



Chilika and Legend of Goddess Kalijai

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The Chilika lake is the largest brackish water lagoon in the continent. The panoramic view of the Chilika and the landscape makes the spectator spell-bound. The scenic splendor and brazen sky makes a man poet. The sunset is quite worth enjoying with the mountains and the sanguine bloodstained sky. The blue watered Chilika is a bounty of nature. The poet Radhanath has written a poetry on it "The Chilika".

Its Origin

As to the origin of this largest brackish water lagoon, it is an extension of Mahanadi Delta. ('Fauna of Chilika' - Zoological survey of India - 1995). The other view suggests that the heaps of sands gathered by the Tidal waves framed it to a lagoon. The research scholars and the scientists suggest this to be the origin of Chilika. In summer, Chilika is at about 905 square kilometres in area and in rainy season, it is almost 1165 sq.kms. The salinity in summer varies from 1 to 27% and in monsoon it varies from .5 to 5%. Many rivers like the Salia and the Kushbadu meet Chilika. The mouth of Chilika merges with the Bay of Bengal. The confluence is the mouth where the Chilika merges with the sea.

The Chilika is a holy place of pilgrimage (Tirtha). The reason is obvious. The sacred rivers run and meet Chilika. Second, it was by the lotus

feet of the mother goddess Kalijai (Kali). During the Mohammedan aggression Lord Jagannath was shifted to the lap of Chilika for safety and security. That is why Chilika is a holy shrine. Third, the historical Kanchi invasion during the rule of Sri Purusottam Dev was made through this lake and the legend now stands as the mute witness 'Manik Patna' and 'Dahikhia'. This is the living history of Orissa's victory over Kanchi. The Chilika was hed the lotus feet of Sri Jagannath and Balabhadra in the guise of chief generals of the Orissa army. For this Chilika itself is a holy place.

Nalaban (Birds' Sanctuary)

Nalaban is known as the shrine of birds. Birds from remote places like Siberia, Canada, America and Australia come in flocks to the Chilika for food and shelter in winter. Govt. has declared this area in Chilika as Birds' Sanctuary. Birds in lakhs come to Chilika during the beginning of October. Almost 221 varieties of birds are seen in winter. It is a natural habitat for the birds.

A new mouth has been opened recently by the Government of Orissa. The present survey shows that the salinity is increasing day by day. It may stake the whole marine world of the lake. The life of the fish and fauna may be jeopardised in the change of the living condition. The pollution, the drainage and the constant netting alongwith

the power driven boats have become a threat to the animal world of the Chilika who are to be perished in the new living conditions.

Irrawady Dolphins - Now, the Irrawady Dolphins are the centre of attraction to the tourists. This particular variety of Dolphins are seen in the Chilika. Chilika is their natural habitat.

The Pollution and Hazards

The ecological condition is fast changing and worsening day by day for prawn culture in the heart of the Chilika. Though the Government of Orissa has banned prawn culture, the ecological base and the living world of fauna and flora have been devanged. Many species in the water space are on the verge of extinction as the recent survey has pointed out. However, not with despondency, but with robust optimism the mission to save Chilika is never bleak. The past which is ebbing away should be buried for a sanguine future.

The Island Called Parikud

Within the Chilika lake, the island is called Parikud. Parikud consists of 96 Mouzas. It is a sum total of about 120 revenue villages and some hamlets. Parikud is confined to the block area Krishna Prasad Panchayat Samiti. The entire land mass runs some 50 kilometres from Samantraypur to Jahaikuda and Mahinsa Brahmpur. It is surrounded by Chilika and the sea at the other. Parikud is a vast landmass with fertile cultivable lands.

Beforehand this area was under the king of Bankad (now Banpur). The royal heritage started in Parikud from 1774. The defeated Raja of Bankad Sri Harisevak Mansingh came to Parikud and established his empire at Parikud, Gurubai. The capital was known as Nrusinghgarh at Gurubai. After that Raja Bhagirathi Mansingh shifted his capital to Krishnaprasad. There is a legend suggesting that a milkman who informed

the king about the crane killing an eagle, the king was fascinated to shift his capital to this place and the capital was, named after 'Krishnaprasad'. It was during the period of Bhagirathi Mansingh who erected the royal palace in the year 1798. The king also donated a village for Brahmins (sasan) which is known as Bhagirathipur Sasan.

In the year 1803, British General Harcourt was marching from Madras. In Madras we witness the North Harcourt and the South Harcourt district. The Army General Harcourt with his large troop started from Madras towards Khurdha. As there was no communication to Khurdha, he marched on the seashore. They did not know the way to Khurdha. The people of that time were patriots. They were not prepared to show them the way to Khurdha for their ill-intention. One person from Malud, Fateh Mohammad who was in charge of the ferry, agreed to show them the way with some conditions. Fateh was in charge of the ferry. It was near Kandakhai where Chilika was very much dangerous. General Harcourt agreed with Fateh who made the condition and Fateh showed the way to Puri. In turn he was rewarded with a vast stretch of land from Malud to Sunamuhin. This is known as the 'Namak Haram Jagir'. It is a sort of Jagir or gift in token of love for playing treachery with the mother soil. This Namak Haram Jagir was awarded by the British Government to Fateh Mohammad of Malud.

The area of Parikud and Malud was very much under-developed. But with the advent of the new time a road has been constructed from Humma to Puri which is a very short route to Puri. Now in Parikudgarh at least 5 telephone towers are installed. Before the Government banned the prawn culture, people of Parikud at least earned something handsome for their livelihood. For violence and unnecessary law and order situation,

the Government of Orissa banned the prawn culture.

The population of Parikud is now at about 1,20,000. The main occupation of this place is farming and fishing. The fishermen community live on fishing in Chilika and others are farmers. For catching prawn and cultivating it, the controversy has started ending in firing. However the Government of Orissa has banned this and peace is prevailing. The Mother Goddess Kalijai and Chilika is under the Tehsil of Parikud (Krishna Prasad Tehsil).

Due to the communication link and the spread of education Parikud has advanced at least and no more a place for punishment.

The Kalijai

The Kalijai, the goddess on the mountain surrounded by the vast stretch of blue watered Chilika lagoon is a scenic beauty and a holy shrine.

People from time immemorial are worshipping the deity. The faith in general is that she saves the life of the crew on the deck. She is the centre of all hope, assistance and aspiration of the crew on the vast stretch of water where life is helpless. She is the symbol of symphony of life. This maritime expedition is only possible by the grace of the deity.

The Mother Goddess, the Kalijai is the centre of attraction. People in lakhs come to see the holy place of 29 acres of mountain within the Chilika lake. It is a unique spot in the state for tourism. Mother Goddess Kalijai is Kali, the source and the first 'Mahavidya' of "Dasmahavidyas". According to a poem by Pandit Godavarish Mishra, Jai - a girl was coming to marry in Parikud. The boat was capsized in the rough stormy water. She met her tragic death and became the deity Kalijai. It is the imagination of a

poet but there is no supporting fact or a legend corroborating the whole state of affair. It is only the creative imagination of the writer. A girl, without fulfilment of her dreams, desire and ambition can never be a deity or a Goddess. It can either be termed as a spirit or a spectre. A girl of Banpur coming to marry at Parikudgarh, if at all is true, we would have been able to trace the exact nativity of the both, the bride and the bride-groom. Hence it is a fiction. The metamorphosis of Jai to Kalijai is that is why not a tenable proposition. But the poetry is a unique work of art. "The History of Parikud" (1930) by Radha Charan Panda states that Sri Harisevak Mansingh, the king of Bankad (Banpur) came to Parikud in the year 1779 after being defeated by the Raja of Khurdha. His son Sri Bhagirathi Mansingh was attacked by the king of Khurdha. The king of Parikud surrendered in the lotus feet of the mother Kali. Dr. Panda has stated that this temple was erected by Sri Jagannath Mansingh of the then king of Bankad in the year 1717. The State of Parikud is also a part of Bankadgarh.

During that period, a large number of Flamingos (a kind of bird 4'6" in height) alighted in the Chilika and marched forward. The army of Khurdha presumed it to be a vast army deployed in the Chilika and fled away. The people opined that Kali made the king victorious (Jayi). So She was named Kalijai.

Makarmela is celebrated with great pomp in the holy shrine of the Kalijai. This is the only popular festivity here. Lakhs of devotees flock here for celebrating Makar Sankranti. The Raja of Parikud worships the Mother Goddess as his saviour. Let the Mother Goddess Kalijai bless us.

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