



The Mathas of Puri

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Puri is a unique place where large number of Mathas or religious establishments belonging to different sects are located around the shrine of Lord Jagannath. The Mathas were originally founded with the purpose of imparting education to *Chelas* or disciples and feeding travellers, ascetics and beggars. Gobardhan matha is one of the oldest Mathas in Puri and is believed to have been founded by Adi Sankaracharya in the 9th century A.D. Tradition assigns some mathas like the Vrugu Ashram and the Angira Ashram even to an earlier date. The Vaishnava Mathas belonging to different *Sampradayas* or sub-sects of the cult are numerous at Puri, of which Emar, Dakhinaprasabha and Rathavadas are supposed to be the richest. Prominent among the Goudyamathas are Radhakanta, Gangamata and Kathabhogo, whereas the Oriya, Sisu and few other mathas belong to the local sect of Utkaliya Vaisnavas. The Gobaradhana and the Sankarananda mathas situated near Swargadwar are saiva, and the Kabir chaura matha located in their vicinity belong to the followers of Kabir. There are two matha, viz., Bauli and Mangu which belong to the followers of Nanak. The Mahantas or the heads of these mathas usually pass on responsibilities to one of the chelas or disciples by way of succession, but there are a few mathas like Kothabhola, Kalitilaka and Achari where married Mahantas may hold the office.

Most of the mathas of Puri are connected with the worship of Jagannath and have various *sevas* or duties to perform in the Temple. The Mahantas are the Gurus or spiritual preceptors



of many people. In the past, they received from their wealthy followers liberal gifts of money and endowments in land for the worship of Jagannath and for other charitable purposes. The priests of the temple used to be trained at the Sankaracharya matha and only after obtaining a certificate from the matha were eligible to enter into priesthood and perform worship in the temple. But now this function is being performed by the Muktimandap. Rathavadas matha, besides other duties, arranges special bhogas in the temple during snana Yatra, Car festival, Chandan Yatra, Kumar Purnima, and along with Gopal Tirtha matha supplies the requirements for the Hatibesa of the deities, The



Oriya matha makes arrangement for the pankti bhoga in the Jagamohan during Rakminiharan festival and supplies Kala Sari (black cloth) to goddess Vimala. This matha is also vested with the duty of clearing the Rathnavedi and supplying of canopy and pillows for the Lords. The Record of right compiled under the Puri Shri Jagannath Temple (Administration) Act, 1952, mentions in detail the nities to be performed by certain mathas. Closely connected with the daily nitis and the festivals of Jagannath are the Mathas Jagannathballava, Raghavadas, Sri Ramadas, Emar, Uttarparasva and Oriya.

After their conquest of Orissa in 1803 the British Government took over the management of the temple for some Years and made an attempt to assess the properties of Jagannath including the vast landed properties endowed with the



mathas for the worship of the Lord. Mr.C.Grome, the Collector of Puri furnished a report in 1805 in which he gave an account of lands under the charge of the Mathadharis for the use of Jagannath.

The lands were endowed to the mathas by the donors with the specific purpose of offering some bhogas or performing certain sevas in the Temple of Jagannath or for performing other acts of charity and the Mathantas were mere trustees or marfatars. But being possessed of huge wealth

the Mahantas misutilised these assets. There was much public resentment. Some steps were taken by the British Government to resume endowments of the mathas which were grossly abused, but no tangible result ensured from such half hearted measures as the British Government had committed itself to the policy of not interference in religious matters. After the achievement of Independence the Orissa Hindu Endowments Act,1951, with its subsequent amendments put some effective control over the management of the religious and chartiable trusts. In case of gross mis-management the commissioner of Endowments was empowered to remove the hereditary system of a matha and appoint one or more persons to discharge his functions till the new trust was appointed in accordance with the Provisions of the (Act 1951, Section-35).

However the research scholars have prepared a list of maths available from official records like Gazetteer of Puri District 1929 and from the book "The Cult of Jagannath" written by Dr. K.C.Mishra. So a list of mathas belonging to various sects is furnished here for the ready reference of the readers though the list is not exhaustive.

List of Mathas at Puri

Name of the Mathas	Type, Sect (Sampraday)
Abadhuta Matha	Modern
Arjundas Mathas	Gouda Madhava
Angira Ashram	Angila
Achyuta Matha	Goudiya
Bada Santha	Ramanuj
Bada Matha	Khairata
BadaAkhada	Pancha Ramanandia
Bada Oriya	Ati Badi
Bauli Matha	Nanak Panthi
Balaram Kota	Ramanandi



Bada chhata	-do-	Hati Akhada Matha	Ramandi
Bada Jhadu	Angila	Haridakhandi Matha	-do-
Balagandi Matha	Ramanandi	Jagannath Ballava	Vishnuswami
Baba Bramchachar Matha	Gouda Madhava	Jagannath alias Patipabhan	Vishnuswami
Bali Babaji Matha	-do-	Jayapur Matha	Khairata
Bagha Akkhada	Pancha Ramanandi	Jagata Mohini Matha	Ramanuj
Bada Tarala	Madhwa Gaudeswar	Jatia Babaji Matha	Gouda Madhava
Bankimuhan Matha alias Padmacharan Das Matha	Atibadi	Jena Matha	-do-
Bisakha Matha	Gauda Madhava	Jejeram Matha	Ramandi
Bharati	Adwaita	Jhanjapita	Goudiya
Balbhadra Chhata	Madhwacharya	Jeer Swamy	Ramanuj
Chhauni	Ramandi	Jogada	Modern
Chaulia Matha	Gauda Madhava	Kabir Chaura	Kabirpanthi
Chikti Matha	Nimbarka	Kadali Patuka	Goudiya
Chakrititha Math alias Pandit Matha	Ramanuj	Kadali Patuka	Angila
Sri Ram Das Matha	Ramanuj	Kataki Matha	Ramanuja
Dasvatra Matha	Ramandi	Kanasa Matha	Gouda Madhava
Dampara Matha	Gauda Madhava	Krupa Samudra Math	-do-
Degrri Matha	Angila	Kasusalya Das	Ramanuj
Dukhishyma Baba Matha	Abdhuta	Kunja Matha	Goudya
Emar	Ramanuj	Kothbhoga	-do-
Falahari Matha	Abadhuta	Labanikhia Matha	Angila
Gangamata Matha	Goudiya	Languli Matha	Dasanami
Gandharava Matha	Goudya	Lunia Chowdhury	Goudiya
Gopal Tirth	Adwiata	Mahiprakar	Brahmachar
Gour Kishore Jew Matha	Goudya	Mangu	Nanakapanthi
Goswami Matha	-do-	Malei Matha	Angila
Ghumsar Matha	Ramandi	Mahaprabhujike Baitaka	Ballavakula
Girinaribant Adwata Bramhshara	Adwaita	Mahibiria Matha	Ramanuj
Haladia Matha	Gouda Madhava	Mani Ram Matha alias Kapudia Matha	Ramandi
Haridas Thakur Matha	Goudiya	Nandini Matha	Goudiya
Hati Gorudeva Matha	Ananta Sampradays	Naga Matha	Ramandi
		Narasinghari matha	Ramanuj



Nebal Das Matha	-do-	Samadhi Matha	Ramanju
Narayan Chhata Matha	Goudiya	Sanchhata	-do-
Nirmohi Akhada	Pancha Ramanand	Sanu Jhadu	-do-
Nua Matha	Ramanuj	Stalahari	Ati Badi
Nima Akhada	Pancha Ramanandi	Satasan Giridhari Matha	-do-
Nirbani Akhada	-do-	Sisu Matha	Utkaliya Visanava
Niranjana Chhata	Aghorapatnithi	Siddhu Matha	Ramanuj
Nidhi Das Matha	Gouda Madhava	Sitaram Kota	-do-
Nandi Matha	-do-	Sidhbakula Matha	Goudiya
Omkananath Sitram Das	Gouda Madhava	Sidha Bramchachari Matha	Madhwacharya
Paramanda Das	Goudiya	Suna Goswami	Goudiya
Punjabi Matha	Ramandi	Sundar Das	Pancha Ramandi
Purna Seva Matha	Angila	Siva Tirtha	Adwaita
Pada Matha	-do-	Sanu Oriya Matha	Atibadi
Piplayana alias Papudia Matha	Ramandi	Swargadwar Chhata	Ramanandi
Shri Purustooma math	Goudiya	Surangi Matha	Goudiya
Panjabi Matha	Ramandi	Sana Tarala alias	
Purna Seva Matha	Angil	Radha Kishrna Matha	-do-
Pada Matha	-do-	Sataprakar	Madern
Piplayana alias papudia Matha	Ramandi	Sena Santha	Gaudua Madhava
Shri Purustooma Matha	Goudiya	Trimiali	Ramanuj
Ramakrishna	Modern	Torani Chhatra Matha	Ramandi
Ramaji Matha	Nimbarka	Total Goponath	Goudiya
Radhavallavi	-do-	Uttara Parswa	Ramanuj
Radhakanta	Madhwa Goudeswar	Vania Chhatra	Khairat
Raghav Das	Ramanuj	Venkatchahari	-do-
Ramanuj Kota	-do-	Vruga Ashram	Angila
Ranganikachari	-do-		
Rima Chhatra	Khairata		
Rani Matha	-do-		
Rune Matha	Goudya		
Ramakrishna Matha	Dashnami Sannyasi		
Sankaranandi	Dandi Sannyasi		
Sankaracharya or Bhogobaradhan	-do-		

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