

Folk and Minor Art in India
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Lecture - 22
Yamapata, Pytkar and other art practice of Jharkhand
Yamapata by the Jadopatias

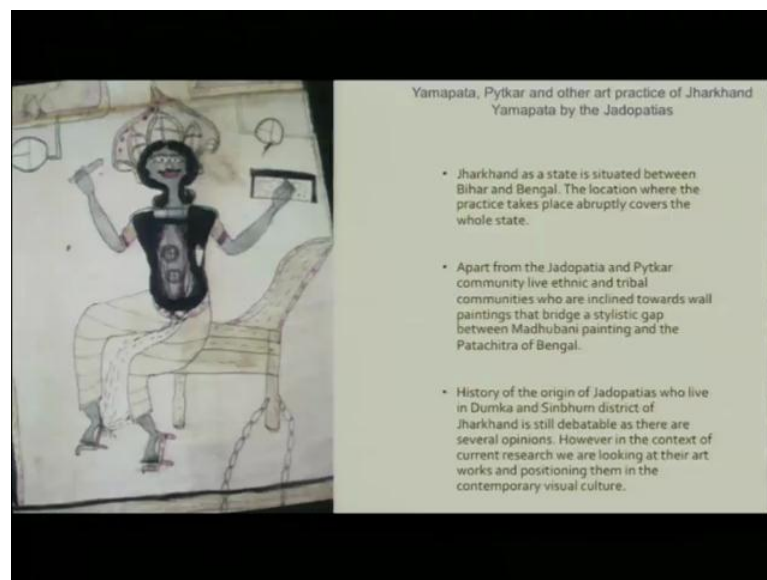
We have been speaking about the habitual or practices that are connected to the social norms, and the regular habitual behavior that is connected to the customs and religious practices very closely. There are traditions where we see, there are communities were very closely connected to each other and they living in different places like the previous lecture, where we were focusing on places like Mithila that has image cultural tradition.

The literary resources there is of a very high quality, at the same time there are places that we were covering as our examples there are topics that related to Bengal, Odissa and many other eminent districts and also the states which are quite prominent and the traditions are also quite well known to many of us and right now I am going to focus on another tradition, which belongs to state, which has newly come up and, but the place was there. It has a very old and rich tradition that days back to the tradition and that is the state named Jharkhand which is working almost like a transition between Bihar and Bengal.

So, there are some mixed traditions that we get to see in the regular practices, but it has a strong individual identity also. So, we cannot say that it something that grew with by holding hands from the other joining states, but it had a rudimentary connection to nearby and to characteristic of the art works are also very pure in nature having said pure I try to mean certain things which is connected to the indigenous culture and the paintings of Jharkhand is abruptly spread. It is at the same time there are cultural connections and the practitioners there belong to a very old tribe, and because of that they have focused way of looking at the their tradition and it grew there with all those resources that was intrinsically connected to their regular life and ritualistic practices, but the expression there rather than becoming aesthetic oriented, they are related to many different mysterious connections and that makes it very interesting to look at.

Of course as a decorative aspect to it, but there is another very eminent feature of this art work which is connected to the funerary rights. So, it is all about the death after life and all those customs and the customary believes they are connected to the artistic expression that they come up with. So, let us focus on the first category that is Yamapata.

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Where I also going to talk about Pytkar Chitrakars and also the art practice of Jharkhand where Yamapata is done by a community called Jadopatias. So, Jharkhand as a state is situated between Bihar and Bengal, the location where the practice takes place abruptly covers the whole state.

Apart from the Jadopatias and Pytkar community live ethnic and tribal communities, who are inclined towards wall paintings and that bridge a stylistic gap between Madhubani painting and the Patachitra of Bengal, very effectively history of the origin of Jadopatias who live in Dumka Sinbhum district of Jharkhand is still debatable as there are several opinions. However, in the context of current research we are looking at their art works and positioning them in the contemporary visual culture. The themes of this art works are related to the funerary rights of the Santhal tribe, they are known as Yamapata and this remains the primary subject of this paintings.

Figurative images with humans forms, but initially they are divide of eyes on them what we saw in the picture is perhaps an image of door keeper of Yama or the God of Death or in some other words, the God of Forgiveness, he has a keeper in his gate. So, after death

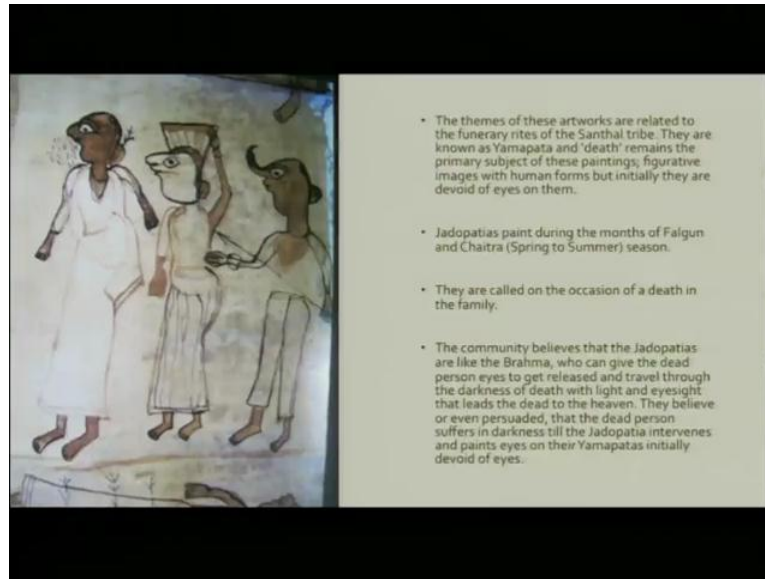
it is believed that when the dead person reaches Yama before that he needs to encounter his character called Chitragupt. So, perhaps this is one image where the messenger of the Yama or the God of Forgiveness sits there and he has the count of each and every sin that a person commits through his life or her life.

So, Chitragupt takes the count that and on the basis of that he decides whether do he needs to be forgive him or what are the kind of punishment that has to be pronounced for this particular person. So, that is the believe that inserts a lot of fear to the living being to keep them ethically routed and these are the purpose that is connected to social behavior and it controls the society to with fear fantasy and that is perhaps the factor that is gives birth to such interesting and effective images which is having very strong communicative essence in to it with very strong imageries they often do not stick to the naturalistic or realistic approach towards the forms. They render it in to a very free manner, but the approach is a semi realistic approach.

So, the evolution that is taken place in the art works they are mostly from the semi obstruct to semi realistic, I will come to that slowly with images, but then I am going back to the thematic aspect of the same thing, where the imagination, the image that gets formed with the idea of Yama, the God of Death or the God of Forgiveness. It is gives you sense of fear at the first time and then it is all about the opposite and complementary connections of virtue and wise good and bad and it works as a complementary factor with a human emotion.

However, there are certain things that I mentioned just now that the images are realistic sometimes semi realistic with no sense of naturalism, but the main interesting feature is that they are mostly devoid of the eyes because it is connected to another custom where the eyes are painted much later when the Jadopatia community who coming to the scene. After the death they feel that they are the people who have the right to give sight to the people who are dead. So, the tradition has all this connections which are superstitious in general, but that is working as an operational factor for this practice to thrive and grow and then move on.

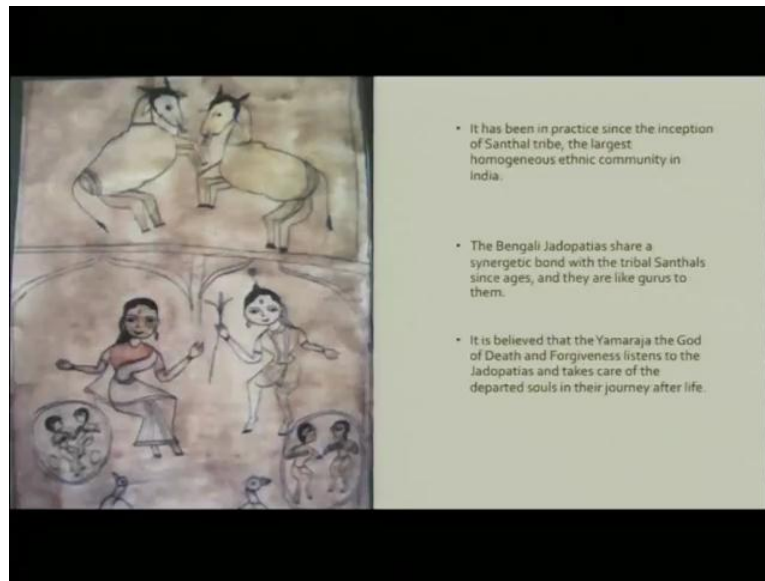
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Jadopatias paint during the month Falgun and Chaitra that spring to summer season. They are called on the occasion of death in the family. The community believes that the Jadopatias are like the Brahma, who can give the dead person eyes to get released and travel through the darkness of death with light and eyesight that leads the dead to the heaven.

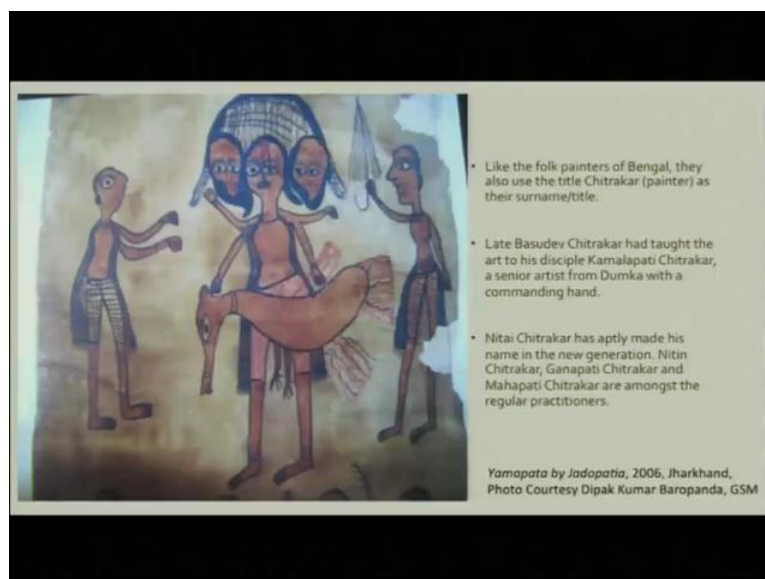
They believe or even they forces people to make that that the dead person will suffer in the darkness till the Jadopatias will intervene and paint the eyes on their Yamapatas which are already there without the eyes. They initially made without eyes the Jadopatias receive gifts that range from utensils to cattle against their performance that combines painting and singing in the corners of those painted scrolls called Yamapata.

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The Jadopatias paint the objects that they receive; the Jadopatias live and work from the places like Gurguri and Dumka, in the state of Jharkhand. They belong to the ethnic Bengali community, who speak local Bengali and work for the Santhal tribes. They claim that the tradition is at least a century old it has been in practice since the inception of Santhal tribe, the largest homogeneous ethnic community in India. The Bengali Jadopatia shares a synergetic bond with the tribal Santhals, since ages and they are like gurus to them. It is believed that the Yamaraja, the God of Death and Forgiveness listens to the Jadopatias and takes care of the departed souls in their journey after life.

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Like the folk painters of Bengal, they also use the title Chitrakar, a painter as their surnames or title late Basudev Chitrakar has taught the art to his disciple Kamalapati Chitrakar, a senior artist from Dumka with a commanding hand. Nitai Chitrakar has aptly made his name in the new generation. Nitin Chitrakar, Ganapati Chitrkar and Mahapati Chitrakar are among the regular practitioners.

The subject matters revolves around the concept of reward and punishment a bad donor getting brutal physical torture after his death the people of the god of forgiveness take out his tongue with for and as the common pictures show as there are people being haunted by the Kalyaki ghost thus not able to relieve from the disease that is caused by the death family members of the diseased are expected to satisfy the Jadopatias with their desired gifts which are otherwise very simple and nominal. There are Santhal stories based on Karunventhi literally meaning and appeal for misdeeds.

The Santhal society recognizes the artists as the funerary priests, the Yamapatas have songs and visual narratives arise from the memorable death events of characters from Ramayana and Mahabharata. They modified the stories that maintaining like the they make sure that it maintains the subsequent authenticities combing with existing Purana and the stories related to those Purana stories with characters like Chitrugupta, the assistant or the disciple of the Yama. A Brahman Chitrugupt, who keeps account of virtue and wises and thus make decisions of the afterlife destiny of the mankind in the assembly of Yamaraja, the God of Death.

The Jadopatias of appear as characters to add to the popular epics performing the funerary rights of Chakshudan. In those stories they enduringly include stories related to the inception and the regeneration of the Santhal tribe. They make images of the first couple like Adam and Eve, they have characters named old man and the old lady that it means as they die the scrolls have the dead bodies in the burning heart at Jadopatia and the frozen nails of the couple offering gifts to them against their Chakshudan the bestowal of eye sights that is a performance the Chaskshudan performance.

The name comes from Jadu that means magic Patia means Patua or the painters. The painters acknowledge that they cannot do without a guru or a master. So, it is a legacy that has to be passed on from generation to generation or you may have guru from different community also the exclusive character of Yamapata lies in the spontaneity of

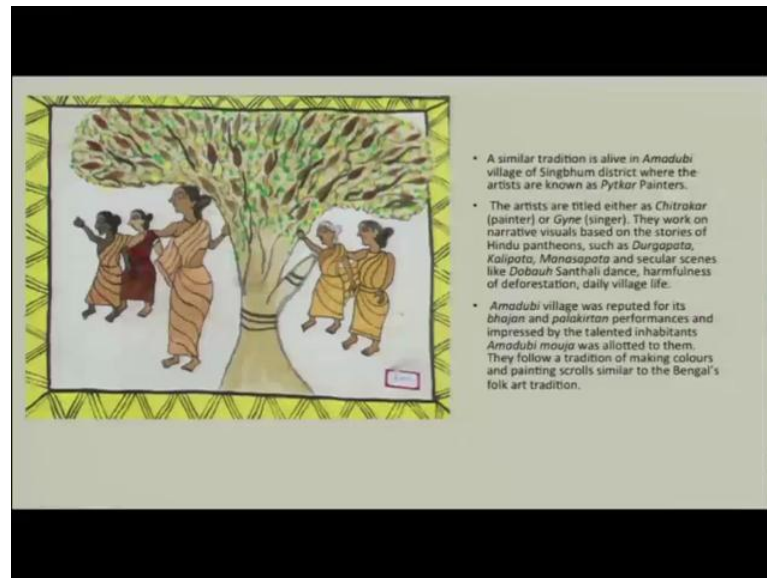
image making that is where within the regimental traditional art which is towards the classical conditions.

So, the execution has the limited scopes for individual expression as the art works are seldom purposed for aesthetics for the subject being the funerary rights. The free flowing lines compositions and continuity of narration render a magical view diversity that is too subjected describe through limited words. Now, for just tradition how it came in to the scene and how we are realizing the importance of this tradition that also needs to be realized a little bit with some data that in the year 1932, Guru Saddadath in his essay the tiger God of Bengali art mentions about the Jadopatia tradition, he compare the art from whether primitive negro sculpture death then indicated while negro art was extinct Jadopatia or the Jadu Patua women and analogous tradition still living and therefore, needed required attention.

William J. having informed by Guru Saddadath themselves in 1940s accumulated a collection of Jadopatias scrolls and published them with a review by his wife, she appreciates the style of Yamapata for it is silent modernity with a primitive spontaneity. According to in her writing, she mentions that the color application was as dynamic and rigorous as the action painter like Jackson Polar, William J. and his book Santhali song and poetry, the heel of flutes in 1974 has mentioned of Jadopatias.

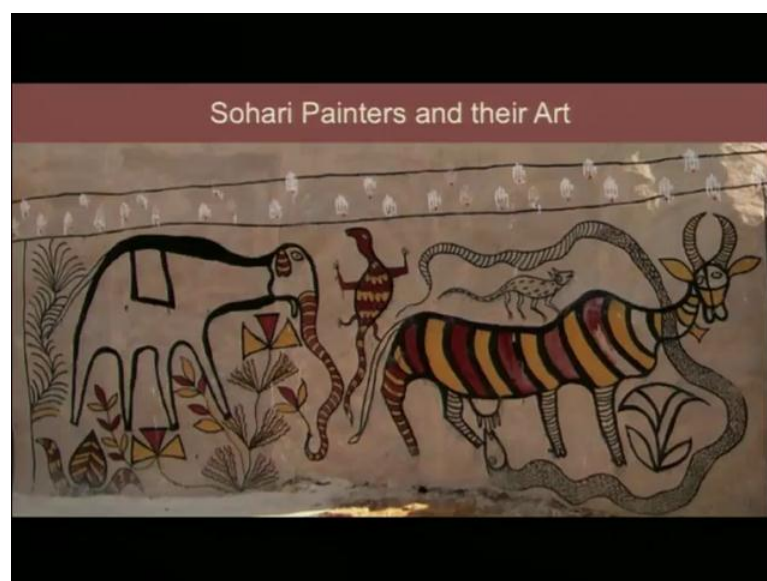
There are two other traditions that are living with the main stream Jadopatia tradition. They are the Pytkar Chitrakars is one community and their paintings which is quite similar to the Jadopatia paintings with a different aim they make it and also the Sohari paintings, which is the paintings for good luck and blessings on wall, we need to discuss about this two traditions also.

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A similar tradition is alive in Amadubi village of Singbhum district where the artists are known as Pytkar painters, the artists are titled either as Chitrakar or painter or Gyne or singer. They work on narrative visuals based on the stories of Hindu pantheons such as Durgapata, Kalipata, Manasapata and secular scenes like Dobauh Santhali dance harmfulness of deforestation daily village life. Amadubi village was reputed for its bhajan and palakirtan performances and impressed by the talented inhabitants. Amadubi Mouja was allotted to them they follow a tradition making colors and paintings scrolls similar to the Bengals folk art tradition.

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The tribes like Oraon, Koori, Damary and Prajapati other than the Santhals are also indulged in their own habitual art practice surrounding the Hazaribagh district in Jharkhand. It is believed that the wall painting tradition of this region days back to 15000 years, the assumption is based on the motives of prehistoric paintings that resemble the living wall paintings tradition. The Isco cave is of an archeological importance, now located in the place named Choti Pahari, block Barkagaon close to Hazaribagh district in Jharkhand. The surviving evidences of this ritualistic wall paintings practiced by the few members of the agrarian families are found in Bhilwara located 30 kilometer east of the Hazaribagh.

They paint on the occasion of karma festival. Sohari is an art form of Hazaribagh that celebrates the return of Lord Rama during the Diwali festival in the month of October or November. They paint horses, flowers, birds, bitter leaf etcetera. Parvathi Devi and Rukmini Devi Sohari painters from the region draw linear images on marriage ceremony called similar to Madhubani painter to celebrate fertility.

Another purpose of painting is to ensure protection from evil spirit. The paintings are often quite graphical and the process involved is making a ground ready by repairing this surface and making it even with mud layers. They apply layers of black soil that is extracted from lamp lack mixed with mud beneath a layer of yellow mud. They draw the images by scratching of the yellow layer with the scrapper. So, that the black layer reveals eventually the wall paintings are energetic and stunning in their looks the portable version are made on mud coated papers following the same method and material.