

Editor's Note



Ratha Yatra is a very important aspect of our custom and belief. This grand festival symbolizes the confluence of all religions and exhibits the magnanimity and universalism of Lord Jagannath. The Cult of Lord Jagannath constitutes an important facet of study of Odisha. The culture of Odisha, which has been described as Land of Lord Jagannath in considerable form has been brilliantly embodied in the cult of Jagannath.

Jagannath Culture has immense contribution to the society at large. Although many have tried to confine Lord Jagannath to Sanatan Dharm only still the people of Odisha have kept our individuality and identity basing on the Cult of Lord Jagannath. The Jagannath Culture, therefore, assimilates the essence of all religions and that is why it is magnanimous. On the basis of the Cult, Jayadev created Geeta Govinda which has brought about tremendous change. It can therefore be concluded that the Odishan society is a reflection of Jagannath Chetana.

In Buddhist literature, there is a reference to Lord Jagannath in 8th century A.D. Around 9th to 10th century, the abode of Jagannath, Puri is described as Purusottam Kshetra. The literary record claims that Purusottam was the deity worshipped on the seashore of Puri during that time. In 13th century A.D. the name of the deity became well-known as Jagannath who was worshipped along with His elder brother Balabhadra, sister Subhadra and Sudarshan.

Madala Panji enumerates that Yajati Keshari was behind the development of Purusottam Kshetra. But in all Puranic works, Indradyumna has been described as the builder of the temple. As a matter of fact, the effort of royal political power in the development of Purusottam Kshetra

has been presented symbolically by the account of Indradyumna. The erudite scholars have accepted the Hinduization of tribal deity and after a long process of tribal “Khamba” worship, the image of Jagannath has evolved. The presentation of the source might be different but one thing is crystal clear that Jagannath Cult is a confluence of all religions and exhibits magnanimity and universalism.

The socio-cultural significance of Rath Yatra is vast and extensive. The festival is an institution by itself. Its genesis, growth, spread and magnificence are but the reflections of spiritual, metaphysical, universal Catholicism of our socio-cultural heritage. The various names of the Car Festival like Ghosh Yatra, Patitapaban Yatra, Adap Yatra, Shree Gundicha Yatra are the multiple ways of index of its multifarious significance.

On the eve of Rath Yatra, Hon’ble Chief Minister of our State completed a successful visit to United Kingdom. However, a group of conspirators tried to conspire against the people of the State by organizing an unsuccessful coup. As the Chief Minister is a man of the masses working day and night for the benefit of Odisha and Odias by the blessings of Lord Jagannath, the political treachery of the worst kind against a popular Government was subverted. It has been rightly said- “Man proposes But God disposes”. As the conch shell indicates willingness of God to communicate with the man, the incidents of last few days clearly proves that in a democracy people are all important and nobody should take them for granted.

I sincerely thank the entire Odisha Review team for their hard work and cooperation. I am also grateful to the management and staff of Odisha Government Press for their unflinching support in bringing out this invaluable publication.

Jai Jagannath.



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