

For Kids

Saraswati Puja (February 13, 2005)

Saraswati Puja falls on Shukla Pakhsya Panchami (fifth day of fullmoon lunar cycle) of Oriya Magha month. The day marked for the propitiation of Saraswati, the Goddess of learning is known as Sripanchami or Basanta Panchami. 'Sree' is beauty and the other name of 'Saraswati' and Basanta is spring season which brings beauty and pleasure to the Earth. Therefore it is a festival to welcome beauty through worship of the Goddess



Saraswati puja is celebrated in all schools and colleges. Very rarely it is celebrated as a community event. Schools, colleges and educational institutes are closed for two days, the day of Saraswati Puja and next day for bisarjana. The students get up early in the morning, collect flowers and decorate the school's puja place. By 10 am, everybody takes complete bath and they gather in the puja place in new garments. After the puja there are feasts arranged in schools with vegetarian meals. At times drama and other cultural activities are arranged for the Saraswati puja day. Students take break from their studies for the day to pay their respect to Goddess Saraswati.

What to do?

On the puja day, take a complete bath. Put on new or washed cloths. Collect flowers and make a garland for the mother. Join the puja celebration with your family either making arrangements at home or go to the temple to perform the puja. Recite the slokas for Mother Saraswati that are discussed below. Organize some of your favorite books and keep it near the puja place for mother's blessings. If you learn any musical instrument, please take blessings of Mother Saraswati putting your instrument in the puja place. Eat vegetarian food.

If your local Oriya or Bengali communities organize Saraswati Puja, then join the puja and perform the rituals. Puja place is not a place for gossip. Please concentrate and listen to the mantras and do not talk while puja is being performed.

Mythology

Saraswati is described as the water deity in Vedas. She is also described as the goddess of all the creative arts and in particular of poetry and music, learning and science. She embodies wisdom, fortune, intelligence, nourishment, brilliance, contentment, splendor and devotion. With book and veena, Lordess Saraswati is known as the symbols of literature and music.

Knowledge is power. Goddess Saraswati is regarded as the giver of wisdom. She is also referred as Vak devi (Goddess of speech) and Sakala kaladhishtatri (goddess bestowing all the art forms.)

Saraswati is appropriately described as spotless white in complexion, riding on a white swan, wearing white silk, bearing the Vina (lute-variety), the book, the rosary and the symbol of protection in her four hands, and having a crescent moon on her head.

Celebration in Orissa

Prayer

Literally, Saraswati means SARAH - Knowledge, STHANAMYASYAH ASTITI. Thus, Saraswati is the goddess who rules all kinds of knowledge. In scriptures appearance of Saraswati is thus described as:

Shukalaam Brahma Vichaar Saar

Parama Adhyaan Jagadvyaapeeneem

Veenaa Pusthaka Dhaarineem

Abhayadaam Jaadyaandhakaaraapahham

Haste Sphaatikamaalikaam Vidadhateem

Padmaasane Sansthitaam

Vande Taam Parameshwareem

Bhagavatheem Buddheepradaam Shaaradaam

Saraswati is all pure with white clothes and her arms bear the veenaa (a string musical instrument), the book of knowledge. Saraswati is the bestower of fearlessness, and Remover of the darkness of ignorance. She (also) bears a crystal maala (rosary). Mother's form is brilliant and is firmly established in her position on the lotus flower, who is a graceful bestower of intellect. I offer my prostrations to that Goddess (also known as Shaaraada).

yA kundendu tushAra hAra dhavaLA

yA subhravastrAv.rta

yA vINa vara daNda maNDitakarA

yA sweta padmAsana

yA brahmAccuhta saN^kara prabh.rtibhir-
devaiH sadA pUjitA

sA maM pAtu sarasvatI bhagavatI
nisshesha jADyApahA

Meaning: She is the embodiment of all beauty and the abode of all learning, the consort of Brahma, and is worshipped by Gods like Indra, and sages like Suka, Sanaka and Narada. She is kindness incarnate and generous in her gifts to her devotees.

Saraswati Namasthubhyam
Varade Kamaroopini
Vidya Aarambam Karishyami
Siddhir Bhavatum Sada

Meaning: O Goddess Saraswati! I pray to you, who is the fulfiller of my wishes. I start on the path of learning with the request that Thou will bestow Thy blessings on me.

Odia Prayer:

ବିଦ୍ୟାଦାୟିନୀ ନମଃ ସରସ୍ୱତୀ ଜୟ ବୀଣାପାଣି ଭାରତୀ (ପଦ)

ବୀଣା ପୁସ୍ତକ ବେନି ପାଣି, ବେଦ ବେଦାନ୍ତ ସମାପ୍ତ ରାଣୀ
ଛଅ ଭାଗ ଆଉ ଛତିଶ ରାଗିଣୀ ଗଙ୍ଗାରେ ତୋ ବୀଣା ସାରା ସୃଷ୍ଟି
।୧।
ଶ୍ରେତବସନୀ ମାତା ପଦ୍ମାସନୀ, ବିଦ୍ୟା ଭଣ୍ଡାର ତ୍ରିପୁର ମୋହିନୀ
ନମଃ, ନମଃ, ନମଃ, ନମଃ ଶାରଦେ, ନମଃ ମାଗୋ ବରଦାୟିନୀ
।୨।
ବ୍ରହ୍ମ ପାଟରାଣୀ, ଜଗତଜନନୀ, କୃପାପ୍ରଦାୟିନୀ, ଦୁଃଖହାରିଣୀ
ସୁରେନ୍ଦ୍ରପୂଜିତା ଭଗବତୀ ବନ୍ଦେ, ବନ୍ଦେ ତବ ଚରଣ ବେନି ।୩।

bidyA-dAyinI namah Saraswati,
jaya bINApANi bhAratI |pada|
biNA, pus-taka beni pANi,
beda, bedAnta samrATa rANI
chha rAga Au chhatisha rAGiNI,
TankAre to bINA sArA sruSTi |1|

shwetabasanI, mAAtA padmAsanI,
bidyA-bhaNDARA tripuramohinI
namah, namah, namah, namah shArade
namah mAgO baradAyinI |2|

brahmA pATarANI, jagata-jananI,
krupApradAyinI, dukhahAriNI
surendrapUjitA bhagabatI bande,
bande taba charaNa beni |3|

Meaning My salute to you mother Saraswati, the giver of the knowledge. All glory to you mother Binapani, Bharati. You hold veena (bINA, a string instrument) and books in your both hands and you are the empress of all vedas and vedantas. Your string echoes the whole creation with the six rAgas and thirty-six rAGiNIs. You are clad in the white saree, and seated on the lotus. You are the prettiest in the three worlds and also the source of all knowledge. I salute you several times mother Sharada, I salute you mother, the fulfiller of all desires. You are the wife of Lord Brahma and you are mother of the whole world, you are also very graceful and remover of all misery. Mother Bhagabati, who is worshipped by the king of Gods, I salute your both feet.