

Karasdev Vs Kakasbos

Two Different Deities of Asia Minor and India having same Nature of worship

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Abstract— This current paper deals with two identical deities worshipped in different regions. One worshipped in Indian subcontinent and the other in Asia Minor. But the nature of both the tutelary deities is same and it is a question whether it entered India during Greek influence or it went out from India during Hellenistic period.

I. INTRODUCTION

This current paper deals with two identical deities worshipped in different regions. One worshipped in Indian subcontinent and the other in Asia Minor. But the nature of both the tutelary deities is same and it is a question whether it entered India during Greek influence or it went out from India during Hellenistic period.

Karasdev is a tutelary deity of Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh including some regions of Rajasthan. Karasdev is considered as the doctor of animals. He treats those milking animals who could not produce milk or who could not conceive. The villagers come to pay homages to Karasdev for such remedies. After the cure the villagers offer sweets made of milk to Karasdev. Karasdev is worshipped throughout the Bundelkhand region. The karasdeva platforms are found in almost all villages of these regions mentioned above. He is worshipped and invoked by singing the songs, popularly known as “Karasdevki got”, which describe his valor and magical powers.

Karasdev, who is present in the life of Bundelkhand, who is also considered to be an incarnation of Shiva, as well as his brother Hiraman dev and Ajaypal, who lived in forest with Karasdev. He used to graze animals and meditate also. Many historians including Narmada Prasad Gupta, Dr.Ganga Prasad Barsaiya,

DiwanPratipal Singh, Kashi Prasad Jaiswal and Gorelal Tiwarietc have described folk deities in the folk culture and history of Bundelkhand. Many differences were seen in the history, time and character of karasdev. A special worship is done at 12 midnights on Chaturthi tithi of Bhadrapada, considering his birth at midnight. Devotees keep singing in the strange mite with a sound like dhank(Damru) throughout the night, in which one can hear the beautiful character of karasdev’s bravery from his birth to his childhood and youth. In Bundelkhand area of Morena, Bhind, Gwalior, Datia, Jhansi, Mahoba, Lalitpur, Jalun, Hamirpur, Bandaetc , the Gujar families who domesticated animals live in these areas worship the deity with full enthusiasm. During the reign of Chandelas, he was considered as an incarnation of Shankar among the local deities of Karasdev group. For the diseases of animals and birds and their treatment, the names of Karasdev comes alone, which specially protects the animals like cows, buffaloes etc when they are tortured by any insect, bitten by snake, tortured by any tantra-mantra, oghad-masan etc.¹By praying for the animal on the platform of Karasdev and offering its milk, the animal becomes healthy.

From Alahakhand to Bundelkhand , mention of folk gods is found in the sagas of Alaha, the Gotas of Karasdev, rachre of kajariyan, Gehnai and Kanhaiya etc. Karasdev worship is popular in entire Bundelkhand, Malavanchal, including the entire Brajmandal and Rajasthan. He is prayed by offering milk, curd and pure ghee to keep the animals healthy and free from all kinds of obstacle.

Karas dev in true sense a warrior and protector of the animals. He is shown riding a horse with a club in his hand. That is why a horse is symbolically placed in

front of his madhya²and it is believed that Karasdev used to protect the animals by riding on horse and fighting with the cows.

In India, there are many legends about the birth of Karasdev in which a childless SarniMaa in the Gujar family of Village Jhanz of Rajasthan has been mentioned that she had performed rigorous penance of lord Shiva by fasting for 12 years. One fone morning SarniMaa saw a huge flower on which a beautiful little baby boy was lying, whom SarniMaa took in her lap considering it a boon from Shiva and started caressing her. SarniMaa took Karasdev home where she pampered him and brought him up with love. There is mention of two cousins named Hiranman and Surajpal of karasdev, who were very courageous and brave, they had immense cattle and all three used to go together to graze the cows. It has been described in the Gotas of Karasdev- '*JanamkeKarasdevKanahiya, PatoBhedkauayenaiya*'.³The introduction of Eladi, a daughter of SarniMaa, who was a brave woman is found in one verse-'*Bara BarasTapiyaTapi, Krena Ann ahar*'⁴The story of Eladi 's bravery are also sung in the gotas. One day the intoxicated elephant of Delhi's King AllauddinKhilji

Karasdev is shown sitting on a horse and holding a staff in his hand in almost all the ancient sculptures found in India. In the modern days he has been depicted with a sword in his hand. The platform of karasdev is built in almost every village of Madhya Bharat. Some of the ancient sculptures are made on stone slabs.



Fig 1 Karasdev lalitpur U.P



Fig 2 Karasdev , Lalitpur



Fig 3 Karasdev from Internet source





The images on Internet sources.

The history of karasdev goes to very ancient times because many stone slabs found from India depict the god as an ancient god of animal herds.

Similar images are found from Southern Asia minor, in Lycia and Pisidia. Almost all traces of such cult is found from the region delimited by modern towns of Fethiye (formerly Telmessos) and Nebiler(about a dozen kilometers South West of Korkuteli). Some steles dedicated to him were discovered in other Anatolian cities. Here this deity was known as Kakasbos..

Kakasbos is linked to Herakles at latest at the beginning of the Roman Imperial era, he has been venerated exclusively in Southern Asia Minor, more precisely in Lycia and Pisidia. As a club bearing horse rider God.⁵

In an article published by Huseyin KOKER⁶, A new bronze type of Sagalassos, which is dated to Hellenistic period(possibly 2nd to 1st Century BC). This coin was recorded during the studies on Greek Coin collection in Burdur Museum between 2005-2009 by the author. On the obverse of the coin, a Zebu figure to right and on reverse a rider (Kakasbos/ herakles?) galloping to right, holding a club in right hand with a legend in depicted

Now the question arise whether Karasdev, the Indian God has something common with Kakasbos of Asia minor. We know the facts that India has good relation with ancient Greeks. Megathenes wrote about the prehistoric arrival of the God Dionysus in India. According to Philostratus, Dinoyus was called Nysian or Nysean by the Indians.⁷

At the Nasik caves, some of the caves were built by Greek descended people. The murals of Ajanta caves are painted in such a way which suggest a Greek Influence. The existence of the rider God called Kakasbos was first recognized towards the end of the 19th century. Kakasbos was first published in 1880 by Collignon.⁸, but it was Drexler who gave due credit to the god's newfound existence and wrote an article about him.⁹

The images of kakasbos in Andriake Museum-



Fethiye Museum- Wikipedia



Andriake Museum- Source Wikipedia



Ancient Anatolian deity.



Karasdev in Indian Context-



Village Saipura, U.P India



Azadpura U.P

The images of Karasdev are shown with a club in his right hand where as the new images are depicted with sword in the right hand. The karasdev is usually shown with his friend rider, a similar image is found from Pisidia also.

The images of Karasdeva and Kakasbos are similar in nature but the cult is still in worship in India. The god is invoked by singing his Gots(songs in local language with local musical instruments called Jhanz) by the villagers. The worship was conducted with the products made of milk as the God is supposed to protect the animals from natural calamity and bless the villagers with sufficient cattle for their purpose. Many stories of their heroic deed are sung by the villagers and there is also a tendency that no women is allowed

to climb the platform of Karasdev. Only men were allowed to do so.

Some new images which are still in worship in India-



Karasdeva with a sword in right hand and his platform.



Twin brother of Karasdev & Hiradev



REFERENCES

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- [2] A small triangular shape structure on a platform, where the lamps are put for the worship of folk god.
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- [4] For twelve years she fasted without any food or grain.
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