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Tappa-mudra-dharana..

Namaskara!

July 16th is Prathama Ekadashi ie Ashada Shudda Ekadashi. On that day most of the madhava groups will have Tatpa Mudra Dharana from their preceptors. Since my childhood I was curious to know what is the importance of this unusual way of putting the hot or heated seal.

Recently Sri Vyasanakere Prabhanj Charya has brought out a book containing the details, importance and history about this performance. I thought I could share with you all by translating the genesis of this sacred ritual. This is an abstract form of the complete book without any hymns, stotras etc. which the author has given in an very methodical way.

regards.

Madhusudana Rao CR

Tappa-mudra-dharana (Heated seal, seal burnt in)

A devotee's (man's) utmost ambition in his life is to reach liberation (moksha). One of the ways is to achieve the moksha is to get Sri Hari's blessings. There are two things which one has to acquaint himself to shower (get) the Sri Hari's blessings, one is visible knowledge and other is invisible knowledge (paroksha and aparoksha gyana). Complete devotion is suppose to acquaint invisible knowledge and following the one's karma yoga (his duties and responsibilities, varnashrama) is visible knowledge. Karma yoga includes offerings (dana), tirtha yathra (going to holy and sacred places) etc and among these 'Tatpa Mudra Dharana (Tappa-mudra-dharana)' has special prominence and considered to be very sacred in achieving the moksha (apoorva sadana).

Devotion to Vishnu is considered to be the heart of all good and sacred characters and it is also considered to be very special. One who is the follower of Vishnu (Vaishnavatva) has many special show of his body identity and one of them is Tatpta Mudra Dharana. In ancient scriptures it has been to told that for all class of people it is a must. Like wearing Gopichandana, Urdvapundra and five mudras (pancha mudra) this Tatpa mudra dharana is also considered to be one of identifiable sacred wearing for body culture.

For any Vaishnava there are five rituals to be followed (pancha samskara) (five samskara's are tapa, nama (name), pundra, yaga and manthra) in that 'tapa' rituals is 'tappa mudra dharana'(Tappa-mudra-dharana). Tappa-mudra-dharana has special
place in chowla (first hair cutting), Upanayana (munji, thread ceremony), Manthropadesha (Initiation of Gayathri hymn). It is said that one should not conduct these sacred ceremonies without Tapta-mudra-dharana. Every year one should have Tapta-mudra-dharana on shayaniekadashi (ashada shukla ekadashi), shravana dwadashi, Upakara (changing of threads) and other important occasions. In wearing (fire) Sudarshana wheel will give pleasant tatva knowledge (nirmala tatva gyana). The wearing also helps in purifying the body and soul. 'usshhNaM ushNEna sshltalaM' very popular word also gives meaning that this Tapta-mudra-dharana will solve all samsaric worries and those who wear will cross the samsaric ocean with ease.

The wearing of Tapta-mudra-dharana has been explained in various spiritual scriptures like R^igveda, Padma Purana, Mahabharatha etc. It is also mentioned in Sumadva Vijaya that Sri Madacharya also blessed his disciples with Tapta-mudra-dharana in Chapter 9 of 39th verse.

Later at different times great saints and schloars have explained the importance of Tapta-mudra-dharana in their scriptures. Sri Vadiraja in Chakrastuti, Sri Vijayendra Swamy in Tapta Chakra Mimasa, Sri Satyabhinava Tirtha in Ramamrutha MaharNava and its Tika, Sri Kundalagiri Acharya in Taptamudradhara Samarthanam, Sri Chalaarinarasimha Charya in Smruthartha Sagara, Sri Chalaari Shesha Charya in Narnaya Tatva, Sri Krishna Chary in Smrutimukthavali, and other people have explained the Tapta-mudra-dharana's importance in different ways.

In Pala shruti of Yukti Mallika of Sri Vadiraja Swamy contains about 72 verses explaining in detail about the importance and greatness Tapta-mudra-dharana, including the pramana from shruti (vedas). This is the first schloastic work on Tapta-mudra-dharana by the great saint.

**Need of Tapta-mudra-dharana:**

For all refinements (samskara) Tapta-mudra-dharana has the first place, for all class, section of people must and should have done burnt wheel and conch shell in their body. For any Brahmin keeping the Yagnopavitha is so necessity like that wearing Tapta-mudra-dharana is also must. There are two sings for any Vaishnavas, they are bhaya (body) and antara (inside). For body sign Tapta-mudra-dharana and for antara kama (sex, lust), kroda (hatredness) etc removal. For any women wearing a bangles are considered to be auspicious and sacred for her paviatratva; like the same for Vaishnavatva Tapta-mudra-dharana is important, auspicious and sacred.

**Importance of Tapta-mudra-dharana**

One who wears symbols of wheel and conch shell are eligible to study shruthi
(vedas) and for all sacred activities. The one who sees the other person wearing wheel and conch shell in the shoulder the person who has seen will be cleared with all sins. Even the demons will run away after seeing the vaishnava symbols.

**Sins of not wearing Tapta-mudra-dharana:**

Those who are not having Tapta-mudra-dharana at regular intervals their learning of scholarly knowledge will become waste. This has been told in the shruthi. Those who are not wearing Tapta-mudra-dharana according to the specification their yagnopavitha (janiwara), shika bhandana (hair tieing), Urdvapundra and other symbols will also become waste. Those who does all sacred performance without Tapta-mudra-dharana the out come of these good things will reach the demons. The Brahman (vipra) who does not have Tapta-mudra-dharana will have demon presence with him. Those who bow to a person who doesnot have Tapta-mudra-dharana from his preceptor will acquire sins of reaching Naraka for three hundred kalpas.

**Annual Tapta-mudra-dharana:**

Every year during the upakarma one has to have Tapta-mudra-dharana. The auspicious time for putting the Tapta-mudra-dharana is 'jataka karma', later chowla, upanayana and initiation of Gayathri hymn. For ladies wedding time is most auspicious time of wearing Tapta-mudra-dharana.

**Tapta-mudra-dharana at death time**

Those who are wearing Tapta-mudra-dharana nearing their death time will not have the fear of Yama and his messengers. (Brahmanda Purana)

**Devataas will also have Tapta-mudra-dharana**

Brahma, Rudra, Indra and all devataas and Prahlada, Vibhshana, Mandatha, Ambarish, Markandeya and many Bhagavatha experts are always wearing the vaishnava symbols. In Yukti Mallika it has been told that on shravana Dwadashi, Prathama Ekadashi and other auspicious days devataas will have wearing of Tapta-mudra-dharana.
Who has to wear Tapta-mudra-dharana (who are all eligible):

Tapta-mudra-dharana is for all class of people, all sections of people and for ladies it is a must. In all sacred ceremonies like jataka karama's Tapta-mudra-dharana is necessary. It is one's one duty to wear on annually on Prathama Ekadashi (Ashada shudda Ekadashi) along with his entire family members. Even it is also said that house hold things also should put wheel and conch shell symbol. Those who are wearing Tapta-mudra-dharana will have the residence of Sri Hari. All class and section of people includes Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vysya, Shudra (classified according to varnashrama) and ladies also.

Who are all authorised to put Tapta-mudra-dharana:

ONLY Heads of Mutts, who should be saint (seer) are authorised and are eligible to put the Tapta-mudra-dharana to their disciples. It is understood that Sri Madhwacharya in one form will stay in these saints and are giving his blessings to their disciples. Gruhastas (head of the family, family man) are not authorised and eligible to put this to other members. Any Vaishnava has to take Tapta-mudra-dharana from their Mutt seer who they belong to. Even spare saints (bidi sanyasi, one who doesnot belong to any famous mutt like ashta mutt, Vyasaraja Mutt, Raghavendra Mutt, Uttaradi Mutt etc) are not authorised to put this to others. This has been told clearly in Sri Satyabhinava Tirtha's work. Even there is no mention in any of the scriptures that any body who has weared Tapta-mudra-dharana by himself. This is also proved that gruhasta does not have any authority to give Tapta-mudra-dharana. Sri

Procedures for putting Tapta-mudra-dharana:

The one who is authorised to put Tapta-mudra-dharana has to worship Sudarshana and wheel, conch shell conceited (abhimani) devataa then it has to be put in the fire. Then it has to be done yagna (fire offer) with different weapon hymn. Twenty times it has to be offered (ahuti). Then along with the disciples he has to go around and bow to the yagna's place. He has to sit facing north with pleasant and peace of mind and then he has to put with the same symbols to his disciples.

Tapta-mudra-dharana manthra (hymns):

Chakra Dharana Manthra (wheel);
Sudarshana mahA jwala kOti Urya samaprabha |
aNYA ndasya mE nithyAAM visNOma^rgaM pr^ada^rshaya ||

Sha.nkha Dharana Manthra (conch shell):

pA.nchajanya nijadhvandvastapAtakasa.nchaya |
pAhIm narAkAd GHOrAt samsArAN^rnatAraNa ||

Sudarshana and pancha janya mudras are should be made out of gold and while preparing also there is a clear cut procedure how it should look like. It has been mentioned in the Yukta Mallika that conch shell symbol should be of rajatha (pure gold). But it has been practised that these symbols are in silver these days.

Conceited Devataas (Chakrabhimani devataas):

For wheel symbol Durga is the abhimani, for conch shell it is Sri Devi, for Padma symbol its Bhu Devi and for Gada it is Vayu. It is been understood that by wearing these conceited devataas one will be removed the agyana, mithya gya (mis conception, lack of knowledge etc) and will acquire Tatva gya and fruit ful knowledge.

Number of Mudras wearing:

Those who cannot wear (ashakta) has to have minimum of wheel (chakra) symbol. Those who can wear will have wheel and conch shell symbol and those will very much have (ativa shaktya) will have all five symbols. (those who practised wearing five mudras are called (familiar) with chakra pancha mudra dharana vidhi smaraka)

Places of wearing the symbols:

In the right arm wheel symbol, left arm conch shell, centre of the bridge (between right and left arm) gada, in the heart place it is nandaka and on the top of the head (skull) shAgr^ya.

Background of Tapta Mudra Dharana (Tapta-mudra-dharana):

Once upon time Indra and other devataas were defeated by the demon called
V^ruth^rasura. Then they all went to Sri Vishnu and requested him to remove this defeat. Then Sri Narayana told all of them to wear his symbols like wheel and conch shell and go and fight with him again. And also assured all them that all demons will lose by the presence and power of these symbols and winning is certain. Later they will win over the demons by wearing these sacred symbols. From then on all Vaishnava community are wearing these sacred symbols to win over any thing and every thing. This wearing not only win over with the enemy but also win over kama, kroda etc.

kr^ishnArpanamastu

PS : The above writeup is an abstract of the book ' Tatpa Mudra Dharana' Compiled and translated into Kannada by Dr. Vyasakere Prabhanjancharya and published by Aitarey Prakashan, Vyasankere, Bangalore 1995. Each topic has been supported by pramana taken from the shrutis and other great scholary works with its original hymns in kannada. Other than that the book also contains the complete stotras of Chakra Stuti by Sri Vadiraja Swamy, Sahastrara Stuti of Sri Vadiraja Swamy and Sudarshana Shruti of Sri Ambarisha.