

LAXMI WORSHIP-A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

As per Panin, Amarakosha and Patanjali,

The word Laxmi is a derivation from the Sanskrit lakshi (Denotative of feminine gender) Lakshi +echa mutt, whose etymological meaning is one who looks upon the prosperity of mankind and helps for the aims and objects of all the Creatures in Universe. She looks upon the industry of every person. [Panin: "Ashtadhyayi" padac chedavritti vartika tippani sahit" parishkarta Shastri gopaldutta pandeya evam prlhaad-giri, (in two volumes), 1981 Chaukhamba Varanasi (Surbharti Granthamala no. 119), 3.16 6.

Amar kosha" Svargavargah, line 54, Braille edition by Dr. Tej Singh hand written Braille copy: December 3, 1973 in two volumes, volume 1, Kashi Hindu Vishva Vidyalaya, Varanasi Amarakosha Ink Print edition Compiled by B.L. Rice edited by N. Balasubramanya, 1970. Delhi verses IBID, Puri B.N. "India in the Time of Patanjali" Page 181 and n.11. First edition: Bhartiya Vidyabhavan, Mumbai.

According to mythological details Laxmi are very commonly Shri, is the wife of Lord Vishnu and appears in various names in the various form taken by the great Lord himself.

The philosophy attached to her worship indicates that Goddess Laxmi is the Goddess of prosperity, purity, chastity and generosity to all. Her form as "Chanchalla" represents the fickleness of the mind of human being. Her four hands represent four spiritual virtues. They are in existence to all the four directions of the Universe and embodies her willingness to help and assist to all the Creatures to every direction in space, signifying The boons she bestows upon - the four ends of human life; dharma, wealth or Artha, pleasure and moksham.

She sits on a fully blossomed lotus a seat of divine truth. Her personal charm is considered par excellence. An aura of divine happiness, mental and spiritual satisfaction, and prosperity always exist around her as depicted in Indian and foreign art.

Aparna chattarji holds "Goddess Laxmi has no favouritism. She does not discriminate on the basis of cast, creed, gender or social status. The same bowl of rice can satisfy the hunger of a king or a beggar, the same blanket will provide warmth to a man or a eunuch, the same roof will shelter equally the judge and the criminal. Laxmi will go to anyone who seeks her and make himself worthy of her. She even makes know moral judgments to a poor and a judge. Wealth and Power are essentially impersonal to her. They come with a position and not with the person. Thus we wood safely say that people bow not to the man under the crown but to the king bearing the crown and sitting on the thrown."

She is incorrectly connected only with money and popularly accepted as its goddess by general masses but in fact, the Holy goddess is also the goddess of prosperity, chastity, luck, divinity and purity. She is also the goddess of Bramha-vidya and one of her name is 'vidya' which literally means knowledge. She is the goddess on whom we ask for happiness in family, friends, marriage, children, food and wealth, beauty and health to all over Nations.

Hence she is very popular goddess worshipped everywhere since ancient time. She is also attached to prosperity and Operator of the Universe Shri Vishnu and Ganesh, she is known as Haripriya, Shri, Padmalay, Kamala, Lokemata, Padmpriya, Padmamaladhar, Devi, Padmamukhim, Padmakeshi, Padhastam, Padmasundari, Bhargavi, Daridranashini and the daridradhvamshini in different literature of India.

KEYWORDS: Lakshmi, Lakshi Cha Mut, Jashmski, Pompaii, Prayer, Laxmi, Mahabharata

INTRODUCTION

Art has been the fundamental basis of representing the thoughts of human beings. Laxmi worship is indicative of respectability of women folk admixed with myth and reality. This is how this paper presents our thoughts in historical manner.

Prayer

“Ya Devi Sarv Bhuteshu Laxmi Rupena Samsthita.

Namastasyai Namastasyai Namastasyai Namoh Namah.

Namastastestu MahaMayee Shripeet hi Surapugite Shankha,

Chakra, Gada, Haste Maha Laxmi Namostute.

“O Goddess thou art everywhere in the form of Laxmi,

Thus Salutations to the Great Maya (the power of Supreme Brahman devoid of qualities.

Thou abode is none other than Sri Peetha or Sri Chakra.

Thou hold the Conch (symbolizing the gross manifestation) and the Disc (symbolizing the great wisdom.

Thus we worship Sri Maha Laxmi with all devotion.”

“Namaste Sarva – Lokanam – Jananeemambaj - Sambhavam Sriyamunindra – padma - Akshim
Vishnu-Vaksha-Sthala-Sthitam Padma-Aalyam Padma-Karim Padma-Patra-nibhekhaam Vande Padma-Mukheem
Deveem Padma-Nabha-Priyaam aham Tvam siddhis;

Tvam svadha svaha sudha tvam Lok-pavani sandhya ratri prabha bhootir medha sraddha
sarasvati yagya-Vidya maha-vidya guhya-vidya Cha shobhane aatma-Vidya Cha Devi Tvam
Vimukti-Phal-Dayani

Aanveekshikee Trayee Vaarta Danda-Neeti TvamEva Cha Saumya-Asaumyar Jagad-roopaish
TVA etada Devi pooritam Ka TVA Anya tvamRta Devi Sarva-Yagya...;

Sa Shlaaghya SA Guni Dhanyah SA Kuleenah SA Buddhiman SA Shurah SA cha Vikranto Yas
Tvaya Devi Vikshitah”

"O goddess, he who is glanced upon by thou self, is praiseworthy, accomplished, fortunate, intelligent, high-born, and heroic and possessed of power. We pray the gracious power of thine"¹

The Puranic verses signify the greatness of Goddess Laxmi thus, showing her affinity to some ancient time.

Omnipresence and omniscience of the Goddess are attested by the variety of her images in the sacred scapes of Indian Traditions.²

They are in existence from the time of the development of art.³

Variation of the Goddess forms in the art tradition admixed with religious sentiments initiated the process of establishment of scenes and Temples. These processes of getting in close contact with the divine spirits, Spacial manifestation, acceptance and recognitions of folk traditions by the grate traditions, and symbolic expression of Identity, respectability of the feminine divine have shaped the human quest to establish its expression in the form of arts. Thus that Goddess images in various forms and at different places is found.⁴

Not only this but local mythologies are super imposed to justify the historicity and religious merit of this kind of approach specially to Goddess Laxmi.⁵

The spatial pattern of Goddess like those of the Laxmi is and outcome of representation of menifestive realities, acculturation process and maintenance and continuity of the tradition by which a combination of historical affinity comes in respect of the development of fortune not only in India but place where Indian culture influenced.⁶

Laxmi is also known as Annapurna (provider of a bounty of rice. Women generally uphold cultural practices. Rice culture is no exception. Further, of all the food grains, rice perhaps has a unique place in shaping the lifestyle of the people who depend upon it for their sustenance and livelihood. Only rice is associated with a goddess called Laxmi. In the rice-cultivating region, each stage of rice production is done on an auspicious day and some rituals are performed. Being a predominantly rice-producing State, Odessa also followed different rituals associated with rice cultivation marking each stage of cultivation such as sloughing, transplanted, harvesting and storing the rice.

If the sowing season is observed as the fertility ritual, the harvesting of rice is marked by another ritual expressing gratitude to the Goddess Laxmi. Rice and Laxmi are interchangeable concepts in local imagination. In South India the worship of Laxmi is performed with rice, which is supposed to take place on Thursday of the first half of the Lunar month of the Paush and, Chaitra and the Bhadrpad of every year.⁷

This rice which is used for Laxmi worship is known as Akshat. Now if Laxmi is connected to rice as is elaborated, then her worship goes to long antiquity.⁸

Egbert Richter, a German scholar believes that the Mother Goddess of Indus Civilization is represented in the Rigveda as Shri Devi.

In support of his argument He cites an example of the Rigveda where word Laxmi is used.⁹

It means 'lucky sign' which is referred in the Indus script for women sign of comb.¹⁰

If we correlate it to the views of Prashant to this end, we would find that one coin of Chandra Gupta Ist-Kumar devi type is found in Hajipur in Bihar whose another type is found in Chandrakheragadh coin stuck with gold at West Bengal represents pasha in one hand of the Goddess and cornucopia in the other hand appearing like a Greek Goddess of fertility and fortune resting on lion which is believed to be like in azes I obverse side of coin, which concludes as her form of “Sarvamangala and Rajya Laxmi”. This view allows us to support to the views of above noted German scholar that in the later time the Vedic and Indus Goddess Laxmi came to be quoted thus as the deity of luck and fortune.¹¹

The Guptas attest her important not only in their coins as has already being stated but also in their inscriptions.¹²

Yaksh culture was developed in north India where Laxmi is portrayed as Sri Devi and Kuber is also associated with her.¹³

As Buddhism migrated across Asia and merged with existing faiths, gods and goddesses came to be worshipped in new forms, and then were depicted in these new manifestations. Kumano, the inspiration for Mariko Mori’s video and originally a revered Shinto pilgrimage site, was gradually transformed as Japan’s native religion fused with Buddhism. Similarly, Buddhism was changed as it absorbed external influences. The image of Kichijoten in this gallery, for example, is a Buddhist form of Laxmi, the Hindu goddess of beauty and wealth.¹⁴

The Buddhist painting, Laxmi, worshipped in Buddhism as the goddess of wealth and happiness, stands on a lotus pedestal. She holds her right hand in the gesture of reassurance, and a wish-granting jewel rests in her left palm. Laxmi’s multi-layered robes and crown belong to a tradition of Buddhist painting that began in China and Japan in the eighth century. This painting, however, displays a fascination with detail that is characteristic of the Meiji period (1868–1912). The elaborate crown and the frothy appearance of the sleeves and hemline are among the attributes that suggest a late date.¹⁵

CONCLUSIONS

Thus Laxmi worship is an ancient one. Its antiquity can be assigned to 7000 B.C. She is that mother Goddess of ancient time who is not only worshipped in India but also in the rest of the Countries in her different names and forms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Salutations to lord Ganesh,

Who removes all ills in bestowing of strength and energy along with all impediments and ensures blessedness and success to His devotees and knowledge seekers.

Prostration’s to Guru Bhagvan Shiva in the form of Hanuman Ji, and ocean of benevolence and compassion.

Who removes defects of vision and purifies the eyes of understanding

And Guides on the path of knowledge, wisdom and devotion, dispelling darkness of superstitions;

Thus allowing sprinkling that light of history which hath come to us through the benedictions;

Reverence to Him as He thus protects his humble disciples from all sights through the darkness of ignorance.

Reverence to Sarasvati, The goddess of knowledge and learning, and Parwati the aadi-Shakti and the consort of lord Shiva the bestower of strength and energy.

By Whose power we have been allowed to sprinkle that light of wealth before the divine and knowledgeable readers and thus enabled to chant the Mantras of Goddess of wealth, who is omnipotent and omnipresent in the form of golden bird which glides and indicates towards the present and future on the basis of one's merits and demerits.

Reverence to Grate Power who by virtue of her Power allowed us to explore and dig her treasure of knowledge without attachment and prejudice through the ancient past and thus enabled us to present in this paper the historical facts on the titled subject.”

In the last we acknowledge our parents,

Uncle late Shri Suraj Narayan Sinha, the dialogue director of film Milan of 1967, and elder brother late Mr. Om Narayan Sinha, my daughter Eechya Sinha for helping me to paste Photographs on this paper and many authors whose works provided new source to present our thoughts to this end.

Author

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APPENDICES



Figure 1

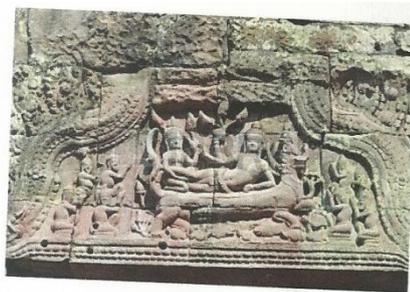


Figure 2



Figure 3