

## Kumbhipata Babaji

We have already communicated the news of a few Kumbhipatias of Sambalpur being punished by the court for attacking on Jagannath temple. Readers must have remembered it. After this news came to the knowledge of the government, the Chief Commissioner of Madhya Pradesh has, by the request of the government, sent a document on the Kumbhipatia community. Since this document is published in the "Calcutta Gazette", newspapers have cited this fact and because it is an interesting subject to know, we too communicate a little on them to our readers.

That (Kumbhipatia) community exists in Sambalpur district. As they wear the bark of a tree called Kumbhi, they call themselves Kumbhipatias. Sometimes, some of them coming to this district wander in the rural areas. People call them Kumbhipata babajis and like them much. The name of their religion is 'Alekh'. They regard Lord Alekh as the incarnation of god. Lord Alekh was residing amidst the Himalaya mountains. In 1864, he, coming to Malbihar pur of Banki district, initiating sixty-four disciples, expounded Alekhism. This religion was propagated by those disciples. Lord Alekh went Dhenkanal from Banki, he went through "Vikshyashram" for three years and finally died there.

Though this religion was first expounded in this district, yet very soon it was propagated in Sambalpur district and there, except the brahmins, people belonging to all other castes followed this religion. At present this religion has already been established in thirty villages of that district. Kumbhipatias are divided into three sects (1) Real or original, (2) Kanāpitias and (3) Grihasths. The followers of the first two sects are "Niangi" and homeless. (they have left their homes for good).

Kumbhipatias accept one God only. Truthfulness, receiving of guru's advice and faith are the main principles of that religion. They do not accept caste differences and they eat the food from the hands of people belonging to any caste. But they never receive food from the hands of kings, Brahmins, Dhobas and Hadis. Because a king collects money by corruption, Brahmin eats the rice taken from obsequial rites and Dhobas and hadis do many heinous works. They accept the thirty three crores of Hindu Gods and Goddesses, but they never worship their idoles or images. They tell that no one has ever seen god, hence how can his idol be rightly made? Therefore, they do not worship gods and goesses and they have ill feelings towards Hinduism. For Hindus consider Tulsi leaves to be sacred, Kumbhkipatias never touch them. There are many other such things. They worship in the morning and evening. They eat during the day time only, as a principle, they do not

eat in the night. One can drink water only if he feels hungry in the night. They do not take medicine, they only depend upon god to be cured from disease.

Kumbhipatias have been divided into two sects since last two years. A man named Bhima Khond was their leader. He is blind from his birth but highly intelligent. He is an illiterate, but has been able to compose verse by only listening to the Mahabharat and the Bhagabat written by others. He has composed some rare pieces of songs and hymns for God which are not even possible by many highly educated persons. Since he made a woman pregnant developing illicit love with her Kumbhipatias got irritated with him. Then he deceived them saying that arjun, getting birth through that woman would kill who disbelieve in Alekhism. Thus they waited for the birth of Arjun, but a doughtier was born. Then Bhima Khond told that God had commanded him that a divine nymph would be born from that woman and would kill the disbeliveers by the might of Mahima. But the daughter died after a few days, Bhima then told that the celestial nymph, abhorring the sinful world, went back to heaven. Who had even a little bit of intelligence, they disbelieved it and separated themselves into a, different sect. The rest, sticking to Bhima's sect, are worshipping him. Daily Bhima sits in the morning on an altar with his wife and his disciples, circumambulating around them, washing their feet in milk, drink the milk as a sacred nectar. The other reason of segregation into two sects is that Bhima Khond had had identified himself to be the incarnation of god. Those, who attacked Jagannath temple, are inhabitants of Chandrapur and Dasaram was their leader. Dasaram had come to Puri with a few Kumbhipatias with the intention that if Jagannath would be burnt down Hindus would understand the temporariness of Hinduism and all would follow Alekhism, but finally Dasaram lost his life in an awful riot there.

If a Kumbhipatia tells lie or commits crime, he is then excommunicated. If someone wants to receive initiation to this religion, he has to appear a test first. There were some panas (low caste people ) in Angul who were hardcore criminals. As the Tahasildar initiated them to Alekhism, they are now for away from crimes and now prevails peace there. So however, this religion is really fruit-giving, but it is told that the leader of the Kumbhipatias tells lie and practice adultery. But not all the people belonging to a caste or religion behave honestly.

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