



PURI

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Puri, the holy land of Lord Jagannath has many names. It is mentioned in Puranas as Srikshetra, Sankhakshetra, Neelachala, Neeladri, Purusottama Dham, Purusottama Kshetra, Purusottama Puri and Jagannath Puri. May be, Puri is a shortened name for Jagannath Puri or Purusottama Puri. In some records pertaining to the British rule, the word 'Jagannath' was used for Puri.

A reputed researcher Prof. Panchanana Mohanty has discussed the origin of the term 'Puri' from linguistic point of view. In ancient time this place, i.e. Puri was inhabited by Savara tribe, Savara, Santal, Bonda tribes belong to the Munda tribal group. Lord Jagannath was originally a tribal deity, as mentioned by poet Sarala Das in his Mahabharat, and also in subsequent writings of other poets and historians. The aboriginal tribe must have ascribed a name of their place of living and that name must have been a word from a tribal dialect of the Munda group. In Bonda dialect, the word 'Pur' means flood. In Santali dialect 'Puri' has four meanings - world, sea, place and abode. Prof. Mohanty presumes that 'Puri', a Munda word for sea, was later on ascribed to this place on the seashore.

As aforesaid, 'Puri' in Santali also means abode (Pura). In the island of Bali under Indonesia, the words 'Pura' and 'Praasaad' are applied to a temple. In Bali,

the famous temple of 'Purebesakhi' is known as praasaad. The word 'Praasaad' (palace) is also used for the temple at Puri. A great Oriya Poet Upendra Bhanja has stated in a poem that the 'Lord has come out of the praasaad on car festival day in order to redeem the fallen.'

There is predominance of Hindu culture in Bali. It is evident that during the 5th - 7th century A.D., or even earlier, some sailors and traders from Kalinga (south-east Orissa) migrated to and settled permanently in Bali island. According to a report of the Archaeological Survey of Burma (1916), the name of the old Prome region of Burma was Criksetra (Srikshetra). It was a Hindu colonial kingdom. Its early settlers had come from Kalinga. Perhaps 'Prome' is a derivative term from 'Puram' (Pura). Presumption could be made that in the distant past, the temple of Lord Jagannath was also known as 'Pura' and the place (habitat) around it was named Puri.

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