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**JAGANNATH SWAMI NAYANAPATHAGAMI BHAVATU ME**

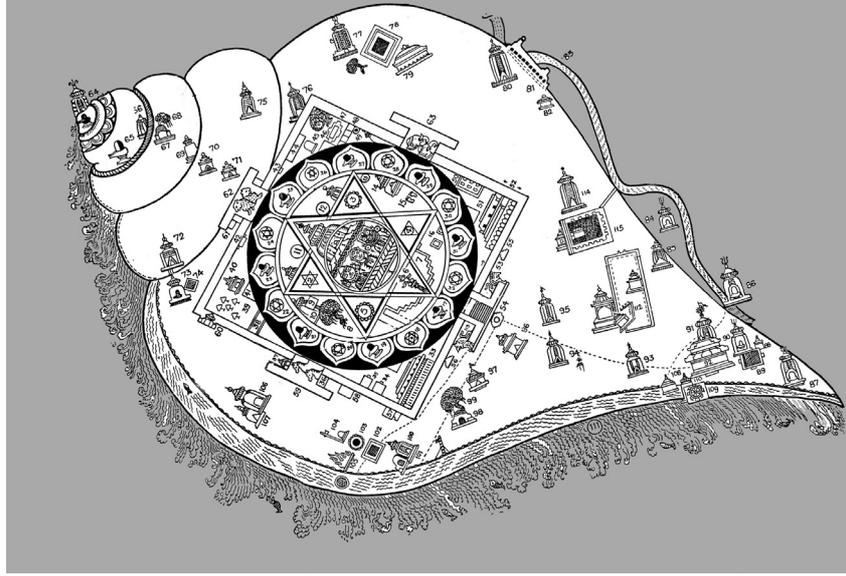


**CHANDAN YATRA OF THE LORDS**



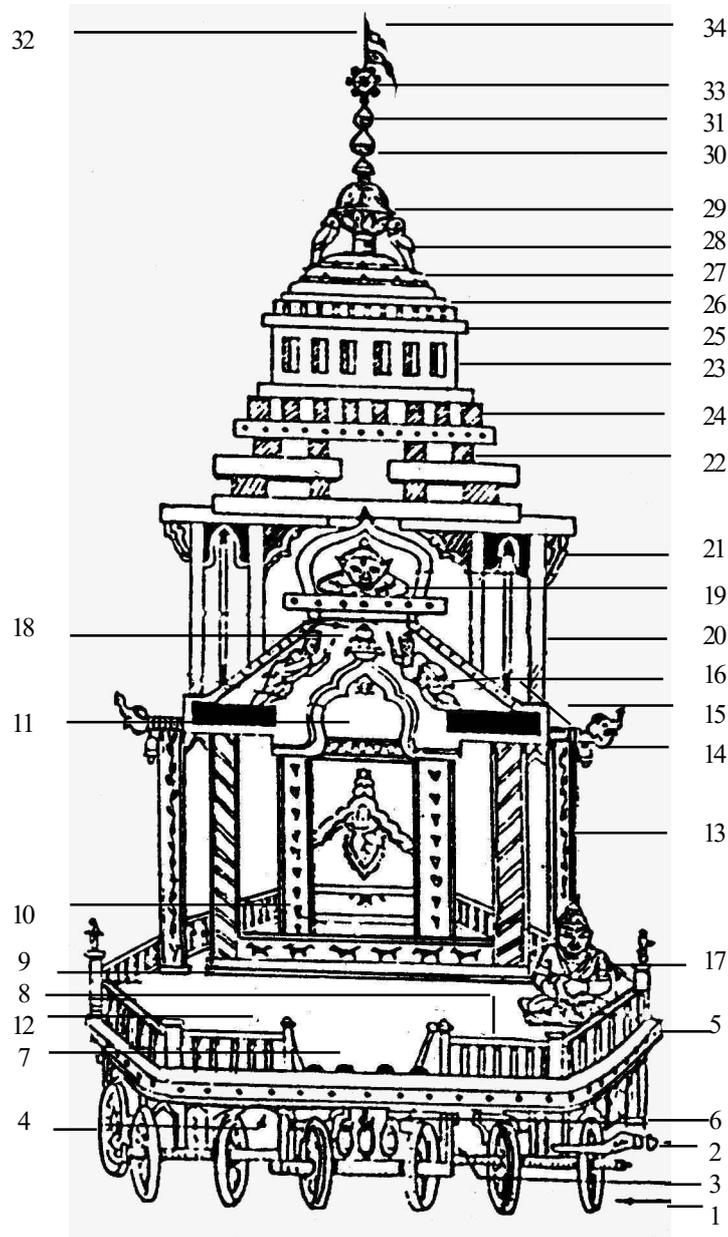
**HOLY DEITIES ON SNANA MANDAP**

# SANKHA KSHETRA



- |  |                          |                           |                         |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Balabhadra, Jagannatha, Subhadra & Sudarsan | 29. Vaikuntheswara       | 58. Prahari Hanuman       | 87. Vilweswara          |
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| 7. Bhoga Mandap                                | 35. Kundaleswara         | 64. Sri Lokanath          | 93. Mausima             |
| 8. Kalpabrukhya                                | 36. Ram Chaitanya Temple | 65. Rameswara             | 94. Marchika Devi       |
| 9. Rohini Kunda                                | 37. Baravai Hanuman      | 66. Kandunursingha        | 95. Charchika Devi      |
| 10. Bata Ganesh                                | 38. Nirmalya Hanuman     | 67. Kandu Asrama          | 96. Sodasha Putri       |
| 11. Uchsta Ganapati                            | 39. Alaka Batika         | 68. Nikumvilabata         | 97. Narayani            |
| 12. Sri Saraswati Devi                         | 40. Chakra Narayan       | 69. Harachandi            | 98. Angirasrama         |
| 13. Nabagraha                                  | 41. Rameswar             | 70. Chamundeswari         | 99. Angirabata          |
| 14. Konark Suryadev                            | 42. Chaturdhama          | 71. Banadurga             | 100. Dakhina Kali       |
| 15. Padapadma                                  | 43. Kanapata Hanuman     | 72. Basheli               | 101. Ugreswarashrama    |
| 16. Yagnyabata                                 | 44. Niladri Vihari       | 73. Kapalmochana          | 102. Swetaganga         |
| 17. Angeswar                                   | 45. Bavabyeswara         | 74. Manikarnika Teertha   | 103. Muktisila          |
| 18. Indranidevi                                | 46. Sialilata            | 75. Ghatamangala          | 104. Adisankara Pitha   |
| 19. Khetrapala                                 | 47. Koili Vaikuntha      | 76. Vagabati              | 105. Swargadwara        |
| 20. Swana Vairabi                              | 48. Tapaswi Hanuman      | 77. Markandeswara         | 106. Varahi Devi        |
| 21. Mukteswari                                 | 49. Survarnakupa         | 78. Markandeya Teertha    | 107. Shyama Kali        |
| 22. Chstrakali                                 | 50. Ananda Bazar         | 79. Saptamatruka          | 108. Bedi Hanuman       |
| 23. Batamarkandeya                             | 51. Devasnana Mandapa    | 80. Alamba Devi           | 109. Chakra Teertha     |
| 24. Katyayani                                  | 52. Meghanada Prachira   | 81. Atharnala             | 110. Chakra Narayan     |
| 25. Gopeewara                                  | 53. Singhadwara (E.gate) | 82. Makardhwaj Hanuman    | 111. Mahodadhi Tirtha   |
| 26. Beda Kali                                  | 54. Aruna Sthamva        | 83. Vargavi River         | 112. Jagannatha Ballava |
| 27. Pataleswara                                | 55. Badachhata Math      | 84. Mukteswara            | 113. Kashi Biswanatha   |
| 28. Bhubaneswari                               | 56. Chhauni Math         | 85. Bata Mangala          | 114. Visweswari         |
|  | 57. Pejanala             | 86. Kapoteswara           | 115. Narendra Sarovar   |

## THE PARTS OF A CHARIOT



(1) Chaka or the wheels (2) Dandia (3) Ara (4) Banki (5) Hansa Pata (6) Kani (7) Sankha-dwara (8) Jali (9) Gaipata (10) Singhasana (11) Kanak Mundai (12) Bhumi (13) Sola Nahaka (14) Makara Danda (15) Basanta (16) Duar Ghoda (17) Sarathi Pida (18) Kumbha Pati (19) Rahu Pati (20) Athanahaka (21) Banki (22) Pida (23) Rusi Pata (24) Danda (25) Para Bhadi (26) Khapuri (27) Pada (28) Olata Sua (29) Dadhi Nauti (30) Kalasa (31) Kasthi (32) Danda (33) Chakra (34) Copi Ketana or the flag.

## *Editor's Note*



The culture of our State is synonymous with Lord Shree Jagannath, the supreme identity of Odisha and its people. The Jagannath Cult is the foundation of Odia culture and tradition. The history of Odisha remains incomplete without the Jagannath culture. Furthermore, the popularity of the Holy Trinity is not confined to Odisha only. Its appeal and followership is universal particularly the concept of equality and brotherhood espoused by the culture. For millions of devotees Lord Jagannath is the Lord of the universe. Puri, the abode of the Lord, is also known as “Sankha Kshetra”, “Neelachal” and more popularly as “Purusottam Kshetra”. The architectural marvel Shree Jagannath temple built in 12<sup>th</sup> Century is considered as one of the four Dhams. Situated on the shores of Bay of Bengal, the temple attracts lakhs of pilgrims and visitors every year. The Holy Trinity stands apart from other gods and goddesses worshipped throughout the world. They are taken as mortal human beings.

The annual ceremonial sojourn of the presiding deity Lord Shree Jagannath along with brother, Lord Shree Balabhadra and sister, Devi Subhadra to the Gundicha Temple is observed as world famous “Ratha Yatra”. Millions of devotees flock to Puri to participate in the spectacular Ratha Yatra, which takes place every year on the Grand Road of Puri. The Holy Trinity is amongst the common masses irrespective of caste, creed, sect and religion and shares the joys and sufferings faced by us. The Ratha Yatra of Puri is also an extraordinary religious event. Nothing gives the devotees as much satisfying experience as that of pulling the chariots of the Holy Trinity. The construction of chariots commences from ‘Akshaya Trutiya’. On the full moon day in the month of Jyestha, the Snana Yatra takes place. A sea of devotees from different parts of the country flung to Puri to catch a glimpse of the ceremonial bathing rituals of the deities. After completion of the rituals the deities suffer from Fever and are taken to a place called “Anasar Ghar” for 15 days. During this time the Temple Vaidya treats Them with herbal medicines. After recuperating from Fever, the Lord a day prior to Ratha Yatra allows Public Darshan “Naba Jauban Darshan”.

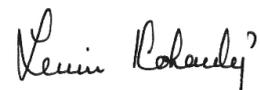
The Ratha Yatra is a grand culmination of a series of celebrations spread over summer and monsoon months. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of bright fortnight of the month Ashadha the deities come out of the temple in a spectacular procession called “Pahandi”. Adorned with Tahias the deities are pulled in rhythmic motion to the beats of cymbals and chanting of the names of the Holy Trinity in chorus by devotees in frenzied ecstasy. After the deities are seated on their respective chariots, the “Chhera Panhara” by the Gajapati Maharaja takes place. The most exciting part is the pulling of chariots by lakhs of people along “Bada Danda”, the Grand Road. The chariots

move slowly until they reach Gundicha temple where the deities rest for a night adorned with “Dashavatar Costumes”. They enter the Gundicha Temple in the next day morning in the usual “Pahandi” style and stay there for 7 days. On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of bright fortnight of Ashadha the return of chariots or “Bahuda Yatra” takes place. The 3 chariots pulled by lakhs of devotees reach the Simhadwar. The next day the deities are attired in the costumes of glittering gold which is known as “Sunabesha”. After completion of certain rites like “Adharapana”, the deities go back to “Ratna Simhasan” on the Dwadashi day which is popularly known as “Niladri Bije”. Their arrival to the sanctum sanctorum marks the end of Ratha Yatra, the grand festival of chariots.

The onset of millennium’s first Nabakalebar Ratha Yatra last year provided a unique challenge and management opportunity to the Government of Odisha led by popular Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik. The Odisha Government’s effort is a testament to what a plan concerned Government can do. The first Nabakalebar of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century accomplished the twin objectives of maintaining the traditional fervor along with the successful management of the event. Besides this, a number of steps have been taken by the State Government focusing to address the basic needs of our farmers, women, youths and the disadvantaged and marginalized sections of the society.

Odia is one of the finest classical languages of the country. Its roots are ancient and the language continues to be vibrant to suit the requirements of the modern times. Our State Government is committed to promote the language and the rich cultural heritage of Odisha. Odisha Official Languages Rules are in advanced stage of formulation for better implementation of Odia language in transaction of official business. Odisha leads the country in the Settlement of Land under the Forest Rights Act. In the last two years 3.3 lakh youths in the State have been trained equipping them with employability and self employment skills. The State Government envisages enabling and training 8 lakh more youths in 3 years from now. In the last 10 to 15 years our State has also emerged as the education hub of the east with several Engineering and Medical Institutes along with many Government owned educational and research centres coming up here. Besides, a large number of corporate firms have set up their establishments and many more are coming up in the State. To add to the development front, Bhubaneswar was last year declared as No.1 Smart City in the country.

Hon’ble Chief Minister has rightly said that “we have achieved significant milestones in several flagship programmes of the State Government in quantitative terms. Now we have to constantly find out ways and means to improve our performance in every sector both quantitatively and qualitatively. With the blessings of Lord Shree Jagannath in the 80<sup>th</sup> year of formation of our state as we are also celebrating the birth centenary of our legendary leader Shri Biju Patnaik, Odisha now, is in a journey of development and inclusive growth. For this wonderful issue I would like to thank Hon’ble Chief Minister, Hon’ble Minister, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Director and the entire team of I. & P.R. My special thanks to the esteemed writers of this invaluable issue including the Director and staff of Odisha Government Press for their efforts in bringing out this priceless publication.



Editor, Odisha Review



## Secrecy in God-Devotee Relationship

*Dr. Bibhudutt Dash*

Every relationship tends to struggle for privacy or secrecy because revelation would be inimical to it. Especially, if this relationship is between a devotee and God, it may preferably be a secret. As Mayadhar Mansingh painfully writes in “Tinoti Sonnet” (“Three Sonnets”): “Tuma sange chahen ehi gopana pranaya, / Prakashyare tuma sanga bibhisikamaya” (I wish our relationship were a secret / for revelation might prove dangerous). In fact, secrecy is the beauty of a relationship. If anyone, by inadvertent or indiscreet action, makes it open, he or she would surely run the risk of loss or obloquy. However, no one knowingly makes it open. The God-Devotee relationship is an extraordinary matter and by the same token, it may be a secret. But it is never a secret. Whenever a lover of God or a supplicant has been benefited by Him, this interaction has always remained revealed.

An intense interaction or engagement with God is, as John Bowker writes, *Darshan* (87).

This engagement is a clandestine, sacrosanct affair. It is intriguing that this never remains clandestine! We might like to take certain instances of this intense relationship; snapshots of God-Devotee engagement in moments of prayer, surrender, followed by an epiphany bound up with help, deliverance, benediction or assurance of grace. The striking instances could be the case of the endangered *gaja* (elephant), *mruguni* (doe), *Draupadi*, *Prahallad*, *Ahalya*, *Dhruva*, *Mirabai*, and in some other



instances where the devotees are not so much endangered, for instance, *Shavari*, *Kubja*, *Sudama*, *Dasia Bauri*, *Bandhu Mohanty*, *Balaram Das*, *Deenakrushna Das*, *Salabega*, and others. All of them have loved God and intensely prayed to Him in distress, and they have been helped. Or, if we take another example, such as the secret interaction between *Indradyumna Dev* and *Jagannath*, where the former requests God to destroy his family in fear of his kinsmen’s brag



that their forefather built the Jagannath Temple, and God grants this wish, the world still knows that it was Indradyumna Dev who built the temple. Let us take another example of this interaction between Bhima Bhoi and God, the former, being blind, falls into a pit, and is rescued by God in person. All such instances of God-Devotee interaction are known to us, are open, are revealed, and are never a secret. And we wonder, 'Why'? Why doesn't this relationship remain a secret? We might exclaim at the inevitability of this revelation, or interrogate a built-in teleology that necessitates such revelation.

Every secret is potentially open because the charm of a secret lies in the fact of its being known, and the English dictionary houses an oxymoron, 'open secret'. In the above instances where the devotee and God have interacted, and in the light of the revelation that follows, it might be guessed either the benefited ones themselves made it open, singing the glory of God and His boundless grace, or it might be that God created such conditions whereby it would be revealed. Maybe, He left some 'telltale' signs or clues to reveal or to immortalize this relationship. Really, who could understand God's extraordinary stratagem, His ways to eternize the bond! But the question remains as to why should God like to do so. Is He troubled by the secrecy of this relationship, the secrecy of this divine 'assignment'?

The answer to this question is not only difficult, but decidedly impossible. We might like

to halt our enquiry or wonder since such relationship is not only beyond the expanse of our knowledge, but the gravity of the God-Devotee interaction, in contradistinction to any clandestine amour, frustrates its own secrecy or tussles for revelation. It is true that the revelation of their interaction makes it desirable or peremptory that we pray to God, or lose His divine grace, but at the same time it makes us think what it would have been if this was a secret, an eternal arcane, defying decoding and revelation.

Such interrogations would only confound us. Barring the fact whether they are revealed or not, God's majesty, grace and infinite love is not contingent upon the revelation. In a very simple, mundane way, we admire, adore or value someone whose successes, exploits or charisma is open and known to us. We are enthralled by the feats performed by him or her in one thing or in a panoply of spectacular achievements. In some cases, the achievers are modest, and in some, there lurks in them a tacit desire for recognition. However, this does not hold good in the case of God-Devotee relationship. The question further remains if no exploits and feats of God, such as what He did in His different incarnations, or the ineffable experiences of some people in their day-to-day lives concerning their interaction with God were not known to us, would it have lessened the devotees' love of God? When we read the devotional songs glorifying the majesty of God, we see most of these songs highlight God's exploits, His feats, and how He has extricated the distressed, which leads the poets to commend



their souls to Him. This act of submission rests on the conviction that only He can save us. In some cases God has delivered the afflicted ones from distress, and in some, He has respected His devotees' sentiments, as in the case of Shavari or Dasia Bauri, who were not as endangered as Draupadi or *gaja* or *mruguni* was.

It seems as if these interactions are never meant to be secret. We might say that this is the wish of God. However, there are certain instances where God wants them to remain a secret and accordingly instructs the devotees on pain of incurring His displeasure. In these cases, the devotees welsh on the promise. An adage goes, "Curiosity killed the cat." Instances of this breach may have been prompted by curiosity or by execrable lack of patience. We have heard tales where God has helped the devotees the way they wanted Him to do, and has told them to obey His commands, primarily to keep their interaction a secret, but they have failed. We find occasions when God walks on foot following the devotees to destinations where His presence would be crucial, and telling them not to look back. But they look back, and God halts there for ever. Such moments are beatific and transcendental. What is important is the revelation of these interactions. What is also important is that these revelations help us participate in the *lila* of God, to experience the bliss of God-Devotee relationship. If they were not revealed, we would have been deprived of this experience. In a God-Devotee relationship, the privacy of the bond, and the fact of this being a secret would surely be a deprivation for

mankind. Therefore, the discovery of such a relationship is a blessed opportunity since it helps us experience the joy of this relationship. Such discoveries never meet with hostile reactions. In one instance, we find a reaction. Hiranyakashipu's ire against his son Prahallad arises from his son's worship of Vishnu contrary to his father's commands to worship Shiva. Whether Prahallad could have beguiled his father by prevaricating that he worshipped as his father instructed is not that significant as the pathetic inability of his father to understand that God is essentially one.

In most of the devotional songs, we see descriptions of the glory of God and they do not just highlight the mercy of God, but show how the poets themselves struggle to gain His affection amid a litany of complaints. This essay attempts to study the nature of God-Devotee contact, and the element of secrecy, but also studies its potential in the rupture of secrecy. If we take instances of this contact in stories from other religions, we do not probably find any such God-Devotee contact remaining a secret. If revelation is important, and maintaining secrecy is unimportant, it would still make us distinguish between accidental and deliberate revelations of secrecy. If accidental, it is regretted; if deliberate, it is intended to be celebrated.

We are, in fact, poor at withholding secrets, and intently, though unwittingly, long for the moments when they could be blabbed or consciously revealed. Sometimes we feel like revealing secrets, sometimes not. When we feel



like revealing, we search for appropriate time and people, with the hope that this would make us feel happy or relieved. Further, we also like them to be a part of the experience we have had. In case of experiences involving God or any supra-mundane events, we usually feel chary about revealing because we apprehend disbelief or misinterpretation from the hearer. Thus we vacillate, dither or shrink from sharing our experiences. We prefer that they remain a secret. As we find Kabisurya Baladev Rath expressing such a wish before God, “Mu tumbha parichara janile ki bichara / Itare najanantu au” (OGP 2010). It is likely that a hearer might wonder at, doubt or envy the unique interaction the narrator has had with God. In any case, if there is a feeling that this is to be revealed, then finding the right hearer with selfsame spiritual interest is desirable. Whether we want to reveal or not, every secret is in itself desperate to be out. It leaves traceable clues for its disclosure. The nature and the variety of the secrets and their potential to be open offer exciting grounds of analysis where the complexities involved in the dual properties of the secrets being

private and public frustrate our attempts to fathom the exact basis of this antinomy. But far from belabouring to comprehend this puzzling duality of secrets, we would rather participate in their mutual tension that sustains the secrets, finds or makes opportune moments of their discovery or revelation. The intended secrecy in God-Devotee relationship is powerless before the irresistible attraction of God’s love. As Salabega writes, “Kalia ki mantra kala / Chitta chhanna chhanna hela” (17).

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# **GOOD GOVERNANCE**





## **Law and Order Arrangements for Making Nabakalebar Festival-2015 a Success**

The Jagannath culture is an inherent part of Odisha's tradition and culture. The Ratha Yatra every year continues to attract lakhs of devotees from across the country to the temple town of Puri. Amongst all the festivals and rituals associated with Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra the most unique, intricate and grand festival is the Nabakalebara when the Holy Trinity assume new bodies. The Nabakalebara ceremony spanning a period of over five months adheres to diverse, complex and mystic rituals. The exceptional festival draws millions of people who gather in Puri to have a glimpse of the deities in Their new embodiment.

The onset of the millennium's first Nabakalebara posed a huge challenge to the Government of Odisha. Maintaining a delicate balance between fulfilling centuries-old tradition, aspirations of millions of devotees and organizing the mega event with contemporary management, administration and supervisory skills was indeed not an easy task. However, it also provided a suitable opportunity to the State government to demonstrate its management competence in successfully organizing the event.



Nabakalebara 2015 was a massive effort requiring the synchronization of multiple departments and agencies working towards a common goal. The synchronized efforts and the aspirations of millions of devotees made the event a grand success. Govt. of Odisha's endeavour under the leadership of popular Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik for maintaining law and order arrangement to manage such a mega event is praiseworthy.



## Preparatory Phase

- Development of infrastructure to augment capacity of State Police:

State Government made budgetary allocation of about Rs 50 Cr in last 3 years for development of various infrastructures of State Police, particularly Puri District Police in connection with Nabakalebar festival. This includes the state-of-the-art CCTV surveillance system with Modern Control Room and Traffic Control Room, a number of built-up accommodations for officers and men and modern security gadgets;

- Holding of a number of Review Meetings & distribution of responsibilities to Senior Officers.
- Series of preparatory and review meetings were held from February 2015 onwards under the Chairmanship of DGP, Odisha and ACS to the Hon'ble Chief Minister on security, law and order and mobility arrangements.
- Specific duties like co-ordination, law and order, crowd control, temple affairs, cordon management, traffic management were distributed among senior police officers as early as March 2015.

## Deployment

- Around 10,000 Police personnel including 3,000 Home Guards were engaged for Nabakalebar Festival.
- More than 500 Police vehicles were mobilized from different units for Nabakalebar duty.
- Approximately, 600 wireless sets utilizing seven channels were in use for communication.
- Besides, a number of security gadgets like metal detectors, bomb disposal units, x-ray baggage scanners, night vision devices, binoculars etc. were utilised for security purpose.

## Assignments

- Under the overall charge of the then DGP, Odisha, specific duties were assigned to senior police officers.
- Security Management- Sunil Roy, Director, Intelligence



- Nodal Officer- Satyajit Mohanty, ADGP, Headquarters
- Overall law & order and Coastal Security- B. Jha, ADGP, Law & Order
- Cordon Management- Arun Kumar Ray, ADGP, SAP, CTC.
- Traffic Management- Sanjeeb Panda, IGP SAP being assisted by Dayal Gangwar, DIGP, SAP.
- Temple Affairs-Cum-OSD- S.K.Priyadarshi, IGP (Operation),
- Railways arrangements- Mahendra Pratap, ADGP, Rlys.
- Besides, R.P. Koche, IGP, CR & Ashish K Singh, SP, Puri were supervising ground level deployment.

### **Security Arrangements**

- Two Bomb Detection & Disposal Squads deployed (handled 9 calls for suspected bombs and 18 calls to handle unclaimed luggage).
- Three Urban Anti-Terrorist Specially trained Squads, two ODRAF Units & one NDRF unit was on alert to react to an eventuality.
- Elaborate arrangements were made to thwart any threat from sea by Coastal Security Units of the State Police in tandem with Coast Guards & Indian Navy.

### **Traffic Management**

- About 3000 Police and Home Guards were engaged for traffic regulation.
- The entire Traffic arrangement divided into 3 parts:
- Outside Traffic (6 Zones & 12 sectors)
- Inside Traffic-I( 4 Zones & 9 Sectors)
- InsideTraffic-II( 3 Zones & 9 Sectors)
- Total 31 Parking places have been developed for buses, LMV, Two Wheelers etc.



- 6840 Heavy, 29160 Light MV and 55180 two-wheelers entered Puri on 17-18 July for Sri Gundicha Yatra

### Crowd Management

- For smooth Crowd management entire Puri Town divided into 4 Zones.
- Zone-1 ( Sectors-1 to 13 and 14 (F))
- Zone-2 (Sectors-14 A,B,C,D and E)
- Zone-3 (Sectors- 15 and 16)
- Zone-4 ( Sector-17)
- 500 volunteers of the locality have been involved during crowd management and they were issued with I/D cards from local Police as Community Police Officers.



### Sunabesha

- One way crowd mobility plan was designed.
- 6 Evacuation boxes were formed on the entry path to accommodate the persons in distress.
- Sectoral deployment of Police personnel (total 16 Sectors) in Grand Road to facilitate crowd flow.
- Deployment also was made in lanes and by-lanes leading to Grand Road.

### Foot fall(approx in lakhs)

- Nabakalebar Car Festival( 18.7.2015)- 15 plus
- On 19.7.15- 2
- On 20.7.15 -2



- On 21.7.15 -2
- Herapanchami ( 22.7.15) -3
- On 23.7.15 -2
- On 24.7.15 -2
- Sandhya Darshan (25.7.15) –5
- Bahuda Yatra (26.7.15)- 10
- Sunabesh (27.7.15)- 14
- On 28.7.15 and 29.7.2015- 1
- Niladri Bije ( 30.7.15)- 1



Grand Total– 58 Lakhs (approx)

### Lessons Learnt from the unique experience

- Collaborating with the local population and keeping the lane & by-lanes leading to Grand Road free from movement led to better crowd management & facilitated as an evacuation area.
- The mobility plan was designed to avoid cross vehicular movement in and out of Puri as well as inside the town.
- Developing a number of parking places in and around the town kept the lane and bye-lanes free from vehicular traffic & facilitated safe & free movement of crowd.
- RoB and Fly-over to connect NH 203 from New Nabakalebar Road at Bira Harekrishnapur for better traffic management in future.
- More public transport to be encouraged to avoid private transport.
- ‘Niti’ and event like “Sunabesha” needs to be expedited so that the crowd is not restive.
- Entry regulation for crowd beyond one million, of elderly persons, children, and medically unfit persons needs to be imposed in future.
- Effective utilisation of members of Non-profit & NGOs in the arrangement.



## Evolution of Iconography - Shree Jagannath Cult

*Padmanabha Mahapatra*

On the high pavilion of the sanctum sanctorum of the great temple four prominent wood-made images of Shree Balabhadra, Shree Subhadra, Shree Jagannath, and Shree Sudarshan along with another miniature wooden replica of Shree Jagannath called as Madhab attract the notice of the devotees.

Besides these, there are two female images of Shreedevi (wood-made image with gold-coating in the front side) and Bhudevi (image made of silver) on both the sides



of Lord Jagannath. When so many deities are worshipped together why the nomenclature of the temple is Shreemandir? Such nomenclature cannot be justified without recounting the reminiscences of its deep past. Scriptures describe that from long long ago it was famous as Shree-kshetra, Shree-dhama and Shree-tirtha and subsequently the first temple of the place was widely known as Shreemandir, the deluxe divine

abode of Shree, the goddess of wealth, luxury and lustre. That ancient temple is not the present-day's edifice of Lord Jagannath, which has been subsequently transformed and modified to present shape in course of time. On the Ratnabedi in between Shree Balabhadra and Shree Jagannath, in the middle is sitting Maa Subhadra, devotee

touching and bowing head on the backside of Garuda pillar can see Devi Subhadra in full shape and one hand each of Balabhadra and Jagannath. The great Gurus and Preceptors have accepted Her as

the Prime-mother and Her temple is the Shreemandir. The above-stated four wooden deities are worshipped jointly as Param Brahma, the absolute Supreme Being.

### **Worship of the formless Brahma — (The initial phase)**

The Self hidden in the heart of all the beings was not revealed to all. Sages possessed



of keen intelligence alone could see It with the help of their sharp and acute reason, and through direct knowledge of embodiment of Sat, Cit and Ananda. '*Hiranyagarbhah Samabartatagre*' [Yajurh -23-1]. '*Hiranyagarbhah*' is infinite effulgence without any definite shape. '*Na tasya pratima asti yasya nama Mahadasya Hiranyagarbhah*', initially He had no image. It has been propounded in the Upanisad that there was only one and one unique Parambrahma, without a second, in the beginning – '*Sadeva somyedamagra asidekamevadvitiyam*'. [Chandogya -6-2-1] Only that Primordial Supreme God became diversified into many – '*Tadaiksata bahu syam prajayeyeti*' [Chandogya -6-2-3], He resolved – 'Would that I were many! Let Me procreate Myself!'. '*Eko basi sarbabhutantaratma, ekam rupam bahudha yah karoti*' – The one controller, the inner Soul of all the things, makes His one form manifold. [Katha -2-2-12] Despite being diversified into many, He remained one alone, manifoldness could not occur in Him – '*ekopi san bahudha yo bibhati*' – He manifests Himself as many, though He is one. '*Sarbam khalwidam Brahma*' [Chandogya -3-14-1]- Hence, this whole universe is Brahma.

'*Sarbam hi etat Brahma ayam atma brahma sah ayamatma chatuspat*'. [Mandukya -2] This means – All this is surely Brahman. This self is Brahman, The Self, such as it is, is possessed of four phases. Then, what are these four phases? Those are – 'Jagaritasthanah' (Shree Balabhadra), 'Swapnasthanah' (Mother

Subhadra), 'Sushuptisthanah' (Shree Jagannath), 'Prabhava-apayayau' the place of origin and dissolution of 'bhutam' –Turiyasthanam (Shree Sudarshan).

Shree Jagannath is the symbolic of Supreme, Devi Subhadra represents to Maya the illusion, Shree Balabhadra is Jiva the Mortal soul. When the Supreme Soul Brahma is enlivened by the illusory energy Maya, the Universe is created. Therefore from the unification of the Param with the Maya the Jiva is thriving in the sphere of creation. Therefore the joint worship of the above deities is the worship of the Supreme, the Brahman.

A brief, as regards the chronology of evolution of iconography in Shreeekshetra, phase by phase in course of time from the Vedic period to-date is being discussed as below.

(1) From time immemorial Shree Devi was worshipped in Shreeekshetra by its founder preceptor Bhargaba Parasuram. (so the Kshetra is still surrounded by the river Bhargbi in memory of Bhrgu Rishi, who was the Guru and Grandfather of Parasuram) Parasuram's disciple sage Medhas worshipped Shree Devi continuously for many years and this holy place was Medhas's hermitage at that time. In course of time king Surath of Chedi dynasty (the predecessor of Kharabela, the powerful king of Kalinga of 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.), being defeated by the enemies, went away alone into a deep forest and took shelter of Maharshi Medhas. King Surath as per direction of Maharshi, in association with



Samadhi Baisya who lost his business, adored Mahamaya (Shree Devi), after construction of Her image in bare sands, at the outlet of the river Malini and by the side of the sea-shore (at present the place is known as Banki Muhana near Chakratirtha), continuously for three years and due to Her grace got back his Kingdom. Then the rulers of the then Kalinga came to know the Goddess, built a temple which was reputedly recognized as Shreemandir. Shree Devi was decorated by two elephants on the top of both of Her sides and was reverentially attributed as Gaja-Lakshmi. A similar image of Gaja-Lakshmi was carved within the Hatigumpha inscription of Samrat Kharbela on the Dhabalagiri hill during 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.

(2) During the period of worship of Shree Devi, the worship of Madhab was initiated in Brahmabana (the prior name of Shreekshetra). Madhab is Gana-devata, Mangalayatan Murti and Agrapujya in the cultue of Odisha. “*Madhabo Madhabo Vishnuh Madhabo Madhabo Harih, Smaranti Sadhabo nityam sarbakaryeshu Madhabam*”. His name has been uttered five times, the meaning of ‘Maa’ is ‘Laxmi’, Her other names are – ‘Padmalaya’, ‘Kamala’, ‘Shree’, ‘Haripriya’, ‘Indira’, ‘Lokamata’, ‘Khirabdhitanya’ and ‘Rama’ (Amara Kosha – Prathama Kanda/14), Their husband is Madhab (the predominant Father). Madhaba is usually a Chaturbhuja Vishnu image. The Mahabharata puts forth – ‘*Maunadhyanasca yogasca biddhi bharat Madhabh*’, on accounts of His silence

(mauna), prayer (dhyana) and Yoga He is the epithet of Madhab. At a later period, ‘Brahmabaibarta Purana’ described Madhab as the husband of all the Saktis.

*Maa ca Brahmaswarupa ya Mulaprakrutiriswhari,  
Narayani iti bikhyata Vishnumaya Sanatani//  
Mahalaxmi swarupa ca Bedamata Saraswati,  
Radha Basundhara Ganga tasam swami ca  
Madhabh//*

In Mahabharata there is mention of a “vedi” within the ‘Brahmabana’ near the sea coast of Kalinga which was crossed by the Pandabs with Pachali in course of their Agnyata Banabasa as per the direction of the sage Lomasha. (Mahabharata –Bana-parba- 114 – 16 to 28) This Vedi (altar) uprose from within the sea-water, was the creation of Agni and Surya, it was the “Shree-nivas”. The Bhumi was created out of Yagnyagni (fire sacrifice made by Brahma) and Shree Vishnu (Madhab) was the Yagnya-purush. Hence the worship of Madhab was initiated in this khetra on or before the period of Mahabharata all along with the upasana of ‘Shree’.

Since Shree Devi, the main goddess was worshipped in Her own temple; a separate temple along with a descent platform was constructed for Madhab in course of time. Instances of worship of Madhab images by the side of the river Prachi, around the then ‘Mahavijaya Prasad’, the state capital of Samrat Kharabela, at Niali (Madhabananda), Chaurashi (Lalitmadhab), Mudgala (Mudgala Madhab) etc are ample in the history of Odisha. The same Madhab consecrated during the time of Mahabharat in



Shreekshetra, has been worshipped at different stages as Shree Nilamadhab by Biswabasu, Shree Nrusimha in course of arrival of Maharaja Indradyumna and Shree Purusottam by Acharya Sankara respectively.

(3) When Shree Devi and Madhab were worshipped in separate temples within the campus of Shreemandir the influence of Brahmanism was reduced in the-then Kalinga and the Buddhist-*tantra*'s influence captured the entire state. They initiated the worship of Tara and Bhairabi along with Shree Devi. The elephant and the lotus were their national symbols, so they easily accepted Shree Devi (Gajalaxmi) as their goddess. Hence all the three deities Shree Devi, Tara and Bhairabi were worshipped together for quite a longer period.

(4) Gradually in course of time the Buddhist influence was humbled in Odisha, their three images – Tara, Shree Devi, Bhairabi were again accepted by the Brahminic followers and were worshipped as Dakshinakali, Mahalaxmi and Bimala respectively. All these three goddesses were being worshipped, in those times, within a south-facing temple, on which the present day Ratna Bhandar (Treasure-house) of Shreemandir stands. From that time the Buddhist-Tantric monolatry system of worship discontinued and the worship of a series of gods and goddesses was initiated in Shreekshetra.

(5) Thereafter Brahmanic culture made up their mind to initiate the worship of conjugal or multiple deities. As a result of which

the worship of Durga- Madhab, Shiva-Parbati, Laxmi-Nrushimh etc were emphasized. This trend ultimately resulted in worship of seven deities on the Ratna Simhasan one after another in course of time.

(6) Because of the Buddhist influence male and female images were treated as brothers and sisters. Under such analogy Jagannath and Devi Subhadra are worshipped as brother and sister on the Ratna Simhasan. Similarly during the Gupta-Gundicha festival in the month of Aswina, Durga and Madhab are also worshipped as brother and sister. In olden days the images were made of stone or metal, subsequently in course of time this system was also modified. Previously the images were subjected to direct worshipping system in their bathing and brushing of teeth etc. unlike the present day's system of reflections on metallic mirrors.

(7) Acharya Sankar, the spokesman of Adweta Darshan, consequent on his arrival in Shreekshetra initially desired to worship the unique Purusottam image as Shiva but subsequently modified his opinion and decided to accept Him as Vishnu. His mission was to revive the Vedic system of worship and to eliminate the Buddhist influence on Hindu rituals. In his Gita-bhasya he has got justified that the Madhab or the Nilamadhab worshipped earlier in Shreekshetra was Gita's Purusottam – '*Atoasmi loke vedeca prathitah Purusottamah*'.

After Acharya Sankar, Acharya Ramanuj, the spokesman of Bishistadweta, arrived in



Shreekshetra, he had directed to worship Jagannath and Devi Subhadra as Narayan and His consort Laxmi. Thereafter Madhwacharya, the spokesman of Dwetamata, Acharya Nimbarka, the spokesman of Dwetadwetabada and Acharya Vishnuswami of Rudra Sampradaya, spokesman of Shuddhadwetabada arrived in Shreekshetra one after another and tried to influence the system of worship of Shreekshetra in their own direction.

During the middle period of Acharya Sankar and Acharya Ramanuja the presently seen temple has been constructed, the previous temple where Shree Purusottam was worshipped has been re-designated as Shree Nrusimah's temple (East-facing temple in front of the present Muktimandop). In Nrusimah's temple Shree Balabhadra, Shree Subhadra and Shree Jagannath were worshipped as a joint unique image known as Shree Purusottam. In course of time the joint image was initially divided to three entities and subsequently Their number has increased to seven on the Ratna Simhasan.

(8) In the beginning the wood-made deities were enlivened and worshipped in the Gundicha temple for quite a long period, thereafter they were brought to the present-day temple, Shreemandir, after the completion of its construction. Mahalaxmi and Bimala were shifted into their new temples constructed afresh within the premises of Shreemandir and Mahakali was shifted to a new temple constructed outside the western side of Shreemandir, which is at present known as Dakshinakalika temple at Kalikadevi Sahi.

(9) As a result of accomplishment of rigorous spiritual endeavour of innumerable sages, saints and Acharyas, Shree Subhadra, Shree Jagannath and Shree Balabhadra, Trinity, in Shreemandir are worshipped as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar representing the Srusti (the creation), Sthiti (the existence) and Pralaya (the total destruction) respectively.

**Conclusion** — The prevailing worshipping rituals of the holy trinity are the idealistic specimen for the people of Odisha. The Puja-laws in other temples of India may be different as per Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnavite variation, but the Acarya in Shreemandir is all-in-one – Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnaba. He primarily worships the Vedic Mother, so he is Shakta. In course of time he attains the wisdom of realization that he himself is Shiva, hence he is Shaiva. Indoctrinated in Vedic and Tantric Mantra by Perfect Guru he becomes a Vaishnaba. Being Vaishnavite, he offers Naibedyas to Subhadra (Brahma), Jagannath (Vishnu) and Balabhadra (Maheswar) with Tulashi leaves. This Rajbidya and Rajguhya of both Nirguna and Saguna aspects of the Trinity, is a sovereign science, a sovereign secret, supremely holy, most excellent, attended with virtue, very easy to practice and imperishable. Hence we conclude in brief, Odisha is Jagannath and Shree Jagannath is Odisha. Truly speaking, Shree Jagannath is the Lord of the Universe.

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Padmanabha Mahapatra, Shree Mandir Purohit,  
Matimandap Sahi, Puri.



## Param Brahma Ananta Maharana

*Sudarshan Sahoo*

He exposed Himself early in the dawn on the sea shore keeping the roots upside. The word 'Bijnana' is the super precious metaphysics in the ancient Indian volumes. Knowledge is not visible to naked eye. When it turns to be practicable with exposition, it carries the identity of 'Bijnana' (Science). Indranilamani gave the touch of effulgence through dream to the devotee of Malaba.

*'Indranilamani murti haste  
chakragadadharah  
Ekashatyangulamitam  
swarnapadmoparisthitah'.*

(Kapila Samhita)

The statue of Indranilamani measuring eighty one fingers stands on the golden lotus with wheel and mace in hands. 'Swapnasthanah antaprajnah saptanga ekonabinshatimukhah prabibik-tabhuk taijaso....' (Mandukya Upanishad-4). Allured Indradyumna towards transformed awakening from dream got excited to have an exposed vision of the God. Parameswara transformed Prajnana (inherent knowledge) to Bijnana before a pure and sanctified devotee as like as Yama revealed of Brahma to Nachiketa apprehending him a true disciple. He is largest, loftiest, longest, oldest,

subtlest and alike all the extreme identities mean Brahma. 'Urddhwamulam adhahshakham-ashwattham Prahurabyayam' (Gita-15:1). That indispensable Super Soul has exposed Himself as a gaint pipal tree comprising of the immense universe whose roots are towards the top and the branches spreading reverse. He deduces / shrinks this expansion to zero at the end of two Parardhas or one Param year and thus known as Hari. The term of one Brahma ends in two Parardhas. The whole universe disappears in the womb of Hari in Prakrutika Pralaya (Natural Dissolution). The pastime of creation and dissolution is continuing perpetually. *Bhutagramah sa ebayam bhutwa bhutwa praliyate* (Gita- 8:19). All these celestial bodies are created and dissolved frequently. Carl Sagan, American cosmologist and the author of COSMOS has told, "The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite number of deaths and rebirths. It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond to those of modern scientific cosmology. Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years long. Longer the age of Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang. Dr. Brian P. Schemdt,



the Nobel Scientist of 2011 has revealed in the International Astronomers' Conference held at Beijing on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2012 that the whole universe will dissolve into darkness in next 100 billion years. This is the first ever declaration of the modern scientists that has been codified in the ancient Indian volumes five thousand year ago.

Hiranyagarbha first appears from Darkness through vibration, turning to effulgence. This is Brahmaa. This effulgence is impregnated with infinite numbers of universes, galaxies, stars, solar systems etc. The celestial bodies now in the space are created from the Hiranyagarbha. These effulgent twinklings hide the Creator. Hence Isha Upanishad prays, '*Hiranmayena Patrena Satyasyapihitam mukham, Tattwam pushanapabrunu Satya Dharmaya Drustaye*'- O Parameswar, the face of Truth has been

covered. Remove the cover for the followers of Truth and virtues. The next hymn prays Him to roll back the effulgent rays, and consequently His graceful figure would be visible to conclude that the Lord are the same. The duration of one Brahmaa is from creation of Hiranyagarbha to the dissolution of Cosmos, a span of one hundred years. This span is not the solar years counted for human beings on the earth. There are four eras – Satya, Tretaya, Dwapara and Kali that compose one Chaturyuga-a span of 4,32,000 years. This is counted as one Yuga. Gita (8:17) hymns that one thousand Yugas make one day of Brahmaa and another one thousand Yugas make one night. This calculation comes to  $4,32,000 \times 2000 = 8,64,000,000$  human years. Accordingly, one hundred years of Brahmaa is  $8,64,000,000 \times 365 \times 100$  human years. On completion of this period,





the existence of Brahma comes to an end and he dissolves into deep darkness 'Tamasah'. Alongwith him, Vishnu who was for nourishing and Maheswar for dissolution, get lost in Tamasah. There remains no hint of effulgence or light in the vast entirety of infinite ocean of zero. Silence reigns for indefinite period. This zeroness, the Tamasah, is termed as 'Ananta Shayanam' (Indefinite Slumber) of Sri Maha Vishnu. Time halts here. No stir in period exists. He holds the time in the zeroness. This unimaginable extremity is hymned in Sri Vishnu Purana:

*'Nahonaratrirnavo na bhumih  
Nasittamojyotirabhutchananyat,  
Shrotadibudhyanupalabhyamekam  
Pradhanikam Brahma Pumastadasit'.*

(There existed no day, no night, no sky, no earth, no darkness- light, no five elements, no mind nor intelligence. There persisted only Brahma). Devi Puranam scribes in narrating the infinite Tamasah:

*'Asididam  
tamobhutamaprajnatamalakshanam  
Apratarkyamabijneyam prasuptamiba  
sarbatah  
Na devadanababaapi na bhuminanilonalah  
Na suryam chandrama baapi nakasham  
salilam tatha'.*

(Before creation there existed only unknown, symptomless, logicless, intellectless and conceptless darkness all around in deep slumber. There were no gods, no demons, no land, no air, no fire, no sun, no moon, no sky nor water). Katha

Upanishad (2:2:15) and Swetaswatar Upanishad (6:14) hymn in the similar words:

*'Na tatra suryo bhati na chandra tarakam  
Nema bidyuto bhanti kutoayamagnih,  
Tameba bhantamanubhati sarbam  
Tasya bhasa sarbamidam bibhati'.*

(There is no shine of sun, no beam of moon, no twinkling of stars, nor there is spark of lightning. The light of fire is too negligible. Only His effulgence is reflected in all of them and all they get energy from Him) The similar theme is hymned in the 6<sup>th</sup> sloka of 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of Gita:

*'Na tad bhasayate suryo na sashanko na  
pabakah,  
Yad gatwa na nibartante taddhamam  
paramam mama'.*

(No effulgence of sun, moon or fire exist there. That is my abode from where no body returns after reaching there) The 12<sup>th</sup> sloka of Purushottama Yoga of Gita reveals:

*'Yadadityagatam tejo jagatbhasayate  
akhilam,  
Yatchandramasi yatchagnou tattejobiddhi  
mamakam'.*

(The effulgence of sun, moon and fire that make the entire universe glow, is mine). Swetaswatar Upanishad hymns:

*'Yada tamastanna diba na ratrih na  
sannachasat shiva eba kebalah'.*

(When there was no existence of night, day, darkness, sat or asat, there existed only Shiva)



Srimadbhagavatam 8<sup>th</sup> Canto sings:(Odia):

*'Jagata upujila kale, Aruna heu joga bale.  
Pralaya Kale mahi nashe, Sakala luchanti  
akashe.  
Rabi sashanka kehi nahin, Tu matra rahu  
sesha hoi'.*

Rigveda 10<sup>th</sup> Mandala 90<sup>th</sup> Sukta (Nasadiya Sukta) hymns:

*'Tamah asit tamasa gudhamagre  
Apraketam salilam sarbama idam  
Tyuchhenabhupihitam yadasit  
Tapasah tanmahina ajayataekam'.*

(In the foremost, deep darkness was spread everywhere. There was no existence of the universe. As if an infinite ocean having no sign, symptom, hint or anything else scattered all around. When He intended, this vast creation came into being)

As well as the ocean water saturates to form crystals of salt, alike, the deep dense ocean of darkness saturates into infinite effulgence by His 'Tapah' (Meditation / heat). This is Hiranyagarbha. His inhibited energy before Tapah is cool and tranquil. When Param Brahma, from Ananta Shayhanam, intends to create, He initiates Tapah that causes heat and generation of effulgence. The generation reaches till Hiranyagarbha diffuses to form universes, galaxies, stars and other celestial bodies. Before diffusion, there was no hint of space or sky. All the formations are lying scattered in the space as glowing objects. Currents are formed in sea water that make stirring movements and whirls. When

strong storms take place, high waves tussle on the sea. Exactly, the infinite space is an ocean where furious storms take place due to currents. There are crores of spiral galaxies due to whirls in the space. Milkway, known as Akash Ganga, is one line of a spiral galaxy. Our solar system is placed in an insignificant corner of this spiral galaxy. High stormy waves of effulgent coloured clouds measuring lakhs/ crores of light years in distance / height are raised in the space. Stormy waves on the surface of the sun are very frequent, as observed by astronomers. Stars also have life span as creatures on earth. The newly born stars are violet and dying stars are red. Each star changes its colour from birth to death in the series of a rainbow. The Whirl of spiral galaxy attracts the objects towards its centre, the mysterious black hole, which devours everything. Even the magnetic force of one spiral galaxy steals stars from another galaxy.

After performance of one thousand horse sacrificial Yajnas the body of Indradyumna glew with effulgence of Vishnu. The king got hypnotized to see the lotus, conch, mace and wheel, the four auspicious hand signs of Sri Vishnu in the four branches of the tree on shore, reflected with maroon glow of the early dawn. His consciousness flew towards an undirected, unbound and undimensional sphere. '*Yatha nadinam bahabambubegah samudramebabhimukha drabanti*' (Gita – 11:28) – Like the flowing water of rivers run towards the sea. Focussing on the centre of the open lotus, he was feeling the peep of twinkling stars from the unfathomed sky.



Indradyumna got lost in searching the root-end of the lotus –stem that dives into infinity on the top of the tree.

The deep saffron light of the early dawn touched the feet of Indradyumna forming row of garlands on the crests of submissive waves on the shore and his consciousness was traversing from planet to planet, galaxy to galaxy and universe to universe to have a vision of the blue sappier idol. But he was observing the sun and moon forming the two ear rings of the Lord and the stars hanging as garlands on His chest. Akash Ganga, the milkway looked like His sacred thread. His consciousness reached Brahmaloaka. This is the topmost of Saptaloka (Seven worlds), the abode of Brahmaa. In Vaman Avatar, the second step of Indranilamani reached Satyaloka, known as Brahmaloaka being spread on the entire heaven, crossing Mahaloka, Janaloka and Tapaloka. The aura of all the *rishis* along with Brahmaa became pale by the blaze of His nail. Brahmaa washed His feet by water from his pot. Haribansha Purana narrates : (Odia):

*'Ganga ye thila kamandale, Brahmaa ta  
Vishnu Pade dhale  
Suddha pabitra jalarashi, Govinda nakha  
kone pashi'.*

(Ganga remained in the pot. Brahmaa poured that on the feet of Vishnu. The Water was pure and sacred. It entered the nail corner of Govinda). Ganga got entitled as Vishnupadi after being coloured by the reddish effect of Indranilamani's feet. After one thousand years, this stream flowed

down to Dhruvaloka located atop the heaven. Then this stream reached Brahmapuri located on the centre of Sumeru hilltop spreading through the star world in the sky path, surrounded by thousand crores of flying chariots.

Brahmaa entered into unknown depth to the root of the lotus stem on which he sat to know his origin. Likewise, the consciousness of Indradyumna dived into as far as possible – *Saptabarana Veda Kari, Jahin Lagi gati mori* (Sriramacharitamanas). His intellect got reflected, *'Sarbasya dhataram achintya rupam aditya varnam tamasah parastat'* (Gita- 8:9) – The appearance of the Lord is glowing as sun and He is the provider of all who exists beyond this dark illusory world.

*'Divi surya sahasrasya bhabet  
yugapadutthita,  
Yadi va sadrusha sa syad bhasastasya  
mahatmanah'.* (Gita 11:12)

(Even if the effulgence of thousand crore suns are combined together, these won't be equal to the glaze of the Lord).

The consciousness of Indradyumna returned from Brahmaloaka. After crossing the lotus, he got captured by the *pranab* sound evolving from the initiation of Hiranyagarbha on vibration, the beginning of creation. The conch, Panchajanya, in the hand of Vishnu, was a demon killed by Him in the ocean bed near Prabhas Tirtha, Indradyumna felt exhilarated auspiciously. His consciousness rolled ahead to the giant mace sign, as if it was alert ready for action. It is the weapon



to punish the miscreants. All keep strict discipline being afraid of:

*'Bhayadasyagnistapati Bhayat tapati suryah  
Bhayandrischabayuscha Mrutyu dhabati  
panchamah'*

(Katha Upanishad)

Fire gives heat out of His fear, sun gets heated out of His fear, Indra and Vayu also are afraid of and Mrutyu god also runs in its five paths). No one dares to neglect the responsibilities. Because He is watching everywhere as He is omnipresent- *'Ishabasyamidam sarbam yatkincha jagatyam jagat'* (Isha Upanishad :1). All the gods are under strict discipline.

Indradyumna's conception turned towards the wheel which seemed to be ready to whirl out from the tree branch, like all other divine weapons for instant action- *'Divyanekodyatayudham'* – (Gita-11:10) – There are many weapons in the hands of the Lord ready for instant action. Divine effulgence further glew in the sahasrara chakra (modula oblongata) of Indradyumna. He felt, *Sudarshan Chakra*, the inconceivable glown wheel is only capable of bringing down metagalactics of Sri Purusottam, beyond Kshara and Akshara, to the place of PrajnanamBrahma from some unknown indualsphere. *'Na tatrachakshurgachhati na bag gachhati na mano na bidmob na bijanimo'* (Kena Upanishad- 1:3)- No eye, no word, no mind nor wisdom is capable of reaching there.

Brahma Purana reveals, This wheel was prepared by Shankar himself out of the combined effulgence of all the gods and the wicked demons got demolished by this weapon. Pasupata Darshan tells, Lord Shankar is revolving round the universe sitting on this wheel. Skanda Purana narrates, wheel is knowledge. Markandeya Purana scribes, wheel is energized with boundless effulgence. Ahirbudhnyu Samhita sings, Lord Nrusingha got consecrated with Sudarshan Mantra. In the evening of each eleventh day of lunar month, the great lamp is lighted near the wheel on the top of the temple, which signifies that in the human body the effulgence starting from Muladhar Chakra proceeds upwards to be settled at the Sahasrar Chakra and that results in the vision of only one Brahma.

While Indradyumna's focus remained still on the divine signs on the tree, Narada speaks, 'The deity Mahavishnu Indranilamani you saw in the dream, has appeared here in the form of this tree being subdued with your devotion.'

Indradyumna was getting perplexed what to do and how. He asked Narada how to get the image for worship. In reply Narada said, *'Ananta Murti Bhagaban chestaswebapyagochara'* (Niladrimahodayah) – The statue of God has no end and can't even be conceived by trial. Brihadaranyak Upanishad (2:3) scribes how could be the appearance of SriPurusottam: This could be His countenance or that could be or some other. Such numberless anticipations have been exercised. This is appearance as like a cloth coloured with turmeric, as like a white woolen



cloth, as like a red velvet insect found in the early rainy season, as like a flash of fire..... Neti Neti..... He is not like this, He is not like this, His shape and countenance has no end..... His name is Truth of Truth ....., such indecisively His conception of appearance has gone in darkness. Who is capable of judging the form of this infinite Lord ? Swetaswatar Upanishad hymns: *'Sa betti bedyam na ca tasyasti betta tamahuragrayam purusham mahantam'* - He has knowledge in all the subjects, but nobody knows about Him. Mandukya Upanishad scribes that the past, present and future and any thing beyond these three are the form of AUM. The infinite universe is the exposition of AUM. Mundak Upanishad speaks, *'Na sandrushe tisthati rupamasya na chakshusha pashyanti kaschanainam'* - He has no visual form, nor any body is able to see Him with the eye.

At this time voice came from the heavens that God has no physical identity; He would incarnate Himself as per own will to build the statue. Yajurved hymns that He has no statue whose name is Mahadyasa Hiranyagarbha. His very initial exposition is infinite effulgence and it is an unending ocean.

After the divine voice, an artisan who configured the metagalactic interpretation 'Brahma' - the oldest, the thinnest, the foremost, the highest, the longest and likewise all the extreme entities from the heavens appeared there and Indradyumna offered the chance to build the statue of the Lord from the tree. In Mahabharat while Arjun watching Viswaroopa, he exclaimed,

*'Anadi madhyanatamanantaviryam, Ananta bahumsasisurya netram'* (Gita- 11:19) – You have neither beginning, middle nor end. You are the epitome of infinite vigour. As because that infinite power came to work as an artisan, He is known as 'Ananta Maharana'. According to the advice of Brahmaa, Indradyumna stood as the guard at the temple door.

*'Dine dine tada tatra divyagandhobhajayate Parijatadipuspanam brustischaiba babhuba ha Swargangambulabastatra patitah sukshmarupinah'*.

(Niladri Mahodayah)

Day by day divine essence came out from the workplace. Parijat flowers rained from the heaven. Minute water sprinkles came from the heavenly Mandakini river. Skanda Purana was eavesdropping in the ear of Ananta Maharana inside the temple, *'Tasmaddarumayam Brahma Vedanteshu Pragiyate'* – Hence Darumayam Brahma is heralded in the Upanishads. The mystery of Supreme Lord is secretly hidden in the hymns of Upanishads- *'Tad Veda guhya upanishatsu gudham tad Brahma vedate brahmayanim'* (Swetaswatar Upanishad). Brahmaa knows that the birth place of Param Brahma is the Upanishads. The Upanishads were coming down from the divine hidden corners in the darkness of the closed temple, like the pigeons come down fluttering their wings from all around the blue wheel and sit on the head of the temple. Ananta Maharana had nothing to do by hand. *'Yatha satah purushat kesa lomani*



*tathaaksharat sambhabatiha viswam* ' (Swetaswatar Upanishad) – As like the hair from the body of a living man grows automatically and nothing is to be done by the man, likewise this universe is grown from Paramatma. When He wishes, action goes on automatically. His visual configuration hints are codified in the Upanishads. When He wished to configure His shape, the giant shaped Brihadaranayak Upanishad uttered melodiously, *Chakshusi eba prathame sambhabatah sambhabata iti*- Perhaps the eye got born in the initiation, Purusha Sukta of RigVeda evoked, '*Manasa Jayate chandraschakshuh suryoajayata*' - Moon took birth from the mind and sun from the eye of the Supreme Lord. They got placed properly in the figure of Parameswar. The wooden deity got illuminated by the glaze of the eyes. The seventh *mandal* of Rigveda cheerfully sang, '*Tatchakshurdevahitam Purastat shukramutcharat, Pashyema saradah satam, Jivema saradah satam, shrunuyam saradah satam, Prabrabama saradah satam*... ..' Let the eye be auspicious to the gods, let that see welfare of the world, let us see good views for hundred years, let us speak of God for hundred years. These visual sounds echoed infrequently inside the closed temple.

Swetaswatar Upanishad (3:19) murmured, '*Sahasra sirsha purushah sahasraksh sahasrapat*'- The God is having thousand heads and thousand eyes and also thousand feet. Gita (13:13) reverberated, '*Sarbatah panipadam tatsarbatoakshis- iromukham, sarbatah shrutimalloke*

*sarbamabruya tisthati*' - His hands and feet are every where and His eyes, heads and mouths are everywhere, His ears are everywhere and He has pervaded all around. When Ananta Maharana thought of the hands, they were built to their own accord; but without fingers. As He does nothing by hand, fingers were not necessary. Isha Upanishad's voice streamed, '*Anejadekam manaso jabiyo*' - The One who does not walk, but travels by mind. When He intends to move, He reaches there before the mind. So no feet are required for Him. The sweet tone of Swetaswatar Upanishad tuned, '*Apanipada jabano grahita pasyatyachakshuh sa srunotyakarnah*' - He has no hands and feet, but He receives very fast, He sees without eye and hears without ear. So there constructed no ear in His statue. Though He sees without eyes, the question remains how the sun and the moon were placed as eyes on His face. Swetaswatar Upanishad was reverberating the secret hymn in a response to this metaphysics, '*Ajamekam lohitasuklkrishnam bahivhi prajah srujamaanam sarupah*' - The unborn One has three colours- red, white and black, representing three *gunas*: *raja*, *sattva* and *tama*. He has created the creatures in His own shape. He has given eyes to the creature to see the beauty of the world. All the creatures are in His own shape. All the creatures are the shapes of SriJagannath. Following His structure, all the creatures have two eyes, representing sun and moon. Had there been no sun and moon in the sky, He would have not given eyes to the creatures. The both eyes of SriJagannath are focussing deep into the space as He is their ruler.



Isha means Lord or the Ruler. Isha Upanishad first *mantra* hymns:

*'Ishabasyamidam sarbam yatkincham jagatyam jagat'* - In each nook and corner of this unending universe the Lord resides.

The mouth of SriJagannath is wide open and red. While Arjun was trembling to see the Viswaroop, furious fire flames were flowing from all around into His mouth like the flow of rivers enter into sea. It is the scene of dissolution of the entire universe at the end of one Param Year (at the end of term of the one Brahmaa) when the whole nature reverts back to Hiranyagarbha which finishes into the deep darkness, the Tamasah. Sri Vishnu Puranam narrates this dissolution scenario- The dissolution fire flames play whirling games after burning the worlds and heavens. Then Lord Vishnu takes the form of Rudra and assimilates this whole creation into the self. The Viswaroop *darshan* inflow of fire flames is reflected as red mouth of SriJagannath.

Swetaswatar Upanishad sang in combined voice of a male and a female: *'Twam stree twam pumanasi twam kumara uta ba kumari'* - You are female, You are male, You are young boy and young girl. All aged figures, both male, female and even the bi-gendered are the bodies of SriJagannath. So, in automation a giant nasal ornament, *notha*, was designed just below the nose to represent femininity.

There are mythological narrations that Ananta Maharana intended the temple to remain closed for 21 days to complete the statue; but

because of sound of structuring was not heard outside, the royal couple Indradyumna and Gundicha opened the closed door after 15 days to find the deities incomplete. But the real fact is that the metaphysics of Vedant (Upanishad) is extremely stringent for common men to conceive. These themes vividly describe the Supreme Lord as unending, *Neti Neti* (No end, No end). How then the structure in representing the Lord could be end? The metaphysics of all the Upanishads have been exhausted in shaping the statue of Sri Jagannath. His exposition is the best, most beautiful, and mind blowing and knowledge glowing on the Jewel Throne. When one Param Year completes, He turns to zero entity into Tamasah (Darkness) and this is why HE is BLACK. No dissolution can touch Him, because He is the creator and the dissolver. To explain this mystic, Niladri Mahodayah (4:115) hymns:

*'Madiye pralaye jate naste sthabara jangame.*

*Jagatyasmin Jagannathastatra sankhakrutou sthale'.*

Brahmaa explains the gods, 'when I get dissolved along with all living and non-living beings, there at Sankha Kshetra Jagannath alone remains as usual in the whole creation. He is AUM, beyond the limits of past, present and future. He is all pervasive. He is eternal. The immense space consisting of crores of universes is His womb.

Sri Ramacharitamanas describes the immense number of universes visited by Kaka



Bhushundi (the crow) in the womb of SriRam. During the babyhood of SriRam, Kaka Bhushundi usually hops near him to take the fallen rice fed by mother Kaushalya. Once baby SriRam followed Kaka Bhushundi to catch, but Kaka fled up to escape. During flying Kaka found the hand of SriRam following him. He fled up and up, still found the hand getting longer and longer to follow. He crossed *Saptavarana* as far as capability. The infinite universe is the body of God. Body has seven layer till the core. Each year after bath ceremony, the deities in Srimandir remain in the Anasara house till 15 days where *Saptavarana* treatment goes on very secretly only by the descendants of Viswabasu and Vidyapati strictly.

*'Majja Brahma swarupam ca asthihi darabi  
tanu Tailatya bastram doranca jhillirupam  
prakalpita Medam Karpuram lepam  
ca leha tad mansameba ca  
Raktabasatadaraktam shuklabastratya  
chandanam Charma rupe samakhyata  
Saptavarananaruchyate'.*

Brahma is bone marrow, wooden body is bone, camphor pasting is fat, sandal- camphor-musk-kumkum combined application is flesh, red cloth is blood, coatings of white cloth and sandal is skin and 'jhuna'- til oil – camphor coating is membrane. These seven coatings known as *Saptavarana* wrap the soul.

Kaka Bhushundi sped in the whole cosmos and still found the hand of SriRam quite touching his body; so out of fear he closed eyes. After the moment, he found himself in the

courtyard of Ayodhya and baby SriRam smiling. The smiling mouth opened. Kaka Bhushundi got attracted to the mouth and entered inside the womb of SriRam. There he discovered immense universes, stars, galaxies, worlds and many other wonders of the creation. There were many strange earths in each universe. There were crores of Brahmaas, Shivas, Suns, Moons, Lokapals, Yamas, gods, *rishis*, *siddhas*, *nagas* and creatures, giant mountains, oceans, rivers, ponds, jungles those never he thought of nor imagined. The appearance and shape-structure of everything was completely different from each other in the universes. Kaka Bhushundi spent one hundred years in each of the universes seeing each different wonder. He traversed for one hundred *Kalpas* and returned to his hermit in the blue hill north of Sumeru.

The period described is the time of seventh incarnation of SriJagannath. In His womb, there is no end of universes. Once Kaka Bhushundi felt thirsty while flying and came up to Shrikshetra:

*'Kadachittatra niladrou trushartah kaka  
agatah Ayatnan Madhabam drustwa rohini  
kunda samebhabam Jalam pitwa  
bimuktatma sankhachakragadabjadhruk  
Samprapya Hari sarupyam  
Vaikutham prati nirayou'.*

Once upon a time thirsty Kaka arrived and found the image of Madhaba in the water of Rohinikunda without any hardship. He drank



water. His soul got salvation because he found conch, wheel, mace and lotus. His soul got the same figure of Hari and went forward to Vaikuntha.

Indradyumna was standing near the closed door of the temple. Inside, the statues got finished with effulgent five elements. Ananta Maharana entered the statue through *Brahmarandhra* while Aitareya Upanished, containing *PrajnanamBrahma*, the *Mahavakya* of Rigveda in its heart, eloquently uttered '*Sa etameba simanam bidaryeitaya dwara prapadyata*' by this. He is entering the statue tearing the top of the head. Everything got silent then. It was the very moment of mid of newmoon night. Ananta Maharana turned to *Saguna Brahma* from *Nirguna Brahma*. The three colours red, white and black represented the three *gunas* of *Sattwa*, *Raja* and *Tama* by power of feminity of the Lord. At this time, the '*Aum, Hrim, Klim*' Kalaratri hymn evolved from the ground base of the statue:

*'Kalaratrih namastubhyam sarba bighna  
binashini Twam Vishnu ballabha  
nityamajnakuru Jagatpate'*.

(Niladri Mahodayah- 24:4)

O' Kalaratri, obeisance to you, the destroyer of all hurdles; you are the beloved of Vishnu perpetually. Allow SriJagatpati for *saguna* activation (pastime of five elements).

By transformation from material non-existence to existent, the Param Brahma succumbed to involve in material pastime like

human being. Here the soul got transformed to a physical form; hence known as '*Bijnanamaya Atma*'.

Sankaracharya has mentioned in '*Brihadaranyak Upanishad Bhashya*' that when Paramatma accepts limbs, He falls prey to worldly affairs, physical pimpings and resultings of *karma* etc like human beings and other creatures. The limbed Param Brahma is eating fifty six varieties of offerings, being treated with the *dhupas* and five *abakashas*, wrapping winter clothes, enjoying deep slumber, taking bath games in hot summer, suffering from fever, taking diet and medicines, getting treatment secretly in *anasar* house and exchanging joys and sorrows with devotees. But His supreme metaphysics is regular, eternal and beyond past, present and future. His supreme exposition is the mid of newmoon night, the Zeroness. As that there remains no effect of five elements nor the effulgence of *Hiranyagarbha*, nor appearance to see, enzyme to taste, essence to smell, object to touch nor sound to hear. These five subtle senses lose their virtue into the deep darkness through *Hiranyagarbha*. This extreme metaphysic is dramatized by the Sevayats while transferring the '*Brahma*' from the exhausting statue to the new one like wrapping clothes on the eyes, hands and restricting mind not to take any inquisitiveness nor to exercise the intellect. They maintain complete zeroness in sanctifying *Daru Brahma*.

Daru is the board term of materials, and particularly the tree. Param Brahma Himself



chooses a seed to take the birth of a neem tree. The signs of the weapons get exposed on the trunk or branches. By the matured age, the neem tree turns to be sweet. The tree is detected during *Bana Yaga Yatra* and by performance of classic rituals, the tree is cut down to fall in the *Aishanya* corner. This is the corner of kind and benevolent Shiva, the auspicious. Indradyumna brought the tree to the altar where Lord Nrusimha was being worshipped. The wooden cart, *Sagadi* on which the tree became carried is known as *Deva Yan*. Also the quadru-statues were carried to Srimandir by three chariots; hence they are named as *Deva Yan*. The path is known as *Devayan Marg*. This is the path of *Satya O Dharma* (Truth and virtues). The *Brahmarshis* reach the Truth on this path. All the paths leading to Truth are *Deva Yan Marg*. This path remains ever illuminous, even after all the paths get destroyed:

*'Satyameva Jayate nanrutam  
Satyena partha bitato Devayanah  
Yenkramanti rushayohyaptakama  
Yatra tat Satyasya parama nidhanam'*.

Always Truth remains victorious, not the untruth. The path of Truth is harrowed by *Devayan*. In this path the ascetics who wish salvation tread where the abode of God (Truth) lies. The path from where the tree is found to the Koili Vaikuntha through the Elephant gate is known as *Devayan Marg*. By treading on this path Brahma is achieved. All the walkers accompanying the motion of *Daru Sagadi* from the find spot to the temple on the *Devayan Marg* get the touch of Truth and Virtue. The devotees

whose consciousness feels upliftment, are fortunate enough to have vision of the Almighty. Their worldly bondage gets loosened:

*'Vidyate hriday granthischhidyante  
sarba sansayah  
Kshiyante chasya karmani tasmin  
druste parabare'*

(Mundaka Upanishad)

His heart- knot gets loosened, all his doubts are mitigated, all *karmas* get perished and then he gets vision of the Lord.

While during the Car Festival, the sound of moving wheels is heard by a devotee with ecstasy and cheer, he gets relief from the highest order of sins and gets no rebirth:

*'Ratha ghosham samakarnya ye hrushyanti  
narottamah Brahmahatyadi papebhyo  
muktwa syurbhava bandhanat  
Rathanugamanam ye bai kurbanti dwija  
sattamah Tesham cha bandanam bhuyah  
karishyanti suradibih'*.

(Niladri Mahodayah-16:120-121)

Those who walk along with the chariot during pulling, the gods of heaven adore them frequently. As because they walk along with the chariot and visit the festival, they get salvation and achieve the Supreme.

Brahmaa consecrated the statues in Srimandir. He created two clans of domestic Brahmins for the service of SriJagannath. One clan remained engaged in the adoration and the other



in water service. He then instructed the gods of heaven, 'Take birth on the earth to serve Sri Jagannath. In my first *Pararddha* only Viswabasu has served Him. You all take this opportunity in the second part. The devotees will respect you as gods.' Now the gods are engaged in the service in Srimandir.

The supreme Lord has created 84 lakh varieties of creatures in this universe. The under water world is much more wonderful. Apart from the visible universe, there are lot of invisible universes lying scattered in the infinite space, resided by divine powers, according to the settled atmosphere and environment provided by the Supreme. Out of Seven Lokas, two are Patal and Martya. Other five are above these, named Swah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah and Satyah. These five are invisible to human eye, as because they are not materials. These are resided by gods, pitris (forefathers), *rishis*, ascetics, *siddhas*, and ultimately Brahmaa in Satya Loka. Katha Upanishad sings, There is no thirst, no fatigue, no old aging nor death in the heaven. So there is no

need of birth spots, water ponds, crop fields nor cremation grounds. Above these Seven Lokas, the adobe of Param Brahma exists which is all pervasive and covers all, even these Seven Lokas.

Recently the astronomical scientists have calculated of atleast ten thousand living planets like earth exist in the cosmos. In this perview, the tour-traverse of Kaka Bhushundi of Sriramcharitamanas in various universes in the womb of the Lord is deeply thought-worthy.

All the creatures in different universes are completely different from another in appearance, shape and size as experienced by Kaka Bhusundi. But in all the universes the appearance of the Lord is indifferent, one and all. He is Param Brahma Ananta Maharana.

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## Shree Jagannath Temple at Puri : A Study on Aruna Stambha, Simha Dwara and Baisi Pahacha

*Dr. Benudhar Patra*

The massive temple of Shree Jagannath (214 feet 8 inches high above the road level) located at Puri (the hallowed *srikshetra* or the *Purushottam kshetra*) near the sea (the Bay of Bengal), in the state of Odisha on the eastern coast of India is not only a sacred Hindu temple but also one of the *char dhamas* (four *dhamas*/ four traditional pilgrimage centres) of the Hindu devotees and pilgrims. It is the symbol and embodiment of the Odia culture and civilization. The temple was built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE by King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva (c. 1078 to c. 1147 CE) of the Eastern Ganga dynasty and is moulding the social, economic, political, religious and cultural life of the people of Odisha for centuries. The temple is built in the Kalinga style of architecture and is significant for its marvellous art, architecture and sculpture. Apart from the main temple complex, the *aruna stambha* standing in front of the temple, the *simha dwara* or the lion gate or the main entrance of the temple and the *baisi pahacha* (the flight of twenty two steps) leading into the temple complex from the *simha dwara* are very noteworthy to be discussed.

### **Aruna Stambha**

The *Aruna stambha*, a striking monument of marked elegance, stands in front of the main



gate (lion gate or *simha dwara*) of Shree Jagannath Temple. The pillar is named so after the name of Aruna, the charioteer of the Sun God. It is a magnificent sixteen-sided monolithic column of chlorite stone set on an exquisite pedestal, delicately carved of the same material. According to R.L.Mitra<sup>1</sup> the carvings on the plinth “are of the most sumptuous description, the like of which are to be seen nowhere else in India.” It is 25 feet, and 2 inches in height, 2 feet in diameter, and 6 feet and 3.5 inches in circumference. The exquisitely carved pedestal on which the *Aruna stambha* stands is of 7 feet 9 inches square and 6 feet high, and has a capital on the top of 2.5 feet high, over which mounted an elegant statue of Aruna, the charioteer of the Sun God Surya, in



a prayer mode. The capital is formed of two rings surmounted by a series of lotus petals. The measurements, thus, give a total height of 33 feet and 8 inches from the ground, including the pedestal to the top of the capital. One significant thing about the *Arun stambha* is that originally it used to stand before the Sun temple at Konark from where it was shifted by the Marathas to its present site in the 18<sup>th</sup> century CE. It is said that this beautiful pillar was erected in honour of the sun God at Konark. But when the Konark temple was abandoned and worship ceased there, in absence of the presiding deity, this pillar was brought to Puri in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century CE. The *Madala Panji* records that during the time of Divyasingha Deva, the Maratha Guru, Brahmachari Gosain brought this pillar from Konark and re-erected it in front of the *simha dwara* of Shree Jagannath temple where we see it now. Andrew Sterling,<sup>2</sup> a British administrator (who was secretary to the Commissioner of Cuttack and also the Collector of Cuttack) in Odisha from 1818-1822 has mentioned that the pillar has been brought from the famous “but now deserted, temple of the Sun at Konark, about sixty years ago, by a *brahmachari* inhabitant of Pooree [Puri], of great wealth and influence.” The pillar is a masterpiece of art that bears eloquent testimony to the impeccable history of Odia sculpture.<sup>3</sup> It is worthy to mention that the placing of *Aruna stambha* in front of the temple of Shree Jagannath is quite appropriate as from the Vedic times, the Sun God is considered identical with Vishnu. On the basis of architectural execution, the date of this pillar can be traced back to the early part of c. 13<sup>th</sup> century CE.<sup>4</sup>

### Simha Dwara

The *Simha dwara*, or the Lion Gate, is one of the four gates to the temple of Shree Jagannath and forms the main entrance. It is named so because two colossal statues of crouching lions, carved in a naturalistic style, with crowns on their heads exist on either side of the entrance. The gate faces east opening on to the *bada danda* or the Grand Road. The Lion Gate is square in structure and built with a pyramidal roof. Its door-frames are of black chlorite and most beautifully carved. The statues of the two guards to the temple Jaya and Vijaya stand on either side of the doorway. Just before the commencement of the *Ratha Yatra* (car festival), the idols of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra are taken out of the temple through this gate. On their return from the Gundicha Temple they have to ceremonially placate Goddess Mahalakshmi, whose statue is carved atop the door, for neglecting to take Her with them on the *Ratha Yatra*. Normally, the devotees enter into the temple through this gate.

In the propylaeum at the Lion’s Gate on the northern side or to the right as a devotee enter the temple there is an idol of Jagannath known as *patita pavana*, which means the “saviour or deliverer of the downtrodden and the fallen”. In front of the image of *patita pavana*, a small image of Garuda has been installed. This *patita pavana* image of Jagannath, however, is different from the main deity of Jagannath. This image of Jagannath (*patita pavana*) is by Himself and not with His brother Balabhadra or sister Subhadra or with His *sudarshan chakra*. The deity has manifested



only a face, with no arms or torso. Some scholars say that Jagannath manifested Himself to give *darshana* to His devotee Salabega, who was born in a Muslim family while others claim that Jagannath manifested here to give *darshana* to His devotee Gajapati king of Khurdha, Ramachandra Deva II who was converted to Islam and was not allowed to enter the temple. However, it is generally believed that during the medieval period, the untouchables who were not allowed to go inside the temple used to offer their prayers to *patita pavana* (Jagannath) remaining outside the *simha dwara*. Even now, it is believed that if one cannot go inside the temple, can get the same benefit of *darshana* simply by presenting oneself before the all-compassionate *patita pavana* Jagannath. On the left side of the enclosure, on a long stone pedestal stands the image of Hanumana, thickly smeared with vermilion, as the guard of the temple and the *patita pavana* Jagannath.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from the *simha dwara*, which is the main entrance to the temple, there are three other entrances facing south, west and north. They are named after the sculptures of animals guarding them such as the *ashwa dwara* or the horse gate on the south, the *vyaghra dwara* or the *khanja-dwara* or the tiger gate on the west and the *hathi dwara* or the elephant gate on the north. The *simha dwara*, the *ashwa dwara*, the *vyaghra dwara* and the *hathi dwara* are also respectively called *purva dwara*, *dakshina dwara*, *paschima dwara* and *uttara dwara* according to their directions. Each gate located at the central

part of the walls. The gates are crowned with pyramid shaped structures. Worshipping of the gates also forms a part of the daily ritualistic services of the temple. *Navagraha* reliefs are carved on the architraves of all the gates. In almost all the gates there are small images of Shiva, Vishnu, Hanumana, Durga and Nrusimha. According to a local tradition, the four gates represent *chaturvarga* (four *vargas*) i.e. *dharma* (lion), *artha* (elephant), *kama* (horse) and *moksha* (tiger). According to another tradition these four gates symbolize the four fundamental principles of *dharma* (right conduct), *jnana* (knowledge), *vairagya* (renunciation) and *aishwarya* (prosperity) in the direction of east, south, west and north respectively. According to K.C.Mishra<sup>6</sup> “The Lord Jagannatha being the monarch, is supposed to live in His imperial abode which is necessarily a fort consisting of four gates in its four sides.” He further says that these four gates i.e., *simha dwara*, *ashwa dwara*, *vyaghra dwara* and *hathi dwara* represents the strength, military prowess, energy and prosperity of the monarch i.e. of Shree Jagannath respectively.<sup>7</sup>

### Baisi Pahacha

The *baisi* (22) *pahacha* (steps) or the flight of twenty-two steps inside the complex of Shree Jagannath temple considered not only an important part of the temple but also played a significant role in the life of the devotees. From the *simha dwara* (eastern gateway of the outer enclosure) the *baisi pahacha* leads into the temple complex (inner enclosure) in an ascending order. After passing through the *simha dwara*,



one has to go up these steps in order to get into the main temple. Though the exact time period of its construction, is not mentioned anywhere in historical record or the *puranic* literature, legends say that it was built by a king named Bhanudeva. The width and length of the steps are not uniform but vary. The width of the middle 15 steps varies from 5 feet and 10.5 inches to 6 feet and 3 inches and the height is 6 inches to 7 inches. The sizes of the remaining 7 steps are smaller both in length and width. The steps are made of felspar and khodalite. A famous Shiva Linga, named Kashi Biswanath and the idols of Ramachandra, Nrusimha and Ganesh have been installed on the southern side of the *baisi pahacha*.

The history or the mystery of this flight of steps is not properly known. However, these 22 steps are highly revered by the people as it is believed that they possess 'spiritual animation'.

Numerous holy activities are performed on these steps on different days and occasions. It is said that during the *Ratha Yatra* (car festival) several gods and goddesses, demi gods, other heavenly entities, the souls of the ancestors [near *pitrushila*], Chitrugupta (minister of Yama Raj) and Yamadootas [near *Yamashila*] descends upon these steps to witness the *pahandi* (procession of deities during the *Ratha Yatra*) of Shree Jagannath. On *chaturdashi tithi* of the dark fortnight in the month of *Margashira* (December), Madana Mohan, the representative deity of Shree Jagannath offers *pinda dana* (*shradha* or oblation) on these steps to His ancestors i.e., Nanda and Yashoda, Devaki and Vasudeva and Kaushalya and Dasharatha. Madana Mohana also offers *pinda dana* on this *baisi pahacha* to king Indradyumna and queen Gundicha since they were childless.

The devotees while going up the steps (*baisi pahacha*) must step on a stone called *Yamashila* engraved into the 3<sup>rd</sup> step, which, it is believed that frees from the reasons to be punished by Yama (the god of death). But one must not step on this stone on the way back, since it takes away the merits of the *darshan* of Shree Jagannath. The small rough stone on the seventh step is called *pretashila* or *pitrushila*. People who believe to liberate the souls of the deceased leave *anna mahaprasad* (holy rice of the temple that has been offered to Shree Jagannath) on it for feeding the ancestors.



Annual *pinda dana* (a special ritual in which food is offered to the ancestors) is performed on both the sides of these 22 steps. It is believed that ancestral souls are satiated by this. A ritual called *badabadia daka* (elders call) is also performed on the *baisi pahacha* on the day of *Deepavali*. On this day people burn *kaunria kathi* (a bundle of jute/light sticks) and show it upwards to illuminate the path of the ancestral souls.

Besides, the twenty two pious steps have also other religious merits. Children are made to roll down these steps, from top to bottom, to bring them spiritual bliss and happiness. It is believed that as countless devotees are walking on these steps, these steps are throbbing with spiritual animation. It is also believed that the devotees who walk on the steps cthrob with spiritual vibrancy. Some says that these steps represent the 22 kinds of weaknesses and faults in human beings. It is also believed that when the pilgrims are passing through the 22 steps their sins are removed. If a devotee trustingly puts on his forehead a speck of dust from the surface of the steps he gets a sense of fulfillment.

To conclude, we can say that the *aruna stambha*, the *simha dwara* and the *baisi*

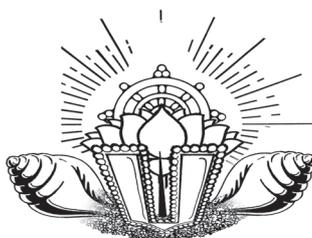
*pahacha* plays an important role not only as constituent parts of the temple but also in the life and culture of the devotees and pilgrims through the ages.

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## The Glory of the Month of Karttik and Lord Jagannath

*Durgamadhab Dash*

In every religion, a particular period of a year is considered most auspicious. Christians consider the month of Christmas most auspicious. In Islam, Muslims, consider the month of Ramzan most sacred and auspicious. Likewise, in Hindu religion, the Hindus regard the month of Karttik holy and most sacred.

Scriptures say that those who perform spiritual 'sadhana' by observing the customary practice of 'Habisyā' taking one-time strict vegetarian meal and spend their time reading or listening to 'Karttik Puran' in remembrance of Lord Jagannath and His cosmic 'Lilas' are sure to be absolved of all sins. They attain 'Moksha' after death.

In this way, the month of 'Karttik' is considered a religious month. Generally, the devotees of the Lord observing 'Karttik Brata' in the Grand Temple in the month of 'Karttik' practice austere 'sadhana' and lead a strict disciplined life away from their homes.

It is said in Karttik Purana that a devotee observing Karttik Brata gains immense virtues in life. He gains the highest spiritual reward of "no life after death" which means that he has no further birth after this life. This is the actual goal of life.

It is said in Skanda Purana (Utkal Khand) that once King Dillip, a 'Suryabansi' ruler, asked



his Kulaguru Vasista to explain to him, the surest ways to attain Moksha in life. In reply to the king, Maharshi Vasista said that by observing, Karttik Brata, one can have 'Moksha' in life. The king then wanted to know the ways of observance of 'Karttik Brata' which is a unique spiritual practice. He also wanted to know from his 'Kulaguru' the inhibitions, in particular, that are required to be strictly followed to achieve this goal.

As regards the rituals to be observed in this regard, Vasista said that in the first instance, one should observe 'Karttik Brata' in 'Purusottam Kshetra'. This Kshetra is also known as 'Brahma Kshetra' in scriptures. One should have the 'Darshan' of the Lord every-day during this month. Along with it, one should also have 'Habisyanna' i.e. one-time strict vegetarian meal in the month in observance of the 'Brata'. One



should, at the same time, take bath in the sea early in the morning and do 'Japa' of 'Astakshara Mantra' and religiously listen to 'Kartik Purana' for spiritual elevation. All these rituals go to show that one should be truthful in one's behavior practicing the 'Brata' resorting to charity according to one's capacity. These are the minimum spiritual practices, one has to do while observing 'Kartik Brata' during the month of Kartik.

Next, the Maharshi also said that while observing 'Kartik Brata', one has to keep one's inclinations of sense-indulgence under strict control in the order of hard austerity in the month.

There is a Puranic story which says that at an auspicious moment in the spiritual evolution, Lord Narayan had descended on earth in His incarnation as Divine Fish. His incarnation in this divine form was known as 'Matsya Avatar'. In that appearance, He retrieved the four Vedas which a demon called Sankhasura had stolen from earth and escaped into the deep sea. The Lord went to that place and had a fierce battle with Sankhasura. After killing him in the fierce battle, He recovered the Vedas from possible destruction. This occurrence had taken place in the month of Kartik. Devotees, during Kartik Brata, observe Ekadashi in remembrance of this Cosmic Lila of the Lord and gain spiritual virtues.

In practice of this spiritual 'Brata', they take their ablution early in the morning. They observe strict fasting with the Japa of Astakshara Mantra before Lord Jagannath. They also observe other spiritual restrictions.

There is another spiritual story in this regard. One day, Lord Krishna was sitting alone in a pensive mood in the garden of His Dwarika-palace. Satyabhama, the consort of the Lord, was closely observing His state of mind. The Lord was looking absentminded as Satyabhama distinctly marked. She came near the Lord and said "Prabhu, You are oblivious of your surrounding and not in Your usual undisturbed self. I find on your face a faint mark of abnormal consternation which presents You in a different form. What has actually happened to You?"

The Lord said, "Satyabhama, It is simply nothing. It is a case of my casual divine digression. In fact, I was thinking about my devotees in the cosmic evolution. Saying so, He narrated the facts about her past life which runs as follows:

Satyabhama was a girl-child in a Brahmin family. She was born in a poor Brahmin family. However she was devoutly upright in her spiritual behavior. Her 'Ista' was Lord Narayan. She worshipped Him in deep devotion. She religiously observed all Ekadashis along with acts of charity on all auspicious days. According to the custom of the family, she also practiced all spiritual rituals. Accordingly, she observed 'Kartik Brata' with all the austerities of her religion. She earned spiritual virtues as a result of her austere 'Sadhana'. She got the Lord in His Krishna Avatar as her husband in Dwapara Yuga. So there is a belief among the Hindus that he or she who observes 'Kartik Brata' with unflinching faith in the glories of the Lord shall have immense spiritual benefits as Satyabhama had earned by



getting, for instance, Lord Krishna as her divine consort.

It is said in Narad Purana that there is no month like Karttik month just as there is no Veda like Sama Veda and no Tirtha like Ganga Snana (bath in the River Ganga).

As regards the procedure of observance of Karttik Brata, it is said in the scriptures that devotees practicing this religious order are required to take one-time meal with Arhar Dal or Mung Dal, raw-plantain, colocacia along with acid-fruit (OUUE) in different recipes according to taste and worship Radha-Damodar reading or listening to 'Karttika Purnana' in the Grand Temple or at any other sacred place. It may be mentioned here that Maa Radha is the Hladini-Sakti of Prabhu Damodar i.e. Lord Krishna. He is also Lord Jagannath in 'Kali Yug'. Devotees for that purpose everyday take bath early in the morning and worship Lord Jagannath with Tulasi leaf. They repeat the name of Lord Jagannath in profound devotion.

'Habisanna' is very important on this score. First it is to be prepared with raw-rice. Specific vegetable are to be used for this purpose. The food is to be prepared with Cow-Ghee. The devotees either cook the holy food with sanctified 'Bhab' or even they take the Mahaprasad in the Temple.

Turmeric powder is not to be used in 'Habisanna'. There is no bar to take 'Gazar' in Habisanna. One may take milk, 'Harida', Til, ripe banana and coconut. In the Habisanna, one may also take jackfruit and mango if such fruits



are available during this period. No food is to be taken in night during the period of the austerity.

The devotee has to read or listen to Karttik Purana every-day. This is said to be compulsory. In the Grand Temple, this part of the 'Brata' is celebrated in evening hours at different places on the premises of the Grand Temple. In addition, if the devotees find time, they also read other holy scriptures like the 'Gita' or the 'Bhagabat'. Japa of Lord Jagannath is very important during this month. The whole purpose of this holy observance is that the devotee has to spend his entire time during the month in strict remembrance of the Lord. He is not to think about any other thing relating to the material world. This is the strict spiritual regimentation which every devotee has to follow during the entire month of Karttik.

In Hindu houses, another spiritual practice is noticed during the holy month of Karttik. This is in relation to what is known 'Akash Deep'.

'Akash Deep' is light on an earthen ware with cow ghee. It is tied to a bamboo embedded near the platform of the holy Basil Plant. This is a temporary arrangement. This is to last only in the month of Karttik. The Hindu devotees believe that the 'Akash Deep' near the platform of the



Basil Plant displays sacred light to the 'Pitrapurushas' i.e. the ancestors of the family during the holy month of Karttik. The process of 'Akash Deep' is discontinued after the month of Karttik.

In 'Padma Puran' it is said that women of Hindu households adore Maa Tulasi as a Devi of impeccable virtues. She is the most loved devotee of Lord Narayan. Most unfortunately, her husband was a demon. He was an unholy person. He was a terror in his time in the three worlds of the cosmic creation. In his unusual behavior, he played havoc with the Rishis and the spiritually enlightened people of his time. He also tortured them very much in their day-to-day lives. He destroyed their 'Ashrams'. He did not allow them to perform any sort of spiritual activity to worship the Gods.

Jalandhar as described in scriptures was most powerful because of his wife, Tulasi who was chaste and virtuous in her life and according to a divine boon, she was the strength and life-savior of her husband. According to the said boon, he was not to die so long as his wife remained chaste.

The gods of the Heaven were very much afraid of Jalandhar. One day, they appeared before Lord Narayan in Golak Baikuntha and appealed to Him to save them from the torture made by Jalandhar. The Lord had known the strength of Jalandhar. The Lord heard the appeal of the gods. At last He said that He would take care of the entire situation and do the needful for

the safety of the gods. The god's at last dispersed after getting the assurance of Lord Narayan.

The Lord next made out a plan He acted upon it with utmost caution.

One day, the Lord disguised Himself as Jalandhar and appeared before Tulasi. The chaste lady, by then, had been overpowered by Maya of the Lord. So she could not know the mystery of the divine sport of the Lord. Tulasi had mistaken the Lord for her husband, Jalandhar. That way, she had lost her virtues. Later when she came to know of the details, she was greatly disheartened. She was very angry. And she expressed her anger to the Lord.

At last, the Lord pacified her by telling her the purpose of His cosmic Lila. When He explained the whole purpose of His game, Tulasi calmed down. The Lord blessed Tulasi saying that she would be His ardent devotee at every point of time in future. She would be worshipped by one and all on earth as Maa Brundabati and He as 'Lilamaya Purusha' would like to be adorned with Tulasi leaves on Himself. This way, there is a saying that the Lord in Srimandir gets immensely delighted when He is offered a single Tulasi leaf at the time of His worship.

In Srimandir, there is a big garden of Tulasi plants. Everyday, Tulasi leaves are collected from this place, and offered to the Deities seated on Ratnasimhasan. Oblation of the Lord's Prasad is also sanctified with Tulasi leaves. Devotees of the Lord wear Tulasi *malas* on their necks. With Tulasi beads, they chant the name of the Lord.



Tulasi is thus the divine object most needed in all rituals and functions in the Grand Temple.

A function called Aanla Nabami is observed in the Grand Temple on the ninth day of the bright fortnight of Karttik. On this day too, they take their baths early in the morning anointed with Aanla paste. They also offer the same to the idol of Lord Bishnu and celebrate His divine worship in a ritualistic way. Next, they worship the Lord by offering Balbhog. Later they prepare Anna Prasad (Rice, Dal etc) under Aanla Tree and offer the same to the Lord. They take this 'Prasad' in the usual practice of Habisyana and spend the rest of the time of the day in Japa and meditation.

"Aanla Nabami" is an important function of the Baishnabas in the holy month of Karttik. At Puri, there is another religious custom in this regard. On the day of Aanla Nabami, a special 'Puja' (worship) is observed in the Sakhigopal Temple at Sakhigopal about 8 km away from Puri. Here, the devotees have a special religious custom. They touch the feet of Radha and Gopal and worship them by offering Tulasi Malas at their feet. There is a day-long line of devotees for this purpose. Special vehicles are inducted for this purpose from Puri and Bhubaneswar to Sakhigopal by the local administration to facilitate transport convenience of the devotees on this sacred day.

The five days preceding Karttik Purnami are observed as 'Panchaka Parba'. Normally on these five days, no Hindu devotee in Odisha takes any type of non-vegetarian food. These

five days mean a very sacred occasion to all the Hindu devotees.

Normally it is said that Hindus not observing the sacred Brata during the month of Karttik strictly observe these five days with Habisyana at their respective places and worship Lord Jagannath/Sri Krishna in utmost devotion. They read scriptures. They do 'Japa' and meditation and aspire to gain divine virtues of the month. It is believed in this connection that even the Crane-bird that is generally non-Vegetarian in nature does not take fish during these five days. So in religious books, this period of five days is known as 'Baga-Panchak'.

It is said in 'Skanda Purana' (Utkal Khanda) that in the past, Lord Jagannath had prevailed upon Lord Siva to observe 'Karttik Brata' and the latter had observed the same with due regard to the Lord's instructions in appreciation of the virtues one gains during this period. It is further said in this connection that Lord Siva had prevailed upon Swayambhuba Manu and Rishi Agasti to observe 'Karttik Brata' to gain spiritual virtues. They had also observed the austerity in obedience to Lord Siva's spiritual instructions.

Thus the month of Karttik is symbolic of fact that this is the holy month of a year. 'Karttik Brata' is a sacred spiritual practice. It preaches spiritual austerities. It gives us spiritual progress in life. It teaches us the spiritual lesson that mundane pleasure is not the end-all and be-all of life. One needs to have spiritual austerities in a regular way. By listening to the sacred words of



scriptures, the devotee internalizes the spiritual values. His life is filled with peace and joy. Month-long practice of hard austerities creates positive spiritual vibrations in the minds of the devotees and neutralizes their negative emotions.

Once, a Swami known as Swami Sachidananda, while narrating the glory of Karttik said that on one occasion, he was at Puri Temple during the holy month Karttik. He was calmly watching the activities of the devotees observing the sacred Brata in the Temple. At a little distance from his place, he found a group of women sitting together and gossiping about their respective homes. One woman of the group who appeared to be very strong-willed was speaking ill of her daughter-in law and deriding her social activities. Others present also joined the chorus and vomited out aspersions against their respective kith and kin.

The Swami thought to himself that those women should be brought to proper line. They should be dissuaded from the wrong path from the following day. He started his 'Satsang' at the same place where another small group of devotees were sitting. Naturally the women of the other place also joined the Satsang.

During his spiritual discourse, he said to them, "My dear devotees, all of you who are here, have left your respective homes and come to Srimandir to observe the sacred Brata of Karttik. The austere observance here will bring positive transformations in your life; you should therefore free yourself from mundane desires and need to

have positive spiritual thoughts. You should have self-introspection for that purpose. You should either read or listen to scriptures. Please remember one thing in this connection. This Temple is a mysterious place. Here, if you think good, the spirit of goodness in you will fly high in your life. If you think bad of others, the spirit of badness in you will rise to an excruciating end in your mind. And this will bring your spiritual downfall over the period of time. Please always bear his spiritual truth in your mind".

The Sanyasi observed in this connection that from those days there was a great change in the minds of the devotees. They were found sitting calmly, at their places and doing Japa of the Lord's name.

This should be the spirit and the attitude of the devotees during observance of any Brata in general.

Thus the Karttik Brata as observed in the Grand Temple, Puri has a different religious implication. Here, a devotee has the privilege to observe the austerities by taking 'Avada' of the Lord during the entire month. One reads or listens to scriptures at different places on the premises of the Grand Temple. One also attends 'Satsangs' which are organized at different places in the Temple. It is believed that Karttik Brata properly observed in the Temple leads a devotee to 'Baikuntha' after his or her 'Mahaprayana' on earth.

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## Shree Jagannath Consciousness and Culture

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Religious liberalism and peaceful coexistence seem to be base of the Shree Jagannath consciousness which has spread all over the world. This consciousness has helped spread the feeling of friendship among the human fraternity and nations sending messages for upkeep of integration. It has created miraculous vibration of humanity regardless of caste, colour and creed. Shree Jagannath consciousness is above all the sects, colours and communities and languages. It has encouraged the world brotherhood to be united and inseparable. Because of these qualities the Jagannath consciousness seems to be gaining ground in most of the countries in the world.

There are four religious *dhamas* in India. This *dhama* culture is prevalent in India since ancient time. These *dhamas* (places of religious activities) include Puri in the eastern part, Dwaraka in the western part, Badrinath in the northern part and Rameswar in the southern part of India. Puri, which is otherwise known as Jagannath Dham, is said to be the ancient *dham* of India. Devotees not only from inside India but also from Nepal, Shree Lanka, Myanmar, Malaysia and Mauritius come to Puri to have a *darshan* of Lord Jagannath to feel the completeness of their lives. This apart, people of different religious sects from America, England,

Russia, German, France and other countries also come to Puri during the time of Car Festival in order to avail the scope of having a glimpse of Puri Triad.

Puri, one of the most sacred and religious destinations of India, is identified in different nomenclatures like Shreekshetra, Sankha Kshetra, Niladri Kshetra, Martya Baikuntha Kshetra, Nilagiri, Nilasaila, Nilakandar, Shreedham, Jagannath Dham, Bhuswarga (Paradise), Purusottam and Nilachandan etc.

Puri is the most ancient religious place of India which has gained popularity as one of the important pilgrim cities of world. A place of pilgrimage is a *tirtha* or *tirthasthan*. A pilgrimage is a *tirthayatra* and pilgrim is a *tirthayatri*. The meaning of a *tirtha* is a sacred place charged with the power of Gods and Goddesses and resonant with purity. A *tirtha* possesses three elements that make it so sacred- it is *suchi*, pure; it brings *punya*; merit and goodness and it is *shubha*; auspicious. This makes a *tirtha* a place where you can gain Nirvana; enlightenment and achieve Moksha or liberation. Pilgrims aspire to attain salvation by visiting holy shrines to prepare for release from the temporal world. Moksha cannot be attained before fulfilling



one's duty towards one's family and society. Pilgrimage, thus, came to be consciously promoted by traditions that have grown up around a shrine and its locality. They are used to explain and sustain the shrine's claim to sanctity. Thus, arose a large corpus of literature called Sthalapuranas (Ancient stories of a sacred site) or Mahatmya (greatness of a shrine). A sacred geography is created by the process of bringing together cult centres of a particular tradition through myths and symbols. In India this has happened at various levels i.e. local, regional and pan-Indian. Cults created their own religious topography through links with other regional centres by means of myths and legends evolving around a specific cult.

It is interesting to know that in this Kshetra, layers of cultural or historical traits are seen in the way of living traditions such as rituals and festivals. It could be observed that such powerful ethos pertaining to the cultural layers in Indian context are also observed in some of the sacred Kshetras like Kasi, Kanchipuram, Gaya, Ujjain, Nasik, Tirupati, Madurai, etc. and kept alive the Indian tradition which is some way or other bounded by divine order written in the scriptures, believed in practice. Puri is such a place where the living Godhead play like human being, suffer like a common man, partake among the ocean of humanity in the way of festivals like Rath Yatra that exhibits all the Godly and human traits.

The definitions of culture are many. One of them is –The culture helps the human society

reach a great height of success. The culture builds up a human being in an orderly manner in the social, political and spiritual fields. Shree Jagannath culture and consciousness bear identity of a great ideal spreading messages of Triguna. Culture is a thought- provoking process. It exposes the hidden qualities of a person and strengthens the human spiritual process by guiding a human being to the path of theism. Considering these definitions' of culture, it is ascertained that Shree Jagannath Culture is ideal one to be followed by human beings. The theology concentrating on Jagannath culture has been described in different Puranas (mythological texts) like Skanda Purana, Brahmanda Purana, Shiva Purana and Matsya Purana.

The Jagannath cult and culture has encouraged the whole world to be bound on world brotherhood giving up separatist ideas. The car festival of Lord Jagannath has spread the message of love for one and all besides encouraging one to resort to brotherhood amongst all.

One vital essence of Jagannath consciousness is complete surrender. The consciousness is based on devotion. One can feel the miracle of Lord Jagannath when he or she completely surrenders himself or herself to the Lord. At that time only communion with the Almighty can be possible. Humanistic appeal is one of the aspects of Jagannath consciousness. Although Lord Jagannath is the Lord of the whole world, He keeps up His style in royal manner in this brittle mundane world. Puri temple is like a



royal palace and each bit of activity in the temple is royal. In the past the kings and emperors of Odisha considered themselves as representatives and servants of Lord Jagannath. From this kind of mentality borne by the kings prove that the physical power has been vanquished by the spiritual power. This is the unique feature of Jagannath consciousness.

Lord Jagannath comes down to the midst of sea of humanity during Rath Yatra and becomes one with them. Everybody irrespective of caste, creed and colour can openly have the *darshan* of Lord Jagannath on the chariot. **It is said that Lord Jagannath meets the devotees during Rath Yatra on the Grand Road of Puri to exonerate their sins. Therefore, Rath Yatra is called Patita Paban Yatra. The thought of being one amongst others is another vital essence of Jagannath consciousness.**

Ratha Jatra or Chariot Festival is a Hindu festival associated with Lord Jagannath held at Puri in the state of Odisha, India. It is the oldest Rath Yatra taking place in India and the world, dating back to 10 - 11 century and its descriptions can be found in Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, and Skanda Purana and Kapila Samhita.

This annual festival is celebrated on Ashadha Shukla Paksha Dwitiya (second day in bright fortnight of Ashadha month). The festival commemorates Jagannath's annual visit to Gundicha Temple via Mausī Maa Temple (aunt's home) near Balagandi Chhak, Puri.

As part of Rath Yatra, the deities of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra along with Sudarshan are taken out in a procession to Gundicha Temple and remain there for nine days. Then the deities return to the Main temple. The return journey of Puri Jagannath Rath Yatra is known as Bahuda Jatra.

The Rath Yatra festival has become a common sight in most major cities of the world since 1968 through the ISKCON Hare Krishna movement, which successfully transplanted the festival which now happens on an annual basis in places all over the world in over 100 cities including Lagos Nigeria Dublin, Belfast, Birmingham, London, Bath, Budapest, Melbourne, Montreal, Paris, New York, Singapore, Toronto, Suva in Fiji Islands, Antwerp, Kuala Lumpur and Venice, California. The Rathajatra in Dhamrai, Bangladesh, is one of the most important occasions in Bangladesh. Many of the European nations observe Rath Yatra pompously. The Indians and Hindus living in foreign countries celebrate Rath Yatra in a religious way.

Jagannath culture and consciousness teaches us to be humble in our each effort of building the society in a righteous manner giving up false pride and self-elation, clinging to the honest ways and methods.

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## Management of Shree Mandira : A Historic Perspective

*Susanta Kumar Dash, Dr. Bhaskar Mishra*

Shree Purusottama Dham is one among the Schar-dhams (four divine abodes) in the holy land of India and Shree Jagannatha Temple of the said place is considered unique so far as the spiritual and cultural tradition of the world are concerned. Lord Shree Jagannatha has appeared in the Neelachala, i.e. the most sacred centre of pilgrimage, as a saviour for a vast concourse of devotees. This is the reason for which Puri-dham and Shree Mandira bear the testimony of the greatest spiritual and cultural heritage of the world.

Thousands of years ago Neelamadhava was found in the Nilagiri mountain and later He appeared in the name of Shree Purusottama and was worshipped there uninterruptedly. According to information available from different *Puranas*, in Satya Yug king Indradyumna of Malwa came to Shree Kshetra to have a glimpse of the God. Lo ! He could not find Neelamadhava as He chose to vanish. Then the king was informed through an oracle and as a result, he performed fire sacrifice at the present Gundicha Temple premises near the Indradyumna tank. According to history, Mantung in his book "*Bhakta Mara-Stotra*" had

recorded that while he was eulogising Jain Tirthankar Rushabha Dev, he inadvertently compared him with Budhadev, Shankara (Shiba),



and Purusottama. M. Winternitz has translated the last stanza of the verse of the said book as follows.

“Thou O Lord, art Purusottama, the highest of all the beings”.

According to different scholars and researchers Mantung lived between 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD to 8<sup>th</sup> Century. A Jain philosopher Mantung propagated that Shree Purusottama was the greatest of all Gods.



King Mahashiva Gupta Yajati of Soma dynasty in the early part of 10<sup>th</sup> century constructed a temple near the dilapidated building (presently the Mukti Mandap) and consecrated Shree Purusottama there. Before Yajati in the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD a play viz, *Anargha Raghava* written by Murari Mishra was performed in front of Shree Purusottama.

According to historians Ananta Burman Chodaganga Dev who had constructed the Shree Mandira reigned from 1078 to 1147 AD. His coronation took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1078, Saturday which fell on Revati Nakshatra and during Mithuna Lagna (Ascendant Gemini). He was 5 years old then. He got married to Gundi Reddy, a girl child of Bira Choda. At 40, Chodaganga Dev the king of Kalinga shifted the capital of his state from the shore of the river Bansadhara to Abhinabh Baranasi i.e. on the shore of the Mahanadi. Because of the able administration of Chodagangadev for a long period of 70 years political stability as well as religious tolerance could be maintained. The last part of his life was spent in Chudanga Sahi of Shree Kshetra. According to the temple architectural text (*Silpa Shastra*) the temple (Shree Mandira) in the shape of five chariots belongs to *rekha* category and it was constructed under his direct supervision. Ananga Bhima Dev III, his great grandson, a staunch Vaishnavite completed the construction of temple and consecrated the deities in 1230 AD. This has been mentioned in his Nagari Copper Plate.

During the reign of Ananga Bhima Dev performance of different rituals, provision of servitors and above all the management of the temple could be done in an effective and systematic way. Since then the temple was managed smoothly by independent Hindu Kings till 1568. The temple administration in the subsequent period remained under the control of Afghan (1568-1588), Muslims (1588-1751), Marhatta (1751-1803) and English (1803-1947).

During Ganga and Surya dynasty huge landed property, jewels and diamonds were donated to the deities. For any lapse in the management of the temple the guilty was being punished. During the reign of Moghul, king Mansingh had given the responsibility of the kingdom to Ramachandra Dev, the king of Khurdha in 1590. The Marahattas after taking over the administration of Odisha from Nawab Alibardi Khan in the first part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century kept Shree Mandira under their supervision. They had made available vast landed property for the performance of *nitis*, rites and rituals of the deities. During the reign of Moghuls so also Marahattas, pilgrim tax was levied on the pilgrims. Some Parichhas (superintendents) were employed to manage the administration of Shree Mandira.

While taking over the administration of Puri and Shree Mandira Lord Wellesely had given the following command to the army.

“After reaching Shree Jagannatha Puri you should be extremely careful so as to keep up



the reputation of the Temple, Brahmins and servitors. You should not hurt the religious belief of the pilgrims. Adequate security personnel should be deployed for the safety and security of Jagannatha as well as other temples. Special attentions should also be given for the smooth performance of rituals, festivals etc.”. The people of Odisha were extremely happy as the British administrators made provision for payment of cash towards the management of Jagannatha Temple. The English government performed the *nitis* of the temple in the same way as was done by the Marahatta rule. After 3-4 years it was seen that the expenditure in the temple was more than the income, hence the Government was obliged to finance for the day to day rites and rituals of the temple. In 1808 a regulation (No.4) was introduced and a committee comprising three Pandits was formed. The said committee was given the responsibility of management of the temple. In 1858 the British Government severed the management of temple from its clutch and handed over a conglomeration of 156 villages i.e. one *ekharajat mahal* to the king of Puri for smooth management of the temple. The temple administration was collecting 20% of the total income out of 138 villages and cent percent of rent from the rest 18 villages. Besides this, an amount of Rs.27000/- that was collected as tax from 90 villages (*Sateisi Hazari Mahala*) during the reign of Marahatta rule in 1843 was also handed over to the king of Puri. During the British rule the king of Khurda and subsequently the Gajapati of Puri were appointed as superintendent of Shree Mandira for its smooth management.

In 1805 Charles Grome had submitted a detailed report on the management of temple. In the said report he had mentioned about the indiscipline and mismanagement prevailing in the temple and suggested various remedial measures.

Similarly in 1902 Mr. Garret in his report had justified the formulation of certain laws for smooth management of the temple. Queen Suryamani Patamahadei discharged the responsibility of superintendent of temple from 1860 to 1897. There was an amicable settlement between the Queen of Puri and the British ruler as a result of which the civil suit pending in the court was withdrawn. As per condition the management of temple administration would be given to the King of Puri and an efficient manager will be appointed to aid the King. The power and responsibility of the manager was mentioned in a decree. On 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1888 an agreement was signed between the British ruler and Queen Suryamani Patamahadei. The broad outlines of the agreement are as follows :

- a) King of Puri will be the superintendent of the temple.
- b) Suryamani Patmahadei will be the guardian of the minor king.
- c) The King has the authority to appoint and dismiss a manager of the temple.
- d) If for some reason the post of manager remains vacant the same will be filled up by the British ruler.



e) The day to day administration of the temple will be given to the manager.

Sri Sakhichand 1921 (May) to 1925 (May)

The following is the list of managers who remained in charge of temple from 1889 to 1926.

Sri Lala Ashutosh 1925 (May) to 1926 (August)

Name	Period of incumbency
Sri Harekrushna Das	1889 to 1890
Sri Krushnachandra Mohanty	1890 to 1893
Sri R.K.Kundu	1893 ( for a few days )
Sri J.N.Choudhury	1893 to 1895
Sri Nityananda Das	1895 ( for a few days )
Mr. Price, Ex-ICS	1898 ( for a few days )
Mr. Price	1900 ( for a few days )
Sri Chintamani Pattnaik	1900 (from the month of May to October)
Sri Rashabihari Nayak	1900 (for a few days )
Sri Rajkishore Das	1903 to 1913 (from the month of May 1903 to May, 1913)
Sri Gourisham Mohanty	1913 (May) to 1917 (May)
Sri Balamukunda Kanungo	1917 (May) to 1921 (May)

It is worth- mentioning that “Dewans” were appointed by the king of Puri to manage the temple.

For various reasons mismanagement was seen in the rituals and functioning of the temple in the post- independent India as a result of which State Govt. formulated “Puri Jagannatha Temple(Administration) Act.1952”. As per this Act, a Record of Rights indicating the duties and responsibilities of various servitors with reference to the rites, rituals, festivals etc. was prepared. One special officer in the rank of a District Judge was appointed for this purpose. He submitted his report on 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1954. Accordingly, an Act was formulated in the year 1954. The validity of the said Act was challenged by Maharaja Rama Chandra Dev IV and Birakishore Dev and the matter was subjudice. Subsequently the Kings of Puri got defeated in the above case in the Supreme Court. The “Shri Jagannath Temple Act, 1954” came into force in 1960. Thereafter Government took over the administration of temple and Sri Ananda Chandra Mohapatra was appointed as its first administrator. The following OAS Officers were appointed as administrators of Shree Mandira in between 1960 to 2004.



<b>Name of the incumbency</b>	<b>Period of Administrators</b>
Sri Ananda Chandra Mohapatra	27.10.1960 to 16.11.1961
Sri Laxman Mishra	17.11.1961 to 8.11.1965
Sri Gopalkrushna Das	9.11.1965 to 16.3.1967
Sri Ramesh Chandra Satapathy	17.3.1967 to 17.9.1967
Sri Kahnu Charan Mohapatra	18.9.1967 to 15.7.1968
Sri Paramananda Tripathy	16.7.1968 to 26.4.1971
Sri Prafulla Chandra Panda	12.5.1971 to 6.7.1971
Sri Purnendu Narayan Kar	Short period
Sri Ramesh Chandra Satapathy	15.1.1972 to 28.10.1974
Sri Bihari Lal Pattnaik	15.1.1972 (short period)
Sri Biranchi Narayan Dash	28.10.1974 to 25.3.1975
Sri Ganeswar Praharaj	9.4.1975 to 10.11.1976
Sri Giridhari Das	10.11.1976 to 8.9.1977
Sri Prahallad Rath	9.9.1977 to 30.11.1978
Sri Gadadhar Mishra	1.12.1978 to 31.12.1978
Sri Gangadhar Das	1.1.79 to 16.6.1980
Sri Kali Kumar Rath	17.6.1980 to 31.8.1984
Sri Guru Prasad Mohanty	1.9.1984 to 7.7.1990
Sri Sarat Chandra Mohapatra	7.7.1990 to 14.6.1991
Sri Rabindra Narayan Mishra	14.6.1991 to 20.12.1992
Sri Mahimohan Tripathy	15.5.1992 to 28.5.1992
Sri Lombodar Nayak	20.12.1992 to 17.2.1993
Sri Himadri Bihari Mishra	17.2.1993 to 2.6.1994
Sri Mahi Mohan Tripathy	3.6.1994 to 24.3.1998
Sri Jayanta Narayan Panda	24.3.1998 to 31.1.2000
Sri Himanshu Sekhar Samantaray	1.1.2000 to 5.10.2001
Sri Bhabani Shankar Panda	5.10.2001 to 20.2.2004
Sri Rajendra Kumar Mohanty	20.2.2004 to 24.2.2005



24 numbers of administrators were appointed in Shree Jagannatha Temple during 1960 till 2005.

As per Section 6 of Shree Jagannatha Temple Act 1954, the King of Puri was declared as hereditary chairman of the Managing Committee of the Shree Jagannatha Temple. On 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1960 Law Department, Government of Odisha nominated the following members for the Managing Committee .

King of Puri	Chairman
Sri Srinibas Ramanuja Das	Mahanta, Emar Matha, Puri-Member
Sri Ramachandra Mohapatra	Secretary, Mukti Mandapa-Member
Swami Bichitrananda Das	Advocate, Dagarapada, Cuttack-Member
Sri Dwarikanath Patanjoshi Mohapatra	Harachandi Sahi, Puri-Member
Sri Ramesh Chandra Mitra	Retired Dist. Judge, Puri-Member
Dr. Parsurama Mishra	Ex-Vice Chancellor, Utkal University, Member
Sri Jagabandhu Mohapatra (Garabadu)	Balisahi, Puri-Member

State Endowment  
Commissioner  
Sri Biswanatha Padhi  
Administrator

Ex-Officio Member,  
Odisha, Cuttack  
Suar, Mahasuar Nijoga-  
Puri, Nominated Member  
Ex Officio Member

The first meeting of Managing Committee was held on 27.10.1960 at 7.30 a.m. Gajapati Maharaja was absent in the said meeting, hence Sri Srinibas Ramanuja presided over the meeting. In the said meeting the administrator was given the authority to perform the *niti*, *puja* and festivals of the temple as per the Record of Rights.

In the subsequent period the Temple Act was amended slightly and the Collector, Puri and Administrator, Shree Jagannatha Temple Administration were kept as Vice-Chairman and Member -Secretary of the Committee respectively. Again as per amendment in the said Act in 2004, one Chief Administrator belonging to IAS in the rank of Commissioner was appointed. For the first time in the history of temple administration Sri S.C. Mohapatra, IAS was appointed as chief administrator on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2005. The incumbency of different Chief Administrators is given below.

Name of Chief Administrator	Period of Incumbency
Sri Suresh Chandra Mohapatra, IAS	24.2.2005 to 27.05.08
Sri S.N. Sarangi, IAS	27.5.2008 to 24.2.09
Sri A.K. Meena, IAS	27.2.2009 to 27.4.10
Sri P.K. Mohapatra, IAS	27.4.2010 to 13.5.12



Dr.A.K.Padhee,IAS

13.5.2012 to 28.10.14

Sri Bikash Chandra Mohapatra,IAS

28.10.2014 to 9.3.15

Sri Suresh Chandra Mohapatra,IAS

9.3.2015 (continuing)

As per amendment in the Act,2004 one 18 member Managing Committee has been formed. The tenure of the said committee is 3 years. Some ex-officio officials have also been included in the committee. At present the following are the members of the Managing Committee.

Gajapati Maharaja, Puri	Chairman
Vacant	Working Chairman
Chief Administrator	Member-Secretary
Collector,Puri	Member
Endowment Commissioner, Odisha	Member
Additional Secretary, Law Deptt., Odisha	Member
Superintendent of Police, Puri	Member
Er.Baladev Singhari	Member
Sri Premananda Das Mohapatra	Member
Sri Birakishore Mohapatra	Member
Sri Purna Chandra Pujapanda Samanta	Member
Sri Bhagaban Suar	Member

Sri Jagannath Rath	Member
Dr.Ram Charan Das Maharaj	Member
Padma Bibhusan Raghunath Mohapatra	Member
Sri Mahimohan Tripathy	Member
Dr. Bijoy Kumar Sahoo, FCA	Member

In 1983 - the “Shree Jagannatha Temple Act” was amended and a “Foundation Fund” was created. The Chief Minister, Odisha is the Chairman of the “Foundation Fund Committee”. The Law Minister of the State is the Vice-Chairman of the said committee. Besides this, the Law Secretary, Finance Secretary and Collector, Puri are the members of the Committee and the Chief Administrator, Jagannatha Temple acts as the Member-Secretary. As per the said Amendment a “Hundi” was installed in the Jagamohan of the Temple on 23<sup>rd</sup> August,1983.

The comprehensiveness of *niti*, rituals, festive occasions etc. in Shree Jagannatha temple is unique. As per the Record of Rights of Shree Mandira around 85 to 90 servitors are engaged in the daily rituals. Around 1800 servitors are engaged for various rituals throughout the year. Cash awards are given to the Palia servitors for rendering *seva puja* to the deities. The temple administration supplies materials for *kotha bhoga*.



The employees of the temple are given salary every month. Besides this, since 1979 the ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) has been entrusted with the responsibility of conservation and repair of the temple. Presently the annual budget of temple is around Rs.240 crores. As the management of such a large institution is highly important many high ranking officers of State Government have been appointed to ensure its smooth management. The temple administration is now under the direct administrative control of Law Department, Government of Odisha.

To facilitate comfortable stay of the devotees coming from different places to Shreekshetra the temple Administration has built two residential clusters known as Bhaktanivas (2007) and Sri Gundicha Bhaktanivas (2012) on the Grand road and near the Gundicha temple respectively.

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## Chandan Yatra and Chariot Construction Ceremony

*Prof. Sarbeswar Kar*

The socio-cultural activities of Odias are reflected in Jagannath cult. Like human beings Lord Jagannath gets up early in the morning from bed, performs daily activities, takes break-fast, launch and rests a while during mid-day, goes to bed at night. These activities are performed through rituals and offerings at different points of time during the day. Similarly the deities in Puri temple feel scorching heat during the Summer as the humans do and to get rid of the Summer pain, they go out of the people on a pleasure trip to a grand pond called Narendra Puskarini for water sports. They, after being smeared with sandal paste in order to get the cooling touch, play in the pond which is known as Chandan festival. This festival begins on Akshay Trutiya day and ends on Snana Purnima day spanning for a period of 42 days every year.



The 21 day long Chandan Yatra of Lord Jagannath is observed on the day of Akshay Trutiya at holy town Puri. The Yatra is held at Narendra Pushkarini in accordance with the

religious rituals. The idols of Madanmohan, Bhudevi, Sridevi, Ramakrushna and Panchu Pandav take part in the Chapa or water sports.

Lord Jagannath follows a schedule for the Chapa Khela or water sport in the Narendra Pushkarini every year. According to the practice, after performance of the mid-day *puja*, Lord Jagannath would move for the water sports. As a mark of the beginning of Chandan Yatra on the auspicious day of Akshay Trutiya. Nitis like Mangal Alati, Mailam, Abakash, Rosha Homa, Surya Puja, Dwarpal Puja,

Gopal Ballabh and Sakal Dhup are performed and the deities board the *bimans* or vessels at around 12 o'clock and make for the holy pond Narendra Puskarini.

On the other hand, the construction of chariots for the deities begins on that day after receipt of Agyanmala for the same. After the fixing of the time for Nitikanti, Servitors and Shrotriya Brahmins perform rituals on a 12-foot Dhaura



wooden log, marking the beginning of the Rath Yatra.

The Chandan Yatra which is also known as Gandhalepana Yatra of deities of Sri Jagannath temple is performed for 42 days at the pilgrim town of Puri. The Yatra is observed in two parts: Bahara Chandana and Bhitara Chandana.

Bahara Chandana starts from Akshaya Tritiya and continues for 21 days. On the first 21 days the representative idols of the main deities of the Jagannath temple as well as five Shivalingas known as the Pancha Pandavas are taken in a procession from the Singhadwara or the Lion Gate of the Jagannath temple at Puri to the Narendra Tirtha. After various rituals the deities are placed on grandly decorated boats for an evening cruise of the tank.

The last 21 days include rituals held inside the temple itself. Instead of the daily cruises, the playful ride happens on four occasions, the Amavasya, the full moon night, on the Shasthi and the Ekadashi of the bright fort night. The deities go out of the temple to enjoy boating in the Narendra tank for 21 days.

As per the religious practice in the Jagannath temple, Madan Mohan, the representative image of Lord Jagannath accompanied by five Shivalingas go to Narendra tank, a huge water body in the heart of the city for a cool bath to beat the scorching summer heat.

As per the schedule, Madan Mohan, His consort Laxmi accompanied by five Shivalingas believed to be incarnation of Panch Pandavas



begin their pleasure trip from the temple in six separate palanquins along the Grand Road (Bada Danda) to Narendra tank situated about 1.5 km away from the temple for sandalwood paste bath and boating. With the deities on board the decorated palanquins are carried over the shoulders of a special set of servitors known as Biman Badu.

The temple musicians recite notes of Geeta Gobinda and Odishi Bhajans. The youths of various Jaaga Ghars (schools of martial arts) accompany the deities displaying their skills along the Bada Danda. The rhythmic body movements of palanquin bearers in concert with swinging of the top half of the decorated palanquin, particularly of Madan Mohan called "Manivimana" is a rare treat for the pilgrims and devotees.

The accompanying devotees in the procession participate in the bathing ritual and join in grand feast which follows the bathing. The playing of Odissi 'Dekha Go Radhamadhaba Chali' (Please see the walking style of Radha and



Madhab) on clarinets accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and blowing of conch shells besides display of fireball skill (banati) in the procession present a splendid scene along the Bada Danda.

The deities on their arrival at the Narendra tank are accorded sandal wood paste and aromatic water bath for cooling effect. Then the deities are taken in procession to their respective boats shaped as giant swans. The deities on board move about the tank enjoy the notes and dances of Odissi presented by danseuses on the decks till late in the evening and return to the temple in the same manner and style which were followed at the beginning of their journey time.

This scene is repeated everyday and on completion of twenty one days the concluding ceremony known as 'Bhauri' is observed with display of fireworks and music extravaganza.

On the other hand, construction of three chariots for forthcoming Rath Yatra also begin. Shrotriya Brahmins headed by the temple priest perform a Yajna with Nrusingha Mantra in the chariot construction yard (Rath Khala) to consecrate the timber logs to be used for construction of three chariots.

Earlier on the Ram Navami day the wood logs selected for use in construction are purified by observance of Homa. Amidst singing of *kirtans* and *bhajans* (devotional songs), sounds of cymbals and gongs, the idols of Lord

Madanmohan accompanied by Devi Bhudevi and Devi Sridevi in one palanquin and idols of Lord Ramkrushna and Pandavas in another palanquin are taken in a procession from Shree Mandir to the Narendra pond in the afternoon.

En route to the Narendra pond, the procession stops in front of Shree Nahara (the Puri king's palace) on the Grand Road where



priests of Shree Mandir along with the Shrotriya Brahmins complete all the rituals at the chariot construction yard. Following the completion of Puja, *agnyanmalas* (order in the shape of garlands from the Lords to commence chariot building for Rath Yatra) are placed on a 12-foot *dhaura* log marking the beginning of chariot construction for Rath Yatra.

The procession later reaches the Narendra pond where the idols board two newly built Chapas or boats—Nanda and Bhadra- which are rowed then for a long time by the Sevakas. Temple dancers dance and sing on the boat during the rowing.



The construction of the chariots starts on Akshaya Trutiya, the third day of the bright fortnight of Vaisakha, with ritual fire worship. This takes place in front of the palace of the King of Puri and opposite the main office of the Puri temple. On this day, the new agricultural season starts and farmers start ploughing their fields. This day marks the beginning of the summer festival of the deities, known as the sandalwood festival or Chandan Yatra. In this festival, the representative images of the presiding deities are taken out in colourful processions and given a ceremonial boat ride in the Narendra tank everyday. In an interesting demonstration of the assimilative character of the Jagannatha cult, Madanmohana and Rama Krushna, representing Jagannatha and Balaram partake in the festival with the representatives' images of the presiding deities of five main Shiva temples of Puri. These are curiously known as Pancha Pandava, the five brothers of the Mahabharata story. Later the deities have a ritual bath in a small temple in the middle of the tank, in stone tubs filled with water, sandalwood paste, scents and flowers.

This sandalwood festival culminates in the Snana Yatra, the Bathing Festival on the full moon day of the month of Jyestha. On this day, the presiding deities descend from their seats on an elevated platform in the sanctum sanctorum, the bejewelled throne. They are bathed in 108 pots of water brought from the *sunakua*, the golden

well and assume the elephant form on the special bathing platform, close to the Eastern boundary wall of the temple. From that day the deities remain in symbolic and ritual convalescence for about two weeks. They are barred from view of the ordinary devotees. Only three special *patta chitras*, traditional Odia paintings of natural colours on cloth stiffened with starch, known as Anasara Pattis, are strung on a bamboo screen hiding the deities from public view, can be seen by the public. During this period, the deities are given only roots, leaves, berries and fruits to cure them from their indisposition. This ritual is a reminder of the strong tribal elements in the genesis and evolution of the Jagannatha cult. The progeny of Lalita, daughter of the original tribal worshipper Biswabasu, chieftain of hunters, and the Brahmin priest Vidyapati, are known as Daitapatis or Daitas. They have almost exclusive privilege of serving the Lord during the convalescence and through the entire period of Ratha Jatra or the Festival of Chariots.

People from different places come to Puri to witness the Chandan Yatra festival of the Trinity. Even some people stay in Puri from the day of Akshaya Trutiya till the Snana Purnima, the day of bathing ceremony of the deities.

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## 21<sup>st</sup> Century's First Nabakalebara : A Case of Best People's Management Strategy

*Prof. Bhakta Bandhu Dash*

**N**abakalebara or the renewal of body of the Divine *vigraha*-s in Shrikshetra-Puri is known as Brahmotsava. Nabakalebar is a composition of two words like 'Naba' means New and 'Kalebar' means body. Hence the meaning of the term 'Nabakalebar' means New Body. 'Atibadi' Jagannatha Das's unique creation Srimad Bhagabata' evokes spiritual feeling with an established ritual of regular recitation in every Odia heart. There it is written '*Martya mandale deha bahi, devata hoile marai*'. It means- Everyone, including gods, has to experience death if they take birth in this mortal world. *Nabakalebara* has a long history, as revealed from the temple chronicle, *Madala Panji*. Few sources cite 1575 AD as the commencement of *Nabakalebara* rituals. However, authentic physical records are available since the early part of nineteenth century describing this mega event.

This grand holy festival precedes Ratha Yatra so called Car Festival. Usually it is done at intervals of eight or nineteen years, particularly in the intercalary month of Asadha which comprises three fortnights. Out of these three fortnights, the closing two fortnights constitute an intercalary month or *mala masa* (impure month) or *adhimasa* (leap month). All leap months have a sanctified name, Purusottama Masa. Nabakalebara or



fashioning of images in the Nirmana Mandapa in Koili Baikuntha takes place during the first dark fortnight which is *shuddha* or pure fortnight.

In Odia Mythological Culture, Navakalebar is the periodical renewal of the wooden images of Sudarshan, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath. The Darus (Neem Tree) of different deities are characterized by different features. They are distinguished from each other. The tree of Sudarshan is plotted first which is followed by the tree of **Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath** in order. It is to be endorsed that in none of the temples of



antiquity in India we find wooden images being worshipped over ages. Though there are Shastric/ Vedic / Puranic prescriptions for different mediums, eg., gold, silver, brass, wood, iron, gemstone, rock, sandalwood, flowers and paintings etc, in which the divine images can be made. The Holy Trinity, Sudarshana and *Vamana* are all fashioned from the neem wood. The neem tree is said to be very pure and sacred. It smells sandalwood when the tree grows old.

This historic event is said to have occurred in July 1575 A.D. as per the *Madalapanji* – The temple record. The history says that Nabakalebar has occurred during Afghan Rule, Mughal Rule, Maratha Rule and even during British Rule. In British rule this festival was successively organized in 1809, 1828, 1855, 1874, 1893, 1912 and 1931. After Indian Independence it happened during 1950, 1969, 1977, 1996 and 2015.

#### Features of Nabakalebara Rituals:

- 1) Banajaga Jatra – Ceremonial Journey in quest of Daru (the Holy Tree) via goddess Mangala of Kakatapur.
- 2) Mahadaru Chinhata (Identification of the Holy Neem Tree as per the identification marks)
- 3) Shabarapalli Nirmana (Construction of a temporary shed for the Daita servitors during the fire sacrifice or Yajna in the proximity of the Daru)
- 4) Surya Puja and Yajna Mandapa Nirmana (Construction of sacrificial platform near the Daru)
- 5) Bhumi Shuddhi (consecrating the place where the chosen Daru stands) includes Daru Snana (Bathing Daru), touching Daru with gold-axe and felling Daru.
- 6) Burying unrequired branches and leaves.
- 7) Vedic Puja with secret and esoteric ritual near Daru.
- 8) Making *chaupata* (proper sizing) of the Daru.
- 9) Carrying the Daru wrapped in Gitagovinda Khandua to Koili Baikuntha in a newly built cart.
- 10) Construction of Seven Temporary Mandapa-s or thatched houses at the premises of Koili Baikuntha for consecration of the Divine Logs collected from different places.
- 11) Construction of temporary Mandapa-s are to be completed two days before the Snana Purnima. The Mandapas include Nirmana Mandapa, Pratistha Mandapa or Yajna Mandapa, Lakshmi-Nrushingha Mandapa, Daru Mandapa, Sambhara Mandapa, Snana Mandapa, and Adhivasa Mandapa.
- 12) Constructing Idols as per the guidance of Caretakers of Idol- the Bada Grahi.
- 13) Ghata Parivartana – Transfer of Brahma or the secret life substance from the old idols to the new ones popularly known as Brahmotsava.



- 14) Patali leela or Goloka Vishrama (burial of old idols).
- 15) Shuddhi Kriya (Purificatory rites by the Daita Patis).

### People's Management for Nabakalebar 2015

The State Government collaborated with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) for undertaking reactive as well as proactive steps in managing crowds in Nabakalebar Festival at Puri. It was expected that there will be agglomeration of about 30 lakh of pilgrims at Nabakalebar and Cart Festival at Puri. In this regard, quick reaction team was constituted for managing emergency situations and for this purpose, 127 well trained police officers were specially deployed for this team. The state government had imparted special training to police officers and Jagannath Temple Police (JTP), for better crowd management and behaviour. In order to make the process more streamlined State Government prepared a schedule for the festival:

The Nabakalebara 2015 schedule:

- 29 March 2015, Sunday: Banajaga Yatra.
- 30 March 2015, Monday: Journey to Deuli Math. Daitapatis will leave Jagannath Ballava Ashram and will stay at Nuanai Bank Ashram.
- 2 April 2015, Thursday : Stay at Deuli Math
- 3 April 2015, Friday: Worship at Kakatpur Mangala temple.
- 4 April (Saturday) to 17 May 2015 (Sunday): Explore Daru.
- 2 June 2015, Tuesday: Debasnana Purnima
- 5 June 2015, Friday: Carving of images.
- 15 June 2015, Monday: Transfer of Brahma at midnight.
- 17 July 2015, Friday: Naba Jaubana Darshan.
- 18 July 2015, Saturday: Rath Yatra
- 22 July 2015, Wednesday: Hera Panchami.
- 26 July 2015, Sunday: Bahuda Yatra.
- 27 July, Monday: Sunabesa
- 28 July 2015, Tuesday: Adhara Niti.
- 30 July 2015, Thursday: Niladribije

Anticipating congregation of more than 30 lakh the State government has prepared the comprehensive Mobility Plan for regulating vehicles. In this regard main road as well as connecting road expansion was made. National Highway, Connecting Roads, Modernization of Hospital, Police Stations, Fire Station were completed much before the Nabakalebar Festival which was purely a strategic implementation of the State Government.

Odisha Government deployed 10,000 police and security forces for safe conduct of Nabakalebar ritual, Rath Yatra in Puri in 2015. Apart from police personnel, 14 units of senior police personnel were deployed for managing the VVIPs and to control crowd and traffic, besides



emergency services. There were bomb detection and disposal units, dog squads and intelligence gathering units as well. As per the arrangement, sea, air and land routes were kept under tight security and strong supervision. The entire city was under the views of 150 CCTV cameras. 32 CCTV cameras were installed in Jagannath Temple. CCTV control rooms were thoroughly operational during the ritual.

For the purpose of managing traffic, places were earmarked for parking of light and heavy motor vehicles. For the peaceful stays of devotees 33 temporary shelter zones so called Nabakalebar Villages were constructed by the State Govt. These centres were offering services like pick-ups and drops from station/ bus stop to the Centre and back, free hygienic food, safe drinking water, bathing points and toilets. All the centres were connected with light, fan, and wi-fi services. 24X7 police patrolling and ambulance services were given to the devotees. Free health check-ups and health assistance facilities were also given to the devotees, by the State Govt.

### **Management of Nabakalebar by State Government:**

For Odisha Government, Nabakalebar festival was a great success. Lakhs of devotees from across the world peacefully visited the Rath Yatra, Bahuda Yatra, Sunavesha. Chief Minister, Shri Naveen Patnaik had reactive as well as proactive review over the preparation of Nabakalebar. He reviewed the progress of various works connected with the Nabakalebar festival. He had categorically instructed the concerned departments to complete the projects within scheduled time before the arrival of monsoon. The concerned administrative departments had been asked to monitor the weekly and monthly progress of the works at ground level.

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## Impact of Baladev Cult on the Socio-Economic and Religious Life of the People of Odisha

*Balaram Lenka*

In medieval period, Vaishnavism shaped the socio-religious life of the people of Odisha. Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra were inseparable and predominated among the Vaishnavite Gods of Odisha. The same rituals are performed for the Jews in the Baladevjew temple as at Puri. Right from the days of Sarala, Panchasakha and Sri Chaitanya, Vaishnavism had become very popular in the fifteenth-sixteenth century A.D. In due course of time, Balabhadra was adored a lot. He was projected as the God of Agriculture by the Brahmins who associated many agro-festivals with Balabhadra. By Seventeenth Century A.D. and more particularly,

with the building of Baladevjew temple at Kendrapara, agriculture was more popularized. Besides this, other trends of Vaishnavism like amity, fraternity and equality were largely practised by the people of Odisha. The impact of Baladev cult on the socio-economic and religious life of the people have been discussed in this chapter. Baladev cult and Jagannath cult are synonymous and used in interchangeable terms.

With the coming of Sri Chaitanya, the position of Brahmins dwindled away as Prataprudradeva gave vent to Vaishnavism. In fact, Vaishnavism tried to narrow down the gaps between higher caste and lower caste in the society. When Brahmins lost their position in the society and found it difficult to earn their livelihood, they tried to resort to agriculture which was not permissible in the society. However, the Brahmins tried to give it a religious tinge by depicting Balabhadra, as a God of agriculture and justified themselves to resort to agriculture. They even termed themselves as 'Balabhadragotriya Brahmana' or 'Halua Brahmana' (a class of Brahmins who plough). They translated a Sanskrit text *Krisiparasara* into Odia language





and named it as *Khana Vachana*. It contained several astronomical and astrological predictions, auspicious moment for starting journey and several other things. However, it put much emphasis on agricultural production. The Balabhadragotriya Brahmins not only resorted to agriculture but advised the people how to cultivate the land and get more production. The religious sanction behind this was the projection of Balabhadra with plough who was the God of agriculture. They showed ways to take up agriculture.

In *Khanavachana*, it is described that the month of *Chaitra* (March-April) signals the beginning of an agrarian year. However, *Baisakha* (April-May) is chosen as the starting month of agricultural activities. Sowing of seeds begins herein the very day of *Akshaya Tritiya* in the month of *Baisakha*. For cultivation weather prediction is very much indispensable. As per the suggestion of *Khanavachana*, if winter prevails in *Chaitra*, storm takes place with hailstones in *Baisakha* and if sky remains clear in *Jyestha*, then there will be good rainfall in the month of *Ashadha*.<sup>1</sup> Further, it predicts that if stars appear inside the circle encompassing the moon, there will be heavy shower of rainfall.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, if wind blows from the opposite direction of the cloud in *Bhadrava* (August-September), then there will be immediate rainfall.<sup>3</sup> Following these predictions, the peasants must be careful for starting agricultural work.

Explaining about plough work, *Khanavachana* suggests that the plough work is

to be started just after the rainfall. The agriculturist has to follow some sort of auspicious time for starting the work. A farmer has to avoid any inauspicious sound at the time of his journey to the field. He should plough the field from the four directions beginning from the east.<sup>4</sup> The prohibited days of ploughing have also been suggested i.e. the fullmoon day and newmoon day. If violating the rule the agriculturist tills his land during those days, the bullocks will suffer from diseases and the farmer will be considered as a sinner and his face is not to be seen by anybody.<sup>5</sup>

For agricultural purpose, *Chaturmasya* is important which consists of four consecutive months, i.e. *Ashadha*, *Sravan*, *Bhadrava* and *Aswina*. Usually, the farmers advance agricultural work starting from the month of *Ashadha* which does not exceed *Aswina*. If he starts the *Veusana* (resetting the paddy plants through ploughing after heavy rain) work in the month of *Ashadha*, he is expected to get good harvest and if he starts it by *Sravana*, he gets bit less, *Bhadrava* fetches still less harvest and *Aswina* gives nil output.<sup>6</sup>

Coming to Plantation (*ropana*), *Khana* suggests that if it is done within first five days of *Ashadha*, there will be a good harvest. In the process of plantation paddy should be planted with regular distance from each other. Then only those plants will be able to get considerable opportunity for healthy growth and ultimately it will help in producing more crops.<sup>7</sup>

Plantation is a general phenomenon associated with agriculture. Almost all the books related with agriculture in medieval period



invariably tell about paddy cultivation. However, Khana simply does not confine her advice to the cultivation of paddy alone. She also tells about other crops like betel, potato, brinjal, mango, mustard, chilly, turmeric, sugarcane, etc. and gives different times for their plantation.<sup>8</sup>

Coming to reaping of paddy, Khana says that if it is harvested in *Margasira*, the farmer will get maximum, in *Pousa* (November) sixty per cent less, in *Magha* only straws and in *Phalguna* (February-March) nothing. She also suggests that a farmer will cut the paddy thirty days after coming of bud (*thoda*), twenty days after it leaves its flower and thirteen days after it beads down. Similarly she suggested to plant banana in *Phalguna* which will produce fruit after one month, to plant brinjal in every month leaving *Chaitra* and *Baisakh*, to plant betel in *Sravana* for good harvest etc.<sup>9</sup>

From the hoary past, agriculture has been accepted as one of the ways for livelihood for all. However, so far as society is concerned, right from the later Vedic age, the Vaisyas were entitled to handle this work not only for their livelihood but appropriating the surplus for others. It has been suggested by our ancient law givers that if the Brahmins fail to earn their livelihood by their respective professions (*adhyayana, adhyapana, yajana, dana and pratigraha*) they are permitted to switch over to agriculture.<sup>10</sup> The *Krisi Parasara*, an Odishan treatise on agriculture suggests the degradation of Brahmins to accept agriculture for their livelihood. The same law was also applicable to the Kshatriyas.<sup>11</sup>

Subsequently, this sort of adjustment gave way to recognize agriculture as the main profession for all castes. That is why Parasara the only authority in ancient Indian legal literature permitted even the Brahmins to resort to agriculture.<sup>12</sup>

If the agriculturist, knowing details of the rainfall, does not acquire adequate knowledge of ploughing time and place, he fails to maintain agriculture in a purposeful way. So Khana has exercised her brilliancy in speaking some sort of useful manual in this regard. It is a matter of importance that the farmer has to start ploughing land from the eastern direction.<sup>13</sup> Mention may be made here that Indra, the lord of rainfalls is the presiding deity of eastern direction. If ploughing is started from this direction with invocation to Indra, the rain god favours the agriculturist by supplying sufficient water through rainfall. That is why the eastern direction is so much important in *Khanavachana* for starting the plough work.

Further, the days prohibited for ploughing are another factor to be discussed here since newmoon and fullmoon days for sacrifices (Yajna) of ectype (Prkrti) character, no one is allowed to get rid of these sacrifice. If the agriculturist resorts to the ploughing, he will not be able to perform those sacrifices. This is why, without referring to this core point, Khana directly instructs the agriculturists not to plough the land in those two sacrificial days.

Tools of agriculture are to be taken into consideration. Though Khana does not give details of agricultural tools, still one comes across many a references of such tools in



*Khanavachana* like spade, sickle, plough, yoke, blade, etc. of which *Kodala* (spade) is of very significant character. It is known from Smṛti literature<sup>14</sup> that for the first time in history of agriculture in human civilization, *Kodala* was the first hand tool to till the land for sowing seeds. That is why one of the householders of the Vedic time was designated as *Kuddalaba*. Khana, by referring *Kodala*, tries to maintain uninterrupted cultural link following from the Vedic times till today.

From one place to another, the plant is to be transferred for healthy growth. Khana, in this regard gives a practical picture by differentiating atmosphere for plantation of paddy from the date of plantation of betel, potato, banana, brinjal, coconut etc. She suggests that the paddy plant is to be planted in sunshine. Mention may be made here that paddy is treated as *ashadhi* (crop) in the Vedic period, the lord of which is Moon. Since Moon appears in the night and at that time sedition is possible, the paddy planted at day time gets opportunity for healthy growth. Unless paddy is planted in sunshine, it does not bear the capacity to grow for bearing healthy crops. Sunshine gives life energy not only to the people but plants at large. That is why importance is given to sunshine for paddy plantation by taking into account its valid necessity.

Why has so much explanation been given here regarding agriculture ? In 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. with the spread of Vaishnavism in Odisha, the Brahmins could not get proper position in the society. They resorted to agriculture and devised

means to attract people for agriculture. They advised people how to plough the field and sow seeds, how to reap and get good crops. They associated several agro-functions like *Akshaya Tritiya*, *Raja Sankranti* which falls in *Ashadha* (June-July), *Gamha Purnima* (August-September) and *Manavasa* etc. On the very day of *Akshaya Tritiya*, the seeds are to be sown. Right from the beginning of the *Niti* in the temple of Baladevjeev, it has been decided that before four days of *Akshaya Tritiya*, a meeting is to be held there attended by many people of the locality.<sup>15</sup> Decision will be taken from which direction and by what time plough work should start on the day of *Akshaya Tritiya*. Gradually many temples of various locality have followed this practice. Even the Chief Minister of Odisha and other Ministers of his cabinet go on the day of *Akshaya Tritiya* to different districts to plough the land and sow seeds on the land thereby signaling the beginning of the agricultural activities in different areas. In every sense, the Baladev cult has given vent to agriculture. Even if the modern methods have been applied to the agriculture, the old tradition has its unbroken continuity through the Baladev cult.

The *Khanavachana*, which was composed in 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. in Odisha, by the Brahmins who devised suitable means through it to resort to agriculture for earning their livelihood since the ploughing tool *Hala* is connected with Balabhadra, the Brahmins chose him as the first progenitor of their race by designating themselves as *Balabhadragotriya* Brahmins.<sup>16</sup> Thus, Balabhadra cult helped them



to get back their fallen position in the society thereby being wise counsellors as agriculture to the people. Their precarious economic condition was also improved when they resorted to agriculture. Thus, the social tension which had taken place in 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. was subsided by the cleverly manipulation of principles of *Krisi Parasara* reflected through *Khanavachana* which eased the situation by again giving the Brahmins their lost position in the society although the position of a sect of Brahmins (*Balabhadragotriya*) was lowered among their society. Thus, Balabhadra worship has influenced the society and also economy of this land by popularizing agriculture.<sup>17</sup>

Another impact of Baladev cult on the Odishan culture is its universality. *Ratha Yatra* of God Jagannath and Balabhadra is its best example. This has allured the attention of the people across the world. In this Car Festival there is no distinction between caste, creed and sex. Everyone is free to have a *darshan* of the Gods on the Chariot on that day. This speaks of the great culture of Odisha which reflects amity, fraternity, equality and universality. Everyone is a potential soul to see the God (Supreme Soul) placed on the *Ratha*. This creates a religious ethos in which everyone is mingled. The Balabhadra Cult (synonymous with Jagannath Cult) has exerted an abiding effect on the people of Odisha by bringing them together. Perhaps, this is the greatest influence of Baladev cult on the socio-religious sphere.

The Vaishnavite culture represented through Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath is

soaked in 'Sanatana' humanism i.e. neither materialistic nor spiritualistic but is compatible with both.<sup>18</sup> It gives a feeling to the people of Odisha that the Gods are present with them in the human form. Like family members, they visit the deities in the temple. In every auspicious ceremony, people visit the temple as they visit the ceremonies of their friends. This humanistic aspect of the cult of Baladev is, in fact, glaring.

This Vaishnavite culture centering round Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath has created a striking balance between freedom and creativity, on one hand discipline and restraint, on the other. The martial arts of Odisha originating of the '*Akhada*' tradition of 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century is the projection of the martial spirit of the land. The various *Veshas* of the deity like 'Kandaramardana', 'Bakasura Badha', 'Dhenuka Badha', 'Pralambasura Badha', etc.<sup>19</sup> project the martial spirit of the Odias which are even to-day displayed during the *Rathayatra* of the Gods and in several occasions including Durga Puja.

The *Mukti Mandapa* of the Jew has become a symbol of wisdom. It is the open air theatre of discourse where wise counsels are given to weary-ridden people who come to seek redemption. The *Mukti Mandapa* at Puri and the same inside the temple of Baladev have kept this tradition vibrant even today. The Pundits who sit there frame socio-religious laws to govern the people. For expiation, people from the nook and corner visit the '*Mukti Mandapa*'<sup>20</sup> which shows the abiding influence of this cult on the people of Odisha.



The worship of Trinity is very popular in the nook and corner of Odisha. In each and every auspicious ceremony in the family – whether religious, social, personal or political – the names of Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath are taken. This shows the wide popularity and acceptance of this cult among the people of Odisha. This *Dharma*<sup>21</sup> has been truth's embodiment of life and has always given the Odias the power to refashion their nature as per contemporary and moral imperatives.<sup>22</sup>

This Balabhadra Cult aims at harmony. The elements of diversity in Odishan society on the basis of caste or ethnicity has been functionally tackled by the institution of '*Sevayata Nijoga*' in the Baladevjew temple. The multi-Sevayat system in the Baladevjew temple at Kendrapara is like the '*Chhatisaniyoga*' in the Puri Jagannath Temple.<sup>23</sup> Here every servitor feels proud to do his part associating himself in the worship of the Jews in the temple. Even a *Kaivarta* (fisherman) has the same right as the Brahmins of the temple. Thus, the concept of cultural pluralists has been ironed out in the temple of Baladevjew by the service rendered by the *Sevayats*. Thus, the Baladevjew temple has become a symbol of cordial inter-caste relations. Infact, it has created a cementing force for binding all in one rope relating casteism into the distant background.

Ever since the Odishan empire was consecrated to the God (Jagannath) making Him the temporal and ecclesiastical head of Odisha in the Kanchi expedition<sup>24</sup> of Purusottamdeva, the state has evinced a political culture of being a

'Holy Jagannath Empire'. In the romantic Kanchi-Kaveri legend God Balabhadra and Jagannath had marched towards Kanchi by riding horses and had made king Purusottamdeva victorious. Right from that day, King became the first servitor of the Gods as was reflected in the performance of *Chhera-Pahanra* before the Chariots of the Gods on the auspicious day of car festival. This tradition is preserved in Odishan culture since that hoary past.

The socio-economic structure of Odisha has been another determinant of its political as well as individual culture. Surrender to the divine will gives an emphasis on *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha* has become the order of the day. This is due to the abiding influence of Jagannath *Dharma*. The cult has become very popular in the nook and corner of Odisha. It has aroused the self-consciousness of the people of this land to be a follower of this cult.

The food habit of the people has been largely influenced in this cult. Varieties of food prepared in the temple are also being followed by the people. *The Khechudi, Vesara, Mahura*<sup>25</sup> and other curries served to the Jews are also being prepared by the people. This food-culture of the temple has spread in the nook and corner of Odisha. In different social functions, now *Prasada* from the temple of Baladevjew or any Jagannath temple is being taken with different curries and served to the guests in a religious atmosphere. This *Prasada* culture has cast its spell over the people of Odisha who have now adopted it as a way to meet the need of the social functions.



The picture of a composite social unity and family bondage is reflected through this cult. During the car festival, the Gods came to give *Darshan* to the people. The eternal love and bondage between brother and sister is reflected through this function. It is, in fact, the portrayal of the typical family picture of Odishan society. Even wife (Goddess Laxmi) is neglected when the brothers (Balabhadra and Jagannath) take their sister (Subhadra) with them. This exerts influence on the Odishan family. Similarly, the birth of Balabhadra is celebrated in the temple as '*Gamha Purnima*' where He is offered *Rakshi*. The same *Raksha Vandhan* is followed in the nook and corner of Odisha like other parts of India.

Among many delicious food of the temple of Baladevjew, the *Rasabali*<sup>26</sup> is famous. It is unique in its style. The soft cakes are prepared with flour and cheese and dipped in the sweet milk. This has become so famous that every part of Odisha, in general and Jagannath temples, in particular adopt the practice of preparing *Rasabali*. The tourists who come to visit Baladevjew temple are tempted to take this *Rasabali*. The *Gudia-Pandas* of the temple prepare these *Rasabalis* in such a way that it has its own charm. When the name of *Rasabali* comes, one is reminded of the one prepared at the Baladevjew temple.

The Baladevjew cult like Jagannath has promoted the habit of fasting among the people of Odisha. *Upabasa*<sup>27</sup> (fasting) is performed on various occasions. *Ekadasi* or the eleventh day

of each fortnight of the lunar month is observed as such. As per the temple rituals, four important *Ekadasis* like the *Ashadha Sukla Ekadasi*, *Karttika Sukla Ekadasi*, *Magha Sukla Ekadasi* and *Baisakha Sukla Ekadasi* are performed by the pious people of Odisha, particularly by the widows who observe them without food and drink. In fact, the Vaishnavites observe these days to enhance the glory of these days in a year. The *Bhadra Krishna Chaturdasi* is also observed by them as a day of fasting. These traditions maintained in the temple of Baladevjew have influenced the people to perform the fasting in these auspicious days. These fastings, as psychologists observe, have changed the life-style of the people of Odisha. Their behavioural pattern, attitudes, beliefs and values have undergone change by fasting. Now, of course, many people are observing 'fasting' not for the sake of religious practices or for performing religious rites and rituals but for 'dieting' purposes.

Thus conceived, the Baladev cult has cast its spell on the politico-socio-economic and religious spheres in Odisha. It has reduced the rigidity of the caste system to a great extent by diluting the caste system through its famous car festival. This cult has tried to bind the people in the rope of love, amity and fraternity. Its universalism has been widely accepted and applauded by the people. Being a synthesis in itself, it has tried to bring social harmony. Odishan culture has been greater due to the influence of Baladev Cult.

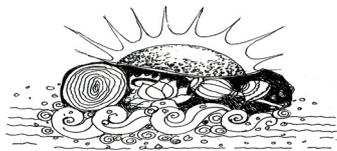


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23. S.C.Mohapatra, 'Socialism in Jagannath Culture', *Orissa Review*, June-July, 2007, p.35.
24. For detail, *vide, supra*, Ch.II.
25. 'Khechudi' is boiled rice with turmeric, *Vesara and Mahura* are curries offered to the gods in the temple.
26. Rasabali is a special bhoga of the Baladevjew temple which is very famous in the nook and corner of Odisha.
27. T.Mahapatra, 'Fasting': Its Socio-Religious Significance in Orissa', N.R.Pattnaik, op.cit., p.87.

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## The Importance of Twenty Two Steps in Jagannath Temple

*Prabhat Kumar Nanda*

Twenty two steps popularly known as 'Baaishe Pahaach' made of stone are existing inside the Jagannaath temple complex. Such steps are available at the Lion's gate or Singhadwara of the temple. A devotee after crossing Aruna Sthambha enters the temple through Singhadwara on the eastern side. A small enclosure named as Gumuta exists in between the main entrance gate and twenty two steps. Such steps are present from Meghanada wall i.e. outer parameter wall of the temple to inner wall. The other name of Jagannath temple is Neela Shaila i.e. Blue Hill. The sanctum sanctorum of the temple exists at the top of the hill. Hence one will have to climb the steps from the grand road to the peak of the hill i.e. abode of Lord Jagannath. The importance of twenty two steps can be analysed from religious and historical points of view.

Scholars of religion depicted twenty two steps as fourteen Bhubanas i.e. planets and eight

Brahamanda i.e. cluster of planets and universes. It is believed that Lord Jagannath is the epitome of Lord Bishnu. Hindu Religion believes in the existence of thirty three crores of Gods and Goddesses. Such Gods and Goddesses remain in different planets and universes. Whereas Lord

Bishnu stays at the top of the above spheres. Hence scholars opine that, after visiting all the planets and universes as twentytwo in number, a devotee attains the salvation or Moksha and becomes eligible to enter Baikuntha, the abode of Lakshmee Narayana.



Another school of thought believes in twenty two types of weaknesses in human character. After controlling and suppressing twenty two weaknesses, a person elevates himself to the status to be united with the God. Twenty two steps in Lord Jagannaath temple represent twenty two weaknesses of human character or human life. After crushing twenty two evils by feet a man empowers himself to visit Lord



Jagannath. Twenty two steps are existing in two phases. Twenty steps are available from Singhadwara to Kurmabedha where as remaining two steps are existing towards the northern side leading to Ananda Bazaar i.e place for sale and partaking of cooked food (Maha Prasad).

The size of twenty-two steps are not equal. Steps leading from Singhadwara to Kurmabedha are of forty ft. in length and five ft. to ten ft. in breadth. Steps were constructed by stone available in Odisha as popularly classified as Baulamala or Kunda. The height of each step is six inches to seven inches. Eighteenth step has longest width of fifteen ft.

Nineteenth and twentieth steps are semicircular in design whereas other steps are in rectangular shape.

On the southern side of third step, the temple of Kasi Biswanath is existing in a miniature form. Lord Siba was penalized by Lord Bishnu to have an un-important position in the Jagannath temple in Kaliyuga, as he did not share the leftover food of Lord Bishnu after being collected from monk Narada. The details of the popular story is related to Maha Prasad.

Twentytwo long steps available inside the Jagannaath temple are also the place to take rest by the devotees. People believe that to get rid of diseases of children, parents pray Lord Jagannaath for early cure and promise before Him to bring their children to twenty-two steps and roll them on such steps. Now even hundreds of children of different parts of the country are brought to

Jagannath temple by their parents for rolling on twentytwo steps as a sign of gratitude to Lord Jagannath after being saved from the evil effects of diseases.

The tenth step is considered as very important from religious point of view. In Hindu religion 'Shraddha' i.e. presentation of offerings to forefathers, is one of the most sacred rites. It is believed that on the day of death anniversary of father, the family members pay their gratification received from their parents and fore-fathers. Such annual rite can be organized in the residence of a person or in any temple. The organization of Shraddha in Jagannath temple is considered as the most important rite and it is believed that all the offerings in shape of food etc. dedicated to forefathers are received by them directly without any hindrance. Such religious rite is held on the tenth step by the priests of the temple. A specific place is available at a corner of tenth step to place offerings after the religious rite of Shraddha. It is also interesting to mention here that, Lord Jagannath also offers Shraddha in favour of King Indradyumna and queen Gundicha on twentytwo steps.

As per the followers of Lord Shiba popularly known as Saivites, Lord Biswanath Mahadeb is the presiding deity of twentytwo steps. As per them, Lord Biswanath Mahadeb controls and supervises the action of twenty two yoginees i.e. representatives of Goddess Maha Kalee. Yoginees, as literally known as she-monks and maneuvers different activities of the nature.



Such Yoginees are named a Teebra, Kumudbatee, Mandaa, Chandobatee, Dayatbatee, Ranjaneer, Ratikaa, Roudraa, Krodhaa, Badrikaa, Prasaarinee, Brati, Marjaneer, Kshati, Raktaa, Sandipaneer, Aajapaaneer, Madantee, Rohineer, Ramyaa, Ugra and Kshorineer. It is believed that above fourteen yoginees diminish the ego, evil nature and negative pride of devotees while proceeding towards sanctum sanctorum to make them eligible to appear before Lord Jagannath. In Shaivism, control on sensual activities and unconditional dedication to God are considered as primary phase of attaining the phase of Yogi or Yoginee.

A small temple of Shree Ram and Seeta also exists on the southern side of twenty two steps. Now the temple Police Station is also operating near nineteenth and twentieth steps. People of Odisha have an emotional attachment to twenty two steps as most religious and sacred in nature. Such steps remove all evils from human lives and paves the path of prospects of life in future. While climbing such steps most of the devotees touch their hands and heads on each of the steps. Twentytwo steps even described in Odia literature as the steps of un-matched virtues of the universe. Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Sudarshan are brought in procession as popularly known as Pahandi Bije on twenty two steps while leaving the grand temple and placed in chariots on grand road during car festival. The idols also return back to the grand temple during Niladri Bije on such

twenty two steps after nine days of journey to Gundicha temple.

While returning from Gundicha temple to grand temple, Goddess Lakshmi permits Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra to enter the temple and restricts Lord Jagannath. Goddess Lakshmi expresses Her anguish as Lord Jagannath being husband has forgotten to take His wife Goddess Lakshmi during the journey of Car Festival. Lord Jagannath presents Rasagola, a special sweet dish made of cheese to Goddess Lakshmi and requests her to excuse Him. Then Goddess Lakshmi permits Lord Jagannath to enter into the temple. The above episode with the dramatic conversation of two groups of priests representing Lord Jagannath and Goddess Lakshmi is held every year depicting the emotion of a wife towards action of the husband.

Taking the above episode into consideration, twentytwo steps of Jagannath temple are very famous from religious and emotional point of view embodied with the hearty attachment and respect of devotees to Lord Jagannath.

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## Influence of Tantra in the Rituals of Shree Jagannath

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Shree Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe is worshipped in the form of *Daru Devata* (wooden-incarnation) in *Shreemandir* of *Nilachal Dham (Puri)*. He is world famous as *Daru Brahma*. In the body of the deity the *Brahma* (the mystic syllable of Om) is placed; so He is *Daru Brahma*. But people address Him in thousand names. Similarly followers of different religions have tried their best to establish *Jagannath* as their tutelary deity but still He is mysterious. No one is able to guess His beginning or end. His super human power is beyond any thought, belief and imagination. Yogis remaining in meditation for years together are not able to meet the almighty, Shree *Jagannath*. He is the paramount ruler and under His direction and will the whole world is governed. He is the source of all powers because *Brahma* is the only truth and the world is meaningless. (*Brahma Satyam, Jaganmithya*). *Brahma* is hand and legless but inspires all to move, without eyes sees everything and being earless listens to the supplication of the devotees. This has been narrated in *Swetaswetara Upanishad*,

“*Apanipadojavanagrahita  
Pashyatachakshuhsashrunotwakarnah  
Sabettibedyanatasyastibetta  
Tamahuragyampurushampuranam.*”



So the learned have accepted *Daru Brahma* as the *puranapurusha* (a progenitor, God) and worship Him with deep devotion.

Shree *Jagannath* is a symbolic deity. Hence He has become an easy accept for all religions. For Vedic Aryans He is *Bhu, Bhurva, Swah*, for Buddhist, Buddha, *Dharmo, Sangho*, for Yogis, *ida* (an artery supposed to run on the left side spinal cord), *pingala* (a particular tubular vessel of the body), *sushumna* (the name of an artery of the body), for *Shaibas, parvati, Shiva, Ganesh* and for the wise He is *Maha Laxmi, Maha Kali* and *Maha Saraswati*. In the Veda *Jagannath* is described as *chaturddhamurtti* (four fold incarnations) i.e. *Balabhadra, Subhadra, Jagannath* and weapon *Sudarshan*.



In *Bhagavadgita* Bhagavan Shree Krishna has narrated before Arjun,

“*Jejatha mam prapadyante,  
Tamstathaibabhajamyahm  
Mama batmranubartantemanushyaha,  
Parthasarbashah.*”

(In the way the devotees reciprocate me Partha, I also reciprocate in the same way, for people in all respect follow my path.) Hence, Shree Jagannath is above all religious concept.

Originally the name of *Jagannath* is not mentioned in the Vedas but mentioned in the Tantric scriptures. Moreover the system of idol worship is not there during the Vedic age, though the names of many Gods are mentioned in it. They are worshipped only through *Jajna* (a religious offering). But in tantric method of worship an image is very much essential. Hence the tradition of idol worship in *Shreemandir* is nothing but a tantric method. It is also pertinent to mention that not only now but also long time ago Indian religious concept has been dependant on two cultures i.e. Nigam (the Vedic) and Agama (Tantric). Shree *Jagannath* is the tantric deity, although different scholars have made an attempt to establish Him of the religion and culture of *Shavara*, *Vedic*, *Brahmanya*, *Buddhism* and *Jainism*. The side deities, system of their worship in *Jagannath* temple are the clear symbol of the tantric concept.

Shree *Jagannath* is worshipped on *Vairava* Chakra and known as *Vairav*. The offering to Him is *Mahaprasad*. It is also a tantric

word. Among its other synonymous words, *Nirmalya* and *Kaivalya* are familiar ones. According to the tantric doctrine *Asta Shakti* (eight powers) safeguard the religious centre. Same is also marked in *Jagannath* temple. *Mangala*, *Vimala*, *Sarva Mangala*, *Ardhashosini*, *Alamchandi*, *Kalaratri*, *Marichika*, *Chandarupa* are the eight powers placed in the south east, west, north west, north, north east, south, east and south west direction respectively of *Jagannath* temple. *Kapalamochana*, *Jameswar*, *Isaneswar*, *Markandeswar*, *Bileswar*, *Nilakantha*, *Bateswar* and *Mahesha (Loknath)* are the eight *Rudras* protecting the temple. *Jagannath* is regarded as *Vairav* and *Vimala* the *Vairavi*. The paintings of *Dasha Maha Vidya*, *Vagadarshini*, *Chhaya Maya* and *Kali* in *Vimala* temple are the Tantric Devis. In temple enclosure and outside images of many tantric side deities are displayed. Just like a *tantric* deity on a *Yantra* (an implement), *Balavadra*, *Shuvadra* and *Jagannath* are inhered on the *Tara*, *Bhubaneswari* and *Shyama Yantra* respectively, inscribed on *Ratna Singhasan*.

*Bamachar* method of tantric worship is narrated in the ritual of Shree *Jagannath*. Accordingly *Pancha Ma Kara* (fine objects used in tantric worship) such as wine, fish, meat, *maithuna* (sexual union) and *mudra* (gesture) are offered to the deity. Indirectly it is also observed in the worship of *Jagannath*. Nutmeg juice and coconut water in bell metal plate, *Birhi* (a kind of pulse)-cake, ginger, raw sugar, half naked dance



of *devadasi* and *yoni mudra* exhibition are the symbol of *Pancha Ma Kara* that are offered to *Jagannath*. *Mendha Mundia Khechudi* (a hotchpotch of rice and spices) is used in the adoration of the deity in the specific *Thali* (metal plate). Some are in the opinion that in the past the head of sheep has been offered to *Jagannath*. All the above facts justify that tantric concept in the temple service are pre-eminent. Similarly the most important ritual, *Navakalevar* is also influenced by the same concept.

*Navakalevar* (the periodical renewal of the wooden body-divine of the deities) is the most important ritual in *Jagannath* culture. As per Hindu religious tradition the same ritual is observed in *Joda Ashadha* (a joint third Indian month, June-July), usually called *Malamasa* (an intercalary month)/*Adhimasa* (an excess month). Generally, in between two *Sankrantis* (the passage of sun from one zodiac sign to another/ the first day of Indian month) if double *Amabasyas* (the day of the new moon) fall, then it is accepted as the intercalary month. The same month is narrated in Hindu scriptures as *Purusottama* month. The intercalary month is determined as per astrological calculation, based on the movement of the Moon. The Moon takes 27 days 7 hours and 43 minutes for revolving once in the zodiac. By that time the sun also revolves in the same. Hence for the meeting of the both, the Moon takes approximately 29 and 1/2 days. As per the solar demonstrated calculation after 2 years, 8 months, 16 days and 16 *Danda* (6 hours and 24 minutes), the lunar month is of four fortnights instead of two.

Only Indian joint 3<sup>rd</sup> month *Ashadha* is accepted for *Navakalevar* ritual. People in general are with the conception that it occurs in every 12 years is a wrong one. As per historical records joint *Ashadha* falls in 8, 11, 19 and 27 years difference. Last *Navakalevar* ritual has been observed in 1996 and after 19 years the same is performed in 2015.

*Navakalevar* ritual is deeply influenced by *Vaishnavism* but impact of tantric worship also plays an important role. The first phase of the said ritual is *Banajaga* and it begins from the tenth lunar day of bright fortnight in the 12<sup>th</sup> Indian month *Chaitra*. A group from the different classes of priests and servants attached to *Jagannath* temple like *Daita*, *Pati Mohapatra*, *Purohita*, *Viswakarma* (an epithet of the architect of gods), *Lenka*, *Kahalia* (a trumpeter) and some temple police start in a procession in quest of *Daru* for the construction of new deities. They take rest in *Jagannath Vallabha* math, and then proceed for *Deuli* math of *Kakatpur* situated by the bank of river *Prachi*. Once upon a time the same was the abode of *Mangala*. Later on a new temple is built and *Mangala* has been shifted to it. It is only a legendary belief. *Mangala* of *Kakatpur*, *Bhagabati-Banapur*, *Charchika-Banki*, *Sarala-Jhankada*, *Ramachandi-Konark*, *Harchandi-Brahmagiri*, *Alamchandi-Atharanala* and *Ugratar-Bhusandapur* are the eight pillar-powers that guard *Shreekshestra*. They are the tantric goddess. Among them the role of *Mangala* of *Kakatpur* in *Navakalevar* ritual is the most important one. Without her grace



the search of *Daru* is impossible. For her benediction the *Banajaga* team first moves to *Mangala* and completely surrender them before her. Then the worship of the goddess is performed in tantric process. After purification of the temple, the *Smarta* Brahmins recite ‘*Samputachandi*’ and other Brahmins pray her in *Swapnavati Mantra*. At the same time the *Daitas* completely surrender them to get the blessings of the goddess. Being pleased *Mangala* indicates the direction of *Darus*. Accordingly the *Banajaga* team proceeds and collects *Darus* for four deities after completion of all sorts of worship and traditions. Not only in *Mangala* temple but also in *Banajaga* near selected *Daru* tantric Mantras are recited and special sacrifice of pumpkin-gourd near it are some aspects of tantric system. After collection of *Darus* those are brought to *Shreemandir* through the north gate and kept in the *Daru Sala* (an edifice meant for construction of deities) at *Koili Baikuntha* (the rest abode of *Jagannath*) and worshipped daily. The graveyard is the most auspicious ground for tantric worship of *Chandi*. The tantric achieves perfection in satisfying *Devi Chandika* in the burial ground. Similarly *Koili Baikuntha* is the most sacred and holy place and selected for some important parts of *Navakalevar* ritual. It is situated at the outer circumference of *Jagannath* temple in the North-West direction. It is narrated in the *Smruti* scripture, “*Utaresarva Devata, utaresarvatirthani*” (all deities and all holy places in the north). So among nine abodes of *Vishnu* it is the famous one. The other eight are *Niladri Baikuntha*, *Purva Baikuntha*, *Paschima*

*Baikuntha*, *Patala Baikuntha*, *Leela Baikuntha*, *Brahma Baikuntha*, *Ananta Baikuntha* and *Naba Baikuntha*. *Kaivalya Baikuntha* is popularly known as *Koili Baikuntha*. *Baikuntha* is the abode of Lord *Vishnu* and *Koili* the degenerated word of *Kaivalya* that means the relinquishment of the organ of sense and sole existence of soul. During *Navakalevar* ritual the construction of new deities, consecration of *Brahma* in them and divine burial rituals of old images are performed in *Koili Baikuntha*. The old deities take heavenly rest. Hindu mythologies have described it as ‘*Golaka Vishram*’. All those rituals in *Koili Baikuntha* are related to tantric concept. Besides, during the consecration of deities, fish offering to *Dasha Digapal* in the North East corner of the consecration arbour are just like the tantric practice. After sacrifice of *Magura* and *Sheula* (kinds of fishes) the blood and fish are offer to eight powers, the *Varahi*, *Nrusinghi* and *Koumadi* etc. The effect of tantric concept in this ritual is also well imagined. More importantly the goddess in *Koili Baikuntha* is *Smashan Chandi* is none but a tantric *Devi*.

According to tantric concept water of unused *ghat* provides maximum result. After bathing in it and use of *Kurubeli* (a kind of sweet scented flower) helps in taming all. Similarly in the full moon day of the second Indian month *Jyestha* is the auspicious *Snana Purnima*. On the same day the famous *Snana Yatra* (bathing festival) of the deities is celebrated. The deities bathe in the water of *Suna Kua* and put on



*kurubeli*. According to *Navakalevar* ritual *Darus* kept in *koili Baikuntha* also bathe in four waterfull pots brought from the same well. The well *Suna Kua* is not used all along the year except in *Snana Yatra*. This festival is very much influenced by tantric concept. Besides those, Shree *Jagannath* is worshipped as *Kalika* (the goddess Kali). *Alaka* (ringlet on hair), *Nakuasi* (an ornament for nose) and, *Odhani* (veil on the face) and that *Jagannath* puts on during adoration as per tantric worship. So it is mentioned in tantric scripture -

“*Niladrau Shree Jagannath sakshyatdakhinakalika*”.

*Jagannath* is worshipped in *Gopalmantra*, *Bhubaneswari-mantra* and *Nrusinghatapini Mantra* are the clear symbol of tantric adoration. *Jagannath* is not the *Vedic* deity but now a day the *Vaishnavas* have tried to establish Him as their God but failed. From many angle it is justified to accept *Daru Brahma* as tantric deity. But by what tantric rituals the worship in *Shreemandir* is being influenced is yet to be ascertained. In due course of time the tantric concept in *Jagannath* culture has been reformed

and new stream of worship became customary. However the start of tantric system and the pioneer of it in *Jagannath* temple are still in darkness. As per the Holy Scripture -

“*Utkalenavideshcha Biraja Kshetramuchyate Bimalatma Mahadevi Jagannath vairavah*”.

Shree *Jagannath* never belongs to any religion. He is the assimilation of all community, all philosophy and all concepts. He is the deity of equality. All other Gods are glorious of their majesty. But for *Jagannath* the devotees recite,

“*Jagadanandakandayapranatatriharastha cha Nilachalanibasaya Jagannathayatenamah*”.

There ends all religious speculations related to *Daru Brahma Shree Jagannath*. The rituals in *Jagannath* culture are influenced by different religious thoughts but tantric concept in the rituals of Shree *Jagannath* is pre-eminent.

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## Ratha Yatra and Its Origin in Puri

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The Ratha Yatra of Jagannath, however, is recognized as the most famous of the twelve festivals. It is the second important Yatra of Lord Jagannath. It has become so famous that millions of people from India and abroad assemble at Puri every year to watch Lord Jagannath on this occasion with worship in their eyes. The Rig. Veda speaks of the Rathas that moved in the air. These were the three storeyed Rathas drawn by horses. Panini also refers to Ratha, while analyzing the word 'Rathastha, Rathaganak', etc. According to the Ramayana, the Ratha which is used in the games is called 'Pusya', while the Ratha employed by Gods is known as Marut. There is also descriptions of Ratha in Bhagavat, Mahabharat, Visnupurana, Kautilya-Arthasastra and Sukra Niti. The Buddhist Literature, especially, Lalita Vistara and Buddha-Carita also speaks of Ratha.

It has inspired Sanskrit and Odia poets to compose various works, of which Vasantotsava Kavyam of Haladhara Misra, Gundica Campu of

Bakrabak Chakrapani Pattanaik, Gundicotsava Varnanam of Bhagabat Brahma and Gundicha Vije of Brajanath Badajena deserve a special mention. Also, Narahari Panda in the 'Brahma Prakasika Tika' of Megha Dutam has successfully interpreted the theme with the Ratha Yatra of Lord Jagannath



in a good style. Ratha Yatra is celebrated at different places in Odisha, notably, at Puri. Konark holds a Ratha Yatra in honour of the Sun God, while every year is witnessed a similar festival of Lord Lingaraj. It may be presumed that the Ratha Yatra of Puri is existed anterior to the Ratha Yatra of Bhubaneswar. The popularity of the Ratha Yatra of Jagannath dates as far back as the Puranas.



The Brahma Purana, delineating the Yatra, highlights its unique significance. The Padma Purana and the Skanda Purana, also offer vivid descriptions of the festival. The references to the Ratha Yatra are found in Kapila Samhita. Some scholars opine that the Ratha Yatra owes its origin to Jainism. Some scholars have tried to link Ratha Yatra of Lord Jagannath with Buddhism as well. This Yatra at Puri begins on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the bright fortnight of Asadha. In the Hindu tradition, Asadha is esteemed as a sacred month, since Visnu sleeps on the eleventh day of the bright fortnight of this month.

Ratha Yatra is also known as Gundicha Yatra. Some critics maintain that the term 'Gundicha' has been derived from 'Gudisa', or 'Kundiya' which in term means 'Daru'. They argued that this word, in its present form, is used for Jagannath to suggest that He is 'Daru-Devata'. But according to an Odia legend, Gundicha was queen of King Indradyumna, who built this gigantic Temple. It is believed that the queen Gundicha requested the king to organize this festival, so that the sinners and the poor untouchables, who were not ordinarily allowed to enter the temple, might have Darshan of Lord Jagannath in His Ratha and thus attain salvation. Gundicha Yatra has been aptly named after queen Gundicha. Gundicha House is at a distance of a mile and a half from the Jagannath temple. Now-a-days it is known as by various names, such as, Gundicha Mandapa, Gundicha House, Janma Sthana (Birthplace), Janaka Puri and Mahavedi. Skanda Purana also speaks about Mahavedi or Gundicha Mandapa as the birthplace of Lord Jagannath. It was the place, where Indradyumna performed thousands of sacrifices. The images of three deities were made

at Mahavedi after the sacrifice, performed by Indradyumna. But when the God Nilamadhava was worshipped by the Savara, the Ratha Yatra of Lord was not known. It was only after the completion of the images the Ratha Yatra was organized to transport the deities to the temple. This legend was quite popular in the times of Puranas. It is also known as Nrsimha Ksetra. Jagannath assures Indradyumna in the Purushottama Mahatyma that he would come to stay for seven days at His birthplace, situated on the bank of Indradyumna Sara. Now we see the same Indradyumna Sara at Gundicha House. And the deities Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra come to this place once every year. Their journey commences on the second day of the bright part of the month of Asadha, and after staying here for seven days, they make their usual return journey to the temple on the ninth day. Dr. Benimadhab Padhi, the author of 'Daru Devata' remarks, 'in the beginning Jagannath was worshipped as the stem of a tree in Gundicha Mandapa. Then He was brought to the temple to be installed as the Trinity'. Thus, while suggesting the term 'Gundicha' to have been derived from the 'Savara' word 'Kundiya'. He seeks to prove the Savara origin of the Yatra. Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab suggests that the word Guidisa, in Telegu means a cottage. Incidentally, the word in this sense has not been used anywhere in literature, though some of the Puranas do refer to Gundicha Mandapa. Some says that Mandapa does not mean a cottage. Hence, we cannot accept that the word 'Gundicha', was derived from 'Gudisa' under Dravida influence.

The Ratha Yatra is the source of amusement all over the Universe. The rationalism

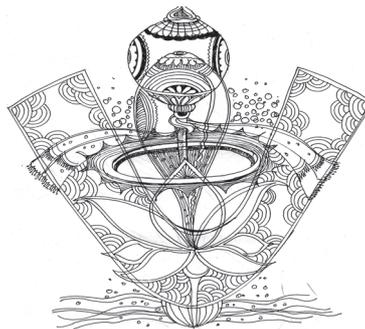


of the Ratha Yatra of Lord Jagannath, celebrated every year at Puri, is essentially to offer an opportunity to all people, regardless of their caste, creed, or religion, to have darshan of the Lords. The Ratha Yatra, unmistakably, is the symbol of equality among all beings. It makes no discrimination between the Brahmin and Chandala. The Lord here grants equal right to all. The king of Puri himself acts as a sweeper on this occasion, thus removing ego from the mind of the ordinary people. (It is stated that 'Chhera Panhara' was introduced at the time of Anangabhima Deva in the 12<sup>th</sup> century when Jagannath came to be regarded as a state deity and the King as His servant) The pulling of the Ratha is the most interesting feature of the festival. Thousands of people lay their hands on the sturdy ropes to draw the Rathas, while the entire atmosphere resounds with the sacred name Hari. In the course of their journey, the deities are offered only fruits and cakes. On reaching Gundicha temple, the three

Deities are put in 'Dasaavatara Vesa', and are worshipped in the form of 'Sodasaupachara' with all the modes of daily worship like 'Sandhya Alati', 'Sandhya Dhupa', 'Sarvanga' and 'Badasinghara'. On the day of Bahuda, the three deities, following the usual order, come to their respective chariots. On the twelfth day (Dwadasi), the deities once again go through 'Pahandi' to reach Their seats on the "Bejeweled Throne". With the re-entry of Lord Jagannath into the temple, concludes the Ratha Yatra of Lord Jagannath. The evil of untouchability disappears, at least during the time of the Ratha Yatra. In this context, the Puranas aver that anybody who has darshan of the Lord on the Ratha, goes to the 'Vaikuntha Bhuvana' of Hari.

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## Takki Khan and Shree Jagannath

*Dinabandhu Pradhan*

There was a big gathering of devotees in front of the Lions' Gate of the Grand Temple Puri. As it appeared, those people had come to Puri from some other State for Darshan of the Lord. Two pilgrims among them were calmly talking with each other. One was saying to the other, "Friend, do you know that Puri is the heaven on earth. The Grand Temple is adored as the Goloka-Baikuntha of Lord Narayana on earth. This way, Puri is known as the fourth pilgrim centre of the Hindus. There is a religious saying that one who dies at Puri and is cremated here will have a straight access to heaven."

The other pilgrim was listening to his friend wonder-struck. He added that he had heard those facts from his father and grandfather. Lord Jagannath is a Great God. He dwells here with Maa Laxmi. Lord Jagannath that way is the richest God of India. His store in the Temple is known

as "Akshaya Bhandar". It is full of ornaments and jewels. It is said in this connection that in the past, some merchants were invited to Puri by the then Administration of the Temple to assess the value of the jewels and precious stones of the Lord.

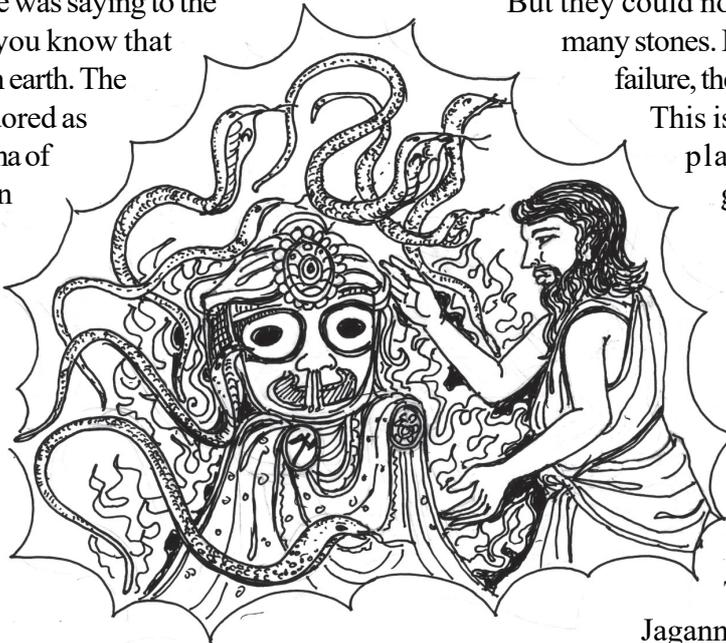
But they could not assess the value of many stones. Having admitted their failure, they had left the Temple.

This is the greatness of the place. This is the greatness of the Lord who is adored as the Lord of the universe.

It is also said that Shree Mahadev locally known as Shree Lokonath is the custodian of the

Temple of Lord Jagannath. He keeps steady watch over the Lord's store. He who unauthorizedly lifts anything from the Temple has the rigorous punishment of the Divine.

At a short distance away from the Lions' Gate was standing a person named Takki Khan. He had come to Puri and was staying in a private





house near the Grand Temple. He had actually come for a different purpose. He had no adoration for the Lord. He was listening to the discussion of the two pilgrims. He laughed at them hearing their discussion. He scoffed at their blind faith in the Lord. He said to himself, "The Lord about Whom the two pilgrims are talking is a mere piece of log. How can such a deity have any life or a sense of thinking ? Is it not ludicrous to believe that a person unauthorizedly taking anything from the Temple shall be visited by a sort of divine punishment ? Is it not bunkum"?

Takki Khan was a Muslim by birth. He had come to Puri with a different mission in his mind. He had his covetous eyes on the Ratna Bhandar of the Temple. His mission was to prepare an action-plan to commit theft in the Temple at a convenient time. He had picked up the language of the place. He was closely associated with the life-style of the people. He also looked like a Hindu youth. So none at Puri took him for a member of Islamic religion. Moreover, he had picked up friendship with many local people. He had given his identity to them as Takki.

Takki used to come to the Lions' Gate everyday. He talked with the 'Pandas' about the Temple and its Ratna Bhandar. His eyes had sparkled with a high ambition. He had heard from others about the Bhandar Ghar of the Lord. He had built many castles in the air when he heard that the Bhandar Ghar of the Lord had a big stock of expensive diamonds, stones and very costly ornaments.

One day, in the company of a Dhulia Gumasta of the Temple, he entered the premises of the Temple. The Temple police had no occasion to know him as a Muslim as he was accompanying a Dhulia Gumasta who had picked up friendship with him. The Dhulia Gumasta took him round all the important places of the Temple. When they came near the Garuda-pillar, the Dhulia Gumasta said to him, "Now you have come to the proper place of the Temple. You stand behind the Garuda-pillar and have a look at the Lord and the other Deities."

Obedying him, Takki stood behind the Garuda pillar and looked at the Lord and the other deities. Lo! Takki virtually trembled in deep surprise. His inner self was in a state of mortifying quiver. It was a situation which created in his mind a ruffled surge of extraordinary wonder. He thought to himself. "How fearful the deities appear to be"!

After some time Takki thought to himself. "Jagannath has another mystifying feature. The smile on his face is however the most glamorous feature of His Divine self. The devotees are therefore inwardly attracted towards Him."

Casually Takki wanted to know from the Dhulia Gumasta the location of the Bhandar Ghar of the Lord. The Gumasta showed him the place with all detailed information. The Gumasta further said, "Friend Takki, our Lord is not small. He is a very Big Lord of the universe. He is very powerful. He is said to be the Lord of all Lords. He has the most precious jewelry bedecked with the stones of a very superior quality. All these have been stored in the "Ratna Bhandar of the Temple."



Takki Khan was very keenly hearing everything about the Lord. In the name of paying his obeisance to the Lord, he was very carefully moving his eyes around the location of the Bhandar Ghar.

It was then the time of 'Sahanamela' (general Darshan) in the Temple. Takki availed of the opportunity and went inside the sanctum of the Temple and had a very close *darshan* of the deities. The Gumasta standing in front of the Divine Alter said to Takki, "Listen, my friend, the three main deities along with other Gods are seated on this altar known as Ratna Simhasan. Please have a look at the head of Lord Jagannath. The ornament you find at the top of His head is known as 'Chita'. It is bedecked with very expensive Jewels. Please see how they dazzle. You may see the same types of ornament on the heads of Balabhadra and Subhadra. You cannot look at them for more than a minute. Tears will come to your eyes.

Takki saw the ornaments, He could not believe his eyes.

Takki asked the Dhulia Gumasta, "Friend, the white stones in the Chitas appear to be glass-pieces. Are they actually Jewels? The Gumasta said, "yes, of course. They are Jewels. It is very difficult to assess their value. There are also diamonds on these ornaments".

Sometime after, Takki and the Dhulia Gumasta came out of the sanctum. Now, Takki was very much disturbed, in his mind. He felt very

restless. In fact, he was anxious to lift the Chitas from the three deities as quickly as possible. Since the security arrangements in the Temple were very elaborate, he could not instantly make out any plan. However, he noted all the details and at last returned to his house.

From that day onwards, he visited the Temple everyday. He collected all other details to simplify his mode of operation. He made out a plan to commit robbery on the Ratnasimhasana first.

A hoard of "Nitis" is followed in the Temple to perform the daily and periodic "Nitis" of the Temple. Of them, the most popular and fascinating 'Niti' was 'Badasimhar' and 'Pahuda' that are observed mostly in late night hours when the deities retire for divine slumber. The robes of the deities are changed at this period of time. And finally they retire for divine slumber and take rest in the usual way. The Temple is then closed for the night. Mostly the devotees living at Puri attend this divine ritual and return to their houses after this ritual.

Takki made out a plan to commit the intended robbery in the Temple in the late night hours after observance of the 'Niti' of 'Badasimhar' and 'Pahuda'. Takki used to visit the Temple at that period of time. But the mystery was that when Takki was present in the Temple, the 'Badasimhar' could not be observed in proper time. There was some reason or the other for which the 'Niti' was abnormally delayed. On some days, 'Badasinghar Niti' was not at all observed.



For such reason, Takki could not carry out his plan. He could not commit the intended robbery. He could not lift the “Chitas” from the deities. So in deep sorrow, he used to return to his house when he did not attend the Niti of ‘Badasimhar’. That was the mystery of the entire happening.

There was utter restlessness in the mind of Takki. He was soon exposed to severe illness. He was ultimately bed ridden. He could not go to the Temple on the subsequent days. He could not budge an inch from his bed because of the said illness. Lo and behold the mystery of the entire happening was beyond anybody’s comprehension. On the days of his illness, all the ‘Nitis’ of the Temple were however properly observed. There was no delay in observance of the Nitis of ‘Badasimhar’ or Pahuda. At long last, Takki was cured of his illness. He became entirely fit to embark upon his mission again. He re-started his strategy and set out on his plan. He used to regularly visit the Temple. Now, he noted in the Temple that the “Nitis” of the Temple were regularly observed. So he waited for an opportunity to hide himself somewhere in the Temple and commit the robbery when the Temple was empty of devotees and there was perfect quietude all around.

When gods cannot know the ‘Maya’ of the Lord, how can an insignificant person like Takki understand His divine deception? In this way, four to five days passed without any work done by Takki as planned out by him in this regard.

At last a chance came to Takki. One day, he entered the Temple with his plan. Somewhere at an exclusive corner of the Temple, he hid himself and remained there till the Temple was entirely cleared out. After the divine slumber of the deities, all the lights in the Temple were put off in the routine procedure. There was thus darkness on the Temple-premises all around. All the servitors after closing the gates including the main gate returned their homes. None could see Takki and the place he had hidden himself.

After all had left the Temple, Takki climbed the Ratna Singhasana. Although there was pitch darkness all around, the ‘Chitas’ of the deities looked very dazzling. The rays of the Chitas were piercing his eyes.

At first Takki extended his hands to take out the ‘Chita’ from the head of Lord Balabhadra. But he could not succeed in his attempt. He felt in the process of his action that hundreds of Snakes were moving out from the Lords head hissing fiercely to sting him on his head. He tried to see the face of the Lord. It was not possible as it was pitch dark inside. So he lighted the torches. He saw as if the snakes were rushing towards him. The deities were not seated on the divine Alter. And there was fire in the eyes of the snakes. He trembled in fear. He could no longer breathe. He shouted in excruciating pain. He cried for help.

The next day early in the morning when the servitors opened the main gate of the sanctum, they found to their utter surprise that Takki was lying on the floor senseless. When, by sprinkling water on his face, they made Takki sit on the floor,



and asked him how he was sleeping there, Takki said, "See the snakes. They are rushing towards me from the Lord's head to sting me to take away my life. Help me, help me, my friends."

The servitors were surprised. They could not believe their ears. Some of the servitors had known Takki, as he was a regular visitor to the Temple. They gave him water to drink. Takki did what they said. When he came to his normal sense, he was a different person then. He was blabbering like a mad man.

Takki was apprehended by the King's police. He was apprehended on the charge of robbery.

But when he was produced before the King, there was no concrete evidence against him. The charges could not be proved. Takki was at last set free and released.

After some days, Takki was found moving on the Grand Road like a mad man. The disease of Leprosy had gradually entered into the vital parts of his body. He was begging from door to door to eke out his livelihood.

One day Takki heard a person saying to another person, See this sinner. He had been arrested by the King's police on the ground of robbery. However, he was released as there was no concrete evidence. But before the providence, he was an established criminal. The fellow was

trying to commit robbery in the Temple. Can he do any such act in the abode of the Lord? See the man, how he is attacked by leprosy.

When Takki heard those aspersions, tears flowed down from his eyes.

He stood at a distance and with folded hands said to Lord Patitapaban, "Prabhu, I had heard many things about You. I had scoffed at the sayings of others. You are really very great, as people say. You are God of the Universe. You are all powerful. You are the Omnipresent Lord. You are aware of the language of the inner-self. I am actually a sinner. You are the Lord of all Lords. Forgive me, my great Lord. I may be exonerated of my sins.

Takki felt in his heart of hearts that Patitapabana was speaking to him, "Takki, come to me. I am waiting for you. It is enough that you have repented your mistakes. I have extended my hands to give you shelter irrespective of caste, creed and religion. I am everybody's God. I am Patitapabana. I also bring you under my shelter.

Takki saw in the broad eyes of Patitapabana a ray of atonement. Takki became a great follower of the Lord thereafter.

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## Twelve Festivals of Lord Jagannath

*Balabhadra Ghadai*

The grand temple of Lord Jagannath is famous for its unique ritualistic practices as well as various functions observed throughout the year. Traditionally, twelve months are fixed for Dwadasa Yatras or twelve festivals but in reality more than fifty six festivals are observed throughout the year.

**1. Snana Yatra:-** The annual cycle of the festival begins with Snana Yatra or Bathing Festival which falls on the full-moon day of Jyestha (May-June). The three deities along with Sudarsana and Madanmohan are brought out from the Garbhagruha (Sanctum Sanctorum) of the temple and taken in a traditional ritual procession called Pahandi and placed on the Snanabedi situated in the north-east corner of the Bahara Bedha (outer enclosure). The deities are bathed there with 108 pitchers of water from a well called Suna Kua (Golden well) near the Uttara Dwara (North gate), which is used once on this occasion.

After the bathing ceremony the deities are dressed like Ganesha (the Elephant God). At night, the deities return to the temple in a procession and again they are placed (except Madanamohan) in a place called Anasara Pindi. They remain there unexposed to the public view for a period of fifteen days. During this period, the servitors of a particular group known



as 'Daitapati' perform certain secret rituals of the deities. These rituals are called 'Anasarariti'. On Pratipadatithi i.e. the day before the Car Festival, the deities give 'Darshan' to thousands of eager devotees which is known as 'Navajauvana Darshan'. A special rite called Netrotsav (Festival for eyes) or Navayauvana (Festival of the new youth) takes place on this occasion. On this day onwards, the Car Festival actually starts till the deities return back to the Main Temple.

**2. Ratha Yatra:-** The world famous Ratha Yatra or Gundicha Yatra of Lord Jagannath is celebrated annually on the second day of the bright fortnight of Asadha (June-July). This Yatra being one of the much awaited Hindu festivals, attracts pilgrims from all over the world. On the Car Festival day, the deities are taken out of the temple and placed in their respective chariots, kept near the Simhadwara. In the three chariots



namely Taladhwaaja for Lord Balabhadra, Devadalana for Goddess Subhadra and Nandighosa for Lord Jagannath, all deities are carried to GundichaGhara located at a distance of about 3 kms from the temple. On the ninth day, i.e. return Car Festival day, the deities are brought to the Simhadwara area of the Jagannath Temple.

**3. Sayana Ekadashi:-** This festival takes place on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of bright Ashadha, when the deities are still in chariots in the Lion Gate after the Return Car Festival. On this occasion, the images of Vasudeva, Bhubaneswari and Narayan are taken to the chariots. After some rites are performed there, these images are taken to the 'Chamber of Slumber' for enjoying complete rest for four months. It is believed that Vishnu falls asleep in Ksheerasagara-cosmic ocean of milk on Seshanaga, the cosmic serpent. Thus, the day is also called Deva Shayani Ekadashi or Hari-Shayani Ekadashi. Vishnu finally awakens from his slumber four months later on Prabodhini Ekadashi, the eleventh day of bright fortnight in the Hindu month Kartika (October-November).

**4. Dakshinayana Yatra:-** This festival takes place on the day of Karkata Sankranti. Special rites are performed on this day as the Sun begins to move to the autumnal equinox.

**5. Uttarayana Yatra:-** In the temple of Lord Jagannath, Makara Sankranti is observed as Uttarayana Yatra. Astronomically, on this day the Sun starts moving towards northern hemisphere i.e. from the Zodiac sign of

Makara(Capricorn) to Karkata(Cancer). A special recipe of raw rice soaked in water the previous night and mixed with coconut gratings, clarified butter, spices and jaggery etc. (known as Makara Chula) is prepared and offered as Bhoga to Lord Jagannath. This is taken around Badadeula in a procession which is called 'Makar Bedha'.

**6. Parswaparivartana:-** This festival takes place on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight in the month of Bhadraba. The deities enjoying sleep change sides on this day.

**7. Hari Utthapana Ekadasi:-** This festival is observed on Kartika Sukla Ekadasi Tithi, i.e. 11<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight of Kartika (October-November). On this day, the deities rise from their slumber after enjoying a sleep for the four rainy months (Chaturmasya).

**8. Prabarana Sasthi / Odhana Sasthi:-** It is observed on the Sukla Pakhya Sasthi in the lunar month of Margasira (November-December). From this day Ghodalagi of the deities begins and the bodies of the deities are covered with colour woollen cloth specific for these days till Magha Sukla Panchami or Basanta Panchami i.e. the 5<sup>th</sup> day of bright Magha (January-February).

**9. Pushyabhiseka:-** On the Sukla Pakhya Purnami in the lunar month of Pausa, special attire of the deities is performed. The deities are dressed in Suna Besha (God attire) on the Ratnasimhasana. Since Lord Ramachandra's coronation ceremony was celebrated at Ayodhya on this day, this festival is also known as Ramabhiseka.



**10. Dola Yatra:-** The famous Dola Festival of the deities is celebrated from Phalguna Sukla Dasami Tithi i.e. the 10th day of the bright fortnight of Phalguna (February-March) upto Phalguna Purnami, i.e. the full-moon day. On Phalguna Purnami, the image of Lord Dolagobinda representing Jagannath Mahaprabhu along with Devi Lakshmi and Devi Saraswati are taken in a procession to a dias called DolaVedi located outside the main temple and special nitis are performed.

**11. Damanaka Chori (Dayana Lagi):-** On the 13th and 14th day of the bright fortnight in the month of Chaitra (April), the Damanaka Chori Festival is observed. On this occasion the deities, Rama and Krishna march in a procession to the flower garden, called Jagannath Vallabha Matha from where they steal the tender leaves of the Dayana. Next day these leaves are offered to deities in great solemnity.

**12. Chandan Yatra:-** The Chandan Yatra or the Sandal Festival lasting over 42 days, is an important festival next to the Car Festival and Snana Yatra. It is observed both inside and outside the temple. The part of the festival outside the temple is called Bahara Chandana or outer Chandana which lasts for 21 days and the festival inside the temple, the Bhitara Chandana or Inner Chandana is observed for another 21 days. Bahara Chandana starts from Akshaya Tritiya and construction of the Chariot for the annual Ratha Yatra Festival starts from this day. During the first 21 days, the representative idols of the main deities of the Jagannath Temple as well as

images of Lord Shiva from five Shiva temples known as Pancha Pandava are taken in a procession from the Simhadwara or the Lion's Gate of the temple to the Narendra Tirtha Tank on their respective Bimanas (Chariots carried on human shoulders). In the Narendra tank, the images play in two beautifully decorated and illuminated Chapas (boat houses) and worshipped. They are generally taken around the tank in these Chapas. Then they are carried to a house known as Chandana Ghara inside the tank, where they are bathed for some time in scented water. Thereafter, they are dressed and decorated and Bhoga or food offerings are made. Finally, second round of cruise takes place with the said Chapas and then the images return to the main temple. The last day of the first phase of the Chandana Yatra is called Bhaunri. Thousands of people enjoy this festival with great delight.

The second phase of 21 days known as Bhitara Chandana is celebrated inside the main temple. On this occasion the images are placed in brass pots containing water scented with sandalwood which are kept on a special platform called Jalakrida Mandapa i.e. water play platform. This is the platform on which the wedding of Krishna with Rukmini takes place during this period.

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## Krishna Jagannath

*Balakrushna Dash*

**D**aru otherwise means wood. Brahma to the mystic vivacity of the Lord Brahma is the truth of eternal. It is the cosmic cause and cosmic result of the Universe. It means ever expanding and endless. Thus Daru Brahma or Daru Devata is the supreme power of the Universe. We know Lord Jagannath and other three images seated on the Ratnasinghasan are made of wood. The wood is not any ordinary wood. It is neem-wood and neem-wood is also called Daru in the interior parts of Odisha.

Likewise the name Jagannath connotes the Lord of the Universe. The world usually covers different sects, races and religions as reflected in Lord Jagannath. It is needless to mention here that if one sees deeply he can see the four dominating colours of the four respective icons, that is black of Sri Jagannath, white of Sri Balabhadra, yellow of Devi Subhadra, and red of Sri Sudarsan, which represent the entire mankind all over the globe. Sri Jagannath is usually revered by all religions and appears before His devotees according to their faiths in the forms of Vishnu, Shiva, Buddha, Jina, Krishna, Rama, Shakti, Surya Ganapati, Jesus Mohammad and so on. He is regarded as the only God of the people throughout the world. His devotees come to see him without distinction of caste and creeds, haves and have-nots; whatever may be the

apotheosis; Lord Jagannath holds a unique place not only in the history of Odisha but also in the lives of common people. To the millions of Hindus of Odisha, He is their kith and kin Faraway some remote villages in Odisha on the occasion of marriage or in an important function in the family, the house-holder will never forget to first send a coconut, sacred threads smeared with turmeric paste and a small pot-full of dry-rice to Lord Jagannath as token of invitation, so that the Lord may be pleased to attend the ceremony to bless the occasion. Even today when faiths are giving way to misanthropy; this custom prevails in Odisha. He may be the Lord of the Universe the highest supreme deity, the Purusottam to the countless millions of Hindus, living in India and abroad but His relationship with Odisha and Odias is almost homely, humanly and overwhelming.

As per Skanda Purana Lord Jagannath is believed to be the Krishna himself as Sri





Krishna is regarded as the full incarnation of Mahavishnu or Brahma himself. With the end of Dwapar Yuga Lord Balaram (Sankarsan) and Lord Krishna left the World for their heavenly abode. Skanda Purana says King Indradyumna of Malva came to know the great God Nilamadhab the other shape of Sri Krishna from Vidyapati, one of his Brahmin Ministers who was sent to Udra Desa (Odisha). When he came and searched for the Lord he could not be able to get the trace of Him but heard a voice from the Heaven to perform Yajna, at the seashore to get the sacred tree having four branches, out of which he would get Lord Nilamadhab in the shape of Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra, Lord Jagannath and Chakra Sudarsan and to worship them constructing a great temple of paramount beauty at Nilachal. As such we see Lord Krishna as Lord Jagannath, Lord Balaram as Lord Balabhadra, goddess Yogmaya as Devi Subhadra and Chakra as Lord Sudarsan at Srikshetra, Puri on the Ratnasinghasana. But Madala Panji observes Nilamadhab became Jagannath subsequently and was worshipped originally alone. Devi Subhadra was subsequent addition upon the resurgence of Shaktism. At some point of time the figure of Lord Balabhadra was added to satisfy Saivas to the existing couple Lord Jagannath and Devi Subhadra. The discus Sudarshan was also a subsequent addition to satisfy the Ganapatyas and Sauras. This only has taken place over the process of Krishnization was well advanced and given the political importance of the cult after Chodagangadeva only under a special royal influence.

Unique and enigmatic are the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan without any parallel in any Hindu shrine. They are not built according to the injunctions in traditional Silpa Sastras. In fact there is no reference in traditional scriptures for the construction of images of gods and goddesses in wood. And thus the four fold images of Daru-Brahma stand apart of all the other icons in the temples situated even in the campus of the great Jagannath temple. They are all of traditional types by and large, human in form and built according to scriptural descriptions and injunctions. As per this strange descriptions; Chaturddhamurty or four fold deities is the centre of the Jagannath cult and has dominated the Odishan life, art and culture and in the sense it synthesizes all the major cults of India.

It is not out of place to mention here that Nilamadhab in his primitive shape is now being worshipped on the hilltop Brahmadrri or Brahmachal on the bank of river Mahanadi at Kantilo in Khandapada P.S. of Nayagada District.

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## Various Characters of Indradyumna in Scriptures

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The word Indradyumna is the combination of two words: 'Indra' and 'Dyumna'. Indra is placed in the first rank of Gods. He is said to be one of the sons of Kasyapa and Aditi. He is the Lord of Gods and the god of rain. The other meaning of Indra is a king or ruler, the first or best of any class or objects. The words 'Dyumna' means splendour, glory, lustre, energy, strength, power, wealth, property etc. Therefore, meaning of Indradyumna is glorious, energetic, and powerful like Indra.

By name Indradyumna so many characters appear in our scriptures as follows.

**Indradyumna I** – He was a Suryavamshi King of Ayodhya. He was the son of Sumati and grandson Bharata. Being advised by the sage Durbasa and Markandeya he went to Kotitirtha, on the bank of the river Narmada and performed a horse sacrifice there. Both the gods Vishnu and Shiva were pleased and blessed the king, (Skanda Purana, Reva Khanda 34/19-20)

**Indradyumna II** – He was the son of Tejas, a Dravidian king belonging to Pandya dynasty. Indradyumna in his old age became a true devotee of Vishnu and handed over governance of the kingdom to his sons. Then the king went to Malaya Mountain and performed penance there. Once upon a time when he was immersed in deep

meditation the sage Agastya approached there. Naturally, Indradyumna did not notice Agastya's arrival. Enraged at this the latter cursed Indrayumna and turned him into an elephant. Being told immediately about the curse by his followers Indrayumna sought redemption from the curse from Agastya himself. Redemption was granted thus: Indradyumna would roam in the forest for years as an elephant, as a devotee of Vishnu and he would attain salvation when Lord Vishnu would come down to the earth and patted the elephant on its back. Accordingly Indradyumna who was turned into an elephant roamed about in the forest for many years in the company of a herd of wild elephants. At last it arrived at Mount Trikuta. There was a lake on the banks of which sage Devala was engaged in penance. Huhu, the Gandharva had once come to this lake with a number of Apsara women and they indulged in amorous sports which Devala did not like. He cursed Huhu and turned him into a crocodile and the crocodile lived in the same lake.

Indradyumna, who was turned into an elephant, stepped into the lake to drink water when the crocodile caught hold of its hind leg. Neither does the elephant yield nor does the crocodile leave the former free. Their tug of war continued for thou thousand years. Finding no other way to save his life, the elephant prayed for



mercy of Vishnu. Its sincere prayers immediately moved Vishnu, who appeared in the scene killed the crocodile and saved the elephant. At once the elephant was transformed into Indradyumna and he attained Vaikuntha, the abode of Vishnu. (Bhagabata VIII Chapter 4/7-12)

A Malayalam verse summerises the above story as follows : Impelled by Agastya's Curse the elephant went to the lake at Mount Trikuta suffered for thousand years. As the crocodile which caught hold of its hind leg did not loosen its grip, Vishnu appeared on his vehicle Garuda, killed the crocodile using his discus (Chakra) and granted salvation to the elephant.

Since Sri Jagannath has been identified with Vishnu incidents connected with the life of latter is connected with Him.

Gajauddharana vasha takes place in Srimandira on Magha Purnima (the fullmoon day of Magha) to remind the incident of the past.

**Indradyumna III** - A sage named Indradyumna is mentioned in the list of saints who paid their homage to Yudhisthira during his forest life at Dwaitaban. (The Mahabharata Vanaparva, Chapter 26-Verse 22)

**Indradyumna IV** – King of Mithila and was the father of Rajarshi Janaka. (The Ramayana)

**Indradyumna V** – A certain king Indradyumna was contemporary with Srikrishna. It is known from the prayer of Arjuna that Srikrishna killed him (The Mahabharata- Vanaparva, Chapter 12, Verse 32)

**Indradyumna VI** - Indradyumna lived in Satyayuga in Malwa and was a devotee of Vishnu.

Being informed by Vidyapati the younger brother of the priest, he wanted to have a 'darshan' of Neelamadhav in Údradesha'. But when he reached there the Lord was then hidden under the sand. King disappointed at this was about to return. But he became determined to fast unto death at the Mount Neela, a celestial voice cried – 'Thos shalt see Him.' Being advised by Devarshi Narada the king performed one thousand horse sacrifices. He donated lakhs of cows to Brahmins as a part of sacrifice. Afterwards the king Indradyumna saw the shape of idols in his dream. The king informed about the dream to Narada. Narada consoled the king. Then the king came to know from his servants regarding floating of a 'daru' in Mahodadhi. The king brought the 'daru' and placed it on a platform. Then the king thought of constructing of idols. Meanwhile Sri Jagannath himself arrived as an old carpenter and made four idols within a fortnight. The king built a magnificent temple. He went to Brahmaloaka with Narada to invite Brahma for installation of the said temple. Brahma reached Purusottamakshetra, completed everything with sage Bharadwaja and other hermits. When the rituals in the temple were properly managed, king Indruadyumna handed over the charges to king Sweta and went to Brahmaloaka. (Skanda Purana, Purusottama Mahatmya).

In the Mahabharata, Vanaparva Chapter 199 there is a story about king Indradyumna's arrival on earth and his return to heaven again. Gods were unable to count the good deeds of the king properly. In their opinion the merits of his good deeds were exhausted. The merits or the result of his good and noble deeds having been



exhausted Indradymna descended from heaven to earth. The king was very sad and he wanted to prove his countless noble deeds on earth. At that time sage Markandeya was known for his eternal personality. The king approached sage Markandeya. But the sage was unable to recognize him. Then the king and sage went to Pravarakarna, an owl living on the top of the Himalayas. It also did not recognize the king. Then they went to Nadijangha, a stork very much older than the owl and living in the lake known as Indradymna. Nadijangha also could not recognize the king. In another part of the lake was living a tortoise called Akupara, who was older than Nadijangha. At last the king, the sage, Pravarakarna and Nadijangha approached Akupara. At this very sight Akupara recognized the king. Akupara told the sage Markandeya that Indradymna was a benevolent king who performed thousand horse sacrifices in which he gifted lakhs of cows and the lake Indradymna was formed by the passage of cows and sacrificial water in which he resides. Gods were watching Indradymna from beginning to end. When Gods came to know about the countless noble deeds of Indradymna they sent a divine *viman* for return of Indradymna to heaven. Indradymna returned to heaven and was welcomed by gods.

#### **Duti Indradymna or Abhinav Indradymna**

Gajapati Ram Chandra Dev-I (1567-1600) was given the title Duti Indradymna or Second Indradymna or Second Indradymna. Gajapati Maharaja Ram Chandra Dev-I was the founder of Bhoi dynasty and he reinstalled the four images of deities on the Ratnasinghasana of

Sri Jagannath Temple, Puri. It is said that the images had been burnt by fanatic Kalapahad after the occupation of Odisha by Afghans of Bengal in 1568. King Ramachandra Dev brought 'Brahmapadartha' (Divine Substance) from Kujangagarh and made four idols in which 'Brahmapadartha' was placed. The new images were installed for which the king was given the title "Duti Indradymna or Second Indradymna". Bisar Mohanty was appointed as the Gadanayak. According to the sources from Puri District Gazetteer sometime in 1596 he set the Neelachakra on the crest of Sri Jagannath Temple. It was during his rule Muktimandapa in Sri Jagannath Temple was renovated by Rani Gaora Devi, the wife of Mansingh in 1592.

Gajapati Ramachandra Dev reintroduced the Mahaprasad after a long gap of eight years which was offered to the deities near Ratna Singhasan and the same was distributed among the Brahmins, *santhas* and *sevayatas*.

All the saints and Brahmins accepted the Mahaprasad gladly and conferred the king the title of Duti Indradymna, and tied a Saree on the forehead of the king. It was really a very pleasant historic occasion (Madalapanji). The famous Car Festival was celebrated again for which devotees of Sri Jagannath were very much pleased with him.

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## Jagannath : A Unique Conception of Humanity

*Dr. Saroj Kumar Panda*

**H**umanity aims to achieve human welfare through benevolence, kindness, charity and love. It is the core of all religion, divested of its external appendages. By accepting the religion of humanity one does not prove disloyal to our own religion rather every religion may be said to be best followed when its adherent practices the religion of humanity in all its thoroughness. Jagannath, the Lord of universe symbolizes such unique example of humanity. The Brahma substance of Lord Jagannath is the matter of diverse views which are analyzed in the following article.

What is Brahma ? Why and how It has been kept secret inside the body of the Trinity in Srimandir ? Sarala Das, the 15<sup>th</sup> century Odia poet in his Mahabharat has described about the miracles of events and the story behind it. According to Sarala Mahabharat after the death of Sri Krishna His body was cremated in Dwaraka. But His heart portion remained unburned inspite of serious attempts to burn it. Then it was tied with branch of a banyan tree and thrown into the ocean. That branch with the lump of unburned flesh floated on and on till it reached the coast of Puri. Here it was taken up and with this heart inside, the image of Jagannath was made. Nobody has yet said whether the Brahma

substance of Jagannath is one or divided into three parts.

The tradition of Buddha's tooth also corroborated to the Brahma substance of Sri Jagannath. The 8<sup>th</sup> century king Indrabhuti of Uddiyana was a great Vajrayana tantric. He was the propounder of Sahajiya Buddhism which had great stronghold in Assam and Bengal. By 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century this sect gradually turned into Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Their followers had been calling themselves Nihilist Bauddhas. This group in course of time had great influence on the coastal Odisha particularly in Puri. So they called Jagannath as incarnation of Buddha and the Brahma substance inside Jagannath, the tooth of Buddha.

The third proposition is given by Pandit Nilakantha Das. According to him the Brahma substance is nothing but only some old pieces of wood said to be secured from the images burnt by Kalapahada in 1568 A.D. The legend goes like this. Just before the time Kalapahada came to Puri temple, the priests had secretly removed the images to Chilika coast and put them underground there. But somehow he got this news. He went to the coast of Chilika, unearthed the images, put them on the backs of elephants and



proceeded to the Ganges. There on the bank of the river Ganges he ordered a huge pyre to be prepared and put fire to the images. But before the images were fully burnt, he brought them out and threw into the river. Those remnants reached an Island in the river bed. A devotee known as Bisar Mohanty swam to the Island, rescued the remnants and proceeded to Kujanga with that substance. The Raja of Kujanga constructed temple and worshipped that. After consolidating his position Ramachandra Dev-1 sent men to Kujanga, brought the substance from there and put it into his newly constructed images.

These are three different opinions regarding the Brahma substance of Lord Jagannath. We accept it all. The Brahma substance of Jagannath has no parallel in the religious conception of humanity.

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## Lord Jagannatha

Lord Jagannatha .....  
does not move  
yet He is faster than wind  
what this seemingly  
contradictory statement means  
that the Lord being all-pervading  
is present everywhere  
so what need for Him  
to move anywhere  
and yet it is not that  
He is without the capacity  
to move if He so chooses  
nothing is beyond His capacity  
He is both omnipotent  
and omniscient



*Rajkishor Das*

He is far away and yet close by  
Says the Upanishad  
He is close to those  
whose minds are focused  
on Him .....  
But is far away from those  
who are attached  
to objects enjoyed  
by the senses .....

Rajkishor Das, At- Brundabanpur, Po-Parjang, Dist.-  
Dhenkanal-759120.



## Revelation of Lord Jagannath

*Parikshit Mishra*

The devotees believe Shri Jagannath, master of cosmos, is timeless and so is His worship since time immemorial after descent of man and growth of spiritual civilization. The composition of the oldest scripture Rig Veda written in form of hymns and verses was completed in 1200 BC in antiquated Sanskrit. The Vedas were transmitted from generation to generation through memory. This way it was kept alive in absence of writing materials or means of writing.

The exact time or period of appearance of Lord Jagannath seems speculative. Researchers believe that He was worshipped

before Vedic period (1500-1200 BC). Vedas were the oldest religious scriptures in the world. The seed of polytheism was sown in the Vedas. Take for example the Rig Veda, the first of the Vedas ever composed. Here Agni (Fire God), Indra (King of Gods), Varuna (God of Water) etc were eulogized for appeasement. This gave rise to multiplicity of gods and goddesses in Hindu pantheon.

Noted researcher Pt. Antaryami Mishra writes (in Utkal Prasang of 7/2003 P-16) that Purusottam Jagannath is the oldest god on earth (for that universe). He is adored at Nilachal along

Mahodadhi in the east. He is older than Buddhism, Jainism and tribal religions. Here Daru (tree or tree trunks) worship was prevalent much before composition of Rig Veda. Vedic interpreters could not determine the status of pre-Vedic Daru (holy wood) worship. The Aryan seers in later period, treated the Daru afloat in the sea as the well-spring of salvation or *nirvan* as the Daru god was





not made by any individual but self-revealed (Apaurus). Since aeons a super Daru (a huge trunk or holy wood) continued to be worshipped along eastern sea shore. A great civilization flourished. Where Sri Mandir stands erect that shrine is the oldest in the world. An un-Vedic civilization or religion grew in the sea shore in 500 BC.

Lord Jagannath is the sovereign god. He is the incarnator of different forms of Lord Visnu in different ages. As a corroboration Puri is the holy place of Dasabatar or ten incarnations.

The devotees believe that God existed before creation of time and space (what scientists call 'big bang') and will exist after the end of the universe ('big crunch') called by scientists. William Cowper (1731-1800) said, "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform". And in fact god, a single entity, is the mysterious supreme power from whom everything emanates and at long last, everything merges in Him.

All of supreme Lord's creation dies or merges in Him at the end of a *kalpa* and reemerges at the beginning of a *kalpa*. *Kalpa* is a huge period. Brahma's one day spans 430 million years on earth. A night also spans that much time. He lives one hundred years and that is counted as a *kalpa*. But Niladri Mahodaya extrapolates this way that amalgamation of four yugas is counted as a Mahayug. Seventy one Mahayug, added together, is called a Manwantara. The total is 4,320,000 years. Two thousand Manwantaras added together becomes a kalpa or 8640 million earth years. The epic Mahabharat is authored by sage Vyasa (500 BC)

highlights the bloody war between Kauravas and Pandavas who were cousins by relation to determine who would rule Hastinapur. The war didn't bode well. At long last either side met its end. That was in fact the handiwork of inscrutable and super soul Lord Krishna.

It is difficult to trace the origin of the self-revealed Lord Purusottam in Jagannath form from the plethora of written documents, books, research papers, epigraphs scattered in libraries and archives. Noted researcher Jagabandhu Padhi writes under "Puri, The land of Lord Visnu (Ref: 6)". "In fact it has to be accepted that by the time, the section of the great epic was composed the deity of Purusottam or Jagannath had not been installed at Puri in any form or in any name".

The Mahabharata was composed or compiled by sage Vyasa about 500 BC. Padhi further maintains, "But the system of worship which the Vaikhanasa Vaisnavas adopt during the present days, was not in practice in the ancient period when the Mahabharata was composed. There was no deity to be called either Purusottam or Madhav or Jagannath or by any other name. The form of worship comprised of Vedic fire oblation, chanting of mantras only, as was the practice for propitiating the gods during the Vedic period".

Not much is known about the status of Puri before 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. But the the scholars believe that Lord Visnu eternally ruled in Neela Saila or sacred blue hill. Puri was more known as a tirtha or a holy place of pilgrimage.



Sunil Kumar Patnaik writes in his research paper entitled “A study on Puri as Tirtha Kshetra”, “We believe that there must be somewhere in ancient Odisha, wood or tree worship, Daru Puja was in vogue at least up to 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD (Daru Devata, Beni Madhav Padhi (1964). Scholars like B.M. Padhi, S.N. Rajguru (1996) have focused Jagannath’s origin, again, in relation to the Sabar tribes of South Odisha. K.C. Mishra (1971), A. Eschmann (1978), came forward with the discovery of several peculiar relations between Jagannath culture and religious practice of the Konds in Dhenkanal/Talcher region of Odisha.”

Niladri Mahodayah gives out details of emergence of Daru after performance of slew of Aswamedha Yajna by king Indradyumna. Composed earlier Bamadev Samhita elaborates about the revelation of Lord Jagannath the similar way. But the origin is undated, shrouded in mystery. Pt. Nilakanth Das endeavoured to give Jain tinge to Lord Jagannath and His cult. He goes back to the period of worship of black-stone Nilamadhav. He writes, “This Jagannath, it appears, was there in the coast of Kalinga (present Odisha) as a piece of black-stone which was called Kalinga Jina or symbol of Jina in Kalinga. ×××× Hence Jagannath seems to have been the name of the neem wood god of Uddiyana, which god was in course of time to replace Nilamadhava at Puri. This Jagannath which had developed into Sankhya (or more fittingly its off-shoot, Yoga), Purusottam or the highest or the best Purusa became, in course of time, image of Neem-wood worshipped as Visnu of Puri”.

Nilakantha Das observed that Chodaganga Deva in the Puranas was non other than Indradyumna and saint Ramanuja was seer of gods Narada. During their period in place of idol called Savarinarayan four images made of neem wood replaced the old Nilamadhav idol.

Dr. Ramesh Pr. Mohapatra in his article “Kalinga Jina and the Evolution of Sri Jagannatha” quotes Nilakantha Das as follows: This Jagannatha it appears, was there in the coast of Kalinga (Present Odisha) as a piece of black stone which was called Kalinga Jina or symbol of Jina in Kalinga. Later on, it was somehow analysed and the analytic name Nilamadhava was given to it. Mohapatra further maintains, which is more of estimation than historical finds, put as under :

“We cannot trace the tradition of Jagannatha back to the days of Ashoka, but it is probable that it already existed in some form, no doubt in an un-Sanskritised form with the Hindu God Visnu.” It is a manifestation of the fact that Lord Jagannatha existed much before 300 BC.

Dr Prafulla Kumar Rath writes, “Sri Purusottam was Jagannatha and according to Visnu Dharma, by 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD he was Visnu or at least Krushna of Srimad Bhagabata worshipped in Odra”.

It strikes the minds of the devotees to know exactly when the wood triad or quartet were first worshipped on Ratnavedi or jewel altar. Historically Lord Nrusingha was worshipped in the temple as an incarnation. He was the fourth incarnation. It was a natural phenomenon. Like



the origin of our vast universe we keep thinking about the time of first appearance of Lord Jagannath and his siblings. Dr. Rath broached, “This temple has a few stone images under worship out of which Nrusingha is important. An image of Ganesh within an arch is placed by his side. Sudarsana, the post like figure, said to be representative of Jagannatha but worshipped along with the venerated triad used to visit this shrine on specified days of the year. Hence we get two indications here that (I) Kandu said to be worshipper of Purusottama was possibly worshipping his venerated god through Nrusingha and/or (II) Purusottam, the presiding deity of Puri who kept alive his association with the sage Kandu through visit of Sudarsana even after the consciousness changed to Jagannath consciousness or the worship of Jagannath triad.”

Professor Dr Yudhistir Khatua writes that after installation of Adi Nrusingha and performance of one thousand Aswamedha Yajna king Indradyumna dreamt of Daru afloat in the sea shore. He took help of Viswabasu and brought

the holy daru out of waters of the sea. Viswakarma, the carpenter of gods, none else, could carve four idols out of the Daru. Strangely Indradyumna saw only the idol of Nrusingha alone. Lord Brahma advised the king to pray as the idols made of the Daru were not ordinary idols. The king meditated and was stunned to see the four holy idols on the Ratnavedi or altar of gems, or most precious stones.

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## Narasimhanath Temple at Nuasasan : A Study on Art and Architecture

*Dr. Ratnakar Mohapatra*

### Introduction

The temple of Narasimhanath is situated at Nuasasana, a small village 7 kms far away from Pipili of Puri district. This temple is built in sandstones, locally called as *Kandapatharas*. It consists of three structures such as *vimana*, *jagamohana* and *natamandapa*. All the structures of the temple are erected on a plinth of 3 feet high and aligned in same axis. This temple faces to east. There is a raised platform of 2½ feet high erected in front of the *natamandapa*. According to the local tradition, the original or earlier temple of Lord Narasimha was constructed by Langula Narasimha Deva of Ganga dynasty. But Kalapahada, the converted Muslim invader, destroyed the earlier temple, which lies in ruined condition near about 300 meters distance from the present temple site. Thereafter the local landlord had constructed the present temple of Lord Narasimhanatha for public worship. This article attempts to highlight the detailed art and architecture of the temple of Narasimhanath.

### Art And Architecture of the Temple:

#### *Vimana:*

The *vimana* of the temple is a *pidha deula* and its height is about 32 feet from the



surface of the temple complex. It has four vertical parts such as *pistha* or plinth, *bada*, *gandi* and *mastaka*. The *pistha* is about 3 feet in height and it is devoid of decorative ornamentation. The base of the *bada* is square of 15 feet. The *bada* is *panchanga* type i.e. having five fold divisions viz. *pabhaga*, *talajangha*, *bandhana*, upper *jangha* and *baranda*. All the elements of the *bada* are completely plain.

#### *Parsvadevatas:*

The central niches of the three sides of the *bada* of *vimana* are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of Varaha, Narasimha and Trivikrama. The image of Varaha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern side. The four handed deity Varaha has been installed on the plain pedestal. He wears a long garland of beads, which



lies up to his knees. He holds a *chakra* in upper right hand, a hand of a female figure (possibly Lakshmi) in his lower right hand, conch in lower left hand and the uplifted upper left arm bears the image of Goddess Prithvi respectively. Garuda, the conventional mount of the deity is installed on the left side of the pedestal. A female figure is carved in standing posture on the right of the pedestal.

The image of Narasimha is the *parsvadevata* of the western side. The four handed image of Narasimha has been installed on the plain pedestal. He holds *chakra* in upper right hand, conch in upper left hand and the lower two hands of the deity are engaged to take out the entrails of Hiranya Kashyapu, the demon king. Garuda, the conventional mount of deity is installed on the right of the pedestal. A diminutive female figure is noticed in the left side of the pedestal. The deity wears a rosary which lies up to his knees. The neck of the deity is adorned with garland of beads.

Trivikrama is the *parsvadevata* of the northern side. The four handed image of Trivikrama has been installed on the plain pedestal. His right leg is firmly set on the pedestal and the left uplifted leg is touching the image of Brahma. He holds *chakra* in upper right hand, *padma* in lower right hand, conch in upper left hand and *gada* (mace) in lower left hand respectively. Diminutive figures of king Bali, Sukracharya and Vamana are depicted beneath the uplifted leg of deity.

The *gandi* of the *vimana* is a pyramidal superstructure and it consists of three flat shaped *pidhas*. Small *dopichha* lions are fixed in the corner of the recesses or *kanthis* between the *pidhas*. Small stones carved with amorous couples are also fixed in the *kanthis* between the *pidhas*. From the sculptural point of view, these figures do not attract visitors. The middle portion of the second *pidha* is projected with *jhapasimhas* in all sides. *Dopichha* lions are finely fixed on the top of the *kanika pagas* of the *gandi*. Garuda figures are inserted in the four cardinal directions of the *beki* above *rahas*.

The *mastaka* of the *vimana* consists of *beki*, *ghanta* (bell shaped member) above which there is another *beki*, *amalakasila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa*, *ayudha* (*chakra*) and *dhvaja*.

The sanctum preserves the image of Narasimha as the presiding deity of the temple. Besides the presiding deity, other images of Radha-Krishna, Siva, Salagrama, Durga are also worshipped in the sanctum. All the deities are installed on the *simhasana* of 2 feet high. The *simhasana* of the presiding deity is relieved with flower medallions, scroll works, full blown lotus devices, etc. The floor of the sanctum is covered with marbles.

The sanctum has one doorway towards the *jagamohana*. The base of the doorjamb is decorated with *khakhara mundis*. There is a painting of Vasudeva carrying child Krishna on his head finely depicted on the middle portion of the doorway lintel. Paintings of Jaya and Vijaya are depicted on either side of the doorway wall.



### **Jagamohana**

The *jagamohana* of the Narasimhanath temple is a *pidha deula* and its height is about 25 feet from the surface of the temple complex. It is also erected on the plinth of 3 feet high. The base of the *bada* is rectangular and it measures approximately 35 feet in length and 20 feet in width respectively. The *bada* of the *jagamohana* is *panchanga* type like the *bada* of the *vimana*. All the component parts of the *bada* are also devoid of decorative ornamentations.

The pyramidal superstructure is surmounted on the *bada* of the *jagamohana*. It consists of three flat shaped *pidhas*. The centre of the middle *pidha* is projected with *japasimhas* in the both northern and southern sides. But the centre of the middle *pidha* of the eastern side is projected with *gajakranta* motif (lion on crouching elephant)

The top of the upper *pidha* is crowned by a *mastaka*, which consists of *kalasa*, *ayudha* (*chakra*) and *dhvaja*.

Inner walls of the *jagamohana* are depicted with some paintings. The right side western wall is depicted with the paintings of Mahavira Hanumana, *bastraharana* scene of Lord Krishna and Narasimha figure. The Mahavira-Hanumana figure is depicted in the posture of carrying the Gandhamardana mountain. In the *bastraharana* scene, Krishna is depicted in seated posture among the branches of the Kadamba tree while the *Gopis* in folded hands in the water (of the river Yamuna) are requesting

Lord Krishna to return their dresses. The figure of Narasimha is painted in the *ugra* posture. The left side western inner wall is depicted with the paintings of Radha-Krishna *yugala* figures and Lakshmi-Narayan on Garuda. The southern side inner wall of the *jagamohana* is excellently depicted with the *Dasavatara* figures of Lord Vishnu. They are such as Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana or Trivikrama, Parsurama, Rama, Balarama, Budhha and Kalki. The *Gaja-udharana* scene of Lord Krishna is also depicted in the southern side inner wall of the *jagamohana*. The corner side of the western inner wall is depicted with the scene of *Anantasayee* Vishnu, who is surrounded by Lakshmi, Sarasvati and Brahma figures in their respective places. These pictures are executed in the traditional *Patta-style* paintings of Odisha.

There is a Garuda pillar of 5 feet high noticed at the centre of the floor of the *jagamohana*. The figure of Garuda is installed in kneeling posture on the top of the circular pillar. The *jagamohana* has three doorways, which are devoid of decorative ornamentations.

### **Natamandapa:**

The *natamandapa* of the temple is a *pidha deula* and its height is about 25 feet from the surface of the temple complex. The structure of the *natamandapa* is also erected on the plinth of 3 feet high. The *bada* wall of the *natamandapa* is *panchanga* type i.e. having five fold divisions such as *pabhaga*, *talajangha*, *bandhana*, upper *jangha* and *baranda*. All the elements of the *bada* are completely plain.



The *gandi* of the *natamandapa* is a pyramidal superstructure. It consists of 5 *pidhas* and each *pidha* is decorated with *tankus* in all sides. The centre of the middle *pidha* is projected with a *jhapasimha* on each side.

The *mastaka* of the *natamandapa* consists of *almalakasila*, *kalasa*, *ayudha (chakra)* and *dhvaja*.

The *natamandapa* has four doorways; one on each side. All the doorways of the *natamandapa* are devoid of decorative ornamentations. The architrave of the eastern side is carved with *chakras* and flower medallions. There is a raised platform of 2½ feet high erected in front of the *natamandapa*.

### Boundary Wall:

The temple complex is enclosed by a boundary wall of 9 feet high. It measures approximately 120 feet in length and 100 feet in width respectively. The boundary wall is entirely made of laterite.

### Entrance Porch:

The main entrance porch of the eastern side is a *pidha* order structure and its height is about 24 feet from the road level. This porch hall has usual elements of the Odishan *pidha deula*. The *bada* of the porch hall is *panchanga* type like the *bada* of *vimana*. All the components of the *bada* are plain. The pyramidal roof of the porch hall consists of five *pidhas* and each is decorated with *tankus* in all sides. The *mastaka* of the porch hall consists of usual elements of the Odishan *pidha deula*.

The doorway of the entrance porch is mostly undecorated. The *navagraha* figures are carved on the architrave about the doorway lintel. They are all in *padmasana* posture with usual attributes in hands.

Two huge *jhapasimhas* are installed on the both sides of the main entrance gate. They are acting as the gatekeepers of the temple. All the structures of the temple including entrance porch are thickly plastered with lime mortar.

### Date of the Temple:

On the basis of the architectural style and iconographic features of the sculptures, the construction period of the Narasimhanath temple can be tentatively assigned to the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Now this temple is being managed by a Committee of that village.

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## The Legend of Sadan, The Butcher

*Pramod Chandra Pattanayak*

There are abundant legends on the devotees of Lord Jagannath and the constellation of gods and goddesses worshipped within the enclave of the great temple complex of Jagannath at Puri. Each of these statues and their respective routine rituals are based on some legends or other. Many legends like Bandhu Mohanty, Dasia Bauri, milkmaid Manika, Salabega, Meerabai so on and so forth are very popular and found in scriptures. Yet some legends live in the minds of the people being transferred vocally from generation to generation and waiting to get an entry into the scripture, I suppose. Many of these are very popular. But some legends are though not so popular yet very very emotional and devotional in nature as well. As I have faith in vox populi, I trust the present piece may find its way to the scripture, if not yet placed.

Long long ago there was a butcher named Sadan. His profession was to kill and sell the products and byproducts of animals. Though low in birth, Sadan was pious by heart and maintained a high degree of morality in his profession. In addition to that he was an ardent devotee of Lord Jagannath. He took up his family profession

because he knew one thing "a man to thrive must keep alive." Thus he had to take his profession for livelihood. But he had his own dictum and philosophy of life.



As such he never swayed away from the path of morality in his activities, either in the profession or out of it. It was a regular practice of Sadan to attend the gathering of saints and sanyasis to listen their spiritual discussions and discourses. Thus he tried to enlighten himself.

Time rolled on. Sadan's life tossed between vocation and avocation. It so happened one day a saint was passing by the shop of Sadan. Per chance a piece of stone which Sadan was using in his balance for weighing the products while



selling, attracted the attention of the saint. Incidentally the saint recognized it to be a *salagram*. Though it was a stone only but worshipped as an image of Lord Vishnu by the Hindus and said to be a rarity and found rarely in the bed of river Ganduki. The saint couldn't tolerate the sight of the sacred stone in such a filthy background. So he asked Sadan whether he can spare the stone. Sadan spared it with pleasure thinking that he can use another stone instead. The saint felt relieved due to the fact that he could recover the sacred image from such a nasty environment and from the hands of a person of a low breed thereby doing a pious work done.

There is a saying "man thinks god laughs". The saint took the stone cleaned it. With all the abracadabra he worshipped the *salagram* in his *ashram*. The same night he had a dream in which Lord Vishnu appeared and appealed the saint not to separate him from his dear devotee, the butcher. Now the saint repented for his feelings while taking out the stone from the butcher. Early next morning the saint rushed to the butcher and returned the *salagram*. Sadan wanted to know the reason. The saint described in honest all that happened last night. Sadan was overwhelmed to hear the incident from the saint and the very moment he left his job and prepared himself for the bon voyage to Puri for the *Darshan* of Lord Jagannath.

Puri was too far from him and the mode of movement was only to walk to cover the distance. However, Sadan was young and energetic physically and determined mentally. As

such he set out to Puri for the *Darshan* of Lord Jagannath banking on his will power. He walked for days together and felt little tired. Indeed he needed little rest. The sun was setting down the other side of the hillock and his energy was coming down all time low. En route by the side of the road, he came across a small village. Sadan knocked at a door. The master of the house opened the door and knowing that the stranger wanted a little shelter, allowed him to come in and asked his wife to make arrangement for the dinner and a bed to sleep for the guest. Everything was done. Sadan went to sleep after the dinner. Then something unusual happened. While he was going to sleep, the young lady of the house being enchanted with the charming personality of young Sadan, approached him for *affaire d'amour*. But Sadan calmly and humbly refused the proposal addressing her as mother. Presuming that her husband might be the cause of the denial for her proposal, she took a hard decision and killed her husband. Again she came with a fresh proposal saying that she had killed her husband in order to remove the obstacle whatsoever for him to accept her proposal. But Sadan as stubborn as before didn't agree. This hurt her feminine ego for hurting which was at the stage of climax. The young lady now completely blind for the *affaire d'amour* attempted another devilish decision either to achieve her goal or to avenge on the guest. She shouted loudly. This also didn't have any change on Sadan but the neighbours heard the panic voice of the lady and rushed to the place to know the reason. Now failing her all attempts she made an evil plan and made allegation against sadan



that he killed her husband when she didn't agree to his proposal of affaire d'amour. This didn't have any change over Sadan. He was as composed as anything but the villagers took the statement of the lady to be true and caught hold of Sadan and produced him before the magistrate. The magistrate heard the case. Taking the fact to be not only true but also grievous the magistrate ordered to amputate both the hands of Sadan. Even then sadan didn't object or depose any argument to defend him. Order of ex cathedra was executed then and there. Sadan took it to be deo volente. He was then ruminating the divine characters like Rama et al who had also bad times and underwent spells of sorrows in their lives. On the other hand, he thanked Lord Jagannath for that the magistrate had ordered to amputate his hands not the legs. Had he ordered to amputate the legs which would have restricted the journey to his destination for the Darshan of Lord Jagannath. Here I am tempted to quote a stanza from A.W.Rider which I presume would be relevant.

*“Remember Rama wandering far  
Remember Nala's sinking star  
With Bali's bond Vishnu's tomb  
Lanka's monster Monarch's doom  
Pandu's forest borne disaster  
Knightly Arjuna dance master”*

The essence of the stanza is that perils do come to everybody's life even to celestial personalities mentioned above what to speak of human being. Days rolled on and the injury of Sadan was healing up. But Sadan could not wait

for the full recovery of his injury as he was too eager to have a Darshan of Lord Jagannath. So he resumed his journey to Puri.

In the meanwhile the cheap servitor (Bada Panda) of the temple had a dream one night in which Lord Jagannath asked him to make arrangement to welcome to one of his devotees who has lost his two hands coming for the Darshan within a few days. In obedience to the divine order Bada Panda arranged a beautiful palanquin with required fittings and fixtures and well decorated for the devotee to usher in to the temple. Bada Panda also instructed the juniors to be vigilant about the devotee, without two hands, in the outskirts of the city. One day a servitor of the temple informed the Bada Panda that they have seen a man without two hands and enchanting “Jai Jagannath, Jai Jagannath” near Atharanala. Bada Panda could know that person would be none other than the devotee of the Lord about whom he had received the divine order. Immediately he arranged for a grand welcome of the devotee. He himself found that the devotee had lost his two hands. The devotee was carried in the well decorated palanquin arranged for the purpose. Sadan was amazed to see such ovation and elaborate arrangement to welcome for a person of low birth and low profession. His palanquin was carried with all musical drums. Now Sadan became confirmed it to be the blessing of Lord Jagannath, being too excited started enchanting emotionally “Jai Jagannath, Jai Jagannath” by raising his stump of the cut hands. At this point he felt something miracle. He found that both the



amputated hands at right place. He could not believe his own eyes. Bada Panda and others were also surprised to see this miracle. Tears were rolling down from the eyes of Sadan out of joy and excitement.

Sadan was garlanded and ushered into the temple for his Darshan. Sadan became overwhelmed to see right in the front of him the trinity, in general and Lord Jagannath in particular. After his Darshan, arrangement was done for his shelter and rest in the night. Exhaustion of the long journey and the excitement of Darshan made him to slumber soon. While in deep sleep he dreamt Lord Jagannath standing before him and describing his last birth. He was a Brahmin by caste in Kashi in his last birth. The landlady who approached him for affair d'amour was a cow in her last birth while her husband was a butcher. Once the butcher while going to slay the cow somehow she escaped and he butcher was running after it to catch. Sadan was passing by the cow then and the caught hold of the cow in his both hands. Thus,

there was a curse upon him to carry on this birth by jure divino. But due to his dedicated and spiritual activities with high degree of morality in his daily life curse is webbed and he was added with the recovery of hands.

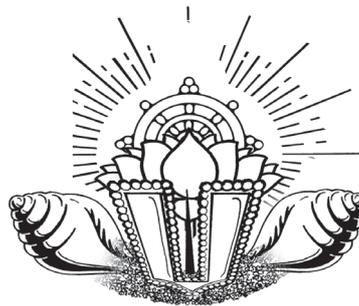
Sadan got up and found none. He tried to recapitulate the scene which he had seen a moment before and in his delirium state of mind. He rolled on his bed enchanting "Jai Jagannath , Jai Jagganath".

#### **Reference :**

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## Shree Jagannath Consciousness

Prof. A.V.P.R.Rao

The awareness of Self / Brahman as experienced by us at different stages of activities, like waking, dreaming and sound sleeping is called consciousness. The General Consciousness in the light of Shree Jagannath is referred to as Shree Jagannath Consciousness. We shall now discuss Mandukya Upanishad before we come to Shree Jagannath Consciousness.

Mandukya Upanishad says :

*“Sarvah etat Brahmamayamatma Brahma  
Swayamatma Catuspat”* (2nd Sloka)

(All this is surely Brahman. This self is Brahman.  
The self as It is possessed of four quarters)

Isa Upanishad also says :

*“Isa vasyam idam servam yat kim ca.  
Jagatyam jagat”* (1st Sloka)

(There is no place in this world where there is no self/ Brahman).

Brahman permeates through prakriti / Jagat. Brahman appears to be different at every stage because of ‘Maya’. Brahman, if pointed out directly and specifically is “Ayam atma Brahman”. It means self is Brahman.



The very self is signified by ‘Om’ and exists as higher and lower Brahman. It is chatuspat, possessed of four quarters as mentioned earlier.

Prajna connects outer world with inner Brahman. It is mass consciousness. It is threshold to other quarters, Viz. Viswa / Vaisvanara and Tajasa on the side of mundane world while it can absorb, “Turiya” on the inner self.

Prajna, if reached through the path of jnanam, is not bound by mind and vital force (Hiranya garbha) and hence it remains in its natural free state. We can coin this state as *yoga nidra* or divine sleep. It is contrary to deep sleep where self is enveloped in Maya. We are now discussing Prajna in its natural free state.



Mandukya Upanishad describes prajna as :

*“Esha sarveshwarah, Esha Sarvajya, Esha Antarjami Esha Yonih sarvesyahi prabhava-apyayau bhutanam”* (Sloka 6)

Prajna is the Lord of all and it is omniscient. He directs every thing, staying inside the heart. He is the sustainer of entire universe. He is the origin and also dissolution of all beings. Thus he is the Sarveswarah.

He is Purushotham as described in Bhagawad Gita. In chapter XV, it is said,

*“Na tad bhashyate surya  
Na Sasanka na parakash”.*

Prajan Brahman at this stage is said to in yoga nidra / Divine sleep) Sri Ranganath Swamy of famous Srirangam temple, at Srirangam on the banks of beautiful Kaveri river in Tamil Nadu is “Maha Vishnu” in the posture of divine sleep, carved on shining black stone. On Vaikunta Ekadasi Tithi the doors of sanctum sanctorum, commonly known as swarga dwaram (door) are opened in *brahma muhurtam* at early 4 0' clock in the morning when Sri Ranganath Swamy makes his divine presence before his devotees, waiting from midnight in a long queue for these auspicious moments to have a glance at him which is considered as *maha bhagyam* (blessed opportunity), taking one direct to Vishnu Lokam after one's demise.

Srirangam is an important one among one hundred and eight punya sthalas (sacred places) to be visited surely according to Vaishnavism.

During the waking state, one experiences external world with sense organs. It is full of activity. It is the cause and effect. Vedas say it is represented by right eye.

Tajjasa is also cause and effect and enjoys internal things within mind. Vaisvanara merges into Tajjasa and Tajjasa into deep sleep, known as 3rd quarter, Prajna state about which we have already discussed. The fourth quarter of consciousness is Turiya. Mandukya Upanishad describes it -

*“Nantah Prajna Na bahish prajna  
Na prajya ghanam.....”* (sloka 9).

Turiya is neither conscious of internal world nor external world, nor both the worlds, nor mass of consciousness nor unconsciousness. It is seer of every thing. It is inner witness (sakshibhutam).

‘Om’ is comprised of three letters ‘a’, ‘u’ and ‘m’ known as three quarters. The waking state, Vaisvanara is denoted by ‘a’. The second letter, ‘u’ indicates the dreaming state, Tajjasa. The third letter ‘m’ indicates *prajna*. It amounts to saying that Prajna state absorbs first two stages, Vaisvanara and Tajjasa. ‘There is a gap of silence between the end of one syllable ‘Om’ and beginning of second one. This gap is known as ‘Turiya’, the IVth quarter.

Turiya is partless ‘Om’. It is culmination of three states, viz, gross, dream and deep sleep. The knower of Brahman /Self enters into ‘Self’ by burning away third state of latency of creation,



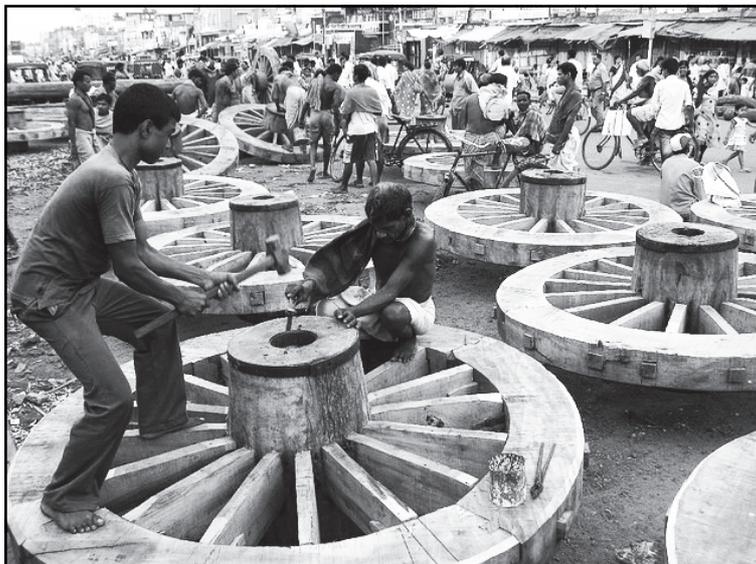
Prajnam state. This is Turiya State. So while practicing ‘Om’ with its meaning, there will be gradual merging of 1st quarter into 2nd one, 2nd into 3rd and 3rd merged completely into silence, i.e. Turiya.

It should be remembered that ‘Om’ is not ‘Self. But it is a vehicle to take individual ‘Self’ into ‘Self’ / Brahman.

Now let us discuss Shree Jagannath consciousness. Shree Jagannath temple and its idols — their shape and placement in sanctum sanctorum — the rituals and customs and having no bar for the idols being touched by anybody irrespective of caste, creed and faith all clearly reflect how Shree Jagannath / Brahman

permeates into our lives through different stages of consciousness.

The act of taking original idols of Lord Shree Jagannath, Shree Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra is famous and unique “Pahundi Yatra”, a classic example of its own and found nowhere in any Vaishnava temple, strikingly reminds you the practical demonstration how Self / Brahman diffuses into gross world, crossing different stages of consciousness. Similarly the idols, going back to sanctum sanctorum in return car festival seems to us as if 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarters of consciousness merge one another into Turiya state. Now Shree Jagannath is only Sakshibhuta or witness “whose vision can never be lost:” as Brahadaranyaka Upanishad pinpoints out.





## Avatara

Ramesh Chandra Dash

The Cosmic soul desired, “May I be many, may I be born. With this desire, he created all this-the Universe determined by the past activities and desires of the sentient beings of the previous cycle-

*‘Tadeikshata bahusyaam prajaayeyeti’- the Chandogya Upanishad.*

*‘Soakaamayata bahuhsyaam prajaayeyeti’- the Teittiriya Upanishad.*

The creation was possible as the desirous Cosmic soul created at once ‘Purusa’, the procreator, his first incarnation. The Purusa emanated from his body 16 raw materials like five delicate elements, ten senses and one mind, says the Bhagavata-

*“Jagruhe pourusam rupam bhagabanma hadaadibhiih,*

*Sambhutam sodasha kalamaadou lokasisrukshayaa.”*

Having created all these, the Lord entered into all with his consciousness as seed, witness and omniscience (Anatarjyami). He thus became both the manifest and the un-manifest, the defined and the undefined, the supported and the unsupported, the intelligent and unintelligent and both real and the unreal. Thus, from nonexistent was born what exists.



Three causes make the creation possible such as instrumental, raw material and common cause. Main instrumental cause was the lord himself while the second instrumental cause was the ‘Purusa’ that created everything taking all natural materials after agitating/ disturbing the equilibrium state of three modes of Nature. Thus, the Nature is the raw material while knowledge, philosophy, power, hands, directions, eternal time and five elements were common causes of the creation. However, the Mundak Upanishad holds the Cosmic soul as the sole cause of this creation-



*“Jathornnanaabhih srujate gruhnate cha jathaa  
pruthibyaamosadhayah sambhabanti,  
jathaa satah purusaat kesalomaani  
tathaa ksharaat sambhabatih bishwam.”*

It means, “As the spider brings out its web from within its own body and again takes it back within itself; vegetables grow on the earth and hair appears from the body of a living person; likewise, this world arises from the supreme being.” However, as the Purusa, part of the cosmic soul agitated the Nature/un-manifest cosmic energy; its three modes such as (goodness, purity/sattwic, passion, activity/rajas and ignorance, inertia/tamas) lose their steadiness. These three are distinct inherent principles or qualities of Nature as equanimity, activity and inertia respectively. They give birth to the Mahatattwa (Universal intelligence) as the first germination of the world-

*“Deibaat kshubhita dharminyaam swasyaam  
jonou parah pumaan, Aadhatta birjyam  
saasuta mahattattwam hiranmayam.”*

Then from Mahatattwa, grows Universal Ego (Ahankaar), five subtle elements (Tanmatras), five gross elements (Pancha bhutas), ten senses and mind. These 23 essences along with Prakriti endowed with three qualities and eternal time (Kaala) constitute 25 essences of this whole cosmos. So the Sankhya Sutra says

*“Sattwarajastamasaam saamyabasthaa  
prakrutih prakrutermaahan  
mahatoahankarat pancahtamaatraanyu  
bhayamindriyam  
panchatanmaatrebhyah shtulabhutaani  
purusa iti panchabimsharganah.”*

Thus, the creation was complete in two categories but ten stages-Natural category (six stages namely Mahatattwa, Ahankar, pancha tanmatras, panchabhutas, ten senses with their presiding deities and the mind) and integrated category (Four stages namely plants, animals and birds, human beings and divine element such as demigods, forefathers, divine musicians, demons, man eaters, angels, spirits, garland carriers etc.). However, Purusa (Soul), Prakriti (Nature), eternal time (Kaala) and cosmic soul (Paramatma) are immortal. They represent our four deities namely Balabhadra, Subhadra, Sudarshan and Jagannath. In this regard, the Swetasweta Upanishad says, “There is one unborn Nature of red, white and black colours (three modes), which gives birth to many creatures like itself. By her side lies one unborn male out of attachment for her while another male also unborn forsakes her after having enjoyed her-

*“Ajaamekaam lohita shuklkrushnaam  
bahwih prajaah srujamaanaam swarupaah,  
ajohyeko kupamaanoanushete jahatyenaam  
bhuktabhogaa majoanyah.”*

This statement clearly points to Prakriti, Purusa and Paramatma. While Prakriti and Purusa remain attached, Paramatma remain unattached. Look at another supplementing hymn of the same source

*“Dwaa suparnaa sayujaa sakhaayaa  
samaanam bruksham parisawajaate,  
tayoranyah pippalam swaadwattya  
nashnannanyo abhichaakashiti.”*

It means, two birds (soul and supreme soul) are always on the same tree both with



beautiful plumes and similar to each other. One of them eat fruits of the tree with relish while the other bird simply looks on without eating anything. Human body is the tree here.

However, a new creation comes into being in each 'Kalpa' (4320 million years). Then, how this God is like? The Bishnu Purana holds the Supreme Soul as the reservoir of six opulence namely all beauty, strength, fame, wealth, knowledge and renunciation-

*"Aishwarjyasya samagrasya dharmasya  
jashasah shriyah,  
Gyaana beiraagyayo scheiba sarnaam  
bhaga itiranaa."*

He is aware of creation, coming and going of all creatures and dissolution in addition to death, knowledge and ignorance, says this source-

*"Utpattim pralayam cheiba  
bhutaanaamaagatim gatim,  
Betti bidyaamabidyaam cha sa baachyo  
bhagabaaniti."*

The Veda reveals knowledge on this God. It says that the supreme being with his innumerable heads, eyes and legs pervades the whole of this universe and transcends even ten elements (Five subtle and five gross elements). That universal soul is absolute and perfect. This individual soul apparently finite is also absolute-perfect. Taking perfection of the supreme soul into account, it ever remains the same even when it becomes individual soul through illusion. It means the absolute nature of the Brahman persists even

when it takes the garb of the individual soul or universe by its mysterious power of Maya-

*"Om purnamadah purnamidam  
purnaatpurna mudachyate,  
Purnasya purnamaadaaya purnamebaa  
bashisyate."*

Thus, the Taittiriya Upanishad asks to know that Brahman as one from which all creatures are born, by which they live and into which they merge after dissolution-

*"Jato baa imaani bhutaani jaayante jena  
jaataani jibanti,  
kshat prayantyabhi sambishanti tad bijijna  
saswatad brahmeti."*

The source also discloses sage Bhrugu's identification of the Brahman with bliss. It says that all the senses like speech and mind turns away being unable to reach the Brahman-

*"Jato baacho nibarttante apryaapya  
manasaa saha,  
aanandam brahmano bidwaan na bibheti  
kutaschaneti."*

However, the lord created this world for His own pastime and activities. He first creates a divine point (Brahma Bindu) which was divided into three parts to emanate lord Brahmaa, Bishnu and Mahesh. Lord Brahma was directed to create the world by 16 essences as told earlier. Lord Brahmaa was sprouted sitting on a lotus from the navel of the cosmic soul. All the materials of creation were within this lotus. God himself was absorbed within it and became its innermost being.



Immediately, Lord Brahma came forth from the lotus and looked around. He was recognized as the first cosmic subtle being. He was not satisfied with to find the aforesaid creations. With a sacred mind, Brahma created four sages namely Sanak, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanata Kumar who disappointed him by not showing any intention for creation. With the mercy of the Supreme soul, now he created ten imaginary sons from parts of his body like mind, eye, face, ear, naval, hand, skin, vital energy, thumb and lap namely Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulah, Kratu, Bhrgu, Vasistha, Daksha and Narada. Sage Kadarma was born from his shade. Then the body of lord Brahma was divided into two parts giving birth to Swayambhub Manu and Satarupa, the first human couple. Sage Kadarma was married with Devahuti, daughter of Manu. Devahuti gave birth to nine twin daughters who were married with imaginary sons of Lord Brahma. Sage Bhrgu married Khyati, one of those daughters of Kadarma. Sage Marichi and Kala gave birth to sage Kashyap who is regarded as the real father of all creatures.

The Cosmic soul has 12 qualities like existence, consciousness, bliss, knowledge, oneness, undivided, resolved, unborn, inactive, hidden, infinite and self effulgent as described by Shankaracharya. He is shapeless and figureless but he takes three appearances-lord Brahma to create with rajas quality; Lord Bishnu to sustain and protect by Sattwic quality and lord Shiva to annihilate with tamas quality-

*“Aadaababhuchhatadruti rajasaaya sarge bishnuh sthitou kratupatirdwija dharmasetu, rudroapyayaaya tamasaa purusah sa aadya ityudbhabasthiti layaah satatam prajaasu.”*

If the Cosmic soul creates, sustains and dissolves the Universe as does a spider, what leads him to take incarnation? This intention is linked with his creation. His main creatures consist of aquatic, amphibian, animal, bird, human being, spiritual souls, and divinities. Sage Kashyap creature 13 kinds of creatures from his 13 spouses. The creatures needed food to exist in addition to already elements available. This responsibility was given to sage Bhrgu who meditated upon the cosmic soul to be blessed with a daughter for this purpose. Goddess Laxmi was born as his daughter with the name Bhargabi. As Khyati, spouse of sage Bhrgu gave shelter to demons, the enemies of divinities, lord Bishnu had to take her life force. This incident irritated the sage who cursed lord Bishnu to take births for at least seven times. At the beginning of each Kalpa, he would search for his spouse Laxmi and suffer from the pang of her separation. This mythological evidence forms the basis of avataras (Incarnation). Incarnations are many but always meant for the welfare of human beings says sage Jeimini-‘Sarbatthaa barttate lokahitaaya purushottamah.’ Purushottam Jagannath takes all incarnations with attributes though he is the only one God without attributes-

*“Deva deva Jagannath sarbarupa paraayana/Eka nirguna bhagabaana sagune bahudhaastathaa.”*



The mediums as divine, aquatic, amphibian, terrestrial beastly, feline man, dwarf, man with arm and sage are told in a pithy description-‘Mina kamatha sukara narahari vamaana parshurama rupadhari.’ Goddess Laxmi who stands for wealth, fortune, power and beauty is the deity for granting four pursuits of human life-virtue, material prosperity, hedonic love and liberation. So, goddess Laxmi takes incarnation along with the Lord each time-

*“Ebam jadaa Jagataswaami debadevo  
janaardana/ Avataaram karotyesaa tadaa  
shristatsa haayini.”*

Thus, goddess Laxmi incarnated in names such as Dakshina during Yajna *avatara*, Jayanti during Rushabha *avatara*, Archa during Pruthwu *avatara*, Padma or Kamala during Vamaana *avatara*, Bhumi or Dharini during Parshuram *avatara*, Sita during Rama *avatara* and Rukmini during Krushna *avatara*. She has 1000 names like that of Lord Bishnu.

The Bishnu Sahasranama reveals that the Super soul (Purushottam) only can take incarnations-

*‘Aneka rupa deityaantam namaami  
purushotaamam.’*

Since Sri Rama is taken as ‘Marjyada Purushottam’ (Most honoured for up-keeping human values) and Sri Krushna as ‘Lila Purushottam’ (Most honoured for glorious pastime), they are taken as sources of incarnations. The Hanumat Samhita, Rama Charita Manas and Sudarsan Samhita held Sri Rama as sources of ten incarnations-‘*Etesaa*

*mabataaraanaamabataari raghuttamah.*” The Sudarsan Samhita further reveals that his divine qualities are of lord Bishnu, benevolent vigour is that of Basudeva Krushna and asceticism is of Lord Shiva.

Noted poet Jayadeva sings that Sri Krushna holds ten incarnations-

*“Vedaanuddharate jaganti bahate bhugola  
muda bibhrate,  
Deityaan daaraayate balim jalayate kshatri  
kshayam kurbate,  
Poulastyam jayate halam chalayate  
kaarunya maatannate,  
Mlechhan mruchhayate dashaahruti krute  
krushnaaya tubhyam namah.”*

However, Lord Jagannath at Puri is the only deity worshipped as Purushottam in our country. Odia poets hold him with sixteen ‘kalaas’ and Sri Krushna taking one of it becomes full as learnt from the Upanishadas that the absolute nature of the Brahman persists even when it takes the garb of the individual soul-

*“Sri Jagannath sola kalaa ethu  
kalaaye Nandabalaa,  
kaalake sola kalaa hoi gheni  
janamile Gope jai”*

Odia poets namely Divakar Das and Balaram Das suggest that the super soul rests in ‘Niladri’ (Blue hill) and all incarnations go and come back to him. Thus *avatars* are meant for a specific time and purpose. We know about their pastime from the Puranas only-



“*Sarbadaa nilaadrire sthiti ethu sakala  
jaata honti,  
Samasta avataara maana jaata hoina pashe  
puna.*”- Vedanta sara Gupta Gita.

The Brahma Purana reveals that the supreme soul stays back in his own abode and dispatches a little part of him to take incarnation and care of virtue-‘*Swalpam senabati jorbyaam dharmasya kurute sthitim.*’ Both communicate at times of requirement. It returns soon after the particular objective is fulfilled-‘*Loka kaarjyaani krutwaa cha punah swaam prakrutika gataah.*’ But the Harivamsa suggests that these two equal parts do not keep any relationship during incarnation. One takes incarnation while the other part remains in abstract meditation (Joganidra) for any long period taking care of creation, sustenance and dissolution. There are six varieties of incarnation- partial (ansha), part of part (anshaansha), interposing (abesha of knowledge, power and stoical), Guna (Trideva taking three natural modes), Purna (complete), Paripurna (full and final). Another set suggests Lila (Pastime), Guna, Purusa and Yuga *avatara* to enforce worship and Yajna. The number of incarnation has no limit. He is divine both in birth and action. The Lord takes *avatara* whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice and a predominant rise in impiety. He thus delivers the pious men and wipe out the miscreants as well as to reestablish the principles of righteousness from time to time, declares Sri Krishna in the Gita. From the Valmiki Ramayan, we know the words of Sri Rama, “I will kill the cruel, wicked

and oppressive demons those are frightening the divinities, sages and human beings.”-‘*Hatwaa kruram duraadharsam devarsinaam bhayaabaham.*’ The Devi Bhagavat says-

“*Jadaa jadaa hi kaarjyeba  
bhabisyati duratyayam,  
karisyati pruthibyaam bei  
avatara tadaa hari,  
tirjyakaa jonyaa bithyaanyatra  
maanusaam tanumaasritah,  
daanabaanaam binaasham bei  
karisyati Janaardana.*”

“When the beautiful Universe is distressed with the absolutism of malefactors; then the ascetics and devotees take refuge at the feet of the omnipotent God. Out of pity, the Lord comes out in forms of bird, animal or human to subdue the criminals, save the righteous people and restore Dharma and maintain peace everywhere.” The objectives of avatars are many. Sometimes, He wants to display Himself before his creations like divinities, ascetics and devotees. He has no worldly desire but assumes a figure overcast with illusion as per his sweet will whenever situation demands. He comes down from his eternal abode to the world to help, save and honour the devotees like Dhruva, Prahallad, Droupadi, Gajendra and doe on their plaintive call in dangerous situations. He comes down to kill those who seem invincible consequent upon ill effects of boons. He refurbishes, delights, redeems human values and purifies heart and mind of human beings by incarnations. The Lord enlightens people by His divine pastimes. He glorifies



morality, modesty, love, affection, truthfulness, obedience and good administration as He did in Sri Rama *avatara*. He also liberates human beings who come in His contact in ways of desire, rage or enmity, fear, affection and amity-

*“Kaamam krodham bhayam snehameikyam  
souhruda mebacha,  
Nityam harou bidadhato jaanti  
tanmayataam hite.”*

Another important objective is that He takes human incarnation as He is not able to display human emotions with divinity. Man thus gets an idea of his magnanimity through communion. Common men prefer to worship personal God as they find difficulty in conceiving God, his appearance and form in heart. So for the benefit of worshippers, image of the cosmic soul was imagined-‘*Upasakaanaam kaarjyaartha brahmaro rupa kalpanaa*’, says Tapinyupanisad. The mind and senses of human beings get overwhelmed with His merciful, compassionate and protective smile, conversation and appearance. He preaches devotion, knowledge, fraternity, compassion and charity.

Lord Kapila incarnated to promulgate the Sankhya Darshan, Lord Vyasadeva incarnated to compose 18 Puranas, the Mahabharat and four Vedas.

Tulasi Das opines that the Lord takes incarnation to help the Brahmins, cattle and divinities. All these help people to renounce, weigh up the utility of spiritual knowledge and know secrets of Nature. Again, enlightenment for realization of self not mere protection is the primary intention of incarnations. The Hindus like to commune with Him as a kinsman. Common people become devotees by His contact. The Lord wipes out sorrows, ignorance and attachment depicting a pure life of devotion and sense of refuge. Happiness and prosperity prevail as soon as the Lord enters to the womb of his blessed mother. People give up self eulogy and practice to recall, chant and sing about God for deliverance from mundane life. Folk dance, song, culture take origin due to pastime of the Lord.

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Ramesh Chandra Dash, MIG-62, Udayagiri Vihar, Bhubaneswar.





## Sri Jagannatha- Bhairabi : Durga - Madhaba Kshetra

*Prafulla Chandra Mohanty*

Odisha is the land of spiritual and cultural monuments. The biggest religious cultural centre inside the state is Puri and it is famous for the shrine of Lord Jagannath. Jagannath Dham is one of the four important Dhams (centres) of India situated at the eastern part of our country. Jagannath Dham of Puri termed as Sankha Kshetra situated in a triangular land space looking like a coanch. It is also the Shreekshetra which signifies the place of Lakshmi, the spouse of Lord Jagannath, Who is well known as the Goddess of wealth. In Odisha, there are other Kshetras (centres/ places), like Arka Kshetra (place of Sun), at Konark, Tulsi Kshetra, at Kendrapara (Baldevjew temple), Sabar Shreekshetra –recently developed Jagannath temple of the tribals in Koraput, Saran SriKshetra at Marada (Ganjam), Saila Shreekshetra at Anugul and Durga-Madhaba Kshetra or Bhairabi Kshetra of Mantridi in South Odisha. Similar to this, there are also some other Kshetras, in and outside Odisha like Dakshina Kshetra (Jagannath Temple) at Chennai, Shree Kshetra at Delhi, Calcutta, Mumbai, Bangalore etc. In Bhagawat Geeta, Lord Srikrishna details about the Kshetra and Kshetrangya. Kshetra is the place where God of the Universe resides. Kshetra without Kshetrangya (God) is nowhere.



With the above background the article tries to give a brief description on ancient Bhairabi-Kshetra presently developed as Durga-Madhaba Kshetra situated in the sacred land of Mantridi area in Ganjam district of South Odisha. (established since 1999- 2000 year.) Maa Sri Siddha Bhairabi Kshetra is situated at a distance of 18 kms. to south east corner of Berhampur city on the side of N.H.-5. The Shaktipeeth is famous for the cult of Bhairaba- Bhairabi which believed to be present since 400 B.C.

Bhairabi Devi was worshipped as the Boudhatantra Devi. After Boudhayugo, the Brahma *upasana* came into existence and accordingly the Madhaba culture was spread. Madhaba *upasana* is seen everywhere in Odisha in the form of Radha-Madhaba, Rai-Damodar, Radha-Krishna worship generally in the month of Kartika. The Kartika Purana narrates the story of Lord Krishna, Narayan, Lakshmi, Jalandhara



the demon and Brundabati. Before the worship of 'Daru Image' of Lord Jagannath, only a blue stone was worshipped. The Utkal Khanda of Skanda Purana narrates that a blue stone or Nilakantamani was being worshipped near the Rohini Kunda. It is believed that this black stone is kept inside the wooden image of Jagannath as the Brahma. Similarly, the black stones are also worshipped under the name of Nilamadhab in different parts of Odisha and India. The Markendeya Puran has also a description on Madhaba. The Rupamadan furnishes twenty four names of Vishnu and the *ayudhas* (weapons) in His four hands. Madhaba holds Chakra (wheel) in upper right hand, Sankha (conch) in upper left hand, Padma (lotus) in lower left hand and Gada in the lower right hand.

The history of Madhaba worship (in Odisha) is traced, from the time of Vaishnavism

with its various manifestation of Vishnu. The epithet of Madhava was adopted by the rulers of Sailodbhava Dynasty. Nila- ma-dhaba (here Nila means blue or black i.e. nothingness, ma means mother i.e., the creation and Dhaba means the white-the embodiment of all colours- the oneness means the Supreme. The myth tells us that Jagannath is originally worshipped as a blue stone (Maha Nilamani) idol in the cave of a Blue Mountain (Neela Kandara). Viswavasu, a tribal chief was worshipping this stone, with a purpose of increasing fertility to earth, and well-beings to all of the universe. He was offering to the God, the natural flowers, fruits of the trees. In almost all ancient civilization, the cave worshipping is seen. The historians opine that the black or blue stone pieces are the salgrams worshipped as the living Vishnu, the Supreme God. Niladri Mohadaya relates that Saptada Murti (Seven God's images) worshipped on the Ratnavedi of Jagannath temple comprises Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra, Sudarsan, Bhudevi, Sridevi and Madhaba. This signifies the Madhaba cult and Madhaba of the Bhairabi Kshetra is thus justified after the establishment of Jagannath temple as-the unique Durga-Madhaba Kshetra. Durga-Madhab Kshetra has two important deities. One is the Goddess Bhairabi (the fifth incarnation of Durga), and the second one is the Jagannath (the Lord of the Universe). In Vaishnavism, earlier to Daru worship was the worshipping of idol made out of stone. In each and every Shakta Peetha a Vaishnava Bhairabi Kshetra will be there. Accordingly a Jagannath Temple was developed since 1982, as per the



verse goes like ‘Vimala Bhairabi yatra Jagannathstu Bhairab.’ The sacred shrine is situated at an ancient port town and trading centre Mantridi. The natural beauty of the location is very heart-touching and attractive. The Kalinga Sagar, i.e. the Bay of Bengal is only at a distance of two to three kilometers to the east. The wave-roaring sound of the sea in the night can create an eternal music of life in the ears of living being. The fragrance of the Bahuda river, its’ sacred sands, soil turns the visitor emotional. In the west, sky-high green Kerandi- mala mountains looks like pyramids and stands like fence linked (tailed) to the Eastern ghat of sacred legendary mountains of Mahendragiri. The very important river shrine Rushikulya, Bahuda the pious river shrine of mahabharatian age, the ancient fort ganj-i-am. panchama, the shrine of Lord Sri Ganesh, the Kalingan-palura mountains and the Chilka, the

largest lake of Asia is situated near to this Jagannath-Bhairabi Kshetra. These natural scenery increase thousand times the beauty of this shrine of Ma Bhairabi- Durga Madhaba Kshetra.

Spiritually, Mantridi is the place of Shaiva, Shakta, Vaisnava and Boudha religion. Uttareswar, Neelakantheswara, Kasiviswanatha, Enkenswara and Pataleswara Saiva temples are there in this area. Raghunatha, Balaji, Radhakanta Mathas remind the holy culture of Ayodha, Venkateswara of South India, Radha Krishna worshipping of Mathura, Srichaitanya Brundaban and Dwarika in western India. Mantridi is a place which connects South to North and East to West of India in religion and culture.

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Prafulla Chandra Mohanty, Sanskruti Sadan, Bayali (Mantridi), Ganjam-761008.





# Nabakalebara - Marketing Odisha to the World

*Dr. Manmath Nath Samantaray, Dr. Prakash Ch. Dash*

## INTRODUCTION

People have come across with lot of hoardings and bill boards on the way to Puri, Odisha. These have put many questions in mind and generate curiosity to know the details of the programme. Many times it has been tried to explore the possibility of image creation through this ritual. Is it sending some message to the community? Does it lead to image creation?

The Nabakalebara 2015 is a celebration of the ancient ritual of Nabakalebara associated with most of the Jagannath Temples when the images of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan are replaced with a new set of images; the last such festival of events was held in 1996. It is a festival, the period of which is chosen according to the Hindu calendar conforming to the astrological planetary positions. The festival during 2015 involves several schedules, and it has started from 23 March 2015 with Banajaga Yatra<sup>1</sup> and will conclude with Rathayatra followed by Sunabesa<sup>2</sup> on 27 July 2015, with many other rituals being held in between on specific dates. More than 5 million devotees are expected to participate in these rituals held in and around the temple complex of the Jagannath Temple, Puri, Odisha.

## NABAKALEBARA: BACKGROUND NOTE

The exact year of origin of when the ritual, Nabakalebara was started is not known. But on many occasions the deities had to be secretly buried or shifted from the temple when it was attacked by external forces. After the threat had passed, the images, though retrieved, had to be made anew and reinstalled. One such recorded event was in 1600 when king Yajati is reported to have conducted this ritual after he had retrieved the images from Sonpur where they had been buried during an attack by Muslim invaders. When the wooden statues were unearthed by the king he found them in a state of decay and therefore got new images carved and installed on altar of the temple.

Another version of the history is that after Muslims invaded Odisha, the iconoclasts had burnt the images on the coast. Even the Afghans defied the command of Akbar and had desecrated the Jagannath temple. Following this Man Singh had captured Odisha in 1578. However, Besara Mohanty, a Vaishnava wandering saint had gathered the charred remains of the image, known as "Brahma Padartha", and carried it to Kujang. Then, according to the



Jagannath temple chronicle sources, Ramachandra Deb, Raja of Khurda, took the sacred remains from Kujang and sanctified it within the new image of Jagannath.

Nabakalebara festival is a much bigger and of longer duration than the annual Ratha Yatra at Puri. According to Anncharlott Eschmann, it is a Sanskritized version of a tribal ritual of the Khond tribes. It is said that “prototypes” of this ceremony are practiced by the Kond.

The festival rituals are held over a long period of 65 days to replace the old images known as “Daru Brahma,” meaning Brahma (divine life force) in the shape of wood, of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Goddess Subhadra and Sudarshana, by new ones made of neem tree wood; the search for the appropriate neem Datu Brahma wood, its carriage to the carving site precedes the start of the Nabakalebara festival. It is begun in the Hindu calendar month of Chaitra Shukla Dashami (10th day of bright half of Lunar month) day.

The rituals are held when an Adhimasa<sup>3</sup> (intercalary month) of Ashadha (June/July). Such a rare occasion usually occurs once in 12 years, but the gap may range from eight to 19 years. In the 20th century, Nabakalebara was celebrated in 1912, 1931, 1950, 1969, 1977 and 1996. In the 21st century, the first Nabakalebara is being held for a period starting from 29 March 2015 and ending with Niladribije on 30 July 2015 as per schedule announced by the temple

administration. Lord Jagannath who is a central figure of the rituals is worshipped in the Jagannath Temple, Puri as the king of the Universe. He is hierarchically number one in the realm, while the Maharaja Gajapati of Puri holds the second position and is the chief servitor of the temple. The Maharaja would present gifts to Jagannath but also receive gifts from representatives of feudatory kings, and his jurisdiction extended to tribal areas. To the people of Puri, the gods took the unusual form of huge wooden stumps, since they had lived with the tribal people. While the king got the images deified in a Hindu temple after elaborate religious ceremonies of the Nabakalebara, its tribal incomplete form, called “virupa” was retained but encased with cloth and resin. As the images are made of wood, they would inevitably rot, similar to the human beings, and need replacement. It is this replacement which is performed with elaborate rituals called Nabakalebara. Navakalevara meaning “New Body or re-embodiment” is a composite of two words ‘Nava’ meaning “New” and ‘Kalevara’ meaning “Body”. It is only the body of the gods that is changed during the rituals as it would deteriorate with time but the Brahman or the “Brahmapadartha (soul-substance)” within the wooden body (called “Daru Brahma” or the “Prime-Soul enshrined in wood”) is transferred from the old images to the new through a secret religious rigmarole.

### THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign for Nabakalebar has started with some slew of measure by Govt. of



Odisha. The integrated marketing campaign undertaken was covered through all media and created a buzz around the media.

The state government has collaborated with Doordarshan for real-time broadcasting of the festival. The festival would also be shown live on a number of private television channels. The live streaming of the festival also had been planned to be available in a few Odia websites such as *www.incredibleorissa.com*.

The state government had provided the wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) service to the public at Puri. The Government has planned that the service would be available on the entire 3 km stretch between the Jagannath temple and Gundicha temple. Apart from helping the thousands of devotees planning to visit the city for Nabakalebar festival, it would also help in making the festival available to a global audience. Many travellers, especially foreigners, would also want to update their profiles on social networks with posts of the festival.

The link of the webcast was planned to be available on the Nabakalebar mobile app through which the smart phone users could see the proceedings live. The link would also be streamed on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook pages of the festival.

The details on events, rituals, maps, helpline numbers and various public utilities available during the event were being regularly posted on the social networking sites. To make its online presence more visible on the day of Rath

Yatra, the state government also conducted a quiz competition. Every hour, a question related to the festival would be asked on the Twitter page and a lucky winner would receive a goody bag from the Tourism Department. The contest was planned to begin at 8am and 12 questions would be asked throughout the day.

The aim of the above campaign was to keep the audiences engaged and simultaneously educate them about Nabakalebar. To garnering ample interest from people around the globe, the various initiatives had been taken up by the Government of Odisha as part of their Digital Campaign, which was proving to be really helpful for anyone planning a trip to be a part of this historic Rath Yatra.

Leaving no stone unturned, with the help of latest technological trends, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Jena, Principal Secretary, Information Technology along with his able Team of IT Professionals had been busy in providing authentic information about this auspicious events through a well-built informative and educative website ([www.nabakalebara.gov.in](http://www.nabakalebara.gov.in)). Department of Information Technology (DoIT) had developed the website with the support of CSM Technologies Limited. The website, mobile app and Social Media handle with Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google Plus etc were being dynamically obtained by a group of young professionals.

The Tech Savvy Bureaucrat, Mr. Jena sat down with the Team to source content from most authentic sources including Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA), District



Administration of Puri, State Administration, Departments like Tourism & Culture and Information & Public Relations which are uploaded on a daily basis, said a senior officer of Odisha Computer application Centre (OCAC). Mr. Jena regularly monitored the inputs and ensured that all departments supported the Government initiative to the maximum with a view to provide up to date and authentic information about the grand Festival to devotees, pilgrims and tourists.

Besides, a Ministerial Committee with the Ministers of Tourism and Culture, Information & Public Relations and Energy and Information Technology also provided necessary guidance to ensure maximum reach to the world through Digital Media. To make it even easier for tourists to visit Puri during the event, Nabakalebara Official app had been launched. The mobile app was available to download from the Google play store <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ionicframework.nabakalebara2015501818&hl=en>. It was developed for Android phone and iOS. So people could without any delay install and experience this app on their mobile phone.

Along with these two modes, there had been a large Social Media campaign running on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Not only with interesting facts and information, the social media pages kept the interest of audience with exciting contests providing mythological information to the masses, said Mr. Pratik Mohapatra, Head of

Prelude Digital, and engaged in Social Media Campaign of Nabakalebar mooted by the DoIT.

The Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik launched the digital campaign on 14 May 2015. Along with launching the official portal of the festival, a user-friendly mobile application in Android, iOS and Windows platforms was also started. Besides, the campaigning was also initiated through various social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Google Plus.

Working towards building transparency between the various works undertaken by respective departments for this event, the website provided detailed information on the projects that each of the departments had been working on. These 16 departments included Commerce and Transport, Energy, Health & Family Welfare, Home, Housing & Urban Development, Information & Public Relations, Information Technology, Law, Tourism & Culture, Water Resources, Works, Fisheries & Animal Resources Dev, General Administration, Rural Development, Women & Child Development and Handloom, Textiles & Handicrafts.

Not just limiting the audience to Odisha or India, the IT initiatives had been truly able to make it a global event. With tourists expected from around the Globe, it became highly crucial to pass on critical and important information of tourists stay and safety during this seven day long event. Various route information on the temporary shelters, ambulance, police were also made



available in the website and app, said Mr. Pratik Mohapatra.

Efforts were made on to provide user required information on tourist amenities, accommodations, vehicle parking, route maps, health facilities, police assistance, road side assistance etc. to make visit to Puri a pleasant experience. The plan was to share information from the central control room on Rath Jatra day regularly in the digital space. Besides all important festivals like Rath Jatra, Bahuda and Suna Besha would also be webcasted through the official website.

The main aim of the Digital Campaign was to improve the tourist engagement, enhance the service offerings, and enable visitors and tourists to find relevant information about the Nabakalebara event, said Mr. Pratik Mohapatra.

The digital campaign for Nabakalebar launched by the state government gained momentum. Within a fortnight of its launch, the number of people liked its Facebook page increased rapidly and the number of followers on Twitter and viewers on YouTube were also escalated.

Updates posted on the official social networking pages of Nabakalebar throughout the day. The Facebook page had over 35,000 likes. Interestingly, the page gathered a lot of attention from youngsters. Around 61 per cent of the likes came from people belonging to the age-group 18 to 24 years. While 27 per cent of the likes had been gathered from people between the age group

of 25 to 34, the remaining 12 per cent were from people above 35.

A number of posts regarding the various developments associated to the festival were updated on the Facebook page regularly. That apart, the day-to-day Nabakalebar rituals, along with interesting facts related to the grand festival, were also posted. To attract more followers, a number of innovative initiatives were also being taken. "After the daru reached Puri, there was nothing much happening. So, we have started online quiz and exciting contests to keep the audiences engaged and simultaneously educate them about Nabakalebar," said Pratik Mohapatra, who headed the Prelude digital team, an extension of a Bhubaneswar-based organisation Prelude that drives the social media campaign.

The main purpose was to keep the online users updated on all the traditions and customs followed in the holy event of Nabakalebar. Details regarding events schedule, rituals, map, helpline numbers as well as various public utilities available during the event were also posted. The Nabakalebara mobile app provided important information related to hotels, hospitals, transportation facilities, tourist points and hospitals, hotels, banks and ATMs and nearby places in Puri.

A number of videos related to the festival had been uploaded on the YouTube page. Some of the videos that are mostly viewed are the animation film on Nabakalebar by sand artist



Sudarshan Pattnaik and the one featuring eminent singer Prafulla Kar.

While a number of other pages have also been created on various online platforms, one needs to recognise the pages run by the government to obtain authentic information related to the festival. “We added the term ‘official’ to every page so users do n’t gets confused,” added Pratik Mohapatra.

### OUTLOOK

The mood at the Govt. of Odisha was upbeat following successful completion of Nabakalebara festival. The festival made its presence felt in the globe through integrated marketing approaches adopted by the state government. It was seen that people living across the world had shared photos, news and other items in the cyberspace. Tourism Secretary, Mr. Arabinda Padhi had said, “Social networking sites

have proved (to be) a good bridge for us to meet several people in our state and interact with them. We often get very good suggestions from many of the netizens and we often try to turn the best suggestion into action. Through Twitter I have personally known many people from our state who aim to boost tourism in our state.”

### References :

1. A process of search to select the neem tree to make new images to replace the old ones.
2. A donning the new images of gods with golden attire.
3. As per the Hindu Calendar, when two lunar months of Ashadha (four lunar fortnights) fall in one year.

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## Be Oceanic Darling ! Be Oceanic !!

Lord Jagannath, presiding deity, Srimandir  
arrived at Lion's Gate parting Ratna Simhasan  
Tulsi, Jasmine, Michellia Flower - Crown  
Tossing, show off graceful vision.

Rotund eyes unfold equal vision  
Scarlet lip displays romantic flow  
Arms spread afront to embrace all  
without discretion of high and low !

With brother and sister on sacred altar  
Adored in Srimandir, behold all  
In car festival proceeds together to preach  
"Live all like brother and sister well".

You are descendants of mine, speaks He  
Have universal brother and sister-hood.  
Have love and amity among all, you live  
And lead life with rapturous mood.

Forget discrimination of caste and creed  
Forget bigotry of religious bar,  
For, all are offsprings of mine, own  
Shun animosity, live peacefully all.

Don't you behold, the king himself  
Sweeps cars like scavenger oh !  
I am paramount, all children of mine  
Without service can't please Me, Lo !



*Er. Raghunath Patra*

As all rivers long to ocean, darling !  
The infinite longs to finite so.  
We are His, He is ours, genuine  
Can you quit Him, else you go.

As ocean welcomes rivers ever  
So the supreme to all, you see  
Be oceanic, darling ! Be oceanic !!  
Love ye all to make you free.

To drench with grace, the parched souls  
He comes out of Srimandir, once a year  
Car Festival is journey to eternal bliss  
To enchant devotees ever more.

His celestial pastimes beam sermons  
Usher duties, services of man  
This poet treats Lord as beloved son  
Frequents His pastimes, very often.

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Er. Raghunath Patra, Brindaban Dham, Lokanath Road,  
Patanahat Sahi Chhak, Puri-752001.



## Oh ! My Jagannath !

*Bipin Bihari Sahu*

Oh ! my Jagannath, the Lord of Lords  
the Sole Controller of the Universe  
a micro-tiniest creature I'm; in appraisal  
what could I say of You in my converse.

What the scriptures could not say of You  
and The Veda , Vedant say nay, nay  
I would be forever a slave of Yours  
if -to You - my poor language finds an way.

If it concerns with the appearance  
what an awesome it's the black boring face !  
the half made body and incomplete hands  
even having no feet, that You make pace !

How do You do make them danced !  
and they do same the puppets like  
as if their thread at Your hand,  
and as You will and as You like .

they fling in flocks; to have a glance  
of Your sublime pleasant countenance  
forgetting about their kith, kin and hearth  
as if , You're their all the means and abundance.

At every where and in every heart  
every moment they feel Your presence  
and the whole universe resting within You  
that You The One and Only have The  
Omnipotence !

Alike a Greatest Magician You do  
miracle with the musics of the flute;

take them under spell  
how do you become The Strong Arms;  
The Supreme, the omnipresent; as they call.

Though, could not perceive, my senses and  
mind the Ego I had become humble  
yet, my wits stuck with You and with Your eyes  
stupefied, enchanted; I became baffled.

The eyes of round shape and the lotus like  
which manifests the universe beautiful,  
in splendor if You cast a glance,  
it's Your grace they find the Final Truth -  
age over they wonder.

You are The Person - the Final Most;  
to whom I become humble  
so reverential to You I bow and bow,  
as I see You - the Final Abode of mine and all.

Nothing I see around me is of mine  
as to make with an offer to You better  
all those I see emanate from You  
You are the sole Source and the Creator.

But my fickle and untamed mind,  
which is becoming wilder and wilder  
of which I find no way to say  
is not of mine; I can surely make it surrender.

---

Bipin Bihari Sahu, At/p.o - Bhalumunda, Bolangir,  
Pin - 767040.



## Oh Lord ! Why have you forsaken me ?

*Prabhudutt Dash*

Oh Lord ! Why have you forsaken me ?  
 Why have you left me in the lurch ?  
 Why have you abandoned me ?  
 And why my sincere prayers are not granted ?

I am no Dasia Bauri or Ganapati Bhatt, or no Sudama  
 or Bandhu Mohanty.  
 I do not have the devotional intensity of gajaor spiritual  
 fervor of your servitors  
 for whom your kindness knew no bounds.  
 And you showered boundless mercy on them.

Oh Lord ! Have you cut off my name  
 in the list of your devotees,  
 and struck down my devotion and fervent appeal ?  
 Have you rejected my heartfelt offerings  
 or disapproved of my belongingness to you ?  
 Have you suspended me from your service  
 or turned down my closeness to you ?

In spite of all your rejection,  
 I still need you.  
 I still worship you in my heart and soul.  
 Your disapproval has become a blessing for me  
 because I adore you and seek your blessings  
 more than ever.

---

Prabhudutt Dash, Plot No.307, Haladipadia, Saralanagar,  
 Laxmisagar, Bhubaneswar-751006, Email: 1977tiku@gmailcom





## The Strange World

All time begins with you  
as they die at your feet, too  
You are the beginning  
You the limitless  
You the destroyer  
You add tune to all.

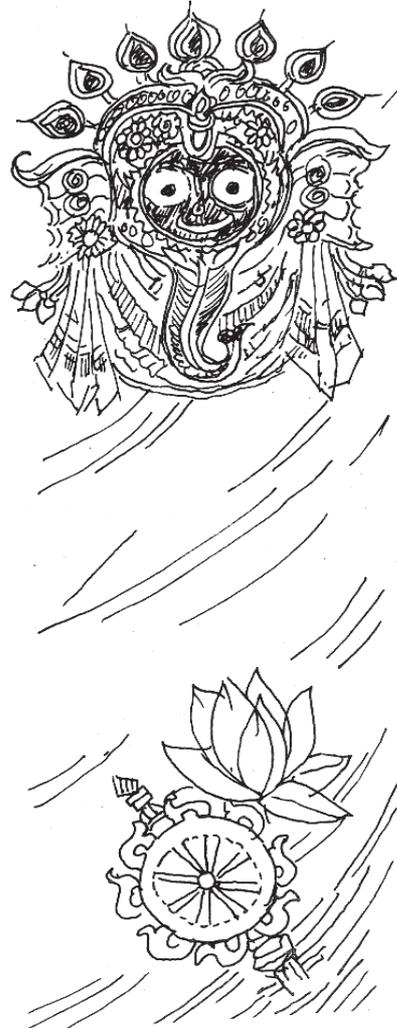
You are the mystery  
end of everyone's imagination  
You remain beyond all thoughts  
beyond all expressions  
beyond all manifestations  
one can reach You  
only through Your grace.  
You are the object of all meditation  
the goal of all penance  
the ultimate of all realization.

You make yourself felt here and beyond  
in every speck of dust  
You manifest  
to deliver the bliss you uphold.

You fill boundless confidence  
in all who look up to You  
without you the void is no void  
perfection has no meaning  
immortality trickles through You.

You resolve all thoughts  
And theories  
You contain all paths  
All joy and sorrow.

*Shyam Prakash Senapati*  
*Trans.: Dr. Janmejaya Dwibedi*



Dr. Janmejaya Dwibedi, Grand Road, Puri - 752001.



## Jagannath, the Leader of Utkala

*Sasidhara Padhy*

Jay Jagannath, Odias chant day and night  
The Odia devotees pray Him, with all their might.

Gopabandhu announced Odisha needs no leader  
As Jagannath Himself is our bonafide feeder.

He is the source of inspiration to poor middle and rich  
Even the kings and emperors call Him on highest pitch.

The Lord and His brother marched ahead, before the fighter king  
Took yoghurt from old lady on the way and gave a ring.

The warrior king Purusottam, saw the ring of the Lord prostrated  
Gave a village to Manik, the old lady, an instance unprecedented.

The king Anangabheema announced the Lord to be the king  
He became the caretaker of kingdom and crownless king.

Jagannath Culture is so effective in days of yore  
The kings and subjects were minus ego from heart's core.

King Kapilendra donated all his gold and wealth to God  
On occasions the Lord is decorated with bunch of gold.

The system of Bhagabat cottage was introduced then  
Villagers had prayers and meetings of kith and kin.

Thanks to Lord Jagannath, our mighty leader  
Let us be disciplined and spiritualised under His care.




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Sasidhara Padhy, Resource person in English, Ramsa Street, Brahmapur-1.



## Chilika

*Abhishek Tripathy*

To caress the waves,  
the silk waters, and the luscious swell.  
The sun has just bade farewell,  
and retired, tired, into the deep depths.

The night-bird sings to the impending night,  
and the moon arrives clothed in its majestic shine.  
The boats and the dhows,  
return from the day's grind,  
To retire, atop the deep depths for the night.

The boatman beams with pride,  
with the prized catch from the deeps.  
As the day ends, for yet another to begin,  
Chilika looks on with peace.

A proud mother, a generous giver,  
a devout wife, and a faithful companion.  
For years and years,  
It has stood still, yet flowing.

She is a goddess,  
and a treasure of wealth untold.  
the deep fathoms hold,  
priceless secrets and many a tale of adventure  
and joy.

Nature's loved daughter,  
She looks forlorn, though.  
For somewhere the darkness looms heavy,  
pollution and exploitation, gheris and what-not!

She seems distraught,  
at the onset of man's avarice.  
For one child may not,  
alone benefit the most.

She wonders, if she was indeed a mother,  
to the many who lived on her, by her side;  
If she was also the feared goddess,  
that people extolled.

Why, then, her children forget  
to respect the body of hers?  
She wonders as she flows,  
Stands still with time, yet flows.

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Abhishek Tripathy, 195, Bapuji Nagar, Near Sishu  
Bhawan, Bhubaneswar- 751009.



## Rethinking the History of the ‘Odia Identity’: An Appraisal in Jagannath Das’s ‘Odia Bhagavata’

*Snigdha Acharya*

Odisha, because of her geographical position has developed a pattern of life, art, language and literature of her own. Nature’s bounty gave her a unique population and individuality, out of which grew up a culture representing a solid mixture of the Aryans and Dravidians. From the beginning of her dated history, Odisha maintained her political identity, economic prosperity, overseas commerce and cultural splendor. The emergence of the Eastern Gangas in the 12<sup>th</sup> century brought a significant turn in the history of Odisha. Anantavarman Chodogangadeva united the territories of Kalinga and Utkal into one political entity, which entailed a chain of events in the society<sup>1</sup>. It was in the Ganga rule that the Odia language as an Odia vernacular became the dominant speech in Odisha<sup>2</sup>. The united kingdom of Odisha extended from the river Ganges in the North to the Godavari in the South.<sup>3</sup> A great solidarity of thought was generated out of the union and the Odia language under a public administration developed the sense of linguistic, social and cultural unity among the people. Chodagangadeva’s construction of the monument Jagannath temple knit the Odias further into cultural unity and henceforth Jagannath was to be recognized as the presiding deity of the Odias. Beginning from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Odia literature

has been enriched by the mighty pen of eminent writers and poets like Sarala Dasa, Jagannath Dasa and a host of others. A pan-Indian consciousness was present not only in the contemporary Odia literature but also in the treatment of the Jagannath cult.

The conceptual framework of nationalism imbibed a new spirit amongst the Odias through the Medieval Odia literature contained by the Odia intellectuals. The Odia nationalism as a symbol of geopolitical phenomenon created a separate province, which one in the later stage came to be known as Odisha and placed its name as the first linguistic-based state in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This essay reveals the newness on the base of literary references. In the particular time frame of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century literary activities, we find a discussion about the identity of a particular region and race fixed within the ancient region of Kalinga, Tri-Kalinga, and Utkala and as well as *Odra* or *Odra-Desha* context. The discourses of the Odia nationalism and its identity were not only the product of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it was also developed long before the 16<sup>th</sup> Century AD. This essay explores the work of Jagannath Das’s ‘Odia Bhagabata’ in the context of Odia identity and Odia nationalism.



The Odias for four centuries, were dismembered and scattered as neglected and exploited, their language and nationally systematically controlled by their neighbours. It was the 'Bhagavata' of Jagannath Das that kept their nationalism secretly alive, to be reunited again as a homogenous people after centuries of sufferings. Even today the 'Bhagavata' may be found in a hundred thousand homes outside the political boundaries of the Odisha state in Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh -as the commonest and the surest symbol of Odia nationalism.

The Bhagavata of Jagannatha Das of Odisha, a medieval saint of the 16th century, is honored in every household in Odisha for his original translation of the Bhagavata from Sanskrit to Odia. It is a translation and at the same time a commentary on the original text in the Odia verse. It has made him a household word in Odisha, the most outstanding author in the national consciousness of Odias. To fulfill mother's pious desire he started writing Odia Bhagabata chapter by chapter and recited each to her. His mother hardly realized that her humble desire was to grow a scriptural composition that was not only to touch individuality, generation after generation but also to bind together the scattered people for centuries and be the banner of their national existence. It is a fact to be noted that although Jagannatha Das, the author of the epic 'Odia Bhagavata' was initiated to Vaishnavism by Balaram Das on the direction of Chaitanya and became their disciple, yet he did not adopt the principle of Gaudiya cult

of Vaishnavism of Chaitanya. He expounded the philosophy of Odishan Vaishnavism in his work. Thus, there was the birth of Odia Bhagavata, the torch bearer of the Jagannath Dharma and culture.

The Odia Bhagavata also helped much in reducing illiteracy from Odisha. It gave a new turn to the growth of Odia literature due to its mass appealing qualities and its simplicity<sup>4</sup>. It is indeed, well appreciated and recited even by the tillers in the field, the stranger on the road and the illiterate common villagers even today. Dibakar Das, the seventeenth-century biographer of Jagannath Das, claims that Chaitanya himself had appreciated the Odia rendering of the Bhagavata by Jagannath Das in the following lines:

*"Ehi samaye Sri Chaitanya  
Sangate dhari sakha gana  
Bata tolena bije kale  
Purana suni toso hele"*

*(Jagannath Caritamrta)*

At the same time, the Brahmanas used to interpret Sanskrit scripture especially the Bhagavata which was it seems, quite popular in Odisha to the Odia-speaking people who did not know any Sanskrit. However, due to Jagannatha Das, the Bhagavata was made available in Odia language. They learned that Bhagavata as the most sacred book was within their reach. As a result, the people took the study of vernacular Odia with uncommon zeal and energy. This is why the art of reading and writing is known to be practiced extensively in Odisha.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the



monopoly of the Sanskrit knowing people over the sacred scripture has been severely threatened. People in every village took interest to copy the Odia Bhagabata on palm leaves in large numbers and worshipped the same by establishing 'Bhagabata Gharas' or 'Bhagabata-Tungi' in the villages of Odisha. Thus, Jagannath Das not only saved Jagannath Dharma and Jagannath culture from the clutches of the *Sahajiyas* but also created feelings of nationalism among the Odias that resulted in the establishment of Bhagavata Gharas in the villages of Medieval Odisha. A multipurpose village institution-the village school, the village hall, and the village library, all combined into one.

There must be few books in the whole of Indian literature that can compare in depth and influence with this Odia Bhagabata of Jagannatha Das says the Bengali scholar B. C. Majumdar: 'There cannot be any hesitation in making this statement that Jagannath Das presenting his 'Odia Bhagavata' to the people, influenced all classes of men of his country to cultivate the vernacular language'<sup>6</sup>. Long ago, Basudev Mukherjee as Inspector of school duly observed this fact of Odia mass education and reported the matter in his public report. 'I too cannot speak of what Jagannath Das has done to raise his countrymen to a higher level of moral existence. No poet of old time enjoys so much popularity as poet Jagannath Das does. There is not a single village in Odisha, where at least a portion of Jagannatha Das's Bhagabata is not kept daily recited.'

Jagannath Das has left behind a style in Odia, which for its chastity, elegance, dignity and beauty remain inimitable. Among the masses of Odisha, lines from this book are most quoted, suiting them to various situations. He gave a new birth to the Odia cultural notion and cultural identity. The work of Jagannath Das is of the medieval perspective, and it brought changes in the socio-geo-political outlay to construct the Odia identity through the vision of mass. The common voice through the form of language audible and understandable to others is now in new context. The work of Jagannath Das is an indication and a standard version to understand the problem of the common mass. The common mass while using and practicing a language in their day to day life as well the medium of communication gave it a valuable position it always needed to be. Odia Bhagavata played a dominant role in the context of social sphere to regulate the education system and became a symbol of growth in the literary percentage of that time. It had more impact on the Odia linguistic movement during the colonial era. The Odia intellectuals groups got a new spirit to reframe the idea of Odia identity from the various quotation of Odia Bhagavata. The conceptual framework of Odia Bhagabata based on the identities of Odia's as per the tradition of people's lifestyle, communication and lingua franca. The origine of the language-based identity came across opposing the implementation of Bengali as a medium of education. It may be assumed that *Chahali* as a primary education system was prevailing in the earlier period. In this education system, the syllabus merely consisted



of the reading of the religious text of medieval literature like *Koili*, *Chautisha* and also some part of Odia Bhagavata. They can at least learn, read, write and understand through the lingua franca in a particular language and script, which is known in Odia as a 'script' and 'language.' In this legacy, Odia community had refreshed themselves to evaluate their identity through the literary mass. From the *Chahali* education system, some Odia educated personalities evolved and later enriched them through the English education. Inspired by their childhood education system (*chahali*) they started thinking of reconstructing the Odia movement in the colonial period. In this direction, we may take examples from the lives of some of the elites like Madhusudan Das, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Gaurishankar Ray, Radhanath Ray, etc., who have noble contributions for the growth of Odia nationalism.

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