

IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Name of the Element: Jangam Gāyan.

Community: Jangam community belongs to the state of Haryana, India. The members of this community are wandering mendicants.

Region: Jangam community is dominant in Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Ambala and Jind districts in Haryana. Besides, they also move as itinerant religious mendicants in the adjoining states of Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir in north India.

Brief Description: Jangam Gāyan is a narrative sung by the Jangam community. It is performed in the temple courtyards of Shiva temples to huge gatherings. Sometimes, there are public performances in village squares.

The main component of Jangam Gāyan is a poem that deals with the narrative of the wedding of Shiva and Parvati. The poem is sung in a chorus and the singers double up as actors and musicians, as they dramatise the sequence of events leading up to the wedding. The music accompaniment for the performance is provided by the damru (a small drum, associated with Shiva) and bells.

The poem is a rare narrative as it describes a process of transformation of Shiva from a deity to a human being. Significantly, this transformation is an experience of earthly passion leading to the realisation of one's being. The poem begins with the story of the birth of Parvati. The narrative moves on to a detailed description of Parvati's growing up into an exceptionally accomplished, beautiful girl and her dream of marrying Shiva, followed by a description of Parvati guiding the Brahmin match maker to the abode of Shiva. This part of the narrative deals with a fascinating expose of Shiva, the wild god in an intoxicated state surrounded by dangerous serpents and black snakes. The poem then elaborates on the preparations and rituals of the marriage ceremony and talks about how Shiva, the wild god becomes a family man who can never afford to displease Parvati.

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