Regarding the factors leading to the destruction of Buddhism in the land of its birth, the postulated theories suggesting the causes like-"the emergence of Brahmanism as a strong powerful force in 8th and the penetration of Islam into India in 11th Century A.D. with fanatic and iconoclastic attitude"; "the growth of Trancnicism in the Buddhist cult"; "the old age or seer exhaustion and moral decadence of Buddhism" and "the departure of Buddhist scholars en masse to China causing brain-drain" are appeared baseless as it is observed that the Buddhism is surviving till today in the socio-religious life of the Indian people. Out of the four principal dhamas (religious centres), the Puri in Odisha (the seat of Lord Jagannath) is considered as one.

Odisha has been witnessing and experiencing the flow of Buddhism in its socio-cultural life which is also passing through following a policy of ‘withdrawal and return’. The growth of Vajrayana and Tantrayana in Mahayana Buddhism are said to have fostered in the land of Odisha; it influenced and also, is influencing the Odia-cult since the days of its origin. A lot of theories have been developed ascribing to the growth of Jagannath cult tinged with Buddhistic ideological perspectives, the Sunya-theory of Vajrayana and trio-theory of Buddhism in general. Historians like William Hunter, Cunningham, R. L. Mitra, Monier Williams, H. K. Mahatab and many others advocate that the Jagannath temple prior to its Vaisnavisation in the ninth century was a Buddhist shrine. The three schools of Tantrayana, i.e. Vajraayna, Kalachakrayana and Sahajayana are believed to manifesting its spirit in the Jagannath cult. The word Vajra commonly rendered as the thunderbolt is taken here to connote the immutable adamant nature of the dharmas. It has been said Sunyata, which is firm substantial, indivisible and impenetrable, incapable of being burnt, and imperishable, is called Vajra.

The term kala signifies time, death and destruction. Kalachakra is the wheel of destruction and Kalachakrayana means the vehicle for protection against the wheel of destruction. Every syllable of the word Kalachakra is said to be pregnant with meaning. Thus the syllable ‘ka’ indicates unruilled causality in which there should be the final absorption as is indicated by the syllable ‘la’; ‘cha’; indicates the unsteady mind, and ‘kra’ means the series of event or the process; Kala, therefore, means the state of absorption in the original cause potency, and this is the state of Sunyata; it is due consciousness or the principle of subjectivity. Chakra, on the other hand means...
the principle of knowability, or the cycle of world process, which is also the principle of Upaya. Kalachakra, therefore, means the absolutely unified principle of Prajna and Upaya. The word ‘Sahaja’ literally means easy; it makes man realize the truth in the most natural way i.e. by adopting the path through which the human nature itself leads.

Jagannath, the lord of the whole universe, the life and the breath of Odia people, dwells on the Nilachala (Blue Mountain) or Srikheta or Purusottama, is the stir and vibration of Odia life. The essence of Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism is merged and incorporated with each other in the Jagannath cult. Kapila Samhita rightly mentions that:

“Sarveamapi devanm Raja SriPurusottama Sarvesamapi Kshetranam Raja SriPurosottamah”.

The Trio-theory of all religious faiths finds deserving position in the Jagannath cult. This theory is well analysed by B. Panda in his article “Jagannath – The Incarnation of Buddha”. In the Anakara theory of Sunya philosophy, the ‘trio’ is Niranjana, Sunya and Jyoti; The Visarga theory of Yoga is represented by Sarbangasundar purusha, Amanab Purusha and Nirvana kala; Uttam Purusha, Akshara Purusha and Vakshara Purusha are the three main components in the theory propounded by Gita. The Sakti theory of the Saktas believes in the Tara, Bhubaneswari, Mahakali again recalling the trio. In the Mahavindu theory of Saivas, the trio is symbolized as Bhairava, Siva and Durga; the Vaishnava’s seshasayi ascribe as Sri Vishnu, Shri Shesadeva and Sridevi or Bhûdevi. In Narayana theory of Krishna philosophy the trio has been manifested as Sri krishna, Balarama and Subhadra Ekanamsa. The Refarudha theory of Sriraâma philosophy takes that as Srirama, Lakshmana and Janaki; the Jaina Triratna philosophy recognizes this trio as Purusottama, Purusha and Salaka; the triranta theory of Buddhism also describes this Buddha, Dhamma and Samgha. Cunningham proposes that Jagannath Triad represents the Buddhist Triad-Buddha, Dharma and Samgha of which Dharma is always represented as female. In this theory of Jagannath cult the Omkarvadin sees Kala, Vindu and Nada and Akara, Úkara, Makara, whereas the Panchattattvavadin finds there in the panchattatva viz, Gana, Surya, Sakti, Sankara and Narayana. Hence it is said that:

“Yam Saivâh Samupasate Siva iti Brahmeti Vedantino Bouuddhah Buddha iti Pramana Patavah Kareti Naiyayikah Ahrannityatha Jinasasanarthah Karrmeti Mimaunsakah Soyam Vo Bidadhata Vânchita Phalam Trailokyo Natho Harih”

K. C. Misra holds an opinion refuting the theory that Jagannath is not Buddhistic as Jagannath is purely a Hindu deity. He
strengthens his theory on the basis of ritualism practised in both the faiths, while Jagannath worship is based upon an elaborate ritual Buddha never believed in ritual. His ignorance over the elaborate ritualism adopted by the Vajrayana Buddhist deserves to be mentioned and analysed. In the rites and worships of Vajrayana Buddhist, the articles required for use are incense, lamp, conch-shell, bell, perfumes, flowers, garlands, sesamum (Tila), grains (Yaba), seat (Asana), flag, jar, cloth, ornaments, fried paddy (Laja), unboiled rice (Akshata), offerings (Arghya and Anjali) the five preparations from cow-milk (Panchagavya), the five sweets (Panchamrita) i.e the mixture of milk, curd, honey, molasses and ghee are found to be used. It is accompanied by laughing (hasya), artistic gesture and movement (lasya), music, dancing, playing on musical instruments, etc. Besides the use of yantra, mantra (sound), mudra (posture and gesture) and mandala (circle) and upachara in the daily rituals of Lord Jagannath suggests to the influence of Buddhist-tantra. B. Bhattacharya believes that the Hindu Mantric system is later than Vajrayana, and for holding that the mantras were incorporated into Hinduism bodily from Buddhism. It is asserted that mantra, mudra and mandala will support to create suitable mental condition for devotion and meditation. It is also found that the worship of Jagannath begins with the utterances of bija-mantra which probably influenced by bijamantra of Tantrayana; though the system of bijamantra is very common in the Hindu Tantras. It has often been assured in the Buddhist Tantras that in response to the muttering of these bijamantras the ultimate void Sunyata will transform herself into the particular form of god or goddess and confer infinite benefit on the reciter. The same belief is found in the Hindu Tantras. The bijamantra of Sri Jagannath i.e. Om, Hrim Hlim, Srim Klim Dhlrim appears to be a synonym of tantric bijamantra, Om Hrim Strim Hum Phat.

R. K. Sahoo goes to such an extent identifying Lord Jagannath as a syncretic and synthetic product of aboriginalism and Buddhism. He proves it suggesting the theory that the round eye (Chakadola) of Sri Jagannath symbolizes supreme wisdom (Prajna), perfect awakening (Sambodhi) and right view (Sanyaka Drishti) which are chiefly attributed to Lord Buddha. Buddha had already been considered as an Avatara, Avtari, Upasya long before the recognition of Hindu pantheons which is evidently known from the Buddhist stupas of third century B.C. The historians are of opinion that the twenty four Avatars as described in the Bhagavata has been influenced by Buddhism. The Buddhist and Jainas as well have also 24 Buddhas and 24 Tirthankaras which led the instance to arrive at such a conclusion. Mayadhar Mansingh, a famous Odia poet, finds the Jaina, Buddhist and Saivite characteristics being present in the daily practices of this temple even to-day. He also believes that “the pedestal inside the temple of Jagannath on which the trinity now stands, is called Ratnavedi and most probably as a result of usual shortening of syllable in common speech the original expression Triratnavedi (pedestal of three Buddha ratnas or jewels) has become merely Ratnavedi.

The slow and steady decline of the Mahayana Buddhism is noticed during the Mathara rule, i.e. 4th century AD, who were found to promote and patronize the ‘brahminisation process’ in the society. A probable dictum must be laid down here that in the culture shift process, the embryo one nourishes by the root-culture. Perhaps, an unnoticed slow and steady conversion from Buddhism to Hinduism was going on incorporating, assimilating and integrating the
Buddhist way of life, principles and thought to the Hindu-fold. A religious asylum was sought in Lord Jagannath who was believed to be no other than Lord Buddha. So began the era of the Budhhaisation of Lord Jagannath. To legalize the concept that “Jagannath is the Lord Buddha”, numerous attempts had been made. Indrabhuti, one of eighty four Siddhacharyas and the ruler of Uddiyana (Sambalpur of Odisha), described Lord Jagannath as the Buddha in his famous treatise JnanaSiddhi. He was found invoking Lord Jagannath as the Buddha from time to time in different verses of his work: it is mentioned below:

Pranipatya Jagannatham Sarvajina Vararochita
Sarvabuddhamayam siddhi Vyapinogagonopam

(Ist verse of Ch.I)

Lord Jagannath is saluted who is worshipped by all the noble (best) jinas (people). He is Buddha the embodiment of all efforts and accomplishments and pervades like the sky.”

Besides, in another verse, Indrabhuti also described Lord Jagannath as;

“Sarvajnahsarvaradasi cha sarvalokarthakârakah
Tatra tatra Jagannathai darisitha
karunatmahbhah”

(21st verse of Ch.I)

“Lord Jagannath is omniscient, all-seeing and beneficial to all human beings. Wherever you see Him, He is found as the embodiment of sympathy and compassion.”

In the JnanaSiddhi, the idols of Lord Jagannath are described as ‘Ratnakraya’. The colour of triratna is described in this book as sukla (white), pîta (yellow) and krushna (black) which is a symbolic representation of the Jagannath Triad. Further, in the Chapter XV of the same treatise, a symbolic representation of the Budhhicitta with gada (mace), Chakra (wheel) to destroy the ajnana (ignorance), padma (signifying wisdom) and the samkha (conch) to destroy the world’s suffering have been made. There is also reference to Lord Jagannath as the Buddha in the ‘Prajnopaya Vinischaya Siddhi’, a treatise composed by Ananga Vajra, who was a disciple of King Indrabhuti. In this book he prays to Lord Jagannath as the symbol of sunya (void) and jnana (wisdom).

Jnanamitra of Tripura (12th – 13th AD), a monk of JagadalaVihâra and well versed in guhyatantras and in various Mahayanic scriptures was a great devotee of Lord Jagannath and very often he was getting into the temple of Puri, where he was performing various miracles. Taranath believes that when this Acharya was once ill-treated inside the temple, the images of Lord Jagannath lost their hands and feet, as well as their former magical efficiencies. Around 13th Century AD, the Buddha was one of the ten incarnations of Lord Jagannath, i.e. the 9th incarnation had already become an established fact. The famous Vaishnava poet Jayadev while praying to Lord Jagannath is found to invoke Lord Buddha as the ninth incarnation. Taking an account of the idolatry form and shape of Lord Jagannath, it is to be believed that they must be called a-lekha (which could never be written), or sunya (void, or vacuity) bearing a transformed version of the Buddha.

It is interesting to note the difference between Tandra Patnaik and Prabhat Mukharjee regarding the period of Budhhaisation of Lord Jagannath who hold that it was done in the year of eleventh or thirteenth century A.D. Buddha has been given the status of the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, in such works as the Bhagabatam, Kshemendra’s Divadana Kalpanâ and Jayadeva’s Gita Govinda. Jaya
Deva the famous Odia poet, in his *Gita Govinda* seems to have conceived an Adi Buddha, who would fit the conception of Fish, Tortoise and Boar incarnations. Ramai Pundit in his book *Dharma Puja Vidhana* describes the deity on the sea coast as Buddha Himself. The Odia *Santhita* literature is also found to portray Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu.Sudramuni Sarala Das, the harbinger of renaissance in Odia literature through the composition of the great Odia epic ‘Mahabharat’ has also been found saluting Lord Jagannath in the name of the Buddha. He was the immediate predecessor of the Panchasakha. Some of his verses are mentioned below:

“Kaliyuge charilaksha batisasahasra parijante
Baudhrupe puja paibe Nilasundar parvate.”

During Kaliyuga, Lord Jagannath would be worshipped as the Buddha on the beautiful Blue Hill for four lakh and thirty thousand years.

“Kaliyuge Bauddha Kesavapratimâ
Munibo Nilasundargirije uttamâ”

In the Kaliyuga, the Buddha would be manifested in the idolatry form of Kesava. I will be the best of the beautiful hill, i.e.,Blue Hill.

“Samsara jananku tariba nimante
Baudhharupe vije acchi Jagannathe”

It is for the redemption of the people of the universe, Lord Jagannath is present bearing the manifestation of the Buddha.

“Mahabuddha vikasha hoila tinirekha
Kara charana pallava nadisai sikha”

The Mahābuddha is appeared in the three blooming forms of three straight lines, i.e., Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath, and Mother Subhadra whose hands and feet are not visible.

Sri Chaitanya Das, another Vaishnava poet of Odisha, who is believed to appear just after Sarala Das or to be the contemporary of the Panchasakha is found to praise and glorify the Buddha in his famous treatise ‘Nirguna Mahatmya’ as nobler and greater than Sri Krishna. He made a comparative analysis between the character of Sri Krishna and Buddha. He is found to suggest that one should seek refuge in the Brahmajnana because the performances and observances of certain meritorious religious functions like yajna (sacrifices), tapasya (meditation), brata, dana (donation), tirtha (pilgrimage), bhoga (offering of oblation), achara (observances of rites and rituals), japa (prayer) and tarpana, etc. could not bring the perfect result. This Brahma Jnana is the self-knowledge which is undestructable and inseparable it is also comparable to the Buddha-Narayan.

The spirit of the Buddhanisation of Lord Jagannath is found to have precipitated more in the ideological concepts of the Panchasakha. The philosophy of the Buddha and Buddhism is found to cast an insurmountable influence on the life, character and the thought of the Panchasakha. In their literary compositions, they have left no stone unturned to prove the fact that Lord Jagannath is no other than the Buddha and the great Sunya. An analytic explanation of the Panchasakha makes the social-scientist to portray them as no other than the ‘Panchadhyani Buddhas’ or they were the incarnation of the Buddha. S.N. Maharana believes that the spirit of the Buddhanisation of Lord Jagannath had been withdrawn to a great extent during the period of early-emergence of the Panchasakha and the process of Vishnuization was in a state of completeness. The Panchasakha are found to take further attempt to revive the lost spirit of the Buddhanisation-process, i.e. to prove that the
**Chaturddhamurtti** (four forms) of Lord Jagannath, or Radhakrishna are the symbolic representation of the Buddha, the *Sunya* and *Mahasunya*. They have made a fine critical synthetic operation anatomizing the ingrained philosophy in both the cults and have produced their unique philosophy. The charismatic treatment of the Buddha and Buddhism made by the Panchasakha had made it rise up like a phoenix.

The Panchasakha are found sometimes to evaluate Lord Jagannath as the Buddha; or sometimes they present the Buddha as one of the incarnation of Lord Jagannath. It is well perceived from the literary expositions of the Panchasakha. Balaram Das’s *Bhaba Samudra* (Ocean of Love) mentions:

“Hari ho-Baudhha Kalanki nana Rupaheu Balaramaku padare khatu”

“Hey Hari! You have been incarnated in different forms like the Buddha and the Kalki. You have made Balaram to serve at your feet.

Similarly, Atibadi Jagannath Das in his treatise ‘*Daru Brahma Gita*’ mentions that Lord Jagannath becomes devoid of hands and feet because of becoming Buddha. Achyutananda Das’s *Sunya Samhita*, a magnum opus, presents that Sri Krishna has considered Sudama as his half-soul and has made him his lady companion if need arises. From birth to birth, the Panchasakhas would be with Him. He promised to Sudama that they would further meet each other as Achyuta and Buddha. Again one of his incarnations, would appear as Chaitanya at Nadia Navdeep and would initiate the people with *Hari Nama*. Achyuta is also instructed that bearing the name, he would emancipate the gopalas (cowherd). Furthermore, their real master (i.e., Lord Jagannath) in the form of the Buddha would appear in the form of *Chatureddharupa*, i.e. Lord Jagannath, mother Subhadra, Lord Balaram and Sudarsan. It is also stated in the same book that Sri Hari would assume the wooden form during Kaliyuga and having been incarnated as the Buddha, he would enjoy a lot. He further mentions that Sri Hari in the form of the Buddha is dwelling on the Nilachala along with his family members. With extended and wonder looks, he sits in a calm and composed meditational form. He would arrest the mind and heart of the people without uttering a word and maintaining utter silence. He is an endless glorious being who would be perceived and be nearer through love and devotion. He would be far away from the man devoid of love and devotion. In *Sri Adi Samhita*, another classic treatise of Achyuta, it is mentioned that Anadi Brahma, the Guru (spiritual instructor) answering his disciple Vishnu’s queries about forthcoming incarnations, tells that He (the *Sunya*) leaving his natural abode would incarnate in the shape and form from the formless as Buddha-Vaishnava in this temporal world. In the eleventh *patala* of the above said book, the decision of the Mahasunya (The Great Void) is explained that He would incarnate Himself as the Buddha during the end of the Kaliyuga to propagate the concept of *Pinda-brahmanda-vada*, i.e. to make the people to be aware that the God resides within their body, mind and thought. A very interesting story is described in the Achyutananda’s *Chitta Binoda* that after Sri Krishna’s departure from this mortal world, King Yudhisthira along with his five brothers decided to make a journey to heaven with their temporal bodies leaving this world. On the way to Heaven’s journey, they came across a beautiful Blue-Hill situated on the shore of the Mahodadhi which would be a seat of Sri Krishna in future where he would be worshipped in the form of the Buddha. It is further stated in the same book that to save the people of Kaliyuga
from the suffering and the deluge, Sri Krishna would leave Biswabasu, the chief of the Sabara tribe, by whom He was worshipped in the iconic form of Nilamadhav and would assume the form of the Buddha to be worshipped on the bank of the Blue-Ocean. Achyuta, further, describes that as all the efforts of the King Indradyumna and his generals failed to remove the idol of Vishnu (Nilamadhav) of Sabara Biswabasu from the Vyaghra-cave (tiger-cave), the King got worried and thought what happened. In such a critical situation, a voice was heard from the Sunya (void) telling the king not to be perplexed. As this iconic form would lose importance during Kaliyuga, He would manifest himself as the Buddha. In spite of the presence of multi-religious beliefs in Kaliyuga, the Buddha would be honoured by all religious sects.

It seems that Achyutananda develops his own notion theorizing Lord Jagannath as a symbolic representation of the Lord Buddha; that the Jagannath philosophy is a derivative of the Buddhist ideologies. ‘Chhabisa Pamamala’, another classic literary composition of Achyuta highlights that the dweller of Mahasunya, who is the Guru-Narayana, when found that his devotees were in a state of stress and strain during Kaliyuga, emerged out of the Brahmamandal in the form of the Buddha. Achyuta admits that his God is the Buddha-Narayana. Explaining the causes of the Buddha-avatar, Anadi Brahma said that he decided to manifest as the Buddha because the gods and goddesses were propitiated through sacrifices and became blood thirsty through destroying the animal kingdom; they enjoyed different oblations satisfying and fulfilling the desires of the people; the gods, the kings and the subjects had lost their conscience and violated the morality spreading the earth with untruthfulness. So seeing all these sorry state of affairs leading to the path of destruction and towards the deluge, He was awakened from the Sunya with a form through breaking the sky with a single syllable and a single sound, i.e. Om to save the world and for the benefit of the self-less devotees. Achyutananda’s Anadi Brahma is found to instruct and impart certain principles to be followed by the householders. They are: they should not worship different gods and goddesses but of the Anadi Brahma; the fundamental duties of a man is to follow truth, to love others, to serve the mankind, and to practise forbearance; one must keep himself far away from the violence, the shrewdness, complexities; one should not think of about the loss and gains; Anadi Brahma further tells that if one is not sincere in discharging his duties and becomes evil-mind then it could lead to a sinful state. It is further stated that it might be leading Anadi Brahma to be incarnated as the Buddha to disseminate the knowledge and wisdom after which he will again assume the Sunya form. It is mentioned in the Achyutananda’s ‘Kalptika’ that Pitavasa (Lord Jagannath) assuming the form of the Buddha would reincarnate as Kalki. In the Chausathi Pattala, it is described that after killing Kamsasura in the form of Krishna, he was further reincarnated as a Buddha at Puri to propagate the cult of non-violence and this was His ninth incarnation.

Further Achyutananda Das refers to at least three sects of Buddhism. Viz. Nagantika, Yogântika and Vedantika in this work. T. Patnaik evaluates Nagantika, Yogantaka and Vedantika as the followers of Nagarjunapada (the famous Siddha of Tantric Buddhism), Yogachara and Sautantrika Schools of Buddhism respectively. Names of some tantric siddhas are also mentioned in his work – like Gorakhanatha, Vira Singha and Lohi Dasa. Vira Singha, the author of Vira Singha Chautisa wrote on the Sunyavada theory of
It is observed that T. Patnaik strongly believes that Jagannath is the manifestation of Buddha. She has seen to developing Jagannath-Buddha theory on the iconographic evidences of Jagannath temple. She states that “The iconography of Jagannath temple bears strong evidence to this fact. The ten incarnations are found on the frieze over the main gate of this temple. Hence, we find Jagannath in the place of Buddha, the ninth incarnation. Similarly carving can be observed in the interior walls of the Natyamandapa, inside the Jagannath temple.

What is more interesting about the iconography is that in both the places Jagannath is presented as having a complete form with both hands and legs in tact. On the other hand, P. Mukherjee and K.C. Misra are found to refute the ‘Jagannath-Buddha’ theory on the ground of car festival, Snanajatra, Mahaprasad and caste distinction. P. Mukherjee holds the view that “Thus Jagannath has nothing to do with Goutama Buddha on his religion, though he became Neo-Buddha after the decline of the religion of Goutama Buddha.”

The idea of Yugabandha i.e. god (Upaya) in sexual union with goddess (Prajna) in iconographical form by which Buddha and Bodhisattvas were frequently represented and which is developed by Vajrayana’s Tantricism, has probably influenced the temple architecture of Odisha from 12th century onwards. The eroticism in the temple architecture of Odisha which is prominently reflected in all the great shrines, i.e. Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneswar, Jagannath Temple and Konark of Puri and other temples scattered in different parts of Odisha shows to what a great extent the Odia artists and sculptors were influenced by the Vajrayana cult of the Buddhism. Tara, the principal deity of Buddhist tantric cult is equated with Kali of Hindu faith. Corresponding to this goddess it is found in the Hindu pantheon Tara, Ugratara, Ekhata and Mahanila Sarasvati. In Odisha Tara cult is also prominently prevalent as She is found to be worshipped in the name of Ugratara (in Khurda district), Târini (Keonjhar district) and Tara-Tarini (Ganjam District), etc. Besides other Buddhist gods and goddesses are found to be Hinduised and worshipped by the people of localities. The Buddhist images discovered from the Prachi Valley are now worshipped as a subsidiary deity inside different temples.

All people of the Hindu faith, irrespective of caste distinction, and the offshoots of the Hindu religion like the Buddhists, the Jains and the Sikhs are permitted to enter inside the temple. The Jagannath cult preaches and promotes socialism which is the cardinal principle of the Buddhism. Philosophically, the Jagannath cult encourages to realise the God within one’s own self.

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