



Eulogising the Grandness of Lord Jagannath by Saints and Poets Through Ages

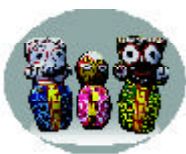
Tarakanta Mohanty

Lord Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe is the most adorable and revered God for all faiths in Odisha, India and abroad. All the main five deities of Hinduism have been merged in Him. He is represented as a Supreme Lord to Saivites, Shaktas, Ganapatyas, Saurasas and Vaishnavas. Vajpeyi Vidyakara Mishra, the famous Sanskrit Odia writer prays to Lord Jagannath as follows :

"Pranipatya Jagannatham Charachara Gurum Harim Markandaya toha tustwa bhoga peryanakasayinam (Nityachara Paddhati)" Indravuti, the then king, Udiyana (Odisha) who founded Bajrayana system of Buddhism has invoked in his Jnanasiddhi as Jagannath. "Pranipatya Jagannatham Sarvajana vava chitam sarva Buddhamayam Siddhivyapinam Gaganopaman." Puri the abode of Lord Jagannath has been frequented by saints and seers and the poets who have sung and composed on Lord Jagannath. Those are rhetoric and sensuals and of high vocabulary. The poets of Odisha have exhausted their pens and panegyric writing on Lord Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe. Thus poets and writers of Odisha have used their facile pen under the illuminating influence of Lord Jagannath for more than a thousand years past.

Not Adisankaracharya but Adisankaracharya's disciple in the end of 8th century A.D. paid a visit to Puri and after beholding Lord Jagannath he was overwhelmed and swayed by emotion he recalled the Krishnalila and instantly sung 'Kadachit Kalindi tata bipine' which is popularly known as Jagannathastakam. Once you appeared in the woods on the banks of Kalindi. Oh Lord, the master of the universe, appear in my vision'.

The great Vaishnava poet Jayadev of 13th century Orissa, certainly did not complete his matchless lyrics in the 'Gitagovinda' to please any earthly potentate but to please Jagannath who is considered nothing but Krishna. Jayadev was the poet in the temple of Lord Jagannath. Most probably his great book 'Gita Govinda' was composed according to a plan for dancisation of the sublime Krishnapadam before Jagannath. The reincarnated Krishna and Jayadeva's songs have become part of the daily rituals of the temple of Jagannath. The songs composed during British and pre-British period are nothing but the lovely offshots in vernacular of those divine love and lyrics of Jayadev in Sanskrit. Poet Jayadev's 'Dasavatara Stotam' is a magnum opus of his creation.



The mediaeval saint Kabir of the sixteenth century India is a secular saint who had endeavoured throughout his lifetime to bring harmony between Hindus and Muslims is also popularly known as a saint of 'Ram-Rahim' cult. On beholding Lord Jagannath he had sung 'Kabse chhodi Mathurapuri kabse chhodi Kasi ab ho geya tu Jhadkhanda ki basi'. Since when you left Dwarka Mathurapuri and Kashi now you are the inhabitant of Jhadkhanda. He has sung many more poems on Lord Jagannath.

Not only Santha Kabir paid a visit to Puri, but after him saint Tulsi Das, Guru Nanaka, Lord Chaitanya, Shankar Dev of Assam, Ramanujacharya, Nimbarkacharya, Madhabacharya and Ballavacharya from south had a visit to Srimandir.

In the sixteenth century Nanak paid a visit to Odisha. When in the evening prayer in Srimandir, he sang the dish of Your light is as bright and due to your grace I see light and the world will be plunged into darkness if You do not exist.

Sri Chaitanya had seen Lord Krishna in Lord Jagannath, therefore he had submitted - unconditional love to Lord Jagannath. His prayer is as such : Na dhanam, na janam, sundari, kabita ba Jagadish kamaye, mama janmani janma disware Ahetuki Jagadish kamaye.

Meaning : "I do not want wealth, I do not want to become a Pandit rather I pay my unconditional love to you."

The first Odia woman writer Madhavi Dashi, contemporary of Sri Chaitanya wrote 'Gajapati Janana' in the 16th century.

Sarala Das, the earlier Odia poet so far known referred to Jagannath in several

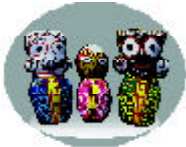
places of his work, the Mahabharat which had the largest circulation in Odisha. The 'Vilanka Ramayana' and Chandi Purana of the same poet contain prayer to Jagannath in the beginning of each work. Sarala Das though primarily a Sakta had the greatest respect for Jagannath the presiding deity of Odisha which testifies by hundred of respectful references to his glory and greatness in his works. The works of Sarala Das which are still very popular in Odisha contributed a lot to the popularisation of devotion to Jagannath in this land during the last five centuries.

During his period there existed two schools of devotion, Orissan School of Vaisnavism and the Goudiyavaisnavism. In Odia poetical work, the Rasakallola Jagannath has been described as 'Avataree', the father of all incarnations. At the end, he clearly states that he could accomplish the task of completing Kabya Rasakollala only due to the grace of Lord Jagannath.

His prayer to Lord is magnificent. 'Jaya Jagabandhu he Jadu Nandana, Brajabali hruda tata chandana, meaning Oh scion of Jadu, He is the sandal paste to the heart shore of Radha. Similarly Jagabandhu Parijane samanta nahin nahita, meaning 'there is no such feudal Lord like Jagannath.

No systematic devotional songs were written prior to sixteenth century. With the advent of Pancha Sakha, Jagannath Das, Achyutananda Das, Balaram Das, Yashwanta Das and Ananta Das. devotional songs were written. The Panchasakhas have offered prayers to Lord Jagannath in several of their works.

Devotional songs to Jagannath are found in many other important literary works. Mention may be made in this connection of

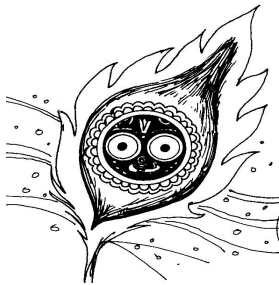


Lilavati by Raghunath Raja Harichandan, Kanchi Kaveri by Purusottam Das, Rasavinod by Dinakrushna Das-II, Anangarekha Ichhabati and Raghunath Vilas by Raja Dhananjaya Bhanja.

Achyutananda Das, who too was a prolific writer has respectfully referred to Jagannath in his several works of which Harivamsa was most important and popular.

Lastly, we can conclude by mentioning that, this mysterious God is eulogised not only by Hindu pantheon but also by different religious sects through ages.

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'Jagar-nout' You are Not

Prof. Rajat Kumar Kar

Gigantic size evoked titanic horror for foreigners
they called you 'Jager-nout' - the chariot
out to crush

Visitors coming on its way.

Oh ! my Lord ! How tragic it is
they could not gauge your depth
they could not go beyond the shore.

High waves threatened them
the shallow is rough, it is calm beyond
they could not comprehend.

Afraid and alarmed
wrong message they spread
but you remained unperturbed.

Vast you are very same as the sea
Your expanded self
standing at the shore
undeterred by the sound of furious waves.

He, who sees the calm sea afar,
gets you

the breeze over the calm bay
makes the body cool
takes his stress away.

Symbol of ultimate source !
closing my eyes before You
I neither see You calm or furious
I am lost in Your vast expansive existence.

Jager-nout you are not
between soul and source
you are the knot
In deep meditation
on Your ever vigilant eye
You are pursued my Lord
and ultimately caught.

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