



SACRED SPELLS OF THE TRIBES:

(A STUDY ON KANDHA TRIBE OF KANDHAMAL DISTRICT)

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Abstract

Sacred spell is a combination of words or a formula supposed to have magical powers, by its incantation a magical effect or influence induced on Deities and people, which purifies the mind, makes it free from worries, sorrows, and sufferings and provides stability. Odisha has as many as sixty-two tribal communities of which about thirteen are identified as primitive and they form a considerable percentage of the state's total population. Their culture is man-nature and spirit complex. Their unquestionable belief in supernatural power, which regulates human existence in the world, is the basis of observation of many festivals and rituals. Like all other human communities they have their special religious believe and to please their Deities they used special spells (*kelpaa*) and hymns (*Penu Gaani*) to chant in different rites and rituals of socio-religious ceremonies.

The main purpose of this work is to bring to the limelight the *Kui Mantras* (spells) used by the *Kui* people, popularly known as Kandhas of kandhamal district.

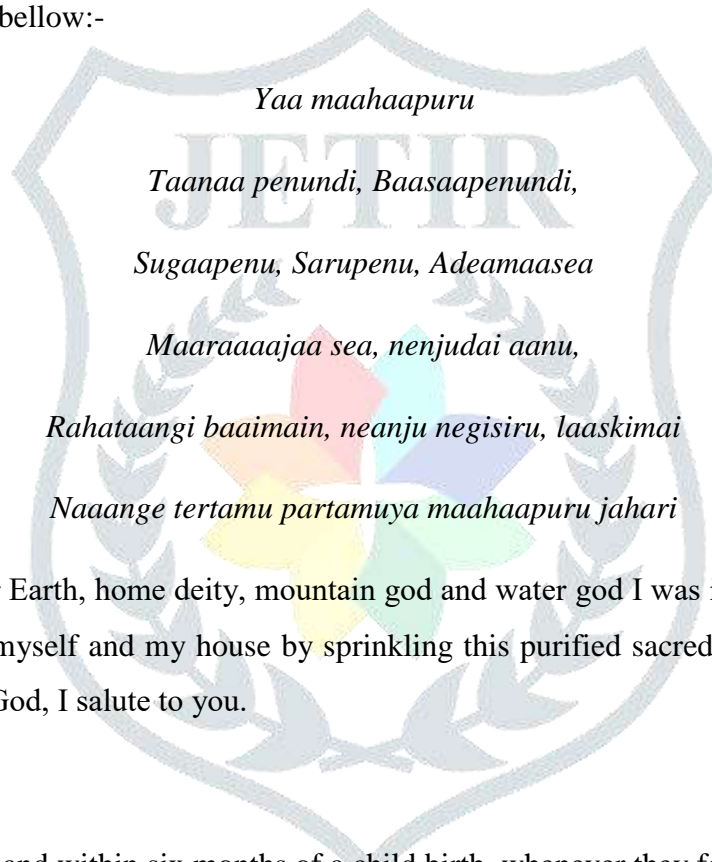
Key words- *Kelpaa*, *Penu*, *Penu Gaani*, Sacred Spell, *Debtaa*, *Mantra*, *Kui*, Kandha

Kandhamal, a centrally created district of Odisha has a population of 7,33,110 as per 2011 census, out of which ST population is 3,92,820 which constituted 53.6%. This district is largely inhabited by Kandha tribe. "Kandhas" identify themselves as '*Kuinga*' in plural usage and *Kuenju/Kuilogu/Kuilogu* in singular form, but the word 'Kandha' is exclusively used by scholars for these eople.¹ they used a dialect known as *Kui* for their conversation, to them word '*Kui*' means 'upper' or 'high'. The Kandhas have been having their habitat only in the hills thus they called themselves "*Kuilogu*" or '*Kuinga*' as the people high up or as the high landers.²

Presently regional history has been given due importance with a view to find truth in pan-Indian generalizations in relation to the pattern of evolution of socio-cultural life of the aboriginals. Since Kandhamal district is predominantly inhabited by a great majority of the tribes, the study of the history of the tribes has become the focal point in most of the recent works relating to Kandhamal Tribal Culture. Let's have a look on different *Kui* spells used in different rituals by the Kandhs of Kandhamal district.

Sirulaska mantra

Sirulaska means the rite after twelfth day of a child birth. Within twelfth to fifteen day of a child birth Desia kandha people observe such ritual. The eldest male member of the family sprinkle sacred water inside the house with the help of some mango leaves on this day. They add some mango bark with the water and purify it by chanting the spell given bellow:-



Yaa maahaapuru

Taanaa penundi, Baasaapenundi,

Sugaapenu, Sarupenu, Adeamaasea

Maaraaaajaa sea, nenjudai aanu,

Rahataangi baaimain, neanju negisiru, laaskimai

Naaange tertamu partamuya maahaapuru jahari

Meaning: - O' God, mother Earth, home deity, mountain god and water god I was impure and stayed outside of my house. Today I purify myself and my house by sprinkling this purified sacred water. Save me and protect me from all directions. O' God, I salute to you.

Tekingaspa or Mrahpa

After twenty first day and within six months of a child birth, whenever they feel convenient they observe another ritual called *Tekingaspa* or *Mrahpa* as the *Ekoisia* (twenty first day ceremony) of Odia people. On this occasion they use to offer *Kalu* (mahua wine offered in a leave cup), *punji* (some dry rice admixture with turmeric powder presented on Siali leave), sacrificial fowl etc. to their Gods, Goddesses and *Pideri penu* (forefathers). They worship a number of deities on this occasion with special spells for special gods and goddesses. They have a strong faith on rebirth of their forefathers as their child. So to know, which soul has took birth as their baby they adopted two methods famous as *Jiu khoja* (searching of the soul) and worships the soul by chanting the spell as:-

Yaa Maahaapuru

Jiu gaataati praanaa gaataati

Nenju baatijiu dibaati

Ninge aamu sebaa gipi naanjaanaamu

Panti gipi nanjanamu, jiu dekki inarkaareah

Dehenakaaareah, ninge laakaainanjaanamu,

Keeta dehngibaata dehngi, saanjaamu aadaamu

Dinaa aahaamu desaa aahaamu

Baadi aamu udi aamu

Dana paaanmu bita paanmu

Dataaamu baal aamu

Ka-a-di daai ka-a ru dai se e ru dai mraasu dai,

Mieda dai ba-a da dai, idu dai kumbu dai

Sa-aa-njamu aasaamu yaa Maahaapuru jahaari aapaakari

Meaning: - O' God! O' soul who took birth as our baby! We are serving you. The baby do not get fear, be white as *ketaa* root, be beautiful/nice /handsome, be victorious and successful in every job his/her life, be brave and strong, be wealthy with all types of prosperity, O' God, I salute you.

Taanaa Penu laka (Earth Goddess worship)

Yaa Maahaapur!

Taanaa penu, Baasaapenu inu beeh

Miedaataa- ba a data

Daataa siemu ba a la siemu

Termunse paramunse, aambara aamu sambara aamu

Tlaau kuiti guuta kuiti, nisaa naangaa kaksaa naangaa

Elu siemu budi siemu, dinaaitakanju desaitakanju

Yaa Maahaapuru jahaari.

Meaning: - O' Earth goddess! O' *Vastu* (Shelter) god! Please give him/her strength, intelligence and wealth. Make him/her able to protect the earth. O' god salute you.

Sarupenu Laka (Mountain god worship)

Yea maahaapuru! Taanaapenu, Pangapenu inu bea,

Sarutangi baditangi, saanaani Baanaani

Dehe esaha –aa, kaddaditangi, alitangi siaajiaaraa-aa

Kahaajiaaraa-aa x x x ya Maahaapuru jahaari.

Meaning:- O' mountain god, field god! Please don't make him/her fear while he/ she goes to the forest, mountain and to fields for work and save from tigers. O' God salute you.

Suugapenu laka (water god worship)

Yaa Maahaapuru

Suuga penundi, Banda penundi

Siru minaani kudu minaaniNa aa daangi ujaadi

Teretamu paratamu, sraasu taangi paanaa taangi

Siajiaaraa-aa Kahaajiaaraa-aa, adikeene saanjaakaanju aadaakaanju

Yaa maahaapuru jahaari.

Meaning:- O' water god in the well and pond! Protect him/her from danger while bathing, let him/her grow well and be beautiful. O'God salutes you. ³

Pideri penu (forefathers)

Yaa maahaapuru

A aabaa saajanaateru mujaanaateru

Mindaaraah paadaa aahaangaana

Nenjulaakaai naanjaanamu, sakai naanjaanaamu

Taarek taateru purek taateru, ajji taateru leangi taateru

Baaisi maataa baaisi pita, siepkinaanjaai kahpinaanjai
Paahamu injaanaangaa pusaamu injaanaangaa
Siebaasida daa aamu mindaaraah sididi aahaanaangaa,
Biddi aahaanaangaa,kaataa ittanaangaa, gaadi itaanaangaa,
Sipki naanjaanaamu, kahpi naanjaanaamu, saanjaakaari aadaakaari
Yaa maahaapuru jahaari

Meaning: - O' forefathers! Those have passed away one after another since long, we worship you all as per the previous tradition learnt from you. Let all be good and pleasurable. Salute to you.

Rakeni Jageni laka (God of Savior and guardian worship)

Yaa maahaapuru
Rakenindi jagenindi
Tlaukuuti Gutaakuuti, Naadaangi ujaadi
Buliaanaani Saalianaani, Kaamaginaani Kaaraaginaani
Tihnaani unnaani, Dahnaani sunjinaani,
Taangiaahaani guudiaahaani, keale aahaani kuudeaahaani
Kandaa aahaani paari aahaani, raki aamu jagi aamu
Gule dukkudaai, jidipitaamu yaa Maahaapuru jahaari

Meaning;- O' God of Savior and Guardian! Always with him/her, guide and protect him while working, eating, sleeping and moving with the help of your weapons like axe, bow and arrow, sword, sickle and billhook. O'God! Salute you.

Baateni laka (God of distribution)

Yaa Maahaapuru
Baatenindi, katenindi, ppaadaa punaanaaraa
Baara baagaa tera baagaa giaani
Sarutaangi, Taanaataangi, Baaditaangi, Gutaataangi

Aabaariki, iaasaaniki suugaataangi, bandataangi, kenjaagaani, punjaagaani

Baatigimu, patigimu, sirsenindi, sirsigumu, pursinindi, pursigimu

Yaa Maahaapuru jahaari.

Meaning: - O'God of distribution! Please distribute the offerings equally among the mountains, ponds, wells, forefathers, fields, stones and stumps, those are worthy to worship but unknown to us or we have forgotten. O'God! We salute you.

Sacred spelling of marriage engagement (*Maala kalu*)

'*Kalu*' means mahua wine and mala means the price. Kandhas have to pay bride price to the parents of the bride. When grooms family and relatives visited to the house of bride to conform the marriage and for engagement, grooms family has to pay some price to the bride. This is called '*sike taka*' and the ritual performed for confirmation of marriage is called '*Maala kalu*'. Kandh people use Mahua wine as offering to earth Goddess, *Pideri penu* (forefathers) and Other Gods and Goddesses in every rites, rituals and ceremonies. The sacred spelling for this ritual is as follow:

Nenju ibi aadekaalu aatu, bide kaalu aatu,
Mapkalaataa, irpi palaata siru maasaani irpi dipkitani
Asiru pataautaikati utai, siruni itai, sirguni itai
Ebaa aa telikalu, sundikalu, daabaataa naalaataa,
nenju taanaa penu, Saru penu, Suga penu,
Nienge tapu ispinjai, sipkinjai, kahpinjai,
Pua selu, jhiangi selu, kalu siipki naanjaanaamu
Idea aae ragsitaka saa aataka kadutaakaa,
Peanuaataakaa maajuaataakaa, aalaangaru, pattangaru,
Daanju beala taambasukaa durusukaa, titimaain, baatimaain,
Teteni geteni kaataagiaasu baasi aajaasu titiaajaasu
Dinaaaahpa desa aahpa, midaa aahpa badaa aahpa
Enga dinaasaanjine ranjine ekaata egaani, taangaataangi baasaataangi

Sauutaangi baaditaangi, sipki naanjanaamu kahpi naanjanaamu,

Raajidai piejidai, saanjaakaare aadaakaare

Inja naanga raakenindi rakigidi jagenidni jagiigidi

Sunasaataari Rupaasaataari aahaanaangaa

Plakadise itidise injaanaangaa kalu sipki naanjaanaamu

Jaausipkinaanjaanaamu yaa maahaapuru jahaari.

Meaning: -The above sacred spell says about a myth on origin of mahua wine like this:-the wine we offer to you is not an ordinary liquor, which was auto prepared with the falling of some mahua flowers in the water of a tree cavity. Birds and squirrels became intoxicant by drinking this water. People of oilman community first learn the art of wine preparation (distillation process). Then Sundhi (Distiller) cast people learn this art. We offer the same wine to all Gods and Goddesses, and to our forefathers, please let this would be couple live in peace, prosperity and happiness. Protect them from all types of dangers, evils and diseases. O' god we salute you.

(The above sacred spell says about a myth on origin of mahua wine)

After competition of marriage, when the new bride inter in to the grooms house, paternal uncle- in-laws and other elders performs a ritual. New wed couple sits inside the house facing east ward direction and the elder male members make them 'Bandapana' and grace them by chanting the following spell.

Yaa Maahaapuru!

Taanaapenu, Baasaapenu, Sarupenu, Paangaapenu

Sugaapenu, Kutipenu, Laatipenu

Aamunenju puasealusu jhiani taakaataamu,

Abi ra-a dehengi aajaanaangaa

Kaamaagipaakaai, kaaraagipaakaai

Jiu jedaa aadpaakaai sraanginaakaai brungunaakaai

Nenjudai maange budjaadaa aakaare,

Tiraangaa maaraanga sihu, paaiti kaabaadi gipaakaari,

Namerigaalaa gaerigaalaa, laktakaari maastaakaari

Taadaanaaju lakuri-I, taaditaanjia tinie

Budjaakaari elguaakaari, engaasinaa desaa-aahaane dinaa- aahaane

Imbaane taa-aanhjaa, pudenji su-uju pdenu muhin gipaakaari-i

Engaa kunaa baanaani naajubaanaani, dehnaa deknna, trikna plaapaakaari aaspaakaari

Mainnaanju, saasusani, sasurangaani, midaakaani-I, jedaa-elu budjaa-aakaare-e

Engaa bihinidaai kahenidaai, taakaadaai, dabudaai, serudaai mraasudaai,

Karudaai kadidaai, adadaai, paajidaai, kajudaai saanjaakaare-e, aadaakaare-e

Injaanaangaa ninge aamu dahpi naanjaanaamu,

Yaa Maahaapuru! Rakenindi Jagenindi, Taangiaahaani biduaahaani,

Sunaa saataari rupaasaataari aahaanaai plakmuse itaamuse parmuse

yaa maahaapuru! Jahaari.

Meaning:- O Gods and goddesses! We bring a bride for our boy. Both of them live together, work together without any disturbance. Think us as own parents and relatives; serve us at the old age, at the time of illness. Let her forget her parents and accept us as her well-wisher, behave affectionately, lovely and politely to all of our relatives. Be honest to us and be graced with all types' good health, wealth and prosperity. O, God! Protect them from all types of dangers, evils and diseases. O' God! we salute you.⁴

Maada Mantra (nijutaajaa/neginiju) (spell in death rite)

Kondh people offer (Pour/politely dropped) paddy, rice, *mudhi* (fried rice), *liaa* (fried paddy) and sometimes coins to the dead body before burning/burring at the outside of the village by chanting this spell:-

Raakaadaai jukaadaai saalaa-aa

Bihenidaai kahenidaai, serudaai mraasudaai

Midaadaai badaadaai, itaanaai saalaamu.

Meaning:- don't go as poor, without having any property, take all these things we offer. Don't be greedy to us and to our property, leave us in peace.

Nijutaajaa Mantra (purification spell)

After funeral of the dead body family members, friends and relatives have a purification bath. Before taking a bath they use to apply chicken blood mix oil to their body distributing by a male member of Hadi community (a man of one Scheduled Caste community) with the help of fowl feather chanting the mantra given below.

I

Estari penuki, Estari Maju Tinjate

Enekinu tadasaka inu Aakaamu

Maain Meedaa Badaa anu digaa Jiaaraa

Meaning:- You are eaten by any God are ghost, now you are friend to them, be a real friend of them and do not touch us or our children or do not do any harm to us.⁵

II

Yaa Maahaapuru!

Nenju aasaamdehaadaai

Grihtaataamu mustaataamu

Maange, kaasaahaa sidaakaarehe

Pudisidaakaare-e, rudiakaamu teliaa-aahkaamun

Kaamaaginaamun, baadisenginaamu,

Gutasenginaamu, saapu sidaakari-i

Gutasidakaare-e, ruga sidaakaare-e

Duhka sidaakare-e, esti pe-e-nu, esti maa-aa-ku

Ateiseka, eri pe-e-nu, taadaadinaa-aa-ki tadaadesaa-aa-ki

Rangi aapaakaare-e, gusiaapaakaare-e

Yaa maahaapuru! juhaari.

Meaning:- Today we burnt/buried the dead body, Let not we infected by any disease, Let not any hindrance on our way to work. The God, who has taken him away from us, shall go to his own world, let us live in peace. O, God we salute you.

Suddhikriya Mantra (soul worship)

Kandha people perform a special rite on eighth to twelfth day of the death of their near and dear one. They offer 'Punjis' (one *punji* means a palm full of rice) to all forefathers along with the recent dead soul to satisfy them by chanting following spell:-

Inu saataati kdutaati aabaadi

Ninge akala paakitiita baa-aa-ja saa-aa-mun

nenju raahaa paakiti aarpi naanjaanaamu

Kaakerimaalaa mundmaalaa

Lahiti piju puhaaisi, bilu tinjisi, peni tinjisi,

Daanju mulkaa, sakaa mulkaa puhaaisi

Nenju inu, idu taangi llaaiti piju puhaaisi,

Bilu tinjisi, peni tinjisi, Daanju mulkaa sakaa mulkaa puhaaisi

Nenju inu, idu taangi llaaiti aajaana baamu nenju ninge aarpi naanjaanaamu

Jedaadaai, rehaadaai, aarpi naanjaanaamu,

Raakaadi dukaadi, aajaanaa baa-aa, daijedaadaai baa-aa

Katu duli, mara duli, iditaani, guditaani itibaamu

Taanaa penu, Baasaa penu, Saru penu, Banda penu, Sugaa penu,

Aade neti, kurmaa neti, rekenindi, jagenindi,

Rakise jagise aajaamu, suna saataa rupaa saataa daabigiaamu

Margagiaamu change aahanaa, bidu aahaanaa, gudiaahaanaa,

Kaataamu jataamu, ruga taani, duhka taani, raangi gimu, gusi gimu,

Naaibadaa, nai sidaa injaanaain, ilugiaamu,

Yaa Maahaapuru! Jahaari

Meaning: - O, father/ mother! You have passed away from this world. We had kept your soul behind our house, so you suffered a lot from severe cold/hot/ rain/ and darkness. Now we are inviting you in to our house. Please enter in to without any hesitation, disgust and sorrow and receive our offerings.

O, God! Who created this world, save us and protect us from all sorts of miseries. We salute you.

They performed another ritual after departure of the relatives by sacrificing a fowl and offering wine to different gods. The spell is as follow:-

Nenju taanaa taani, Basaataani,

Sa-a-ru taani, Barsi taani, Daarni penu,

Sugaa penu, Banda penu

Baai bansadaai gulenenju, raajidaai,

bihenidaai, kahenidaai, serudaai, mraasudaai,

Taanaadaai, baasaadaai gule saanjaakaari,

injaani raaji aapaakaari,

yaa Maahaapuru jahaari.

Meaning:- O, all Gods and Goddess! Be all happy and graceful. Let all live in peace, make good of all. We salute you.

It is just like a 'Santi stotra' (peace chanting) of Hindu worship.⁶

Desia Kandha Mati puja Mantra (sacred spell for Earth Goddess worship)

Kandhas worship their Earth Goddess once in a year. This is a community ceremony. Whole village participate in this ceremony. It is observed at the out skirt of the village, near a mountain.

Eenhen Yandi Mahapurundi

Sendu Maanji Belaa Penu

Nede maanji Taanaapenu

Purba bidhi aahaanaangaa

Plaasaanaanga ninde

Sabu kaale ninge

Aasaanaanga Plaasaanaanga

Isingi Ninge

Paanchaloka kaksanaangaa

Ragabhoga sikinjinamu

Meaning:- O' God!, O' Sun God!, O' Earth Goddess! We are performing the ritual as per the earliest system please accept our offerings and let us live in peace. ⁷

Desia Kandha Saru penu Laka (Mountain God worship)

'Saru' means mountain, penu means God and 'laka' means worship, in *Kui* language. Every year in Odia month *Baisakh* (May-June) they use to worship the mountain God to save their cattle and forest products from wild animals. Day before this worship, they performed another ritual known as 'Baara', means 'Adhibaas' or a ritual to invite all the Gods and Goddesses of the village and nearby villages. The *Mantra* (spell) is-

Yaandi saru penundi

Paangaa penundi

Enga enu kuna saajaa sekaa

naaju saajaasekaa

inu udanengaa paanjaanenga bamu

bioke ragasianamu bhogasianamu

Meaning: - O! God we invite you all to come to our Worship place tomorrow to receive our offerings.

They use following mantra (spell) on the day of worship for Mountain God.

Eenhen Yandi Sarupenundi

ninge Plaahpinjaanaamu aaspinjaanaamu

ehengaa twe Saajaaduaa

ninde sabu kale

ekaate ragabhoga siaanaamu

Meaning: - O, Mountain God! We worship you by offering different foods, wine, sacrificial fowl like our forefathers. Please accept all these things. Be happy and make us happy. ⁸

Cattle worship on *Raakhi Purnimaa* (August-September)

On the full moon day of Odia month Sravana(August-September) Kandhs worship the cattle wealth and cattle shed to make them free from different diseases. The mantra they use as:-

“Aa aabaati Buraapenu, Taanaapenu, Sarupenu kahe

Dinaataa siranu piju Aaji jiji need senda ranjaanaa Kaajaanaa

Aadiaamu midiaamu Aamu geja mitari Sanidehngi Saadaalidengi

Adaakaari Saanjaakaari⁹

The *Meriah Sloka* on the eve of *Dharanipenu puja* (mother earth worship)

Meriah sacrifice or the Human sacrifice was a barbarous and inhuman practice prevailed among the Kandh community of Kandhmal district, which is substituted by buffalo/pig sacrifice with two other names ‘*Kedu*’ and ‘*Jhagidi*’ respectively later on with the interference of British authority. The rite of human sacrifice was explained away by linking it to the supposed belief of the Kandha that human blood will make the turmeric redder in colour. It is a wrong conception but scientifically the tribes meant to fertilize the earth. The flesh and blood cut away from the meriah used to be buried in the fields to increase its fertility. Primitive society does not favour individual freedom of thought rather for group welfare. ‘*Turki Penu*’ (garbage mound) worship at the outskirts of the village is another example of their support and knowledge of fertility to earth. They gathered garbages of their village at a particular place at the outskirts of the village and worship it. Dr. Sitakant a Mahapatra opines the *meriah sloka* is in three parts. The first section of the *sloka* refers to the symbolic purchase of *Meriah* and kept and lovingly reared up in the village headman’s care as:-

O’ our headman

Our village elder

Have you baby deer

Have you got tiny fowls?

Have you got sons?

The season has come

The season of Dharanipenu

The Earth Goddess,

Give us young fowls

Baby deer

We will buy.

In the second part the priest chants the invocation after giving the first stab to the victim.

Here we will the enemy

Here we sacrifice the meriah

The Gods wanted this sacrifice

Earth Goddess wanted this sacrifice

Let the Goddess be Happy

Let her bless our actions

Let not tigers enter into our village

Let there be plenty of rains

Let no calamity be fall us

Let no famine visit our village

Let all be happy and live in peace.

The third part refers to the wistful conception of an ancient *Kandhistan* i.e. the home land of the Kandhs and prays *Dharanipenu* (Earth Goddess) and *Belapenu* (Sun God) to bestow prosperity and plenty on the entire village community. It is a chorus.

All these hills

All these hillocks

All these forests

All these valleys

Our sacred home

Let turmeric grow well

Let garlics grow well

Let maize grow well

Let cattle return home

Let goats return home

We only feed the Gods

The Earth Goddess

We have no guilt

We do not crime

The Goddess eats

Dharanipenu eats

Durga eats

They eat the meriah

The axe eats

The rope eats

We do not crime

We do not wrong

Dharanipenu bellow

Dharma devta above

And we offer

This little sacrifice

Too small for Gods

Too small for goddesses

Let them be happy

Let them make us happy.



It can be easily noticeable from the third part of the song that the total rejection of any sense of guilt or criminality. It is thus treated as a sanctified ceremonial offering to the Gods and Goddesses who have to be appeased and propitiated so as to enable the community to live in peace and plenty with enough good crops and without the depredation of tigers and wild animals.¹⁰

Mao laakaa (Bhuinaani Worship)

'*Bhuinaani*' is an incarnation of Earth Goddess. To satisfy her, kandh people occasionally worship her by offering wine and sacrificing a fowl. The sacred spell for this worship is given bellow:-
Yaandi Maaolindi!

Aamu nenju laakaai maanjaanaamu

Engaa inu midatini doditini digaa kaahaa.

This is the prayer to *Bhuiaani*. Then they pour some mahua wine on the earth by chanting following spell.
Yaandi Taanaa penundi, Baasaa penundi,

Inu imbeki saajaaseke bam

Idananga panjananga bam

Raga bhoga inu nenju paadi.¹¹

The most important special feature of the sacred spells of Kandha people is their dialect '*Kui*'. They composed these spells with the use of their colloquial dialect '*Kui*', not as Hindus in "Sanskrit". Their dialect '*Kui*' has no script, but they remembered these spells by hearing to their predecessors, like '*Veda*' in ancient times by Hindus. Their language, feelings, behavior and attitudes to the deities are also very simple, just they behaves to their family members, friends and relatives. They have a strong believe that every natural element, object, and wonders have supernatural powers. They control the universe and the life of all animals. They are the real Gods and Goddesses. They are the real cause of sorrow and happiness. So they utter the names of all natural aliments, wonders and objects of their surroundings while chanting the spells.

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