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THE ROLE OF RAJA-RANI DOLLS IN INDIAN TRADITION

Chadalavada Venkatesh
Academic Consultant, Department of Fine Arts, Yogi Vemana University, Kadapa

ABSTRACT
India has different traditions and religions. Each of the 28 states and 8 union territories of India has its own traditional style, and each state also has different traditional practices. According to those traditions, festivals are celebrated in different ways in each region, and according to that festival, traditional dreams are developed in those regions. Among them, Raja Rani dolls have a special place. These Raja Rani dolls are made by different names in different states and follow the same tradition.
KEY WORDS: *Raja Rani, Kanyaputri, Achi Chittiyar, Dancing Dolls, Traditional Settigunta, Channapatna, Marapachi, Jau Kandei*

INTRODUCTION

These traditional dreams have been inherited from ancient times throughout India. During the Harappan Indus Valley Civilization, a traditional method of making dolls developed in India. Clay dolls appear during the Indus Valley Civilization. They are called terracotta dolls. In these bullock cart dolls, we mostly find male and female bullock dolls. That tradition spread throughout India and different types of traditional dolls were developed in different states. Among them, especially the Thanjavur dolls and Marupachi dolls of Tamil Nadu, Kanyaputri dolls of Bihar, Achi Chittiyar dolls of Tamil Nadu, Assam terracotta dolls, traditional dolls of Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Kerala, and Haryana regions, tribal dolls of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Uddi dolls of Madhya Pradesh, traditional dolls made in Barwani, Chitrakoot wooden dolls of Maharashtra, traditional-style dolls of Uttar Pradesh, Kondapalli Etikoppaka Settigunta traditional dolls of Andhra Pradesh, Nirmal dolls of Telangana, as well as Koppal dolls of Karnataka, have gained importance in India. In the manufacture of these dolls, some traditional dolls have a single style; for example, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, Raja Rani dolls made of red sandalwood are traditionally sent to the groom's house along with the newly married girl. A similar custom also exists in states and union territories like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Bihar, Jharkhand, Punjab, Assam, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Andaman and Nicobar[1].

Raja Rani (Shettigunta Red Sandalwood Dolls): The dolls represent the King and Queen and are often elaborately carved and painted with intricate details. The dolls are not just decorative items but are considered a symbol of tradition and culture. Raja Rani Dolls are made in Lakshmi Gari's village near Shettigunta in the Annamaya district of Andhra Pradesh. These dolls were made with red sandalwood 20 years ago, but nowadays, due to the scarcity of red sandalwood, they are made with sticks like Kudummati, Sarkar, and teak that are available in the forest. Dolls ranging from 3 inches to 24 inches tall are made in Lakshmi Gari's village. Shoe polish colors are used to give them a red color. Female (queen) and male (king) dolls are made in two types. In the past, these were carved with a lot of decoration, but in the present time, they are made plain with less decoration. It can be said that these dolls have an important role in the Telugu culture. In Andhra, it is customary to take these dolls to the house of the in-laws for the first time.



Figure 1Raja Rani Sandalwood Toys Settigunta Andhra Pradesh

These Raja Rani dolls also have a special role in important Hindu festivals. These Raja Rani dolls are also decorated and used in the "Bommala Koluvu" during Sankranti and Vijayadashami (Dussehra). And for the sake of children, some people put one of the Raja Rani dolls in a small size and offer it as a gift at the temple of God. This tradition is seen in Chittoor, Tirupati, Annamaya, and Kadapa districts.

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Jau Kandei: Baleshwari Jau Kandei (lacquer dolls) are a refined form of terracotta idols of Dhangada and Dhangadi (or male and female) worshipped by the tribals of *Mayurbhanj*, Odisha[2] is estimated that the practice of this art form flourished in *Baleshwar* from the seventeenth century onwards. These idols are mainly of male and female construction, made of terracotta and then covered with lacquer made from lac collected from the *neighboring* forests and are of different tones. The artisans of the *Sankhari* community living here have perfected this specialty of making idols. Their male and female sculptures are kept simple with some important associated signs like hands and feet. The details of the idols are completed by the use of lacquers, which add eyes, ornaments, and clothes to these idols. In the *Baleshwar* region, these lacquer idols are called "Jau Kandei." Odisha people exchange these dolls with each other during their wedding while singing the following song[3]

"Aa boula bohu bohuka khela kheliba,
Come, friends—let's play doll marriage with fun and joy.
Jia bahakari pua bahakari
By letting the marriage between our daughter and son take place
Jani-jautuka deba"



Figure 2 Jau Kandei Lacquer Dolls Odessa

Marapachi Bomme: The red sandalwood dolls of the king and queen made in Settigunta in the Tirupati district of Andhra Pradesh are also used in the traditional way in Tamil Nadu, that is, during weddings and in doll houses. In Tamil Nadu, the dolls of the king and queen are called Marapachi Bomme In Tamil Nadu, the Marapachi Bomme is decorated with ornaments and clothes. Here too, it is a custom here to bring these dolls to the in-laws' house during the wedding. These Marapachi Bomme are especially shown as a special attraction during the Gulu Festival (Bommeala Koluvu in Telugu). It is a specialty of Tamil Nadu to show them as Andal and Perumal during the Gulu Festival. These Raja Rani dolls are made in Dashavatara and decorated during the Gulu Festival.



Figure 3 Raja Rani sandalwood Marapachi Dolls Tamilnadu

Kanneputri Dolls: Kanneputri is a traditional handmade doll. It is mostly found in the Champaran district of Bihar state. According to a tradition, the mother of the family makes a beautiful bride doll as a gift to the daughter who is about to get married. So behind giving Kanyaputri, there is also a belief in hereditary tradition. Moreover, every year, sisters make dolls for their brothers and immerse them in ponds during the month of Shravan[4]. Then their brothers bring these dolls back from the ponds. After that, sisters and brothers share sweets and express their love for each other. However, this type of activity has almost disappeared from society.

Conclusion : The tradition of dolls can be said to have had a great influence on the culture of India. Apart from the above, the culture of Gangaur (Gauri) dolls continues in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh in India. Apart from that, in the state of Karnataka, there are Chennapatna dolls. In the state of Tamil Nadu, there are traditional dolls from Thanjavur, which have been coming since the Chola period. In this way, in every state, those who use dolls to reflect our traditions in the present era have become accustomed to technology and do not care about traditional dolls, due to which we are not able to pass on our cultural traditions to our future generations.



Figure 4 Kanneputri Dolls Paper Pulp Champaran Bihar

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