



Madhab Chandra Routray : The Hero of Tapanga

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Tapanga Garh was the most important out of 71 Garhs of Khurda kingdom. Madhab Chandra Routray was the Dalabehera of Tapang (in the present district of Khurda) in 1827 when Mukundadev was dethroned from the monarchy of Khurda. Madhab Chandra Routray was born in the illustrious family of Narasingh and Narayan Routray. Narayan Routray and Narasingh Routray were commanders-in-chief of the Gajapati King of Khurda who defended the kingdom from Mughal invasion during the days of Dibyasingh Dev. Tapang was the arsenal of the Gajapati King of Khurda. Madhab Chandra Routray, the Naik of Tapanga, was the lord of the ten thousand forces.

During the year 1827 the British forces came to Tapangagarh. They first came to the house of Chintamani Ransingh on 23rd May, 1827 for collection of land revenue. In the absence of Chintamani Ransingh, his wife Haramani was asked to pay taxes to the British. This brave woman warned the revenue peon of the British that if he enters, his head would be cut off with vegetable-cutter. Then Madhab Chandra Routray along with his followers arrived at the spot and ordered to drive out the British revenue officials from Tapanga. Not only the Paiks of Tapanga drove away the British people, but also they killed two peons of the British. This matter was reported to the Magistrate of Khurda who informed the incident to the Magistrate of Cuttack. British commander Harcourt arrived at Khurda and sent message to Tapanga to pay taxes. Madhab Chandra Routray preferred to face war

instead of paying taxes to the British. Madhab Chandra Routray prayed to Goddess Hasteswari, the presiding deity of Tapanga Garh, who promised to help him in the war against the British. Therefore, Madhab Chandra Routray along with Gobardhan Bairiganjan proceeded to Puri and met the Gajapati king and stated that they had not paid taxes during last ten years after the defeat Buxi Jagabandhu and Jayakrishna Rajguru. The king advised that fighting with the British was not that easy and Khurda kingdom was lost in spite of his huge army and excellent Commander-in-Chief. However, the king tied the turban of Commander-in-Chief on the head of Madhab Chandra Routray. Madhab Chandra Routray and his followers came back to Tapanga and summoned the seven Dalabeheras, dalais and Paik Karans on the 16th of June, 1827. The dalais of Malipada Gada, Naranagarh, Rathipuragarh, Kaipadar Garh, Jhinkijhari garh and Anda, all gathered near goddess Hastesware temple of Tapanga Garh on 24th of June, 1827. Division of duty was made amongst different Karans. The Kanjiagarh Kothakaran was in charge of store. The forces were looked after by Anda Kothakaran, and the Jhinkijhari Karan deployed the armed forces. Kanjiagarh in the east of Tapanga was selected as the war field. On the 25th of June, 1827, the army was kept in position. Madhab Chandra Routray worshipped goddess Hasteswari and his wife Indurekha garlanded the great hero and marked vermilion on his forehead. Madhab Chandra Routray was blessed by his mother Annapurna. The army of Tapanga



collected the arms from the arsenal near Hasteswari temple and proceeded to war. The Tapanga army was led by Gobardhan Dalai and Sri Dhanurjaya Srichandan. The Tapanga forces consisted of infantry, cavalry and elephant forces. Guns were fitted on elephant back.

On 26th June, 1827, Dhanurjaya Dalai was made the Commander-in-Chief by Madhab Chandra Routray. The Tapanga forces met the British army at Kanjiagarh on the same day. The British army consisted of two hundred cavalry and seven hundred gun-men under the command of Colonel Harcourt at Kanjiagarh war field. On the first day of the war 115 soldiers of the British and seven Tapanga Paiks were killed, on 27th June, 1827, the second day of war, Eighty soldiers from both sides were killed. Colonel Harcourt killed Dhanurjaya Dalai, the Commander-in-chief of Tapanga army on 28th June, 1827 on the 3rd day of war. An employee of Madhab Chandra Dalabehera named Mousum Karan played treachery and gave all secrets to the British at Khurda. The British promised to provide him with rent-free land. The traitor informed the British that Madhab Chandra Routray would not wield sword on Tuesday and therefore, the British, should attack on that day. On the 29th of June, 1827 Madhab Chandra Routray fought as Commander-in-Chief of Tapanga army and killed 85 British soldiers. Since the British Commander-in-Chief, Colonel Harcourt knew from Mousum Karan that on 30th June, 1827 Madhab Chandra Routray would pray to goddess Hasteswari on Tuesday and would not come to the war, the British started massive attack on Tapanga forces. It is said that goddess Hasteswari came in the form of Madhab Chandra Routray and killed 100 British forces on Tuesday. On that day the British forces ran away to Khurda to save their lives. The British army got secret information from Mousum Karan and Madhusudan Karan regarding the secret armoury of Tapanga forces in the forest near the temple of goddess Hasteswari. The British army marched towards

the Hatia hill and captured the armoury of Tapanga Dalabegera. Further, the British fired gun along with blood of cows. Because of the treachery of Madhusudan Karan and Mousum Karan, Madhab Chandra Dalabehera was defeated by British. Then he fled away to the forest, but his house was raided by the British who took away all his properties. Mousum Karan was given NIMAKHARAM JAGIR by the British. The people of Tapanga paid revenue taxes to the British and Tapanga was occupied by British.

Madhab Chandra Routray appeared to fire at the British Subedar at Chilika, when he found the general public producing salt were harassed by the British. The traitor Mousum Karan again informed the British that Madhab Routray was staying in the house of his father-in-law at Badaparigarh. He was likely to organize the people of Ranpur and Banpur and wield war against the British. The British sent 200 forces to Badaparigarh, but the illustrious Madhab Chandra Routray escaped. British agents searched for Madhab Chandra Routray, but they could not locate him. The British authorities announced prize and reward to obtain information about Madhab Chandra Routray. A reward of Rs.1,000/- was declared for capturing Madhab Routray. But he surrendered himself at Khurda fort, and the magistrate of Khurda arrested him, and then referred the matter to higher authorities at Cuttack. The British authorities realized the large heartedness of Dalabehera Madhab Chandra Routray and could guess that any punishment to this benevolent soul would create further disturbances in Khurda area. Therefore, the British decided to release Madhab Chandra Routray, who went away to Tapanga and lived happily with his people. He was a noble hearted person, besides being a patriot.

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