

The Four Dhams

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"Dham" means "Abode". There are four dhams in four directions of India which are believed to be the abodes of Hindu gods, and the holiest places of pilgrimage. The four dhams at the four corners of India symbolize the essential unity of India's spiritual traditions and values. To the north is Badrinath, to the west Dwarka, to the south Rameshwaram and to the east is Puri. Each of the four dhams is a citadel of ancient temples and religious monuments, with one most significant temple as its distinguishing landmark.

BADRINATH

Badrinath is at a height of 10,400 feet above sea-level in the Garhwal Mountains, a part of the larger Himalayas, in the state of Uttaranchal. Built in early ninth century AD, the Badrinath temple is one of the most revered Hindu shrines of India.

The Badrinath temple is located between the two mountain ranges of Nar and Narayan, with the Neelkanth peak in the background. The presiding deity at the Badrinath temple is Shri Badrinath (Vishnu). The Badrinath temple stands in a beautiful valley on the bank of River Alakananda. The origins of the Badrinath temple may be traced to Adi Shankaracharya (8th century). In the 8th century AD Adi

Sankaracharya came to Badri and restored the ancient Badrinath idol from the Narad Kund and consecrated it in a cave near Tapt Kund. The present temple was built by the Garhwal rulers. Tapt Kund, the hot water spring with natural curative properties believed to be the abode of Lord Agni, faces the shrine. The pilgrims take a holy dip in the Tapt Kund before entering the temple. The temple remains closed from October to April due to the winter snow, when temperatures fall to sub-zero degrees.

There are four other shrines (dedicated to Lord Vishnu) near Badrinath shrine. They are Yogadhyan Badri, Bhavishya Badri, Bridha Badri and Adi Badri. Not far from the Badrinath temple is the Hemkund Lake. According to legends, Guru Govind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, meditated on the banks of this Lake. The other places of worship in Badrinath are Gupt kashi (Ardh -Narisvara and Viswanath temples), Kedarnath temple, Vyas Gufa and Ganesha Gufa (where saint Vyas is said to have dictated the Mahabharata to Ganesha).

DWARKA

Dwarka, situated on the west coast of Gujarat on the shore of the Arabian Sea, was the seat of Sri Krishna after He quit Mathura, His



maternal home, to come and reign here. It is said that Lord Krishna, after slaying Kansa, left his abode at Mathura and travelled with the entire Yadava community to the coast of Saurashtra where he founded a town and named it Swarnadwarika. Vajranabh, Lord Krishna's successor and great grandson, is believed to have built the present temple Dwarkanath, also called Trilok Sundar. It is said that the temple was erected in one night by a supernatural agency, under Vajranabh's direction. Legend has it that when dying, Lord Krishna asked his devotees to leave Swarnadwarika so that the sea could engulf it. Until this day, Lord Krishna's city lies buried under the sea. Excavations have revealed that the sea swallowed five settlements, the present-day Dwarka being the sixth in line.

The temple of Dwarkadhish, also known as Jagat Mandir, is built on the north bank of the

Gomti creek. The temple dates back to 2,500 years. Sixty columns support the roof of the audience hall of the Jagat Mandir. The main temple is five-storey high with the lavishly carved conical spire rising to a height of 157 feet.

Among the large number of temples belonging to different periods in the history of Dwarka, the most popular with pilgrims is the temple of Rukmini, Lord Krishna's wife, who is considered an incarnation of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and beauty. This small temple is an architectural masterpiece. The temple walls are decorated with beautiful paintings depicting Rukmini's pastimes with Krishna. This temple is dating back to the 12th century.

The story behind this temple is that one day, Durvasa Muni, who was known as a saint who could be easily angered, was invited by Lord Krishna and his wife, Rukmini, to dinner. When a person is invited to dinner, etiquette dictates that the host should not eat until the guest has been satisfied. On the way to dinner, Rukmini became thirsty and asked Krishna for help. Krishna then put his foot in the ground and the Ganges water flowed forth from the earth. As Rukmini was drinking the water, however, Durvasa turned and saw her drinking without his permission. He became angry and cursed her to live apart from Lord Krishna. That is why Krishna's temple is in the town and hers is located outside the town.

RAMESHWARAM

Rameshwaram is a town in Ramanathapuram district in the state of Tamil Nadu. It is located on an island separated from mainland by the Pamban channel and is less than 40 kilometres from the Jaffna Peninsula of Sri Lanka. Together with Kashi, it is considered to be one of the holiest places of Hindu pilgrimage.



Rameshwaram is significant for the Hindus because it is, firstly, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, and secondly, it is said in the scriptures that a pilgrimage to Varanasi to pay homage to Lord Vishwanath is incomplete without also paying homage to Lord Ranganatha at Rameshwaram. Rameshwaram is called the "Varanasi of the South".

The presiding deity here is in the form of a Linga with the name Sri Ramanatha Swamy. Different rulers built the Ramanatha Swamy Temple over a period of time starting from the 12th century. The temple comprises forty wells where the taste of the water of each well is different from the other. The grandest part of the temple is the corridor said to be the longest in the world. The outer wing of the corridor measures 690 ft in the east-west direction and 435 ft in the north-south direction. There are a total number of 1212 pillars or columns each sculptured to a similar profile and these frame the corridor on either side. The height of this corridor is 22 ft.

According to the Puranas, the sages and 'rishis', assembled in Rameshwaram to receive Rama and Sita on their way from Lanka to Ajodhya, advised Rama that as he had killed Ravana, a brahmin, he should atone for his sin of 'brahmahatya' by performing a purificatory rite in front of a Lingam. As there was no Lingam available, Rama asked Hanuman to obtain one from Lord Shiva himself from Mount Kailash. Hanuman went to Mount Kailash and sat in prayer to Lord Shiva requesting for a Sivalingam. Days passed and Hanuman had not returned. As the auspicious time was approaching, Sita moulded a Sivalingam out of sand and Rama performed his purificatory rite in front of this Lingam. Later Hanuman arrived with his Lingam given by Lord Shiva and was dejected to find

that his efforts were in vain. Lord Rama seeing his dejection told him to throw away the Lingam made out of sand and to install the Lingam given to him. Hanuman then tried to lift the Sivalingam already installed but could not move it. So Rama advised him to install his Sivalingam near the one already there and requested all his followers to worship this Lingam first before worshipping the Lingam installed by him. So this practice continues until this day as the devotees first offer prayers to this Lingam from Mount Kailash as Visvanathar before offering prayers to Lord Ramanathaswamy.

One of the most significant mythological landmarks in Rameshwarpuram is the Gandhamardhan Parvat (a hill) on top of which Rama's footprint is still found embedded.

Sethu Karai is a place 22 km before the island of Rameshwaram from where God Ram built a Floating Stone Bridge "Ramasethu" till Rameshwaram that further continued from Dhanushkodi in Rameshwaram till Talaimannar in Sri Lanka as mentioned in the great Hindu epic Ramayana. The ruins of the Ramasethu are submerged under the sea as shot from Gemini 1 satellite of NASA in 2004.

PURI

Puri is a small coastal town of Orissa, situated on the shoreline of the Bay of Bengal, about sixty kilometers from the capital city of Bhubaneswar. The resident deity at the main temple of this dham is Lord Jagannath (Lord of the Universe). He is present together with His elder brother Balabhadra and His sister Subhadra.

The temple, dating back to the twelfth century, was built by an Oriya king Chodagangadeva but legend has it that it has been



there since time immemorial. The temple is a huge tall structure and dominates the seaside town. The distinct identity of the icons of the temple is that all the deities are handleless. Legend has it that Vishwakarma Himself carved the idols out of wood. When the time came to make the idols Vishwakarma ordered for special wood and went into the temple. He stipulated that He would close the doors of the temple and would remain inside

till the idols were ready. Before that time no one was to enter the temple. Unfortunately, moved by the impatience of his queen, the king had the doors opened before Vishwakarma came out. When they went in they found that the God had carved all the idols up to their elbows. He was about to put on the hands but this was not to be as Vishwakarma angrily went away from there and was never seen again! So the unfinished idols had to be set in the temple and worshipped. So Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra are handleless.

The idols are newly carved out of wood from specially-grown Neem trees every 12 to 19 years according to the lunar calendar. Another unique feature of the Puri Jagannath Temple is the Ratha Yatra. The three deities are boarded onto very large wooden chariots and drawn by stout ropes by millions of devotees who gather in Puri at this time to participate in one of the holiest rituals in Hinduism.

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Purusottama - Jagannath and Purusottama - Puri : Its Origin and Antiquity

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The origin and antiquity of Purusottama-Jagannath and Purusottama Kshetra -Puri remains unsolved. Evidences suggest that from very ancient times, Purusottama Jagannath was being worshipped at Purusottam Kshetra. The word Purusottama is formed by the combination of two words such as Purusa and Uttam, this means the best of all men. There is a reference to Purusa in Vedas. In Vedas we do not find any mention of the word Purusottam. This is used with reference to Virata Purusa. In Sanskrit literature, the name Purusottam Jagannath is not exclusively used to denote Jagannath of Puri.¹ In Upanisadas the word 'Purusa' has been interchangeably used with 'Atma'-Soul and 'Brahma'- Supreme Soul. The use of the term Purusa in the sense of human being is found in Chandogya, Taittiriya, Bruhadaranyaka, Prasana and Mundaka Upanisadas. It is used in the sense of Jiva or individual soul in Bruhadaranyaka, Chandogya, Katha, Svetaswatara and Prasana Upanisadas. In some other passages of the Upanisadas, the term Purusa has been referred in the sense of Divyapurusa, a divine entity. In some of the texts of the later Upanisads we find the term used almost exactly in the sense of Brahman, one who is immortal.² It is thus clear that in the Upanisads, Purusa is a philosophical term which is used besides in the usual sense of Man or person. While Vedanta prefers the term. 'Atman' and 'Brahman',

Nyaya and Yoga prefers the terms Jiva and Iswara. The word Purusottam has been used in Srimad Bhagavatgita. Bhagavatgita says that there are two types of Purusa, the perishable one and imperishable one. The Purusasukta also speaks of two forms of Purusa, one higher and the other lower. The Universe emerges out of the different parts of the body of this lower form of Purusa, where as the higher form of Purusa is Lord of the mortality and the immortality.³

Thus the term Purusottam generally stands for Vishnu in literature. But in Vaisnava Agamas It is identified as a special deity which represents particular aspects of Visnu such as Madhava, Narayana and Damodara, all of which are considered as different aspects of Visnu. Saradatilak the famous tantric work written by Lakshmana Desika of Kashmir towards the end of the 10th or the 11th century classifies Visnuite deities in three broad heads; Visnu, Nrusimha and Purusottam. The term Visnu represents Bhagabata-Vasudeva aspect, Nrusimha the furious or violent aspect and Purusottam the amorous aspect of the same God. In the Sridhara aspect of Purusottama, He is worshipped as consort of Laxmi, in His Krishna aspect as the beloved of Gopis etc. The most important of all the forms of Purusottama, as Visnu conceived of as the God of love, in other words a combination of Rama and Visnu. Purushottam thus unites in



Himself the characteristics of the husband of Laxmi, Krisnaa and of Ramaa. All of these characteristics are present in the nature of Purusottama- Jagannath of Puri.⁴

The Ksetramahatmyas of Jagannath Puri have been discussed in Brahma Purana written in about 1030 A.D.,⁵ Narada Purana, Kapila Samhita (1350 A.D), Skanda Purana composed in about 11th-12th century A.D.,⁶ Padma Purana, Vamadeva Samhita and also Niladri Mahodaya. The Brahma Purana describes 'Purusottama' as one, whose principal attribute is that He is conceivable only in terms of contradictory qualities of Dharmas.⁷ The Ramayana uses the term Maryada Purusottama for one who, like Rama is always ready to attend to the call of duty.⁸ Matsya Purana, one of the earlier among the eighteen Puranas, refers to Purusottama as the name of both a sacred place and the deity there in.⁹ Padma Purana identifies Purusottama with Ramachandra of the Ramayana and Mahalaxmi with Sita.¹⁰ In the Mahabharata, Jagannath is mentioned in connection with the thousand names of Vishnu.¹¹ In the Vishnu Purana, Krishna is addressed both as Purusottama and Jagannath.¹² In the Vamana Purana (7th century) Vishnu is prayed by Aditi as Jagannath.¹³ In the Sasthamuttara Khanda of Padma Purana, Purusottama is taken for a sacred month, although in its Kriya Yoga Sara Khanda, it is merely another name for Jagannath.¹⁴ In the times of Garuda Purana, Purusottama had already become well known.¹⁵ Purusottama in this Purana, becomes synonymous with such other names as Govinda, Keshaba, Damodara, Vishnu, Tribikrama, Narayana, Hari and Vasudeva.¹⁶ In Agni Purana, Purusottama has been described in terms of the attributes of Salagrama, which in turn is the same as Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Krishna, Vishnu, Nrusimha, Vamana, Tribikrama, Ananta, Damodara and Sudarshana. The Purusottama Mahatmya has identified Purusottama with

Vishnu, Krisna and Jagannath. In it Purusottama is depicted as one who sees all in the Universe and as Parameswara, who sports the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. He is none but Narayana, Vishnu or Jagannath, the holder of conch, disc, mace and the lotus, and is the granter of the four vargas, i.e. piety, prosperity, pleasure and salvation. He pervades the whole universe and, at the time of deluge, He contains the entire universe in Him.¹⁷

Purusottama Ksetra-Puri has been described in the Puranas as the most sacred place in Bharata Varsa. It is the ksetra where the God Purusottama made his perpetual abode, Vaikuntha Bhubana. The sacred place, according to the tradition, existed even during the great universal deluge and also in the beginning of this creation. Its greatness is unparalleled, its importance is unique and its sanctity is unquestionable.¹⁸ The Kapila Samhita refers to the land as the one "that takes away sin". There are Puranic view on Purusottama Ksetra. The Matsya Purana, among the oldest of the Puranas, refers to Purusottama Ksetra twice, though it is silent on Jagannath,¹⁹ while mentioning only about the deity Vimala. The sacred tract is also known as Sankha Khetra in the Utkala Khanda of Skanda Purana. One conspicuous point of " Purusottama Ksetra Prasasti" of this Purana, as also of Nilamani Purana, is that these speak of Jagannath being established on Nrusimha hymns.²⁰

In Purusottama Mahatmya, Jagannath has been described as a Vedic deity. Here epithets like Ekapada, Tripada, Tirthapada, Antariksapada are used for Jagannath. It is also mentioned here that the river Ganges, flowing from His feet, sanctifies the whole world. This is one of the characteristics of Vaisnavism in Jagannath culture. He is also known as Darubrahma (the image made of Daru). He is Brahma of the Vedanta and in this form, Vidyapati saw Him at



Nilachala. He is the source and soul of the universe. He is described as the Sabda Brahma and the creator of the universe. He is embodiment of sense and pleasure. There is no difference between Vishnu of Sweta-Dwipa and Jagannath Himself. He is also known as Ramaanatha or the husband of Ramaa i.e. Laksmi.²¹

In Sanskrit literature, the word Purusottma or Jagannath is not exclusively used to denote Jagannath of Puri. Kalidas refers to Purusottama as a name for Vishnu in the Raghuvamsa.²² Murari Mishra in his Anargha Raghava mentions Purusottama.²³ Krushna Misra in his Prabodha Chandrodaya makes a reference to the temple of Purusottama in the Utkal Desha.²⁴ The Kalabiveda of Jimutavahana (1100-1150 A.D) informs us that it is highly meritorious to observe full moon day at Purusottama in the month of Jyestha. Lakshmidhara in the Tritha Bibechana Kandam of Kritya Kalpataru mentions Purusottama as a famous place of pilgrimage. The Barhaspatya Arthasastra refers to Purusottma as one of the eight Vaishnaba tirths of India.²⁵ The Kalika Purana refers to Orissa as the seat of Goddess Katyayani and God Jagannath. The Pithanirnaya, a tantric text of the late medieval period, refers to Jagannath. The literary dates are also corroborated by epigraphic evidences. There are epigraphic reference to Purusottama Jagannath, which help us to establish His historicity on very solid foundation.

Epigraphic References:

The Sirpur Stone Inscription of Mahasivagupta Balarjuna begins with invocation of God Purusottama.²⁶ The Maihar Plate of Damodaradeva also begins with praise of Purusottama.²⁷ Purusottama mentioned in these records can hardly represent Purusottama of Puri. Similarly, the Kalian copper plate inscription refers to king Sridharana Rata of Samatata as a devotee of Purusottama.²⁸ The most valuable reference

to Purusottama is that found in the Sarada Devi temple inscription of Maihar of Madhya Pradesh.²⁹ Purusottama mentioned in the inscription is no other than the deity of Puri, who has already become famous by the middle of the 10th century A.D.³⁰ The copper plates of Eastern Chalukya king Rajaraja-1 discovered from Korumelli begin with Sridhamnah Purusottamasya.³¹ The Nagpur inscription of the Paramaras of Malwa mentions God Purusottama in the vicinity of the eastern ocean.³² The Pujaripali inscription of Gopala mentions Purusottama as an important tirtha of India.³³ In the inscription discovered from Govindapur poet Gangadhara states that his father Manoratha visited Purusottama.³⁴ As the inscription is dated in Saka year 1059 (1137-38), this proves the popularity of Purusottama as a tirtha and the close religious contacts between Bihar and Orissa in the 12th century A.D. The Edilpur grant of Kesavasena says that Lakshmana Sena (1179-1205 A.D.) established a sacrificial pillar at Purusottama.³⁵ The Kalindi grant of Rajaraja I, the Eastern Chalukya king, which is undated, describes in its introductory verses the Brahma is born from the lotus, which grows from the navel of the great Lord Narayana-Purusottama at Sridhama,³⁶ The undated Pujaripali inscription of Gopaladeva refers to Purusottam among a list of holy places.³⁷

Copper Plates Grant:

In many copper plates dating from 8th century A.D. mention of individuals bearing the name of Purusottama also substantiates the wide popularity of Purusottama Jagannath. Mention may be made of Dandi Mahadevi's gift of land to one Bhattaputra Purusottama.³⁸ A similar grant of the village Rasambha in Kangoda Mandala is another such instance. Similarly a poet, Bhatta Purusottama by name, find mention in the Brahmeswar temple inscription of Udyota Kesari of 11th century A.D. Parama Saugata



Subhakaradeva-I's Neulpur plate of 8th century speaks of many persons bearing the name of Purusottama, Balabhadra and Haladhara. Purusottama Ksetra finds mention as one of the holy places in the Pujaripali inscription of 11th century A.D.³⁹ The Boramdeo inscription of 11th century refers to Purusottama Ksetra and it is one of the earliest epigraphical references.⁴⁰ According to D.C. Sircar, "The language of the verse 27 of the Nagari copper plate seems to suggest that Purusottama had been in worship for many years before the conquest of that region by Chodaganga."⁴¹ The Nagpur stone inscription of the rulers of Malava (1104 A.D.) does refer to Purusottama Ksetra. The Nagari Plate of Anangabhima-III describes the place as Purusottama Ksetra. The 12th century inscription of Malava Raja of Nagpur includes a reference to Purusottam Ksetra. This reason enough to conclude that Purusottama and His Ksetra were quite popular even before the advent of imperial Gangas. The name Purusottama Ksetra in the form of Purusottam Chhatar or only in the form of Chhatar was used by the Mughal, the Maratha as well as the early British rulers.⁴² The city is referred to as Purusottama in Kalika Purana and in Yoginitantra.⁴³

The Vishnudharmottara while enumerating the main centers of Krushna worship states that Krushna was worshipped as Purusottama in the Odra century.⁴⁴ This would certainly suggest that Purusottama existed prior to the third century A.D. and had been incorporated into the fold of Vaishnavism. For a long period we get no reference to Jagannath, and these passing reference when co-ordinated together help us to place Jagannath in a proper historical perspective.

The first epigraphic reference regarding the construction of the present Purusottama temple by Chodaganga Deva is found in the Dasagoba Copper Plate Grant of his grandson Raja Rajadeva III issued in 1198 A.D.⁴⁵ Pandit

Krupasindhu Mishra has mentioned in his book 'Utkal Itihas' that Jagannath temple has been constructed during 100-200 century B.C.⁴⁶ According to Dr. Satyanarayan Rajguru, the name of this Ksetra was Purusottama, or Purusa Mandapa and in this Purusapura, Purusottama was worshipped much before 4th Century A.D.⁴⁷ The Chinese traveller Hieun Tsang, who visited Orissa in 638 A.D., does not specifically refer to the deity Purusottama Jagannath. It may be possible that Purusottama Jagannath existed during his time. Hieun Tsang mentions a city called che-li-ta-lo on the south-east of Odra (Wucha) country near the ocean shore.⁴⁸ In Mon documents Sriksetra is mentioned as the name of Prome. Reference to Sri Kshetra or Prome is also found in the account of the Chinese traveller I-tsing. The term Sri Ksetra is the abbreviated form of the fuller name Sri Purusottama Ksetra i.e. the Ksetra of the God Sri Purusottama. It is another name of Puri. Till the end of the 12th Century A.D. in all the inscriptions (copper plate grants) and in the important literary works the name of the presiding deity of the Ksetra was stated as Sri Purusottama. The Kurmeswar temple inscription of 1230 A.D. is the first record to refer to Jagannath as the presiding deity of the Ksetra.⁴⁹ Sri Kurmam inscription clearly refers to Sri Jagannath as king and Anangabhima as Raut. During the period of Anangabhima III the Muslims were already powerful on the frontier of the Ganga Kingdom and they posed a great danger to the safety and security of the kingdom. The regional Hindu powers were also not united. During that critical phase Anangabhima attempted to safeguard the vast Ganga kingdom in South-Eastern India by the support of local religious force. For that purpose Purusottama was declared as Lord of the Ganga kingdom and the Ganga King himself became His Raut⁵⁰ and ruled the Kingdom on behalf of Lord Jagannath. The name was changed from Purusottama to Jagannath to



suit to different sections of religious belief such as Buddhists, Jains, Saivas, Vaishnavas and Saktas. Thus Purusottama became Jagannath during the reign of Anangabhimadeva III and from this period the kingship of Jagannath was well known.⁵¹ In the sculptures of Konark temple there is representation of the image of Purusottama-Jagannath along with Sivalinga and Durga in three panels. Thus it is clear from various sources, inscriptions, religious texts as well as secular literary works, that Jagannath Worship had made progress and His fame spread even beyond the region of its origin. The available epigraphic evidences however, clearly prove that by the 10th-11th century A.D., the fame of Puri as the seat of Purusottama - Jagannath had become well-established.

Jagannath makes His appearance in history, according to W.W. Hunter, in 318 A.D. when the priests fled with His image to escape the wrath of Raktabahu and his band of plunderers. Murari Misra's Anargharaghava Natakam refers to God Purusottama who was being worshipped on the seashore.⁵² That there was an earlier temple of Jagannath at Purusottama Ksetra prior to the present one built by Chodaganga Deva in 12th Century A.D. is proved by the mention 'Devayatana' of God Purusottama in Krishna Misra's "Prabodha Chandrodaya Natakam". Purusottama in Odra is mentioned in the Saradadevi temple inscription. The sanctity of this place and of its presiding deity must have gained wider acceptance after the construction of the temple, as is apparent from the Kapilasa Inscription of Narasimha I (1246-53A.D.) which describes Purusottama as Chaturdasabhubanadhipati or Lord of the Fourteen Worlds. Epigraphic sources reveal that the Inscriptions of Bhanudeva II (1306-1328 A.D.) of Ganga dynasty make the first mention of the name, 'Jagannath'. Whether in literature or in the inscriptions of the Gajapati period, both the names

of Purusottama and Jagannath are found to denote the presiding deity of Puri. Earlier to the Maihar Copper plate is the Kailan Copper plate of the Samatata Chief Sridharana Rata (2nd half of 7th century A.D.). This chief was a 'Parama Vaisnava' declaring therein that Purusottama is creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. The name Purusottama, used here to describe Visnu, can alone pertain of Purusottama Jagannath of Puri for simple reason that, there is no evidence to show that Visnu goes by this name anywhere else other than Orissa.⁵³ The Barhaspatya Sutram speaks of Purusottama Ksetra as a conspicuous centre of Vaisnavism. "The name Purusottama Ksetra was also for sometime known as Purusottama Puri and the word Purusottama Ksetra or Chhatra, so also Purusottama Puri was expressed in the contracted form⁵⁴ of Purusottama or Puri. An inscription of Anangabhim III of the Ganga dynasty (Saka era 1158 or 1236 A.D.) in the Pataleswara Temple inside the premises of the Jagannath temple makes mention of 'Halin' (Balaram), 'Chakri' (Jagannath-Visnu) and 'Subhadra'. His daughter Chandrikedevi's inscription (Saka 1200 or 1278 A.D.) regarding the Purusottama temple at Ekamra (The Ananta Basudeva temple of Bhubaneswar) toes the line in speaking of Bala (Balaram), Krisna (Purusottama Visnu) and Subhadhra. These wooden deities, prone to appear as in completely visually, "are conceived of images with fully developed iconography.⁵⁵ The incomplete wooden images of the deities may be ascribed to their Savara origin, but there are discernible symptoms of Krisna Vasudeva Worship of the Bhagabata cult during the Pan-Indian Influence of Vaisnavism under the Imperial Guptas on Jagannath. An interesting amalgamation of sculptural pieces from the ruins of Teligarh temple near Dhanmandal Railway Station in Cuttack district probably belonging to 13th century A.D. on the basis of their sculptural style,



which was definitely not prior to the Konark style shows Jagannath on a chariot.⁵⁶

The name of Jagannath is used for the first time in the inscriptions of king Bhanudeva II (1306-1328A.D.).⁵⁷ The description of the deity in the early Ganga period was Purusottama or Purusottama-Jagannath. During the reign of Bhanudeva II, a feudatory chief had made gifts at Srikurmam "in the 3rd Anka of Jagannath Deva when Sri Bhanudeva was ruling."⁵⁸ According to the Puri Grant of 1313 Bhanudeva had granted villages in the 7th Anka of Purusottama Deva. Thus in a private record Purusottama comes to be called Jagannath. It appears to be the earliest epigraphical reference to the name, 'Jagannath'. However, being descriptive epithets, Jagannath, Lord of Universe and Purusottama, the Supreme Being are but derivatives of the description of the Supreme Lord as 'Purusottama' in the Bhagavat Gita⁵⁹ or Jagannath in Valmiki's Ramayan.⁶⁰ Achutananda Das, in his 'Sunya Samhita' speaks of the ten divine incarnations originating from, and plunging into the 'Daru' form on the Ratnasimhasana of Puri temple.⁶¹ That Krishna Vasudeva is none other than Jagannath is the contention of Balaram Das in his Gita.⁶² Sarala Mahabharat speaks of the mortal remains of Krishna Vasudeva being contained in the wooden image of Jagannath.⁶³ Jagannath Caritamruta narrates that Jagannath is Purna Brahman, the very apotheosis of Sat, Chit and Ananda. The Prema Bhakti Bramha Gita of Yasobanta Das mentions the affinitive relationships between the 'Harekrishna' mantra and the 'Chaturdhamurti' at Puri by identifying 'Ha' with Subhadra, Re with Baladeva as the husband of Rebati, 'Kr' or Krishna with Jagannath and 'Shna' with 'Sudarsana Chakra'.⁶⁴ Purusottama and Jagannath are not simply 'identical simpliciter'; they are identical. The popularity of Purusottama Jagannath was increased by the construction of a grand temple by Chodagangadeva. The copper plates of his

successors mention that the task of building a temple for the God Purusottam has been neglected by the previous kings but it was accomplished by Gangeswara i.e. Chodaganga Deva. It was the subsequent patronage of Ganga and Gajapati rulers, and the devotional literature of poet-philosophers of Orissa, that paved the way for the popularity of Lord Jagannath. The deity, as we find it today, is a deity on which we can trace various influences. He has absorbed in himself various elements from different religions in different periods, to meet the spiritual needs of the changing times. In this process, Jagannath has become an inseparable ingredient of Orissan Culture.

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Abbreviation

1. EI - Epigraphia Indica
2. IHQ - Indian Historical Order.
3. MHS - Mahakosal Historical Society.
4. JAS - Journal of Asiatic Society.
5. OHRJ - Orissa Historical Research Journal.
6. ODG - Orissa District Gazetteer.
7. OR - Orissa Review.
8. MP - Matsya Purana.
9. PP - Padma Purana.
10. VP - Visnu Purana.
11. GP - Garuda Purana.
12. PM - Purusottama Mahatmya.
13. UP - Utkal Prasanga.
14. Rg. V - Rig Veda.
15. JC - Jagannath Cult.
16. JKHRS - Journal of Kalinga Historical Research Society.
17. KHRJ - Kalinga Historical Research Journal.
18. SP - Skanda Purana.
19. CJ - Cult of Jagannath.
20. HMVO - History of Medieval Vaishnavism in Orissa.

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Ahom Royal Patronage for Puri Jagannath Temple

Paban Kumar Kalita

Puri, otherwise known as Shri Kshetra or Purushottama Kshetra, the abode of Lord Jagannath has been a place of pilgrimage since time immemorial. Like people of other parts of India the people from Assam also flock to Puri round the year. The magnificent temple dedicated to Lord Jagannath is a well known pilgrim centre for the people of Assam. The great Vaisnava saint Sankardeva visited Puri along with his disciples. In *Guru Charita Katha* great details of his pilgrimage have been narrated. He had made a tremendous effect on the cultural, spiritual and religious atmosphere of the then state of Orissa for which a lot of followers of Sankardeva were created and Kabi Govinda Nayak was one among them. He had composed a biography entitled



Sankar Gosain Charita in Vrajaboli language. From the historical evidence it can be inferred that the temple was enjoying royal patronage not only from the ruling dynasties of Orissa but also

from Ahom kings of Assam. The copper plate issued by king Siva Singha is one such evidence. The Puri Copper Plate of Siva Singha is now with the Assam Panda family of Jagannath Temple. Sri Raghunath Mahapatra, Sri Sudarsan Mahapatra and Sri Bhuban Mahapatra Lal Moharia, family members of the said family helped me in getting the first hand information about the plate. The plate is 16 inches in length and

12 inches in breath. There is a *sloka* glorifying the Lord Jagannath. The copper plate was the Royal Proclamation in favour of Siva Sankara



Mahapatra who was appointed as priest of Assam at Jagannath Temple. The Proclamation requested the Burha Gohain, Phukan, Bezbaruah, Hatibaruah, Bujarbarua, Baruah, Mahanta and disciples of four *Sattras* as well as all subjects of the state who goes for pilgrimage to Puri in order to pay homage to Lord Jagannath, to do the rituals through the above mentioned Panda and give strict instructions not to violate the royal order. It is also described in the plate that formerly Ram Chandra Mahapatra, father of Siva Sankar Mahapatra was appointed as Assam Panda by King Rudra Singha for the benefit of the pilgrims. The copper plate was issued on 12 *chaitra* in the *Saka* 1714. It is worth mentioning that there are some other valuable paper documents related to the Panda family issued by other Ahom Kings, Satradhikars and leading Assames gentlemen, which are in the possession of the Assam Panda family.

The Puri copper plate of Siva Singha and other documents point to the popularity of Puri as a place of pilgrimage and the close religious and cultural relations between Assam and Orissa. It should be mentioned that the descendents of Siva Sankara Mahapatra still performs the service of Panda for the people of Assam following the royal instruction. They also take care of pilgrims going to Puri by providing accommodation in their

residence. The name and address of the pilgrims are being recorded in a book known as 'Karija' and pilgrims put their own signature in a register. The pilgrims may donate their offerings to Lord Jagannath through the Panda.

The Assam Panda can speak Assamese language fluently and is well known for their hospitality towards pilgrims. The temple of Jagannath has a strong link with Assam and Panda family plays a significant role in this regard. In the light of above historical link, the scholars may take initiative for future studies. The Sri Jagannath Research Centre of Puri and Sri Jagannath Central Library and Research institute, Puri can take initiative. The Assam State government and research institutions of Assam should take steps to strengthen the relations between Assam and Orissa. Now the 'Centre for Jagannath and Sankardev Consciousness' has undertaken scheme on this subject under the dynamic leadership of its President Renu Dutta Barphukan in co-operation with the scholars of both Assam and Orissa, and Assam Panda family.

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A Note on Jagannath Worship in Manipur

Dr. B. Tripathy

The North-Eastern region of India, consisted of the states of Assam, Manipur, Tripura and a number of tribal pockets before 1947, assumes much importance for the study of diverse culture and traditions that prevailed in the region throughout the ages. Besides the indigenous tribal religion, as practised by various tribes in the plains and the hills, the area has witnessed flourishing of Saivism, Vaishnavism, Saktism, Surya cult, Tantricism and Buddhism in early and medieval period of her history. The cult of Jagannath, a manifestation of god Vishnu, was also popular in some pockets of Assam,¹ Tripura and Manipur, as attested by literary, archaeological and oral traditions.

The state of Manipur, in the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, 'A Jewel of India'² can be divided into two geographical regions - the valley and the surrounding hills. The valley area, known as Imphal Valley is surrounded by hills, on all the sides,³ where various tribal groups have their settlements. The state is a landlocked one, connected with the neighbouring areas with a long border line, of which 352 kms are international borders with Myanmar (erstwhile Burma) on the east and Chin Hills of Myanmar on the southeast. At present the remaining 502 kms connect her with other neighbouring sister states of North-East India. Among the different ethnic groups of the

people of Manipur, the Meities of the valley are the most dominant one and are considered to be a very advanced community.⁴ Pakhangba, the founder of the Ningthouja dynasty in 33 AD, was the first known king of the history of Manipur,⁵ and after him a series of kings ruled over the kingdom of Manipur establishing a powerful kingdom consolidating many neighbouring areas.

Though some forms of Vaisnavism seem to have flourished in the state since the 8th century AD, it became firmly established during the reign of Kiyamba in the 15th century.⁶ During the period of king Charairongba (1697-1709) Vaishnavism had its sound footing in the soil of Manipur. We are told in a traditional Meiti literature, entitled *Bamon Khunthoklon* that the Brahmana inhabitants of Tripura, Bengal, Mathura and Orissa migrated to Manipur during this period. The king is said to be the first Manipur king to be formally initiated into Vaisnavism.⁷ The literature further mentions that from Svetaganga Puri came a pious Brahmana named Krishna charya alias Rai Banamali with some of his companions in October 1703 AD. His wife Krisnamayi, two Sudras and a Brahmana named Balabhadra Brahmachari are mentioned as members of his party.⁸ The pilgrims were received favourably by the king. It is stated that Rai Banamali introduced king Charairongba to profess



the Vaisnavite faith. The king along with his courtiers said to have performed a fast on Wednesday about April 15, 1704 and formally initiated to Vaisnavism.⁹ Banamali's descendants are called Guru Aribam. The king said to have acknowledged his gratitude to his preceptor by assigning a place of honour to him and to his descendants in festivals and ceremonies held in the palace. The king said to have placed a village, a hill and 100 acres of rice field at the Guru's disposal. He constructed a brick temple of Radhakrishna at Brahmapur Guru Aribam Leikai. A nine-round brick house was also constructed in the honour of the Guru, which was destroyed by the Burmese in the early part of the 19th century.¹⁰ Thus the coming of the Guru from Puri was a turning point in the history of Vaishnavism in Manipur. In this connection, it is to be noted that cultural interaction of various states of Northeast including Manipur with Orissa was already existed from early historical period.¹¹ Instances are there to show that Brahmin and Buddhist scholars from Orissa and Northeast were responsible for maintaining cultural contact between both the regions. It can be noted here that one Ganga king of Orissa Anantavarman Chodagangadeva issued a copper plate charter in 1122 AD¹² where the name of Brahmana, Visnusomacharya from Sringatikagrahar of Kamarupa Visaya belonging to Parasara gotra and well-versed in Veda and Vedanta was mentioned, who was honoured by the king at the time of his brother's daughter marriage. It is worth mentioning that the Tripura Maharaja Kalyan Manikya performed Tulapurushadanam, in which many renowned scholars from Mathura, Benaras, Orissa and Setubandha arrived to receive awards and *dakshinas* from the king in or around 1600 AD.¹³ The point to be emphasized here that Orissan culture was not unknown in some areas of Northeast India, and Puri had already earned

its name as the important centre of Vaishnavism in medieval period. It can be assumed that the Manipuri king would have invited the Vaisnava Guru to Manipur for propagation of Vaisnavism in early part of 18th century AD. After Charairongba, king Chourajit had his devotion towards Lord Chaitanya and said to have sent gold *tangas* to Puri, Nabadvip and Vrindaban to meet the expenses of the worship of Visnu.¹⁴ His successor, Garibniwaz was initiated into Vaisnavism and worked for its cause by patronizing Brahmins and constructing a number of Vaisnava monuments.¹⁵ Thus, we see, in the later part of 18th century, the root of Vaisnavism had already been strengthened in Manipur.

Here it may be mentioned that when Vaisnavism was becoming popular in the Valley of Manipur, the Vaisnava cult of Orissa in the form of Jagannath cult became already popular in some parts of Assam and Tripura, two neighbouring states of Manipur. The *Kalikapurana* (9th century) and the *Yogini Tantra* (16th century), two celebrated texts of Assam, popularized the concept of Jagannath by linking Him with the important Vaisnava *pithas* of Assam.¹⁶ The *Yogini Tantra*, while mentioning the greatness of Jagannath attempts to link the Hayagriva Pitha of Kamarupa with that of Jagannath at Puri, which is reflected in an Assamese text *Manikuta* of 1680 AD.¹⁷ Interestingly enough, the Ahom ruler of medieval Assam, said to have sent one delegation to Puri for the worship of Jagannath, which is well-attested in the *Buranjis*, traditional court literature of the Ahoms.¹⁸ The biographies of Sankaradeva have dealt extensively regarding the impact of god Jagannath on the life and deeds of Sankaradeva, the *Mahapurusha* of Assam, who said to have visited Puri once in 1490 AD and again in 1550 AD.¹⁹ The writings of Sankaradeva attests to the fact. The popularity of Jagannath in the socio-



religious life of the people is known from a copper plate land grant of 1787 AD,²⁰ remains of a number of Jagannath temples in lower Assam, oral traditions prevalent in Kamarupa, in sculptural and folk art of lower Assam.²¹ In the southern Assam territory of Cachar, the worship of Jagannath was not unknown, as revealed from British document of early 19th century.²² In the Jayantia Hill (now a part of Meghalaya state), there is one interesting information in the form of a land grant. The said grant mentions that one Queen Kasabati Debee, the consort of Bar Gosain, said to have made gifts of some land for the worship of Basudeva, Jagannath and Bhudhara (Subhadra) with the consent of Raja Ram Sinha in 1735 Saka (1813 AD).²³ Instance from Tripura refers to donation of fifteen drones of land to Brahmins to conduct the daily puja of Lord Jagannath in Tripura era 1186 (1766 AD) by king Maharja Krishnamanikya.²⁴ Even a few Jagannath temples were constructed in or around Agartala in 18th and 19th century AD. The above discussion makes it clear that already in the 18th century; the cult of Jagannath was not unfamiliar with some people of Kamarupa, Cachar, Tripura and Jayantia Hills.

Though Vaisnava cult of Puri gained ground in Manipur in 18th century, the beginning of Ratha yatra (car festival) of Jagannath started in Manipur only in 1832 AD, the credit for which goes to Manipuri king Gambhir Singh. The regional literature narrates one incident in connection with the beginning of Ratha yatra in the state. It is told how once the king of Manipur Gambhira Singh was invited by the British Government for taking part in the expedition against the Khasis. The Manipuri work, *khaki ngamba* provides a thrilling account of his exploits in war.²⁵ On Monday, April-May 1829, Gambhir Singh left Manipur for Sylhet and could defeat the Khasis, when at Sylhet he is reported to have quelled a communal riot

between the Muslims and the Hindus. It is mentioned that in the particular year, the Muharram and Ratha yatra occurred in the same day. The Nawab of Sylhet, Gonarkhan, requested the Hindus to defer the celebration of the Ratha yatra by one day. In the meantime Muslim subjects took law in their hands and assaulted the Hindus to dissuade them from observing the festival. Gambhir Singh dispersed the Muslims with the help of his troops. The grand festival in which the king and his people participated was held as scheduled. Gambhir Singh was hailed as a protector of Hinduism by the people of Sylhet. On his return to Manipur, he introduced the worship of Jagannath.²⁶ With his initiative, a twelve wheeled car was made and the *Jivanyasa* ceremony of Jagannath was performed on a grand scale. The images of Subhadra and Balabhadra were also carved. Infact, Gambhir Singh was responsible for introducing the festival of drawing the car by the people to the accompaniment of chorus song and dance.

The Rathayatra locally known as *Kangchingba* was thus introduced in 1832 AD in Manipur. The Manipuri Vaisnavites observe the Rathayatra of the Lord on the model of the Puri festival, which is revealed from a passage of the Meiti work *Kumbaba*.²⁷ It is a famous festival of nine day duration in the bright fortnight in the month of Ingen (June-July) with elaborate paraphernalia. Before fifteen days of the yatra, the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra are bathed on the day of *Snanayatra*. As per the tradition, on the day of the Rathayatra (2nd day of Ingen) at the main gate of the palace of the king at Imphal, thousands of people including the royalty, considered it auspicious to pull the ropes of the ratha. Every Krishna temple in the state observes the Ratha festival with the active support of the people, who contributes their mite to its success. The *Darbar* of Manipuri



Maharajas used to make special allotment of funds for the celebration of the chariot festival which every year starts from Sri Gobindaji temple near the royal palace at Imphal.

On the day of the yatra, the images are carried out on the Ratha to the accompaniment of music, offering of fruits by individual householders.²⁸ Sometimes persons stand behind the image and fan it with a yak tail fan, while in procession. The structure of the Ratha is like Kairen Kaijo and its *ambari* (head portion) takes the shape of Burmese *pagoda*. The daily recitation of Jayadeva's *Dasavatara* in the evening is an essential ingredient of the festival. In every village temple, *Dasavatara Stotra* is sung before Jagannath by old and young alike to the accompaniment of dances. The rite also sanctions the offering of rice and dal cooked in oil (Khichri) and the priests distribute the Prasad among the Vaisnavas. The Meiti including the royalty considered it auspicious to pull the ropes of the Ratha. The nine day programme of devotional music and dance is followed by the preparation of khichri and mangalutti on lotus leaves. Two kinds of dances i.e., the Jayadeva dance and Khubak Isei dance are the gift of Rathayatra to Manipur culture.²⁹ The Khubak Isei is the dance performed to the accompaniment of musical sounds made by the clapping of hands. It became popular in Manipur after the Manipuri accepted the Gaudiya form of Vaisnavism. In the Jagannath temple, Puri, when Chaitanya resided for the latter part of his life, the sight of the chariot of Jagannath threw the Gauranga into rapturous mood of Radha, feeling the pang of separation when Krishna was invited to participate in the function. In another instance, Radha fainted while Krishna left for Mathura in the chariot of Kamsa. The sentiment of separation is beautifully expressed in Khubak Isei. The dance is in two forms i.e., the *tandava* and the *lasya* form. If a villager is unable to

worship Jagannath with Khubak Isei, he is expected to invoke god by reciting the verse of Gitagovinda.

A few other rituals are performed by the Vaisnavite Meiti in the Jagannath temple. On the eleventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Ingen, the people observe Harisayana. In this festival, the idol of the Jagannath is laid in water ceremoniously. Hariutthana is celebrated on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Kartika which marks the awakening of god Jagannath from asleep. The ritual consists in the awakening of god and the performance of Kirtana. On this day, youths and virgins indulge in stealing the fruits and sugarcane from nearby fields. Congregational walking in the night sometimes leads to fighting and abduction of girls.³⁰

A number of Krishna temples are noticed in Manipur Valley of 18th - 19th century. The images worshipped in the village temples are those of Radha, Krishna, Jagannath, Subhadra, Balaram, Gopaladeva, Saligram, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Icons of wood of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra have been noticed in various parts of Manipur. A fine icon of Jagannath located at Bijoygovinda temple at Imphal is represented with arms but no hands and the body is without legs and head is almost flat. He is painted in black colour. Balabhadra and Subhadra are also of the same form though different in size and white in colour. These icons are dated to early part of 19th century.³¹

The traditional Meiti literature do mention regarding the visit of Manipuri Vaisnavites to Puri in the British period, which is well-supported by archival documents.³² It is told that the Vaisnavite Manipuri kings were kind to the mendicants coming from Puri, Sylhet and Nabadvipa. No doubt, Puri being the abode of Jagannath and



considered as a holy place for Vaisnavite Hindus, used to attract pilgrims from nook and corner of India including Manipur. Till today, Jagannath is worshipped by the Manipuri Vaisnavites with love and devotion.

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31. Singh Bheigya, S., Sculptures of Manipur in Bhaskar Chattarjee (ed) History and Archaeology, New Delhi, 1986, pp.186-190.
32. Archival Documents such as Charles Grome Report of 1803 (preserved in Orissa State Archive Bhubaneswar) mentions the flow of Pilgrimage from various parts of Nepal and North East India to Puri, the Jagannath Ksetra in early 19th century.

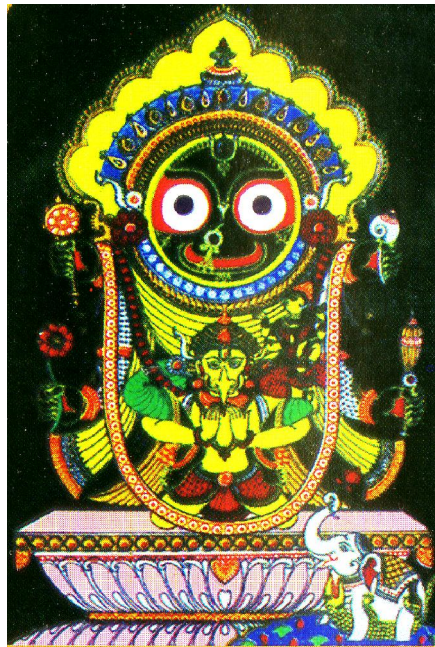
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Images of Sri Jagannath Installed Outside the Sanctum Sanctorum in the Grand Temple at Puri

Durgamadhab Dash

The images of seven gods have been installed on the Ratnavedi in the Grand Temple at Puri. The famous among them are the four gods known as "Chaturdha Murty" referring to Balabhadra, Subhadra, Jagannath and Sudarsan. The images of all the four deities are made of "Neem" wood. Sri Jagannath is adored as Lord Purusottam, the Lord of the Universe. In the traditional form of adoration, He is symbolic of all religions, all creeds and all doctrines of the world. Jagannath, in that way is a mysterious God on earth. The study of Jagannath Triad, therefore, holds much interest among the scholars and the readers of Jagannath religion. Though many things have been spoken about and many pages written about the great Lord, He still remains an enigma to all scholarly minds. His ways of worship are amazingly mysterious. Every item, every component and every feature of the religious shrine taken together constitute a sacred realism. Every such phenomenon has an esoteric reasoning in the background. The Jagannath Triad, in that way, is an inexplicable yet a fabulous corroboration of a great Divine Existence on earth.



Puri, for that reason, is known as Martya Baikuntha. Anybody who dies here, it is believed, has a direct sojourn to heaven.

Peculiarly enough, besides the main Lord on the 'Ratnavedi', four other images of Jagannath Mahapraphu have been consecrated at four different places in the Grand Temple. Two of them are within the inner compound (Bhitar Bedha) and the remaining two have been consecrated at places covered by the outer compound (Bahar Bedha) of Jagannath Temple. Each such deity has both historic and spiritual reasonings for its existence. The purpose of this article is to signify the implication of these four images in relation to Jagannath Religion and their mode of worship in the Grand Temple. The history of Jagannath religion, it may be mentioned, has provided ample space to all plausible reasonings pertaining to existence of these deities in the Temple. We may discuss them with required references in the following lines of the article.

The four images of the Lord, as aforesaid, are identified in different names.



The one installed in Gumuta Griha at the main entrance of the temple is worshipped as "Patitapaban Jagannath". The Lord in this form is consecrated here for the worship of one and all, particularly those who cannot enter the Temple premises for inadvertent religious reasons. History would say that the Temple had the necessity to install this deity in the Gumuta Griha near the eastern gate of the Temple, when the crown-ruler of the Temple, Ramachandradev (1732 to 1743 AD), under duress of inadvertent circumstances, had to marry a Muslim maiden, one of the daughters of Murshid Khan, a Muslim Commander to save the Temple from destructions by the Muslim rulers of the time. Nevertheless, the Lord was the Pujya Ista of Ramachandra Dev. He had the inherent institutional right to the worship of the deity as the Gajapati king of Utkala. How could that system be maintained? That was the concern of Pundits of the time. By marrying a Muslim maiden, the king had ruptured his religion. He became irreligious by his very behaviour. But sympathising with the king's ardent allegiance to Jagannath Dharma, and the 'Chaturdha Murti' on the Ratnavedi of the Temple, the Pundits had to make an alternative arrangement by way of a viable solution to the problem. An image of the Lord, as described above, was installed near the Simhadwar of the Temple as 'Patitapaban Jagannath' and the king had the privilege of 'darshan' of the Lord from the grand road, known as Badadanda. Since that day, it is said, Jagannath is worshipped as 'Patitapaban Jagannath' at this place.

We have another image of the Lord near the western Gali of the Temple. He is installed here in a small shrine known as "Charidham Mandir". Some also call it in the name of Rameswar Mandir. The image of Sri Jagannath is installed here among the representative images of Badrinath, Rameswaram and Dwarika. It is said in this connection that Sankaracharya had consecrated all the four images in this shrine. There

is a saying that if anybody has the 'darshan' of the four deities here, he or she will have the benefits of sacred visits to all the four pilgrim centres in one round. Poor and old pilgrims who cannot afford to visit the four pilgrim centres may have the darshan of the four lords over here. This is the religious significance of the shrine. The image of Jagannath installed here is worshipped as the Tirtheswar of Puri.

We now discuss about the other two images of Sri Jagannath as installed within the inner compound (Bhitar Bedha) of the Temple.

In the temple of Neelamadhab, we can see one such image of Lord Jagannath. He is installed in this temple by the side of Neelamadhab Mahaprabhu, the main deity of this subsidiary shrine. The image here is 3ft high. The two deities installed together go on to reveal that worship of Neelamadhab was the primary mode of adulation in the Grand Temple in the earlier years of Jagannath Religion.

The next in importance is the image of Sri Jagannath installed in a subsidiary shrine to the south of Kalpabata, the age old Banyan Tree of the Grand Temple. The image here is adored and worshipped as 'Bata Jagannath'.

The age-old Banyan Tree is worshipped in the Temple as Kalpa Bata. The Tree has been existing here since time immorial. "Kalpa Bata" is also known to the devotees in the names of Banchha Bata, Akhyaya Bata, Bedanasan Bata, Bansi Bata and so on. The image of Sri Jagannath installed here is named after this age old Banyan Tree as Bata Jagannath. Not only this. Many other deities like Bata Krishna, Bata Ganesh, Bata Mangala and Bata Markandeya have also been installed in the vicinity of this shrine and named after the said Banyan Tree. As described in 'Nitya Karma Paddhati', Kalpa Bata is worshipped as a god with the spiritual aura of Lord Vishnu. The devotees believe that Kalpa Bata, worshipped with profound faith, and devotion, is



graced to fulfill all their wishes. It is evident from the Puranas that during the period of deluge, Rishi Markandeya had prayed to and worshipped Lord Vishnu reposing on a leaf of banyan tree. In this analogy, Lord Vishnu, by the order of traditional worship, is associated with the banyan tree. The Kalpa Bata of the Grand Temple is thus the replica of Lord Jagannath. And so, whosoever is worshipping this Holy Tree shall be believed to be worshipping Lord Jagannath, the presiding deity of the Grand Temple. It is also believed in this connection that when the Temple of Lord Jagannath was consecrated by Anangabhim Dev, the then Gajapati King of Orissa, he had planted a banyan tree near the Havan Mandap in the Temple premises. The Kalpa Bata is the said Banyan Tree existing since that time. It is glorified over all these years as the sacred symbol of Lord Vishnu. Batabihari Jagannath has come to be adored as the replica of Lord Jagannath of the Ratnavedi.

Bata Jagannath is 5ft high evidently a little smaller than the main image of the Temple. The other two deities namely Balabhadra and Subhadra, have not been installed on the alter of this shrine. Although the practice of Jagannath Triad is in vogue in the cult of Sri Jagannath in general, Sri Jagannath at many places in Orissa is worshipped alone. Where he is worshipped alone, he is known as either Syamasundar or Patitapaban or Dadhibaman according to the local mode of worship and devotion. His car festival in these places is observed shorn of Balabhadra and Subhadra. For example, in Mirjapur under Dharmasala Block in the district of Jajpur, the car festival is celebrated with Sri Jagannath alone known as 'Syamasundar'. Likewise, in village, Digapahandi, in Ganjam district, the car festival is observed at two places in this village. At one place, it is observed with the Jagannath Triad. At the other place, it is observed only with the image of Sri Jagannath known as 'Dadhibaman'.

In the temple of Sri Bata Jagannath, an image of Mahalaxmi has been installed on the alter on the left side of Sri Bata Jagannath.

Be that as it may, the shrine here is important from the point of view of a noteworthy customary practice. In the temple of Bata Jagannath, there is vat-like water-place containing water to subserve a sacred purpose in the practice of worship in the Temple. The robes of the images are washed and cleaned at this place. In the western corner of the verandah of this temple, there is another such stone-vat containing water. Here, the servitors of the Lord wash their hands and legs before going to the main temple for the worship of the deities.

It may be mentioned here that because of Sri Bata Jagannath, the Grand Temple of the Lord had been protected on more than one occasion in the past against the invasions of Muslim rulers. During his reign, Rama Chandra Dev-I had a meeting with his principal counsels like Somanatha Bhatta Mishra and the 'Paricchhas' of the Temple. This was a crucial meeting during his time. It was decided in that meeting that whenever there was to be a Muslim invasion to Puri, the servitors were to shift Sri Bata Jagannath to the Kalahata entrance of the Temple to project the idol to the outside invaders as the main idol of the Temple. As, the Gajapati king observed, the main idols of the Temple could thereby be protected against defilement. That situation actually arose on more than one occasion in the past and the Jagannath Triad had been saved from dishonour by Muslim invaders. This is evident from the invasion of Kalapahad to the Grand Temple. Kalapahad led out an invasion to Puri Temple in 1568 AD. In his expedition, he succeeded in lifting the idol of Jagannath. It is said in this connection that he burnt the same on the bank of the Ganga. This demonic action had a devilish effect on the body of Kalapahad. His son therefore floated the half-charred Daru in the water of the Ganga. The Daru came floating in the holy water. People who saw



it floating thought it to be a charred fire-wood. Later, Bisar Mohanty a devotee of the Lord, identified the same as a piece of the 'Divine Daru'. He preserved it in the wooden case of his 'Mrudanga', a drum beaten by both hands during repetition of god's name, known as 'Samkirtan'. This Daru it is said, was ordered by Rama Chandra Dev, the then Gajapati king of Utkala, for preservation in the temple of Bata Jagannath. In 1576 AD Rama Chandra Dev got the new Divine images prepared and consecrated on the Ratnabedi of the Temple. From that time onwards was started the system of 'Mahaprasad' in the Grand Temple in a regular way.

Thus, as evident, the image of Bata Jagannath comes into prominence when the image of the Lord is absent from the Ratnabedi of the Grand Temple. Such situations generally arise during festivals like Ratha Yatra.

As per Puranic descriptions, King Indradyumna had begged from Lord Brahma a boon of universal worship of the Lord according to which the Lord was to be available to his devotees every day and at every moment for general worship in the Grand Temple. In the analogy of this spiritual boon, Bata Jagannath is, doubtless, an alternative divine arrangement. Accordingly, he is always available to the devotees for universal worship in the Grand Temple.

On the day of 'Snana Purnima', the Anasara rituals are observed in the temple of Bata Jagannath. This is almost akin to the practice being followed in the main Temple. The ritual of Nabakalebara is also observed in the temple of Bata Jagannath. The shrine here is entitled to receive a piece of Daru for this purpose from the Daru collected for Lord Jagannath. The 'Pinda' of Bata Jagannath is buried in 'Koili Baikuntha' during this ritual akin to the practice being followed in the cases of the Jagannath Triad. Here, Annaprasad is not obliterated like the practice

observed in the main Temple. The servitors offer dry 'bhog' to Bata Jagannath, which includes 'Ballav' (a type of dry sweetmeat), 'Kakara Pitha', (a type of sweet rice cake) and 'Kora', (a type of sweet coconut round roll).

Atibadhi Jagannath Das, the famous devotional poet of Bhakti cult had written his famous Oriya Bhagabat and other holy scriptures sitting in front of Batabihari Jagannath. He was also daily reading out the Bhagabat and explaining the meaning of the sacred couplets to the devotees who were assembling there to listen to the great poet. Not only this. It was here that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had met Jagannath Das, and conferred on him the title, 'Atibadhi' for his erudite spiritual expositions on the famous Bhagabat in Oriya. Atibadhi was functioning here as a professional 'Puran Panda'. It is for this reason that Bata Jagannath is spiritually adored as "Bhagabata Kalia" in the Grand Temple.

Acharya Baladev Vidyaratna had written here his famous commentary on 'Brahma Sutra', known as 'Govinda Bhasyam'. It is believed that Chandan Hajuri, a devotee of the Lord, by singing prayers and worshipping Bata Jagannath had attained spiritual realisation in his life.

Lord Jagannath, it is believed, has the spiritual aura of utmost divine resplendence. He is adored as the symbol of all religions and all creeds of the world. He has appeared at Puri as Patitapaban to atone the sins of his devotees. Bata Jagannath also appearing as Bata Patitapaban has a similar spiritual disposition. He is the replica of the main Lord in the Grand Temple. Here, many religious thinkers had exhibited their intellectual climax by worshipping the 'Bata Thakur' in the form of Daru Brahma of the main Temple.

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Antiquities of Shri Jagannath : Amazing Findings

Sasanka Sekhar Panda

The massive earthen mound contain cut stone blocks, round Amalaka in four pieces, broken Neel chakra in stone, which once adorned the temple top and other sculptures of historical importance. These antiquities were unearthed from the mound by Trilochan Bhoi, a villager of Kondh origin, almost single handed over a period of one year. Bhoi mentioned to me during my visit on 29th June 2004 that three handleless stone icons of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra were recovered from the mound and are presently kept in an adjoining hut



Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra

for worship. This discovery confirms the theory of construction of the oldest temple for the holy trinity by the Somavamsi king Yayatikeshari ninth century A.D. as mentioned in Madala Panji, the temple chronicle of Puri Jagannath temple. It may be relevant to mention that this author in one of his earlier visits to this temple site in 1985 had discovered a big stone slab engraved with "Astadala-Padma" design, besides stone amalaka and other temple sculptures scattered all around. He had also come across a huge stone block with

the image of "Anant Sayana Vishnu". This ancient sculptures since been shifted to a place on the right bank of river Tel, a tributary of Mahanadi. It seems, many other sculptures like the doorjamb with vase folige motif, Gajalaksmi and Nabagraha panel etc. were shifted from this site to a

neighbouring village Deulgudi about seventy years back. This is an extremely potential site which calls for a planned excavation by the State Archaeology. With the discovery of this anthropoid forms of Jagannath, Balabhadra and

Subhadra cast in stone, intriguing questions may be asked about the origin of Jagannath cult and present wooden form of holy trinity worshipped in the Jagannath temple of Puri. For the first time we get the anthropoid form of Jagannath sculpted in two panels on the walls of the famous 13th century Sun temple at Konark. In these panels, Balabhadra is shown as a Shivalinga and Subhadra has been depicted as Mahishamardini Durga. In one of these two stone panels, presently kept in the National Museum Jagannath is flanked

*Gajalakshmi*

by Durga on his right, whereas in the stone panel on the temple walls of Konark, he is flanked by Durga on his left. Positioning of Holy Trinity is not so relevant but depiction of Siva linga, anthropoid form of Jagannath and Durga depicted in both panels of Konark conclusively prove that during the reign of the Ganga king Narasimhadeva I (circa 1238-1264 A.D.) builder of Sun temple, the three images of Holy Trinity were not worshipped in the present form. In the *Pancharatra* philosophy, Balabhadra Samkarsana is identified with Siva. Bramhapuran (23-132) states that Rudra is known as Halayudha. Scholars like Eschmann, Kulke and Tripathi have further suggested that Balabhadra could have been worshipped as Ekapada Bhairava in the remote past, since Ekapada Bhairava is represented in the uniconical form as single-legged. The portion of the image below waist is shaped like a tree-trunk or a pillar. Such an uniconical figure of Ekpada Bhairava could be seen as rock-cut figure on the monolithic rock in a hillock called Bhairo Pahad situated about 5 kms to the south of Titlagarh town in the upper Mahanadi valley, dated to eighth century A.D.

Legend has it that king Indradyumna of Malava had a dream wherein he saw Purusottama Narasimha being worshipped in a form, over whose head snake Sesa had spread his hood. This was indicative of the association of the divine

snake Ananta Sesanaga with Purusottama Narasimha. Bhagawata Purana (v.25.2.3) has identified Balabhadra as Ananta - Samkarsana Balabhadra, who has been elevated to the status of elder brother of Purusottama.

Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke and Gaya Charan Tripathi are of the view that the uniconical figure represented in Konark was taken over from the Saiva model of Ekapada Bhairava, the Ugra aspect of Siva. They have further assumed that the Jagannath figure developed from the identification of a tribal deity represented as Narasimha in the form of a wooden post or pillar. In fact, Narasimha came out of a pillar to kill the demon Hiranyakasipu. In the upper Mahanadi valley a temple was built by queen-mother Vasata of the Panduvamsa some time in the 8th century A.D. at Sripura, the capital city of Kosala for worship of Purusottama Narasimha. Anantasayana Visnu image has been carved on the door-lintel of the entrance to the sanctum of this temple, which is known as Laksmana temple at present.

Goddess Subhadra has been identified with goddess Khambesvari (the Goddess of the Pillar or Post) whose worship was prevalent in the upper Mahanadi valley in the 5th-6th century A.D. as recorded in the Teresingha copper-plate charter of king Tusthikara, discovered from the Teresingha village in Kalahandi district in 1947.

*Broken Amalaka*



Goddess Subhadra is worshipped in the Bhubaneswari mantra in the Jagannath temple at Puri. It is pertinent to note in this context that goddess Samlei, enshrined in the temple at Sambalpur is also worshipped in the same Bhubaneswari mantra. The uniconic form of goddess Samlei like the present anthropoid form of Subhadra seems to be identical. Is Samlei a corrupt form of the name Somalai or Samalei, a deity of the tribal origin, initially worshipped by the tribals and later absorbed into the Hindu fold by the Somavamsis, who were ruling over Orissa from the upper Mahanadi valley first from Suvarnapura and then from Yayati Nagara in around 9th-11th century A.D. Another fact comes to mind that goddess Bhagabati Panchambari Bhadrabika was enshrined at Pattana Suvarnapura (present Sonepur town) during the rule of the Somavamsi king Mahasivagupta Yayati-II Chandihara (Ruling Period: Circa 1024-1060 A.D). Is goddess Bhadrabika converted into Subhadra?

The concept of Harihara worship can also be found in the upper Mahanadi valley as early as the 8th century A.D. when the twin temples of Gandharadi were built by the Bhanja king Ranabhanja of Khinjlimalandala, one dedicated to Nilamadhava Visnu and the other to Siddhesvara Siva. Most probably during the time of Yayati II the Somavamsi king, Panchambari Bhadrabika was also worshipped along-with Visnu and Siva on one platform.

But if we take into account the recent discovery of the stone images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra in the uniconic anthropoid forms then the sculptural findings from this Tentelkhunti mound allure us to date the sculptures of this site to the early Somavamsi period and probably to the reign of Yayati-I (Circa 885-925 A.D). In that case it can be surmised that in these forms the Jagannath triad were worshipped in the upper Mahanadi valley in the 9th century A.D.



Anantasayana Vishnu Panel

Like the anthropoid forms of the Jagannath triad, Daksina Kalika in the similar form and also made of stone has been discovered from the same mound. In the Mahanirvana Tantra, Jagannath has been identified with Daksina Kalika. (*Tara Saksyat Sulapani Subhadra Bhuvaneshvari / Niladrou tu Jagannatha Saksyat Daksina Kalika //*).

A stone Chakra (Nilachakra) found in this site is also of much significance. A huge stone-block with Visnu Anantasayana is also found here. The earliest Visnu Anantasayana panel is found fitted to the door-lintel of the entrance to the sanction of the Lakshmana temple at Sirpur, which is dated to the 8th century A.D. The Visnu Anantasayana panels are found widely in the upper Mahanadi valley of Orissa in places like Kusang, Ranipur Jharial, Kagaon, Sonepur, Vaidyanath and Charda, all in the undivided Balangir district, which was the seat of a civilization during the



early Somavamsi period in the 9th-10th century A.D.

Traditional account credits Yayati-I with the construction of an earlier temple of Purusottama at Puri. In that case, he might have installed the stone image of the uniconic anthropoid form symbolising Lord Jagannath in the temple at Puri, which he had already done earlier at Tentelkhunti, the site under discussion, situated in his original home land Daksina Kosala. Then during the time of Yayati-II this anthropoid form of Jagannath might have been worshipped alongwith Sivalinga, symbolising Siva and Durga symbolising Sakti, upto the time of the Ganga king Anangabhimadeva III and also during the reign of his son Narasimha-I, the builder of the Sun temple at Konark.

Now the question arises, when were the three images made in the present uniconic anthropoid forms? In this context, learned scholar late Dr. Satyanarayan Rajaguru's view assumes significance. According to him, the anthropoid features of the stone images in the temple at Puri were not made of wood upto the rule of Narsimhadeva-I (circa 1238-1264 A.D.). They were worshipped in the similar forms as depicted in both the stone panels from Konark, when Baladeva - Ekanamsa - Krisna trinity were installed and worshipped by Chandrikadevi, the widow sister of Ganga king Narsimhadeva-I in the sanctum of the Ananta Vasudeva temple built on the bank of Vindu Sarovara at Bhubanesvar.

It is a known fact in history that during the reign of the Ganga king Anangabhimadeva - III

(circa 1211-1238 A.D.), the century old Ganga - Kalachuri war ended in favour of the Gangas, as a result of which the Sonapur-Sambalpur region was annexed to the Ganga empire. This victory could be achieved due to the generous gesture of Anangabhimadeva-III, who gave his daughter Chandrikadevi in marriage to a Kalachuri prince Paramardideva. This Paramardideva became the General of the royal Ganga army during the reign of Narasimhadeva-I, the son and successor of Anangabhimadeva-III.

Thereafter the Gangas of Utkal-Kalinga joined hands with the Kalachuris of Tummana-Ratanpur (Chhattisgarh) in fighting against the Muslim forces of north-eastern India. Learned historians like late Prof. N.K. Sahu, Prof. J.K. Sahu and Prof. P.K. Mishra are of the



Anthropoid form goddess Daksina Kalika

view that Narasimha Deva-I (circa 1238-1264 A.D.) was powerful enough to engage himself in a war with the Muslim ruler of Lakhnauti in Bengal, who was defeated by him. Dr. Satyanarayan Rajaguru is of opinion that Narasimhadeva-I was victorious due to the great valour of the tribals (Savaras) who then formed a large section of his army, and therefore, to appease them the king might have installed such anthropomorphized figures of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra in a Hindu temple.

But the recent discovery of not only Jagannath, but all the three deities of the Jagannath triad in a temple ruins belonging to the 9th century A.D. leads us to believe that the Holy Trinity of



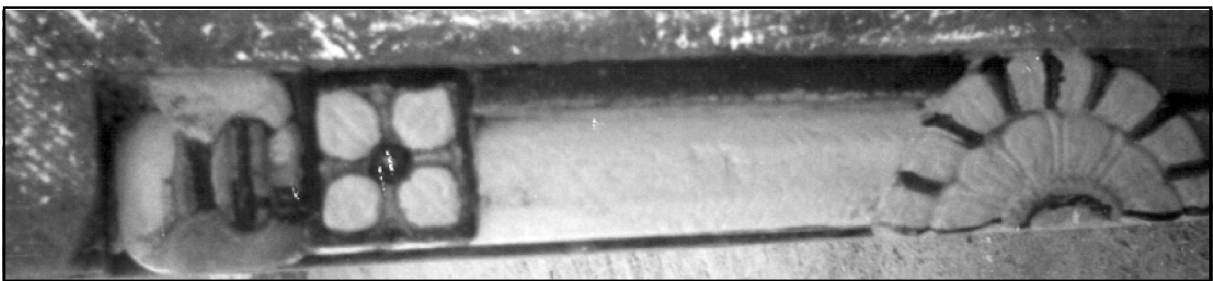
Puri were being worshipped in the anthropoid forms, (with only the handless torso and having the face) right from the ninth century A.D. in the ancient Daksina Kosala region, which was predominantly inhabited by the Savaras. Such an image of Lord Jagannath was also simultaneously installed by king Yayati-I at Puri.

The Muslim rulers of Lakhnauti in Bengal were constantly at war with the Ganga kings of Utkala even after the reign of Narasimhadeva-I and during the time of Bhanudeva-III (Reigning Period : circa 1352-1378 A.D.) Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq of Bengal attacked Baranasi Kataka and defeated the Ganga king in war. The Muslim invader destroyed the temple of Lord Purusottama built by Anangabhimadeva-III at Baranasi Kataka (present Cuttack). It is quite possible that due to this destruction, the stone images of the Jagannath triad as depicted in the stone panel of the Konark temple were taken away to some unknown place in Sonepur (Sunapura) region and later were again installed in the temple at Puri. Following the tribal traditions, all three images were made of wood perhaps convenience of shifting as and when required in case of such attacks. The construction of a temple by the Somavamsi king Yayati for the worship of the Great Lord (Jagannath) has found mention in the temple chronicle Madala Panji (Prachi Edition, p.6). Since we find the mention of Jagannath in the introductory verse, (*Pranipatya Jagannatham Sarvajina-vararchitam / Sarva*

Buddhamayam Siddhi Vyapinom Gaganopamam //) and four other verses of the text Jnyanasiddhi by Indrabhuti, the king of Sambala (present Sambalpur) who was ruling some time in the 8th century A.D., the origin and antiquity of Jagannath should be traced to the Sambalpur - Sonepur region.

The Bhagavata cult of Vaisnavism held its sway in the upper Mahanadi valley, right from the time of the Nala king Skandavarman (Reigning Period : Circa 480-515 A.D.) who was ruling the present undivided Koraput-Kalahandi region of Orissa and the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh state. As soon from his Podagad Stone Inscription he installed a foot-print (Padamula) of Visnu. The occurrence of Vasudeva in the epigraphic record of the Nala king testifies the prevalence of Vasudeva cult in the Nala domain and its amalgamation with Visnu in the Vaisnava philosophy. Dr. C.B. Patel has rightly pointed out that 'Vasudeva Krishna cult which is resplendent in Indian sacred literature was a very popular creed since the ages. In the Mahabharata he is described as an invincible fighter god, a guide and philosopher. Skandavarman, a valiant warrior of his age was a worshipper of Vasudeva, who appears to have been inspired by his personality.' In this record, Vishnu (*Hari*) has been called *Vijayo Jeta* which epithet find mention in Verse-16 of the Visnu Sahasranama.

The Nala were replaced by the Sarabhapuriyas in the upper Mahanadi valley



Doorjamb with lotus and vase motifs



some time in the 6th century A.D. In the upper Mahanadi valley of Orissa, strong royal patronage was given to the Bhagavata cult of Vaisnavism by the Sarabhapuriya kings, who ruled this part of the present Orissa around 5th-6th century A.D. All the rulers of the Sarabhapuriya dynasty were devout worshippers of Visnu. Learned scholar Dr. S.P. Tiwari is of opinion that they were the followers of the Pancharatra system of the Bhagavata cult, which accepted Krisna Vasudeva as the supreme deity. Like the Gupta kings, they designated themselves as Parama Bhagavatas. The Gupta emblem of Garuda flanked by Samkha and Chakra is found embossed on the repousse gold coins of kings like Prasannamatra, Mahendraditya and Kramaditya of this dynasty. Similarly, the standing figure of the Vaisnavite goddess Laksmi, flanked by two elephants was the royal emblem of the Sarabhapuriya kings, as this emblem is found in the seals attached to the rings of their royal charters.

Vaisnavism flourished in full swing during the reign of the Panduvamsi kings of Sripura, succeeded the Sarabhapuriyas in the upper Mahanadi valley sometime in the second half of the 6th century A.D. Queen Vasata, the mother of the Panduvamsi king Mahasivagupta Balarjuna was a great devotee of Lord Purusottama Narasimha. In the upper Mahanadi valley brick temple tradition in the same pattern of the Bhitargaon brick temple of the Gupta period was popularised during the Panduvamsi rule in the 7th-8th century A.D. Queen Regent Vasata built a brick temple for worshipping Lord Purusottama Narasimha in the capital city of Sripura, which is presently known as Laksmiana temple. This temple is built in bricks although the gateway of the Garbhagriha is made of stone, on which Dasavataras and Krishnalila themes are carved. A Bhogasayana - murti, which is also called the Anantasayana Visnu is carved on the Dvaralalatavimba of this gateway. This type of

image of Anantasayana Visnu is also found carved on the Dvaralatavimba of the Garbhagriha doorway of the Rajivalochana Visnu temple at Rajim. Sirpur and Rajim, both places are situated in the Raipur district of the present day Chhattisgarh. When the Panduvamsi rulers left Sripura, their capital city due to the menace of the Kalachuris of Dahala sometime in the first half of the 9th century A.D., they migrated downstream of Mahanadi to the area around Balangir-Sonepur-Bargarh-Jharsuguda-Sambalpur region of Orissa and subsequently established themselves as Somavamsis at Suvarnapura, the present Sonepur town on the right bank of river Mahanadi around 850 A.D.

The Somavamsi king Mahabhavagupta Janmejaya (850-885 A.D.) through his Sonepur copper-plate charter donated a village named Gettaikela situated in the Luputura Khanda of Kosaladesa in his 17th Regnal Year to the illustrious Kamalavana Merchants' Association situated in Suvarnapura, which in turn bestowed the same village to two temples, one of Lord Kesava and the other of Lord Aditya for charity, oblation and offerings as well as for repair of both the temples.

Mahabhavagupta Janmejaya Svabhavatunga's son and successor Mahasivagupta Yajati has been compared with the divine Visnu who killed the epic Chaidya or Shishupala in the Rajasuya Yajna performed by Yudhisthira.

The Gopalpur plates of the 10th Regnal Year of the Somavamsi king Mahabhavagupta I Janmejaya records the grant of a village "Jollamura-grama" of Lupattora-Khanda to Bhatta Sadharana, who instead of keeping the village, made over the same for the maintainance of a temple, built by him at Suvarnapura, enshrining god Jalasayana Narayana Bhattaraka. The text of this grant concludes with the Vaisnava Mantra *Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya*.



The Gond tribals, who are predominantly inhabiting central India (Gondwanaland), stretching from Orissa to Maharashtra, worship two major gods called Bad Deo (Dev) and Jangha Deo (Dev). Are they Bad Devata or Balabhadra and Lord Jagannath? If so, then the tribal origin of these two gods can be established.

In the context of historical findings and inscriptions one could safely infer that from the days of Nala Kings of Koraput-Kalahandi region (said to be the descendents of Nishada king Nala of Nala-Damayanti epic fame) i.e. 4th-5th century A.D. till the advent of Somavamsis, upper Mahanadi valley has witnessed a rare churning of the tribal cults of Ekapada Bhairava, Khambeshwari, Maheshwari, Bhubaneshwari and above all Narasimha, Purushottama, Tantrik God Jagannath of Vajrayana. This amalgamation has crystallised on the cult of Jagannath, literally the Lord of universe. Thus we would see that the period from the 5th to the 9th-10th A.D. was epoch making when the concept of Holy Triad evolved absorbing the tribal and non-tribal religious beliefs leading to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

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Sree Jagannath Jeeu of Nayagarh

Geeta Devi

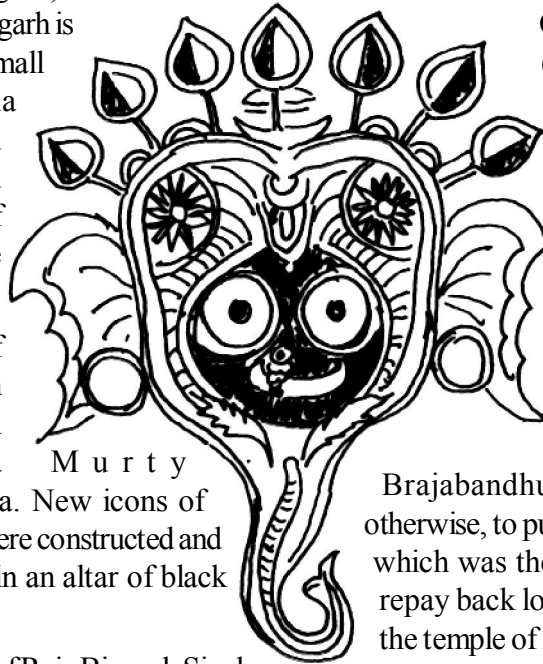
Though the Rajas of Nayagarh were Saivites of the Lakulisa Pasupata Sect, they were equally devoted to the Vaisnavite faiths.

Raja Bagha Singh (1480-1510 A.D.) who rose from the status of a petty chieftain of Ralaba to the stature of a Raja Samanta (feudatory chief) creating a new Fort (Nuagarh) at the present principality of Nayagarh is credited to have made small icons of Shree Vighraha Chaturdha Murty and installed the deities in a mud altar on the foot hill of Balarama for the first time in the history of Nayagarh.

During the rule of Raja Ramachandra Singh (1720-30 A.D.) the small icons of the Chaturdha Murty were removed to Sinduria. New icons of comparatively bigger size were constructed and worshipped at Nayagarh in an altar of black chlorite stone.

It is during the reign of Raja Binayak Singh (1793 - 1823 AD) the present icons were installed in the newly built temple of Sri Jagannath on the foot hill of Balarama. The old images installed by Raja Ramachandra Singh were

removed to the temple precinct of Sri Ladu Baba of Sarankul. The stone altar in which the deities were installed by Raja Ramachandra Singh was sold on a nominal price of Rs.250/- in 1890 A.D. to Neela Kothlok of the palace (Kept of the Raja) which was used as the pedestal (Padma Prusta) of Lord Gopinath Jeeu.



Murty

Only the main sanctum (Viman), 120 ft. in height was constructed by Raja Binayak Singh. However he had kept Rupees 60 (Sixty) thousand along with some building materials for the construction of the frontal porch or Jagamohana. Due to his demise in 1823 A.D., the work could not be completed. His son Raja

Brajabandhu Singh spent the money otherwise, to purchase the estate of Baramba which was then being sold on auction to repay back loans. So the frontal porch of the temple of Lord Jagannath could not be built. However a flat roofed pucca building was later built to serve the purpose of Jagamohana.

The main temple of Lord Jagannath is of a 'Rekha' order characterised by a Pancha Ratha Plan. As usual, Varaha, Narasingha and



Trivikrama are installed as Parsvadevates around the main sanctum.

On the lintel of the doorjamb there are stone carvings of the nine planets. Little above the planets there is the carving of Gajalakshmi.

It is said that Raja Binayak Singh sought the assistance of Mukunda Mahapatra, a cultor of the state of Athgarh (Ganjam). Mukunda was the father of the famous poet Jadumani Mahapatra. Mukunda's father Raghmani Mahapatra carved out the icon of 'Radha Ballava' for the Raja of Athgarh. Raghmani's father Artabandhu Mahapatra was the main mason to make the icon of Lord Jagannath in the state of Athgarh. In all probability Raja Binayak Singh who had family connection with the Raja of Athgarh might have invited Mukunda Mahapatra to house the family at Itamati with royal land grants, to use his masonry skill. Mukunda also carved out the image of Lord Radhamohan Jeeu installed in the palace precinct.

Raja Binayak Singh introduced the 'Chhatisa Niyog Sevas' for the deities in the line of Lord Jagannath of Puri. He also recorded huge land grants to defray the expenses of the temple. The royats of Sakiri were providing fine rice of sixty-two cart loads of paddy. They were also discharging other Bethis (Services free of cost) for the temple. Royats of Itamati were discharging 'Bethis' for the Gundicha Bhawan. Royats of Balipatna, Gundi Gadia and Bhalia Padar were

discharging the duty of 'Prahari' (door keeper) on Bethi. All the royats were providing vegetables for Dwitiya Osha.

The Car Festival, Makara, Chandan and Snana Yatras are the chief festivals of the deity.

In the line of Lord Jagannath Jeeu of Puri, here also three chariots are used for Rath Yatra. The making of the chariots starts from the day of Akshyaya Tritiya. The Khonds of the state were previously providing the ropes and discharging some other duties on Bethi. Now-a-days the Debottar Department assumes all responsibilities of the festival.

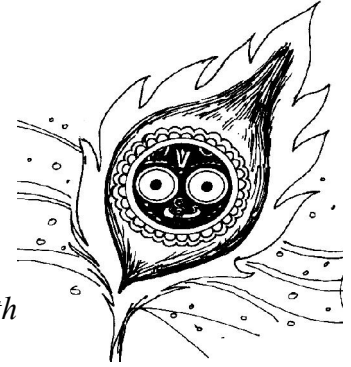
On the day of the car festival, the Raja of Nayagarh comes from the old palace in a grand procession and performs the Chhera Panhara (sacred sweeping) of the chariots with a golden broom. Then only the chariots start their journey to the 'Adapa Mandapa'. In the Adapa Mandapa (Gundicha Ghara) also all rituals like that of Puri are observed with pomp and grandeur. The festival ends with the end of the return journey (Bahuda Yatra). Like the sacred Mahaprasad here also Anna Prasad (rice, dal, curry etc) is available in earthen pots (Kudua) to the devotees of the Lord.

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Dinakrushna Das - The Poet of Eternal Love



Jayanti Rath

Dinakrushna Das emerged as a luminous star in the post-Bhanja era of Oriya literature. He was contemporary of king Divyasimha Dev-I (1688-1715). The Oriya literature has been enriched by his vast literary contributions. His magnum opus viz. *Rasa Kallola* and *Rasa Vinoda* speak eloquently about his poetic sensibility. *Rasa Kallola* is clubbed with two other brilliant 'Kavyas' of Orissa i.e. "Koti Brahmanda Sundari" of Upendra Bhanja and "Bidagha Chintamani" of Abhimanyu Samanta Simhar.

Born and brought up in Bhima Nagar, in the outskirts of Khurdha, Dinakrushna spent his early life in utter poverty and deprivation. His father's name was Madhusudan Das. His literary activities began with the support of Balarama Samantasimhara of Bhima Nagara. As mentioned in "Rasavinoda", he descended from Rajput origin and his ancestors were inhabitants of Jalesvara, on the river bank of Suvarnarekha.

The anguish of his poverty-stricken life has been expressed very often in his verses. The poet's regrets for appeasing stupid persons have also been reflected in his writings.

True that life had been hard and difficult for him. He had more foes than friends. He was surrounded by problems. But nothing could deter

him from his poetic pursuits. In the midst of difficulties he could conceive of eternal pleasure - "Nitya Rasa". It is really amazing and incredible. Where from did he find such lucid imaginations ?

An ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu he had concentrated on elucidating His leelas. To earn his livelihood he had to move different places of Orissa and depend in the favour of Zamindars and affluent persons.

He was so popular that his contemporary poets became jealous of him and hatched out plots against him. Tradition says that king Divyasimha Deva insisted him to write some 'Kavyas' in his name. Offering the authorship to the king was quite in vogue at that time. Dinakrushna did not accept this proposal. Obviously he became the victim of king's wrath. He was imprisoned and tortured. Having no

other way, Dinakrushna silently prayed Lord Jagannath inside the prison. Lord Jagannath appeared in the dream of the king and warned him for doing injustice to His devotee. The Lord ordered the king to release the poet immediately. In the next morning, the king went to the prison to see the poet. He was stunned to see that the chain that was put in the hands and feet of the poet had been opened by itself. This miraculous event made the king to believe that Dinakrushna was not an ordinary person. He was divinely gifted





and divine grace was with him to protect from all obstacles. The king begged apology from the poet. Pleased with his devotion and talent, the king offered him a lot of wealth. Perhaps Dinakrushna did not want to remain indebted to the king. Though materially poor, he was very rich in his thoughts. He was broad hearted and used to give the needy persons from his limited means. He wrote the "Jagamohana Chhanda" in the name of the king. By doing this, he stepped down from his principle no doubt, but this should not be considered as his weakness. Rather it shows the broadness of his heart.

Historians say that there were more than one poets in the same name 'Dinakrushna' and the author of 'Rasa Vinoda' and 'Rasa Kallola' is not one and same person. Owing to the tremendous popularity of Dinakrushna, some other poets of his period adopted the same name. They used the name to make their works widely circulated and earn for them more readability. But it can be said certainly that poet Dinakrushna Das was author of both texts 'Rasa Vinoda' and 'Rasa Kallola.' The presentation style of these two texts is more than enough to prove this fact. The distinct feature of "Rasa Kallola" is that here every line of the verse begins with the letter 'Ka'. From the beginning to the end the poet has meticulously maintained this rule.

The eternal play of Radha, other Gopis and Krushna is the theme of 'Rasa Kallola' while depicting the grace and beauty of women, the poet has observed much restraint. He has never allowed his stylus to narrate the nudity of female figure.

The entire kavya 'Rasa Vinoda' is written in "Navakshari" Chhanda.

Apart from "Rasa Kallola" and "Rasa Vinoda", Dinakrushna is credited to have authored a number of texts. "Guna Sagara", "Rasa Samudra", "Bhuta Keli", "Samsara Bodhana", "Amruta Sagara", "Mukti Sagara",

"Kaliyuga", "Prastara Sindhu", "Jagamohana Chhanda", "Jambavati Bibha", "Sri Brundavana Rahasa", "Kamsa Bibha", "Sayana Sagara", "Dharma Sagara", "Pancha Patavamsi Bibha", "Daridra Damodara Dvija", "Namaratna sita", "Sayana Chudamani". "Bhakti Sagara", "Mahima Sagara" are some among them. While naming the texts the poet has frequently used the suffix "Sagara" or Sindhu. Besides these texts the poet has composed innumerable *Chautisa*, *Chaupadis* and *Bhajanas*. All these works give ample evidence of his dexterity and deep feelings. Everywhere we find the touch of decency and delicacy.

We find vivid description of Purusottama Kshetra (Puri), glory of Lord Jagannath in the writings of Dinakrushna. In the image of Lord Jagannath he found his beloved Lord Sri Hari or Vishnu.

According to some scholars, towards the last part of his life he was affected with leprosy and driven away from Puri. He was given shelter by a rich man of nearby area of Khurda. However the truth of this fact is not sure. "Darhyata Bhakti Rasamruta", the great literary text of the period does not support this view.

The trials and tribulations lingered through out his life. But nothing could snatch away his talent, and inner pleasure from him. The worldly sorrows, instead had made his feelings more intense, and his imaginations more subtle.

He suffered a lot, he struggled a lot and he played a lot with the letters. By his abundant contributions he remains immortal in the cultural history of Orissa. Through brilliant arrangement of works and systematic presentation of themes, he still lives as a superb artist.

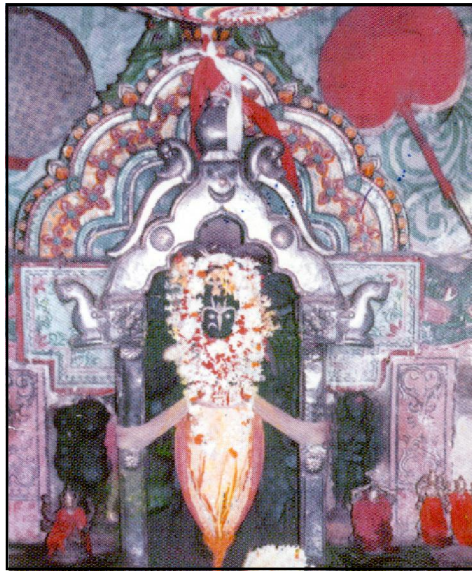
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The Unique God, Lord Jagannath

Dr. Pramod Chandra Pattanayak

The legendary Hindu God, Lord Jagannath, indeed, is unique in many respects. I want to mention here only few of them in view of my limited penetration to the concerned subject which is vast. However, the readers who are not aware of them may be interested to know these few but main features of the greatest Hindu God. I also want to put forth, in short, two legends which are as old as the deity or even older than the deity, in Trinity, which are worshipped from time immemorial by the innumerable people in general and by the Hindus, in particular.



1. It is needless to say that the deity of Lord Jagannath is the greatest of deities in the entire world worshipped in the great temple of Hindus.
2. The main deity of this temple has a number of nomenclature fitting to its functions, festivities, anatomy and genesis of the deity itself, though the most popular one is Jagannath (the Lord of the Universe). Purusottam (Highest Being) is the

next popular name of the deity and is in accordance with the cantos of Bhagabat Gita. Patitapaban (saviour of the downtrodden) is the

name of Lord Jagannath which according to Hindu Philosophy is also very popular. To fulfill this function the Trinity come down from the shrine and makes a journey to give 'darshan' to the devotees; irrespective of caste, creed and colour, downtrodden or holy ones alike during the world famous car festival. The original deity as per a legend was a blue stone and hence the deity is also called Neelamani. Again the legend describes that the deity is

nothing but an unburnt part of the dead body of Lord Krishna, therefore, the name Neelamadhab is the name of this deity. The deity being the part and parcel of Lord Krishna, any name of Krishna fits into the deity.

Beside this above names innumerable loving names have been given to the deity by His devotees like Jaga, Kalia, Chakanayan, Chaka-akhia, so on and so forth. The summary of the



above descriptions amounts to uniqueness of the deity. No where in the world such variety of names are found for a single deity.

3. God attracts the devotees as usual in any religion or sect. But here the God is attracted by the devotees for which once in a year the trinity, in original form (singular instance), come down from the shrine to look at His dear devotees gathered from every nook and corner of the world. This is a rarity. It also means that the God is not only of the saints and holy ones but for the common mass of the society i.e. God of the People.

4. In Hindu religion usually the Brahmins have the right to worship images in a temple. But here two groups of non-Brahmins take care of the Trinity from the time of coming down off the shrine till their return, during the journey and the return journey and their stay in Gundicha Temple.

5. It is clear from the genesis of deity that this Hindu God belongs to both Aryans and non Aryans. In fact, Lord Jagannath is known as Sabara - God.

6. Lord Jagannath is not only worshipped by Hindus but also by the Jains and Buddhists. In fact in Buddhism the three deities are considered as Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

7. There is no instance of worshipping brothers with sister. Of course there are temples where couple like Laxmi Narayan or Hara Gouri or even Ram, Laxman and Sita are worshipped. But here two brothers with sister are worshipped. This is not only a unique feature but shows that consideration of equalities to sons and daughters in a family and love and affection between brothers and sisters was existing in the society since the time in obscurity.

8. The deity is considered as both Shiva and Vishnu. The logic behind such consideration is

that the original deity of Bluestone was nothing but a Shivalinga.

These are but unique features regarding the deity of Lord Jagannath besides the others. By others, I mean there are many functions observed traditionally in the temple of Lord Jagannath which are not performed in a temple elsewhere.

Legend No -1

Lord Krishna died when the arrow from bow of Jara Sabar pierced into His foot. The dead body of Krishna was burnt in the funeral fire. But His heart did not catch fire. This part then was thrown to the sea. Jara was watching the scene of obsequies all through from the beginning till the end of the process, being in agony for his action though it was without his intention. He followed this unburnt part thrown to the sea and



finally he was able to fetch it in the eastern coast of this sub-continent. But he was surprised that the unburnt part had turned into a Bluestone in the mean while. This Bluestone was worshipped by him in a cave secretly and there after by his



family heads in succession, from generation to generation.

Time rolled on. The king of Malava, a dedicated devotee of Vishu wanted to spread Vaishnav cult in his kingdom. With this in mind he sent his ambassadors far and wide in search of a deity to be worshipped. Out of these ambassadors one young Brahmin named Vidyapati came to the eastern coast of this country crossing difficult terrains and deep forests. In the long run he reached the Sabar village surrounded by the forest. The village headman received him with hospitality and kept in his house as a guest. The Village Head had a young daughter. Soon she fell in love with Vidyapati, who was a very handsome young man though had already married before taking this hazardous journey. This love affair did not escape the notice of her father. So the Village Head decided to give his daughter in marriage to Vidyapati. Thus Vidyapati lead a conjugal life there. By and by he gathered important information of the Bluestone deity and its genesis from the daughter of the Village Head.

One day Vidyapati left the place without the knowledge of the Village Head or his daughter and went away to his kingdom. On arrival he informed his king Indradyumna regarding the Bluestone deity. Indradyumna prepared his army for the trip to the Sabar village in the eastern sea coast. He surrounded the Sabar village and arrested the Village Head. The king applied all possible force to the Village Head to extract information about the location of the secret place where the Bluestone deity was worshipped but in vain. The village Head thought it to be a betrayal to his God and hence defied all force and never gave any hint of the cave. However the army of the king could locate the cave. But the Bluestone was not to be seen. At this point of time King Indradyumna had a dream in which God was

annoyed with him for adopting violence on His devotee. At the same time He was happy for his taking up this strenuous journey. So He would appear next morning as a stone inside a cylinder which can be installed and be worshipped in a temple.

To the amazement of everybody this stone image in a cylinder was found next morning lying on the coast. Indradyumna ordered his army to lift the stone deity. But the stone deity did not budge even an inch. Again Indradyumna had a dream on his night long prayer that the stone deity would be lifted only by Viswabasu, the village Head. Immediately Village Head was released and Viswabasu could lift the stone deity which was installed in a temple as Vishnu.

Legend No-2

In the second legend the young Brahmin is named as Vidyapati and the Sabar chief of the village named as Viswabasu. As per the legend the deity says to Indradyumna in a dream that he would be allowed to be worshipped if He be placed in a suitable temple. Accordingly Indradyumna constructed a big temple with attractive architectural features. But again the king faced a problem of getting a suitable priest to perform the rituals of Sthapana. So he decided to go to Brahma to request him to do the job. Brahma was in meditation by the time Indradyumna arrived there. It is not known how many centuries passed by in the process. Here I want to quote a stanza from Sri Bhagabat Gita which is appropriate, I suppose.

*Sahashra yugaparyantam ahorjat bramhanah biduha |
Ratrim yugasahashrantam te ahoratra bidyo janaha |16|*

(8th Adhyaya)

The sum and substance of this stanza of the Bhagabat Gita means one day of Brahma is equal to one thousand centuries and one night also one thousand centuries of the people.



As such a new generation appeared after so many centuries. In this generation a king named Galamadhav was passing through the eastern coast riding on a horse. His horse stumbled on some hard object in the sand. The king dismounted from the horse and asked his people to dig out the object. This hard object was found to be the top of a temple. The king ordered to excavate the area and to his astonishment it was a big and splendid temple without any depreciation, whatsoever. At this point of time king Indradyumna arrived there being accompanied by Brahma. But king Galamadhav claimed his ownership over the temple. This dispute was settled by the statements of the tortoises found in a tank (now this tank is existing and is known as Indradyumna tank). Those tortoises were supposed to be artisans who were engaged by Indradyumna in the construction of the temple and subsequently became tortoises under heavy load of stone work. The dispute thus was settled in favour of Indradyumna. Now Brahma was ready for the rituals. But no image was found. Again the king was informed through heavenly dream that the deity would appear next morning as a log of wood. True to the version the log appeared in the coast and Indradyumna employed his people to lift this log. But again this log could not be lifted by his people. At this point of time there came command from the deity that He would be lifted only by Vidayapati and Viswbasu, both of them being dedicated devotees. Thus the log was lifted into the temple. Indradyumna decided to install the log as such, as

the deity. At this point queen Gundicha interfered and wanted to prepare three beautiful deities out of the log. To satisfy the queen Indradyumna marshalled carpenters from far and near. But the log was so hard that the tools of the carpenters blunted in attempting to work on the log. Visualising the plight of the king, Viswakarma, the Divine Architect in the guise of an old carpenter volunteered himself to do the job. But he had a condition, He would remain inside the temple to complete the job within twenty one days and no body should disturb him or open the door of the temple before completion of the time period. The condition was agreed upon and Viswakarma started his work inside the temple. Initially the sound of the carpentry work was heard outside the temple. Later the sound became fainter and fainter and then there was no sound at all. The queen became unusually worried. In spite of the repeated request of the king, the queen forcefully opened the door and found no carpenter inside. Only three unfinished deities were found.

The three unfinished deities representing Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra were installed by Brahma and have been worshipped traditionally since then as the greatest Holy Trinity in the little town of Puri, known as Shri Khetra or Purusottam, which is one of the four *Dhams* in the Hindu Philosophy.

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Iconography and Retrospect of Sri Jagannath

Padmanabha Mahapatra



On the high platform Ratnavedi inside the inner sanctum of Srimandir seven images are seated at present. They are Balabhadra, Purusottama Jagannath, Subhadra, Sudarshan, Biswadhatri, Laxmi and Madhab. Their origin and evolution, phase by phase, from pre-Vedic period to-date has been discussed in this article.

Daru-upasana during Pre-Vedic period -

The origin of Jagannath worship at Puri is mysterious, but it is a fact that Jagannath is a pre-Aryan and pre-Vedic God. The initial inhabitants

for their clothing, leaves and flowers for medicines, firewood for cooking. Shadow below them were used as their domestic shelter and parts of trees as furniture as well as arms and ammunitions. Researchers state that such trees worshipped by them were Peepal or Aswastha trees and the then Dharma of the Savars was Aswastha Dharma (cult of ficus tree). This Brikshya-Puja has been accepted as 'Nyagrodhambaroaswastham' in 'Sri Vishnu Sahasranama' subsequently. Even as on today, the puja of Tulashi, Banyan, Aanla, Baul and Ashok trees are prominent in Orissa. In



of the richly wooded blue mountain, subsequently known as Niladri, were the Austric linguistic Savars. The Austrics were Brikshya-Pujaks because, for them the tree was the source of life. The trees provided them fruits as their food, rinds

course of time, these tribals started worshipping trees and log of woods. (Stambha), which were subsequently otherwise known as Madala Puja and Daru-upasana. In Savar language their deities



were known as 'Kitung' and 'Jaganta'. At a later stage, worship of stone-made images also became popular in the tribal community.

It has not been possible so far, to infer any direct reference to the worship of Jagannath or any of His previous incarnation in Nilachala from the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Ramayan. In the Vedas we find that the Arya Rishis were worshipping Agni, Bayu, Surya, Chandra, Basu, Rudra, Biswadeba, Brihaspati, Indra and Barun etc, but there was no idol worship. Rigveda (First Mandala 164 Mantra - 46) states - *Ekam sadbiprah bahudha badanti*'- There is only one God, saints and seers exhibit Him in different names. That one God is the Highest God Sahasra Shirsha Purushah. (Rigveda - Tenth Mandala - Purush Sukta). In the Swetaswatara Upanishad, 6-11, it is said - *Eko debah sarbabhuteshu gudhah, sarbabyapi sarbabhutanaratma* - There is one god, He resides within every one, He is universal, and He is present as the soul in every living thing.

In Ramayan only we find the (a) description of hospitality rendered by Savara-rajya Guha to Sri Ramchandra in course of his Banabas (b) worshipping and providing sweet fruits to Sri Ramchandra by one 'Sabaruni', which establish the existence of Savars during the time of Ramayan and their good relationship with the Aryans.

Historical background of Antarvedi/ Mahavedi as referred to in the Mahabharat

In Mahabharat, there is mention of a 'Vedi' within the 'Brahma-bana' near the sea in Kalinga. (Mahabharat - Bana Parba - 114 -16 to 28) In course of Agnyata Banabasa, after crossing the river Baitarani, Yudhisthira along with his four brothers and Panchali were intimated by the sage Lomasha - "This is the divine forest of Brahma, the self-existent one, where magnanimous

dwellers are reciting their audible prayers. Here Viswakarma performed religious rites (Yagnya), and on such occasion Brahma made a gift of the entire earth to Kashyapa, by way of gratuity, for ministering as a priest. The earth became so unhappy after being treated as such that she descended into the bottom of the nether world. Then saint Kashyapa beheld the Goddess Earth, performed a propitiatory act to appease Her wrath, as a result of which Earth was pleased, she arose from within the waters and showed herself in the form of a sacred altar (Vedi) by the side of Mahodadhi." Rishi Lomasha explained to Yudhisthira - "This is the very altar, which reaches as far as the sea and rests itself upon its bosom, ascend over it and thou would gain valour and strength. You must recite the following words of truth and ascend the Vedi,

This altar (Vedi), uprose from within the waters, is the creation of Agni and Surya. This Vedi is 'Sri Nivas', residence of the daughter of the ocean. The Bhumi is created out of Yagnyagni (fire of sacrifice) and Sri Vishnu is the Yagnya-Purush. The Vedi is the place of union of Sri with Vishnu, here Sri has been recognized as the consort of Sri Vishnu.¹

"Keeping this truth in mind, do necessary japa and tapa and take bath in Mahodadhi". As per instructions, Yudhisthira, his four brothers alongwith Draupadi performed all that the saint had directed, bathed in the ocean and then started towards the south.

Researchers have identified that Vedi as the present 'Antarvedi' or 'Mahavedi',² and 'Madhab' as the 'Adya Vishnu' of Srikhetra. The Bhumi (Earth) that came out of water where fire sacrifice was performed was 'Bhudevi' (Biswadhatri). The Yagnya Sharirdhari-Purush was 'Madhab' (the 'Dhab, 'husband of 'Ma Laxmi' - Madhab), the descent flame in the left side of



Yagnya Purush was Laxmi. (Sri - consort of Vishnu and the daughter of the Ocean) The Yagnya-sthala (Brahma-bana) was the place of union of Vishnu and Laxmi as husband and wife. More-over the Yagnya-Jupa has been considered as Sri Sudarshan subsequently. The thirty two-petalled-lotus drawn on the Vedi, the 'Chakrabja Mandal,' on which the Yagnya was performed has been later designated as Yagnya-Narasimha and His basic upasana was made under 'Mantraraja' mantra.³

Hence Sridevi, Bhudevi (Biswadhatri) and Madhab are the three initial deities of Srikhetra, at present seen in small figures, on the Ratnavedi /Antarvedi / Mahavedi within Srimandir.

Development of Worship of Madhab, Narasimha and Nilamadhab in Srikhetra -

Mahabharat puts forth - '*Maunadhyanascha yogascha biddhi bharat Madhabh*' (5-10-4). On account of His silence (mouna), prayer (dhyna) and yoga, He is the epithet of Madhab. Out of main 24 Avatars of Vishnu - Keshab, Narayan and Madhab sprang from Para-Vasudev, the supreme Brahman, who has neither beginning nor end. Chaturbhuj Madhab is Chakra-Sankha- Padma-Gada-Dhari. In Orissa, the following Mangalastak of Madhab is chanted in all auspicious occasions and before initiation of any good work

*'Madhabo Madhabo Vishnuh
Madhabo Madhabo Harih /
Smaranti Sadhabo Nityam
Sarbakaryeshu Madhabam' //*

Madhab is Laxmikanta, Sarba-Subha-Phal-Pradayak, so His name is uttered five times before taking up any work. Maa is Laxmi, Sarba-Subha-Phal-Pradayini; She is Khirabdhitanaya, Lokamata and Ramaa, Agra-pujya in all spheres.

In course of time the idol worship of the primitive Sabars entered into the Vedic Culture

and the worship of Madhab was initiated in a joint venture. The shrine of Nilamadhab at Puri appears to have its origin during the rule of the Sailodbhava kings of Kalinga, the then Kangoda. The copper plate grant of Madhabaraja of Sailodbhava dynasty is the first reference of Madhab worship in Kalinga - *Prabratta-Chakra-Chakradhar eba Bhagaban, Madhab Raja Kushali*. The Madhabaraja and Madhaba Barman designated Sailodbhava kings, as it appeared from their names, were tribals, they lived on the 'Saila' or mountains, their ancestors were Sabars or their synonyms. During their reign, the Sabar chieftain Biswabasu must have been entrusted with the Sevapuja of Nilamadhab. Vidyapati, the messenger of Maharaja Indradyumna, after his arrival at Nilasaila, has seen this Nilamadhab as described in Skanda Puran.

In Skanda Puran, after his return from Nilasaila, Vidyapati narrates to Indradyumna - "On the top of Nilagiri there is a perennial Bata Brikhya, towards its west there is Rohini Kunda and there is a Sphatik-manimaya Vedi around it. Gada-Padma-Sankha-Chakradhari, sapphire colored, Indra-nila-manimaya, Nilamadhab, is seated on a golden lotus, on this Vedi, under the cooling shade of the Banyan tree, His lotus-like hands embrace Laxmi, who is seating on His left thigh and playing flute, Ananta Nag in backside covers Him in shape of an umbrella. Sudarshan is seen in front of Him and Garuda is seated with folded hands just in the front side."

This image of Nilamadhab and the Rohini Kunda are stated to have vanished (buried under the sands) due to a severe cyclone, in between the periods when Vidyapati saw Nilamadhab and Indradyumna arrived the holy place. However, Sri Narasimha, enshrined on the Nilasaila under an 'Aguru' tree, was all along present before and after the disappearance of Nilamadhab.



Initiation of Purusottam Upasana

At this juncture Acharya Sankar arrived at Srikhetra; his mission was to revive the Vedic system of worship of all the Indian Gods and Goddesses and to eliminate the Buddhist influence on Hindu rituals. Acharya Sankar, the founder Acharya of Purusottam Tatwa, during 9th century, in his *Gita Vasya* justified that the Nilamadhab worshipped in Sri Khetra was Gita's Purusottam. - '*Atoasmi loke Bede cha prathitah Purusottamah*'. In this process, he revived the cult of Purusottam in the holy land of Srikhetra, consequent upon construction of a new temple and consecration of blue-stone-made Parameswar therein, during the reign of Jajati Keshari. However there was no basic difference in the iconographic features between Nilamadhab, vanished earlier and Purusottam worshipped later on.

Sri Narasimha Upasana by king Indradyumna, Construction of Daru-Devas

Maharaja Indradyumna along with Narada reached Srikhetra but could not get the darshan of Sri Nilamadhab and became very much worried. In absence of Nilamadhab, he could get the darshan of Sri Narasimha under the 'Aguru tree, as per advice of Narada worshipped Him and obtained His blessings, conducted Ashwamedha Yagnya, found the Aporusheya Daru in the nearby sea-shore and three images of Narayana, Laxmi and Ananta within it, arranged their construction in Adapa Mandap (present Gundicha Temple). But there was a prolonged delay in their consecration and in shifting them to present Srimandir.

End of worship of one God and the initiation of the Hindu Triad

The Brahmin culture in the then Kalinga accepted the worship of 'Jugal-murti' and 'many

images' in their temples, based on the Buddhist influences. The upasana of Laxmi-Narasimha, Durga-Madhab and Siva-Parbati were its specific examples. Acharya Sankar was worshipping Purusottam as 'Siva' during 9th century, but Acharya Ramanuj started describing Subhadra and Jagannath as Laxmi-Narayan during 12th century. The present Srimandir has been constructed in between the period of both the Acharyas. Sri Purusottam (combination of Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath) in course of time has been separated into three icons, such as Sri Balabhadra, Sri Subhadra and Sri Jagannath and they are being worshipped under different mantras. Based on Buddhist influence Sri Jagannath and Sri Subhadra are considered as brother and sister.

God has created the world; He sustains it; destroys it and then regenerates it again. This basic interpretation generated the synthesis of the Triad - Brahma; Vishnu and Maheswar - the creator; the preserver and the destroyer. Brahma is the prime member of the Hindu Triad; He was born from the lotus that appeared on Vishnu's navel. He is known as Prajapati; master of the populace. His four heads represent the four Vedas. Swan is his vehicle. Vishnu is the most popular God of the Hindu Triad. He has got one thousand names; ten incarnations. Garud; the king of the birds, is His Vahana. Most powerful, Maheswar is the destroyer so also the reproducer; He is Sivalinga; He has hundreds of names; His mode of transport is a bull -Nandi.

In Hinduism the wives of the Triad are also revered more. Saraswati is the Goddess of Learning; we always seek Her blessings; She is 'Buddhiprada Sarada'. Just like Brahma; swan is Her vehicle. Laxmi is the Goddess of good fortune; wealth and prosperity. She sits on a lotus and owl is Her vahana. Parvati is sometimes benevolent



and at times destructive. She provides good life-partners and ensures happy married life. She is 'Durgatinashini'. Her two sons are Kartikeya and Ganesh. She is Bhairabi and She moves on a lion.

Under the above analogy researchers come to the conclusion that Sri Subhadra, Jagannath and Balabhadra, the principal Daru-Devas represent to Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar respectively. In Kaliyuga Brahma is not to be worshipped, hence His Sakti Subhadra has replaced Him. In synthesizing the Philosophy of Triad the great Sanskrit poet Kalidas mentions - "In those, Three persons the one God was shown- Each first in place, each last - not one alone; Of Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, each may be First, Second, Third among the Blessed Three." Sri Sudarshan is referred to as a thousand-spoked *Sahasrara*. He represents the violent aspect of Vishnu and many elements of Sri Narasimha. Garud, the most liked vahana, got his place on the Garud Stambha. As regards, the presence of Daru Madhab, metallic images of Bhudevi and Sridevi, placed by the sides of Sri Jagannath on Ratnasimhasan, we have discussed their backgrounds in earlier paragraphs.

The word Jagannath is neither a Sanskrit nor a Pali word; presumably it is the Sanskritised form of the Austric word 'Jaganta' used long back by the Pre-Vedic Sabars.⁴ Sri Jagannath is made of Daru i.e. Wood. Within His wooden body Brahma has been placed, so He is Darubrahman.

Brahman is omnipresent. As a man shedding worn-out garments, takes other new one, Brahma, likewise the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others, which are new. (*Bhagavat Gita-2-22*). Based on above Hindu interpretations, we have got so many Gods and Goddesses on the Ratnasimhasan of Srimandir.

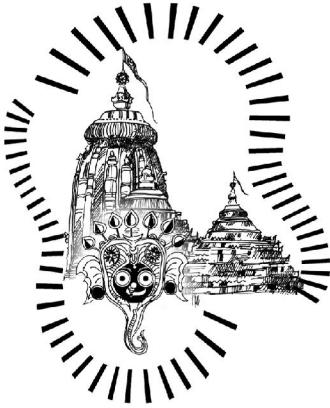
Jagannath in some other name or shape is there in Orissa since the pre-Vedic period, many preachers have come here and gone back, left their ideologies in Purusottam Khetra. All of them claim that Jagannath is their God but the Khetra has remained unaffected by such preaching. Sri Jagannath has maintained His independent identity, He has accepted something from many cults and established a religious harmony of all the cults found all over India.

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Patalesvara Temple at the Jagannatha Temple Complex, Puri

Ratnakar Mohapatra

The temple of Patalesvara is an important ancient Saiva shrine of Orissa. It is situated in the northern side inner courtyard of the Jagannatha temple complex of Puri. This temple is exactly located to the east of Srirama temple. The Patalesvara Siva is one of the Astasambhus or eight guardian Sambhus of the Kshetra of Lord Purusottama. The names of other Sambhus are Lokanatha, Markandesvara, Yamesvara, Nilakanthesvara, Kapalamochana, Belesvara and Isanesvara. The temple of Patalesvara is famous for the inscriptions incised in three different characters on the left doorjamb of the main *deula* or *vimana*.² The temple is erected from 27 feet below the ground level.³ From the architectural point of view, the Patalesvara temple is an important structure. It was so built as to make the lower portion appears buried in the temple courtyard. A descending flight of steps leads on the floor of the sanctum enshrining the Svayambhu *lingam* of the deity.⁴ This temple is one of the ancient Saiva shrines in the precinct of the Jagannatha temple.

As many as four inscriptions of the time of Anangabhima Deva III relating to the management of the Jagannatha temple are noticed around the door entrance to the sanctum. The first grant records the offering of milk, butter rice and curd to the Lord.⁵ The second inscription mentions the grant of two *batis* and five *manas* of land by the Padatika Khanda to Lord Jagannatha for daily

offering of clarified butter, rice, curry, curd and betel leaf.⁶ The third grant refers to the gift of two *batis* of land in Kuranga and Murada villages by Kirtisvara Naik to Lord Jagannatha for *naivedya*.⁷ The fourth grant indicates to the gift of one *bati* and ten *manas* of land for supply of *Naivedya* and ten bundles of fragrant flowers every day to the deity.⁸ These four inscriptions on the left walls of the Patalesvara temple written in three different characters refer in most eulogistic terms to Anangabhima Deva.⁹ Dr. S.N. Rajaguru has referred that the inscription records that in the Saka year 1158 i.e. corresponding to 1236 AD. It is written in the 39th Anka of Sri Anangabhima Deva-III in the kingdom of Lord Sri Purusottama in the month of Makara, for grant of a plot of land, measuring two *batis* and five *manas*, in the village of Khanda Saisasa East under the supervision of Bisu Padhi for *Naivedya*.¹⁰ The inscriptions of the temple are incised in proto-Oriya character of the 13th century AD.¹¹ The place where the inscription is located is very dark, and it is very difficult to stay there for a great length of time. Due to the inscriptions being incised in the wall, the temple is of considerable historical importance.

Art and Architecture of the Temple

The temple of Patalesvara consists of three structures such as *vimana*, *jagamohana* and *natamandapa*. This temple is built in sandstones. It faces to east.



Vimana

The vimana of the Patalesvara temple is a rekha deula and its height is about 35 feet from the ground level. Half of this temple is submerged in the earth. The main deula or vimana lies at a depth of 20 feet from the level of the inner courtyard of the Jagannatha temple.¹² At present the entire bada portion of the vimana is buried under the earth. The bada of the vimana is surmounted by the curvilinear superstructure, which is thickly plastered with lime mortar. The entire gandi is devoid of decorative ornamentation. The mastaka of the vimana consists of usual elements of rekha deula such as beki, amalakasila, khapuri, kalasa, ayudha (trident) and dhvaja.

The sanctum preserves Sivalinga within saktipitha as the presiding deity of the temple. Pancamukhi (five faced) Sivalinga has been installed below the saktipitha. So the Linga is not visible to outwards. Hence this Siva is known as Patalesvara. Legend says that Lord Vamana by putting his third leg on the head of Bali while pressing him to patala, Bali stayed here by becoming Patalesvara Siva.¹³ A descending flight of steps are provided to enter into the floor level of the sanctum, which is about 20 feet below from the floor of the Kurma bedha.¹⁴ There is a stone slab, which contains the images of Siva-Parvati or Hara-Parvati and it is closely installed to the backside wall of the sanctum. A painting of ten-headed Ravana figure is also excellently depicted in the backside wall of the sanctum.

The vimana has one doorway towards the jagamohana. The jambs of the doorway are devoid of decorative ornamentation. The figures of navagrahas are finely carved on the doorway lintel. They are all in seated posture (padmasana) with usual attributes in their hands. The head of Rahu is depicted above the doorway lintel. Here the image of Gaja-Lakshmi is carved on the

architrave above the Rahu head. Nandi and Bhrungi are installed on either side base of the doorjambs. They are acting as the traditional dvarapalas of the temple.

Jagamohana

The jagamohana of the Patalesvara temple is a pidha deula and its height is about 15 feet from the surface of the temple complex. The base of the bada is rectangular and it measures approximately 30 feet in length and 15 feet in width. The outer walls of the bada are completely undecorated. The pyramidal superstructure is surmounted on the bada of the jagamohana and it consists of three pidhas. There is no element of mastaka found from the top of the upper pidha. The jagamohana has one doorway towards the north.

Natamandapa :

The natamandapa of the Patalesvara temple is a pidha deula and its height is about 18 feet from the surface of the temple complex. The base of the structure is a square of 15 feet. The structure is erected on a low plinth of 1 foot height. The bada of the natamandapa is completely plain. The pyramidal superstructure is surmounted on the bada of the natamandapa and it consists of four flat shaped pidhas. There is only one kalasa found on the top of the upper pidha.

There is no separate wall between the jagamohana and the natamandapa hall. The inner walls of the jagamohana and natamandapa are decorated with some sculptures as well as paintings.

The niches of the southern side inner wall of the jagamohana contain images of Hara-Parvati in a single slab and a small Sivalinga within saktipitha. The images of Hara-Parvati are carved in standing posture on the plain pedestal. Both lion and bull are also depicted on the pedestal. The images of Siva (Hara) displays trisula in right



upper hand, abhaya mudra in right lower hand, dambaru in left upper hand and the left lower hand lies on the shoulder of Parvati. Small Sivalinga within saktipitha is installed on the left side of the Hara-Parvati image.

The eastern inner wall of the natamandapa is excellently depicted with the painting of ten-armed Banambara (Siva). The figure of Banambara has been depicted on the prostrate body of an asura (demon). His right hands display naga-pasa, parasu, ankusa, dambaru and varada mudra while the left side hands possess snake, trident, dhvajä, bell and abhaya mudra. There is a painting of Kartikeya found on the southeast corner wall of the natamandapa. He is depicted on a peacock, the conventional mount of deity. He displays chakra in right upper hand, arrow in right lower hand, conch in the left upper hand and bow in left lower hand respectively. The northeast corner of the natamandapa is also depicted with a painting of Ganesha. The four-handed figure of Ganesha is depicted in standing posture on the dambaru shaped pedestal. He displays nagapasa in right upper hand, broken tusk in right lower hand, ankusa in left upper hand and a ladu in left lower hand respectively.

Devotees at this place (Patalesvara temple) after visiting Lord Siva turn their face towards south and see the Nilachakra and pay their obeisance to Nilacakra.

Date of the temple:

The construction of the temple of Patalesvara within the precinct of the main Jagannatha temple is ascribed to Anangabhima Deva-II, the fifth king of the Ganga dynasty, who is supposed to have ascended the throne in 1192 AD.¹⁵ On the basis of the inscriptions of Anangabhima Deva III in the doorway wall, most of the scholars accept that this temple belonged to the Gaiga period of Orissa history and it was constructed during the contemporary period of

the Jagannatha temple. On the basis of the architectural style and sculptural features (rare), the construction period of Patalesvara temple can be tentatively assigned to the last quarter of the 12th century AD.

It is known from the above discussion that the temple of Patalesvara is an ancient Saiva shrine in the temple complex of Lord Jagannatha. Though the architectural feature of the Patalesvara temple is not so important, but from the cultural point of view, this temple is an important Saiva shrine of Puri.

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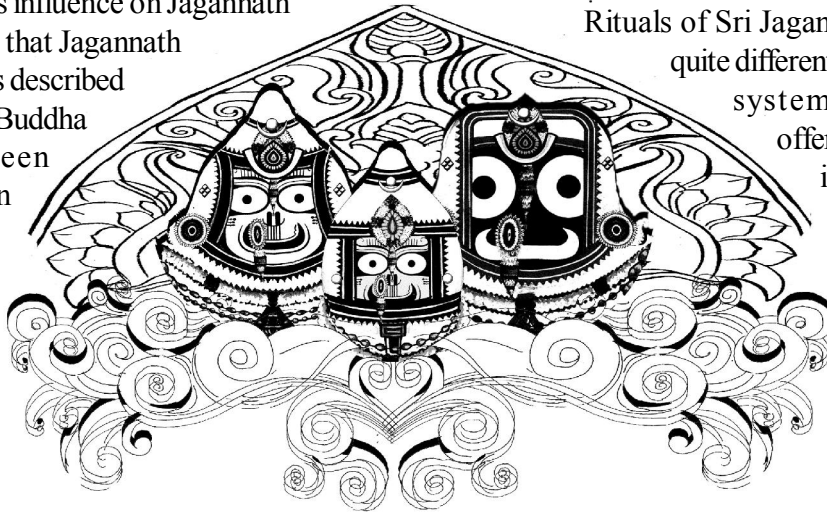
Lord Jagannath : Effective Analysis of Jagannath Culture

Basanta Kumar Das

Nilachal, Sri-Khetra or Purusottama Puri has been famous for thousands of years as the seat of Lord Jagannath, historicity of which is as mysterious as the life of the earth. No body knows how, when and why it originated. Most probably Jagannath was a tribal deity in the Prehistoric Period. Buddhism had its influence on Jagannath to such an extent that Jagannath in ancient times is described as incarnation of Buddha who has been accepted as an Avatara of Vishnu by Jayadeva. Shankaracharya and Ramanuja established their religious centres (Maths) at Puri and have their influences on the worship of Lord Jagannath. But Jagannath fame has not only contained to India, but also in the western countries and some communist countries.

The goal of thousands, the year round is to go to Puri to honour and pray to Lord Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe. The temple of Jagannath at Puri is a magnificent example of architecture and carving but what is curious is that the deities,

the three images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra sit and stare unblinkingly. Their appearance is unfinished and frightful in the eyes of the modern aesthetics. But a true devotee sees in the hideous figure the bewitching and lovely figure of Krishna.



Rituals of Sri Jagannath temple is quite different from the ritual system of Puja of offering performed in other temples. It is a n accumulation of many faculties of Hindu religion, which syntheicises

here on one platform, and rituals are performed by "Arya" "Anarya" and "Brahmana" called Aryan Raja "Indradyuma", Savara srestha "Bishwabasu" and Brahmana "Bidyapati". This Seva Puja is traditionally performed by Sevaks called as Gajapati, Daita Pati and Brahmin.

Few shrines in the world can boast of a pattern of organization which provides for an ideal



adjustment among hundreds of functionaries who run the works of the huge temple complex day in and day out. The Gajapati Maharaja of Puri, traditionally first and the foremost Sevak of the Lord still enjoys suzerainty over a million hearts and fills them with a nostalgia for the glorious past when Orissa stood at the zenith of its power. The Maharaja sweeps the floor-boards of the chariots at the beginning of the Lord's Journey creating emotion among the spectators. The Brahmin Priests chant hymns so on and so forth.

In the age of the Vedas, Lord Jagannath was called Purusottama (Supreme Person) and that evidence is in 'Yajurveda Rudrastadhyayi'. There is also similarity between the description of Paramapurusa in Yajur Veda and the shape of Lord Jagannath.

Shree Jagannath is Vedic Purusa because he accepts all these things and wanders around all places without having hands and legs. He can see all the things of the universe having two rounded eyes and he can hear the sacred prayers of the devotees having no ears. He knows all the things of the universe.

Sri Jagannath is actually the Lord of the Universe. He is the apostle of humanism, a cult of universal brotherhood, love, tolerance, equality and fraternity. The cult of Jagannath is not a sectarian religion but a cosmopolitan philosophy. The Jagannath cult has embraced all types of spiritual thought starting from primitive Savara tribal to ultra modern Krishna consciousness. It has given solace to all devotees hailing from the so called untouchable low caste, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism and even Christianity. Jagannath Cult is

a pleasant synthesis of Vaishnavism, Saktism, Saivism and other sects of Hinduism.

The high pedestal of the inner sanctum is shared by three deities Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra, which is an unique phenomenon as in most of the temples there is usually one presiding deity who sits in the inner sanctum only. Others are relegated to inferior position, but in temple of Lord Jagannath, all deities particularly Jagannath Balabhadra and Subhadra are given equal respect and reception in all rituals. The Almighty is worshipped daily as Balarama in the image of Balabhadra, as Bhubaneswari in the image of Subhadra and as Purusottama in the image of Jagannath. In Balabhadra he is viewed as *Atma* (the soul) in Subhadra as *Prakruti* (the nature) and in Jagannath as *Paramatma* (the universal soul)

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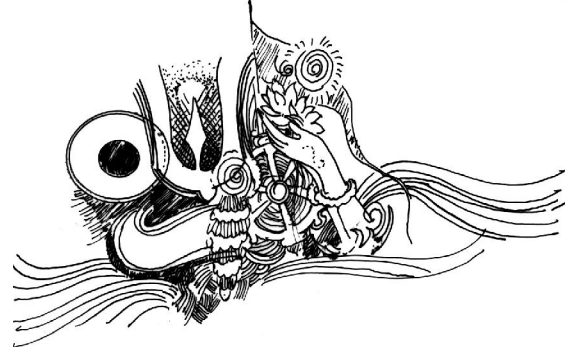
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Sri Krsna - Jagannath Consciousness : Vyasa - Jayadeva - Sarala Dasa

Dr. Satyabrata Das



Vyasa's original Sanskrit Mahabharata, his magnum opus, was written between 3rd and 4th Century B.C. The entire casting of this great Indian epic was done with a lot of care and craftsmanship. Among the dramatic personae Sri Krsna seems to have received the best attention and artistic favour from the master, Vyasadev. As it turns out, Sri Krsna emerges as the most glamorous, charismatic and the most sought-after character. He is not only the possessor of the unique panchajanya conch and the formidable Sudarshan Chakra; he is the omniscient, philosopher-king, rhetorician, diplomat, strategist, statesman, guide, friend, preceptor, conscience-keeper, crisis-manager, spokesperson and the ambassador of the Pandavas.

Further, Vyasa's dotting on the character of Sri Krsna takes the centre-stage and remains the focal-point in the entire stretch of the grandiloquent Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, a massive sub-plot, that spans quite impressive eighteen chapters, and ultimately turns out to be the quintessence of the great epic.

On this ionian highway the next conspicuous milestone after Vyasa that we stumble upon is the 12th century Sanskrit poet from Orissa, Jayadeva. While Vyasa only highlights Krsna's spiritual, intellectual and diplomatic traits and blows the character out into a larger - than - life stature; Jayadeva in his classic Gita Govinda focuses only on the sensuous,

romantic inter-actions between the divine pair, Sri Krsna and Sri Radha, often bordering on sensuality and licentiousness. Jayadeva conceives the characters of Sri Krsna and Sri Radha as divine companions though, all along the classic Gita Govinda we have the feeling that the poet delicately and immaculately brings out the finer and the most elemental virtues like love, longing, ecstasy and transcendence without any conscious attempt to mystify or to portray them out into larger-than-life statures. The poet with the best of his artistic and lyrical manoeuvres keeps himself grounded in reality.

More than three hundred years after, yet another Oriya poet, with no direct knowledge of Sanskrit or any trace of scholarship, and purely from agrarian background shows an incredible feat by composing the Mahabharata in Oriya. And thus doing he becomes the pioneer, the path-finder. And soon others from Bengal, Assam and the Hindi belt follow the suit. He is Sarala Dasa. His Mahabharata in Oriya is not a translation of the original Sanskrit Mahabharata, nor even written in the shadow of it. It is out and out original both in structure and content though; the general schemata and the main story-line remains on the backdrop. As a western scholar John Boulton looks at it : "Sarala Dasa's Mahabharata was the first important Oriya work on the Jagannath cult. Though Sri Krsna is portrayed as the protagonist of Sarala Mahabharata, Sri Jagannath continues to be Sarala's "counter theme".



As Boulton explains :

Scattered throughout his Mahabharata, Sarala presents a number of historical, racial memories, which appear in the form of dream like, narrative sequence. In recounting them he is obviously looking back from the stand-point of a tradition... It is clear from his account that his sympathies lie with the Savaras, whose God in origin Jagannath was.

Sarala (who proves himself every inch a poet, original and striking) breaks away from the master craftsman Vyasa in more than one ways. First, he heavily rationalizes the portrayal of the character of Sri Krsna. In a way, Sarala reacts against the Sanskrit-Hindu-Aryan pantheon of Gods and Goddesses. So we are not at all surprised to find the various Gods and Goddesses including Lord Krsna without any supernatural clout or larger-than-life portrayal in Sarala Mahabharata. As Boulton comments:

... here we come to the crux of the matter - Sarala Dasa behaves towards Krsna in the traditional manner of Oriyas towards Jagannath : he mocks and debunks him. In doing so he breaks away from the path of both Vyasa and Jayadeva.

Vyasa had exalted Krsna as the philosopher-hero and Jayadeva as the divine lover. But Sarala Dasa refuses to regard Krsna/Jagannath as anything but an equal, whose faults are to be mocked and censured.

But all the same, Sarala, who uses the Oriya lingua franca as his medium successfully creates an atmosphere of informality in dealing with Sri Krsna or Sri Jagannath that becomes the very spirit of typical Oriya devotees including the Sevayats of Puri Temple. They look upon Lord Jagannath as a member of their family - so close, so intimate, so informal. Thus the Mahabharata of Sarala Dasa is a world apart from the Mahabharata of Vyasadev. That explains why Sarala has skipped the entire Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and heavily abridged the Santi Parva of Vyasa's original. Nowhere do we

find Vyasa's omniscient, philosopher-king Krsna in Sarala's epic.

Sri Jagannath Cult : A veritable melting pot : Orissa (synonymous with Sri Jagannath - a cult, a way of life, a living culture) has been a meeting ground, a melting pot of all sects and faiths since time immemorial. Brahmanya, Jaina, Buddha, Natha, Saivya, Shakta, Soura, Ganapatya, Nirguna, Saguna, Vaishnava - all streams have flooded the Orissa coast. And Sarala Mahabharata has the unique distinction of integrating, synthesizing and reflecting the myriad thoughts and faiths. At several points in Sarala Mahabharata, Jagannath is identified as Buddha, Krsna and Rama.

As Sarala writes in the Adi Parva :

*Salute thee Sri Jagannath
The revered One whose domain
Is the Blue Hills:
He sits pretty as Sri Buddha
There in the Blue Cavern*

At another point in the Adi Parva Sarala writes:

*Glory be to Rama Krsna
Brahmaa as Subhadra
And to the great soul Buddha ...*

In Madhya Parva Sarala writes :

*There comes Sri Jagannath
As Buddha to liberate the Mankind ...*

(Translation : mine)

Such instances are many where Sarala looks at Sri Jagannath as one with Sri Krsna, Sri Rama, and Buddha. A wonderful integration, a rare unification and synthesis of all faiths and paths. Sarala Mahabharata indeed is a unified voice, a sum total of the consciousness that draws its energy and vibration from one common source - the Krsna - Jagannath pool...

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The Mirror of Lord Jagannath

Mahimohan Tripathy

The articles required for the daily rituals in the Sri Jagannath temple at Puri, include three mirrors. The mirrors are made of brass having no part of glass, each about two and half feet high. It is disc-shaped with a stand. Both the surfaces of the disc are well polished.

The mirrors are used at the time of *Abakash* of the Deities. *Abakash* means cleaning of the teeth and bath of the Deities. This religious rite is performed subsequent to the *dwaraphita* (opening of the temple-doors in the early morning), *Mangala Alati* (waving of lamps before the Deities) and *Mailam* (removal of flowers, clothes etc. decked on the Deities in the previous night).

The time for the abakash is within 6.30 in the morning, as specified in the Record-of-Rights of the temple. The Sevaks (Servitors) associated with this service are Pushpalak (3 persons), Paniapat, Suarbadu, Khatulisevak, Mukhapakhala-Padhiary, Mukhapakhala-Puspalak, Garabadu, Amla-Ghatuary, Mahabhoi, Jyotisha-Khurinayak, Bhandar-Mekap and Darpania.

The Pushpalak Sevaks perform the abakash ritual sitting on the floor down the Ratnavedi (Pedestal) in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. They sprinkle water mixed with camphor, curd, sandal paste and amla fruit-paste on the three brass mirrors placed on the floor, one each for the three Deities - Lord Balabhadra,

Lord Jagannath and Devi Subhadra, symbolizing Their bath. Before bath, the Sevaks also show tooth-sticks and tongue-scrappers to the Deities symbolizing cleaning of Their teeth and tongues.

One such mirror is also used in the 'Pushyaviseka' ritual of Lord Jagannath, celebrated on the full moon day in the month of Pausha.

There is a ritual service known as Darpania Seva in the temple. The word 'darpan' means in English 'mirror'. The Sevak of this service, Darpania Sevak is in charge of keeping the mirrors for the rituals. He also cleans certain utensils used in the rituals on a place called Anasarapindi after *Mangala Alati* is over.

The necessity of a mirror as an article of Hindu rituals has been mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavata (Book-Eleven). It would not be out of place to mention here that in the Tibetan Buddhism a mirror (in their parlance 'Adarsha') is used in their rituals. In Oriya, the words *adarsha*, *darpana*, *aaina*, *aarisi*, *mukura* convey the same meaning i.e. mirror. The mirror (adarsha) of the Tibetan Buddhism has resemblance with that of the Puri temple.

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Srikshetra - A Replica of Indian Culture

Sarat Chandra Mohapatra

Srikshetra or Jagannath Puri, as it is commonly said is a truthful replica of Indian culture. To understand this culture, one has to have some idea of the history of this land, which again is different from that of other countries of the world. Indian history does not contain accounts of imperialistic aggresions or invasions into the territorial integrity of any nation. It is on the other hand, a history of assimilation, a perfect adjustment to a specific environment, which began thousands of years before the periods history earmark, as the period of Indus Valley Civilization. Both Mahenjodaro and Harappa reveal that, it was not an incipient civilization that had to their creation, but they had millions of human endeavours behind them. As Jawaharlal Neheru felt, "it was like some ancient palm leaf set, on which layer upon layer of thought had been inscribed and yet no succeeding layer had completely hidden or erased, what had been there previously." But the culture that grew up here and that is hinted at by Nehru was not an anthropomorphic entity, but a perfect



synthesis and adjustment of diverse racial cultures. If one cares to analyse further, he would find out that, it is a curious mixture of free thought and orthodoxy. Nevertheless, it is the inner creativity of the people belonging to this country and their strong religious and spiritual faith that led to the growth of a dynamic Indian culture based on tolerance.

A person trying to understand the basics of Indian culture can very well study the history of Srikshetra with innumerable temples, Maths and Ashramas and however tantalizing they may appear outwardly, they would at long last espouse the essence of Indian culture, which is

basically a harmonious blending of diverse thoughts and philosophies, not a synthesis but a perfect agreement, each maintaining its own peculiar phenomena, yet forming into one indivisible whole named Indian. This Indianness is an emotional experience, which breeds and develops a queer feelings of oneness.



Jainism and Buddhism

Of these two religions, Jainism is older than Buddhism and it basically approved the precepts of the Vedas. On the other hand, the Hindus were the believers in the Vedas from which, the Brahmin religion had the impetus. The Vedas are first casted as *Mantras* (Prayers etc) and *Brahmanas* (Rituals etc.) and the Brahmin religion started thriving on the tenets of the Vedas. The historians believe that, Rishabhadeva or Rishabha, traditionally known as the founder of Jainism, is inseparably associated with the cultural history of ancient Orissa. The Hatigumpha (Elephant's Cave) inscriptions have a reference to an image of Kalinga Jina, being carried away from Orissa by a king belonging to Nanda Dynasty of Magadha. Whether that was the image of Sitalnath, or Rishabha is a matter of controversy. But fact remains that gospel of Jainism was preached extensively in Orissa and its impact on the religious firmament of Orissa reached its all time high during the reign of Kharavela in the 1st century B.C. Stone inscriptions and sculptures speak glory of this impact and finally of the Trinity of the cult.

That there had been a cross-cultural fertilization between the resident non-Aryans of India and the immigrant Aryans is a foregone conclusion. It is this cross-cultural integration, which precisely gave a peculiar shape to Indian culture. The appearances of the Indians residing in the foothills of the Himalayas, to their living in 'Person's Pygmalion Point', in the Nicobar Island (for that is the Southern most tip of the Indian sub-continent); their language, food, dress, art and music, so also architecture, all point out unmistakably to this grand fusion of sub-cultures into a big one. When we concentrate our attention on Srikshetra, we perceive immediately that it enshrines within its limited boundaries, a fusion of

various faiths, traditions, and sub-cultures to give it the most acceptable shape of a replica of Indian culture. A study of the Jagannath cult and a survey of Srikshetra give us this idea of strength.

Starting from Lord Jagannath Himself, the history has it that, He was a tribal deity, adored by the Savaras, as a symbol of Narayana. Another legend claims Him to be Nilamadhava, an image of Narayana, made of blue stone and worshipped by the aboriginals. He was brought to Nilagiri (Blue Mountain) or Nilachala and installed there as Jagannath with Balabhadra and Subhadra. The images made of wood are also claimed to have their distant linkage with the aboriginal system of worshipping wooden poles and to cap it all the Daitapatis, who have a fair share of responsibilities to perform rituals of the Temple are the descendants of the aboriginals or hill tribes of Orissa. So we may safely claim that, the beginning of the cultural history of Srikshetra is found in the fusion of Hindu and Tribal Cultures, which has been accepted as a facet of our proud heritage. The three deities came to be claimed as the symbols of Samyak Darshana, Samyak Gyana and Samyak Charitra, usually regarded as Triratna (of the Jaina Cult), on assimilation of which, a human being leads to Moksha (Salvation) or the ultimate end.

Growth of Buddhism in India is also an important phenomenon since 6th century B.C. and is considered wielding much impetus to the intellectual movement of the contemporary period. Some of the Indian historians consider Buddha to be a great social reformer, while other tends to attach some importance to his humanitarian approach. However, Buddhism also grew up enormously and transcended the geo-political boundaries of India.

Chandashoka (Ashoka, the violent or fierce) turned into Dharmashoka (Ashoka, the



religious) in 261 B.C. after the blood bath he had in Kalinga and ultimately, the Maurya Empire declined after Ashoka. The Kalinga War was a turning point in the Indian history, as the Conquered Kalinga conquered her conqueror, The holocaust witnessed by the emperor Ashoka, left an indelible mark on his sensitive mind and he accepted Buddhism and followed the same through out his life. Although historians differ in their opinion, if Kalinga was the turning point in the life of Ashoka, there is no doubt that, this is one of the reasons, which turned Chandashoka to Dharmashoka. His Rock Edicts, better known as Kalinga Edicts say, "All men are my children. Just as for my children I desire that, they be united with all welfare and happiness of this world and of the next, precisely, I do desire it for all men".

Some scholars have come forward to stake a claim on the Trinity, on behalf of Buddhism. According to them Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra stand for Buddha (the enlightened) Dharma (the religion) and Sangha (the organization). As we all know that, the Buddhist does have strong allegiance to these three aspects of their religion, which comprise Buddhism. The Hindus have also put a seal of recognition on their claim by accepting Jagannath as the symbol of Buddha. That Srikshetra does not recognize differences of caste and creed, is the focal point on which, the Buddhist base their claims. The caste system as it is commonly known, is a basic idea of Hinduism. Without going into the claims and counter-claims of the scholars, we can safely announce that so far we have noticed a fair amount of cross-cultural cohesion in the growth and development of Jagannath cult. Lord Jagannath is worshipped as Vishnu, Narayana or Krishna and simultaneously regarded as the Bhairava (Shiva, the formidable) with Bimala (the Bhairavi or the concert of Shiva), installed near the temple. So ultimately, we find a fusion of Saivism,

Shaktism and Vaishnavism of the Hindu religion with Jainism and Buddhism in the cult of Jagannath and the cultural tradition so relevantly held together in Srikshetra.

History has it that, Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikhism in India, travelled extensively through the length and breadth of India. He paid a visit to Puri with two of his disciples; Bala and Manda (the former a Hindu and the latter a Muslim) and stayed here for some days. His disciples dug a hole in the sea beach in quest of potable water for the use of their Guru. On being considered holy, subsequently it was converted into a well and a Gurudwara was created in memory of Guru Nanak, and Granth Saheb, the Sacred Book of Religion of the Sikhs, was placed there for reciting hymns from it.

Muslim invasions into the Hindu Kingdom of Orissa started in the 13th century A.D with their strong base in the adjoining province of Bengal. Those invasions were repulsed with intermittent spells of defeat, by the contemporary ruling Ganga kings of Orissa. This kind of attack and counter attack continued upto the 16th century, when finally in 1568 A.D. Orissa came under Afghan rule. The impact of Muslim rule cannot be traced so much in the Puri district, although it is felt to have left permanent imprint in the district of Cuttack, in the form of Muslim monuments and burial grounds. Although Srikshetra does not contain any such monument, it can boast of the burial place of Salabega, a Muslim, yet a great devotee of Lord Jagannath and composer of a lot of hymns for the Lord. Haridas, 1450-1530 A.D., a Muslim disciple of Sri Chaitanya, is more known as Javan Haridas (Haridas, the Muslim). He died in the Srikshetra and Sri Chaitanya himself buried his mortal remains in the seashore.

At the outset, we have mentioned that Srikshetra represents the essence of the Indian



culture. Unity in diversity. So long, we have tried to present legendary so also historical facts to prove our contention that Srikshetra stands for its unique cross cultural phenomenon and the fact is unchallengeable that Lord Jagannath is a symbol of diverse concept and ideologies in regard to god and religions. With its origin as a tribal deity in the hoary past Jagannath plays the multifaceted role of Vishnu and Shiva on one hand and Trinity as the symbol of Jainism and Buddhism. Even the Muslims like Salabega and Haridas offered him prayers for their salvation. It has to be accepted therefore that the philosophy that grew up in Srikshetra with Lord Jagannath in the centre stage defies a simplistic or for that matter a dogmatic definition. And more over the shrine known as Srikshetra is a place with monasteries performing diverse rites according to their ideology. It is the most liberal outlook of the contemporary king of Khurda or the Raja of Puri, who granted pieces of land to the founders of these monasteries.

Historically, Gobardhan Pitha of the Sankaracharya Sect seems to be the oldest of the monasteries in Puri, established by one of his disciples. Sankaracharya preached Advaita Philosophy (Monism). But, nevertheless Srikshetra can boast of monasteries belonging to the sects, preaching Dvaitavad-Dvaita Dvaitavad, (qualified dualism), Bishistadvaitavad, so on and so forth. So, there are monasteries belonging to Ramanuja sect, Ramanandi sect, Nimbarka sect, Goudiya Vaishnava sect, and so on. Some other monasteries are there which preach slightly different philosophy besides the eminent ones mentioned above. They follow different rituals and way of life also. Kali Tilak Matha, Balabhadri Akhara, Bada Odia Matha, Ramakrishna Mission Ashram and the rest of others being of this category. Outwardly, they may be having different religious philosophies and different mission to perform, but this can be said for certain

that, all these institutions have their unflinching devotion to Lord Jagannath and many of them have been taking part in the temple rituals on a routine basis for centuries past. So, it can be said that other organizations are now ingrained in the infrastructure of Srikshetra.

Some of these monasteries are having rich libraries, containing printed books and manuscripts. They also offer shelter to people, belonging to their sects, while some of them have arrangements to provide temporary shelter to pilgrims. Most of them also carry on charitable functions in some form or other. So, taking all these pieces of brief information about their organizations alongside the colourful administration in the temple complex engaging hundreds of Sevakas, their supervisors and top administrators, the total picture is almost incomprehensible. But, one aspect, one can glean out of the whole discussion is that, Srikshetra stands out uniquely and pre-eminently as a replica of Indian history and culture. Whether it is a Shaiva Kshetra or a Vishnu Tirtha, is entirely out of context and not in conformity with the philosophy that has grown up here during the centuries past, with Lord Jagannath as the pivotal force. The only consideration that prevails here is that, everything belongs to Him and He belongs to everybody, every organization or even every dwelling house of common people and the palace of the king as well. Nothing in Srikshetra, the holy concourse, can be conceived of without Purusottama or Lord Jagannath, as the king of Puri. He is the great synthesizing force behind the entire gamut of Srikshetra and fraternity. Therefore, it has assumed its stature, which can unmistakably be claimed to be a faithful replica of India.

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The Holy City Puri

Lalmohan Patnaik

The holy city of Lord Jagannath is situated on the sea shore of the Bay of Bengal in Orissa, India. Puri is the modern name of this holy city. The geographical location of Puri is Lat 19°47'55"N Long. 85°49'5". Puri is situated at a distance of 63 km. by road (NH 203 stretching from NH 5) and 59km. by railway (East-Coast Railway) from Bhubaneshwar, the capital city of Orissa. The nearest airport is Bhubaneshwar.

Puri owes its existence to the great temple of Jagannath. The sanctity of Puri as an important centre of pilgrimage is of remote antiquity. In 'Orissa and Her Remains' Mano Mohan Ganguly observes: "Puri is the seat of Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe; the sanctity of the place exists from pre-historic period where traditions cannot reach."

Puri revolves around the great Jagannath Temple. Not only is the temple holy, but the whole of its surroundings has been extolled as holy in

the Puranas, Sanskrit scriptures and ancient Oriya literature. In these ancient texts Puri is described as Srikshetra, Nilachal, Nilagiri, Purushottam, Purushottam Kshetra, Purushottam Puri, Sankha Kshetra, Jagannath Dham, Jagannath Kshetra and Jagannath Puri. Adi Shankaracharya (788-820) visited Puri and founded Gobardhan or Bhogabardhan Matha here. This proves the importance of the holy city of Puri as a centre of Hindu pilgrimage before the 9th century. Large number of pilgrims coming to Puri from all parts of India even today calls Puri as Jagannath Puri.



In Ain-i-Akbari and other Muslim chronicles till the eighteenth century Puri has been mentioned as the city of Purushottam. In the early years of British rule, in the Government records, Puri has been described as the city of Jagannath and called Jagannath Puri. William Hamilton in his description of 'Hindustan' (1820) mentions the city as Jaggernath and Jaggarnath Pooree.



Andrew Stirling in his 'Accounts of Orissa' published in 1824 describes this place as Jagannath Pooree and simply Pooree.

Puri is a unique place where all shades of Hindu religious faith have converged. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, National Professor of India, in his foreword of K.C.Mishra's 'The Cult of Jagannath' writes;- "Puri or Jagannath is one of the pan-Indian Hindu religious centres and shrines and it is of primary importance in modern Hindu corporate as well as personal religious life. The temple of Jagannath is known all over the world and people are interested in the history and its religious surroundings."²

In modern chronicles and world famous Gazetteers and Encyclopedias Puri is described as a famous holy city. In 'The Chamber's World Gazetteers and Geographical Dictionary' Puri is narrated as "Puri, Pooree or Jagannath-Orissa, India, ancient town long sacred as the abode of the Golden Tooth of Buddha, but owing its reputation to a temple (1174-1188) to Vishnu as Jagannath (Lord of the World)."³ But the 'Britannica Ready Reference Encyclopedia' depicts: "Jagannath as form under which Lord Krishna is worshiped at Puri, Orissa, a famous religious centre of India. His temple at Puri dates from the 12th century. The Rath Yatra or Chariot Festival is held in his honour each year in June or July."⁴ The Hutchinson's New 20th Century Encyclopedia' indicates-"Puri (Pooree) town in Orissa, India, on the Bay of Bengal the shrine of Jagannath (q.v.) is there, dating from C.A.D. 318; the annual festival attracts thousands of pilgrims".⁵

But in the 'Jagannath Charitramruta' Jagannath has been described as the Supreme Lord or 'Purna Brahma', where as Krishna represents only a part of his glory.⁶ This is not the place to go into these arguments and counter-

arguments. Actually Jagannath is never a sectarian deity. The Jagannath worship at Puri is an assimilation of divergent modes of worship of different religions, creeds and sects. In the daily rituals and annual festivals of Sri Jagannath temple at Puri, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Saivite, Shakta, Tantric and Vaishnavite influences are clearly discernible. The cult of Jagannath is an epitome of divergent religious creeds and schools of philosophy.

This holy city of Puri is also a great center of learning. Adi Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Ballavacharya, Sri Chaitanya, Atibadi Jagannath Das, Guru Nanak, Bhakta Kabir and heads of different other Sampradayas and creeds have come to this sacred shrine and established there Mathas and Ashrams in this holy city. These Ashrams and Mathas are patronizing different schools of study and learning here. The Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University and the Rastriya Sanskrit Sansthana's, Sadashiv Campus here are great centers of Sanskrit learning. The world famous 'Odissi dance' and 'Odissi sangeet' have their roots in Puri.

For centuries now the blue sea at Puri, called sacred 'Mahodadhi', has been the venue of countless pilgrims taking the traditional purification dip. Puri beach offers the rare opportunity of witnessing the colorful sunrise and sunset on the same beach where they can bathe and laze for hours on the golden sand. The world famous Travellers Guide - 'The Illustrated Guide to India of the Reader's Digest' describes Puri as one of India's most important pilgrimage centers. This Sea-side town is dominated by the Towering Jagannath Temple. Early European sailors, for whom 65m. (213 ft) high spire was an important landmark, called it -'White Pagoda' to differentiate it from Konark's Sun Temple which they called 'Black Pagoda'. Puri beach is other attraction.⁷



Puri is also the seat of numerous artisans and craftsmen who produce rare and exquisite world famous stone sculptures, handicrafts, wood-carvings, sea-shell items and Patta paintings depicting several aspects of the Jagannath culture.

This holy city's sacredness is inherent in the sacred "Mahaprasad" of Mahaprabhu Sri Jagannath. The Puri District Gazetteer observes: "it is on record that as many as 435 items of food were being offered to the deities at Madhyana Dhupa in 1910."⁸ The 'Anand Bazar' of Sri Mandir can feed more than one lakh people in a day. In this holy city the pilgrims and tourists get the sumptuous taste of several varieties of nutritious Orissan food in typical Oriya recipes.

The people of Puri are simple, friendly, hospitable and helpful. There are large number of Dharmashalas, Lodging Houses and all categories of Hotels, Holiday Homes, Guest Houses and Tourist Bungalows to serve lakhs of pilgrims and tourists in this holy city.

In Orissa, particularly in the holy city of Puri, Purushottam Jagannath is a living God enshrined in the hearts of the children of the soil. Here Sri Jagannath forms a part and parcel of the religious, social and cultural ethos of the people. The spirit of tolerance and co-existence are the basic tenets of Orissan culture.

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Sudarsan of Lord Jagannath

Sibasundar Pattanaik

Sudarsan is the Chakra of Lord Jagannath which is placed on the left side of the Lord. Generally, the Chakra is a circular shaped iron weapon having curved and sharpen edges on its outer circle and there are several spokes connecting the inner axis with the outer circle. In ancient times it was used as weapon by the warriors who use to throw it towards the foes. As it moves towards the enemy in circling its axis and touches the enemy, its curved and sharp edges pierced on the body of the enemy warriors chopping off their limbs or heads. Afterwards the Chakra returns to its master.

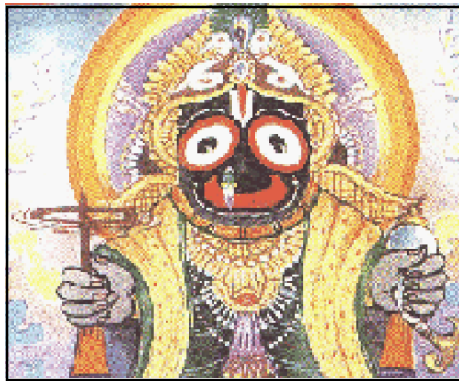
But Sudarsan Chakra of Lord Jagannath is not round shaped iron weapon. It is pillar shaped wood on the upper portion of which Chakra is carved out. It is clothed. As Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra change their bodies in the year of dual Asadha normally falling on the 12th year, Sudarsan is also replaced with new body.

When Lord Jagannath takes His incarnation as Narayana. He is adorned with four articles on His four hands-In His upper right hand He holds Sudarsan Chakra and in His upper left hand He

holds Sankha (Conch). In His lower left hand He holds Gada (Mace) and He holds Padma (Lotus) in His lower right hand. Lord Jagannath is also adorned with those articles on the days of "Sanabesha" - three times inside the temple and once on His Chariot "Nandighosa". The last one on Asadha Sukla Ekadasi Day (The 11th day of

Bright Moon of the month of Asadha). Like His incarnation Narayana, Lord Jagannath holds Chakra in His upper right hand on the days of Sunabesha. But it is unique in India that, Sudarsan Chakra is placed on the left side of Lord Jagannath. Some people get solace that placement of Sudarsan on the left side of Lord Jagannath is an advantage as Lord Jagannath

can not apply His left hand to throw Sudarsan Chakra on such a velocity as His left hand is less powerful than the right hand. Lord Jagannath is Almighty. His left hand is as forceful as his right hand. Sudarsan is not fearful. The *Bhaktas* (the devotees) worship it. They consider Sudarsan as their protector. At the time when they are in danger Sudarsan comes to their rescue. To help the *Bhaktas* Sudarsan doesn't require specific





order from Lord Jagannath, which is given by the Lord in general terms to protect the *Bhaktas* prior to their actual difficulties or danger. Sudarsan is some total *Bhakti* (devotion) of the Vaisnavs (the persons who worship Vishnu or any of His incarnations). It is "Vaisnavastra" (Weapon for Vaisnavs). At the time of their needs Sudarsan comes to their rescue and kills evil persons or Daityas.

Sudarsan is being worshipped in the following terms -

*" Sudarsan Mahajwala Koti Surjya Samaprabha,
Agyan Timirundhasya Vaisnavastra Niketan"*

(Oh Sudarsan ! Your are highly hot and exert light equivalent to crores of Sun. In the pitch darkness of immorality you are weapon of Vaisnavas and also their abode).

Sudarsan as its name implies "Su" + "Darsan" that means "Well Views". There is no fearfulness for it. On the other hand every *Bhakta* likes it.

There are numerous instances how Sudarsan comes to the rescue of the righteous people and kills the evil persons. In the famous war "Mahabharat Yuddha", all warriors took pride in themselves to have killed the warriors of the opposite camp. When Belalasen was asked what he has seen, he told that he has only seen a Chakra killing the warriors of both sides. That Chakra is none other than Sudarsan Chakra normally adorned by Lord Krishna, the God Himself taking His incarnation in "Dwapar Yuga". It is God who killed the evil persons in that war to protect the righteous people of the world.

In "Srimad Bhagabatam", we come across a story how Chakrabarti King Ambarish (A predecessor king of Lord Rama) was protected by Sudarsan. King Ambarish was a devotee of Bhagaban. He observed austerity on the Ekadasi

day. On the following morning he took his bath and gifted different valuable articles and cows to the Brahmins. Thereafter he was going for "Paran" (To take food after observing austerity of the previous day of Ekadasi) when the sage Durbasha appeared to whom the king requested for "Parana". The sage went for a bath but did not return for a long time. As the time limit for "Parana" was about to be over which usually ends about three hours from Sun rise and the sage did not come at the advice of the Raja Purohit (King's Priest), the king took water as "Paran" for which the sage became furious and removed a hair from his head and threw towards the king. The said hair turned a burning object and went towards the king. Seeing this the king called the Almighty for help. At this Sudarsan appeared being illuminated like crores of Sun and destroyed the burning hair of the sage. Thereafter Sudarsan ran after the sage Durbasha to kill him and the later ran for shelter first to Siva and then to Brahma, who expressed their inabilities to save from the weapon of Lord Jagannath. Thereafter the sage surrendered before Lord Jagannath who told that His Sudarsan is under the clutches of His *Bhaktas*, who may save the sage. Lord Jagannath told that His devotees have relinquished their worldly attachments such as wife, son, dwelling house, superiors, life treasures, "Ihaloks" (Present life) and Paraloks (Subsequent life) for His devotion and have made complete surrender before Him. Lord Jagannath expressed His inability to save the sage since He can not leave His devotees who do not want Salokya or Sarupya Mokhya (to end one's worldly birth for a living on God's place or merged with God). Lord Jagannath told that the *Bhaktas* exist on the abysmal depth of His heart and He exists on their respective hearts. Lord Jagannath advised the sage Durbasha to take shelter before the king Ambarish, abusing the sage not to apply his Tapa



and knowledge in the unjustified manner but to look for the well-being of the society.

The sage surrendered before the king who requested Sudarsan to save the sage. In his prayer to Sudarsan the king Ambarish praised Sudarsan in the following manner :

"Oh Sudarsan ! You are equivalent to Agni (Fire), Surya (Sun), Chandra (Moon) and all the stars. You are water, earth, heaven, tanmatra and indriyas. You are having a thousand spokes and beloved of Lord Visnu. You destroy the powers of all weapons and you are the protector of the earth and harbinger of Dharma, Karma and also Protector of Yagyan. Your are the Lokapal possessing the pure heart. Your burning quality destroys darkness. Being the defender of Dharma (righteousness) and destroyer of Adharma (evil quality) you travel at the speed of mind. Your virtuousness is supreme and your swarup (real intention) is universal. None can defeat you. When Lord throws you to kill Daityas (evil persons) you

instantly do that and none can do anything against you.

Lord Jagannath possesses such a weapon i.e. Sudarsan Chakra which protects the righteous people from evil persons.

Sudarsan is also authorized to represent Lord Jagannath for "Panti or Chacheri Bhog" after getting "Agyamala" (Falling of flower garland from the body of Lord Jagannath). He also goes to the bathing platform with Lord Jagannath and His Brother and Sister on Jyestha Purnima and also accompany Them to Gundichaghar during Car Festival.

Jai Sudarsan !

Glory to Sudarsan !

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Jagannath, The Lord of Universe His Origin and Evolution

Er.Nirakar Mahalik

Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe is one of the most revered and ancient deities of the Hindu pantheon. His origin and worship has been shrouded with myths, legends and traditions. The earliest references of the Lord are found in the Puranas and ancient literature. As His origin being traced to the king Indradyumna of Upanishad period, a hoary antiquity has been assigned to Him in Puranic and local traditions.

From the legendary sources it is stated that

Lord Jagannath was originally worshipped by tribals and Savaras. In the Buddhist records we find that Oddiyana was one of the centres of Buddhism and Tantricism. This Oddiyana is identified with the Gopalpur (Ganjam) on sea coast which is contiguous with the split formed by Chilika-Puri island during the time of Taranatha.¹ The Savaras and Patara Savaras mentioned in the tantric literature used to live there alongwith the fishermen. Important evidence of this belief is the existen those who are believed to

be of tribal origin and play a major role in performing different sevas to Lord Jagannath.

In the remote corners of Orissa, tribals of Koraput district are performing Daru (wood) worship from the primitive period. Such type of worship was seen at Bata-Kuhudi, a village in

Koraput district. The deities were worshipped on the road side on Sunki-Jagdarpur National Highway No.43 at a distance of three kms.



from Kotapad. Here two wooden posts (shown in figure) of 1.30 meters in height above the ground level and 26 cms apart from each other were seen during February 1997. It is learnt that the concretion ceremony of these two posts were seen vertical to the ground with 26 cms apart. But during the year 1997, top of the two posts came so close (shown in figure) that they might have touched each other within three to four succeeding years. After they touch each other, the Navakalevar of the deities was to be performed



again. This function is generally organized in the month of Chaitra or Baisakha (March-April - May). This Navakalevar ceremony is called 'Bali-Yatra' which starts from 6 P.M to 12 P.M in every night for a period of three months.

'Daru Devata' written by Dr. Benimadhava Padhee has traced the origin of Jagannath to the Daru worship by the savaras in pre-historic times. Tree-worship is a very ancient cult. Even people of Kashmir was worshipping wooden idol before 10th century AD. Historian Al-Biruni (973-1048 AD) wrote, "In inner Kashmir about two or three days journey from the capital in the direction towards the mountains of Bolor, there is a wooden idol called Sarada, which is much venerated frequented by pilgrims.² So the tree or wood (Daru) worship was prevalent in India all through from early time.

Now-a-days tribals of Ganjam and Koraput worship tree and log of wood (Daru) as their Lord. It is to be pointed out that a popular tradition among savaras speaks of two early progenitors of their race called Rama and Bhima lived in Mahendra mountain where they used to worship Gods or 'kitungs' in the wooden posts like the posts shown in figure.³ Rama Chandra Dikshitar says that the aboriginals call their deities Puradeva and Murugan.⁴ This Puradeva was converted to Purusadeva (Purusottama deva) and Bhima devata in the formay Siva of Murugan culture. So the Savaras were the earliest worshipped of Purusottama Jagannath.

Navakalevar rituals of Batakuhudi in Koraput district were performed before the function of Navakalevar of Lord Jagannath was started. During Navakalevar at Puri, Anasara rituals of Lord Jagannath was performed just like a tribal function. His worship in Hindu rituals also have been done for eleven months in a lunar year. During Snana Purnima to Vyasa Purnima, Daita-

Patis are incharge of the deities. During this period called 'Anasara', the deities remain secluded in 'Anasara-gumuti', where special rituals are performed. This Savar or tribal rituals are particularly marked prominently during Anasara, Navakalevar and car-festival. Most of the rites during this period are confidential, which is known to the Sevakas only. The Daitas who are hereditary servitors of Lord Jagannath claim their descent from the Savaras. They observe the funeral rites of Lord Jagannath during Navakalevar. Scholar like Anncharlott Eschmann opined that the Navakalevar ritual i.e. the ceremony of periodical renewal of the deity, is a tribal custom. Such practices of renewal of wooden deity are to be found among the primitive tribes like Saoras and Khands.⁵

In course of time, the worship of Jagannath took the Aryanised form and major faith like Jainism, Buddhism, Saivism, Saktism, Saurism and Vaishnavism had some influence on the faith. All these faiths were assimilated into the concept of Jagannath to form a unitary grand composite culture of Lord Jagannath.

From the history and archaeology we came to know some of the kings were professing the Bhagavat cult or Narayan cult after the southern expedition of Samudra Gupta to South India in the fourth century A.D. Bhagavatism influenced Matharas when their dominion was extended from the river Krishna in the south up to the Mahanadi in the north. Chandivarman, Pravanjan Varman, Anantasakti Vaman of Mathara dynasty used the title of 'Parama-Bhagavata' in about 5th century A.D. After the Mathara dynasty, the early Ganga king Hasti-varman adopted Narayana cult though their principal deity was Gokarneswar (Lord Siva) of Mahendragiri, where Narayana was adored alongwith Siva.⁷



Narayana cult changed into cult of Madhaba in 7th century A.D. The earliest king of Sailodbhava dynasty was Madhavaraja. From 7th to 9th century A.D, the Madhava cult was popular in Kangoda under Sailodbhava when their dominion was extended from Mahendragiri in the south upto Mahanadi in the north.⁸

Narayana cult and Madhava cult again changed to Buddhism by Bhaumakara king who invaded Tosali and Kangoda after 736 A.D. During this period the great philosopher Sankaracharya (788 A.D to 820 A.D) visited Puri to save the Hindu religion and culture from decay. He protected the Purusottam kshetra by making it one of the four important religious centres of Hindu tirthas and established Govardhan Matha at Puri to propagate the Advaitavada. At that time the feudatories of Bhaumakaras such as Swetaka Gangas of Chikiti and Bhanjas of Khinjili Mandala were followers of Madhava cult. The Bhaumakaras during 9th century A.D changed to Saivism from Buddhism and supported Vedic rituals. Some of the queens of that family also embraced Bhagavatism. Towards the 10th century A.D Puri became an important centre of pilgrimage and centre of Vaisnavism. The name Nilamadhava was changed to Purusottama. Maharaja Yajati Keshari of Soma dynasty had constructed the great Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneswar and Madhava (Purusottam) temple at Puri.

In 1112 A.D Ganga king Anantavarman Chodagangadeva of Mukhalinga defeated Yajati's successor, Karnadeva and annexed the Utkal with Kalinga by extending his dominion from Godavari in the south to the Ganga in the north. After defeating Chalukyas of Vengi in south and Pala king of Banga he started construction of the great temple of Lord Purusottam Jagannath at Puri, Chodagangadeva was a follower of Saivism but latter on he accepted "Bhagavatism'. For the

first time in Korniplates dated Saka year 1034 (1112 A.D) he adopted a title like 'Parama Maheswar', Parama Vaisnava' and 'Parama Brahmanya'.⁹ The first epigraphic evidence to the construction of Jagannath temple by Chodagangadeva is found in Dasgoba copper plate grant of his grandson Rajaraja Deva-III.¹⁰

Besides Vedic and Mahabharata sources, the glory and sanctity of Jagannatha and the Kshetra find mention in many Puranas like Matsya, Brahma, Narada, Padma and the Utkal Khanda of the Skanda Purana. In 717 AD, the Uddiyana King Indrabhuti wrote in his work Jnanasiddhi - "Pranipatya Jagannatham sarvajinavar chitam Sarva Buddhamayam Siddhi vyapino Gaganopamam. He described Jagannath as Buddha. In other tantric works written in around 950 AD like Kalika Purana, Rudrayamala, Brahmayamala and Tantrayamala, Jagannath is described as the famous deity in Odradesha (Utkal). During 7th-8th century Buddha was considered as an Avatara of Vishnu, but gradually Buddhism lost itself in Jagannathism. Some scholars are exponent of Jaina origin of Jagannath. They say that Nilamadhava of the epic period is the famous Kalinga Jina of history. '*Daru Brahmagita*' of Jagannatha Dasa (16th century) and '*Deulatola*' of Nilambar Dasa (17th century) also advocates savara worship of Jagannath.

During famous Navakalevar ceremony, the Daitas a leading role in the expedition team for procurement of sacred 'Daru' (log of Neem tree). They first stay in a Sarvarpalli (name of camp) near the temple of Goddess Mangala. It is evident that the tribal custom of worship of Goddess Mangala before procurement of 'Daru' has linked Lord Jagannath with Goddess Mangala. Culturally, this type of customs and temple tradition are also found to be the result of the integration of tribal and Aryan cultures. Historians



admit that deformed uncouth figure of Jagannath owes a lot to its Savar origin. They traces the influence of Krishna Vasudeva worship of Bhagavata cult on Jagannath during the Gupta rule. From the plate Chandravarman, the Mathar king of Kalinga which was found from Bobbili (Ex-state of Paralakhemundi) in present Vizagapatam district we know that he was devout worshipper of Bhagavata or Vishnu in the 5th century AD during the period of Gupta Emperor Chandra Gupta and his successors.¹¹ Sankarsana and Vasudeva came to be known as Balarama and Jagannath under the influence of Bhagavata Cult. Ekanamsa came to be worshipped as Subhadra in the 6th century AD. Jagannath is regarded as 'Daru Brahma' manifested in the wooden image. The worship of Daru as Brahma is traced to the Vedic sources and to the Bhagavat Gita.

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Jagannath and Buddha

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(Most of the research materials contained in this article are taken from a book named "The Real Birth Place of Buddha" by late Chakradhar Mohapatra- published in 1977 by Grantha Mandir, Cuttack)

In the Buddhist literature, Lord Buddha is named as Nath, Jagannath, Lokanath, Jeena, Bhubaneswara, etc. (vide - Jagannath Swamy- an article in Oriya by Sri Prahallad Pradhan, the Prof. in Sanskrit of Utkal University and the former Professor of Sanskrit, Peking University, China. This article was published in the Oriya monthly 'Paurusha' -2nd Year, 2nd issue, 1969).

Asoka came to Kalinga to worship Buddha in his birth place after 12 years of the Kalinga War. After inaugurating the installation of the inscribed vase containing the sacred relics of Buddha in the secluded Stupa, Asoka started to join the car festival. He got decorated a water field earthen vase, replica of the original vase containing the relics of Buddha, and installed it inside the car in great reverence under the cover of thousands of umbrellas and accompanied by different gorgeous music. The Malas (later on known as Malias, who were in charge of the sacred relics of Buddha, were also in charge of this car festival. With great pomp and grandeur the car proceeded on. The car moved in the same path, in which Buddha had paced forward to attain enlightenment. The people thought the earthen vase to be the living remnant of their beloved

Buddha and forgot their all miseries in the War after 12 years.

This came to be known as the Ashokastami Rathayatra. From the beginning till some hundred years, this car every year was going upto the Mausī Ma's house i.e. Aunty's (mother's sister) house. There till mid-night the worship continued and in the last part of night, the earthen vase containing water was immersed in a nearby tank, in a secret manner. The Vase was immersed in the last part of the night, because Buddha had breathed his last in the last part of the night. After immersion of the vase, the car was dismantled and hence was called non-returning car. This shows, Buddha had died in an alien place and did not return back to his birthplace. The tank, where the immersion ceremony was done is still present, at Bhubaneswar, and at present is known as "Asoka Jhara"

This Aunty is the step mother of Buddha, Goutami Prajavati. After the death of Suddhodana, out of sorrow and misery, she left Kapilavastu, at present Kapileswara and went out in a pilgrimage and resided in Puri in a house, which is still known as 'Mausī Ma Ghara' or Aunty's house. The memory of her offerings to



Lord Jagannath is still in vogue. It is true that neither Suddhodana nor Goutami was the followers of Buddhism. It was Gopa, wife of Goutam and his Son Rahul who had taken to Buddhism. In order to spread Buddhism some Buddhist religious books have included them as Buddhists.

This is evident that it is an image of Mausī Ma made of black stone, which is erected in a standing posture on a Lotus base, situated in the Mausī Ma temple in Badadanda. It has two prolonged hands and two legs. But its original face is covered with another bigger sized face, made of some gummy substance, resembling that of Subhadra. The Pujaka of this deity is a Brahmin of Kaundinya clan. The worshippers of Lord Jagannath call this image as Arghaseni. That means as she was a daughter-in-law of Sakya dynasty, it is quite natural that she is called Seni. Moreover, as her hands are very very long, she is called Arghaseni.

After continuing pilgrimage for 12 years Goutami returned back to her palace in Kapilavastu. But she did not find peace there. So she resided in a separate house which is known as Mausī Ma's Ghara, at Aunty's house at present. Even afterwards the road in Bhubaneswar was named after her as Mausī Ma Danda or Aunty's road which is still present. So it is a proven fact that Asoka's car was going upto the Aunty's house. Neither Lord Shiva nor Lord Krishna had any aunty (Mausī) in Hindu mythology who was worshipped. The practice of Lord Shiva and Lord Jagannath visiting an Aunty both at Puri and Bhubaneswar points to the fact that both the yatras perhaps had a Buddhist origin.

After worshipping Buddha at Kapilavastu and joining the Rathayatra, Asoka went to the Charitra port of Kalinga. It was a famous port in the whole world at that time. By that time the Emperor of Kalinga had built a port in the southern

region of Orissa, which was named after the famous lady Bisakha, who was born in Bhadrak and was one of the great disciples of Buddha. The port was thus named Visakhapattana. The great port Tamralipti was in the north, and Charitra port was in the middle. The people of Kalinga had built a statue of Buddha in Charitra port, and worshipped him. Ashok got this renovated. According to Ptolemy, Charitra was a great foreign port. This Charitra, after the installation of the statue of Buddha (Konakamana) was transformed into Konarka. Now this statue of Buddha is in the Dharmaraja or Indra temple inside the Jagannath temple. Even there, the image of Mayadevi (Buddha's mother) was worshipped. After the name of Gopa, the wife of Buddha, the village was also established which is perhaps now known as Gop.

Very near to the present Bhubaneswar and the then Kapilavastu rising from the 'Andhari' region river Rohini was passing by the foot of the Khandagiri hill. This flowed through Chandaka (some part of which is the Utkal University campus now). Enough evidence is there in favour of this water body as a part of the old Rohini river. One portion of the river has become a corn field near the river Kuakhai near the South-Eastern Railway line (Howrah-Madras line). A very old bridge of stones can be seen in the corn fields, resembling the 'Atharanala' bridge of Puri. While on the way from Cuttack to Bhubaneswar the ruins of this bridge can be seen on the left side of the highway, after passing the Kuakhai bridge. When there was no Kuakhai river, this river Rohini passed through the present 'Atharanala bridge' and was an obstacle to car festival (to reach Gundicha Bari). It went through Puri town and fell into the sea at Banki Muhana (estuary named as Banki). So the sands of this river were famous as 'Saradhabali'. During the time of Bhanudeva-I of Ganga dynasty, there were six cars during car festival. But this emperor filled



the river with soil and three cars were used. He filled the Banki muhana (mouth of the river Rohini) with soil (vide Madala Panji P.36). The sand of the river Rohini was for a long time in the Badadanda or the main highway of Puri. This sand was known as Saradha Bali (Utkal Itihasa- by Pandita Krupa Sindhu Mishra, P.119). One of the portions of this river is now known as Lahunia or Lahania and Ratnachira. But the Buddhist scriptures prescribed a sacred bath in the river Rohini - '*Rohinyanca Mahodadhi*'. Religious merit (Punya) is achieved by taking bath in the river Rohini and in the sea (i.e. Bay of Bengal) then known as Kalingasagar. But only a portion of Rohini river can be seen now near Bhubaneswar. It is quite evident that this river was very much utilized for irrigating the corn fields in the past in the Lembai kingdom with Kapilavastu as the capital.

In the *Nidana Katha* of the Jataka and in many other old Buddhist literature, it is written that the seed sowing ceremony was celebrated by Suddhodana every year. That day the idols of gods were put in a Vimana (i.e. a carriage borne on men's shoulders) and they were worshipped and were carried in the well decorated streets. The people putting on new garments, garlands and sandal paste were accompanying the gods. After the ceremony was over, the king himself was tilling the land with golden plough. Then all other were celebrating the seed sowing ceremony. This is a true fact that Suddhodana was symbolically tilling his own land. That is, cultivation was one of his professions. So during his meditation, Buddha addressing his own tongue said-"you have taken for three years' old scented rice. Why are you worried then ?" So Buddha was quite acquainted with paddy and paddy fields. Such scented rice is never cultivated in Nepal.

This seed-sowing ceremony as described in the Buddhist literature is still celebrated in Orissa in the Aksaya Trutiya (i.e. 3rd day of the bright

half of the month of Vaisakha corresponding to the month of April-May). On this day the idols of gods are carried in the main streets, and garlanding and sandal pasting still persists. This festival still can be seen in Bhubaneswara and Kapileswara. Throughout Orissa this seed sowing ceremony is in vogue, and from this day the cultivation with sowing of paddy starts. This festival is not seen in any other part of India or Nepal. Specially the Lembai region including the Kapileswara village still contains vast areas of paddy fields. Of course the habited area now is a part of the old town of Bhubaneswar.

The Sakya people very much liked rice. So Buddha's father was named Suddhodana i.e. literally one who liked pure rice. Buddha's grand father Sinhayana had five sons; and they were known as Amitodana i.e. who liked unmeasured rice.

Dhautodana who liked washed rice, Suklodana who longed for white rice, and Sukhodana who liked fine rice.

Orissa is famous for rice. The Mahaprasada or rice offering to Lord Jagannath and Lingaraj is famous in the world. Washed and watered rice is a traditional and cultural heritage of the Oriyas. It is also given in the Jagannath Puja. The rice offering was first of all adopted by Brahmadutta in the Konakamana temple. It continued in that place till the Konarka temple was destroyed. This type of rites have come from the views of the Buddhist thought. This rite is still to be found in the temple of Kapileswara. So the seed sowing ceremony was a peculiarity of Kalinga, and Suddhodana was a man of Kalinga. The big kitchens unearthed now very close to the Konark temple bear evidence that cooked rice was offered as Prasad to Aditya Vishnu. "Vaishnav Lilamruta" describes how Srichaitanya and Panchasakha were relishing the Khiri Prasad (sweetened rice boiled in milk) at Konark temple.



Facts about the Marriage of Buddha :

Buddhadeva married to the daughter of his maternal uncle. This was a custom only confined to Kalinga. Still it is in vogue in the southern part of Orissa. Although largely this custom had been abolished in other parts. It is well-known to everyone that many Oriya kings and Kshatriyas are used to get married to the daughters of their maternal uncles. This is an age-old custom of the priests of the temple of Jagannath. Even this custom is seen now among the Karans and Brahmins to some extent.

During the 13th century AD Narasingha Deva (the 1st), the Gajapati king of Orissa, in order to excel the sculpture of Jagannath temple built by his grand father Gajapati Anangabhima Deva, built the world famous temple of Konarka (also known as Black Pagoda). In that temple Konakamana was worshipped as Aditya Vishnu. He also established vast Navagraha images in one stone in this temple according to the tradition. When these are taken into consideration, it is known that Konarkadeva (Konakamana) is not the Sun. Still now He remains as Buddha (Dharmaraja). But in course of time the main part of the Konarka temple was destroyed. So Konarkadeva was brought to Puri. After a great religious upset due to the revival of Shaivism and Vaishnavism, these things were quite possible. So in absence of the Konakamana image and the Stupa, the dense forest region of Nepal cannot be taken as the place of Konakamana Buddha.

The image of Konarkadeva which was originally Konakamana can easily be identified in the Indra temple inside the precincts of the Jagannath temple. But the real image of

Konakamana had been hidden and second image of Sun god had been put there. Still when proper investigation is carried out, it becomes quite obvious that the hidden image is none but Buddha. The temple which is known as Indra temple, is also known as Dharmaraja temple. Dharmaraja i.e. Buddha. It is written in Tripitaka. '*Chakkavatti dhammiko dhammaraja*' P.193, Mettasuttam (itivuttakam) Suttapitaka-Khuddakanikaya Suttanipata, pp. 355, 357, 358 and P.14 Mahavagga (Dighanikaya). The assumption of Bisan Swarup (1910) regarding this image is quite correct.

Sri M.M.Ganguli has described - 'and on a higher elevation is seen the figure of Dharma or Surya Narayana and behind the stone background of this figure is seen the beautiful image of a mutilated Buddha in a sitting posture with several carved figures all in black stone. The image is in *padmasana* and in *bhumi-sparsa-mudra* (a type of sitting posture). Aruna the emblem of the Sun god, is not present. Besides the Sun god is always represented in a standing posture. This image has got a crown and ear ring. The bosom is adorned with a necklace. There are two hands which are broken. There is an umbrella above the crown. There are two demi goddesses (Vidyadharis) in the two upper angles of the image. One can notice the halo round above the head. In the lower portion there are two female figures with chowries in their hands. The size of this image is 6 feet X 3 feet.

This image can be said to be the first image of Buddha. The people of Kalinga were worshipping Buddha in the likeness of a prince. Thus the connection between Buddhism and Jagannath cult is well established.





The Creation of "Baihandi Mahadei Mahaprasad"

Pitambar Pradhani

Baihandi is famous amongst the cooks (Suar) and super-cooks (Maha Suar) of Puri Jagannath Temple as an earthen pot that contains Prasad which can satisfy hundred persons along with dal, curry, and sour curry (khata). The legend behind the creation is very astonishing and interesting too.

In a village named Pandarpur of Maharashtra Province, lived a lady named "Karmabai" who was not only wealthy, but also was cultured, intelligent and a great devotee of Lord Jagannath. She

was deeply devoted to Lord Jagannath. Once she had an opportunity to come to Shrikhetra (Puri) with her religious teacher, Indravarma to pay homage to the Lord of the Universe, Lord Jagannath.

But after having a glance of Lord Jagannath, she got a spiritual calling to stay back in Shrikhetra,

hence she did not return back to her native village Pandarpur, and she lived in Puri by the side of Grand Road by building a house for the rest of her life with her religious Guru, Indravarma.

Lady Karmabai had a very soothing and fine tone and she sung devotional songs with all

her heart and other devotees gathered to hear her singing with utmost respect and attention. Indravarma used to explain the essence of the Jagannath culture to the devotees in an articulate manner.



Lady Karmabai kept an effigy (Idol) of Lord Jagannath in her house and gave her holy offerings every day. Once she thought of offering "Khechudi" (specially cooked mixed rice) to the Lord. Hence she purchased an earthen pot from the local traditional potter (Kumbhara) and cooked "Khechudi" and offered it to the Almighty with all



her prayers. She got so keen in offering Khechudi, that she made it a must to offer it everyday with utmost devotion.

As gods always look forward to the offerings made by the devotee, Lord Jagannath ate the Khechudi Prasad with keen interest. Being deeply satisfied with her offerings the Lord informed the "Gajapati" (King of Puri) through a dream saying, "There lives a lady devotee of mine by the side of Grand Road named Karmabai, who offers me delicious Khechudi everyday, hence I would like her offerings to be given to me within the temple premises". The Gajapati on receiving the Lord's command, ordered the Khechudi Prasad prepared by Karmabai to be added along with other daily offerings. The Gajapati also recognized Karmabai as one of the supreme devotees of Lord Jagannath and also gave her due respect.

However the servitors did not obey the order of the Gajapati. They told that the Prasad cooked outside the temple premises cannot be

offered to the Lord. Lady Karmabai was highly disappointed.

Since then Khechudi could not be offered at the right time. Some day it was unholy or due to some abysmal incident the Prasad was discarded. This continued for seven days until the servitors actually changed their mind and allowed Karmabai to bring her cooked Khechudi and thus included this extra item along with the rest, as per the command of the Lord.

As time passed the typical earthen pot in which Karmabai cooked became famous as "Baihandi", and her offerings were well known as "Lakhmi Pak" or "Mahadei Pak". Till now the Baihandi tradition of offering the Mahadei Pak to the Lord Jagannath is practiced.

Pitambar Pradhani lives at Pradhani Sector, Bimanabadu Sahi, Puri.





Gadibrahma Worship in the Religious Tradition of Orissa

Dr. Saroj Kumar Panda

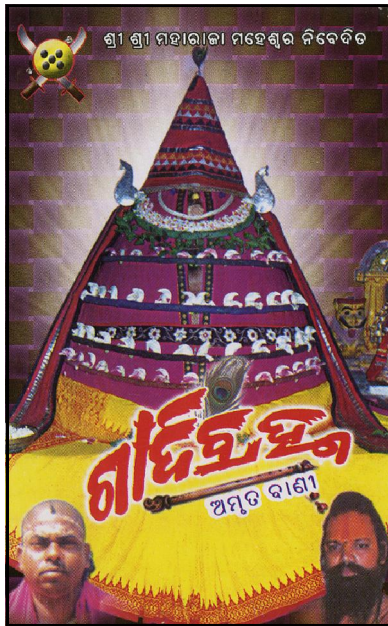
Lord Jagannath is variously presented and interpreted in different texts in terms of Brahma like Darubrahma, Sabdabrahma, Sunyabrahma etc. One among these concepts is Gadibrahma - the clay made Stupa. The worship of Gadibrahma is prevalent in 752 branches of undivided Puri, Cuttack and Ganjam districts of Orissa with headquarter at Benupada near Delang in Puri district.

Village Benupada has a Matha which is an important Vaishnava Shrine.¹ The presiding deities of this Matha are five clay-made Stupas decorated in garlands of flowers and clothes. Scholars identify these clay-Stupas with five elements of Hindu Philosophy i.e. earth, water, fire, sky and air. Others connect them with Buddhist religion in view of the fact that the areas surrounding Benupada were once strongholds of Buddhism.²

Benupada Matha was founded around 250 years ago on an area of 5 acres and 25 decimals by Siddhapurusa Bai Das.³ Bai Das created miracles by disappearing all the Mahaprasadas

from Anand Bazar of Srimandir for which the then Gajapati of Puri Birakishore Dev imprisoned him but latter getting instructions (Swapnadesha) from Lord Jagannath released him. Since then the pot containing Srimahaprasad was declared as Baihandi.⁴

Bai Das was succeeded by Krushna Das and then by Arta Das. It is due to the initiative of Arta Das that Gadibrahma concept was spread far and wide and worship of Gadibrahma started in different parts of Orissa. In fact, he established 752 branch Gadies and behind this there was direct blessings of Lord Jagannath for him. It is said that, once during Rathayatra days, he visited Puri to see the 'Navajauvana Vesha' of the Lords. In the sanctum of Srimandir he came across with two Godly men, one white in colour and another black. Both



of them advised Arta to spread the worship of Gadibrahma and Arta did accordingly.⁵ Madhav Das and Niladri Das who succeeded Arta Das along with the previous two Siddhapurusas were considered incarnation of Panchupandava'.



Bai Das has written a number of poems which depict the state of affairs in the contemporary society with reference to illiteracy and its consequences and the need of women education.⁶ Likewise Arta Das has written many devotional songs dedicated to Lord Jagannath. The benefits of cow rearing, Malika (future talks), Dandadhua songs, commentaries on body and soul along with short poems like Chaupadi and Chautisha are glaring contribution of Arta Das to Oriya Literature.⁷

Benupada Matha has 75 Acres (30.35 hectares) of landed property. The main source of income of this Matha is derived from local munificence and cultivation of its own land. Major portion of the income are spent for charitable distribution, free food service and worship of deities installed in the Matha.⁸

Most of the fairs and festivals of Srimandir are duplicated in Benupada Matha. On the day of Amla Navami in November a big fair is held and many thousands are fed. Many devotees bring gift of food such as rice, vegetable, milk product etc. for the Matha.

A Mahanta usually remains in charge of the management of the Matha. They come from villages round about and succession is by nomination of the existing Mahanta. If disputed, two pieces of paper containing the names of the two claimants are kept on the head of the deity and whichever drops first is selected. The Mahanta never leaves the Matha but his assistants go round the neighbouring areas spreading their religious cult.

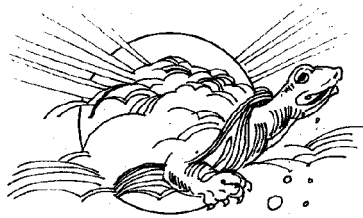
The symbols of Artatran Gadi are Badi (stick), Topi (cap) and Kanthi (necklace). The Mahantas adorn these. During Rathayatra time, one can see the saints of Benupada Matha dance on the Grand Road in front of the chariots wearing these caps on their heads and flutes in their hands.

Now-a-days in Puri town alone find the worship of Gadibrahma at four places - (i) Hati Gurudeva Matha of Baseli Sahi, (ii) Khurunthi Matha of Markandeswar Sahi, (iii) Jhaditota and (iv) Kumbharapada club house.⁹

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Rani Suryamani Patamahadei : A Revolutionary Queen in Puri Gajapati Dynasty

Prof. Jagannath Mohanty

Having read my article entitled "Rani Suryamani Patamahadei - an Extraordinary Lady in Puri Temple Administration" published in the Orissa Review (Rathayatra Issue), 2005, Revd Lawrence M. Ober, S.J.2926, Carroll Avenue Cleveland, Ohio, 44113, USA on 17 March 2007, wrote to me for getting some information relating to the details of the Rani. But inspite of my contacting repeatedly some knowledgeable persons on this subject both over phone and in writing throughout the year I could not collect adequate data, I however, responded to him with some information on 03.12.2007.

In order to convince me about his sincerity of purpose he introduced to me and sent a genealogical chart with details that he was able to collect starting from the king Ramachandra Deva-II (1722-1736) ending with the king Mukund Deva (1877-1926). He is a foreign researcher in History of India and read with keen interest about the kings and queens of Puri. I, for meeting his queries, went through relevant literature. I feel that among all the Gajapati kings and queens of Puri, Rani Suryamani Patamahadei stands unrivalled and outstanding in managing the Puri Temple administration and handling the affairs of the state under an alien rule with their possessive attitude. Her training and education for ascending a royal throne was excellent. She

was very efficient in archery, horse-riding, handling swords and acquired other useful skills.

She married Raja Birakishore Deva of Puri Gajapati dynasty who expired in 1859. They had an adopted son of four years only. He was the first child of Zamindar of Bada Khemundi. By a Will Rani Suryamani was made the guardian of all properties and was head of the temple administration. She also obtained a certificate from the Civil Court appointing her the guardian of the minor and his estates under the Act XI of 1858. At that time the condition of temple management was unsatisfactory. There was indiscipline in the temple at first. However, she managed to control the temple administration soon. The son attended adulthood and became Raja Dibyasingh Deva. The Raja was found indifferent, wayward and misguided, as a result of which temple administration was disturbed and the Raja chargesheeted and then convicted of killing a Sadhu. On this ground he was deposed and deported to one of the Andaman Islands.

By deposition of the Raja Dibyasingh Deva, a very anomalous situation arose. As under Act X of 1840 the superintendence of the temple remained with the Raja, but he was then deported. The British government wanted to extract huge funds from the Raja as Superintendent of the temple. Again, Government of India wanted to



pass an Act for vesting management of the temple with a manager appointed by Government. There was strong protest from the public and from Rani Suryamani on the issue. Mr. Madhusudan Das, a great Oriya Advocate was requested by the Rani herself to institute a suit protesting against the Government action. The arguments of Mr. Das was so strong that government proposed a compromise formula. Rani was in charge of the Temple administration. She was also authorized to appoint a manager with full power to control the Sevayats. Rani could dismiss any manager, if his performance would be unsatisfactory. She then had to appoint another as soon as possible.

At this critical juncture the startling qualities of Rani Suryamani enabled her to fight for the right and also in the interest of the Oriya people and Puri temple. Subsequently she was at the helm of the temple and state affairs for long 33 years from 1860 to 1897, excepting a disturbing period from 1875 to 1878 ruled by Raja Dibyasingh Deva. During this long period she could bring peace, order and prosperity to the people and Temple. Eulogising the important role played by Rani Suryamani an eminent historian Prabhat Mukherjee commented -

"Rani Suryamani was undoubtedly a women of keen intelligence and strong personality. Though a Purdah lady, she revived the prestige of the Puri Raj family, x x x She became widow at an early age x x x x she was expected to live sixty years in recluse. But destiny ordained otherwise. She became the custodian of the Jagannath Temple and of the Puri Raj estates from 1860 to 1897 except for the brief period 1875 to 1878 when Dibyasingh Deva took charge".

The Rani made a great success with the stewardship of advocate Mr. Madhusudan Das. Rani Suryamani improved the administration of the temple and there was no complaint from any side. Besides her education and training, she learnt

from experience. Due to the strong efforts of Madhu Babu, the government's infringement of the Temple superintendent power was checked and government's malafide intention to reduce the autonomy of the Rani by setting a committee to supervise the Temple administration was thwarted. Although a Christian, Madhu Babu fought tooth and nail and with British Government foiled the government's conspiracy and safeguarded the prestige and autonomous status of Sri Mandir and of Rani Suryamani. After Raja Mukund Deva came of age, she relinquished her responsibility as the ruler of estates and superintendent of the temple. Her place in the history of Puri Gajapati Dynasty is unrivalled and she deserves to be remembered for ever. This memorable lady was born in the Sonepur (Suvarnapur) royal family in 1818 and breathed her last on November 24, 1926. Her marriage was held in 1830 with Raja Birakishore Deva of Puri. She actually lived a very pious and useful long life.

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The Role of Mathas at Puri in the Culture of Lord Jagannath

Bhagaban Mahapatra

Among the four religious centers of Hindus, namely Badrinath, Ramnath, Dwarikanath, Sri Jagannath Dham, Puri is regarded as the most important Pitha as Lord Himself has taken his abode at Srikhtra, Puri in this Kali Yuga. He is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He is the only religion. All sects, all beliefs and all religions have mingled in His eternal oblivion. He is Lord Jagannath.

Puri is famous to such an extent that it is regarded as heaven. It is universally believed that the Jagannath Dham is the confluence of all religious faiths. The precepts of different sects have paid their visits to the holy land of Puri and preached their philosophy and got them involved in the rituals and services of Jagannath temple, and in course of time established their Mathas (monasteries).

The establishment of Mathas at Puri dates back to the 9th century. The great Sankaracharya,

who in course of his spiritual conquest of whole India visited Puri (820 AD) and brought many reforms in the Jagannath temple. He also established a Matha at Puri which is known as Govardhan Matha. The Bhoga Mandap, where large quantity of Bhoga are generally offered to Lord to cater the need of devotees was

introduced by him in the temple.

After Sankar, the great Vaisnav saint from South India Acharya Ramanuja came to Puri during the reign of Chodaganga Deva. He established a Matha which is



known as Emar Matha in front of the Lion's Gate, Puri.

It is also said that Visnuswami established Jagannath Ballav Matha at Puri which is known as playing garden of Lord Jagannath. Many rituals of the temple are performed in this Matha throughout the year.



Sri Ramananda, another saint also visited Puri in the 14th century. He also established some training centers known as Akhadas, the main purpose of which was to protect the temple from the attack of Muslims. These Akhadas are known as Bagha Akhada, Khaki Akhada, Nirmohi Akhada and Bada Akhada. Lord Mahavira Hanuman is the symbol of hero worship (god) of these Akhadas.

Ballavacharya who belonged to Vishnuswami sect, also established a Prabhuji Baithak at Puri to preach the glory of Sri Gopal Krishna.

During the reign of King Prataparudra Deva, Sri Chaitanya from Bengal came to Puri to see the Lord. He stayed at Puri for a period of 24 years. His place of stay is presently known as Radhakanta Matha. During his period the Vaisnavism reached the climax point in the religious life of people.

Kabir Das, a great saint came to Puri and could witness Allah in Jagannath. According to him there is no difference between Allah and Jagannath. He stayed at a place near the sea shore which is commonly known as Kabir Ghat.

Nanak, the Guru of Sikh religion also visited Puri. The Matha established by him is known as Mangu Matha.

Tulsi Dasa, a great saint of north India, who composed the famous Ramacharita Manas came to Puri and realized that he could not see his devoted Lord Ram in Jagannath. He returned back to a place near Puri and sat in meditation. In the night he could see Lord Jagannath in a dream, who directed him to see the Lord in the temple. Tulsi Das came back to the temple and could see Lord Ram in Jagannath. He became overwhelmed with joy. This place where saint meditated is known as Tulasi Chaura (about 8 km away from the temple).

Ganapati Bhatta a great devotee of lord Ganesh could see Ganapati in Jagannath on the day of Snana Purnima on Snana Mandap. He established a Matha which is known as Raghab Das Matha.

The saints and seers of different sects of Hinduism had come to Puri being attracted by Lord Jagannath and accepted Jagannath as their Lord of Worship. They felt the assimilation of their religious faith in the Jagannath culture. Accordingly large number of monasteries of different sects of Hinduism have developed at Puri by their religious leaders. Generally Mathas are divided in two kinds. Those Mathas administered by Sanyasis are known as Nihangi Matha and those administered by Gruhi are known Gruhi Matha. In Puri, Mathas are developed with the following main objectives:

- (a) To preach and spread the Jagannath culture and the essence of Hinduism.
- (b) To give shelter to the pilgrims of different sects and saints,
- (c) To donate food to the distresse, beggars, poor people and to help poor students in their studies in different schools and colleges,
- (d) To involve and support in different rituals and Nitis of the temple.

Presently about thirty Mathas are closely involved in different rituals and Nitis of Lord Jagannath. The functions of Mathas in the temple are detailed below:

Matha Services:

1. *Emar Matha*: Provides Chamara and Canopy Seva. Chandrika made of flower are supplied daily.
2. *Uttar Parswa Matha* : Offers daily Mohan Bhoga (made of coarse flour and sugar) to distribute among the devotees.



3. *Trimali Matha* : Offers Bhoga during Chandan Yatra.
4. *Raghabadas Matha* : Offers Bhoga at the time of Ballav (Morning Tiffin), Chamar and Alata seva. Hativesa on the day of Snana Purnima.
5. *Jaganath Ballav Matha* : Associates with many rituals of Lord, such as Ramanabami, Dola Yatra, Dayanachori, Lakha Vindha, Dussahara. Provides lotus flower for decoration of Lord and ornaments made of flower.
6. *Govardhan Matha* : Chief of Muktimandap Pandit Sabha and gives final opinion on Niti and rituals of Sri Jagannath temple.
7. *Badachhata Matha* : Alata and Chamar Seva, Kirtan at the time of daily Puja, and Chandan Yatra, to recite some traditional songs at the time of Mangal arati and Bada singhar.
8. *Radhakanta Matha* : Cleaning of Gundicha temple before Car Festival.
9. *Jhanjapita Matha* : Offers seva and puja at the lotus feet of Lord inside the compound wall of the temple.
10. *Bada Odia Matha* : Provides Ballav Bhoga (Morning Tiffin) of Lord. Alata and Chamar Seva.
11. *Dakhinaparswa Matha* : Canopy Seva and Chamar Seva.
12. *Revasa Matha* : Alata and Chamar Seva.
13. *Gangamata Matha* : Alata and Chamar Seva.
14. *Radhavallav Matha* : Alata and Chamar Seva.
15. *Ramji Matha* : Alata and Chamar Seva.
16. *Sana Chhata Matha* : Alata and Chamar Seva.
17. *Goswami Matha* : Alata and Chamar Seva.
18. *Venkatachari Matha* : Alata and Chamar Seva.
19. *Nua Matha* : Alata and Chamar Seva.
20. *Mangu Matha* : Alata and Chamar Seva.
21. *Labanikhia Matha* : Sports of Lord during Krishna Janma.
22. *Kapadia Matha* : Provides dress materials.
23. *Dasavatar Matha* : Cultural function
24. *Sunagoswami Matha* : Flower garlands for decoration.
25. *Sivatirtha Matha* : Provides tooth brush for Lord.
26. *Mahiprakash Matha* : Provides tooth brush.
27. *Darpanarayan Matha* : Offers flower garlands.
28. *Gopaltirtha Matha* : Hati Vesha for Lord Balabhadra.
29. *Rani Matha* : Provides decorated Tahia
30. *Nandimata Matha* : To stick jari in *patta*

At present some Mathas are not performing their duties with the pretext of paucity of funds. Although Mathas are in possession of huge landed property in papers, but actually they do not get any income from these properties. This has been due to the implementation of land reform act. To revive the glory of the past, all efforts should be made at all levels so that all Mathas can perform their Sevas for Lord properly.

Bhagaban Mahapatra lives at Sri Gundicha Vihar, Sarboday Nagar, Puri-752002.



Dhanwantari : The Incarnation of Lord Vishnu

Dr. Dinabandhu Moharana

Dhanwantari, the God of Ayurveda is regarded as the incarnation of Lord Vishnu in many Hindu Mythologies like Vishnupuran, Bhagabatpuran, Mahabharat, Agnipuran and Haribans - Vayupuran etc. One of these prominent mythological script Harivans Vayupuran reveals that 'Dhanwa', the king of Kasi was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. He had no son. He worshipped Lord Vishnu for this purpose and Lord Vishnu took birth as the son of king Dhanwa and was named 'Divodasa'.

Divodasa, the king of Kasi surnamed Dhanwantari, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. In Sushruta Samhita, one of the most ancient encyclopedic and authoritative classical books of Indian medicine, i.e. Ayurveda, Dhanwantari is referred to as the teacher of Salyatantra or science of major surgery and he imported this knowledge to

Sushruta, the representative of an assembly of Rishis or sages. He said, "It was I who cured the disease of the Gods and prevented their deaths and decrepitude. I have now come to this world to teach Salyatantra and other divisions of Ayurveda in detail.



In fact God Dhanwantari is the pioneer of Ayurvedic science. His birthday is celebrated in the month of Kartika, all over the country. The proficient Ayurvedist of India, earn their livelihood following the advices of Dhanwantari written in Sushruta Samhita.

The theory of the incarnation of Lord Vishnu as Lord Dhanwantari is not found in Vedas, but many Puranas narrate this topic. According to some Puranas Dhanwantari appeared in this world at the time of "Samudra Manthana". This is the mythological fact about the creation of Lord Dhanwantari. But if we go back to the history there are two Dhanwantaries in different times. (1) Lord Dhanwantari who appeared before gods at the time of "Samudra Manthanam."

(2) Kasiraj Divodasa Dhanwantari who was born at Kashi and was an eminent surgery specialist and advisor of Sushruta Samhita.

In Harivansa, Vayu Purana and Brahma Baivarta Purana, it has been described that Lord Vishnu sent Dhanwantari, as the son of king



Dhanwa of Kashi. Dhanwantari was master of healing all diseases. He was taught by Rishi Bharadwaja and first time divided Ayurveda into 8 parts and transferred it to his students.

Many Hindu mythologies reveal his appearances that Lord Dhanwantari has four hands. In one hand, there is a nectar pot, in another there is a Ayurvedic book, a medicinal herb in the third hand and in the fourth hand there is a conch shell. Equipped with these things, he appeared in this world to save mankind in their adversity.

Many things have been written about him in Hindu mythological books and scriptures. It is known from mythological book that once there arose a great problem to save the world from danger. The God was puzzled seeing this terrible situation. Trinnath Sabha was arranged. Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar considered the matter and told that great injustice has been done to Gods, who have been deprived of getting nectar at the time of churning of milk sea. If it will be churned again ordure will come out as a result of which the whole world will be annihilated. On the other hand immortal Gods are in the distress being wounded and caught by many diseases. For the settlement of peace, treatment and to save he world from danger, Dhanwantari was sent for. Accompanied by his colleagues he appeared in the "Trinath Sabha".

He proposed that "we can get nectar from the trees given by Laxmi, the daughter of sea instead of churning the sea." We can get plenty of it from the trees of mountain Gandhamardan. If order will be given, my descendant will bring these threes. Drinking their nectar many people will be cured from their diseases. Although they will not be immortal, they will be long-lived. This proposal of Dhanwantari was unanimously accepted. At that time Sukracharya knew

Sanjivani Mantra of animal as Dhanwantari knew Sanjivani Mantra of plant. But animals depend upon trees for their survival. So trees accepted Dhanwantari as their Guru. The moment, they get order from Dhanwantari, they immediately bear fruits, flowers and confer juice. Then Dhanwantari collected juice from soma trees, palm trees and also from many other trees of Gandhamardan. His descendants conferred it to Gods and demons. Drinking the juice of those trees they were cured from their diseases and became strong and stout. But stupid demons concealed some of it. They drank making it bear at a secret place. No doubt they were cured from their diseases became healthy, but there was no development of their mental power. They became tyrant and quarrelsome so long as they would not discard drinking bear.

In Vedic period Aswinis were expert medical practitioners and in Puranic period Dhanwantari became the same as Aswinis. Dhanwantari was master of all branches of Ayurveda. He was an eminent toxicologist. On the other hand he was also well-known physician of Horses (Ashwayurveda) and elephants (Hastyayurveda). Thus Dhanwantari developed 8 branches of Ayurveda at his period, especially the surgery by the time Dhanwantari became the surgery specialist and Dhanwantari group widely known as surgery specialist i.e. "Salya Sampradaya".

However it is undoubtedly accepted that Dhanwantari was the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. We expect that till the end of this civilisation Dhanwantari and his descendants will be remembered.

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Lord Jagannath and Sailasrikhetra, Angul

Barada Prasanna Das

Gajapati Maharaja of Puri transferred his administrative power over Angul to the hands of kings of Kadamba dynasty of Kashyap clan towards the middle of the tenth century. Before the arrival of Kadamba kings this region was inhabited by aboriginals mainly of Kandha tribe and the last Kandha Sardar was a chieftain named Anu who withheld tribute and broke out in rebellion. A conspiracy was hatched against Anu by Kadamba kings and in the struggle, which ensued, he was deposed by means of a *gol* i.e. a battle or plot. They then ruled over the land and in commemoration of their conquest called this region Anugol what is now called Angul. The Kadamba kings were devotees of Lord Jagannath and with their efforts, the Daru Vighraha of Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sudarshan were installed on an alter inside the palace in Anugol gada (Presently Puruna gada) and were worshipped. Later on towards the seventeenth century A.D, a beautiful temple for the deities was built and the auspicious

Car Festival was held. This was indeed a memorable and remarkable step for revival of the ancient Jagannath Cult in Angul.

The Britisher deposed Somanath Singh Jagadev, the last king of Kadamba dynasty and assumed the reins of power in 1848 A.D and in 1891 decided to shift their headquarters to the foot of Sunasagada hill and in the last part of nineteenth century, the new town of Angul was built.



After few years the Car Festival at Angul started with small idols of Chaturdhamurti Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan. Those deities were worshipped in Madan Mohan temple as Parsvadevatas. After lapse of several years a religious dilemma crept in the minds of devotees. The dilemma is that

Lord Jagannath is complete in sixteen *Kalas* and is the primordial source of all incarnations who emerges out of Him according to the Utkaliya Vaishnav beliefs. Whether it is justified and appropriate that he should be the Parsvadevata



in the temple of Lord Madan Mohan? This serious questions resounded in the minds of people for quite few years, but Rathayatra was celebrated as usual. During 1992 A.D. the issue took a sensitive turn, and a comprehensive dialogue of eminent persons and scholars of Angul was held to arrive at a decision on the Sripanchami day of 1992. It was unanimously resolved that a new Jagannath temple shall be constructed on the Sunasagada hills. After clearing a series of hurdles on 21st February 1996 its foundation stone was laid due to the grace of Lord Jagannath. It is a matter of pride and glory that in the mean time the temple construction has been over and it has been named as Saila Srikhetra. On 22nd February 2002 the Chaturdhamurtis of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan have been installed on Ratnasimhasana in the sanctum sanctorum. A Board of Management has been constituted with Collector, Angul as its chairman for the management of temple and Saila Srikhetra. The Supreme blessings and grace of Valiyarbhuja Jagannath have enabled the people to perform three Dhupas and the Abakashas apart from daily rituals, worship and ceremonial observations in adhering to the principles and traditions followed

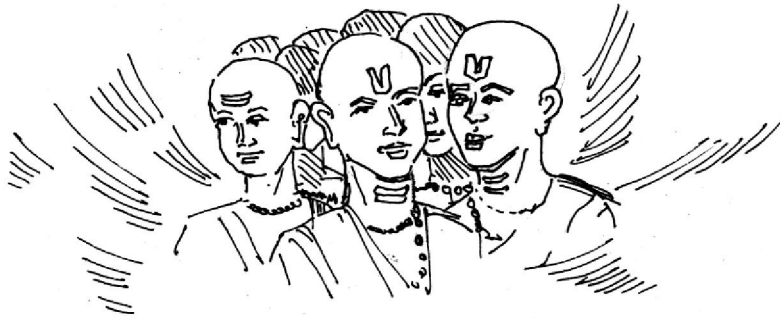
at Srikhetra, Puri. The erstwhile Rath yatra has assumed the form of mega festival. Goddess Budhi Thakurani, Madan Mohan Jeeu, Brahmeswar and Jagannath are worshipped on Sunasagada hills in a common place, which has brought in a unique cultural synthesis of Saivism, Saktism, Vaishnavism and Jagannath cults at Sailasrikhetra in a glorious manner. There is no doubt that due to this religious influence and impact on day to day living of population in an industrial city of Angul spiritualism will be aroused in the people's mind.

Let pray Lord Jagannath for his blessings to enable us to know more about him from his adyapitha Kantilo to Srikhetra and Srikhetra to Saila Srikhetra.

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Nrusimha Worship in Puri

Prof. Purna Chandra Mohapatra

Eventhough Puri is a famous Vaisnavite centre there is no other Vaisnavite shrine, worth the name except the Temple of Jagannath and minor Vaisnava shrines of other incarnations of Visnu.

The worship of Visnu is very much popular among the Hindus. He is the Protector who rescues humanity at the time of distress. The time when the evil prevails upon the truth, Visnu takes different incarnations to annihilate the evil and rescue the saints and truthful. The Vaisnavas believe in the ten incarnations of Visnu. His fourth incarnation is the great god Narasimha, the body of a man and the body of the lion. The concept of man-animal combined feature or the anthropomorphic form are to be noticed in the icons of Dakshya Prajapati, Varaha, Ganesha, Gomukhi Keshaba and Narasimha. Similarly in Egypt, the people worship a goddess Bast, who had a human body and the face of a cat. The image of Narasimhanath of Paikamal, in Baragarh district is Marjara Keshari. The image of Sarabha is illustrated in the composite of a man, bird and

beast. Evolved as one of the Avatars of Visnu, Nrusimha grew into prominence and worshipped independently and considered as the full incarnation.

The story of Visnu assuming Narasimha incarnation is very popular throughout the country. Hiranya Kasyapu, the demon king, in order to avenge the death of his elder brother Hiranakhya (who was killed by Visnu in Varaha or boar incarnation) decided to conquer death and worshipped Brahma. After his prolonged and rigorous Tapas, he received five-fold boon from the Creator, that he will not meet death at the hands of a man, beast, bird, or demon or at the hands of any new creation. He should not die inside or

outside. Neither on the day nor at night, neither on earth nor in the sky and finally not with weapon. After receiving the boon, he possessed unlimited power and ruled over all the creatures. He prohibited Visnu worship in his territory. But interestingly his son Prahallad became an ardent devotee of Visnu. Dissuasions and punishments





did not fault Prahallad in his devotion to Visnu. Hiranyakasyapu challenged the omnipotence of Visnu by his mocking query whether Visnu resided in the pillar of the palace hall, which he kicked. The pillar broke open and Visnu appeared in his terrifying form and killed the demon, assuming man, lion form observing all the conditions of the boon of Brahma, (neither man nor beast, bird demon, or any creation,) at dusk, (neither day nor night), on the threshold (neither indoor nor outdoor,) with his sharp claws, (not by means of any weapon,) after placing him on his thighs (neither on earth nor sky.)

In the Sakti Sangama tantra, it is mentioned that Visnu assumed the Narasimha Avatar in the Kritayuga, Angira year, Madhav month and 14th day in the Swati Nakshatra. In the Skanda Purana, it is written that Narasimha appeared on the lunar 14th day of Baishakha in Swati Nakshatra on Saturday during dusk.

We do not find the name Narasimha in the Vedic period. Only the name is found in Atharvaveda, Narahari is worshipped by Ganadeva. Astadhyayi of Panini did not mention the name. Epic Mahabharata (Harivamsa), Puranas like Matsya, Padma, Kurma, Visnu, and Visnu Dharmottara associate Narasimha with Visnu. Basing on these K.C. Das believes that all these Puranic references on Narasimha were known during the Gupta period. There are two broad types of Narasimha images i.e. Ugra and Saumya. But T. Gopinatha Rao has divided the images of Narasimha into three groups, Sthauna, Girija and Yanak. The word Sthauna, Narasimha coming out of the pillar (Ugra) and Girija coming out of caves (yoga). Some call it Keshava, and Yanak is seated on Garuda or Shesha with five hooded canopy held like an umbrella. When Laxmi is on the left lap the image is called Laxmi-Narasimha. The deity sitting in Utkutikasana with Yogapatta and Laxmi on the left lap is very common and popular in Orissa, and Oriyas believe him as the embodiment of valour, vitality and

virtue. The popularity of the god is evinced from the hymns and Suktas composed for him inclusive Stotram, Puranas and Upanisads. Not only in literatures but also in epigraphic records and sculptural art, there are references of Narasimha worship. There are 105 Narasimha temples with land endowments in Orissa. The list prepared by G.C. Tripathy out of the materials collected by H.V. Stietencorn. Besides this, there exists many more temples scattered through out the State. In addition, a large number of detached images find place in other temples as Parswadevatas. The worship of Narasimha was sanctioned in western Orissa during the Gupta era. "In the research article of scholar Sasanka Sekhar Panda, "Purusottama Jagannath is Purusottama Narasimha" published in "Orissa Review", Ratha Yatra Special Issue, June - 2006, it has been mentioned that Three Narasimha images are found at Podagarh, Sarguli and Parwa in Nabarangapur district which are believed to be the images of the Vakataka period who conquered Puskari (Podagarh) of the Nala kings in 5th and 6th century A.D. Another image of Narasimha of Maraguda now in Khariar Branch Museum is believed to be of the period of the Sarabhapuriyas. In Sirpur Inscription, queen Vatas, mother of king Mahasivagupta Balajurna of Pandu dynasty had paid her homage to Lord Purusottam and sought the blessings of Narasimha." During the Somavamsi rule, Narasimha worship got a new impetus afterwards. Some of the ruling dynasties like Kadambas of Goa, the Imperial Gangas of Orissa and the Vijayanagar kings in India have Narasimha as their tutelary deity.

From the Dasagoba copper plate of Rajarajadeva, it is revealed that Sri Laxmi Narasimha was the tutelary deity of the Ganga. In the Kaleswar Siva Temple Inscription of Anangabhimadeva-III, the Ganga ruler Chodagangadeva is compared with Narasimha. Four of the Ganga kings bore the title of



Narasimha which proves the popularity of Narasimha of that time. As found in the Dynasty *Ganga Vamsanucharita* from among the 27 kings of Eastern Ganga, seven kings before Chodaganga had the word Narasimha added to their names. Narasimha temples and Narasimha sculptures of large varieties of this time (10th to 13th century AD) found in every nook and corner the State, proves the patronization the cult by the ruling dynasties.

The association of Narasimha with Puri is unique. Puri is the recognized Vaisnavite centre of India, in the Province of Orissa. Puri came to prominence, not as a political centre but as a socio-religious and cultural centre. It has not been the capital of the kingdom at any point of history of Orissa. Therefore, the rise and fall of the dynasties in its long history have no role in the tale of the sanctity of the city. Puri is the site of the gods from the time immemorial. Puri, the city of gods, was the land of Narasimha at one time, the land of Purusottama at other time and finally the land of Lord Jagannath now. With scanty historical sources it is very difficult to reach a positive conclusion. Puri was under the domain of different dynasties ruling over the kingdom in different periods of history. We don't find any specific historical references about this place during the rule of the Chedis, Murundas, Matharas, Pitruvaktas, Vighras, Sailodvabas or the Bhaumakars. But during this period Puri had gained a remarkable popularity as a place of religious importance and there are literary and archaeological references of Madhava worship by the tribals at this place. It led Dr. S.N. Rajaguru to justify that Madhavaraja II of Sailodvaba dynasty had established the shrine of Madhava at Puri and entrusted its management to some of his kins men, who were supposed to be tribals. During this period the philosophy of Vaisnavism was divided into two sections, namely (1) Vaikhanasa School and (2) Pancaratrika School. The Vaikhanasa worshipped Visnu in three phases, namely *Purusa* (Omnipotent),

Achyuta (imperishable), and *Anirudha* (unconstraint), while the later Pancaratrikas followed Chaturvyuha cult and worshipped Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna, and Anirudha. The Pancaratrika school might have gained popularity in Kalinga, Kangoda and other neighbouring tracts as long as the Sailodvabas continued their rule in that region. The Sailodvabas were the followers of Saivism. They must have constructed a large number of temples of Lord Siva in their dominion, surrounding all sides of Chilika lake. Srikshetra (Puri) was topographically a religious centre of Kangoda, where some muni-asramas were established in the temples of Markandeya (Markandeswar Sahi near Markanda temple and Markanda Tank), Angira (Dolamandap Sahi), Pandu or Kandu, (Gaudabada Sahi near Jameswar temple) and Bragu. According to a system, introduced in Puri temples, the image of Sudarsana is carried to visit those risi-asramas on the auspicious days of Radhastami, Kumarotsava and Gamha Purnima. Sudarsana is to honour each sage at his temple or Asrama. That old system is still practised in Puri. According to Mahabharata (Banaparva) the Pandavas were advised by Lomasha-muni to visit some sacred places after they crossed the river Vaitarani on their way to Kalinga. Again Pandit Nilakantha Dash states that the Jinasana brought back by Kharavela in the 1st century B.C. was worshipped as Purusottama Jagannath at Puri. But for want of any convincing evidence, we are not able to accept it, although Puri was an ancient Tirtha where Tapasvinis were dwelling in the hill caves. Some inscriptions of later Sailodvaba kings of Kongoda narrate the following verse, expressing that a king of that province could earn similar religious glory at his own capital what the yogis and munis could achieve by performing hard austerity in mountain caves. Most probably those hermits who lived in Kangodamandal, were worshipping either Visnu or Siva in the coastal tracts while in the hill areas. i.e. the western part



of Kongoda, there lived Tantri yogis who were worshipping Devi, (Durga) in the form of Stambheswari. In the Bhagabata Gita, Srikrishna says, "I am Visnu among the Adityas" (Adityanam aham Visnuh)". It is therefore presumed that Puri, the seat of Madhava-Narasimha-Purusottama might not have experienced the apathy of Bhaumakaras who were not hostile to Brahmanism, though they were Buddhists. During the Somavamsi rule, the epoch-making event was the coming of Sankaracharya to Puri. The visit of Sankaracharya inspired Narasimha worship to be popular in this locality. It is believed that Sankar had the blessings of Laxmi-Narasimha and wrote *Sri Laxminarasimha Pancharatna Stotram*, *Sankatanasan Laxmi-Narasimha Stotram*, and the *Bhasyas* of *Narasimha Tapini Upanisad*. Narasimha worship in the Gobardhana Math and the figure of Sankar beneath the sculpture of Laxmi-Narasimha in the Jagamohana of Sri Laxmi temple of Shree Jagannath temple of Puri also associate Narasimha and Sankar. This fact is supplemented in the Skanda Purana (narration of Indradyumna) and the Narasimha temple construction near Gundicha temple. A Telegu inscription of Chodagangadeva at Narasimha temple refers to Narasimha worship in the pre-Ganga period. During the Ganga rule, after the coming of Sri Ramanuja of Sri Sampradaya, a devotee of Narasimha and promoter of Bhaktimarga, Narasimha Worship reached its climax. Narasimha worship reached every doorsteps of Sakalautkala in general and Puri in particular. It led Sena king Laxman to adopt the title of "Paramanarasimha." Narasimha became the Khetrapala or the guardian deity of the kshetra. At present we find a dozen or Narasimha temples in the city with many more in the Maths of Sankar, Ramanuja, and Madhugaudeswara order as well as in the Jagagharas. We also find Narasimha as Parswadevata in Vaisnava, Saiva and Sakti temples.

Present - Day Narasimha Temples in and around Puri :

(i) Narasimha Temple, (Jagannath Temple Precinct) : It is a *pancharatha rekha deula*. Its height is about 55ft. The presiding diety is the Vidarana Narasimha in *ugra* pose. The image is of 1 ft. high which is not matching size to the height of the temple (in accordance with the Silpasastras).

(ii) Yagna Narasimha Temple: It is near Gundicha temple. Its height is about 60ft. The presiding deity is Laxmi-Narasimha.

An elevated place has been levelled for the erection of the main temple and its two front apartments. The area around the temple complex has been protected by high masonry walls with provision of a series of steps for entry into the premises on the eastern side. The main temple built in *pancharatha rekha* order is fronted by a pyramidal *Jagamohan* and a rectangular *natamandap*. All the structures within the premises is thickly plastered in lime mortar painted in matching colours. The *bada* of the main temple as well as the *jagamohan* indicate five fold horizontal divisions and five vertical *paga* projections. The *gandi* of the main shrine is bereft of figure sculptures and decorative designs except however the projecting lions of the central *rahapaga* of all directions. The *mastaka* consists of the usual *beki*, *amalakasila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa*, and *nilachakra*. The central niche of the outer walls contain figures of Varaha-Visnu, Trivikrama, of later workmanship and a Visnu image of early medieaval period as parsvadevatas. The sanctum preserves a remarkable image of Laxmi-Narasimha on a high masonry pedestal. The artistic finish and iconographic peculiarity of the image take us back to the time of the Ganga period. The deity was very likely installed at Puri by Chodagangadeva who is said to have introduced the system of Narasimha worship in Orissa. A similar Laxmi-Narasimha image is still



noticed in the premises of Gangamandira of Cuttack town. The image in question is seated in Yogasana with both legs crossed and tied near the knee. Laxmi is found seated on his left lap. Of his four hands the two lower ones are stretched over the knees and the two upper ones display conch and disc, the most favourite weapons of Visnu. The jambs of the doorways leading to the sanctum are embellished with floral motifs, creepers, nagabandhas and scroll works. Figures Jaya and Vijaya, the two legendary door-keepers, of a Visnu temple are seen at the base of the jambs. The architrave over the door entrance is relieved with the figures of nine planets. A figure of Gajalaxmi is carved at the centre of the door lintel. The outer walls of the Jagamohan are set with several figures sculptures of much later workmanship. A large panel on the left wall of the Jagamohana represents three mounted elephants on the march. The window grills of the Jagamohana are relieved with ladies playing on various musical instruments, *salabhanjikas*, *alaskanyas*, and *gajasimha* motifs, also of much later workmanship.

(iii) Chakra Narasimha Temple : It is at Chakratirtha road. It is a Pidha Deula. Its height is about 55ft. In the Sanctum of the temple there are three Narasimha images. Among these three deities the middle one is bigger than the other two and is seated inside the Chakra. It is known as the Chakra Narasimha and the others, on left is Purusottmnarasimha is right on Anantanarasimha.

(iv) Pandu Narasimha Temple : It is in Pandu Asrama near Jameswar temple, Gaudabada Sahi. The presiding deity is the eight-armed Vidarana Narasimha in Ugra pose.

(v) Laxmi-Narasimha Temple: It is at Mangalaghat road near Bali school. It is a *Pancharatha rekha Deula*. Its height is about 25ft. It has Jagamohan.

(vi) Narasimha Temples : (inside Jagannath temple) (A) Baisi Pahacha (B) Suka (C) Simachala. (D) Uttar Dwara.

(vii) Singada Narasimha Temple : (Near Lokanath Temple) The presiding deity is four armed Laxmi-Narasimha, sitting on Utkatasan. A small image of Goddess Laxmi is sitting on the yoga-pata at the left thigh of the deity. She is offering betel in her right hand looking to the god. She has a lotus in her left-hand. Narasimha in his uplifted backhands hold sankha and chakra and his front two hands rest on his knee. The deity is crowned by Kiritamukuta and he has three glittering eyes. The deity is adorned with different types of ornaments. He wears the *Anantasarpa* as sacred thread. Seven hoods of the snake cover as canopy over his head, amidst which the face of Balabhadra is seen with plough. Two female attendants like Sridevi and Bhudevi are found with folded hands on either sides of the deity. A Gajatorana, supported by two pilasters is found just by the side of the deity. At the right side base of the pillar there is a standing royal figure with folded hands. Perhaps it is the figure of legendary king Indradyumna. Just at the backside of Prahallad, god Siva is found in a aradhana pose, the image of Brahma with folded hands is seen at the left side. The presiding deity is flanked by two Vidyadharas with garlands. It is said so because the image is very near to the pond full of a water-fruit named Singada.

(viii) Narasimha Temple : It is at Gadanti Chowk by the side of Meghanada Pachery of Srimandir. There is a miniature temple. The presiding deity is four-armed Laxmi-Narasimha.

(ix) Kanchisasana Narasimha Temple : Kanchisasana is a Brahmin sasana village under Chalisbatia Gram Panchayat in the Sadar Block, Puri. This village is renowned for Narasimha worship. Most of the Brahmins are Atharvavedi and Narasimha is their tutelary deity. The village has one Narasimha temple on the eastern side of the village temple. The presiding deity is four-armed Laxmi-Narasimha. The temple is of *rekha* order and the height of the temple is 25 feet.



(x) Jagannathpur Laxmi-Narasimha Temple : Jagannathpur is a Brahmin sasana village under Chalisbatia Gram Panchayat in the Sadar Block, Puri. It is 2 km from Kanchi sasana. The temple is of *pidha* order and of about 35ft height. The presiding deity is four-armed Laxmi Narasimha made of granite stone, exclusively carved and a fine elegance of craftsmanship, about 6 ft. in height.

(xi) Rendha Narasimha Temple : It is on Puri-Brahmagiri Road at a distance of 10 km from Puri at Rendha Chowk. The god is highly revered. The presiding deity is four-armed Laxmi-Narasimha.

(xii) Kusunikhuntia Jaga Narasimha : It is in the Jaga in Harachandi Sahi. It is a *Pidha Deula* of about 25ft height. The presiding deity is four-armed Saumya Narasimha. The peculiar feature is the absence of any Laxmi figure. The deity is crowned with seven-hooded Adishesha which forms like a canopy over the head.

(xiii) Jadamath Narasimha : It is a private Math in Pathuria Sahi. It is a *pidha deula* of about 23ft height. The presiding deity is four-armed Laxmi-Narasimha.

(xiv) Radhamadhav Narasimha Temple : It is located at Hatisal Chowk in Dukhishyama Chhata Math. The temple is of 20ft height. The presiding deity is four-armed Vidarana Laxmi-Narasimha.

(xv) Hinjalajaga Narasimha Temple : The temple is in the premises of the Jaga in Bali Sahi.

(xvi) Barabatijaga Narasimha Temple : The temple is in the premises of the Jaga in Harachandi Sahi. The presiding deity is four-armed Vidarana Laxmi-Narasimha.

(xvii) Narasimha images in the temple-walls : Inside the temples in the premises of Jagannath temple Narasimha images are worshipped as wall-god at least at 50 places like Mukti Mandap, Bhogamandap, Natamandir, Narasimha and Nisanarasimha, Laxmi, Dadhibamana, Bhubaneswari and Madanamohan, Nandagopal

temples, Ramamandira at Baisapahacha, Lion's Gate near Patitapaban.

(xviii) Narasimha images in the temple as Parswadevata : These images are generally four-armed and in Vidarana posture on the back-raha niche of the temple (a) Gopinath temple at Keponjharkothi on Grand Road (b) Radhakrisna temple at Gopinathpur near Atharnala, (c) Jagannath temple - Manikarnika Sahi, (d) Radhakrisna temple - Manikarnika Sahi, (e) Patitapaban temple at Patitapaban Lane, Markandeswar Sahi.

(xix) Narasimha images in the temple as Parswadevata in Sakti temples : (a) a four-armed 1ft image with back hands uplifted with *sankha* and *chakra* and front hands in *dhyana* and *abhaya mudra* in Dakshinakali temple, Kalikadevi Sahi and (b) a 4ft high, three eyed, with *ramanandi chita*, back hands uplifted with *sankha* and *charka* and front hands on his knee, sitting on a Garuda in the Ramachandi temple, Ramachandi sahi are the examples. It seems like recent installations.

(xx) Narasimha images in the Saiva temples as wall-god : This type of images are found in the temples of Jameswar, Lokanath and Kapalamochana.

(xxi) Specific Image : (a) The image (sculpture) is known as Panchamukhi Mahavir having five faces; Varaha in north, Narasimha in south, Siva or Hanuman in east, Garuda in west and Hayagriva in top near Indradyumna Tank. It has ten hands, holding *sankha*, trident, *khatwanga*, *pasa*, *ankusa*, hillock, *dhuma*, *musthi*, mace and snake. He is standing over the demon. It is stated in the Kapila Samhita that one will earn more *punya* if he/she makes a *darsana* of Sri Nilakantheswar, Yajna Narasimha and Panchamukhi Mahavir after the sacred bath in Indradyumna Tank. (It is related to Adapa Mandap Yatra of Jagannath) (b) Garuda Tosana : It is also an unique sculpture in the niche of



Bhogamandap. It is a two-armed image standing on *dwibhanga* pose over the lotus pedestal. There is a Garuda image in worshipping pose in the right side of the deity. In his right hand the deity is offering a *laddu* to Garuda when his left hand is in *katyavalambita* posture. The legend associates it with the great Sankar.

(xxii) Laxmi images : In almost all Laxmi-Narasimha sculptures of Puri the size of Laxmi is very small and two-armed. The peculiarity noticed here is that Laxmi touches the mouth of Narasimha in her right hand in the process of offering betel. Another variation is found with the image at Algom where Laxmi is four-armed.

(xxiii) Narasimha is worshipped in almost all the Maths of Puri. The Maths at Puri have developed over the centuries into unique institutions, which have exercised profound influence on the religious and cultural life of the local as well as people coming to Puri. Adisankar is credited with, as the pioneer of Math building. When he established Gobardhana / Bhavavardhana Math at Puri in the early 9th century A.D. there is a saying that Puri had 752 Maths. But the number is far less below 100 at present. The head of the Math is the Mahanta. He lives in these maths with *sadhu-sanyasis*, *sisyas* of the institution and some inmate students. These Maths belong to various Sampradayas and socio-religious groups. In these Maths various deities are worshipped as per the sect they represent. The main deity or subsidiaries are worshipped in the Maths. By this process all Maths of different monastic order have promoted Narasimha worship. Ramanuja followed Adisankar in establishing Maths in considerable number which are situated at every strategic places by his two categories of *sisyas* order, the Bagel and Dingal and they facilitated Narasimha worship like their guru. These *sisyas* are of *sanyasis* and *gruhastas* (Narasimhachari and Venkatachari). Madhavacharya, another saint of 13th century had established one Narasimha temple at Soda. Some Maths of Madhavacharya

order also worship Narasimha. Narahari Tirtha had established one Narasimha temple at Srikakulam. Ramayati Vaisnavas at Puri are worshipping Narasimha alongwith Rama and Sita. Sri Chaitanya advised his disciples to have Danda Pranama (Salutation by laying on the ground) to Narasimha before the Darsan of Sri Jagannath. Sri Chaitanya himself worshipped the Narasimha at third step of Baisapahach before going to have the Darsan of Sri Jagannath. So in some Gaudiya Maths Narasimha is worshipped. There is a legend that Sri Gauranga saved Thakur Haridas from the attack of an enemy assuming the form of Narasimha. There is a separate temple for Narasimha in the Sidhabakula Math of Thakur Haridas. Similarly some Maths of Ramananda order also have Narasimha worship. Atibadi Jagannath Das, author of Oriya Bhagabat started his writing with salutation to Narasimha. So the Math of Atibadi Jagannath Das order has Narasimha worship. The plamleaf manuscript of Oriya Bhagabat is worshipped with great reverence as the representative of Jagannath or Narasimha. Therefore with the spread of Bhagabata and Bhagabata Tungi in Orissa, Narasimha became more popular as a deity. In all these Maths Narasimha is worshipped either in iconic form or aniconic form. The iconic forms are normally made of metals mostly *astadhatu* and sometimes stone. The aniconic form is the worship of Salagrama on which the face of Narasimha is drawn.

Traditionally, seven Sahis of Puri were set up encircling Sri Jagannath temple with a view to have Sevas of the Lord and to protect the shrine at the time of crises. Each Sahi has an Akhada. Under each Akhadass there are some Jagaghars. These Jagaghars are the centre of physical and cultural training like Kusti (wrestling), Oddisi song, Oddisi dance, Gotipua dance, special Jaga Sangeetas under reputed gurus. The term of Jaga in Oriya connotes the "place" like jagar of Himachal Pradesh. These Jagaghars in Puri are



the genuine centres of cultural awakening at the grass root level. Considering from this angle it may not be out of place to state that the term *jaga* is derived from the word Jagarana which means to keep awake. The members of these Jagagharas worship Hanuman (Mahavir) and Narasimha as the sources of power and strength. Even some *jagas* have been named after Narasimha like Narasimha Ballav and Nrusingha Ghar.

Narasimha is associated with Saivism. It has been analysed by Eshmann. She states that the representation of Lingodbhava where Siva appeared from the endless flaming Lingam, usually represented as a huge column resembling the sense of Narasimha bursting out of pillar. To support her view we find a description in Vishnudharmottar Purana that the face of Narasimha and manes surrounded with flames. The flaming Lingam of Saivism and the flaming manes of Narasimha cult have close affinity. Eschmann has also stated another story from Vishnudharmottar Purana where a devotee worships the Lingam until he has a vision of Narasimha appearing from it. This connection is represented in one of the early Siva temple in Orissa near Baramba called Simhanath. The figure of Simhanath is carved on the front entrance. A standing human figure with a lion head holding a trident is locally called as Simhanath. This speaks of Siva-Narasimha or Siva incorporating Narasimha. The panels of Bhimeswar and Madhukeswar temples at Mukhalingam contain Narasimha images. In the Lingaraj temple premises, there is a Laxmi-Narasimha image. At the Manibhadreswar temple at Bhubaneswar and Nilakantheswar temple at Denua, Narasimha is the Parswadevata. In Puri, the association of Narasimha with Siva is intimately noticed. Near all the Narasimha temples, there are Siva temples. Near Chakra Narasimha temple, there is Panchabati Siva temple. Similarly, near Pandu Narasimha temple, there is Jameswar temple and inside the Jagamohan of Jameswar temple there is the image of Narasimha. In the temples of

Lokanath and Kapalalochana the images of Narasimha are there. A Narasimha image was found from the earth while digging of the compound of the Grameswar Siva temple in Kanchi Sasana was going on. The beautiful image was made of chlorite. Another interesting feature of this Siva temple is that there is Narayan image at the right door-jamb as Dwarapala. Another peculiarity of this temple is that animal sacrifice is given during Dasahara every year at the sanctum of this Siva temple. This shows the close association of tantricism. Another resemblance between Narasimha and Siva is its Ugra form. The Vidarana Narasimha is Ugra as Lokanath of Puri on whose name the local people fear to take vow. In some Puranas, Siva is Kirtimukha. In some Narasimha image there is Kirtimukha. Ananta is sometimes described as Sankarsana or Siva as well as Narasimha. Eschmann has rightly pointed out Saiva element in Narasimha which probably also made him eligible to be the tutelary god of the latter Gargas.

H.V. Stetencorn narrated that in western Orissa people give more emphasis to the Narasimha aspect of Visnu. The trend was finally found in the Jagannath cult of Puri. G.C. Tripathy has tressed the tantric element which helped the evolvement of Narasimha cult from Vaisnavism. Narasimha's appearance from the pillar and the body of Lord Jagannath, they believe, have some affinity. Eschmann has rightly pointed out that the head of Jagannath is an attempt to reprint a lion head and the round eyes are typical features of Narasimha's furry.

According to Indradyumna legend the satiated god assumed the form of Saumya Narasimha with Chakra and bow in his up-lifted hands and main two hands are on the knee. Balabhadra covers the head of Narasimha with the thousands hood. Narasimha is the guardian deity of the temple and all the performances beginning from cooking to puja are preceded by offering to Narasimha first. The initiation by a new



servitor (*sadhibandha*) starts with worshipping the Khamba Narasimha (image of Laxmi-Narasimha) on the first pillar of Jagamohana. The Palia Pujapanda sits at this pillar and offers the *bhoga* of the public to Narasimha, then to the Lord and at the time of Pahuda (door-closed) offerings are also given here. Narasimha is described as the protector of Jagannath. He is the protector of Nandighosha chariot. It is customary that a wooden image of Narasimha after due ritual (*Rath-pratistha*), completed by the Deula-purohit the only strotriya Brahmin servitor of the temple is to be brought with proper procession with Bijekahali and other Vadyas to the Chariots (Hanuman and Bhubaneswari for Balabhadra and Subhadra, respectively). Narasimha is also one of the nine *parswadevatas* of the said chariot. In the Nabakalebara the role of Lord Narasimha is indispensable. The new images of the Lords are to be consecrated in presence of Narasimha and trees selected for image making are to be cut also in the presence of Narasimha. These rituals are called as Banajaga. In all these above rituals Mantraraja (the Mantra of the god Narasimha) only are to be recited by the Brahmins. Yajna-Narasimha is associated in the process of the journey of the logs of the Lord. Narasimha is one of the Vesas of the Lord on the 13th day of month of Kartik and worshipped as Narasimha on 14th day of lunar fortnight of the month of Vaishakha (Narasimha Chaturdasi). Angyamala (garland) of the Lord is taken on this day to Chakra Narasimha for his birthday-celebration. The birthday-celebration of Narasimha is celebrated at the temple of Narasimha near Muktimandap. On the said day Narasimha image (from Dakhinighar) visits Jagannath Ballav Math. On the 9th day of lunar fortnight of the month of Sravana and the 14th day of lunar fortnight of the month of Margasira, Laxmi-Narasimha move around the city.

Narasimha is treated as the embodiment of valour and energy. Sometimes Sudarsan is

linked with Narasimha. Sudarsan is the Ugra aspect and the working force. Similarly Narasimha is the Ugra form of Visnu. When Sudarsan is consecrated, it is recited that he belongs to Narasimha group. Representation in sculpture is made on the combined aspect of Narasimha and Sudarsan. Sudarsan in form of wheel is found at the back of the image of Narasimha in the sculpture Chakra Narasimha. Sudarsan is the moveable image of Narasimha.

It is claimed by the scholars that Jagannath and Narasimha are inseparable and all the four deities of Jagannath pantheon are linked intimately with Narasimha. Balabhadra as Ananta, Subhadra as post, Sudarsan as fury and Jagannath as Narasimha, speak the story of intimacy of Narasimha in Jagannath consciousness.

The Narasimha sculpture found at Puri are two-armed to twenty-armed images. Important of them are the Garuda-tosana Narasimha, eight-armed Pandu Narasimha, Narasimha sitting on Garuda. All the *parswadevatas* are in *vidarana* posture. These images are made of different varieties of stones but common is chlorite. Metal images of the Jagagharas and Maths are of *astadhatu*. Some of these institutions worship the *salagramas* with Narasimha, Chakra and Sankha drawn on it and also called Chitra Narasimha.

It is unique in Puri that the amalgamation of several cults are found here. It includes safely the Narasimha Upasana. The most common images of Narasimha found in Puri are Laxmi-Narasimha in *utkurita* posture. The Ugra aspect of the deity is not there rather it represents the erotic elements in the character of Purusottam.

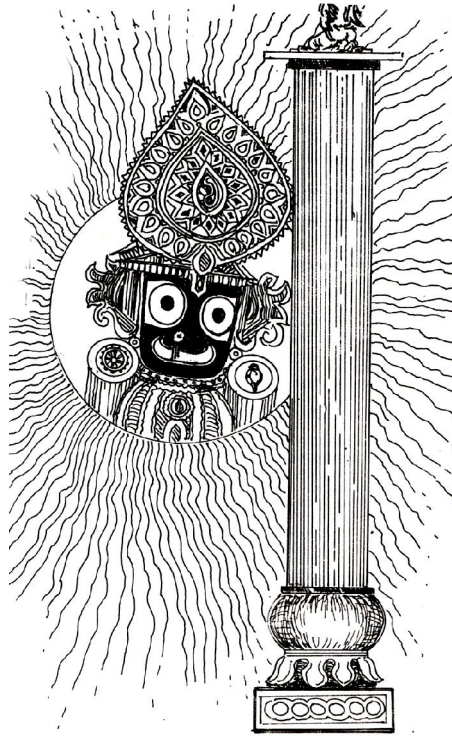
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Scientific Background of Shri Jagannath Cult

Dr. Ramakanta Kar

Lord Sri Jagannath has for centuries been the most popular God of Orissa and even now He remains a vital element in the religious life of the Indian people Puri, the holy city of Lord is one of the four major centres of pilgrimage (Dham) namely, Badrinath, Dwarakanath, Sri Jagannath & Ramnath. The pilgrims and devotees come to the Temple for their mental peace and to give up their mental tension. In Orissa, Lord Jagannath receives the same devotion as accorded to Vishnu from 10th Century onwards. In 16th Century A.D., Chaitanya came to Puri and the then king Prataprudra Deva was influenced by his Uddanda Kirtan and admitted Sri Chaitanya as his spiritual *guru*. He took *dikshya* from him. Lord Jagannath became identified as Sri Krishna. The traditional Chandana Yatra, Janmastami, Radhastami etc. rituals were celebrated from 16th Century AD. in the Sri Mandir. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the messiah of the fallen humanity, visited this place.



We know from history that from time to time the temple was attacked by kings and leaders of various religions and different sects. There are so many scientific traditions in the regular rituals of Lord, annual festivals and all the ethics of Sri Jagannath cult which influence the mind of human being of present society.

The evolution of man as manifested in Darwin's Theory is depicted as Dasabatara (Ten incarnations) which are mostly described in "Geetago vinda" composed by Sri Jayadeva. Sri Jayadeva has written this poem by the blessings of Lord Jagannath. The nitis of Temple create cleanliness in the heart creating spiritual and sacred environment which develop develops the physique, mind and spiritual tendency of the human being.

There is our old tradition that when we go to the temple of Lord Vishnu, Shiva or Shakti, we must go with sacred mind in empty stomach, otherwise we earn sins. Fearing the sins, we



maintain our regularity in Darshan. If regularly we go to the Shiva Temple in empty stomach for His Darshan, we can get his Prasad: Belapatra, which prevent the chest disease and cure constipation. If we go to the temple of Vishnu or Sri Jagannath in empty stomach, we can get His Prasad: Tulsi, which cure issonofil tendency, cure thyroid defects and cold tendency and wash away abdominal defects. If we go to the Goddess temple, we can get both Prasads of Vishnu and Shiva. Lord Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra and Maa Subhadra have been mostly imagined as Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma or Shakti respectively. Maa Subhadra is also called as Yogamaya.

Art and architectures of the Natamandapa and Bhoga Mandap pour psychological and spiritual influence in the minds of the devotees which removes the mental tension and creates spiritual consciousness.

Sri Jagannath's Ayudha is Shankha and Chakra. Shankha is the symbol of sound and Chakra is the symbol of wheel. Sound and wheel are industrial character. So Sri Jagannath can be called as the deity of Industry. Sri Balabhadra holds Hala and Mushala, the symbol of Agriculture. So Balabhadra may called as the deity of Agro-Industries. Maa Subhadra has already been imagined as Brahma and She is the deity of knowledge. Sri Sudarshan, the point of rays as rays are reflected in the lence as a point. So Sri Sudarshan is the deity of Real focus. Devotees get emancipation or Salvation after

Darshan of Lord Sudarshan the focus point of Chaturdhamurty on Ratna Simhasan.

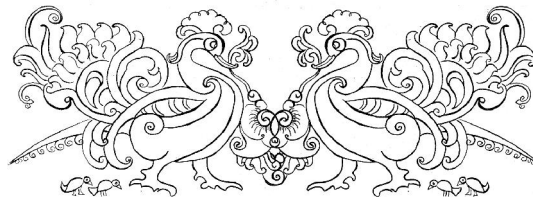
Paduka or Abakasha Jala (The bathing water of Lord) cures Chronic constipation of the devotee who takes this Jala everyday regularly. Neela Chakra on the top of the temple is fixed and it is made by Astadhatu and connected with a long copper plate (earthing) from the top to earth. It saves the temple from the rain, thunder and natural calamities etc. scientifically.

The traditional rituals, Nitis and parba-parbanis based on nature and hygienic science and cover Yama and Niyama of the ethics of Yogic Science.

Garuda Stambha is made with a root of a tree recognised by Ayurvedic Science. It is covered with a chemical solution. When a devotee touches his chest and hand, he feels well and his chest disease is cured. This also gives prevention of chest disease. The bathing water of the Garuda washes away different fevers of the devotees. This water also removes indigestion and dyspepsia.

So the rituals, traditions, environment of Sri Jagannath Temple, and culture both are mostly based on Scientific background, there is no doubt.

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The Distinct Speciality of Lord Jagannath

Dr. Harihar Kanungo

During the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, the Bhagabat religion in India was wrongly acclaimed as Vaishnavism under the patronage of the then rulers. Subsequently its impact was also felt in Orissa. Rationally speaking, Bhagabat religion is markedly different from Vaishnavism. The latter is associated with the worship of different contexts in India literature, history and religion. The word Vaishnav is derived from the word Vishnu. Word like Vishnu or Vaishnav is wrongly associated with Lord Vasudev Shrikrishna. When Brahminism revived under the patronage of the Gupta dynasty during 3rd - 4th century, this deliberate attempt was made in religion, literature and history. The reason can be found in the fact that, prior to Mahabharata war, Brahminism was associated with Sun-worship. The alien Aryans who invaded India were accustomed to worshipping the elements of nature as gods: hence Sun-worship.

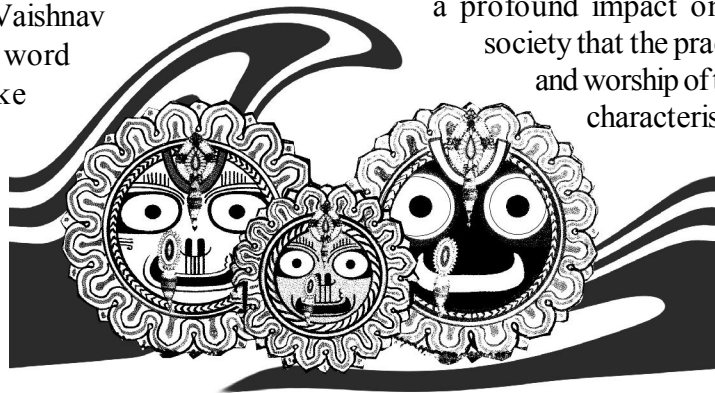
Sun-worship was mainly confined to yagna (holy offerings to the fire-god), sacrifice of animals

and drinking of Soma-rasa. Under the influence of Lord Srikrishna's diplomacy during the Mahabharata war, people shifted their attention from yagna and worship of elements and turned them into introspective spiritualism. In keeping with that basic change, the post-Mahabharata era witnessed the advent of introspective religions like Jainism and Buddhism. These religions had such a profound impact on the contemporary society that the practice of Sun-worship and worship of the elements of nature characterising Brahminism was

t o t a l l y discontinued. In fact, right after the end of the Mahabharata War, the B h a g a b a t d h a r m a ,

introduced by Vasudeva Srikrishna along with Jainism and Buddhism had greatly influenced the people and put an end to Brahminism. It could not revive even by 3rd - 4th century.

Protagonists of Brahminism cleverly conspired, by means of jargons to identify Vasudeva Srikrishna with the Sun-God or Lord Vishnu and nearly succeeded in getting public support for their endeavour. The derivation of the word Vishnu can be found in 1,85,7:6,48,14





Mandalas, Sukta and mantra in the Rg. Veda.¹ Elsewhere in the Rg Veda, the Sun-god or Lord Vishnu has been portrayed as a God of Sacrifice. Can there be any justification for identifying such a god of external and inanimate nature with Vasudeva Sri Krishna ? The latter is the presiding deity of an introspective religion and hence the efforts of the torch bearers of Brahminism to treat Vasudeva Sri Krishna on par with the Sun-god or Vishnu, god of outward and inanimate nature is highly unrealistic. The reason is that when the supporters of Brahminism discovered that the worship of Vishnu or the Sun-god cannot stand the powerful influence of Saivism, the Bhagabat religion, Jainism or Buddhism, they propagated rather fraudulently about Buddha, etc being the incarnations of Vishnu or the Sun-god. By massive propaganda, they managed to ensure the perpetuation of Sun-worship which prevails even today. Such endeavours led to revival of Brahminism during the rule of the Gupta dynasty. This attempt no doubt eluded the people. But, still, they never accepted Vishnu as Sun-god at any time. The patrons of Brahminism derive a great mental satisfaction by keeping the Sun-god in the guise of Lord Vishnu.

The Protagonists of yagyajna (Sacrificial offerings to the fire-god) and Sun-worship, under the encouraging patronage of State-power penned several Puranic literature where they invariably propagated that all the deities and religious beliefs worshipped and sustained by the people irrespective of caste or creed were mere parts of incarnations of Lord Vishnu or Sun-god. Therefore we find in the Puranas that Lord Rama, (the Son of Kaushalya), Vasudeva Sri Krishna, Gautam Buddha and Nrusingha have been portrayed and propagated as parts of the so-called Lord Vishnu or Sun-god. Lord Sriram, Lord Sri Krishna, (the son of Devaki), Lord Nrusingha who emerged out of a shattered pillar

greatly influenced and inspired the contemporary society as symbols of inward consciousness. Unfortunately, the protagonists of Brahminism, in the Puranic literature purposefully created by them, identified these gods with the worship of the inanimate Sun-god or Vishnu. The state power no doubt encouraged and patronised such propangandas. The people, though confused, rejected such notions outright. Alongwith the mythological characters like Shri Ram, Sri Krishna and Nrusingha, the historical religious leader like Gautam Buddha were propagated as the incarnations of the Sun-god or Vishnu. The confusion these attempts created can be traced to Lord Jagannath of Puri.

Historically and ethically speaking, Lord Jagannath, the presiding deity of the land of Odra was worshipped by the Vajrayanist Buddhists during the 7th and 8th centuries as the overall manifestation of the spiritual consciousness of different tribal groups like the Odras and the Nagas. The Buddhists accomplished unanimity in the diverse religious beliefs of these different tribal races like Nagas and Odras and this gave rise to the practice of worshipping Lord Jagannath. That is why we find the influence of Buddhism in the cult of Lord Jagannath even today. Such synchronised religious feeling and reasoning reflect an introspective consciousness having its own speciality and distinction profoundly affecting the minds of all Indians. That is why during the 7th and 8th centuries, Lord Jagannath was acclaimed as the presiding deity of the entire Odra region. We find in Madalapanji that with the rise of Keshari dynasty, Yajati became the monarch. He searched for this state deity of Orissa and installed Him in Puri. By the time of the Lord's installation, the popular gods like Lord Shri Ram and Vasudev Shri Krishna were given the title of Purushottama (The perfect man) and the propaganda of their being parts or incarnations



of Lord Vishnu or Surya (The Sun god) went on unabated. These theories originated from the Puranic literature since the 3rd and 4th centuries and are still in vogue.

After Lord Jagannath's installation in Puri by royal effort, he too has been termed as a part or incarnation of Lord Vishnu or the Sun god. His name, therefore has acquired the prefix of Purushottama or the Perfect Man. Initially, Lord Jagannath was described as a miraculous derivation of Nrusingha and subsequently, He is identified with Vasudeva Srikrishna. But from the historical and logical view point, even by His acquiring this prefix of Purushottama, he can neither be identified with Nrusingha nor with Shri Krishna, the Purushottama. The word Purushottama or the Perfect Man, fails to convey the full significance of the omni present Lord Jagannath, from the ethical point of view. Possibly, this is the view expressed by Dibakar Das, a 17th century poet in his book of verse 'Jagannath Charitamrita' - "Lord Jagannath is cent percent complete with Divine Qualities, a part of which went to Srikrishna, the son of Nanda. But he turned this part into one hundred percent and moved around in the land of Gopa." ²

From this, we find that Purushottama or the Perfect Man is a qualitative concept. But a deliberate attempt has been made to attach this term to Lord Jagannath who defies any qualitative description (Guna-tita). He is far beyond logical reasoning and some one very special. So from this view point, Lord Shri Ram has been called Maryada Purushottama (the Perfect Man of Glory). Srikrishna or Nrusingha also carry this prefix as all of them have been propagated as belonging to the category of Lord Vishnu. Lord Jagannath is altogether a different phenomenon and beyond qualitative description.

The ancestors of the monarchs belonging to the Soma or Keshari dynasty made Sripur of Madhya Pradesh their capital and ruled in that state. Nrusingha, the Purushottama, was their house-hold deity. From an inscription preserved in the Museum of Raipur, it is learned that, in the 8th century, Basatta Devi, a queen of the Soma dynasty, had built a temple in Sripur and installed her house hold-deity, Nrusingha, the Perfect Man, there. In the years that followed, descendants of Soma dynasty who ruled Sonepur in Orissa also built a temple in the mountain region of Gandhamardan, installed Nrusingha, the Perfect Man in that temple and worshipped Him. That is the famous Nrusinghanath temple of Paikmal. We learn from history that, years after, the descendants of Soma dynasty also built a temple at Puri, for the worship of their household deity, Lord Nrusingha, the Purushottama. Having conquered different regions in Orissa, the Somavanshi kings installed the statues of Purushottama Nrusingha in those places and encouraged His worship. They also patronised many books of verses eulogising the deity, Purusottam Nrusingha. "Anargha Raghav," a drama by Murari Mishra, "Prabodha Chandrodaya," another drama by Krishna Mishra. "Vaswati" by Satananda, 'Krutya Kalpataru' and 'Brahma Yamalatantra' are some of these books lauding Lord Nrusingha, the household deity of the Somavanshi rulers, brought from Sripur of Madhya Pradesh. Puri was widely propagated as Purushottama Ksetra (or the Land of the Perfect Man) only because the Somavanshi kings installed the deity Nrusingha in Puri. These kings tried to popularise Nrusingha-worship throughout Orissa. Hence Puri earned the epithet Purushottama Ksetra. But in later period, Lord Jagannath earned the status and recognition of being the presiding deity of the Odra land and was installed in Puri and in due course of time replaced Nrusingha who had earned the same



status before. So Puri, previously called Purushottama ksetra (or the Land of the Perfect Man) came to be known in due course of events as the land of Lord Jagannath, who was installed there as the presiding deity and was worshipped.

So "Purushottama Ksetra" the land of the Perfect Man and "Jagannath Dham", the land of Lord Jagannath are not at all synonymous. "Purushottama" and "Jagannath" are different terms, the former referring to "Purusottam Nrusingha" and not to Lord Jagannath. However, the effort is on to identify Jagannath with Purusottama as well as to equate Lord Jagannath with Lord Vishnu. From time to time, this effort has obtained royal patronage which encouraged the writing of puranas like Skanda Purana.³

We can also mention the age-old attempts to equate Lord Jagannath with Purushottama Nrusingha. And at a later stage, the Vaishnavites adopted a different strategy to identify Lord Jagannath with Vasudeva Srikrishna, the Presiding deity of Bhagabat religion. Of course, taking a closer look, we can not find any marked difference between the religious aspects of Vasudeva Srikrishna and Lord Jagannath. But still, both are certainly not identical. Just as Vasudeva Srikrishna of Bhagabat religion is distinctly different from Vishnu or Surya worshipped by the Vaishnavites, similarly, the cult of Lord Jagannath, enunciated by the Buddhists, is different from that of Vasudeva Shrikrishna. But as a result of attempts made by the Vaishnavites, many Puranic works proclaiming Vasudeva Shrikrishna as the incarnation or part of Lord Vishnu came into being. In a similar manner, efforts to identify Lord Jagannath with Vasudeva Shrikrishna with the help of Puranas have never stopped.

Possibly noting this, Jayadeva, a 12th century poet wrote in his Dasavatara Stotram - "Thou, O Keshava ! who discredited the rituals

of yajna and the Vedas, thou whose soul wept witnessing the religious sacrifice of animals, incarnated thyself as Lord Buddha. Glory to thee, O Jagadish (Lord of Universe) Hari."

It is obvious that Jayadeva was referring to Lord Keshava or Srikrishna reincarnating Himself as Lord Buddha or Lord Jagannath. But despite all the apparent similarities these deities have, research scholars have proved that they are not inseparable. As has been said earlier, under pressure of circumstances the patrons of Vaishnavism or Brahminism had drawn Vasudeva Srikrishna into their religious fold. However, the cult of Lord Jagannath is very special and distinct. Conforming this distinctive aspect of Lord Jagannath, Dr. Harekrishna Mahatab has aptly observed in his "History of Orissa":- "Three factors prevent us from accepting Jagannath as the Lord of Brahminism. They are,

- i. The name, "Jagannath" (The Lord of Universe)
- ii. The very image of Jagannath
- iii. The presence of Subhadra with him,

So how did the name "Krishna Vasudeva" vanished and was replaced by Jagannath ?"

Along with their efforts to proclaim, Lord Sriram, Lord Srikrishna and Lord Nrusingha Vishnu or Surya incarnate, the patrons of Brahminism spared no pains in encouraging the special worship of Surya or Vishnu in Orissa. This effort was very expensive. The Sun Temple at Konark (Arka Ksetra or the Land of Sun) testifies to this. All the revenue Orissa earned in twelve years was spent for the construction of this temple. The Sun Temple, no doubt, is a marvellous object of art. But the basic purpose (Sun-worship) for which it was built went flak with the people of Orissa. Although they are proud of this beautiful artistic work, they have never taken to worshipping Vishnu or Surya. That is why the Sun-



Pillar (Arun Stambha) of the Konark Temple was shifted to Puri and was placed in front of the Lion's gate of Jagannath Temple facing the Grand road. Many people attribute the dilapidated state of Konark temple to natural and geographical factors. But this is not true. Both the Jagannath temple of Puri and the Sun-temple at Konark are situated near the sea -shore. But the latter is of a more 'recent' build. One hundred years after the Puri temple was built (1115-1147 AD) by Chodagangadeva of Ganga dynasty (1078-1147AD), King Narasingha Deva or Langula Narasingha Deva (1238-1264 AD) built the Sun-temple at Konark with much gusto; the place was named Arka-Ksetra (the land of Sun-God) and found a glorious mention in latter Puranas like the Samba Purana. Despite these much hyped propagandas, the temple remained unused for worship. Only on the day of Magha Saptami, devotees gather here to take a holy dip in the nearby Chandrabhaga. This rite has nothing to do with the Konark temple. Of course, the devotees are certainly enchanted by the artistic excellence of the temple, but it does not arouse any religious feelings in their hearts. The temple does not have any priests or servitors. Thus for the want of use and sheer disinterest of the public, the temple collapsed, ruined and abandoned. This rather than natural factors is a greater cause for its devastation. In contrast to this, the temple of Lord Jagannath is a crowd - puller and primarily in public interest, timely repairs and preservation of this sacred monument have been done.

Temples have cropped up time and again with much pomp and ceremony in different parts of India. The state - power has encouraged their construction and has tried forcibly to impose them on the people. But since they have failed to touch their hearts, people have outright rejected them. As a result, many of the temples are in shambles.

But, in contrast to this, Lord Jagannath draws millions of people from every part of the world to Puri and it is a humanitarian religion.

So it is clear from the above discussion that Jagannath is different from Purushottama Nrusingha or Vasudeva Shrikrishna. He has a place of his own. He is a God of Humanism.

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Rath Yatra and Marketing of Tourism Events

Truptimayee Dash

Rath Yatra is a traditional festival carrying thousand year legacy. It is well within the tradition. There is an existing strategy for marketing and more emphasis may be put forth for its promotion from tourism point of view. Festivals are part of our rich cultural heritage and uphold age-old tradition in its living form, which is otherwise known as intangible heritage. Tourism is regarded now as a promoter of cultural heritage, a medium of cultural conservation and a source of revenue and employment generation. As a major economic activity, particularly, for revival of intangible cultural heritage, Tourism is considered as a driving force.



From ancient times, pilgrims from all parts of India, even from Nepal used to come every year in order to witness the Car festival of Lord Jagannath. These pilgrims have close relationship with the Sevayats and the Pandas of Sri Jagannath temple. Since 14th century A.D., these temple servitors of Puri have been attending the pilgrims and making all sorts of arrangements for

convenient Darshan of the deities and the festivals. Traditionally, the Pandas have followed a system of promotion of Sri Jagannath Dham. The Brahmin Priests (Pandas) of Puri were deputed to different areas of India in order to preach glory of Lord Jagannath. At the same time they were given responsibility to look after the incoming pilgrims of different parts of India. To this day, the priests continue to be the Panda for various Indian States. This is a strategy for spread of the glory of the destination. They would also persuade believers to make a pilgrimage to Puri, from that place. Occasionally

pilgrims are astonished to see the name of their forefathers in Panda's records, as confirmation of their pilgrimage to Puri. Pilgrims from various parts of the country thus arrived at Puri in groups. There are separate Pandas such as Lal Moharia Panda, responsible for the pilgrims of Nepal. They were visiting these areas and also guiding them during their visit to Puri. In fact these Pandas were well - versed with the language of their assigned territory.



Similarly, Manipuri and Assamese Pandas are also there at Puri. As late as 1700 A.D. King of Manipur, Chud Chan Maharaj, gave recognition to the then Panda of Manipuri. Number of Nepali Panda and Manipuri Panda work together as Pandas for the State of Assam.

All other states like Gujrat, Maharastra, Rajasthan, Punjab and Chattishgarh apart from Bengal have their system of Panda's assigned duties. All the native Pandas with this pilgrim business would regularly visit these areas and promote Jagannath cult as well as the destination. This is a unique system by pilgrim promoters only available in the established pilgrim cities like Gaya, Banaras, Haridwar, Ujjain etc. This system is deep rooted as part of Indian cultural heritage.

In the modern times particularly after 1980, number of new systems developed and more and more organizations, Government Departments involved in the destination marketing. Marketing helps to create new customers by way of first identifying their needs and then trying to satisfy these. Customer satisfaction becomes a crucial part of travel sales. The first task of the travel marketer is identification of the customer's needs in order to guide the development of suitable products and services. The second task is to motivate all the potential customers, through various means, to purchase these products and services. The objective of marketing in tourism could, therefore, be stated to be as attracting and motivating all the potential customers or users of tourist services to a particular destination or event and not to other.

Since, Sri Jagannath Temple Administration, with District Administration and State Administration as a whole, organizes the Car Festival as a mega event, State Tourism Department, India Tourism and various other Travel and Tour Operators, try to market the

Event at various level. The following key organizations have their strategy for marketing. Let us discuss few of them.

Sri Jagannath Temple Administration

Sri Jagannath Temple Administration is an autonomous organization set up under a special Act of Orissa Government. It has a Managing Committee and Executive Body. The Executive Body is headed by a Commissioner rank officer designated as Chief Administrator and the Managing Committee is headed by the Gajapati king of Puri. The Managing Committee is the policy maker and the Executive Body is the implementing agency.

Since Car Festival is a living and a mega traditional event, it is the tourism product of the state itself. The Temple Administration wholeheartedly organizes the event and take care for its publicity. In fact Temple Administration has produced the chronology and sequence of the Car Festival well in advance and circulate to all outlets set up in India. They have also sent the details of the event through their website - www.jagannath.nic.in. The event is documented and widely circulated through video cassettes and CDs. It is circulated to all Jagannath Temples set up in foreign countries and Indian cities. There is provision of interaction and inquiries through Telephone and E-Mail.

State Tourism Department and Orissa Tourism Development Corporation are major source for marketing of the mega events on the head "Fairs and Festivals". Although the activities of the organizations are well planned but not perceptible at the state level. The unique fairs and festivals are documented and Car Festival in such a large event, is only next to Kumbha Mela. So far wide publicity is concerned, it needs combined effort to market the destinations as well. Puri is the Destination and Event is the product. The



product has been taken as a medium for marketing total Orissa and its culture. Accordingly Tourism Department has brought out beautiful posters, CDs, write ups and distributed these through Tourist Offices of India and abroad.

Tourism Department participates in different tourism promotional events, workshops and forum such as TAAI, SATTE, TTF, PATA, World Travel Mart etc. and distributes widely the literature about the event and destinations.

Time to time different workshops are also organized by State Tourism with different tour operators of India and abroad. They were apprised about the potentialities and facilities of the destinations as well the standard of accommodation facilities available etc. It is a regular and routine venture of the Tourism Department and Tourism Corporations. Private organisations like different tour companies organize road shows and market the event to lure more and more tourists. The domestic tour operators such as Swosti Travels, Thomas Cook, Sita Discover Tours, Heritage Tours and others market this event in a big way. They sell packages for Car Festival in national and international market. They have also tie-up with other International Tour Agencies even different Airline companies to show Car Festival as a mega event.

The traditional religious organizations like Mathas (Monasteries) of different sects like Ramanandi, Sankaracharya, Chaitanya, Sri etc. also popularize the event through their organisations all over India.

The marketing strategy of the Car Festival taken up by different organizations and agencies is really a matter for study. As the Event has been

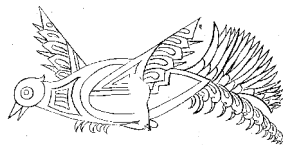
already popularized internationally, it requires some detail marketing strategy like more and more visional presentation in different countries. The Cultural Exchange Programmes of India and other countries must have some kind of performance on Car Festival, so that more and more exposure of the event ought to be made.

Since the Car Festival is a traditional festival having rich history, cult and culture, it should be packaged in such a manner that the tourists get to know all about the way of life and cultural milieu of the state as well as country.

As the date of the festival is almost fixed, a separate arrangement is required to be made exclusively for the tourists. Since it is a community festival, the tourist can't enter in the ocean of people. There necessitates specific guideline by Government. If it will be done then more and more tourists may come to see the festival.

The accommodation facilities should be upgraded and expanded. At present there are 50 thousand beds available and more than 50 thousand temporary sheds made for the tourists which is meager as it receives about 8 lakh visitors, pilgrims and tourists. All the accommodation units should sell their packages well in advance keeping eye on Car Festival.

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The Pilgrimage, Rituals and Worship - A Study on Puri as Tirtha Kshetra

Sunil Kumar Patnaik



Travellers from within the land and abroad, visit a tirtha (pilgrimage) to discover the soul of our ancient land. Tirthas are seldom anonymous places. They all have their unique character and ambience. Places of pilgrimage are distributed throughout India and are called tirthasthanas or Kshetras. These ancient cities are like living symbols of history. The concept of tirtha in Indian context originates from the time when Puranas began to be composed around 4th century A.D. The gargantuan size of the tirthas in some of the Puranas was clearly the result of their unprecedented proliferation and continual addition to the Puranic list. According to the Brahma Purana, their number is so large that they cannot be enumerated. A rough statistical estimate prepared by P.V Kane fixes the number of Puranic verses devoted entirely to the subject of tirthas as about 1,200 in Matsya Purana, 3,182 in Varaha Purana, 4000 in Padma Purana and 6,700 in Brahma Purana. Some exclusive studies on the subject based on single Purana, especially Skanda Purana, would further bear testimony to such over growth. A statement in Skanda Purana claims as many as half crore tirthas in the country.

A place of pilgrimage is a tirtha or tirthasthana. A pilgrimage is a tirthayatra and a 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 locale. 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 /site). A sacred geography is created by the process of bringing together cult centers 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 centers by means of myths and legends evolving around a specific cult. Many such cultic geographies emerged in India particularly in south India between the 7th and 17th centuries. The cult of Balajee, as the famous Venkateswara at Tirupati (a Vishnu temple) is known, acquired a



pan-Indian status being elevated to it after the Vijayanagar rulers made Venkateswar their tutelary deity. So also the cult of Jagannath acquired a pan-Indian status after the Gangas and Gajapatis made Lord Jagannath as their state deity. Infact, pilgrim networks expanded in the Ganga and post-Ganga periods when significant reorganization, elaboration and changes in the temple ritual and festivals, incorporating manifold Vedic and Agamic practices, took place.

The tirthamahatmyas speak aloud about a particular place (tirtha), especially with regard to their cultic and functional importance and magical potency. The Skanda Purana (v.2) itself is brimming with such sections as Sulvaramahatmya varnana, Simhesvara-mahatmya, Ekanamesa Mahatmya, Avantikshetra-Mahatmya, Purusottama Kshetra Mahatmya etc. However, Matsya Purana, which is considered as one of the oldest of the Puranas mentions Purusottama Kshetra in two places. It mentions only deity Vimala in Purusottama Kshetra. Among the later Puranas, namely Visnu, Agni, Padma, Narada, Brahma and Skanda, we get references to Jagannath, the deity and place of his installation. But it is only in Agni, Padma, Brahma and Skanda Purana, there occur passages about the sanctity of the place, construction of the temple and part played by Indradyumna. J. Padhi writes that Kurumaurana mentions that Purusottama tirtha belongs to Narayana although it is named after Purusottama. The supreme Purusa Narayana resides here with all glory. A pilgrim after taking holy bath in this sacred tirtha and worshipping supreme Visnu (Narayana) and feeding the Brahmanas secure the abode of Visnu.

A set of uniform popular form of ritualism were prescribed for a tirtha. Some of these are *snana*, *dana*, *pūja vrata*, *pinda dana*, *katha* recital etc. According to one Puranic dictum the

performance of rituals at tirthas is infinitely more effective than performed in one's home (Matsya Purana). Infact, tirthas came to be recommended in the Puranas as cure for most ills, an infallible means of spiritual quest, an ultimate source of moral redemption.

The greatest tirthas are often a combination of a number of sacred elements. The supreme tirtha Kasi offers the combination of a river, a temple and Ganga, the Kasi Vishwanath Temple and the presence of Shiva. Puri has the Lord Jagannath Temple, the Mighty ocean Mahodadhi and the grand festival, famous Ratha Yatra and the presence of Vishnu. Puri is known in the ancient scriptures as Shri Dham, Purusottama Kshetra, Jagannath Dham etc. It is recognized as Dham or a tirtha particularly after 9th century A.D. Although, the Epic Mahabharat in the tirthayatra section has a reference about Swayambhu Lokeswara and the Veda, a famous spot in Puri itself. Scholars try to trace the antiquity of Puri from the time of Mahabharat. However, no concrete evidence is available so far. But from our recent exploration in the old city of Puri, we have traced some of the mounds particularly, Balisahi, Markandeswara Sahi and behind Gundicha Temple to Indradyumna tank. From surface exploration, it is found that number of red, black and slipped pot-shreds available in plenty. It can safely draw a conclusion that there might be an earlier city buried which could be dated earlier to Somavamsis. Some sporadic findings such as sculptural pieces, brick bates, parts and architectural pieces are also reported from different places in recent times. To get the clear stratigraphic position of early historical period of Puri intensive study with excavation is highly necessary.

However, the cult of Sri Jagannath has its deep root as pre -Aryan or un-Aryan or Tribal features. In the remote past, at the earliest phase,



the God represented a simple form of tree worship or it may be that he was worshipped in the form of a wooden deity by aboriginal Savaras in Eastern India. Orissa was continued to be a tribal dominated area for long period at least up to early mediaeval period. We have references in Emperor Asoka's Edict (3rd C. BC) as well as in various literatures. We believe that there must be somewhere in ancient Orissa, wood or tree worship (Daru) was in vogue at least up to 3rd century A.D (Daru Devata, Beni Madhav Padhi, 1964). Scholars like BM Padhi, S.N Rajguru (1996) have focused Jagannath's origin, again, in relation to the Sabara tribes of South Orissa. K.C Mishra (1971), A Eschman (1978), came forward with the discovery of several peculiar relations between Jagannath cult and religious practice of the Konds in Dhenkanal/ Talcher region of Orissa.

Puri emerges as a tirtha having pan-Indian character since early part of 12th century A.D., with the increasing process of ritual royalization of the deity Lord Jagannath. Among the prominent Gods extensively portrayed in Puranic mythology as being instrumental in tirtha formation were Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti/Devi. It may be pointed out that Vishnu in His milder and more popular aspects portrayed through His numerous incarnations, particularly those having tribal or pastoral affiliations, such as Narasimha, Krishna, Balarama, Dattatreya, Purusottama, Venkatesvara etc., naturally bore closer affinity to those native groups that originally subscribed to those cults. Thus, we find that Krishna had special affiliations with pastoral tribes like the Yadavas. Similarly a special relationship seemingly existed between Jagannatha and the Savaras, Venkateswara of Tirupati and Kurubas and Narasimha in Andhra Pradesh and the Chenchus. Moreover, among the numerous incarnations of Vishnu listed in the Puranas, the ones like Kuruma,

Matsya and Varaha very definitely had totemic affiliations, suggesting their close links with tribal cultic beliefs. In fact, we have a temple dedicated to Marjara-Kesari, the feline incarnations of Lord Vishnu at Narasimhanath, in Western Orissa. Another example could be given here as how was the impact of tirthas on the tribes of Chhotnagapur. According to a popular legend connected with the construction of a Jagannatha Temple situated about 10 kms from Ranchi by Thakur Ainsahi in 1691, A.D, both Thakur and his *Oran* servant had visited Jagannatha temple of Puri and after their return, it is said Lord Jagannath appeared in dream and asked to build a temple for Him in Chhotnagapur. According to Karma *Oran*, the annual Ratha Yatra at Jagannathapur is the biggest religious and social event connected with any religious creed in Ranchi district and is exercising very strong influence in Hinduizing the tribes, who are known to freely join the festival in pulling the ropes of the chariot.

It was during 12th century A.D, that the temple town Puri might have assumed the greatest prominence under the rule of Imperial Gangas (1078-1435. A.D). The present magnificent temple of Purusottama-Jagannath was constructed during this period. It is mentioned in an inscription in the temple Garttesvara (Siva) at Alagum, about 15 km from Sakhigopal that Chodoganga seems to have invited some selected Brahman Pandits or Vaisnavas from Kanchi and settled near Puri, for propagation of Dvaitya-philosophy.

Sri Jagannath temple was more organized during the rule of Anangabhima III (1211-1238). It was this king who regarded Purusottama as real Emperor, himself being his representative. He used the title Paramabhataraka, Purusottamaputra and Durgaputra (Drakasaram Ins, SII, IV, No-1329, p-469). Madalapanji



also states that this king introduced 36 types of duties for Sevakas, known as Chatisanjoga, and Panda system as tirtha Gurus. The other Ganga kings like Bhanudeva-I, Narasimhadeva-II, Bhanudeva-II had made all efforts to make Puri as chief religious centre.

During the rule of Suryavamsi or Gajapatis (1435-1540 A.D.) under the able kings like Kapilendradeva, Purosottamadeva and Prataparudradeva Puri was protected from Muslim invaders and much patronage was given for propagation of Jagannath cult by Sarala Das and Chaitanya.

The mention of anecdotes concerning the images being made of Daru (wood) found floating on the sea by Sarala Das (1435-1466 A D) in Oriya Mahabharat, and in Skanda Purana show the eager views of the authors of these texts to establish connection of the worship of Lord Jagannath with Vedic tradition concerning the Daru as given by Sayana. Scholars like Stietencorn have dealt elaborately Jagannath's relation to Narasimha cult.

Again, Jagannath cult was renewed and reached at its climax particularly Vaisnavism with the Bhakti Movement of Sri Chaitanya (A.K Muzumdar 1969). Jagannath cult on the principle of Prema Bhakti or devotion by love was made only the path to attain Mukti and become the cult of mass and thus the cult was spread over Orissa, Bengal and Assam (A.L Basham, 1975).

From first part of 16th century the pilgrim movement to Puri was grown and it became the epi-centre of Vaishnava cult in the whole of eastern India. The rituals like Nagar Kirtan brought the medium for popularization of Jagannath cult and rested deep into heart and mind of the common people. All along with this movement, again in 16th century the works of Pancha Sakhas like Balaram Das, Ananta Das, Achyutananda Das,

Jagannath Das and Jossabanta Das revealed the gospel of devotion based on knowledge and yoga in preference to the doctrine of emotional love and faith as professed by Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

Gradually there developed a common all India pilgrimage network, consisting of Siva, Vaisnava, Sakta and Subramanya temples. Holy centres from the ancient days, located on the mountains, confluences of rivers and river crossings, centres with epic associations became a part of this network. Ayodhya, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Amarnath, Kasi (Varanasi), Puri, Dvaraka, Rameswaram, Kanchipuram, Tirupati, Tiruvannamalai and Srirangam are some of the important places in this pilgrimage network. The list often swells with the addition of new cults which have originated in India from time to time up to the present day, such as cult of Vaisnodevi near Jammu.

All these centres have developed elaborate system of ritual worship. They start with waking of the deity with chants and music, followed by the first of five or six main Pujas of the day. Twice a day, the deity is given a sacred bath and decorated with beautiful garments and ornaments. The offering of food (naivedya or bhoga) completes the morning Upachara. (It is an offer or homage to divine sovereign). After the dawn puja, various objects such as a mirror, parasol, fan, flag, embalm, flywhisk, incense, lamps and camphor are offered to the sound of bells and temple music, accompanied or followed by chants of invocation, dedication and praise. Distribution of Prasada is then carried out. Then, follows the noon puja, sandhya (twilight) puja and ardhajama (midnight) puja and putting the deity to sleep ceremonially. These are part of the shodasa maha upachara or the 16 kinds of great offerings to the deity, a ritual which was also at one time, ceremonially performed for the king at his palace.



However, these system is an all India phenomenon varied slightly at regional level. Besides special occasions are also being observed with elaborate Puja ceremony.

Festivals again evolved around the myths and legends of particular aspect of the deity enshrined in the temple, and the popular beliefs encoded into the temple's origin myths. They grew in number and importance depending upon the temple's locale, the founder-patron, and their significance for the community. Birth asterisms of the royal family and of Bhakti saints and spiritual leaders were important occasions for institutions. Festivals, particularly for religious leaders, continue to this day. Other festivals to celebrate the God's victory over evil forces/demons, which have been basic to the Puranic religion, are still observed in all temples. Festivals associated with Siva, Visnu, Kali (Durga), and Subramanya are celebrated in their respective temples. Durga killing Mahisasura is amongst the major myths celebrated in these temples. Processions of the deities, regally attired and ornamented, on their decorated vahanas (vehicles) or in their chariots are still major events in sacred centres on all such occasions. These processions have their counterparts in royal processions, about which poetic compositions are known from 11th century. On such occasions, the interface between the sacred and secular is highly visible.

Festivals in general display a cyclic concept of time. Here, at Puri, like other sacred places Dvadasa-Yatras of Lord Jagannath is being celebrated round the year. Niladri-Mahodayam, the Sthala Purana of 14th century gives detail about the festivals. Like Brhamotsav, Navaratri

Vasantotsav, Dipavali, the festivals of Lord Jagannath such as Chandana Yatra, Snana Utsav, Sayana Utsav, Dola Yatra, Ramanavami, Damanaka Yatra and Ratha Yatra and many others are being celebrated. Ratha Yatra or Car Festival of Lord Jagannath is very important and retains the age old tradition. Car festival of Puri in Orissa and Tiruvarur in Tamil Nadu have special importance because of their close association with royalty, such as mediaeval Eastern Gangas and Gajapatis of Orissa and Cholas of the Tamil region. Processional images thus became part of temple's iconography and ritual.

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Shreekshetra (The Divine Land)

Dr. Dibakar Mishra



Lord Jagannath :

He is Lord Jagannath, Who is the Nath (Master) of the Jagat (Universe). Here the Master means Authority, Administrator, Leader, Protector or Saviour.

He is called Parambrahma (Supreme Soul) means all of the souls (individuals) are tied with Him. The true idealism of the Supreme Soul is reflected on all of these souls or individuals of the Universe. Hence, this can be imagined how perfect, pure and spotless this Supreme Soul should be.

He is "Nirakar" having no "Akar" or shape of His own. But He is seen in the particular shape in which the worshipper or the subject wants to see Him or perceive Him in his mind's eye. Hence, the designer has given Him a shape with a head and belly just like two triangles slightly curved at the apex and joined together having two horizontal bold arms expanded. Hence, any worshipper desiring of seeing God in any shape can perceive the same in this main base with some additions as per his imagination.

He is called "Purusottama" means best of the men. A man can also be called a God if he acquires all the heavenly qualities or the idealisms of the God. Here Sri "Purusottam" is a symbol of idealism and others try to achieve that idealism in their lives.

He is called "Chakadola" - having two expanding round eye balls without lids to shut the

eyes. The significance of it is that, a good administrator should not close his eyes even for a moment towards the grievances of his subjects. That means he should remain always alert towards their grievances and difficulties.

Lord Jagannath has got no ear except the two expanding round eyes. It is presumed that He hears through eyes just like a snake. For this reason the both are called "Chakshushraba". The meaning of this is that, a good administrator should not rely upon the words of others by hearing only, which may misguide him. Hence, he should be sure of the things by perceiving those through his own eyes. For this the designer has given Him two round expanded eyes without lids to be kept open always to see everything of the Universe for which no ear is necessary.

He is called "Mahabahu" with two stretched arms without palms which indicates its expansion to the infinity as if to embrace the people of the whole universe at a time. The significance is that, a man once surrenders to Him is embraced by Him for all the times and he comes under His protection.

He is called "Patitapan" means saviour or purifier of sinners and downtrodden people; through love, affection and impartation of knowledge. Thus, the people who are lagged behind, depressed or oppressed or disconnected from the mainstream of civilization are lifted up and made fit to join the mainstream of life.



The complexion of His face being glossy black, He is called "Kalasreemukh". So, what is the reason of giving Him such a colour? He being the Master of the universe and also being the "Purusottama" His Dharma is "Vishwa Dharma" (Universal Religion), which ought to be followed by all the people of the world. But different castes, creeds, sects and communities give different colour to Dharma according to their own suitability. But, as Lord Jagannath does not belong to any particular caste or religion, the colour of that particular caste or religion should not be reflected on Him. In other words a broader conception should not be affected by a narrow conception at any time. Hence, to keep Jagannath Dharma or the Universal Religion unaffected, a glossy black colour has been assigned to Him as no other colour can stain this at any rate.

Mahaprasad and Ananda Bazar :

The food offerings to Gods and Goddesses are called "Prasad" while the same of the Lord Jagannath is known as "Mahaprasad" as it undergoes six types of purification before it reaches the devotees. The Anand Bazar (Market of Joy) is that market in the temple premises, where all types of Mahaprasad of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra are sold. These Mahaprasads are the best scientifically prepared food available in purest form in this holy place. These are prepared strictly from the country vegetable and food grains where the foreign goods are strictly prohibited.

The cooking of these items are made under pressure of steam which is more scientific than cooking in pressure cooker today. In Mahaprasad all the food factors like vitamins and minerals remain well preserved. As the process undergoes six types of purification till it reaches the hands of commonmen it is more purified form of food available for the commonman in the earth.

These foods being very tasteful as well as easily digestible are liked by all the people such as; rich and poor, king and beggar, learned and ignorant alike. In spite of all the above factors it is very cheap to purchase so that a poor man can also afford to have the same and can preserve his health very easily. The same food is also liked by the rich persons and kings because it is more tasteful than any other food they cook in their kitchen. On the other hand, they like this more because it protects them being suffered from digestive troubles and other complaints generally occurs from the use of rich oil, spices and loss of food factors owing to boiling etc. This arrangement is so automatic and prompt that, it can not be achieved in any country or continent on earth even on the patronage of their own government. Moreover, it is a fact that nobody out of the lakhs can have any complaint of his dissatisfaction with the preparation or service of food of this vast organization. This Anand Bazar organization is so great in the world that it can feed lakhs of people at a time without prior intimation and that too with full satisfaction.

This is also a great achievement of this place that, there is no difference between rich and poor, a king or beggar and a pious or sinner to take their meals at a time and even from the same pot without any hesitation and rather they would feel obliged to do so. They would embrace and be friendly to each other from their own accord and by doing so they feel thankful to each other. The man once entered into the place would forget his grief and pain, poverty and despair as well as the difficulties of his family life and would be joyous and hopeful with richness of mind and heart. Hence, it is rightly called "Anand Bazar" i.e., a market of joy on earth.

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Synthesis of Diverse Cults in Jagannath

Dr. Gourishankar Tripathy

For the origin of Sri Jagannath shrine and His cult we have only some legends without evidences. It is shrouded in obscurity. The task of extricating history from the legends is impossible as the legends vary from source to source. What is true to the historians based with evidence cannot be extricated from the source that depend on legends. It is the faithful who takes the legends as the true history of Jagannath.

There is a story which relates that the partial burnt dead body of Sri Krushna came floating to Puri from Dwaraka turned wood. This wood was carved into the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. The details of this story do not tally with the story written in Sarala Mahabharata composed in the fifteenth century A.D. In Deulatola there is another story which is different from the two stories mentioned above. Hence it will be felt that the Legends are of highly conflicting character about Sri Jagannath which have come down to us. When some corroborating evidences are obtained from the sources like epigraphic records or coins or from excavations etc, the matter of facts of history on Jagannath can be reconstructed. The history of origin of the great shrine of Hindus will continue to be a guess work until such time.

It seems to be great antiquity with its history of Jagannath going back to the Pre-Christian era. In all the legends the builder of the first temple of Jagannath, Indradyumna still remains a legendary figure till his historicity is established. It would have

been possible to throw some light on the early history of the shrine, had it been possible to prove his historicity. There are numerous copper plate grants and rock edicts of the ruling dynasties of Odissa but they do not refer to Lord Jagannath. That He did not exist in Odissa is not the proof of absence of references from the stone inscriptions.

In the Hindol plate of Subhakaradev III, the word Purushottam is found with sacred city of Puri which is capable of yielding two meanings. Purushottam means the best of men and also it means city of Purushottam which is another name of Puri. Hence it is an ambiguous reference. The story of Raktabahu invasion recorded in Madalapanji is probably an echo of the Rastrakuta invasion of Odissa under Govind III. This has happened during the reign of Subhakaradeva I of the Bhauma dynasty. If this interpretation is taken for granted, then we will be sure Sri Jagannath shrine existed in the early Bhauma period of the eighth century A.D. The Bhaumas came from Assam. Both Uddiyana which is identified by many as Odissa and Kamarupa were the primary Pithas of Vajrayana. Jagannath and Kamaksya of Odissa and Assam respectively had identical name Nilachala. This name Nilachala is still attached to both the great shrines of both the states. From the Bhauma period, the name Nilachala shrine seems to have originated as Bhaumas might have built a temple at Puri.

In the later Ganga copper plate records, Chodaganga is represented as the builder of the



present Jagannath temple at Puri. He was the founder of the Ganga dynasty in Odissa. For Lord Jagannath Jajati I also built a temple at Puri. A greater attention had been paid by both Jajati I and Chodaganga who were actuated by political motives to the shrines of Jagannath which had acquired a great sanctity by the time they ruled the then Odissa. Jagannath cult has a great significance in the national life of the Indians and He is the unquestioned Supreme deity of India and the world.

In the earliest time it seems that He was a Brahminical deity worshipped on an altar as described in the Vana Parva of the Mahabharata. The altar was probably made of wood and like the images, they were liable to be renovated every twelve years. Subsequently Savaras became the custodian of Jagannath who became the virtual rulers. In the first part of the eighth century A.D. Bhaums came from Assam and obtained the shrine from Savaras. They got the wooden altar carved into three images and enshrined Them in a temple built on the spot. They gave the name Nilachala which was the famous shrine of Kamaksya in their homeland of Assam.

These Bhauma rulers of Odissa were Mahayana Buddhists. As suggested by General Cunningham and explained by Dr Mahatab in his History of Orissa, it is most likely that the three images carved represented as tri-ratna due to Mahayana influence. During the next two political periods of Somavansi Jajati-1 and Chodaganga of Ganga dynasty spectacular temples had been built for the deity. Gradually it became famous as a great religious centre of Hindus which was a very famous religious centre of Jains at the time of Kharavela the great. It was named as Pithunda at that time when Chandasoka took Jinasana by force to Magadha after defeating Kalinga. Archaeologically Puri has not yet been surveyed so far to find out the two temples in the Bhauma and Somavamsi periods. Assigned to the eighth century A.D. and attributed to Indrabhuti, the

Sanskrit work Jnaan-siddhi opens with a salute to Sri Jagannath worshipped by all sages who have conquered all their inner desires. In several other verses of the same work the word Jagannath has occurred bearing the same sense. In its etymological sense, Jagannath means, the Lord of the universe. But some scholars through a forced interpretation maintain the Jagannath of the verse refer to Lord Jagannath of Puri only which cannot be accepted.

In the Sanskrit Drama Anargha Raghava Natakam by Murari assigned to the mediaeval period a definite reference to Lord Jagannath at Puri occurs. It has been stated by Sutradhara of the drama that during the festival of Prabhu Purushottam on the seashore studded with the Tamal trees it was meant to be staged. A number of other Sanskrit work composed before Ganga rule had been cited by Dr. Mahatab in his Odissa Itihas.

In the early part of the 12th century A.D. from the beginning of Ganga rule in Odissa, the shrine of Jagannath became very famous for several reasons. On the charming seashore the spectacular great temple which had been built by Chodaganga, attracted the notice of the whole world specially the Hindus. Sacred sanctity has been enhanced with the great antiquity of the deity enshrined in it. The sacredness of the shrine of Lord Jagannath had been increased to a greater degree in the last part of the 12th century A.D. with the political condition of India after the Turkish invasion. Odissa remained a very strong independent Hindu kingdom up to 1568 A.D. eventhough Muslims rapidly occupied the neighbouring regions of Odissa.

To follow their religious performances unmolested the faithful flocked to Puri in large numbers gradually. It is quite noticeable that the Cult of Jagannath is a composite one. The diverse elements that compose it at various stages of its developments have got into by degrees. During



the Ganga period its composite character became well-marked. It is really surprising and amazing how the diverse cults could be welded together into a cosmopolitan form of religion which are so different in origin and sometimes even antagonistic to each other became the order of the age.

There were three main cults in Odissa before the commencement of Ganga dynasty. Saivism, Saktism, Vaisnavism existed side by side each preaching its own superiority over the other. They have not lost their separate entity at no time either in theory or in practice. There were attempt to amalgamate them in one form of religion during the Ganga period that contained the principles of each and every ism representing none. According to the cult of their origin the shrines continued to bear distinct names. The traditional five Pithas representing five distinct cults continued to be termed as Vaisnava, Saiva, Saura, Ganapatya and Sakta with respect to Puri, Bhubaneswar, Konarak, Mahavinayak, Viraja of Jajpur. Both five form of worship became essentially a cosmopolitan one that came into vogue in them. There was a movement aimed at a synthesis of cults and sects in Jagannath by taking Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism along with the primitive cults that were practised by the primitive people of Odissa. In Jagannath it affords the best example of this synthesis that embodies all these diverse cults in principle and practice.

On the origin and development of the Jagannath cult there are different scholars who put different interpretations. Savara origin of the cult is further supported by the existence of a class of Sevakas known as Daitapatis or Devatapatis meaning custodian of the deity in the Jagannath temple who claim their descent from the Brahmin Vidyapati through Savara mother Lalita. There are some scholars who suggest that these images represent Ananta, Vasudev and Ekanama as depicted in Brahmasamhita. Buddhist scholars think that they represent Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. One scholar would like to trace its origin

to Jainism also. As in reality Jagannath grew into an institution embodying the principles of all the sects and cults found in Hinduism. The views of different scholars on the matter are no doubt right, of course, but partially. But the character of the cult in its earlier phases is not definitely known eventhough the shrine of Jagannath was existing much earlier than the Ganga period. The final shape of Jagannath cult embodying the principles and ideas of various sects has been synthesized with the emphasis of the theory of its Brahminical origin. Then it was given a very wide publicity during the rule of the Ganga dynasty. In the history of Indian Civilization, Brahminism was a great unifying factor. One may recognise in its gradual development the assimilation of various heterogeneous ideas and beliefs synthesizing into the larger concept of Hinduism. An attempt to endow the various strains, the emphasis on the Brahminical origin of Jagannath cult is nothing that went to the formation of the cult with an authoritative sanction. In early British period an account of Odisha had been written by Sterling in 1822 pertaining to the orthodox interpretation. Of the three images namely Sri Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra as current in Ganga period followed by Suryavamsis, they respectively represent Vishnu, Siva and Durga. The three main cult of Hinduism namely Vaisnavism, Saivism and Saktism had been sought to synthesize in Jagannath in its final phase along with some practices of the solar cult and religion and became the religion of Odisha.

The synthesis of the cults with the spirit of the age has been manifested gradually in art, architecture and literature, of which enough materials are now available at hand. The religious history of Odissa has been formed through its influence by degrees culminating the principles of the past with the cult and shrine.

Dr. Gourishankar Tripathy lives at 847 Kapil Prasad, P.O. Sundarpada (Old Town) Bhubaneswar-2.



Car Festival

A Radiant Religious Resonance

Er. Niranjan Rath

Lord Balabhadra, Goddess Subhadra and Lord Jagannath respectively,
Inside the chariots Taladhwaja, Darpadalana and Nandighosh in series;
Really it is heavenly scenery in Nilachal,
The spectators only can visualise and realise.

Scholars of different religions search and research,
To define the divinity of Lord Jagannath;
As He is the supreme power and the absolute mystery,
To reach Him one has to pass through spiritual path.

Car festival of Lord Jagannath,
With brother and sister together;
A symbol of international brotherhood,
That teaches and preaches everywhere.

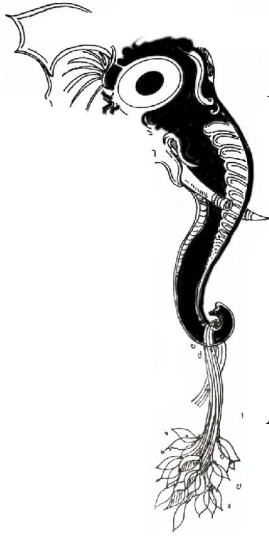
'Thakur Raja' though he is the honourable king of Puri,
Sweeps the cars as the dedicated devotee of the Lord;
As it is the highest religious humility,
As all are equal in the eyes of the Almighty in the world.

Thousands of people take His 'Mahaprasad'
Without any discrepancy a sacred food for all;
As if a grand hotel in this earth,
'Srikshetra' provides it regularly without fail.

Keeping away all the restrictions of 'Sri Mandir',
He makes journey on the 'Badadanda';
To meet and to enlighten the people of all the religions,
As He is the well-wisher of all in this mortal land.

The songs and prayers of the saints and devotees,
With sounds of gongs, cymbals, mridangas and conches;
Creates vibration with religious waves,
The environment is filled with righteous riches.

This function is celebrated in many places,
The substance of religious race;
Lord Jagannath is the saviour of the whole universe,
Car festival is a radiant religious resonance.



Er. Niranjan Rath lives at S-2/617, Niladri Vihar, P.O.- Sailashree Vihar, Bhubaneswar-21



Take Me Darling ! When I Die

Er. Raghunath Patra

You are focus of all conscience.
Convey message of complex culture.
Mystic look absorbs myths and legends.
Carry faiths from far and near.

From Tribals upto Brahmin Servitors,
rituals surpass precinct of man.
From tribal faith to Aryanised form,
you accommodate all and hesitate none.

All streams of beliefs merged in you
as river mingles with ocean, Oh Lord !
And lose their entity without grumble
and confess all, your heart so broad !

Your Car-festival is really splendid.
A most thrilling feature in the world over.
All can pull your cosmic Chariots,
forget caste, creed what so ever.

Cosmic and mundane mirrored in rituals
all visible and invisible present in man.
You are marvel of marvels, Cult is unique
Your nobility and grace are unique one.

You don't possess mundane shape, true
but a synthesis of all shapes and views



Your pastime is divine, boating and hunting
car tour excite all, "Oh ! arise."

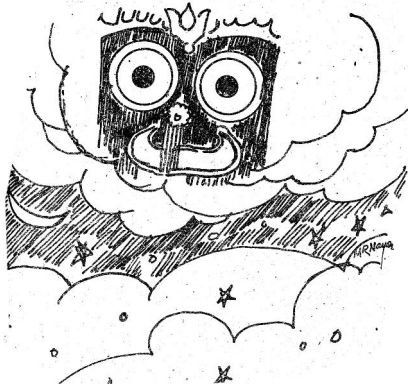
You launch ever in versatile pastimes
like that of man Oh ! Catholic Lord !
But inwardly calm and detached from all
involved and aloof Oh ! fabulous God.

Mahaprasad depicts diffuse brotherhood.
All take together, no discretion.
Caste, creed and belief, forget all
pervades equality, no hesitation.

Your food, finery, armour all holy
You elevate pleasure to sublime bring
Sermonise devotees "all remain holy
wakeful, joyful, never shrink."

You have given salvation to many a one
wicked and fallen, do I lie ?
You are my son forever you know
take me darling ! When I die.

Er. Raghunath Patra lives at Brindaban Dham,
Lokanath Road, Puri-1



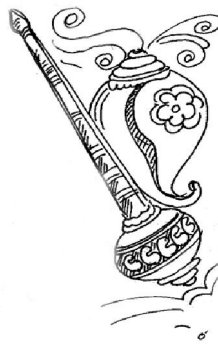
The Celestial Red Lips

Prafulla Chandra Sahoo

What melodious music
you are playing
from your grand chariot
Oh, wheel-eyed Lord Jagannath;
Millions and millions
are thronging enchanted
to the rain-soaked Sharadha-sands
too congested of late
to stand and stare
offering a raving prayer.

Leaving apart your victory-expedition
once only in a year,
now every day resembles
hypnotic congregation of Car Festival
wherein is ushered
a hurricane of resonance
from so thick a crowd
that a saucer thrown overhead
can pass sliding
without falling to the ground.

In the confluence of airy Nishatala*
the angular vestibule of ventilation
in your temple-deluxe,
the forty-nine mythic winds
are having parched gullet
in warding off the flow-tide
of mundane desires.



The infant God Mukund's canopy
Kalpabata, the ancient banyan
has bowed down to touch the earth
with tons of yearnings
tied to the branches in tiers.

After the anxious night's waiting
for her rakish customer,
Pingala, the prostitute was awakened
to the belated Sunlight
beckoning through the winter's gate-way;
So are blossoming devotees
swimming across illusory oceans
lured to your embracing arms
and winsome butterfly kisses
to celebrate which
Oh, Black Hornet;
you revel in painting yours lips red,
come Wednesday.

NB : * Nishatalas are three miniature temples supporting the main Jagannath temple from three sides, where sitting below in the court-yard one can enjoy the best of air.

Prafulla Chandra Sahoo lives at Budhima Lane,
Dutta Tota, Puri.



All in One

Dr. R.S.N. Murty



No matter what the origin is !
 equally unimportant is the race and religion
 Blood and flesh are uniform throughout,
 Structure and function are never different,
 But, hair and skin are diverse,
 This difference is the present day concern
 And is everything now !
 We hear people saying,
 Oh ! He is a Hindu ! That man is a Muslim !
 And this lady is a Christian !
 Or even, we hear,
 He is an Indian
 This is an Irish lady,
 And that guy is an Afghan or a Palestinian !
 Why this discrimination ?
 What for are these differences ?
 My friend, a Mexican, Survived a plane crash,
 And is back home and active
 With an Afghan's cornea, a Jew's kidney
 And a Hindu's heart.

How strange it is !
 You have put every one in one
 Respresenting unity amongst diversity
 Oh ! Lord ! You created only two races,
 The male and the female,
 You did not synthesize the good or the bad
 Nor even did you create the rich and the poor,
 Almighty ! The Lord of the Universe,
 Give power for non-discrimination,
 Give strength for better perception,
 And improve, refine and redefine
 The human values and morals.

Dr. R.S.N. Murty lives at Qr.No.VA-31/2, Unit-2, Bhubaneswar.





Octave on Lord Jagannath

*Shree Shankaracharya
Trans.: Ramakanta Rout*

Scarcely ever Thy music echoed
 in the forest of Kalandi bank
 Thou art the bee, who sucks honey from
 the lotus-faced milkmaids
 Rama, Sambhu, Brahma, Ganesh and
 Kama worship Thy feet
 Oh Lord Jagannath !
 please enshrine in my vision.

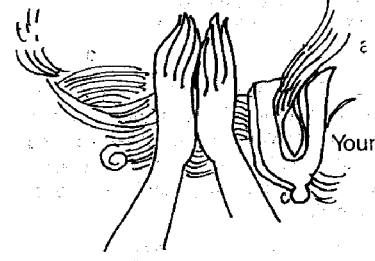
Thou hold flute in hands, peacock
 feathers adore Thy head
 Thy waist wrapped in yellow clothes and
 Thy eyes lash tricks of love
 Thou ever stay at Brindaban and
 manifest the eternal Lila
 Oh Jagannath ! the Lord of Lords,
 enshrine Thyself in my vision.

Thou dwell in Thy palace, the Blue Mountain
 in the unrest ocean with
 Lord Balabhadra, the mighty and
 Subhadra in the midst
 All dieties are engaged in
 Thy service all along
 Oh Jagannath ! the great,
 please enshrine in my vision.

Thou art the Ocean of mercy
 moistured clouds fricker
 The sweet sound Ram uttered
 by Lotus-faced Rama
 Thou art worshipped by Surendra,
 hymns recite Thy glories
 Oh Jagannath ! Lord of my life,
 enshrine in my vision.



Thou march along riding on Thy chariot
 in a procession of royal army
 Thou art kind on hearing hymns of
 prayers to the whole world
 Thou art the ocean of mercy and dearest
 to the Marine princess
 Oh Jagannath ! Lord of my life
 please enshrine into my vision.



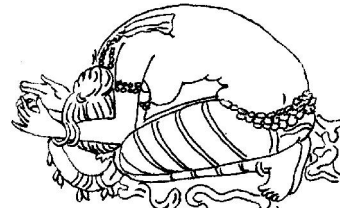
Oh dweller of the *Blue Mountain* ! the lotus-
 eyed *Supreme Brahma* !
 Thou set Thy feet on hoods of Anant,
 the king of snakes
 Oh *Rasanand* ! Thou derive immense delight and
 ecstasy in embracing Radha
 Oh Jagannath ! Lord of my life
 please enshrine in my vision.

I implore thee neither for an
 empire nor gold or emerald
 My desires not for what others aspire,
 the paragon of Beauty
 I long to listen to Thy immortal tales,
 the sacred song of Eternity
 Oh Jagannath ! Lord of my life
 please enshrine in my vision.



Oh God of gods ! please root out
 instantly evils of the world
 Oh king of *Yadavas* ! please remove
 immense sins growing around
 Oh protector of poors ! please press
 Thy firm and ensured feet
 Oh Jagannath ! Lord of my life
 please enshrine in my vision.

He, who reads ever Thy holy hymns
 in pure heart and soul
 Is elevated and proceeds, removing all
 sins to the bliss of paradise.



(Translated from the Original Sanskrit verse the *Jagannathastakam* of Shree Shankarcharya)

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