## Holy Pilgrimage of Guru Nanak to Puri

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Srikshetra Puri is the abode of Sri Jagannath, Lord of the Universe and has attracted the pilgrims of all sections of the society irrespective of all religions, castes and colour. It is also regarded as the centre or site for salvation of all human beings, who suffer from sorrows and sufferings in this world and seek to get salvation. That is why, all pilgrims pay visit to Puri through ages. Among them most prominent are Adi Sankaracharya, Ramanuja, Nimbark, Nanak, Kabir, Vallavacharya, Srichaitanya and so on. Puri is the most popular spiritual centre of peace and in the country tranquility. It is observed by David Smith (1868) "The city of Puri is anything but a heaven upon the earth."

The daily rituals, fairs and festivals are so peculiar and interesting that the pilgrims from where they come enjoy and adore the deities and pay respect by worshipping them. The worldfamous Car Festival of Puri, its most colourful cars, the rich rituals that are performed on various occasions, the Gajapati King sweeping the chariots himself are quite wonderful. The democratic and socialistic practices are prevalent in the Srimandir administration. The greatness of Lord Jagannath has been ever eulogized by all devotees, saints and sanyasis.

Guru Nanaka was enlightened about the greatness of the deities and came to Orissa with a purpose to have "darshan" of

> Lord Jagannath. In 1506, He at the age of 36 or 37 reached the soil of Orissa. He arrived at Bhadrak where the settlement records give evidence of his coming and staying at the Sangat village in Bhadrak district. There Nanakjee organized "a Guruka Longer (Community Kitchen in the honour of Guru)

and mass prayers. In the Revenue Record, a plot is known as "Nanak Diha" (a field in the name of Nanak) on which people built a cottage. Nanak's village has been mentioned by a village poet in his writings. The name of the poet was Bansi Ballav Goswami and besides, in the writing "Bhadrak Kali Janan" contemporary poet called Rajaballav Mohanty. Even Guru Nanak himself has described in his "Japajee" about his



experience at Sangat. Then he set his feet at Srikshetra via Cuttack. It is said that he was received by the Gajapati king and then taken to Puri sea-shore at "Swargadwar. He traveled nearly 50,000 miles on feet during his pilgrimage. Guru Nanak was very much impressed with the holiness of the Puri Purusottam and greatness of Lord Jagannath. He preached universal love and sympathy that he enjoyed there.

Nanakajee's greatness was shown and realized by two of his disciples named Mardava and Bala who took shelter on the beach of Puri. They felt the pinch of thirst and prayed for getting drinking water which was made available to them through blessings of Nanakjee. The hole dug on the shore is still preserved and a Math has been set up nearby, which is known as Bauli Math. Similarly, Mangu Math was established near Singhadwar (Gate of Heaven). This Math is said to belong to Nanak Panthies. It is also mentioned by J.S. Armstrong, Magistrate to the Commissioner, Orissa Division about its location, in the year 1873. Two of his disciples called Mangoo and Gaddar from among Punjabis who established this Mangu Math. It is also told that Raja of Puri made an endowment in the honour of the saint and built some cottages there. The Gajapati Raja also granted the right of Chamar Seva or Mayur Panchhi Seva to be rendered by the Mahant of the Math. The total area of the June - 2009

plot on which the Math was established 11 Gunthas and 21 Biswa, amounting to Rs.12,895/-.

In the year 1868 David Smith, Sanitary Commissioner of Bengal reported that Punjabees came to Puri walking on foot about 2000 miles for long six months ! They used to stay at Puri a day or two and walked back home happily. The Nanak Panthis were attracted to Lord Jagannath after Nanak's journey to Puri Dham. Raja Birakishore Dev granted a Sanand allowing Chamar Seva to the Mongu Math in the 16th century. Guru Nanak's association with Mangu Math and Galua Math have made them sacred which bear evidence of Nanakaji's coming to Puri and his deep reverence for Lord Jagannath.

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