



Bishar Mohanty, An Ardent Devotee

Gopinath Mohanty

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Lord Jagannatha has many a devotees from the time immemorial. Balaram Das, Jagannath Das, Yosavanta, Shisu Ananta and Achyuta are the renowned devotees of the Lord of the Panchasakha age. Other devotees of order are Dasia Bauri, Bandhu Mohanty, Sri Chaitanya Deva, Bhakta Salabega and many others. They are reputed savants and dedicated souls who were bestowed with divine blessing by their devotion. Bishara Mohanty is a name to be noted. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Jagannatha. He not only was bestowed with the Divine Blessings, he could turn the impossible to possible. He could restore the Shree Jagannatha Culture and Shree Jagannatha consciousness in a united flow. He could enliven the wooden images of Shree Jagannatha, Shree Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra. The Daru images were converted to living Brahma by his devotion and endeavor. The kings and rulers of Odisha and the gallant Paikas failed to achieve the great event of installing 'Brahma Particles' in



the wooden images, where as Bishara Mohanty could establish the process staking his life. By installing the 'Brahma Particles' in the wooden deity of Shree Jagannatha he has become an adorable and all time great, for the entire human community and especially in the heart of innumerable Odias. The Odias are indebted to him for such yeoman contribution. The history of the Nation will always remember him as a successful personality.

But, it is a matter of great regret and astonishment that the contemporary historians, researchers, litterateurs and socially

recognized important persons have remained silent about his life and achievement. He has not been paid adequate and deserving place in their works. The Madala Panji of Srimandir states, "No king could survive due to the Mughal attack and their oppression." Parichha Debyasingh Pattnayak took the deities in exile to Chhapali Hatipada. Kalapahad came to know about this and chased, crossed the river-mouth. The informer took him in waist-deep water to the place of hide of the



images. Kalapahada carried the images over an elephant. He looted the treasury, broke the temple construction up to the *Amalak*, damaged and defiled all the images of gods and goddesses enshrined in the temple. He dug black pits and burnt the images with dried horse-shits. He carried Shree Jagannatha up to the bank of the Ganges and arranged the dry wood and burnt Him. As a result, the body of the Muslim invader turned into pieces and burst like crackers. The Kaji commented that, it happened as you had burnt the deities of Odisha. Hearing this, the son of Kalapahad drifted the remnants (Brahma) of the images in the waters of the Ganges. When the burnt images reached the shore adrift, Amura recovered it and kept in his courtyard thinking it to be a fuel. Bishara Mohanty accompanied Amura while collecting the burnt wooden images. He followed as a Vaishnavite and stayed there for eight months. At last, he could bring back the burnt wooden images inside a Mrudanga, a musical instrument. He entered into Kujanga-gada and kept the deities over the Khandayats.” (Madala Panji by Artaballava Mohanty, Prachi Edition P-220).

Several questions spontaneously arise; who was this Bishara Mohanty? Where did he live in? The exact informations about him are not available as yet. Some say, he belongs to Kujang in Jagatsinghpur District. Others say, he was a resident of Balasore district and the novelist, Kanakalata Mohanty says, he was a *Karana* boy from Jajpur; *Karana* by caste converted to a Vaishnavite, a descendant of Bandhu Mohanty, the great devotee of Lord Jagannatha. Bishara Mohanty followed the great army of Kalapahada when they were carrying the images of the deities on the back of an elephant. According to Kanakalata’s description, “While he was on

chase, if someone advises him to return to his home and better look after his family, kith and kin, rather than giving away his life in the hands of the sharp-sword equipped soldiers, or to die without food. This land is kingless. The great God Himself is not able to save Himself. The Sevayats are worried and planning to save the Lord. What is your *locus standi*?” Bishara Mohanty only simpers a little without uttering any words.

If persistently pressed upon, he replies, “*Che sara Sara*. The fate is pre-written. Whatever there written in my fate, that must happen. If one is destined to die on the route, the cosy bed in the hidden place even cannot save him....”

The persons who advise him to restrict, now abstain themselves, thinking him to be an adamant. If you wish his betterment, he will take it as a bitter one. But, the persons who are well – acquaint with him, they certainly know that Bishara is highly intelligent, he knows the policy of *tit for tat*. He is intelligent in the true sense of the term, cunning to the core.

The members of the Shree Jagannatha Sanskruti Parishad along with the noted Art–historian, Dr. Ekadashi Padhi of Jajpur were on a visit to the adjacent areas of the town discovered from the revenue records that in the settlement, the name of the Bandhu Mahonaty has been mentioned to notify an area as “Bandhu Mohanty Nagar”. Some therefore conjecture, his resident was in the Kapilapur Shasana nearby. It was rather a history of 450 years old but cannot be proved without a concrete historicity. But, taking into consideration of the revenue record, along with the local legends, it can be assumed that Bandhu Mohanty once was a resident of Jajpur and Bishara Mohanty may be his descendant.



The history of Odisha during medieval period was rather hazy and complicated. Mukunda Deva was the king of Ganga dynasty enthroned in Odisha. Suleman Karany, the Nawab of Bengal was tempted to invade Odisha to plunder the treasures of Lord Jagannatha. He was inspired by such invasions of Mahammad Ghor of Gajni on Somanath Temple at Gujrat. He carried a huge quantity of ornaments and wealth to his country. Suleman planned accordingly knowing that there were huge wealth and ornament kept in the Ratna Bhandara of Lord Jagannatha at Puri. He accordingly ordered his General, Kalapahada to invade Srimandir and plunder the wealth stored there.

Kalapahada was a Brahmin by birth. Later on he was converted to a Brahma Rakshasa, a heinous giant. Kanakalata Mohanty in her novel describes that Kalidas Gajadani Bhata Mishra was a resident of Jajpur. He went to Nabadwipa of Gouda (Bengal State) seeking for knowledge but later on he returned to his birth place being distracted from study. He used to go to the religious places rarely under the compulsion of his widow mother. He had no faith in worship and rituals.

He was used to intoxications. His passion was to swim in the banks of the river Baitarani and to catch fishes. He used to sell the fishes to the fishermen and resorted to stake his money in gambling, earned from sale proceeds of the fishes. He convinced himself that money is the main requirement of life.

He was never a believer of God. It was his habit to commit thefts of mangoes and coconuts from the endowment lands and sell those to others. Even when he was entering to the local shrines, it was his habit to steal the money offered

to the gods & goddesses by devotees. Kalidas Gajdani, the son of the widow was loitering like a bull hither and thither enjoying the free gifts. He had no children.

One night, when his wife whispered to him about her pregnancy, he could realise that he is to mind his family now onwards. He can no more resort to petty thefts and selling of fishes, he needs to earn for sustenance.

Somebody invited him to the wrestling arena. He concentrated himself in learning martial arts like Wrestling, Fencing, Archery etc. At a point of time he met a sepoy working in the court of Nawab of Murshidabad. The sepoy explained him about his salary and extra income during war-time as a booty. The sepoy was on his annual leave during his cultivation time by requesting the court officers.

Suddenly, one cloudy mid-night, the wife of Kalidas Gajdani got the delivery pain. Kalidas daringly proceeded to the house of mid-wife in that stormy night. The mid-wife blatantly refused to come without her claim money. He requested all with modesty. Nobody listened to help him. Others, shut their doors on seeing his face.

Kalidas was aware of his pennilessness. He had never been witnessed the severe side of poverty before hand. The night ended. When the sun rose in the east, his young, beautiful wife breathed her last without delivering the child from her womb. She succumbed to her pain.

After that Kalidas accompanied the sepoy and joined in the army of the Murshidabad, Nawab. After a few days, he was shocked to hear the tragic death of his widow mother too. His kindred thought Kalidas was absconded. With



an eye on his heirless property, they burnt his mother alive by setting fire in the closed house from outside. Now it became easier to grab the heirless property.

“Some scholars speak that Kalachand was the former name of Kalapahada. He was in the army of Suleman Karany, the Nawab of Murshidabad. Consequently Dulari, the daughter of the Nawab fell in love with Kalidas. Initially he was reluctant to marry her but later on he married her and converted to Islam. His name after conversion was Raju Khan. Afterwards he repented for this and wanted to reconvert to Hinduism. The Pundits of Mukti Mandapa abused him as fanatic and blasphemer. The Gajapati King, Mukunda Deva also gave his decision negatively – the religion is not like an ornament which can be changed time and again.

Raju Khan became fierce. He could not control himself in anger. He proclaimed that he was an atheist from the beginning and had no faith in any religion. He decided war against God.....”

That imprudent Raju Khan was transformed to Kalapahada. He took vow to defile Hinduism and to finish the deities of Puri.

This is the heresy and folk tale of Kalapahada. But, the real historic evidence was different. The noted historians in the light of Persian texts, Akbar nama and Tarik-e-Daudi indicated that Kalapahada never born as a Hindu Brahmin. On the other hand he was an Afghan Muslim by birth. He married the daughter of Murshidabad Nawab, he decided to invade Odisha and plunder the Srimandir to placate the Nawab. Being a Hindu antagonist he engaged himself in damaging the temples and raised Masjids in their place. He

marched to plunder the Srimandir. There was a bloody battle in 1568 AD at Gohiri Tikiri of Jajpur between Gajapati King Mukunda Deva and Kalapahada. The traitors conspired and Mukunda Deva was defeated and slain. Odisha came under Muslim rule. A rule of 300 years right from Ananga Bhim Deva (1211-1238) upto 1568 of the Hindus came to an end. Barabati Katak turned to be the Capital of the Muslim instead. At least for 19 years, the Muslim rule continued there as such.

After the victory at Gohiri Tikiri, the Muslim forces devastated the Hindu temples and shrines and built Masjids over night. Kalapahada occupied the Barabati Fort and created panicky of torture everywhere and proceeded to plunder the temple at Puri. Thus goes the saying.

“ Kalapahada came and broke the iron gets, drank the water of Mahanadi, the queen of Mukunda Deva presented him the diamond jewelries in golden plates.”

Surendra Mohanty in his famous novel, “Nila Saila” wrote that after subjugation of capital at Katak, Kalapahada surrounded Srikshetra Puri with his troops. Parichha Debyasingh Pattnaik realizing the imminent defeat and humiliation, took the deities in exile to Chhapali Hatipada through the rivulet Kanchi at its mouth in Chilika and hid the images in the island. But, Kalapahada was informed about the matter by Dana Pahanta Singh, a local and proceeded to the place and found out the wooden images and carried them on the elephants to burn the Hindu supreme Deities to ashes.

At that crux of time, there was no existence of independent royal rule in Odisha nor any concerted effort of the general public. In order to prevent Kalapahada, there was no strong



personality in Odisha either. Each household in Odisha had nothing but only to mourn silently for the situation. Raju Khan, the invincible Kalapahada tied Shree Jagannatha in the leather chords and carried the images in the Highway in broad daylight. Only the wails of widows were heard in each household.”

In the beginning of the 16th century AD, the British constructed Port at Khidirpur, Kolkata for their Naval trade. The Navigators of Kujang, Kanika, Balasore and Khurda were established. At that time they were trading in the distant islands of Java, Sumatra and other places by their sailing ships. When the Khidirpur Port became functional the sailors from the above mentioned districts established themselves there and many a persons got employment. Mr. Damodar Rout, a former Minister and a Senior Social activist opines that Bishara Mohanty was one of such employees at Khidirpur.

Sri Chaitanya Deva came to Odisha in 1510 AD. He could influence the then king Pratap Rudra Deva as well as his subjects. At that time, there was a trend of devotion tinged with knowledge in Odisha by the influences of Panchasakha's devotional writings. Ray Ramachandra the Principal Minister influenced Pratap Rudra Deva to a greater extent in this line. After all, the arrival of Chaitanya Deva drastically changed the Odian social and religious life. The Vaishnavism became the trend of the day. Taking the advantage of the situation, Bishara Mohanty under the guise of a Vaishnavite chased the army of Kalapahada who were carrying the deities on the back of an elephant and loitered in Murshidabad to get proper information.

Noted novelist Surendra Mohanty in his 'NilaSaila' has said “Bishara Mohanty, the little

known, unidentified was running after the images of the deities like a hungry beggar wearing a maroon gown and a *Pakhauj* hanging from his neck to the chest. On his head, a long napkin printed with the divine names was surrounded telling his commitment to the Vaishnavism. A thin skeletal man, running after, singing the devotional songs with ecstasy.....

“Behold, the Bodyless God is in the space
The temple is empty, door is closed
His Charisma is spread,
Behold his stand.”

The Muslim army of the Nawab paid no heed to Bishara Mohanty, assuming him to be Vaishnavite *Baul* singer going back to his home in Nadia.

They took no interest in him.

Those who knew Bishara Mohanty were looking at each other thinking Bishara had gone mad.

While Bishara was not singing the devotional *Bhajan* and taking pause in between, he was behaving like a deranged person uttering linkless words, “Whenever, the Alpervadable will wish, He will return home.” After the pause, he was continuing the *Bhajan* beating his drum....

“Listen the voice
From the empty space
The voice of the soul,
Listen carefully....”

The altitude of Bishara and the way he was beating the drum and singing in a queer manner, led the people to laugh at his behavior and they thought him to be gone mad totally. But, when they looked at images of the deities tied in



leather ropes and hang from the back of the elephant in an insulting and unpleasant way, It hurt them. It was done to demonstrate the power of the Afghan. Again, the soldiers in front and back of the elephant were uttering loudly the praise of Akbar equating him to be the Allah, their God.

The crowds on road were only silent observers to that heart – throbbing scenario, keeping themselves at a safe distance. Nobody had the guts to protest. No tears even in their eyes. Only long sighs could be heard intermittently from the crowd, like a silent storm of a dying nation. Only a shocking, silent note was heard at the pitiable sight from their presence. Their hearts were hammered with a heavy blow inside. They were eagerly looking at Lord Jagannatha, their beloved God for the last time before the elephant disappeared from their sight.

Bishara Mohanty was running after and he was deliriously telling the crowd, "Don't you know, once Krushna was dragged to Mathura by Akrura and Rama went to forest in exile ?"

The onlookers were disappearing like a patch of dark cloud after pouring down a shower and consequently becoming lighter. Bishara Mohanty could not but follow the Lord "With the drum hung from his neck in an unusual fashion, sandal smear on his forehead, a *dhoti* just below his knees and wearing a printed shirt. The wheat complexioned, dwarf and slim person is leading ahead. Dressed in a queer way. Peculiar hairdo, a pair of ear-rolls, basil beads round his neck along with a seasoned napkin and a white scarf. "Bishara Mohanty has been delineated by many a scholars but his source is from the Madala Panji only.

The writers have presented Bishara Mohanty, following the army. He ignored heat,

rain and cold and their slipped searching sight. He only concentrated his sight on the images tied on the back of the elephant. According to Madala Panji, Bishara decided to follow the deities in the guise of a Vaishnavite. For a long period of eight months he chased the enemy army forgetting his hunger and thirst and avoiding their suspicious sight in fact sounds like a fairy tale. But, it is a fact. For such a sacrifice and bold step, Bishara Mohanty is no doubt a venerable character for the Odias.

Dr. Surendra Nath Mishra, a research scholar conjectures that on his way back, Kalapahada and his army lost their way and proceeded to their kingdom through Sambalpur. To substantiate his hypothesis he has mentioned about a grave yard of his army at Shankarabandh. It is still in existence. This may be true. But, one thing is more true when Kalapahada reached Bengal, he ordered his people to burn the images keeping over wooden logs. The images of the trinity were set fire to. The bodies of the images started burning but the heat of the fire spread to Kalapahad. His body started to burst. He shrieked with unbearable pain. The Kaji (Muslim Priest) told, "This is result of burning the Hindu deities." The son of Kalapahada was panicky and ordered to throw the half-burnt images in the Ganges at Huguli. The images reached the shore adrift at the bank of Huguli river. That place is known as the 'Jagannatha Ghat' till date.

Bishara Mohanty was the direct witness of all such happenings. He put on his napkin making his eyes blind folded and carefully collected the 'Brahma' material from the nAvels of the half-burnt images. He kept secretly within his Pakhauj(drum).



He decided to return back to Odisha with the 'Brahma' particles. The land posts were guarded by the Muslim army and search operations were in vogue in every household to find him by the orders of the Nawab. They are searching for a person with a pakhaaj with him. It was rather easy to travel by water to avoid capture. At that time the sailing ships were on trips from Khidirpur port to Chandbali. The Muslim army were scrutinizing the ships before those left the port. Somehow, by the help of somebody, Bishara Mohanty was able to reach the Chandbali port. During night fall he settled in a small country-boat and sailed through the Shankha river by Gadakujanga and he got down at a place full of dense forest nearby.

Some opine that thereafter he went to the court of the Kujang king. Bishara was also reputed as a local doctor at Jajpur. He had come before hand to the palace of Gadakujanga and treated the queen. She was healed. He had familiarity in the court. The king took over the 'Brahma' particles from Bishara and concealed beneath the scattered tit-bits of his store. Others opine differently on the episode. They say that in the dense forest, there was a temple of 'Hanuman', worshipped by a saint. Bishara sought his help and could live in disguise in the house of a devotee as a doctor and concealed his Mrudanga (Pakhaaj) amid the sacks of preserved food-grain of the person. Bishara became much sought for person being popular for treatment of people during Rainy season. Apprehended by the frequent appearance of the Muslim army, Bishara finally transferred the Pakhaaj to the Durga temple of the king's complex.

Time rolled on. The Khandayat Paikas of the Bhoi dynasty supported the heir-apparent

of the dynasty Ramai Ront as Rama Chandras Deva and settled him in the empty throne of the Gajapati. He was young but stayed near the Barunei hill at Jagannathpur, Khurda. He avoided to settle neither at Barabati, Katak nor at Sri Kshetra, Puri. He constructed a new palace there.

The son of Mukunda Deva was absent by that time, however, he had gone to approach before the emperor at Delhi for justice.

Kedarnath Mohapatra, a noted historian threw light on the then situation of Odisha, "after the fall of empire of Odisha, the coastal areas were divided into three regions. The region from the river Godabari to Ichhapur was under the Sultan of Golkunda, from Koshadesha of Puri along with areas from Kathajodi to Huguli rivers, a vast tract of areas remained under Afghans, subsequently under the direct supervision of the Mughals and the rest territory came under the king of Khurda."

The year 1571 AD was the 4th regnal year of Rama Chandra Deva's reign, Todar Mall visited Odisha to study the administration of Mughal occupied territories by the order of Akbar.

According to the novelist Surendra Mohanty "Misrule prevailed for a long time in Odisha. The nobles of Odisha enthroned Rama Chandra Deva as the leader. By the assurance of Mansingh, peace was restored."

Rama Chandra Deva was installed as the leader and the king but the real Lord of Odisha was not there in His throne. That was in fact lying vacant. The real rule was not possible without Him. Not only the Shrine of His abode was vacant, the whole of the state was empty and was reverberating with the imploration, "Lord Jagannatha, where are You?"



The description of return of Lord Jagannatha to Puri has been described in Madala Panji as “ Rama Chandra Deva of Bhoi dynasty recovered the ‘Brahma’ from Gadakujanga and established Them in Purusottam Kshetra in the 9th day of bright fortnight of July-August of his 11th regnal year. Deities were installed in the throne. Bishara Mohanty was honoured as the hero. The traditional Bhogas being discontinued for a long period, the king could not venture to offer the same in the beginning etc....” (Madala Panji, P-62-63 by A.B. Mohanty)

The Chakada Scripture which was written later speaks, “ When the Kingdom was inaugurated at Khordha-gada, the king Rama Chandra Deva discussed with his entourage about installation of a Deity in absence of Lord Jagannatha. The entourage were shocked and surprised to hear this. However the king dreamt in the night time. The Lord told him about His presence in Kujangagada and ordered to make new images for the ‘Brahma’ particles to be inserted and the Deities to be installed in the Ratna Singhasana following detail procedure.

Very next day, the king bathed and purified himself and called for the entourage, the noble Bhatta Mishra. He explained his dream to all of them. They were astonished and delighted to know about the Lord. He ordered his eldest son Padmanava Pattnaik to bring the deities. The Deities were established with proper rituals mentioned in the Skanda Puran etc. (Chakada Pothi P-6-7)

Some say that in 1571AD Todar Malla came to Khorda-Katak and empowered the Gajapati Rama Chandra Deva to bring the Deities from Kujangagada. Accordingly the king proceeded to KujangaGada after discussion with

the main priest. The ‘Brahma’ which was hidden by Bishara Mohanty in the cow-sheds of king Ananta Narendra Samanta were finally restored.

Sri Surendra Mishra, a research scholar narrates the episode in a different way. According to him king Rama Chandra Deva after his dream sent his son Padmanava Pattnaik to Kujanga. His son returned from Kujanga Gada bringing back the ‘Brahma’ particles with Bishara Mohanty to Barunei fort. The fort was extended westward up to an area of 4Kms. There were 9 nos. of temples in the premises. One of those was the Gopala temple. The Deity was brought from Kanchi and installed in Barabati-Katak. During the invasion of Kalapahada the deity was shifted to this lonely forest area and images were installed in this temple. The deity afterward was shifted to Sakhigopal. But, the temple at Khordhagada is still known by Gopala temple. The temple is still in existence facing towards west with a lot of past glory. There is no image in it. It is built in two steps like that at Marda and there is no seat of throne within. The temple opens with only one door; entrance-cum-exit. There is another door in the entrance hall leading to Barunei hill in a secret route. Upon a time, the evening lamp offering rituals of those nine temples along with four Mathas were greatly reverberating the fort hills of Barunei. There were as many as 19 ponds in the fort-complex. 1182 meters a side square type magnificent palace was built at the foot hills. Adjacent to it was a conference Hall. All these information are recorded in the Madala Panji.

After the arrival of the ‘Brahma’ from Kujanga, the Gajapati king announced the ‘Navakalebara’ arrangement. The journey to forest rituals (Banajaga) were carried out at Srikshetra untimely, the Daitapatis (Divine



Servants) set out in search of the befitting trees for the wooden image of the Deities. The proper trees were identified. Then after the logs were carried by carts to the Gopal Temple. In 1576 AD about 444 year from now, Navakalebara was carried out in *Maha Ana Sara* rituals in the Gopala Temple. After the Navakalebara ceremony was conducted, the images were taken to Srikshetra by carts through the dense jungles from Khordha to Puri via Pattnaikia. This was pre-ordained by the Lord Himself. After arrival of the images at Nilakandara Puri, the place became flooded with festivals.

The 'Brahma' was kept at Gada-Kujanga for about 7 years. After the Gajapati Rama Chandra Deva was dawned with dream, sent his eldest son Padmanav Pattnaik to Kujanga-Gada to bring back the 'Brahma' (Ganesh Prasad Parija reffered this matter in his research work). They were vouch-safed and the Navakalebar ceremony was conducted at Khordha Gada, apprehending the Muslim attack at Puri. All the rituals right from untimely collection of logs etc. were conducted with top secret. The four images including that of Sudarshan were installed in the great thrones on Sri Mandir on the 9th day of bright fortnight of Shravana (July-August) month as per the rites. The date was 17th, the month was July and the year of this installation was 1575 AD. The Scholar Arta Ballava Mohanty who edited the Madala Panji and Sudhakar Pattnaik, the editor of the 'Chaini Chakada' however do differ regarding the episodes at Khordha and Puri.

The *Sankhudi Bhoga* with the Khechudi was served in regular basis after 4months of installation of the Deities in Srimandir. The Banajaga was conducted for ten days also in the Khordha to install the 'Brahma' in the images.

For that, the fort was renamed as 'Jagannathpur-Katak'. The devastation caused by Kalapahada in the temple was severe. The repair works were carried on by Rama Chandra Deva rapidly. He also installed the Deities in Srimandir for which he was considered as the Indradyumna, the second and was honoured. He reinforced the great Car Festival which was stopped for the last eight years. On the day of restarting of the *Anna Mahaprasad*, the king Rama Chandra Deva himself carried the *Kudua* in a procession and took the Mahaprasad with all indiscriminate of Brahmins, Sevayats and common people. The Sudras (lower caste) served the Mahaprasad which was applauded far and wide. By adoption of such a great tradition the Hindus of the country honoured him as the 'Thakura Raja' (The godly king) or otherwise was known as "Chalanti Pratima" (The living image).

According to Madala Panji, Bishara Mohanty was honoured as the first citizen (Por nayak) for his commendable activities and was provided with Sirpa and saree during *Anasara* time of the Lord, in the complex.

The Deities were also established at the place where Bishara Mohanty concealed the 'Brahma'. There is legend as to the local heresay that Bishara getting the permission from Devi Subhadra carried the 'Brahma' of Lord Jagannatha and Balabhadra to Khordha. The 'Brahma' of Devi Subhadra was kept there and later on a Kshetra was established in Her name. This is unsustainable heresay. The temple here is famous as the Kunja Bihari.

After all is said and done, one thing is taken for granted that Bishara Mohanty was no doubt a rare person, appears in earth once in a while. He was a great devotee of the Lord



Jagannatha. He had endangered his life amid manifold hurdles and became successful to bring back and install the Lord at Puri. Srikshetra restored its past glory. Without him, the seat of the Lord should have been empty till date. He could sustain the Jagannatha consciousness as a continual flow in the social stream by his dedication and devotion. In the hard and difficult time of the state, he could guise himself to retrieve the priceless 'Brahma' as a General of Odisha.

Despite all this, it is a matter of great regret and remorse that the Odias have not given proper importance to remember his precious contribution. His previous position prior to retrieval of the 'Brahma' and after the installation of Deities at Srikshetra no body remembered him nor his existence was assessed. However, some novelists and historians like Kanaklata Mohanty delineated the characters like his wife Binodini and his son Brahmananda in the pages of her novel.

She expressed in the words, "after the installation of the images, Rama Chandra Deva summoned the court and sought for Bishara Mohanty. But, Bishara was not there to find. The king sent a palanquin for him to bring to the court. But, he was not there too. His son proceeded to the kingdom in the palanquin instead. The king sent his army to locate Bishara but in vain.

The king digested his anger and declared publicly that "Bishara, the kabiraj(doctor) is not convicted with any crime to be brought back by the army. He is a respectable person after all."

The king said to himself, I was aware of this plight my friend. Even then, I planned to award you suitably. The honour, wealth and to crave for the material ends are not the symptoms of a true devotee. All these are desired by the nobles of the court.

"One who is capable of capturing the Lord of Universe, who so ever could capture him ? It is simply impossible. Nothing in this mortal world can attract him ? No gift, royal honour can ever allure such a personality. Please excuse me noble friend."

In absence of Bishara, his son Brahmananda was honoured by the king and blessed. The King told him, " You will be designated as Brahmananda Gadanayak from today. You will be assigned with the title of Dadhivamana Sevayat. I bless you. It will continue for ages to come too."

The novelist Mohanty describes again, "Bishara Mohanty, no doubt a boney, slim man but he found out his own place behind the Garuda Stamba, adjacent to the finger print of Sri Chaitanya Dev.

There he stands elevating both his hands upward in the pose of sacrificing everything and sheds tears drenching his whole body.

He stands veiled to avoid the sight of others around.

When the arena becomes thinner, everything lonely and desolate he looks at the attractive vision of the Lord bestowing piety on his smiling lips, he becomes overwhelmed and obliged.

He was not residing within any house. He was only witnessing the Blue wheel of the temple from the distant sand dune.

The month of Kartik (Oct-Nov) was a religious one. One morning, Bishara prostrated down in the Bada Danda to offer his ovation to the Lord. He was dust laid, body could not be



raised up. He felt temperature in his body and breathed his last there.

The Vaisnavagni was brought from the Roshaghar (Kitchen) of the temple and he was cremated. His son, Brahmananda set funeral pyre to his mortal body. During sunset it was seen a patch of white cloud has shrouded the pyre as if covering the sun.

It appeared as if diamond pieces or the Parijat petals are dropping down as ovation over his funeral pyre.

The corpse bearers while taking the Prasad were discussing, “ this is in fact the real life, accomplished life attaining salvation.”

King Rama Chandra was agony-stricken and while loitering, planned in his mind to construct a beautiful gate at the entrance of the Purusottam Kshetra to commemorate.

This was the way, the novelist Kanakalata delineated Bishara Mohanty in her book in her own imagination. Can we think more than that to remember such a great son ?

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