



Jagannath in the Name of Prashannadev at Basudevvpur

Dr. Pratap Kumar Nayak

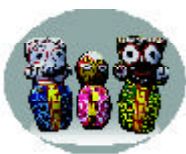
If we open the annals of the Odishan history or the history of Utkal from time immemorial we will be sure that it is full of mystery. Many emperors and Zamindars have risen and fallen into dust. It was a suitable place for intellectual, religious and spiritual attainments. The religious set up is yet to be known to the historians and scholars. Whatever progress has been made by Science, Information Technology and literature in the 21st Century the veil of darkness surrounds the culture of Jagannath. What is true to the faithful is not true to the historians. It cannot be denied that Jagannath had a tribal origin. The cult of Jagannath is a liberalized and globalized concept.

Utkal is taken into mean a glorious country. John Beam calls this country as the land of bird killers or the outlying territory (Ut-Kala=Kalit=Cut off). H.K. Mahatab treats Utkal to be a Sanskrit term derived from “Okkat”, a Canarise word, meaning cultivator of soil. Odisha is very well known as land of temples and specially for Jagannath who is regarded as the Lord of the Universe. Jagannath culture became popular under the fostering leadership of Gangas and Suryavamsi Gajapatis in every nook and corner of Odisha. For popularizing the culture of Jagannath the Gajapatis extended their royal support. Consequently a good number of Jagannath temples were erected in various parts of Odisha.



Lord Prashanna Dev

Odisha is full of archaeological treasures ranging from the prehistoric times to the end of the Muslim race. Basudevvpur, the remote village of the past, very nearer to the blue water of the Bay of Bengal, the area of nationalists in the pre-independence era, in the north of Odisha has a unique destination of being a rich store house of antiquities. The concept of a deity for a state and a region is an inherent concept which historians and scholars have marked for the age old civilization of Egypt. Gods and deities were accepted with absolute tolerance. Gods and the forces of the nature have been personified from the time immemorial. The geographical location of Basudevvpur is that it is 14 kms away from the National Highway-05 but presently NH-16 to the west, 7kms away from the Bay of Bengal in the



east. It was full of jungles and trees in the remote past. Transportation was not there. Barter system was prevailing in the area where one deity Jagannath in the name Prashanna Dev was worshipped alone. This temple is just 2kms away from Basudevpur.

The date proposed for the construction of present “Prashanna Dev Temple” at Basudevpur is surrounded with mystery and doubt. No treatment has been given by the Archaeological Department or the Govt. of Odisha to know the history of the temple. Nor even any excavations have been made to ascertain the construction and time of the building of the temple. The dates may be within 1500 to 1700 A.D. as stated by some of the senior citizens of Basudevpur.

There are several tales about the temple of “Prashanna Dev”. Long time back at the time of rule of the king of Pataspur, Suryanarayan (nearer to Srijanga of Balasore) his daughter Mallika fell in love with Kumar Achyuta (the son of his Commander) and got married. The king did not approve it so they escaped for life. But they lost their life by the order of the king leaving two sons at the Sri Mandir Math under the Mataji Baidehi who had direct contact with the Jagannath temple of Puri. These two sons were named as Chaku and Maku Bhoi who were brought up under the guidance of the Gajapati King as Rout. At the time of Afghan invasion one Afghan Commander who is popularly known as Kalapahad invaded Gajapati King and dethroned the Hindu deity the Jagannath. But unfortunately these two brothers were driven away from the royal harem and deported. Finally Chaku and Maku came to the path of Maa Ankudeswari “one Goddess of Binayakpur of Basudevpur Block (Taluk)”. At night Maa appeared before them and told this was the time to save the king of Palia and the God Biranchi Narayan who was in danger from the Muslim attack. From Palia they marched towards Tihidi to Basudevpur. Chaku started his

reign. At last Chaku gained Ankuda and Maku regained Pataspur by the grace of Maa Ankudeswari.

It is said that the legal heir of Chaku Bhoi is Basudev Sudhala Dev Harichandan Bhuian. It is assumed that after his name “this area is named as Basudevpur”. To some others, in the name of God Prashanna Dev the area is named as Basudevpur. Another legend is there, one Basudev Ray of Khurda royal family who had been to this area and under his leadership he merged Veda, Ankuda and ruled. For which it is named Basudevpur. Fact or a fiction Basudev Harichandan defeated 14 (Fourteen) Mahalas (Subas) and became the unchallenged leader of Veda and Ankuda. As because he was the leader of superb quality he opened Mallaha Sahi, Akhada Badi where Bir Hanuman was worshipped. Exact date can't be traced because of non-availability of records. So it may be pointed out that in between 1500-1600 A.D a new rule started in this Zamindari. His immediate successor was Choudhury Kunjaban Rai Chandan.

Legend

There are several folk lores and stories regarding the deity Prashanna Dev. The first one is that, there was a Kusuma Pokhari in the village of Artung 7 to 8km away from Basudevpur towards north and it was very nearer to the Bay of Bengal. During the reign of Choudhury Bidhu Bhusan some cow watchers saw a stone in the Pokhari. They used to play with that stone. But the Zamindar (Ruler) of Kaida (Mangaraj) dreamt about that stone who was no other than “God Baladev”. Next day he visited that Pokhari and realized his dream. But he couldn't bring that stone because that was under the Ankuda Zamindari (rule). News reached at Basudevpur and the ruler (Zamindar) with his followers approached the Pokhari and saw the truth. After a thorough discussion one amicable settlement was made. Basudevpur Zamindar allowed the stone to the



Mangaraj with some rewards and it was worshipped as God Baladev at Gud.

Others say the Zamindar of Basudevpur left with much grief and sorrow to his palace. But in the night God Jagannath appeared before him



(Lord Prashanna Dev Temple)

and directed to go and dry the pond. Miraculously there were two stones laying in the mud buried of that pond. Before the sunrise he again marched with pomp and pleasure and found two stones. One is called Jagannath and another is called Subhadra who is being worshipped now at Padhuan as “Kanak Durga”. The Zamindar was highly delighted by the grace of the God for which he named it as “Prashanna Dev”.

Temple Structure

Built on a high plinth the temple of Prashanna Dev conforms to the feature of old architecture comprising the Ratna Bedi, Jagamohan, Natamandira and Snana Mandap. The temple represents the Rekha type of temple. The height of the main temple is 40 feet 6 inches, length 18’6" and breadth 17’4". Left to the Singhdwara there is a Snana Mandap which is 13’3" length and 10’2" breadth and the height of it is 3’7". The very striking thing is that the Ratna Mandap is 6/5 feet in length and breadth and height 3 feet. Another temple called Mukhasala was there but presently it is ruined. To the left of

the temple SriRam and right of the temple Srikrishna are worshipped as side Gods. A striking monument with marked elegance in front of the Singhdwara is the Garuda Stamba and Aruna Pillar which was added to the temple latter on.

Rituals & Festivals

The rituals in the temple take place thrice a day. Puja starts at 6AM with cheese as bhoga, in the noon Avada and in the night Balya Bhoga (Khair and Ukhuda). Whatever festivals we observe in the Srikshetra here we see that except “Chandan Yatra”. Ratha Yatra is observed with much pomp and pleasure under the religious patronage of Choudhury family. Mausai Maa Mandir is there towards the east of the temple adjacent to A.B. College, Basudevpur called Balinagar. The Yatra inspires vim and vitality among the inhabitants of Basudevpur. The Rath of Prashanna Dev initially was of 16 wheels but now it is reduced to 4 wheels only. The representative of Prashanna Dev is called “Dola Gobinda”. Bigrah Prashanna Dev is purely made of stone not of wood. Had it been made of wood there would have been “Navakalebara”. So it indicates it is made of granite. Since 1700 A.D Jagannath is worshipped here as Prashanna Dev.

Garuda Stamba

During the British period 4 year settlement was made at Basudevpur in the year 1899 and taxes were collected as Taiji, Mahal and Janaral and the area was reconstituted. In 1909-10 another settlement was made by the Biharies which is called 15 years settlement. For the first time Kabala was prepared and Patta system introduced in this locality. But neither the Britishers nor the Biharies have interfered in the Zamindari of the Choudhury. In 21st century excavations have revealed many undiscovered truths.

Dr. Pratap Kumar Nayak, Department of History, A.B. College, Basudevpur.