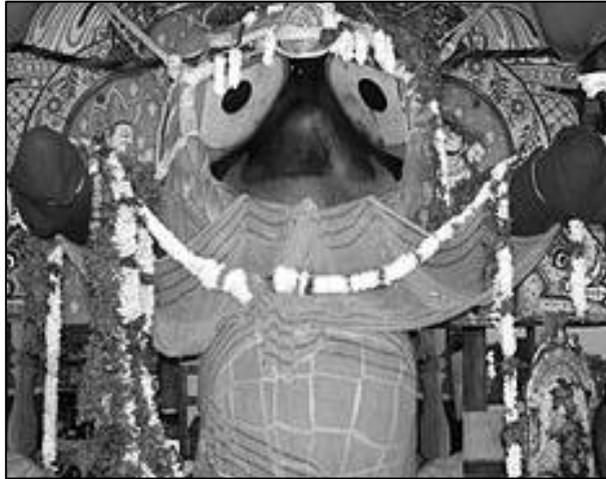


Jagannath Temples of Ganjam

Dr. P.C. Mohanty

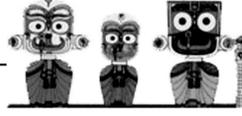
Legendary sources suggest that Jagannath was originally worshipped by the Tribals, the Sabaras. The most important evidence of this belief is the existence of Daitas, a class of sevaks who are considered to be of tribal lineage and who still play a major role in the various services to Lord Jagannath. Historians predict that the original diety was 'Kitungu' worshipped by the Tribal Sabaras in the hilly areas of Mahendragiri situated in the undivided Ganjam District. Later on 'Kitungu' the God of wood was named as 'Jagunta' and then the Lord Jagannath. Ganjam is the place directly related to the birth of Jagannath cult. Earlier the Ganjam had not less than thirty Gadjats. The king of each Gadjat had a direct relation with the Gajapati king of Odisha and everyone had accepted the Vaishnavism and the cult of Jagannath for their kingdom and constructed temples and celebrated functions on Lord Jagannath. After Puri, Ganjam is the next richest place in celebrating the festivals of



Jagannath cult in the state of Odisha. Each and every Zamidar of Ganjam has their Jagannath Temples. Following are the Jagannath Temples situated in different Zamidaries of district Ganjam.

The Jagannath Temple at Khallikote:

From the manuscript of 'Krshna Janmastami Vrata' in Odia composed by Aniruddha Chhotaraya, a Raja of Khallikote in the Saka year 1670 (1748 A.D), it is known that the wooden images of the Chaturddha Murti (Jagannath, Balbhadr, Subhadra) and Sudarshan were first being worshipped in a Mandapa (open space) built by his great grandfather Jagannatha Mardaraj -I. So the building of the Jagannatha Mandap of Khallikote may tentatively be fixed in the middle of the 17th century A.D. From the manuscript of 'Vaisakha Puran' in Odia written by Jagannath Mardaraja Deva II, it is known that he built the present Jagannatha Temple of Khallikote. He may be



placed in the last quarter of the 18th century as his father Nalinaksha Mardaraj was living in Saka year 1699 (1777 A.D). A vadivelu writes about this as follows, “The building of the Temple of Jagannatha in Khallikote which commenced seven generations ago was finished during his time at a cost of over lakh rupees”.

The Jagannatha Temple at Athagada:

From the seventh Parichheda (chapter) of Gangavamsanucharitam, the Champu, a historical Kavya written by poet Vasudeva Ratha Somayaji of Athagada in Ganjam in 1762 A.D., it is known that Raghunatha Harichandan, Raja of Athagada (1712-1732 A.D) built a temple for Jagannatha in the Saka year 1650 (1728 A.D.). From the three Verses, it is known that from Raja Ramachandra and his queen Chandrama Devi had three sons named Raghunatha, Giridhara and Divyasimha. Prana Devi, the queen of Raghunatha was the mother of Jagatbandhu Harichandan. Raghunatha Harichandan, who was a very powerful chieftain, built the Jagannatha Temple in the Saka year Kha (o), Sara (5) Ttu (6) and Sitagumita of moon (1) or 1650 corresponding to 1728 A.D. This Jagannatha Temple is still to be seen with in the ruined fort of Langalaveni, near Boirani in the District of Ganjam by the Khallikote-Aska road, these three Verses are

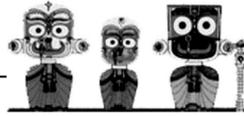
found inscribed in the Nilachakra (Blue Disc) on the top of the Jagannatha Temple of Athagada.

Jagannath Temple at Marada.

Village Marada is situated at about 60 kms away from Berhampur. The Temple at Marada was constructed to conceal the three great images of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra & Subhadra of Puri Shree Mandir during the attacks of Taqi Khan, the then Mogul Subedar for Odisha in the year 1733 A.D. The temple consists of a Viman and Jagamohan. The main entrance and the wooden doors of the Temple are a replica of the Jagannath Temple of Puri. The masons and carpenters of the Village Mathura were engaged in the construction of the temple day and night and completed it in the record time of two months on war footing. The Temple still stands eloquently speaks about the glorious regional tradition of Lord Jagannath. The images Puri Shree Mandir were kept there for about two and a half years till they were brought back to Puri by the orders of the liberal minded Murshid Alikhan in 1736, the next Subedar of Odisha.

The Jagannatha Temple of Parlakhemundi:

The powerful Ganga Chieftains of the estate of Parlakhemundi, a part of the extensive Khemundi kingdom were great patrons of religion and literature both in Sanskrit and Odia. From a Copper plate grant of Jagannatha Narayan Deva of Parlakhemundi issued in his 21st Anka year in Chitrabhanu Samvatsara, Mithuna 20, Asadha 12 Monday, it is known that this chieftain had granted the village of Jagannatha Narayanpur to 31 Brahmans at the time of his coronation. The exact date of the grant being Monday, the 28th June, 1762 A.D. when the Chitravanu Samvatsara of the southern recension was current, the year of his accession was (1762-71) 1745 A.D. As this



temple was existing in all its prominence in 1745 A.D. at the time of his coronation it must have been constructed before that year. As the exact year of construction of this temple is not known, it may tentatively be placed near about 1700 A.D. when the Jagannath Temple of Vijaya Nagara (Bada Khemundi) was built.

The Jagannath Temple of Kuladagada:

The fort of Kulada now in ruins, situated at a distance of about 4 miles from the town of Bhanjanagar surrounded by hills, remained the capital of the powerful Bhanja Kings of Ghumusara from the beginning of the 13th Century A.D. till its occupation by the British forces in 1835 A.D. Though the Bhanja Kings became the followers of the Srivaishnava faith from the time of Sri Jayabhanja Deva (1223 A.D) no information about the building of any Jagannatha temple in between 1225-1750 is available. The deities of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra were first installed at Kulada by Pratap Bhanja near about 1600 A.D. The present Jagannath Temple at Kulada was built by Sri Krsna Bhanja, a powerful Bhanja Chieftain (1744-73 A.D), who successfully resisted the invasion of the French General De Bursey in 1757 A.D. and bravely fought with the British forces in 1768 A.D. So the construction of Jagannatha Temple may be fixed near about 1750 A.D. (1744-1757) which was a happy a peaceful period of his reign.

Parth Sarathi Temple of Jarada:

Village Jarada was the capital of the Ex-Zamidari estate named Jarada. It is situated at a distance of about 50 Kms. South-West to Berhampur. The place is famous for the Parth-Sarathi Temple of its kind. According to local traditions, the Sabaras of Jarada hilly area worshipped one “ Kittunga Jaganta” who later

on became Partha Sarathi and subsequently known as Jagannath. The present temple of Parth-Sarathi was established by Gajapati Purushottam Dev, the Gajapati Maharaja in 15th century on his return journey after the conquest of Kanchi. Parth Sarathi (Jagannath) is the Presiding deity of this temple and the Rath Yatra is the main festival which attracts thousands of tribal people to this place.

Jagannath Temple at Sunapur:

Sunapur is situated at a distance of 26 kms, towards South East of Berhampur near the falling point of Bahuda, the ancient river at the Bay-of-Bangal. It was a principal port and shipping centre for the area functioning till the first part of 20th century. A Jagannath Temple was there with the three beautiful images of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra along with Sudarasan and the rituals were observed since long.

Jagannath Temples of Mantridi:

Mantridi was a famous trading spiritual and cultural centre situated at a distance of 16 kms South-East to Berhampur. There are three Jagannath Temples in the area. Jagannath Deula is happens to be the ancient one supposed to be established by a maritime trader during seventeenth Century. It was one of the most famous Jagannath Temple in the South Odisha observing all rituals and festivals like Rath Yatra. The Car Festival was exhibited as good as of Puri. But now due to the bad economic condition, the festivals and rituals, neeties were observed with out the chariots in the Car Festival. Mostly, the devotees of the area are the ‘Sadhabs’ and Sahukars presently known as Sahu Brahmins. Another, Jagannath along with his brother and sister are worshipped in Radhakanta Matha of Vaishnaba Sampradaya-established probably



during first part of 16th century in Western part of Mantridi Village. Now, a days Mantridi is famous for the Sakti Peetha of Bhairabi. The deity was surrounded by other 107 Hindu Gods and Goddesses alongwith a newly constructed Jagannath Temple. Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsan are taken to Gundicha Mandir (New) by three decent chariots since 2001.

Jagannath Temple at Village Bayali:

Nearing to Mantridi, Bayali is a small village of historical importance. The village has two big tanks and a Radharaman Math. The Matha has the principal deities like Radha Krishna, Gopika and a single small image of Jagannath (Dadhi Baman) worshipped probably since sixteenth century past with the religion of Vaisnavism preached through Sri Chaitanya. Later on the Muslim attacks, the temples were worshipping the single image of Jagannath (the Dadhi Baman) in most of the temples. The village has the pride of taking the single imaged small but very beautiful Jagannath in the chariot to Gundicha Mandir on the 2nd *tithi* of Sukla Ashadha.

Jagannath of Mahurigada (Berhampur):

Mahuri estate was of 521 Square miles and carries four hundred eleven villages. The Mahuri forte was earlier at the Kerandi Mala hills but for a better security, the fort had been changed to Berhampur. The king of Mahuri has constructed a Jagannath Temple along with Astasambhu Temples in his kingdom. Another Jagannath Temple was also established at Khaspa Street by Businessman named Naina towards the 1st part of 18th century. Another brother named Aina of Naina had also constructed a tank at Berhampur which was named after him like 'Aina Bandha'. The ancient Jagannath Temples at

Berhampur are Sana (Small) Jagannath and Bada (Big) Jagannath Temples. The other Jagannath Temples at Berhampur are Gosaninuangaon Temple, Courtpetta, Hatibandha sahi, Ganjam Kalaparishad Jagannath, Lanjipalli, etc. are of recent origin. The car festivals were celebrated with great devotion and spiritual divinity.

Jagannath of Surangigada:

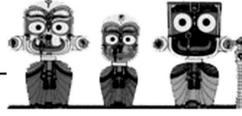
A descent, fine and beautiful Jagannath Temple was built by the king of Surangi during the 2nd part of 18th century and donated Lands for maintenance of deities. The neeties and rituals were maintained as like as of Puri Temple but with only a difference of pulling the chariot starts a day after to Sukla Duitiya i.e., the next day to Rath Yatra.

Jagannath of Ganjam Proper:

Ganjam was the ancient port town of India, the headquarters of the then Ganjam District. It is also an important place of tourism. The town has four Jagannath Temples. Two Temples are at Bada Bazar, i.e., old and new Jagannath Temples and the other two are at Dharmasala and Choudhury Street. The car festival is celebrated with a great devotion of spiritual order by the devotees. The deities are being worshipped since sixteenth century.

Jagannath at Sankhemundi and Badakhemundi:

Pratapgiri of Sanakhemundi was the capital fort of ancient Khemundi Garh. The three deities were established by the king Purushottam Ananga Bhima Dev most probably in 1760 A.D. But without a proper Temple, the deities were kept in a kitchen house since that day and worshiped at Pratapgiri. Later on Raja Chandramani Dev shifted his capital to Pudamari in the year 1801 and the inhabitants are trying to



construct a Jagannath Temple for the same but due to insufficient funds the temple works is remained half constructed till date.

Jagannath at Aska:

Aska is rich with Jagannath cult. There are five Jagannath Temples i.e. in the areas of Sunamba Street, Market Area, Khambeswari Patna, Lalagurji and at Nuagaon, Sugar factory. The deities of Sunamba Sahee happen to be the ancient one. The temple at Sugar Factory looks very beautiful. The town is crowded with the devotees of surrounding villages during the car festival season.

Jagannath Temple at Buguda:

At Buguda, just close to Biranchi Narayan Temple, a Jagannath Temple was there which was built by Harisaran Bhanja in the year 1680. The Temple has Jagamohan, Bhoga Mandap, Amalaka, Khapuri, Kalasa and Neelachakra as per the Silpa Sashttra. The place is worthfull to see.

Jagannath Temple at Digapahandi :

Digapahandi is the new capital of Badakhemidi after Vijaya Nagar Gada. The Jagannath Temple was built after the death of King Purushottam Ananga Bheema Dev i.e. after 1776, probably during the year 1790 as narrated by K.N. Mohapatra in his book "The Jagannath Temples in Eastern India." The past was glory but the present of this Temple is an apathy to narrate. Another deity Dadhibaman was also worshipped in same street (Bada Danda).

Jagannath Temples at Gadazata Areas of Ganjam :

A researcher has surveyed the total number of Jagannath Temples in the state which

are 928 and out of this only Ganjam bears 178. They are as follows: Digapahandi, Vijay Nagar Gada, Padma Nava Pura, Veer Padmanava Pura, Gopinathpur, Brahmapur, Alarigada, Kurula, Nuapada, Jakamaripally, Podamari, Pratapgiri, Bhisimagiri, Fasiguda, Singipur, Moula Bhanaja, Patapur, Sidheswara, Basudevapur, Kankarada, Adapada, Haripur, and Paika Jagannathpur, Parlakhemundi, Seranga, Jiranga, Udayagiri, Mohana, Luhagudi, Kasinagar, Garabandha, Gurandi, Ankuda, Chandragiri, Chheligada, Namangada, Ramgiri and Rayagada, Bhanjanagar, Balichhai, Buguda, Belguntha, Jagannath Prasad, Bidipur, Barpalli, Natgaon, Badangi, Kaduapada, Kokalaba, Rauti, Gobara, Binjigiri, Jhilemili, Mahaguda, Patrappur, Basudevapur, Badakodanda, Birikote, Galeri, Golia, Khamareddi, Pailipada, Berhampur, Mahuda, Bayali Mantridi, Khallikotegada, Bikrampur, Kairashi, Chikite, Pathara, Dampur, Kama Nalinakshyapur, Kanchana, Keshapur, Kantapada, Langaladei, nimina, Sankuda, Shandhamala, Athagada, Kabisuryanagar, Barida, Dhundapada, Gudiapalli, Gudiali, Kharida, Veer Jagannathpur, Kodala, Polosara, Beguniapada, Digapada, Jilunda, Hatioat, Phasi, Rimagada, Marada, Ramasa Narayanpur, Sikula, Tentulia, Chatrapur, Purushottampur, Landabar, Pratappur, Chingudighai, Jalaswara Khandi, Kantali, Kakarpani, Raipur, Sanathara, Tanganapalli, Hinjilikatu, Saru, Huma gada, Biraligada, Gopinathpur, Naidapalli, Khanda Deuli, Balarampur, Rambha, Subalaya, Palurgada, Ganja, Agasti Nuagaon, Aska Sunambasahi, Debhuin, Jayapur, Sidhanai, Dharakote, Dhaugaon, Kalashandhapur, Nalabanta, Chasa Pital, Tahamra. Along with the above spots Jagannath Temples are existing at Chikitigada, Surangigada, Patrapur, Jarada, Surangi Nuagada, Seragada, Sorada areas. Hence, Ganjam is claiming as the 2nd place in the state after Puri in



celebrating the Jagannath cult. There is a saying in the area that Khallikote gada Jagannath Temple is the 2nd biggest Temple in Odisha, Tikali Jagannath is the 2nd ancient most, Pratapgiri carries the biggest image and widest Badadanda. The saying in Odiya goes like, Khallikote deul (temple) Jarada gahala (rush), Pratapgiri Ratha, Bije Nagar Yatra (festival), Seragada Mandani (decoration) and Dharakote Adheni (celebration), this tells about the top in kind and quality in the state of Ganjam district as well as in Odisha.

Jagannath Temples at other areas of the District :

The cult of Jagannath is the culture of Ganjam District. In each and every inhabited village mostly carries at least one Jagannath Temple or a Dadhi Baman Murty associated with other God and Goddesses of Vaisnavism. Similar to this the Temples are at Konisi, Randha, Golonthara, Girisola, Chatrapur, Rajpur Bipulungi, Purushottampur, Kodala, Buguda, Balipadar, Belguntha, Kumari, Kanaka, Sunathara, Sahapur, Raipur, Sikula, Hinjilikatu, Rambha, Huma, Kukudakhandi, Hinjilikatu and in almost all remote and urban areas, and so the observance of all the yatras is very popular with car festival in whole of the district. Chikiti, Dharakote, Digapahandi, Mahuri and so all other zamindari estates have their Jagannath Temples from the times immemorable basically from the second half of fifteenth century. During the partition and formation of the New Odisha province, the

Temples of Budharsingi, Tekkali, Jalantara, Manjusha, Tarala, etc, are in bichhinnanchala (Andhra Pradesh).

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