



## The Shrine of Goddess Bhairavi of Puruna Katak, Boudh District

*Niyati Panda*

In the heart of ancient Utkal was the famous Tantra Pitha, which is situated at Puruna Katak in Boudh District, known as "Devi Bhairabi Pitha". Devi Bhairabi is the Istadevi or presiding deity of the then Chatrapur Gada Samanta, Mohapatra Royal Dynasty. During 895 A.D. the Somavanshi Maharaja Swabhaba Tunga was the king of Kosala. His only daughter, very wise and learned, was also the chief queen of the Bhoumakara dynasty, Maharani Tribhubana Mahadevi. She expired and her baby son Gandhamardan Dev was brought up by Swabhaba Tunga with the help of his brother Jajati Keshari. Gandhamardana Deva ruled over the kingdom with the capital at Dhrutipur. At that time his *Samanta* king of Mahapatra royal dynasty ruled over Chhatrapur Garh. When Samanta Mohapatra dynasty started the rule in this area, Goddess maa Bhairavi became the presiding deity or *Istadevi*.



*Goddess Bhairavi, Puruna Katak*

But much before the Bhairabi Pitha became famous as Isthadevi Pitha, the shrine of Goddess Bhairavi was famous in entire Utkala as a Tantrapitha. As per the *Madalapanji* - "*Navischa Utkal Desa - Bhairabi Kshetra Muchyate*".

The famous shrine of Goddess Maa Bhairabi Siddha Tantra Pitha at Puruna Katak is almost closer to all devotees for Goddess of mercy. All *nitis* of Maa Bhairabi is strictly followed and observed as per the guidelines of *Madala Pothi*. In which form Goddess Bhairavi is worshipped here, it cannot be found anywhere in the process of *nitis*. So it is a different *tantra pitha* than others.

From ancient ages Mahadevi Bhairabi is worshipped at Puruna Katak under the dense bamboo and mango forest. She is the presiding deity or *Istadevi* of Boudh. It is an integrated place of *Mantra, Yantra* and *Tantra*. Who ever



visits to this place once, he feels the eternal importance of Goddess Bhairavi. Many scholars, philosophers and *tantrikas* have attained the enlightenment of divine power of Goddess Bhairavi. It is only 29 kms away from Boudh town, 42 kms from Phulbani 199kms from Bhubaneswar. Maa Bhairavi is situated just on the N.H.224 of Khurda-Bolangir National High Way.

Sati committed suicide in the *Yagyankunda* as she couldnot tolerate the insult wordings spoken by her father Dakhya Prajapati against her husband Shiva. Shiva carried the half burnt dead body of Sati and moved here and there. Lord Vishnu applied Sudarshan Chakra to cut into pieces the body of Sati. *Navi Mandal* of Sati fell in the forest and flowed in the spring water. The *Navi kamal* settled on the foot of the mountain, in the Padma Narasingha thorny forest. Lord Shiva kept this *Navi kamal* of Devi Sati in his heart and started *Tandaba* Dance and at last, he was fully attracted and satisfied to this Padma Narasingha thorny forest and set up the *Navi kamal* in this Puruna Katak place, and proceeded to North. The different parts of Body of Sati fell in 108 places of India and these places are named by different names as *Shakti Pithas*. The *Kamal Navi* of Sati settled in Padma Narasingha thorny forest and named as Devi Bhairabi. Previously this *pitha* was far away from devotees and was located in Jhadakhanda which is situated on the right bank of the river Mahanadi, now known as Boudh. This kingdom was streched from Drutipur to 100 Kosa and four Samanta Raja's (Vassal King) were in charge of smoth adminstration in four places, (1) Kusanga (2) Chhatrapur (3) Dharmagada (4) Bausuni. Chatrapur gada, the capital of Mahapatra Samanta Raja was situated 29 kms away from Boudh and was between two villages i.e. Salakata and Jiakata. Still now the ruined of the fort of Chatrapurgada

is found near Salakata village which is extended in an area of 8 acres of land. During March 1986 March a copper plate was exavated from this place. Chatrapur Samanta king was older than the Gupta Raja's of Golden Era. The Mahapatra Samanta Rajas of Chatrapur Gada worshipped Maa Devi Bhairavi as their dynasty presiding deity i.e. *Istadevi*. Devi Bhairavi is situated in the middle of the *Argalia* mountain forest range near *Gadadurga* of Chatrapur kingdom. Mahapatra Samanta Raja's were happy and powerful with the blessings of Maa Devi Bhairavi, the Goddess being installed near the entrance of his Royal Fort. Two brothers Kenhya Ray and Danei Ray were appointed as royal commanders for the worship and development of Maa Bhairavi Pitha. During *Dushhera Saradiya Puja*, great festival was organised. Still now it is a great festival day for Maa Devi Bhairavi. When non-Brhamin Kshatriya Raja Mrutunjaya Bhanja was the ruler of Boudh, at that time steps were taken to keep Devi Bhairavi in a thatched house but it was a wonder that before completion of the cottage it was burnt by fire. Later on this proposal for construction of thatched house or cottage for Maa Devi Bhairavi was abandoned by King Mrutunjaya Bhanja. Again new priests (*sevaka*) for the *Upasana* of Maa Devi Bhairavi were engaged. Within few days they expired. Then none dared to come to worship. Ramakrushnadev became the King of Boudh and devoted himself for religious works. After him Raja Gangadhar Dev ascended the throne of Boudh. He exavacated the new tank named Chandrapur Sagar and also many village tanks. The King of Boudh Chandrasekhar Dev placed order to Paramananda Mishra of Palasa village to go to Puruna Cuttack for the seva of Maa Devi Bhairavi and also allotted 27 villages as *jagir*. The priest Paramananada Purohit proceeded with his wife and two infant sons and at Puruna Katak third son was born. The eldest son Bhagaban Purohit was granted Rajjngi village,



middle Basudev Purohit, Puruna Katak and the youngest son Jagamohan Purohit the Salakata village.

King Pitamber Dev engaged Pradyumna Dehuri for the worship of Maa Devi Bhairavi as an assistant *Sevak* of Paramananda Purohit . On special occasion of festivals, Purohit was engaged for worship of Maa Devi Bhairavi and *Dehuri* was engaged for daily *Nitis* and *Sevas* of *Shakti Pitha* of Maa Devi Bhairavi. During *Saradiya Sodasa Puja* and other festivals, *purohit* attained the *seva puja*.

Till 1965 Devi Bhairavi was worshipped in a cottage. Then Sitaram Agarwal and Nandulal Agarwal constructed a new temple with the blessings of Maa Devi Bhairavi in 1969, along with other rooms for *Bhoga* kitchen and rest house for other *Sevakas*.

During *Saradiya Sodasa Parva Puja* Boudh, King engaged 16 village heads called *Gauntias* to perform one each beginning from *Aswina Krushna Mulastami*. These *Gauntias* belongs to village (1) Puruna Cuttack (2) Salakata (3) Jiakata (4) Kamalpur (5) Ranji (6) Gurudi palli (7) Ratnapur (8) Saradhapur (9) Phulajhari (10) Balanda (11) Indrapur (12) Pitambarpur (13) Jajpur (14) Chamarapur (15) Bhabanipur (16) Chhatrapur / Udayapur. Still now the villagers of the 16 villages provide all puja materials for Maa Devi Bhairavi for *Saradiya Sodasa Puja*.

In the shadow of bamboo and mango trees Devi Bhairavi temple is a nice and peaceful place for all devotees. Devotees dedicate animals for sacrifice during the main festival on *Mahastami*. *Sahada* tree is dezzled with vermilion (*Sindura*). The animals meant for sacrifice are kept here. Under the tall banyan tree *Pithasena* *Devis* are worshipped. They are gate keepers of Maa Devi Bhairavi i.e. *Dwarapala*, *Khetrapala*

and *Mahapala* with sixtyfour *yoginis*. In the middle of these, *Balipitheswari* is seen. Animal sacrifice *nitis* are held here till now.

After *Darshana* of *Khetrapala* and *Dwarapala*, one can enter into temple of Maa Devi Bhairavi crossing five steps. Mahavir Sardula is standing in the main temple and lion faced, tiger faced gate keepers are found in the temple of Maa Devi Bhairavi. Inside the temple along Maa Devi Bhairavi following *Devis* are worshipped. They are - Maheswari, Khambeswari, Dakhinakali and Durgadevi with *Chalanti Pratima* and *Bije Pratima*.

During *Kartika Dipawali Amavasya* i.e. Diwali Maa is worshipped in the form of Shyamakali, during *Magha Krushna Chaturdasi* Maa is seen as Ugratara and during spring *Chaitra* month *Sukla Astami* to *Dasami* Maa *Basantika puja* is celebrated and the Goddess is worshipped as Bhubaneswari, Bagala and Dakhinakali in three days respectively. Maa Devi Bhairabi is seen as Kaumari during the month of *Bhadrava Krushna Astami*. It is the birth day puja of Maa Bhairavi. On *Bhadrava Krushna Chaturdasi* Maa Bhairavi is seen as Digambari, Kanyakumari, during *Bhadrava Amavasya* or *Saptapuri Amavasya* Yogmaya Besa is seen during *Bhadrab Sukla Ekadasi*.

It is also a nice picnic spot for its natural scenario and enchanting environment. So tourists and devotees from all over the state visit Maa Devi Bhairavi through out the year.

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Ex-Head Mistress,  
Helen Keler Red Cross School for the Deafs,  
Ambapua,  
Berhampur, Dist. Ganjam.