



## The Gopinath Temple of Remuna

Devidutta Das

Nestling on the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal lies the small, quiet town of Balasore. Balasore boasts of a unique combination of tradition and modernity, science and religion. This place encapsulates not only, an expansive defence range for the experimentation and test of the Indian military artillery but also is a religious landmark for the Hindus of the country. Its increasing inclination towards a cosmopolitan ambience has not at all robbed its people of the religious bent of mind. The fact that thousands of visitors throng the various temples of Balasore validates the above statement.



Ten kilometres away from the town of Balasore lies the sleepy semi-town of Remuna. This place shelters five places of consecration, viz, Shri Khirochora Gopinath Mandir, Shri Ramchandi Mandir, Shri Madhabendra Puri Matha, Saptasara river, Gadagadeswara Mahadeva Mandir. Out of these five emblems of religious fervour, Shri Gopinath

Mandir is the one which has gained global popularity because of the story that underlines its existence in the tiny town of Remuna. The legend behind the origin of Lord Gopinath lays down that, in the *Tretaya Yug*, Shri Ramachandra had been in exile along with his wife Sita and brother Lakshman. When, Shri Rama was in *Dandakaranya*, one day on watching a cowman tending to his cows, he smiled a bit. Sita, on seeing her husband smile, inquisitively asked the reason behind that smile. Rama predicted that in the *Dwapar Yug*, he will take birth as Lord Krishna and would in the same way tend to the cows at the banks of river Yamuna. On listening to

this prediction, Sita insisted Rama to show her an image of Lord Krishna. Lord Rama on the request of goddess Sita engraved an image of Shri Krishna on a black granite stone lying over there. As soon as goddess Sita laid her hands on the image, it came into life. With the passage of time, this engraved stone was found by King Langula



Narasimha Deva and installed it in Remuna. From that day onwards that image was worshipped as Lord Gopinath. Another legend lays down the story that Remuna got its name from the fact that it was *Ramanya* or a very beautiful landscape. It was such a beautiful place that, Lord Gopinath instructed the King Langula Narasimha Deva in a dream that he wanted to get worshipped in that place. The King obeyed the instructions and constructed a temple on the very place and named it Shri Gopinath Mandir. In the course of time, Shri Chaitanya's guru Ishwarpuri and Ishwarpuri's guru Shri Madhavendrapuri came to Remuna and ultimately the image that was established in the temple was christened Sri Gopinath. Thus this place gained immense popularity in the whole of India.

The full name of Gopinath Mandir is Khirachora Gopinath temple. Khirachora means one who stole the milk bhog (ambrosia). Every aspect of the temple has a story attached to it. In the same manner this name also has an interesting story behind the christening of the temple. It is believed that Shri Madhavendrapuri, one of the devout devotees of Lord Gopinath had once visited this temple. After completing his prayer, he wanted to have the Khira bhog (the milk ambrosia) but as was his want, he never begged for food. With a heavy heart, he went to the nearby Ramachandi temple and started singing hymns in praise of Lord Gopinath. It is a daily ritual in the temple that every day twelve pots of Khira bhog are offered to the God. On that very day when those twelve pots of offerings were offered to the Lord, the priests found it to their utter surprise that one pot of the milk bhog was missing. The priests desperately searched for the missing pot, as it was regarded a bad omen if God's offerings are stolen. To their disappointment, they found nothing. That very



night, the Lord appeared in a dream of the chief priest of the temple and laid bare the whole secret behind the mystery of the stolen milk pot. He said that it was none other than he who had stolen the milk pot and hidden it inside the cloth that his idol is wearing. He further instructed the priest to immediately go and offer the pot of bhog to his favourite devotee, Shri Madhavendrapuri. The priest at once woke up and went to the main chamber where the idols were there and to his surprise found a pot of bhog. He took it and immediately offered it to Shri Madhavendrapuri, who was quietly sleeping under a tree in front of the Ramachandi temple. This incident rapidly spread far and wide, thus bringing huge number of devotees to the place and worldwide popularity to the place. It is a crime to steal, but the God himself committed this crime for the love of his disciple. It is a rare instance of God serving his devotee. This temple exemplifies God's unflinching and true love for his ardent believer.

A visit to this holy place is, thus, a must for every believer of Shri Gopinath.

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Devidutta Das, Asst. Prof. of English, Silicon Institute of Technology, Bhubaneswar.