

Abstract

The main objective of this bachelor thesis is to introduce the deity Ganesha also called Ganapati in the context of the festival Ganesh chaturthi. The thesis is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter deals with the history of Ganesha from the first references about Ganapati in the vedic period until the clear evidence that Ganesha has his place among the main hindu deities. The first chapter also introduces legends about his birth which can be mainly found in puranas and provides deep analysis of Ganesha symbols from different angles. The second chapter presents the term puja on general level as well as with the particular focus on Ganesha. Different types of worships of Ganesha are mentioned. Special attention is given to the eight main Ganesha temples in Maharashtra called Ashtavinayaka. The third chapter is dedicated to the main festival of Ganesha, the Ganesh chaturthi. The history of this festival is followed with the focus on Bal Gangadhar Tilak. The idea to celebrate Ganesha in public came from Tilak. How the festival is currently being celebrated in Maharashtra is described as well. Maharashtra is the most popular state in India regarding the celebration of Ganesh chaturthi. The photos linked with this festival are attached to the thesis. The pictures were taken by the author in Pune during the period 2009-2012.

Key words

Ganesha, Ganesh chaturthi, Ganapati, festival, hinduism, puja, Maharashtra, Gangadhar Tilak, symbols