

Raja Parba

Raja Parba or Mithuna Sankranti(Oriya: ରଜ ପର୍ବ) is a four day long festival and the second day signifies beginning of the solar month of Mithuna from, which the season of rains starts. It inaugurates and welcomes the agricultural year all over Orissa, which marks, through biological symbolism, the moistening of the sun dried soil with the first showers of the monsoon in mid June thus making it ready for productivity.

Mythology

It is believed that the mother goddess Earth or the divine wife of Lord Vishnu undergoes menstruation during the first three days. The fourth day is called as Vasumati gadhua or ceremonial bath of Bhudevi. The term Raja has come from Rajaswala (meaning a menstruating woman) and during medieval period the festival became more popular as an agricultural holiday remarking the worship of Bhudevi, who is the wife of Lord Jagannath. A silver idol of Bhudevi is still found in Puri Temple aside Lord Jagannath.



Raja Doli khela

Rituals and customs

During the three days women are given a break from household work and time to play indoor games. Unmarried girls decorate themselves with new fashion or traditional Saree and Alatha in feet. All people abstain from walking barefoot on earth. Generally various Pithas are made of which **Podopitha**, and Chakuli Pitha are main. People play a lot of indoor and outdoor games. Girls play swings tied on tree branches whereas aged ladies play Cards and Ludo. Many villages organise Kabbadi matches among young men. The Raja gita (a folk song sung by the people is:

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ବନସ୍ତେ ଡାକିଲା ଗଜ,
ବରଷକେ ଥରେ ଆସିଛି ରଜ,
ଆସିଛି ରଜ ଲୋ
ଘେନି ନୂଆ ସଜବାଜ ॥
ରଜ ଦୋଳି କଟ କଟ,
ମୋ ଭାଇ ମଥାରେ ସୁନା-ମୁକୁଟ,
ସୁନା ମୁକୁଟ ଲୋ
ହେଉଥାଏ ଝଙ୍କମକ ॥ ”

(Banaste dakila Gaja, barasake thare aasichhi Raja, asichi raja lo gheni nua sajabaja'
(meaning the Raja carnival has come with the pomp and pleasure of newness)

“
ପାନ ଖିଆ ରସିକ ପାଟି,
ଖୋଜି ବୁଲୁଥିଲା ରାଜାଙ୍କ ହାତୀ,
ଭାଲି ଦେଇଗଲା ଶିରରେ,
ରାଜା ହୋଇଗଲେ ରଜରେ ॥ ”

(Pana khia Rasika Pati, khoji buluthila Rajanka hati, dhali deigala sirare, raja hoigale rajare
(Meaning the while the lucky charming man chewing betel was blessed with the wondering elephant with the kingship)

Observances

It falls in mid June, the first day is called **Pahili Raja**, second day is Mithuna Sankranti, third day is **Bhu daaha** or **Basi Raja**. The final fourth day is called **Vasumati snan**, in which the ladies bath the grinding stone as a symbol of Bhumi with turmeric paste and adore with flower, sindoor etc. All type of seasonal fruits are offered to mother Bhumi. The day before first day is called **Sajabaja** or preparatory day during which the house, kitchen including grinding stones are cleaned, spices are ground for three days. During these three days women and girls take rest from work and wear new Saree, Alaktaka, and ornaments. Its similar to Ambubachi Mela.

