



Sri Purushottam Chandrika (The narrative of Srikshetra Dham) by Bhavani Charan Bandopadhyaya was published on 1844 A.D. (1251 *sal* or 1766 *Saka* era) at *Samachar Chandrika Yantralay* (Printing Press). It is purported to be the first full-fledged book on Lord Jagannath and His Domain of course with special reference to history of Odisha written by an Indian author in the first half of the 19th century. It is written in Bengali with poetic style.

Invention comes from the word 'invent' (to be the first to think of, make or use something). Invention in this case is the act of creating something new while reinvent is to invent something again or bring something back into existence, use or popularity after a period of

neglect or obscurity. The second invented edition of the book in 2011 A. D. has made a new addition to the historiography of Jagannath literature and of Odishan History.

The article aims at bringing to focus the first indigenous writing on Odisha more luminous on the abode of the Lord, Puri with its theological and blessed manifestation. The Christian missionaries of the period have bitterly criticized *Juggernaut* (the handless and legless Deity) whose decline was only a question of time that would ultimately pave the way for the collapse of Hindu religion. But contrary to missionary expectation and zeal, the Indian minds have exhibited strong inclination and deep-seated penchant towards the cult of Jagannath that got

Jagannath in Literature : Sri Purushottam Chandrika Revisited

Dr. Somarani Chand



itself expressed through literary manifestation. In this backdrop, the pioneering attempt has been made by Bhavani Charan in the 4th decade of 19th century.

The name Bhavani Charan Bandopadhyay (1784-1848) may not be familiar to the majority of Jagannath readers today. In fact, he belongs to the first category of Indian writers, whose writings on Odisha cover a spacious range of geography, religion, Jagannath culture, mythological significance of the soil with sporadic reference to British occupation of Odisha. Above all, *Sri Kshetra*, Puri forms the nucleus of Bhavani Charan's literary pursuit.



The repercussion of 16th century enlightenment coupled with fertilizing effect of European Romanticism invested the non-Europeans like Indians with an aura of inquisitiveness, interrogation and exploration. The tendency was to probe not only in the direction of historical happenings of hoary past, but in the direction of society, culture, tradition, heritage, customs, religion, rites, rituals and the like. Growing interest in Indological studies received an advantageous foothold with the establishment of Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. Thus wrote Rabindra Nath Tagore in the Preface of *The Bengali Book of English Verse* (Ed. T.O.D. Dan) in 1918, I think she (Bengal) is the only region in the Orient which has shown any distinct indication of being thrilled by the voice of Europe as it came to her through literature. While other eastern countries captivated by the sight of the immense power and prosperity which Europeans presented to us, Bengal has been stirred by the forces of new ideas breaking upon her from the western horizon. This shock, which roused Bengal, mainly came through literature and a great part of her energy followed the same channel of literature for its expression Bengal's response through literature to the call of the west is something unique in the history of modern east.

Sri Purushottam Chandrika can be well cited as a glaring example of Bengal's response to literature in its initial phase of awakening. It is characterised by Bengal's enthusiastic proclivity for Jagannath (Whom they usually refer as *Jagannathdev*, *Nilachal Bihari*, *Niladri Nath*) and intense estimation for His surroundings. Again it can be well quoted as a sweet symbol of neighbourly fraternity and goodwill.

As a matter of fact, a glance towards the history of religion in Odisha, identifies itself with the history of the Lord to a great extent. In the words of William Wilson Hunter in Odisha :

There, then is a great phenomenon in the inner history of a nation, over which those who would study the workings of the religious instinct in man's heart will do well to pause. In order to understand what Jagannath is now to the Hindus, it is necessary to learn what He has for Ages been.

Again Hunter has asserted that this cult of Jagannath has congregated all the principal sects of Hinduism, assimilated the tenets of other religions, that in due course has become the national religion of the soil. He further adds of this religious syncreticism, Jagannath forms the ultimate result. He has assimilated to Himself a wider range of attributes, than any of the Gods of Rome or Greece. This national reverence for holy places has been for ages concentrated on the city of Puri. On these inhospitable sands, Hindu religion and Hindu superstition have stood at the bay for 18 centuries against the world. Here is the National Temple whither the people flock to worship from every province of India.

Author Bhavani Charan born on 1784 A.D. at 24 Pargana of Bengal was a Brahmin by birth. Following two consequential battles; that is Battle of Plassey (1757) and Battle of Buxar (1764), the political revolution in Bengal led to a series of socio-economic and cultural changes. Calcutta (Kolkata) had overtaken the older commercial centres of Dacca or Murshidabad. More *Brahmins* and *Kayasthas* of rural Bengal settled in and around Calcutta, that in the long run ushered in a free environment in ideas, thoughts, apperception and appreciation. It created a new class of native elites, with deep insight to the past, interpretation of the present with vision for future.

Bhavani Charan Bandopadhyay very well belongs to this category who had with him intellectual awareness and cognizance. He had thoroughly mastered Sanskrit and English along



with his mother tongue Bengali. Starting his career at the tender age of 16 in a commercial concern, J. Docket Company, he had a long tenure of 11 years service experience. Then he was secretary to Bishod Middleton at Calcutta and thereafter served as main assistant to Collector of Hoogly. His intellect proximity with administration, commercial knowledge have made him a gifted personality. He was no less aware of the labours of British Orientalists like Sir William Jones (1746 – 94), Charles Wilkins (1749 – 1836), H. T. Colebrooke (1765 – 1837), H. H. Wilson (1786 – 1860), James Prinsep (1799 – 1840), who made serious attempts to gain greater knowledge of the legal, cultural and religious literature of the Hindus.

Alongside the Hindu history and culture there was a discernible growth in the demand for English education. 'They (the Hindus) have shown the greatest desire in Calcutta to learn the English language' as one contemporary official was to note 'and have gone to considerable expense for that purpose.' The best known instance of such private initiative in education was Hindu college, set up in 1817 (later renamed as Presidency College in 1855). Thus, Bengal witnessed a meaningful transformation, better to be called as 'Bengal Renaissance' where Raja Rammohan Roy was like a father-figure. As a junior contemporary Bhavani Charan had joined Rammohan in editing *Sambad Kaumudi* in 1821. Soon difference of opinion made them poles apart and in 1830, Bhavani set up *Dharma Sabha* himself being the President and Radhakanta Dev as Secretary. His Bengali Daily *Samachar Chandrika* (1823) became his mouthpiece. A creative genius of high order, the other literary outputs of Bhavani Charan include *Babu Upakhyān* (1821), *Kolikata Kamalalay* (1823), *Duti Bilas* (1825), *Hitopadesh* (1823), *Nabababu Bilas* (1825), *Naba Bibir Bilas*

(1831), the translation of *Bhagavat, Manu Samhita* and *Gita*.

Travelling constituted another striking feature of Bhavani Charan's personality. He had visited many places throughout India. Naturally, Odisha was one of his cherished spots for religious, cultural and artistic heritage. The observation of missionary Amos Sutton seems befitting to the context.

Pilgrimage to reputed holy places have been so popular in India. But no pilgrimage was ever so extensively practised and so generally famed as that of pilgrimage to *Juggeranath*. But what fortuitous circumstances that idol became so celebrated, it is difficult to imagine.

Bhavani Charan has made extensive tour of Bhubaneswar, Jajpur, Konark though Puri is the most favoured and revered one. The inquisitive mind has goaded him to look into history, tradition and heritage of the places he has come across. The temple chronicle *Madalapanji* has hastened his spirit of creativity. Just four years before his death at a matured age of 60, he has written *Sri Purushottam Chandrika* and has published it in his own publication unit of *Samachar Chandrika Yantralay*. The book has become not only a guide book for the Bengali pilgrims, but also it represents a brilliant combination of history and spiritualism.

Jagannath in Tradition and Literature

The holy temple town of Puri is situated on the eastern sea coast of India and lies within 19°47'55" North latitude and 85°49'5" East longitude. It is famous for the acclaimed temple of Lord Jagannath and the blue sea which provides a picturesque appearance to the place. The great temple being at the centre, the whole its surroundings constitute the *kshetra* extending about five *kosas* or around 16 kms as referred in ancient scriptures. It resembles a right oriented



conch-shell or *Dakshinavarta Sankha* for which the *kshetra* is also called *Sankha Kshetra*.

Thus, antiquity of Lord Jagannath is of remote origin. No fixed date or year can be assigned in this regard. Nevertheless, the prevailing tradition, myth or legend help us to form a reasonable hypothesis on the matter. In ancient Indian literature of *Rigveda* and *Atharvaveda* there is reference to *Daru* who is regarded as the symbol of *Brahman*. The Upanishadic literature however makes mention of *Purusha* as the Creator of the Universe. It is therefore presumed that with the passage of time the *Daru Upasana* concept of Vedic Age was moulded to *Purusha Upasana* is Upanishadic era. The *Svetasvetara Upanisad* (III, 19), *Kaivalya Upanisad* (mantra 21) depict *Purusha* as one Who possesses neither hands nor legs, Who has no eyes, but sees everything, no ears but hears all and who through unknowable knows everything.

*ApânipadoYavanograhitâ
Pasyatyacaksuhsasrnotyakarnah
Savettivedyamnacatasyastivetta
TamâhurârâdhyamPurushammahântam.*

*Apânipado ham
acintyâsaktihpasyamyacaksuhsrnomyakarna
Ahamvijânamiviviktârupo n castivettâ mama
citsadaham.*

It can be well deduced that this very depiction of *Purusha* in both the *Upanisadas* provides basis of peculiar form of *Purushottam* and His Associates.

In *Uttarakanda* and *Kiskindakanda* of *Ramayan* and in *Santi Parva* of *Mahabharat*, reference to Lord Jagannath are not unfamiliar which indicates the remote ancientness of the cult.

The *Puranas* (mythologies) are however vociferous on their accounts regarding *Purushottam Kshetra* and *Kshetranath* (Master of the *Kshetra* (place), Jagannath).

Bhavisya Purana, *Brahma Purana*, *Brihat Vishnu Purana*, *Garuda Purana*, *Padma Purana*, *Skanda Purana*, *Vayu Purana*, *Vishnu Purana* and *Narasimha Purana* are worth-quoting in this context. *Brahma Yamala*, *Vishnu Yamala*, *Rudra Yamala*, *Kapila Samhita*, *Kshetra Mahatmya* are the others in the line.

Besides these mythological texts, several medieval Sanskrit works throw light on Jagannathism or Jagannath religion or its various aspects or in entirety. The followings are the list of few texts.

- *Abhinav Gitagovinda*, *Mukti Chintamani*, *Gopalarcana Vidhi* by Gajapati Purushottamdev.
- *Bhakti Bhaibhava Natakam* by Jivadevacharya
- *Chandrakala Natika* by Viswanath Kaviraj
- *Gangavamsanucharita Champu* by Vasudeva Rath
- *Jagannath Ballav Natakam* by Rai Ramananda
- *Gundicha Vijay Champu* by Kaviraj Bhagavan Brahma
- *Mukunda Vilasa* by Raghuttama Tirtha
- *Niladrinath Satakam* by Nityananda
- *Purushottam Satakam* by Purushottam Mishra
- *Purushottam Tattva* by Raghunandan
- *Srikrishnalila Tarangini* by Narayana Tirtha
- *Saubhagya Manjusa* by Krushnananda Brahmachari
- *Siddhanta Darpana* by Samanta Chandrasekhar

The theological concept centering round the deities Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana evolved through ages. It further developed and got reoriented by various groups of worshippers under different ruling dynasties of the state like Matharas, Early Gangas, Sailodbhavas, Bhaumakaras, Somavamsis, Gangas and Suryavamsis. Leading philosophers like Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, Narahari Tirtha and others have their laudable contributions towards the growth of the cult and conviction. Several existing sects and religions have also exercised considerable influences in making the cult an amalgam.

This gradual absorption of heterogeneous attributes by Jagannath have made it the melting pot of many faiths and beliefs. Irrespective of individual conviction, the Lord has His universal appeal because of the spirit of harmony and co-existence. He epitomizes *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (the world as one family), a global vision of unified concept, the Indians have unfailingly cherished since time immemorial, a philosophy that goes beyond the realm of realism.

Since the time of Ganga rule especially with Chodaganga, Jagannath religion better to be called as Jagannathism became more vibrant and reflective. In addition to His epigraphic appearances, he made His presence felt in Odia literature. The followings are the glaring examples.

- Mahabharat by Sarala Das.
- *Amarkosa Gita, Bata Abakash, Deulatola, Gupta Gita, Gurubhakti Gita, Virata Gita, Jagamohana Ramayana, Vedantasara Guptagita* by Balaram Das.
- *Darubhakti Gita* by Jagannath Das.
- *Namaratna Gita, Rasakallola, Jagamohan Chhanda* by Dinakrushna Das.
- *Premabhakti Gita* by Jasobanta Das.

- *SunyaSamhita, Chayal is Patala* by Achyutananda Das.
- *Usha Vilas, Deulatola* by Sisusankar Das.
- *Anakara Samhita* by Nanda Das.
- *Chaturdha Vamana Murati* by Krupasindhu Das.
- *Dadhyata Bhakti* by Ram Das.
- *Kalpalata and Ramvivaha* by Arjun Das.
- *Jagannathastakam* by Gajendra Das.
- *Kotibrahmandasundari, Niladri Chautisa, Kshetra Mahatmya, Rasika Harabali* by Upendra Bhanja.
- *Jagannath Chautisa* by Ratnakar Sharma.
- *Nilagiri Vighraha* by Gopinath Singh.
- *Niladri Mahotsav* by Loknath Vidyadhar.

The collective efforts of these writers have made the cult of the Lord a glittering one that has its reflection in every aspect of human life be it religion, architecture, social custom or cultural heritage. It assimilates within itself the views of teachers, preachers, philosophers by re-establishing the ultimate truth that God is one, beyond all man-made trivial narrowness and thus belongs to all.

With British occupation of Odisha in 1803, remarkable changes were felt in socio-intellectual and religio-economic sphere. The English people were well aware of the importance of Jagannath and His all-pervading influence on Hindu life. To quote Major Thorn in his *Memoir of War in India* (1818) :

A considerable degree of importance has been attached to the possession of Cuttack from the connection which it has with the religion of the *Hindoos* whose reverence for Temple of *Juggernath* infinitely surpasses all that has ever



been known in the history of ancient or modern superstition of the extravagance of local sanctity.

The celebrated structure may be said to constitute the centre of *Brahmanical* devotion absorbing all the proud and invidious distinction of that extraordinary system.

Naturally, a wave of writings in English appeared that fabricated the literary appearance of Jagannath more impressive. Some of the earlier publications as follows :

- *An Account of Orissa Proper or Cuttack* by Andrew Stirling.
- *Ancient Geography of India* by Sir Alexander Cunningham.
- *A Brief History of the Rise and Progress of the General Baptist Mission in Orissa* by James Peggs.
- *Orissa, the Garden of Superstition and Idolatry: Including an Account of British Connection with Jagannath Temple* by W.F.B. Lauree.
- *The Government Grant to Juggernath's Temple* by James Peggs.
- *History of Puri* by B. K. Ghosh.
- *Orissa and Its Evangelization* by Amos Sutton.
- *Antiquities of Orissa* by R. L. Mitra.

Pilgrimage to holy centres constitutes a vital part of Hindu religion. But among various places, Puri is the most preferred one. In the words of Amos Sutton,

Orissa is to India what Jerusalem was to the land of Israel. It is the holy land of the Hindus. As the Israelists went up to worship at Mount Zion, so do the inhabitants of the various provinces of India go on pilgrimage to the great temple of Juggernath.

Realising this tradition bound sentiment, the construction of new Jagannath Road from Jaleswar to Puri began in 1812 and was completed in 1825. The construction of a well at *Atharanullah* for the convenience of the pilgrims in 1827, erection of *saraies* (pilgrim shelters) at Balasore, Akhuapada, Basta, Bhadrak and Rajghat near Jaleswar in 1827, plantation of shady trees on roadside further encouraged the pilgrims to visit Puri. As a result, Jagannath began to get place in indigenous Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Bengali literature. Some earlier publications can be cited in this regard.

Hindi

- *Jagannath Mahatmyabhasa* by Viswanath Tripathy.
- *Tirthadarpan* by Shivakrishna Binani.
- *Jagannath Mahatmya* by Shiv Narayan Sharma.
- *Narapati Nala* by Bisaldev Raso.
- *Chitravali* by Usman.

Telugu

- *Utkal Sri Jagannatham* by Narasimhamurti Bhallamudi.
- *Nilachal Mahatyam* by Tennets Seethumuti.
- *Mukti Chintamani* by Venkatadiya.

Tamil

- *Sri Jagannath Kshetra Kilakkam* by K. S. Venkataraman.

In Bengali, however more number of publications are available. In fact, the Bengalis are the forerunners among other Indians who were either government servant or ardent Jagannath devotee or sincere Odisha lover. They were somewhat justified in taking such a stand, frantically trying to present different aspects of Odishan

history, cultural heritage, religious sanctity. Some of them are more descriptive about Puri and Jagannath. In spite of various limitations of their works, they are the harbingers of indigenous historical as well as religious writings on Odisha. Few among them are-

- *Sri Purushottam Chandrika* by Bhavani Charan Bandopadhyay.
- *Niladri Madhuri* by Jadabendra Adhya.
- *Utkal Tirtha* by Sadananda Saraswati.
- *Sri Kshetra* by Sundarananda Vidyavinod.
- *Sri Jagannath Mandir* by M. M. Sadasiv Mishra.
- *Mandirer Katha* by Gurudas Sarkar.
- *Jagannath Mangal* by Viswambar Das.
- *Nilachal* by Chuinal Basu.
- *Utkal Parva* by Ramyani Viksha.
- *Mahaprabhur Nilachal Lila* by Haridas Goswami.
- *Govinda Deser Katha* by Govinda Das ed. Jaygopal Goswami.
- *Amader Des Orissa* by Subodh Kumar Chakravarty.
- *Kanchi Kaveri* by Rangalal Bandopadhyay.

Even in the Bengali autobiographies of 19th century like *Amar Jivan* by Nabin Chandra Sen, *Amar Jivan Katha* by Nagendra Nath Basu and *Keshab Janahir Atmakatha* by Sharada Sudari Devi, description on Puri and Lord Jagannath occupy a dominant position.

Sri Purushottam Chandrika : An Evaluation

The first category of Bengali writing on Lord Jagannath is *Sri Purushottam Chandrika* written by Bhavani Charan Bandopadhyay. Published in 1844, it is in poetic form in Bengali.

The caption of the book denotes its exclusiveness for Puri and Jagannath. At the same time, the proximity of religion with contemporary politics and administration, religious interference vis a vis power has been well portrayed by the author.

The book consists of three parts. The first part includes the colourful description of *Sri Kshetra* (Puri) to *Chatish Niyog* (36 types of servitors) of Jagannath temple with sub chapters like *Panchatirtha Vidhan*, *Chakratirtha*, Prayer (in Quartains), *Pratimurti* (Representation of Image) of the Lord, the boon to Indradyumna, Twelve Festivals (*Dwadasa Yatra*), the offerings as designed by Indradyumna, reference to *Snanayatra*, *Nava Yauvan Darshan*, Car festival and list of 36 servitors. The second part of the book reflects the story of the monarchs from *Kali Yug* to 4945 years of rule from Yudhisthir till Mukundadev. The last part of the book centers round the three other religious centres of importance- *Chakra Kshetra*, *Gada Kshetra* and *Padma Kshetra*.

For the portrayal of *Srikshetra* and other main places of ecclesiastical weightiness, the author has used *Utkal Khanda* (section) of *Skanda Purana*, *Madala Panji*, (Temple Chronicle), *Kapila Samhita*, *Vayu Purana* and *Garuda Purana* as source books. In fact, the first and third portion of the book is the Bengali form of original Sanskrit version. The second part of the book centers round the political history of the state with mention of the long list of rulers and short reference to the notable activities of some rulers for which *Madala Panji* has served the base.

The initial depiction of the first part starts with deep reverence and prayer to Lord Jagannath. Bhavani Charan's precise study of the physical features of *Sri Kshetra* with the details of other deities of Puri like *Loknath*, *Asta*



Mahadev, Astachandi etc. with their mythological and religious significance, a rich description of Jagannath temple from *Meghnad* Boundary wall, *Simhadwar* (entrance gate), the kitchen, the *bhogamandap*, the *Jagamohan* and the *Viman* is indeed a comprehensive one. The sub-chapter *Panchatirtha Vidhan* refers to take bath first at lake *Markandeya*, *darshan* (view) of Jagannath Trio, bath at sea and *Indradyumna* tank. The importance of *Chakratirtha* refers to representative images (*pratimurti*) of Jagannath like *Madan Mohan*, *Ramakrishna*, *Nrusimha*, *Dolagovinda*, blessings of Almighty to king *Indradyumna*, *twelve yatras* (festivals) in twelve months, five types of *bhoga* (offerings) in a day as fixed by *Indradyumna*, bathing festival (*SnanaYatra*), *Naba Youban Darsan* (view of new youth), Car festival and 36 types of servitors are the respective additions to first chapter.

Bhavani Charan's account of ancient phase of political history is rather a curious one being the admixture of mythology and legend with history. The contour of ancient history, he has tried to reconstruct from *Kali Age* by utilizing references from *Madala Panji*. To maintain the chronology of the kings, mythical, legendry heroes along with epical heroes from *Mahabharat* have been included, total numbering 14 over a period of 3179 years.

The *saka* era in the book starts from 65 A.D. From 65 *saka* era to 1741 *saka* era there is the mention of 96 rulers with references to very few who has some specific achievements to his credit like constructing *Markandeswar* temple, *Jagannath* and *Konark* temple or the digging of *Atharanalla* and the like. In addition, the *Raktabahu* episode of 245 *saka* era during the reign of *Sovandev*, related with some miraculous incomprehensible happenings place the historical description to a hodgepodge of legend with history. Also it indicates the inadequacy of

differentiating between myth and reality and paucity of data.

The concluding portion contains the narration of *Chakra Kshetra* (Bhubaneswar), *Gada Kshetra* (Jajpur) and *Padma Kshetra* (Konark). It elucidates the history of *Chakra Kshetra* with reference from *Vayu Purana*. The emphatic mention of *Brahmesvar* temple, *Bhaskaresvar* temple, *Ramesvara* temple, *Gokarnesvar* temple, *Muktesvar* temple etc. along with *Ananta Vasudev* temple, the scenic beauty of the place with devotional touch makes it an interesting study. For *Gada Kshetra*, Bhavani Charan has relied upon the contents of *Garuda Purana*. The presentation is lively and catchy. Within a well marked boundary line, the author has attributed divine importance to the place by mentioning numerous deities besides the Presiding one, *Goddess Viraja*. The spiritual gravity of the place is very strong and distinct in this presentation while for *Padma Kshetra*, he has devoted only a single paragraph in a prosaic manner. This again points to the dearth of sources for *Konark* temple and its surroundings.

Concluding Analysis

Raja Rammohan Roy on one occasion said;

A day will come when my humble endeavours will be viewed with greater justice, perhaps acknowledged with gratitude.

The remark of Rammohan can be well applicable in case of his junior contemporary Bhavani Charan. His humble and maiden attempt of writing a book on *Jagannath* at the fag end part of life (in the forth decade of 19th century) is definitely acknowledged with gratitude by the posterity. As mentioned earlier the medium of expression is Bengali because it is exclusively for the people of Bengal to have an idea about their immediate neighbour with effulgent portrayal of *Srikshetra* and its Overlord. An inimitable



combination of spiritualism with history has made the book quite a fascinating one.

As mentioned earlier, the historical accounts are far from authenticity for insufficient source materials. But the author's narration of *Srikshetra* with other three *Kshetras* will definitely impress any ordinary reader for lucidity and simplicity. The stanzas are in couplet, triplet or quatrains form. Its poetic appeal is equally amazing. History, Philosophy, Theology, legend and travelling experiences amalgamated altogether has been presented in a hearty manner that forms further major attraction for the book. It is a brilliant example of emerging prose and poetry style in Bengali literature of formative years. For the ardent devotees of far of Bengal, the very name and contents of the book breathe an aura of sacredness and purity.

The book is 170 years old. It may not be of any use to present generation of Bengali readers as a lot of publications along with availability of net facilities on the subject has quenched their inquisitiveness. But for Odisha, it carries greater weightage. For a proper and justified assessment of *Madala Panji*, the book is of meaningful significance. Last but not the least, in the evolution of regional writings on Jagannath, the book has its own essentials. It has opened the gate for others to contribute more and more on the subject to touch the grassroots level and to open new vistas for the study Jagannath Cult.

In 1891, the Collector of Puri, N. K. Bose wrote in *Calcutta Review*.

The worship of Jagannath is for the highest minds among the Hindus, a pure system of theism. To the polytheistic multitude, it refers the infinite phases of divinity as objects of worship and provide for their declaration, an infinite number of rituals and ceremonials. In a word, it supplies the spiritual requirements of different classes of Hindus in different stages of their intellectual



developments. Under its broad and receptive roof, doctrines, the most divergent, find a resting place.

Jagannath is an unsectarian name. All Hindu sects worship at its shrine. The followers of Sankaracharya, Ramananda, Kabir, Chaitanya and Nanak are to be seen paying homage to the great God. Even the Jains of the *Digambar* sects flock to the Temple at a certain season of the year. The common link of all these sects is their belief in the supremacy of Jagannath.

This cosmopolitanism of the Lord is indeed a matter of wonder. For, when in the second decade of 21st century, we find the votaries of religion have turned the world into a theatre of senseless violence, meaningless terror in the name of God, the Abode of Trinity has remained a trans-continental confluence of people of all faiths with the message.

All are equal before Almighty.

This message had definitely prompted Bhavani Charan for writing on Jagannath to be the forerunner in recent times.

Bibliography :

Bhavani Charan Bandopadhyay, *SriPurushottam Chandrika* (Bengali), Calcutta, 1844, (1251 *sal*), Ed. G. C. Das (Odia), Bhubaneswar, 2011.

Prabhat Mukherjee, *The History of Medieval Vaishnavism in Orissa*, New Delhi, 1981.

Prabhat Mukherjee, *History of Jagannath Temple in the 19th Century*, Calcutta, 1977.

M. N. Das (Ed.), *Sidelights on History and Culture of Orissa*, Cuttack, 1977.

A. Eschmann, H. Kulke & G. C. Tripathy, (Ed.) *The Cult of Jagannath and Regional Tradition of Orissa*, Delhi, 1986.

K. C. Mishra, *The Cult of Jagannath*, Calcutta, 1971.

Dr. Somarani Chand, Reader in History, S.B. Women's College, Cuttack - 753001.