



Place of Chakratirtha in the Cult of Lord Jagannath

Durgamadhab Dash

Chakratirtha is an important pilgrim centre of Sri Kshetra Puri. It is situated in the eastward direction of the holy town at a distance of about three kilometers from the Grand Temple of Lord Jagannath abutting the famous sea-beach in an elegant spiritual surrounding. In the religious practice of the Hindu pantheon, Chakratirtha is adored as a holy place of many sacred beliefs. This place is as much religiously sacrosanct as any other peripheral sanctimonious place of the Nilachala Dham of Lord Jagannath. Commonly acclaimed as a Tirthakshetra of the holy town, Chakratirtha is famous for Tantra worship of Sri Nrusingha in Hindu religious practice. As stated in scriptures, Sri Nrusingha, the first lord of Sri Kshetra, was consecrated at Chakratirtha in three different divine appearances seated on the Yantra of the Divine Disc (Chakra-Yantra) known as Abhaya Nrusingha, Chakra Nrusingha and Laxmi Nrusingha, each name having a spiritual significance of its own. The form of Abhaya Nrusingha is worshipped as the Lord of enormous compassion. He appears incandescent to confer divine blessings on His devotees constricted to total surrender in impeccable devotion. His Chakra Nrusingha appearance is worshipped as Durgamadhab Swarup bound by an esoteric order of Tantric rituals. In the third category of His appearance, He is worshipped as the Lord of the Universe glorifying His divine presence with His consort, Mahalaxmi.

As stated in the Gita, the Lord descends on earth as a divine incarnation when there is decline of religion and uprising of un-righteousness in the celestial creation. The Nrusingha form of the Lord as consecrated at Chakratirtha, is one such appearance of His divine incarnation. It is stated in Puranas that the Lord manifested in this appearance from a wooden prop of Hiranyakasipu's palace at the earnest divine wish of His devout worshipper, Prahallad. This was His wondrous manifestation signifying the resplendent attributes of His omnipotent expanse. This also meant that God in His Nrusingha Avatar had displayed Himself as Daru Brahma on earth. It is believed in this connection that, like Sri Nrusingha, Lord Jagannath was also at a later period consecrated as Daru Brahma conforming to a meaningful spiritual significance in the Hindu pantheon. There are many sacred legends about this spiritual incident in the cult of Lord Jagannath. It is for this reason that Lord Jagannath is worshipped as Daru Brahma at Puri in Sri Nrusingha Mantra in the ritualistic practice of the Divine Trinity. Sri Jagannath Das, the author of the Oriya Bhagabat, at the beginning of his spiritual poetry has first prayed to Lord Nrusingha and said, "Oh, Lord ! I worship Thy holy feet; you are the first infinite Lord of the Universe." Chakratirtha is thus the citadel of Lord Nrusingha in Sri Kshetra Puri. He is worshipped here in a Tantric order of peerless excellence.



Lord Nrusingha has thus a unique place in the ceremonial rites of the Grand Temple. This is precisely noticeable when Lord Jagannath retires to Anasaraghara before the car festival every year. Sri Nrusingha during this period is adored in the place of Lord Jagannath in the daily rituals of the Grand Temple. All religious oblations in the Temple are offered to Lord Nrusingha during Anabasara period as Sri Jagannath is not available for worship by his devotees. The Prasad offered to Lord Nrusingha in the daily rituals during this period are also held out in oblation to Goddess Vimala. In the usual practice, after being offered to Goddess Vimala, the Prasad of Lord Nrusingha becomes Mahaprasad.

In the Tantric order, the three different forms of Sri Nrusingha as consecrated at Chakratirtha have a unique divine expression in the scriptures of Hindu religion. The seraphic form of Abhaya Nrusingha represents Sri Balabhadra of the Hindu pantheon. The form of Chakra Nrusingha similarly represents the spiritual form of Subhadra. The form of Laxmi Nrusingha illustrates the divine appearance of Lord Jagannath. In the celestial order of the Divine Creation, the first three gods of the universe, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar have also found expression in the forms of Chakra Nrusingha, Laxmi Nrusingha and Abhaya Nrusingha respectively. Chakratirtha is thus divinely glorious as a pilgrim centre in as much as this sacred place is the confluence of myriad beliefs of Jagannath culture. Sri Nrusingha in different forms is worshipped here in a profound devotional discipline adoring the beliefs of all cults of Hindu religion. On the day of Nrusingha Chaturdasi, a divine garland of Lord Jagannath is sent from the Grand Temple to Sri Nrusingha at Chakratirtha as a customary religious practice.

According to a traditional religious belief, once there was an unusual cyclone in Srikshetra

Puri. The Nilachakra of the Grand Temple was displaced from its pinnacle. It wafted across the sky and at last fell at Chakratirtha. Since then, the place over here has been adopted as a holy place of Srikshetra Puri. Accordingly, the place has come to be known as Chakratirtha in the scriptures of Hindu religion. There is another spiritual belief that in the foremost part of the celestial creation, the Divine Disc of the Lord was sanctimoniously installed at this place. It is believed in this connection that the cute wooden form of Lord Jagannath known as Daru was first found floating across the sea near Chakratirtha. The Daru at last nuzzled up at the shore and the same was finally retrieved from this place by the king's sculptors in great pomp and ceremony. Later, the images of the Divine Trinity and Sri Sudarsan were made out of this sacred log and consecrated on Ratnavedi.

The golden image of Sri Gauranga has been consecrated at Chakratirtha. It is believed that as Sri Gauranga at first was not allowed to enter the premises of the Grand Temple for the "darshan" of the three deities, in anguish, Sri Gauranga sat at Chakratirtha and went into deep meditation. Later, he was immersed in the supreme consciousness. The Lord at last came to his vision. The Temple was at last made open to Sri Gauranga and he entered the holy premises singing the glory of the Lord's name. The temple of Sunar Gauranga, as it is known today, recalls the aforesaid spiritual experiences of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu.

According to the belief of Hindu devotees, Chakratirtha, as a sacred place of Srikshetra Puri, has another spiritual significance in the scriptures of our religion. The abode of Mahalaxmi's father is situated near Chakratirtha.

The Temple of Daria Mahavir is also situated at this place. It is believed in this connection that Daria Mahavir protects Srikshetra



Puri against the fury of the sea. The duty of Sri Hanuman here is to see that the sea does not cross its limits and enter the peripheral boundaries of Puri. According to a traditional belief, one day Sri Hanuman left his temple at Chakratirtha and went on an errand mission without taking permission from Sri Jagannath. Taking advantage of this situation, the sea here crossed the boundaries of the holy place and caused many damages to Srikshetra Puri. This was a great shock to the monkey god. Since that day, it is said, the monkey god has been sincere and mindful in his duty. However, at the instance of Sri Jagannath, his feet have been tethered and Hanuman has come to be known here as "Bedhi Hanuman." Chakratirtha is also known for the Sadhana Mandir of Matta Balaram Das, a devotee of the Lord.

The holy place is thus linked to Jagannath cult in several ways as described above. The Sudarsana Chakra is not merely believed as a weapon of the Lord. In the system of Tantra worship, the Divine Disc has a lot of spiritual significance. It is considered as very powerful like the Lord Himself and so, the devotees while worshipping the mystic weapon feel like worshipping the Supreme Lord of the Universe for peace and prosperity in life. In the manner of worship as customarily envisaged in this regard, our scriptures have provided a set of rituals for the worship of the Divine Disc. In Kularnava Tantra, it said that Sri Jagannath has been consecrated on Ratnavedi on the mystic mark of Sudarsan Chakra. This is also known as Bhairavi Chakra in the system of Tantra worship. The mark of Bhairavi Chakra is also conceived for the worship of Sri Devi as the delusive and the motivating force of Paramatma in the vast network of His cosmic creation. The Bhairavi Chakra virtually represents Devi Mata in all esoteric performances in the Tantric order of worship. The Bhairavi Chakra in this sense is no different from

the divine image of Devi Mata in the observance of the prescribed rituals in the Grand Temple of Puri.

According to Ahirbudhynu Sanghita, Lord Vishnu had devised the Sudarsan Chakra for annihilation of the demons on earth. The Chakra in this scripture is described as the fierce and dreadful form (Ugra Rupan) of Lord Vishnu. It is also stated here that the Chakra is His activating force. As the devotees know, Lord Vishnu appeared in the half-animal and half-human form in one of His divine incarnations known as Lord Nrusingha. This was a dreadful incarnation of the Supreme Lord. Sri Nrusingha had appeared then with Sudarsan Chakra to magnify His dreadful fearfulness in his divine past-time on earth. It is therefore described in Puranas that whenever the Lord incarnated in His frightening appearance, He appeared with Sudarsan Chakra in His possession. In view of this analogy, Sudarsan Chakra, in many ways, is said to be divinely linked to Lord Nrusingha as His invincible divine missile. The Chakra is thus the mystical symbol of Lord Nrusingha. As such, while worshipping Sudarsan, devotees invoke the divine force of the Celestial Disc as the symbolic expression of Sri Nrusingha Mahaprabhu and chant appropriate incantations in sacred adoration. Sri Sudarsan is also depicted as the moving idol of both Sri Nrusingha and Lord Jagannath. This is the reason why at the time of car festival, Sri Sudarsan is first carried to the chariot of Subhadra in slow steps during the divine procession (Pahandi Uchhav) of the Grand Temple. When the image of Sri Nrusingha was first established as the foremost deity of the temple, the mystic mark of Sudarsan had been conceived then as His inseparable peripheral image and accordingly Sri Nrusingha with the mark of the Divine Disc had simultaneously surfaced in the Grand Temple prior to the appearance of the Divine Trinity.



Sudarsan Chakra is worshipped in a pole-like form on the left side of Lord Jagannath. It is said that the Lord had devised this arrangement to crush the ego of the Divine Disc. There is a popular belief that at the time of car festival as Sri Jagannath travels all by Himself leaving Mahalaxmi in the Temple, Sudarsan in anguish takes His seat by the side of Subhadra in Her chariot for the entire period of the sacred celebration and returns to the Temple only when the Lords return to Ratnavedi after conclusion of the car festival.

According to a legend in Jain religion, the place where Risabha Deva is worshipped is, also, known as Chakratirtha. According to this view, in good old days, the idol of Risabha Deva was being worshipped at Chakratirtha in Srikshetra Puri. This was considered as a sacred place in Jain religion. Even today, there is a similar place in Anandpur Subdivision in Keonjhar district of Orissa. This place is adored as the sacred idolatry-citadel of Risabha Deva and is also known as Chakratirtha in that area. There is another legend on this subject. Pradyumna was the eldest son of Lord Krishna. He was most lovable and affectionate to every member in the royal family. He was named as the crown-prince and the heir-apparent of Jadu Dynasty to ascend the royal throne of Dwarika. When the Divine past-time of the Lord was over in Dwapar Yuga, He made preparations on his own to depart to Golak Vaikuntha. Not only this, He also made all necessary arrangements to devastate His own clan and all the members of the royal family to end the "Yuga" in His celestial past-time. This was felt necessary as His sons and successors and other members of the dynasty had grown arrogant and disdainful in their manners and behaviour on account of huge concentration of wealth and power in their disparaging possession.

When the process of devastation continued and His clan came under the catastrophic operation, Pradyumna some how managed to

escape the gruesome extinction. The Lord came to know of this. Immediately He sent His Sudarsan Chakra. Pradyumna was beheaded in no time. A voice was then heard from the sky that the place where the Lord's Chakra would fall would be known as Chakratirtha and the Chakra would be consecrated here with the divine pennon of the Lord flaunting in the sky aloft. This place would be known as Chakratirtha glorifying the popular mission of the Lord's incarnation on earth. It is believed in this connection that the Sudarsan Chakra of the Lord had fallen in Srikshetra Puri. Since that day, this place has come to be known as Chakratirtha, a sacred pilgrim centre of Srikshetra Puri.

As described in the Bhabisy Purana, Sudarsana, after the advent of Kali Yuga had descended on earth as the Amsa Avatar of Lord Vishnu. He was named as Nimbarka. The Nimbarka community propounded in India the philosophy of dualism in religion befitting the need of the time. It believed in the separate existence of both the matter and the spirit in the cosmic creation. It also believed in the existence of the individual and the Supreme Spirit. We have now a branch of Nimbarka Sampradaya in Srikshetra Puri as in many parts of India.

Sri Sudarsana is thus an important deity in the Bhakti and the Tantric cults in India. The Divine Disc, as described in the scriptures, has the effulgence of a million luminous suns and is as resplendent and invincible as the overpowering and vivacious Trident of Lord Shiva. Chakratirtha is thus the seat of worship of both Sri Nrusingha and His Divine Disc. It is a Tirtha Pitha signifying one of the many important pilgrim centres of Srikshetra Puri. It is believed that, by worshipping the divine weapon at Chakratirtha, one will have one's wishes fulfilled with liberation in life.

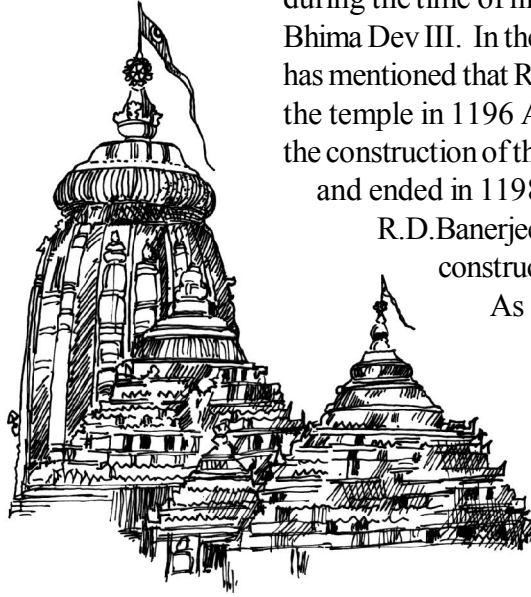
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Landed Property of Lord Jagannath

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The antiquity of Orissa is endorsed by her rich temple architecture. The temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri is an important religious shrine of Orissa. The word Jagannath refers to Natha (master) of Jagat (universe). The origin of Jagannath cult has been traced back to the time of the Veda. The temple has ever since its inception been a sacred institution of national importance in which millions of Hindu Bhaktas (devotees) have reposed their faith and belief. They have always regarded this living monument as the epitome of Hindu religious tradition and culture. Reference to this ancient temple at Puri otherwise known as Purusottama-Kshetra, Sri-Kshetra, Sankha-Kshetra, Dasavatara-Kshetra and Neelachala-Kshetra, has come in literature of many languages more particularly in Sanskrit. However, scholars are not unanimous on the issue of the period of its construction. Our subsequent analysis attests this fact. Some believe that Raja Ananta Burman Chodaganga Dev, the founder of the Ganga



dynasty in Orissa, built the present temple in the 12th century AD. Some scholars view that Raja Chodaganga Dev started the construction work of this sky-reaching temple but he could not complete it in his lifetime. The construction of this monumental work was given a final shape during the time of his descendant Raja Ananga Bhima Dev III. In the History of Orissa, Sterling has mentioned that Raja Anangabhima Dev built the temple in 1196 AD. According to Hunter, the construction of the temple began in 1174 AD and ended in 1198 AD. The noted historian

R.D. Banerjee opines that the temple was constructed in the 11th century AD.

As per the Orissa Gazetteer, Raja Ananta Burman Chodaganga Dev built the temple in the 12th century AD. For S.N. Rajguru, the images of the Triad were installed in the temple in 1230 AD. Be

that as it may, the Ganga period witnessed the recognition of Lord Jagannath as the patron deity of the royal family.

The images of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra are made of Daru (Neem wood) and for this reason Lord Jagannath



is called Daru-Devata. According to some scholars, Raja Anangabhima Dev of the 13th century introduced 36 categories of Sevakas known as Chhatisa Nijoga wherein Chhatisa means 36 and Nijoga means association. But these categories increased over the years. The Temple Record of Rights prepared in 1950s describes about 119 different categories of Sevakas (servitors). It may be noted here that the persons entrusted with the Sevapuja (ritual services) of the deities are known as Sevakas. Most of them enjoy hereditary rights to perform Sevapuja in the temple. In fact, tradition plays a pivotal role in the Temple and the Sevapuja (ritualistic activities) of this temple are not only innumerable but also amazingly varied. There is no denying the fact that centuries of myths, legends and history are blended into the cult of Lord Jagannath and its tradition. In view of this, it may reasonably be believed that the Rajas had made adequate provisions for the maintenance of this temple and its Sevakas, and regular performance of Sevapuja for its deities. In all probability, this world famous temple was being managed by the Hindu Rajas upto 1756 AD when the Marathas took over the management of this temple. Thereafter, the management of the temple came under the British Raj in 1803. Regulation IV of 1806 authorized Government to appoint a Committee of Pandits to superintend the affairs of the Temple with power over receipts, disbursements and discipline vested in the Collector of the Pilgrim Tax. Later on, the Regulation was amended to provide that persons attached to the Temple should elect the Committee of Pandits and the Government would not interfere in this matter. In 1809, the Committee of Pandits was replaced by the Raja of Khurda who was released from imprisonment in the fort of Midnapur. The Raja and his heirs were to hold the situation as long as they continued to conduct

themselves with integrity and propriety. In other words, the Temple was under the direct control of the British since 1890 when Regulation IV of 1806 appointed the Raja of Khurda as the Superintendent of the Temple. In all probability, the idea of a Committee for the management of the Temple and the idea of Raja Superintendent of the Temple were mooted for the first time during British rule nearly two hundred years back. In other words, the management of the temple has all along been the direct concern of successive rulers during the pre-independent period, most probably due to its unique social and religious importance.

It is believed that the assets of Lord Jagannath as recognized during the British Raj, comprised of (i) endowments consisting of assignment of revenue of certain lands by the Marathas, (ii) certain sayer duties collected on behalf of the Temple, and (iii) Pilgrim Tax. In the year 1809, the East India Company took over the management of the Temple estates. Accordingly, the company also took up the liability to contribute a fixed sum of money to the Temple for its maintenance. In the year 1840, an important development took place when Act X of 1840 abolished the Pilgrim Tax. Shortly thereafter in 1843, Government having withdrawn from the management of the endowments, the same were made over to the Raja of Khurda. The Estate popularly known as Hazari Mahal yielding annual revenue of Rs. 17,420/- was also made over to the Raja. In the year 1845, the annual money payment to the Temple were fixed at Rs. 23,321/-. At that time, the cost of maintenance of the police force in and around the Temple was Rs. 6,804/-.

So, in the year 1856, this amount was deducted and the net allowance, otherwise known as Khairat allowance was fixed at Rs. 16,517/-.



Subsequently, in the year 1858, Government decided not to make annual payment but to transfer lands equivalent to Rs.16,517/-. Immediately after that, the Court of Directors in 1859 decided that the Raja Superintendent should also be responsible for maintenance of peace and discipline inside the temple. The British decision was not shortsighted because they could realize the difficulties to contain the Sevakas inside the temple. So, they decided that a sum of Rs.6,804/- then paid direct to the police should be paid to the Raja Superintendent until that period as a transfer of land yielding an equivalent sum could be effected. Therefore, by the Deeds of 03-04-1858 and 26/30-03-1863 lands yielding a sum of Rs.23,715/- was transferred to Shri Jagannath Temple. This is detailed in the following table.

Transfer of Lands Yielding an Equivalent sum of Rs.23,321/-

(A) Deed of 03-04-1858	
(i) Whole of Zilla Tapanga -	Rs.14,327/-
(ii) Three villages of Zilla Rameswar -	Rs.2,500/-
(B) Deed of 26/30-03-1863	
(iii) 31 villages of Zilla Rameswar -	Rs.6,888/-
Total -	Rs.23,715/-
(C) Deduction	
(iv) Average annual loss due to inundation -	Rs.104/-
(v) Collection charges -	Rs.290/-
Balance : (i + ii + iii) - (iv + v)-	Rs.23,321/-

There were many political disturbances during this period, which had much bearing on the administration of the Temple. In other words,

the second half of the 19th century paved the way for some important changes in the temple administration. In 1854, Raja Ramachandra Dev expired and his son Birakishor Dev ascended the throne and became the Superintendent of the Temple. But it was an unfortunate expedition, which lasted only five years. In 1859, Raja Birakishore Dev died after suffering from illness. So, his widow Rani Suryamani Patamahadei, in spite of the conspiracy of the British Government, was successful to make her adopted son Divyasingha Dev the Superintendent of the temple. There was unrest among the Sevakas and there was not much discipline in the Temple administration. At this time of difficulty, the Rani managed the temple and proved her administrative ability. In 1886, the tragic famine took place. On account of this misery of mankind, everywhere there was agony, apathy, death and great suffering. At this juncture, the widow Rani distributed the cooked Mahaprasad among the hungry people and others who were left destitute. The British Government was happy with her noble gesture. Thus, the Rani controlled the Temple administration for sixteen years. In 1875, on attainment of adulthood of the prince she relinquished her duties and Divyasingha Dev became the Raja Superintendent of the Temple. But his period was also short-lived one. Moreover, when the Temple was badly in need of a better management, the young Raja was lacking in administrative ability. He was indifferent to the Temple administration and insensitive to the indisciplined Sevakas. Unfortunately, he was charge-sheeted and convicted of killing one Sadhu named Siba Das in 1878. Thereafter, he was deported to Andaman on life imprisonment. Perhaps, Lord Jagannath had designed his tenure for a very limited period of time.

The widow Rani had to take control of the Temple administration again as the Superintendent



on behalf of her minor grandson i.e. Divyasingha Dev's minor son Jenamani Jagannath (later on known as Mukunda Dev). The old Rani was not disturbed so much and composed herself again to maintain the royal prestige and position. But this time her fate decided otherwise. She could not control the unruly Sevakas properly. Particularly at the time of Ratha Yatra of 1879, the Temple Nities could not be held in time and thousands of pilgrims from far and wide could not get Mahaprasad in time. It was an opportunity for the British Government to introduce some changes in the Temple administration. They passed the Puri Temple Act of 1880 according to which the superintendence of the Temple was vested in a Committee of Management and the Raja would remain a nominal head on hereditary ground. This raised a mass protest and finally the matter was amicably settled by a compromise deed, which stated that Rani would have the services of a Government officer to manage the Temple affairs till the prince came of age. Hence, the Rani remained the Superintendent of the Temple during the long period of minority of Mukunda Dev. As per compromise, the Rani appointed one Harekrushna Das, Sheristadar of the Judges Court at Cuttack as the Manager of the Temple and the Government's proposal of setting up of a Managing Committee with the Raja as a nominal head on hereditary ground was dropped. When Mukunda Dev came of age in 1897, Rani vested the superintendence to him. There is no denying the fact that Rani Suryamani Patamahadei was an extraordinary lady in the known history of Shri Jagannath Temple administration.

In view of the above analysis, it may be said here that after the British conquest of Orissa in 1803, the British Raj in continuation of the tradition and policy of former rulers, made annual payments to the Temple. For a period they

resumed the endowments, then subsisting directly to take the Temple under their control, enhanced the annual grants in order to meet the expenditure towards management of the Temple. However, this was severely criticized in England as ailing and abetting idolatry in India by a Christian Government. So, the Government in England instructed the Government in India to sever their connections with the management of the Temple and revert back to the earlier system. What we want to point out here is that the then Governments and all previous rulers or Governments had shouldered the responsibility and obligation to make provision for meeting the deficits in the Temple. This tradition continued till the British left India and we achieved independence. The condition, however, changed after India got freedom in 1947. After independence, when the management of the Temple was deteriorating under the control of the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri, the State Government passed the Shri Jagannath Temple (Administration) Act, 1952. Subsequently, for better management of the Temple, Shri Jagannath Temple Act, 1954 came into force on 27-10-1960 vide Law Department Notification No.6619, dt.24-10-1960. Significantly, in the new administrative system of the Temple, the superintendence of the Temple was vested in a Managing Committee and the Gajapati Maharaja remained as a nominal head on hereditary ground. Thereafter, Shri Jagannath Temple (Amendment) Act, 2004 was enacted which came into force on 24-2-2005 vide Law Department Notification No.2255, dt.14-02-2005.

With the implementation of the Orissa Estate abolition Act 1951, the Trust Estates that were initially exempted from the purview of vesting, ultimately vested in the State on 18-03-1974 in Notification No.13699 of that date. A dominant section of the influential people went in



writ before the Hon'ble High Court of Orissa challenging the validity of vesting of the Trust Estate of Lord Jagannath. But it was dismissed in the year 1981. Against this they preferred an appeal in the Hon'ble Supreme Court in their judgment delivered on 02-11-1988 held that the vesting of the Estate of Lord Jagannath in the State was in order. It is said that the Temple Managing Committee did not contest the case on its own on the instructions of the Government. But the Managing Committee requested the State Government, as the ultimate authority over the affairs of the Temple, to take appropriate steps immediately for safeguarding the larger interest of Lord Jagannath. It would not be out of place to mention here that the Managing Committee, in a resolution in January 1988, appealed to the State Government for taking adequate measures and for making special provisions in order to meet the financial requirement of the Temple in view of the special nature and historical character of the origin of the Estate of Lord Jagannath. So, on 09-04-1988, the Chief Secretary of the State Sri N.K.Panda took the meeting on the affairs of Lord Jagannath Temple. It was indicated that the State Government might consider for providing a revolving fund of at least ten crore rupees to the Temple which would enable the Temple to tide over its financial constraints and would save the State Government from sanctioning financial grants every year for the smooth management of the Temple. Thereafter, the Chief Secretary on 10-08-1988 took another meeting and the matter was discussed further in detail.

The result of the two meetings taken up by the Chief Secretary of the State was the formation of a Committee headed by the Finance Secretary to recommend measures for augmentation of financial resources for the Temple. Secretary of Law Department, Additional Secretary of Finance Department and the District Collector of Puri

were taken as members of this Committee. Subsequently, Additional Secretary of Revenue & Excise Department was also included as the member of the Committee. The Committee observed that there had been year-to-year deficits and the deficits had been made good by assistance from the State Government by way of ad hoc compensation against vested estates and grants-in-aid etc. Yet the Temple was in deficit, which increased over the years with rise in the price level. The Committee also discussed some important points as follows: (i) updating of lands recorded in the name of Lord Jagannath by collecting additional information from all districts of Orissa; (ii) extension of time for filling claims under the OEA Act; (iii) taking over the landed properties of Lord Jagannath by the State Government on payment of suitable compensation. This exclude the lands necessary for daily Sevapuja of the Temple; (iv) taking over the landed properties where Marfatdari rights exist but the Marfatdari have discontinued their service. However, on the basis of the report prepared by the Committee on augmentation of financial resources of Shri Jagannath Temple, Puri the State Government in March 1991 directed the Temple Administration to furnish full details of properties of Lord Jagannath. Thereafter, the proposal regarding disposal of lands belonging to Lord Jagannath situated within the State and outside the State was taken up in the Managing Committee of the Temple in its meeting held on 01-08-1992 and 31-10-1993 respectively. It was decided in the said two meetings to obtain approval of the State Government for disposal of such lands. At that time, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of the State was Biju Patnaik. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to record here that during the reign of Biju Patnaik (from 1990 to 1995) and his son Naveen Patanaik (from 2000 onwards) some



important developments occurred on this subject. It would not be out of place to mention here that one of the major works of repairing of this world famous Temple was also taken up and completed successfully when Biju Patnaik was the Chief Minister of the State.

**LANDED PROPERTIES OF LORD JAGANNATH
IN THE STATE OF ORISSA**

Sl. No.	District	No. of Tahasils	No. of Villages	Area (in Acre)	Percentage to Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Khurda	3	456	26,816.473	47.68
2	Puri	7	787	16,712.181	29.71
3	Ganjam	12	704	2,843.530	5.06
4	Cuttack	10	370	2,165.385	3.85
5	Kendrapara	7	385	1,941.566	3.45
6	Bhadrak	5	167	1,330.730	2.37
7	Jagatsinghpur	4	242	1,144.250	2.03
8	Sambalpur	1	2	1135.990	2.20
9	Jajpur	5	154	973.229	1.73
10	Baleswar	6	118	540.380	0.96
11	Nayagarh	4	72	216.960	0.39
12	Anugul	3	31	116.840	0.21
13	Mayurbhanj	1	2	57.970	0.10
14	Dhenkanal	4	26	56.574	0.10
15	Sundargarh	1	1	45.450	0.08
16	Bargarh	2	13	41.170	0.07
17	Gajapati	1	13	33.977	0.06
18	Koraput	2	4	24.580	0.04
19	Rayagada	2	6	19.240	0.03
20	Bolangir	1	1	14.190	0.02
21	Kendujhar	1	5	12.020	0.02
22	Subarnapur	1	1	1.000	
23	Malkangiri	1	1	0.510	
Total		84	3,561	56,244.195	100.00

Source: Pasayat, C. (2005), "Landlord Shri Jagannath Mahaprabhu Bije Puri," Orissa Review, July, pp 3-4.

The above table reveals the fact that the landed properties of the Temple are distributed in 23 districts of Orissa. Of these districts, Khurda occupies the top position that contributes about 48 per cent to the total landed properties followed by Puri (29.71 per cent), Ganjam (5.06 per cent), Cuttack (3.85 per cent) and Kendra Para (3.45 per cent). In other words, Khurda and Puri (undivided Puri district) together occupy nearly eighty per cent of the total landed properties of the Temple. There are four districts namely Bhadrak (2.37 per cent), Jagatsinghpur (2.03 per cent), Sambalpur (2.20 per cent) and Jajpur (1.73 per cent) where the landed properties of the Temple are one to three per cent only to total. Interestingly, there are fourteen districts viz. Baleswar, Nayagarh, Anugul, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Sundargarh, Bargarh, Gajapati, Koraput, Rayagada, Bolangir, Kendujhar, Subarnapur and Malkangiri where the percentage of landed properties is less than one per cent to the total landed properties of the Temple. It would not be unwise to mention here that except Baleswar the remaining 13 districts belong to the vast inland region of Orissa and their combined contribution is a little more than one per cent of the total landed properties of the Temple. Historically, Bengal to Vijayanagaram is the sacred coastal belt of Jagannath cult. Bhadrak, Baleswar, Kendra Para, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack and Ganjam districts also belong to this great sacred cultural zone of Orissa. But landed properties of Lord Jagannath found in these districts are not satisfactory. Perhaps, large-scale illegal transfer of lands of Lord Jagannath has occurred in these parts of the State. Subsequent identification of lands of Lord Jagannath by comparison of Sabik and Hal RORs may attest this fact. However, the entire inland region of Orissa contributes less than five per cent of the total landed properties of Lord Jagannath. It



would not be out of context to mention here that landed properties of Lord Jagannath are found outside the State too. A detailed description is given here on the basis of available data collected from various sources.

Landed Properties of Lord Jagannath Found Outside Orissa

Sl. No.	State	Area (in Acre)	Percentage to Total
1	2	3	4
1.	West Bengal	322.930	78.94
2.	Maharashtra	28.218	6.90
3.	Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh	26.810	6.55
4.	Andhra Pradesh	18.987	4.64
5.	Tamil Nadu	11.885	2.90
6.	Bihar	0.274	0.07
	Total	409.104	100.00
7.	Uttar Pradesh	Ground floor of two storied building at Raebaraili Road of Haldwani town	

Source: Shri Jagannath Temple Office, Puri

The proposal regarding disposal of land belonging to Lord Jagannath situated in and outside the State was taken up in the Temple Managing Committee meeting held on 01-08-1992 and 31-05-1993 respectively. It was decided in the said two meetings that approval of the Government for disposal of such lands would be obtained. Subsequently, as per the proposal of the Temple Administration a high level meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Minister, Law on 02-08-1993 regarding disposal of lands of Lord Jagannath. By that time the total extent of Temple lands identified inside and outside the State were Ac.47,755 and Ac.301 respectively. In the meeting, it was decided that

all the Tahasildars of Orissa would be asked to furnish the land particulars of Lord Jagannath, Puri. It was also decided that the Revenue Departments of other States would be contacted and requested to furnish such information in detail. By that time, out of 47,755 acres of Temple land identified inside the State only 3,416 acres of land had been assessed to rent and settled in favour of Lord Jagannath, Puri. These lands were under the possession of different tenants; but as the deity is a privileged Rayat and perpetual minor, these tenants would acquire no tenancy rights over these lands scattered in various parts of Orissa. For disposal of lands, both agricultural as well as house-sites to the extent of above-mentioned 3,416 acres of land, the Temple Administration had applied to the Government for sanction under section 16(2) of Shri Jagannath Temple Act, 1955 which says "...no immovable property taken possession by the Committee shall be leased out for more than five years or mortgaged, sold or otherwise alienated except with the previous sanction of the State Government". In the meeting, it was decided to accord approval of Government for the disposal of these lands. It may be mentioned here that the then Hon'ble Minister, Law was Sri Narsingh Mishra in Biju Patanaik Government.

In the said meeting, it was also decided that a Land Committee at the State level would be constituted which would take steps for disposal of lands of the Temple in the following manner. The Land Committee would fix up suitable upset price for the land. Preference would be given to the tenants in possession of the lands; provided that they would be ready to pay the highest price, and if not then the lands would be put to auction sale. Before finalisation of negotiation notice inviting public objection allowing seven days time should be published in the locality and in the Temple Office. Objection received, if any, should



be disposed of within next seven days. After final negotiation and before execution of the sale deed (RSD), the Government should be intimated. Thus, the idea of a Land Committee at the State level for disposal of Temple lands was mooted for the first time in August 1993. Our subsequent analysis will unfold the truth that during these years, this Committee has played significant role and has taken some important historical decisions to give practical shape to the process of sale of Temple lands. Thus, with a view to get better suggestions on the disposal of the Temple lands the State level Land Committee was constituted with Law Department Notification in August 1993. The first Land Committee consisted of the following members: (1) Endowment Commissioner of Orissa or in his absence the Deputy Endowment Commissioner; (2) Special Officer-cum-Deputy Secretary to Government in Law Department; and (3) the Administrator of Shri Jagannath Temple, Puri. Subsequently, Special Officer, Shri Jagannath Temple had been taken in place of Special Officer-cum-Deputy Secretary in September 1994. Thereafter, the Joint Secretary of the Endowments Section of the Law Department had been taken in place of the Endowment Commissioner in May 1995. In other words, the State level Land Committee had been reconstituted from time to time. As per the provision, the Land Committee might co-opt the Tahasildars concerned or any other persons to assist them in any particular matter and the Temple Administration would be the Convenor of the Land Committee.

The first meeting of the Land Committee was held on 16-09-1993 and the following decisions were taken in the meeting: (i) In first instance, the Bharati Kotha lands and other lands of Cuttack town and the lands scattered in different villages of Puri Tahasil be taken up for sale; (ii) Two notices, one for sale of lands situated

in Cuttack Town and the other for sale of lands in 15 villages under Puri Tahasil, be published in two local dailies for wide publicity. The draft notices were placed before the Committee and approved; (iii) Upset price of the lands to be fixed on the basis of the sale statistics obtained for similar lands of the same village from the concerned Sub-Registrar's office and other factors as would be decided in the next meeting of the Land Committee; (iv) Offers made by parties for purchase of lands be considered after the lapse of the publication period stipulated in the notice; (v) The members of the Land Committee would fix up date to conduct spot enquiry in respect of Bharati Kotha lands and other lands in Cuttack town prior to fixation of up set price of the lands; (vi) To visit lands situated in other rural areas if they so like. In view of this, it may be said that this high level Committee was formed to examine and prescribe valuation of the Temple lands. However, the Land Committee unanimously recommended for disposal of the Temple lands.

Another high level meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Orissa on 11-05-1998 regarding disposal of lands belonging to Lord Jagannath, Puri. In the said meeting, it was decided to form another Land Committee consisting of four members, and the Government in supercession of all previous orders in this regard reconstituted the Land Committee vide Government in Law Department Notification No.7966/L, dt.30-05-1998. The meeting of this Land Committee was held on 21-08-1998 and the Committee unanimously decided and recommended that the lands which were in possession of different individuals despite these lands recorded in favour of the Temple i.e. Shri Jagannath Mahaprabhu bije Puri would be transferred to those individuals by Registered Sale Deed (RSD). The Land Committee further recommended that the lands, which were under



occupation of the individuals and where construction of structures and buildings were found from a pretty old time, was to be sold at a rate of one lakh rupees per acre so that the individual concerned should have Sthitiban right in their favour and the Corpus Fund of the Temple would be augmented. In view of this, the Land Committee decided that the Temple lands measuring an area of Ac.88.372 dec. situated in five villages in Puri town namely Matiapada, Talabania, Chakratirtha, Daitapada Sahi and Kundheibenta Sahi in which the spot enquiry had been completed would be disposed of to the persons who possessed the same with permanent structure since long. The State Government was requested to accord permission u/s 16(2) of the Temple Act 1955 for sale of these lands. Accordingly, the State Government accorded permission in October 1998 for sale of above-mentioned lands of the Temple in Puri town at the rate prescribed above.

Practical problems arose in the implementation of the decision taken by the Land Committee to sale away the Temple lands at a rate of one lakh rupees only per acre, though the Government in October 1998 accorded permission to the Temple Administration for the same. It was apprehended that the Registration authority might not register the instrument of sale under the ground of low valuation and impound the instrument. As to the legal provision, the Registering Officer while registering a document of conveyance, exchange, gift, partition or settlement has every reason to believe that the market value has not been correctly set forth in the instrument and he may after registering such instrument refer the same to the Collector for determination of market value and duty payable thereon. Further, the Registering Officers have been instructed vide the Revenue Department Notification No.3577, dt.04-09-1993 to suspect

a document for valuation basing on the highest sale instances of particular Kisam of preceding three years. As such the Registering Officer is bound to suspect those documents if they are found to be undervalued. Thus, certain working difficulties were experienced and apprehended. Accordingly, some further improvements on it were felt necessary. The fact remains that the tenants in occupation of the Temple lands have enjoyed the same either with their hereditary right or with the right of purchase from the illegal transferees. In order to give them a legal status the matter was being considered for a long time past and Government in Law Department after careful consideration accorded permission for sale of these lands to the tenants concerned in a subsidized rate. So, the Inspector General of Registration (IGR), Board of Revenue, Orissa was approached by the Temple Administration for a solution.

The IGR was requested by the Temple Administration to issue necessary instructions to the DSR of Puri not to impound the RSDs just on the ground of under valuation in view of the Government decision. Considering the gravity of the situation, the IGR immediately referred the matter to the Revenue and Excise Department. For the larger interest of the tenants, the Revenue and Excise Department informed in January 1999 that the rate of one lakh rupees per acre fixed in the permission letter of the Government may be deemed as market value within the scope of sub-clause (ii) of Clause (i) of Rule 2 of the Orissa Stamp Rules 1952. Accordingly, the DSR of Puri was instructed to allow Registration of these deeds without further examining the adequacy of the consideration price with the market price/value of the Temple land. The Temple Administration was also requested to furnish the detail land particulars to the DSR of Puri in respect of 88.372 acres of land covered under the permission



granted u/s 16(2) of the Temple Act. After receipt of the permission from the Government regarding sale of Temple land situated in Puri urban areas, notices inviting public objections if any were issued from the Temple office. At that time, Settlement operation was still in progress in Puri town and the Settlement records relating to some Mouzas of Puri town were yet to be finally published. So, after publication of notices from the Temple office, some tenants/ land-holders approached to the Temple Administration to allow them to deposit the land value so decided in the Temple office and requested the Temple Authority to withdraw their objection petitions from the Settlement Court at Puri so that the lands could be settled in their favour on the basis of clearance from the Temple Administration instead of Registration Sale deeds.

Most probably, to save time, energy, and resources and for the larger interest of the common tenants/land-holders under the circumstances, the Temple Administration requested the State Government in the third week of December 1998 to consider the matter. This letter of request brought immediate response. In the first week of January 1999, the State Government was pleased to accord permission to allow the land-holders to deposit the land value at the rate of one lakh rupees per acre instead of Sale Deeds (RSDs) to record their names in the Settlement records on the basis of clearances from the Temple Authority. It would not be out of place to mention here that by September 1999, the Temple Authority had collected a sum of Rs.2,96,800/- only from the landholders for the sale of an area of Ac.2.968 dec. Furthermore, taking into consideration of the applications received for purchase of lands of Lord Jagannath, the Temple Managing Committee in its meeting dt.10-12-1999 resolved to seek permission of the State Government u/s 16(2) of the Temple

Act 1954 for transfer of Ac.593.826 dec. in respect of 17 Mouzas of Puri town. Subsequently, the Government of Orissa in Law Department was pleased to accord permission u/s 16(2) of the Temple Act 1954 in January 2000.

On 27-01-1999, the Land Committee (State level) meeting was held again. It recommended disposing of the agricultural lands of the Temple situated under Puri, Khurda and Bhubaneswar Tahasils covering an area of Ac.2896.788 dec. at the maximum rate of the lands in favour of the concerned persons who possessed these lands for generations without auction. Accordingly, in the first week of April 1999, the State Government accorded approval u/s 16(2) of the Temple Act 1955 for sale of the Temple lands as mentioned above. Thus, after this Land Committee meeting, the process of land sale was not confined to homestead lands of Puri town only. In this process, other two important Tahasils namely Khurda and Bhubaneswar were included and the most important decision of this meeting was to dispose of the agricultural lands of the Temple. In this context, it may be noted here that in the Sabik RORs most of the Temple lands stood recorded in the name of Shri Jagannatha Mahaprabhu bje Puri marfat different private individuals and Mathas. In the current Settlement RORs, some lands have been recorded in favor different private individuals and Mathas under Sthitiban status in which the Temple Administration filed hundreds of Title Suits in various Courts of law and which are yet to be finalized. Furthermore, in some cases, the OEA Collectors have settled some Temple lands under Sthitiban status in favour of private individuals in which the Temple Administration has also filed Appeal cases before the concerned Appellate Courts which are pending for disposal even to-day.



Again, the State Level Committee meeting was held on 01-12-2000. At that time, the Hon'ble Minister, Law and Revenue was Sri Biswabhusan Harichandan in Naveen Patanaik Government. The meeting of the Land Committee was held under the Chairmanship of Sri Dillip Kumar Sahu, the then 1st Additional LR-cum-Joint Secretary to Government in Law Department, who was subsequently the Law Secretary of the State Government. This Committee cleared up some ambiguities. In its first meeting held in August 1998, this Committee had decided that the persons in continuous possession of land for generation are to pay at the rate of one lakh rupees only per acre for transfer of lands in their favour. The phrase "possession for generation" created confusion, as it cannot be properly stated as to who are those persons and for what period they should have been in possession. This matter was discussed in the Land Committee (State level) meeting held in the first week of December 2000. After careful consideration, the Committee made improvements in their earlier decisions and suggested for amendments. The Committee decided that instead of continuous possession for generations, the persons in continuous possession for more than thirty years relating to lands containing houses, might be allowed to purchase the land on a minimum consideration of rupees two lakhs only per acre. But for larger interest of Lord Jagannath bije Puri, the Temple Administration should make negotiation for higher value, depending on the nature and character of land containing house, its situation and also the period for which the applicant and / or his predecessor in interest are in continuous possession.

In fact, it was an important but unanswered question which was creating a lot of confusion at the time of implementation. So, as regards possession of lands or house for less than thirty

years, the Land Committee decided that the Temple Administration might prepare a list of such persons and that matter would be discussed and decided in subsequent meeting for valuation and finalisation. This Committee decided to enhance the rate of land sale from Rs.100000/- only per acre to Rs.200000/- only per acre. So, it was also decided that the transaction made as per the valuation fixed by the Land Committee by their earlier decision i.e. Rs.1.00 lakh only per acre for lands in continuous possession for generations, were not to be reopened, and those should not be precedents for future transactions. Accordingly, in the first week of January 2001, the State Government was pleased to accord permission u/s 16(2) of the Temple Act 1955 for disposal of lands as per the decisions taken in the Land Committee meeting held under the chairmanship of Sri Dillip Kumar Sahu. There is no denying the fact that this Committee made some important decisions to give a practical shape to the process of land sale of Lord Jagannath bije Puri.

In the first week of September 2001, the Hon'ble Minister of Law and Revenue took a meeting at Puri to discuss various aspects and problems relating to sale of Temple land and to augment the Corpus Fund of the Temple. By that time, the Temple Administration had identified total extent of 51,066.812 acre of land of Lord Jagannath. In the meeting it was decided to form District level Land Sale Sub-Committee in each district under the Chairmanship of the concerned District Collector to accelerate and to streamline the process of sale of the Temple lands located in various parts of Orissa. In the meeting, the Hon'ble Minister of Law and Revenue informed that he had written to all the Hon'ble Ministers of Law and Revenue of different states in India for identification of lands of Lord Jagannath bije Puri if any situated in their states. He also informed



that he had written to his counterparts in the states of West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh for disposal of the Temple lands situated in their States. Thus, the idea of a Land Committee / Sub-Committee at the district level for disposal of the Temple lands was mooted for the first time in this meeting which was subsequently approved by the State Government. Nonetheless, it would not be out of place to mention here that the then Temple Administrator Shri Jayant Narayan Panda and his successor Sri Himanshu Sekhar Samantaray have played crucial role in the first phase of the process of sale of Temple lands, though subsequently, there has been much dispute over the procedures adopted for the sale of Temple land.

In a Notification of Law Department in the first week of November 2002, the Land Committee at the State level was reconstituted under the Chairmanship of the LR-cum-Addition Secretary to Government in the Law Department Sri B. Khadenga. At that time, the Secretary to Government in Law Department was Sri Himadri Mohapatra and the Hon'ble Minister of Law and Revenue was Sri B. Harichandan in Naveen Patnaik Government. By that time, an area of 53,048.591 acres of land belonging to the Temple had been identified. Out of these lands, nearly three thousands acres of land were under the direct control of the Temple Administration. The remaining areas were non-productive and virtually no income was being collected from these lands. Only huge amount of rent and cess had been paid by the Temple Administration for the above lands. In the mean time, District Level Land Sale Sub-Committees were formed in some districts to accelerate and streamline the process of sale of the Temple lands.

Immediately after the reconstitution of the Land Committee (State level) under the

Chairmanship of Sri B. Khadenga in the first week of November 2002, the Committee sat on 15-11-2002 and took some historical decisions on sale of Temple lands which may be discussed briefly as follows: (1) An Uniform Policy would be prepared by the Temple Administration for disposal of the Temple lands throughout the State of Orissa along with the village-wise land schedule which shall be placed for approval of the State Government through the Land Committee (State level); (2) The Temple lands situated in other States may also be listed location-wise and a policy for disposal of the same may be formulated by the Temple authority which may be processed for Government approval through the Land Committee (State level); (3) The Temple lands will be classified as Kism-wise i.e. Homestead, Agriculture, Patita, Jungle, Bagayat, Jalsaya etc. and the market value / upset price will be determined accordingly; (4) The basis of fixation of valuation of lands should be the sale-statistics, Kism of land, their location and other equitable principle shall be followed; (5) Looking to the RSDs only, a strict procedure shall be adopted for the declaration of determination of possession of the Temple lands. Significantly, the State Government approved the draft proceedings of this meeting immediately in the second week of January 2003. Accordingly, the Uniform Policy was prepared and got approval of the State Government for sale of lands of Lord Jagannath bije Puri.

It has been said earlier, Bengal to Vijayanagaram is the sacred coastal belt of Jagannath cult. But the contribution of Andhra Pradesh as compared to West Bengal to the landed properties of Lord Jagannath is really minimal. Like Orissa, landed properties of Lord Jagannath in Andhra Pradesh and other States might have been illegally transferred and recorded in the names of different individuals though it is



not so easy to ascertain. There is no denying the fact that Lord Jagannath at Puri is the biggest landlord of the 21st century. But during the past one hundred years, we the people of Orissa, either as individual or as group have caused tremendous loss to this biggest landlord who is regarded as our Istadevata and who is the symbol of Oriya nationalism. During Settlement Operation, landed properties of Lord Jagannath at Puri have been probably transferred illegally and recorded otherwise. Similar is the case during operation of the Consolidation of land-holdings. Furthermore, fresh identification of land by comparison of Sabik and Hal RORs in every Tahasil may throw much light on the landed properties of Lord Jagannath at Puri. Some dedicated and honest workers are required for this rigorous search. If it is done carefully and sincerely then truth may be unearthed. Unfortunately, there has been much dispute over the question and process of sale of land of Lord Jagannath. It was also a matter of serious dispute in the Temple Managing Committee whether previous Temple Administrators did the right things and followed the right procedures at the time of disposing the Temple land. Inhabitants of Puri town in particular have been fighting for getting land rights over the land recorded in favour of

Jagannath Mahaprabhu since past one decade or so. Despite repeated agitations, they are yet to get the Pattas. Constant fights for land rights have been a reality in Puri town. This factor makes people vulnerable to the Managing Committee as well as the Temple Administration. Allegedly, the most valuable urban land of Jagannath Mahaprabhu in Puri town and other parts is under the unauthorized occupation of the dominant and influential persons in that region who control the Lord's property by using force and also intimidate Jagannath Mahaprabhu with various tactics. There is no denying the fact that Jagannath Mahaprabhu is paying lakhs of rupees towards rent, cess, water tax etc. whereas others are enjoying the fruits. This is undoubtedly, the greatness of this deity. State Government continues to wield enormous power over the unlawful persons. But, litigations have been continuing for years without any tangible results. As a result of this, Jagannath Mahaprabhu has also developed a feeling of helplessness in fighting His own battle.

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Tribikram Vesa



Festivals in Shri Jagannath Temple

Sarmistha Barik

It is said that there are twelve important yatras (festivals) of Jagannath Mahaprabhu celebrated in the Shri Jagannath Temple, Puri. But actually there are many more yatras observed in the Shri Jagannath Temple, Puri throughout the year. Some important festivals celebrated in the Temple are described below in brief:

Maha Bishuba Sankranti: The Sankranti of the month of Mesa i.e. Baisakha (April-May) is called Maha Bishuba Sankranti or Pana Sankranti. The birthday of Lord Hanumana is observed on this day in the Temple. It is worth mentioning that Oriya calendar starts from this day.



Akshya Trutiya & Chandana Yatra: The Chandana Yatra starts from Akshya Trutiya i.e. the third day of the bright fortnight of Baisakha (April-May). According to the tradition, from this day onwards, construction of the Rathas (chariots) of the deities for the Ratha yatra starts. Chandana yatra is celebrated for 42 days, divided into two phases/periods of 21 days each. The first phase is known as Bahara Chandana or outer

Chandana. During this period, the representative images of Rama, Krushna, Madanamohana, Lakshmi and Biswadhatri and images of Lord Siva from the five Siva temples known as Panchu Pandaba are taken in a procession to the Narendra puskarini / Pokhari on their respective Bimanas (chariots carried on human shoulders).

In the Narendra puskarini, the images play in two beautifully decorated and illuminated Chapas (boat-houses) and worshipped. They are generally taken around the Pokhari in these Chapas. Then they are carried to a house known as Chandana Ghara inside the tank, where they are bathed for some time in scented

water. Thereafter, they are dressed and decorated and bhoga or food offerings are made. Finally, second round of cruise takes place with the said Chapas and then the images return to the main Temple. The last day of the first phase of the Chandana yatra is called Bhaunri. Thousands of people enjoy this festival with great delight. The second phase of 21 days known as Bhitara Chandana is celebrated inside the main Temple.



Niladri Mahodaya: It is celebrated on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of Baisakha (April-May). It is stated that on that day Lord Jagannath was first worshipped in this Kshetra. On this occasion, 108 pots of consecrated water are offered to the deities. Thus, a special abhisek (bath) is performed for the deities.

Nrusingha Janma: Birthday of Lord Nrusingha is observed on Baisakha Sukla Chaturdasi i.e. the 14th day of the bright fortnight of Baisakha (April-May). The image of Lord Nrusingha is taken to the Jagannath Ballabha Matha, where special nitis are performed.

Sitala Sashti: Marriage of Lord Siva and Goddess Parvati is observed on Jyestha Sukla Sashti i.e. the sixth day of bright fortnight of Jyestha (May-June). On this occasion, Goddess Lakshmi welcomes the newly married couple in her temple.

Rajendrabhiseka: It is celebrated on Jyestha Sukla Dasami i.e. the 10th day of the bright fortnight of Jyestha (May-June).

Rukmini Harana Ekadasi: Marriage of Lord Krishna and Goddess Rukmini is celebrated on Jyestha Sukla Ekadasi i.e. the 11th day of bright fortnight of Jyestha (May-June). On this occasion, the marriage is held between Lord Madana Mohana as Lord Krishna and Goddess Lakshmi as Goddess Rukmini.

Champaka Dwadasi: It is celebrated on Jyestha Sukla Dwadasi i.e. the 12th day or on the next day of Rukmini Harana Ekadasi.

Debasnana Yatra: It is the bathing ceremony of the deities, celebrated on Jyestha Purnami i.e. on the full moon day in the month of Jyestha (May-June). The three deities along with Sudarsana and Madanamohana are brought out from the Garbhagruha (sanctum sanctorum) of the Temple and taken in a traditional procession called

Pahandi and placed on the Snanabedi situated in the northeast corner of the Bahara Bedha (outer enclosure). This is the first occasion in the year when the large and heavy wooden images of the deities are brought out of the Garbhagruha to the Snanabedi. There, the deities are bathed with 108 pitchers of water from a well called Suna kuan (Golden well) near the utara dwara (north gate). Water from this sacred well is used only once in a year during the Snana Yatra of the deities. The usual daily rituals continue thereafter in the Snanabedi. After the Snana Yatra, the deities are dressed like Lord Ganesha (the elephant god) who bears the head of an elephant. That is why this besha is also known as Hati Besha.

At night, the deities return to the Temple in a procession and the deities, except Madanamohana, are placed in a place called Anasara pindi. They remain there unseen, secluded and unexposed to public view for a period of 15 days. During this period of seclusion, the sevakas of a particular group known as Daitapati perform certain Gupta (secret) nitis (rituals) of the deities. These rituals are called anasara nitis. On Pratipada tithi i.e. the day before the Ratha yatra, the deities give darsan to thousands of eager devotees. This darsan is known as Nabajaubana darsan. A special niti (rite) called Netrotchhaba takes place on this occasion. On this day onwards, the Ratha yatra period actually starts till the deities return back to the main temple after spending some days in the Sri Gundicha temple.

Ratha Yatra (Car festival): This festival is held on Asadha Sukla Dwitiya i.e. the second day of bright fortnight of Asadha (June-July) every year. This festival is also known as Sri Gundicha yatra and Ghosha yatra. As per the prevailing tradition, Gundicha was the Rani (queen) of Raja Indradyumna, the legendary builder of the first temple. She had initiated this grand festival.



Hence, this festival is known after her name. It is also said that Sri Gundicha temple was the place where Lord Jagannath had his first manifestation in the present form and thus, is the birthplace of Lord Jagannath. On this day, the deities are taken out from the Temple and placed in their respective rathas (chariots), kept near the Singha dwara. The deities are carried to the rathas in a traditional ceremonial manner called Pahandi when Lord Balabhadra and Lord Jagannath are made to swing forward and backward. As per tradition, at first Sudarsana comes out followed by Lord Balabhadra, Goddess Subhadra and finally Lord Jagannath.

The ratha of Lord Jagannath is called Nandighosha. It has 16 chakas (wheels) and the colours of the fabrics that cover the roofs of the ratha are red and yellow. The ratha of Lord Balabhadra is known as Taladhawaja, which has 14 chakas and the colours of the fabrics are red and green. Devi Subhadra's ratha Debadalana has 12 chakas and fabrics of red and black. In other words, the colours of the fabrics used to decorate the Rathas are yellow, green and black respectively, mixed with red. Logs of wood for the Rathas are procured from the forest of Dashapalla range, located about 200 kms away from Puri. Government of Orissa in Forest Department takes special care and efforts to provide required number and quantity of logs of wood with prescribed specifications for the purpose. The three Rathas are dismantled after the festival is over.

As per the tradition, Sudarsana sits by the side of Devi Subhadra in her ratha. Madanamohana, the representative deity of Jagannath Mahaprabhu sits in the ratha. Rama and Krushna take their seats in the ratha of Lord Balabhadra. These small idols are made of brass. Thus, seven deities namely Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhara, Devi Subhadra, Sudarsana, Lord

Madanamohana, Lord Rama and Lord Krushna are seated on three rathas. After the deities are seated on their respective Rathas, the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri sweeps the floor of the Rathas. This niti is popularly known as Chhera Pahanra, which is a great attraction of this festival. This signifies that even the highest sovereign power of the state is only a sevaka (servant) before the Almighty. After the Chhera Pahanra niti is over, the charioteers are seated on the respective chariots, the horses (four in each Ratha) are tied and the ropes (usually four in each Ratha) are fitted. A huge log is used as the break in each Ratha, which is operated manually. Thereafter, the general public are allowed to pull the Rathas irrespective of caste, creed, sect, and religion and sex distinctions. This liberty indicates that the deity is equal for every person on earth and grants equal opportunity to all. Also, the festival signifies that the deities desire to come down to the level of the common man for some time and move with them to Sri Gundicha Temple, which is at a distance of about three kms. from the main temple.

According to the tradition, first the ratha of Lord Balabhadra is dragged followed by those of Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath. It is a nine-days festival, when the deities are taken to the Sri Gundicha Temple from the main Temple along the Bada danda (Grand Road) in three gorgeously decorated Rathas, especially made for each of the three principal deities. Normally, the Rathas reach the destination by the evening on the very first day of the festival and on the ninth day of this festival, the deities are brought back from the Sri Gundicha Temple to the Singha dwara of the main temple on the same Rathas. Thus, the deities practically spend seven days in the Sri Gundicha temple. The return journey is known as Bahuda yatra and is observed in the same manner as Ratha yatra. If, on the same day any ratha cannot reach the Sri Gundicha Temple or



the main Temple as the case may be, then it is dragged on the next day. As per the tradition, Rathas are not dragged after sun set.

An important niti (ritual) is performed on the fifth day starting from and including the day of the Ratha yatra known as Hera Panchami, when Goddess Lakshmi proceeds to the Sri Gundicha Temple to see her Lord. On the Nabami tithi i.e. the 9th day of bright Asadha, a special darsan of the deities is held which is called Sandhya darsan. On Asadha Sukla Dasami tithi i.e. the 10th day of the bright Asadha, the Return Car Festival (Bahuda yatra) is held. On the evening of the Ekadasi tithi i.e. 11th day of the bright Asadha, the deities are adorned with gold ornaments and dressed gorgeously in their respective ratha parked in the Singha dwara area. This besha of the deities is called Bada Tadhau Besha or Suna Besha. On the same day, another niti (ritual) called Hari Sayana Ekadasi is performed. On the following day i.e. on Dwadasi tithi, an important ritual called Adhara niti is performed when the Adharapana bhoga is offered to the deities. It is a sweet drink offered to the deities. On the evening of Asadha Sukla Chaturdasi tithi i.e. 14th day of bright Asadha, the deities are taken into the Temple in a traditional procession called Pahandi as mentioned earlier amidst gathering of thousands of devotees. While entering into the Temple, a feign quarrel takes place between Goddess Lakshmi and Jagannath Mahaprabhu. Finally, Devi Lakshmi is pacified and Jagannath Mahaprabhu enters into the Temple.

Hari Sayana Ekadasi: As mentioned above, Asadha Sukla Ekadasi i.e. the 11th day of bright Asadha (June-July) is known as Hari Sayana Ekadasi. This day, Lord Vishnu goes to sleep. Since the deities are seated on their Rathas that day, images of Basudeba, Bhubaneswari and Narayana representing them are honoured in the

Rathas with Bandapana (a customary niti denoting honour). Then they are made to sleep in the bedroom.

Nabakalebara (new-body ceremony): When the month of Asadha (June-July) happens to be an intercalary month (Joda Asadha or two months of Asadha), the Nabakalebara ceremony of the deities takes place. It is worth mentioning that the wooden images are liable to decay after a certain period and needs replacement. This new body change over ceremony is called the Nabakalebara when the new ones replace old images. Generally, this takes place once in every 12 years, but actually the shortest period is eight years and the longest is 19 years. Nitis associated with this festival are very complicated and elaborate. It is the occasion when the old bodies or images of Jagannath Mahaprabhu, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra, Sudarsana and Nilamadhava are replaced by new images. The first step taken in this connection is the procurement of daru (Margosa wood). For this purpose, a party consisting of specific persons likes Daitapatis, Deulakarana and others set out in search of the trees, which must have certain specifications. First, they go to the temple of Goddess Mangala at Kakatpur to implore the mercy of the goddess so that they would be able to locate the suitable margosa trees. As per the prescribed specifications like environment, location, height, age and other details, the trees are thoroughly checked. After the trees are located and selected, a small niti including homa is performed and the trees are felled and the wood is brought by wooden carts driven by the sevakas for manufacturing the images of the deities observing elaborate nitis (rituals). In the Koilibaikuntha, situated in the northwest corner of the Temple, the skilled carpenters called Biswakarma fashion the wooden images under the strict supervision and guidance of Daitapatis. On these days, elaborate sacrifice invoking the



deity Nrusingha is performed. After formation of the new images, those are taken inside the Temple and the mysterious life substances (Brahma) from the old images are transferred secretly into the new images. Thereafter, the old images are buried in the Koili Baikuntha. The new images are painted and made ready for worship. So, it is not merely the log of wood or the image that is worshipped with so much of reverence. What is known as Brahma in Jagannath Mahaprabhu is something unseen, which is there in his body. There is a cavity wherein a casket containing this unknown and unseen object till today has been kept. It is worth mentioning that this daru or the wooden image containing this Brahma is called Daru Brahma. There are many theories about this mysterious object. Some say that it is a tooth of Lord Buddha. Others say that it is an image of Lord Vishnu made of some precious stone. Some others hold the view that it is a very rare variety of Salagram sila. And for some others, it is a piece of bone of Lord Krushna. As per the tradition, when Jara Sabara killed Lord Krushna, Pandavas cremated him, but some portion of his body did not catch fire and remained unburnt. This unburnt substance is kept there in a casket in the wooden body of Jagannath Mahaprabhu.

Karkata or Dakshinayana Sankranti: This festival takes place on the day of Karkata Sankranti. Special nitis are performed on this day, as the Sun begins to move to the autumnal equinox. Since, Surya (Sun) commences his journey to the southern hemisphere, a special Bandapana of the deities is held to mark the occasion.

Chitalagi Amabasya: On the Srabana Amabasya Tithi (July-August), the gold and precious stone set Chitas removed from the deities on the Snana Purnima night are again adorned on them. Chita is an ornament for the forehead.

Jhulana Yatra: It is celebrated for seven days from the Srabana Sukla Dasami upto Pratipada. On this occasion, a well-decorated Jhulana (swing) is prepared in the Muktimandapa called Jhulana mandapa. Lord Madanamohana, the representative image of Jagannath Mahaprabhu alongwith Devi Lakshmi and Devi Bishwadhatri are placed on this swing.

Ganha Purnima: On Sravana Purnima Tithi i.e. the fullmoon day of Srabana (July-August) otherwise known as the Jhulana Purnima or Ganha Purnima, the birthday of Lord Balabhadra is celebrated in the Temple.

Rahurekha Lagi: Rahurekha is a gold ornament for the forehead and face of the three deities. Jagannath Mahaprabhu, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra wear Rahurekha on Bhadrava Krushna Panchami i.e. the fifth day of the dark fortnight of Bhadraba (August-September)

Janmastami / Krushna Janma and Lila: The birthday of Lord Krushna is celebrated on Bhadraba Krushna Astami Tithi i.e. the eighth day of dark fortnight of Bhadraba (August-September). On the next day i.e. Navami Tithi, Nandotchhaba is observed. From next day i.e. Dashami Tithi onwards certain nitis (rituals) relating to Krushna Lila like Banabhoji, Kolibika, Bakasura and Arghasura Badha, Kaliyadalana, Dhenukamana and Pralambasura Badha are celebrated for some days. On Bhadrava Krushna Trayodasi i.e. the 13th day of this dark fortnight, Jagannath Mahaprabhu and Lord Balabhadra dress like Lord Srikrushna and Lord Balarama or Balabhadra.

Saptapuri Amabasya: This is observed on Bhadraba Amabasya Tithi i.e. the new moon day of Bhadraba (August-September).

Ganesa Chaturthi: On Bhadraba Sukla Chaturthi Tithi i.e. the 4th day of the bright fortnight of Bhadraba (August-September) birthday of Lord Ganesha is observed in the Temple.



Nabanna: Taking of new food is observed on Bhadraba Sukla Panchami Tithi i.e. the fifth day of the bright Bhadraba (August-September).

Rushi Panchami: This is also observed on Bhadraba Sukla Panchami Tithi i.e. the 5th day of the bright fortnight of Bhadraba (August-September).

Radhastami: Birthday of Devi Radha is observed on Bhadraba Sukla Astami Tithi i.e. the 8th day of the bright fortnight of Bhadraba (August-September).

Parswaparibartana: This festival takes place on Bhadraba Sukla Ekadasi Tithi i.e. the 11th day of the bright fortnight of Bhadraba (August-September). The deities enjoying sleep change sides on this day.

Bamana Janma or Sunia: The birthday of Lord Bamana (dwarf incarnation of Lord Vishnu) is observed on Bhadraba Sukla Dwadasi Tithi i.e. the 12th day of the bright fortnight of Bhadraba.

Anantachaturdasi: Birthday of Lord Ananta is observed on Bhadraba Sukla Chaturdasi Tithi i.e. the 14th day of the bright fortnight of Bhadraba (August-September).

Indra-Govinda Puja: On Bhadraba Purnami i.e. the full moon day of Bhadraba, this Puja is performed.

Sahasra Kumbha Abhiseka: On Aswina Krushna Astami Tithi i.e. the 8th day of the dark fortnight of Aswina (September-October) and sometimes on the 7th day abhisek of Durga Devi image is done. From this day onwards, Shohala Puja (puja for 16 days) of Bimala Devi is performed. It is the special esoteric worship performed in the Goddess Bimala Temple for 16 days.

Dasahara: On Aswina Sukla Dasami Tithi i.e. the 10th day of the bright fortnight of Aswina (September-October), the Raja Besa of the

deities takes place and the ayudhas (weapons) of the deities are worshipped.

Kumara Purnima: On Aswina Purnami i.e. the full moon day of Aswina (September-October), this festival is observed. On this day a gambling competition is held between Jagannath Mahaprabhu and Devi Lakshmi in which Jagannath Mahaprabhu loses and the Madhaba image representing Jagannath Mahaprabhu stays in the Goddess Lakshmi Temple for a period of seven days.

Kartika Brata: It is observed in the Temple of Jagannath Mahaprabhu from Aswina Sukla Ekadasi Tithi i.e. the 11th day of bright Aswina (September-October) till Kartika Purnami i.e. the full moon day of Kartika (October-November), extending over the whole month. During all these days, an additional bhoga known as Baladhupa is offered to the deities. A large number of pilgrims visit the Temple during the whole month.

Deba / Hari Utthapana Ekadasi: This festival takes place on Kartika Sukla Ekadasi Tithi i.e. the 11th day of the bright fortnight of Kartika (October-November). On this day, the deities rise from their sleep after enjoying a sleep for the four rainy months (Chaturmasya).

Prabarana Sasthi / Odhana Sasthi: It is observed on Margasira Sukla Sasthi Tithi i.e. the sixth day of the bright fortnight of Margasira (November-December). From this day ghodalagi of the deities begins and the deities wear winter garments (heavy winter garments) till Magha Sukla Panchami or Basanta Panchami i.e. 5th day of bright Magha (January-February).

Prathamastami: This is held on Margasira Sukla Astami Tithi i.e. the 8th day of bright Margasira (November-December). A special Bandapana of Jagannath Mahaprabhu is held on this day.

Deba Dipabali: It is observed on the 14th day of Margasira (November-December). This day



Jagannath Mahaprabhu performs Sraddha and offers lamps in favour of his forefathers.

Pusyabhiseka: It is held on Pousa Purnami Tithi i.e. the full moon day of Pousa (December-January). On this occasion, abhiseka of the deities is performed. It is also known as Ramabhiseka. The deities put on royal dresses on this occasion.

Makara Sankranti: This festival falls in the month of Pousa (December-January). On the Makara Sankranti day, Jagannath Mahaprabhu wears Makara-chula (a sort of head-gear). The previous day, the rice is consecrated (adhibasa) and on the festive day, coconut, clarified butter and different spices are mixed with the said rice to prepare a dish known as Makara chaula. This food is offered to the deities as bhoga. This Makara chaula is taken around the Temple in a procession, which is called Makara bedha.

Basanta Panchami: Special worship of Devi Saraswati is performed on Magha Sukla Panchami Tithi i.e. the 5th day of the bright fortnight of Magha (January-February). Panji (almanac) puja is done in the Goddess Saraswati Temple. From this day, the deities wear modified winter garments (light winter garments).

Magha Purnima: On the full moon day of Magha (January-February), the Gaja Uddharana Besa of the deities is done.

Sibaratri: It is celebrated on Phalguna Krushna Chaturthi i.e. the 4th day of dark Phalguna (February-March). This is also popularly known as Siba Chaturdasi. A great fair is organized near the Lokanath temple of Puri. The most important attraction of this festival is Hari-Hara Bheta when both Lord Hari (Vishnu) and Lord Hara (Siba) meet each other.

Dola Yatra: From Phalguna Sukla Dasami Tithi i.e. the 10th day of the bright fortnight of Phalguna (February-March) upto Phalguna Purnami i.e. the full moon day, festivals known as Chacheri and

Dola are celebrated. On Phalguna Purnami i.e. the full moon day, the image of Lord Dolagobinda representing Jagannath Mahaprabhu along with Devi Lakshmi and Devi Saraswati are taken in a procession to a dias called Dola Vedi located outside the main Temple and special nitis are performed. A play with Phagu (coloured powder) between the three deities is the main attraction of this day.

Ramanabami: Birthday of Lord Ramachandra is celebrated on Chaitra Sukla Navami Tithi i.e. the ninth day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra (March-April). It continues for some days during which Ramalila is performed. Different episodes of the Ramayana are dramatized at the Jagannath Ballabha Matha. Sahijatra / Sahijata (demonstration of military skills) is held on these days.

Damanaka Chori (Dayana lagi): It is celebrated on Chaitra Sukla Trayodasi and Chaturdasi Tithis i.e. the 13th and 14th day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra (March-April). As per the tradition, Jagannath Mahaprabhu had forcibly collected Dayana leaves from the Nandana garden of Lord Indra and had worn them in his hands. This festival is observed in memory of the said incident. The representative deities like Lord Rama and Lord Krushna are taken in a procession to the celebrated garden of the Jagannath Ballabha Matha, where the deities pick up their dear Dayana leaves unnoticed by anybody and on the 14th day the leaves are offered to the deities. This is also known as Damanaka Chaturdasi. However, these are some of the important festivals as observed in the Shri Jagannath Temple, Puri.

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Salabeg - The Great Devotee of Lord Jagannath

Prof. Jagannath Mohanty

Salabeg was hailing from a Muslim father. He was not allowed to enter into Srimandir at Puri, but was extremely devoted to Sri Krishna and Sri Jagannath. He composed a large number of devotional songs for them. His father was a Mughal Subedar and mother a Brahmin widow. In one of his Bhajans (devotional songs) he has given his identity in an humble way "I am a Yavana" (Muslim). My father is the son of a Mughal Subedar and mother a Brahmin widow. I am born in such a family that the Hindus do not even take water from me. However, nowhere he has mentioned the name of his father or mother. Scholars believe that his father was Lal Beg.

He was appointed Subedar, Cuttack which was the main center of administration and one day while Lal Beg was going to Puri on the horse-back, he happened to see the enchanting beauty of a Brahmin widow and forcibly married her, who subsequently gave birth to Salabeg at Cuttack and Lalbeg died on the 27th April, 1608. As a very strong Subedar he might have invaded

many Hindu temples including Sri Jagannath Temple, Puri. Most probably Salabeg and his mother were neglected, but his education was properly taken care of by his mother.



Salabeg like his mother adjusted with Muslim customs, but worshipped Sri Jagannath most fervently. He visited Mathura, Brindavan and other holy places and enjoyed Rasalilas and the prevalent Vaishnavite Bhajans and Kirtans etc. There is a saying which indicates the depth of his devotion to Lord Jagannath. On the way back to Puri, Salabeg fell ill. It was the time of Rath Yatra and Salabeg prayed "O Jagabandhu my master, You please wait for me in your Rath

till my return." Actually there was an accident and the Rath had to be detained on the Grand Road (Bada Danda). It shows the love and affection of the Lord for the Bhaktas like Salabeg.

Salabeg himself composed many devotional songs in the form of Bhajans and Janans. All those hymns and prayers are dedicated to Sri Krishna and Sri Jagannath. Most of his compositions are so sweet and melodious



that they have been in vogue in our literature and music over centuries. Some stanzas of his immortal poems may be taken as examples-

*"O, Jagannath ! I am not asking for anything
Not wealth, nor kith and kin
I seek only a handful of sand from Saradhabali.
I do not want to see any other face except your's".*

His deep attachment to Sri Krishna is evident. He always expressed his eagerness to see Him at Mathura and Brindavan. In one poem he has penned,

*"As long as I am living, I shall go to Brindavan
And shall take bath in Radhakunda and
Shyamakunda
And shall go round the hill Gobardhan.
I shall gladly drink the water of the river Yamuna
So that I shall attain salvation."*

Salabeg's deep devotion has also been evident in another hymn as follows.

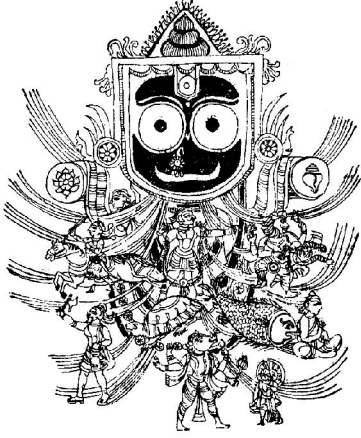
" This is my humble prayer, O the God of poors
Let my mind be engaged always in your service
I may be deprived of my food and cloth
I will be happy looking at the Neelachakra flag at the
peak of the temple
O, Lord of the Universe, don't be cruel to me"

Although the prayer songs of Salabeg seem to be similar in theme, but in language, emotions and rhythms those are diverse and multi-coloured. The intensity of devotional feelings are so great that those are very much enchanting as well as captivating.

Salabeg is a poet of deep devotion, sympathy and human understanding. He is a staunch devotee of Sri Jagannath and Sri Krishna. He does not belong to any particular sect, caste or community. He is a universal preceptor, a great cosmopolitan, a passionate devotee, an extraordinary lyricist and liberal saint. His concern, fellow-feeling and strong sense of dedication to Sri Krishna and Sri Jagannath are incomparable. Lastly, his contribution to the growth of spiritual Oriya literature and secular Oriya traditions and culture is outstanding and memorable.

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Lord Vishnu

Dr. Dibakar Mishra

Lord Vishnu is the centripetal force responsible for sustenance, protection and maintenance of the created Universe. Etymologically speaking the word "Vishnu" means one who pervades or one who has entered into every thing. So, He is the transcendent as well as immanent reality of the Universe. He is the inner cause and power by which things exhaust.

The word "Vishnu" is derived from the verb 'Vis' whose meaning is 'to enter'. In 'Nirukta' the word Vishnu has been described:-

"Yad Visito bhabati Tad Vishnurbhabati". That is, which enters becomes Vishnu.

'Narayana' is the other name of Vishnu which is 'Nara' (man) and 'Ayana' (shelter place) i.e, the shelter place of souls. When we meditate 'Narayana' we imagine Him inside the Sun's Disc. Such as :-

*"Om Dhyeya Sada Savitru mandala
Madhyabartee Narayana Sarasigasana
Samibistah."*

That is, "Narayan is always to be meditated in the middle of the Sun's Disc, seated on Padmasana (lotus posture).

Hence the Sun is himself Vishnu. Sun being the son of "Aditi" is called 'Aditya'. Vishnu is also

the son of Aditi in another generation, so He is also called Aditya. 'Tribikrama' also travels thrice or keeps slaps thrice. As mentioned in 'Rugveda' Lord Vishnu keeps His steps thrice on earth and travels in between those places. These places are undoubtedly three tropical regions such as :- Tropic of Cancer, Ecuador and mansion Capricornus. From this it is clear that Lord Vishnu is the Sun himself. Out of one thousand names of Lord Vishnu (Vishnu Sahasra Nama), Ravi, Surya, Savita, Jyotiraditya, Bhaskaradyuti, Gavastinemi (Centre of Rays) are also the names of the Sun. In the Vedas, Lord Vishnu has been mentioned as "Sahasrasirsa" means "with thousand heads." In the other hand countless rays of the Sun (Surya Rashmi) are named as 'Sahasrasirsa', hence Surya is called "Sahasranshu",

We know Vishnu as the Protector or maintainer of the whole world. The science has proved that the Sun is the fosterer or nourisher of the world. Food, life, beauty and wealth, what ever we get in any way, we get the gifts of the Sun's energy. Because, due to this energy of the Sun; cloud, wind and rain are formed for which maintenance and nourishment of the lives on earth is possible. Hence to differentiate between Sun and Vishnu we can now say that He is called Sun who is "Jaba Kusuma Sankasam" like the flower



Hibiscus rose and spreads his colour in the whole sky. But when radiation starts which penetrates all objects is called Vishnu or Narayana.

At the time of rest Lord Vishnu sleeps on a serpent called 'Sesanaga' using it as coach in 'Kshirasagara'(ocean of milk). The complexion of Vishnu is 'Meghabarna' (Sky coloured) and He puts on 'Pitabasa' (yellow cloth) for which His name is also 'Pitabasa'. The commonest form of Vishnu icon has one face, four arms holding "Sankha" (conch), Chakra (discus), Gada (mace), Padma (lotus) and wears a necklace with the famous gem Kaustubhamani dangling on chest, Goddess Laxmi is seen sitting at His feet and pressing His legs.

Here "Ananta" the extensive empty space (Mahasunya) which has got no "Anta" (end) has been shaped as 'Ananta' (Lord Vishnu). The Sun's rays scattered all over the sky have been taken as the serpent on which Vishnu sleeps which is called "Ananta Sayana", The yellow flame of the rising sun which falls on blue sky, is accepted as Lord Vishnu's "Pitabasan" or yellow cloth. The famous bright gem (Kaustuva Mani) dangling in his chest is the Sun's Disc itself. The floating white clouds below resemble as the ocean of milk (Kshirasagara).

His four arms represent four quarters of the year; such as; Summer, Rain, Winter and Spring, extending in all directions. The "Sankha" (conch) is the symbol of 'Nada' to bind the whole world together, understand each other; communicate feelings and realize things. "Chakra" (discus) is the infinite power to create or destroy things, lives and even the universe. Gada (Mace) symbolizes power and sovereignty. Padma (lotus) indicates beauty and holiness. The other name of it being Pankaja has got its production source "Panka" the ugliest mud which indicates that the persons coming out of a disgraced family may have dignity if graced by God.

Here Goddess Laxmi, the source of all wealth connected with fertility, water, rain and agriculture presses the legs of Lord Vishnu (Ananta) while sleeping, This indicates the pressure on water bearing cloud to cause rain for fertilization of earth to produce corns, fruits, flowers and grow lives.

Out of several names of Lord Vishnu one is "Vasudeva". All the objects of the world being called 'Vasu', He is Vasudeva as he exists in all. He is also called "Bhagaban" as he is the owner of all the "Vagas"(wealths) which are six in numbers, such as ; - 'Aishwarya' (Opulence), 'Birya' (Vigour), 'Yasha' (Fame), 'Shree' (Prosperity), 'Jnana' (Knowledge) and 'Vairagya' (Renunciation).

His name is 'Hrusiksha', the meaning of which is the master of all organs as 'Hrusik' is organ, such as ; eye, ear, nose etc. and "Isha" is the master, He is called 'Hari' as 'Haran' is to steal or take away and Lord Vishnu takes away all the sorrows or grieves of his subjects.

One of His names is 'Baikuntha', The meaning of 'Kuntha' is to hesitate and 'Bai' is used in negative sense. Hence the meaning of "Baikuntha" is not to hesitate to show kindness to His devotees. He is 'Gopala' as 'Go' is 'Viswa' or the world and 'Pala' is one rears or nourishes. As Lord Vishnu rears or nourishes the world He is Gopala. Similarly His another name is 'Gobinda' as 'Go' is 'Viswa' or the world and 'Binda' is one who gives pleasure. So he is Govinda as He gives pleasure to the whole world. He is also 'Mukunda' as 'Mukun' is "Moksha" (salvation) and 'Da' is to give. Here Lord Vishnu releases the devotees from bondage or makes free from binding. He is 'Sahasraksha' having thousands of eyes to look each and every corner of the world.

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Chhatisa Nijoga in Shri Mandira

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Puri the seat of Lord Jagannath is otherwise known as Srikshetra or the Purushottama Kshetra or Sankhakshetra. It finds its mention in the Puranas. It has been referred to as the Nilachala (Blue Hill) in the Vana Parva of the Mahabharata. It has been considered as one of the four sacred dhams of the Hindu religion and is the topmost pilgrim center in India. Emphasising the importance of Puri it is said that, it is to India what Jerusalem was to the whole land of Israel. The priests of Jagannath speak of it as the city of heaven upon earth. Its importance, however, is due to Jagannath, Lord of the Universe and His abode Sri Mandira or the Magnificent Temple - The Jagannath Temple, which was constructed by Chodaganga Deva (12th century AD), the mighty monarch of the imperial Ganga dynasty. It is a monument which acquire fame internationally and attract thousands of pilgrims to its precinct. Jagannath, indeed, is the representative of the Oriyas and in the true sense represents the Oriya culture. As such Orissa is very often known as the land of Lord Jagannath (Jagannath Desh). The activities and festivals of the Jagannath temple are synonymous with that of the Oriya culture. During the mediaeval period Jagannath was considered as the real king of Orissa, while the reigning monarchs considered themselves as His Rauta or deputy. Being the real king, like the reigning monarch, He was attended by a number of attendants or servitors including

the women attendants. Highlighting the requirement of the servitors S. Mohanty says". The elaborate daily rituals in the Temple, continuous stream of festivals and Yatras all the year round, preparation of massive quantities of cooked offerings, which can feed lakhs of pilgrims on a single day during the Car Festival; preparation of innumerable varieties of sweet rice, cakes and sweet meals in the temple kitchen, maintenance of the Temple and painting of its walls by murals, construction of chariots during the car festival, carrying to and fro the proxy images of Lord Jagannath on different occasions, require an elaborate system of temple servitors, with clearly appointed tasks. Otherwise an institution like the Temple of Jagannath would not run even for a single day." The Nitis or rites of Lord Jagannath temple are performed so orderly and timely that the requirement of the servitors is highly essential. If one Niti can not be performed timely than the entire schedule of the rituals will be disturbed. The entire network of employees engaged in the temple, indeed is a unique feature in the world.

For the conduct of the rituals of Lord Jagannath several categories of servitors were employed and a class of servitor (sevaka) is known as Nijoga. Chhatisanijoga refers to thirty six categories of Servitors of Srimandira. According to the Madalapanji or the Temple



Chronicles, Ananga Bhima Dev had established 36 Nijogas called Chhatisanijoga in the temple. But with the march of time and according to the necessity, the number has increased considerably. According to the Report of Special Officer, L. Panda, which was published in 1955 there were then 250 Nijogas. Here is given a list of some of the Nijogas with their allotted duties.

Raja of Puri : The Raja of Puri is the Adya-Sebaka or the foremost Sebaka of Lord Jagannath. He was the hereditary Superintendent of the Jagannath Temple since 1803. At present he is the Chairman of the Temple Managing Committee under the provisions of Sri Jagannath Temple Act of 1954. The important function of the Raja is now to sweep the floors of the three chariots during the car festival with a golden broom (Chherapanhara). He also performs certain other duties during Chandana Yatra, Snana Yatra, Dola Yatra etc.

Mudiratha or Mudirasta : Mudiratha is considered as the representative of the Raja on some occasions. He officiates for the Raja in the Chherapanhara and other functions when the Raja is prevented from performing them due to some reason or other.

Chhatisa Nijoga Nayaka, Pattajosi Mahapatra and Bhandara Nayaka: He is the Chief of the Nijogas and execute all orders of the temple authorities. He is to see that all the Sebakas do their duty properly. He also performs the "Sari Bandha" ceremony.

Bhitarcho Mahapatra : Bhitarcho Mahapatra is the first man to go for Dwarafita ceremony (opening of the doors) and to examine the seals placed on the lock, the previous night. He checks the purity of the Bhoga offered.

Tadaukarana : Tadaukarana informs the Sebakas about the daily nitis of the deities. He maintains the traditional temple chronicle called the "Madala Panji"

Other Karanas : Various kind of other Karanas looks after the daily accounts of the temple and distribute kheis.

Charchiat : The main function of the Charchiat is to make Charcha or to see that the nitis are performed regularly.

Brahmins or Purohit : The Purohit including the Deul Purohit makes the rites like Ratha Anukula. Abhisek etc. The Pujakas, who performs Vimanapuja in sixteen rituals (Solapuja) and shrotriya Brahmins, who are deputed for Nabakalebar to work as Acharyas and to perform regularly.

Puja Panda : Puja Pandas who perform Puja offer Naibedyas to the deities. The Bada Panda, who is also included in the Puja Panda category is appointed to see that other Puja Pandas perform their duties regularly.

Daitas : Daitas form the core of the temple servitors. They are regarded as the descendants of the autochthonous priests who used to worship Jagannath in His Sabari-Narayana form. They exclusively dominate the rituals of Shri Jagannath on special occasions like Snana Yatra, Nabakalebara, Anasara, Ratha Yatra etc.

Patis : Patis are the Brahmin Sebakas in the temple. They work with the Daitas but being Brahmins have got other special functions.

Duttas : Duttas paint the faces of the images, which is called Srimukha Singhara.

Khuntia : The main duty of the Khuntias is to give, "Manima Daka" and watch the deities. There are various types of Khuntias in the Sri Mandira like, Palliakhuntia, Behera Khuntia, Bileijaga Khuntia, Rukuna Harana Khuntia etc.

Changada Mekap : He is in-charge of the wardrobe of the deities. Palia mekap, who perform some specific duties and Akhanda Mekap, who light the Ratna Dipa of the deities from Dwarafita to Pahuda are other Mekaps.



Padhiaris : Padhiaris keeps watch near the Deities and calls servitors for different offerings of different stages of worship.

Gochhikars : They belongs to Padhiari class and watch Jaya Bijaya Dwara.

Binakara : He plays on the Bina when the Deities go to bed.

Bhitaragayeni : Bhitragayeni sings at the time of Pahuda and other festivals.

Sampradanijoga : They are the dancing girls or the Maharis, who once used to dance inside the sanctum before the deities retired for the night.

Madeli : Madeli plays on Madala at the time of Patuara.

Sankhua : He blows Sankha or conch-shell with the Baijyantris (Musicians).

Kahalia : He plays on Bijekahali or trumpet.

Ghantua : Ghantua play on bell-metal gongs during daily rituals and on festivals.

Amania Chhatra : He holds the umbrella and tras over the deities during the festivals.

Gitagovinda Sebaka : This Sebaka use to sing the Gitagovinda of poet Jayadeva after the Badasinghara Dhupa and at Chandana lagi.

Chakra Dihuri : He is in-charge of arrangement of lamps inside the sanctum and holds the masal (lighted torch)

Singhari & Pasupalaka : They dress the deties at different times daily and perform Abakashapuja.

Suara Badu : The function of the Suara Badu is to watch the pokharia (floor of the inner sanctuary) several times, supply khata, chauki etc.

Patri Badu : They supplies Puja Upakarana throughout the day.

Gara Badu : They supplies water required during Pujas and nitis.

Sudhasuara : These servitors arrange, Ballabha Bhoga and other offerings.

Muduli : He is in charge of Puja utensils and other daily Puja upakaranas and supplies them to Mekapas.

Hadapa Nayaka, Bidia Joganias and Tambul Sevaka : They prepare and offer betels to the deities.

Ghatuaris : They prepare and serve Anjana, Chandan and Mahadipa for daily and Parbajatra Nitis.

Tulasia : He supplies Tulasi leaves daily for the Deities.

Dayanamali : He supplies scented flowers called Dayana which is the most favourite of Lord Jagannath.

Mahabhoi : He is an important servitor of the temple who supplies milk and curds to the temple kitchen and for rituals.

Paniapata : He supplies all the water throughout the day required in the temple for conducting the rituals.

Balita Sevakas : They supplies Arati Balita to the temple.

Kumbhar Bishois : They supply Handi, Kudua and other pottery required daily.

Daudia : Daudia supplies rope to draw water from Sri Bimala well.

Malachula Sevaka : He is a Mali or gardener by caste. He supplies Chula or floral decorations for the deities to wear.

Mali Suasia : He supplies wooden seats (Katha Pidha) for the Deities. He is obviously a carpenter by caste.

Jogonias : Jogonias supply offerings at different places during different rituals in the Temple.



Biman Badus : They carry all Bimans of the proxy images.

Chapa Behera and Dalais : They are generally boatman by caste and prepare boats during the Chandan yatra.

Ratha Bhois : They work and supply labourers for the construction of the chariots.

Kalabethias : They drag the chariots during the Car festivals.

Karatias : The Karatias or sawyers work for Car construction.

Tamra Bishoi : They work as copper smith in Car festivals.

Chitrakarars and Rupakarars : They paint and colour the chariots and prepare pratimas for decoration of Cars.

Ojha Maharana : He is the blacksmith of the Temple.

Ratha Dahuka : He sings bawdy songs on the chariots during the Car festivals.

Banua : They supply the fire-works during festive occasion.

Chaka Apasar Sevaka : He take charge of Chaka Apasar from the tailor at the time of Anasara.

Mandani : Mandani Servitors ties Chandua (Canopy) during festivals.

Kotha Suansia : These Sevakas work as labourers to prepare thatched huts, chhamundias etc. at festivals inside the Temple enclosure.

Suna Goswami : The work of Suna Goswami is to draw water from Suna Kuan on Snana Purnima (Bathing Festival) day.

Daraji : The Daraji stitches the garments of the deities.

Patara : He prepares silken ropes for the deities required on different occasions.

Badhei : Badhei or carpenters construct the chariots and bedsteads.

Panikunda Sevaka, Lugadhua and Mahasethi : Mahasethi cleans the clothes of the Deities every morning.

Bania : Bania is the goldsmith. He prepares ornaments and repairs them for the use of the Deities.

Mukha Pakhala : He supplies Muturi twigs for brushing the teeth of the Deities.

Khatuli Sevaka : The Sevakas, who places the wooden seats for the deities during the Abakasha Puja are called Khatuli Sevaka.

Darpania : He supplies Darpana (mirror) and cleans the utensils of the Deities.

Baidya : Baidya or the physician gives medicines to the Deities during Anasara.

Jyotisa or Khuri Nayaka : Jyotisa or the astrologer reads tithis before the Lord during the Abakas Puja.

Chunaras : He worships the image of Garuda.

Lenka : Lenka summons different servitors on different occasions for performing their allotted services.

Pradhani : He summons the priest and distributes Khei to different class of servitors at the Mukti Mandap.

Paikas : Paikas with their heads Dalei and Dala Beheras use to stay throughout the day and night at the Sri Mandira and work according to order of the temple authorities.

Mandir Sipahi : He guards the Temple inside the inner enclosure.

Suar : He cooks the offerings in the Temple kitchen for the Deities. For different dishes, there are various categories of Suaras like-Badasuara.



Pithasuara, Chunasuara, Thalisuara, Amalasuara etc.

Rosha Amina & Rosha Paika : They watch and supervise the Temple Kitchen.

Handi Joganias : They supply pots for Bhogas.

Bahar Deuli Suaras : They are in-charge of goddess Lakshmi's kitchen and cook in Lakshmi's Rosa. It is here mentioned that goddess Lakshmi does not partake food from Jagannath's kitchen and runs her own kitchen exclusively for himself.

Rosa Kotha Bhoga Panias : They supply water to kitchen.

Paniki Pata : This type of servitors dresses vegetables in the Kitchen. The vegetables like potato and tomato are not used in the kitchen being of foreign origin.

Rosa Mekap : He prepares gingers and other astringents and distributes ghee in the kitchen according to the requirement.

Chaula-Bachha : These servitors clean the rice to be cooked.

Chuna-Munda Samartha, Birimunda Samartha and Biribuha Samartha : All these servitors supply rice powder, flour and blackgram powder required in the kitchen.

Tanti Badu (Panti Badu) : They carry the offerings to the sanctum and usually cover their mouths with pieces of clothes while carrying the offerings.

Biduas : They make ready the offerings / cakes for beings carried to the sanctum by the tanti badus.

Dho Paikhalia, Gobara Panias, Angarua and Rabadia : These servitors wash and clean the kitchen and Chulis.

Sabuta Nijoga : Sabuta Nijoga offers special offerings at Swargadwara (Gateway to Heaven) on the evening of every new moon day (Amabasya).

Benta Bindha Paika : They are considered as hunters, who on behalf of the deities go to the Jagannath Ballabha Garden in a hunting expedition on a particular day for hunting.

Mudra : The servitor who puts Mudra at the time of putting seals is known as Mudra.

The above mentioned list of servitors however, is not exhaustive. This is a reproduction of the Report of the Special Officer under Sri Jagannath Temple Act, 1957. Some of the aforesaid terms need a detail analysis and descriptions. It is said that Ganga King Ananga Bhima Deva provided this elaborate system of Chhatisa Nijoga in lieu of rent free lands. From the list it is gleaned that most of the servitors are non-Brahmins. The lists also indicate, how the servitors belonging to different castes of Hindu society assimilated themselves with the Brahmin caste, who are traditionally considered as the servitors in the Hindu Pantheon. As such it is significant that it pronounce a casteless social structure. Some times the Daitas even have the absolute right for the worship of the Deities than the Brahmins. The entire Hindu community inspite of its caste rigidity and social taboos have been assimilated into the Chhatisa Nijoga. This is in fact a unique feature of the Jagannath cult and His worship.

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Socialism in Jagannath Culture

Sarat Chandra Mahapatra



Socialism - Meaning and Connotation

The dictionary meaning of the word socialism is, "Political and Economic Theory of the Social Organisation, which advocates that, community as a whole should own and control the means of productions and exchange." The term socialism signifies the importance of the role of the state in the pursuit of social and economic justice. Socialistic ideas were incorporated in the Directive Principles of State Policy of our Constitution. They have been borrowed from the Irish Constitution enjoins upon the state to direct its policy towards securing :-

- (a) That the citizens, men and women, equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood.
- (b) That the ownership and control of the material resources of the community as so distributed as best sub serve the common good;
- (c) That the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of productions to the common detriment.
- (d) That there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women,
- (e) That the health and strength of workers, men and women and the tender age of the children are not abused, and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength;

- (f) That childhood and youth are protected against moral and material abandonment.

Articles 41, 42 and 43 also contain human conditions.

Symbolic Representation of the World Community

It will be evident from the above that the term socialism mainly implies equality without discrimination, control and distribution of the means of production by the community and the entire state activity is oriented towards securing a sound social order with dignity to each individual participant.

Against such conceptual backdrop Jagannath culture is to be evaluated. The term 'Jagannath', etymologically means the Lord of the Universe, that is, the supreme deity of the world community. The entire world consisting of different communities have been broadly classified on the basis of their colours into three categories, that is :-

- a) White for Aryans
- b) Black for Negrites
- c) Yellow for Mongoloids

Sri Jagannath Trinity exhibits these three colours that is Balabhadra- White, Jagannath-Black, and Subhadra - Yellow. Such colour combination is unique in the whole pantheon of Gods and Goddesses worshipped in the whole



world. There can not be a more convincing symbolic representation of the world community except the holy trio of Jagannath on the basis of colour combination.

Incomprehensible Iconography

Every god-head in the world religion has its own distinction in features, in ritual system and in the mode of worship. The gods are either shapped as super-human beings and when shapeless god like Gurugranthasaheb of Sikh community is worshipped, the devotees always bear the shape of their guru in their minds while worshipping. But paradoxically and peculiarly the Jagannath trio does not conform to any anthropomorphic model. Jagannath and Balabhadra are legless and armless and appear to be only a wooden stump. They lack proper representation of mouth, nose and ears. Goddess Subhadra is also legless and armless and appear to be only a wooden stump. Sudarsana, the fourth image is just a small log of wood or stump. Such peculiar features of the god baffle any academic analysis.

Socio-Religious Cohesion

Scholars say that this conception of god has integrated the conflicting religious trends with their presiding deities like Vishnu, Rudra and Shakti. Such integration and religious synthesis is no where available. All divergent communities subscribing to different beliefs and philosophies have been inextricably blended into one. No other religious mechanism could have achieved so much of socio-religious cohesion and socialistic approach to sectarian community.

Equalizer of social distinction:- Mahaprasad

The most interesting and important socialistic aspect based upon principles of equality is the Mahaprasad of Lord Jagannath. It transcends all barriers of communal divisions in Hindu society, particularly where a conservative

Brahmin does not hesitate, rather takes it as a privilege, to partake Mahaprasad with a person of lowest social ladder. There can not be more demonstrative symptom of socialism than Mahaprasad.

The Car of Lord Jagannath - the Crusader of Communal Distinctions :

The next most noteworthy feature is the famous Car Festival of Lord Jagannath. The temple entry is restricted to the persons of other religions and many communities are deprived of the personal appearances. It is unconventional and unique that the peculiar God Lord Jagannath, the epitome of socialism, comes to the mass, crushing all barriers of communal distinctions. The individual identity gets merged in such collective and mass consciousness which is being experienced by everybody regardless of caste, creed and colour that, virtually Car festival is going to be the international festival sooner or later.

Symbol of Universal Humanism-Purushottama :

The greatest perceivable aspect of the holy trio is their humanization. Those humanised Deities entail the elaborate rituals of getting up in the morning till going to the bed. They suffer from fever, attend various festivals like human being of taking bath (Chandan Jatra) during summer days, swinging ceremony (Jhulana Jaltra) and even go for hunting (Paradhi) to their pleasure garden Jagannath Ballava on Basanta Panchami Day. These religious activities depict the life and style of a royal human being, in the eyes of which everybody is equal without discrimination. He became the directive force of the entire community instead of keeping away, as only god to be worshipped Lord Jagannath bears the name of Purushottama, which means 'Finest Man'. Here the 'Man' (Purusha) is without any distinctive racial and communal complexion. He has rightly being praised by a great devotee Bilwamangala in the following words :-



*Nilachalendra nilayaya nira kulaya,
Nityodayaya Nikhilagha Nivaranaya,
Nisseshashoka somanaya niranjanaya,
Tasmaye namah bhagabata purushattamaya.*

This invocatory verse signifies that Lord Purushottama sanctifies the sins, sorrows and sufferings of the whole universe. This total humanistic approach makes Lord Jagannath the symbol of universal humanism, i.e., Purushottama.

The Lord is the Sovereign and the king, His Deputy

The community control of the organization which is the fundamental of socialism is being demonstrated by the management pattern of the Lords. There are 36 niyogas consisting of various categories of religious functionaries. The niyogas, a peculiar concept of personnel management and not a synonym of service association or trade union, all servitors belonging to the same gotra and assigned with a particular seva, i.e., service to the Lord are grouped together under a 'Head man'. In case of failure or default of service to the Lord the niyoga along with the defaulting individual becomes answerable. Over all the niyogas there is one 'Chatisaniyoga Nayaka' or Head of 36 Niyogas designated as 'Pattajoshi Mahapatra'. Such well knit division of labour and community control of the seva system of the Lord is unparalleled.

The king is the first sebayat or the servitor. Before the multitude of devotees he performs the job of a scavenger and sweeps the cars. This job belongs to the lowest man of the Hindu social order. But the king doing the same, it speaks of the highest religious humility nowhere comparable. There is no-body big and small in the eyes of the Lord. This particular activity is definitely a perceivable socialistic trait.

The vertical or external legitimation of Orissan kingship manifested itself the monumental imperial temple of Puri and the recognition of its

deity as the 'King of Orissan Empire'. As His earthly deputies and rulers of 'New Benaras', the kings of Orissa thus claimed an imperial status among the Hindu Rajas of India.

In a time when Orissa was encircled by several mighty enemies and when the feudatory Gadajat States seriously endangered the central power, Raja Govinda Vidyadhar had recourse to the State Deity and His Priests. In order to secure their support-most probably-reconfirmed their rights to the gifts offered by the pilgrims. In front of 'The Lord of the Universe,' Raja Govinda then demanded obedience of his rebellious feudatories and threatened all his opponents with the wrath of Lord Jagannatha. During the most dangerous decades of the history of Orissa, after the dynastic links had broken down, the state cult with its powerful priesthood- besides the standing army-had thus seems to have become the most important central authority of the empire.

In various inscriptional evidences, the successive Gajapati Kings have accepted Jagannath as the state deity and they produced themselves as His 'Lowest Servant or Rauta'. They ruled the kingdom on behalf of the state deity 'Jagannath' as His Deputies. There can not be a more demonstrable socialism when the godhead is conferred with the power of a sovereign who is perfect, just, fair and extends equal treatment to everybody.

On ultimate analysis, it appears that while Jagannath concept is oriented for creating a socialistic pattern of society.

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2. Public Administration in India, by Padma Ramchadran, Page 72.
3. The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Traditions of Orissa, Pages 199 & 208.

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Padma Vesa Patta of the Deities

Jayanti Rath

A full blown lotus is the symbol of universe in which the divinity is established. It is the symbol of awakening of the spirit and the flowering of the psyche. It is held sacred by the Hindus who have installed all their principal Gods and Goddesses on Padmasana (lotus-seat). In other words nothing can be conceived without Padma in Hindu religion and that is equally true in the sphere of art, sculpture and painting. The Supreme Lord Vishnu is closely associated with padma. Padma is one among his four

Ayudhas, the other three being Sankha (conch), Chakra (Disc) and Gada (mace). His feet are called Lotus-feet, hands are lotus-hands, eyes are lotus-eyes. Similarly. His consort Goddess Lakshmi is called Padmakshi (lotus-eyed), Padma Sambhava (originated from lotus). It goes without saying that in the rituals of the temple of Lord Jagannath, who is unequivocally believed to be the incarnation of Vishnu, Padma is given prime importance. So among the various vesas of the triads, one vesa is specifically related with Padma and that is called Padma vesa.



The Suna vesa of the triad is definitely most resplendent and most significant from religious point of view, because the devotees believe that after visualization of this vesa all the sins of the onlooker vanish, but then, the Padma vesa is at once very attractive and symbolic. The vesa is done on any Saturday or Wednesday between

the new moon day of Magha and Basanta Panchami. Traditionally, from the Sukla Sasthi of Margasira month till the Basanta Panchami, the three Vighrahas are covered with winter

wrappers at night. This ritual is called Ghoda Lagi and it is observed to protect the deities from excessive cold. On the Wednesday the colour of the wrapper is green and on the Saturday it is black. The Padma Vesa is made on over this wrapper. It is made during the Bada Sinhara and the deities remain with the vesa throughout the night.

The big petals of lotus adorn the faces of the deities in the shape of disc. Lord Balabhadra and Lord Jagannath hold lotus buds in their hands. Three triangular crowns made of crape and cloth



are decorated with innumerable lotus flowers. Now-a-days flowers made of thermocol are used in stead of natural flowers.

It is interesting to note that four swans are projected in this Vesa. They are seen with the lotus stalks. Perhaps the addition of the swans with the lotus stalks has been made, so that the Vesa would appear more lively.

There is an interesting episode related to this Vesa. As the story follows - long long ago there was a devotee named Manohar Das, living in village Shahpur on the bank of the sacred river Rishikulya. With a strong desire to have a darshan of the lords, Manohar started his journey by walking from the distant village to Puri. He brought with him a basket full of lotus flowers. In course of his long journey he came across a number of tanks. At every tank he kept some new flowers on the basket and poured water on the old ones to make them fresh. At last he reached Puri and halted at Bada Chhata Matha, just adjacent to the Sri Mandira boundary (Purba dwar). The trouble of the long painful journey could not deter him. The very thought that he would offer the flowers to the Lord enlivened his spirit.

With that simple faith and devotion he entered inside the temple. The Sevakas saw the pitiable condition of the old man. They asked him about the thing he kept in the basket covering a towel. He showed them the flowers which were stale and stinking by that time. The Sevakas threw the rotten flowers in the kitchen drain of the temple and beat him cruelly for his madness. Due to severe injury and mental shock Manohar Das fell on the ground and became unconscious. In the night the dwellers of Bada Chhata Matha brought

him back and put him in rest. Lord Jagannath appeared in the dream of the king in the night, asked him to go immediately to Manohar and consider the matter with all kindness. The king called the Rajguru and explained the theme of the dream. The Rajguru took Manohar inside the temple, with much care collected the thrown-away flowers and adorned the deities with those flowers as to fulfill the wish of Manohar.

Surprisingly those flowers looked bright pink and emanated divine and sweet fragrance. The blessing of the Lord to Bhakta Manohar could be heard from the void.

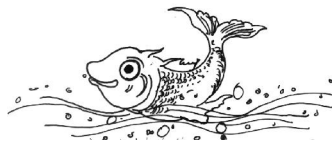
To perpetuate this incident Padma Vesa is being done every year in the said period. The dress materials for this vesa are being provided by the Bada Chhata Matha. The Matha also offers Khiri which is called Padma Vesa Khiri and distributes among the devotees in the following day.

The Chitrakar finds immense pleasure in depicting this Vesa. Usually he draws full blown lotus, eight-petalled lotus and the lotus buds as the border designs in Vaishnava Pattas. In the making of Padma Vesa Patta the lotus is taken not only as a decorative programme, it becomes the sole theme. The Chitrakar just feels himself ascendant both spiritually and aesthetically, while doing it.

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Jagannath : The Eclectic Lord of the Universe

Dr. C. B. Patel

The popular Jagannath Culture is a mysterious conception. Many distinguished scholars from different parts of the country and abroad have attempted to solve the mystery of origin and evolution of Jagannath consciousness and have stumbled confusedly at the platform of religious eclecticism of world eminence. Jagannath allows all and admits all, yet he is aloof from all. It is also said that he is all of it and none of it. He is like a mirror where all can see their reflection but cannot touch. He adorns

his Ratnasimhasan efflorescently admitting flexibility, adaptability, integrity and magnanimity of all dynamics of Hinduism. For this, the Jainas, Buddhas, Vaisnavas, Saivas,

Saktas, the tribal aboriginals, prelates and potentates surrender at his feet seeking eternal salvation. The earliest reference to Jagannath-Daru worship is found in the Vedic literature. In the Mahabharata there is mention about a Veda near the eastern Kalingan sea which was visited by the Pandavas. Scholars have identified this spot



with the present day Jagannath temple complex of Puri. Indrabhuti the king of Sambala in his famous work Gyanasiddhi refers to Jagannath as Buddha in the 8th century A.D. The invocatory sloka of the famous Vajrayana tantric work says -

*“Pranipatyā Jagannatham
Sarvajinavararchitam,*

*Sarvabuddhamayam Siddham Vyapino
Gaganopamam.”*

Sankaracharya in course of his religious conquest of India in 8th/9th century A.D. visited Puri and worshipped Jagannath. The Anargharaghava Natakam of Murari Misra (9th century A.D.) refers to Purusottama. There

is mention about a ‘devayatana’ that existed at Puri in Prabodha Chandradayo Natakam of Kruna Misra (11th century A.D). The Saradadevi temple inscription of Maihar in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh describes Purusottama as the Lord of Utkala in 10th century A.D. In the Baramdeo temple epigraph of 1088 A.D. and



Nagpur inscription of 12th century A.D., there is reference to Purusottama Kshetra that existed in Orissa. In ancient Hindi literature like Bisaldev Raso (12th century A.D.) and Prithvirayo Roso of the same century Jagannath is described as the deity of Orissa.

Thus there is ample evidence of Jagannath at Puri since remote antiquity. The glory and greatness of Jagannath and Puridham find mention in the Puranas like Matsya, Brahma, Narada, Padma; Kapilasanhita, Niladrimahodaya and the Utkal Khanda of the Skanda Purana. In all such Puranas, he has been described as the famous deity of Odra or Utkala. In the tantric works like Kalika Purana, Rudrayamala tantra, Brahmayamala tantra and Tantrayamala, etc. of 10th century A.D. Jagannath is mentioned conspicuously.

The foreign scholars like Stevens, Wilson and Fergusson etc have traced his origin in Buddhism. Rajendralal Mitra has opined that during pre-Christian century only Buddhism was in vogue in Orissa. Chinese traveller like Yuan Chwang has narrated that Mahayana Buddhism was the religion of Utkala in the 7th century A.D. This school of scholars believe that original Jagannath temple complex was a Buddhist establishment. Very recently a Chunar sand stone pillar has been traced out below the fossilised Garuda pillar of Natamandira while repairing it by ASI. This further strengthen the Buddhist origin of Jagannath. From the funeral pyre of Buddha at Kusinagar a tooth relic was known to have been brought by Therakhema to Puri of Orissa. For this for centuries Puri was called Dantapuri. It is believed that it is still there as Brahmadhatu in the wooden statues of Jagannath, which is mysteriously shifted to the new idols at the time of Navakalevara. Alexandar Cunningham has stated that “the three shapeless figures of

Jagananth and his brother and sister are simple copies of the symbolical figures of the Buddhist triad i.e. Buddha, Dharma and Sangha of which the second is always represented as a female. The Buddhist origin of the Jagannath figure is proved beyond all doubt by their adoption as the representative of the Brahmanical avatar of Buddha in the annual almanacs of Mathura and Benaras” Dr. H. K. Mahatab has also refered to a similar stone of Asokan polish with the symbols of Buddha, Sangha and Dharma discovered and sent to Calcutta University sometime back for preservation in Asutosh Museum. According to him “the Savaras of Orissa were converted to Buddhism during the time of Asoka and worshipped the Triratna symbol in a Buddhist stupa at Puri. Later on in the 7th/8th century A.D., when Buddha was considered as an avatar of Visnu, Jagannath was also considered to be an avatara of Visnu. Gradually Buddhism lost itself in Vaisnavism.”

Another school of scholar like Pandit Nilakantha Das believed in Jaina association of Jagannath cult, so far its origin is concerend. He has tried to identify Nilamadhava with Kalinga Jina refered to in the Hatigumpha inscription of Kharavela which was known to have been taken by Nanda, king of Magadha as war trophy in 4th century B.C. The said Jaina symbol came to be known as Nila i.e. void or black. The image of Jagannath, that is why represents black colour or void. Subhadra is identified with the Dharmachakra of Jainas. Kaivalya so closely connected with Jagannath, has in fact Jaina origin. Kedar Nath Mahapatra and Binayak Misra also subscribe to this school of thought. For this they have attempted to identify the legendary Indradyumna with emperor Kharavela who brought back the Kalinga Jina in 1st century B.C. which was taken away by Mahapadma Nanda in 4th century B.C. to Pataliputra.



Jagannath is also adorned as Darudevata of Vedic period and Bhagavatism. According to P. Mukherji in about 5th century A.D. during the Gupta rule, Sankarsana and Vasudeva came to be worshipped as Balarama and Jagannath. The Brihat Samhita of Varahamihira of 6th century A.D. associated Ekanamsa with Subhadra. In Harivansa, she is described as the daughter of Nandaraja and also as the common sister of Jagannath and Balabhadra. Under the influence of the Bhagavatism, she came to be worshipped as Subhadra as their common Shakti being the sister, a phenomenon unknown to Indian tradition. Thus the cult of Shakti entered into the fold of Jagannath worship in a zigzag manner baffling the beholders and philosophers alike.

Another strange aspect of the Cult is the Sabar connection in the origin and worship of Jagannath tradition. Jagannath Das in the Musaliparva of Mahabharata has written in the 15th century A.D. and said that after the Mahabharata war Pandavas left for heaven through Himalaya. The Yadava Vansa of Krishna got destroyed by Krishna himself through the deluge of intoxication and homicide of the clan.

The Krishna avatara lila of Dvapara Yuga was thus to be concluded. Lord Krishna, to leave the mundane world was swinging in the forest. A Savara, thinking him to be a deer shoot an arrow at Krishna. When the Savara came to know of this he cried and prayed God to excuse him. Consoling him the Lord said that this incident was preordained to put an end to his avatar of Dvaparajuga. He further directed him to burn his body and to immerse the ashes in the ocean. The Savara could not completely burn his body. As per heavenly direction, he threw it in the ocean. It floated and in course of time came to Mahodadhi i.e. Puri sea beach. The then king of Puri Indradyumna dreamt of this and as per the divine

direction brought it to the palace to make the wooden statues of Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath.

A story goes that no carpenter could handle the wooden log. Ultimately an old carpenter came and assured the king that he can make the statues under one condition that he would not be disturbed for fourteen days and he would do his job inside the temple by locking the door. The king agreed to the terms and conditions. But hearing no sound of the carpenter from outside, the queen insisted the king to break open the door before the completion of fourteen days and to his surprise the king found the deities half made and the old carpenter vanished. He prayed God who advised him to worship him in that form which we find today. Many such other stories in different versions are found about the Savara connection of the Jagannath culture. The Daitapatis now claim their origin to this Sabar tribe.

Thus the synthetic and syncretic cult of Jagannath is the embodiment of several cults of diverse religious philosophies that existed in India in different periods of her long cultural history. In the historic process of assimilation, it has embraced strange contradictions and varied traditions of amazing diction. There is no discarding of any religious sentiment in Jagannath culture. Pt. Nilakantha Das has rightly surmised that "all the gods and goddesses attacking and appealing have found a place in the compound of the temple. Jagannath has welcomed and embraced all, but been overwhelmed by none and has lost himself in none."

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Pilgrim Tax and the Management of Sri Jagannath Temple

Dr. Janmejay Choudhry

After the establishment of British rule, the administration of the Sri Jagannath temple at Puri received serious attention of the British because of the importance of the temple. The British sought to follow their general principle of non-interference in religious matters with regard to the temple. The Maratha Subedar Bhatt Sathe had removed the raja of Khurda from the superintendence of the temple and thereafter the temple was managed by the Maratha government. However, being a Christian government, the British did not deem it proper to manage a Hindu temple. The Regulation IV of 1806 provided that the affairs of the temple should be managed by an assembly of Pandits or learned Brahmins, appointed by the government on recommendation by the Collector of Pilgrim Tax, according to the recording to the recorded rules and established usages. Subsequently the regulation was amended to make provision for the election of the assembly of pandits by persons attached to the temple. But the government felt that it would be wiser to vest the management of temple in one person on a hereditary basis.¹ The Raja of Khurda who was imprisoned in the fort of



Midnapore was considered to be the most suitable person for this purpose. He was, therefore, released. By the regulation IV of 1809, the superintendence of the temple was vested in him on a hereditary basis.² The Raja and his heirs were required to conduct themselves with "integrity, diligence and propriety" for maintaining their position as the superintendents of the temple on hereditary basis.

When, after the conquest of Orissa in 1803 the British government took over the management of the temple for some years they made attempt to assess the properties of Jagannath including the vast landed properties endowed with the mathas for the worship of the lord. Mr. C. Grome, the Collector of Puri, furnished a report in 1805 in which he gave an account of lands under the charge of the Mathadharis for the use of Jagannath.³ The British regularized the financial administration of the Jagannath temple. They continued the Maratha practice of collecting pilgrim tax, but made it more orderly, and decided to spend the money earned from this source on the repair of the temple and completion and repair



of the Jagannath road to Calcutta. They also provided better facilities for the pilgrims. Before the opening of the railways pilgrims had to track hundreds of miles on foot on rough roads and forest paths crossing many un-bridged rivers on the way. The fear of pestilence and highway robbery was always there and many unfortunate pilgrims died on the way. After the opening of the railways most of the pilgrims prefer to come by train, though every day many come to Puri by bus and other conveyances. It was the usual practice with the pilgrims of Jagannath to visit on the way Biraja, Lingaraja and Sakhigopal. The rush of pilgrims at Puri increases during important festivals like Rath yatra, Dola yatra, Chandan yatra and reaches its peak on Nabakalebar and Govinda Dwadasi. The number of up-country pilgrims is more during Dola yatra, while during Jhulana yatra and Rasa festivals, the local pilgrims prevail. Curious non-Hindu visitors who have no access to the temple often come during Rath yatra and Snana yatra when the celebrated deities come out of the temple and can be seen from outside. A large number of pilgrims and visitors also congregate at Puri during Durga puja and Christmas holidays.

A time-honored relationship exists between the pilgrims and the priests of Jagannath. The Pandas and the Pratiharis of the temple usually employ pilgrim agents to keep contact with their pilgrims coming from different parts of the country. These pilgrim agents or Jatri Pandas, some of whom serve pilgrims independently, are not necessarily all Brahmins. They used to visit remote corners of India with a view to recruit pilgrims before the important festivals and conducted their little flock all the way to Puri for which they were known as batya (journey men) or sathua (fellow travellers). Now-a-days as the pilgrims travel by train and bus the agents are no more required to accompany them from their homes but usually wait to receive them at important railway junctions and other pilgrim centers, and then conduct them to Puri. For

accommodating the pilgrims and visitors at Puri there are a large number of licenced lodging houses, hotels and Dharmasalas. The Pandas and Pratiharis of the Jagannath temple have a reputation for hospitality and they take all possible care of the pilgrims during their stay at Puri. The Pandas are paid by the pilgrims for the services rendered to them. Before the pilgrims depart from Puri another rite called Atika- Bandha is performed at Koili Baikuntha. During the Maratha rule pilgrims were persuaded to pay a round sum to feed the Brahmins, ascetics and the beggars with the Bhoga offered to Jagannath and the amount thus realized was appropriated by the priests. If a pilgrim was not able to pay the whole amount on the spot then he was to write a promissory note in his own hand to pay the remaining amount later. Either the pilgrim was remitting the amount after reaching home or the Panda's agent was going to his place to collect it. Most of the Pandas were earning a fair income from the pilgrims, out of which, they were spending quite a good sum for employing the pilgrim agents and the rest they were spending away on spendthrift habits.

The income from the pilgrim tax formed an important source of revenue to the government of Orissa. The Muslim rulers were supposed to have raised the enormous sum of 9,00,000 (nine lakhs of sicca rupiya) per annum from this tax.⁴ The pilgrim tax continued to be collected during the Maratha and the early British rule till it was abolished in 1804.⁵ The British government made elaborate arrangements for the collection of the tax and stationed a collector of pilgrim tax at Puri. By the regulation of IV of 1809⁶ the pilgrims, depending upon their financial position and status, were divided into four categories, such as, Laljatri, Nimlal, Bhurung, and Punjtirthee. The pilgrims coming from the south paid from rupees six to rupees two at Lokanath Ghat. Certain categories of persons including Sanyasis and very poor pilgrims were exempted from the tax. Total tax collected in a period of sixteen months from



January 1st, 1806 to April 30th, 1807 is stated to have been Rs.2,05,608.⁷ From a statement of the revenue account's office of Fort William it is gathered that the total collection from the pilgrim tax from 1805-6 to 1826-27 was sicca Rs.21,42,911-7 pies which came to an average of about 1 lakh of rupees per annum. Deducting total charges of the temple for the above period, the net receipts from tax was Rs.10,36,456-10-2 pies which was on an average of Rs.47,111-10 annas per annum.

The pilgrim tax was generally used for the interest of the temple rather than as a source of revenue to the government. It was decided to construct a better road over the old route from the northern border of Orissa to Puri particularly for the advantage of the pilgrims. The Jagannath road was finally reported to be completed in 1825. In July 1825, Thomas Pakenham, the Collector of Cuttack, suggested the construction of rent-houses or 'Sarai' to mitigate the sufferings of the pilgrims at convenient distances in the Jagannath road. But the proposal was not feasible immediately as the surplus from the pilgrim tax had been almost fully spent in the construction of the Jagannath road. The authorities admitted their limitations that the utmost effort of the government was only a partial remedy for improving the conditions of pilgrimage. Still 'it is not the less necessary, however, to do what humanity requires.'⁸ The management of a Hindu temple by a Christian government was obnoxious in the ages of devout Christianity. The European mind was first awakened by the fearful accounts of Jagannath temple, its festivals and customs narrated by Claudius Buchman, vice-provost of the College of Fort William, who visited Orissa in 1806. He gave a horrible picture of the pilgrims and their self immolation under the wheels of the car of Jagannath. The preaching of Christianity and distribution of the Bible among the pilgrims, he believed, would remove their superstitions, and he wanted the government to undertake such measures. But the settled policy of the government

was "to support the natives in the undisturbed exercise of their religious rites and ceremonies and to preserve their places of worship inviolate".⁹ The Baptist Missionary Society undertook the work at Puri in right earnest from 1823 with the belief that "a blow at idolatry here, will prove a blow at the root." William Bampton and then Sutton preached the gospels at Puri and denounced the worship of Jagannath publicly which only excited 'madness of the mob' and led to violent opposition. It was not possible for them to influence so easily the faith of a people, molded by age-old customs and religious feelings. Bampton died at Puri on 17 December 1830 and towards the end of 1832, Sutton left Puri after which the missionary station was not regularly occupied. In the views of the missionaries, the pilgrim tax was a great slur on the good name of the Christian government. It was 'inhuman, in politic and un-Christian.' The Baptist Missionary Society presented petitions to the House of Commons and the Court of Directors against 'British support of Hindoo idolatry.' They steadily pursued the matter, and in course of a few years, their efforts were crowned with 'considerable success.'¹⁰

In 1831 Lord William Bentick, the Governor-General, did not agree at all with the views of the missionaries to abolish the pilgrim tax. In his minute of 25 March 1831, he said; "we deem it the bounden duty of a government ruling over a Hindu and Musalman community, and professing a respect for their religions and customs, to protect and aid them in the exercise of those harmless rites, which are not opposed like suttee, infanticide and self-immolation to the dictates of humanity, and of every religious creed; that he therefore thinks that all those places of pilgrimage, with those who frequent them, are upon principle entitled to our special care; that a tax upon pilgrims is just and expedient."¹¹ But Charles Grant, President of the Board of Control in Lord Grey's ministry (1830-34), considered the problems in a different light. He was convinced



that the government, with best of intentions, had allowed its toleration to fructify into active patronage of idolater, and that the support given by the State might be much relaxed without any breach of existing obligations. Accordingly, a Despatch was prepared which received the signature of the Court of Directors on 20 February, 1833. The Despatch observed that "from being simply conservators of the public peace at certain numerous assemblages of the people, we have become the chief agents in sustaining an idol establishment. In every way we became practices to the accounts and general management of the establishment, including the supervision and disposal of its revenue."¹² Naturally the government appeared before the people of the country in such intimate connection with unhappy and debasing superstitions in question, as almost necessary to inspire the people with a belief either that we admit the divine origin of those superstitions, or at least that we ascribe to them some peculiar and venerable authority.

The Court of Directors arrived at certain conclusion which were communicated to the Government of India and they were as follows : "First, that the interference of British functionaries in the interior management of native temples, in the customs, habits and religious proceedings of their priests and attendants, in the arrangement of their ceremonies, rites and festivals, and generally in the conduct of their interior economy shall cease. Secondly, that the pilgrim tax shall everywhere be abolished. Thirdly, that the fines and offerings shall no longer be considered as source of revenue by the British government, and they shall consequently no longer be collected or received by the servants of the East India Company. Fourthly, that no servants of the East India Company shall hereafter be engaged in the collection, or management or custodies of money in the nature of fines and offerings, under whatever name they may be known or in whatever manner obtained, or whether furnished in cash or in kind.

Fifthly, that no servant of the East India Company shall hereafter derive any emolument resulting from the above mentioned or similar sources. Sixthly, that in all matters relating to their temples, their worship, their festivals, their religious practices, their ceremonial observances, our native subjects be left entirely to themselves. Seventhly, that in every case in which it had been found necessary to form and keep up a police force, specially with a view to the peace and security of the pilgrims or the worshippers, such police shall hereafter be maintained and made available out of the general resources of the country."¹³

In spite of such categorical instruction, no prompt action was taken in India. The question was again raised in the Parliament in 1838, and John Hobhouse, the President of the Board of Control, assured the house to take necessary steps in the matter. On 8 August 1838, the Court of Directors signed another Despatch to India urging upon the authorities "for abolishing the pilgrim tax and for discontinuing the connection of the government with the management of all funds which may be assigned for the support of the religious institutions in India."¹⁴ Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, took prompt action on the matter. On 20 April 1840, an Act (Act 10 of 1840) was passed to abolish the exaction of all taxes and fees upon pilgrims resorting to Allahabad, Gaya and Puri. It provided that "the Superintendence of the temple of Jagannath and its interior economy, the conduct and management of its affairs, and the control over the priests, officers, and servants attached to the temple, shall continue and vested with the raja of Khurda for the time being."¹⁵

Moreover, "the raja of Khurda shall not receive or allow to be received by any person connected with the said temple, any payment, other than such voluntary donations as may be freely offered, from any person resorting to the said temple for the performance of religious ceremonies." From 3 May 1840, the collection



of tax from pilgrims actually ceased in the temple of Jagannath. Thus ended one significant phase in the British relation with the temple. The Christian government no longer played the role of controller of the temple, to make it thrown open to the pilgrims without realization of any tax from them. The abolition of pilgrim tax, however, did not sever the British connection with the Jagannath temple. The government still paid the fixed amount of Rs.56,342 to the raja of Khurda for management of the temple and the temple lands were under the control of the revenue authorities. According to the direction of the Court of Directors, the Sadar Board of Revenue decided to transfer the management of those lands to the Superintendent of the Temple. Towards the end of 1843, the actual transfer of lands took place and the annual allocation to the temple was reduced to Rs.36,178/-.¹⁶

The donation and the pilgrim tax were "two ingredients of one and the same system." Consequently, the Board concluded that after abolition of the pilgrim tax, the payment for maintenance of the temple must also be stopped.¹⁷ For a long time the problem could not be solved. In 1850 a Memorial was submitted to the Court of Directors by the Protestant missionaries of London Missionary Society and Church of Scotland pointing out the pernicious effect of government donation to the temple. Ultimately the Governor General-in-Council decided that in lieu of an annual grant to the temple, some lands in the district of Puri yielding an equal amount of revenue should be handed over to the raja of Khurda. The Commissioner of Cuttack was directed to take necessary steps in that connection and by 1863 all payments by the government to the management of the temple finally ceased.¹⁸

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Abbreviations :

- B.R.P- Bengal Revenue Proceeding.
 H.C. - House of Commons.
 J.T.C- Jagannath Temple Correspondences.
 C.R.R- Cuttack Revenue Records.
 P.P- Parliamentary Papers.
 O.R.R- Orissa Revenue Records.
 Survey and Settlement Report-Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of the Province of Orissa.

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Jagannatha Temple at Rupadeipur

Ratnakar Mohapatra

The Jagannatha temple of Rupadeipur is situated at a distance of about 5 kms from Satasankha on the way to Balanga from Puri. This temple consists of two structures such as vimana and jagamohana. It is built in laterite and bricks. The temple faces to east.

The vimana of the Jagannatha temple is a pidha deula and its height is about 35 feet from the ground level. The entire structure of the vimana is thickly plastered with lime. It has four parts such as pista, bada, gandi and mastaka. The pista of the vimana is about 1 foot high. The bada is panchanga type i.e. having five fold divisions viz. pabhaga, tala jangha, bandhana, upara jangha and baranda. The base of the bada is a square of 30 feet. All the component parts of the bada are mostly undecorated except the baranda. A few erotic scenes are depicted on the baranda portion of the bada.

The three side central niches of the bada are housed with the parsvadevata images of Trivikrama, Narasimha and Varaha. The image

of Trivikrama is the parsvadevata of the northern side. The slab of the deity is made of chlorite and it is about 1½ feet in height. The four-handed image of Trivikrama has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. He holds chakra in his right upper hand, padma (lotus) in right lower hand, conch in left upper hand and gada in left

lower hand respectively. One of his legs is firmly set on the pedestal while the uplifted left leg is touching the image of Brahma. The figure of Garuda is carved on the right side of the pedestal.



Narasimha is the parsvadevata of the western side. The four-handed image of Narasimha has been

installed on the plain pedestal. The upper two hands display sankha and chakra, while the lower two hands are engaged to take out the entrails of Hiranya Kashipu, the demon. Garuda, the conventional mount of the deity is installed on the right side of the pedestal. A diminutive female devotee figure is carved on the left side of the pedestal.



Varaha is the parsvadevata of the southern side. The slab of the deity is about 1½ feet high and it is made of chlorite. The four-armed image of Varaha has been installed on the plain pedestal. He holds chakra in his right upper hand, a hand of a female figure, possibly Lakshmi in right lower hand. The left uplifted arm bears the image of goddess Prthvi and the left lower hand is completely broken. A diminutive Garuda figure is installed on the pedestal and it is noticed beneath two legs of the deity. All the three parsvadevatas are housed in the pidha mundi niches.

The gandi of the vimana is a pyramidal superstructure and it consists of two potalas; the lower and the upper potalas, which contain three and two flat-shaped pidhas respectively. Each pidha is decorated with small tankus in all sides. There is a gaja-kranta motif (lion on elephant) projected on the upper pidha of the lower potala of the eastern side. Dopichha lions are fixed on the top of the kanika pagas of the gandi. Garuda figures are inserted in the four cardinal directions of the beki above rahas. They are acting as the supporting elements of the amalakasila of the mastaka.

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

The sanctum preserves the Daru images of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra as the presiding deity of the temple. Besides the Jagannatha "Trinity", Sudarsana Chakra is also being worshipped in the sanctum. All these Chaturdha murtis are installed on the simhasana of 3 feet high. Other deities such as Lakshmi, Madana Mohana, Radha-Krishna, Anthua-Gopala, Patitapabana are also being worshipped in the sanctum. All the above deities (except presiding deities) are made of brass.

The ceiling of the sanctum is supported by the four massive pillars. The northern side inner wall of the sanctum contains the images of Chandra Shekhara and Durga in its niches. Both these images are made of sand stones and about 8 inches in height. They display usual attributes in their hands. The inner walls of the sanctum are completely plain. The figures of Jaya and Vijaya are depicted on both side inner walls of the doorway. They are acting as the dvarapalas of the sanctum doorway.

The vimana has one doorway towards the jagamohana. The jambs of the doorway are devoid of decorative ornamentation. The centre of the doorway lintel is carved with an image of Gaja-Lakshmi. The lintel is also relieved with nagabandhas, lotus flower devices and creepers with the frolicking boys. The navagraha figures are not found on the architrave above the doorway lintel.

The jagamohana of the temple is a flat roofed structure and its height is about 12 feet. According to the opinion of local people, it was built in 1970's.

Outer walls of the jagamohana are completely plain. The western side inner left wall of the jagamohana contains images of Satya Narayana, Devi Lakshmi and another Satya Narayana. The slab of the deity Satya Narayana is about 2½ feet in height. The four-handed image of Satya Narayana has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. He displays a conch in right upper hand, varada mudra with a small lotus in right lower hand, panji or horoscope in left upper hand and padma or lotus in left lower hand respectively. This image is locally worshipped as Surya-Narayana. Another stone slab contains an image of Devi Lakshmi and its height is about 2½ feet. The four-armed image of Lakshmi has been installed on the lotus pedestal.



She holds padma in upper two hands, amruta kalasa in left lower hand and the right lower hand displays varada mudra respectively. The slab of devi is made of granite. There is another slab, which also contains an image of Satya-Narayana. It has been installed on the plain pedestal. He displays rosary (akshamala) in right upper hand, panji or horoscope in right lower hand, abhaya mudra in left upper hand and the left lower hand lies upon his left knee. Garuda, the conventional mount of the deity is carved on the right side of the pedestal. All these three images are housed in a large niche of the wall and it is decorated with makara headed arch. According to the priests of temple, these three images were made during the construction period of the jagamohana.

The right side western inner wall niche of the jagamohana contains an image of Devi Vimala and Ghata Mangala (a stone above a kalasa). The slab of Devi Vimala is about 2 feet in height. The four-armed image of Devi Vimala has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. She displays a diminutive female figure in right upper hand, varada mudra in right lower hand, pasa ankusa in left upper hand and kalasa (amruta kalasa) in left lower hand. Lion, the conventional mount of Devi is carved on the right side of the pedestal. Another stone slab is carved with a

kalasa crowned by a green coconut and it is locally worshipped as Ghata Mangala.

There is an octagonal Garuda pillar of five feet high noticed in the centre of the jagamohana. The figure of Garuda is kept in kneeling posture on the top of the pillar.

The jagamohana has one doorway towards the eastern side. The doorway of the jagamohana is devoid of decorative elements. Two lions are projected on the ground of both sides of the doorway. They are acting as the dvarapalas of the main doorway of the temple. An Aruna Pillar of 12 feet high is installed in front of the jagamohana. There is no boundary wall around the temple complex.

According to public opinion, the temple is not earlier than 600 years. On the basis of the architectural features, the construction period of the temple can be tentatively assigned to the 2nd half of the 16th century A.D. Most probably, this temple was built by the king of Puri.

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Sreekshetra : A Tourist Destination

*Pareswar Sahoo
Gayatri Das*

Sreekshetra - the soul of Orissa, is identified in the ethnographic map of India's east coast. It has been considered as one of the four dhams (sacred religious place) in India, and in true sense a high ranking tourist destination. It is bounded by the Bay of Bengal in the east and known as the summer capital of Orissa next to Bhubaneswar. Puri offers not only nature in all its glory with its finest white sand beaches, rivers and marine drives, but also a great tradition of architecture, monuments and sculptural art. Historically Puri bears the two great temples like the Sun temple (the Black Pagoda) at Konark (Arka Kshetra) and the Lord Jagannath temple (the White Pagoda) at Puri Sreekshetra. The temple of Jagannath built on an altar presents an imposing sight and can be seen from miles away that means from Batamangala. It is a fine specimen of the Pancharatha style¹ of Orissan architecture. The credit goes to Anantavarman Chodaganga Dev (1073-1147) for its construction. It is approachable by four entrances on the east, west, north and south through Lion's Gate (Simhadwara) Elephant Gate (Hastidwara) Horse Gate (Aswadwara) and Tiger Gate (Byaghradwara) respectively, which are considered as very sacred from the historical and religious point of view. They are said to represent Dharma², Jnana³, Vairagya⁴ and Aiswarya⁵.

In fact each one of these monuments is a master piece, the work of so many artisans, sculptors and architects reflected on stones. However the cult of Jagannath is all pervasive depicting three colours White, Yellow and Black⁶ in the form of Balabhadra, Subhadra and Lord Jagannath. The three deities signify the attitude of Oriyas that is universalism as a matter of principle of co-existence.⁷ The long coast of Puri was once famous for its maritime trade and commerce.

Besides the central attraction of Lord Jagannath temple of Puri the holy trinity is guarded by eight Siva temples i.e Markendeswar, Kapalamochan, Lokanath, Jameswar, Nilakantheswar, Bilweswar, Isaneswar and Pataleswar, stationed in eight directions and save the people of Puri from danger. Similarly eight Mother Goddesses like Batamangala, Alanchandi, Ardhasani, Marchika, Narayani, Shyamakali, Dakshinakali and Ramachandi also guard the Holy Trinity. Another site for the tourists is the Panchatirtha situated in the temple premises of Puri adding the new feathers in its historical potentialities. Yet other sites are Markandeswar Tank, Indradyumna Tank, Swetaganga, Mahodadhi and Rohinikunda⁸.

Another unique and distinct feature of the Land of Puri or Sreekshetra is a form of painting known as Pattachitra⁹ or palmleaf paintings. Drawing of Chita¹⁰ and Jhoti¹¹ adore the walls of



the traditional thatched houses and the floors and ground nearby. The village of Raghurajpur on the way to Puri attracts the tourists in this regard.

The carpet of Puri is considered as a cherished acquisition. It could be termed out to be the single most expensive purchase you end up making on that glorious trip to Puri. A Puri carpet is a multi-purpose object that fulfills the contrary functions. It is an object of high decoration, yet lies under the feet of people forgiving warmth, smoothness and protection from dampness. It is as some would say one of the selected few articles of home decoration that has remained unchanged through the centuries. Prized for its warmth, visual appeal and individual enduring quality, it has embellished the hall of the kings and sultans of a bygone time and still a cherished item in modern days.

Next to the carpet acquisition, Sakhigopal is the leading place emerging for the revival of nationalism with the pioneering philosophy of Panchasakhas and the Satyavadi School and for the temples of Radha Krishna and Rama, Laxman, Sita. Lord Krishna is the presiding deity of this temple. The stone image of Lord Gopinath alias Gopal was at Kanchi which was later on brought by king Purusottama Dev to Orissa and installed at Sakhigopal. A great festival is annually held here on the Anla Navami¹² day in the Month of Kartika to see the feet of Radha. It is meant both for the internal and inland tourist as a tourist destination through which a great deal of social interchange and entrepreneurship take place.

Above all, from spiritualists to the monument lovers, the Sun temple (the Black Pagoda) in Puri district is distinguished as an enduring symbol of Orissan art and architecture on the faces of granite. It stands as a symbol of beauty through the centuries and even today fascinating tourists from all over the world. The historical monument like the Sun temple at Konark

has been declared as a Heritage Site by UNESCO. This lovely temple on the sea shore was built in the 13th century A.D. It represents the matured phase of Orissan architecture. Adding to its charm is the beautiful expanse of the glittering highways with its swaying palm trees, azure sea and the golden sea beach¹³. Although it is sharing its architecture in common with northern temple styles such as at Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, and Tose in Rajasthan, but Orissa developed a characteristic local style that is distinguished.

The festivals of Puri district like the Beach Festival and the Konark Festival provides enormous opportunity to the tourists both from inland, and abroad. By this festival a common cultural synthesis has emerged. In the months of Kartika and Margasir like November and December these two festivals take place with a great pomp and gait. The typical life style and the local food preparation helps a lot for the tourist influx to Orissa and particularly to Sreeksheeta. All these conspicuous characteristics make Sreeksheeta as the leading tourist destination not only in India but also in the world and open up a new chapter in globalization.

Over the centuries it has attracted people from wide and far, especially preachers, saints, philosophers, educationists and tourists from all over the world. Examples can be given of Hiuen Tsang, the Buddhist Chinese traveller; Ramanuja, the Vaishnavite saint philosopher; Sri Chaitanya, the exponent of Radha Krishna consciousness; Nanak, the founder of Sikhism etc. who came here in religious pursuits. A meeting point of so many traditions, faiths, and philosophies like Jainism, Vaishnavism, Saivism and Saktism, Puri beholds crowds round the calendar year who come to see the ancient historical-cum-religious sites.

The new concept of tourism has emerged in the recent days as the central pillar of the



services economy which can uniquely help the society to respond to global challenges, if its growth is managed properly with an emphasis on poverty alleviation. The projected growth of tourism sector has its broad direct and indirect impact across all economics, particularly those of developing states. Being a topmost tourist destination it attracts the tourists.

For tourism management and to achieve a self propelling growth of economy in the tourism sector, the following aspects should be managed.

(i) Demarcation of the rural tourism sector as a special tourism segment and allowing only focused tourists to the sites.

(ii) Well qualified educated guides having the sound historical knowledge should be appointed to properly guide the tourists.

(iii) Orissa Government authorities to give exposure to local entrepreneurs near the tourism spots in different forms viz; exhibitions, fairs and festivals, competitions, symposiums etc regarding the historical relevance interpreted generally and in particular with regard to contemporary importance.

(iv) Preservation and adherence to the "codes of ethics" of tourism development as prescribed by the World Tourism Organization in 1999.

(v) It is necessary for the Govt of Orissa and the Orissa branch of Indian Tourism, to give priority to the tourism departments of other states like, Andhrapradesh Tourism, Uttaranchal Tourism, Tamilnadu Tourism, and West Bengal Tourism to open their stalls in various Exhibitions.

(vi) Imposition of strict and punishable ban on illicit activities, prostitutions, drug trafficking and any other activity that disturbs traditional culture and heritage.

(vii) Specially outstanding market facilities should be developed in the vicinity area with the

availability of all commodities in well affordable prices.

(viii) A yoga center with modern facilities should come up in the vicinity of the area.

(ix) Developing a special armed professional Tourism Protection Force (non-voluntary) with sufficient caliber to prevent physical assaults to the tourists as well as to the tourism resources of the region.

(x) Giving wide publicity to potentially attractive places of tourist attractions, the history, traditions, art, music, climate, and information about the rural entrepreneurship and the availability of accommodation in different cost segments and the smooth convenience of transportation etc.

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Mahaprasad of Lord Jagannath

Dr. Harihar Kanungo

After Lord Jagannath was unearthed from Sonepur and transferred to Puri, He was installed in a patola of 38 yards. Certain rituals and rites were then observed in his worship and the partaking of Mahaprasad is one of them. Since the days of antiquity, the Sriksetra Puri Dham has gained prominence as a Holy place. The

Mahaprasad (offering) of Lord Jagannath, the presiding deity is world famous. While the offerings for the deities in other temples in India are called prasad, those made for Jagannath are called Mahaprasad. Puri has the unique custom of discarding racism, casteism or the

stigma of left over, when people share Mahaprasad together. Pandit Surjanarayan Dash, discussing about the speciality of Mahaprasad writes, "Among the four Holiest places of India like Rameswar, Jagannath, Badri and Dwaraka, the land of Lord Jagannath is the most sought after one. Its geographical location attracts many people. Jagannath's Mahaprasad is partaken en masse not withstanding caste and religion - and this secular attitude has popularised the Jagannath

culture. The ritualistic Brahmins, Ksatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras do not discriminate among themselves, while sharing Mahaprasad or even sharing its left over among one another. At the time Mahaprasad is consumed by large groups of people, caste distinction is thrown into the air albeit for a short time. At that moment caste

difference is forgotten in creed, deed and word, people eat and feed this holy cooked rice and take away some rice from other's mouths and eat it themselves considering this act as a holy and sanctifying ritual. Such a practice arouses a feeling of unanimity and fraternity

and establishes the oneness of Hinduism. Besides it also reiterates the liberal attitude of humanism.¹ While partaking Mahaprasad from one another, the devotees do not scruple about caste, creed or religion nor do they mind about eating it from others mouths. It is very difficult but not impossible to discover precisely when and why this tradition of mass partaking of Mahaprasad became an integral part of Jagannath worship. Pandit Krupasindhu Misra opines that this tradition was





set by king Jajati Keshari. From a legend mentioned in the book "Jagannatha Kaifiyata", glorifying Mahaprasad, it is known that Mahaprasad was introduced from the time of Jajati.²

Tantra worship had been propagated and established by the time king Jajati, the descendant of the Soma dynasty conquered Orissa. The Soma Vamshis themselves practised Saivism.

But prior to them, by virtue of the patronage from the Bhaumakaras, Saivism, Saktism and Tantrism became popular and gained the status of state religion. After Jajati installed Jagannath at Puri and made rules for his worship, he, out of respect for tantra, promulgated the Lord's worship as per tantrik methods. In the tantrik cult, Lord Jagannath is regarded as Bhairava and the Goddess Vimala as Bhairavi.

*"Utkala Navi Deshescha Bimala
Purushottame / Bimala Bhairavi Yatra
Jagannathastu Bhairava.//"*

So the Bhairavi Chakra has been drawn near the Ratna Simhasana or Vedi in the Jagannatha temple. Sri Jagannath is installed on this Srichakra. Image of Bhairava was also installed on the Ratna Simhasana.

It is learnt from a report of James Hunter, dated 6.12.1806 that the image was removed from Ratna Simhasana afterwards.³ In deference to the Tantric Cult, Jajati installed Jagannath as a tantric deity in Puri. This tantric traditions developed as a part of Vajrayana from the Buddhist era. In the tantric tradition anything offered to Lord Jagannath cannot be contaminated by caste or touch. Regarding this Prof. Prahallad Pradhan, quoting from "Hevajratantra" and "Guhyasiddhi" says, "The practice by devotees of taking food offered to the Panchen Lama has some similarity with the

communal eating of food offered to Lord Jagannath by the devotees of the Hindu community, irrespective of caste. This writer thinks that it is the remnant of a Buddhist practice of the tantric period, still lingering in the Puri temple. Food in the Puri temple is not polluted by the touch of a person of any caste, even if it is left over after eating and thrown on the road. It is called Nirmalya or unsullied.⁴

The religious tradition of Orissa has accepted Jagannath as a tantric deity. This tantrism is manifested in his worship rituals and festivals. As per the Sakta faith, Prasad offered to Jagannath becomes Mahaprasad only after it is offered to Goddess Vimala. In deference for this tradition, king Jajati constructed a 38 cubic feet high temple for Sri Jagannath and at its Nairuta angle, thereafter constructed an 18 cubic feet high temple for Goddess Vimala. As per Jajati's arrangement, the offering made to Jagannath becomes Mahaprasad (the grand offering) only after it is offered to Vimala. It has been mentioned earlier that Lord Jagannath is installed on the Bhairavi Chakra. Because of offerings made to him are never contaminated by touch, Sir John Woodroff comments on this, "During the Chakra all eat, drink and worship together, there being no distinction of caste." Kularnava Tantra also states that after initiation to Bhairavi Chakra people of different castes shed this caste difference. But they again develop this difference if they refrain themselves from Bhairavi :-

*"Prabrutte Bhairavi Chakre
Sarve Barnah Dwijatayah/
Nibrutte Bhairavi Chakre
Sarve Barnah Pruthak Pruthak.//"*

Pandit Nilakantha Das says that the place where offerings are made to Jagannath is called Bhairavi Chakra. That is why Ratnavedi is called the Lord of Bhairavi Chakra or Tantrapitha. So



the tradition of sharing Mahaprasad found in Jagannath temple is based on the tantric tradition (Parampara) associated with the cult of Vajrayana.

This cult of Buddhist tantra promulgated by Indrabhuti in the 8th century A.D. was transformed into Vajrayana in course of time. The cult of Vajrayana created tantric tradition in the land of Jagannath. In addition to this, the worship of Jagannath has also been greatly influenced by the Savari tantra as He is the deity of the Savara tribals. Jagannath's Mahaprasad is called "Abadha." In the tribal Saura language spoken by the Sabaras, Abadha means the act of boiling some thing in water.⁵ Mahaprasad is called so as the rice used in it is boiled in water - (Ab-ada = boiling in water). Therefore, by the advise of Sankaracharya the then king made arrangement for the offering of boiled rice before Jagannath. This arrangement seems to be influenced by the tribal Sabari culture. Following the Odda Sabara Culture offerings consisting of rice boiled in bamboo poles (Menjan bhinne) or Mayens (some eatable roasted in fire) are placed before the God. This boiled or roasted cookerries were described by Sarala Das, the Sudra Saint as Sauribidhi cooking. Such offerings were said to have been made to the God called Sabari Narayan worshipped before Nilamadhab by his wife Sriya, the Sabara girl at Sripura. The Sauras, the original priests of Sabari Narayan of Sripura point out that, their original God has left for Puri and after being installed there in Srimandir, is at present called Jagannath.⁶

Prior to installing Lord Jagannath at Puri, Jajati Keshari must have been aware of the firm

tradition followed in worshipping the Lord. By that time, Lord Jagannath had been honoured and recognised as the state deity. So while reinitiating the Lord's worship he might not have thought it proper to violate that strong tradition. On the contrary adhering to that tradition might have helped in realising his political ambition. He promulgated the practice of mass sharing of Mahaprasad by the devotees, irrespective of caste or varna and such practice must have helped in fostering a sense of unity among his subjects. Thereby, he not only recognised a long followed rich tradition, he also must have attained a political mileage.

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Cult of Lord Jagannath and Ideals of Human Philosophy

Dr. Chinmayee Satpathy



Orissa is a holy land of different gods and goddesses. Lord Jagannath is the supreme Lord of the land. Jagannath is the center of human conscience and consciousness. The cult of Lord Jagannath is the cult of Orissa. The religion of Jagannath is the religion of Orissa. The history of Lord Jagannath is the history of Orissa. Kindness, benevolence, tolerance, peace and tranquility are the ornaments of the philosophy which enrich and deepen the sense of humanitarian values and absolute freedom. The cult develop the mental insight to build up super human consciousness for obtaining liberation from materialistic needs and desires and to attain salvation and to merge with the absolute. Lord Jagannath is symbolic in character. Some says he is the incarnation of Lord Krishna, Others say he is the embodiment of Lord Buddha, Siva and Bhairaba. The philosophy of Adveitabada of Hindu Guru Sankaracharya tells Aham Brahmasmi which means Brahma and the Soul are the one and inseparable. He is dual as well as one. He is Purusottama as well as Sunyapurusa. This is the uniqueness of the Jagannath philosophy. From Aryan to Dravidian, from Saivites to Vaishnavites, from Vedic to Tantric all the religious ideologies have been assimilated and integrated in this universal philosophy of Lord Jagannath.

The cult of Lord Jagannath is a beautiful combination of worldly and cosmic realities. The speciality of the cult is that all the religions of the world has been merged within it to make it flexible,

open and generous. Like all other religions it has not been narrowed down itself within certain idealistic values and principles. The cult is based upon peak ideals of democracy, humanitarian principle of equality, justice, honesty and integrity, which purely illustrates against the conservative outlook of castism, sectarianism and any such other barriers for attainment of complete universalism. Therefore, Jagannath has been called the Lord of the whole universe. From Adveitabada of Hindu Guru Sankaracharya to message of rebirth in Gita it has always enlightened the human consciousness for attainment of Moksha or salvation. The cult depicts that the ultimate end of self realization is the merger of soul with Paramatma, the Satchitananda-Sat (Truth) + Chit (Consciousness) + Ananda (Eternal joy).

Jagannath Philosophy deeply influences the social life, literature and culture of Orissa, which makes the Oriyas, energetic and sensitive. Every Oriya feels proud to express that Lord Jagannath as part and parcel of his life is a family member to share all his pleasure and pain. There is no other religion in the world where a common man see his Lord as his own family member who is an inseparable entity. It is based upon the beliefs of Sarbajana Hitaya Sarbajana Sukhaya that the cult is meant for the shake of well being of entire humanity of the universe. According to Indian classics only the Brahmins have the rights to do the Vedic rituals of Lords. But with an exception



to that Jagannath Philosophy entails that every year during the time of Rathayatra the Daitapati Sevakas of Lord Jagannath, the heirs of Savara King Biswabasu get the opportunity to provide all services and worship to Lord during his stay outside the temple. This practice depicts the humbleness and modesty of the religion. Kaibalya or Mahaprasad is called Arnabrahma, which destroy all evilness and enmity by extending the message of love, mutuality and support. During different ceremonial occasions, marriage and thread ceremony, Mahaprasad is distributed among the friends and relatives. It is said that by offering the same it perpetuates the ties of friendship and brotherhood. Not only in the holy deed but also after the death of the person after all Sanskaras are over, the friends and relatives enter the home of the person only after taking the Mahaprasad of Lord Jagannath.

The cult is a simple illustration of human nature and traits of God which makes it unique and distinctive from other worldly religions. The natural history of the cult also reflect the synthesis of human values and character. Different facets of human life have emerged within the cult to give it a unique place and stature. The devotee never think himself separate from his lord. The two are inseparable and are tightly hold with each other in the sacred bond of love, devotion and loyalty. Like daily happenings and day-to-day activities of a common man, everyday rituals of the God includes bathing, brushing of teeth, dressing with a variety of colourful dresses and adornments in definite time intervals. Because of these many traits and attributes it has been replicated in various facets of life. It also illustrates that there is no discrimination and inequity among the people of different strata. All are equal before the Universal Lord. Whoever completely surrenders before Him with humble motive leaving apart all other material and non-material existence He takes care of all pain and pleasures by sheltering him under

his supreme grace mitigating all His sorrows and sufferings. When different facets of the cult is thoroughly unfold it has been profoundly noticed that it spreads the ideals of human philosophy generously reflecting life in varied dimensions. From king to ordinary man all are equal in the God's empire. The cult of Lord Jagannath has crossed all the borders of casteism, untouchability and disruptive selfish motives of human temperament. It proclaims the victory of human endeavour over all narrowness and conservatism.

The cult spreads the massage of patriotism and national integration. As sugar and potato were imported from outside the country it has been prohibited in the kitchen of the temple as vegetables of foreign origin, which exemplify that the cult promotes patriotism and loyalty towards own country or nation. The foods are cooked in usual Indian style through steaming, thereby preserving the nutrient values intact and it also makes the food tasty and flavoursome. Cakes are prepared from grinding rice, *Saga* (green leaves) is given as religious offering to God everyday which is the daily food of a common man in the State. It has also been noticed that inside the temple of Lord Jagannath from Brahmin to untouchables all takes food from the same plate without any unfairness and discrimination among them. It shows that Jagannath is not the God of rich and affluent class of people but the God of the subjugated, needy and poor. Before him rich and poor, privileged and deprived, superior and inferior, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Jain and Buddhist all are similar. Therefore, he is called Jagat Natha i.e the God of entire universe and not confined to any religion, sect or creed.

Jagannath is called Darubrahma. It is said that Daru is the only object where the Brahma or the Sensitivity confines itself. The holy body of the three deities are made up of Neem wood



instead of any costly metals like gold, silver or iron. Because if the metals are thrown into the fire those get heated and nobody can touch them. But if Daru is set into fire, though one side get burnt the other side remains cool since there is much resistance to hit, which teaches us to be tolerant and lenient and to become broad and generous to engulf all pain and miseries for realization of the ultimate truth. During the Sri Gundicha Yatra the Lord takes his brother Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra along with him instead of taking his beloved wife Sri Lakshmi, which reveals that romanticism is sacrificed even by the Lord himself. In this incarnation Lord Jagannath himself takes birth as the younger brother and Balabhadra as the elder and in the Ratha Yatra the Nandighosha Yatra of Jagannath takes place at last after the Yatra of Balabhadra in Taladwaja Ratha and Devi Subhadra in Debadalana Ratha is over. It express the sense of respect, politeness and loyalty for siblings and elders.

The world famous Ratha Yatra propagates the message of universalism, impartiality and universal equality. Once in a year the God himself comes to his disciples for giving peace and pleasure to the mankind freeing them from all their pains and problems. The persons who are prohibited from entering the temple get the opportunity to see the three Gods in their Chariots. Many people says, who see Lord Jagannath in the Chariot during the festival does not take rebirth again. The carnival also demonstrates the major ideal event where the king, at the highest position of the State serves the God by engaging himself in the lowest job like scavenging, which is the job of untouchables. The event illustrates his modest polite moral bending before Almighty which breaks the sense of superiority and self arrogance. For this lowest work the king gets the highest

honour and he is called the prime servent of Lord. In the eyes of people as the representative of Lord Jagannath the king is also the Moving Incarnation of Lord Bishnu which increase the sense of self confidence and self realisation. In the holy Patitapabana Yatra from highest to lowest cadre everybody is equal and alike.

The mortality of the mundane existence has been clearly reflected in the observance of Navakalebara which add new synthesis to human life and existence. Since the human body is perishable but the soul never get destroyed, so it takes a new form after a life period is over. Since Lord Jagannath symbolizes the Human God, he is also abided by the same principle of rebirth and regeneration. Once in twelve years the celebration of Nabakalebara asserts that like human being God also take rebirth by leaving apart his old wooden body and the Navibrahma is transferred from old to new body. Some says the soul of Lord Jagannath is nothing else but the tooth of Lord Buddha.

From the overall analysis it has been clear that the cult of Lord Jagannath is quite distinctive and idiosyncratic in its character and for this reason it has been treated as the best religion of the world. From traditionalistic principles to modernistic views all are embedded within the cult to give it a unique position among the world religions. Starting from socialist philosophy to universal brotherhood, nationalistic ideals to patriotism, devotion, dedication and perseverance, all have been merged within the vast ocean of religious conviction and consciousness.

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Lord Jagannath : The Symbolic Concentration

Dillip Kumar Samantaray

Shree Shree Jagannath Mahaprabhu is the frame of reference for any form of greatness throughout the country. He is the Bada Thakura, the Chief among the Gods. His Temple is named as Bada Deula, the main Temple among the Temples and the Path in front of His temple is the Bada Danda, the grand Pathway. The sea washing the shores of His Kshetra is called Mahodadhi or the great ocean. Even the cremation ground here is named Swargadwara or gateway to the heaven. In worshipping Him, all the deities are worshipped and in visiting His Seat or Kshetra all pilgrimages are made. He is conceived as the king, the co-subject, the father, the brother and the son in One. All religious practices, social customs and cultural activities get their sanction by reference to what is followed in His temple and the deviations, if any are also made humble supplication of His sanction. The Lord of the Lords is the ideal of ideals for the people.

Lord Shree Shre Jagannath has been conceived as the emperor and the temple itself as His empire. The kings who were ruling over the state of Orissa from long past were considering themselves as the servants of the great Lord. The paraphernalia as is found in a royal household, is also discernible in the temple of Jagannath with much splendour and magnificence.



The three deities have different colours and symbols. As such Subhadra, the symbol of Prakrti or Sakti has yellow colour. Prakrti is the source of all living things and forms, which assumes various colours as they grow and develop, but at the origin are characterised by yellow colour. Balabhadra who is the symbol of pure being or pure indeterminate spirit, has white colour, which



is at the same time the synthesis and negation of all spectral, the veil of mystery which surrounds the Supreme Lord. Black is no colour in itself, nor it is a synthesis of colours. It is the negation of all colours as well as the colourlessness.

Lord Shree Jagannath is all pervading and He combines in Himself all the main five Hindu deities namely Shree Narayana, Shree Rudra, Shree Ganesh, Shree Surya and Shree Durga. When on the Ratna Simhasan of His temple, He is Shree Narayana; during the Nabakalebara ceremony, He is considered as Shree Rudra; during the Snana Yatra, He is conceived as Gajanana, (Shree Ganesh); at the time of car festival, He is taken to be Shree Suryanarayana; while enjoying the divine slumber (Sayana Yatra), He becomes Shree Durga. Thus all the main deities of Hinduism are considered to have been merged in Him. Thus, He is represented as the Supreme God to Saivas, Saktas, Ganapatyas, Sauras and Vaisnavas.

The eyes of Lord glisten with divine grace (Krupa) and the Supreme Lord is connected with the world of things and beings by Bhakti and Prema. Devotion (Bhakti) or absolute self surrender constitutes the most dominant note in the religious tradition of Shree Jagannath and before the Lord of the Universe all are deemed as equals and co-sharers of Mahaprasada. The famous Jagannath cult enjoins upon the acceptance of Mahaprasad by members of all castes and creeds together. The greatness of Mahaprasad has been loudly acclaimed in the Holy Puranas. After taking Mahaprasad, a devotee touches his head with that hand as he considers Mahaprasad to be most sacred. This custom was prevalent in the Vedic Age. So, especially we will never find in famous Jagannath cult the caste or creed feelings for taking Mahaprasad.

Nabadha Bhakti (Bhakti of nine types) is found specially on the occasion of famous Rath Yatra or the Car Festival which is observed on Asadha Sukla Dwitiya i.e. second day of the bright fortnight of the month of Asadha. The celebration of the Rath Yatra during the rainy season is significant.

The car of Lord Jagannatha which is named as Nandighosa has another name called the "Garudadhwaaja". The car of Lord Balabhadra is named as "Taladhwaaja". The mystery behind the formation of this car is still unsolved. Baladeva is the incarnation of "Sesa", the holy infinite serpent on whom Lord Visnu takes rest. It is said that Lord Balabhadra functions as mirror of wisdom and receives a view of the entire universe through that. As the mirror is placed below (tala) it is called 'tala.' Besides, pure and transparent qualities of the mirror are symbolically observed in Lord Balabhadra Himself, who is therefore designated as "Talanka". In this way His car is named as "Taladhwaaja." The outline of a mirror is perpetually found in the banner of his car. The car of goddess 'Subhadra' is called both 'Devadalana' and "Padmadhwaja". Goddess Laksmi who is identified with Subhadra is again called Padma (the goddess on the lotus). Subhadra represents wealth, prosperity and grace (Sree.) Hence there is the lotus profile in the banner of Her car and it is called "Padmadhwaja" too. On the eve of the car festival the cars are virtually worshipped and the presence of other deities are admirably invoked. It is believed that such deities descend into the cars and protect the cars for nine days. Hence the three cars are considered as divine during this time. The tradition is that, all categories of people ought not to ascend these. In Puranas various rules and directions of ascending the cars have been mentioned. It is said that the protection of the cars for full nine days is much more important than all sorts of worship



and meditation before the deities therein. It is enjoined to safeguard and protect the attires, decorations, the weapons, the Parsva Devatas placed in the cars when these move.

When the hilarious people drag the cars with the help of ropes, they are advised not to drag these speedily either out of excitement and fun or out of exhibiting their strength indicating lack of respect for the cars. To drag the cars in high speed is unconventional, which is discouraged. As the hymn says :-

*"The car ought to be
Dragged very slowly
And the Holy wheels
Shall move slowly,
And with sounds,
Of universal love,*

*Saneh Saneh Ratho Neyo
Ratha snehatu cakrna." (Surya Purana)*

In this way the Gods descend into the cars and gradually seat themselves in the cars in supreme comfort. Hence the Gods get rest and poise if the cars move in a slow and sober manner. If the cars move otherwise, there might be some harm and it is believed that if by chance,

some part of a car is damaged, it leads to disaster for the country and humanity. It attracts people from different parts of India, nay from the world.

*"Rathe Tu Bamanam drustwa,
Punarjanma Na Bidyate"*

If we have strong devotion before the deities or self surrender completely before Him while seeing the Lord on the car, we the devotees get better pleasure of heavenly bliss and create eternal peace in our heart, ultimately called the Salvation.

All people, irrespective of caste, creed and religion can of course get maximum facility as to the viewing and worshipping the Lords placed on Rathas. This is possible because the evil of unsociability is consciously absent here.

*Jagannatha Swamy
Nayana Pathagami
Bhaba Tu Me.*

Dillip Kumar Samantaray is an Advocate, who lives at Gangaram Nua Sahi, Near Budhima Temple, Puri





The Source of All is He

Er. Raghunath Patra

Spiritual mate once
Asked me "Dear !
Who is Jagannath
Who's incarnates are ? (1)

Who is the source ?
Sequels who ?
From whom spring all
Tell me true. (2)

Lucidly resolved to
disroot doubt
with mundance instance
strong and stout. (3)

From gold groomed
Ornaments all
In variant sizes,
Large or small. (4)

Filigree varies, differs use and
in variant times
as we choose. (5)

In all ye behold
Element gold
Although processed
In different mould. (6)



So is Jagannath
Gold is He
Source is He
Element is He. (7)

All incarnates
His sequels are
Spring from Him,
Far and near. (8)

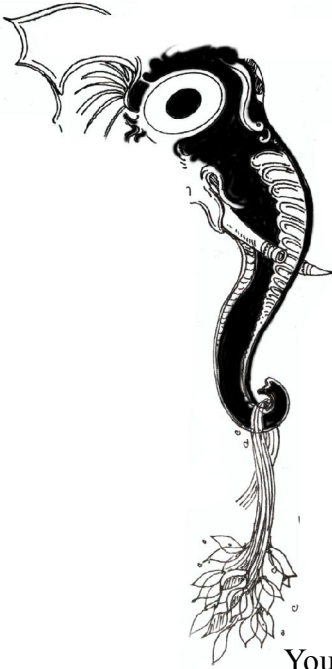
Varies in qualities
Names as well
Evince in time
Without fail.(9)

Varies nativity
Pastimes differ
All merge in Him
When duty is over.(10)

The supreme goal of
Disolate soul
The creator is He
Who preserves all. (11)

Lord of the Universe
Bears the name
Pray ye all,
His name and fame. (12)

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



You are Unique

Dr. R.S.N. Murty

Unique is your Sanctum Sanctorum
 Hosting two brothers and one sister,
 You convey to us the universal brotherhood,
 Unique is the tricolour representation
 of Your three idols,
 You convey to us the presence of three human races,
 Unique is Your incomplete body and face,
 You convey to us the shapelessness and
 alterability of the mind,
 Unique are Your prominent round eyes,
 You convey to us the necessity of having global vision,
 Unique is Your smile,
 You convey to us the necessity of happiness and
 Contentment,
 Unique are Your temple rituals and their performers,
 You convey to us the division of labour and
 The specificity of each individual's role,
 Unique is Your car festival and Your accessibility to every one,
 You convey to us the universal sameness and
 Nondiscrimination,
 Unique are Your gimmicks,
 Oh ! Madhusudhana ! Jagannatha !
 Bless every one to feel Your Uniqueness.



Dr. Murty is working as the Cardiologist of Capital Hospital, Bhubaneswar, Orissa



Orissa : The Kingdom of Lord Jagannath

Er. Niranjan Rath

Orissa, the mythological kingdom of Lord Jagannath,
Puri 'Srimandira' His sweet home on this earth.
He lives here with all the gods and goddesses together,
In this beautiful lap of nature on the sea shore.
'ThakurRaja', the king of Puri acts as His representative,
This announces His worldly and lively functional view.
Lord Neela Madhava at Kantilo tells His ancient legend,
Biswabasu and Vidyapati are remembered by mankind.
None can conclude as He is absolute mystery,
King Indradyumna, queen Gundicha are linked with history.
The art, culture and sculpture of Orissa pronounces His name,
The writer writes, the singer sings His greatness and fame.
Oriyas are identified in the world abroad,
Lord Jagannath and Jagannath cult with brotherhood.
He is the saviour of the living-being in hapless state,
He is the Lord of all with universal religious thought.
'Mahaprasad' of Lord Jagannath is served in religious feast,
Integrity in all castes and creeds is its main gist.
Lord Jagannath is worshipped in every home,
Every inaugural functions are started by His name.
'Jagannath Swamy nayana path gami bhabatu me',
Recite the people of Orissa very often everyday.
Saints and devotees feel His existence and spiritually realize,
The story of Bandhu Mohanty and Dashaia Bauri, the events of surprise.
Every year religious festivals are observed happily,
The people of Orissa by His grace live peacefully.
He is believed and worshipped as if He is alive,
With this fathomless faith this universe can survive.
Car festival is the incomparable indescribable heavenly function,
It is the celebration of eternal love between Creator and creation.

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



Some Early Jagannath Temples of Western Orissa

Pabitra Mohan Barik

Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe, who is worshipped at Puri is the supreme deity of the Hindu Community. Puri the sacred city of Orissa is well known for the great temple of Lord Jagannath. Shree Jagannath is heartily loved and respected by all Oriya speaking people and others alike. Jagannath culture influences every sphere of life in Orissa, whether it is political, social, cultural, religious or economic. Puri the seat of Lord Jagannath is the greatest religious centre of India. Great temple of Lord Jagannath is situated near the sea-coast of Puri. All Oriya speaking people respect Sri Jagannath as their supreme Lord and in every social, culture and religious activities people of Orissa at first take His name in adoration. There are a number of Jagannath temples in various parts of Orissa. Jagannath temple at Brahmapura village near Patnagarh town of Balangir district is one of ancient temples of Orissa. Ramai Deo, the founder of Chauhan dynasty of Balangir-Patna kingdom in the 14th century constructed this Jagannath temple. This temple symbolizes the spread of Jagannath culture in Western Orissa. Ramai Deo, the first Chauhan ruler of Balangir-Patna installed the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra, which he took from Puri. Ramai Deo also took thirteen Brahmana families from Viraja Kshetra, who were engaged in the Seva Puja of the deities. Ramai



Deo granted them two villages named Hirapur and Chandanbhati for the maintenance of the temple. Those Brahmana families are living in Brahmapura village till now.

There are number of Jagannath temples in Sambalpur town, which were constructed by Balabhadra Deva, the third Chauhan ruler of Sambalpur kingdom. Brahmapura temple situated in the heart of the Sambalpur town is one of them, where he has installed the images of the Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra in the sanctum. The temple observes all rituals of Jagannath culture. Spiritual scripture *Adhyatmya Ramayana* was translated into Oriya verses by poet Gopal Telenga under the patronage of Maharaja Ajit Singh of Sambalpur (1726-42 A.D.). Another



important early Jagannath temple in Sambalpur is in the Gopalji Matha, popular for its religious activities. Bansigopal, the third son of Madhukar Deva, the fourth Chauhan ruler of Sambalpur became a great Vaisnava and founded the Gopalji Matha in the Sambalpur town on the bank of the Mahanadi. There he spent his whole life as its first *Mahanta*. He had constructed two temples in this Matha complex, one is Gopalji temple and the other is Jagannath temple.

The Dadhivaman temple at Bhatli of Baragarh district is famous as Jagannath is worshipped as Dadhivaman here. Bhatli is an old village, where, according to tradition the temple of Dadhivaman was built by a rich merchant named Paramananda Sahu. At the time of Car Festival thousands of people congregate here to worship the Lord. The time of construction of the temple of Dadhivaman at Bhatli may be the 18th century. Anangabhima III, the Ganga ruler had constructed many Jagannath temples in Baragarh area after the conquest of western Orissa by his ablest general Vishnu Acharya around 1220 A.D. Anangabhima Deva had granted lands for the running of those temples. He had granted land with a total area of 52.36 acres in village Deshkumhari in Baragarh district. He had granted certain land with a total area of 78 acres in the village Tamparsara, also in Baragarh district as

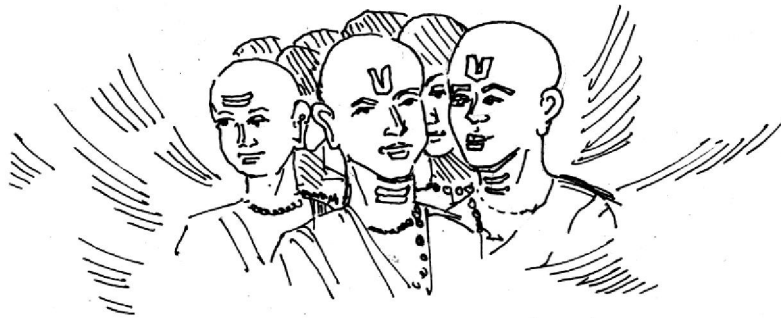
an endowment for the temple of Dadhivamana of that village. The Dadhivamana temple located at Tamparsara is the oldest in Western Orissa.

Sonepur, the head-quarter of Suvarnapur district is famous for its temple culture. It is situated on the confluence of the rivers Tel and Mahanadi. There are many temples in and around this historic town. It is known as the temple city of western Orissa. The Jagannath temple at Sonepur town stands near by the damaged royal palace on the bank of the Mahanadi.

Another ancient Jagannath temple of western Orissa is situated at Junagarh in Kalahandi district which is called Dadhivaman temple. Junagarh was the old capital of Nagavamsi kings of Kalahandi. The Dadhivaman temple at Junagarh is existing there since 1718 A.D. as an important centre of Jagannath Culture.

These early Jagannath temples of western Orissa were constructed by the kings of various dynasties ruling this part of Orissa in the mediaeval period to spread far and wide the inner ideology and philosophy of Jagannath culture.

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Jagannath and the Orissan Society

Dr. Surya Narayan Misra

Orissa, a small, poverty stricken and politically impotent State of Eastern India, has carved a bigger cultural space in the country. The factor that is responsible for this elevation is Lord Jagannath and the cult of Lord Jagannath. This makes Orissa to be better known as the land of Jagannath. The area is known for other contributions as well. Here, Emperor Ashok, who fought a bloody war in 261 BC, known as Kalinga war, was converted from Chandashoka to Dharmashoka. During the first century B.C., Orissan emperor Kharavela enhanced the reputation of the land by winning battles and expanding territorial limits of the state. Throughout history, Orissa is a suitable place for intellectual, religious and spiritual attainments. Further, the state was a meeting place of Hindus, Buddhists and Jainas and had created a creditable climate to systematise and assimilate the essence of these three spiritually intellectual belief order.

According to various research studies, the earliest references about Lord Jagannath are found in different puranic literatures. Further, there are several copper-plate inscriptions which provide information about Lord Jagannath as the supreme

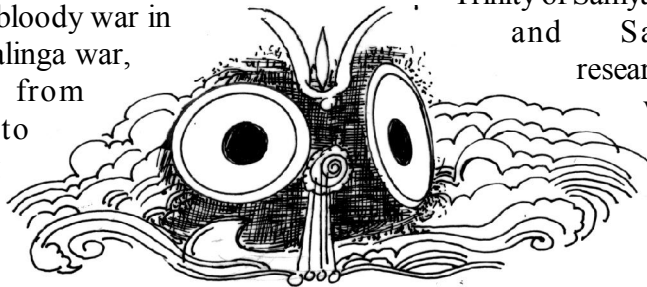
deity of India. Jagannath binds three religious denominations : Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism.

Pandit Nilakantha Das opined that Jagannath represented Jainism. He was of the view that the rites and rituals connected with the Lord are non-vedic. The three deities Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath represent the Jaina Trinity of Samyakjnana, Samyakcharita and Samyaktisti. Other researchers contest this Jaina view of Jagannath advocated by Pandit Das.

Though, the daru connection available in the Rigveda and

Atharva Veda hint towards vedic origin of Jagannath. Yet, it is not sufficient to establish 'His' vedic identity.

From the legend presentations, King Indradyumna is presented as the person linked with construction of a temple for the worshipping of the Lord. The story further narrates about the divine instructions and association of Viswakarma for the construction of the images out of the log of woods collected from sea under advice to the king by the Lord. The incomplete images of the trinity was due to impatience of queen Gundicha, who forced the king to open the door where the





disguised carpenter was engaged in image making. It was surprising, the legend depicts, that the carpenter was absent and the three unfinished images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra were seen. Since then, the three deities are worshipped and several incarnations in the ritual of 'Nabakalebar' have passed.

Adikabi Sarala Das found in the three deities the replica of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar, Subhadra representing Brahma, and Vishnu and Maheswar are presented as Jagannath and Balabhadra. But, the Vaishnabas have something else to say. According to them these deities are puranic deities who are Balabhadra and Jagannath representing Balarama and Krishna with their sister Subhadra.

Budhist scholars opine that three deities represent three Ratnas - Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. They say that the image of Jagannath contain a relic of Lord Buddha. The scholars observed that the world famous Car Festival resembles the Buddhist festivals which became popular during Gupta Age. Again, Jagannath is taken as Nirakar and Buddhism does not accept the concept of God. Yet, the claims of such scholars are yet to be accepted as whole truth.

The Jainas claim that the existence of Kalpabata, Nilachakra and the affix 'Nath' as well as 'Purushottam Vada' are the contributions of Jainism to Jagannath Cult.

Thus, Jagannath, the very name provides the idea that 'He' is an institution of diverse religions. Even Jagannath religion is an excellent contribution to the various religious practices. It is a splendid synthesis of diverse beliefs and a meeting place of various views of philosophy.

It has been accepted that Jagannath is a resultant composite of many divine concepts and gods. According to W.J.Wilkins, Jagannath is the sole source of man's needs, and the search ends

with him. He looked into the tribal origin of the deity. He observed that "starting from a local deity of an unknown tribe in the dense forest, Jagannath manifested 'Himself' as one of the greatest religious centres of the whole world. It has found unity in diversity. In spite of heterogeneous ritualistic practices Jagannath stands supreme. He is not meant for any sect or tribe only. He is universal."

According to eminent researcher K.C. Misra, the philosophy of Jagannath is one of the most difficult philosophies in the history of religions with the changing needs of the times several interpretations about this deity have come to the surface. As with the most of the oriental philosophies, the philosophies of Jagannath defies a definite definition. Rather different kinds of interpretation have merged into the philosophy of Jagannath. As a matter of fact, the history of Jagannath is a curious assemblage of essence of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. Professor K.C. Misra observed that as a Jaina institution, Jagannath meant not the Lord of the Universe but Jagat as the Universe itself. This is a new dimension because it is rare to find God being identified with the universe. The Jaina belief of transmigration as a consequence of karma being loudly accepted in Jagannath cult. Further, the idea of Nirvana had found its place in the philosophy of Jagannath in different degrees. Professor Misra further says that the philosophy of Tantra, which in course of time, became an integral part of Buddhism had a special place in the philosophy of Jagannath. This is one of the most important contributions of yogic and tantric methods of expounding a philosophy of Mukti, Nirvana and Kaivalya.

Jagannath is worshipped in four forms - Sudarshana which is a pillar with indifferent colour, Balabhadra with white face with eyes and hands, Subhadra in the form of a woman with yellow face and eyes but no hands, and Jagannath with black face with brilliant eyes and hands.



Balabhadra is the transcendent, the unchallengeable and the unqualified, the Unmanifest. Balabhadra is a unique one. He is supremely excellent. Jagannath is supremely manifest with pure qualities, changeable in order, qualified with diverse dimensions and also supramundane. The concept of Jagannath is a synthesis of Bhakti, Jnana, Prema and Sadhana. Subhadra is a mysterious deity and she is accepted as symbol of karma or Action. Sudarshan represents the symbol of the unknown. It represents time and change. It is connected with the unchangeable and the eternal force.

Anthropologists talk about 'Great Traditions' and 'Little Traditions'. The little traditions of the rural society or tribal communities are plentifully observed in the Indian society. Jagannath cult is derived from the little traditions of worship by the savara tribal has been sanskritised by Brahman priests and Rajas at Puri. The new seat for worship is located here. But this ritual has undergone universalisation by being elevated the supreme god head of the Hindu life. Jagannath has been identified as Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of the Universe. He is the penultimate incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Professor L.K. Mohapatra, the noted Anthropologist observes : If this is a process of Universalisation, in Orissa the cult itself has undergone the process of parochialisation, too, as in western Orissa, where each village celebrates ratha yatra of Lord Jagannath in its own ways in emulation of the world famous Car Festival of Lord at Puri. Similarly, if the supreme god heads of holy trinity Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma belong to great tradition, their worship has been parochialised in the little traditions for the last two hundred years or so in Orissa by holding Trinath Mela.

Integration of little and great tradition is exemplified in Jagannath Cult. This cult has evolved as the magnetic central cult of Orissa with all aspects of regional cultural development. The associated values of tribal heritage in this cult -

the basic fraternity and equality of all men as devotees of the Lord, the absence of commercial taboos among castes while partaking of the sanctified food offered to the Lord, the folk medicine administered to the god at the time of illness and the divine directions in dreams, visions and miracles are all integrated into the cult system. Here, the 'Little traditions' associated with the Lord co-exist and are valued along with elements of 'great traditions' rituals and institutions introduced and mediated by the Brahman priests and Rajas. (Mohapatra)

Orissa had a checkered political history. But its cultural continuity over a wide area in ancient Kalinga / Utkal is significant. The cornerstone of this cultural continuity in the pre-Islam past has been the cult of Lord Jagannath, who is worshipped as the Lord of the universe. Puri is treated as one of the four most sacred centres of pilgrimage for the Hindus. Lord Jagannath is looked upon as the protector and even sovereign of Orissa and the Raja of Puri officiates as His earthly deputy. The king is respected as 'Chalanti Vishnu'. He is also called as 'Thakur Raja'. The king functions as the head of ritual functionary of the Jagannath temple. The paramount Raja of Orissa since the Ganga era has made the Jagannath cult as the state cult.

Though Jagannath has not been conceived as one among the well known vedic deities like Agni, Varun, Indra, Surya and so on and so forth, yet there is no dearth of vedic rites in the Jagannath cult. All the sects like Saiva, Shakta, Ganapatya and Vaishnava offer their prayer to the Lord. Jagannath temple attracts both the Aryans and Non-Aryans. This brings whole lot of people living in Orissa and outside to have their devotional agenda set at the Lord's temple, both inside and outside its precinct.

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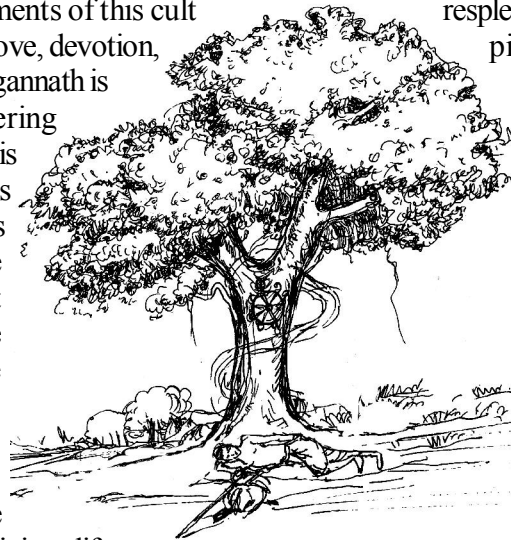
Ratha Yatra

Indrajeet Mohanty

This work is a portrayal of the unique cult of Jagannath in Orissa. It tries to project, through a short story, the basic fundamentals of this cult. Here is a subject in which myth, legend, history and philosophy have got inextricably mixed. Through Nitai, a simple, rustic, untouchable, we have a glimpse of the rudiments of this cult which is an embodiment of love, devotion, universality and equality. Jagannath is very much humane, suffering from fever before going on his chariot (Rathayatra); has human relations; dies and is also reborn during the "Nabakalebara". The spirit of reverence is no where more manifest, than in the moving 'Jananas' of the Oriya poets. For the common Oriya, Jagannath is the manifestation of the Supreme Being and their religious life is intricately bound up with Him. To those who believe, the following story of Nitai will explain itself; for those who do not, there are no explanations.

The euphony of the wind, as it passed through the tree, kept rhythmic pace with the rays of the rising sun which, by gradual degrees, was illuminating the horizon, touching the palm heads with crimson and the field with silver birds, silhouetted in the twilight, plunged into the spots of red and gold as if cleansing themselves off the

sins of the night, amazed at the listlessness of the human race. Nitai, as he lazed on his charpoy, thought how fresh and virgin everything looked, in the first blush of the morning. God's creation, His bounty was manifest in its most chaste form only at day break-the dawn, which is ever resplendent, ever magnificent and ever picturesque, brightens up the whole day.



Nitai was shaken out of his musings by the maledictions of a crow perched on the window. What a spoil sport! But nothing was going to throw cold water on the auspicious day of today. This dawn was the precursor of the great car festival, Rathayatra, at Puri, when the three deities, Lord Balabhadra, His black hued brother Jagannath and their moon faced sister Subhadra are brought out in chariots, to be drawn to their aunt's not by elephants or horses but by the people-the devotees. Today, caste barriers would melt and both the untouchable and the Brahmin will pull the cars by hand, one's sweat mingling with the other's and flowing down as one before the holy trinity. Nitai was surely going to pull the Cars. He had to hurry. Sounds and smell of cooking came from the kitchen, where his wife had been busy from before sunrise. She had to prepare extra provisions for her husband's journey to Puri.



Nitai's Village was around thirty miles from Puri, but unfortunately he had never seen the holy trinity, though he had gone to Puri a few times. As he was an untouchable, he had never been allowed into the temple, and also had feared to enter. The only time he could see the Lord was during the Rathayatra, but being a bonded labourer like his father and grandfather, he had never had the time nor finance to go to Puri during the Ratha. Nitai had a great belief in Jagannath because he had believed in his mother, who had told him the stories of the Lord. He narrated these stories to the children of the village and sang the devotional songs on Jagannath while working.

He felt Jagannath to be his best friend, helping him in his difficulties, his enemy at times, when he scolded Him and took him as a family member, most of the time. Today, when he had grown old and tired, both in body and mind, he wanted to fulfill his desire, to pull the chariots, touch his Lord feet and in the process bring blessings for his people.

The sun had become tepid by the time Nitai walked out of his house. His wife watched standing near the doorway, on which she had placed a 'Kalash' so that her husband's footsteps would return to the threshold. She, however, had no fear about her husband's going away. After all, he was going to the abode of Jagannath. She was happy for him. Knowing that her husband's life long dream was going to be fulfilled. As she turned away, the sun caught her bangles, reflecting the light on to her vermilion tika. She could hear her husband's voice gradually fading away as he chanted

*"oh tired mind let us go,
And see the Round Eyes;
And bathe our tears
In the mandal of the
navel of the conch....."*

As he walked down the narrow path, between the paddy fields, which joined the main

road to puri, Nitai saw around him farmers tilling their plot while others were busy with their daily chores, Everything was reverberating with life the life he had enjoyed some twenty years back. There was the smell of husk and cow dung in the air. All this was a part of him. Two boys were up on a guava tree busy helping themselves to the fruits which had not ripened yet. Nitai saw himself as a small boy plundering the mango orchards of the Chowdhury Gosain or chasing frogs and butchering them. They used to tie non-poisonous snakes to a stick and parade them through the village, sending girls and women screaming to their houses. It was his mother who had advised him not to steal or harm any living beings, for the Lord Jagannath had created all beings and His large round eyes are always vigilant on them. Nitai, all of a sudden felt nostalgic. Thoughts of home, which was a heaven of love and security, came to him. It had taken years, with a lot of sweet spilled, to build the small hut in which they now lived. His wife was a good and quite woman and had stood by him in all his difficult days. She was a full woman who worked with him in the fields, kept the house, cooked the food and bred sons who were strong and noble. The old women of the village used to call her "Laxmi". For this Nitai was pleased and thanked God for this kindness. He thought of his village, the hamlet which he loved, the old banyan under which they gathered at dusk, the village temple where he stood outside during the 'arati', the emerald green pond where he bathed and of the peace he experienced while grazing the cattle in the pasture. Farmers waved at him from their fields and men stopped to talk with him. The women, carrying water pots, coming down the path pulled their veils lower, as they passed him, as a mark of respect. Children ran around him being inquisitive about where he was going. He was much lived in his dear village. He had the urge to stop and embrace the whole village and its people with his arms, but the excitement of seeing Jagannath on the Ratha was more overpowering. The path, through the fields,



broadened out and joined the highway to Puri. Nitai saw many people, carrying bundles on their heads walking down the path. Men, women and children were coming from many villages and from many directions to parttake in the festival. As Nitai stepped on the highway, cars, buses and two wheelers fled past him in an endless stream, making his dhoti blow out in the breeze. By this time the highway had become too warm to walk on bare-foot and so Nitai took to the side walk, made of red laterite soil, under the shade of the mango, neem and banyan. He walked down the road quickly as he had to catch a bus from the next stoppage. The buses would be filled to their capacity today and if he did not quicken his pace, he would not even find a standing space.

It was the month of Ashadha and the early rains had quenched the thirst of the parched soil and now the fields were adorned with lush green paddy. While the remaining land was decked with luxurious undergrowth. Every low laying land had become a prosaic lake and every gutter a running rivulet. Nature was a riot of colours ranging from the wings of a butterfly to the pageant of a rainbow in the sky. Nitai would have felt euphonic, but for the great thirst he was now feeling. He had to drink some water. He came down from the highway and walked a few yards across the field, and came upon the river Bhargavi. The river was pregnant with monsoon rains and was rushing by with great speed, as if to reach the sea early so as to wash the shores of Puri, this auspicious day. Nitai bent down and drank some ten to eleven palm full of water. He, then wiping his hands with his red handloom towel, retraced his steps towards the highway, but strangely his thirst was not quenched. Perspiration formed on his forehead and sweat trickled down his neck feeling ticklish, Nitai walked towards a cluster of trees as he all of a sudden, felt a great urge to rest, his legs becoming weak. There was a bitter feeling in his mouth and unnatural salivation, while he sensed a reeling of the head. He sat down under a neem tree, resting his whole back on the tree trunk. He

was conscious of a white ant-hill near him, and there might be a cobra inside it, but he was overcome by spasms of nausea to move away to a safer place. After the nausea had subsided, Nitai felt exhausted. He looked around him. He was within a cluster of trees and the high-way was not visible through the foliage. The sound of the gushing river was audible clearly. There was a cremation ground nearby, where the ashes and bamboos of the last person cremated remained to be cleared, while the earthen ware pots gaped up to the cloudy sky asking for more rain to cool them, after the scorch of the funeral pyre. After some time Nitai felt a little better and thinking that he should hurry, he tried to get up. But alas, he could neither get up, nor move his limbs. He tried to scream but that also he could not. He had suffered from a stroke.

The sun reached its apex and the humidity in the air was uncontrollable, But Nitai, who sat like stone under the neem tree, felt none of it. His initial feeling of shock had given place to despair and fear. A fear, not for himself, nor a fear of death, but a fear that he could never see his friend and savior on the chariot. He began indulging in self pity, thinking of how poor he had been, how much he had worked, that he had never harmed anyone and how after all this he had been forsaken by God whom he had always loved. He reflected on the time when he had helped his neighbors at the time of famine by serving grains from his own meagre stock, on the time when he had taken care of the old and diseased in the village and on the time when he had showered love on all like mango flowers, in spring. He never understood the mantras of the Brahmins, in the temple nor their religious discourses on the Geeta and the Upanishads. For him 'Faith' was what mattered. He loved all creatures, great and small, and all his fellow-men. Probably, this love was the essence of prayer. There was no difference between people. All being the children of God. Serving humanity, Nitai thought, is indirectly serving God. He never asked God or bribed him for anything,



but wanted that this all pervading and omnipresent God should go on inspiring human beings for generations to come so that the burden of life will be lighter and this world will be a better place to live in. The phase of self-analysis. He realized that in addition to the good deeds he had done, he had also involved himself in an equivalent number or more of, what society called bad. He had told a lot of lies in his life, had many girls when he was young, had fought with one of his sons, at times had also drunk etc. He had felt the resistance of the soul towards such deeds, by being overwhelmed by a feeling of guilt. Yet he knew that he was only human and was susceptible to such evils. A sense of resignation set in. He started recollecting all the prayers and praises to the almighty that he knew, but as he soon realized, it was of no avail. He could hear vehicles speeding away and the voices of men from the highway. No one, however, discovered him in the cluster of trees, which had shut him and his thoughts from the rest of the world. No one came to carry him to the 'Badadanda; at Puri, if he could get back his voice, he would cry for help, but it was a hopeless situation. As time went by a great anger rose within Nitai-an anger towards Jagannath. He was cruel and unpitiful. He had no mercy. Nitai now finding it difficult to recollect and concentrate, remembered, through the mist which was gathering before his eyes and in his mind, a few lines of a 'Janana' which he recited mentally. "O, unnecessarily did I die calling you, oh round eyes. To hear my sorrow you have turned your ears to stone "When the shadows lengthened, Nitai's condition deteriorated and when conch shells blew as harbingers of the night and giving a farewell to the dying day, life ebbed out of Nitai's body. A man who has got down from of the cars returning from Puri, to relieve himself in the cluster of trees, found the dead body in the beam of his torch light. The Municipality van came and took it away. As an unclaimed body, it was sent to the Medical College, at Cuttack, where the anatomy students dissected upon it to broaden their frontiers of knowledge.

Epilogue :

There is a saying that "if you die today, tomorrow it will be the second day." Thus time passed by, as it always does. Ten years passed by, as it always does, Ten years passed into taciturnity and in the eleventh Puri was gripped with great activities. The particular constellation of stars had been prophesied, which would witness the charge of body of Lord Jagannath, the Nabakalabera. The head priest of the temple, as the popular saying went, had a dream in which he was requested by the Lord to prepare for the "Nabakalabara". Accordingly lesser priests were sent to the temple of the Divine mother of Kakatpur, who was to direct them as to where to find the logs for the three idols. The log of "Daru" of Jagannath was found in a place a few kilometers from Puri. It was a neem within a cluster of tree. There was, according to the instructions of the Goddess, a cremation ground near by and a river flowed in its vicinity. The river was the Bhargavi. The neem tree had a white ant-hill at its base and there were the marks of the conch, discus, mace and lotus on its bark. This was the very tree under which Nitai had died.

The tree was cut down with a golden axe and tied with silken strings, it was drawn on a bullock cart through the neighboring villages, Nitai's wife came out of her hut to see the 'Daru' just on her door steps. People were singing. "Oh mind ! meditate on the Divine Being repeated in the form of a log (Daru)." The sun caught her bangles and reflected on her vermilion mark on the forehead. There was a Kalash still on the door steps, but she would never know that her husband's footsteps had again returned on the house.

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Mystics of Lord Jagannatha

Sudarshan Sahoo

The gigantic and marvellous temple of Lord Jagannatha represents ten incarnations carved around the main temple at a height of about 30 feet. The great poet of 12th century A.D. Jayadev describes about ten incarnations; but in Srimad Bhagabatam, Vyasadev has mentioned about 24 incarnations. According to Jayadev, the supreme Lord took his 7th incarnation as Rama. Saint Tulasi Das in his immortal volume 'Sri Rama Charita Manasa' has described that He who takes various incarnations is Rama. Rama is the Supreme Lord who is Nirguna (having no properties), Akhand (having no break), Anadi (having no beginning) and is uttered by the sages as 'Neti' 'Neti' (No end No end), the supreme form of bliss, having no title nor comparison and from whom many Brahmas, Vishnus and Shivas have been evolved in various *Kalpas*. He is the purest *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, having no births, the sanctified form of Bijnana (science), Omni Present, Omni Potent,



Omniscient and Omniparous, having no end; beyond the reach of Indriyas (sensory organs), unconquerable, having no form and is for ever above the Maya (illusion - Nature). All the above symptoms are the subjects of prayer by Vedas and Upanishads for *Param Brahma*. All the foregoing entitlements are attributed to Lord Jagannath. He is the accentuated epitome of all the above symptoms. He is the *Avatari* who takes *Avataras*. He is Rama as envisioned by saint Tulasi Das. So, he told that Rama and Jagannath are one and the same. Rama is the *Avatari* who incarnates in various *Kalpas*. Param Brahma Rama has incarnated as Rama, not for a single time; but several times in several *kalpas*.

In 'Sri Rama Charita Manasa', saint Tulasi Das has profiled Lord Shiva as the devotee of the Supreme Lord Rama. He described the miracles and majesties of the Supreme Lord to Parvati on her request. He told that Sri Hari had two gate keepers namely Jaya



and Bijaya. Both were brothers. Once upon a time, four brahmins (sages) Sanak, Sanandau, Sanatan and Sanak Kumar arrived at the gate of the abode of Sri Hari where the two brothers did not allow them to get in. Hence, the four sages cursed the brothers to take birth as demons for three lives, and in each occasion, they would be salvaged by Sri Hari. In *Satya Yuga*, both the brothers took birth as two mighty demons called Hiranaksha and Hiranya Kashipu. They demolished the ego of Indra by snatching the throne of the heaven and exercised furious torture all above the earth. So, Sri Hari took birth as Varaha (wild boar). He killed Hiranaksha and saved the earth. The next was formidable Hiranyakashipu. His son was Prahlad, a strong devotee of Sri Hari. Hiranyakashipu never admitted Sri Hari as the Supreme Lord. This difference in belief between son and father resulted in a series of tortures by Hiranyakashipu on his child son Prahlad. Ultimately Sri Hari appeared from a broken pillar in the form of Nrusingha and killed Hiranyakashipu. He blessed Prahlad to become a glorious king of immense fame.

As such, the first demon birth as curse was completed by the two brothers. Another birth as demons took place in the Dwapara Yuga (This Dwapara Yuga births of the two brothers have not been described in Sri Rama Charita Manas. Here it is being quoted from Sri Bhagabatam). Both the brothers, Jaya and Bijaya took birth as demons named Sishupala and Danta Bakra. Both were killed by Sri Krishna and saved to return to Vaikuntha, the abode of Sri Hari.

Then came one of the most significant part of the curse of the four sages. These facts were being described by Lord Shiva to his wife Parvati, who was eagerly listening every thing as a passionate devotee of Sri Hari. This time, the Supreme Lord took birth as Rama in *Tretaya*

Yuga. Saint Tulasi Das has attributed three mystics for Rama-Avatara in the versions of Lord Shiva to Parvati. Once upon a time sage Narada was passing by the Himalayan mountains. He found a very beautiful cave on the bank of river Ganga. Narada was allured by the exquisite natural panorama and intended to enjoy the bliss of this solitude by meditating the Supreme Lord. In tranquility, he went into *Samadhi* (crossing death point). Indra, the king of the heaven got afraid lest Narada achieve to occupy the throne by severe austerity. Indra invited Kamadev, the lord of Love and approached him to disturb Narada from austerity. Kamadev spread his illusive melodrama by engaging all the beautiful singer-dancers of the heaven. Spring season blossomed all beautiful flowers with exotic fragrance, the cuckoos sang to romance, the breeze blew erotically. But nothing could affect the meditation of Narada. Kamadev got afraid and fell down the feet of Narada begging pardon. Narada consoled Kamadev. Kamadev went back to Indra to describe the event where all present in the royal hall of Indra appreciated Narada and offered obedience to the Supreme Lord.

Narada felt boasted by conquering Kamadev. He went to Shiva and described the event. Lord Shiva advised Narada not to reveal this fact before Sri Hari. Narada could not feel appreciated by this advice of Shiva. He went to the ocean of milk where Sri Hari, the head of all Vedas and Upanishads was residing with Laxmi. Narada described the event with Kamadev, even after denial by Shiva. Sri Hari could understand the inherent vanity of Narada. Sri Hari decided to save Narada, as because the arrogance could hurt Narada's perseverance. Narayana created an illusion on the returning path of Narada. An unparalleled beautiful city was created where all inhabitants were too handsome. There were large number of horses, elephants and armed forces.



The city was full of luxury and pleasures hundred times more than that of Indra. King Shilanidhi ruled over the city. He had a daughter whose beauty was par excellence.

King Shilanidhi arranged to get his daughter married by Swayambar. Many kings were invited. Narada was interested to see the arrangement. He entered the palace and met king Shilanidhi. The king honoured him and brought his daughter to ask for her horoscope. Narada forgot himself before the beauty of the girl and enchantingly thought, 'he who would marry this beauty would remain immortal. All the creatures on this earth would remain as his slaves.' Narada, keeping his thoughts inside, told something praising the girl. He left the place; but remained deep in thought of the beauty how to marry her. He decided to take the help of Narayana. He met and requested Narayan to lend his appearance so that the beauty would prefer him. Narayan replied that definitely he would help Narada in his welfare. Jubilant Narada entered the palace to attend the swayambar ceremony. He was confident that Narayan has given him extremely handsome appearance so that the princess would garland him as the groom. But really Narayana gave Narada a very ugly appearance. There were two followers of Shiva who were observing these in the disguise of brahmins. They both occupied the adjacent seats to Narada and cunningly uttered that lord has given Narada very beautiful appearance. Hence the princess would definitely garland him. While the princess had her round with the garland in hand, she got infuriated to see the ugly face of Narada and went ahead. Restlessly Narada felt painful and made various physical postures to draw the attention of the princess. Both the disguised brahmins were smiling seeing the poor postures of Narada. At that time Narayan entered the hall as a prince. The princess accepted him

and garlanded. Then Narayan left the place with the bride. Narada got broken down severely. Both the brahmins asked Narada to go and see the face in a mirror. Narada immediately went and saw his face in water. Seeing his face as a monkey, he got frowned and cursed both the brahmins to turn to be demons. When Narada saw his face again in water, he got back his own appearance. But his anger continued and he left the place to meet Narayana or to commit suicide. On the way he met Narayana coming with the new bride alongwith Laxmi. Narayan sweetly asked Narada what about his movement. Narada was out of sense due to peak frowning and harshed at Narayana that he was jealous, crooked, hypocrat and did not tolerate others' pleasures; Narada scolded Narayan telling several incidents of period of *Samudra Manthan*, claiming him as a cheater and traitor. Then Narada cursed Narayana to take birth as a human being in the same appearance of a prince. He also added that monkeys would help Narayana at that time. Further Narada added that as Narayana snatched away his happiness from enjoying a wedded life, the same desperation would grasp Narayana and he would suffer from desperation and tragedy during his human birth. Narayan accepted the curse. He consoled Narada a lot and then removed his network of illusion. Narada then found neither there was the city, nor the newly wedded bride nor Laxmi. He fell down the feet of Narayana to save him felling his curses be futile. Narayan with a smile advised Narada to pray Lord Shiva for mental peace and tranquility. Narayana disappeared. On the way, the two brahmins met Narada opened their true identity as followers of Lord Shiva and begged apology for their disguised play. Narada told them to get birth as two very mighty demons to overcome the world. At that time Narayan would take birth as human being and by killing them, he would give



salvation to both of them. According to this event, the Supreme Lord took Rama-Avatar in a *Kalpa*.

Lord Shiva started to reveal the second reason of Rama-Avatar of the Supreme Lord to Parvati. Manu and Satarupa were the first human couple on this earth created by Brahma. They both were highly virtuous and moral. Today also the Vedas sing their majestic deeds. King Uttamapada was their son. Uttamapada's son was Dhruva, who is famous in mythologies as a great devotee of Sri Hari. Manu's younger son Priyabrata is also now gloriously sung by Vedas and Puranas for his grandeur. Debahuti was Manu's daughter who married sage Kardam. Debahuti and Kardam gave birth to sage Kapila, who is the founder of *Sankhya Darshan*. King Manu led his royal life like a sage for a prolonged period. He got frustrated from the worldly matters. On a day, he handed over the throne in his son's hand and left for hermitage along with his wife to Naimisharanya. It was a dense forest famous for *siddhi* (concrete achievement) where lot other sages continued their meditation. Both reached the river bank of Gomati. Other sages welcomed them. Both led the life of hermitage attending puranic auditions daily. They lived on fruits and roots. After a few days, they both stopped taking fruits-roots and lived on water only penetrating into deep meditation. Their sole anxiety was to have a vision of the Supreme Lord who is void of end-beginning - quality - property - birth - death - shape - title - comparison and who is the epitome of infinite pleasure and from whom many Brahmans, Vishnus and Shivas evolve in course of various *Kalpas* (one *Kalpa* is composed of four *yugas*, i.e. Satya, Tretaya, Dwapara and Kali). Both Manu and Satarupa were sure of having a vision of the Supreme Lord if the above vedic descriptions were there.

Such water drinking austerity lingered for six thousand years. Next seven thousand years they lived on air only. Next they entered more stringent austerity stopping air breathing. They stood one legged without air for ten thousand years in meditation. During this time Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva visited them several times offering them boons to refrain from such extreme austerity; but nothing could stir them. Their bodies remained just to skeletons. Ultimately their unstirred austerity stirred the Supreme Lord. Both Manu and Satarupa heard voice from the skies, "Ask for boons." This sound made the skeleton body of the couple into healthy and beautiful figure as if they arrived fresh from their palace; they dipped into fathomless ocean of love. They both prayed to have a *darshan* only in the same form as He lives in the heart of Shiva and for which all the hermits meditate. The devotee-lover, bliss treasure, omnipresent and almighty Lord appeared before the praying couple. His hue excelled the azure skies and blue hill; His face was like autumn full moon, throat like tri-lined conch; eyes were like fresh blossomed lotus petals; ears were ornamented with *Makarakundala*; he had a jewel crown on the head; his chest was looking beautiful with foot mark of devotee Sribatsa; jewel garlands covered the neck and chest; bow-arrow in hands and the arrow bag behind the waist; dressed with yellow saffire. In His left was present Janaki, the reason - source of creation of this vast universe from whom countless Laxmis, Parvatis and Brahmanis born in due course.

Both Manu and Satarupa contentfully stared at them in winkless eyes forgetting their own bodily sense. They fell down at the feet of the Supreme Couple. The Lords left them from the ground. Manu prayed the Lord to get a son like Him. It was granted by the Supreme Lord and assured to take birth as Manu's son in some



future *Kalpa*. The Supreme Lady, Maya (Janaki), who is the reason of all the creations in the infinite universe would also take birth as human being alongwith the Lord. The Lord scheduled that Manu would be the king of Ayodhya. At that time He would take birth as his son. The Lord promised it for three times and disappeared. After that Manu and Satarupa lived for a few days in the hermitage on the river bank of Gomati and breathed their last.

Lord Shiva then started to narrate before Parvati the third reason of *Rama-Avatara* who was anxiously hearing with tearful eyes the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. There was a famous kingdom named Kaikaya ruled over by king Satyaketu. The king was highly virtuous, radiant, valiant and principled. He had two sons. The elder was Pratapbhanu and the younger, Arimardan. King Satyaketu left for hermitage at old age relinquishing the throne to his elder son Pratapbhanu. The king had a minister called Dharmaruchi who was highly intelligent. King Pratapbhanu had a very powerful battle force. He decided to expand his kingdom by conquering neighbouring states. He started invasion and no kingdom could withstand his valour. He conquered all and became the emperor of all the kingdoms on the earth. As a virtuous king, he did a lot of welfare works.

Once upon a time, king Pratapbhanu set out for hunting on his horse and entered into dense forest. He killed many deer. A wild boar appeared before him which had external teeth curved like the moon. King Pratapbhanu followed after the boar. It was running very fast with hide and seek play in the forest. The boar entered a cave where the king could not reach; the king wanted to return. He forgot the return path and felt very exhausted and thirsty. His horse also felt the same. He found a hermitage. A king, who

lost his kingdom during Pratapbhanu's invasion, was residing in the hermitage in disguise of a sage. He could identify Pratapbhanu instantly. But Pratapbhanu could not recognise him. He thought the hermit as a great sage. The sage showed Pratapbhanu a nearby pond where he took a contentful bath and drank cold water. Under pretext, the sage asked the identity of the king; but Pratapbhanu identified himself as the minister of king Pratapbhanu. As evening was approaching, the sage suggested the king for night halting in the hermitage. The king felt fortunate by reaching here and asked the identification of the sage. The disguised sage replied that he is staying in this hermitage since creation of this world. He has kept aloof himself from all others only to continuously meditate the Supreme Lord in this solitude. Hearing this, Pratapbhanu felt much more surrendered before this hermit. Then the sage revealed the name of the king, his royal life, family matters and all the history. King Pratapbhanu was too astonished to hear these. He felt at the feet of the sage with request to bless him to become immortal and enjoy the whole earth as king for ever. The sage accepted this. He put forth the suggestion to offer food to one lakh brahmins daily for one year. The king agreed. Further condition was by the sage that the sage himself would cook the meals in disguise of Pratapbhanu's minister, and the real minister would be kept secretly in the forest care for one year. The king accepted and slept at night in the hermitage. At night a powerful demon reached there, named Kalaketu. He was the wild boar in disguise which mistracked the king in the forest. He was well conversant in powerful illusion. At night Kalaketu removed the king and the horse to the palace. Then he removed the minister from the palace to the jungle care. Then he disguised himself as the minister and remained in the palace. Next day, the king Pratapbhanu understood the minister as the sage



according to previous evening's talk in the hermitage. One lakh brahmins were invited for dinner. The minister (Demon Kalaketu) cooked meals with human flesh of brahmins. While the meals were served, a loud voice came from the sky not to touch the meals, as these are prepared with flesh of brahmins. All the brahmins got up infuriated and cursed Pratapbhanu to turn to be a demon and no body would exist in his heredity.

The curse of brahmins resulted in action. Later king Pratapbhanu was born as demon Ravana; his brother Arimardan as Kumbhakarna and all his family and relatives were born as demons. His minister Dharmaruchi was born as Bibhishana. Ravana and his demon force tortured the whole world and heaven. All the lords of heaven went to the milk ocean where Sri Hari was residing. Sri Hari consoled them to save and assured to take birth as a human being to kill the demons. He also revealed before the Lords that he had promised before king Manu and queen Satarupa to take birth as their son on this earth. Already that time had arrived. By that time both were in Ayodhya as king Dasaratha and queen kaushalya. Sri Hari assured to take birth very soon as their son. All the Lords became happy. Lord Brahma advised all the Lords to take birth as monkeys to help and serve Sri Hari in his human pastime.

In due course, Sri Hari took birth as Rama in the lap of queen Kaushalya and king Dasaratha.

His other brothers, Laxman, Bharata and Satrugna were born to two other queens, Kaikeyee and Sumitra. Saint Tulasi Das has blended the epic 'Sri Rama Charita Manas' with unprecedented touch of vedic and Upanishadic messages to explain the mystery of the Supreme Lord in most verses; to arouse devotional sensation in the heart of devotees alongwith extraordinary panoramic discriptions of places and events. Lord Jagannatha is the essence of all Vedas and Upanishads.

Alike saint Tulasi Das, saint Ramanujacharya also visioned the Supreme Lord as Rama. He was the unique scholar of 12th century A.D. He found Lord Jagannath is the same as Rama. All the incarnations have evolved from Ram. He is Jagannatha, who creates several Brahmas, Vishnus and Shivas in various *Kalpas*. Jagannatha and Rama are the same. So saint Ramanujacharya placed the great symbol of 'Rama Tilak' on the 'kalasa' of Sri Jagannath temple in red colour to establish that Sri Jagannatha is Sri Rama. He (Jagannath and Rama) is *Avatari*. Rama-Avatar, the 7th incarnation is evolved from Him.

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Lord Jagannath - The Tribal Deity

Dina Krishna Joshi

The sacred temple of Lord Jagannath stands on the hillock "Blue Mountain" in the heart of Puri. It represents a lovely picturesque panorama of great Orissan Architecture. It's a monument of the 12th Century A.D. with all the richness and novelty of the Kalingan style of architecture known as "Sikhara", which is mainly predominant in Eastern India. The temple of Jagannath Puri was built by Ananta Barma Chodaganga Dev during 12th century A.D. and was completed by Ananga Bhima Dev, and this temple is one of the tallest monuments in the country; height is about 65 metres i.e. 214 feet 8 inches from the ground level. It stands on an elevated platform of stone measuring about 10 acres, which is located in the heart of the town and presents an imposing sight. The temple is bounded by two enclosures. The inner enclosure is 400' x 278' size and known as Kurma Bedha. The outer enclosure is of 665' x 644' size with the height varying from 20' to 24' and popularly known as Meghanad Prachir. The temple has four gates at the eastern, southern, western and northern midpoints of the Meghanad Prachir. They are called Lions gate, Horse Gate, Tiger Gate and the Elephant Gate.

Legends of the Lord

Legendary account as found in the Skanda-Purana, Brahma Purana and other Puranas and later works in Oriya state that Lord

Jagannath was originally worshipped as Neela Madhab by a Savar king (tribal chief) named Viswvasu. Lord Nilamadhaba (formerly worshipped as Kitung) appeared in a dream of Indradyumna, the legendary king of Malawa, and told him to bring back the Lord to "Malawa". Then the King sent "Bidyapati" to trace out the deity who was worshipped secretly in a dense forest by Viswvasu. Vidyapati tried his best, but could not locate the place. But at last, he managed to marry Viswvasu's daughter Lalita. At repeated request of Vidyapati, Viswvasu took his son-in-law blind folded to a cave where Neelamadhab was worshipped.

Vidyapati was very intelligent. He dropped mustard seeds on the ground in the route. The seeds germinated after a few days, which enabled him to find out the cave later on. On hearing from him, king Indradyumna proceeded immediately to Odra desha (Orissa) on a pilgrimage to see and worship the Deity. But, the deity had disappeared. The king was disappointed. The Deity was hidden in the sand. By seeing this, Indradyumna made his mind that without having a darshan of the deity he would not return to his palace. Then he observed fast unto death at Mount Neela. Then a celestial voice cried - 'thou shalt see him.' Afterwards the king performed a horse sacrifice and built a



magnificent temple for Vishnu. Narasingha Murti brought by Narada was installed in the temple. During sleep, the king had a vision of Lord Jagannath. Also an astral voice directed him to receive the fragrant tree on the seashore and make idols out of it. Accordingly the king got the image of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Chakra Sudarshan made out of the wood of the said tree and installed them in the temple.

History of Jagannath cult

The Hindu devotee believes that Lord Jagannath is eternal. Thus, we have two versions of the origins. One is the popular legends based on Puranas and Folklore. The other is the statements of the scholars who have tried to collate evidences from known history, archeology and ancient literature to draw surmises about the history and the origins. Eminent writers and poets

like Sarala Das, Jagannath Das, Balaram Das, Achyunanda Das propagated the cult of Jagannath. After the visit of Shri Chitanaya in A.D. 1501 this cult of devotional love predominated in Orissan religious life and literature. Orissa came under the Muslims in 1586, after which profound changes took place in the social and religious life of the Oriya People, the impact of which fell on the worship of Lord Jagannath. Under the Maratha Rule, Orissa got no patronage and religious peace, but the institution of Jagannath flourished, because of the zeal of the Maratha nobles. Not only architectural additions were made by way construction of "Meghananda Pachery of 20 feet height but an all-round architectural and religious development was made in this sacred Temple. Brahmachari Gosain, a Maratha Saint who had political influence got the dilapidated temple of Jagannath decorated with these relics. The famous work of



this saint was the removal of one Aruna Pillar from Konark to the Singhadwar of Puri Temple where it is found today.

Tribal Deity-Legendary and Historical Views

Although scholars differ on the origin and evolution of Lord Jagannath, all of them agree that Lord Jagannath is basically a tribal deity from legendary as well as from historical evidences. According to some, this evolution has started with the appearance of the primitive man and has undergone the process of evolution till ultimately worshipped as Rastra Devata, Jagannath. From legendary point, it can be stated clearly that Biswabasu belonged to Savara tribe, who worshipped the Lord Jagannath. Apart from the above mentioned faiths, all historians agree that Vindhya region in the west constituted the habitat of the Savaras. Savaras speak Mundari dialect. The Mundari dialect is the primitive form of modern Oriya and Purva Magadhi language. Though the tribals speaking Mundari language were divided into different tribes like Savar, Kandha, Munda and Gonda etc., they primarily belonged to a larger community. The descendants of these primitive people still inhabit the hilly regions and forest lands of Orissa. Some of them use Mundari dialect as means of communication. Besides language, close similarity is noticeable in their religious thought and worship, and in the form of their presiding deities. Among these tribals who spoke Mundari dialects, tree or khamba (pillar or post) worship was in vogue. In trying to give a human shape to the tree or Khamba (post) they in fact gave it strange shapes. Perhaps that might have originated the shape of Lord Jagannath. We see a unique combination of shape and shapeless in this tree or Khamba deity. This structure is their own original creation. That, Lord Jagannath is being worshipped in Shreeksheetra Puri from time immemorial is based on Puranic evidences given

by scholars. However, there is no historical evidence of worship of Jagannath at Puri prior to the 10th century A.D. when Yayati Kesari was the ruler. But we come to know from the Indrabhuti's Jnanasiddhi about the place of Jagannath. Pt. Neelakantha Das has mentioned that the Savaras were worshipping the image of Jagannath made of neem wood in a place called Sambal (Samal, now in Talcher of Angul District) in Uddiyan, the kingdom of Indrabhuti. We can say that Jagannath was worshipped in some part of Uddiyan prior to the rule of Yayati-I. Indrabhuti has described Jagannath as Buddhist deity in Jnanasiddhi. In the opinion of Indrabhuti Jagannath was worshipped by the Savaras in one of the Budha Viharas.

The Puspagiri Vihar which has been mentioned in Hieun-tsang's travelogue has not yet been discovered. Possibly it has been completely destroyed. Although history is completely silent over this issue, it may be said that it was destroyed due to anti-Buddhist activities of King Sasanka and his feudatory chief Madhav Raj-II in the 7th century A.D. Prior to its destruction Jagannath was shifted to a place in Sonepur in Uddiyan and kept hidden under the earth. Jagannath was shifted before the arrival of Hieun-Tsang and Puspagiri Vihar was destroyed after his departure. But by that time Jagannath was accepted and recognised as the most popular deity. Therefore, after 80 years from the rule of Sasanka and Madhav Raj-II, we see Indrabhuti as a worshipper of Jagannath in 717 A.D. There are various opinions about the place where the image of Jagannath was lying buried. Madalapanji (the temple Chronicles) identifies this place with the village Gopali of Sonepur. The Madalapanji records legend of King Yayati recovering the wooden images of Jagannath from the Sonepur region where it lay buried for over 144 years. Since, the images were damaged, new images



were made out of the trees brought from Sonepur. Even now in the forest of Kakdein and Kotsamalai of Sonepur lives a Savar tribe that knows the technique and art of making Jagannath images out of neem wood. A good number of them in the past were settled at Puri as tribal priests through the patronage of Yayati-I for worshipping Jagannath. The odra kingdom inhabited mostly by primitive Savaras was famous even from the time of Mahabharat. We find the mention of Odras in the Dharma Sastra of Manu. The name of an Odra king is found in the Mahabharat. From the ancient time, the primitive Savaras were the worshipper of Khamba.

Whether the Khamba tradition came to Orissa through the practice of Vedic religion or through primitive tribal worshipping is not very clear. It has to be noted that the concept of Lord Jagannath has a tribal history behind it. Sabaras, the earliest tribal inhabitants of Orissa, were tree worshippers, and all their rituals involved dancing and singing before the 'Kitung' or 'Jaganata' or God. It is believed that when the Vedic people occupied Orissa, they adopted many of the local tribal traditions, which included the transformation of Jagannath from 'Jaganata'. The Origin of Lord Jagannath, the presiding deity of the holy city of Puri, around whom the religious life of Orissa has evolved from hoary past has been shrouded in myths and legends. Analysing the legendary association of Jagannath with a class of aborigines, called Sabaras, the peculiar nature of the wooden icon of the deity and his associates, Balabhadra and Subhadra, and association of a class of non-Brahmin priests, called Daita, who are presumed to be of tribal origin with the worship of the deity. Some scholars hold that Jagannath was originally a tribal deity. Anncharlott Eschmann holds 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

found among the primitive tribes like Saoras and Khonds. If Lord Jagannath was tribal in origin, at what stage and how was he metamorphosed into a Hindu deity ?

The legends regarding the origin of Jagannath, which have been recorded in various sources such as Mahabharat of Sarala Das, Deula Tola of Nilambar Das, Skanda Purana, Brahma Purana, Narada Purana, Padma Purana, Kapila Samhita etc., suggest the tribal as well as Brahmanical links of the deity in the initial stage. According to Sarala Das's Mahabharat, the dead body of Lord Krishna, transformed into wooden form, landed at the Puri sea shore; Jara Sabara, an aborigine, picked it up and worshipped it; subsequently, Indradyumna, the king of Somavamsa, got three wooden images made out of the log and built a temple for the deities. According to Deula Tola, Indradyumna, the king of Malava, got a piece of sacred wood which was the metamorphosed shape of god Nilamadhava from the Sabara chief, named Visvavasu, and out of the wood he carved three images. Both the stories suggest the Vaishnavite origin of Jagannath. But Indradyumna remains a legendary figure, and his historicity cannot be established on any safe ground. Some have identified him with the Indradyumna of original Mahabharat and considered him to be quite an ancient figure of pre-Christian era. If we accept the version of Sarala Dasa's Mahabharat, we may feel inclined to identify him with Indraratha, the Somavamsi king of tenth century A.D. But identification of Indradyumna with Indraratha is at variance with the long-accepted tradition, that Yayati-I, the remote predecessor of Indraratha, built the Jagannath temple at Puri.

Regarding tribal origin of Lord Jagannath, it is said that Nilamadhava was worshipped by Savara King Viswabasu inside the dense forest



of Nilagiri (the Blue Mountain). Subsequently Nilamadhaha disappeared and reincarnated in the forms of three deities Lord Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabhadra. These three deities together symbolize Nilamadhaha (Nila-Ma-Dhaba). Nila (Blue) represents Lord Jagannath, Ma (Mother) represents Goddess Subhadra and Dhaba (White) which represents Balabhadra who are worshiped at Puri. The Savaras became known as Daitas who are the hereditary servitors of Lord Jagannath. They observed the funeral rites of Lord Jagannath during Navakalevara (when the deities change their body) and the sole responsibilities of Snana Jatra and Sri Gundicha Jatra are bestowed upon these Daitas. The worship of Lord Jagannath by Savara is also mentioned in Darubrahma Gita written by Jagannath Das in 16th Century AD and in Deula Tola written by Nilambara Das in 17th Century AD. Regarding origin of Lord Jagannath, historian William Hunter also remarked that the aboriginal people worshipped a Blue Stone inside dense forests as Nilamadhaha the Dravidian God, who was offered kacha (Raw) food by the primitive tribes and with the passage of time as the Aryan elements introduced Jagannath into Hinduism he is worshipped as God of Aryan (a more civilized race) who is offered pakka (cooked) food. At present these two fold worship coexist side by side. Till today the Sauras or Savaras worship trees "the Nature God" known as "Kitung" which means God. They do not cut trees because they

believe that Kitung dwells inside the tree. Kitung is otherwise known as Jagant and according to them Jagant is the 10th incarnation of Vishnu. As it is said the word Jagannath is not a Sanskrit word nor it is a Pali word but a derivation of Austric word Jagant.

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The God Who Dies Young

Rabi Ray

Thousand years ago, in the '*Rig Veda*', the Aryan mind had explored the composition of human self and discovered '*Ajo-Bhagah*', the unborn part of the body which survives death. In the *Vedanta* (Upanisads), the '*Ajo-Bhaga*' is named as '*Brahman*' or '*Atman*'. The enlightened rishis had elaborately narrated the concept of '*Brahman*' or '*Atman*'.

" *J i v o*
mrutasya charati
s v a d h a b h i r,
A m a r a t y o
martyona sa
yonin". (Rig-Veda
1-164-30). The
immortal self will be
reborn in a new
body due to its
meritorious deeds.



"*Anupashy yatha purve pratipashy tatha*
pare shasyam iba martyah pachyate shasyam
iba jayate punah". (Kathopanishada-1-1-6).
Consider, how it was with the forefathers; behold,
how it is with the later (men); a mortal ripens like
corn, and like corn, is born again."

The text "*Brahman Sutra*" is an aphoristic
summary of different views or concepts of
Brahman mentioned in the '*Upanisads*'. Through

the ages the concepts of Brahman or Atma have
been simplified. The *Bhagabat Gita* is the most
simplified text, which helps the common man to
understand and realise the knowledge of Brahman
or Atma. "*Jatasyahi dhruvo mrutyura*
*dhruvamjanma mrutasasyacha ****" (Gita 27.2.)
Death is due to birth and birth is due to death :

This is the only
truth of life. How it
occurs ? Gita
explains, "*Vasamsi*
jirnnani yatha
*vihaya ****" (Gita
22-2). The Atma
changes the old
body into the new
body as old and
worn-out clothings
are changed for the
new.

Sri Purusottama Jagannath and its puja
and rituals observed in the *Sri Mandir* at Puri
since time immemorial, are based on the
philosophy of Brahman. *Srimandir* of Puri is a
Vishnu Temple. But to our surprise, instead of
iconic Vishnu image, four mystic wooden idols
i.e *Jagannath*, *Balabhadra*, *Subhadra* and
Sudarshan are worshiped in the main temple of
Srimandir since time immemorial. Jagannath being

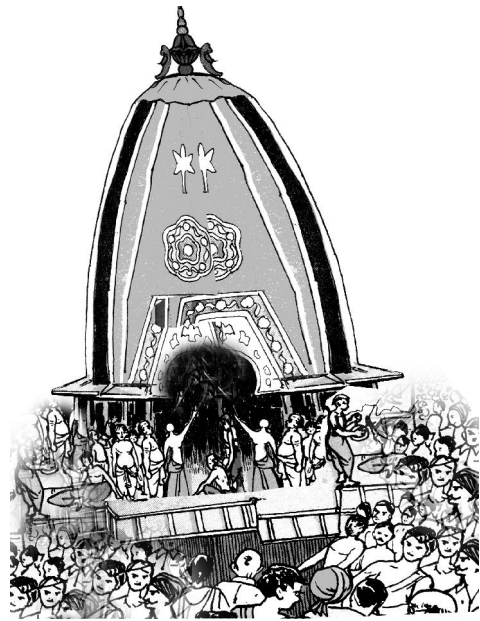


the presiding deity, Puri is famous as *Jagannath Dham*, one of the four celebrated Dhams of Hindus of India.

The wooden icons are not only unique but also their ceremonies and rituals are the most unique and mysterious. The '*Navakalevar*' or renewal of icons is one of the principal rituals which is performed at an interval of some years. In lunar calander when the month *Asadha* is sixty days or two months, the '*Navakalevar*' is to be done. The last '*Navakalevar*' was done in the year 1996.

The '*Navakalevar*' is of two types i.e '*Sri Angaphita Navakalevar*' and *Sampurna*(total) '*Navakalevar*'. In the former type, the '*Saptavaran*' or the seven layers of clothes pasted on the icons are removed only and new '*Saptavaran*' is done. In the latter, the secret '*Brahman*' is taken out of the old icons and placed in the new icons. The old icons without '*Brahman*' are treated as dead bodies or corpses and are buried in the grave-yard known as '*Koili Vaikuntha*' inside the temple premises. The *Daita-pati*, Sevaks of tribal origin observe '*Suddhi-Kriya*' (the traditional purification or death rituals) for the dead icons. The new icons, carrying '*Brahman*', are treated as alive and born. Hence the '*Navakalevar*' is nothing but the practical representation of fundamental doctrine of '*Brahman*' which speaks of the immortality of '*Brahman*' or Soul in the vicious circle of birth-death-rebirth.

All the religious texts describe the '*Brahman*' as '*Paramam Guhyam*' meaning supreme secret. According to the '*Chandogya Upanisad*', the doctrine of '*Brahman*' may be imparted by a father to his elder son or to a trusted pupil, but not to another, whoever he may be, even if, the latter gives him the whole earth surrounded by the water and filled with treasures. So it is not easy on the part of a lay man to know



the doctrine of '*Brahman*'. With such traditions the proceedings of the '*Navakalevar*' are done with utmost secrecy except the Sevaks engaged in '*Gupta-seva*' meaning secret service. Each wooden structure pasted with seven layers of clothes and painted with colours is not the self form or image of any God or Goddess of Hindu pantheon. But, it is the symbolic manifestation of the mortal body with a purpose to conceal the symbolic immortal mystic '*Brahman*' or Soul. Therefore the famous Oriya *vaishnava* teacher '*Ativadi*' Jagannath Dasa is justified in saying, "Even, the God shall die if he incarnates in this mortal world".

The '*Brahman*' or '*Atman* or Soul is the common element of all the religions of the man kind. According to belief of all the religions of the World, the God is immortal. But the Jagannath Cult is an exception to such belief. In the Jagannath Cult the God not only dies but dies young.

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The Eyes That Harboured All Infinity

Mahimohan Tripathy

The caption of this article is a line (with a variation) from Sri Aurobindo's poem "The Stone Goddess". The line is "A Form that harboured all infinity." A striking feature of the image of Lord Jagannath is His big round eyes. A familiar and lovable name of Lord Jagannath is 'Chakadola', meaning round eyes. The word 'Chakadola' is synonymous with 'Chakanayana', 'Chakaakshia'. Unlike those of Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra, the eyes of Jagannath are round in shape. The symbolic meanings of Chakadola are as interpreted by some eminent scholars, recounted below.

One of the *avataras* (incarnations) of Lord Vishnu is *Matschhya* (fish) avatara. *Rohita* (Rohi fish) and *Animisha* (having no eye-lids) are two names of Vishnu out of his one thousand names (Vishnu sahasra nama), which indicate Matschhya avatara. The round lid-less eyes, like that of fish, symbolise that Lord Vishnu or Jagannath is ever active and vigilant. To Him, days, nights and fatigue make no meaning.

Sun and Moon are the two eyes of Lord Vishnu. Hence, His eyes are round in shape ("Sashi Surya netram", Gita).

Round wheel like eyes symbolise the Buddhist concept of *nirvan*. The soul, passing through many births, completes the circle and

attains liberation. Buddhists believe that the seed of enlightenment in each person's mind is nourished in the process of visualizing and contemplating on a *mandala*, a circle representing the wheel of time, the universe, and the Buddha's enlightened mind. A mandala, they say, is a store-house of vast amounts of spiritual energy.

The eye-index of Lord Jagannath is higher than that of the images of deities belonging to many ancient civilizations e.g. the Indus valley, the Mexican and Egyptian civilizations. Hence, it could be presumed that Lord Jagannath is a very ancient deity in the world.

Lord Jagannath is also called Darubrahman'. It means the prime soul enshrined in the wood. He is shrouded in mystery like *Brahman* of *Vedanta* or *Upanishad* philosophy.

We behold the image of Darubrahman - Jagannath, but the Brahman in Him is invisible, too subtle for our eyes ! As stated in *Kena upanishad* (1-5-9), that which is not seen by the eye, but by which the eye sees - know that to be Brahman". In the Holy Quran (ch.6), it is mentioned "Eyes can not reach Him, but he reaches the eyes. And, He is the incomprehensible, the All-Aware".

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The Sabar Tradition in Shri Jagannath Culture

Bhagaban Mohapatra

Lord Jagannath, supreme God of the universe, has taken his abode at Puri, the chief religious centre among the four celebrated religious centre of Hindus. Various Sanskrit works, such as *Padma Puran*, *Narada Puran*, *Skanda Purana*, *Niladrimahodaya*, *Bamadeva Samhita* etc. have described about the sacred abode of Lord Jagannath at *Purusottam Khetra*, Puri. Different scholars in different times have also left no stone unturned to trace out the origin and antiquity of Purosottam Jagannath; but no satisfactory, positive and commonly acceptable evidence have come to light so far to unveil as to how and when this concept has come into existence in Puri. The *Niladrimahodaya* provides in detail all the festivals of Lord Jagannath and the mode of their worship alongwith the deities. Out of twelve months of the year, worshipping of deities for eleven months are performed on *Aryan* tradition basis and rest one month i.e. from *Jestha Purnima* (Snan Purnima) till the entry of deities into the temple, worshipping is performed in non-Aryan basis i.e. in *Sabar* fashion. It is, therefore, not clear to understand whether Lord Jagannath originally is a Hindu Aryan deity or tribal deity. Mystery is still wrapped behind the cult of lord Jagannath. Prevalent legend and traditions, however, throw some light for which it is necessary to turn to pages of *Vedic* and *Puranic* literatures for the purpose.

Sabar tradition in the Culture of Lord Jagannath has its connection with the legend of *Raja Indradyumna*. He was the king of solar dynasty in *Satya Yuga* and was ruling the city of *Avanti* in *Malaya*. He was a devotee of Lord Vishnu. One day, he came to know that Vishnu in flesh and blood was present at Blue Mountain (*Nilakandar*) in *Odra Desha*. The story goes in this manner. It is mentioned in the *Skanda Purana* (Uttar Khanda) that *Rohini Kunda* is situated near *Kalpabata* tree on the Blue Mountain of the country of Odra. To the North of Rohini Kunda, there is a place where a Sabar Chief named *Viswabasu* was worshipping *Nilamadhaba*. The *Devatas* used to come at night to worship Lord Nilamadhaba everyday. This news tempted the king Indradyumna to see Nilamadhaba. The king deputed his Brahmin priest *Vidyapati* to Odra Desha to collect information of Lord Vishnu. Coming to Odra Desha, Vidyapati took shelter in Sabar village and made friendship with the family of Sabar Chief concealing his identity and motive of coming to that place. Then he fell in love with a Sabar maiden called Lalita, the only beautiful daughter of Viswabashu and got married her. On his repeated request through *Lalita*, *Viswabasu*, being motivated, one day took his son-in-law (*Vidhyapati*) covering his eyes throw a narrow



track to a cave where Nilamadhava was worshipped. On seeing Nilamadhava, his eyes were glittered. Vidyapati was very intelligent. He secretly dropped mustard seeds on the ground on his way to see Nilamadhava. After some days, plants from germinated seeds paved the way to the cave where Nilamadhava was worshipped. No body except Vidyapati could know this. Locating the route, he then returned to Avanti and informed the king (Indradyumna) about Nilamadhava. The king with his forces, accompanied by *Narada*, set out his journey to Odra Desha. No sooner the king reached the boundary of Odra country, than he received the news about the disappearance of Nilamadhava. The king became extremely sad.

Narad, however, assured him that the lord would appear in the form of Daru (sacred wood). The king then went to Nilagiri and there he performed a Yagyan. Lord Nilamadhava made his appearance in a dream to the king and instructed him that Lord would appear in the form of Daru (sacred wood) on the seashore. On the next day, the king got the information about the floating of

Daru on the seashore with four branches. Then the king brought it and placed it on *Maha Vedi* with supreme care. At the time of discussion with Narada about the construction of deities, a voice from above announced- "The Lord himself will construct His own image and will appear on Mahavedi after a fixed number of days, during which the door of the said room with Daru should be shut up". While the king was thinking about this announcement, an old carpenter with his instrument came and agreed to take up the work with the condition that he would be allowed to remain isolated and un-disturbed for a period of 21 days inside the temple. The king agreed to his condition. After 15 days when no sound of construction of images came from the room, the king and queen, being impatient and doubtful, opened the door of the room and found that the images remained unfinished and the carpenter had disappeared. In the meantime, a heavenly voice declared, " Oh king ! Dress these four deities with silken garments and establish the images on Mahavedi." Accordingly, the king worshipped the Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsan uttering three *suktas* of the *Rig Veda*, which are symbol of brahman. From that day, tradition has associated with the worship of deities at Purusottam kshetra with the name of Indradyumna. After installation of images, Lord Jagannath was very much pleased on the king and offered him boons. Indradyumna sought from the Lord four boons. The first was that descendants of Viswabasu would decorate and do their services especially during *Anavasara* and *Ratha Yatra*. The second was the children of Lalita and their descendants to be designated as *Suar* (Supakars) or the cooks; the third was the descendants of Vidyapati would be priests of Jagannath designated as *Patimohapatra*. On being asked as to what boon he wanted for himself, Indradyumna prayed for no servitors in



his family, as they might claim with a sense of vanity that the temple was built by his ancestors. For this tremendous sacrifice of Indradyumna, Lord was very much pleased and granted the last boon. This has been given in much detail in "*Deaula Tola*" by Nilamber Das.

The Sevaks or servitors called Daitapatis are of Sabar origin and they are engaged in worship and services of main deities especially at the time of *Nabakalebar* and Car festival. During Nabakalebara, on the day of transfer of Brahma from old images to new images, Daitapatis perform the burial of old images at *Koili Baikuntha* in the precinct of the temple and observed' the funeral rites like Hindus in traditional manner; because they think themselves that they are *Gyanti-Sahodar* (family member of Lord). They use to shave their head and take bath in *Markandeswar* Tank with their family on the final day of funeral rites and they put on new clothes and take *Mahaprasad* as observed on funeral day. They therefore treat themselves as related to the family of Lord Jagannath.

Daita means "the most beloved one of Lord." After bathing festival on full moon day of Jyestha, the deities are worshipped in a secret chamber (Anavsara) for full two weeks by the Daitas. Except Daitas and Patimahapatra, none are allowed to see and do the worship of Lord during Anavasara, car festival and Nabakalebar. Anavasara means engagement without rest. The worship is so engaging and continuous that Daitas do not get time to relax. Hence, this period of two weeks has been correctly named as Anavasara. During this period, they offer fruits and Anavasara - pana (water mixed with sugar, milk cream etc.) to the deities and they take that as Prasad there. It is believed that the deities are in sickness. Normally one likes to see his close relatives at the time of sickness. With that belief,

as Daitas are treated as close relatives of lord's family, they are only allowed to sit with him during this period and sing different hymns in a very low voice to please the deities. From the way of their worship and engagement it appears that they have devoted themselves most affectionately, closely and heartily to the deities. During Car festival, they decorate the Deities in the chariot in tribal costumes. At the time of *pahandi*, they use to sing a type of song called *malasree* which has a traditional belief that such songs and wordings would protect and safeguard the Deities. Besides, just before pahandi they use to tie up charms and talismans made up of roots and leaves on the arms of deities in order to protect their bodies. This is characteristically a sabar mode of belief and indicates their affection for deities.

It may be observed that Daitas have no privilege to participate in all other festivals of Deities, which are celebrated according to Aryan tradition. Thus in Sri Jagannath culture there is a fusion of celebration of Aryan and non Aryan worshipping without any conflict. Tradition and practices followed in the Jagannath temple indicate that Lord Jagannath is of tribal origin.

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Temple Administration : Past and Present

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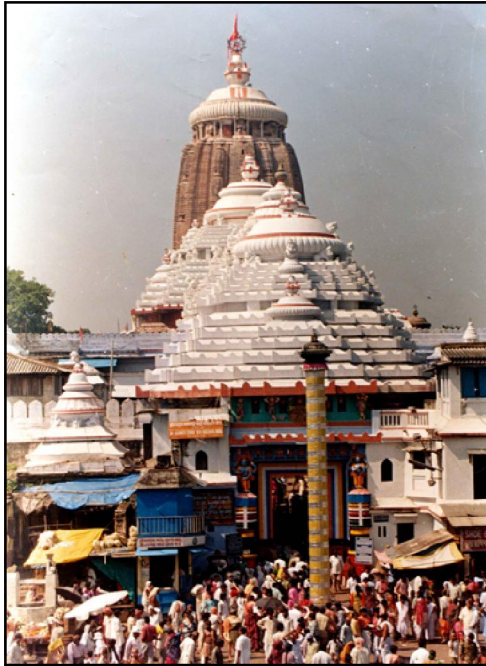
Analysing the story of invasion of 'Shree Mandira' by "Raktabahu" as described in 'Madala Panji', famous historian 'Hunter' settled for the year 318 AD as the establishment of the shrine of Lord Shree Purusottam in Puri.

According to the views of Sri S.N. Rajguru, in 4th century AD, Brahmins and Bouddhs used to sit together in Purusha Mandap near sea beach, where they worshipped their respective deities by chanting their mantras and hymns. Devotees from far off places came to Puri and offered their valuables in cash and kind to Sri Purushottam as a token of their deep devotion. Their contribution and donation ultimately resulted in accumulation of huge wealth.

The celebrity status of the God and accumulation of this huge wealth tempted many fanatics to invade the land and shrine. 'Raktabahu' was the first among them, who grabbed a huge part of it and carried that to his native place. This implies that, though, celebrity and wealth was enormous but the system of effective management wasn't there,

which could protect the deity and counter the invader. To protect the icons from the cyclonic invasion of such people, some dedicated Sevayats sailed the idol to village 'Gopali' (Nearly 19 km

away from river bank of Mahanadi Block - Bira Maharajpur, Dist.-Sonepur) even risking their own lives. Till the arrival of Adi Shankaracharya, (788 AD - 820 AD) shrine of Puri was idolless. Shankaracharya came to Puri in the later middle part of his life, and with the help of Keshari Pata Raja, discovered as well as re-incarnated the idol. Researchers opine that Shankaracharya came to Puri during the 'Bhowmakara' dynasty. History and other evidences also corroborate the view of researchers.



Different stone inscriptions, copper plate etc. found in different parts of India attest the celebrity status of shrine at its peak in 9th century. During the rule of 'Ananga Bhima Deva(III)' of Ganga dynasty (1201-1238), the Chhatisha Nijoga seva was introduced in Puri temple. This



seva included original 9 traditional Sevayats of earlier days. During the rule of 'Ganga' and 'Surya' dynasty, temple administration and management were running under effective patronage of devoted kings.

After the battle of 'Gohiratikiri' of 1568, Orissa was subjugated by Afghan rulers. Subsequently by co-operation of Moughul rulers, Gajapati Rama Chandra Dev established 'Bhoi' dynasty carving a small state 'Khurda', which included Puri, Cuttack, Athagarh of Ganjam district, Banki and a major portion of undivided Dhenkanal district. Ramachandra Dev, who was popularly known as 'Dwiti Indradyumna' as he had resanctified and again consecrated the deities by recovering their remnants from Bishan Mohanty as was collected by him after 'Kala Pahaada' set the idols ablaze. The administration of the state runs in the name of Lord Jagannath. To strengthen his clutch over state administration and to obtain loyalty of subordinate kings, Sri Ramachandra Deva assigned Gumasta Batakrushna Mohanty to write *Madalapanji*. In this temple chronicle, shape and nature of temple administration was reflected upto a greater extent.

In subsequent stage, due to the bulk of Madala Panji, its content covering different dimensions related to temple management, it was divided into 4 parts i.e. :-

1. Bhandara Khanja Madala - maintained by Pattajoshi Mohapatra
2. Deula Madala / Karmangi Madala - maintained by Deula Karana
3. Deshapanji Madala - prepared by Deula Karana
4. Rajakhanja Madala - Prepared and maintained by Tadhau Karana

In temple management, usually advisory and policy making aspect is taken care of by

Shankaracharya of Puri Gobardhan Pitha Matha, who's also president of Puri Mukti Mandap Pandit Sabha. Learned scholars of Mukti Mandap and other parts of the country, Rajguru, Mandira Parichcha, minister-in-charge of temple administration and any other special invitee associate themselves in sorting out the difficult and controversial issues of temple administration as and when required.

In execution level, there's a committee under the chairmanship of Gajapati Maharaj. During Bhoi dynasty, Minister-in-charge of the temple, Buxi (Head of Army), Council of Pandits used to help in temple administration. Complete subjugation of Orissa by Moghul General Maan Singh, conquering Naseer Khan (an Afghan ruler) on 5th Aug. 1590 further strengthened Sri Ramachandra Dev to tone up temple management. Maan Singh adorned the king with the title of Gajapati Maharaj. Upto 1760, the temple administration was smoothly managed by him. But declaration of a war against - Birakishor' Dev (I) of Bhoi dynasty by Jagannath Narayan Dev, Maharaj of Paralakhemundi ruined the temple administration. Parala Maharaja claimed his entitlement over temple on the ground that his ancestors constructed and consecrated temple in 12th century. Birakishor Dev (I) took shelter in the camp of Marathas and in later period won the battle with a condition to pay one lakh rupees as compensation to Marathas towards war expenses. But crippled finance of the State couldn't meet with this agreement and hence Marathas took mortgage of four profit generating Praganas, whose income were meant for temple expenses.

In earlier days, Bhoi kings appointed four ministers (Rajgurus) for

- (i) Effective collection of state revenues



- (ii) Look after state administration
- (iii) Supervision of temple management
- (iv) Orientation of people in religious way of thinking.

After war, Marathas were the authority of temple administration. They appointed four *parichchas* for conduction of rites and rituals, internal temple management, finance management of the temple and collection of revenue from different sources to meet temple expenses. They had appointed only one *parichcha* for the above works but soon followed the Bhoi way of administration by dividing the work into four divisions as stated earlier. Marathas were sincere in temple administration. So, number of pilgrims as well as the revenue of the temple increased manifold, which came out of the offerings of the pilgrims. Usually temple revenue comes from the following sources i.e. :

- (i) Land revenue collected from different *praganas*.
- (ii) Contribution from *sewayats* as 40% of their 'pindika' income (the income collected from their pilgrims).
- (iii) Sale proceeds of *kotha khanja* of Shree Mandira.
- (iv) 'Sulli Mahaal' contribution i.e. 25% of the amount paid by pilgrims at checkpoints of Zobra (Cuttack) and Atharanala (Puri).

If above ones were inadequate, Maratha rulers used to compensate the required sum from state exchequer. Bhonsla Supremo, staying at Nagpur, was the final authority regarding each and everything of the temple. At lower level, temple Subedar and Naib Subedar heard and disposed of petty matters.

During British rule, temple administration took a new shape. To curb unruly Maratha rulers,

Governor General Lord Wellesely waged a war against them on 18th Sept. 1800. Colonel Harcourt, the General of the battle defeated and subjugated Orissa by signing a pact on 17th December 1803. The pact was between Yashowant Rao Ramchandra on behalf of king of Berar and Arthur Wellesely on behalf of East India Company. This resulted in total control of the State and temple.

Governor General Lord Wellesely, in his despatch to Lt. Colonel Campbell, Commander - southern forces, commanded him to maintain the sanctity of the shrine without hurting the religious sentiments of the *Sewayats*.

East India Company appointed one *Parichcha* for temple administration. In 1803, the rift between the company and Raja Mukunda Deva became acute, leading to confiscation of the state of Khurda. Aggrieved company instructed temple *Parichcha* not to use even the name and *gotra*(clan) of the king in regular and routine temple practice. From 1803 to 1806, East India Company was directly involved in temple management. On certain fiscal ground, Mukunda Deva (II) was confined to his palace under surveillance. In the meanwhile, the first Collector of Puri, Charles Groom submitted a detail report in 1905 to Thomas Fortesch, Secy. to the Commissioner of Cuttack Province, regarding the role and functions of different *Sewayats* including Gajapati as the chief of *Sewayats*. After reaching an agreement between East India Company and Gajapati Mukunda Deva, the king was released from confinement. In 1806, company gave up temple management after being criticised by Christian missionaries as temple belonged to idolatry. Pressure from different sectors led company to promulgate "The Regulation IV of 1806', which formed a council of three Pundits for temple administration. Subsequently this



regulation was replaced by act of 1809. As per Section II(I) of this regulation, the total temple management was vested to king of Khurda, who would stay at Puri to look after the temple management, regulating the activities of the priests, officers and sevayats. King was responsible for management of codified laws, established usages. Again this law was abolished and the Council of three Pundits was resolved. But in practice, the real chain of control was in the hands of the company. Later the company selected three employees to assist the king, who were answerable to the Company.

In the meanwhile, Buxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mohapatra of Rodanga killa waged a war against Company administration on 29th March 1817 claiming his entitlement over his hereditary estate of Rodanga. The estate was transferred by Dewan Krushan Chandra in the name of his relative Laxminarayan in 1814 with a plan to retransfer it to his own name subsequently. Company doubted the foul play of Mukunda Deva in waging this battle and kept him in confinement in Barabati Fort, which finally turned out to be his last resort.

Rama Chandra Dev (1817-1856) succeeded Mukunda Dev and he was followed by Birakishor Dev (1856-1859). Thus temple management was with the king as superintendent of the temple. From 1818 to 1863, British Government utilised the income of 'Ekharajat Kharcha Mahaal' (Approximately the income of 67520 Mana of Land) for temple expenses.

The pilgrims' tax collected was a major source of bridging up the deficit of temple budget. In Car Festival of July, 1825, approximately 2 lakh and sixty thousand rupees only were collected.

On the amendment of legal provision, the section II of Act X of 1840 reaffirmed the absolute authority of Puri Raja as superintendent.

Abolition of pilgrims' tax necessiated more financial help from the Government Sector. So the authorities diverted the income of 27,000 Kharcha Mahaal on 25th Nov. 1843, reducing the temple grant from 53000 to 35738. To bridge the gap of Rs.17261/-, an additional land was given by them.

The Christian missionaries continuously nagged the British authorities to reduce the grant provided by them to the temple but this proposal was finally refused by Governor General on 12th August 1852. Unfortunately, there was mismanagement in Dola festival of 1853, which resulted in stampede claiming 27 lives. This resulted in penalty on Pandas, Pratiharis and security Jamadars and they were eventually put behind bars. King Ramachandra Deva was censored for this.

To improve temple functioning, British Government gave additional land to conduct Nabakalebar ceremony of 1895. During the reign of Birakishor Dev, police personnel were appointed to maintain temple's administration and discipline. After the death of Gajapati Birakishor Dev in 1859, his widow Maharani Suryamani Patto Mahadei appealed to get superintendship of temple as the adopted son Dibyasingha Dev was a minor at that time. Her appeal was accepted and justified in the Court of Law. During her superintendship, sevayats didn't co-operate and financial inconsistency reduced the temple management to a mockery. The Nabakalebar ceremony of 1874 lost its glamour limiting it to 'Sri Anga Phita' Utsav only.

Dibyasingha Dev attained adulthood in 1875 and became the temple authority. But his



indifferent attitude denoted the worst ever management of temple. The mismanagement reached its apex during the rare event of "Snana Yoga" of Govdinda Dwadashi. Almost ten lakh devotees of different parts of country assembled in Puri for *darshan* of deities after having auspicious bath in the ocean in 1877. The then Collector of Puri, Joseph Armstrong and John Beams, Divisional Revenue Commissioner had adequately informed and warned the king, but it was futile as the king didn't pay any heed to it. Again stampede claimed 8 innocent lives (6 at lion gate and 2 at the west gate). This led to withholding of title of Maharaja, which was scheduled to be adorned shortly.

After a short while, George Dickens rendered punishment to nine Sevayats and exiled Gajapati Dibya Singh Dev to Andaman Nicobar Island. Gajapati was earlier arrested by District Magistrate for torturing and committing murder of one Shiva Das of Damodarapur, Puri. The king died in exile on 25th August 1887. His exile prompted his mother Suryamani Mahadei to take hold of temple management. But this logic didn't suit British Government. So she had to appeal in the Court of District Judge W. Warren in Cuttack, who passed an order in her favour on 18th December 1882. Thus she became the guardian of adopted minor son Sri Jagannath Jenamani, who was later known as Gajapati Mukunda Dev (III).

In the meanwhile, the Section II of Act X of 1840 was replaced by Act XIV of 1882, which reflected in appointment of a receiver and empowering a committee to look after temple management. This was challenged by Suryamani Patto Mahadei. Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das filed a petition in Calcutta High Court in March 1887 to protect the cause of the queen. Strong and witty advocacy compelled the British Government to surrender before Royal interest.

The regulation X of 1840 was withdrawn in 1891, following a compromise petition's signing. On behalf of British Government, Hariballav Ghosh and Lalbihari Ghosh, and on behalf of Royal family, Barrister Madhusudan Das and Ramashankar Ray put their signatures on it. This empowered the queen to appoint Harekrishna Das, Sirastadar of Cuttack Judge Court as temple manager.

Raja Mukunda Dev (1897-1926) became the Superintendent of the temple after attaining adulthood. During this aforesaid period, Bengal Government had to appoint a new manager for effective temple administration as per resolution No.5109 of 5th December 1902 as Gajapati Mukunda Deva wasn't keeping well.

Temple managers like Sri Rajakishor Das, Sri Balamukunda Kanungo, Sri Sakhichand (A Bihari by Origin) etc. did a tremendous job to improve temple management.

Gajapati Mukunda Deva was heirless. Hence he adopted Rama Chandra Dev, second son of Bamara Maharaja as his heir in 1918 but later tried to repeal him by cancelling the adoption deed, which was turned down by Patna High Court.

After death of Mukunda Deva III on 14th February 1926, Ramachandra Deva IV wanted to appoint his own Dewan as the temple manager. He tried to use his power as Superintendent of temple to overlook the practice of appointing Governmental officials on deputation basis as temple managers.

Apathetic attitude of Gajapati Rama Chandra Dev crippled temple administration. Dominance of Sevayats and other pressure groups clutched the progressive reforms of the temple.



Hence, in free India, to restore the pride of the temple, an act called "Jagannath Temple Administration Act" was passed in 1952. It directed an officer of District Judge cadre to prepare an exhaustive list of record of right of different sevayats of temple and to submit it to the Department of Home and Law.

Basing on the report and consulting other law knowing personnel, Jagannath Temple Act of 1954 (Orissa Act II of 1955) was prepared, which empowered Orissa Govt. to take over temple management after getting approval of Assembly. It was legalised in 1955.

The enactment of the above was challenged by Gajapati Ramchandra Deva IV claiming his entitlement over temple and deity with the plea that as his forefathers had constructed and consecrated the temple and deity. Ultimately Hon'ble Supreme Court rejected the prayer of the king on 27th Oct. 1960. Hence Government took over the charge of the Temple.

The present Act contains the seeds of earlier enactment, starting from regulation IV of 1806, Act X of 1840 etc. The act is :- "Sri Jagannath Temple Managing Committee shall be a corporate body having a perpetual succession in which Hindus are eligible to be the members of the Committee. Gajapati, Puri is the Chairman, and Collector by designation would be the Vice Chairman. Administrator shall be the Secretary of the temple Committee, who alongwith official staff shall execute the decision of the managing committee."

Gajapati Birakishore Deva IV was succeeded by Gajapati Divyasingh Deva IV in 1971.

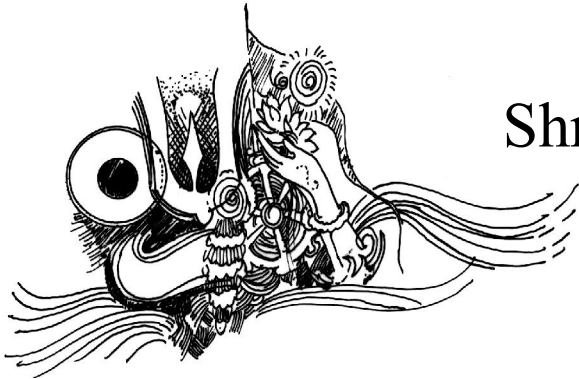
In 2005, earlier law was amended creating a post of chief administrator adorning the same by a Commissioner cadre officer and other few post of deputy administrators to look after the internal security, discipline, rites and rituals etc.

After completion of 3 years' term of previous managing committee, in May 2007 the temple managing committee was reconstituted taking Gajapati Divya Singha Deva as Chairman, Home Secretary of Government of Orissa as ex-officio- Vice Chairman, Chief Temple Administrator as Secretary and some other representatives of Sevayat Committee and other religious groups, scholars, striving to improve temple management, are also included as Members.

At present, a lot of educational training and other welfare programmes including field trips to Lila Kshetras of Lord Jagannath are organised to widen the knowledge of Sevayats. The present attempts, if continued uninterrupted, will certainly make Puri the primary destination of many pilgrims.

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Shree Jagannath Dham and Religious Tourism

Sunil Kumar Patnaik

Culture and Religion in India contribute a significant role in promotion of *ism*. It was the Indian religious culture, which made many foreign travellers to visit India in ancient times. India having a good reservoir of various colourful religions is unique in the world, which consists of so many hues of various cultures in such a small area. The religion causes lot of changes in the life and history of the any society and country. The same is the case in India too. On one hand, there are various religious temples having their own architectural style. On the other hand, there are a good number of traditions, beliefs, customs, rites and rituals that are living and vibrant. Puri is one such cultural and religious tourist destination, where one can get the flavour of pan- Indian religious beliefs and essence of cult and culture in the forms of rituals and customs. After all, Puri is a city where devout Hindus would like to die, and which a lot of salvation seeking foreigners would count among the 1000 destinations to visit before they die. For many NRIs, it represents an age-old link with their Indian roots. A foreign tourist generally looks for history, culture, shopping, entertainment and relaxation. In case of India, they also want a mystic experience. Overseas Holidayers and Travellers from across the globe have put India in the top five list of most attractive and satisfying holidaying destinations in the world as reported by 'Conda Nest Reader Travel award' survey. As such the

domestic tourism reached 500 million in India during 2006.

In travel and tourism, the destinations such as cultural centres and temple towns have something to reveal pack with myths and legends, ancient rituals, historical values and festivals, and Puri is evidently one such place. Long before the birth of modern term "Tourism", the ancient land Puri has experienced the glory, the din and bustle of a travellers town. Here pilgrimage has been taken into the fold of tourism in the course of time. Puri is a religious destination having distinctive brand and has an aura that has been created over hundreds of years.

The tourist destinations are often sacred places, be it a Tirtha or a pilgrim Centre or an archeological site or a place of historical significance, besides natural heritage sites. In Indian Tourism scenario, cultural sites are the main tourism product for the foreign nationals. About 47% of foreign tourists coming to India are interested in our cultural heritage. In India, today, there is a new breed of younger people who are re-discovering their tradition and culture. They've got money and are used to affluent lifestyle. If destinations such as Puri, Varanasi and Haridwar provide them with a spiritual experience set amidst the trappings of luxury, more and more people will be attracted. For people in the west,



there's a difference in approach to these places. While for Indians, it is a must take journey, for westerners, it is a combination of mysticism and mystery.

Puri is largely a pilgrim Centre, an eternal city, a holy land for liberation (Mokshya); of course, a classic tourist destination owes its origin to the lord of the Universe-Sri Jagannath.

In ancient India, religion and learning were very closely intermingled and each Tirtha or holy place was also a centre of learning and culture. Puri-one of the 'Dhams' was no exception to this general rule. Though Puri as a Tirtha first finds mention in the vanaparva of the Mahabharata and its sanctity and glory are elaborately described in the *Kurum Purana*, *Narada Purana*, *Padma Purana* and the *Utkal Khanda* of *Skanda Purana*, still its cultural history can be traced back from 7th century A.D. In another set of ancient scripture like *Tantra Jamala*, *Rudra Jamala*, *Bamadev Samhita*, *Niladni Mohodaya* etc, where one finds the references of this religious pitha. Some scholars opine that the *vedi* or *antarvedi* as referred to in the Mahabharata is nothing but the *ratnavedi* i.e., raised platform or pedestal on which the deities are seated in Sri Jagannath Temple. Jagannath is also known as *Daru Brahma* or the prime soul enshrined in wood. Some researchers co-relate this Daru with that of *Apurusham Daru* mentioned in Rig Veda (canto x. 155.3) and hold the view that worship of lord Jagannath started well before the Christian era. However, we get reference of Jagannath in the famous work "Jannasiddhi" of Indrabhuti the founder of Vajrayana sect of Buddhism flourished in Oddiyana or Orissa towards 7-8th century A.D.

Next, we come to the days of the great Sankaracharya (788-850 AD.), who in course of his spiritual conquest of the whole of India, stayed at Puri and founded one of his four pithas

called "Bhogavardhana Pitha" or Govardhana Pitha which has remained in existence till today. Establishment of a Pitha by Sankara at Puri forms a landmark in the history of Orissa, as it was followed by the revival of Sanskrit learning and literature in this area. Just few years after Sankara's visit to Puri, we find that the famous drama "Anargha Raghava Natakam" written by Murari was staged at Puri before an audience of learned people at the time of festival (Yatra) of God Purusottama, with the consort of Kamala, who was being worshipped in the 'Tamala' forest on the sea-shore.

After the days of Sri Sankara, the greatness and sanctity of Sri Purusottama in the sea shore near this sacred place spread throughout India which is corroborated in the Mahiar state inscription of 10th century A.D. found in the Saraswati Temple. This inscription clearly indicates that Sri Purusottama was worshipped in the sea shore of Udra or Orissa. This concept was held by millions of devotees in India.

The construction of the present Jagannath Temple in place of the small old dilapidated temple some time after the conquest and annexation of Orissa by imperial Ganga King Anantavarmana Chodaganga Deva in 1112 A.D. (Twelfth century A.D.). The earliest epigraphic record crediting Chodaganga with the construction of the temple occurs in Dasgoba copper plate inscription of Rajaraja III (1199 A.D.). During this time, the Ganga Empire was stabilized and the temple perhaps was completed. Towards 1230 AD., King Anangabhima Deva III, (1211-1239 A.D.) dedicated his Kingdom to God Purusottama-Jagannath of Puri and acknowledged the divinity of Puri both as the state deity of Orissa and as his divine overlord. Hence, onwards, Anangabhima Deva and his successors claimed to rule under divine order (*adesa*) worshipping Lord Jagannath.



Epigraphically, it was during the reign of King Bhanudeva II, the name of Jagannath appeared in inscriptions of Sri Kurumam (1309 A.D.) and Simhachalam (1319 A.D.).

Again during this period the Purusottama Jagannath trinity must have been a major interface with the established cult at one of India's most sacred kshetra. The dedication of the empire to lord Jagannath, combined with vast land donations to the temple at Puri and the formation of Jagannath cult must have earned the fame of a great *tirtha kshetra*. It was also said that during this period the "*Chhatisa Nijoga*" (36 categories of Sevakas) was introduced.

It can be safely said that from this period onwards, Puri became a famous centre of pilgrimage, and saints and seers, preachers and teachers, devotees and thinkers, and general visitors coming from far off as well as nearby places. They thronged this place during different occasions like rituals, festivals, and ceremonial observations for the purpose of offering worship and paying homage to the deity.

Puri became famous to such an extent that it was regarded as heaven on earth and the lord Jagannath as the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. It was universally believed that the Jagannath Dharma/belief is the confluence of all religious faiths. Naturally, the precepts of different sects paid their visit to the holy land of Puri and influenced the rulers through their respective philosophical doctrines. While in Puri they 'preached' their philosophy and got themselves involved in the ritual services of Jagannath temple and also established their Mathas (monasteries). It was during the reign of Chodaganga Deva (1112-47 A.D.) the great Vaisnava saint of South India - Sri Ramanuja in between 1107 to 1117 A.D. visited Puri and stayed at Puri. The effect of his visit was the change of religious faith of king Chodaganga Deva who became "Parama

Vaisnava". In commemoration of his visit to Puri, Sri Ramanuja established a Matha. His disciple Govinda established "Emar Matha at Puri in front of Lions Gate, which is a great Matha (monastery) in Orissa at present. Visnu Swami, another famous vaisnava preacher of South India also visited Puri in second half of 12th century AD and established a Matha near Markandeswar tank. Many Vaishnava reformers of South came to Puri and established their Mathas. Of the five Matha of this sect at Puri, the "*Radha Ballav Matha*" standing in front of lions gate of Jagannath temple is note worthy. Madhava Acharaya or Ananda Tirtha, Narahari Tirtha had visited Puri in the last part of 12th century A.D. A lot of epigraphic records about the activities of Narahari Tirtha are found in the Srikurma and Simanchala Temples. The coming of these four famous reformers and vaisnava preachers of South India to Puri within a century (1112 to 1212 A.D.) greatly stimulated the cultural activities of this holy place which became the chief centre of Hindu religion in India. It is mentioned in *Padma Purana* that the *Pandits* all over India will accept no new faith unless it gets the approval of the Pandits of Puri.

During the middle part of 12th century A.D., the great celebrated poet Jayadeva-the author of *Gitagovinda* who was born at Kenduli (near Baliptna Dist-Khurda) introduced the Radhamadhav faith through his *Gitagovinda*. Due to influence of *Srimad Bhagavata* and *Gitagovinda* the composite images of Krishna and Visnu as Gopinatha became very popular. The long continued tradition of Dasavatara had a imprint on Jayadeva who popularized Dasa Avatara (ten incarnations of Vishnu) in lucid language, which could be put to music and dance. It was Sri Jayadeva who institutionalised the "Devadasi" (Temple dancer) system introduced from the time of Somavamsi Kings. *Devadasi* or *Mahari* were women dedicated to the deity in



the temple for performance of dance and music. The importance of this dancing service became so great that a separate structure called *Natamandira* was added to the *Deula* or *Jagamohana*, in Sri Jagannath Temple. Gitagovinda recitation before the deity was introduced as daily 'Seva' of the Gods. The glory of 'Jagadisha' or Jagannath was immensely enhanced by the immortal work "Sri Gitagovinda", while it gained popularity throughout India.

The climax of vaisnavism in Orissa was reached in the 16th century with the coming of Sri Chaitanya whose long sojourn at Puri till his death brought a miraculous change in the religious life of the people. Under Chaitanya's influence vaisnavism became the dominant faith of the people of Orissa and Jagannath came to be regarded primarily as a vaisnavite deity. The strict followers of Chaitanya are known as Gaudiya Vaisnavas who adore Krishna as their supreme Lord. Sri Chaitanya is remembered as the great teacher of the popular faith. Chaitanya taught his followers not to enter into the forest of philosophy but to utter the name of lord Krishna. He organized "*Samkirttana-mandali*" to establish that "*Nama-Sankirttana*" was the only path to attain mukti. Chaitanya's main principle was "*Prema-bhakti*" (devotion by love). The establishment of *Bhagavat-tungi* in the villages of Orissa was outcome of Chaitanya's preaching.

In Orissa, an eclectic form of vaisnavism had existed from the time of Chodaganga centering around Jagannath which did not completely eclipse Saivism and Buddhism and Sakti worship, rather it assimilated certain ideas from these faiths. Traces of this broad-based Orissan Vaisnavism can be found in the works of the great 15th century Oriya poet Sarala Das, who avows himself to be a Sakti, has shown remarkable tolerance and regard for other religious faiths. But, Orissan Vaisnavism finds its best expression in the writings

of Balarama Das, Jagannath Das, Achutananda Das, Yosabnant Das and Ananta Das, the five poet philosophers of Orissa, who are popularly known as panchasakha.

In the wide-ranging tradition of Jagannath, attempts have been made to accommodate and absorb the Neo-Vaisnavism of Chaitanya within its all-embracing fold. Yasavanta Das in his *Premabhakti Brahma Gita* describes Nilachala as the embodiment of all the holy places whose sanctity baffles description. Gokul, Mathura, Virndavan, Dwarka, Kasi etc., are all present here. Achutananda Das in his *Sunya Samhita* writes that all ten incarnations emanate from this Daru Brahman (Jagannath) and are again absorbed in Him. Krishna has not merely been identified with Jagannath by the Orissan Vaisnavas, but has been depicted by some as the *ansavatara* (part incarnation) of the latter. In *Jagannath Charitamruta*, a work of post-panchasakha period, Jagannath has been described as the supreme Lord or Purna Brahama, where as Krishna represents only a part of his glory.

The synthetic faith of Jagannath is an epitome of divergent religious creeds and schools of philosophy that prevailed in India at different periods of her long cultural history. In the historic process of adjustments, Jagannath assimilated strange contradictions in a manner that is most amazing in the history of religious thought. 'There is no discarding any in this religion of man', wrote Pandit Nilakantha Das, 'and all the gods and goddesses have found a place here and mingled here'.

Thus, the religious system developed centering around Jagannath faith attracts all the saints and seers, Kings and commons that become unique in many ways. The assimilation of religious faiths as we have discussed and its continuation with a huge temple at Puri has given



definite shape as a *Tirthakshetra*. The majestic temple of lord Jagannath at Puri was built during 12th century A.D. Anantavarmana Chodaganga Deva (1078 to 1147 A.D.) commenced its construction and Anangbhim III completed the construction. It is described in Madalapanji, the temple chronicle of Puri that Anangbhim constructed a temple of Srivatsa Khandasala type for lord Jagannath. The height of the present temple is 214 feet 8 inches.

The Brahamapurana, Narada Purana and Utkala Khanda of Skanda Purana describe vividly the construction of the shrine of Purusottama. Although, Brahma Purana mentions about the performance of Asvamedha sacrifice (Vedic rite performed by kings), Purusottama Mahatmya of Skanda Purana presents it more elaborately. The legend of Indradyumna and Visvvasu, which prevails till today, is more or less akin to the description of Skanda Purana.

The mode of worship at the Jagannath temple is an essential blend of *vedic, puranic* and *tantrik* rituals. The worship of the Jagannath may be divided under three heads (1) The daily rituals or '*Nitis*' which are fixed and observed every day as routine course. (2) The special '*Nitis*' according to the specialty of certain days like Amavasya, Ekadasi, Eclipses etc. (3) The various festivals are celebrated throughout the year both inside and outside of the temple.

Thus, here the deity symbolizes the King of Kings and is consequently offered regal honour, consistent with the concept of God as the supreme ruler of the universe.

Here, the temple town becomes a centre of vaishnava faith and elaborate arrangements have been made for the pilgrims since historical times. The Pandas or Sevayats were specially known as pratiharees were kept in charge of pilgrims traditionally. They used to contact and control the unit of pilgrims. They receive the pilgrims from

different festive occasions. In course of time other categories of *Sevayats* and *Brahmin Gumastas* entered into the pilgrim trade. The Pandas used to go or send their Gumastas to the different parts of the country to disseminate the Jagannath faith and culture and distribute the Mahaprasad. They also motivate different class of people to have a pilgrimage to Puri. Management of pilgrims by the Pandas have taken the trade and forms of family assets. The Pandas take care of pilgrims starting from their arrival to departure from Puri and hence Pandas are well known for their hospitality towards pilgrims. The pilgrims are also provided with accommodation either in the residence of Pandas or in the lodgings or hotels. The names and addresses of the pilgrim and their pre or post generations are being recorded in a book known as "*KARIJA*" and pilgrims may put their own signature in a register for the future generation of the pilgrim that could recognize the Panda.

In course of time, during the festivals particularly car festival, large congregation of pilgrims was felt. In the year 1810, Raja Sukhamaya Ray of Bengal had taken a leading step for construction of the Jagannath Road, which facilitated pilgrims to come easily. In 1901 Railway line was opened to Puri. It was during 1841 - 1891 and 1901 the pilgrim flow to Puri particularly during car festival as recorded is 1,12,000/2,00,000 and over 3 lakhs respectively. At present the tourist and pilgrim traffic to Puri is more than 5 million in a year (2006). During Car festival we receive about a million of tourist and pilgrims which is very good trend for tourism industry. We should prepare to showcase these potential for economic benefit as well as facilitate the tourist needs. The faith and belief are the dominant drivers in case of domestic tourists and the curiosity and the exotic appeal of our religion and culture is the attraction of foreign tourists. However, the need of the hour is social awareness



and change of mindset to the positive side of tourism, so that we can go ahead.

The other main attraction of Puri Tourism is the sea Beach known as 'Mahodadhi'. Mahodadhi is said to be the birthplace of Goddess Laxmi, the consort of Lord Vishnu (Jagannath), which is reflected in the rituals of Lord Jagannath. This can be felt in the observation of *sagar vije* ritual on the day of Amavasya when Lord Jagannath visits his in-law's house. Pilgrims take a dip in sea, particularly during Ganga Sagar Mela. The tradition is so rich that lot of pilgrims visit the sea and takes a dip in sea to get religious merit. Thus, the sea at Puri (Mahodadhi), is regarded as the most sacred and beautiful for which people gather here for ritual purposes as well as to enjoy the natural beauty; which constitute a major attraction of religious tourism of Puri. National Council of Applied Economic Research report that Tourism as defined by leisure travel or holidaying accounted for only 6% of all travel in the country. Religious travel accounted for more than double at 13%. The predominance of religious travel over holidaying means that when it comes to the most popular destinations for religious or leisure travel in the country, top 10 were pilgrim centres including Puri placed in the second spot only after Tirupati.

Whatever the pull factor, it is well known that religious tourism routes in India are buzzing with activity and every year millions of devotees travel huge distances to visit the pilgrim centres. Add to those numbers the new age pilgrims- both foreigners or well heeled NRIs-who are also increasingly hitting India's pilgrim trails. So from the sacred Hindu cities of Varanasi, Puskar, Puri, Rameshwarm, Mt Abu and Risikesh to the Buddhist circuit in Bihar, UP and Himachal, the sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar and Dargah in Ajmair, twin-track tourism is becoming the order of the day. Many of these pilgrim cities have

developed as diverse and multicultural centres where devout Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists rub shoulders with footloose foreigners in search of the mystic orientalism. Economic Times remarks "India has always been considered as the land of spiritual awakening. With the boom in the tourism sector in India, domestic travellers and those from across the globe are using this opportunity to explore the various religious destinations in the country to understand the myriad shades of the land". No doubt the spiritual journey in India today have come to mean more than just renunciation. They could signify anything from big profits to ethnic diversity and eastern mysticism. Thus, we should prepare to tap the twin-track tourism before it goes beyond.

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Car Festival and the Significance of Nabakoti

Pitambar Pradhani

Car festival or Ratha Yatra is a leading festival in Orissa. Right from the pauper in the street to the king of Orissa all like to participate, contribute and see it throughout the day. After Radio and T.V. telecast, it has become well connected with all the houses of Orissa and Oriyas living abroad.

Chariots are famous in ancient warfare and all the warriors used chariots with specific significant name. In *Mahabharat* all the top figures had a good name for their chariots they used. Lord Sri Krishna was the charioteer (driver) of the chariot of Dhananjaya (Arjuna).

The Gajapati king of Orissa is the Chief Servitor of Car Festival. He comes to the car of the three Lords; namely Nandighosh, Taladhwaja and Debadalana. The cars are also called Garudadhwaja, Kapidhwaja and Padmadhwaja. These namings are supported in the version of Sanskrit *slokas* of the famous book Niladri Mahodaya, written in 17th or 18th century.

The Charioteers of the three chariots are Daruka, Matali and Arjun. The relation of Arjun

and Subhadra in the description of Mahabharat are quite distinct and clear. So the namings of such are quite appreciable and interesting. The Gajapati king of Orissa comes to the car/chariot in Meheana/Tamjan alongwith the Samanta Kings or feudal kings in a grand procession with elephants and horses, as the Gajapati is the Lord of Elephants. The Elephant is a must in such type

of royal Oriya procession. The important Servitor of Lord Jagannath Temple and Gajapati also use elephant palaquin (Palinki) and chhatri in their marriage ceremony as a decree by the royalty of Orissan Gajapati King. Pradhani servitor and Rajguru

(Prime Minister) of Gajapati Maharaja get this type of privilege.

The Gajapati king has a unique place in every Oriya family. When any child is born in any family, a birth plate (Jatak) is made in palm- leaf indicating date, time of birth of the child as per our traditional almanac (Jotish Panjika). This indicates the traditional year of rule of Gajapati





King (Anka). The ancient age-old title of Gajapati also finds place as a distinct respect to the kingship. The decorative designation of the king is very big one. It is described as such Bira Sri Gajapati Gaudeswar, Nabakoti Karnata Kalabargeswar Biradhi Birabara Dibyasingh Deba. The further description is that as *Sangrame Sahasra Bahu*.

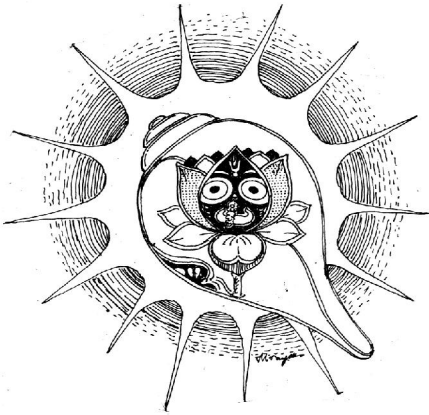
In historical descriptions, at the time of Kharavela, the Orissan empire covered most parts of India. Subsequently, during Keshari Ganga and Surya dynasty the empire of Orissa was from Ganges to Kaveri or from Ganges to river Godavari. To represent these facts the royal title of Gajapati indicated the kingdom as Gaudeswar (King of Bengal), Karnata (the king of Mysore, Kalabargeswar (the king of Andhra and Madhya Pradesh & U.P.) including Orissa. *Sangrame Sahasra Bahu* indicates the enormous power of the Orissan king in the battlefield. In this description of title we find the word "Nabakoti". It can be simply explained as nine crore. One may also assume that the revenue of the Orissa at that particular period was nine crore

gold coins or to some other, it may be the total expenditure made throughout the State of Orissa or the expenditure in all the car festivals made throughout the States including Puri, but the real meaning of Nabakoti in the distinctive decorative and long title is attributed as a special respect to the Gajapati King. The word Koto and its real meaning is the assemblage of nine small kingdom under the rule of Gajapati King of Orissa. The related brothers of the Gajapati King remained as feudal kings or Samanta Raja or small zamindars taking a koto or small kingdom and its limited kingship under the great Gajapati banner and defensive protection from external attack. This system continued safely from Keshari Kings till the death of Mukunda Dev in 1568 when Orissa lost its independence to the foreigners like Afghans, Mughals, and other Muslim Kings of Bengal. To name the kotos we can very well indicate Dharakote, Umerkote, Dhenkikote, Pachhikote, Khallikote and Barakote etc. The



relation of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa was very much distinct and pleasant. The daughters of Andhra married to Orissan kings and Orissans too married to Andhra Pradesh Kings.

Pitambar Pradhani is the Pradhani Sebayat, Bimanabada Sahi, Puri.



Iconology of Lord Jagannath

Dr. Sidhartha Kanungo

From time immemorial, Puri has been the most important centre of Vishnu worship. Its presiding deity is called Purusottam. He is otherwise known as Jagannath. Etymologically, the word Jagannath means the Lord of the Universe. The temple of Lord is one of the sacred shrines of India.

The cult of Jagannath is not a sectarian religion but a cosmopolitan and eclectic philosophy which has assimilated in its fold, the influences of many religious creeds and sects. According to legendary sources, Lord Jagannath was originally worshipped in the form of "Neelamadhab" by a tribal (Sabar) known as Biswabasu. In course of time, the cult of Jagannath took an Arayanised form and various major faiths like Saivism, Saktism, Vaishnavism, Jainism and Buddhism have been assimilated into this cult. In Jagannath temple, Jagannath is worshipped as Purusottam or Vishnu, Balabhadra as Siva, and Devi Subhadra as Adyasakti Durga. Finally, the fourth one Sudarsan Chakra symbolizing the wheel of Sun's chariot attracts the Sauras to the Centre.

Scholars like Nilakantha Das are of the opinion that the three main images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra represent Jain Trinity of Samyak Jnana, Samyak Chinta and Samyak Drusti. Pandit Nilakantha Das and Dr. Artaballav Mohanty have even gone to the extent of saying that Jagannath is the image of Rushavnath. Jain

dictionary also tells us that Jagannath is another name of Jeeneswar or Rushavnath.

On the other hand, Scholars like Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab are of the opinion that the three images such as Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra represent the Buddhist trinity of Buddha, Dharama and Sangha. It is also believed that the soul of Jagannath or Navi, most secretly hidden within the idol of Lord Jagannath, is nothing but tooth relic of Lord Buddha.

Jagannath is also known as "Darubramha." In other temples we see that stone and metal idols are the object of worship. But, the Jagannath quadruple are carved out of Neem Wood. It is a fact that the idols being made of wood, cannot sustain themselves for long time. Thus comes the question of "Navakalevar." Their (idols) periodical renovation becomes inevitable, which is called "Navakalevar." This is a unique ceremony in many respect in the Hindu religious worship.

Lord Jagannath is "Nirakar" having no "Akar" or specific shape of His own. He has no legs but two parallel incomplete hands. He has two round eyes. He is black in complexion and does not have ears. All these things bear testimony to His symbolic form.

As pointed out earlier, Jagannath has two round eyes. He is therefore, called "Chakadola".



These two round eyes represent the Sun and Moon. We all know that the Sun and the Moon remove darkness and gives us light. Similarly, Lord Jagannath removes darkness from our mind. He is the embodiment of knowledge and source of wisdom. Secondly, we know that circle does not have a beginning nor an end. In the same manner, the round eyes of Lord Jagannath teach us that He does not have a beginning nor an end. Thus we can say that He is Anadi (no beginning) and Ananta (no end).

Lord Jagannath has no ears except two round eyes. Famous Oriya poet Kabi Surya Baladev Rath has, therefore, compared Him with Snake who has got no ears. It symbolizes that a good administrator should not rely upon the words of others which may misguide him. Hence, he should be sure of things by perceiving those through his own eyes.

Lord Jagannath is called "Mahabahu". He has two stretched parallel hands without having palms. It presupposes that a man who surrenders to Him is embraced by Him and He ultimately protects him (the man). One thing deserves Special mention here. Lord Jagannath's hand are parallel which prove His unlimitedness. We have read in Geometry that the two parallel lines cannot meet at a point. They may meet an unimaginary and an unlimited point. Thus, His hands are symbolic.

Some scholars have even gone to the extent of saying that the three colours of the Deities (Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra) represent the three basic races of the world namely, black, white and yellow. Hence, the Trinity of Puri represents the mankind.

The tantric texts also point out the name of Jagannath and His worship. According to these texts, Jagannath is Mahavairav and Goddess Vimala is His Sakti. The Prasad of Lord Jagannath becomes Mahaprasad only when it is reoffered to Goddess Vimala. No where we notice this

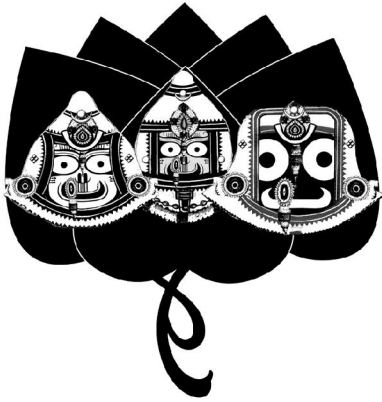
unique feature except in the temple of Lord Jagannath. Similarly, different tantric features of Yantras have been engraved on the Ratnavedi where Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra are worshipped.

The Saiva elements in the cult of Lord Jagannath are correlated with the doctrines of Tantrism and Sakta Dharma. According to Saivas, Jagannath is Bhairav. As pointed out earlier, the tantric literary texts also identify Jagannath with Mahabhairav. The representation of Balaram as Sankarsan or Sesanaga bears testimony to the influence of Saivism in the cult of Lord Jagannath. It may be pointed out that the third deity Subhadra, who represents Sakta element is still worshipped with Bhubaneswari Mantra.

Lord Jagannath is also known as "Darubramha". In other temples we see that stone and metal idols are the objects of worship. But the Jagannath quadruple are carved out of Neem wood. Its a fact that idols being in wood, cannot sustain themselves for long time. Thus comes the question of the ceremony of "Navakalevar." This is a unique ceremony in many respect in Hindu religious worship.

Iconology of Lord Jagannath gives us many indications. It is symbolic. Sholars have made an attempt to interpret the God in their own ways. It is for this reason that no definite view has been accepted and Jagannath cult has been interpreted in many ways. Every religious cult whether Hindu or Non-Hindu finds justification here. But in this context we must not forget the following words of Rig Veda 'Ekam Sat Vipra Vahuda Vadanti' (Truth is one, wise speak of it in different ways).

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Nature, Jagannath and Future

Dr. Prafulla Kumar Mohanty

India is known for its multifaceted aspects such as religion, culture, language, dress, food, tradition and unique biodiversity. People outside India know this country in a different form, that is the land of Lord Jagannath. People from Orissa or in particular from Puri are acknowledged with respect and love, just because they are from the land of Lord Jagannath. This indicates the significance of Jagannath.

In fact, Jagannath is such a name which literally means "Lord of the World". People of India and Orissa strongly believe that the Lord manages, protects and rear the whole universe. The Economic profile of Orissa though not so rich in national scenario, but Orissa occupies an important rank and position as far as Lord Jagannath Temple is concerned. Lord Jagannath temple is located in Puri town of Orissa state. It is roughly two kilometer from Puri Railway Station and also one kilometer from bus stand. The road through which one goes to visit the temple is known as "Grand Road" because of its great width. The National Highway which touches the grand road is 203 (NH 203).

The king of Puri is popularly known as "Gajapati Raja" (Gajapati king), whose palace is very close to the temple. In Puri many things are great such as "Bada Deula" (Great Temple), "Bada Sankha" (Great Bridge), "Bada Panda" (Great

Priest) etc. This signifies the real greatness of Puri temple. The most spectacular point of greatness and centre of attraction of millions of people of the world is Car festival (Rath Yatra). During this period, three chariots, which are also great, are unique, well designed, well structured and geometrically built up. Nine-day journey of Lord Jagannath from the main temple to Gundicha temple is undoubtedly world famous. People from outside India try to study, visualise and analyse the activities, rituals and routine performance in day to day life of Lord Jagannath. It is like the systematic lifestyle of human being.

Lord Jagannath and Science :

Looking at the routine life style, festivals, food pattern, dress code, visit style, death and cremation process, rebirth etc., it appears that every aspect matches the time table of human being. All these activities are undertaken timely, systematically and scientifically with hygienic conditions and environment. Certain examples are quoted below.

- (i) Jagannath uses stick of plant and sandalwood paste (chandana) for brushing in the morning.
- (ii) Indigenous food items are prepared and offered and the materials from outside are strictly



prohibited to the temple such as tomatoes and potatoes and other non indigenous items.

(iii) Dresses made up of cotton and silk (patta) are used by Jagannath. Synthetic dresses namely nylon, beryline, tere-cotton etc. are not allowed to go inside temple.

(iv) For worshipping, different indigenous flowers and leaves of certain plants such as "Tulsi" and "Dayana" (aromatic plants) are used. Barks of banana tree are used for the preparation of garlands.

(v) For food preparation, ghee made out of cow's milk is used where as vegetable oil is prohibited.

(vi) All the food items are simply boiled items which are free from rich spices and gravy. These food varieties are vegetarian items which are hygienic and simple.

(vii) All the food are prepared and cooked in earthen material or containers but not in steel or aluminum containers.

(viii) During festivals, the crown is prepared by using bamboo, flowers, grass like materials and also light floating plant stems which are all from the nature. Artificial and synthetic products are not used during this preparation.

(ix) During car festival, all the chariots are designed and constructed in wood and cotton cloth, iron, coloured with eco-friendly colour, and fibre ropes are used.

(x) Plant products like camphor, turmeric, ghee etc. are used during morning and evening hour.

(xi) The complete idols (Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra) are made up of seasoned log of neem tree which is not damaged and affected by any insects and environment.

Lord Jagannath and Nature

Of course, the rituals and routine activities performed by the priests of Lord Jagannath are human-made and human created, but one thing is crystal clear that the preparation and collection of materials essential for Lord Jagannath is solely from the nature. All the products are eco-friendly, human friendly, hygienic and disease-resistant. This indicates the conservation, preservation, regeneration and recreation of nature. Unless the nature is protected, nothing can be performed including car festival. Now the state Government is planning to develop forest where trees required to build up cars (chariots) can be grown.

Natural products namely sandalwood paste, turmeric paste, neem oil, corpoora or camphor etc. are also used by human beings. These products are useful and helpful for human. The food and water taken from earthen container is also better for health. Since festivals are a source of entertainment and amusement, various festivals are held during each month. People visit, witness and enjoy these festivals. Keeping the available fruits, vegetables and edible items in view, different food items are prepared in various seasons and people enjoy by taking these foods. For godly memory and feeling, people from various corners of India collect dry rice (Nirmalya) and keep in homes for futures use. Before car festival in each year, Lord Jagannath is coloured by different colours which are prepared from various natural products such as root, stem, flowers, seeds and paste of certain fruits and trees.

Lord Jagannath and Human Future:

Indian culture, tradition and religious belief are very rich, old and strong. Divinity and divine life is interlocked and inter linked with nature, environment and natural surrounding. Nature is



the best teacher. Experienced human beings are associated with nature, environment and natural surrounding. Water provides us food, shelter, medicine and what not. Following aspects are learnt from the daily life and activities of Lord Jagannath.

- (i) Life should be dependent on nature and its products, especially food.
- (ii) Daily activities must be maintained systematically to overcome health hazards, problems and tension.
- (iii) Vegetarian items must be taken regularly which keep the body fit, resistant against diseases and support a healthy life.
- (iv) Nature must be protected which protects, saves and maintains our life as well as others. We, our animals and plants cannot survive unless nature is maintained.
- (v) Share, care, love, coexistence, healthy feeling, altruism (sacrifice), help, discipline, harmony etc. are highly strong in nature. So we cannot forget it.

Today, human beings are seen to be more selfish, destructive and inhuman. The food preference is more towards animal food instead of plant food material for which diseases and health hazards are acute in human population. In the name of Jagannath if we can practise a routine life, proper vegetarian food and healthy living, then we can have a better life, and peaceful society without problems. Let us try to follow the science of Lord Jagannath.

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Shree Jagannath and Shree Ram

Prabhat Kumar Nanda



Many scholars have enunciated that Shree Ram is none other than Shree Jagannath as depicted in our religion. On careful analysis, it has been observed that virtues of Shree Ram are mostly as such of Shree Jagannath. Shree Jagannath has been accepted as the origin of incarnations. Hence, in Sanskrit he is named as incarnator (Avatari) and ten others created by Shree Jagannath are called ten incarnations (Dasa Avatara). In Oriya literature, it has been established that Shree Jagannath is the embodiment of sixteen virtues. Lord Krishna is one of such virtues. Hence, Lord Jagannath has been accepted in the religious literature as "Parambrahma" i.e., the absolute supreme, as the philosophy accepted by scholars of Orissa. Such scholars have named as followers of Baishnab in Orissa (Utkaliya Baishnab). Such theory has not been accepted by the followers of Gaudiya Baishnav. Shree Chaitanya, an eminent saint of Bengal tried his level best of fostering the importance of Shree Krishna on Shree Jagannath. People of Orissa and "Muktimandap Sabha", the house of scholars of Jagannath temple, accepted Shree Krishna as one of the incarnations of Shree Jagannath, but did not accept the "Raga Nuga Vokti" i.e., expression of Love and total surrender to Shree Radha and Shree Krishna without any query and debate. People of Orissa and followers of Lord Jagannath are named as "Utkaliya Baishnav" i.e., followers of Baishnavs of Orissa.

They believe in "Gyana Mishra Bhakti" i.e., offering devotion which is supported and accepted by knowledge and proper reasoning.

Lord Jagannath has been accepted all over the world as the master of entire universe (Natha means Master and Jagata means Universe). Hence, anything found on this earth is created by Him. He is the supreme creature and all others are his creations. Accepting such analogy, Shree Ram is one of the virtues of Shree Jagannath.

The other name of Lord Jagannath is "Shree Purusottam" i.e., the best personality (Uttam means Best and Purusa means Person). The activities of Shree Jagannath from dawn to dusk are exactly as that of a benevolent person of human society. In the present age i.e., "Kalijuga", Shree Jagannath preferred to be like a worldly person because of greater acceptance by the people of world in the age of knowledge explosion. Shree Rama is named as "Maryada Purusottam" i.e., personality with dignity. The creation of incarnation of Shree Ram was to uphold the dignity of personality. Shree Ram, as the obedient son, fostered high regards to the words of his father. Shree Ram preferred to leave the kingdom of Ayodhya for fourteen years. To uphold the dignity of his kingship and administration, he did not hesitate to send his wife Sita to the dense forest after reaching Ayodhya to honour the feelings of the people of Kingdom.



Though Shree Ram was convinced of the innocence and the sacred life of Sita, preferred to put more importance to the views of common people of Ayodhya by sending her out of Kingdom. Hence, there is no doubt equalizing the dignity of Shree Ram and Shree Jagannath as Purusottama, the excellent person.

Shree Jagannath was more established as Shree Ram by saint Tulasi Das. Like that of all religious scholars who visited the temple of Shree Jagannath at Puri, saint Tulasi Das also visited and saw Shri Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra on the grand throne. Saint Tulasi Das, an ardent devotee of Shree Ram, was disappointed not to see Sri Ram on the grand throne of the Grand Temple at Puri. Later, he was astonished to see Ram in Lord Jagannath, Shree Laxman in Lord Balabhadra and Sita in Goddess Subhadra. Hence, he immediately accepted Lord Jagannath as Shree Ram. In his famous writing, he has also expressed in Hindi ;

*"Johi Rama Sohi Jagadisha,
Dina Hi Ke Antana
Pabata Shesa, "Shesa Bhaya Lachhiman
Anuchari, Bhadra So Siya Rajkumari"*

The gist of the above is, "He is Ram, Who is Jagannath". Taking the above writing of saint Tulasi Dash, the devotees of Shree Ram all over India accept Shri Jagannath as Shree Ram.

In Balmiki Ramayan, it has been narrated that Shree Ram advised devotee Hanuman and the king Bivisana to worship Shree Jagannath after the age of Tretaya. The version of Balmiki Ramayana is produced below:

*"Aradhya Jagannatham Ekshyaku
Kula daibatam,
Aradhaniyo Manisham Debanam
Basabai Sahah "*

As per determination of Baidik clan of every person, Shree Jagannath belongs to Surya clan. (Surya Bansha) Ekshyaku is the other name

of sun (Surya). Shree Ram also belongs to Surya clan. With such convincing narration by Balmiki Ramayana, scholars accept Shree Jagannath as Shree Ram. Different rites in Jagannath temple also prove the influence of Shree Ram on the cult of Shree Jagannath. During Car Festival the king Bibhisana offers special prayer to Shree Jagannath on the full moon day of month Pusya. Shree Jagannath is also decorated in the dress of Shree Ram during Ramayana Festival in Jagannath Temple.

During the birth month of Shree Ram i.e., Chaitra, for fifteen days, processions with idol of Shree Ram, Laxman and Sita are organized in different areas of Puri. Specifically, idols of Parsuram from Harachandi Sahi, Ravana from Balisahi, Maya Ravana from Dola Mandap Sahi are organized with pump and ceremony. Such ceremony is popularly named as "Sahi Jata" of Puri.

As a king of Surya clan in Benta Festival (Benta Yatra) during Basanta Panchami of Dola, the idol of Shree Ram is carried to Jagannath Balav garden and hunting of animals are organised and surrendered to the forefathers. The rites of Lord Jagannath and Shree Ram depict and synthesise the culture of Shree Ram and Lord Jagannath.

After Bahuda yatra i.e. Return Car Festival, Lord Jagannath is worshipped as Shree Ram during Niladri Bije i.e., returning to the Grand Temple after nine days of Car Festival. All above narrations prove that Shree Ram is accepted as Shree Jagannath. Hence, saint Tulasi Das has correctly enunciated that "Johi Rama Sohi Jagadisha" i.e., He is Ram, who is Lord Jagannath. It is one of the illustrations of excellent synthesis of different cults of our nation in Shree Jagannath Temple.

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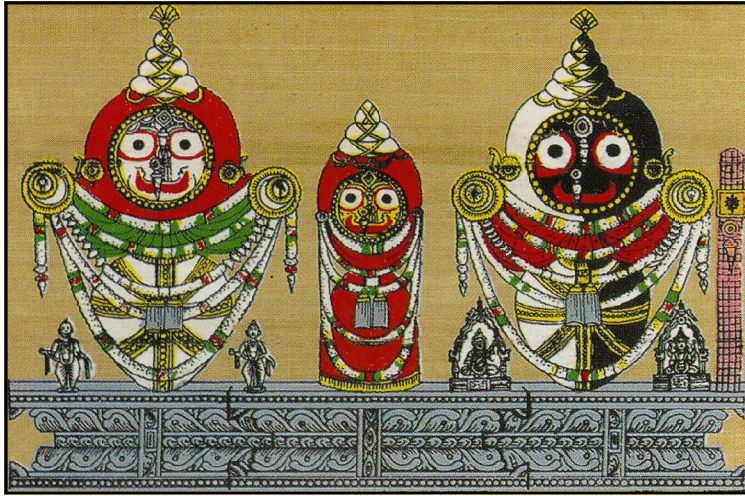


Lord Jagannath in Suryavamsi Inscriptions

Bharati Pal

The Ganga dynasty was followed by the Suryavamsi Gajapatis. After the accession of Bhanudeva IV, the process of Ganga disintegration became evident. Under the able leadership of Kapilendradeva, a new dynasty known as Suryavamsis emerged as a very strong political force in Orissa, and they firmly established and extended their kingdom from river Ganga to Cauvery. The period witnessed the greatest expansion of kingdom, the first renaissance in Oriya literature and the advent of Chaitanya faith in Orissa. Purushottama-Jagannatha became their tutelary deity, which gleaned from numerous inscriptions.

The Puri inscription¹ of Kapilendra was issued in the 4th Anka (year). The inscription deals with an order of the king Kapilendra, who remitted taxes on salt and cowries in favour of the God Purushottama.



As an usurper of the Gajapati throne, Kapilendra needed a special legitimation over a vast kingdom which had been ritually dedicated to Jagannatha about two hundred years ago. It was obvious that Kapilendra would try to revive the ideology of the divine mission of the Gajapatis as a deputy of Jagannatha.

The next Puri inscription² of Kapilendra is found in right side of the Jaya-Vijaya doorway of Jagannatha temple. It registers a gift of Sari cloth known as Pundarika gopa by the king Kapilendra to the god Purushottama-Jagannath, while he was dining at the camp Purushottama on his victorious return journey from the Mallika Parisha. The order to this effect was conveyed through Raghudeva Narendra, the store keeper and the Superintendent.

In the 35th Anka (year), he issued an order³ which was written on the left side of the



Jaya Vijaya doorway of Jagannatha temple. It depicts the king's resolution before the deity Jagannatha to take disciplinary measures against his ungrateful nobles, infantry and cavalry.

Another inscription⁴ of Kapilendra is found on the left side of the Jaya Vijaya doorway of Puri. The inscription states that Maharaja Sri Kapilesvara, the hero, the lord of the Navakotti Karnata and Gulbarga, the lord of the elephants, the king serving the lotus feet of the deity Sri Jagannatha, gifted some precious jewellery which includes wrist ornaments, the two jeweled conch-shell and discus for the gracious arms of the Lord.

The Warangal inscription of Raghudeva⁵ describes Kapilendra as the Lord of Utkal at the command of Purushottama, the lord of the fourteen world.

The Madala Panji, the temple chronicle states that Lord Jagannatha had ordered the last Ganga Bhanudeva IV in a dream to nominate Kapilendra as his successor.

The Warangal inscription describes in the first line, God Vishnu as the imperial ruler of the earth and apparently as the ever lord of the emperor Kapilesvara of Suryavamsi Gajapati family of Orissa. The date of the record has been put against the background of eternity as it represented reign period of the said god. This is because of the fact as it is presumed from the Ganga inscription that Anangabhima dedicated his kingdom in favour of the God Purushottama Jagannatha of Puri, who is regarded as a form of Vishnu, and that the Ganga king's successor as well as the later imperial ruler of Orissa including their theoretical successors, the present Maharaja of Puri regarded themselves as the viceroy of the deity who was considered the real lord of the country. This conception is noticed in several inscriptions of the Ganga dynasty. The present

epigraph is the only record outside the Ganga family which echoes the same ideas. There is however a slight difference in the conception as found in the inscription under review. The idea expressed in our record is that the God was the lord of the earth while Kapilesvara endowed with imperial style was the king of the Utkala country under him. This mode of introducing a king is possibly the only case of the kind in the whole range of Indian Epigraphy.

Further, the inscription states that Kapilesvara assumed the title as Mahesvara-Putra, Purushottama-Putra and Durga-Putra. The above passage is copied from the records lies in the Draksharama,⁶ Bhubaneswar and Kanchipuram inscription of Anangabhima III and one of the Kapilas⁷ inscription of Narasimha I of Ganga. In the similar representation of Anangabhima III and his son Narasimha I, one may notice the fact that these kings, inspite of their staunch devotion to the god Vishnu in the shape of Purushottama-Jagannatha of Puri, could not possibly dissociate themselves totally from the Saiva leanings of their ancestors. However, the hold of Vaishnavism became gradually stronger and stronger under the kings of Orissa. It is rather strange that the same epithets were applied to Kapilesvara who flourished two centuries later.

Raghudeva the issuer of the present charter called himself as Sri Durga-Vara putra as well as Sri Jagannathadeva labdha Vara-Prasada. He also bore the typical Saivite name Virabhadra. This prince as well as his father and grandfather is further represented as devotees of the god Mallinatha and the Goddess Gangamangachandi. These two deities are probably identified respectively with Siva and Parvati. As Raghudeva's grandfather was Kapilesvara father, it is possible to think that the family was originally Saiva and that Kapilesvara was the first of its



members who was devoted to the God Purushottama-Jagannatha. Kapilesvara may have become a devotee of the said deity after his accession to the throne of Bhanu IV, since theoretically the Ganga throne belonged to the God Kapilesvara is stated to have become a lord of the Utkala country at the command of the illustrious Purushottama, the lord of the fourteen world.

After Kapilendra, Purushottamadeva⁸ ascended the throne and granted some gift in favour of Lord Jagannatha.

On the left side of the Jaya-Vijaya doorway of Jagannatha temple records the gifts of some valuable ornaments in favour of Lord Jagannatha, when the king was campaigning at Purushottama-Kataka.

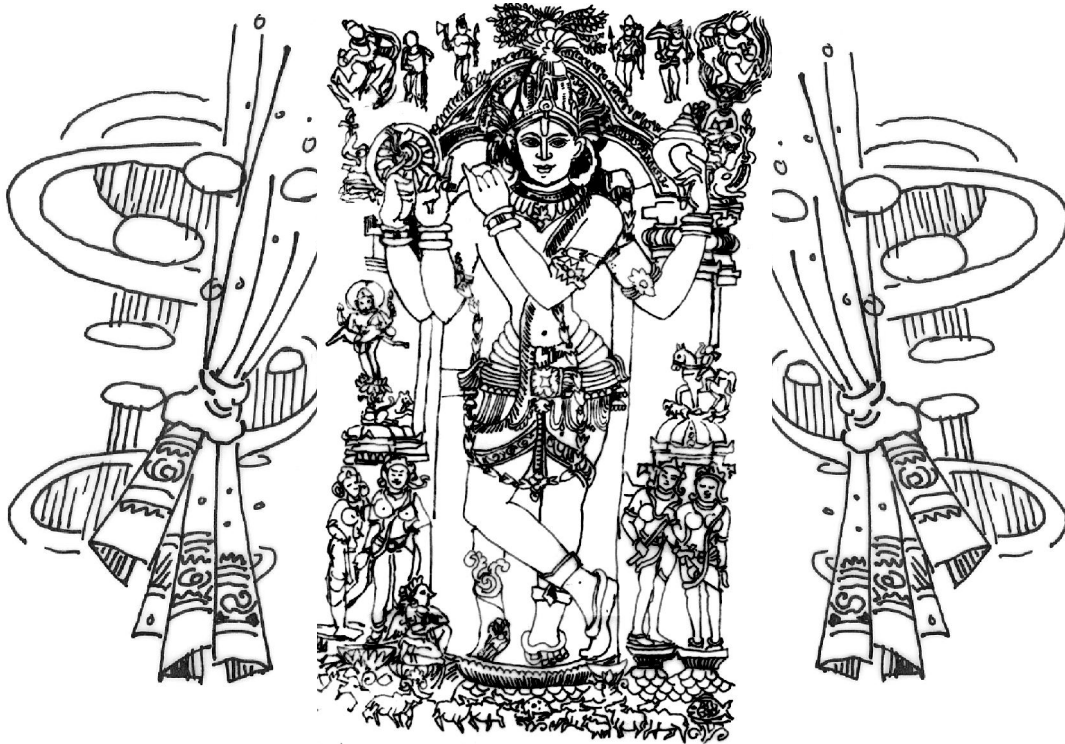
Another grant of Purushottamadeva also found from the Jaya-Vijaya doorway, which

records the remittance of the Chaukidari taxes leviable from the Brahmanas.

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Shree Jayadeva and the Cult of Jagannath

Dr. Bhagyalipi Malla

Sri Jayadeva was the famous composer of Shree Gita Govinda. His lucid composition of Gita Govinda became world famous during his life time especially because of its introduction in the rituals of Jagannath Culture. Its romantic as well as religious fervour ignited the devotional thought of priests, peasants and royal personalities alike. The construction of Jagannath temple at Puri by Choda Ganga Deva in 12th Century A.D. ushered in a new era in the religious history of Orissa. With the decree of the Ganga emperors, Gita Govinda was sung everyday in the temple as a result of which it became popular in every household in Orissa and India as well.

Gita Govinda describes the love sport of Radha and Krishna in a beautiful manner. The charming and simple language of the text attracted one and all from every quarter. The depiction of Avatar conception in the composition of Jayadeva deserves special mention. Similarly, the description of Radha Madhav Cult, which was in vogue in Prachi region, is very interesting in the poetic articulation of Jayadeva. For the first time, we find reference to Radha as a cult icon in his poetic creation.

Vaishnavism received new impetus because of the impact of Jayadeva's Gita Govinda from 12th Century A.D. Many new ideas and ideation entered into the fold of Jagannath

Consciousness after the emergence of great poet Jayadeva. His work also popularized Jagannath worship in every nook and corner of Orissa. It is glorious that the great poet Jayadeva was born in the sacred soil of Prachi Valley region.

The popular Jagannath Cult is a mysterious religious system. Scholars from different parts of the country and abroad have attempted to solve the mystery of origin and evolution of Jagannath cult and have stumbled confusedly at the platform of religious eclecticism of Jagannatha Triad. Jagannath allows all and admits all, yet He is aloof from all. It is also said that He is all of It and none of it. He is like a mirror where all can see their reflection but cannot touch. He adorned his ratnasimhasan admitting flexibility, adaptability, integrity and magnanimity of all dynamics of Hinduism. For this, the Jainas, Buddhas, Vaisnavas, Saivas, Saktas, the tribal aboriginals, prelates and potentates surrender at his feet seeking eternal salvation. The earliest reference to Jagannath-Daru worship is found in the Vedic literature. In the Mahabharata, there is mention about a Vedi near the eastern Kalingan sea. Scholars have identified this spot with the present day Jagannath temple complex of Puri. Indrabhuti, the king of Sambala, in his famous work Gyanasiddhi speaks of Jagannath as Buddha in the 8th century A.D.



Sankaracharya in course of his religious conquest of India in 8th/9th century A.D. visited Puri and worshipped Jagannath. The Anargharaghava Natakam of Murari Misra (9th century A.D.) refers to Purusottama. There is mention about a 'devayatana' that existed at Puri in Prabodha Chandra-dayo Natakam of Krusna Misra (11th century A.D). The Saradadevi temple inscriptions of Mahihar in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh describes Purusottama as the Lord of Utkala in 10th century A.D. In the Baramdeo temple epigraph of 1088 A.D. and Nagpur inscription of 12th century A.D., there is reference to Purusottama Kshetra that existed in Orissa. In ancient Hindi literatures like Bisaldev Raso (12th century A.D.) and Prithvirayo Roso of the same century, Jagannath is described as the deity of Orissa.

Thus, there is ample evidence of Jagannath at Puri since remote antiquity. The glory and greatness of Jagannath and Puridham find mention in the Puranas like Matsya, Brahma, Narada, Padma Kapilasanhita, Niladrimahaodaya and the Utkal Kanda of the Skanda Purana. In all such Puranas, he has been described as the famous deity of Odra or Utkala. In the tantric works like Kalika Purana, Rudrayamala tantra, Brahmayamala tantra and Tantrayamala, etc. of 10th century A.D., Jagannath is mentioned conspicuously.

The foreign scholars like Stevens, Wilson and Fergusson etc have traced his origin in Buddhism. Rajendralal Mitra has opined that during pre-Christian century, only Buddhism was in vogue in Orissa. Chinese traveller like Yuan Chwang has narrated that Mahayana Buddhism was the religion of Utkala in 7th century A.D. This school of scholars believe that original Jagannath temple complex was a Buddhist establishment. Very recently a Chunar sand stone pillar has been traced out below the fossilized

Garuda pillar of Natamandira while repairing it by ASI. This further strengthened the Buddhist origin of Jagannath. From the funeral pyre of Buddha at Kusinagar, a tooth relic was known to have been brought by Therakhema to Puri of Orissa. For this relic, for centuries Puri was called Dantapuri. It is believed that it is still there as Brahmadata, in the wooden statues of Jagannath which is mysteriously shifted to the new idols at the time of Navakalevara. Alexander Cunningham has stated, "the three shapeless figures of Jagananth and his brother and sister are simple copies of the symbolical figures of the Buddhist triad i.e. Buddha, Dharma and Sangha of which the 2nd is always represented as a female. The Buddhist origin of the Jagannath figure is proved beyond all doubt by their adoption as the representative of the Brahmanical avatar of Buddha in the annual almanacs of Mathura and Benaras." Dr. H. K. Mahatab has also referred to a similar stone of Asokan polis with the symbol of Buddha, Sangha and Dhama discovered and sent to Calcutta University sometime back for preservation in Asutosh Museum. According to him, "the Savaras of Orissa were converted to Buddhism during the time of Asoka and worshipped the Triratna symbol in a Buddhist stupa at Puri. Later on in the 7th/8th century A.D., when Buddha was considered as an avatar of Visnu, Jagannath was also considered to be an avatara of Visnu. Gradually Buddhism lost itself in Vaisnavism."

Another school of scholars like Nilakantha Das believed in Jaina association of Jagannath cult. So far its origin is concerned, he has tried to identify Nilamadhava with Kalinga Jina referred to in the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela which was known to have been taken by Nanda ruler as war trophy in 4th century B.C. The said Jaina symbol came to be known as Nila i.e. void or black. The image of Jagannath, that is why, represents black colour or void. Subhadra is



being identified with the Dharmachakra of Jainas and Kavalya so closely connected with Jagannath, has in fact Jaina origin. Kedar Mahapatra and Binayak Misra also subscribe to this school of thought. For this they have attempted to identify the legendary Indradyumna with emperor Kharavela who brought back the Kalinga Jina in 1st century B. C. which was taken away by Mahapadma Nanda in 4th century B.C. to Pataliputra.

Jagannath is also adorned as Darudevata of Vedic and Bhagavatism. According to P. Mukherjee, in about 5th century A.D. during the Gupta rule, Sankarsana and Vasudeva came to be worshipped as Balarama and Jagannath. The Brihat Samhita of Varahmihira of 6th century A.D. associated Ekanamsa with Subhadra. In Harivansa, she is described as the daughter of Nandaraja and also as the common sister of Jagannath and Balabhadra. Under the influence of the Bhagavatism, she came to be worshipped as Subhadra as their common Sakti being the sister, a phenomenon unknown to Indian tradition. Thus the cult of Shakti entered into the fold of Jagannath worship in a zigzag manner baffling the beholders and philosophers alike.

Another strange aspect of the Cult is the Sabar connection in the origin and worship of Jagannath tradition. Jagannath Das in the Musaliparva of Mahabharata has written in the 15th century A.D. and said that after the Mahabharata war, Pandavas left for heaven through Himalaya. The Yadava Vansa of Krishna got destroyed by Krishna himself through the deluge of intoxication and homicide of the clan.

The Krisna avatara lila of Dvapara Yuga was thus to be concluded. Lord Krisna, to leave the mundane world was swinging in the forest. A Savara, thinking him to be a deer, shoot an arrow at Krisna. When the Savara came to know of this he cried and prayed God to excuse him. Consoling him the Lord said that this incident was

preordained to put an end to his avatar of Dvaparajuga. He further directed him to burn his body and to immerse the ashes in the ocean. The Savara could not completely burn his body. As per heavenly direction, he threw it in the ocean. It floated and in course of time came to Mahodadhi i.e. Puri sea beach. The then king of Puri Indradyumna dreamt of this and as per the divine direction brought it to the palace to make the wooden statues of Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath.

A story goes that no carpenter could handle the wooden log. Ultimately an old carpenter came and assured the king that he can make the statues under one condition that he would not be disturbed for fourteen days and he would do his job inside the temple by locking the door. The king agreed to the terms and conditions. But hearing no sound of the carpenter from outside, the Queen insisted the king to break open the door before the completion of 14 days and to his surprise the king found the deities half made and the old carpenter vanished. He prayed God who advised him to worship him in that form which we find today. Many such other stories in different versions are found about the Savara connection of the Jagannath culture. The Daitapatis now claim their origin to this Sabar tribe.

Thus the synthetic and syncretic cult of Jagannath is the embodiment of several cults of diverse religious philosophies that existed in India in different periods of her long cultural history. In the historic process of assimilation, it has embraced strange contradictions and varied traditions of various religious orders and has emerged as a universal heritage of world eminence.

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Sarala Mahabharat : A Study

Dr. Satyabrata Das

The original Sanskrit Mahabharat by Vyasa was written somewhere between 3rd and 4th Century B.C. that fell mostly under the illustrious Guta Age of ancient India. This holy scripture, as the Hindus looked upon it, continued to hold its absolute sway over the vast Indian peninsula for nearly two millennia. All along, the Sanskrit Mahabharat remained the exclusive monopoly of the Brahmin pundits and received the patronage of the court and the kings.

The first attempt to subvert the iconic status of Vyasa's Mahabharat in Sanskrit came from a non-Brahmin, a commoner from the peasantry of Orissa'. It is hard to believe how a man from a remote hamlet of coastal Orissa could venture such an incredible feat and took up the challenge successfully. It was Sarala Dasa, who, with no formal education or scholarly inheritance (or any literacy tradition to fall back upon), could accomplish such a stupendous work like the Mahabharat in Oriya.²

Moreover, Sarala Mahabharat is in no way behind the Sanskrit Original in its endurance and brilliance. Sarala, as a non-Brahmin (and Oriya as a langue that commanded absolutely no respect or esteem at that point of time) must have encountered heavy odds to realize this mission.

As Dr. Mansingh Observes : Any composition of lyric or epic in Oriya for that matter couldn't simply be conceived of during the period of Sarala Dasa as it was being looked down upon and ridiculed by the Kings and the learned coterie of intellectuals around him. (Matira Mahakabi Sarala Dasa - 3 : Translated by the writer).

Sarala not only made Oriya lingua-franca his mode of writing, but also chose to break away from the original to give a realistic Oriya flavour to it. As a matter of fact, Sarala Dasa makes numerous digressions and interpolations to accommodate the customs, culture, folk tradition and religious sentiments of 15th century Orissa. As Dr. K.C. Panigrahi asserts, "Sarala Dasa follows the bare outline of the Mahabharat Story"³ and omits most of Vyasa's circumlocutions, and scrupulously avoids the long, winding, philosophical discourses. For example, Sarala Dasa has omitted "the entire Bhagvad Gita by just making a reference to it in two verses" (Panigrahi, 42). A great scholar both in Sanskrit and Oriya Pandit Gopinath Nanda, who has done a very insightful comparative research work on the Mahabharat of Vyasa and Sarala Dasa, is of the opinion that Sarala Dasa has not even followed the general scheme of the original Mahabharat in eighteen cantos (Panigrahi, 41). Sarala skips the



whole length of intellectual discourse of Bhishma to Yudhistira in the Shanti Parva. Sarala's Madhya Parva of fifteen thousand verses is a new addition which is not found in the Sanskrit original. Pandit Gopinath Nanda further shows that the Vana Parva of the Sarala Mahabharat omits as many as twenty lengthy narratives of the Sanskrit original and adds twenty-four of his own (Panigrahi, 42). Pandit Nanda adds that Sarala Dasa has omitted fortyfour narratives of the original Shanti Parva and the Anusasanika Parva(Panigrahi, 42).

The deviations, as such, are many and numerous. Even Sarala Dasa goes to the extent of ignoring Hastinapur (the very Capital City: the locale and the focal point of all conflicts) and drives the Pandavas down to Orissa to set out on their last journey to the Himalayas. Further, Sarala Dasa has made it a point to make the illustrious Pandavas visit Puri, Konark, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Kapilas, Amaravati and Jajpur (all the places are located in the coastal Orissa). The poet exhibits his imaginative flight and, may be in a bid to subvert the iconic Sanskrit Mahabharat, adds a comic relief. He arranges a marriage of the old octogenarian king Yudhisthira with a Vaisya girl, Suhani, the daughter of Hari Sahu of Amaravati (Panigrahi,42) But, he scrupulously avoids giving her a visa to join the Pandavas on their final journey to the Himalayas. In a similar vein, Sarala Dasa, in his Mahabharat, has made the sanctified Gods appear life-like as men in flesh and blood which became a rich cultural heritage of Orissa. Thus, we find Lord Jagannath being depicted with such informality and intimacy by scores of poets and writers over centuries. Moreover, on every occasion and in case of every great hero, Sarala invariably seems to make a determined attempt to subvert the larger-than-life stature as Vyasa confers upon them. In the *Lakha Bindha* episode in the *Adya Parva* of the original Sanskrit Mahabharat, Vyasa creates a situation (for

shooting the eye of the fish on continually moving wheel with yet another moving basement on which the archer has to position himself with the giant Shiva Dhanush) that seems impossible on the part of any mortal archer. It can only be feasible for a larger-than-life hero which Sarala Dasa systematically subverts. In fact Sarala Mahabharat abounds with such instances from beginning to the very end.

In view of the above discussion, we can, without involving any risk, conclude that Sarala Mahabharat is not a translation of Vyasa's original Sanskrit. Though, the original Mahabharat of Vyasa remains the *raison de'tre* of Sarala Mahabharat, the latter makes endless imaginative flights and brings countless interpolations at his sweet free will. The question now arises whether those digressions and interpolations (that Sarala so naturally indulges in) can be treated as an act of Subversion or an artistic Sublimation !!!

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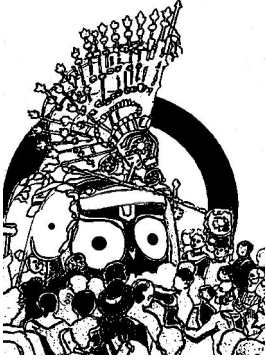
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Note: Mr.Gadadhar Mishra gives a comparative account of the composition Mahabharat in different regional languages. While Sarala wrote in late 15th century, Kasiram, Rama Saraswati, Ramanujan and Mukteswar wrote Mahabharat in Bengali, Assamese, Malayalam and Marathi respectively during 6th century and Gokulnath wrote the epic in Hindi full two centuries after, during 18th century (110).

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Sri Jagannath : The Symbol of Universal Love

Dr. Ramakanta Kar

Srikshetra of Sri Jagannath Dham is the most prominent pitha among four Dhams : Sri Jagannath Dham, Badrinath Dham, Ramanath Dham, and Dwarakanath Dham. A devotee after bathing in any tirtha, he must take bath in Mahodadhi and have a darshan of Lord Jagannath, otherwise he cannot get salvation or paritrana. So, pilgrims come to Puri for a final darshan of the Lord Jagannath after making trips to all other Dhams.

The founders of all the religions have come to Puri for darshan of Lord and have achieved divine knowledge and also accepted him as their *ista* in different shapes, as it is stated in different Shastras. The Vishnavas regard him as Krishna or Vishnu, the saivas and shaktas as mahakala and mahavairavas, the Vedantists as Brahma, the Buddhists as Tathagata, and the Jainas as Rushavaadinath. Even Charistians and muslims find some thing in him to relate to their own religion. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, did not fail to worship him. Salabega, a Muslim devotee, wrote some of the most enchanting bhajanas in his praise and now even European devotees dance with fervour in front of His Chariot during the Car Festival. So Sri Jagannath, the black coloured and wheel eyed (Chakanayana) deity, is called as Lord Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe.

There are four main features which are of permanent importance as regards to any deity; his form- *Rupa*, His food- *Mahaprasad*, His Festival - *Yatra*, His dwelling place - Temple, and his temple cannot be compared with any other temples in India. Every thing about him is great. The road is Badadanda, the temple is Bada deula, the sea is Mahodadhi and the food is Mahaprasad.

All these important features combined together make him a Universal deity, signifying universal love and compassion.

His Ayudha in both hands, Sankha and Chakra (conch shell and wheel). Conch - shell produces sound and wheels drive machines. These two instruments are important for industries. So Lord Jagannath is the symbol of industries. 36 categories of Sevakas are working in this industry. The output of this industry makes a famous market known as Ananda Bazar and supplies Mahaprasad to hundreds and hundreds of devotees daily. So his temple may be called as the biggest hotel of the world.

Sri Jagannath is called as Parama Brahma, because real Brahma is inside of his heart and at the time of Navakalevara, the Brahma is replaced from old deity to new. It is mentioned in Bhagavat Geeta (10th Chapter / 12th Versa):

*Paramabrahma Paramadhama
Pavitram Paraman Bhaban
Purusham Shaswatam Divyam
Adidevo Bhasam Bibhum.*

That means the supreme Brahman, the supreme abode, the supreme purifier, etenal divine purusha, the Primeval God is unborn, Omi-present. Thus, Jagannath is not only a material manifestation, but also the only symbolic expression of Universal Love in which all contradictions melt, all diversities fade into oneness.

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Prelude.....



*Kadachitkalinditata bipinasangeetakabaro
Mudabhirinari badankamala swadamadhupa.
Ramasambhorbrahma Surapatiganesharchitapado
Jagannathswami nayanpathagami bhabatumein.*

The evolution of Jagannath Cult defies all conclusions drawn by scholars and researchers. References to myths, legends and history are yet to reveal any basis of a concrete point which formed the beginning of a mystic reflection. Lord Jagannath as the centre of all consciousness conveys the message of a grand composite culture. He signals the convergence of all faiths and beliefs, and therefore transcends all boundaries perceived by human mind. Legends depict Jagannath as the Lord of tribals, the Sabaras. Daitas, the sevakas of the Lord are considered to be of tribal lineage even to-day. As an Aryanised form, major faiths like Saivism, Saktism, Vaishnavism, Jainism and Buddhism assimilated in to it. The images of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra have been described as many forms from time to time. But, nevertheless these remain as mysterious perceptions.

Ratha yatra is the culmination of a series of celebrations spread over the summer and the monsoon month. The most exciting feature of the Ratha Yatra is the pulling of chariots by many people. This mega event is now telecast by electronic media providing access to the people all over the globe. The emergence of internet technology has changed the course itself. The ritual of the Lord of the Universe has, thus, turned to be a splendid global event.

The present issue of 'Orissa Review' is the compendium of all these views, ideas and analyses of many scholars, devotees and researchers. We hope this will have much interest to our esteemed readers.

Jai Jagannath

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Digambar Mohanty'.

*(Digambar Mohanty)
Commissioner-Cum-Secretary*