



॥ साकंत ॥

समायण कला संग्रहालय

॥ SAAKET ॥

THE MUSEUM OF RAMAYANA CORRELOGRAM

वास्तुदखाना, ओरछा  
BAROOD KHANA, ORCHHA

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## THE CONTEMPORANEITY OF THE ETERNAL

*The Indian epic Ramayana is one of the greatest creations in the art and tradition of narrative poetry. Beginning from the classical tradition to the folk tradition of narration, the story-tellers have continued to generate and preserve its spirit in the racial memory of the community. This tradition gained a miraculous impetus with the appearance of Sant Tulsidas Ramcharitamanas. After Valmiki, perhaps Manas is the only epic which has widely influenced a community's moral and religious consciousness. The great Bhakti poet of the medieval age, Sant Tulsidas developed the narrative into a dramatic form and thus creating a stage for the dramatic enactment of the Leelas of gods (acts of deities). The tradition of Leela Darshan further enhanced the creativity of the people and Manas blossomed into various forms of fine arts.*





*The tradition of painting Ramkatha developed as an impressive genre of folk art in Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. And simultaneously Leela Darshan established a magnificent tradition of designing and crafting costumes, masks and crowns. To Leela Darshan goes the credit of incorporating the folk music of Northern and Western India into Ramayan Gaan infusing it with life and vigour. The Ramayana is poetry, a story, music, painting, craft and drama. Its multidimensional aspects highlight its uniqueness as a pulsating form of art. Could there be another comparable epic which observes all norms of classical arts and yet conforms fully to folk tradition? That which is the focal point of racial memory and value-added awareness. It is difficult to think of a similar text with such a wide and expansive canvas.*

*Twenty two years ago, when Adivasi Lok Kala Academy established the first national stage for the performance of various folk forms of Ramkatha, the scholars and organizers were unaware of the numerous local forms and varieties of folk theatre. Gradually, the annual organization of Ramkatha helped create a vast repertoire of a wide variety of paintings and handicraft. A part of this huge collection is being exhibited in Saaket Ramayana Art Museum.*

*Ordinarily, museums display antiquities of archeological and historical importance. These awaken our sense of heritage and enliven the memory of our past.*

*In this context, I hesitate to term it as a museum. The reason is that it is a part of a living folk tradition and not a distant memory or an extinct art tradition. The folk artists of various states in India are engaged in creating vibrant folk paintings on the Ramayana. Bihar, Bengal, Maharashtra, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh are famous for Madhubani, Patua, Chitrakathi, Patta, Cheriya Pattam and Kalamkari folk paintings. Varanasi or Benaras, Puri and Mathura are major centres for the performance of the Ramakatha in various folk styles. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu specialize in crafting leather puppets. These arts are an inherent part of our contemporary folk tradition.*

*No matter how far or deep our memory penetrates into the distant past or goes beyond the very concept of time, older and more ancient than all of these, has existed a saga which is value-centric and has expressed itself through the medium of a variety of arts and craft. Vast magnificent and enchanting world of Ramayana arts opens a huge panorama of life. Saaket is a grand world of the Ramayana Leela and its gracious aestheticism.*

*This world of art is an evidence of unimaginable past and also a proof of transforming the great epic into various art forms. The sacred city of Orchha is the seat of Raja Rama and so is the art centre of his leelas here at Saaket.*



*Dr. Kapil Tiwari  
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