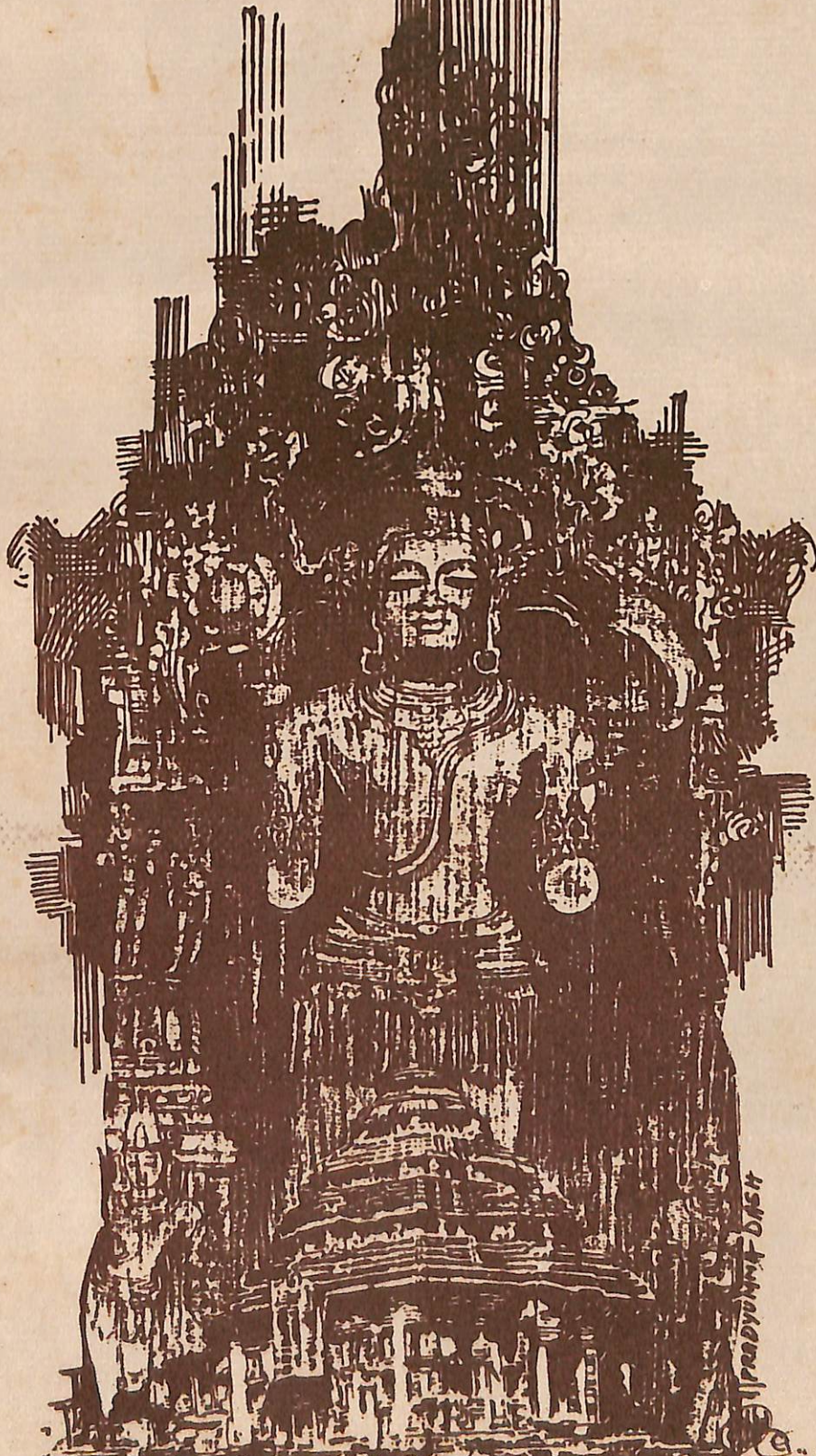


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ORISSA REVIEW



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Chhau Dance of Mayurbhanj



Odissi Dance

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FROM TRADITION TO
AVANT GRADE:
THE DHANU JATRA OF
BARGARH



Ratna Roy

Sri Dhiren Dash, with his long gray hair and sideburns, sat in his drawing room at Bhubaneswar, reminding me as always of the King of Jataras, when he first introduced me to "Dhanu Jatra."-1 He spoke of the panoramic theatre that flashed images of Artaud's "total theatre" in my mind. As I listened to him, I envisioned Greek theatre, possibly in the line of the British production "Oedipus at Colonus," or better still like the U.S. "Gospel at Colonus," with the setting an African Methodist Church and the cast the entire congregation. Then flashed through my mind's eye a Mexican production I saw at Veracruz in August 1988 with total audience participation, a theatre in the round, entryway open air, flanked by tortilla stands bar, complete with a cock fight and the audience betting in jest.

When finally I went to Bargarh with Sri Dhiren Dash and David Capers to witness the Dhanu Jatra, I saw something beyond my imagination- a totality that was to encompass music, dance and theatre as a unified whole or Artaud's "total theatre"; intense audience participation, including my own, beyond the realm of jest; and a stage and cast that were panoramic. Barriers had collapsed and conventions had been transcended multi-directi-

onally. Dhanu Jatra is traditional theatre that Sri Dhiren Dash feels is akin to "Tripurdaha" (the Burning of Tripura) mentioned in the Natya Sastra-2 and yet it is truly avant garde in its treatment of theatrical conventions.

The story is the simple, traditional one of Kamsa being threatened by the birth of Krsna, Krsna's exploits as a child, Kamsa's attempts to slay Krsna, and the final killing of Kamsa by Krsna. The stage consists of the town of Bargarh, the village Amapali (or variously called, Ambapali), and the River Jira, with sub-sets within both Bargarh and Amapali. In Hatopada, Bargarh (now transformed into Mathura), anachronistically decorated with modern electronic gadgetry stands King Kamsa's durbar (court). A panchayat dharamsala (religion-based Y.M.C.A.) nearby is King Kamsa's palace, where the actor Gopal Sahu resides for eleven of the twelve day duration of the play. Both the dharamsala and the durbar have attached Saivite temples where Kamsa prays ritualistically as well as dramatically for power and strength. The Radha Krsna temple on the Monabandha road is the prison house for the internment of Devaki and Vasuki, Krsna's real parents. The River Jira

becomes the River Yamuna, while the village of Amapali is Gopapura, the homeland of Sri Krsna. Temples all over, especially the Radha Krsna temples, are Krsna's resting places. Peter Brook has experimented with outdoor theatre, mountain sides, gravelled pits for his avant garde production, "Mahabharata." What he has simulated is literally enacted as a yearly event here in Bargarh, and whereas "Mahabharata" is a three day production, Dhanu Jatra is a twelve-day production.

What is even more significant is that the audience participation is very intense. The theatre becomes life itself as young Panchanan Birtia becomes Krsna. Initially carried on the shoulders of young men, he is eventually carried by women into their courtyards, worshipped, deified, and treated as the Lord God himself. The village itself is transformed since every villager participates in the drama of the life of Krsna. In this transformation, the village women no longer remain spectators. They serve as both participant and spectator. They become performers, actresses, playing the role of devotees. And the transformation is not manoeuvred for a theatrical purpose, as in Shechner's "Mother Courage" or in the Mexican cock-fight scene. The transformation of the audience into devotees comes from the intense religious belief that Panchanan Birtia is Lord Krsna, their God. In the outdoor scenes when Krsna steals the gopis' clothes (vastraharana) or subjugates the serpent, Kaliya, vendors serve the dual role of real-life fair vendors as well as vendors in Krsna's Gopapura. It is true that the treatment of the actor, Panchanan Birtia, as Krsna is not peculiarly an Orissan phenomenon since the integration of religion and theatre (in its broadest sense) takes place in Ramlila-3 and elsewhere as well as the immensely popular television serials, "Ramayana" and "Mahabharata." What is significant, however, is that it also takes place here in the Dhanu Jatra in Bargarh, in a vast scale, unrecognized

by many people. According to Sri Dhiren Dash, Dhanu Jatra is on a much larger scale than any theatrical work, including Ramlila.-4

The dual role of audience participant is not confined to Krsna's Gopapura alone. In Bargarh, King Kamsa delivers his prepared speeches coached by his director, Sri Buddhadeva Pradhan. Yet, interspersed he still is allowed the freedom that he had before 1984 when there was no director. This freedom allows him to draw unexpected spectators into the act itself. For example, on the ninth day, he proclaimed having noticed an intruder from Bolangir and invited him into court before a side tete a tete with one of his former friends that he had happened to spot from atop his royal elephant during his entry into the durbar. Even foreign guests, such as we, are integrated into the totality of the theatre. The King was informed of our arrival. He sent his guards with a band to receive us royally and conduct us into court. Once in court, we were welcomed but also fined one lakh svarna mudras (gold coins) for having entered the kingdom without prior permission. Once satisfied with the symbolic Rs.20 that David, my husband, paid much in the manner of the Mexican betting, the King ordered that we be allowed to photograph as we please. As in Elizabethan theatre, King Kamsa's court consists of royalty, nobles, and the commoners who stand down in the pit. We were royalty, foreign dignitaries, who were temporarily asked to speak about our impressions of the now transformed city of Mathura. Our intrusion into the scene did not necessarily break the illusion of Kamsa's court, and the crowd in the "pit" cheered as both David and I spoke of our impressions.

Thus, the venues each had their spectator participants, but due to the nature of the theatrical scenes their characteristics were different. Whereas, much of the audience, especially in the last three days, were

participants in Gopapura, some of the audience was in Mathura. And, whereas King Kamsa was given more liberties for extemporaneous speeches, Krsna was confined to his set acts and speeches. However, even in the much more formal -5 Krsna role in the Gopapura arena, the actor, Panchanan Birtia, as Krsna, one evening sent word to David that he desired to see him, and when the arrangements could not be made, came to me himself the following day on the grounds of the George High School, where he was to confront the dhobi (laundryman), and handed me a note.-6

The improvisation in the case of Kamsa also serves the purpose of transformation, allowing Gopal Sahu to become his role. In an interview he claimed that he becomes Kamsa for the period of the Dhanu Jatra. The Saivite temples where he prays for strength give religious sanction to this transformation. The transformation is obvious when at the end of Dhanu Jatra he leaves for Puri to take shelter in the Temple of Lord Jagannath to expiate the sin of having condemned the Lord God for eleven days. Gopal Sahu, thus, once again is himself, and not King Kamsa. A substitute is symbolically killed by Krsna on the final day. While the fight between Krsna and the substitute continues, an effigy of Kamsa is burnt on the grounds. The spectators turn to the effigy as fireworks crackle and the heat intensifies. At that moment, the substitute disappears behind the curtain. The killing is not enacted. And even then, the substitute dies only once. The next time a new substitute is found. We were told that the actor, Gopal Sahu, could not be on stage the final day because he would have to return the following year. The substitute does not die, for he is in reality alive. The barrier between theatre and reality is eliminated, and the two dimensions merge in Dhanu Jatra. There is an intricate blending of symbolism, reality, spiritualism, and theatre. In other words, there is a totality about the Dhanu Jatra that no other form of theatre outside India can boast of.

Dhanu Jatra collapses the barrier not only between spectator and participant, but also between the historico-mythical time and the twentieth century. While on stage there were King Kamsa, his minister and guards, dressed in period costume, there were also the director and assistant director, lightmen, sound men and crew, some in plain clothes, some in suits. Invited guests were not in period costume, but in plain twentieth century wear. The audience did not seem to mind. Dialogue wove in and out of historical time to the present. There was an illusion of the timelessness of the events. It was the eternal fight against corruption and tyranny. This dimension was especially clear in the prepared monologues of the various Kings who came to King Kamsa's court to offer help and advice. Symbolically, the breakdown of time barriers helped emphasize the message. The victory of spiritualism, truth, and good over evil was eulogized, intruding into the psyche of contemporaneity.

Finally, there is not only spoken theatre, but carnival, mime, dance, and music. Krsna mimes as he throws clothes down to the gopis, as he kills Kaliya. And, in Bargarh/Mathura, dance and music not only adorn the court of the King but also continue in a nearby area all night. The durbar dances range from court dances of sangit pilas, through Sambalpuri folk dances, to what is known as classical Orissi today, although the form I witnessed was much less sophisticated than what has been codified by the Odissi Research Centre at Bhubaneswar. The sangita pilas (singers who are also dancers) ogle at the King and dance in the court tradition, probably dating all the way back to King Khavela's time (1st century B.C.) as depicted in the Rani Gumpha Cave. They are the fixtures for the duration of the Dhanu Jatra. The rest seemed to be one-timers. The music and dance in the nearby make-shift stage (earthen floor covered with applied tenting-samiana) were far superior. Known as sanchars, in the Orissi kirtan tradi-

tion, each group consisted of three performers, one drummer and two cymbalists who sang, danced and interacted with one another through dialogues. Two of the groups had female drummers, who ritualistically tied the white wraps around their waists, prayed to the Lord and the drum and began with a percussion invocation resonating the sound of Om. The female drummers chanted from the Sri Chaitanya Charanamrita, sang, danced with brass bells around their ankles, and drummed simultaneously. The other two served as foils. The dance became more and more vigorous as the night rolled on. Their stamina and clarity of voice were both very remarkable. As soon as King Kamsa would leave his court, the sanchari would begin and continue through the whole night. Bundled spectators, wrapped in scarves and blankets, would brave the January cold to enjoy the music and dance that were nonetheless religion itself. During the day,

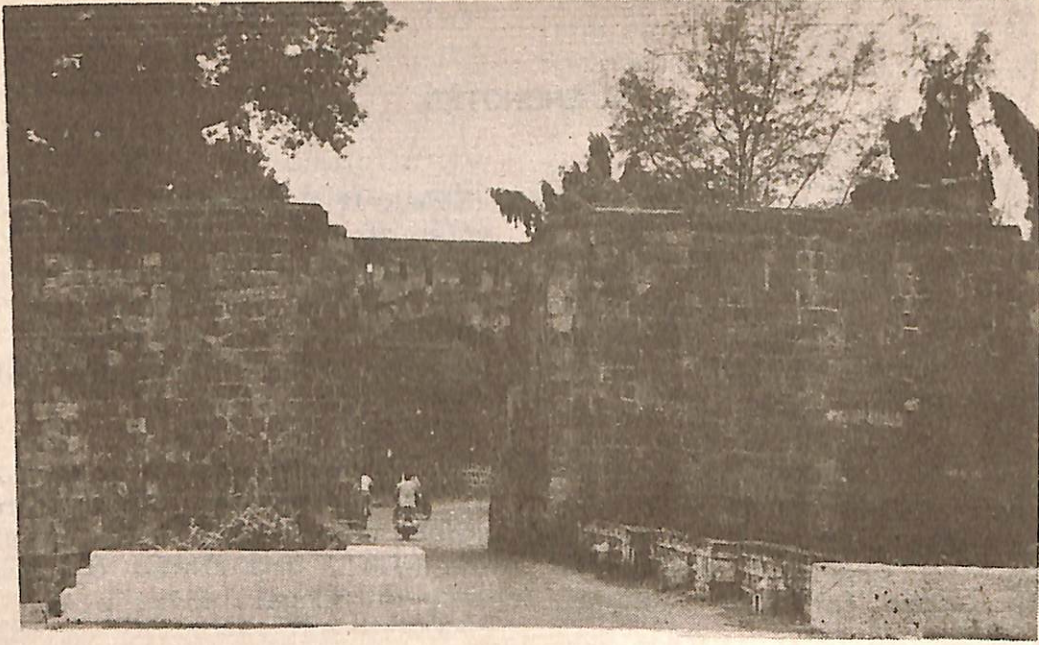
the gaeity of Mathura was projected in the carnivals where the children ate, drank, bought toys and rode ferris wheels.

Dhanu Jatra displays a totality that is remarkable. There is an ever-increasing intensity during its twelve-day duration that reminds one of the Durga Puja, and yet it is not just a religious festival. I would have to agree with Sri Dhiren Dash who first claimed it as theatre in his book, *The Jatras of Orissa* (1972). At the same time that it is theatre even in the Aristotelian sense, it transcends barriers of time and the theatrical conventions of space and audience/cast through its integration of theatre and religion. Thus, it is a religious festival that is nonetheless theatre, and avant garde theatre at that.



ENDNOTES

1. Here I am equating jatra (Sanskrit "yatra") with theatre. For a complete analysis, refer to Sri Dhiren Dash, "Yatra of Orissa," in Manmath Nath Das ed., Sidelights on History and Culture of Orissa (Cuttack: Vidyapuri, 1977), pp. 760-765. This particular jatra takes place in the month of Dhanu or Saggitarius and is therefore called Dhanu Jatra.
2. The Natya Sastra mentions "...the Tripuradaha (the Burning of Tripura) was performed in the Himalayan region which consisted of many hills and in which there were many Bhutas, Ganas and beautiful caves and waterfalls." Translated by Manomohan Ghosh (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1951), p.46.
3. Refer to Richard Schechner, Performative Circumstances From the Avant-Garde to Ramlila (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1983), 238-287.
4. Discussed by Sri Dhiren Dash during the duration of the Dhanu Jatra in Bargarh, January 1989. However, Richard Schechner's description of the 30-31 day Ramlila with an audience of close to 50,000 people indicates a production that is at a larger scale in Ramnagar. Whatever be the case, the dimensions and their complexity are identical in both Ramlila and Dhanu Jatra.
5. Since Panchanan Birtia is only twelve years old, his acting and speeches are, of necessity more formal, and he follows the text closely.
6. The note said: "Most Respect Sir, Please you will sent some photograph with following address:
Panchanan Birtia, at Ambapali, P.O. Bargarh, Dist-Sambalpur, Pin-768028, Orissa.



THE FALL OF BARABATI FORT

RAJA PARIJA

Once the heart-beat of the mighty Kalingan empire, the Barabati fort was one of the strongest, the most stupendous and the finest among all the citadels erected during the medieval period in the eastern India. The fort which had been the centre of administration of Orissa and the royal residential complex of the Hindu rulers, Moghuls, Marhatta Governors and the Britishers for centuries is completely destroyed in course of time. But a few structures still remain here, at Cuttack city, on the bank of river Mahanadi, to whisper silently the saga of the bygone days.

Before going into details of the Barabati fort, I would like to mention the history of Cuttack, the medieval capital of Orissa. The history of Barabati fort is in turn the history of Cuttack, the city which turns 1000 this year. And a grand plan to celebrate the occasion is already afoot.

Till date, it is a matter of debate among scholars, when Cuttack rose into prominence as a royal metropolis. From the archaeological and circumstantial evidences found in and around the city of Cuttack, scholars presume that, the history of Cuttack can be dated back to the rule of Bhaumakaras, when a number of places in coastal belt rose into prominence either as administrative of commercial or cultural centres. On the basis of the accounts of Madala Panji, the Chronicle of the Jagannath Temple, Puri, Mr. Stirling says that, the city of Cuttack was founded by the ambitious King Nrupakesari of the Kesari dynasty around 989 A.D. and King Markat Kesari, another distinguished ruler of the same dynasty is credited for the construction of a stone revetment on the bank of river Khatjuri to protect the city from inundation in 1006 A.D.

The word 'CUTTACK' is an anglicised form of the sans-

krit word 'KATAKA' which means the military cantonment or Royal Metropolis, or the fort or capital or the seat of the Government protected by the army. According to Madala Panji, there were five KATAKAs namely Jajpur Kataka, Amaravati Kataka, Choudwar Kataka, Varanasi Kataka and Sarangagoda Kataka, during the rule of Gangas (1038-1435 AD).

The Kanchipuram inscription of the Queen of Anangabhimha Dev III, says that, by 1230 A.D., King Anangabhimha Dev III (1211-1238 A.D.) had shifted his capital from Yajati Nagar (modern Jajpur) to Abinava Varanasi Kataka, dedicated his empire to purushottam (Lord Jagannath) and declared him as a supreme Lord of his empire, he himself being his 'Raout' or deputy.

Why did Anangabhimha Dev choose Varanasi Kataka as the new capital of his empire? There were many reasons - some historical and some that belong to the realm of folklore - that ultimately prompted him to transfer his capital. Situated at the apex of the delta of river Mahanadi, Cuttack was commanding to be fit for the capital of an empire in various ways. The most important factor was that, in medieval time, the geographical situation of Cuttack had a very strategic advantage. For centuries, it served as the only narrow strip for the land route between the north and the south. People coming from the north to the south or south to north had no alternative but to cross the river Mahanadi at Cuttack. Another factor was that, by the time of Anangabhimha

Deva's rule, Cuttack had flourished as the centrally located city of his vast empire. These were the historical reasons.

According to folklore, King Anangabhimha Dev sometimes used to reside at Chaudwar Kataka at the northern bank of river Mahanadi. One day, while cruising in the river, he was surprised to see a heron killing a hawk in the vicinity of Visweswar Siva situated in the village Barabati. He was so struck by this unusual event of nature, that he 'realised the importance of that place and then decided to shift his capital to Barabati. And he built the famous Barabati fort at the very site. During the long 350 years of Ganga rule, Cuttack became the most flourishing and well-populated capital of the Kalingan empire and witnessed many epochmaking events.

After the downfall of the Gangas, the Gajapati dynasty (1435-1534 A.D.), the Bhoi dynasty (1534-1560 A.D.) and the Chalukya dynasty (1560-1568 A.D.) came to the political scene of Orissa successively with their capital at Cuttack. it is said that King Mukunda Dev, the last Hindu ruler of Orissa and the founder of Chalukya dynasty, rebuilt the defensive wall of barabati fort and also constructed a massive nine-storied palace of gray granite, inside the fort.

With the defeat of King Mukunda Dev, the long years of Hindu rule in Orissa came to an end. Sulaiman Karrani, the Afghan ruler of Bengal conquered Orissa from Mukunda Dev in 1568. But his rule

was a short-lived one. However, Orissa came under the complete suzerainty of the great Moghuls only after the conquest of Raja Manshing in 1592. During the Moghul rule, Cuttack was an important outpost of their vast empire in the eastern India. Then in 1751, the administrative responsibility of Orissa was shifted to Marhattas from Moghuls. And finally, Orissa came under the control of the British empire in India in 1803. During the British rule, Cuttack remained as the Divisional Headquarters upto 31st March 1936 under the Government of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. From the 1st April, 1936, a separate province of Orissa was formed according to the Government of India Act of 1935, with Sir John Austin Hubback as the first Governor.

Thus, Cuttack remained as capital of Orissa from the days of Anangabhim Dev to the British rule with Barabati Fort as the centre of administration. In the year 1948, the capital of Orissa was shifted from Cuttack to Bhubaneswar. But till today, Cuttack remains the greatest cultural and commercial centre of Orissa.

Our principal sources of the history of Barabati Fort from its rise to its fall, are the palm leaf chronicle of Jagannath Temple (Madala Panji), Ain-i-Akbari of Abul Fazal, and the accounts of European officers, travellers and historians.

Abul Fazal in his book Ain-i-Akbari, which was compiled in 1594-95, beautifully narrates about the Barabati Fort. He writes :

"Kataka (Cuttack), The city has a stone fort situated at the bifurcation of two rivers the Mahanadi held in high veneration by the Hindus, and the Kathjuri. It is the residence of the Governor and contains some fine buildings. For five or six Kos round the fort during the rains, the country is under water. Rajah Makand Deo built a palace here nine storeys in height; the first storey was taken up for the elephants and the stables; the second was occupied by the artillery and the guards and quarters for attendants; the third by the patrol and gate keepers, the fourth by the Workshops; the fifth by the Kitchen; the sixth contained the public reception rooms; the seventh, the private apartment; the eighth, the woman's apartments, and the ninth, the sleeping chamber of the Governor. To the south is a very ancient temple".

When Aga Muhmmad Zaman of Tahran, the then Moghul viceroy of Orissa, was residing at the Barabati Fort, two English merchants named William Bruton and Ralph Cartwright visited Barabati Fort in May 1633 and described it as the court of "Malcandy", a corrupt form for Mukunda Dev. Though their description of the splendour of Barabati Fort is similar in some extent to that of Abul Fazal, but they are silent about the nine-storeyed palace.

Mr. Stirling, who was present at Cuttack from 1818 to 1819, describes the then condition of the Barabati Fort as follows:

"Its square sloping towers or bastions, and general

style, bespeak clearly a Hindu Origin. The Mohammedan or Marhatta Governors added a round bastion at N.W. angle and constructed the great arched gateway in the eastern face, which alterations are alluded to in a persian inscription, giving for the date of the repair and additions according to the rules of the Abjed, the fourth year of the reign of Ahmed Shah in AD 1750. The Fort has double walls built of stone, the inner of which enclose a rectangular area measuring 2, 150 by 1,800 feet. The entrance lies through a grand gateway on the east, flanked by two lofty square towers, having the sides inclining inwards, from the base to summit. A noble ditch faced with masonry surrounds the whole, measuring the broadest part two hundred and twenty feet across. From the centre of the fort rises a huge square bastion or cavalier supporting a flag staff. This feature, combined with the loftiness of the battlements on the river face, give to that edifice an imposing, castellated appearance, so much so that the whole when seen from the opposite bank of the Mahanadi, presented to the imagination of Mr. La Motte, who travelled through the province in 1767 A.D., some resemblance to the west side of windsor castle".

According to Madala Panji, Barabati Fort was erected by the King Anangabhima Dev in the village Barabati where he resided for many years. From the Nagari plates of Anangabhima Dev, it is learnt that, he also constructed a soaring temple for Lord Purusottam inside the Fort and

two Saiva temples on the bank of river Mahanadi. Another popular tradition says that, King Purusottam Dev of Gajapati dynasty brought the image of Sakhi Gopal from Kanchi and installed in a temple in the precincts of Barabati Fort. it is said that, before the attack of Kalapahar in 1568, the image was taken away from the temple, but he destroyed the temple. However, this image is now installed in the temple of Sakhi Gopal at Satyabadi near Puri. It is a matter of great surprise that, although the Jagannath Temple at Puri and the Sun Temple at Konark were built by the Gangas at a time when Cuttack was their capital, today, no trace of any temples of their period have been found in either within the Barabati Fort or in the city of Cuttack.

Today, the only existing important monument within the Fort is Fetah Khan Mosque, adorned with beautiful domes on hexagonal bases. It is exclusively of Pathan School of architecture. Most probably it was built by Fetah Khan before 1768 for the convenience of prayer for the Army who were garrisoned in those days inside the Fort. After the British occupation, this mosque was used as a powder Magazine of English troops stationed at the Fort. After the independence, for a long period it remained in disuse. Now it is used for regular prayer.

In 1803, Lord Wellesley, the then Governor-General of British empire in India, Planned to root out for ever the Marhattas from the soil of Orissa. As per his plan,

on 4th Septemebr 1803, the British troops marched out from Ganjam under the commandership of colonel Harcourt to Cuttack for the occupation of the Barabati Fort, which was considered as the main stronghold of the Marhattas in Orissa. Harcourt reached Cuttack on 8th October and Colonel Calton also joined with him in the operation. On the 13th October, they planned to attack the fort and set up guns facing towards the Fort on the southern side.

On the Barabati Fort operation, W.W. Hunter writes :

"We reached Cuttack city, which we entered unopposed- the gates open, and all the inhabitants' houses empty. Six days sufficed to build our batteries and extend our approaches to the Fort. This stronghold, firmly fixed between two branches of the Mahanadi, formed the one difficult fortification in Orissa. Faced with stones, defended by eight small towers, surrounded by a high rampart and a deep moat, 20 to 30 paces broad and in some places by a double ditch, its single weak point was the number of hollows in the neighbouring fields, which afforded good cover for the besiegers. At 10 A.M. on the 14th October, an English Officer blew open one of the small gates, receiving a wound the same moment in the neck, and a storming party dashed into the heart of the fortification. A few moments ended the struggle. The colonel of the attacking party fell with a wound in his leg; two or three soldiers were killed; the Marhattas leaped the ramparts and streamed out of the other

gates; about thirty of their dead bodies were carried out in bullock cart to the river, where they were eaten by wild beasts and birds."

Barabati Fort suffered much from the vandalism of the Britishers after its occupation. And the glorious history of Barabati Fort began to decline. The seat of administration of Orissa for several centuries was ultimately used as the prison for many kings and nobles of the land. In 1803, the Raja of Kujanga, in 1818, the Raja of Khurda and his son and in 1819, two persons belonging to the family of the Raja of Surguja were kept as prisoners in the Fort. After a few years, the Fort was abandoned and the Divisional quarters of the British Government was shifted to the bank of river Kathjuri.

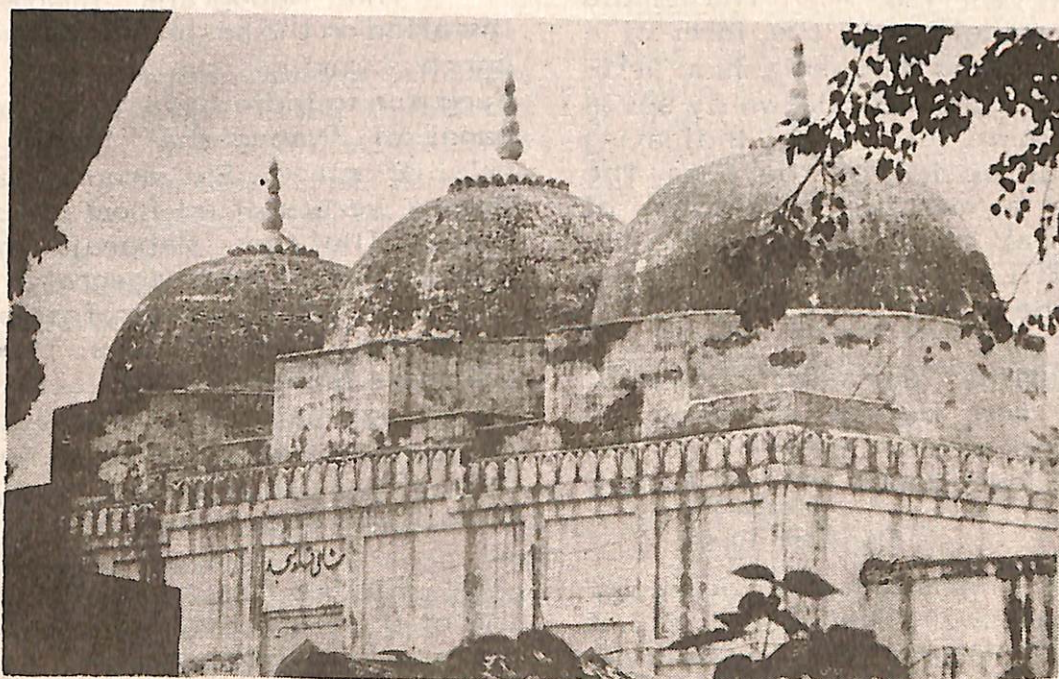
When the Fort was deserted by the Britishers, the stone slabs of the Fort were used for constructing a light house at the Flase point, the Cantonment road at Cuttack, and for the repair of revetment and public roads. Even stone slabs were sold to local people for private construction at a cost of Rs.5 to 6 per hundred pieces. It is an interesting fact to note here that, with anintention of searching out the hidden treasures in the Fort, an English Officer excavated several places in 1829. But nothing is known regarding the treasure-hunt exploration. By the year 187, the Barabati Fort, one of the finest architectural marvels of medieval Orissa was converted into an unsightly series of earthen mounds and a wildness of stone pits. Thus the vanda-

lism of Britishers caused to this stupendous citadel an irreparable and a tremendous loss for the archaeological heritage of Orissa.

The Barabati Fort, once the royal residential complex of Hindu rulers, Maghul and Marhatta Governors and finally the Britishers now serves as the residential complex for the high Government officers. The shattered remains of buildings from where an

empire was administered now still lies under mounds of earth. Historians believe that extensive archaeological excavation can only reveal the lost treasures of the Barabati Fort.

'NAVANIKETAN'
BADAMBADI,
CUTTACK-753 012.



THE BLACK PAGODA

Sri Aurobindo Dutta Ray

The Sun temple of Konark, popularly known as the "BLACK PAGODA," was built by Langula Narsingha Deb, a king of Ganga Dynasty, around the year 1255 A.D. The temple has been modelled in the form of a Chariot, mounted on twenty four artistically built wheels, drawn by seven giant and powerful horses, indicating the eternal motion of the Sun. The temple is a massive conception of architectural magnificence and engineering skill and is regarded by many as one of the wonders of the world.

Beautiful damsels, powerful elephants and horses engraved on stone, bear ample testimony to the sculptural excellence of the Konark Temple.

Konark is situated 65 km away from Bhubaneswar, the Capital city of Orissa and 85 km from Puri on the river bank of 'Chandrabhaga' along the coastline of the Bay of Bengal. According to legend, 1200 artisans took 12 years to complete the sun temple. It is constructed in such a way that the first rays of the rising sun fall on the images of 'Lord Surya,' as the Sun leaps up from the horizon. Konark, with its abundant architectural beauty has been attracting crores of tourists from all over the world for the last 350 years. The erotic images engraved on the body of the temple are second to none in the field of sculpture.

Today, alas, we only find remnants of this superb creation of man, Konark, on the sandy expanse of the river 'Chandrabhaga'. The main temple is ruined. Only the forty meter high imposing 'Porch' is in existence. Even this giant structure, today, is not

free from the ravages of time and the renovation work is still continuing to protect it from further ruin.

The Nabagraha images were installed on the eastern entrance of the porch. During the visit of James Ferguson to India in 1837, he found the panel of 'Nabagraha' images in its original place. But around 1838 the images were shifted from its original place. The then Maharaja of Puri, wanted to shift the 'Nabagraha' images to Puri. But he was refrained from doing so by the Britishers. Though the Maharaja of Puri failed to take away the Nabagraha, he succeeded in installing the 'Aruna Stambha' of Konark in front of the main temple of Puri, which can still be seen today.

For the first time, towards the end of the 19th century, attention was given for the preservation of the ruined temple of Konark. It was decided to shift the Navagraha images to the Calcutta museum. It is still an enigma, how the stone slab of Navagraha was taken out from the porch of the temple to the nearby sandy place. However, the steps taken to preserve the left out portion, thereafter, is a history by itself. That was a time, when facilities for transportation were extremely limited. So finding no other way, the then British Government decided to bifurcate the slab into two pieces, keeping the Navagraha intact. The front portion containing the Navagraha was separated and was planned to be shifted to Calcutta. But due to the strong protest of the local people, the government of Bengal refrained from doing so, with the result that the piece containing the images remained on the nearby sand till the 2nd decade of the

present century. Subsequently, separate construction was made for its preservation. A few years back, a special building was constructed for the Navagraha, outside the north-east boundary of the temple. Strange though, the 'sun' images of Konark could never be a place of worship in its long history. However the 'Navagraha' images are worshipped by the people even now. The images on the Navagraha slab are, from left to right, the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu. The front half of the Navagraha slab is 6.146 m long, maximum thickness of the rear slice is 96.5 cm., 1.146 m high and 53 cm. thick.

The left out portions of the slab, are still to be seen lying at a short distance from the main temple. The renovation work was first initiated during the British period. But, unfortunately in the process of preservation, the condition of the temple further deteriorated.

The year 1901, will remain as a mile-stone in the history of Konark. From this time onwards, systematic steps for preservation were launched and by 1921, the unearthing of the temple from beneath the sand was completed. Besides other devices, chemicals for the first time were applied to protect the temple from further ruin.

It was found after thorough research that the stones used for the Sun temple were not quality stones, which can stand the ravages of time. Only the Blackstones used for Navagraha and Sun images and certain other parts of the Sun temple have stood the test of time.

A sophisticated museum has been constructed close to the main temple. Here with the help of chemical processes, many of the beautiful statues, out of the ruin, have been preserved.

Although Konark is in ruins, even today, thousands of pilgrims flock

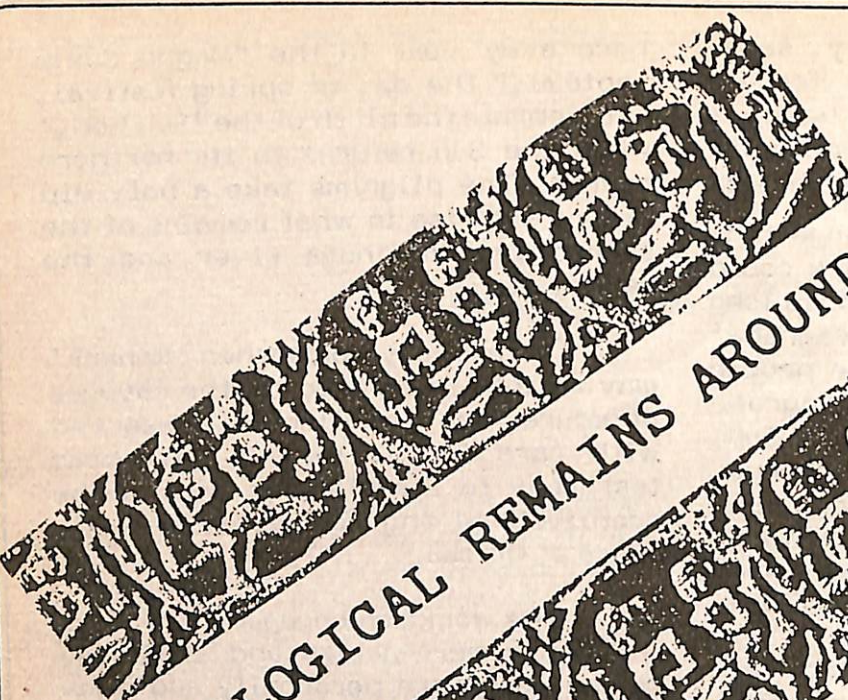
here every year in the "Magha Sukla Saptami," the day of spring festival, to celebrate the birth of the 'Sun God,' when the Sun returns to its northern course. The pilgrims take a holy dip before sun rise in what remains of the sacred Chandrabhaga river and the nearby sea.

A time may come when 'Konark' may be totally effaced by the ravages of nature, but the collection preserved with care in the museum will bear testimony to the glorious part of the architectural and sculptural magnificence of Orissa.

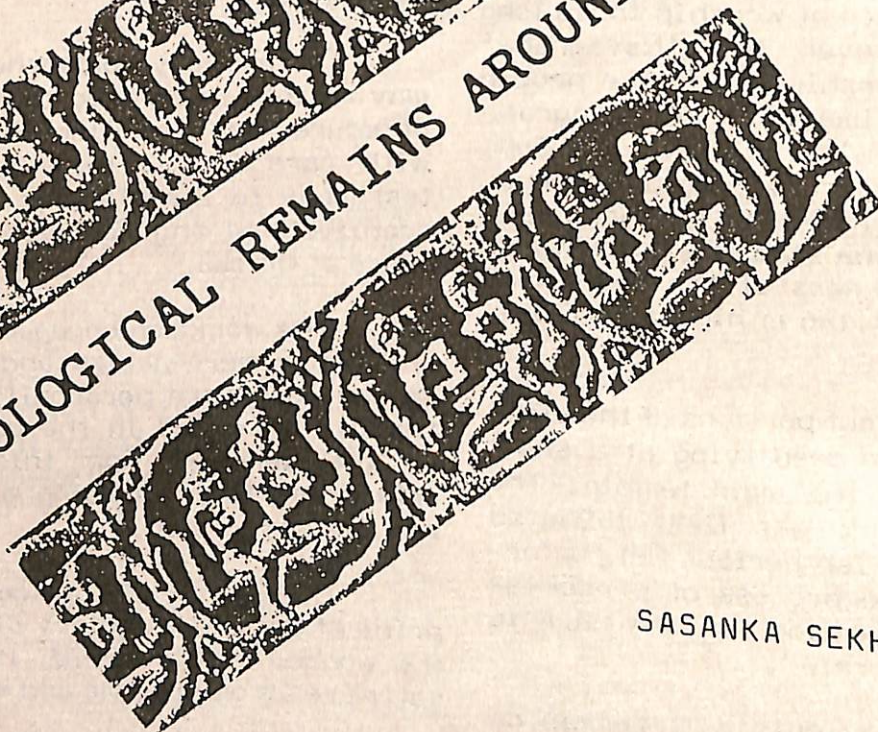
The workmen engaged here were no simple mercenaries and still less slaves, but were personally and emotionally involved in the construction of the temple. For this colossal enterprise Raja Narasingha Dev gave his life and wealth.

The Sun temple of Konark is the pride of Orissa, the glory of India and the wonder of the world. Its preservation rests on you, me and all of us.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS AROUND KHARIAR



SASANKA SEKHAR PANDA

There are ruins of many sites of historical and archaeological importance in and around Khariar, the seat of administration of the erst-while feudatory state of the same name. The archaeological findings in the Maraguda valley as well as in places like Bhuliasikuan, Sandohel, Nehna, Nagpara, Rajna, Kotipadar, Dumberbahal, Karlakhamar, Dhanksar, Dargaon and Komna, testify to the fact that this area had a rich heritage.

The antiquities of this area goes back to the pre-historic age, as evidenced from the discovery of stone-age tools and artefacts from various places like Nehna and Maraguda as well as the cave paintings of the neolithic age in the Yogi-math Donger (Mountain), situated near Khariar.

Existence of a flourishing civilisation in continuity is evidenced from discoveries of gold and copper coins, beads, potteries, copper-plate grants of various kings and ruins of brick as well as stone structures and temples. Sculptures related to various cults like Saivism, Vaisnavism, Saktism and Jainism as well as local tantrik practises are in abundance to testify that under the patronage of various royal dynasties like the Nalas, the Sarabhapuriyas, the Somavamsis, the Kalachuris, the Gangas and the Chauhans various religious cults evolved in this region.

Many important sculptures are collected by Mr. Jitamitra Prasad Singhdeo, the former Yubraj of the erst-while state of Khariar and are either in his private possession or kept in the Khariar museum.

The scope of this article is to discuss about some of the loose sculptures kept in Khariar and in the nearby village of Bhulia-sikuan, which is lying some eight kms to the north of Khariar. In 1907 three copper-plates of the Sarabhapuriya king Mahasudevaraja (1) was found from a field of the village named Nehna, in the vicinity of Khariar. In this copper-plates names of two places, namely Navannaka and Sambilaka are mentioned. From the same site four gold coins of the Sarabhapuriya king Prasannamatra were discovered by Shri J.P. Singhdeo in 1973. Navannaka can be identified with the find-spot Nehna. Regarding Sambilaka of the Khariar copper-plates of Mahasudevaraja, Sten Konow writes in the foot-notes that the local authorities are inclined to identify Sambilaka with the present San Doel or San Dohel, a village adjoining Nehna. A clay seal of Nanna, father of Tivaradeva, the founder of Panduvamsi rule in South Kosala was found from Nehna. Nanna was serving as a high-ranking military official under the Sarabhapuriya king Sudevaraja but his son could chalk-out an independent kingdom. It seems that Nehna was a flourishing town during the time of the Sarabhapuriya rule. In that case, the other village Dan Dohel might have got a significant position also. San Dohel is literally means small temple and in fact, ruins of a temple is found at present in the village of San Dohel. As many as four sculptures, which seems to be fitted in the temple are brought from San Dohel and are now preserved in the Khariar museum. There is a dancing male figure of the height of about two

feet and a half, seen holding in both his hands his erected penis. He has Rudraksa as arm-lets and anklets, a broad

neck-lace around his neck, Makara-kundala in ears as well as thick moustache and Jata--mukuta on the head. It seems to be the figure of a Tantrika Guru. There is another figure of an erotic standing couple of the height of about three feet. Both male and female have their hairs arranged in chignon and have Patra-kundala in their ears. The female's left arm is around the neck of the male, while in right arm she helps the male to touch the tip of his erected penis in her vagina. The male's right hand is around the female's back portion touching her right breast while holding his erected penis in his left hand. Both are looking at each-other. There is another figure of an amorous couple, of the height of about two feet and a half. The female has a beaded neck-lace hanging between her breasts and her waist garment hanging between her thighs. She has a big chignon. An inter-lover woman is sitting near her right leg. A male having wig-like head-dress is standing beside her, touching his own penis with his left palm. Besides these figures, there is a standing female figure of the height of about two feet, wearing a beaded neck-lace in her neck which is hanging between her both breasts, Patra-kundala in her ears and touching the left thigh with her left palm while touching the branch of a tree with her right hand raised upward. This is the figure of a Dalamalika. Two other sculptures, one collected from Khariar and the other from Chindaguda village deserve

attention. Both are temple-pillar pieces. In one sculpture, a two-handed standing male figure of the height of about two feet with Trisula in his left hand and Jata-mukuta on his head is carved.

On the pedestal there are two Kirtimukha head motifs. In another pillar a Nayika, standing in Dvibhanga posture and in a dancing pose of Lasya is carved. She is seen wearing Patra-kundala in her ears and a three-lined neck-lace, the middle one being that of beads hanging between her breasts. Her left hand is placed on her thigh while with the right hand she is seen touching her navel portion. The pedestal has three moulding courses with a triangle motif in the centre connecting all three mouldings. As there is no temple-ruins in Chindaguda village, this sculpture might have been taken away from San Dohel. Near the daily market there is a small temple called "Phata Deul". It enshrines the portion of a temple pillar depicting dance-scenes in two sides. In one side a female drummer and in other side a male drummer as well as one female dancer are depicted. All these sculptures seem to have been shiefted either from the temple ruins of San Dohel or Bhulia Sikuan. In the village of Bhulia-Sikuan there is a big tank called 'Nuabandh' on the bathing ghat of which a large number of huge cut-stones with designs on them are assembled. The four-angled star-shaped motifs with eight-petalled design in them occur in two cut-stones.

Another eight-petalled lotus-rosette motif in a round circle is carved on another block of a big block of stone, which might have been placed

as the roof of the inner sanctum of the temple in it's original state. This 'eight-petalled lotus-motif' (Asthadala Padma) might have been associated with Tantra. There is a temple, dedicated to Dhavaleswara Siva just near this tank. There are three sculptures fitted to this temple-wall. One is that of a two-handed female figure seated in Padmasana and holding lotus in both of her raised hands. She wear Kati-mekhala, neck-lace and Karanda-mukuta. It might be the figure of goddess Bhumidevi. This sculpture measures 8" x 8" and seems to be carved on a pillar. There is another sculpture of the height of the two feet and a half and of the breadth of two feet, depicting two male devotees. In the right side a male in folded hands with a short weist cloth and having moustach and beard as well as Rudraksa around his elbows is depicted. It seems to be the figure of a Yogi or priest. The other one is that of a male figure wearing a dress around his weist which is hanging upto the knee portion. His right hand is bent to his navel portion and in his left hand he holds a big Danda (staff). He wears Mukuta on his head, Rudraksa around his elbows, necklace around neck and Makara-kundala in his ears. It seems to be the figure of a king. The most important sculpture fitted to the temple wall is that of a dancing Varuni Chamunda, of the height of about two feet and a half and of the breadth of two feet. She wears Kundala in her ears Mukuta on her head and a weist garment which is hanging between both her thighs. Rudraksa is seen around her wrists and anklets. This is the figure of a six-handed

dancing Varuni Chamunda has her pendulous breasts hanging and a flabby belly although generally Chamunda figures are skeletoned. In her upper right hand she holds a big sword over her head and in upper left hand a shield while in the raised right middle hand she holds a Dambaru and eating the little finger of her left middle hand. There is a skull-up (Kapala) in her lower left hand, which she holds near her navel-portion and a small knife in her lower right hand. A long trident placed in the bent left middle hand is hanging below. This scholar was told by Mr. P.K. Samantray, Assistant Curator of Khariar Museum that there is another similar figure of a dancing Chamunda in San Dohel.

The students and lecturers of Khariar college, while cleaning the mud and weeds of the Nuabandh tank of Bhulia sikuan could discover seven sculptures of the temple-ruins from under the water. Six of these sculptures are now kept inside the Jagannath temple, situated in the centre of the village and one is still lying underneath a big banyan tree near the tank. One of these sculptures is that of a standing female figure of the height of two feet, with a big chignon. She wears three necklaces, one of which is hanging between her heavy breasts. In her right hand she is touching this neck-lace, while the left hand is hanging below in Katyavalambita pose. She has Patra-kundala in her ears and a long garment is hanging from waist below. It is the figure of a Nayika. She wears a Katimekhala also. There is another figure of a Dalamalika of the same height and of the same beauty. There is a

figure of a male drummer on a pedestal, in which two Yaksha figures seated in Kukkutasana are carved. Besides these three sculptures, two more sculptures kept in this Jagannath temple deserve attention. One is that of a dancing female touching her own vagina while her right hand is raised up touching the head. It seems to be a figure associated with Tantra. There is another sculpture where a standing male is holding the stretched legs of a female hanging below head down, while licking her vagina. This is the figure of an erotic couple. Another sculpture is kept in the street outside the Jagannath temple. It is the portion of a temple-pillar on which, standing figure of a couple is carved. They both have Mukuta over their heads, neck-laces ear-rings, Rudraksa around ankles and garment hanging from waist below upto the knee portion.

The male figure is holding a big Danda (staff) in his right hand. A lady is in his left side, putting her left hand on her waist. This figure is that of the king and queen who were associated with the construction of the temple of San Dohel. Swan-panel depicting three swans is carved on the pedestal of this royal couple figure. Another similar figure of a royal couple is now kept near the tank, underneath a huge banyan tree. This couple has the same appearance which resembles with the above mentioned royal couple figures of the Jagannath temple. The temple ruins of this village is so extensive that this writer is apt to think that there were at-least two temples in this village in the remote past being constructed by the same king. Two important sculptures shifted long

ago from Bhulia Sikuan and now preserved in the Khariar museum are the figures of a seated goddess and that of Kartikeya. The two-handed goddess is seated in Padmasana holding a lily flower in her right hand and a vessel (Kalasa) in her left hand being placed on her left thigh. She has a Mukuta on her head, Kati-mekhala, necklace hanging between her round breasts and Patra-kundala in both her ears. It is the figure of Kirtidevi. This figure is of the height of two feet.

The Kartikeya figure is of the height of about three feet, four-handed and having Ushnisa style of hairs. He is seen holding Sakti and Vajra in his upper right and left arms respectively and a Kukkuta (cock) in his lower left arm, while the lower right hand is in Abhaya-mudra. His Vahana peacock is sitting near his right leg and his wife Devasera is seen to be seated near his left leg. It is a Dvibhanga standing figure of Kartikeya in his "Saktidhra" aspect. This aspect of Kartikeya is said to be the embodiment of Jnanasakti. All these sculptures found from Bhulia Sikuan make us to believe that it was an important centre of worship. The sculptures of Bhulia Sikuan are similar in look with sculptures found in the temples and temple-ruins of Janjgir, Ratanpur and Malhar of Bilaspur district of the Madhya Pradesh all belonging to the early Kalachuri period of around 11th-12th century A.D. This observation has been made by this scholar during survey tour to the Chhatisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh.

Coins of the Kalachuri King Gangeyadeva Vikramaditya (2) of Tripuri or Dahala Mandala

(Circa 1015-1041 A.D.) as well as those of Jajjaladeva I (3) of Ratanpur branch (Circa 1095-1127 A.D.) are discovered from Padampur near Narsimhanath in the district of Sambalpur and Nehna near Khariar as well as Kamkeda near Budhikomna in the district of Kalahandi respectively. This Gangeyadeva is said to have attacked Orissa and extended his kingdom for a short period upto the eastern sea-coast. This invasion was assisted by king Kamalaraja of the Ratanpur branch of the Kalachuris, who were accepting formal suzerainty of the Tripuri Kings (4) After this victory, Gangeyadeva took the title 'Trikingadhipati', which means that he captured the Kalahandi region for some time during the chaotic period after the defeat and death of the Somavamsi ruler Indraratha in the hands of the general of Rajendra Chola in 1023 A.D. (5) This seems feasible as we know that Gangeyadeva attacked Kuntala from three sides after making alliances with the Paramara Bhoja and Chola Rajendra. (6) The event took place before his attack on Orissa (Utkala). His assistant, the Kalachuri king of the Tummana branch, Kamalaraja, came to the throne in circa 1020 A.D. Therefore, this event might have taken place immediately after 1020 A.D. This attack of Gangeyadeva of Tripuri and Kamalaraja of Tummana has been mentioned in the Amoda plates of Prithvideva II, the son and successor of Kamalaraja. (7)

Therefore, it is clear that although in the Amoda plates, it has been mentioned that they attacked Utkala, it was the kingdom of the Somavamsis, with capital at Yayatinagar, which included Utkala, Kosala, Kalinga and Trikinga by this

time. This Trikalingadhipati title adopted by Gangeyadeva was used by his son Karnadeva also who has been mentioned as Trikalingadhipati in his declaration made during the second celebration of his coronation in circa 1052-53 A.D. (8) Karnadeva ruled from 1041 to 1073 A.D. After him, his son Yasakarna ruled upto 1123 A.D. He made conquest of Andhradesa upto Draksarama and worshipped Lord Bhimesvara Siva after reaching Draksarama. During this attack he defeated the Chalukya king of Vengi, Vijayaditya VII. (9) In all probability in this invasion, he was assisted by Jajjaladeva I, the Kalachuri king of the Ratanpur branch because Jajjaladeva I has spoken very high of his friendship with the Chedi ruler in his Ratanpur stone inscription, where it is mentioned that 'Jajjala was taken as a 'Parama-mitra' by 'Chedipati'. The way 'Chedipati' term is mentioned is definitely meant for the most powerful Chedi (Kalachuri) ruler of Tripuri, whose formal lordship was accepted by their collateral branch of the Kalachuris of Tummana-Ratanpur. It is more likely that this attack of Yasakarna, prompted his ally Jajjaladeva I to attack and subjugate the rulers of Kosala, Andhra, Khimidi, Vairagarh, Lanjika, Bhanara, Talahari, Dandakapura Nandavali and Kukkuta and to force them to accept his suzerainty by sending an annual tribute to him. This Khimidi is the place of the same name, now in the district of Ganjam of Orissa. He also attacked and captured Somesvara, the Chhindaka Naga king of Chakrakot Bastar, destroyed all his army, set ablaze the capital of that kingdom and imprisoned him along-with all his queens and ministers but

on the request of Somesvara's mother set them free. This Jajjaladeva is said to have captured Suvarnapura and dethroned the king of that place (10) Although, Ratanpur Stone Inscription of Jajjaladeva I is dated to 1114 A.D., his victory over Somesvara might have taken place before 1111 A.D., because it is known from the Narayanpal Stone Inscription of Gunda Mahadevi, the mother of Somesvara, that in 1111 A.D. Kanhar, the son of Somesvara was ruling Bastar (11).

The Suvarnapura king who was defeated and dethroned by Jajjaladeva I has been taken as none-else than the Telugu-Choda king Somesvaradeva III, whose Patna Museum Plates have been dated to 1112-13 A.D. and after him we do not know any Telugu-Choda ruler to have ruled from Suvarnapura. (12) After this victory over Suvarnapura, it is more tenable to think that this area went under the Kalachuris for about fifty years till the time of Jajjaladeva-II (Circa 1165-68 A.D.) because coins of three succeeding rulers, who ruled after Jajjaladeva I from Ratanpur, namely his son Ratnadeva II (Circa 1120-1135 A.D.), grand-son Prithvideva II (Circa 1135-1165 A.D.) and great grand-son Jajjaladeva II (Circa 1165-68 A.D.) were discovered from Sonepur also. (13) Similarly, it is reported that twenty-nine gold coins of Prithvideva II and two of Jajjaladeva II were discovered near a tank of village Shapur-Lohara situated at a distance of some thirty kilometres from Kaivardha in the district of Rajnandgaon of Madhya Pradesh, bordering Kalahandi district of Orissa. (14) In the private possession of Mr. Jitmitra Prasad Singh

Deo of Khariar are copper coins of Jajjaladeva I, which he discovered from village Nehna, situated some four kilometres to the south-east of Khariar town. It seems that the Kalahandi-Bolangir region went under the control of the Kalachuris of Ratanpur.

Similarly, as recorded in the Vizagapatanam grant of Circa. 1118 A.D., Anantavarma chodaganga, the Eastern Ganga king of Kalinga was decorated with the rank of sovereignty over the whole of Utkala by defeating the Somavamsi king of that kingdom (15) It is also stated in the Madala Panji that Vasudeva Ratha, the Commander in Chief (Vahini-Pati) of the Somavamsi army, invited Chodaganga to invade Orissa. (16) After occupying Utkala, Chodaganga tried to capture the upper Mahanadi valley of Orissa around Suvarnapur (modern sonapur in the district of Balangir), which was under the Kalachuris of Ratanpur since it's occupation by Jajjaladeva I. Chodaganga had to fight with Ratnadeva II, the son and successor of Jajjaladeva I in the battle of which he faced a crushing defeat in the hands of the Kalachuris and his entire army was destroyed in the battle-field. (17)

Similarly, it is known from the Bileigarh copper-plate charter of Prithvideva II, son and successor of Ratnadeva II that by crushing Chakrakota Nagara he terrorised Sri Ganga raja, who could not get any other alternative than to flee away beyond the ocean to save his life. (18) Although this description seems to be mere exaggeration of facts, it might be true that he could defeat Jatesvara alias Kamarnava, the son of Chodaganga in around 1158 A.D. This

Gangaraja has been identified as Jatesvara Kamarnava by scholars like N.K. Sahu, Balachandra Jain, Pyarela Gupta, P.K. Mishra and J.K. Sahu. (19) This lost glory of the Gangas could be recovered only by Aniyankabhima III the great grand-son of Chodaganga, who as known from the Chatesvara temple inscription could capture Trikalanga due to the defeat of the Kalachuri king of Ratanpur by his general Vishnu on the bank of the Bhima, at the out-skirt of the Vindhya hills and on the sea-shore. (20) As Aniyanka Bhima III ruled from 1211-1228 A.D. this Kalachuri ruler can be taken as either Pratapamalla, the son of Ratnadeva III or his successor, because after Pratapamalla nothing is known about this line of kings till 1494 A.D. (21) The last copper plate charter available as epigraphic records (22) is that found from Bileigarh (Raipur district) dated the Kalachuri Year 969 (circa 1222 A.D.) In this contest it is very interesting to note that although the Kalachuri kings of Tripuri like Gangeyadeva Vikramaditya (1015-1041 A.D.) and his son Karnadeva (1041-1073 A.D.) are said to have used the title Trikalingadhipati, it seems that after Karnadeva Trikalanga region was captured by the Imperial Ganga king Devendravarman-Rajaraja (1070-78 A.D.) (23) and continued to be under their rule for a short period also during the time of his successor Anantavarman Chodaganga (1078-1152 A.D.) (24) till he was defeated by Ratnadeva II, the Kalachuri king of the Ratanpur branch. Chodaganga and his predecessor king Devendravarman Rajaraja are said to have adorned with the title 'Trikalingadhipati' also as known from records.

It seems that the Trikalinga region was under the hegemony of the Kalachuris of Tripuri, Tummana and Ratanpur from time to time due to their continuous warfare with the Somavamsis, Telugu Chodas, Chhindaka Nagas and the Imperial Gangas in between 1015 A.D. and 1211 A.D. except for a short period under the Gangas in between 1070 A.D. to 1114 A.D.

Taking into account the art form of the temple ruins of San Dohel and Bhulia Sikuan, this scholar is inclined to believe those to be of the Kalachuri period of occupation of Trikalinga region, 11th and 12th Centuries A.D., as these are much similar to those found at Malhar, Pali and Janjgir in the Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh, all of these being Kalachuri sites.

Nehna village, situated some four kilometres to the south-east of Khariar town and near the left bank of Sundar river is of considerable importance from the archaeological point of view. From this site, the copper-plates of the Sarabhapuriya king Maha Sudevaraja-I was discovered. Through exploration from time to time learned historian Jitmitra Prasad Singhdeo of Khariar could discover ten gold coins of another Sarabhapuriyan king Prasannamatra, out of which one is presented by him to the Orissa State Museum at Bhubaneswar and four to the Sambalpur University Museum at Burla. It is important to note that Mahasudevaraja-I was the son of Mahajayaraja alias Manamatra, who was the son of Prasannamatra. Mahajayaraja's copper-plates grant has been discovered from a village named Amgura of Boden Panchayat Samittee area (25) A stone bull having the figures

of a royal couple seated in graceful posture was found from a site, very near to Nehna spot, from where the gold coins of Prasannamatra were discovered. From the site of the bull, a red stone seal of Nanna was also found. Nanna was the father of the first Panduvamsi king Tivara-deva of Kosala and was in all probability serving as a high military official under the Sarabhapuriya king Sudevaraja-II. It is important to note here is that one clay seal of this Nanna has been discovered in 1973 from Maraguda also by J.P. Singhdeo. In all probability towards the close of the Sarabhapuriya rule, this part of their kingdom might have been put under Nanna, as a reward to the great service he rendered to that dynasty and he was given with some power by his overlord king Sudevaraja-II (who was ruling from Sripura) to use seal in his name as a feudal seat of authority.

The royal couple carved on this bull are identified as king Prasannamatra and his queen by Prof. Sahu. (26) From Nehna one human head made of baked clay (as found in Tala ruins of Bilaspur district, also of the Sarabhapuriya period), pottery-pieces, rusted iron pieces, knives, one horse-shoe, one bronze bangle, one beautifully designed black-coloured trinket paltry case, many beads of stones and semi-precious stones are collected by Mr. Singhdeo. The depression marks and grooves on the rocky surface of the hill near Nehna allure, this scholar to think that it was a site of bead-making factory in the early christian era. Some beautiful peacock lamps and bowls made of bronze are also collected from Nehna by Mr. Singhdeo.

In the private possession of J.P. Singhdeo are copper coins of the Kalachuri king Jajjala-deva-I, who is said to have defeated the Telugu choda king of Suranapura, named Bhujavala-I, around 1114 A.D. All these findings from Nehna make us to believe that it was a flourishing habitational site since the early Christian era till the 12th century A.D.

The most important findings which take Nehna to the hoary past are ring-stones and one stone pestle, also in the private possession of Mr. Singhdeo. Such items have been collected by Mr. Mihirendra Singhdeo of Madanpur Rampur from a site, called Budhigarh where stone beads, iron-pieces, terracotta pieces ivory-comb-piece, a redseal depicting two trees on the railing and one gold coin of king Mahendraditya were found from time to time.

These ring-stones were prevalent in the neolithic and chalcolithic sites and are referred to in the archaeological literature as mace heads, or as weights for digging sticks. (27)

The neighbouring town of Khariar is not less important in view of these archaeological findings. The present 'Badgudi' (Bad-dadhivamana temple) is made from the collapsed stone-blocks of a ruined temple, which was in all probability a centre of esoteric religious practices. On a big stone-slab of this temple we find star-like symbols or 'Yantras'.

A beautiful Visnu image, broken and now existing above chest-portion measuring about eighteen inches in height and about fifteen inches in breadth has been collected

from Khariar by Mr. Singhdeo and is at present kept in the Khariar Museum. The Lord is seen wearing a Kirita-mukuta and Makara Kundala. Out of the four hands, the lower hands are broken and in the upper left and right hands, He is seen holding the Sankha (conch) and Chakra (wheel) respectively. A lion-head is carved above the Mukuta and an arch is formed instead of a Prabha-mandala.

As lion-head is carved above the head of the deity, this scholar is inclined to ascribe it to the time of the Vakataka King Harisena of Basim branch (C.478-510 A.D.) who is said to have defeated the kings of many kingdoms including South Kosala as revealed in the Ajanta inscription. (28) V.V. Mirashi is of the opinion that the Vakataka invasion helped the Sarabhapuriyas to set up their empire in south Kosala. (29)

In all probability, this Visnu image might have been installed by Serabha, the founder of the Sanabhapuriya dynasty, in honour of the Vasinava faith, which was prophecised by his Vakataka over-lord. The Visnu image can be ascribed roughly to around 500 A.D.- It is worth mentioning that lion-head was the royal emblem of the Vakatakas. Some small images, likely to be worshipped as family deities in the past, were also found and collected by Mr. Singhdeo. Those include the head of Siva from Mr. Prayagdutt Joshi's courtyard, a four-handed dancing Siva measuring six centimeters in height and five centimeters in breadth; as well as a seated priest in terracotta, seen wearing a robe falling from his left

shoulder upto the knees. This terracotta priest was found in the courtyard of one Mr. Jagabandhu Dash. One most important finding from Kotipadar village in the vicinity of Khariar is a Uma-Mahasvara sculpture measuring around sixteen centimetres in breadth. The divine couple is seen to be seated on a Padma-pitha (lotus-pedestal) in Sukhasana mudra. While the Lord is sitting in Vama-Lalitasana, by keeping the left leg folded on the Asana and the right leg hanging down; Parvati is seen to be seated in Pralambapada by keeping both legs pendant. The left hand of Siva is on the right shoulder of Parvati, who is sitting in His left side. Her right hand is embracing the back portion of Siva and the left hand is resting on the Asana. The head-dress of Parvati is like that of Kartikeya of Vaidyanath. The Jata of Siva is seen flying on the right shoulder. the lord is depicted as three-eyed. He is seen wearing kundala, Hara (necklace) and Yojnopabita. In his right hand Siva holds Dambaru near the right shoulder. From this village, named Kotipadar, two foot-prints carved inside a full bloomed lotus flower on a soft red stone plate of the circumference of ten centimeters was found. It seems to be the foot-prints of a Guru similar to those found in the tantrik sites like Ranipur Jharial, Ghudar and Menda, all in the neighbouring district of Balangir. Another important piece of art found from Kotipadar is a squatting figure of Lajjya Gauri, also carved on a flat stone-plaque. It is a seated female figure in squatting posture, with both her legs spread apart. She has round breasts and instead of head, there is a

super-size fully bloomed lotus (Kamala), with prominent central pericarp, the lower calyx indicated above the pearl are prominent while the girdle and the abdomen are thinner and supple. She wears a short garment around her waist. Both upraised arms are supported on the knees, in her left hand is Vajra, while object in the right hand is broken. The head of Lajjya Gauri as Sahasra Padma (Thousand lotus) symbolises the rise of Kundalini to Sahasrara. Dr. Stella Kramrisch identifies the Lajjya Gauri figure with goddess Aditi. "The Lotus head of Aditi placed on her shoulder overlaps her throat with its petals".(30) The lotus part above the neck, instead of human head finds mention in Vishnudharmottara-"Divyascha Mastake Padmam Tatha Karyam Manoharam, Saubhagyam Tad Vijnahnihi (31).

Most of the Lajjya Gauri figures date from the beginning of the Christian era when the concept of Yoga-'the Mahakundalini'- had taken deep roots and had virtually been assimilated by all subjects of Indian religion. It is the imagery per excellence of Yogins. Similar Lajjyagauri figures in stucco, terracotta and other soft stones are obtained from the later Satavahana levels at Nevasa, Ter, Kondapur, and Yellawaram etc. (32) Such figure but in nude are reported from the Chalukyan temples of Alampur, Bhavanasi, Sangamesvaram, Yellala and Pratakota also. A figure of Lajjyagauri wearing 'langoti' type underwear, carved on a square grey slatestone plaque measuring nine centimetres was found in the sanctum of a brick temple

at Keesaragutta (Andhra Pradesh) during excavations by the Archaeological Survey of India. This figure is dated to the 4th century A.D. These figures are taken as cult figures in which rituals related to Kanya and Kumari-worship for progeny assumed deep roots and spread widely in the South India during the early centuries A.D. (33)

Lajjagauri figure are reported from various parts of upper India like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat as well as from down below, from Karnataka. (34) Such a figure is found to be kept in the A.S.I. Museum at Malhar also which can be dated to circa 9th-10th century A.D. (35) Similar figures are reported from Bharhut, Mathura and Sanchi also. (36)

It is apparent that the sculpture of Lajjagauri ranges in date from the early christian era to almost the 12th century A.D. and thus was popular in that time as well (37)

One square brick measuring twenty three by eighteen centimetres is with Mr. Singhdeo. It's findspot is not known. A Yantra symbol of two straight lines, one horizontal and the other in the centre and four round shapes carved in all four blocks, the overall Yantra inside a round lotus-petalled circle is carved.

To the south-west of Khariar town, in the vicinity, there is a temple dedicated to Siva on the embankment of a tank. Here a figure of six-headed Kartikeya (Sadanana) sitting on the back of his Vahana peacock is housed. This figure has twelve arms. Such Sadanana sculpture is the only of its

kind in the entire upper Mahanadi valley of Orissa. Here Kartikeya is seen to be seated by keeping his left leg bent on the back of the peacock, while the right leg is hanging below. He wears Karanda-Mukuta in all six heads. Rao has illustrated Kartikeya having six-heads and twelve arms with various weapons held by him. (38)

From a village named Dumerbahal, one hero-stone having a proto-Oriya inscription on the pedestal has been collected by Mr. Singhdeo and is now kept in the Khariar Museum being presented by him. Being requested by this writer, the learned epigraphist Pandit Satyanarayan Rajaguru has deciphered it as DA (DU)RAA ROGARE' (Probably the death occurred due to some incurable disease) and assign it palaeographically to the 16th century A.D. (39)

One Harihara figure of the size of twelve into twelve centimeters has been collected from the same Dumerbahal village, which is lying some twenty kilometers away from Khariar in the Sinapali Panchayat Samittee area, on the right bank of the Udanti river. Left half is Visnu while the right half is that of Siva. It is a four-handed seated figure, both lower hands are on the knees. Attributes in the left and right upper hands are Chakra (wheel) and Damru respectively. The Lord has moustache and is seated in Lalitasana, the left leg being folded and on the Asana, while the right leg is hanging below. Goddesses Lakshmi and Parvati are seen to be seated in Padmasana in both sides. It is an unique seated figure of Harihara, although very small in size and dimensions.

We get life size standing Harihara images in the temples of Charda and Vaidyanath in the district of Balangir. Harihara cult seems to have been popularised during the time of the Panduvamsi king Mahasivagupta Balarjuna and continued in full swing during the later Somavamsi rule.

In the same site, from where Mr. Singhdeo got this seated Harihara image, a cut-rock pillar of the height of about eight feet is fixed to the ground. In the upper-portion of this flat pillar, the figure of a four-handed goddess is carved. The deity is seen holding a sword and a club in her right hands and a shield and a severed human head in her left hands respectively. This seems to be a tantrik deity. Mr. Singhdeo is enclined to believe that as this image is worshipped as goddess Samaleswari by the local people, there is possibility of Stambheswari being Hinduized to Samleswari.(40) A little down-stream, the ruins of a brick temple is located in the Dharnimal village, also situated on the left bank of Udanti river. Another ruined brick temple is located in Rajna village, which is situated on the left bank of the Indra river, a tributary of river Sundar in the Komna Panchayat Samittee area of the Nawapara Sub-division of the Kalahandi district. This village Rajna has been identified as 'Rajyagrama' of the Amgura copper plate grant of the Sarabhapuriya king Mahajayaraja. Brick structures of the early mediaeval period are found at Nehna and in Tukla village, also lying some ten kilometers away from Khariar, situated on the left bank of Sundar river. Bricks measuring as big as 39 cms x 21 cms and 40 cms x 17 cms.

are found from Tukla sites. Beads and bricks collected by Mr. Singhdeo are presented by him to the Sambalpur University museum and are kept there at present.

Besides all these sculptures, peculiar Egyptian spinkx-type small tribal art pieces are collected by Mr. Singhdeo from Dhanksar village, which is situated on the right bank of Sundar river, on the opposite direction of Nehna and lying some six kilometers away from Khariar. These tribal art pieces are now kept in the Khariar museum.

Two hero-stones have been collected from the Nagpara village, which is situated some fifteen kilometers away from Khariar on the foot-hill of the Guru Dangar mountain in the Sundar river valley. From another site near Nagapara, Mr. Singhdeo has collected two sculptures, which most likely depict the marriage-scenes.

Another hero-stone is reported to be collected from Dharua-dangar, situated to the south of Komna, some twenty kms away from Khariar. Komna was one of the forts of the Chauhan rulers of Patnagarh from the 15th Century A.D. onwards.

Taking into account the vast archaeological and sculptural remains in and around Khariar it can be safely concluded that this belt witnessed a flourishing civilization right from the beginning of the Christian era till the mediaeval period. Extensive survey and more keen study can bring to light more thrilling facts on the history of this region.

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Gold coins of the Sarabhapuriya king
Prasannamatra from Nehna village
(Circa Sixth Century A.D)
Photo Courtesy : Martin Brandtner,
South Asia Institute, Heidelberg
University (FRG).





CHAKRA TIRTHA

Pandit Upendranath Hota

'Srikshetra' is known for the Chaturddha Murti Jagannath, Balavadra, Subhadra and Sudarsan. Chakratirtha has found its place in the pages of history for its speciality with regard to Chakra, sudarsan, Nrusingh, the incarnation of Vishnu worshipped at this place in vedic tantras.

The place, Chakratirtha, close to sea, Laxmi's birth place, is about 3 to 4 Kilometres away from the Jagannath temple in the south east direction. A distributory of the river Vargabi named Banki river had met the sea at this place. Though it is not visible now a days still people call this place as 'Banki muhan'. It is told that king Indradyumna had found the sacred Daru (log of wood) here and carried the same with care. The images of Lord Jagannath, Balavadra, Subhadra and Sudarsan had been made in a closed chamber out of this Daru, Chakranrusingha temple is the famous temple of this place and the three images Chakranarayan Ananta Narayan and Laxminarayan are worshipped in this temple. This place is also called the paternal home of Goddess Laxmi. It is also told that once the Nilachakra being blown off in heavy cyclone had fallen at this place and

accordingly the place is named after Nilchakra "The Chakratirtha". In another story it is described that once an elephant, while drinking water, was caught by a great crocodile and prayed God to save his life from danger. Lord Vishnu having been pleased ordered Sudarsan who cut the head of the crocodile and saved the great elephant. As such the place is named as Chakratirtha. According to some scholars Lord Jagannath had ordered Sudarsan to establish himself at Chakratirtha before the three Gods visited Srikshetra.

Sunar Gouranga temple in Chakratirtha is famous and many vaishnav devotees visit this place. Sri Chaitanyadev the great devotee of Lord Jagannath had offered his prayer at this place and stayed here for sometime. Dola festival is celebrated here with great pomp and ceremony. Since long the people of Srikshetra were the great devotees of Nrusingh

Nrusingha is one of the forms of Lord Jagannath and as such people worship him as an avatar. Being pleased with the prayer of Prahlad, He revealed Himself in the Pillar and killed the great demon king Hiranyakasipu. For his deep devotion king

Indradyumna could see His daru form at this sacred place "the Chakratirtha". Jagannath Das, the great Oriya poet who wrote the Oriya Bhagabata has described Narsingha as the primordial cause of all creation. The mantra of Nrusingha is the Mahamantra of Sriksheeta.

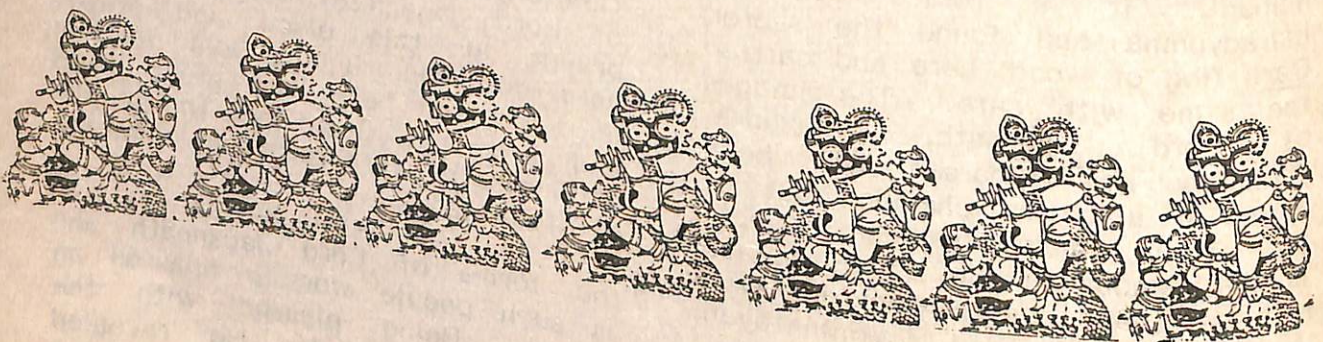
The Chakra here refers to the weapon of Vishnu. The story goes that for the destruction of the demons, Sudarsen had appeared Himself in Nrusingha Avatar, which is the angry form of Lord Jagannath. Sudarsan is the moving image of Lord Jagannath and Nrusingha. Hence at the time of Pahandi on the car festival day Sudarsan leads the procession of the three Gods.

At the time of Anasara, 'Bhoga' is offered to Nrusingha at first and the same is offered to Vimala and then only it is called the sacred Mahaprasad. In the car festival Nrusingha gets His place in the Nandighosa the chariot of Jagannath. The day before full moon in the month of Baishakha, the birth day of Nrusingha is celebrated. In the month of Kartika Lord Jagannath is decorated and assumes the form of "Laxmi Nrusingha" for five days. The vast sea with all its splendour is quite near the tirtha and it is believed that a dip in the sea at this place leads one to the path

of Mokshya, or salvation. The great "Daria Mahavir" is at the gateway and keeps the place safe from the attack of high tides in the sea. He is also called "The Bedhi Mahavir" because the chain has been put round its feet in order not to move from that place. It is told that once when Mahavir had left that place, the place was submerged in saline water. In order to save the place, Mahavir is chained and as such is called Bedhi Mahavir. On the day of Pana Sankranti, Ajnamala is sent to Mahavir to obtain his permission for construction of the cars.

It is believed that the virtues which are gained on seeing the Nilachakra at the top of Srimandir, are also achieved by offering prayers from the core of one's heart to Abhaya Nrusingha, Chakra Nrusingha and Laxmi Nrusingha at Chakratirtha.

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Elections to the Tenth Orissa Legislative Assembly were held on February 27, 1990.

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