

Review of Odishan Cultural Interaction with Bali

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The Indian Sub-continent is featured by expansion of trade contact with the countries of Southeast Asia especially with Malaysia, Thailand and the island of Java, Sumatra and Bali of Indonesia since the early historical time. Overseas trade played an important role in the spread of glorious Indian culture abroad. The people of India most specifically Odishan people had a great expertise in sea-voyages. In the ancient period Orissa was known as Kalinga, had a long history of maritime tradition owing to its close proximity with the sea, it stretched to a length of more than five hundred miles in the eastern part beginning with river Ganga in the north to river Godavari in the south. It is known from folklores, tradition and literature that Orissa had a viable commercial and cultural interaction across the sea. The peoples of Orissa were the pioneer in establishing colonies in Southeast Asian countries especially in Bali island of Indonesia.

Bali, the island situated between Java and Lombok present a synchronized picture of Hinduism and Buddhism. The commercial ties between Bali and India slowly developed into socio-cultural contact from India. Balinese were biologically belonging to southern Mongoloid group. Since early century C.E. Bali had been flourishing industries with Odishan sculpture.

The Sambalpuri style of textile weaving has influenced the tie and dye weaving known as *patola* in Bali, where themes of Indian mythology are found. In the monkey or *kecak* dance and tiger or *barong* dance of villages marked the burial site which have been found with iron, bronze, glass and beads. Discovery of Indian roulette ware have established the fact that Sembiran and Gilimanuk had maintained brisk trade with Roman empire, India and Southeast Asia.¹ With the growth in trade Indian influence spread to large area. The Chinese text referred Bali as Po-li, when Balinese King Kaundinya maintained diplomatic relation with China.

After the end of the Javanese rule in the beginning of 9th century C.E., a new rule was started by Sri Kesari Varmadeva.² Varmadeva was later on maintained as their title. The Mataram ruler Airlangga in the 11th century exerted influence in Java by appointing his own viceroys, then Majapahit rulers in 14th century exerted authority in Java, after its downfall Bali declared its independence and maintained its own unique cultural identity.³ With the growth of trade Indian influence began to spread. Brahmins were employed in the Balinese ruler's court. Hindu Gods like Siva and Vishnu worship became widespread, later on Buddhism and Saivism welded into a unified system. Javanese culture was

also prevalent in Bali. Thereafter Islam entered into Southeast Asia including Bali. Bali never lost its own cultural moorings and developed its own unique culture by absorbing alien influence.⁴

Synchronized Religion:

As we know that Hindu-Buddhist religion was professed in Bali. Brahminical religion was well-known in Bali; here Siva is recognized as the elder brother of Buddha and on the occasion of religious ceremony four Saivite and one Buddhist priests performed the rituals, so the common mass saying is; He who is Siva is Buddha (*ya Siva ya Buddha*).⁵ Siva was treated as most powerful in spite of prevalence of Gods like Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, Baruna, Krishna and Ganesha. Siva was most powerful and has the attributes of both Vishnu and Brahma. According to Balinese belief and tradition Bali was the centre of universe and abode of Gods with Siva as the presiding deity. They also believed that the spirits or *butas* lived in water, tree and hills.⁶ Evil *butas* to be appeased and benevolent spirits were to be solicited with friendship. *Pitara* or ancestor worship was prevalent in Bali. Each houses for the purpose of religious rituals like *pegursi*, *galungan* and *kuningan* constructed a small temple and special puja or prayer held for the departed soul. In each worship *ghrta* (clarified butter), *kusa* (grass effigy), *madhu* (honey) and *tila* (sesamum) are offered to Gods and Goddesses. So both indigenous and Hindu religious beliefs were widely practised in Bali.

In the early quarter of 5th century C.E. Buddhism entered into Bali. The *Purvaka Veda Buddha* contains the Buddhist priest daily rituals. As stated above Siva was regarded as elder brother with age-old privileges and Buddha was a younger brother with ascetic qualities. The ceremonial consecrated water brought by a

Saivite priest is mixed with that of a Buddhist. The practice of a Saivite is known as *Bhakti* whereas Buddhist is called *Yoga*. The worship of a *Dhyani Buddha* and *Prajnaparamita* in Bali was the influence of Javanese religion. Regarding Buddhism there was cordiality between Odisha and Bali. A section of Brahmans in Karangasam district called themselves as Brahmins-Bouddha-Kalinga. The votive tablets with inscription and Buddha figure and Boddhisattva have been found from Bali, Ratnagiri and Avana in Orissa.⁷ Interestingly in the daily rituals of a Buddhist priest, God is addressed as Jagannath, Suresvara and Rudra. The daily rituals begin with the following *Veda Buddha* slokas ;

*Ksamasava mam Jagannatha Sarvapapa
Vinasam Sarva Karyapranadevam
Pranamami Suresvaram .⁸*

The recitation of Lord Jagannath name in prayer suggests itself the contact of Odisha with Bali. In Odishan tradition Adi Buddha is referred as Jagannath. Most probably king Indrabhuti of Odisha introduced Vajrajana Buddhism in Bali. In his tantric work *Jnanasiddhi* the first Sloka refers to close relation between Jagannath and Buddha, the Sloka is as follow;

*Namaskrtya Jagannatham
Sarvajinavarareitam Sarvabuddhamayam
Siddhivyapinam Gaganopam.⁹*

Tantric cult of Buddhism was also prevalent in Bali. *San-Hyan –Kamahayankan* a 9th century work taught tantric variety of Mahayan sect. It was developed due to the influence of India and Java. Siva was also worshipped in Bali as Jagannath and the priest recited hymn like; *Om Ksamam Siavadeva Jagannath Hitamkara*.¹⁰ Thus, there was rapprochement between Siva, Buddha and Jagannath in Bali and this influence basically came from Odisha.

Harmonized Society:

Major religion of the Bali was Hinduism, it represented the characteristic of four fold caste system in the society; *Brahmans* (priestly caste), *Sastria* (warrior), *Wesia* (noble) and rest of the population comes under *Sudra* caste.¹¹ The first three categories known as *trivangsa* occupy advantage position. Despite rigid caste practices inter-caste marriage was prevalent. The upper caste or *trivangsa* accorded special title; *ida* for *Brahmans*, *deva* to *Sastras* and *gusti* for *Wesias*.¹² Further the *Brahmans* were categorized into two division; *Padanede* and *Pamangku*. The *pandade* were worshipping priest of Siva and enjoyed more privileges. They maintained high moral order and procured holy water, and the *pamangku* were also the worshippers of Siva but relegated to common status. They performed rites and rituals in village, temple and for the lower castes or *Sudras*. The word *Idayus* was used for female *Brahmans*. The warrior or *sastria* also enjoyed royal power and privileges. The *wesias* were influential categories, and the last division *sudras* known as *kaulas* were regarded impure community, but there was no sign of untouchability in Balinese society.

In view of festivals and day to day life, the Balinese society has maintained their indigenous garb. They followed their calendar with five days a week and Saturday was treated as most auspicious day as it was marked for Goddess Sarasvati worship. They did not consider *Amavasya* as auspicious night.¹³ The *Saka-Samvat* or New Year celebration is a week-long observation marked by several entertainments and merry-making. The society of Balinese also celebrated festivals like *Sivaratri*, *Sarawvati Puja* or *Odalon Saraswati* and *Durga Puja* or *Page Wesi*. In the observation of festivals impact of Odisha was marked prominently. The legends of Odisha speak of

merchants or *sadhavas* going to far-off islands like Java and Bali for maritime trade. To mark tradition the Odishan people take a dip in the river water and float small boats made of thermocole or Banana *Patuka* on pond or river water. This festival celebrated in the month of October/ November on the auspicious day of *Kartika Purnima*.¹⁴ In Cuttack, on the banks of the Mahanadi river a large number of people congregate for celebration of festival called *Bali Yatra* in Odia language or Journey to Bali.¹⁵ In the same way the Balinese observe the *Masakapam Kapesih* festival by floating a small boat having burning candles with the belief that the child is being sent to his original homeland Kalinga. The rites of the funeral ceremony are known as *Pitrayajna*. The rituals like shaving of heads, offering food items i.e., clarified butter, sesamum, honey and feeding the *Brahmans* on twelfth day are found in Odisha. The Mahendratana river of Odisha along with the Mahendra mountain is recited in Balinese *stutis*. The river Mahanadi is considered sacred which is known from the following Sloka;

*Om Ganga, Sindhu, Sarasvati, Vipasa,
KausikaNadi Yamuna, Mahanadi Srestha
Sarya Mahati.*¹⁶

Similarities are also recorded in food habits, manner and dress design of both Odisha and Bali. In Odisha *Peja* a fluid is made out of cooked rice while in Bali *aru* is made out of uncooked rice of parboiled paddy. The *Sajana Saga* or leaves of drum-stick tree (*maningaoleifera*) is a food of delicacy in both the regions, other food items like cakes prepared from rice-flour known as *manda enduripitha* in Odisha are also popular in Bali. Chewing betel and keeping the ingredients in a wooden box are found in both the regions. The practice of bending down and stretching right hand towards ground

while passing along elders sitting on the way is a common manner in both the regions. The bridal wardrobe and crown are similar in Bali and Odisha. Rounding of hairs by women in typical bun is alike in villages of both the regions. Ornaments and dresses also bear the similarities as it has been observed in the impression of Odishan Paika and tribal dance.

Language and Architecture:

Sanskrit was used as a court language and in religious rites and ceremonies in Bali. There was widespread prevalence of *kawi* language in Bali after the 10th century C.E. One inscription of Sri Kesari Varmadeva known as Blanjong inscription is traced in *Kawi* language. Odia and Tamil words have also entered into the Balinese vocabulary as initial trade ties were established from these regions. Odia and Balinese similar words with English meaning are mentioned as follows :¹⁷

Odia	Balinese	English meaning
<i>Bou</i>	Bu	Mother
<i>Borokuli Bokul</i>		A kind of fruit
ChhuinTui		A kind of vegetables
<i>China (badam)</i>	Kaccan (cina)	Peanut
Genda	Gondan	Snail
Gua	Buah	Betel nut
Muha	Muha	Face
Para	Dara	Pigeon
Ruti	Roti	Bread
Sanja	Sanja	Evening

Architecture did not reach the same height as in the other segments in Bali. Existing indigenous idea, Indian and Javanese impact made it a unique pattern of architecture in Bali. In temples placing of offering pillars has been

influenced by Odishan style. In the innermost courtyard images of Hindu Trinity are enshrined. This square like chamber constituting *Cella* is similar to the Bhubaneswar's temples of Odisha.¹⁸ The male and female standing figures of *Pura Sukhavana* are equal to the early Odishan art. The use of lion with strands of pearls dripping from its mouth or *Kirttimukha* motifs is an important aspect of Indo-Balinese art and the influence of Vaitala and Mukteswara temples is most eye-catching. The *Hariti* image surrounded by seven children near the gateway derives inspiration from Ratnagiri style of figures.¹⁹

Thus, to conclude it can be said that the course of Odishan maritime contact with Bali was in reality, a cultural interaction between the two regions which needs further intensive and extensive research work to enlarge our perception in this context.

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