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Jagannath

For the short story collection so entitled, see Karin Tidbeck.

Jagannath (or **Jagannatha**) meaning "Lord of the Universe", is a deity worshipped by Hindus, mainly in the Indian states of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Assam, Manipur and Tripura[1] and by Hindus in Bangladesh. Jagannath is considered a form of Vishnu[2] or his avatar Krishna by the Hindus. Jagannath is worshipped as part of a triad on the "Ratnavedi" (jewelled platform) along with his brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra.

The icon of Jagannath is a carved and decorated wooden stump with large round eyes and with stumps as hands, with the conspicuous absence of legs. The worship procedures, practices, sacraments and rituals of Jagannath do not conform with those of classical Hinduism.[3] It is made of wood, which is an exception to common Hindu iconographic deities of metal or stone.[4] The origin and evolution of Jagannath worship, as well as iconography, is unclear and has been subject to intense academic debate.

Jagannath lacks a clear vedic reference and is also not a member of the traditional Dashavatara concept or the classical Hindu pantheon,[5] though in certain Oriya literary creations, Jagannath has been treated as the Ninth avatar, by substituting Buddha.[6]

Jagannath considered as a form of the Hindu God Vishnu, is non-sectarian[7][8][9] and has not been associated with any particular denomination of Hinduism in entirety, though there are several common aspects with Vaishnavism, Saivism, Shaktism, Smartism, as well as with Buddhism and Jainism.

The oldest and most famous Jagannath deity is established in Puri. The temple of Jagannath in Puri is regarded as one of the Char Dham (sacred Hindu pilgrimage places) in India.[10]

The most famous festival related to Jagannath is the Ratha yatra, where Jagannath, along with the other two associated deities, comes out of the Garbhagriha of the chief temple (Bada Deula). They are transported to the Gundicha Temple (located at a distance of nearly 3 kilometres (1.9 mi)), in three massive wooden chariots drawn by devotees. Coinciding with the Rath Yatra festival at Puri, similar processions are organized at Jagannath temples throughout the world.

1 Etymology

Etymologically, "*Jagannath*" means "Master, Lord" (*nātha*) of the "World, Universe" (*Jagata*).[12] The word has Sanskrit origin, being a tatsama in Oriya. It is a relational-case Tatpurusa compound word.

"Jagannātha" is a genitive tat-puruṣa-samāsa, derived from "'Jagat *(a reduplicated nominal form of the verbal root √gam [to go]), meaning "[whatsoever] is moving" and nātha (Oriya: ନାଥ), meaning "lord, refuge, shelter", (Oriya: ଜଗତି). Jagannatha can thus also mean "He the shelter of the Revolving World"*[13][14]

In the Oriya language, "Jagannath" refers to multiple names, as "*Jagā*" (ଜଗା) or "*Jagabandhu*" (ଜଗବନ୍ଧୁ) ("Friend of the Universe"). Both names derive from "Jagannath". Further, on the basis of the physical appearance of the deity, names like "*Kālya*" (କାଳିଆ) ("The Black-coloured Lord", but which can also mean "the Timely One"), "*Darubrahman*" (ଦାରୁବ୍ରହ୍ମ) ("The Sacred Wood-Riddle"), "*Dāruēdabatā*" (ଦାରୁ ଦେବତା "The wooden god"), Chakāākhi (ଚକା ଆଖି) or "*Chakānayan*" (ଚକା ନୟନ "With round eyes"), "*Cakāḍōḷā*" (ଚକା ଡୋଳା "with round pupils") are also in vogue.[15][16][17]

Some scholars have suggested that the word is a Sanskritization of a tribal word. They have presented arguments concerning the Jagannath's tribal origins. Savaras the early tribal inhabitants of Odisha were tree worshippers who called their god *Jaganata* from whom the word Jagannath may have been derived.[18] However, the verity of these statements depends upon a prior knowledge of the verbal origins of the source languages, and so remains to some extent speculative and possibly represent political agendas. Still, to this day, a class of non brahmin priests known as "Daitapati" claiming origin from original Savara devotee of Jagannath named Viśvabāsu perform some of the most important rituals in the main temple at Pūri and are considered the God's family.[19]

2 Metaphysical attributes

While some schools of thought consider Jagannath as an Avatar or incarnation of Vishnu, others consider him as Vishnu incarnate[20] or the Avataree i.e. the cause of the Avatars, and not merely an Avatar of Vishnu.[21][22] The incarnations emanate from Jagannath, who is the cause of all material creation. Therefore, Jagannath

*The image of **Jagannath** in the Puri Temple.*

does not have any life stories and lila, in contrast to Avatars like Parshurama, Rama, Krisna etc. According to author Dipti Ray in *Prataparudra Deva*, the last great Suryavamsi King of Odisha:

> "In Prataparudradeva's time Oriya poets accepted Sarala Dasa's idea and expressed in their literary works as all the Avataras of Vishnu (Jagannath) manifest from him and after their cosmic play dissolute (bilaya) in him (Jagannath). According to them Jagannath is Sunnya Purusa, Nirakar and Niranjan who is ever present in Nilachala to do cosmic play ... The five Vaishnavite Sakhas ["Comrades"] of Orissa during Prataparudradeva's time expounded in their works the idea that Jagannath (Purushottama) is Purna Brahman (i.e. god *in toto*) from whom other Avataras like Rama, Krishna, etc., took their birth for lilas in this universe and at the end would merge in the self of Purna Brahman[23]

Jagannath has been endowed with attributes of all the Avatars of Vishnu. He is adorned and worshipped as different Avatars on special occasions.[24] Various traditions identify Jagannath with different Avatars of Vishnu. However he is most frequently identified with Krishna the 8th Avatar of Vishnu.[25] The Puranas relate that the Narasimha Avatar of Vishnu appeared from a wooden pillar. It is therefore believed that Jagannath is worshipped as a wooden idol or Daru Brahma with the Sri Narasimha hymn dedicated to the Narasimha Avatar.[26] Jagannath when worshipped alone is called **Dadhi Vaman**[27] Sanskrit for the Dwarf who likes curds. Every year in the month of Bhadra, Jagannath is dressed and decorated in the form of the Vamana avatar of Vishnu.[28] Jagannath assumes the Vamana Avatar during the annual Rath Yatra.[22] Jagannath appeared in the form of Rama another avatar of Vishnu to Tulsidas, whom he worshipped as Raghunath when visiting Puri in the 16th century.[29] From the times of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Jagannath has been strongly associated with

Krishna.Jagannath is identified with Buddha considered the ninth avatar of Vishnu by Hindus.[30] Attempts to label Jagannath as the ninth Avatar of Vishnu instead of Buddha is controversial.[31] Jagannath as the dutiful son offers oblations in memory of parents of all the Human Avatars of Vishnu annually.

Jagannath in his Hathi Besha or elephant attire

Caste barriers never existed among the devotees in Jagannath's temple.[32] Jagannath is venerated by all Hindu sects,[24] not just Vaishnavas and has a Pan-Indian influence.[33][34] Jagannath is considered the epitome of Tantric worship.[30] Jagannath is venerated as Bhairava or the Hindu God Shiva the consort of Goddess Vimala by Shaivites and Shakta sects.[33] Even the priests of Jagannath Temple at Puri belong to the Shakta sect, although the Vaishnava sect's influence predominates.[35] As part of the triad Balabhadra is also considered to be Shiva and Subhadra a manifestation of Durga.[36] Jagannath is said to assume the form of any God to satisfy his devotee's desire.[29] In the Bhagavata Purana the Sage Markandeya established that Purushottama Jagannath and Shiva are one.[37] Jagannath in his Hathi Besha (elephant form) has been venerated by devotees like Ganapati Bhatta of Maharashtra as the God Ganesh.[29]

3   Iconography and physical appearance

The most significant of Jagannath's many shrines is the temple at Puri, Odisha. In this temple, Jagannath is part

Raja Ravi Varma lithography of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Sudarshana.

of a triad of deities that includes Balabhadra and goddess Subhadra. Apart from the principal companion deities Jagannath is worshipped along with Sudarshana Chakra, Madhava, Sridevi and Bhudevi on the principal platform; Ratnavedi (Ratna: Bejewelled, Vedi: Platform/Pedestal - The bejewelled platform) in the inner sanctum sanctorum of the temple.[38]

Unlike other deities of the Hindu gods, there is no anthropomorphic or artistic aspect to the idol of Jagannath. The idol has not been designed to represent the image of a human being. The image has a massive square head, merging with the chest into one piece of wooden stump without any demarcation of the neck. The arms have been inserted in a line with the upper lip. The eyes are very large and round. The waist is the limit of the body.

It has been hypothesized in the myths and legends that the idols of Jagannath, along with those of Balabhadra and Subhadra, are unfinished, as there are no identifiable hands or legs.[39] Such a state of affairs mixed with the hearsay led William Bruton, the first English traveller to Puri in 1633, to mention that the idol of Jagannatha "is in a shape like a serpent, with seven heads".[40] The top upper portions of the deities' heads are triangular in shape, evoking the Trimundi (Triangular head).

The deity of Jagannath is about 6 feet tall (1.83 m).[41] The colour is predominantly black and the eyes are round and large. The eyes have three concentric circles - Red on the outer border, white in the middle, and black in the centre. The image of Balabhadra in the temple is also

approximately 6 feet (1.8 m) tall.[41] Balabhadra's face is white, his eyes are oval-shaped, and his stump-like arms are at eye level. The Devi Subhadra statue is yellow in hue and stands about 5 feet tall (1.52 m).[41] The goddess's eyes are also oval. The Sudarshana Chakra is approximately the same height as the two male deities and is red in colour and is worshipped as the fourth deity in the Ratnabedi. The Sudarshana Chakra is represented by a wooden pillar on which a Chakra is carved and clothed, unlike the traditional representation as a metal discus. The Sudarshana Chakra is placed to the left of Jagannath contrary to the traditional placement to the right of Vishnu signifying its benign and protective aspect.[42]

The idols of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshana Chakra are made of neem wood.[43] Neem wood is chosen because as per the Bhavishya Purana it is the most auspicious wood to make idols of Vishnu. The Brihat Samhita and the Vishnu Samhita mention that if God is worshipped in the form of a Daru (idol of wood) the worshipper obtains all four aspirations of man, namely Ayu (longevity), Sri (wealth), Bala (strength), and Vijaya (victory).[41]

4 Myths and legends of the origin and emergence of Jagannath

The legends regarding the origin of Jagannath, which have been recorded in various sources such as Mahabharat of Sarala Dasa, 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 stages.

It should be noted that, despite repeated references to King Indradyumna in the Jagannath lore below, Indradyumna remains a legendary figure and his historicity cannot be established on any safe ground.[44] Some have identified him with the Indradyumna of the Mahabharat and considered him to be quite an ancient figure of the early Vedic era. Drawing from poet Sarala Dasa's *Mahabharat*, Indradyumna can be identified with Indraratha, the Somavamsi king of the 10th century AD. 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.

The following principal Puranic legends are associated with the emergence of Jagannath:

4.1 Puranic version

The Puranic text Purusottama Mahatmya [45] of the Skanda Purana [46] contains the Indradyumna legend and the origin of Jagannath's wooden idol at Puri.

According to the legends, in the Satya yuga, Indradyumna was a Lunar Dynasty king of Somavamsa lineage. A traveling pilgrim came before Indradyumna and described the great God Nila Madhava (Blue Vishnu) being worshipped at Nilachal (Blue Mountain) in Odra (Odisha). The pilgrim disappeared after telling the story. At the king's request, his priest and his younger brother Vidyapati went in search of the legendary divinity. Vidyapati reached the forest in Savardvipa on the banks of the river Mahanadi. The Savara king, Visvavasu, received Vidyapati and promised to show him Nila Madhava the next morning. Vidyapati did not touch food or water before seeing the Lord. Seeing the eagerness of Vidyapati, the Savara king had him bathed in Rohini-kunda and seated him under the kalpa tree. There Vidyapati saw Nila Madhava being worshipped by the Devas. Then Vidyapati returned to Avanti, the capital of King Indradyumna.

Nilamadhav Temple, Kantilo

After listening to Vidyapati's account, Indradyumna set out for Nila Madhava, along with the priest, Vidyapati, and his followers. But as it turned out, Nila Madhava had disappeared on the very day that Vidyapati had returned to Malava. Upon reaching the spot, they found the god missing and the entire area covered with the golden sand of the coast. The shocked king Indradyumna was apprised of the message of Brahma by Narada: that the King must worship the deity with one thousand Asvamedha yajnas.

The divination of Nila Madhava went on:

> "In this world I will not give you darshana in the form of Nila Madhava, but I will manifest in four forms: Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra, and Sudarshana chakra. Wait near Chakra tirtha, and a daru would come afloat. I will manifest in the form of a very large, fragrant, reddish log, and the signs of shankha, chakra, gada, and padma will be seen everywhere on that form. Go there. Take Me out and make four deities from that log. Then you will be able to worship Me."

Upon receiving the devotion of the King, the Purusottama himself took the form of Visvakarma and secretly made the idols of daru (wood).Vishwakarma agrees to carve four idols for Indradyumna, on the condition that the door of the temple should be shut and nobody should try to enter the temple or disturb the carpenter until the idols were ready. Indradyumna promised to follow these conditions and Vishwakarma began his work. However, out of curiosity, the King (or in some versions, Queen Gundicha) could not help stealing a glance at Vishwakarma's work. Vishwakarma, upset at the breach of promise, vanished without completing the idols. Thus, Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra are still represented with incomplete limbs. Thereafter, Brahma himself established the holy idols on Vaishakha Sukla, on Pushya star.

The traditional version lacks historical support, as the identity of Nila Madhava remains unclear. For this reason, this traditional account of the emergence and origin of Jagannath worship remains a myth only. However, in the town of Kantilo in Odisha, there is a temple dedicated to a deity named Nila Madhava, of uncertain genealogy.

4.2   Vaishnavite version

Carpenters constructing Jagannath's chariot for the Rath Yatra at Puri

The Skanda Purana and Brahma Purana have attributed the creation of the Jagannathpuri during the reign of Indradyumna, a pious king and an ascetic who ruled from Ujjain. According to the second legend, associated with the Vaishnavas, when Lord Krishna ended the purpose of his Avatar with the illusionary death by Jara and his "mortal" remains were left to decay, some pious people saw the body, collected the bones and preserved them in a box. They remained in the box till it was brought to the attention of Indrdyumna by Lord Vishnu himself who directed him to create the image or a murti of Jagannath from a log and consecrate the bones of Krishna in its belly. Then King Indradyumna, appointed Vishwakarma, the archi-

tect of gods, a Brahmin carpenter to carve a the murti of the deity from a log which would eventually wash up on the shore at Puri. Indradyumna commissioned Vishwakarma (also said to be the divine god himself in disguise) who accepted the commission on the condition that he would not be disturbed till the carving of the image of the deity was completed, and the king to this condition. He then began his work in complete isolation behind closed doors.[47]

Everyone was anxious about the divine work, including the King Indradyumna. After a fortnight of waiting, the King who was anxious to see the deity, could not control his eagerness, and he visited the site where Vishwakarma was working. Soon enough Vishwakarma was very upset and he left the carving of the idol unfinished; the images were without hands and feet. The king was very perturbed by this development and appealed to Brahma to help him. Brahma promised the King that the images which were carved would be deified as carved and would become famous. Following this promise, Indradyumna organized a function to formally deify the images, and invited all gods to be present for the occasion. Brahma presided over the religions function as the chief priest and brought life (soul) to the image and fixed (opened) its eyes. This resulted in the images becoming famous and worshipped at Jagannath Puri in the well known Jagannath Temple as a Kshetra (pilgrimage centre). It is, however, believed that the original images are in a pond near the temple.[47]

4.3   Sarala Dasa Mahabharata version
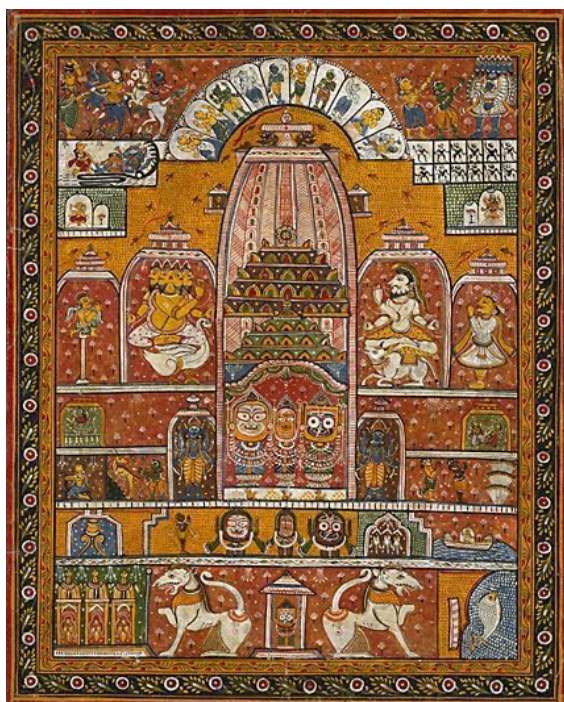
Jagannath Theme in Pattachitra painting

Sarala Dasa, the great Oriya poet of the 15th century while praising Jagannath as the saviour of mankind considered him both as a form of Buddha as well as a manifestation of Krishna.[48] According to Sarala Dasa's Mahabharata, the mortal remains of Krishna transformed into a wooden form and floated up to the Puri sea shore. Jara Savara, an aborigine, picked it and worshipped it. Subsequently, Indradyumna, the king of Somavamsa, had three wooden images made out of the log and established a grand temple for the images.

5   Origins of the Sect of Jagannath – alternate theories

5.1   Vedic origin of Jagannath

In the Rig veda,[49] there is mention of a Daru (log of wood) floating in the ocean. Vedic prayers have indicated taking shelter in the Daru.

In spite of the fact that Acharya Sayana, the noted commentator on the Vedas, has categorically interpreted the hymn with Jagannath as the daru floating at the sea shores,[50] some scholars have refuted this interpretation under the argument that the hymn deals with "Alaxmi Stava" of Arayi.

5.2   Stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharat

It has been claimed that the land by the sea shore where King Janak performed a yagna and tilled land to obtain Sita is the same as the area in which the Gundicha temple is situated in Puri.[51] In the Valmiki Ramayan it has been said[52] that Ram advised Hanuman and Vibhishan to worship Jagannath after the Treta Yuga.

The Mahabharat amply describes King Indradyumna's Ashvamedh Yagna and the advent of the four deities of the Jagannath cult.[51] It describes how the holy Indradyumna tank was formed by the trodding of ground by thousands of cows donated by Indradyumna to Brahmins. To this day the Indradyumna tank is considered holy by pilgrims.

5.3   Buddhist origins

William Bruton, the first English traveler to visit Puri and to see the Jagannath temple, made a certain counterfactual observation in 1633 that the image of Jagannatha "is in shape like a serpent, with seven heads" and the holy pagoda is "the mirror of all wickedness and idolatry". Thus, Jagannath became known to Europeans as a pagan divinity of monstrous form. To the Europeans, the iconography of Jagannatha remained a mystery from

the time of Bruton's visit until the 19th century. Bernier visited Puri in 1667 and left the first reliable description of the Car Festival, but failed to give any account of the image.[53] Jean-Baptiste Tavernier later described in detail the priceless jewellery of Jagannatha, which however, he never saw.[53]

With the more enlightened views of the 19th century, the problem of the iconography of Jagannath became a fascinating field for speculation. After the British occupation of Odisha in 1803, the temple and its priests received special treatment from the East India Company, which decided to protect the institution for economic and political reasons. Europeans were still excluded from the great sanctuary and even General Alexander Cunningham, one of the doyens of Indian archaeology, had a rather vague knowledge of the appearance of the Puri images, chiefly based, it seems, on secondary sources. The restrictions imposed on non-Hindus did not prevent a number of scholars from observing the strange rites at Puri, which included the suspension of caste-rules during the Car Festival, nor from drawing conclusions concerning the origins of the cult of Jagannath.[6]

As noted by Jagannath cult researcher, O. M. Starza, [54] since the complex rites of the Brahmins had given Christian scholars a low opinion of Hinduism, they endeavored to explain the enlightened features of the Jagannath cult by suggesting that it originated in the noble religion of the Buddha. It was thought, for instance, that the temple of Puri occupied almost certainly the site of an earlier Buddhist shrine, without any real evidence to support this view; while General Alexander Cunningham's suggestions that the figure of Jagannath was derived from the Buddhist symbol of the triratna (or taurine) was accepted even by such authorities as the Sri Lankan Buddhist scholar Ananda Coomaraswamy.

In the Bhilsa Topes monuments, Alexander Cunningham has identified the Jagannath triad as the Buddhist triad. Cunningham argues that the following two points are sufficient to conclude in favour of the Buddhist triad: "the suspension of caste during the festival and the belief that the image contains the relics or bones of Krishna". In support of second point he says that "(it) is also not at all Brahmanical, it is eminently characteristic of Buddhism."[55] Cunningham also asserts that the Brahma Padartha/Mani (Divine Life material) is nothing but a Buddhist relic (Buddha's Tooth).[55]

Along the same lines, noted writers like W. W. Hunter,[56] A. Stirling, John Beames, N. K. Sahu in the book *A History of Orissa*, Harekrushna Mahatab in his *History of Orissa*,[57] and Mayadhar Mansingh in his *The Saga of the Land of Jagannatha*[58] opine that it is a Buddhist triad.

In fact, there is no historical evidence of worship of Jagannath at Puri prior to the 10th century, when Yayati Kesari was the ruler. The Buddhist King Indrabhuti's Jnanasiddhi mentions[6] about the place of Jagannath.

Nilakantha 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 Oddiyana, the kingdom of Indrabhuti, which was even prior to the rule of Yayati Kesari -I. Indrabhuti[59] has described Jagannath as Buddhist deity in Jnanasiddhi.

In the narrative by Indrabhuti, Jagannath was worshiped by the Savaras in one of the Budha Viharas. During the rule of King Sasanka and feudatory chief Madhav Raj-II, many anti-Buddhist campaigns were undertaken. Therefore, the Buddhist Jagannath was shifted before the arrival of Hieun-Tsang and destruction of the Puspagiri Vihar. In this period, Indrabhuti emerged as a worshipper of Jagannath in 717. There are various opinions about the place where the image of Jagannath was lying buried. The *Madala panji* (The Temple Chronicles) identifies this place with the village Gopali of Sonepur district of Odisha. The *Madala panji* records a legend of King Yayati recovering the wooden images of Jagannath from the Sonepur region, where they lay buried for over 144 years. Thereafter, King Yayati reconstructed the wooden images from Sonepur forest tribes.

The book *Gyanasidhi* written by Indrabhuti, as published from Baroda, has descriptions about Jagannath worshipped as Buddha.

> Pranipatya jagannatham sarvajin-
> abararcitam |
> Sarvabuddhamayam siddhi – byap-
> inam gaganopamam |
> Sarvadam sarvasattwebhyah sarva-
> jna vara vajrinam |
> Bhaktyaham sarvabhaven kakshye
> tatsadhanam vajrinam |
> "Jagannath is worshipped by the greatest Jainas, he is in the form the almighty Buddha, full of wisdom and compared to the sky. He offers everything to all the living beigs. He is omniscient and best among the Bajjajanis. I offer my solemn prayer to that Jagannatha with devotion and tell the way of his Sadhana".[60]

Many of the ancient poets of Odisha have also explained Jagannath as the form of Buddha and worshipped as Baudhabatara (incarnation of The Buddha). Sarala Mahabharata:

ସଂସାର ଜନଙ୍କୁ ସେହୁ ତାରିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ
ବଉଦ୍ଧ ରୂପରେ ବିଜେ ଛନ୍ତି ଜଗନ୍ନାଥେ ॥
ବଉଦ୍ଧ ରୂପରେ କଲି କଲାନ୍ତକ ସାଧି
କୁଟାନ୍ତକ ଦର୍ପଗଞ୍ଜ ଅଟ୍ କୃପାନିଧି ॥

Roman transliteration:
saṁsāra janaṅku sēhu tāribā nimantē
bauddha ruparē bijē chanti jagannāthē

bauddha ruparē kaḷi kaḷāntaka sādhi
kuṭāntaka darpagañja aṭa kṛpānidhi

[61]

English translation: (unknown)

Darubrahma gita:

> Sastha di sa antarena, pada je pani hela khina |
> | Baudharupa heba pain, padapani chadile tahi
> ||[62]

Oriya bhagabata:

ଠାକୁରେ ବେ   ଇଲେ ରାଜା ହେ   ଇଲୁ କି ବାଇ,
କଳିଙ୍ଗେ ବସିବୁ ବଉଦ୍ଧ ରୁପ ହେ   ଇ ॥[1] (*Deuḷa toḷā*, Oriya
Bhagabata)
ସମୁଦ୍ରେ ମେଳିଣ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଦିଅ ଦେବରାଜା,
କଳିଙ୍ଗେ ପାଇବେ ସେ ଦାରୁରୁପେ ପୂଜା ॥

1. **^** Cite error: The named reference prabhat was invoked but never defined (see the help page).

ṭhākurē bōilē rājā hōilu ki bāi
kaḷijugē basibu bauddha rupa hōi
samudrē mēliṇa prabhu dia dēbarājā
kaḷijugē pāibē sē dārurupē pujā

[63]

Sunya sanhita: Nija bansa gheni baudharupare nilachale
achi rahi[64]

Ananta guptagita:

> Tahun baudharupe bhagabana, rahile puruso-
> tama bhubana |
> Baudharupe nilagiri mohi ||[65]

The texts of the above prove that Jagannath was worshipped in Puri by the Oriyas as a form of Buddha from a long time. Jayadeva, in Gita Govinda also has described Buddha as one among the Dasavatara. Indrabhuti, the ancient king of Sambalaka (present Sambalpur district) of Oddiyan used to worship Jagannath as Buddha. This culture also influenced Buddhism in Nepal and Tibet. That is how Buddha is also worshipped as Jagannath in Nepal.[66]

Anangavajja, the guru of Indrabhuti (Also described as Acharjya, Jogi, Jogiswara and Mahacharjya in the Tengur cannons). Pragyonpayabiniscayasidhi, written by Indrabhuti and published from Baroda also has description of Jagannath by Siddha Anangavajja.

> Sada   parahitascaiva   car-
> jayahkampyacetasa |
>
> parjyupasyo jagannatho guruh sar-
> varthasidhida dah |[67]
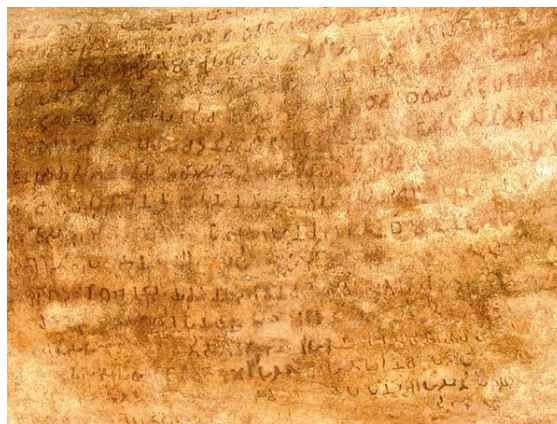
Hathigumpha inscription of King Khāravela at Udayagiri Hills

5.4   Jain Origins

Pandit Nilakantha Das suggested that Jagannath was a deity of Jain origin because of the appending of *Nath* to many Jain Tirthankars.[68] He felt Jagannath meant the 'World personified' in the Jain context and was derived from *Jinanath*.Evidence of the Jain philosophy like the concept of Kaivalya which means salvation are present in the Jagannath cult.[69] O.M Starza[70] discussed Annirudh Das's theory that the original Jagannath deity as influenced by Jainism and is none other than the *Jina* of Kalinga taken to Magadh by Mahapadma Nanda.[71] This theory identifies the *Jina* of Kalinga recorded to have been restored to Odisha by Kharvela in his Hathigumpha inscription with Jagannath.

5.5   Tribal origins

Polish Indologist Olgierd M. Starza has reviewed various theories on the tribal, Buddhist, Jain, or Vaishnav origins of Jagannath in *The Jagannatha Temple at Puri: Its Architecture, Art And Cult*,[72] and has arrived at the conclusion that "... *several early theories regarding the origin of Jagannatha have been refuted; only the tribal theory remains a possibility ...*" .[73]

The factors responsible for the acceptance of tribal origin theories are as under:

1. The structure and shape of Jagannath deity is commensurate to a pillar. The Savaras, the earliest tribal inhabitants of Odisha, were tree worshipers, and their rituals involved dancing and singing before the *Kitung* or *Jaganata* or God.[18] It has been argued that when the Vedic Aryans migrated to Odisha, they adopted the local tribal tradition of *Jaganata* worship, and effected the transformation of the tribal wooden pillar *Jaganata* to aryanized *Jagannath*. In fact, among tribals of Vindhya region, tree or khamba (pillar or post) worship is prevalent.

2. A deep association of a class of non-Brahmin, tribal

origin servitors, called Daitas, exists with the worship of the Jagannath deities. These Daitas are the hereditary servitors of Jagannath.[19] They are inextricably and exclusively connected with the funeral rites of Jagannath during the Nabakalevara (New embodiment/renewal) ritual and bear the sole responsibilities of Snana Yatra and Ratha-Yatra. The instances of worship of Jagannath by Savaras is also mentioned in Darubrahma Gita written by Jagannath Dasa in the 16th century and in Deula Tola written by Nilambara Das in the 17th century.

3. The images of the Jagannath triad are built out of neem wood, as opposed to universal use of stone for construction of images of all brahminical Hindu deities.[41]

4. There is no caste distinction in the cult of Jagannath which is akin to the practices of tribals and significantly different from classical Vaishnavism.[74]
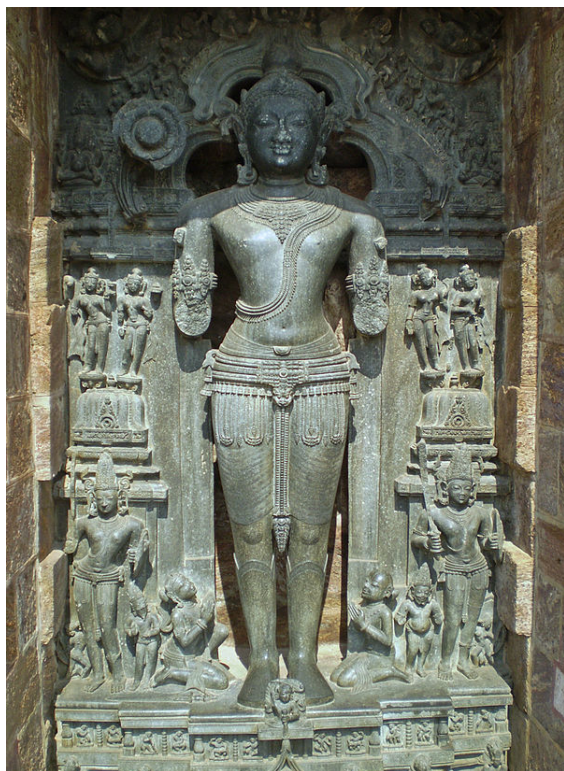
A statue of Surya in Chlorite Schist from Konarak

These assumptions state Jagannath with a class of aborigines, called Savaras, the peculiar shape as a pillar and typical nature of the wooden icon of the deity and his associates, Balabhadra and Subhadra; many scholars have held that Jagannath has originally been a tribal deity of Savara origin.

Anncharlott Eschmann has pointed out that the Nabakalevara ritual is the ceremony of periodical renewal of the body of the deity, is a tribal custom.[75]

Such practices of renewal of wooden deity are found among the primitive tribes like Savaras and Konds.

British historian William Wilson Hunter in the first volume on the British province of Odisha and the temple of Jagannath has remarked that the aboriginal people worshipped a Blue Stone inside dense forests as Nila Madhava. Hunter ascribed the blue (Nila) colour to the use of the common chlorite schist stone of the Hills of Odisha in which all the ancient images of Odisha were being made.[76] As per Hunter, the dravidian God, who was offered raw, uncooked food by the primitive tribes. Hunter hypothesized that with the passage of time, the Aryan elements assimilated Jagannath into fold of Hinduism where as per more sophisticated customs, Jagannath is being offered cooked food. The synthesis is clear even at present since worship methods of both these two folds (Tribal and Brahminical) coexist side by side at Jagannath Temples.

Three pillars found in an old temple said to date back to the 8th century in Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh

Nilakantha Das opines that Savari Narayana of Madhya Pradesh (Dakshina Kosala), was brought to Puri from Phuljheur of Madhya Pradesh where a wooden deity was worshipped.[77] This Narayana of the Savaras and became Jagannath.

Prof. B. C. Mazumder (ed), in the *Typical Selections from Oriya Literature*,[78] maintains that Seori-Narayana has been located in the Bilaspur district of present Chhattisgarh state, which was then in the kingdom of Dakshin Kosala, where in the 7th century a line of rulers of Hinduized Savara origin, established its rule with Sivpur, in the north of Raipur, for its capital.

Verrier Elwin, anthropologist, ethnologist and tribal activist, in his book *Religion of an Indian Tribe* has narrated that:[79]

> "The god Jagannatha had appeared in Seori-Narayana and an old Savar used to worship him. The king of Odisha had built the great temple at Puri and wished to install Jagannatha in it, and he found a Brahmin to fetch it from

Seori-Narayan, but nobody knew where it was except the old hermit, Savar. The Brahmin besought him in vain to be allowed to see the god and even went so far as to marry his daughter, and finally the old man consented to take him blindfolded to the place. The Brahmin, however, tied some mustard seeds on a corner of his cloth and made a hole in it so that they dropped out one by one on the way. After sometime they grew up and served to guide him to the spot. The Brahmin then went to the Seori-Narayana alone and begged the god to go to Puri. Jagannatha consented and assuming the form of a log of wood, floated down the Mahanadi to Puri, where he was taken out and placed in the temple."

As per Elwin there is an alternative Savara legend, according to which there are three most important and prominent Kittungs (Gods) - two brothers and a sister, Ramma, Bimma and Sitaboi. Ramma is always coupled with the brother Bimma. The legend maintains that it was from them that the Savara tribe was born. Such a set up has significant resemblance to the Jagannath triad.

The argument, that because there is no caste distinction inside the Jagannath temples, the images are of Buddhist descent, cannot be accepted on merit. Verrier Elwin has argued that:

"They (The Savars) have no caste feeling, and they do not excommunicate one of their members if he changes his religion. Most of them have no idea of untouchability and accept food even from the Douss (Douss are treated as inferiors)." (The Religion of an Indian Tribe)

Although Dr. Mayadhar Mansingh thought it (*Jagannath triad*) to be a Buddhist triad,[80] in his other book *History of Oriya Literature*, he writes:[81]

"Originally a god of the tribal Savaras, and adopted later successively by the Aryan faiths of Jainism, Buddhism, Tantricism and Vaishnavism, Jagannatha bears the indelible impress of each of these cults even today. The traditions and practices which centre in an around this famous temple are also still South Indian or Dravidian to a large extent."

The theory that the Jagannath triad is a Vaishnava cult has been ruled out as there is no semblance of *Nila Madhaba* in the present triad images, nor are the three images on the same platform being worshipped by the Vaishnavites. Further, the *Brahma Padartha* (life substance) has been argued not to be Lord Krishna's mortal remains, since puritanism in the Vaishnavism does not permit mortal remains to be inserted in a sacred image.

Further, the Buddhist relic, the tooth relic, cannot be the *Brahma Padartha* (life material), as the relic has been kept at Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka.

In connection to the possible tribal origins of the Jagannath cult, a pertinent point has been raised by Pandit Nilakantha Das in *The Orissa Historical Review Journal*, April 1958, whereby it has been argued that:[77]

"Before Choraganga actually came to Orissa it appears from tradition that, Nilmadhava so much made of the Nihilists and perhaps accepted by the local Savaras, with whom also perhaps mixed up Uddas, has just been replaced by the image of the neem-wood, called Sawrinarayana. Chodaganga deba instead of disapproving the attempt seemed to take ready advantage of the incident, specially as his Hindu patriotism as well as the imperialistic outlook dictated him to make the powerful Savara element of his newly annexed land completely his own and consequently, the new god more liberal and universally popular among these Savara people as well as the Hindu public. Jaina or Buddhist worship and practice were also retained there in making the offering acceptable by all clans and castes with equal reverence."

All the above facts and arguments point to a possible tribal origin of the Jagannath worship.

5.6 Tribal Narasimha origins

As per current predominant thought, Jagannath, embodies the metamorphosis of tribal god into a pre-eminent deity of the classical Hindu pantheon. The icon is carved out of wood (not stone or metal), and the tribes whose rituals and traditions were woven into his worship are still living as tribal and semi-tribal communities in the region. This tribal god may have taken a fairly circuitous route to his present pinnacle, via absorption of local shakti traditions and merger with the growing popularity of the Narasimha and Purushottam forms of Vishnu in the region in the medieval era.

As regards to archeological findings, Queen Vasata in the 8th century built the famous Narsinghnath temple built in brick at Sripur or Shreepur on the banks of river Mahanadi in present Mahasamund district. Sirpur or Shreepur was then the capital of Dakshin Kosala (Chhattisgarh region) kingdom. The temple is believed to have been built in the 8th century by Vasata, the daughter of King Suryavarma of Magadh. The temple plaque opens with a salutation to Purushottam, also titled Narasimha, suggesting a trend in Vaishnav tradition to stress the ugra (violent) aspect of Vishnu.[82] This possibly culminates with Jagannath, widely revered as Purushottam until the end of the 13th century, which had

Jagannath in the Narasimha or Nrusingha Besha in Koraput

Scholars explain this in terms of Narasimha's association with wooden posts representing tribal deities. In the Andhra village Jambulapadu in (Anantapur), Narasimha Svami is worshipped as a pillar to which a sheet shaped in the form of a lion's head is attached. This lion-head explains Jagannath's large round eyes, typical of Narasimha on account of his fury (krodh).[21] The head of the Jagannath image makes sense when perceived as a lion's head, where the emphasis is on the jaws, rather than as a human head.

6   Transformation from unitary icon to triad

Jagannath on the right with Subhadra in the center and Balabhadra on the left

The Madala Panji observes that Neela Madhav transformed into Jagannath and was worshipped alone as a unitary figure, not as the part of a triad. It is significant to note that the early epigraphic and literary sources refer only to a unitary deity Purushottama Jagannath.[84] The Sanskrit play "Anargharaghava" composed by Murari mentioned only Purushottama Jagannath and his consort Lakshmi with no references to Blabhadra and Subhadra.[84] The Dasgoba copper plated inscription dating to 1198 also mentions only Purushottama Jagannath in the context that the Puri temple had been originally built by Ganga king Anantavarman Codaganga (1078–1147) for Vishnu and Lakshmi.[84] These sources are silent on the existence of Balabhadra and Subhadra. Such state of affairs has led to arguments that Purushottama was the original deity and Balabhadra and Subhadra were subsequently drawn in as additions to a unitary figure and formed a triad.

close connections with Narasimha who became popular in Odisha in the post-Gupta period.

After Anantavarman Chodaganga, who commissioned the temple at Puri, his chief queen, Kasturikamodini, built a temple in his homeland in Tekkali (present Andhra Pradesh), east of his first capital Kalinganagar, in 1150. The temple was dedicated to the god Dadhivaman, and the inscription reveals that the image installed was of the wooden God, and not the famous Puri Trinity of Jagannath-Balabhadra-Subhadra.[21] Scholars maintain that such fact means that Chodaganga was a devotee of this god, and as the god's name is preserved in Tekkali in this early period, it seems likely that "Dadhivaman" (or the tribal form of this Sanskritised name) was the original name of the wooden god.

As the original wooden god was a unitary figure, temples for the single deity continued to be built even after a Trinitarian image emerged at Puri. Even today there are many Dadhivaman temples in Odisha,[83] which perpetuate the original state of the god. The Kond continue to practice a ritual renewal of wooden posts.

There is also something striking about the figures constituting the Jagannath triad. Subhadra's image consists of only a trunk and a head, but Jagannath and Balabhadra are larger, with a trunk, over-dimensional head, and arm stumps. But while the heads of Subhadra and Balabhadra are oval with almond-shaped eyes, Jagannath's head is curiously flat on top and is dominated by enormous round eyes.

The situation changed during the rule of Anangabhima III [1211–1239] when Balabhadra and Subhadra are mentioned for the first time in the Pataleshwara inscription dating back to 1237.[84] The German Indologist Kulke termed Anangibhima III the originator of the triad of Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra[85] suggesting that

Balabhadra was added after Laksmi's transformation into Subhadra. This is because there is an Oriya convention, according to which the younger brother's wife (i.e. Krishna's wife Lakshmi) could not have lived in the same house with her husband's older brother i.e. Balarama.

As per scholars, Devi Subhadra could be subsequent addition upon the resurgence of Shaktism as the consort ("Not sister") of Jagannath.[86] At some point of time the figure of Lord Balabhadra may have been added to satisfy the Saivas to the existing couple Jagannath and Devi Subhadra. At this juncture, a major change had to be introduced into the relationship between the deities since as per traditional Oriya culture, the elder brother is not permitted even to see the face of younger brother's spouse. Therefore, as a solution, the erstwhile consort (Shri) of Jagannath was relieved from dual images of Jagannath-Shri and Subhadra, the sister to both to deities was introduced.

The discus Sudarshana chakra.[42] was also a subsequent addition to satisfy the Ganapatyas and Sauras. This could only have taken place over the process of Krishna consciousness was well advanced and given the political importance of the cult after Chodaganga, only under a special royal impact.

Unique and enigmatic are the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsan without any parallel in any Hindu shrine. They are not built according to the injunctions in traditional Shilpa Sastras (Iconography). In fact there is no foundation in traditional sculpture for the construction of image of Gods and Goddesses in wood).[41] And thus the four-fold images of Daru-Brahma stand apart from all the other icons in the temples situated even in the precincts of the great temple.

All the hundred odd sub-ordinate deities all compare to traditional icons by and large, being anthropomorphic in form and built according to scriptural descriptions in stone so as to be eternal and immortal.

Yet the strange descriptions of Chaturdha Murti or four-fold deities is the centre of the Jagannath cult and has dominated Oriya life, art and culture and in the sense it synthesises all the major cults of India.

7 Assimilation and synthesis

Seemingly, the origin of Jagannath cult is aboriginal, tribal Savara. However, in course of time, the cult has taken an Aryanised form and various major faiths like Saivism, Saktism, Vaishnavism, Jainism, and Buddhism have been synthesised into this cult.[8][9]

Jagannath is worshipped as Purushottama form of Vishnu,[87] Gaudiya Vaishnavs have identified him strongly with Krishna.[88] Balabhadra considered the elder brother of Jagannath is worshipped as Shiva.[88] Subhadra considered Jagannath's sister is considered as

Jagannath

Brahma[88] in some versions and worshipped as Adyasakti Durga in the form of Bhuvaneshwari in other versions.[89] Finally the fourth deity, Sudarsana Chakra symbolizes the wheel of Sun's Chariot, which attracts the Sauras. The conglomerate of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan Chakra worshipped together on a common platform are called the Chaturdha Murty or the "Four-fold Form".[90]

Certain scholars like Pandit Nilakantha Das have opined that the three main images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra represent the Jain Trinity of Samyak Jnana, Samyak Charita and Samyak Drusti. It is also believed that the soul of Jagannath, most secretly hidden within the image of Jagannath, is nothing but a Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha. The philosophy of Tantra, which in course of time became an integral part of Buddhism, has also significantly influenced the rites and rituals of Jagannath cult.

Jagannath is also worshipped as "Purushottama" ("The Best of All"). Jagannath is worshipped along with Lord Balabhadra or Balarama who is alternatively considered to be an incarnation of Seshanaga. According to some scholars, Subhadra, who is worshipped along with Jagannath, is the Goddess Bhuvaneshwari. But some other Vaishnavite scholars regard her as the younger sister of Lord Krishna, because of the similar name.

To the right of Jagannath is the Sudarshana chakra, a post-like structure that may have originated in processional Siva lingas, but that also has some parallels in pillars seen in orthodox Vaishnava contexts, in folk settings,

and in tribal areas. Author O.M. Starza (1993) provides information about the processional Siva lingas,[91] Vaishnava pillars,[92] modern folk parallels to the Sudarshana chakra,[93] and stakes or pillar-like icons in the tribal settings.[94] On the other hand, the importance or role of Sudarshana chakra, the fourth deity remains unexplained. Such a combination of deities is unique in India iconography.

The Saiva element in the cult of Jagannath are co-related with the doctrine of Tantricism and Shakta Dharma. According to the Saivas, Jagannath is Bhairav.[95] The tantric literary texts identify Jagannath with Mahabhairav.[96] It will not be out of place to mention here that Jagannath sits on the Sri Yantra ("holy instrument") or Sri Chakra ("holy wheel") and is worshipped in the Vijamantra 'Klim', which is also the Vijamantra of Kali or Shakti. The representation of Balaram as Sesanaga or Sankarsana bears testimony to the influence of Shaivism on the cult of Jagannath. The third deity, Devi Subhadra, who represents the Sakti element is still worshipped with the Bhuvaneshwari Mantra.[95]

The Tantric texts also point out the name of Jagannath and his worshippers. According to these texts, Jagannath is Bhairav, and Goddess Vimala is the Shakti. The offerings of Jagannath becomes *Mahaprasad* only after it is re-offered to Goddess Vimala. Similarly, different tantric features of Yantras have been engraved on the Ratna vedi, where Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra are set up. The Kalika Purana depicts Jagannath as a Tantric deity.[95]

In Gaudiya Vaishnav tradition, Balabhadra is the elder brother Balaram, Jagannath is the younger brother Krishna, and Subhadra is the youngest sister.[96]

According to the Jain version, the image of Jagannath (Black colour) represents sunya, Subhadra symbolizes the creative energy and Balabhadra (White colour) represents the phenomenal universe. All these images have evolved from the Nila Madhava, the ancient Kalinga Jina. "Sudarshana Chakra" is contended to be the Hindu name of the Dharma Chakra of Jaina symbol. The term "Kaivalya" ("liberation"), exclusively common in the cult of Jagannath, is derived from Jaina tradition.

To conclude, in the words of the historian Jadunath Sarkar:[97]

> "The diverse religions of Orissa in all ages have tended to gravitate towards and finally merged into the Jagannath worship, at least in theory."

8   Symbolic representation

Jagannath has been depicted as the symbol of godhead in certain other belief systems and faiths as, under:

In Vaishnavism, the Jagannath form is worshipped as the abstract form of Krishna.[88]

The follower of Shaivism maintain that the original shape of Jagannath was in shape of a Linga. Deity Balabhadra is also named as "Shiva" and "Ananta Vasudev" .[98]

The Shaktas claim that in tantra systems, Jagannath has been accepted as Bhairava [89] and associate deity Bimala represents 'Bhairavi'. Such a belief is reinforced by the ritual whereby only after offering of the 'Jagannath Bhog' at Goddess Vimala, it is considered as 'Mahaprasad'.

Some followers of Buddhism pray to Jagannath in mantra "*Namoh Jagannath Buddhaya*". In their opinion, Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra represent the Buddha-Sangha-Dhamma triad.[69] A section of Buddhists believes that the tooth relic of Buddha is kept inside the Jagannath idol in the navel circle.[99] Buddhists draw parallel in claiming that the Jagannath Rath-Yatra is like the of Rath Yatra for Buddha. The Buddhists also do not follow casteism in society, which is also followed in the Ananda Bazar of Jagannath.

Jains believe that the word "Jagannath" has been derived from the word "*Jinanath*".[69] The Jagannath idol resembles with the ancient Jain Idol. The 'Baisi Pahacha' (22 steps) leading to the Jagannath Temple at Puri has been constructed in the memory of 22 tirthankaras or *Kevalins*. Similarly, the offerings made to Jagannath is called 'Kaivalya'.

9   Mythology of Jagannath

9.1   Kanchi conquest

The conquest of Kanchi

One of the most popular legends associated with Jagannath is that of *Kanchi Avijana* (or "Conquest of Kanchi"), also termed as "Kanchi-Kaveri". According to the legends,[100] the daughter of the King of Kanchi was betrothed to the Gajapati of Puri. When the Kanchi King witnessed the Gajapati King sweeping the area in front of where the chariots of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra were kept during Ratha yatra, he was aghast. Considering the act of sweeping unworthy of a King, the

King of Kanchi declined the marriage proposal, refusing to marry his daughter to a 'Sweeper'. Gajapati Purushottam Deva, felt deeply insulted at this and attacked the Kingdom of Kanchin to avenge his honour. His attack was unsuccessful and his army defeated by the Kanchi Army.

Upon defeat, the Gajapati King Purushottam Deva returned and prayed to Jagannath, the God of land of Kalinga before planning a second campaign to Kanchi. Moved by his prayers, Jagannath and Balabhadra, left their temple in Puri and started an expedition to Kanchi on horseback. It is said that Jagannath rode on a white horse and Balabhadra on a black horse. The legend has such a powerful impact on the Oriya culture that the simple mention of white horse-black horse evokes the imagery of Kanchi conquest of the God in devotees minds.

On the road, Jagannath and Balabhadra grew thirsty and chanced upon a milkmaid Manika, who gave them buttermilk/yogurt to quench their thirst. Instead of paying her dues, Balabhadra gave her a ring telling her to claim her dues from King Purushottam. Later, Purushottam Deva himself passed by with his army. At Adipur near Chilika lake, the milkmaid Manika halted the King pleading for the unpaid cost of yogurt consumed by His armie's two leading soldiers riding on black and white horses. She produced the gold ring as evidence. King Purusottam Deva identified the ring as that of Jagannath. Considering this a sign of divine support for his campaign, the king enthusiastically led the expedition.

In the war between the army, of Kalinga inspired by the Divine support of Jagannath and the of army of Kanchi, Purushottam Deva led his army to victory . King Purusottam brought back the Princess Padmavati of Kanchi to Puri. To avenge his humiliation, he ordered his minister to get the princess married to a sweeper.[101] The minister waited for the annual Rath Yatra when the King ceremonially sweeps Jagannath's chariot. He offered the princess in marriage to King Purusottam, calling the King a Royal sweeper of God. The King then married the Princess. The Gajapati King also brought back images of Uchista Ganesh (Bhanda Ganesh or Kamada Ganesh) and enshrined them in the Kanchi Ganesh shrine at the Jagannath Temple in Puri.

This myth has been recounted by Mohanty .[102] J.P Das [103] notes that this story is mentioned in a Madala panji chronicle of the Jagannath Temple of Puri, in relation to Gajapati Purushottama. At any rate, the story was popular soon after Purushottama's reign, as a text of the first half of the 16th century mentions a Kanchi Avijana scene in the Jagannath temple. There is currently a prominent relief in the *jaga mohan* (prayer hall) of the Jagannath temple of Puri that depicts this scene.

In modern culture, Kanchi Vijaya is a major motif in Odissi dance.[104]

In Oriya literature, the Kanchi conquest (Kanchi Kaveri) has significant bearing, in medieval literature romanticized as the epic **Kanchi Kaveri** by Purushottama Dasa in the 17th century and a work by the same name by Maguni Dasa.[105] The first Oriya drama written by Ramashankar Ray, the father of Oriya drama in 1880 is *Kanchi Kaveri*.[106]

It has been asserted by researcher J. P. Das [107] that the historicity of this event is not certain. However, the legendary Kanchi Kingdom has been identified as the historical Vijayanagar Kingdom. As per historical records, Gajapati Purushottam Deva's expedition towards Virupaksha Raya II's Kanchi (Vijayanagar) Kingdom started during 1476 with Govinda Bhanjha as Commander-in-chief.[108] Gajapati Purushottam Deva invaded Thiruvannaamalai of Tiruvannamalai district after crossing river Kaveri.[109]

9.2 The Story of Patita Pavana
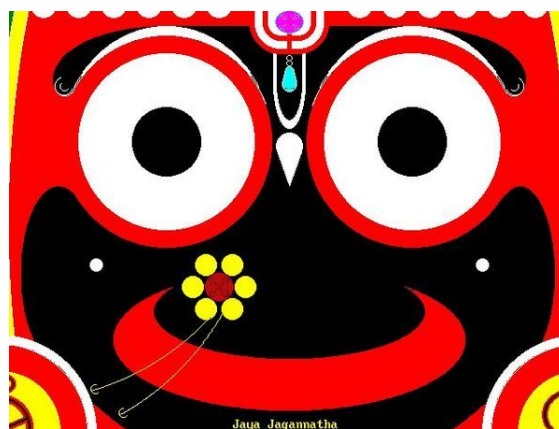
Patita Pavana

Patita Pavana in Sanskrit means "Saviour of the fallen souls".When Jagannath is worshipped alone with only his face depicted devoid of his arms and torso, he is called Patita Pavana considered the all merciful aspect of the God.[110] Various legends have mentioned the origin of Patita Pavana. Local tradition mentions Jagannath manifested as Patita Pavana to bless Haridas Thakur, a Vaishnav Saint born a Muslim.Because of his non-Hindu origin he was forbidden entry to the Temple in Puri. Moved by his intense desire to have darshan of God, Jagannath assumed the form of Patita Pavana to bless and offer salvation to Haridas Thakur.[110]

The story of Patita Pavana has been associated with Salabega a Muslim devotee of Jagannath.[110] Salabega was the son of a Muslim Subedar in the 17th century Mughal army. It is believed that Salabega suffered from some incurable ailment and through prayer to Lord Jagannath, as advised by his mother, he was miraculously cured.[111] The grateful Salabega was eager to have darshan of Jagannath in the temple in Puri. However because he was a non-Hindu, he was forcibly removed from the temple. In great sorrow Salabega fell prostrate in front of

the Lion Gate of the temple, crying for a chance to see Jagannath. Jagannath unable to bear his devotee's sorrow, came to the gate of the temple assuming the form of Patita Pavana to bless him.[112] It is said on gaining vision of Jagannath, Salabega is said to have composed a poem in his honour known as Patitapavana Astakam. To quote Salabega:

> "O unlimited one! All those who have witnessed my sins
> Are so terrorized that they stop seeing their own flaws, And fearlessly praise each other's virtue. So if you are truly a purifier of the fallen, Then, dear master, save this worst of all miscreants!"

(Stanza 5 from Jan Brzezinski's translation of *Patitapavana Astakam* [113])

Another legend associates the emergence of Patita Pavana with Ramachandra Deva II. Ramachandra Deva II was the King of Khurda in the 18th century. He was imprisoned by the Mughal General Taqi Khan for 13 months in Khurda.[114] To protect the idols of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra from descecration, he had his faithful servants shift the idols to Banpur, near Chilika Lake.[115] Ramchandra Deva to escape imprisonment and ensure safety of Jagannath and the temple in Puri converted to Islam and married a Muslim lady.[110] Due to his apostasy he was denied entry into the Jagannath temple or take part in any religious rites associated with Jagannath.[116] Tradition maintains Ramachandra Deva pined for darshan of Jagannath. He is said to have gone every day at midnight and cried about his plight in front of Jagannath's temple. Jagannath unable to bear his devotee's plight used to come to the Gate of the temple everynight to console Ramachandra. When people came to know of this occurrence the statue of Patita Pavana was consecrated at the main gate of the Puri temple for Ramchandra Deva to pay his obeisance.

10   Jagannath in Vaishnavism

Although Jagannath has been identified with other traditions in the past, He is now identified more with Vaishnav tradition.

10.1   Early Vaishnav tradition

Vaishnavism is considered a more recent tradition in Odisha, being historically traceable to the early Middle Ages.[117]Ramanujacharya the great Vaishnav reformer visited Puri between 1107 and 1111 converting the King Ananatavarman Chodaganga from Shaivism to Vaishnavism.[118] At Puri he founded the Ramanuja Math for propagating Vaishnavism in Odisha. The Alarnatha
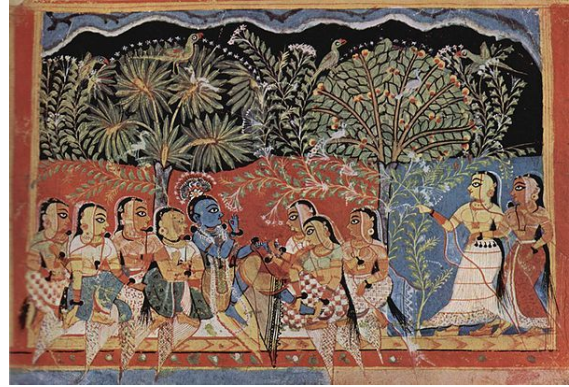
Gita Govinda manuscript c. 1500.

Temple stands testimony to his stay in Odisha. Since the 12th century under the influence of Ramanujacharya, Jagannath was increasingly identified with Vishnu.[6] Under the rule of the Eastern Gangas, Vaishnavism became the predominant faith in Odisha by assimilating ideas from Shaivism, Shaktism and Buddhism.[119] Oriya Vaishnavism gradually centred on Jagannath as the principal deity. Sectarian differences were eliminated by assimilating deities of Shaivism, Shaktism and Buddhism in the Jagannath Pantheon.[117] The Ganga Kings respected all the ten avatars of Vishnu, considering Jagannath as the cause of all the Avatars. The Vaishnav saint Nimbaraka visited Puri, establishing the Radhavallav Matha in 1268.[118] The famous poet Jayadev was a follower of Nimbaraka and his focus on Radha and Krishna. Jayadev's composition Gita Govinda put a new emphasis on the concept of Radha and Krishna in East Indian Vaishnavism.[120] This idea soon became popular. Sarala Dasa in his Mahabharat thought of Jagannath as the universal being equating him with Buddha and Krishna. He considered Krishna as one of the Avatars of Jagannath[6]

10.2   Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Gaudiya Vaishnavism

Gaudiya Vaishnavism (also known as **Chaitanya Vaishnavism**[121] and **Hare Krishna**) is a Vaishnava religious movement founded by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486–1534) in India in the 16th century. "Gaudiya" refers to the *Gauḍa region* (present day Bengal/Bangladesh) with Vaishnavism meaning "the worship of the monotheistic Deity or Supreme Personality of Godhead, often addressed as Krishna, Narayana or Vishnu".

The focus of Gaudiya Vaishnavism is the devotional worship (*bhakti*) of Krishna, as *Svayam Bhagavan* or the Original Supreme Personality of Godhead.[122]

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu spent the last 20 years of his life in Puri dedicating it to the ecstatic worship of Jagannath whom he considered the highest form of Krishna.[123] Mahaprabhu propagated the Sankirtan movement which laid great emphasis on chanting God's name in Puri. He

converted noted scholars like Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya to his philososphy. He left a great influence on the then king of Odisha, Prataprudra Deva, and the people of Odisha.[124] According to one version Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is said to have merged with the idol of Jagannath in Puri after his death[123]

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu changed the course of Oriya Vaishnav tradition emphasising Bhakti and strongly identifying Jagannath with Krishna.[88] His Gaudiya Vaishnav school of thought strongly discouraged Jagannath's identification with other cults and religions, thus shaping Jagannath's identity as the Krishna Avatar of Vishnu.

10.3   The ISKCON Movement
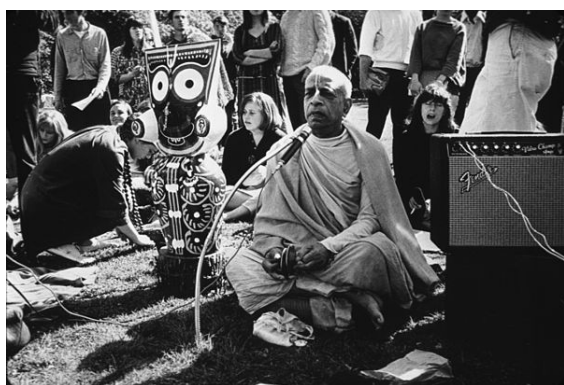
Srila Prabhupada in Golden Gate Park with Jagannath deity to his right: February, 1967

Prior to the advent of ISKCON movement Jagannath, and his most important festival the annual Rath Yatra were relatively unknown in the West.[125] Soon after its founding, ISKCON started founding temples in the West. A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada popularly called Srila Prabhupada, the founder of ISKCON selected Jagannath as one of the chosen forms of Krishna installing an idol of Jagannath in ISKCON temples around the world.[126] ISKCON has promoted Jagannath throughout the world. Annual Rath Yatra festival is now celebrated by ISKCON in many cities in the West where they are popular attractions.[125] ISKCON devotees worship Jagannath and take part in the Rath Yatra in memory of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu spending 18 years in Puri worshipping Jagannath and taking an active part in the Rath Yatra[127]

11   Jagannath in Shaktism

Vimala (Bimala) is worshipped as the presiding goddess of the Purushottama (Puri) Shakti Pitha by Shaktas. In a departure from tradition Jagannath, is worshipped as the Bhairava, traditionally always a form of Shiva. Jagannath-Vishnu equated with Shiva, is interpreted to convey the oneness of God. Also, in this regard, Vimala is also considered as Annapurna, the consort of Shiva.[128] Conversely, Tantrics consider Jagannath as Shiva-Bhairava, rather than a form of Vishnu.[129] While Lakshmi is the traditional (orthodox tradition) consort of Jagannath, Vimala is the Tantric (heterodox) consort.[130] Vimala is also considered the guardian goddess of the temple complex, with Jagannath as the presiding god.[131]

Jagannath is considered the combination of 5 Gods Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, Ganesh and Durga by Shaktas.[132] When Jagannath has his divine slumber (Sayana Yatra) he is believed to assume the aspect of Durga. According to the "Niladri Mahodaya"[132] Idol of Jagannath is placed on the Chakra Yantra, the idol of Balabhadra on the Shankha Yantra and the idol of Subhadra on the Padma Yantra.

In the Skanda Purana, Subhadra is identified with Katyayini manifestation of Shakti.[133] The 16th-century poet Balarama Dasa described Jagannath being attended by 64 Yoginis, Katyayini, Saptamatrikas, Vimala, and Viraja[133]

12   Jagannath and Sikhism

In 1506 Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism made a pilgrimage to Puri to visit to Jagannath.[134] As per tradition it is said that because of his clothes, Guru Nanak was mistaken as a Muslim and not allowed into Jagannath's Temple.[135] Nanak instead recited devotional hymns in the sea shore of Puri. Jagannath appeared in the dreams of the Gajapati King of Puri forbidding him to perform any rituals in the temple, when he went to hear the Bhajans of Guru Nanak. The King was surprised to find Jagannath present when Nanak recited his hymns. Because of his devotion, Guru Nanak was reverentially escorted to the temple to have darshan of Jagannath.

While in the Jagannath temple, Guru Nanak was said to be in deep thought when Arti service of Jagannath was being performed. On being asked why he did not take part in Arti, Guru Nanak composed a hymn in Rag dhansri explaining that the whole nature was doing a great Arti of God and questioned empty rituals.[136] The Mangu, Punjabi and Bauli mathas of Puri are associated with Guru Nanak.[134] According to B.B Majumadar Guru Nanak spent time with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Puri taking part in Kirtan which both of them found pleasure in.[137] Under the banner of the assimilative and all embracing Jagannath, Guru Nanak and Tulsidas met.[138] Thus in medieval India Jagannath Puri became a meeting ground of philosophers propounding various faiths and beliefs .To this day a Gururdwara in Puri commemorates Guru Nanak's visit to Puri.

Later Sikh gurus like Guru Teg Bahadur also visited Jagannath Puri.[139] Maharaja Ranjit Singh the famous 19th-century Sikh ruler of Punjab held great respect in

Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of Punjab revered Jagannath

Jagannath, willed his most prized possession the Koh-i-Noor diamond to Jagannath in Puri, while on his deathbed in 1839.[140]

13   Reference of Jagannath in various literary works and texts

References and mention of Jagannath have been found in numerous religious texts and semi-religious literary works.

The most ancient reference is found in the 3rd rca of the 155th sukta in the 10th Mandala of the Rig veda.[49] In a sukta there is reference to sacred log (Daru) which runs as thus:

"Ado yad daru plavate sindhoh pare apurusam,
Tada rabhasva durhano, tena gaccha parastaram."
(10.155.3 R.V.)

Vedic Commentator Sayanacharya has ascribed this sukta to Jagannath in the following manner,:[50] "The exists on sea-shore in a far off place, the wooden image of a deity with name Purusottama;
O ye, by worshipping that wood so indestructible, attain the supreme place.

However, the acceptance of this rca as referring to Jagan-

nath is not universal. Alternately, it has been argued by scholars that the rca is Alaxmi Stava only.

In the Uttara Kanda of the Valmiki Ramayana, mention of Jagannath has been found[52] where Rama has advised Vibhisana to devote himself to the worship of the deity, who has been described as the presiding deity of the Ikshvaku Kula (Clan) or Surya Vamsa. As a matter of fact, even today, the ritual Vibhisana Bandapana is observed in the temples of Jagannath. Further, in the Kiskinda Kanda of the Ramayana, there are references to the names of Jagannath among other deities.

In the Mahabharata, the tale of King Indradyumna and the tank named after him is a direct reference to the Jagannath lore.[51] In this epic, there is description of Vedi, which is identified by the scholars as Antarvedi or the seat of Sri Jagannath in the Samkha Kshetra. In the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata, a reference has been made to the Jagannath Dharma.

Mention of Jagannath and the Purusottama Kshetra abound in Puranic literature[141] of Matsya Purana, Vishnu Purana, Agni Purana, Padma Purana, Narada Purana, Brahma Purana and Skanda Purana.

References to Jagannath have also been made in some Sanskrit texts such as Kapila samhita, Tirtha Chintamani, Niladri Mahodaya, Rudrayamala, Tantrayamala and Purusottama Tatwa. The Jagannath Astakam of Adi Shankaracharya composed in Sanskrit is another important historical literary piece on Jagannath which provides information about the temple and appearance of the deity in the 8th century.[142]

Apart from the above Puranic and other ancient texts, the mention of Jagannath in medieval Oriya literature is enormous.[143] Almost every Oriya literateure like Sarala Dasa, Jagannath Dasa, Jayadeva, Balaram Dasa, Achyutaand Dasa, Jasobanta Dasa, Ananta, Upendra Bhanja, Baladeva, Dinakrush Dasa, Kavi Jadumani Mahapatra have composed invocations, prayers pertaining to Jagannath.

In modern Oriya literature, Jagannath has been a common reference point on both historical and mythical paradigms. The most acknowledged literary pieces on Jagannath are the novels *Nila Shaila* and *Niladri Vijaya* by renowned Oriya writer Surendra Mohanty, who was a recipient of Orissa Sahitya Akademi awards in 1957-8, 1969 (for *Nila Shaila*)[144] and 1987.[145]

14   Epigraphic evidence of Jagannath and the timeline

The antiquity of Jagannath is supported by several historical, literary and epigraphic evidences.

318 AD: According to William Hunter, first appearance of Jagannath in history occurs during 318 [146] when
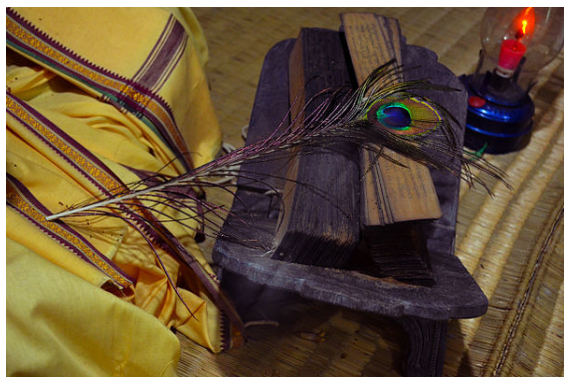
Original palm leaf manuscript of Gita Govinda written by Jayadeva, at the Odisha state museum, Bhubaneswar

the priest fled with his image to escape the wrath of Raktabahu and his band of plunderers.

464: The holy idol hidden in 318 was recovered by a king about 150 years later from the jungles of western kingdoms.[146]

475: The second reconstruction [First being the reconstruction from Nila Madhav shrine by King Indradyumna) of the Jagannath temple by Yayati Kesari and the renewal of the cult after Yavana invasion of Odisha in the 5th century, as per Puri's late 16th-century Madala Panji temple chronicles.[147]

Historian K. C. Panigrahi suggested [148] that Puri's legendary account of the claimed invasion of Odisha under the Yavana general Raktabahu in the 4th/5th century during the reign of the legendary King Sovanadeva (Legendary) may contain a historical reminiscence of the conquest of Odisha by the Rastrakuta King Govinda III during the reign of the Bhaumakara king Subhakara deva who ruled in coastal Odisha around 800. And moreover, he pointed out that Jagannath's legendary absence of 146 years in western Odisha (between Raktabahu's invasion and Yayati's 'rediscovery' of Jagannath and reinstallment at Puri) corresponds more or less exactly with the space of time between the historical reigns of Subhakaradeva and Yayati-I, the Somavamsi ruler Yayati Kesari established the first regional kingdom of Odisha. The installation of Jagannath at Puri temple took place several years after Yayati Kesari had come to throne, viz., in Yayati's 9th regnal years. Moreover in both cases the images were renewed outside Puri. Yayati Kesari performed the great 'Vanayaga' ritual in the vicinity of his former capital near Sonepur and Jagannath was finally reinstalled on at Puri only two years after the renewal of the idol. However, In Puri, too, no pre-16th-century sources of the Yayati Kesari account are known. Contemporary facts are fully silent about any activities of the Somavamsis at Puri, particularly of Yayati Kesari as builder of the first Jagannath temple at Puri. The silence of early medieval sources would be surprising in view of the many available Somavamsi inscriptions and other literary sources which could have mentioned or even praised Yayati Kesari and

his great deeds at Puri. In Purusottama Mahatmya which has contained the Indradyumna legend and the origin of Jagannath's Daru Devata at Puri there is no mention of Yayati Kesari.

That there was an earlier temple of Jagannath at Purushottama Kshetra prior to the present one built by Chodaganga Deva in the 12th century, is established by Sanskrit playwright Murari Mishra's Anargharaghava Natakam (c. 9th century), which refers to Purushottama being worshipped on the seashore.[149] In the drama Anargharaghava Natakam, the name Purushottama is used to denote the place. In the Ganga rule the Jagannath temple was rebuilt by Gangeswar or Chodaganga Deva (1078–1147).

8th century: In many copper plates dating 8th century, mention of individuals bearing the name of Purushottama also substantiates the wide popularity of Purushottama Jagannath.

810: Sankarcharya visits shrine at Puri[142] in course of spiritual conquest over Buddhism and other denominations, and establishes Govardhana Matha at Puri upon mahavakya Prajñānam brahma (Brahman is Knowledge). Sankarcharya must have come across the image of Nila Madhava as described in Skanda Purana as above, during his visit to Puri.

1078: Devayatana of Purushottama finds special mention in Krishna Mishra's Prabodha Chandrodaya Natakam (c. 1078).[150]

1135: Anantavarman Codaganga Deva began the construction of the present temple c. 1135. In the Dasgoba Copper Plate Inscription of the late 12th century, Codaganga's grandson Rajaraja III praised his grandfather for having built the Jagannath temple which had been "neglected" by previous kings,[151][152] which indicates epigraphical evidence of the existence of a Jagannath temple at Puri before the construction of the present temple.

12th century: The Vaishnava preachers of the 12th century such as Sri Ramanujacharya, Acharya Nimbarka, Acharya Vishnuswami and Sri Madhavacharya established monasteries at Jagannath Puri to spread their religious theories.[153]

12th century: The Gitagovinda of Jayadeva mentions of the glory of Jagannath.[120]

1211: Emperor Anangabhima deva (1211–1238) donated his vast empire to Sri Purushottama Jagannath calling it Purshottama Samrajya or empire of Jagannath[154] and declared himself as his servant (Rauta). Due to his efforts several Jagannath temples were set up at different places in Odisha. During the Suryavamsi period (1435–1533) the same trend continued.

13th century: A sculptural piece of Konark temple of the 13th century depicts its builder, King Narasimha-I, offering worship to Siva Linga, Purushottama Jagannath

and Durga.[155]

1328: Epigraphic sources reveal that the inscriptions of Bhanudeva II (1306–1328) of Eastern Ganga dynasty make the first mention of the name, 'Jagannath'.[156] Thus, the name Jagannath has been used for the first time in the inscriptions of Bhanudeva-II.[157] During the reign of Bhanudeva-II, a feudatory chief had made gifts at Sikurmam in the 3rd Anka of Jagannath Deva when Sri Bhanudeva was ruling. According to the Puri Grant of 1313,[158] Bhanudeva granted villages in the 7th Anka of Purushottama Jagannath deva. Thus in a private record Purushottama comes to be called Jagannath. It appears to be the earliest epigraphical reference to the name, Shri 'Jagannath'.

1568: The destruction of the 'Darumurti' of Puri's Holy Trinity by Muslim iconoclast Kalapahar, the General of the Bengal Sultan.[159] Kalapahar looted and destroyed the Jagannath temple in Puri. He descecrated and burnt the idols of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. A devotee Visara Mahanty was able to retrieve the sacred essence (Brahma Padartha) from the burnt idol of Jagannath. He spirited away the relic to a remote village in Odisha known as Khandait Kalua, where he preserved and worshipped the relic.

1590–1592: The rise of Ramachandra Deva I of Khurda.He captured the town of Puri. He restored the temple of Jagannath. Ramachandra Deva recovered the sacred essence of Jagannath and restored it to new Idols which he consecrated first in Khurda in 1587 and then in Puri in 1590.For the restoration of Jagannath worship he was considered the second Indradyumna[159]

It has been argued that the most important message of the Visara Mahanty and Yayati Kesari legends to Jagannath's devotees is proclaimed in the very beginning of the Madala Panji temple chronicle which commences with the words[160]
"*Jagannath, the Lord of deities, never abandons Sri Purushottama (Puri) even though crores of Brahma (Brahmanda) are destroyed.*"

15   Festivals

Main article: List of festivals observed at Jagannatha Temple, Puri
 A large number of traditional festivals are observed by the devotees of Jagannath. Out of those numerous festivals, thirteen are important.[161]

1. Niladri Mahodaya
2. Snana Yatra
3. Ratha Yatra or Sri Gundicha Yatra
4. Sri Hari Sayan
5. Utthapan Yatra

The Ratha Yatra at Puri

6. Parswa Paribartan
7. Dakhinayan Yatra
8. Prarbana Yatra
9. Pusyavishek
10. Uttarayan
11. Dola Yatra
12. Damanak Chaturdasi [162]
13. Chandan Yatra

Ratha Yatra is most significant of all festivals of Jagannath.

15.1   Ratha Yatra

Main article: Ratha-Yatra (Puri)

The Jagannath triad are usually worshipped in the sanctum of the temple, but once during the month of Asadha (Rainy Season of Odisha, usually falling in month of June or July), they are brought out onto the Bada Danda (The main high street of Puri) and travel (3 km) to the Shri Gundicha Temple, in huge chariots (Rath), allowing the public to have Darshan (Holy view). This festival is known as Rath Yatra, meaning the festival (Yatra) of the chariots (Ratha). The Rathas (Chariots) are huge wheeled wooden structures, which are built anew every year and are pulled by the devotees. The chariot for Jagannath is approximately 45 feet high and 35 feet square and takes about 2 months to construct .[163] The artists and painters of Puri decorate the cars and paint flower petals etc. on the wheels, the wood-carved charioteer and horses, and the inverted lotuses on the wall behind the throne .[164] The huge chariots of Jagannath pulled during Rath Yatra is the etymological origin of the English word Juggernaut.[165] The Ratha-Yatra is also termed as the Shri Gundicha yatra.

Pahandi bije during Ratha Yatra at Puri

The most significant ritual associated with the Ratha-Yatra is the *chhera pahara*. During the festival, the Gajapati King wears the outfit of a sweeper and sweeps all around the deities and chariots in the *Chera Pahara* (Sweeping with water) ritual. The Gajapati King cleanses the road before the chariots with a gold-handled broom and sprinkles sandalwood water and powder with utmost devotion. As per the custom, although the Gajapati King has been considered the most exalted person in the Kalingan kingdom, still he renders the menial service to Jagannath. This ritual signified that under the lordship of Jagannath, there is no distinction between the powerful sovereign Gajapati King and the most humble devotee.[166]

Chera pahara is held on two days, on the first day of the Ratha Yatra, when the deities are taken to garden house at Mausi Maa Temple and again on the last day of the festival, when the deities are ceremoniously brought back to the Shri Mandir.

As per another ritual, when the deities are taken out from the Shri Mandir to the Chariots in *Pahandi vijay*, disgruntled devotees hold a right to offer kicks, slaps and the derogatory remarks to the images, and Jagannath behaves like a commoner.

In the Ratha Yatra, the three deities are taken from the Jagannath Temple in the chariots to the Gundicha Temple, where they stay for seven days. Thereafter, the deities again ride the chariots back to Shri Mandir in *bahuda yatra*. On the way back, the three chariots halt at the Mausi Maa Temple and the deities are offered *Poda Pitha*, a kind of baked cake which are generally consumed by the poor sections only.

The observance of the Rath Yatra of Jagannath dates back to the period of the Puranas. Vivid descriptions of this festival are found in Brahma Purana, Padma Purana and Skanda Purana. Kapila Samhita also refers to Rath Yatra. In Moghul period also, King Ramsingh of Jaipur, Rajasthan has been described as organizing the Rath Yatra in the 18th century. In Odisha, Kings of Mayurbhanj and Parlakhemundi were organizing the Rath Yatra, though the most grand festival in terms of scale and popularity takes place at Puri.

In fact, Starza[167] notes that the ruling Ganga dynasty instituted the Rath Yatra at the completion of the great temple around 1150. This festival was one of those Hindu festivals that was reported to the Western world very early. Friar Odoric of Pordenone visited India in 1316–1318, some 20 years after Marco Polo had dictated the account of his travels while in a Genovese prison.[168] In his own account of 1321, Odoric reported how the people put the "idols" on chariots, and the King and Queen and all the people drew them from the "church" with song and music.[169] [170]

16 Jagannath Temple at Puri

Main article: Jagannath Temple (Puri)

The Temple of Jagannath at Puri is one of the major

Jagannath temple at Puri

Hindu temples in India. The temple is built in the Kalinga style of architecture, with the Pancharatha (Five chariots) type consisting of two anurathas, two konakas and

one ratha. Jagannath temple is a pancharatha with well-developed pagas. 'Gajasimhas' (elephant lions) carved in recesses of the pagas, the 'Jhampasimhas' (Jumping lions) are also placed properly. The perfect pancharatha temple developed into a Nagara-rekha temple with unique Oriya style of subdivisions like the Pada, Kumbha, Pata, Kani and Vasanta. The Vimana or the apsidal structure consists of several sections superimposed one over other, tapering to the top where the Amalakashila and Kalasa are placed.[171]

Temple of Jagannath at Puri has four distinct sectional structures, namely -

1. Deula or Vimana (Sanctum sanctorum) where the triad deities are lodged on the ratnavedi (Throne of Pearls);

2. Mukhashala (Frontal porch);

3. Nata mandir/Natamandapa, which is also known as the Jaga mohan, (Audience Hall/Dancing Hall), and

4. Bhoga Mandapa (Offerings Hall).[172]

The temple is built on an elevated platform, as compared to Lingaraja temple and other temples belonging to this type. This is the first temple in the history of Kalingaan temple architecture where all the chambers like Jagamohana, Bhogamandapa and Natyamandapa were built along with the main temple. There are miniature shrines on the three outer sides of the main temple. The Deula consists of a tall shikhara (dome) housing the sanctum sanctorum (garbhagriha). A pillar made of fossilized wood is used for placing lamps as offering. The Lion Gate (Singhadwara) is the main gate to the temple, guarded by two guardian deities Jaya and Vijaya. A 16-sided, 11 meter high granite monolithic columnar pillar known as the Aruna Stambha (Solar Pillar) bearing Aruna, the charioteer of Surya, faces the Lion Gate. This column was brought here from the Sun temple of Konark.[173]

The temple's historical records Madala panji maintains that the temple was originally built by King Yayati of the Somavamsi dynasty on the site of the present shrine. However, the historians question the veracity and historicity of the Madala Panji. As per historians, the Deula and the Mukhashala were built in the 12th century by Ganga King Anangabheemadeva, the grandson of Anantavarman Codaganga and the Natamandapa and Bhogamandapa were constructed subsequently during the reign of Gajapati Purushottama Deva (1461–1491) and Prataprudra Deva (1495–1532) respectively. According to Madala Panji, the outer prakara was built by Gajapati Kapilendradeva (1435–1497). The inner *prakara* called the Kurma bedha (Tortoise encompassment) was built by Purushottama Deva.

The temple is known as the *Shri Mandira* to the devotees.

As a matter of tradition, it is strictly forbidden for non-Hindus to enter the Jagannath temple.

There are many more Jagannath Temples all over India, Bangladesh and Pakistan .In the Besakih temple of eastern Bali province of Indonesia, an ancient idol of Jagannath has been found.[174]

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19   External links

- Shri Jaganath, Official website

- Shri Jaganath Temple at Puri

- Detailed description of Ratha Yatra festival of Jagannath

- Ratha Yatra

- 136th Jagannath Temple Ratha Yatra in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

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