



## A Cult to Salvage Mankind

*Sarat Chandra*

The cosmic and terrestrial : both realities are reflected in the Jagannath cult of Orissa. The cosmic reality of the undying spirit which abides, endures and sustains; the cosmic reality of birth and death, as well as the beauty and refinement of the terrestrial world are mirrored in this all-inclusive religious practice. "*The visible and invisible both worlds meet in man*", sang the British poet T.S.Eliot in the *Four Quartets*. We may say that the Jagannath cult is designed to reflect both the visible, this-worldly realities as well as the cosmic phenomena. Hence, the cult reflects a life style of a god who has numerous human attributes.



This makes the God and the cult unique. Several traits characterize the God: the everyday rituals of bathing, brushing of teeth, dressing-up and partaking of food materials. But the traditions like the Car Festival (*Ratha Yatra*) and the adornments (*Beshas*) sets the deity apart, suggestive of aristocracy and refinement.

The Hindu inclusiveness is nowhere as evident as in the rituals of Lord Jagannath. Even romance is not excluded in the deity's schedule: Once in a week the God is closeted with his consort Lakshmi (in the ritual *Ekanta*). The *Sayana Devata* golden sculpture used in the mid-night ritual after the *Bada Singhara Dhupa*, is not only suggestive but even explicit.

Over a year Lord Jagannath, like human beings, is engaged in multification activities. On one occasion (Banabhoji Beshha) He sets out on a picnic trip, to an idyllic forest land, which is suggestive of the God's love for natural beauty. On the other

occasions (seven times in a year), the Lord goes for hunting expeditions. During the summer he goes for boat rides for twenty-one days consecutively, which is known as the Chandana Yatra. The God also supposedly subdues a venomspewing wicked serpent as celebrated in the Kaliya Dalan Beshha, as if to suggest that the wicked and evil-minded are to be sternly



dealt with. The God's love of pomp is only too evident in the Ratha Yatra during the rainy season.

In several ways Lord Jagannath resembles human beings. Man is compelled to perform myriad duties on earth, and this message is brought forth in the Jagannath temple rituals. Numerous activities are attributed to the Lord eloping with a woman and marrying her, boat rides and hunting expeditions, swinging with consort Lakshmi, wearing *sraddha*-costume for a sober ritual, modifying an enraged spouse with sweetmeats, enjoying family happiness with elder brother Balaram and sister Subhadra (as reflected in the Krushna-Balaram Besha), trampling a malevolent serpent, going for a picnic etc. A vast variety of activities indeed ! And yet the idol is still. And though on two occasions the Lord's idol moves from the pedestal, the God's image of unbroken placidity persists. The message is clear as sunlight: even while engaging himself in manifold activities the God has an inner calmness, an absolute detachment. He is involved and yet aloof ! And that is the core message of the *Bhagavat Gita*.

A life style is evident in the cult of the Puri God: a profound though joyful approach to life. But this approach has taken into account a basic premise without which no philosophy may sustain an ideal social atmosphere. This is reflected in the handling of the Mahaprasad at the Ananda Bazar, (the market place within the temple complex) and elsewhere. Even a low-caste person has the same right on the Mahaprasad as the high-born, and shares this sacred food with him, even from the same earthen pot or banana leaf. This is suggestive of universal brotherhood. This practice accepts and spreads the ideal of equality of mankind,

especially in the basic requirement of food. No philosophic approach in individual or social life can sustain without this basic premise. And Jagannath culture stresses this in practice.

There are other rituals and traditions which make a social philosophy explicit. An ideal is brought home when the king of Puri (the Gajapati) sweeps the chariots during the Car Festival. A king-any king-symbolizes power, wealth, honour, influence; he is held in high esteem by the multitude. But whatever may be the king's status he must have the virtue of humility; a sense of values. Unless the king submits humbly to higher values, he will fall short in performing his duties. The Jagannath cult has been spreading this message for centuries.

The range of feelings reflected in the rituals is also quite wide. The Ratha Yatra symbolizes the God's love for pomp and ceremony. But there are rituals which evoke many other feelings: pathos and suffering and death.

The Sraddha Besha held in early winter for three consecutive days reflects the austerity of a bereaved soul. Sraddha is a ritual in remembrance of a departed person and hence pathos is inherent in this practice. Jagannath is supposedly observing the rite for King Indradyumna who built the first temple for the God. The deity wears white, befitting the mood on this occasion.

Sickness too is a very common failing of all human beings, and the God also supposedly gets bed-ridden for fifteen days at a stretch during the early rainy season. This is a period when the God's usual diet is replaced with medicines and restoratives. The helplessness of man on earth, for whom



suffering is inevitable, even inherent, characterizes the God.

Even death is not excluded in this religious practice. Death is inevitable; and this inevitability is incorporated in the Jagannath cult. The only difference is that while man does not know exactly on which day or month he would depart from the earth, a particular month is being specified when the God supposedly dies. When Asadha (the third month in the Indian calendar) falls twice in succession in a year the God embraces this inevitable reality known as death. That this invincible metaphysical reality is included in the Jagannath cult shows its philosophical approach.

And yet the negative elements do not predominate the worship of the deity.

While admitting the inevitability of death, the immortality of the soul is accepted by the *Brahma* substance, which is transferred from the old images to the new. What predominates in this cult is a sense of joy and celebration. The essential nature of the creator, *sat*, *chitt* and *ananda*, that is holiness, wakefulness and joyfulness are reflected in the practices and rituals. All the blessings of life are accepted here: good food, finery, romantic

feeling, aesthetic beauty, celebration. But everything must be charged with holiness, must be *sattwik*: food must be sanctified by incantations, adornments must reflect taste, joy rides or pleasure trips must have significance. A poet of the 16th century, A.D. Jagannath Das declared in his transcreated "Oriya Bhagavata", *Jagate thiba jete dina, Ananda karuthiba mana* that is (fill your mind with joy so long on earth). Most of the rituals in the Puri temple reflect a celebration of life.

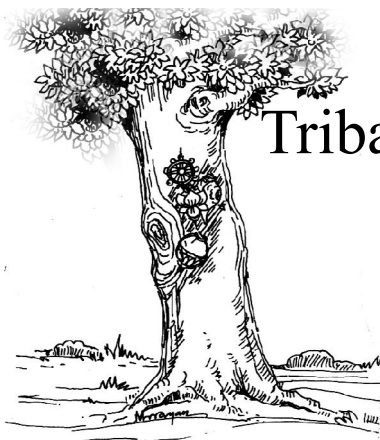
Pleasures of life therefore are not excluded in the Jagannath cult; but what is stressed in many ways is to transmute pleasure into joy. Mahaprasad is tasty as well as sacred. The message is to elevate pleasure to a sublime level. This is the only way to save mankind.

Religions which overlook the basic nature of the mankind are based on false promises, since man's essential nature is to seek joy. Abstinence may also be an ingredient in this quest; but a feeling of joy is what the human soul longs for. The Jagannath cult shows the way.

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## Tribal Origin of Holy Triad

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No human society exists without the belief in supernatural entities like gods, spirits and the like. The consideration of such powers invokes the study of religion, which includes other aspects like rituals, ceremonies and crisis situations in a society. The religious phenomena are deep-rooted in each and every known human society /

community on this earth. In this sphere of life, man interacts with the supernatural beings. Scholars have tried to conceptualize the religious phenomena in order to understand the intricacies between

the religious beliefs and practices on the one hand and the style of life on the other, prevailing in a particular society. Needless to say, religion takes into consideration three aspects, namely (a) beliefs in the supernatural entities, (b) specialists who creates such beliefs, and (c) deities who receive it in various forms. In India, there are people belonging to different religious faiths like Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jainas and innumerable tribes. They are maintaining their own religious

identity. Though there are differences between these religious faiths, they are not a mere collection of people belonging to diverse faiths. There has been continuous borrowing and imitation of elements among themselves due to co-existence over the years. Also, there is an inner force to maintain the distinctiveness

among them. In other words, changes are obvious and found in social life. It is more visible in a progressive society because of the continuous actions and reactions of different forces and factors both internal



as well as external. In all probability, our religious concept is receiving a new dimension taking into consideration the present need and dynamic situation due to influence of the age/time. The concept of Jagannath is mysterious and the present paper is an humble attempt to bring to light the tribal aspect of the deity. In other words, in the present paper, our emphasis is to understand the Jagannath cult from tribal perspective. The present study suggests that in the evolution of the cult of Jagannath, the





importance and significance of the tribal principle cannot be ignored if noticed minutely. Now, we have two main tasks: to say whatever is known about Jagannath in Orissa from tribal perspective and to trace primitive survivals as the contribution of pre-history to modern Oriya society. The origin and antiquity of the concept of Jagannath is shrouded in considerable mystery. There is no positive evidence to know how and when this concept has come into existence particularly in Puri and Jagannath has come to be worshipped there and also has become one of the prominent deities of the Hindu pantheon. It is not easy to understand whether Jagannath was a Hindu deity or a tribal deity later on converted/transformed into a Hindu deity. This process of change may be understood through processes like Tribalisation / Sanskritisation / Hinduisation / Aryanisation etc.

The literary meaning of Jagannath (Jagat+Nath) is the Lord of the Universe. He is called Devadhideva (Lord of Lords), Rajadhiraj (King of Kings) and Purushottam (Purusa+Uttama i.e. the Supreme Purusa). Puri is known as Jagannath Puri that is the abode of the Lord of the Universe. In fact, Puri is synonymous with Lord Jagannath and *vice versa*. At times, it is popularly known as *Sri-kshetra*, *Sankha-kshetra*, *Purushottam-kshetra*, *Nilachala* and *Niladri*. This pitha finds mention in the ancient Puranic literatures namely *Vishnu Purana*, *Agni Purana*, *Brahma Purana*, *Padma Purana*, *Naradiya Purana*, *Bhagavat Purana*, *Skanda Purana*, *Kapila Purana* or *Kapila Samhita*, *Kalika Purana* etc. Also, in other ancient Hindu religious scriptures like *Tantra Jamala*, *Rudra Jamala*, *Bamadev Samhita*, *Niladri Mahodaya* etc. one finds the references of this religious *pitha*. In the Sanskrit *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* though there are no clear and specific references to this *pitha*

or deity, for some scholars the word Jagannath has been found mentioned in some places. For instance, Ramachandra had once advised Bibhisana to worship Jagannath. Some scholars opine that the *vedi* or *antarvedi* as referred to in the *Mahabharata* is nothing but the *ratnavedi* i.e. raised stone platform or pedestal on which the deities are seated in Puri temple. Jagannath is also known as *Daru Brahma* or the prime soul enshrined in wood. Some scholars co-relate this *Daru* with that of *Apurusham Daru* mentioned in the *Rig Veda* (X.155.3) and hold the view that worship of Lord Jagannath started well before the Christian era. In this context, it may be mentioned that for the first time Jagannath has been cited in a religious text titled *Gyanasiddhi* (Vajrayana treatise) authored by Raja Indrabhuti of Sambala/Sambalpur who was a great devotee of Lord Jagannath in the eighth century AD. Also, the *Niladri Mahodaya* narrates in detail the rituals and customs of the deities in the Puri temple. The most famous Oriya work of Adikavi Sarala Das is *Oriya Mahabharata* that belonged to the 15th century AD. Therein, the poet has lucidly narrated in detail the legendary origin of Lord Jagannath. Besides, a good number of inscriptional references testifying to the popularity of Jagannath are found in and outside Orissa. In this connection, mention may be made of Neulapur inscription of Subhakar Dev of 780-800 AD, Baramdeo Temple inscription of 840-1088 AD, Satana (Madhya Pradesh) inscription of 10th century AD, Nagpur stone inscription of 1104 AD, Govindpur inscription of 1137 AD, Nrusimha, Markandeswara and Pataleswara temple inscriptions at Puri of 1113 AD-1238 AD, Dasagova Copper Plates of 1192 AD-1211 AD, Nagari Copper Plates of King Anangabhima Dev III of 1230 AD, Lingaraj temple inscription of 1230-38 AD,



Kapilas inscription of Narasimha Dev of 1238-64 AD, Srikurmam temple inscription of Bhanu Dev II of 1310 AD, Simanchalam temple inscription of 1319 AD. Thus, researches clearly indicate and substantiate that this *pitha* has a hoary antiquity.

According to the most popular legend, the *Savaras* in the hill tracts of Orissa worshipped the deity originally enshrined in the Puri temple. It is mentioned in the *Utkala Khanda* of the *Skanda Purana* that one Vidyapati was instrumental in locating Nilamadhaha, the predecessor of Lord Jagannath. As per this tradition, there was a ruler named Indradyumna in Avanti *rajya* (kingdom) in the *Satya Yuga*. He was a great votary of Lord Vishnu. He sent one Vidyapati, the younger brother of his *Kulaguru* (family priest) to *Odradesa/Udradesa* to find out the exact place where a tribal chief called Viswabasu was worshipping Lord Vishnu in the name of Nilamadhaha secretly. Coming to Odradesa, Vidyapati took shelter in a *Savara* hamlet situated very near to the *Nilasaila* or *Nilagiri* (Blue Mountain). He concealed his identity and motive of coming to that place. He tried his best, but could not locate the place of worship. Somehow he could manage to marry a tribal maiden called Lalita, the only beautiful daughter of Viswabasu and motivated her. In response to the repeated request made by Lalita, finally Viswabasu took his son-in-law blind-folded to a cave wherein Lord Nilamadhaha was being worshipped. Vidyapati was a very intelligent man. He dropped mustard seeds on the ground on his way. After a few days, the seeds germinated which helped Vidyapati to trace out the secret cave wherein the deity was being worshipped. Thus, winning over the friendship of the Savara chief and subsequently marrying his only daughter the willful young Brahmin was able to have a

darsan of Lord Nilamadhaha. Tracing the route to the shrine of Nilamadhaha, he returned to Avanti and informed Raja Indradyumna the whereabouts of Lord Nilamadhaha. The king accompanied by Narada, set out for *Odradesa* to pay homage to the deity. But at the boundary of the country he came to know about the miraculous disappearance of the deity. He became extremely sad. Narada consoled him by saying that the deity would appear in the form of a *daru* i.e. sacred wood. After few days, Lord Nilamadhaha appeared in a dream of *Raja* Indradyumna and as per his instructions, *Raja* and his attendants brought the *daru* from the seashore next day and placed in on the Mahavedi with respect. As directed by the Lord in the dream, *Raja* Indradyumna ordered for fashioning beautiful images out of the *daru*. But strangely enough, no carpenter was available for the purpose. At last, Viswakarma (the Divine Builder) appeared in the guise of an old *Maharana* (carpenter) and agreed to take up the work on the condition that he would be allowed to remain isolated and undisturbed inside the temple for twenty-one days. *Raja* agreed to his condition but after few days when the sound of the *Maharana's* (carpenter's) tools became thinner and one day no sound was heard, *Rani* Gundicha became curious and impatient to open the doors. She insisted the *Raja* and when the doors of the temple were opened, the *Maharana* (carpenter) was not found inside the temple rather the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra were found incomplete. This legend with slight variations is also mentioned in the *Brahma Purana* and in the *Oriya Mahabharata* of *Adi-kavi* Sarala Das.

Various epigraphic and historical evidences also attest this legend, which associates the *Savaras* with Lord Nilamadhaha. It speaks of the immigration of Hindus into



the tribal hinterlands of Orissa and Hinduisation of a tribal deity. Perhaps, this was due to the migration of the Vedic Brahmins from north and central India to eastern parts of the country like Orissa and consequential spread of the Brahmanic/Hindu culture. In due course of time, the tribal deity of Orissa has passed through the process of Hinduisation. In this process of Hinduisation and royal patronage extended to the tribal deity, the Brahmins played the most significant role. They defined and codified the duties of the original worshippers i.e. tribal people / *Savaras* in the Hindu system of worship i.e. temple worship at Puri. *Raja* also felt the necessity of their *seva* (services), particularly in arduous nature of *seva* during *Anasara / Anavasara, Ratha yatra, Pahandi, Nabakalebara* etc. Their services were essential for the promotion and extension of Jagannath cult in and outside the State. Needless to say, out of various agencies responsible for changing the religious canvas of Indian tribes, Hindus would perhaps claim to be the oldest dating back to many centuries. They had set an example of high-spirited religious reform or conversion which was later followed/adopted by many others including Christian missionaries in various parts of India particularly during second half of the 18th century. There is no denying the fact that for several centuries the tribes in some parts of India lived in remote hills and forests, almost uninfluenced by the main currents of history and cut off from the mainstream of social, economic, political, religious and cultural life of Indian society. In this background, it was initially the entry and working of particularly Brahmins into the tribal areas that the *Rajas*, emperors and different Governments in different period of historical development started paying attention to them. It would not be out of place to mention that tribal

populations constitute a sizeable section of the total population in Orissa. Their population is roughly 23 per cent of the total population of the State. Orissa occupies a unique position in the ethnographic map of India for having the largest number of tribal communities. Being one of the fascinating ethnographic States of the country, it has been the homeland of as many as 62 tribes numbering about 81.45 lakhs populations as per 2001 census. The tribal population of Orissa constitutes about 22.13 per cent of the total population of the State and about 9.66 per cent of the total tribal population of India. Among the various factors that contributed to the evolution of Jagannath cult in Orissa, primitive tree worship of the aboriginals formed an important aspect. The deities of Puri, which are made of log, generate an immediate impression and give an indication that they might have been aboriginal in character and origin. In course of time, the native hill tribes of Orissa came in gradual contact with the Hindus. As a result of this, there was a continuous interaction of two forces leading to a synthesis of religious beliefs that characterized the growth and development of Jagannath cult in ancient Orissa. Though at present Orissa contains substantially a large and varied tribal population, only the *Savaras* and Gonds figure in the epigraphic records. Mahendragiri mountain range in south Orissa was a stronghold of aboriginals like the *Pulindas* and the *Savaras*.

The *Pulindas* believed in the tree worship, which is said to be a pre-Aryan concept. The *Savaras* belong to the Proto-Austroloid tribe who were also originally worshippers of tree. In the subsequent history of tree worship, this assumed the shape/form of *linga* worship. In other words, in course of time, they became worshippers of *Sivalinga* whom they adored as *Sihanu* or branchless



trunk. Thus, the *Pulindas* and the *Savaras* are believed to be the worshippers of tree in the Vindhya and Mahendragiri mountain ranges from the earliest times. The *Skanda Purana* reveals that the worship of *Sivalinga* emerged out of tree worship, which was the faith of the aboriginal people of Kalinga. This was widely prevalent among the aboriginals of ancient Kalinga. The tree worship was later on transformed into Siva worship where the tree or log of wood represented *linga*. It is believed that the *Pulindas* and the *Sailajas* emerged as the *Sailodbhavas*. In other words, *Sailodbhavas* originated from the tribal stock of the *Pulindas* and the *Sailajas*. Under the influence of the Brahmanical school, the *Sailodbhavas* called Lord Siva as *Sthanu* as mentioned above. It may be surmised that they were the worshippers of the *Sthanumurti*, which, in course of time, replaced the primitive tree worship. Thus, the *Savaras* and the *Pulindas*, who were the traditional worshippers of Siva, seemed to have been gradually Hinduised under the influence of the Brahmanical school and absorbed the Vedic concepts in their socio-religious system. In this process of development, the tree worship of the tribal people got itself assimilated in the Vedic worship of Rudra. In this context, influence of Mattamayura School may be worth mentioning. Under the influence of the Saivite teachers of this School the *Sailodbhavas* became devout worshippers of Uma-Mahesvara. They propitiated and also popularized the cult of Madhava (Nilamadhava) in Orissa, which was considered part and parcel of the Jagannath cult.

Later on, worship of this *Sthanumurti* seems to have mingled with the worship of Lord Purushottama Vishnu. In the *Rigveda*, there is a passage that refers to the Lord of

*daru* (*Ado Yad Daru Plavate Sindhoh Pare Apurusam, Tada Rabhasva DurhanoTena Gachha Parastaram - Rig Veda, X.155.3*). According to the 14th century Vedic commentator Sayana (1300-1380 AD), this *daru* represents the wooden image of Lord Purushottama. This view is also attributed by a 15th century tradition as recorded in the Kondavidu copper plate grant of Ganadeva of the time of Gajapati Kapilendradeva. This tradition attests that Jagannath resembles the log of wood as spoken of in the *Sruti* (*Sa Bhagavan Srutyukta Daru Akrtih*). It is believed that the *Savaras* worshipped a deity named *Kitung* who had ten synonyms. One of the familiar synonyms was *Jaganta* or *Jaganelo*. In south Orissa, particularly among the *Savaras* inhabiting the Mahendragiri region, the deities are made of wood. It is widely believed that, even to-day the savaras worship a log of wood that they adore as *Jaganta* or *Jagannalo*. The resemblance of the names Jagannath and *Jaganta* and the log of wood as the common medium of worship for both the deities very well indicates the significance of the tree worship as a common religious practice among the aboriginals in Orissa which has subsequently mingled in the Purushottama Jagannath cult of the Hindus at Puri. According to another tradition recorded in the *Skanda Purana*, the *Savaras* who were the original worshippers of *Jaganta* made of wood, were also devout worshippers of Madhava i.e. Nilamadhava, the predecessor of Lord Jagannath. The legendary association of the *Savaras* with Nilamadhava, the predecessor of Purushottam Jagannath, as narrated in the *Skanda Purana* lends support to this presumption. This suggests us to believe that *Jaganta* of the *Savaras* had been transformed/converted into the Hindu god Jagannatha, who is no other than Madhava or Krishna. With





gradual process of Hinduisation, the *Savaras* were influenced by the Brahmanical form of Hinduism and incorporated the Brahmanical principles in their socio-religious life. The Hindu invaders who had settled amidst the tribal people, in course of time, adopted and worshipped this tribal deity in order to enjoy their confidence and seek the cooperation of the latter in their settlements. So much so, gradually the deity was Hinduised being transformed from a formidable tribal cult into Jagannath cult and worshipped both by the tribal people as well as the non-tribal people. Over the years, this aboriginal deity originally worshipped by the *Savaras* of Orissa has played an important role in the folk religion and the regional cultural tradition of Orissa.

In this context, there is an interesting tradition recorded in the Vizagapatnam plates of Anantavarman Chodagangadeva of the year 1119 AD. This tradition reveals that *Raja* Kamarnava conquered the Mahendragiri region towards the close of the fifth century AD, acknowledged a tribal deity of the *Savara* tribe as *Siva-Gokarneswara* and worshipped as his *Ista Devata* i.e. the tutelary deity of his family. Bestowed with grace by the deity, *Raja* Kamarnava climbed down the mountain, killed the *Savara* chief and conquered Kalinga. This attests to the fact that historical processes have always affected the nature of beliefs in Indian population. Invaders, who settled as rulers, had always played significant role in this regard. Generally, the rulers had a strong role of reinforcing a particular faith. Besides, ruler's religion used to fetch privileges while that of other's subjected to oppression and suppression. It would not be out of place to mention that a verse in the *Bhagavata Purana* informs us that the *Kiratas*, the *Hunas*, the *Pulindas*, the *Abhiras* and other tribal people were influenced by the worship of Lord Vishnu.

This process of interaction and intermingling of the tribal and non-tribal cultures led to Hinduisation of many tribal deities in the *Oriya* society. As discussed earlier, the *Pulindas* and the *Savaras* were beyond the pale of Hindu civilization in the proto-historic period in different parts of Orissa. But in course of the Hinduisation, the Brahmanical form of Hinduism deeply influenced their life and thought.

Some scholars have suggested that Saktism in Orissa has also incorporated the principle of tree worship of the hill tribes into its fold. They opine that the figure of Khambeswari resembles the figure of Subhadra of the holy triad (Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra) at Puri temple because both are similar in their iconography as well as iconology. It is pertinent to note here that the worship of Khambeswari is known since the fifth or the sixth century AD and it is believed that her Hinduised iconography might be taken as the prototype for the development, which led to the Subhadra figure at Puri temple. Stambheswari, the goddess of the post / pillar, was originally an aboriginal goddess worshipped by the tribal people and their rulers in west Orissa and Ghumsar region of the Ganjam district of Orissa. Among the Mother Goddesses/Sakti she was in the past one of the important deities, who was patronized and supported by many royal dynasties and the people at large. Under the influence of the Brahmanical school, the aboriginals identified the *Stambha* with the mother goddess. The hill tribes who believed in matriarchy were generally worshippers of Sakti. The worship of Sakti or the female principle is the primordial factor in the creation and reproduction of the Universe. It occupies a unique position in the religious system of India. As a result of the fusion of the Vedic concept of Uma with the



cult of *Stambha*, there emerged the worship of Stambheswari (Mother Goddess) in tribal surroundings. The earliest reference to Stambheswari is found in the Teresingha copper plate of king Tustikara. Paleographically, it is assigned to the fourth / fifth century AD. Tustikara ruled over Kalahandi, Boudh, Sonapur / Suvarnapur and Ghumsar regions during that period and Stambheswari was popular atleast from the time of Tustikara, who had styled himself as *Stambheswari Padabhakta*. This copper plate reveals that *Raja* Tustikara in order to cure his ailing mother worshipped the feet of Goddess Stambheswari, the *Ista Devi* of his family.

In course of time, this cult became very popular among some ruling families of the early medieval period in Orissa. For instance, the Bhanjas of Khinjilimandala and the Sulkis of Kodalakamandala had recorded in their charters that they achieved success and prosperity by the grace of Stambheswari/ Khambeswari. She was the tutelary deity of the Sulki royal family (600-800 AD) of Kodalakamandala (Dhenkanal-Talcher region) and the Bhanja kings (9th century AD) of Khinjilimandala (Sonapur/Subarnapur, Boudh and Ghumsur region). Under the royal patronage of the Bhanjas the worship of Khambeswari became very popular in the Ghumsur region as revealed by their inscriptions. In the 17th century AD, the Bhanja kings regarded Khambeswari at Aska as the presiding deity of the *Dakshina dwara* (south gate) of their kingdom. The Somavamsis were also influenced by this cult. As revealed from the Muranjamura charter, Panchambari Bhadrabika was the tutelary deity of the Somavamsis. They identified this deity Bhadrabika with Stambheswari when they came in contact with the worship of the log of wood as Stambheswari. Most probably, this fusion of the Stambheswari cult and

Bhadrabika contributed to the evolution of Subhadra, the central wooden image in the Jagannath triad. Very recently, the noted scholar Sasanka S.Panda has opined that Samlei of Sambalpur, Lankeswari of Suvarnapur, Subhadra of Puri and Panchambari Bhadrabika might be the same goddess. Thus, in course of time, Stambheswari was given a prominent place in the Hindu pantheon. She was adopted and worshipped by the Hindu invaders who had settled amidst the tribal people in Orissa. Summararily, the aboriginal deity Stambheswari has been acknowledged as member of the documented theology of the Oriya society due to their constant contact with the tribal people. At present, such goddess is worshipped at Suvarnapur, Balangir, Sambalpur and Aska etc. as an important deity. Originated directly from the primitive background Stambheswari or Khambeswari gradually crept into the mainstream of Jagannath cult as Subhadra.

It is also very interesting to mention the similarities between the renewal of tribal ritual of the post, representing Stambheswari or Khambeswari and the *Nabakalebara* ritual of deities at Puri. According to the tradition followed in the Jagannath temple at Puri during *Nabakalebara*, the *Patimahapatra* leads the party of *Daitas* to find out the *daru* for the four deities and goes to the *Saktipitha* (Mangala) at Kakatpur. There he is told in a dream by goddess Mangala the exact location and appearance of *daru*. It is believed that two groups of the *sevakas* (servitors) of the Puri temple originated from the *Savaras*. In this context, mention may be made of *Patimahapatra* and *Daita*. As per the available tradition narrated earlier, *Patimahapatra* is the descendant of Vidyapati (Brahmin) and Lalita (*Savara*). Thus, he may be called the head of the half-*Savara* Brahmins. *Daitas* are the descendants of *Savara* chief Viswabasu and



they are a special section or group of non-Brahmin priests in Puri temple. In case of the renewal of the tribal deity Stambheswari, the goddess herself appears in a dream through the medium of the priest called Bhejini and indicates the spot where the tree is to be found. The tree to be selected must display certain features, which are similar in both the cases. In case of the tribal custom the new tree is worshipped with the sacrifice of a sheep or a goat before being cut off. The chief priest of the tribal deity called *dehuri* always performs the first stroke on the tree. In case of the *daru* of the deities also the sacrificial ritual is symbolically performed/observed and the chief priest called *acharya* makes the first stroke. In both the cases the tree should fall to the east and should not touch the ground in any case. The tradition that the logs should be carried in a special hand-made wooden cart exclusively pulled by human hands and should not touch the ground is followed in both the cases. The *Maharanas* (carpenters) in a closed room do the carvings of the images of deities secretly. Nobody except the *Daitas* and the *Patimahapatra* are allowed to enter the place where the figures are being carved. The *Maharanas* are to lead a pure life i.e. purity of mind and body and also observe certain *nisthas* or principles during this period. In case of tribal custom also, the carpenter is to abstain himself from drinks, drugs and sex and to lead a pure life. Just as the sacred *Brahma* is inserted into the images at Jagannath temple, Puri before their consecration, five metals namely gold, silver, iron, copper and brass are inserted into the post of the tribal people before it is consecrated. The images of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsan at Puri temple are crude and have an aboriginal look. Similarly, the post representing Stambheswari is also crude and sometimes the figure of Narasimha (an aspect of Jagannath) is carved on the post in a very crude form. It would not

be out of place to mention that the Sirpur stone inscription of *Rani Vasata* refers to Narasimha, an incarnation of Vishnu as Purushottama who emerged out of a *Stambha* (pillar).

All these similarities between the *Nabakalebara* ritual of Lord Jagannath and that of the tribal deity Stambheswari suggest us to believe that there is a close link between the Hindu deities of Puri temple and the tribal deity Khambeswari. It would not be out of context to mention that the *Savaras* i.e. *Daitas* also play a distinct role in the daily worship of Lord Jagannath in Puri temple. As noted earlier, they are the descendants of the *Savara* chief Viswabasu who was the first worshipper of Jagannath in the form of Nilamadhava in the hoary past. *Daitas* are known as the close relatives of Lord Jagannath and entrusted with certain important *seva* (services). During the *anavasara* ceremony of the deities, it is not the Brahmins but the *Daitas* who perform the worship. *Anavasara* refers to sickness of the deities. During this period of seclusion, the Vedic offerings and rituals are not performed and the deities are placed in a place called *anasara pindi*. They remain there secluded and unexposed to public view for a period of fifteen days. During this period, *Daitas* perform certain secret rituals of the deities. These rituals are known as *anasara nitis*, which no one is allowed to witness. Obviously the deities would like to see their close relatives at the time of sickness. Since the *Daitas* claim Jagannath as a member of their family, they sit together with the deities and take the *gnyatisara* (the dishes taken by members of the same family together). They also play significant roles at the outset of the *Ratha Yatra* i.e. car festival. During this period the deities are not worshipped in the Vedic line but in the tribal line. Even the deities are dressed in the *Savara* costume. The deities move towards the *Rathas* (chariots) in north-west direction whereas in



Hindu process, the procession moves towards eastern direction. Hence, it is believed that the northwest movement of the deities towards the *Rathas* indicates the impact of the *Savara* convention / tradition on the *Ratha Yatra*.

After the *Nabakalebara* ceremony, the *Daitas* as descendants of Lord Jagannath claim on the articles used by the deceased Jagannath. After disposing of the old figures/images of the deities in the *Koilibaikuntha*, situated on the northwest side of the temple the *Daitas* take bath and observe mourning because of the death of one of their clan. They weep and cry for the death of Jagannath and for ten days they remain in a state of ritual impurity observing all sorts of obsequies prescribed in the Hindu *dharmasastras*. On the tenth day, they cut their hairs and nails and shave their body and take purificatory bath in the *Markandeya puskarini* (tank) of Puri. The fact that the *Daitas* (*Savaras*) even today consider Lord Jagannath as a member of their clan and observe all sorts of obsequies is a clear indication of the tribal origin of Lord Jagannath. In other words, tradition as well as present practices clearly points to the tribal origin of Lord Jagannath. But how the tribal deity Nilamadhava has come to Puri to be worshipped as Jagannath is a mystery, which is yet to be solved. With the older mode there would always remains older beliefs and ways of life. It becomes difficult to say precisely when a given stage passed and another took over. Needless to say, Lord Jagannath is a synthesis between the Hindu and non-Hindu tribal culture. The process of interaction was mutual. Not only did Hindus (immigrants) influence aboriginals in Orissa but also the newcomers took over some indigenous and even aboriginal beliefs and customs. To day, it is practically difficult to believe that *Daitas* belong to the *Savara* tribe, however loosely defined the term tribe may be. It is also ridiculous to speak of a *Daita* tribe with no

reference of ethnic unity with *Savara* tribe. The present generation of some *Daitas* prefer to establish marital relationship with the Karanas of the Oriya society, apparently with a view to making their tribal origin less known and thereby have elevated their social status in the overall social hierarchy in Oriya society. In a traditional Oriya society, the so-called Brahmins do not partake food if touched by the low caste people. Usually persons of all castes are seen enjoying *Mahaprasad* sitting in one place in a row. It is the established practice that the moment *Mahaprasad* is served, no Hindu of the so-called high castes objects to partake it even from the same plate with any person of the so-called low castes. All the devotees irrespective of castes accept the vegetarian food (*bhoga*) offered by the *Daitas*. They are one of the dominant classes of non-Brahmin *sevakas* of the temple at Puri. They have emerged as a pressure group to fight for their rights and exert tremendous pressure on the temple administration and even dictate terms and conditions at times. However, as an important aspect of Oriya culture, Jagannath is indispensably associated with the social life of the Oriya people from birth to death.

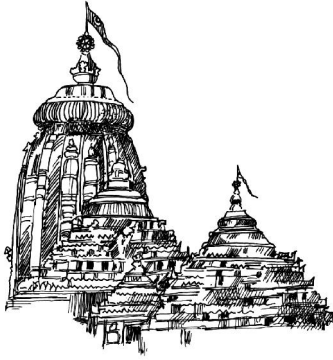
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## Mahadham

*Mahimohan Tripathy*

It is generally accepted as tradition that Adi Sankaracharya founded four *mathas* (monasteries) as seats of Hindu religion at four ends of India- the Sringeri *matha* on the Sringeri hills in the south, the Sharada *matha* on the Dwaraka coast in the west, the Badrinath *matha* at Badrinath in the north, the Govardhan *matha* at Puri in the east. These are the four major spiritual centres of Hinduism in India.

Swami Nigamananda (1880-1935AD), a great saint of modern India, after his initiation into *sanyasa*, was instructed by his *guru* Swami Sachidananda to visit all these spiritual centres (*dhamas*) to realize the deeper significance of the four great sayings of *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. Each *dham* is known for a *mahavakya* (great saying), which has to be understood and realized by each *sanyasin*.

He visited first to Badrinath accompanying his *guru* Swami Sachidananda. They stayed in the Jyoti *matha* (i.e. the Badrinath *matha*) for some days. The great ancient sage, Vyasadeva had meditated in Badrinath (also known as *Badrikashram*). Here Nigamananda was taught by his *guru* the method of realizing the great saying, *Ayatma Brahman* which means 'This Self is Brahman'.

Swami Nigamananda continued his journey without his *guru*. He visited the Sarada *matha* near the Dwarakadhish temple. This is

the *dham*, where the *mahavakya* of *Samveda*, *Tatwam Asi* (Thou Art That) has to be realized. After staying some days there, the Swami visited Rameswar and Sringeri. In this place (Sringeri), a vedic sage has to realize the significance of the saying of *Yajurveda*, *Aham Brahmanmi* (I am One 'With Brahman).

His last journey was, of course, to Puri. Puri is also known as *Nilachaladham*, *Purusottama dham* and *Jagannath dham*. Rigvedic *mahavakya* '*Pragyanam Brahman* (or *Pragyanam Ananda Brahman*) is to be realized in this place. In other three monasteries, the soul is equated with *Brahman*, but here the real identity and nature of *Brahman* is to be realized.

Swami Nigamananda visited these four *dhamas* and realized the great sayings of the scriptures through intense *sadhana*. He attached more importance to *Jagannath dham*. He established a spiritual organization named as *Nilachala Saraswat Sangha* at Puri in August, 1934 and became its President. *Brahman*, the ever blissful, has manifested as *Daru-Brahman-Jagannath*. Another great saint, Yogiswara Kalipad (1902-1966 A.D.) has stated that Puri, the abode of *Daru Brahman*, is a *Mahadham*.

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Mahimohan Tripathy lives at 56, Suryanagar, Bhubaneswar-3



## Offering Bhoga to Great Lord

*Dillip Kumar Samantaray*

The kings who were ruling over since the Ganga Rule (13th century A.D. onwards) Orissa were considering themselves as the servant (Rautta) of great lord. The same paraphernalia as is found in a royal household, is also discernible in the temple of Jagannath Mahaprabhu with much splendour and magnificance. The items of *Bhogas* that are offered daily to the deities are many and varied and they are offered with royal dignity and ceremonial purity.

*Bhogas* are of two kinds : - (i) Those that are cooked and prepared inside the temple kitchens are called "*sankhudi*". They are prepared out of rice, black gram and other vegetables (ii) Those that are prepared outside the kitchen but inside the temple specified for the purpose are called *Nisankhudi Bhogas*. These constitute *Bhogas* made out of flour, wheat, ghee, candy etc. This divine kitchen of Lord Jagannath is one of the biggest and splendid kitchens of the world which can feed one lakh people at a time. There is a popular proverb that :

*"Sada rasa vyanjana nana yati  
Chhapana Bhoga lage dinarati",*

*"Multifarious dishes of six-fold tasters  
fifty-six bhogas are offered day and night".*

The *Bhogas* which are being offered to the *Mahaprabhu* daily are illustrated below as such :

Jagannath Vallabh, Khaja, Gaja, Pheni, Luni Khuruma, Sweet Khuruma, Bada Poori, Kakatua Jhilli or Bada Jhilli, Bada Naadi, Sena Naadi, Kakara, Hansa Keli, Candra kanti, Bada Kadamba, Vasanta Arisa, Paga Arisa, Maricha Ladu, Magaja Ladu, Amalu, Dalimba, Parijataka, Mandua Vallabha Kora, Gopal Vallabha, Amruta Rasabali, Bada Kanti, Mathapuli, Papudi, Bundia Khiri, Khechudi, Plain Arna, Dal, Dalama, Kanika, Ghee Arna, Mahana Bhoga Jenamani, Suji Gaja, Balibamana Muga, Suara Pitha, Podapitha, Makhana, Khali rooti, Khua Manda, Chhenapitha etc.

The *bhogas* are offered to the deities prepared by the *Suaras* very deliciously in season times accordingly.

1. During Baisakh and Jyestha, (in April, May and June) the deities are offered the following *bhogas* like - (i) Dahi Pakhala (watered rice with curd), (ii) Saga, (iii) Chhena Mandua, (iv) Biri pitha (cakes prepared out of black gram) (v) On pana or Visuba Sankranti day the Gheuties made of flour, curd, cheese and molasses) is offered in the morning and delicious drink in the evening.

2. During the month of Asadha (during Car Festival, June-July) the deities are offered a special drink called Adharapana (*Adhara* means lips) as the drink sweetness the divine lips.

3. During the month of Sravana (Jhulan Yatra i.e. July-August) the deities are offered Amalu and Khiri.



4. During the month of Bhadraba, (Janmastami i.e. August to September) the deities are offered the same food as mentioned above.

5. During the month of Kartika (October-November) The deities are offered Lunilia (salty parched paddy) early in the morning which is called Bala Bhoga.

6. During the month of Pausa (December) the deities are offered Pahili Bhoga, i.e. the First Food offered rather early in the morning. It is a delicious Khechedi preparation. The episode runs that as Mahalaxmi, the divine consort moves to her father's house, Yosoda, the mother of Lord herself prepare this delicious Khechedi to the utmost satisfaction of her son.

7. On Baula Amavasya day the Gaintha cake, new mango blossoms, powdered rice fried with ghee and Nadi mixed with ghee are offered.

8. During Makara Sankranti day, on 13th or 14th January the deities are offered Makara Chaula (i.e. fresh uncooked rice well moistered and mixed with milk, jinger, black peeper, candy, coconut, cheese camphor, raisin, ripe banana etc.

During Dolayatra, in the month of February-March the deities are offered Chhenagaja, Khanda Vari, Canaladi (Ambakasi) Dahana chori, Arisa and Kakara.

#### **Dhupas (Divine Meals)**

Morning - For morning refreshment, the deities are offered the following platters, Gopal Vallabha, Fried Paddy, Sugar coated Coconut, butter, Khuamanda, Papudi, fruits like Banana, Guava and Coconut chips etc.

For morning meals which is called Raja Dhupa, the deities are offered as following as

Kakatua Jhilli, Kanti, Enduri, Jinger tonic, fried green leaves, fried rice, dal and curries.

Forenoon - The deities are offered Bhoga Mandap Dhupa. It includes Rice, Vegetable curries and cakes.

Midday-afternoon - They are offered Oriya cooked Ghee Arna (made of rice, salt, ghee and orange juice), Dal, curries (Besara Mahura) cakes, sweet Kakara, Arisa, Maricha Ladu, Pomegranates, Bada, a drink prepared out of black peeper, banana etc.

Evening - The Sandhya Dhupa consists of cooked rice, and watered rice, Mathapuli, Kantipuli, Jenamani, Parijataka, Mandua, Rasavali, Suaridal and other curries etc.

Evening - The platters are called Badasinhara Dhupa or Sayana Dhupa. It consists of sweet watered rice, Bananabada, plaintain fry, Bhoga Kshiri (a liquid made of rice, milk, sugar and spices) Chadhei neda green coconut and bettle (sandal paste instead of lime and without tabacco).

This type of food which are offered to the deities (Mahaprabhu Jagannath, god Balabhadra, goddess Subhadra) and after Naibedyta the devotees take His prasad and distribute it to others who become very happy. It gives us pleasure, peace and harmony, as because in the acceptance of prasad by the devotees there is no partiality and it create fellow feelings. This greatness and traditional system is called Shree Shree Jagannath Cult in which we create among ourselves friendship and universal brotherhood. As a whole Shree Shree Jagannath Mahaprabhu is the symbol of love, peace and equality.

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Dillip Kumar Samantaray lives at Gangaram Nua Sahi, Puri, Orissa.



## Brahmanda Chhatradanda - Shree Jagannath

*Somanath Khuntia*

When King Indradumna, the king of Avantee, wanted to know where the real *Brahma* was, he sent his ministers all over India to find out, but they returned without success. So to Orissa, known as Utkal, at that time, another minister Bidyapati was sent. He was told by the tribal people of Puri. "On the beach in the Neelagiri cave, *Brahma* is to be found." He was being worshipped by their tribal leader Bishwabasu. So Bidyapati came and met the chief. But in spite of all his probings, no information was divulged, no place was even shown, so secret and sacred was this *Brahma* to Bishwabasu. The minister was feared to stay on for many years. With the hope of discovering this *Brahma*, Bidyapati married the chief's daughter Lalita.

Afterward, Bidyapati was stunned when Bishwabasu would return from his worship of *Brahma*. He gave Bidyapati very fine rice *prasad* and other delicacies, curries and fruits not found in Puri at that time. Bishwabasu himself would be smelling of heavenly camphor from his arati. Bidyapati saw rare flowers that were not in season in Puri at that time. So he asked his father-in-law. "Sir, where did the fine rice and all these rare flowers come from ?

Bishwabasu replied. "The rice you are getting is Prasad' offered to *Brahma* by *Devas*

of other planets, and the flowers are also presented by other beings from outer space who come to see this *Brahma*.

From this record of the origin of *Mahaprasad*, found in the palm-leaf manuscript *Niladri Mahodaya*, we can ascertain quite clearly that this present day Jagannath Temple is not only an attraction for people of this world, but for the inhabitants of other spheres, or *Lokas*, as well.

When king Indradumna heard from Bidyapati that *Brahma* was at Puri, he immediately went there, and wanted a temple to be built by him. His wish was fulfilled, but then he wondered which deity was to be worshipped there. He dreamt that a log of wood would be floating near the beach. Out of this log, the deities must be made. The dream came true. In procession the wood was taken to the temple. But again the king wondered. In which shape should the deities be carved ? Nobody could offer the king any suggestions.

At last an old man came and volunteered himself to carve the deities. When asked what his name was, he said emphatically, "My name is Viswakarma, the Divine Architect ! I am from another world." People all around laughed at him thinking him to be a fool. However,





King Indradumna assigned the work to him. Viswakarma made three conditions.

- 1) He must be confined in a room where he would work for 21 days.
- 2) He would not take any food or drink during this period.
- 3) He must not be disturbed.

Once this was agreed to, Viswakarma entered the closed chamber. Everybody suspected a trick, as there was no sound of any carving. The queen also became suspicious, thinking that the old man might even have died. Out of great anxiety the door was opened before 21 days were up. There was no body there. The old man vanished. Only a voice was heard, "Oh king ! worship these unfinished deities I have carved. You have broken your promise. I came from *Devaloka* only to make the full form of the deities you wanted to have !"

It means the divine craftsman himself came down to earth to help make the TRIO known today as Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Mother Subhadra. They have been worshipped in Jagannath Temple, Puri for more than three thousand years.

As these stories about the origin of Jagannath Temple reveal, Lord Jagannath is a mystic deity. There are many phenomena surrounding him which cannot be explained by modern science. Not only do sages, seers and people from different parts of the world come to see him, but also inhabitants of other spheres as well. As he is considered the master of the universe. He attracts all. There is documented evidence to support many of these occurrences in the form of eyewitness reports and objects left by divine beings when they

came. These events are also documented in ancient epics, palm-leaf scripts, and in texts written by scholars and sages of the past. Some are as follows :

- 1) *Manima Daka Sloka* from *Niladri Mahodaya*

*"Rajadhi Rajarajeshwar*

*Ishwara Thakur, Manima !*

*Anantakoti Brahmanda*

*Ishwara Thakur, Manima !*

*Chaturdasha Bhubana*

*Ishwara Thakur, Manima !*

In the daily rituals of the temple this *sloka* is recited at the time when Lord Jagannath retires to bed. The meaning is this :

*"Oh Lord Jagannath !*

*You are king of kings !*

*You are master of many universes !*

*You are the controller of all creations !"*

The *khuntia* worshipper who recites this *sloka* then scatters flower petals up into the air to welcome all the divine beings who have come that evening to observe this ritual.

- 2) *Kadachit Kalindi sloka* by Saint Adishankar in his Sanskrit verses "*Jagannath Astaka*"

*"Rama, Samvu, Brahma, Surapati*

*Ganesharchhit Padam*

*Jagannatha Swami, Nayana Pathagami, Bhavatume "*

The meaning is :

Even Gods like Rama, Shambhu (Siva), Brahma the creator, Surapati, the king of Gods, Ganesh, the god of wisdom, who all belong to *Devaloka*, worship Lord Jagannath at Puri.

- 3) *"Jatta Chhaya Lokamatra*  
*Tribhubana Janata Badhate*  
*Na Tritap"*



This means that the inhabitants of all *Lokas*, or spheres are under the protection of Lord Jagannath. This sloka is taken from *Brahma Geeta* (writer not known)

4) From *Kapila Samhita*

"*Sarba Rahasya Purusottamasya  
Deva Na Janati Kuta Manusya.*"

The meaning is that the mystery of Lord Jagannath cannot be known by the Devas, so what to speak of man !

5) From *Skanda Purana*

"*Byomatit Byomarupa Prakasa  
Byomakar Byapino Byomarudha.*"

The glory of Lord Jagannath is described here. He can take on any shape. He is as limitless as the sky itself. He is even beyond that.

The whole cosmos of life is divided into many spheres or *Lokas*. These are described in the palmleaf scripts *Lokabimarsa*, *Lokatattwa* and *Lokamimansa*. As life evolves from lower to higher forms, consciousness becomes more individualised and expansive. The main *Lokas* are 21 in number. They are as follows :

#### **The Underworld Lokas :**

1) Patala, 2) Talatal, 3) Rasatala, 4) Bitala, 5) Mahatala, 6) Atala, 7) Bhutala

#### **The Earth Lokas :**

8) Loka, this earth, 9) Pitru-loka, 10) Matru-loka, 11) Preta-loka, 12) Bhuta-loka, 13) Jaksha-loka, 14) Swarga-loka,

#### **The Higher Lokas**

15) Divya-loka, 16) Kinnara Loka, 17) Gandharva-loka, 18) Devaloka, 19) Suraloka, 20) Vishwa-loka, 21) Goloka

Paranormal events occur on earth when beings from these other regions are present. According to the *Loka* they come from, they appear in different ways.

#### **1. Patala Loka**

This is a sphere of the underworld which supports life on earth. It is said Vasuki, the snake who holds the world in proper balance, lives in Patala Loka. He comes to Jagannath Temple only during special darshan times. If he is present, there will be a loud rustle in the crowd.

#### **2. Talatala Loka**

When inhabitants of this Loka come, there will be rays of light of various colours which can be seen by the naked eye. These beings come in disguise of blind, lame, one-eyed, or other deformed persons. They carry flowers in their palms to offer to the deities, in the crowd this can be seen easily.

#### **3. Rasatala Loka**

If a strong wind passes through the crowd and a hot place becomes cool suddenly, beings from this Loka have come. They often come also as children and sing loudly during Kirtan, even though they know nothing about all these things. They smile in the crowd after seeing the deities.

#### **4. Bitala Loka**

Beings from Bitala Loka come as birds although not as vultures, who signify bad days ahead when they are seen.

#### **5. Mahatala Loka**

Beings from this sphere come as animals such as cats, monkeys and dogs. As dogs can not enter the temple, if one is spotted inside, it is said to have come from this Loka. If this



happens, it is felt that the food that day was cooked in an impure way. All offerings must be stopped and the food to be prepared again. This dog is called Kutama Chandi. He always disappears mysteriously.

#### 6. Atala Loka

Sages and saints with long beards who are deep in meditation often come from this sphere. They even walk into the temple with half-closed eyes. Only when looking at Lord Jagannath Himself do their eyes open fully.

#### 7. Bhutala Loka

Those who sweep the temple floors, make garlands for the deities, prepare the wicks and lamps, make the earthen pots for the kitchen, and fetch the water are often from this region. Their duties are not hereditary, but are done purely for spiritual pleasure.

#### 8. Loka, this Earth

Ordinary people from all parts of this visible world come to Jagannath Temple with a vast variety of wishes, both worldly and spiritual. The word Loka means people. Before birth all came from other Lokas, according to previous habits and activities. They wish to go to higher Lokas, by dint of their human birth. Inside the temple they come under the influence of beings from these other spheres, who are also present there, whether they are aware of them or not. Actually, the very purpose of human birth is to pass through all the Lokas by degree. It is also told in ancient scriptures of India that the gift of human birth is the greatest boon God gives. In no other Loka can a being progress spiritually. That is why *devas* and demonic spirits both long to return to earth.

#### 9. Pitru Loka

These beings are the ancestors from the father's side of one's family. They come to the

temple of Lord Jagannath at dawn when there is less rush. If one finds a man having a similar face to one's father, he is from Pitru Loka. If one feels attracted to some unknown person, he is certainly related and has come down from this Loka. Inhabitants of Pitru Loka come to the earth as human beings.

#### 10. Matru Loka

These beings give the same signs of their presence here, but they are from the mother's side of one's family.

#### 11. Preta Loka

Those who commit suicide come to this Loka after death. This is the region of bad spirits and beings of evil demonic nature. They come inside the temple, but only to the outer portions, not into the inner altar of the deities. They criticise, joke, and make noise or other disturbances in spiritual gatherings there. Their coming is signaled by a bad smell, like that of a dead body.

#### 12. Bhuta Loka

This Loka is similar to Pretaloka, only having the confused inhabitants who have taken their lives by consuming poison.

#### 13. Jaksha Loka

People in a crowd wearing gorgeous dresses are often *Jakshas* in disguise. They have come to this earth for worldly comforts and bad motives, such as how to collect money from those present in the crowd. They wear gold ornaments and precious gems to impress others.

#### 14. Swarga Loka

Swarga means Heaven. Beings from this sphere have this sign. In darkness suddenly there will be light. Many people present may



experience a divine feeling without any visible reason at all. Not flowers but petals only will be found scattered on the floor afterwards.

### 15. Divya Loka

When divine beings of this Loka come, auras of different colours will fill the atmosphere. Even in darkness, these can be seen slightly. Some of the temple lamps (*Dipas*) may be mysteriously extinguished at that time. Beings from Divya Loka do not come in form, but only as light and auras. There are other signs, but mortal man can not have concrete experiences of them.

### 16. Kinnara Loka

When Kinnaras come to the temple, they come as dancing girls. They may be seen visibly if one's third eye is open. They are eight in number, the *Asta Sakhis* : Rambha, Urbasi, Menaka, Tilottama, Manjulosi, Rochika, Mochika and Sundaree.

They come as *Devadasis* also, only to dance before Lord Jagannath before He goes to bed. They are decorated in flowers only, no ornaments.

### 17. Gandharva Loka

During devotional singing these beings are always present, both inside and outside the temple. They sing in chorus spiritual songs known as Bhajans, meant only for the deities. If an ordinary person's singing is especially sweet one night, or soft sweet music is heard in the midst of silence, a *Gandharva* is present. According to *Nada Shastra*, there are ten types of divine sounds that may be heard inwardly, the two highest being the sound of the flute and OM.

### 18. Deva Loka

Many gods come to Jagannath Temple to pray every night, such as Indra, God of Rain,

Baruna, God of the Ocean, Vayu, God of Wind, Laxmi, Goddess of Wealth, Saraswati, Goddess of Wisdom.

The sign of their presence is complete tranquility and peace in the midst of a huge crowd. It would appear as if nobody at all was there. After they go, flowers of different varieties are usually found scattered on the floor of the temple.

### 19. Sura Loka

Sura means strength, especially the divine strength of mother. Beings from this Loka come to the temple during darshan time, known as *Sahana Mela*. They come in a big rush so that the crowd is forcibly pushed aside for them to precede to the deities without any difficulty.

### 20. Vishwa Loka

Those who come from Vishwa Loka think that Lord Jagannath is just like a human being. The worshippers of the temple who are in charge of decorating the deities with flowers, sandal and beautiful dresses and take great pleasure in doing such spiritual things are often from Vishwa Loka. They seem to be worldly, with homes and family life like ordinary people but they are born to serve *Brahma*, the Supreme.

### 21. Goloka

From Goloka come Sri Krishna himself and the *gopis*. Even though there might be a big rush inside the temple, everybody will love the gathering. All present will feel attracted towards something unseen and smell soothing fragrances all around. In the crowd there will be more ladies than men. Most significant of all, all will hear a mysterious sweet laughter in the air.





There are other spheres of *Lokas* also, such as :

1. Shiva Loka - the abode of Shiva
  2. Vishnu Loka - the abode of Vishnu
  3. Brahma Loka - the abode of Brahma
  4. Asura Loka - the abode of demons
  5. Yama Loka - the abode of Yama, the king of death
  6. Naga Loka - the abode of snakes
  7. Graha Loka - the abode of planets
- A. From Shiva Loka : Shiva comes on Snana Purnima day to see the Bathing Ceremony of Lord Jagannath. He comes in disguise of a sage with trisula.
- B. Lord Vishnu comes to see Dola Festival, or Colour Day held in the temple during Holi celebrations in the beginning of Spring. He comes as any other devotee but he would have with him big garlands, to be offered to Lord Jagannath.
- C. Brahma comes during Chandan Yatra, or Spring Festival. He stays for twenty-one days. He can be identified with one who recites *Vedas* in front of the deities.
- D. From Asura Loka : *Asuras*, or beings of demonic physical instincts come at the time of rice offering, especially at the time of mid-day *Bhoga*.
- E. Yama; the King of Death: Someone from his Loka comes when a dead body is found in the premises of the temple.

On Rath Yatra day every year, not only do people come from all over the world, but also beings from all *Lokas* and planets. Lord Jagannath's chariot, known as Nandighosha, is guarded by the following *devas* :

1. the Flag by Hanuman from Mahatala Loka.
2. the Chariot itself by a being from Bitala Loka.
3. the Rope by Vasuki from Patala Loka.
4. the Wheels by Mother Vimala from Sakti Loka.
5. the Entrance by Gatekeepers Jaya and Vijaya from Divya Loka.
6. the devas surrounding the Chariot being. Ram, Laxman, Krishna, Nrusingha, Narayan, Chintamani, Yoga Maya and Kubera, all from Devaloka.
7. The sages all around the chariot being. Narada, Vyasa, Suka, Parasar, Rudra, Vashista and Viswamitra, all from Pitru-loka.

The chariots of Balabhadra and Subhadra are guarded by many divine beings also.

### Aesthetic Experiences

Some of the most mysterious phenomena reported from time to time by the people of Puri, especially the worshippers (*Sevakas*) of Jagannath Temple, are as follows :

1. Not only do people from all over the world come to see Lord Jagannath, but so do gods and goddesses. It is believed that these devas are most fond of seeing the last ceremony of the day known as *Pahuda*, in which Jagannath retires to bed. This occurs some time after midnight. Three beautiful beds made of ivory and decorated with the sweetest-smelling flowers, especially white jasmine, are brought before the deities. Flowers are scattered all over the beds to the sound of devotional music, and three miniature golden forms representing



Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabhadra are laid down on the beds to sleep. Then arati-the offering of a lamp is done, the flowers are scattered all around overhead to be collected by the gods and goddesses as a token of Lord Jagannath's blessing. So it is also the duty of all the gods and goddesses to be present at the time of this ceremony every night.

One day goddess Charchika of the distant village of Banki arrived late to the function. She was excused by Jagannath, who excuses all mistakes, but Balabhadra did not excuse her. "Mother, do you think that the rituals of this temple should take place according to your convenience ? You have become too proud these last few days. Get out! You cannot come to see the Pahuda Ceremony any more."

Charchika was not prepared to take this insult from Balabhadra and in anger she replied. "I am not the proud one. You are the one who is ostentacious, being gorgeously dressed, bedecked with royal robes, golden ornaments, and sweet-smelling flowers. I have eight hands, but you with no hands think you are doing everything. Who is the proud one ? You please let me enter so that I may meet my Lord. Why are you ostracizing me for such a little offence ?

After that Balabhadra became even angrier and lost his temper. "Your misbehaviour to Bitarachha Mohapatra, the chief priest is of grave concern. I am ordered by him to prevent you from entering the temple any more. How can you do and protect your area Banki, even with your eight hands with weapons, if you have no discipline ?" Charchika replied, "Oh, then please go and ask him to forgive me ! I will not have nay peace if I am deprived of the Lord's vision. I will be happy again only when I am redeemed. " Charchika was left standing there at the bottom of *Baishipabachha*, the

twenty-two steps leading to the temple. The whole night was passing and her heart becomes very agitated. It was almost morning. The sevakas were coming fout rom the temple. Devas from all corners of the world had come that night, as was the custom every night to consult with Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe. Now they were going out to execute his will. Only Charchika was left standing at the gate. If a deva neglects his duty, he may cause harm to others and must be replaced. The sin of too much pride is almost irremediable. Just as Charchika was remembering this, Balabhadra came back with the sad news not to allow her inside. Balabhadra delivered the message of Lord Jagannath. "A proud deva should not be admitted. If you wish to redeem yourself, render service in the home of Bitarachha Mahapatra, the head priest to whose function you came late, and not to me. Bitarachha Mahapatra alone can exonerate you, if he so desires and is pleased with your service."

Balabhadra explained, "By the practice of virtuous deeds an ordinary man ascends upwards and may eventually attain the status of a demigod. Such a good soul may be regarded as equal to god himself, but only because of his goodness, not his high position. Do you know this, Mother ?" Charchika replied, "Yes, I have done wrong. I myself will take on the task of serving this man Bitarachha Mahapatra, even though I am a goddess of the highest order.

It is the right punishment for a degraded goddess. I will be serving a man who is himself a servant of Lord Jagannath. Let me leave this place before others come out."

Disguising herself as a young widow in a white saree, Charchika left the temple for



the house of Bitarachha Mahapatra. As she approached, she saw the old man sitting on the front steps. So she quickly covered her face with a sari piece and respectfully stood at some distance. The old man looked up and thought, "who is this lady ? I can see only half of her face, but she looks so young and radiant! I have never seen her in this area before. "Thinking like this, he called to her. "Mother, have you come to our house or are you looking for someone in this neighbourhood." The soft motherly appearance of Charchika made Bitarachha Mohapatra regard her as a mother.

Charchika pleaded, "I pray that you accept me in your house as a servant, as I have no other means of survival, father. As I lay flat on the ground before Lord Jagannath, he himself ordered me to serve here in your house."

The old man was astonished and with tears in his eyes, he answered." This is your own home, you are so like my own mother. A son can never be reluctant to provide shelter to his mother." Thus Charchika become the maid-servant of the head priest Bitarachha Mahapatra. Gradually she became accustomed to the household affairs of the family and took full charge of the puja room herself, cleaning the brass puja articles, changing the dress of the deities daily and lighting the lamps. So perfectly did she act out the role of mother that Bitarachha Mohapatra hardly thought of his own mother, who had just recently died. Time passed. Bitarachha's wife was old and ailing and so she was very pleased with Charchika's help and good manners. Sometimes people wondered about Charchika, "who is she ? Where did she come from ?" Sometimes Charchika would be overcome with feeling when there was talk of Lord Jagannath, what was the reason for this ?

They would ask her, "Why did not you go to the temple and have darshan of Lord Jagannath ?" When so many people come from distant places to see Him, you are living nearby and do not go ? "Charchika said sadly," It is a matter of luck, sometimes one is not destined to meet him. I will visit the Lord whenever he showers his mercy on me."

One day a huge storm hit Puri with heavy rain. The whole town was enveloped in darkness. Bitarachha Mahapatra struggled to find his way home and finally reached the door, knocking loudly. Charchika responded anxiously. "Oh, what a treacherous night to be out! When it fell dark I lit a candle and sat waiting, expecting you at any moment. That candle has just now gone out."

The head priest had come from the temple and was completely rain drenched. He handed over the Mahaprasad to Charchika and went to change his dress. But there were no matches to light the candle in his room. Neither did he bring a candle from the temple, as it was raining too heavily.

With surprise he asked "How did you light that candle, when there were no matches and all the neighbours had already gone to bed ? Can you light another one ?" Charchika replied, "Yes there is a way. Allow me to light the room." She immediately assumed her original form. She stretched one of her hands to the top of the temple where a lamp was burning and with it she lit the priest's candle.

On seeing this divine vision, Mahapatra almost felt senseless. He could not believe his eyes. How could this maid servant assume such a divine miraculous form ? And so vast and glorious it was. The whole town of Puri could be accommodated within the space between her feet. A deep sense of awe and wonder



overcame him. Charchika came back to her normal form in a moment's time, and the room was lighted. Mahapatra felt as if his eyes had betrayed him and he was going mad.

"Do not worry, father," Charchika said. Bitarachha Mahapatra told her, pleading, "Oh Mother! Please reveal your real identity. I will not leave your feet until you do so." Such rare display of God's divine grace thrilled the priest through and through. His body became numb. So Charchika disclosed everything to him, especially the reasons why she was cast out of the temple.

Mahapatra exclaimed, "Oh Mother, please go back to your original abode. I will obtain due permission from the Lord for your reinstatement." With such assurance of Mahapatra, Charchika disappeared from Bitarachha's house. It was after midnight and the rain had stopped. It was as if everything had occurred in accordance with God's plan.

Charchika once again approached the main gate of the temple and Balabhadra offered her a welcome smile. Because of this, Charchika realised that one can not retain even his position as a demigod if he does not fulfill his assigned duties and commitments for the upliftment of the world, for these are the duties of the demigods. Lord Jagannath ordered, "I am now very happy with you. I will assign you an additional responsibility, that of caring for my own car during Ratha Yatra, the great Festival of Chariots. Even though the regular Sevakas are there to look after Nandighosa, you will be its deva."

Charchika was silent and only nodded her head affectionately, then left. It was already morning and Bitarachha Mahapatra appeared before the deities to offer his regular service. This event occurred in the year 1368. Before Goddess Charchika left the house of the head

priest, Bitarachha Mahapatra, she asked him what he wanted. He answered that he had no demand for any worldly things, but only wanted to see her again. She said, "Go to your puja room," and then vanished. He went there and saw emerging from the floor a framed stone image of the devi herself.

Even today, some six centuries later, this holy image is there and puja is still being done to it daily by the descendants of Bitarachha Mahapatra, the head priest of Jagannath Temple.

## **2. By head priest Pattajoshi Mahapatra, in the year 1810.**

Vibhisana was one of the brothers of the demon king Ravana in Lanka during Tretaya Yuga. Yet he took shelter at the feet of Lord Rama. After the death of Ravana, he was made king of Lanka. He always felt that Rama was the Supreme Lord, and it is believed by the people of Puri that he comes every day to Lord Jagannath, feeling that He is Sri Rama Himself. Like all the devas, Vibhisana comes to see and enjoy the last ritual at midnight, known as Pahuda Arati.

It was in the year 1810, when there was no electricity and the town was dark at night. When returning home through the horse gate of the temple, head priest Pattajoshi Mahapatra felt somebody walking beside him. The person was not visible owing to the darkness, but he was so huge, it seemed his head was touching the sky. Pattajoshi Mahapatra was totally overwhelmed. Out of fear, he questioned, "Who are you, Sir?" The answer was, "I am Vibhisana from outer space. I come here daily to see the last ritual of Lord Jagannath."

Still the head priest doubted him. He asked again, "Please give me some proof that





you are from the outer space !" So Vibhisana gave him the huge golden armlet he was wearing and vanished. Even now, almost 200 years later, this ornament given by Vibhisana of Devaloka is worshipped in the residence of Pattajoshi Mahapatra's family. It may be seen and verified. The ornament is the size of a wheel of a bullock cart. It could never have been used by a human being.

### **3. By a Mekap worshipper in the temple, in the year 1890.**

The Mekap worshipper in Jagannath Temple is in charge of the deities' dresses and the store room known as Ratna Bhandar. Inside this sealed room are kept costly pearls, diamonds, emeralds, golden necklaces and many other precious ornaments used to decorate the deities during Suna Vesha or Golden Decoration. The deity in charge of this store room is Loknath, who is a form of Lord Shiva Himself. It is told that anyone who is greedy and tries to steal any ornaments from here will one day suffer from leprosy and everybody in his family will also die.

This actually happened once, in 1890. One Biswanath Mekap stole from the store room some ornaments, thinking nothing would happen. In his dream that night, two cobras entered his bedroom and he was bitten. His wife heard someone saying in a loud voice, " We have been sent from Nagaloka by Lokanath Shiva to punish him."

Biswanath Mekap died of snake bite and all his family members died prematurely and he was left heirless.

### **4. By Padmanav Khuntia, a worshipper of Jagannath Temple, in the year 1902.**

Padmanav Khuntia was a very humble sincere worshipper of Lord Jagannath. He used

to return to his house at 2 A.M. after attending the last Pahuda Ceremony of the temple. It was his daily habit to bring from the temple used flowers and garlands. These he would later offer to local deities such as Mothers Dakshinakali, Shyamakali and Baseli. On his way home, he would throw petal to the smaller temples as he passed by.

However, one night he forgot to offer any to Shani Temple, the temple of planet Saturn. Suddenly he felt someone following him in the darkness. Dogs also barked and sensing the presence of some being Khuntia looked back. He saw only the head of someone, but not clearly visible. As if in a humble way, the voice requested, "Just a leaf of the garland used by Him, I am Shani ! (the god of planet Saturn).

He vanished at high speed when only a leaf from the garland was presented to him. Khuntia stood dead still and speechless. Later on when he told his friends of this event, they said, "Khuntia, you are saved ! He would have caused you many difficulties had he not been obliged. He is the planet Shani, who comes to Lord Jagannath, but usually in the disguise of a lame man or a one-eyed person or someone with a deformed body. You were lucky to meet him, but still we hope you will not meet him again !"

### **5. By a decoit (thief) from Bihar State, in the year 1910.**

A thief from the state of Bihar wanted to steal the costly *Chitta*, which Lord Jagannath wears everyday over his third eye. The present value of this rare gold ornament studded with priceless gems would be millions of rupees. This thief was known as Bihari Daku. He went to the temple daily to learn every detail about the timings of the rituals, as the deities were guarded closely. Finally he came to know that



after Pahuda, the last ritual of the day, nobody is allowed inside the temple. So he made a plan. Wearing a black cloth, he hide himself inside the temple one night, just behind the sealed doors of the inner sanctum. He was with the divine trinity, but with evil motive. After all left, he stealthily climbed the altar where Lord Jagannath is worshipped. When he was about to take off the divine *Chitta* from the forehead of Lord Jagannath, he felt as if bitten by a thousand snakes !

The next morning worshippers and many other pilgrims saw Bihari Daku lying dead on the temple floor, surrounded by five cobras, who were also dead. The most aged worshipper present there said, "From Patala or Naga Loka devas come up as snakes to guard the deities while asleep.

**6. By Hazuri Balabhadra, grand son of the great hero and worshipper of Lord Jagannath, Chakhi Khuntia, in the year 1940.**

"I was standing on the roof of my house where the temple is more visible," reports Hazuri Balabhadra. It was 5 A.M. I have forgotten the date, but the month was July. I saw strange rays of light coming from the Chakra on top of the temple, like a clear line of brilliant light leaving the temple at high speed. This lasted for more than 10 minutes.

Out of great curiosity, I asked my father, He replied, 'You are very lucky. Only you saw the vehicle of some other devas coming to Lord Jagannath.' "I am thrilled even now when I tell you this !" This story was told to the father of this writer in the year 1940.

**7. By Jayaram Singhari, a worshipper of Jagannath Temple, in the year 1963.**

Jayaram Singhari was considered one of the most learned men in the society of

worshippers in the present day. He did not have any educational degrees or diplomas but he had profound knowledge of the ancient epics of India. Many people coming from different parts of India revered him as their spiritual guide. He only ate Mahaprasad, the rice meal offered to Lord Jagannath. One day for some reason his sons did not bring it from the temple. Even though he had not taken any food all day, he never revealed his hunger. Only his wife knew. As she looked sad, Singhari consoled her, "He will give, He will send !" But at midnight who would give ? All slept, his wife also.

After sometime there was a soft knock at the door. On opening the door, the old man found a banana leaf in which there were seven types of temple cakes ! Nobody was there. The next morning when he narrated this happening, nobody believed him. All day long this miracle of Lord Jagannath was very much in mind. The next night a voice told Singhari in a dream, "Did you eat everything that was given ?"

**8. By Harihar Guru, who was one of the greatest worshippers of Jagannath Temple. He was called Prakruta Panda, a real worshipper; for the help he rendered to all. This event occurred in 1969.**

Harihar Guru lived in recent times but he was one of the most honest, simple and sincere worshipper ever to serve Lord Jagannath. In spite of his limited income, it was his habit to help poor people. In fact, he became poor himself, helping others.

He used to come daily to the temple at 4 A.M. by the west gate, known as *Byaghradwar* or "Tiger's Gate". One morning he saw three beautiful ladies also going through the same gate. They had a divine fragrance around them and were nicely dressed,



decorated with flowers but no ornaments. Their faces were veiled. It was raining heavily at that moment, but Guru could not see them wet, even though he was completely drenched and shivering from the cold. The three ladies seemed to be going inside as if there were no downpour. Their saris were dry and there was no sign of their foot prints on the earth.

Seeing all of this, Guru approached them to ask who they were. They simply vanished ! Only the sound of soft laughter was heard. When he narrated this episode to his friends, he was told that the ladies were divine beings from Kinnara Loka.

**9. By Krishna Chandra Ray; an Oriya man from Khurda District, in the year 1969.**

Koili Vaikuntha is the place where old deities are buried during Nabakalebara Yatra, or the great festival of Metamorphosis in which the deities are changed and new ones made. This occurs only after a gap of atleast twelve years. *Dayitapatis*, who are considered to be the kith and kins of Lord Jagannath, carry the old deities out, just like dead bodies. Nobody except them can see this procession. It is said that if anyone else sees this event, he will die immediately.

Krishna Chandra Ray from Khurda district considered this to be an act of blind belief, a silly superstition. So on this special day he hide himself inside the temple at midnight. When the *Dayitas* carried the old deities to Koili Vaikuntha, he saw it all from the branch of a tree. The *Dayitas* returned after burying the deities. The whole atmosphere was dark and frightening. Ray heard the sobbing of ladies. He saw rays of different colours, but nobody was there. It had been told that beings of other Lokas come in the most sorrowful

mood. As the master of the universe leaves His body, all cry, out of deep sadness.

In the early morning hours of the next day, people found the dead body of Ray. This happened in the year 1969. The notes he had written of what he had seen was found beside the body.

**10. By worshipper Harihar Khuntia, the father of the writer, in the year 1970.**

Harihar Khuntia lived to the robust old age of 97. He was the spiritual teacher of pilgrims coming from Calcutta (Kolkata). When at Puri he would spent most of his time inside the temple, sometimes sixteen hours a day. When in Calcutta, he would spend most of his time discussing how Lord Jagannath is worshipped by all, even by the gods and goddesses. He was answering to all their querries. One day there was a very sceptical man sitting next to him. He putting all sort of odd questions to him.

One doubtful man from Bolpur questioned him, 'Is our Kali of Kalighat Lord Jagannath ?' The reply was spontaneous, "You take these flowers I have taken from Lord Jagannath and give it to the goddess Kali ! You will see Him in Her. Actually it was done and the next morning he came running and shouting, "I have seen Him, I have seen Him !"

**11. By worshipperJairam Singhari, in the year 1972.**

After Pahuda, the last ceremony of the day, no one is allowed to be inside the temple. Many divine beings come to attend the Lord at this hour. In the year 1972, Jairam Singhari, a worshipper, who was decorating the deity daily, narrated about this occurrence. He saw two ladies mysteriously entering the west gate of the temple after the doors were sealed in



the night. They were quietly talking to each other. From their talk, Singhari overheard that the name of one was Manujosha. Later he read in a reference book called *Amar Kosha* that she is one of the eight dancing girls of Kinnara Loka, a space beyond this earth.

## 12. By worshipper Laxman Mudali in the year 1985.

On the alter of *Ratna Singhasana* of the temple, seven gods and goddesses are worshipped. They all come from spheres beyond this world.

Name of Deities	Sphere Belonging To
1. Lord Jagannath	Vishnu Loka or Golaka, the abode of Srikrishna.
2. Lord Balabhadra	Shiva Loka, where Lord Shiva resides.
3. Lord Sudarshan	Swarga Loka or Heaven, the abodes of divine beings.
4. Lord Neela Madhava	Kinnara Loka, or abode of divine dancers. According to the palm leaf script, <i>Indira Nilamani Tattwa</i> , Neela Madhava is a dancing deity.
5. Goddess Subhadra	Sura Loka-All Suras derive strength from Divine Mother.
6. Goddess Lakshmi	Deva Loka -the abode of divine beings with only divine qualities.
7. Goddess Saraswati (Or Bhudevi)	Bhu Loka, or the Earth. One of the names of Saraswati is Bhudevi, as she is made of clay for Saraswati Puja every year.

The worshippers known as *Puja Pandas* perform puja to them daily. These are Puja Pandas, one for Lord Balabhadra, one for Goddess Subhadra, and one for Lord Jagannath and the other four deities. If there is any mistake in the recitation of *slokas* or in the text, the

worshipper will be reprimanded by the deities themselves. Some sign of disapproval or some bad things must happen. The priests who are the direct worshippers of the deities do not feel that the images are lifeless wood. Rather they are much more vibrant with life force than man, as they (the deities) do not belong to this world, but other higher spheres where energy is stronger.

Once a worshipper forgot to do *puja* to Neela Madhava when he was serving the five deities. When he returned home, he came to know that his wife has gone mad. She was found repeating only the name "*Neela Madhava, Neela Madhava,*" over and over again. After three days the worshipper realised the fault he had committed. As ordered in a dream, he held a *yagna* or holy fire ceremony. Only after that was performed his wife was cured of madness. As soon as she regained her senses, she asked, "Did you forget Neela Madhava on that day I went mad ?"

## 13. By Ganesh Mishra, in his book "Santha Mala", about a happening in the 18th century.

There was a very poor Brahmin whose habit was to recite the *Bhagavat Geeta* to the people who would be interested to listen to it. His wife was very much annoyed as she was without meals often. The husband would say, "I have Lord Jagannath to help" But where is He ? One day she was totally upset. Her husband was away teaching the essence of *Geeta* to the people. In fact his wife was dying of hunger.

She saw a black man carrying rice, vegetables and milk shouting, "Where is Geeta Panda's house ?" The wife, as her name was Geeta Panda, came out trembling. The young man told her, "Kindly accept all these offered by one of your friends."





"No please stay a little longer, you can eat. My husband will be coming now." "No, I have many works, I can not stay."

When the brahmin was told about all these by his wife, he became almost senseless. With weak voice, he said "You, poor lady, you saw Him, you are so lucky' Oh Lord Jagannath !"

**14. By Ganesh Mishra, in his book "Santha Mala", about a happening on July 7- 1902.**

Dasia Bauri from Dandamukundapur, in the district of Puri, Orissa took a coconut to be offered to Lord Jagannath through the priests of the temple. But they out of mockery did not accept the fruit. Dasia was extremely sad, cursing the heritage of the worshippers.

Out of pure devotion he stretched his hands and prayed, "Oh Lord, kindly accept this coconut". He was standing outside at the Lion's Gate of the temple. People saw two hands emerge from within the temple to take the coconut from Dasia. It was He who blessed Dasia in the presence of many.

**15. Recorded in Madala Panji, the temple record book in 1818.**

This is another true story of a devotee named Bandhu Mohanty of Jajpur to prove how Lord Jagannath descends from His throne to help His devotees.

Bandhu Mohanty was very poor and as such he had no support to maintain his family, consisting of his wife and two sons. His wife asked him out of agony one day that why he was not going to his rich friend of whom he was so proud. The friend about whom Bandhu Mohanty mentioned was Lord Jagannath, but his wife did not realise the essence of what her husband was saying all the time. So his wife

compelled him to go to the house of the friend whosoever he was. He under took his journey to Puri. It was night already. Their two little sons were crying for food. They came just near the temple. Bandhu Mohanty consoled his wife saying. "My friend's palace is too big. He is very rich but it is not right to enter his house now as it is night. We will go tomorrow."

All slept, being weak, hungry, tired and sad. But his wife did not sleep.

Suddenly, on a golden tray many kinds of food were brought by a robust man whose colour was very black. He left the place very quickly. She fed her sons and when Bandhu Mohanty was awake from his sleep, he was thunder-struck, hearing everything from his wife.

But the golden plate was missing from the temple and found with them. This made a great noise in the small town. The police arrested all the family members and they were produced in the court before the king for severe punishment the next day.

The king dreamt that very night of Lord Jagannath. As if giving order, the Lord said to him, "Oh King ! When guests come to you, do you not entertain them ? So release Bandhu Mohanty at once; he is my devotee." It was done, and he was given service as a cook in the temple.

Even now, descendents of Bandhu Mohanty are the main cooks in the kitchen of the temple and they daily offer food to Lord Jagannath on a golden Tray.

**16. By Godavari Pujapanda on April 2, 1890.**

A Puja Panda worshipper is one who does puja and offers food to the deity. While



doing so, in the course of offering, he hold water in his palm. A priest cannot sanctify the offering unless the deity is reflected in the water which he holds.

Once it happened that no reflection was seen for some unknown reason. This disturbed all. Nobody, not even the king knew why the deities were angry. Was the Puja Panda insincere ? Was the food not cooked with purity ? Not knowing what to do the worshippers remained sitting on the altar where Lord Jagannath is seated. The king was determined not to touch water until he could know the cause. He dreamt as if Lord Jagannath was telling him, 'Oh king, I was not

in the temple. I went to eat food prepared by Vedamata with love and loyalty. How can there be any reflection if I am away from my devotee. Now I am in the temple, so offer the food."

Immediately, the Puja Panda was informed about the dream of the king, and everything went well again.

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## The Life of Lord Chaitanya and His Sankirtana Movement in India

*Alok Mishra*

"If by chance we get the association of a pure devotee, then by his mercy our illusion becomes over. Therefore it is advised that everyone should seek association of saintly persons. And by saintly person's instructions, the darkness of ignorance can be removed." There is no question of 'loss' in devotional service. God has taken care of it as well.

There are innumerable names for the Supreme Lord, both in India and elsewhere. All of them are equally good because they all indicate the Supreme personality of Godhead. But this particular *Mahamantra* - "*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare - Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare*" which consists of sixteen names or words are especially recommended for this era, called *Kali-yuga* (the age of quarrel), is the best for people to take advantage of them and thus follow the path of the great *Acharyas*, the saintly teachers who attained success by practicing this system.

In congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord, people can come together and glorify the Lord in their respective languages to the accompaniment of melodious music. And if such performances are executed sincerely, it is certain that the participants will gradually attain spiritual perfection without

undergoing more rigorous methods. The *Srimad-bhagavatam* states, "In this age of *Kali*, people who are endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the gold-complexioned Lord by performing the *Sankirtana-yajna*, the sacrifice of chanting the Holy names of God." So the *Sankirtana* movement of Lord Chaitanya, the Golden Avatar, is not a concoction, for it presents the fulfillment of what is stated in the revealed scripture, just as the appearance of Lord Buddha and other *Avataras* is forefold in the Vedic literature. And to fulfill the Lord's mission, all the people of world should accept the holy name of God as the common platform for the universal religion of mankind.

### **The Biography of Lord Chaitanya :**

The advent of the holy name thus took place alongwith the advent of Sri Chitanya. When on the lap of his mother, he once stopped crying as soon as the ladies surrounding him chanted the Holy name of Sri Krishna and clapped their hands. Sometimes the young ladies took pleasure in making him cry, so that they could then stop him by chanting '*Hare Krishna Hare Rama*'. By the age of sixteen, he was regarded as a great scholar of India called *Nimai Pandit*.



He was then married and began to spread the 'Hare Krishna' movement in Navadvipa. There some of the *Brahmanas* soon became envious and put many hindrances in his path, at length complaining to the Muslim Magistrate against him. The Kazi as this official was called, took their complaints seriously and he at first warned the followers of Chaitanya not to chant the name of Sri Krishna loudly. But Chaitanya asked his followers not to care the orders of the Kazi and they went on with their Sankirtana parties as usual. The Kazi then sent constables who broke some of the *Mridangas* (Drums) during *Sankirtana*. When Lord Chaitanya heard of this, he organized a civil disobedience movement in Navadvipa. He was the pioneer of civil disobedience movement in India and for the right cause. He organized a procession of a huge crowd of people carrying thousands of *Mridangas* and *Karatalas* (Hard cymbals) and the procession passed through the roads of Navadvipa without any fear of the Kazi.

At length the party reached the house of the Kazi, who fled upstairs in fear of the masses. The men assembled there showed hot tempers but Chaitanya pacified them. When the Kazi came down, Chaitanya had an amicable discussion with him about the Koran and the Vedic *Shastras*.

The Kazi questioned Chaitanya about cow sacrifice, which the Vedas prescribe, and the Chaitanya replied that the sacrifice which he (Kazi) cited from the *Vedas* is not actually cow-killing. In that sacrifice an old bull or cow is killed to give it a new life by the power of Vedic *mantras*. In the *Kali-yuga* however, such cow sacrifice is forbidden because there are not so many learned *Brahmanas* who can conduct that type of ceremony. Now the

scriptures recommend only the sacrifice through *Sankirtana* for all purposes.

Lastly the Kazi was convinced by Sri Chaitanya and at once he became his follower. Indeed, the Kazi declared that hence forward no one could hinder the chanting of *Harekrishna* in Navadvipa, an injunction observed up to the present day. Following this incident, Chaitanya began to propagate *Sankirtana* more vigorously than ever. In the course of his preaching, he sent out all his followers every day, chief among whom were Srila Nityananda and Thakura Haridasa. They would go from door to door and preach the Science of Love *Sree Krishna*. One day as they were walking along the main road, they came across two brothers named Jagai and Madhai. Though these brothers were the sons of a respectable *Brahmana*, they had fallen to the most despicable position and were meat eaters, womenisers and decoits of the first order. Upon learning of these two, Srila Nityananda at once decided that if they could be delivered by the holy name then Sri Chaitanya would be all the more glorified. With this in mind Srila Nityananda at once approached the two brothers and requested them to chant the holy name of Krishna. But the drunken brothers flew into a rage and attacked Srila Nityananda injuriously, who hurriedly left the place with Haridas Thakura, the drunkards chasing them for a considerable distance. The next day Srila Nityananda again went to see the brothers. But as soon as he approached them Madhai threw a piece of broken earthen pot at him and struck his head, drawing profuse blood. Srila Nityananda was so kind towards them that instead of protesting their heinous act, he said, "It doesnot matter that you have injured me, I still request you to chant the holy name of God."





Jagai was astonished and moved by Srila Nityananda's behaviour and he at once fell down at his feet, begging pardon for their sinful behaviour. But as Madhai again attempted to hurt Srila Nityananda, Jagai protected him and implored him to also fall down at his feet. Meanwhile Sri Chaitanya having heard of Nityananda's injury at once rushed to the spot to take a stiff action against them but Nityananda refrained him from his mission namely, to deliver the hopelessly fallen souls of the *Kaliyuga*. The brothers Jagai and Madhai were, after all, typical examples of the present day population. Because of Nityananda's intervention and their own sincere surrender at Chaitanya's lotus feet, Chaitanya at length was pacified, and the brothers became welcome devotees of Sri Chaitanya.

To deliver the debased population of *Kaliyuga* Sri Chaitanya appeared, and out of his mercy he gave us the simple method of self-realisation - chanting of the holy name of God. Once when the great impersonalist *Sanyasi* Prakashananda Saraswati asked Sri Chaitanya why he was propogating the *Sankirtana* movement instead of studying the *Vedanta-Sutra*, which is generally understood to be the duty of a *Sanyasi*, Sri Chaitanya replied very humbly as follows :

"The reason why I perform *Sankirtana* instead of studying the *Vedanta-Sutra* is that I am a

great fool. And because I am a great fool my spiritual master forbade me to play with *Vedanta* philosophy. He said it would be better for me to chant the holy name of the Lord for that would beliver me from material bondage."

Swami and Goswami are different synonyms of the word for persons who are in full control of the senses. Don't think that you cannot control your senses. Everyone is able. You'll get strength by this process. This chanting of *mantra* will help you to feel the God everywhere. Don't be dejected by thinking that you have no strength. You will get strength by continuing this process of *Kirtanam Sravanam*, which means chanting of *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna . . .* and hear some passages from the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam*, utilize these two processes and you will find strength for your spiritual life.

So in this age there is no religion other than glorifying the Lord by chanting His holy name and that is the injunction of all the revealed scriptures. Everything is there in the chanting of "*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.*"

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## Impact of Orissa Land Reforms on the Land Revenue of Shree Jagannath Temple

Arjuna Sahoo

The celebrated Temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri was constructed by Raja Chodaganga Dev of Ganga dynasty in the 12th century A.D. During the long span of last eight hundred years many rulers of different religions starting from the Ganga dynasty to the East India Company have administered the Jagannath Temple. They have granted vast landed properties in the name of 'Shree Jagannath Mahaprabhu' to meet the deficits on account of day-to-day expenditure on rituals of the Lord. *Sataisi Hazari Mahal* and *Ekharajat Mahal* were given by the Maratha and the British to meet the temple expenses. *Sataisi Hazari Mahal* consists of 90 villages comprising an area of 11,070.740 acres and *Ekharajat Mahal* consists of 156 villages comprising an area of 70,568.920 acres of land.

Orissa Land Reform Act came into force in 1960. The tillers of the soil were cultivating Lord Jagannath Land under *Mathas*. They all filed different O.L.R. cases in Revenue Court to declared them as *Stitiban* tenant. The unscrupulous agents of *Mathas* and *Mahantas* granted fraudulent grant receipts and *Pattas* in favour of fake tenants. So all the cultivable and horticulture lands of Lord Jagannath became a subject matter of litigations. As a result, all the landed properties of Lord Jagannath become disputed. Though there is provision U/S2 (24) of O.L.R. Act that Lord Jagannath is a privileged *Royat* but it has no effect so far

as the collection of *Rajabhag* dues are concerned.

In O.E.A. Act the vesting of trust properties were not included till 1963. In 1963 for the first time all the *Devottara* Trust properties were vested to the State Government by notification. The State Government Under S(3) of O.E.A. Act declared that all the public religious trusts including Jagannath Mahaprabhu Trust to be vested with State Government on 18.03.1974. The effect of vesting has serious impact on the decrease of revenue on the annual income of the Jagannath Temple.

By Orissa Tenancy Act many persons, specially in the town area and in village area in collusion with unscrupulous and motivated agents of different *Mathas* and *Mahantas* manufactured fraudulent, forged documents to Proof. themselves as tenants having right of occupancy as per Sec- (23),(24) (236) O.T. Act. Such fraudulent and collusive action put the Lord Jagannath Trust into serious loss of immovable properties which are very valuable. Now it has become a problem for temple management to sale the land of Lord Jagannath or get any revenue out of it.

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## The Disillusion

*Prafulla Chandra Sahoo*

Descending from your Shree Mandir  
the deluxe abode  
across the flight of twenty two steps  
to stumble playfully  
in the dusty grand-road  
Oh, Lord of the Universe;  
you are flying butterflies  
in the wintry grey valley  
of down-troddens;  
climbing up, where as,  
on your mighty arms  
and hanging down from your  
*Tahia*, the flowery crown  
hereditary vampires are aspiring  
to buy acres of infinity overhead.

Distributing liberally the bliss  
of *Kaivalya*, the absolute salvation  
to the stampeding seekers  
from the moving chariot  
and pouring down the monsoon frolic  
in their mangroves of salty eye-lids  
Oh, Lord of the Blue-hill;  
you are merrily overlooking  
how most of these feigning recipients  
are, otherwise, harnessing  
wild horses in their wishful forests.

Despite your various incarnations  
on this mundane theatre

to protect the virtuous ones  
and annihilate the evil,  
you seldom shirk  
Oh, Lord Saviour of the down-cast flock;  
to rub shoulders with the simmering sinners  
wiping off their streaming tears,  
patting and guiding them to your  
dream of a paradise on earth,  
every rain-soaked *Asharh*  
once in a year.

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## Oh ! Lord Jagannath

*Er. Niranjan Rath*

You are the Omnipresent of Omniscient,  
This universe exists at Your will;  
You are the master of all the arts and the acts,  
You are the almighty over and above all.

Past, present, and future,  
Every event is by Your direction;  
About the ups and downs of the creation,  
You have distinct plan and vision.

You possess all the divine attributes,  
You are the origin of every incarnation;  
You are the law maker of time and nature,  
To balance the good and evil deeds of the creation.

You are the beauty, You are the truth,  
Every thing is by Your grace;  
To punish the sinner, to save the saints,  
Both are Your eternal duty and wish.

You exist in all, all exist in You,  
You are the supreme soul;  
You are in omniform, hither and thither, everywhere,  
You are the controller of all as a whole.

Oh! ascendant of Nandighosh, I pray for Your mercy,  
For the living being peacefully to live;  
You are the Creator, You are the Savior,  
Under Your care let this universe happily survive.

Er. Niranjan Rath lives at S-2/617, Niladri Vihar, Po- Shailashree Vihar, Bhubaneswar





# The Marvel of Marvels

*Er. Raghunath Patra*

Antique Scriptures  
I pondered over  
from saints and preachers  
what I hear. (1)

Formless *Brahma*,  
all surmise  
adored in *Srimandir*,  
Sermons the Wise. (2)

In winkless eyes  
round like tabor  
beholds He all  
far and near. (3)

Devoid of hands  
executes sound  
Devoid of legs  
moves around. (4)

Without nose  
inhales best  
Without mouth  
Perceives taste. (5)

Without tongue  
Converses all  
His hands stretched  
to embrace all. (6)



Limbs limit figure  
limitless is He  
The formless in form  
a grand marvel, see.(7)

With come-hither-smile  
He trails all  
Who goes oh ! nigh  
Skips from fall.(8)

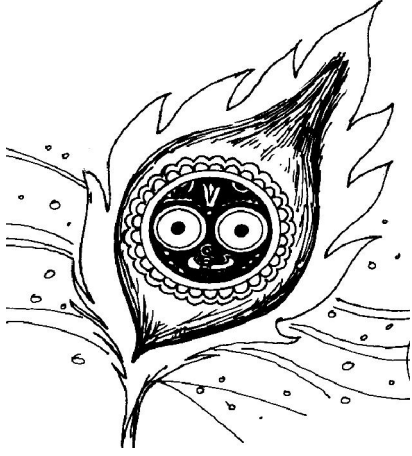
The supreme goal of  
disolate ones  
love stuck devotees  
or fallen fans.(9)

A silent witness of  
all the deeds  
none escapes His vision  
though cunningly hides.(10)

With beaming face  
He signals all  
forget ye prejudice  
forget fall. (11)

Love ye all  
high and low  
all are parallel  
in caelestial flow.(12)

Er. Raghunath Patra lives at Brindaban Dham, Lokanath  
Road, Puri-1



## Dainandina Niti in Sri Jagannath Temple

Sarmistha Pasayat

In this paper an attempt has been made to study the *dainandina niti* (daily rituals) of the Shri Jagannath Temple, Puri (hereinafter referred to as the Temple). The word *niti* in Oriya and Sanskrit refers to a principle, a rule or a policy. But in the Temple, this word is used in a more general sense, which signifies a particular religious rite. The *nitis* in the Temple are elaborate and complex in nature. It involves a multitude of *sevas* and *sevakas*. Hence, it is essential to understand briefly something about the *sevas* and *sevakas* of the Temple. For the performance of various *nitis* in the Temple, a large number of *sevakas* have been engaged on hereditary basis. It is believed that Raja Anangabhima Deva of Ganga dynasty, a sovereign ruler of Orissa in the 13th century AD, had initiated a well-knitted administrative system of the Temple. He had established *Chhattisa nijoga* (36 different associations of *sevakas*). Subsequently, the number of *nijogas* (associations) has increased but the nomenclature of *Chhattisa nijoga* is still in vogue. Over the years, the number of *sevakas* has also increased considerably. Gajapati Maharaja of Puri is the first *sevaka* (*Adya sevaka*) of the deities. He represents the sovereign ruler of Orissa. As per the tradition, he had constructed the Temple, installed the

deities, arranged for *seva-puja* (ritual services), arranged different types of *nitis*, appointed different categories of *sevakas* to perform these *nitis* and administered the establishment. During the foreign rule, Gajapati Maharaja was known as the Superintendent of the Temple. There is a list of various classes of *sevakas* and others associated with different types of *nitis* and management of the Temple in Part-3 of the Record of Rights (ROR) of the Temple, prepared in 1952. It is voluminous to narrate the details of each *seva*. However, for the understanding of *nitis* in the Temple the list of 119 categories of *sevakas* mentioned in the said ROR is given below:

- (1) Gajapati Maharaja, (2) Parichha or Rajaguru, (3) Chhattisanijoga Nayaka Pattajoshi Mahapatra, (4) Bhitarchha Mahapatra, (5) Taluchha Mahapatra, (6) Mudirasta or Mudihasta, (7) Deula Purohita, (8) Pujapanda, (9) Badapanda, (10) Pushpalaka, (11) Mahajana, (12) Mudra, (13) Khuntia, (14) Bhandara Mekapa, (15) Palia Mekapa, (16) Akhanda Mekapa, (17) Changda Mekapa, (18) Khata Seja Mekapa, (19) Pratihari, (20) Daita, (21) Pati Mahapatra, (22) Patribadu, (23) Garabadu, (24) Suarabadu, (25) Khuri Nayaka, (26) Mukha Pakhala, (27) Ghatuari,



(28) Gochhikara, (29) Suna Goswami, (30) Muduli, (31) Alati Balita Sevaka, (32) Purana Panda, (33) Datta Mahapatra, (34) Lugadhua and Panikunda Sevakas, (35) Ballabha Jogania, (36) Bimanabadu, (37) Anasara Suddha Suara and Suddha Suara, (38) Hadapa Nayaka, (39) Bidia Jogania, (40) Khatuli Sevakas, (41) Asthana Pratihari, (42) Kotha Bhoga Jogania, (43) Pradhani, (44) Paika, (45) Lenka, (46) Suara Nijoga Naika, (47) Suara Nijoga and Mahasuara, (48) Jagia Mahasuara, (49) Badu Suara, Thali, Tuna and Amalu Suara, (50) Panti badu, (51) Amalu Tola, Pura Kharada, (52) Tolabadu, (53) Rosa Paika, (54) Bahara Deuli Suara, (55) Bahara Deuli Jogania, (56) Rosa Dho Pakhalia, Angarua, Gobara Pania and Rabadia, (57) Handi Jogania, (58) Birimunda Samartha, (59) Kotha Bhoga Pania, (60) Paniki Pata, (61) Nikapa and Gandhana Nikapa, (62) Biribuha, (63) Daudi Bola, (64) Chunara, (65) Sabata Nijoga, (66) Paniapata, (67) Mandani, (68) Chaka Apasara, (69) Mulia Suansia, (70) Binakara, (71) Darpania, (72) Kotha Suansia, (73) Mahabhoi, (74) Gita Gobinda, (75) Bhitara Gaani, (76) Samprada Nijoga, (77) Dayana Mali, (78) Madeli, (79) Prasadabadu, (80) Tatua, (81) Patrabintha, (82) Bajanti, (83) Chhatara Nijoga, (84) Kahalia, (85) Sankhua, (86) Parba Jatra Jogania, (87) Chitrakara, (88) Rupakara, (89) Bania, (90) Tamara Bisoi, (91) Karatia, (92) Benta Bindha Paika, (93) Patara Bisoi, (94) Kalabethia, (95) Daraji, (96) Kumbhara Bisoi, (97) Ratha Bhoi, (98) Malachula, (99) Banua, (100) Chakra Dihudi, (101) Ojha Maharana, (102) Ghanta Seva, (103) Ghantua, (104) Ratha Dahuka, (105) Badhei, (106) Baidya, (107) Amunia Chhatara, (108) Chhamu Dihudi, (109) Chapa Behera,

(110) Chapa Dalei, (111) Mapa Saita Karana, (112) Tadhau Karana, (113) Deula Karana, (114) Baithi Karana, (115) Kotha Karana, (116) Charcha Karana, (117) Dayana Patri, (118) Chaula Bachha Karana, (119) Matha and Byaktigata Seva. Another Seva called (120) Behera Karana Seva, which was not included in the original list of the Record of Rights, has been revived in 1988. Out of these *sevas*, in the mean time, some *sevas* have been discontinued. These are (1) Kotha Karana, (2) Churcha Karana, (3) Mapa Saita Karana, (4) Samprada Nijoga, (5) Madeli, (6) Bhitara Gayani, (7) Binakara, (8) Rajaguru (Patuara Seva), (9) Banua, (10) Kalabethia, (11) Prasadabadu, (12) Patrabintha, (13) Sankhua, (14) Mulia Suansia, (15) Badapanda, (16) Kumbhara Bisoi, (17) Malachula, (18) Dandibala, (19) Gitagovinda, etc.

These *sevakas* do not receive any salary from the Temple Administration. On an average, 70 to 80 *sevakas* perform *seva-puja* (ritual services) every day. Each of them is entitled to get a portion of the *Raja bhoga* or *Kotha bhoga*. This is called *Khei* of the day. *Sevakas* in general are paid daily remuneration, which is known as *Purashkar* (cash reward) according to the scales prescribed by the Managing Committee of the Temple. Some *sevakas* get rewards both in cash and kinds. There is also provision for special cash reward over and above the *Purashkar*. For example, each year after the Ratha Yatra is over most of the *nijogas* and also some individual *sevakas* use to get special cash rewards from the Temple Administration for their satisfactory *seva* during the festival.

*Nitis* of the Temple can be broadly divided into the following three parts: (1) Daily



*niti*, (2) Occasional *niti* and (3) festival *niti*. The fixed *nitis* are observed daily. Secondly, the periodic or according to the specialty of certain days, months etc. or occasional *nitis* are observed. In this context, mention may be made of some specific occasions like *Ekadasi* (eleventh day of fortnight), *Sankranti*, *Amavasya*, *Grahana* (eclipse), *Nakshatra* or any mishaps in the Temple. Thirdly, there are various festivals observed through out the year, some outside the Temple like *Snana yatra*, *Ratha yatra*, *Chandana yatra* etc. and some inside the Temple like *Jhulana yatra*. Each *sevaka* has his specified duty to perform in these *nitis* having terms and times specified. Various *nitis* that are observed in the Temple commence at about 5.00 A.M. early in the morning every day and continues till midnight. The daily *nitis* in short are described below.

#### **Dwaraphita and Mangala Alati :**

Dwara means door or entrance and *Dwaraphita* means opening of doors and *Mangala alati* refers to auspicious lamp offerings to the deities early in the morning. As per the ROR, the doors of the Garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) are to be opened by 5.00 A.M. in the morning. In the months of Kartika (October-November), Dhanu (December-January) and also on certain specific days, the doors are to be opened much before 5.00 A.M. i.e. between 2.00 A.M. to 3.00 A.M. Five categories of *sevakas* namely (1) Bhitarchha Mahapatra, (2) Pratihari, (3) Muduli, (4) Akhanda Mekapa and (5) Palia Mekapa are required to remain present to perform this *niti*. As per the tradition, the doors are opened after Bhitarchha Mahapatra examines the seals, placed on the padlocks on the previous night by another *sevaka* known as Taluchha Mahapatra. On some days, it becomes difficult

to do *Pahuda* (*niti* related to closing of Temple doors after the final *niti* is over at night) on account of extra *nitis* or delay in completion of *nitis*. On such occasions, the question of *dwaraphita* in the following morning does not arise and the *nitis* commence as usual only from *Mangala alati* onwards.

The subsequent *niti* after *Dwaraphita* is *Mangala alati*. Bhitarchha Mahapatra and two other *Pushpalaka sevakas* perform this *niti* standing below the *ratnavedi* / *ratnasinghasana*. Talichha Mahapatra is entitled to perform this *niti* in the absence of Bhitarchha Mahapatra. As per the tradition, Bhitarchha Mahapatra or Talichha Mahapatra performs *Mangala alati* to Jagannath, Sudarsana, Madhava, Sridevi and Bhudevi. It is worth mentioning that the Badachhata Matha performs *kirtan* every day at the time of *Mangala alati*. Every day, in fact, *alati* is performed seven times. These are (1) *Mangala alati* when camphor, pithau and 21 *bati* are required for the purpose. This is performed by the *sevakas* as mentioned earlier, (2) *Sakala Dhupa Alati* when camphor and 21 *bati* are required and this *alati* is performed by the *Pujapanda sevakas*, (3) *Madhyahna Dhupa Alati* when camphor and 21 *bati* are required and this *alati* is performed by the *Pujapanda sevakas*, (4) *Sandhya alati* when camphor, 21 *bati* and pithau are required and this *alati* is performed by the Talichha Mahapatra and Palia *Pushpalaka sevakas*, (5) *Sandhya Dhupa Alati* when camphor and 21 *bati* are needed and this *alati* is performed by the *Pujapanda sevakas* (6) *Badasinghara Dhupa alati* when camphor and 21 *bati/salita* are needed and this *alati* is performed by the *Pujapanda sevakas* and lastly (7) *Pahuda alati* when camphor and pithau are required and this *alati* is performed by the





Pushpalaka *sevakas*.

### Mailama :

This means removal or taking off the clothes, dress, flowers, tulasi etc. of the previous night. The schedule time of this *niti* is about 6.00 A.M. in the morning. But it depends on the time taken for Mangala alati. The *sevakas* associated with this *niti* are (1) three Pushpalakas, (2) Khuntia, (3) Changda Mekapa and (4) Dhoba. Pushpalaka *sevakas* change the clothes, flowers and tulasi leaves of the deities worn on the previous night. After removal of clothes, the deities wear another set of clean and washed clothes. It is known as *tadapalagi*. The clothes are called *tadapa* and *uttariya* like towels. These are made of cotton worn by the deities for morning bath. As per the tradition, these clothes are washed by the Dhoba *sevaka* in the kunda (water tank) near Bata Ganesa. This Dhoba *sevaka* is actually Brahmin by caste. It is worth mentioning that every day the deities wear different types of clothes (Bastras) in different times of the day. These bastras are (1) Tadapa, (2) Uttariya, (3) Paharana, (4) Phuta, (5) Sirkapada / Srikapada, (6) Baralagi Pata (set), (7) Srimukhabala (made of cotton), (8) Suta luga (cotton clothes), (9) Chandana Guda, (10) Suta Chadara, (11) Gita Govinda Khandua bastra etc.

### Abakasa :

It means cleaning of teeth and bathing. The time is between 6.00 A.M. to 6.30 A.M. in the morning for the purificatory rites of the deities such as brushing of teeth and bath. These *nitis* are performed by the following *sevakas* namely, (1) Bhitarchha Mahapatra, (2) Palia Pushpalaka, (3) Suarabadu, (4) Paniapata, (5) Mukhaphala *sevaka*, (6) Khatuli *sevaka*,

(7) Darpania, (8) Padhiari, (9) Amla Ghantuari, (10) Bhandara Mekapa, (11) Mahabhoi and (12) Khurinayaka and (13) Jyotisa. This does not mean that the deities actually take bath. Three Pushpalaka *sevakas* perform this *snana bidhi* in *pancha upachara paddhati* sitting on the floor below the Ratnavedi. They sprinkle water mixed with camphor, curd, amla and Chandana (sandal wood paste) on three brass mirrors (darpana), each about two feet high, symbolizing the bath. Before that they also show the tooth sticks and tongue scrappers to the deities symbolizing brushing of the teeth. During this *niti*, the Temple astrologer (*Jyotisa*) reads out the *tithi* and other astrological details of the day. After this *niti*, Garuda in the Nata mandapa takes bath for which the Garuda / Chunara *sevakas* perform the *snana bidhi*.

### Mailama and Besa :

Specified time for this *niti* is about 6.45 A.M. in the morning. The deities change their clothes and wear another clean and washed set. Every day the deities also wear different types of flower ornaments made of different types of flowers, leaves of tulasi, banana, panasa and patuka etc. These flower ornaments are (1) Kara Pallava, (2) Kundala, (3) Tadagi, (4) Chandrika, (5) Gabha, (6) Alaka, (7) Tilaka, (8) Jhumpa, (9) Nakuasi, (10) Dayana, (11) Adhara Mala, (12) Makara Kundala, (13) Sripayara Mala, (14) Hrudaya Padaka, (15) Kali Padaka, (16) Kaustubha Padaka, (17) Chausara Mala, (18) Guna etc. A *sevaka* known as Akhanda Mekapa keeps in the *Garbhagriha* the *Akhanda Baitha*, which is not extinguished and burns till Pahuda i.e. time of retirement of the deities to beds. For this til oil is provided to the Akhanda Mekapa from the Kotha Bhoga godown of the Temple Administration. The following *sevakas* are



associated with this niti : (1) Pushpalaka, (2) Changda Mekapa, (3) Akhanda Mekapa, (4) Suarabadu and (5) Dhoba etc. It is worth mentioning that the colour of bastras/dress (clothes) of the deities varies as per tithi (day). For instance, on Sunday the deities wear red pata, on Monday they wear black and white pata, on Tuesday the clothes are called Barapatia pata (combination of five colours), on Wednesday they wear blue pata, on Thursday they wear yellow pata, on Friday the deities wear white pata and on Saturday they wear black pata.

### **Sahanamela :**

It means *sarbasadharana darsan* or public *darsan* of the deities. As per the ROR, the specified time of sahanamela is 7.00 A.M. in the morning. During this time, the *yatris* are allowed to go into the *garbhagriha* near the ratnavedi to have a close darsan of the deities and circumambulate with out paying fees for the same. It takes place twice a day, once in the morning immediately after *abakasa* and for the second time during night immediately after *sandhya alati*. However, in practice it is being held only once generally after mailama on account of the delayed performance of nitis. On certain festive occasions, sahanamela is held after Sandhya dhupa (evening bhoga). In the month of Kartika, it is held after Sandhya alati. Sometimes, it is held after Sakala dhupa and on certain festive days like Sri Gundicha yatra, Bahuda yatra, Niladrimahodayastami, Nrusinghajanma, Dhulia Gundicha, Kartika Sukla Ekadasi (Lakshmi-Narayana vesa), Kartika Sukla Chaturdasi (Lakshmi-Nrusingha vesa) and during *anavasara*, there is no provision of Sahanamela at all. It is generally held to enable the common people to go near the ratnavedi in the *garbhagriha* to have a close

darsan of the deities. After darsan of the deities, the pilgrims do *parikrama* along the lane behind the Ratnavedi and then come out of the *Bhitara Pokharia*. Pilgrims are not allowed to touch the deities. If any body accidentally does so, the deities are supposed to be polluted and a Mahasnana takes place. In case, any one vomits or passes urine or any one is injured and blood falls inside the Pokharia that also amounts to pollution of the deities and Mahasnana takes place. The following sevakas remain present during sahanamela : (1) Pushpalaka, (2) Khuntia, (3) Mekapa, (4) Tadhau Karana, (5) Gochhikara, (6) Pratihari, (7) Suarabadu and (8) some Temple as well as Police personnel. Though it is conducted only for one hour, in the months of Magha and Pousa, Sahanamela continues for two to three hours in view of large gatherings in the Temple during these months.

### **Besalagi :**

After sahanamela the deities change their clothes again. This is performed between 8.00 A.M. to 8.20 A.M. in the morning. This time, the deities wear different robes and gold ornaments studded with precious stones to suit different festive occasions and seasons. Also, the deities wear flower ornaments like Guna, Jhumpa, Adhara Mala and Tulasi Gabha.

### **Rosha Homa :**

The time is between 8.00 A.M. to 8.30 A.M. *Homa* (oblation to the fire) is performed in the *Rosha ghara* (sacred kitchen) of the deities. Thereafter, that fire is used in all the *chulis* (hearths) for cooking the food for deities. This niti is performed by Pujapanda sevaka. It is said that previously Deula Purohitas were performing this niti. The other sevakas engaged in this niti are Dhopakhalia and Nikapa. Generally, Rosha Homa and Besalagi nitis are



performed simultaneously. It is worth mentioning that on account of this Rosha ghara, the Temple may be described as the biggest hotel on this earth. It can feed even one lakh persons per day. The method of preparation is very hygienic and the traditional processes of food preparation for many people in a very short time take many by utter surprise.

### **Surya puja (worship of Sun God) :**

Surya puja is performed in the Bhitara bedha (inner enclosure) near the Mukti Mandapa. For this niti presence of the following sevakas namely (1) Pujapanda, (2) Suarabadu, (3) Patribadu, (4) Garabadu and (5) Ghatuari are required.

### **Dwarapala puja :**

It means worship of the dwarapalas or guardian deities who are divine gatekeepers at the Jaya Vijaya dwara which is the entrance/door between the Mukhasala/porch and the Natamandapa of the Temple. This puja is performed by a Pujapanda sevaka.

### **Gopala Ballabha Bhoga :**

The word *bhoga* in Oriya and Sanskrit means enjoyment. This word is commonly used in Orissa in the context of food offerings made to the deities in the Temple. Every day and through out the year, fifty-six varieties of dishes (*Chhappan bhogas*) are prepared and offered to the deities. Apart from this, several other varieties of dishes are also prepared and offered on the occasion of different festivals. Similarly, on specific occasions, special drinks are also offered to the deities. The prescribed time of this niti is about 9.00 A.M. in the morning. This may be termed as the morning breakfast of the deities, which consists of *khai* (sweet popcorn), *kora* (coconut sweets), *khua laddu*, ripe banana, curd and chipped

cocoanuts. The offerings are made at Anasara pindi / Ballabha pindi which is the place between the Kalahata dwara and the Bhitara katha in the Mukhasala. It may be mentioned that Kalahata dwara/Kalaghata dwara/Chhamu dwara is the dwara or entrance/door between the *Garbhagriha* and the Mukhasala/porch. Three Pujapandas perform this niti in a brief manner with *Pancha upacharas* only. Pancha upacharas or five upacharas refers to (1) Gandha (Chandana), (2) Pushpa (flower), (3) Dhupa (incense), (4) Dipa (lamp) and Naivedya (food). Other sevakas associated with this niti are (1) Sudu Suara, (2) Ballabha Joganja, (3) Suarabadu, (4) Patribadu, (5) Garabadu, (6) Palia Mahasuara, (7) Pradhani and (8) some Temple officials. It is worth mentioning that the deities change their dress at each meal and after each meal *pana* (betel nuts) are offered to them as a part of the niti.

### **Sakala dhupa (morning meal):**

It means morning food offerings. The word *dhupa* is commonly used in the Temple to mean the offering of a *bhoga* to the deities especially Sakala Dhupa (morning meal), Madhyahna Dhupa (midday meal) and Sandhya Dhupa (evening meal) when the nitis performed are a little elaborate. It is worth mentioning that *alati* is offered at the end of each Dhupa. The prescribed time is about 10.00 A.M. in the morning. This bhoga is known as Kotha Bhoga or Raja Bhoga. Previously, the Raja (Superintendent of the Temple) used to bear the entire cost of materials for preparation of this Bhoga. At present, the cost is shouldered by the Temple Administration after the Temple was taken over by the Government. All the raw materials like rice, wheat, ghee, sugar, fuel, *kudua* (earthen



pot), vegetables etc. required for the cooking of bhogas are supplied by the Temple Administration. Three Pujapandas perform the Bhoga puja with *Sodasa upacharas* which means that the puja has 16 aspects namely (1) Asana (seat of image), (2) Swagata (welcome), (3) Padya (water for washing the feet), (4) Arghya (offering of flower, chandana etc.), (5) Achamanya (water for sipping), (6) Madhuparka (ghee, Madhu or honey, khira or milk, dahi or curd offered in silver or brass vessel), (7) Achamaniya, (8) Snana (bathing), (9) Bastra (clothes), (10) Avarana (jewels), (11) Gandha (scent and chandana), (12) Pushpa (flower), (13) Dhupa (incense stick), (14) Dipa (lamp), (15) Naivedya (food) and (16) Vandana (namaskara or prayer). This puja is performed in the *garbhagriha*. Three Pujapandas worship three deities respectively. But the Pujapanda who worships Jagannath also worships Sridevi, Bhudevi and Sudarsana. Nilamadhava is not worshipped separately, as he is considered to be identical with Jagannath. It is worth mentioning that there are seven images seated on the Ratnavedi. After bhoga, the same is distributed as *Khei* (dues) among the sevakas of the day including the Gajapati Maharaja. The following sevakas namely (1) Pujapanda, (2) Suarabadu, (3) Paniapata, (4) Pradhani, (5) Pratihari, (6) Palia Mahasuara, (7) Pantibadu, (8) Garabadu, (9) Rosha Paika, (10) Palia Patri, (11) Changada Mekapa, (12) Muduli, (13) Chandana Ghatuari, (14) Palia Mekapa, (15) Palia Khuntia, (16) Hadapa Naika, (17) Bidia Jogania, (18) Sudusuara, (19) Gochhikara, (20) Dakshinighara Pratihari, (21) Ghantua, (22) Baijayantri, (23) Dhukudidwara Pratihari, etc., are engaged in this niti. After Bhoga puja, alati is offered to the deities. This is known as Sakala dhupa alati, which is offered by the Pujapandas.

The food is simply called *Prasad* when it is offered to the deities. But after certain nitis performed in the Bimala temple, this very *Prasad* becomes *Mahaprasad*. The bhoga after being offered to the deities is re-offered to goddess Bimala and then it becomes Mahaprasad (*Maa+Prasad*). Thus, Bimala temple plays an important role in giving extraordinary religious and spiritual sanctity to the food offered to the deities. In this regard, there is a beautiful story. After the construction of the main Temple and before installation of the deities in it Goddess Bimala was occupying this Temple during that intervening period. When the deities arrived there, they had to obtain permission from Bimala to enter into the Temple. She allowed the deities to occupy the Ratnavedi on the condition that the bhoga of Jagannath after being offered to them each time every day has to be re-offered to her. As per the condition agreed upon, the Prasad of the deities is again offered to Bimala in each session and then only the same Prasad becomes Mahaprasad. The glories of Mahaprasad have been described in the *Padma Purana* and the *Bhagavata Purana*. It is believed that instant liberation is achieved by taking Mahaprasad. So, it is also called Kaibalya. It is worth mentioning that while eating of cooked food is prohibited on sacred *tithis* (days) like Ekadasi (eleventh day of the fortnight), Sankranti and during upabasa (religious fasting) etc, there is absolutely no restriction in taking Mahaprasad on these occasions. Sakala dhupa consists of *Kanika* (sweet rice), *Khechudi*, *Dali*, vegetable curries, *saga* (green leaves), *pitha* (cakes) etc. Various preparations of black gram like Bada Kanti, Sana Kanti, Mathapuli, Hamsapuli, Kakatua Jhili, Ada Pachedi, Saga, Khechudi, Pithapuli, Bundia Khiri etc. are offered to the deities.





### **Mailama and Bhoga Mandapa Bhoga:**

The prescribed time is about 11.00 A.M. in the morning. After Sakala dhupa, the deities change their clothes and again puja takes place in Bhoga Mandapa, a place behind the Garuda stambha of the Nata mandira. Huge quantity of bhoga such as rice, dal, curries, cakes of different kinds, saga etc. is offered to the deities. Pujapandas perform Bhogapuja with Pancha upacharas only as discussed earlier. The Temple Administration does not bear the cost of this bhoga. Traditionally, this bhoga is offered in order to provide sufficient Mahaprasad to different *Mathas* (monasteries), other institutions and private individuals who eat *Mahaprasad* as their principal meal. In other words, the *Suaras* (authorized cooks) of the Temple prepare sufficient quantities of food in the *Rosha ghara* on commercial basis for pilgrims and others. It would not be out of place to mention that one should be pure in mind and body while taking *Mahaprasad*. No outside food is taken along with it. As a mark of utmost regards to *Mahaprasad* it is taken by sitting on the floor. Care is also taken to see that the water does not fall on the feet when hands are washed after eating *Mahaprasad*. It is not an exaggeration to mention that *Mahaprasad* is free from caste discrimination prevalent in orthodox Hindu society. Persons belonging to all caste do partake *Mahaprasad* from the same plate without any caste hesitation. The sevakas associated with this *niti* are (1) Pujapanda, (2) Mahasuara, (3) Suara, (4) Changda Mekapa, (5) Palia Mekapa, (6) Palia Pushpalaka, (7) Bhoga Mandapa Pratihari, (8) Suarabadu, (9) Khuntia, (10) Patribadu etc. On most of the days Bhoga Mandapa puja is normally performed once a day after Sakala dhupa. But on festive occasions, it is performed after the Dwipahara

dhupa/Madhyahna dhupa. On certain occasions, Bhoga mandapa puja is also performed twice or thrice a day i.e. after Sakala dhupa, Madhyahna dhupa and Sandhya dhupa to meet the high demand of pilgrims and as per the necessity of *Mahaprasad*.

### **Madhyahna dhupa (mid-day meal):**

The time is between 12.30 P.M. to 1.00 P.M. in the afternoon. Three Pujapanda sevakas perform the Bhoga puja in the *Pokharia* (the space around the *Ratnavedi* in the *Garbhagriha*) with *Sodasa upacharas* in the same manner as in the Sakala dhupa. This time the bhoga items are more in number than that of Sakala dhupa. The same categories of sevakas as in the Sakala dhupa are engaged in this *niti*. As it has been noted earlier, Madhyahna alati is offered to the deities by the Pujapanda sevakas after the Madhyahna dhupa.

### **Madhyahna Pahuda :**

After the Madhyahna Dhupa, the deities enjoy a siesta, called *Pahuda*. It is worth mentioning that if *nitis* have been performed in time and if time permits, then only the deities retire for afternoon nap. Kalahatadwara / Kalaghatadwara, Jaya Bijaya dwara and Beherana dwara / Dakshini dwara (south gate of the porch/Mukhasala) remain closed. This *niti* is performed generally between 1.00 P.M. to 1.30 P.M. in the afternoon.

### **Sandhya Alati (evening lamp offering):**

After opening of the doors, the Sandhya alati is offered to the deities by the Taluchha and Palia Pushpalaka sevakas. If there is no Madhyahna Pahuda, then the Sandhya alati is offered after the Madhyahna dhupa and after the change of clothes.



### **Sandhya dhupa (evening meal):**

The time for this niti is between 7.00 P.M. to 8.00 P.M. in the evening. The puja upacharas and manners i.e. Sodasa upacharas are similar to that of Sakala dhupa. The items of this Dhupa are mostly *Pakhala* (watered rice), *pitha* (cake). It includes varieties of puddings; confections and delicacies called Kanla puli, Takua, Mathapuli, Bhogapitha, Gotali, Kakara, Amalu, Jhadeineda, Kadamba and Subasa Pakhala. After this Bhoga puja, again alati called Sandhya dhupa alati is performed by the Pujapanda sevakas. This alati is also known as Jaya Mangala alati.

### **Sahanamela (public darsan of the deities):**

As per the provision sahanamela is arranged thereafter. Nowadays, Sandhya dhupa very often takes place at a very late hour at night on account of the delayed performance of nitis, and consequently sahanamela at that late hour is ignored. As it has been mentioned above, this is free darsan when no body is required to pay any fee for going into the *Garbhagruha* (sanctum). Excepting at the scheduled time of sahanamela, no pilgrim is allowed to enter into the Bhitara Pokharia or Garbhagriha without payment of proper *Paramanika* fees. Thus, the pilgrims are offered an opportunity of *sahanamela* or *sarbasadharana darsan* of deities in the evening hour also. If there is no sahanamela, then the subsequent niti called Mailama follows.

### **Mailama and Chandanalagi :**

This time the deities change their clothes and anointed with *chandana* mixed with camphor, kesara and kasturi. This niti is performed by the Pushpalaka sevakas. Other sevakas needed at the time of this niti are

Suarabadu, Ghatuari, Muduli, Palia Mekapa, Palia Padhiari, Garabadu, Hadapa Naika and Palia Khuntia.

### **Badasinghara Besa:**

After chandanalagi, the deities are dressed up again which is known as Badasinghara besa. This time they wear Baralagi pata (silken robes). Some portion of the Gitagovinda of Jayadeva is woven into the texture of these robes. The deities wear flower, flower garlands and floral headgear. This besa is very attractive to look at. It is worth mentioning that Jagannath Ballabha Matha supplies flower ornaments like Tilaka and Jhumpa for this besa of the deities. Similarly, the Emar Matha supplies Chandrika and Chausara, made of flowers for this besa of the deities.

### **Badasinghara Dhupa:**

This is the last bhoga of the day offered around 11.00 P.M. at night. For this, bhoga puja is performed by the Pujapanda sevakas following the principle of *Pancha upacharas*, sitting on the floor down the Ratnavedi. This time the quantity of bhoga is much less and the items are *Pakhala* and *Kanji*, some fries like *Kadalibada* and sweets like *khiri*. Thereafter, the Badasinghara Dhupa alati is offered to the deities by the Pujapanda sevakas.

### **Khata Sejalagi and Pahuda:**

The time of this niti is around 12.00 at mid-night when the bedsteads of the deities are arranged. The Pushpalaka sevakas carry the idols of Sayana Thakura from Bhandara ghara to Ratnavedi and place the idols near Jagannath. This is a metallic conjoined idol of Purusa (Vishnu) and Prakruti (Lakshmi). Then follows offering of *Paida* (green coconaut), *pana* (betelnuts) and camphor alati to deities. It



would not be out of context to mention that Bada Chhata Matha performs Kirtana at the time of Pahuda alati offered by the Pushpalaka *sevakas*. Earlier, at the time of *alati*, the *Bhitara gayani*, a Temple Devadasi (lady *sevika*) used to sing devotional songs from the Gitagovinda standing at the Kalahata dwara. Presently, this *seva* has been discontinued after her death. Thereafter, Sayana Thakura is taken to the Jaya Bijaya dwara where *paida*, *pana*, *pushpa* and camphor alati are offered to Sayana Thakura. Thereafter, the idol is taken to the bedstead of Jagannath and then to the *Bhandaraghara*. Thus, the deities retire to their beds, after which follows sealing of locks on the Kalahata dwara, Jaya Bijaya dwara and Dakshina/Beherana dwara. Taluchha Mahapatra puts the seal. The Temple premises are vacated of *sevakas* and visitors, which is called *sodha*. Only a few

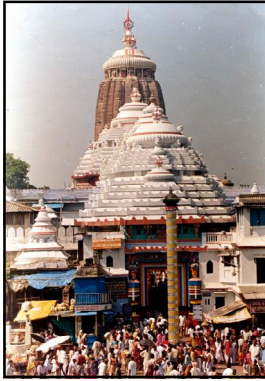
Temple police, officials and *sevakas* keep watch at night.

In brief, this is the *dainandina nitis* (daily rituals) observed in the Temple. It is usually not possible to follow the time prescribed for each *niti* because of various practical difficulties. As per the tradition, unless a particular *niti* is performed, the next one cannot take place. As a result of this, punctuality fluctuates to ensure attendance of various categories of *sevakas* required for a particular *niti*. Also, on specific festive days, additional *nitis* are performed. Accordingly, changes in timings and alterations in the routine *nitis* are made.

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## Sri Jagannath Temple at Puri - An Architectural Study

*K.K. Patnaik*

In the later half of the 7th Century, as the surviving examples show, the temple structure in its medieval aspect was beginning to assume a prescribed form.

The principal architectural features of the temple are as follows : Through out the greater part of the country, the sanctuary as a whole is known as the *Vimana* of which the upper and pyramidal or tapering portion is called the *Sikhara*, meaning tower or spire. Inside the *Vimana* is a small and generally dark chamber or cella for the reception of the divine symbol. This cella is the *Garbhagriha* and is to be entered by a doorway on its inner and usually eastern side. In front of the doorway is a pillared hall or *mandapa*. Some of the earlier temples indicate the *mandapa* as a detached building isolated from the sanctuary by definite open space as in the Kailashanatha temple at Canjeevaram and built about 700 A.D. A little later it became the custom to unite the two buildings, thus forming an intermediate chamber or vestibule called *antarala*. Leading upto the main hall or *mandapa* is a porch or *ardha-mandapa* while there may be a transept on each side of this central hall known as the *Mahamandapa*. The most complete illustrations of the fully formed and coordinated temple structure are the 10th Century examples at Khajuraho.

With the establishment of the temple type by about the 8th century A.D. the people proceeded to embark on an era of temple building.

Orissa, a land of many holy shrines, famous for the divine powers of the deities occupying them, for the artistic embellishments, the architectural skill and sculptural richness, occupies her rightful place. The present capital widely known to art-lovers the world over as the 'Temple City' was a Laboratory for daring innovations and bold experiments in architecture and temple designing in the period from the 8th to the 13th century A.D. Surviving specimens of temples here mark the evolutionary stages through which temples have passed. Milestones in architectural ingenuity have been left behind in temples like the Mukteswar, the Rajarani and the Lingaraj temples itself. However it is only in the Jagannath temple at Puri that Orissan genius has blossomed more fully. The genius also shines best at Konark, which shows art par excellence.

"The Jagannath temple surmounts a mound 20' high called Nilagiri. As the whole of the mound is now covered by building, I could not ascertain whether the eminence is due to a sand-ridge, or the rubbish of the ancient Buddhist structure over which the present





temple has been built" - (*The Antiquities of Orissa by R.L. Mitra Vol.II*). The outer walls, *Meghanada Prachira*, enclose an area of 665' x 644' (R.L.Mitra). They are build of dressed laterites, thickness of walls uniform, but the height varies from 20' - 24' because of variation in ground level.

Four gates mark the outer walls, which were perhaps added about three centuries after the construction of the main temple, during the reign of Purusottama Deva apprehending foreign aggression. The eastern gate, the *Simhadvara* is the main gate leading from the *Badadanda*. The gateway is guarded by two imposing lions in a crouching position. On the side pilasters of the door there are a couple of statues of guards, *Jaya* and *Vijaya* by name.

The gateway breaks the monotony of the walls mounted by battlements and is a square structure with a pyramidal roof. The door frames are of black chorite 'Muguni', richly carved in bands. Doors are made of heavy sal wood? The other doors though built on the same plan are not as grandiose and rightly carved. The norhern gate is guarded by a couple of elephants mounted by mahounts, '*Hastidvara*'. The southern gateway is guarded by horses '*Asvadvara*'. The western gate had no special guardian and is known as the '*Khanjaduara*' which would mean it was intended to be a service entrance.

### **Aruna Stambha - Sun Pillar**

It is a monolithic pillar of black chlorite, set on a pedestal of the same material 7'9" square and 6' high. The pedestal is richly carved and are of unsurpassable beauty. The pillar itself, is a sixteen - sided pillar being 25' 2" high from the pedestal to the bottom of the capital. The capital itself is 2'6" high and is surmounted by a squatting Garuda. The total height from the ground level to the top of the capital is 33'8". This was originally a portion

of the Konark Temple complex but was brought to Puri by the Marathas.

The four gateways lead to flights of stairs leading to the inner enclosure. The eastern gate leads to the famous twenty-two steps popularly known as the '*Baisi Pahacha*'. At the top of the flight of stairs are double walls eleven feet apart. The exact function of a double wall is not clear but it was either intended to fill up the space between them with hard earth to form a solid compact wall, or to allow defending soldiers to move freely around the boundary without exposing their body.

The main temple, and also most other lesser temples are located in the inner enclosure measuring 420' x 315'.

The *Vimana* or the main temple rises from a plinth measuring 80' square. The *Vimana* rises in a sheer perpendicular to a height of 35' above the plinth after which it curves inward. The stonework rises to a height of 192'. (In comparison the Lingaraj Temple of Bhubaneswar rises to a height of 160' on a square base of 66'). The body of the temple has been covered with a liberal coat of lime mortar that masks the details of rich carvings. It is only now being unmasked for a general view though the presence of rich carvings underneath the lime mortar was known as early as R.L. Mitra's survey of the Temple. Temple Records mention the first thorough repairs to have been carried out in the reign of the Surya Vamsi king Prataparudra. The temple was 'plastered and whitewashed'.

Basing their opinions on the plain look of the Jagannath temple many European art critics, including Stirling and Fergusson speak of a general decadence in the art of sculpture in Orissa during the period, the Jagannath temple was built. Yet strangely the Sun temple at Konark built only fifty years later and twentyfive miles away bears ample and rich



testimony to the undying art traditions of the region.

The Jagamohana or the porch also rests on a plinth 80' square 6' high. Its body rises vertically to a height of 31'6" after which there is overhanging cornice projecting nearly 5' from the wall. The cornice was originally totally unsupported but after some damage to the cornice R.L. Mitra has referred to some repairs and re-enforcements with mild steel rail and wrought iron architraves, which may be seen even today. The *Jagamohana* is split into a central nave and two aisles by solid square pillars. The walls at their thickest are 18'. It has four doorways one towards the sanctum 14'4"x8'10", one to the south 13'8" x 6'6", one towards the *Natamandapa* in the east 14' x 7' and the fourth towards the north.

The *Natamandapa* or the Dancing Hall belongs to a much later age than the main temple and the porch. While the exterior measure 80' square, the interior measures 69' x 67'. Four rows of plain, square pillars divide it into a central nave and two aisles. The pillars bordering the nave are 4' square and 16'8" high. The two rows of pillars dividing the two aisles on either side are squares of 3'6" and rise only 12'8". While the length of the nave and the aisles is 69' the nave is 16' wide, the aisles near to it are 10'6" wide and the *Natamandapa* are generally bare of any art or decoration, though of late *pattachitra* type of paintings have been made on the eastern walls.

The *Bhogamandapa* was originally a part of the Konark temple complex. It was dismantled and reassembled by the Marathas in the 18th century. The *Bhogamandapa* or the Hall of Offerings is the eastern most structure of the main temple complex. Though almost a square like the other structures, it is smaller in size and measures only 58' x 56' and strides a plinth 7'6" high. The plinth is profusely

decorated with delicate sculptures. The body of the structure above the plinth is 15'6" high and also bears a superabundance of rich carvings, on red sandstone. The door frames on either side of the doorway are of green chlorite luxuriously adorned with delicately chiselled carvings. Two pilasters support a red sandstone architrave bearing the *Navagraha*. Contrasting the richness and profusion of the exterior, the interior is spartan in its plainness and is devoid of any attempt to relieve the monotony of the bare walls, save the four pillars supporting the wall. The roof of the *Bhogamandapa* is pyramidal in shape made of overlapping stones. There is a covered passageway connecting the *Bhogamandapa* with the kitchen complex so that offerings cooked in the kitchen may be brought to the *Bhogamandapa* by the Lord's servants without being defiled by unwanted touch. As a reassembled structure it is remarkable for lack of any physical evidence showing its dislocation from the original site quite a distance away.

It is not possible to discuss the other temples within the inner enclosure of the Jagannath temple complex. That they throw many interesting sidelights goes without saying. The main temple complex i.e., the *Vimana*, *Jagamohana*, *Natamandapa* and the *Bhogamandapa*, in their own right as architectural specimens have few parallels in India. A complete removal of plaster which shields the sculpture, rich or otherwise, from the critical gaze of art historians and scholars, is in good progress. If the specimen of the Lingaraj temple built before it, and the Sun temple built after it provide any indices, they cannot but be truly remarkable.

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## Jagannath : The Epitome of Supreme Lord Visnu

Jayanti Rath

In the cosmological trinity, Visnu is the name given to the cohesive or centripetal tendency. All that in the universe tends toward a centre, toward more concentration and more cohesion. More existence, more reality, all that tends toward light, toward truth, is the Visnu tendency. Visnu pervades all existence, hence He is known as the Pervader. The name Visnu comes from the root *visir*, which means "to spread in all directions," to pervade. As the inner cohesion through which everything exists Visnu dwells in everything, owns everything, defeats the power of destruction." He is Visnu, he overcomes all.

All the qualities and attributes which are inherent in the nature of the pervader and which are found in his manifestations are symbolized by the different qualities and attributes of his image. The significance of the icon of Visnu is explained in the *Puranas* and several minor *Upanisads*. The two most common

representations show him sleeping above the Ocean on the coils of the Serpent Remainder (Sesa-naga) or standing with four arms and a number of attributes as the ruler of *Sattva*, the cohesive or centripetal tendency.

The worship of Visnu or Vaisnava cult was prevalent in Orissa long before the advent

of Shri Chaitanya. The 9th-10th century grants of Dandi Mahadevi and Tribhuvana Mahadevi, two renowned queens of the Bhauma Dynasty, tell that they were great followers of Vishnu. *Shrimad Bhagavata* had already been translated into Oriya before Shri Chaitanya came to Orissa. With the rule of Chodaganga Deva in 1078, Orissa also came in contact



with the Alvar School of *Vaishnavas*. Rai Ramananda was a learned *Vaishnava* poet who flourished even before Shri Chaitanya came to Orissa.

The *Padma Purana* describes twenty-four epithets of Vishnu (Kesava, Narayana,



Madhava, Govinda, Visnu, Madhusudana, Tribikrama, Vamana, Sridhara, Hrisikesa, Padmanabha, Damodara, Sankarsana, Vasudeva, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Purusottama, Adhoksaja, Narasimha, Achyuta, Janardana, Upendra, Hari, Krisna).

In Orissa, Narayana, Madhava and Krisna forms of Visnu have gained immense adoration. And all these forms have been symbolized in the form of Lord Jagannath. Lord Jagannath has been undoubtedly taken as the epitome of Supreme Lord Visnu.

He is the beloved Krisna Gopinath, He is Madhava, and He is Purusottama. He is the outcome of many shapings and reshapings by the religious cross-currents of this land.

The peculiar iconography of the wooden images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra with their thick and massive heads and stumps emerging out of the middle of the head; devoid totally of the legs, speaks of its tribal origin and character even to a layman. Long after the total integration of the Jagannath figures into Hinduism, their iconography persistently reminded the people of their origin.

During the period when the wooden image or images of Jagannath were accepted in the Hinduistic fold, the most popular Visnu images in Orissa were those of Madhava, who was also known as Nilamadhava, since those images were carved out of the black chlorite - black or blue being the body hue of Vishnu. Madhava, (as it is said earlier) is a standing form of Vishnu with four arms in which he holds (beginning from the upper left) a conch, a mace, a lotus (in Orissa, however, this lower right mostly displays the *varada-mudra*) and a discus respectively. A number of such images belonging to the 8th - 10th centuries

have been found and excavated in the valley of the river Prachi not far from Puri.

In the beginning of the present millenium therefore when the worshippers of Jagannath felt the necessities to explain to themselves and others this strange form and wooden character of their deity, they naturally thought first of Nilamadhava which was the most common form of Vishnu in those days. Initially the Lord was worshipped by Viswvasu, a Chief of the Sabara race. Bidyapati, a Brahmin emissary of king Indradyumna of Malava wanted to have a *darsan* of the Lord. He discovered the Lord. But the Lord vanished and a divine voice was heard to the king that the Lord would now no more be visible to the people in his Nilamadhava form which was appropriate only for the golden age of humanity (*Krtayuga*) but would instead assume a new shape more suitable to the prevailing time to be worshipped as a deity made of wood.

Why the wooden images of Jagannath etc. have exactly these peculiar and uncommon features, has also been explained either as the will of Visnu who himself appears as carpenter to fashion the images or as a result of the uncalled for curiosity of Gundicha, the legendary queen of Indradyumna, who opened the doors of the Carpenter's Workshop after the lapse of fourteen days whereas they were to remain shut up for three weeks, an act which offended the divine carpenter so much that he disappeared leaving the work unfinished.

The effort to explain the strange form and unusual substance (wood) of Jagannath which at no stage seem to have just been taken for granted is the beginning of the speculations, not only about the origin of Jagannath, but also about his true nature. Leaving aside here the question, how this wooden image was





identified with Visnu, we may recall that Jagannath has very often been characterized as the Buddha incarnation of Visnu in the Orissan literary tradition. Sarala Das, (first half of the 15th century A.D.) refers to this identification several times in his *Odia Mahabharata*. This tradition persisted and flourished in the works of the *Panchasakha* (beginning of 16th century A.D.) and others.

Buddha is not the only form of Visnu, with whom Jagannath is identified. There are sufficient evidences in the cult practices to show that atleast in a certain phase of his development, Jagannath has really been considered as identical with Narasimha, the man-lion. The *Purusottama Mahatmya* of *Skanda Purana* for example, mentions Narasimha as a combined form of all the three deities, Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra.

It was the Krisna incarnation, however, which was to succeed in the end partially due to the reason that, the cult of Krisna became increasingly popular in the beginning of 11th and 12th centuries in Bengal and Orissa owing to the tremendous influence of *Bhagavata Purana*. Latest by 1250 A.D. there stood three images in the temple of Puri, which were identified with Krisna, his elder brother Balarama and their sister Ekanamsa. The identification of Jagannath with Krisna was so popular that Sarala Das was inspired to evolve an interesting story about the material identification of the wooden image of Jagannath with the dead body of Krisna.

Gradually, the relationship between Krisna and Jagannath was changed. The Oriya poet Karttika Das, writing a little later in the same 16th century, tells us that it was Jagannath

who became the son of Devaki in the *Dvapara Yug* not the other way round.

That Jagannath is the *avatari* from whom all the ten *avataras* have emanated is propagated vigorously in the 17th century also by the poet Dinakrusna Das in his work '*Rasakallola*' and especially by Divakara Das in his *Jagannath Charitamrita* who declares Krisna to be only the 16th part (one Kant) of Lord Jagannath.

*Kavindra* Upendra Bhanja, the greatest of the Oriya poets, writing in the second half of the 18th century, describes the images of Jagannath etc. as shapeless, devoid of form being the *svarupa* of Visnu. Jagannath, to him, represents the *Nirguna* (non-qualified) form of God.

Thus the development of the concept of Jagannath is also the history of the development of philosophical speculations in Orissa.

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## Beshas of Deities

Sabita Barik  
&  
Sobha Barik

In Oriya and Sanskrit, the word *Besha* means dress or adornment. It is a very common feature observed in all the temples that the deities are dressed and decorated in suitable manner. Similarly, every day from the Mangala Alati to Ratri Pahuda, the deities on the Ratnavedi of Shri Jagannath Temple, Puri wear and enjoy different types of dresses, which include *Suta bastra* (cotton) and *Pata bastra* (silken clothes) namely *Tadapa*, *Uttariya*, *Paharana*, *Phuta*, *Srikapada/Sirkapada*, *Baralagi-pata*(set), *Srimukhabala*, *Chandanaguda*, *Chadara* and gold ornaments studded with precious stones, flower ornaments, *Tulasi* leaves, *Chandana*, camphor and musk etc. Flower ornaments namely *Kara pallaba*, *Kundala*, *Tadagi*, *Chandrika*, *Gava*, *Alaka*, *Tilaka*, *Jhumpa*, *Nakuasi*, *Dayana*, *Adharamala*, *Makara kundala*, *Sripayara mala*, *Hrudaya pallaba*, *Kali padaka*, *Kaustubha padaka*, *Chausara Mala* and *Guna* etc. are made out of different types of flowers, leaves of *tulasi*, banana, *panasa* etc. In this article, a few important *beshas* of the deities are briefly discussed below:

1. **Abakasa or Tadapa Uttari Besha:** Abakasa means the brushing of teeth and bathing rituals of the deities. The clothes, which are worn for this purpose, are known as *tadapa*

and *uttariya*. This *besha* is done everyday after Mangala *Alati* for the *abakasa* rituals.

2. **Badasrungorara Badasinghara Besha :** This *besha* is usually made of different types and colours of flowers. Deities are decorated with flower ornaments like *Adhara*, *Jhumpa*, *Gava*, *Chandrika*, *Tilaka*, *Alaka*, *Guna*, *Hrudapallava*, *Karapallava*, *Tadaki* and a number of flower garlands. Most of these are prepared with leaves of *tulasi*. Deities wear *Pata bastra* (silk clothes) known as *Khandua*. Extract from the famous Sanskrit work the *Gitagovinda* of the most celebrated poet Jayadeva is found woven in the texture of this *Khandua*. This is the last *besha* of the deities done everyday before the night *Pahuda* i.e. closing of the doors when the deities retire to beds. It is worth mentioning that on the following early morning Mangala *Alati* is offered to the deities when they are in this *besha*.

3. **Chandana Besha:** The word *chandana* means sandalwood. The sweet scented paste of this wood is applied to the body of the deities in the month of *Baisakha* and *Jyeshtha*. This *besha* is done for 42 days during *Chandana yatra* beginning from *Akshya Trutiya tithi*. (third day of bright fortnight of *Baisakha*).



4. **Rukmini Harana Besha:** On Jyeshtha Sukla Ekadasi tithi (the 11th day of bright Jyeshtha), Krishna had married Rukmini. Therefore, on this day Jagannath wears a suitable dress to look like a bridegroom.

5. **Ganapati or Hati Besha :** On Snana Purnima tithi (the full moon day in Jyeshtha), the bathing ceremony of the deities is observed on the Snanavedi. Thereafter, the deities are dressed like Ganesha who bears the head of an elephant (Hati). Lord Jagannath and Balabhadra appear like Ganesha or black and white elephants respectively.

6. **Naba Jaubana Besha :** Immediately after the day of Snana Purnima, the deities remain secluded for 15 days. On the eve of the Ratha Yatra they are gorgeously dressed and decorated and give *darsan* to the visitors. They put on very charming robes and look like persons at the commencement of their youth (Nava Jauvana).

7. **Suna Besha :** Suna besha takes place on Asadha Sukla Ekadasi tithi (the 11th day of the bright fortnight in Asadha, when the deities are brought back from Sri Gundicha temple to the Singha dwara of the Shri Jagannath Temple. Deities are dressed in this besha when they are still in their respective Rathas (chariots). They are decorated with different types of gold ornaments like gold diadems, hands and feet made of gold and the like. Jagannath holds a gold Chakra (Disc) in his right hand and a silver Sankha (conch) in his left hand. Balabhadra holds a gold Hala (plough) in his left hand and a gold Gada (mace) in his right hand. This besha is also known as Bada Tadhau Besha and Raja Besha. This besha is also done on the days like Dasahara, Kartika Purnima and Pousa Purnima (Pushyabhiseka Besha).

8. **Chitalagi Besha :** The word Chita means decoration of forehead with special materials like chandana, musk and gorachana etc. But in Sri Jagannath Temple, Puri three magnificent Chitas (ornaments of the foreheads) made of gold, diamond, sapphire and emerald are put on the three principal deities on Sravana Amabasya. Connected with this is the decoration of Rahu Rekha. It is also an ornament of the head. This is removed from the head of the deities on the day of Snana Purnima and is again put on in the month of Sravana.



9. **Banabhoji Besha:** It is done on Bhadraba Krishna Dasami (the 10th day of the dark fortnight in Bhadraba). The deities are dressed like cowherd boys, as if they are going to attend a picnic.

10. **Kaliyadalana Besha:** On Bhadraba Krishna Ekadasi tithi (the 11th day of the dark fortnight in Bhadraba), Jagannath is dressed like Krishna killing the Kaliya serpent. As per the Puranic lore, Kaliya was the venomous serpent/vipor living in Jamuna river. It was a source of great danger to the people and Krishna had killed it. This besha takes place to remind this Puranic incident. The actual scene of killing Kaliya is usually dramatized in the sacred tank of Markanda in the Puri town.





11. **Pralambasurabadha Besha:** It is done on Bhadraba Krushna Dwadasi tithi (the 12th day of the dark fortnight in Bhadraba), when Balabhadra is dressed as if killing the demon Pralambasura. According to the Puranic story, Pralamba was a demon who was killed by Balarama. So, Balabhadra wears this besha.

12. **Krushna - Balarama Besha:** This besha is done on Bhadraba Krushna Trayodasi tithi (the 13th day of the dark fortnight in Bhadraba). Jagannath is dressed like Krushna and Balabhadra is dressed like Balarama. This besha attests the deep impact of Krushna cult in the Shri Jagannath Temple, Puri. This is also known as Giri Gobardhana besha, which reminds us the lifting up of the mountain Govardhana by Krushna.

13. **Bali-Bamana Besha :** On Bhadraba Sukla Dwadasi tithi (the 12th day of the bright fortnight in Bhadraba), Jagannath is dressed like Bamana (dwarf). Notably, Bamana is the fifth incarnation of Bishnu. According to the Puranic story, Bishnu had appeared in the form of a Bamana (dwarf) and through his ingenuity, outwitted the demon king Bali and pushed him down to the *Patala* (inferno or nether world) with his foot.

14. **Radha-Damodara Besha :** This besha takes place from Aswina Sukla Ekadasi tithi (the 11th day of the bright fortnight in Aswina) to Kartika Sukla Dasami tithi (the 10th day of the bright fortnight in Kartika). Radha is the female counter-part of Krushna who is otherwise also known as Damodara.

15. **Hari-Hara Besha :** When the Radha-Damodara besha of Jagannath continues, we have the Hari-Hara besha of Balabhadra. In this besha, half of the body of Balabhadra looks blackish while the other half looks whitish. This

connotes that half of his body is Bishnu and the other half is Siva.

16. **Thiakia Besha or Lakshmi-Narayana Besha :** This besha is done on Kartika Sukla Ekadasi tithi (the 11th day of the bright fortnight in Kartika). It is said that the worship of Lakshmi and Narayana has gained popularity in this Temple since the visit of Ramanuja to Puri.

17. **Bankachula Besha :** This besha is done on Kartika Sukla Dwadasi tithi (the 12th day of the bright fortnight in Kartika). This is similar to that of Lakshmi-Narayana besha with addition of golden headgear.



18. **Adakia Besha or Tribikram Besha:** This besha is done on Kartika Sukla Trayodasi (the 13th day of the bright fortnight in Kartika). This is also called Tribikram besha.

19. **Dalikia Besha or Lakshmi-Nrusingha Besha:** This besha is done on Kartika Sukla Chaturdasi tithi (the 14th day of the bright fortnight of Kartika). This is also known as Lakshmi-Nrusingha besha. This besha unfolds the truth that the powerful Nrusingha cult is given due recognition and importance in this Temple.

20. **Nagarjuna or Parasurama Besha :** This besha is occasionally done in the month of Kartika, when there are six days of





*Panchaka*. Deities are dressed like warriors on the extra day. In the recent past, this besha was last done on 16-11-1994. The previous four dates were 26-11-1993, 03-11-1968, 16-11-1967 and 26-11-1966.

21. **Ghodalagi Besha:** During the period from Margasira Sukla Sasthi tithi (the 6th day of the bright fortnight in Margasira) to Magha Sukla Panchami tithi (the 5th day of the bright fortnight in Magha i.e. Basanta Panchami), deities wear winter clothes.

22. **Sraddha Besha:** Jagannath puts on this besha in the month of Margasira for three days. Sraddha means the offerings made out of love. Such rites observed for the departed souls (parents and forefathers) are called *Sraddha*. In the month of Margasira, Jagannath performs the *Sraddha* in favour of Nanda, Basudeva and Dasaratha. In Tretaya yuga, Bishnu was born as the eldest son of Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhya and was named Ramachandra. Again in the Dwapara yuga, his birth took place as the son of Basudeva in a prison in Mathura, wherefrom he was mysteriously taken out and delivered to Nanda, the king of Braja, who nourished him like his own son and came to be known as the second father of Krushna.

23. **Chacheri Besha:** In the month of Phalgun, Chacheri besha takes place. According to the age-old tradition prevailing all over India, people play with phagu i.e. coloured powder and throw this powder over the friends and relatives. Jagannath is the best representative of the people and he is also shown as sharing the experiences of the people by playing with red powder.

24. **Padma Besha:** Padma means lotus and the dress materials for this besha are made of lotus flowers, which are traditionally supplied

by the Badachhata Matha. This flower appear on earth from this month onwards. It is believed that the deities are dressed with this besha in order to perpetuate the memory of a devotee who had brought the lotus flowers from a long distance to decorate the deities. Pudding is offered to the deities when they are in this besha. It is done on any Saturday or Wednesday between the new moon day of Magha and Basanta Panchami.

25. **Gaja Uddharana Besha:** This besha is done on Magha Purnami tithi (the full moon day of Magha). This besha depicts a story in the Puranas as to how Bishnu saved a helpless elephant from the clutches of a crocodile. At one time in the past, a crocodile attacked an elephant. Finding no other way out to save his life, the helpless creature implored the mercy of Bishnu. His prayer moved Bishnu to compassion and the latter hurled his chakra to cut the attacking alligator into pieces. Jagannath who is identified with Bishnu wears this besha.

26. **Jamalagi Besha:** From Basanta Panchami (5th day of the bright fortnight in Magha) to Dola Purnami, (full moon day of Phalgun) deities wear modified *Ghoda* (winter dress).

Sevakas who are specially engaged for this purpose traditionally are called Pushpalaka or *Singharis*. They know the traditional ways of dress and decorations.

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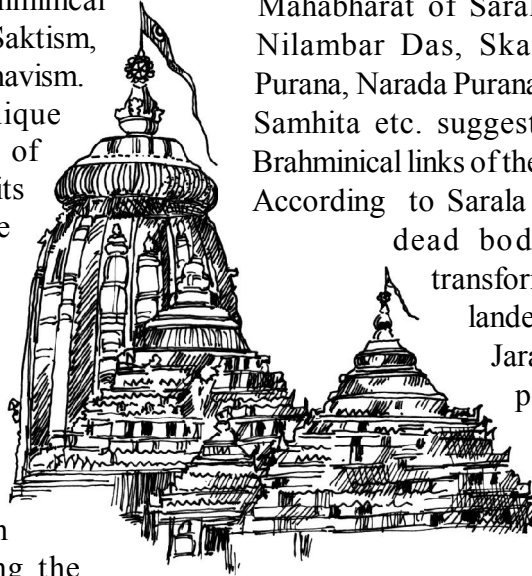
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## Sri Jagannath Temple : The Nerve Centre of Orissan Culture

*Dr. Janmejaya Choudhury*

Jagannath cult exercises unique influence over the socio-religious-political life of Orissa. During the Ganga and Surya rules, Jagannath, so to say, became the state deity. Jagannath cult is an amalgamation of diverse religious cults like tribal religion, Brahminical religion, Buddhism, Saivism, Saktism, Tantricism and above all Vaishnavism. Lord Jagannath holds a unique place not only in the history of Orissa, but also in the lives of its people. To the millions of the Hindus of Orissa, Jagannath is their nearest kith and kin. But the origin of Lord Jagannath, the presiding deity of the holy city Puri, around whom the religious life of Orissa has evolved from hoary past has been shrouded in myths and legend. Analysing the legendary association of Jagannath with a class of aborigines called Sabaras, the peculiar nature of the wooden icon of the deity and his associates, Balabhadra and Subhadra, and association of a class of non-Brahmin priests called Daitas who are presumed to be of tribal origin with the worship of the deity, some scholars hold that Jagannath was originally a tribal deity.



If Lord Jagannath was tribal in origin, at what stage and how was He metamorphosed into a Hinduised deity? The legends regarding the origin of Jagannath, which have been recorded in various sources such as Mahabharat of Sarala Das, Deula Tola of Nilambar Das, Skanda Purana, Brahma Purana, Narada Purana, Padma Purana, Kapila Samhita etc. suggest the tribal as well as Brahminical links of the deity in the initial state. According to Sarala Das's Mahabharat, the dead body of Lord Krishna, transformed into wooden form, landed at the Puri sea shore. Jara Sabara, an aborigine, picked it up and worshipped it. Subsequently, Indradyumna, the king of Somavansa, got three wooden images made out of the log and built a temple for the deities. According to Deula Tola, Indradyumna, the king of Malava, got a piece of sacred wood, which was the metamorphosed shape of god Nilamadhava from the Sabara Chief named Viswvasu, and out of the wood he carved three images. Both the stories suggest the Vaishnavite origin of Jagannath. But Indradyumna, the hero



of these legends remains a legendary figure, and his historicity cannot be founded on any safe ground. Some have identified him with the Indradyumna of original Mahabharat and considered him to be very ancient figure of pre-Christian era. If we accept the version of Sarala's Mahabharat, we may feel inclined to identify him with Indrarath, the Somavamsi king of tenth Century A.D. But identification of Indradyumna with Indrarath is at variance with the long-accepted tradition that Yajati I the remote predecessor of Indrarath, built the Jagannath Temple at Puri. According to the Temple chronicles, when Yajati Keshari, who was a Saivite by faith, came to occupy the throne of Orissa, he enquired of the priests of Puri, 'Where is the Overlord' ? Whereupon the priests informed him that the great God Parameswara was kept hidden in Sunupura for fear of defilement in the hands of the invaders. Yajati Kesari retrieved the idol of Jagannath from under the earth and installed Him in a newly constructed temple in order to legitimatise his rule in the eyes of the people. Anantavarma Choda Ganga Dev, of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty also followed the same tradition. Chodaganga Dev hailed from the South, with Mukhalingam as his Capital. The Shiva Gokarneswara on Mahendragiri, was his family deity or Ista devata. But in course of the northward push of his empire, for strategic reasons he shifted his capital from Mukhalingam to Cuttack and reconstructed the Jagannath Temple of Puri to legitimise and stabilise his authority over Orissa. The famous Vaishnava Saint Ramanuja (1056-1136) visited Puri during his reign and is said to have introduced the Pancharatra System in the worship of Jagannath, Chodaganga Dev, who was described as a Shaivite in his earlier inscriptions, soon began to proclaim himself

as a Vaishnavite. Anangabhima Dev-III, his successor, during whose reign construction of some parts of the Temple were completed, in his 6th regnal year in 1216 A.D. called himself the "Son of Purushottam" or Jagannath. In his Puri inscription of 1237 A.D., Anangabhima Dev proclaimed Lord Jagannath, as the Emperor of Utkal and himself as only his Rauta or representative. Jagannath, identification as the State deity or Rastra Devata, was complete. In the changed context, the traditional tie between the State and Jagannath has snapped through the people of Orissa, still continue to look upto him as their Ista-Devata.

Some Scholars trace a Buddhist origin of the trinity of the Jagannath temple. It is said that the tooth relic of Lord Buddha is preserved in the image of Jagannath, that the three deities- Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra represent Buddha, Dharma and Sangha respectively, that all Snana Yatra and Ratha Yatra of the Sri Jagannath temple are of Buddhist origin and that the sharing of Kaivalya on equal footing by all castes is due to the Buddhist impact. There are some literary evidences of co-relation between Lord Jagannath and Buddhism. According to some scholars, Jagannath is a common epithet of Buddha. In Tibet, one of the names of Buddha is Jagannath. Jayadeva, the twelfth century Vaishnava poet who according to some scholars, identified Jagannath with Krishna or Vishnu also accepted Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Krishna or Vishnu. Sarala Das, the fifteenth century poet, in his Mahabharat, regarded Jagannath as an embodiment of Buddha. He wrote, "To deliver mankind, Jagannath has manifested himself in the form of Buddha", Daru Brahma Gita of Jagannath Deva says, "to assume the form of Buddha, the lord gave up his hands and legs." Some Oriya Vaishnavas



regarded Chaitanya as the partial manifestation of Buddha. In the Chaitanya Bhagavata of Iswar Das, Chaitanya is reported to have said, "I am Chaitanya in form of Buddha." Dr. Eschmann holds that in his earliest form as an image Vishnu, Jagannath was known as Nrushimha, the Lion incarnation of Vishnu. Her contention is based on the fact that the Nabakalabar ritual considers the Jagannath figure to be Narasimha. She says, "Narasimha is that iconological aspect of Jagannath, which recedes in the later theology; it can be easily associated with tribal cults and was probably instrumental for the development of Jagannath iconography."

Most of the scholars accepted that Jagannath was known as Purushottama. Vishnudharma, an unpublished Sanskrit manuscript of 3rd century A.D. says that Krishna was known as Purushottama in the Odra country. Vamana Purana, a work of seventh century A.D., refers to the Purushottama deity of Puri. Anargharaghavanatakam of Murari Mishra is a work of the middle or later part of ninth century A.D. describes Purushottama deity of Puri with his female consort, Kamala on lap. The Sarada Devi temple inscription of Maihar (Satna district of Madhya Pradesh) which is assigned to the middle of the tenth century A.D., also refers to the Purushottama deity of Odra country, located on the sea-shore. The literary and epigraphic sources affirm the reputation of the Purushottama deity of Puri in the tenth century A.D. The name Purushottama though an epithet of Vishnu, has Tantrik significance according to some scholars. It represents the erotic aspects of Vishnu. Purushottama is to be found with Laxmi, the female erotic partner. Jayadeva, in his Gitagovinda, dealt with erotic sports of

Krishna with Radha, and identified Radha with Kamala or Lakshmi, the consort of Narayan. Jayadev regarded Jagannath as Krishna. Subhadra was treated as Lakshmi in the Ganga period, and even afterwards. The Purushottama Mahatmya of Skanda Purana and Vishnu Purana referred to the female wooden image between Jagannath and Balabhadra as Lakshmi. Some Scholars are of opinion that the image of Jagannath has striking similarity with that of Ekapada Bhairava with one foot which is a manifestation of Siva, whose was prevalent during the Bhaumakara period. Some Tantrik texts refer to Puri as a seat of Shaktism, Vimala as the Shakti and Jagannath as his Bhairava. The prevalence of Saivism at Puri is proved by the existence of such Saiva shrines of Markandeswara, Pataleswar and Lokanath. The prevalence of Shaktism at Puri is borne out by the worship of Vimala inside the temple, and the existence of Saptamatruka image. The 'Utkal Khanda' of Skanda Purana describes Subhadra as the Shakti of Jagannath.

Basically the pre-Aryan autochthonous visionaries have laid the foundation of the Hindu spiritual thoughts. Even the concept of 'Soul' or the Divine ground is borrowed from the autochthonous seers and savants. The uniqueness of Lord Jagannath lies in the fact that originally a Deity worshipped by the autochthonous Sabaras, came to occupy the highest position in the Hindu Pantheon and came to be known as the Purushottama and in the process the cult absorbed all the major religious movements and philosophy which had swept the Indian sub-continent and has evolved a syncretism which is unique in character. This small treatise while emphasises on the autochthonous origin and isolates the tribal stands in the highly sophisticated cult, highlights the elements of the Nathsidha cult,





and other various cults like the Buddhist Tantric, the Sakta, the Shaiva and the various denominations of the Vaishnavites. While this work seeks to achieve nothing new, it highlights the all absorbing aspects of the cult of the Jagannath, which makes it so universal. Even Guru Nanaka had composed soulful hymns in praise of Lord Jagannath, when he had visited the temple. The sufi Muslims like Salbega and Javan Haridas were great devotees of the Lord. The iconography of Jagannath has enabled every denomination to see the God of his heart's desire in Him. The all embracing liberalism of the cult of Jagannath has also very intimately influenced the Orissan culture.

Orissa, in the pre-Chodaganga period was divided into four district cultural and political divisions, namely, Utkal, Kangoda, Kalinga and Kosala. Centering round

Jagannath, the political unification of Orissa, into one unit was brought about which ultimately helped full blossoming of Orissan culture, during the Solar Dynasty. Jagannath came to symbolise also the nationalist aspirations of Orissa, during the 19th and the early part of 20th centuries, when Orissa was lying dismembered under three separate administrative units, namely, Bengal, Central Provinces and Madras. So it will be no exaggeration to say that Temple of Jagannath has veritably been the nerve centre of Orissan culture.

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## Laxmi-Narayan Discord in Jagannath Religion

*Durga Madhab Dash*

The cult of Lord Jagannatha is an eclectic system. It has assimilated in its fold divergent religions. It is also inclusive of myriad creeds and manifold sects of the world. Jagannatha in this sense is not a sectarian deity. The images of the Jagannatha triad do not approximate to the divine forms of any known gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. Yet in the common belief of the devotees, Lord Jagannatha is identified by the name of Narayan and His chief consort by the name of Mahalaxmi. Like the enormity of the Jagannatha cult, His temple is also known by different names like 'Badadeula', 'Nilachala', 'Srimandir' and so on. Every name, for all practical purposes, has a significance of its own. Of these names, the name of the temple as Srimandir is most popular among the devotees of the Almighty Lord. In this sense, Mahalaxmi is adored as the divine proprietress of the sacred temple.

As described in 'Durga Saptasati', Mahalaxmi is worshipped as the goddess of

wealth. She is the symbol of affluence and prosperity of the universe. Having adopted in herself all the mystic powers of Mahakali and Mahasaraswati, she is venerated in the temple as the primordial divine force. In the belief of the devout Vaishnavites, the main protagonists of the Jagannatha religion, Mahalaxmi is the

primary divine force of the cosmic creation and therefore she is worshipped as one of the principal images in the Jagannatha temple.

A number of festivals where Mahalaxmi is

primarily involved are celebrated in the temple of Lord Jagannatha. One such festival is the car festival of the Lords. The car festival, following the universal import of Jagannatha cult, is not merely a function of the Hindus. It transcends all barriers of space and belief. It involves multidimensional activities linked to many other rituals of the temple. Every such ritual is the expression of common human behaviour in our day-to-day life. The Laxmi-Narayan discord is one such function arising





out of the famous car festival of the Lords. This is observed in the temple on the twelfth day of the car festival. The discord is related to a dialogue between Mahalaxmi and Jagannatha. Countless devotees enjoy the ritual at the time of Lord's entry into the temple after the Bahuda Yatra. As the ritual ensues, Mahalaxmi does not open the doors of the temple at the Jay -Vijaya entrance. Jagannatha, as a result, is stranded outside. Balabhadra is however taken inside the temple. He is as usual seated on the Ratnavedi, the divine platform of Jewel. It is said, Mahalaxmi stoops to this action out of awful anguish. Her anger is caused due to the fact that she was not allowed to accompany Jagannatha during the Gundicha Yatra, although the Lord took his sister, Subhadra in pomp and ceremony. Stranded outside, Jagannatha entreats Mahalaxmi to open the door of the entrance. He gives out several explanations in the forms of insistent appeals. The flared outburst of Mahalaxmi and the humble appeals of Jagannatha Mahapravu thus constitute the Laxmi Narayan dialogue. This is an important ritual of the Temple. The dialogue is contained in verse form. The ritual pertaining to the dialogue is celebrated in the temple for about an hour. Thereafter, with Mahalaxmi's permission, the doors of the temple are made ajar and the Lord is taken inside in a grand procession to adorn his seat on the divine platform. This is the mystic background of the famous Laxmi-Narayan dialogue.

The purpose of this endeavor is to make a realistic study on this dialogue. An attempt is made here to present the gist of the dialogue in a prosaic order. Mahalaxmi flares her violent outbursts like an angry wife neglected by her husband. However harsh and rasping her outbursts may appear, they are symbolic of an

endearing appeal to Lord Jagannatha. This is most common in the case of a wife in her loving and dutiful behaviour towards her husband. The display of her passionate conduct is all a fuss. In the end, it ultimately turns out as much ado about nothing. The disharmony at last dissipates like the transient morning dew in the usual passage of time. Mahalaxmi adapts herself to the ongoing situation and finally wins over her husband. This is wife and husband relationship in the usual go of life. This spirit is depicted in a picturesque way in the famous Laxmi-Narayan dialogue, full of realities in filial behavior. The general theme of the dialogue, as followed in different parts of India, is almost the same. But the style and rhythm of the dialogue are different in different parts where the car festival is celebrated. The dialogue was once prevalent only in Oriya. But as things now prevail, the dialogue is written in different languages. In some places, the ritual of Laxmi-Narayan dialogue is not at all observed. The images, after the Bahuda Yatra, are straightway taken to the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. The Laxmi-Narayan dialogue where it is in vogue, has been, by and large, formulated conforming to the themes and contents of 'Deulatola' of Sisu Krushna Das, 'Bramha Puran' and 'Skanda Puran', the sacred treatises on Jagannatha religion. In some places, the dialogue as published by Hari Arjun Company is also ceremoniously followed for observance of the ritual. The dialogue is always recited in verse form. But, the Ragas followed are different in different parts of Orissa.

In the expressions of some devout poets of Jagannatha religion, the Lord's attitudinal disposition is not to the liking of the common people of the society. How can he neglect Mahalaxmi, his chief consort while moving out on the divine sojourn ? The poets say,



Mahalaxmi's presence in the Lord's chariot would have added to the glamour of the car festival.

In Jagamohan Ramayan, Matta Balam Das, the eldest of the five illustrious devotees of the Panchasakha Age, describes this mystic sequence from the point of view of a common man's feelings. He says in a common man's voice, "Hay, Hari ! You didn't take Mahalaxmi while going on the divine sojourn. Instead, you let your sister follow your gracious company. How could you do this, Oh, the most adored Lord ! Didn't you thereby ? dishonour your consort ? You appeared with Subhadra on the stone platform of Gundicha Ghar braving an unusual custom. Didn't you, my supreme Lord"?

In Nila Sundar Gita, the devout poet, Sekhar Das while presenting the cosmic pastime of the Lord in Kaliyug has depicted the theme of the dialogue with a similar accusation through Arjun, the illustrious companion of the Lord in answer to several questions, brought forth by the latter in his perennial anxiety of gathering wisdom. One such question pertains to the Lord's neglect of Mahalaxmi, which from a common man's viewpoint, is avowedly disheartening. Arjun says to Bhagawan, "Hey, Natabar ! My illustrious companion ! Are you aware of the general reaction of the people around you ? They disapprove your sojourn with Subhadra on the occasion of the car festival. Your consorts, Sridevi and Bhudevi, detest your action. Which also stands less prudent to my own conscience and to the conscience of your devotees." Arjun speaks out in this way disapproving the Lord's boisterous sojourn.

In the poetic work known as "Laxmi Naraya Kali" by Kali Charan Kabisurya of

Digapahandhi, district, Ganjam (Orissa), Jagannath proffers a fitting explanation in this regard. The Lord says to Mahalaxmi, "Hey, Devi ! Isn't it the fact that you are the divine proprietress of the temple ? In fact, you look after the routine rites of the peripheral deities of the temple. If you go out, the rites of the temple will be in an awful shambles. How can then you move with me ? Hey, Devi ! You are Chanchala in your action and usual behaviour. Think for a while; can you remain with me in the Adap for so many days at a stretch ?

Indeed a very cogent and incontrovertible explanation ! Mahalaxmi has all knowledge about the rationale of the Lord's explanation. But she is not prepared to admit it as a justifiable reasoning. After all, she is the Lordly consort of Jagannatha and, for that reason; she is to exert her domineering control on her beloved Lord ! This is the spirit of the entire altercation in the Laxmi-Narayan discord. The devout poets of Jagannatha religion have viewed this episode from their own visionary appreciations. But everywhere in Orissa, where the car festival is observed, the theme of the episode is one and the same.

Thus, the Lord, unmindful of other people's reactions, is bent upon his own decision. And the Lord finally goes out in his divine mission as per his own plan. It is in this background of facts that the car festival begins.

The Lord at last reaches the Gundicha Temple, accompanied by his elder brother, Balabhadra, his sister Subhadra and the cosmic weapon, "Sudarsan". The images are then taken from the chariots in a divine procession and finally alighted on the stone platform of the Gundicha temple. The festival continues here for a period of long seven days.





On the Herapanchami day, Mahalaxmi after paying her obeisance to Nilamadhava, the moving idol of Lord Jagannatha, leaves the massive temple and proceeds to Gundicha Mandir to have the 'darshan' of the Lords on the stone platform. However, her main purpose is to invite Jagannatha Mahaprabhu back to his divine abode soon. Mahalaxmi travels in a palanquin in a grand procession. As she reaches the place where "Nandighosa", the chariot of the Lord, is parked, some Servitor-Daitapatis come along from the Gundicha Temple to the palanquin of Mahalaxmi in a similar grand procession and offer their scared obeisance while receiving Mahalaxmi on her way. The servitors perform this ritual as the emissaries of the Lord. Mahalaxmi is thus taken into the temple where the Lords are worshipped. Thereafter, a different rite takes place in Gundicha Temple. Mahalaxmi's palanquin is brought near the Gundicha pillar in front of the main entrance of the temple. Here, goddess Mahalaxmi, after paying her obeisance, invites the Lords to come back to their divine abode. In a Sanskrit verse of Kali Charan Kabi surya, Mahalaxmi's invitation to the Lords is nicely depicted. Mahalaxmi says, "Oh, the great Lord ! The four armed cosmic Divine ! Be gracious enough to come back to the grand temple with your worshipful elder brother and loving sister. You have stayed away from the temple for a long time. I have personally come over here to extend my warm invitation. In your absence, the temple looks vacant."

As the ritual next follows, Lord Jagannatha, having gracefully acknowledged the invitation, sends out through his servitors one of the garlands adorning his exalted self. Mahalaxmi receives the garland known as "Ajnya Mala" of the Lord in expression of her deep love and profound graciousness. Just

thereafter, the ritual of offering "prasada" is celebrated. The servitors now fasten the holy cloth known as 'Tera' on the entrance of the Temple. Gratified with the Lords' fabulous large heartedness, Mahalaxmi returns to the temple through Hera Gouri Street. This is how the ritual of Hera Panchami is performed in the Gundicha Temple during the car festival period.

On the ninth day, the Lords resume their back journey to the main temple. This is known as Bahuda Yatra of Lord Jagannatha. When the three chariots are halfway through, Mahalaxmi, extraordinarily euphoric, appears on the Bhog Mandap of the main temple and steals a glance of the chariots moving along towards the grand temple. In the process of this ritual, the idol of Mahalaxmi is taken out in a procession, conducted by Gajapati Maharaj, to the chariot of the Lord Jagannatha. Here again, she welcomes the Lords. Jagannatha as usual offers her a garland- "Ajnya Mala" -as a mark of his earnest concern. After the sacred observance of the ritual, Mahalaxmi moves back to the temple. As the three chariots in the usual process reach the Lions Gate of the temple, Mahalaxmi again appears on the 'Chahani Mandap' to confirm that the Lords have arrived near the entrance of the massive temple. Everything is alright so far. Having reached the Lion's Gate, the Lords give their audience to the eager devotees. The servitors perform some more rites over here, while the Lords and Subhadra are still seated in their respective chariots. The ritual of Sayana Ekadasi is observed during this period. The Lords and Subhadra are then taken to the temple. Mahalaxmi's expectations are outraged during this period. She expected the Lords back to the sanctum sanctorum soon after their arrival at the Lion's gate. The delay caused in



the process of various ritualistic observances is unbearable to the self-conceited and impatient Mahalaxmi. So she denies the entry of the Jagannatha Mahaprabhu in to the sanctum sanctorum out of anguish as narrated above. The Lord, by now, is quite aware of his own slip-ups. He explains his predicament and the circumstances leading to the delay in his arrival in the temple.

According to the dialogue prevalent in North Orissa, Mahalaxmi, hearing the voice of Jagannatha, orders her maidservant to close the door of the entrance at the Jaya-Vijaya gate. She orders "Hey, Sakhi !, listen. I hear the voice of the Lord outside. It appears, he has arrived in the temple now. You move forth and close the door of the entrance. The Lord should not be allowed to enter the sanctum sanctorum. Let him remain outside.

However, Mahalaxmi before giving this order allows Badathakur to enter the sanctum of the temple. After all, he is her elder brother-in-law. How can she disrespect his elderly self ? This sequence has been beautifully described in the Laxmi-Narayan dialogue published by Hari Arjuna Company. As per the relevant verse on this score, Mahalaxmi says to her maid servant, "Listen Sakhi ! Let my elder brother-in-law enter the temple. But the black hued Lord should stand outside and get drenched in rain".

Hearing all this, the Lord, stands outside like an unfortunate offender. To appease her infuriated consort, the Lord speaks in the next verse of the same dialogue, "Oh, the lotus eyed, the daughter of the ocean, open the door of the entrance; I am immensely distressed. Show me your splendourous face and mitigate my distress. I have brought for you this gorgeous piece of chitrameghi silk. This, I believe, will best suit

your fair complexion. Mahalaxmi is least moved by his cajolery words. She replies saying, "I do not like to hear your words of encomium. Hey, Niladribihari, go away from the temple now; go away with your loving sister. If you leave the daughter of Nandaraj alone, she will be forlorn and greatly distressed. See the face of your incorrigible sister; she has no mark of honour in her face. Don't you know, how she moved out first and mounted the chariot on her own? She is like a way-ward cow entirely unmanageable. She cannot correct her behaviour even if she is admonished for her aberrant ways."

Subhadra does not mind the piercing words of her self-conceited sister-in-law. After all, she is like her own mother in the line of respectable relationship ? But lo ! To the Lord himself, all those were serious aspersions.

Mahalaxmi again says, "Oh, Lord! The way you behave is your strange style of mannerism. I know, you cannot mend your manners. This is what your caste has actually taught you over all these years. Having stayed in Gopapura for long, you have picked up many unusual habits and the one, you exhibit now, is the display of your obsessive mind".

The Lord still maintains his calm. He swallows all her aspersions without a word of reaction. He does not mind what his consort says. In defence he only proffers his explanation cozily trying to convince Mahalaxmi on the points of his own submission.

In the words of the devotee-poet, Sridhar Das, this is be the go of life in the dealings between a husband and his wife. The quality of adaptability is the sine-qua-non of a happy married life in household relationship. When the wife is intransigent, the husband should be



flexible and calm going and adjust himself to the disparaging situation.

Now, undisturbed despite the continuing acrimony, the Lord as depicted in the Brahma Puran, makes an appeal to Mahalaxmi, "Hey, Devi ! As you know, in Satya Yuga, Indrayumna built the temple. He was the fifth descendant of Lord Bhama. He consecrated our images on the Ratna Vedi in all devotion. His queen Gundicha was no less a devotee of mine. Satisfied with their devotion, I called upon them to ask for a boon each. You know very well, Indradyumna initially did not ask for any boon. After all he was an invincible emperor. He was not in want of anything in his world. Why should he need a boon from me ? However, when I persisted in my wishful blessings, the king said that if I still insisted, the boon should be such that, after him, there should be no survivor in his dynasty to claim the temple as his own. Indeed ! A stupendous boon ! The queen was flabbergasted at the king's flamboyance. She had no other alternative. And so, adopting me as his son, she wanted me to make a commitment, that I should, once in a year, visit, her place and this visit shall, in future, be known as Gundicha Yatra after her name. In compliance of her wish, I am committed to visit Gundicha Temple once in every year as you know very well. So, Oh, Devi ! You should not misunderstand me for my car festival, which is sacredly tied to a divine commitment. This version is also included in the Deula Tola of Sisu Krishna Das.

Now, the Lord's submission to Mahalaxmi, as described in the lyric is of some Bachanikas prevailing in the ex-zamidari areas of Ganjam district is considerably overwhelming. The Lord says, "Hey, Devi ! have I ever deviated from my words of

commitment since then? Why then you pointlessly exhibit your fury on the flimsiest grounds ? While moving along in my usual elegance in the divine procession of the festival, I admit, I might have delayed in going to the temple. But I confess my embarrassing indiscretion. So now be pleased to open the door and I enter sanctum sanctorum without any further fuss in the continuing misunderstanding.

In the same lyrical presentation, the Lord continues, "Hey, Indirey ! My beloved, the divine benefactress of all devotees in this world, irrespective of caste, creed and religion; you visit the places of your devotees with a spirit of enormous compassion. In the same spirit, I set off on my divine sojourn only once in a year to give audience to my devotees and to avenge their sorrows and atone their sins. Hey, Indirey ! My divine sojourn is not for any other reason. Still, if you do not open the door, I shall go back to Adap (Gundicha Temple) and live there forever."

Mahalaxmi knows very well that the Lord cannot leave the temple under any circumstance. He has a bigger commitment to live here and give his audience to the demigods and his devotees every day. She is aware of all the divine responsibilities of the Lord in his own temple. So, she least bothers about his cautionary remarks. Feigning her indignation further, she continues to say, "It is alright that you set off on your divine mission. But why did you leave me alone ? You may or may not say; but I know the reason. In the name of the festival, you went out to meet the cowherd women with whom, as the world says, you are in deep love in actual dispensation.

A strange accusation ! She dubs the Lord as immoral in his disposition. In fact, this is



the type of accusation, a wife usually hurls at her husband when there is slightest misunderstanding in the heedful attention of the latter. Mahalaxmi reflects a common women's sentiment. Whatever be the religious implication of the Laxmi-Narayan dialogue, it is the mirror of a common women's usual reaction to her husband when there is slightest neglect on the part of the latter. The accusation of the wife may appear to be harsh and damaging. But one thing is sure that, in every such accusation, the wife has the flair to highlight the enormity of her husband's greatness. This is romanticism in the meaningful layout of a negative disposition.

As depicted in the dialogue prevalent in some places, Mahalaxmi says to Jagannatha, "Oh, the crown potentate of deceivers and tricksters, go back to the cowherd women of Gopapura; they may be waiting for you. If you hold up, they may be angry with you. Hey, Muralidhar ! You have looted their love; you have looted their all with the captivating note of your magic flute. How winsome your potent fluit is ! Even Brahma and Siva are captivated by its wondrous sound. You have brought for me many gifts, as you say. Give them to Radha; She will be very happy to receive them from your divine self".

Having exhausted all her anguish through several blames, Mahalaxmi gradually calms down. As described in the dialogue published by Hari Arjun Campany, Badathakur at last

intervenes in the divine altercation. He speaks out to Mahalaxmi, while enjoying the transcendental situation, "Hey Bhadre ! if my brother, Jagannatha is a wrongdoer for lapses, if any, I too am not free from your accusation. Our darling Subhadra accompanied us because of the candid wish of both the brothers and not of Jagannatha alone. Subhadra cannot remain without her brothers. And so, you were left in the temple for the genuine reason best known to you. After all, you are the divine proprietress of the grand temple. Mind not my brother's mistake, if any. Now open the door and let my brother enter the sanctum of the temple." With these words of Badathakura, the arrogance of Mahalaxmi breaks down like bubbles on the surface of water. Mahalaxmi now comes forward and offers the sacred light to her Lord. She finally receives the Lord at the Jaya-Vijaya Gate. And all the images are at last seated on the Ratna Vedi, the platform of Jewel as before.

Now, there is ululation all around in the temple. The devotees say "Haribole" at the pitch of their voice. In the midst of drums, cymbals and other musical instruments blowing, the ritual of Laxmi Narayan Bachanika is ceremoniously concluded.

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## Siddha Mahavir Temple at Puri

*Ratnakar Mohapatra*

The temple of Siddha Mahavir is situated at a distance of about one Km to the north-east of the Gundicha temple of Puri. This is a small temple dedicated to Siddha Mahavir (Hanumana). From the architectural point of view the temple is not so important but from the religious point of view, it is one of the important shrines of Orissa. It is believed that Tulasi Das, the famous author of Rama Charita Manasa, stayed here for sometime when he visited Puri.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of tradition, it is further believed that Hanumana after retirement from active service of Lord Rama desired to settle in this shrine.<sup>2</sup> The kshetra of Purosottama is noted for the installation of several Hanumana images in the late medieval period in order to arouse the martial spirit of the local people to defend the Jagannatha temple from the repeated Muslim onslaughts.<sup>3</sup> The Ramananda Sect made arrangement for the installation of Hanumana images in this Kshetra. Hence, there are a series of Hanumana shrines noticed in the different parts of the Kshetra of Jagannatha.

The shrine of Siddha-Mahavir is an important place, where the presiding deity is greatly revered by the local people who are believers of the Ramayana Cult. Dr. Bichitrnanda Mohanty opines that God

Siddha Mahavir is considered as one of the Asta-Mahaviras of the Kshetra (Puri town).<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Dr. Braja Kishore Sahu has referred that God Siddha Mahavir is one of the real protectors as well as controllers of the Kshetra.<sup>5</sup>

### **Architectural features of the temple :**

The temple of Siddha Mahavir consists of two structures such as Vimana and Jagamohana. There is an open flat mandapa recently erected in front of the Jagamohana. This temple is built in sand stones, which locally called as Baulamala and Kanda Patharas. It faces to east.

#### **(A) Vimana :-**

The Vimana of the Siddha Mahavir temple is a Pidha Deula and its height is about 35 feet from the road level. It has four vertical parts such as pistha, bada, gandi and mastaka. The pistha of the Vimana is 2 ½ feet in height and it is completely undecorated. The bada of the Vimana is panchanga type i.e. having five fold divisions viz Pabhaga, tala jangha, bandhana, upper jangha and baranda. The base of the bada is square of 22 feet on each side. All the component parts of the bada are devoid of decorative ornamentations. The three sides central niches of the bada are housed with



parsvadevata images of Yamaraja, Male deity (Keshari) and Devi Anjana. The upper *Garviksha* of the northern side is decorated with a war tour scene (a row of soldiers holding war implements in their hands).

The pyramidal superstructure is surmounted on the *gandi* of the *Vimana* and it consists of 3 flat shaped *pidhas*. The centre of each *pidha* is projected with *jhäpa-simhas* in all sides of the *gandi*. Small *dopichha* lions are fixed in the corners of the *kanthis* or intervening recesses between the *pidhas*. Diminutive *Mahavir* figures in different postures are also inserted in the *kanthis* between the *pidhas* of *gandi*. *Dopichha simhas* are fixed on the top of the *Kanika pagas* of *gandi*. *Deula Charini* figures are inserted in the four cardinal directions of the *beki* above *rahas*. They are acting as the supporting elements of the *mastaka*.

The *mastaka* of the *Vimana* consists of *beki*, *ghanta* (bell shaped member) above which there is another *beki*, *amalaka sila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa*, *ayudha* (*chakra*) and *dhvaja*.

The sanctum preserves a large image of *Mahavir* (*Hanumana*) as the presiding deity of the temple. The image is about 6 feet in height. He holds *gada* in left hand and a massive rock boulder (*Gandha-Mardana Parvata*) in right hand. The deity has been installed on the decorated masonry pedestal of 2 feet high. The slab of the presiding deity is carved with a series of diminutive *Hanuman* figures in different postures. They are locally considered as the *asta-mallas* such as *Sugriba*, *Jambu bahana*, *Bali*, *Angada*, *Susena* etc. These figures are also believed to be the eight advisers of Lord Rama during his expedition to Lanka to fight against *Ravana* for rescue of *Sita*.<sup>6</sup> A brass image of *Hanumana* (*Mahavira*) has also

been kept on the same pedestal as the *vije pratima* for ceremonial occasions. The presiding deity of the temple is very attractive to visitors and it is the best specimen of the fine workmanship. The background slab of the deity is decorated with *trefoil arch*; *makara heads* at the base and *Kirtimukha motif* at the apex. This slab is also relieved with scroll works, flower medallions and various scenes from the *Ramayana*. R.P.Mohapatra has referred that the temple though of later workmanship its presiding deity, a huge *Hanumana* image deserves special mentions as an excellent work of Orissan art.<sup>7</sup> Inner walls of the sanctum are completely undecorated and it is recently covered with china plates. The top of the presiding deity is surmounted by pyramidal roof, which is supported by four massive circular pillars.

The sanctum has one doorway towards the *Jagamohana* and it is devoid of decorative ornamentations. The images of *Gaja-Lakshmi* and *Navagrahas* are completely absent in their respective places. The eastern side outer wall of the *Vimana* ( towards the *Jagamohana*) is relieved with *Jagannätha 'Trinity'*.

#### (B) Jagamohana or Mukhasala :

The *Jagamohana* of *Siddha- Mahavir* temple is a *pidha deula* and its height is about 30 feet from the road level. The structure of the *Jagamohana* has four vertical parts like the *Vimana*. The *pistha* of the *Jagamohana* is 2½ feet in height. The base of the *bada* is rectangular and it measures 35 feet in length and 18 feet in width. There is no decorative moulding in the walls of the *bada*. The northern sidewall of the *Mukhasala* is decorated with some sculptural panels such as the mounted elephant scene, horse procession scene and the *abhisheka* scene of *Puri king*. A mounted



elephant and two cavaliers are relieved in marching posture in the wall. It is thickly covered by lime mortar. The entrance doorway wall of the Jagamohana is inserted with two large panels depicting a Panchamukhi Ganesha and a Sikshadana scene.

The pyramidal superstructure surmounts on the gandi of the Jagamohana and it consists of three flat shaped pidhas. The centre of each pidha is projected with a Jhapa simha on all the four sides of gandi.

The mastaka of the Jagamohana consists of Khapuri, Kalasa, Ayudha (Chakra) and Dhvaja. Two jhapa simhas are projected on the northern and southern sides of the kalasa respectively. Inner walls of the Jagamohana are fully covered with china plates. The Jagamohana has one doorway towards east. The door-jambes of the Jagamohana are devoid of decorative ornamentations. The figures of Gaja-Lakshmi and Navagrahas are also completely absent in their respective places. Two lions are installed on the both sides of the doorway of Jagamohana. They are acting as the dvarapalas of the temple.

#### (c) Natamandapa :-

The Natamandapa of the Siddha-Mahavir temple is an open flat roof Mandapa, which is supported by octagonal pillars. The height of the flat roof is about 15 feet from the surface of the temple complex. The ceiling of the flat roof is recently painted with different scenes, which mostly derived from the stories of Ramayana. There is a pedestal of 2½ feet high noticed in the floor of the Natamandapa. The footprint of Lord Rama is carved on the top of pedestal for worship. The Endowment Trust of the Government of Orissa has built the Natamandapa of the temple in 2000 AD.

#### Sculptures :-

The temple of Siddha Mahavira is partially adorned with different sculptures and scenes. The three sides central niches of the bada of Vimana are housed with parsvadevata images of Yamaraj, Keshari and Devi Anjana.

The image of Yamaraja is the parsvadevata of the southern side niche of the Vimana. The two handed image of Lord Yama has been installed on the plain pedestal. He is carved in seated posture on the backside of buffalo, the conventional mount. Lord Yama displays gada in right hand and kala phasa in left hand respectively. The background slab of the deity is decorated with trefoil arch.

A statue of a male figure is locally worshipped as Keshari noticed in the western side parsvadevata niche of the bada of Vimana. R.P.Mohapatra has identified it as the image of Hanumana.<sup>8</sup> This image is not completely designed in the form of Hanumana. The two handed image of Keshari has been installed on the decorated pedestal. He holds gada in left hand and akshamala in right hand. He is also wearing the garland of beads in his body. Six diminutive Mahavir (Hanumana) figures are finely carved on the pedestal. Two female figures are flanked on either side of the deity. They are displaying flywhisks in their hands. The background slab of the deity is decorated with trefoil arch.

Devi Anjana is the Parsvadevata of the northern side central niche of the bada of Vimana. The two-armed image of Devi Anjana has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. She holds Child (Mahavir) by her two hands. Two female figures (Sakhis) are flanked on either side of the devi. The backside head of the devi (Anjana) is also relieved with trefoil arch. All the parsvadevata images are made of



black chlorite and they are also housed in the pidha mundi niches.

At first N.K. Bose has noticed that a detached sculptural panel inserted into the wall of the Siddha Mahavir temple, which throws interesting light on the technique of inclined plane. The sculpture depicts a temple under the process of construction, where two masons are still working on the top of the unfinished gandi while other four workers are carrying up a rectangular block of stone over an inclined plane.<sup>9</sup> K.S. Behera also refers that the presence of three pillars to support the inclined plane, whose one end rests on the ground and the other end on the top of the temple, suggest that the slope was made of wooden planks.<sup>10</sup> This sculptural scene indicates the technique and methods of temple construction in ancient Orissa.

There is a scene of royal procession with two elephants inserted into a niche of the northern sidewall of the Mukhasala of the temple. The elephants are placed one in front of the other so that only one is visible in this view. The front figure of the near elephant is of royal lineage as suggested by the two parasols held by attendant figures, one on each elephant. Three figures with hands in anjali mudra stand in-front of the elephants while an acrobat rolled into a ball is beneath the head of the near elephant. The head of the royal figure is completely missing. Some senior priests of the temple say that it is a scene of Indra Devata. Most probably, this scene is a royal tour of Puri king. An elephant and a horse with their grooms are carved on the pedestal of the royal procession slab. The measurement of the royal procession slab is 31 inches in length and 18 inches in width respectively.<sup>11</sup> A short line of inscription is engraved just below the

sculptural panel. The royal procession scene was executed in the third quarter of the 13th Century AD.<sup>12</sup>

The left side eastern entrance wall of the Jagamohana contains an image of Panchamukhi Ganesha in its niche. The slab of the deity is exquisitely carved by the artist. The ten-handed image of Ganesha has been installed on the decorative pedestal. His right five hands display chakra, snake, trident, broken tusk, and varada mudra while the left five hands hold gada, pasa, ankusa, flower and a bell. The image of Ganesha measures approximately 34 inches in length and 20 inches in width.<sup>13</sup> He wears a Sarpa-Yajnopavita in His body. His Sakti is seated in lalitasana and embraces Him with Her right arm. She holds a lotus flower in Her left hand.<sup>14</sup> The upper portion of the slab is decorated with foliage. The pedestal of the deity is relieved with a Kalasa along with stalks and foliage. The slab of the Panchamukhi Ganesha is carved out of black chlorite. Prof. K.S. Behera and T.E. Donaldson opine that the image of Ganesha was made in the middle of the 13th Century AD and it probably comes from Konark Sun temple.<sup>15</sup> Srinibas Tripathy has also referred that the Panchamukhi Ganesha image inserted into a niche flanking the entrance of the Jagamohana of Siddha Mahavir temple seem here was originally brought from Konark.<sup>16</sup>

The right side eastern entrance wall of the Mukhasala is relieved with the sikshadana scene. R.P. Mohapatra has identified that it is the teaching scene of Vyasadeva who is reciting the Bhagabata Purana among his disciples.<sup>17</sup> The guru is seated in a pavilion with his right leg crossed over his left and right hand raised as if imparting instructions. Facing him are three rows of two figures each. Both male and female devotees are flanked on either side of





guru. Most of these devotees are carved in folded hands (anjali mudra). The stone slab of the sikshadana scene measures 27½ inches in length and 18¼ inches in width.<sup>18</sup> Prof. K.S. Behera and T.E. Donaldson have referred that the sikshadana motif inserted into a niche on the Siddha Mahavira temple was also brought from the Sun temple of Konark.<sup>19</sup> This sikshadana panel was probably executed in the 13th century AD.

Besides these sculptures, three brass idols of Narayana and a figure of child Krishna are preserved in a shed, which constructed in the right of the Jagamohana. Along with them stone images of Yama seated on buffalo, Hara-Parvati, Radha-Krishna Yugalamurti and a huge stock of palm leaf manuscripts have also been preserved in this small apartment. According to R.P. Mohapatra, the images preserved in the shed furnished varying dates of workmanship.<sup>20</sup> Available sculptures noticed in the temple complex are not made in same period. Most of the sculptural panels, which inserted in the walls of temple, were brought from Konark temple. Parsvadevata images of the temple were made at the time of temple construction. The other images in the temple premises were executed in later period.

The surface of the temple complex is about 4 feet high from the road level. A boundary wall of 10 feet high has enclosed the temple and it measures approximately 80 feet in length on the northern and southern sides and 60 feet in width on the eastern and western sides respectively. The modern flat roof covers the main entrance porch of the temple complex. A series of ascending masonry steps are provided for entry into the temple complex. Two huge lions are installed on the both sides of the main entrance gate of the eastern side.

They are acting as the gatekeepers of the temple.

#### **Date of the temple:**

There is no authentic evidence regarding the construction period of the temple of Siddha Mahavir. On the basis of the architectural style, the construction period of the temple can be tentatively assigned to the 1st half of the 16th century AD. Most probably this temple was built by the Gajapati ruler of Orissa.

Now the Endowment Trust Board of the Government of Orissa is managing the temple. The site of temple is also a beautiful spot for picnic.

Thus it is known that the temple of Siddha Mahavir is one of the sacred spots of the Kshetra. By the influence of Ramanuja sects, Humanana temples were constructed in the different parts of the Kshetra. This temple possibly was built by the King of Puri. Out of available sculptures, some of them were brought from the Konarka Sun temple. Probably, Tulasi Das, the famous author of Rama Charita Manasa was residing near this shrine, although the architectural feature of the temple is not so important but from the cultural point of view, it is one of the important shrines of Puri.

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## Lord Jagannath and Goddess Maa Hingula

*Barada Prasanna Das*

"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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Barada Prasanna Das is presently working as the DIPRO, Angul in the Department of Information & Public Relations.



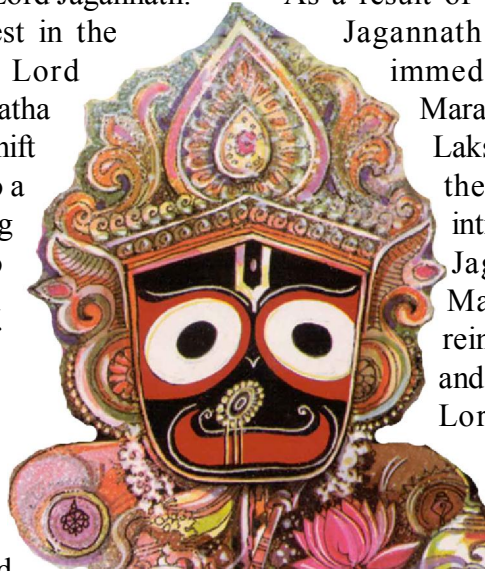




## Contributions of Marathas Towards Shree Jagannath Culture

*Pabitra Mohan Barik*

After the end of Mughal period the Marathas exercised their power in Orissa. Being Hindus they had a great respect for Lord Jagannath. They took a special interest in the temple administration of Lord Jagannath. In the time of Maratha rule there was no need to shift Jagannath from the temple to a secret area as was done during the Mughal rule. Due to internal stability, peace and security in the time of Maratha pilgrims from various parts of India came to Puri to give their tribute to Lord Jagannath of universe. The Maratha administration provided necessary facilities for pilgrims and encouraged them to visit Puri. The Maratha Govt. had taken all necessary steps for better management of the Jagannath temple. They gave respect for all rituals, customs, traditions, practices and faiths relating Jagannath culture. Maratha Government was not in favour of any change in the old customs of worship of Lord Jagannath. A conflict took place when the Vaisnavas removed the images of Sankar and Padmapada from the throne of Jagannath. The



followers of Sankar strongly protested the antisocial and inhumane activities of Vaisnavas. As a result of this conflict the worship of Jagannath was stopped. Interfering immediately in this matter the Maratha Govt. of Orissa warned Laksmana Nath Krishna Goswami, the chief of Vaisnavas not to introduce any thing new in the Jagannath temple. Then the Maratha Govt. took step to reinstall the images of Sankara and Padmapada on the throne of Lord Jagannath. The Maratha Govt. always encouraged the pilgrims to come to Puri in large number. Particularly Sambuhaji Ganesha had more interest to encourage pilgrims to visit the temple of Jagannath. Raja Ram Pandit, the Maratha Governor (1778-1793 A.D.) took special interest for the development of Jagannath culture and temple. During Maratha administration regular funds were provided to observe religious activities in the Jagannath temple. During that time many rich persons were encouraged to endow lands for the celebration of festival in the Jagannath temple. The Maratha rulers were spending 20,000



kahanas of cowries or about Rs.6000 yearly for the charitable purpose in the Jagannath temple. This charity was known in the name of "Anna Chatra". The Maratha Govt. gave special attention for the safety of the pilgrims coming to visit Puri. The pilgrims in those days faced number of difficulties in their way to Puri. In spite of troubles the pilgrims were encouraged to visit Puri because of the interest taken by the Maratha Govt. to help them in their journey. Pilgrims from all parts of India mostly from Bengal, Banaras, Rajasthan, Central Province were coming to visit Lord Jagannath at Puri. The Maratha Govt. was also very liberal and broad minded in issuing passports to Muslims to visit Lord Jagannath at Puri. Jasrat Khan, the Naib Nazim of Deccan requested the Maratha Govt. to issue passport in favour of his Dewan coming to Puri to see Lord Jagannath. In order to have a Darshan of Lord Jagannath the devotees were coming from Deccan and in large number from the West Bengal to Puri during the period of the Maratha rule in Orissa. During the period of the Raja Ram Pandit the pilgrims were coming from Bombay, Gujrat, and Maharastra and they were given all assistance in Orissa for Darsan of Lord Jagannath.

During the Maratha rule the temple administration was supervised under the direction of the Raja of Khurda. The sources of income of the temple were the revenue collected from the "Satais Hazari Mahal" town duties and the sale of the Lord's sacred food Mahaprasad. The Satais Hazari Mahal- a vast area of landed property was donated by Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur in order to meet day-to-day expenditure of Lord Jagannath. In the beginning the financial management was very satisfactory. After some years the corruption in the financial activities of the

temple that resulted increase the deficiency. The revenue from the Satais Hazari Mahal was not collected in proper way. The Parichhas in that period were engaged in corrupt practice and had earned money in illegal way. No proper account was kept in the temple office in this regard. So Maratha Govt. was providing extra amount for proper management of Jagannath temple because of insincerity of the Parichhas at the time of the Maratha rule. The management of the Jagannath temple was vested on the hands of Parichhas. Maratha Govt. gave appointment four Parichhas with specific duties for the better management of Jagannath temple. First and third Parichhas were the Marathas and the second one was the man of local. He was called Jagannath Rajguru and also holding the right for the post of Deula Parichha. The third Parichha was known as Satais Hazari Parichha. His duty was to collect revenue from the Satais Hazari Mahals. The king of Daspalla supplied the log to Maratha Govt. Free of cost for the construction of chariots. So the king of Daspalla was exempted from paying any tribute to Maratha Govt. The Parichhas became corrupted as a result the Maratha Govt. had to pay additional amount to meet the deficiency that occurred in the temple treasury. The Maratha Govt. also imposed a tax on Parichhas in order to make up the loss. A pilgrim tax was collected from the pilgrims who were coming to visit Lord Jagannath. Maratha Govt. collected more money as revenue from pilgrim tax. The moment when the pilgrims entered into the territory of Orissa, the tax was collected from them. When the pilgrims were to enter into the Puri town they had to cross a river named "Mittiani" in two places. The pilgrims from south, were to enter through the "Lokanatha Ghata" and the pilgrims of the North were to



enter through the "Atharanala Ghata". The pilgrims were giving the tax in both the ghats. The tax collected from the pilgrims in different places was very heavy for them. The pilgrims from northern side were giving Rs.10/- only as pilgrim tax but Rs.6/- collected as pilgrim tax from southern people. Another fee was collected from each man when the visitor entered the Jagannath temple. Jagannath temple was a source of income for the Maratha Govt. At the time of Anglo-Maratha conflict, a treaty was signed, which reflects the conditions that Jagannath temple and all the duties collected from the pilgrims shall remain in the hand of Maratha. The Marathas were giving more emphasis on the protection of the Brahmins and Hindu deities. They also wanted to appoint a person of their own to supervise the Jagannath temple administration. After the decline of Maratha rule in Orissa their representative was continuing for some days in his own post of Parichha in the administrative system of the temple of Jagannath even when

the British captured Orissa in 1803 A.D. Morar Pandit and Sewaji Pandit, the Marathas continued their work as Parichhas of Jagannath temple during the British rule in Orissa. Within half a century in the rule of Maratha, they did a lot for the welfare of the temple. During the Marathas rule the Jagannath temple attracted the pilgrims at large all over India. The contribution of Marathas towards the Jagannath culture is remarkable and far-reaching.

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## The Kitchen of Srimandir : Biggest in the World

*Saroj Kumar Panda*

Sri Jagannath is the Lord of the Universe. His kitchen is considered as the largest and the biggest kitchen in the world. It is situated south-east direction of the outer compound of Srimandir. The length of the kitchen is 150 feet, breadth is 100 feet and height is about 20 feet. It consists of 32 rooms with 250 earthen ovens within these. Around 600 cooks (Suaras) and 400 assistants serve here everyday for preparing Lord's food.

There are three types of hearths in the kitchen of Srimandir such as Anna Chuli, Ahia Chuli and Pitha Chuli. The dimension of hearths where rice is prepared are 4' x 2.5' x 2'. The rectangular space created between two rice hearths is called Ahia. All types of Dal and Curry items are cooked in Ahia Chuli. There are only ten numbers of Pitha Chuli in the temple kitchen which are made of cement. The fire of this kitchen is known as Vaishnava Agni, because it is the fire in the kitchen of Lord Jagannath and used to serve Vishnu Himself. It is never put out.

It is believed that Mahalaxmi cooks in the kitchen Herself; all are felt to be Her servants. As she is not attentive to the cooking on the days when Lord Jagannath is said to be sick before Rath Yatra, the food is less tasty. During Rath Yatra when Lord Jagannath is in

Sri Gundicha Temple, She is said to have no zeal to cook and so the food is tasteless. It is also said that if mother Laxmi is displeased with the preparations by the cooks, a dog will appear mysteriously on the temple grounds. If the dog is seen, all the food must be buried and prepared again. As no dog is allowed to enter the temple, this dog is said to be Kutama Chandi, a tantric goddess in charge of purification of food.

Four types of cooking are prepared in the kitchen of Srimandir. Those are Bhimapaka, Nalapaka, Souripaka and Gouripaka. The items of Bhimapaka consist Badatiana, Gudakhuara, Pakala Nadia Rasa, Purapitha, Biripitha and Gudakanji. In Nalapaka, items like Sakara, Tianalapara, Adanga and different types of sweet drinks are prepared. Souripaka items include Mahura, Deshialubhaja, Kadalibhaja, Adapachedi, Ghialabanga and varieties of cakes. In Gouripaka, Mugatiana, Leutia, Kosala and Madhura Lalita Saga items are cooked.

In the kitchen of Srimandir, four types of rice are prepared. These are Salianna, Khiraanna, Dadhianna and Sitalaanna. Sunakhila rice cooks along with ghee and Phalatabha Kharada Lavana to get Salianna. For getting Khiraanna alongwith Basumati rice;





cow milk, ghee and Kharada Lavana are mixed and cooked. Similarly plain rice mixed with curd; Dadhianna is prepared and rice mixed with Tabharasa and Kharada Lavana; Sitalaanna is prepared.

The food in the temple kitchen is prepared in such a pure way and with deep devotion; great spiritual impact is felt, both by those who cook and those who eat. The unique feature is that, clay pots are placed in a special earthen oven, five in numbers, one on the top of another. Yet the one on the top is cooked first.

There are two wells in the temple complex for the purpose of supplying water to the kitchen. These are named as Ganga and Jamuna and both are near the kitchen itself. The radius of the wells is more than 10 feet and depth is 100 feet each.

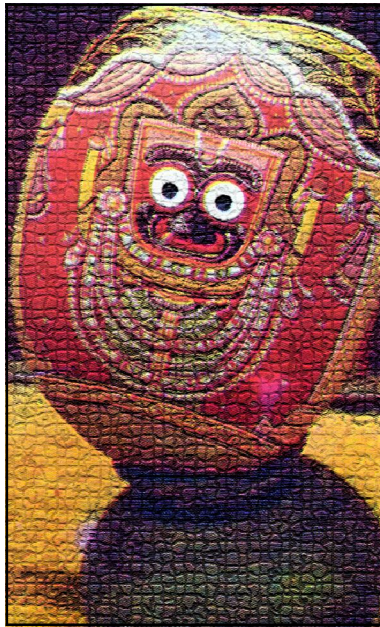
All the necessary commodities for the temple kitchen are brought from Mahalaxmi

Bhandar, which runs by Suara Nijoga Cooperative Society. The earthen pots used for cooking foods are provided by Kumbhakara Nijoga Society. The potters of Kumbharapara and nearby areas supply these pots the temple kitchen. The required timber for the kitchen was previously supplied from different forests of the State. But after nationalisation of forests, the State Forest Corporation is providing timbers for cooking purpose.

Daily 5,000 persons may be fed, but on big festival days, one to ten million may be accommodated. The temple kitchen of Lord Jagannath is therefore considered to be the biggest hotel in the world, serving all without reservation or previous notice.

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## Three Great Devotees of Lord Jagannath

Somanath Jena

### **Bhakta Manohar Das and the Padma Besha (Lotus dress) of Lord Jagannath of Shriksetra, Puri.**

Lord Jagannath is connected with numerous *Besha* (dressing for appearance) on stipulated days linked with specific incidences those happened in the past to remember those happenings and to inspire the devotees perennially. The dressing has become the ritualistic regular tradition in Srimandir, Puri. *Padma Besha* (to dress Lord Jagannath with



Lotus flowers) is one of such important *Besha*. Traditionally from the *Sukla Sasti* of *Margasira* month till the *Basanta Panchami*, the Sri Vighras, seated in *Ratnasinghasan* of Sri Mandir, Puri are covered with winter wrappers, at night called '*Ghoda Lagi*' to protect the Lord from excessive cold. On the Wednesday or Saturday, coming in between *Amabasya* of *Magha* and *Basanta Panchami*, the Lord is dressed in *Padma Besha*. On the Wednesday, the wrapper covering the Vighraha is blue in

colour and on Saturday the colour of wrapper is black during the '*Ghoda Lagi*' period. In case of the *Besha* falling on Wednesday, the Lotus dressing is on blue wrapper covered around *Vighraha*. The *Chandan Lagi* (Sandal paste offering) is made, than in *Badasinhar* such Lotus *Besha* is made and the Vighraha is dressed accordingly at night.

Lord Jagannath is reputed as devotee friendly : *Bhakta Batsal* and *Bhabagrahi*, receiver of pure devotional thought and *Bhakta Rakhyakari*, protector of the

dignity of devotees for ages together. He can not sit peacefully in the *Ratnasinghasan*, when his *Bhakta* is tortured and unable to meet Him. There are many incidents recorded in history, *Puranas* and *Daryata Bhakti*. One and such incidents is that of *Bhakta* Monohar Das, who was living in village Sahapur, on the bank of the sacred river Rishikulya in Orissa. The period, according to the history, is during the rule of King Udyot Keshari, towards the last part of the 10th century A.D. in Orissa.



This devotee, *Sadhu* Manohar Das, started his journey from distant village Sahapur to Srikhetra Puri on foot covering a long distance and reached Srikhetra Puri on the *Amabasya* day of *Magha* month. For days together, he walked on the road to reach Puri. In course of his long journey, Manohar Das, on his way found a tank in the road side and found beautiful hundred-petalled red lotuses flowering and floating on the water of the tank. It came to the mind of devotee Manohar Das, out of devotional sentiment that some flowers can be collected for offering to the Supreme Lord at Puri. Accordingly, forgetting the distance and time factor to reach Puri, he collected some fresh lotus flowers and packed those in his *Gamuchha* (Red towel) by binding through knot. He reached Puri Dham and halted at *Badachhata Matha*, just adjacent to the Sri Mandir boundary wall of the eastern side in the right side of '*Purba Dwar*'. Through out the painful and long journey, his mind and thought was ever filled with joy that he is going to offer lotus flowers to Lord Jagannath. No other thought disturbed him. He proceeded and reached inside the temple. The *Sevakas* asked what he has knotted in his *Gamuchha*. He opened the knot and showed the lotus flowers. But alas ! Those lotus flowers were no more fresh. Those have already dried, some have rotted and colour changed to pale and black. The *Sevakas* beat him in cane sticks for taking rotten flowers and due to severe injury and mental shock Manohar Das fell on the ground unconscious. The people of *Badachhata Matha*, brought him back and put him in rest in unconscious stage in the *Matha*. In the dream, Gajapati, Maharaja of Puri could see the Lord telling him to go to Manohar Das, to take the lotus flowers from him and offer to Him and allow devotee Manohar Das to enter

the temple to share His *sevas* and *darshan*. The Gajapati, called the *Rajaguru*, namely, Bhavadeva and told the contents of his dream. The *Rajaguru* took Manohar Das, and the Lotus packed *Gamuchha* to the Sri Mandir. In front of the *Vigrahas* he opened the knot, asked the *Sevakas* to offer the Lotus by taking from the *Gamuchha* of Manohar Das. And Lo ! the lotuses, though were previously dry and black in colour, could get fresh lease of life, became fresh, red and purple coloured and emanated divine and sweet fragrance. Being put on the *Vigraha* the Lord showed smiling face with appearance as if blessing all.

To remember, such exchange of love between the Supreme Lord and the devotee, and to inspire other devotees, each year *Padmabesha* is made on the day fixed. *Badachhata Matha* offers *Khiri* seva to the Lords on this day in Srimandir. That *Khiri Prasad* is distributed next day to the devotees.

### **Till Swami Rasikananda's arrival Cars of the Holy Triad could not move to reach Sri Gundicha Temple at Puri Dham.**

Lord Jagannath of Puri Dham always understands the devotion of His devotees. He waited for the arrival of Muslim devotee Salabeg and *Bhakta Balia* Balaram Das to move in his car from Lion Gate of Sri Mandir to go to Sri Gundicha temple. Another such incident of His waiting for His devotee Swami Rasikananda in his Car during the annual Car Festival at Puri is worth mentioning.

Rasikananda was born in the year 1590 A.D. at Rohininagar situated on the bank of river Subarnarekha which is now in Balasore District of Orissa. The boy's name was Rasika Murari. His passion for the Lord was found in his childhood when he was uttering the name of Lord Krishna constantly. Like his father, he



was uttering the name of Lord Krishna while sitting on a sacred place called *Ghantasila* being in meditation of the calmly form of Lord Krishna. At that time, the great devotee Sri Shyamananda Thakur was studying the devotional scriptures at Vrindaban, after getting initiation from the Vaisnava Guru Sri Jiva Goswami. One day, while Sri Shyamananda was sitting absorbed in meditation in a lonely garden, Bhagaban Sri Madan Gopal Himself appeared before him and said "Syamananda, immediately proceed to Utkal where Bhakta Rasika Murari, who is very dear to me is meditating and chanting my name constantly. Initiate him in the *Mantra* of Sri Krishna and preach my love and devotion widely". But Sri Syamananda though came to senses at once by this incident, could not at the outset believe the command of the Lord. So in next few moments Sri Gopal appeared before Sri Jiva Goswami and ordained him to tell Syamananda to immediately proceed to Utkal and initiate devotee Rasika Murari in Sri Krishna *Mantra* and preach the art of love and devotion. Sri Shyamananda Goswami reached Utkal in the year 1608 A.D., initiated Rasikananda ( the name of Rasika Murari after initiation) and stayed at Utkal now in Orissa and devoted his remaining period of the life in preaching love and devotion of Sri Krishna. The *Matha* where he stayed is now at Kanpur, nearly 4 km from Rasgovindpur and at about 46 km. from Baripada, the District headquarters of Mayurbhanj district in Orissa State. There the wooden sandals he used to put on, his winter wrapper like *Kantha* and his *Samadhi* are there. In the Year 1630 AD Syamananada Swami breathed his last.

Rasikananda Swami was living in a *Matha* at Gopiballavpur on the bank of the river, Subarnarekha, which was on the northern

border of the Ex-State of Mayurbhanj, (at present in Nayabasan Tehsil of West Midnapur District of West Bengal) and at a distance of 47 km on road from Baripada via Jamsola. The *Matha* is in a very dilapidated condition due to lack of maintenance and preservation.

Once, while Sri Rasikananda Swami was living as a guest of king Baidyanath Bhanj of Banapur, the Muslim Subedar Ahmed Baig who was kept in charge of Orissa, became much irritated of the devotion of Sri Krishna, preached by Rasikananda which was widely acceptable to the common mass. Subedar Baig became furious and asked Swami Rasikananda to pacify a ferocious and rogue wild elephant by his power of devotion to Lord Krishna. This is the test of his devotion. If he fails, he will be punished severely. Rasikananda fearlessly approached the rogue elephant and whispered the name and mantra of Lord Sri Krishna in both the ears of the elephant. Instantly, the nature of the elephant was changed and he became, peaceful, obedient and in token of respect for Saint Sri Rasikananda, the elephant prostrated in his feet. On seeing this miraculous power of Sri Krishna *mantra* which Rasikand preached, Ahmed Baig became stunned, and he himself started glorifying the merit and greatness of Sri Rasikananda Swami.

Thereafter, Rasikananda returned to Gopiballavpur. Once an intense desire to see the Lord Jagannath of Puri came to his mind. He started to proceed on foot to Puri and on the way he was to visit sacred places at Jajpur and other places of pilgrimages located on the bank of the river Baitarani. There was delay, as a result of which he could not reach Puri Dham in time. On the day of Gundicha, the day of Car Festival the car started moving from Lion's Gate towards Sri Gundicha temple in Badadanda. Knowing this, Sri Rasikananda





Swami prayed from the core of his heart saying " Oh Lord, kindly favour me by staying in the car till my arrival, to enable me to have your *darshan* in the car during Car Festival. Kindly wait for my arrival. " *Mahaprabhu* Lord Jagannath is *Bhabagrahi* and *Bhaktabatsal* and *Bhaktabandhu*. He waited for his sincere devotee in the *Nandighosa Ratha* and none of three *Rathas*, including that of His moved an inch forward. The *Thakur Maharaja* was perplexed at this. Even horses and elephants in large number, being yoked to pull the three *Rathas*, failed to drag an inch forward. All efforts failed. The Gajpati king prayed and took shelter of Lord Sri Jagannath to favour him to solve the situation. In his dream, Lord Jagannath told the king - "My devotee Rasikananda is hurriedly rushing to see me on the car during the Car Festival. He is approaching Puri and is now at *Tulasichoura*, located very near, please wait for his arrival. After his arrival and seeing me in the car, the car will move of their own accord in the usual pulling." In fact, the dream came true when the king received Rasikananda Swami and on his touching the cars by hands, the cars ran on the road, being dragged by devotees and reached Sri Gundicha Temple smoothly. The record testifies the event to have taken place in the year 1640 A.D.

On request of the king, Rasikananda stayed with Sri Vighraha Batakrushna in "*Kunja Matha*", located on the side of Sri Mandir. Infact that *Matha* was first founded by Swami Rasikananda.

Rasikananda left Puri for Remuna, as Khirchora Gopinath at Remuna ordered the Gajapati king in his dream to send him back to render His worship. There at Remuna, Rasikananda stayed and rendered *Seva Puja*

of Lord Khirachora Gopinath till his last days. Till date, the *Samadhi* Shrine of Rasikananda is within the premises of the temple, and at a distance, the residence of Rasikananda is found at Remuna. It was Narasingh Deb, the Gajapati King, who brought Madan Gopal's idol from Chitrakut, and that Madan Gopal remained at Remuna, who later on in the year 1436 A.D. after stealing *Khira* Bhoga for saint Madhabendra Puri, came to be known as Khirachora. The legend says that Lord Sri Rama has carved this stone edol of Madan Gopal at Chitrakut by arrows during his stay and has shown to Sita. In 1258 A.D. the temple for Mandan Gopal was built at Remuna and for arrangement of *Seva Puja* landed property was donated by the king. In Chitrakut, Lord Brahma was worshipping Madan Gopal. Madhabendra Puri one of the devotees, whose *Matha* is still there very near to Khirachora Gopinath temple, Remuna, near Balasore in Orissa. This incident testifies the fact that the Lord is even fulfiller of the sincere thought of devotees.

**Santh Tulsi Das, the Sri Ramabhakta could see his Lord Sri Rama in the Raghunath Besha and Padma Besha of Lord Jagannath.**

Lord Jagannath of Sri Jagannath Dham, Puri is the *Param Brahma* and ever friendly to the devotees. The Lord has shown His





appearance to devotees in the forms, they conceived in their minds and wanted to see him. Lord Jagannath satisfied. *Santh* Tulsi Das, the author of the great *Ramacharit Manas* by showing him His Raghunath Beshas, which is enlisted as one of several *Beshas*.

Realising the fact that Lord Sri Jagannath is himself *Param Brahma* in appearance, *Santh* Tulsi Das in his advanced age proceeded on foot from Kashi Pith to Sriksetra Puri, the Jagannath Dham alone to see his Lord Sri Rama Chandra, armed with bow and arrows in Lord Sri Jagannath. This pious desire inspired him to travel, covering a long distance with hardship. On the way in between Cuttack and Bhubaneswar, in a place named *Tulsi Talwa* locally known as *Tulasi Sarovar* (Tulsi tank), he took rest in the night.

Next day, he resumed his journey on foot early in the morning and reached Puri. On his arrival at Puri, he hastened to enter the temple, by ascending the *Baisi Pahacha* (22 number of steps) and stood in front of the idol of Lord Jagannath Bije in *Ratna Sinhasan* (in golden throne). From a little distance, he could see the *Param Brahma* Lord Jagannath with round black eyes, the Sri Vighraha (sacred idol) without hands and feet and ears, seated and being worshipped. He could not see *Param Brahma*, according to his conception in the form of Sri Rama Chandra armed with bow and arrows. Being disappointed he left Puri, without taking any food or drink. *Bhabagrahi* (knower of the thought of devotee) Sri

Jagannath could not tolerate such anxiety of Tulsi Das, who was walking on foot. He crossed *Atharnala* (a road bridge over eighteen nalas) and rapidly proceeding from Puri to Kashi via Batamangala. On command of Lord Jagannath, *Bhakta* Hanuman, sat on the road bridge over *Atharanala* and obstructed Tulsi Das from proceeding to Kashi. Tulsi Das, paid no heed to the indication of Hunuman and proceeded ahead on the road to Kashi. On the way, in a village called Malatipatapur, Tulsi Das halted in a *Tulasi Chowwara* (elevated platform having sacred basil tree in a pot) at night even in the midst of hunger and thirst. Tulsi Das, out of fatigue and frustration, not seeing Sri Ramachandra, in *Param Brahma* Sri Jagannath, fell asleep. While closing his eyes he saw in his dream, goddess Mahalaxmi, telling Lord Jagannath that no devotee returns from Puri without taking *Mahaprasad* in the form of sacred cooked rice (Avada) and curry, but devotee Tulsi Das has left Puri without taking any food and drink. She requested Lord Jagannath to proceed himself in disguise of a small boy taking the sacred rice and cury, which is called *Mahaprasad* and offer him to pertake. *Santh* Tulasi Das when asked by the boy to take the *Mahaprasad*, told him that he would not take the sacred rice and curry without seeing Sri Ramachandra in Lord Sri Jagannath who is hailed as *Param Brahma*. The boy asked him to open his *Ramacharit Manas* manuscript, which was availble with Tulsi Das, written on palmleaves and bound in red cloth and asked him to refer to *Doha 117* - from the 5th *Chowpahi* to 8th *Chowpahi*, which Tulsi Das, himself had written and to read the *Balakanda*.

*"Binu Pada Chalai Sunai Binukana,  
Kara Binu Karama Karai Bidhi Nana  
Anana Rahita Sakala Rasabhogi*



*Binubani Bakata Jogi  
Tana Binu Parasa Nayana Binu Dekha  
Grahai Ghrana Binu Basa Ashesa  
Asi Samabhati Alaukika Karana  
Mahima Jasu Jai Nahin Barana."*

He is that *Param Brahma*, who walks without feet, hears without ears, does various works without hands, tastes all sorts of items and juices without mouth, touches all without skin, sees all without eyes, and smells all without nose. That *Param Brahma* is so extraordinarily mysterious, that it is unknown to gods even. Lord Jagannath is the very said *Param Brahma*, which you have narrated in your above *Dohas* and poems. He is residing in Sri Mandir being bound and tied with devotional thought of his devotees. The boy narrating this, told Tulsi Das to return and look again. He can see Him in the form he desired and described in *Rama Charit Manas*. Tulasi Das being emotionally charged and overwhelmed by the words of the boy, resumed his return journey to Puri, came running and reached Puri, ascended the *Baishi Pahachas* and prostrated before the Lord sitting in *Ratna Sinhasan* and in the process, Tulsi Das lost consciousness. Regaining his senses, he looked at Lord Jagannath with folded hands in standing position. He became surprised to see Sri Ramachandra with bow and arrows in hands in the *Ratna Sinhasan*, in place of Lord Jagannath. He begged excuse and prayed the Lord to forgive him as he could not recognise Him and could not realise his own version written in *Ramacharit Manas*.

Spontaneously, Santh Tulsi Das wept profusely and tears rolled down from his eyes and he confirmed his version by the inspiration of the Lord in the immortal poem, which came out from his mouth.

*"Johi Rama Sohi Jagaddisha,  
Dina Hine Ananta Parbata Shesha*

Lord Jagannath is Rama, and Rama is Lord Jagannath. He is the protector of the poor, down-trodden and neglected, like the mountain is being protected by Sheshanaga, (Ananta) upholding the same by placing the earth over it.

Tulsi Das became satisfied and his journey to see Lord Ramachandra in Puri in *Param Brahma* Jagannath was fulfilled completely. He returned to Kasipith from Puri Dham on foot, meditating over the event.

The *Besha* of Lord Jagannath in the shape of Raghunath is called Raghunath Besha. Sri Raghunath Besha, is too expensive, but it lasts for a period of seven days and lakhs of devotees throng to Puri and get *Darshan* of Sri Raghunath Besh in *Ratna Sinhasan* of Lord Jagannath.

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## Lord Purushottama in the Ganga Inscriptions of Orissa

*Bharati Pal*

The history of the Gangas is a landmark in the history of Orissa. The dynasty reached the height of glory for its political achievements, temple building activities, economic prosperity and religious movements. The advent of the imperial Ganga marked a great revival of the Vaishnava cult in Orissa. Under the royal patronage of the Ganga rulers the fame of Purushottama Jagannatha reached the pinnacle of glory. The cult of Vaishnavism took an important form with the construction of a temple for Lord Purushottama at the sea-shore of Puri.

Anantavarman Chodagangadeva the founder of the Ganga dynasty occupied Utkala and shifted his capital from Kalinganagara to Kataka. Anantavarman like his predecessor, was a great devotee of Siva and assumed the title Parama Mahesvara. But in the Korni copper plate grant<sup>1</sup> dated 1112 A.D. he changed his attitude and appeared to demonstrate religious universality by applying to himself titles such as *Parama-Mahesvara*, *Parama-Vaishnava* and *Parama-Brahmanya*. In the Narasimha and Markanda temple inscriptions of Chodaganga the name of Purushottama<sup>2</sup> is found to have been mentioned.

Many scholars have spoken of a conversion of Chodagangadeva from Saivism

to Vaishnavism and thinks that due to the influence of Ramanuja this conversion took place. It was during his reign Ramanuja<sup>3</sup> visited his kingdom and stayed at Puri. The effect of his visit was the change of the religious faith of Chodaganga who became a Parama Vaishnava.

Secondly the influence of his queens should not be ignored. His chief queen Jayamgonda Chodadevi was the daughter of Virochoda and grand daughter of the great Kullotunga Choda. Virochoda erected a Vishnu temple at Sarvavaram, and nine inscriptions<sup>4</sup> of this temple record grants by Anantavarman Chodagangadeva's younger brother Paramadideva and his wives and refers to the god as Purushottama.

Lastly the construction of a temple for god Purushottama at Puri by Chodaganga proof his inclination towards Vaishnavism. Line 17 of the Nagari plates<sup>5</sup> of Anangabhima III states that Chodaganga built a temple for the great god Purushottama at Puri on the sea-shore of the Bay of Bengal. The plate further describes that Lord Purushottama had been in worship at Puri for many years before the conquest of that region by Chodaganga, but that Saivite Somavamsi kings, who were supplanted from Utkala by the Gangas, had neglected the





erection of a temple for the Vaishnavite deity. Purushottama-Jagannath of Puri was originally worshipped by the aboriginal Savara people in an inaccessible forest on the Nilachala and that the priest of king Indradyumna of Avanti, who popularized the god, received information regarding the deity and his worship from a Savara named Viswvasu. So the identification of this deity with the Brahmanical god Vishnu apparently earlier than the beginning of the 12th century when Chodaganga conquered Utkala country, and the construction of the great temple of Purushottama Jagannath at Puri by Chodagangadeva has reflected his great devotion to and popularization of the Vaishnava cult.

In the Chattesvara temple inscription<sup>6</sup> of Vishnu, the victorious general of Anangabhima III, king Chodaganga has been praised as a king in whom the glory of the "Narasimha *avatara* of Vishnu manifest itself. As we know from other records that Chodaganga ancestors were all staunch devotee of the god Siva and Chodaganga's himself was one such in the earlier part of his life but later on a devotee of Vishnu alone for the above-said reason.

The next important ruler of Ganga dynasty who patronized Vaishnava cult was Anangabhima III. In many of his records he has described himself as a deputy of the Lord Purushottama. In the Nagari plate<sup>7</sup>, he assumed the title Anankabhima-*rautta*-deva, and by assuming this title he considered himself a mere deputy of the god Purushottama Jagannath of Puri whom he regarded as the real Lord of the kingdom. He is the first imperial Ganga monarch who is so far known to have assumed the subordinate title *Rautta* and claimed theoretically atleast to have been a feudatory of the god Purushottama Jagannath. In the

Draksharama temple inscription<sup>8</sup> he stated himself as *Parama Vaishnava* and *Parama Mahesvara* as well as *Purushottama Putra*, *Rudra Putra* and *Durga Putra*. In this context we think that the formation of a Jagannath Triad by Anangabhima during his early years proves his ritual relationship with the three dominant deities of Orissa, Purushottama at Puri, Lingaraj Siva at Bhubaneswar and Durga or Viraja at Jajpur

It was only under the king Anangabhima III that the god Purushottama at Puri became the official state deity of the Ganga empire. In the Bhubaneswar Inscription<sup>9</sup> which is dated 1230 A.D., he has been declared as a son and deputy of Lord Purushottama and similarly pronounced his dominions as *Purushottama Samrajya* and he was the servant of the god Purushottama.

In the same year his wife Somaladevi made a valuable donation to the God Vishnu-Allalanatha at Kanchipuram. The inscription<sup>10</sup> record the gift of the village named Udaiyakamam in Antarudra Vishaya by Somaladevi, for offering and worship to the god Allalanatha while she was at Abhinava Varanasi Kataka. The inscription is dated in the 19th regnal year of Anangabhima. He is described as the son of Lord Purushottama and a *Parama Vaishnava* who regularly observed *Ekadasi-vrata* and constantly meditated at the feet of his Lord and the grant was made by the command (*adesa*) of Lord Purushottama.

During the same year Anangabhima had consecrated a temple for Purushottama in his newly founded capital Abhinava Varanasi-Kataka<sup>11</sup> and donated land to several Brahmanas. It is therefore quite logical that in one of his last inscriptions dated 1238 A.D. he declared his regnal year or *Anka* as the regnal



year of Lord Purushottama. The sources leave no doubt that Anangabhima acknowledged Jagannatha as the overlord of Orissa and remained as his deputy. According to the temple chronicle<sup>12</sup>, king Anangabhima had even renounced his royal consecration (*abhiseka*) because he considered himself only as the deputy of Purushottama Jagannatha."

The next ruler Narasimha I, the son and successor of Anangabhima III, followed the deputy ideology of his father, and like him he also declared himself as a son and deputy of Purushottama, the Lord of the Universe. In one of his inscriptions<sup>13</sup> at Kapilas he stated that the king succeeded in subduing by the power of his arms enemies in numerous battles at the command of the god Purushottama. The god is none other than Lord Purushottama Jagannath, who is worshipped in the temple of Puri, to whom Anangabhima dedicated his empire. Further it describes him as *Parama Mahesvara*, *Durga Putra* and *Purushottama Putra*, who built a temple for Lord Siva at Kapilas hill. But it is not surprising in view of the fact that his father Anangabhima himself is also called both *Parama Vaishnava* and *Parama Mahesvara* as well as *Purushottama Putra*, *Rudra Putra* and *Durga Putra* in one of his inscriptions<sup>14</sup> in the Siva temple at Draksharama.

The Kapilas Inscription compares Narasimha I with the great Boar (Vishnu in his Varaha incarnation) that raised the *Vedas* and world from the ocean. He was the first king of Orissa who used the title *Gajapati* or the Lord of the Elephants. This title became the most popular royal title in Orissa under the later Gangas and especially under the Suryavamsis.

The next important ruler of imperial Ganga dynasty who considered himself as the

mere deputy of Lord Purushottama, was Bhanudeva II. In his Puri Inscription<sup>15</sup> he called himself as Bhanudeva *Rautta* and declared his own regnal year as the prosperous and victorious reign of Sri Purushottamadeva. He considered himself as a deputy of the god in the matter of ruling the Ganga dominion. The epithet' *Visvambhara-bhara-vahana-mahaniya*' which is applied to god Purushottama in our record point to his identification with Vishnu who is believed to carry the burden of the earth in the form of the tortoise. He describes Lord Purushottama as the Lord of the Ganga dominion. Further for the first time in one of his inscriptions at Srikurmam<sup>16</sup> the god of Puri is called Jagannatha.

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## Sakta Pithas of Purusottama Kshetra

Prabhas Kumar Singh

Saktism played a very prominent role in the development of Indian religions. The all pervasive *sakti* became so powerful a cultural force that all the religious thoughts in the mainstream and folk religious faiths had to acknowledge its profound influence. With the widespread efflorescence of *sakti* cult, there emerged numerous manifestations, *sakta pithas* and vast masses of literature in support of the *sakta* principle. The sacred centres of India were spotted with *sakta* centres (*sakta pithas*). The royal houses in acknowledging the significance of the emerging religion patronized it and people accepted it with heart and soul, as there was no caste or sex restriction in this faith. As a result of emergence of numerous manifestations of *sakti*, the sacred places in India were associated with them and these places came to be known as *sakta tirthas* or *pithas*. The literal meaning of *pitha* is the seat (*asana*). The sacred places which contain the seat of the *devi* are *sakta pithas*. The *sakta pithas*, the favourite abodes of *devi* are virtually the places of pilgrimages. According to noted scholar J.N. Banerjea and others, a *pitha* sprang of wherever a limb or severed part of Sati's body fell as per the *Daksha Yajna* story. Of course there are certain *sakta* centres, which though not linked with the limbs of Sati are also called *sakta pithas*.

The ancient sacred texts enumerate Uddiyana, Jalandhara, Purnagiri and Kamakshya as the earliest *sakta pithas* of India. Scholars like Sylven Levi, P.C. Bagchi, D.C. Sircar and few others have identified Uddiyana of the *Hevaraja Tantra* and Odra of *Kalika Purana* with Swat Valley of northwestern India where Katyayani is the presiding goddess and Jagannath is the tutelary god. But in fact there is no archaeological evidence in the Swat valley to justify the view points of scholars. Jagannath is the original god of Orissa and Vimala, Viraja and Katyayani are his consorts. Vimala is the *pitha devi* of Puri, Viraja, the *pitha devi* of Jajpur and Katyayani of Chausasthi Yogini temple of Hirapur (Near Bhubaneswar). The Sanskrit *Mahabharata* refers to Odra, Utkala and Kalinga in several contexts. The *sakta* importance of Odra or Uddiyana is substantiated by the *Kubjika*, *Pranatoshini* and *Yajnarnava tantras* with the illustration of Jagannatha as Bhairava and Viraja as Bhairavi. The *Yajnarnava tantra* relates Uddiyana and Ekamra as a *Sakta kshetra*. Uddiyana can be identified with Purushottama Kshetra (Puri) and Ekamra with Bhubaneswar.

Puri is a holy city in the whole world and referred with many synonyms in *Puranas* and old Sanskrit texts as *Srikshetra*, *Samkha*



*Kshetra, Purusottama Kshetra, Nilachala, Niladri, Jagannatha Kshetra* etc. Out of these Puri is more popularly known as *Purusottama* (best synonym of Lord Jagannath). Although *Purusottama kshetra* has been recognized as a great centre of Vaisnavism, it is also recognized as a *sakti pitha (pada pitha)* where the foot of sati fell down according to *Daksha Yajna* story. It was also a centre of Saktism of India as attested by literature, tradition and archaeological remains. *Matsya Purana* refers to *Purushottama Kshetra* as a *sakta pitha* with its presiding goddess Vimala. In tantric lore, lord Jagannath is considered to be a Bhairava and Vimala is worshipped as Mahadevi. In the *Devi Bhagavata*, Vimala is considered to be a *kshetra sakti*. *Vamana Puarana* refers to *Purusottama* along with Viraja as a sacred centre. According to *Tantra Chudamani*, the naval portion of Bhagavati fell in Utkal and therefore this kshetra came to be known as Viraja or Navikshetra where the name of Devi is Vimala and Jagannath is Bhairava. Tantric literature *Rudra Yamala* glorifies Jagannath as adorning the Mahapitha. Another tantric literature *Kalika Purana* refers to *Odra pitha* as a famous *sakti pitha* which was the celebrated centre of goddess Katyayani and god Jagannath. Vimala has been mentioned as presiding goddess of *Purusottama kshetra* in the list of 108 pithas found in the *Pranatoshini Tantra*. In the Puranic list of 108 names of the mother goddess in Namastotra Sata, we come across the expression *Vimala Purusottama*. In the list of *Mahapithas* and *Upapithas* given by the author of *Sivacharita* also we come across *Nilaparvata* or *Nilachala* where Vimala is the presiding *devi* and Jagannath is Bhairava. The *saktas* consider Vimala the real presiding deity of *Srikshetra* and that Lord Jagannath is merely her Bhairava (the terrific manifestation

of Siva traditionally associated with each goddess presiding over a *sakta pitha* of her own. The *yantra* of *Purusottama* consists of an eight-pettalled lotus with the *Vija Mantra* "Klim" in the centre. The priest first worships Purusottama with Lakshmi and proceeds thereafter to worship the *eight saktis* of Vishnu (Vimala, Utkarshini, Yajna, Kriya, Yoga, Prahvi, Satya and Eshana). Vimala is regarded as one of the *Asta Chandis* of *Purusottama Kshetra*. The other seven are Ramachandi, Harachandi, Vaseli, Varahi, Alamchandi, Dakshina Chandi, Jhadeswari.

In *Purusottama Kshetra* Jagannath and Vimala are regarded as Madhava and Durga respectively. During Dusshera festival the images of Durga and Madhava are brought to Vimala temple for propitiation. A sculptural panel of Sun temple at Konark depicting Jagannath, Siva Lingam and Durga altogether symbolizes syncreticism of Vaisnavism, Saivism and Saktism. The worshop of Madhava and Durga in the Madhavananda temple in the Prachi valley further substantiates the prevalence of Durgamadhava worship tradition in Orissa.

The origin of Vimala at *Purusottama Kshetra* is shrouded in obscurity. She has been the *pitha devi* much before the emergence of Lord Jagannath. It is pertinent to mention here that the *Bhogas* of Lord Jagannath become *Mahaprasad* after those are offered to Vimala. The present temple of Vimala, a four-chambered structured shrine dating back to the imperial Gangas, like most of the edifices lying within the Jagannath temple compound, was most probably built on the foundation of an earlier *sakta* shrine dedicated to the same goddess. According to noted scholar H.C. Das, the iconographic features and artistic imagery





of the goddess bear the art tradition of Bhaumakara period when most of the *sakta* tantric *pithas* emerged in Orissa. The literary traditions assign her origin to the Puranic Period. However, Vimala is the earliest *sakta* deity of *Purusottama kshetra*.

There are other *sakta* temples inside the Jagannath temple complex. Those are dedicated to goddess Bhubaneswari and Lakshmi. The fore-armed Bhubaneswari is seated in *vajraparyanka* on a lotus cushion. Her front right hand shows *varada* while the left hand displays *abhaya*. The uplifted back hands hold *ankusha* (goad) and *nagapasa*. She has three eyes and has a crescent moon in her crown. The four-armed Lakshmi assumes a similar *vajraparyanka* pose and likewise displays *varada* and *abhaya* with her front set of hands. Both uplifted back hands hold a lotus. Within the *bhogamandapa* of Jagannath temple itself is an image of Mahisamardini. Mahisamardini or Kanaka Durga is also the palace deity, the personal deity of the king of Puri and her image plays a major role in the Durga Puja festival.

The *sakta* environment of *Purusottama kshetra* is also apparent in the believe that the shrine is protected by *asta saktis* namely, Sarva Mangala, Bhubaneswari, Indrani, Patta Mangala, Chamunda, Durga, Vimala and Lakshmi. *Sakta* influence is also visible in the mode of worship of Lord Jagannath that is partly Vedic and partly *Sakta/Tantra* with the incorporation of various *Nyasas* like *sristi*, *sthiti*, *samhara nyasa*, *matrika nyasa*, *kesa vinyasa*, etc. and *yantras* such as *Sri* and *Bhubaneswari*, *kriyas (mudras)* and *vijamantras*. Equally interesting is the yogic tantric system of impelling the *satkaras (satcakrabheda)* of the body which is also

given an important part in the mode of worship. The tantric *panchamakaras* are identified in a manner that divests the individual items of their gross sensuality. *Matsya* is replaced by green vegetables mixed with *hingu*, *mansa* is replaced by *adapacedi* (ginger), green coconut water served in bell metal pots substitute for *madya*, *Mudra* is replaced by *kanti*, a podding prepared with sugar and water and *maithuna* is replaced by dancing performed by *devadasis* and the offering of *aparajita* flower (conceived as the *yoni*).

The image of Subhadra with the Jagannath trinity probably has *sakta* origin. She is no other than Ekanamsa, often considered to be the personification of Durga as well as the sister of Krishna and Baladeva. Once absorbed into this predominantly Vaisnavite trinity her association with Durga is still apparent in the Car Festival, however her chariot is decorated with nine representatives of goddesses who are either aspects of Durga or her incarnation *Navadurgas*. In *Brahma Purana*, Ekanamsa is identified with Katyayani. Subhadra has been regarded as *Parasakti*, *Yogamaya*, *Kampilya Vasini*, *Ekanamsa*, *Bhubaneswari*, *Mahalaxmi* and also in many other forms of supreme power of the world. She is worshipped in *Bhubaneswari Mantra (hrim)*, which implies that she is the *lipta (gnana) sakti* of Lord Jagannath. Learned scholar Sasanka Sekhar Panda has opined that Goddess Samalei of Sambalpur is worshipped in the same *Bhubaneswari mantra* as in the case of Subhadra. The uniconic form of goddess Samalei like the present anthropoid form of Subhadra seems to be identical. Samalei initially worshipped and later absorbed into Hindu fold by the Somavamsis who were ruling over Orissa from the upper Mahanadi valley from their capital city Suvarnapura in



the 9th/10th centuries A.D. Noted scholar B.C. Pradhan and Herman Kulke hold the view that the iconography of Subhadra resembles that of the iconography of goddess Khambeswari. So Subhadra existed in the Jagannath triad at least during the Somavamsi period. She was a *sakta* deity and was adorned as Katyayani, Durga and Bhadra Kali. Thus, it seems that the central placement of Subhadra in the Jagannath triad is an indication of the pivotal position of the *sakti* in the great *sakta pitha* Purusottama.

In course of the growth of Saktism in *Purusottama kshetra* a number of *sakta* shrines were constructed, highlighting the *sakta* character of the Jagannath *kshetra*. Among the *sakta* shrines mention may be made of Ramachandi, Baliharchandi, Vaseli, Varahi, Alamchandi, Dakshina Kali, Syama Kali, Jhadeswari, Saptamatrikas, Bata Mangala, etc. some of which deserve a little discussion to justify Puri as a *sakta pitha*.

### **Ramchandi**

The shrine of Ramchandi is located on the mouth of the dead river Banki Muhana in Puri town. She is traditionally associated with the legend of the *daru* of Jagannath. It is believed that she protected the sacred *daru* when floating in the mouth of Banki Muhana through the sea. She is further believed to be the protector goddess of the fishermen and the naval crews. It is a six-handed Mahisamardini image of chlorite stone. She holds sword, arrow and trident in her right hands, shield, bow, in her two left hands while the third one twisting the head of the demon. This goddess can be compared to the images of Dakshina Chandi at Bhubaneswar and Sikhara Chandi of Patia near Bhubaneswar which is assignable to Bhaumakara period.

### **Bali Harchandi**

Bali Harchandi has been depicted in *Tantra sashtra* as one of the protector *Chandis* of Shrikshetra and one of the powerful *sakta* tantric goddess of Chilika (along with Kalijai, Bhagavati, Tara, Durga, Narayani, Kalika, Hingula and Charchika) is enshrined in the west of *Srikshetra* near the mouth of the lake. She is mentioned frequently in the invocatory verses composed by poets in Oriya literature. She is also very prominent in legend and tradition. During the regime of Bhoi dynasty, a *tantrika* named Pratak Kapalika attained enlightenment (*siddhi*) in this *pitha*. Sri Ramachandra Deva, the founder of the Bhoi dynasty was attracted to this *tantrika* for his miraculous power. He constructed the present temple in honour of the deity and granted land for her daily rituals. This goddess is also regarded as goddess of water and navigation, who protects the boatsman and fisherman, when confronted with danger in the sea. The goddess is eight-armed Mahisamardini on the demon in therimorphic form which is assigned to the illustrious Bhaumakara period.

### **Varahi**

A beautiful image of Varahi at Bali Sahi, Puri town is four-handed holding a fish and a skull cup in the upper two arms, while the lower right one is in *abhaya* and the lower left holds a child on her lap. She is worshipped by the Brahmin priest with non-vegetarian food, particularly fish. The image with bold workmanship emitting celestial smile and grace looks elegant. It is dated to the Bhaumakara period.

### **Saptamatrikas**

A set of Saptamatrika images near the Markandeswara tank are assigned to the epoch



of Somavamsis. The *Madala Panji* relates the construction of the Saptamatrika temple by one Bhimakasari of Kesari dynasty. This is the definite evidence to indicate that Puri was well-known as a *sakta pitha* by the 9th and 10th centuries A.D.

### Syama Kali

Syama Kali was the presiding deity of the old palace of Puri. She was probably established at Bali Sahi, Puri town by the Bhoi dynasty after it shifted its headquarters from Khurdha to Puri. The deity is four-handed, holding *khadga* and severed human head in upper right and lower left hand respectively. The upper right and left are in *varada* and *varada* mounting on a dead body respectively. She is worshipped in *Dakshina Kali mantra* and confirms to the *dhyana* of first *mahavidya* Kali.

### Bata Mangala

The goddess Mangala is so popular in Orissa that she is worshipped both in folk and anthropomorphic forms. Bata Mangala of Puri is enshrined on the gateway to Srikshetra on Jagannath road. She is believed to guide the pilgrims to Sri Kshetra. She is worshipped in the *mantra* of Durga and is the same as Mahamangala, Sarva Mangala and Mangala. She is beautiful, two-handed and three-eyed goddess seated in *padmasana* with smiling face holding consciously *pasa* and *ankusa*.

Thus *Purusottama kshetra* was earliest *sakta pitha* of India. Taking into account the numerous legendary accounts of different times, the antiquity of this *kshetra* can be traced from the time of *Mahabharata*. This was a great centre of pilgrimage from the ancient

times. The successive royal dynasties have left behind their cultural and religious influence on this sacred centre.

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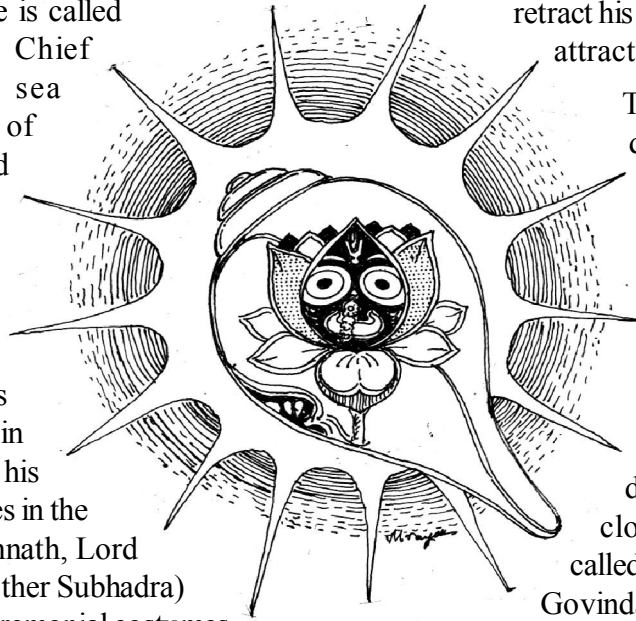


## Lord Jagannath in Costumes

*Bhagaban Mohapatra*

Orissa is glorious and boastful because of presence of Lord Jagannath at Puri. He is the Bada Thakura, the Chief among Gods, His temple is known as Bada Deula, the Chief temple among temples and the path in front of His temple is called Bada Danda, the Chief path way. The sea washing the shore of His Khetra is called Mahodadhi means the great ocean. The food offered to Lord is known as Mahaprasad. Hence His greatness cannot be narrated in words. To add to his greatness, the deities in the temple (Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Mother Subhadra) are adorned with ceremonial costumes on various occasions throughout the year. These ceremonial costumes are 36 in numbers out of which 20 are considered most important. There are two Veshas, which take place outside the temple while rest 18 nos take place inside the temple on Ratna Bedi, where deities take their seats. All these Veshas of deities are linked

with different events of His incarnations, major Veshas relating to His incarnation as Lord Krishna. These Veshas draw the attention of countless devotees and visitors every year and the deities look so beautiful that one cannot retract his attention from the magnetic attraction of the eyes of Lord.



The deities in the temple are decorated in three ways, that is by cloths, by gold ornaments and by flowers with Tulasi. Daily from Sunday to Saturday the deities are decorated with different colours of Silk cloth, which represent the colour specified for that day of the week. The Silk cloth used for the purpose called as Khandua on which Gita Govinda verses are woven written by an eminent devotee and Sanskrit poet Jayadev.

**Sunday** : red colour of the sun during the dawn, who is the main planet of the day.  
**Monday** : white colour the colour of the moon who influences the day. **Tuesday** : cloth mixed with five colours (Pancha rang Jodi) signifies





Mars's influence on this day. **Wednesday** : green colour means the Mercury's influence on this day. **Thursday** : Yellow or Golden colour Jupiter's influence is felt. **Friday** : White colour venus influence is felt on this day. **Saturday** : black colour signifies Saturn's influence on this day.

On specified days, all these veshas are performed at night before the deities go to bed (*Pahuda*). It is known as Bada Singhar Vesha means the dress of great divine love. Really it is an auspicious moment of the day. After paste of sandal wood's on His body and forehead (Chandan Lagi) the Silk Patas called (Khandua) on which His favorite Gita Govinda stotra is woven, are covered to decorate the deities. Gita Govinda and Dasavatar songs are sung by the devotees assembled at the moment. Along-with cloth dress, deities are decorated with fragrant-flowers ornaments locally known as Adhara, Jhumpa, Gava, Kundala, Alaka, Guna, Karapallav, Hrudapallav, Chandrika with Alaka Pati and garlands. His daily Vesha is really attractive. One cannot realise it unless he sees this vesha. Lord appears to be in a cool and pleasant mood at this moment. On the following early morning after lamp offering (Mangala Alati), the Bada Singhar Vesha done on the previous night are opened and a special type of cloth (Tadap) with white colour and orange colour border are used to dress the deities to take bath in the morning. After bath the deities are dressed with silk patta, gold ornaments and flowers everyday.

Daily decoration of deities in the temple is performed by His Sevakas Khuntia Niyoga, Singhari Niyoga and Mekap Niyoga. Khuntia Niyoga is in charge of collecting flowers offered by the devotees and supplied by the temple itself. They hand over the flowers to

Singharis. Singhari Niyoga known as Pushpalikas actually dress and decorate the deities with cloth, flowers and ornaments used for vesha on Ratnavedi. Mekap Niyoga is in charge of cloth and ornaments used for Veshas. They supply these to Singharis at the time of Veshas.

Besides daily decoration of deities, there are many important decorations of Lord which are performed during every year as detailed according to the month in which that occur.

### January

On the full moon day of Pausa (Pusa Purnima) Deva Abhisek or Rajavesa is observed with golden ornaments. In this Vesha, Lord appears, like a royal king.

### February

(a) Padma Vesha is done on any Wednesday or Saturday between the new moon day of Magha and Basanta Panchami. Padma means lotus flower, the availability of which is remote in the month of Magha because of winter season. There is a legend behind this Vesha. Long ago, a great saint devotee of Lord named Manohar Das desired to offer lotus flower in this winter. Because of his Bhakti Bhava (deep devotion towards Lord) it could be possible. From that day this Padma Veshas made of Sola, Jari, and Jhalak powder like white lotus flowers are used for decoration of deities on Their heads and arms. A special type of pudding called Padma khiri is offered to deities on this day. Only with this Vesha on Ratnavedi, deities go to sleep and on the following day morning after Mangal Alati devotees get chance to see this Vesha.

(b) Gaja Uddharan Vesha is done on the full moon day of Magha. This Vesha depicts Lord's kindness not for human beings only but for



animals also. Once an elephant while taking bath in a river was attacked by a crocodile. The elephant finding no other alternative prayed Lord Vishnu to save him. Lord saved him by sending His Sudarsan Chakra. This prayer of elephant is known as Gaja Uddharan. This stotra has really a miraculous effect. One who enchants before Lord with devotion of mind, he gets rid of his obstacles like elephant from crocodile. This Vesha is made of Sola and deities are decorated in a life like manner.

### March

From 10th day to the 14th day of bright fortnight day of Phalguna, the deities are decorated with a Vesh known as Chachari Vesha. This Vesha symbolizes love, devotion, adornment of beauty and peace. On the 15th day (Dola Purnima ) the deities are decorated with finest silk patas, many gold ornaments, and fragrant flowers, this Vesha is known as Raj Vesha, sole king of universe and Trilok (Martya, Swarga, and Patala)

### April

The 9th day of bright fortnight of Chaitra is observed as Ram Navami means birth day of Lord Sri Rama, in-carnation of Lord Jagannath in Tretaya Yuga. As lotus flowers are available in plenty, the deities are decorated with lotus flowers of white, pink, and red colours in addition to sweet smelling flowers. This Vasha is known as Rama Raja Vesha.

### May

From 3rd day of bright fortnight of Baisakh till 42 days (during this hard summer) the deities are decorated on Ratna Vedi with sandal wood paste mixed with musk and campher and sweet smelling flowers available in the season. Alaka and Chandrika made of flowers are used to make this Vesha beautiful.

To get soothing to his body with cool air, the deities are fanned with a special type of fan known as Alata.

### June

On the full moon day of Jaista Purnima (Snan Purnima) the deities are decorated with a beautiful Vesha known as Gajanana Vesha or Hati Vesha. There is a legend behind this Vesha. Sri Ganapati Bhatta a great devotee of Lord Ganesha from south India came to Puri to see Lord on this day of Snan Purnima. On this auspicious day he, however could not see Lord Ganesha on this Snan Mandap. He was disappointed. But Lord Jagannath is great, He is Antrayami, He could know the heart of His devotee. In order to appease the desire of Ganapati Bhatta, Lord manifested Himself in the form of Lord Ganesha. Since that day, this Vesha is being observed on the day of Snan Purnima.

### July

On the 11th day of bright fortnight of Asadha, the deities are decorated with gold ornaments on the Chariot during Car- Festival. This Vesha is known as Suna Vesha. This is one of the important and famous Veshas observed during the year and many devotees from all corners of the country used to come on this day to see Lord on the Chariot with gold ornament Vesha.

### August

Jhulana Yatra, the festival of swings falls in this month (Sravana). All Veshas such as Banabhoji Vesha, Kaliya Dalana Vesha, Pralambasura Vesha and Krishna Balaram Vesha which connect to the lila of in-carnation of Lord Krishna are held in this month inside the temple on Ratna Vedi. The main attraction of this Vesha is that the deities are decorated



with silk Pata, gold ornaments, flowers of rainy season (Kadam and lotus etc.).

### September

On the 12th day of bright fortnight of Bhadraba, Bali Bamana Vesha is celebrated on the Ratna Vedi. Lord Jagannath is decorated in such a manner that he looks smaller and dwarf like, which commemorates His 5th incarnation on this earth in which he defied the egoism of king Bali.

### October

On 10th day of bright fortnight of Aswin i.e. Vijaya Dasami (Dasehara), Lord is decorated with Raja Vesha (in royal dress) with bow and arrow as in Ram Avatar. On this day he defeated the demon Ravan in Tretaya yuga.

From 11th day of Aswin, Rai Damodar Vesha commences till the 10th bright day of Kartika (November). Rai Damodar Vesha means to celebrate the love of Radha and Srikrishna, during Krishna Avatar.

From 11th day of Kartika towards last five days is observed as Panchaka and during this period the deities are decorated daily with different Veshas known as Laxmi Narayan Vesha. On 11th day, the deities are decorated with royal garb, golden ornaments, hands, and legs with Ayudha. This is known as Thia Kia. On 12th day, the deities are decorated with Banka Chuda Vesha. On the 13th day the deities are decorated with Adokia or known as Tribikram Vesha. On the 14th day the deities are decorated with Dalkia. This Vesha is known as Laxmi Nrushingha Vesha. On the 15th day

(full moon day) the Raja Rajeswar Vesha is celebrated. These Veshas are mostly with gold ornaments. The deities are decorated occasionally with one Vesha known as Nagaryuna Vesha, when 6 days of Panchaka falls in the month of Kartik. This Vesha was observed in the year 1993.

### November

On the advent of winter season from 6th day of bright fortnight of Margasira to 5th bright fortnight of Magha, the deities are decorated with Ghoda Lagi Vesha means bodies of deities are covered with colour woolen cloth specific for these days. From the decoration it can be understood that as if the deities are actually feeling cold.

### December

In order to pay homage to His parents (Nanda, Vasudeba and Dasaratha), Lord puts on plain white cloth with a small yellow border to perform Shradha Ceremony on 13th, 14th and 15th of dark fortnight of Margasira.

Through His various types of Vesha, Lord delights the mind and heart of the devotee. The greatness of His pastime is boundless whether God is decorated with Vesha or not; but His black face and eyes are the embodiment of all beauty and pleasure which are unsatiable point for a devotee despite seeing Him for hours together.

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## A friend In Need.....

*Lokanath Mishra*

Jajpur is a holy place. It is an important place in the history of Orissa as well. The river Baitarani flows by its side. On auspicious days, a dip in this river is as holy as that in the river Ganga. Here the presiding deity is Devi Biraja, the saviour goddess of the area. She is revered as the most benevolent goddess who mitigates all the misery and hardship. The place is considered a sacred Pith of Devi Durga because when Lord Shiva carried the corpse of Sati, Her navel fell here. King Yajati of Keshari dynasty held a great yagnya here and invited Bramhins from distant a place like kanauj. He also constructed Dasaswamedh Ghat on the bank of river Baitarni to commemorate this great yagnya. Jajpur continues to be a spiritual and cultural centre of Orissa to this day.

Long long ago here lived a poor but devout man called Bandhu Mohanty. He had no land and property at all. His family consisted of his wife, two young daughters and a son. Being poorest of the poor he lived almost on alms. But he was a devout Bhakta of Lord Jagannath and

beseeching His divine grace. He had no worries what so ever as he considered Lord Jagannath a friend ever vigilant of his condition and ever ready to mitigate his misery.

But nothing goes on well forever. One year the rains failed miserably. Months of Asadha and Sravan passed by without a single drop of rain. No crop grew on vast tracts of land. People's misery had no end. They did not have a morsel of food for days together. A great famine ensued and people started dying. Misery and despair were quite large every where. Needless to say Bandhu Mohanty's condition started worsening day by day. His family went without food for days.

Bandhu's wife was a pious lady and had great faith in her husband. But the plight of her children unnerved her and she implored her husband

saying, "you have always been telling of your friend at Puri who is not only rich but very kind and generous. Should he not help us in our hard days? How can I tolerate the condition of my children who have not even a morsel of







food for so many days? My good husband, let us not make any delay, and proceed to Puri".

But Bandhu Mohanty was not willing to embarrass his friend the Lord for his own sake but finding no other way he agreed with his wife. So one day the family started on their sojourn to Puri. He carried his son on his shoulder and held a daughter's hand. His wife carried the other daughter in her arms. It took them full four days to reach the Lord's place, Srikhetra.

It was evening when they approached the temple of Lord Jagannath. The temple was illuminated with bright light and stood majestic with all its splendour and glory. But there was great rush at the entrance of the temple. Pratiharis were controlling the crowd. Their sacred canes were touching the head of every Bhakta as a token of divine blessing. As Bandhu Mohanty and his family members were almost in tatters they did not dare to enter the temple, lest the Pratiharis drove them away. So he bowed to Patitapaban with all reverence and walked away to look for a shelter for the night. He however reached Pejanala and decided to spend the night there. (A huge quantity of rice is cooked daily for Lord's Bhog. The drained out rice gruel gets accumulated at Pejanala). His wife asked him as to why they had come to this place instead of going to his friend's house. Bandhu Mohanty replied that his friend had a lot of guests that night so it would be convenient to meet Him the next morning. After a long journey his children were obviously very hungry. Bandhu Mohanty, brought some rice gruel and asked his wife to feed the children. He and his wife also took some rice gruel and went to sleep.

It was dead of the night. Ghastly silence was pervading all over the place. Suddenly

someone appeared where Bandhu Mohanty's family was resting and called aloud Bandhu's name. Bandhu Mohanty woke up but could not mark if it was he who was being called. At last there was a call, "oh, the friend from Jajpur, don't you here the call ? Please come". Being sure it was him who was being called, he went to meet the man. He saw a Brahmin told him, "Your friend has sent this Mahaprasad by me. All of you partake of it to your heart's content. Tomorrow morning some arrangement will be made for you." Saying so he handed over the big Thali to Bandhu Mohanty. Bandhu's surprise and happiness had no end when he saw the Thali overflowing with Mahaprasad. There were fine rice, various types of curries, lots of condiments, Khechudi, Payas, Nadi, Amalu and Sarapuli etc. He woke up his family members and all of them partook of the Mahaprasad to their hearts content. Then Bandhu Mohanty washed the Thali clean and went to return it to the Bramhin. But, no body was there. The Bramhin had vanished in the meanwhile. Thinking to return the Thali next morning he wrapped it in a rag and kept it near his head. He bowed in silence to his Lord for His graciousness and went to sleep.

Next morning Lord's temple was opened to the chanting of hymns and devotional songs. Sevayats started arriving to attend to the daily chores of the Lord. The Bhandar Mekapa opened the Ratna Bhandar to bring out various pots and pans needed for the daily Nitis of the Lord. But to his great suprise he did not find the gold Thali in which Bhog is offered to the Lord. He was terribly upset as he perfectly rembered to have kept the Thali inside the Ratna Bhandar last night and looked the door firmly. He immediately raised a hew and cry and declared that Lord's gold Thali had been stolen away by some miscreant. Everyone of



the temple was aghast with the news and there was a great uproar inside the temple. All the Sevayats were examined but no clue could be found about the missing Thali. So the Dewan immediately sent out sepoy to every nook and corner of Puri town in search of the Thali.

One sepoy while passing by the side of Pejanala saw Bandhu Mohanty and his family lying there in a corner. Out of curiosity he approached them and to his great surprise saw the gold Thali kept there wrapped in a piece of rag. Bandhu Mohanty tried to narrate the last night's incident before him. He tried to convince the sepoy of his innocence but the sepoy was thoroughly unmoved. He was convinced that no one other than this man was the thief who had somehow managed to steal away the Thali from the Ratna Bhandar. The sepoy arrested Bandhu Mohanty and dragged him to the temple. Every one hurled abuses on him and some also dealt blows to this person. He was branded a thief and lodged in a cell of the King's Jail.

Bandhu's plights had no end. He was utterly distressed but he did not lose hope in the graciousness of Lord Jagannath. He prayed Him with all his heart beseeching Him to give him strength to withstand the ordeal. He knew that he was innocent so he completely surrendered himself to the lotus feet of Lord Jagannath and waited.

On the Ratna Singhasan Lord Jagannath felt disturbed. How could a little act of his kindness not been understood by His Sevayats ? A true devotee was being harassed for no fault. It was He who took Mahaprasad to Bandhu Mohanty in the gold Thali. Had all the people concerned gone out of there wits ?

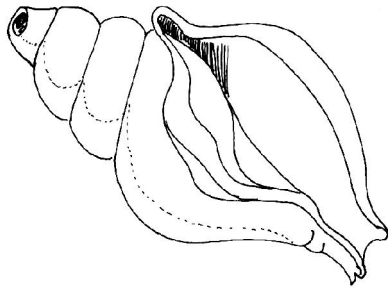
King Prataprudra was then staying in his royal palace at Khurda. So in the dead of the night Lord Jagannath boarded the great Garuda and flew over to Khurda. The King was fast asleep, so He appeared before him in a dream and narrated the whole incident. He ordained that Bandhu Mohanty should be released forthwith and made a Sevayat in the temple. Arrangement should also be made at Srikhetra for his stay with dignity and honour. The king should also apologise for the injustice.

No sooner than the king had heard all this in his dream he hastened to Srikhetra to do whatever the Lord had desired. He immediately released Bandhu Mohanty from the jail, prostrate before him and apologised for all the injustice done to him. Bandhu Mohanty and his family members were bathed in scented water, given finest garments to wear and were led to Ratna Singhasan for the Darsan of the Lord. The King appointed him a Kharasodha (Keeper of accounts in the temple) and arranged a house at the south gate of the temple for his stay. This appointment was hereditary and was to continue for generations to come.

Bhakta and Bhagban are inseparable. The unflinching devotion of Bandhu Mohanty for Lord Jagannath had its effects on Lord Himself. The Lord never forsakes His true devotee. He is really a Friend in need.

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## Administration of the Puri Temple Through Ages

*Prof. Jagannath Mohanty*

Lord Jagannath is held in high esteem and great affection not only by the Hindus, but many saints and philosophers from other religions like Salbeg and Kabir from Muslims, Nanak and Ranjeet Singh from among Sikhs. His adoration is limited not only to Orissa but also to India, even the world through ISKON cult. Although it was well managed by the hundreds of people engaged under Chhatis Nijogi under the direct administration and supervision of Gajapati Kings belonging to various Hindu dynasties, Sri Jagannath's Temple was efficiently managed and all kinds of rituals and festivals were organised as per schedule. After construction of the temple now in existence since the 12th Century A.D., the famous Ganga monarch Chodaganga Dev confirmed the old endowments of Shree Mandir and laid the strong foundation of administration which continued smoothly till the time of Prataprudra Dev during whose reign administration of the temple declined gradually. However, on the death of Mukunda Dev, Orissa missed the last independent Hindu King in 1568 A.D. Then the Afghan power ruled Bengal including Orissa for a brief period. But in the year 1568 the revengeful Afghan General Kalapahad desecrated and plundered its treasures not only of the Shree Mandir, but also a large number of temples in the coastal districts.

The King Ramachandra Dev of the Bhoi Dynasty established a small Hindu Kingdom on the ruins of the vast Gajapati Empire with its Capital Khurda. He soon strengthened his position and kingdom and reinstalled Shree Jagannath in the temple at Puri. Due to his popularity he was called by the people as Abhinav Indradyumna. The successive Gajapati Kings continued to be the Superintendents of the Jagannath Temple and managed the administration of the Temple. Subsequently, Orissa came under the control of the Marathas who kept the management of the temple under their direct supervision. Of course, the day-to-day affairs of the temple were managed by the Parich as appointed by the Maratha Rulers.

The Britishers invaded Orissa in 1803 and the Temple management was taken over by the East India Company. But as in the past Parichhas managed the daily affairs of the Temple. In 1906 as per the Regulation-4, administration of the Temple was vested with the Collector, Tax nominated by the British Government. In 1809, the Superintendence of the temple was vested to an assembly of the three Pandits. After three years this management was transferred to the Raja of Khurda also called as Gajapati Raja of Puri



who was hereditary Superintendent of the Temple since 1840 with absolute authority subject to the control of the Britishers. In 1843 the British Government decided to get rid of the Temple Administration and transferred the full authority for the maintenance of the temple to the Raja along with an endowment viz. the Satais Hazari Mahal yielding a revenue of Rs.17,420 at the time of occupying Orissa, Some other villages under the Ekharajat Mahal were also transferred to Raja for the maintenance of the temple. By this the British Government also stopped payment of Rs.53,000 per annum required for the management of the temple. Besides maintenances the Raja was made responsible for preservation of peace and order in the temple.

Raja Birakishore Dev expired in 1859, but his widow Suryamani Patamahadei was empowered by his last will to manage the affairs of the Temple till the minor adopted son Dibyasinha Dev became major. The administration of the Temple was very good under the management of the Patamahadei. But after Dibyasinha Dev took over the administration of the temple on his assumption of majority, the condition of the management deteriorated badly. The situation turned from bad to worse and a case was instituted by the Government for declaring the office of the Superintendent vacant and obtaining decree to appoint new Trustees for management of the Temple. This suit was seriously taken by Rani and the people of Orissa as interfering in the administration of the temple. Particularly, Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das, in view of safeguarding the prestige of the Oriyas, championed the cause of Ranee Suryamani Patamahadei. Madhubabu pleaded the case so strongly that Government wanted to make a

compromise and prepare a deed accordingly which provided.- that Pattamahadei was required to appoint a manager for the Temple till her grandson Mukunda Dev attained maturity. The Temple administration, however, did not improve and Mukunda Dev died in 1921. Raja Ramachandra Dev succeeded him and removed a Government Officer in Gazetted rank from the management of the Shree Mandir. There were often complaints of law and order and misuse of power and property of the Temple.

After Independence it was felt imperative to take strong legislative measures for improving the management of Shreemandir. The then Law and Home Minister while introducing the Sri Jagannath Temple (Administration) Bill, 1952 in the Orissa Legislative Assembly observed, "In the absence of any guidance from the Raja and sufficient contribution from him, the regular expenses of the temple, the scheduled and disciplined performance of the Nitis has suffered beyond imagination and the Raja has practically lost all control over the different Sevaks and other temple servants. Specific-endowments are regularly misapplied and misappropriated." The Government of Orissa before taking a comprehensive legislation passed the Act for improving the temple administration and proper maintenance of temple properties. The Shree Jagannath Temple (Administration) Act, 1952 provided for the appointment of a Special Officer to consolidate and prepare a record of rights and duties of Sevaks, Pujaris and such other persons connected with Seva, Puja and management of the temple. He was also required to prepare a record of rights for the endowments of the temple. The Special Officer in the rank of a District Judge was appointed and he submitted his Report on the 15th March,





1954 that revealed serious problems in management of the temple. Subsequently, Sri Jagannath Temple Act, 1954 (Orissa Act II of 1955) was passed which laid the foundation of the present administration structure and endowments of the Temple.

According to this Act, all the Temple administration and management of endowments were vested in the Sri Jagannath Temple Managing Committee with the Raja of Puri as the Chairman, the Collector of Puri District as an ex officio member and Vice-Chairman and Administrator as Secretary of this Committee. The Administrator carry out the decisions taken by the Committee and is responsible to all records and property. There are often reports in the mass media about the misbehaviour of the Sevaks and Pandas towards pilgrims, undue delay in various rituals and untoward incidents tantamounting to security and discipline of the Temple. Particularly, after attacks of terrorists on the Hindu Shrines like Akshardham in Gujrat, Baishno Devi in Jammu, the security of the Puri temple has assumed more significance and urgency. In the meantime the position and powers of the Administration have been upgraded and personnel have been strengthened to ensure better management and peace as well as security of the Temple. The Puri Temple administration has faced certain challenges as follows :-

- (i) Paucity of funds for day to day management and improvement of the general administration.
- (ii) lack of security facilities -lapses and loopholes are there.

(iii) Difficulty in lease out to auction sale of land belonging to Jagannath Temple in and outside the State.

(iv) Unsatisfactory conduct of some Sevayats and Pandas towards pilgrims and among themselves.

(v) Beautification and renovation of Ananda Bazar and other aspects of the Temple with funds received from NALCO and other sources.

There are some other matters to be looked into by the Government. These are the problems to be sorted out by the Temple Administration with more concern and commitment.

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## Jagannath Temple Administration During the British Rule

*Prafulla Pattnaik*



With the British occupation of Orissa in 1803 the management of the Jagannath temple was taken over by the East India Company. The Marquis of Wellesley in his dispatches to Lt. Col. Campbell, the Commander of the Southern forces, had particularly stressed the need for respecting the great sanctity attached to the temple of Jagannath at Puri. Before the British army marched into Orissa Wellesley had instructed that " no part of the property, treasure, or valuable articles of any kind, contained in the Pagoda of Jagernaut, or in any religious edifice, or possessed the priests or Brahmins, or persons of any description attached to the temples or religious institutions is to be considered as prize to any army ." For the first few years the East India Company managed the day to day administration of the temple through the Parichhas and annually made up the differences between the receipts and the expenditures of the temple as their predecessor and Marathas had done. Gradually the Christian Government endeavoured to get rid of the minute supervision of idolatrous rites, which this system involved, and in 1806 the Superintendence of the temple was vested in an assembly of three Pundits. In 1809 the assembly of Pundits was abolished, and the management was transferred to the Raja of

Khurda (now known as the Raja of Puri), who was appointed as hereditary Superintendent of the temple subject to the control and supervision of the British Government. With a view to give up all connections with the management of a Hindu temple the British Government in 1840 vested the Raja of Puri with full and absolute authority in regard to the management of the temple and its property, and in the same year abolished the pilgrim tax which was considered to be a State sanction to idolatry.

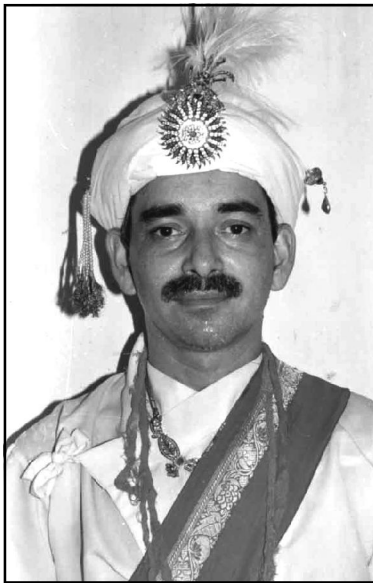
The Britishers after their conquest of Orissa in 1803 A.D. had gradually resumed the endowments of the temple of Jagannath and were making a cash payment of about Rs.53,000/- per annum for the management of the temple. With a view to sever all connections with the temple the British Government in 1843 released to the Raja of Puri the last resumed endowment, viz., the Satais Hazari Mahal yielding a revenue of Rs.17,420.00. In 1858 and 1863 some villages, which constituted the Ekhrajat Mahal, were transferred to the Raja for the maintenance of the temple and all future cash payments by the Government were stopped. The Raja was also held responsible for the preservation of peace inside the temple and for maintaining such extra police as may



be necessary outside the temple on the occasion of the great festivals.

Raja Birakishore Dev of Puri died in 1859 and his widow Suryamani Pattamahadei was empowered by his will to manage the affairs of the temple during the minority of his adopted heir Dibyasingh Dev. During the Superintendence of Ranees there was a marked deterioration in the management of the temple and its properties. "She was entirely inaccessible and was neither seen nor spoken by her people of business. Even her native agents never heard her voice. Her wishes were known only at third hand. She spoke only to her maids who reported her commands to a set of male servants called Bisoi through whom the Mukhtars or the agents learned her pleasure and informed the world without."

Corruption was rampant among the employees of the temple estates and the tenants were worst affected. Things did not improve when Raja Dibyasingh Dev came of age. In 1878 Dibyasingh Dev was implicated in murder and was punished with transportation for life. The management of the temple was in utter confusion. This led the Government to institute a suit in 1885 for the purpose of declaring vacant the office of the Superintendent, which was nominally held by the convict Raja, and of obtaining a decree to appoint new trustees for the management of the temple. This suit was hotly contested in which Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das, the renowned lawyer of Orissa championed the cause of Ranees Suryamani Pattamahadei. The



cry that religion was in danger was raised in the vernacular press and the public mind was considerably agitated over the issue. The Government finally decided to abandon the case under a deed of compromise. According to this compromise the Ranees had to engage a competent manager to manage the affairs of the temple till her grandson Mukunda Dev attained maturity. Complaints of negligence and mismanagement continued even after the

Raja came of age. So a Deputy Magistrate during the lifetime of Mukunda Dev and on his death in 1926, the management of the temple was transferred to his successor Raja Rama Chandra Dev.

With the removal of senior government officers of gazetted rank from the management of the temple the administration of the temple fast deteriorated. After the achievement of independence it was felt necessary to take legislative measures to save this unique religious institution of all India fame from utter confusion and ruin.

While introducing the Shri Jagannath Temple (Administration) Bill in Orissa Legislative Assembly, the then Minister of Law and Home observed, "In the absence of any guidance from the Raja and sufficient contribution from him for the regular expenses of the temple, the scheduled and disciplined performance of the nitis has suffered beyond imagination and the Raja has practically lost all control over the different sebakas and other temple servants. Economic rivalry and moral degeneration of the servants and sevaks has



divested them all sense of duty and co-operation. Specific endowments are regularly misapplied and misappropriated. Strikes amongst various classes are of common occurrence. The non-availability of the Mahaprasad, coveted and adored by millions of pilgrims, at the appointed hours is always there in these days. The lapses into unorthodoxy has resulted in extremely unhygienic conditions inside the temple and commissions of heinous crimes even within the temple precincts is not rare, even the image of the deity has been at times defiled and its precious jewellery removed." For better administration of the temple and its properties the Government of Orissa as a preliminary step towards undertaking a comprehensive legislation passed "the Puri Shri Jagannath Temple (Administration) Act, 1952, providing for the appointment of a Special Officer to consolidate and prepare a record of right and duties of Sevaks, Pujaris and such other persons connected with the seva, puja and management of the temple and also to prepare a record of rights for the endowments of the temple. A Special Officer of the rank of a District Judge was accordingly appointed who submitted his report on the 15th March 1954, which disclosed serious mismanagement of the affairs of the Temple and in consequence Shri Jagannath Temple Act, 1954 was passed.

Shri Jagannath Temple Act, 1954 (Orissa Act II of 1955) forms the basis of the existing administration pattern of the temple and its endowments. Section 5 of the Act states that "the administration and the governance of the

Temple and its endowments shall vest in a committee called Shri Jagannath Temple Managing Committee constituted as such by the State Government. It shall be a body corporate, having perpetual succession and a common seal, and by the said name sue and be sued". Section 6 provides for the constitution of the committee with the Raja of Puri as the Chairman. No person who does not profess the Hindu religion shall be eligible for membership. The Collector of the District of Puri is an ex-officio member and is designated as the Vice-Chairman of the committee. Section 19 and 21 deal with the appointment, powers, and functions of the Administrator of the temple who shall be the Secretary of the Committee and its chief executive officer and shall, subject to the control of the Committee, have powers to carry out the decisions in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The Administrator shall be responsible for the custody of all records and properties of the temple.

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## Worship of Lord Jagannath

*Pareswar Sahoo  
Suma Sahoo*

Though it is horns of dilemma to reconstruct the history of Orissa from the treasure house of antiquity one typical aspect of this antiquous history has been Orissa's assimilation with the tribal cultures. The history of the tribes must be viewed in an orthogonal relationship to

Indias core-values. In the context of Orissan history the worship of lord Jagannath shows the intellectual development in the arena of



religious segments. V. Ball was the first archaeologist to come up with findings of pre-Historic evidences of Orissa (1875) which reveals the fact that in ancient times or most remote past Orissa was not a civilized region. Mostly it was populated by the non-Aryans among whom the savaras were the most dominate in the field of social harmony, kinship and in the political organization. Specifically it should be clarified that 'Savara' is a genetic term applied to all the tribal folklore of Orissa. The racial homogeneity and the great deal of language similarities, thus gives Orissa an

interest spectrum. The worship of Lord Jagannath was started in a very traditional manner by the tribes. So scholars like B.M. Padhi, J. Padhi, K.C. Mishra, S.N. Rajguru and a few others have admired that the theory of tribal origin of the worship of Jagannath is

accepted by them as the God called Jagant.

This is no doubt the origin of the worship of Jagannath. The intellectual interpretation by

R. D. Banerjee

suggested that it is a modern Hindu Tirthas & one among the four dhamas in India. D.C. Sarkar has rightly pointed out that Purusottam Jagannath at Kambukshetra, like Venkateswar Ballaji at Tirupati, Minakshi at Madurai, Vindhyabasini at Mirzapur, Kamakshya at Guwhati of Assam and a number of Gods and Goddesses in different regions of India were originally worshipped by the aboriginal inhabitants of the locality and gradually tantamounted with a God of recognized Brahminical pantheon.



The Skanda Puran and the Purusottam Kshetra Mahatmya recognize the worship of Jagannath as Neelamadhab by one tribal, Viswvasu Savara in the Nilachala (Nil Hills). There is a stout resemblance which raised in the Prachi Mahatmya that, Jagannath was worshipped by the tribals. It is a strong support to the notion that in the present scenario on the bank of the river Prachi there is a village in the east side of the river called, 'Savarapalli' and Viswvasu savar belongs to this village. In fact the Niladri Mohodaya mentions the Lord Purusottam saying "Not the learned in the four holy scriptures but the man who believes, is dear to me." Jagannath is the God for all.

Once upon a time the worship of Lord Jagannath was performed by the savaras, but such practices has been dwindled down with the coming up of the Daitas ; who are the inhabitants of the savar clan. Gradually they have developed by their birth and became expert in reciting the Vedas, Mantras and Slokas and had awareness of the daily rituals of Sri Jagannath. In Orissan culture the gap between man and the supreme Devine has been bridged in Jagannath Culture & Jagannath Himself is a highly humanized deity. Like the human aspect the daily rituals shows that how He gets up from the bed, takes His bath, changes the attire, takes up public grievances, takes breakfast and lunch, enjoys an afternoon nap, decorates Himself before going to bed, goes for hunting, uses cosmetics, goes for boating during summer, covers Himself sufficiently for the winter, falls sick once a year. All these are human qualities. He is considered as omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient means super human Purusottam. Supporting this a poem of poet Dinakrushna Das's Jagannath Janana recognizes with 'ka' Anuprasa means the starting letter of each line of each stanza is 'ka', like

*'Kambu katakare Niladri Nagare  
Pahanti sankha bajila  
Kambu chakradhar derarajankar  
Nidra turite bhajila'*

The worship of the Jagannath may be divided under three heads:-

- (1) The daily rituals or 'Nitis' which are fixed and observed everyday as routine course.
- (2) The special "nitis" according to the specialty of certain days (i.e. Thursday, Amavasya, Ekadasi, and *Naksashtra* vandapana etc.)
- (3) The various festivities are celebrated through out the year both inside and outside the temple. The worship of Jagannath generally done by the sevakas known as Pujapanda, Suaravadu, Pratihari, Paliamahasar, Paniapta, Pradhani, Panliadu, Jaravadu, Rosava paika, Paliapatri, Cangada mekapa, Muduli, Candana ghatuar, Palia khuntia, Hadapa Nayak, Bediajogania, Gochikara vaijyantri Dhukudidwaram etc. It can be said, that, Orissa is a rare specimen at a reversed sanskritisation so far as the institution of Jagannath culture is the flow from the tribes to the Hindu groups. All above the priests known as the Daitas descendants of savar tribe , and the Paties hybrid off springs of Aryan-Dravidian sources, have made their association established with the function and worship of Lord Jagannath right from the inception of this institution.

The term chhatishnijoaga gives the present Daitas, a privileged identity, which is qualitative, and conspicuous at any time or under any circumstance. Since the time immemorial the method of worshipping management attitude depends critically on social values and indigenous practice of management which exemplify the successful



blending of traditional values. The Daitapatis association with Jagannath has been a tradition and a pluralistic nature of historical interpretations. Thanks to this hiatus, the worship of Jagannath culture is synonymous with the culture of Orissan people. Amazingly Raja Mansingh notifying 'Orissa' is no fit subject for conquest as "from end to end it is on region of pilgrimage."

However the Jagannath tradition is all pervasive as is marked in the land of Orissa, depicting three colours White, Yellow and Black. The three deities signify the approach of Oriya's that is universalism as a matter of principle of co-existence. Since the ancient, period passing to the medieval period and in course to the present, the form of Jagannath worship has been coined by the different ways of religious interpretation. The religious impact of Jagannath upon society was there in medieval period. Example can be taken Sri Krushna Chaitanya the first fan of Sri Jagannath was overwhelmed with emotion and danced out of joy. He lost control of his senses when he beheld the image of Jagannath seated on Asthan. The first darsan (sight) and devotional worship of Lord had a lasting effect upon Chaitanya's mind. In a state of deep trance, he realized his indissoluble bond with Jagannath.

The most typical worship of Lord Jagannath is when Jagannath cannot be seen for fifteen days called as the Anavasara or Anasara or Nirodhana commences from Jyestha purnima and ends with the Ashadha amavasya. The literary meaning of the Anasara of Lord Jagannath is it really denotes a period of indisposition of the deities during which period only the kith and kin of the Deities enjoy the special and exclusive rights to nourish them back to normal health. This is symbolic of the

human-touch given to the life of the Deities by the tribals. The worship of Jagannath by the Daipaties is very secret. Narayan as Jagannath, Bhubaneswari as Subhadra and Vasudev as Balabhadra.

The car festival of Lord Jagannath is concerned in the world context as the symbol of intellectual tradition of Orissan History. In the month of Jyestha the car festival of lord Jagannath held at Puri with a great pomp. Which shows the universal worship of human society, irrespective of caste, creed, colour and sex. From the nook and corner of the world people come forward to the destination of Puri and offer their mass worship by opening up their hands upwards. On the three cars Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabhadra represent their power and blessings for the shake of the human civilization. As for the attire, the Duttamahapatras and the Suddhasuras are in charge of applying only white flowers, sandal wood paste and herbal ointments; Tulsi garlands and a lot of amenities to the body of the devinities. The system of Chhapanpauti bhoga is used every day for worshipping the deities which is a vital aspect of Orissan Culture. In the world context where there is no religious shrines or any temple where such type bhoga system is used for the God. In the Anandabazar each and every day, thousands of pilgrims are eating the prasada bhoga, called as Mahaprasada. Every rituals and the aspects of the Jagannath worship is the vital segments in the history of Orissan Culture.

In this paper the Jagannath worship has been exemplified as the core backbone of the Orissan Culture. So far Purusottamkshetra is famous for its catholicity over the human civilization. The Mahaprasada bhoga concept is the symbol of universal brotherhood like



'Basudheiba Kutumbakum' that has marginalized consideration of caste and creed and sex primarily because of its origin and evolution is the back bone of the tribal cultural segments. The syntheses and eclectism have been the forte of Jagannath. So the worship of Jagannath is the melting pot of all religious ceremonies and principles of Hindu communities.

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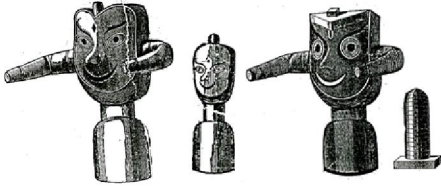
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## Distinctive Lifestyle of Puri People

*Sarat Chandra Mohapatra*

Puri, though a small temple town, attracts large number of people from different parts of India, many of whom wish to settle down here for its status as the ultimate place of salvation. It is thus evident from the fact that when the population of the town was only about twenty three thousand in 1840-41, it has now touched more than two lakhs in 2001. The colonies of the Temple town Puri can well be divided into two parts-of the earlier residents and the later-day inhabitants. The earlier small population of the town was centering round the temple of Lord Jagannath of whom, most were the servitors of Sri Jagannath Temple. But at present, the new inhabitation has extended in all the four directions for miles together.

The very ground around Puri for ten miles is to the Hindu mind of such sanctity as to absolve from the deepest sin all who proceed thither. It is, as depicted in different sacred texts, the heaven upon earth and each and everything of this land is holy. In the eyes of certain foreign scholars: "It is to India what Jerusalem was to the whole land of Israel."

As far back as in 1632 AD William Bruton has described Puri Town as 'Garden City'. Thus the natural scenario with a green belt all around with sand dunes has made the

people more exposed to the nature which has generated a broadness of mind and heart.

Normally, Puri people mean the original inhabitants of Puri, mostly consisting of the priestly order, artisans and others connected with the great temple. The localities like Markandeswar Sahi, Harachandi Sahi, Bali Sahi, Daitapada Sahi, Dolamandap Sahi etc. are inhabited by the temple servitors and other castes directly or indirectly connected with the temple. A major segment of them are Jatri Pandas, Gumastas and Dhulias. Flow of pilgrims from different parts of India in almost all seasons has afforded the scope of entertaining them and earning their livelihood. They are used to be conversant in different regional languages to guide the pilgrims of different states.

The general occupational structure and the socio-economic condition determine the lifestyle of the people of a particular locality. Puri being a cosmopolitan culture entertains various classes of people. The traditional class of persons of Puri consists of Temple Sevayats, Supakars and others as stated earlier. But the most significant are the artisans, which consist of carpenters (Badhei), Painters (Chitrakaras), Potters (Kumbhakararas), Stone- carvers



(Pathurias), Applique workers and other artisans engaged in manufacturing of different handicrafts like Patta Paintings, Palm-leaf carving, Seashell products etc. All such artisans have linkage with the Jagannath Temple and the products have tourist's attraction. Their economic activities are more oriented and influenced by the lifestyle of Sevayats. The carpenters (Badheis) of Puri are engaged in the construction of the massive chariots (Festive Car) every year. Similarly the Tailors (Daraji) stitch the cloth for the chariots (Festive Car) and flag (pataka) for the temple, the jewelers (Bania) are associated with the preparation and repair of ornaments of the temple Lords, the carriers (Bojhia) of Mahaprasad all entertain a sense of pride being associated with the service (Seva) to Lord Jagannath Temple.

The lifestyle of artisans is imbued with a super sense of imagination. The artists have succeeded in giving form to their inner aesthetic realisation. Celestial beings with fully developed body, swelling busts, rounded hips, delicate curves and divinely ecstatic face with an expression of grace and elegance cast a memorable impression of the viewers.

Similarly other artistic products contain a perceptible touch of imagination indicative of stabilised traditional skill and expertise.

The Brahmins play an important role in rendering different religious service to the pilgrims like Sradhha, Sankalpa, Jagnya etc. The Brahmins of nearby Sasan villages around Puri use to sit on Mukti Mandap and offer prescription (Byabastha) containing purificatory advice (prayaschita Bidhi) for different social sins. The gifts and donations of the pilgrims constitute their livelihood. Dhoti, Chadar and napkin are their usual dress

with sacred mark on the forehead make them distinct from other people.

Puri District Gazetteer records six thousand male adults as priests, brahmins and pilgrim guides who roam throughout India enlisting pilgrims and rendering required hospitality to them. Pilgrim guides are attached to different Pandas who act as the hereditary intermediary between the Lord and the devotees.

Their clientele spread all over India and divided amongst themselves. As such there is professional rivalry, which is a part of their lifestyle. Many a time such activities embitter the social life and annoy tourists and pilgrims.

The most noteworthy part of the lifestyle of Puri people is to earn livelihood without much investment or labour. Their convincing capacity to the pilgrims is the main source of their income. Their children usually follow the footprints of their father and attach less importance to formal education.

Pleasure seeking is the basic principle of the life style of Puri people. Collective activities with feast and merrymaking is their usual way of spending leisure and recreation. The local life style of Puri people consist of Sanga (friends), Bhanga (taking Canavis Indica), Sangeeta (music), Pangata (feast). This is called Mauja (recreation) in singular term and the traditional Puri people is somewhat philosophical in substantiating the validity of mauja in following words - "Marigale Pani Patrie paibu mauja paibu kahun? (After death, one is only entitled to get a spoon of water as homage; but can he get recreational pleasure like this?). The cultural centres of Puri grown through unbroken tradition of the town are 'Jaga and 'Akhada'. Such forums are meant for training the youths in physical exercises,



gymnastics, music and other social and ritual services of the Temple during 'Sahijata' commencing from the birth of Lord Rama and His coronation after killing demon Ravana. Each Sahi has traditional mode of participation spread over seven cantos of great epic 'Ramayana'. The lifestyle of the youths of traditional families of Puri are shaped considerably by such youth organisations. With the commencement of winter, the Sahi youth go to Jaga for massage, wrestling and other physical exercise. During such period they are refrained from taking any intoxication and observe complete celibacy (Brahmacharya). Thus Puri's traditional youth maintain a muscular and well-built body. Jagas also impart musical lesson particularly Odissi, Chhanda, Champu etc. with Mrudangam. Usually collective feasts are arranged in such Jagas, which is one of the major attractions to participate in Jaga activities. The apex bodies of such Jagas are Akhada, Kota etc. Apparently such organisations have been set up as military mechanism against invaders. The Puri people, mostly the youth mass, participate and play a major role in different festive events such as Ratha Jatra, Chandan Jatra, Jhulan Jatra etc. On the occasion of one noteworthy festival Chandan Jatra, during which the festive deity Madan Mohan go with a procession with their divine associates Panchu Pandava to Chandan Tank for pleasant boating, Puri people in general and youth of Jagas in particular participate with great enthusiasm which is a distinctive lifestyle of Puri people. Jhulan Jatra is another popular festival where Odissi music and 'Gotipua' dance are notable items performed by local people. Cultural involvement has been the most prominent feature of Puri people since centuries despite of several odd phases in the history.

Some of the traditional Puri people, though minimal in number, nurture a fond habit of domesticating or patronising pets and playing with them. Such pets include birds like Para (pigeons), Gobara (a small brown- coloured bird), parrot, animals like monkey, Neula (Mongoose) and even bulls. Occasionally they organise various contests among them. They look after the pets with much affection and care.

The daily routine of a traditional common Puri man begins with going to Jaga, taking full body massage and bathing in pond, taking heavy breakfast and going to respective profession to the temple or Lion's Gate for motivating pilgrims for Darshan of the deities, then going to home for food and fiesta and in the afternoon go to Jagas to paste and take Canavis Indica (Bhanga), go for open air toilet (Pokhari Pani) and bathing in pond. Habitually they wear Dhoti and Punjabi and walk in majestic style with swinging shoulder called 'Mani Bimana Chali'.

The dialects of Puri people is peculiar with a commanding personal touch usually qualified by some obscene words called 'Do-akhari' by which they don't mean anything but it is their style of speaking. Sometimes people take exception to it. However, they have the unique quality of establishing friendship with unknown man within no time.

They are respectful to the elders and lovable to the youngsters but become arrogant while dealing with other professional rivals while with pilgrims. They always prefer to remain with friends and show more interest in collective feasts in different picnic places in and around the town. Most of the traditional Puri people are expert in cooking.



In family life, the traditional Puri people are orthodox to some extent though they are not captives of blind-beliefs or narrowness. This contradictory attitude was possible due to their constant exposure to wider public life. While on one hand they try to retain their distinct identity that is bound to age-old custom and tradition, on the other they make themselves comfortable with relatively modern lifestyle without surrendering their originality. Rather, they encash upon modernity which is evident from the fact that some of the traditional Puri People, in particular the Sevayats, are equally successful in business at present while keeping continued their familial profession such as serving the Lord and the pilgrims.

In general the lifestyle of Puri people are distinctive and unparallel and tension-free. They enjoy even the adversities and usually do not get worried in personal problems. They assign everything to Lord Jagannath and believe that He will take care of everything.

The unworried attitude of Puri people in any problem, small or big, is sometimes construed as traditional incorrigible lethargy. They are complacent and lovers of leisure or entertainment. They sidetrack the problems particularly relating to family and get involved in collective merry-making. This speaks of, apparently, social irresponsibility, but if viewed with deep insight, it is a unique mental makeup not comparable with common psychosis of people of other places. Usually on any small problem, others get worried and run places for solution of the same. Not that Puri people are

totally oblivious of their problems but the only distinctive factor, they usually do not get perturb and face it gracefully with a spirit of tolerance. A spirit of carelessness or Nawabi attitude by which they take day-to-day matters with utter casual manner without considering the next consequence is another facet of their personality.

In a world of problems, crimes, sex nuisance and apprehension all around of terrorist attack, the lifestyle of Puri people can definitely be construed as distinctive and perhaps the only panacea for this tension-torn present society. A sense of fraternity, which is emanated from the Supreme Lord Jagannath, the Puri people are friendly and embrace everybody with a sense of fraternity. They get distinctive pleasure in extending hospitality to outsiders, which is a noteworthy distinctive attitude of Puri people.

Though with the onslaught of modern culture, rapid urbanisation, commercialisation, consumerism, socio-economic traumas and spread of hatred and narrow feelings, the basic tenets of Puri culture are gradually being shattered. But still considerably a sizeable amount of it remains to which we may identify as the true distinct feature of Puri and its people.

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## Sri Jagannath Temple - A Study of its Cosmic Symbolism

*Sunil Kumar Patnaik*

The temple is a sacred place, a place for worship, a tirtha, a meeting of divine and earthly life and a community center. Temple means body or embodiment. Temples enable devotee to sacred and blissful experience that the yogi has attained through rigorous and painstaking sadhans. These experiences are often displayed on the temple walls.

The idea of temple originated centuries ago in the universal ancient conception of god in human form. Such form required a habitation; a shelter and this need resulted in a structural shrine. It is often believed that the temple form is derived from the "vedic" altar the earliest known sacred structure (vedi), which had the square as its essential form. Its origin goes back to the pre-Christian era, and its evolution into a monument of the great architectural merit is marked by conscious efforts on the part of several ruling dynasties from the 4th to 17th centuries A.D. Religion in India, has been a powerful ideological space for worship of the divine, served as super ordinate institution of social organisation. In the medieval periods of Indian history, the role of the temple as the institutional focus of development is understood by the temples social and economic out reach as a land owner, organizer of rural and urban activities, provider

of educational and medical help, and above all, as the center of: cultural activities, such as the arts, paintings and sculpture, apart from architecture, music and dance and more significantly as symbol of political power.

It can well be glimpsed through the temple towns of India. The culture that revolved the temples can be felt even today in temple cities like Banaras, Ujain, Kanchipuram, Tanjore, Madurai, Dwaraka, Tirupati, Rameswaram, or Puri, etc. Here the God is chalachala, the rituals, festivals, are living today. The culture that once developed with the community such as rituals and festivals and the idea of pilgrims has thus, created network of temple-centers and sacred geography, continue to emphasize the integrative role of the temple in the sub continent.

Again the temple in particular symbolizes as an object of devotion like an image. Hence, the temple is visualized as human body. Accordingly various parts of the temple are termed after the names of various limbs of human body with architectural connotations.

The Hindu temple is also considered as the image of Mahapurusa. The medieval



architectural texts like the Agni Purana and the Isanasivagarudeva Paddhati and others elaborate this symbolism in a realistic manner. In this way the entire temple becomes the manifested form of divinity, containing all levels of existences, all substances, tattva and bhuttas from the earth to ether and its structure gains the absolute supreme changeless essence.

In India the temple as cosmic symbolism can be best seen from the royal temples of famous Brahadisvara temple at Tanjore and Jagannath temple at Puri. The Brihadisvara temple at Thanjavur (Tanjore) was completed in 1010 A.D. by Rajaraja I of Chola dynasty. This temple for next 1000 years was the cradle of Bharatnatyam through the successive dynasties. This temple again marked a watershed in the history of art and architecture of India. Like other monuments of 'Political architecture' in India, this temple symbolized the new royal power of its founder. The extensive donative inscriptions at the walls of the temple at Tanjore reveal an even more explicit political function of this temple. Hundreds of Brahmins and temple servants were brought to Tanjore, among them 400 dancing girls, about 200 dancing masters, musicians, drummers, goldsmiths etc. Some of these servants had to be maintained by regular duties in form of rice sent from their own villages. For other servants and the maintenance of the Brahmins, villages were donated to the temple all over the empire, even in Sri Lanka. Rajaraja and several members of his family furthermore donated immense treasure of gold and jewels to the temple, which at once made the temple one of the richest in India.

It was during 11th-12th century A.D. that the temple town Puri might have assumed the

greatest prominence under the dynastic rule of the imperial Gangas. The present magnificent temple of Purusottama-Jagannath was constructed during this period. Several copper plate inscriptions of this period credit "Gangesvara" as the builder of the temple and this "Gangesvara" has rightly been identified with Anantavarmana Chodaganga Deva (1078-1147 A.D.). It is known from the inscriptions that Chodaganga might have invited some selected Brahmana Pandits or Vaisnavas, belonged to Kanchi and settled near Sri Purusottama Kshetra for propagation of Dvaitya philosophy. It is also known from inscriptions that towards 11.5 A.D. several Pandits, Brahmanas and Sadhus (sages) did settle in different parts of the empire. It is also known that king Chodaganga Deva patronized Vaisnavism under the influence of the great Vaisnava saint Ramanuja (1056-1136 A.D.) who advocated the Visistadaitya philosophy of Vedanta. It is also believed that Ramanuja might have visited Puri during the time of Chodaganga and was closely associated with the rituals of the temple. For the next 800 years this temple of Purusottama-Jagannath is the center of art, cult and culture of Orissa. In 1230 A.D. the Ganga King Anangabhima ritually dedicated his kingdom to the God Purusottama-Jagannath and acknowledged the divinity of Puri both as the sole state deity of Orissa and as his divine over Lord.

Thus like that of Chola king Rajaraja, King Chodaganga Deva and later Anangabhima Deva of Ganga dynasty had made all possible efforts to make Purusottama-Jagannath as state deity and sovereign Lord. Accordingly the temple was certainly built for the Lord Vishnu as the iconographical feature denote. Of course, there are layers of cultural assimilations and synthesis.



Sri Jagannath Temple at Puri is a matured Kalingan style, consisting of four structures called (i) Vimana (Sanctum-Santorium) (ii) Jagamohana or Mukhasala (the porch) (iii) the Natamandira (dancing hall) (iv) Bhogamandapa (the hall of offering), built in a row in one axial alignment facing east.

The main temple as discussed above based on Vastu Purusa mandala is of the Pancharatha type having a curvilinear tower rising above all other monuments. It is evident that the temple is based on prescribed architectural design Sri Bachha Khandasala. This is one of the thirty six different examples prescribed for Rekha temple in Vastusastra meant for pancharatha type. Vastu sastra texts, conventionally attributed to the divine architect of the universe, Visvakarman, but composed at various points of time from 5th to 17th centuries, represent a growing tradition.

Sri Jagannath temple referred as Prasada in the inscriptions. The temple is variously known in Sanskrit as the prasada, vimana, devagriha, devalaya etc. Prasada and Vimana are the most commonly used terms to refer to the main and integral part of the Hindu temple. Prasada, the other name of the main building, is synonymous with Vimana. According to the Silparatna (a Vastu Sastra text), "Prasada please by their beauty, the minds of Gods and Men."

The main shrine (Vimana) symbolizes by means of its architectures, the universe, its manifestation and integration. It incorporate in its structure all the images. This is true in every respect in the architecture of Sri Jagannath temple as the temple has vertical divisions i.e. the pitha (pedestal), the bada (wall), the gandi (body) and the mastaka (the head). Each component signifies the divine aspect of celestial world.

The pitha (pedestal) on which the temple stands signifies a square base. Based on the square, the structure of the temple also rises from the square Vastupurusamandala. The pitha on which the Sri Jagannath Temple stands commences from the existing plinth of 5'.2" in height. But the major portion of the pedestal is buried. The square is arch type, and the pattern of order in the Indian tradition, as laid down in the Brahat Samhita. Based on the square, the structure of the temple arises in the mid-world (antariksha) of air. The square as the fundamental figure of vedic sacrificial symbolism and temple architecture lends itself to many variations and still retains its symbolism.

Above the pedestal, the original temple structure stands with Pabhaga. The Pabhaga again has panchanga divisions of Orissan temple style like khura, kumbha, pata, kani and vasanta in ascending order. All these components have decorated with rich carvings like vanalata, scroll motifs, procession of various animals mostly war animals, procession of foot soldiers, etc. in the horizontal surface of Pata is carved with Giri-Govardhanadhari Krishna playing with Gopis, Dhenukasuravadha, proceeding towards Mathura on chariot etc.

Above the Pabhaga, the next division is Tala-Jangha (lower jangha) having miniature temple replicas with Khakara-Mundis in the Kanika and raha and anuraha pagas. The front phase of these miniature Khakaramundi niches of Kanika paga are depicted with astadikapala or guardian deities in their respective directions. Again the miniature Khakharamundi shrines (niches) of anurahapaga depicts the King's court, priests giving sermons to the devotees, teachers (acharya)



teaching their disciples. The two sides of each miniature shrine exhibits the image of Vishnu, Shrikrishna, and Radha, with the hoard of cows, or playing with veerna etc. The corner space in between the two khakaramundi shrines within the Tala-Jhanga portion is occupied by the giant figures of Gaja Simha, Gaja vidal trampling over 'apsamarapurusa' or a demon. These are typical Orissan art motifs all whom depict fertility and celestial world.

The bandhana consists of three moldings connected at places by vertical bands decorated with standing figures of kanyas (maidens representing celestial beauties).

The upper Jhangha has pidha-mundis (miniature temple of pidha-order), which contains deities including avataras of Vishnu. In the south-east corner, Varaha and Narasimha are found intact. In the south-west corner Balarama, north-west corner Kalki and Buddha are found in tact. These icons show the perfect shape and size with serenity in their faces and represent the mature iconographic features of Vaishnava cult.

The recesses in between the two pagae of upper Jhanga is occupied by life-size sculptures of maidens and surasundaris (kanyas) in different actions representing female power and piousness. Orissan architectural text Silpaprakas has shown sixteen postures for there maidens (kanyas). The baranda over the upper jhanga is made of ten curved moldings, which are almost, equal size.

On the front side of each rahapaga above the baranda level contains a small niche, inside it a beautiful figure of Vishnu is exhibited and above that the chaitya window motif with two purusa figures (demons) on either side having

beaded borders, popularly known as "Bhoo motif" of Orissan art is carved. Further, above the projecting Gaja-Simha motifs are found in all cardinal directions.

In the Gandi level, bhumi-amalas form offsets partially running all around the temple surface, decorated with creepers and floral designs. The niches provided on three cardinal directions below the baranda level contain life size images of Varaha, Narasimha and Trivikrama-the parsadevatas.

The most remarkable feature of Sri Jagannath Temple is that on the both sides of each parsvadevata, shrines, in the outer wall figures of Vishnu, four on either side are carved with depicting twenty four forms of Vishnu. These twenty four forms manifestations are alike in their iconographic features. They are all standing figures with no band in the body possessing four arms and adorned with Kirita Mukuta (crown) and other usual ornaments. The difference between any two of there images has to be made out by the way in which the Sankha (conch), the Chakra (wheel) the Gada (mice/club) and the Padma (lotus) are found distributed among their four hands. "Rupamandana" furnishes the twenty-four names of Vishnu and the corresponding arrangements of the four ayudhas in the four hands in each case. These twenty four forms of Vishnu which have been listed in the Silpasastras are found nowhere in any temple sculpture except in this Sri Jagannath Temple.

The next division gandi or body of the temple proper has ten bhumis or storeys. In architectural features and decorative details, the bada shows unmistakable affinity with those of Lingaraja Temple. But here in Jagannath Temple we find advanced stage of development in the architectural style.





The towering division mastaka consists of usual elements of Beki (neck), amalaka, khapuri, kalasa and ayudha (chakra) attached with flag. As the symbol of the world mountain (Sri Jagannath Temple termed as meru), the prasada carries all the worlds strata along its axis, which is the central pillar of the temple visible above its curvilinear superstructure, in the form of beki (neck). The amalaka (ribbed myrobalan) and the Kalasa (finial) are the shapes and symbols of the vertical axis of the temple where it emerges into visibility. Thus, the finial extends into mid-space. The finial rises above the high temple. The amalaka above the beki, the highest point, marks the limit between the unmanifest and the manifest. The hierarchy of divine manifestation is thus accommodated in the monument, located within its vertical axis, the cosmic pillar.

Thus, Sri Jagannath Temple and the iconographic manifestations symbolizes the universe with Vishnu as cosmic divine. Of course, layers of other cultural traits, amalgamations and synthesis are marked in the Jagannath cult. But the outer surface of the main temple signifies the various forms of the deity Vishnu-Krishna in what are called the avarna kosthas (surrounding niches). Thus, the rite of (pradkhina) by the devotee is more a communion by movement with the images in the niches of the walls, than a visual recognition

of their identity . As we have seen the temple is mean to be a monument for the manifestation of the divinity whose image or symbol is enshrined in the garbhagriha.

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## Raja Sankranti : The Festival of Swings

*Pravukalyan Mohapatra*

Festivals of any state reflect the culture, tradition and history of the people. Festivals in India are mostly associated with seasonal phases of the sun, the moon, birth of divinities and agricultural operations. Legends have grown connecting these festivals with mythological events recorded in the Puranas and other religious literatures. They intend to inspire faith and virtuous life among the people as a result of which religious impact pervades the celebration or observance of all the festivals.

Though festivals are deeply associated with religion (faith), the main purpose seems to be recreational. They mitigate the monotony of life. Man and women tired of hard routine work need change or relaxation which festivals provide. Thus festivals promote a common cause, develop social solidarity, fellow feeling and mutual co-operation. They also instill self-discipline and emphasizes the spiritual value of human existence besides providing enjoyment and recreation.

In ancient days most of the celebrations were agricultural in their basic character having festivals mostly related to various agricultural operations. People thought certain divine powers were associated with various aspects of human life and festivals were scheduled in honour of Gods and Goddesses, who were

supposed to control agricultural operations. The tradition of such festivals have also come down to the people of Orissa in the form of Raja-Sankranti (swing-festival), Akhaya-trutiya, Gamha-purnima, Manabasa-gurubara, Nuakhai etc.

Raja is an agriculture oriented festival, mostly observed in the coastal districts of Orissa for three days. The last day of month "Jestha" is known as "Pahili Raja" and the first day of month "Asadha" is Raja Sankranti (Mithuna Sankranti) from which rainy season starts. It also inaugurates the agricultural year all over Orissa which marks the moistening of summer parched soil with the first shower of monsoon making it ready for productivity. The second day of "Asadha" is known as "Bhuin Dahana". To celebrate the advent of monsoon the joyous festival is arranged for three days. Even in some places of Orissa the fourth day of Raja festival is also celebrated in the name of "Basumata Puja". During this festival Mother Earth or "Basu Mata" is considered to be a menstruating woman. Hence digging of soil or tempering it in any way is strictly prohibited. The Mother Earth is said to undergo pollution due to menstruation and given rest just like a woman imposed with several restrictions.



Raja is also considered as one of the chief festivals of un-married girls or the potential mothers. The women folk, especially the virgins, forbid all kinds of manual works during these three days of Raja-festival. They don't carry water, cut vegetables, sweep the houses, sew clothes, grind grains, comb hair, walk in bare foot etc. So, all kind of restrictions are imposed both for the land and the women-folk.

Although Raja Sankranti is celebrated all over Orissa, it is more enthusiastically observed in the coastal districts of the State. The un-married girls or virgins observe the restrictions prescribed for a menstruating woman. On the first day of Raja Sankranti they rise before the dawn, do their coiffure, anoint their bodies with turmeric paste and oil, then take the purification bath in the river or tank. Bathing for rest two days of the festival is strictly prohibited. During these three days girls are seen in the best of their dresses and decorations, eating cakes and rich food at the houses of friends and relatives. They move up and down in the swings rending the village sky with their joyous impromptu songs. The swings are tied to the branches of Mango or Banyan trees and decorated with garlands of different flowers. The virgins of the village gather there on this festive occasion and one of them is elected as Dolo-rani (queen of the swing). When the queen takes her seat on the swing, the virgins move her forward and backward with chorus of charming songs. These songs are full of jolly spirit of girl-hood days and refer to glorious future, happy love and would be marriage with suitable husbands.

Special varieties of cake prepared out of recipes like rice-powder, molasses, coconut, camphor, ghee etc goes in the name of Podapitha (burnt-cake). The size of the cake varies according to the number of family members. Cakes are also exchanged among relatives and friends. Young girls do not take rice during this festival and sustain only with different

types of cake, fried rice (mudhi) and vegetable curry.

While girls scatter beauty, music all round moving up and down on the swings during this festival, young men give themselves busy in various types of country games including Kabadi competition. While 'Yatras' and 'Gotipua' dances are arranged at night in prosperous villages; plays and other entertainment programmes are also conducted by amateur artists in relatively less prosperous places.

The communal mode of worship, from time immemorial, has taken the form of festivals. All communal worships have tended to assume the form of festivals. Festivals always involves the community, a gathering, a mela or a fair. It is the expression of a community on a festive and relaxed mood. Festivals are an inextricable part of Indian society. There are some festivals like Rakhi-purnima, Holi, Diwali, Durga-puja, Shiva-ratri, Makara-sankranti which are observed all over India though their mode of celebrations are different from state to state. On the contrary, there are also certain festivals which are purely regional and sectarian. In India the months are counted on the basis of solar or lunar movements. While the month is calculated, in solar system, from Sankranti to Sankranti, that is counted in lunar system from Purnima to Purnima (full-moon). The number of festivals observed in Orissa are many compared to other regions of the country. Amongst them Raja-sankranti, Kumara-purnima, Prathamastami are some of the festivals which are specifically meant for the young.

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## Buddha - Jagannath in the Evolution Process

Dr. Harihar Kanungo

When we look at the history of 'Buddhist Literature' we find that before Buddhism was preached by Gautam Buddha the tribal people of 'Bhasa' and 'Bhana' who were living in *Odrabhumi*<sup>1</sup> of ancient '*Savaristhan*'<sup>2</sup> had accepted 'AHETUBAD' -AKRIYABAD' or 'NATHIKABAD'<sup>3</sup> as their national religion. of '*Odrabhumi*' was considered and demarcated as the connecting link between the Northern and the Southern India as per the history of that time. It can't also be denied that Goutam Buddha went to the coastal region of South India to preach Buddhism, although the truth in this regard is not yet discovered. There is no doubt that the contemporary Odra state started from the boundary line of Magadh. Two merchants of Utkal named 'Tapasu' and 'Vallika' had the good luck to become the Buddha's disciples in the eighth week of his enlightenment. Subsequently the *Bhasa* and *Bhana* communities, then living in Odradesh accepted Buddhism by giving up their own religion: i.e. Ahetubad, Akriyabad, and Nathikabad. In fact



that is considered as the beginning of the preaching and the spread of Buddhism in 'Odra State'. In course of time, Buddhism became the national religion of the whole of 'Odra State' because of Buddha's unique and attractive religious advice and this trend continued till the reign of the Soma dynasty. During that period the unchallenged influence of Buddhism was felt all over Utkal, Kalinga, Toshal, Koshal and Odra. Mostly the tribal people like the *Savaras* and others speaking the Nagavamsi and Mundari dialect were living in Utkal at that time.<sup>4</sup> History of the period also reveals that Lord Jagannath, the prime deity of the *Nagas* and *Savaras* had already been incarnated and worshipped by that time. The great resemblance of the Lord's face, eyes and the structure with that of a serpent establishes the fact that he was the God of the *Nagas* and the *Savaras*. As a matter of fact the face of the idol of Lord Jagannath is a reflection of the face and eyes of a serpent and this practice is maintained on every *Navakalevara*.<sup>5</sup> the





'Bastupuja' (*Astakula Naga* and *Naguni Puja*) performed at the time of *Navakalevara* further corroborates this fact. A keen observation of the body of Lord Jagannath's face, which resembles with the image of the serpent while the lower part of the idol indicates a *Khamba* or a log, which is being worshipped by the tribals (*Savara*). The so called imagination of *Khamba* or *Sthamba* worship by the *Savaras* alongwith the serpent face of the Nagas gives a clear picture of the unity among the two chief inhabitants Naga and *Savara* of Odra State. Such types of integration of image was possible by the Buddhist. Thus in the form of this image, the Buddhist could combine both the religions and the languages of the *Naga* and *Savara* races.

This type of tremendous discovery could only be possible at the beginning of the civilisation by the Buddhists. This is proved by the fact that the mention of Lord Jagannath is found for the first time in the Buddhist Literature. Indrabhuti, the king of Sambala (AD.717), the famous preacher of Buddhism (Vajrayan) had brought the Lord Jagannath to light. It is described in his *Gnyanasiddhi*.

"Pranipatya Jagannatham Sarvajina bararchitam  
Sarva budha mayam siddhi byapinam gaganopamam."  
(Indrabhuti - Gyana Siddhi, 1st Canto, Sloka No-1)

It is evident from these lines that Indrabhuti tried his best to bring unity and integrity among the *Savaras* and the *Nagas* by such a synthesised image of Lord Jagannath as Buddha for the first time. Because, prior to this we never find the mention of Lord Jagannath in any literature or writing. Therefore, Dr. Benimadhav Padhi described in his book '*Daru Debata*' that the Lord Jagannath has the *Savara* origin. In his opinion it is justified that the Lord Jagannath is neither from

Pali nor Sanskrit, but of *Savara* Origin.<sup>6</sup> An analysis of Indrabhuti's work proves the fact that he struck a balance in the emotional and religious levels of the *Nagas* and the *Savaras* and created an atmosphere of unity among them by the image of the Lord Jagannath. Really the Buddhists and Indrabhuti, the chief proponent of Vajrayan are remembered for using the Lord Jagannath in order to bring co-ordination among *Natha* and *Naga* alongwith *Jagant*, the God of the *Savaras*. This could bring unity of thought and religion among the Oriyas. This unique image of Lord Jagannath and the nomenclature helped the Oriyas to remain united as a race and established the Lord or Buddha as a deity with all pervading power in the world. This recognition was so wide and strong that it could command respect from every corner of the world towards the unity and integrity of Oriyas in the name of Jagannath. The ruling class used the term Jagannath to bring unity among the people and used it to expand their power and authority. This resulted in bringing Lord Jagannath from the forests to the close quarters of the capital by the state power. The synthesized image of Lord Jagannath who was primarily meant to bring both religion and social unity one day, became the medium of strengthening army and influence of different rulers.

It is learnt from the historical facts that being migrated from Sripur region of Mahakosal, the Kings of Soma and Pandu dynasties, at first established their kingdom with capital at Sonepur. They gradually spread their kingdom all over Orissa. By the grace of Lord Jagannath they could win the hearts of the Oriyas. In the contemporary society of Orissa, Lord Jagannath became the only God of the people. It is described in *Kalikapurana* (5th centry AD) that "*Jagannathmodresam*



*tatra Pujayet*".<sup>7</sup> In other words Jagannath is universally accepted and worshipped as the chief of the Gods.

As described in *Madalapanji*, Yajatikeshari searched for Lord Jagannath in order to win the hearts of the people of Orissa just after his coronation as '*Pataraja*'. *Madalapanji* records, "Hereafter *Keshari* became *Pataraja*, the first *Pata* was *Yajatikeshari*. This king was very kind and generous. He asked the monks and the Brahmacharins, Brahmins of the whereabouts of Lord Jagannath of Orissa."<sup>8</sup>

According to this description of *Madalapanji* Yajatikeshari brought Jagannath from Jharakhand and worshipped him in a patol (temple) of 38 cubits in the sea-shore. After being transferred from Jharakhand to coastal region Buddha in the guise of Jagannath was worshipped by his original worshippers of Jharakhand. This arrangement was made due to the pressure from people. In spite of new establishment of Lord Jagannath the same old Buddhist tradition was followed while worshipping.

In 300-400 A.D. after the revival of the *Bhagavat Dharma* or *Avatarad* duly patronised by the Gupta dynasty, it influenced the kings of Soma dynasty who had migrated from Sirpur of Chhattishgarh State. After coming from Sirpur they occupied the kingdom of Sonepur and spread the culture of *Bhagavat Dharma* and *Avataravad*. Because of their influence, the people of Orissa started worshipping the Gods Nrusingha and Madhava. Although Lord Jagannath was established in the sea shore of Puri the kings of Soma and Ganga dynasty of later age became partly successful in their efforts in recognising Jagannath as Srikrishna, the

beloved God of *Bhagavat Dharma*. Paying due regards to this event the renowned poet Jayadev (1200 A.D.) composed -

"*Nindasi Yangya bidherahha Sruti Jatam  
Sadaya hrudaya darshita Pashughatam  
Keshav dhruta - Buddhaa Sarira, Jaya Jagadisha Hare*"  
(*Shree Jayadev-Geeta Govindam, Dasavatara stotram*)

In this way Lord Buddha, the beloved God of Buddhists is seen in the guise of Lord Jagannath every where. But this process of co-ordination took a lot of time to emerge to the present state.

In spite of the hard efforts made by the kings of Soma and Ganga dynasties for recognising Buddha in the guise of Jagannath as Krishna the contemporary society could not accept it completely. Therefore, in 1500 A.D. after three hundred years of Jayadev the poet Sarala Das described Buddha as Jagannath.<sup>9</sup>

It is clear from this description of poet Sarala Das that kings of Soma and Ganga dynasties who came from outside tried their best to influence the people of Orissa to accept *Bhagavat Dharma Avatarabad*, but they accepted Jagannath only as Buddha. This sort of people's thought is being reflected in the writings of Sarala Das. That is why Sarala Das is widely known as "Adikavi" of the land of Orissa. It is crystal clear that the people of Orissa worshipped Jagannath as Buddha till the time of Sarala Das (1500 A.D.). In the later age being patronised by the kings, Brahminism became influential, as a result of which '*Bhagavat Dharma*' became more powerful and Buddha in the form of Jagannath was given recognition more as Srikrishna, the devoted God of *Bhagavat Dharma*. In spite of all these events even now the influence of Buddhism is reflected in the way of worshipping Lord Jagannath as usual.



In order to establish unity among different tribes of Orissa so far as thought, religion and society are concerned, the image of Lord Jagannath was used as a symbol. In this synthecised system of controversial thoughts even a sort of integration could be maintained. In the opinion of the historians, all the events of *Mahabharata* War took place in the crisis of *Dwapara* and *Kali* era.

The incarnation of Lord Shrikrishna of the epic *Mahabharata* took place with a specific aim and that is announced by Lord Shrikrishna himself in the *Bhagavat Gita*-

*"Yada yada hi dharmasya glanirbhabati bharata  
Abhyuthanmadharmasya tadatmanam Srujamyaham  
Paritranyaya Sadhunam binashaya cha duskrutam  
Dharma Sansthanarthaya Sambhabami Yugeyuge".*

It means the main aim of incarnation of Lord Shrikrishna was to get rid of both the vices and the enemies of this earth and to give protection and justice to the saints. On the other hand Lord Buddha preached and spread his religion with an aim to get rid of the fear of old age, disease and death from minds of the men by giving guidance to them. Although we do find diferences in the (incarnation) births and aims of these two great men of *Dwapara* and *Kali*, they made it possible to establish co-ordination through Lord Jagannath. It is the great poet Sarala Das, who made the successful attempt to synthecise the basic thoughts of both *Dwapara* and *Kali* through the medium of Lord Jagannath. This is reflected in different places of his composition.

*Baudha Avatara Abasya biharibu  
Dustajana mari Santhajana pratipalibu" 1531  
(Sarala Mahabharata, Musaliparva, P,109)*

*"Se Jagannatha je Sansara Uddharana  
Mlechwajana Uddharana Se baudha rupena"161  
(Sarala Mahabharata, Adiparva, 2nd pt.P.1056)*

It is no doubt the evolutionary process, the creation of Buddha and God Srikrishna of *Bhagavat Dharma*, was possible only because of the identification of an image and symbol of Buddha in the guise of Jagannath. It is the opinion of most of the research scholars that only one image of Buddha in the form of Jagannath and his *Dharmadanda* or *Chakra* was being worshipped in the beginning. Consequently when the devoted God of Srikrishna of *Bhagavat Dharma* was symbolised as Buddha the images of Balabhadra and Subhadra were being imagined and arrangements were made for the worship of the four images (*Chaturdha murti*).<sup>10</sup> That is why Sarala Das started saying in his *Mahabharata* regarding *Chaturdhamurti* of Lord Jagannath.

Thus the cult of Lord Jagannath is the product of an evolutionary process, it started with the worship of the Serpent God by the *Nagas*, a tribal communities, which was later embodied into the *Khamba* (Log) being worshipped by the *Savaras* belonging to a different tribal community. Later on Lord Buddha, who was the champion of equality and social justice was worshipped in the form of Lord Jagannath. The rulers of the state used every opportunity to use the name of Lord Jagannath to bring unity among the people and it helped them to derive power and authority. The Somavamsi ruler popularised the cult of *Avatarabad* and Lord Shrikrishna was incorporated in the cult of Jagannath in the form of "*Chaturdhamurti*" This has been testified by the great Oriya poet Jayadev and Sarala Das. Thus Lord Jagannath is the original concept of God among the tribal people. In course of time other *Avatars* have appeared in the form of Lord Shrikrishna and Lord



Buddha. But they have been incorporated and worshipped in the form of Lord Jagannath.

The present cult of Jagannath, the Universal God is a product of socio-cultural evolution, which has accommodated various religions and tribal cultures including the concept of social equity preached by Lord Buddha. Subsequently during the reign of Rama Chandra Dev I (1738 AD) the Islamic concepts were also accommodated in the cult of Lord Jagannath (*Patitapabana*). Thus Lord Jagannath does not belong to any particular religion, caste or community. He is unique and Universal. That is why we worship Him as the *Natha* of the Universe-*Jagannath*.

#### Foot Notes:

1. Dash (Dr) Mahesh Prasad-*Sakta Sanskritira Itibruta* in Sakta Culture in Orissa, Orissa Cultural Forum (Edi.) Bhubaneswar, Grantha Mandira Cuttack-2, 1980, Page-57
2. The author says that the combined states of Kalinga, Odra, Prachi, Magadha and Bidaha were known as '*Savaristhan*' it extended from Pataliputra, the capital of Magadha to Sirpur (Sripur), the capital of Kosala and to Prakyothispur or modern Assam, which was on the north east of Magadha. (Padhi (Dr) Beni madhav- Daru Debata, Cuttack students store, June'1975, P.176 (map).
3. Sahu (Dr.) N.K. *Buddhism in Orissa*, Utkal University, 1958, P.13.
4. Rajaguru (Dr.) S.N. *Naga Itihas*, Part-1, 1958, pp. 58-59.
5. Kanungo (Dr.) H. Muktimandapa : Its Relation with Shree Jagannath Temple - A Historical

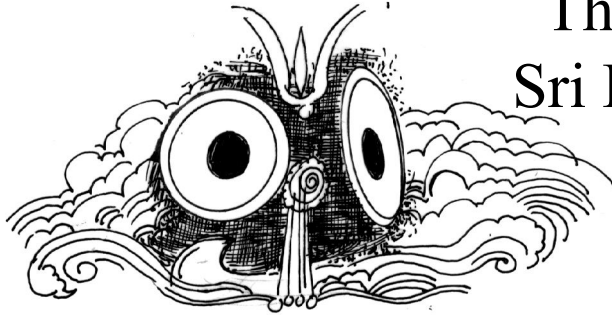
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6. Padhi, (Dr.) B- *Daru Debata*, Cuttack Students Store, 2nd Edn. 1975, P.32.
7. Sahu, (Dr.) N.K. - *Buddhism in Orissa*, Utkal University, 1958, P-38.
8. *Madalapanji (Rajabhoga Itihas)* IInd Edition, 1969, Utkal University, 5 & 6.
9. "*Baud RupeBije Shree Neela Kandare Yeka Murti Chaturdha rupa dharichhanti Damadare*" 12131  
(*Sarala Mahabharata, Madhya Prava, 2nd part, P. 836*)  
"*Dwapara ante yethi vije karibe Jagannathe Baudha rupa hoi vije karibe dasa Sahasra Varsa Parijante.*" II 89 I  
(*Sarala Mahabharata, Sabhaparva, 2nd pt., P.51*)  
*Salara Mahabharata, Virata Parva, P. 454 / Gada Parva, P. 70/ Adi Parva, 2nd Pt. P. 1056.*
10. "*Baudha rupe Vije Srineelakandare Yeka Murty chaturdha rupa dharichhanti Damadare.*" (213)  
(*Sarala Mahabharata - Madhya Parva, 2nd pt. P. 782.*)

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## The Date and Builder of Sri Purusottama Jagannath Temple at Puri

Rabi Ray

Puri, the abode of Lord Jagannath is one of the four celebrated religious centres of Hindus, situated on the shores of Bay of Bengal. Sri-Ksetra is not only famous for Sri Purusottama/Jagannath, but also for the great temple, which attracts pilgrims and visitors throughout the world. The Vimana or Garbhagriha is the largest as well as tallest surviving temple of Orissa, raising to a height of 200 feet with all the richness and plasticity of the medieval Kalinga Style of Architecture. The temple has all the four components. i.e. Vimana or Garbhagriha, Mukhasala or Jagamohana, Natamandapa and Bhogamandapa. Bhogamandapa and Natamandapa are the latter additions to the original Vimana and Jagamohana. This paper deals with the Vimana and Jagamohana of Srimandira.

The Vimana is a Pancharatha Rekhadeula, three storied and the thickness of the walls are 5.30 meters. The Jagamohana is a Pancharatha pidha deula. These gigantic structures are standing on an elevated platform of 20 feet height and enclosed by Kurma-Bedha. There are different views on the date and builder of Sri Purusottama/Jagannath Temple (Vimana and Jagamohana)

- i) According to some Puranas (Starting from Skanda Purana) the builder was Indradyumna, the king of Malava.
- ii) The Temple Chronicle, Madala Panji mentions king Yayati to be the builder of a

temple of 38 *Hata* height which became delapidated. The present temple was built by Anangabhima deva in place of delapidated temple of Yayati. According to *Ganga Vamsanucharitam Champu* and *Raja vamsavalis*, Anangabhima II was the builder of this great temple.

iii) With the discovery of Ganga copper plate grants Manmohan Chakraborty, on the basis of a particular verse credited Anantavarmana Chodaganga as the builder of the Vimana and Jagamohana. This view of Mr. Chakraborty is accepted by most of the present day scholars.

iv) Dr. S. N. Rajguru was of the opinion that Chodaganga started the construction of the great temple, but it was completed by Anangabhima II and the temple was consecrated by Anangabhima III.

The present paper differs from the above views on the basis of some newly discovered epigraphic records.

The date of "Skanda Purana" is not yet determined. The account of temple building by Indradyumna is in the chapter of 'Utkal-Khanda'. Some scholars believe that this chapter, 'Utkal Khanda' is a latter addition to the original 'Skanda-Purana', Moreover there is no historicity in the Indradyumna episode as it is full of unrealistic and supernatural stories. The account of Indradyumna is merely a legend than history.



Madala Panjis are believed to be edited during the reign of Ramachandradeva I in the 16th century. According to Madala Panjis Anangabhima II had built the temple in three years. It is beyond the imagination of the present day historians and archaeologists that the construction of the gigantic Vimana was completed in three years. Moreover Ganga stone inscriptions and copper plate grants which are more authentic records do not corroborate the aforesaid view of Madala Panji.

Most of the historians (starting from M.M. Chakraborty) have accepted Chodaganga as the builder of the present Vimana and Jagamohana on the basis of a *Prasasti*-verse of Dasagoba copper plate grant of Rajaraja III (1198 A.D.) The same verse is repeated in all the Ganga grants of his descendants discovered so far.

*"Padau yasya dharantariksam-akilam  
nabhisca sarvadisah  
srotre netrayugam ravindu-yugalam  
murddhapi ca dyaur-asau /  
Prasadam purusottamasya nrpatih  
Konama karttum Ksamah  
tasyatyadi-nrpair-upeksitam-ayam  
Cakretha Gangesvarah" //*

The first half of the verse is a simple *prasasti* or adoration of God Purusottama whose feet are the earth, navel the sky, ears the cardinal points, eyes the sun and the moon and head the heaven. The second half is historically important. Scholars including M.M. Chakraborty have interpreted the verse as follows. Previous ruling kings had neglected to construct a suitable palace (temple) for God Purusottama, thinking that who king can be able to do such task ?, which was fulfilled by Chodaganga alias Gangesvara. This interpretation is not proper. In the verse the verb "*cakre*" is used in "*lit-lakara*" (remote past tense), which suggests that the verse was

composed long after the death of Chodaganga in 1147 A.D. The composer had no direct knowledge about the fact mentioned in the verse. He had composed the verse after being heard. In the verse the word "*upeksitam*" (neglected) is not a verb rather an adjective of the temple (the object). The verse under discussion not only admits the existence of God Purusottama, but also the existence of present sky-high Vimana prior to the conquest of Utkal by Chodaganga.

Choudwar copper plate grant of Kamarnava 1147/48 A.D. was discovered in 1993 (published in Jhankar, 1994, November Issue, page 901-915). In Kamarnava's grant neither the aforesaid verse is seen inscribed nor there is any mention about the temple building activity of Chodaganga. A comparison of Kamarnava's grant with Dasagoba grant shows that after fifty years the latter grant had not only followed the writing pattern, but also copied or repeated the laudatory verses from line no 1 to 72 of the former. This is another clear proof that the verse under discussion was composed long after Chodaganga's death and was introduced in the Dasagoba grant in between the accounts of conquest of Utkal and Bengal, copied from Kamarnava's grant.

Kamarnava, the eldest son of Chodaganga was quite adult at the time of the conquest of Utkal by his father. So it was obvious that Kamarnava was the eye-witness to all the achievements of his father. If Chodaganga had built the Purusottama Temple, Kamarnava would have mentioned it in the grant as the most glorious achievement of his father without any hesitation.

The Narasimha Temple is situated at a distance of 65 feet from the gigantic Vimana to its south-east. A series of donatory inscription in Nagari and Telugu were discovered on the walls of Narasimha Temple



after deplastering in 1980. The earliest inscription of 1113 A.D. on the door-jamb of Narasimha Temple admits the existence of Narasimha Temple in 1113 A.D. Chodaganga conquered Utkal in 1108/1112 A.D. If Chodaganga constructed the Vimana after 1113 A.D. then the Narasimha Temple could not have existed at the time of the excavation of the foundation of the Vimana.

In ancient time as the construction of a stupendous temple rose in height, the practice or technical method was to surround the temple with great mound of earth, which acted as a platform from which the work could proceed further. An inclined plane or earthen ramp was then made and along this inclined ramp large block of stones were dragged up for the construction of the upper levels of the temple. If such a practice or a method was followed for the construction of 200 feet high Jagannath Temple, then the surrounding temple area with the Narasimha Temple, which was in existence since 1113 A.D. would have been buried under the mounds of earth for a pretty long time. But the inscriptions of 1113 A.D., 1121 A.D., 1126 A.D., 1131 A.D., 1133 A.D., 1136 A.D., 1150 A.D. found on the Narasimha Temple make us believe that no such construction work of Jagannath Temple was in progress during the reign of Chodaganga. From the construction point of view the present Vimana can not be a subsidiary or latter temple of Narasimha Temple.

Dr. S. N. Rajguru believes that the Narasimha Temple was the early Purusottama Temple built by king Yayati and the Vimana was built in subsequent period. Similarly the consecration of Purusottama (at Varanasi-Kataka) mentioned in the Nagari Copper plate grant of Anangabhima III 1230 A.D. is misinterpreted by Dr. Rajguru as the

consecration of Purusottama/Jagannath Temple of Puri.

In the present context it is needless to explain about the views of Dr. S. N. Rajguru which are based on misinterpretation and hypothesis.

Now the deplastering of Vimana is complete. The art and architecture of Purusottama/Jagannath Temple (Vimana) are seen similar with that of Lingaraj Temple at Bhubaneswar. The only difference is in iconography. The Purusottama/Jagannath Temple is a Vaisnavaite temple whereas the Lingaraj temple is a Saivite temple. Otherwise both temples are prototype and contemporary. The Vimana and Jagamohana of Purusottama Temple was built in Somavamsi rule in Orissa. About the builder nothing can be said at present due to the lack of authentic historical records.

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## Tulasi Kshetra Kendrapara

Er. Nirakar Mahalik



*Tulasi Kshetra* Kendrapara is one of the five holy *Kshetras* of Orissssa. It houses the temple of Lord Baladeva Jiu in the heart of this *Kshetra*. The same rites and rituals of Lord Jagannath at Puri are generally followed here which makes Kendrapara equally attractive. It is only 95 Km away from the state capital Bhubaneswar. Literature like *Brahama. Tantra* written by Vedavyas and *Padma Puran* speak the glory of this place.

Here Lord Balabhadra married Tulasi, the daughter of the demon king Kandarasura and resided here secretly. So this place is called *Tulasi Kshetra* or *Gupta Kshetra*. It is also known as *Brahma Kshatra*, *Kandarapadi* or *Kendarapada*. From the

ancient times this *Kshetra* was extended from Bay of Bengal (Kalinga Sagar) in the east, the high hill of Lalitagiri as well as the Assia mountain range in the north-west, Holy river Baitarani in the north and river Mahanadi in

the south which was once known as Uttar Tosali or UCHA (ODRA) of Hiuen-Tsang. This deltaic region is a very fertile land formed by the three major rivers of Orissa namely Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarani falling to the sea.

People of the locality are worshipping the God of Agiculture and oxen/bull for prosperity. In the medeaval Bengali literature it appears that Lord Siva is represented by a cultivator who ploughs his field, seeds sow, take out weeds, cut grass and carries it to his house on his head. We know that the wisdom of Balabhadra is that of Siva of the Universe. Hence Siva - Balabhadra is the God of Agriculture from the ancient times.



In the *Oriya Mahabharat*, Adikavi Sarala Das has described the three deities - Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath as the embodiments of *Nara*, *Bramha* and *Hari* respectively. In *Jagannath Charitamruta* by





Dibakara Das he is portrayed as "*shling Bija*", Subhadra as '*Hling Bija*' and Jagannath as '*Kling Bija*'.

According to Vedic literature, Devi Subhadra is *Kshar* (Perishable) called *Prakriti* and Baladeva, the Vedic Lord Rudra or the *Akshara* of Vedant, represent "Elemental self". Both *Kshra* and *Akshara* are sub-ordinated to Purusottama known as Jagannath, the Eternal Unburn as also the cosmic streaming forth.

In *Durga Saptasati*, the triad have a tantric eulogization. According to Tantrik devotees Balabhadra is none other than Saraswati, the Goddess of Knowledge. Subhadra is worshipped as the divine expression of Mahalaxmi, The Goddess of Wealth, Jagannath is the divine expression of Lord Vishnu, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe. Not only this the Tantric devotees also worship Balabhadra as Ugratara, Subhadra as Bhubaneswari and Jagannath as Dakhinakali.

There are several myths and legends surrounding Lord Baladeva Jiu at Kendrapara. Legend records that Kandarasura, a demon king, destroyer of *Jajnas*, was ruling over the area surrounding Lalitagiri and Assia mountain ranges. *Tulasikshetra Mahatmya* reveals that he lived near Lalitagiri - Alutigiri and was terrifying people. Lord Balabhadra defeated him in a fight as a result of which he left the place, went to Kapilas mountain near Dhenkanal and lived in disguise in the nearest mountain ranges as he was an ardent devotee of Lord Siva. Lord Balabhadra thoroughly searched every nook and corners of the hill and lastly ploughed the hill with his plough (*hala*) as a result of which one perennial spring emerged from the hill, which is now called '*Langal Siar Jharana*' (spring of the plough).

After persuading him from Kapilas, Lord Balabhadra killed the wicked demon Kandarasura in a fight and threw his slain body all over nearby places by cutting it into pieces.

It is a popular belief among the local people that the scattered body was fallen at Asureswar, Balagandi, Kamar Khandi, Navi Khanda which places are named after the head (*Aswa Sira*), trunk (Gandi of Aswa) waist (*Kamar-Khanda*) and *Naval* (peice of Navi) of the demon Kandarasura respectively. It is also belived that the Siva temples of Swapneswar at Kantia, Lankeswara of Gualisingh, Bileswar of Kagal were founded by Baladeva over the face, neck and waist of the demon respectively, Balagandi, the place where the trunk of Kandarasura had fallen is called *Kandara padi* (Kendrapara). One menhir with some *Tulasi* trees were existing there.

Before killing the demon, Lord Balabhadra at first killed Madhudaitya, the chief military general of Kandarasura at Lalitagiri through his war weapon plough. The blood gushing out from the body of the general formed a river named Madhusagar (now Gobari river) which flow towards east by the side of Kandarasura Menhir and ultimately meet the sea.

Lord Balaram married Tulasi, the only daughter of Kandarasura on the 12th day of the bright fortnight in the month of Magha which is observed with pomp and ceremony every year as '*Tulasi bibaha day*' (marriage day of Tulasi) in the Baladeva Jiu Temple, Kendrapara. The place where this marriage was performed is renamed as *Tulasi Kshetra*.

It is said that after the death of Balarama his dead body was transformed into a Manibigraha (stone image) which was



worshipped by *Devatas* at the door of *Patalpuri* which is identified with Lalitagiri in *Dwapar Yuga*. When *Kali yuga* appeared *Buddha Dharma* (Buddhism) spread over the area. *Devatas* kept the image of Balabhadra in disguise under water of Madhusagar (river Gobari). After Gopal Siddha Das, a cowherd boy discovered the stone image of Balabhadra near Siddha Sarobar it is worshipped at Kendrapara it is worshipped as Siddha Baladev Jiu after the name of Siddha Das, who discovered the deity first.

In the 13th century A.D., king Anangabhima III of Ganga dynasty constructed one temple for the worship of Lord Siddha Baladeva Jiu near present *Kacheri* of old Kendrapara town which is about 60 hands (28 mtrs) high over a *vedi* (*Mandapa*) constructed previously.

Some historians are of the opinion that stone image of Lord Baladeva Jiu on a plain and square *mandapa* (length 75 *dhanu*) was worshipped by Kalyan Devi, the queen of Madhav Raj of Sailodbhava dynasty during 7th century. This *Mandapa* was renovated by 2nd Indradyumna Yayati Keshari and was consecrated by the Brahmans brought from Jajpur.

Other historians differ from the above views and in their opinion, one *Mandapa* (*vedi*) was constructed during the period of Bhaumakaras for the worship of Lord Balabhadra at Kendrapara and subsequently reconstructed by the Ganga monarch Anangabhimadeva-III as stated above. Mention have been made of the Talcher Copper Plate of Sivakaradeva, the king Gayada of Bhaumakara dynasty, in which we come across the name of Hari, Damodar, Haladhar, Madhusudan, Govinda, Tribikram,

Gobardhana, Janardana, Purusottama, Sudarsana, Balabhadra, Vamana, Vasudeva, Visnu, Narayan, Narasimha and Padmanava. Thus the period of Bhaumakara rule is very important for Orissa from the religious point of view. For the first time we come across the name of Balabhadra in the Inscriptions of Orissa.

The original temple was demolished by Khan-i-Duran (1660-1667 AD), the then *Subedar* of Orissa during the time of Moghal Emperor Aurangazeb on 2nd April 1661 AD. He constructed one *Masjid* on the foundation of the dismantled temple in the year 1663 A.D.

Devotees of Lord Baladev Jiu, took the deity in disguise in a boat through the river Govari and kept the deity in a secret place near Baranga (Chhedara) Jungle. Afterwards it was shifted to Balarampur village near Luna river at *Sakhi Bata*. So this place is sacred for the Hindus.

The present shrine of Siddha Baladeva Jiu was constructed during the Maratha rule in Orissa (1761 AD) of Ichhapur (Kendrapara). It was constructed by the king of Kujanga, Raja Gopal Sandha and *Zamidar* (land lord) of Chhedara *killah*, Srinivas Narendra Mahapatra. One saint (*Santha*) Gopi Das and Sairatak Giri convinced the then Maratha Chief Janoji and constructed the *Jagamohan*, *Bhoga Mandapa* of the main temple, temple of Gundicha and compound wall. The *Viman* and *Jagamohan*, are built in *pidha* style of temple architecture. Afterwards *Mukti Mandap*, *Ananda Bazar*, *Bhandaraghar* (store house), Gouranga temple, Basudeva Temple and Garuda pillar were constructed inside the temple enclosure. Painting of some Hindu iconography was done on the roof ceiling and inner wall of *Jagamohan*. The entire area surrounding the



Lord Baladeva Jau temple is traditionally known as *Tulasi Kshetra*. The image of Tulasi Devi is worshipped in a temple near village Gochha on the northern side of the road from Kendrapara to Ichhapur.

The stone image of Lord Balabhadra and wooden idols of Jagannath, Subhadra and Sudarsan are also worshipped according to the rituals of the temple in Lord Jagannath at Puri.

*Tulasi Kshetra* (Kendrapara) and its adjoining areas were once upon a time a centre of Buddhist and Saivite cultures. Some of the Buddhist and Brahmanical images recovered from here have been preserved in the Indian Museum at Calcutta (Kolkata). This place is very near to Lalitagiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri where famous university of Puspagiri and Buddha Vihar flourished since 3rd-2nd century B.C. Therefore the entire deltaic area from Lalitagiri to the river Mahanadi and the sea is full of scattered Buddhist antiquity. Zamindar of Chhedaragarh also was worshipping one of the Buddha images in the dense forest of *Baranga Jhada* inside a temple facing north. The present Siddha Baladeva Jau temple, Kendrapara was constructed on the same spot. Now the old image of Buddha in the campus is being worshipped as the father of Lord Baladeva named Basudeva.

Car festival of Lord Balabhadra in the *Tulasi Kshetra* is celebrated on the 2nd day of bright fortnight in the month of *Asadha* just like the Car Festival of Puri. He moves in a magnificent chariot called 'Taladhwaaja'. His chariot is 39 feet (12 mtrs) in height and 24 feet (7.5 mtrs) in diameter having 14 wheels. Two black and two white horses are fitted in front of the chariot.

*Zamindar* of Chhedaragarh was performing all royal duties of Puja like

*Chherrah Panhara* etc. After the death of the Zamindar, his widow queen sold all the rights of the temple to the then *Zamindar* of Kendrapara, the Radheshyam Narendra family. Now the *Chherrah panhara* rituals before the Lord Balabhadra is performed by the successors of late Radheshyam Narendra. *Bhoga* like 'Rasabali' is famous in Baladeva Jau temple. Besides this, the festival of *Makar Sankranti*, *Mahabishuva Sankranti* (*Pana Sankranti*), *Chandan yatra*, *Snana Purnima*, *Shravan Purnima* (*Baladeva Janma* and *Magha Sukla Dwadasi* (*Tulasi Bibaha*)) are some of the main festivals observed in the Baladeva Jau temple at Kendrapara.

*Tulasi Kshetra* Kendrapara is very much proud of poets, writers and artists like Achutananda Goswami, Madhu Das of Kantia Matha, Phagu Das, Bhikari Dibakar, Baikuntha Mahapatra, Baisya Sadasiva, Bhakta Kabi Gangadhar Narendra Bipra Madhuri of 16th century, Ramasankar Roy, Gourisankar Roy, Golaka Pradhan (2nd Bhanja), Kuntala Kumari Sabat, Bidyut Prava Das etc. There are also many renowned poet and writers those have contributed to the Oriya literature like late Arta Ballabha Mohanty, Kahnu Charan Mishra, Surendra Mohanty. Bhikari Charan Pattanaik, Kabi Prasad Mohapatra and renowned poet Sitakanta Mahapatra, Dipak Mishra, Sribatschha Nath, Nimai Charan Pani, Sukadev Sahu etc., poet and dramatist Natyarathi Gopal Dash, historian Pratap Kumar Roy and ancestors of Vyasakabi Fakir Mohan Senapati also hailed from this place.

Cultural contribution of *Tulasikshetra* towards *yatra*, Drama, Ramalila, *Chaiti Ghoda Nacha*, Idol dance (*Kandhei Nacha*) *Nama Sankirtan* and *Pala* are praiseworthy. *Pala gayak* Nidhi Nath, Mani Nath, Hari Nath, Narayan Kar, Keshab Kar, Golak Das,



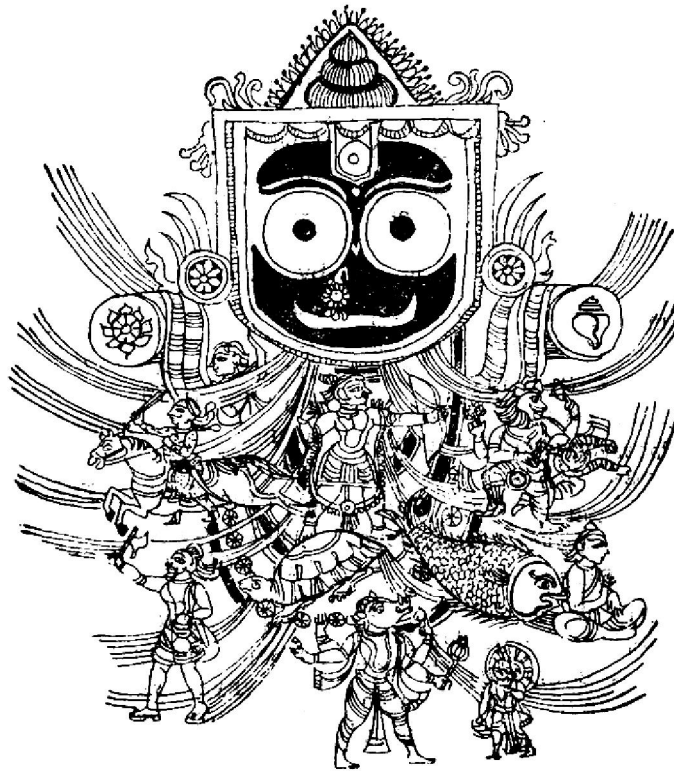
Niranjan Kar, Parikshit Nanda, Rabi Mishra Bhagabata Panda , Anadi Nayak and about 70 or more *Pala gayaks* are pride of this place. Singers like Nimai Charan Harichandan, *Bhajan Samrat* Bhikari Bal, Violine artist Sunakar Sahu, Rakhil Mohanty, Dibakara Sahu and many others are glory of this *Tulasi Kshetra*.

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## The Story of Jagannath Temple and Car Festival at Ranapur



*Braja Paikaray*

There were six districts and twenty six Princely States in Orissa when it became a separate state on 1st April 1936. Ranapur was one of the Princely States. India achieved its independence on 15th August 1947 and after merger of Princely States with Orissa in the year 1948 Ranapur Gadjat became a Tahasil of Puri district under Nayagada subdivision. After the 1993 re-organisation Ranapur has become a Tahasil under Nayagada district.



Settlement operations of the Ranapur Ex-State area in the district of Puri (1943-1952 A.D) observes and writes as follows : "Udhab Singh built a temple of Lord Jagannath at Ranapur and his wife built the Mukhasala. He then built the temple of Maninag Durga on the top of the hill. He started twelve Jatras of Jagannath at Ranapur for his darsan. This Raja died in 1363 A.D. So the temple of Lord Jagannath and Maninag Durga were built towards the middle of 14th century."

In the Pre-independence era when Ranapur was a Princely State, the present Jagannath temple and the temple of Maninag Durga at the top of Maninag hill were built in the middle of 14th century during the reign of Raja Udhab Singh Narendra (1324-1363 A.D.).

Regarding the construction of Lord Jagannath temple at Ranapur, Mr. G.N.Singh in his Final Report on the Survery and

It would not be out of place to mention here an interesting legend regarding the establishment of Sri Jagannath temple at Ranapur which is as follows.

" Raja Udhab Singh Nerendra was a great devotee of Lord Jagannath of Puri and use to go to Sri Khetra on horse back from Ranapur every day for darsan of the Lord. From Ranapur the King goes to Puri enroute Jankiagada on horse back and there he changes



the horse for Puri and after having the darsan of Sri Jagannath returns back to Ranapur. Once open a time the king went upto Jankiagada but due to flood in the river could not be able to go to Puri for darsan of the Lord. But while the river became normal the king proceeded to Puri and sat for 7 days under the banyan tree in the temple premises without taking any food and water and prayed Lord Jagannath to remove all obstacles from his way which debarred him for darsan of the Lord. Lord Jagannath became pleased with the sincere and deep devotion of the Raja of Ranapur. The Lord ordered Gajapati Prataparudra Dev in a dream that out of 16 divine Kalas of Lord Jagannath one Kala would go to Ranapur as a work of boon in favour of King Udhav Singh and the devotee Raja would build a Jagannath temple at Ranapurgada and would observe the seva puja of the deities as per the custom and tradition of Puri Jagannath temple. The next morning Gajapati Prataparudra Dev met the Raja of Ranapur in the premises of Puri Jagannath temple and offered him the duty of Madhab Goswami and honoured him with Pata saree on his head and the title of "Narendra" as per the order of the Lord."

Therefore we can come to the conclusion that during the reign of Udhav Singh Narendra the temple of Lord Jagannath was built and the Nitis of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Ma Subhadra and their Seva Puja are observed accordingly since that period till today. It is also very interesting to note here that besides the aforementioned bigrahas of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra three small deities also adorn the golden throne who are known as "Ghar babus".

As per the version of Sri Rabi Nanda, the present Chief Sevayat of Ranapur Jagannath temple, at 7.30 A.M. the "Abakash" or "Nitya Karma" of the deities are being

observed and at 8 A.M. the "Ballav Dhup" is offered in which the "Curd" and "Lia Muan" are included. At 12.30 P.M. the "Sakal Dhupa" is offered to the deities which comprises of Rice, Dal, Curry, Sag, Besar, Mahur, Pickle and Payas. The deities go for "Pahuda bije" after the "Sakal dhup" and wake up at 3 P.M.

At 7 P.M. in the evening the "Alati" is made as per the custom and tradition of the temple. The Bramhins called "Patri" and "Padhiary" use to provide Alati stick, Pidha, Ghanti and mirror, where as the Samanta Bramhin chants Mantra and observe Seva Puja of the deities. A person belonging to Mali Caste use to clean the temple precinct and provides water and Tulasi at the time of Sevapuja of the deities.

At 8 P.M. the deities are offered "Sankhudi Bhoga" in which Puli (a special type of cake prepared out of cheese, ghee, Biri and coconut) and "Enduli" are included. After 9 P.M. the "Bada Singhar dhupa" is offered to the deities which comprises of "Sarapuli" and "Khaja". At 10 P.M. the deities use to go to bed which is called as "Pahuda bije".

As per custom and traditions of Ranapur Jagannath temple, out of the total Bhog Prasad, the sebayat famlies are entitled to get fifty percent, the royal family gets twenty-five percent and rest of "Bhog Prasad" is meant for common devotees of Lord Jagannath. This costum is still in vogue in the temple of Sri Jagannath of Ranapur.

That besides the deities of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Maa Subhadra the deities of Sri Harihareswar, Brundaban Behari Dev, Braja Behari Dev, Radhakanta Dev, Mahalaxmi, Saraswati and Sri Ganesh have also adorned their respective temples and places as "Parswa Devatas" or "associate



deities" in the Jagannath temple precinct of Ranapur. The Devasnan Mandap is also existing in the Jagannath temple premises meant for bathing of the Lords.

Following the customs and traditions of Puri Jagannath temple twelve Jatras are being observed at Ranapur Jagannath temple. Though the Samanta Bramhins were honoured by the Raja of Ranapur, the Pujari Bramhins were not provided with any thing for their service to the Lord. Further the king was compelling the Pujari Bramhins to perform "Suar Bethi".

Some times while the king was remaining absent from Ranapur palace and was staying at Chandapur place in festive occasions the Pujari Bramhins were walking the whole way from Ranapur to Chandapur carrying the "Bhog Prasad" in the night after the "Sandhya Dhup" of Jagannath temple. They were also carrying the "Bhog Prasad" to the residence of Agadhu Routray of village Jadupur who was the Dharma Putra (god son) of Ranapur King.

In 1943, Bamadev Rath, the then Dewan and Superintendent of Ranapur Princely State had abolished the "Suar Bethi" custom due to the royal power vested on him. Because, after brutal killing of the British Political Agent Major R.L. Bazelgette on 5th January 1939 by the mob, the king of Ranapur was divested of his royal power by the British Govt. and due to imposition of Court of wards the Dewan and Superintendent was enjoying all the powers of the king in Ranapur from the year 1941 to 1945.

During the reign of Raja Sarangadhar Bajradhar Narendra Mohapatra (1727-1754 A.D.) the Car Festival of Ranapur had started for the first time and is continuing till the present time.

For manufacturing the chariots the "Katha Anukul" is performed on the day of "Akshay Trutiya" in the month of Jestha. The holy timbers are generally collected from the jungle of Barbara, Randa, Girinda, Bandhamunda and Jamuganda under Ranapur.

After the merger of Ranapur Princely State with Orissa it became a Tahasil and the Tahasildar is acting as the ex-officio Executive officer of Jagannath temple who is responsible for the smooth management of the Car Festival at Ranapur. Therefore under the direct control and supervision of Ranapur Tahasildar the customs and traditions of Car Festival is organised and maintained. The Tahasildar after providing the required holy timbers for manufacturing of the chariots, the concerned carpenters of Ranapurgada, Siko, Rajsunakhala, Lekhanpur, Gopalpur and Majhian Khand are called for to start the building of Rathas. The carpenters complete the building of full fledged chariots before the day of Srigundicha. The Tahasildar also provides the holy ropes and other necessary articles for pulling of the chariots. The Raja of Ranapur comes out from the palace in a procession alongwith *Chhatra*, *Chamar*, and *Masal* with royal splendour on the day of Srigundicha and performs the holy *Chhera Panhara* in the chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Maa Subhadra.

During the reign of the kings when Ranapur was a Princely State, the subjects were compelled to perform "Ratha Bethi" for two months till the end of Ratha Jatra. (*Bethi* means compulsory wage-free labour done by the subjects of Ranapur and other Princely states of Orissa). No body can think of *Bethi* in a democracy. But in the pre-independence period the evil practice of *Bethi* was prevalent in all the Princely States including Ranapur.



The subjects who perform *Bethis* were called "*Bethia Praja*" and those ill-fated persons were compelled by the royal administration to collect and carry the holy timbers on their own shoulders and bullock-carts meant for manufacturing of the chariots for car festival. The *Bethia Prajas* were also collecting the ropes meant for pulling the holy chariots of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra, Sudarsan and Madan Mohan. During the reign of the Kings five chariots were built in Ranapur Princely State. The Sepoys of the king were free to beat the "*Bethia Prajas*" mercilessly at their own sweet will for swift pulling of the chariots. The rich and respected subjects of Ranapur were bribing the Chowkidars, sepays and Darogas to exclude them from "*Ratha Bethi*".

For abolition of the evil practice of "*Ratha Bethi*", "*Suar Bethi*", "*Sadak Bethi*", "*Paridhi Bethi*", "*Palace Bethi*", Bheti, Nazarana and human Sacrifice before "*Maninag Durga*" and to protect and preserve the human dignity of the subjects the young revolutionary leader, Dibakar Parida and Raghunath Mohanty had raised their voice against the tyrant King, Dewan, Daroga and Amalas and had organised the *Ranapur Praja*

Andolan. In course of events the British Political Agent interfered in Ranapur agitation and was killed by the mob. The young leaders were hanged due to the joint conspiracy of the British Government and the then king Krushna Chandra Narendra Bajradhar Mohapatra.

But the life sacrifice of Saheed Ragh-



Dibakar have yielded the result of human dignity in Ranapur. The Jagannath temple is very well existing at Ranapurgada and the Car Festival is performed with much enthusiasm by the people at

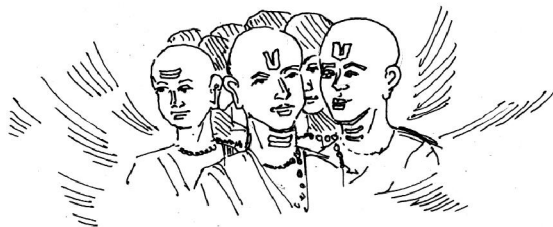
present but the evil custom of "*Ratha Bethi*" and "*Suar Bethi*" are no more there in Ranapur area.

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## The Patlinga Copper Plate Grant Inscription of Dandi Mahadevi

*S.N.Girish*

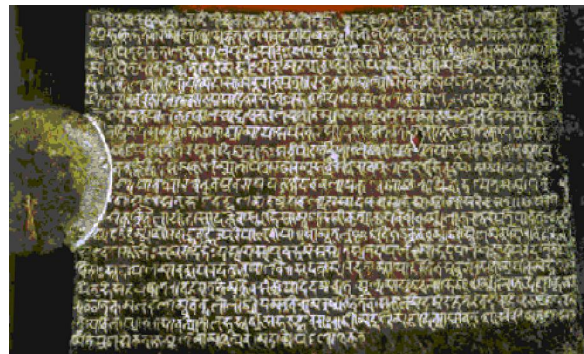
The Patlinga copper plate grant inscription brought to light in April 2006 has thrown new light on the history of Bhaumakara dynasty and the antiquity of Athagarh region. The inscription was discovered in an excellent state of preservation while one Trilochan Pradhan, a farmer, was renovating a dug well in his paddy field in the revenue village of Patlinga, near Athagarh town.

Issued by Bhaumakara queen Dandi Mahadevi, the Patlinga plate is the latest of all her inscriptions discovered so far. The Banpur plate of Dandi Mahadevi had been issued in the Bhauma era 187, whereas the present charter was issued on the occasion of Vishuva Samkranti in the Bhauma year 190, which corresponds to 926 A.D. Thus this inscription extends the chronological limit of Dandi Mahadevi's reign for three more years.

The inscription sheds new light on the administrative formations of Bhaumakara dominions. Dandi Mahadevi is said to have granted the village called Tadata Grama situated in Kontolo Khanda within Santa Mandala under the Dakshina Tosali division of her kingdom in favour of Bhattaputra Daddananda, a learned Brahmin of Kasyapa gotra. The charter begins with a verse

describing the city of Guhesvarapataka from where it was issued. Several other Bhauma documents refer to Guhesvarapataka as a place where the victorious Skandhavara of the reigning monarch is said to have been situated. The word Skandhavara implies a royal cantonment or a capital city. D.C. Sircar locates Guhesvarapataka at about the modern Jajpur. He avers, "The kings of this family granted lands in northern and southern Tosala, the former indicating the Balasore Cuttack region (sometimes with a part of the Midnapur district of West Bengal) and the latter including parts of Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam districts."

Whereas other Bhauma charters mention "Vishaya" as an administrative division intermediate to Mandala and Khanda, the instant inscription carries no mention of Vishaya. One of the Ganjam plates of Dandi





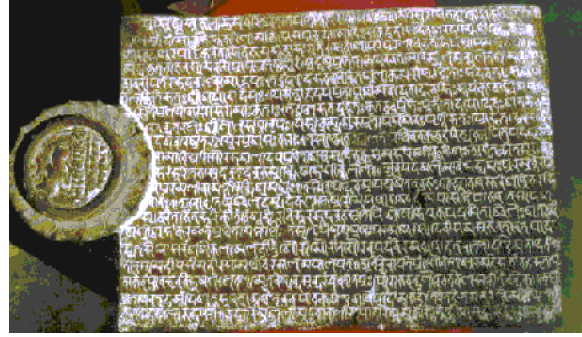
Mahadevi records the grant of a village in the Purva Khanda of the Varadakhanda vishaya in the Kongoda Mandala. On the basis of this, D.C.Sircar seems to suggest that Khanda was designated particularly by its geographical direction like Purva (eastern) and Paschima (western). But the mention of Kontolo Khanda in Patlinga inscription proves that Khandas were also named after the headquarter town, apart from the geographical direction.

The topographical and social description of Kontolo Khanda in the Patlinga plate agrees with the features of the modern Konthol village within Athagarh NAC. The Patlinga village, whence the inscription was discovered, is situated only four kilometers away from Konthol. The Konthol village is a populous habitation with an ancient Brahmin Sasan. Several archeological remains of Konthol like the ancient images of Chamunda (locally known as Dakshina Chandi), Manjusri and Jaina Tirthankaras corroborate the antiquity of the place.

The Santa Manadala ('Santa' originally means a holy person) can be satisfactorily identified with the present Athagarh region, which is replete with ancient rock-cut caves carved on the hillocks for the use of monks, marking out the region as a seat of religion and asceticism.

As regards Tadata Grama, there is no village extant by that name. The reason could be that during 18th century the Gadajat kings of Athagarh renamed several villages in Vaishnavite tradition.

When compared with other grant inscriptions of Dandi Mahadevi, the Patlinga plate is a mere reiteration of the genealogy, religious affiliation and the official hierarchical structure of the Bhaumakara dynasty, with no



variation. It mentions officials like Mahasamanta, Kumaramatya, Auparika, Vishayapati, Tadayuktaka, Dandapashika, *et al.*

The early Bhaumakara kings were Buddhists adorned with titles like Paramopasaka, Paramasaugata and Paramatathagata. But towards the end of Bhauma rule, the queens are endowed with Hindu epithets: Dandi Mahadevi is styled as Parama mahesvari, Paramabhattarika and Paramesvari. Therefore, the beginning of the end of Buddhism in Orissa can be traced to the transition in religious affiliation of Bhauma rulers. As stated in the Patlinga inscription, Dandi Mahadevi was a devout Saivite who granted Tadata village together with the subjects such as Tantuvaya (weavers), Gokuta (milkmen) and Saundika (vintners) to a Brahmin. A ruler practising Hinduism granting an entire village, along with its castes, in Santamandala (named so due to its religious character) to a learned Brahmin represents propagation of Hindu socio-religious order in a region of religious prominence. Therefore, the decline of Buddhism in Orissa, which is attributed to Somavamsi and Ganga rule, should actually be traced back to Bhauma times.

As in other Dandi Mahadevi's charters, in the Patlinga inscription also, the genealogy



begins with the illustrious King UnmattaSimha, and also mentions the ascendancy of queen Gauri Mahadevi, and subsequently of her daughter Dandi Mahadevi, whose virtuous reign has been eulogised in glorious terms. There has been no mention of the marital status of Dandi Mahadevi in any of the inscriptions discovered so far. That a princess was enthroned in the 10th century A.D and her reign was celebrated by her subjects is a monumental tradition bequeathed by the Bhaumakaras, unparalleled in ancient Indian history. The fact that generations of royal women could rise to the imperial throne and shine in administrative

brilliance during the Bhauma period, should find proper appreciation in the gender studies of ancient Indian history. The Patlinga copper plate of Dandi Mahadevi has once again reminded us that the ethos of equality in Oriya society is deep-rooted and time-honoured.

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## Lord Jagannath - The Emblem of Cosmic Consciousness

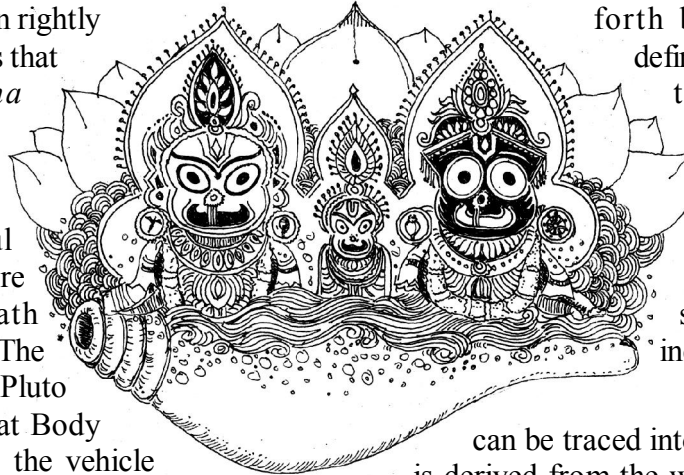
Dr. Chinmayee Satpathy

*Ek Brahman ditiya nasti. Ahom Brhmasmi.* The fundamental truth of *Adweitabad* of Hinduism propagated by *Adiguru Sankaracharya* is that the *Atma* or Soul and the *Paramatma* are one and inseparable. When the soul attain *Nirbikalpa Samadhi* the individual consciousness is fully absorbed into supreme consciousness without any sense of duality and the soul never parish as it is completely assimilated into the absolute. It has been rightly said by the intellects that *Rathe tu Bamana drustwa punarjanma na vidyate.* In Upanisad the Soul means *Bamana* where the Lord Jagannath represents the Soul. The Greek philosopher *Pluto* has also defined that Body of the individual is the vehicle or the carrier of the Soul, where the body represents the *Yana* i.e the Chariot. The whole irony is that *Atmadarshan* is the highest kind of realisations for attainment of ultimate salvation.

According to *Sanatana Dharma* among the four most important holy shrines of Hindus, *Puri* or *Shree Khetra* is the most important pilgrim centre where Lord Jagannath

*Balabhadra* and *Subhadra* reside. The origin of Lord Jagannath can be traced into the hoary past most probably to the age of pre-history and the cult of Lord Jagannath is *Prak-Vedic* derived from the oldest civilization of the world. For which it has been rightly said that the uniqueness of Jagannath Cult is that all the old religions and sects of the world are assimilated in this Cult. Many arguments and counter arguments have been put forth by the scholars for defining the truth regarding the origin of Lord Jagannath from various sources like Jainism, Buddhism, Tribal origin or from *Veda & Brahminical* sources since its very inception.

Some says the origin can be traced into the *Jaina* cult. *Jaina* is derived from the word *Jin* which means *Nirgrantha* i.e to conquer over wishes and desires in order to attain *Nirvana*. The *Jaina Gurus* are called *Nathas* like *Adinath*, *Parswanath*, *Rusavanath*. According to which Jagannath is *Jagat Nath* that means the *Swamy* or the Lord of entire universe. Jagannath Cult is the combination of the two major sects of *Jainas* i.e *Sunyavadi* and *Atmavadi*. The scholar like *Adiguru Sankaracharya* the upholder of







Hinduism says Jagannath is the incarnation of Lord Buddha the last Tenth *Avatara* (Kalki *Avatara*) of *Dasavatara* of Lord Jagannath. Buddha has been acknowledged as one of the *Avataras* of Vishnu. Again the four dimensional *Stupa* of Lord Buddha is identified with Lord Jagannath since he is the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Historians say Puri was an ancient seat of Buddhism. After the conquest of Kalinga by *Samrat Ashoka*, Buddhism was widely spread and gained its popularity after getting the royal patronage. Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang also described that the cult of Buddhism flourished in Orissa in 7th Century A D. and in pre Christian Era Buddhism was having strong foothold in Orissa.

Regarding tribal origin of Lord Jaganath it is said that Nilamadhava was worshipped by *Savara* King Viswabasu inside the dense forest of *Nilagiri* (the Blue Mountain). Subsequently Nilamadhava disappeared and reincarnated in the forms of three deities Lord Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabhadra. These three deities together symbolize Nilamadhava (*Nila-Ma-Dhaba*). *Nila* (Blue) represent Lord Jagannath, *Ma* (Mother) represents Goddess Subhadra and *Dhaba* (White) which represents Balabhadra who are worshiped at Puri. The *Savaras* became known as *Daitas* who are the hereditary servitors of Lord Jagannath. They observed the funeral rites of Lord Jagannath during *Navakalevara* (when the deities changed their body) and the sole responsibilities of *Snana Jatra* and *Sri Gundicha Jatra* are bestowed upon these *Daitas*. The worship of Lord Jagannath by *Savara* is also mentioned in *Darubrahma Gita* written by Jagannath Das in 16th Century AD and in *Deula Tola* written by Nilambara Das in 17th Century AD. Regarding origin of Lord Jagannath historian William Hunter also remarked that the aboriginal people worshipped a Blue Stone inside dense forests

as Nilamadhava the Dravidian God, who was offered *kacha* (Raw) food by the primitive tribes and with the passage of time as the Aryan elements introduced into Hinduism Jagannath he is worshipped as God of Aryan (a more civilized race) who is offered *pakka* (cooked) food. At present these two fold worship co-exist side by side. Till today the *Sauras* or *Savaras* worship trees "the Nature God" known as "Kitung" which means God for which they do not cut trees because they believe that *Kitung* dwells inside the tree. *Kitung* is otherwise known as *Jagant* and according to them Jagant is the 10th incarnation of Vishnu. As it is said the word Jagannath is not a Sanskrit word nor it is a Pali word but a derivation of Austric word *Jagant*.

Mythology is called the language of the primitive, because in Pre-Vedic age due to absence of literature it represented the temporal reflections to attain the penultimate truth if not the truth itself. Early Vedic religion is simple, natural and pure and the Early Vedic Mythology is the outcome of the intellectual inputs of numbers of scholars for generations together for which it is evolutionary in character which represents a dynamic process that converts simple Vedic God to God of a complex character by introducing various new elements into it. At the initial stage the *Griha Devata* transform to Village Deity was used to be worshipped outside the village and ultimately the God of mass is worshipped inside the temple. This signifies the merger or polarization of oriental primitive tribal tradition, the so-called little tradition in to the great tradition of Hinduism, which exist as two bipolar extremes. Hindu Mythology represents some distinctive features of Hinduism, its strengths and weaknesses from Pre-historic era. The body of Lord Jagannath is made up of Neem Wood for which he is regarded as *Daru Brahma* (wooden image). The origin of the



deity is also traced to the Vedic sources and *Bhagabat Gita*. In Vedantic literature of *Rigveda*, *Daru* is used to indicate the material from which the entire universe is made. The philosophy is the basic foundation of all religions and rituals and the superstructure in which mythology is the ornamental use for their decorations.

Lord Jagannath is also identified with the *Bijamantra* OM (the trilateral syllabi A U M). In *Upanisad Pranava* is called *Chatuspada* i.e. four faces of Brahma out of which four *Vedas* have been uttered. Four *Vedas* represents the *Chaturdhamurti*. Lord Jagannath represents *Sam Veda*, Devi Subhadra represents *Yajur Veda* and Lord Balabhadra represents *Rigveda* and Sudarshan represents *Sishu Veda* which also symbolizes *Dharma Artha Kama Moksha*, the four stages of Hinduism. One *Vijamantra* along with one God and one *Veda* formed the *Yogasadhana* for awakening of *Kundalini Shakti* for attainment of final liberation or *Moksha*. In *Rigveda* Sun is the only living God, (the Soul) who has the Chariot. Most probably the *Ratha Yatra* of Shri Jagannath symbolize the same where Sri Jagannath represents the Sun God. Jagannath represents the Night Sun, the Symbol of *Sunyabad* (the blue/black colour), Subhadra represents Morning Sun represents *Shakti* or Symbol of Power (Yellow colour) and Balabhadra represents brightness (Day Sun). The three deities symbolize three stages of senses of mind, Unconscious, Sub-conscious and the Super-consciousness. *Chaturdhamurti* represents Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshana, which symbolizes the unification of three deities. To understand the Supreme Consciousness, it needs higher sense of knowledge than any intellectual synthesis and power of reasoning of human mind what Sri Aurovindo has called the Supermind or the Supramental Consciousness.

### Jagannath & The Human Philosophy

Lord Jagannath, the so called *Istadevata* of every Oriyas whose rites and rituals are fully identified with the manly character. Sri Jagannath is identified as the Lord of Masses since the rites and rituals observed in the temple have wide similarity with day-to-day activities of common man. The different rites of the deities that are performed everyday in the temple are *Dantadhapana* (cleaning tooth), *Snana*(bath), *Chandanapuspa dharana* (flower decoration), *Bhojana* (Eat), *Sayana* (Sleep) etc. The worship of Lord Jagannath inside the temple is done in tantric method. *Tantra* means tan (body) + tar (above). The *prasada* (offering) of Lords called *Mahaprasada* or *Kaibalya*, which is other wise called *Arnabrahma* accepting it gives liberation to *Jiva*. It is prepared by traditional method of steaming for preservation of nutrient value of food as it is done in the house of common men. Besides *Chhapana Bhoga* is offered to the Lords like *Areesa*, *Kheeri*, *Chenakakara*, *Gaja*, *Podapitha*, *Rabidi* etc which are the typical foods of Oriyas. Like common man the Lords also suffer from fever for a period of fifteen days in a year after *Deva Snana Purnima* (Cermonial Baths of Lords) immediate before the *Ratha Yatra*. The significance of this occasion is that the deities take heavy bath and give darshan to devotees in the *Gajabesha* after which the three deities are kept in *Anasara* (convalesce inside the sanctum for treatment) and given some natural medicines, which are served only by the *daitas*. During this time the devotees are not allowed for the darshan of the deities.

Sri Jagannath is called the Lord of entire universe with whose name the *Bada* (grand) is always associated. He is called *Badathakura* and the *besa* is called *Badasinghara* (decorated with flowers) whose temple is *Badadeula*,



whose sewakas are called *Badapanda*, whose prasada is called *Mahaprasad*, and whose *danda* (road) is *Bada Danda*, whose *dwara* (door) is called *Singhadwara* and the *Samudra* (Sea) where he resides is called *Mahodadhi*.

### Relevance of Nabakalebara

Nabakalebara symbolizes the basic human philosophy of life and death in order to realize the eternal truth of life. As it has been illustrated in the Bhagabat Gita that just like the *Atma* of a *Jiva* takes a new birth leaving its old body so also the Lord change their old wooden body and take a new form once in twelve years when two *Ashadha* months are fall in a year. The term *Navakalevara* implies New Body (*Nava* means New and *Kalevara* means Body). The bodies of the deities are made up of Neem Wood and the Neem Tree is selected two to three months before, when the *Sevakas* of Lord Jagannath get the heavenly order from Kakatpur Mangala (the temple of the Goddess is 60km away from Puri). The significance of the Neem tree is that it contains the four symbols of *Sankha*, *Chakra*, *Gada* and *Padma* respectively, from which the body of the Lord is made. The Lords are called *Darubrahma*, which means *Daru* (the wood) containing *Brahma* (the *Paramatma* or the Supreme Soul). During the process of transfer of *Brahma* from the old wooden body to be kept in the new body, which is carved and in the darkness the *sevaka* with his eyes and hands closed bound with new cloths for which he is not allowed to feel or touch the *Brahma* directly. It has been said that the *Brahma* of Sri Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra are rare *Salagramas* where as it is quite different in Lord Sri Jagannath.

### Ratha Yatra and Its Significance

When we cast our glance into the history of Ratha Yatra it has been said that during the time of Yayati Keshari who was a Soma Vansi

king, the height of Jagannath Temple was 48hands. The three *Rathas* were pulled from *Singha Dwara* to *Balagandi*. The three Chariots with four wheels were decorated over with gold coated *Ratna Chanduas* with Golden Bowls and decorated with colourful designs and devices. The *Badyakaras* used to go in front of the *Rathas* and the devotees behind. At that time the Ratha Yatra was held for one day and gradually it continued for seven days.

In between the Ratha Yatra was not organised for many years due to the attack of Yavanas like Kalapahada, Moghuls like Aurangjeb who tried to close the festivals forever and provoked Mir Mahammad accordingly. After seeing Lord Jagannath in dream as Allah he again ordered to continue the same. But during the royal patronage of Marahatta kings the festival was promoted in many ways. Marahatta Guru Brahmachari was doing *pahandi* at the time of Car Festivals. Rani Ahalyabai constructed the road of Lord Jagannath and King Bira Kishore Dev made some major developments of the Car Festival. In the 12th Century the King Chodaganga Dev employed Rathakaras and subsequently Anangabhima Dev employed other *Sevayatas* in the services to Lords before the festivals. Thereafter the Ganga kings Narasimha Dev, Suryavamsi king Purusottam Dev brought certain major changes to make the Ratha Yatra more attractive and beautiful. The woods were brought from Tribhuban Jungle for making the cars. The heights of *Rathas* were increased to 32hands. Suryavamsi King Kapilendra Dev had constructed another *dwara* in Sri Gundicha Temple called *Nakachana Dwara* facing to the sea beach. During the rein of his grand son Pratap Rudra Dev, Gajapati himself was scavenging the *Bada Danda* during the Car Festival. *Chera Pahara* in the Chariot was started during the time of Suryavamsi king Purusottam Dev. From that day it has been continuing till date.



Ratha Yatra otherwise called *Nandighosa (Ghosa) Yatra* or *Sri Gundicha Yatra* has a wide relevance not only in India but all over the world. It is usually held in the month of July every year and continue for a period of nine days when thousands of devotees assemble at Puri for holy *darshan* of three deities, Lords Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra. The Nine days *Yatra* represents *Nabadha Bhakti*. The four main functions that are observed during the *Yatra* are *Pahandi Vije* of three Lords Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra and *Cherapahara* by the King or Gajapati of Puri and ultimately the *Ghosa Yatra* and *Bahuda Yatra* of three Lords. In *Pahandi Vije* the deities are brought by the devotees who take them to the three Chariots made for the three deities. After performance of some rites and rituals Gajapati or the king of Puri sweep the three Chariots with golden broom and sprinkle sandalwood water on the floor in order to purify them. After observance of all rituals and worships to the Lords the three Chariots are pulled by thousands of devotees on the *Badadanda* (grand road) of Puri up to Sri Gundicha temple (aunt house of Lords). On the ways they are fed *Podapitha* (specially baked rice cakes). The deities after reaching Sri Gundicha Temple give *darshan* to countless devotees every day with ten different *Besas* continuously for eight days. Then the deities return to Sri Mandir (the main temple) riding their Chariots which is popularly known as *Bahuda Yatra*. The *sevakas* who are allotted to provide different services to Lords during the *Yatras* are called *Dahuka, Chitrakaras, Khuntia, Dolia, Pahandia* etc. The three *Rathas* are called by different names and are different from each other so far as their colour and structure are concerned. The *Ratha* (Chariot) of Balabhadra is called Taladhawaja, which has fourteen wheels, and the *Ratha* of Devi Subhadra is called Devadalana, which has

twelve wheels and that Jagannath is called Nandighosa which has eighteen wheels. The colour of Taladhawaja is Green and Red, that of Subhadra is Red and Black and that of Jagannath is Red and Yellow.

*Ekam Satya Bipra Bahuda Badanti.* Truth is one but called by many names. The holy *Pranava* from which the three deities Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra originated where Subhadra symbolises *Brahma* who is the Creator and Sri Jagannath symbolises Bishnu and Siva symbolizes Sri Balabhadra the Mahakala or the Destroyer. The basic philosophy Lord Jagannath is based upon is the central ideology i.e *Bahu Jana Hitaya, Bahu Jana Sukhaya*. Jagannath cult has crossed over all the narrow barriers and compartmental divisions of the society on which the caste divisions rest. The fundamental ethics of Bhagbat Geeta illustrates that the division of society is based upon the *karma* or the deeds of the individual concerned and not upon the caste, which is ascribed to the mankind and not achieved through individual dignity and self-consciousness. After all, caste is not made for the welfare of the society rather it create divisions in the society. It preaches the democratic principles and universal brotherhood i.e equality among the un-equals. The positive philosophy of Jagannath cult teaches us that from the Raja the supreme authority of the state to the *Praja* the common man all are one and the same and there should neither be any discrimination nor any differentiation between the two, for which the cult of Lord Shri Jagannath is said to be the rarest of the rare cults and perhaps the best cult in the world, which embraces all sects and religions.

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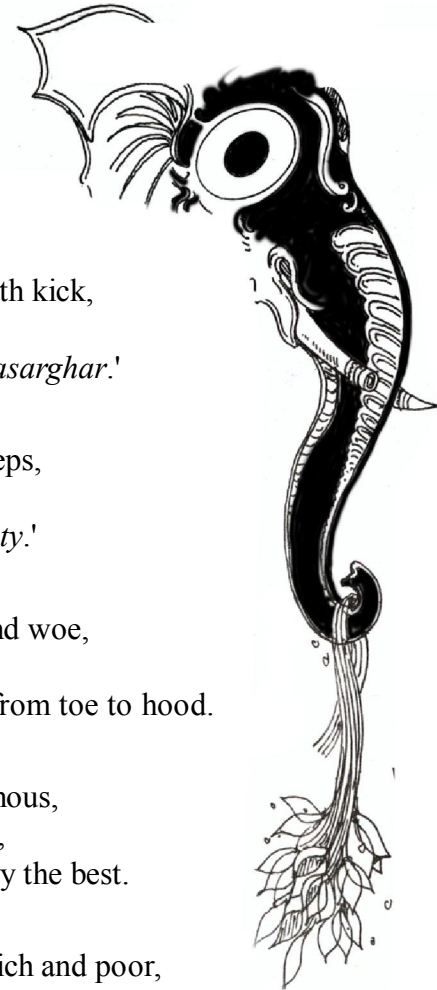
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## Jagannath Falls Sick

*Abhilash Mohanty*



The Lord has fallen sick,  
the result of un-usal bath kick,  
Catch of cold and fever,  
Forces the Lord to '*Anasarghar*.'

Fifteen days of suffering,  
the throne of gems weeps,  
The '*Singhadwar*' reels in empty,  
No diet of '*Sathiye pauty*.'

The disciples around suffers too,  
Saultry nights sweat and woe,  
The inner garments wet are removed,  
The deity Kalia cared from toe to hood.

The tactics followed rigorous,  
The deity is fit and famous,  
The activities ceases and made to rest,  
To equip future delivery the best.

He immediately after cure,  
Rushes to the masses rich and poor,  
In chariot he moves  
Rests for a week though Laxmi rebukes.

Returns to the throne  
to rule the kingdom problems prone,  
The chariot bends in broken reed  
the Lord is the Orissa spride.

3A, Station Square,  
Bhubaneswar



## Purusottama Jagannath is Purusottama Narasimha

S.S. Panda

The Supreme Lord of the Universe Jagannath is invariably called *Purusottama*, and his abode *Sriksetra* is known as *Purastama* or *Purusottama Ksetra*. The deep reverence to Lord Purusottama is found in the very beginning of the invocatory verses of the Sirpur Stone Inscription of the Panduvamsi queen Regent Vasata, who ruled Kosala as dowager queen in the first half of the 8th century A.D.

on behalf of her minor son Balarjuna (later on known as Mahasivagupta Balarjuna). In 1904, Henry Cousens discovered this inscription engraved on a thick red-coloured stone-block of the size of around four feet in length and two feet and a half in breadth. This inscription was edited by Hiralal. (*Epigraphia Indica, Volume- XI, PP- 184-202 ff*).

In the first line itself the queen paid her deep reverence to god Purusottama. (Om !

Narasimha Purusottamaya //) The three verses immediately follow, narrated the greatness of the Lord in his Narasimha *avata*ra. In translation by late Dr. Satya Narayan Rajaguru it runs like this : "(Vr.1) Let the discuss-holder's foot protect you-the foot whose sharp claws emitted a sound like that of *gunji* berries (shaken) by the gust of strong winds passing



Laksmi Narasimha, Sonapur

through the long spaces between each other, and (looked) terrific (more so) with the jaws shining with the flame of rays (emanating) from the nails, when they being lifted up, tore through the mass of dark clouds in the sky and revealed the star with pearly brilliance, like a lion who, having overcome that storehouse of darkness; - the elephant, jumps about scattering brilliant pearls (torn from his temples). (Vr.z) Let that Narasimha protect you, who looking with eagerness at (his own) nails, for the enemy ( Hiranayakanasipu)



Narasimha killing Hiranyakasipu,  
Sarsara, Sundargarh District.

who had not been secured for being torn with these (claws), happened to see him hiding through fear in the cavern-like cavity in the interior of the deep hollow of those (nails), with a laugh (at his foolishness in taking shelter in the place where he could be easily crushed out) joy ( at finding him out) and contempt ( at the miserable creature) he split the demon at once with the print of the other claw and threw him away with wrath like dirt that had collected there. (Vr.3) As if bearing the jaws like a beautiful conch and the tongue like a sword, with the face burning like the discus (and) with the eyebrows (as it carrying) the mace, this form of Vishnu born for devouring, like sins, the demons, presented the appearance of the god of death..."

In the *Vayu Purana* and *Padma Purana* we get the account of *Narasimha avatara* (one among ten *avataras* of Visnu) killing the demon *Hiranyakasipu*. In the *Kurma Purana* also we find the brief account about the *Narasimha avatara* or the man-lion incarnation of Visnu. The *Saura Purana* also follows the *Kurma Purana* in stating a short account. Noted iconologist T. Gopinatha Rao has found from the texts *Silparatna*, *Vaikhanasagama* and *Visnudharmottara*, that the *Narasimha* images are of two types; *Girija Narasimha* and the *Sthauna - Narasimha*. *Girija Narasimha* is also

called *Kevala Narasimha* or *Yoga Narasimha*. A third category of *Narasimha* image is called *Yanaka Narasimha*, in which aspect *Narasimha* is depicted as seated upon the shoulders of *Garuda* or upon the folds of *Adisesa*. There are some images depicting the seated figure of *Yoga Narasimha* and goddess *Laksmi*. Those are called the images of *Laksmi Narasimha*.

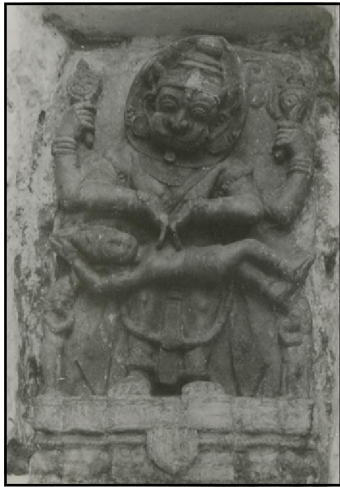
Although *Purusottama Narasimha* has been mentioned in the 8th century *Sirpur Stone Inscription* of the *Panduvamsi* queen-regent *Vasata*, the worship of *Kevala Narasimha* in the upper *Mahandi* valley was prevalent also in the *Nala* kingdom in the 5th-6th century A.D. due to the influence of the *Vakatakas* of *Nagavardhana*, whose titular deity (*Istadevata*) was *Kevala Narasimha*. Therefore we get three *Kavala Narasimha* images, one at *podagad* in the *Umerkot Tahsil* of *Nawarangpur* district and another two at *Sarguli-Deulpada* and *Parua-Simdapada*. In the foot of a hill situated to the north of *Podagad* hill a modern temple has been constructed where the image of *Kevala Narasimha* called the "*Bhairava Narasimha*" is worshipped as the central deity.

Two-handed *Narasimha* in the pacified form is sitting in a graceful *Maharajalila* posture, holding a *Cakra* in his right hand by placing it on the ground and putting his left palm on His right thigh. A *Hara* is round



Parsvadevata Narasimha,  
Narsinghnath Temple, Paikmal,  
Bargarh district.





Parsvadevata Narsimha, Jagannath Temple, Sonepur

his neck and another on His chest, while a *Yajnyopabita* is on his body. Four front-faced seated Yaksa figures are carved in a row on the pedestal of this image, measuring eighteen inches in length and four inches in

breadth. In the Narasimha images at Sarguli and Parua the Yaksa figures are absent. The Sarguli Kevala Narasimha sculpture is made of black granite. All the three Kevala Narasimha images of Podagad, Sarguli and Parua are two-handed and seated in the megestic *Maharajalila* posture. *Srivatsa* symbol is carved on the chest of the Kevala Narasimha image at Parua-Simdapada, which symbol is usually found on the chest-portion of the Visnu image. The lion-mane of the Lord is flowing from the head-portion on His back as well as both shoulders. His lion face is completely calm and serene.

A huge Kevala Narasimha image of the around five feet height is worshipped in the *Garbhagrha* of a flat-roofed temple at Ramtek near Nagpur city of Maharashtra State, which is strikingly similar to all three Kevala Narasimha images found at Podagad, Sarguli and Parua in the Nawarangpur district of Orissa State. As the temple at Ramtek is dated to the 5th-6th century A.D. i.e. the Vakataka rule from Nagavardhana (present Nagardhan near Nagpur), the worship of Kevala Narasimha might have been instituted by the Vakatakas, when they attacked the Nala kingdom,

occupied the capital city Pushkari (present Podagad) and burnt down and devastated their capital city some time in around the 5th-6th century A.D. The association of Yaksa with Narasimha is found in another Nrsimha image at Sarsara (Banei) in Sundargarh district also. A huge stone-block, measuring around 48" in height and 30" in breadth is found at Sarsara, having the image of a fourhanded standing Narasimha, killing the demon Hiranyakasipu by placing his body on His right thigh, which is slightly raised. The lion-faced god is depicted as cat-faced, which seems to be a peculiar phenomenon in western Orissa. Such cat-faced four-handed Narasimha image seated in Maharajalila on a high pedestal has been discovered from Maraguda in Nuapada district, which is dated to the 6th century A.D. Even cat-faced and lion-bodied feline form of Lord Narasimha is worshipped as the central deity of the Narsinghnath temple in Bargarh district as Lord Narsinghnath. The earliest temple at Narsinghnath is believed to have been built by Queen Vasata, the mother of the Panduvamsi king Mahasivagupta Balarjuna sometime in the second half of the 8th century A.D. The top portion of this Sarsara stone slab bearing the Narasimha image is designed like a Caitya window with a squatting Yaksa figure carved inside it. This design is flanked by two lotus-rosette motifs in both sides.



Narasimha sitting in Maharajalila, Khariar Museum





A pacified form of Narasimha figure, seated in the *Lalitasana* is found at Khariar Museum in Nawapada district of Orissa which is four-handed. It is dated to the Sarabhapuriya period, the 6th century A.D. as it has been collected from the historic Maraguda valley and belongs to the Sarabhapuriya period.

Another place, where we get four depictions of Narasimha is in the Narsinghnath temple at Paikmal in the Bargarh district of Orissa. The Yoga Narasimha images, one diminutive images seated in *Utkutikasana* worshipped by a profiled male figure in the *gelaba* scroll of the eastern doorjamb of the *Jagamohana* and another one in a small niche in the *baranda* portion of the southeast side of the *vimana*. In both the cases, the Lord is seated in the *Utkutikasana*, the legs being maintained is required position by the *Yogapatta* belt going round them and the back of the body.

Another very interesting standing image of Yoga Nrsimha is found at Narsinghnath. To the north of the temple, there is a small room, where one four-handed figure of Narasimha is enshrined. It is a pacified form of the Lord known as Yoga Narasimha," He is standing in *Samabhanga* and holding a *Sankha* and a *Cakra* in his upper left and right hands respectively. A *Gada* is in the lower left hand of the Lord, which is firmly placed on the pedestal. His lower right hand is in *Varada*. In both sides of his legs, there are standing figures

of two lady attendants. The lady near the *Gada*, wearing a *Mukuta* seems to be Laksmi. The eyes of the Lord are half-closed and *Jata* forming many stripes is hanging on both shoulders. The strange characteristics of this figure is that, there are long boots covering both legs of the Lord up to knee portion. The Lord's body is heavily ornamented with all ornaments like *Hara*, *Keyura* and *Katisutra* etc. The figure is of the height of about four feet.

The fourth one is the usual image of Lord Narasimha killing the demon king Hiranyakasipu, which is fitted to the western Parsvadevata niche of the Narsinghnath temple.



Narasimha killing Hiranyakasipu, Indralath Temple, Ranipur Jhari

The lotus-petalled design of the pedestal and the trefoil torana with the *Kirtimukha* motif in the centre of its apex occur in this sculpture also. In both sides of the top portion, there are two round lotus-rosette motifs. The Lord is seen to be standing in *dvibhanga* posture

and killing the demon by putting his body on his slightly raised right thigh and tearing the entrails of the demon in the claws of his lower hands. A *gada* is in his raised upper left hand, while the upper right hand is broken. A male figure with *Mukuta* on his head and both his hands folded in abeissance, probably Prahallad the son of Hiranyakasipu is standing in the right side of the pedestal, to the proper left of the Lord.

Another exquisitely carved Narasimha image is found in the Jagannath temple at Sonepur, situated near the completely



destroyed place of the erstwhile Maharaja (foundetary ruling chief) of Sonepur. The image of Narasimha fitted to the western *parsvadevata* niche exhibits the scene of lord Narasimha killing the demon king Hiranyakasipu, tearing apart his belly by piercing claws, while both his hands in obeisance, his body is upheld by the Lord on his right thigh which is slightly raised, the leg resting on the toe. The anthropomorphic form of Garuda in profile and Prahallad, the son of Hiranyakasipu, also in profile are to the proper right and left of the Lord respectively. They both are seen standing in both sides of the pedestal praying the Lord with both hands folded in obeisance. Although in this pose, Lord Narasimha has usually a fearful appearance; in case of this figure, there prevails a serene calmness on his face and both his

eyes are closed. In the upper left and right hands, which are raised up, the Lord is seen holding a *sankha* and a *cakra* respectively. There is an oval-shaped halo forming the *prabhamandala* behind his head. The *mukuta* is conical in shape resembling the top portion of the *pidhamundi* design. Just above the forehead a thin band of beaded strings with a flower-pendant in the centre is tied on the *mukuta*. A long *vanamala* is hanging upto the

knee-level from the neck of the Lord. A long scarf is put round the shoulders of Narasimha, and hanging in both sides of his body (*OHRJ Vol. XLIV, No.1-4*).

Two images, one of four-handed Mahisamardini Durga and the other of Narasimha killing Hiranyakasipu are worshipped on one pedestal inside a *triratha* temple, built in the laterite stone at Belsaragad in Sundargarh district.

Narasimha cult was so popular in the upper Mahanadi valley that in another small *triratha* style stone temple at Gandharla on the right bank of river Under in the opposite side of Sindhekela in the Titilagarh sub-division of Balangir district also till to-day Narasimha is enshrined and worshipped since the 8th century A.D. The *Avatara* concept

developed in the 7th-8th A.D. and we find diminutive figures of *Dasavatara* (ten incarnations) of Lord Visnu carved in both edges and beneath the feet of two Visnu images found at Saintala. Such depiction of the *Avataras* including Narasimha killing Hiranyakasipu is found carved in both side-edges of Visnu images found at Dadpur in Kalahandi district and Kapilapur (Pujaripali) in Jharsuguda district also. The Kapilapur and



Yoga Narasimha, Narsinghnath,  
Bargarh District



Dadpur images belong to the 11th-12th century A.D. The *Dasavatara* concept became extremely popular all over Orissa by the beautiful composition of *Gitagovinda* by Mahakavi Jayadev in the 12th century A.D. Even during the reign of the Chauhans at Sambalpur, they have carved out the *Dasavatara* of Visnu in both side of the doorjamb of the *Garbhagrha* of the Radhakrisna temple inside the Gopalji Math precinct belonging to the 17th century A.D. The images of Nrsimha killing Hiranyakasipu are also found in the Samlei, Bad Jagannath and Radhakrisna temple Parsvadevata niches.

The Narasimha image, depicting the god as killing the demon Hiranyakasipu is found carved in the south *Raha* niche of the upper *Jangha* portion on the north side of the brick-built exquisitely sculptured Indralath temple at Ranipur Jharial in Titilagarh subdivision of Balangir district, belonging to the 10th century A.D.

Images of Narasimha killing the demon king Hiranyakasipu are found in the Suvarnameru, Gokarnesvar and Ramesvar temples at Sonepur town, all belonging to the Chauhan period, i.e. 17th -18th century A.D. The Gundicha temple of Sonepur, rising to a height of around sixty feet is dedicated to Lord Narasimha. An image of Yoga Narasimha is also fitted in its western *Parsvadevata* niche of this temple. A very interesting image of Yoga Narasimha with his consort Laksmi sitting on his lap is found in the Kunjaghar complex, just in front of the devastated royal palace at Sonepur. There is one independent image of Narasimha under a tree near the Suresvari temple at Sonepur, which might have been enshrined inside a temple in the remote past as the central deity. Even broken images

of Narasimha killing Hiranyakasipu are found at Daspur Surda in Balangir district, Topigaon in Kalahandi district and Godhanesvar in Sonepur district which testifies to the popularity it was enjoying in the upper Mahanadi valley.

This cult of Narasimha has affinity with Saivism from the iconographic aspect as suggested by the learned scholar late Anncharlotte Eschmann. "The representation of *Lingodbhava* where Siva appears within or from the endless flaming *lingam*, usually represented as a huge column, resembles the scene of Narasimha bursting out of a pillar." It was probably such an association which stands behind an image used in the *Visnudharmottara Purana*, where a devotee worships the *Sivalingam* until he has a vision of Narasimha appearing from it. (*Visnudharmottarapurana*, III, 354), Eschmann further writes : "The fact that the imagery of Narasimha has been applied to Bhairava is very interesting in the connection of Hinduization. Bhairava being a popular god, he could have had to 'lend' the imagery. It is certainly an advantage of the Narasimha concept, that it is simulataneously important in both realms : popular religion and sophisticated theology." It is important to point out that the Kevala Narasimha image of Podagad in Nawarangpur district is worshipped as "Bhairava" by the local tribal populace. In this context it is very interesting that Lord Jagannath is also worshipped both as Bhairava and Narasimha. In the tantric tradition He is even taken as Daksina Kalika (*Niladrou tu Jagannatha Saksat Daksina Kalika Mahanirvana Tantra*). The discovery of the uniconic anthropoid stone images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra at Tentelkhunti (Balangir district) from underneath a mound (temple ruins) in 2004





testifies to the fact that the Holy Triad were worshipped during the early Somavamsi period (probably by king Yayati).

As about the identification of Lord Jagannath as Narasimha it has been stated by the noted German scholar H.V. Stietencron that "Even to-day, Narasimha plays an important role in the periodical renewal of the wooden image of Jagannath." Jagannath is also worshipped in the *Nrsimha Mantra*. He further writes. "The worship of Purusottama Narasimha can be traced back to Sirpur in the upper Mahanadi valley, the ancient capital of Daksina Kosala. It is here that during the late Panduvamsi period we find one of the germs which later developed into the composite Jagannath cult of Orissa ..... Here it may be noticed only that this development is closely linked with the political fate of the Panduvamsi dynasty which, being driven away from the political center by the Kalachuris, was forced to retreat into largely tribal areas of Bolangir and Sambalpur districts of western Orissa."

"Tantricism and Saktism were powerful rising movements at this period. These popular trends could to some extent be incorporated into the Vaisnava creed by means of the Narasimha cult. On the whole, however Visnuism was slow and reluctant to adjust itself to tantric requirements. Therefore, from the 8th to the 12th century, the general trend was in favour of Saivism, which was unrestrictedly free to accept or to promote, Tantric and Sakta developments and which even absorbed Tantric Buddhism to a large extent". (*Stietencron : 12-13*)

We find mention of the terminology "Jagannath" for the first time in the *Jnanasiddhi*, composed by the tantrik Buddhist (Vajrayana) king Indrabhuti of Samalaka. Scholars are yet to identify exactly who

Indrabhuti was and what was the extent of his kingdom, as we lack historical or inscriptional or textual evidences. But this much we know that Indrabhuti's kingdom was situated on the bank of river Mahanadi. While going through the Oriya history book, titled '*Anugola Itihas*' this scholar has come across seven tribal chiefs (*dalapati*) ruling over Angul area in the 8th - 10th century A.D., the first and last *Dalapatis* being Indra and Anu. As in the Samal area of Angul district there is a place called Vajrakot or Vajrakotta this place might have some connection with Vajrayana or the Tantrik Buddhism, as we get a large number images of gods and goddesses of Vajrayana in the Talcher, Angul, Rengali, Vajrakot, Riamal and Barkot (Deogarh) area, which were probably under the rule of Indra *dalapati* in the 8th century A.D. A few years back also explorers have come across a huge brick mound called *Baisipahacha* in the Angul area near Odsingia village (*Odrasinga* of the historical fame), on the left bank of river Mahanadi. Therefore this scholar believes that the kingdom of Indra was situated in between the right bank of Brahmani river and left bank of Mahanadi upto Sambalpur town.

This Indra was Indrabhuti, whose daughter Laksmikara was married to the son of the king of Sonepur. Laksmikara propagated Sahajayane another form of Tantrik Buddhism and is treated as one among the *Chaurasi Siddhas* of Tantrik Buddhism. This Sahajayana of Laksmikara might have influenced the *Sahajia* sect in the later period.

Most probably it is during the 8th century, Purusottama Narasimha got amalgamated with Lord Jagannath, the Supreme God of the Samala or Sambala kingdom of Indrabhuti and popularly came to be known as Purusottama Jagannath.





The Indradyumna episode is so significant that some time Indradyumna, Indrabhuti and Indra Dalapati seem to be the same personality. But the fact that Indradyumna was a king of Malava and belonged to the dynasty of the Pandava although Indrabhuti, the king of Samala were of all together different origins. While attempting to identify Indradyumna of Malava, name of one celebrated king comes to mind of this writer, i.e. Shri Maharaja Indra, or Bharatavala of the Pandava dynasty, son of Nagavala and grandson of Vatsaraja, grand-son of Jayavala of Mekala. He was ruling some time in the 5th century A.D., who might be identified with Indradyumna who sent his Brahmin Minister Vidyapati to look for Lord Jagannath. As this king Indrabala was married to Lokaprakasa, the daughter (princess) of the Amaryakula of South Kosala kings of which dynasty were great Bhagavata (Parama Bhagavata), he might had been allured to look for the great Lord Jagannath in Odra.

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# The Lord and His Land

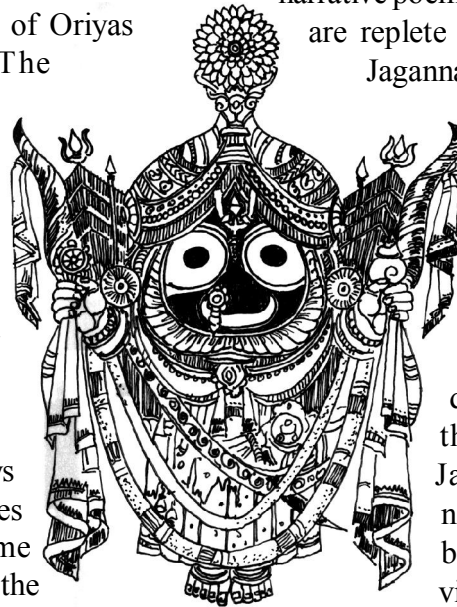
Dr. Nishakar Panda

He is the Lord of Lords. He is Jagannath. He is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent. He is the only cult, he is the only religion, he is the sole sect. All sects, all 'isms', all beliefs and all religions have mingled in his eternal oblivion. He is Lord Jagannatha. And for Orissa and teeming millions of Oriyas He is the nerve centre. The institution of Jaganatha influences every aspect of the life in Orissa. All spheres of our activities, political, social, cultural, religious and economic are inextricably blended with Lord Jagannatha.

## A Political Prodigy :

Lord Jaganatha is always and for all practical proposes deemed to be the supreme monarch of the universe and the Kings of Orissa are regarded as His representatives. In yesteryears when Orissa was sovereign, the kings of the sovereign state had to seek the favour of Lord Jaganatha for their success in administration or participation in war. *Madala Panji* the magnum opus of Orissa in the days of yore, was believed to be compiled for the first time in the late sixteenth

century. In *Rajabhoga* section of *Madala Panji*, Lord Jagannatha has been described as "the king of the kingdom of Orissa", "the master or the lord of the land of Orissa" and "the god of Orissa". Various other scriptures and narrative poems composed by renowned poets are replete with such descriptions where Jagannatha has been described as the sole king of Orissa.



Basically a Hindu deity, Lord Jagannatha had symbolized the empire of Orissa, a collection of heterogeneous forces and factors, the individual or the dynasty of the monarch being the binding force. Thus Lord Jagannatha had become the national deity (*Rastra Devata*) besides being a strong and vivacious force for integrating the Orissan empire. But when the empire collapsed, Lord Jagannatha had been seen symbolizing a seemingly secular force of the Oriya nationalism.

Lord Jagannatha being the real king of Orissa is the richest landlord. He owns vast tracts of land in all parts of India. Hardly there



is any important region in India where the Lord has no land of his own. He is the sole deity in the country in whose favour donations of land have been made not only by the Kings and Monarchs but also by the common people. Apart from the collateral donations, a sort of spiritual dedication of life and property also is offered to Him all over Hindustan.

Humbleness to Lord was not a simple ritual but a political necessity. The roots of Mahatma Gandhi's decision to start his *padayatra* from Puri may be traced in the importance of Jagannath. After formation of Orissa State, K.C. Gajapati Narayan Dev, the Raja of Paralakhemundi, took oath as the first Prime Minister of Orissa in 1936 A.D. One of his first acts was to pay a ceremonial visit to Lord Jagannatha though there was bitter dynastic rivalry existing between the kings of Paralakhemundi and the kings of Puri.

#### **A Symbol of Social Solidarity:**

In our social tradition, whatever is done for welfare of the family or the individual is attributed to Lord Jagannatha. This is regarded as a rich social tradition and this tradition exists in the social life of some parts of India in general and Orissa in particular. In the marriage and other religious ceremonies, the house-hold people take it as their prime duty to satisfy their guests with *Mahaprasad* of Jagannath before serving them with other kinds of food. This system has strengthened the bond of fraternity and has helped people in establishing brotherly relationship in their social life. In marriages, the parties come together to take oath before Lord Jagannatha to make their relation firm and permanent. The marriage invitation card is first offered to Jagannatha before being distributed among the kith and kins. Various festivals and ceremonies held in

honour of Jagannath have great influence on the religious and cultural life of the people of Orissa. During the *Sayana Yatra* in the temple of Lord Jagannatha, the Lord goes to sleep. During the period of this *Sayana Yatra* lasting for about 3 months, all ceremonies such as marriage, sacred thread ceremony, the coming of the bride to her father-in-law's place, etc. are all suspended and during the rising ceremony of the Lord (*Devotthana*), all these activities are resumed again. All kinds of trees are planted in various parts of Orissa during the Ratha Yatra festival of the Lord because these days of the festival are considered to be the most auspicious. The first fruit of any crop grown in Orissa is presented to the Lord.

Ratha Yatra a special festival of the Lord is celebrated in every nook and corner of the State and in various places of India and the World with new enthusiasm and spirit. Car festival in U.S.A. and other parts of the World, the Lords chariot-pulling in Gujarat and other States bear the testimony of deep-rooted bond of people in all walks of life with Lord Jagannath. Only in Delhi two Jagannatha temples have been built where the Car festival and the other festivals of Jagannatha are enthusiastically celebrated. Though the foreigners are restricted to enter the Lord's temple at Puri, it seems now that the foreigners are more attracted for *Jagannath Dharma*. At the time of Ratha Yatra every year some of them use to dance with the prayers of the Lord by playing the musical instruments. Baripada's importance for 'Rathayatra' stands next to that of Puri. Since the sixteenth century innumerable pilgrims have been forming the crowd at Baripada of Mayurbhanja district to see Lord Jagannatha on his chariot. Millions of followers of Iskcon throughout the World celebrate the car festival of Lord Jagannath with gaily and devotion.



Various legends associated with Lord Jagannatha still occupy a prominent place in religious sentiments among the people of Orissa. The legend of Kanchi invasion of Purusottama Dev, the Lord becoming beggar as described in Laxmipurana, the story of Raghuarakhsita, Balarama Das, Jagannatha Das, Bandhu Mohanty of Jajpur, Dasia Bauri, Poets Salbega, Dinakrushna Das are very popular legends of Orissa which are still fresh in the minds of the people of the State.

#### **A Source of Religious Resurrection :**

Jagannath cult is not confined to any particular sect or religion. It is cosmopolitan in nature. It has integrated in its fold all beliefs and practices and become universal. The multiplicity of ritualistic practices in the lord's temple leads us to divergent theories in respect of its origin. But, as far as the religious development is concerned, the historical data from age to age revealed the religious attitude and faith of the people as well as of the rulers operated in evolving the cult of Jagannath. The cult is not derived from any particular religious system, practice or belief, it is a combination of countless religious thoughts

Lords were considered as the supreme head of the state or the state deity. *Jagannatha Dharma* thereby became the mass religion (*Gana Dharma*) of Orissa. Thus, this Dharma embraces all the religions and assimilated them in itself. It however became more popular when it assimilated Buddhism, Saivism, Saktism and finally the *Gaudiya* Vaisnavism. Lord's abode, the Puri Temple is the symbol of the synthesis of the Aryan and the Non-Aryan cultures. Yet, the speciality of the Jagannath Temple and the Jagannath Cult, in this synthesis, is that neither the Aryans have displayed their traditional feeling of aristocratic self-consciousness nor

the non-Aryans evince the spirit of inferiority complex. The Puri Temple, *Sriksetra*, as it is called is the all pervading symbol of equality, fraternity and secular sovereignty.

The sacred food offered to God is rich in quality and content. Therefore, it is popularly called the *Mahaprasad*, the like of which is not found anywhere in India. Food, the first and foremost requirement of human life and existence is not only offered to the deity but is also meant for all the people, irrespective of their caste, creed and position and they satisfy their hunger and religious fasting with utmost comfort. Food is available in the temple always and for all. The Lord of the land sitting in the *Ratnavedi* with ease holds out His hands for giving food to His hungry and devoted millions. All the seasonal foods offered to the deity are also made available to the public. This arrangement is unique in a temple visited by lakhs. In the Lord's eye all are equal. People with varied caste, creed and culture and status take His *Mahaprasad* sitting together in the 'Ananda Bazar' the common dining place inside the temple. One source of administrative discomfort for the British officials was the close relationship existed between the Oriya nationalism and Lord Jagannath in the closing years of the nineteenth century. They believed that only the Oriya employees of the Government were susceptible to the Orissan custom of "*Mahaprasad* brotherhood" formed by sharing the sacred rituals of Lord Jagannath, which was an effective barrier to the smooth functioning of administration. This was so because the *Mahaprasad* brothers are supposed to come to each other's help and assistance under any circumstance ignoring the code of legal and moral principles and even humane feelings. Any deviation from this rule is





considered a worst sin one commits. It is not only a betrayal of a *Mahaprasad* brother but also of Lord Jagannatha himself.

*Muktimandapa* is the judiciary wing of the temple pertaining to religious matters. Cases involving religious controversies in any part of India particularly Orissa, are referred to the *Muktimandapa*. This *Muktimandapa* is the famous seat of the learned brahmins associated with Jagannath temple and the verdict pronounced by this august assembly of Pandits, is always accepted by the parties with utmost respect. All social customs, cultural activities and religious practices get their prior sanction by reference to what is followed in His temple and the deviations, if any, are also made with humble supplication of His sanction. Thus, for the people, He is the ideal of all ideals.

#### **A Cosmic Cultural Chord :**

All greatness is associated and ascribed to Lord Jagannath. He is the greatest of all Gods with all greatness. 'He is the *Bada Thakur*, the Chief among the Gods. His temple is the *Bada Deula*, the chief temple among the temples and the path in front of His temple is the *Bada Danda*, the chief path-way. The sea washing the shores of His *ksetra* is called '*Mahodadhi*' or the great ocean. Even the cremation ground here is named as *Svarga Dvara* or gateway to the Heaven.' All the deities are worshipped if He is worshipped, and visit to His place or *Ksetra* is the culmination of all pilgrimages and one achieves emancipation.. He is the king, the co-subject, the father, the brother and the son in one whole being.

The philosophy and thought of Oriya centre round the philosophy of Lord Jagannath. He is the pivot around which revolves all

cultural connections associated with the people of the State. Volumes of literatures were written to magnify and glorify his greatness. The religious thinkers of Orissa, the five associates, *panca sakha*, as they are popularly known like Jagannatha Dasa, Balarama Dasa, Ananta Dasa, Acyuta Dasa and Yasovanta Dasa composed their respective works highlighting the God's greatness. Lord Jagannath is the epicentre in all their creations. In *Bana Parva* and *Musali Parva* of famous Oriya *Mahabharata* composed by *Sudramuni Sarala Dasa* of Jhankada, the story and the philosophy of Jagannath was the focal point in the theme narrated there.

In the medieval Oriya literature also Lord Jagannath has been associated with the Oriya nationalism. During 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, Lord Jagannath was given prominence in all Oriya literatures. Hardly there was any literary activity where Lord Jagannath was not focussed. There are innumerable mentions of the glory of Lord Jagannath in *Jananas*, *Bhajanas*, *Daskathias*, *Chadheya* Dances and elsewhere. Homage to Lord Jagannath is paid in the prefaces of epics and long narrative poems. Today, scores of literary works on Lord Jagannath written in Oriya and Sanskrit are available making the cult of Jagannath not confined within the State of Orissa but felt through out the Sub-continent. To cite a few, 'the Anargha Raghavam of Murari Misra of Orissa (8th century), *Gitagovindam* of Sri Jayadeva of Kenduvilva (Orissa), *Candrakala Natika* of Mahapatra Visvanatha Kaviraj, *Abhinava Gitagovindam* of King Gajapati Purusottama Deva, *Gopalarcana vidhi* of Gajapati King Purusottama Deva, *Jagannatha Vallabha Natakam* of Raya Ramananda, *Mukti Cintamani* of Kind Purusottama Deva,



Dvadasa Yatra tatva of Raghunandana, Ganga Vamsanucarita campu of Vasudeva Ratha, Gundica campy of Bakravak Cakrapani Pattanayaka, Gundica Vijaya campu of Kaviraja Bhagavan Brahma, the sthala puranas like Vamana Samhita, Niladrimahodayam, Kapil Samhita, kestra Mahatmyam, Madhuranirudha Natakam of Cayani Candrasekhara or Yatra Bhagavatam of Balunki pathi'are the Sanskrit works on Lord Jagannath. Besides these Sanskrit works the Oriya works which glorify the cult of Jagannath are ' Deulatola of Balarama Dasa, Jagannatha caritmrta of Divakar dAsa, Dardhyata Bhakti of Ramadasa, Amarakosa Gita of Balarama Dasa, Bataavakasa of Balarama Dasa, Daru Brahma Gita of Jagannatha Dasa, Oriya Bhagavata of Jagannatha Dasa, Anakara Samhita of Nanda Dasa, Chayalisa Patala of Acyutananda Dasa, Caturdhmurti varnana of Karpasindhy Dasa, Deulatola of Nilambar murti varnana of Krpashindhu Dasa, Deulatola of Nilambar Dasa, Deula tola of Dama Dasa, Deula tola of Sisukrsna Dasa, Jagamohana Chanda of Dinakrsna Dasa, Jagamohana Ramayana of Balarama Dasa, Jagannatha Bhajana of Bhagirathi Dasa, Jagannatha Vandana of Krpasindhu Dasa, Jagannatha Avakasa of Kesava Bhanja, Jagannatha cautisa of Ratnakara Sarma, Ksetramahatmya of Upendra Bhanja, Rasika Haravati of Kavismrat, Upenda Bhanja, Namaratna Gita of Dinakrsna Dasa, Netrotsava Varnana of Sisu Dasa, Niladri cautisa of Upendra Bhanja, Nilasundara Gita of Sekhara Dasa, Niladri Mahotsava of Lokanatha Vidyadhara, Rama bibha of Arjuna Dasa, Nilacala Gupta Jnana of Balarama Dasa, Vedantasara Gupta Gita of Balarama Dasa and in the 20th century Siddhanta Darpana of Samanta Candrasekhara'.

*Badadeula*, the temple of Lord Jagannath is also a cultural centre besides a profound religious habitat. It is the temple and its priests who decide the rules and regulations governing Hinduism and also prescribing expiation (*prayascitta*) for any sins committed. Only the temple has a final say for any sort of religious dispute. Thus, in the Hindu society throughout the country, the importance of Lord's abode is beyond challenge. Not only in India, but also in other Hindu countries like Nepal, Lord Jagannath rules the religious sentiments of people and the ruler.

Many temples for Lord Jagannath were built after 12th century in various places of Orissa and in different parts of India. Jagannath temple in Suvarnapur of Banki Sub-division of Cuttack district, Jagannatha temple of Jajpur, Baladevaji temple in Kendrapara, Jagannath temple of Katarapa, Jagannath temple in Binika, Jagannath temple at Savakota (Andhra Pradesh), Baladevji temple at Degaon of Dhenkanal District, Jagannath temple in Jagannathapura of Bankura (West Bengal), Jagannatha temple of Dusia, South West of Ranchi (Jharkhand), Jagannath temple of Indupura were some of the temples built during 13th, 14th & 15th century. Many temples of Lord Jagannath were also built during 16th century onwards. Jagannath temple of Patiakilla of Surangarah, Baladevji temple at Keonjhar, Jagannath temple at Agarpada of Balasore District, Jagannath temple Hauzkhas, New Delhi, Jagannath temple of Sabarasrikshetra, Koraput are few examples. Besides these, there are innumerable number of temples dotted all over the state of Orissa and it is quite difficult to date them correctly.

Lord Jagannath was the symbol and the centre of Oriya nationalism and ultimately



of Hindu nationalism in pre-independence period. Indian nationalism was a powerful force during the British rule. With the assimilation of Hindu nationalism with Oriya nationalism, Indian nationalism became a dominant force. There is a strong and binding link between the Oriya nationalism and Jagannath. This will never be snapped rather it is gaining strength day by day. Due to the intimate relationship existing between the Oriyas and Lord Jagannath, only Jagannath occupies a focal position in the nationalistic thought process. This is very clearly reflected in the literary activities of poets and literateurs of Orissa. Poems composed by Nilakantha Das, Purusottama Deva, Mukunda Deva, plays and ballads by Godavarish Misra, Gobinda Bidyadhara, Aswini Kumar Ghose, Mayadhar Mansingh, Kalicharan Pattanayak and Radhamohan Gadanayak were pointers to this direction..At a point of time when Oriya language was in the verge of loosing its identity in the wake of dominant Bengali forces who claimed that Oriya is not a separate language (*Odia ek swatantra bhasa noi*), Satyabadi Group of Writers rose to the occasion and highlighting Lord Jagannath they uphold the Oriya language.

These poets were primarily committed to Oriya nationalism in their heart and soul even after their dedication to the cause of Indian nationalism. Gopabandhu Das in his long poem *Bandira Atmakatha* written in Jail in 1923-24 made a fervent appeal to the people of Orissa not to feel diffident because Lord Jagannath himself is the leader of Utkala.

*"Bisese Utkale nahi prayojana  
Utkalara neta nije Narayana"*

The fact that Lord Jagannath continued to occupy the central position in the

nationalistic thought process, is evident from the following incident. Mr. M.S. Das, the "grand old man of Orissa", Utkal gaurav Madhusudan Das While addressing a public meeting in 1928 in the Town-Hall of Cuttack, recited a poem written on the spur of the moment, in which he appealed the millions Oriyas to recite 'Save Us Lord Jagannath' in unison which would bring an end to the enveloping darkness and lead the path to progress and prosperity.

*"Kotie Odia Gotie Swarare daka trahi Jagannatha  
Andhara Ghunchiba nischaya dekhiba Jatira Unnati Patha"*

Many more examples can be cited from the literary works tracing the historic tie existing between Lord Jagannath and the Oriyas, the subjects of his land. Lord Jagannath is not a mere deity or a reigning lord but has become a true guide for the teeming millions of Oriyas. He is the bond, He is the binding connection, He is the motivating factor and above all He is an all pervading force engulfing the entire socio-economic, religious and cultural fabric of his land.

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## EDITORIAL



*Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe, the greatest of the gods has assimilated in Himself all religions, all philosophies and all religious and tribal beliefs of this Holy Land. His annual visit to Aunt's House to give a chance to millions of His devotees on Badadanda, the Grand Road of Puri is known as Ratha Yatra, Ghosa Yatra, Sri Gundicha Yatra and so on. This issue of Orissa Review is solely devoted to contain articles on various aspects of the Jagannath Cult so that it can be collected by devotees coming from all over India and abroad. Common readers, serious scholars, writers and researchers may get some interesting new facts in the articles printed in this issue. The photo pages portray various activities undertaken by the State Government for the welfare of the people of Orissa. Our efforts will be fruitful if this Special Issue will be of any interest to readers of Orissa Review.*

*Jai Jagannath.*

*Navankar Sekhar Pandey*