



Lord Jagannath and Goddess Maa Hingula

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"Goddess Hingula" is worshipped with great devotion by the people of the surrounding areas. It is located at a distance of 14 K.M. from Talcher. Goddess Hingula is believed to be the agni (fire) in the Kitchen of Lord Jagannath at Shree Mandir Puri. Maa Hingula, who manifests herself in form of fire is another name for cosmic mother. Every year on Bishnu Damanak Chaturdashi (Chaitra Sukla Chaturdashi), the Goddess gives darshan to Her devotees in a state of burning fire at a spot near Hingula temple in Gopal Prasad, one of the famous 'Shakti Pitha' in the country.

There are many similarities between Hingula Yatra and Ratha Yatra. It is said while Gopal Prasad is the 'Puja Sthali' of the Goddess, Shree Mandir is 'Here Karma Sthali.'

When Lord *Siva* had torn apart the body of Sati (Parvati), each of the 52 pieces that fell



was known as 'Shakti Pitha'. But a piece identified as Brahmandreya fell at Beluchistan of present Pakistan where shakti appeared in burning fire state. In course of time Nala Raja of Vidarva region of western India became an ardent devotee of Maa who resided in his kingdom. In Puri when the Raja decided to start 'anna prasad' Lord Jagannath responding to His prayer asked him to bring Hingula to manage his kitchen. Accordingly Puri Raja went to Vidarva and requested him to pray Maa to come to Puri. Nala Raja on the request of Puri Raja brought the Goddess on his wrapper in form of fire and in course of his journey reached at Gopalgarh where he took rest.

The Goddess told Raja in his dream that Gopalgarh will be Her 'Puja Pitha' and since 1575 Maa is being worshipped here through



the Hingula yatra. Birbar Harichandan was the first king of Talcher who started the festival.

On Sukla Chaturdashi of Chaitra month the Goddess takes leave from Sri mandir kitchen and gives 'darshan' to devotees here in form of burning fire. Before some days of the Chaturdashi, Maa appears near the temple and informs the chief 'Dehury' about the location of the burning spot which is kept surrounded with heaps of coal till the yatra. On the day of yatra, a canopy given by the king of Talcher is placed above fire and thousands of devotees

from far and wide irrespective of caste, creed and religion offer 'bhog' into the fire, but interestingly the canopy does not burn. After nine days a puja called 'sital' is performed on the spot by Talcher king and Dehury (Worshipper).

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