

Saraswoti Puja:

Basanta Panchami, also known as Shri Panchami or Saraswoti Puja, honors Goddess Saraswati, the deity of knowledge and learning. Students take early morning baths, worship their books, and visit Saraswoti temples with puja items. This day also holds cultural and religious significance for Buddhists, who worship God Manjushree.

Saraswati Puja is performed for devotion to the Goddess of knowledge and wisdom. The Goddess of learning is worshiped among the students and learned who firmly follow all the customs to worship her. The festivities that go along with Saraswati pooja is a division of the social celebrations. On this day, small girls are seen in yellow saaries. Bright Palash flowers are offered as Pushpanjali along with chanting mantras that is a significant part of the worship.

Significance of Saraswati Puja:

Goddess Saraswati is worshipped to invoke the blessings of the deity, who is the Goddess of culture, music art and education. The significance of Saraswati Puja is that it is a spring festival and it marks the beginning of spring. The yellow colour forms an integral part of the festival. Yellow coloured flowers are offered to the deity, such as Marigold. The food prepared are also yellow in colour, such as kesariya bhaat or sweet saffron rice, kesariya ladoo or halwa or saffron pudding, khichdi or a mixture of yellow pulses with rice and so on. Young girls drape themselves in yellow coloured sarees or basanti coloured saree. Even the cloth which covers the stool on which the deity is placed is yellow in colour. Yellow forms the theme colour of this festival because mustard flowers during this season, spring are in full bloom everywhere and this festival represents the Spring season.

Not only is this festival celebrated with a lot of zeal and fervour in the states of Orissa, Bihar and West Bengal, but in Punjab the Sikh community celebrates this festival with a lot of pomp in Gurdwara and the musicians perform basant raga. In many parts of Punjab, fairs are held on this day. Guru Gobind Singh was married on this day and hence it is celebrated by the Sikh community. This day is celebrated by flying kite in Firozpur.

The significance of Saraswati Puja is that, Saraswati, being the Goddess of learning, on the day of Saraswati Puja young children are made to write alphabets. This is a common practice in West Bengal and it is known as "Hathe khori". It is a popular belief that if a young child writes in front of the Goddess, he would be blessed by the deity and will do very well in his education in future.