

PURI

THE HOME OF
LORD JAGANNATHA

**A comprehensive pilgrimage guide
to Sri Purushottama Kshetra**

compiled by:
Parama Karuna Devi

published by:
Jagannatha Vallabha Research Center

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It is the brainchild of Mataji Parama Karuna, a writer, teacher and social worker, who has been studying and practicing Hindu Dharma since 1970, and researching and practicing Jagannatha culture since 1978.

In 1979 she received her Diksha name with a Vedic *homa* consecration ceremony to dedicate herself completely to spiritual life and service to all living entities as the family of God. She is residing in Sri Purushottama kshetra since 1994.

She translated many religious books and she regularly publishes spiritual discourses on internet, also corresponding with her many students of different nationality and religion who reside both in India and abroad.

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Introduction

The purpose of this book

This is not a book for ordinary tourists.

It is a book for pilgrims, although pilgrims certainly constitute a very large share of the tourist-related income of the State of Orissa, and an increased number of pilgrims visiting Puri could represent an enormous source of prosperity and prestige for its people.

Certainly the practical information contained in its pages will help its readers find their way around Puri and Orissa, but the real purpose of this book is to give them a deeper understanding of the spiritual value of the holy pilgrimage place of Purushottama kshetra and hopefully help them to receive the blessings of the presiding Deities.

Precisely for this reason, we have included a section on the Code of Behavior that one is expected to follow while staying in a pilgrimage place.

This is not a book for atheistic scholars either.

Most books that are normally available on “The Cult of Jagannatha” academically deal with the historical, architectural, cultural, ethnographic and anthropological aspects, anxious to keep a “scientific approach” that is nothing but the denial of the intrinsic value of spiritual reality. The authors of such books are generally anxious to give the impression that they do not believe in the “mythological stories”, because they are plagued with a sense of inferiority about Vedic or Hindu culture in respect to the dominant Western culture, that is either atheistic or Christian (as in Western mainstream culture of the last centuries).

Some of these academic presentations have been written by Western scholars and some by Indian scholars (often Hindus educated in Christian or “secular” academic institutions) but even when the authors profess a favorable view on Hinduism, their approach always seems to be superficial, a mere theoretical exercise of scholarship not intended to transmit any tinge of devotion to their readers or to make them appreciate the deep and important significance of the subject.

Obviously such works cannot penetrate the real meaning of Sri Jagannatha or His abode, as such meaning is powerfully spiritual and it remains hidden to the eyes that are blind to transcendental realities.

As Krishna says in *Gita* (18.55), *bhaktya mam abhijanati yavan yas chasmi tattvatah, tato mam tattvato jnatva vishate tad anantaram*: “One can understand the Divine Reality only through sincere devotion, and only by knowing Transcendence one can enter on the transcendental level and interact with the Divine.”

The few books actually written by devotees (people who have dedicated their lives to the loving service of the Lord) deal mostly with the theoretical aspects of *bhakti* or at most they are written to support the particular philosophical conclusions that are characteristic of their group and their perspective about the importance of Sri Purushottama Kshetra as a holy place.

Although such presentations may be inspiring for their devotion, they do not make any attempt to integrate or reconcile their vision with other different schools of thought or traditions, or to present a greater picture that can give their readers a more complete view of reality.

Some of such books (written particularly by Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavas) almost only report the *lilas* of Chaitanya, who lived in Puri for many years during the last part of his life together with many of his Bengali followers, and his meditation on Sri Jagannatha as Krishna.

These are wonderful exercises of meditation on the pastimes of the Lord and His devotees and an important service in themselves as they contribute to spread the glories of Sri Jagannatha, but they do not have any connection with the life of Sri Jagannatha’s temple and the residents of Puri, especially with the direct servants of the Lord in the temple and the daily worship of the Lord there, that is the most prominent feature of Puri dhama.

And further, some of these books appear to neglect and at times minimize or even decry Vedic culture and some of the prominent aspects of its tradition. This is a sectarian approach that tends to perpetuate a separatist vision in which proper mutual understanding and cooperation among all the servants of the Lord are not likely to develop.

To put it very plainly, this is not even a book for a particular group that strives to establish its superiority over other groups, or that wants to present the facts in a biased light.

The information for its compilation has been researched without prejudice, with the purpose of reconciling the various different perspectives in the wider and more complete vision of reality. We strongly believe that Sri Jagannatha is the Lord of all, and that He reciprocates with His devotees according to the particular way they want to see and worship Him.

Just like a towering mountain range presents very different views of its peaks from different geographical positions – to the point of giving the impression that the viewer is observing totally different objects from what is seen by other viewers who stand from a different perspective – the actual One Reality can be properly understood only from a multi-dimensional vision of the “large picture”.

A sectarian and separatist mentality only creates offensive attitudes that are extremely detrimental to the sincere effort to understand and serve the holy places of pilgrimage, so this book rejects any divisive approach and rather tries to present the fullest possible picture of the holy place of pilgrimage of Puri, to help all the members of Sri Jagannatha’s family to understand and appreciate each other.

Because we cannot understand what we refuse to listen to, we fear what we do not understand, and we hate what we fear. Such feelings are characteristic of the age of Kali, but they should not be present among the family of Sri Jagannatha’s servants and devotees.

Particularly, we feel that today’s need in the presentation of Sri Jagannatha’s culture is to return to the genuine and original roots of Vedic knowledge.

A couple of century ago, the great reformers of Indian culture and spirituality needed to present it in a somehow “Christianised” form in order to propitiate the colonial cultural regime into accepting the validity of “Hindooism”. The accent on exclusive devotion to “monotheism”, patriarchal supremacy, passive renunciation and detachment from social life, the marginalization of “pagan” aspects, and the academic assimilation of Vedic *tattvas* into typically Western or Christian concepts in theology and philosophy were extremely important to preserve the survival of the divine spark of Vedic knowledge and make it more acceptable to the global culture of those times.

However, the present situation is very different. Today, while many Indians are straying away from their tradition and are attracted to the blind imitation of the “Western ways”, becoming massively and fanatically converted to Christianity, atheism and communism, or simply to gross materialism and agnosticism, among foreigners at global level Vedic concepts such as yoga and meditation, karma, prana, and reincarnation have become extremely popular, selling millions of books, courses and seminars all over the world.

Millions of non-Indians from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds are sincerely taking up the study and practices of the traditional “golden heritage” of India, including classical Indian dance, Sanskrit, Ayurvedic medicine, Vastu, Indian astrology, and even the ritual performance of *japa*, *bhajan*, *vrata*, *puja*, *homa*, and *samskaras*. They have no hesitation in declaring that they value Hindu ideals and methods much more than those in which they were born and raised, and they often preach them actively with the zeal and dedication of the newly converted - of one who has actively made a deliberate choice rather than passively and fatalistically shouldering the cultural expectations imposed on him by birth, family and society.

These Hindu converts of foreign origin faithfully wear *tulasi* or *rudraksha* malas as a sign of their devotion, invest much of their resources and time to travel in pilgrimage to the holy places in India and often show more respect and devotion towards *tirthas* and *mandiras* than Indians do. They carefully study *shastra* such as *Bhagavad Gita*, *Bhagavata Purana*, *Upanishads* and other sacred texts, and they recite and quote them regularly. They fast on Ekadasis, Purnimas, Mondays, and on the sacred days not only in celebration of their *ista-devata* but also for the other *avatars* or different aspects of the Divine.

Many of these people are so serious about *sadhana* that they seek initiation from traditional Gurus and take a lifelong vow to strictly observe the prescribed practices, including abstention from all non-vegetarian foods, from alcohol and intoxicating substances, from illicit sex, and from materialistic pursuits of all kinds.

Often, such choices put them at serious odds with their families and friends, employers, neighbors or government authorities, and when it is the time to choose, they are ready to drop all material connections and face serious difficulties in order to continue following the Vedic version.

Even the academic world in Western countries, traditionally influenced by Christian-oriented or atheist-oriented theories, has already opened to an unbiased understanding and appreciation of pre-Christian cultures in their original values, and the old colonial mentality in “Indology studies” is quickly disappearing.

Western scholars and academic institutions are increasingly favorable to utilise the original Sanskrit definitions such as *lila, katha, puja, bhajan, dharma, mantra, yantra, dhama, brahman, atma, murti, vighraha, varna, sannyasi, brahmana, guru* and *acharya*.

Ironically, it is in India that we still find the greatest difficulties in demolishing the colonial mentality – a typical example being the unquestionability of the Aryan invasion theory, the aggressive criticism of journalists and writers against “Hindu zealots”, and the vocabulary normally used even by Hindus to describe traditional Vedic concepts in a demeaning and misleading way as mythology, legends, cult, idols, incantations, litanies, polytheism, animism, castes, monks, priests, pontiffs, pagodas and so on.

India has the potential to become the leading culture in the world, as it was in the distant past. In its golden days, Vedic civilization flourished at global level: we can still find the evidence in innumerable forms. And this does not, or should not, surprise us. Vedic culture is universalistic and pluralistic in nature, tolerant and inclusive, joyful and positive in outlook, and teaches a deep respect for nature and life, truth and knowledge, ethics and balance. The Vedic approach to science, medicine, psychology and sociology is being recognised as strikingly similar to the most advanced cutting edge contemporary scientific research in these fields.

Western scientists are turning to Vedic knowledge to understand particle and sub-particle physics, wholistic medical treatments, bioenergy magnetic fields, and transpersonal psychology. The contribution of ancient Vedic culture to mathematics, chemistry, metallurgy, astronomy and other sciences is being increasingly recognised and proven at the highest academic levels, and the old prejudices are crumbling.

Great progress in archeology and anthropology, liberated from the old bias, has shattered the paradigm that equated Christianity with the beginning of civilization and the Biblical calculation of the creation (believing Adam and Eve had been created in 4004 BCE) with the actual origin of the world. Even the dating of Vedic literature and history is freely debated and researched, pushing back the antiquity of Buddha, Adi Sankara, Krishna, Rama etc considerably.

The Vedic science of ethics, with its vast, deep, solid and practical knowledge of truthfulness, compassion, cleanliness and self-discipline, and the Vedic science of theology and philosophy with its multi-dimensional and inter-disciplinary approach, can answer all the questions that a human being can ever conceive on the purpose of life and the reality of the universe.

Particularly, the special approach of Vedic theology to the Divine feminine is enormously appreciated by an every growing number of people at global level. The worship of the Mother Goddess in Hinduism in an uninterrupted living tradition is presently considered as the role model for a great number of Wicca and Neo-Pagan groups that seek to restore the ancient religious traditions of the planet.

The old patriarchal model has lost its grip on the masses because its disastrous results have become fully apparent, and cultural, ethical and spiritual evolution has become a mass phenomenon.

The Vedic values – family and respect for women, elders and children, care for guests and spiritual people, the sense of self sacrifice for the sake of duty and renunciation to material attachments, respect for nature and all life forms, and the appreciation for simple natural living and high thinking – are obviously the natural solutions to the social problems of the contemporary world.

What the world needs today is a bridge between past and future, and Vedic culture is this bridge.

It is not only a bridge between the past and future of India: it connects the past and future of the planet, as evidence is abundantly surfacing about Vedic culture actually being the original ancient culture on all continents, something that had already been declared by Vedic tradition itself and is now confirmed by modern archeology and anthropology. And if we want to protect the future of the planet and mankind, Vedic culture is the only way to actual progress and prosperity, because it offers the perfect reconciliation between matter and spirit, enjoyment and detachment, rationality and emotion, simplicity and complexity.

The special characteristic of Vedic knowledge is that she can accommodate all the relative and limited visions of reality by integrating them and reconciling apparent contradictions in the Greater Picture that is beyond all dualities.

The Absolute Truth is so kind that many methods and paths are offered to different persons in consideration of time, place and circumstance.

Each individual has a personal history of evolution producing particular qualities and tendencies that must always be carefully considered and need to be guided in a personal way towards the common goal, the highest realization. Upon attaining the peak of the mountain, we see that all paths climbing its slopes were ultimately leading to the same place and we will be able to appreciate things from a wider perspective.

As Krishna explains in *Gita*: “Everyone follows My path in all respects, and as they surrender to Me I reciprocate accordingly” (*Bhagavad Gita* 4.11: *ye yatha mam prapadyante tams tathaiva bhajamy aham, mama vartmanuvartante manushya partha sarvasah*).

All human beings have a natural tendency to search for the Absolute Truth, and all the genuine paths of religion actually lead to God, who has unlimited forms and names, qualities and activities. God is the central and unifying principle of all creations, like the thread on which pearls are beautifully strung (*Bhagavad Gita* 7.7) and as such He can reconcile all opposites without difficulty. The key to success is to surrender all our material identifications to the Divine.

The particular nature of the philosophy and theology of Sri Jagannatha and its universal character are also admirably suitable to bridge the gap between East and West, or oriental and western culture - the great task that faces us in the third millennium, in a world that is becoming smaller and smaller by the day, and swept by the currents of globalization.

The name “Jagannatha” means “the Lord of all”, or “the Lord of the entire universe”.

Sri Jagannatha is therefore not only the Lord of the temple servants or of the people of Puri. He is not merely the Lord of Orissa or India. He is the Lord of all the planetary systems, and hence all the inhabitants of the universe (what to speak of this planet) have the duty and right to offer their homage to Him, irrespective of their birth.

Famous stories describe the glories and activities of great devotees of Sri Jagannatha hailing from all groups, including those who came from a Muslim, Christian, Buddhist background, as well as tribals (*vanavasis*), members of the lower castes and other groups, and Sri Jagannatha’s reciprocation and appreciation of their sentiments is always advertised with great pride by the Puri *pandas* and scholars.

The special characteristic of the worship of Sri Jagannatha at Puri is that both Vaishnava priests (devotees of Vishnu) and Shakta priests (devotees of Shakti, the Mother Goddess) actively participate to the temple services, side by side. It is a quite well known fact that the Vaishnava temple servants have traditionally been in charge of the evening worship, while the morning rituals still have a strong Shakta symbolism. For a very long time (we may say, since a time before recorded history) Puri has also been a Shakti-pith or a holy place sacred to the Mother Goddess, which is proven by abundant evidence. Some of such evidence is covered by secret, but some is openly in the eyes of everyone. For example, the food that has been offered to Sri Jagannatha must be presented to Goddess Vimala (“the perfectly pure”), sometimes spelled Bimala according to Oriya and Bengali pronunciation, before it is considered *mahaprasada*. The very name of the temple, Sri Mandir, indicates that Sri or Lakshmi, the Mother Goddess, is in charge there.

The Sri Jagannatha Mandir at Puri is the only temple where Mother Durga (Subhadra, the “sister of Vishnu”, also called Yogamaya) sits on the same altar together with Krishna and Balarama — in fact She sits in the middle of Them, in a central position. There are many other similar facts that will be discussed later in the book. There have been many scholarly discussions on the theological implications of the identities of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra, but the danger of such debates is that one party usually tries to “defeat” the other by proving it “wrong”, or to show that a real truth does not exist or at least is not known or knowable.

Our opinion is that a sincere and honest researcher of the Truth must examine all the available and genuine information and evidence, and then try to see the Greater Picture by reconciling apparent opposites or at least abstain from negative and offensive judgments that can only hamper progress in self-realization.

The Absolute Truth is not a limited sectarian truth that ignores or tries to destroy whatever it cannot accommodate: it is the Totality that includes all other truths harmoniously and beautifully. Only those who are actually Seers can understand this, and not the blind-born fools who try to ascertain what an elephant “looks like” by groping around in the dark, quarreling against each other over who is right and who is wrong. According to the Vaishnava tradition, Jagannatha is accepted as Krishna, Balabhadra as His elder brother Balarama (the son of Rohini), and Subhadra as His younger sister Yogamaya. Yogamaya was born in Gokula from Yasoda and was brought to Mathura in exchange for Krishna by Vasudeva.

We read in the Tenth Canto of Srimad *Bhagavata Purana* that Kamsa, rushing in to kill the newborn eighth son of Devaki (who was to kill him according to a prophecy) was astonished to find a baby girl instead.

And just like Krishna at His birth had briefly shown His four-armed form of Vishnu to His parents Vasudeva and Devaki to dispel their fear for His safety, in the same way Subhadra manifested Her eight-armed form of Durga to curb Kamsa's pride. She was then worshiped and glorified with Her various names in all Her power and glory by the inhabitants of the higher planets.

In Vaishnava theology, Subhadra or Yogamaya is the internal divine potency, Krishna's power of transcendental illusion, who governs His pastimes in such a way that Krishna's associates forget about His supreme divine position, allowing them to freely interact with Him as equals or even to see Him as their subordinate, especially during the intimate pastimes of Krishna in Vrindavana. Yogamaya has a fundamental role in the Divine Play or *lila*, by which devotees can please the Lord with the confidential exchange of loving feelings and play with Him.

The worship of the Mother Goddess is also strictly connected with the worship of Shiva Mahadeva, as illustrated by the famous iconography of Shiva-Shakti as *ardhanarisvara*, "the Lord who is half female".

In another popular story within the Vaishnava tradition, Lord Shiva takes the form of a *gopi* (a cowherd girl of Vrindavana) to participate to the divine love dance of Krishna. Still today Lord Shiva, who is also called *Gopishvara* and as *Kshetrapala* is in charge of all the holy places (including those sacred to Vishnu and Krishna such as Vrindavana), is worshiped in this *gopi* form.

Shiva Mahadeva is also recognized as the *param guru* (original founder) of the Rudra sampradaya, one of the four original Vaishnava disciplic successions (inaugurated by Brahma, Sri, Rudra, and Kumara). Shiva also descends as *avatara* to re-establish Vedic knowledge and the principles of religion, as exemplified in the life of Adi Shankara Acharya.

The Tenth Canto of *Bhagavata Purana* tells the story of the marriage of Subhadra with Arjuna, which was secretly arranged by Krishna. This detail is very interesting as in Puri the five main forms of Shiva Mahadeva residing in the Dhama are called "the five Pandavas", or *pancha pandavas*. We may remember in this regard that Arjuna is the most important among the Pandavas, as stated by Krishna (*Bhagavad Gita* 10.37). There are many other connections between Shiva Mahadeva and Vishnu, as we can see in innumerable stories from the Vedic scriptures (including the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*), as well as between Shiva and Arjuna and Hanuman, and Shiva and Durga. The worship of Hari-Hara, the Divine form that unites Vishnu and Shiva, is the center of devotion in many temples, starting from Lingaraja in Bhubaneswar, where the Lord is offered both *tulasi* and *bilva* leaves. Hari-Hara temples flourished in Orissa as well as in Bengal and many other areas, and are extremely popular with Vaishnavas and Shaivites as well.

One of the most prominent Vaishnava preachers in history, Chaitanya, manifested symptoms of ecstasy while visiting the Lingaraja temple (as described in *Chaitanya Bhagavata*) and his favorite *kirtana* song began with the invocation to "Hari-Hara" (*hari-haraya nama krsna yadavaya namah*).

Another interesting point to be considered is that Balarama (the elder brother of Krishna in Krishna lila) is explained in Vaishnava theological literature to be the first expansion of Krishna, from whom Sankarshana and Ananta Sesha Naga emanate, and that Shiva is a direct manifestation of this Sankarshana.

We should also remember that the Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy taught by Sri Chaitanya states that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to conceive intellectually how truths are simultaneously one and different on the spiritual platform (*acintya bheda abheda tattva*), therefore Gaudiya Vaishnavas are strongly advised to simply accept things as they are, at least hypothetically, without blindly rejecting or decrying (or even trying to silence or destroy) what they are unable to understand.

Even the strictest *rupanugas* will have to recognize that "exclusive devotion to Vishnu is simply an unnecessary disturbance to society when it not in accordance to *sruti* and *smriti*" (*sruti-smrti-puranadi pancaratra-vidhim vina aikantiki harer bhaktir utpatayaiva kalpate, Bhakti rasamrita sindhu*, 1.2.101). Those who disparagingly call advaitins or shaivas as "*mayavadis*" and use the word "*smarta*" as an insult, obviously have no idea of what *sruti* and *smriti* are.

Of course this shortcoming should not be held against them or be used to condemn a particular tradition in favor of another. All groups of sincere seekers need to fight ignorance in all its forms rather than fighting "the opposite camp", because the war should not be between factions, but between Vidya and Avidya, between Dharma and Adharma.

Especially in Kali yuga, attacking persons - at individual or collective level - is not very helpful because Avidya and Adharma may manifest even in sincere people who are trying their best to serve the Lord.

In our humble attempt to walk the path where the Mahajanas have left their glorious footsteps, we have tried to build a small bridge in the form of this book, offering connections and foundations where we recognized the existence a gap that needed to be filled, and uniting pillars that, to the superficial appraisal, appeared to be standing worlds apart.

I am presenting this work to the divine lotus feet of my eternal Sat Guru, to my spiritual teachers, and to all the sincere devotees of the Lord, who will be pleased by any effort meant to serve Sri Jagannatha by uniting His family in understanding, love and cooperation. I therefore offer my most humble obeisances to them, who are the dearest family members of the Lord of the Universe, and I pray for their blessings.

As it is intended as a bridge uniting different shores of knowledge and devotion, the meaning and scope of this book can be summarized by the name Dharma Setu (“the bridge of dharma”).

This title was originally offered to jagat guru Adi Shankara Acharya by the King of Orissa on the occasion of the re-establishing of Sri Jagannatha’s worship in Puri after the original temple had been destroyed.

Adi Shankara Acharya dedicated his life to preach Dharma all over India and to re-establish Vedic knowledge in its true glory against the negative influences of the age of degradation called Kali yuga, which brought about many misconceptions and deviations under various names.

Moreover, Adi Shankara’s teachings integrated and accommodated the different views of people who felt attraction towards the different aspects of God — devotees of Krishna, of Vishnu, of Shiva, of the Mother Goddess, of Surya, of Ganesha etc. — and united them in the philosophical understanding of the transcendental nature of the Absolute, the Lord of All — Sri Jagannatha, the Supreme Brahman.

The same mission of Dharma Setu was renewed several centuries later by Chaitanya, another famous devotee of Sri Jagannatha who resided for many years in Puri and powerfully preached the path of intimate and pure love for God, which is open to all and free from material labels and impediments (*sarvopadhi vinirmuktam tat paratvena nirmalam hrsikena hrsikesa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate, Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya, 19.170*). This ecstatic and spontaneous love for God overcomes all obstacles and is the only way to actually understand Sri Jagannatha (*Bhagavad Gita 18.55*).

Again Dharma Setu was manifested in very recent years on a global scale by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who expanded the glories of Sri Jagannatha all over the world, opened hundreds of temples dedicated to Him, turned hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life into dedicated and loving devotees of the Lord, and established the Festival of Ratha Yatra in all the major cities of the planet.

My prayer is that our humble effort in building this bridge can contribute to increase the flow of spiritual energy and ultimately to the sparkling of the great spiritual revolution that has been predicted to start from Sri Jagannatha Puri Dhama and establish Sanatana Dharma at global level.

I apologize for any imperfection, mistake or omission in this book, and we request our readers to please help correct them by supplying the appropriate information for the next printing, so that this work can really be a service to the Lord of All.

Thank you very much.

Parama Karuna Devi

Code of behavior while staying in a holy place

The best overall solution is to perform your pilgrimage accompanied by a trusted local guide that can help you out, not only translating, but also dealing with other people. A little care in following these suggestions will go a long way to help you experience a truly spiritual pilgrimage.

Our Jagannatha Vallabha Research Center has a special training course for Tirtha Yatri Guides and a Center for Tourist Assistance.

For more information please contact:

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Clothing

For all general purposes, men should wear the traditional Indian *dhoti* and *kurta*, and women should wear sari over the *choli* (traditional blouse with half sleeves) and petticoat. Arms and especially shoulders should remain covered.

Colors are also important: family men generally dress in white, while only widowed women wear white. South Indian men sometimes wear white *longis* instead of *dhotis* (accompanied by a matching “upper cloth” to be worn on and/or around the chest), but colored and printed *longis* are worn only by Muslims. *Brahmacharis*, *sannyasis* and *sadhus* generally wear saffron clothes (colors may vary from orange to pink to red). Unless under a vow of celibacy (whether temporary or permanent) men should wear white, light yellow or light brown. Red and black are colors used by tantrics, so it is better to avoid them. Women, too, should not wear clothes that are entirely red, black or blue while visiting temples.

The alternative to the traditional *sari* is a *salwar*, *churidhar* or *panjabi* dress (large trousers, long tunic) that have versions for men and for women. On the local markets you can find many very pretty models of *churidhars* that are comfortable, light and stylish. Some are also embellished by embroidery, especially the models for women. However, remember that married women are generally expected to wear a traditional sari. Married women are generally more respected than unmarried women, so be warned.

Hindu girls and women wear an auspicious dot (*bindi*) on their forehead, which can be of various shapes and colors especially for unmarried girls. Married ladies usually stick to the dignified red and simple circle, adding some more red powder (*sindhur*) or liquid (*kunkum*) at the parting of the hair. Women should also wear a light scarf on the upper part of the body (shoulders and chest, and possibly head). There are many styles for wearing such scarves, and a little observation of the manners of the local girls will give some good ideas.

At the very least, men should wear ordinary long trousers and long sleeve shirts (the shirt is better not tucked inside the waist but left outside). A T-shirt is not recommended for anyone, although it can be made a little more dignified by covering it by a scarf (different scarves are used for men and women).

Sacred scarves (bearing holy Names and holy Images) should be worn only on the upper part of the body and in clean places. Never wear them as a towel and leave them outside when going to the loo.

Leather articles (shoes, belts, purses etc) should be carefully avoided. Even non-leather shoes should always be left outside all sacred places (temples and all places in the presence of something sacred) and generally even outside homes.

Loose hair for women, matted hair or shaven heads both for men and women are considered a sign of austerity or mourning, so they should not be worn with clothing that contradicts the message.

Nudity or partial nudity is considered a sign of low social condition or disregard for respect in society. Many *sadhus*, such as the Naga babas or the *avadhutas*, choose to situate themselves outside the social rules and roam around naked or half naked. Also some temple servants simply wear a small *gamcha* (light towel) during the performance of their duties, but that is not to be imitated. Especially westerners will do better to avoid exposing their bodies, even on the beach and while taking bath, if they do not want to forfeit the social respect that people usually expect. Particularly, women exposing their bodies in public may be seen on the same level as prostitutes.

In case the traditional Indian clothes are too uncomfortable for bathing and swimming, men can wear a *gamcha* over their underwear, and women can wear a maxi or at least a long petticoat tied over the chest. Dark colors are recommended as they tend to be less transparent when the fabric is damp.

Physical contact

Public display of affection and intimacy is generally considered indecent, and all types of physical contact are considered a sign of great intimacy. As such, all physical contact should be avoided in public, except in cases of emergency. Especially men and women should always avoid holding hands, hugging, leaning on each other, or kissing (even on the cheeks). For the same reason, it is very important not to allow anyone to initiate physical contact with you, even casually. This is particularly important for women.

Hand shaking is also considered contrary to “good behavior”; the traditional respectful Indian greeting, the “*namaskar*”, consists in lifting one’s folded hands to the chest, sometimes accompanied by a slight bow of the head. While offering respect in this way, one usually says “*namaskar*” or “*namaste*”.

Disciples and devotees, and subordinates in general, aspire to touch the feet of their superiors in order to absorb their spiritual power, but before attempting the move one should always be sure that the Guru or the Deity have given their permission to be touched, as the act of touching someone without permission is considered offensive. Touching people or even respectable objects with one’s feet is considered particularly offensive, so it should be always carefully avoided. Accidentally touching people with your feet requires immediate apology. Do not use feet to open doors, move bags etc.

Since the floor is considered always in contact with feet, it is not proper to put respectable items directly on the floor: books, pens, food, pictures, etc. A cloth can be used to separate the items from the direct contact with the floor. Putting a plate with food on the floor is acceptable, as long as you sit on the floor to eat. Sitting on the floor is a very common habit, and usually a mat or a piece of cloth is used so that one does not sit on the naked ground. However, when eating *mahaprasadam* etiquette requires sitting on the naked floor. Similarly, you are supposed to stand barefoot on the ground when offering *pranam* to a temple (even from the outside) and when you are offered some sacred article, such as *paduka* water, Tulasi leaves, etc.

Cleanliness

Traditional convention teaches that one’s right hand is used for eating and doing “clean works” (accepting or offering things, handle *malas*, touch books etc), while one’s left hand is used to wash oneself after toilet, blowing one’s nose (often without a handkerchief!) and similar other “unclean works”. In this regard it is important to note that traditionally one is expected to wash oneself with water instead of using toilet paper and that almost everyone is used to eat without spoons.

In all restaurants, temples and ashrams special sinks or water faucets (at the very least, a bucket of water and a mug) are destined to wash one’s hands before and after meals. One should not touch anything clean before having washed one’s hands properly (especially after touching one’s feet, shoes or dirty things). Pilgrims who take *prasadam* in temples or ashrams, and also guests taking meals in the house of friends are supposed to eat all the food in their plates, without leaving anything. Leftovers are considered to have “absorbed the qualities” of the people who have touched them first, so unless such leftovers come from a very respected and divine personality, they are considered “contaminated”. This does not apply to Jagannatha’s *mahaprasada*, though, because it is a well established fact that anyone can eat *mahaprasada* leftovers from practically anyone, without any consideration of caste or cleanliness. It is said that *mahaprasada* remains always perfectly pure even if it has been touched by a dog. Occasional visitors in temples and ashrams are often served food on disposable leaf plates (one use only), and it is important to throw them in the proper place after finishing the meal. Mouth should be washed too, after meals, but it is advisable not to spit the water out especially if the meal consisted of *mahaprasada*. In this case drinking water is used to rinse one’s mouth, and swallowed. One should always take a full bath after going to the toilet, or in case of vomit or any other physiological “leak”. Whenever the body is “leaking”, it is considered to have become impure, so before entering a pure or sacred place one should take always a bath and change clothes.

Women are also considered “impure” during the period of menstruation (usually for a minimum of 4 days). Sanitary pads are also considered “contaminated” and should be disposed of carefully, wrapped in paper and plastic. Never throw sanitary pads or tampons into toilets, and avoid throwing them in the “wrong dustbin”. The “right dustbin” is the one kept in the bathrooms: if it is not there, it is better to ask directions from some ladies in the household or in the ashram. Special attention must be given to the ritual bathing in holy water reservoirs: they are not to be considered ordinary bathing places and therefore one should avoid spitting, brushing teeth, using soap or shampoo, washing clothes with detergents etc. Some Indians and local residents may disregard this rule, but they should never be imitated. If the holy water reservoir appears to be polluted with garbage and the water appears muddy or foamy, a full bathing can be substituted by sprinkling one’s head with a little of the water.

Do not pet or touch dogs or other animals, as animals are generally considered dirty (except the cows, treated as mothers of human society because they give their milk to men). Cleanliness and purity are not necessarily the same thing. One can also be “impure” for ritual reasons – for example if a birth or death has occurred in one’s family, the period of impurity is 10 full days, no matter how many baths you take.

When allowed to enter a temple, first remove shoes and socks (of any material). Also umbrellas need to be left at the door, not only because of the potential danger offered by traditional umbrellas (rather than the folding ones), but also because the act to put aside one’s umbrellas and shoes is traditionally considered an act of humility.

Generally Hindus (dharmic people) do not use leather articles, but in any case all leather articles (including belts) need to be left at the door. Also, it is advisable not to carry bags when going to visit a temple. Cameras may be allowed in some temples, but it is always better not to carry them because we do not want to give the impression of being ordinary tourists. If you want to get photos of a temple or Deities for worship purposes, it is better to ask a trusted local friend to take the photos for you. To protect the sanctity of the place, one should not create disturbances of any kind, so switch off your mobile phone and certainly do not carry radios or tape recorders.

Another apparently obvious recommendation is not to carry any type of intoxicants (including cigarettes) or foods (from outside the temple). Within temple premises only the food from the temple itself (which was acquired and prepared by the temple servants) is allowed.

Smoking, spitting, littering, bickering, talking loudly, or other disrespectful or disturbing behaviors are certainly forbidden and must be strictly avoided, even if we may happen to see local people giving bad example in this matter.

Food and drink

Usually during a pilgrimage one is expected to consume only *prasadam* (sacred food) or to follow some kind of dietary restriction, as for example eating only fruits or packed snacks, or some other form of fasting. Puffed rice (*muri*) is a very popular choice. Rice flakes (called *chuda*) are another very popular food for pilgrims because they do not require any further cooking, just washing and soaking with some liquid (yogurt, milk, water), and they go well with fresh fruits.

It is always possible to procure *mahaprasadam* from the Jagannatha temple through any local friend.

About the *mahaprasadam* etiquette, apart from sitting on the bare ground while eating it, it is important to know that when eating together with other people the tradition is that nobody starts to eat until everyone has been served and nobody gets up to leave until everyone has finished eating.

Almost all the temples, mathas and ashrams prepare good vegetarian *prasadam* food for the pilgrims for a very convenient price. The meals usually consist in rice, lentil soup (*dal*) and some vegetable preparation (*sabji*); however it is always advisable to bring one’s own bottle of packaged water and a personal cup. If you are not comfortable in eating with your fingers all kinds of foods (including watery soups), you need to bring your own spoon.

Usually temple or ashram food is good, simple and clean, but it may happen that some preparations have an unusual or unpleasant taste or texture. No matter how strange or spicy, you should try to graciously eat all the food that has been given you. If you had enough, politely but firmly put your right hand (with spread-out fingers) over your plate to indicate you don’t want any more.

Social conventions require that a hungry guest never asks for anything, or even mildly denies when *asked* if he wants something, so hosts will never ask and will generally not accept denials, unless very convincing (usually on the basis of dietary restrictions for health purposes).

Many pilgrims consume their meals in Marwari restaurants (strictly vegetarian). Strict vegetarianism allows milk and milk products but excludes onions, garlic and mushrooms. Not many ordinary vegetarian restaurants will avoid the use of onions and garlic, unless they declare themselves “pure vegetarian”.

In any case, one should strictly abstain from consuming non-vegetarian foods and from eating in non-vegetarian places. Similarly, one should abstain from all alcoholic drinks and from smoking.

Never accept food or drinks from unknown people, as they may be drugged: the police often gives out warnings to travelers in this sense. Also avoid eating and drinking and socializing with unknown people or occasional acquaintances, especially with hotel or guesthouse workers, beach boys, rikshawalas, drivers, etc.

Only eat with your right hand. Touching the food with one’s left hand is considered improper. Many Hindus even keep their left hand totally off the table when sitting at a restaurant.

Hygiene in restaurants is not very common, and cups and plates are usually simply rinsed in a bucket of water (in some places the same bucketful of water is used for the entire day’s rinsing). For this reason, eating in restaurants is not considered appropriate for religious people who care about cleanliness and purity. If you really need to eat cooked food in a restaurant, it is very important to choose clean, vegetarian only, restaurants that have running water and to carry around a personal cup and your own bottled water for drinking.

Many shops and restaurants serve drinks in disposable clay cups that are broken after use for cleanliness. Do not trust disposable plastic plates and cups (or straws) because they are often “recycled” with a quick rinse. Never eat anyone’s leftovers or the food or drink already touched by others, and never offer anyone food from your plate or drink from your cup or bottle. Exceptions are occasionally acceptable in case of very close relationship (mother-child or husband-wife).

Contacts with local people

As all kinds of outsiders, pilgrims and especially foreign pilgrims can be categorized (subconsciously, in general) either as “above the castes” or “outcaste”, depending on the opinions of the Indian observer, and especially depending on the behavior of the outsider him/herself.

All interpersonal exchanges are based on this “high class/low class” categorization.

Indian mentality is often very contradictory and the behavior towards women is one of the most evident examples. Women are very much respected by good people and in some situations, and very much mistreated and disrespected by “bad” people and even by “good” people in some other situations.

So women should never “socialize”, because this would appear as encouraging wrong ideas in the minds of Indian men. Also, women should not walk around alone in the night, travel or live alone.

Do not speak loudly, do not laugh loudly, and do not whistle, because these are considered “low-class” behaviors. Also, a pilgrim is not supposed to get angry under any circumstance. Never fight in public with anyone, including the people of the group you are traveling with.

If a local resident gets angry and reacts aggressively when someone disrespects, mistreats or cheats him, he is “upholding his dignity and defending his rights”. If an outsider does the same thing, he can be accused of being “crazy, violent, uncivilized, and looking for troubles”, and easily get in trouble with the police. Thus is it not a good idea to regulate one’s behavior according to what you see Indians do.

Arguing with local people for any reason, including for bargaining, is never a good idea. The best course of action consists in just walking away from a bad deal, never paying money in advance (except in rare unavoidable cases, but then make sure you get the proper receipt), never leaving money or valuables (or any property) unattended, carefully checking the prices of the things before you purchase them, checking the change you get before you walk away from the shop, and not showing the bulk of your money when you go around.

Pilgrims are expected to live in a very simple way, traveling in a modest way without so much money, and not spend much on shopping.

Avoid giving money to beggars or children, or “making friends with them”, as this encourages a wrong mentality in the people. Even in the temples and Mathas, it is best not to give large donations or even show a purse with large currency notes.

The average donation when visiting a temple is 10 rupees; if you are really inspired by the good service of the temple servants you may give up to 50 rupees. Local people generally add 1 rupee coin to their donation (11, 51, etc)

Entrance into temples

The issue of restrictions on entrance to the temples is very complex and emotional, and complicated by strong prejudice, fear and lack of proper information.

Never insist on trying to enter temples or any other place where you seem not to be welcome, even if you feel that you should be allowed on the basis of your personal dedication, devotion or seriousness in spiritual/religious life, or on the basis of your spiritual/religious lineage.

It is much better to offer one's homage from outside, so that the temple servants will be inspired and not antagonized by your behavior. Do not take any provocation and do not engage in discussions, because these will aggravate any uncomfortable situation.

On the other hand, it is advisable not to give any money offerings to temples that do not recognize you as a bona fide Hindu or devotee of the *ista devata* worshiped in the temple, because such offering will not be accepted, transmitted and utilized in the proper spirit and would rather be interpreted as an act of approval, endorsement and support of such policies. When we give money to someone, we implicitly make a statement that we approve of their choices and behaviors.

Jagannatha Vallabha Research Center

Jagannatha Vallabha Research Centre is a non-sectarian and non-profit Organization dedicated to preserve, perpetuate, propagate and popularize the tradition that forms an integral part of Jagannatha Culture, and to assist all those who wish to visit the holy place of Purushottama kshetra with a sincere and respectful appreciation and spiritual desire for personal progress.

Lord Jagannatha has no caste and religion bar, and at Jagannatha Vallabha Vedic Research Centre everyone interested in Vedic Culture is welcome, irrespective of nationality, caste, or colour. Foreign students are also admitted, in cooperation with several academic Institutes and researchers around the world.

The pioneer who started and is directing this effort is Mataji Parama Karuna Devi, a *sannyasini* who in the last 30 years has dedicated all her efforts and resources to the cause of preserving and spreading Vedic culture both in India and at global level. She has several students both in India and abroad, who come to Puri for instruction and training, and who support her social work.

The Center is situated on a 7 acre property in a rural area at Purushottama kshetra (Orissa, India) near the village of Piteipur, under the PS of Chandanpur, Puri district, about 12 km from the famous Jagannatha Puri temple (Sri Mandir). The focus of the Center is the traditional Jagannatha temple, where the worship is established according to the principles and traditions of the Sri Mandira in Puri.

The Center includes facilities for residential students, a vocational training center, a good library, a publication department and an Internet center. It provides courses in and organizes classes in several branches of Jagannatha culture under expert traditional teachers. The study plan is personalized according to the needs and inclinations of each student, with freedom to choose and focus on the areas of greater interest, for the practical application on the professional and personal level.

The Center is also developing an On-Line facility to allow students to study from home through Internet, with e-books and support material in digital format, e-mail, e-forum and phone assistance from teachers on a personal relationship level.

For more information, please contact the following e-mail addresses:

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Hinduism

Modern Indian culture is the result of the superimposition of different cultural influences in the course of history, including the Islamic and British dominations. However, the greatest and deepest heritage of Indian culture lies in Vedic tradition, an ancient corpus of knowledge that includes all aspects of life, both material and spiritual, and is normally explored in Western universities under the definition of “Indology”.

Vedic knowledge is generally described as Hinduism, but this word is not found in Hindu scriptures, which rather speak of Dharma. Many people believe that Hinduism is simply an ethnic/racial belonging that has nothing to do with one’s philosophical/theological knowledge, religious beliefs and practices. For this reason, many people today prefer to speak of Sanatana dharma or Vedic culture and Vedic knowledge rather than Hinduism. Within the vast expanse of Vedic knowledge there is a great freedom and pluralism as different groups or even individuals can choose the particular path that is best suited to their *guna* and *karma*. If properly followed according to the original instructions of the *shastra* and under the guidance of a realized Guru, all paths contain the potential to lead the practitioner in his or her progress.

Vedic philosophy is based on the concept of Brahman, the ever-existing Reality as the spiritual basis and transcendental origin of all things. Brahman is characterized by the qualities of *sat* (existence or essence or eternity), *cit* (consciousness or knowledge) and *ananda* (happiness or pleasure).

Nirguna Brahman is the non-manifested reality, without form or qualities, the source of supreme light (*brahmajyoti*) that is the origin of all material energies and creations. *Saguna Brahman* is the spiritual form that manifests in innumerable qualities, names, attributes, forms and activities of the Supreme Being. Human beings can choose to worship the form of Godhead they feel attracted to (called *ishta devata*).

This is wonderfully exemplified in the concept of Sri Jagannatha, who is worshiped by the devotees of all the different forms of Godhead - He includes all the aspects of the divinity that attract people.

For example, here is a list of the various schools and spiritual movements that worship the presiding Deities of Sri Jagannatha Puri – Sri Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannatha – according to their specific perspective:

- * Madhva or Madhava Acharya: Balabhadra as Balarama, Subhadra as Lakshmi, Jagannatha as Krishna
- * Chaitanya: Balabhadra as Balarama, Subhadra as Their sister Subhadra, Jagannatha as Krishna
- * Ramanuja Acharya: Balabhadra as Adi Sesha, Subhadra as Lakshmi, Jagannatha as Narayana
- * Ramananda Swami: Balabhadra as Lakshmana, Subhadra as Sita, Jagannatha as Ramachandra
- * Smarta vada: Balabhadra as Shiva, Subhadra as Shakti, Jagannatha as Narayana
- * Devi tantra: Balabhadra as Tara, Subhadra as Bhubanesvari, Jagannatha as Dakshina Kalika
- * Vaidika: Balabhadra as Shiva, Subhadra as Padmayoni Brahma, Jagannatha as Vishnu
- * Upanishads: Balabhadra as ksara-purusha, Subhadra as akshara maya, Jagannatha as uttama purusha
- * Pranava Omkara: Balabhadra as A, Subhadra as U, Jagannatha as M (anusvara)
- * Advaita: Balabhadra as jiva, Subhadra as maya, Jagannatha as brahman
- * Shaiva: Balabhadra as Sadashiva, Subhadra as Bhairavi, Jagannatha as Bhairava
- * Tantra yoga: Balabhadra as srim, Subhadra as hrim, Jagannatha as klim
- * Tantra vijñana: Balabhadra as anahata jyoti, Subhadra as vasarga jyoti, Jagannatha as sahasrara purusha
- * Sauravada: Balabhadra as madhyana Surya, Subhadra as udaya Surya, Jagannatha as asta Surya
- * Patanjali: Balabhadra as anahata jyoti, Subhadra as visarga jyoti, Jagannatha as para bindu
- * Nakulesa: Balabhadra as pasu jiva, Subhadra as vikshepa shakti, Jagannatha as pasu pati
- * Kabir and Nanak: Balabhadra as anahata, Subhadra as visuddhi, Jagannatha as alekhatva
- * Mahayana Buddhism: Balabhadra as Lokesvara, Subhadra as Prajna paramita, Jagannatha as Buddha
- * Hinayana Buddhism: Sangha, Dharma, Buddha (tri-ratna)
- * Jaina: Balabhadra as Parsvanatha, Subhadra as Sarasvati, Jagannatha as Jinasana

The culture of Jagannatha accepts all these perspectives as complementary rather than contradictory, as various aspects or personalities of the Godhead.

Here are the specific characteristics of the various divine personalities:

Vishnu

According to Vedic literature, Vishnu (“the omnipresent”) also called Narayana (“the shelter or goal of all human beings”) is the Supreme Deity, transcendental to the material manifestation, eternally existing, the One in whom all dualities are reconciled and integrated.

Vishnu emanates everything: the spiritual world, the spiritual energies, the living entities, and the material nature. He is never to be considered on the same level with the individual living beings (*jivatmas*) or even with the secondary manifestations of the Divinity that are controlling the material universe. In the Trimurti of the *guna avatars*, Vishnu represents *sattva guna*, the mode of goodness, and the Preserver of the Universe, while Prajapati Brahma (not to be confused with “Brahman”) represents the *raja guna*, the mode of passion, and Shiva (who is Vishnu’s manifestation in the material universe) represents the *tama guna*, the mode of ignorance.

The fact that Brahma and Shiva also emanate from Vishnu exemplifies the concept that both creation and annihilation are integral parts of the preservation of the universe, and needed in the material cycle of manifestation and non-manifestation. Actually the destructive action (controlled by Shiva) is even more important than creation (controlled by Brahma) because it helps the individual souls to become detached from material identifications and thus obtain the valuable opportunity for liberation.

Vishnu descends in many *avatars* to protect the world and attract the conditioned living entities with His wonderful adventures. The number of such *avatars* is unlimited, and there are various categories of them – *svamsa*, *vibhinnamsa* and *shakty-avesha*, respectively direct manifestations of the Divine Personality, indirect/partial manifestations (such as secondary emanations or personal associates) of the Divine Personality, and ordinary souls that receive a particular mission.

In Puri, tradition considers mainly ten of such *avatars*, described in the introduction of Jayadeva’s *Gita Govinda*: Matsya (the fish), Kurma (the tortoise), Varaha (the boar), Narasimha (the man-lion), Vamana (the dwarf *brahmana*), Parasurama (the axe-wielding *brahmana* who punished the degraded *kshatriyas*), Ramachandra, Balarama, Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) and Kalki. Other famous *avatars* are Kapila, Hayagriva, Hamsa, Yajna, Rishabha, Dhanvantari, Mohini, Nara Narayana Rishi, Vyasa, Prithu. Some of these *avatars*, like Varaha and Buddha, appear in different colors in different ages or use different strategies to accomplish their mission.

The most famous of all *avatars*, Ramachandra, is the warrior king who successfully endured all difficulties by giving the perfect example of adherence to Dharma; his story is narrated in the famous *Ramayana*, written by Valmiki, and in *Rama Charita Manasa*, written by Tulasi Das. Rama appeared at Ayodhya and due to a conspiracy he was exiled in the forest for 14 years. He is accompanied by his brother Lakshmana and his wife Sita, and he always protects the sages living in the forest from the attacks of demons and evil people. During the exile Rama’s wife Sita is kidnapped by the demon king named Ravana. Rama is helped by his faithful devotee Hanuman and with the armies of Sugriva and Jambavan (humanoids with forms similar to monkeys and bears) he goes to war against Ravana and defeats him.

Krishna (also called Govinda) is generally considered an *avatara* of Vishnu, although according to the *Bhagavata Purana* He is *avatari*, a complete manifestation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead that does not appear cyclically like others. In this, He is equated with Jagannatha, that is considered the source of all *avatars*; in fact the tradition in Puri says that all *avatars* first appear in Purushottama kshetra before proceeding to the specific place of their mission.

In His various manifestations Vishnu is known as Purushottama, Madhava, Narayana, Hari, Rameshvara, Venkatesvara, Srinatha, Badrinatha, Janardana, Ranganatha, Acyuta, Chakrapani, Gadadhara, Jagadisha, etc; 1000 of such names of Vishnu are listed in the famous *Vishnu sahasra nama*, included in the *Mahabharata*. Vishnu’s form is represented with four arms holding the symbols of the lotus flower (blessing), conchshell (protection), mace (punishment for evil doers), and disc (time, or the sun’s orbit). His characteristic marks are a blue complexion, a garland of flowers, yellow clothes, a crown, earrings, the *kaustubha* gem, and the *srivatsa* mark. He sits or stands (or lies) on Ananta Sesha, the divine serpent, and rides the mighty eagle-man Garuda.

Vishnu resides in Vaikuntha (“the place free from anxiety”) where there are innumerable planets, one for each of His manifestations, where He lives eternally in the loving company of His pure devotees. The most intimate of such planets is called Goloka Vrindavana and is the abode of Krishna, the transcendental cowherd boy who spoke the *Bhagavad Gita* to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

The eternal consort of Vishnu is Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune and beauty. In some temples Vishnu is accompanied by two consorts called Sri Devi and Bhu Devi, also called Lakshmi and Sarasvati, symbolizing the spiritual world and the planet Earth.

Sometimes Vishnu is worshiped in the form of Salagrama shila, a stone with very special marks that is found only in river Gandhaki in Nepal. Other similar special stones found in other sacred places are called Govardhana shilas or Dvaraka shilas.

Vishnu is worshiped with the offering of *tulasi* leaves and flowers (called *manjari*), flowers (generally white – while Shiva and Shakti like red flowers), sacred water, and all the 16 articles of worship, in full opulence. He particularly likes sumptuous foods (prepared from fruits, milk products, grains and other sattvic ingredients) as well as gorgeous dress and ornaments – in contrast to Shiva who favors bathing (*abhisheka*) and Surya who favors salutations (*namaskara*). Vishnu's devotees wear a vertical *tilaka* mark (called *urdhvapundra*) of sandalwood paste or sacred white or yellow clay (*gopi chandana*) on 12 parts of the body (one on forehead, one on top of the head, one each on throat, chest and front part of the abdomen, one each at the two sides of the abdomen, one on the back, and two on each arm and forearm) with a V shape symbolizing Vishnu's foot, and sometimes a *tulasi* leaf. The devotees of Rama wear a larger *tilaka* with a red line in the middle symbolizing Lakshmi-devi.

The personification of the Sun, Surya, is generally considered a visible manifestation of Vishnu (Surya Narayana) but sometimes worshiped separately. The daily worship of the Sun and Fire was the central ritual of the Vedic household duty, and the *brahmana* has the duty to recite the Gayatri hymn to the Sun three times a day, at *sandhya* times (junctions of day): dawn, noon, sunset.

Krishna

Considered the most intimate and original form of Vishnu (*Bhagavata Purana, ete chamsa kalah pumsah, krishnas tu bhagavan svayam, 1.3.28*) Krishna descends as *avatara* only occasionally and His specific worship seems to have become popular in the last 5,000 years only, since His appearance, culminating on the sublime teachings of *Bhagad gita*. Previously, Krishna (or Govinda) was mostly assimilated with Vishnu. For this reason, sometimes Krishna is considered a form of Vishnu, or an *avatara* of Vishnu. In fact, the devotees of Krishna believe exactly the opposite - that Vishnu is a secondary manifestation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna. The devotees of Krishna also consider themselves as Vaishnavas.

Since the times of Nimbarka Acharya, Krishna is usually installed in temples together with Radha (His eternal consort in Vrindavana) or Balarama (His elder brother), as it is understood that Krishna's personality is centered about His loving relationships and exchanges. Sometimes Krishna is also installed with Rukmini (His married wife in Dvaraka), or Rukmini and Satyabhama, who represent the equivalent of Nila and Bhu in Vishnu worship. Krishna's characteristic marks are a decoration of peacock feathers on His head and the flute held by His two hands. He stands in the *tri-bhanga* pose (slightly bending a knee, the waist and the neck) as if dancing, and in fact His most famous *lila* is the transcendental *rasa* dance, where He multiplied Himself to dance simultaneously with all His beloved young *gopis*, symbolizing the loving dance of God with each of the innumerable souls that are attracted to Him.

Krishna is also worshiped in the form of Bala Gopala (child Krishna) or Laddu Gopala, baby Krishna crawling on His knees and holding a sweet ball in His hand. Among the many names of Krishna, we may list Govinda, Gopala, Syamasundara, Madhava, Madana Mohana, Gopinatha, Giridhari, Dvarakanatha, Keshava, Madhava, Yadava, Partha sarathi, Yashoda nandana, Devaki nandana, Radha Vallabha, Damodara, Gokulananda, and so on. Here below we give a brief summary of the Krishna *lila* that will greatly help in understanding the worship method and the festivals of Jagannatha, as well as the special character that the Personality of Krishna lends to the Hindu tradition and spirit.

The story of Krishna from *Bhagavata Purana*

According to the *Bhagavata Purana*, Krishna appeared on this planet about 5000 years ago, and His disappearance coincided with the beginning of the Kali yuga, a period of degradation, quarrel and hypocrisy affecting the entire human society.

The story of His appearance (taken from the *Bhagavata Purana*) is as follows:

At that time, the Earth was burdened by an excessive number of armies and exploitative rulers, who were bent on conquering other kingdoms and creating troubles for good people who simply wanted to live a peaceful and prosperous life, based on the cultivation of spiritual values and practices.

So the Earth herself, Bhumi Devi in the form of a cow, approached the creator of this universe, Brahma, and together with Dharmaraja in the form of a bull and all the various Devas (the exalted and powerful personalities in charge of the administration of the universe) prayed for help. Brahma himself found the problem too difficult to tackle by himself because it involved the free choice of so many individuals on this planet, bent to act against the principles of religion. So it was decided that the only solution was praying for the appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who descends from time to time among incarnated beings to protect good people, destroy the evil doers, and re-establish the principles of religion as stated in *Bhagavad Gita* 4.7,8 (*yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bhārata, abhyutthanam adharmasya tad atmanam sṛjamy aham, paritrānaya sādhanam vinasaya ca duskṛtam, dharma samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge*).

The parents chosen for Krishna's appearance were Vasudeva and Devaki, members of the royal family of the Vrishnis of the Surasena kingdom, living in the great capital city of Mathura, who in their previous lives as Aditi and Kasyapa had prayed Lord Vishnu to appear as their child. In their first life as Aditi and Kasyapa they had Vamanadeva as their child, and in a subsequent life as Sutapa and Prishni they had Prishnigarbha as their child. As Vasudeva and Devaki they were blessed with the appearance of Krishna. Devaki had an evil brother called Kamsa, who had made alliances with other demoniac people and planned to imprison his own father Ugrasena who was the king. When Kamsa heard that he would die by the hand of the eighth son of his sister Devaki, he immediately imprisoned both Devaki and Vasudeva to kill all their children at birth. When Krishna was born in the middle of the night, Vasudeva escaped from prison and took baby Krishna to Gokula across the Yamuna river and exchanged Him for the baby girl who had just then appeared as the daughter of Nanda and Yasoda Devi. Then he returned to the prison with the baby girl. When Kamsa tried to kill the baby, however, the girl manifested all Her power and glory as Durga Devi Herself, Yogamaya or Subhadra, and warned Kamsa against his bad behavior.

In the meantime in Gokula, Nanda and Yasoda considered little Krishna as their own son and were totally fascinated by His sweet exchanges. Kamsa came to know that Krishna had been hidden in Gokula, and sent his assistants to kill Him and His brother Balarama (the son of Vasudeva and Rohini, the second wife of Vasudeva who had taken shelter in Nanda's family due to the persecutions of Kamsa), so much that Nanda decided to move his people from Gokula to the nearby Vrindavana, a beautiful place hidden in the middle of the forests. However, the attacks of the demons did not stop.

Krishna and Balarama fought back and in spite of Their very young age killed all the powerful demons who possessed great magic powers, like Putana, Satakasura, Trinavarta, Dhenukasura, Aghasura, Bakasura, Pralambasura, Sankhacuda, Kesi, Vyomasura, and subdued the great serpent Kaliya.

Krishna exhibited His supreme power also in other famous pastimes (*lilas*, or "playful activities") like devouring a forest fire which was threatening the lives of the cows and cowherd boys, lifting the Govardhana hill to shelter His friends from the torrential rains sent by the King of heaven Indra, delivering His father Nanda from the prison of Varuna, multiplying Himself in a great number of exact replicas of calves and cowherd boys when Brahma had kidnapped the real ones, and liberating Nalakuvara and Manigriva, two demigods who had been cursed to become trees, and also liberating King Nriga, who had similarly been reborn as a lizard.

However, the most wonderful *lila* of all is the *rasa lila*, the loving pastimes manifested by Krishna with His dearest devotees and friends, the *gopis* or cowherd girls of Vrindavana. The foremost *gopi* is Srimati Radharani (although she is never directly named in the Bhagavatam – and in Puri She is known as Vrinda), the direct *hladini shakti* or power of happiness of the Supreme Lord. The dancing of Krishna with the *gopis*, when Krishna multiplied Himself in as many forms as there were *gopis* to please each and every one of them, has been portrayed in innumerable art forms – poetry, drama, songs, dance, painting, sculpture etc.

At the age of 16, Krishna and Balarama left Vrindavana and returned to Mathura to defeat and kill Kamsa (and more of his demon friends) and reinstall Their grandfather Ugrasena on the throne. Because Mathura had been attacked by Kamsa's friends and allies (such as Jarasandha), Krishna and Balarama decided to build a new capital in the ocean and thus Dvaraka was founded.

There Krishna married a great number of queens, starting with Lakshmi Devi appeared as Rukmini, and thus created the Yadu dynasty. The story of the marriage of Krishna with Rukmini is very interesting and is the focus of a lively festival in the Jagannatha temple at Puri.

Rukmini's brother Rukmi had arranged Her marriage with Sisupala, but She wanted to marry Krishna and so She sent Him a message requesting Him to rescue Her. Krishna showed up at the last minute and took Rukmini away on His chariot, defeating all opponents.

Krishna's other consorts are also emanations of Lakshmi Devi; there are 8 main queens such as Rukmini, Satyawati (daughter of Satrajit, connected with the episode of the Syamantaka jewel), Jambavati (daughter of Jambavan, a great servant of Ramachandra), Yamuna (daughter of Surya and sister of Yamaraja), Mitravinda (sister of the kings of Avantipura or Ujjain, and daughter of Krishna's aunt), Satya (daughter of Nagnajit, king of Kosala), Bhadra (daughter of His aunt Srutakirti from Kekaya), and Lakshmana (daughter of the king of Madras). Krishna also defeated a demon called Bhaumasura or Narakasura (son of the Earth), king of Pragajyotishapura (Arunachala Pradesh), rescued 16,100 other princesses held captive by him and then married them, too.

In His capital city Dvaraka Krishna lived like a powerful King with His brother Balarama and His sister Subhadra, with many other wonderful adventures and loving exchanges with several devotees, like the Sudama *brahmana*, Uddhava, the famous five Pandavas (the heroes of the Mahabharata epic), also killing many other demonic aggressors like Sisupala, Dantavakra, Dvivida, Paundraka, Jarasandha, Salva, Balvala, Viduratha, Romaharsana, Banasura and others.

Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra also visited Vrindavana once again, to meet Their dear friends and devotees. Towards the end of Their pastimes on this Earth, Krishna and Balarama organized for the disappearance of Their city of Dvaraka and the Yadu dynasty in the Mausala lila described in 11th Canto of *Bhagavatam*.

The Yadus had grown proud of their personal and familiar connection with Krishna, and sometimes they had even taken undue advantage of such position. Krishna was always ready to protect them and had engaged them in assisting His mission and *lilas*, like a thorn used to remove another thorn. However, the size and the power of the Yadu dynasty had grown excessively, so Krishna decided it was time to wind up His pastimes and withdraw the Yadu dynasty, too.

Sri Baladeva had already left Dvaraka before the battle of Kurukshetra, displeased by the stubborn behavior of Duryodhana and his brothers, and He did not want to see the results of the disastrous fratricidal battle of Kurukshetra, so He started to travel to various holy places. Krishna also decided to leave His home and started wandering in the forest, keeping company with *sadhus* and spiritualists only.

In order to relieve the Earth from the burden of the Yadus He arranged for some *brahmanas* to visit Dvaraka, and Samba, a particularly spoiled child fond of teasing the *sadhus*, organized what he considered a funny practical joke. He dressed himself in womanly clothes, pretending to be an expectant mother, and accompanied by his associates asked the *brahmanas* a prediction over the destiny of the child who was to be born. An offense to genuine *Sadhus* is a sure sign of the imminent downfall of the offender: the *brahmanas* quietly told Samba that the fruit of that pregnancy would be the destruction of the entire Yadu dynasty. Terrified, Samba found out that his belly had in fact started to swell and soon he "gave birth" to a big lump of iron. The members of the Yadu dynasty went to ask advice from Grandfather Ugrasena. Ugrasena pondered the problem and then declared that the iron lump should be ground to dust and thrown into the ocean. In that way, they imagined that the threat would be averted.

So the Yadus did. The iron lump was ground to dust and only a thin bit remained. They all went to the beach and threw everything into the ocean, hoping that their sins would be forgotten and covered by the waters. But this was not Krishna's plan. Soon afterwards, the ocean waves washed the iron dust back ashore, and it quickly grew into a thick bamboo grove. The thin iron bit was swallowed by a fish and later on recovered by a fisherman/hunter called Jara, who used it to make an arrow point.

One day the Yadus went to the beach to enjoy a picnic and under the spell of Maya they started drinking rice wine. Soon they got drunk and began to quarrel among each other. After heated words and physical insult, they all became so angry that a really fierce fight ensued. In the frenzy of the fight they grabbed the iron-hard bamboo canes grown on the beach from the fateful iron dust, and they soon killed one another. The fisherman decided to go hunting and while wandering through the thick forest with bow and arrows, he spotted something moving behind a bush. Mistaking it for a deer, he shot his arrow.

Krishna was resting there and His foot was pierced. So this was the disappearance of Krishna. At the same time, the ocean rose and covered Dvaraka Puri.

Shiva

Different and simultaneously non-different from Vishnu, Shiva is the father of the material world and His eternal consort is the Mother Goddess.

The *Bhagavata Purana* (12.10.8, 11-12) describes Him as follows:

*bhagavan sa satam gatih isanah sarva-vidyanam ishvarah sarva-dehinam
atmani api sivam pratam tadit-pinga-jata-dharam
try-aksham dasa-bhujam pramsum udyantam iva bhaskaram
vyaghra-carmambaram sula-dhanur-isv-asi-charmabhiih
aksha-mala-damaruka-kapalam parasum saha*

“Lord Shiva is the shelter of the saints, the supreme Teacher of all Knowledge, and the Soul of all embodied living entities. He auspiciously appears in the heart of His devotee, illuminating it like a bolt of lightning. His golden matted locks (*jata*), His three eyes and His ten arms, His tall frame clothed in a tiger’s skin, appearing like the rising Sun. The Lord holds the *trishula* (trident), the bow and the arrows, the sword and shield, the *rudraksha japa mala*, the small drum called *damaru*, and the axe.”

Shiva’s hair is red, surmounted by the crescent moon and Ganga, His body is white-complexioned and smeared with holy ashes. His characteristic symbols are the trident (*trishula*), the small hand drum (*damaru*), the third eye, the snakes circling his neck and body, the *rudraksha* necklace, the conchshell, and the yogic attire. The trident is sometimes interpreted as the three *gunas* or modes of material nature, and sometimes as the three fundamental powers of the creative process: *iccha* (will), *kriya* (action), and *jnana* (knowledge).

Shiva is usually worshiped in the form of the *linga*, the symbolic representation manifesting the form of the Formless, usually accompanied by the snake-like Shakti (representing Kundalini).

He rides the bull Vrishabha, and one of His closest servant is Nandi, who is considered the original compiler of the Kamashastra and the Natyashastra. Sometimes the two are considered the same personality. Shiva resides on mount Kailasha in the Himalayas and some of His holy places are Varanasi or Kasi (Benares), Ekamra (Bhubaneswar, Orissa), Amarnatha and Kedarnatha (Himalaya), Tarakeshvara (West Bengal), Ekalingaji (Udaipur), Somanatha (Kathiawar), Chidambaram, Thanjavur, Tiruvanmalai (also called Arunachala hill, sacred to Shiva as Govardhana is sacred to Krishna), as well as Tiruvarur, Conjivaram, Jambukeshvara, Kalahasti, and Kanchi in south India.

Shiva also performs many *lilas* and is known with different names, like Shankara, Hara, Rudra, Sambhu, Nilakantha, Kshetrapala, Ishvara, Ishana, Mahadeva, Maheshvara, Asutosha, Brihadesvara, Omkareshvara, Mahakala, Tripurari, Nataraja, Somanatha, Mallikarjuna, Girinatha, Ganganath, Visvanath, Kedarnatha, Amarnatha, Chandrashekara, Nageshvara, Umapati, Vatuka, Bhairava or Kalabhairava, Pasupati, Tryambaka and Bhutanatha. In Puri and Bhubaneswar, Shiva is mostly known as Lokanath and Lingaraj respectively.

Understanding Shiva tattva is not easy, because Shiva is the intermediate manifestation between Vishnu and Jiva, the direct and personal presence of God in this universe, and realizing His nature is the key to realizing our own divine nature and becoming free from material identifications and conditionings.

The main form of worship for Shiva is the offering of water and leaves of the *bilva* (bel) tree, but also very popular offerings are the flowers of datura (stramonium), red *mandara* (hibiscus), etc, as well as *bilva* fruits, coconuts, bananas, and raw milk. Every year in the month of Shravana (July) devotees perform a particular *vrata* that consists of collecting pure water from a river and carrying it in small pots tied to a balancing rod (walking barefoot and wearing simple red clothes) to the Shiva temple for the bath offering. While the devotees of Vishnu or Krishna wear a necklace of *tulasi* wood beads, the devotees of Shiva wear a necklace of beads made with *rudraksha* seeds. They also wear a special *tilaka* called *tripundra*, “three marks”, made of three horizontal stripes of holy ashes (*vibhuti*) from the sacrificial fire, generally with a dot (*bindu*) at the center of the forehead. The three marks serve as reminders of the three causes of bondage: *dvandva* (duality), *karma* (selfish action) and *maya* (illusion).

Also called Maruti or Mahavira, Hanuman is the great hero who serves Ramachandra in the battle against Ravana, and one of the most popular personalities in Hinduism, believed to be a direct manifestation of Shiva.

The song composed by Tulasi Das in glorification of Hanuman, called *Hanuman Chalisa*, is one of the most popular *bhajan* songs in India. He is generally depicted in the act of leaping or flying, while carrying a mace and lifting a mountain peak, illustrating the episode in Ramayana when he fetches the medicinal herb Sanjivani with the entire mountain from Himalaya to revive Lakshmana.

The Mother Goddess

Shakti is the Mother of the Universe, worshiped with many names.

She is called the Triple Goddess as She manifests as Durga/Kali, Lakshmi and Sarasvati. She is worshiped as such in the famous *Chandi* or *Devi Mahatmya* (a part of the *Markandeya Purana*), describing the glories of the Mother Goddess slaying the demons Madhu and Kaitabha (by taking the form of Vishnu), Mahishasura and Raktabija (by taking the form of Lakshmi), Sumbha and Nisumbha (by taking the form of Sarasvati), Dhumraksha, Chanda and Munda, symbolizing the destruction of the various obstacles on the path of self-realization. In relation to Vishnu, Shakti is both sister (as Vaishnavi) and wife (as Lakshmi), and even mother (as Aditi or Adi Shakti). She is Savitri to Surya, not as a wife but as sister (or identical female manifestation), Gayatri the Mother of all Vedic knowledge. In Vedic times, Aditi is the Mother of all Devas, and among the Adityas there are several females.

In Puri, this concept of the many roles of the Mother Goddess is particularly evident in the Personality of Subhadra, as we elaborate in the chapter about Jagannatha tattva. As Durga She manifests in many forms and names, such as Parvati, Uma, Sati, Annapurna, Ambika, Kali, Bhairavi, Chinnamasta, Tara, Chandi, Chamundi, Mahishavardhini, Narayani, Vaishnavi, Santoshi, Viraja, Bhagavati, Subhadra, Varahi, Matangi, Kamakshi, Kumari, Lalita, Mukhambika, Minakshi and so on. She rides the lion or the tiger, respectively symbols of Vedic and Tantric knowledge.

Particularly in Tantra, She is known as Dasa Mahavidya with the following names and forms:

1. Kali or Kalaratri. She is Time that takes everything away, the cycles of the universe and the destruction of all obstacles.
2. Tara, meaning both “star” and “she who liberates”. She is the powerful Sound that saves and guides us.
3. Shodashi, Rajarajesvari or Lalita Maha Tripurasundari. She is the spiritual experience of the beauty of this universe.
4. Bhuvaneshvari or Maya. She is the creative aspect of Kali, the Matrix of all things.
5. Chinnamasta. She is the power of conscious, the direct and immediate intelligence that transcends the conscious mind.
6. Bhairavi or Tripurabhairavi. She is divine Anger that destroys all demoniac powers, Cidagni (the fire of consciousness), the Tejas that controls the Tanmatras (the subtle forms of the senses), Tapas (the powerful aspiration that consumes all other concerns and attachments).
7. Dhumavati. She is the Ancient, the knowledge acquired through long experience, the power of transforming defeat into victory.
8. Bagalamukhi. She is the pronouncement of the final truth, the hidden presence of the opposites within each other, that brings stillness.
9. Matangi or Rajamatangi. She is the mystic form of Sarasvati, the power of communication and listening.
10. Kamala or Kamalatkika. She is the secret form of Lakshmi, the Great Mother that fulfills all aspirations.

Durga is also worshiped in the form of the 15 Lalita Nityas (waxing Moon) and the 15 Kali Nityas (waning Moon). The names of the Lalita Nityas are Maha Tripura Sundari, Kameshvari, Bhagamalini, Nityaklinna, Bherunda, Vahnivasini, Mahavajreshvari, Duti, Tvarita, Kulasundari, Nilapataka, Vijaya, Sarvamangala, Jvalamalini Nitya, Malini. The names of the Kali Nityas are Kali, Kapalini, Kulla, Kurukulla, Virodhini, Viprachitta, Ugra, Ugraprabha, Dipa, Nila, Ghana, Balaka, Matra, Mudra, Mita. As Durga, She wears a garland of red *rudraksha* beads (*akshamala*), has eight to eighteen arms holding various weapons and symbols such as a lotus, axe, mace, arrow, thunderbolt, spike, sword, iron rod, and disc. The worship of Durga includes red *mandara* (hibiscus) flowers, *durlabha* leaves and flowers and *darbha* grass; among the food offerings the favorite are green coconut water, yogurt, spinach, ginger, high protein foods like black pulse (*urad dal*), dried fruits and nuts.

Many holy places (called Shakti pithas) were created when the different parts of Her body fell on the Earth. The most famous is Kamakshya pitha in Assam, where Sati's yoni fell; every year for three days the river flowing near the temple becomes dark red as menstrual blood, so much that the tantric sadhus dye their clothes in it. Another famous Shakti pitha is Dakshina Kali in Kolkata (Calcutta), that was originally called Kali ghata; here the small toe of Her left feet fell. In Viraja kshetra (Jajpur, in Orissa), Sati's navel fell, and finally the last portion of Sati's body (the feet) were placed in Puri by Shiva and became Vimala kshetra. As Lakshmi, the Mother Goddess is the bestower of wealth and prosperity, both material and spiritual.

She wears red clothes with a golden border and is seated on a lotus; she has four hands with gold coins, a half opened red lotus (symbolizing the performance of one's duties) and a fully blossomed golden lotus (the attainment of liberation). The two or four elephants that accompany Her in the form of Gaja Lakshmi shower Her with holy waters. As Sarasvati she wears white clothes and is seated on a lotus flower. She rides a swan and has a peacock by her side. Her four arms hold and play a *vina* (stringed musical instrument), hold a *japa mala* (rosary) and a book.

The Mother Goddess is also worshiped in forms that correspond to the various male manifestations of God, with the respective names of Radha (Krishna), Lakshmi (Narayana), Sita (Ramachandra), Varahi (Varaha), Vinayaki (Ganesha), Brahmani (Brahma), Gayatri or Savitri (Surya), Indrani (Indra), Rudrani (Rudra), as the heavenly Kamadhenu cow, as Bhumi (Mother Earth), in the form of Ganga, Yamuna, and the other holy rivers, springs and lakes, in the 64 Yogini forms, in the form of all women, and in the form of Kundalini in the bodies of all human beings. She is the *iccha*, *jnana* and *kriya* Shakti, that enables Brahma to create, Vishnu to maintain and Shiva to destroy creation.

Surya

In Hinduism, Surya (the Sun) is considered a manifestation of Hari-Hara, or Vishnu who manifests in the material universe as Shiva-Shakti. The sages that compiled the Vedic scriptures also describe the Sun as the first of the Adityas, the divine incarnations that preside over the administration of the universe and of material elements. In such manifestation, the Sun has various names, such as Surya, Savita, Mitra, Ravi, Bhanu, Aditya, Khaga, Bhaga, Pushan, Hiranyagarbha, Marichi, Arka, Vivasvat, Arhapati, Gabhastiman, Dinakara and Bhaskara.

It is interesting to note that several of these names correspond with names of Adityas. Iconography depicts Surya either sitting on the Sun Chariot or standing like most *vigrahas* or Deities, sometimes with two arms (holding two lotus flowers) and sometimes with four arms (as Surya Narayana) holding *ayudha* ("weapons") such as disc, conchshell, mace and sometimes trident, and showing *mudra* (symbolic hand gestures) such as *abhaya* (protection) and *varada* (blessing).

The Sun is considered the Lord among the nine planets (Nava Grahas): Surya (Sun), Chandra (Moon), Mangala (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Brihaspati (Jupiter), Sukra (Venus), Sani (Saturn), Rahu and Ketu (two dark planets, considered in astrology as corresponding to the head and tail of the Dragon's constellation)

Surya has two wives – Samjna (also called Saranya or Usha) and Prajna (also called Chaya). Chaya took the form of a mare to generate the twins Yama and Yami or Yamuna, respectively the Lord of Dharma and death (Yamaraja) and one of the most important rivers in north India, center of almost all the *lilas* of Krishna. Usha's sons are the Asvini kumaras.

Surya's charioteer is Aruna ("dawn"), the brother of Garuda (the eagle-man that transports Vishnu). His main symbols are the lotus flower, and the wheel (or discus) that is characteristically found in the hand of Vishnu as well as in the hand of Lakshmi (Vishnu's consort) and Durga (Shiva's consort) and in their various manifestations, as well as standing by itself as the Sudarshana chakra or the Dharma wheel that was assimilated by the Buddhist tradition.

In the Hindu tradition, worship to the Sun is recommended for those who wish to find determination to achieve success in life and especially to obtain and maintain physical and mental health.

In this regard, it is said that Sri Ramachandra worshiped Surya with the famous hymn Aditya-hridayam, and that Krishna instructed one of his sons, Samba, to go in pilgrimage to Konark to worship Surya to regain full health (still today, this tradition is celebrated as Samba Dasami at Konark on the river Chandrabhaga).

In HathaYoga, the most famous practice is called Surya Namaskar ("salutation to the Sun").

Other devatas

Also called Ganapati or Vinayaka, **Ganesha** is considered one of the most important *devatas* in the entire territory of India. He is the son of Parvati, the divine scribe who compiled the Veda under the dictation of Vyasa. He is recognized by his elephant head and fatty body; his carrier is the mouse. The symbolism of the mouse, perfectly controlled and absorbed in contemplation of Ganesha in spite of the presence of fresh food, indicates the controlled ego that can live in the world without being affected by temptations. The large elephant head symbolizes wisdom and discriminating intellect, the wide mouth symbolizes enjoyment of material success, the large ears indicate the need to listen and learn. The trunk of the elephant is a very versatile, strong and delicate instrument and symbolizes these qualities needed to attain perfection.

The two tusks symbolize wisdom and emotion: the broken left tusk signifies that one needs to control emotions with wisdom. The four arms indicate omnipresence and omnipotency. The small axe cuts the attachments of the devotee, the rope pulls the devotee towards the divine, the *laddu* or sweet ball symbolizes prosperity and enjoyment. The clothes are usually yellow and red, symbolizing respectively purity, peace and truthfulness, and activity in the world. The big belly conveys the idea that to attain perfection, one must have a large capacity to face all pleasant and unpleasant experiences.

Kartikeya is another son of Shiva who is very popular in south India, where many temples are dedicated to him. He is described in *Gita* as the Lord of War and he is also called Muruga, Skanda, Kumara, Subhramanyam, Sanmukha (“six faced”, symbolizing the five senses and the mind). His two consorts are Valli (symbolizing *jnana shakti*, the power of knowledge) and Devasena (symbolizing *kriya shakti*, the power of action). His carrier is the peacock, symbolizing the unpredictable ego.

Brahma is the Creator, Architect or Demiurge of the universe, also called Hiranyagarbha and Prajapati. He is generated by Vishnu in His *purusha avatara* (Garbhodakasayi Vishnu) when He cyclically manifests the material universe. It is said that Vishnu sleeps on the Ocean of the Causes and from His pores emanate innumerable universes, each with one Brahma inside it, born on the lotus flower that grows from Vishnu’s navel. Brahma starts the material manifestation by emanating the Vedic knowledge. He lives in the highest planet in the material universe (Brahmaloka or Satyaloka), his carrier is a swan, and his *shakti* is the goddess of knowledge, Sarasvati or Brahmani. His holy place on this planet is Pushkar, but there are no temples dedicated to him. Brahma is usually depicted with four bearded faces and four arms; he holds a rosary (*japa mala*), a water pot (*kamandalu*), and a book. He sits on the lotus where he was born, symbolizing spiritual power.

In Vedic terms, Brahma’s creation (*srishthi*) does not mean creating something out of nothing, but rather manifesting a perceivable phenomenon out of a subtle substance. This subtle material substance, called mahat tattva, eternally exists and is never annihilated: only its variegated manifestations are manifested and then withdrawn cyclically. Material nature is therefore eternal. Within one breath cycle of Vishnu the universes are developed by Brahma, remain for a specific duration of time, and are absorbed again into Vishnu’s body. This duration of each universe is calculated as 100 years of Brahma’s life; one day of Brahma is given as 1000 *mahayuga* or complete cycles of *yugas*; one cycle of *yugas* is 12,000 years on the higher planets of the *deva*, corresponding to 4,320,000 human years. A day on the higher planets corresponds to one entire year on our human planet: 6 months of day and 6 months of night.

According to the calculation of Devas, Satya yuga lasts for 4,800 years, Treta for 3,600, Dvapara for 2,400 and Kali for 1,200. After one thousand of these complete cycles, Brahma goes to sleep in his night and the universe is partially destroyed (*pralaya*); at the end of Brahma’s life, after 100 years of his days, the entire universe is destroyed (*mahapralaya*) before being absorbed again into Vishnu’s body, before the subsequent manifestation in the next breath of Vishnu. This time calculation gives one a pretty good idea of the relativity of time at different levels of existence.

Yama, also called Dharma, is generally considered a manifestation of Shiva as the Lord of Death and retribution. According to the sacred stories, Yama and his twin sister Yami (Yamuna) were born from Surya. In iconography, Yama rides the buffalo and holds the *gada* (mace) and *pasa* (rope). He presides over Yamaloka or Pitriloka, the planet/dimension where conditioned human beings go after death. Those who have committed criminal activities are forced there by Yama’s servants, the Yamadutas, while virtuous human beings who are still attached to the material world are allowed to remain as his guests as long as on the earthly dimension their descendants remember them and offer them oblations (*sraddha*).

These are the Pitris, the “ancestors”, who sometimes take the shape of birds to visit the earthly dimension. When their merits (*punya*) are exhausted, they return to the earthly dimension where they are allowed to take birth as human beings and continue their cycle or take the opportunity to pursue liberation. The various manifestations of God in this material creation are grouped in 33 categories, divided in 3 groups of 11 manifestations, associated respectively with heaven, earth and water.

The leader of the first group is known as Surya, the second is Agni, the third is Indra. For their references, see the Glossary.

Dharma

The term comes from the root *dhṛ*, that means “to sustain”, in the sense that *dharma* sustains existence. Usually translated as “religion”, the Sanskrit word *dharma* is much more complex in meaning. It can be defined as “intrinsic quality” and “activity connected with one’s own nature”: to make an example, we could say that the *dharma* of fire is in radiating light and heat. On the universal level, this “natural order of things” is defined as Ritu, a word that is also utilized to define the movements of the planets and the stars, the seasons of the year, the cycles of nature and the monthly menstruations of women. What is Ritu in material nature becomes defined as Dharma on the level of the duties of human beings in society according to their particular nature.

Dharma is the first essential requirement for progress in human life and the basis for economic development (*artha*) and enjoyment (*kama*). Without *dharma*, the search for economic development and sense enjoyment only leads to degradation, while the knowledge and the practice of *dharma* enables one to use economic development and sense enjoyment to progress towards the fourth purpose of human existence, called *moksha* or liberation from material conditionings.

Dharma is determined by the nature, or the natural tendencies, habits and tastes of each individual. The *yuga dharma* for Satya yuga is meditation, in Treta yuga is Vedic sacrifice, in Dvapara yuga is temple worship, in Kali yuga is the glorification or favorable discussion of God’s names, teachings, activities, qualities etc.

Within each *yuga dharma*, according to the nature (qualities and tendencies) of each individual we find specific *dharma* activities that are generally described as *varna ashrama dharma*, the religious duties (Karma) characteristic of the different social categories and stages of life.

The *varnas* are clearly described in *Bhagavad Gita* (4.13, 18.41-45) with their specific qualities and activities as *brahmana* (intellectuals, teachers, spiritual advisors), *kshatriya* (administrators, warriors, rulers), *vaisya* (agricultural entrepreneurs, cattle farmers, traders, merchants etc), *sudra* (manual workers without organizational skills, including artists, craftspeople, servants, etc).

The *ashrama* division is also connected with the *varna* system, as only *brahmanas* are expected to go through all the four *ashrama* stages, although there is no prohibition for others. Actually, when a person takes the vow of *sannyasa*, he or she totally transcends previous life conditions and becomes situated beyond the *varna* system of social duties and prescriptions. Therefore the *sannyasi* is respected by all members of society and, paradoxically, he or she appears to occupy the highest social position. However, the vows of *sannyasa* are extremely difficult to follow and it is not advisable to take the position of *sannyasi* lightly or for the wrong reasons (fame, adoration, profit, or social/political position).

For example, *sannyasis* cannot keep relationships with their previous family or friends, have a personal house or any other personal property, including a bank account. They cannot take up professional occupations for a living, but must simply beg alms strictly for their daily food, eating leftovers from temples or from householders’ families, and never keeping any food for the next day. Before eating, he should distribute food to all who may request it.

A *sannyasi* does not light fire for cooking or for other reasons, and does not cause anyone to light a fire to cook for him. He has no servants except his trainees in spiritual life, and he must never take advantage of them but simply act for their benefit. He does not use regular clothes but only wears a simple loincloth and a simple *uttariya* (a cloth covering the upper part of the body) none of which can be tailored and stitched. He cannot wear any jewelry or ornaments except for sacred *malas*, or use beds or mattresses for sleeping, and of course he cannot have any sexual relationship of any kind (physical, verbal, mental) or any type of entertainment or playing games.

He cannot get into a fight with anyone or get angry with anyone, no matter what offense is meted out to him, he must avoid the company of others and especially of other *sannyasis*, or aspire to name and fame as all social interaction is forbidden to him.

The four gradual stages of *sannyasa* are called Kutichaka (living outside the village in solitude and simplicity), Bahudaka (going from door to door to beg alms as a *madhukari*), Parivrajakacharya (or Hamsa, traveling around without any fixed place to stay) and Paramahansa (or Niskriya, sitting down in one place to fully dedicate to meditation). In fact, Vedic scriptures advise that in Kali yuga it is best not to take *sannyasa* at all:

asvamedham gavalambham sannyasa pala-paitrikam, devarena sutotpattim kalau panca vivarjayet

In this verse, the *Brahma vaivarta purana* teaches that five things are not recommended in Kali yuga: *asvamedha yajna*, *gomedha yajna*, the acceptance of the order of *sannyasa*, offering animals to the *devas*, and generating children with the wife of one's brother.

In previous ages, with the technical scientific knowledge and the spiritual power of the *brahmanas* it was possible to perform these pious acts properly with a perfect consciousness and a perfectly beneficial result, but in this degraded age they are likely to go wrong and thus bring more troubles than benefits. Nonetheless, *sannyasa* as renunciation to material conditionings, attachments and identifications is a fundamental pre-requisite for Self realization. What can be dispensed with in this age is the external dress, that may even be the focus of more conditioning, attachment and identification.

A *brahmana* is capable of being trained as *brahmachari* (celibate student in the care of a guru), enter the *grihastha* stage (provider and protector of family, and active worker in society), then retire into the *vanaprastha* stage (detachment from social life and from family responsibilities, pilgrimage, austerity etc; "living in the forest" means doing without the amenities of city life) when the grown up sons can take up the duty of providing and protecting the family, and finally *sannyasa*, a life of complete renunciation, solitude and austerity in preparation to death.

A *kshatriya* is only expected to go through the above stages up to the level of *vanaprastha*, retiring to the forest (usually with his wife) to live simply and peacefully after entrusting the kingdom to a good heir or successor.

A *vaisya* needs a good training in his young age, but after entering into the religious stage of family provider and protector, he generally remains incapable of giving it up, therefore he is encouraged to remain in the family and participate to active life as long as possible, especially contributing his expert advice to family, enterprise and social environment.

A *sudra* is not capable of austerity or renunciation and he has no inclination for study, therefore he may simply be trained as *brahmachari* in the school of the guru and learn how to be a good, honest and hard working person — something which is a basic qualification for any human being. The *brahmachari* training will offer him opportunities to understand, appreciate and practice truthfulness, compassion, cleanliness and austerity, and to hear the Vedic science and religiousness as much as he can understand.

The "four legs" of *dharma* are described as: *satyam*, truthfulness, *daya*, compassion, *saucha*, cleanliness, and *tapas*, austerity. These qualities or duties are universal in nature and constitute the basis for all genuine religious or ethical traditions and even for decent human life.

In Satya yuga, the Golden Age of the universe in the cycle of four ages, all human beings spontaneously practice *dharma* because they naturally possess these four qualities, therefore society is not divided into classes because everyone is fully capable of performing all functions. In other words, the entire society is composed by *brahmanas* (i.e. those who have the knowledge and realization of Brahman) and all people easily attain spiritual perfection through the practice of meditation and contemplation of the spiritual reality. In the age of Satya nature gives spontaneously fruits and leaves to feed everyone, cows give an abundance of milk, and nobody needs to labor hard to cultivate the fields, cook the food or engage in any trade or other social tertiary occupation.

Treta yuga is the second age after Satya, and the religious principle called *tapas* or austerity becomes gradually lost. People start to become lazy and greedy, and therefore the duration of life and the qualities of people also decrease. The social position of a King is required to make sure that everybody properly performs the needed activities in society and since simple contemplation is no more suitable for lazy and greedy people, the practice of Vedic sacrifice (fire sacrifice) becomes more prominent.

Society becomes divided into classes that cooperate together, but there is not much difference between them as *kshatriya* and *vaisya* duties frequently overlap in the cultivation and development of the land and protection of the *prajas*, and saintly learned kings called *rajarshis* also constitute a spiritual and religious example for the people.

In Dvapara yuga cleanliness (*saucha*) becomes gradually lost. *Brahmanas* and *kshatriyas* continue to exist as separate groups, and also *vaishyas* and *sudras* become different categories of people. It is very important to understand that all these categories are defined by the actual qualities and tendencies of each particular individual, and not by birth in a particular family or ethnic group.

Devoid of cleanliness and clarity of mind, lazy and greedy, incapable of sacrifice or austerity, those who are born with the *sudra* qualities are unable to take care of themselves and must therefore depend on the other three social classes that take care of maintaining them and tell them what to do. The land needs to be cultivated, the cows and other farm animals need to be protected from predators, and the natural abundance of nature decreases even more, so the performance of sumptuous Vedic sacrifices becomes difficult. Thus temple worship is especially recommended for this age (*yuga dharma*) and great temples are built, where Deities are cooperatively worshiped by all members of society, each according their particular abilities and possibilities.

In Kali yuga compassion (*daya*) becomes gradually lost, and the solidarity and cooperation spirit between the various classes of society also disappear. Lack of compassion or love entails the development of a logic of exploitation and neglect, both towards the members of human society and towards all the other *prajas* (“living entities born in the kingdom”) including the animals. The land reacts by curtailing the supplies of food and valuables and agricultural practices become harsher and more difficult, requiring a greater number of *sudra* workers. The scarcity of goods and bad management causes the artificial development of banking, currency, and private property. Life becomes shorter, full of troubles and anxieties, and the only religious practice that is suitable for all is the *sankirtana yajna*, the glorification of God and the favorable discussion of the Divine teachings.

By the end of Kali yuga, also truthfulness (*satyam*) becomes gradually lost and life becomes hellish. Almost all members of society become *chandalas* (uncivilized people, outside the scope of human society regulated by Vedic principles as they do not follow the proper rules and regulations) and the various definitions of *varna* and *ashrama* remain in name only, because all people in general have no good qualities - they are lazy, greedy, foolish, ignorant, dirty, and insensitive, so at best they can only qualify as *sudras* (*kalah sudra sambhavah*). Degradation continues in all families and at all social levels below the level of *sudra* and *chandala* down to the demoniac and ghostly level, until the situation becomes intolerable. At this point the Kalki *avatara* of Sri Vishnu appears to wipe out all evildoers with a general destruction. Only a few good and evolved people remain to start a new Satya yuga and thus a new cycle.

Thus at the conditioned and historical level of the social categories there are different types of contingent *dharma* connected with the psychological nature, qualities and tendencies of the different types of human beings: these “duties” are considered religious observances because the proper execution of one’s social duty is considered a legitimate form of worship to the Supreme and contributes to support a progressive society and the proper natural order of the universe.

However, such relative *dharmas* (or Karma) are temporary and change with circumstances because they are based on the qualities and activities of the individual (*Bhagavad Gita* 4.13), which can (and actually should) progressively change from one lifetime to the other and sometimes even within one lifetime.

As opposed to these relative and temporary *dharmas*, Vedic shastra explain that there is one eternal and universal *dharma*, called Sanatana Dharma, that equally applies to all, and that encompasses and transcends all relative *dharmas*. In fact as explained by *Gita* (18.66), we need to ultimately transcend all the relative *dharmas* and subordinate them to the supreme duty of each individual, realizing one’s divine nature and relationship with the Absolute:

*sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam sharanam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo mokshayishyami ma suchah*

“Leave all the temporary and relative *dharmas*, and simply concentrate on the Divine Reality. I will liberate you from all the negative actions and their consequences: do not worry.”

Similar verses in *Gita* (2.39, 2.47, 2.49, 2.51, 3.9, 3.31, 4.22, 4.41, 5.3, 5.7, 6.1, etc) and other Scriptures state that we need to act dutifully but selflessly and without material identification: in this way we are serving Dharma and we will always remain free from the bondage of Karma.

Karma

This Sanskrit definition has entered the vocabulary of all the modern languages and has become a household word, but often its meaning is distorted due to cultural superimpositions and lack of proper information. It is generally used with the meaning of “destiny”, and sometimes “retribution” or punishment.

In Abrahamic cultures, this destiny is the “lot in life” incomprehensibly assigned by a tyrannical God to each individual at birth, and that must be accepted without discussion and without attempting to improve one’s situation. To this fatalistic interpretation of Destiny, the concept of reincarnation, and “karma from the past” adds the idea that the good or bad actions we performed in previous lifetimes come back to us in the form of reward or punishment, in a sort of “tit for tat” reaction that was also described in some versions of Abrahamic hells (for example, in Dante Alighieri’s *Divina Commedia*). However, Karma is not just an inevitable sentence we simply need to storm out in a passive and fatalistic way. Karma is constantly changing with each action (or inaction) of ours, and can even be neutralized or overcome completely by new and suitable actions; as people usually want to get rid of the “bad karma” (and don’t mind having some “good karma”). The Scriptures and Tradition recommend pious activities such as sacred rituals of purification (*prayaschitta*), worshiping God, going to pilgrimage, bathing in sacred tirthas, distributing charity to deserving persons, selflessly performing good deeds for the benefit of all and sacrificing one’s possessions for good causes, engaging in austerities (such as fasting etc), or simply renouncing one’s material identification and attachments.

All these activities are strongly recommended for everyone, because in the normal course of life each individual inevitably incurs into some form of negative activity, and therefore “produces bad karma”.

Those who are interested in accruing “good karma”, and thus qualifying for a better position and a happier material life, should not only engage in pious religious activities as listed above (to atone for their past wrong actions) but should also carefully perform their social, familiar and religious duties according to their *guna* and *karma* - in other words, their *sva dharma*, fulfilling their specific function within the world.

So in this sense, the best definition of Karma is given in *Gita* (8.3): “Karma is the activity performed for the development of the material body”. More precisely, Karma can be distinguished into *karma* proper (or “prescribed action”) and *vikarma* or “bad karma” (the action that is contrary to the prescription of the Shastra).

According to the Shastra (*Gita* 18.42-44), the Karma (duty, or *sva-dharma*) for most qualified and most respectable members of society, the *brahmanas*, is described as follows:

*samo damas tapah saucham kshantir arjavam eva cha
jnanam vijnanam astikyam brahma-karma svabhava-jam*

“Peacefulness, self-control, austerity and simplicity, purity and cleanliness, tolerance, honesty and truthfulness, wisdom, love for knowledge and religiousness, as determined by their own personal nature.

If a person is unable to truly develop these qualities because of a different nature, rather than trying to impose oneself artificially for a position we cannot hold, it is better to find a more appropriate and useful position in society.

The Karma (duty, or *sva-dharma*) of a *kshatriya* is heroism, powerful strength, determination, resourcefulness, courage especially in battle, generosity and tendency to leadership:

*sauryam tejo dhritir dakshyam yuddhe chapy apalayanam
danam isvara-bhavas cha kshatram karma svabhava-jam*

A person who does not possess these talents but wants to progress and improve can take the position of a *vaisya* and practice the qualities of responsibility and self-sacrifice in an easier way, while a person who is totally unable to even take care of himself and needs to depend on others for a salary should humbly accept the position of *sudra*:

*krishi go-rakshya vinjyam vaisya krma svabhava-jam
paricharyatmakam karma sudrasyapi svabhava-jam*

“The Karma (duty, or *sva-dharma*) of a *vaisya* consists in cultivating the land, protecting the cows, engaging in trade and business, while the *sudra* is only able to serve and assist others.”

Contrarily to what some people may think, the life and duties of a *sudra* are much easier than the life and duties of the other occupational classes, because a *sudra* is not expected to be responsible, austere, clean and pure, or to make great efforts to get a higher education in which he has no interest.

Those who employ the *sudras* as their servants have the stringent duty and responsibility to take care of all their needs and maintain them properly even when they become sick or old and unable to work, as well as to take proper care of the servants' families.

A *sudra* can also become relatively self-sufficient by making a career of some manual ability he possesses - such as hair-styling, tailoring, panting, sculpting, singing, dancing etc. However, he still remains a *sudra* if he depends on others who hire and pay him for his physical services. A *sudra* can rise to the level of *vaisya* by becoming a businessman, or in other words learning to develop organizational and vending skills, putting up a shop or enterprise and employing workers, storing products and arranging for sales promotion, etc.

Similarly, a *vaisya* who has become expert in managing his land and cattle and is able to responsibly manage his farm hands, can further qualify for progressing to the *kshatriya* level, and a *kshatriya* who aspires to become more religiously inclined, or to teach others, can further qualify for progressing to the *brahmana* level.

Usually each *varna* has provisions for several levels of personal progress where each individual can still feel satisfied and be useful to society, but in special cases a person who is truly qualified for a higher occupation can be recognized as such by the King, the Guru or the assembly for the *brahmanas*, who can equally "elevate" the social position of an individual if better qualified, and "downgrade" it if the individual has demonstrated to lack the necessary qualifications for the position he occupies.

In Vedic times all children were sent to the *gurukula*, the "family of the Guru", a special kind of school where a qualified teacher would take responsibility of shaping the moral character of the students and not simply fill their brains with stereotyped information. The Guru observed all the children carefully and tested them to ascertain their actual natural tendencies, and instructed and trained them accordingly, so each individual student would be able to develop fully in a progressive way. Thus the Guru's evaluation about the *dharma* of the student was more important than the rank of the family in which the student was born: those who were born in families of *brahmanas* and *kshatriyas* but did not have the qualities or tendencies to perform such duties were commonly called *brahma bandhu* and *ksatra bandhu* respectively, meaning "relative of *brahmanas*" and "relative of *kshatriyas*". We can give the example of a child born in a family of physicians or surgeons: if the child does not have the required intelligence, ability or talents, or he is not interested in pursuing the career of his parents for whatever reason, trying to force him into that direction or artificially recognizing him as automatically qualified to perform surgeries, diagnose diseases etc, even without going through proper schooling, training and verification of the actual knowledge and abilities, would be criminally dangerous for the entire society and even prevent any genuine progress of the individual concerned.

In Vedic stories we also find several examples of people changing their *varna dharma* even within one lifetime due to change of circumstances, i.e. the development of qualities and tendencies by association and practice. Visvamitra, for example, was welcomed as a *brahma rishi* by the great authority Vasistha due to his dedication to developing the required qualities and activities. Satyakama Jabala was recognized as a *brahmana* by his Guru because of his great truthfulness (*Chandogya Upanishad*), Karna was made a *kshatriya* by Duryodhana although he was considered son of a *sudra* (a charioteer), and Valmiki was born in a family of hunters and robbers but he became a great *brahmana* and Rishi.

Bhimasena married the *rakshasi* Hidimba, and her son Ghatotkacha was considered a *kshatriya* warrior and fought on the side of the Pandava during the battle of Kurukshetra. What to speak of the greatest authority on Vedic knowledge, the compiler of the *Vedas* himself, Veda Vyasa, who although born from a fisherwoman (Satyavati) without a conventional marriage, he is considered the greatest *brahmana* and begot illustrious *kshatriyas* such as Pandu, the father of the Pandavas.

It is normally accepted by Hindu social standards that a *brahmana* can fall down and become an outcaste, or any member of the caste system can lose or give up his *dharma* when they cease to follow the rules and regulations prescribed by Vedic tradition – for example when converting to Christianity or Islam. In Kali yuga the tendency is to "fall down" or to become degraded, but the path of human progress is to change *dharma* in an ascending process of evolution and purification, and this is indeed what we should do, according to the instructions of the *Bhagavata Purana* (2.4.18, 3.33.6-7):

*kirata hunandhra pulinda pulkasa abhira sumbha yavanah khasadayah
ye 'nye ca papa yad apasrayasrayah sudhyanti tasmai prabhavisnave namah
yan namadheya sravananukirtanad yat prahvanad yat smaranad api kvacit*

*svado 'pi sadyah savanaya kalpate kutah punas te bhagavan nu darsanat
aho bata sva paco 'to gariyan yaj jihvagre vartate nama tubhyam
tepus tapas te juhuvuh sasnuraya, brahmanucur nama grnanti ye te*

“I offer my homage to Sri Vishnu. Those who take shelter in Vishnu are immediately purified from all sins, even if they were habitually committing sinful activities and if they belonged to the uncivilised tribes that do not follow the Vedic rules and regulations.

“O Lord, to say nothing of those who always contemplate You in their hearts and live in Your company, even a person born in a family of *mlecchas* immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices if he once utters Your holy name, recites Your glories, hears about Your *lilas*, offers You obeisances or even remembers You. O Lord, those who worship You by chanting Your holy names with devotion are the real *brahmanas* even if they were born in the families of dog-eaters.”

By developing the proper qualities and activities, and by exposing ourselves to the appropriate association and experience, our karma can and must change for the better. In fact, the entire Vedic system is a progressive path, intended to facilitate the evolution of the individual from a lower level to a higher level – from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light. This can be done gradually through the *karma kanda* path, or even suddenly by a special blessing of higher authorities: God, the Guru, and the saintly King.

Some people judge the *dharma* of an individual by considering his/her birth in a particular family as if intellectual, religious and ethical qualifications were merely determined by genetic DNA, but this is not a fact. Birth in a good family can help because of the favorable atmosphere, the immediate availability of theoretical and practical knowledge, and a training that starts even before birth with the proper performance of the prescribed *samskaras*, but if by any chance the performance of the *samskaras* has been neglected or faulty, and if the level of consciousness of the family members has fallen to a lower level, even this advantage is lost.

According to the *dharma shastra* one needs to show his qualifications and regularly engage in the suitable actions, and to be officially recognized by a qualified Guru with the proper process of *diksha* before he can consider himself a member of the higher classes of society, i.e. *brahmana*, *kshatriya* or *vaisya*. By birth, everyone in Kali yuga is a *sudra*, and one can attain a higher position than *sudra* only through training with sufficient training from proper authorities and the refinement of one's character by the performance of *samskaras*.

Samskara

The definition of *samskara* is complex and has roots in the psychology of Yoga.

Angira Rishi describes Samskaras as follows: “Just as a picture is painted with various colors, the character of the individual is formed by the proper performance of Samskaras”. This means that birth in a specific family is not a sufficient qualification if the Samskaras are not properly performed; the advantage of a progressive family is that the knowledge and practice of Samskaras is rigorously followed.

Instructions on Samskaras are contained in the *Griha sutras* known as *Apastambha*, *Asvalayana*, *Baudhayana*, *Bharadvaja*, *Gobhila*, *Hiranyakeshia*, *Jaiminiya*, *Khadira*, *Manava*, *Paraskara*, *Sankhayana*, and *Varaha griha sutras*. Besides that, a number of commentaries have been added in time: 25 *Parishtas*, 24 *Prayogas* and about 12 *Karikas*, as well as *Apta vakyas* (quotes from great personalities).

Samskaras are impressions of experiences that become engraved in the consciousness (*chitta*) and in subtle body (*karanavastha*) and combine in the subconscious to form *vasanas*, or subconscious inclinations to particular *guna* (qualities) and *karma* (activities). In turn, *vasanas* (“that which remains”) influence the formation of mental waves or *vrittis* that become manifest (*abhivyakti*) in the suitable circumstances (*anugunanam*) at the suitable time (*vipaka*). The cycle consists in *karma* (action) producing *samskaras* (impressions), producing *vasanas* (tendencies), producing *vrittis* (thought patterns) that in turn produce more actions. Memories are perceptible forms of *samskaras*,

Samskaras and *vasanas* can be good or bad. The bad ones, that we need to extirpate from our psychic body, are *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *mada* (madness) and *matsarya* (envy).

Adi Shankaracharya wrote: *kama krodas cha lobhas cha dehe thishtanthi taskarah jnana ratno-paharaya tasmajagrata jagrata*, “one should beware of those dacoits that reside in our own body, ready to steal away the jewel of knowledge from us: these are lust, anger, and greed”.

The good *samskaras* and *vasanas* are also perpetuated by habit, or by the repetition of thoughts, actions, verbal expressions and sense perceptions that are recommended in the practice of Yoga. The first two “limbs” of the *ashtanga yoga* are *Yama* and *Niyama*, aimed at creating positive impressions and habits in the subtle body.

Yama includes *ahimsa* (absence of hostility), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (honesty), *brahmacharya* (abstinence), *aparigraha* (simplicity), which need to be applied on the levels of body (*saririka*), speech (*vachika*) and mind (*baudhika*).

Niyama includes *saucha* (cleanliness), *santosh*a (inner satisfaction), *tapas* (austerity), *svadhyaya* (study of the scriptures) and *isvara pranidhana* (devotion to God).

Sadhana, or the regulated performance of spiritual practices, is intended to create positive impressions in the subtle body through repeated experience of *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana* and *Dhyana*, so that the *Sadhaka* can eventually attain *Samadhi*.

Sadhana also comprises the practice of *japa*, the *tri-sandhya* worship (to *Surya*, *Guru*, and one *ista devata*), visiting temples to get the *Darshana* of the Deity and to accept *prasadam*, purifying one’s food (or better, offering it to God) before eating, bathing and washing according to precise rules, observing the many festivals and celebrations in the annual calendar, performing pilgrimages, distributing charity, etc. All these activities are repeated to bring a constant sense of sacredness and consciousness in everyday life.

Besides the basic *Dasa Samskaras* or ritual purification ceremonies performed during one’s life (and that are celebrated also for the Deities and *Agni* during Their installation) there are several other *Samskaras* aimed at creating favorable mental impressions on the subtle body through ritual ceremonies.

1. **Garbhadana**, performed for the child at the time of conception, so that an evolved soul will be attracted to incarnate in the family. An auspicious day is chosen, and mantras are chanted to invite the child.

The specific manifestation of fire invoked for this ceremony is called *Maruta Agni*.

2. **Pumsavana**, performed for the child when pregnancy is ascertained, generally on the second or third month; it is meant to establish the basic training of the child in his early life. A few drops of the sap of the *Banyan* tree are inhaled through the right nostril of the mother, to relieve the troubles of pregnancy. Sacred thread is also tied to the left wrist of the mother for protection. The father places his hand on the mother’s belly, and encourages the child visualizing its body as the personification of religious ideals. From this day the mother takes rest, follows a proper diet and takes herbal food supplements, and lives in the best mental conditions possible. The specific manifestation of fire invoked for this ceremony is called *Chandra Agni*.

3. **Simanta nayana**, performed for the child’s mother between conception and birth, usually between the fifth and the eighth month of pregnancy. It is aimed at creating a *sattvik* and spiritual atmosphere around the mother, so that the child will be positively influenced. Symbolic objects representing sharp intellect, moon-like beauty and fruitfulness are honored. The father chants *slokas* in praise of his wife’s beauty, sweetness and generosity, wishing her all happiness, calling her to participate to all the religious functions and prayers of the household and to bless him with all good fortune. Music is played for the mother, and ladies sing. The mother observes a partial fast and remains in silent meditation until the time when stars become visible at night; finally she touches a calf for inspiration towards motherhood.

The specific manifestation of fire invoked for this ceremony is called *Mangala Agni*.

4. **Jata karma**, performed at birth. A secret name is chosen, then the child is given a taste of honey and *ghi* touched to a golden ring, and a taste of strained water mixed with rice and barley. Depending on the circumstances, several other symbolical rituals are performed, prayers are chanted softly and *brahmanas* bless the baby. Finally the umbilical cord is cut. *Jagannatha*, *Durga Madhava* and *Sarvamangala* are worshiped.

The mother starts breast feeding after chanting a mantra, and the horoscope of the child is calculated. The father takes a full bath with all his clothes, preferably in a river or lake, distributes charity and performs other pious acts. However, from birth for 10 days all the members of the close family are not supposed to go to temples or to the house of other people, but should remain in their home taking care of the mother and the baby. The specific manifestation of fire invoked for this ceremony is called *Pragalbha Agni*; a *Sutika* fire is also lit sometimes, after birth, in the delivery room where the mother enters two days before her due time. The *Sutika* fire is fed with mustard seeds and grains for auspiciousness.

On the 7th day after birth, **Surya puja** is performed, and the baby is bathed in turmeric water. Pujas are additional rituals that complement the basic Samskaras.

On the 21st day after birth, the **Raksha kavacha puja** is performed; the mother recites “*vimala raksha kara*” for 21 times in the child’s ear, and fruits are offered to the Deity. Another ritual that is performed on the 21st day after birth (for a son, and on the 30th day for a daughter) is the **Sasthi puja**, in which *pitha* pancakes are offered.

5. **Nama karana**, performed about 21 days (for boys) or 30 days (for girls) after the birth of the child to give him a name; usually the name is composed by 2 or 4 syllables and the first syllable is chosen according to astrological calculations. The baby is bathed in turmeric and *chandana* water, then 7 married ladies offer *arati*, and mother worships the ladies with offerings of *sari*, *chandana*, *alata* on feet and *sindhur*. At the ceremony, 7 *brahmanas* recite *slokas* from the *Vedas* and the *Bhagavata*, then the *homa* is performed. The specific manifestation of fire invoked for this ceremony is called Parthiva Agni. In the evening the family offer Satyanarayana puja in Sri Mandira in the name of the baby; they can also make a small temple in their own house and offer puja there.

Nishkramana is the ritual of the formal Darshana of Sun and Moon, when the child is taken out of the house for the first time.

6. **Anna prasana**, performed seven months and seven days after the birth of the child, is the first time when the child is given grains to eat. Cooked rice is mixed with ghi, honey and yogurt, sanctified, offering as oblation, and then fed to the child. The specific manifestation of fire invoked for this ceremony is called Uchi Agni.

Also after 6 months from birth, **Mangala puja** is offered: 7 married ladies sit in a circle keeping the baby in the center, and offer puja to the baby offering fruits and lamps.

7. **Chuda karana**, the ceremony when the boy gets his first hair cut (or shaven), on completion of the first year from birth. Symbolic objects are blessed, a barber is invited to the ceremony to shave the child’s head (sometimes leaving a *sikha* or a tuft of hair in the back) after moistening the hair with lukewarm water and butter or yogurt. The shaven hair are traditionally buried in the forest. The specific manifestation of fire invoked for this ceremony is called Sadhya Agni.

Another important ritual is called **Karna bheda** (“piercing the ear lobes”); it is performed at 3 to 5 years of age, the ear ring and a healing ointment are applied. The child receives his first earrings and then goes to the temple with his maternal uncle. This ritual is sometimes performed at the time of Upanayana.

At the same age (from 6 to 7 years) girls observe the **Neta puja**, a life passage ritual. She worships Shiva offering flowers, *bhoga*, and *arati*.

8. **Upanayana** (also called *Vrata*): the ceremony when the boy is given the sacred thread and the *mantra* for his basic daily *sadhana*. It is performed on the 8th year from birth for a *brahmana* child, on the 11th for a *kshatriya* child, and on the 12th for a *vaisya* child, but not later than the 16th, 22nd and 24th year respectively. If by that time they have not qualified for initiation, they are considered to be *Vratyas*, or fallen from the position. The ceremony should be performed in spring for *brahmanas*, in summer for the *kshatriyas*, and in autumn for *vaisyas*.

For 3 days (or at least 1 day) before the ritual, the child should fast, only drinking milk (for a *brahmana*), boiled barley with sugar (for a *kshatriya*), or *skrihanda* (for a *vaisya*) when they feel hungry. *Srihanda* is drained yogurt mixed with sugar and saffron. The *varna* of the child is determined by the horoscope and endorsed by the Guru after examination and preliminary training of the child. With the thread ceremony the first phase of the education of the child is completed, the child is officially authorized to perform all rituals and starts the study of *Vedas* in full obedience to the training of the Guru. During the ritual, the Guru declares himself to be the representative of the real Guru, *Antaryami*, and dedicates the student to God’s service.

Entering the *brahmacharya* vows, the student pledges to abstain from any lusty thought, speech or act, to sleep on the ground (and not on a bed), to abstain from the use of perfume, to abstain from dancing and singing mundane songs, to abstain from riding horses or other animals, to observe moderation in sleeping, bathing etc, to rise early in the morning, to faithfully discharge his duties and chores, to abstain from remaining (living or spending nights) in a village or outside the *Gurukula*, to abstain from using shoes or umbrellas, to abstain from body massage and cosmetics, to eat a very moderate and strictly vegetarian diet (also abstaining from very sour foods like tamarind, spicy food, excessive turmeric or salt, or acidic foods).

During the ceremony the sacred thread is ritually awarded and the Gayatri mantra is uttered into the ear of the student to inspire him in discipline and proper performance of his duties. The student also steps on a stone, to be inspired to develop firmness and solidity, as well as physical strength. He is given a staff (*bilva* or *palasha* for *brahmanas*, *vat* or *khadir* for *kshatriyas*, and *pipal* or *gular* for *vaisyas*) and a girdle (*darbha* or *munja* for *brahmanas*, *dhanusa* for *kshatriyas* and jute for *vaisyas*). He also officially pledges to uphold vows (especially *brahmacharya*, *ahimsa*, purity in diet, and abstinence from illicit activities or adharmic acts), always remain truthful, remain tolerant, strive for excellence and greatness in life, engage in positive and beneficial activities, perform charity, serve God and the Devas, be kind to people, protect his subject or dependants, produce good children, remain detached and equipoised, assist the elders, etc. Brahmins wear a thread made of 6 strains to symbolize bhava for Guru, Pitru (ancestors), Matru (Mother), Atithi (guests), Mitra (friends) and Atman (one's Self); after father dies, 3 more strains are added, to symbolize *rina* (one's debt) towards Pitru (the ancestors), Matru (Mother) and Deva (God). The specific manifestation of fire invoked for this ceremony is called Samudbhava Agni.

9. The ritual performed to consecrate the official beginning of the study of the scriptures is called **Vidya arambha** ("beginning of the cultivation of knowledge"); at the age of 6 or 7, the child sits in the *chatusala* (school) and writes OM on the chalkboard for 21 or 108 times. The specific manifestation of fire invoked for this ceremony is called Surya Agni.

Keshanta is the ritual of cutting the student's hair when he takes the vow of *brahmachari* for the sake of his spiritual studies.

Samavartana is the ritual that ends the period of studies at the feet of the Guru.

Girls getting their first menstruations observe the ritual called **Rajasvala**: during the menstrual days the girl sleeps on the floor and does not enter the kitchen; on the 7th day she performs puja to Mother Earth, sits in the middle of a circle formed by 7 married ladies, with *gua* (a betel nut) representing Mother Earth, both the girl and the *gua* are worshiped.

10. **Vivaha**, the marriage ceremony. One day before the marriage the couple performs the Mangala kriti, or visiting a Devi temple for permission, then the Pani grahana ("accepting the hand") is performed. In Puri, the marriage ceremony itself is celebrated in the day time for Brahmins, and at night time for others. The groom arrives at the marriage venue in a decorated car together with a dancing party (called *barati*) with a noisy musical band, friends and relatives. The bride goes to a nearby temple to get blessings for the auspicious ceremony. A *homa* is celebrated; for a Brahmin marriage a barber and his wife assist in the rituals. The specific manifestation of fire invoked for this ceremony is called Jojaka Agni.

After the marriage ceremony there are several rituals to be performed. On the fourth day of the marriage (called Caturthi) the bride is formally accepted into the Gotra of the husband with a series of rituals, to which 7 married ladies are invited to participate.

Another very important ritual observed by married people (and also observed by Jagannatha in the temple) called **Sraddha**, is offered for the benefit of the expired forefathers. On Mahalaya the holy thread is changed, and *brahmanas* are given food (7, 21, or 108 *brahmanas*), then for the next 15 days the performer grows beard and nails; on the 13th day the first Sraddha Pinda is offered at Svetaganga; on the last day of the Pitri paksha Pinda is offered by the son of the sister of the deceased; this day is also Government holiday. The *bahu* (wife) cooks for the ancestors on the 10th, 11th and 12th day after death, every year on the anniversary day of death, and during the Pitri paksha; during one entire year after death the eldest son of the deceased does not take meals outside the house and does not take part in social ceremonies (marriages etc). The final ceremony for the departed forefathers consists in exhuming the bones of the 4 grandparents, previously buried in pots in front of the house, and taking them for a pilgrimage to Gaya.

During all the *Samskaras* and auspicious ceremonies, the *karta* (performer) is expected to offer homage to the Devas, the fire, 7 generations of ancestors (by naming them).

Married people are expected to perform a number of recurrent rituals for the various yearly celebrations, and observe *Upasana* (regular worship to the family Deities) and *Upavasa* (fasting on special occasions, such as Ekadasi and the other sacred days listed in our Calendar) as well as *Snanas* (ritual bathing in sacred tirthas).

These Snanas are listed as: Magha saptami (at sunset in Chandrabhaga, Konark), Papanasini alavya (on Chaitra krishna Ekadasi), Varuni (Chaitra krishna Dvadasi, to have one's wish fulfilled), Akshaya tritiya (especially by ladies, after bath they offer Bhoga to Lakshmidēvi and distribute sweets to children), Vaisakha purnima (the family Deities are bathed with ocean water mixed with *chandana*, *kasturi* and flowers), Punyaprada Ganga dasara (Jyestha sukla Dasami), Mahati (during the month of Sravana, to develop good qualities), Vijaya saptami (Asvina sukla saptami, to worship Durga), Kartika Amavasya in November (men take bath in the afternoon then light sticks of kauria wood to call the Rishis from the Himalayas), Panchatirtha snana (on Margasira krishna Panchami for Sri kshetra parikrama), Kartika Purnima, Rasa Purnima (Asvina Purnima), Manasika snana (can be any day, it is done when one's desires have been fulfilled), Sudhi snana (can be any day, it is done after a funeral; after cooking the last meal of the day one should take bath in Svetaganga), Ganga snana (once in a lifetime), Triveni snana at Prayaga (once in a lifetime), Gaya snana (after Sraddha, once over many lifetimes).

Vanaprastha: at the age of 50, as old age approaches, the person retires for a life of austerity and study, sometimes going on pilgrimage in various holy places.

A householder generally takes **Sannyasa** on his 60th birthday. Sometimes boys who have a strong tendency to religious and renounced life may take Sannyasa much earlier, but that is not specifically prescribed as a duty. The Sannyasi abandons all ties with his previous life, including his name, and lives in a very austere way. Wives of Sannyasis consider themselves as widows.

Antyeshthi, or the funeral ceremonies, also known as Naramedha, Purushamedha, Narayajna and Purushayajna. They do not include the celebration of a *homa* (fire sacrifice) like the regular *samskaras*, but fire is required nonetheless for the cremation of the body. The specific manifestation of fire invoked for this ceremony is called Chita Agni. The dead body is shaven, bathed and sandalwood paste is applied, then it is dressed with new clothes. Ghee is mixed with *keshar* (saffron), *kasturi* (musk), *agar* (aquilaria malaccensis), *tagar* (*valeriana walichli*), sandalwood powder, and *karpura* (camphor). A *kunda* is prepared in the crematorium, the wood is piled and large spoons are attached to long stick for oblations of ghee by four men at a time. The body is laid with the head to the north, and covered with wood. Slokas are chanted and the pyre is lit. Brahmins observe a 13 day mourning, during which they do not shave; at the end of this period they whitewash the house and replace all the cooking pots. After the funeral, more ceremonies are performed for the departed soul, specifically Sraddha and Pindi that are destined to please the departed soul and help him get a new human body. In Puri, people perform *sraddha* at any of five *tirthas*, especially at Svetaganga, Markandeya, Indradyumna, as well as at the Baisi pahacha inside Sri Mandira.

Samskaras also include the four rituals like Prajapatya (Vedavratas) performed during *gurukulavasa* (the years the student spends in the home of his Guru) and the five *mahayajnas* performed every day by the householder. These daily *pancha mahayajnas* are called Brahma yajna (chanting of the Vedas and/or study of the scriptures), Deva yajna (*upasana*, *puja*, *homa* and celebration of festivals in honor of the Deity), Pitra yajna (*sraddha* or *tarpana* for one's ancestors), Manusya yajna (charity and feeding guests) and Bhuta yajna (offering food to various creatures).

The householder also performs seven *pakayajnas*, seven *haviryajnas* and seven *somayajnas*.

The seven *pakayajnas* (generally to be performed once a year) are: Astaka (Anvastaka), Sthalipaka (to be performed every *prathama* or at every "beginning"), Parvana (*sraddha* ritual to be performed once a month), Sravani, Agrahayani, Chaitri, Asvayuji. The seven *haviryajnas* (to be performed once a year or at least once in a lifetime) are: Agniyadhana, Agnihotra, Darsha-purnamasa (to be performed once every 15 days), Agrayana, Chaturmasya, Nirudhapasubandha, Sautramani.

The seven *somayajnas* (to be performed once a year or at least once in a lifetime) are: Agnistoma, Atyagnistoma, Uktya, Sodasi, Vajapeya, Atiratra, Aptoryama.

In case of contamination of the family or falldown from one's duties or position, as well as for the induction of a person of lower birth into the higher *varna* system, the Vratyastoma yajna or Prayaschitta is celebrated. Daily respects should also be offered to the teacher's chair (Vyasasana), to holy books and school books, to the feet of the parents and to the kitchen grinding stone (called *shila*).

Some additional forms of worship are called Desachara, or special local worship according to the customs of the region, and others are called Lokachara, or special worship according to the "liking of the people", such as Vratas etc.

Guru

Another very popular word that has entered the dictionaries of almost all languages, *guru* literally means “heavy”. The meaning indicates that a Guru is “heavy with knowledge” and has the duty to be “heavy” with the disciples in order to train them.

As we already mentioned, the Vedas consider four basic religious principles: 1) *satya*, or truthfulness, 2) *daya* or compassion, 3) *saucha* or cleanliness, and 4) *tapas* or austerity. There are several other religious principles described in Vedic literature, but they all derive from these basic four.

The observance of the principles of religion enables the individual to go through the different stages of life and obtain success in the purposes of human life (*dharma, artha, kama, moksha*): without them, none of these goals can be really attained in a satisfactory and permanent way.

A Guru has the duty to lead all his disciples on the progressive path of liberation, for their individual benefit and for the benefit of the entire society. Therefore he must train them to follow progressively all the principles of religion from the simplest (truthfulness) to the highest (austerity), and he must transmit the proper knowledge through his genuine realization and example.

The discipline applied by the Guru in the training of the disciple is based on the rules called *yama* (*ahimsa* – non violence, *satya* - truthfulness, *asteya* - honesty, *brahmacharya* – spiritual attitude in relationships, *aparigraha* - detachment) and *niyama* (*saucha* - cleanliness, *santosha* - contentment, *tapas* – self-control, *svadhyaya* – study of spiritual knowledge, *isvara pranidhana* – dedication to God).

In the Vedic system, a Guru is anyone who can teach any type of knowledge, including technical skills or ordinary material knowledge. All Gurus should be respected because without the proper respect and trust for the teacher, a student cannot learn anything properly. The principle is the same in all kinds of teaching and learning: it is based on discipline and transmission of the genuine knowledge, both theoretical and practical. Fundamentally, a Guru can teach what he has already personally realized and mastered; for example a martial arts teacher must be perfect in the practice of combat, otherwise he is only a theoretical speculator.

Obviously there are different levels of Gurus, because every individual has a specific level of personal realization and experience. These must all be respected, but after a disciple has learnt whatever the Guru had to teach, the Guru has the duty to advise the disciple to find another Guru who can take him to the next level. There is nothing wrong in this or in the disciple’s becoming more qualified than his first Guru; if the first Guru was genuine, he will gladly bless the disciple to go forward in his training with a more qualified teacher.

As there are various levels of realization in the religious and spiritual field, a student may be introduced to the spiritual science by a *vartha pradarshaka guru*, or “one who has first shown the way”, even before he gets the blessing to meet a perfect *sat-guru*. This is why in the Vedic tradition we often find spiritual searchers who have accepted more than one Guru, and nobody finds anything wrong in the process.

A *siksha* Guru is one who “gives instructions”, not necessarily taking personal responsibility for the student’s liberation and perfection. A *diksha* Guru, however, is one who formally accepts responsibility for the student’s progress, and therefore he is supposed to be perfectly qualified to take the student to the platform of perfection in what he teaches.

When we want to learn religious and spiritual knowledge, we need to search a teacher who has perfectly realized this knowledge and is demonstrating such perfection not only in theory but also in practice and even in his personal life.

If the Guru is sufficiently qualified to take his disciples up to the level of *moksha*, he can be at the same time *vartha pradarshaka, siksha* and *diksha guru*; this “complete package of the Guru job description” includes attracting an ordinary person to the value of spiritual search, then gradually instructing him and taking full responsibility for his permanent deliverance from material conditionings and attainment of spiritual perfection. This “complete Guru” is usually described as *sat guru*, or “eternal Guru” (as opposed to a temporary or limited Guru), just like *sanatana dharma* is the “eternal dharma” as opposed to a temporary or limited social duty.

Vedic tradition makes a clear distinction between the ordinary gurus who teach limited subjects and the *sat-guru*, the teacher of spiritual knowledge - that knowledge that is eternal and perfectly pure. By definition, the *sat-guru* is a self-realized and liberated person who can also liberate his/her disciples, and takes this responsibility beyond all material limitations, therefore the *sat-guru* is considered the direct representative of God and has a mystical relationship with the sincere disciple and can speak to him/her directly even in his physical absence and understand him/her even without words.

The disciple will continue to respect the first Guru as and also respect the subsequent Guru or Gurus who will help him in his journey to liberation and perfection, but will have a special and eternal relationship with the saint who delivered the spiritual knowledge that changed his/her heart. Such *sat-guru* continues to be his/her protector and benefactor lifetime after lifetime, and guide the disciple from within the heart.

Another important principle to be understood about *guru* is that *guru tattva* is absolute and on the same level of God/Brahman. Guru, and especially the *sat-guru*, is not limited by material conditions and considerations: The *sat-guru* is one, and manifests in many different forms, so a sincere disciple will always be in contact with the Guru even without personal (material) meetings, and even after the Guru's disappearance from the material sight.

A few words should be spent here to describe the meaning of "disciple" (*sisya*).

The relationship between teacher and disciple, or *guru-sisya*, is a very special relationship and does not depend on material circumstances or the endorsement of a third party. The *sat guru* (the Guru who takes full responsibility for the disciple's deliverance from material conditionings) may manifest in any form, and should never be judged from the material appearance - from considerations based on bodily identification.

Vedic literature (*Padma Purana*) clearly states: *arcey vishnau sila-dhir gurushu nara matir vaishnave jati buddhir, vishnor va vaishnavanam kali-mala mathane pada-tirthhe 'mbu buddhi, sri vishnor namni mantrre sakala kalusa he sabda samanye buddhir, vishnau sarveshvarese tad itare sama dhir yasya va naraki sah*, "One who considers the Deity of God or *salagrama shila* to be a stone, who considers the genuine spiritual master to be an ordinary human being, who considers Vishnu or His devotees to be touched by material contamination, who considers the holy *tirtha* (sacred water reservoir) to be just water, who considers the *mantra* consisting of the holy names of God to be just a sound, or who considers the Supreme Godhead to be equal to any other personality, is already living in hell".

It must also be said that there are false Gurus.

A false Guru is someone who does not actually teach (he just keeps a formal or social position without actually discharging his responsibilities to the students) or teaches misconceptions or bad behaviors (that are contrary to the principles of religion): these people are compared to shallow rivers, where diving or sailing is very dangerous. They must not be given the respect due to genuine *gurus*, but rather the public should be warned of the danger false Gurus constitute for the general benefit of the society.

False Gurus are also warned by Vedic scriptures: by accepting worship and benefits from their unfortunate followers they contract a karmic debt they will have to pay in the future. Besides being punished by Yamaraja after death, the false Gurus will have to take many births in various unfavorable situations, until all of the disciples they had accepted have either attained liberation or have formally rejected them, accepting another Guru.

Besides, because many more people become confused by their false teachings even if they do not formally become disciples, the false Guru will have to "clean up the mess" in subsequent lifetimes by sufficiently and publicly establishing the proper religious principles to pay his karmic debt to society before getting liberation himself. This amounts to a lot of work and pain, so in fact exposing false Guru is a great favor and service to the so-called Guru and their followers, not only to society in general.

***Atma* and reincarnation**

Usually translated as "self" (as in "self realization"), the word *atma* or *atman* can be used in different ways depending on the level of identification of the self. A person who identifies with the body will define the self as "body" and one who identifies with the mind will define the mind as "self", but one who knows the deep reality of things will understand the self as the "soul" of spiritual nature or Brahman substance.

A still higher meaning of "self" or *atma* is the Supreme Self or Supreme Soul, called in Sanskrit *param atma* ("the Supreme Self), a very important concept for those who want to understand Vedic theology. However, this is also a very difficult and subtle concept, usually interpreted in various ways according to the individual level of realization. The lack of realization often creates misconceptions about the identity between *atman* and Brahman.

In fact, for those who have truly attained the level of Brahman realization there is no real contradiction, rather it is a fact that the doors of true *bhakti* open only at that stage, as clearly stated by Krishna in *Gita* (18.54): *brahma-bhuta prasannatma na sochati na kankshati, samah sarveshu bhuteshu mad-bhaktim labhate param.*

The misconception of “opposite conclusions” taught by different schools, such as the *dvaita* and *advaita* debate, is actually due to a limited understanding of the *tattva*. We will get the greatest benefits only by accepting the fact that apparently contradictory views are actually only particular perspectives of Reality and they should be considered as complementary rather than contradictory. All perspectives, including the views of other schools, should be studied humbly and sincerely and understood in depth, rather than insulted and defamed or considered as “enemies”: a method that is actually alien to the original Vedic culture. It was introduced through the influence of exclusivist and intolerant so-called monotheism, for which the Absolute Truth is not the Greater Picture that reconciles all relative truths, but a single partisan truth that is sworn to oppose and destroy all other aspects of truth in order to remain the only accessible one.

The four Vaishnava Sampradayas, for example, explain Reality as *visista advaita* (Ramanuja, Sri Sampradaya), *visista dvaita* (Madhva, Brahma Sampradaya), *suddha dvaita* (Vishnu Swami, Rudra Sampradaya), *dvaita advaita* (Nimbarka, Kumara Sampradaya), and *acintya bheda abheda* (Chaitanya and the Gaudiya Vaishnava offshoot).

These explanations do no contradict each other but rather complement each other. We may even say that they also complement the Advaita Sampradaya. In fact, the original concept of *advaita* preached by Adi Shankara fully recognizes the transcendental nature and eternal personality of the Supreme Godhead, Narayana (*narayano paro 'vyaktat*) who is eternally manifested in the spiritual world beyond this temporary material universe. Adi Shankara strongly and unequivocally prescribed the process of *bhakti* and selfless service to the eternal and transcendental Personality of Godhead, as we can clearly see from his famous *Bhaja Govindam* song. The spiritual self, the individual person, does not begin to exist at birth and does not cease to exist at death, but leaves the old body that is no more useful and attains a place (human womb, animal womb, egg, plant seed etc) where he starts developing a new body for his subsequent life.

Changes of body occur constantly even during one’s life from childhood to old age, but the change called death is much more dramatic and radical. We can give the example of a magnet that constantly attracts fine particles of iron dust: due to the rusting process (the natural degenerative oxidation of iron) some of the outer iron particles regularly fall off from the magnet and are immediately substituted by fresh iron particles that can easily be magnetized.

Due the passage of time, traumatic events, or lack of proper care and utilization the rusting process becomes faster and more dramatic, so that the iron particles continue to stick together by forming a hard shell even after being oxidized. This rigid shell becomes loosened because it cannot stick to the magnet any more, and it can crack open suddenly: the magnet will then roll spontaneously away, to a place where a sufficient mass of fresh iron particles is available, and start attracting new particles. Reincarnation does not mean “entering someone else’s body” as some people mistakenly think. It rather means building a new body for oneself according to the qualities and activities developed in the previous life.

Everybody reincarnates, not only a few people. It is even possible to remember one’s previous lives, in some cases, although the majority of people simply forgets the circumstances of their previous lives and only retains the instinctive memory of the lessons they have learnt or they have not learnt, so at every new life they can start again their progressive journey exactly from where they left it at death. Reincarnation or transmigration of the soul was a very popular concept in all ancient cultures, including early Christianity, from where it was banned and persecuted in relatively recent times. Vedic knowledge presents the greatest wealth of information about reincarnation and its mechanisms, especially in *Bhagavad Gita*.

Yoga

Another Sanskrit word that has become extremely popular all over the world is *yoga*. It is derived from the root *yuj*, meaning “uniting, connecting, controlling, disciplining” just like horses or oxen are *yoked* to a cart to pull it. In this sense, *yoga* has the same primary meaning of the English word *religion*, that comes from the Latin *re-ligare*, or “connecting, uniting” the human being to God.

The concept of *yoga*, however, is wider than the concept of *religion*, as it also applies to different levels of identification such as body/willpower, senses/mind, mind/intelligence, intelligence/spiritual self, lower self/higher self, individual self/supreme self, where the first and lower reality must be disciplined, controlled, and used by the higher reality in a progressive path.

Yoga includes the knowledge of the material body and nature, the fields of science that Western terms comprise physics, electro-magnetism, biology, neurology, psychology, medicine, and similar branches of knowledge. Furthermore, the science of Yoga includes aspects that Western science is only now starting to investigate seriously, such as cymetics (or the science of vibrations and their effects especially on water), biomagnetism, the connection between the living beings and the environment, and many others.

Although expressed in terms that traditionally belong to the Vedic culture, such as *chakra*, *nadi*, *prana* etc, the technical knowledge of Yoga is deeply scientific and enabled its students to act on the structure of matter in amazing ways, completely controlling breathing, heartbeat, metabolism, body temperature, hormonal regulation, and in some cases even the aggregation of atoms as for example in the bilocation of one's body, levitation, and other wonders that generally appear as miraculous.

Besides the complete control of one's body, Yoga also enables the student to achieve control over the mind and its amazing powers, including the phenomena that Western science usually considers as "parapsychology", such as telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis, distance healing, and so on.

The practice of Yoga integrates the various levels of consciousness – called the waking state, dreams, dreamless sleep, or conscious, subconscious and super-conscious. The different methods or practices of *yoga* should be integrated together according to the specific evolutionary journey of the individual being: for example, *buddhi yoga* is the science of intelligence and awareness, *karma yoga* is the science of selfless action, *jnana yoga* is the search for philosophical and scientific knowledge, *sankhya yoga* is the logical and analytical search for truth, *bhakti yoga* is the science of love and devotion to the Supreme, and *hatha yoga* is the science of proper utilization of the material body and senses.

Ashtanga yoga is the science of "eight parts" required in all forms of yoga: *yama* (abstentions), *niyama* (prescriptions), *asana* (control of the body), *pranayama* (control of breathing), *pratyahara* (withdrawing the senses from the sense objects), *dharana* (concentration of the mind), *dhyana* (active meditation), and *samadhi* (constant absorption, where ignorance and illusion are completely vanquished). For more information about Yoga, please read our publication "*Mind Training: A Simple Course on Meditation and Yoga*".

Bhakti

The school of Bhakti is particularly popular because it appeals to the sentiments of the people. It requires the spiritual guidance of a competent Guru, the study of scriptures and constant remembrance of God, renunciation and constant work to eliminate the seven enemies: *kama* (lust), *moha* (illusion), *ahankara* (false identification), *krodha* (anger), *matsarya* (jealousy), *mada* (pride), *lobha* (greed).

The nine practices of *bhakti* (Navadha bhakti) are *sravana* (hearing), *kirtana* (glorifying), *smarana* (remembering), *vandana* (offering prayers), *pada sevana* (following the instructions), *dasya* (offering service), *puja* (worshiping), *sakhya* (making friends with God), *atma nivedana* (surrendering completely to God). They may be practiced all together, or separately: it is said that even one only of them, if practiced perfectly, can take us to self realization.

The five main sentiments or *bhavas* of Bhakti in the personal relationship with God are *santa* (neutral admiration), *dasya* (service), *sakhya* (friendship), *vatsalya* (maternal or paternal affection), *kanta* or *madhurya* (conjugal love). Bhakti can be directed to any genuine form of God that inspires the devotee, and is usually developed according to the rules (*sadhana bhakti*) under the guidance of a self-realized spiritual master up to the level of spontaneous love for God (*raganuga bhakti*), where the devotee is completely purified by all tinges of material identification and bad qualities, and instead shows all the divine qualities.

Devotion can be pure (*suddha*, *ekanta*, or *para bhakti*) or mixed (*mishra*) with the desire of knowledge or material benefit; in its lowest form (*kanistha* or *bahya*) devotion can be a form of superficial and materialistic religion, characterized by ignorance and fanaticism, sectarianism, bigotry, intolerance (sometimes violent) and expectation of material benefits or sentimentalism.

It must also be said that some materialistic people fake devotion in order to get material benefits and to get cheap adoration, fame and donations from ignorant people. There is a famous Oriya proverb which says, *ati bhakti chori lakshana*: “a great display of devotion is often the symptom of a thief”. One is therefore advised to get sufficient knowledge from the authorized scriptures and carefully examine individuals and institutions before accepting someone as a teacher of bhakti. We read in *Bhakti rasamrita sindhu* (1.2.101), compiled by Rupa Gosvami: *sruti sruti puranadi pancharatra vidhim vina, aikantiki harer bhaktir utpatayaiva kalpate*, “A so-called exclusive devotion to the Lord which is not in accordance with the genuine Vedic knowledge contained both in *sruti* and *smriti* is simply a disturbance that creates confusion in society”.

The Vedic scriptures

The word “*Veda*” literally means “knowledge”. Vedic tradition recognizes two large groups of scriptures: *sruti* (the original texts) and *smriti* (a collection of commentaries). Tradition says that the present form of the Vedic *sruti* was compiled about 5000 years ago by the great sage Vyasa and his direct disciples, to preserve the ancient knowledge in a standard format during the upcoming period called *kali yuga* (“the black age”), in which people were expected to lose memory, concentration, intelligence, good environmental conditions and longevity. In fact, it is said that in previous ages Vedic knowledge was much vaster and deeper than what we can approach today in Kali yuga with our limited understanding and the unfavorable conditions in which we live. Not all these original Vedas have survived time in these 5,000 years. Originally the *Rig Veda* had 21 branches, the *Yajur* had 109, the *Sama* had 1000 and the *Atharva* had 50, with over 100,000 verses. Now only about a fifth of these are still known, yet the present corpus of Vedic scriptures remains the most comprehensive and scientific presentation on theology, philosophy, ethics, and many other branches of knowledge.

Vedic knowledge is not limited by time and space or by any other material consideration, as it is considered eternal and universal, and manifested cyclically just like the creation of the universe. So the term “Vedic scriptures” indicates not only the original manuscripts that prove Hinduism to be the oldest known religion of the world, but any other literary work or teaching presented by realized souls who explain the original knowledge with the same harmonious conclusions. For example, we see in the case of *Puranas* (“ancient stories”) that the original teaching is expanded and elaborated upon by a series of teachers or realized souls.

The *Bhagavata Purana* is said to have been expounded in this age by Vyasadeva to Sukadeva, but Sukadeva had already heard it in his previous life as a parrot while perching on a banyan tree under which Mahadeva Shiva was narrating the *Bhagavata* to Parvati. Sukadeva Gosvami then narrated the *Bhagavata* to Maharaja Parikshit on the bank of the Ganges in the presence of various sages. The present version, however, is recorded as it was repeated by Suta Gosvami to the sages assembled in the holy place of Naimisaranya: Suta Gosvami explains that he heard the narration of the *Bhagavatam* from Sukadeva Gosvami as he was also present on the bank of the Ganges. Regular references are given in the text quoting teachings and stories presented previously by various other personalities in the form of dialogues, for example between Maitreya and Vidura. It is therefore impossible to state in which particular historical period the Vedas were composed.

Historians who refuse to believe in the time frame stated by Vedic scriptures themselves can at most establish the time frame of the manuscripts that have been found and assign a “compilation period” based on the oldest available manuscripts. This is not done simply by evaluating the age of the paper, palm leaf or other material on which the text is written, but also by looking for historical references in the text. Of course in the case of Vedic knowledge, which traditionally includes new details, examples, commentaries and explanations composed by the later speakers who add them to the earlier narration, this system of assigning a time frame becomes very unreliable.

Another system used by mainstream historians is based on the “complexity” of the information, based on the theory that the entire human kind evolved from an uncivilized pre-historical state to a gradually civilized system with standard inventions (fire, agriculture, wheel, alphabet, numbers, astronomy, geometry, organized religion, philosophy, technology, etc) up to the present form of civilization, that is considered the highest product of historical evolution and human progress.

The time line of the stages of such evolution are generally established according to the most ancient evidence acceptable – as much as that does not challenge the established theory, because evidence that contradicts the official mainstream theory is systematically ignored or minimized. Most history text books teach that pre-history was divided into various stone age periods with a specific general time line calculated on the findings in the European region, while the rest of the world was automatically considered “uncivilized” until the arrival of “civilizers” from Europe.

We now know very well that such a theory is not correct.

Several populations around the world have been found up to very recent times as happily and comfortably living in “stone age” or otherwise non-technological conditions without any need of “evolving” towards the Western/European model, and actually demonstrating better survival capacities, harmony with the environment, social cooperation and ethical values than the “civilized” societies. When abruptly forced to contact with “advanced civilization” these people usually suffer, decline and disappear instead of prospering as one would expect it from a contact with “progress”.

Furthermore, mainstream archeology is finding increasing difficulties in “sweeping under the rug” all the mounting evidence of extremely advanced civilizations that unquestionably existed many more thousands of years (even millions of years) before the accepted evolution of mankind, especially outside Europe.

Unfortunately this crisis of history, archeology, paleontology and anthropology (all names for the same “knowledge of human civilization”) is carefully hidden from the eyes of the public and even from eyes of many specialists, who are still made to believe that the old colonial conceptions are still unquestionable. However, an open minded student of Vedic literature and tradition will easily see through the academic mists and be able to put all “strange findings” in the proper perspective.

Regarding their own composition, the *Vedas* make no mystery of their eternity, and the mainstream academic division of the Vedic texts according to the “period of composition” does not make much sense for a genuine follower of the Vedic tradition. Vedic knowledge has always been existing, not only on this planet Earth but on other planets as well, personally transmitted by teacher to student, and it is compiled from time to time when it is required by the circumstances. It is amply known that Vyasadeva put in writing all the previous divisions of information about 5000 years ago, at the onset of the Kali yuga, because he could foresee that in the upcoming age of degradation human beings would become confused and forgetful, and unable to understand things as they are. Thus according to the Vedic version, all the different degrees of complexity of Vedic literature were simultaneously compiled by Vyasadeva for the benefit of the many different classes of human beings, who find themselves at different stages of personal (individual and collective) evolution and therefore need appropriate guidance to attain higher and higher levels, just like in a school there must always be simultaneously easier and more complex text books for the different classes of students.

Another myth we need to clarify is that Vedic culture was not brought to India by the so-called “Aryan invasion” , as the colonialist scholars affirmed. The Aryan invasion theory distorted the Vedic concept of *Arya* (“civilized person”) by giving it a completely artificial racial meaning to justify the colonial oppressive and exploitative domination and the intrinsic racial superiority of white people over black people. This absurd theory claimed that a race of nomadic marauders with “Caucasian” racial features like white skin, blue eyes and blond hair, descended from the Caucasus into India massacring and enslaving the original and primitive black populations and “civilizing” India.

However, the version of the *Vedas* is precisely the opposite and finds confirmation with the most recent archeological and ethnological research. In fact shortly after the beginning of Kali yuga bands of nomadic barbarian tribes (called “Sakas” or “Scythians”) resulting from the cross breeding of Yakshas and Rakshasas with primitive tribes of the Caucasus migrated south towards Mesopotamia, and on their way created some problems to north-west India. Some of them settled in the Indian subcontinent and were gradually absorbed and civilized by the Vedic peoples there – quite the opposite of what the colonialist scholars stated.

In fact by reading Vedic literature we can easily see that the Aryan peoples of Vedic civilization had never been “nomadic” at all. Vedic peoples had great cities filled with palaces and temples, permanent villages and hermitages, a very prosperous system of permanent agriculture, and a very refined way of life. Something that better fits the picture of the Sarasvati and Sindhu civilization.

The mainstream academic establishment has at least partially recognized the historical findings at Mohenjo Daro, Harappa and many other archeological sites in the Sarasvati and Sindhu valleys, that reveal an extremely rich, advanced and refined culture that flourished over 5000 years ago: large cities with a complex sewage system that ran under the streets and served all houses with private bathrooms, rounded street corners to facilitate the turning of fast vehicles, systematic street lighting, swimming pools, and so forth. Among the seals found in Harappa, one features an image of the earth globe, with lines that clearly represent latitude and longitude lines on the planet.

Vedic literatures also speak of airplanes, nuclear weapons and other weapons that still remain mysterious (based on the properties of sound, on weather control etc), electricity, calculation of atomic time, biotechnology, and especially of the immense potential of the human mind and body... and a careful and honest translation by open minded scholars will reveal many more wonders that are now becoming understandable to modern people thanks to the simultaneous progress of mainstream science. Even Vedic medicine (the *Ayur Veda*) is presently considered a great inspiration for modern Western researchers.

Yet, the precise astronomical references supplied in Vedic literature in regard to some important events of that very advanced Vedic civilization speak of dates in the order of many thousands of years before the present era, and this is still difficult to accept for mainstream historians. Therefore a line is drawn generally between the “Vedic times” and the Kali yuga that began about 5000 years ago, in 3000 BCE (according to the astronomical calculations of Aryabhata, precisely on 18th February 3102 BCE).

Vedic tradition explains that the onset of Kali yuga gradually brought degradation to civilization through the spreading of material identification, degradation of the *varnas* (see the story of Sringi, the proud son of a *brahmana* that by unjustly cursing Maharaja Parikshit brings about disaster over the kingdom, as described in *Bhagavata Purana*), excessive and complicated religious rituals which lost their real meaning due to lack of understanding and qualification of their *brahmana* performers, a growing material orientation of religiosity, unnecessary animal sacrifices, social injustices and so on.

According to *Bhagavatam* and the Orissan tradition the Lord appeared as Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) in order to reform society and re-establish the basic principles of religion; he preached a more basic and simple path that gave more importance to compassion (*karuna*) and friendship towards all entities (*maitri*), honest and austere behavior, and desire to elevate oneself to liberation, above the external rituals of materialistic religion. Although Buddha did not explicitly encourage his followers to believe in God, in the existence of an individual soul or in the authority of the Vedas, he re-established the basic principles of religion (truthfulness or honesty, compassion, cleanliness and austerity) by preaching the Eightfold Noble Path, which is a highly ethical way of life. Simultaneously, he encouraged people to give up attachment to illusion and material conditioning by preaching the Four Noble Truths. Therefore Buddha is recognized as a genuine *avatara* of Vishnu.

Let us now examine the different texts of Vedic knowledge.

The most important and basic scriptural authorities in Hinduism are called Prasthanaya trayi or Prasthanaya traya (“three points of departure”), and constitute the basis on which all traditional teachers develop their commentaries. When starting to study Vedic knowledge, one should begin from these texts.

They are:

* *Bhagavad gita*, known as Sadhana prasthanaya (practical text)

* *Upanishads*, known as Upadesha prasthanaya (injunctive texts)

* *Brahma Sutras*, known as Nyaya prasthanaya (logical text)

A more general categorization of the vast expanse of Vedic knowledge divides it into Sruti (the original scriptures) and Smriti (commentaries).

Sruti

The original revealed scriptures are called Sruti or more generally *Vedas*.

The four **Vedas** are:

1. *Rig Veda*, containing 10,598 verses arranged in 10 books or *mandalas*, further sub-divided into chapters and sections. It is mostly composed by mystic hymns (1,028 in total) dedicated to the deities in charge of the material manifestation, considered personifications of the universal archetypes or forces of nature.

The hymns of the first 8 chapters contain praise to Indra (250 hymns), Agni (200 hymns), and Soma (100 hymns). The other hymns are dedicated to Surya (also called by other names such as Savitur, Mitra and Pushan), and to the Aswins, Varuna, Rudra, and the goddesses Usha, Aditi and Sarasvati. Fewer hymns are also dedicated to Vishnu, Dyos, and Marut. The 9th chapter deals with the extraction of the *soma rasa*, while the 10th contains suktas (special mantras). Some of the most important Suktas being the Purusha Sukta, Sri Sukta, Narayana Sukta and Pavamana Sukta. One of the most famous verses of *Rig Veda* (1.164.46) recites: *ekam sat vipraha, bahudha vadanti*, “Truth is one, but the wise call It by various names”.

2. *Yajur Veda*, containing 3988 verses in 40 chapters, consists of rituals and explanations of their subtle meaning. The *Yajur Veda* consists of two *samhitas* (collections of verses) known as white *Sukla Yajur Veda* (*Vajasaneyi samhita*) and *Krshna Yajur Veda* (*Taittiriya samhita*), used in *yajnas*.

3. The survived text of the *Sama Veda* consists of 1549 verses set in musical tunes, the origin of the Indian Karnatik music. Mathematical combinations of the seven basic sounds (Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha and Ni) give rise to a world of magic vibrations.

4. Today only the Saunaka branch of the *Atharva Veda* survives, with 5977 verses in 20 chapters. It contains verses for success in agriculture, trade, progeny, and health, to avert evil and diseases, conquer enemies and fulfill personal desires. An important part is dedicated to the development of love and understanding in relationships (between husband and wife, father and sons, teacher and student).

The Vedic mantras, used in Vedic sacrifices, are traditionally chanted by 4 priests: the *hota* who calls the gods by reciting the *Rig veda*, the *adhvaryu* who performs the rituals according to the *Yajur veda*, the *udgata* who sings the *Sama veda*, and the *brahmana* who supervises the ceremony and corrects mistakes. To elaborate on the highly symbolic contents of the Vedic hymns used in rituals (*karma-kanda*) and deity worship (*upasana kanda*), philosophical explanations (*jnana kanda*) have been added (and they are still considered part of the *sruti*). The corpus of this knowledge has been defined as “*trayi vidya*”.

Thus, each of the four original Vedas themselves can be described of having 4 parts:

1. *Samhitas*, or the basic text of the Veda (as described above),
2. *Brahmanas*, explaining on what to meditate during the chanting of the mantras, the story of the rituals and the reason to perform them, and the requirements for the priests who conduct the sacrifice (called *brahmanas*, “those who know Brahman”).

Still existing are the *Aitareya*, *Sankhayan*, *Kausitaki*, *Sthapatha*, *Taittiriya*, *Panchavimsa*, *Sadvimsa*, *Tandya*, *Jaiminiya*, and *Gopatha*.

3. *Aranyakas*, the innermost mystical knowledge destined to those who have renounced materialistic activities and have retired to the forest (*aranya*) to perform austerities, and therefore do not engage in complicated external rituals; they introduce us to the “sacrifice of knowledge”.

4. *Upanishads*, considered the most important part of the *Aranyakas*, are the most complete and profound philosophical explanation of such knowledge, compared to sitting at the feet of the Guru for specific instruction in order to destroy ignorance and attain enlightenment about the nature of the Absolute.

Upanishads

The *Upanishads* have influenced many modern Western thinkers, such as Goethe, Arthur Schopenhauer, Ralph Waldo Emerson and C.G. Jung. They are probably the most famous texts of Indian philosophy, together with *Bhagavad Gita* and *Vedanta sutra*.

The *Upanishads* are classified in various categories:

- Mukhya: particularly important
- Sannyasa: dealing with the renounced order of life
- Samanya: of universal value
- Vaishnava: focusing on Vishnu
- Shaiva: focusing on Shiva
- Shakta: focusing on Devi
- Yoga: dealing with the science of yoga

Here is the list of the 108 Upanishads with their classification:

1. *Isa*: Sukla Yajur Veda, mukhya
2. *Kena*: Sama Veda, mukhya
3. *Katha*: Krishna Yajur Veda, mukhya
4. *Prasna*: Atharva Veda, mukhya
5. *Mundaka*: Atharva Veda, mukhya
6. *Mandukya*: Atharva Veda, mukhya
7. *Taittiriya*: Krishna Yajur veda, mukhya
8. *Aitareya*: Rig Veda, mukhya
9. *Chandogya*: Sama Veda, mukhya
10. *Brihad aranyaka*: Sukla Yajur Veda, mukhya
11. *Brahma*: Krishna Yajur Veda, sannyasa
12. *Kaivalya*: Krishna Yajur Veda, saiva
13. *Jabala (Yajur)*: Sukla Yajur Veda, sannyasa
14. *Svetasvatara*: Krishna Yajur Veda, samanya
15. *Hamsa*: Sukla Yajur Veda, yoga
16. *Aruneya*: Sama Veda, sannyasa
17. *Garbha*: Krishna Yajur Veda, samanya
18. *Narayana*: Krishna Yajur Veda, samanya
19. *Paramahamsa*: Sukla Yajur Veda, sannyasa
20. *Amrita bindu*: Krishna Yajur Veda, yoga
21. *Amriya nada*: Krishna Yajur, yoga
22. *Atharva sira*: Atharva Veda, saiva
23. *Atharva sikha*: Atharva Veda, saiva
24. *Maitrayani*: Sama Veda, samanya
25. *Kausitaki*: Rig Veda, samanya
26. *Brihajjabala*: Atharva Veda, saiva
27. *Nrisimha tapani*: Atharva Veda, vaishnava
28. *Kalagni rudra*: Krishna Yajur Veda, saiva
29. *Maitreya*: Sama Veda, sannyasa
30. *Subala*: Sukla Yajur Veda, samanya
31. *Kshurika*: Krishna Yajur Veda, yoga
32. *Mantrika*: Sukla Yajur Veda, samanya
33. *Sarvasara*: Krishna Yajur Veda, samanya
34. *Niralamba*: Sukla Yajur Veda, samanya
35. *Suka rahasya*: Krishna Yajur Veda, samanya
36. *Vajra suci*: Sama Veda, samanya
37. *Teji bindu*: Krishna Yajur Veda, sannyasa
38. *Nada bindu*: Rig Veda, yoga
39. *Dhyana bindu*: Krishna Yajur Veda, yoga
40. *Brahma vidya*: Krishna Yajur Veda, yoga
41. *Yoga tattva*: Krishna Yajur Veda, yoga
42. *Atma bodhi*: Rig Veda, samanya
43. *Parivrata (Narada parivrajaka)*: Atharva Veda, sannyasa
44. *Trishika*: Sukla Yajur Veda, yoga
45. *Sita*: Atharva Veda, shakta
46. *Yoga chudamani*: Sama Veda, yoga
47. *Nirvana*: Rig Veda, sannyasa
48. *Mandala brahmana*: Sukla Yajur Veda, yoga
49. *Dakshinamurti*: Krishna Yajur Veda, saiva
50. *Sarabha*: Atharva Veda, saiva

51. *Skanda (Tripada vibhuti)*: Krishna Yajur Veda, samanya
52. *Mahanarayana*: Atharva Veda, vaishnava
53. *Advaya taraka*: Sukla Yajur Veda, vaishnava
54. *Rama rahasya*: Atharva Veda, vaishnava
55. *Rama tapani*: Atharva Veda, vaishnava
56. *Vasudeva*: Sama Veda, vaishnava
57. *Mugdala*: Rig Veda, samanya
58. *Sandilya*: Atharva Veda, yoga
59. *Paingala*: Sukla Yajur Veda, samanya
60. *Bhikshaka*: Sukla Yajur Veda, sannayasa
61. *Mahata*: Sama Veda, samanya
62. *Sariraka*: Krishna Yajur Veda, samanya
63. *Yoga sikha*: Krishna Yajur Veda, yoga
64. *Turiyatita*: Sukla Yajur Veda, sannayasa
65. *Sannyasa*: Sama Veda, sannayasa
66. *Paramahamsa parivajaka*: Atharva Veda, sannayasa
67. *Akshamalika*: Rig Veda, saiva
68. *Avyakta*: Sama Veda, vaishnava
69. *Ekakshara*: Krishna Yajur Veda, samanya
70. *Annapurna*: Atharva Veda, shakta
71. *Surya*: Atharva Veda, samanya
72. *Akshi*: Krishna Yajur Veda, samanya
73. *Adhyatma*: Sukla Yajur Veda, samanya
74. *Kundika*: Sama Veda, sannayasa
75. *Savitri*: Sama Veda, samanya
76. *Atma*: Atharva Veda, samanya
77. *Pashupata*: Atharva Veda, yoga
78. *Para brahma*: Atharva Veda, sannayasa
79. *Avadhrita*: Krishna Yajur Veda, sannayasa
80. *Tripura tapani*: Atharva Veda, shakta
81. *Devi*: Atharva Veda, shakta
82. *Tripura*: Rig Veda, shakta
83. *Katha rudra*: Krishna Yajur Veda, sannayasa
84. *Bhavana*: Atharva Veda, shakta
85. *Rudra hridaya*: Krishna Yajur Veda, saiva
86. *Yoga kundalini*: Krishna Yajur Veda, yoga
87. *Bhasma*: Atharva Veda, saiva
88. *Rudraksha*: Sama Veda, saiva
89. *Ganapati*: Atharva Veda, saiva
90. *Darshana*: Sama Veda, yoga
91. *Tarasara*: Sukla Yajur Veda, vaishnava
92. *Mahavakya*: Atharva Veda, yoga
93. *Pancha brahma*: Krishna Yajur Veda, saiva
94. *Pranagni hotra*: Krishna Yajur Veda, samanya
95. *Gopala tapani*: Atharva Veda, vaishnava
96. *Krishna*: Atharva Veda, vaishnava
97. *Yajnavalkya*: Sukla Yajur Veda, sannayasa
98. *Varaha*: Krishna Yajur Veda, sannayasa
99. *Satyayani*: Sukla Yajur Veda, sannayasa
100. *Hayagriva*: Atharva Veda, vaishnava
101. *Dattatreya*: Atharva Veda, vaishnava

102. *Garuda*: Atharva Veda, vaishnava
 103. *Kali santarana*: Krishna Yajur Veda, vaishnava
 104. *Jabala (Sama)*: Sama Veda, saiva
 105. *Saubhagya*: Rig Veda, shakta
 106. *Sarasvati rahasya*: Krishna Yajur Veda, shakta
 107. *Bahrcha*: Rig Veda, shakta
 108. *Muktika*: Sukla Yajur Veda, samanya

The most famous *Upanishads* are as follows:

- Brihad Aranyaka

Starting from the explanation of the meaning of the Vedic sacrifice, it describes Vac (the creative word) as the origin of the universe. It then explains about Dharma and the four social categories, and Prana or the life air. The second *adhyaya* explains the nature of Brahman and Atman, while the third deals with the departure from the body and the destiny of the living entity after death, and the nature of Antaryami. The fourth elaborates on the three states of consciousness and reincarnation. The fifth describes again Brahman as the origin of everything, and the sixth speaks about the difficulties to be overcome in the process of liberation (particularly the struggle of the senses). This *Upanishad* (1.3.28 *Sukla Yajur Veda*) contains the famous verse *asato ma sad gamaya, tamaso ma jyotir gamaya, mrityor ma amritam gamaya*, “from the impermanent lead me to the eternal, from darkness lead me to light, from death lead me to immortality”.

- Svetasvatara

It contains 6 chapters with the philosophical explanation of the soul, Brahman, Paramatma and material nature, and the process for spiritual realization. It says that the Self supports both the eternal and the transient, the manifest and the non-manifest. Due to *maya* (illusion) the embodied *atman* becomes forgetful of his own divine nature but meditation enables him to vanquish illusion and ignorance. Creation exists eternally although in cycles, and the mind, matter and *maya* are three aspects of Brahman.

- **Kena**, belonging to the *Sama Veda*, is composed of 4 sections, 2 in verse (describing *nir-guna* Brahman) and 2 in prose (describing *sa-guna* Brahman or Isvara). The knowledge of Isvara, called *para vidya*, is possible only for those who abandon material identification and attachments to attain the consciousness of the identity with Brahman.

- **Katha**, composed of 6 chapters, it contains the conversation between Nachiketa and Yamaraja. Nachiketa was the young son of a *brahmana* who was performing a difficult sacrifice. During such ritual his father lost his temper and “sent him to Yamaraja”, and Nachiketa obliged. Arrived at Yamaloka the child had a deep conversation with the Lord of Death, and was finally sent back with many blessings and powerful spiritual realizations.

- **Aitareya** is actually a part of the *Aitareya Aranyaka* of the *Rig Veda*. It is composed of 3 chapters (starting from the 4th chapter of the 2nd *Aranyaka*), and elaborates on the inner meaning of the sacrificial rituals (described in the previous chapters of the *Aranyaka*). It describes Brahman as the source, support and end of the universe. Without Him the eye cannot see, the ear cannot hear, the skin cannot feel, the tongue cannot speak and the mind cannot think. He is pure consciousness.

- **Chandogya**, one of the longest, it belongs to the *Sama Veda*, *Chandogya Brahmana*. The first 2 chapters of the *Brahmana* deal with sacrifices and ritual worship, then the other 8 chapters constitute the *Upanishad* part, containing stories and dialogues, including the story of Satyakama. Satyakama Jabala was recognized as a qualified *brahmana* by his guru because of the love for truthfulness he demonstrated. Among the important teachings of this *Upanishad*, the nature of Brahman as Existence (and not as a nothingness or void).

- **Mundaka**, contains 6 chapters, with the instruction of Angira to Saunaka, describing two types of knowledge, the higher and the lower.

- **Mandukya**, the shortest, contains only 12 very important verses explaining the passage of the living entity through the stages of waking, dream and deep sleep, and eventually into the fourth state beyond senses and expression (called *turiya*), where the self can be realized.

- **Taittiriya**, contains 3 chapters, explaining the process of creation of the material world from Brahman from *akash* (ether) to *vayu* (air), to *tejas* (fire), to *ap* (water) to *prithivi* (earth).

These elements are also explained respectively as gravitational energy, kinetic energy, radiation, electricity and magnetism. It also gives instructions about “moral purity, intelligence, search for knowledge, hope, leadership skills, determined concentration, health and strength”.

A dharmic person observes truthfulness and religiosity, shares wisdom and shows gratefulness to parents and forefathers, is dynamic and skilled, and does not procrastinate or neglects worldly or spiritual realities.

- **Prasna**, belonging to the *Atharva Veda*, has 6 sections, each containing a question asked to the Rishi Pippalada by his disciples Sukesha, Satyakama, Gargya, Kousalya, Bhargava and Kabandhi.

- **Isha**, from the 40th chapter of the *Sukla Yajur Veda*, contains only 18 verses. One of the most famous and important of its verses clearly explains the concept of property and utilisation (*isha vasyam idam sarvam*).

- **Kaivalya**, in the form of a dialogue between disciple and guru. The teacher explains to the student that in order to attain the Brahman realization one needs to develop faith in the words of scriptures and guru. Brahman is the One without beginning, middle or end, all pervading, infinite wisdom and bliss, ever present in the hearts of all beings.

- **Kausitaki**, composed of 4 chapters.

- **Maitri** or *Maitrayaniya*, belonging to the black *Yajur Veda*, containing the teachings of Maitri in 7 chapters. It mentions the three forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, connected to the three *gunas*.

- **Subala**, from *Sukla Yajur Veda*, is a dialogue between Rishi Subala and Brahma, about the nature of the universe and Brahman.

- **Jabala**, belonging to *Atharva Veda*, discusses renunciation.

- **Paingala**, from the *Sukla Yajur Veda*, is a dialogue between Yajnavalkya and his disciple Paingala.

- **Vajrasucira**, from *Sama Veda*, discussing the true character and activities of a *brahmana*, specifying that birth is not the criteria for judging who is a *brahmana*.

- **Krishna**, describes the *lilas* of the *avatara* of Krishna in Vrindavana.

- **Gopala Tapani**, contains only 2 chapters, elaborating on the divine nature of Krishna.

Bhagavad Gita is also considered one of the *Upanishads* (*Gitopanishad*) although at present it is contained in the *Mahabharata* as 18 chapters of instructions given to Arjuna by Krishna.

The basic teachings of the *Upanishads* are summarized in the six *mahavakyas*:

1. *aham brahmasmi* (“I am Brahman, conscious living spirit”)
2. *ayam atma brahman* (“the self is Brahman”)
3. *tat tvam asi* (“you are Brahman”)
4. *prajnanam brahma* (“consciousness is Brahman”)
5. *sarvam khalv idam brahma* (“all that exist is Brahman”)
6. *so 'ham* (“I am That”)

Smriti

Besides the main four *Vedas* and their philosophical elaboration, there are other secondary *Vedas* or *shastras*, called *smriti shastra*, *Vedangas* or *Upavedas*, composed by great Rishis and *avatars* such as Manu, Yajnavalkya, Parasara, Brihaspati, Daksha, Gautama, Kanada, Bharata, Yama, Angira, Pracheta, Yogeshvara, Atri, Jaimini, Panini, Kautiliya, Nandi and Dhanvantari Vishnu.

They include instructions on dharma application, practical knowledge to live in this world, historical records, and other useful information. The collections of regulations are also called generically *Nibandhas*. Here is a list of the corollary Vedic Smritis.

Vedangas:

- * *Siksha*, instructions about the correct pronunciation of mantras
- * *Chanda*, instructions about the intonation and metrics
- * *Kalpa*, instructions about the practical proceedings of the rituals
- * *Srauta*, royal rituals such as *asvamedha*, *rajasuya*, *agnistoma*, *agnihotra*, *pitri yajna*, etc
- * *Grihya*, daily worship in householder family, including *samskaras*
- * *Vyakarana*, grammar

- * *Nirukta*, a dictionary of etymology
- * *Jyotish*, astrology

Upangas or *Upavedas*:

- * *Nyaya*, logic (the special school of Rishi Gautama)
- * *Vaisesika* (the special school of Rishi Kanada), composed by questions and answers about the elements, the atoms, the soul, and the categories of experience, examined through the two methods of perception and inference.
- * *Sankhya*
- * *Yoga* (see the separate chapter)
- * *Dharma*, social laws or occupational duties
- * *Artha*, politics, sociology and economy
- * *Dhanur*, military science
- * *Vimanika*, airplanes and space ships
- * *Kama*, enjoyment of the senses
- * *Gandharva* (or *Natyasastra*), dance, drama and music
- * *Ayur*, medicine
- * *Sulba*, mathematics
- * *Krishi*, agriculture
- * *Silpa*, handicrafts and architecture
- * *Yoga Vasistha* (a dialogue between Rama and Vasistha)
- * *Panchatantra* (5 books of popular stories with moral significance)

Other important texts are the philosophical commentaries on the *Vedas*:

1. *Uttara Mimamsa*, also called *Vedanta sutra* or *Brahma sutra*
 2. *Purva Mimamsa*, considered the introduction to the philosophy of *Vedanta*
- Both explain the application of philosophy in daily life as a means of liberation from the cycle of birth and death, beyond the purpose of the material blessings sought through the *Karma kanda*.

The fifth Veda

The “fifth *Veda*” is constituted by the *Puranas* and the *Itihasas*, collections of philosophical and theological teachings presented in a unique blend of stories, historical records, epic poetry, and allegories. Compared to the similar sacred stories of other religious traditions, *Puranas* and *Itihasas* contain an immensely greater quantity and quality of information, not only on theology and philosophy but also on cosmology and several other branches of science. To give just one example, a chapter of the *Bhagavata Purana* describes the various levels of divisions of time, starting from atomic time and up to the duration of one cycle of creation, maintenance and dissolution of the entire universe.

Puranas

It is the largest body of *Smriti* literature, explaining the teachings of the *Vedas* in the form of dialogues and stories. There are 18 main *Puranas*, of which *Bhagavata Purana* is considered the topmost or most popular.

The *Bhagavata Purana* is regularly chanted in the Jagannatha temple in Puri and in many other Hindu temples all over the world. It is considered the natural commentary of the *Vedanta sutras*, written by Vyasadeva himself to stress the importance of *bhakti* in divine knowledge, the sublime mixture of theology, philosophy and cosmology that constitutes the object of the *Vedas*.

The *Bhagavata Purana* is narrated by Suta Gosvami to the sages gathered at Naimisaranya to celebrate a great sacrifice to counteract the bad effects of Kali yuga. Suta relates the end of the Kurukshetra war and illustrates the beginning of Kali yuga, then speaks of king Parikshit (the son of Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna) who fights against the increasing power of Kali yuga but, under the influence of the degradation of the age, is cursed to death by the ignorant and proud son of a *brahmana*, called Sringi.

Parikshit then retires to the bank of the Ganga to spend the last 7 days of his life in complete absorption on transcendental subjects to prepare for his next destination, and Sukadeva Gosvami the son of Vyasa arrives to deliver him the highest and most intimate spiritual knowledge by which one can attain liberation (1.1.9-23):

- what is the ultimate benefit for all human beings
- what is the essence and meaning of all scriptures
- what are the teachings of the great saints of previous ages
- what are the glories and activities of God
- where the principles of religion can be found during the age of Kali.

The text of the *Bhagavatam* gradually explores the deep meanings and the unthinkable powers of God, then relates the most famous divine manifestations in this material world, culminating with the advent and activities of Krishna, who has just disappeared from the planet.

The *Devi Bhagavata Purana* is an additional compendium of all the *Puranas*, describing the 18 *Mahapuranas* and the 18 *Upapuranas*; it describes the 28 appearances of Vyasa, the knowledge about Mother Kali, Lakshmi and Sarasvati, Radha and Krishna.

The *Mahapuranas* are divided into groups according to the aspect of the Godhead they deal with: *Bhagavata*, *Linga*, *Skanda*, *Agni*, *Matsya*, *Kurma*, and *Shiva* (or *Vayu*) *Puranas*. *Brahma*, *Brahmanda*, *Brahma-vaivarta*, *Markandeya*, *Bhavisya*, *Vamana*, *Vishnu*, *Narada* or *Naradiya*, *Garuda*, *Padma*, and *Varaha Puranas*.

The *Upapuranas* are: *Sanatkumara*, *Narasimha*, *Shiva*, *Durvasasa*, *Kapila*, *Manava*, *Ausanasa*, *Varuna*, *Kalika*, *Samba*, *Nandi*, *Saura*, *Parasara*, *Aditya*, *Mahesvara*, *Bhargava*, and *Vasistha*.

The definition of *Itihasas* refers to epics or historical texts:

- a) *Mahabharata* (which contains *Bhagavad gita*)
- b) *Ramayana* (by Valmiki)

The *Mahabharata* is a monumental work attributed to Vyasa himself, who dictated the text to Ganesha. The protagonists of the story are the five Pandavas (Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva), who were relatives and close associates of Krishna. The *Mahabharata* starts with the history of their family's origins and lineage, setting the scene for the succession dispute between the Pandavas the sons of Pandu and their cousins the Kauravas, sons of Dhritarastra.

The dharmic Pandavas, direct manifestations of Devas such as Yamaraja, Vayu, Indra, and the Asvini kumaras, are the legitimate successors to their father Pandu who was cursed into an early death because of a fatal imprudence he had committed during a hunting expedition. However, in the absence of Pandu, his blind brother Dhritarastra assumed the regency and groomed his own 100 wicked sons, headed by Duryodhana, to ascend the throne by any means. Duryodhana and his brothers actually try to kill the young Pandavas by poisoning them and by setting fire to a shellac house specifically built for them; the Pandavas were then insulted and offended in many ways, exiled for many years, and finally challenged to the final battle at Kurukshetra. The center of the narration of the *Mahabharata* is the famous battle of Kurukshetra, that closes the previous age of Dvapara and inaugurates the new age of Kali with an unprecedented destruction and massacre, as kings and armies from all races and kingdoms over the world participated to the battle that lasted 18 days and included the use of atomic weapons and other weapons based on meteorological control, sound, magnetic fields, heat, radiation, light, and so on. After the bloody victory the five Pandavas, their mother Kunti and their wife Draupadi installed young Parikshit on the throne and retired to the Himalayas. The philosophy of *Bhagavad Gita* is probably the main pillar of Vedic knowledge and tradition, together with the *Upanishad* and the *Brahma sutra*. It is the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, narrated within the *Mahabharata*. It consists of 700 verses arranged in 18 chapters and deals with the nature of the spirit, matter, the influences of material nature (*gunas*), action, devotion, God, time, and the universe. The sublime teachings of *Gita* dispel all illusions and misconceptions, and indicate the path of perfect duty performed without attachment, discrimination between self and non-self, and the nature of Brahman.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is presented in all His glories, and the universe is represented as originated from God. There is no other text that so beautifully explains the nature of God and the soul.

Arjuna also asks Krishna to clarify some misconceptions about religious life and to clearly explain what is the duty of a human being, especially when facing the practical problems of life. Instead of discussing at length about the *Gita*, we prefer to recommend our readers to directly become familiar with the *Gita* itself: a very satisfying reading, appreciated by all.

The *Ramayana* is the other monumental epic of Vedic tradition, still extremely popular with all Hindus. It narrates the story of the *avatara* Ramachandra, who appeared in human society in the Suryavamsa royal dynasty and, due to a palace conspiracy organized by a servant called Manthara, was ordered by Kaikeyi to be exiled to the forest for 14 years. To the immense grief of his father Dasaratha, his mother Kausalya and his brothers Bharata and Satrugna, and the entire population of Ayodhya, Rama left home accompanied by his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana, and traveled around India. While they resided in the forest, Rama and Lakshmana killed many *asuras* to protect the Rishis of the hermitages there, and ran into a large Rakshasa settlement (called Janasthana) inside the Dandaka aranya forest. Attacked by Surpanakha, the sister of the powerful Rakshasa Ravana, Rama and Lakshmana fought back and Surpanakha went to her brother to seek vengeance

Aware of the great military prowess of Rama, Ravana devised a scheme to weaken his determination by kidnapping his beloved wife Sita: he forced his uncle Maricha to take the shape of a beautiful golden deer and Sita, enchanted by the beautiful animal, asked Rama to go get him for her as a pet. Lured into the thick of the forest, Rama finally killed Maricha but while returning to his Rakshasa form, Maricha cried out with the voice of Rama, calling Lakshmana to help. Pushed by an anxious Sita, Lakshmana was forced to go search for Rama and in the meantime Sita, now alone, was kidnapped by Ravana and taken away in a flying chariot.

When Rama and Lakshmana returned, they were informed about the kidnapping by the old eagle Jatayu, who had tried to stop Ravana but was mortally wounded in the attempt. Rama and Lakshmana travelled south in search of Sita and on their way they met Hanuman, the great Vanara warrior and minister of the Vanara king Sugriva. Sugriva had also been unjustly exiled in the forest by his brother Vali, and with the help of Hanuman he secured Rama's alliance in regaining his throne, promising his help and the help of the Vanara army to rescue Sita. Rama and the Vanaras marched to the kingdom of Ravana, Lanka, and built a miraculous bridge of stones over the ocean, then the battle began. After many days of uncertain fight, Rama sought divine help from Durga and Surya, and in the final confrontation with Ravana he finally hit his heart and killed him. After the victory, Rama delivered the kingdom of Lanka to Ravana's good brother Vibhisana and returned to Ayodhya with Sita and Lakshmana.

In a later period, Tulasi Das wrote another famous version of *Ramayana*, entitled *Rama charita manasa*.

Tantra

The entire world of Tantra is divided into two nomenclatures i.e. *Agama* where Shiva is the narrator and Devi hears, and *Nigama* where Devi is the narrator and Shiva hears.

Tantra is another important section of the *Smriti*, sometimes called "sectarian" because it deals with the specific worship of one Deity in full dedication, often presenting that particular Deity as Supreme. The main Tantras are dedicated to Vishnu, Shiva or Durga, while less known *Agamas* are dedicated to Surya and Ganesh.

Tantric knowledge is considered secret and initiatic, or in other words it can be revealed only from guru to disciple, although in recent times there have been many translations and publications on the subject, most of which are quite cheap and misleading.

The most famous *Tantra* is dedicated to the Mother Goddess Durga, and since it trains its initiates to worship Mother Nature and the feminine energy in all her aspects, some people mistake the idea of *tantra* for some kind of mystical oriental sex. We must be particularly careful about cheap people who call themselves tantriks, but are actually ghost worshipers and perform dangerous and evil practices among the 6 black arts (*shanti* for averting diseases, *vashikarana* for controlling the mind of others, *stambhana* for stopping the movement of others, *vidveshana* for creating quarrel among people, *ucchatana* for driving away persons, and *marana* for killing). In the long run, the result of such practices (that can be equated with black magic) is disastrous even for the performer.

Each *Agama* consists of four parts:

1. philosophical and spiritual knowledge (*vidya*)
2. *sadhana* and mental discipline (*yoga*)
3. rules for the construction of temples, making of murtis and temple worship (*kriya*)
4. rules for personal lifestyle (*achara*)

The *Vaishnava Agamas* present Vishnu as the ultimate Reality. They are divided into the *Pancharatra* and *Vaikhanasa* systems, which are still followed in famous temples. For example, the *Pancharatra* worship system is followed in Venkatesvara temple in Tirupati and Parthasarathi temple in Chennai (Madras), while the *Vaikhanasa* worship system is followed in Ranganatha temple in Srirangam and in the *Varadaraja* temple in Kanchi. The *Shaiva Agamas* present the ultimate Reality in the form of Shiva.

There are four main traditions of Shaivite tantrism: *kapala*, *kalamukha*, *pasupata* and *shaiva* proper. The *Shaiva* tradition proper has further subdivided by originating the *Shaiva Siddhanta* in south India and the *Pratyabhijna* in Kashmiri Shaivism.

The *Shakta Agamas* present the ultimate Reality in the form of *Shakti*.

They are divided into three schools:

1. *dakshinachara* or *samayachara*, following Vedic regulations and applicable for *brahmanas*. In *samayachara* the Mother Goddess is worshiped as *Maha tripura sundari*.

2. *vamachara* or *kaulachara*, sometimes opposite to orthodox Vedic teachings and therefore meant for non-*brahmanas*. In *kaulachara* the Mother is worshipped as *Bhairavi*.

Kaulachara includes the famous *Pancha Ma-kara* rituals (utilizing *Madya* or wine/intoxicating substances, *Mamsa* or flesh, *Maithuna* or sexual union, *Matsya* or fish and *Mudra* or hand gestures).

The *Kaulachara* has been further subdivided into *Uttara* and *Purva*. The *Purva Kaulas* believe in *Shiva Shakti* equilibrium and the *Uttara Kaulas* insist solely on *Shakti* worship.

3. *mishra* (a mixture of both); this path is followed specifically in *Puri*.

Tantric texts sub-divide these traditions into 7 *acharas*: *Vedachara*, *Vaishnavachara*, *Shaivachara*, *Dakshinachara*, *Vamachara*, *Siddhantachara* and *Kaulachara*.

The most important Tantric texts are *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Rudra Yamala*, *Mahanirvanatantra*, *Sharadatilaka Tantra* etc. *Sharadatilaka Tantra* is the root of almost all of the *bija mantras* used in all forms of ritual worship in Hinduism.

The 64 *Tantras* given in the *Vamakeshvara* are as follows: *Mahamaya*, *Shambhara*, *Yoginijala-shambhara*, *Tattva-shambhara*, *Bhairavashtaka* (*Asitanga*, *Ruru*, *Chanda*, *Krodha*, *Unmatta*, *Kapali*, *Bhishana*, *Sanghara*), *Bahurupashtaka* (the eight *Tantras* of the seven *Matrikas* and *Shivadutis*), *Yamalashstaka* (*Brahmayamala*, *Vishnuyamalam*, *Rudrayamala*, *Lakshmiyamala*, *Umayamala*, *Skandayamala*, *Bhaskara* or *Jayadrathayamala*), *Ganeshayamala*, *Grahayamala*, *Mahochchushya*, *Vatula*, *Vatullotara*, *Hridbheda*, *Tantrabheda*, *Guhyatantra*, *Kamika*, *Kalavada*, *Kalasara*, *Kubjikamata*, *Tantrottara*, *Vinatantra*, *Trodala*, *Trodalottara*, *Panchamrita*, *Rupabheda*, *Bhutoddamara*, *Kulasara*, *Kuloddhisha*, *Kulachudamani*, *Sarvajnottara*, *Mahakalimata*, *Mahalakshimimata*, *Siddhayogeshvarimata*, *Kurupikamata*, *Devarupikamata*, *Sarvaviramata*, *Vimalamata*, *Purvamnaya*, *Pashchimamnaya*, *Dakshinamnaya*, *Uttaramnaya*, *Niruttara*, *Vaisheshika*, *Jnanarnava*, *Virabali*, *Arunesha*, *Mohinisha*, *Vishuddesvara*.

The various philosophical schools

Besides the traditional scriptures, Vedic knowledge remained alive through the centuries due to the oceanic and encyclopedic expanse of commentaries and literary works compiled by *Rishis* and enlightened teachers. Many more were lost in time. Most of the texts we have today are actually just partial transcriptions or commentaries quoting passages from the original works of ancient Vedic knowledge.

We have already mentioned the *Vedangas* and *Upangas*, developed by Vyasa's disciples and their successors. Their particular fields of philosophical research and perspective on the Absolute and Complete Truth can be categorized in the *Sad Darshanas* (also called *astika darshanas*), the six orthodox subjects or schools of Vedic philosophy.

There are also other schools of philosophy, called *nastika darshanas* because they do not recognize the theological authority of the Vedas: they are the traditions taught by Charvaka (materialistic atheism), Buddha (Buddhism) and Jina (Jainism). We will not examine these as they are not considered Vedic or Hindu, and they have very small relevance in today's Indian culture.

We need to understand that all these schools and philosophical systems are not considered as opposed or contradictory, but are rather considered as different perspectives to the same Absolute Truth or Reality, and recognizing the same basic concepts.

The purpose of this variety of schools is philosophical debate (*vagvada*), intended to widen the perspective of the listeners and enable them to expand their minds (thus becoming "*mahatmas*") and attain enlightenment (*prakash*) and liberation (*moksha*).

For all these schools, Enlightenment consists in getting all the pieces together in the proper multi-dimensional perspective and realizing the "greater picture" of Reality.

The six Darshanas

The *Sad Darshanas*, the main orthodox schools of Vedic thought, have developed the following main traditions of practices to attain Self realization:

1. *Uttara mimamsa* or *Vedanta* (compiled by Vyasa), considered the conclusion of the four Vedas as the knowledge of Brahman. Subsequently, in post-Vedic times this school was further sub-divided into Advaita (Sankara) and Dvaita (represented by the Vaishnava *acharyas*).

2. *Karma mimamsa* or *Purva mimamsa* (established by Jaimini and based on the *karma kanda* section of the Vedas related to ritualistic ceremonies); the two foremost philosophers of this school are Prabhakara and Kumarila Bhatta.

3. *Yoga* (also called Raja Yoga or Astanga Yoga). The most famous philosopher of this school is Patanjali who wrote the *Yoga sutras*. *Vedanta* defines yoga as the means of uniting *jivatman* with Paramatman. It is also the means of uniting matter and spirit, the lower self with the higher self, and the solar and lunar energies that compose the body and the mind (this is the meaning of the definition "Hatha", for example).

The practice of Yoga has eight *angas* (*astanga yoga*), defined as *yama* (restraint), *niyama* (observances), *asana* (control of body), *pranayama* (control of breathing), *pratyahara* (control of the senses), *dharana* (control of the mind), *dhyana* (meditation), *samadhi* (complete absorption in the Absolute). The practices that constitute the yoga *sadhana* include physical exercises (*kriya*), cultivation of knowledge (*jnana*), active selfless service (*karma*), and devotion to God (*bhakti*). Mantras (special sound vibrations) and yantras (special diagrams) are also utilized.

Yoga is also closely connected with the science of *Ayurveda* in regard to the lifestyle and the diet. Since the subject of Yoga is very vast, we have dedicated a separate publication entitled "*Mind Training: A Simple Course on Meditation and Yoga*".

4. Sankhya (Kapila)

This philosophical system stresses the evolutionary nature of the universe and analyzes (*sankhya* means "analysis") the various components of reality, categorizing them with precision. The two main categories of *sankhya* are Purusha (spirit) and Prakriti (matter); the contact of these two generates the material world. Prakriti is composed by three subtle elements called *gunas* (*sattva* or goodness, *rajas* or passion and *tamas* or ignorance). From the interaction of the *gunas*, all the different categories of the material world are originated, including the body, senses, mind and intellect.

5. Nyaya (Gautama)

The system of logic ("theory of inference") is not a system of religious practices but rather an organized investigation on the nature of Reality, with the purpose of attaining liberation.

6. *Vaisesika* (Kanada)

Very similar to the Nyaya school, this philosophical system (“study of differences”) is also known as the Atomic School of Hinduism. It considers six categories of investigation: substance, quality, action, category of concept, species and inherence.

Advaita and Dvaita

As we have mentioned, Vedanta has two main schools, giving emphasis to Advaita, or monism, and Dvaita, or difference. As in the case of the six Darshanas, it is important to understand that the purpose of Vedic knowledge is to present different angles and perspectives of Reality so that we become capable of contemplating it from many sides, thereby gaining a sort of “multidimensional vision”.

Thus enlightened by the direct perception of the greater picture, we can understand better each and every position and perspective offered by each school. If on the other hand we choose a sectarian approach to the understanding of knowledge, our vision remains limited and incomplete, and tied to the material conditionings and duality.

The problem with the mainstream academic presentation as opposed to the Vedic version, is that the westernized academic concept is not interested in reconciling the various aspects of Reality into a unified vision and a common platform. In mainstream academics, the branches of knowledge become separated and opposed, as if the purpose of study was to disprove all reality. Philosophy becomes different and opposed to spirituality, metaphysics becomes different and opposed to physics, and religion becomes different and opposed to science. The human being is torn to pieces. Medicine treats organs separately. The body is treated separately from the mind. Individuals are considered and treated impersonally, and separated from their families and communities.

On the other hand, the Vedic vision categorizes the fields of knowledge without separating them, as everything and everyone is integral part of the Supreme Whole, with the purpose of celebrating Reality in all its wonderful aspects. There are practically innumerable branches of the main two schools (Advaita and Dvaita), called Sampradayas, generally categorized as Vaishnava, Shaiva, Shakta, and Smarta.

Sampradayas

A Sampradaya is an ideological tradition in which the teachings of a founder are transmitted faithfully in a line of descendants who in turn became teachers after achieving perfection in self-realization and mastery over the theory and practices that constitute the particular perspective of the founder. Any established philosophical school within a denomination is called a Sampradaya and a traditional lineage of teachers from any Sampradaya is called Parampara. This concept applies at various levels and constitutes the basis of religious Institutions (or Mathas) founded by great Acharyas, and also the heritage of high level family traditions in the Hindu concept. In traditional Hinduism, often these two (religious affiliation and family descendance) are strictly interconnected as Vedic knowledge makes no difference between son and disciple. In the case of religious affiliation, a disciple approaches a Sampradaya because he is attracted by the teachings and by the behavior manifested by the current representatives of the Tradition, and therefore accepts to become integrated into the system of beliefs and practices that constitutes the characteristic of the Tradition itself.

Strict adherence to the instructions and a specific check-and-balance system ensures the vitality of the Tradition, as the current teacher has the right and duty to train the aspirant disciples as required, and will endorse them only when they have demonstrated the appropriate realizations in theory and practice, according to the various levels and positions in the Institution. Such endorsement comes in the form of *diksha*, or formal initiation, and appointment in various positions as preachers, leaders, and initiating Gurus.

Also in the case of family heritage, in a family descending from a great religious personality there is a need of a strict adherence to the instructions and a specific check-and-balance system, to which the Guru also participates, as the family Sampradaya also depends on the external validation of qualified mentors since the attachment to bodily identification can be blinding.

In a family tradition the equivalent of *diksha* is birth, achieved through a system of *samskaras* or formative ceremonies of ritual purification that are intended to shape the level of consciousness of the matrix to which a suitable personality will be attracted to take birth.

These *samskaras* are performed with the help of qualified mentors that are not part of the seminal family, to ensure the maximum objectivity and detachment.

Another important factor in the family Sampradaya is the tradition of adoption, a very common practice in Hinduism, that enables the family leaders to accept qualified persons into the family Tradition even beyond the normal method of marriage. The negative side of adoption is the rejection of an unqualified seminal child, also a very common practice not only endorsed but also recommended by the check-and-balance system represented by Shastra, Guru and Sadhus, the traditional scripture, the qualified religious teachers and the expert and wise elders of the community.

In fact, even if the parents of an unqualified child may hesitate to abandon him, the council of the elders and the *brahmanas* have the authority to expel him from the community and therefore from the family Sampradaya.

However, as *Bhagavad gita* (4.2) points out, this method to propagate and perpetuate knowledge can fail in the course of time, no matter how perfectly it was established in the first place:

*evam parampara-praptam imam rajarshayo viduh
sa kaleneha mahata yogo nashtah parantapa*

“This knowledge was learned by the saintly Kings through Tradition, but the functional connection (*yoga*) in the transmission of knowledge usually becomes lost with time.”

The gradual loss of knowledge and realization within a particular Sampradaya is almost inevitable, as rarely the disciples of a founder are on his same level of knowledge and realization, and impurities can always penetrate in the system from weak spots.

Due to the decline and degradation inherent in the destructive effects of Time and Illusion, there is a frequent need to renew the transmission of realized knowledge, so God periodically manifests either directly or indirectly, by delegating His loyal servants to carry out His mission (4.7-8):

*yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata
abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srijami aham*

“Every time that Dharma declines and Adharma becomes prominent, at that time I manifest Myself”

*paritranaaya sadhunam vinashaya cha duskritam
dharma-samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge*

“I become manifest from age to age, to protect the good people, to destroy the evil-doers, and to re-establish Dharma.”

For this reason, the larger Tradition of Hinduism is ready to accept periodical renovation of the original teachings in view of the different circumstances of *desa, kala, patra* (place, time and audience), provided that the new presentation of the Sanatana Dharma (“eternal principles of religion”) is compatible with the eternal and universal fundamentals explained and exemplified in the root scriptures.

For example, no “new Sampradaya” can be accepted if it ignorantly presents Dharma as Adharma (and vice versa) or states that there is no difference between the two (and therefore one may choose according to selfish convenience), or it opposes Dharmic principles such as truthfulness, compassion, cleanliness, self-restraint, goodness, humility, nonviolence, tolerance, simplicity, honest desire to learn, detachment from the objects of sense gratification and possession, detachment from bodily identification, balance, devotion to God (*Gita* 11.8-12), peacefulness, austerity, purity, honesty, wisdom, knowledge and religiousness (*Gita* 18.42).

Also, no “new Sampradaya” can be accepted if it denies the philosophical and theological fundamentals, such as the eternal existence of spirit, reincarnation, the law of consequences to actions, the necessity to properly perform one’s duty, the necessity to improve oneself, dedication to the Divine, the need to overcome duality and illusion, and the authority of genuine scriptures.

In the Hindu there is ample provision for the various Sampradayas to meet and discuss together, especially in public, so that the reconciliation and integration of the different views and perspectives can lead to a higher and deeper vision of the Great Picture that is the One Reality. Ideally, this leads to the rise of a new Sampradaya that is best suited to the needs of the individuals and society.

The Vaishnava Sampradayas have the greatest number of followers and are listed as follows:

* Ramanujacharya (who lived in 12th century, born in 1016), propagated the doctrine called *visista advaita*, or oneness with varieties of the Lord and His energies

* Ramanandi, who branched off from the Ramanujacharya Sampradaya.

- * Madhvacharya, (who lived in 13th century, born in 1238, propagated the doctrine called *visista dvaita*, or duality with varieties,
- * Vishnu Svami, who propagated the doctrine called *suddha dvaita*, or pure transcendental duality;
- * Vallabha Acharya, who branched off from the Vishnu Svami Sampradaya.
- * Nimbarka, who propagated the doctrine called *dvaita advaita* or simultaneous oneness and duality.
- * Vaikhanasa
- * Radha Vallabha
- * Gokulesh
- * Vrindavani
- * Pancharatra
- * Vira Vaishnava
- * Harivyasi

Among the major theological schools of Shaivism we can mention Kashmir Shaivism, Shaiva Siddhanta, Virasaivism and the Lingayat panthi.

The Shaktas are the least sectarian tradition, as they do not give much importance to denominations or classifications. They are happy to celebrate all the festivals for the various Deities, and are extremely tolerant and inclusive as they consider everyone to be a child of the Mother.

The spiritual importance of Puri

The meaning of pilgrimage

The Sanskrit names used to describe the holy place of Puri and pilgrimage places in general are *dhama*, *kshetra*, and *tirtha*. *Dhama* means “abode” and it refers to the fact that God has a special residence place there. God is omnipresent in every single atom of the creation, but some special places have been blessed and surcharged with spiritual power by divine activities and by the activities of holy people there. In India there are four main and famous *dhamas*: Badrinatha in the north, Dvaraka in the west, Ramesvaram in the south, and Jagannatha Puri in the east. It is said that Badrinatha is connected with Satya yuga when the Lord engages in deep meditation, Rameshvaram is the place where in Treta yuga the Lord takes bath and worships, Dvaraka is connected with Dvapara yuga when the Lord takes rest with His queens, and Puri is the pilgrimage place in Kali yuga, where the Lord takes His meals.

Thus in Puri the Lord bestows blessings to His devotees through His Mahaprasadam, His Darshana and His Seva. Of these three blessings, Mahaprasadam is not subject to any restrictions.

When a *dhama* is particularly large, it is called a *kshetra* (“field”).

The meaning of the term indicates the cultivation or performance of spiritual activities intended as service to the *dhama kshetra*, because the results of any spiritual activity performed in such a holy place are multiplied many times by the potency of the land.

It is said that even sleeping in Purushottama kshetra gives the benefits of deep yoga meditation, lying down gives the benefit of offering prostrations, walking around is considered as beneficial as circumambulating the Lord’s temple, talking gives the result of glorifying the Lord, and eating any kind of foods there gives the result of consuming sacred food (*havishyanna*, the remnants of the fire sacrifice).

For this reason traditionally many people come here and take the vow to always reside in the *dhama*: this is called *kshetra sannyasa* or “renouncing to go to any other place”. Such a vow is taken not simply for one’s own spiritual benefit but also for the benefit of society in general, because the spiritual activities and devotion performed in the holy pilgrimage place constantly purify the atmosphere there and offer to the pilgrims the opportunity to obtain the highest benefit from their *tirtha-yatra* (travel to the holy places). Jagannatha Puri is also known as *dasavatara kshetra* because according to Utkala khanda of *Skanda Purana* when the Lord descends in His incarnations He appears here first and then goes to the place where He will perform that particular *lila*; at the end He returns here where He merges into Jagannatha.

Tirtha indicates a “crossing place” or ford, where a river becomes easier to wade through.

This symbology indicates the special spiritual opportunity offered by the holy place to the pilgrims who can thus cross over the river of material existence and attain the shore of spiritual purification.

The connection with water is essential. Water is the purifying substance that every day cleanses our body and mind and everything we use, and in a holy *tirtha* surcharged with spiritual power, water becomes even more purifying.

Therefore traditionally all pilgrims go to take a bath in the holy *tirtha* and offer *tarpana* (oblations to the forefathers and to the gods, especially the Sun god) by standing in the waters and reciting prayers. Many come in pilgrimage carrying the ashes of their ancestors and offer *sraddha* (liberatory worship) to them here, believing that the spiritual power of this holy place will greatly benefit them. The five *tirthas* or holy water reservoirs in Puri are the ocean (called *mahodadhi*), Indradyumna Sarovara, Markandeya Pushkarini, Svetaganga, and Rohini kunda. There are also two other very famous holy tanks, such the famous Narendra Sarovara (or Chandana Sarovara), the Manikarnika *tirtha* (in Manikarnika sahi), the specific tract of the ocean beach called Chakra *tirtha*, and the less famous Manasi Ganga (in Gangamata Gosvamini’s math).

It is said in *Skanda Purana: markandeya avate krishne rohiniam ca mahodadhau indradyumnambhasi snanam punar janma na vidyate*, “If one takes bath in the Markandeya sarovara, in Svetaganga, in the Rohini kunda, in the ocean at Puri, or in the Indradyumna lake, he will not have to take another birth again.”

tirtharaja namastubhyam sarvatirtha mahasrayam pratarvindami bhakty aham trahi mam kshetrvasinam

“I offer my obeisances to the King of all holy places, the refuge and shelter of all the other holy places: O Lord, who reside in this Purushottama Kshetra, please protect me.”

However, it must be said that taking a bath in the holy water reservoirs is not the only purpose of the pilgrimage, especially when such bath is taken without the appropriate consciousness, as if it were an ordinary washing. For example, you should never brush one’s teeth and spit into the water, clip one’s nails or hair, use soap or shampoo, or leave behind gross garbage of any kind on the banks. Bathing within the holy *tirthas* must be performed as a sacred worship ritual, with a sense of deep respect and devotion.

Similarly, it is a traditional custom to leave sacred objects and prasadam to the holy waters at the end of particular rituals, but that, too, should be done with the appropriate consciousness. Only clean (pure) natural (biodegradable) substances (certainly not plastic bags) can be dispersed into the holy reservoirs, that should never be treated as garbage dumps.

Bhagavata Purana (10.84.13) warns that for those who want to remain in the material conception of life and bodily identification, purification by water is not sufficient in itself to grant the highest spiritual perfection:

*yasyatma buddhir kunape tri dhatuke, sva dhik kalatradishu bhauma ijya dhik
yat tirtha buddhih salile na karhicit janeshu abhijneshu sa eva go-kharah,*

“Those who think of themselves as a material body composed of material elements, have a sense of proprietorship and belonging over one’s family connections and relationships, and who worship their native place or country, also believe that a pilgrimage merely consists in taking a bath in a holy water reservoir. These people have no knowledge or understanding at all.”

The real meaning of a visit to the holy places is the spiritual purpose, so one should abandon all material bodily identifications and attachments (such as selfishness) and only cultivate the spiritual identification of being an eternal servant of the Lord and His sacred abode. This opportunity is obtained by sincerely searching the association of genuinely saintly people, worshiping of the Lord, and listening to the spiritual discourses like the recitation of the *lilas* of the Lord and His teachings, especially *Bhagavad Gita* and *Bhagavata Purana*, and the glorification of the Lord through devotional songs.

An extremely important factor for the successful result of a holy pilgrimage is *seva*, or practical service offered to the sacred places, that can be rendered in a variety of ways, such as feeding its residents (from *brahmanas* to cows and even dogs), keeping the places clean, making donations for ceremonies and rituals as well as for the maintenance and beautification of spiritual places, and so on.

Another important point to be considered in visiting a holy place is the need to keep oneself focused on the transcendental reality free from duality and sectarianism. Those who think that honoring and paying respects to the servants of the Lord is opposed to the exclusive loving service of the Lord Himself, or even that worship to the various manifestations of the Lord is contrary to the exclusive dedication to one’s *ishta devata*, are actually unfortunate people who cannot get the spiritual benefit from the holy pilgrimage.

We must not project our limited understanding onto the unlimited and transcendental nature of the Godhead. Therefore it is advisable that all pilgrims offer their respectful obeisances to all the bona fide spiritual establishments in the holy Dhama, even if they feel an exclusive devotion to one particular form of the Lord. In particular, we recommend that the devotees of Krishna or Vishnu should respectfully visit the temples of Lord Mahadeva, who is Kshetrapala, and Goddess Vimala who is the queen of the Kshetra (*Sri Kshetra Rajeswari*), who is Yogamaya.

Shiva Mahadeva is universally accepted by genuine Vaishnava acharyas as the greatest Vaishnava (*vaishnavanam yatha sambhu, Bhagavata Purana* 12.13.16) and therefore disrespecting him is a great offense.

Without his permission and blessings, no one can really enter in the holy *dhama* — even if one physically treads the streets of the geographical location, he will never be able to penetrate in the spiritual reality that remains hidden to the eyes of *mudhas: naham prakasah sarvasya yoga-maya-samavrtah, mudho 'yam nabhijanati loko mam ajam avyayam* (*Gita*, 7.25), “I do not manifest My self to everybody. To their eyes, I am covered by My Yogamaya. The fools remain unable to know Me because I am unborn and eternal.”

Similarly, all scriptures recommend that devotees of Shiva Mahadeva and, or, the Mother Goddess should honor and worship Vishnu, too. All ritual ceremonies call on Sri Vishnu’s blessings for the complete success, because without pleasing Sri Vishnu, all spiritual activities lose their higher transcendental value.

In the Vaishnava tradition there are other *dhamas* in all the places where the Lord manifested His pastimes, and especially in Vrindavana (Uttar Pradesh) and Mathura, Ayodhya (the appearance place of Ramachandra).

For the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, Mayapur-Navadvipa (the appearance place of Sri Chaitanya) is one of the most important pilgrimage places, but they also give a great importance to Puri because Sri Chaitanya lived here after taking *sannyasa* and until his disappearance.

In fact, *Sri Vaishnava tantra* states that Puri contains all the holy places connected with Krishna: *mathura dvaraka lila yah karoti cha gokule, nilachala sthitam krishnas ta eva charati prabhuh*, “In Nilachala, Krishna resides performing all the pastimes He manifested in Mathura, Dvaraka and Gokula (Vrindavana)”.

The Gaudiya Vaishnavas see Vrindavana as manifested in the temple of Gundicha, where Jagannatha goes every year for the Ratha yatra. Sri Chaitanya also believed that the Radha Kunda is represented by the Rohini kunda inside the Jagannatha temple, Govardhana Hill by the Chataka parvata (a large sand hill near the seashore), the the river Yamuna by the ocean, and Vamsi vata by the place next to the banyan tree inside the Jagannatha temple (called Akshaya bata or Kalpa bata).

Gaudiya Vaishnavas still constitute the majority of the pilgrims who visit Puri, coming mostly from the area of Kolkata (Calcutta) and Bengal. Kolkata, that is about 500 km north-east of Puri, has a very strong tradition of devotion to Jagannatha, and many wealthy families from Kolkata (and even corporate companies or Banks) have a holiday house in Puri. Every day at least 4 trains (2 in the daytime and 2 overnight) directly connect Kolkata to Puri, and in Kolkata’s main railway station (Howrah) a separated platform is reserved to the trains that go up and down the line. Before the railway connection arrived in Puri in 1901, people used to travel from Bengal on foot, on bullock or horse carts or palanquins followed by porters for the luggage, according to their financial means. Sometimes a large procession accompanied members of royal families with elephants, camels, armed horsemen, together with carts loaded with luggage. But the stream of people was almost continuous, and every village on the main road had shelters for the pilgrims.

Purushottama kshetra

Jagannatha Puri is also called Nilachala dhama or Niladri (“the blue hill”), Purushottama kshetra (“the holy field of the Supreme Personality of Godhead”), Sankha kshetra (“the holy field shaped like a conchshell”), and Mahodadhi tirtha (“the holy bathing place at the Great Ocean”).

Puri literally means “city”, and so it defines this holy place as the royal capital city of Jagannatha, His personal residence and the center of His kingdom. It is said that when Dvaraka Puri was submerged by the waters of the ocean at the time of Krishna’s disappearance, the opulence of Dvaraka was manifested in Jagannatha Puri, where Krishna continues to reside to bless His devotees.

The glories of Puri, also called Sri Kshetra, are mentioned in the *Matsya purana*, *Brahma purana*, *Narada purana*, *Padma purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Kapila samhita*, *Niladri mahodaya* and Utkala khanda of *Skanda purana*. These and other scriptures also mention the names of Jagannatha and Purushottama, as we will quote later on.

Skanda Purana, Utkala kanda:

*vishnoh kalevare tasmin kshetre sri purushottame
antar vedi maha punya vishnoh hridaya sannibha*

“This Purushottama kshetra is Vishnu’s body, and the Antar Vedi (Ratna simhasana) is His heart.”

*etat kshetra varanchasya vapur bhutam mahatmanah
svayam vapushman yatraste svanamnakshapitam etat*

“This Kshetra is the body of Mahavishnu, the Supreme Lord Himself is physically present here, and the name of the place is Purushottama after His name.”

*svetadvipe yatah vishnu bhoga bhumau nijalayah
jambudvipe karma-bhumau nija-sthanam idam smritam*

“As Svetadvipa is Vishnu’s own *bhoga-bhumi*, similarly in Jambudvipa Purushottama kshetra is Vishnu’s own *karma-bhumi*.”

*mulayatana metadhi srishti palana samhritehe
atra batirjya bhagavan prayatyam atra karyatah
nishpadya krityam prityaham punaratreva tisthati
ato dasavataranam ato darsanadyestu yat phalam
tat phalam labhate martyo drishtva sri purushottamam
dasavatara sangyasya kathita putra te maya*

“This Purushottama kshetra is the root place for creation, maintenance and destruction. Vishnu appears in His *avatara* at this Kshetra, then fulfills the purpose of His incarnation and finally after completing His work He returns to this Kshetra. Whatever blessing one can get by having Darshana of the ten *avataras*, one can get from darshana at Purushottama kshetra, so the other name of this holy place is Dasa avatara kshetra.”

Padma Purana foretells that in Kali yuga a spiritual revolution will start from Purushottama kshetra in Orissa (*hy uktale purushottamat*) and says (7.11.3-6):

*lavanambho nidhes tire purushottama samjnakam puram tad brahmana sreshtha svargad api
sudurlabham, svayam asti pure tasmin yatah sri purushottamah purushottamam ity uktam tasmad tan nama
kovidaih, kshetram tad durlabham vipra samantad dasa yojanam tatrastha dehino devair drisyante cha
chaturbhujah, pravisantas tu tat kshetram sarve syur vishnu-murtayah tasmad vicharana tatra na kartavya
vichakshanaih.*

“This city of Purushottama, on the shore of the ocean, is more wonderful than Svargaloka, the heavenly planets. It has been suitably called Purushottama because the Supreme Personality of Godhead selected it as His capital city and resides there. When the gods look down on this extraordinary Purushottama kshetra, which is ten *yojanas* wide, they see that everyone who lives there has a four-armed form. Even those who simply visit that land take on spiritual forms like that of Vishnu. Therefore one should be careful to never commit offenses to its residents.”

Ramayana (Uttara khanda, 108.29) explains that the family Deity of the Ikshvaku dynasty is called Jagannatha (*aradhaya jagannatham ikshvaku kula daivatam*) and Sri Rama recommends to His devotee Vibhishana to travel to Puri to worship Jagannatha (*aradhaya jagannatha ikshvaku kuladaivatam aradhaniya manisham devanam basavai sahad*). It is also said in *Vamana Purana* that Prahlada visited Puri.

Mahabharata (Vana parva, chapt. 114, slokas 22-24), speaks about the *vedi* (“platform”) near the sea in Kalinga, where the Pandavas arrived after crossing the Vaitarani river, on the banks of which stands the holy city of Jajpur, where the Mother Goddess Viraja resides with Yajna Varaha. On that occasion, Lomasa Rishi told them the story of a sacrifice performed by Visvakarma and presided by Kashyapa, and in which the land was given in charity. Mother Earth did not like the idea and so she sunk away. Only after Kashyapa’s great penance she accepted to appear again as the raised platform near the ocean, where Jagannatha’s temple is built.

Vishnu Purana mentions that the *ayatana* (holy place) of Purushottama was visited by Kandu Rishi who wanted to purify himself from the material desires generated from his relationship with one Apsara: *sa capi bhagavan kandu ksine tapasi sattamah, purusottamakhyam maitreya visnor ayataman yayan.*

“The Lord revealed Himself to Kandu Rishi, who had performed very great austerities. The Lord told him that the holy place of Purushottama kshetra is very dear to Vishnu.”

The glories of Puri are also described in various other texts:

Brahma Purana: aho kshetrasya mahatmyam samantad dasa yojanam, divi stha yatra pasyanti sarvan eva chatur bhujan, “How glorious is this land, ten *yojanas* across from one end to the other! The demigods look down on this land and see that all its residents have four arms like those of Vaikuntha”.

yatha sarvesvaro vishnu sarvalokottamotamah tatha samasta tirthanam varishtham purushottamam, aste yatra svayam devo muktida purushottamam dhanyaste vibudhipraksya ye vasanti kule narah,

“Just like the Supreme Lord Vishnu is the greatest among the greatest personalities in all worlds, the place where Sri Purushottama resides is the best among all the holy places of pilgrimage. In that place the Lord Himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the most worshipable Person, awards liberation to the very fortunate souls who live there under His protection.”

Brahmanda Purana:

varshanam bharata sreshtha deshanam utkala smrta utkalasya samodeshah deshah nasti mahitale,

“It is said that among all countries, Bharata Varsha or India is the best, within Bharata Varsha the region of Utkala (Orissa) is the best. Therefore there is no better place in the whole world than Utkala.”

Narada Purana:

pratimam tatra tam drishtva svayam devena nirmitam anayesena vaiyanti vadanam me tato narah,

“Simply by seeing the Deity of the Supreme Lord, Sri Jagannatha, fashioned and installed by the Devas, people can attain the spiritual world, Vishnuloka.”

Tantra yamala:

bharate cotkale dese bhusvarge purushottame darurupi jagannatha bhaktanam abhaya pradah,

“Within Bharata Varsha, Utkala (Orissa) is like paradise on Earth. In this *bhu-svarga*, called Purushottama kshetra or Puri, Lord Jagannatha resides as a Deity made of holy wood and protects His devotees from all fears.”

Kapila Samhita:

sarvesam caiva devanam raja sri purushottamah sarvesam caiva kshetranam raja sri purushottamah,

Among all the greatly powerful Lords, Sri Purushottama Jagannatha is the greatest. Among all *dharmas* *kshetras* or holy places of pilgrimage, Purushottama Dhama is the greatest.”

Skanda Purana:

purushottam akhyam sumahata kshetram parama pavanaman yatraste darabatanu srisho manushalilaya, darshanad muktida sakshat sarvatirtha phala pradam,

“In the wonderful holy place called Purushottama Kshetra, the greatest among the purifying places of pilgrimage, Sri Narayana, the husband of the Goddess of Fortune, resides exhibiting *lilas* similar to the activities of a human life, and personally awards liberation and the result of visiting all the holy places.”

Svetasvatara Upanishad (3.19)

*apani pado javano grahita pasyati acaksuh sa srnoty akarnah
sa vetti vedyam na ca tasyasti vetta tam ahur agryam purusam mahantam*

“Though the Lord has neither hands nor feet, He takes and He walks. He sees without eyes and hears without ears. He knows all that is to be known, but nobody knows Him. This is the one they call the original and greatest being, the Purushottama.”

Narada purana, Utkala khanda (52.12)

*pratimam tatra tam drstva svayam devena nirmitam
anayesena vai yanti bhavanam me ta to narah*

“In the greatest of the holy places, the unparalleled Supreme Lord manifests in a Deity that was carved by the Lord Himself. Any human being who contemplates this Deity attains My abode.”

Brihad Bhagavatamrita (2.1.167)

*durad adarshi purushottama vaktra chandro bhrajad visala nayano mani pundra bhalah
snigdhabhra kantir arunadhara diptu ramyo 'sesa prasada vikasat smita chandrikadhayah*

“From a distance I saw the moonlike face of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Purushottama, with His large eyes and the jewel on His forehead. His complexion was black like a fresh monsoon cloud, and His lips were red like the morning sun. His unlimited mercy was shown by His smile, refreshing like moonlight.”

Brihad Bhagavatamrita (2.1.159-64)

daru brahma jagannatho bhagavan purushottame kshetra nilachale kshararnava tire virajate mahavibhutinam rajyam autkalam palayan svayam vyanjayan nija mahatmyam sada sevaka vatsalah tasyannam pachitam lakshmya svayam bhuktva dayaluna, dattam tena svabhaktebhyo yo labhyate deva durlabham, mahaprasada samjnam cha tat sprishtam yena kenacit yatra kutrapi va nitam avicharena bhujyate, aho tat kshetra mahatmyam gardabho chaturbhujah yatra pravesa matrena ka kasyapi purnarbhavah, praphulla pundarikshe tasminn evekshite janaih phalam syad evam asrausham ascaryam purvam asrutam

“Lord Jagannatha, also called Daru Brahman, resides in the holy land called Purushottama kshetra or Nilachala, on the shore of the ocean. There He lives with great opulence as a King protecting Orissa, revealing His glories and exchanging loving relationships with His personal servants. Jagannatha eats the food personally cooked by Lakshmidēvi and distributes His *prasadam* to His devotees, although the remnants of His food are difficult to obtain even for the gods. These remnants are called *mahaprasadam*, and are never contaminated even if touched by unclean persons or carried over a long distance. The glories of that holy place are so great that even a donkey there has a spiritual form, with four arms. In the very moment one enters that land, he receives the blessing of liberation from rebirth. By seeing the beautiful Lord, who has eyes like lotus flowers, one obtains wonderful blessings, beyond anything ever heard before. It is said that Jagannatha is regularly visited by devotees not only from all parts of this world, but from other worlds as well – Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Devas, Asuras, Nagas and Rishis are known to come every night for Darshan, as well as king Indradyumna and Vibhishana, who are still living. Besides the references contained in ancient scriptures, there is also ample evidence from post-Vedic times.

In one inscription in a Sarasvati temple in Maihar, Satana district of Madhya Pradesh, a Devadhara dedicates the temple to the memory of his son Damodara, described as the son of Goddess Sarasvati. This Damodara went to pilgrimage to Puri and by drowning in the ocean there he returned to Svarga.

The pilgrims at a Ratha yatra in Puri also form the audience to whom the poet Murari speaks in his *Anargha Raghava*: “Purushottama, dark blue like a sapphire, resides on the shore of the salt ocean and plays with Kamala by drawing patterns on Her breast with the paste of musk”.

The *Skanda purana* specifically speaks about the special characteristics of the different areas of Sri Purushottama kshetra. The larger circle is described as ten *yojanas* in diameter (80 miles, or 128 km), between the ocean and the Mahanadi river, which includes Bhubaneswar (also known as the Ekamra forest, an important holy place sacred to Shiva) and Cuttack/Jaipur (sacred to the Goddess Viraja).

Purushottama Kshetra or the domain of the kingdom of Utkala begins with Viraja and ends with Vimala i.e from Jajpur to Puri and this whole area is divided into four parts namely the Gada Kshetra, Padma Kshetra, Chakra Kshetra and Sankha Kshetra. Gada kshetra is Viraja kshetra (the district of Jajpur), Padma kshetra is the present Cuttack, Chakra kshetra is the present Bhubaneswar.

The central area of Purushottama kshetra is called Nilachala or Sankha kshetra, described as a *daksinavarta sankha* (a special Lakshmi conchshell with the hollow part on the right side) having an area of 16 square km of which some part is submerged under the sea. In fact, “the entire area of Orissa is full of holy places, but the city of Puri is the holiest of all.” (Utkala Khanda, *Skanda Purana* 3.52-3, 4.5-6)

“The land to the north of the seashore and to the south of the Maha Nadi (“the Great River”) gives all other holy places in the world their powers. The land becomes holier with every step one takes southward from Bhubaneswar (Ekamra Forest) to the ocean. The land by the ocean, where the blue mountain stands, is the most secret of holy places, unobtainable by even Brahma.” (Utkala-khanda, 1, *Skanda Purana* 33-35)

“This is a most wonderful and delightful place, sovereign among all holy places. Eighty miles long (ten *yojanas*), it is surrounded by the sands that have come out of the ocean and beautified by the blue mountain that stands in its center.” (Utkala-khanda, 1, *Skanda Purana* 12-13)

The Sankha kshetra is ten miles wide and the two miles closest to the ocean are the most sacred. Thus the shape of Puri is usually compared to a conch shell, tapering off to the east and round in the west. The belly of the conch is in the ocean, while Nilakantha Shiva makes his home in the narrow portion.

The belly of the conchshell is covered by the sea sand, the head is pointed westward where the entrance is guarded by Nilakantha Shiva. In the second circle of this conchshell there is Brahma Kapala Mochana Shiva, in the third Vimala, and at the center Jagannatha. All the different parts of the Dhama are guarded by different Deities. Halfway between Nilakantha and Brahma Kapala Mochana there is Goddess Ardhasini, Mausima, who swallows the waters submerging the world during annihilation. In the eight directions eight forms of Durga are installed: Marichika (east), Vimala (west), Ardhasini (north), Kalaratri (south), Bata mangala (southeast), Lambha (northeast), Chandarupa (southwest), Sarva mangala (northwest). Similarly, Shiva manifests here in eight forms as Kapala Mochana, Kama, Kshetrapala, Yamesvara, Markandesvara, Visvesvara, Nilakantha and Batesvara.

Sankha kshetra

Here is a list of holy places and shrines in Sankha Kshetra: (according to *Vamadeva Samhita*)

1 first Avarana: Vimala, Rohini Kunda, Nrisimha, Kalpa Vata, Ishanesvara.

2 second Avarana: Kapalamochana, Manikamika tirtha (inside Kapalamochana temple), Chandarupa, Svetaganga, Sveta Madhava and Matsya Madhava, Dakshina Kali, Ardhasoshani (Mausima), Marichika, Chakratirtha, Markandeya Pushkarini, Markandesvara.

3 third Avarana: Yameshvara, Kandu Ashrama, Sarva Mangala, Alabukesvara, Alamba (Alama Chandi, at Atharnala), Nilakantha (at Indradyumna Sarovara).

According to the Jagannatha Temple Administration (as stated by Bhaskar Mishra), the Sri Kshetra Parikrama performed on Margasira Krishna Panchami pays respects to the following holy places:

- * Markandeya Pushkarini and Markandesvara Shiva temple, Kapalamochana, Yamesvara, Chamunda
- * Inside Sri Mandira (Jagannatha temple): Nilachakra, Muktesvara, Kalpa Bata, Ganesha, Batesvara (Bata Mukunda), Sarvamangala, Ananta,
- Kshetrapala, Mukti Mandapa, Mukta Nrisimha, Vimala, Sarasvati, Kamala (Lakshmi), Ishanesvara, Jaya Vijaya, Bhairava (Jagannatha)
- * Sveta Ganga, Sveta Madhava
- * Indradyumna Pushkarini, Matsya Madhava
- * Ugrasena Ashrama, Kumuda (Varunesvara), Mahodadhi (the ocean), Chakratirtha
- * Lokanatha
- * Mangala
- * Alamba devi or Alama Chandi (at Atharnala)
- * Bilvesvara (towards Konark)

As we have mentioned, Sri Purushottama kshetra is shaped like a conchshell (Sankha). On the picture we can see the shape and the extension of the heart of the Kshetra. The presiding Deities and places of reference on the picture are as marked by the following numbers:

1. Sri Jagannatha, Subhadra, Balabhadra, Sudarshana (inside Sri Mandira)
2. Sri Kshetresvari Vimala (inside Sri Mandira)
3. Sri Mahalakshmi (inside Sri Mandira)
4. Uttarayani Durga (inside Sri Mandira)
5. Batamangala (inside Sri Mandira)
6. Garuda stambha (inside Sri Mandira)
7. Bhoga mandapa (inside Sri Mandira)
8. Kalpa vriksha (inside Sri Mandira)
9. Rohini kunda (inside Sri Mandira)
10. Bata Ganesh (inside Sri Mandira)
11. Ucchista Ganesh or Kanchi Ganesha (inside Sri Mandira)
12. Sri Sarasvati Devi (inside Sri Mandira)
13. Nava Graha (inside Sri Mandira)
14. Konarak Suryadeva (inside Sri Mandira)

15. Padapadma (inside Sri Mandira)
16. Yajna bata (inside Sri Gundicha)
17. Agnesvara Mahadeva (inside Sri Mandira)
18. Indrani Devi (inside Sri Mandira)
19. Kshetrapala Mahadeva (inside Sri Mandira)
20. Snana Bhairavi or Sitala Devi (inside Sri Mandira)
21. Muktesvara (inside Sri Mandira)
22. Chatra Kali (inside Sri Mandira)
23. Bata Markandeya (inside Sri Mandira)
24. Katyayani, also called Ekadasi Devi (inside Sri Mandira)
25. Gopesvara (inside Sri Mandira)
26. Bhadra Kali (inside Sri Mandira)
27. Patalesvara Mahadeva (inside Sri Mandira)
28. Bhuvanesvari (inside Sri Mandira)
29. Vaikunthesvara (inside Sri Mandira)
30. Yajnesvari (inside Sri Mandira)
31. Ishanesvara (inside Sri Mandira)
32. Sitala Devi (inside Sri Mandira)
33. Pakasala or Rosasala, the kitchen (inside Sri Mandira)
34. Dakshinesvara (inside Sri Mandira)
35. Kundalesvara (inside Sri Mandira)
36. Rama Chaitanya mandir (inside Sri Mandira)
37. Barabhai Hanuman (outside Sri Mandira, on the external boundary wall)
38. Nirmalya Hanuman (inside Sri Mandira)
39. Alaka Batika (inside Sri Mandira)
40. Chakra Narayana (in Chakra Tirtha road)
41. Ramesvara (inside Sri Mandira)
42. Chaturdhama (inside Sri Mandira)
43. Kanapata Hanuman (inside Sri Mandira)
44. Niladri Vihara (inside Sri Mandira)
45. Bhavaisvara (inside Sri Mandira)
46. Siali lata (inside Sri Mandira)
47. Koili Vaikuntha (inside Sri Mandira)
48. Tapasvi Hanuman (inside Sri Mandira)
49. Suvanna Kupa (inside Sri Mandira)
50. Ananda Bazar (inside Sri Mandira)
51. Devasnana mandapa (inside Sri Mandira)
52. Meghanada pacheri (outside Sri Mandira, the external boundary wall)
53. Simha dvara (east gate of Sri Mandira)
54. Aruna stambha (outside Sri Mandira)
55. Badachata Matha (outside Sri Mandira)
56. Chauni Matha (outside Sri Mandira)
57. Peja Nala, the drain from the kitchen (outside Sri Mandira)
58. Prahari Hanuman (outside Sri Mandira)
59. Dakshinadvara (south gate of Sri Mandira)
60. Durga Madhava (outside Sri Mandira)
61. Mangalesvari (outside Sri Mandira)
62. Pascimadvara (west gate of Sri Mandira)
63. Uttaradvara (north gate of Sri Mandira)
64. Sri Lokanatha
65. Ramesvara (College road)

66. Pandu Nrisimha
67. Kandu ashram
68. Nikunja bata
69. Bali Harachandi (Brahmagiri)
70. Chamunda (in Manikarnika Sahi)
71. Vana Durga (in Manikarnika Sahi)
72. Baseli (in Baseli Sahi)
73. Kapalamochana
74. Manikarnika tirtha
75. Gaja Lakshmi (inside Sri Mandira)
76. Bhagavati (outside Sri Mandira, west gate)
77. Markandesvara
78. Markandesvara tirtha
79. Saptamatrika
80. Alamba Devi
81. Atharnala
82. Makaradvaja Hanuman
83. Bharghavi Nadi (at Chandanpur)
84. Muktesvara
85. Batamangala
86. Kapotesvara
87. Bilvesvara
88. Siddha Hanuman
89. Indraduymna tirtha
90. Nilakanthesvara
91. Adi (Chakra) Nrisimha
92. Gundicha mandapa
93. Ardha Soshani (Mausima)
94. Marichika Devi
95. Charchika Devi
96. Sodasha Putri (at Markandesvara Sarovara)
97. Narayani
98. Angira ashram
99. Angira bata
100. Dakhina Kali
101. Ugrasena ashram (at Svetaganga)
102. Svetaganga
103. Muktisila (at Svetaganga)
104. Adi Shankara Pitha
105. Svarga dvara
106. Varahi Devi
107. Syama Kali
108. Bata Hanuman (at Svargadvara)
109. Chakra tirtha
110. Chakra Narayana
111. Mahodadi tirtha
112. Jagannatha Vallabha
113. Kasi Visvanatha
114. Visvesvara
115. Narendra sarovara

Jagannatha

The people in Puri affectionately and respectfully speak of “Mahaprabhu” referring to Jagannatha, “Bada Thakura” referring to Balabhadra, and “Ma” or “Bhagavati” referring to Subhadra. It is important to note that since these terms are sometimes used by various groups to define different personalities – for example by Gaudiya Vaishnavas to refer to Sri Chaitanya, and by the followers of the *pushti marga* to refer to Vallabhacharya – the communication between such groups might be fraught with some confusion. One of the most popular names for Jagannatha is certainly Purushottama, as the holy land of Puri is called Purushottama kshetra. The connection between the name Jagannatha and the name Purushottama is highlighted in the *Purusha sukta*, where the Supreme Lord is glorified as the omnipresent Soul of the Universe (Virat Rupa or Jagat):

*sahasra sirsha purusha sahasrakshah sahasra-pat
sa bhumim visvato vrtatyathisthad dasangulam*

“The Lord of the Universe has thousands of heads, eyes and feet, and entirely encompasses the cosmic creation, surpassing it to a distance of ten *angulas*: He is thus existing everywhere both within the universe and outside the universe”

*purusha evedam sarvam yad bhutam yac cha bhavyam
utamritavasyesano yad annenatirohati*

“This visible universe (*vyakta*) is the form of the Virat Purusha, the universal Lord that contains everything that existed and that will ever exist in the future. Although immortal, He manifests this form to grace the living entities and offer them the opportunity to reap the results of their own actions.”

The famous *Purusha sukta* also highlights the connections between the worship of the Supreme Lord (Purushottama Jagannatha) and the natural cycles of Mother Earth, the ritual sacrifices (especially the *homa*), the hymns of the Rig and Sama Vedas, the organization of human society in the four *varnas* (which form the various limbs of His body), the sacrificial pole, and the performance of *yajnas* as the extremely important link between the human beings and the *devas*, where man becomes the co-creator of the Universe in cooperation with the Divine. The omnipresence of the Lord of the Universe, Jagannatha, is further highlighted in the close connection between Jagannatha and Nrisimha (as we will see more elaborately in the chapter about Nrisimha). The innumerable heads and faces of the effulgent Virat Purusha are also described in the Nrisimha mantra:

*ugram viram maha vishnum jvalantam sarvato mukham
nrisimham bhisanam bhadram mrityor mrtyur namami aham*

“I pay my homage to the fierce and valiant Mahavishnu, whose radiant face is omnipresent, Lord Nrisimha who is unlimitedly benevolent. He is the death of death.”

Jagannatha as Purushottama is also *visvato mukhah* (*Aranyaka Taittiriya Upanishad*).

The *Vishnu Purana* states:

*hiranyareta samdiptam puranam purushottama
sakalam niskalam suddham nirgunam guna sasvatam*

“Lord Purushottama is described in the *Puranas* as effulgent as the Sun. He is all-pervading and transcendently pure, simultaneously undivided and manifesting in innumerable forms, beyond all material qualities and the personification of all qualities.”

Similarly, the *Mathannaya* by Adi Shankara teaches:

*adi-deva jagannatha-sthata sevana vidhau bhavan
nirguna api cha sakshi sa chetana kevala mahatmanah*

“The primeval Lord, Jagannatha, is eternally present in the universe. He is not subject to the *gunas* of material nature and He is the eternal witness, the Supreme Atman, the form of Consciousness itself.”

Another very interesting connection between the Supreme Lord (Purushottama Jagannatha) and the form of the Virat Purusha, who transcends the *vyakta* and the *avyakta*, is the experience of Markandeya Rishi related in *Bhagavata Purana* (12.9.15-34).

In this episode Markandeya finds himself tossed around in the furious waters of the dissolution of the universe. The inundation submerged the entire universe – earth, outer space, the heavenly luminaries and the higher planets – and the Rishi as the only survivor was battered by the wind and the waves, afflicted by hunger and thirst, confused, exhausted and terrified by the aquatic monsters lurking in the darkness. Finally Markandeya reached a small island on which a young banyan tree was covered in blossoms and fruits.

On a north-eastern branch of the tree was a wonderful and effulgent dark-complexioned baby boy lying within a leaf of the tree, and sucking on His own toe – Bata Krishna. Overcome by happiness, Markandeya approached the baby but was instantly drawn inside His body like a mosquito is sometimes inhaled. To his great amazement, Markandeya could see the entire universe in its full splendor contained within the body of the baby – the sky, the heavens and earth, the stars, mountains, oceans, great islands and continents, the saintly and demoniac living entities, forests, countries, rivers, cities, mines, agricultural villages and cow pastures, and the entire human society organized in *varnas* and *ashramas*. That Universal Form contained the basic elements of creation and their products as well as Time itself. The baby exhaled, and Markandeya found himself expelled from His body and again clutching at the banyan tree on the small island surrounded by the ocean of destruction. The baby smiled at him, and Markandeya found himself in his own hermitage, amazed by the wonderful power of Yogamaya. It is particularly interesting to note that the *tirtha* within the Jagannatha temple in Puri is the Rohini kunda, the small reservoir that absorbs the immense waters of the dissolution of the universe, and on whose bank we can still find the Kalpa Bata, the banyan tree where Markandeya Rishi saw baby Krishna. In fact under this tree we find the shrine of Bata Mukunda, baby Krishna lying on the banyan leaf and sucking on His toe.

The name “Purushottama” describes the “Supreme Person”, the “best of the enjoyers”.

It is composed by the word *uttama* (“supreme, highest”) and *purusha*, a noun that expresses a very complex and deep concept. Many people superficially translate it as “man” or “male” because it is also used to describe the ordinary materialistic role of a man within a sexual couple relationship (*stri-purusha*) and by extension the male gender, but to the learned and spiritualists, the definition holds a much deeper philosophical and theological meaning (*purusha-prakriti*). *Purusha* is in fact the definition for the spiritual soul (*atman* and *Brahman*) in contrast with the body made of material energy (*prakriti*), and therefore it applies to all spirit souls, both the individual souls (no matter which gender of body they inhabit) and the Supreme Soul, God. This is confirmed in many passages of the *Upanishads* and especially in *Bhagavad-gita* (15.16), that clearly speaks of two *purushas*: the *kshara* (fallible) and the *akshara* (infallible). Among the *aksharas*, Purushottama is the Supreme that transcends them all. The common denominator of the two meanings of the name is the concept of “enjoyer”, a spiritual concept (based on *ananda*, transcendental bliss, *sat*, ever-existing reality, and *cit*, knowledge or awareness) that is reflected in a distorted way in the materialistic dealings of human couples, where the male sexually enjoys his wife. The concept of “enjoyer” is also connected to the concept of “knower”, while the concept of “enjoyed” is connected to the concept of “field” or “land” to be consciously cultivated. Another important verse of *Gita* (13.3) in this regard explains:

*ksetra-jnam capi mam-viddhi sarva-kshetresu bharata
kshetra-kshetrajnayor jnanam yat taj jnanam matam mama*

“O scion of Bharata, know that I am also the Knower of the Field of the body, living within all bodies. I tell you that knowing the Field and the Knower of the Field is the real Knowledge.”

On another level, the *purusha* soul (embodied either in a male or female body) enjoys the *prakriti* that is constituted by the material elements that form his/her own body and the world, the objects of the senses and the senses themselves, as a reflection of the Virat Purusha that is the natural Enjoyer of material Nature in the universe, and is described in the *Purusha sukta*.

Since every individual soul (*jivatma*) is a fragment of the Supreme Godhead, he inherits His tendency to enjoy (*purushatva*) and is therefore always striving for pleasure, although the direction of this effort is directed on various levels according to his particular mode of identification. A *jiva* that is strongly identified with the material body will search for pleasure on the gross physical level (through food, sex, etc), while a *jiva* that identifies more with the subtle body will search for pleasure on the mental or intellectual level, and a *jiva* that has attained self-realization will search for pleasure on the spiritual level, in the Self. In this sense, Purushottama is the Supreme Person: just as *purusha* is the *jiva*, Purushottama is *ishvara*.

Sri Jagannatha in Puri as Purushottama is certainly the Enjoyer, as He is the Lord of Purushottama-kshetra, proprietor and beneficiary of all, lavishly worshiped with sumptuous food offerings and royal rituals, attended by a great family of servants, including a number of maidens called Devadasis. All the activities in the temple are performed for the benefit of Jagannatha – from the morning Homa celebrated in His name to worship Surya, to the daily horoscope read by the *jyotishi*, to the financial report read by the accountants (*karanas*). In this sense, Sri Purushottama Jagannatha is the true King, in fact the supreme Ruler of the entire Universe, sitting in His throne room, daily giving audience to His family members,

servants and subjects.

The King of Puri is considered His younger brother, deputed to take care of the general matters. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the term *prasada*, usually indicating the sacred food that was offered to God, can also be used to indicate a Temple or a kingly Palace.

A more technical description of the name Purushottama is found in the *Vaishnava Agamas*, specifically in the *Sarada tilaka*, where the forms of Vishnu are described in the three broad categories of the majestic Vishnu, the terrifying Nrisimha and the loving Purushottama.

Purushottama is the consort of Lakshmi and is therefore also called Madhava (*Ma*, “of the Mother Goddess”, *dhava* “husband”). The particular form of Nila-Madhava that is found at the origin of the story of the manifestation of the Jagannatha Deities (due to the desire of king Indradyumna) is a Vishnu form holding in His hand a lotus on which Mother Lakshmi sits, not to be confused with Brahma, who sits in the lotus born from the navel of Vishnu.

This loving aspect of Jagannatha unites the three concepts of conjugal love (as Sridhara for Lakshmi Devi), paramour love (as Krishna for Radha and the gopis) and passionate love (as Kama). It is important to remember that all these three aspects must be analyzed on the transcendental level. The *Brahma Purana* confirms that Purushottama is inconceivable through material parameters, and can only be understood by one who overcomes the dualistic mentality in reference to Dharma.

In *Bhagavad Gita*, included in *Mahabharata*, Krishna reveals that His name is Purushottama: *yasmad ksharad atito 'ham aksharad api chottamah, ato 'smi loke vede ca prathitah purushottamah*, “Since I am beyond both the fallible and the infallible beings, I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For this reason I am known in both the Vedic literature and among the people of the world as the Purushottama.” (*Gita* 15.18)

The entire 15th chapter is dedicated to the glories of Purushottama, under the title “Purushottama Yoga”. This chapter describes the imperishable banyan tree of Vedic sacrifices and the path to transcend it, to become situated in the eternal kingdom of Purushottama.

The *Mahabharata* (Anusasana parva, 135.12) contains the famous *Vishnu sahasra nama stotra* (the thousand names of Vishnu) where Jagannatha Purushottama has a special position in the initial presentation of the whole *stotra* by Bhishma (*jagat prabhum deva devam anantam purusottamam stuvan namasashrena purusasatatottamah ... tasya loka pradhanasya jagannathasya bhupate visnor nama sahasram me srinu papa bhayapaham ... vishnum vishnum maha vishnum prabhavishnum mahesvaram aneka rupa daityantam namami purushottamam*), besides being mentioned in the text of the *stotra*.

In the *Vishnu purana* (V.33.41) Krishna is called Jagannatha and Purushottama (*krishna krishna jagannatha janetvam purushottama, paresham paramatmanam anadi nidhanam harim*).

In the *Vamana Purana* Aditi glorifies Vishnu with the name of Jagannatha, and Purushottama is also mentioned in connection with Prahlada’s pilgrimage.

The *Artha shastra* written by Brihaspati mentions Purushottama kshetra as one of the 8 Vaishnava *tirthas* in India and the *Kriya yogasara* speaks about the “three Deities of Purushottama”.

The *Vishnudharmottara* (3.125.21) mentions *udreshu purushottamam*, “Purushottama who resides in Orissa”.

The *Devi Mahatmya* of *Markandeya Purana* mentions Vishnu as Jagannatha in its 1st chapter: *utthastau ca jagannathas taya mukto janardanah, ekarnave 'hisayanat tatah sa dadrse ca tau*.

“The Lord of the universe and supporter of all living entities arose from Yoga Nidra in the Ocean.”

Many other scriptures mention Purushottama: *Vamadeva Samhita*, *Skanda Purana*, *Niladri Mahodaya*, *Brahma Purana*, *Kapila Samhita*, *Padma Purana*, *Matsya Purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Vamana Purana*, *Garuda Purana*, *Agni Purana*, *Naradiya Purana*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*.

The *Kalika Purana* mentions Jagannatha as the consort of Goddess Katyayani.

From time to time, Purushottama is described as Vishnu or Krishna and also called Hari, Narayana, Vasudeva, Govinda, Keshava, Damodara, Trivikrama etc, but also as Sri Ramachandra (*Maryada Purushottama*), Antarikshapada, Tirthapada, Tripada and Ekapada.

Among the more recent traditional texts that mention Jagannatha or Purushottama we can name Brihaspati’s *Arthashastra*, Kalidasa’s *Raghuvamsa*, Murari Mishra’s *Anargha Raghava*, Krishna Mishra’s *Prabodha Chandrodaya*, Jimutavahana’s *Kalaviveda*, and Lakshmidhara’s *Kriya Kalpataru*.

The vast literature composed by the five saints of Orissa is naturally full of references to Jagannatha and Purushottama. In his *Sunya Samhita*, Acyutananda writes that all the *dasa avataras*, the ten major “descents” of Vishnu into this world, first manifest from, and finally disappear into, the form of Jagannatha sitting on the Ratna Simhasana in Puri. Yasobanta also connects the four syllables of the “Hare Krishna maha-mantra” with the four forms of Subhadra, Balabhadra, Jagannatha and Sudarshana.

Academic historians usually refer to epigraphic evidence such as stone and copper plate inscriptions to support the continued existence of the cult of Jagannatha as Purushottama in Puri. However, we believe that such archeological relics should not be used to restrict the culture of Jagannatha as Purushottama within the limited historical period that history theories by mainstream academics assign them, both because the greatest part of the ancient artifacts and buildings have been destroyed or despoiled (and therefore cannot make their voices heard any more) and because the dates assigned to Indian history are extremely controversial, being originally based on the Biblical timeline where the entire universe had been created precisely on 23 October 4004 BCE and that the first civilization had been be the Mesopotamian in Sumer (3200 BCE) and the pre-dynastic Egyptian (3000 BCE). Similarly, mention of Jagannatha and Purushottama in various books and diaries of travelers can only prove that such names were known in a particular period – which does not prove that they were not known in previous times (of which we have no record). Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. The logic of the non-existence of something of which we have no physical remains is faulty, because so many things existed in the past of which nothing remains today. What is worse, such faulty logic rewards the ruthless policy of systematic destruction of texts, temples, centers of learning and sacred images by endorsing the idea that in such a way the aggressors can legitimately and “scientifically” disprove the very existence of the ancient cultures in the past.

The worship of Sri Jagannatha is also connected with the worship of Nila Madhava, that according to tradition was prevalent in many villages in the Prachi river valley since very ancient times. For example, in one single temple at Sobhanesvara, there are ten Deities of Nila Madhava.

The *arca vigraha* of Nila Madhava, a form of four-armed Vishnu who holds Lakshmidēvi as Kamala, is traditionally made of black stone, and His worshiped together with Balabhadra in the form of Naga and Subhadra as Ekanamsa.

There are many opinions regarding the form of Jagannatha, some of which (as for example the version that connects the special form of Jagannatha to tribal origins, or the version according to which the form of Jagannatha was not “completed” by the artist who carved the Deities) are considered very controversial by the people in Puri and may even be considered offensive.

The most popular and authoritative explanation of the peculiar form of Jagannatha is offered by *Mandukya Upanishad*:

*akara netradayas cha ukara adharasthata
makara malidese cha nadabindu prakatita
esho hi pranava kara purusha purushottama*

“Jagannatha appears to be shaped in the form of Pranava (Aum): His eyes forming the letter A in Sanskrit, His lips form the letter U, His complete face forms the letter M, and His *tilaka* is the *nada bindu* (*anusvara*).”

This version is confirmed by Sridhara Swami (the author of *Bhavartha Dipika*), and further elaboration was offered by Pandit Sadashiva Rathsharma.

Sridhara Swami wrote:

*jaddaru-brahma-murti pranava tana-dharam sarva-vedanta-saram
bhaktanam kalpa-vriksha bhava-jala-tarani sarva-tattvam tattvam
yoginam hamsa-tattvam hari-hara-namitam sri-patir vaishnavanam
shaivanam bhairavakhyam pashupatir iti jat-sakta-tattvi cha shaktih
baudhanam buddha-rupo rishabha-jati-bharau jaina-siddhanta saraih
devoshau patu-nityam kali-kalusha harau nila-shailadinathah*

“The Deity of Daru Brahman, in the form of Pranava (or Aum), is the essence of all Vedanta. For His devotees, He is the Absolute Truth, the wish-fulfilling Kalpa Vriksha, and the deliverer from the ocean of births and deaths. For the yogis, he is the Swan of the Paramahansa vidya. We offer obeisances to Hari and Hara, who is the Lord of Lakshmi for the Vaishnavas and Bhairava Pashupati for the Shaivas.

He is Parashakti for the Shaktas. For the Buddhists He is Buddha, for the Jains He is Rishabha (the first Tirthankara). O Lord of Nilashaila, please deliver me from all the impurities of Kali yuga.”

In the *Niladri Mahodaya*, Brahma offers the first prayers to Jagannatha addressing Him as Bhairava:

*bhairavam prarthayitvadau pradakshina-matho hareh
avahyahamyaham devam tripurantagni-samdisham
bhima-kantha-tanodharam palasha-kushumopamam
raktabam turagarudam khadagam sirasi-dharinam
urdhva-kesham karalakhyam bhishanam kala-rupinam
avahayamyaham devam vrudham dakshina-samsthitam*

“Then Brahma circumambulated the Deity of Jagannatha, and prayed to Jagannatha in the form of Bhairava: O Lord, O destroyer of Tripurasura, O Bhima (having a powerful body), Your complexion has the color of the Palasha flower smeared with blood. You ride a horse, holding a cleaver and a decapitated head. Your hair is standing, Your eyes are fierce: You are terrifying! You are Kala-Rupa, the form of eternal Time. O elder of the universe, who faces south: I invoke You.”

Jagannatha is worshiped with the *Narayana sukta* of the *Rig Veda*.

It is said that Jagannatha at Puri is regularly visited by devotees not only from all parts of this world, but from other worlds as well – Gandharvas, Kinnaras, devas, asuras, nagas and rishis are known to come every night for darshan, and so do Prahlada, Bali Maharaja, Vyasadeva and Sukadeva.

Temples dedicated to Lord Jagannatha in ancient times are found in Madhya pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Bengala, Dacca. In Orissa, Jagannatha temples were built in Tikkali (by Kasturi Kamodini the queen of Chodaganga in 1150), Cuttack (by Anangabhima in 1220), Jajpur, and Kendrapara. Dozens of other Jagannatha temples were also built in smaller towns and villages in the entire area. In Nepal the Adi Buddha is sometimes called Jagannatha and the Jains venerate the Adi Jina “who resides in Kalinga”.

Balabhadra

*dorbhyam shobhita langalam sa-mushalam kadambarim chanchalam
ratnadhya barakundalair bhujabalair lorakrantam bhu-mandalam
vrajrabhyam chalacharu ganda yugalair nagendra chudojvalam
sangrame chapalam sasankam dhavalam kamapalam bhaje*

This *shloka* portrays Balabhadra as white as a pure moon, holding the plough and the mace. The power in His muscles terrorizes the evil doers in the entire world. Balabhadra is Ananta Sesha, the divine Serpent. According to the Tantric tradition, Balabhadra is worshiped as Ugratara, the second of the *dasa mahavidyas*, also known as Nila Sarasvati. This is why Balabhadra sits on the Tara yantra on the Ratna simhasana. During the ritual ceremonies, Balabhadra is worshiped with the *Purusha-sukta* of the *Rig Veda*.

During the time when Vaishnavism gained prominence in Orissa, Balabhadra (generally called Bada Thakura by the people of Puri) was identified with Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna during the Vrindavana, Mathura and Dvaraka lilas. Similarly, Jagannatha (generally called Mahaprabhu by the inhabitants of Puri) was identified with Devaki-nandana Krishna and Subhadra was identified with Their younger sister, sometimes considered the daughter of Rohini and sometimes considered the daughter of Yasoda in Gokula.

However, in the Vaishnava tradition Balarama is also called Sankarshana or Ananta Sesha.

It is said that from Sankarshana the first Chatur vyuha (four-fold Vishnu emanation) manifest in the form of the original Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. From this Vasudeva the second Chatur-vyuha is manifested (with the same names), and from the second Vasudeva the Karanodakashayi Vishnu is manifested, lying on the Causal Ocean (Karana udaka). From the pores of this Vishnu innumerable universes emanate, and in each universe Garbhodakashayi Vishnu manifests, lying on the Garbha Ocean filling the bottom half of the huge bubble. From the navel (“*garbha*”) of this Vishnu a lotus flower grows, from which Brahma the creator is born. Again Vishnu manifests within each universe as Kshirodakashayi Vishnu, who resides in Svetadvipa (also called Prapanchika Vaikuntha), identified with the polar star (also called Dhruvaloka). This Kshirodakashayi Vishnu also manifests within each and every atom of the universe as Antaryami.

The *Brahma Purana* (12.132) says that Rudra is known as Halayudha.

The *Vishnu Purana* (2.5.17-19) describes Balabhadra in Puri as follows:

*nilavasa madotsiktah sveta haropasobhitah
langalasakta hastagro vibhram mudalam uttamam
kalpante yasya vaktrebhyo visanalasikhojjvalah
sankarsanatmako rudro niskramyanti jagat trayam
langalasakta hastagro vibhram mushalam uttamam
upsyate svayam kantya yo varunya cha murtaya
kalpante yasya vaktrebhyo visanalasikhojjvalah
sankarshanatmako rudro niskramyanti jagat trayam*

“The Lord wears blue clothes and white garlands. His complexion is white like pure clouds. He sits majestically like the Kailasha, and Ganga flows from Him. He holds a plough and an exceptional club in His hands, and His form is worshiped by Revati and Varuni. At the end of each *kalpa*, huge Rudras radiant with fire, called Sankarshanas, manifest from His mouth and devour the entire universe.”

These Rudras are called Mahadeva, Shiva, Maha Rudra, Shankara, Nilalohita, Isana Rudra, Vijaya Rudra, Bhima Rudra, Devadeva, Bhavodbhava, Adityatmaka Sri Rudra. Their consorts are Dhi Devi, Dhriti Devi, Ushna (or Rasala) Devi, Uma Devi, Niyut Devi, Sarpi Devi, Ila Devi, Ambika Devi, Iravati Devi, Sudha Devi and Diksha Devi. The *Bhagavata Purana* (5.25.1-4) also describes Ananta Sankarshana:

*tasya mula-dese trimsad-yojana sahasrantara aste ya
vai kala bhagavatam tamasi samakhyatananta iti satvatiya
drashtr-drshyayoh sankarshanam aham ity abhimana-lakshanam yam
sankarshanam ity acakshate
yasyedam kshiti-mandalam bhagavato 'nanta-murteh sahasra-sirasa
ekasminn eva sirshani dhriyamanam siddhartha iva lakshyate
yasya ha va idam kalenopasanjihirshato 'marsha-viracita-rucira-bhramad-bhru
vor antarena sankarshano nama rudra ekadasa-vyuhas try-akshas tri-sikham
sulam uttambhayann udatisthat*

“At the root of the universe, thirty thousand *yojanas* down, resides the Personality of Godhead called Ananta, that controls the darkness. He is also called Sankarshana because He attracts together the *drasta* and the *drisya* (what sees and what is seen), exemplified in the sense of identification (*abhimana*). This divine form of Ananta has thousands of heads, on one of which the entire universe is resting just like a mustard seed. At the time of the dissolution of the universe, the Lord moves His beautiful eyebrows exhibiting anger, and the eleven Sankarshana Rudras appear, each having three eyes and holding a trident.” The Utkala khanda of *Skanda Purana* addresses Balabhadra with the following mantra:

namah kalagni rudraya maharudraya te namah

“I offer my homage unto You, o Rudra, o Maharudra, who are the fire of Time”.

White is the color of the *shanta* (peaceful, or benevolent) aspect of Shiva. At the time of the first Gajapati king, Narasimha Deva, the worship of the Jagannatha triad obviously identified Balabhadra as Shiva and Subhadra as Durga, as we can see from several panels – one in the Bhoga mandapa in Jagannatha temple in Puri, another in the Konark museum (previously in the Surya temple in Konark), and a third one in a museum in Delhi. In this panel, Jagannatha is in the traditional form but He stands in the middle of the triad, while a Shiva lingam is on His right side (where Balabhadra normally stands) and a murti of Mahisavardhini Durga is on His left side (where usually the wife stands). Subsequently, under the pressure of the social changes towards the patriarchal system, the position of the Deities was moved as it was considered improper for the wife to show her face in front of the brother of her husband: thus Subhadra became the sister rather than the wife of Jagannatha.

Subhadra

The Personality of Subhadra Devi is not easy to understand. She is the Supreme Shakti, the Power of God, in all the possible manifestations, without contradiction, for example, between the roles of sister and consort (wife). In the temple of Jagannatha in Puri, Subhadra's birthday is celebrated together with Krishna's birthday on Janmashtami.

The *Bhagavata Purana* narrates that while Krishna was appearing at Mathura in Kamsa's prison, Yashoda mata was giving birth to a baby girl in Gokula. By the power of Yogamaya, in the middle of the night and without being detected by anyone, Vasudeva was able to take baby Krishna to Gokula and carry back in exchange the baby girl. When Kamsa tried to kill the child, She manifested as Vaishnavi Durga in all Her opulence, and was thus honored by all the devas. After manifesting this form as Durga to Kamsa, Subhadra ascends to Svarga where She is considered the sister of Indra, then returns to Earth as the Formless, *bahurupini* and *virupa*, worshiped by Sabaras, Barbaras and Pulindas. Thus the image of Subhadra is also connected with the traditional cult of Stambhesvari, the wooden pillar that is worshiped as the Mother Goddess by the tribal populations of Orissa.

The popular Vaishnava version say that at that time Rohini, another wife of Vasudeva, was staying under the protection of Nanda Maharaja in Gokula, where she also gave birth to Balarama; this explains the strong theological connection between Baladeva and Subhadra. In this version, Subhadra later married Arjuna, as described in *Mahabharata* and in the tenth canto of *Bhagavata Purana*.

The *Durga saptasati (Devi mahatmya)* of *Markandeya Purana* and the Utkala kanda of *Skanda Purana* call Subhadra with the names of Katyayani, Bhadrakali, Gauri, Lakshmi and Vishnumaya, Narayani, Bhagavati, Nidra, and Mahamaya. She creates the universe from Her own body, then makes Vishnu sleep at the time of the dissolution of the universe. She resides in Vishnu's chest, heart, arm, mouth and nose.

The *Harivamsa* too describes Subhadra as Nidra Shakti, who incarnates as the daughter of Yashoda in Gokula. She is also called Vindhya vasini (Mahisamardhini) and Ekanamsa, with a black body but with the same facial features of Balabhadra: *macchavisadrsi krsna sankarsana samanuna*.

The worship of Subhadra together with Krishna and Baladeva is extremely ancient. In that form, Subhadra is generally called Ekanamsa, and is depicted with a black complexion and many arms.

The *Brhat-samhita* states:

*ekanamsa karya devi baladeva-krsnayor madhye
kati-samsthita vama kara sarojam itarena codvahanti*

“Ekanamsa Devi, holding a lotus flower, is situated in the middle of Krishna and Baladeva”.

The triad of Krishna, Ekanamsa and Balarama is depicted in two famous panels at the temples of Ananta Vasudeva and Lingaraja in Bhubaneswar.

*madhye bedi paratpara bhagavati ja prakriti rupini
nirlipta gupta deha tribhuvana janani sukshma rupa vichitra
devim anandakandam kanakatanu dharam sarva saubhagya rupam
dehi me suddha-bhaktim hari-pada-yugale yogamayam smarami*

“In the middle of the Vedi, between Para (manifested) as white as Balabhadra and Apari (non-manifested) as black as Jagannatha, She is the form of Prakriti. She is unlimited, with a secret body of a subtle form, the Mother of the three worlds, the root of bliss, with a golden hue, She is the embodiment of all auspiciousness. O Mother Yogamaya, please give me *suddha bhakti* (pure devotion) to the feet of Lord Jagannatha.”

Sri Kshetra is the only place in the three worlds where creation is worshiped in its undiluted form: here Vishnumaya resides between Jiva Brahma (Balabhadra) and Param Brahma (Jagannatha).

An invocation to Goddess Subhadra says,

*om ambe ambike ambalike namanayati kaschan
svasasthyaha sakaha subhadrikam kampilyam pura vasinim*

Subhadra is called the cosmic Mother as Amba (the Supreme Mother of the *Rig Veda*), Ambika (the Supreme Mother of the *Vajasaneya samhita*) and Ambalika (the Supreme Mother of the *Satapata brahmana*).

Subhadra is known as Kampilyapura vasini, or the Queen of Kampilya Pura, a realm located between the Jiva Brahma and the Param Brahma.

In *Bhagavata Purana*, Subhadra is called Bhadra. The *Brihad samhita* calls her Ekanamsa, whose position is between Krishna and Balarama.

According to the Tantric concept, She sits on the Bhubanesvari yantra and is worshiped with the bija mantra *hrim*, thus symbolizing Adi Bhuvaneshvari, the Supreme Cosmic Mother.

According to the *Devi Bhagavata*,
*naham stri na pumamschaham na klibam sarvasankhyaye sarge satidibhedah syat kalpitoayadhiya
lunah*

“She is neither a male, nor a female, nor an intermediate form. As the form of Dhi (the Earth), She is the object of worship for everyone.”

Since Subhadra is also considered to be Lakshmi, She is worshiped with the *Sri sukta* of the *Rig Veda*. She is the seed of creation and always controlling the cycle of birth and death. Thus Sudarshana chakra (symbolizing the cycle of birth and death) sits with Her on the chariot during the Ratha yatra.

The Purushottama mahatmya of *Skanda purana* says that Brahma instructed king Indradyumna to consecrate the Ratha of Subhadra with the *Lakshmi sukta* or *Sri sukta*, from the 5th mandala of the *Rig Veda*.

It also relates the story of two friends, Pundarika and Ambarisha, who traveled to Puri and fasted in order to get darshana. This is the description of their vision:

*tayor madhya sthitam bhadram subhadram kunkunarunam
sarvakavanya vasatim sarvadeva namaskrtam
laksmim laksmisahrdya pankajastham prthak sthitam
varabja dharinim devim divyanepathya bhusanam*

“Between the two (Jagannatha and Balabhadra) sits the auspicious Subhadra, Her form the golden color of saffron. All the gods offer Her their humble obeisances. She is Lakshmi, sitting on the lotus flower, bestower of all blessings, decorated with divine ornaments.”

The *Sarada tilaka tantra* (17.31) recites:

*devam sri purusottamam kamalaya sankasthaya pankajam
bibhratya parirabdham ambujaruca tasyam nibaddheksanam*

“Next to Sri Purushottama deva is Kamala (Lakshmidivi)”.

She is thus also addressed as the wife of Jagannatha:

subhadra-prananathaya jagannathaya te namah

The Utkala kanda of *Skanda-purana* describes Subhadra’s form as follows:

*tayor madhya-sthitam laksmim subhadram bhadra-rupinim
sarva-devaranim papa-sagottara karinim
vikacambhoja-vadanam varabjabhaya-karinim
kunkumaruna-deham tam saksal-laksmim ivaparam*

“Standing between Jagannatha and Balabhadra, Lakshmi Subhadra is the personification of all auspiciousness. She is the origin of all the devas, the deliverer from the ocean of sins. Her face is a blooming lotus flower, she holds a lotus flower in one hand and offers blessings with the other hand. Her body is golden red like saffron. She is Lakshmidivi herself.”

*laksmih pradurbabhuvayam sarva-caitanya rupiniyam krsnavatare hi rohini-garbha-sambhava
balabhadrakritir jata bala-rupas ye cintanat ksanam na sahane sa hi moktum nilavatarinam
na bhedas tv asti ko viprah krsnas ya tu balas ya ca eka-garbha-prasutvad vyavaharo ‘tha laukikan
bhagini baladevas ya hy esa pauraniki katha pumrupena stri-rupena laksmih sarvatra tisthani
punnamna bhagavan visnuh stri-namna kamalaya deva-tiryak-manusyadau vidyate naitayoh param, ko hy
anyah pundariksaksad bhuvanani caturdasa dharayet tu phanagrena so ‘nanto bala-samjitah, tasya sakti-
svarupeyam bhagini sri-pravatrika*

“Subhadra is the form of Lakshmidivi, as the personification of all consciousness. She appeared together with Krishna as the daughter of Rohini, and because She is constantly immersed in the contemplation of Balabhadra, Her form is almost identical to Balabhadra’s form. She cannot be separated even for one single moment from the most handsome black Krishna, the source of all *avatars*. O learned scholars, there is no difference or separation between Krishna and Baladeva: it is commonly known that they were born from the same embryo, and the *Puranas* state that Subhadra is the sister of Baladeva. Lakshmidivi, who is omnipresent, appears both in female and in male forms. As a male She is Lord Vishnu, and in Her female form She is called Kamala or Lakshmidivi. But we know that She is the same One who is manifesting in the Devas, the animals, the human beings and all other life forms. No one is higher than Her. No one but the lotus-eyed Balabhadra could support the fourteen worlds, in His form known as Ananta. Devi is the original form of His power and His opulence, and is called His sister.”

Subhadra Yogamaya is Lakshmi Devi (the consciousness of all living beings) who took birth from Rohini, as we find in the Mahapurusha vidya of *Vishnu rahasya* with the following meditation on Subhadra:

subhadra caru vadana varabja bhaya dharini, laksmih pradur babhuvayam sarva caitanya rupini, iyam krsnavatare hi rohini-garbha sambhava balabhadra-kritir jata balarupasya cintanat, ksanam na sahate sa hi moktum lilavatarinam na bhedo 'sthiha ko viprah krsnasya ca balasya ca, eka garbha prasutatvad vyavaharo 'tha laukikah bhagini baladevasyetyesa pauraniki katha, pumrupe stri svarupena laksmih sarvatra tisthati pumnamna bhagavan visnuh strinamna kamalalaya, devatirymanusyadan vidyate na tayoh tasya sakti-svarupeyam bhagini srih param prakirtitha

“Subhadra’s face is wonderfully beautiful. She became manifested as Lakshmi Devi, the form of all consciousness. She is the bestower of blessings and fearlessness. During the descent of Krishna, She was born from the womb of Rohini as Balabhadra’s sister and *shakti*. She is the *lila avatarini* and therefore She is never, not even for a single moment, separated from Krishna and Balarama. Thus the *Puranas* state that She appeared from the same embryo with Balarama. She is always present in the form of Lakshmi, the eternal consort of the Purusha Himself, and She is called Kamala, the wife of Lord Vishnu. The Devas and the human beings know You as the Shakti, both sister and wife of the Lord. You are the very manifestation of power.”

Here is another description of the three Deities:

sankha cakra dharah sriman nilajimutasannibhah ramaya saha sarveso nityam viharati svayam, atha sri jagadisasya srnu simhasanam drdham ramaya balabhadrena saha yatra virajate, vamanga rupinim laksmim tasya daksina parsvagam apasyad divyaya drstva subhadra rupa dharinim, mahalaksmim jagad dhatrim subhadra rupa dharinim subhadra sa jagan mata kunkumaruna rupini

“The Lord who dwells on Nilachala holds the conchshell and the chakra. He enjoys the company of His family of servants, moving in complete freedom. Thus the Lord of the Universe sits on His Simhasana and also enjoys His Yatra (traveling) with Balabhadra. Lakshmi Devi is the left part of His body, and sitting on His right, with a wonderful divine form, is Subhadra. Mahalakshmi, the supporter of the entire universe, is also Subhadra, the mother of all, beautifully reddish like the rising Sun.”

Sudarshana

According to the *Skanda Purana*,

sudarshana maha-jvala koti-surya-samaprabha ajnana-timirandhananam vaikunthadva-paradipah

“O Sudarshana, fiery radiance, having the same power of millions of Suns. Please destroy my ignorance and guide me to Vaikuntha.”

Sudarshana sits on Chakra yantra and is worshiped with the *Pavamana sukta* (*Chakra sukta*).

There is a difference between this Sudarshana chakra and the Nila chakra on top of the temple. This Sudarshana chakra is not the Chakra weapon of Narayana (that is usually on the right side of Narayana) as it stands on the left side of Jagannatha. It is rather the Jupa shakti (the “staff of power”), associated with the lightning or thunderbolt, and representative of the power (or weapon) of the divinity, the *shakti* of the *purusha*. With the same speed of lightning, Sudarshana is carried to the chariot for the Ratha yatra by the running Daitapatis, rather than the slow *pahandi* procession that is done for Jagannatha and Balabhadra.

Skanda Purana also prays,

jyotishchurala mauli tri-nayana vadanah sodaso tungabahu

pratyaldhena tisthan pranavaha sashi-dharah dharah sat-kona vartih

nisimena shabhumna nikhilam api jagat kshema-vahni mimano

bhuyotsa darshanena prativata purushah purusa-paurushaya

“Your face and the top of your head are very effulgent, you have three eyes and your body has sixteen arms. You stand behind Jagannatha, you are the personification of the *pranava omkara*, as bright as the moon, you have six directions. In one moment you are self-generated, illuminating the entire universe like fire. Please show me the proper direction when I am lost, o power of the powerful.”

The concept of Jupa shakti is connected to Stambha or Skambha, the seat and representative of the presence of all gods and goddesses at the *smarta yajnas*. It is considered that the *ghi* offered into the sacrificial fire is eaten by the Jupa shakti. Traditionally during the performance of *homas* it is not possible to have a particular Deity installed as a *vighraha*, because the gods and goddesses are personally invited to participate to the ritual. So the Stambha or Jupa shakti is always installed at the *yajna salas* where rituals are conducted according to the *Smriti*. For example in Viraja kshetra (Jajpur), there is Subha Stambha or Skambarupa, marking the area where the *yajnas* are celebrated. Stambhesvari or Khambesvari is the name of the Devi worshiped in the form of a pillar in several places according to an ancient tradition of Orissa.

Another type of *jupa* (pole) is the sacrificial pole (also called *laghuli*) in front of the Devi temples, where the rituals are performed. Since Subhadra is controlling the cycle of births and deaths, Sudarshana, that symbolizes this cycle, is always attached to Subhadra. When Vaishnavism gained prominence, owing to Sudarshana's position to the left of Jagannatha, it became considered to be Radha, so much that even to this day during Radhashtami Sudarshana goes on *nagara-parikrama*.

Narasimha

Nrisimha is the most important Deity of Puri, the Adi Murti of Purushottama kshetra, and is also very popular all over Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. There are 105 major temples of Nrisimha in Orissa in various districts: in Puri there are 21 Nrisimha temples, in Cuttack, 51 temples of Nrisimha and 5 of Lakshmi Nrisimha, in Ganjam, 12 temples of Nrisimha and 5 of Lakshmi Nrisimha, in Sambalpur, 10 temples of Nrisimha, in Balasore, Dhenkanal and Mayurbhanj there are 2 temples each, and in Bolangir there is 1 temple.

There are also 169 major temples of Nrisimha in Andhra Pradesh, where the worship shows a very close relationship with the tradition of the worship of Shiva and Shakti, which also connects it to the "pole worship" of Sudarshana and Kambhesvari and the Jagannatha concept of Daru Brahman worshiped by non-Brahmins (the Daitas). A large part of such Nrisimha Deities (70%) are stone Lingams and are worshiped by non-Brahmin priests. In Mangalagiri (Andhra), there is one Svayambhu Narasimha, a Narasimha head that appeared spontaneously, and is constantly submerged in sugar water. Only young unmarried priests can worship the Deity, when they marry they lose their worship rights. The Deity was originally worshiped by Bhumiya.

In the villages of Andhra, Nrisimha Svami is generally worshiped in the form of a pillar with an attached lion head, while the Nrisimha in the Varadaraja temple in Kanchi has Sudarshana on the back side. The "sacred pole" is also worshiped as Khambesvari, for example the one at Gandharadi temple in the royal palace at Sonepur; in the middle of the sacred pole there is a golden nail ("the heart") that is inserted in the new pole when changed, in a way that reminds us of the Nava kalevara rituals for Jagannatha in Puri.

At Simhachalam (Visakhapatnam), on the top of the hill Varaha and Nrisimha are worshiped as stone Lingams covered in *chandana*. It is said that after Nrisimha killed Hiranyakasipu, Shiva manifested as Virabhadra and Sarabha (with forms respectively of bird and lion) and absorbed the form of Nrisimha. Some say that this is the reason why Shiva wears a lion skin. In the *Vishnudhaarmottara Purana*, a devotee worships Shiva Lingam until Narasimha appears from it. Bhairava, the terrifying form of Shiva, also appears from a pillar, shattering it with a great noise. The Shiva Simhanatha at Baramba is a Svayambhu Lingam and is worshiped by non-Brahmin priests. Inside the temple there is a shrine to Dakshina Kali where the regular Bhoga is reserved to the local fishermen, while the pilgrims take the uncooked Bhoga. The temple also has many murtis of Varaha and Nrisimha, and at the entrance there is a standing human figure with a lion head, holding a trident.

The Narasimhanatha temple in Padampur (Sambalpur) is a completely lion-like form, but only the head is visible for Darshana. The head has silver eyes, and a nose and whiskers are applied as ornaments. He is called Girija Narasimha, as He is a particular form of Nrisimha who appeared not from a pillar (usually called Sthuna Narasimha) but in a mountain cave. He is worshiped alone (and thus is called Kevala Narasimha) far from human habitations. It is said that once Narasimha wanted to kill a demon living in the hills, so He appeared in the form of a wild cat; He was discovered by an old Khonda woman who was digging for roots. The present priests are said to be the descendents of this Khonda woman and are called Aranyaka Brahmanas. They offer puja and vegetarian Bhoga four times a day. It is said that the Pandavas lived on this hill for some time during their exile.

Tradition in Puri says that even before the appearance of Jagannatha, Nrisimha was residing in Nilachala beside Kalpa Bata as Adi Nrisimha. The *ista-deva* for the *asvamedha yajna* ceremony organized by king Indradyumna was also Nrsimha, as Yajna Nrisimha. Nrsimha is the first *archa avatara* of Vishnu; amongst the *dasa avataara*, the first three *avataras* (Matsya, Kurma, Varaha) are *nimitta avataras*, which appear only for the specific purpose of executing a mission and immediately disappear.

The *avataras* of Vishnu are described in many scriptures, especially in the *Bhagavata Purana*, an essential text of Vedic knowledge that is highly revered and recited daily in the Jagannatha Puri temple. This scripture describes Narasimha in the two groups of ten and twenty-four major *avataras* of the Lord.

The main ten *avataras* of Vishnu are also described in the famous *Gita Govinda* composed by Jayadeva, specifically in the *dasa avataras stotra* at its very beginning. These ten *avataras* are: Matsya (the fish), Kurma (the tortoise), Varaha (the boar), Nrisimha (half-man, half-lion), Vamana (the dwarf), Parasurama (the warrior), Rama (the king), Krishna-Balarama (the cowherd and the farmer), Buddha (the monk) and Kalki (the destroyer). Some have seen some kind of “evolutionary line” in the sequence of these *avataras*, comparing it on a universal scale to the evolutionary development of each human fetus in the first weeks of life, but we should never forget that the activities and the bodies of the Supreme Lord are never on the same level of the activities and bodies of the ordinary living entities, and They can certainly never be on the level of ordinary animals, as it is clearly demonstrated by Their miraculous activities. Matsya appeared as a gigantic fish to save Vaivasvata Manu and the Vedas from a great flood, Kurma appeared as an equally immense tortoise to be the pivot on which the Mandara Hill rested to churn the Ocean of Milk and produce the nectar of immortality, and Varaha appeared as an immensely powerful boar to lift the Earth from the bottom of the Garbhodaka Ocean where it had sunk. Similarly, Vamana was no ordinary dwarf, as He was able to cover the entire universe with just two of His steps, even perforating its covering with His big toe – and causing the waters of the holy Ganga to descend into this world.

Parasurama was no ordinary warrior either, although He demonstrated unsurpassable prowess in systematically destroying the rebellious *kshatriyas* who stood against the religious principles and against the progress to transcendence. Buddha and Kalki, too, have specific missions to accomplish, displaying miraculous powers, respectively to preach the secondary ethical principles (*upadharma*) such as *ahimsa*, and to physically eliminate all those who won’t accept to reform themselves.

The *nimitta avataras*, as opposed to the *archa avataras*, are not widely worshiped by Themselves but only as temporary forms of Vishnu, rather than eternally manifested forms. They are called *nimitta* (“instrumental”) *avataras* because They appear for a specific mission and then withdraw; also Their color or form, of the details of Their activities may change according to the circumstances. For example, Varaha appears respectively as white and red in two different cycles and in another age, Buddha appears as an attractively dressed preacher in a society of space travelers with a demoniac mentality who use the material knowledge described in Vedic scriptures to bring war on many planets (*Bhagavata Purana*, 2.7.37).

The three main *archa avataras* in chronological order are Nrisimha, Ramachandra and Krishna (the son of Devaki), characterized by a specific *adhara tattva*, *adheya tattva* and *adhara shakti*.

Among the three *archa avataras*, Nrisimha is the one who mostly resembles Jagannatha – for example, neither of Them accepted parents in their appearance *lila*. *Adhara* is the “element”, *adheya* is the “purpose” and *adhara-shakti* is the “power” displayed by the *avatara*.

For example, the *adhara tattva* for Rama was *yajna*, His *adheya tattva* was the killing of Ravana, and the *adhara shakti* was the establishment of truth, dutifulness and idealism (*maryada*).

Ramachandra’s *adhara tattva* is called *yajna*, and His *adheya tattva* is the slaying of Ravana, the demoniac ruler that outlawed all *yajnas* and *samskaras* and forced everyone to worship him only. His *adhara shakti* is Satya (truthfulness) and the establishment of *samskaras*.

For Krishna, the *adhara tattva* was the tree (*adi vriksha*), the original tree of the creation of the spiritual and material worlds: this is the reason why Krishna is also called *avatari* rather than *avatara*. *Bhagavata Purana* (1.3.28) describes Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as opposed to the emanations (*amsas* and *kalas*) that descend in this world for the purpose (*adheya tattva*) of establishing the principles of Dharma, protecting the good people and destroying the evil doers every time that irreligiosity threatens to overcome the world (*Gita* 4.7-8). Krishna’s *adhara shakti* is constituted by His intelligence and expertise, or strategy.

For Nrisimha, the *adhara tattva* was *tejas* (effulgence), that is wrathful (*ugra*) against the evil doers, combative (*vira*), radiant (*jvalantam*) as well as compassionate (*bhadram*) for His devotee. His *adheya tattva* was the protection of Prahlada symbolizing pure and innocent *bhakti* and the destruction of Hiranyakasipu symbolizing irrationalism, and the *adhara shakti* was omnipresence as elaborated in the dialogue between the great devotee Prahlada and his demoniac father Hiranyakasipu (*Bhagavata Purana* 7.8.12).

God is omnipresent. He is all pervading and all penetrating (*sarvato mukham*). His right eye is the Sun (Surya) and His left eye is the Moon (Chandra); His third eye is Fire (Agni).

In *Vishnu Purana*, Prahlada describes Nrisimha as *sthula* (having a bodily form), *sukshma* (being formless or invisible) and *prakata* (appearing in a particular shape).

To show this nature, Nrisimha appeared from a pillar in the hall of Hiranyakasipu's palace, and He has long been (and still is) worshiped in the formless form of a pillar (*stambha*). The most famous examples are the traditional worship in Viraja-kshetra (Jajpur) and Simachalam, where the pillar is covered by sandalwood paste. Sudarshana is also considered a representative of Nrisimha

The *Nrisimha mantra* forms a very important aspect of the rituals of the Jagannatha temple, from their very beginning.

The *Purushottama mahatmya* of *Skanda Purana* says that after the ritual performed by Brahma, king Indradyumna perceived the Deities in the form of Narashimha. Brahma instructed Indradyumna to draw the Narasimha yantra (*cakra bija mandala*), had the king sit inside it, initiated him in the Narasimha mantraraja (still used today). Indradyumna then had a vision of Yogi Narasimha (the benevolent form of Narasimha, as opposed to the Ugra Narasimha, the terrifying form), sitting inside a yantra formed by a lotus of 32 petals, hands on His knees, and Lakshmi Devi sitting on His lap. Narasimha looks at Lakshmi with a broad smile, and is shaded by the 1,000 hoods of Sesa Naga on His back. Sesa is identified as Balabhadra (Sankarshana) and Lakshmi is identified as Subhadra (more on this subject later).

The original *yajna* for the installation was offered to Narasimha, the presiding Deity of Orissa before the appearance of Jagannatha, and the Adi Narasimha temple near Gundicha is considered the original Deity at the place of the first installation of Jagannatha.

Still today, in Puri Jagannatha temple the first offering is done to Narasimha and the *nyasa* (the tantric ritual of worship consisting in installing mantras on the body of the worshiper for its spiritualisation) is based on the Narasimha mantraraja. Also, the Puja Sevakas in the Jagannatha temple are initiated at the Khamba Nrisimha pillar, where an image of Lakshmi Narasimha is worshiped.

During the period of *anavasara* (when the Deities of Jagannatha are kept in seclusion for their renovation) all the temple offerings are presented to Narasimha, and during the rituals of Navakalevara the Deities are addressed as Narasimha up to the last moment.

An inscription in the temple says that in 1132 Chodaganga offered an *akhanda vartika (dipa)* lamp to Sri Purushottama, on the door of the Narasimha shrine inside the Jagannatha temple in Puri. It is also interesting to note that king Chodaganga was called by his contemporaries both as Parama Shaiva and Parama Vaishnava.

The Khamba Narasimha, on the first pillar of the Jagamohana entering from south, is the *ista devata* of all the *sevaka brahmanas*: the initiation of the new pandas starts by worshiping this murti. Here the priests also offer food in emergencies when the *garbha griha* is closed because Jagannatha is sleeping. In fact, some sources say that Jagannatha was previously worshiped as Narasimha only, and He came to be considered as Krishna only in the period of king Purushottama Deva. The same sources also explain the strange form of Jagannatha's head as a lion head, with large round angry eyes, a big mouth resembling powerful jaws, and even triangular ears like a lion's. On the bank of the lower Brahmani river, in Jenapur and Sukhinda, two traditional mathas worship Narasimha as salagrama and Dadhi Vamana (the single standing Jagannatha form) by the Narasimha mantra.

A strong connection is also recognised between Narasimha and Sudarshana, the wooden pillar that sits on the Ratna simhasana together with Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra.

As we know from the story of Prahlada, Narasimha appeared from a pillar. This connection is confirmed by the Narasimha murti in the Varadaraja temple in Kanchi that has Narasimha on the front side and Sudarshana on the back side. In Andhra villages, Narasimha Swami is worshiped in a form of pillar with a lion head attached. In the meditation on Sudarshan, the worshiper visualises Sudarshan with yellowish (*pinga*) eyes and hair (similar to a lion's) that are resplendent like fire, sharp teeth and 8 arms.

From *Nrisimha tapani Upanishad*:

*om ugram viram mahavishnum jvalantam sarvato-mukham
nrisimham bhishanam bhadram mrityor-mrityum namamy aham*

"I offer my obeisances to You, O Nrisimha, the terrifying and combative form of Mahavishnu, whose effulgent face is everywhere. O powerful destroyer of death, I salute You."

In the tradition of Jagannatha, Nrisimha is the first Deity to be identified with Jagannatha, whose form was installed by kind Indradyumna during the Satya yuga, the same yuga when Lord Nrisimha appeared. When Indradyumna arrived at Nilachala, he saw the Deity of Nrisimha under a *krishnaguru* tree. Thus king Indradyumna first celebrated the *asvamedha yajna* installing Nrisimha as the *yajna purusha*, as instructed by Narada, who brought the divine Deity of Yajna Nrisimha and celebrated the rituals with the *mantraraja*, the Nrisimha mantra, as explained in the Utkala khanda or *Skanda Purana*. Similarly, Chodaganga Deva installed Mukta Nrisimha first and arranged for His worship, when he started building the present temple for Jagannatha. Still today, during the periodical *navakalevara* rituals, when new bodies are prepared for the Deities, the priests celebrating the *vana yajna* install Nrisimha as the *ishta devata*. Before cutting the trees, the *mahayajna* is conducted with the Patala Nrisimha mantra, with 27 *ahutis* (oblations of clarified butter into the sacred fire). The Nrisimha mantra is used to worship the wood kept in Koili Vaikuntha before the carving of the Deities and in the *pratistha* ceremony on the Nrisimha chakra bija mandala before the beginning of the Ratha Yatra. The Purushottama mahatmya of the *Brahma Purana* says that by the grace of Adi Narasimha a worshiper can obtain great mystic powers, including the control on rain and storms, similar to those exhibited by the Rakshasas.

By reciting the *Patala Narasimha mantra* in front of the *vivara* tunnels in the ground, one can be granted free access to Patala, the subterranean heavenly realms, where he obtains a beautiful new body and the company of wonderful girls. If he desires to return to Earth, he receives some magic gifts, such as a *gutika* to keep inside his mouth to become invisible, an *anjana* to apply to his eyes to become able to see anything in time and space, and *paduka* to wear by which he will be able to reach any place instantly.

The importance of the Deity of Adi Narasimha in Puri is particularly explained in the *Purushottama mahatmya* of the *Brahma Purana*. There it also says that by the grace of Adi Narasimha a worshiper can obtain great powers, including the control on rain and storms.

The Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, too, has a special connection with the Narasimha lila – Chaitanya liked to hear the story of Prahlada again and again, hundreds of times. Every time he visited the temple, Chaitanya stopped at the Narasimha Deity on the *baisi pahacha*, the 22 steps on the inner entrance, and sang prayers to Narasimha. Still today, after each Arati, the Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavas sing these same prayers to Narasimha, together with the Narasimha verse from the famous *dasa avatara stotra* by Jayadeva Gosvami:

*namas te narasimhaya prahladahlada dayine hiranyakasipu vaksah silatanka nakhalaye
ito nrsimho parato nrsimho yato yato yami tato nrsimho
bahir nrsimho hrdaye nrsimho nrsimham adim saranam prapadye*

“I offer my homage to You, o Lord Narasimha, who gives immense joy to Prahlada. With Your powerful nails, as hard as stone, You have ripped apart the body of evil Hiranyakasipu. Lord Narasimha is the Supreme Lord, all-powerful and omnipresent: wherever I may go, He will be there, within and without. I take shelter in the primeval Lord, Sri Nrisimha.”

*tava kara kamala vare nakham adbhuta srngam dalita hiranyakasipu tanu bhrngam
kesava dhrta narahari rupa jaya jagadisa hare*

“The nails on Your soft lotus hands are wondrous claws tearing the gold-robed black bee Hiranyakasipu. O Krishna, You take the form as the Man-Lion, Narasimha Avatara. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!”

Madhava

The tradition of Vishnu worship in connection with Jagannatha focuses on Narasimha (often worshiped both by Vaishnavas and Shaivas) and Madhava first and foremost. Among the many names of Vishnu regularly recited, 24 are considered particularly important, identified by the way the four symbols of Sankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma are held in the four hands. Madhava holds Chakra in the back right hand, the Sankha in the back left, Gada in the front left and Padma in the front right, giving particular prominence to Kamala. In Purushottama kshetra, the most important forms of Narayana are Surya Narayana, Satya Narayana and Chakra Narayana. The worship of Madhava (“the husband of the Mother Goddess”) is found all over India, in prominent temples such as Veni (Triveni) Madhava in Prayaga (present Allahabad), Setu Madhava at Ramesvaram, and Bindu Madhava at Kashi (Benares).

However, it is in Orissa that the tradition of Madhava is stronger, with 12 Madhava temples in Jajpur and many clusters of them in the Prachi valley. The *Viraja Mahatmya* lists them as Adi Madhava, Ananta Madhava, Bhoga Madhava, Champaka Madhava, Rama Madhava, Prasanna Madhava, Purushottama Madhava, Sudarshana Madhava, Janardana Madhava, Narakantaka Madhava, Vasudeva Madhava and Govinda Madhava. On the other hand, in *Prachi Mahatmya*, compiled by Balaram Dash, we find references to the Dvadasa Madhavas according to the particular place, apparently because at that time the *vigrahas* had been moved from the original temples because of the Muslim attacks against both temples and Deities.

The first among these 12 Madhava temples was in the Kapilesvara temple, and was later moved to the Gokarnesvara temple. Triveni Madhava is worshiped together with Lakshmi at Manikarnika Tirtha, near Vikesvara. The third Madhava was installed in His own temple in Niali on the east bank of Prachi (50 km from Bhubaneswar), near the Sobhanesvara or Sovanesvara temple, but the Madhava temple was destroyed; now eight *vigrahas* of Madhava and one *vigraha* of Varaha are kept inside the Sobhanesvara temple in Niali. Other important Madhava temples are in Kantilo and Phulbani, as well as Nilakanthapur (Nila Madhava), Chahata (Lalita Madhava), Mudgala Madhava in Mudgal, Madhava in Kenduli, Korakara (under a tree), Pitapara (in a thatched room), Adasapur, Raghunathpur (Kakatpur), Gambharipada, Bolara, as well as those housed as *parsva devatas* in the temples of Mangala (Kakatpur), Amaresvara, Ramesvara (Suhagpur), Gramesvara (Nivarana and Lataharana), Somesvara, Visvanatha (Krishnaprasad), and Nasikesvara Shiva.

It is common knowledge in Orissa that Madhava is Hari worshiped with Hara, and the Durga Madhava cult is very popular all over Orissa, so much that people invoke Their names at the start of journeys.

The most famous poet of Orissa, Jayadeva Gosvami, worshiped a Madhava Deity, and the ground level of the Sveta Madhava and Matsya Madhava temples on Svetaganga (about 18 feet below the general ground level of the city) is a witness to their great antiquity. Another Nila Madhava Deity is presently sheltered in the small Hanuman temple near Indradyumna Sarovara, and in the shrine imprecisely dedicated to “Indradyumna” at the same place. In fact, the two small and ancient shrines facing each other just on the bank of the Sarovara, several feet below the ground level of the area, are today considered dedicated to “Indradyumna” and “Gundicha”, while it is evident that the Deities there are respectively Matsya Madhava and Bhuvaneshvari Durga. Another small Durga Madhava shrine is on the external wall of the Sri Mandira, high above the road level.

The worship of Durga Madhava is a very important in the tradition of Puri. The Deity of Madhava accompanies Durga to Dolamandapa Sahi for Dola yatra and for Durga puja. During the long Sola puja celebrations, on Mulastami, the Sahasra kumbha abhisheka is performed for Mother Durga and Madhava is also worshiped together with Her. The same Durga Madhava worship is performed at the end of the festival, on Aparajita Dasami.

Even more important, we know that Nila Madhava is the original Deity that is described in the story of the manifestation of the form of Jagannatha. It is Nila Madhava that king Indradyumna wants to see and worship, and it is Nila Madhava that remains hidden in the forest and secretly worshiped by Visvasu the Sabara. Within the temple of Jagannatha at Puri, one Nila Madhava is worshiped by the Daitapatis in the north-west side of the temple compound, and one Benu Madhava shrine where Sri Krishna lovingly braids the hair of Srimati Radhika, in a sweet picture that seems to be straight out of the *Gita Govinda*.

There is another Madhava yet, who sits with Jagannatha on the Ratnavedi. It is said that this image was installed when the worship was re-established after Kalapahada had attacked the temple: it is the fulfillment of the promise by Jagannatha will never leave the temple again, even in the absence of the main Deities. Thus Ratnavedi Madhava remains sitting in the Garbha griha even during the annual Ratha yatra.

The Daru Brahman

The Deity of Lord Jagannath is often called *daru-brahman*, the incarnation of God in wood.

This definition is found in the 10th mandala (10.155.3) of the *Rig Veda*:

ado yad daru plavate sindhoh pare apurusham, tadarabhasya durhano tena gaccha parastaram,

“In the beginning, the primeval Lord manifested as the transcendental Daru Brahman on the shore of the Ocean, and those who go to take shelter in this Supreme Lord are delivered from all difficulties.”

A famous commentator of the *Vedas*, Sayana Acharya (1300-1380 CE), offers this explanation:

*ado viprakrishta dese kartumanam apurusham nirmatra purushena rahitam
yad daru darumayam purushottamakhyam devata sariram sindhoh pare
samudra tire plavate jalasyopari vartate tad daru he durhano dukhena
hananiya kenapi hantum asakya he stotah arabhasva alambasva upasvety
arthah tena darumayena devenopasyamanena parastavam atisayena
taraniyam utkrishtam vaishnavam lokam gaccha*

“On the sea shore, in a place that is not accessible by material vision, God the creator who is beyond the perception of the senses, the Self-born who is without any human element, exists in a wooden form and is named Purushottama. He delivers His devotees from the ocean of material sufferings. O great scholars, take shelter in that wooden form of the Lord, and through His worship attain the supreme abode of Vishnu.”

The *Sankhyayana brahmana* also contains a similar verse: *adau yad daru plavate sindhoh pare apurusham, tad alambasva durduno tena yahi param sthalam*

“On the shore of the ocean, the Primeval Lord has manifested in a piece of wood that was not fabricated by human hands. By taking shelter in Him, you will attain the supreme abode.”

The *Sankhyayana bhashya* comments:

*adau viprakristha dese vartmanam yad daru daru-mayam
purushottamakhyam devata sariram plavate jalasyopari vartate apurusham
nirmatri rahitavena apurusham tad alambasva durduno he hotah tena
darumayena devana upasyamanenaiva param sthalam vaishnavam lokam gacchety arthah*

“The Supreme Lord known as Purushottama has taken a form of wood and resides on the ocean shore, although He transcends the human level and He is beyond the perception of the senses. O great scholar, worship this form of the Lord with the purpose of going to the supreme abode of Vishnu.”

A similar verse is also found in the Utkala Khanda of *Skanda Purana* (21.3): *ya esa plavate daruh sindhu pare hy apaurushah, tam upasya duraradhyam muktim yati sudurlabham*

“One who venerates that transcendental piece of wood that floated to the ocean shore, which is so hard to worship properly, will attain the rarest form of salvation.”

In the Utkala Khanda of *Narada Purana* (52.12) the Lord answers a question by Lakshmi Devi: *pratimam tatra tam drishtva svayam devena nirmitam, anayasena vai yanti bhavanam me tato narah*

“In the greatest of all the holy places there is an image of the Lord that was directly manifested. Anyone who sees this form attains My abode.”

The definition of Jagannatha as Daru Brahman also appears in *Padma Purana*, *Brihad Vishnu* and *Tattva yamala*: *samudrasyottare tire aste sri purushottame, purnananda mayam brahma daru vyaja sarira bhrit*, “In the land of Purushottama on the north shore of the sea, Brahman, the full manifestation of happiness, plays at taking a wooden body.”

niladrau chotkale dese kshetre sri purushottame, daruny aste chidanando jagannathakhya murtina, “At Niladri, in the holy place known as Sri Purushottama kshetra in Orissa, the Supreme embodiment of happiness and knowledge manifests in a form of wood, known as Jagannatha.”

bharate chotkale dese bhu svarge purushottame, daru rupi jagannatho bhaktanam abhaya pradah, nara ceshtam upadaya ya aste mokshaika karakah

“In Bharata Varsha (India), in the kingdom of Orissa, in that heaven on Earth known as Purushottama, Lord Jagannatha manifests to take away all the fears of His devotees. Although He seems to act like a human being, He is the only one who can give liberation.”

As we have seen for Narasimha, the concept of Daru Brahman wonderfully connects the various Personalities of Godhead and Their manifestations in the devotional union between the Vanavasi and the Vaidika traditions. It is said that the inhabitants of Orissa were Vratyas, or populations (tribes) fallen from the original Vedic traditions and performances, and that devotion to Jagannatha was largely instrumental to bring them back into the Hindu fold. This may explain the great enthusiasm they have for rules and regulations and “purity”.

More information about the worship of trees and wooden poles as the visible forms of the Divine are included in the chapter about the various temples in Orissa.

The Tantric Jagannatha

Jagannatha is described as the famous Deity of Odra or Utkal in tantric texts like *Kalika purana*, *Rudrayamala*, *Brahmayamala*, *Tantrayamala*. In the Tantric tradition, Jagannatha is worshiped with the bija mantra *klim* and sits on the Kali yantra as Dakshina kalika. He is also considered the Bhairava of Vimala, who is the Bhairavi: *vimala sa mahadevi jagannatha tu bhairava*.

The *Kalika Purana* says:

udrakhyam prathama pitham dvitiyam jalasailajam tritiyam purnapithantu kamarupam chaturthakam

“Among the Tantric Pithas, the first and foremost is Udra or Uddiyana (Orissa), the second is Jalasaila, the third is Purnapitha and the fourth is Kamarupa.”

Devi Bhagavata says:

srishthbhuta mahashakti manipura nivasini vimala sa parashakti uddiyana pureshvari

anjuna dehi me devi bahiryoge mamambike madhavah bhairava sakshat pranatosmi jagatpate

“In Orissa, Vimala is Parashakti and Pureshvari, the source of the creation of the universe, residing in the City of Jewels. I offer my homage to You, o Goddess, together with Your Bhairava, Madhava. Please bless me.”

The *Kubjika Tantra* describes the center of Orissa, the Sri Mandira in Puri, the abode of Mahalakshmi: *mahalakshimimaya pitha uddiyanantah param*. The Tantric Jagannatha is not so distant from the Vaishnava Jagannatha as we may think. After all, the Tantric texts or *Agamas* also include a number of Vaishnava Tantras that give specific ritual instructions for the worship of Vishnu. Particularly the *Gautamiya Tantra* is often quoted by the six Gosvamis of Vrindavana in their writings. The *Pancharatra* method of worship is also tantric; Vaishnavism is divided into Vaikhanasa (the Vedic method of the followers of *Nigama shastras*) and Pancharatra (the Tantric method of the followers of the *Agama shastras*). At one point of time, *Tantra* and *Veda* merge, as *Tantra* is considered an expansion of the *Atharva Veda*.

True, the tantric system of worship to Jagannatha was not to the liking of Ramanuja, and in fact when he visited Puri he attempted to change it, but without much success.

This fact is related in the traditional texts of the Ramanuja Sampradaya, such as *Prapannamrita* by Ananta Acharya and the *Ramanuja Divya Charita*, where it is said that Ramanuja came to Puri from north India and attempted to reform the worship system in Jagannatha temple and appoint a new group of priests. Jagannatha manifested His displeasure and Ramanuja was mystically carried away from Puri (it is said, by Garuda) all the way to Sri Kurma kshetra. However, the Gaudiya Vaishnava method of worship is definitely open to contemplating the passionate *kama* form of Krishna, that follows closely the tradition celebrated by Jayadeva Gosvami in his *Gita Govinda*. The Kama Gayatri in the daily *sandhya* practice of Gaudiya Vaishnavas is coupled with the Gopala Gayatri mantra that is the same basic mantra used in Jagannatha temple for daily worship:

klim krsnaya govindaya gopi jana vallabhaya namah

klim kamadevaya vidmahe puspa-banaya dhimahi tan no 'nanga pracodayat

“I offer my worship to Krishna, Govinda, the Beloved of the *gopis*. May Ananga, Kamadeva, inspire us. I meditate on Kama Deva, who carries the arrow made of flowers.”

The *bija mantras* used in the daily puja are *Srim* for Balabhadra (Ugratara), *Hrim* for Subhadra (Bhubanesvari), and *Klim* for Jagannatha (Dakshina Kali). It is also very important to know that all the bija mantras used in all ritualistic ceremonies (including those of the Vaishnava tradition) are taken from the *Sarada tilaka Tantra*.

There are four main schools of Hindu Tantra, namely Odiyana, Jalashaila (Jalandhara), Shrahata (Sirihata), and Purnagiri (Kamarupa or Kamaksha). The Odiyana, the most important, has its seat in Orissa, and is also the Adi-bhumi of the Bauddha Tantra (the Buddhist Tantra). Here, Sarahapada started the tradition based on the *Buddha kapala Tantra*, Kambalapada and Padmavajra started the tradition based on the *He Vajra Tantra*, Luipada started the tradition based on the *Samputa Tilaka Tantra*, Lalitavajra started the tradition based on the *Krishnajamari Tantra*, Gambhiravajra started the tradition based on the *Vajramrita Tantra*, Kukkuripada started the tradition based on the *Mahamaya Tantra*.

In the *viharas* (Buddhist monasteries) of Ratnagiri, Pitopada started the tradition based on the *Kalachakra Tantra*, and Jayadratha started the tradition based on the *Chakrasambhara Tantra*.

In the 8th century, the famous Buddhist scholar Indrabhuti, who was the king of Sambalpur, started the tradition called Vajrayana.

This tradition unites the knowledge of the *Tantras* with the philosophical concepts of the Buddhism; it spread throughout the world, and has been very prominent in Tibet and the Himalayan area. Jagannatha is the main Deity (Vajresvara) of the Vajrayana tradition, while Balabhadra is considered as Vajrodaka (the manifestation of Maha Vajresvara), Subhadra is Vajresvari and Sudarshana is Vajra. His sister and disciple Lakshminkara Devi, who was the queen of Lanka (present day Sonepur), started the Sahajayana tradition by simplifying the Vajrayana method.

From the Puranic episode of the Daksha yajna, we learn that Sati (the consort of Shiva) attended a yajna performed by her father Daksha. When Daksha insulted Shiva, Sati became disgusted with him and with her own relationship with her father, so she decided to destroy her own body by jumping into the sacrificial fire.

Immediately Shiva rushed to the spot and picking up the half-burned body of Sati from the fire, manifested a great anger and started to dance as he does at the time of the destruction of the universe. Terrified, the devas prayed Vishnu, the preserver of the universe, begging Him to save them from imminent destruction, and Vishnu used His Sudarshana chakra to cut the body of Sati into pieces. Sati's navel fell at Jainagar or Jajpur (in Orissa), the abode of Goddess Viraja, and other parts of Sati's body fell in different places all over the Indian subcontinent. Finally only Sati's feet were left, and Shiva was still walking around Purushottama kshetra in a trance-like state. Vishnu finally asked him to keep the feet of the Mother Goddess here: thus this area came to be known as Pada pitha, the abode of Goddess Vimala.

*lokanatha shivoyatra tirtharajah mahodadhih
vimala bhairavi yatra jagannathastu bhairavah*

“In that place where Lokanatha Shiva resides, Mahodadhi is the Tirtha-rajah, the abode of Vimala, and Jagannatha is Her Bhairava.”

Several temple images of the Bhauma period depict Ekapada Bhairava, carved in the form of a wooden pillar (the base of the pillar constituting the “single foot” that translates “*ekapada*”), with the big round eyes that characterise the Ugra form, a tiger skin on his hips, and the *urdhvalingam*. It is said that Adi Shankara installed a Bhairava Deity on the Ratna simhasana together with Jagannatha, a Deity that was removed when Vaishnavism became prominent in Orissa.

According to the Tantra shastras, every Tantra pitha is protected by the Ashta-shaktis along with their Ashta-sambhus, seated each on one petal of an 8 petalled lotus. In this case for Sri Kshetra, the Ashta-shaktis are: Mangala in the Agni-kona, Vimala in the Paschima-kona, Sarvamangala in the Vayu-kona, Ardhasoshani in the Uttara-kona, Alamba Devi (Alama Chandi) in the Ishana-kona, Marichika in the Purva-kona, and Chandarupa in the Nairruta-kona. Similarly, the Ashta-sambhus are: Kapalamochana, Yameshvara, Ishaneshvara, Bilveshvara, Nilakantha, Vatesha, and Lokanatha.

In Sri Kshetra the following Devis are prominent: Kutama Chandi, Mashani Chandi (Smashana Chandi), Khamba Kali, Bedha Kali, Mahakali, Bata Mangala, Khamba Mangala, Vimala, Kamala, Jhadeshvari, Sitala, Khamba Vimala, Uttarayani, Alama Chandi, Varahi, Chamunda, Ramachandi, Harachandi, Shyama Kali, Dakshina Kali, Bata Kali, Grantha Kali, Marichai, Narayani, Hata Jodi Thakurani, Shola Pua Ma, etc.

In the Yantra puja, the Deities are seated on a Yantra to be worshiped. In Sri Kshetra, Balabhadra is seated on Tara Yantra, Subhadra on Bhuvaneshvari Yantra, and Jagannatha on Dakshina Kali Yantra. The cremation grounds are used for *sadhana*; in Sri Kshetra on the north of the temple the Koili Vaikuntha is the Deva Smashana, where Smashana Chandi resides.

The animal sacrifices (also called *bali*) are also an important aspect of the worship. In the Jagannatha temple, in front of Goddess Vimala, fish is cooked in a temporary makeshift kitchen and animals (especially goats) are sacrificed during Maha-saptami, Maha-astami and Maha-navami in Durga puja.

The *Durga saptasati chandi*, a very important text for the Tantrics, is divided in three Charitras: Prathama, Madhyama and Uttara Charitras, each presided by a particular Devi and in chronological order Maha-Sarasvati (white in color), Maha-Lakshmi (golden in color) and Maha-Kali (black in color).

The *Mahanirvana Tantra* states:

ugratarata sulapani subhadra bhuvaneshvari niladrau tu sakshat jagannatha dakshina kalika

“In Niladri Balabhadra is Ugratarata, Subhadra is Bhuvaneshvari, and Jagannatha is Dakshina Kalika.”

These three Devis are the most important Goddesses in the Tantric rituals; so Balabhadra is connected with Maha Sarasvati, Subhadra with Maha Lakshmi and Jagannatha with Maha Kali. To highlight this identification, the Deities of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra always wear *saris* (the garment generally used by women) and a nose ornament made of flowers.

The *Aranyaka Taittiriya Upanishad* confirms:

*tvam strim tvam puman asi tvam kumara uta va kumari
tam jirna dandava chesi tvam jata bhavati visvato mukhah*

“You are simultaneously woman and man, You are youthful girl and boy and at the same time You are the eldest. You are self-manifested, and Your divine face is everywhere.”

According to the *Saudarshini Vamadeva Samhita*, credited to Padmapada Acharya (one of the first and foremost disciples of Adi Shankara Acharya, who was installed as the Parama Acharya of Govardhana pitha):

tara yantra pralambagno subhadra bhuvaneshvari syama yantra madhava che dakshina kalika svayam
“Balabhadra, the enemy of Pralamba, is sitting on the Tara yantra, Subhadra on the Bhubanesvari yantra, and Madhava Jagannatha, who is Dakshina Kalika Himself, sits on the Shyama yantra (Kali yantra).”

The Purushottama Trailokya Mohana Gayatri mantra used in Jagannatha worship in Puri is as follows:

lim trailokamohanaya vidmahe puspa-banaya dhimahi tan no visnuh prachodayat

A further mantra says:

*devam sri purusottamam kamalaya svankasthaya pankajam
bibhraty parirabdhan ambujaruca tasyam nibaddheksanam*

Jagannatha is meditated upon in a jewel *mandapa*, decorated with 4 *toranas* (archways) under a Kalpa vriksha in the heavenly garden filled with flower beds, peacocks and cuckoos. Jagannatha is sitting with Lakshmi (who sits on His left thigh) on a red lotus flower. Both have reddish intoxicated eyes, and Lakshmi wears two yellow pieces of cloth (as upper and lower garment).

The worshiper invites Him to manifest in his heart with this meditation:

om trailokya mohana hrsikesa apratirupa manmatha sarva stri hrdaya karsana agaccha agaccha namah

In the center of the lotus mandala sits the Bija mantra *klm* (the Kama Gayatri bija mantra), and the first 8 petals around the lotus center are the 8 Shaktis Vimala, Utkarsini, Jnana, Kriya, Yoga, Prahvi, Satya and Isana. The 8 weapons that are part of the mandala are *ankusa* (the goad), *mushala* (club), *khadga* (sword), *chakra* (disc), *pasa* (noose), *sankha* (conch), *dhanuh sara* (bow and arrow), and *gada* (mace with a spherical top).

The *pancha makara* ritual is symbolically practiced in the Jagannatha temple:

1. *matsya*: symbolized by *atta* (whole wheat flour) mixed with sugar to make *kanti* (a particular type of pancake)
2. *mamsa*: symbolized by *biri pitha* (a pancake made with urad dal batter) with *hingu* (assafetida) and ginger
3. *mudra*: *yonis mudra* (ritual hand gesture used during the worship), offering of aparajita flowers and tamarind juice mixed with crushed ginger; also *mudra* is often substituted by an offering of grains.
4. *maithuna*: symbolized by the dance of the Bhitara gaunis during the Bada Sringara arati; on this occasion the Maharis remove the cloth covering their breast.
5. *madya*: symbolized by green coconut water offered in a bell-metal (*kamsa*) container, and *ghasa jala* (a particular type of water offered in an earthen pot)

Regarding animal sacrifices, the tradition in Jagannatha temple is that on Sandhi puja (at the junction of Maha astami and Maha navami in Durga puja), one sacrificial animal is purified by a Ratha *brahmana* and taken near to the Bakula pindi adjacent to the Vimala temple, in front of the lion (Durga's *vahana*). A sword is kept in front of Goddess Kali's image painted on the wall on the right of Goddess Vimala; the sword is worshiped there before being used to behead the goat. Then the goat's head is kept in an earthen pot and the Goddess Vimala is offered plantains mixed to the sacrificial blood; uncooked rice also mixed with the sacrificial blood. During Sola puja, the 16 days of the Durga puja festival in the month of Ashvina, the *chalanti pratima* (festival Deity) of Goddess Vimala (Kanaka Durga) is worshiped along with Nila Madhava in the Vimala temple. At this time a secret Ratha yatra (called Sarad Gundicha) is held in which Kanaka Durga travels to the Narayani temple (in Temple Road) along with Nila Madhava. For the entire Sola puja period, no women are allowed inside the Vimala temple.

Contrarily to what many think, this is not because women are considered “inferior” or “unqualified” to access the temple: rather the opposite, all women are considered direct incarnations of the Mother Goddess and therefore if a lady entered the temple during the puja, the priests would have to interrupt the worship to pay homage to her.

The famous *Gopalarchana vidhi* written by Purushottama Deva says that the bija mantra of Jagannatha is the Kama (Pradyumna) mantra, and describes Jagannatha as Krishna, decorated with the peacock feather and various ornaments, surrounded by cows and *gopas*, and worshiped by offerings of blue lotus flowers in the form of the dark eyes of the *gopis*.

Krishnananda Bhattacharya also mentions, in his *Tantra sara*, that Jagannatha is worshiped as the Sanmohana Krishna (the “all attractive Krishna”) with the *klim kama bija*.

The *Jnana siddhi* by Indrabhuti also quotes, *namaskrtya jagannatham sarva jnanarcitam, sarvabuddhamayam siddhi vyapinam gaganopamam* The other strong emotion (*bhava*) manifested by the Tantric Jagannatha is *krodha*, in the terrifying (*ugra*) aspect in which Jagannatha is worshiped as Narasimha.

Narasimha is considered the Vaishnava equivalent of the Shaiva terrifying form of Bhairava and in Puri the two concepts are closely tied together. Narasimha is extremely important in the worship of Jagannatha, and especially in the long and complex rituals of Navakalevara, the renovation of the Deities.

The *Rudra yamala Tantra* recites, *odresu vimala saktir, jagannathas tu bhairavah*. Several temple images of the Bhauma period depict Ekapada Bhairava, carved in the form of a wooden pillar (the base of the pillar constituting the “single foot” that translates “*ekapada*”), with the big round eyes that characterise the Ugra form, a tiger skin on his hips, and the *urdhvalingam* like the lions at the gates at the temples. It is said that until the British period, a Bhairava Deity was sitting on the Ratna simhasana together with Jagannatha. Another interesting fact is that Bhairava Shiva is also identified with the sun, with the name of Martanda Bhairava. The worship to Surya Narayana is also an extremely important part of the rituals in Jagannatha temple in Puri: the Surya puja is performed every morning before any other activity takes place in the temple. The strict connection between Jagannatha, Narasimha, Surya and Bhairava is also confirmed by the prominent presence, inside the Lingaraja temple in Bhubaneswara (a *svayambhuva lingam* of Hari Hara), of a large Laskhmi Narasimha Deity in black chlorite, the Deity of Surya Narayana, and Jagannatha.

The Mahabhava vigraha

The very special form and appearance of Sri Jagannatha is difficult to understand, although it immediately creates attraction and joy in the devotees. This form is not simply an “unfinished form” (which would have hands and feet, even if rudimentary, and smaller eyes and mouth), but has a wealth of deeper meanings of sentiments and emotions. The science of *bhakti* is the precise and practical analysis of the development of sentiments and emotions for the Divine, binding the devotee to his/her *ista devata* in a strong relationship and filling his/her life with divine consciousness.

Krishna Chaitanya, also called Gauranga Mahaprabhu by his followers, is undoubtedly one of the most famous figures in the scenario of *bhakti* especially in Jagannatha Puri.

His Gaudiya followers and especially Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis (two of the famous “six Gosvamis of Vrindavana”) have compiled a wealth of *bhakti* scriptures, still considered the greatest masterpieces on the subject and the reference texts for the disciples of the spiritual lineage of Gaudiya Vaishnavas, including the most famous disciple of Rupa Gosvami, Krishnadasa Kaviraja, who wrote the *Chaitanya charitamrita*.

Rasa (sentiment) and *bhava* (emotion) are the basic root concepts from which the creeper of *bhakti lata* grows, winding around the unlimited support of the Divine, and reaches the transcendental world where it gives the fruit of *prema*, pure love for God – the highest purpose of human life. It is said that *prema* is the *panchama purushartha*, the fifth purpose of human life, the supremely valuable attainment that remains after the first four have been attained (*dharmā, artha, kama, moksha*). The result of the cultivation of the sentiment (*rasa*) of love for God culminates in the arising of a transcendental emotion (*bhava*) that is also described as “ecstasy”. Ecstasy is the highest peak of joy and pleasure, a powerful passion that incinerates all other concerns and attachments, with the same overwhelming power of the natural attraction between young men and women on the ordinary material platform.

Sentiment and emotion fill the lives of every living entity also on the material level and are the strongest source of happiness and suffering. All forms of physical happiness and suffering depend on emotional happiness and suffering: a different emotion in consciousness turns hell into heaven and heaven into hell.

Attraction and attachment (*raga*) as well as repulsion and hatred (*dvesa*) are based on emotions, and these two basic polarities constitute the entire universe of material identification and action. It is impossible for the conditioned soul to ignore sentiments and emotions or to get rid of them. Very often, those who try to deny sentiments and emotions end up simply repressing them, and repressed sentiments and emotions simply become stronger and branch out, consciously or unconsciously, in a number of compulsive behaviors that cause immense sufferings both to oneself and to others.

Why can't we eliminate sentiments and emotions? Because they are the manifestation of the three *gunas* or fundamental qualities of nature – *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*. As *Bhagavad gita* (7.14) explains very clearly, the Divine Shakti of the three *gunas* is extremely powerful: the only way to cross over the ocean of material existence is to surrender to the Divine in a spirit of *bhakti*. Then only our emotions will become transcendental to the material *gunas* and take us to the level of transcendental goodness, or *suddha sattva*. The higher emotions such as love, compassion, sense of duty, determination, productiveness, purity etc belong to the level of *sattva*. Lust, greed, anger, pride, envy etc belong to the level of *rajas*. Fear, despair, depression, apathy, confusion, madness, hatred, cruelty, etc belong to the level of *tamas*.

Human life at the ordinary level of material identification is generally tuned to the energy of *rajas* or passion that generates movement. This passionate impulse can be channeled either upwards for progress, or downwards for degradation.

One should use *rajas* to get out of *tamas* and to work towards *sattva*; however once *sattva* is attained, it is very important to transcend *sattva*, too, and attain the level of *suddha sattva*, or completely spiritual virtue, otherwise he will slide again into *tamas*. While *rajas* constantly pushes to action, a person who lives prevalently in *tamas* is inactive or ineffective in action, or his actions result only in destructive and damaging effects. Under a strong tamasic influence there is no progress, but only degradation.

On the opposite, a person who lives prevalently in *sattva* is active on the subtle level more than on the gross level – thinking before acting, and listening more than speaking. However, if action does not manifest on the practical level for one's own progress and for the progress of society, the germ of inactivity contained even in material *sattva* can easily turn into inertia under the general influence of time and illusion (especially in Kali yuga) and sink the consciousness back down into *tamas*.

For example, the first stages of meditation are necessarily focused on silencing the constant blabbering of the mind, but if silent meditation does not evolve in active contemplation, the so-called meditator will slide into a dazed stupor and even fall asleep. It is therefore necessary to cultivate positive action that can raise us to the level of *suddha sattva*, pure virtue that is not tainted with material identification and attachment. Such action is called *seva*, and is explained in *Bhagavad gita* as the utmost form of yoga.

A person who lives prevalently in *rajas* is very active but his energies obtain temporary results unless they are stabilized and organized by *sattva*. Again, since *sattva* is a synonym for consciousness, the action fueled by *rajas* and controlled by *sattva* is also defined as *karma yoga*, although on a neophyte platform called *sadhana*, the practice of dutiful action. The difference between the two levels (*suddha sattva* action and material *sattva*) is explained in the *bhakti* literature as *ragunuga bhakti* and *sadhana bhakti* respectively, constituting two progressive stages of the same path.

For the general mass of people especially in Kali yuga, when ignorance and passion are overwhelmingly prevalent in all levels of society, the easiest and safest method consists in channeling the *rajas* energy with the knowledge and consciousness of *sattva* in the *sadhana bhakti* process. Thus, Bhakti Yoga is the most suitable process to attain God consciousness in this age. Another definition of *bhakti* given in the *bhakti* literature (*Narada pancharatra*) is "serving God through the use of one's senses": *hrsikesa hrsikena sevanam bhaktir ucyate*. So by absorbing our senses in the contemplation and service of the Divine source of the senses and the sense objects, we find the proper dimension of energy and nature; the same applies to sentiments and emotions in the entire range of *rasas*, according to the individual nature of each person.

The two strongest emotions of *rajas* (passion), that push the living entity into action, have been defined in Vedic knowledge as *kama* and *krodha*.

Bhagavad gita warns the spiritual seeker that material lust and anger are the two greatest enemies of spiritual realization, because they completely absorb the mind, the intelligence, the senses and the life energy into the material bodily identification and consume the energies by channeling them into the sense objects. Overwhelmed by lust and anger, the conditioned soul loses intelligence and memory, and the control of his or her actions, thus sliding into disaster. However, the science of *bhakti* gives the knowledge and the practice to utilize these two strong powers as vehicles for spiritual realization by contemplating them in the transcendental form of the Godhead worshiped by the devotee. Thus *bhakti* is developed by the contemplation of the *saumya* (gentle) and *asaumya* (terrifying) aspects of God that sublimate our tendencies to lust and anger, subordinating our material *rajas* to God's transcendental passion, and therefore rising us to the same divine platform. The *saumya* (sweet) aspect of the Divine is the easiest and most attractive object of spiritual contemplation, and the meditation on God in that aspect is most popular among all groups of devotees. The sweetest, most intimate and most attractive aspect of God contemplated by *bhakti* is Krishna, immersed in the ecstasy of love for His greatest devotees, the *gopis* of Vrindavana. As we have seen in our study of *bhakti*, the deepest and strongest *rasa* (sentiment) for Krishna is manifested in the *parakiya madhurya rasa*, the particular sentiment of extra-marital conjugal love of the *gopis*, who are totally immersed in the ecstasy of satisfying the "kama" (lust) of Krishna.

The very famous *Gita Govinda* of Jayadeva Gosvami, so dear to the heart of Jagannatha and the people of Orissa, is the universally acclaimed masterpiece of such spiritual literature, the center of innumerable artistic and spiritual expressions in figurative arts, music, dance and drama, and literature.

This is a very sensitive topic because so many people, still identified with the material level and material body, remain unable to contemplate how sexual attachment can apply to the spiritual and transcendental level, and so often they slide back into the material dimension of ordinary sense gratification based on temporary attraction and rejection.

Obviously, the kind of Kama contemplated by the devotees of Krishna is totally transcendental, highly symbolic and substantially different from its gross material counterpart, just like the birth and death of Krishna and all the other *lilas* that may appear as similar to material or mundane activities. The *rasa acharyas* have therefore presented the *madhurya rasa lila* of Krishna with great care, supporting it with vast and deep philosophical/theological knowledge (*jnana*) and life rules of strict renunciation (*vairagya*) to distance the genuine path of *raganuga bhakti* from the ordinary material lust of this conditioned world. Thus the famous 10th Canto of *Bhagavatam* presents the *rasa lila* of Krishna in Vrindavana only after thousands of verses that amply explain the completely transcendental nature of Krishna and His various manifestations and teachings.

According to the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, Jagannatha is the special form of Krishna while immersed in the ecstasy of separation from Radharani and the other devotees of Vrindavana; the appearance of this special form, the Mahabhava Vighraha in *madhurya rasa*, is celebrated every year in the day called Snana Purnima or Snana Yatra, with the famous Bathing Festival.

In Vedic tradition, kings and princes are usually given a ceremonial bathing with sacred waters and auspicious substances (*abhisheka*) by the members of their family in special occasions, such as the day of their coronation and birthday. Similarly Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra are offered this ceremony in the day of Their appearance.

In his *Brihad Bhagavatamrita*, Sanatana Gosvami writes that on that Purnima, Narada Muni had gone to Dvaraka to visit Krishna and His Queens, and entered Rukmini's palace.

As Krishna and Balarama were sitting in the royal assembly hall called Sudharma, Krishna's Queens Rukmini and Satyabhama took the opportunity to inquire from the sage about Krishna's pastimes in Vrindavana and especially about the *gopis*; they said that in the night they could often hear Krishna speaking in His dreams, directly addressing or talking about the *gopis*, and especially about Srimati Radhika.

While the Queens were thus talking with Narada Muni, Mother Rohini entered the hall and was given a seat of honor. As Rohini had lived in Vrindavana with Mother Yashoda, caring for Krishna and Balarama for many years, the Queens asked her to reveal Krishna's most intimate pastimes and the unconditional and overwhelming love that the inhabitants of Vrindavana had for Krishna.

After the meeting in the royal assembly hall, Krishna and Balarama arrived at Rukmini's palace, but Subhadra Devi stood guard at the door to prevent any male from entering the hall. So Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra remained standing at the door, listening from outside to the intimate discussion of the Vrindavana lila.

While hearing Rohini speaking about the ecstasy of His devotees in Vrindavana, Krishna manifested evident symptoms of *mahabhava*, the highest form of spiritual ecstasy that causes physical transformations in the body. As we can read from bhakti scriptures like *Chaitanya Charitamrita* (describing the ecstasy and bodily transformations of Chaitanya) and *Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu* (a famous text describing the science of bhakti written by Rupa Gosvami, one of the main followers of Chaitanya), the emotions of *mahabhava* make eyes grow wider and wider, the mouth blossoms in a huge smile, and the body limbs are withdrawn inside the body (especially head, arms and legs).

In *Chaitanya Charitamrita* it is related how the devotees of Sri Chaitanya sometimes found the Lord completely lost in *mahabhava* ecstasy, and His withdrawn body limbs made Him resemble a tortoise. Lord Jagannatha manifests all these symptoms in His transcendental body.

According to the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, Sri Chaitanya is none other than Sri Krishna Himself who appeared to taste the ecstasy of the supreme spiritual sentiments of Srimati Radharani, the internal energy of the Lord or Hladini shakti.

Chaitanya Charitamrita (Adi lila, 4.121-125, 132-135) says that Krishna wondered about the inconceivable quality of the love of Sri Radha, and wanted to understand it. So He thought, “I am the primary cause of all rasas. I am the full spiritual truth and am made of full joy, but the love of Srimati Radharani drives Me mad. I do not know the strength of Radha’s love, with which She always overwhelms Me. Sri Radhika is the highest abode of My love, and I am its only object. I taste the bliss to which the object of love is entitled, but the pleasure of Radha, the abode of that love, is ten million times greater. My mind races to taste the pleasure experienced by the abode, but I cannot taste it, even by My best efforts. How may I taste it? If sometime I can be the abode of that love, only then may I taste its joy.”

So while Srimati Radhika is immersed in Her ecstasy of separation from Krishna in Vrindavana, and Krishna is immersed in His ecstasy of separation from Radha in Dvaraka Puri, the surcharge of emotions of *bhava*, through the agency of Yogamaya, sparked out between the two poles in an intermediate position with a powerful spiritual discharge in Mayapur, where Sri Chaitanya appeared.

For the followers of Chaitanya, the culmination of this *mahabhava* is represented in the annual Festival of the Chariots, the Ratha Yatra. For them, this festival is the re-enactment of the emotional meeting of Krishna, Baladeva and Subhadra with the inhabitants of Vrindavana at Kurukshetra, during the celebrations of the solar eclipse.

The Syamanta Panchaka pilgrimage place at Kurukshetra is the lake where Parasurama took a purificatory bath after concluding his campaign to annihilate the *kshatriyas* who had deviated from the path of Vedic principles. In Vedic times it was customary to assemble in a holy place during solar and lunar eclipses to perform auspicious rituals. The *dharma kshetra* called Kurukshetra was a very suitable place in a central location, so all the Yadus from Dvaraka, the Pandavas from Hastinapura (ancient Delhi) and the *gopas* and *gopis* from Vrindavana all went to Kurukshetra and met there.

Upon seeing their beloved Krishna, the son of Devaki, sitting there on His chariot in the company of Baladeva and Subhadra, the inhabitants of Vrindavana could not control their emotions and immediately wanted to take Him back to Vrindavana so that they could serve Him intimately as they used to do before, with a love unchecked by considerations of respect and grandiosity. So they grabbed the ropes of the chariots, just like the *gopis* had grabbed the ropes of Akrura’s chariot to stop it and pull it back to Vrindavana, on the day their beloved Krishna and Balarama had left to go to Mathura. This time, however, they would succeed in dragging Krishna and Balarama back to Vrindavana!

So Krishna, overwhelmed by the love of His devotees, actually went back to Vrindavana. The annual Ratha Yatra takes Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra in Their huge, decorated, wonderful chariots, pulled by all devotees, from Their royal palace in Sri Mandira, where Jagannatha lives with His wife Lakshmi-devi, to the village-like temple of Gundicha, representing the forest of Vrindavana (“His birthplace”).

Chaitanya charitamrita (Madhya 14.117-118) explains:

*yadhyapi jagannatha karena dvarakaya vihara, sahaja prakata kare parama udara
tathapi vatsara madhye haya eka bara, vrndavana dekhite tanra utkantha apara*

“Although Jagannatha enjoys His life in Dvaraka, where He shows great generosity to His companions, once a year He develops the strong desire to see Vrindavana.”

The greatest and most famous expression of this *madhurya rasa mahabhava* during the Ratha yatra festival is certainly Chaitanya, whose overwhelming ecstasies are recorded in many biographies. *Chaitanya Charitamrita* contains the most detailed descriptions of these sentiments. For example, Krishnadasa Kaviraja quotes the expression of eagerness of the *gopis* in contemplating their beloved Krishna: “The creator did not give us a million eyes, he only gave us two. Not only that, but he has made it necessary to blink, so how we cannot look at Krishna as much as we would like to.”

In this sentiment, Chaitanya recited verses, and particularly the following poem:

*yah kaumara-harah sa eva hi varas ta eva caitra-ksapas
te conmlita malati surabha yah praudhah kadambanilah
sa caivasmi tathapi tatra surata vyapara lila vidhau
reva rodhasi vetasi taru tale cetah samutkanthate*

“He who stole away my heart during my youth is here again as my lover. And these are the same moonlit nights of the spring month of Chaitra. The same fragrance of jasmine is there and the same sweet breezes blowing from the kadamba forest. I too am the same person with whom he made playful, ecstatic love. Yet my unsatisfied mind yearns for that place under the groves on the bank of the Reva river.” (*Chaitanya Charitamrita*, Madhya, 1.58)

The people around Chaitanya, hearing him recite this verse again and again, were quite surprised because they were not expecting mundane romantic verses from a *sannyasi*. Only Rupa Gosvami was able to fully understand the ecstatic mood of Chaitanya, and he wrote a similar, but more explicit, Sanskrit verse:

*priya so 'yam krsnah sahacari kuruksetra militas, tathaham sa radha tad idam ubhayoh sangama sukham
tathapy antah khelan madhura murali pancama juse, mano me kalindi pulina vipinaya sprhayati*

“My dear friend, this is the same beloved Krishna I see in Kurukshetra and I am the same Radha; both of us are feeling joy in our meeting as we used to. Still, my mind longs for the groves along the Yamuna where the fifth note of his flute reverberated so sweetly in my heart.” (*Chaitanya Charitamrita*, Madhya 1.76)

Chaitanya charitamrita adds several Bengali verses to express the ecstatic mood of Krishna, too, in His meeting with the *gopis*:

*prana priye suna mora, e satya vacana, toma sabara smarane jhuron muni ratra dine
mora dukkha na jane kona jana, vraja vasi jata jana, mata pita sakha-gana, sabe haya mora prana sama,
tanra madhye gopi gana, saksat mora jivana, tumi mora jivanera jivana
ami tomara adhina kevala, toma saba charana, ama dura dese lana, rakhi yache durdaiva prabala, rakhite
tomara jivana, sevi ami narayana, tanra saktye asi niti niti
toma sane krida kari, niti jai yadu puri, taha tumi manaha mora sphurti
mora bhagye mo visaye, tomara je prema haye, sei prema parama prabala
lukana ama ane, sanga karaya toma sane*

“My beloved Radha, listen to me. I am telling you the truth. I am thinking about you, the people of Vrindavana, day and night, and I cry because I miss you so much. No one here can understand how unhappy I am. All the people of Vrindavana, my mother and father, the cowherd boys, everyone, are my reason for life. Among all the Vrajavasis, you *gopis* are My very life. And of all *gopis*, you, Radha, are the life of my life. I am bound by the love and affection of all of you Vrajavasis, but you, Radha, control me completely. A cruel fate has taken me away from you, to a distant place where I am obliged to remain. Every day I worship Narayana to pray for your long life, and by His blessing I am able to come every night to visit you. After enjoying your company, every time I return to the city of the Yadus, and you think you had simply been dreaming of me. Your love for me is my great fortune. The immense power of your love carries me secretly in the night to unite with you and enjoy your company.”

The appearance of Jagannatha

The most popular version of Jagannatha’s appearance is a summary of the accounts found in Utkala Khanda of *Kapila samhita* and *Madala Panji*, as well as compiled by Shishu Krishna Das in the 18th century in Oriya language under the title *Deula tola* (“The building of the temple”).

A slightly different account is found in *Narada Purana* (Utkala Khanda), where Indradyumna comes to Sri Kshetra to worship Vishnu and is instructed in a dream to search for a particular tree; the King finds it on the beach, guarded by Vishnu Himself in the form of a *brahmana* boy and by Visvakarma, the craftsman of the heavenly planets, who agrees to carve the Deities.

There are also other famous versions, such as the one told by Sarala Das in the 15th century Oriya version of *Mahabharata*, more or less confirmed in the 16th century by Jagannatha Das. This particular version claims that the remains of Krishna floated from Dvaraka to Puri, where they were collected by a Sabara (called Jara or Vasu) who worshiped them as Nila Madhava.

In Utkala Khanda of *Skanda Purana* we find that before the times of Indradyumna several great personalities had visited Purushottama kshetra. There Brahma saw a crow fall in Rohini Kunda and immediately attain the *sarupya mukti*. In the same text, it is said that Yama obtained there the *darshana* of Lakshmi who told him that She resides there with Nila Madhava.

In the *Niladri Mahodaya* the original Deities are listed as seven: Janardana (Jagannatha), Baladeva, Subhadra, Sudarshana, Visvadhatri (Bhudevi), Lakshmi (Nila or Sridevi) and Nila Madhava (said to have been originally installed by Gala Madhava). These are the Deities still sitting on the Ratna simhasana.

Jagannatha is seated on a lotus. Balarama, also seated on a lotus, has a seven-headed serpent over His head. Gaja Lakshmi has four arms (two with lotus flowers, two with *abhaya* and *varada* mudras); She is seated on a lotus and is attended by elephants bathing Her from jugs held in their trunks. Visvadhatri is white, with two arms (the right hand in *jnana mudra*, the left holds a lotus). Several chapters of the *Skanda Purana* are dedicated to describing the story of Indradyumna and the appearance of Jagannatha, also stating that during the entire first half of Brahma's life, Lakshmi resides with Jagannatha in the form of Ekanamsa, whose Deity is made of black stone.

The Utkala Khanda of the *Skanda Purana* asks:
kasmin yuge sat u nripa indradyumno bhavan mune?

“In which yuga did Indradyumna establish his kingdom at Purushottama kshetra?”

The answer for this question is also mentioned in the Utkala Khanda:
*asit krutayuge vipra indradyumno mahanrupaha
surya vamse sa dharmatma stasthu panchamapurusha.*

“During Satya yuga, there was a great king, Indradyumna, who possessed all the qualities of a *brahmana*. He was born in Surya vamsa in the fifth generation from Brahma and was a very religious man.”

It is said that in the first half of Brahma's life (*parardha*), the Lord took the form of Nila Madhava and appeared in Sankha Kshetra in order to give His blessings to the sinners of this world. In the second *parardha*, in the first Satya Yuga of the first Manvantara, a King named Indradyumna or Indrasavarni took birth in the Solar dynasty as the 5th descendent of Brahma and ruled over the land of Malava, making his capital in Avanti (now Ujjain). Therefore he is also known as Avanti Naresh. Being a great devotee of Vishnu, Indradyumna became very eager to have a direct vision of the Lord.

One day Lord Vishnu Himself, in the form of a Rishi named Jatila, visited the court of king Indradyumna to tell him about the glories of Nila Madhava. Excited, the King sent the younger brother of his Raj Guru, Vidyapati, and many *brahmana* messengers accompanying him, who traveled all over the country to search for that Deity and bring Him to the palace to be installed there. Finally, Vidyapati reached a remote tribal Sabara village and was invited by the head of the tribe, Visvavasus, to spend the night in his house. This particular meeting is an important incident in the temple history where two complete separate and vibrant cultures i.e. the brahminical Aryan tradition and the tribal Sabara cultures joined to form the very unique tradition of the Vratyas. Still today, the most intimate servants of the Deities of Jagannatha, who are exclusively in charge of Their personal service especially during the period of Anavasara and during the Ratha yatra, are the Daitas and the Patias.

The Daitas are considered the Sabara descendents of Visvavasus; they are not considered *brahmanas* and they do not follow the specific ritualistic regulations characteristic of the *brahmanas*. The Pati Mahapatras are the *brahmana* descendents of Vidyapati belonging to the Kaundinya gotra, who move the *brahma* from the old Deities to the new ones during the Nava kalevara According to the Niladri Mahodaya Visvavasus was already aware of the arrival of Vidyapati and invited him to have the Darshana of Nila Madhava.

After having Darshana of the divine form of Nila Madhava, Vidyapati vowed never to return to Avanti. It was Visvvasu who reminded Vidyapati of the original purpose and also informed him that Nila Madhava would reappear in another form. It has been mentioned that as soon as Vidyapati set forth from Purushottama kshetra, Indranilamani Madhava and Rohini kunda vanished from their original places. The Devas started lamenting and said, “O Lord! Where did You vanish? What shall we do now? Should we roam around in the *aranyas* growing matted locks of hair and wearing tree bark?”

Then they were instructed to visualize the form of the Deity in this Kshetra and in return they would get the benefit of attaining Vaikuntha. The *Indranilamani Purana* (a secret text used in the temple also known as *Sthala Purana*) mentions that Vidyapati arrived in Avanti on the morning of Asadha Purnima day, that is celebrated as Guru Purnima, and he handed over the flower garland he had brought with him for Indradyumna. Vidyapati narrated to Indradyumna his arrival in Purushottama kshetra, saying that as soon as he arrived there in the evening he could smell a divine fragrance in that area. A gentle breeze was blowing, and he heard voices shouting, “*yahi, yahi*” (“go away”). He realized that those were the devas who instructed him to go away as they were performing secret rituals for Nilamadhava. So guided by Visvvasu, he went to the Rohini kunda, where he took bath and sat under the Kalpa Bata in meditation for some time. After the Seva was completed, the Devas returned to Svargaloka and Visvvasu handed over the offered arland and *mahaprasada* to Vidyapati. In this chapter Vidyapati describes the Deity of Nilamadhava, which he says was 81 *angulas* (fingers) tall and standing on a golden lotus flower. Nilamadhava is a Deity of Vishnu, but in one hand instead of the lotus flower He carries Subhadra Lakshmi Devi (who is also called Kamala). Amazed, Indradyumna vowed to move his capital to Purushottama kshetra and remain there for the rest of his life to start a royal standard of daily worship rituals for Lord Jagannatha: *tatrasam karisyami purvadurgani chaivahi, satopacharahe srinatham pujayishye dine dine*

“There I will make my residence as I had already decided, and there I am going to perform perfect ritual worship to the Lord every day.”

While Vidyapati was narrating, Narada Muni arrived at the court of Indradyumna, saying he was just coming from Badrinarayana. Narada told Indradyumna, “O King, you must go to Purushottama kshetra, where the Lord will manifest Himself in four forms.”

Immediately the King arranged to go to Purushottama kshetra with all the residents of Avanti, and the departure day was fixed on *sukla paksha sasthi* in the month of *jyestha*, on a Wednesday. This day is still celebrated as Sitala Sasthi in the Jagannatha temple and the anniversary day of Shiva’s marriage; on this day Madana mohana and Shiva (in the form of Pancha Pandavas: Lokanatha, Yamesvara, Nilakantha, Kapalamochana and Markandesvara) feast together. According to the Vana Parva of *Mahabharata*, the Pandavas reached Puri on this day for the first time in the company of Krishna to get the Darshana of Purushottama, and they remained for three days. After the disappearance of Krishna the Pandavas again visited Puri on this day under the guidance of Shiva and Parvati. Indradyumna’s journey was prepared according to the ancient rituals mentioned in the scriptures. First the Purohita performed the Abhisheka to king Indradyumna with *Sri sukta*, *Vahni sukta* and *Daivata sukta*, then performed the Nandi sraddha, *homa*, *navagraha puja*, *vardhani puja*, *graha kumbha snana*, and the worship of the *raksha kavacha* known as Sanju, wrapped in a thin cloth.

The King wore all pure white clothes and was adorned with turban and crown, the *urdhva pundra* (Vaishnava) *tilaka* made with *chandana*, and some *durbha* grass tucked behind his ear. First Indradyumna went to get blessings from his *ista deva*, Nrisimha and Durga. Finally holding Narada Muni’s hand he ascended his chariot, drawn by ten horses, by stepping with his right foot first. According to *Indranilamani Purana*, the King was accompanied by Narada Muni, four *brahmanas* each expert in one of the *Vedas*, two body guards, one minister, the Queen, and four trusted friends. These fourteen people formed the closest group of the royal retinue. Starting from Avanti (the modern Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh), they first arrived on the northern bank of Mahanadi, where they rested for the night.

In the morning, Indradyumna asked Narada Muni to tell him something about the place where they had rested, and Narada explained that the source of the Mahanadi river was in the far east, on a mountain where Brahma had installed the footprints of Sri Vishnu and worshiped them. This river offers the same spiritual benefits as Ganga and on her banks there are two very important pilgrimage places: one is Suvarnesvara Madhava and the other is the abode of Madhava (Kantilo Madhava).

The King took bath in the tract of the river known as Chitrotpala, then he had the Darshan of Charchika, Vishnu's Yogamaya. According to the Tantric tradition, Charchika is a very important Deity of the Odiyana or Udrakhya tantra pitha.

Still today, at the time of Navakalevara, when the Sabara sevakas or Daitapatis start their *vanayajna yatra* for *daru sandhana*, on *sukla paksha dasami* in the month of Chaitra (celebrated as Vasanti Dasahara), they seek permission from the King in front of the Deity of Charchika. Also, when the Daru is carried to Puri, it is taken first to the Charchika temple in Banki (near Khurda).

According to the 34th chapter of *Kalika Purana*:

*udrakhyam pratama pitham dvitiyam jalasailakam tritiyam purna pithantu kamarupa caturthakam
udra pitha pascime tu tathaibodresvarim sivam katyayanim jagannatham utresam ca prapujayet*
“The first *pitha* is Udra or Odiyana, the second is Jalasaila or Jalandhara. The third is Purna pitha or Purna giri, and the fourth is Kamarupa. On the western side of Udra pitha, Udresvari resides, and on the northern side Katyayani is worshiped along with Jagannatha.”

After visiting the temple of Charchika, Indradyumna followed the Chitrotpala entering the forest named Dhatukandara by crossing the Vaitarani river (the abode of Goddess Viraja) towards Ratnagiri, famous for the cave known as Brahma gumpha.

After crossing the Vaitarani, Indradyumna reached the middle course of the Mahanadi at Kantilo, where he worshiped Nilamadhava and then set up his camp for the night. While Indradyumna was in his tent, the guards informed him that the King of Utkala was waiting to have his Darshan at the Devas' gate. During this meeting Indradyumna asked the King of Utkala about Purushottama kshetra and he was very disappointed to hear that in that region there was no human settlement yet. Narada Muni comforted him saying, *vaishnavanam na vancha hi viphalajayet kvacit*: “A true Vaishnava's wishes never go unfulfilled”.

The King of Utkala showed Indradyumna the way to Ekamra Kanana, and Indradyumna resumed his journey. After crossing the river Gandhabaha he heard divine sounds of mantras being chanted, and he thought he had reached Purushottama kshetra.

However, Narada Muni explained to the King that he had arrived at Ekamra kshetra (today's Bhubaneswar), a place that had been created by Sri Vishnu with His Sudarshana chakra when He rested here as Ananta Vasudeva after killing the demons. Later, Lord Shiva left Kashi (Varanasi or Benares) to come and live here on the bank of Bindu Sarovara along with Goddess Parvati. This place was called Ekamra kanana after the name of Goddess Eka, a form of Goddess Parvati.

Narada Muni instructed the King to take bath in the Bindu Sarovara and take Darshana of Ananta Vasudeva and Lingaraja. Lord Shiva blessed Indradyumna and spoke to him about the glories of Purushottama kshetra, telling him also that He resides there as the Astha Sambhu (Shiva in eight forms).

After visiting Ekamra, Indradyumna resumed his journey and arrived on the bank of the Bhargavi river, where he had the Darshana of Kapotesvara Shiva. This name is derived from the fact that during His meditation on Lord Jagannatha, Lord Shiva was immersed in such a spiritual ecstasy that His body shrunk to the size of a pigeon.

From there Indradyumna saw the fumes of the sacrificial fires rising from the forest and he set out to find the place where the fires were burning. He discovered that it was the ashrama of Bhrgu, and the sons of Bhrgu were performing the *yajna*. The King asked them the way to Purushottama kshetra, to which the *muni kumaras* (the young Munis) replied, “Purushottama kshetra is an extremely secret place, and we cannot give you its exact location.”

Then Narada Muni heard the sound “Narayana Param Brahman” emanating from a tree. They searched the tree and found out that the mantra was chanted by two doves. With great happiness, Narada Muni told the King that Shiva and Parvati themselves were personally giving him indications to continue the journey. From there, Indradyumna arrived at Bilvesvara (Belesvara). When Krishna visited Purushottama kshetra with the Pandavas, He also came to this place and worshiped Shiva with a Bilva (Bel) fruit, asking for the power to defeat the Daityas (Sabaras) who lived in this area.

From Bilvesvara, the King and his party arrived at Nilakanthesvara under the guidance of Margadevi (Batamangala). At that time, Indradyumna observed some ill omens: his left eye started twitching and his left arm was quivering.

He asked Narada Muni why this was happening, and Narada answered that although the King was on a spiritual mission for the benefit of all, still he was trying to get the Darshana of Nilamadhava, and Nilamadhava had disappeared after been seen by Vidyapati. Indradyumna was struck dumb with this revelation.

Again Narada comforted the King, saying that it was eventually his destiny to install that Deity, but in order to be able to see Indranilamani Madhava, the King should first perform one thousand *asvamedha yajnas*. When the Asvamedha yajnas were completed, Nila Madhava appeared in a dream to king Indradyumna, revealing that he would eventually be able to achieve success, but in a different way. Instead of finding the original Deity of Nila Madhava, he would have to retrieve the sacred Daru from the ocean and prepare new Deities to be installed in a grand temple. It is mentioned that Vidyapati had the Darshana of the Indranilamani Madhava Deity on the Amavasya of the Purushottama masa during Asadha, after which the Deity had disappeared into Patalaloka. On this particular day during the Navakalevara ritual the descendents of Vidyapati belonging to the Kaundinya gotra move the *nabhi brahma* (considered as the Indranilamani) from the old Deities to the new ones. Then the old Deities are given *samadhi* at Koili Vaikuntha.

Encouraged by the dream, the King and his party started climbing the Nilachala hill, arrived at Kalpa Bata and had the Darshana of Adi Nrisimha. Here Indradyumna was instructed to worship Adi Nrisimha. He heard an incorporeal voice said he should organize the *asvamedha yajna* under the guidance of Narada, who had been sent by Brahma. Narada asked Indradyumna to return to the place where they had the darshana of Nilakantha. There Brahma had installed a Nrisimha Deity (Yajna Nrisimha): that was the most suitable place for the *yajna* to be performed, and as Narada Muni was going to stay with the King for a short time only, the *yajna* had to start immediately. According to the instructions received, Indradyumna immediately built a palace facing west, where Narada himself installed the Deity of Nrisimha as the *ista deva* of the *yajna*. Ardhasini or Mausima was installed as the *yajna shakti*. After all the arrangements were made for the *yajna*, Indradyumna invoked the blessings of Indra and invited the other Devas to come and remain with him until the *puṇahuti* (the last oblation of the fire sacrifice). Obliging, the Devas arrived in the guise of Sevakas.

The ritual started with Pitru karma, Nandi sraddha etc, then the king performed the *varana* (invitation) ceremony for the *ritvik brahmanas* using the *svasti mantras*. In turn the *ritvik brahmanas* initiated the King and the Queen as the *yajna kartas*, and invited them into the *yajna sala*.

Then they installed the Agni (fire), performed the *prokshana karma* (purification of the five elements) and the *dasa digapala puja* (the worship of the Guardians of the ten directions). A suitable horse was chosen as the *asvamedha* horse, and after verifying all the auspicious symbols on its body, it was let out and the King and the Queen silently sat on a black deer skin. The *yajna* was performed in a *kunda* 14 x 7 *hasta* (about 7 x 3.5 feet) wide, according to the specifications for the Vaishnava Samskaras. The *yajna* ceremony was so elaborate that it was unprecedented for any of the *yugas*, and made Purushottama kshetra the most important *kshetra* of the universe. The night before the last day of the ceremony, Indradyumna had a dream in which he had the Darshana of the Yajna Purusha (Yajna Narayana), visualizing the form of Jagannatha. Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshana (also called Caturdha murti). This day was Asadha sukla Navami, which is still celebrated as Sandhya Darshana (Indradyumna Mahotsava) during the annual Ratha Yatra festival.

In the dream, Indradyumna saw:

*diptam balarka-koti prabhamanalashikam sapta-jihvagrajvalam
madhye subhram prashantam phanimukuta manishobhitam kamapalam
tanmadhye shankrachakra nalinavala gadan dharinam lakshminathan
bhadramalingya vakhyama pasyan rupa tan saccidanandarupam*

“Among the seven radiating tongues of Agni, that appeared to be brighter than thousands of new Suns, in the center, he saw Kamapalam Balabhadra, white in color with a peaceful expression and a crown of snakes decorated with gem stones. In the center he saw the Lord of Lakshmi Devi (Lakshminatha), holding *sankha*, *chakra*, *gada* and *padma* and embracing Subhadra on the left side of His chest. Sudarshana appeared as the radiance around Them.”

The *yajna* ceremony continued for ten days, of which seven were for the fire sacrifice itself, characterized as *sapta jihva homa* (offerings for the seven tongues of Agni, namely Helakali, Karali, Manojaba, Sulohita, Dhumravarna, Sphulingi, and Visvaruchi).

At the end of the ritual, the King distributed many cows and other gifts to the invitees, especially to the *brahmanas*. It is said that the nearby Indradyumna Sarovara (artificial lake) where pilgrims bathe before visiting the Lord, was formed by the hooves of the cows that Indradyumna gathered there to donate them to the *brahmanas*.

According to the scriptures a ritualistic bath ceremony called the *avabhrita snana* is performed at the end of the *asvamedha yajna* ceremony on its final day; the *yajna karta*, accompanied by his wife, carries the *jupa danda* (the sacrificial ladle) on his shoulder. He is accompanied by Vedic Panditas who chant the *Pavamana* and *Asuhushisano suktas*, etc. Some servants who accompany the *karta* and his wife carry the twelve articles that have remained after the completion of the *yajna*: the *somaghata* or *vardhani kalasa* (ceremonial pot), the *kushodaka* (water with *kusha* grass), the *bhasma* (ashes from the *yajna*), the cow dung, the *pranitodaka* (the leftover water), the *odana patra* (a type of container), the *purodasha kharpara* (the stick used to remove the ashes from the *yajna* pit). After reaching the bank of a water body, the *yajna karta* and his wife take the ceremonial bath amid the chanting of the Vedic mantras and then they all return in a royal procession accompanied by *chatras* (royal umbrella) and *chamaras* (royal fly whisks).

Thus, following the rituals as prescribed in the Soma *yajna* paddhati, King Indradyumna accompanied by his queen completed the *avabhrita snana* in the Mahodadhi (the ocean) in the place that became famous as Rakta tirtha or Chakra tirtha, between Bilvesvara in the north and the Mahavedi in the south. The Deities installed at this place (now known as Chakra Nrisimha temple) are Chakra Nrisimha, Adi Nrisimha, and Lakshmi Nrisimha.

As soon as the bath ceremony was completed, a huge log of wood arrived on the shore, its roots still pointing to the ocean. The tree was marked with the symbols of the *chakra* and *sankha*, and it was surrounded by divine scents. The King asked Narada what this log was, and Narada advised that before discussing about this matter, the King should offer oblations to the Sun, reciting the *Surya sukta*. The King complied, then Narada explained that this huge log was actually one hair of Vishnu from Svetadvipa.

The Daru (the sacred log) was taken to the Adapa mandapa (the *yajnasala*) at the present day Gundicha, passing in front of the Alambadevi or Alama Chandi temple in the northern direction known as Devajana marga (the path of the devas). There the worship to the Daru started. Indradyumna asked Narada Muni what kind of Deity should be carved from the log, and Narada replied that it was not a good idea to try to conceptualize the Deity: the Lord would take care of the matter directly. At that time, an incorporeal voice said:

*suguptayam mahavedyam svayam so' avatarisyati
prachadyatam dinanyosah jabat panchadashani vai*

“This log of wood has come to be installed on the Mahavedi as per its own wish. You must seal this area completely for the next fifteen days.”

These fifteen days are still celebrated as Anavasara.

At that time an extremely old man appeared and requested to be taken into the Karusala, saying he was going to carve the Deities. The old man (who was actually Visvakarma, the architect and craftsman of the heavenly planets) said he would carve the Deities, but on one condition: that no one should disturb him in his work. He wanted to work in a secluded room behind closed doors, and no one was to be allowed to enter the room for the next fifteen days. In the meantime, outside the *sala* there should be musicians playing all the time so that no sound of the carving work could be heard. If this condition was not respected, he would leave immediately without completing the work. Visvakarma started his work.

On the first day he thought of carving Surya, the Adi Deva (primeval Deity) of the *Vedas*, but then he thought that the worship of Surya could only be done in the daytime, and he decided otherwise. On the second day he thought of carving the form of Agni, the most important Deity of the Vedic period. Again he changed his mind because he thought that fire attracts insects and burns them. On the third day, he thought of carving the Deity of a tree, but then it came to his mind that trees become old and eventually die, and he gave up the idea.

On the fourth day he decided to carve the Yoga Chakra, but then again he thought that people would be unable to understand the concept, and he decided otherwise.

On the fifth day he thought of carving the *vighraha* of Rudra, the most important Deity of *Yajur Veda*. Then he thought that such Deity, showing an angry form, would not be suitable for everyone to worship. On the sixth day, he decided to carve the *bhoga sayana murti* of Vishnu (Ananta Vasudeva), but then he thought that again such worship would not be accepted by all groups of people.

On the seventh day, he decided to carve the Deity of Adya Bhuvanewari, then he thought that the worship around such Deity would encourage only tantric adepts and transform the place in a Shakti pith only. On the eighth day he decided to carve the Deity of Maha Ganapati, but then he thought that such form, too, would not be preferred by all.

On the ninth day, he decided to carve a Shri Chakra, but gave up his idea because nobody would be able to understand its meaning. On the tenth day, he finally decided to carve a *pranava* Deity, as *pranava* includes all traditions and appeals to everyone.

So he started carving the four Deities of Balabhadra, Subhadra, Jagannatha, and Sudarshana, representing the four elements of the Pranava syllable, forming the face of Jagannatha.

On the eleventh day the *lepa samskara* (the wrapping of the body in layers) of Jagannatha was started. Visvakarma first applied sandalwood paste on the entire body, then the *sapta-varti lepa* (also called *vajra lepa*) followed:

the first layer was *sugandha taila*, scented oil (also called *pushpa drava*)

the second layer was *patta vastra*, or indigenous silk

the third is *jhuna*, frankincense resin mixed with oil

the fourth is *patta jallika*, a kind of gauze cloth

the fifth is *chehalijina vastra*, another type of cloth

the sixth is *avaleha* (also called *khali*), a paste made of medicinal herbs

the seventh is *sri mukhaota*, a kind of gum, and then finally paint

Finally, on the fifteenth day, known as *Ubha amavasya*, the doors were opened and the king was able to contemplate the *caturdha murti* on the Ratna simhasana. This day is celebrated as *Nava yauvana darshana* (also called *Netra utsava*).

The King was advised to construct a temple on the Nilachala hill: the building was to be a thousand *hasta* (about 500 foot) long. After the completion of the temple, Indradyumna was advised to invite Brahma for the consecration ceremony of the Deities, so the King left for Brahmaloaka to call on Brahma. However, he was stopped at the gate by a guard named Manikodara because he was still holding an earthly material body; finally Narada Muni arrived to plead for him and they were both allowed inside. Brahma gladly accepted the invitation, instructing the King to start with the arrangements and promising that he would soon arrive. As Indradyumna had had to wait one day in Brahmaloaka before being allowed to see Brahma, a complete *Manvantara* (a cycle of 71 *maha yugas*, equivalent to 4,320,000 earthly years) had passed on Prithviloka (the planet Earth), and during that long time the temple he built had sunk into the sand. In the absence of Indradyumna, the then king of Utkala, Gala Madhava, had the temple pulled out from the sand but falsely claimed to have built it himself, so when Indradyumna reached back, there was a controversy.

On the sacred banyan tree by the temple lived a crow named Kaka Bhushundi, who age after age chants the name of Rama and witnesses everything. The crow testified, "It was Indradyumna who built this temple. It sank into the sands during his absence and Gala Madhava came and lifted it out."

Narada pacified Gala Madhava and convinced him to cooperate. Indradyumna confirmed that Gala Madhava would also be welcome to worship Jagannatha together with him, and that the Deity installed by Gala Madhava would also be worshiped on the main altar as one of the seven main Deities of the temple. This Deity is called Nila Madhava (although the form is Jagannatha's) and is still sitting on the Ratna Simhasana.

Narada instructed Indradyumna to construct three chariots to transfer the Deities from the Adapa mandapa (Gundicha) to the new temple that had been built on top of Nilachala. Thus three beautiful Rathas were built and all the paraphernalia for the journey and the installation was prepared.

The Ratha of Balabhadra was called as Taladhvaja and was decorated with green and red cloth. It had 14 wheels symbolizing the 14 *brahmandas* (universes).

Subhadra's was called Padmadhvaja and was decorated with black and red cloth. It had 12 wheels symbolizing the 12 *bhuvanas* (worlds).

Jagannatha's was called Garudadhvaja and was decorated in yellow and red. It had 16 wheels symbolizing the 16 characteristics of the Supreme Purusha.

The *Madala panji* mentions that 6 chariots were prepared, because the Deities were moved from one set of chariots to the other after crossing the river Banki Malini Nadi that ran across the path, which is now Grand Road.

Madhvacharya, who came to Puri during the reign of Kapilendra Deva, explained that it was not auspicious to have six chariots and advised the king to fill up the river and make the path smooth from the Jagannatha Mandir to Gundicha. After setting the Deities on the chariots, the procession journeyed to the new temple. Brahma also arrived, accompanied by his wives Savitri and Sarasvati, and was welcomed by Durvasa and Narada who were already there and helped him dismount his airplane.

Brahma circumambulated the chariots and recited the following prayer to the *chaturdha murti*:
namostubhyam namo mahyam tubhyam mahyam namo namah
aham tvam tvamaham sarvam jagadetacharacharam

“You and I are non-different from each other (as we are Your manifestations). Thus, by paying obeisances to You, I am offering respect to myself, too. You are the one who actually creates, maintains and destroys the universe through us. You are the seed of the universe.”

Finally the Deities were transferred into the temple and seated on the Ratna simhasana, then Brahma chanted *mantras* from the *Rig Veda* for Balabhadra, from *Yajur Veda* for Subhadra and Jagannatha, and from *Atharva Veda* for Sri Devi and Bhudevi. Then he installed Bharadvaja as the *yajna acharya*, Agastya Muni on the *brahmasana*, and Vasistha, Durvasa and Narada in the role of *pracharakas* (preachers). Then, on the *sukla paksha astami* of the month of Vaisakha (falling on a Thursday) the *abhisheka* ceremony was performed, accompanied by the recitation of the *Purusha sukta* for Balabhadra, *Sri sukta* for Subhadra, *Narayana sukta* for Jagannatha, and *Pavamana sukta (Chakra sukta)* for Sudarshana. This day is still celebrated as Niladri Mahodaya astami.

Lalita, the daughter of Visvasu

Regarding the story of Jagannatha there is also another version belonging to the popular folklore, that according to the official website of the Jagannatha Puri temple (www.jagannath.ori.nic.in) is found in the *Skanda Purana*, *Brahma Purana* and other *Puranas*.

According to this story, Lord Jagannatha was originally worshiped as Nila Madhava by the tribal chief of the Saoras (Sabaras) called Visvasu, and king Indradyumna dreamed of this wonderful Deity and sent a *brahmana* priest, Vidyapati, to find the Deity, who was worshiped secretly in a dense forest.

When Vidyapati arrived in Orissa and reached the Sabaras, Visvasu invited him to spend the night in his house. The *brahmana* fell in love with Visvasu's daughter Lalita and married her.

While staying in their house, Vidyapati noticed that every night Visvasu went out to the forest and came back only in the morning, radiant and emanating a celestial fragrance. When Vidyapati inquired about the mystery Lalita revealed him that her father was going every night into the forest to worship the beautiful Lord Nila Madhava. Vidyapati was elated. He immediately begged Visvasu to please take him to the forest to see the Lord, but the Sabara accepted only at the condition that Vidyapati would go with him blindfolded so that he could not learn the way and then go there by himself.

Vidyapati accepted, but wrapped some mustard seeds into his garment before going out. So, while walking, he released a trail of seeds that fell on the ground on a line all the way to the holy shrine. When they reached the spot, Vidyapati could see the beautiful Lord and remained astonished. While he was contemplating the Lord, one crow happened to fly around, and after seeing the Deity, it fell in a nearby pond and drowned. To his amazement, Vidyapati saw the crow emerging from the pond as a beautiful Vishnuduta form: the bird had attained immediate liberation and the personal company of the Lord in His transcendental abode. This crow was none other than Kaka Bhusundi of the *Ramayana* fame. Vidyapati wanted to do the same thing, so he climbed the same tree and was about to jump into the lake when he heard a voice say, “Don't die! You must tell Indradyumna that you have found Nila Madhava.”

A version of the story relates that at that moment, Visvasu returned from the depth of the forest with fruits and flowers for the worship ceremony, and Nila Madhava spoke to him: “Dear Visvasu, for a long time I have accepted your forest fruits and flowers with great pleasure, but now I wish to enjoy the regal opulence that king Indradyumna will give Me.”

It was not easy for Visvvasu to accept the idea of letting Nila Madhava go, but finally after repeated requests from Vidyapati and Lalita, the Sabara finally allowed the *brahmana* to go back to Indradyumna's court in Avantipura. However, when the King came to Orissa with all his royal retinue to take Nila Madhava away, following the line of the plants grown from the seeds, they all had a surprise: the shrine was empty — Nila Madhava was gone. According to one version of the story, the Deity had been hidden under the sand. Frustrated, the King decided not to return to his palace without having a Darshana of the Deity and started to fast to death at Nilachala. Then a celestial voice reassured him that one day he would see the beautiful form of the Lord, and instructed him to retrieve the sacred log on the ocean's shore and have Deities carved out of it.

Another version of the story says that Indradyumna felt offended and had Visvvasu taken prisoner by his soldiers, but immediately a voice from the sky said: "Do not give troubles to My devotees. Because of this aggression, you will never be able to see Me as Nila Madhava. However, if you build a temple at Nilachala I will come to you in My wooden form."

Indradyumna had a road built from a quarry in Baula Mala to Nilachala and he constructed a temple with stone in the navel of the conch shell of Sri Kshetra. The temple was built with a foundation 90 feet deep and the tower rose 180 feet above the ground. At the top of the temple tower, he had a pinnacle fashioned in the shape of a water pot (*kalasa*) with the *chakra* above it. He also had the entire temple covered in gold. Indradyumna also founded the *brahmana* village of Ramakrishnapur for the temple servants.

Some say the temple was 1,000 *hastas* ("hands") high, and Prajapati Brahma was immensely pleased in seeing it, so he offered a boon to Indradyumna. At this, Indradyumna replied, "I only ask for one blessing, that I will remain without male heirs to the throne, and that I will be the last member of my family, so that nobody after me will proudly consider himself as the owner of the temple". It is said that when the time came to inaugurate the temple, Indradyumna appointed Suradeva and Gala Madhava to take care of the kingdom in his absence and he went to Brahmaloaka to ask Lord Brahma to perform the ritual sacrifices and ceremonies. It is common knowledge that Indradyumna had to wait a long time to see Lord Brahma and during this time the temple he had built sank into the sand, so Gala Madhava had the temple pulled out from the sand, but falsely claimed to have built it himself.

In this version, too, the controversy was solved by the witness of the crow named Bhushandi, who lived on the sacred fig tree by the temple chanting the holy name of Sri Rama. Because Gala Madhava had lied, Lord Brahma condemned him to remain outside the temple, to the west of Indradyumna Sarovara.

Indradyumna wanted Lord Brahma to ritually consecrate the temple but Brahma answered, "This land of Sri Kshetra has been directly manifested by the Supreme Lord and His internal potencies, so there is nothing I need to do in order to consecrate this temple. Lord Jagannatha and His holy abode are eternally manifest within this material world purely by His mercy. Nevertheless, I will place a flag on the very top of the temple tower. Those who see this flag from a distance and pay their respects to the Lord will easily attain liberation."

Indradyumna also received instructions from Narada Muni, who told him to establish a temple for Adi Nrisimha in order to eliminate all obstacles to his objectives. Visvakarma built this temple beside Nilakantha Shiva. The King then performed a thousand Ashvamedha sacrifices in front of this temple for the satisfaction of the Lord who holds a mace in His hand. In that same night Nila Madhava appeared again to the King in his dreams and told him that He would come personally to him very soon. He should go to the shore of the ocean in the place known as Banki Mohan, and wait there. Indradyumna went to the beach, lay on a mat made of *kusa* grass and fasted waiting for the Daru Brahman to arrive. Soon he could see the enormous log, marked with the four symbols of Vishnu – the conchshell, lotus, mace and disc – floating towards the land, washing ashore to the amazement of all. Indradyumna ordered his men to carry the log to the palace but no one was able to move the huge piece of wood. Hundreds of men tried to pull it together, then the elephants came in, but every attempt failed. Then the King realized that he had committed a mistake and an offense by blaming Visvvasu and Vidyapati, so he called them with all honors to join him in the effort of getting the sacred log to the palace. As soon as Visvvasu and Vidyapati walked in, the log was easily moved and carried off. The King had the chariot pulled to the place where a sacrifice had been prepared under the personal direction of Brahma for the worship of Narasimha, the original presiding Deity of Puri. This sacrifice was performed at the Gundicha temple and the Nrisimha Deity in the adjoining temple there is this original *murti* sitting on the altar during the *yajna* conducted by Prajapati Brahma.

It is said that the nearby Indradyumna Sarovara (artificial lake) where pilgrims bathe before visiting the Lord, was formed by the hooves of the cows that Indradyumna gathered there for offering them to the *brahmanas* as gift. Next, the King had to find a suitable artist to carve the beautiful image of the Lord. The best artists and artisans were called to the palace, but something very strange happened: all their tools were breaking off, while they could not even scratch the wood. Indradyumna was in a very serious plight. His desire to see and worship the beautiful Nila Madhava was growing more and more — as the Lord is very expert in fanning the desire of His devotee. So after some sleepless nights and fervent prayers, the King received the visit of a stranger, a mysterious artist who came from “outside” and who introduced himself as Ananta Maharana. The artist said he would carve the Deities, but on one condition: no one should disturb him in his work. He wanted to work in a secluded room behind closed doors, and no one was allowed to enter the room until the work was finished. If this condition was not respected, he would leave immediately without completing the work. In the meantime, the other carpenters should be engaged in building three chariots for the Deities.

King Indradyumna was puzzled, but he agreed to the strange proposal, and the foreigner remained locked inside the room, but no sound could be heard from inside, while hammer and scalpel should have made a lot of noise. After many days of doubts and fears, the King finally decided he could wait no more: on the 21st day he opened the doors to see what was happening. Some of the versions of the local story say that it was the king’s wife, Gundicha, who pressurized him to disregard the orders of the carpenter and open the doors without his permission. Immediately the divine artist (who is believed to have been Visvakarma, the architect and craftsman of the heavenly planets) disappeared. In the room, the three “unfinished” forms of Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra stood magnificent and mysterious.

The King had no one else but himself to blame for the sudden disappearance of the divine artist, so his sorrow knew no bounds. However, again the merciful Lord appeared to him in a dream, in the smiling and kind form of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra, and told the King: “Do not worry. These are beautiful forms, My real forms, and you can worship Me like that.”

When Jagannatha offered a blessing to king Indradyumna, he asked that he may die without any male heir to continue his dynasty, so that nobody would ever be able to claim the temple as his personal property. This particular blessing is considered to have been carried on through the centuries.

Another version of the appearance of the Jagannatha Deities is given by Sarala Das in his Oriya version of the *Mahabharata*. Sarala Dasa writes that during the Krishna lila, Durvasa Muni had pronounced that in all the body of Krishna, only the soles of His feet were vulnerable. So during the *mausala lila* (the disappearance *lila*) of Krishna, Krishna Himself arranged for the destruction of the Yadu dynasty as described in the *Bhagavata purana*. One of Krishna’s sons, Samba, offended the great Narada Muni by disguising himself as a pregnant woman and asking the “all-knowing sage” about the child who was going to be born. Narada predicted that the questioner would deliver the Destruction of the Yadu dynasty, and in fact Samba’s abdomen swelled and produced a large iron mace. When Krishna refused to take personal interest in the matter and retired into the forest taking *sannyasa*, Samba and the other descendents of the Yadu family brought the mace to the old king Ugrasena, who decided that the mace should be ground to dust and thrown into the ocean.

The iron dust was washed ashore again by the waves and sprouted into a vast thicket of bamboo plants that were as hard as iron, while the last bit of iron after the grinding was swallowed by a fish and later on was recovered by a fisherman and hunter called Jara, who used it as an arrow tip.

One day the Yadus went to the ocean shore for a party, and drunk with rice wine they started to fight among themselves, ending up by killing each other with the iron-strong bamboo poles that grew on the beach. The hunter Jara accidentally shot Krishna’s foot while Krishna was resting among the bushes, mistaking His rosy foot for the muzzle of a young deer, and thus Krishna died.

Sarala Dasa’s *Mahabharata* continues the story by saying that the Pandava brothers, close relatives and friends of Krishna, came to Dvaraka to celebrate the funeral rites of Krishna. After cremation one small piece still remained, a bit of unburned flesh from around the navel, and it was consigned to the ocean together with Krishna’s ashes. Carried by the waves, Krishna’s navel finally reached the shore in Puri at Chakra Tirtha, where Jara Sabara collected it and worshiped it as Nila Madhava. Many people believe that the Brahma that is moved from the old Jagannatha Deities to the new bodies at Navakalevara is actually that ancient relic from the original body of Krishna.

This version is also confirmed, although not precisely, by Atibadi Jagannatha Das in his *Daru-brahma Gita*. He writes that the Pandavas celebrated the funeral rites for Krishna at Puri, after carrying His body on a sandalwood stretcher from Dvaraka. Although the funeral pyre burned for five days, only the hands and feet of Krishna's body were burned: the rest of the body was then consigned to the ocean. Later on when it was washed ashore by the waves, it was collected by Basu Sabara who installed it under the eternal banyan tree next to the Rohini kunda, and he started to worship it.

The Buddhist connection

It is certain that Orissa was the birthplace of Tantric Buddhism and a major seat of different Buddhist groups, and the Jagannatha tradition in Puri also recognizes a strong connection with Buddhism. Buddha is one of the *dasa-avatars*, the ten main incarnations of Vishnu listed in the famous song written by Jayadeva Gosvami in his *Gita Govinda*:

*nindasi yajna-vidher ahaha sruti-jatam sa-daya hrdaya darsita pasu-ghatam
kesava-dhrta buddha-sarira jaya jagadisa hare*

“Moved by deep compassion at the sight of the animal slaughtering performed because of a mistaken and offensive interpretation of the instructions about sacrifices contained in the scriptures, the Lord appeared in the form as the Enlightened, Buddha. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!”

Bhagavata Purana (1.3.24) confirms:

*tatah kalau sampravritte sammohaya sura-dvisham,
buddho namnanjana-sutah kikatesu bhavisyati,*

“At the beginning of the age of Kali, the Lord will appear in the province of Gaya as Buddha, Anjana's son, to confuse the demoniac beings who are always envious of the good people.”

The Utkala khanda of *Skanda purana* affirms that Purushottama Jagannatha is the origin and sum total of all the 10 avatars:

ato dasavataranam darsanadyai tu yat phalam tat phalam labhate martyo drstva sri-purusottamam

“A mortal being can get the benefit of contemplating all the ten *avatars* simply by seeing Sri Purushottama”.

Buddha also appears as one of the main 22 *avatars* listed in *Bhagavata purana* and commonly associated with the 22 steps (*baisi pahacha*) leading into the inner courtyard to the Jagannatha temple. Some people claim that Jagannatha's worship has borrowed some characteristics from Buddhism. It would be like saying that the father takes from his son. For example, the tradition of inserting the *Brahma* inside the new bodies of the Deities during the Navakalevara rituals is compared by many to the sacred tooth of Buddha that was placed inside the Buddha image, as related by the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Fa-hsien (around 400 CE), who also described a yearly procession of this image and relic in a place called Dantapur in Kalinga (the ancient name of Orissa). This procession still takes place in Kandy (Sri Lanka).

It is also a well known fact that Buddhism borrowed a lot of theological concepts and symbologies from Hinduism, including Devas and Devis. As Buddhism developed into a major religion precisely in Orissa under the reign of Ashoka, it is perfectly legitimate to conclude that it absorbed many of the characters of the worship of Jagannatha that was already popular there. For example, the concept of “Lord of everyone” (without distinction of caste and color), as well the peculiar concept of “form without a form” exhibited by the Deities of Jagannatha. However, we have seen that sometimes academic scholars, such as Wilson, James Fergusson and General Cunningham, tend to stretch themselves a little too much to defend the Buddhist theory. The equivalence claimed by some Buddhist-oriented scholars between the triad of Jagannatha/Balabhadra/Subhadra on one side and the triad Buddha/Dharma/Sangha on the other side is rather controversial.

The claim that the *Brahma padartha* that is moved from the old Deities to the new ones during the Navakalevara rituals is actually a tooth-relic of Siddhartha Gautama, or that the “lack of hands and feet” of Jagannatha is supposed to depict a “meditating Buddha” seem to be rather unlikely.

Similarly controversial are the connections between Jagannatha and Christianity and Islam that some scholars strive to establish, mainly because many people confuse the circumstances of one's birth with personal beliefs and especially with the adherence to the teachings of the religious authorities of the specific traditions. However, it is a fact that Orissa has a strong Buddhist tradition and many holy places in the Buddhist tradition.

The most famous site is Dhauli, where emperor Ashoka, shocked by the violence of the Kalinga war, found enlightenment and consolation in the doctrine of Buddha and introduced it as the State religion of his empire, actively propagating it even as far as Lanka and Indonesia through his personal ambassadors, carving his edicts in the rock still visible at Dhauli and establishing strict vegetarianism for himself and his court.

There are also several other remains of ancient Buddhist settlements, such as Lalitagiri and Langudi hill, Ratnagiri Mahavihara and Udayagiri (near Cuttack), Brahmavana (Salipur), Banasvaranasi (Narasinghapur), Ratnagiri (Jajpur), Kuruma (near Konark), Padmapura (Rayagada), Ayodhya, Kupari, Solampur, Khadipada and Soro (Balasore), Banpur, Visvanath hill, Jaugada (Malati hills), Gandhamardana hill and Ganiapali (Sambalpur), Naraj, and Bhubaneswar.

More information about these historical sites (now mostly in ruins) can be found in the chapter about Orissa.

A brief history of Buddhism

Siddhartha Gautama is also called Sakyamuni as he was born in the Sakya dynasty, son to queen Maya and king Suddhodana, whose capital was in Kapilavastu on the bank of the Rohini river, at the foot of the Himalayan hills in north-eastern India. The year of his birth is controversial; mainstream academia says 8 April 563 BCE, but recent research has shown that he might have lived in a much earlier period.

An old hermit, Asita, visited the newborn child and predicted that he would become very famous, either as an emperor if he remained in the palace, or as the savior of the world if he chose the life of renunciation. King Suddhodana did not want his only heir to become a holy mendicant, so he created a closed paradise around his son, where no shadow of suffering could enter. One day prince Siddhartha took the opportunity to visit his city and for the first time he saw the effects of old age, disease, poverty, death and pain: overwhelmed by compassion, he abandoned the palace and set on for the Great Journey to enlightenment. For six years he traveled and practiced austerities with *sannyasis* and *sadhus*, then he realized that penance was not sufficient and he left the company of everyone to concentrate on intense meditation.

After 49 days of deep contemplation at Gaya in Bihar, he found the answers, that he expressed as the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path:

1. the Truth of suffering: the world is full of suffering, life that is not free from passion and desire is always heavy with suffering because in the world everything is temporary and imperfect.
2. the Truth of the cause of suffering: undoubtedly the cause of suffering is found in the desires of the body and in the illusions of the mind.
3. the Truth of cessation of suffering: if we can eliminate the attachment to desires and passions, suffering automatically ceases.
4. the Truth of the cessation of the cause of suffering: in order to attain this level of detachment from desires and passion, one must follow the Noble Eightfold Path: Right vision, Right thinking, Right speaking, Right behavior, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right awareness, Right dedication.

Siddhartha Gautama had become the Buddha, the Enlightened. He started to preach in Varanasi and soon had many followers including king Bimbisara who had been his friend in his royal days.

The teachings of Buddha focused on compassion, nonviolence, renunciation, simplicity, as the reform of Hinduism that was being increasingly polluted by unqualified and degraded Brahmins exploiting people and unnecessarily causing a great number of animal sacrifices for their own personal gain. Buddha taught his followers that they needed worry about the *Vedas*, the gods or even the soul: by keeping themselves detached and benevolent towards all living beings, they could overcome illusion and achieve liberation. However, he maintained the basics of Vedic knowledge, such as dharma, karma, moksha, reincarnation, and preached nonviolence, cleanliness, and charity. The basic principles of Buddhism were *maha-prajna* (great wisdom) and *maha-karuna* (great compassion).

This path was open equally to all, men and women, rich and poor, Brahmins and Chandalas and everyone in between. It liberally afforded facilities for monastic life and family life, established the greatest universities of ancient times, produced a wealth of scriptural texts and assimilated the interests and beliefs of the local cultures where it was introduced.

Thus Buddhism branched out as Mahayana (worshipping the Buddha on a divine level), Hinayana or Theravada (honoring the Buddha as a great human master), Vajrayana (tantric Buddhism), Zen or Ch'an (focusing the meditation on overcoming all illusions).

Buddhism gained prominence in Orissa and was very popular until the times of Adi Shankara, who re-established the authority of the *Vedas* while assimilating much of the positive reforms effected by Buddhism. After Ashoka's conversion, when Buddhism spread to Lanka, the tooth relic of the Buddha was transferred to Lanka from its Stupa in Dantapura, a major city described by the Buddhist chronicles as the capital of Kalinga. The greatest contribution offered by Orissa to Buddhist culture seems to be the origin of Vajrayana, confirmed by the Tibetan work *Pag-san-jonzang* that refers to Oddiyana (Orissa) as the land of Tantric Buddhism.

It is said that this path was started by Asanga; king Indrabhuti and his sister Lakshminakara of the Bhauma dynasty were adepts of this form of Buddhism, strictly connected to the *Uddiyana Tantra*. In his *Jnana Siddhi*, he prayed Buddha in the form of Jagannatha.

One of the most notable characteristics of Vajrayana Buddhism is the importance of worship of the Mother Goddess as Prajnaparamita, equivalent to the Tantric Srividya. While the Buddha (considered by the Mahayanas as the manifestation of God) was transcendental to the world, his feminine counterparts were active within the world itself, and therefore closer to the hearts of the general people, and considered as the power of compassion and salvation offered to the confused souls of the universe, as Tara ("the savior goddess") the Shakti of Avalokitesvara ("the compassionate").

The terrific aspects inherent to the material world were represented by the secondary manifestations of the "irate" Goddess such as Yogini, Dakhini, Matangi, Pisachi etc.

Many elements of the *Tantra* were assimilated by this school of Buddhism, including the sexual symbolism that is still the center of the 6-syllable mantra *Om Mani Padme Hum* ("the jewel within the lotus").

In subsequent times, Vajrayana Buddhism developed further when it came in touch with the Yaksha (Bon) culture in the Himalayan region, creating the particular tradition known as Lamaism (Tibetan Buddhism).

Here are some of the traditional symbols of Vajrayana Buddhism:

- * Vajra: a combination of sceptre and weapon (lightening), symbolizing indestructibility and is held in the right hand during rituals.
- * Ghanta, or bell: symbolizing sound (insight, emptiness, the female aspect), it is held in the left hand during rituals.
- * Japa, or a rosary of prayer beads: symbolizes practice and concentration.
- * Kapala or skullcup: symbolizes transformation and renunciation.
- * Damaru (small hand drum) and Chod (larger drum): symbolizing time.
- * Kata (sword): symbolizing intelligence and knowledge.
- * Kartika (sickle or curved knife): symbolizing impermanence.
- * Khatvanga (stick): symbolizing the *siddhis*.
- * Phurba (ritual dagger): The hook the transformation of negative powers on the path to enlightenment.
- * Musala (pestle, hammer): symbolizing crushing strength or power.
- * Dhanu (bow with arrow): symbolizing single pointed concentration.
- * Trishula (trident): symbolizing attainment of the three Kayas (or Buddha bodies).
- * Bana (arrow): symbolizing longevity and prosperity.
- * Pasa (rope): symbolizing constraint of negative forces.
- * Ankusa (hook): symbolizing determination.

Great personalities

Many saints, devotees, scholars and poets have chosen Sri Jagannatha Puri dhama as their beloved home to be near Jagannatha. Some are more famous, some are relatively less known, and some are downright controversial, but nonetheless Sri Jagannatha accepts them all and reciprocates their love in a variety of ways.

The chapter lists first the three greatest personalities that left the strongest mark on the tradition of Jagannatha, a fact that is solemnized with the presence of their physical memory within the compound of Jagannatha's temple, in the form of *murtis* (sacred statue) or *pada padma* (sacred imprint of the feet).

These three great devotees of Sri Jagannatha are, in a progressive timeline of appearance, Adi Shankara Acharya, Jayadeva and Chaitanya.

Adi Shankara Acharya

Some *Puranas* and other ancient scriptures contain references to Shankaracharya as an incarnation of Siva and Surya. Sri Adi Shankara was born in Kaladi on the river Periyar, near the modern Trichur in Kerala.

His father Shivaguru and his mother Aryamba went in pilgrimage to the Shiva temple at Vrisachala, Trichur. There, Lord Shiva asked them if they preferred a foolish son who could live long, or a brilliant son with a short life. The couple chose the brilliant son, and on Vaisakha sukla Panchami their child was born. He was named Shankara, from *sam* ("happiness") and *kara* ("the giver").

The exact date of his birth is very controversial. The Western academia calculated Adi Shankara's life from 788 to 820 CE, while a number of Indian scholars have indicated a more likely period from 509 BCE to 477 BCE, demonstrating that the Shankara who lived later was in fact one Abhinava Shankara, a successor to Adi Shankara in the line of Kamakoti Pith, who also traveled and preached extensively. In the horoscope of Adi Shankara maintained by the Shringeri Pitha, the date of birth is stated as 3058 of Kali yuga (the age of Kali began in 3102 BCE), Ishvara Samvatsara, Sunday, Vaisakha sukla panchami. The ascendant was Dhanus, and the constellation Punarvasu. The horoscope given by Chitsukhacharya in his *Brihat Sankara Vijaya* (32nd chapter) says that Adi Shankara appeared at a very auspicious time, in the 2631st year of the Yudhisthira era, in the year Nandana, on Sunday, Vaisakha sukla Panchami. The Sun was in Mesha, the Moon was in the Punarvasu nakshatra, ascendant Karkata. The time was midday with the Abhijit nakshatra, Brihaspati, Sukra, Sani, Mangala and Surya all in exaltation, and Budha in position with Surya.

Such an earlier date for the appearance of Adi Shankara is more in accord with the records of the Dvaraka Pith that show an unbroken lineage of 79 Acharyas, while the Puri Pith has had over 140 Acharyas, and the Kamakoti Pith had 68.

Within a year the child started to speak, and at the age of 3 his memory was so powerful that he was able to repeat by heart whatever he heard, including many verses from *Puranas* and *Kavyas*. When the boy was 3 years old, his father Shivaguru passed away. His mother Aryamba performed the *upanayana* (sacred thread ceremony) for the boy when he was 5 years old and she sent him to Gurukula. Very soon the teachers found themselves at a loss, as the child was learning faster than they could teach him, and gave explanations of the scriptures in a very deep way. The young student found that the books used in the school were not good enough, so at the age of 6 he composed a text entitled *Balabodhi samgraha*, to help his fellow students to study better.

While staying at the Gurukula, young Shankara went to beg alms to the houses of the village like all the other students. In one instance (the story has several versions, one of which claims that the episode happened much later, when Shankara was residing in Puri) he came to the door of the house of a poor *brahmana*, and the lady of the house felt sad because she had nothing else but one *amla* fruit. Nonetheless, the lady sincerely offered the fruit to the boy. Moved by her generosity, Shankara composed the famous *Kanakadhara stotra*, praying Mahalakshmi to bless the family, and in answer to his prayer a rain of gold amalaki fruits fell on the house.

After completing his education at the age of 7, Shankara returned home and practiced his *sadhana* regularly, affectionately taking care of his mother, who also engaged herself in many *vratas* and fasted very often.

One day mother Aryamba started walking to the river with the intention of taking her noon bath, but due to the heat and exhaustion she collapsed on the way. Shankara rushed to assist her and brought her back to her house. That night, Shankara prayed river Purna to come and flow near his house, so that his mother could take bath more easily: the next day all the neighbours were astonished to see that the river had changed its course and now flowed near Aryamba's house. Adi Shankara had engaged himself in the study of *Vedas* since early childhood with a strong desire to lead an ascetic life, but as his father died when the boy was still young, so his mother hesitated to allow him to enter the renounced order of life.

A very famous story says that one day the boy was bathing in the river Purna, when a crocodile caught hold of his leg — the boy was going to be dragged away, and he prayed to his mother to allow him to take the order of *sannyasa*, because he was going to die very soon anyway. His mother relented and gave him permission, and immediately the crocodile let the boy go and disappeared into the river. Shankara chanted the *resocharana* mantra three times, initiating himself into the order of *sannyasa*, then came out of the river and prostrated himself to his mother in gratitude, promising that he would make all the proper arrangements for the maintenance and protection of his mother, leaving all his paternal properties to their relatives and requesting them to take care of all her comforts. Aryamba expressed her grief at the thought that her son would not be able to perform the last rites for her, and Shankara reassured her that his taking *sannyasa* would not stop him from performing such duty.

Then with his mother's permission, Shankara left Kaladi and headed north to search for a teacher who would initiate him formally into the renounced order of life. Soon afterwards, he had a dream and saw Achyuta, telling him to go to see Yogi Sri Govindapada Acharya, considered the disciple of Gaudapada, disciple of Sukadeva, son of Vyasa. Govindapada lived in a cave at Omkarnath on the bank of the Narmada river, and it was believed that he had been immersed in the *samadhi* of internal consciousness for a very long time.

Shankara traveled on foot, walking in the coolness of the morning and collecting alms at noon, walking again in the evenings and spending the night in a temple or under some tree. During his traveling, he came to a sacred hermitage in the place now known as Sringeri. There, while resting under a tree in meditation, he saw one frog who was laying eggs on a stone. Then a large cobra snake came and instead of devouring the frog and her eggs, spread his hood to shelter them from the sun. Amazed by this display of very unusual friendship among such animals, Shankara understood that the hermitage must be a very special place and on his enquiry the old ascetic told him that the hermitage was indeed the home of Rishya Sringa and his father Rishi Vibhandaka described in *Ramayana*. At the end of the long journey, Adi Shankara reached Omkarnath on the river Narmada, and found Sri Govinda Bhagavat pada immersed in deep meditation. Prostrating himself to the great Yogi, Shankara requested to be accepted as a disciple. When the Yogi asked him who he was, Shankara introduced himself by expressing the illusory nature of all material identifications.

Nirvanasatkam

*mano-buddhyahankara-cittani naham, na ca srotra-jihve na ca ghrana-netre
na ca vyoma bhumirna tejo na vayus, cidananda-rupah sivo 'ham sivo 'ham
na ca prana-samjno na vai panca-vayur, na va sapta-dhaturna va panca-kosah
na vak-pani-padam na copasthapaya, cidananda-rupah sivo 'ham sivo 'ham
na me dvesaragau na me lobha-mohau, mado naiva me naiva matsarya-bhavah
na dharmo na cartho na kamo na moksas, cidananda-rupah sivo 'ham sivo 'ham
na punyam na papam na saukhyam na dukkham, na manro na tirtham na veda na yajnah
aham bhojanam naiva bhojyam na bhokta, cidananda-rupah sivo 'ham sivo 'ham
na mrtuyr na sankha na me jati-bhedah, pita naiva me naiva mata ca janma
na bandhur na mitram gurur naiva sisyas, cidananda-rupah sivo 'ham sivo 'ham
aham nirvikalpi nirakara-rupi, vibhutvacca sarvatra sarvendriyanam
ca casangatam naiva muktir na meyas, cidananda-rupah sivo 'ham sivo 'ham*

“I am pure spirit, a form of knowledge and happiness, source of all auspiciousness. I am not the mind, nor the intelligence or the false ego or material consciousness, I am not the material senses nor the material elements which compose this body (air, water, earth, fire, space). I am not the vital air, nor the ability to comprehend and analyze, or the tissues or cells or components of this body. I am not the functions or the acting organs of the senses which compose this body (speech power, hands, feet, stomach, genitals etc).

I am not identified with repulsion or attachment, with the urge to obtain something, or with illusion: all this belongs to the material nature and it is distinct and separated from by being. I am not madness, I am not envy, I am not what causes rebirth. Even religiousness, economic development, sensory pleasure or liberation are separate from me: I am free from them. I am not bound by pious or sinful actions, by joys and sorrows of this world, as they all belong to the material level and the illusion of conditioned existence. My real identity is beyond all the various mantras used to attain benefits, the pilgrimages to get pious merits, the scholarly study of the Vedas, ritual sacrifices and ritual activities: my real nature transcends all this. I am not the beneficiary of material pleasures, nor the object of material pleasures, nor the cause of others' material pleasures. I am free from birth and death — they do not belong to me. I have no father or mother, no friends or relatives, I am neither master nor disciple. All this belongs to the material level, and my nature is different and distinct, being purely spiritual. I am eternally unchangeable, always situated in transcendental knowledge, free from action and from the consequences of action. I am free from anyone's power and even from the power of my senses: I am detached from everything, even from the very concept of liberation.”

Govinda Bhagavatpada gave Shankara all the four *mahavakyas* (*prajnanam brahma, aham brahmasmi, tat tvam asi, ayamatma brahma*) and kept him for three years studying all the scriptures and the yoga techniques. It is said that Govindapada taught Shankara the science of Hatha Yoga during the first year, Raja Yoga during the second year, and Jnana Yoga in the third year, following the system of *sravana manana nidhidhyasa*, or hearing, learning by heart and discussing the object of study. The opportunity for Shankara to manifest the perfection of yoga he had attained came with an extraordinary swelling of the river that surged up and was going to flood the area; it is said that Shankara set his *kamandalu* at the entrance of Govindapada's cave, stopping the waters in spate. Finally Govindapada recommended him to go to Kasi (Varanasi, also known as Benares) to get direct instructions from Shiva Mahadeva and Parashakti Bhavani, and to write commentaries on the scriptures. It is said that Govindapada entered the final *samadhi* after granting leave to his young disciple. The now 11 years old Shankara still had another duty to perform. During his meditation, he perceived that his mother Aryamba was approaching her final days, and she was waiting for him to fulfill his promise and take care of her during her passing away. Immediately he stood up and left for Kalaty. Aryamba was very happy to see her son and to hear him speak about the knowledge of the *Vedas* and recite *slokas* in praise of Deities. Knowing that his mother was a devotee of Vishnu, Shankara sang a *sloka* in praise of Vishnu, and Vishnu appeared together with His consorts. Aryamba happily left her body to attain the abode of Vaikuntha.

The dutiful son now prepared for his mother's funerals, but the orthodox Brahmins of the village refused to help him or even to give him fire, criticizing him for his intention to engage in Vedic rituals even after entering the renounced order of life. Shankara made a funeral pyre by cutting banana trees and by sprinkling water from his *kamandalu*, he created a fire that consumed his mother's dead body in a matter of minutes.

After completing the last rites for his mother, Shankara left Kalady and started his Dharma Prachara (preaching tour). He had heard about a very learned *brahmana* by the name of Mandana Mishra, who lived in Mahismati and followed the Karma Mimamsa (the path of ritualistic activity). Arriving to his house, Shankara found that the door was closed because Mandana Mishra was engaged in puja, but he used his powers to enter the house anyway. Mishra became very angry at Shankara and yelled at him, but Shankara merely smiled, and explained the uselessness of such rituals. Startled by the arguments presented, Mishra asked the young *sannyasi* to continue the discussion after the completion of the rituals, and Shankara agreed, appointing Mishra's wife, Sarasvani, as the judge of the debate. Sarasvani was extremely intelligent and learned and realized that this *sannyasi* was not an ordinary person, and at the same time she did not want to be the one to pronounce the defeat of her husband, so she suggested that both of them should wear a garland: whichever garland would fade first, that person would lose the debate.

Shankara won the debate and Mishra accepted the order of renunciation with the name of Suresvara, and left his home. Sarasvani pleaded Shankara to allow her to follow her husband as according to their faith, husband and wife make one unit and cannot be separated; another discussion followed and Sarasvani was accepted to travel with them. The three reached Sringeri on the Tungabhadra, and Sarasvani stopped on the bank of the river. Shankara then created the Sarada Pitha there, his first established Matha.

From Sringeri he visited various places of learning, meeting scholars from various schools of philosophy and defeating them all in debate.

He then traveled south, reaching Madurai where he offered prayers at the temple of Minakshi, and then went to Rameshvaram, where he met Sanandana, who later became known as Padmapada, the first director of the Shankaracharya Matha in Puri. On that occasion he instructed Padmapada to write the Glossary to the Sutra Bhasya, called Panchapadika. Shankara offered his prayers to Ramanatha and contemplated the ocean, that appeared to him as a wonderful symbol of the all-pervading Brahman, with rising and merging waves of creation and annihilation.

After visiting Tanjore, Chidambaram, Subramanya Puram (Tiruthani), Kanchi and Kalahasti on the bank of Tamraparni river, then he went to Venkatachala (Tirupati), where he worshiped Lord Venkatesvara and established the Dhanakarshana chakra.

While traveling, he gave intense training to his disciples. One of them, called Giri, always remained silent without asking any question or clarification, so the other disciples came to consider him as less intelligent, until one day Giri suddenly started reciting eight *slokas* that he had composed himself. Shankara called him Thotakar, and these *slokas* are known as *Thotaka ashtakam*.

At Arjuna kshetra or Thiruvadai Maruthur (Srisaila) in Andhra pradesh, Shankara visited the Mallikarjuna Lingam, residing under a Marutha (Arjuna) tree supporting many jasmine (*mallika*) plants. Overwhelmed by ecstatic devotion, Shankara composed the *Sivanandalahiri*, then remained in meditation for several days in the nearby forest called Hatakeshvaram.

He also preached to the Kapalikas, living in forest and hill caves. Their leader Krakacha (in some versions of the story, the name is Kirakshan) came to meet him and criticized him for carrying an earthen Kamandalu instead of using a human skull carrying liquor, and when Shankara preached to him explaining the actual meaning of the worship of Bhairava and Bhairavi, Krakacha became angry and decided to send a band of his followers to seize him so that they could sacrifice him.

Shankara approached the local king Sudhanva and informed him of the dangerous ways of the Kapalikas. Krakacha himself came to fight, but Bhairava appeared and cut off Krakacha's head. In other versions of the story, Shankara was about to be decapitated by Krakacha and he prayed Nrisimha, who appeared in the form of a lion and killed Krakacha. Shankara continued traveling and defeating opponents in philosophical and theological debates.

More amazing incidents are told about his journey, including another manifestation of the mystic powers of his *kamandalu* in stopping flood waters.

He reached Rajamahendri and then Jagannatha Puri in Purushottama kshetra, resting further north in a place now known as Shankaracharya Guha. When he reached Magadha desha there was a great meeting of Vaishnavas, Shaivas, Shaktas and Sauras, all eager to debate with him, and he defeated them all, convincing them of his mission and teachings.

Finally he reached Kashi. During his stay in Varanasi Shankara stayed at Manikarnika ghat, taking bath daily in the Ganges, near the Visvanatha temple, which he visited every day. The name Manikarnika ("ear ornament") refers to the sacred story of Vishnu's earring that fell here. Watching the sufferings of the human beings, Rudra Mahadeva wept out of compassion and engaged in austerity to pray Vishnu to help the poor conditioned souls of this world and liberate them from the bondage of material existence. Vishnu appeared and granted him the boon that anyone who visited the place where Shiva had performed such austerities would obtain liberation. Knowing the whimsical nature of conditioned people, Mahadeva asked that such blessing could be granted even to those who reached that place after death, and Vishnu, moved by Shiva's unlimited compassion, shook His head in amazement while granting the boon, and His earring fell there. Later, while descending to Earth, Ganga wanted to honor the place of Shiva's austerities and stopped here for a while on her course.

At the age of 12 he became known as Shankara Acharya, and by the age of 16 he had already completed his commentaries on the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma sutras* and the *Bhagavad gita*.

In Varanasi Adi Shankaracharya accepted many disciples and stayed for some time to write. After completing his writing, Shankara continued to travel, preaching and debating with various scholars and religious leaders, to re-establish Vedic knowledge by fighting against the various philosophical deviations and preaching devotion to God.

Another famous episode is his encounter with a Chandala in a street in Varanasi: it is said that while walking to the Visvanatha temple, his path was blocked by an outcaste man accompanied by his wife and four dogs. Shankara's disciples shouted to the Chandala to move away and to keep a distance, but the man replied, "According to your philosophy, Atman is not different from Brahman, and all-pervading. Where am I supposed to go? And why do you address me in a different way from how you address your Param Guru? We are all One."

Shankara realized that this was not an ordinary person, and had the vision of Lord Shiva Himself who had come to bless him accompanied by His consort and by the personification of the four Vedas. He reflected bodily concepts and prejudices, and as result he composed the famous *Manisha Panchakam*, in which he teaches the importance of seeing the Atman in every body. When he was 16, and was surrounded by 6000 followers, Shankara met the great sage Vyasa in Varanasi. One very old *brahmana* in poor health came to see him, and asked him to discuss his commentary to the *Vedanta-sutras*, the *Sariraka bhasya*. The debate continued for four full days, and Shankara was amazed to see the intelligence and scholarship of the old man, until at last he realized that he could be none other than Veda Vyasa himself, the author of the *Vedanta sutra*. He then offered his homage to him, obtaining the blessings of Vyasa.

Finally leaving Varanasi, Shankara visited Triveni at Prayaga (now known as Allahabad) and after taking bath at the Sangam he traveled to Ujjain, where he also offered prayers to Mahakala Mahadeva, Girinatha, Somanatha and Prabhasa khsetra, finally reaching Dvaraka, where he established his third Amnaya pitha (after Sringeri and Puri).

Departing from Dvaraka, Shankara went to the Sindhu Sangama (Karachi), where a group of Jain scholars assembled to debate with him, then proceeded to Gandhara, Purushapura (Peshawar), and finally to Takshila, the famous Buddhist university. After defeating all opponents in their arguments, Shankara proceeded to journey through Bahlika (Persia), where he met and debated with various groups such as Vaishnavas, Shaktas, Kshapanas (a sect of Shaivites), Charvakas (followers of the materialist Charvaka), and Paripatas (a group that abandoned the Vedic teachings). Afterwards Shankara went to Gaya, an ancient center of learning and a famous seat of Buddhists (as Buddha had obtained enlightenment at Gaya or Bodhgaya), then proceeded to Kamarupa or Kamakoti pitha (in Assam), where he established Vedic rituals, then to Pragytishapura (Guwahati) and to Pasupatinath, where he stopped the blood sacrifices. Shankara debated with Tantric Shaktas who were worshiping Kamakshi Devi with human sacrifices, meat and liquor, and convinced them to raise their mode of worship to a more sattvic level. Reaching Jyestesvara and then Kashmir, Shankara remained in meditation for some time in a place now known as Shankaracharya Hills. It is said that on that occasion, while sitting on the bank of the Ganga, he obtained the Darshana of Gaudapada, the Guru of Govindapada and disciple of Sukadeva, who asked him to read some portions of his commentaries. Pleased by his scholarship, Gaudapada blessed Shankara.

Then Shankara proceeded to Bhimesvara, Jvalamukhi, Haridvara, Uttarakasi, then Naimisaranya, Ayodhya and Mithila. Traveling further east, he reached Pataliputra and Nalanda, another important center of learning, where he had more meetings and debates with the local scholars.

Finally Shankara visited the famous temple of Sharada (Sarasvati), called Sarvajna pitham, where the south gate reserved for a person who was "master of all knowledge" had not yet be crossed by anyone. Shankara was tested for many days, answering one question after another with precision and clarity, and finally the south gate was opened and he was allowed to enter it. When Shankara entered the temple room, the Deity of Sarasvati Herself questioned him: "how can a *sannyasi* study the Kama sutra?" Shankara replied, "my body is pure and untainted from birth".

The scholars from all schools praised him, and Shankara ascended the seat of honor. On the next day he left for Badarikashram on the Himalayas and reached Jyotirdham (also called Yoshimatha). At Badarikashram he found the ancient Narayana murti in the Narada kunda at Alakananda (a branch of the Ganges), so he installed Him in a temple and ordered a Nambudiri *brahmana* (from Kerala) to perform the puja. Again Shankara met Vyasadeva there, discussing philosophy with him. One day, because his disciples were suffering from the extreme cold of the Himalayan region, Shankara prayed Lord Shiva, and a spring of hot water started to flow, that can still be seen today.

In Badarikashram Shankara established his fourth Amnaya Pitha, called Sarvajna Pitha, and appointed his disciple Thotaka as its head. Shankara remained at Badarikashrama for four years, writing 15 books. At the age of 32 he left for his last journey, reaching the Himalayan hills at Kedarnath, where he had established the famous temple to Mahadeva in the place where a previous temple had been dedicated by the Pandavas.

Just behind the Kedarnath temple there is his Samadhi. His last instructions to his disciples were about strengthening the foundations of a Hindu Nation, on the pillars of Dharma, Satya and Nyaya. He ordered his followers to strictly follow the teachings of the Vedas and to protect Dharma in cooperation with each other. To summarize his teachings, he repeated the *Dasa sloki*, containing the same fundamental truths that he had first expressed at the beginning of his journey.

Adi Shankara brought from Kailasha five *sphatika lingas* and installed them at Kedarnath (Mukti linga), Nilakantha kshetra in Nepal (Vana linga), Chidambaram (Moksha linga), Sringeri (Bhoga linga) and Kanchi (Yoga linga). The disciples in the succession of Shankaracharya that are chosen as directors of his Mathas also take the name of Shankaracharya. Among the main works of Adi Shankaracharya (about 300 texts are ascribed to him) there are the *Sariraka-bhasya* (commentary to *Vedanta-sutra*), the commentaries on *Bhagavad-gita*, 12 *Upanishads*, *Viveka chudamani*, the *Saundarya lahari*, and the famous *Bhaja Govindam* song. The famous *Jagannathastaka* song was also composed by Adi Shankara.

We can also mention other famous texts, such as *Dasa sloki*, *Atma bodha*, *Manisha panchakam*, *Prasnottara ratna malika*, *Brahma jnanavali mala*, *Manasa puja*, *Nirvanasatkam*, *Kanakadhara stotram*, *Upadesha sahasri*, *Bhavani astakam*, *Satasloka*, *Tripura sundari*, *Ranganastakam*, *Maha Ganesha Pancharatna stotra*, *Vishnu Bhujangam*, *Hanumat bhujangam*, *Gangastakam*, *Guru astakam*, *Annapurnastakam*, *Sadhana panchakam*, *Daksinamurti stotram*, *Shiva panchakaksha stotram*, *Ardha narisvara stotram*, *Dvadasa linga stotram*, *Kalabhairava astakam*, *Shivananda lahari*, *Govindastakam*, *Uma Mahesvara stotram*, and many others.

Adi Shankara in Puri

Sri Adi Shankara reached Kalinga to see Jagannatha, but the Deity had been lost. So Shankara went to meet the King in Jajpur and was received on the bank of river Vaitarani (where the footprints of both have been installed). It is said that this King was Janamejaya or Yayati Keshari. The King arranged for an Asvamedha yajna in the dry riverbed and invited 10,000 *brahmanas* from Kanyakubja to attend the ceremony. To mark the occasion for posterity, the King also erected a memorial pillar 31 feet high (from ground level), with a Garuda image on top; this pillar was destroyed during the invasion of Kalapahada, while the Garuda image is now in the temple of Narasimha at Madhupura (Jajpur).

Under the instruction of Shankara, the King went to Sonapur to search for the old Deity of Jagannatha Purushottama and found Him under a famous banyan tree. The Deity was brought to Jajpur, but since His body was damaged, it was decided to make a new one with neem wood.

Another version of the story says that Shankara simply retrieved the original Deity of Jagannatha from a cave in Chilika lake and had a new Deity carved, installing Baladeva as Shiva and Subhadra as Mahesvari Durga. This version seems to be substantiated by the relief sculpture from the Konarak temple, where in fact Jagannatha is the only Daru Brahman *murti* as we know Him today, and on His sides we see a Shiva lingam and a *murti* of Mahisha mardhini Durga (riding the lion and killing Mahishasura) as Balabhadra and Subhadra.

It is said that Shankara sent Bharati Acharya to Shankara Deva, the King of Nepal, to bring a Salagrama Brahma sila from Gandaki to be worshipped together with Jagannatha. From that time the Kings of Nepal have a special connection with the temple of Puri; their title is “Patta Mahanayana” and they are allowed to worship Jagannatha on His altar.

The installation of the new Deities of Jagannatha took place on the river bank at Jajpur, in the place where now a Jagannatha temple is situated. Then the Deities were brought to Puri on Sravana Purnima. Padma Acharya seated Them on Their throne and offered a diamond jewel (called Chita), after which the food offerings were started. Adi Shankara also built the temple of Nrisimha within the main temple compound. Adi Shankara also established the Deity of Badrinarayana inside the temple of Jagannatha, and it is said that the working organization of the different groups of Sevakas was planned according to his instructions. The King gave Adi Shankara the title of “Mahanayaka Dharmasetu”.

As Adi Shankara was responsible for reforming the worship system in the Jagannatha temple and increased the offerings, his seat was called Bhogavardhana pitha, which later came to be known as Govardhana matha. A small image of Adi Shankara was kept near Jagannatha at first, then it was moved to the shrine of Lakshmi Nrisimha to the Jagamohana. It is said that Adi Shankara composed the famous *Jagannatha ashtaka* prayer while residing in this Matha.

It is said that the Shankaracharya's Govardhana matha was originally located within the Jagannatha temple, in the place where the present Jagamohana stands, and the Acharyas of the Matha were in charge of the worship, while only their ashram was in Bali Sahi. When the largest temple was constructed, the Govardhana Matha was moved to the ashram in Bali sahi and only the painting and the murti of Shankara. Later, during the Maratha period under the reign of Divyashingh Dev II (1793-1798), the Ramanandi sadhu Baba Govinda Brahmachari undertook repairs to Jagannatha's Ratna simhasana and removed the images of Adi Shankara and Padmapada (the first Acharya of the Govardhana Matha); before the images could be reinstalled, someone stole them.

Still today, the Shankaracharya of Puri has the right to sit within the sanctum of the temple, to personally render any service to the Deity as per his wishes, and to personally appoint the new priests of the temple after examining them. These priests also have the duty to supply him daily with a share of *mahaprasada* and a special plate of *kichari* that had been offered to Vimala Devi, and to serve his personal Nrisimha Deity.

Adi Shankaracharya played an extremely important role in the renaissance of Vedic culture as in his times Buddhism and Jainism had grown to an immense popularity and power both among the general people and among the rulers. As we have already mentioned in the chapter about the history of Orissa, Buddhism was particularly open and adaptable, blending with very different types of religious beliefs and cultures, and could easily accommodate everyone, from the completely illiterate to the greatest scholars, and had no prejudice towards women and the lower sections of society. Buddhism promoted social cooperation and harmony, and although it preached non-violence and morality in governance it never encroached upon the duties of the rulers and let them completely free to act for the benefit of their kingdoms.

At that same time it denied the power of the unqualified caste *brahmanas* who encroached on every sphere of life demanding power, wealth, sense gratification and social respect while neglecting to fulfill their duties. The Buddhist monks were a shining example of renunciation and humility, dedication to spiritual life and the upliftment of the entire society, and quite often they were learned in all the branches of knowledge. In fact, the greatest universities of the time were organized and managed by Buddhist monks. The main teaching of Adi Shankara is the integration of the apparent opposites (Advaita), a vision that offers a beautiful and happy synthesis of the entire corpus of Vedic knowledge, reconciling all the various presentations that were originally meant to facilitate different people. Adi Shankara Acharya and his successors established the superiority of Vedic knowledge over the spreading of Buddhism, at the same time integrating and highlighting those reforming aspects of Buddhism that had made it so popular with people - simplicity of life and renunciation, kindness and compassion, equality, a way to the study of scriptures and religious life that was open to all irrespective of birth, a transcendental and deeper level where spirituality was a personal matter based more on enlightenment and consciousness than on social conventions.

The major spiritual revolution of Adi Shankara consisted in creating a group of *sannyasis* and *brahmacharis* who totally disconnected themselves from the material identification with social classes (*varnas* and *jatis*) and who cultivated and taught Vedic knowledge in its purest and most ecumenical form. He founded organized religious institutions called Mathas, that extended the scope of complete dedication to spiritual life from the ascetic hermitages of the Rishis in the forests and on the mountains, and brought them directly among the people, in the cities and in the temples. These "new age *sannyasis*" accepted disciples from all sections of society and from any order of life, creating Ashrams that substituted the traditional *gurukulas*, the "Guru's household" of the married *brahmana* teachers. Such a move was totally unprecedented and certainly created frictions with the caste Brahmins who counted on their religious monopoly to exploit society. Shankara's preaching affirmed the superiority of philosophy and self realization over the materialistic rituals prescribed in the Vedas for advancement in material life. Yet, he never denied the value of ritualistic activity in temples and in homes, and he rather encouraged and regulated it, demonstrating it in practice by the establishment of the blissful and personal worship to the Deities. Furthermore, Shankara taught that the attainment of *moksha* or *samadhi* is followed by *vyuthana*, return to ordinary life with an extraordinary level of awareness, by which one is able to see reality and interact with the world without being confused by illusion. Thus, life on the level of transcendence was presented as perfectly compatible with performing one's duties in life in the world.

Simultaneously, Shankara wrote many devotional hymns fostering a deep sense of *bhakti* in the hearts of people, addressed to different Deities but always exalting the supreme transcendental position of Narayana.

Among these devotional hymns, we find the famous *Jagannathashtaka*, the even more famous *Bhaja Govindam* song, the *Moha Mudgaram* and many other texts. The devotion of ordinary people for God is often suffering from the limitations of sentimentalism, bigotry and fanaticism due to a lack of scriptural knowledge; since devotion is usually presented as self-sufficient for the attainment of divine realization, many people misunderstand this idea to mean that one can attain pure *bhakti* without developing *jnana* (knowledge) and *vairagya* (detachment or renunciation). In fact, *Bhakti* can become self-sufficient only at a higher level, when through knowledge and detachment the devotee has become free from *anarthas* (unwanted qualities or activities).

Before attaining such enlightened and purified state, devotion without knowledge remains fanaticism, and without detachment it remains bigotry, just like knowledge and detachment remain arid without devotion. Shankara gave great importance to the cultivation of knowledge and study and the practice of teaching, but such elevated and spiritual philosophy was never separated from *bhakti*, love and devotion to the transcendental form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. At a higher level *jnana* and *bhakti* are one and the same.

Adi Shankara's tremendous contribution in the presentation of Vedic philosophy focused on the Advaita Brahman (in its impersonal form) and the *pancha upasana* method of worship (including the five most popular Personalities of Godhead: Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Surya and Ganesha) thereby preventing and overcoming the potential conflicts among the followers of the different sects – Vaishnavas, Shaivas, Shaktas, etc. In this light we can come to better understand and appreciate the significance of the worship of Jagannatha as well as the related worship of Hari-Hara that is prevalent in the entire region, not only in Bhubaneswar (Lingaraja, Siddhesvara) and Puri (Yamesvara) but also in the original Nila Madhava temple in Kantilo and the Laddu Baba temple at Odagaon (all in Puri district), as well as in the Hari Shankar temple in Bolangir and the Gandharadi temple in Phulbani. In these temples, the Deity is worshiped with the simultaneous offering of Tulasi and Bilva leaves, and Garuda sits in front of the shrine together with Vrishabha, while the dome of the temple shows both the Chakra and the Trishula.

In later periods, some of Shankaracharya's followers started to give more sectarian interpretations of his teachings, transforming them into an intransigently impersonalistic view, to the point of stating that even the Supreme Personality of Godhead Narayana has to take a material body when He descends into this world and thus becomes subject to the illusion of Maya. These "impersonalists" maintain that the conditioned soul is actually Narayana Himself having been overcome by illusion. Such conclusion is obviously contrary to the teachings of the Vedas and especially to the teachings of *Bhagavad Gita*, the scripture that Shankaracharya treasured most.

The Bhaja Govindam song

One of the most famous songs composed by Adi Shankaracharya towards the end of his life is an open invitation to worship Govinda:

*bhaja govindam bhaja govindam bhaja govindam mudha mate
samprapte sannihite kale, nahi nahi rakshati dukrin karane
mudha jahihi dhanagama trishnam kuru sadbuddhim manasi vitrishnam
yad labhase nija karmopattam, vittam tena vinodaya cittam
yavad vittoparjana sakta stavad nija parivaro raktah
pascad jivati jarjaradehe vartam ko 'pi na prcchati gehe
ma kuru dhana jana yauvana garvam harati nimesat kalah sarvam
maya mayamidam akhilam hitva brahmapadam tvam pravisa viditva
suramandira tarumula nivasah sayya bhutala majinam vasah
sarva parigraha bhoga tyagah kasya sukham na karoti viragah
bhagavad gita kimchidadhita ganga jala lava kanika pita
sakrdapi yena murari samarca kriyate tasya yamena na carca
punarapi jananam punarapi maranam punarapi janani jathare sayanam
iha samsare bahu dustare krpaya 'pare pahi murare
geyam gita nama sahasram dhyeyan sripati rupam ajasram
neyam sajjana sange cittam deyam dina janaya ca vittam
artha manartham bhavaya nityam nasti tatah sukhalesah satyam*

*putradapi dhanabhajam bhutih sarvatraisa vihita ritih
guru charanambuja nirbhara bhaktah samsara dachiradbhava muktah
sendriya manasa niyamadevam drakshyasi nija hrdaya stham devam*

“Worship Govinda, serve Govinda, glorify Govinda, you fools! Scholarship and rules will profit you nothing, once the hour of death comes. Renounce, o fools, your insatiable thirst for material wealth! Train your mind to be intelligent and satisfied with what comes through your good and honest work. Detach your mind from evil doing and material attachments. When a man is rich and able to support his family, everyone shows him affection and care, but when life’s sunset arrives, not even his nearest kin will approach him to ask about his well-being. Do not be proud of youth, friends, followers or wealth, because Time will steal them away in a moment. Leave the illusion of this material world and enter into the transcendental level of Brahman, full of the supreme consciousness. Make a temple or a tree your home, clothe yourself in rough attire, lie on bare earth, detach yourself from sense gratification and do not search for gifts. In this way, how can one fail to be happy, since he does not depend on anything? By simply reading *Bhagavad Gita*, drinking a little Ganges water, sincerely worshipping Sri Murari even once, one will never have to fear Yamaraja any more. Not having to be born again! Not having to be dying again! Not having to lie in a mother’s womb again! O Sri Murari, please protect me, with Your supreme mercy, from this horrible cycle of birth and death! Every day read the *Gita* and the thousand names of Vishnu, always meditating with full devotion on the form of the Lord of Sri Lakshmidēvi. Be happy and attentive in the company of good and saintly people, and offer your wealth and knowledge to those who have none. Remember, material possessions and achievements are illusory and bring suffering: they do not give any real happiness. A rich man even fears his son: this is happening everywhere. Cherish your guru’s lotus feet and quickly free yourself from the enslavement of illusion, control your senses and your mind, and contemplate the Lord within your heart.”

The Shankara Acharya Mathas

The main *dhamas* where Adi Shankaracharya established his Mathas are:

1. The Matha in Puri (in the eastern side of India) is called Govardhana Matha or Bhogavardhana Pitha. Some say it was established in 821 CE, but such calculation depends on the dating of Adi Shankaracharya’s birth that is almost certainly incorrect.

Its first Acharya was Padmapada; its *sannyasi* names are Vana and Aranya, and its *brahmachari* name is Prakasha. They study the *Rig Veda*, they consider the ocean as their holy bathing place, and their Deities are Purushottama Jagannatha (Vishnu) and Vimala (Durga or Subhadra). Their mantra is “*prajnanam brahma*”, from the *Aitareya Upanishad*.

2. The Matha in Sringeri (in the south) is in Karnataka and is also called Sarada Matha. Its first Acharya was Suresvara. Its *sannyasa* names are Sarasvati, Bharati and Puri, while the *brahmacharya* name is Chaitanya. This is the Matha that considers Sri Chaitanya (the initiator of the Gaudiya Vaishnava movement) as their spiritual descendent (although some Gaudiya Vaishnavas claim Chaitanya had no connection with this lineage). They study the *Yajur Veda*, they consider river Tungabhadra as their holy bathing place, and their Deities are Chandra Mulesvara (Shiva) and Sri Sarada (Sarasvati). Their mantra is “*aham brahmasmi*”, from the *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad* of *Sukla Yajurveda*.

3. The Matha in Dvaraka (in the west) is in Gujarat and is also called Kalika Matha. Its first Acharya was Hastamalaka. Its *sannyasa* names are Tirtha and Ashrama, while the *brahmacharya* name is Svarupa. They study the Sama Veda, they consider river Gomati as their holy bathing place, and their Deities are Siddhesvara Shiva and Bhadra Kali. Their mantra is “*tat tvam asi*”, from the *Chandogya Upanishad* of *Sama Veda*.

4. The Matha in Badrinath (in the north) is in Himalayas and is also called Jyotirdham or Yosi Matha. Its first Acharya was Thotaka. Its *sannyasa* names are Giri, Parvata and Sagara, while the *brahmacharya* name is Ananda. They study the *Atharva Veda*, they consider river Alakananda as their holy bathing place, and their Deities are Vishnu Narayana and Shakti Purnagiri. Their mantra is “*ayam atam brahma*”, from the *Mundaka Upanishad* of *Atharva Veda*.

Succession in the Shankaracharya Mathas

Generally Shankaracharyas become *sannyasis* directly from the *brahmachari* line, often at a very young age; the Matha of Puri is an exception.

Sringeri is the only Matha that has had an unbroken line of succession from Adi Shankara. Among the other three Mathas, the succession has been interrupted at one time or the other for a variety of historical reasons. The longest hiatus in the line of succession was in the case of Jyotirmath, where the seat lay vacant for around 165 years. In the recent past, the Sringeri Math has been involved, directly or indirectly, in stabilizing the line of succession in the other three Mathas.

Ugra Narasimha Bharati (1817 - 1878) of the Sringeri Matha was well-known throughout India as a very saintly personality who travelled far and wide, and had disciples all over India and in Sri Lanka. He was succeeded by Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati (1878 - 1912), who rediscovered Kaladi, Adi Shankaracharya's birth-place, and instituted Shankara Jayanti celebrations all over India. He also arranged for the publication of a comprehensive collection of Shankara's works and initiated the practice of having the various Shankaracharyas meet for informal discussion and decision making. Thus meetings took place at Kaladi, Hardwar, Prayag etc. His successor, Chandrasekhara Bharati (1912 to 1954), acclaimed as *jivanmukta*, wrote a commentary to Shankara's *Vivekachudamani*. The first meeting of all four Shankaracharyas (Chaturamnaya sammelanam) took place at Sringeri in 1979 under the leadership of Abhinava vidya Tirtha (1954 - 1989). The Shankaracharyas of the four Amnaya Mathas and the head of the Kanchi Matha held another conference at Sringeri in 1993, following the events of December 1992 at Ayodhya, to express their concern at the politicization of religious issues and resolved to lead a non-political effort to solve the Ramajanmabhumi-Babri Masjid issue amicably.

Trivikrama Tirtha was the head of the Dvaraka Matha till the year 1921. He was succeeded by Bharati Krishna Tirtha, who had a very interesting career. Beginning as a student of *Vedanta* at Sringeri, he became a *sannyasi* under Trivikrama Tirtha of Dvaraka and became the Shankaracharya at Dvaraka in 1921. Soon after the First World War he was prosecuted along with the Ali brothers and other Muslim leaders by the colonial British government for treason, in connection with his involvement in the Indian Independence movement and his support of the Khilafat movement. He is also said to have discovered some ancient *sutras* of basic arithmetic, which have been published as a book under the title *Vedic mathematics*. He was asked to take over the Puri Matha in 1925, when that seat fell vacant, so Svarupananda Tirtha and Yogesvarananda Tirtha followed at the Dvaraka seat. In the year 1945, Abhinava Sacchidananda Tirtha was nominated as the Shankaracharya of Dvaraka, with Bharati Krishna Tirtha performing the installation ceremonies. Before taking over at Dvaraka, Abhinava Sacchidananda Tirtha was the head of the Mulabagal Matha in Karnataka, an old branch of the Dvaraka Matha established in the 17th century, so with his appointment to the Dvaraka seat, the collateral lineage of Mulabagal Matha was merged with that of Dvaraka. In later years, he was called upon to mediate the succession issues at both Puri and Jyotirmath. He also renovated the Samadhi site of Adi Shankara at Kedarnath with the assistance of the government of Uttar Pradesh. When he passed away in 1982, Svarupananda Sarasvati of Jyotirmatha assumed charge at Dvaraka. Abhinava vidya Tirtha of Sringeri consecrated his appointment, and Svarupananda has held dual charge at both Dvaraka and Jyotirmatha since then.

Jyotirmatha is also known as Joshimatha and Badrinatha Matha. After a long hiatus of 165 years, this Matha was revived in the year 1941 under Brahmananda Sarasvati, a disciple of Krishnananda Sarasvati, who was originally from Sringeri. The appointment was made by a committee of Pandits from Varanasi, and Brahmananda's accomplishments helped re-establish the Jyotirmatha as an important center of traditional Advaita teaching in northern India. When he passed away in 1953, he was succeeded by Santananda Sarasvati according to the terms of a will, although there was a major controversy that remains unresolved. Karapatri Swami (Hariharananda Sarasvati), a well-known disciple of Brahmananda, was asked to take over the Jyotirmatha title, but he declined. To resolve the dispute, another committee of Pandits from Varanasi was formed, under the guidance of Karapatri Swami and Abhinava Sacchidananda Tirtha of Dvaraka. Krishnabodha Ashrama was appointed as the new head of the Matha and in the early 1970s, he nominated as his successor another disciple of Brahmananda, Svarupananda Sarasvati, who continues as the Shankaracharya of Jyotirmatha, and has also been in charge of Dvaraka since 1982.

Some people consider the rightful succession of the Jyotirmatha title to be along the line of Santananda Sarasvati, who retired in 1980 in favor of his disciple, Vishnudevananda Sarasvati, who has since passed away and was succeeded by Vasudevananda Sarasvati. Thus, there are at least two separate lineages at Jyotirmatha currently, although Svarupananda Sarasvati is endorsed by the other Amnaya Mathas.

There is a third claimant to the Jyotirmath title, named Madhava Ashrama (a disciple of Krishnabodha Ashrama, who was nominated to the Jyotirmath title in the 1960s), contesting both the claims of Svarupananda and Vasudevananda. It is said that he was anointed in 1993 or 1994, under the guidance of Niranjana deva Titha, the former Shankaracharya of Puri.

In the beginning of the century the Matha in Jagannatha Puri was headed by Shankara Madhusudana Tirtha. Bharati Krishna Tirtha, who was then at Dvaraka, took over as the Shankaracharya of Puri in 1925. Bharati Krishna Tirtha visited the USA in the 1950's, on the invitation of the Self-Realization Fellowship (Yogananda's Organization). During this time, Shankara Purushottama Tirtha supervised the Puri Matha on his behalf. When Bharati Krishna Tirtha passed away in 1960 he was succeeded by Yogesvarananda Tirtha, whose period was quite short as he passed away in 1961, leading to a brief period of uncertainty during which the succession at the Matha was being litigated. In 1964 one of the nominees named in Bharati Krishna Tirtha's will, Niranjana deva Tirtha, known for his political views, was consecrated at the Puri seat by Abhinava Sacchidananda Tirtha of Dvaraka. In 1992 he stepped down after nominating Nischalananda Sarasvati as his successor. In recent years another claimant, Adhokshajanananda Sarasvati, contested the position of Nischalananda Sarasvati and opened a small Matha in Puri.

Other than the four Amnaya Mathas, Shankara Acharya also founded several other Mathas in several cities like Kanchi, Ayodhya, Mathura, Hardvara, Kasi, Avanti (today Ujjain) etc. Kanchi, or Kanchi Kamakoti Pitham, in Tamil Nadu, is particularly important as it is described as the place where Parvati performed austerities in order to get the *darshana* of Lord Shiva. Other Shankara Mathas were originally branches of one of the four Amnaya Mathas and grew into more or less independent institutions over time. Notable among these are the Mathas at Kumbhakonam, Sankhesvar, Kudali, Virupaksha (Hampi), Kolhapur (Karavir Pitham), Shivaganga, Sakatapura, and the famous Upanishad brahmendra Matha at Kanchipuram, founded in the 18th century by Ramachandrendra Sarasvati. Sometimes succession controversies also lead to the establishment of separate Mathas.

A few Mathas of the Nambudiri community in Kerala also trace their foundation to Shankara himself, as do the Sumeru and Paduka Mathas in Varanasi. However, the Kavale Matha of the Gauda Sarasvata community in Goa traces its origin not to Shankaracharya, but to another disciple of Govinda Bhagavatpada. In northern India the Shankarite *sannyasis* are also called Dasanami and are organized into a number of Akhadas, namely Juna, Niranjani, Mahanirvani, Atal, Avahana, Anand, Gudad, Bada Udasin, Naya Udasin, Nirmal and Agni. Except for the Agni Akhada, which is for *brahmacharis*, the members of all other Akhadas are *sannyasis* carrying the single staff (*ekadanda*).

Jayadeva

A very special place in the heart of Jagannatha and in the hearts of all the people of Orissa is reserved to the great poet Jayadeva, who unites exquisite Sanskrit scholarship with the most intimate and passionate feelings of divine *bhakti*. Some of his contemporaries have described him as "the incarnation of melody". Some even consider him a direct incarnation of Krishna (and his wife Padmavati as Radha) or Jagannatha.

Although Jayadeva did not start any disciplic succession or establish any Matha, the admiration and respect for his name remains undying and his work remains the strongest foundation of Orissa's spiritual and artistic culture. It is not easy to speak about the "teachings" of Jayadeva, as he only wrote the *Gita Govinda* (as well as the famous dictionary *Nirukta*) and not numerous volumes of philosophical elaborations, ritualistic instructions or ethical recommendations as the traditional Acharyas do, yet for those who have attained the realization of the transcendental form, qualities and activities of Sri Krishna (and are therefore protected from any misconception on the nature of His loving exchanges with Sri Radhika), there is an immense symbolic wealth of philosophy and theology to be found in his beautiful songs.

Sri Jayadeva Gosvami was born during the 11th century; the year of his birth is uncertain, although it is said that he composed the *Gita Govinda* under the reign of king Kamarnava, who ruled Orissa between 1147 and 1156. He was born in Kendubilvagram, a Brahmin village under Adaspur Panchayat of Balipatna block, Khurda district, in the Prachi valley, about 37 km from Bhubaneswar and 50 kms from Puri. There has been some controversy raised by Bengali scholars on whether this Kendubilvagram might be in the Birbhum district of Bengala, but the testimony of Chandradutta in his *Bhaktamala* specifies that Jayadeva's village was Kenduli Sasana, a *brahmana* settlement in Balipatna (Puri district), between the rivers Prachi and Kushabhadra. On the other hand, the Kenduli village in Birbhum (Bengal) is not a Sasana village, having already in those times a mixed population of Brahmins, Agradani, Kayastha, Tambuli, Kamar, Napit, Chhatra, Bairagi, Sundi, Kalu, Dhoba, Yogi, Bhagdi, Hadi and Baudi. Jayadeva's father's name was Bhojadeva and his mother's name was Bama or Radha Devi.

Little is known about his early life, but it is said he was a Sanskrit scholar at an early age and was strongly inclined towards spiritual life; he studied with his father for 12 years from the age of 5 to the age of 17, when his father died. When his father and mother died, Jayadeva lived as a hermit until the age of 23. As his father died leaving some debts, the creditors evicted the boy from his house to appropriate it, but as soon as he walked out the house started to burn. As soon as the boy entered the house again the fire subsided, so the creditor finally allowed him to stay.

For a period Jayadeva was engaged as the chief *pandita* of Raja Lakshmana Sena in Bengal. Jayadeva resided at Navadvipa on the banks of the Ganga, in the company of three other *panditas* whose names he has mentioned in *Gita Govinda*: Sri Umapatidhar, Acharya Sri Govardhan and Kavi Kasmapati, who were his close friends. At that time Lakshmana Sena, aware of Jayadeva's position as a great Vaishnava, went to see Jayadeva to request him to become his minister and the court *pandita*.

However, when the King arrived with his ministers in full regalia, Jayadeva became very angry, because as a *brahmana* he felt that his residence had been disturbed by the intrusion of the King. Jayadeva began to rebuke the King, "I'm leaving Navadvipa, I refuse to reside here any longer. Because Kings are always involved in so much worldly activity, my residence has now become polluted. Therefore, I'm leaving. I'm very offended."

Then Lakshmana Sena paid his obeisances to Jayadeva and pleaded, "Please don't leave my kingdom. I meant no offence. It's true, this royal order is such a despicable occupation. We have to be involved in so many undesirable activities to protect the country, but if you leave our kingdom, then it will be a great loss. You have given your word, I know you can't break it, so please just take your residence across the Ganga. At least you will still be in our kingdom. Otherwise, if we lose the association of such a great Vaishnava, this will be very inauspicious for everyone. We want the blessings of the Vaishnavas, and only for this reason I have come to you, to request to use your knowledge for the upliftment of the entire kingdom."

Seeing that after being criticised the King had not become puffed up but instead had taken a humble position, Jayadeva realized that the King was a devotee and not just a materialistic person who wanted to exploit him for his own name and fame.

Then Jayadeva said, "All right. I will live across the river. You can also come and visit me, but don't come as a King, come in ordinary dress like a Vaishnava. You can come and see me in secret and we can discuss Krishna katha."

It is said that during a poetry competition at the court of king Lakshmana Sena, Jayadeva's singing caused an old and leafless banyan tree to immediately start to sprout new leaves. Jayadeva was a great devotee and installed the Deities of Radha and Madhava in his humble house.

In this regard we may mention that the worship of Madhava is very ancient in the entire territory of India and especially in Orissa, the original Deity of Sri Jagannatha being Nila Madhava (now in Kantilo, Puri district) and the village of Kenduli in Orissa is surrounded by a number of Madhava temples, such as Mudugala Madhava, Lalita Madhava, Ganga Madhava, Niali Madhava and Gupta Madhava.

In the town of Puri there are still several Deities of Madhava, especially Ratnavedi Mahava and Nilamadhava (worshiped by Daitapatis in a shrine in the north-west area of Sri Mandira), Venu Madhava (also within the Sri Mandira), as well as Matsya Madhava and Sveta Madhava; the antiquity of these temples is witness by the fact that the shrines are about 18 feet below ground level. As a young man, Jayadeva went to Jagannatha Puri after visiting many holy places.

There he married a girl named Padmavati, who was had been consecrated as a Mahari (Devadasi) in the temple of Lord Jagannatha. Jayadeva himself declares in his poem that Padmavati was the main source of his poetic inspiration.

Jayadeva's immortal poem *Gita Govinda* is the celebration of the divine love between Radha and Krishna, a uniquely fascinating approach to the transcendental realm of spirituality.

The poem starts with a description of the spring, the season that awakens romantic desires. In Vrindavana, Krishna plays His flute and captivates the minds of all the *gopis* for the *rasa lila*. Radha waits for Krishna on the bank of the Yamuna, and Her *sakhi* (female companion) narrates the loving pastimes of Krishna with the *gopis*, and then His longing for Radha. The *sakhi* then goes as a messenger to deliver the lovers' requests and longings, and after a night of anxiety in separation (*viraha tapam*, considered the most intense sentiment in love) Krishna finally arrives to surrender to Radha's desire. But now Radha vents Her anger and jealousy, and Krishna withdraws. Radha's friends scold Her for Her pride and advise that She should try to win back Krishna's attention. When Krishna returns, this time Radha falls into the sweetness of love and They spend a loving night together. In the morning, Radha asks Krishna to rearrange Her hair, ornament and dress.

Sri Chaitanya used to especially relish hearing the *Gita Govinda*, considering it the epitome of the intimate pastimes of Sri Sri Radha Govinda. Jayadeva's village of origin, Kenduli, was regularly on the pilgrimage itinerary of Chaitanya's followers (on the occasion of Makara Sankranti) since the times of Chaitanya himself.

Gajapati Purushottamadeva composed a similar work called *Abhinava Gita Govinda*. One day, he summoned his advisors and asked them to widely circulate his work, in an attempt to make it more popular than Jayadeva's. The King's own men, however, told him that his work was far inferior to Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*, rather it was even unfitting to try to compare the two, just as it was impossible to compare a lamp to the sun. Still, the King insisted on the value of his own work. A controversy soon arose, and it was decided that the matter would be settled by placing both manuscripts before the Deity of Lord Jagannatha for the night. By morning the Lord Himself would make His decision known. When the temple priests went to greet the Deities the next morning, they found Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* clasped against Jagannatha's chest, while the King's manuscript was scattered about the floor. The verdict was clear.

Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* was imitated by many subsequent similar poems both in Sanskrit and in Oriya:

1. *Abhinava Geeta Govindam*, by Gajapati Purusottama Deva
2. *Jagannatha Ballava Natakam*, by Raya Ramananda Pattanaik
3. *Piyusha Lahari Natika*, by Jayadeva Acharya (1525)
4. *Baishnabamruta Natakam*, by unknown author
5. *Gopa Gobindam*, by unknown author
6. *Mudita Madhavam*, by Satanjiva Mishra (1650)
7. *Mukunda Vilasam*, by Yatindra Raghunath Puri (1670)
8. *Shibaleelamruta Mahakvyam*, by Nityananda (1690)
10. *Narahari Charitam*, by Rama Chandra Khadgaray (1730)
11. *Radha Vilasa Mahakavyam*, by Harekrishna Kaviraj (1760)
12. *Samrudha Madhaba Natakam*, by Kavi Bhusana Govinda (1760)
13. *Brajayuba Vilasam*, by Kavichandra Kamala Lochana Khadgaray (about 1780-1800)
14. *Sangeeta Chintamani*, by Kavichandra Kamala Lochana Khadgaray (about 1780-1800)
15. *Geeta Mukundam*, by Kavichandra Kamala Lochana Khadgaray (about 1780-1800)

The entire *Gita Govinda* is sweetly sung every night to the Lord before His retiring for sleep. It is said that the tradition started when Lord Jagannatha appeared in a dream to the King and requested him to fetch a girl, the daughter of a gardener, who had been singing sweetly reciting the *Gita Govinda* in the temple garden while collecting flowers.

The *Gita Govinda* is full of the intimate pastimes of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna, that can be properly relished only by those who have attained a deep level of spiritual understanding and have become liberated from material identification and concepts: the proof is that it openly recognizes Sri Keshava as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of all *avatars*. It is also very popular in Nepal and Manipur, and the favourite subject of Odissi dance.

The *Madala Panji* says that originally its recitation in Jagannatha temple at Puri was introduced by *pandit* Narasimha Deva (1278-1309). Some say that the poetic drama in its original choreography was first performed for the dedication on the present Sri Mandira, coinciding with the coronation of Kamarnava as the crown prince in 1142, during the reign of Chodaganga Deva.

From the *Gita Govinda*, two main songs are most popular and regularly sung as Bhajans for Sri Jagannatha: *Srita Kamala* and the *Dasa Avatara stotra* (see chapter on Jagannatha Bhajana).

Jayadeva also organized for 12 pieces of cloth to be woven in his village, each decorated with one chapter of the *Gita Govinda*. These red clothes are still used to wrap the Deities for the night, after bedecking Them with the most beautiful dresses, ornaments and garlands.

According to some in his later years Jayadeva moved to Varanasi (Benares), where he died. It is said that when he became very old and almost invalid, he had difficulties in going every morning to the Ganges to take his bath; one night he had a dream in which he saw Mother Ganga appearing to him and promising she would appear in his well. Next day, Jayadeva narrated his dream to his wife Padmavati, and to the King and Queen of Varanasi (who had been insisting for Jayadeva to accept a palanquin to go take bath to the Gange). With their great surprise, they found that the water of the well had indeed become milky like the water of the Ganga.

Padmavati

Padmavati, wife of Jayadeva Gosvami and former Mahari in Jaganntha's was the main inspiration for Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*, as Jayadeva himself declares in the introductory verses of the poem: *padmavati charana charana chakravarti*. Padmavati was the daughter of Devasharma (also from Kenduli), who prayed Lord Jagannatha for a child, promising to offer her to the divine service in the temple. On the night of Padmavati's consecration as a servant of Lord Jagannatha, the head priest of the temple had a dream in which Jagannatha Himself asked that the young girl should be married to poet Jayadeva, who lived as a *brahmachari* hermit in Kenduli.

While writing in the *Gita Govinda* about the pastimes of Radharani as she lamented after Krishna had gone away, Jayadeva became lost in thought. He felt inspired to write a particular verse regarding Krishna becoming the servant of His devotee, but he was tormented by doubts, asking himself if such a description could be proper.

The verse read: *smaragarala khandanam mama shirasi mandanam dehi pada pallava mudaram*
"Please place your foot on my head, as a sublime blossom that can destroy the poison of the sufferings of love".

After some contemplation, he felt unable to decide and so he thought he should continue to write after taking his bath. So he oiled his head, as it is customary before taking bath, and went to the river.

While Jayadeva was away, Krishna Himself personally appeared in the form of Jayadeva, took his meal and then wrote down that very verse with His own hand. It is said that while Krishna was writing, He playfully joked with Padmavati, saying that the oil massaged into His scalp was trickling down into His eyes, so that He could not see well. Padmavati lovingly wiped the oil off from the brow of her husband, by using the front part of her sari. Then she left Him to His writing and went to take her own meal.

Just then Jayadeva returned from his bath and asked for his lunch. Padmavati was completely startled, as she had seen that Jayadeva had already taken his meal and gone to his room to work on his poem. She also showed the oil-stained sari and told him about the little loving game she played, as she could not believe he had already forgotten about it.

Jayadeva went to his room and saw the verse now composed in golden letters. With tears in his eyes and with a choked up voice he called out to his wife, "You are so fortunate! You just had the direct Darshana of the Supreme Lord and personally served Him!"

The example of Padmavati as a Mahari fully dedicated to the service of Lord Jagannatha, dancing in the temple to the beautiful songs written by her husband Jayadeva, is paralleled by the story of another famous Padmavati, princess Rupambika from Kanchipuram, who married king Purushottama Deva and also dedicated herself to the service of Lord Jagannatha as a Mahari.

Krishna Chaitanya

Perhaps the most famous spiritual personality in the recent history of Puri is Chaitanya, who resided in Purushottama kshetra for exactly half of his life, 24 out of 48 years, and inspired Jagannatha bhakti in millions of followers.

In the first 6 years Chaitanya kept base in Jagannatha Puri, where he returned after traveling around, to South India, Bengala and Vrindavana.

In the middle 6 years, Chaitanya remained in Puri only, associating with his followers, daily visiting the Jagannatha temple, and preaching.

In the last 12 years, Chaitanya retired to private life, in the company of very few close associates, immersed in the contemplation of the transcendental *lila* of the Lord day and night. Often he lost external consciousness in the intensity of ecstasy in separation, totally oblivious of everything else.

Chaitanya's memory in Jagannatha Puri is celebrated both inside the Sri Mandir (where his footprints and *vigraha* are still worshiped) and in the numerous Gaudiya Mathas, starting from the Radha Kanta Matha (also called Gaura Gambhira), where his sandals and *japa mala* are still worshiped. Still today, the Sad bhujra Gauranga form is one of the Vesha for Madana Mohana during Chandana yatra.

A large image of Chaitanya stands at the crossroads on Svargadvara, and a Sadbhujra Gauranga form is also worshiped inside the Alarnatha temple (in Brahmagiri). According to Jayananda's *Chaitanya mangala*, the forefathers of Sri Chaitanya had migrated from Jajpur in Orissa to Srihatta (Sylhet) in Bangladesh during the period of king Kapilendra Deva. It seems they had expressed disapproval for the manner in which he had ascended the throne, and they preferred to move away to avoid Kapilendra Deva's displeasure. However, the family retained their spiritual attachment to Sri Jagannatha, so much that Chaitanya's father was called Jagannatha Mishra. On the request of his mother Chaitanya took residence in Puri after taking *sannyasa*, with occasional journeys to Vrindavana, south India and Bengal.

The teachings of Sri Chaitanya can be summarized as *acintya bhedabheda tattva*, or the simultaneous inconceivable difference and unity of the Lord and His energies, including the living entities. All living entities are servants of the Lord, and therefore they should engage in His loving service, beginning with the recitation or singing of His holy Names. In fact, chanting the holy name (*kirtana* or *bhajana*) and tasting the sacred food offered to the Lord (*prasadam*) are the two main spiritual activities prescribed by Chaitanya; anyone can practice them and in fact Chaitanya did not make any discrimination based on caste or race and accepted any sincere person among his followers.

The Gaudiya Vaishnavas present scriptural evidence about Chaitanya being an *avatara*:

Chaitanyopanishad of *Atharva Veda* (verse 5): *sah uvaca, rahasyami te vadisyami, jahnvi-tire navadvipe golokakhye dhamni govindo dvibhujo gaurah sarvatma maha-puruso mahatma maya-yogi trigunatitah sattva-rupo bhaktim loke kasyatiti, tad ete sloka bhavanti* — "Brahma said: I will tell you a secret. The abode of Navadvipa is synonymous with Goloka Vrindavana. There on the banks of the Ganges, the two-armed Govinda will appear as Lord Gauranga, endowed with a golden complexion. He is the Supersoul, the Supreme Godhead, beyond the three modes of nature. He will appear as a great saint and mystic. Throughout the world he who is the embodiment of pure goodness will disseminate the cult of pure devotion to Krishna".

Krishna yamala: "In the holy place of Navadvipa, I will appear as the son of Mother Sachi".

Vayu Purana: "In the age of Kali I will appear as the son of Sachi to inaugurate the movement of Sankirtana".

Brahma yamala: "I will appear in the age of Kali in the form of My own devotee, to inaugurate the movement of Sankirtana".

Bhagavata Purana: krsna varnam tvisakrsnam sangopangastra parsadam, yajnair sankirtana prayair yajanti hi sumedhasah, "The Lord will appear to inaugurate the Sankirtana yajna, with a complexion which is not black, but dedicated to the name of Krishna. People who have sufficient intelligent will worship Him."

Vishnu sahasra nama of *Mahabharata: suvarna varno hemango varangas candanangadi, viraha visamah sunyo ghrtasir acalas calah*, "Golden complexioned, with body and limbs of the color of molten gold, with beautiful and well proportioned body, adorned with sandalwood, unequalled defeater of opponents, without attachments or material aspirations, unmoving in His unchangeable nature yet constantly moving like the wind".

Sikshashtakam

Although his disciples and followers wrote a great number of important books explaining his teachings and the science of Bhakti, Sri Chaitanya himself is said to have written only 8 verses, called *Sikshastaka*:

1. *ceto-darpana-marjanam bhava maha-davagni-nirvapanam
sreyah-kairava-candrika-vitaranam vidya-vadhu-jivanam
anandambudhi-wardhanam pratipadam purnamritasvadanam
sarvatma-snapanam param vijayate sri-krsna-sankirtanam*
2. *namnam akari bahu-dha nija-sarva-saktis, tatrarpita niyamitah smarane na kalah
etadrsi tava krpa bhagavan mamapi, durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah*
3. *trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna, amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harir*
4. *na dhanam na janam na sundarim kavitam va jagad-isa kamaye
mama janmani janmanisvare bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi*
5. *ayi nanda-tanuja kinkaram patitam mam visame bhavambudhau
krpaya tava pada-pankaja sthita-dhuli-sadrsam vicintaya*
6. *nayanam galad-asru-dharaya vadanam gadgada-ruddhaya gira
pulakair nicitam vapuh kada tava nama-grahane bhavisyati*
7. *yugayitam nimesena caksusa pravrsayitam, sunyayitam jagat sarvam govinda-virahena me*
8. *aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam adarsanam marma-hatam karotu va
yatha tatha va vidadhatu lampato mat-prana-nathas tu sa eva naparah*

“All glories to the Sankirtana of Sri Krishna, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death. The Sankirtana movement is the greatest benediction and spreads its refreshing rays like the Moon. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge. It increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, and it enables us to constantly taste the nectar for which we are always anxious.

O my Lord, Your holy Name alone can render all benedictions to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of Names. In these transcendental Names, You have invested all Your transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these Names. O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by chanting Your holy Names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them.

One should chant the holy Name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy Name of the Lord constantly.

O almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor do I desire beautiful women, nor do I want any number of followers. I only want Your causeless devotional service birth after birth.

O son of Maharaja Nanda (Krishna)! I am Your eternal servitor, yet somehow or other I have fallen into the ocean of birth and death. Please pick me up from the ocean of death and place me as one of the atoms of Your lotus feet. O my Lord, when will my eyes be decorated with tears of love flowing constantly when I chant Your Name? When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs of my body stand on end at the recitation of Your Name?

O Govinda! Feeling Your separation, I am considering a moment to be like twelve years or more. Tears are flowing from my eyes like torrents of rain, and I am feeling all vacant in the world in Your absence.

I know no one but Krishna as my Lord, and He shall remain so even if He handles me roughly in His embrace or makes me brokenhearted by not being present before me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for He is always my worshipful Lord unconditionally.”

Kirtana song

One of the most cherished Kirtana songs of Chaitanya is the following:

*hari haraya namah krsna yadavaya namah
madhavaya yadavaya kesavaya namah*

*gopala govinda rama sri-madhusudana
giridhari gopinatha madana-mohana*

“I offer my homage to Hari Hara, I offer my homage to Krishna the descendent of Yadu. I offer my homage to Madhava, to the Chief of the Yadu dynasty, to Keshava. O divine cowherd boy, Govinda, o killer of the demon Madhu! O lifter of the Govardhana hill, o protector of the *gopis*, o enchanter of Kamadeva!”

Life in Navadvipa

Jagannatha Mishra, son of Upendra Mishra and father of Chaitanya, had moved from Srihatta to Navadvipa as a student because at that time Navadvipa was a famous center of education and culture, philosophy and religion. He settled on the bank of the Ganges at Mayapur after marrying Sachi Devi, the daughter of a great scholar in Navadvipa, Nilambara Chakravarti, and he had very close friendship with other Dakshinatya Vaidic *brahmanas* such as Advaita Acharya, Srivasa Pandita, Chandrashekhara Acharya etc.

Sachi Devi gave birth to 8 daughters who died at an early age and then had two sons, Visvarupa and Visvambhara (who would later become known as Krishna Chaitanya, or Gauranga). Visvambhara was also given the affectionate family nickname Nimai because he was born under a neem tree.

Nimai was born on the evening of Phalguna Purnima, 18 February 1486. The time of his birth was considered particularly auspicious as it was marked by a lunar eclipse, and as a traditional custom everyone was engaged in religious activities and chanting of mantras.

It is said that when he was still a baby, he was so attracted by the Names of Krishna that he stopped crying immediately when they were chanted, and during the ceremony of *anna prasana*, he immediately chose the *Bhagavatam*. Several extraordinary stories are related by his biographies: once a big snake appeared in his home's courtyard and little Nimai started playing with it, scaring everyone, until the snake went away. Another day some thieves kidnapped him to steal the jewels he was wearing, but they got confused and after a long walking they found themselves back in the courtyard of Jagannatha Mishra, so they put the child down and ran away. A pilgrim who stayed for one night in the house of Jagannatha Mishra also had an amazing experience: several times he cooked food to offer to his Krishna Deity, and every time little Nimai sneaked upon him and tasted the food, ruining his offering. Every time the Sadhu started cooking again, the last time at midnight when all doors were locked and everybody was asleep in the house. However, Nimai managed to come and taste the food anyway; to the aggrieved Sadhu, Nimai showed himself as Krishna and the Sadhu was overcome by ecstasy. In a few occasions, little Nimai also had deep philosophical discussions with his mother and once he specifically asked her to observe the Ekadasi vrata by abstaining from eating all types of grains in the day of Ekadasi.

The sacred thread ceremony of Nimai was performed according to the Oriya tradition with Gayatri and Savitri mantras by Nilambara Chakravarti, the maternal grandfather of Nimai. At the age of 8 he was admitted in the school of Gangadasa Pandita in Ganganagara, and in 2 years he mastered Sanskrit grammar, rhetoric, *smriti* and *nyaya*. While Nimai was still very young, his elder brother Visvarupa left home to take *sannyasa*; shortly afterwards Jagannatha Mishra died and Nimai became the head of the family, so he opened a school (*chatuspati*) and started accepting students.

On the order of his mother, Nimai married Lakshmipriya (daughter of one Vallabha Acharya) and then started on a tour in east Bengal to collect money for the family; during this tour he met Tapana Mishra and suggested him to move to Varanasi.

While he was away, Lakshmipriya died of a snake bite so after coming back, to please his mother he married Vishnupriya, the daughter of Sanatana Mishra.

His fame as Nimai Pandita spread and when a Keshava Mishra, a Digvijayi Pandita, came from Kashmir to challenge the scholars from Navadvipa, Nimai met him on the bank of the Ganges. Informally, Nimai asked Keshava Kashmiri to compose some verse on Ganga and Keshava quickly recited 100 *slokas*. Nimai precisely repeated the 64th, pointing out that the expression *bhavani bhartuh* was somewhat redundant, and also mentioned some discrepancies in other verses.

The Kashmiri Pandita was amazed by the extraordinary memory and erudition of Nimai, and withdrew his challenge. During a pilgrimage to Gaya, he met Ishvara Puri and received initiation from him.

Some Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavas consider this is as a very important moment in Nimai's life, connecting him (and his followers) to the Madhvacharya lineage through the famous Madhavendra Puri, who had become rather famous for his preaching in Bengal and Orissa, and who had initiated Advaita and Nityananda. However, a controversy about the formalities of such disciplic succession has been going on for more than 200 years.

Our discussion about this particular point is simply aimed at better understanding the phenomenon of Gaudiya Vaishnavism and especially the Sarasvata Gaudiya tradition, that is undoubtedly today one of the most numerous, famous and active religious groups of Vaishnavism known at global level.

Our discussion is certainly not aimed at discrediting the lineage claims of the Sarasvata Gaudiyas, especially because the very same source quoted to support such direct connection (Kavi Karnapura's *Gaura ganoddesa dipika*) states that it was Madhavendra who "started this new religion" (*yah dharmo yah pravartitah*).

Bhaktivinoda himself (in his commentary to *Chaitanya charitamrita*, Madhya 4.197) writes that Madhavendra Puri was the first in his line to teach *prema-bhakti*. Also Bhaktivinoda's son and spiritual heir, Bhaktisiddhanta, writes, "the first shoot in the desire tree of divine love that came out of the Madhva lineage. Prior to his appearance, there was no sign of the conjugal mood of devotion in the Madhva line".

This would certainly lead us to think that the connection of the Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya has not much in common with the "orthodox" Madhvacharya line. In fact, it must be reported that a significant institution in the Madhvacharya line, the Poornaprajna Vidyapeetha of Bangalore, founded by Sri Vishvesa Tirtha Swamiji of Pejavar Matha, categorically denies any connection between the Madhva line and that of the Gaudiyas, in an official statement made at the beginning of May 2001. Their arguments are based principally on a multiplicity of doctrinal differences rather than the historical ones, although the historical evidence is certainly not lacking.

We will now report the results of our research, begging forgiveness in advance for anything that may be perceived as disagreement. Also, we need to clarify that we have chosen to omit many specifics on "who says what" where such information was unclear or not relevant to the validity of the point that was brought by the source, as there seems to be also some internal controversy among the various branches of Sarasvata Gaudiyas.

Apparently the preoccupation of some of the Sarasvata Gaudiyas with the "unbroken disciplic succession" concerns the need for the aspirant followers of Chaitanya to accept formal *diksha* from one of their officially and institutionally endorsed Gurus. This seems to be difficult to understand, because Chaitanya himself never initiated anyone, and because the Sarasvata Gaudiyas usually do not accept the validity of the other two remaining lines of disciplic successions from Madhavendra Puri, i.e. through Advaita and Nityananda, who continued to carry on the formal *diksha* system. In fact both Advaita and Nityananda and their successors formally initiated several disciples, while Chaitanya did not.

We also need to note that in the disciplic succession described by Sarasvata Gaudiyas there are several links that appear to be formally weak, apart from Rupa (Svarupa and Sanatana) who were never formally initiated by Chaitanya but simply instructed and informally authorized to carry on the mission.

This, in our opinion, does not subtract anything from the intrinsic validity of Chaitanya's teachings and mission, or from the teachings and mission of his followers starting from Rupa, Svarupa, Sanatana etc. If anything, in our opinion it gives them even more importance and relevance in relationship with the purpose of Chaitanya's mission: to freely distribute the priceless treasure of Prema Bhakti.

As Chaitanya stated in the *Sikshastakam*, "there are no strict rules and regulations for the chanting of the Holy Names", and the only necessary requirement is an act of faith by the aspirant who accepts to "purchase" such great treasure on the "free market" of the Holy Names (called Nama Hatta by Bhaktivinoda).

According to our research, the preoccupation with formalities seemed to have very little or no relevance for Chaitanya, as well as for his most prominent followers.

For example, in the description of the disciplic succession of the Sarasvata Gaudiya line, Bhaktivinoda Thakura's formal *diksha guru* (Vipina Gosvami, from the lineage of Jahnava-Nityananda) is not mentioned, while the place of pride is given to Jagannatha Dasa Babaji, whose relationship with his initiating (*diksha* or *siksha*?) guru Visvanatha (presented as disciple of Narottama) has, to our knowledge, never been discussed.

Visvanatha Chakravarti is said to have lived from 1626 to 1708 (although the dates are not clear or sure) while Jagannatha Das Babaji was (probably) born around 1750.

Some Sarasvata Gaudiya sources fill the gaps informing us that Baladeva Vidyabhushana had a disciple named Uddhava Das, whose disciple was Sri Madhusudana Das (who lived in Suryakunda), whose disciple was Jagannatha Dasa Babaji, although such sources do not specify whether such relationship had been formalized with an institutional and official *diksha*.

Apart from the historical evidence, it seems that Baladeva Vidyabhushana highlighted a few major doctrinal differences between Chaitanya's Sampradaya and the Madhvacharya line, as he specifically states in his commentaries to the *Tattva sandarbha* (28) that according to the "southern Sampradayas" such as the Madhvacharya line, only Brahmin devotees are eligible for liberation and Lakshmi Devi is an ordinary *jiva*. Besides that, it is very important to note that the Madhva line does not accept the worship of Radha, which is a very central point of the Gaudiya tradition. Even further back in time, the controversy on the *diksha* lineage seems to take us to Madhavendra Puri and to Madhva himself.

In the Madhva tradition as given by the mainstream Udipi Matha we find the following disciplic succession: Hamsa Paramatma, Chaturmukha Brahma, Sanakadi (the four Kumaras), Durvasa, Jnananidhi, Garuda vahana, Kaivalya Tirtha, Jnanesa Tirtha, Para Tirtha, Satyaprajna Tirtha, Prajna Tirtha, Achyuta Prekshacharya Tirtha and Sri Madhvacharya. Historical dates on these links of the disciplic successions are not given. According to the Sarasvata Gaudiyas, Madhvacharya took initiation (*diksha*) directly from Vyasadeva instead.

The mainstream Madhvacharya Matha in Udipi says that Madhvacharya was born around 1119 or 1239, (not sure) and he had four direct disciples who became his successors: Padmanabha (1200), Narahari (1206), Madhava (1215) and Akshobhya (1235). After the demise of Madhvacharya, the next link in the chain of disciplic succession is Jayatirtha (1246), followed by Vidyadhiraja (1269).

From Vidyadhiraja Tirtha, the mainstream "orthodox" lineage of the Madhva Sampradaya continues with Kavindra (1335) as well as his contemporaries Rajendra Tirtha, Vijayadhvaja, Purushottama and Subramanya, then with Vagisha (1340), Ramachandra (1348), Vidyamidhi (1377), Sri Raghunatha (1445) and Rayuvarya (1503). There is no mention of any Jnanasindhu and Dayanidhi or Mahanidhi as mentioned by the Sarasvata Gaudiyas. However, the Madhva Sampradaya recognize that at the times of Vidyadhiraja the disciplic line branched off with Rajendra Tirtha, Vijayadhvaja, Purushottama, Subramanya and Vyasa Raja from whom, according to the Gaudiyas, the lineage is said to continue with Lakshmiapati, Madhavendra Puri and Isvara Puri.

Apart from the fact that the Madhva Sampradaya does not recognize any Lakshmiapati as an historical personality, the Sarasvata Gaudiyas seem to identify this Vyasa Raya with Vyasa Tirtha the disciple of Brahmanya, however Vyasa Tirtha's life period is said to be between 1469 and 1539, which means that he survived Chaitanya for more than 5 years.

Since according to the tradition of the Madhva Sampradaya a disciple only becomes initiating Guru after the demise of his own Guru (otherwise he is expected bring the aspirant disciples to his own "living Guru"), it ensues that Lakshmiapati, the Guru of Madhavendra Puri, who was in turn the Guru of Isvara Puri, would have become initiating Guru only 5 years after Chaitanya's disappearance.

Another interesting point is that Vyasa Tirtha lived for a long time (1498 to 1539) in Vijayanagara, the capital city of Krishnadeva Raya just south of the kingdom of Prataparudra, and he was extremely famous and respected (even honored as the "Kuladevata" of the King there). It seems rather strange that Chaitanya or his associates never made any attempt to visit him to pay their respects, or even mentioned him.

Another strange occurrence is when Chaitanya visited Udipi, the seat of the orthodox Madhva Sampradaya; the *Chaitanya charitamrita* (Madhya 9.276, 277) relates that Chaitanya twice mentions "your" Sampradaya while speaking about the Madhva tradition. From their part, in the episode related by Krishnadasa Kaviraja the Madhva Vaishnavas seem to fail to recognize Chaitanya as a Vaishnava, but consider him a Mayavadi. From his part, Chaitanya criticizes the Madhva doctrines for being mixed and having the goal of liberation rather than Prema, pure love for God. (CC Madhya 9.245-278). As a conclusion of the debate, in verse 277, Chaitanya states, "the only good thing I see in your Sampradaya is that you accept the eternal nature of the Supreme Lord's form".

There is no mention of Madhva in the Gosvami literature prior to Baladeva Vidyabhushana - nor in the *Chaitanya bhagavata*, *Chaitanya charitamrita*, *Chaitanya charita mahakavya* (by Kavi Karnapura) or *Chaitanya chandrodaya nataka*, where Madhavendra's name is mentioned but not in connection to Madhvacharya (1.21), or *Bhakti ratnavali* (by Vishnu Puri, who presents himself as a disciple of Jayadharma, whose name does not appear in any of the Madhva lines), where no mention of Madhvacharya or Madhva is given in the *mangalacharana*.

But the most amazing statement about the disciplic succession in the Chaitanya Sampradaya is offered by Jiva Gosvami, who in the Pramana khanda of his *Tattva sandarbha*, lists various commentaries on the *Bhagavata Purana*, beginning with the *Tantra Bhagavata*, named in the *Hayasirsha Pancharatra*, and then lists all the commentaries to the *Bhagavata Purana* he has consulted, giving no particular priority to Madhva, but stating that Madhva was originally a disciple in the Adi Shankara line.

Accepting this statement, we would find it easier to understand the recurrence of the *brahmachari* and *sannyasi* and titles such as Chaitanya, Bharati, and Puri, and the fact that all the *sannyasis* in the Madhva line are Ekadandis (that is, they carry a one-ended staff) rather than Tridandis (carrying a three-ended staff) as the present Sarasvata Gaudiyas do after the instructions and example of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati (who initiated himself into the order of *sannyasa*).

It is also interesting to note that while the orthodox Madhva lineage has repeatedly rejected any connection with the Madhavendra-Chaitanya disciplic succession, the Shankaracharya line has no problem in accepting it, as it is evident from the *vighraha* of Chaitanya installed in the Kanchi Shankaracharya Matha in Puri (Svargadvara) and the images of Chaitanya associated with Adi Shankara in various other Mathas in Puri (especially in the Nigamananda Matha). Again, this digression on formal initiations in disciplic succession is absolutely not aimed at discrediting Chaitanya or his followers, but rather it intends to shed a much more brilliant light on the immense importance and glory of Chaitanya and his mission by focusing on him only, on his own right and merit. The teachings of an *acharya* should be judged by their intrinsic validity and their compatibility with the overall conclusions and spirit of the Vedic knowledge in general, as well as by their fruits (*phalayam phariciyate*) in facilitating the spiritual progress and the dharmic example set by individuals and groups in their wake.

And certainly Chaitanya and his followers have proven the immense value and power of his mission and his extraordinary personality, in self-illuminating evidence.

Trying to validate Chaitanya's mission by resorting to connections to any other previous teacher or tradition seems to us an unnecessary effort, comparable to trying to illuminate the Sun.

Vedic tradition also normally accepts the idea that Sampradayas can start at any point in time, and the founder Acharya of the particular Sampradaya may have received instructions directly from a divine source. Thus it seems totally irrelevant whether the "new religion" was started by Madhvacharya (getting it directly from Veda Vyasa or not), Madhavendra Puri, Chaitanya, Bhaktivinoda or Bhaktivedanta Swami or any other teacher claiming to be in their lineage, provided that the "branching off" does not carry the Sampradaya away from the original conclusions and teachings of Vedic knowledge and from the universal principles of Sanatana Dharma.

In the particular case of Chaitanya, it appears that his only concern was to spread the cultivation and practice of the Sankirtana yajna, the collective glorification of the Names, forms, glories, qualities, activities and teachings of Hari (particularly *Bhagavad gita* and *Bhagavata Purana*), with the purpose of bringing everyone to the level of pure ecstatic love and devotion in the most intimate relationship with Him.

Since the most intimate, emotional and ecstatic sentiments for God are found in Sri Krishna, especially in the Parakiya Sringara (or Madhurya) Rasa exhibited by the *gopis* of Vrindavana, Chaitanya manifested that sentiment and is therefore considered by his followers as an incarnation of Krishna in the "mood" of Radha, as clearly elaborated in *Chaitanya charitamrita* by Krishnadasa Kaviraja.

It is said that after his meeting with Isvara Puri, Nimai became completely immersed in the devotional sentiments of Bhakti and started preaching pure love for Krishna.

In order to distribute freely this pure love for God he inaugurated the Sankirtana movement, the congregational chanting of the Holy Names of God, as the most effective method for self realization in the age of Kali prescribed by the scriptures. The Sankirtana movement had its first headquarters in the house of Srivasa Pandita in Navadvipa and became very successful. Some envious people from the local Brahmin community went to complain to the Muslim Kazi of Navadvipa (Bengal was under the rule of Hussain Shah) and demanded that the Sankirtana movement of Nimai be stopped.

The Muslim Kazi went to Srivasa's house with his soldiers, notified the prohibition against congregational chanting and broke the *mridangas* used for the Sankirtana. Informed about the incident, Nimai organized a protest march with all his supporters, each carrying a torch, accompanied by 14 Sankirtana groups.

Worried about the possibility of disorders, the Kazi went to pacify Nimai calling him “nephew” and sat with him discussing about the Koran; after a long conversation the Kazi became very favorable to the Sankirtana movement and gave official orders to the effect that nobody should disturb the public singing of the divine Names. Still today, the Kazi’s tomb in Navadvipa is visited by Gaudiya pilgrims.

Nimai continued to organize Sankirtana meetings in the houses of Srivasa Pandita and Advaita Acharya; one day at Srivasa’s the devotees asked for mangoes and Nimai planted a mango seed that immediately sprouted and grew into a large tree laden with so many fruits that everybody ate their fill. Another famous miracle was the reviving of the dead son of Srivasa. It is also said that Nimai manifested himself in the form of Varaha in the house of Murari Gupta, a medical practitioner of Navadvipa who had become one of his earliest follower.

In the same period Nimai also showed the *sadbhuja* form (a composite six-armed form of Rama, Krishna and Chaitanya) to Nityananda, and the *visvarupa* (the universal form) to Advaita Acharya.

Two of his opponents from the Brahmin community, called Chapala and Gopala, became infected by leprosy and were healed after begging forgiveness: this miracle certainly impressed the general population of Nadia. Nimai’s popularity kept increasing and his Sankirtana movement was joined by great personalities such as Pundarika Vidyanidhi and Gadadhara Pandita, Mukunda, Sri Garbha, Sadashiva, Sriman, Purushottama, Mukunda, Sanjaya, Buddhimanta Khan, Gangadasa, Jagadisha, Gopinatha, Garuda, Srirama, Govinda, Sridhara, Krishnananda, Kasisvara, Jagadananda, Govindananda and Suklambara. In this period Nityananda arrived in Navadvipa (he was born in Radha desha) and also joined the Sankirtana movement.

Two parties were then formed headed by Nityananda and Haridasa and door to door preaching started, still increasing the number of followers. One day two drunkard brothers from the local Brahmin community, Jagai and Madhai, attacked Nityananda by throwing a broken clay container at him and injuring him. Nimai rushed to the place ready to punish the attackers, but Nityananda pleaded with him to forgive them. Amazed, the two brothers repented and joined the ranks of Nimai’s followers.

Buddhimanta Khan organized for Nimai a dancing drama performance at the house of Chandrasekhara, where Nimai dressed as Rukmini entering in her mood. During the memorable event many of the foremost associates of Nimai also played theatrical roles – Srivasa played Narada, Haridasa and Murari Gupta played “Vaikuntha guards” with big moustache and turbans. From Vaikuntha, the mood of the players turned to Vrindavana and Gadadhara entered the scene dressed as a *gopi* and accompanied by Brahmananda dressed as her old companion Suprabha. Then Nimai entered the mood of Radha and Nityananda played grandmother Purnamasi, and finally Nimai entered into the royal mood of the Mother Goddess while Gopinatha played Vishnu and the devotees started offering many prayers to Lakshmi and Chandi Durga.

On that occasion, Nimai instructed his followers never to disrespect or belittle the Devas. Vrindavan Dasa quotes these prayers in the *Chaitanya Bhagavata*:

“All glories to the universal Mother, Mahamaya Devi. Kindly give the shelter of your lotus feet to the wretched conditioned souls who suffer in this material world. You are the controlling power of the entire material universe and you appear in every *yuga* to uphold the principles of religion. Even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are unable to fully describe your unlimited powers, what to speak of ordinary people. You are faith, compassion, modesty, and the personification of pure devotion to Lord Vishnu, Krishna, so all branches of knowledge are your manifestations. The Vedas describe you as the original energy, and you appear to be within this material nature consisting of the three *gunas* but you are actually their cause, and you are always situated in a transcendental position. You are the eternal, unchanging, supreme energy, the shelter and resting place of all living entities, the universal Mother who sustains everyone, matchless and unrivalled. You are the life sustaining water, and by remembering you one can easily cut the bonds of material illusion. You appear also as Mother Lakshmi, the eternal consort of Lord Narayana, in the homes of the dharmic people, but to the sinful offender you manifest as the all-devouring death. You are the creator of the universe and those who ignore you, not offering you worship, are punished by the threefold miseries. To the devotees you inspire pure faith, and therefore please give us shelter in the shade of your lotus feet. Your illusory potency keeps the entire creation enthralled, so if you do not protect me, who will? Your appearance in the material world is to deliver the conditioned souls, and by remembering you one attains all perfection. O Mother, we are all surrendered to you, kindly look upon us with benevolence, so that we may remain with a fixed mind at your lotus feet.”

At some point the students of his school started to criticize Nimai because he was chanting the names of the *gopis* in ecstasy. Some *kulya* Brahmins also organised some opposition against Nimai, and Nimai passionately preached to them about the need to overcome sectarianism and material identification with family, caste, town etc. He was also very impressed with the pure life of Suklambara Brahmachari, who sustained his life simply by begging, and one day he snatched some rice from his bag and ate it with great pleasure. Sometimes he was irritated by his followers, too, and he went alone to other places, such as the house of Nandana Acharya. *Chaitanya Bhagavata*, in commenting Nimai's reflections, quotes from the *Bhumi Gita* in *Bhagavatam* (12.3.38): "In Kali yuga unqualified people will make a living by wearing *sannyasi* clothes and thus collect charity, and similarly ignorant and adharmic people will sit on *vyasanas* and speak about *dharma*". Nimai started to think that foolish people respect and obey even unqualified people if they are dressed as *sannyasis*, so in order to stop the criticism of materially attached people who were considering him just an ordinary householder, he decided to take *sannyasa*.

When Keshava Bharati, a Shankarite *sannyasi* from Katwa in Bengal, visited Navadvipa, Nimai invited him for lunch and asked him to be initiated into the *sannyasa* order. The records say that Nimai took *sannyasa* at the Shankaracharya Matha of Katwa in the month of Magha of 1510.

As a *sannyasi*, Nimai (now called Krishna Chaitanya) completely shaved his hair, carried a *danda* and a *kamandalu* as his only possessions, and was dressed with a simple *kaupina* and *bahirvasa*. Chaitanya did not even have a *japa mala* but counted the *mantras* on his fingers.

Chaitanya, also called Gauranga by his followers because of the golden color of his complexion, decided to travel to Vrindavana with a small group of devotees, composed by Nityananda, Gadadhara, Mukunda, Govinda, Jagadananda and Brahmananda. He took leave from his mother and all friends and supporters in Nadia at a very emotional meeting organised in Shantipura at the house of Advaita Acharya. On that occasion, Chaitanya's mother asked him to take his residence in Puri instead of Vrindavana.

The travel to Puri

While Chaitanya was traveling towards Vrindavana, his companion Nityananda cleverly led him around and towards south through Radha desha, to Chatrabhoga on Ganges at Mathurapura (now Diamond Harbor).

Chatrabhoga is a famous *tirtha* dedicated to Shiva, where Shiva manifests as the water linga at Ambulinga ghat, in the form of a great number of streams formed by Ganga. Everyone took bath there, and Chaitanya immediately manifested a strong ecstasy with uncontrollable spiritual emotions and lost external consciousness. The arrival of the young and spiritually powerful *sannyasi* spread around and the Governor of the region, Ramachandra Khan, invited him and his party to stay at his house. When he heard that Chaitanya had decided to go to Puri, he was very concerned because the roads were extremely dangerous due to the presence of Muslim soldiers and a number of dacoits. So Ramachandra Khan arranged a boat for them to travel down the river as safely as possible.

In this way they reached Prayaga ghata in Midnapura district of Orissa. Immediately they went to pay respects to the temple of Shiva Mahesha, a lingam installed at a temple near a bathing ghat established by Yudhisthira during the journey of the Pandavas. Chaitanya ecstatically participated to the kirtana of the devotees of Shiva, and in the end he was so happy that he went around to beg food for everyone and Jagadananda cooked it.

While walking on, Nityananda and Jagadananda fell behind the group, carrying Chaitanya's *sannyasi danda*. Jagadananda went to beg for food and left the *danda* to Nityananda, but in his absence Nityananda broke the staff into three pieces. Perplexed, Jagadananda carried the pieces on and when he met Chaitanya he showed him the pieces. Chaitanya became very disturbed and decided to travel alone. It is said that the pieces of Chaitanya's *sannyasa danda* were thrown in the nearby Bhargavi river. According to the diary of Murari Gupta, Chaitanya took bath in the river, that is glorified as extremely powerful (*mahaviryavatim*).

Walking on, Chaitanya arrived in Jalesvara and went directly to the local Shiva temple, where his anger subsided and he started to dance happily. Vrindavana Das writes in his *Chaitanya Mangala*, commenting the fact: "If anyone disrespects Lord Shiva, not following the example of Lord Chaitanya, then he cannot be considered a Vaishnava, and all his spiritual advancement will be annulled."

After some time the other members of the group arrived and they also joined Chaitanya in his ecstatic dancing.

Continuing his traveling, Chaitanya and his party reached Remuna near Balasore, where they visited the famous temple of Kshira chora Gopinatha. It is said that while Chaitanya was offering *pranama* to the Deity, a garland fell from on his body from Gopinatha.

Chaitanya charitamrita relates the wonderful story of the Deity of Gopinatha who stole a pot of sweet rice for His devotee Madhavendra Puri, narrated by Nityananda (a disciple of Madhavendra Puri) and the ecstatic kirtana of Chaitanya and his followers in the temple.

Madhavendra Puri (the Guru of Isvara Puri) was travelling to Chandanpur near Puri on the request of his Gopala Deity to get sandalwood. On the way he decided to visit the famous temple of Gopinatha in Remuna, where the Deity was offered a famous sweet rice pudding called *amrita keli*. Hoping to be able to taste the sweet rice *prasadam* so that he could cook a similar recipe for his own Gopala Deity, Madhavendra Puri proceeded to Remuna but arrived late at night, when the *prasadam* was finished and the temple was closed. Gopinatha appeared in a dream to the Pujari, and revealed that He had hidden a pot of sweet rice under His dress for His devotee Madhavendra Puri, who had not had any food. He requested the Pujari to take the sweet rice pot and give it to Madhavendra immediately. The Pujari woke up with a start, and getting up he went to check under Gopinatha's dress: the sweet rice pot was really there. Amazed, the Pujari ran out with the *prasadam* searching everywhere for Madhavendra Puri, and on finding him he respectfully delivered the pot.

Still further on, Chaitanya and his party arrived at Jajpur on the bank of river Viraja (Vaitarani) and stayed in Brahman nagara (Jajpur). They visited the self-manifested Deity of Adi Varaha in the famous temple, and Chaitanya explained that just by seeing the river Viraja one is purified of all sins: it is such a sacred pilgrimage place that it is filled with innumerable temples. They all took bath at the Dasasvamedha ghat, and after worshiping Varaha they danced ecstatically for a long time. Suddenly Chaitanya left his companions to go and visit other temples alone.

The next leg of their journey took them to Cuttack, where they took bath in the Mahanadi river and visited the Deity of Sakshi Gopala. The wonderful story of Sakshi Gopala is also related in *Chaitanya charitamrita*. This Krishna Deity walked all the way from Vrindavana to Vijayanagara near Kanchi to go and bear witness (“*sakshi*”) in a controversy where the word of His devotee had been questioned. Two *brahmanas* from the same village of Vijayanagara had traveled to Vrindavana (some say to Kashi, Varanasi) in pilgrimage, and while there the younger *brahmana* had taken very good care of his elderly companion, serving him faithfully. Moved by his sincere service, one day in the temple of Gopala the old *brahmana* had wished that the young man accepted his daughter in marriage and thus become his son, and the young *brahmana* accepted.

However, after returning to their village, the sons of the elderly *brahmana* forced their father to break his promise because the young *brahmana* was not very wealthy and they had decided to give their sister in marriage to someone else. To the objection that the promise had been made in front of the Deity of Gopala, the sons of the elderly *brahmana* derisively responded that then Gopala should come and bear witness.

The young *brahmana* then went back to Vrindavana and pleaded to Gopala to save the truthfulness of His devotee and to please come to bear witness in front of the villagers. Gopala accepted, to the condition that the *brahmana* would walk without looking back each day, then at night he should stop and prepare some rice to offer to Him. Every morning Gopala resumed walking behind the *brahmana*, His anklets tinkling merrily to reassure His devotee. Finally reaching the outskirts of his village, the *brahmana* turned around and Gopala stopped there; all the villagers came to see the miracle and the marriage was performed without any further delay. We will give it with more details in the chapter dealing with the specific temple of Sakshi Gopala (now in the village of Sakhigopal, about 20 km from Puri).

After reaching Bhubaneswar (anciently called Ekamra kanana and Koti lingesvara), Chaitanya took bath in the Bindu sarovara, a holy *tirtha* filled with all the waters collected by Shiva from the various places of pilgrimage. He immediately went to take Darshana of Tribhuvanesvara svayambhu lingam, and by seeing that it was beautifully surrounded by innumerable ghi lamps offered by the devotees, Chaitanya felt very pleased and started to dance ecstatically, singing “Shiva, Rama, Govinda”.

Then he instructed his followers by quoting Krishna's words: “One who claims to be My devotee but disregards Shiva is only trying to pretend devotion to Me” and he offered worship to Shiva with all the devotees. Vrindavana Das comments: “The Supreme Lord is the supreme Guru, one who does not follow His instructions suffers because of such grievous mistake.”

Chaitanya and his followers stayed in the temple for the night and on the next day they proceeded to Puri, Purushottama kshetra. *Chaitanya mangala* explains that Purushottama kshetra is glorified by all *devas* as the most auspicious place in the world. There, mere sleeping is equal to *samadhi*, laying down is equal to offering *sastanga pranam*, walking is equal to performing *pradakshina*, talking is equal to *kirtana* and ordinary eating is equal to consuming the *havisya*, the austere simply cooked grains that are offered for the fire sacrifice.

Chaitanya also visited many other Shiva temples in Bhubaneswar before resuming his journey to Puri. He also stopped on the way outside Bhubaneswar at the Shiva temples called Jalesvara and Kapotesvara near the Bhargavi river.

At Tulasi chaura near Malatipatpur, a few kilometers from Puri, Chaitanya saw the flag on top of Jagannatha's temple from a distance and fell to the ground in ecstasy. Then he started proceeding towards Puri by constantly offering *sastanga pranama* and thus measuring the distance to Puri with his entire body, taking 9 hours to reach the Atharnala bridge (6 times longer than normally required). Chaitanya felt disturbed in his ecstasy by the presence of his companions, so he expressed the wish to travel alone and his companions stayed back. Thus arriving in Puri on 10 April 1510, Chaitanya rushed into the temple and on seeing Jagannatha he started to roar loudly and jump in ecstasy, then fainted crumbling to the ground. The temple guards thought he was a madman and were going to throw him out of the temple, but the Sanskrit teacher of the *pandita sabha* of king Prataparudra, Vasudeva Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, was in the temple room and intervened. Observing the extraordinary symptoms of ecstasy exhibited by Chaitanya, he had him respectfully carried to his house while he was still unconscious.

In the meantime Chaitanya's companions arrived at Puri and visited the temple, performed *pradakshina* of Jagannatha chanting Vedic prayers and were blessed with garlands from the Deities. When they inquired about Chaitanya, the priests told them he had been carried to Sarvabhauma's house. Gadadhara was a friend of Gopinatha, the brother in law of Sarvabhauma, so they went to his house and Gadadhara introduced the entire group. Gopinatha arranged for Chaitanya and his associates to settle in his house, and organized everything for their comfort. Later, Chaitanya shifted to Kashi Mishra's house (also known as the Gambhira).

After reviving Chaitanya by chanting the holy Names, the devotees they went to take bath in the ocean and then sat to take Jagannatha's *mahaprasada* together; Chaitanya took only some rice and a simple vegetable preparation called *laphra*, and he asked his companions to eat all the pancakes, the cheese and the sweets.

About his fainting in Jagannatha's presence, Chaitanya said that it was too dangerous for him to come so close to Jagannatha, so from that day on he would simply take Darshana from some distance, by standing near the Garuda stambha at the end of Jagamohana.

Sarvabhauma was also from Navadvipa and he had been a school friend of Nilambara Chakravarti (the maternal grandfather of Chaitanya) so he naturally felt some affection for Chaitanya. He had a long conversation with his brother in law Gopinatha, who claimed that Chaitanya was a divine *avatara*, but since Sarvabhauma had some material pride due to his being the teacher of several *sannyasis* in the Shankaracharya matha, he remained unconvinced. Finally he offered to instruct Chaitanya on the philosophy of *Vedanta* and Chaitanya accepted gracefully.

One month after Chaitanya had arrived in Puri, he sat with Sarvabhauma in Jagannatha temple regularly for one week, and for the entire period he listened silently to Sarvabhauma's explanations. In the end Sarvabhauma, perplexed, asked Chaitanya if he had understood the topic without any doubt, since he was not asking any questions. Chaitanya candidly replied that he could understand Vedanta very well, and he could also understand the commentaries of Adi Shankara, but he found that Sarvabhauma's explanations had the effect of clouding the meaning instead of clarifying it. The two started discussing the famous *atmarama* verse from *Bhagavatam* (1.7.10) and Sarvabhauma tried to regain the upper hand by giving 9 different explanations of the verse. Smiling, Chaitanya immediately offered 64 more different explanations, without touching any of those given by Sarvabhauma. Shocked, Sarvabhauma felt his scholar's pride shattering and he became convinced that the young *sannyasi* was not an ordinary personality. That night he remained brooding over the events, until in very early morning, before sunrise, Chaitanya went to visit him bringing Mahaprasada (sweet rice, sweet *laddu* and *pitha* pancakes) and melted his heart with affection. It is said that Sarvabhauma had a vision of Vishnu and the Chaitanya's *sadbhuja* form (a 6 armed form composed by a combination of Krishna, Rama and Chaitanya) and he instantly composed 100 *slokas* in glorification of Chaitanya.

Pleased, Chaitanya healed the son in law of Sarvabhauma, who had contracted cholera, and remained in Sarvabhauma's house for 5 days. Sarvabhauma organized a grand feast including rice with ghi, 10 types of sag, soup with nim leaves, panir kofta, buttermilk with small dal bara, fried eggplants with nim, fried white pumpkin, bara make from mung dal, urad dal and banana, 6 types of chatni, sweet rice cakes, cakes of various types, sweet rice with ghi, condensed milk and mango, lassi, sandesh, then scented cold water.

The opinion of the temple priests about this young *paradesi sannyasi* dramatically changed into a deep respect, and several Pandas, including the temple manager, become his followers. The amazing change of opinion of Sarvabhauma and the temple priests about the young Bengali *sannyasi* was great news in Puri, and soon everyone rushed to see Chaitanya. Thus Chaitanya met Paramananda Puri (godbrother of Ishvara Puri, Guru of Chaitanya and disciple of Madhavendra Puri), Pradyumna Brahmachari (a great devotee of Narasimha, who sometimes manifested/channeled in his body), Pradyumna Mishra, Bhagavan Acharya and other famous personalities who lived in Puri, including Jagannatha Das (whom he honored with the title of Atibadi) and his friends.

However, Ramananda, Svarupa Damodara, Sila Mohanty, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharyas and Madhavi Devi were the closest associates of Chaitanya in Puri, while Chaitanya was also in close contact with Sanatana Gosvami, Jiva Gosvami, Haridasa and Rupa Gosvami, who had been a minister of sultan Hussain Shah of Bengal. Chaitanya regarded Brahmins and non-Brahmins as equals, and supported non-Brahmins such as Ramananda, Shyamananda and Baladeva Vidyabhushana. So great was Chaitanya's influence in the area of Puri, that in the end even Brahmins took up the name Dasa when settled near Puri.

Chaitanya's companion Nityananda also became famous in Puri. He used to rush into Jagannatha's temple while the temple guards stood paralysed. Once Nityananda jumped on the altar and tightly embraced Balarama; he took His garland and put it on his own neck, then strode out majestically, while the flabbergasted guards could only stand and watch. There are several episodes where Nityananda manifested his great power in his relationships with devotees - once he visited Raghava's house asking for kadamba flowers, and the perplexed Raghava (who had no kadamba trees in his garden) found some kadamba flowers on his lemon tree. Another time, when Nityananda stayed in the house of Hiranya Pandita some dacoits planned to attack the house to steal his ornaments, but there many attempts were regularly foiled by the direct intervention of Chandika: once the thieves were overwhelmed by sleep, another time they became temporarily blind and fell into ditches, then they became ill with fever, and were bitten by snakes and insects. Nityananda was also famous for his eccentricity and disregard for social norms (therefore he was called Avadhuta); once he was visited by some devotees who had brought clothes and ornaments, and he wore a silk sari, two rudraksha malas and garlands made with malati, malika and champaka flowers. In that attire, Nityananda happily went to visit all the Vaishnavas. Not everybody was able to understand his behavior: Krishnadasa Kaviraja's brother was one of those who simply considered Nityananda a madman, therefore Krishnadasa left his home and severed all connections with his family.

Sometimes Chaitanya felt disturbed by the large numbers of people who came to see him, so he built a small *bhajana kutir* on the ocean beach and went to live there. Gadadhara stayed with him and they had night-long *kirtanas* on the beach. Later on, in that area Chaitanya excavated an ancient Deity of Gopinatha and established the temple that is today known as Tota Gopinatha. Gadadhara Pandita was appointed to take care of the Deity, and Chaitanya came every day to listen to him recite the *Bhagavata Purana*. One day Chaitanya went to see Paramananda Puri in his Matha and asked for some water. Paramananda Puri regretfully informed him that the water of his well was actually very bitter and muddy and unfit to be drunk. Chaitanya smiled and said that Jagannatha had made that water muddy to put a limit to the number of people who would attain liberation by drinking it. Chaitanya prayed Ganga to appear in the well, and the next morning, to the great amazement of everyone, the water from the well had become crystal clear and extremely sweet.

The journey to Bengal

After Ratha yatra, Chaitanya asked Sarvabhauma's brother, Sri Vidya Vachaspati, to help him arrange his journey for Vrindavana, and suggested that for some time he could stay secretly in his house, on the other bank of the river to avoid the disturbance of so many people around him. However, the news spread quickly and soon large crowds rushed to see Chaitanya in the house of Vidya Vachaspati; so many were trying to cross the river that the boats sank under the weight of the people.

To reach Vachaspati's house, people quickly constructed makeshift rafts with banana tree trunks, or swam across the river with the help of upturned clay pots. After much pleading by Vachaspati, finally Chaitanya agreed to bless the crowds and there was a huge *kirtana*.

Later Chaitanya sneaked away to another village, Kulia, but it was impossible to keep the secret. Everybody followed him and in the meantime the crowds had multiplied, so much that merchants set up markets selling all kinds of goods and made very good business. After much pleading from Vachaspati, again Chaitanya came out to bless the crowds with a roaring *kirtana*. On that occasion Chaitanya met a friend of Vakresvara Pandita named Devananda, and instructed him to freely distribute the *Bhagavatam* to people.

Finally starting his journey to Vrindavana, Chaitanya reached Bengal first, where at Shantipura Advaita Acharya arranged a large festival and brought mother Sachi to meet her son. Chaitanya offered *pradakshina* and *dandavat pranama* to his mother, while Advaita recited prayers to Devaki. Filled with ecstasy, Sachi insisted to cook for her son and prepared 20 types of *sag* (Nimai's favorite vegetable), plus a variety of other vegetables cooked in 10 to 20 different ways, and other innumerable dishes. Chaitanya happily ate the food, describing the spiritual qualities of the various types of *sag* such as *achyuta*, *patala*, *bastuka*, *kala* etc. Relaxing after the feast, Chaitanya asked Murari Gupta to glorify Lord Ramachandra and he blessed him. From that time, Murari Gupta has been considered by the Gaudiya Vaishnavas as a manifestation of Hanuman. Chaitanya remained in the house of Advaita for several days. Advaita's young son Achyutananda had a great attachment to Chaitanya and once he even scolded his father because he had apparently disrespected him.

During his stay, Advaita Acharya celebrated a festival in honor of the appearance day of his Guru Madhavendra Puri; Mother Sachi cooked daily and all the devotees busied themselves making garlands and working at the roomfuls of *chida* (flat rice), *muri* (puffed rice), bananas and banana flowers, coconuts, sugarcane and *gur* (brown cane sugar), yam, potatoes, spinach, patola, and all kinds of milk products.

Chaitanya thus commented: "Such manifestation of opulence cannot be the work of an ordinary *jiva*. Sri Advaita must be Mahesha, Shiva, I am strongly convinced of that. This miracle is possible only for Mahadeva, so Advaita Acharya must be the incarnation of Shiva."

Chaitanya bhagavata adds: "The Lord smiled and kept repeating these words, thus revealing the actual spiritual identity of Advaita Acharya. One who is blessed by virtue will accept these statements of Chaitanya with great spiritual joy, but those nonbelievers who have no faith in the Lord's words will be confronted with Advaita himself as the terrible consuming fire of destruction. Although Advaita is very compassionate in nature and his shelter is cooling as the refreshing rays of millions of moons, he becomes the terrifying all-devouring death to those who have no faith."

The *Srimad Bhagavatam* (4.4.14) declares that if anyone utters Lord Shiva's name, even without the proper understanding of the esoteric truth about Shiva, he will immediately be purified by all sins anyway. If a person disregards Lord Shiva's name and fails to feel happiness in hearing it, that wretch will certainly be thrown into an ocean of despair. Lord Shiva's orders cannot be disobeyed. He is a completely pure and transcendental personality, and those who disrespect Shiva are the personification of misfortune.

Krishna Himself says that one cannot worship Him without worshiping Shiva. It is not possible to develop love for Krishna by disregarding Shiva, who is so dear to Krishna.

Again *Skanda Purana* teaches, "One should worship Lord Krishna, the cause of all causes, and then worship the best of the *devatas*, Lord Shiva. Then one should worship all the other *devatas* with great faith and devotion."

After eating through the wonderful feast and exchanging garlands and sandalwood paste with the devotees, Chaitanya went to visit Srivasa Pandita at Kumarahatta, where he met Srivasa's brother Ramai Pandita, Purandara Acharya and Vasudeva Datta, then he went to the house of Raghava Pandita in Panihati, where a great feast was organised, with many varieties of *sag*. There he also met Gadadhara Das, Purandara Pandita, Paramesvari Das and Raghunatha Vaidya. Finally he went to Varahanagar to visit a local *brahmana* who used to recite the *Bhagavatam*, and falling into ecstasy, he gave him the name of Bhagavata Acharya.

Since it had become apparent that it was impossible for Chaitanya to travel to Vrindavana this time, he returned to Puri to the house of Kashi Mishra.

Traveling to south India

When lots of people again started to crowd around him, after the Ratha yatra Chaitanya sent Nityananda and Haridasa to preach in Bengal, accompanied by Ramadasa, Gadadhara Dasa, Raghunatha Vaidya, Krishnadasa Pandita, Paramesvara Dasa and Purandara Pandita. As for himself, he decided to journey to south India and left Puri accompanied by Krishnadasa; his declared purpose was to search for his brother Visvarupa, who had taken *sannyasa* before him. On the first leg of his journey south he visited Narasimha at Simhachalana and Sri Kurmanath at Kurmakshetra, where he met a leper called Vasudeva Datta. Vasudeva Datta was a great devotee and Chaitanya embraced him in great ecstasy: immediately Vasudeva Datta was cured from his leprosy.

Further south on the bank of the Godavari Chaitanya met Ramananda Raya, the governor of Vidyanagara, and they had the famous philosophical discussion related in *Chaitanya charitamrita*. Chaitanya asked Ramananda what was the highest duty in life. Ramananda first suggested the proper execution of *varna* and *ashrama* duties, then he suggested the realisation of Brahman, and finally the company with good saintly people and the performance of Sankirtana, the congregational glorification of God. Chaitanya finally confirmed that this last suggestion was the best course of action in the difficult times of Kali yuga.

Taking leave from Ramananda, Chaitanya travelled further south, down to Kanyakumari. On the way he embraced 7 *tala* trees that immediately disappeared. To the amazed Krishnadasa who traveled with him, Chaitanya said that those special trees had been blessed by Ramachandra when he had killed Vali, and they had been waiting to see him before returning to the spiritual world.

In Rangakshetra Chaitanya stayed for the four months of the rainy season (*chaturmasya*) in the house of Venkata Bhatta, a follower of Ramanuja; there he met his young son Gopala Bhatta, who had learned Sanskrit from his uncle Prabhodananda Sarasvati. At that time Gopala Bhatta was a 10 year old child, but he was intensely influenced by Chaitanya and later on he became one of the six Gosvamis of Vrindavana.

It is important to understand that the title of Gosvami is not exclusively used to refer to *sannyasis*, as some people believe. No one of the six Gosvamis of Vrindavana took *sannyasa*, and specifically Gopala Bhatta Gosvami married and settled in Vrindavana raising a family, whose descendents are still in charge of his Radha Ramana temple. For a long time (up to the time of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati) nobody among the followers of Chaitanya took *sannyasa*, but rather remained in the *grihastha* order of life or, if they chose a life of renunciation, they took up the attire (*vesha*) of a simple and humble Baba. Still today, among the Gaudiyas only the Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavas take the dress of *sannyasa*, while all other lineages only take Baba diksha.

During his travel in south India, Chaitanya recovered two important scriptures, the *Krishna karnamrita* of Bilvamangala, and some fragments of the ancient *Brahma samhita*, containing a description of creation and the famous prayers of Brahma to Govinda. It is said that Chaitanya discovered the *Brahma samhita* during his visit to Travancore in 1511-12 and recommended it to his followers, although at present such texts appears to be considered rather controversial, and except for the famous prayers of Brahma to Govinda there seems to be no complete study over the entire text by the contemporary members of Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavism. This could easily be explained considering that Jiva Gosvami's commentary on *Sri Brahma Samhita* states that the same Deity that is Krishna is also Durga, and that Durga is the presiding Deity of the 10 and 18 syllable Gopala mantra, as the Shakti of Gopala Krishna.

After visiting Kanyakumari, Chaitanya went to Pandepura where he met saint Tukarama and had extensive association with him. He returned to Puri about one year later, on time for Chandana yatra. Shortly afterwards a large party of devotees from Bengal arrived in Orissa led by Advaita Acharya. Chaitanya sent them *mahaprasada* in Cuttack, then started to walk towards them. While Advaita and his party reached the Atharnala bridge, Chaitanya arrived at Narendra sarovara and they saw each other (as at that time there were not many buildings in between). Chaitanya offered them garlands from Jagannatha and together they went to participate to the Chandana yatra in Narendra sarovara. While the representative Deities of Govinda and Rama Krishna sailed around the lake on the boats, Chaitanya and his devotees jumped into the lake and started playing happily in the water. Afterwards, they all went to get the Darshana of Lord Jagannatha.

Advaita and his wife Sita cooked a wonderful feast, with many varieties of *sag* and curries, yogurt, milk, *rabri* and sweets. Chaitanya happily enjoyed the food, and stated that he would always accept food from Laskhesvaras, or those people who chanted lakhs of God's Names.

In those days, Chaitanya planted Tulasi in a pot and started chanting his *japa* by sitting in front of Tulasi. The first meeting of king Prataparudra with Chaitanya was indirect, and for a long time Chaitanya refused to meet him directly because he insisted that *sannyasis* should never have any contact with Kings, politicians or materially powerful persons, because such association is extremely dangerous: Chaitanya compared it to “pure poison”.

Even later on, Chaitanya strongly refused to get involved in any politics, to the point of refusing to intercede when Prataparudra sentenced to death Chaitanya’s follower Gopinatha Raya, the brother of Ramananda Raya, for misappropriation of government funds. Gopinatha Raya sent him a message begging for his help, but Chaitanya became irritated and said that if he had to be dragged into politics, he was ready to leave Puri and move to Prayaga. Both brothers, the sons of Bhavananda Pattanayaka, were engaged in government service, as Gopinatha Raya was the governor of Midnapore and Ramananda Raya was governor of Rajahmundry. Ramananda left his government position after meeting Chaitanya and retired to a solely spiritual life, while his brother continued to work in the government.

So for a long time Prataparudra contented himself of observing Chaitanya from a distance especially during the Ratha yatra celebrations, when Chaitanya danced and exhibited his wonderful ecstatic symptoms. In fact the first time that Prataparudra saw Chaitanya he was taken aback as Chaitanya, completely lost in his ecstasy, was covered in tears, mucus, drool and dust as he cried in his emotions and rolled uncontrollably on the ground. It is said that the same night Prataparudra had a dream where Jagannatha appeared to him similarly covered in drool and dust, and scolded Prataparudra for having given a material judgment about Chaitanya. Then suddenly Prataparudra saw in his dream Jagannatha disappear from His throne, and in His place he saw Chaitanya dressed in the Deities’ clothes and ornaments.

Prataparudra showed great respect and humility also towards Chaitanya’s associates. Once, accompanied by his minister Harichandan Mahapatra, Prataparudra was watching Chaitanya dancing ecstatically at the Ratha yatra. Srivasa Pandita was also standing in front of them, and Harichandan repeatedly tried to push Srivasa aside, telling him that the King wanted to see Chaitanya. Finally Srivasa lost his patience and slapped him. When Harichandan became offended and angry, Prataparudra told him that he should instead be grateful for having been blessed by a personal associate of Chaitanya.

During the Ratha yatra of that year, finally king Prataparudra succeeded in meeting Chaitanya directly, with the help of Sarvabhauma and Ramananda, who suggested that the King wear plain clothes as any ordinary person, and quietly approach Chaitanya in the Jagannatha Vallabha garden (where Ramananda Raya had his Matha) while he rested. Then he should recite some verses from the *Gopi gita* in the 10th canto of *Bhagavatam*. Prataparudra followed the advice and was blessed by Chaitanya who recognised his humility and devotional sincerity. Filled with ecstasy, Chaitanya embraced Prataparudra.

Nityananda also gave the King one of Chaitanya’s old outer garments and Prataparudra kept it as a spiritual treasure, worshiping it regularly like a Deity.

Still Chaitanya remained reluctant to maintain a direct relationship with Prataparudra because of his position as a ruler. He suggested that he could see his son instead, so Prataparudra eagerly sent his son. On seeing the young prince, with his dark complexion and wearing a yellow cloth, Chaitanya was immediately reminded of Krishna and he started manifesting ecstatic symptoms; when he embraced the boy, the same ecstatic symptoms were absorbed by the boy, who in turn passed them on to his father when he returned home.

On the next year, Chaitanya again he went to Bengal with the idea of traveling to Vrindavana from there, but because many people kept following him, he gave up and decided to go back to Puri: on that occasion he explained to his followers in Puri that going to Vrindavana should be a solitary meditation, not a circus show.

In Ramakeli he met Rupa and Sanatana, who had been engaged in the government of Hussain Shah and had received the Muslim names of Dabir Khas and Sakara Mallik. The two brothers were from a Brahmin family but they had become learned in Persian and Arabic besides Sanskrit, and due to their great intelligence and talent they had made a career in the government. However, they had a sincere desire to pursue Vaishnavism and Chaitanya instructed them to read *Bhagavatam* and to meet him in Vrindavana.

The two brothers returned home to study *Bhagavatam* and started to devise some means by which they could give up their government posts and join Chaitanya in total dedication in the devotional service to Krishna.

At that time, in Shantipur, Chaitanya also met Raghunatha Dasa, the son of Govardhana (a friend of Advaita Acharya). Raghunatha stayed for one week in the house of Advaita in the company of Chaitanya and decided he wanted to completely dedicate his life to devotional service. However, his father was not happy and every time Raghunatha tried to run away from home he would catch him and tie him up.

Finally Raghunatha asked permission to his father and he went to see Chaitanya again accompanied by several people from his household; Chaitanya advised him to remain quietly home without acting rashly, and in time Krishna would arrange to fulfill his spiritual desires.

Before returning to Puri, Chaitanya again met his mother. During the period of Anavasara Chaitanya felt a strong feeling of separation from Jagannatha so he went to the temple of Narayana Alarnatha (at Brahmagiri) where the power of his ecstatic feelings melted the stone on which he prostrated himself to pay homage to Alarnatha. Still today the stone remains visible to the pilgrims. This Deity of Narayana Alarnatha (Alvar-natha, worshiped originally by south Indian Brahmin) was very dear to Chaitanya: sometimes Chaitanya threatened his followers that if they kept trying to involve him in politics he would leave Puri and move to Alarnatha.

One day before the Ratha yatra, Chaitanya performed the festival of the cleaning of Gundicha temple (Gundicha marjana) together with his devotees, with the help of the temple manager, Tulasi Pariccha. Hundreds of water pots were fetched from the Indradyumna lake and all the devotees participated to the big cleaning. After the cleaning work both in the Gundicha and in the nearby temple of Yajna Nrisimha, everybody went to take bath in Indradyumna Sarovara and played happily in the water. *Chaitanya charitamrita* describes in many details this and other wonderful events full of spiritual ecstasy during the festival of Ratha yatra.

Here we will simply mention that during the Ratha yatra festival, Chaitanya swam in the ecstatic mood of Radha when she sees Krishna at Kurukshetra on the occasion of the eclipse. Radha sees Krishna in His kingly dress, on His majestic chariot, accompanied by His brother Balarama, sister Subhadra and large crowds of people. However, her undiminished love and attachment for Krishna cannot be fulfilled completely because of the lack of privacy and intimacy. So Chaitanya repeated again and again, “He who stole my heart in my youth is once again in front of my eyes as my lord and master. These are the same moonlight nights of the month of Chaitra, the same fragrance of the *malati* flowers, and the same sweet breeze from the *kadamba* forests. I am also the same person who played with him in joyful love and ecstatic. Yet my mind longs to be back there, to that place on the bank of the Reva, under the Vetasi tree.” (*Chaitanya charitamrita*, Madhya 1.59, and *Padyavali* of Rupa Gosvami, 386).

Rupa Gosvami explained this verse by writing a similar, but more explicit one (CC Madhya 1.76): “O my friend! This is my beloved Krishna I see here at Kurukshetra, and I am that same Radha, and we are meeting again with great joy. Yet, my mind longs for the forest on the bank of the Yamuna, where the flute of Krishna resounded so sweetly.”

Chaitanya coaxes Jagannatha to Vrindavana, calling “Manima! Manima!” (“O Lord!”) and singing the famous couplet from Adi Shankara’s *Jagannathashtakam*, *jagannatha svami nayanapatamai bhavatu me* (“O Lord of the universe, kindly become manifested to my eyes”).

At some point, Jagannatha’s chariot stopped at Balagandi and would not move. Finally Chaitanya came behind the Ratha and started pushing by his head, and immediately the chariot moved on.

Every year Chaitanya organised Kirtana parties for the Ratha yatra. Each Kirtana party usually had one main dancer, 2 *mridanga* players and 4 *karatala* players. Hundreds of devotees from Bengal and Orissa participated to these Kirtanas.

On the Ratha yatra day Chaitanya took rest in Aitota near Gundicha (where the Sri Krishna Chaitanya mission now stands), and during the subsequent nine days he stayed at the Jagannatha Vallabha Matha with Ramananda Raya, where the devotees also came for *prasadam* feasts.

The journey to Vrindavana

On the Jyestha Purnima (Svana yatra) of the next year Chaitanya left for Vrindavana accompanied by Balabhadra Bhattacharya. Chaitanya arrived in Mathura and accepted food in the house of a Sanodiya *brahmana* who was a disciple of Madhavendra Puri. In Vrindavana Chaitanya took bath in the 24 *tirthas*, visited the 12 forests (*vanas*) and kept his residence at Akrura ghat. After visiting Vrindavana, his servant Krishnadasa Vipra suggested that they go to Prayaga for the Magha Mela.

On the way to Prayaga Chaitanya met a large group of Muslim soldiers and converted them to Vaishnavism by preaching them according to the Quran: their descendents are still known as Pathana Vaishnavas.

In Prayaga he met Rupa and his younger brother Anupama at the Bindu Madhava temple.

On that occasion he instructed Rupa for 10 days, explaining the various levels of consciousness of the living entities and the complexities of *bhakti*. The he ordered him to write books on *bhakti* and to excavate the places of Krishna *lila* in Vrindavana.

Rupa finally succeeded in districating himself from the Muslim government and retired with 2 boats full of golden coins as a reward for his services. Of this money, Rupa distributed 50% for the service of Krishna and the Vaishnavas, 25% he distributed to his family and relatives, and the remaining 25% he kept for his own future emergencies. Another important meeting was with Vallabha Bhatta (also called Vallabha Acharya, the founder of the Vallabha sampradaya). While going to his house in Adaila, Chaitanya was overwhelmed by ecstasy and he jumped into the Yamuna.

After leaving Prayag Chaitanya went to Varanasi, where he stayed in the house of Chandrasekhara, usually taking lunch in the house of Tapan Mishra. Very often Chaitanya visited the Shiva Visvanatha temple and he became very popular with the inhabitants of Varanasi.

One *brahmana* from Maharastra was so enthusiastic about Chaitanya's preaching and devotion that he arranged a meeting in his house with a group of Shankarite *sannyasis* followers of Prakashananda Sarasvati. On that occasion, Chaitanya presented himself very humbly in front of the Shankarite *sannyasis*, who were conquered by his unpretentiousness, effulgence and enormous spiritual power.

While he resided in Varanasi, Chaitanya met Sanatana who had come searching for him. On that occasion he instructed Sanatana for two months on many subtle and technical points of philosophy, and ordered him to compile philosophical and theological texts for the education of the people in general. The *Chaitanya charitamrita* relates some of the teachings given to Rupa and Sanatana during this period.

Chaitanya came back to remain permanently in Puri in 1455 at the age of 30, keeping his headquarters in the house of Kashi Mishra (Kashi Mishralaya), in the room called Gaura Gambhira (now Radha Kantha Matha).

He never traveled again from there. Still today his wooden sandals, water pot and bed are preserved there.

Of the 18 years he spent without moving from Puri, the last 6 years were increasingly absorbed in the internal ecstasy of meditation on Krishna in the company of very few devotees (Ramananda Raya, Svarupa Damodara, Govinda, Paramananda Puri, Raghunatha Dasa, Sankara Pandita), mostly listening to the recitation of *Bhagavatam*, *Gita Govinda*, *Krishna karnamrita*, the poems of Chandidas and Vidyapati, and the *Jagannatha Vallabha Nataka*, written by Ramananda Raya.

In this first period Chaitanya went every day to see Jagannatha in the temple, standing near the Garuda pillar, and stayed there often crying in ecstasy until the end of Vallabha bhoga arati. It is said that his tears filled the drain besides the Garuda stambha, where the water from the Deities' bath flows outside the temple. Raghunatha Dasa, in his *Chaitanyastaka (Stavavali)* describes Chaitanya contemplating Jagannatha in the temple.

One day during the arati an old lady climbed the Garuda stambha to see Jagannatha behind the thick crowd, propping her foot on Chaitanya's shoulder. Govinda chastised her for this offense, but Chaitanya stopped him, saying he was very happy to see a devotee so eager to see Jagannatha.

Every day Chaitanya went to see Gadadhara Pandita and sat with him listening to the readings of the *Bhagavatam* again and again; he particularly liked the story of Prahlada, and he listened to it hundreds of times.

Another devotee visited every day by Chaitanya was Haridasa, who had settled in Puri in the ashram presently known as Siddha Bakula, and was constantly engaged in chanting the divine Names.

Chaitanya called Haridasa the Nama Acharya, and personally brought him *mahaprasada* from Jagannatha, because Haridasa considered himself as fallen due to his association with the Muslim family that had adopted him, and in humility did not want to enter the temple with the danger of contaminating it. This great display of humility is often found in the writings and life of the followers of Chaitanya, as we see when Krishnadasa Kaviraja states in his *Chaitanya charitamrita*: "I am lower than a worm living in stool, and simply by hearing my name people will become contaminated". Similarly, Rupa and Sanatana preferred to walk on the blistering hot sand of the beach rather than mixing with the temple Sevakas of Jagannatha, fearing that their contact may pollute their ritual purity.

After visiting Haridasa, Chaitanya used to go to take bath in the ocean and perform his noon duties, then he would go to take lunch in the house of some devotee. Back at Gambhira in the house of Kashi Mishra, Chaitanya would take rest while Govinda or Shankara Pandita massaged his body. After the devotees had rested, Chaitanya would meet them in the afternoon and go with them to the Jagannatha temple for Kirtana.

Often, Chaitanya wandered around a tall sandy dune near the ocean (now called Chataka Parvata) surrounded by gardens, calling it “Govardhana”. One day he started digging in this garden and quickly unearthed a large and tall Krishna Deity; the Deity was installed as Gopinatha and a temple built, now called Tota Gopinatha. Gadadhara Pandita was entrusted with Gopinatha’s worship and he faithfully took care of the Deity even in his old age, after the disappearance of Chaitanya. It is said that Gopinatha, moved by seeing old Gadadhara’s efforts in putting fresh garlands on His neck every day, sat down crossed-legged to make it easier for him – and He is still sitting, in a very unusual pose for a Deity.

Purushottama Acharya, a friend of Pundarika Vidyanidhi, had come from Varanasi and became Chaitanya’s secretary, taking the name of Svarupa Damodara. Every day he sang Bhajans to Chaitanya, soothing his mood of separation from Krishna that gradually sank him into a greater and greater oblivion of the external circumstances. At times Chaitanya roamed around Puri in the night and fell unconscious overwhelmed by ecstasy – in a well, in the cow shed outside the temple, in the ocean, and always the devotees would bring him back and take care of him. When awakened from his ecstasies, Chaitanya said he had been in the direct presence of Krishna or hearing the sounds of Krishna’s flute, words, voice, anklebells and bangles that absorbed all his consciousness.

Among all devotees Svarupa Damodar, Raya Ramananda, Shikhi Mohanty and his sister Madhavi Devi were very near and dear to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Except Svarupa Damodar the other three devotees were from Orissa.

Raghunatha Bhatta, who is famous as one of the six Gosvamis of Vrindavana, went to see Chaitanya in Puri and remained there for eight months to cook for him. Then Chaitanya instructed him to return to Varanasi to serve his parents; he was ordered not to marry but to dedicate to the study of the *Bhagavatam*. Chaitanya blessed him by giving him his own *tulasi mala*.

When his parents died, Raghunatha Bhatta returned to Puri to serve Chaitanya for another eight months, then he finally went to Vrindavana where he spent the rest of his life. As a blessing for his mission in Vrindavana, Chaitanya gave him a betel nut (that is considered a temporary form where a Deity can be invoked) and a large *tulasi* garland from Jagannatha.

Raghunatha Dasa also joined Chaitanya after the death of his parents and he was the personal assistant of Svarupa Damodara for sixteen years, and witnessed the last days of Chaitanya. After Chaitanya’s disappearance he went to Vrindavana where he stayed in the company of Rupa and Sanatana. Raghunatha Dasa became famous for his amazing renunciation and austerities.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu lived in Puri for many years, and so did many of his followers from Navadvipa. One group of such followers was normally residing in Puri, including Gadadhara Pandita (pujari of Tota Gopinatha), Govinda (who was personally serving him and was a disciple of Isvara Puri), Kasisvara Gosvami (who acted as his body guard, also a disciple of Isvara Puri), Paramananda Puri, Jagadananda Pandit, Ramai and Nandai, Vakresvara, Svarupa Damodara, Shankara, Kama Bhatta, Krishnadas, Balabhadra Bhattacharya, Bhagavan Acharya and Ramabhadra Acharya.

Other famous associates of Chaitanya from Orissa were Sikhi Mahiti (a Deul Karana of Jagannatha temple), his sister Madhavi Devi, Kanai Kunthia, Jagannatha Mohanty, Kashi Mishra, Krishna Das, Tulasi Pariccha (the supervisor of Jagannatha temple), Janardana Mohanty (a Sevaka from Jagannatha temple), Harichandan Mahapatra (a military officer and minister), Murari Mahiti (a temple accountant), Pradyumna Mishra (the head cook in the temple kitchen), Shivananda, Krishnananda, Kumara, Paramananda Mahapatra, Singheshvar, Svapneshvar, Chandaneshvar, Raghunath Vaidya, Gopinatha Acharya, Kashi Mishra, Shivananda, Paramananda Mahapatra, Brahmananda Bharati, Murari Mahiti, Bhavananda Raya (father of Ramananda) and Ramananda’s brothers (Gopinatha Pattanayaka, Vaninatha, Kala and Subhanidhi) and king Prataparudra, Krishnadas, Balabhadra Bhatthacharya, Ramabhadra Acharya, Bada Haridas, Chota Haridas, Ramabhadra Acharya, Simhesvara, Tapan Acharya, Raghunatha, Nilambara, Singabhatta, Kamabhatta, Kamalananda, Acyutananda, Nirloma Gangadas and Vishnu Das.

Many other devotees regularly came to Puri to see Sri Chaitanya and stayed for four months each time, after walking for one month to reach Puri from Bengal. Among them Nityananda Prabhu and Advaita Prabhu, Srivasa Pandit, Murari Gupta, Rupa Gosvami, Sanatana Gosvami, Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami, Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Ramananda Raya, Vasudeva Datta, Pundarika Vidyanidhi, Vasudeva Ghosh, Narahari, Sivananda Sena (who used to lead a party of 200 devotees from Bengal to Puri, paying for all their expenditures), Raghava Pandita and Damayanti Devi, Acyutananda Gosvami, Raghunatha Vaidya, Mukunda Datta, Kalidasa Thakur, Sri Govinda, Sri Madhava, Paramesvara Modak, Raghunanandana, Makaradhvaj Kar, Satyaraj and Ramananda Vasu. Although Chaitanya himself only wrote the eight verses of the *Sikshastaka*, his followers wrote a wealth of texts and songs in different languages, including the dialect of Vrindavana, Brajaboli (Ramananda Raya and Madhavi Devi).

Chaitanya never gave formal initiation to anyone, did not establish any Matha or institution, and did not leave any successor in his disciplic line. In fact, he never even formalized his teachings into a consistent, detailed and precise corpus of knowledge, rather delegating his followers to engage in such work. His idea of initiation consisted in simply pronouncing the Holy Names of God and instructing his followers to develop pure love and devotion for Krishna, without giving much importance to rules and regulations.

These are the core teachings preached by Chaitanya, as we can clearly see from the only text he personally composed: the famous *Sikshashatakam*. Furthermore, his philosophical perspective came to be known as Acintya Bhedabheda tattva, or simultaneous identity and difference, which leaves a lot of space for all possible reconciliation and integration of perspectives, since the deepest nature of Reality remains inaccessible to the intellect but is only comprehended and realized in pure devotion. Therefore a wide variety of people started preaching and making their own disciples while preaching their particular perspective on Chaitanya's teachings, sometimes even coming at odds with each other.

One certain thing is that in all the Mathas belonging to the Chaitanya Sampradaya there are Deities of Gopinatha and the *yugala murti* of Radha Krishna. Of the 57 Gaudiya mathas (without counting the Sarasvata Gaudiya Mathas), those contemporary to him were Gangamata, Radhakanta, Sunar Gosain, Nadiar Gauranga and Sunar Gauranga, and Haridas matha. It is also said that Chaitanya stayed sometimes in Jagannatha Vallabha with Ray Ramananda and others.

Chaitanya left this world during the Ratha Yatra of 1555, and it seems that his disappearance is perceived and discussed by different people in different ways. A popular rumor in Puri says Chaitanya was eliminated by the priests of the Jagannatha temple or by some high-caste Brahmins, and some say he was hit by a stone or hurt his foot while dancing at Ratha yatra and he was carried to Tota Gopinatha where he passed away.

His contemporaries Achyutananda, Divakara and Isvara all speak of his disappearance, while this subject is not discussed in the official biographies of the Gaudiya movement. In his *Chaitanya Bhagavata*, Isvara Dasa says that Chaitanya "merged into Niladripati", but his body was moved by Kshetrapala to the Ganga (some say this reference indicates Gomati tirtha). The day mentioned by Isvara Dasa is Sunday, sukla Saptami of the month of Ashadha 1555.

Some versions say that Chaitanya appeared to get a leg injury then a fever (which could be ideologically assimilated to the circumstances in which Krishna Himself had disappeared, having been shot in the foot by Jara's arrow), and he told his associates that he would be gone soon. On the next day he went to the temple of Tota Gopinatha and during the *kirtana* he entered the inner room of the Deity. Tradition says that he disappeared into the leg of Gopinatha: still today the Pujaris will show a golden line in the leg of the Deity, where Chaitanya is said to have entered.

After the disappearance of Lord Chaitanya in the 17th century, Syamananda and Rasikananda from Orissa had an important role in the preaching of Gaudiya Vaishnavism in Orissa and other state of India. In the 18th century Baladeva Vidyabhushana from Remuna Rudrapur in Orissa wrote the *Govinda Bhasya*, the famous commentary on *Vedanta Sutra* according to the Achintya bhedabheda philosophy taught by Chaitanya.

Biographies of Chaitanya

Although Sri Chaitanya himself only wrote the eight verses of the *Sikshastaka*, his followers and the followers of his followers produced a wealth of Bhakti literature, both on his teachings and on his life.

All biographies were composed from the diaries (*kadacha*) of Svarupa Damodara (who was the closest associate of Chaitanya during the last part of his life) and Murari Gupta (a medical doctor who had been a close associate of Chaitanya since his childhood). Murari Gupta arranged his diaries in a Sanskrit work with the title *Gauranga charita*, also called *Krishna Chaitanya Charitamrita*.

About ten years after the disappearance of Chaitanya, Nityananda requested Vrindavana Das to write a biography in Bengali (*Chaitanya Bhagavata*). About sixty years later, Krishnadasa Kaviraja wrote the deeply philosophical and theological *Chaitanya charitamrita*, elaborating in the popular Bengali language on the divinity of Chaitanya and his associates. Other biographies are Lochana Dasa's *Chaitanya Mangala*, Kavikarnapura's Sanskrit *Krishna Chaitanyacharitamritam Mahakavya* and *Chaitanyachandrodaya Natakam* and Jayananda's *Chaitanya Mangala*. Vishvanatha Chakravarti also collected poems about Chaitanya written by several devotees, especially Chaitanya's associates in Navadvipa. *Chaitanya Charitamrta* is divided into Adi, Madhya and Antya lila, but Adi lila deals more with the philosophical aspects of the incarnation of Chaitanya than with his childhood and early life.

The detailed explanation of the *pancha-tattva*, or the "five forms of the incarnation" as Chaitanya, Nityananda, Advaita, Gadadhara and Srivasa is extremely detailed and learned, quoting many verses from a variety of scriptures. In the first 14 Sanskrit verses, Krishnadas Kaviraja offers his homage to the Pancha tattva, then to the three principal Krishna Deities of Vrindavana (Madana Mohana, Govinda and Gopinatha), representing the three stages of the development of devotional service: *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*. Then in the subsequent Bengali verses he gives an extensive explanation and commentary on the meaning.

A long conversation between Krishna in Vrindavana and Brahma (when Brahma stole Krishna's cows and friends) establishes that Krishna is Narayana, the origin of all *avatars*, and explains that different devotees address Him as the different incarnations: each statement is as correct as the others, because there are no contradictions in God. A description is then given about the topics of the *Bhagavatam*, and the reasons for the descent of Chaitanya in this world (quoting *Bhagavatam* 11.5.32) and his auspicious bodily features. In the 4th chapter of Adi lila, the author reveals the confidential reason for the appearance of Chaitanya, as Krishna wanted to taste the nectar of the love of Krishna, that gives so much pleasure to His devotees.

Then the internal potency of Krishna is described in detail, as well as the sentiments of Radha and the *gopis* – but warning that such information should not be disclosed indiscriminately in public.

After 12 chapters of substantial and complex philosophical and theological presentations, the author starts describing the advent and the early years of Chaitanya's life. Madhya lila also contains the teachings to Rupa and Sanatana, and the philosophical discussion with the Sankarite *sannyasis* in Varanasi.

Antya lila describes the character and life of Haridasa, the meeting with Raghunatha Dasa, and the *Sikshastaka* prayers.

Chaitanya Bhagavata is also divided into Adi, Madhya and Antya lila, but leaves philosophy and theology to a minimum, simply describing the events of Chaitanya's life, especially his childhood and early years, up to the travel to Puri and the his arrival there. Most of the information presented in this book about the life of Chaitanya is taken from *Chaitanya Bhagavata*.

Chaitanya mangala (Sutra khanda) begins with an auspicious invocation song to Ganesha, who destroys all obstacles, to Gauri and Shiva the creators of the three worlds and the givers of devotion to Lord Vishnu and to Sarasvati the bestower of artistic speech. The author then bows to the spiritual masters, the *devatas* and the Vaishnavas to ask for their blessings so that the book can be completed successfully. Then he offers obeisances to Chaitanya and all his associates, listing them one by one.

Then he explains that Rukmini in Dvaraka originally suggested to Krishna to try to taste the bliss of love for Krishna, and it was at that time that Krishna first manifested the form of Gauranga to the astonished Narada who had come to visit, and said He would descend as Gauranga in Kali yuga. Narada went to give the wonderful news to Uddhava, to Shiva and Parvati, and to Brahma.

In Satya yuga Vishnu appears as white Hamsa, in Treta as red Yajna, in Dvapara as black Krishna, and in Kali as yellow Gauranga (*Bhagavatam*, 10.8.13). He also explains the reference to *Bhagavatam* 11.5.32.

Then Lochana Das proceeds to describe the spiritual world as manifested in Narada's vision, and the appearance of the companions of Chaitanya.

First Shiva appeared as Kamalaksa (Advaita), then Balarama appeared as Kuvera Pandita (Nityananda), son of Padmavati and Hadai Ojha. Then Katyayani appeared as Sita, the wife of Advaita. Lochana Dasa also mentions again all the associates of Chaitanya and especially Narahari Thakura, his spiritual master, who in Goloka is the *gopi* Madhumati.

The Adi, Madhya and Sesha Khanda describe the events of the life of Chaitanya, much like the *Chaitanya Bhagavata*.

The Oriya followers of Chaitanya also wrote some biographies, such as *Shunya Sangita* by Achyutananda Dasa, *Jagannatha Charitamrita* by Divakara Dasa, and *Chaitanya Bhagavata* by Ishvara Dasa. However, after some time a deep rift was created between the Gaudiya Vaishnavas (from Bengal) and the Oriya Vaishnavas followers of the “five saints of Orissa”; such hostility is reported in the *Jagannatha charitamrita* by Divakara Das.

Several other biographies were composed in the subsequent period. Some of these pushed Chaitanya’s identity with Krishna to the level of the idea of describing *rasa lila* with the women of Nadia, thus giving some kind of ideological basis for the perspective of the Gauranga nagaris, the Sahajiyas, and other similar groups.

Haridasa

Haridasa Thakura, considered by Gaudiya Vaishnavas to be an incarnation of Prajapati Brahma, was one of the most intimate associates of Chaitanya, although he humbly lived by himself in a solitary place on the beach, and for a time that was almost as long as Chaitanya’s time in Puri. As Haridasa had no connection with the Jagannatha temple or any other temple, he was not interested in scholarship, did not write any books, did not accept any disciples, did not preach and indeed did do anything else but chanting the Holy Names and relishing his relationship with Chaitanya, it seems only befitting that he should be placed next to him in this book.

Haridasa was born in 1449 in Budhan, now in Bangladesh, from a Hindu Brahmin family. His father Manohar and his mother Ujvala died while the boy was still very young, so the child was adopted by a Muslim neighbor called Malaya, therefore the caste-conscious Hindus considered him a Muslim or “Yavana”.

Haridas started the chanting of the holy Name in Phulia, but the Muslim governor was not happy with his behavior so he persecuted him in many ways and he even ordered his soldiers to beat him on many market places as an example of the punishment for those who wanted to defy his orders. Finally Haridasa seemed to be dead, so the soldiers threw him in the Ganga, but after plunging in the water he was revived and ran away, escaping the persecution.

Later on some envious people tried to disgrace him by sending a famous prostitute to his *bhajana kutir*, hoping that she could make him fall down from the spiritual practice. For three nights Haridasa kept the prostitute waiting on the plea that he had not finished his daily *harinama* chanting yet, and in the morning the girl would go away frustrated at her vain attempts. However, by that time she had been sitting and listening to the chanting of holy Name and her heart changed, so finally she confessed the plot and begged forgiveness from Haridasa. Haridasa then revealed to her that he had remained in that place only to give her the holy name, he instructed her to change her life and become a devotee of the Lord, which she did.

Haridasa was formally initiated by Advaita Acharya, who invited him at the meal in honor of the *sraddha* ceremony of his father. To the outraged caste conscious Brahmins, Advaita Acharya explained that Haridasa was better than hundreds of caste *brahmanas*, so feeding him was an extremely pious act. Haridasa settled in Puri at the famous Siddha Bakula Matha, and whenever they came to Puri, Rupa, Jiva and Sanatana Gosvamis stayed with him as guests. Haridasa Thakura is famous as the Nama Acharya, or the Acharya of the Holy Name, because he was chanting every day 300,000 names of the Lord. Chaitanya loved him so much that, although Haridasa was considered a Muslim by the temple guards and therefore not allowed into the temple, Sri Chaitanya was personally going to visit him every day and bringing him the Mahaprasada of Lord Jagannatha. Haridasa passed away in the presence of Sri Chaitanya, who personally took his body on his arms and danced in ecstasy, his eyes filled with tears of love. Chaitanya asked his followers to dig a hole in the beach sand, and Haridasa’s body was put in the dig together with Jagannatha’s *prasadam* – silken rope, sandalwood, cloth and food.

Chaitanya personally covered Haridasa’s body with sand, then built a platform and a fence, and went to beg food from shop to shop at the Simha dvara at Jagannatha temple for a feast.

Then he ordered all the devotees to observe a ceremony every year in honor of the disappearance of Haridas. The Samadhi of Haridasa is in the beach area, Svargadvara, near the Purushottama Gaudiya Matha, and is called Samadhi Matha.

The development of the Gaudiya Vaishnava movement

From the teachings contained in the *Sikshastaka*, we can easily understand that Chaitanya was not worried about rules and regulations, dogmas or labels. He was not interested in sectarianism or in establishing religious institutions or similar other ideas: his mission was purely to encourage the masses to develop bhakti through the public Sankirtana movement – starting with hearing, repeating and remembering Krishna or Hari (which includes names, qualities, pastimes, teachings etc). In fact all Gaudiya Vaishnavas still greet each other by saying “Hari Bol!” (“chant, sing or speak about Hari!”).

The Bengali branch of the followers of Chaitanya not only detached itself from the Oriya branch but they also developed into a myriad of groups, often rather at odds with each other, due to the different tendencies and attachments of the people involved.

For example it seems that the Nityananda vamsa and Advaita vamsa groups (also known as “caste Gosvamis”, the family descendents of Nityananda and Advaita, the two main associates of Chaitanya) claim for themselves an exclusive birthright to the teaching of Chaitanya’s cult, saying that all others can at best become disciples, but never Gurus.

The various groups known as Baul, Aul, Gauranga Nagari, Sakhi Bheki etc, maintain that philosophical knowledge, rules and regulations, and a code of conduct are not needed (or even favorable) to attain perfection; however, they cultivate detachment and renunciation. The followers of Kalachat observe some rules, although these are not consistent with the Vedic conclusions and principles.

Today, the most active disciplic successions of the Gaudiya Vaishnava branch are from:

- Rupa Gosvami (and the other five Gosvamis: Sanatana, Jiva, Raghunatha Dasa, Raghunatha Bhatta, Gopala Bhatta), who preached in Vrindavana
- Jahnava (Nityananda’s second wife), who preached in Bengal, and his disciple/adopted son Virachandra or Virabhadra (son of Nityananda’s first wife)
- Advaita parivara (the seminal descendents of Advaita Acharya)
- Haridasa (the Nama Acharya), who lived in Puri and was fully dedicated to chanting the Holy Names
- Syamananda (and his disciple Rasikananda), who preached in Orissa
- Narottama das (a second-generation follower of Chaitanya), who preached in Manipur

In the disciplic succession descending from Rupa Gosvami and Baladeva Vidhya bhushana we find Jagannatha dasa babaji, who became the spiritual mentor of Bhaktivinoda Thakura (1838-1914), a very special personality in the history of Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

Bhaktivinoda

The connection between Bhaktivinoda (originally known as Kedarnath Datta), Puri and the tradition of Jagannatha is very strong. He lived in Puri for several years and had a position of responsibility in the administration of the Sri Mandira. His most illustrious son (later known as Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati), who took up his spiritual mission of reviving the preaching spirit of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, was born in Puri and received the name of Vimala Prasad.

Although he had taken *diksha* in the Gopala mantra from Bipina Gosvami (from the disciplic succession of Jahnava), Bhaktivinoda chose Jagannatha Dasa babaji as his spiritual master. He also received Babaji disksha from Gaura Kishora das babaji. In contrast with the Babajis of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition who lived in complete renunciation, Bhaktivinoda worked at first as a school teacher and principal, and later on as a Government officer and magistrate. He also had a wife and many children.

His writings and activities revolutionized the Gaudiya Vaishnava movement, especially because he was the first to write and mass-print in English, presenting the philosophy of Chaitanya in a form that appealed to the Western philosophers and Christian religionists that dictated the cultural norms in British-dominated India.

Although many of his contemporaries considered him a controversial figure, his revolutionary vision created an immensely strong wave of religious enthusiasm in the masses as well as in many intellectuals of his times, whose culture had received a strong British imprinting.

Here is a revealing extract from the famous lecture on the *Bhagavatam* that Bhaktivinoda (also known as Kedarnath Datta) gave at Ninajpore (now Bangladesh) in 1869:

“Gentlemen,

We love to read a book which we never read before. We are anxious to gather whatever information is contained in it and with such acquirement our curiosity stops. This mode of study prevails amongst a great number of readers, who are great men in their own estimation as well as in the estimation of those who are of their own stamp. In fact, most readers are mere repositories of facts and statements made by other people. But this is not study.

The student is to read the facts with a view to create, and not with the object of fruitless retention.

Students like satellites should reflect whatever light they receive from authors and not imprison the facts and thoughts just as the Magistrates imprison the convicts in the jail!

Thought is progressive. The author’s thoughts must have progress in the reader in the shape of correction and development. He is the best critic, who can shew the further development of an old thought, but a mere denouncer is the enemy of progress and consequently of Nature.

‘Begin anew’, says the critic, because the old masonry does not answer at present. Let the old author be buried because his time is gone.

These are shallow expressions. Progress certainly is the law of Nature and there must be corrections and developments with the progress of time. But progress means going further or rising higher. Now, if we are to follow our foolish critic, we are to go back to our former terminus and make a new race, and when we have run half the race, another critic of his stamp will cry out, ‘Begin anew, because the wrong road has been taken!’

In this way our stupid critics will never allow us to go over the whole road and see what is in the other terminus. Thus the shallow critic and the fruitless reader are the two great enemies of progress. We must shun them. The true critic, on the other hand, advises us to preserve whatever we have already obtained, and to adjust our race from that point where we have arrived in the heat of our progress... He will direct the adjustment of the angle of the race at the point where we are. This is also the characteristic of the useful student.

He will read an old author and will find out his exact position in the progress of thought. He will never propose to burn the book on the ground that it contains thoughts which are useless....

The great reformers will always assert that they have come out not to destroy the old law, but to fulfill it. Valmiki, Vyasa, Plato, Jesus, Mahomed, Confucius and Chaitanya assert the fact either expressly or by their conduct...

What sort of a thing is the Bhagavat, asks the European gentleman newly arrived in India. His companion tells him with a serene look that the Bhagavat is a book which his Oriya bearer daily reads in the evening to a number of hearers. It contains a jargon of unintelligible and savage literature of those men who paint their noses with some sort of earth or sandal, and wear beads all over their bodies in order to procure salvation for themselves. Another of his companions, who has travelled a little in the interior, would immediately contradict him and say that the Bhagavat is a Sanskrit work claimed by a sect of men, the Goswamis, who give mantras like the popes of Italy, to the common people of Bengal, and pardon their sins on payment of gold enough to defray their social expenses. A third gentleman will repeat a third explanation. Young Bengal, chained up in English thoughts and ideas, and wholly ignorant of the pre-Mohamedan history of his own country, will add more explanation by saying that the Bhagavat is a book containing an account of the life of Krishna, who was an ambitious and an immoral man! This is all that he could gather from his grandmother while yet he did not go to school! Thus the great Bhagavat ever remains unknown to the foreigners like the elephant of the six blind who caught hold of the several parts of the body of the beast!

But Truth is eternal and is never injured but for a while by ignorance.”

About 300 years after the departure of Chaitanya, the Sankirtana movement seemed to be almost extinct and was generally regarded as a religion of ignorant and sometimes immoral beggars. Bhaktivinoda restored the worship of Krishna to a dignified place and sowed the seeds of its propagation throughout all the nations of the world.

Bhaktivinoda was born as Kedarnatha Datta on September 2, 1838 in the ancient village of Birnagar located in the Nadia district of West Bengal. His family originally belonged to the village of Chadi in Orissa, situated about 13 km. far from Kendrapara town in Orissa, on the bank of river Virupa.

According to *Datta Vamshavali* written by Bhaktivinoda himself in 1876, his family line traces back to Brahma through the descendants of Chitrugupta, therefore they are called Brahma Kayasthas. Bharata is in the 87th generation from Chitrugupta and his son Bharadwaja is the 88th. Brihaspati is the son of Angira and grandson of Bharadwaja. In the 149th generation of descendants, Purushottama son of Siva Datta went from Kanyakubja to Bengal under Adisura the Suryavamsi King of Bengal. Purushottama's youngest son took *sannyasa* and became famous as Kanakadandi. In the 7th and 8th generations of Purushottama's family both Binayaka and his son Narayan Datta were the ministers of the the King of Bengal.

Once Nityananda came from Sankaila to Andul to accept hospitality in the house of Krishnananda Datta and offered him the Hare Krishna mahamantra. Then Krishnananda handed over his estate to his son Kandarpa Dutta and accepting *tirtha sannyasa* he went to Puri and set up a monastery named Andul Matha there. He always remained in that monastery and silently chanted 300,000 Hare Krishna maha mantras and worshipped Radha Madhava there. After some years he wanted to stay at Baladeva Kshetra or Tulasi Kshetra where Baladeva had killed the demon Kandarasura and married his daughter Tulasi, and with the help of the King of Aul he settled in the village of Chhoti with his Deity Radha Madhava. After some years he also installed the image of Lord Jagannatha there. The King of Aul also donated lands for the worship of the Deities. From that period Chhoti became the dual residential place of Datta family of Andul.

Kedarnath Datta was the third son of Ananda-chandra Datta and Jagat-mohini Devi, belonging to an illustrious and very pious family; his maternal grandfather was fabulously wealthy. However, Kedarnatha had a difficult childhood. His family gradually lost all their wealth and went into deep debt. He lost his father and most of his siblings to various diseases and sickness. When he was eleven years old his father died, so under the direction of his mother he married Sayamani, the six year old daughter of Madhusudan Mishra of the village of Ranaghat in West Bengal.

In 1860 when at the age of 22 Bhaktivinoda was the Headmaster of Bhadrak High School, his eldest son Annada prasad was born. But in 1861 when Kedarnath went to teach at Midnapura High School and the infant was ten months old, his wife died so he was forced to have a second marriage to Bhagavati Devi, the daughter of Pitamber Nag in the village of Jakpur, four miles from Midnapur town, to take care of his family. Including Annada prasada, Bhaktivinode was the father of eight sons: Radhika prasad (1870), Kamala prasad (1872), Bimala prasad (Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, 1874), Barada prasad (1877), Biraja prasad (1878), Lalita prasada (1880), and Shailaja prasad (1892) (his second son died when he was two months old), and five daughters Sandamini (1864), Kadambini (1866), Krishna binodini (1884) and Shyama sarojini (1888).

Besides these children, he had many spiritual children like Krishnadas Babaji and Bhaktipradipa Tirtha. Krishnadas Babaji engaged his whole life in the service of Bhaktivinoda until his disappearance in 1914. Bhaktipradipa Tirtha accepted *sannyasa* from Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati and in 1933 he went to Europe to preach the message of Chaitanya with a group of preachers.

In his Oriya work *Thakur Bhaktivinode* Nityananda Brahmachari (the disciple of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati from Berhampur) stated in 1958: "For the education of the poor pupils of that area Thakur Bhaktivinode started an English school at Kendrapara and being the teacher of that school he gave education to many poor pupils there".

In 1986 Dr. Vashudev Das of Kendrapara wrote in his Oriya booklet *Sahitya Sahita*: "Bhaktivinode was the teacher of High School in Cuttack, Kendrapara and Bhadrak". It is stated by Dr. Dolagovinda Shastri (the disciple of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati and Professor of Revenshaw College, Cuttack), that Bhaktivinoda has given a great contribution towards the spreading of education in Kendrapara High School and in that area. When Bhaktivinoda was the headmaster of Bhadrak High School he wrote a book entitled *Mathas of Orissa*, which was mentioned by William Hunter in his *History of Orissa* (this text is not in print any more).

Once Bhaktivinoda requested Bhaktamadhu to start a private High School with Indian thoughts and culture in Cuttack. Taking leave from his service Bhaktivinoda worked as honorary first Headmaster of that school in 1882. As the school was started in the Silver Jubilee of Queen Victoria the school was given the name Town Victoria High School, but subsequently the name of the school was changed into Bhaktamadhu Vidyapith.

Kedarnath Datta was a brilliant scholar and a hard worker. He was the first Law graduate from Orissa, having appeared at examination in Calcutta University. In March 1868 he was appointed as Deputy Magistrate, the highest position that could be held by an Indian in the then British Government of India. He served in Puri for five years and got full power of magistrate and charge of the Jagannatha temple. He also served in Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector in various places of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from 1866 to 1904 when he retired from his service.

Kedarnath became famous for his judgment, intellect and honesty. His career as a magistrate was accompanied by frequent transfers as different British officials vied and sometimes fought to get him in their region. With his reputation as being a spiritual person and well versed in scriptures, he was often called to settle potentially explosive religious issues.

Even though externally immersed in the day to day responsibilities of a senior government official, the only true business of Bhaktivinoda was preaching. In 1881 he started to publish the magazine *Sajjana toshani*, the first spiritual magazine in the Vaishnava society, which inspired the creation of similar publications like *Ratnakar* in Dacca, *Hari-Bhakti-Pradayini* in Balasore in Orissa and *Vaishnava* in Calcutta.

He also gave several lectures (the most famous being the lecture on the *Bhagavatam* in 1869) and established hundreds of Nama Hata groups around the country for the free distribution of the holy Names. In 1868 he wrote the *Sac-cid-ananda-premalata*, which was so well received that he was awarded the title of Sac-cid-ananda himself. Later, impressed by his erudition and dedication, the leading Vaishnavas of the time conferred him the title “Bhaktivinoda” meaning one who derives ecstasy from Bhakti. In this way Kedarnath Datta came to be known as Sac-cid-ananda Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Of his innumerable great achievements, Bhaktivinoda Thakura is most remembered for discovering the birthplace of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, in 1887.

Bhaktivinoda met Jagannatha Dasa Babaji in Vrindavana in 1881. In 1887 Jagannatha Dasa Babaji gave him Giridhari (Govardhana shila) that Bhaktivinoda worshiped in his Bhakti Kutir in Puri.

Bhaktivinoda embodied the principle of practicing Krishna consciousness as a family person. As a senior official he executed his duties very sincerely and efficiently. As the head of a large family, he took full care of all the members and ensured a proper spiritual upbringing. Three of his sons would become famous as spiritual philosophers and renunciates. One of his sons, Bimal Prasad, would become a prominent Vaishnava leader and initiating Guru, later to be known as Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati. In 1896 Bhaktivinoda Thakura succeeded in spreading the word of Chaitanya beyond the borders of India. His book, *Sri Gauranga-lila-smarana-stotram* was sent and well received in all major universities and libraries over the world. It was in this year that Bhaktivinoda made an amazing, bold prediction: “a personality will soon appear to preach the teachings of Lord Chaitanya and move unrestrictedly all over the world”.

Bhaktivinoda published *Bhagavad Gita* with Vishvanatha’s commentary and Bengali translation in 1886 and presented the manuscript of *Bhagavatam* with Vishvanatha’s commentary to Biruchandra Manikya Bahadur, the King of Tripura and requested him to publish it.

In 1886 Bhaktivinoda installed a printing press named Chaitanya Yantra under the management of Bipina bihari Goswami, his *diksha guru*, and published *Dasopanisad Charanika*, *Prema pradipa*, the translation in verses of Raghunatha Das’ *Manasashiksha*, Sri Chaitanya Sikshamrita, *Bhavavali* (in Sanskrit), *Sri Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram* with Baladeva Vidyabhushana’s commentary and Bengali translation (in 1886).

In 1887 Bhaktivinoda received an old palm leaf manuscript of *Sri Chaitanyopanishad* (*Upanishad of Atharva Veda*, Paripalad Shakha) from his disciple Madhusudan Dash of Sambalpur in Orissa, and *Sri Krishna Vijaya* from Gunaroy Khan and published them. He also published *Harikatha* (1850), *Shumbha-Nishumbha yudha* (1851), *Poriade* part I & II (English epic, 1857, 1858), *Mathas of Orissa* (1860), *Bijanagram* (1863), *Our Wants* (1863), *Sanyasi* (1863), *Balide Registry* (in Urdu, 1866), *Speech on Gautama* (1866), *Speech on Bhagavatam* (1869), *Garbhastotra Vyakhya* or *Sambhandha-tattwa Chandrika* (1870), *Reflections* (English poems, 1871), *Jagannath Temple in Puri* (1871), *Slokas on Samadhi of Thakur Haridas* (1871), *Akharas of Puri* (1871), *Vedanta adhikaranamala* (Sanskrit verses with Bengali explanations, 1872), *Dattakaustubham* (1874), *Sri Krishna Samhita* (1874), *Dattanamshamala* (1876), *Bandhavijay Kavyam* (1878), *Kalyana Kalpataru* (1881), *Sri Sajjana Toshani* (a monthly journal, from 1881 continued up to 17th volume), *A Review in English of Pandit Upendramohan Goswami’s thesis “Nityarupa Samsthapan”* (1883), *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* (with Vishwanath Chakravarty’s Sanskrit commentary *Sarartha Varshini*, and with the Bengali translation *Rasikaranjan* (in 1886).

Also, *Sri Chaitanya Shikshamrita* (1886), *Sri Shikshashtakam* (with the Sanskrit commentary *Sanmohana-Bhashyam* and translation in Bengali verses, 1886), *Manah Shiksha* (1886), *Sri Harinama* (1892), *Sri Nama* (1892), *Sri Nama Mahima* (1892), *Sri Nama Prachar* (1892), *Sri Nama Tattva* (1892), *Sriman Mahaprabhur Shiksha* (1893), *Tattva-vivek* (1893), *Saranagati* (1893), *Shokashatan* (1893), *Jaiva Dharma* (1893), *Tattva Sutram* (1894), *Ishopanishad* (text with Baladeva Vidyabhushan's commentary and with Bengali explanations, 1894), *Tattva muktavali* or *Mayavada Shatadushani* (1894), *Chaitanya Charitamrita* (including the commentary *Amritaprabaha Bhashya*, along with other smaller works of various authors, 1895), *Gauranga Smaran Mangal Stotram* (1896), *Arthapanchaka* (1896), *Brahma Samhita* (Sanskrit verses with Jiva Gosvami's commentary, 1897), *Kalyana Kalpataru* (1897), *Sri Krishna Karnamrita* (the famous lyric by Bilvamangala, Sanskrit text with Chaitanyadasa's Sanskrit commentary and with Bengali translation, 1898), *Sri Upadeshamritam* (1898), *Sri Madhva-Bhyashyam* on *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* (Sanskrit commentary by Madhvacharya, 1898), *Sri Goloka Mahatmyam* (a portion of the work *Sri Bhagavatamritam* in Sanskrit verses by Sanatana Gosvami, 1898), *Sri Bhajanamritam* (by Narahari Sarkar, 1899), *Sri Nabadwip Bhava Tarangini* (1899), *Sri Harinama Chintamani* (1900), *Dattavamshamala* (1900), *Sri Bhagavatarka Marichimala* (important *slokas* compiled and arranged systematically from *Srimad Bhagavatam* according to the three divisions of Sambandha, Abhidheya and Prayojana and their Bengali translation and explanation, 1901), *Padma Purana* (1901), *Sri Sankalpa Kalpadruma* (by Vishavanatha Chakravarti, with Bengali translation, 1901), *Sri Bhajan Rahasya* (1902), *Bijanagram* (1902), *Satkriya Sara Dipika* with the appendix *Samskar Dipika* (a book of ritualistic code and institute for all Gaudiya Vaishnava householders, *brahmachari* and *sannyasis*, 1904), *Sri Prema Vivarta* (by Pandit Jagadananda, 1906), *Svanyam Dvadashakam* (incomplete).

Unfortunately many of these volumes are not available any more, especially the book *Akhadas in Puri* (1871) and *The Temple of Jagannatha at Puri* (1871). On 23 June 1914, precisely at noon Sac-cid-ananda Bhaktivinoda left this planet. This day was especially auspicious since it was also the disappearance day of Gadadhara Pandita, a close associate of Chaitanya.

Manasa deha geha

This is one of the most famous songs written by Bhaktivinoda.

*Manasa deha geha, yo kichhu mora, arpinu tuya pade, Nanda kishor
Sampade bipade jivane marane daya mama gela tuya o pada barane
Marabi rakhari yo ichha tohara, nityadasa prati tuya adhikara
Janmaobi moe ichha yadu tora bhakta grihe jani janma kank mora
Kita janma hank yatha tuya das, bahirmukha brahma janma nahi asa
Bhukti-mukti-spriha bihina ye bhakta, lavaite tanka sanga anurata
Janaka janani dayita tanaya, prabhu guru pati tunhu sarbamaya
Bhaktivinoda kahe suno kana, radhanatha tuhnu hamar parana*

Mind, body, family, whatever is mine, O youthful Son of Nanda, I tender at Your feet. In wealth and poverty, in life and death, I am relieved of all anxiety, because I choose Your feet. Save me or slay me as You wish, You are the Master and I am Your eternal servant. If You wish me to be born again, may I have birth in the home of Your devotee. In the house of Your servant, I will be happy to be born even as a worm; I have no desire to be born a Brahmin who is averse to You. I crave the boon of the association of You devotee, who is free from any desire of enjoyment or liberation. You are everything to me — father, mother, lover, son, Lord, preceptor, husband. “Hear, O Kana”, says Bhaktivinoda, “O Lord of Radha, You are my life”.

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati was the son and spiritual successor of Bhaktivinoda. As we mentioned, Bhaktivinoda stayed in Puri as Deputy Magistrate for five years. At first he stayed in a rented house on the side of Grand Road with his mother, wife, two sons (Annada prasad, Radika prasad) two daughters (Sandamini and Kadambini) and two sisters (Seje didi and Nutan didi). His third son, Kamala prasad was born in 1872 while he was staying at Kshetra babu's rented house.

It is interesting to note how Bhaktivinoda gave all his sons names connected to the blessings of the Mother Goddess: Annapurna (Parvati), Radha, Vimala (Durga), Kamala (Lakshmi), Varada (“giving blessing”, it could be any Goddess in her benevolent aspect), Viraja (Durga), Lalita (which could refer not only to one of the two main Sakhis of Krishna, but to Durga as per the famous *Lalita sahasra nama*), Shailaja (“born from stone”, another name of Parvati).

His fourth son Bimala prasad (Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati) took birth on 6th February 1874 when he was staying in the rented house near to Narayan Chhota Matha. Everyone was astonished, having seen the natural *tilaka* marks on the body of the child, and the umbilical cord wrapped around the body like a sacred thread. Shortly before the happy event Bhaktivinoda was reading *Bhagavatam* in front of Chaitanya Padapith in Jagannatha temple, praying that the son who was going to take birth could become able to preach the message of Chaitanya in the world. As the child was born by the grace of Goddess Vimala Devi the name of the child was Bimala prasad.

When the baby was six months old the chariot of Lord Jagannatha remained for three days in front of the house of Bhaktivinoda. The mother with her son proceeded on the chariot to see Jagannatha, and when the mother left the child to prostrate in front of Jagannatha, the child spontaneously touched the feet of the Lord and His garland. Immediately the garland fell on the child. When the proper time came, Bhaktivinoda performed the *annaprasad* ceremony for Bimala prasad by feeding him Jagannatha Mahaprasada.

The child remained for 10 months in Puri, then he traveled with his family to Bengal and stayed in Ranaghata, Nadia. Since his early childhood he assisted his father in his preaching work. In 1897 he established the Sarasvati Chatuspati and started publishing the magazines *Jyotirvid* and *Brihaspati*, the *Surya siddhanta* (an ancient astrological text), *Bhakti panjika*, *Sri Navadvipa panjika* and *Raj ratnakar* (a history of the royal family in Tripura).

From 1885 to 1905 Bhaktisiddhanta was employed by the Kings of Tripura in various capacities, such as advisor, editor, and as tutor of the sons of Maharaja Radhakishore Manikya Bahadur. In 1897 he began to strictly observe the vows of *chaturmasya*. In 1899 he published various spiritual articles on the magazine *Nivedana*. Subsequently he wrote a commentary on *Chaitanya charitamrita* called *Anubhasya*, and a book about castes entitled *Bange Samajikata*.

In March 1900 he visited Orissa with his father, and while in Puri Bhaktivinoda decided to build a *bhajan kutir* there, so Bhaktisiddhanta assisted him in that work. During this period there was a controversy with Radharamana charana Dasa Babaji, who developed a new mantra and dressed his disciple Jayagopala Bhattacharya as a *gopi* (Lalita sakhi).

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati also started to compile a Vaishnava encyclopedia entitled *Vaishnava Manjusa Samahriti*, which was published in 4 volumes and contained the history of Vaishnavism, a compendium of Vaishnava literature, Vaishnava philosophy, Vaishnava *rasa shastras*, Vaishnava architecture, Vaishnava rituals and a glossary with thousands of entries. Again he added that without a Vaishnava dictionary people do not understand the meaning of the technical words in Vaishnava scriptures, that’s why they attack Vaishnavism. He said, “If I will not complete the work of *Vaishnava Manjusa*, I must again take birth in the world to complete it.”

On 6 February 1913 he started the Bhagavat Printing Press (Sri Bhagavat yantra) in Calcutta, to publish the important literature of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas. He called the press his *brihat mridanga* “big drum”, explaining that an ordinary kirtana party drum could be heard for only a few blocks, but his Great Drum could be heard far and wide. In 1914 the press was moved to Vrajapattana and in 1915 to Krishnanagar.

On Phalgun Purnima, 29 March 1918, he entered the order of *sannyasa*. Traditionally the followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, beginning with the Gosvamis of Vrindavana, had taken the Babaji *vesa* (dress).

However, at that time many bogus people were wearing the babaji dress and defaming the Gaudiya Vaishnava good name with their behavior, so Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati introduced the Gaudiya Vaishnava *sannyasa veshha* to establish a religious code based on the study of Shastra and a strict moral discipline.

This *sannyasa* system was rather peculiar and revolutionary, as it was *tridandi* (carrying a three-pointed staff, rather than the simple staff called *ekadandi*) and its *sannyasis* kept a *sikha* (tuft of hair) on the back of their head. In the same year, in June, he visited Orissa and Puri with 23 devotees, giving discourses in several places. In Alarnath he entered into trance and was overwhelmed by ecstatic symptoms that continued all along his stay in Puri.

Bhaktisiddhanta thus carried on the revolutionary spirit embodied by Bhaktivinoda. His Gaudiya Matha consisted of permanent Ashrams with temples and Deities, where several *brahmachari* students lived together in the same style of the Shankaracharya mathas, and also introduced the order of *sannyasa* among the followers of Chaitanya.

Until that time the Gaudiya Vaishnavas were just homeless babajis who lived in solitude just chanting japa and bhajan, or at most, writing bhakti literature (like the six Gosvamis of Vrindavana). These babajis were not in the *sannyasa* order, they did not belong to any institution, they did not have temples or ashrams, and they were not keeping disciples to live with them.

In fact, if we observe the picture of the six Gosvamis we will see that they were not dressed in *sannyasi* robes (just very simple white cloth) and they were not carrying *dandas* (neither *eka-dandas* nor *tri-dandas*).

Some of the six Gosvamis were also married (like Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, whose seminal descendants are still in charge of the Radha Ramana temple in Vrindavana and carry the family name of Gosvami).

Another important innovation of Bhaktisiddhanta's Gaudiya Matha was the strict rule of non-association with women. Many of these babajis had disgraced the name of Gaudiya Vaishnavism by freely cultivating illicit and irresponsible sex relationships with their female disciples, the wives of their male disciples, or naive women from the ordinary public, and using their "spiritual status" to get rid of their lovers when they grew tired of the relationship. Bhaktisiddhanta gave himself *sannyasa* initiation in front of the picture of his babaji Guru, Gaura Kisora Das babaji, and then started giving *sannyasa* initiation to his own disciples.

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati (sometimes called "*simha guru*" for his fierce uncompromising preaching), started the Gaudiya Matha as an official, large and respectable religious institution, building residential ashrams, expanding the Nama Hatta preaching system, maintaining public libraries on Arya shastras (*Vedas*, *Upanishads* and Bhakti literature), collecting historical materials from the lost holy sites, organizing public festivals and *parikramas* in the holy places as well as preaching groups and meetings from door to door and from village to village, awarding the sacred thread to his disciples, initiating disciples into *brahmacharya* and *sannyasa*. He also held pictorial exhibits demonstrating the lives and teachings of Chaitanya and stories from Vedic literature, developed a Sanskrit teaching program according to the *Hari Namamrita Vyakarana* (a Sanskrit grammar) written by Jiva Gosvami, introduced ten academic examinations on Vaishnava literature and philosophy including the history of religious sects, and established a residential English High School (called Thakur Bhaktivinoda Institute).

Inspired by the vision of his father, he continued to utilize modern concepts such as traveling in vehicles and sending disciples to preach outside India: two things that were traditionally debasing and disqualifying for *sannyasis*. (Still in recent years, one of the Acharyas of the Udupi Madhvacharya Mathaa was removed from his position because he had gone abroad to preach the message of Madhvacharya).

In 1933 the Gaudiya Matha was officially presented to the King and Queen of England, then preaching centers were established in London and Berlin, making disciples in Europe.

The Gaudiya Matha also opened temples in the heart of big modern cities in India (such as Calcutta), owned and managed land properties and temples, utilized machines and modern technology, printed literature in many copies by establishing printing presses, distributed books freely or at nominal cost, regularly published magazines and journals, entertained preaching relationships with influential people and politicians (for example with the King of Tripura), introduced stitched clothing and conventional shoes for *sannyasis* and *brahmacharis*, etc. This was perfectly in line with Chaitanya's philosophy, applying the concept of *yukta vairagya* (renunciation through utilization of everything in God's service) already expounded by Rupa Gosvami.

Again, we need to clarify that all this was in stark contrast with the Gaudiya Vaishnava babajis who dressed in a simple white cotton piece of cloth, had no permanent residence or ashrams, went barefoot or only wore wooden sandals, traveled by walking only, subsisted by begging food, and mostly kept their philosophy to a bare minimum. In 1918 Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati established the Sri Bhaktivinoda Asana in Ultadanga Junction Road, Calcutta, and on 5 February 1919 he established the Vishva Vaishnava Raja Sabha, originally envisioned by Jiva Gosvami. In 1929 the Bhaktivinoda Asana was renamed Gaudiya Matha, and in 1922 it began publishing a weekly Bengali magazine, entitled *Gaudiya*. In 1921, in Puri, he published *Achar and Acharya*, a book exposing false Vaishnavas. In 1922, he established the Sri Purushottama Matha in Puri, where his Bhajan kutir still stands.

In 1924 he established a Matha in Bhubaneswar. From 1925 to 1926 he spoke widely about the *daivi varnasrama*, the transcendental consciousness of *varna* and *ashrama dharma* as direct service to the Lord.

In 1927 the *Sajjana Toshani* started its publications in Hindi and Sanskrit, and also in English language under the name *The Harmonist*. In 1929 he established 108 Pada pitha memorials of the footprints of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the various places where Gauranga had traveled and preached. In 1930 he installed Deities of Radha Govinda at Triveni, Prayag (Allahabad) at the Purna Kumbha Mela and established a diorama show called Sridham Mayapur Navadvipa Exhibition, then installed Radha Krishna Deities in Baghbazar Gaudiya Matha, Calcutta. The Gaudiya Matha became famous for its progressive mentality, modern printing presses, motor cars, dioramas, shoes and sewn clothes for *sannyasis*, public festivals etc.

In 1933 Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati sent a group of preachers headed by Bhaktipradipa Tirtha, the seniormost *sannyasi* preacher of Gaudiya mission and disciple of Bhaktivinoda, to England to preach the message of Chaitanya there. Several meetings were organised in universities, Students' Union clubs, the Empire Society, Buckingham Palace, the Theosophical Society of London and the Anglo Catholic Church International Mission Council.

On 10 December 1933 the preachers went to Germany, had a meeting with the President Hindenburg and then delivered lectures at the House of Parliament, the State Church, Bristol Hotel and Hambled House in Berlin, and traveled to various other places. Some German scholars such as Schulze, Hern Barm and Unoth came to Mayapur in India and took initiation from Bhaktisiddhanta. The preaching tour continued to Czechoslovakia and Austria before returning to India with two foreign disciples.

On 14 October 1936 while Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati was staying in Tridandi Gaudiya Matha in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, another preaching party left to London with Rasabihari. This time Bhaktisiddhanta sent Gomati Sila, Salagram and Govardhan Sila to London. C. Bawtel, a lady from a royal family, received Harinam from Bhakti Pradipa Tirtha with the name of Vrindavana Dasi and became the director of the London Gaudiya Matha. So the two centers of London and Berlin became listed in the total of 64 Gaudiya Mathas with the others in India, Bangladesh, and Rangun.

In 1933 Bhaktisiddhanta published *The Vedanta, Its Morphology and Ontology*; in 1935 he celebrated the Purushottama dhama parikrama and completed the *Bhagavata Purana*, with indexes, word meaning, Bengali translation and the commentaries entitled *Saratha Varshini* (written by Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura) and *Vivritti* (written by himself). On 31 December 1936 he passed away; his body was taken to procession to Mayapur and entombed in Samadhi at Chaitanya Matha, Vrajapattana, Mayapur.

After Bhaktisiddhanta's disappearance

One among all Bhaktisiddhanta's disciples became most famous and successful in his preaching mission: Abhay Charanaravindam Bhaktivedanta Swami, who took the mission of his predecessors one step further and created not a Matha but an open legal structure called International Society for Krishna Consciousness (I.S.K.Con).

Bhaktivedanta's success in preaching in Western countries was far greater than his Godbrothers' because he chose to adjust the externals of his work according to time, place and listeners (*desa, kala, patra*) while retaining a powerful faith and loyalty towards the spirit of the mission. So rather than restricting his scholarly lecturing to a small number of academics or pious Christians, he descended among the hippies and revolutionized the American culture of the 60s and 70s, making a great number of sincere albeit often unruly disciples and engaging them in a variety of services, collecting funds from the public, printing and distributing religious books, building temples and installing Deities, organizing festivals, managing pure vegetarian restaurants and farms etc. Unfortunately Bhaktivedanta was able to coach his Western disciples only from 1965 to 1977 and therefore much of his intended work was left unfinished, with a substantial decline in the Institution since his disappearance.

The original Chaitanya Matha was directed at first by Bhakti Vilasa Tirtha, then by Bhakti Hriday Bon (in 1948, and for 3 years). At the disappearance of Bhakti Vilasa Tirtha the position of Acharya of the Sri Chaitanya Matha was taken by Bhakti Kusum Sraman, while Bhakti Keval Audulomi directed the Bagh Bazar Gaudiya Matha.

Gradually almost all other disciples left to start their own mathas, the most famous being:

- Bhakti Dayita Madhava (Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Matha, founded in 1954)
- Bhakti Raksak Sridhar (Sri Chaitanya Sarasvata Matha)
- Bhakti Pramod Puri (Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Matha)
- Bhakti Vaibhava Puri (Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mission)
- Bhakti Srirup Siddhanti (Sarasvata Gaudiya Ashram)
- Bhakti Keval Audulomi (Gaudiya Mission)
- Bhakti Hriday Bon (Institute of Oriental Philosophy)
- Bhakti Prajnan Kesava (Gaudiya Vedanta Samiti): Bhakti Vedanta Narayana claims to be the present Acharya of this Matha.
- Bhakti Vaibhava Aranya (Krishna Balaram Mandir in Mathura)
- Bhakti Saurabhi Bhaktisar (Gauranga Gaudiya Matha)
- Bhakti Vilas Bharati (Rupanuga Bhajanashram)
- Bhakti Saranga (Gaudiya Sanga)
- Bhakti Alok Paramahamsa (Paramahamsa Gaudiya Matha)
- Bhakti Srirupa Siddhanti (Sarasvata Gaudiya Ashram)
- Bhadri Narayana Bhagavat Bhusana (Sri Chaitanya Bhakti Rakshaka Mandapa)
- Bhakti Vilasa Bharati (Bhakti Keval Audulumi Gaudiya Matha)
- Bhakti Prakash Hrishikesh (Sri Chaitanya Mudrani Gaudiya Matha)
- Bhakti Abhay Narayana (Hungarian Vaishnava Association)
- Bhakti Aloka Paramadvaiti (Vrindavan Institute for Vaishnava Culture and Studies)
- Bhakti Vijay Puri (Radha Krishna Matha)
- Jagat Guru Siddha Svarupananda (Chaitanya Mission)
- Bhakti Nandan (Chaitanya Isha Mandalam)
- Bhakti Sambandha Yachak (Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Sevashram)

These are only a small number of the dozens of Acharyas who started their own missions and Mathas (often with many sub branches), built temples, installed Deities, restored ancient holy sites, published books and magazines, opened schools and guesthouses, opened charitable dispensaries and even conducted active campaigns to close slaughterhouses especially in the holy cities.

Some of such teachers were disciples of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, others were disciples of his disciples (called “second generation”); in particular the second generation became rather mixed up because many disciples of Bhaktivedanta Swami left his Organization to associate with Gaudiya Matha branches and eventually started their own Mathas.

The Vaishnava Sampradayas

The next most visible influence on the tradition and life of Jagannatha Puri, besides Adi Shankara, Jayadeva and Chaitanya, is the variety of the orthodox Vaishnava Mathas, of which many participate directly to the temple rituals. The Vaishnava tradition is so vast and complex, counting many Sampradayas (religious and ideological lineages) and practically all its Acharyas and branches are represented in Puri with some Matha or religious center. According to the simplest definition, a Vaishnava is one who worships Vishnu above all other Personalities of the Godhead.

The ideological territory defined by this perspective is immense, as even Adi Shankara (who is normally not considered as a mainstream Vaishnava Acharya) clearly proclaimed that Narayana (Vishnu) is supreme, and some ritual for Vishnu worship and recognition of His supremacy is found in the prescribed duties of almost all traditions. A more specific definition, restricting the ideological territory to a more focused region, would say that a Vaishnava is one who is exclusively dedicated to the worship of Vishnu and offers only a subordinate level of worship, or no worship, to the other Personalities of Godhead.

This perspective is usually expressed as Aikantika Bhakti, or “orthodox Vaishnavism”.

It is also important to specify that within the tattva of Vishnu we also need to include Krishna and all the *avatars* of Vishnu, although some groups prefer only one specific form of Vishnu.

The most famous traditional (or orthodox) Vaishnava Acharyas who compiled commentaries on the scriptures are listed as follows:

1. Ramanujacharya (who lived in 12th century, born in 1016), propagated the doctrine called *visista advaita*, or oneness with varieties of the Lord and His energies,
2. Madhvacharya, (who lived in 13th century, born in 1238, propagated the doctrine called *visista dvaita*, or duality with varieties,
3. Vishnu Swami, who propagated the doctrine called *suddha dvaita*, or pure transcendental duality; Vallabha Acharya is also a branch of this Sampradaya
4. Nimbarka, who propagated the doctrine called *dvaita advaita* or simultaneous oneness and duality.

The relevance of these doctrines especially focuses on the relationship between the Lord, the world and the living entities.

It is very important to understand that, in the particular perspective of their founders, such differences in opinion in the various Sampradayas are intended to offer a variety of angles of observation that are not opposite to each other but they should rather help us to integrate our overall vision of the Supreme Reality and reconcile apparent differences.

In later times, Sri Chaitanya explained the Vaishnava philosophy as *acintya bheda abheda tattva*, the simultaneous and inconceivable oneness and difference between the Lord and His energies. In this regard, it is interesting to examine a verse that is often quoted by the Gaudiya Vaishnavas to allude to the spiritual revolution that Chaitanya would start from Jagannatha Puri:

*sampradaya-vihina ye mantras te nishpala matah
atah kalau bhavishyanti chatvarah sampradayinah
sri-brahma-rudra-sanakah vaishnavah ksiti-pavanah
chatvaras te kalau bhavya hy utkale purushottamat*

“Without the proper connection and context within the Sampradaya (tradition) a mantra cannot bear fruits. For this purpose the founders of the four great Vaishnava traditions have appeared in the age of Kali. The four supremely pure and purifying Vaishnavas, namely Lakshmidēvi, Brahma, Rudra and Sanaka will manifest in the age of Kali in Jagannatha Puri, within Purushottama kshetra.”

Kavi Karnapura, Gopala Guru, Baladeva Vidyabhushana and Harirama Vyasa quote this verse attributing to the *Padma Purana*, albeit without reference to the position within the text.

The above quote (from *Prameya Ratnavali*, 5-6, by Baladeva Vidyabhushana) also states that the four major Vaishnava sampradayas originated from Sri (Lakshmidēvi), Brahma, Rudra (Shiva) and Sanaka are represented respectively by Ramanuja, Madhva, Vishnusvami and Nimbarka:

*ramanujah srih svichare madhvacharyah chaturmukhas
sti vishnu svaminah rudro nimbadiyah chatuhsanah*

Since no one of these Acharyas took birth in Puri or even established their prominent ideological base in Puri, we may conclude that these apologists of Chaitanya and his tradition were alluding to Chaitanya himself, who had wonderfully integrated the four branches of Vaishnavism in a new, more complete, non-contradictory and very liberal ecumenical vision, and did so specifically in Jagannatha Puri.

Moreover, in the writings of the Gosvamis there is no mention of four Vaishnava Sampradayas from one of which Chaitanya would have claimed authority, since they considered that Chaitanya himself had superseded all the previous “revelations” by establishing his own Achintya Bhedabheda Sampradaya.

Ramanuja

The main exponent of the Sri Sampradaya, Ramanuja was born in Sri Perumbudur (about 35 km east of Chennai, Tamil Nadu) on 25 April (one day after Shankara) in 1017 (some say in 1055), and lost his father at an early age. He studied Vedanta in Kanchipuram with an Advaita teacher called Yadavaprakasha, but he quickly found many defects in his presentation and offered his own explanations that were highly appreciated by the other students.

The teacher became envious and planned to have him killed during a pilgrimage to Varanasi, but Ramanuja escaped the attempted assassination.

Later he accepted the order of *sannyasa* and was chosen by Yamunacharya as his successor in the Srirangam Matha. He was also asked to write a *Visistadvaita Bhasya* to Vyasadeva's *Vedanta sutras*, propagating the doctrine of "oneness with varieties of the Lord and His energies".

Both the Ramanuja and Raghavadas (of Raghur Arakhita) Sampradayas follow the philosophy of *dasya upasya bhava*, or access to Jagannatha through Goddess Lakshmi.

His Guru, Sri Ghosthipurna Nambi, initiated him into the Srimantram (Thirumanthiram in Tamil), the mystic 8-syllable mantra that was given only to a very small number of selected candidates. However, Ramanuja impulsively ran to the top of the temple roof and cried the mantra aloud for all to hear: "Listen, o people! This is the life-transforming mantra that will give you salvation if you repeat it always by fixing you mind on God: Om Namō Narayanaya! Om Namō Narayanaya!"

When Ghosthipurna scolded him for broadcasting the powerful Srimantram, Ramanuja replied that he was ready to go to hell if he had committed a wrongful act, but he just couldn't bear to keep such a secret that could benefit the entire world. Ramanuja initiated 700 *sannyasis* and thousands of family men and women to the path of Bhakti. King Kulothunga Chola I persecuted him and his followers, forcing him to leave Srirangam; Ramanuja moved to Mysore where he cast away a ghost that was harassing the daughter of king Bhatti Deva of the Hoysala dynasty. The King helped him to build a temple in Melkote, open to all social classes. When Kulothunga died, Ramanuja returned to Srirangam, where he lived to the ripe old age of 120, dying in 1137.

Ramanuja's Sampradaya is probably the most famous in south India and has various branches, all characterized by a particular *tilaka* (a mark on the forehead made with sacred clay and *kunkuma*). Ramanuja was deeply influenced by the devotional poetry of the south Indian mystics known as Alvars, and resided as a *pujari* in the temple of Ranganatha or Srirangam (near modern Tiruchirapalli).

This philosophy states that the *jiva* (the individual soul) and the *jagat* (the material universe) depend on Ishvara (the Supreme *sa-guna* Brahman, or Bhagavan), who is the only Reality. According to this philosophy, the individual soul can be either *baddha* (conditioned) or *mukta* (liberated). *Jagat*, the material world, is real and eternal, although manifested and withdrawn in cycles.

This philosophical system is based on *pramana* («epistemology, or evidence»), explained as *pratyaksha* (direct perception), *anumana* (deduction), and *sabda* (evidence from *shastra*, *guru* and *sadhu*). The eternal and natural knowledge (*jnana svarupa*) of the *baddha* soul is covered by ignorance, while the liberated soul resides in Vaikuntha. The difference is total surrender (*prapatti*) in *ananya bhakti* (unalloyed and exclusive love and devotion) to God, free from *karma* and *jnana*, by which God will take care of our liberation immediately at our death even if we are unable to remember Him.

God manifests in five forms as Para (the transcendental form), Vyuha (the divine manifestations that originate Reality), Vibhava (the *avatars*), Archa (the Deity form) and Antaryami (the Paramatma residing in the heart of each living entity and each atom).

Ramanuja wrote *Vedartha sangraha* (on the Vedas), *Sri bhasya* (on Vedanta), *Bhagavad gita bhasya*, *Vedanta sara* (a summary of *Vedanta*), *Vedanta dipa* (describing the subjects of *Vedanta*), *Saranagati gadhya* (prayers favoring surrender to Narayana), *Sri Ranga gadhya* (prayers in glorification of the holy city of Sri Ranga), *Sri Vaikuntha gadhya* (prayers glorifying Vaikuntha), *Nitya grantha* (a manual for daily worship and rituals, including funeral and birth ceremonies). Introductory works to his philosophy have been written by Srinivasa dasa (*Yatindra mata dipika*) and Bucchi Venkatacharya (*Vedanta Karivadi*).

He founded seventy-four centers of Sri Vaishnavism and initiated seven hundred *sannyasis* (renounced monks), twelve thousand *brahmacharis* (celibate students), and thousands of householders, including Kings and wealthy landowners. According to the *Prapannamrita* by Anantacharya, the *Totadrimatha guruparampara*, and the *Ramanuja Divya Charita*, Ramanuja visited Puri during the reign of Chodaganga Deva and attracted him to Sri Vaishnavism. Ramanuja intended to replace the prevailing Shaiva and Tantric worship in the temple with the Sri Vaishnava rites, but was faced by the opposition of the priests. It is said that while he was sleeping in the night he was carried away by Garuda himself as far as Kurma kshetra. It is said that he then finally realized that the Kurma form of Vishnu is not very different from the Shiva lingam.

However, some marks of his influence still remain, for example the shape of the Tilaka on Jagannatha and Balabhadra and on top of the temple dome, and the title of “Sripada” that came to be attributed to saints and religious teachers. Under his influence the King installed the Lakshmi Narayana temple at Chodaganga sahi, where previously Jagannatha was worshiped with Shiva Linga and Mahavira.

Also, one inscription from Prataparudra Deva in the Jagannatha temple states the four categories of Vaishnavas performing Nama Sankirtana during Bada Sringara: the Ramanuja panthis are the first, then there are the Vishnusvami panthis, the Madhava panthis and the Gaudiya panthis.

In the times of Ramanuja under king Narasimha I the river bed of Malini river at Banki Mohana was filled up so that only three chariots were used instead of six (as the King was informed that changing chariots was considered inauspicious), and the wooden *pindis* for the Deities at Gundicha were replaced by new stone *pindis*. In Puri there are 24 Ramanuja panthi mathas, of which the oldest are Emar, Daksinaparva and Raghava Das Mathas. The Mahanta of the Raghava Das Matha receives the tying of the sari on his head during Snana yatra and is called Mahanayaka, “great leader” The name of the Emar Matha is a contraction of the Tamil *Emperumanar* Matha. The presence of Tamil worshipers of Vishnu is also found at Alarnath (originally *Alvarnath*, the “Lord of the Alvar”) about 16 miles south of Puri, and at Alarpur (originally *Alvarpur*), about 3 miles east of Bhubaneswar.

Ramanuja failed to introduce his worship system also in Trivandrum (the temple of Ananta Padmanabha), but he succeeded in Tirupati, substituting the *Vaikhanas agamas* (of a more traditional character, using Vedic hymns and mantras), with the *Pancharatra agamas* (more modernist and liberal, absorbing from less orthodox paths).

Svami Ramananda

There seems to be a good amount of confusion on the Sampradaya to which the many Ramananda Mathas in Puri (there are still 29 of them) belong. Some believe they have been established by Ramananda Raya, or by the Ramanuja Sampradaya, but this is not a fact. They belong instead to the disciplic succession of Swami Ramananda. Although originally he belonged to the Ramanuja Sampradaya, he dissociated himself from it and started his own movement.

Ramananda, also referred to as Ramadatta, Saint Ramanand or Swami Ramanand, is generally considered to have been born around 1400 in Prayaga (now Allahabad) from an upper caste family originally from south India (his parents were probably named Sushila and Punyasadhana), although there is vast disagreement about the exact date and place of his birth, due to lack of information regarding his early life.

As a child, Ramananda was strongly attracted by spiritual life and scriptures, and probably received his early education in Varanasi in the Shankara line. From his young age, he learned from Swami Raghavananda, an ascetic from the new Sri Vaishnava order, known for his rejection of birth prejudice, and left home to become a *sannyasi* in the Sampradaya. As an early follower of Ramanuja, Ramananda believed that his Guru was an incarnation of the divine serpent Ananta Sesha. Ramananda became a famous teacher in the Ramanuja line, practicing yoga and obtaining mystic powers on Mount Abu, where his footprints are still visible. He also visited many places of pilgrimage, of which Varanasi still has a memorial in his honor.

Ramananda traveled around south India for several years and on his return he was refused admission into the Matha, as he had not “maintained proper eating habits” during his travels. The *sannyasis* of the Ramanuja sect are very peculiar about their food, as they can only eat what had been prepared by themselves and in absolute privacy, and also observing other strict rules such as the type of garments (only wool or silk, but no cotton). This was a turning point for him: he decided to start his own Matha in the holy city of Varanasi, freely admitting people from all castes and groups without any prejudice and teaching in the language of the common people (Hindi). Ramananda is quoted as saying, “Let no one ask a man’s caste or with whom he eats. If a man is devoted to Hari, he becomes Hari’s own.”

While Ramanuja (like Madhva) had accepted disciples only among high caste Brahmins, Ramananda accepted disciples without any birth prejudice. Some of his famous disciples are Sant Kabir, Tulsidas, Pipa, Ravidas, Mirabai’s guru Raidas, Anantananda, Bhavananada, Dhanna Bhagat, Nabha, Naraharyananda, Sain and Sukhananda. It is said that among his original twelve disciples there was at least one woman, which at those times was very rare. All his disciples wrote in Hindi rather than Sanskrit.

Ramananda is thus considered a pioneer of the Bhakti movement as well as a social reformer in Northern India. While Ramanuja taught the worship of Lakshmi Narayana, Ramananda's devotion focused on Sri Rama, the perfect example of a faultless prince defender of Dharma, ready to accept devotees from any walk of life, including the non-human species such the Rakshasas and Vanaras, bears and birds.

For Ramanandi sadhus, the most common relationship sought is one with Sri Rama as Lord and master. This is best expressed in the relationship between Rama and Hanuman, as depicted in the *Rama Charita Manasa* written by Tulsidas. Hanuman, an incarnation of Shiva, represents the ideal devotee and is believed to be the incarnation of selfless devotion and supreme service of Rama.

Additionally, because Shiva is Lord of ascetics and yogis, Vairagis see Hanuman as combining the ideal of asceticism and devotion, and they often reveal their desire to identify with Him by referring to themselves collectively as «bandar dal,» or «Varana army.» Daily Bhakti practices directed toward Hanuman almost always include recitation of the *Hanuman Chalisa*, a forty verse prayer written by Tulsidas. Some Vairagis will repeat the prayer 108 times on Tuesdays or on Saturdays, the performance which typically takes between six to eight hours to complete. Some will repeat this practice every day for an entire month. There are also a variety of tantric and other prayers to Hanuman that are done to help enhance one's mental and devotional strength and focus.

In his *Rama Charita Manasa*, Tulsidas says that both *saguna* and *nirguna* are equally valid approaches to Ram, so many vairagis opt for the latter. However, if one does do *saguna* worship, the most common image worshiped is not of Rama, but of Hanuman, as Hanuman epitomizes selfless devotion and is seen by most Ramanandis as the ideal which they hope to emulate. The second is that, unlike the performance of rituals to images of Rama that must be done daily and properly, rituals done to images of Hanuman can be minimal, require next to no ritual accessories, and can be done practically at any time and place.

The main source of doctrine is Valmiki's *Ramayana*. The story is of Rama's birth, his marriage to Sita, his exile, the abduction of Sita by Ravana the demon king, the battle leading to the killing of Ravana, and the recovery of Sita. Rama is a man upholding Dharma, cosmic order. He is a supreme example of Dharma, following this all through his life whatever the cost. To Rama «Dharma is the highest truth in the world, and is said to be the root of heaven.» In the *Ramayana* there is hardly any mention of *moksha*: Dharma is the most important doctrine and the means of obtaining heaven and to establish the Ramarajya, the ideal kingdom on earth.

For Ramananda, Lord Rama is the supreme Personality of Godhead and the human race is simply one large family. His preaching drew large crowds, yet most of his sayings and poems were not preserved, except for a notable case that is recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs. This poem, called *Raga Basant*, sings:

“O my brother, where shall I go? Why should I wander?
The pleasure I seek is in my very own home.
My mind will not stray, for my heart is now steadfast.
One day, a yearning arose in my heart,
and I went with sandalwood paste and so many perfumes,
so that I could worship Brahman in the temple.
But then the Guru told me that
the Brahman I sought dwelt in my very own heart.
Wherever I went I met only water and silt
but you remain all-pervasive and forever unchanging.
I read and searched all the Vedas and the Puranas,
I go to them if I do not find Him there.
O my true Guru, I am your handmaid, your living sacrifice,
for you have cut away all my hardened doubts, all my great fears.
Ramananda's Lord is all-pervasive Brahman
a Guru's word can destroy a million sins”

The Ramanandis or Ramayats are the largest Vaishnava ascetic Sampradaya, competing with the Shaiva Dashanamis for the best place at pilgrimage sites such as the Kumbha Mela.

Ramayats are divided into renouncers, non-renouncers, and householders. The householders provide financial support for the other two groups. Non-renouncers live in monasteries and hermitages, found in large numbers throughout western and central India, the Ganges basin, the Himalayan foothills, and Nepal. Renouncers are the most revered Ramayats and they travel in small groups which are termed a *khalsa*, an itinerant monastery. They follow an annual cycle to visit all the major Vaishnava pilgrimage sites at the astrologically correct time. All Ramanandis bear on their foreheads the distinguishing Vishnu sect mark, the Trifala consisting of three vertical lines (one red in the center and a white or yellow line on either side of the red line). All Ramanandis also wear necklaces and rosaries that are made of wooden Tulasi beads.

They wear *tulasi mala* around their necks all the time, whereas the followers of Ramanuja usually put *tulasi* necklaces on only when they are recited their *sandhya mantras*. They do not observe *tridandi sannyasa* on retiring from household life, but wear white *kaupin* and *bahirvasa*. There are four sub-sects of Ramanandis, and all of the sub-sects are celibate. The sub-sects are named the Achari, the Sanyasi, the Khaki, and the Vairagi.

The Vairagi are by far the largest group of people. They do not wear colored clothes and they do not cut their hair or nails. Most importantly, at the time of initiation, all Vairagis take vows of adherence to the ascetic lifestyle. These include restrictions on food and beverage, dress, occupation, association, possessions, habitation, hair style, and sexual activity. The preliminary vows serve as the foundation of the renunciant life and the basis upon which Ramanandis organize and engineer their spiritual path, reminding them that their lives are not to be focused on sensual pleasures and material accumulation, but on the pursuit of spiritual growth and self-realization. An added assumption within the order is that all who take initiation also make an inner commitment to focus on the path for as many lifetimes as is necessary to attain spiritual enlightenment.

The Acharis wear garments made of silk and wool, the Sannyasis wear salmon colored clothes made out of cotton, while the Khakis usually go about without any clothes. None of the sub-sects of the Ramanandis eat meat or drink alcohol, yet many of them are addicted to bhang. The Ramananda Sampradaya recognizes that not everyone has the same ability to undertake physical austerities, so a variety of sub-orders have arisen for those who wish to focus on specific forms of *tapasya*. Members of these various groups are known as Tyagi, Mahatyagi, Phalahari, Naga, and other names depending on the particular austerities they undertake. The actual length of practice, type, and intensity of *tapasya* that one performs is decided by the individual Vairagi and is said to be a combination of the particular attachments that the individual is seeking to overcome and the degree to which the individual can handle the particular form that is chosen.

It is important to emphasize that a Ramanandi teacher does not force *tapasya* on disciples but rather encourages them to place restrictions on themselves, for any disciplinary practice is considered to be most effective and fruitful when it is self-imposed. The reason for this is that restrictions imposed by others may be followed but resented. Ramanandis consider such practices as not only lacking in benefit, but sometimes even harmful, since they may lead the performer to resent the ascetic life completely. However, self-imposed disciplines give practitioners the freedom to push themselves as much or as little as they choose. Successful completion of such austerities inspires a sense of fulfillment and empowerment. As Ramanandis become accustomed to self-imposed forms of *tapasya*, this may lead to subsequent undertakings that are more intense and more physically and psychologically demanding. In this way, the Vairagi takes personal control of his own spiritual growth and his relationship with the Divine. Those who commit to a particular *tapasya* for an extended period are usually looked up to and respected for their will power to do so. Such commitments help foster both personal identity formation as well as an affinity to, and an identity within, the broader ascetic community. Some Sadhus are inspired to push their physical limits to a far greater extent, such as fasting for long periods, vowing to live under no shelter of any sort, or rejecting the use of all traditional forms of cloth, including cotton, wool, silk, and linen.

In Puri, the followers of Ramananda established many Mathas and also several martial arts centers (called *akhadas*) to train young people to protect the temples from Muslim attacks, such as Bhaga akhada, Khaki akhada, Nirvani akhada, Nirmohi akhada, and Bada akhada. In these centers Mahavira Hanuman is considered the presiding Deity and every year each *akhada* organizes a function enacting the pastimes of Sri Ramachandra (Rama lila) and other *lilas* of the Dasa avatara, also called Sahi yatra, that enjoy immense popularity in Puri on various occasions.

Madhva

Madhva Acharya, also called Ananda Tirtha or Suka Tirtha, should not be confused with Madhava Acharya, a famous exponent of the Advaita school.

Madhvacharya's followers believe that he was the third incarnation of Vayu (or Mukhyaprana), after Hanuman and Bhima. He propagated the philosophy called Dvaita or Visistha Dvaita ("duality with differences", or "various differences").

Madhva was born on the Vijayadasami day in 1238 (some say in 1199) at Pajaka, a small village near Udupi in Karnataka. Narayana Panditacharya, who wrote Madhvacharya's biography *Madhva vijaya*, does not record the names of his parents; however there is agreement on the name of his mother as Vedavati while according to some sources his father was called Madhyageha Bhatta and according to other sources he was called Nadilliya Narayana Bhatta.

The child was named Vasudeva. Many amazing stories are told about Madhvacharya's supernatural powers, exhibited since childhood.

It is said that once he was sitting alone at home, when a creditor came to claim a loan that he had given Vasudeva's father. The child reassured the creditor and went to get a handful of tamarind seeds from the kitchen: in his hands they became golden coins. In another miraculous incident, he is said to have killed a huge snake named Maniman, simply with the big toe of his left foot.

Many are also the stories of his physical strength and prowess, of which he sometimes gave demonstration, engaging in various sports and physical exercise such as wrestling, weight lifting, running, jumping and swimming. His melodious voice was also famous and fascinated the audiences.

Since his early years, the child was very attracted to spirituality and religion and aspired to the life of a *sannyasi*, but because he was the only son of his parents, he hesitated and waited until a brother was born. So at the age of 11 he sought *sannyasa* initiation into the order of Achyuta preksha, of the order of the Ekanti or Ekadandi Vaishnavas. He was then named Purnaprajna.

About one month later young Purnaprajna engaged in a debate with some scholars headed by Vasudeva Pandita, and defeated them, earning the title of Ananda Tirtha.

While he was still a teenager, Madhva went on a preaching tour through south India, visiting holy places of pilgrimage such as Anantasayana, Kanyakumari, Ramesvaram and Sriranga, and giving discourses against Adi Shankara's interpretation of the *Vedanta sutra*.

After returning to Udupi he composed his commentary to *Bhagavad gita*, called *Gita Bhasya*, then traveled to Badarikashram to present it to Vyasa. It is said that Madhva remained at Badri observing a vow of silence, prayer and meditation for 48 days, then he proceeded alone to Vyasa's ashram where he met the original compiler of the Vedic scriptures.

Subsequently Madhva traveled through Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, Andhra pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka, finally returning to Udupi to compose his famous commentaries to the *Vedanta sutras* and the ten *Upanishads*. He also composed commentaries on forty hymns of the *Rig Veda* and a treatise entitled *Bhagavat tatparya*, as well as several handbooks and devotional songs. All his writings were actually dictated to his disciples, such as Satya Tirtha, who wrote on palm leaves.

Another extraordinary episode regards the installation of the Krishna Deity at Udupi.

It is said that Madhvacharya was sitting on the beach of the ocean near Udupi when suddenly a storm appeared, endangering a ship that was sailing by. Madhva stood up praying Vayu to calm the wind, and miraculously the wind stopped. The ship was saved and the owner, grateful for that extraordinary rescue, offered Madhva a large block of *gopichandana* (yellow clay used for Tilaka) that he was carrying from Dvaraka. Madhvacharya personally carried the block of clay to the tank of the local temple and immersed it there to add sanctity to the waters, and from the clay emerged a beautiful Deity of Krishna Gopala. Madhva installed the Deity in the temple, that became the headquarters of the Madhvacharya school.

After establishing the worship for Krishna Gopala and delegating some disciples to take care of the temple, Madhvacharya traveled again to Badrinath.

It is said that on his way, while crossing the river Ganges, Madhva encountered the Persian Sultan Jalaluddin-Khilji, who was surprised by the boldness of the Hindu ascetic.

When asked if he was not afraid of traveling alone in a territory that was controlled by the Muslim invaders, Madhva replied, "I worship that Father that fills the universe with His light, and so do you. Why should I fear you or your soldiers?" Certainly the Sultan was equally impressed by Madhva's bravery, his scholarship and his knowledge of the Persian language.

Traveling on, Madhva reached Badrinath where he met Veda Vyasa again. On his way back to Udipi, he visited Varanasi where he engaged in debate with Amarendra Puri and defeated him, then he visited Kurukshetra where he instructed his disciples to excavate a mound: the buried mace of Bhima was unearthed, and again Madhva asked his disciples to cover it with soil.

Madhva's work was not free from challenges and problems. He had opponents in the local orthodox community, who challenged him from time to time, as in the case of Pundarika Puri, that was also defeated by the Acharya. His enemies also resorted to other means: one Padma Tirtha succeeded in stealing Madhvacharya's works from the custody of Pejattaya Shankara Pandita in Kasargodu. Madhvacharya went to Kasargodu and defeated Padma Tirtha in a debate. The discussion was recorded in a summary form by his disciples under the title of *Vada* or *Tattvodyota*. The stolen books were returned to Madhva in a ceremony arranged by the King of Tulu, Jayasimha of Kumble.

On the same occasion, Madhva also had an intense debate (that lasted 15 days) with the King's Guru, Trivikrama Pandita Acharya; the defeated Raja Guru became Madhva's disciple and wrote the *Tattva dipika* as a commentary to Madhva's *Brahma sutra bhasya*.

Later on the request of his disciples, Madhvacharya compiled a more extensive commentary on the Brahma sutras, entitled *Anuvyakhyana*. It is said that he dictated simultaneously to four disciples working each on one of the four chapters, without any break. In the same period he completed the *Nyaya vivarana*.

Finally, Madhvacharya appointed some of his disciples to be the leaders of his Mathas in Udipi:

1. Hrishiksha Tirtha at Palimaru Matha
2. Narasimha Tirtha at Adamaru Matha
3. Janardana Tirtha at Krishnapura Matha
4. Upendra Tirtha at Puttige Matha
5. Vamana Tirtha at Sirur Matha
6. Sri Vishnu Tirtha (Madhva's brother) at Sode Matha and Subramanya Matha
7. Sri Rama Tirtha at Kaniyuru Matha
8. Adhokshaja Tirtha at Pejavara Matha
9. Padmanabha Tirtha (previously known as Sobhana Bhatta) at Desastha Matha

After establishing these Mathas and their Acharyas, he introduced a strict code of conduct for his followers and a system of flower offerings (*Pista pasu yagas*) in place of animal sacrifices during yajnas, and imposed the strict observance of fasting on Ekadasi.

Madhva also trained several other followers who became scholars and writers on their own right, such as Narahari Tirtha, Trivikrama Pandita Acharya, Narayana Pandita Acharya, Vamana Pandita Acharya (Traivikramaryadasa), Jayatirtha (Tikacharya), Vijayadhva Tirtha, Vishnudasa Acharya, Vyasa Tirtha, Vadiraja, Vijayindra Tirtha, Raghavendra Swami, Yadupati Acharya and others.

Madhva continued to travel and engage in public debates, also composing more literary works. One of such works was the *Krishnamrta maharnava*, another was *Khandartha nimaya* (or *Karma nimaya*) consisting of the summary of a discourse to the Brahmins of Ujjire. Subsequently he re-established the worship at the Pancha lingesvara temple at Paranti, that had fallen into neglect and disrepair.

Madhva felt he had completed his mission, so on Magha sukla Navami of the year 1317 (Kali yuga year 4418) he started on his last journey to Badrinarayana. This day is still celebrated as Madhva Navami.

Among the many followers of Madhvacharya, who continued his tradition of scholarly religious literature, the records mention in chronological order Vishnu Tirtha, Padmanabha-tirtha, Narahari-tirtha, Trivikrama-panditacharya, Narayana Panditacharya, Vamana-Panditacharya, (Traivikramaryadasa), Jayatirtha (Tikacharya), Vijayadhva-tirtha, Visnudasacharya, Vyasatirtha, Vadiraja, Vijayindra-tirtha, Raghavendra Swami, Yadupati-acharya, etc

Narahari Tirtha, one of Madhva's direct disciples (previously known as Swami Shastrin) is also responsible for the resurgence of Yakshagana and other forms such as Kuchipudi.

Raghavendra Swami of Mantralaya was a saint in this tradition who lived in the 16th century and is revered and worshiped to this day. Several Dvaita mathas and Raghavendra mathas in particular, continue to be established all over India and also in some places in US, UK and other countries. All these Madhva mathas continue to further the propagation of Vedic studies and are also involved in social and charitable activities.

The Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavas claim that Chaitanya's lineage descends from Madhvacharya through Akshobhya, Jayatirtha, Jnanasindhu, Dayanidhi, Vidyanidhi, Rajendra, Jayadharm, Purushottama, Brahmanyatirtha, Vyasatirtha, Lakshmiapati, Madhavendra Puri, who accepted Isvara Puri, Nityananda and Advaita as his disciples. However, this point is fraught with controversy, as the Madhva Sampradaya do not agree. For more detailed elaboration on the subject, please see the section on Sri Chaitanya's connection with Isvara Puri. Even accepting this claim as true, still we need to consider that Chaitanya distanced himself considerably from Madhva's philosophical line, so much that usually his teachings are distinctively called Acintya Bhedabheda, rather than Dvaita or Visistha Dvaita. According to Madhva's philosophy, there is a substantial distinction between Ishvara, *jiva* and *jagat*. Isvara is always independent (*sva-tantra*) while the *jivas*, *prakriti*, *kala*, *karma* etc are dependent realities (*para-tantra*). Such differences are elaborated in five categories (*pancha-bheda*) as between Isvara and *jiva*, Isvara and *jada* (*prakriti*), *jiva* and *jiva*, *jiva* and *jada*, *jada* and *jada* (or between an object and another). These five differences are eternal, although *jagat* can be sometimes manifest (*vyakta*) and sometimes not manifest (*avyakta*). *Jivas* are also eternally categorized in three groups as *sattvik* (who can attain *mukti*), *rajasik* (destined to remain in *samsara* but with the possibility of making progress) and *tamasik* (hopelessly destined to hell or darkness).

Another perspective on the various differences explained by Madhva is the *sajatiya*, *vijatiya* and *svagata*: respectively the differences between different categories of objects, the differences between objects in the same category, and the differences within the parts of one specific object.

The collection of the 37 books written by Madhva (called *sarva-mula*) is divided in four groups:

1. *prasthanaya trayam*, including two commentaries on *Gita*, ten on *Upanishads*, four on *Vedanta sutras*, and one on *Rig Veda*.
2. *dasa prakarana*, ten short books explaining the points of Madhva's doctrine; the most important is the *Vishnu tattva vinirnaya*, detailing the characteristics of the *atman* and establishing Vishnu's supremacy
3. *smriti prasthanaya*, commentaries on *Bhagavata purana* and *Mahabharata*
4. poems and essays about rituals and *sannyasa*

Narahari Tirtha

This disciple of Madhvacharya (who was also called Ananda Tirtha) lived under the patronage of Bhanudeva I (1264-1278) and Narasimha II (1278-1306), preaching Vaishnavism in Orissa. Therefore he is particularly important in connection to the tradition of Orissa, having strongly influenced Orissan culture in the direction of Vaishnavism. Narahari Tirtha had come to the Ganga kingdom on Madhva's order to obtain images of Sita-Rama on behalf of his spiritual master. The Ganga empire at that time extended further south and Narahari Tirtha was particularly connected with Simhachalam and Kurma Kshetra (about 250 km from Puri).

He remained from 1264 to 1293 as regent of king Narasimha II and the governor of a province in the Ganga kingdom; when the King came of age, Narahari Tirtha returned to his Guru with the Deities, and thus Ramanatha, Sita Paramesvari and Lakshmana Deva were installed in Sri Kurma.

Narahari's long stay in Orissa was mostly responsible for the ascendancy of Madhvacharya's Vaishnavism there. He was a patron of the Kurmanath temple, installing Deities and giving land endowments, as for example the village Kornu to 15 Vaishnava *brahmanas*.

Madhavendra Puri

We have already mentioned (in connection with the life of Sri Chaitanya) how Madhavendra Puri is considered the guru of Isvara Puri (Guru of Sri Chaitanya, Nityananda and Advaita), and how the Gaudiya Vaishnavas (specifically, Kavi Karnapura in his *Gaura Ganoddesa dipika*) considered him the founder of a new Sampradaya (*yah dharmo yah pravartitah*) uniting various traditions, the lineage of Shankara (as he was initiated into *sannyasa* in this very respected lineage) and Madhva (as he accepted Lakshmiapati Tirtha as his Guru), as well as the tradition of Nimbarka (as he introduced the worship of Radha Krishna in his own lineage).

It is believed that Sri Chaitanya's experience of feelings of separation (*viraha*) in the conjugal mood (*sringara rasa*) for Sri Krishna begins with a single verse spoken by Madhavendra Puri:

*ayi dina dayadra natha he mathura natha kadavalokyase
hrdayam tvad aloka kataram dayita bhramyati kim karoty aham*

“O, my beloved Lord, the friend of the afflicted! O Mathura-natha, when, when shall I see you? Without seeing you, my heart is perplexed, my beloved, and I am very restless! What am I to do?”

This verse is described in *Chaitanya charitamrita* as the *Rasa kavya* (the greatest masterpiece of the Rasa literature), the Kaustubha among all precious jewels, and causing immediate and overwhelming ecstasy in Sri Chaitanya. Madhavendra Puri is mentioned in *Chaitanya charitamrita*, *Chaitanya mangala*, *Gaura Ganoddesa dipika*, *Bhakti ratnakara*, *Prameya ratnavali* and in the writings of Gopala Guru Gosvami.

Vrindavana Dasa Thakura wrote, “Madhavendra Puri's body was completely full of divine love; so were his followers. He displayed uncommon love of God. Seeing a dark blue rain cloud, he would fall down unconscious. Day and night he was intoxicated from drinking the ambrosia of Krishna prema.”

Bhaktivinoda Thakura wrote that prior to the appearance of Madhavendra Puri, “there was no evidence of Prema Bhakti in the Madhva line. In his verse, *ayi dinia-dayadra-natha (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.4.197)*, the seed of the religious doctrines of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu can be found.”

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati adds, «Madhavendra Puri was the first shoot of the desire tree of divine love that came out of the Madhva lineage. Prior to his appearance, there was no sign of the conjugal mood of devotion in the Madhva line.» ...

After traveling in pilgrimage all around India, Madhavendra Puri settled in Vrindavana. He founded of a Vaishnava Matha at Mathura and began the restoration of Vrindavana that later Rupa and Sanatana would continue on the order of Sri Chaitanya. In a dream, Sri Gopala ordered him to uncover a buried Gopala Deity and install Him on Govardhana Hill. Madhavendra Puri celebrated Gopala's installation with an *annakuta* (grand festival offering a mountain of foodstuffs). This Annakuta festival, also called Govardhana Puja, is one of the most important Vaishnava festivals in Vrindavana, in India and around the world. The original Gopala Deity, known as Sri Nathaji, is now installed in Nathadvara (Rajasthan) and was worshiped by Vallabha Acharya. The name of Madhavendra Puri is well known in connection with the temple of Kshira chora Gopinatha, at Remuna (Balesvara or Balasore) in Orissa. Madhavendra decided to travel to Puri to get some sandalwood for his Gopala Deity. On the way, he thought he should visit the Gopinatha temple in Remuna. He had heard that the *pujaris* there prepared a wonderful rice pudding, called *amrita keli*, that was offered to Gopinatha, so he wanted to taste it and find out how to make a similar preparation for his Gopala. However, the journey took longer than expected and it was already night when he finally arrived in Remuna; the temple was closed and so were all the shops and houses, thus Madhavendra had no other choice but skipping dinner and humbly lying down to sleep on the market square.

In the meantime, Lord Gopinatha felt compassionate for His devotee, and He appeared in a dream to His *pujari*, ordering him to get the bowl of rice pudding He had hidden under His dress on the altar, and take it to His dear devotee Madhavendra Puri, who was sleeping on the market square. Startled, the *pujari* got up from his bed and went to check into the Deity's room, and actually found the rice pudding. All excited, the *pujari* ran out in the night calling loudly for Madhavendra Puri, and as Gopinatha had mentioned, he found him on the market square. Madhavendra Puri became overwhelmed by devotion for Gopinatha and was greatly honored by the people of the village, but he decided to continue his travel and go back to take care of his Gopala.

Madhavendra Puri's disappearance day is on Phalgunasukla Dvadasi and his Samadhi is in Remuna, not far from the temple of Kshira chora Gopinatha.

Nimbarka

Also known as Aruna Rishi and Haripriya Acharya, Nimbarka was born as Niyamanananda Acharya in the evening of Kartika Purnima in 1096. His parents were the great ascetic Aruna Muni and his wife Jayanti Devi, Tailanga *brahmanas* originally from Vaiduryapatnam on the bank of the Godavari in Andhra Pradesh.

The name Nimbarka is said to have been given because of an episode that happened when Niyamananda was still a young boy. One evening a *sannyasi* (considered by some as Prajapati Brahma, who wanted to test the boy) came to the house of Aruna Muni begging for food, but all the ingredients had been used for the daily cooking that had been completed and consumed, and there was no more time to prepare anything else because after sunset Sadhus are not supposed to take food. Niyamananda invoked the Sudarshana Chakra and placed it like a sun (“*arka*”) over a nearby neem or nimba tree to give light, while he personally went to gather roots and fruits and his mother prepared and served them to the Sadhu.

After the sacred thread ceremony, his parents sent him to Rishikula (Gurukula) for his education in scriptures, and in a very short time he mastered all the teachings, with great amazement of all. Taking leave from his parents, Nimbarka proceeded to search for a Guru to further progress in knowledge, and after reaching Govardhana in the region of Mathura, he began meditating in strict austerity in a grove of Nim trees. Pleased with his austerities, Narada Muni appeared to initiate him with the Gopala mantra from the *Gopalatapini Upanishad*. Narada also gave him the name of Haripriya and entrusted him with a Salagrama Deity known as Sri Sarvesvara.

Another version of the story is that young Nimbarka visited Bilva Paksha with a group of other *brahmanas* and offered worship to Lord Shiva with great devotion by offering bilva leaves for 15 days (one *paksha*). Pleased by his devotion, Shiva appeared to him and instructed him to go to the nearby forest to search for the Kumaras and take initiation from them. Indeed Nimbarka went into the forest and found the four great sages, the sons of Brahma, shining as brilliantly as the sun, seated on a natural platform beneath a tree as if they were fire blazing on an altar. The four child-sages embraced Nimbarka; then Sanat Kumara granted him initiation into the Radha Krishna mantra and gave him his *Sanat Kumara samhita*. Subsequently, Nimbarka established his Ashrama there and performed austerities and meditation.

According to some sources, the episode of the visiting *sannyasi* and the appearance of the Sudarshana Chakra took place at this point in time and space rather than during the childhood of the Acharya. Another version of the story is centered on the meeting that Nimbarka had with a Jain pandit, who had come to visit him but had refused to accept food saying that the evening was already at sunset; in this version Nimbarka prayed the Sun to appear again from a Nimba tree.

That place also became known as Nimgram (“the village of the nim tree”), and is the place where Nimbarka performed rigorous austerities and obtained the Darshan of Sri Krishna. The most important holy places of the followers of Nimbarka are Vrindavana, Nandagrama, Varshana and Govardhana, the lands of Sri Krishna’s youthful pastimes, and the Parikrama of Vrajabhumi is their foremost duties. Other large temples of the Nimbarka Sampradaya are at Nimgram (the place of Nimbarka’s appearance and *sadhana*, which is not far from Govardhana), Salembabad in Rajasthan, where a large temple has been built, as well in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bharatpur, Gwalior, Burdwan and Okara. Various groups of Nimbarka followers are also found in Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa.

Nimbarka Acharya is considered to be an incarnation of Sudarshana Chakra, and according to the Vishnu Yana he received the 18 syllable Gopala mantra directly from Narada Muni, who in turn received it from the Kumaras, who received it from Hamsa. Nimbarka’s philosophy is known as Dvaitadvaita, or simultaneous duality and non-duality, and identifies the Supreme Brahman as the divine couple of Radha and Krishna.

His most famous works are the *Vedanta Parijata Saurabha* (commentary to the *Vedanta sutra*), *Sadachar prakash* (a treatise on Karma kanda), *Gita bhasya*, *Rahasya shodasi* (explanation of the Sri Gopala mantra), *Krishna stava raja* (establishing the supreme position of Krishna), *Prapanna kalpa valli* (explanation of Mukunda mantra), *Prapatti chintamani* (a treatise on surrender), *Prata smarana stotram* (a devotional poem), *Kamadhenu Dasa sloki* (“ten nectarine verses” about the meditation on Radha Krishna). According to Nimbarka’s philosophy, there are three categories of existence: *cit* (consciousness, or atman), *acit* (non-consciousness, inert matter or material body) and *isvara* (the Lord). Brahman is the Controller (*niyantri*), the Jiva (*cit*) is the enjoyer (*bhoktri*) and the world (*acit*) is the object of enjoyment (*bhogya*).

However, *cit* and *acit* are non-different from Isvara because they cannot exist without Him; their existence is separate but not independent (*para tantra satta bhava*) as His body or attributes, as opposed to the concept of independent existence (*svatantra satta bhava*) that is the Supreme Lord. The example is given of the snake and its coils, the stones and Earth, or the sun and its rays.

Just like the coils of the snake cannot exist without the snake, just like stones could not exist without the Earth, and the rays of the sun would not exist without the Sun itself, similarly the *jivas* and the world are Brahman (being *brahmatmaka*) but are distinct from Him because of their own characteristics.

The identification between the *savishesha* and *nirvishesha* aspects of Bhagavan is called *svabhavika-bheda-abheda*, “natural difference and oneness”, as he sees no contradiction. The two categories of *jivas* as *baddhas* and *muktas* are temporary as a *baddha jiva* can become a *mukta* through the path to realization or *sadhana*, which is *bhakti* that includes both *karma* and *jnana*. The first stage is *karma* (the ritualistic process of action through *varna* and *ashrama*), the second is *jnana* (the cultivation of knowledge, that is not independent but a support of action), the third is *dhyana* or *upasana* (meditation through *sadhana*), and the fourth is *prapatti* (surrender).

The method of meditation, performed by initiated disciples, is composed of three stages:

1. meditation on the Lord as the Inner Controller of the *cit*, the soul of one’s soul
2. meditation on the Lord as the Inner Controller of the *acit*, the soul of all atoms
3. meditation on the Lord Himself as distinct from *cit* and *acit*

The method of surrender (*prapatti*) is the most important *Sadhana*, the only independent practice that is open to everyone irrespective from birth, and is aimed at the Divine Couple Sri Sri Radha Krishna also through the surrender and devotion to the Guru (*gurupasatti*). In fact, in this devotional surrender the devotee takes shelter in Srimati Radhika (*ekanta-radhikasraya*) that is the highest form of *gopi bhava*.

Surrender and dedication in devotion is first called *Sadhana Bhakti* and then becomes *Para Bhakti* or *Madhurya Rasa*.

In Puri, Nimbarka established the Radha Vallabha matha (east of Sri Mandira). It is said that Jayadeva (the author of *Gita Govinda*) stayed there. Other important Nimbarka panthi mathas in Puri are Ramji matha, Gopali matha, and Dukhshyam Baba matha.

The disciplic succession from Nimbarka was revived in the 35th link, Svami Harivyasa Devacharya, who appointed 12 of his senior disciples to lead missions; the most famous being Svami Parasurama Devacharya (who received the Sri Sarvesvara Salagrama Deity) who became based in Nimbarka Tirtha (Rajasthan) and Svami Svabhurama Devacharya who became based in Kurukshetra.

The Sampradaya branched out in many groups including the Kathia Baba Sampradaya (based in Kathia Baba ka Sthana, Vrindavana), Svami Nagaji Maharaja (who started the Vrajabhumi Parikrama), Haripriya Sarana Devacharya (who founded the temple of Bihari Ji Ki Bageechi, Vrindavana). The present representatives of the Sampradaya are very active at global level, helping the establishment of various temples and major festivals at the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton, Canada.

Vishnusvami

There seems to be some confusion about the identity and the placement in time of this founder of this very ancient Sampradaya, as three Vishnu Svamis are generally considered in the Rudra Sampradaya: Adi Vishnu Svami, Raja Gopala Vishnu Svami, and Andhra Vishnu Svami. In fact, some sources even say that Vishnusvami was born just after the completion of Janamejaya’s sacrifice, around the beginning of Kali yuga. We may remember that Janamejaya was the son of Parikshit Maharaja.

An apparently more historical calculation states that Adi Vishnusvami was about around the 3rd century BCE. His father, Devesvara, was the Raj Guru and a minister in the court of the Pandya Kings.

Devatanu, as he was known before accepting the order of *sannyasa*, was trained to protect Hinduism from the Buddhist competition.

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, the founder of the Sarasvata Gaudiya Sampradaya, explained that Devesvara and king Pandovijaya went to Jagannatha Puri and removed the Deity of Jagannatha from the temple that had fallen under the control of Buddhists, transporting Jagannatha on a chariot to Sundarachala, about 3 km away from the temple: this is said to be the origin of the Ratha Yatra, and the vestiges of this episode are found in the name of the ceremony, called Pandu vijaya, and in the name of the temple pujakas, called Pandas. It is said that this Vishnusvami, the son of Devesvara, introduced the *ashtottara satanami* (108) *sannyasa* system. Vyasesvara was the last in this line of *sannyasis* that became practically extinct.

The second Vishnusvami is Rajagopala Vishnusvami, who revived the old Vishnusvami line in the 8th or 9th century CE, installing the Varadaraja temple in Kanchi, the temple of Ranchorlal in Dvaraka and several other shrines in places of pilgrimage. His main follower was Bilvamangala.

After the disappearance of Rajagopala Vishnusvami the Sampradaya came under the influence of Shaiva Shivasvami, and the ideological tradition underwent some changes regarding the position of Shiva (Rudra) in connection to Vishnu.

The third Vishnusvami, who appeared in the 13th century, is said to have been the son of a minister of a Dravidian prince. The successors of this Vishnusvami include Lakshmana Bhatta, the father of Vallabhacharya.

The emphasis of this school, called *visuddha* or *suddha-advaita* (“pure monism”) is on the concept of *lila*, by which God can be transcendental and immanent according to His will. Thus everything is pure, including the material universe that is created by God and intimately related to Him. In his worship method, Vishnusvami gives preminence to Narasimha and Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna. Vishnusvami’s commentary on the *Vedanta sutras* is called *Sarvajna sukta*. It is said that Vishnusvami visited Puri and founded here the Vishnusvami Math (near Markandeya Sarovara) and the Jagannatha Vallabha Matha in the gardens of the temple, where Ramananda Raya also established his spiritual school.

Vallabha Acharya

Vallabha Acharya appeared in 1479 in south India and disappeared in 1531, spending much of his life in Varanasi, the greatest remaining center of Hindu culture, where his family emigrated after his birth.

After completing his studies and taking initiation in the Vishnusvami Sampradaya, he traveled around India several times, engaging in philosophical debates and reciting the *Bhagavata Purana* in each of the 84 places he visited - usually a grove outside a major city, on the bank of a river or lake, at Varanasi, Puri, Prayag, Dvaraka, Bhadrinatha, Ramesvaram, etc. In these places his followers established memorials called Bethak (“a place to sit”) still worshiped with offerings of fresh drinking water, *arati*, *sringara* and *naivedya*, 7 times a day. Vallabha started his own tradition called Pushti marga bhakti, which is prominent today especially in Mathura-Vrindavana. In his school there are no *sannyasis* but only householders, as the emphasis of his teachings is on the point that devotion is perfectly compatible with the ordinary duties of the world. He wrote the *Tattvartha dipa nibandha* (divided in three parts, one about *Gita*, one about *Bhagavata Purana* and the third a comparison between philosophies), *Anubhasya* (a non completed commentary on *Vedanta sutra*), *Purva mimamsa bhasya* (commentary on Jaimini’s *karma kanda* philosophy), *Subodhini* (a non completed commentary on *Bhagavatam*), and the *Sodasa grantha* (16 books containing the essence of his teachings).

For Vallabha, the realization of the Para Brahman, the complete (*purna*) aspect of the Brahman, can be achieved only through *pushti* (“nourishment”) or total surrender to God who blesses the soul with His grace. In his philosophy there are different categories of *jivas*: *suddha*, *samsarin* (further divided into *daivi*, *madhyama* and *danava*) and *mukta*.

Vallabha Acharya probably came to Puri the first time in 1489 as a young boy, but returned in 1519 for his preaching. He was proud to be a great scholar and started a Bhakti Marga center in Varanasi. He contacted Sri Chaitanya in Prayaga (Allahabad) who suggested he debate with Advaita Acharya. It is said that during such debate Vallabha Bhatta started to criticize the Sankirtana movement by objecting that, if the devotees were worshiping Lord Krishna in the *madhurya rasa* they should not chant His name, as a faithful wife is not supposed to call her husband confidentially by his name, but always address him with a respectful title. Advaita Acharya simply responded “on His order, we are doing”, meaning that, if the husband specifically requests the wife to call him intimately by his name, a faithful and loving wife should do so happily to please her husband. Similarly, Sri Krishna has ordered all of us to chant His name intimately, so as faithful wives and servants of the Lord, we should do so. Another day, in the presence of Sri Chaitanya, Vallabha Bhatta boasted that his own commentaries were different from those of Sridhara Svami. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas relate that Chaitanya quickly rebuked him, and in the end Vallabha Bhatta was convinced of the superiority of the teachings of Sri Chaitanya and from the worship of Bala Gopala was initiated into *madhurya rasa* by Gadadhara Pandita. The son of Vallabha Bhatta, Vittala, adopted *Gita Govinda* as his text for teaching Sanskrit in his school.

The preaching of Vallabha Bhatta made the worship of Bala Gopala popular in all Hindu homes. His philosophy distinguished the two different roads in Vishnu worship as Maryada bhakti (or devotion in respect), where God is worshiped as the Supreme Brahman and Pusthi bhakti (or devotion in intimacy).

Ramananda Raya

Ramananda Patnaik, also known as Ramananda Raya, was born in Bentpur in Puri district, where his relatives still live as Chowdhury Pattanaiks. He was one of the four sons of Bhavananda Pattanaik, one of the closest royal advisors. Ramananda was initiated by Raghavendra Puri, the disciple of Madhavendra Puri (Guru of Isvara Puri), and before meeting Chaitanya he wrote the *Dandatmaka lila*, a catalogue of services to be performed for Jagannatha. He was an administrator under the Gajapati Prataparudra Deva, who gave him the title of Raya or Raja, and appointed him as the Governor of Rajamahendri or Rajmundhry in the southern region of the kingdom. On the bank of the Godavari river he met Sri Chaitanya who had come to search for him on the recommendation of Vasudeva Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya.

Ramananda was fascinated by Chaitanya and immediately became his follower, relinquishing his job. Together with Svarupa Damodara, Sila Mohanty, Sarvabhauma and Madhavi Dasi, Ramananda was one of the closest associates of Chaitanya in Puri. Ramananda, who established his Matha at Jagannatha Vallabha (the private gardens of Sri Jagannatha) near the Jagannatha temple, was a great scholar, poet, musician and dramatist. He wrote the famous *Jagannatha Vallabha Nataka* drama on the *lilas* of Radha and Krishna, that was played several times in Jagannatha temple by the Devadasis; it was Ramananda who first dramatized Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* for the performance in Jagannatha's temple.

Ramananda used to personally instruct the temple Devadasis (Maharis) not only in dancing and bodily expressions (*abhinaya* or dramatic expressions, such as *sattvika* and *sanchari bhava*), but also in costume dressing and body decoration, down to bathing and massaging. For this reason some of Chaitanya's followers accused him of immorality and illicit association with women, but Chaitanya himself personally defended Ramananda glorifying him for his vast knowledge of philosophy and his austere life.

From that episode, the tradition among Gaudiya Vaishnavas maintained that Ramananda Raya was the reincarnation of Arjuna, the dearest friend of Krishna and the recipient of the teachings of *Bhagavad gita* – connecting the period that Arjuna had spent in Virata's palace as Brihannala, teaching dance and drama to the princess Uttara and her girl friends with the devotional service in drama and dance manifested by Ramananda Raya.

A famous inscription on the western side of Jagannatha's temple says that, on the order of Prataparudra Deva, only Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* could be sung and danced by the Oriya and the Telugu Devadasis (*nachunis*) during the time of the food offerings in the temple, and especially in the evening until the resting time for the Deities. Four Vaishnava singers were also appointed for this service.

Although Ramananda Raya had trained the Devadasis to play feminine roles in his *Jagannatha Vallabha Nataka*, Prataparudra felt that it would be inappropriate for the Maharis to perform drama outside the Jagannatha temple, so he introduced the tradition of the Gotipuas. Ramananda died at Vidanashi in Cuttack in 1572, near the Gadgadia ghat of the Mahanadi where Prataparudra is said to be buried.

Sridhara Svami

A disciple of Ramakrishnananda Svami, he was born in the village of Marei or Maraigaon in the present Nilagiri subdivision of the Balasore district in Orissa, about 3 km from the temple of Kshira chora Gopinatha (Remuna, Balasore, between Orissa and Bengal), some time in the second half of the 14th century. In the first part of his life he was a householder and had some children, then he took *sannyasa*.

For some time he was in charge of the Chandrashekara temple in Kapilas, then due to his vast learning and saintly character, he was selected as the Mahanta of the Govardhana pitha (the Adi Sankara Matha in Puri). He wrote a famous commentary to *Bhagavad Gita*, a commentary to *Vishnu Purana* and an extremely famous commentary to the *Bhagavatam* (entitled *Bhavartha Dipika*), a book that is considered very dear to Lord Jagannatha. Once the Pandas wanted to verify the value of the book, so they presented it to the Deity before closing the doors. On the next morning, the book was found on Lord Jagannatha's lap.

The fact that Chaitanya attributed an immense value to Sridhara Svami's commentary to the *Bhagavata Purana* seems to confirm that Chaitanya was closer to the Adi Shankaracharya Sampradaya than to the Madhvacharya Sampradaya.

Rasikananda

He was a disciple of Syamananda who was a disciple of Jiva Gosvami, who in turn was a disciple of Rupa Gosvami. His life has been described by Gopivallabha Das in his book *Rasika Mangala*, written in 1657. Once he was travelling with his disciples to Puri for participating to the annual Ratha Yatra, but after crossing the Vaitarani river the group of devotees had to stop at Malatipalam (Malatipatpur). During the night, Jagannatha appeared in a dream to the king Nrsimha Deva, and told him to go and personally invite Rasikananda to the festival. Later the King gave Rasikananda some land in Balisahi, near Gacchakali; today his Ashram is called Kunja Matha. He passed away at Kshirachora Gopinatha temple in Remuna, near Balasore (north Orissa).

Tulasi Das

Tulasi Das or Tulsidas, the author of the famous *Rama charita manasa*, was born in Varanasi and was adopted by Ramananda Swami, the founder of the Ramanandi Sampradaya. While reading the *Ramayana* written by Valmiki Muni, Tulasi Das saw in Uttara Rama charita that Rama had instructed Vibhisana to worship Jagannatha in Kali yuga in the holy place of Sri Purushottama (Puri), so he came to Puri and remained sitting in meditation at Tulasi Chaura, a small temple that he built at Malatipatpur, a few kilometres outside Puri. It is said that he also resided in the famous Hanuman temple called Siddha Mahavira within Puri. On sukla Ekadasi, Thursday, he had Darshana and saw Lord Rama within Lord Jagannatha.

Gangamata Gosvamini

She was the daughter of king Naresha Narayana of Bengal, and her birth name was Sachi. Deeply devoted to Krishna since childhood, she refused to marry and went to Vrindavana to dedicate her life to devotional service. In Vrindavana she met Haridasa Pandita, took initiation from him and engaged in austerity and renunciation at the Radhakunda. Soon she was joined by another disciple of Haridasa Pandita, called Lakshmipriya, who used to chant 300,000 Holy Names everyday. On the instruction of Haridasa Pandita, Gangamata took residence in Puri in the house of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya (where Sri Chaitanya had also lived). She established the worship of Damodara Salagrama and gave discourses on *Bhagavata Purana*.

The King, Raja Mukunda Deva, was very impressed by her learning and realization, so he donated her a place on the side of the Svetaganga sarovara. The story goes that one night Gangamata took bath in the Svetaganga and she was instantly transported inside the temple of Jagannatha: the temple guards were roused and, believing she was a thief trying to steal the Lord's ornaments, took her to jail. Later that night Jagannatha appeared in a dream to the King ordering him to release Gangamata immediately and take initiation from her.

Gangamata became a great preacher and Guru, initiating many people, including many of the temple Pujakas and many Brahmins.

The Five Saints of Orissa

The famous five Saints or five Friends (*pancha sakhas*) of Orissa were Balarama Das, Jagannatha Das, Achyutananda Das, Yasobanta Das and Sisu Ananta Das.

They started their own Sampradaya, already preaching Bhakti for Radha and Krishna in Orissa before the arrival of Chaitanya, following a tradition that had been established by Jayadeva Gosvami's *Gita Govinda*. Such was the popularity of *Gita Govinda* that, as we have already mentioned, king Purushottama Deva wrote his own imitation, called *Abhinava Gita Govinda*, hoping to establish it as the new devotional success of his times. Many other Oriya poets such as Dinakrishna, Abhimanyu, Bhakta Charan, Baladeva and Gopala Krishna composed poems about Krishna's romantic stories, such as the famous *Valis*.

Songs on Radha and Krishna written by Vidyapati of Mithila (in north Bihar) had also become famous in Orissa, and in fact both Jayadeva's and Vidyapati's songs were deeply appreciated by Chaitanya, who had them sung again and again to him by his companions. Before meeting Chaitanya, Ramananda Raya had written the *Mahabhava prakasa*, in which Kanai (Krishna) describes Radha as the embodiment of *mahabhava*, and the *Jagannatha vallabha nataka*. Another work on Krishna Bhakti that enjoyed great popularity before the arrival of Chaitanya was Markanda Dasa's *Kesava koili*.

The five Friends all came in contact with Chaitanya, who arrived in Sri Kshetra in 1510, and often associated with him and his followers. *Chaitanya Bhagavata* mentions Nityananda and Ramananda Raya celebrating Sankirtana together with Balarama and Achyutananda.

They found Chaitanya's preaching very near to their own ideas, because Chaitanya introduced the Nagara Sankirtana where there were no discriminations based on caste or social class, and the songs of the *kirtanas* were not only in classical Sanskrit but also in the popular languages such as Bengali and Oriya, encouraging ordinary and low-caste people to participate more directly. Chaitanya also accepted low-caste people as his followers, embraced fishermen and honored "ex-Muslim" devotees such as Haridasa, Rupa and Sanatana etc.

The liberality of the Pancha sakhas antagonized the Brahmins, who disparaged the Oriya translations of the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, *Bhagavata* and *Harivamsa* compiled by Sarala, Balarama, Jagannatha and Achyutananda. The Oriya Bhagavatam of Jagannatha Das was even called "*тели bhagavata*", the "*Bhagavata* of the low-caste oil-maker". However, the literary work of the Pancha sakhas was vital to the development of the Oriya language and cultural identity, uniting the people and creating a feeling of solidarity that protected the region for a long time.

The five Friends preached the Vaishnava dharma or ninefold process of Bhakti and chanting the Holy Names (Harinama), giving more importance to the realization of the soul rather than worship of the Deities. The most important aspect of their preaching was the abolition of all discriminations among Vaishnavas, no matter from which caste or background they came; Achyutananda, Yasovanta, Balarama and Ananta met a strong opposition from the caste-conscious Brahmins, who even disparagingly called Jagannatha Dasa's Oriya *Bhagavata* as "*тели bhagavata*" ("the *Bhagavata* of the oil-maker"). However, this Oriya *Bhagavatam* became so popular that every village had a Tunga, a hall where the villagers regularly gathered to listen to its reading.

As a reaction against the excessive ritualism of the caste Brahmins and their monopoly and control over the temples and Deity worship, the Pancha Sakhas preached that Lord Krishna/Jagannatha could be worshiped as Sunya, "void", a particular "non-shape" that transcended the Deity in the temple and therefore could be accessible by everyone at all times. It is important to understand that such "void" is not an impersonal emptiness devoid of sentiments, qualities and relationships – in fact quite the opposite, as Jagannatha Dasa preached the *Rasa krida*, Acyutananda preached the *Nitya Rasa*, Yasovanta preached the *Prema bhakti brahma gita* and Ananta the *Tula sunya rasa*.

They accepted Radha Krishna as Paramatma and Jagannatha as Radha Krishna *yugala murti* or *bhava murti*, and taught that Guru is the manifestation of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara. According to their doctrine (that is also shared by many other groups, including the Natha yogis and several traditions of Bhakti in Bengal), the human body is a microcosm where the Supreme Lord resides and manifests His pastimes, including the most intimate *lilas* of Radha Krishna, where Radha is the pure devoted soul and Krishna is Paramatma.

The Pancha sakhas followed the path of Bhakti adopting mantra, tantra and yantra in their *sadhana*; they manifested mystic power and could change their body into different forms.

For many generations, there has been a serious rift between the followers of the Atibadi Sampradaya and the Bengali followers of Chaitanya, and especially the Sarasvata Gaudiyas, sometimes with excessive emphasis on marginal details such as the order of the two verses of the Maha mantra sloka:

hare krishna hare krishna, krishna krishna hare hare
hare rama hare rama, rama rama hare hare

While the Atibadi Sampradaya and several other ancient Gaudiya Mathas in Puri chant the mantra starting with the "Rama line", the Sarasvata Gaudiya insist that the mantra should start with the "Krishna line" in order "not to be offensive by reversing the lines". It is not clear how sincere followers of Chaitanya could find "offensive" the recitation of the Holy Names simply because one verse is put before the other - also considering that by continued recitation, neither of the two verses appears to come first, but they form a circle.

In fact, we have heard that Narada Muni tricked Valmiki into chanting the name of Lord Rama by instructing him to chant the name of Death (Mara); the constant chanting “in circles” of the syllables Ra and Ma was nevertheless so powerful that it turned a highway robber into the greatest devotee of Sri Ramachandra. Besides, we should remember the clear teaching of a verse of the *Sikshastakam*, the short ideological summary considered the only text actually written by Chaitanya: *namnam akari bahu-dha nija-sarva-saktis tatarpita niyamitah smarane na kalah*

“O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benedictions to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names.”

The *Jagannatha charitamrita*, a biography of Jagannatha Das written by Divakara Das, states that the difference between the Oriya (Utkali) and the Bengali (Gaudiya) Vaishnavas is that the Oriyas consider Jagannatha as the *avatari*, the source of all *avatars*, while the Bengalis say that Krishna is the *avatari*. Such distinction could be easily overcome by considering that Jagannatha is Krishna Himself, and especially in the light of the *acintya bhedabheda tattva* taught by Chaitanya. The rift between the Bengali and Oriya Vaishnavas has lasted long enough, and is based on very flimsy grounds, more emotional than philosophical or theological. Divakar Das wrote that the Bengali devotees were jealous of the Oriya devotees, and in fact still today we find people from the Sarasvata Gaudiya line writing that the title “Atibadi” given by Chaitanya to Jagannatha Das was meant in an offensive and sarcastic way, while we know that Chaitanya strictly taught and demonstrated the utmost humility towards all groups of people.

Some also say that the powerful influence of the Atibadi Sampradaya, challenging the excessive ritualism and casteism of the orthodox society, was carried to the extreme consequences by the anti-brahminic and iconoclastic movement called Mahima Dharma in more recent times. However, this would be an exaggeration considering that the Mahima Dharma actively opposed the worship of Jagannatha, to the point of attacking the Puri temple with the intent of destroying the Deities. This seems to be quite far fetched, as all the Atibadi Mathas worship the form of Jagannatha as well as other divine forms, and uphold the sacredness of the Shastra, which the Mahima sect do not recognize.

The Acharya in the sixth generation of the disciplic succession from the Atibadi Sampradaya, Purushottama Das, had five prominent disciples, the first of which, Mukunda Das, became the Mahanta of the Bodo Oriya Matha, and the other four established new branches of the Matha in Puri, called Sana Oriya Matha, Rama-Hari Das Matha, Vanamali Das matha and Bhagavata Das Matha.

Balarama Dasa

He was born between 1472 and 1482 in Erabanga village at Gop (near Konarak); his father was Somanatha Mahapatra and his mother was Mahamaya Devi. Some say that he was born in the village of Chandrapur, where he also met Chaitanya. Balarama Dasa became a minister of king Prataparudra Dev, but after meeting Chaitanya he left the Government service and utilized his previous knowledge of Kundalini yoga, *vaidhi bhakti* in the mood of Ramanuja Acharya, and *jnana* to propagate the chanting of the Holy Name. He is sometimes called Matta Balarama, because of his disregard for social conventions in favor of ecstatic Bhakti.

He used to participate to the discussions on *Vedanta* in the Mukti Mandapa in the Jagannatha temple (in spite of the resentment of the Brahmins), and it is said that anyone who touched his head would become instantly able to explain the philosophy of Vedanta. One day a beggar (who was dumb and deaf) approached him, touching his head, and he was not only cured and became able to speak, but he also started to discuss philosophy immediately. This beggar then became Balarama’s foremost disciple with the name of Hari Das.

The mula mantra chanted and taught by Balarama Das was the Krishna mantra. His residence in Puri is called Gandharva Matha. Balarama Dasa wrote the famous *Jagamohana* or *Dandi Ramayana*, as well as a number of other works entitled *Gita Abakasa*, *Bhava samudra*, *Gupta Gita*, *Vedanta Sara*, *Mriguni Stuti*, *Saptanga yogasara tika*, *Vedanta sara or Brahma tika*, *Baula gai gita*, *Kamala locana chotisa*, *Kanta koili*, *Bedha parikrama*, *Brahma gita*, *Brahmanda bhugola*, *Vajra kavaca*, *Jnana chudamani*, *Virat gita*, *Ganesh vibhuti*, *Amarakosha Gita*, *Lakshmi Purana* (which is very popular in Orissa).

In his *Bata Abakasa* he writes that Lord Jagannatha is served by 64 yoginis. In his *Virata Gita*, he describes the *nirakara* form of Krishna as Sunya. However, his idea of Sunya is quite particular, as it includes form and relationships. He was also a social worker and reformer, and an expert astrologer as well. He disappeared in 1540.

Achyutananda Dasa

He was born in Tilakana near Nemala, Cuttack, in 1485; his father was Dinabandhu Khuntia and his mother's name was Padmavati. His grandfather Gopinath Mohanty had served in the army of the Gajapati King. As a child, he was named Agani. When he grew older, he had a mystic dream where the Lord taught him the *Gita*, the *Upanishads* and the *Tantra*. Immediately he went to pilgrimage and on the way he met Chaitanya and it is said he received Harinam initiation from Him. Some other people say that he went to meet Chaitanya together with his father; he was then 18 years old. At the time of Achyutananda's initiation, Chaitanya asked Sanatana Gosvami to take care of him and coach him in spiritual knowledge.

Achyutananda married the daughter of Raghurana Champati Rai and stayed in Dhauligram. He had 12 main disciples, of whom the most prominent was Ramachandra Das. The King gave him some land in Banki Mohana. The mula mantra he chanted and taught was the Radha mantra.

Achyutananda is mostly famous for the book of prophecies called *Achyutananda Malika*, composed of 13 chapters, describing the future destruction of the town of Puri after Jagannatha has moved out, and the appearance of Kalki avatara who will annihilate all the evildoers starting from Orissa. A few summary studies have been published in Oriya language Achyutananda also translated into Oriya and commented *Harivamsa*, *Tattva bodhini*, *Sunya samhita*, *Jyoti samhita*, *Gopala Ujjvala*, *Baranasi Gita*, *Anakara Brahma Samhita*, *Abhayada Kavacha*, *Astagujari*, *Sarana panjara stotra*, *Vipra chalaka*, *Mana mahima*. He wrote a book about the preaching mission of the Pancha sakhas (five friends) and organized a travelling party of Rahasankirtana, for which he also wrote several bhajan songs. It is said that once he was attacked by some envious Brahmins and he manifested his *laghima yoga siddhi* by becoming extremely light and floating away in the air. Achyutananda's teachings present a fusion of Saguna and Nirguna worship, uniting the doctrines of Dvaita and Advaita, and knowledge from *Upanishads* and Kundalini yoga. He left his body on Jyestha sukla Ekadasi.

Atibadi Jagannatha Dasa

He was born in Kapilesvarapur or Kapilesvar grama (one of the 16 traditional Sasana villages) at 14 kms from Puri towards Brahmagiri, on the day of Radhastami of 1487 (some say in 1490). Because he was born on Radhastami, he is considered to have a close relationship with Srimati Radhika.

His mother was Padmavati Devi and his father was Bhagavan Das, from the Kaushiki Gotra. He used to recite the *Bhagavata Purana* in Lord's Jagannatha temple, and his explanations were so attractive that king Prataparudra gave him the title of "Purana Panda". As son of the Purana Panda, Jagannatha Dasa used to sit by his father and learn the *Bhagavata*. One day, while visiting the temple, Chaitanya noticed the 18 years old boy sitting near the Bata Ganesha Deity in Sri Mandira, reciting the *Brahma stuti* from Gopa lila (10th Canto), and honored him by offering him a cloth and the title of Atibadi ("very great").

Jagannatha Das also used to go to recite the *Bhagavatam* in the houses of people and made no discrimination on the basis of bodily identification, befriending men and women in the same way. A famous incident regarded such confidential exchanges with Medha and Sumedha, two ladies endowed with great spiritual power and who were said to be going in the night to visit Jagannatha in the temple by their mystic powers after it was closed. Some envious men complained to king Prataparudra accusing Jagannatha Dasa of immoral behavior (illicit relationships with women) and the King called him for questioning. Jagannatha Dasa replied that for him there was no difference between men and women; he said that in fact when he was associating with ladies, he actually regarded himself as a woman, too.

The King did not believe him but when Jagannatha Das was put in jail he actually manifested himself in the form of a woman and the guards, impressed, called the King to witness such an extraordinary feat. King Prataparudra realized he had committed an offense to a great devotee, so not only he released him/her from prison, but he also asked that s/he gave initiation to his chief Queen into Bhakti yoga. The Queen invited Jagannatha Dasa within the royal palace, where he could open his own Matha, called Bada Odiya Matha.

It is said that by the order of Narada Muni, Jagannatha Das translated *Srimad Bhagavatam* into Oriya. This work gave him the reputation of the best spiritual teacher in Orissa in his times, and is still extremely popular even today, being worshiped and recited in all households. In fact in Orissa this text is considered on the same level of Tulasi Das' *Rama charita manasa*.

Jagannatha Dasa wrote also *Gupta Bhagavat*, *Tula vina*, *Sola chapadi*, *Chari chapadi*, *Tola bena*, *Daru brahma gita*, *Diksa samyad*, *Artha koili*, *Muguni stuti*, *Annamaya kundali*, *Goloka sarodhara*, *Bhakti chandrika*, *Kali malika*, *Indra malika*, *Niladri vilasa*, *Nitya gupta chintamani*, *Sri Krishna bhakti kalpa lata* and other books. The mula mantra he chanted and taught was the Rama mantra. He established two Mathas in Puri, the Bada Odiya Matha and the Satalahari Matha. His main disciple was Baliga Das. Jagannatha Dasa passed away on Sukla Magha saptami (the day of Chandrabhaga Mela in Konarak) in 1557, and his Samadhi Mandira is on the beach. His main disciples were Uddhava, Ramachandra, Gopinatha, Hari Das, Nandani Acharya, Vamani Mahapatra, Srimati Gaura, Gopala Das, Akhandala Mekapa, Janardana Pati, Krishna Das, Vanamali Das, Govardhana Das, Kanai Khuntia, Jagannatha Das and Madhusudana Das.

Yasobanta Das

He was born in 1482 near Aranga Nandi village, district of Cuttack, in a *kshatriya* family. His father was Balabhadra Mala, his mother was Rekha Devi. He married Anjana Devi, the sister of king Raghunath Champatti of Aranga. Later on, he took *sannyasa* and traveled to many holy places in India, he attained mystic powers and was able to change his form at will. The mula mantra he chanted and taught was the Shyama mantra.

He wrote *Govinda chandra*, *Shiva sarodaya*, *Sasti mala*, *Prema bhakti*, *Brahma gita*, *Atma pariche gita*, a *Malika* and several bhajans. The *Govinda chandra* became very famous in Assam, Bengal and north India; it is basically related with traditional dance and teaching of dance, connected with the Vaishnava tradition. His best disciple was Lohi Das. It is said that also the famous saint Salabega was his disciple. He left his body on Margasira sukla Sasti.

Sisu Ananta Das

He was born in Balipatna village, near Bhubaneswara, in 1488. His father's name was Kapila, and his mother's Gaura Devi.

In a dream he received from Surya Narayana in Konarak the order to go and meet Chaitanya, so he approached the party and took *diksha* initiation from Nityananda Prabhu. Sisu Ananta Das resided in Khandagiri, in what is today called Gadi Tapovana Ashram; through his Sadhana he attained mystic powers, and he was able to change his form at will. Usually he would take the form of a little child, hence his name as Sisu. In this form, he became the adopted son of the wife of king Prataparudra, who nursed him.

He personally found a Patita pavana (Jagannatha) murti in the Matha in Balia patana. His main disciples were Barang Das, Hamsa Das, and Sisu Das.

He wrote the *Bhakti mukti daya gita*, one of the oldest and most important popular scriptures of Orissa, and other texts like *Sisu Deva gita*, *Artha tarani*, *Udebhakara*, *Tirabhakana*, a *Malika* and several bhajan songs. In *Udaya bhagavata* he describes Lord Jagannatha as the combined form of Radha and Krishna. However, due to general lack of interest, these books are not properly valued at present.

Other members of the Atibadi sampradaya

The followers of the Sampradaya descending from the Pancha Sakhas are known for their work as social and religious reformers. Besides the original five associates of Chaitanya, also their disciples and grand disciples became famous, especially during the 1800s. For example, Dina Krishna Das, disciple of Madhusudhana Jyestha, Sikhara Das disciple of Pradyumna (who wrote a *Bhavisya Purana*), Bali Krishna Das, Nirakara Das, Hari Das, Artha Das, Bhima Bhai, and Abhiram Paramahamsa.

In 1871, Bhaktivinoda (also called Kedarnath Datta, the ideologist of the Gaudiya Matha movement) clashed with one Bishikishan, who claimed to belong to the Atibadi Sampradaya and was planning to drive the British out of Orissa.

As in that period Kedarnath Datta was a deputy magistrate for the British Government, he conducted investigations against the Atibadi Sampradaya, accusing them of “conspiring against the Government, being involved in drugs such as hashish and opium, practicing yoga and curing diseases with their mystic powers, and reciting the Malika, a series of revelations from the Lord, including the prediction of the time of the end of the world....”

The Achyutananda Malika

This mysterious text written by Achyutananda Das (and still not available in English translation) contains a series of disquieting prophecies, the most important being the departure of Jagannatha from Puri (moving to a place called Chatiya, where a Vaishnava will build a new temple) and the destruction of the city by a rising ocean, that echoes the *lila* of Krishna and Balarama leaving Dvaraka Puri to be submerged by the ocean.

Achyutananda writes that these events will come to pass about 5,000 years from the beginning of Kali yuga, during the reign of a Maharaja Divyasingha Deva, announced by a series of ominous signs such as frequent eclipses of the Sun and the Moon (sometimes two in the same month), cyclones and earthquakes, new incurable diseases, a bright comet appearing in the sky at night, stones falling from the tower of Sri Mandira, and a great war that will start from the holy lands of the Muslims (Arabia). There will be destruction and death everywhere, and scarcity of food. Varanasi will disappear. Finally a woman will take power and under the rule of the Maharani women will get justice.

The *Malika* says that at that time Jagannatha will appear in His Kalki avatara, a great Sudharma Sabha will be held in Virajapitha (Jajpur), and people will come from all over the world to Puri to take Darshana of Jagannatha and worship Him through Sankirtana.

The Achyutananda Ashram near Hirapur, Bhubaneswar, is still visited by many people searching for astrological and tantric consultation.

The seven Tantric maidens

Also called the Satvaheni (“seven sisters”), they were followers of the famous Tantric princess Lakshminkara, and although they came from low families they came to be very respected and even feared in Puri, and they are still worshiped today. They were Nitei Dhobani, Jnanadei Maluni, Gangi Gauduni, Sua Teluni, Luhukuti Luhurani, Sukuti Chamaruni, and Patrapindhi Saharuni

Nitei Dhobani

The most famous of the Seven Tantric Sisters in Puri is probably Nitei Dhobani, credited for the successful rise of king Chodaganga Deva to the throne, as we have mentioned in the chapter on Orissa’s history. The last king of the Keshari dynasty, Surya Keshari, had wronged one of his generals, Vasudeva Rath Vahinipati, so the Vahinipati went to Bhubaneswar where he engaged in austerities to please Lord Lingaraja. Lingaraja appeared to him in a dream and instructed him to find Ananta Varma (the future Chodaganga) and help him win the throne. It is said that Ananta Varma was the son of the Ganga king Devendra Varma Rajaraja I and his mother Rajasundari was the daughter of the great Chola king Rajendra Chola. However, there are other versions that would better explain why Ananta Varma was so happy to leave his own homeland and move to Puri to win a kingdom for himself. In fact, in Orissa his story is used as an example for any poor man without a family who suddenly rises to prominence: people will often call him “*randi pua ananta*”.

According to this other version, Ananta Varma was actually the son of a widow (*randi*) and his illegitimate father was called Gokarna. Chodaganga was a young boy playing the part of a king in a game with other boys when Vasudeva Vahinipati communicated to him the orders of the Lord Lingaraja to conquer Orissa and found a new royal dynasty. The boy was happy to take the opportunity offered to him by the Vahinipati and Nitei Dhobani, who taught Ananta Varma the occult arts and helped him, with advice and assistance, to dethrone Surya Keshari.

Chodaganga’s reign was a turning point for Orissa and especially for Puri, so much that he was called “the second Indradyumna”; he built the present Jagannatha temple in Puri, organized the city in Sahis (long neighborhood streets) and started the compilation of the *Madala Panji*.

The first meeting between Ananta Varma and Nitei Dhobani was particularly interesting. When the boy went to see “Auntie”, she was cooking her noon meal by using her own legs as fuel, and carrying a baby on her lap.

The Tantric Guru who had been supported by the Kesharis, Acharya Someshvar, was a worshiper of Aghora Shiva Markandeya. He challenged Nitei Dhobani, a staunch devotee of Jagannatha, to test her powers, and a date was fixed for a public test. Whoever was able to produce rice from dry rice husk in a *dhenki* or *udukhalo* (a pedal husking machine) would be the winner. Someshvar offered prayers to Shiva and bowed to the machine, but in spite of his efforts he was unable to produce any rice. Nitei Dhobani chanted her prayers to Jagannatha, offered respects to the machine, and immediately the rice started to flow out.

Still today some people worship Nitei Dhobani as a powerful personality, and in Chodanga Sahi, in the place called Badu Mahapatra Jaga, there is a small temple with the image of Nitei Dhobani and Chodaganga Deva. Nitei Dhobani, here called Garede Suni (“lady practicing witchcraft”), is sitting on a stool and operating the husking machine that was used for the contest. Chodaganga is seated on a throne and armed with bow and arrows, with two attendants on his sides (one holding the royal umbrella and the other holding the chamara), and two other attendants on the pedestal (one with an elephant and one with a horse).

Previously Jagannatha’s Mahaprasadam was regularly offered here to these two Deities, but it seems that the ritual has been discontinued about 40 years ago. On Vijaya Dasami (Asvina sukla Dasami) an annual function is still held here; the Bada Mahapatra from the Jagannatha’s temple takes the Balabhadra’s prasada, offers it to Vimala Devi within Sri Mandira, then carries a portion to the Deities of Nitei Dhobani and Chodaganga, as well as to a Hanuman Deity, that is housed in a small temple there.

Jnanadei Maluni

Jnanadei, a beautiful *malini* (garland maker) lived in Puri under the reign of king Mukunda Deva. Nobody really knew who she was or from where she came.

One night an old temple florist had a dream where he saw a little girl and he was told that he should accept her as an adopted daughter. The little girl actually came by his house on the next day and she became his adopted daughter, although nobody really knew where she was coming from.

After the death of her father she continued his service, making garlands for Lord Jagannatha and selling them to the people who visited the temple. In spite of her beauty, she never married. In fact she remained always indifferent to men, and she did not allow anyone to touch her even by mistake. She lived alone in her father’s house, but she kept many domestic animals, such as sheep and parrots, to whom she taught to sing the names of Jagannatha. Naturally the fantasy of the young men in Puri was excited by the idea of this beautiful girl who lived alone.

Once the son of a Panda went as far as touching her hand. Jnanadei never gave the garlands into the hands of anyone: she packed the garland in a clean banana leaf and put the packet down to be collected by the purchaser. The young man snatched the packed garland directly from her hand to get an excuse to touch her, but he was horrified and scared when he immediately experienced a great pain and loss of energy in his own hand.

The rumor spread and the interest of the young men in Puri was roused even more. A mix of strong attraction and fear pushed several young men to try to approach her, but at the last moment they backed out, terrified of being burned to death for their offense. However, fear did not stop the gossip and the fantasies that kept spreading like wild fire. Her neighbors were constantly looking for proof of her illicit sexual relations; at some point they started to say they had found hoof prints around her house, and this must mean that someone was going to see her secretly at night.

One day, in 1268, the King came to the temple and was also captivated by her beauty. After being informed about the gossips on her secret lovers the King ordered an investigation, but the spies were unable to even enter the house. They saw many amazing things, though. For example, under heavy rains in November Jnanadei was walking without umbrella, yet when she reached home, she looked perfectly dry. People then started believing she was a powerful tantric yogini, so the neighboring ladies crowded her house to get treatment for disease for their children. Jnanadei kindly helped them, giving miraculous water from her pot. The temple priests became more and more envious of her fame and employed black tantrics to stop her by making her become dumb, but they were unsuccessful.

In fact, their black magic backfired against them and they were the ones who became dumb. However, the black tantrics were able to reveal the secret of the five sheep in the house of Jnanadei, who were actually great tantrics that took the form of sheep during the day but at night returned to their normal shape.

The priests believed they had finally found some argument to accuse Jnanadei of immorality and they went to complain to the King, saying that the lady was a dangerous black tantric who enslaved men and transformed them into animals to have illicit sex with them. They mentioned that one of such men was the prince of Suvarnapura.

Frustrated in his own lust and worried about the power that this woman could have on princes from other kingdoms, the King became angry and ordered his soldiers to raid the house of Jnanadei and board it up. Before the soldiers arrived, one of her parrots warned Jnanadei of what was happening, but she remained undisturbed and did not run away, trusting in Jagannatha's protection. When the soldiers arrived, Jnanadei asked to be taken to the King's presence with her five sheep.

The King questioned her about the prince of Suvarnapura, who had gone to meet her. Jnanadei replied that indeed the prince had come to learn Tantra from her and he was still staying with her voluntarily. Then she patted one of the sheep and it immediately transformed into a young man, who bowed to the King. Also the other four sheep turned into men, and defended the character of Jnanadei, explaining that the priests were simply envious of the yogini's great spiritual powers.

Then the King asked Jnanadei if she could restore the priests' power of speech, and when she prayed to Jagannatha a great shadow descended taking the shape of Lord Jagannatha Himself. The priests were instantly cured, and Jnanadei offered Lord Jagannatha a *dhanva mala*, a special traditional garland that is 12 feet long garland and is worn between His arms.

Other famous devotees of Jagannatha

There are also other famous personalities connected with Puri and the *lilas* of Sri Jagannatha; it is difficult to list them in order of time period or in order of importance or fame, therefore we apologize in advance for any impropriety in such list.

Salabega

He was the son of the Muslim warrior Lalbeg, who served under Raja Man Singh in the Mogul army. While he was in Danda Mukundpur near Pipili, this warrior saw a beautiful *brahmana* widow called Lalita who was taking bath in the village pond; he kidnapped and married her. Her son Salabega was born on 16 September 1592 (Radhashtami), in a house that still exists in Cuttack near Lal Beg Fort, that had been assigned as residence to his mother. Lalbeg remained in Cuttack for a short time and then departed, leaving behind Lalita and the child. Despite her forced conversion to Islam, Lalita continued to worship Lord Jagannatha and also raised her child in a strong sentiment of *bhakti* for the Lord.

In 1607 Lalbeg was appointed the Subadar of Bengal by Jahangir and he called his son to fight besides him against the Afghans who had rebelled against the Delhi sultanate. In one clash on the battlefield, the young Salabega was wounded and his father was killed. The injury was very serious, infection spread and his condition worsened, the pain becoming intolerable.

His mother called a Hindu Sadhu of the name Bala Mukunda, who chanted the *maha mantra* near his bed for 21 days and put holy *vibhuti* (ashes) on his forehead. Salabega's mother also kept encouraging her son to pray Lord Jagannatha for his recovery and in fact suddenly his health was restored. His miraculous healing encouraged him to develop an even deeper faith and devotion to Sri Jagannatha.

Gradually his faith and worship for Sri Jagannatha made him very unpopular with the Muslims, and finally he was driven out of his house and deprived of all rights. So he decided to walk alone and penniless to Puri, but when he reached there he was not allowed to enter Lord Jagannatha's temple and no Matha or Hindu house was willing to give him shelter. Finally he built himself a small hut made of Tala palm leaves at Balagandi in Grand Road, from where he anxiously waited for the chariots to come by for the Ratha Yatra festival. With great amazement of the people, all three the chariots stopped in front of his hut, one after the other, while he stood singing his famous prayers.

Jagannatha's chariot could not be moved for over one hour and finally the Pandas humbly prayed Salabega to pull the ropes of the chariot so that it would start moving again.

When the Subadar of Cuttack Mirja Ahmed Beg came to attack the Jagannatha temple in Puri, Salabega went to meet him and by his pleading averted the attack. King Narasimha Deva, grateful, gave Salabega official permission to build a permanent housing instead of the simple hut, and people started to come from all over India to visit his Matha.

His mother Lalita also came to stay with him in Puri, and when she passed away Salabega took her body to the Svargadvara, the crematorium in Puri, for her final rites. However, the temple priests not only forbade him to access the crematorium, but also attacked his Matha to show their spite and hatred for what they considered an act of presumption and arrogance.

Salabega then travelled to Vrindavana. However, Vrindavana had come under the attack of Aurangzeb who had set out to destroy the temples there, so Salabega decided to return to Orissa and be in Puri for the Ratha Yatra. During his travelling he fell ill and became worried about not making it in time for the festival, so he ardently prayed Jagannatha to wait for him. It was the year 1489.

Meanwhile the Ratha Yatra festival started but after reaching Balagandi, in front of today's Salabega's Matha, Lord Jagannatha's chariot stopped and it was impossible to move it, in spite of many auspicious ceremonies such as fire sacrifices, Kirtanas, and all physical efforts including the strength of the largest elephants that were harnessed to pull it. Instead, a great flood came up and the chariots were totally blocked for three months. The chariot finally moved only when Salabega arrived in Puri and came to offer his homage to Jagannatha on His chariot.

King Narasimha was now strongly convinced of the special favour of Jagannatha for Salabega and he ordered that he should be allowed to enter the temple, but the priests refused to comply. For Salabega, however, Lord Jagannatha's affection was sufficient and he remained in Puri for the rest of his life. He passed away in 1646, and his body turned miraculously into a heap of fragrant flowers.

Salabhega's Samadhi is situated in Balagandi, near the Balagandi Chata Matha of the Ramanandi Sampradaya, and every year the Chariot of Jagannatha stops at Chatamatha, or the *samadhi* of Salabega (near Mausima temple) during its travel. Salabega wrote at least 150 songs in various languages on Jagannatha, Radha Krishna, Shiva, and Maa Mangala. The most famous is the song *Ahe Nila Saila* (O great blue mountain):

O great blue mountain God
like an elephant You come out of the temple
to remove the dense forest of our suffering
Plucking it like a small lotus in Your trunk,
You crush all our sorrow into the earth

Some of Salabega's songs are transliterated and translated in the chapter entitled Jagannatha Bhajans.

Dasia Bouri

One of the most famous non-Brahmin devotees of Jagannatha, Dasia Bouri is said to have been a contemporary of the Pancha sakhas, but there is no clear information about the time frame of his life. He was a devotee born in a low caste family of sweepers in the village of Baligram near Puri, but he gave up the traditional occupation of his family, which he considered too dirty, and became a weaver by profession. Although he married, he had no children. Every evening he used to sing new songs for Jagannatha in his hut, composing beautiful poetry even if he was illiterate. Once he heard the voice of Lord Jagannatha saying, "I have created everybody, and all are My sons and daughters. For Me there is no difference between low caste and high caste, as nobody is ever separated from Me".

When the Ratha Yatra day arrived, Dasia Bouri traveled to Puri with other pilgrims from his village, and reached the city when the chariots were already starting to move. So he waited at Balagandi instead of going all the way to the temple, and he remained immersed in the contemplation of the Lord, humbly feeling that because of his birth he was not worthy of getting on the chariot to embrace Jagannatha. When he came back home that night, he was so immersed in the ecstasy of love for Jagannatha that he was seeing Jagannatha everywhere, including within his bowl of watery rice, and thus he was unable to eat.

In the night, Jagannatha appeared to him and offered a boon, so Dasia Bouri asked to be able to offer Him something personally in spite of his low social position. The next morning Dasia Bouri purchased a coconut from his landlord, then he entrusted the coconut to the head priest of his village who was going for Darshana to the temple of Lord Jagannatha, together with several devotees carrying many offerings from the village. The priest was perplexed, but Dasia Bouri insisted, saying, “Do not give the coconut to Jagannatha unless He takes it directly from your hand. Just say that I am sending this coconut and ask Him to take it. If He doesn't, bring back the coconut to me.”

The Brahmin decided that after all he could at least show the coconut before the Deity in the temple hall, and then return the coconut to Dasia Bouri. So when he reached the temple he stood in a little empty space near the Garuda stambha holding the coconut in his hands, and mentally presenting it to Jagannatha in the name of Dasia Bouri. Suddenly the coconut disappeared from his hands, to the great amazement of everyone. Almost immediately, one of the Puja Pandas cried out from the altar, saying that something very strange was happening: pieces of coconut shells were falling around there.

Some time later, Dasia Bouri personally went to Puri with a basket of mangoes and while standing outside the temple, contemplated Lord Jagannatha in the Nila chakra above the temple dome. Immediately the mangoes disappeared from his basket. Some temple priests who had seen the miraculous event rushed inside the temple and found mango peels and seeds laying around the altar, and drops of mango juice dripping down the face of Lord Jagannatha's Deity. Some say that Dasia Bouri used to send a basket of mangoes every year to the Lord, and that the same miracle would happen again and again.

Several other miracles are also ascribed to Dasia. It is said that once he showed his wife Malati the reflection of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra within the Gothagadia pond behind their hut; this pond is still considered sacred and nobody uses it to bathe or wash utensils or clothes. Nobody also uses it to fish, especially since then a villager who was cooking some fish caught from the pond found his pot filled with blood. The local people also say that the pond is protected by black cobras.

The story of another miracle, similar to the story of Draupadi's pot, says that once Jagannatha visited Dasia Bouri's house one night, disguised as an ordinary traveler, and asked for food. Dasia's wife offered whatever scraps she could from the pot, and the traveler was satisfied. At the same time, the King of Puri had a dream in which he was alerted about Dasia Bouri's precarious conditions, and he arranged for food to be sent to his house; it is said that it was the King's duty to send the first Mahaprasadam to Dasia Bouri's house. After the death of Dasia Bouri, the King of Puri granted his relatives the service of carrying the wooden horses and the charioteers to the Rathas for the festival.

Sriya Chandaluni

Another famous story that is practically impossible to place in time is the tale of devotion of a *chandala* woman who pleased Lakshmidēvi with her sincere offering during the traditional Lakshmi puja every Thursday during the month of Margasira. Still today, this tradition is followed faithfully by the women of Puri, who clean their houses with special care and decorate them with drawings made with a paste of uncooked white rice. Then a special ceremony is held and foods are offered to the Devi.

This very popular story from the *Lakshmi Purana*, that has also inspired a famous local film (entitled “Jaya Jagannatha”) tells how once Lakshmidēvi was visiting the houses of the people in Puri on one of such occasions. After visiting many homes, Lakshmidēvi saw a small humble house in the neighbourhood of the street sweepers that had been cleaned and decorated with special attention. The floor had been freshly plastered with a new coating, and in front of the door there were nice drawings of lotus flowers.

The Chandaluni who lived in that house had prepared a lamp with ten wicks and an offering of ten different fruits and flowers that according to the tradition are particularly favored by Lakshmidēvi. The Chandaluni had prepared a *ghi* lamp with ten wicks and prepared an offering of ten different fruits and flowers among those preferred by Lakshmidēvi, and was offering beautiful prayers with great devotion.

Lakshmidēvi was very pleased and accepted the offering of Her sincere devotee. However, when Lakshmidēvi returned to Sri Mandir, Balabhadra decreed that She had now become polluted because She had accepted food in the house of an untouchable, becoming an untouchable Herself, and therefore She should be banned from the temple.

Enraged to see that devotion had been subordinated to birth prejudice, Lakshmidēvi cursed both Jagannatha and Balabhadra to remain without food or any other comfort until They accepted to take food from Her hand, thus becoming “untouchables” just like Her. Lakshmidēvi went to live on the sea beach (in the place called Chakratirtha), in a wonderful palace built by Visvakarma. From there She cast a spell on Jagannatha and Balabhadra, making Them fall in a deep sleep, and summoned eight Vitalas, ordering them to go and plunder the temple storage rooms, not leaving even a grain of rice. She also made sure that nobody would offer food to Them even if They begged for it.

In the form of two Brahmin brothers, Jagannatha and Balabhadra wondered around Puri, begging unsuccessfully for the entire day, and finally a fellow beggar suggested Them to try at the seashore palace of Sriya Chandaluni, that was famous for its abundance of food. After some hesitation and an unsuccessful attempt at compromising on “purity” by personally cooking the ingredients supplied by Sriya Chandaluni’s servants, the two brothers gave up Their pride and were served such a sumptuous feast that They immediately recognized the wonderful cooking of Lakshmidēvi. Lakshmidēvi accepted to forgive Them, on the condition that Mahaprasada could be shared by all without any consideration of birth or ritual purity. According to some versions of the story, Sriya Chandaluni was originally a Sabari, a tribal woman who worshiped Nila Madhava in the forest by offering Him pancakes.

Charchika

When we speak of devotees of Lord Jagannatha, generally people think of ordinary human beings only, but it is a universally recognized fact in Puri that the Devas and Devis, too, come to the Holy Dhama to show their deep devotion for the Lord of the Universe. In fact, it is said that they usually go to Darshana at the time of Pahuda, the particular ritual ceremony when Lord Jagannatha goes to sleep at night.

The *Madala Panji* say that in 1368, one day the Goddess Charchika from Banki village arrived late for Darshana and Lord Baladeva banned her from attending Pahuda, saying that in her carelessness and pride, she had offended the service of the Bhitarcha Mahapatra, who is in charge of the smooth observance of the ritual. The Goddess was perplexed; she could understand that Lord Baladeva was up to some special *lila* for the benefit of the universe, and she remained all night on the 22 steps of the entrance to the temple, meditating on the divine plan to instruct proud human beings through her example. In the morning Lord Baladeva sent out a message from Lord Jagannatha, ordering her to become a servant in the house of the Bhitarcha Mahapatra, to atone for her lack of respect.

Disguised as a young widow in a white sari, Goddess Charchika went to the house of the Mahapatra, who welcomed her like his own mother. She said she was ordered by Jagannatha to become his servant, and the Mahapatra gladly accepted her as a member of his family and asked her to take care of the house, as his own mother had recently died. The young lady showed a great expertise, taking care of the puja room, cleaning the utensils, changing the dress of the Deities and lighting the lamps always in a perfect way. People were astonished to see her devotional attitude and good manners, and asked her why she was not going to the temple to have Darshana of Jagannatha; so many pilgrims came from far away places and yet while living in Puri she did not go. She replied that everything depends on one’s own destiny; she was not supposed to visit Lord Jagannatha in His temple yet, and she would go when Jagannatha wanted. One day there was a big storm and darkness fell. The Bhitarcha Mahapatra found his way back home and knocked at the door, but the lamp had just gone out. He somehow entered and handed the Mahaprasada, then he went to change into dry and clean clothes. But he was perplexed. He asked how the young widow had managed to rekindle the lamp without getting the flame from other lamps in the house or from neighbors, and Charchika taking her original form stretched one leg to the top of the temple and used the lamp there to light another house lamp.

After revealing her real identity, Goddess Charchika explained all the events behind the *lila* and the Bhitarcha Mahapatra assured her that he would ask Lord Jagannatha permission for her to visit the temple. Lord Jagannatha was very pleased with Charchika and gave her the responsibility to care for the Ratha during the festival. Before leaving the house of the Mahapatra she offered him a boon, and he replied that he just wanted to see her again. So the Mahapatra went to his puja room and saw a stone *vighraha* of the Devi manifested from the floor; it is said that the *vighraha* is still there.

Ganapati Bhatta

He was born in Kamari in Karnataka, and he was a great devotee of Lord Ganesha. Once, while reading the *Brahma Purana*, had a vision of Lord Jagannatha worshipped in Nilagiri and assisted to the *arati* in his subtle body. Later he came to Puri and on the day of Snana Purnima he had Darshana of Lord Jagannatha, seeing Him in the form of Ganesha. It is said that from that day, Jagannatha wears His Hati Vesha (elephant dress) in honour of His devotee.

Manohar Das

Another special outfit (Vesha) of Lord Jagannatha, the Padma Vesha, is said to be connected with an extraordinary story of devotion. One Sadhu from North India named Manohar Das, who was a great devotee of Jagannatha, wanted to have Darshan of Jagannath and so started for Puri on foot. He had to walk a long distance and when he got tired he would rest in a Matha or under a tree. While walking he felt extremely thirsty and saw a pond nearby; he took bath and drank water from the pond to his content and while he was going back, to his great surprise he saw beautiful lotus flowers in the pond. It was winter and lotuses usually don't bloom at that time. Considering this as a special opportunity to serve Lord Jagannatha, he plucked the lotuses and tied them up in his personal towel to resume his journey, arriving at Puri on Magha Amavasya. By the time he reached Puri the flowers had dried. The Sadhu handed the used towel with the dried flowers to one Sevaka asking him to offer the flowers to Jagannatha but the Sevaka, outraged, threw away flowers and towel, abusing Manohar Das and driving him out of the temple. Manohar Das, feeling very humiliated, picked up the flowers and walked out of the temple, collapsing near the Bada Chhata Matha. The same night the Gajapati King was informed in a dream about Manohar Das and was instructed to do the Badashringara Vesha of the Srijius with the lotus flowers brought by Manohar Das and offer *khiri* prepared with lotus seeds. The Gajapati went to meet Manohar Das and requested him to offer his lotuses to the Srijius for the Veshas, to which Manohar Das happily consented. He was granted a grand welcome to the Ratna Simhasana and as soon as the dried lotus touched the Srianga, they bloomed with freshness. Everyone was pleased with Manohar Das' devotion and presented him with the *khiri* Mahaprasada made of lotus seeds that was offered to the Srijius.

Gita Panda

In the 15th century in Puri lived a *brahmana* who became known as Gita Panda because he was extremely attached to the *Bhagavad Gita*. Austere and simple minded, he was totally detached from worldly pleasures and constantly immersed in the sublime teachings of Sri Krishna.

Every morning after taking bath he would sit and recite the *slokas* carefully and faithfully before setting out for his daily duty of visiting the houses of the village to beg for food for his family. One day, his wife prodded him to skip some chapters so that he could get out earlier and beg some more food for the children, but the *brahmana* could not be distracted from his meditation and replied that in *Gita* Krishna teaches that one should perform his duty without caring for joy or sorrow, gain or loss. Enraged, the wife took a pen and scratched off the verses of *Gita* that contained those teachings, but her anger turned to horror when she saw blood oozing from the scratches on the palm leaf manuscript.

In the following months the general situation worsened due to a severe draught in the region. The harvest was lost, food was very scarce and many people went begging for food from house to house. Life was even more difficult, but Gita Panda's mind was not disturbed, and he remained fixed in meditating on Krishna.

One day, while Gita Panda was contemplating Jagannatha as the source of all opulence, someone knocked at his door. His wife answered the call, and saw that the visitor was a young man carrying a big load of rice, ghi, dal, yogurt, panir, turmeric and mustard seeds. He introduced himself as a cowherd boy, the younger son of Vrajaraja, and he said that Gita Panda's friend Jagu had sent all this food.

The Panda's wife was very happy and invited the young dairyman to stay for dinner, but he answered he really could not. It was very late, he had many things to do, and besides he was unable to eat because his tongue had been badly scratched. When the lady saw the injuries on the boy's tongue, she was horrified and asked who had committed such an evil act. The dairyman smiled and answered, "your husband knows", then he left.

Bandhu Mohanti

Bandhu Mohanti was a very humble and simple devotee born in a non-Brahmin family in the village of Satapada, near Puri. He was always contemplating, reading and talking about Jagannatha as his friend, so his wife believed he had a local friend by that name, and resented the fact that he was spending more time with his friend Jagannatha than with his family.

One day she asked Bandhu Mohanti who his friend was, and when he replied that Jagannatha was a very wealthy King, living in a very large palace in royal luxury, she suggested that they go visit him and ask for his help. Bandhu Mohanti objected that their clothes were not good enough for such a visit, and the gatekeepers of the palace may not allow them in. So before going to see Jagannatha they needed new clothes and ornaments for them all.

The already bad financial situation of the family and the village became worse as the 1392 harvest failed and food became more expensive, so finally Bandhu Mohanti submitted to the repeated requests of his wife and together with her and their three children they started to walk to Puri. After three days they reached Puri, but as it was night the temple doors were closed. So they rested at Pejanala, on the south side of the temple, where the cows come to drink the rice water draining from the temple kitchen, and Bandhu Mohanti's wife fed her starving children with that rice water before they all went to sleep.

Suddenly the wife woke up and saw a young black *brahmana* carrying on his head a heavy load of different types of delicious food in a golden tray. The boy was walking around and calling for Bandhu Mohanti, and when the wife replied, the boy smiled and said, "Bandhu Mohanti's friend has sent this food for him, please take it". Bandhu Mohanti was in deep sleep, so his wife decided not to wake him up. She thanked the boy and gave the food to the children.

When Bandhu Mohanti woke up in the morning and was told what had happened, he was amazed at the miracle and the only pain in his immense happiness was the idea that he had been unable to see his Lord because he had been sleeping. He gratefully ate whatever food was left, then he cleaned the tray with great devotion and kept it hidden under his pillow, so that nobody would steal it. In the meantime, the priests in the temple found out that a valuable golden tray was missing in the temple and reported the matter to king Virakisora. The police was sent to search all the surroundings of the temple and soon they apprehended Bandhu Mohanti, recovered the golden tray and prepared to punish the alleged thief severely, although Bandhu Mohanti's wife and children kept crying that they were innocent, and the golden tray had been given to them by Bandhu's wealthy friend.

The next night, Jagannatha appeared to the King in a dream to defend His devotee, explaining what had happened and ordered him to release Bandhu Mohanti immediately. So the King did, offering great honor and apologies to him. Bandhu Mohanti and his descendents were also given the service of cooking the first meal of the day for Sri Jagannatha, particularly the sweet rice dish called *khechedi*, and carry it in that very same golden tray to the Deities.

Karmabai

Under the reign of king Virakisora, a saintly lady from Maharastra called Karmabai and her aged Guru Indra Swami came to pilgrimage to Puri and out of devotion they decided to remain to live there in a small Ashrama.

Once Karmabai was visiting the temple while the priest was presenting the offering, but for some reason the food was declared unfit and discarded by the priest. Karmabai rushed to the altar, saying that maybe Jagannatha wanted to take food from her hand, and she tried to informally present Sri Jagannatha with a pot of rice personally cooked by her, but she was stopped by the temple servants. Shortly afterwards, the priests in the temple of Sri Jagannatha found that no food offerings were accepted by the Lord any more. Usually it is said that the food is accepted when the priest can see Sri Jagannatha's image reflected into a drop of water he is holding in his hand. But the image of the Lord did not appear any more in the water: instead, the food immediately became rotten and had to be discarded.

Jagannatha appeared to the King in a dream and told him that a very dear devotee, Karmabai, was suffering because of neglect and therefore He had decided not to accept any more food from the priests until Karmabai's sufferings had been alleviated. The King sent men around to find Karmabai and one of them, called Badu, arrived at the Ashram and strongly felt the presence of Jagannatha there.

He then saw Karmabai coming out of the kitchen, where she had just finished cooking. Badu took Karmabai to the King, who arranged for her maintenance from the royal treasure. Then Karmabai requested to be allowed to offer her *khechadi* directly to Lord Jagannatha as she had desired to do, and the King ordered that her desire would be granted. The priests took the pot to the altar and to their surprise they found that Jagannatha was gladly eating her offering! Still today one of the most popular items in the Mahaprasada is called Karmabai's *khechadi*.

Bhil Prithu

It is actually very difficult to place the story of Bhil Prithu within a specific time frame, as it refers to a period when the temple of Sri Jagannatha in Puri was deserted and in disrepair, and has been transmitted by oral tradition only. The Bhils are a tribal population in Orissa who live in a very simple and natural way, depending on the forest products and without observing the complex Vedic ceremonies or practices. *Padma purana* mentions the Bhils among the non-Vedic populations who attained the highest spiritual realization by worshipping Sri Jagannatha.

It is said that one young man of the Bhil tribe once wandered around the temple of Sri Jagannatha and climbed on a tree to collect fruits. From that vantage position, he was able to see the wonderful form of the Lord. Inspired by spontaneous devotion, he entered the dilapidated temple and offered some fruits to the Lord; a piece of the offered fruits fell to the ground and the man automatically picked it and ate it, thus attaining immediate spiritual realization to the point of liberation from all material conditionings. It is said that after this incident the entire Bhil tribe started to repair the temple and re-established a simple form of worship for the Lord.

Princess Vishnupriya

Queen Candravati, the wife of king Jayasinha of Kora in Rajasthan (near the border with Kashmir) was very ill, and the remedies and *pujas* prescribed by the court astrologers had given no good result. Princess Vishnupriya sat her mother's bedside and kept praying God for help. One day she heard a beggar singing outside in the street and she send out a servant to find out who he was and what he was singing about.

The servant reported that the beggar was a yogi from Sri Kshetra singing songs to Jagannatha, and that after being informed of the predicament of the royal family, he had given a small piece of Mahaprasada for the Queen; if she ate the morsel of sanctified food, her past karma would be purified and she would be cured.

Princess Vishnupriya gave the single bit of Mahaprasada to her dying mother, who immediately felt a great relief and happiness, and a new strength that revived her body. Then during the night the Queen remembered that once she had visited Puri for some days with her husband, and that on that occasion she had prayed for a daughter that resembled Jagannatha, promising that she would be dedicated to Him as His wife. At the same time that night the princess had a dream: she saw Lord Jagannatha standing with open arms, waiting to be garlanded by her. After this incident the princess developed a great devotion for Lord Jagannatha, and the entire royal family became more and more devoted to Him.

Once the Talucha Mahapatra of the Sri Jagannatha temple visited Kota to distribute Mahaprasada in that region, and having heard of the devotion of the princess, he visited the royal palace. After meeting Jagannatha's servant and hearing the glories of the Lord, Vishnupriya's love for Jagannatha increased even more, and after another vivid dream she actually started to feel Jagannatha kissing and embracing her. At the end of his visit the Mahapatra received many gifts from the Queen, then he turned to the princess and asked her if she wanted to send anything to Lord Jagannatha. The princess sat down to write a letter to her beloved Jagannatha, but she composed one single Sanskrit verse: "He is all-pervading like space and His outstretched arms can embrace everyone at the same time, so one does not need to go anywhere to be near Him."

While traveling back to the temple, the Mahapatra felt increasingly curious about what the princess had written, so he opened the letter and read it. As the princess was a very educated woman, the priest was expecting a long and complicated poem, and he was very perplexed to find that single strange verse, that made no sense to his eyes. So he decided it was just some useless blabbering, and he threw it away by the roadside.

Finally he reached back to his house in Puri, and he went to take some rest. Jagannatha appeared to him in a dream and rebuked him for failing in his duty to deliver the letter. He said that the letter was more valuable to Him than all the gold and valuables the Mahapatra had carried back. In fact, Jagannatha said, He Himself had picked up the discarded letter and He was holding it to His heart on His altar. After getting up, the Mahapatra went to the temple and actually found the letter on Jagannatha's chest.

Dhananjaya Mehta

In 1727 a wealthy and proud man from Hyderabad came to Puri to accompany his family in sacred pilgrimage. However, he lacked the faith and devotion manifested by his family, and remained skeptical about the actual position of Lord Jagannatha as the King of the Universe. In fact, he was convinced that his own great opulence was superior to the properties and lifestyle of Lord Jagannatha.

He decided to challenge Lord Jagannatha's superiority by offering 100,000 rupees in donation if the temple priests were able to use the entire sum to prepare one single food offering. At that time 100 rupees were sufficient to pay for an entire offering. So the Sevakas held a prayer meeting in front of Jagannatha to ask Him what to do.

Lord Jagannatha appeared in a dream to the head priest, suggesting that there was not even need to prepare a full meal in order to spend that amount of money. In fact, He said, that amount could be demonstrated insufficient even for a single piece of *pan* – albeit a special one, worthy of the opulence of the Lord of the Universe. In that single piece of *pan*, the betel nut within the *pan* leaf should be smeared not with lime but with the powder of a rare pearl that is sometimes naturally growing within the forehead of a bull elephant. When the wealthy man was informed, he realized he had been outsmarted, as one single ordinary elephant cost 100,000 and such a rare elephant would cost much more. He was unable to pay even for one single piece of *pan*! His pride was shattered, and the only thing he could do now was to humbly offer his respect and devotion to the Lord.

Shankara Deva

Although Shankara Deva is not associated with the city of Puri specifically, he was a very sincere devotee of Sri Jagannatha and he introduced the celebration of Ratha Yatra in the village of Satrusala on the border between Bengala and Assam, where he lived.

Shankara Deva was born on Vijaya Dasami in 1449, at Baradua in Assam. His father was Kusumabare and his mother was Satyasandha. At the age of 31 he received the visit of Jagadisha Mishra from Varanasi, who asked him to teach him the *Bhavartha Dipika* by Sridhara Svami. He wrote *Oresa Varnana*, a collection of 21 songs in Assamese language. His preaching comprised the necessity of association with genuine devotees (*satsanga*), congregational chanting of the Holy Name (*sankirtana*) and the recitation of Srimad *Bhagavata Purana* (*bhagavata patha*). While in Assam, he initiated the king Nara Narayana as his disciple.

Kabir Das

He was born on 1389 at Lahartalao, Varanasi from a Brahmin lady but he was abandoned at birth and raised by a Muslim couple, therefore he was sometimes considered a Muslim or an outcaste. Later he was adopted by Ramananda Swami and became his disciple, but then he continued with his own Sampradaya called Nirakari, meaning that his followers worshiped the "formless".

When he visited Puri, Kabir was wearing a Muslim cap and so the Pandas refused him entry into the temple. Suddenly they saw that miraculously all the people going in and out the temple appeared to wear a similar Muslim cap. Also, during the night the Bada Panda had a dream where Jagannatha told him directly that Kabir was a great devotee and he should be allowed to enter the temple and have Darshana.

Once the sea had come up to the Simhadvara, the main gate of the temple, and Sri Jagannatha asked that Kabir Das should be brought there to stop the sea. The King, impressed, granted him some land, now called Kabir Chata or Kabir Chaura Matha. In his honor the special recipe of watery rice called *tanka torani* was introduced in the daily worship to Sri Jagannatha. According to the teachings of Kabir, God resides in the heart of the worshiper, and even takes the form of tortoise or boar, so nobody is really impure. Still today, at the Kabir Choura Matha pilgrims take a spoonful of water mixed with Mahaprasadam rice, called Torani.

Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh movement, was born on 23 November 1469 at Talwandi (now in Pakistan) in a Hindu family, but his life mission was to mediate between Hinduism and Islam. Since his childhood he made friends with Muslim children, studied Arabic and Persian, discussed philosophy both with Hindu and Muslim scholars, and at the age of 13 when he was expected to accept the sacred thread, he rejected it, stating that compassion, simplicity, austerity and truthfulness were much better than cotton thread and knots.

On the request of his parents he married Sulakhani (Sulakshana) and had two sons, Sri Chand and Lakshmi Chand, but he used all his free time before and after work to meditate and chant, together with his old friend Mardana, a Muslim musician. One morning he went with Mardana to take bath in the river, and while in the water he had a revelation, which is now at the beginning of the Guru Granth Sahib of the Sikhs: "There is only one God, his name is Truth and he is the Creator. He fears none, he hates none, he never dies and is beyond the cycle of births and deaths, is self-effulgent and is realized through the kindness of the genuine Guru".

After this revelation, he left his job and distributed all his possessions to the poor, saying, "There are no Hindus or Muslims. Let the grace of God be the mosque, devotion the prayer carpet; let the Koran be good behavior, modesty be compassion, fasting be kindness, Kaaba be your good acts and your Imam be truthfulness". At the age of 30, in 1499, Guru Nanak started to walk around India, traveling over 50,000 miles on foot in 25 years, offering his teachings in the form of songs in the local languages and opening centers called *manji*, where his followers could gather to sing and meditate. This was the beginning of Sikhism.

On his way to Puri, he rested in the village of Sangat in Balasore district and set up a Guru ka Langar (community kitchen) and community prayer hall. In the village there is still a place called Nanak Diha, where Nanak built his cottage. Guru Nanak reached Cuttack and rested at Kaliaboda on the Mahanadi, was received by the Gajapati. Some envious opponents came to beat him with a Sahaba branch, but he used it as a *datan* (toothbrush) and planted it as a sapling, which still exists as a tree at the Gurudvara.

Guru Nanak arrived in Puri in 1506 (some say in 1508), accompanied by Mardana and Bala, and they camped on the beach. As they were thirsty, Nanak told them to dig a hole in the sand and they found fresh drinking water at a few feet from the sea, a very amazing and inexplicable feat. Baula is the Punjabi name for fresh water holes, and that's how the Matha got its name. Still the Grantha Sahib is worshiped there, and there is a Guru ka Langar and Sangats (holy association). Guru Nanak sent his devotee Mardana to get some Mahaprasada, but the Sevakas did not allow him into the temple. Then, during the evening *arati*, in the presence of the King, a golden pot full of Mahaprasada miraculously flew away by itself towards the seashore to Nanak.

The King went to meet him and in the course of their discussion on Sri Jagannatha asked him if he was not feeling bad not being allowed into the temple. As a reply, Guru Nanak showed the palm of his hand to the King, who with great amazement saw there the forms of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. Nanak also told the King that the real *arati* (worship) is the one performed within one's heart. Very impressed, the King offered him the property of the land where he had camped, today called Bauli Matha. Guru Nanak also established the Mangu Matha, where his footprints are visible.

The Grantha Sahib is said to contain a song that Nanak is said to have composed for Jagannatha, comparing the Sun and Moon to arati lamps, the forests to the flower garlands, and the sandalwood scented breeze to incense. Some say that Guru Nanak met Sri Chaitanya in Puri, in 1518, and that they sang and danced together in Harinama Sankirtana.

Nanak died on 22 September 1539, leaving his foremost disciple Angad (a devotee of Durga named Lehna) to continue his mission. Hindus wanted to cremate his body while Muslims wanted to bury it, and when they went to lift the shroud they only found a heap of fresh flowers: the flowers were divided between the two groups, that respectively cremated and buried their share.

Guru Nanak's son, Sri Chanji was born on Bhadra sukla Navami 1494 in a village named Talbandi (presently known as Nankana Sahib) close to Lahore. His Diksha guru was Abhinash Muni, and his Siksha guru was Purushottama Kol, a Kashmiri pandit.

Sri Chanji is credited to have written Bhasyas on Veda and Gita; some of them are known as Sri Chandra siddhanta sagar, Sri Chandra sabda sudhar, Sri Chandra siddhanta panchakam, Ratna panchakam, Mukti manjari, Sri Chandra siddhanta manjari, Sri Chandra panchadasi, Sri Chandra pancakam, Sri Chandra panchadevashtaka etc.

Captain Beatle

The people of Puri love to mention this Christian French man, captain of a ship, who choose to donate to Jagannatha a bronze bell that was intended to be installed on a church tower in south India. In one sense he could also be listed among the “devotees of Jagannatha”, although there is no mention of any other act of devotion or conversion from his part. Here is the story.

In the 1650s a French ship was traveling from France to Pondicherry, carrying a full cargo of spices and a large bell destined for a Pondicherry Christian church. When the ship reached Chandanpur, it was caught in a sudden but violent storm. At the same time, a large whale appeared on the ship’s course, threatening to wreck it. Captain Beatle, an old seaman with many years of experience, was at a loss. There was nothing he could do to save his passengers and the ship. He could only ring the warning bell to alert the people on board about the grave danger, and pray God for help. While all the passengers panicked and despaired, one old Indian passenger was sitting quietly looking at a painted picture of Jagannatha, whispering prayers.

The captain asked the old man what he was doing, and in return he was instructed about the glories of Lord Jagannatha, the all-powerful Lord of the Universe; the captain was deeply impressed by the his devotion, and in despair offered all the wealth of the ship and his own devotion to this Hindu Deity if Lord Jagannatha could save the ship.

Immediately the whale turned away and disappeared into the depths of the ocean, and with a last deafening lighting the storm died out. Once they reached the shore, Captain Beatle ordered all the valuables, including the church bell, to be donated to the temple in gratitude. The bell is still kept in the old courtyard of the original office of the temple, called Garad.

Phalahari Baba

In 1834 a short bearded man from Romania came to Puri and became a Hindu, marrying the daughter of a Panda. He built himself an Ashram in Harachandi Sahi, Svargadvara, and became famous for distributing fruit Prasadam.

The history of Orissa

First of all, we need to inform the readers that very little is officially known by historians about the ancient history of Orissa and especially its time lines, so almost every historian gives different dates for the kingdoms of the various monarchs and dynasties. The dates we have given are therefore simply indicative and several versions appear of the same stories, depending on which side is telling it.

The traditional source of the Puri temple, the *Raja bhoga* section of the *Madala panji*, was not written in its present form before the 16th century, as the present version abounds in Arabic and Persian references such as Amura, Patisa, Mogala, Pathana, Nabava, Jamidara, Laskara, Fauja, Phuruna and Itwala. Many different versions on palm leaf manuscripts have been found in various places of Orissa.

The Vedic period

Anciently Orissa was known as Odra Desha; the present territory comprised smaller kingdoms known as Uktala (the northern part, from the Hoogly Ganga at Calcutta to the Mahanadi), Kalinga (from the Mahanadi to the Godavari), Tosali, Kangoda, Dasarna and south Kosala down to the Krishna river.

Orissa had a very developed maritime fleet that controlled most of the sea routes from the Bay of Bengal, and for several centuries established colonies in Kampuchea (Cambodia), Java, Sumatra, Bali and Thailand, as well as Rome and the Mediterranean countries, China and the Arabian sea, including some west African regions. Under the rule of Kalinga (Orissa), the famous temple of Angkor Vat was built, in honor of Krishna.

It also established trade connections with Simhapuri (Singapore), Sri Lanka (it is said that the Simhalas are named after an Orissan King, Raja Jai Sinha), Javadvipa (Java), Suvarnarupyadvipa (Sumatra), and many islands of the Pacific selling an abundance of ivory, silk, jewels, indigo and other valuable goods.

Besides Manikapatna (at the Chilika mouth) and Palur (Palora), other famous ports in ancient times were Dantapur (also called Kalingapatnam, ancient capital of Orissa on the mouth of river Vamsadhara), Kannagara (near Konark), Langudi, Tamralipta, Dosarin, Pithunda, Kambyson, Manda, Kati Kardama, Barua, Sonapur, Mantridi, Ganja, Kantiagarh, Prayagi, Badapatna, Arakhuda, Banjiapatna, Boitkud, Astaranga, Harishpur, Marichpur, Chandbali, Narendrapur, Dhamra, Chudamani, Balasore, Talchua, Kansabansa, Panchubisa, Kasaphala, Kirtania, Talsasi and Tamluk.

In ancient times and until the visit of a Chinese traveler in the 7th century, Chilika was a huge natural harbor filled with large ships coming from all over the world. The *Brahmanda Purana* mentions Chilika as the center of naval activity, with ships traveling to Java, Malaya, China and other countries.

The Odras are mentioned in *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Manu Samhita*, *Artha Shastra* and various *Puranas*.

The *Manu Samhita* (10.44) mentions the Odras were originally a Vedic people that had stopped observing religious rites and rules and started living like nomadic warrior tribes; to get them back into the orthodox Vedic society the Vratyastoma sacrifices were performed by which the tribes formally accepted the social system prescribed by the Vedas. From their part, these Vratyas introduced new life into the orthodox system and gave origin to various schools of philosophy.

The Odras defeated the powerful Kalinga kingdom and the neighboring regions before settling into a peaceful Vedic life of agriculture and learning, while at the same time continuing to practice martial arts as training. In the *Raghu vamsa*, Kalidasa describes Ramachandra crossing the Kapisha river on a bridge of elephants and entering Kalinga accompanied by a king of the Odras. In *Brihat Samhita* of Varaha Mihira there is repeated mention of Orissa in connection with the effect of eclipses under particular conjunctions.

Kautilya's *Artha Shastra* mentions that the kingdom of Kalinga produced many excellent elephants. In the Vana Parva of *Mahabharata*, the Pandavas arrive at the Vaitarani river to take bath, then they reach the "vedi", the raised platform on the ocean on which the Jagannatha temple stands, they take bath in the ocean, and finally go to Mahendra mountain to spend the night.

Mahabharata mentions the presentation of elephant tusks by the king of Odra desha to the Pandavas. The army of Kalinga also participated to the battle of Kurukshetra, as allies of Duryodhana. After getting his Divya astras, Karna came to Kalinga with Duryodhana to participate to the *svayamvara* of the daughter of King Citrangada.

The King of Kalinga is also mentioned in *Bhagavata Purana*, 10th canto, regarding the episode when he challenged Sri Balarama at a chess game. The King of Kalinga was a close friend of Rukmi, the brother of Rukmini the first wife of Krishna, who had been defeated by Krishna when he opposed Krishna's marriage with Rukmini. Since Vedic texts describe the positions of the stars and planets at the time of the birth and disappearance of Krishna, it has been possible to calculate the disappearance of Krishna, coinciding with the beginning of Kali yuga, in 3102 BCE.

The advent of Kali yuga marked the gradual loss of knowledge and qualifications in the general population, worsening of the general living condition and bringing a degradation of society. At the beginning of Kali yuga, the Odras had already settled in the mountainous regions of western Orissa, due to the pressure of the Utkalas.

The settlements of Sabaras and other forest-dwellers are very ancient. Their sacred stories say that two brothers, Rama and Bhima, first settled on mount Mahendra and their descendents gradually occupied the hilly regions of Orissa. They still worship ten ancestors: Rama, Bhima, Hodepulu, Peda, Rungjung, Tumerima, Garsada, Jaganta, Mutta and Teata. More information about the Vanavasis of Orissa will be in the third volume of this work.

The traditional worship of Nila Madhava is traced to the Raju family of the tribe Jara Sabara in Darkonda, presently found on the border between Andhra and Madhya Pradesh, around the present village called Krishnadevpetta. The place is very difficult to reach; from the railway station called Narsanpattam road one needs to take a bus to Chintapalli, then another bus to the Sarapapalani village.

In a copper plate inscription of Devendravarman of the Ganga dynasty (around 628 CE) we find the original name of the village on mount Mahendra: Purushavana. The name then turned to "Purushottama". In post-Vedic times, Orissa came under the influence of the Magadha empire and the Pandya dynasty, then under the influence of the Nanda empire (at that time groups of Persian settlers had amalgamated into the Indian way of life). Before Ashoka's conquest, various dynasties ruled in Orissa, including the Murundas, the Matharas, the Nalas, the Vighras and the Mugdalas.

Archeological excavations have revealed very ancient settlements at Sisupalgarh (the fort also called Toshali, at Bhubaneswar), Jaugada (Ganjam district), Radhanagara (Jajpur), Viratgarh and Kichakgarh (Mayurbhanj), Narala-Aurgarh, Budhigarh and Kharligarh (Kalahandi), Manamunda Asurgarh (Boudh), the ports of Manikapatna and Palur (Brahmagiri), etc.

The Buddhist-Jainist period

Mainstream Western history books place Buddha's birth in 567 BCE, but several modern scholars have established that he was actually born in 1894 BCE. Similarly, it seems that Adi Shankaracharya actually appeared in 509 BCE instead of around 800 CE as previously believed. By correcting the dates related to important personalities and events the entire "ladder" of historical dates changes, so it is very likely that Chandragupta Maurya was born in 1541 BCE and Vikramaditya in 102 BCE.

We believe that the entire calculation of periods in the present historical texts is biased and it should be brought back several centuries; it is mostly based on the assumption by Christian historians (for example by Max Muller, who fixed the date of the Aryan invasion and subsequent "civilization" of India in 1500 BCE) that the entire universe had been created precisely on 23 October 4004 BCE and that the first civilizations had been the Mesopotamian in Sumer (3200 BCE) and the pre-dynastic Egyptian (3000 BCE).

Thus the historical period in India is generally assigned with the Magadha empire dated in the 6th century BCE only – before that only "prehistoric" settlements and mythology are thought to have existed.

Although such belief has been challenged by the science of geology and biology and the findings of ancient human remains keep shifting the "evolution clock" back millions of years for paleontologists and geologists, the mainstream fields of archeology, philosophy and theology had long been under the impression that "man's history" can only begin one millennium before the current era (CE). Before that, one can only speak of "pre-history", when only primitive groups existed.

However, astronomical/astrological calculations from the position of planets given in Vedic literatures in connection to important events, and the geological descriptions of ancient kingdoms and lands seriously question such conclusions.

Many modern scholars also question the habit of blindly assigning a time period to artifacts and sites on the basis of their “more primitive” or “more refined” characteristics, as we know that such “evolution of artifacts and architecture” is not uniform in all peoples and in all places, and that until a few years ago there were still several populations living on the planet in conditions that we would classify as “stone age”.

Jainism honors 23 Tirthankaras before Mahavira Vardhamanan, who appeared around the same period of Siddhartha Gautama the founder of Buddhism. His immediate predecessor is considered Parsvanath, son of the king Asvasena of Varanasi. Mahavira personally preached Jainism in Orissa, as the Orissan king was a friend of his father.

Ashoka

Emperor Ashoka, the founder of the Maurya dynasty, who in mainstream historical texts is said to have conquered Kalinga in 272 BCE, is an extremely important figure both historically and culturally. His empire was covering much of present India. Ashoka became a Buddhist after the terrible battle near Bhubaneswar (where the event was commemorated by the famous Dhauhi stupa), where many hundreds of thousands people were killed and 150,000 people were taken prisoners; many more died after the war due to starvation and disease. Thanks to the preaching of the Buddhist monk Upagupta, Ashoka realized the suffering he had created and became such an ardent Buddhist that his whole reign was dedicated to the spreading of Buddhism.

He organized three Buddhist councils at his capital Pataliputra, made 44 edicts for the welfare of his human and animal subjects, built 84,000 stupas to honor the relics of the Buddha and sent his son Mahendra and his daughter Sanghamitra to Sri Lanka to spread Buddhism. He also appointed special government officers, called Rajukas and Dharma Mahamatras, to check the local authorities and ensure that the Dharma (“divine law”) was properly followed everywhere: *satyam* (“truthfulness”), *dana* (“charity”), *daya* (“mercy, compassion”) and *sanyam* (“self control”).

The patronage of Ashoka gave rise to the great Buddhist universities of Ratnagiri (in Orissa) as well as those in Nalanda, Takshila and Pataliputra. Scholars from Greece, Persia, China used to study philosophy, astronomy, mathematics and science in these universities, that had tens of thousands of students.

The Buddhism embraced by Ashoka preached the unity of Dharma and the equality of all human beings, the active and missionary propagation of religion, charity to needy people and especially to priests, obedience to one’s parents and morality in household life.

Both Siddhartha Gautama (founder of Buddhism) and Mahavira (founder of Jainism) opposed the degradation of Aryan society and culture and especially the faulty application of the *varna* system, the lack of respect for animal and human life, the corruption and arrogance of unqualified priests and teachers and the general loss of values in human society. The Buddhist doctrine was simple, tolerant and adaptable to different cultures. It did not require great learning or study, yet it did not exclude or disregard them. It welcomed and honored people from all walks of life including women, persons from lower castes or uncivilized tribes and illiterate persons, provided they were willing to reform their life and mentality.

In his edicts Ashoka prohibited killing animals (for food or for religious sacrifice), established a charitable medical assistance for all human beings and animals, and commanded the digging of wells and planting of trees along the roads for the refreshment of humans and animals alike. Under his compassionate and intelligent rule, culture and sciences flourished together with trade and agriculture. The famous Ashoka pillar, made of iron and exposed for over 2000 years to the rains and damp hot weather of India, still does not show any sign of rust.

Another pillar erected by Ashoka is said to have been transformed into a Shiva lingam now known as Bhaskaresvara.

Again after his death his empire crumbled and everything was lost. The last king of the Maurya dynasty was overthrown by Pushyamitra Sunga, who started his own dynasty. Small kingdoms were formed, and everyone started fighting against each other.

With time the small kingdoms in the north fell easy prey to foreign barbaric invasions, like the Sakas from Central Asia, the Yavanas from Greece and the Kushanas from Chinese Turkistan. Particularly, the Sakas (called Scythians in Europe) left a lasting mark on Indian history, so much that the current era according to the Indian Sakabda calendar calculates years from the 78 BCE.

It was probably from the Saka invasion that the early colonial Indologists created the myth of the “Aryan” invasion.

The Scythians, briefly mentioned by Herodotus in his “*History*” were illiterate nomadic tribal groups moving around with big herds of horses and usually pillaging the peaceful settlements of other populations on their route. They had a patriarchal society, practiced slavery and used to sacrifice old horses by killing them into the tombs of warriors for their travel to the “other world”, together with a varying amount and value of personal effects and funeral offerings. The origin of their name seems to be “*kas-saka*”, which in their language meant “golden men”, referring to their blonde or red hair. The same root can be found in the name “Cossack” referring to a famous special corps of the Russian army, famed for their ferocity and loyalty, and in the present name of the region, called Kazakhstan.

Their white skin was tattooed with blue designs much like the Celtic Picts in Europe. They originally came from the Altai mountains in Kazakhstan; their most famous settlement in their country of origin was called Kurgan, where many tomb mounds have been found by archeologists.

The Yavanas (Greeks) came in bands attracted by the tales of those who had travelled with Alexander the Great. A first organized wave is said to have descended between 538 and 421 BCE, the second wave between 421 and 306 BCE, and the third between 306 and 257 BCE. They were driven out of Orissa by Yayati or Yajati Keshari, who rescued the Jagannatha Deities from the jungle where they had been hidden. However, small Yavana settlements continued to exist in central India for several more centuries.

In this chaos and decline of culture and legality, king Kanishka succeeded in unifying a great territory of north-western India, comprising old Bactria and Parthia (the governorates of old Greek and Persian invaders) and Sindh (all now part of Pakistan), Afghanistan, Punjab, Kashmir and part of the ancient kingdom of Magadha (Uttar Pradesh). Kanishka even tried to conquer some Chinese territory but was not successful. After that, he became a Buddhist and devoted his power to cultural and religious conquests. His successors were not able to keep the kingdom, and soon everything crumbled again.

A very particular characteristic of ancient Orissan culture is the synthesis and reconciliation of apparently very different traditions, such as Buddhism and Vaishnavism (giving rise to Mahayana Buddhism, that some scholars believe started in Orissa), Shaivism and Shaktism (giving rise to Tantrism), Buddhism and Tantrism (giving rise to Vajrayana Buddhism), and so on.

Another very important factor is the assimilation of tribal cultures into mainstream Vedic culture (Hinduism); tribal chiefs are recognised as *kshatriyas*, tribal Deities are assimilated with the Vedic Deities and within the tribal societies some classes become distinguished particularly for the purpose of religious rituals. Vedic *brahmanas* participate to the tribal ceremonies and exquisitely tribal concepts are introduced into the Vedic system of worship. Jagannatha is a most evident and glorious example of this trend.

The conquest of Orissa by Ashoka and the consolidation of the Buddhist power introduced an important element in Orissan culture, that survived in the subsequent centuries through assimilation and reforming as a balancing power against the sometimes excessive ritualistic and casteist power of the Brahmins – as for example in the advaitic preaching of Adi Shankara, the Sunya Vaishnava preaching of the Oriya *pancha sakhas*, the mass *sankirtana* movement of Chaitanya, and the more recent Mahima sect.

It is important to understand that Buddhism (as well as Jainism) were already very popular in Orissa before Ashoka’s conquest: the new imperial regime simply gave Buddhism a political power that it didn’t have, due to its original nature of renunciation to worldly concerns.

According to a Burmese tradition, two merchants from Utkal called Tapasu and Bhallika were direct disciples of the Buddha and spread the Buddha’s doctrine during their travels. The Jainist tradition also says that Haridbhadriya Vritti, king of Kalinga, was a friend of Mahavira’s father and he invited Mahavira to preach Jainism in Orissa. *Kalika Purana* states that the first brahmanical tantric pithas in India originated and developed in Orissa, especially at the Hypaethral temple in Hirapur (near Bhubaneswar), Ranipuri Jharial (Bolangir) and Bheraghat.

The famous Catuspitha Parvatas on the Assia hills (Udaya Giri, Lalita Giri, Ratna Giri and Alati Giri) constituted the four pithas (“holy places”) called Uddiyana, Purnagiri, Kamakshya and Srihatta. In these places, the new Buddhist ideals and lifestyle blended into the previous Tantric tradition. For example, the famous Udaigiri/Khandagiri near Bhubaneswar was once called Kumarigiri.

In such an eclectic approach, the very small differences between Buddhism and Jainism become practically irrelevant, and the two schools are often superimposed in archeological settlements. During the period of Ashoka the great fort of Sisupalgarh was built. Its sides were 1200 meters long each, with walls 9 meters thick, fortified gates and watch towers. Within the ruins of the fort, several ornaments were found, both in gold and in clay.

Kharavela

In the first centuries of the current era, Pataliputra (the old capital of Ashoka's empire) became the stronghold of the Murunda dynasty. In that period, the king of Kalinga Brahmadatta received a relic of the Buddha (a tooth). Brahmadatta's great grandson Dantakumara, prince of Ujjain, married the daughter of Guhashiva and carried the relic to Sri Lanka.

In the 2nd century BCE emperor Kharavela, from a Cheti dynasty named Mahavegavahana (originally from Madhyadesha) reclaimed Kalinga and recovered the seat of Jina (founder of Jainism) which had been taken away as a war trophy by Ashoka after the Kalinga war, after defeating the Magadha king Bahasatimita.

Kharavela was a powerful ruler, the third King of his dynasty. He received good education, was installed as Yuvaraja (crown prince) at the age of 16 and ascended the throne when he was 25. Almost immediately thereafter he launched Kalinga into an ambitious career of conquest, leading expeditions far and wide. In the second year of his rule he led his troops to the west against the Satavahana king Satakarni and reached the river Krishna, where he threatened the city of Asika. In his fourth year he captured the capital of a prince named Vidyadhara and subdued the Rashtrikas and Bhojakas in the north Deccan. Four years later, he stormed Gorathagiri (Barabar hills, District Gaya) and harassed the ruler of Rajagriha (Rajgir, District Nalanda). A Yavana (Indo-Greek) king is said to have fled to Mathura out of fear.

In his eleventh year he destroyed the city of Pithuda (Masulipatam region) and next year threatened the rulers of Uttarapatha (north India) and defeated King Bahasatimita of Magadha (south Bihar). He brought back with him booty from Ariga (east Bihar) and Magadha, including a Jain-cult object (Kalinga-fina), which had been taken away long ago by Nanda, the ruler of Magadha. Next he snatched treasures from the Pandyan king in the extreme south. Thus, the brunt of Kharavela's sword was felt throughout a large part of India.

Kharavela was as great in peace as in war. In the first year of his rule he rebuilt the gates and walls of Kalinganagara, his capital, which had been devastated by a cyclone. In the fifth year he enlarged a canal, said to have been excavated by a Nanda king three hundred years before. In the Kumari-Parvata (Udayagiri Khandagiri) he excavated, in the thirteenth year of his reign, caves for Jain ascetics and erected at an enormous cost, on the Pragbhara in the neighbourhood of the monastic retreats, a structure with hundreds of stones collected from different quarries and pillars with core of cat's eye gem. No doubt Kharavela was a ruler of great accomplishments. In spite of his claiming an eclectic attitude by honouring all sects and repairing temples of all gods, Kharavela was undoubtedly a Jain and espoused with great zeal the cause of his faith, which appeared to have been the state religion of Kalinga and which had received a set-back not only when the Nandas of Magadha (4th century B C) carried away the trophies of Kalinga, but also with Buddhism gaining foothold under the Mauryan king Asoka (circa 273-236 B C) when he annexed Kalinga to his empire.

It is obvious that during the rule of the Mahameghavahanas the hills were honeycombed with caves. In addition, Kharavela's chief Queen is known to have been the donor of the upper storey of Cave 9 (Svargapuri) of Udayagiri. It is also almost certain that the majority of the caves were dug during this period. At the same time, an earlier origin of the Jain establishment on the hills is not entirely ruled out. It is also not unlikely that the Kalinga-fina removed by the Nanda king and recovered by Kharavela had its original enshrinement on the hills and was reinstalled here by Kharavela.

After the fall of the Mahameghavahana dynasty, Jainism is not known to have enjoyed royal patronage, but the religion doubtless continued to have its stronghold on the hills, despite the political vicissitudes through which the country passed. The rise of the Lakulisa-Pasupata sect, that transformed Bhubaneswar into a Saiva centre and the growing influence of which was ultimately responsible for the decline of Buddhism in that city and its surroundings, hardly affected this Jain centre, whose inscriptions show that it continued to be inhabited under the Bhaumas and their successors the Somavamsis.

Kharavela was a great patron of arts and especially of Gandharva Veda (music and dance), as it is stated in the inscriptions of the caves of Khandagiri and Udayagiri. Kharavela was also very respectful to all religious traditions and repaired many temples, as witnessed in an inscription in the Hatigumpha in Bhubaneswar. The inscriptions also say that, in accordance to the duties of a good king, Kharavela repaired ancient buildings, constructed new buildings, excavated canals, remitted taxes and offered feasts to his subjects.

The most famous names of the Kharavela dynasty, inscribed in the temples built by kings and princes are Kharavela, Kudepasiri, Vakradeva and Vadhuka.

In the 2nd century CE, Lakulisa wrote the *Pasupata sutra* and developed a new Shaivite school uniting monism and dualism. He had four disciples: Kausika, Gargya, Kaurusha and Maitreya, who went preaching in different parts of India. Images of Lakulisa can be found at Bhubaneswar (Muktesvara, Parasuramesvara, Bharatesvara), Ranipur Jharila (64 yogini), Mohangiri, Budhikomna, Narasimhanath and Ambabhona.

At this time the Sailodbhava dynasty ruled in Kangoda Mangala, the coastal area of central and south Orissa. They supported Shaivism although they also respected yajnas and Vedic knowledge. In 643 they were defeated by Harsha Vardhana and gradually, although they became again independent after Harsha's death, they lost power to the Karas or Bhaumas of Utkala and finally sailed overseas to establish a new empire in Malaya and east Indies, becoming known as Sailendra dynasty. While in Orissa, they built the early temples of Bharatesvar, Lakshmanesvar, Satrugnesvar and Parasuramesvar (sixth century).

The predominance of Shaivism gave rise to a number of Shaivacharyas, who were granted land for the arrangement of Yajnas for the benefit of the entire society, as well as Diksha (initiation of people to attain liberation), Vyaksha (teaching scriptural knowledge), and Annasya Satram (free food distribution), especially during the Purnima days of Asadha, Kartika and Magha. In this period the footprints of the Acharyas (*padapadma*) began to be worshiped in the holy places, either within a simple circle or inside a lotus, or even on top of Lingams. Also, many figures of Shaivacharyas were inserted in the iconography of temples.

The Gupta period

After the golden period of Kharavela, a number of rulers and dynasties extended their influence over the region of Orissa in a period that is often referred to as "Gupta period", as the Guptas were one of the major dynasties.

The most famous ruler of the Gupta dynasty, Samudragupta, conquered many small kingdoms and for a period extended his power down to river Krishna. The important cities of the kingdom were Sripura, Sunagara, Vardhamanapura, Singhapura and Pishtapura (in the present districts of Ganjam, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam). Finally the Gupta dynasty was terminated by the Gangas.

A relief of his period shows the king riding an elephant and holding a goad in his hand. He is preceded by some footmen, one horseman, and one dancing woman. The procession is followed by another woman. We know from a stone inscription that Madhavagupta, a monarch of the Gupta dynasty, was a faithful devotee of Madhava.

The worship of Madhava is particularly important in Orissa as there are 14 Madhava pithas, such as Nila Madhava, Niali Madhava, Lalita Madhava, Ganga Madhava, Sabari Madhava, Mugdala Madhava etc. During the Gupta period, two other dynasties became prominent: the Matharas and the Vasisthas (or Pitribhaktas).

The succession of the Matharas is the following:

Visakhavarman, 350-360 CE, Umavarman, 360-395 CE, Sankaravarman, 395-400 CE, Anantavarman, 420-450 CE, Chandravarman, 450-460 CE, Prabhajavarman 460-480 CE, Nanda Prabhanjanavarman, 480-498 CE.

We have found no record of the succession of the Vasisthas. Historians even remain confused whether the Vasisthas and Pitribhaktas were one and the same dynasty and ruling power, or they were two different groups.

The Satavahanas from Andhra extended their supremacy over Orissa in the 3rd century CE. We find them again making their appearance from time to time, trying to control various territories and warring against the more important contemporary dynasties that controlled the region.

The Nala dynasty reigned over a relatively small area in the Koraput district, with a capital called Puskhari. The succession of the kings is the following: Brishadvaja (around 400 CE), Varaharaja (up to 440 CE), Arthapatiraja, 465-475 CE, Skandavarman, 475-500. Prithviraja's and Viruparaja's reigns were uneventful. Vilasatunga, around 700 CE, was the last king of the dynasty.

The Bhauma Karas

The Bhaumakaras of Utkala came to power around 736 CE and subdued the kingdoms of Kangoda (ruled by the Sailodbhavas), Kalinga and Tosali, thus unifying a vast territory. The kings of this dynasty had their capital in Viraja kshetra, called Guhesvara Pataka, Guhadevapataka or Guhira Tikra, about 6 km from Jaipur (in the Cuttack district). They ruled until 950 in what is universally known as the golden age of Orissa, equally protecting Buddhism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism. In fact, it is believed that in this period various religious traditions came to be reconciled, creating a deep interest for Tantrism (as the union of Shaivism and Shaktism) and Tantric Buddhism (Vajrayana and Sahajayana).

The main characteristic of the Bhauma period is the coexistence and the mixture of Shaivism, Pasupatism, Shaktism and Tantrism, common to the various traditions of Lakayatikas, Vamadevas, Sisdadevas, Kapalikas, Kalamudhas, Aghoris, Vamacharins, Sahajyas and Tantrikas.

Lakulisa or Lakulisvara preached the Pasupata Shaivism in the Bhauma period. He was born at Kayarohana (now Karvan in Baroda district).

He had 4 main disciples, who established themselves as follows:

- Kusika in Mathura
- Ganga in Somanath, Kathiavadi
- Mitra in Bhubaneswar
- Kaurushya in Karyarohana

Other famous disciples of Lakulisvara were Nakulesvara, Kapila and Parasara.

Still today, the oldest mathas in Bhubaneswar, such as the Bharatimatha, follow the Pasupata system of installing a lingam to represent dead teachers and erect a temple (called *gurvayatana*) around it. Soon the number of lingams in Bhubaneswar multiplied; it is said that it reached the number of 10 millions.

The famous Hirapur 64 Yogini temple and the Ranipur Jharial were built in this period. Also the temples of Vaital in Bhubaneswar, the temples of Varaha, Bhairava, Virabhadra, Gajantakari, Lakulisa, Amoghasiddhi (a Buddhist shrine) and Chamunda.

In the temples, the Kings offered *chandan*, *bali*, *charu*, ghi, flowers, incense, lamps, garments, beds and medicinal preparations.

The Bhaumakara rulers built many temples and monasteries and encouraged the development of culture, philosophy, art, architecture, literature and administration. In their period, a well organised system of feudatories developed. Their contemporaries were the Chandellas and Rastrakutas in central India (who built the temples of Khajuraho and Beheraghat in Madhya Pradesh).

The Bhaumakara dynasty had 12 Kings and 6 reigning Queens, among them queen Tribhuvana Mahadevi. The last two queens, Dharma and Dandi, were called Parama Vaishnavis. The Queens presided the assemblies of feudatories, who offered their homage to their feet dyed with the red *alaktaka*.

Even before the first important King in the dynasty, the tradition of the Bhauma karas spoke of a powerful chieftainness among their ancestors called Devi Gosvamini.

Here is the list of the main rulers of the Bhaumakara dynasty:

- Indrabhuti Deva and sister Lakshminkara Devi Paramopasaka
- Kshemankara Deva (Parama tathagata), 736 CE
- Shivakara Deva I (Unmattasimha), 736-788
- Subhakara Deva I (Parama saugata), 790
- Shivakara Deva II (Maharajadhiraja, Paramesvara, Sugatasraya), 800
- Shantikara Deva I, 829

- Subhakara Deva II, 836
- Subhakara Deva III (Simhaketu), 839
- Tribhuvana Mahadevi, 846
- Santikara Deva II
- Subhakar Deva IV
- Shivakara Deva III (Lalithara)
- Shivakara Deva III
- Tribhuvana Mahadevi II (Prithivi)
- Santikara Deva III
- Subhakara Deva V
- Gauri Mahadevi
- Dandi Mahadevi
- Vakula Mahadevi
- Dharma Mahadevi

Kshemankara Deva

A Tibetan sacred story says the Buddhist monk Luipa converted the Orissan King and instructed him on how to establish the four varnas in the proper order and position; according to a copper plate inscription from Nealpur by Subhakara Deva, this King seems to have been his grandfather Kshemankara Deva.

Shivakara Deva I

He conquered Kongada (the present area including Ganjam and Puri districts), Kalinga (between Ganjam and river Godavari), and Dandakabhukti (district of Midnapore). He also defeated the King of Radha desh (south west Bengal) and married the Bengali princess Jayavali Devi.

Subhakara Deva I

He married Madhavi Devi, a devotee of Shiva (who according to an inscription in Jaipur built the Madhavesvara and Hamsesvara temples). In this period many temples in Bhubaneswar were built: Vaital, Markandesvar and Sisiresvar, all with Nataraj images on their front facades. The Bhaumakaras also built the Shiva temple in Ganja (Ganjam district), the Bhingesvar temple in Bajrakot near Talcher on the right bank of Brahmani river, the twin temples of Nilamadhava Visnu and Siddhesvara Shiva in Baramba, and the Gramesvara temple at Athagarh.

Subhakara Deva gifted the *brahmanas* with the villages of Komparaka (now Kupari) and Solanapura in Balasore, but he also sent an embassy to the Chinese emperor Te Tsong, with the Baudha *Avatamsaka Sutra*. It seems that he had problems with a foreign invasion, probably led by Govinda III of the Rastrakutas of Deccan, and his horsemen ran away in fear. So the King of Rastrakuta raided through Odraka, Kalinga, Kosala, Dahala and Vanga. The *Madala panji* mentions the story calling this invader King with the name of Raktabahu and says that he came from the sea. The Deities were evacuated on a cart to the western frontier of the kingdom in the village named Gopali, a short distance from Sonepur.

Subhakara Deva also had to withstand the invasion of Devapala Deva of the Palas of Bengal, who sent his general Kedara Mishra to attack Orissa, chasing the King away from the capital.

When Subhakara Deva III died in his young age, his mother **Tribhuvana Mahadevi**, was requested to ascend the throne. Tribhuvana Mahadevi was the daughter of Rajamalla of the Gangas of Mysore, who was a devotee of Vishnu. Her son Subhakara III, however, was a devotee of Shiva.

Under the reign of Tribhuvana Mahadevi the kingdom extended over Angul, Hindol, Dhenkanal, Talcher, Pal Lahara, Keonjar, Ganjam, Jharikhand and Mahishya (Midnapore).

There was great progress in administration, bringing harmony and social cooperation and controlling the enemies. The army had many large elephants and 300,000 warriors. There was a lively trade especially maritime and fluvial, transporting pepper, aloe, rotang, conchshells and simli (a particular type of silky cotton growing on trees). The prosperity and the happiness of the kingdom was noted with great amazement by the Persian and Arab travellers of the time who called the Queen with the name of Rayina (or Rani Ma). The dynasty record of Rajamalla claims that king Indradyumna of the Naga clan captured Satrusala, the chief of the Sabaras, and then sent the *brahmana* Vidyapati to carry the Daru Brahman from their village.

According to the palm leaf records of the dynasty Bibarani from the Jarasabar Vamsa came from the village called Dimirijhola in the present district of Paralakhemundi. In that period, 12 families (called Bara Gharia) used to worship Nila Madhava in the form of Daru Brahman. A stone sculpture from that period, now in Bhubaneswar museum, shows three Deities on a chariot.

Tribhuvana Mahadevi II (Prithivi) was the daughter of king Svabhavatunga of the Kosala Somavamsis, who helped her to ascend the throne.

The Soma Vamsis

After the Bhaumakaras became issueless, they were succeeded by the Soma or Kesari dynasty of Mahakosala, who originally dwelled on the right bank of the Mahanadi. Their capital was Sripura (now Sirpur) in Raipur district. These Somavamsis were also called Panduvamsis, and it seems that the Kalachuris and the Banas had pushed this particular branch of the family out of Raipur.

There are no set dates for the reigns of the Kings of the early dynasty, but we do have a list mentioning Udayana, Indrabala, Nanna (and his brothers Isana Deva and Bhava Deva), Tivara, Chandragupta, Harshagupta, Balarjuna Shivagupta, and Janamejaya. After Janamejaya I a number of names are recorded: Mahabhavagupta I, Jharma Kandarpa, and Svabhavatunga, but it is also possible that all these names are titles that refer to the same person of **Janamejaya I**. His reign covered Sambalpur, Bolangir, Kalahandi, and his capital was Svarnapura. However, a part of Maha Kosala was lost to the Kalachuris and became known as Chedi.

Yayati or Yajati Keshari, the first great King of the dynasty, had a strong influence on the Bhaumakaras as he was the brother of Tribhuvana Mahadevi II. He moved the capital of the Somavamsis to Oinitapura (also called Yayati Nagar), now Binka, about 30 km from the old capital Sonepur on the Mahanadi.

He is credited with having rebuilt the temple of Jagannatha at Puri, that had ruined in the course of time. The *Madala Panji* says that Yayati Keshari recovered the Deity of Jagannatha from the village Gapali in Sonepur Bandh, in the kingdom of the Somavamsis. The Deity of Jagannatha had been hidden at the times of an hostile invasion during the reign of Subhakar Deva, about 150 years earlier. The *Madala panji* names this hostile invader as Raktabahu and defines him as a Yavana (Greek or Muslim), but many historians affirm that it was rather Govinda III from Rastrakuta who actually attacked Orissa in that period from the sea.

Yayati performed the Dasa Asvamedha yajna at Jajpur at the river Vaitarani, where the stone steps of the Dasa Asvamedha ghata still exist.

He also made new Deities and installed Them in a newly built temple. According to the tradition, he was guided in the process by Adi Shankaracharya. It is possible that this Shankaracharya may not have been the original Adi Shankara but one of his successors.

It is also said that king Yayati traced the descendants of Visvvasu (the Daitas) in Biribandha and the descendants of Vidyapati (the Patis) in Ratanpur, West Orissa and east Madhya Pradesh, and brought them back to Puri to worship Jagannatha. The King also invited 10,000 very qualified *brahmanas* from Kanyakubja to permanently settle in his kingdom, giving them land and money.

Yajati Kesari also constructed the temple of Kusalesvar at Deogaon (district of Keonjhar) and Chandeesvar near Cilika lake, and started the construction of Lingaraj or Tribhuvanesvara in Bhubanesvara, the tallest temple in Orissa. At the same time his wife Kolavati Devi, mother of Udyota Kesari, built the Brahmesvar temple and dedicated several Devadasis to the temple. All these temples are covered with beautiful carvings.

Also other temples of this period are Muktesvar, with the beautiful *torana* (arched gateway), and four Nataraja images on all sides of the upper portion of the temple. Also the inner ceiling of the Jagamohana has a beautiful panel of female dancers and musicians, and a dancing Ganesha similar to the one in the temple of Vimala inside Jagannatha temple in Puri.

Yayati Keshari successfully defeated the invasion of the king Yuvaraja I of Ratnapura of the Kalachuris, who had raided the kingdom and was carrying away a large group of women on 32 elephants. Yayati Keshari pursued him and rescued the women.

Yayati annexed the Bhauma kingdom, ousted the Bhanjas from north Orissa (the territory between Sonepur, Sambalpur and the coast) by occupying Gandharapati, and united Kosala and Utkala politically and culturally.

Bhimaratha, son of Yayati, ruled at Tripuri (Jabalpur) and worshiped Somesvara together a *murti* of Kaliya set with jewels, which he had to surrender to the invading king Lakshmanaraja II of the Kalachuris. His successors Dharmaratha and Nahusha also had trouble with invasions. Nahusha came to the help of Indraratha, a subordinate ruler, but was defeated by the Cholas and by Paramara Bhoja of Malwa, and finally he ended up allying with the traditional enemies of his kingdom, the Kalachuris.

Yayati II, son of Abhimanyu son of Vicitravirya, descendent of Janamejaya, took over the throne and successfully fought back the enemies and restored the peace in the kingdom. However, later on he made the mistake of allying with Gangeya Deva of the Tripuris (Kalachuris, also called Dahalas) and helped him by attacking the kingdom of Gauda and Radha desh (then under the Pala king Mahipala I). This rash act brought him in conflict with all his neighbors – Karimata, Lata, Gurjara, Cholas of Kanchi, Gauda and Radha. His son Udyota Keshari called him *Madhusudana pratinidhi*, “representative of Vishnu, the killer of demon Madhu”.

Udyota Keshari reigned peacefully enough, although he had to fight against the invasion of the Kalachuri Karna. He restored many temples and sacred tanks, and reinstalled the images of the 24 Jain Tirthankaras at Kumara parvata (Udaipur).

Under **Janamejaya II**, his son, the kingdom started to disintegrate in conflicts and invasions, and the trend continued under his son Puranjaya. The last king of the dynasty, **Karnadeva**, the younger brother of Puranjaya, ruled only on the areas of Puri, Cuttack and Balasore, oppressed in the north by Romapala and in the south by Chodaganga, who offered to help Karnadeva against his enemies but later on simply annexed his kingdom. The conquest of the kingdom by Chodaganga was facilitated by Vasudeva Ratha, the general (*vahinipati*) of the Somavamsis, who openly invited Chodaganga to invade Orissa and helped him.

In the last generations of the Somavamsi dynasty, several minor dynasties grew in power.

The **Kalachuri** dynasty, descending from Sahasrarjuna of the Soma Vamsa (around 248 CE), were a branch of the Haihayas who had settled in the Narmada valley, with their capital in Mahismati puri. They ruled over parts of Orissa from the 6th to the 15th century from their capital Tripuri, and built the Bheraghat yogini temple. Their Shaiva-Shakta tantric cult was particularly important as it is connected to the sacred story of Mahishavardhini Durga.

The story says that Mahismati, the daughter of the Asura Viprachitta, visited the Mandara Parvata (in the Vindhya range) and wanted to take possession of the hermitage of Sindhudvipa the son of Suparsva, so she and her friends took the shape of she buffaloes to scare away the Rishis. However, the powerful Sindhudvipa Rishi cursed them to remain buffaloes until Mahismati had a buffalo son. One day the Rishi went to take bath in the Narmada river, and upon seeing the apsara Indumati he dropped semen in the water where Mahismati was drinking. So Mahisasura was born. Mahisasura went looking for a bride and he saw the Mother Goddess as Vindhyavasini on the Mandara Parvata. When he presented his marriage proposal he was answered that none of the women living on Mount Mandara would marry, but he did not give up. After defeating the gods to show his prowess, he set out to kidnap Vindhyavasini, and a fierce battle ensued. Durga destroyed his entire army, then she started to play the *vina* and the *damaru*, raising a host of ghosts and goblins. Since Mahisasura could not be killed by any weapon, Durga kicked his head and then cut it with her sword.

The first King of the Kalachuri dynasty to rule over Orissa was Krishnaraja (550-575), followed by Shankaragana (575-600). His successor Buddharaja was vanquished by the Chalukyas and became their vassal. In 750 Vamaraja established his own power over the Chedi kingdom, from river Gomati in the north to the Narmada in the south, including the areas of Sagar, Jabalpur, Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand.

The next important king was Lakshman Raj I (841). His successor Kokalla I (850-890) and his son spent a lot of energy into maintaining the delicate balance in the middle of the disputes among the neighboring kingdoms and worked to establish matrimonial alliances.

His grandson Yuvarajadeva I (915-945) took the title of Chakravarti Parameshvara by marrying the princesses of Magadha, Malava, Panchala, Avanti, Jalandhar and Kerala. His court was famous for his wise ministers Bhaka Mishra and Gollaka Kayastha, and for the illustrious poet Rajashekhar.

He was a religious king and founded the Goloki matha, given by him to the Shaiva acharya Sadabhava Sambhu, together with the income of 300,000 villages for the maintenance of the ashram. His queen Mohala built the temple of Nohalesvara and gave it to the Shaiva ascetic Ishvara Shiva.

After him, Lakshman Raja II (945-970) built the Shiva Vaidyanath temple at Bilahari. A number of weak rulers continued the succession, until the dynasty was revived by Gangeya Deva.

His successor Yashakarna Vikramaditya was the first monarch to coin Lakshmi coins in gold, silver and copper. The next famous ruler of this dynasty was Karna (Paramesvara), who in 1062 had conquered Bengal and the kingdoms of the Cholas, Pallavas, Kuntals, Malvas and Chandellas. He established his capital in Varanasi and built the Karna Meru there: a temple 12 stories high. He also built the Karna tirtha at Prayag. His court was adorned by the famous poets Bilhana (from Kashmir), Vallara, Nachiraja, Karpura and Vidyapati. His dynasty ruled until the 1100s.

During the 6th and the 7th centuries the Bhanja kings ruled in the high lands, while the Sailodbhavas ruled in Kangoda Mangala (coastal area of central and south Orissa, in Ganjam and Puri districts), from 570 to 675.

The list of the Kings is as follows: Yathasukha, Mallagambhira, Silabhanja I (Angaddi), Satrubhanja (Gandhara Mangalaraja), Ranabhita or Ranabhanja, Nettekhanja, Dibhanja, Silabhanja II, Vidyadhara bhanja, Nettekhanja II, Sainyabhita, Ayasobhita, Sainyabhita Madhavarman II, Madhyamaraja I, Dharmaraja, Madhyamaraja II, Ranakshobha, Allaparaja, Madhyamaraja III.

The most important King in this period was Sasanka (originally from Bengal), who is credited with the building the Tribhuvaneshvara (Lingaraja) temple in Bhubaneswar around 620 CE. He was a contemporary of Harshavardhana of Kanauja and Pulakeshin in the south; it is said that all these three great rulers conquered Orissa.

Sasanka is famous for his partiality for Shiva worshipers against the Buddhists. The Krittivasa and Devipadahara tank near the Lingaraja temple were built by the Chalukyas.

In 7th century CE the entire area became known as Odra Vishaya, from which the gradual vulgarization of language brought to Odra Vishaya, then Odavisa, Odivisa, Odvisa, Odissa and finally Orissa.

The Ganga dynasty

Until the 12th century, the different parts of Orissa were kingdoms of *kshatriya* clans known as Chedis, Sailodbhavad, Bhoumakaras, Nandas, Tungas, Bhanjas, Somas or Kesaris, Kalachuris and Haihayas.

Finally the imperial dynasty of Gangas came to power and unified Orissa – a vast territory going from Ganga in the north to Godavari in the south and to Bengal.

A very important characteristic of the imperial rulers of India was the patronage of pilgrimage places, which assumed a regional and continental importance and the establishment of communities of Vedic *brahmanas* (called *sanas* or *agrahara*) that supported the King, together with new and large temples. Such new temples largely assimilated local tribal Deities and ancient pilgrimage places – such as, for example, Mahendragiri, where Shiva Gokarna Svami was worshiped. When the Gangas conquered the place, they accepted Gokarna Svami as their *ista devata*. In another temple on a hill near Ranpur, called Ambika Mani Nagesvari, near the original round stone (*chata pahara*) worshiped in the tribal shrine, a bronze Deity of Durga was installed, called Chamunda. Until the 19th century human sacrifices were carried on in the temple.

The new large (royal) temples also acted as center of financial power of the kings. For example, the Brihadesvara temple of Tanjore, built by Chola Rajaraja, lent money at the interest rate of 12.5%. The temple had 400 Devadasis, 212 Nritya Gurus, and possessed many villages for the maintenance of the Deity and His servants. Another name of Shiva Brihadesvara, worshiped in this temple, is Rajarajesvara, strictly connecting the religious power with the political power of king Rajaraja.

With the development of the Ganga dynasty and its transformation in the Gajapati rule, Jagannatha became the the Orissa Rajaraja: according to the Gajapati theology, the King is considered Jagannatha's deputy ruler (*rauta*) and son (*putra*) or younger brother.

The early Kings of the Ganga dynasty, from 496 to 750 CE, had their capital in Kalinganagara (Mukhalingam in Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh). They moved their capital from ancient Kalinganagar to Kataka (or Varanasi Kataka, today Cuttack) in 1135 and governed for about 400 years (from 1078 to 1434).

A branch of the Gangas still exists in Paralakhemundi; in the period of Indian independence one of its members, Krishnachandra Narayana Deva, insisted for the creation of a separate State of Orissa.

Besides their military and administrative prowess, they were great patrons of religions, arts and architecture especially for temples. At some point during this time the great scholar Prajna remained at court and instructed the royal family on yoga. Also, the Kings sent books to China as a present for the Chinese Emperor. The famous Ramanuja acharya and Narahari Tirtha, disciple of Ananda Tirtha (Madhvacharya) lived under the patronage of Bhanudeva I (1264-1278) and Narasimha II (1278-1306), preaching Vaishnavism in Orissa. Narahari Tirtha had come to the Ganga kingdom on Madhva's order to obtain images of Sita-Rama on behalf of his spiritual master. The Ganga empire at that time extended further south and Narahari Tirtha was particularly connected with Simhachalam and Kurma Kshetra (about 250 km from Puri).

He remained from 1264 to 1293 as regent of king Narasimha II and the governor of a province in the Ganga kingdom; when the King came of age, Narahari Tirtha returned to his Guru with the Deities, and thus Ramanatha, Sita Paramesvari and Lakshmana Deva were installed in Sri Kurma.

Narahari's long stay in Orissa was mostly responsible for the ascendancy of Madhvacharya's Vaishnavism there. He was a patron of the Kurmanath temple, installing Deities and giving land endowments, as for example the village Kornī to 15 Vaishnava *brahmanas*.

Here is the list of the Ganga kings, over a period of over 3 centuries and 15 generations. The first group lists the ancestors of the famous Chodaganga Deva (the early Gangas):

Gunamaharava, Vajrahastha I, Kamarnava I, Gundama, Madhukamarnava I, Virasimha, Kamarnava II, Danarnava, Gunarnava, Vajrahastha II (Ranarnava), Kamarnava III, Gunarnava II, Potankusa, Kalingalanuksa, Gundama I, Kamarnava IV, Vinayaditya, Vajrahastha III Anangabhima, Vajrahastha IV, Kamarnava VI, Gundama II, Madhukamarmava II, Anantavarma Vajrahasta V (1038-1069), Devendra Varma Rajaraja Deva I (1069-1076).

The second group lists the more famous descendants of Chodaganga (the later Gangas):

Anantavarman Choda Ganga Deva (1076-1147), Kamarnava VII (1147-1157), Raghava Deva (1157-1171), Rajaraja Deva II (1171-1190), Anangabhima Deva II (1190-1199), Rajaraja Deva III (1199-1212), Anangabhima Deva III (1212-1239), Narasimha Deva I (1239-1265), Bhanu Deva I (1265-1279), Narasimha Deva II (1279-1306), Bhanu Deva II (1306-1327), Narasimha Deva III (1327-1353), Bhanudeva III (1353-1378), Narasimha Deva IV (1378-1424), Bhanudeva IV (1424-1434).

Choda Ganga Deva

Anantavarman Choda Ganga was also called Chalukya Ganga, Vikrama Gangesvara, Vira Rajendra Chandra and Gangesvara Devabhupa. He was celebrated as the "manifestation of the glory of Vishnu Narasimha".

He is certainly the most famous King of the dynasty, considered the founder of the "eastern Gangas" as by defeating king Ramapala of the Somavamsis he took control of south Orissa, from Ganjam to Godavari. He took the title of Chakravarti, a title that was traditionally used by the Cholas in south India, and was also called Parama Mahesvara, Parama Vaishnava and Parama Brahmanya.

Chodaganga Deva was also the most powerful King of this period in south east India and his kingdom stretched from river Godavari in the south to the Hoogly Ganga in the north at Kalighat (Calcutta). He built forts at Sarangagada (now in the jungle near Barang) and Kasigarh near Dalua (on the road from Chandaka to Khurda). This second fort had a perimeter of 8 km and walls made of sandstone and 3 meters thick. Chodaganga's army consisted of many foot soldiers and elephants; the soldiers received land grants and settled in various parts of Orissa.

Anantavarma Choda Ganga Deva started the construction of the present Jagannatha temple in 1142. For the protection of the temple and Puri, Chodaganga established four Kotas (small fortresses) i.e. Nagakota in the south, Bhagavatikota in the north, Indradyumnakota in the west and Marichikota in the east.

At that time Puri was divided into seven Sahis, Adya Sahi (later on called Gaudabada because of Chaitanya), Harachandi Sahi (where most of the Sevakas lived), Bali Sahi (in the area of the old palace), Kalikadevi Sahi, Dolamandapa Sahi, Kundhaibenta Sahi and Markandesvara Sahi. Each Sahi was under a Sahi Nayaka and a Sahibendhia and performed dances and entertainment inside the Temple during festivals.

It is said that before starting the construction of the present temple, Chodaganga organized a grand procession with 99,000 elephants and poured a large amount of gold into the Suna Kua well.

Tradition says that two groups of dancers were assigned to the temple, the Oriya group and the Telugu group. These Telugu Devadasis were installed in Puri by Chodaganga in a street (Sahi) still known as Chudanga Sahi. The *Madala panji* says that after him, also Rajaraja Deva II appointed 20 dancers to the Jagannatha temple. Chodaganga also built the Madhukesvar temple at Mukhalingam, where he established the seva of a selected group of Ganikas or Devadasis. His brother Pramadi Deva donated an *akhanda dipa* in the temple of Kedaresvara, Bhubaneswar, while Chodaganga himself donated an *akhanda dipa* in the temple of Kritivasa (Lingaraja). Chodaganga is also said to have removed the Deity of Ramachandi from the Konark temple and installed her in the present separate temple on the road between Puri and Konark. He also built separate shrines for Vimala and Lakshmi within the compound of Jagannatha temple in Puri, a separate shrine for Parvati inside Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar, and the separate shrine for Chhaya, Surya's consort, within the Konark temple (at present only the basement still remains). Also temples were established in Kakatpur (Mangala), Banki (Charchika), Jhankara (Sarala), Sambalpur (Samalesvari).

In the same period, all male Deities in the various temples were accompanied with their female Shaktis. His general Banapati built a Natyasala, a boundary wall and an assembly hall, dedicating them to Goddess Bhagavati or Kali. His descendant Ananga Bhima Deva III is said to have completed the temple in 1230.

During Chodaganga Deva's reign, Puri became the most important and famous pilgrimage place in India, where refugees came to take shelter from the invasions of Muslims.

The rise to power of Chodaganga Deva is traditionally connected to the story of Nitei Dhobani. The story says that the last King of the Keshari dynasty, Surya Keshari, had wronged a Vasudeva Rath Vahinipati over a land grant, so the Vahinipati went to Bhubaneswar where he engaged in austerities to please Lord Lingaraja. Lingaraja appeared to him in a dream and instructed him to find Ananta Varma and help him win the throne. Ananta Varma was the son of the Ganga king Devendra Varma Rajaraja I and his mother Rajasundari was the daughter of the great Chola king Rajendra Chola. Choda is said to be a local pronunciation of Chola.

Prior to Ananta Varma, the Gangas had made their capital in Andhra Pradesh. When Vahinipati found Ananta Varma in the south, the boy was still absorbed in playing with other children but the boy's mother, informed about Lord Lingaraja's plans for her son, consulted her friend Nitei Dhobani, a powerful tantric and ardent devotee of Lord Jagannatha. Nitei Dhobani taught Ananta Varma the occult arts and with her help he was able to defeat the Keshari ruler and ascend the throne.

Nitei Dhobani accompanied Chodaganga Deva to Orissa and settled in Puri where the King began the construction on Jagannatha's temple. The more established Shaivas of the region, who had been supported by the Keshari Kings, became jealous of all the activity dedicated to Lord Jagannatha and the influence of Nitei Dhobani. In particular the leader of the Shaivas, Acharya Someshvar, who had been brought to Puri by Udyota Keshari, was well established as the head of the followers of Aghora Shiva Markandeya, and considered the arrival of Nitei Dhobani as a challenge to his influence.

The two spiritual leaders faced each other in a public test of their mystic powers, consisting in producing rice from empty rice husk. Nitei Dhobani won the contest. Still today some people worship Nitei Dhobani as a powerful personality, and in Chodanga Sahi there is a small temple with the image of Nitei Dhobani, Chodaganga Deva and the husking device that was used for the contest; on Vijaya Dasami an annual function is held with the offering of Baladeva's *prasad*.

Kamarnava, also called Jatesvara, was the son of Chodaganga and Kasturi Kamodini Devi. Towards the end of his father's reign he was the joint ruler. He performed the Tulabharam, weighing himself against gold and then distributing the gold to the *brahmanas*.

He was defeated by Prithivi Deva of the Kalachuris of Ratnapur and lost parts of Western Orissa. In fact the Kalachuris were a constant harassment for the kingdom, and they were only defeated by Anangabhima Deva III.

Anangabhima Deva also built many temples, public houses, roads, tanks and irrigation canals. He was also a patron of arts; the Ananta Vasudeva temple was built by his daughter Chandra Devi in 1278 in Bhubaneswar. Princess Chandra was an expert musician and dancer, and after the death on the battlefield of her husband Paramardideva (a *kshatriya* of the Haihaya dynasty), she dedicated her life to the worship of Achyuta (Vishnu).

Later on, king Anangabhima Deva II continued the work of Chodaganga Deva by building the walls around the Jagannatha temple in Puri and many of the other shrines on the temple grounds, including the temples of Vimala and Lakshmi.

He is thus often considered to be the principal builder of the temple. He also did much to establish the regulations around the service to the Deity, under the guidance of his Guru Paramahansa Vajapeyi; it is said that he established the Chatisha Niyoga system, broadly classified in the three categories of Pratihari niyogas, Bhitarchu niyogas and Mahasuara yoga. Each Niyoga had a Nayaka, among which were elected an Adhinayaka (president), Karji (secretary), and Karana (treasurer). Four other Nayakas in the Committee were the Chatishaniyoga Nayaka, Bhitarchu Nayaka, Talichu Nayaka and Bada Panda.

It is said that Anangabhima established 7 Akhadas in the 7 Sahis. Akhada comes from Akrida, meaning training with swords, a tradition that was also prevalent in Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Ramesvara. The Naga Sadhus of Puri practiced here.

Membership was free but members were expected to worship Hanuman by offering the *sindhur*.

Later also Jegas or Gadas were established; here Jega Mahavira or Jega Thakurani were worshiped by the Jegapilla (boys) of the Jegha Sanga. Each Sahi had at least three Jegas.

Kapilendra himself was the son of a Nayaka, and he became the most powerful and famous Hindu ruler of contemporary India.

Under **Rajaraja Deva III** the Muslims started to attack Orissa.

In 1192 Muhammad Ghur won the battle of Tarain and started the Delhi sultanate, establishing a strong power hold in north India. From there the Muslim invaders sent expeditions in various other parts of India. In 1202 Muhammad Khalji defeated Lakshman Sena, the last Hindu king of Bengal, establishing the second stronghold of Muslim conquest in the north of India.

In 1203 the Afghan sultan Bhaktiar Khilji sent the two Khiliji brothers named Mohammad and Ahmad Sheran to conquer Lakhnor in Bengal and Jajnapur (Jaipur) in Orissa, while he personally went to Kamarupa in Assam and in Tibet. The *Tabaqat i Nasiri* reports that Bakhyar died during the expedition, in 1205, and the two brothers also decided to return to Devkot, even if the last Hindu king of Bengal had fled to Puri to take *sannyasa*.

Anangabhimadeva III was also engaged in fighting back the Muslims.

In 1212 the third successor of the Afghan ruler, Hisam-ud-din Douz Ghyas-ud-din, invaded Orissa for the first time and exacted tributes from its rulers. However, he was defeated by Anangabhima's minister and general Vishnu, and retreats hastily.

In 1243 the Tartar Izud din Tughral Turghan Khan of Bengal attacked Orissa but was driven back by Narasimhadeva I (1238-1264), who laid siege to his capital Gaur with one division and sent another division to sack Birbhum. The Delhi sultan sent reinforcements but his army was defeated.

In 1253 the Tartar slave sultan of Bengal invaded Orissa again, and was pushed back.

Towards the end of the 13th century there was a new wave of Muslim invasions, but the Bengal Muslims were pushed back by the generals Vishnu and Mohana Chamunatha.

The same general of Anangabhimadeva, Vishnu, also defeated the Kalachuri king of Tummana who had also invaded Orissa; the Kalachuris were pushed out from Sambalpur, Sonapur, Bolangir.

Anangabhimadeva III reorganized the Jagannatha temple, and as we read in an inscription of 1216 (at Draksarama) he made Jagannatha the State Deity, calling himself the Rauta (deputy) and Putra (son) of "Purushottama, Rudra, Durga" (previously Shiva was the *rastra devata*). After 15 years, in another inscription, he mentions only Purushottama as the presiding Deity of his kingdom. He also refused to accept the royal Abhiseka consecration, claiming to be "only the deputy" of Purushottama.

Anangabhimadeva's wife made a considerable donation to Vishnu Allalanatha in Kanchipuram (the Chola capital) claiming she had been ordered to do so by Purushottama, the presiding Deity of Orissa. In that same year, as a response to the invasion, conquest and devastation of Varanasi in the north by the Muslims, Anangabhimadeva consecrated a temple to Purushottama in Abhinava Varanasi (Cuttack), which was later on destroyed during the Muslim invasions, too.

Anangabhimadeva's son **Narasimha Deva I** (also called Lungula Narasimha) was the first King to call himself Gajapati (in the north the Kings called themselves *asvapati*, while in the south they were called *narapati*).

He is considered the builder of the Surya temple in Konark, but it is possible that he simply embellished the original ancient structure of the temple with sculptures and other works. It is difficult to say what exactly he built especially because now only the Jagamohana is still standing. Previously this main temple structure had three doors, but now everything is closed and the interior is filled with bricks to prevent the structure from collapsing. Of the famous Natamandira, only the basement has survived.

Narasimha Deva also built the famous temple of Kshirachora Gopinatha; at that time the Deity was known as Gopala Krishna.

One relief now preserved in the Konark museum shows the King visiting the Jagannatha temple, welcomed by the priests and by a *sannyasi* carrying the traditional staff of the Shankaracharya line. The Deities are depicted in a different order and in a different shape compared to the present arrangement: Purushottama is in the middle and in His traditional form as Daru Brahman very similar to the one we know today, but on His left Balabhadra is a Shiva lingam, and on His right Subhadra is Durga Mahisha mardini in Her characteristic pose.

Narasimha I is famous for having fought back the Muslim invaders in the Lakshmanavati war (1245-6) against the union of the Muslims of Delhi and Bengal. He attacked and defeated Tughril Tughan Khan, the Afghan ruler of the sultanate firmly established in Bengal. He captured Lakhnore in Radha desh (south west Bengal) and besieged Lakhmanavati. The sultan of Delhi sent reinforcements to the sultan of Bengal and Narasimha retreated, but Tughril was deposed and Yuzgak was appointed as the new sultan of Bengal. Yuzgak tried several times to recapture Radha desh, but he failed until the sultan of Delhi directly intervened. Thus for 375 years Orissa remained a Hindu state in the middle of Muslim sultanates and dominions.

Bhanudeva II (1308-1328) fought against the Muslim sultan Ulugh Khan (also called Juna Khan), son of Ghiyas ud din Tughluq (also called Muhammad bin Tughluq), who attacked the Telengana region in 1321 to punish the king of Warrangal, Prataparudra Deva, who had refused to pay tribute to the Delhi sultan. While he was there, Ulugh Khan decided to raid the entire east coast of India and built a mosque in Rajahmundry (1324), but eventually he was defeated by Bhanudeva.

Under the reign of Bhanudeva, around 1230, Purushottama Jagannatha became the prominent Deity, and from that time on Jagannatha gradually became identified with the King of Puri and Orissa.

Bhanudeva III also had to fight against Muslim invaders. Firuz Shah Tughlak of Delhi had embarked in a military campaign to force tribute on the independent sultan of Bengal, and then he decided to attack Orissa with his powerful cavalry. He marched on Tinanagar (now Kiching) of the Bhanja kingdom, defeated the garrison at fort Saranghar, invaded Keonjhar and Cuttack, destroying all the temples in Cuttack including a famous Jagannatha temple of which nothing is left today. Sultan Firuz Tughluq desecrated the temple of Jagannath after invading Jajnagar in 1360, during the reign of Bhanudeva III, Amir Sultan (Amura Surathanu) of the King of Gaura damaged the Deities. Ismail Ghazi, the general of Sultan Hussain Shah, also invaded Puri.

In his campaign report, *Tarikh i Firuz Shahi* describes Jajnagar (Orissa) as a very rich, prosperous and happy country, with large houses and gardens with fruit trees and flower plants. He writes that the abundance of grains and fruits found in the country restored the energies of the men and animals of the Muslim army, who had been suffering from food deprivation during the long campaign.

The *Madala panji* states that Tughlaq demolished the temple of Jagannatha in Puri, too, and massacred all those who had fled to Chilika lake, and returned to Delhi with 73 large elephants. In the beginning king Bhanudeva was helped by some temple Pandas who accepted to work as spies for the King and the sultan was defeated (1361), but later the Pandas started to quarrel against each other and the second Muslim invasion was successful and brought widespread destruction.

Under Bhanudeva III Orissa was also raided by Ilyas Shah, the independent sultan of Bengal. At that time several temples in Bhubaneswar were destroyed, including Meghesvara and a large temple of Jagannatha (described as a temple of Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra), of which nothing remains today. The Bengali sultan returned to Bengal with immense booty and 44 elephants. In 1347 the Bahamani sultan from the south established his power in Gulbarga and attacked Vijayanagar, manipulating the Hindus – setting the Reddis (whose kingdom was between the Krishna and the Godavari rivers) against the Bellamas of Rachakonda and Devarakonda on the other side of the Godavari. After this clash, Anapota Reddi attacked Orissa in 1355.

Narasimha Deva IV, the son of Hira Devi of the eastern Chalukhyas, faced several difficulties during his reign. On one side, Khwaja Zaha had established the independent kingdom of Jaunpura challenging the authority of the Delhi sultan, and on the other side Orissa was invaded in 1390 by Kumaragiri Reddi, who had emerged victorious from a succession struggle.

Under **Bhanudeva IV** the Reddis' power was again sapped by more succession fights after the demise of Kumaragiri, so the king of Orissa felt it was a good time to attack Rajahmundry. However, the Vijayanagar emperor, Devaraya, sent his army to help Allada Reddi. Good sense prevailed and hostilities ceased, with the good result that during the invasion of Hushang Shah the three Hindu Kings were strong enough to deal with him. At some point, however, Hushang Shah disguised himself and his men as merchants and approached Bhanudeva on the pretext of selling him some horses; they kidnapped the King and asked elephants as a ransom. The negotiations were conducted for the Hindu side by Kapili Rauta, the future Kapilendra Deva.

While Hushang Shah was returning with the elephants, he was attacked by Allada Reddi. However, Allada Reddi was killed in the fight. After Allada's death Bhanudeva attacked the Reddis but was defeated by the Vijayanagar emperor, and his allies the Bellamas were subdued by the Bahamani sultan. Bhanudeva was finally killed while he was trying to wage war against the king of Gauda (formerly his ally against the sultanate of Delhi).

The Surya Vamsis

At the beginning of the 15th century the Ganga dynasty ended as the last king Bhanudeva IV, known as "the madman", died without children in 1435, leaving the throne to his senior minister Kapilesvara Rauta, who had demonstrated his talents and his deep devotion for Lord Jagannatha. Other sources say that Kapilesvara forcibly took power while Bhanudeva was on a military expedition. Certainly there were many who considered him an usurper, as an inscription in the Lingaraja temple warns all his opponents of banishment, and states that whoever criticises him is an enemy of God.

Kapilendra Deva or **Kapilesvara** was the founder of the Surya Vamsa (Sun dynasty) in Orissa with the name of Kapilendra Deva (1431-1470). He was crowned in Kirtivasa Kataka (Bhubaneswar), starting the "Kapilabda era". His previous name was Rauta or Rautray, but after his military accomplishments he was renamed Mahapatra (a title for army officers) and then, after conquering Bhramarakotta (now Umakot) in Koraput district, he received the name of Bhramaravara (a title for royal candidates). Kapilendra hailed from a very poor family who had worked as cowherds in the house of a *brahmana* family; his friendship with Kalidasa dates back from those times, and when he became King he appointed Kalidasa as his court poet. The panegyric history of his dynasty says that Kapiladeva's ancestors belonged to a royal family of Keonjhar. His family tree is given as follows: Kapilesvara's son (from his wife Bellama) Jagesvara had three sons – Kapilendra, Balarama and Parasurama. Kapilendra's mother was Parvati. Kapilendra married Rupambika, whose son was Purushottama, and in turn Purushottama married Padmavati, who became the mother of Prataparudra.

Kapilendra was a very capable king, a brave warrior and a great scholar, and under his dynasty the kingdom greatly expanded and flourished for about 100 years. The Oriya language developed during his period with the work of many poets, dramatists and scholars, side to side with Sanskrit. His court poet, Sarala, wrote the *Oriya Mahabharata*, a work in 13,000 verses describing the conquests of Kapilendra in puranic setting and language. He established his capital in Katak (Cuttack) on the banks of the Mahanadi river, but his influence reached to Andhra Pradesh, where his edicts were established in the Kumarnath temple.

Kapilesvara was considered the most powerful ruler in India in his time, yet he was always humbly presenting himself as a mere *sevaka* of Jagannatha. He gave lavish donations to various Shiva temples, but especially to the Jagannatha temple in Puri, where he built the external wall. He also donated many utensils and jewels, most of which are still used to decorate the Deities, such as earrings, crowns, hairnets with pearls, necklaces with pearl and emeralds, gold strings (*suta*), 3-rows necklaces with a pendant in the form of a parrot made of rubies, anklets with chains, finger rings with precious stones, armlets and bracelets of various types, girdles and toe rings, and *uttariyas* (upper clothes).

During his reign, his prime minister Mohapatra Gopinath Dash built in Gopinathpur (Cuttack district) a temple similar of the temple of Jagannatha at Puri and installed there the Deities of Balabhadra, Subhadra, Jagannatha and Gopinatha. It is said that the temple was finally demolished by Kalapahada, a Hindu who converted to Islam and became the general of Suleiman Karnani.

However, apparently Kapilendra did not excel in foresight and administration. Instead of fighting the Bengali Muslims, for example, he entangled himself in a war against the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. This was a mistake that originated a strong enmity along the successive generations and finally brought about the disintegration of Orissa under Krishnadeva Raya.

Kapilendra defeated the Silavamsis of Nandapura, the Matsyas of Oddadi, Vishnuvardhana Chakravartin of Panchadharla, and conquered Gauda (Bengal), Rajahmundry (the Reddi kingdom), Kondavidu and Telengana (Andhra Pradesh). As the Bahamani sultans had suppressed the dynasty of Bellamas and conquered Telengana in 1435, Orissa had to directly face the Bahamani sultans and Kapilendra rose to the task. It is written in the *Burhan i Ma'nasir* that Sanjar Khan had launched a military campaign to capture civilians (i.e. non-warriors) to sell as slaves in the Muslim kingdoms, but Kapilendra defeated him with the superior power of his army, strong with 200,000 war elephants.

Kapilendra also pushed back the attacks of the Delhi sultanate and his kingdom stretched from Ganga to Kaveri. He appointed his grandson, Kumar Kapilesvara Mahapatra son of Hamvira as viceroy for the south in 1464, but the lands in the south were lost in 1470 in the civil war in Orissa for the succession at the death of Kapilesvara. In fact, Kapilendra had too many sons (18 legitimate plus a number of illegitimate, including Purushottama Deva) and grandsons, who had been favored at one time or another, and many of them started to fight over the succession, especially as the youngest son, Purushottama, was designated as the next King.

Purushottama Deva

Gajapati Kapilendra Deva left the throne to his second son Purushottama Deva (1466-1497), born of Parvati. The *Madala panji* says that Kapilendra was uncertain about the choice of his successor, so one day when he was visiting the temple of Jagannatha he prayed the Lord to give him a sign indicating which of his many descendents was more suitable for the throne. While he was praying, his *uttariya* (upper cloth) slid off to the ground, and young Purushottama was ready to pick it up. Kapilendra announced his choice, also affirming that Jagannatha had appeared to him in a dream to bless his decision.

The other sons and grandsons of Kapilendra immediately resented his nomination on the grounds that he was not only the youngest son, but his mother, from a *brahmana* family, was not exactly a queen but a *phula vivahi* wife, something between a queen and a concubine. His opponents called him "*bhogini nandana*". His panegyrists, however, called him Durga vara putra as he was born with the blessings of Durga, and he was a worshiper of the Pancha Devatas.

The other sons of Kapilendra demanded proof that he had actually been chosen by Lord Jagannatha as the next King, so it is said that Purushottama presented himself unarmed to his brothers, declaring that his only protection was Jagannatha's name. The other princes attacked him with various weapons but Purushottama could not be hurt: thus he was accepted as the rightful heir.

On his ascent to the throne, Purushottama Deva immediately propitiated the *brahmanas* by abolishing the *chaukidari* tax and renewing the old grants, donating great wealth to the temple, including villages, as witnessed by the inscription in the Jagannatha temple, dated April 1467. He also promulgated a law according to which nobody could deprive a Brahmin of wealth, wife, life and land.

Purushottama Deva established 16 Sasana villages, within the radius of a *pancha krosa* (20 km) from the Jagannatha temple: Vir Harekrishnapur, Vir Balabhadrapur, Vir Kishoripur (Chandanpur), Vir Narasimhapur, Vir Pratapur, Vir Ramachandrapur, Vir Govindapur, Vir Purushottampur, Sri Purushottampur, Sri Ramachandrapur, Sri Mukundapur, Pratap Purushottampur, Damodarpur, Gopinathpur, Visvanathapur (Nuagaon), Rai Chakradharpur, Kanga Jagannathapur, Gokulpur, Vasudevapur, Jagannatha Vidyadharapur, Pattajoshiapur, Sarikia Vir Kishoripur, Kanhai Vidyadharapur and Rajgurupur. He also installed 15 Sasana villages around Cuttack, the then capital of the kingdom.

It is said that Purushottama Deva built the Bhoga Mandapa of the temple and the kitchens, and replaced the chakra on top of the tower as it had fallen off. He also offered many valuable jewels and articles, including ivory couches, a throne with flags and jars, a royal umbrella, a bedstead, golden-handled brooms, a mirror, *chauris*, and earrings.

Similarly, to strengthen the religious authority of the King, he established the concept of Thakura Raja, Chalanti Vishnu and Raja Chakravarti, he had himself called Narayana amsa avatara and started the Devarchana system, by which the King re-uses for his morning bath the articles that were offered to the Deities the previous night. This process had already started with the Ganga dynasty and continued until the end of the period of the Suryavamsis: as long as these two dynasties rules, they did not allow anyone else to build Jagannatha temples.

Purushottama Deva was careful to present himself as a humble servant of Lord Jagannatha: it is also said that he started the *chera pahara* tradition, the chariot sweeping on the occasion of the annual Ratha Yatra, and elevated the Dasa Mudili transforming them into Mahasuaras (cooks) of the temple.

An inscription within the walls of the Jaya Vijaya door inside the temple says that on the order of king Purushottama Deva every day between the evening meal (*sandhya dhupa*) and the night *arati* (*bada sringara arati*) Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* should be performed by the Devadasis with the accompaniment of four Vaishnava singers. According to a Gopinathpur inscription, the Devadasis of the temples were as beautiful and expert as the apsara Rambha.

After Purushottama ascended the throne, Kapilendra's first born son Kala Hamvira (also called Nrisimhadeva) established himself at Gudari (Koraput district) and started the Khemundi kingdom (that later developed in Paralakhemundi and Badakhemundi). According to historians, Kala Hamvira organized a rebellion against his brother Purushottama Deva, but he was defeated and fled to exile to the court of Muhammad III the sultan of Bahamani, to whom he offered the Telangana coastal areas if he helped him to recapture the throne. With the help of the sultan, Hamvira defeated Purushottama in the south, conquering the territories of Rajamahendry and Kondavindu and delivering Telengana to the sultan.

In 1482 Purushottama Deva reclaimed these territories and waged war against the sultan for several years. Purushottama was also indirectly favored by a palace conspiracy at the Bahamani court, because of which the sultan ordered the execution of his best general and advisor, Mahmud Gawan, on the basis of a forged letter that apparently proved his plans to betray him. From that time on, the affairs of the Bahamani sultanate took a sharp turn downwards. Finally Purushottama Deva convinced the sultan to leave him alone, and showed his good will for peace with a gift of 25 elephants.

In 1488 after the death of Muhammad III Purushottama Deva started to expand his territory again south of the Krishna river and defeated the king of Karnataka, building a temple of Jagannatha in the town of Nagulapalli, in Andhra Pradesh. He then proceeded to reconquer Rajahmundry and Kondavidu, where he immediately propitiated the inhabitants by abolishing the tax on marriage.

Purushottama Deva defeated Saluva Narasingha of Kanchipuram and married his daughter Rupambika, who was given a new name as Padmavati when she became Queen. The famous story of his war and this marriage is known as the Kanchi Kaveri lila, depicted in innumerable pieces of art and literature, including the famous stucco relief inside Jagannatha temple, near the Garuda pillar on the wall between the Bhoga mandapa and the Nata mandapa, where Jagannatha and Baladeva are depicted as horsemen.

Saluva Narasingha of Kanchi was a ruler of the Pallava dynasty. His mother was Mallamvika, his wife was named Tippanvika, and his daughter was Rupamvika. There had already been some hostility, because when Purushottama had led his army south to fight against his rebellious brother Hamvira, it seems that Saluva Narasingha had supported Hamvira. On that occasion, Hamvira and his son Kumara Kapilesvara Mahapatra had been killed. Saluva Narasingha rejected the marriage proposal for Rupambika offered by Purushottama Deva and insulted him, calling him a common sweeper for his sweeping the chariot of Jagannatha during the Ratha Yatra. It is important to understand that especially in those times the gift of a daughter in marriage among ksatriyas was a sign of submission to a more powerful ruler.

Purushottama Deva felt that not only he had been offended, but a most serious offence had been made against the Lord, by equating His transcendental service with an ordinary material activity of the lowest level.

A first expedition failed, so Purushottama returned to Puri, and he prayed Jagannatha for help. Jagannatha appeared to him in a dream encouraging him to show his *kshatriya* prowess, and said that He and His brother Balarama would personally come to fight by the King's side to punish the pride of the King of Kanchi. So Purushottama Deva again travelled south with his army, leaving Cuttack (the then capital of the kingdom, on the Mahanadi about 30 km north of Bhubaneswar). On the way, however, he was wondering what Jagannatha had meant while saying that He would personally come and fight by his side.

A little further on the road, at Manika patana (some say that this place is the village now called Sakhigopal, others say it is near Chilika), a lady called Manika was walking with her pots for selling yogurt in the market. Then she saw two very handsome young men on horseback: one had a black complexion and rode a white horse, the other had a white complexion and rode a black horse. The two young men were dressed in silken fineries and ornaments, and radiated joy and power. They stopped near the lady and asked to drink some yogurt. The lady was happy to offer her curds, but when it was time for payment, the two boys said: “We have no money here. Our brother the King is coming on this way very soon. Take this ring: show it to the King and he will pay you.”

Soon afterwards, the lady met king Purushottama Deva at the head of his army and approached him, asking for the payment of the curds. The King was amazed at the story, but when he saw the ring the boys had given to the lady he had no more doubts: it was indeed one of the jewels from Jagannatha’s treasure. The King felt this occurrence as the special blessing of Jagannatha who wanted to reassure him and proceeded to Kanchi to victory.

In the Khemundi kingdom the story of the Kanchi kaveri war waged by Purushottama Deva against Kanchi (belonging to the Vijayanagara empire) is told in a different way. In this version, Purushottama Deva was a devotee of Goddess Manikesvari (still the presiding Goddess of Paralakhemundi), and with her help he conquered Kanchi and from there he rescued a lady devotee of Manikesvari, who wanted to marry his brother Svarabhanu. Manikesvari was then presented as the Gopalini Maniki in the popular Kanchi kaveri story with the purpose of supporting the more brahminical worship of Radha-Gopala.

It must also be noted that Purushottama Deva wrote the *Gopala archana vidhi*, giving a greater prominence to the *brahmanas* rather than to the Daita-Patis in the worship system, and established 15 tax-exempt *sasana* villages in Cuttack for the settlement of *brahmanas* who would support his religious authority of the *chalanti vishnu*, Thakura Raja, called Narayana amsa avatara. Purushottama Deva returned to his kingdom taking with him the princess, the Deity of Sakshi Gopala, the Deity of Radha Kanta, the Deity of Ganesha worshiped by the Kanchi king, and the throne on which still today Jagannatha is sitting. Sakshi Gopala was first installed in Jagannatha temple, but after some time He appeared to the king in a dream and said He wanted to be moved because His meal schedule did not agree with Jagannatha’s, so Purushottama Deva brought Sakshi Gopala to Cuttack. Later the Deity was installed in a new temple in a village between Cuttack and Puri, in Satyabadi district, now known as Sakhigopal.

Back to Cuttack, Purushottama Deva ordered his minister to give the princess in marriage to a sweeper. The clever minister secretly took the princess to his own house, treating her like a daughter. At the next Ratha yatra, the minister took the princess to Jagannatha’s chariot and instructed her to approach the King while he was engaged in his *seva* of sweeping Jagannatha’s chariot and slip a wedding garland on his neck. Thus the princess was married to Purushottama Deva and received the name of Padmavati.

Queen Padmavati considered her rescue as a special blessing by Jagannatha and decided to dedicate herself to the temple service as a Devadasi and she was honored by the temple with a Gopa (patta) Sari. This story shows that the Devadasis enjoyed great respect from society.

Maharaja Purushottama Deva was generous in the distribution of gifts and charity. In 1494 he started a charitable food distribution system. He also took care of his soldiers: he settled many of them in surrounding lands. These warriors came to be known as Oda-paika (soldiers) and Oda-chasa (cultivators). With time the Utkalas and Kalingas became one people only. Purushottama Deva was famous as a protector of literature and arts, and a poet himself. He wrote numerous books: the *Abhinava Gita Govinda*, *Sarasvati vilasa*, *Mukti cintamani*, *Durgotsava*, *Abhinava veni samhara*, *Tridanda kosa*, *Jaya Durga stuti*, and *Nama malika* (a compilation of God’s name from 67 *Puranas*, *Itihasas* and *Tantra* scriptures). He was a devotee of Vishnu and Durga, and after a special worship to Durga he received the blessing of a son, who was thus named Durga Vira Putra, later known as Maharaja Prataparudra.

Prataparudra Deva

Purushottama Deva passed away in 1497 and was succeeded by his son Prataparudra Deva. Prataparudra is still regarded as one of the best rulers of Orissa, especially for his dedicated patronage to culture and spirituality that gained him the title of Vidyanidhi.

King Prataparudra built the Shiva temples at Kapilashrama and Dhabalesvara and surrounded himself with scholars such as Sarvahauma Bhattacharya and Kashi Mishra; in one inscription at Undavalli he is defined as master of all arts and recipient of 64 types of erudition.

He was extremely religious minded, and even during his war campaigns he dedicated most of his day to spiritual discussions in the company of *brahmanas*, to the worship of Jagannatha and the recitation of *shastra*, from 2 hours before dawn to late in the afternoon. His Raja Guru, Kashi Mishra, established a Varaha temple in Jajpur that was visited by Sri Chaitanya while coming to Puri the first time.

During Prataparudra's reign, in 1509, Sri Chaitanya came to stay in Puri with several disciples, bringing a very strong movement of devotion to the life of the city and a new interpretation of Vaishnavism. Prataparudra Deva, met Chaitanya and became his great supporter, also installing a neem Deity of Sri Chaitanya in a temple in Jajpur, where he retired before his death.

Among the sons of Prataparudra we can mention Virabhadra, Ramachandra and Purushottama. According to the *Sarasvati vilasa* written by him, Prataparudra had four main Queens (Padma, Padmalaya, Ila and Mahila) and his most prominent son was Purushottama, who was crowned the heir prince. However, from other sources we find that Prataparudra also had a number of other wives, and 32 sons (such as Kalua, Kakharua and Virabhadra) and a number of daughters, one of them, called Jaganmohini, went in marriage to the King of Vijayanagar, Krishna Deva Raya, who had been defeated by Prataparudra Deva in battle.

We also know that Prataparudra's chief Queen became a disciple of Jagannatha Das with the name of Gauri Devi, and that one of his sons became a Buddhist (inspiring him to organize a major religious conference for a debate between Hindus and Buddhists). One of the prominent personalities who were won by Chaitanya's devotion was Ramananda Patnaik, who had been appointed by Prataparudra Deva as the governor of Rajamahendri. Ramananda became fascinated by Chaitanya's teachings and he left his governor post to completely dedicate himself to Krishna Bhakti. He became known as Ramananda Raya. More information on Ramananda Raya can be found in the chapter about the great personalities connected with the tradition of Jagannatha.

Ramananda, who established his Matha at Jagannatha Vallabha near the Jagannatha temple, was a great scholar, who wrote the famous *Jagannatha Vallabha Nataka* drama on the *lilas* of Radha and Krishna, that was played several times in Jagannatha temple by the Devadasis. A famous inscription on the western side of Jagannatha's temple says that, on the order of Prataparudra Deva, only Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* could be sung and danced by the Oriya and the Telugu Devadasis (*nachunis*) during the time of the food offerings in the temple, and especially in the evening until the resting time for the Deities. Four Vaishnava singers were also appointed for this service. Although Ramananda Raya had trained the Devadasis to play feminine roles in his *Jagannatha Vallabha Nataka*, Prataparudra felt that it would be inappropriate for the Maharis to perform drama outside the Jagannatha temple, so he introduced the tradition of the Gotipuas.

Prataparudra Deva was a somehow weaker warrior than his father and he lost several territories in the course of his reign, but he had certainly a lot to look after. When he ascended the throne in 1497 his kingdom covered an area of land that went from present Calcutta (the Hoogly branch of the Ganges) to the Guntur district in modern Andhra Pradesh. Saluva Narasingha of Kanchi had died leaving the kingdom to his young son Immadi Narasingha and the regency to the minister Narasa Nayak. However, at the death of Narasa Nayak his son Vira Narasingha killed Immadi and started his own dynasty called Taluva. The Bahamani sultans had also become weaker and the new sultan of Bengal, Hussein Shah, had his own problems in establishing his rule.

The first real problems for Prataparudra came in 1509 when the new King Krishna Deva Raya of Vijayanagar started a military campaign of conquest on the southern part of the Prataparudra's empire. While Prataparudra was in the south to reclaim his territory, the sultan of Bengal, Hussein Shah (Ala ud Din Abul Muzaffar) and his general Gaji Ismail attacked from the east, invading Orissa down to Puri, destroying many temples on their way. The temple priests, headed by Kahnai Khuntia and Nrisingha Mahapatra, escaped carrying the Deities with them, first from a secret passage to the Lokanath temple, and then to the Chilika lake, where the Deities were hidden in an island cave inside the lake, called Choroli guha. The *Madala panji* says that the Amura Surathana,, Patisa (Badshah) of Gauda invaded Puri and destroyed the Deities.

Prataparudra, informed of the situation, immediately came back to Puri to fight back the sultan and his army, chasing them all the way to the Mandaran fort in Calcutta.

However in the meantime Prataparudra's minister Govinda Vidyadhara took advantage of the opportunity and tried to seize the throne, so the King had to give up the siege of the Mandara fort and to come back to his capital in Cuttack. A compromise was made, whereby Govinda Vidyadhara was given greater power and responsibility, so that the King was able to return to his campaign against Krishna Deva Ray, who had raised a huge army, consisting of 800 elephants and 34,000 foot soldiers. The war against the Vijayanagara King lasted for many years, also because Prataparudra's army only had 400 horsemen and 10,000 foot soldiers. Prataparudra suffered many defeats. In Kondavidi, a few km from the Krishna river, Prataparudra's garrison was starved to death in a siege lasted 18 months, and Prataparudra's son Virabhadra and uncle Tirumal Kanta Rava were taken prisoners, together with Narahari Patra (the son of Kapilesvara Hamvira Mahapatra), and the Muslim mercenaries Mallu Khan and Udanda Khan. In fact, at that time the Hindu Kings used to hire Muslim mercenaries, who were happy to fight for them as they obtained the opportunity to kill Hindus. The Vijayanagar Kings also employed Muslim generals and soldiers: a copy of the Quran was placed on the throne of Vijayanagar so that they Muslims could feel comfortable swearing allegiance to the throne.

The Vijayanagar army also attacked the fort of Kondavalli and took more prisoners, Sisachanda Mahapatra, Bodhan Mahapatra and Bijili Khan. Finally, a minister of Krishna Deva Raja (of Vijayanagar) called Appaji bribed several government officers in Cuttack to overthrow the King in his absence and Prataparudra was forced to accept defeat. In 1513 he signed a peace treaty, giving his daughter Jaganmohini Devi in marriage to Krishna Deva Ray with all the territories south of the Krishna river as a dowry. The princess' name was changed into Tippu. From the disintegration of the Bahamani sultanate the kingdom of Golconda rose, together with 4 others. The kingdom of Golconda was officially founded in 1512 by Quli Quib Shah, a general of Mohammad Shah Bahamani.

The King of Golconda attacked and defeated Prataparudra who had come to the rescue of his feudatory Sitapati the chief of Kambhammett. So the river Godavari became the border between Orissa and Golconda. In 1514 the Portuguese, who had arrived in India in 1498 and settled a colony on the Madras coast, were pushed north to the river Subarnarekha and founded a fugitive colony in Pipli where they remained until 1635.

The Bhoi dynasty

At the demise of Prataparudra, in 1540, three of his sons (Purushottama, Kalua and Kakharua) ascended the throne one after the other, for a few months each. It is said that all the 18 princes were assassinated one after the other by the minister Govinda Vidyadhara of the Karana class, and in 1542 Govinda Vidyadhara directly took power as king claiming for himself the title of "King of the Bhoi dynasty". However, he reigned only until 1549. He was succeeded by his descendants Chakra Pratap Deva (1549-1557), his son Narasimha (Jena) Deva (1557-1558), and Raghu Rama Deva Chotaraya (1558-1560), none of whom were particularly bright. Under the kingdom of Prataparudra Deva the power of the Muslim conquerors solidified and expanded.

Hussain Shah (1493-1519) became the most powerful ruler in the history of Bengal, and in the south the sultan Quli Qutub Shah of Golconda (near Hyderabad) declared his independence from the Bahamani sultans and started to build on his own kingdom, mostly by raiding Orissa. Unfortunately Prataparudra was distracted from his battling the Muslims by the hostility with the Hindu empire of Vijayanagara and betrayed by his Hindu ministers (especially Govinda Vidyadhara, who murdered all the sons of Prataparudra), so in the short span of 20 years the empire of Orissa was shrunk into the size of the kingdom before Kapilendra Deva. However, after his death the situation further precipitated into chaos and the Muslims gained more and more power in the region.

The Chalukhyas

The disastrous Bhoi dynasty was finally overthrown by **Mukunda Deva Harichandana** (1560-1568), a descendent from a Chalukya family.

Mukunda Deva performed the Tulapurusha with gold and distributed it in charity, abolished the marriage tax and executed many public works, such as the building of the embankment on the road from Magra to the Triveni, still existing. Mukunda Deva also established 16 *brahmana sasanas*, the original villages of the *brahmana* families whose head members sit in the Mukti Mandapa in Puri temple.

Unfortunately Mukunda Deva involved himself in the politics of Bengal, by giving shelter to Ibrahim Sur, the enemy of Sulaiman Kararani the sultan of Bengal, and exchanged embassies with Akbar, who wanted to annex the sultanate of Bengal. However, Akbar did not send any help to Mukunda Deva when he was attacked by the sultan of Bengal – obviously he reasoned that in case the Hindu king Mukunda Deva was defeated, the Delhi sultanate could annex Orissa when Akbar would defeat the sultanate of Bengal.

In 1568 the sultan of Gauda attacked Orissa, sending his son Bayazid with the general Sikandar Uzbek and the famous Kalapahada, who conquered Cuttack, while Mukunda Deva fled to hide in Kotisami (Kotismul). Raghuhanja Chotaraya, then general under Mukunda Deva, took the opportunity to declare himself the King of Orissa, and killed Mukunda Deva, but he was in turn killed by the Muslims. Two other generals of Mukunda Deva's army, Sikhi and Manai, betrayed the King and showed Kalapahada a path through the jungle so that he could attack the army from the rear.

Kalapahada's name is still remembered with fear and horror by the people of Orissa. He was a Hindu of Brahmin caste of the name Kala Chand, who worked for the Bengali sultan Sulaiman Kararani. It is said that the daughter of the sultan, Dulari, fell in love with him and insisted to marry him although he already had two Hindu wives.

Kala Chand came to Puri to consult the temple Pandas about his plight and to purify himself from the association with the Muslim sultan. He humbly prostrated himself in front of the priests, but instead of the all-encompassing mercy of Patita Pavana, the Lord of the entire universe, Kala Chand and even his wives received gross insults and rude words, kicks and other physical offences from the priests, who banned them from the entering the temple and having the Darshana of the Lord.

Flabbergasted, Kala Chand had a serious crisis of faith not only about the priests' mentality and behavior, but also about the cult of Jagannatha and the Vedic religion, that he now saw as a terrible fraud. He had no other option but to turn to Islam, and he did it wholeheartedly and revengefully. When he came back to Orissa with the new name of Kalapahada, he was fiercely determined to destroy all the temples and Deities of Orissa, and such was his ferocity that his mere name inspired terror into people.

The history of the looting and desecration of Jagannatha temple is long, starting from 1510 with Hussein Shah, the sultan of Bengal. During the reign of Purushottama Deva Jagannatha had to be hidden in the Chilika lake cave four times, two times during the reign of Mukunda Deva (1607-1622), once during the reign of Divyasingha Deva I (1688-1716) and again once during the reign of Ramachandra Deva II (1732-1743). However, the attack of Kalapahada was certainly the most violent.

He systematically destroyed temples, chopping off the hands, feet, ears and noses of all Deities and figures on the temples. He encouraged the Muslim soldiers to loot the temples: the *Madala panji* speaks of a booty worth of 520 million rupees (of those times). The *Makhzan-i-Afghana*, written in 1612 by Niamat Ullah, says, "every Afghan who took part in the campaign obtained large quantities of gold". Niamat Ullah also says that Kalapahada also pulled down a Deity of Krishna, had it broken into pieces and cast into the gutter; seven other gold images of various shapes which weighed five mounds each were also destroyed." He also adds that many people including women took shelter inside the temple, unable to believe that the temple could be desecrated and occupied, but were captured".

Madala panji says that when the Jagannatha Deities were hidden in the cave in the Chilika lake, Kalapahada found out the place and captured Them. Then he put Them on an elephant and took them back to Bengal, where he hacked the Deities to pieces and burned Them near the river Hoogly (the branch of the Ganges that flows by Calcutta). Some consider this an exaggeration, saying that it was more likely that Kalapahada burned the Deity of Jagannatha at the sea shore near Kujang (Chilika).

It is said that a devotee named Bisara or Besara Mohanty collected the Brahma *padartha*, hid it into a *mridanga* drum and brought it back to Orissa at Kujanga Gada, Khurda, where he kept worshiping him with the help of king Narendra Deva. It is said that Bisara Mohanty had followed Kalapahada all the way and that he jumped into the fire to salvage the Nabhi Brahma, emerging unscathed from the flames in front of the astonished Muslims. Then, about 20 years later, in his 9th year of reign, Ramachandra Deva of Khurda had new Deities made, retrieved the *Brahma padartha* from Bisara Mohanty, installed the new Deities, brought Them back to Puri, as we will see in the next section.

The attitude of the Muslim conquerors towards the worship of Jagannatha in Puri seems to have been subject cyclically to the predominance of Islamic zealotry or at other times to considerations about the financial gains that the Muslim government could get from the taxes accrued from a wealthy Hindu pilgrimage place. Another factor was undoubtedly the example of many misfortunes and mysterious deaths among those who had desecrated temples and Deities, including Kalapahada himself. Niamat Ullah also writes, “Strange still was the fact that those who had carried off the idols as booty suffered from misfortune, affliction and disaster and died within a year”.

Ahmad Razi writes in his *Haft Iklim*, “And believer or non-believer, whoever shows disrespect to the idol meets with instantaneous death”. He mentions one incident witnessed by his own grandfather, Maulana Lutfull Ullah of Nishapur, who went to Puri with a number of friends and persuaded the Brahmins to allow them to have a look at the idol on condition that they would not show any disrespect. When the party entered the temple, one of them spat towards the Deity and he instantaneously died.

Mukunda Deva was the last independent king of Orissa, as in 1568 the Karabani Sultans of Bengal incorporated Orissa into their kingdom. The Turks had occupied north India including Bengal and Bihar already in the 1200s, but Orissa somehow succeeded in remaining independent until 1568.

In the political and religious chaos that followed the death of Mukunda Deva, Ramachandra Deva, born of *sudra* caste, revealed himself as the best chance for the people of Orissa.

The Rajas of Khurda

The period of the Khurda Rajas was characterised by the intensive exploitation of Orissa – once a very wealthy region – and unchecked destruction.

A certain balance of power was established among the Rajas of Khurda, the Subahdars of Cuttack and the priests of the Puri temple, for the purpose of extracting money from the pilgrims. Of course, the largest part of the wealth thus extracted went to the Moghul emperor in the form of heavy taxes. During the first phase of the Khurda Rajas domination, several Gajapati aspirants tried to gain power.

Only 2 months after the treaty the brother of Mukunda Deva, Nrisimha, started a military campaign from Rajamahendra and arrived up to Chilika Lake, claiming to be the *divya avatara*, but he failed to establish his claims.

The list of the Rajas of Khurda includes: Ramachandra Deva I (1592-1607), Purushottam Deva II (1607-1622), Narasimha Deva (1622-1645), Gangadhara Deva (1645), Balabhadra (1645-1655), Mukunda Deva I (1655-1690), Divyasingha Deva I (1690-1720), Harekrishna Deva (1720-1725), Gopinath Deva (1725-1732), Ramachandra Deva II (1732-1743), Birakishore Deva (1743-1780), Dibyasingh Deva II (1780-1795), Mukunda Deva II (1795-1817).

Ramachandra Deva

The first king of Khurda was Ramachandra Deva I (1568-1607) of an unknown family, who was followed by his descendants. Ramachandra Deva was not only recognised as the successor of the former Gajapati line of kings but also as the head of the Jagannath temple at Puri. The new Gajapati King made sincere efforts to popularise and glorify Jagannatha’s supremacy as the Ruler of Orissa, first from Khurda and then in Puri. After only 2 years of reign, Ramachandra Deva I had new images of the Deities made and installed them in the sanctum of the Jagannath temple. For this service he became famous as the second Indradyumna. Sometime in 1596 he renewed the famous Nila Chakra on the top of the temple.

It is said that in his 9th year of reign, Ramachandra Deva had the new Deities made, retrieved the *Brahma padartha* from Bisara Mohanty, installed the new Deities, brought Them back to Puri and performed the *vanayajna vidhi*, after which he placed the new Deities in the temple on 17th July 1575.

There seems to be some controversy about the dates of these events, because it seems more likely that the new installation of the Deities may have been facilitated by Raja Man Singh (a Hindu prince from a Rajput family) who was appointed as the Governor of Bengal of 1588. He conquered Orissa and appropriated the Puri temple and district for the Afghan sultan, but he obtained that the Jagannatha temple and the surrounding land would be made “crown land” under his direct protection.

Some sources say that Ramachandra Deva (rather than Mukunda Deva) established the 16 Brahmin villages called *sanas* in different parts of the Puri district, other sources say that he established 5 *sasana villages only*.

It is also said that he built the Mukti mandapa inside the temple; the same sources state that Gaura Rani, the wife of general Man Singh, presided over the construction.

It may be possible to reconcile this contradiction by concluding that Ramachandra Deva carried on with the original idea of Mukunda Deva, possibly constructing a new or improved Mukti Mandapa if the first one had been damaged or originally made of perishable materials (as in the *kaccha* housings). In fact it was considered quite normal to establish a temple or a religious institution in a temporary building; the example being the Govardhana math established by Adi Shankara, which originally was within the temple of Jagannatha in Puri and then was moved to the present location in the city when the Jagannatha temple was renovated and transformed. In fact we could say that Ramachandra Deva literally saved Orissa from total disaster, liberating vast territories to some amount of independence from the Muslims, also through his alliance with Akbar.

Ramachandra Deva's general Krishnadeva Raya defeated the Ismal Ghazi of Bengal who had raided and sacked Cuttack and Puri. Ismail Ghazi withdrew and built a fort on the north west frontier of Orissa near Calcutta, but the Sultan became suspicious of such a move and fearing his rebellion he called him to court, had him beheaded and sent the body trunk back to the fort, riding on his horse.

Daud was defeated by the Moghuls under Munim Khan, resulting in a treaty on 12 April 1575. He had challenged the authority of Akhbar on instigation of Gutklukhan Lohani, who was dominating the area of Puri and wanted to eliminate Daud. Daul was finally killed in 1576 by Raja Todar Mal, the penultimate commander of the Moghul army, and the Afghans became the main power in Orissa. A large number of Afghans settled in the region, growing more powerful and ambitious, so much that they often tried to become independent from the imperial rule. A decisive expedition by the Afghan sultan of Bengal from 1564 to 1573 broke the rebellion.

As we already mentioned in Raja Man Singh (a Hindu prince from a Rajput family) was appointed as the Governor of Bengal in 1588. Ramachandra Deva tried to fight back but he was quickly defeated; he retreated to Khurda where he was besieged by the Moghul army. Finally Ramachandra Deva decided to surrender to Akhbar's army.

In 1589 the Afghans succeeded in assassinating the Moghul Governor of Orissa, Quia Khan, and the possession of Orissa became uncertain, creating a very turbulent period in which the Afghan Muslims also occupied the temple of Jagannatha. Raja Man Singh rushed back to Puri to defeat the Afghans (1591-1592).

Akhbar wanted to appease Ramachandra Deva to bring him to his side, and appointed him as the custodian of Puri and the Jagannatha temple, rejecting the claims of the sons of Mukunda Deva, who had sought help from Akhbar to regain the power in Orissa. So in the treaty of 1590 Raja Man Singh declared Puri as Moghul territory and established Moghul governors (Subahdars) in Cuttack, which was then the capital of Orissa, but assigned him about 2000 square km of zamindari dominions to Ramachandra Deva as a vassal of the Moghul empire. In 1592 Raja Man Singh finally defeated the Afghans and to celebrate his success he went to Puri to visit Jagannatha.

In the following period the Muslims became more possibilistic towards the worship of Jagannatha, also because rumors spread of the ill fate befalling those who had carried off the Deities' images as booty, who seemed to regularly face misfortune and disasters, dying within one year, as confirmed by Asgar Ali.

The high caste Hindus in Puri were also rather open-minded and had no objection in sitting to eat with Muslims or with other races, something that was unthinkable in any other place. The Muslims were impressed by the popularity of Kabir, who was a foundling adopted by lower caste people, and observed that Hindu pilgrims eagerly accepted the Torani, the water mixed with Mahaprasada rice that was distributed at his Matha.

Purushottama Deva II

Things changed under the reign of Jahangir, who made Orissa a separate dominion, where Hashim Khan was appointed as the Subadar. In this period the Mughals and their allies (many of whom were Hindus) became increasingly hostile to the Jagannatha temple, repeatedly attacked, looted and desecrated the temples. A terrible example was the Rajput chief Keshodas Manu, who laid siege and captured the temple in 1607 on the order of Hashim Khan.

Keshodas disguised himself and his men as pilgrims and taking advantage of the Ratha Yatra festival, he penetrated into the temple, looting its treasury and entrenching his men there.

Purushottama Deva's men came to besiege the temple to take it back but were defeated by reinforcements sent from Cuttack, and insult was added to injury as Purushottama Deva was forced to send one of his own daughters to the harem of Jahangir with a dowry of 300,000 rupees, and to give his sister in marriage to Kesho Das. Also Purushottama Deva had to pay more taxes and gift his best elephants to the emperor.

Later Hashim Khan and his successor Kalyan, Todar Mal's son, (who became Subedar in July 1611) attacked the temple again and the Deities had to be removed from Puri for safety, and hidden in the Gopal ji temple, then to Manitri Gurubai and Gopapadara in Khurda (where the Chandana yatra was celebrated). Kalyan Mal's successor Mukurram Khan humbled the Raja of Khurda relegating him to the status of a mere Zamindaar, and attacked the Deity at Sakhigopal when he could not find the Deities in Puri.

Again in 1611 the new Subahdar of Orissa (another Hindu), Raja Kalyana Singh, also attacked Khurda and Puri; Jagannatha was again carried away to be hidden in Chilika for several years, and the worship of Jagannatha was completely stopped during the crisis. Between 1617 and 1620 Makaram Khan attacked and occupied Khurda, so that Purushottama Deva had to escape to Manatri on the southern hills, and Jagannatha was hidden in the village of Banpur there. Finally Purushottama Deva fled to the fort of Manitri where he died in 1622 and took the Deities of Jagannatha with him, hiding them in the village of Banpur.

In 1600 Akhbar gave Orissa and Bengal as a personal potentate to his eldest son Jahangir, and when Jahangir became emperor he passed them to his foster brother Kutabud din. In 1621 Shah Jahan rebelled against his father and entered Orissa in October 1623 with the help of Bhim Singh to create his own sultanate.

Narasimha Deva established a good relationship with him and obtained his help to restore the Deities to the temple; during his reign the Muslims left the temple quiet, so much that *Madala Panji* related that the temple could be repaired and plastered in 1636-1637. This plastering may also have been decided to placate the minds of the Muslims by hiding the images that, according to the Islamic mentality, could be considered indecent and idolatrous.

The 30 years under Shah Jahan (1628-1657) were relatively peaceful, as the new regime realised that it was much more profitable to allow the Hindus to continue the worship of Jagannatha and pay heavy taxes with the money brought by the pilgrims. The Subahdar stationed in Cuttack reached an agreement with the Raja of Khurda to that effect, and gradually the situation became more comfortable. In 1633 a Moghul representative was even ceremoniously sitting on the Ratha; the chronicles of the time say that Muslims and Hindus fraternised and ate together, and the markets were selling all kinds of foods to everyone. In fact it seems that in ancient times the rules for access to the Jagannatha temple and all other temples were not so strict.

The Persian traveler Mohammed Bin Amir Ali writes that he reached Puri on 26 May 1626 as one of the 5,000 pilgrims coming to Puri from Midnapore, chanting "Haribol" all the way. His fellow pilgrims strictly observed austerity, and no foul language ever escaped their lips. He attended the Car festival with "millions" of other pilgrims, and visited the Temple and had the Darshan of the Deities in "the calm, tranquil environment". In his report, Bruton (1632) wrote that in Puri there were no religious barriers and no objection whatsoever from the Brahmins and priests for getting entrance into the temple. And we can't say that Bruton was likely to have shown great respect to the temple worship, as he writes, "unto this pagoda or house of Satan does belong 9,000 Brahmans or priests who do sacrifice unto their great god Juggernath".

Narasimha Deva III (1622-1645) built the palace of the Khurda Rajas at Balisahi in Puri, south of Jagannatha temple and moved there from Cuttack.

In 1642 he organized the compilation of a book of rituals (Niti) and reformed the method of temple worship and the service of the various Sevakas of the temple establishing the specific rights and duties (*adhikara* and *prapya*), also in order to strengthen his own influence. Under the advice of the Vaishnava preacher Rasikananda he stopped the animal sacrifices to Vimala in Jagannatha temple; it seems that under his reign the subordinate offering of Jagannatha's prasada to Vimala was introduced.

Narasimha Deva nominated the Raja Guru as the temple manager and *bada pariksha*. Large shares of the Mahaprasadam were assigned to the King's palace (*raja bhoga*) after every ritual, and the temple servants also started to be engaged in the palace service. Specifically, the King took the Maharis or Devadasis, the wives of Jagannatha, under the direct protection of the royal palace.

Narasimha Deva created 3 new categories of *sasana brahmanas* (Samantas, Bhatta Mishras and Vaidikas) to become the intellectual elite of Orissa, and introduced a rent payment system for the old *sasana* villages to bring their residents more closely under the control of the King. He also raised a number of *sudras* to the position of *brahmanas* and cooks for the temple (*suars*) with the family names of Mahanti, Sahu, Khuntia, and Subudhi. Once he even changed the caste of a barber (*bhandari*) into *brahmana*; his descendents multiplied and they still live in the Ganjam district.

The temple priests resented this expansion of the powers of the king over the temple, and an open revolt broke out, immediately exploited by the Moghul army that found it a wonderful opportunity to loot both the palace and the temple treasure. However, they refrained from disrupting the temple worship. Narasimha Deva III finally fell victim to a conspiracy: Mutaqad Khan invaded and plundered the temple, killing Narasimha Deva who tried to protect it.

His successors Gangadhara Deva (1645) and Balabhadra Deva (1645-1655) continued the worship of Jagannatha. The subsequent Rajas of Khurda were constantly harassed and exploited as mere vassals of the Mughal Subadars, but at least the worship of Jagannatha was not obstructed.

Mukunda Deva I of Khurda (1655-1690), the next prominent King, was quite respected by all. Under his reign a new *sasana* village was established (Mukundapur) and Daspalla (in Nayagarh) became the source of wood for the construction of the rathas instead of Banpur.

The ascent of the fanatical Muslim Aurangzeb to the Mughal throne in 1658 was a further hard blow for Orissa. During the reign of Aurangzeb attacks to the Hindu temples continued and multiplied, especially in Kendrapara and Tilkuti. Ekram Khan and Iman Kohi damaged the Simha Dvara and took away the Chakra over the Bhoga mandapa, forcing King Divya Singha Deva to hide in the house of a Sevaka (Vidyadhara Mohapatra) and allowing only the minimal rituals to be performed in the temple.

The new emperor immediately installed Nasan Khan as the Subedar of Cuttack, with the result of the destruction of many temples, that were replaced by mosques. By imperial decree, in 1669 Aurangzeb even ordered to destroy all the recent temples and prohibited the building of any new temple.

Aurangzeb appointed Khan-i-Dauran as Subedar of Orissa and punished Mukunda Deva for challenging the authority of the emperor. The Subedar desecrated the Baladeva temple at Kendrapara and transformed it into a mosque. According to the *Madala Panji* the temple of Jagannatha in Puri was saved by a miraculous event as the group of soldiers led by Abu Nasar Khan who had started from Cuttack directed to Puri to raze the temple to the ground was stopped by a terrible storm with lightning at Pipli, near Mukundapur (where Mukunda Deva was residing). It is said that the soldiers, terrified, refused to go any further fearing the rage of the dangerous Hindu God. Ekram Khan became the new Subedar in 1687, and under the order of Aurangzeb he planned another attack. Mukunda Deva prepared a replica of Jagannatha made of sandalwood, with two precious gems for eyes, and sent it to the emperor at Bijapur; the image was mutilated and thrown on the step of a mosque in May 1692. In the meantime the King of Khurda arranged for the Jagannatha Deities to be hidden at Banpur on the Chilika coast, where they remained until the death of Aurangzeb.

The Deities were returned to Puri in 1713 with the permission of Murshid Quli Khan and Subedar Shuja-ud-din. When this died, his son Taqi Khan, forcibly converted Ramachandra Deva with the new name Hafiz Qadir, before allowing him to continue as the Superintendent of the temple.

The Deities were again moved out secretly, to Banpur, Bolagarh, Tickli and Athgarh, and for several years the flow of pilgrims decreased until it finally stopped.

After the death of Taqi Khan, the next Subedar Murshid Quli Khan II made some calculations about the financial loss due to the lack of pilgrim taxes, so with the help of the next King of Khurda (Padmanabha Deva of Patia, also known as Raja Danda Deo, appointed by Mir Habib) he requested the priests to bring back the Deities to Puri. In that period the Kothabhoga of the Deities was instituted, the Chakra was set up again on top of the temple, and various construction works were conducted, including the Jagamohana in the temples of Lakshmi, Gopala and Gundicha, the Mukhasala in Gundicha, the Mandapa in Vimala's temple, and the establishment of *brahmana* Sasana villages around Puri. In this period hybrid religious forms started, such as the Hindu-Muslim institution of Satyapirs (Cuttack, Puri, Khurda, Pipili, Gop, Kakatpur, Manikapatna, Balipatana, Satyavadi, Kendrapara and Binjharapur), of whom several tombs are still found. On specific days Hindus and Muslims offered *sirini* (a special drink made with ghi, sugar, crushed bananas etc) and *khir* (milk or milk pudding), and the Pala form of dance was developed.

Muslims were allowed entry in the Jagannatha Puri temple, and some of them even made donations of land to Hindu temples, like the Zamindar of Lalitagiri (Cuttack) who gifted land for the worship of Gopinatha.

There are even instances of Muslim poets who wrote in Hindi presenting Jagannatha in a positive light. Under the reign of Sher Shah, Malik Muhammad Jaisi in his *Padmavati* describes his hero Ratansi of Mewar who goes to Orissa and offers worship in the temple at Puri. Another example is Osman, a poet of Gazipur who lived under the reign of Jahangir, who wrote a mystic love poem, *Chitravali*; in the “Jagannat Khand” of the text Sujan Rai the prince of Nepal gets shipwrecked on the coast of Orissa, and upon asking the whereabouts, he is answered, “This is the city of Jagannatha, the light of the whole world, who is worshipped by the people of the earth, a touch of whose feet takes off the whole load of sins”. The prince then goes into the temple and worships Jagannatha.

In 1692, during the reign of **Divyasingha Deva I** (1690-1720), Aurangzeb sent his general Nawab Ikram Khan of Golconda to attack and plunder the Jagannath temple and to put an end to the Ratha yatra festival; the report of the expedition is found in the Mughal *Tabssirat-ul-Naizirin*, as well as in Orissa’s *Madala panji* and *Chakra pitha*. Divyasingha Deva decided that it was not wise to engage battle with the powerful army of Aurangzeb, so he went to meet the Khan carrying the wooden horses and charioteers of the festival chariots, and doubles of the Jagannatha Deities. He also took the Muslim general to the Puri temple and helped him to destroy the temple entrance at *simha dvara*. Imram Khan’s brother, Jamal Khan, climbed onto the altar and sat on Jagannatha’s *simhasana*.

The Khan had the duplicate Jagannatha Deities thrown on the steps of a mosque so that every Muslim who passed there on his way to prayer could kick Them. Again, a sandalwood Deity who stood at the temple entrance was also sent to Aurangzeb, who had the Deity thrown on the steps of the great mosque in Bijapur (where Aurangzeb was at that time) for the same purpose of getting the Deity kicked by the Muslims on their way to the mosque. However, the original Deities had been hidden – Jagannatha in a secret place behind the shrine of Vimala inside the temple (where the Sevakas continued to worship by entering a secret passage from the south gate) and Baladeva and Subhadra in Kokola Gar. A second Moghul officer sent to completely destroy the temple of Puri was bribed with the sum of 30,000 rupees and the destruction was thus averted.

In the meantime, the Afghan rebels continued to cultivate their ambitions of independence, and in 1695 they revolted again against the emperor. Partly to break down their rebellion, and partly to curb the pride of Hindus, Aurangzeb sent his general Mir Sayyid Muhmad to block all the major roads to Puri, so that it was impossible for the pilgrims to reach the town to participate to the Ratha yatra festival. For 12 years (from 1691 to 1703) there was no Ratha yatra and no pilgrims could reach Puri. Out of fear for the Muslims’ attacks even the Snana yatra had to be performed secretly on Jagannatha’s *simhasana* and Gundicha yatra was celebrated in the Bhoga mandapa – and all in complete silence, without even sounding any bells. Finally all the four Deities (Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra and Sudarshana) were transferred to the dense forest of Banpur, in a place that came to be known as Niladri prasad.

The situation had become intolerable for the people and a *sannyasi* from one of the 59 Puri mathas, a devotee of Nrisimha called Ram Dayita Gosvami, decided to go and ask the sultan permission to hold the Ratha yatra and he succeeded in his task, even securing the revenue of the lands in Markandapur tashila (near Jatni, Khurda road junction) for the maintenance of the Jagannatha temple. It is said that on the previous night Aurangzeb had a dream in which he was ordered by Allah to allow the Ratha yatra and the worship of Jagannatha. Murshid Quli Khan, appointed Subadar or governor of Orissa in 1703, declared with an inscription on a copper plate that the attacks on the temple would stop and he lifted the ban on the performance of the Rathayatra festival. Finally, Divyasingh Deva had new rathas constructed and celebrated the Ratha yatra in full freedom after the long interruption. In 1707, at the death of Aurangzeb, the temple doors were officially reopened and the worship resumed in public.

The Maratha Period

After Aurangzeb’s death in 1707 the Mughal empire slowly started to disintegrate, and the Nawabs of Bengal strengthened their power. Gradually under the Nawabs the regions of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa became almost independent during the period from 1713 to 1733.

The Marathas also started to have a very strong influence in Orissa, during the reigns of the next Kings of Khurda Harekrishna Deva, Gopinath Deva and Ramachandra Deva II.

Ramachandra Deva II

Ramachandra Deva II became King in 1726. The first Nawab, Murshid Quli Khan appointed his son in law Shuja ud din as Subahdar. Their rule was still quite tolerant and peaceful. However, the next Nawab Shuja ud din and his son the Subahdar Taqi Khan installed in 1727 were very cruel and greedy, so that many times both the King and the Jagannatha Deities had to hide into the hills in the south of Orissa.

In 1729 Ramachandra Deva sent his general (*bakhisi*) to central Orissa to strengthen the control over the region, but a mutiny of the soldiers (*paiks*) in the next year caused the defeat of the army. The Nawab Taqi Khan even captured Ramachandra and kept him a prisoner, and moreover forced him to marry his daughter and to convert to Islam. It is said that because of this reason, Ramachandra Deva was not allowed to enter the temple any more, so the Patita Pavana Deity of Jagannatha was installed in the entrance hall of the temple just behind the Simha Dvara.

This version of the story was presented by the Rani Surjyamani when she petitioned the Government for the recognition of the royal rights of his son Mukunda Deva; however it appears quite controversial, as it seems that the Patita Pavana Deity already existed at the Simha Dvara gate 100 years before Ramachandra Deva II, because it is mentioned in the *Jagannatha charitamrita* written by Divakara Dasa in the 1600s. At the time of their father's defeat, the sons of Ramachandra Deva had fled to Athagarh; claiming independence from their father's authority, they fought the Muslims back and delivered Khurda. At that point Taqi Khan reinstalled Ramachandra Deva on the throne and sent his high officer with him to control Puri and the temple.

In 1732 finally Ramachandra Deva regained the confidence of the temple priests and he was entrusted with the care of the Deities when he fled again to Atagarh; however the Nawab changed his mind and declared Virakeshari, the son of Ramachandra, as the new king of Khurda.

In 1733 Ramachandra returned to Puri for the Navakalevara rituals bringing the *Brahma padartha* of Jagannatha, but Taqi Khan attacked Ramachandra in Khurda just after the Ratha yatra, and the new Jagannatha Deities were again taken to Marada in Athagarh for another 2 and a half years, until the death of Taqi Khan (1734), when Ramachandra returned to Khurda only to be defeated by the Subahdar (Murshid Quli Khan II).

Padmanabha Deva of Patia (Cuttack) was appointed as the new Gajapati, but he soon proved himself incapable of paying the heavy taxes demanded by the Nawab. After four years of reign, Padmanabha Deva was overthrown by Birakeshari (or Vira Keshari) Deva (son of Ramachandra Deva II), with the help of Murshid Qui II.

Birakeshari (Vira Keshari) Deva (1739-1792) repaired the temple of Jagannatha, rebuilding the Bhoga mandapa and the Simhasana and constructing the Snana vedi and the Kanaka mandapa (the area where a part of the *mahaprasada* rice is dried to be packed as *nirmalya*). He also repaired the temple entrance and offered several ornaments to the Deities. The temple administration was entrusted to three Praharis under the supreme authority of the Ekadi Pandita from Cuttack. Finally the central Mughal government had decided that it was better to exploit the temple and the pilgrims with taxes than to stop the festivals: the annual tax revenue came to about 900,000 rupees (as in 1739).

The Subahdar sent Mir Habib to Atagarh to retrieve the Jagannatha Deities so that the worship could resume regularly: this decision was taken by the same Murshid and Mir Habib who had destroyed hundreds of temples in Bengal. Birakeshari was also reinstalled on the throne after agreeing to pay the pilgrim taxes (*jatri hasili*) plus the debts accumulated by Padmanabha. In 1742 the Maratha King of Nagpur, Raghujji Bhonsla, started a campaign against the Nawab of Bengal, but without interfering with the local power structure of the Subedar and the Gajapati of Khurda.

In March 1743 the Marathas under Raghujji Bhonsle marched on Cuttack. Birakeshari Deva sent a messenger (Bahadur Khan) to the Marathas, and the messenger returned to assure the temple Sevakas that the Marathas would not disturb the temple worship. Between 1742 and 1751 there was a struggle between Raghujji Bhonsla and Alivardi Khan, and Orissa fell into a state of anarchy. Murshid Qui II was defeated by Alivardi Khan, who had seized the throne of Bengal, and driven out of Orissa. Mir Habib had allied with the Marathas and convinced them to attack Bengal. In March 1743 the Marathas under Raghujji Bhonsle marched on Cuttack.

Birakisore Deva sent a messenger (Bahadur Khan), who returned to assure the temple Sevakas that the Marathas would not disturb the temple worship. Birakishore tried to gather support from his traditional feudatory Kings and allies, and in 1746 he offered special honors to the Raja of Atargarh, Harichandana Jagadeva, during his visit to Puri, with the permission to use vehicles drawn by two horses and wear a turban with a silver elephant emblem.

To reciprocate, the Raja of Atargarh offered a village to cover the income for the *amrta manohi* offerings to Jagannatha. To further strengthen the alliance and to encourage him to help in the fight against Asaf Jah of Hyderabad (who had engaged Birakishore's general Bakshi Hamir Khan at Banpur), Birakishore appointed the raja of Atargarh as manager of the Puri temple, and granted him the privilege of beating the big drum (*nagara*) in procession, carried on the back of a war elephant. In 1751 Alivardi Khan signed a treaty with the Marathas and delivered Orissa to them, retaining the right to appoint Deputy Subedars until 1759.

In 1759 Shiva Bhatta Sathe (also called Seo Bhatt) became the new Hindu Subahdar of Orissa and dismantled the Khurda territory to weaken the power of the Gajapati, bringing Orissa totally under the control of the Marathas.

In 1760 a Hindu King from Paralakhemundi or Khimidi, Jagannatha Narayana Deva, invaded Khurda and Birakishore Deva asked for the help of the Maratha Seo Bhatt Sathe.

However, Birakishore was unable to pay the expensive bill for the campaign (100,000 rupees) and after the army of the Paralakhemundi King had been fought off, the King of Khurda had to mortgage vast lands to the Maratha ruler, including the land where the Jagannatha temple stood in Puri. The two most fertile *pargana* districts of Khurda, Lembai and Rahang, were directly confiscated by the Maratha ruler, and the *samanta rajas* of 14 States were made independent from the control of Khurda (Dhenkanal, Banki, Narsingpur, Tigiria, Talcher, Khandpara,, Daspalla, Hindol, Angul and Band). Puri was occupied and the Marathas took over the temple administration (as the richest source of income of the region) installing their own officers in control.

The authority of the Gajapati remained only in name, in the calendar based on the calculation of reign years (*anka*) and send "royal letters" (*chamu chitan*) of introduction for the *samanta rajas* to the temple manager in Puri, announcing the visit of the feudatory Kings to the temple, listing the special ritual privileges during their visit, including the donation/gift they were entitled to from the temple treasure and the gifts that the visiting Rajas were supposed to bring for Jagannatha. Records of such letters exist especially for the Rajas of Baramba, Tigeria, Khandapara and Ranpur, whose support was essential for the Gajapati power, but also from Kujang, Nayagarh, Barhi, Angul, Dhenkanal, Talcher, Sonpur, Ghumsur, Banpur, Atargarh, Khallikota, Tekkali, and even from allies such as the Kings of Assam and Delhi. The visiting Kings received the *sari* turban as a sign of their intimate relationship with the service of Jagannatha (just like the temple servants when they start their service).

It is said that Birakishore Deva became crazy and killed four of his sons, so with the support of the people Subedar Rajaram Pandit (1778-1793) deposed and imprisoned him, appointing his grandson **Divya Singha Deva II** (1780-1795) with the endorsement of the Marathas on the condition that the Raja paid an annual tribute of 10,000 rupees to the Marathas. The next Raja, Mukunda Deva II (1795-1817) also continued to pay the tribute.

The Marathas' Subadars entrusted the supervision of the temple to a Puri Mahanta (Baba Brahmachary), who delegated his employee Brindaban Das to collect the offerings made to Jagannatha by the devotees of Calcutta. On his death, he left the amount to Keshu Potdar, who refused to deposit it with the agent of the Mahanta, so Subedar Sadasiva Rao (1793-1803) asked the authorities in Calcutta to take the required action to recover the money.

The Marathas managed the finances of the temple, finally enabling it to flourish again after 200 years of Muslim oppression, destruction, looting and terror. Although their interest was not purely devotional as they levied heavy taxes on the pilgrims, they had no ideological objection to Jagannatha worship and in fact they seemed to identify Jagannatha as Vitthal, their traditional *rastra devata*, as they did not install any such temple in Puri. The Maharathas also covered financial deficits in the temple administration caused by misappropriation or negligent management by the Sevakas, also sanctioning money for important festivals and for the construction of the Rathas, recovering funds from the pilgrim tax introduced by the Muslims. Also a tax on the Pratiharis was introduced, allowing them to collect higher fees from pilgrims.

Chimna Sau Babu visited the temple and offered jewels and costly clothes to the Deities, as well as an elephant and the villages of Swanlo and Mohuree (in Sattais Hazar Mahal) for its maintenance. Raghujee Bhonsle established the offering of Mohan Bhoga and granted land to Mahanta Jayaram Das for its maintenance. The Marathas also brought stones from the abandoned Konark temple to repair the Jagannatha Puri temple, as well as the Aruna stambha.

The management of the temple was no easy task either.

In one instance, the Vaishnava Vairagis (probably helped by the Marathi Guru Brahmachary Baba, who was repairing the Garbha griha) removed and destroyed a Deity of Bhairava that was sitting on the Ratnavedi; the *sannyasis* from the Shankara line protested with the mother and brother of Raghujee Bhonsle, who ordered that Enkajee Subhdeo (Naib-Subedar, 1792-1793) to prepare a new identical Bhairava image and install it properly. The Vaishnava Mohantas refused to allow the installation, stopped taking Mahaprasada and convinced the temple manager Harbans Ray to take sides with them. On his advice, Raghujee revoked his earlier instructions and ordered (1798-1799) the two Maratha officers at Cuttack, Raghunath Krishna and Lachhman Janardan, not to allow the worship of the image prepared by Enkajee. The Deula Karana Debsingh Patjoshi, was ordered not to introduce any innovation, put the image in another place and persuade the Vaishnavites to resume accepting Mahaprasadam. However, the soft management by the Marathas gradually caused the deterioration of the discipline inside the temple, with whimsical service, greedy exploitation of pilgrims, and a sort of trade-unionism that led to the creation of the new power authority in the temple. The pilgrims were also harassed by oppressive taxes and repeated demands of payment, with numerous toll gates on the road starting from the border of Mayurbhanj, where the Tahasildars who collected the payments extorted money without much care for the fees fixed by the Government, which were not low either. The tax-paying pilgrims were divided into two different classes: the more affluent and the lower class (Bharangs). The wealthy pilgrims who came from the north (Bengal) were charged 10 rupees at Atharnala gate, while those who came from south (Tamil) were charged 6 rupees at Lokanath gath. Besides that fee, there was a general fee of 15 annas for admission into the temple. The *sannyasis*, *desis* (local residents living between the Vaitarani and the Rishikulya rivers), and *kangals* (paupers and beggars) were exempted from payment of taxes.

The British Period

In 1757 the British East India Company defeated an Indian army at the battle of Plassey, after which the Company gradually took control of the subcontinent through a series of treaties and annexations, and ceded it to the British Government. In 1765 the Moghul emperor Shah Alam sold the revenue of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the East India Company, that was interested in taking possession of Orissa for strategical reasons.

Next year, in 1766, Lord Clive sent T. Motte to Sambalpur to collect the annual revenue of Orissa, but he encountered a stiff resistance from the Maratha King Januji Bhonsla. The Maratha King requested 13 conditions to cede the revenue of Orissa, the first of which was that Puri temple (called “the Jaggernaut Pagoda” in the document) and all the pilgrim taxes, as well all the landholds of the *brahmana* villages (*sasana*) should remain under the control of the Maratha king, who presented himself as a Hindu and thereby most suitable for the task. Obviously the British did not accept the deal – they were only willing to concede a nominal authority to a representative of the Marathas who could take care of the preservation of the religious ceremonies, but without control on the temple taxes. As expected, the Maratha King refused the deal. In 1789 the British Governor General, Cornwallis, wrote to Malet, the British resident at the Maratha court in Pune, suggesting that the spirit of pilgrimage should be encouraged at national level and that special privileges of tax exemption could be given to the subjects of the Maratha King in their pilgrimages to Varanasi, Gaya and Puri, but the proposal was not accepted.

Understanding the British Rajya

The British government was rather cautious in forcing any religious change upon the Indians. This policy seemed to be practical in ruling several hundred million Indians without sparking off a rebellion, or as the tea-dealer Mr. Twinning put it: “As long as we continue to govern India in the mild, tolerant spirit of Christianity, we may govern it with ease; but if ever the fatal day should arrive, when religious innovation shall set her foot in that country, indignation will spread from one end of the Hindustan to the other, and the arms of fifty millions of people will drive us from that portion of the globe, with as much ease as the sand of the desert is scattered by the wind”.

Colonel Montgomery believed that Christianity had nothing to teach Hinduism, and no missionary ever made a really good Christian convert in India. He was more anxious to save the 30,000 of his country-men in India than to save the souls of the Hindus. Under the authority of Lord Cornwallis (1786-1805) a mood of *laissez-faire* dominated the British attitude towards the Indian and his religious practices. The Governor-general in 1793 had decreed to “preserve the laws of the Shaster and the Koran, and to protect the natives of India in the free exercise of their religion.”

However, the missionaries opposed the government’s efforts to take a neutral stand towards Indian culture and worked with more zeal for the complete conversion of the natives. Missionary schools were opened and the Bible was translated into Indian languages, often with the patronage of Government officers who believed they were being “humanitarian”. On his arrival in 1810, the Governor general Marquis de Hastings wrote, “the Hindoo appears a being merely limited to mere animal functions, and even in them indifferent... with no higher intellect than a dog”.

Charles Grant (1746-1823), Chairman of the East India Company, stated: “We cannot avoid recognizing in the people of Hindustan a race of men lamentably degenerate and base... governed by malevolent and licentious passions... and sunk in misery by their vices.”

The prominent missionary, Alexander Duff (1806-1878) founded the Scottish Churches College, in Calcutta, which he envisioned as a “headquarters for a great campaign against Hinduism.” Duff wanted to convert the Indians by enrolling them in English-run schools and colleges, and placed emphasis on learning Christianity through the English language. Duff wrote, “While we rejoice that true literature and science are to be substituted in place of what is demonstrably false, we cannot but lament that no provision has been made for substituting the only true religion-Christianity - in place of the false religion which our literature and science will inevitably demolish... Of all the systems of false religion ever fabricated by the perverse ingenuity of fallen man, Hinduism is surely the most stupendous.”

These missionaries were obliged to use the excuse of education in order to carry on their indoctrination campaigns and to train up Indian assistants to help them in their proselytizing. Duff remained unsatisfied with converting Indians belonging to low-castes, as his chosen target was the higher castes, specifically the Brahmins, in order to accelerate the demise of Hinduism. Many Englishmen patronized missionary schools such as Duff’s. Charles Trevelyan, an officer with the East India Company wrote, “The multitudes who flock to our schools ... cannot return under the dominion of the Brahmins. The spell has been forever broken. Hinduism is not a religion that will bear examination... It gives away at once before the light of European sciences.”

William Carey (1761-1834), the founder of the Baptist Missionary Society, was the pioneer of the Christian missionary scholarship in oriental studies. The teaching of “Indology” in Europe was originally established with the precise purpose to preach Christianity “among the pagans”. In 1312 pope Honorius IV ordered the creation of chairs of Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldean at the Universities of Bologna, Oxford, Paris and Salamanca. In 1870 the Vatican Council condemned Hinduism in the “five anathemas against pantheism”.

From 1801 onward, as Professor of Oriental Languages, Carey composed numerous grammars and dictionaries in the Marathi, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Telugu, Bengali and Bhatanta dialects. From the Serampore press he produced over 200,000 Bibles and portions in nearly 40 different languages and dialects, Carey himself undertaking most of the literary work. Carey and his colleagues experimented with what came to be known as Church Sanskrit. He wanted to train a group of “Christian Pandits” who would probe “these mysterious sacred nothings” and expose them as worthless. He was distressed that this “golden casket (of Sanskrit) exquisitely wrought” had remained “filled with nothing but pebbles and trash.” He was determined to fill it with “the riches beyond all price” that he saw in the doctrine of Christianity. Carey smuggled himself into India and caused so much trouble that the British government labeled him as a political danger. After confiscating a batch of Bengali pamphlets printed by Carey, the Governor general Lord Minto described them as “Scurrilous invective... Without arguments of any kind, they were filled with hell fire and still hotter fire, denounced against a whole race of men merely for believing the religion they were taught by their fathers.”

Not all Indologists shared Carey’s views on Hindu Shastra.

Sir William Jones (1746-1794) was the first Britisher to learn Sanskrit and study the *Vedas*. He was educated at Oxford University and it was here that he studied law and also began his studies in oriental languages, of which he is said to have mastered sixteen. After being appointed as judge of the Supreme Court, Jones went to Calcutta in 1783, founded the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal and translated a number of Sanskrit texts into English. He wrote: "I am in love with Gopia, charmed with Crishen (Krishna), an enthusiastic admirer of Raama and a devout adorer of Brihma (Brahma), Bishen (Vishnu), Mahisher (Maheshwara); not to mention that Judishteir, Arjen, Corno (Yudhishtira, Arjuna, Karna) and the other warriors of the M'hab'harat appear greater in my eyes than Agamemnon, Ajax and Achilles apperaed when I first read the Iliad."

The British historian James Mill (father of the philosopher John Stuart Mill) who had published his voluminous *History of British India* in 1818 heavily criticized Jones. Although Mill spoke no Indian languages, had never studied Sanskrit, and had never been to India, his damning indictment of Indian culture and religion had become a standard work for all Britishers who would serve in India.

Mill vehemently believed that India had never had a glorious past and treated this as an historical fantasy. Mill's *History of British India* was greatly influenced by the famous French missionary Abbe Dubois's book *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, where he writes, "Hindu imagination is such that it cannot be excited except by what is monstrous and extravagant."

Horace Hayman Wilson (1786-1860) received his education in London and traveled to India in the East India Companies medical service, becoming the secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal from 1811 to 1833 and publishing a Sanskrit to English dictionary. He became Boden professor of Sanskrit at Oxford in 1833 and the director of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1837. He translated the *Visnu Purana*, *Rig Veda* and wrote books such as *Lectures on the Religious and Philosophical Systems of the Hindus*. He edited a number of translations of eastern texts and helped Mill compile his *History of India*, although later Wilson criticized Mill's historiography, stating, "Mill's view of Hindu religion is full of very serious defects, arising from inveterate prejudices and imperfect knowledge. Every text, every circumstance, that makes against the Hindu character, is most assiduously cited, and everything in its favor as carefully kept out of sight, whilst a total neglect is displayed of the history of Hindu belief."

However, he was still a prejudiced Christian with a Victorian idea of morality, convinced that that Christianity should replace Vedic culture, so he commented, "From the survey which has been submitted to you, you will perceive that the practical religion of the Hindus is by no means a concentrated and compact system, but a heterogeneous compound made up of various and not infrequently incompatible ingredients, and that to a few ancient fragments it has made large and unauthorized additions, most of which are of an exceedingly mischievous and disgraceful nature. It is, however, of little avail yet to attempt to undeceive the multitude; their superstition is based upon ignorance, and until the foundation is taken away, the superstructure, however crazy and rotten, will hold together. The whole tendency of brahminical education is to enforce dependence upon authority – in the first instance upon the guru, the next upon the books. A learned Brahmana trusts solely to his learning; he never ventures upon independent thought; he appeals to memory; he quotes texts without measure and in unquestioning trust. It will be difficult to persuade him that the Vedas are human and very ordinary writings, that the puranas are modern and unauthentic, or even that the tantras are not entitled to respect. As long as he opposes authority to reason, and stifles the workings of conviction by the dicta of a reputed sage, little impression can be made upon his understanding. Certain it is, therefore, that he will have recourse to his authorities, and it is therefore important to show that his authorities are worthless."

He also was ready to award a prize of two hundred pounds "...for the best refutation of the Hindu religious system." Wilson also wrote a detailed method for exploiting the native Vedic psychology by use of a bogus guru-disciple relationship.

Thomas Babbington Macaulay (1800-59) is best known for introducing English education in India. Though not a missionary himself, he believed that Christianity held the key to the problem of curing India's ignorance. Although he confessed to have no knowledge of Sanskrit, he did not hesitate to belittle the Hindu scriptures. In his *Education Minute*, Macaulay wrote that he couldn't find one Orientalist "who could deny that a single shelf of good European library is worth the whole native literature of India. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is, indeed, fully admitted by those members of the Committee who support the Oriental plan of education..."

He also wrote, "The superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable. All the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used in preparatory schools in England. The question now before us is simply whether, when it is in our power to teach the (English) language, we shall teach language in which there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared to our own... whether, when we can patronize sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance at the public expense medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school. I would at once stop the printing of Arabic and Sanskrit books, I would abolish the Sanskrit college at Calcutta."

In a letter to his father in 1836, Macaulay wrote, "It is my belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be effected without any efforts to proselytize, without the smallest interference with religious liberty, by natural operation of knowledge and reflection. I heartily rejoice in the project."

Macaulay planned to create a class of Christian-educated Indians and use them to uproot their own traditions: "Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, in intellect." He firmly believed that, "No Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion."

Macaulay found a strong ally in Fredrich Max Mueller (1823-1900), a German born in Dessau and educated in Leipzig, where he learned Sanskrit and translated the *Hitopadesa* of Pandita Vishnu Sharma before coming to England in 1846. Since he was penniless, he was cared for by Baron von Bunsen, the Prussian ambassador to England who basked in the idea of converting the whole world to Christianity.

Max Mueller met Macaulay in London and was commissioned by the East India Company to translate the *Rig Veda* into English. The Company agreed to pay the young Mueller 4 shillings for each page that was ready to print. He later moved to Oxford where he translated a number of books on Eastern religion. His magnum opus was his series *The Sacred Books of the East*, a fifty volume work which he began editing in 1875 and of which he wrote, "...this edition of mine and the translation of the Vedas, will hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India and on the growth of millions of souls in that country... to show them what the root is, I am sure, the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last three thousand years. The rotten tree for some time had artificial supports, but if the English man comes to see that the tree must fall, he will mind no sacrifice either of blood or of land. I would like to lay down my life, or at least lend my hand to bring about this struggle. I do not claim for the ancient Indian literature any more that I should willingly concede to the fables and traditions and songs of savage nations."

His motivations are clearly expressed in his writings: "History seems to teach that the whole human race required a gradual education before, in the fullness of time, it could be admitted to the truths of Christianity. All the fallacies of human reason had to be exhausted, before the light of a high truth could meet with ready acceptance. The ancient religions of the world were but the milk of nature, which was in due time to be succeeded by the bread of life. The religion of Buddha has spread far beyond the limits of the Aryan world, and to our limited vision, it may seem to have retarded the advent of Christianity among a large portion of the human race. But in the sight of Him with whom a thousand years are but as one day that religion, like the ancient religions of the world, may have but served to prepare the way of Christ, by helping through its very errors to strengthen and to deepen the ineradicable yearning of the human heart after the truth of God. ...The worship of Shiva, Vishnu, and other popular deities was of the same and in many cases of a more degraded and savage character than the worship of Jupiter, Apollo or Minerva. I would like to live (in India) for ten years quite quietly and learn the language, try to make friends, and then see if I was fit to take part in this work, by means of which the old mischief of Indian priestcraft could be overthrown and the way opened for the entrance of simple Christian teaching... India is much riper for Christianity than Rome or Greece were at the time of Saint Paul."

When Duke of Argyll was appointed Secretary of State for India in December 1868, Max Mueller wrote to him: "India has been conquered once, but India must be conquered again and that second conquest should be a conquest by education...the ancient religion of India is doomed, and if Christianity does not step in, whose fault will it be?" In another letter, Mueller wrote to his son: "Would you say that any one sacred book is superior to all others in the world? ..."

I say the New Testament, after that, I should place the Koran, which in its moral teachings, is hardly more than a later edition of the New Testament. Then would follow according to my opinion the Old Testament, the Southern Buddhist Tripitaka, the Tao-te-king of Lao-tze, the Kings of Confucius, the Veda and the Avesta.”

In a letter to N.K. Majumdar, Mueller wrote: “Tell me some of your chief difficulties that prevent you and your countrymen from openly following Christ, and when I write to you I shall do my best to explain how I and many who agree with me have met them and solved them.”

Mueller harshly criticized the view of the German scholar, Dr. Spiegel, who claimed that the Biblical theory of the creation of the world is borrowed from the ancient religion of the Persians or Iranians. Stung by this statement Max Mueller writes: “A writer like Dr. Spiegel should know that he can expect no money; nay, he should himself wish for no mercy, but invite the heaviest artillery against the floating battery which he has launched in the troubled waters of Biblical criticism.”

Dr. Spiegel was not the only target of Mueller’s bigotry. In 1926 the French scholar Louis Jacolliot, Chief Judge in Chandranagar, wrote a book called *La Bible dans l’Inde*. Within that book, Jacolliot theorized that all the main philosophies of the western world originated from India, which he glorified thus: “Land of ancient India! Cradle of Humanity, hail! Hail revered Motherland whom centuries of brutal invasions have not yet buried under the dust of oblivion. Hail, Fatherland of faith, of love, of poetry and of science, may we hail a revival of thy past in our Western future.”

Mueller’s comment, while reviewing Jacolliot’s book, was: “The author seems to have been taken in by the Brahmins of India.”

Mueller may also be credited with the popularization of the Aryan racial theory. Writing for the *Anthropological Review* in 1870, Mueller classified the human race into seven categories on an ascending scale - with the Aborigines on the lowest rung and the “Aryan” type supreme. Although Mueller cannot be placed in the same category as inexperienced Indologists such as Christian Lassen and Albrecht Weber whose Aryan race conceptions were chiefly fueled by their ardent German nationalism, Mueller’s motivations were just as diabolical. Mueller had been paid to misinterpret the Vedic literatures in order to make the Indians look, at best silly, and at worst, bestial.

However, Mueller had made such a name for himself that at the time of his death he was venerated by none other than Lokamanya Tilak as ‘Veda-maharishi Moksha-mula Bhatta of Go-tirtha’ (Oxford).

Sir Monier Monier-Williams (1819-1899), probably the most famous Sanskritist and author of a Sanskrit-English dictionary that is still extremely popular, was born in Bombay, attending the East India Company’s college and later teaching there. He is known mostly for spending twenty-five years to founding an institution in Oxford disseminating information on Indian religion, philosophy and culture.

After the death of H.H. Wilson, Monier-Williams became Boden Professor of Sanskrit in Oxford University where he delivered an address wherein he stated: “I must draw attention to the fact that I am only the second occupant of the Boden Chair, and that its Founder, Colonel Boden, stated most explicitly in his will (dated August 15, 1811 A.D.) that the special object of his munificent bequest was to promote the translation of Scriptures into Sanskrit; so as to enable his countrymen to proceed in the conversion of the natives of India to the Christian religion. Brahmanism must die out. When the walls of the mighty fortress of Brahmanism are encircled, undermined, and finally stormed by the soldiers of the cross, the victory of Christianity must be signal and complete.”

In 1870 Monier-Williams wrote a book based on a lecture called *The Study of Sanskrit in Relation to Missionary work in India*, written in order to promote Christianity and discredit the Vedic scriptures. He also wrote another work in 1894 entitled *Hinduism*, which was published and distributed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

It is interesting to note that Monier-Williams disagreed with the ‘evolution to Christianity’ theory of Max Mueller. Referring to this he wrote: “There can be no doubt of a greater mistake than to force these non-Christian bibles into conformity with some scientific theory of development and then point to Christian’s Holy Bible as the crowning product of religious evolution. So far from this, these non-Christian bibles are all developments in the wrong direction. They all begin with some flashes of true light and end in utter darkness. It seems to me that our missionaries are already sufficiently convinced of the necessity of studying these works, and of making themselves conversant with the false creeds they have to fight against.

How could an army of invaders have any chance of success in an enemy's country without a knowledge of the position and strength of its fortresses, and without knowing how to turn the batteries they may capture against the fort?"

As the Christian missionaries had not achieved great success in converting the intellectuals and religionists of Hinduism as they tried to, and their physical elimination was not bringing a wave of conversions among the respectable society in India, the strategy needed a change. Richard Temple, a high officer, said in an 1883 speech to a London missionary society: "India presents the greatest of all fields of missionary exertion... India is a country which of all others we are bound to enlighten with external truth... But what is most important to you friends of missions, is this - that there is a large population of aborigines, a people who are outside caste... If they are attached, as they rapidly may be, to Christianity, they will form a nucleus round which British power and influence may gather."

He addressed a mission in New York in bolder terms: "Thus India is like a mighty bastion which is being battered by heavy artillery. We have given blow after blow, and thud after thud, and the effect is not at first very remarkable; but at last with a crash the mighty structure will come toppling down, and it is our hope that someday the heathen religions of India will in like manner succumb."

The British take over Orissa

In 1803 the East India Company decided to extend their territories in Bengal and join them with their other territories in Madras, so they exploited the discontent of the Orissan people and especially the priests of the temple and the King of Khurda, who resented the payment of the heavy tributes. Thus, with the cooperation of the Orissan people, the British were able to defeat the Marathas without much difficulty. Colonel Harcourt occupied Orissa on 18 September 1803. Lord Wellesley ordered Colonel Campbell to "respect the Pagoda and religious prejudices of Brahmanas and pilgrims, supplying security guards to protect them, rites and ceremonies, with utmost accuracy and vigilance."

After occupying Manika Patnam the British sent a message to the Sevakas of the Jagannatha Puri temple. To increase the credibility of the British, a letter dated 14 September 1803 was written by Jagannaath Tarkapanchanan of Triveni in Bengal to the priests of Jagannatha temple, namely "to Ramachaund and other Brahmanas residing at the temple" eulogized "the sense of excellence which characterises the disposition of the English. The English Government not only permits the Hindoos the free exercise of their religion but manifests the greatest degree of benevolence and indulgence known to them to all persons of whatever persuasion, or rank or condition of life".

Two days later the priests answered favorably, writing that "the sacred will of the idol having been first ascertained through the medium of the officiating priest... that the Brahmanas at the holy temple consulted and applied to Jaggernaut to inform them what power now was to have this temple under its protection; and that he has given a decided answer that the English Government was in future to be his guardian".

The Temple priests were so happy that they expressed "most unequivocal proof of their confidence" in the British Government. Controversy was only raised by Jaswant Rao Ramachandra, the agent of the Raja of Nagpur (mistakenly described by Warren Hastings as the "Raja of Berar"), who claimed that the temple was his Raja's "own Pagoda".

The British troops reached Puri to settle there, while the Marathas hurried out of the city. The British relieved the King of Puri (Khurda) and the temple from the heavy Maratha taxes. In fact, the British administration itself paid the difference in the budget: in 1803 the income was 31,884 rupees, while the expenditures were 65,950 rupees. The British also improved the roads and funded the temple with annual grants. However, Christians both in England and in India gradually took offence at the British government supporting the Jagannatha temple and pressurized the British government to dissociate from "idol worship".

The *Madala Panji* refers to an ominous incident in the temple, saying that an owl sat on the head of Jagannatha and defiled it. In the petition of the priests to Hunter on 30 June 1804, the version is slightly different and speaks of an "evil bird" that sat on the head of Vimala, defiling it, and the clothes of the Goddess were found "wet with perspiration", an omen of famine and calamities that needed to be counteracted through expensive rituals of purification involving giving charity to the temple priests.

The Temple Administration suspected an attempt to exploit the good will and liberality of the British Government; they consented to pay for the rituals but instructed Hunter to warn the Sevakas and Brahmans of the temple that the decision was accentuated by a desire to save them from ignominy and reproach of the people, “were it to become evident that the cause of the misfortune originated in their inattention and neglect in the discharge of their religious functions and ceremonies”.

In 1804 Commissioner Harcourt visited the Ratha yatra in Puri and met with a delegation of priests; in the same month the main priests and religious functionaries of Puri sent Wellesley a presentation paper with verses inscribed in gold leaf in recognition of the role of the British as “protectors of Jagannatha”.

However, the troubles were not over. Mukunda Deva, the Raja of Khurda, believed he should rightfully get the temple back from the Britishers, who were no Hindus. So in 1804 he wrote a letter to Morar Pandit, accusing him to oppress the temple Brahmans, who were under the authority of the Raja of Khurda, attempting to create a divide between them and the British administration. As a result, Morar Pandit accepted to pay him the “Nuzar” (the kingly dues) that the Raja was getting every year on the Suniya day. Encouraged by this success, Mukunda Deva wrote again to Morar Pandit, reminding him that the Raja of Khurda originally owned the parganas of Serain, Rahang and Chabiskud (that had been snatched by the Marathas) and as such he should receive the traditional tribute from them. The Board of Commissioners told Morar Pandit to ignore such claims, and within one month the soldiers of Mukunda Deva raided some villages near Pipli, taking away cattle, enraging the Government. The system of using the name of the Raja of Khurda during prayers to Jagannatha was discontinued, the Raja was attacked and expelled and his dominions annexed, making him an example of the Government’s reprisal.

Mukunda Deva’s supporters, Balabhadra Bhanja King of Konika and Chandradhvaja King of Kujang, were imprisoned. However, later the King of Khurda was released and restored in the position of superintendent to the temple of Jagannatha. The Sevakas of the temple then proceeded to present a claim to the Government through the Board of Commission, so that the Toll tax on pilgrims would be renewed to constitute a fund for the expenditures of the Sevakas, and a grant of 16,000 rupees should be made as “customary advance” to meet the cost of “ghi and rice” for the Sevakas and their families and the pilgrims during the “approaching festivals”.

The Board of Commissioners ordered an enquiry on such customs and the feasibility of collecting such rates, as well as the standards of worship in the temple and the amount of the fees paid to the Sevakas. The report, prepared by Groeme with the help of Jagannath Rajguru, was submitted on 10 June 1805 and glorified the splendid discipline of the Sevakas under the former superintendence of the Raja of Khurda, when any deviation was punished by depriving the offenders of their shares of sacred food for a day. It added that under the Marathas such discipline had gradually relaxed, to the point that the Akhanda Mekapa was not lighting sufficient lamps in the Garbha griha, and in the temple in general the lighting was so poor that the pilgrims could hardly see the Deities. The hereditary Sevakas had frequent quarrels, mortgaging and selling temporary contracts for their Seva to other people, and misappropriated donations destined to the Deities; the sale of Mahaprasada was done everywhere in violation of the specific rules, the Mahantas of the Mathas were embezzling the funds destined for the maintenance of the temple services. Most of the main Brahmans were “not sufficiently learned”, and the pilgrims were harassed for “donations” and mistreated by the guide Pandas. The Mukti mandapa assembly agreed that something had to be done to counteract the bad omens. The Draft Regulation prepared by the Board of Commissioners recommended the re-introduction of the pilgrim tax under a Collector, but also the establishment of a Committee of three Pandits for the superintendence of the temple. It was welcomed by all, pilgrims and priests. A letter of praise was written by 18 Mahants and two priests of the temple, addressing the British Governor General as, “one who, like the Sun, caused to bloom the lotus representing the English people, who is the protector of Deva, Brahmana and Vaisnava”.

Besides the Jagannatha temple in Puri, 22 temples in Cuttack were receiving grants from the Government, among which the most prominent were: Sitaram Thakur (Telenga Bazar), Gopal ji (Alishah Bazar), Vitthal Thakur (Mahidas Bazar), Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (Muhammadia Bazar), Kali Thakurani (Balu Bazar), Gangesvar at Ganga mandir, Jalesvara (Dagarpara), Amaresvara (Bakshi Bazar), Jagannatha (Chaudhury Bazar). On 20 April 1804 the act No. X temporarily abolished the pilgrim tax (at that time varying from 50,000 to 100,000 rupees per year). Under the pressure of the temple politics, the British government decided to completely drop the Jagannatha temple and the Regulation Act IV of 1809 passed the entire temple administration to the Raja of Khurda, Mukunda Deva III, who became known as the King of Puri, and transferred to him the Satais Hazari Mahal lands (the source of income for the Puri temple).

In July 1805 Lt Col. Harcourt wrote to the Military Secretary to the Governor General that it was calculated that at least 5 lakhs pilgrims attended the Car festival. "As far eyes could reach, nothing could be seen but the heads. I was astonished at the order and regularity preserved. There was not the least tumult or disposition to violence". Ferguson wrote, "in no where I have seen cars so large as these, nor any festival that I have seen is so well-attended".

Soon the pilgrim tax was re-established, based on the previous fees for the two classes of pilgrims, the wealthy Lal jattris, so called because they were given a red ticket (10 rupees at the Atharnala toll gate, 6 rupees at the Lokanath ghat, covering a stay of 30 days) and the ordinary pilgrims called Bharrang Jattris (2 rupees per person, covering a stay of four days, renewable for another 2 days for the same fees). In 1809 the Regulation IV provided for second class of pilgrims, called Nim Lal Jattris (from the north 5 rupees, from the south 3 rupees, covering a stay of 7 days).

Dandi sannyasis (and their attendants) and *vratis* were often exempted, for example those who traveled by prostrating at every step, and those who carried Ganga water (*Gangajalis*) to be offered to Lokanatha before getting Darshana of Jagannatha (and were entrusted to a Panda who was to make sure that the water was really going to be offered at the Lokanatha temple). Similarly, very sick pilgrims who had no apparent hope of recovery were exempted from payment. Also exempted were the Sathos, whose job was to induce Hindus from all parts of the country to perform pilgrimage to Puri; they were not only exempted themselves but also allowed to take one or two people with them free of cost. Some pensioners also chose to avail of a similar right instead of getting money from the Government. The residents of Puri, the members of the Mathas, the Sepoys in service, and the Kangals or the pilgrims in a dire state of poverty (who were required to sign a form and allowed to stay only for 3 days). Professional singers and musicians were also exempted, as well as the merchants and the Patta daurias who carried the silken ropes for the Deities to be fastened on the chariots at Ratha Yatra.

The low caste people who could not access the temple but only the bathing Tirthas and the town under the control of a Chowkidar, obtained a "Pancha tirtha certificate" against payment of 4 rupees. The following categories of people were not allowed to enter the temple: *ghuski* (kept mistresses), *kusbi* (prostitutes), *suri* (wine dealers), *pano* (basket makers), *tiar* and *machua* (fishermen), *hadi* (scavengers), *kahar* or *bauri* (palanquin bearers), *raj banshi* (boatmen), *yogi* (weavers), *bagdi* (Bengali cleaners), *majur* (porters), *dhobi* (washermen), *chandal* (outcastes), bird catchers, snake charmers and even tantric Sadhus like the Aghore panthis.

Besides the general pilgrim taxes, the Government also collected taxes from the Pandas and the Pratiharis, the "pilgrim hunters" among the temple Sevakas. The British Government had already started to collect pilgrim taxes at Balaji Venkatesvara temple in Tirupati in 1800, then in 1803 a tax was taken from the pilgrims at Gaya, in 1812 the pilgrim tax was imposed for the bathing in Ganga at Prayag (Allahabad).

By section 31 of Regulation XII of 1805, a draft was prepared for collection of pilgrim tax; on 21 November 1805, J. Hunter was designated to officiate as Collector of Pilgrim tax, with a monthly salary of 500 rupees and a commission on 1% of the gross collection of pilgrims' tax. The Government reserved the right to supersede the Raja in the event of incompetence, as there were already serious doubts that he might abuse the power vested in him, which in fact he did.

Mukunda Deva probably had some personal grudge against Raja Padmanabha Narayana Deo of Kimedi (Parlakhemundi) who came to Puri for Darshana with his three wives and mother: the Raja and his family were not allowed Darshan for three days. When the Raja of Khimedi complained with the Settlement Commissioner, Mukunda Deva convinced the temple cooks to stop working, effectively suspending the food offerings and the distribution of Mahaprasadam, on which four to five thousands of people depended as pilgrims were supposed to eat only Mahaprasadam during their stay.

Coming to Puri for a pilgrimage was not easy. Pilgrims coming from the north had to cross unbridged rivers and flooded areas, through jungles and swamps, under scorching heat or heavy rainfall, with the constant danger of thieves and dacoits. The journey lasted a minimum of one month, even covering 65 km a day, which was a very difficult standard, considering that most pilgrims were unable to walk more than 10 km a day. There was no food or water or shelter from the weather or medical assistance before Cuttack or even between Cuttack and Puri, the road was so bad and muddy that often the pilgrims arrived walking on bleeding and infected feet.

Often the pilgrims were detained at toll gates for days, huddled in crowds in non-sanitary conditions, including the presence of dead bodies of those who perished in the journey on both ways, and jackals, dogs and vultures who feasted on the flesh. In 1825 there was a terrible epidemic of cholera due to the large numbers of pilgrims on that year. The sufferings of the pilgrims were increased by the indifference of the authorities, who were only concerned with collecting the taxes.

The Lal Jatris were named and numbered and delivered to Pandas or their agents, then at Atharnala they were counted again; the poorest classes were detained at each station for several hours, their clothes were examined and if no money was found there were allowed in, except at the time of the Yatras, when they were detained at the gate until the very day of the Yatra had started since several hours. At which time the gates were opened and not infrequently there was an uncontrollable rush where several people were trampled to death, dozens of them. Arrived in Puri, the pilgrims were piled up in dark, dirty and overcrowded rooms, where 80 persons would spend the night in a 13x10 feet space, with a height of walls of only 6.5 feet. Many suffered from dysentery after drinking contaminated water and rotting food. Even the Sarovaras were not kept clean.

The Pratiharis (about 500 in number) who traditionally guarded the gates of the temple, were often beating and flogging the pilgrims to extort money from them. Around 1806, the Pandas too started to exact money from the pilgrims visiting the temple, something that was resented by the Pratiharis. Pilgrims were even pushed to make bonds and debts to be collected later on by the traveling Pandas. Disputes were often flaring between the Pandas, the Pratiharis, the Sringeris and the Daitas for the distribution of Bhoga and for other matters of personal interest.

A Collector was appointed to control the temple administration and in 1806 the powers are transferred to the 3 Pandas (Paricchhas). However, in 1809 the three managing posts of the Pandas are abolished and the temple administration went directly under the control of the King, with a government grant of 55,000 rupees plus a monthly allowance of 2,330 rupees per month.

In 1817 the Paiks (soldiers) of Khurda revolted against the British Government, under the leadership of Jagabandhu Vidyadhar, the commander of the Khurda Raja. On 14 April more than 5000 insurgents, supported by many Pandas, entered Puri and overwhelmed Captain Wallington who only had 200 Sepoys at his command; the British retreated to Cuttack, taking away the money in the treasury but abandoning the money in the tax office, amounting to 13,619 in silver and copper coins. The insurgents burned the Government building and the shed at Atharnala, and pillaged whatever property they found. The fall of the English rule was proclaimed, together with the "restoration of the authority of the ancient line of sacred Kings".

However, the senior temple priests also became the victims of the insurgents. Krishnachandra Mahapatra was manhandled and dragged in front of Jagatbandhu at the Raja's house, while his house and properties were plundered. Jagannath Rajguru (who had been the head Pariccha) was away in Calcutta, but his property was also plundered. The Bengal Government ordered the arrest of Mukunda Deva and sent Captain Le Fabre, who reached Puri on 18 April 1817. The insurgents withdrew, the Raja and his son were arrested and kept prisoners at the Barabati fort at Cuttack. Mukunda Deva submitted a petition to the Government pleading his innocence, blaming the "detested Jagabandhu" for having tried to persuade him to rise against the English, and he got away with the support of Eric Watson, Judge of the Calcutta Court of Circuit, who came to Puri in January 1817.

Mukunda Deva died in 1817 and was succeeded by his young son Ramachandra Deva, who proved to be incompetent, easily manipulated and cheated by corrupt advisers.

The attitude of the British in regard to the worship of Jagannatha was mixed, and it often depended on individuals rather than on Government policies. Many Christian Westerners wrote about Puri and Jagannatha, among them Friar Odoric (1321), Nicolo Conti (1430), Gladwin (1590), Sir Thomas Roe (1615), William Bruton (1633), Sebastien Monrique (1636), Thomas Bowrey (1669), Francois Bernier (1671), Captain Hamilton (1727), Major W Thorn (1803), Claudius Buchanan (1806), Robert Southey (1810), Andrew Stirling (1825), James Peggs (1826), James Fergusson (1837), and Lacey (1842).

In his *Hindu Mythology* Wilkins described Jagannath-Puri as "one of the greatest religious centres of the world". Charles Grome regarded it as "probably the most celebrated temple in India to which resort pilgrims from all parts of the country".

Sutton, who stayed in Orissa nearly 28 years observed, "The writer is disposed to believe that there is in Orissa considerably more of conjugal fidelity, of sterling home virtues and domestic happiness, compelled with more general respectability of character, than has been ascribed to Hindus generally."

William F.B. Laurie, a missionary in his chapter “Puri and the Temple of Jagannath”, in his book *Orissa, the Garden of Superstition and Idolatry*, shows how impressed he was at the Ratha yatra: “The eager expectation, the unceasing din of a great multitude, the acclamations of “victory to Jagannath!” which rend the car when the images are brought forth in an erect posture...”

However, the motivation for which such missionaries visited Puri was not to admire, but to vilify Jagannatha and to persuade the pilgrims in distress to embark in Christianity. It pains us to report their statements, but we believe it is necessary in order to respect the historical accuracy. Such accuracy was however not the foremost concern of these writers. Sebastien Monrique states that the temple is situated near the river Ganges and writes, “the idol is a stone statue of huge height with one leg broken”, offering as an explanation that such leg was broken when God threw him down from heaven.

The first Christian missionary in Puri, Claudius Buchanan, arrived in 1805 targeting this “Mecca or Jerusalem of the Hindoos, the Sebastopol (stronghold fountainhead) of their idolatry” for conversion to Christianity, and returned to Britain with horrible accounts of the “atrocities” of the “Moloch of the heathen world”. He had already very strong ideas about Hinduism, “Neither truth, nor honesty, honor, gratitude, nor charity, is to be found in the breast of a Hindoo”.

In his speech at the University of Cambridge on 1st July 1810, he stated, “Many pilgrims die by the way and their bodies remain unburied, so that the road to Juggernaut may be known, at least for 50 miles, by human bones which are strewed in the way. On the great day the idol was brought out... It had the character of crudelty and impurity. Men and women devoted themselves before the Moloch. I myself beheld the libations of human blood, I give you this record because I witnessed the fact”, and “O there is no Pity in Juggernaut! No mercy, no tenderness of heart in Moloch’s Kingdom! The characteristics of Moloch’s worship is obscenity and blood!”.

In 1813 Buchanan wrote to the court of Directors to draw their attention to the promising prospects for evangelization and conversion “into the pure religion of Jesus Christ” most of the “heathens” who gather for the “annual carnival” of Ratha Yatra. Thus Buchanon suggested the establishment of a Christian institution to undermine the “indomitable cult of Jagannatha”, and William Carey, the head of the Serampore Mission, asked one Pandit Purushottama to translate the New Testament in the local language, in 1809 to distribute at Rathya yatra.

Other Christian writers were excited by this propaganda and came “to see for themselves”. George Gogerly (1810) described Jagannatha as a diabolical Moloch, “a frightful visage painted black, with a distended mouth of bloody horror”, and stated about Krishna that, “the whole history of this famous god is one of lust, robbery, deceit and murder...the history of the whole hierarchy of Hindooism is one of shameful iniquity, too vile to be described.”

The Charter of 1813 officially admitted the Christian missionaries into India. In 1816 the General Baptist Mission was established in England and William Bampton and James Peggs were ordained for service in the province of Bengal. Peggs declared that the establishment of the Mission, “destined to undermine the idolatry at Juggernaut and to blot out its atrocities was an event of great importance to the church of Christ”.

After Claudius Buchanan, Bampton, Peggs and Sutton came to Orissa from 1816 to 1821 with their families, determined to make converts to Christianity, but without success. They landed at Patamundai in Cuttack district on 12 February 1822 and opened their first chapel on 6 November 1826, converting a Jewish woman and a Portuguese Christian named De Sozo. One Brahmin of the Cuttack district named Gangadhar Sarangi also converted. Writing in the *Asiatic Observer* one missionary observed: “Before we can reasonably hope that the Hindus will be converted into Christ, it is necessary that they should be capable of understanding of what the missionary preaches them.” The establishment of schools was recognized by the Baptist Mission Society as one of the best means for the spread of Christianity and conversion of the people of India.

In 1823 a thousand copies of the Gospel, translated to Oriya were distributed by William Bampton and James Peggs, followed by Bampton’s pamphlet, “Folly of the Worship of Jagannath”. Their efforts were joined by Charles Lacey and Amos Sutton, but the final result was disappointing. One Lakshman Das who had thrown away his sacred thread after converting was abandoned by his family and just ended up an outcaste. The early convert Sadhu Sundara Das soon declared himself as the reincarnation of Jesus Christ and founded a new iconoclastic movement called Mahima Dharma that totally rejected the authority of the Christian missionaries and proceeded to create troubles on its own.

In 1881, after gathering some followers, he attacked the temple of Jagannatha in the attempt to destroy the Deities. Sundara Das subsequently died in 1888, but his Mahima sect continues to exist.

In December 1828 Bamptom died. Peggs lost his children Francis, Eliza and Mary at Cuttack, and he left worn "by bodily and mental afflictions" to return to England on July 1825. Sutton lamented, "your prayers can not pierce this gloom nor your labours open an avenue sufficient to let down a ray of heaven's light on this idolatrous province." The strong bond of "Mahaprasad brotherhood" among the Hindus was deliberated upon in the British Parliament in January, 1873. Bampton's "forlorn hope" to plant the banner of the Cross within the precincts of Juggernaut's temple was also lamented by Peggs who wrote, "Juggernaut, the grat, the obscene, the bloody Juggernaut, must fall. Long perhaps will be the struggle and fierce the conflict but he must fall; and the place which knows him now will know him no more forever". To these Christian zealots, Shri Kshetra was the "devil's headquarters" (Bampton), the celebrated Emporium of Idolatry (Sutton). Another early Christian missionary, George Cruickshank, wrote that "unhappy millions are crushed to death under the wheels of the chariot of Gin Jag". But no matter how hard the Christian zealots attacked Jagannatha and His tradition, they remained unable to make a dent in Purushottama Kshetra. So finally they decided that their cause would be served better if the British Government would stop supporting the Puri temple. On 3 May 1840 all pilgrim taxes were abolished: the Gate was thrown open and the pilgrims entered the barrier free, amidst the most tremendous storm in which the Chakra on top of the temple was bent.

In 1846 William Laurie wrote an essay entitled *Orissa, the garden of superstition and idolatry, including an account of British connection with the temple of Jagannath*. Here is a sample of his opinions: "Orissa may be compared to a huge Caldron, which been boiling for many hundreds of years, into which ignorance, stupidity and bigotry have cast so many poisonous ingredients that it is difficult to say that when the contents will become purified and good... it's early history is perhaps more wrapped in obscurity than that of any provinces. Ignorance, oppression and superstition garnished with the deceitful trappings of romance, either by, or through the means of self-interested potentates, have for many ages, gilded the misery which has been endeavored by its poor deluded inhabitation", "The entire scene of the Rath Jatra savours, to an incredible extent of the ludicrous, the barbarous and the awful. The eager expectation, the unceasing din of a great multitude, the acclamations of "victory to Jagannath!" which rend the car when the images are brought forth in an erect posture ... There you may picture to yourself Christianity shuddering; there, morality weeping ..."

In a letter to the Court of Directors of the East India Company, Buchanan asked whether they were afraid that "the wretches, who come to lay their bones within the precincts of Juggernaut would mutiny and take away our dominions?" and it concludes that "it will be a most happy event when our Christian nation shall dissolve its connexion."

On 19 March 1813 Charles Buller, Member of the Board of Revenue and Settlement Commissioner of Cuttack, wrote to the Court of Directors a letter that was presented to the House of Commons, stating that he had personally witnessed the "Ruth Jatra at Juggernath" in 1809. He scoffs at the much-publicized Christian indignation of the so-called acts of self-immolation under the wheels of the cart during the festival, and admires the majesty and intensity of the festival. In a book entitled *Apology for Christianity in India*, he writes that Friar Oderic, Nicolo Conti, Gasparo Balbi, Manrique, Bernier, Hamiton and Bruton "have all exaggerated the alleged acts of self-immolation during the Car festival", and lamented that the Company spent the surplus of the pilgrim tax collection at Puri in the maintenance of the "ministers of the established church", scornfully saying that "Christian Missionaries receive the wages of idolatry".

Hunter wrote, "far from encouraging religious suicides, the gentle doctrines of Jagannath tended to check the once common custom of widow burning. Even before the Government put a stop to 'Sati' in 1829, our officials observed its comparative infrequency in Puri." The last financial links of the British government with the Puri temple management were cut in 1863. Actually, in one sense we may say that the propaganda of the Christian missionaries indirectly strengthened the fame of Puri as a pilgrimage place of national importance, increasing the fame of Jagannatha.

Raja Mukunda Deva III of Khurda (1795-1817), decided to support the British government after being offered 100,000 rupees for his military cooperation and the compensation for the transport of baggage and artillery through his territory.

However, the King of Khurda was somehow disappointed because the British refused to grant him any lands, so both the Raja and the Cuttack Subedar Jayi Rajaguru entered secret negotiations with the Marathas and the *samanta rajas* (traditional feudatory Kings) trying to regain control of the Puri temple income. When the plot was discovered, the British Commissioner forbade the King of Khurda to independently give orders to anyone in Puri or in the entire Moghul territory.

As soon as the Maratha wars in west India ended, Harcourt organised the war against Khurda: in 1804 Mukunda Deva III was attacked, defeated and taken prisoner to Cuttack, then sent in exile to Midnapur. The Subahdar Jayi Rajaguru was hanged for rebellion, while the Kings of Kujang and Kanika (who had also allied with the rebellion) were spared. To celebrate the victory, the British cancelled the pilgrim tax from 1804 to 1806. As we have already mentioned, the British Government also found out that the management of the Jagannatha temple in Puri was no easy matter, and that a lot of politics was involved.

The Raja of Khurda was released from Midnapur confinement and assigned the control over the temple (both the financial and ritual aspects) with the Regulation Act IV of 1809. Once back in control of the temple, Mukunda Deva started to settle his scores. In May 1810 Padmanabha Narayana Deva of Khemundi (a descendant of the dynasty that had attacked Khurda leading to its downfall to the Maratha) was denied permission to enter the temple when he visited Puri with his family.

The Settlement Officer in Puri forced Mukunda Deva to give the Raja of Khemundi the permission to enter the temple, but Mukunda Deva convinced the temple cooks not to prepare any Mahaprasadam for the Raja and Khemundi and his retinue of about 5,000 people – which resulted to extreme problems for Padmanabha.

Again king Padmanabha of Khemundi was barred from entering the temple in 1813, and again he complained to the Collector. The Rani of Sambalpur and the Raja of Khandapara were also sent back without permission to enter the temple, and Mr. Richardson, member of the Board of Revenue in Cuttack, wrote to the Governor General about the 3 examples of offensive treatment meted out by the Raja of Puri against the visiting Rajas of Khemundi and Khandapara and the Rani of Sambalpur, as these dealings resulted a loss of pilgrim taxes.

The Paiks (soldiers) and the Nayaka (or Khandaitas, the officers) of the army of Khurda had been deprived of their land privileges and lost the Chaukidhar tax (*chaupani*) from the tenants of their Mahals (estates), although they still had to pay taxes to the British. Many of their lands were auctioned in Cuttack and Calcutta, and in 1817 their discontent exploded in a revolt (*paika droha*).

The leader of the revolt was **Jagabandhu**, the general (Bakshi) of Khurda, descendent in direct line from Dasarathi Vidyadhara, cousin of Ramachandra Deva I. He was the second in power after the King, but he had lost all his land in Rorang near Puri to a rich Bengali businessman, so for 2 years he was reduced to poverty. The discontented soldiers took control of Khurda, Puri and Banpur, looted the offices of the British administration, and acclaimed the King of Khurda as their leader. When Jagabandhu entered Puri with many thousands of Paikas, the same temple priests who had welcomed the British as the new guardians of Jagannatha, proclaimed the fall of the English rule and the restoration of the authority of the ancient line of sacred Kings.

The British Magistrate, Impey, wrote to Calcutta and the rebellion was suppressed with the help of 5 more army companies from Midnapur in May 1818. Mukunda Deva and his son were taken to Cuttack and kept in close confinement. Mukunda Deva died a few months later in Cuttack.

Ramachandra Deva III (1817-54) moved the royal palace (Raja Nahar) from Balisahi to Bada danda (Grand Road) to be nearer to the Jagannatha temple. In 1840 the pilgrim tax was completely abolished and the King obtained the entire power, with “free admission and free worship for all pilgrims”. In 1843, 1845 and 1856 the temple allowance was reduced again and in 1858 it stopped completely. Finally, in 1863 the Government granted some lands to the temple in lieu of the financial allowance.

An important figure of this period was **Suryamani Pattamahadei**, born in 1818 at Sonepur, daughter of Raja Daityari Singh. She learned combat, archery and hunting in her youth. Once, while the Raja family was traveling towards Puri, Suryamani killed a crocodile that was crawling towards their camp at night. She married Ramachandra Deva, who died in 1854, and her son Birakishore Deva became King and superintendent of the Temple. He adopted a son of the Raja of Badakhemundi (Divyasingh Deva), and died in 1859. In 1866, during the terrible famine in Orissa, the Rani financed the free distribution of Mahaprasada to the people in general. The Rani succeeded in having the prince recognized as Superintendent of the Temple and in controlling the revolting Sevayats, and left the position herself in 1875. Unfortunately, Divyasingh Deva was a disaster, and the Rani had to step in again as the regent for Divyashingh Deva’s minor son, Jenamani Jagannath.

When the British offered the king of Puri some lands instead of the previous financial support, **Birakishore Deva II** (1854-62) protested that the British could not give him lands that belonged to the old Khurda state because they were already his inherited property. At his death, the rights and duties of the administration of the temples passed to his wife in accordance to the King's last will. On 2 March 1857 the Collector of Puri recorded 2300 inhabitants in the town of Puri, which increased 8 to 10 times at the time of Ratha yatra. In 1856, 164 policemen under the orders of a Hindu Deputy Magistrates were deployed to keep the order.

Birakishore's adopted son and successor, **Dibyasingh Deva II** (1863-77), was a drunkard. He often misappropriated temple funds and had fights with the temple priests and Brahmins. At that time, Kedarnath Datta (Bhaktivinod Thakur) the magistrate and administrator of the Puri temple, challenged the King for his misappropriation of 80,000 rupees, and forced him to offer Bhoga to the Deities 52 times a day. The King, enraged, decided to kill the magistrate and arranged a 30 day tantric ritual in his inner apartments for this purpose. However, at the end of the puja the King's son died instead of Kedarnath Datta.

In his autobiography, Kedarnath Datta writes, "The King and other persons connected with the temple used to commit many illegal acts. I would go there to prevent all such things and thus made enemies of the King and his men. Because I was helped by Lord Jagannatha, no one was able to harm me in any way."

The widow of Birakishore, Suryamani Pattamahadei, came to believe that Divyasingha was crazy and she called Shiva Das, a respected and pious Sadhu healer from a Damodarapur Matha, six miles from Puri, to treat him. Divyasingha took offense and together with a group of his friends captured Shiva Das by luring him into the Raja's house on 23 February night with the pretext that someone was sick within the palace. The Sadhu was tortured by the King's men for four hours. His genitals were roasted with a torch, 41 one pieces of cork were forced into his intestines and he was suffocated with soiled cloth, until they believed he was dead, finally dumping him outside the royal palace. Shiva Das, however, was not dead yet and he managed to crawl into the main road at Simha Dvara, and reveal the facts to his disciples before succumbing to his injuries.

In February 1878, 11 persons were crushed to death during the poorly organized Dola yatra and Govinda Dvadasi festivals. The King had the doors of the temple closed indefinitely on 19 February, and only on 23 the Superintendent of Police came to know of the situation, due to the huge masses of excited pilgrims gathered in town. On 24 February at noon the Hindu Deputy Collector went to the Raja to ask him to open the gates of the temple but the King refused. The temple gates were finally opened only at midnight, while the auspicious time for Darshana was just before sunrise. Two people were crushed and the gates were immediately closed. On the next day 25 February Dola yatra the Raja still kept the temple gates closed and when the temple opened nine people died in the rush. In the same month Dibyasingh was accused of the murder of Shiva Das, tried and sentenced to be exiled to the Andaman Islands together with four of his servants. He did not come back; he became insane and subsequently died of tuberculosis on 25 August 1887.

Dibyasingha's successor **Mukunda Deva III** (1877-1926) ascended the throne at a very early age under the regency of his grandmother Rani Suryamani Patta Mahadei. The Queen was by no means incapable of managing the temple but the palace rules created a practical impossibility, as she never came out of the palace to inspect the temple and she was supposed to speak only to her female attendants, who passed her orders to the male servants of the royal family, called Bishois, who were to communicate them to the temple officers. In 1880 the British government appointed Rai Bahadur Rajakishore Das as Deputy Superintendent to assist her in her custodianship. Various overseers, inspectors and superintendents worked under him.

In 1881 there was the famous Alekha Mahima attack to the Jagannatha temple at Puri. This group belonging to the Mahima sect, known as Kumbhipatias probably belonged to the Bhima Bhoi affiliation, from Chandrapur in Sambalpur district. The leader of the party Dasaram decided that he would take the Deities of Jagannatha. Balabhadra and Subhadra on the road and burn Them. A large group of men, women and children marched on Puri, and at a short distance from the town 12 men including Dasaram and 3 women hurried forward, reached the temple on 1st March, and forced their way into the temple shouting "Mahima Alekh". They broke down the door of the Bhoga mandapa and tried to break down the Jaya Vijaya gate, but the crowd of pilgrims stopped them. Dasaram was jammed against the stone wall and fell or was pushed down and trampled; shortly afterwards he died on the platform outside the Simha Dvara.

His companions were tried for causing disturbance inside the temple and were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment; more members of the sect (6 men and 11 women) who remained on the street instigating each other to burn the Deities, were rounded up by the police but soon released as there was no definite charge against them. In March 1884 the Viceroy Lord Ripon conferred the title of Raja on Jagannatha Janamani, the minor son of Dibyasingh Deb. The situation in the Jagannatha temple deteriorated because of the lack of respect shown by the various Government servants. In the second week of December 1866 a meeting of the Utkal Sabha was held at Cuttack, and Baidyanath Pandit supported by Ram Sankar Ray presented a resolution to restore the Thakur Raja to the office of Superintendent of the temple, and stop the interference of the Government. Copies of the resolutions were sent to the Governments of India and Bengal. Ram Sankar Ray was the Assistant Editor of the *Utkal Dipika* and defended the Rani in the Court of the District Judge.

In the last week of December another meeting was held at the temple of Gopal ji in Cuttack, presided by Jagneswar Chandra. It was resolved that the services of the temple cannot be performed without the Raja. Yet another meeting was held in January at the Bada Akhada Math in Puri, reaching the same conclusions. The Rani sent for M.S. Das who advised her to file a writ petition in the Calcutta High Court against the appointment of the Receiver, praying that the Government be restrained from interfering with the administration of the Temple until the disposal of the case in the Court of the District Judge, Cuttack. The Calcutta High Court heard the petition in the first week of March, and barristers John Woodroffe, Evans and Sandell and *vakils* Dr. Gurudas Banerjee, Amarnath Bose and Karunasindhu Mukherjee appeared for the plaintiff. The battle continued in the Court and on newspapers until the Superintendence of the temple was recognized to the King. However, Mukunda Deva's administration was not very brilliant and many accidents continued to happen among the pilgrims. In 1902, the Commissioner suggested the appointment of a temple Manager by the Government, and thus Rai Bahadur Raj Kishor Das, Deputy Magistrate, was appointed into office. The temple was then controlled by the Government for 23 years.

In 1926, king Mukunda Deva III died. His adopted son took the name **Ramachandra Deva IV** and once again assumed direct responsibility for the temple management. As such, he eliminated the post of government-appointed manager. Some controversy surrounds the reign of Ramachandra Deva, as Mukunda Deva repudiated him after having adopted him, so Ramachandra had to go to a court in Patna to get his succession confirmed.

The struggle for Independence in Orissa

During the second half of the 19th century Orissa was also swept with the inspiration of reform and the aspiration for independence from the British rule. The rebellion of Jagabandhu in support of Mukunda Deva was ill fated and Jagabandhu himself was abandoned by the King when the British army returned in strength.

Several Sepoys of the 19th and 34th Bengal Native Infantry that participated to the mutiny in Meerut in May 1857 are believed to have come to Puri before returning to their homes. One Sepoy Panda, Chaki Khuntia, who appeared to have had contact with the 13th Bengal Native Infantry that mutined at Lucknow, was arrested and his property was confiscated, although there was very little evidence.

The next phase of nationalism was originated in 1866, when a terrible famine mostly caused by inefficient administration caused the death of about 1 million people, a third of the total population of the region (according to the Famine Commission Report of 1878). At that time the intellectuals of Orissa decided to take some action, and Bichitrananda Das started the Cuttack Printing Company and the weekly publication entitled *Utkala Dipika*, edited by Gourishankar Ray. The most important campaign of this protest movement focused on a court case to take away the hereditary rights of the superintendence and management of the Puri temple from the Raja family and transfer them to a Committee.

On the advice of M.S. Das, an advocate from Cuttack, the Rani filed a petition to the High Court in Calcutta that had appointed the head of the Committee. She was also supported by Gourishankar Ray, the editor of the *Utkal Dipika* (who was a member of the Brahmo samaj) and by his brother Ramashankar Ray, also a lawyer and associate editor of the *Utkala Dipika*. Public meetings and a protest campaign of the local press and intellectuals of the time created such a pressure that the High Court of Calcutta revoked the appointment of the Commission. The British tried to discourage Oriya nationalism by employing Indian officers from different regions, especially from Bengal.

However, Orissan people rallied together in what came to be known as the “Mahaprasadam brotherhood”, as Captain Saurin Brooke described in the Central Provinces Gazette, 21 July 1887: “Men of different castes bind themselves in an offensive and defensive alliance which, if originally designed as a cement of friendship, has certainly proved an effective barrier to the discovery and remedy of administrative evils.”

The Utkala Sammilani (also called Utkal Union Conference) was founded in Cuttack at the convention of 30-31 December 1903, as the “parliament of people inhabiting Oriya-speaking areas, notwithstanding caste, creed, language and administrative divisions”, separating from the Indian National Congress. One of the main promoters was that same M.S. Das who had supported the Rani’s case against the appointment of the Commission at the High Court in Calcutta.

The Utkala Sammilani continued until 122 with sessions in various regions. Perhaps the most famous representatives of the cultural scenario of that period are the Pancha Sakhas, “five friends” called Gopabandhu Das, Acharya Harihara Dash, Godabarish Mishra, and Pandit Nilakantha Dash.

Gopabandhu Das was born in 1877. Gopabandhu, who became known as Utkalmani (“the gem of Orissa”) also organized flood relief work and food distribution programmes for the needy. He became an activist of the Indian independence movement and the Congress party, and had several problems with the British government. Gopabandhu met M K Gandhi in 1920 and invited him to Orissa. Gandhi in fact visited Orissa on the next year in 1921. He was presented with a walking stick by the people of Puri district, and he used that stick for his famous “Salt March” in 1938.

In 1921 Gopabandhu Das proposed that the Utkala Sammilani merge again into the Indian National Congress. After a stormy session in Chakradharpur, under the presidency of Jagabandhu Singh, the resolution was approved, but in 1923 the Sammilani again separated from the Congress.

The separate province of Orissa was created in 1936. The first Prime Minister, K.C. Gajapati Narayana Deva, Raja of Paralakhemundi, immediately went to pay his respects to Jagannatha in the temple after taking oath of service, although for several generations his family had not visited the Puri temple out of rivalry with the Rajas of Puri.

The ferments of the independence struggle were expressed by the literary works of many intellectuals and particularly of the Satyabadi poets, such as Nilakantha Das (*Purushottama Deva*, 1917, *Konark*, 1919, *Mukunda Deva*, 1921), Godavarish Mishra (*Alekhika*, an anthology of songs), Asvini Kumar Ghose (*Gobinda Vidyadhara*, 1921, *Kalapahada*, 1922), Madhyadhar Manshing (*Mahanadir Jyotisna bhara*, 1930, and the play *Barabati*), Kalicharan Pattanayak (*Jayadeva*, 1943, and *Abhijana*, 1946), and Radhamohan Gadanayak (*Utkalika*, an anthology of songs).

After Independence

Ramachandra Deva’s successor, **Birakishore Deva**, was the king of Puri in 1947 when India became an independent nation and the management of the Puri temple was officially taken over by the Indian government.

With the 1952 Temple Act, the Orissa State Assembly constituted a Board of Trustees controlled by the Government. The King of Puri became a member of the Board of Trustees, and the Sankaracharya of Puri became the religious authority interacting with the Government-controlled Board, in his capacity of Chairman of the Mukti mandapa pandita sabha, the assembly of the Sasana Brahmanas of Puri and the *sannyasis* of the Shankaracharya matha.

The present King, Divyasingh Deva III, ascended the throne in 1960 and continues to enjoy a great level of prestige in the province. Despite his primarily ritualistic and symbolic post, he plays an important role in many organizations dedicated to the service of Lord Jagannatha.

Sri Mandira

The temple of Sri Jagannath in Puri is known as “Sri Mandira” because there the Lord lives with His consort Lakshmidēvi, “Sri”, who is the owner of the house. Also all His family lives here: His brother Balarama, His sister Subhadra, and all His companions, vehicles and weapons. It is said that when the holy city of Dvaraka (in Gujarat) was submerged by the ocean, after the disappearance of Sri Krishna at the onset of Kali yuga, Puri became the official residence of the Lord, and is still one of the four main pilgrimage places accepted by all Hindu traditions.

When the pilgrims arrive in Puri, they traditionally take a bath in one of the Sarovaras (man-made lakes) or in the Mahodadhi (the ocean), then proceed to visit the temple of Lokanatha (who is Shiva Kshetrapala), after which they go to get the Darshana of Lord Jagannatha.

Usually the pilgrims or visitors offer a brief type of *puja*, with only 5 *upacharas* —*gandha*, *puspa*, *dhupa*, *dipa* and *naivedya* – i.e. sandalwood paste, flowers, incense, lamp, and food.

The Sri Mandira is situated at one end of Grand Road, also called Bada Danda. On the opposite end there is Gundicha, generally called Gundicha ghara (rather than Gundicha mandira).

All around the temple area the various Sahis (streets), old (the original seven) and 47 smaller lanes, spread to various directions:

Harachandi Sahi (the road where Lakshmi Devi walks to go back to main temple on Hera panchami) to west, Bali Sahi to south, Dolamandapa Sahi (where the festival of Dola yatra is held for Durga Madhava), and Morchi Sahi to east, Markandesvara Sahi and Chodaganga Sahi to north.

Other smaller streets are Khuntia Sahi (where the temple servants called Khuntias used to live), Dayitapada Sahi (the neighborhood of the original worshipers of Jagannatha, descendants of Visvavasu), Suar Sahi (the neighborhood of temple cooks), Gaudabata Sahi (the road where Sri Chaitanya walked every day to go to Jagannatha temple).

The temple structure

The total temple area is 10.7 acres. Some say that the construction of the present structure was started during the reign of Choda Ganga Deva. The *Madala panji* (the traditional books of the Temple Chronicles) states that the present temple structure was built in 12th century, completed by king Ananga Bhima Deva in 1196. It is said that Ananga Bhima wanted to construct a temple of the Srivatsa khandasala type, 100 *hastas* high, but on the advice of the ministers the height was reduced to 90 *hastas*.

The temple administration offered the information that Babu Manamohan Ganguly measured the height of the present structure by "theodolite method" and concluded that it is 214 feet and 8 inches. Some say that about 100,000 Salagrama silas were buried under the temple to increase the spiritual potency of the holy place, but this is rather unlikely as devout Hindus would never walk over Salagrama silas.

The height of the temple is 215 feet from the ground, and the dome can be seen from several kilometers away. In fact, it is traditional for the people of Puri and for the pilgrims to eagerly expect to have a first glimpse of the temple dome on the main road into Puri already at the locality known as Tulasi Chaura, which is 12 km from the Mandira itself.

Scholars were long puzzled by the plain facade on this extremely important temple that seemed to be an exception to Orissa's rich sculptural heritage. The answer was found in 1975, when archaeologists began removing the lime plaster from the walls, and found that the sculptures underneath indeed rival those of the other masterpieces of Orissi temple art.

The best guess as to the reason for applying the plaster originally is that it would be a way to protect the temple from the ravages of the salty sea air, although it is also possible that other considerations of a cultural kind may have had a role in the decision.

It is said that the plastering was started during the reign of Prataparudra Deva (according to the *Madala Panji*, in 1647), both on the Deula and the Jagamohana. Successive plastering layers were applied in the 18th century. As the old plaster is being removed, archaeologists are also repairing the corroded iron dowels in the original structure and replacing broken stones with new ones. Finally, a clear, thin coating is being applied to the entire structure to preserve it for the future.

One can get a view of the temple from the Jaya Balia lodge or the roof of the Raghunandana library on Grand Road, opposite the main entrance of the temple. The library is open from 9 am to 8 pm and it is also possible to get a good photograph of the temple from there. A small donation (about 10 to 20 rupees) is required to pacify the Library's administration. The structure of the entire temple has an almost precise square form, with four gates at east, north, west and south, and two concentric walls, the internal wall and the external wall.

The external wall is called Meghanada Prachira and is 665 x 640 feet, and is 24 feet high. It was built by king Kapilendra Deva in 1448. Originally it consisted of two rows of walls with a gap of 11 feet between them, which provided a protected gallery from which security guards could shoot arrows at attackers. Later this space was covered and several rooms were thus created for various uses.

The internal wall is called Kurma Berha (from the ornamental tortoises carved on it), but previously it was known as the Hosan Berha. It is more rectangular than square, 420 x 315 feet, and 20 feet high. It was built by king Purushottama Deva in 1470. According to the temple administration, within the Kurma Berha there are 95 smaller shrines for Jagannatha's *parsva devata* ("companion Deities"), and in the center there is the Garbha griha of Lord Jagannatha, with attached the Nata mandapa or Nata mandira, then the Jagamohana or Mukhyasala, and the Bhoga mandapa. Specific descriptions of the various shrines will be given in this chapter.

The temple dome (*sikhara*) is decorated with a Sri Vaishnava tilaka. The Nilachakra or Sudarshana chakra, is made of *astadhatu* (iron, copper, zinc, mercury, lead, brass, silver, gold) and is very big. The external circumference is 36 feet, the internal is 10 feet; the spokes are 1 foot and 10 inches long each. It is said that getting the darshana of Sudarshana chakra above the temple, even from a distance, is as good as having the Darshana of Jagannatha Himself, so the devotees would feel happy by seeing the glorious form of Sri Nilachakra, or Sudarshana, who protects all. In fact the Sudarshana on the temple dome is always visible from a long distance. The Sevaka of Garuda also performs the *puja* to Nilachakra, climbing up there while reciting the name of Garuda and Vimala to put up the flag. The flag can be white or yellow, with a crescent moon, *nada* and *bindu* (representing the Pranava omkara). In case the flag is torn off by the wind, no food is offered in the temple on that day. Anyone can offer a flag to Jagannatha, and usually the offered flags are distributed.

The same Sevaka is in charge of putting the big lamp (*mahadipa*) on top of the dome on the night of each Ekadasi (see the chapter on Sevakas). Besides the lamp on the Vimana dome, the Sevaka lights a lamp on the Bhoga and Natya Mandapas each. While placing the lamps, the Sevaka recites this prayer in Oriya language: "Let the whole world be blessed, let all living beings be happy. O God, bless everyone! Let all be holy and peaceful." All the devotees present acclaim the lighting of the *dipa*. Once, about 100 years ago, a young boy of this family fell down from the tower, but he cried out the name of Mother Vimala and landed unhurt on one of the lion images outside the temple.

External parikrama

When performing the Pradakshina of the external wall around the temple, one should start from Simha Dvara and walk in clockwise direction. On the outside of the external wall, there are several shrines visited by devotees. The references are given according to the names of the four gates:

Simha dvara (lions gate, also called *purva dvara* or eastern gate): the lion is considered an emblem of Vedic knowledge and culture; also represents *dharma* (religion). This gate is used by Jagannatha for Ratha yatra, and since it is the main gate it is used by most visitors.

Asva dvara or Aisvarya dvara (horsemen gate, also called *daksina dvara* or southern gate): it is said that the two horsemen (installed rather recently) are none other than Lord Jagannatha and Balabhadra, who appeared in that form to help king Purushottama Deva in his war against Kanchi (Kanchi Abhijana). The horse is considered the emblem of Kings and it also represents *artha* (economic development) and *aishvarya* (dominion). This gate is used by king and family (except for the queen, who enters through Simha dvara), and by *kshatriyas* in general.

Vyaghra dvara (tigers gate, also called *pascima dvara* or western gate): the tiger is considered the emblem of Tantric knowledge; it also represents *kama* (pleasure) and *jnana* (knowledge) This gate is used by Maharis, Tantrics and Sadhus.

Hasti dvara or Chemedi dvara (elephants gate, also *uttara dvara* or northern gate): the white elephant is considered the emblem of Buddhism; it also represents *moksha* (liberation) and *vairagya* (renunciation). This gate is used by Devas. After every Bhoga offering inside the temple, a Puja Panda comes to the gates offering *pushpanjali* to each gate with appropriate mantras (*dharmaya svaha*, etc). Every gate has a small passage chamber called Gumuta. Outside the external wall we find the following shrines.

- east side:

on the right of the Simha Dvara there is the **Badachhata Matha**, then next to its right, a small temple of **Ramachandra**. After this, we find the **Languli Matha**.

On the left side of the Simha Dvara, attached to the external wall of the temple we find the **Chauni Matha**. Just opposite the temple we find the **Emar Matha** with the Raghunandana library.

On the same side, the first shrine we find is **Kakkuri Khai Devi**. The Deity has ten arms and is considered Vimala's sister. Here the devotees who cannot enter the temple may offer Bali to the Mother Goddess.

In front of this shrine, on the corner we meet a murti of Tulasi Devi.

- south side:

Just before the Dakshina Dvara (south gate) of the temple, attached to the temple wall we find a small *bhajan kutir* erected in the memory of a devotee called **Bandhu Mohanti** (see the chapter on Jagannatha's devotees). On the south side of the temple wall we find the famous **Peja nala**, the water drain that comes directly from the temple kitchen and where the rice water runs out into a pool. Here it is collected by destitute people or eaten by cows and other animals.

The shrine of **Kana patta Hanuman** (a big Hanuman Deity), is also attached to the temple wall near the south gate; at the sides of the Deity there are two images of Tulasi Das and Vedavyasa, and also an image of Manavananda acharya. This Acharya was in charge of the Dakshinaparsva Matha, that was taking care of this Hanuman temple in ancient times. At the door's sides there are Nala and Nila, the two doorkeepers of Hanuman, in the dress of Naga warriors.

The small shrine of **Batesvari** (on the temple wall) is dedicated to a Deity of Durga.

Durga Madhava (a small shrine high on the temple wall),

On the left side, opposite the temple wall, there are the **Dakshinaparva Matha** and the **Panjabi Matha**.

- west side:

Again opposite the temple wall, **Lokanath vijaya sthali** is a small shrine dedicated to Shiva; here special worship is offered on the night of Shiva ratri (*jagran*).

Ramachandra kirtana mandira, with Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, and one small dasa avatara of Hanuman; here the *maha mantra* Hare Krishna is chanted 24 hours a day each day of the year.

Ugra Tara (Kali Mata).

On the road opposite the Sri Mandira wall, we find the shrine of **Baseli Thakurani**.

Attached to the temple wall, we have one **Trinatha kirtana mandira**, dedicated to the three *guna avataras* Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Just next, there is another **Trinatha mandira**.

Opposite the temple wall, there is a **Bhagavati** mandira, also called Vanapur ru Bhagavati.

- north side:

Attached to the temple wall, there is an old temple dedicated to **Nrisimhadeva**.

Opposite to the temple wall we find the **Uttarapasva Matha** and the **Rebesha Matha**.

Still further on this side of the temple we find the market called Lakshmi Bazar.

Entering the temple

Entrance to the Sri Mandir is presently restricted at the discretion of the temple administration. A sign at the entrance says that only Hindus are allowed, but the criteria on which a person is accepted as Hindu by the security guards and temple administrators constitute a very controversial topic that cannot be solved by declaring one's personal religious beliefs and practices at the gate.

East gate

Arrived at the Simha Dvara (lions' gate) on the east side of the temple, the pilgrims offer their obeisances to Patita Pavana, the Jagannatha Deity who stands in the entrance hall to bless everyone, including those who are not going to enter the temple.

In front of the main entrance at Simha Dvara (east gate) the **Aruna stambha** (pillar) stands 22 feet and 2 inches high from the base, on a very nicely decorated base called Aruna stambha chakada. Here people usually offer obeisances to Jagannatha without entering the temple. The Chunara sevakas, the caretakers of Garuda, also perform the rituals for the Aruna stambha. Aruna, or “dawn”, is the driver of the Sun’s chariot, and the elder brother of Garuda, the carrier of Vishnu. Son of Kashyapa and Vinati, he took birth before being fully developed. He is positioned on top of the pillar facing the Nilachakra, and is kneeling on the left leg, and keeping folded hands. The pillar and the Deity of Aruna were originally in front of the Surya temple in Konarak, installed by Langula Narasimha Deva when the Konarak temple was built. In the 18th century the Konarak temple was damaged under the reign of the Marathas, so it is said that a Marathi Sadhu, Baba Brahmachari, organized for the pillar to be moved to the entrance of Jagannatha temple in Puri with the permission of then Bhoi King Divyasingha Deva II (1779-1797).

The pillar is one single monolith of chlorite with sixteen facets; the capitol is in the form of two rings surrounded by a series of lotus petals, for a total height of base, pillar and capitol of 33 feet and 8 inches from the ground. The base has various carvings on it, including a frieze of peacocks and a lion rampant on an elephant at each of the four corners.

The **Simha dvara** is considered the main gate, opening on Grand Road (the main road in the city) and Temple Road (Dolamandapa Sahi). The gate is 10 feet wide and 12 feet tall. The doors are made of wood and plated with brass; the right door has a brass conchshell embossed with five bells, while on the left door there is a Chakra, also with five bells.

Within the right the door there is a smaller opening called *chora kabata* used only by temple Sevakas while no outsiders are allowed to enter. According to the *Madala panji*, the Simha dvara with the two lions and the Meghanada pracheri were built during the reign of Kapilendra Deva.

- Over the entrance to this gate there are the Dasa Avataras of Vishnu, with Jagannatha in the 9th place instead of Buddha.

- Above them, on the lintel, there is Maha Lakshmi, together with four *sakhis* to her right and five to her left; the two main *sakhis* are Ganga and Yamuna.

- On the sides of the door we find Jaya and Vijaya, the doorkeepers of Vaikuntha. These Deities are each 3 feet tall and are four-handed, with the mace in their lower left hand, the conch on the upper left, the *chakra* on the upper right and a *japa mala* on the lower right.

Behind the visible Jaya and Vijaya, there are two slightly smaller *vigrahas* of Jaya and Vijaya, in black chlorite, 2 and 1/2 feet high. The **Gumuta** of the Simha Dvara is a 30 feet high room behind the Simha dvara and just before the *baisi pahacha*.

Patita Pavana, the most important Deity of the Gumuta, is on the right side of the room. It is a large image of the face of Jagannatha (only the face) made of a mix of *jhuna* (frankincense), *chandana* (sandalwood), *karpura* (camphor), *lakha* (one type of resin), *agura* (scented oil from the *aguru* plant), *chua* (scented oil from the *chua* fruit) and *kasturi* (musk, a strongly scented powder obtained from the navel of the musk deer). The Deity was settled here at the gate of the temple so that everyone could have *darshana* at any time even without entering the temple, obtaining the same benefits of a full *darshana* of Lord Jagannatha. It is said that the installation of this Deity was made by king Ramachandra Deva II (1727-1737) who had married Razia, the daughter of the Muslim ruler Murshid Khuli Khan to ensure the protection of the city against the Muslim invasions. When he changed his name into Hafiz Kadar he officially became a Muslim and therefore the temple priests denied him access to the temple.

Patita Pavana also has two Veshas (Padma and Gaja uddarana) and a small Garuda kneeling in front of Him.

Next to Patita Pavana, on the right side, there is a small **Sugriva Mahavira**.

Next is a **Nrisimha** Deity with 22 arms called *hatte deulara baisi hatta Nrisimha* (“one hand long temple houses a 22 hands Nrisimha”).

On the left side of the Gumuta we find **Fate Hanuman**, the protector of the eastern direction and the eastern gate. This Deity has twelve arms and was installed in the 14th century by Ramananda.

Above Fate Hanuman there is a painting of Durga. On Hanuman’s left side there are paintings of Radha Krishna and Ganesha. All these Deities are in charge of the Puja Panda Sevakas.

After passing the first entrance hall (Gumuta) we have the **Yama danda**, an iron plate fixed on the steps. People in Puri say that whenever one visits the Jagannatha temple, by stepping on this iron plate all his sins will stick to it so that he will enter the temple in a sanctified state. Thus many people who step on this Yama danda while entering the temple make it a point to avoid stepping on it again while exiting, so that their sins will not stick back to them.

The **Baisi pahacha** are a stair flight 70 feet long, with 22 steps each 6 feet wide and 6 to 7 inches high, made of feldspar and chondolite. These steps start already inside the Gumuta. At the bottom of the stair flight there is a drain to wash one's feet before entering the temple. Many pilgrims roll their bodies on the steps to get the blessings of the holy dust from the feet of the devotees and the Deities, who walk these steps out and back in during the various festivals along the year. People also put their small children on the steps for their purification, and many Hindus perform the *sraddha* ceremony for their forefathers in this place. It is said that many restless spirits (*atrupta-atmas*) always stand on these steps with the desire to attain salvation.

These steps are said to represent the 14 universes and the 8 Vaikunthas, called Sri Vaikuntha, Kaivalya Vaikuntha, Karanarnava Vaikuntha, Svetadvipa Vaikuntha, Paravyoma Vaikuntha, Garbhodakasayi Vaikuntha and Kailasha Vaikuntha. All the small shrines on the 22 steps are on the left side, because on the right side the *brahmanas* sit for *sraddha*. Along these stairs, on the third step on the left side we find **Kashi Visvanatha Shiva**, who is considered the security guard of Jagannatha's house. His shrine is at the beginning of the 22 steps.

This small shrine, between the two boundary walls, is 15 feet high, opening to the west (facing Jagannatha). It was installed in 1611 and contains a 10 inches tall Shiva Lingam that faces north, small stone Deities of Shiva and Parvati, a painting of Kashi Visvanatha, and a brass Deity of Ganesha.

The Parsva Devatas are: on the northern side Kartika, on the southern side Ganesha, on the western side Vrishabha (the bull carrier of Shiva); over the main door there are the Navagrahas and Kirtimukha. The dvarapalas are Nandi and Bhringhi. On Shiva ratri and Sitala sashti the Lingam is covered with sandalwood paste; at Sitala sashti the *jalashayi* (offering of a trickle of water from a suspended pot) is offered.

A Sevak of Jagannatha, called Chakrapani (or according to some, Harihara) Kunthia, who was a great devotee of Kashi Vishvanatha, had a deep desire to perform a pilgrimage to Kashi. However, due to old age and scarce finances he could not afford the travel so he used to sit in meditation here; finally he obtained here the direct Darshana of Visvanatha Mahadeva.

Next there is the **Suna Gosvami matha**, a small room (about 7x7 feet), where during *pahandi* the *panti bhoga* is offered. Next there is a small **Rama mandira** (with Sri Ramachandra, Lakshmana, Sita, and the images of the Vanara army).

Next **Abhaya Nrisimha** shows the *abhaya mudra* instead of holding Hiranyakasipu's body.

Here Chaitanya often stopped to offer prayers.

On the right at the top of the stairs passage leads to the **Ananda Bazar**, a colorful market where the *Mahaprasada* is sold in many small shops. All the 56 varieties (*chappana bhoga*) of *mahaprasada* are sold here, both the "dry *prasada*" (sweets and savories) and the regular lunch package. It is said that in the night all the Devas visit the Ananda Bazar to take *mahaprasada*.

The Ananda Bazar can be accessed both from the Baisi pahacha and from inside the inner wall of the temple. Above it there is the **Bheta mandapa**, where Mahalakshmi watches Jagannatha coming back from Ratha yatra on Bahuda day. In this same Mandapa, the Ratha pratistha yajna is performed on the first day of the Ratha Yatra. Also over the Ananda Bazar we find the large the Snana vedi and the **Snana mandapa**, high above the wall, near the Isana north-east corner of the temple; they are accessed through a passage from inside the Ananda Bazar. Here on a raised platform the Deities are ceremonially bathed in the Snana yatra festival and finally Jagannatha puts on His Hati vesa (elephant dress). The Snana Vedi is 75x75 feet, and in the middle there is a raised Simhasana for the Deities.

The passage to the left of the Baisi pahacha leads to the Rosha shala (kitchen) and the Chahani mandapa.

Rosa sala, Paka sala, or kitchens: on the opposite side of the Ananda Bazar entrance, before climbing down the steps, there is the access to the big kitchens, reserved only to the authorized temple cooks.

Just outside the Rosha shala there are two wells, one (on the south side) is called Ganga, the other (on the north side) is called Yamuna. The Rosha shala is between the two wells.

There are no Deities inside the Rosha shala, but outside the kitchen door, attached to the wall, a *murti* of **Ganesh** is guarding and protecting the kitchen.

Originally the kitchen building was situated on the south-east of the main temple structure, near the Satya Narayana shrine, but it was very small and the smoke used to enter the Garbha Griha, so new kitchens were built by Divyasingha Deva (1682-1713) with donations from Rajendra Raja. However, a small subsidiary kitchen still exists behind the Satyanarayana shrine. The covered passage from the kitchen to the Bhoga mandapa was also built in relatively recent times, between 1720 and 1725. The present kitchens are so big that it is possible to cook food for 100,000 people at the same time. The 3000 cooks, called Suars, work on 752 wooden stoves that burn regular wood. Each stove (*chula*) carries 4 clay pots about 3 liters size, where 2 kg rice is boiled. Each stove has 9 fire mouths, lit every morning after the performance of the Vaishnava Agni-homa in the name of Lakshmi and Narayana. The number of the cooks working daily in the kitchen on a shift is about 700. All kitchen workers keep their nose and mouth covered with cloth to avoid contaminating the food. The particular fashion in which they tie the cloth is called *tundi*. To avoid the temptation of tasting the food before the offering, the cooks enter the kitchen after completing their own breakfast.

Within the kitchen there are no fans. Previously no electric bulbs were used, but now some have been installed. The cooked food is carried through a covered passage from the kitchens to the place where the food will be offered. There the clay pots are arranged and the three *pujaks* perform the offering. During the ceremony, visitors can line on the sides of the Natya mandapa or stand in the Jagamohana. The special Kotha bhoga offering is performed inside the Garbha Griha, on special plates, and no visitor is allowed to watch. During the offering, the Sevakas play musical instruments.

The **Chahani mandapa** over the wall above the kitchen and near the stair flight on the south corner, is the place where Lakshmi Devi comes to watch Jagannatha entering the temple on Niladri Vijaya and offering Him *vandapana*. Proceeding straight on the Baisi pahacha, the pilgrims enter the inner wall of the temple (**Kurma Berha**).

From the Simha Dvara, proceeding on the east side of the internal courtyard towards south, we find:

Ghantesvari Thakurani, a Deity of the Mother Goddess standing up on the wall.

Agnisvara Mahadeva near the entrance of the kitchen, on the right side of the internal courtyard; the small Lingam protects the fire in the kitchens, presides over the cooking and stands guard to the passage between the kitchens to the place where the food offering is brought. The temple cooks say that Mahadeva perfects the cooking while the food is brought through this passage before being offered to Jagannatha.

The next shrine, a 25 feet high temple structure, is dedicated to **Satya Narayana**. This Deity was installed by Satyabhama Patta Mahadevi, wife of Hari Krishna Deva, the younger brother of king Divyasingha Deva. It is a black stone (chlorite) *vigraha* of four-armed Narayana, 5 feet and 10 inches tall, with earrings and a necklace, facing north. The upper right hand holds a *chakra*, the upper left a *sankha*, the lower right shows the *abhaya mudra* (protection gesture), the lower left holds the *gada*. He has Sri Devi and Bhu Devi at His sides. Near His right leg there is a kneeling Garuda, and above Him various images of Apsaras and Kinnaris, celestial women from heavenly planets. On the two sides there are also two small images of Jaya and Vijaya.

The worship of this Deity is associated with a traditional text called *Satyanarayana vrata katha*, extolling the all-important virtue of truthfulness, the basic principle of Dharma, and recommending to treat everyone with justice, love and compassion, remaining free from pride and arrogance. The text offers the example of a proud King who refused to participate to the worship offered to God by some humble cowherds, and subsequently lost his empire, wealth and family. Instructed by a sage, the King was able to return to opulence only by humbly joining the worship rituals of the same humble subjects. Some people believe that this form of Vishnu is the God that is worshiped by Muslims as Allah, although no Muslim authority and not even ordinary Muslims are known to have ever confirmed this idea.

On Snana yatra the water from the Suna kua is kept here, and this is also the place where the flower garlands for the main Deities are prepared. The people of Puri traditionally come to this shrine to pray for blessings on the occasion of various family events.

On the west side of this Narayana murti there is a smaller temple facing north, with a very old stone *murti* of Krishna and Radha called **Radha Vallabha**.

Another smaller couple of Radha and Krishna, **Radha Ramana**, is next on the west direction, facing north and near to the Kalpa vriksa; it is said They came from Sambalpur. This Deity of Krishna is made of black stone, and Radha's murti is made of *astadhātu* (the traditional alloy of eight different metals).

Hari Sahadeva is one of the most important Shiva shrines inside the temple. This Lingam takes care of Jagannatha's cows; in this regard we may remember that during the incognito exile of the Pandavas, Sahadeva was engaged to take care of the cows of king Virata. The Jagannatha temple used to have many cows, kept in Raja Nahara (the King's palace). Now this tradition has been discontinued.

Bata Patita Pavana, also known as Bata Vihari Jagannatha or Bata Abakasha. It is a Daru (wooden) Deity of Jagannatha, standing alone 5 feet tall. On the left of this Patita Pavana there is a Deity of Mahalakshmi. There is no Garuda stambha but Garuda is sculpted on the Simhasana. During the attacks of the Moghuls this Deity was placed in front of the Kalahata dvāra to give the impression that it was the main Deity of the temple; in this way the main Deities were saved on a number of occasions. The *Madala panji* records that in 1568 when Kalapahada took away the original Deities of Jagannatha to burn Them, he was unable to burn the Deities completely, rather he himself was blown to pieces. The half-burned Deities were thrown in the Ganga and floated around in the water. One Bisara Mohanty collected the *brahma padārtha* and hid it in a *mridanga* drum; later he brought it to Kujanga Fort. In 1575 this *brahma* was received by the then king Ramachandra Deva and kept inside this Patita Pavana Deity. In 1576 new Deities were prepared and the *brahma* was transferred into Them. The periodic Navakalevara rituals also take place for this Deity. The temple is on the right of the Kalpa Bata and faces north. Inside this small shrine there is a small pond (*kunda*) where the servants of Jagannatha wash His clothes.

Here the recitation of *Puranas* was regularly held and sometimes scholars compiled their works: the *Govinda Bhasya* by Baladeva Vidyabhushana and the *Oriya Bhagavatam* by Jagannatha Das. This was also the place where Chaitanya met Atibadi Jagannatha Das.

The **Bata Narayana** mentioned in the *Mukti Chintamani* is also called **Bata Mukunda**, Bala Mukunda or Bata Gopala. The Deity in this small shrine under the Kalpa Bata was installed in the very place where Markandeya Rishi saw baby Krishna sleeping on the banyan leaf at the time of the dissolution of the universe. This Deity of baby Krishna is also sleeping on a banyan leaf and sucking on the big toe of His right foot, His head facing south. This Deity is under the responsibility of the Pratihari niyoga.

Bata Ganesha (also called Chintamani Ganesha, Kalpa Ganesha, Siddha Ganesha, Sveta Vinayaka and Sveta Ganesh or "white Ganesha"). The present temple is about 700 years old. This is the most important Ganesha Deity in Sri Mandira. Ganesha is white in color, and his face is always smeared in sandalwood paste. He is facing south, 4 feet tall, with four hands (in upper right he holds the *aksha mala*, in the lower right the broken tusk, the upper left the *parasu* axe and the lower left a *laddu*) and is served by his *vahana*, the mouse. The peculiarity of this mouse is that its skin feels hairy to the touch. The Kunthia sevakas are in charge of this temple. Ganesha chaturti is celebrated here. It is said that during the reign of Purushottama Deva (1466-1497), Atibadi Jagannatha Das and his father Pandita Bhagavan Das used to recite Sanskrit scriptures here. Impressed by their recitation, the king gave Bhagavan Das the title of Purana Panda.

The next shrine is dedicated to **Sri Lokanatha**, the form of Shiva who guards the treasure house of Jagannatha. This treasure house used to be called *bauna koti bandhara*, "the store-room of 52 krores treasure items". It is found underground, within the Garbha Griha, about 30 feet distance from the Ratna Simhasana, behind the silver gate. Another *murti* of Sri Lokanatha resides inside the Bandhara, from which sounds of slithering snakes are usually heard.

Adhivasa devata, or Adivasa Purushottama. This a Deity of Narayana in standing position, about 3 feet tall, of *muguni pathara* (special black stone), facing north. During Navakalevara, when the doors to the Jagannatha Darshana are closed for 2 months (for the *joda masa*, or Purushottama adhika masa) the door to this shrine is opened, otherwise it is always closed. While the shrine is open, every day ten varieties of fruits are offered, with *sodasa upachara*, *karpura*, *chandana*, *agura*, *jaiphala*, *chua*, *kasturi* etc.

Sarvamangala or **Bata Mangala**, near to the Jagamohana of the main Deities' shrine, is said to protect the Antar vedi and Ratna simhasana. The present Deity was installed in 1510 and is 16 and half inch tall, and 14 and half inch wide.

She faces west (west being also the orientation for the shrine's door), has three eyes and four hands holding *trisula* (trident, upper left) and *gada* (mace, upper right), showing the two *mudras abhaya* (protection, lower right) and *varada* (blessings, lower left).

On the left wall of the Jagamohana of the shrine there are Deities of Sitala Devi and Ganesha, as well as Kutama Chandi, Bau Devi, Jhadesvari and Maha Kali. Ganga and Yamuna are also there, on the door lintel of the *garbha griha*. Vyaghra mukhi and Simha mukhi are the guards, and a Navagraha murti is over the door. Just above the Deity of Bata Mangala there is a small Mangala Deity. On the right side of the Jagamohana wall there are the 10 Mahavidyas; a great celebration is performed here at Durga puja. Inside the main door, Chaya and Maya, and Hanuman. On the northern external wall there is a small Deity of Shankata Tarini.

During the Sola puja the *Chandi stotra* is recited and the Deity is offered a different *vesha* every day: Vana Durga (on Mulastami), Annapurna (on Navami), Bagala (on Dasami), Harachandi (on Ekadasi), Matangi (on Dvadasi), Rajarajesvari (on Trayodasi), Mahalakshmi (on Chaturdasi), Simhavahini (on Mahalaya, Amavasya), Bhuvanesvari (on Pratipad), Siddhesvari (on Dvitiya), Ugratara (on Tritiya), Krishnakali (on Panchami), Chamunda or Dasabhuja (on Sashti), Bhagavati (on Saptami), Narayani (on Ashtami), Jaya Durga (on Navami) and Aparajita (on Dasami). During Kali puja (Dipavali), She wears the Mahakali vesh. The Pratihari niyoga is in charge of this temple.

The **Pancha Pandava** or **Pancha Mahadeva** shrine, near the Bata Mangala (Sarvamangala) shrine, was installed by Mrtyunjaya Deva, the *raja guru* of king Udyota Keshari. It is dedicated to the five manifestations of Shiva in Puri: the first is Yamesvara, second is Lokanatha, third is Markanda, fourth is Nilakantha, and fifth is Kapalamochana. They are all Svayambhu lingam, except for Lokanatha. Two other Svayambhu lingam inside Sri Mandira are Patalesvara and Ishanesvara. It is said that at Puri Shiva Mahadeva remains as the associate and servant of Lord Jagannatha. Lokanatha acts as the security guard and Yamesvara as the chief accountant of Jagannatha. These five forms of Shiva are worshiped separately in five small shrines (about 6 to 7 feet tall and 3 feet wide), of which the Markandesvara temple is the tallest (15 feet tall and 5 feet wide). This Markandesvara is mentioned in *Mukti Chintamani*.

Other Shivas inside the temple are Gopesvara (Yogesvara), Kasi Visvanatha (near the eastern gate), Ramesvara Shiva and Siddhesvara Shiva (near western gate), Lokanatha (north gate), Ishanesvara (opposite Koili Vaikuntha) and the group of Shivas on the outer wall of Bhoga mandapa - Vaikunthanatha Mahadeva, Dhablesvara, Pasunatha, Agnisvara Mahadeva and Bedha Lokanatha. In other areas of the temple we find Tandavesvara, Muktesvara, Kshetrapala, Panchavana, Dakshinesvara and Gokarnesvara.

Maha Vajresvari, also known as **Indrani**. This shrine just in front of the shrine of Markandesvara Mahadeva, and was previously known as Bateshvara. Originally this Deity was very near to the Rosha shala, but one night She appeared in dream to one of the Sevakas, saying that She was choking because of the smoke of the kitchen, so She was moved to the present location.

Inside the shrine there are also the small Shiva Linga called Bateshvara (to whom the shrine was previously dedicated), a small Siddha Ganesha, and a Vrishabha. The Deity is the Shakti of Kshetrapala Shiva. She faces south and has two hands. After the Mahaprasada is offered to Vimala, the Supakara Sevakas bring some here to Maha Vajreshvari. The Puja pandas are in charge of the worship.

On the south-east side of the inner wall we find the famous **Kalpa Bata, Vancha Bata** or **Kalpa Vriksha**, a banyan tree that is worshiped as a wish-fulfilling tree.

This tree is very old and is considered one of the two most ancient places in Puri (the other being Rohini kunda, just at its side). It is said that it was already present before the arrival of king Indradyumna, and will remain even after the dissolution of the universe. *Madala panji* relates that Kalapahada cut the tree down during his attack, but some roots remained and it regrew. Since banyan trees constantly regenerate themselves by growing roots out of branches and branches out of roots, it is practically immortal. It is said that during the *maha pralaya*, the destruction of the universe, this tree is not completely submerged, and on its branch baby Narayana lies over one leaf, sucking His own big toe. Markandeya Rishi remained clinging on this tree during the *maha pralaya* and was able to see Bata Krishna here. Pilgrims ask boons from this wish-fulfilling tree, called Bata Mahapurusha, by tying some small stone and thread to its branches.

The concept of the Kalpa Vriksha is found in many passages of the Shastra and in many sacred stories, and it is connected with the very ancient tradition of the worship of trees.

Generally the Kalpa Vriskha is identified as the banyan tree (*Ficus religiosa* and *Ficus Bengalensis*), but sometimes also coconut palms are described s such, because they are so useful, and are able to sustain human life by themselves. It is said that five ancient and famous Kalpa Vrikshas are still present: Akshar Vata at Gaya, Vancha Vata at Prayaga, Nikumbhila Vata in Sri Lanka, Bandhira Vata at Gop and Kalpa Vata in Puri.

The Puri version of the Pancha vata are the Kalpa Vata, the Angira Vata (at Angira ashram), the Nikumbhila Vata at Yamesvara, the Aghor Vata near Nrisimha temple at Matiapada, and the Solakhia Vata in fron of Veda Bhavan. More Vatas are Vatesvara near Pancha Siva inside the temple, one near Varaha Narayana, and the Siddha Bakula tree (at the Siddha Bahula Matha, also called Haridasa Matha).

To the east of the Kalpa Bata we find the footprints of Markandeya Rishi, called **Markandeya paduka**.

Ananta Vasudeva, also called Ananta Sayana or Ananta Purushottama. This shrine stands on the left of the Mukti mandapa and was installed by the eldest daughter of Ananta Keshari, Chandrika Patta Mahadei. Here Lord Narayana is reclining on Ananta Deva, facing west; Lakshmi Devi is massaging His feet and on the lotus growing from His navel sits Brahma.

Kutama Chandi is on the east of Mukti mandapa, near Kshetrapala Mahadeva. The Deity is called Kutama Chandi because She sits on a dog (*kuta*) as Her *vahana*. It is said that whenever some pollution occurs in the temple or in the kitchen without the knowledge of the *sevakas*, Her *vahana* the black dog appears. Since the gates are very carefully guarded and no dogs are ever allowed to enter the temple, this black dog is considered a special manifestation, appearing to inform the *sevakas* of the mishap. In this case the cooked food is buried in Koili Vaikuntha or Nilachala Upavana, the cooks and *sevakas* take a bath and change clothes, and a fresh offering is started. The Deities are also given a purificatory bath called Mahasnana.

Previously this tantric Deity was also sitting on the Ratna simhasana but was moved when Vaishnavism became prominent in Puri. It is said that when the famous tantrik from Ujjain named Digana arrived in Puri, a black dog was seen repeatedly appearing within the temple, causing a lot of disruption in the rituals. Digana suggested that a Deity of Kutama Chandi should be installed, and after that the sightings ceased.

The shrine of **Patalesvara** (also called “Jagannatha’s grandfather”) is 27 feet below the ground level, west of Mukti mandapa. It was built by Anangabhima, and the daily rituals are performed by the Sevaka of Vimala.

Surya Narayana (also called **Surya yantra**): this shrine is in the north-east corner (Ishana kona) of the Mukti mandapa. This is where the daily Surya puja takes place. According to the *Brahma Purana*, this temple is built in the form of a Surya yantra. The present shrine was built by Chodaganga Deva. The Palia *sevakas* change their *yajna upavita* (sacred thread) here before offering *bhoga* to the Deities.

Kshetrapala Shiva, a Bhairava Deity, is the Guardian of Sri Kshetra and Sri Mandira, installed during the reign of Anangabhima Deva. This temple is near to the Mukti mandapa and faces south. According to the *Skanda Purana*, Kshetrapala Shiva is one of the *ashta* (eight) Rudras (the others being Kapala mochana, Yameshvara, Markandeshvara, Ishaneshvara, Vishveshvara, Nilakantha and Bateshvara). It is said that during the Daksha yajna, when Shiva started dancing in anger to destroy the universe, Narayana pacified Him and asked Him to become the guardian (*pala*) of Sri Kshetra and Sri Mandira. Mahalakshmi Devi sits over the door of this shrine, and Jaya and Vijaya stand guard at the sides of the door.

South gate

Inside the Gumuta there are no Deities. From this side, the supplies for the offerings are carried into the temple. After the gate we have:

- **Rosha Mahavira**, a 4 feet tall Hanuman Deity who guards the kitchen.

- **Ramachandra mandir**, with Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, an “obedient” Hanuman (kneeling down), and above Them Jatayu and the army of Vanaras; the Deities were installed by King Satrubhanj from Mayurbhanj district.

- **Sadbhuj Gauranga**: on the eastern side of southern door. The six armed form of Chaitanya shows two arms as Krishna holding the flute, then two arms as Rama holding bow and arrow, and two arms as a *sannyasi* holding staff and *kamandalu*. Near the Vighraha, a Bengali inscription says: *bhaja gauranga, kaha gauranga, laha gauranga nama re, ye jana gauranga bhaja, se he amar prana he; radha krsna ekatma dui deha dhari, anyaneha dila sei, rasasvadana kari*, “worship Gauranga, speak about Gauranga, accept the name of Gauranga: those who worship and serve Gauranga are my very life and soul; Radha and Krishna are one person only in two bodies, but They reunited together to increase the tasting of spiritual bliss.”

- **Simanchala Nrishimha** mandir, facing west. The Deity came from Simanchala (Andhra Pradesh).
 - **Bara Bhai Hanuman**, facing east. The Deity is standing, about 3 feet tall.
 - **Gopinatha**, also called Antua (“kneeling”) Gopala. This Deity is baby Krishna, crawling on the floor of the wood asana, and holding some *laddu* in His right hand, while the left hand touches the floor.
 - **Purana Nrisimha**, this Nrisimha Deity is standing about 3 feet tall, holding the four symbols of Vishnu and killing Hiranyakasipu. Inside the shrine, the images of Sukadeva and Parikshit, the reciter and the hearer of *Bhagavata Purana*.
 - **Budhi Ma** Thakurani. This is a Durga Deity, traditionally worshiped by families whose children are suffering from chickenpox, cholera, smallpox etc. The worship includes offering coconuts, *chandana*, and *pana*, a beverage made of milk, sugar and banana.
 - **Shiva Dakshinesvara**, presiding over another door to the kitchens; on the wall on the back of this shrine there are two stone Deities, one is a flying Hanuman (on the right) and the other is Rosha Ganesha (on the left).
- Also on the wall, in a small niche, a small Deity of Hanuman called **Saraghara Mahavira** is worshiped.

Mukti mandapa

This Mandapa is also known as Brahma vedi, Brahma Asana or Yajna mandapa, and it is the seat of the *sasana brahmanas* and learned scholars presided by the Sankaracharya of Puri, the only person who has the right to sit on an asana there. The Deula Purohita is also a member of the Mukti Mandapa. It is said that when Brahma came to install the original Deities of Jagannatha (Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshana), he stood on this platform to perform the installation *yajna*.

The main celebrations in the Mukti mandapa are the *sola sashana bhoga* offering on Kartika sukla saptami, to which all the Sasana villages contribute, the Pusyabhisheka or Devabhisheka day (Pausha Purnima) on which the *sasana brahmanas* worship Jagannatha and bless the King, the Sunya day (Bhadra sukla dvadasi) celebrating the beginning of the Royal year in which the *sasana brahmanas* visit the King’s palace to bless him, and the Durga puja celebrations (called Sola Puja, from Krishna Ashtami to sukla Dasami in the month of Asvina). The *sasana brahmanas* also traditionally participate to the rituals celebrating the marriage of Krishna and Rukmini (Jyestha sukla Ekadasi), and to the other major *yajnas* within the temple, including the Pratistha homa during the Navakalevara rituals and the Pratistha of the chariots for the annual Ratha Yatra.

The *Bhagavata Purana* is recited here daily. Twice a day, two large *thalis* (plates) of Mahaprasada rice are distributed here to the *sasana brahmanas* after the morning and midday offerings (Sakala and Madhyama). Another plate of Mahaprasada called Mahadei Thali (“the plate of the Queen”) is arranged by the Ramadasa Matha; on a grant by the queen of Athagada, the Prasada is offered to Goddess Kali, worshiped at the Mukti Mandapa and then distributed among the *brahmanas*.

Gaura Rani, the wife of Raja Man Singh of Almera, inaugurated the present structure in 1592 under the reign of Ramachandra Deva. The present Mandapa it is 38x38 feet, is 6 feet high, and has 16 black granite pillars supporting the pyramidal roof. It is said that the roof was repaired and renovated in the 18th century by Sridhara Pattnayaka under the reign of Virakishora Deva. The pillars represent the original sixteen (*sola*) *sasana* villages that existed at that time, while the previous structure had only 4 pillars. The number 16 is significant because the royal *yajnas* required the presence of sixteen celebrating priests.

The *sasana* villages were special *brahmana* settlements established by kings and queens to encourage brahminical culture. The *brahmanas* who came to live there from various parts of the continent were offered rent-free and tax-free land that they could build on and cultivate. No government officer could exercise any power in such villages, rather each village was administered by the Assembly of the prominent residents (Mahajana mela) and a Managing Board (Kotha) elected by the villagers.

In exchange for the special protection and status, the *brahmanas* of such villages had the duty to study and teach, compile texts, perform worship and *yajnas* and propagate religious practices, distribute and accept donations, and in general instruct and guide society and individuals towards the attainment of the purposes of life. The houses of these villages were scrupulously oriented according to the Vastu sastra, along east-west or north-south lines in parallel rows, with Shiva Mahadeva and Gopinatha presiding at the two ends of the village and the Mother Goddess (Grama Devi) on one of the two sides.

Sri Sarat Chandra Mohapatra, Secretary of the Sri Jagannath Research Centre, Gobardhan Matha, comments that unfortunately, due to the introduction of Land Reforms and withdrawal of royal patronage and social recognition, most of the educated young men of Sasana villages have moved to get jobs elsewhere, already in pre-Independence times, substantially reducing the number of the traditional *brahmanas* of the Sasana villages although the ritual pattern still preserves their historical significance.

It is said that king Govinda Deva established Bira Govindapur, then his son Mana Govinda Pratapa Deva, also called Chakra Pratapa, founded Bira Pratapapur. His successor Ramachandra Deva established Bira Ramachandrapur, Sri Ramachandrapur, Pratap Ramachandrapur, Bijaya Ramachandrapur, and Abhayamukhi Ramachandrapur. Bira Purushottampur and Sri Purushottampur were set up by Purushottama Deva. Bira Narasinghapur was established by Narasingha Deva, Bira Balabhadrapur by Balabhadra Deva, and Bira Harekrishnapur by Harekrishna Deva. Other villages were established by queens and ministers: Jagannatha Bidyadharapur, Basudevapur, Sasan Damodarapur, Routarapur or Gopinathapur, Raichakradharapur, Someswarapur, Visvanathapur, and Chandanapur.

With the passing of time more *sasana* villages were added to the original number, until in 1952 the list was updated in this order: 1. Bira Harekrishnapur, 2. Bira Pratapapur, 3. Bira Kishorepur, 4. Bira Ramachandrapur, 5. Bira Balabhadrapur, 6. Bira Narasinghapur, 7. Bira Govindapur, 8. Bira Purushottampur, 9. Sri Ramachandrapur, 10. Sri Mukundapur, 11. Sri Purushottampur, 12. Pratap Purushottampur, 13. Vishvanathapur, 14. Bisvanathapur Samil Nuagaon, 15. Gopinathapur, 16. Damodarapur, 17. Kashijagannathapur, 18. Rai Chakradharapur, 19. Jagannatha Bidyadharapur, 20. Gokulpur, 21. Basudevapur, 22. Pattajoshiapur, 23. Raiagurapur and 24. Sriki Bira Kesharipur.

In later times, the list was expanded to include the villages of 25. Lalitapatapur, 26. Someswarapur, 27. Kapileswarapur, 28. Pratap Ramachandrapur, 29. Bijaya Ramachandrapur, 30. Abhayamukhi Ramchandrapur and 31. Kanhei Bidyadharapur. The “suburbs” of these Sasana villages were called Karabada, and were used to develop commercial and business activities, while the Sasana village proper was exclusively concentrated on educational and religious activities. Among such Karabada villages, we can mention Rai Chakradharapur, Bhanpur, Ganeshapur, Markandpur, Padusipur, etc. The Karabada *brahmanas* attend the Pushyabhiseka and Solasasana Bhoga rituals, but they are not allowed to sit in the Mukti mandapa.

The assembly of the Mukti mandapa is to decide about the matters of the temple such as the approval of the Almanac (*Panjika* with the calculation of the lunar days for the various festivities), the fasting modalities, the religious issues and Hindu society in general, and in particular decide about the atonement and purification (*prayaschitta*) for those who have committed forbidden actions (*papi*), not only in Puri or Orissa, but for the entire Hindu community at global level.

In the olden days all disputes regarding Hindu customs and temple issues were first presented to the Raja of Puri, who called on the assembly of the Mukti Mandapa to pass the final verdict after hearing the head of the Puja Pandas and the Adhinayakas of the Chatisha niyogas (the clans of Sevakas). At present, the authority of the Mukti Mandapa seems to have dwindled in favor of the Temple Administration Board. The assembly officially meets twice a month but every day several of the *sasana brahmanas* are sitting around the place.

During Jhulan yatra the Deities of Madana Mohana, Sridevi and Bhudevi sit here in a decorated swing. In two small niches on the right side of the wall within the Mukti mandapa, the Deities of **Ganesh** and **Kalika** are worshipped daily. Within the Mukti mandapa there is a small shrine to **Muktesvara Shiva**, where the Mrytunjaya mantra is regularly recited, and a **Chatra Kali** shrine.

Mukta Nrisimha. This rather large shrine was built by Chodaganga Deva, is on the western side of Mukti mandapa and is 58 feet high. The Deity facing east is about one and half feet tall, in the act of killing Hiranyakasipu. The west wall of the shrine carries many inscriptions, and there is a Trivikrama (Vamana) Deity in a niche. According to *Skanda Purana*, an ancient shrine was already here together with the Kalpa Bata, the Rohini kunda and the Vimala shrine, before king Indradyumna originally installed the Deities of Jagannatha. The Pati Mahapatras are in charge of the worship. Here Nrisimha chaturdasi is celebrated.

The **Dakshina Ghara** is near the Mukti mandapa. Here, on a very long *simhasana*, we find the *chalanti pratima* (representative) Deities (in metal) of Madana Mohana, Rama-Krishna (smaller than the ones on the Ratna simhasana), Chakra Narayana, Balabhadra, Mahalakshmi, Badi Nrisimha, Pancha Mahadeva with five Parvatis, Badi Hanuman, Rama with Lakshmana and Sita, Laddu Gopala, Vamana, Lakshmi Narayana, Ananta Sesha Deva, Lakshmi Nrisimha and 18 Salagramas. On the walls there are paintings of Dasabhuja Durga, Ganesha, Kartika, Hanuman, Shiva Parvati, Bhimesvari, Harachandi, Bedha Durga and Hanuman.

In front of the Mukti mandapa there is a small staircase climbing up on the external wall of the temple, to the **Majjana mandapa** where the smaller Deities (Madana Mohana, Sridevi and Bhudevi) are bathed ritually on special occasions. This mandapa was built near the Snana vedi by Venu Chota Rai, in 17th century. Here is the place where the yajna consecrating the first day of the Ratha yatra is performed.

Jalakrida mandapa, built by king Mukunda Deva; in this pavilion the Deities enjoy their internal Chandan yatra (bhitara chandana) after the external one at Narendra Sarovara, and the marriage ceremony between Rukmini and Madana Mohana also takes place here.

Nritya Ganapati, or **Nata Ganesha** (“dancing Ganesha”). This shrine is just beside the Jalakrida mandapa and is 35 feet high. The tantric Deity is 6 feet tall and 3 feet wide; He has eight hands: the upper two hold a snake (hood on the right and tail on the left), then in descending order the right hands hold the *japa-mala*, the broken tusk and the *japa mudra*. On the left side they hold the *ankusha*, a *laddu* and His trunk. The Deity is facing south and is dancing on the Shakti. According to some, this Deity was also brought to Puri during the Kanchi abhijana. During Rukmini harana Ekadasi, Madana Mohana hides in this temple to kidnap Rukmini (in the form of Mahalakshmi) when She enters the Vimala temple. The Talucha Mahapatra is in charge of the worship.

Rohini kunda is near the Jalakrida mandapa, in front of Vimala’s shrine. It is 2 and half feet high, 4 feet wide and 10 feet long. One of the most important of the *pancha tirthas* in Puri, Rohini kunda has been there since very ancient times, even before the installation of Jagannatha. It is considered to be located in the heart of the conch-shaped Purushottama kshetra. According to the *Skanda Purana*,
yavat stotum samarebhe arsha sa-phula lochanah udanyarta samayatah tasmin kunde nimajjatam vilokya madhavam nilaratnakantim kripamidhim kala deham samutvajya luntamanam mahuhkshitau sankha-chakra-gada-panistasya parshve vyavasthitah

“At the time of creation Brahma came to the very sacred hidden Purushottama kshetra; there a very big crow went to drink water from the Rohini kunda. It fell into the well having a *darshana* of Nila Madhava; then it left its body, immediately transformed into a four-handed Vishnuduta.” It is also said that this Kunda contains the waters of the dissolution of the universe; the name Rohini comes from the word “*rohana*”, meaning that the waters of the dissolution spread through the universe and were then reabsorbed into it. Within the Kunda there is an image of Bhushundi Kaka, the footprints of Indradyumna (**Indradyumna paduka**), and a replica of the Nilachakra known as Nabhi chakra. Near the Rohini kunda a small shrine is dedicated to the Vishnuduta called Bhushundi Kaka, also mentioned in the *Ramayana*.

Sri Kshetra Rajesvari Vimala, one of the most important and most ancient internal shrines, and the last and most important of the Tantra Shakti Pithas. Vimala is known as the Queen of Sri Kshetra, and is therefore known as Sri Kshetra Rajesvari. She is also known as the Adistatri of Oddiyana Tantra.

According to the *Pancharatra Agama*, Vimala is *mula shakti*. The *Tantra chudamani* states, *utkale navideshascha viraja-kshetra-muchyate, vimala sa mahadevi jagannathastu bhairava*: “in Purushottama kshetra, where Vimala resides as Bhairavi, Jagannatha is the Bhairava”.

This Deity is also called Pada Pithesvari: the *Tantra chudamani* explains that here is the place where the feet of Devi were laid to rest by Shiva when Her body was cut to pieces by Vishnu after the Daksha yajna. The story, described also in the *Bhagavata Purana*, relates how Prajapati Daksha, the son of Brahma, organized a great *yajna* and invited all the Devas. When Daksha entered the sacrificial arena, everyone saluted him except for Shiva, who was deeply immersed in meditation and oblivious to the external happenings. As Daksha’s daughter Sati had married Shiva, Daksha considered the Lord was subordinate to him as his son in law, so he took offense at the apparent lack of respect shown by Shiva, and developed resentment and hatred towards Him. So on the next occasion, when Daksha was issuing invitations to all the Devas to attend his next *yajna*, Lord Shiva was left out from the list. Shiva’s consort, Sati, was very eager to attend the celebrations organized by Her father and decided to go in any case. However, when Sati reached the *yajna* venue, Daksha showed hostility even to his own daughter and started to openly abuse Lord Shiva in Her presence.

Unable to tolerate such injustice, Sati decided to immediately give up the body that connected Her to the offender Daksha. Angered and grief-stricken for the death of His consort, Shiva took Her body in His arms and started to dance for the destruction of the Universe, as He does at the end of the cycle of its manifestation. Terrified, all the Devas approached Sri Vishnu for help, and Vishnu suggested that the body of Sati should rather bless the world and create holy places for the purification of sinners and offenders – the more holy places, the better.

Thus Vishnu used His Sudarshana Chakra to cut Sati's body to 52 pieces, and each piece created a Shakti Pith where it fell on the Earth while Lord Shiva was moving around. Also, Vishnu suggested that Lord Shiva Himself could take residence at Ekamra and become the Kshetrpala of the greatest of the holy place, the abode of Purushottama, so Shiva moved towards the eastern shore of the ocean. The right toe of Sati's body fell in Bengal (where it created the Dakshina Kalika Pith in Calcutta), Her yoni fell in Assam (where it created Kamakshya Pith, where once a year the sacred river flowing near the Pith becomes deep red for the menstruation of the Devi), a tooth fell in Chattisgarh (where it became Dantesvari Pith), the navel fell in Jajpur, Orissa (where it became Viraja Pith). In the end when Shiva reached Sankha Kshetra only Sati's feet remained, and on the request of Vishnu He laid them down here, where they became Vimala Pith. According to the Tantric tradition, the Jagannatha temple in Puri is the most important Tantra Pith because of the presence of Goddess Vimala. Another extremely important aspect of the worship of Vimala Devi in Jagannatha Puri is *mahaprasada*. The food offered to Jagannatha remains only *prasada* until it is offered to Vimala Devi: only then it becomes *mahaprasada*. This is why Puri is called Uchchistapitha. Vimala is also called Kaivalya Lolupini because of Her eagerness to take the *prasada* of Jagannatha. It is said that once Narada Muni had obtained Jagannatha's *prasada* and was singing in ecstasy while roaming around when he met Lord Shiva, who inquired about the cause of such great happiness. One single grain of rice was still stuck on Narada's little finger and Lord Shiva took it, in turn experiencing a deep ecstasy of happiness. When Shiva returned to Kailash, Parvati observed His ecstasy of happiness and desired to obtain the same blessing, so She started to perform austerities and meditation, until Lord Narayana granted Her the boon that in Jagannatha's temple in Puri the sanctified food would become *mahaprasada* only after being offered to Her.

The Deity of Vimala has four arms and is 5 feet tall: the lower right hand holds the *akshamala*, the lower left a pot of nectar (right), the upper right holds Maya and the upper left Chaya (these are the two consorts of Surya). Some say that the two figures in the upper hands of Vimala Devi are mermaids (*matsyakanyas*). She wears a garland of human heads and holds a *japa mala* in Her hand. She has three eyes and wears a crown (*kirita*) and various ornaments. Two female attendants stand on sides, naked and with ferocious eyes. The present temple was built by Chodaganga Deva. A Deity of Mahalakshmi is on the lintel, and the dvapa-palas are Prachanda Bhairava and Chanda Bhairava. The Parsva devatas are painted images of the Dasa Mahavidyas, Ganesha, Kartika, Chaya and Maya. On the ceiling there are illustrations from *Devi Bhagavata*. The Nata mandapa has the paintings of 44 yoginis: Ghatini, Ghora dushti, Aparajita, Sphatikari, Chandarupa, Kankali, Kalaratri, Balaputada, Balapatini, Nityaklina, Raktandi, Prachanda, Kunasundari, Nagini, Tuarita, Nilapataka, Kaumari, Sutika yogini, Jayadurga, Bhadra Varahi, Narayani, Gauri, Brahmani, Bhairavi, Lalita, Saumya Narayani, Svapna Varahi, Jvalamalini, Karalini, Narasimhi, Kurukullya, Raktashi, Simhavahini, Krishna Kali, Chamundi, Varuni, Sumbha praharini, Kachandi, Pisachi, Virakeshi, Ghora simhasani, Nishachari, Pratyangira, and Bhodini. During Durgapuja, Durga Madhava stays here for 8 days, then they go to Narayani mandir in Dolamandap Sahi (Shakta Gundicha or Sarada Gundicha). During Sola puja 11 veshas are offered: Vana Durga, Bhubanesvari, Narayani, Bagala, Jayadurga, Ugratara, Matangi, Dasabhuja, Rajarajesvari, Harachandi and Simha vahini. During the Sola puja (Durga puja celebrations lasting 16 days), the Bali (animal sacrifice) is offered here. The Puja Pandas are in charge of the Deity.

Benu Madhava. This shrine, next to Vimala's shrine, is 15 feet high. The stone Deity, 2 feet tall, came from Prayaga (Allahabad) and is blue in color, and is decorating Radha's hair braid. In Oriya, girls' braids are called *beni*. Radha's Deity is also standing 2 feet tall. Inside the shrine, there are also a small set of Jagannatha Deities (Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra, Sudarshana) and several wooden Deities of Vasudeva, Devaki, Nanda and Yasoda, Rohini, cows. At the door, there are Manisa Devi on the left and Naga-Nagini on the right. Every day full worship is conducted with various *bhoga* offerings, *arati*, and *pancha upachara puja*.

Gopeshvara Mahadeva, also called **Yogesvara:** this is one of the main Shiva shrines inside the temple, mentioned in *Mukti Chintamani*. The Deity is worshiped as a manifestation of Maha Shiva and Maha Vishnu.

In this shrine we also find small Deities of Nrishimha, Nanda Maharaja and Yasoda Devi, Vasudeva and Devaki, Rohini, Dama and Sudama, Rama and Hanuman, Balarama, Gopala, *asta gopi* (the eight *sakhis* of Radha Krishna), cows and calves. There are also pictures of Narayana, Vasudeva and Bhubanesvari, who are worshiped during the Anavasara period.

Near this shrine, we find a small model of the Sri Mandira, made of stone.

Ekadasi Devi is staying here near the west wall of the main temple, in front of Benu Madhava. On the Ekadasi days this Deity is tied inside the shrine by the Sevakas. The story goes that once Ekadasi Devi and Sri Jagannatha had a dispute on which spiritual practice had the greatest power - observing the Ekadasi vrata (which mainly consists in fasting from grains, or even from all foods) or honoring the Mahaprasada (which means eating grains offered to Sri Jagannatha). The transcendental quality of Jagannatha's Mahaprasada was established as the most powerful between the two, and Ekadasi lost the dispute. Till date, the temple Sevakas and most inhabitants of Puri usually do not observe the Ekadasi fast, but rather prefer to take Mahaprasadam on these days, as well as on all other special occasions. Some worship this Deity as Katyayani.

One small shrine in this area contains the footprints of Jayadeva Gosvami (**Jaya pada padma**), the poet who wrote the famous *Gita Govinda*.

Sakshi Gopala: this shrine houses a beautiful couple of Radha Krishna Deities, 4 feet tall, facing east. The original Deity of Gopala was brought from Kanchi by Purushottama Deva, now new Deities have been installed because the original Deity is in a village outside Puri, now called Sakhigopala (previously known as Satyabadi). At Ola navami, during the last days of the month of Kartika, many people come here to get the traditional Radha pada darshana — Srimati Radharani's feet are visible only in this day. The same ceremony is performed in the temple of Sakhi Gopal (at Satyabadi), about 20 kms from Puri. Near this shrine we find **Visvvasu paduka**, the footprint of Visvvasu, the Sabara who originally worshiped Nila Madhava.

Kanchi Ganesha (also called Kamada Ganesha, Chaura Ganesha, Uchista Ganapati etc). This Ganesha is the main Deity brought back from Kanchi by Purushottama Deva. The Kanchi abhijana or Kanchi Kaveri lila (the conquest of Kanchi) is a very popular story in Puri and is often depicted in statues and paintings. The Gajapati Maharaja Purushottama Deva (1466-1497), son of Kapilendra Deva, started the tradition called *chera panhara*, by which the King of Puri sweeps the chariots of the Deities during the Ratha Yatra festival. The king of Kanchi, Salva (Saluva) Narasimha Deva, had opposed Purushottama Deva's ascent to the throne, by supporting his rival Hamvira who had rallied an army in the south. After defeating Hamvira, Purushottama sought an alliance with Salva Narasimha through a marriage proposal to his daughter Rupambika, but the proposal was scornfully rejected as Salva Narasimha called Purushottama a "sweeper" because of his ritual act of subservience to Lord Jagannatha.

After an unsuccessful first military expedition, Purushottama prayed Jagannatha for help and became able to conquer the kingdom of Kanchi. From this second and very successful expedition, Purushottama Deva brought back not only princess Rupambika (who was renamed Padmavati), but also this Ganesha Deity, the famous Deity of Sakshi Gopala, the Deity of Radha Kanta, and the Ratna simhasana that is still Jagannatha's throne. This tantric Deity of Ganesha is 5 feet tall and fashioned according to the south Indian style. He faces east and has four arms, holding the broken tusk (upper right), a *pasha* (upper left), His own penis (lower left), a rudraksha *japa mala* (lower right), and his trunk touches the genitals of the Goddess Siddha Devi who is seated on his lap on the left side.

This Ganesha Deity is also called Bandha ("naughty") Ganesha, both because He is engaged in sexual acts and because He abandoned His devotee the king of Kanchi, Salva Narasimha Deva, when He was brought to Puri in 1474. It is said that only when Purushottama Deva on the order of Jagannatha invited this Ganesha to Puri (after the first unsuccessful military campaign), king Salva Narasimha lost the protection of this Ganesha and could be defeated. It is also said that during this second military campaign, Jagannatha's conch took the form of a sword, causing Ganesha's mouse to run away in fear; thereupon Ganesha touched the ground and taking the opportunity Jagannatha manifested the form of Narasimha, finally convincing Ganesha to leave Kanchi. The Bhitara Mahapatra is in charge of the worship.

Sukinda Gopinatha, a small Krishna Deity.

Kshira chora Gopinatha, the replica of the Deity in Remuna (Balasore).

West gate

The west gate is also called Kanya dvara as it was used by ladies who visited the temple independently, with their attendants. Inside the Gumuta there are no Deities. After the west gate, on the other side of the internal courtyard, visitors offer their homage to the **Charidhama** shrine:

- Catur dhama mandir: here the pandits recite the Bhagavatam; the Deities are Jagannath, Badrinath, Ramanath and Dvarakanath,

- Dvarakanatha and Badrinatha, the first facing north, the other facing south

- Rameshvara Mahadeva and Jagannatha, completing the set of 4 presiding Deities of the *charidham*.

Kana patta Hanuman or Pascima dvara Mahavira (smaller than the one outside) on the northern side of the Chatur dhama mandir; people come here and offer ripe coconuts asking for boons. Behind this shrine there is a small museum called **Niladri museum**, with pictures and information about the temple, and a UCO Bank branch.

At the gate of the museum there is a Visvarupa shown to Arjuna at the time of Bhagavad gita (facing south).

Inside the museum there are many paintings and sculptures (not worshiped) showing how the temple was first installed by Brahma, the appearance of Ganesha, the clash between Shiva and Ganesha, Parvati leaving her house, the decapitation of Ganesha, the weaponry lessons of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna, the Raja abhisheka of Rama, the departure for the forest, the Pancavati ashram, the marriage of Sita, the friendship of Rama and Sugriva, the fight between Lakshmana and Lava and Kusa, the fight between Rama and Ravana, the episode when Lakshmana was bound by *naga pasa*, the fight between Indrajit and Lakshmana, the birth of Krishna, the *vastra harana lila*, the entrance of Krishna in Mathura, the killing of Kamsa, the killing of Sankhasura, the *avatars* of Buddha, Hayagriva, Balarama, Rama, Parasurama, Vamana, Nrishimha, Varaha, Kurma and Matsya, and the churning of the ocean.

The museum also contains various historical objects, including a large bell that was donated by captain Beatle, a Christian sailor to the temple. It is said that the bell was originally meant for a Catholic church in Pondicherry, and in 1746 it was being transported from Calcutta on a French ship (owned by "La Compagnie de France") commanded by Pedro Moudeli, when the ship was threatened by a sudden storm and a huge whale that was seen approaching. While all the Christian passengers started to pray Jesus Christ, one Bengali passenger peacefully chanted Jagannatha's names; the Captain observed the confidence and tranquility of the Bengali devotee and decided to pray Jagannatha, too, that the ship might be spared. Almost immediately the storm subsided and the whale disappeared. Thankful, the Captain decided to donate the bell to Jagannatha as soon as the ship landed in Puri.

In front of Kana patta Hanuman we find the entrance to **Niladri Vihara** garden, also called Nilachala Upavana or Jagannatha Tota. Here Tulasi plants and flowers are grown for the Deities' service, inside the garden there is a small building where garlands and flower decorations are prepared.

The oldest temples inside the gardens are **Siddhesvara Shiva** and **Chakra Narayana Shiva** on the south. There is also a small temple of **Krishna and Rukmini**, who are at the center of the celebration of Their marriage when They exchange garlands. Also a small shrine with **Garuda**, one with **Goloka Bihari**, one with Mahadeva Shiva (called **Kailasha parvata**).

A **Ramachandra** temple houses Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, as well as Bharata and Satrugna, then Vibhisana, Hanuman, Sugriva, Angada, Nila, Nala, Jambavan, Susena, Gandharva, Madana. Inside the garden there is also a cement image of Shiva Mahadeva (6 feet tall) standing with trishula and damaru, and a cement image of Ananta sayana Narayana, but they are not worshiped.

After the garden, we find the **Nirmalya khala**, with a large (about 60x60 feet) platform made of stone (of the type called *baula mala*) covered by cement. The unsold rice *mahaprasadam* from Ananda Bazar is carried here in the morning and spread out by hand; in the evening it is collected and stored, and the next morning is spread out again to dry, for 3 days in a row. After that, the *nirmalya* is packed and sold to the pilgrims to carry back home to family and friends. Many devotees like to break their Ekadasi fasts with a few grains of this dry rice. In the middle of the Nirmalya khola, a small shrine of **Pancha mukhi Hanuman** stands. Some *mahaprasada* is carried here for *samarpana* by the Kota bhoga Suari once a day, after Madhyana dhupa.

On the left side, opposite the Meghanada prachara, on the wall there is a cement bas-relief of Rama fighting Ravana, with both armies. Other bas-reliefs show the Navagunjara form shown to Arjuna.

Near the Gumuta and after Kshira chora Gopinatha, we find the shrine of Bhuvaneshvari, also known as Pancha shakti temple. These Pancha shaktis are: Bhuvaneshvari, Sarasvati, Sasthi, Savitri and Gayatri.

Bhubanesvari, the most important form of the Mother Goddess in the Shakta sampradaya, is the *ista devi* for the Raja Gurus, the only Devi whose worship can take place both according to Vedic and Tantric rituals. Subhadra is a form of Bhuvaneshvari. Just like Goloka is the abode of Krishna, Vaikuntha is for Vishnu, Kailasha is for Shiva, Manidvipa is for Bhuvaneshvari. This Deity of Bhuvaneshvari faces east, has three eyes and four arms; She holds the *pasa* (rope) in the upper left, *ankusa* (hook) in the upper right, and with the lower hands shows the *abhaya* (protection) on the right, and *varada* (blessing) on the left. She sits in *padmasana* on a white lotus, and has a crescent moon on Her head (resembling horns).

It is said that once there was an old *brahmana* who was worshiping Bhuvaneshvari. He was offering prayers daily sitting on a black stone, but he became irritated because his worship was unsuccessful. Finally Bhuvaneshvari appeared and offered a blessing, so the *brahmana* asked that Bhuvaneshvari should carry that stone on Her head and follow him wherever he went. As this *brahmana* used to move frequently, every time paying the landlord for the rent of the house, Bhuvaneshvari suggested the next landlord to ask for the black stone in payment instead of money. Thus Bhuvaneshvari was freed from the promise. It is said that the Deity of Bhuvaneshvari is carved from that black stone. Bhairava is the guardian of the temple. On Saptami, Astami and Navami the Deity is offered the *veshas* called Simha vahini, Narayani and Rajeshvari.

Sarasvati is on the right side of the Nata mandapa; She is one foot tall, sits on a swan and has two hands holding the *vina*. On Her right there is a Nrisimha Deity. The iron pen used to write the *Madala panji* is worshiped here. On the left side of the Nata mandapa there are Shashti, Savitri and Gayatri.

Shasti has three arms, holding a small child sitting on her left thigh, and sucking the milk from Her breast. She is traditionally worshiped by women who ask blessings for childbirth.

The Deity of **Savitri** faces east, has two hands and is worshiped by women to ask blessing for a long life for their husbands.

The Deity of **Gayatri** is white in color and sitting in *padmasana*; She is the Shakti of Surya and resides in Brahmaloaka. The Pratihari Sevakas are in charge of the worship.

Nila Madhava. This shrine on the northern side of Bhuvaneshvari temple and is 34 feet high and 700 years old. It is said that this Deity is a replica of the Deity worshiped by Visvavasu, with the difference that the original Deity held Lakshmi in His hand, while this replica holds the lotus flower.

The Deity is of black stone, with four arms (*chakra* upper right, *padma* lower right, *sankha* upper left, *gada* lower left). He is two feet high and faces east. At His feet, on the right there is a small murti of Visvavasu and on the left there is Sarasvati. Above the head of the Deity there are several Gandharva kanyas, and over the *prabha* (the Deity's throne) there is a form of Vajra mastaka. On the sides of the Deity there are two *alasi kanyas* ("languid damsels").

On the right of this main Deity of Nila Madhava there is a Deity of Krishna (1 foot tall), and on the left there is a small Deity of Jagannatha (2 feet tall). It is said that the Deity installed by Gala Madhava was for some time on the Ratna simhasana, then it was moved here, and then moved again to the Ratna simhasana and in his place the present Deity was installed. The Parsva devatas are Trivikrama (north), Nrisimha (west) and Varaha (east). The lintel has the Navagraha, and at the door sides stand Jaya and Vijaya.

Bedha Kali (also known as *Guhya Kali*, "the secret Kali"), on the northern side of Nila Madhava, between Nila Madhava and Lakshmi temples. She is considered the security guard of the temple. The door to this shrine remains closed throughout the day and opens only in the night. It is said that after Bada sringara this Goddess takes the form of a woman to guard the Jagannatha temple. This Deity of Kali is 3 feet tall, made with a mixture of *jhuna* (frankincense resin) and oil. She has three eyes and two arms, holding the sword (right) and the left hand rests on the thigh. She sits on a tiger skin, wears a garland of severed heads and Her tongue is lolling.

There is also a Deity of Bhadrakali behind the visible Deity and the worship is performed through a hole on the right side, offering flowers and *chandan*.

On the corner there is a small shrine to **Lakshmi Narayana**.

Between the Lakshmi Narayana temple and the Maha Lakshmi temple we find a small shrine dedicated to **Visvakarma**, the architect of the Devas. Daily puja is offered, and a big festival is organized for Visvakarma puja (Asvina krishna Pratipat). Next we have one of the major shrines of Sri Mandira: the temple of Maha Lakshmi.

Maha Lakshmi is the wife of Lord Jagannatha and the Queen of the temple. This shrine was built during the reign of Anangabhima Deva, is 60 feet high and is divided in four parts: the Garbha griha or Vimana, the Jagamohana, the Nata mandapa and the Acinta mandapa. There are three entrances to the temple. The Deity is 3 feet tall, is sitting in *padmasana* and has four arms, two of which hold lotus flowers, while the other two show the *abhaya* (protection) and *varada* (blessing) *mudras*. On Her sides, two elephants pour water from golden pots: this particular form of Mahalakshmi is known as Gaja Lakshmi. The Deity is always adorned with golden jewellery, and every Thursday there is a special worship with a ceremonial bathing of the Deity. While entering the Garbha Griha, on the southern side there is a beautiful Deity of Lakshmi Nrisimha and on the northern side is a beautiful Deity of Varaha. Near the Varaha Deity there is a beautiful Deity of Narayana holding *sankha*, *chakra*, bow and arrow, and also a Deity of Indra. On either sides of the Jagamohana are two Deities of Ganga and Yamuna, and two carved pillars with *kanyas*, besides various pillars with Nagas and naginis, and griffins over crouching elephants. The doorway panel has several temple dancers. On the wall of the Jagamohana there are paintings of Ganesha, Hanuman, Nrisimha, Varaha, Lakshmi Nrisimha and Ramanujacharya, and in the area between the Mukhasala and the Vimana there are depictions of Chodaganga's coronation and reign, with Gouri Rajguru besides the throne.

Near Mahalakshmi's shrine we find the **Bhrigu paduka**, the footprints of Bhrigu. There is a famous episode about Bhrigu Rishi concerning Lakshmidivi and Her displeasure for him. One day an assembly of Rishis was discussing about who, among the three main Devas of this world, was the most qualified: Vishnu, Shiva or Brahma. As they were unable to reach a conclusion, they sent Bhrigu on a mission to find out an answer; the Rishi concluded that the greatest qualifications in a powerful personality are tolerance, humility and kindness, so he decided that he would test each Deva by showing disrespect. He first went to meet Brahma and greeted him in an informal way without showing particular respect, and Brahma got angry. Then he went to meet Shiva and tested Him by abusing Him verbally: Shiva became displeased and angry. Finally, he went to meet Vishnu and was unable to agitate Him by showing lack of respect or even abusing Him verbally, so he actually kicked Him in the chest - thus one of the characteristic marks that distinguish Sri Vishnu from His servants who obtained the *sarupya mukti* is the Bhrigu-pada, the footprint of Bhrigu on His chest. Instead of getting angry, Sri Vishnu showed concern for the foot of the sage, that might have been hurt in the kicking, and offered to massage it. However, Lakshmidivi was not happy with Bhrigu and cursed all *brahmanas* to remain poor. Also, as Bhrigu Muni was a famous astrologer (who wrote the *Bhrigu samhita*) and Thursday is the day of the week that is sacred to Lakshmidivi, generally no astrologer will give consultation on Thursday.

Navagraha or the temple of the nine planets. Towards the northern side of the Nata Mandapa of the Mahalakshmi temple, we find the Navagraha temple. The Deities are Ravi, Chandra, Mangala, Buddha, Brihaspati, Shukra, Shani, Rahu and Ketu. A special characteristic of these Navagraha Deities is that they are sitting from right to left instead of the usual order from left to right. Along with Navagrahas there are deities of Sabaleshvari Durga, Rama, Lakshmana, Site and Hanuman. Next, a small shrine is dedicated to **Badri Narayana**, a standing Deity of Narayana.

Surya Narayana. The temple, 63 feet high, is divided into three parts, namely Vimana, Jagamohana and Nata mandapa. This is the place where Indradyumna and Vibhishana come every day for darshana, and keep invisible. Also, people come here to offer puja and some donation on the occasion of engagement ceremonies; both families come to this shrine and make the marriage promise in front of the Deity, then they all sit together in the same place to eat Jagannatha's *mahaprasada*. The Deities of Surya and Chandra worshiped in this shrine are the original *vigrahas* from Konark.

The exact date of installation is given as 27th March 1628; previously the temple was dedicated to Indra, and there is still a damaged Deity of Indra just behind the Deity of Surya.

According to the *Madala Panji* they were brought from Konark by the Bhoi king Narasimha Deva (1622-1644 or 1646), who removed the *vigraha* of Surya (Maitraditya Virinchi Deva) from the Konark temple and brought it to the Jagannatha temple at Puri. At that time the Governor of Orissa, Baqr Khan, was making plans to attack the Konark temple.

There is some controversy on this point. Some say that this may not be the original Deity, because it is too small compared to the structure of the Vimana or Deula of the Konark temple. Some say that in any case the Deity was suspended in mid-air, kept floating by a colossal magnet that it was reported to seriously disturb the compass operation of ships even sailing at a distance from the coast. We believe it is practically impossible to establish this point on material proof because in any case the interior of the Vimana or Deula of the Konark temple has been filled with bricks to prevent its collapse. Furthermore, the matter seems to be rather irrelevant because the value of the Deities is not in Their historical existence, but in Their spiritual power and eternal form that transcends material limitations. A person who sees and treats a temple like a museum, and the sacred *vigrahas* like ordinary statues is an offender and should not be allowed into the temple where Deities are worshiped, but rather stick to museums where damaged statues (that can not be worshiped any more) should be kept for the education of the general public.

The Deity of Surya (of *astadhatu*) is riding a chariot drawn by seven horses and is accompanied by similar Deities of Chandra and Shiva Kali (on the right of Surya), and a Madhava Deity known as Padma Madhava. There is also another Deity with three heads, three legs and six hands. According to some, this Deity is called Jvara Devata (the “god of fever”) and people come here to worship to be cured from high fever. The daily Surya puja for Jagannatha is performed here. On Indra purnima day the Indra dhvaja puja and the Indra Govinda puja are performed. A special puja is offered on Sundays, on Samba dasami (Magha dasami), on sukla sasthi during Ratha yatra and in occasion of eclipses. On Samba dasami a small Ratha yatra within the temple is organized for this Deity.

Rama Mandira, a small shrine dedicated to Rama and Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman. Here regular puja is conducted every day. Just before this shrine, there is a **Vedic Karma Kanda school**, managed by the State Government of Orissa. The school has 150 students per class, for a total of 700 students. Classes are held daily from 5pm to 8 pm, with the exception of *astami*.

Dadhi Vamana, or “sweet little Jagannatha”. This temple besides the Surya shrine is 30 feet high and is composed by Garbha Griha and Jagamohana (10x12 feet). The main entrance faces south. It houses a 4 feet tall Krishna Deity made out of a Salagrama shila, that was installed by a member of Mirabai’s family, the Rana of Udaipur, Uday Singh. The Parsva Devatas are Nrisimha, Varaha and Trivikrama. On the northern side of the shrine there is a deity of Gajalakshmi, and above Her there is a painting of Jagannatha.

North gate

Devajana darshana: this path from the northern gate of the temple is considered the way the Devas enter the temple to get the Darshana of Sri Jagannatha. The path also leads to Koili Vaikuntha. The 5 feet tall elephants that guarded the external gate (Hasti Dvara) have been moved into the inner gate.

Pataleshvara Mahadeva (“the Lord of the Underworld”), also known as **Bali Pataleshvara** temple. This temple was built by Anangabhimadeva III and is towards the north gate. It is said that in ancient times a secret passage underground (*suranga*) guarded by Mahadeva led from a trap door on the floor of this temple to the Raja Nahara (the king’s palace in Grand Road). Now the passage has been closed.

The central room where the Lingam stays has only one door. There are 22 steps descending to the temple and the Lingam sits 20 feet underground. In the Garbha griha are Deities of Bali Maharaja, Kaliya Dalana and a broken Deity of Ganesha.

On the opposite side of the Pataleshvara shrine, near the northern gate we find the entrance to **Koili Vaikuntha**. Some say that the name is derived from the bird Koili or Kokili, as here Jagannatha saw Radha in the form of a Kokili bird. According to others, Koili is derived from “Kaivalya”, or “merging into oneness of Brahman”, referring to the “death” of Jagannatha at the time of Navakalevara. The Janma kunja or Madhavi kunja, on the western side of Koili Vaikuntha, is a garden full of nice plants; a large well like a hole 9 feet deep marks the area where at the time of Nava Kalevara the old Deity of Jagannatha is buried. Feeding the poor in this place is considered especially meritorious. The large internal gardens, called Bagicha spread between the two walls from the western gate to the southern gate.

Another holy place within the Koili Vaikuntha is called **Slali lata**, the branch of the tree where it is said that Krishna was sitting when Jara Sabara shot an arrow in His foot, mistaking it for the face of a deer.

Vaikunthesvara or Vaikunthanatha Mahadeva, installed in 1375 by Kumara Swami from Kerala. This is one of the main Shiva shrine mentioned in the *Mukti Chintamani*. Here Lord Mahadeva sits with Ganesha and other *parsva devatas* of Shiva. Two large platforms (*pindi*) in this area are used to offer *mahaprasada* to the Pitris, or departed ancestors.

Next is a shrine to **Smasana Chandī** and **Smasanadhipati Shiva**, the guardians of the burial place.

Inside Koili Vaikuntha there is also the Daru Ghara, the place where the sacred logs are kept during the Navakalevara period, when the new Deities are carved. Between the Meghanada prachara and the Kurma bheda we find a number of temples: After the entrance to Koili Vaikuntha, there is a small shrine dedicated to **Tapasvi Hanuman**, a form of Hanuman engaged in penance, showing 8 arms.

Next there is a small shrine to **Uttarayani** Durga, installed by Narayana Vidyadhara, minister of the Gajapati kingdom.

The shrine of **Sitala Devi** is near the northern gate. It is a rather large temple, about 12 feet high, 20x20 feet in surface. Sitala is a protecting Mother who can heal people from various diseases like dysentery, smallpox etc. In the same temple we also find Deities of **Santoshi Ma** and **Sarala Devi** and **Sambalesvari Devi**. Traditionally, every Friday girls and ladies perform the Santoshi vrata, fasting from sour foods (and non-veg) and offering puja (mostly dry roasted chickpeas and *gur*). Also, some of the prasada is offered to cows. After 16 of these pujas, usually a feast is offered to seven small boys.

In front of this temple we find the **Suna kua**, “the golden well”, the special well from which water is taken with gold pitchers (108 in number) for the annual Snana yatra of Jagannatha; it is said that in this spot the Devas gather after descending from the heavenly planets to go and see Jagannatha to offer their homage.

On the right of Sitala mandira, we find the shrine of **Somanatha Mahadeva**.

Pasupatinatha, is also a Shiva temple.

Dhabalesvara, is also a Shiva temple.

Ishanesvara. Since this temple is situated towards the Ishana kona (north east side) thus the Mahadeva is known as Ishanesvara or Aishanesvara. This Shiva lingam is considered very ancient, and is affectionately known as Mama, the “maternal uncle” of Lord Jagannatha. According to the *Madala Panji* the present structure was built by Dhruva Keshari. The Dvara palas are Nandi and Bhrunji. There is also a painting of Banambara Hanuman in the Jagamohana and a carving of Shiva’s family on Kailash that includes Shiva, Parvati, Ganesha and Nandi on the wall of the Garbha griha.

It is said that from this Ishanesvara temple, an underground tunnel goes to the Ratnavedi. The main entrance to the temple is facing north, the Garbha griha is 70 feet deep under ground, and the shrine dome is 25 feet above the ground. Some believe that inside the belly of this Vrishabha (the bull mount of Lord Shiva that sits in front of the shrine) there is a secret current of the Ganga river.

Near this shrine we find the footprints (*paduka*) of Mugdala Rishi, one of the Sapta Rishis.

After the Ishanesvara temple, we enter the Kurma berha.

Narayana. It is a small temple, 8 feet high, 4 feet wide. The Deity is standing, about 3 feet tall, holding the *sankha, chakra, gada, padma*. Near this temple some garlands are made for the Deities.

Chaitanya pada, Chaitanya footprints, or Pada padma; the original stone slab from the Nata mandapa floor, that had melted leaving the imprints of Chaitanya’s feet, was removed on the request of Radha Ramana Charana Das babaji, who considered it unfit for Chaitanya’s footprints to be trodden over by the general crowd of the temple visitors. Now they are in a separate shrine but can be touched by the pilgrims. It is said that seeing the Nilachakra (the Sudarshan Chakra above the temple dome) from this position is very auspicious. Before entering the main temple (called Bada Deula), the Gaudiya Vaishnavas pray at the Chaitanya padapitha (the lotus feet of Chaitanya) and offer homage to the Chakra at the top of the dome.

Gupta Gauranga, a wooden Deity of Chaitanya in his *sannyasi* form, seated and with a shaven head, installed by king Prataparudra. Here we also find two administration offices, where people pay donations for the offering the *sraddha* to their departed forefathers (which is done on the Baisi pahacha), or for having a flag put on top of the temple dome. The offices give a ticket that will be required to get the service in the proper place. Next to these offices there is the way to Ananda Bazar. Here in the temple office the temple managers consult the *Madala panji* every day to organize the particular worship for the day.

The offices of the various Niyogas (groups of Sevakas) are spread around the Sri Mandira. Next to the Pratihari Niyoga office we find the footprints of Suta Gosvami, while next to the Niyoga VEDI (where the various Niyogas meet in assembly) we find the footprints of Vamadeva Rishi (an *avatara* of Siva).

Next we find the **Bandhara ghara**, that goes down below the ground.

Bandhara Lokanatha, the manifestation of Shiva who is in charge of Jagannatha's treasury and store rooms.

Sayana Ghara This shrine, near the Bandhara Ghara, houses the Sayana Thakura for the main Deities (Vasudeva, Bhuvaneshvari, Narayana). Here from Asadha Purnima to Kartika (Bada) Ekadasi the Sayana Thakura sleeps here, turning from one side to the other on Bhadra (Bada) Ekadasi.

The main shrine

The main structure within the temple is called Bada Deula (some also call it Vimana, although this definition is more often applied to the special palanquin used to carry the Deities in processions) housing the Garbha griha (which many call "sancta sanctorum", borrowing an alien term) with the Ratna simhasana of Lord Jagannatha. The tower of the Bada Deula is popularly called Amla Beda, and the Dadhi Neuti is the top part of the dome. Above that, we find the sacred Kalasha (water pot). According to the architectural experts, the Deula is constructed in the Pancharatha style, comprising five horizontal Pagas or segments. The central segment is called Raha, the two sides are called Anurahas, while the "corners" are called Kanika.

Architectural texts also speak of four vertical divisions, i.e. the Pitha (pedestal or stand), the Bada (wall), the Gandi (elephant's trunk) and Mastaka (head). The greatest part of the pedestal is underground, but the visible part (in three design bands) shows elaborate carvings. The wall is sub-divided into five vertical segments, called Pabhaga (foot), lower Jangha (lower leg), Bandhana (knee), upper Jangha (higher leg) and Baranda.

The Pabhaga consists of five design bands connected by vertical lines. These design bands (sometimes called "mouldings") are called Khura, Kumbha, Pata, Kani and Basanta. The Khura is shaped like a horse hoof and shows patterns of inverted leaves and dotted borders. Each Paga has a Kirita (crown) design and shows royal figures. The lower portion of the Khura is decorated with vine trees designs (*vanalata*) and other similar patterns. The Kumbha has a pitcher shape. The Kani is plain, but the Pata and the Basanta are richly carved. The bas-reliefs on the Pata section include military processions with elephants and horses, foot soldiers and a general or king in a palanquin. There are also panels depicting episodes from the Krishna lila. The lower Jangha has Khakhra mundis (miniature domes of the Khakha type) in the Kanika and Anuraga Pagas. On the Kanika Paga the eight Digpalas (the guardians of the directions) sit, while on the Anuraga Paga we find sitting Acharyas instructing their disciples. In the recesses between the Pagas we find different figures of composite animals, mostly lion and elephant. The Bandhana part of the wall consists of three horizontal sections connected by vertical bands decorated with standing Kanyas (maidens). The upper Jangha has Pidha mundis (miniature domes of the Pidha type) with several forms of Vishnu, including the Dasa Avatara and Hari-Hara, a very important form of Vishnu-Shiva that constitutes one of the major concepts in Orissa (for example Lingaraja at Bhubaneswar is a Hari-Hara Lingam, and the Hari-Hara worship is prominent also in Puri temples such as Lokanatha, Kapalamochana and Yamesvara). On the higher Jangha the recesses between the Pagas contain Kanya figures in the different 16 postures described in the *Silpa Prakasha*. The top section of the wall, called Baranda, consists of 10 carved bands of almost equal size. Just above the Ratna simhasana on the Deula there is an image of Rahu; directly below it 30 feet down there is Hanuman, and still below an image of the Kaliya dalana lila (Krishna dancing on serpent Kaliya), and Nrisimha and Lakshmi with Jaya and Vijaya. Still below, an image of Hari-Hara with eight arms flanked with Balarama and Krishna with two gopas. Still below, Sri Rama with Vanaras, then Ravana in a flat niche with Jaya and Vijaya, and on the other side Hanuman offering homage to Sita. Deities of Chaitanya and Ganesha are in niches on the south face of the Deula; on the north side there is Rama with Hanuman and Vanaras, and another Nrisimha with Brahma on the right and Narada on the left. On the western side there are no important figures.

The central structure (Raha Paga) contains large niches for the Parsva Devatas - on the south side we find Varaha (with four arms, dressed in figured brocade) holding up Bhudevi in His left arm and clutching a mace in His right hand, on the north side we find Trivikrama (Vamana) placing His foot on the covering of the universe, while on the west side we find a four-armed Narasimha ripping apart Hiranyakasipu's body with His lower two hands, and holding the Vishnu symbols with the upper two hands. All these small shrines, called Nisha mandiras, are covered with small Sikhara (domes) of the Pidha type and are decorated with double-bodied lions, Kanyas, and Naga-Nagis. Above, the Mastaka bears more figures of Dopicha lions and images of Garuda.

The architectural texts elaborately describe the various structural details in a much more elaborate way, but we seriously doubt that such lengthy descriptions may interest more than an extremely small number of architecture specialists, so we will just content ourselves with the above descriptions, which give a rather good idea of the elaborate nature of the construction and the decoration.

We are more interested in the devotional aspect of the temple and the description of the building is meant only to help the transcendental meditation of the devotees. As we mentioned earlier, the central structure of the temple, called Deula, constitutes the Garbha griha and contains Ratnavedi, or Ratna simhasana, which is the main altar of the temple. Attached to the Deula we find in the order the Nata mandapa, the Jagamohana mandapa, and the Bhoga mandapa, three halls in a row, covered by decorated domes. Architecture and history scholars have expressed various opinions on the time of the constructions of the main temple structure. The most popular theory is that the Deula and the Jagamohana were built together by Choda Ganga, and the other two halls (Nata mandapa and Bhoga mandapa) were added later by filling the gaps between them. According to this theory, the present Bhoga mandapa may have been the original Nata mandira. The highest dome is surmounted by the Nilachakra, or Sudarshana chakra, and carries a number of flags. The flag on top of the dome is also called Patita Pavana, "the purifier of the fallen".

After the 22 steps (Baisi pahacha), the pilgrim climbs another 7 steps (Sat pahacha) to access the inner temple. Some say that the various halls and rooms are compared to the five sheaths of the Atman described in the Yoga science, namely Anandamaya kosha, Vijnanamaya kosha, Jnanamaya kosha, Manomaya kosha, Pranamaya kosha and Annamaya kosha - the first compared to the Ratna simhasana, and the last compared to the Bhoga mandapa.

The most external hall, called **Bhoga mandapa**, and is 44x44 feet, in yellow sandstone painted ochre. The *Madala Panji* states that it was built by king Purushottama Deva, although some claim that it was constructed during the Maratha rule of Orissa (in 18th century) by an architect called Bhaskar Pandit with materials obtained from the demolition of the Surya temple in Konark. There is no public access to Bhoga mandapa: only the Suaras, the Pratiharis and the Puja Pandas can enter there for service purposes.

Within the Bhoga Mandapa there is a panel depicting the Jagannatha triad as Jagannatha, Mahisamardini and Shivalingam, similar to the one found in the Konark museum. There is also a beautiful Shiva in the Tandava nrtya posture over His mount Vrishabha, as well as several images of Dasa avatara, Nrisimha, Bata Balabhadra, Shiva, Ganesha, Parvati, Brahma, Sarasvati, Kalika, Indrani, and Patitapavana. There are also paintings depicting Krishna playing the flute, dancing on the Kaliya snake, tending the cows or engaged in other pastimes and festivals such as Dola yatra, Chandan yatra etc.

Other images also show the *lilas* called Kanchi abhijana and Manika gauduni, with Krishna and Balarama as horsemen (Krishna on a white horse, Balarama on a black horse), the coronation of Sri Rama sitting on the throne in Ayodhya, the rowing of boats, and many Nayika dancers in various postures. Also there are several images of the king of Puri participating to the twelve main festivals of Jagannatha, and sitting in the hall watching a female dancer.

There is a flight of steps on the north side, and some believe that a similar number of steps existed also on the south side but they were removed later when the passage way from the kitchen was built, seemingly under the Gajapati king Harekrishna Deva (1716-1720) of Khurda. Some of the original carvings of the south side of the Bhoga mandapa are still visible through its south door; the external wall has some *maithuna* couples. Also the north side of the Bhoga mandapa, as well as both sides of the Nata mandapa and the Jagamohana, have been partially covered by a number of smaller shrines built over the years; according to some most alterations have been made during the Maratha period in the 18th century.

The Bhoga Mandapa is used only for one offering a day (called Bhoga mandapa, before Madhyana dhupa) while the Kotha boga provided by the temple income is offered in the Mani Kotha (internal room). At the time of bhoga offerings, the path outside Bhoga Mandapa is closed until the offering is finished.

On the external north wall of the Bhoga mandapa we find a small shrine called **Suasari Mandira**, housing small Deities of Radha and Krishna.

Between the Bhoga mandapa and the Mukha Sala or Jagamohana, at 175 feet distance from the Ratna simhasana, the **Garuda stambha** rises, where generally people stand to take Darshan of Jagannatha. In this place Sri Chaitanya used to remain to contemplate Lord Jagannatha and his handprints can be seen on the pillar.

The Garuda stambha is made of neem wood, with Garuda on top of the pillar, with folded hands and looking at the feet of Lord Jagannatha. It is said that the pillar encases the Syamantaka jewel that blesses with wealth and health all those who touch it. Near the Garuda stambha a small water drain runs out of the main temple, carrying the bath water of the Deities.

The lamp (*dipa*) carried by the pilgrims as an offering is placed near the Garuda stambha in the Nata mandira. Flowers and foods are handed over to the Sevaka, together with some money offering (*dakshina*). The food to be offered should be purchased from the store house of the temple to ensure cleanliness.

The hall in front of the Deities is called the **Jagamohana**, Bahar Pokharia or Mukhyasala, and this is the place where devotees come for Sahana Mela (Darshan). Here, on the left side of the hall, the *hundi* is kept, to collect donations from visitors.

Visitors usually enter Jagannatha temple from the north door of the Nata mandapa or from the north door of the Jagamohana, which has two doors on the north side and two doors on the south side. These door frames are decorated with floral designs and Naga-Nagi images, with Navagraha above.

At the south doors we find images of Brahma (with four heads and the *kamandalu*) and Shiva (with four arms). On the external face of north side of Bhoga mandapa we find Durga Madhava, and Jagannatha with Siva linga and Durga. On the walls and ceiling of Jagamohana we find many paintings depicting the Dasa avatara (Matsya, Kacchapa, Varaha, Nrisimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Haladhara, Buddha, Kalki) and scenes from the Krishna lila. On the upper *jangha* of Jagamohana there are *maithuna* couples, *alasya kanyas* on the lower one.

The hall of the Jagamohana is 80x80 feet and its roof is supported by four large square pillars. Here every evening from 8 pm onwards a group of 11 students and 5 teachers sit to recite hymns such as *Purusha sukta*, *Shanti sukta*, *Sri sukta*, *Vishnu sahasra nama*, and *Jagannathashtakam*. Outside the Jagamohana mandapa, on the north side of the wall, there is a small shrine (8x8 feet, 12 feet high) called Nabhikota mandapa, where the Janma niti for the Deities are performed. The roof has a pyramidal shape, consisting of Pidhas or horizontal platforms receding in size as they go upwards. The carvings and even the niches of the small shrines are not visible any more because of the heavy layers of plaster that have been used to cover everything. However, it is a fact that the outside walls of the Jagamohana are decorated with *maithuna* images.

After offering their homage from the Garuda stambha, devotees walk through the Nata mandapa and may even enter the Garbha griha through the Kalahata dvara every day at Sahana mela and after the end of each Dhupa (arati). This close-up Darshan is called Parimanika Darshana and is organized by the temple administration on the payment of a ticket (25 rupees per person). Otherwise, normally visitors take Darshan from the Nata mandapa, then exit from the south doors of the Jagamohana or from the south door of the Nata mandapa itself. Bhajans are performed in the entire area including Jagamohana and Nata mandapa.

The **Jaya Vijaya Dvara** ("door"), with *murtis* of Jaya and Vijaya on the two sides. Jaya and Vijaya are the two door guards of Vishnu's palace in Vaikuntha, who are in the center of the famous story narrated in *Bhagavata Purana*. One day the four Kumaras, great sages who had chosen to keep their bodies from growing up (and thus remained small boys) so that it would be easier for them to maintain their *brahmacharya* vows, visited Sri Vishnu in Vaikuntha but the two security guards stopped them at the gate, mistaking them for ordinary children. The Kumaras considered that such a bodily concept of life should not be found in Vaikuntha, so they cursed the two guards to take birth in the material world. At that point Sri Vishnu arrived to the gate to pacify the Kumaras and to offer help to His door guards, promising that if they accepted to take birth three times to play the role of Asuras in His *avatara lilas*, they would be able to return faster to their usual post. Thus Jaya and Vijaya took birth as Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu (to be killed by Varaha and Nrisimha), Ravana and Kumbhakarna (to be killed by Sri Rama and Lakshmana), and finally as Sisupala and Dantavakra (to be killed by Krishna).

A question that sometimes comes up is how it is possible that two residents of Vaikuntha could have been so grossly overpowered by the illusion of material bodily identification, since the spiritual world is by definition free from ignorance. The answer is that the Vaikuntha planet of this story is Prapanchika Vaikuntha, also called Svetadvipa or Dhruvaloka, and is found within the material sky, a sort of “Consulate” of the spiritual world. It is the abode of Kshirodakasayi Vishnu, Paramatma, where the individual souls (*jivas*) come to being and are offered the choice whether they want to engage purely in the service of God or to experience life on the conditioned level in the material world. This is also the place where Prajapati Brahma and the Devas go to seek Vishnu’s help when something in the universe goes wrong.

Images of Jaya Vijaya as Vishnudutas (having an almost identical form to Vishnu, lacking only a few key characteristics) are found also above the Simha dvara, at the sides of the door of Jagamohana (Jaya Vijaya dvara) with Jagannatha rasa lila, and also at the entrance to Bhoga mandapa

After the Jaya Vijaya Dvara, seven steps (*sat pahacha*) connect the Jagamohana with the **Nata mandapa** (the dancing hall), 69x67 feet (of inside space, while the total space with walls is 80x80 feet) with 16 pillars, decorated with many images, the most famous of which illustrates the Kanchi Kaveri Abhijana, the expedition of Purushottama Deva against the king of Kanchi. The images show Balabhadra and Jagannatha as two horsemen (white on a black horse and black on a white horse) and the Manika patna milkmaid standing with a pitcher full of yogurt on her head. This Nata mandapa was built by king Mukunda Deva and it is the access hall to the Darshana of the Deities; devotees and pilgrims may enter on both sides from four doors. Near the door, there is a painting of the Dasa Mahavidya (the ten manifestations of Mother Goddess as Knowledge), then Daks. Within the wall of the Nata mandapa there is one naked **Bhairavi** in *padma yogasana*; at the time of Dasahara here a secret worship is conducted after the worship to Jagannatha.

The Nata mandapa is also called Kamana, indicating the development of love for the Lord. Some say that the original structure had only 8 pillars, and the other 8 were added in a later period when the structure was enlarged. Architectural experts believe that at the time of the construction of the present Nata mandapa, the original Jagamohana was drastically modified by removing balustraded windows on the south and north sides, the present Ratna Bandhara was built and the south window was converted into a door. The roof of the Mandapa is flat and made of four layers of stone slabs.

The Maharis used to dance here in front of the Garuda stambha in the evenings. The hall is still used for Kirtana and dance, although the Mahari seva has been discontinued from 1958.

The Rupa Dvara (“silver gate”) is also called **Kalahata Dvara**, Chandana argala or Shanka Dvara and is the entrance to the Garbha griha. The door is in fact made out of sandalwood and covered in silver plate.

The Beherana Dvara (“door”) gives access to the Nata mandapa from south side and is used to get out of the main structure.

From the Nata mandapa, one small door on the right side, before the wood rail and before Rupa Dvara, leads to the Bandhara ghara or Ratna Bandhar (treasury house). Next another door leads to Sayana ghara. Before the Rupa Dvara and after the wood rail, is the place where the Anabasara or Vallabha pindi are placed during the Anavasara time from Snana yatra to Ratha yatra for the annual “make up” and during the periodic renovation of the body (Navakalevara).

At that time the Rupa Dvara remains closed, the Pokharia remains empty, and a temporary bamboo wall (*potti*) is built to hide the Deities from the public. On the public side of the bamboo wall, one temporary Simhasana is placed, where the Patta Dia (the paintings representing the main Deities) sit together with the Deities of Sridevi and Bhudevi, Madana Mohana, Rama Krishna and Nrisimha. During the rest of the year the Anavasara pindis are kept on one side of the Nata mandapa

Jagamohana: Garuda Stambha, Charcha Ganesha, Khamba Gayatri, Chakra Narayana, Khamba Vimala, Khamba Nrisimha, Khamba Dakshinakali, Khamba Sitala, Sugriva, Vibhishana, Mangala, Krishna, Mahavira, Panchamukhi Mahavira, and Chaitanya. On the opposite side of the Jaya Vijaya door we have the Chandana Argala, the sandalwood barrier shielding the Garbha griha from the public.

The inner room of the temple is called **Garbha griha**, Mani Kotha, or Vimana and is 24x24 feet wide. In the front of the Ratnavedi there is a space called *pokhoria*, where most of the worship is performed, protected by a wooden rail (made of sandalwood) called Kalahara dvara or Chandan argal.

The Garbha griha contains the Ratnavedi platform, 17x7 feet large and 5 feet high (although there is a variety of versions of its size offered by various scholars and Temple Administration authorities).

On the platform, we find the Ratna simhasana, about 4 feet high, surrounded by a narrow path for the *pradakshina*. It is said that 100,000 *salagrama shilas* coming from Nepal (offered by the then King of Nepal) were embedded in the Ratna simhasana when the Deities were installed there. Behind the Simhasana there is a small passage 3 and half feet wide, where the Sevakas and sometimes the visiting devotees can perform *pradakshina* (walking around the Deities in sign of respect).

The Deities of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra stand on three *pindis*, or round pedestals, within the Ratna simhasana, facing east, and the room is illuminated only by ghee lamps as there are no external windows. The Deities sitting on the Simhasana are seven (*saptadha murti*):

- Jagannatha (on the right)

The Deity of Mahaprabhu Jagannatha has the particular shape called *chakra yantra* and is 84 *yavas* tall.

- Balabhadra (on the left)

The Deity of Bada Thakura Balabhadra has the particular shape called *sankha yantra* and is 85 *yavas* tall.

- Subhadra (in the middle)

The Deity of Mother Subhadra has the particular shape called *padma yantra* and is 53 *yavas* tall.

- Sudarshana (on Jagannatha's left)

The Deity of Sudarshana has a particular shape of a pillar, with a height of 84 *yavas* and a circumference of 21 *yavas*

- Nila Madhava (a small Daru Jagannatha, not worshiped separately)

- Sridevi (Lakshmi, the Spiritual Sky, on Jagannatha's right), gold

- Bhudevi (Visvadhatri, Mother Earth, or Sarasvati, on Jagannatha's left), silver

On the outer wall of the Garbha griha, just in the back of Jagannatha, there is a huge black stone Deity of **Nisha Narasimhadeva**, 11 feet tall in black granite, about 9 feet, holds a disc in upper right, club in upper left, has a garland of *rudraksha* and finely decorated clothes. Next to it, the *bhajana kutir* of Vasudeva Ramanuja Das and a Hanuman temple called Bhara Bhai ("twelve brothers") and a painting of the Yajna Purusha, or Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra in the middle of a blazing fire.

On one side of the Garbha griha (on the left of Jagannatha) there is Varaha Deva. On the other side of the Garbha Griha (on the right of Baladeva) there is a black stone Deity of **Bali Vamana** (Trivikrama).

Near the Vamana shrine there is the **Paduka Kunda**, a small pond that collects the waters of the bathing of the Deities that flow out of the Garbha griha.

Mukti Chintamani

The *Mukti chintamani* (written by Gajapati Purushottama Deva) gives the recommended schedule for Darshana of various Deities inside the Sri Mandira and their invocation.

purvadisham samarabhya agniyadikramanvitam uttarabhagaparyantam kuryat pradakshinam mahat narayanam namaskrtyam punar narayanam param sarva deva mayam chante pasyanti purushottamam

While entering the Singhadvara follow the Agnikona till the Uttaradwara and circumbulate accordingly. After entering Simhadvara first have darshana of Patitapavana Narayana and then complete the circumbulation with the darshan of Purushottama Narayana.

Fate Hanuman:

manojavam maruta tulya vegam jitendriyam buddhimatam varistam

vatamajam vanara jutha mukhyam tam ramadutam saranam prapadye

O Hanuman, fast like the mind and strong like the wind! You have conquered all your senses, and you are the most intelligent and wise of all. You are the commander of the Vanaras. O son of the wind, o messenger of Ramachandra, I take refuge in you.

Patita Pavana:

patitanam patito 'ham twam eva papaharakaha pavana purusa dehi niscalam bhaktim me vibho

O Patita Pavana! I am the most degraded among the conditioned souls, and You are the savior of the fallen souls like me. O Lord! Kindly bestow unflinching devotion in my heart and guide me so that I can attain You.

Kashi Visvanatha:

*visvesvaraya naraknavataranaya bhakti pradaya bhava roga vimocanaya
gouri priyaya varadaya trilocanaya samsara duhkha haranaya namah sivaya*

O Visvanatha, o lord of the world! You can save us from hell and bestow devotion on us, liberating us from the disease of birth. O beloved of Gauri, o three-eyed master, You have the power to destroy the sorrows of the world. O Shiva, I offer my obeisances unto you.

Agnisvara:

agnisvaram maharudram visnupaka visodhakam mahajvala mayam sambhum namami candra sekham

O Agnisvara! You are the greatest among the Rudras. O source of the radiant blaze of fire, You purify the food prepared for Visnu. O Shambhu, whose head is decorated by the moon, I salute You.

Satya Narayana:

suklambaradharam visnum sasivarnam caturbhujam prasanna vadanam dhyayet sarva vighnopasantaye

O Satya Narayana! O four-armed Vishnu, lord of the universes, Your radiance is like the splendor of the moon, and Your clothes are pure white. You smile pleasantly to Your devotees, and remove all the obstacles on their path. I meditate upon you.

Markandeya Paduka:

markandeya! namo 'stute maha pralaya saksine anugyam dehi viprandhatamo nasaya vy nahama

O Markandeya! I offer my homage to you, the witness of the Mahapralaya. Please give us advice: you can remove the darkness of ignorance for us.

Kalpa vriksha:

kalpavrksam! namas tubhyam nyagrodha! punya dayaka sarva kama prada!

*saksat maha pralaya saksine mule brahma svarupam ca madhye rudra svarupinam
vatamule praksham tvam drstva jantur vimucyate*

O Kalpa vriksha! I offer my obeisances to you, o bestower of boons. You are the direct witness of the Mahapralaya. O wish fulfilling tree, Brahma resides in your roots and Rudra resides in your trunk. One who obtains the Darshana of Bala Mukunda at your roots immediately gets salvation.

Hari Sahadeva:

sivam gabhi priyam vande go raksinam punah punah

go sampadam pradam sambhum trilocanam bhajamy aham

O three-eyed Shiva! You are loved by the cows, and You are the one who protects them and bestows them. O auspicious Shambhu, I sing your glories.

Kalpa Ganapati:

kalpa druma daha stitha kamadhenum cintamanim modakanyastasundham

parsvarksyamaladasanam dadhanam namami siddhi pradakamadantam

I offer my homage to you, o Ganapati! You reside at the Kalpavata, and you fulfill desires like the Kamadhenu. You are the most intelligent being. You hold a *laddu* in your trunk and rosary beads decorate your tusks. You give all blessings and all perfections.

Sarvamangala:

subhananam rakta sucaru hasyam netristibhih sobhita mangalasyam

varabhayam sula gada dharam ca nyagrodha lagna vasatim bhajamy aham

O Sarvamangala, you reside besides the Kalpa bata! Your beautiful red face, illuminated by a smile and with three eyes, is all-auspicious. Your divine body is the source of all blessings and fearlessness, wielding the trident and the mace. I worship you.

Markandesvara:

markandeya! namas tubhyam aghora papaharaka papam me hara bho sambho narayana priyam bhaje

O Markandesvara! I offer you my respectful homage. You remove all sins, and you are very dear to Narayana. O Shambhu, please, I beg you to destroy my sins.

Batanarayana:

sankha cakra gada padma dharinam vanamalinam bata narayanam vande mama papaksayam kuru

O Bata Narayana! Decorated with a garland of silvan flowers, You hold the conch, the disc, the mace and the lotus flower in your four arms. I offer You my homage: please destroy my sins.

Rohini Kunda smarana:

kundam hyotad rohinyakhyam karunakhya jalayrjuktam

tatra santisthato nityam sparshanat vanda muktidam

O Rohini kunda! Your waters are filled with mercy, thus spiritual realisation is achieved simply by touching you. I offer my homage to you.

Vajresvari:

vajresvarim mahadevim raksyakam ca vidyut prabham

airavata samarudham namami vajra dharinim

O Vajresvari! O Mahadevi, wielder of the Lightning weapon, you sit on the Airavata elephant. O powerful Devi, you are my protector, I offer you my homage.

Kshetrapala:

ksetrapala! namaste 'stu bhisnam krura locanam trisulam panapatram ca dadhanam ugra bhairavam

ksetra darsanam me dehi papaghna! candavikrama maha papa haram ugram namami ksetra raksyakam

O Kshetrapala! I offer you my homage. O ferocious and fearsome guardian of the Kshetra, your eyes spark with anger. O Ugra Bhairava, you wield the trident and the bowl. O destroyer of all sins, please grant me the darshan of the holy kshetra. O stalwart hero, you are able to remove even the greatest sins: I am your servant, please protect me in the holy place of pilgrimage.

Ananta Purushottama:

anantaya namo 'stu te mahahisayanaya ca bhava bandhabimikshyaya namah purusa purvaja

O unlimited and eternal Purushottama! My homage to You! You recline on the divine bed formed by the great serpent Ananta Sesha. O great grandsire of everyone, You cut the bondage of repeated births. I offer you my homage, again and again.

Surya:

namah kamala rupaya namah kamala dharine namah kamala yantraya padmavallabha te namah

O Surya! You are the personification of the lotus flower, hold a lotus flower and reside in the lotus yantra. I offer you my homage again and again, o beloved of the lotus.

Muktesvara:

muktiprada mahasambho tryambaka candrabhusana bhaktim dehi uma kanta vamadevaya te namah

O Muktesvara! You are the one who can give liberation. O great Shambhu, o Tryambaka, the moon decorates your head like a jewel. I offer my homage to you, o Vamadeva, o consort of Uma: please grant me the blessing of Bhakti.

Mukti Mandapa:

brahmasanam namo 'stu te sarva kalmasanakam yajnyangabhurbharam vande vedangaya namo namah
O Brahmasana! I offer you my homage. You remove all impurities, because you contain the holy ashes of the Yajna and you are the body of the Vedas. I offer you my homage again and again.

Mukta Nrisimha:

ugra viram mahavisnum dvadvantam sarvato mukham
nrsimham bhisanam bhadram mrtyor mrtyum namamy aham
O ferocious and all powerful Mahavishnu! You are inconceivable and your face is everywhere. O Nrisimha, source of all auspiciousness, o death of death, I offer You my homage.

Rohini Kunda:

rohinakhyam mahakalam visnu laksanalancitam sankha cakra dharam sakshat satyavantam namo 'stu te
O Rohini kunda! You are the embodiment of Time and are decorated with all the emblems of Vishnu. I offer my homage to you, the holder of the conch and discus, the personification of Truth.

Nritya Ganapati:

nritya priyaya ganamayaka sundaraya nagendra sutra paribhushana bhushitaya
lambodaraya subhadaya hara priyaya tubhyam namo 'stu te mama vighna vinasakaya
O leader of the Ganas, o beautiful Ganesha, so fond of dancing! Your body is decorated by the king of snakes that serves as your sacred thread. O beloved of Shiva, o long-bellied one, you bestow all auspiciousness. I offer you my homage: please remove all obstacles for me.

Vimala:

dhyayet vidyut samaprabha muddiyana puresvarim nr munda kundali kumbhan dadhanam paramesvarim
akshyamala dharam devim sarva sakti pradayinim padma padam aham vande vimalam vimala pradam
I meditate upon the embodiment of lightning, the Goddess of Uddiyana Tantra. O suprem Goddess, you wear a garland of severed human heads and hold rosary beads in your hand. O Narayani, you are the bestwer of all powers. I bow to your lotus feet, O Vimala! Please grant me success.

Gopesvara:

rasa krida para tattva vilasin gopa raksaka gopesvara saha vande gopibhir gopanayakam
O Gopesvara Mahadeva, you relish the supreme meaning of the Rasa Lila. I bow to you, o protector of the *gopas*, together with the cowherd women and men of Vrindavana.

Sakshi Gopala:

krsnaya vasudevaya devaki nandanaya ca nanda gopa kumaraya govindaya namo namah
O Krishna! O Vasudeva, the son of Devaki! I offer my homage to You again and again, o Govinda, o son of Nanda!

Ganapati:

maha kaya dharam devam vighnesa vighna nasakam parasu malika hastam nija linga gramardakam
krode siddhi mahadevi malingya vapurayatam uddanda vighram vande sudhinam siddhi dayakam
O bestower of Siddhis, I offer you my homage. You have a large body and you are the lord of obstacles, thus you have the power to destroy all obstacles. You hold an axe and a rosary in your hands, and your linga destroys all evil. You embrace Mahadevi, the source of Siddhis, who sits on your lap. I bow to you, o dynamic form, the bestower of all perfections.

Bhuvanesvari:

uddhyadhina dyuti mindu kiritam bhungakucam nayana traya yuktam
smera mukhim varadankusa pasa bhiti karam prabhaje bhuvanesvarim

O Bhuvanesvari! Your breasts are bright and effulgent. The beautiful moon acts as your earring. O three-eyed Goddess, serenely smiling! Your weapons are the noose and the goad, and you grant boons and protection. I am your servant and worshiper.

Gayatri:

sveta varnam samudhishta kouseya vasana brutam

svetair vilepanaihi puspalkanarais ca vibhusitam

aditya mandala bhasam brahma loka nivasinim akshya sutra dharam devam kamalasana samsthitam

O Gayatri, clad in natural white silk! You are decorated with pure sandalwood paste, flowers and ornaments. You are the head of the Sun's family and you reside in Brahmaloaka. Holding rosary beads in your hand, you sit on a lotus throne.

Savitri:

dvi bhujam brahmanah saktim brahma sakti pradayinim savitrim mantra rupam ca smarami tat padambujam

O Savitri! O power of Brahma! You have two hands and grant spiritual power. O embodiment of all the holy mantras, I meditate on your lotus feet.

Sarasvati:

suklam brahma vicarasara paramamadyam jagad vyapinim

vina pustaka dharinim abhaya pradam jadyandhakarapaham

haste sphatika malikam ca dadhatim padmasane samsthitam

vande tam paramesvarim bhagavatim buddhi pradam saradam

O white Sarasvati! O supreme primeval shakti! You pervade the entire universe and destroy the darkness of ignorance. Having carefully studied the Vedas, you are expert in expounding their meaning. Sitting in *padmasana* on the lotus flower, you hold the vina, books and a rosary of crystal beads. I bow to you, O supreme Goddess, Bhagavati Shrada! Please give me intelligence.

Sasthi:

goura varnam ca tri bhujam nanalankara bhusitam sarva laksana sampanam pinonnatapayodharam

divya vastra paridhanam vamakrode sa putrakam prasanna vadanam sasthim jagadhatri sukha pradam

O Sasthi! Your body is white-complexioned and decorated with various ornaments and auspicious symbols. You have three arms, and your breasts are always full of milk for those children who aspire to drink it. Covered with divine clothes, you hold a divine child on your lap, on your left thigh. O smiling Mother, you are the one who gives happiness and you sustain the entire universe.

Nila Madhava:

niladri sikharasinam namami nila madhavam pranatarti haram devam saranagata raksyakam

O Nila Madhava, sitting on the top of the blue mountain, I offer my homage to you! You take away the sufferings and problems of those who worship you, and protect those who take refuge in you.

Guhya Kali:

kalim karala vadanam munda mala visobhitam lolajivham tri netranga khadga patra dharananam

guhyad guhyatamam devam sarvasiddhi pradayinim guhyaca kresvarim vande kalikam kamamatrakam

O Kali! Your dark body is decorated with a garland of human heads. You have three eyes and lolling tongue, you hold a bowl touching your lips. O goddess of Guhyachakra, your manifestation is secret. O bestower of perfection, O Kalika, the mother of Kala (time), I bow to you.

Maha Lakshmi:

sarasija nilaye saroja haste dhavala taram suka gandha malya sobhe

bhagavati hari vallabhe manogyon tri bhuvana bhutikari prasida mahyam

O Maha Lakshmi! You enjoy the lotus flower, which is your eternal seat.

You also hold a lotus flower in your hand. You wear pure white clothes and a scented garland adorns your neck. O beloved of Hari, you know the mind of everyone. You bestow prosperity to the three worlds. I pray you may be pleased by my prayers.

Navagraha:

navagraha namakhyatam graha kumbhena sevitam grahanam dosanasaya svasthyasyapi vibruddhaye
O Navagraha! O nine planets, you are worshiped in the ritual *kalasa* for the heavenly bodies. I offer you my worship, praying that you may grant me health and remove the obstacles due to my astrological defects.

Surya:

grahanam adir aditya loka rakshyanakaraka visama sthanasambhutam pidam haratu me grahah
O Surya! You are the king of planets and the protector of all living beings. Please remove any obstacles in my life, that have arisen due to the unfavorable positionings of planets.

Pataleshvara:

namo rudraya kalaya patalanta sthitaya ca sarvaroga vimardhaya mrityunjayaya vai namah
O Pataleshvara! You are Rudra, eternal Time, manifested until the end of Patala. I offer my homage to you, o Mrityunjaya, conqueror of death and destroyer of disease.

Devajana darshana:

uttara patha margena pasyet kutam subhaktitaha aisanyadhipatim sambhu sitalam loka sankarim
uttarayani durgakshyam vaikunthesvaram utkramat rakshyakam kapi srestham ca sadetan moksha dayakan
On the way to the north passage, one should find the auspicious path of the Devas, who can help us attain liberation – Aishanesvara Shiva, Sitala, Lokeshvari, Uttarayani, Vaikunthesvara and the best of the Vanaras, Tapasvi Hanuman.

Aishanesvara:

namah svayambhu rudraya tryambakaya namo namah namah kalaya ghoraya aisanya adhipate namah
O Aishanesvara, o self-manifested Rudra, o Tryambaka, I offer you my homage again and again. I bow to you, manifesting in the terrifying form of eternal Time. My homage to you again and again, o guardian of the northern direction (aishana).

Sitala Devi:

sitale surpa haste ca maha gardha bhahini rakshyanat sarva gatrani sitale sitala prade
sitale tvam jagan mata sitale tvam jagat pita sitale tvam jagad dhatri sitalayei namo namah
O Sitala! Seated on your *vahana*, the donkey, you hold a winnowing fan in your hand. Please protect me, cool my body and protect me from disease. O Sitala Devi, you are the mother, the father and the support of the universe. O Sitala, I bow to you again and again.

Uttarayani:

namami chottram durgam nila varnam trilocanam
sulam charmam ca khadgam ca nagapasa dharam subham
pasankusa dharam soumyam caitya srnga karanvitam
dhanur bana dharam ugram katyayanim bhajamy aham
O Uttarayani! You are the Durga of the northern path. Your complexion is blue and you have three eyes. You hold the trident, shield, sword, noose and you are always auspicious. Peacefully, you behold the seed of the unmanifest Kalpa Bata. Your ferocious form holds bow and arrow as your weapons. O Katyayani, I sing you praises.

Vaikunthesvara:

vaikuntha kshetrapam lingam bhakti mukti dayakam
chatur varga pradam nityam umadhavam smaramy aham

O Vaikunthesvara! You are the guardian of Vaikuntha, and you can bestow Bhakti and Mukti, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. I meditate on you, sitting together with Mother Uma.

Tapasvi Hanuman:

*bhaktagramim shantaturangam deham bhujadvaye parvbata brukhya yuktam
baddhanjalim mudgarayuktakakshyam bhaje kapindram krutavairinasham*

O Tapasvi Hanuman! You are the greatest among devotees. You are peaceful but very strong. You hold a mountain and a tree as symbols of your power. You always remain with folded hands before the Lord. Your mace is always ready to strike. You are the king of monkeys and the destroyer of enemies. I sing your glories.

Darshan of the four main Deities from behind the Garuda Stambha:

*niladrou shankhamadhye shatadalakamale ratna simhasana stham
sarvalankarayuktam navaghanaruchiram samyuktam chagrajena
bhadraya vamabhage rathacharanayutam brahma rudrendra sevyam
vedanaam saramisham svajanapaributam brahmadarum smarami*

I bow before Brahman, the supreme Self in wooden form, residing on the Nila hills within the sphere of the conch shell and inside a hundred petalled lotus, seated on the jewelled throne and decorated with all ornaments. You are the colour of new clouds, accompanied with your elder brother and sitting on the left of Subhadra, holding a disc, worshipped by Brahma, Rudra and Indra. You are the essence of the Vedas, the Lord of the universe, surrounded by your own people.

Jagannatha Bhajans

The official website of the Jagannatha Puri temple (<http://www.jagannath.nic.in>) lists the following among the popular Bhajans offered to Sri Jagannatha:

1. Jai Jagadish hare
2. Ahe nila giri
3. Badhila jani khyama
4. Dukha Nasana he
5. Jagabandhu he Gosain
6. Kahinki Asichha Mana
7. Nagalu Mana
8. Radhe Gobinda Radhe
9. Kahin Ketedura
10. Baraseke Baramasa

Here is a selection of the best Bhajans

Sri Jagannatha Astakam

This very famous song was written by Sri Adi Sankara Acharya.

*kadacit kalindi tata vipina sangitaka ravo, mudabhiri nari vadana kamalasvada madhupah
rama sambhu brahmara pati ganesarcita pado, jagannatha svami nayana patha gami bhavatu me
bhuje savye venum sirasi sikhi puccham katitite, dukulam netrante sahacara-kataksam vidadhate
sada srimad vrndavana vasati lila paricayo, jagannatha svami nayana patha gami bhavatu me
mahambhodes tire kanaka rucire nila sikhare, vasan prasadantah sahaja balabhadrena balina
subhadra madhya sthah sakala sura sevavasara do, jagannatha svami nayanapathagami bhavatu me
krpa paravarah sajala jalada sreni ruciro, rama vani ramah sphurad amala pankeruha mukhah
surendrair aradhyah sruti gana sikha gita carito, jagannatha svami nayana patha gami bhavatu me
ratharudhogacchan pathi milita bhudevapatalaih stuti pradurbhavam pratipadam upakarnya sadayah,
daya sindhur bandhuh sakala jagatam sindhu sutaya, jagannatha svami nayana patha gami bhavatu me*

*para brahmapidah kuvalaya dalotphulla nayano, nivasi niladrau nihita carano'nanta sirasi
rasanando radha sarasa vapur alingana sukho, jagannatha svami nayana patha gami bhavatu me
na vai yace rajyam na ca kanakamanikya vibhavam, na yace'ham ramyam sakala janakamyam vara
vadhum,
sada kale kale pramatha patina gita carito, jagannatha svami nayana patha gami bhavatu me
hara tvam samsaram drutataram asaram sura pate, hara tvam papanam vitatim aparam yadava pate
aho dine □enathe nihita carano niscitam idam, jagannatha svami nayana patha gami bhavatu me*

Sometimes in great happiness Lord Jagannatha makes a loud concert with His flute in the groves of the banks of the Yamuna. He is like a bumblebee who tastes the beautiful lotus-like faces of the cowherd damsels of Vraja and His lotus feet are worshiped by great personalities such as Lakshmi, Shiva, Brahma, Indra and Ganesha. May that Lord Jagannatha be the object of my vision.

In His left hand Lord Jagannatha holds a flute. On His head He wears the feathers of a peacock and on His hips He wears a fine yellow silken cloth. Out of the corners of His eyes He bestows sidelong glances upon His loving devotees, and He always reveals Himself through His pastimes in His divine abode of Vrindavana. May that Lord Jagannatha be the object of my vision.

Residing on the shore of the great ocean within a large palace situated upon the crest of the brilliant golden Nilacala Hill, along with His powerful brother Balabhadra and in the middle of Them His sister Subhadra, Lord Jagannatha bestows the opportunity for devotional service upon all godly souls. May that Lord Jagannatha be the object of my vision. Lord Jagannatha is an ocean of mercy and He is beautiful like a row of blackish rain clouds. He is the storehouse of bliss for Lakshmi and Sarasvati, and His face is like a spotless full blown lotus. He is worshiped by the best of demigods and sages and His glories are sung by the Upanishads. May that Lord Jagannatha be the object of my vision.

When Lord Jagannatha is on His Ratha yatra chariot and is moving along the road, at every step there is a loud presentation of prayers and songs chanted by large assemblies of *brahmanas*. Hearing their hymns, Lord Jagannatha becomes very favorably disposed towards them. He is the ocean of mercy and the true friend of all the worlds. May that Lord Jagannatha, along with His consort Lakshmi, who was born from the ocean of nectar, be the object of my vision.

He is the ornament of the head of Lord Brahma, and His eyes are like the full blown petals of the lotuses. He resides on the Nilachala Hill and His lotus feet are placed on the heads of Anantadeva. Lord Jagannatha is overwhelmed by the mellows of love and He becomes joyful in the embracing of the body of Srimati Radharani, which is like a cool pond. May that Lord Jagannatha be the object of my vision.

I do not pray for a kingdom, or for gold, rubies and wealth. I do not ask for an excellent and beautiful wife as desired by all men. I simply pray that Lord Jagannatha, whose glories are always sung by Lord Shiva, be the constant object of my vision.

O Lord of the demigods, please quickly remove this useless material existence I am undergoing. O Lord of the Yadus, please destroy this vast ocean of sins, which has no shore. Alas, this is certain: Lord Jagannatha's lotus feet are bestowed upon those who feel themselves fallen and have no shelter in this world but Him. May that Lord Jagannatha always be the object of my vision.

Srita Kamala

This beautiful song is from the famous *Gita Govinda* by Jayadeva Gosvami, and together with the *Dasa avatara stotra*, from the same text, is sung in the temple of Lord Jagannatha in Puri. Usually, a small popular refrain is added to the original Sanskrit text.

*srita kamala kuchamandala dhruta kundala, kalita lalita vanamala jaya jayadeva hare
radhe krishna, hari govinda gopala, hari vasudeva bala, bhaja nanda dulala, jaya jayadeva hare
dinamani mandala mandana bhava khandana, muni jana manasa hamsa jaya jayadeva hare
radhe krishna, hari govinda gopala, hari vasudeva bala, bhaja nanda dulala, jaya jayadeva hare
kaliya visha dhara ganjana jana ranjana, yadu kulanlina dinesha jaya jayadeva hare
radhe krishna, hari govinda gopala, hari vasudeva bala, bhaja nanda dulala, jaya jayadeva hare*

*madhu mura naraka vinasana garudasana, sura kula keli nidana jaya jayadeva hare
radhe krishna, hari govinda gopala, hari vasudeva bala, bhaja nanda dulala, jaya jayadeva hare
amalaka maladala lochana bhavamocana, tribhuvana bhavana nidhana jaya jayadeva hare
radhe krishna, hari govinda gopala, hari vasudeva bala, bhaja nanda dulala, jaya jayadeva hare
janaka suta kruta bhushana jita dushana, samarasamita dasa kantha jaya jayadeva hare
radhe krishna, hari govinda gopala, hari vasudeva bala, bhaja nanda dulala, jaya jayadeva hare
abhinava jaladhara sundara dhruta mandara sri mukha candra cakora jaya jayadeva hare
radhe krishna, hari govinda gopala, hari vasudeva bala, bhaja nanda dulala, jaya jayadeva hare
tava carane pranata vayam iti bhavaya, kuru kusalam pranatesu jaya jayadeva hare
radhe krishna, hari govinda gopala, hari vasudeva bala, bhaja nanda dulala, jaya jayadeva hare
sri jayadeva kaver idam kurute mudam, mangalam ujjala giti jaya jayadeva hare
radhe krishna, hari govinda gopala, hari vasudeva bala, bhaja nanda dulala, jaya jayadeva hare*

Glory to You, O Hari! You wear a beautiful garland of wild flowers and jewel earrings, and rest on Kamala's round breasts.

Glorious among all the suns, You cut the bondage of deaths and births. You are the spiritual swan in the serene lake of the mind of the sages. Glory to You, O Hari!

You delighted everybody by destroying the venomous serpent Kaliya. You are the sun that excites the Yadu kinsmen, like the warmth of the sun enlivens the lotus flowers to bloom. Glory to You, O Hari!

You are the destroyer of the demons Madhu, Mura and Naraka. You ride on the divine bird Garuda.

Glory to You, O Hari, source of delight to the dynasties of the divine personalities!

Your eyes are beautiful like the petals of lotus flower. O Cause of three worlds, You free us from bonds of existence. Glory to You, O Hari!

You are the ornament of Janaka's daughter Sita. You conquered the demon Dushana and killed the ten-headed demon Ravana in battle. Glory to You, O Hari!

O holder of the Mandara mountain, Your beauty is charming as rain-clouds: You are the moonbird chakora to the moon-like face of Lakshmi. Glory to You, O Hari!

We lie prostrate at Your feet in worship. We pray You, give us Your blessings so that we can prosper. Glory to You, O Hari!

May this wonderful auspicious song composed by the poet Sri Jayadeva bring joy and well-being to all. Glory to You, O Hari!

Dasa Avatara stotram

*pralaya-payodhi-jale dhrtavan asi vedam vihita vahitra caritram akhedam
kesava-dhrta mina-sarira jaya jagadisa hare
ksitir ati vipulatate tava tistati tava prste dharani dharana kina cakra gariste
kesava-dhrta kacchapa-rupa jaya jagadisa hare
vasati dasana sikhare dharani tava lagna sasini kalanka kaleva nimagna
kesava-dhrta sukara-rupa jaya jagadisa hare
tava kara-kamala vare nakham adbhuta srngam dalita hiranyakasipu tanu-bhrngam
kesava-dhrta nara-hari-rupa jaya jagadisa hare
chalayasi vikramane balim adbhuta vamana pada-nakha nira janita jana pavana
kesava-dhrta vamana-rupa jaya jagadisa hare
ksatriya-rudhiramaye jagad apagata papam snapayasi payasi samita bhava-tapam
kesava-dhrta bhrgupati-rupa jaya jagadisa hare
vitarasi diksu-rane dik-pati kamaniyam dasa-mukha mauli balim ramaniyam
kesava-dhrta rama-sarira jaya jagadisa hare
vahasi vapusi visade vasamam jaladabham halahati bhiti milita yamunabham
kesava-dhrta haladhara-rupa jaya jagadisa hare*

*nindasi yajna-vidher ahaha sruti-jatam sa-daya hrdaya darsita pasu-ghatam
kesava-dhrta buddha-sarira jaya jagadisa hare
mleccham-vaha nidhane kalayasi karavalam ghumaketum iva kim api karalam
kesava-dhrta kalki-sarira jaya jagadisa hare
sri jayadeva kaver idam uditam udaram srinu sukhadam subhadam bhava saram
kesava dhrta dasa vidha rupa jaya jagadisa hare*

In seas that rage as the aeon of destruction arrives, You hold the holy *Vedas* like a ship straight on course.
O Krishna, You take the form as the Fish, Matsya Avatara. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!
Where the world rests on Your vast back, thick scars show the weight of bearing Earth.
O Krishna, You take the form as the Tortoise, Kurma Avatara. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!
The Earth clings to the tip of Your tusk like a speck of dust caught on the crescent moon.
O Krishna, You take the form as the Boar, Varaha Avatara. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!
The nails on Your soft lotus hands are wondrous claws tearing the gold-robed black bee Hiranyakasipu.
O Krishna, You take the form as the Man-Lion, Narasimha Avatara. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!
Wondrous dwarf, when You cheat demon Bali with wide steps, water falls from Your lotus toenails to purify all creatures. O Krishna, You take the form as the Dwarf, Vamana Avatara. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!
You wash evil from the world in a flood of warrior's blood, and the pain of existence is eased.
O Krishna, You take the form as the axman priest, Parasurama Avatara. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!
Incited by the gods who guard the directions in battle, You hurl Ravana's ten heads to the skies.
O Krishna, You take the form as Prince Rama. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!
The robe on Your bright body has the colour of rain clouds, and Yamuna's waters roil in fear of Your plough's attack. O Krishna, You take the form as the Holder of the Plough, Sri Balarama. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!
Moved by deep compassion, You condemn the criminals who misused the *Vedas* to slaughter animals in sacrifices. O Krishna, You take the form as the Enlightened, Buddha Avatara. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!
You raise Your sword like a fiery meteor, slashing degraded hordes of meat eaters to death. O Krishna, You take the form as the Avenger, Kalki Avatara. Triumph, Hari, Lord of the Universe!
Listen to this song by the poet Jayadeva, which will bring You joy and auspiciousness, for it is the essence of devotional feelings. O Lord of the Universe, Keshava! All glories to You, who have taken ten different forms!

Arati song

*om jay jagadisha hare, swami jay jagadisha hare
bhakta jano ke sankata, dasa jano ke sankata, khyana me dur kare
om jay jagadisha hare
jo dhyabe phala pabe, dukha vinase mana ka, swami dukha vinase mana ka
sukha sampati ghara abe, sukha sampati ghara abe, kasta mite tanaka
om jay jagadisha hare
mata pita tume mere, sarana gahun ke siki, swami sarana gahun ke siki
tume bin aur na dujya, tume bin aur na dujya, as karu me ki siki,
om jay jagadisha hare
tum purana paramatma, tum antaryami, swami tum antaryami
param brahma paramesvara, param brahma paramesvara, tum sab ke swami,
om jay jagadisha hare
tum karuna ke sagar, tum palana karta, swami tum palana karta
me murakha kala kami, me murakha kala kami, kripa karo bhara ta,
om jay jagadisha hare*

*tum ho ek aghochar, sab ke prana pati, swami sab ke prana pati
 kis vidh milu dayamaya, kis vidh milu dayamaya, tum ko ke kumati
 om jay jagadisha hare
 dina bandhu duhkha harata, tume thakur mere, swami tume thakur mere
 apane hata hathao, apane hata hathao, dvara kada tere
 om jay jagadisha hare
 vishaya vikar mitao, papa haro deva, swami papa haro deva
 sraddha bhakti badhae, sraddha bhakti badhae, santhane ke seva
 om jay jagadisha hare
 dhana jana tana mana sab he tera, swami sab kuch he tera
 tera tuj ko arpan, tera tuj ko arpan, kya lage mera,
 om jay jagadisha hare
 jagadish swami ki arati, jo koi naragabe, swami jo koi naragabe
 kahata sivananda swami, kahata sivananda swami, manavanchita phala pabe,
 om jay jagadisha hare*

O Lord of the universe, o Hari, You take away the sufferings of Your devotees and servants. Please take away my sufferings quickly.

You are the giver of the fruits of meditation, You destroy the sufferings of the mind and give great happiness and glory, as well as all opulences such as house, etc. You quickly put an end to all the worries of Your devotees.

You are my mother and father, where else will I take shelter? You are my all in all, where else should I search for what I need?

You are the Primeval and Supreme Soul, who is seated in the hearts of all living entities and in every existing things, down to each atom. You are the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Ruler, You are everything.

You are the Ocean of Compassion, You are the Protector. You are Knowledge and Kindness. I am begging You for Your mercy.

O Friend of the poor and suffering souls, You take away all sufferings. You are my God, my Lord and Master. Please raise Your hands, I am standing here at Your door.

O Lord, You put an end to the material illusion and contamination, You purify all sins. You increase the faith, love and devotion in Your devotees, and give service to the sadhus.

You are the wealth of the heart and mind of everyone. You are everything. O Lord, since You are so great, I offer You everything I have and everything I do. What else could I aspire to?

Sivananda Swami says, whoever sings this arati song will obtain success in whatever his or her mind desires.

Ahe nila saila

*ahe nila saila prabala matta varana mo arata nalini bana ku kara dalana
 gaja raja chinta kala, thai ghora jalena chakra peshi nakra nashi uddharilo apana
 ghora bane mruguniku parithila kashana ede bada bipattiru uddharilo apana
 kuru sabha tale suni draupadira kashana koti vastra dei hele lajja kala varana
 prahlada pita se je bara dushta daruna stambharu bahari taku bidarilo apana
 ravanara bhai vibhishana gola sarana sarana sambali tanku lanke kala rajana
 kohe salabega hina jati re mu jabana sri ranga charana tale karu achi janana*

O Lord of Nilachala, destroyer of all dangers, please destroy the quicksands of sins.

Gajendra remembered You while dragged into deep waters, and You rescued him by killing the crocodile with your Chakra. The doe was in great danger inside the forest, You delivered her from that difficult situation. You listened to the prayer of Draupadi in the assembly of the Kurus, and saved her honor by providing an endless length of cloth. Prahlada's father was a tyrant, You appeared from the pillar and tore him apart. Ravana's brother Vibhishana took shelter in You, upholding his honor You made him the King of Lanka. The fallen Salabega says, I am a Yavana by birth, but I always sing the glories of Sri Ranga, sitting at His feet.

Jagabandhu he gosai

*jagad-bandho he gosai tumbha sri-carana binu ana gati nai
satasa' pachasa kosa chali na parai moha jiba jaye nandighoshe thiba rahi
ratha chari pase lambe mukutara jhara jhala mala disuthai prabhu chakadola
baisi pahacha tale bikahue bhata darsana teniki thau kaivalye mukata
age cale balabhadra madhye canda muhinre asuchi kalia pache gahala lagaire
kahe salabega jina jatire yavana ehimate ajna heo siri brindavana*

O Lord, O friend of the universe, I have no shelter other than Your lotus feet. I am unable to walk 750 *kroshta* to see you, please wait for me on Nandighosha until I arrive. O Prabhu Chakadola, whose round eyes are shaped like wheels! How glittering You look on the chariot, decorated with strings of pearls. The rice that is scattered at the base of the twenty-two steps will bring me liberation let Your darshan wait. Balabhadra rides in front, followed by the moon-faced Subhadra and the black Lord Jagannatha comes in the rear, creating a stir. The lowly Sal Beg, born a Muslim, prays – “Give me Your permission to leave Vrindavan.

Jagannatha he, kichi magunahi

*jagannatha he, kichi magunahin tate dhana magunahin, jana magunahi maguchi saradha baliru hate
ana darasana na loãe nayana eka tumbha dekha bina sunibaku kana na icchai ana tumbha carite kamana
jihva na banchai gramya gita gaibaku rajani dibasa tumbha namavali kebala sankhali hoi thau pita-vasa
nasa mora tripti na labhai ana subasa dravya aghrane tava chara mala tulasi kusuma candana karpura
dhyane,
mo hasta anguli rama vanamali japu thau hare krishna kahe salabega jatire yavana to tirthe jau mora
prana*

O Jagannatha! I ask for nothing from You – I ask not for wealth, I ask not for followers. All I ask is for a few inches of land at Shraddha Bali My eyes want nothing but to see Your glorious form, My ears want nothing but to hear the recitation of Your glories. My tongue has no desire to sing songs of worldly love, neither by day or night; Your holy names, O yellow-robed Lord, are my only hope. My nose finds no satisfaction in any other sweet fragrant substance but meditates on the scent of Your tulasi and flower garlands, Your camphor-mixed sandalwood paste. O Rama! O Vanamali! My hands want only to finger my beads as I chant the Hare Krishna mantra. Sal Beg, born a Muslim, says, “Let me die in this holy land.

Mote sehi rupa dekhao hari

*mote sehi rupa dekhao hari jaya sri radhe radhe dakhe vamsa ri
jeu rupa bali dvare hela bhikari tripada re dana nei bali ki patale thoi
tenu kari sukra mantri nayane re kusha bhari kaikeyi hele bhagari rama hele vanachari
sanga re sitaya nari lakhmana ja sevakari gope janama hoile vane dhenu charailo
gopala puanka mele nachuthao dhali dhali dahane sri hala pani madhye subhadra bhauni
vama pase bosichanti sankha chakra gada dhari kahe salabega hina jati re ate yavana
kamsa astamala mari kahaku na acha tari*

Show me Your wonderful form, o Hari, whose flute cries out in glorification of Sri Radha. Please show me the form that stood at Bali Maharaja's door as a mendicant, begging for three steps of land, and then pushed Bali down into Patala and pierced the eye of his minister, Sukracharya, with a blade of kusha grass. When Kaikeyi turned against You, as Rama You walked into the forest in the company of Sita and Your faithful Lakshmana. Then You became a child among the Gopas, and accompanied the cows grazing into the forest, dancing with the other cowherd children. On one side the Lord stand with a plough in His hand, in the middle sister Subhadra stands, and on the left He sits holding the conchshell, the disc and the club.

Poor Salabega says, I was born as a lowly Muslim, but You have personally fought with Kamsa and the eight wrestlers, so You are able to liberate anyone including me.

Lagaile dinabandhu lagibi kule

*lagaile dinabandhu lagibi kule bhasi jauchi jale (ghosa)
gajaraja chinta kala agadha jale prana jibara bele
ta daka sunila laxmi pasar khele, bhasi jauchi jale
pushpa tolibaku gala mamunka chhale, pashi kalindi jale
kaliki dalila prabhu pada kamale, bhasi jauchi jale
dushtaku marila hari jibara bele, jai mathura pure
bhaye kansha raja mala ta dekhi dole, bhasi jauchi jale
kahe salabega hina pada kamale, jiba jibara bele
tumbha binu anya nahin mahee mandale, bhasi jauchi jale*

O friend of the poor, I am floating in the water of the ocean, and if You want You can rescue me. The king of the elephants Gajendra was worried about the depth of the water and he feared for his life: he called You, you heard his voice while You were playing chess with Lakshmi Devi. According to the design of Your maternal uncle (Kamsa), You entered the waters of the Yamuna to pick flowers, crushing serpent Kaliya with Your lotus feet. You killed the demons while you traveled to Mathura; King Kamsa became afraid seeing Your pastimes and he died. Poor Salabega prays at Your lotus feet, when life comes to the end, nobody but You in this universe exists for me.

Chandana yatra songs

*mani bimane gobinda chau pase gheri chanti sahachari brinda
nirmala chandra badana ahaki pasanda teracha chahani tule hasa manda manda
sangare pancha pandava labhanti ananda patuvari nijoge ga anti gita chanda
mantri pade lokanatha deba sadananda karanti sakhala nirbha se sabha sampada
bada danda ucchulai gaha gaha nada sankha bheri turi ghanta kahali sabada
bole vanamali dhyayi charanaravinda chapaku vijaye ahe gopi hruda chanda*

Govinda sits on the *mani vimana*, surrounded by the *gopis* in the four directions. How beautiful His luminous moon-like body looks, with sidelong glances and sweet smiles! The Pancha Pandavas are enjoying Your company and the Patuvari Niyogis (Maharis) sing *chandas*. Lord Lokanatha enjoys being the minister and coordinates the entire assembly. Grand Road has become lively with the tumultuous sound of conchshells, *bheri*, *turi*, *ghanta* and *kahali*. Vanamali prays, while meditating on Your lotus feet, O Moon of the *gopis*' hearts, please get on the boat.

*dekha go radha madhava chali mani bimana ase jhuli jhuli
bibidha bajana bira kahali bijay kale gopa danda ucchuli
sangate achanti pancha sagara radhika dutika murali dhara
narendra saraku karena mana chapa khelanti jagata mohana
bole banamali sripada dhyai chandana kunde prabesile jai*

My dear, look at the gait of Radha Madhava, They come swinging on the *mani vimana*, various instruments are played along with the royal trumpet, and Gopa Danda becomes very active with Their arrival. Radhika, Muralidhara and Their Sakhi are accompanied by the five Sagaras, heading towards Narendra Sarovara and here the Enchanter of the universe enjoys a boat ride. While meditating on Your lotus feet, Vanamali says, They just entered the Chandana kunda.

Daily worship

Preliminary duties

In Orissa the tradition is that all *brahmanas* (not only the temple Sevakas) take bath while chanting the *snana mantra*:

gange cha yamune chaiva godavari sarasvati narmade sindhu kaveri jale 'sminn sannidhim kuru

“Let the sacred waters of the holy rivers Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Sarasvati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri descend into this water”.

Bath is always taken while wearing two *gamchas*, one for the lower part of the body and another to protect the *upavita*. Also the *upavita* is hung over one's right ear while answering nature's calls and during the bathing. After completing the bathing procedures (usually called “morning duties”), the Sevaka sits for *achamana*, *kara suddhi* (consecration of the hands by the *nyasa* process) and *anga suddhi* (consecration of the body by the *nyasa* process), *asana suddhi*, then performs *sandhya puja* (chanting Gayatri and offering water to Surya).

After this purification ritual, the Sevaka performs first the worship of one's beloved Deity or *ista deva*, then the home or family Deity or *kula deva* (the two may be the same Deity), with *pranama* and *arati*, *snana* or *abakasha* (ritual bathing), a new or fresh dress (generally symbolized by a simple piece of cloth) and ornaments, *bhoga* and *arati*. Then the devotee proceeds to worship the village Deities (*grama deva*); unless he is the appointed *pujaka* for such Deity, such worship simply consists in offering homage. After this, the devotee goes to the main temple to worship the *gana devata*, the Lords of all. In the case of Puri, the *gana deva* is Jagannatha. On the day of his service shift, the Sevaka changes his sacred thread (*paita* or *upavita*) just after taking bath.

The Sevakas of Jagannatha temple in Puri are supposed to maintain strict cleanliness also in their houses, and possibly only eat *mahaprasadam* of Jagannatha. When a Sevaka is on duty at the temple, he takes Mahaprasadam after completing his service. Otherwise, cooking at home is done by the *bahu* (the wife and mother of the family), who takes a full bath and wears fresh clothes before entering the kitchen.

All Sevakas are supposed to be strictly vegetarian, but this rule is not actually followed, as many Sevakas eat non vegetarian foods, especially fish, albeit not on the day when it is their turn to perform *seva* to the Deities. *Sastras* say that fish is considered a non-vegetarian food but may be consumed under particular circumstances and specific purification rituals must be performed after eating it (specifically, the sacred thread or *paita* needs to be changed), while meat and eggs are not to be considered food fit for humans; therefore such foods are considered garbage (*parityakta*). There is one exception, regarding the meat of the animals that have been sacrificed in the temple, usually goats. During their walk to the temple they must be careful not to touch anything dirty – some even go to the extreme of avoiding being “touched” by the shadow of low class people. Even seeing a dead body or garbage lying on the street is considered a contamination.

When the Sevaka reaches the temple, in any case he performs another purification ritual. If he had not changed his sacred thread at home, he is usually doing so within the temple, at the Surya mandapa.

The division of ritual services in the temple of Jagannatha is extremely complex and each particular service is traditionally allotted to the descendents of the previous Sevaka. Since the families have multiplied their descendents, the same service is performed in turn by different members of the enlarged family.

The method of worship

The rituals are based on the following texts:

- *Niladri Mahodaya*
- *Sarada tilaka* (containing all *bijas* and *mantras* and explaining the process)
- *Sthala purana* (also called *Indranilamani purana*)
- *Vamadeva samhita*
- all the *Brahmanas* of the *Vedas* that deal with *karma-kanda*
- *Gopalarchana paddhati*, written by Purushottama Deva
- *Niladrinathasya puja vidhi*, written by Chodaganga Deva

- *Gopalarchana paddhati*, written by Vasudeva

Another important text of the temple is the famous *Madala panji*, or “temple almanac”, that was started by order of King Chodaganga around the 12th century. The King also established the scribes called Deuli Karanas, to keep the future temple records. However, the original *Madala Panji* was destroyed during a Muslim raid in 1568, and the present version is quite controversial.

The *Madala panji* is traditionally divided into five categories:

1. Karmangi, with the description of the daily rituals and festivals, read daily
2. Desha khanja, with a record of all major gifts of lands and money to the temple and the losses
3. Dina Panjika, prepared annually and read daily by the temple astrologer
4. Raja charita (or Raja bhoga), the important events in the kingdom and in the lives of kings, read once annually at Pausa purnima
5. Chakadasa, regional chronicles of the subordinate kingdoms

As we have seen in the previous chapter, there are seven Deities sitting on the main altar (Ratna vedi).

However, only three Palia puja Pandas perform the rituals here:

- 1) one Puja Panda worships Jagannatha, Nila Madhava, Bhu Devi, Sri Devi and Sudarshana
- 2) one Puja Panda worships Balabhadra (Bada Thakura)
- 3) one Puja Panda worships Subhadra

All three *pujakas* sit at the feet of the Deities on the Ratna vedi facing north, while the Deities face east.

The Deula Purohita or a palia Puja Panda performs:

- *rosha homa* in the temple kitchens before the cooking can start
- Surya puja every morning in the south-eastern corner of the temple compound
- puja of the Dvarapalas (Jaya and Vijaya)

Up to Gopala vallabha bhoga, the Deities’ schedule concerns the preliminary worship rituals: getting up, taking bath, dressing, completing the other morning duties, seeing friends and family members – much in the same schedule followed by the *pujakas* for their own morning duties. After the Rosha Homa and auspicious household worship to Surya performed in the name of Jagannatha, the cooks (Suaras) begin their “regular working day”. The cooks (Suaras) start their work, and the day servants of Jagannatha also start their elaborate worship schedule. There are 5 major *pujas* (called *dhupas*) every day with a very elaborate system of worship (called Niti).

Preliminary purification

The first steps of the ritual purification of the Sevaka’s body are the *achamana* (consisting in sipping drops of water with mantras consisting of Vishnu’s names), then the Kara nyasa and Anga nyasa (already mentioned above). These are the mantras recited by Balabhadra’s Sevaka:

The Kara nyasa process consists in applying mantras to the various parts of the hands.

om om angushtabhyam namah

om namo tarjanibhyam svaha

om bhagavate madhyamam vasat

om vasudevaya anamikabhyam hum

om namo bhagavate vasudevaya karatalakara pustabhyam astraya phat

The Anga nyasa process consists in applying mantras to the various parts of the hands:

om hridaya namah

om namo sirase svaha

om bhagavate sikhaya vasat

om vasudevaya kavachaya hum

om svaha netrabhyam vasat

om namo bhagavate vasudevaya karatalakara pustabhyam astraya phat

These are the mantras recited by Jagannatha's Sevaka:

The Kara nyasa process consists in applying mantras to the various parts of the hands.

om klim krishnaya angushtabhyam namah

om govindaya tarjanibhyam svaha

om gopijana madhyamam vasat

om vallabhaya anamikadhyam hum

svaha kanisthabhyam

om klim krishnaya govindaya gopijanavallabhaya svaha karatalakara pustabhyam astraya phat

The Anga nyasa process consists in applying mantras to the various parts of the hands:

om klim krishnaya hridaya namah

govindaya sirase svaha

gopijana sikhaya vasat

vallabhaya kavachaya hum

svaha netrabhyam vasat

om klim krishnaya govindaya gopijanavallabhaya svaha karatalakara pustabhyam astraya phat

These are the mantras recited by Subhadra's Sevaka:

The Kara nyasa process consists in applying mantras to the various parts of the hands.

om hram angushtabhyam namah

om hrim tarjanibhyam svaha

om hrum madhyamam vasat

om haim anamikadhyam hum

om haum kanisthabhyam vasat

om hraha karatalakara pustabhyam astraya phat

The Anga nyasa process consists in applying mantras to the various parts of the hands:

om hram hridaya namah

om hrim sirase svaha

om hrum sikhaya vasat

om haim kavachaya hum

hram netrabhyam vasat

om hraha karatalakara pustabhyam astraya phat

These are the mantras recited by Sudarshana's Sevaka:

The Kara nyasa process consists in applying mantras to the various parts of the hands.

om saum angushtabhyam namah

om sum tarjanibhyam svaha

om dam madhyamam vasat

om sram anamikadhyam hum

om nam kanisthabhyam vasat

om yam namah karatalakara pustabhyam astraya phat

The Anga nyasa process consists in applying mantras to the various parts of the hands:

om saum hridaya namah

om sum sirase svaha

om dam sikhaya vasat

om sram kavachaya hum

nam netrabhyam vasat

om yam namah karatalakara pustabhyam astraya phat

Bhuta suddhi

The next step of the elaborate worship ritual is the purification of the material elements of his body (*bhutas*). With this process, the worshiper dissolves his mundane body to create a new, pure, divine body with a nature and character similar to those of the Deity he worships (this concept is similar to the concepts of *sarupya mukti* and the *siddha svarupa* body developed through *sadhana*).

The *pujaka* meditates on his own heart as an 8 petal lotus having bliss as its root (*ananda kanda sambhavam*) and knowledge as the stem (*jnana nalam*). Awakening the Kundalini Shakti in the *muladhara chakra*, he raises her through the Sushumna (the spinal cavity) to the heart. By concentrating on the mantra of the Deity, the *pujaka* realizes the Deity in himself. Visualizing himself as the *jivatma* residing in the center of the lotus, shining like a burning lamp, he raises this luminous *jiva*, carried by the Kundalini, through the higher *chakras* up to the crown *chakra*, called Sahasrara chakra, to be united to the Param Atma. This is obtained through the chanting of the mantra *so 'ham, ham sah*.

After safely sheltering his own *atma* in the seat of the *param atma*, the *pujaka* proceeds now to dissolve the elements of his own body and to recreate them newly in a purified form. With this purified and divine body, the *pujaka* will be able to approach the Divinity on the same platform and perform the intimate service he is supposed to offer.

The Sankhya system of philosophy describes the process of creation of the universe at the beginning of the cosmic manifestation, and the process of dissolution at the end of each cycle of the universe. By following this process of dissolution through consciousness, the *pujaka* establishes himself beyond time and space, and becomes able to approach the Eternal Transcendence.

He meditates on Earth dissolving into Water, Water dissolving into Fire, Fire dissolving into Air, Air dissolving into Space, and Space (Ether) dissolving into material identification or *ahankara*. Penetrating the root of material identification, he dissociates himself from *tamasika ahankara*, constituted by the organs of perception and action and the sense objects, and dissolves them into *rajasika ahankara*.

Visualizing *rajasika ahankara* as the root cause of the senses (*antah karana*), or mind (*manas*), intelligence (*buddhi*), material identification (*ahankara*) and consciousness (*chitta*), he dissolves these external manifestations into their presiding Deities, respectively Chandra, Brihaspati, Rudra and Vasudeva. What remains at this point is the *sattvika ahankara*, or the separate consciousness: it must be merged into the totality of *ahankara* (thus overcoming the duality of the three *gunas*), and then into the Mahat tattva, the non-differentiated manifestation of Prakriti in this world.

The last step is the merging of Prakriti into Purusha or Paramatma. In this way the worshiper completely gives up the identification with the material elements and meditates on his qualitative oneness with Vishnu (*so 'ham asmi*). Both soul and body of the worshiper are now resting within the Param Atman: what remains is the Papa Purusha, the personification of the accumulated sins previously committed by the worshiper: this is visualized as a tiny black man who resides in the lower left side of the belly. Now the *pujaka* uses the Vayu *bija mantra* (*yam*) to desiccate this tiny Papa Purusha, then with the Agni *bija mantra* (*ram*) he burns it to ashes, and finally exhales these ashes out through his nostrils.

The *pujaka* meditates on the *bija mantra* of water (*vam*), visualizing it in the form of a crescent moon in the middle of his own head. By chanting the sacred syllable *om*, he brings down a shower of nectar composed by the *matrikas* – the 50 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, the primordial sounds that generate speech, which in turn generate the entire universe. Therefore the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet are called *matrikas* (“mothers”) as *vac* and *nada* are the source of creation. This shower of nectarine sounds falls on the elements of the body of the worshiper in their elemental state (*bija bhavena*), purifying the elements in their primordial form and giving them the life of creation. Now the reverse process of creation begins. The body is now *nirguna*, without qualities and differentiation, so to manifest a tangible body the 24 *tattvas* must be called in existence: the 5 *mahabhutas* (space, air, fire, water and earth), the 5 senses of action, the 5 senses of perception, the 5 sense objects, then mind, material identification, intelligence, life air, the 4 presiding Deities, and Narasimha.

The *pujaka* meditates on the *bija mantra* for the earth (*lam*) and creates a golden egg (*hiranya garbha* or *hiranyamaya anda*). By using the syllable *om* like a sword, the worshiper splits this egg horizontally in two pieces: the upper half is the sky, the lower half is the earth. The micro-cosm, replica and symbol of the macro-cosm, is now engaged in the process of creation.

The Mula Prakriti manifests as the separate energy of the Param Atman, then She manifests as Mahat Tattva. The Mahat manifests Ahankara, and in turn the material concept generates the material elements: Space, then Air, then Fire, then Water, then Earth. When the 24 elements or *tattvas* described in the Sankhya philosophy system have been manifested, the worshiper visualizes the Param Atma in the Sahasrara chakra, then he brings Him down with the Kundalini Shakti into the lotus of the heart, then he lets the Kundalini Shakti slip back down into the *muladhara chakra*. After manifesting the Param Atman in the lotus of his heart, the worshiper brings his consciousness into the *sarupya*, manifesting his own spiritual body as an intimate servant of Vishnu, having the same form (as the Vishnudutas in the Vaikunthas). The *sarupya* form of the worshiper is similar to the form of Vishnu, except for the bodily hue (golden instead of blackish) and the lack of the characteristic symbols (Srivatsa etc). The face of this spiritual body blossoms like a lotus flower decorated by a crown, the body is clad in yellow garments, and the four arms carry the conchshell, the mace, the disc and the lotus. The worshiper keeps meditating on this *siddha svarupa* with the mantra *so'ham asmi*.

The Sevaka installs his own spiritual body with the *prana pratistha* mantras associated with the substances of the body and calls to Prana Shakti, the personification of living force: a red complexioned goddess with 3 eyes and large breasts, sitting on a red lotus in an ocean of blood (*raktambhodistha*), holding noose, bow, sugarcane, goad, arrow and a skull dripping blood. By taking *kusha* grass and flowers in his hand, the Sevaka performs the *leliha mudra* and then touches his head with his right hand, uttering the mantra of *prana pratistha*, the prayer to bring *prana* from the old material body to the new special body of his that he will use for worshipping the Deity — *indriya* (senses), *vak* (speech), *manas* (mind), *srotra* (hearing), *sukhani chiram* (“lasting happiness”).

*om am hrim kraum yam ram lan vam sam sham sam ham ham sah so'ham mama prana iha pranah
evam om am hrim kraum yam ram lan vam sam sham sam ham ham sah so'ham mama prana iha pranah
mama jiva iha sthitah, mama sarvendriyani
mama van manas chaksu srotra ghrana prana iha gatya sukham chiram tisthantu svaha*

“Let my *prana* from my old body come here now, in this new body. May my soul, all my senses etc, live happily and long.”

In a process that is similar to the installation of the Jagannatha Deities during the Navakalevara ritual, the worshiper then proceeds to build the external layers of this spiritual body – blood, flesh, etc, by applying the alphabets (*varnas* or *matrikas*) associated with each substance. With *pranayama* he then installs Vishnu on his heart by inhaling (*puraka*), Shiva on his forehead by holding breath (*kumbhaka*) and Brahma on his navel, by exhaling (*rechaka*). The *rechaka* generates fire, which in turn generates water, which generates earth. The different parts of the body are then sanctified with the Matrika nyasa system: the vowels with *anusvara* and *visarga* of Sanskrit alphabet are placed with *bindu* (*bija*) on forehead, face, eyes, cheeks, lips, teeth, head and mouth cavity.

The Sanskrit consonants from *kam* to *sam* are placed in arms, elbows, wrists, fingers, right and left sides, back, navel, abdomen, heart, shoulders. *Sam* is placed from heart to right palm, *ham* from heart to left palm, *ksam* from heart to mouth. Every letter is honored as a divine manifestation of sound, with the words *Om namah*. The *matrikas* are placed on different parts of the body, internally on the chakras and externally on the various limbs: the entire body is visualized as a large lotus flower with *matrikas* on each petal.

The external placement of the syllables starts with meditation on *vach*. The worshiper touches each part of his body with fingers or with a flower held in the fingers.

After manifesting the 24 *tattvas* within his spiritual body, the worshiper now installs the various forms of the Devas and Shaktis (*devata nyasa*) within his body:

the *pujaka* who worships Jagannatha applies the Kesavadi nyasa,
the *pujaka* who worships Baladeva applies the Srikanthadi nyasa, and
the *pujaka* who worships Subhadra applies the Kala nyasa.

Each Nyasa includes 50 aspects of the Deity, each associated with a *matrika*. For example, in the worship of Jagannatha, the divine manifestation of Keshava is applied on the forehead with the letter *am*, Narayana is applied on the face with the letter *aam*, etc.

While the Kesavadi nyasa and the Srikanthadi nyasa also include the respective Shaktis, the Kala nyasa of Subhadra does not include their male counterparts.

Asana suddhi

Before starting the worship, the Sevaka offers homage to Mother Earth, the Adhara Shakti on which everything rests (*adhara sakti pranama, astraya phat*). He purifies his sitting place with the mantras called *asana suddhi* and snapping fingers twice around the head to dispel “bad vibrations”. The *pujaka* then offers *pranam* to 5 generations of gurus to his left, to Ganesha on his right, to Durga Devi in front of him, to Shiva Kshetrapala behind himself, asking for help and protection during his worship. Finally, he creates a symbolic protective cage invoking fire and water.

Atma pitha puja

After installing the manifestations of the Divine within his body, thus transforming his body into the *yantra* of the Deity, the worshiper meditates on his *ista devata*, the Deity he worships. This process is called *bhavana chatustaya*. The shoulders and thighs are installed as the four corners of the *pitha* – the place of appearance of the Deity. The mouth, sides and waist are the 4 cardinal points, the heart is the 8-petal lotus, and the cave of the heart (*hridaya guha*) becomes the *garbha griha* of the Deity.

The worshiper offers homage to the 8 Shaktis of Vishnu who reside on the 8 petals. Then he offers homage in the center, to Bhagavan:

*om namo bhagavate vishnave sarvabhutatmane vasudevaya
sarvatma samyoga padma pithatmane namah*

He then worships Jagannatha’s flute on His lips, the *vanamala* (garland of forest flowers) on His heart, and the *srivatsa* (the symbol of Lakshmi) on His chest.

The Pitha Puja consists in installing the abodes of the Lord on one’s body starting from *muladhara*: *ardhasakti, prakrti, kurma, ananta, prithvi, kshira samudra, svetadvipa, manimandapa, kalpavriksha, manivedika* and *ratnasimhasana*. Dharma is installed on right shoulder, Jnana on the left shoulder, Vairagya on the right side of the body, Aisvarya on the left side, etc. Next the Devata or Murtipanjara nyasa is performed, placing forms of Deity and Shakti in the body, according to the Jagannath kesavadi nyasa, Balabhadra kanthadi nyasa, Subhadra kala nyasa. The *chatur vyuha upasana* invokes the presence of Sankarshana, Vasudeva, Pradyumna, Aniruddha. The Srikanthadi nyasa, performed for Balabhadra, consists in installing Shiva Shakti (Ardhanarisvara) in the body of the worshiper. In this way the whole body of the worshiper becomes completely sanctified as a *yantra*. At this point the worshiper offers *pushpanjali* 5 times to the *yantra* composed by his body. In the middle of the *yantra* of the body there is the heart as the center of the lotus, where the syllable *om* shines like a burning lamp, emanating the *tejas* or power that is identified with the *mula mantra* of the Deity worshiped.

Through the life air or *prana*, this power or *tejas* goes out from the finger tips: the worshiper consecrates his hands with the Kara nyasa again. Then with the Vyapini mudra he places the *mantra tejas* on his own spiritual body 3 times. The worshiper visualizes the meaning of the mantras, meditating on his *ista devata* with Their *dhyana mantra*, then he puts the syllables of the *mantra*, each preceded by the syllable *om* (*pranava omkara*) and the specific *matrika* on each part of the body.

Devata pitha puja

The same process is repeated on the body of the Deity, as also the body of the Deity is purified before invoking the divine presence. This basically means that the Deity is installed anew by the *pujaka* every time the worship cycle starts, and uninstalled at the end of each cycle. After taking permission from the Deity by holding flowers in his hands, the *pujaka* draws the Deity’s *yantra* in meditation into the heart of the *vigraha* with sandalwood paste, or mentally with flowers. The worshiper visualizes the mantra of the Deity and meditates on its meaning. For example, he sees Jagannatha sitting under the Kalpavriksha, on the eight petal lotus. When the image is steady, the *pujaka* takes the *tejas* of the Deity out of his own heart by using his *prana* and through the *sushumna* to his own forehead. Holding up his hand with flowers, he brings down the *tejas* of the Deity into the flowers with *prana* through his right nostril, then he puts the flowers on the head of the *vigraha*. Thus he transfers the divine *tejas* of the Deity living in his own heart onto the *vigraha* in front of him.

The Deity descends into the *vigraha* through the crown *chakra* of the *vigraha* and sits in the heart of the *yantra* drawn by the *pujaka* on the image – like a lamp is lighted by another lamp (*dipad dipantaram yatha*). The worshiper chants the *prana pratistha mantra* four times to make the *vigraha* a “*saguna rupa*”, endowing it with *prana*, *jiva*, *indriya* and *karmendriya*. After welcoming the Deity as an honored guest and offering a complete reception worship, the *pujaka* will withdraw the *tejas* of the Deity again into his own heart at the end of the *puja* (a process called *udvahana*). The worshiper installs the 12 forms of Vishnu within the *vigraha*, accompanied by the Adityas in the following way:

Keshava is accompanied by Dhatri

Narayana is accompanied by Aryaman

Madhava is accompanied by Mitra

Govinda is accompanied by Varuna

Vishnu is accompanied by Amsa

Madhusudana is accompanied by Bhaya

Trivikrama is accompanied by Vivasvan

Vamana is accompanied by Indra

Sridhara is accompanied by Pushana

Hrishikesha is accompanied by Parjanya

Padmanabha is accompanied by Tvastra

Damodara is accompanied by Vishnu

These 12 forms particular of Vishnu also give their names to the months of the calendar.

Manasa puja and Bahir yaga

Then the Sevaka meditates on the Deity and worships the Deity with the various *upacharas* in his meditation. He performs *pranayama* and chants 10 times the Gayatri mantra of the Deity he is worshipping. The Gayatri mantra for Jagannatha is *narayanaya vidmahe vasudevaya dhimahi tan no vishnu prachodayat*. The Gayatri mantra for Balabhadra is *balabhadraya vidmahe vasudevaya dhimahi tan ho halo prachodayat*. The Gayatri mantra for Subhadra is *narayanayi vidmahe bhuvanesvaryai dhimahi tan no devi prachodayat*. The Gayatri mantra for Sudarshana is *sudarshanaya vidmahe heto rajaya dhimahi tan no chakro prachodayat*

For Jagannatha there are 4 *dhyanas* (meditations), according to the specific time of worship.

In the morning Jagannatha is a child playing in the courtyard of His father Nanda and holding butter in His hand, in the afternoon He sits on a white lotus flower under a Kalpavriksha in Vrindavana with His friends, the *gopas* and *gopis*. In the evening He sits on a deer skin placed on a *pith* in the garden in Dvaraka, instructing Narada and others, and in the night He dances with the *gopis* on the bank of the Yamuna.

For the worship of Balabhadra and Subhadra there are similar meditations.

After visualizing his *ista devata* in that particular time of the day, the Sevaka performs a fire sacrifice in his heart to this Lord, by using *muladhara chakra* as the *yajna vedi* (platform for the *homa*) and the *manas* (mind) as ladle for offering clarified butter into the fire of the *tejas* of his *ista devata*. In the process all his bad qualities – pride, untruth, wickedness, passions, desires, anger, delusion, envy etc – are reduced to ashes. After this long preparation, he starts the external worship by preparing the sitting place: he draws a *mandala* on the ground, and invokes the form of fire (*vahni mandala*),

He then places the conchshell on the *mandala*, washes the conchshell then chants the protective mantras (*astraya phat*) offering raw rice, *kusha* grass, sesame seeds, sandalwood paste and flowers with the *mantra hridayaya namah*, and pours ordinary water with reverse *matrikas*. Then he installs all *tirthas* in the conchshell with the *ankusha mudra* and several other *mudras*, meditating on the base of the conchshell as the *agni mandala* and evoking its 10 *kalas* or emanations, the conch itself as *surya mandala* with its 12 *kalas*, and the water contained in it as *soma mandala* with its 16 *kalas*. The water is thus turned into nectar (*amrita*). The worshiper then sprinkles *arghya* – water with sandalwood paste and flowers – by chanting the 50 *matrikas* in reverse order to purify himself and the articles just before offering them. All these steps of the rituals are accompanied by *mudras* (sacred gestures of the hands).

Mantras

Each of the Deities is worshiped with particular *mantras*. For example, Jagannatha is worshiped with the *Narayana sukta*, Baladeva with the *Purusha sukta*, Subhadra with the *Sri sukta*, and Sudarshana with the *Pavamana sukta*. As we have already mentioned in previous chapters, Jagannatha is worshiped as Vishnu/Krishna. Therefore His main mantra (18 syllables) is: *klm krsnaya govindaya gopi jana vallabhaya svaha*.

The concept of Baladeva's worship expressed in the *Pancharatra* and *Agamas* is strongly Shaivite, although many devotees prefer to meditate on Balarama as the elder brother of Krishna in the Krishna lila. His main mantra (12 syllables) is: *om namo bhagavate vasudevaya*.

Sudarshana is worshiped as Narasimha with the Sahasrara mantra: *om sahasrara hrum phat*.

Subhadra or Bhuvaneshvari is even more complex and inclusive, being worshiped both as Lakshmi and Durga (Vimala). This is particularly interesting as in ancient monarchies the king used to marry his own sister born from the same father but from another mother. Subhadra's main mantra is 1 syllable only: *hrim*. Another mantra for Subhadra is: *ambe ambike ambalike namah nayat kaschana subhadrika kampilya vasini*. According to the *pancharatra* concept, well known in south India, Vishnu has two wives – Bhu Devi and Sri Devi. Bhu Devi, who is mother Earth or Sarasvati, is known as Visvadhatri or Dhara, while Sri Devi is Vasudha or Dharitri. In the temple of Jagannatha in Puri there are separate shrines for Sarasvati and Lakshmi in the north-west side of the temple. Lakshmi Devi is worshiped with the bija mantra *srim*.

Upacharas

Upachara samksara is the procedure of worship for presenting the items. Each *upachara* has specific mantras used to introduce the worship article – for example *idam asanam*, “here is the seat”, or *idam pushpam*, “here are the flowers”. More complex mantras are also used, for example this *mantra* for presenting the clothes:

maya chitra patacchamanja guhya urutejasa, niravarana vijnana vastrante kalpayamy aham

The worship is based on the principles of calling the Lord, offering Him a seat and a welcome, and approaching Him to offer service. Then entertaining Him for some time in a pleasing manner and finally accepting His *prasadam*. The techniques for the external worship to the Deities are classified according to the number of *upacharas*, which are gross, subtle and symbolic. They can be 5, 8 or 16, for more complex worship. The *puja* articles are kept on the right of the worshiper, on a white cloth. One by one, they are turned into *amrita* by *mantras* and *mudras*.

The bell is purified before being rung (*ghanta samskara*).

The five items (*pancha upachara*) are:

1. *gandha*, perfumed substances like sandalwood paste
2. *pushpa*, flowers
3. *dhupa*, incense
4. *dipa*, lamp
5. *naivedya*, foods

This basic *pancha upachara* is offered by the pilgrims to the Deity as *archa avatara*.

The *dipa* (lamp, usually a small clay lamp with long *ghi* wicks) and *dhupa* (incense sticks) are offered directly by the pilgrims near the Garuda stambha in the Nata mandapa, while *pushpa* (flowers), *gandha* (sandalwood paste) and *naivedya* (food) may be handed to the priest together with a small *dakshina* (money offering). The food to be offered must be purchased from the temple store, because no food from outside is acceptable.

The eight items (*asta upachara*) are:

1. *avahana*, invitation
2. *samsthapana* or *sthapana*, placement or offering a seat
3. *sannidhana*, approaching
4. *sannirodhana*, asking to stay till the end
5. *sammukhikarana*, pleasing

6. *avagunthana*, covering or veiling with *mudras*
7. *amritikarana*, transforming the food into nectar
8. *paramikarana*, transforming the nectar into supreme energy

All these are supported by the appropriate *mudras*.

The sixteen items (*sodasa upacharas*) are:

1. *asana*, offering five flowers with *padma mudra*, and *tulasi* leaves
2. *svagata*, prayers of welcome, with ten flowers and welcome *mudra*
3. *padya*, water in a metal bowl for washing the feet; the water is sprayed on the feet of the *vigraha*
4. *arghya*, water for refreshment containing sandalwood paste and flowers, sprinkled on the head and face of the Deity
5. *achamanya*, water in a metal bowl for rinsing the mouth, accompanied by a handkerchief for drying
6. *madhuparka* or *panchamrita*, a mixture of yogurt, milk, *ghi* and honey in a silver or brass container, generally offered to guests at their arrival in a house as a welcome gesture
7. *achamaniya* again
8. *snana*, symbolic bath by pouring a little water from the conchshell on a mirror fixed in a bowl, where the image of the Deity is reflected
9. *vastra*, a fresh dress composed by two pieces (one on the waist, the other on the shoulders), and a *yajna upavita* (sacred thread)
10. *abharana*, one or two ornaments fixed on the dress
11. *gandha*, scent, generally sandalwood paste with camphor or *sindhur*, applied on the forehead, chest and arms
12. *pushpa*, flowers and *tulasi* leaves, placed on the Deities' head, heart and feet

Now the companions (*parsva devatas*) of the Deity are worshiped (*avarana puja*), then a bell is purified and rung with the left hand.

13. *dhupa*, incense: several fragrant ingredients are mixed and burned in a container directed to the face of the Deities
14. *dipa*, a lamp of seven cotton wicks with *ghi*, offered in three slow circles, with *mantra* and *mudra*
15. *naivedya*, food offering, the most important and complex of all *upacharas*; it is usually consisting of 6 types of food (*bhaksya*, *bhojya*, *chosya*, *lehya*, *charvya*, *peya* – to be swallowed, nibbled, sucked, licked, chewed and drunk)
16. *vandana*, praise and prayers

A special feature of Jagannatha's worship is the *raja upachara*, the special articles of worship characteristic of the royal court:

1. *chatra* (the royal umbrella)
2. *chamara* (the yak fly whisk)
3. *vyajana* (fan)
4. *darpana* (mirror)
5. *paduka* (sandals)
6. *gita* (songs)
7. *nritya* (dance)

These *upacharas* are also offered together with appropriate *mantras* and *mudras*.

Avarana puja

The worship is offered not only to the main Deities, but also to Their associates (*amsa*) in seven circles (*mandalas*), as follows:

Jagannatha

1. Dama, Sudama, Vasudama, Kinkini
2. Hridaya, Siras, Sikha, Kavacha, Astra
3. the eight main wives of Krishna: Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Nagnajiti, Sunanda, Mitravinda, Sulakshana, Sushila

4. Vasudeva and Devaki, Nanda and Yasoda, Balabhadra, Subhadra, *gopis (sakhis)* and *gopas (sakhas)*
 5. the five Kalpa Vrikshas in Goloka
 6. the three great pure devotees (Narada, Akrura, Daruka)
 7. all the Diggpalas (protectors of the directions) with weapons, carriers and family members
- Balabhadra
1. the *mula mantra* syllables
 2. the twelve forms of Vishnu
 3. the Shaktis of Vishnu
 4. the four *atmas*
 5. the Lord Himself
 6. the Diggpalas
 7. the Ayudhas of Baladeva (*hala* or pickaxe, *musala* or club, *langala* or plough)
- Subhadra
1. different syllables of *hrim*
 2. Shaktis in different forms and directions
 3. the seven forms of Shakti
 4. the seventeen forms of Shakti
 5. the eight forms of Shakti with syllable vowels
 6. the Diggpalas
 7. the Ayudhas of Bhubanesvari (*padma* or lotus, *pasa* or snake, *ankusa* or goad)

Naivedya

The offering of food and connected worship rituals are the most important part of the worship. The cost of the Bhoga Mandapa offerings is not paid by the Government of Temple Administration, but it is covered by the various Mathas, that supply rice, wheat, dal, ghee, molasses, sugar, *suji* (semolina), black pepper, gram, mung dal, milk, curd, masala, turmeric, cumin, salt, *hingu* (asafetida), *besan* (chickpea flour), vegetable oil, coconuts, vegetables and firewood for the cooking. After the offerings, the food is sold to the general public in Ananda Bazar by the Mathas. According to the demand, the Bhoga Mandapa offering is done two or three times a day. The ingredients are kept in the store on the back of the kitchen.

The cooks are required to eat their meal before going to the temple kitchen for their service, so that “they will not hunger after the food” they are preparing. Besides, they must keep a cloth tied over their mouth, to avoid any contamination of the food. It is said that if the food is polluted in any way, the clay pots will break before the food is offered.

During the dressing of the Deities in the morning, the first Bhoga offering is placed within the Garbha griha, in three rectangles drawn with colored powders. A small portion of Bhoga is placed in a metal plate and put on the Ratnavedi with the other *upachara* articles (water, flowers, lamp, etc), while the rest is kept on the ground in clay pots. The preparation of the day food offering is also very complex. Ten *maha mudras*, plus the *mula mantra* and *astra mantra (svaha)* are used. The *pujaka* looks at the food with *mudras* and places a protection on it with the *astra mantra*. The *mula mantra (yam)* symbolizing Vayu is used to blow away impurities, then water is sprinkled, then again Vayu dries it. With the right hand the Agni mantra (*ram*) is used to burn the matter to ashes, and the Varuna mantra (*vam*) is used to recreate it as nectar.

At this point the Sevaka offers *padya* and *achamaniya* to the Deity and honors the food with an offering of sandalwood paste, rice and flower, chanting the *mantra* “*sri krishnaya sangopangaya sarvatmane bhagavate idam naivedyam svaha*”. Then he calls down the *tejas* from the mouth of the Deity, touches the food with his hand and chants the *mula mantra* eight times. Holding flowers in his hand, he asks the Deity to take the food. Then he offers some drops of water saying *amrtapastaranamasi* and performs the five *grasa mudras* offering five morsels of food to strengthen the five Pranas (*pranaya svaha, apanaya svaha, vyanaya svaha, udannaya svaha, samanaya svaha*). Then he chants the *mula mantra* on *japa* for 54 or 108 times. Then he offers the drinking water, then the nectar (some drops from another container of water, transformed by the mantra *amrtapidhanamasi*).

He then offers *achamana*, dries the face of the Lord with a towel, then offers *tambula* (rolled betel leaf). The food offering is thus completed. The doors to the Ratna vedi are opened, the *arati* is offered with seven flames of burning camphor in a metal plate, then flowers and *vandanam* (offering homage) are offered. The *arati* is performed to the accompaniment of music in the Nata Mandapa.

To complete the worship, the *pujaka* meditates on the Deity as pure consciousness and withdraws the divine *tejas* into his own heart. He first takes the offered flowers in his hand, puts them to the right nostril of the *vighraha* so that the *tejas* will descend into them, and then raises the flowers to his own left nostril and “inspires” the divine *tejas* back into his own heart. The *samarpani mudra* closes the completion of the ritual.

The food offered to Jagannatha is sent to the shrine of Vimala Devi for a short *puja*, after which it is considered *mahaprasada*. Finally, the *pujaka* takes some of the offered flowers on his body and accepts the remnants of the offerings (lamp, flowers, sandalwood paste, etc) and some *mahaprasadam*; the *mahaprasadam* is traditionally distributed to the Sevakas and the devotees in the temple and consumed immediately. An important part of the worship consists in asking forgiveness for any mistakes committed in the process, and the dedication of the merit of the *puja* to Hari Himself.

Daily worship schedule

The regular worship schedule for Jagannatha temple is as follows. The timings are only indicative, because the rituals can often be late, due to many planned and unplanned factors. For those who are allowed into the temple, the general Darshana time is during Sahana Mela, generally between 9 to 10 am. There is also a special Darshana opportunity on payment of a ticket, called Parimanika Darshana, at Mangala Arati, Abakasha (Snana), Sandhya Arati and Chandana Lagi.

5.00 am Dvara phita (opening of doors) and Bhitara Shodha

This ritual must be completed at or before 5.00 am. From the Ekadasi after Dashara on Asvina dasami to Kartika purnima, and from Dhanu Sankranti to Makara Sankranti in the month of Pausa, about from 14 December to 14 January, the doors open at 2 or 3 am, while it is still dark.

The following Sevayats are employed for the following rituals:

One temple attendant on behalf of the King, Pratihari, Bhattarcha Mohapatra, Muduli, Akhanda Mekapa, Palia Mekapa, Khataseja Mekapa, Palia Suarabadu, Khuntia, Garabadu, Balitadeba Loka, Pushpalaka. For the ritual the following materials are required: camphor, *pithu* (a dough made with rice flour), lamp and *ghi*, a stand for the lamp, a pot filled with water (*panijhari*), oil and a torch. The rice paste is kept in a silver bowl and used during the Arati. The cotton used for the lamp wicks is provided by the wife of the Narayana Mekapa of Kundeibenta Sahi, who gets a monthly compensation from the king’s superintendent and a daily share of the *mahaprasada*. A quantity of thirteen liters of *ghi* is supplied daily to the Palia Mekapa by the superintendent for the Aratis, but the Sevayats usually get a share of it and take it home. The oil for the lamps is supplied to the Akhanda Mekapa. The materials for lighting the torch are supplied by Emar Math, Jagannatha Vallabha Math, Oriya Matha and Mangu Math.

The previous night, the inner precincts of the temple are cleaned and the Kalahata Dvara (Chamu Duara) and the Jaya Vijaya Dvara are locked and the lock is covered with clay. The gates of the four directions; Simha Dvara in the East, Asva Dvara in the South, Hasti Dvara in the North and Vyaghra Dvara in the west are thoroughly sealed and inspected. Four guards are appointed at each gate.

Early in the morning, the smaller gates also known as Chora Dvara (secret door) which are a part of the main gates of the four directions are opened for the Sevayats only. The Pratihari, Bhattarcha Mohapatra, Muduli, Akhanda Mekapa and Palia Mekapa arrive in the morning to open the doors. They start from the South Gate. Once the Bhattarcha Mohapatra enters the inner boundary of the temple, the main doors are opened. These five Sevayats arrive at the Jaya Vijaya Dvara and inspect the lock. Then the Muduli opens the lock after receiving the key from the Talichu Mohapatra. Everyone now enters the Jaya Vijaya Dvara and close it from inside. Then they inspect the lock of the Kalahata Dwara and then the Pratihari calls on “Manima” and the Kalahata Dvara (Chamu Dwara) is opened. The Akhanda and Palia Mekapa light 9 lamps with oil.

Then the Jaya Vijaya Dvara is slightly opened from inside. The Khata Seja Mekapa, Palia Suara Badu, Garabadu and Khuntia enter inside. The Khata Seja Mekapa removes the Ratna palanka (“jewel bed”) and carries it into the storeroom. The Jaya Vijaya Dvara and the inner southern gate are finally opened completely. The night offering (coconut, scented water and *tambula*) is also removed, then the Deity room is cleaned. Sometimes on festival days the rituals schedule carries on into the night and the Deities are not put to rest. In this case, there is no need to perform the Dvara pitha ritual in the morning. After the awakening of the Deities and before the Arati, the Pahali bhoga is offered (mainly milk and milk sweets) with the assistance of the Palia Suarabadu.

The Bhitarcha Mohapatra stands before Jagannatha and one Palia Pushpalakaas stands before Balabhadra and Subhadra each. After washing their hands with the water given by the Garabadu, these three Sevayats perform the Mangala Arati with twenty-one wicks camphor lamps and then with Pithu Bati (the lamp made with rice dough and cotton wicks). After the Arati is completed, the rice dough lamp and camphor residues are distributed as *prasadam*. Only the Bhitarcha Mohapatra is supposed to do the Arati of Jagannath. If he is absent due to unavoidable circumstances, then the Talichu Mohapatra can do the Arati.

5.30 - 6.00 am Mailama (undressing)

The Sevakas required for this ritual are:

3 Pushpalakas, Khuntia, Changada Mekapa, Dhoba (washerman)

The Bhitarcha Mohapatra leaves after Mangala Arati. The three Pushpalakas, the Kunthia, the Changada Mekapa and the Dhoba enter the Deity room. The Bhitarcha Mahapatra is replaced by another Pushpalaka as he leaves for his other duties. The Pushpalakas climb onto the Ratna Simhasana and touch the body of the Deities after paying obeisances to them. Then they remove the night dress of the Deities (*bada sringara*) and the Changada Mekapa gives the clothes to the Dhoba Sevaka (who is actually a *brahmana*), who will wash the clothes at a tank near Bata Ganesha.

The old flower decorations are also removed and divided. After sending the *adhara* (the neck garland) of Balabhadra, Jagannatha and Subhadra respectively to the shrines to Vimala, Lakshmi and Bhubanesvari, and the *nakha tulasi*, the *nakha chana* and the *guna* (different types of nose ornaments), some of the *adhara*, the small *padaka* decorating the head of Jagannatha go to the king’s palace carried by the Mudirasta and are delivered to the queen. The rest is distributed to the Khuntias and to the Pushpalakas who will sell them to devotees. While the night dress is removed, one Kunthia stands with a *khandua pata* (a silk sari) to hide the bodies of the Deities.

The Changada Mekapa stands with a basket containing the fresh clothes taken from the store room, puts the bathing dress on the Deities – a thin white cotton dress constituted by two pieces. The clothes carried in from the store room are four *tadapas*, two *uttariyas* and one *khandua pata*.

The Pushpalakas dress the Deities with the bathing towels, and the bathing ritual starts.

6.00 Mangala arati

The Bhitarcha Mahapatra and two Pushpalakas stand below the Ratna vedi and offer a lamp of twenty-one *ghi* wicks and then a *ghi* and camphor lamp contained in a lump of dough (*pistaka arati*). The daily amount of camphor (5 grams) to be used for this ritual is kept in the care of the Bandhara Mekapa. Generally the Mangala arati is attended by about 200 devotees and visitors, but on special occasions the number of attendance is much higher. During Mangala arati devotees sing the Bhajan song “Jay Jagadisha Hare”, to the accompaniment of musical instruments such as *mridanga* (small drum), *pakhaja* (big drum), *jhanja* (big brass cymbals), and *jhumuka* (a type of rattle).

During the month of January, when Lakshmi Devi goes to Her father’s house (the ocean) for visiting Her family, the cooking is entrusted to Vimala Devi. In this period there is an additional food offering at dawn, called Pahili Bhoga, which is generally not distributed to devotees. It consists of “baby food”, like very soft *kichedi* and small balls of *biri dal*.

6.00 – 6.30 am Abakasha (bathing)

Usually the ritual bathing ceremony for the Deities is called *snana*, but in Puri it is called Abakasha.

The Sevakas required for this ritual are: Pushpalaka, Suarabadu, Pani Apata, Khatuli Sevaka, Darpania, Mukha pakhala pratihari, Mukha pakhala pushpalaka, Amala ghatuari, Bhandara Mekap, Mahabhoi, Jyotisha Khuri nayaka. The Deity room (*pokharia*) is cleaned by the Suar Badu with water provided by the Paniapata; then the Suar Badu places three wooden planks before the three main Deities and the Khatuli Sevaka places three *khatulis* (wooden thrones) for the Deities.

The Mukhapakhala Pratihari arranges three plates with the items required for the Deities' bath: flowers and *tulasi*, water, *amla*, sandalwood paste, camphor, *panchamrita*, along with three brushes, tongue scrapers and twigs that are used as toothbrushes (*muturi dantakathi*). The Amala Ghatuari is in charge of the *amla*, while the camphor is entrusted to the Bhandara Mekapa, the sandalwood by the Mukhapakhala Pushpalaka.

The Darpania places the three mirrors near the plates; three pots of water are brought in along with a separate pot of water mixed with camphor. The curd (yogurt) provided by the Mahabhoi is added to the bathing water. Then the Mukhapakhala Pratihari calls the three Pushpalakas to sit for the Puja. These symbolically brush the Deities' teeth and scrape Their tongues. Then the water mixed with camphor, curd, *amla* and *chandana* is poured over the mirrors reflecting the form of the Deities. This is known as Bimba Snana. The Deities themselves are actually bathed only once a year during the Snana yatra. The discarded bath water is distributed as *prasadam*. The Gara Badu keeps the silver water pot near the three sitting pedestals and the Darpania holds the mirrors near them.

During the bathing and dressing ritual the temple astrologer, called Jyotisha Khuri Nayaka, reads the almanac and the forecast for the day. When necessary, the worship of the *nakshatras* (constellations) is conducted after Madhyana Dhupa, with the cooperation of the Chadau Karana. After the bathing of the Deities is completed, the Garuda Sevaka (Palia Chunara) gets the *palia churana* water (the water from the Deities' bath) and gives the ritual bath to Garuda. The bathing ritual is not precisely private. Generally people are not allowed inside the inner room, but it is possible to get inside by paying a certain amount of money.

6.45 – 7.00 am Mailama

The following Sevayats are required for this ritual:

Pushpalaka, Changada Mekapa, Akhanda Mekapa, Dhoba, Suarabadu

The Changada Mekap brings the fresh clothes (*patta vastra* or tussar silk cloth) and ornaments for the day and the Pushpalakas dress Bada Thakura, Subhadra, Jagannath, Sudarshan, Madhava, Sridevi and Bhudevi. The Akhanda Mekapa lights the Akhanda Dipa after Abakasha. This Akhanda Dipa is kept burning all day until the deities retire to bed. After the ritual is over, the Suara Badu cleans the area.

7.00 –8.00 am Sahana Mela or Sadharana Darshana

After completing the dressing ritual, the Sevakas get ready for the public Darshana.

The Sevakas needed are:

Pushpalaka, Khuntia, Mekapa, Tadau Pattnaik, Gochikara, Partihari, Suara Badu, Temple police officer

The three Pushpalakas remain sitting on the Ratna Simhasana with the Deities, while three Kunthias and three Mekapas stand below the Simhasana. The king's superintendent or Pratihari and three police officers supervise the Hundi or Pindika (where donations are collected) and the Tadau Pattanayaka and the Gochhikara are also present to assist. The Dvara Ghara Pratihari announces the Sahana mela, the doors are opened and the devotees are freely allowed in the *pokharia*.

The time limit for the Sahana Mela depends on the number of devotees present. Three brass pots are kept below the Deities; the pilgrims put their gold or money offerings into the pots or on the Simhasana: this offering is called *pindia*. This money is usually taken by the Sevakas. The Sahana mela is supposed to be held twice a day, except for the month of Kartika and important festival days when the Sahana mela is held only after the Sandhya puja. During December-January from Dhanu Sankranti till Makar Sankranti, Sahana Mela takes place after Sakala Dhupa. If, by mistake, anyone (including the Temple Sevakas other than the Palia Pushpalakas and the Puja Panda) touches the Deities or if spit, vomit, blood, urine or stool is found anywhere inside the temple compound, then the Puja Pandas perform the Mahasana to the Deities with Panchamrita (a mixture of milk, yogurt, jaggery, *ghi* or butter and honey), and the temple room is thoroughly washed up to the Jaya Vijaya Dvara. If spit, vomit, blood, urine or stool etc is found inside the Pokaria (Garbha Griha) a more complex and elaborate ritual of Mahasana is performed, known as Bada Mahasana, where the dresses of the Deities are changed.

Compensation will be exacted from the culprit (or if the culprit is not found, the temple management will pay the fine). For this reason, small children are usually not allowed near the Deities.

8.00 am Mailama and Vesha lagi

After the Sahana Mela, or the “festival of reunion” of the Lord with His devotees, the Deities’ dress is changed again by the Pasupalakas in the ceremony called Vesa lagi. The change of dress is performed at least five times a day, and is accompanied by the offering of sandalwood paste and the ritual invocation (“Manima! Manima!”).

During this ritual, devotees can watch from a distance in a sort of royal “interview” (*bhitara katha*).

The outfit will be according to the season and day and all outfits are accompanied by a variety of ornaments. For references to Vesas (outfits) please see the chapter describing them in detail.

8.30 Rosha Homa

After the Deities have been bathed, and while They are being dressed, the temple servants and priests proceed to perform the household duties of Jagannatha, or the daily worship routine in the name of Jagannatha, called Rosha Homa, Surya Puja and Dvarapala Puja. These are private rituals where visitors are not usually allowed to assist. The Sevakas needed for this ritual are:

Dhopakhalia, Deula Purohita or Palia Pujapanda, Nikapa

This ritual takes place daily in the kitchen near the clay stoves. Before the puja starts, the Dhopakhalia removes the ashes of the previous day’s cooking and cleans the kitchen with water. Generally the Deula Purohita does the Rosha Homa, but the Puja Panda can also do it. This is a fire sacrifice that is done to start the daily cooking for the deities. The priest offers twelve *ahutis* in the *homa*, symbolizing the twelve *samskaras* in Krishna’s life (including *jata karma*, *upanayana* and *vivaha*). When the *homa* is completed, the cooks pray Lakshmi Devi and Ganesha for a better taste of the food and the removal of obstacles to service.

8.45 Surya Puja

The Sevakas required for this ritual are:

Nikapa, the same Deula Purohita or Puja Panda who conducted the Rosha Homa, Palia Patri

The Palia Patri arranges the materials for the *puja* like flowers, Chandan, Bell, etc. The Deula Purohita or the Puja Panda performs the Surya Puja in the Surya Temple near the Mukti mandapa.

9.00 Dvarapala Puja

After Surya Puja, the same Deula Purohita or Puja Panda does the Dvarapala puja for Jaya Vijaya at the Jaya Vijaya Dwara. The Palia Patri arranges the Puja articles. During this Puja, no one is allowed to at the Jaya Vijaya Dvara. If, by mistake, someone comes to the Jaya Vijaya Dvara, then Mahasnana is done and the *puja* is performed afresh.

9.00 am Gopala vallabha bhoga

The Sevakas required for this ritual are:

Sudu Suara, Vallabha Jogania, Chaka Paika, Suara Badu, Patri Badu, Gara Badu, Palia Maha Suara, Pradhana Sevaka, three Puja Pandas

This bhoga offering takes place in the Anasara pindi. The Sudha Suar prepares the *panchamrita*, collects *puja* materials, and places the *purna kumbha*; the Suara Badu cleans the Deity room (*pokharia*) with water, the Patri Badu dries the floor and prepares the *puja* materials for the Puja Panda, the Gara Badu brings the water for the *puja*, the Vallabha Joganya brings the food to be offered (arranged on the previous night).

The Palia Maha Suara places the plates with the offering and then the Pradhan Sevaka invites the three Puja Pandas to conduct the rituals. This is done after the Pratihari ties a cloth called *tera* to cover the rituals from public view. Then the Puja Pandas do the offerings with *pancha upachara*. The *puja* is executed in the *anabasara pindi* and includes five *upacharas*.

The food offered consists in 44 oli pots of puffed rice (*paga khai*), 228 oli pots of small coconut shreds (*sana naria patti*), 29 oli pots of big coconut shreds (*bada naria patti*), 3 sara plates of ripe bananas, 3 sara plates of coconut pieces (*pai khurdi naria*), 400 gr of *dahi* (yogurt), 12 oli pots of coconut sweets (*kora*) and 12 oli pots of balls of solidified milk (*khua laddu*) are offered. Once the offering included *kuamanda*, pancakes and *rabri*, but the system was stopped in 1988; now they are offered in Jagamohana after Vallabha. On Dola Purnima and Snana Purnima, the Gopalavallabha Bhoga takes place along with the Pahili Bhoga, while on Dola Purnima and Snana Purnima, the Gopalavallabha bhoga is offered during Sakala Dhupa. During Anavasara (the 15 days between Snana yatra and Ratha yatra) the Vallabha bhoga is skipped. After the Gopala vallabha bhoga is completed, the Garbha griha is cleaned again, then the Lord sits to receive His devotees before a curtain called *tera* is drawn over the sandalwood rail entrance for the Sakala Dhupa Bhoga offering.

10.00 am Sakala dhupa, Raja Bhoga or Sankuri Bhoga

The name of this morning (*sakala*) offering is due to the fact that previously its expenditures were paid by the Raja (King).

The Sevakas required are:

Suara Badu, Dhukudi dvara Pratihari, Pani Apata, Pradhan Sevaka, Puja Panda, Pratihari, Palia Maha Suara, Patri Badu, Rosha Paika, Palia Patri, Gara Badu, Changada Mekapa, Patri Badu, Muduli, Chandana Ghatuari, Parikhya Badu, Palia Mekapa, Palia Khuntia, Raja Guru, Palia Mahari (Dancer/singer), Palia Madeli (Percussionist), Jhanjapita Loka, who plays the Jhanja (big brass cymbals), Bojhia, Sudusuara, Purana Panda, Gochikara, Dakshina Dvara Pratihari, Dvuri Nayaka, Ghantua, Bachanti.

Three new Puja Pandas arrive at the temple and perform the largest food offering in the day, sometimes repeated two or three times; after each offering the Deities' dresses are changed and the Arati is offered. The Sakala Dhupa ("morning Arati") is offered in the Deity room (*pokharia*) and includes worship with 16 *upacharas*. The Suara Badu cleans the entire Pokharia with water brought by the Pani Apata, then the Amania again washes the area thrice. In the meantime the Rosapaik watches the kitchen. The Pani Apata washes the utensils and hands them to the Suara Badu, who in turn washes the utensils again and places them before the four main Deities. The Pratihari verifies the *tera*; the same *tera* that was tied during Gopala vallabha offering is kept tied till the Sakala Dhupa.

The Pradhana Sevaka calls the Puja Panda, who begins drawing *mandalas* with coloured powders (*muruja*) before the four deities starting from Bada Thakura. Then the Pratihari goes to the kitchen along with the Pradhana Sevaka to call the Palia Mahasuara to bring the food offering. During this time, the Dakshina Dvara Pratihari guards the doors. The food offering, called *cheka* or *naivedya*, is brought in earthen pots and placed before the Deities. It usually consists of 20 preparations, including plain rice, *kanika* (rice cooked with sweet spices and sugar) and *kichadi*, *dalma*, *kadali bhaja* (fried banana chips), *sabjis*, *sag*, and different types of *pitha* (pancakes), such as *pitha phuli*, *matha puli*, *kanti*, *enduri*, *kakutua*. Other sweets offered at this time as *hansakeli* (one type of *laddu* made with urad dal), *jhili* (made from urad dal, chickpea flour and wheat flour), *bundia* (sweet pearls made from chickpea flour); also offered is a drink called *ada pachedi* (ginger tonic).

The Panthi Badu transfers the food offering from the pots onto the plates. The Pradhani Sevaka invites the Puja Pandas to do the offering which is done with *sodasha upachara*. The Pratiharis and Gochikaras guard the doors while the offering is done. The Ghantuas and Bajantri sound drums and perform *kirtana*, while the Pratihari watches at the Jaya Vijaya gate. Once the Maharis (Devadasis) used to dance near the Garuda stambha during this *puja*. If a pot breaks while the offering is presented, the Bhoga is called *sankhuri* (spoiled, or leftover) and cannot be offered or distributed as *prasada*.

When the Puja Pandas offer the food to the Deities, only the Maha Suara, Patri Badu, Suara Badu and Gara Badu can remain inside the Pokharia. During this, the Raja Guru stands at the Jagamohana in front of Garuda, holding a gold cane given to him by the Pradhana Sevaka. The Palia Mahari (Bahara Gayani) used to dance there and the Madeli played the Mardala, but this ritual has been stopped long since. The Purana Panda recites the *Bhagavad Gita* or *Bhagavata Purana*. After the completion of the Bhoga offering the Patri Badu calls for the Hadapa nayaka from inside and then the Pratihari opens the door. The dancing and singing stops once the inner doors are opened. The Vidia Jogania brings the *bidia tambula* (betel refreshment) to be offered. The Hadapa Nayaka hands over the bidia to the Puja Pandas in a silver bowl, who in turn offer the same to the Deities.

After the food offering the Pushpalakas change the Deities' dress, then Arati is performed. The Panti Badu provides materials for *puja*, the Changada Mekapa arranges the materials for the *puja*, the Chandana Ghatuari brings the sandalwood paste, the Palia Mekapa organizes the *puja*. The Pradhani calls the Puja Panda for *puja*, the Hadapa Nayaka provides *vidya* (instructions) or corrects the possible mistakes during the procedure. The Parikhya Badu places three mirrors in front of the three Deities. The Khuntia brings in three *tulasi* garlands and the Mekapa brings in three golden pendants. The Changada Mekapa places the clothes.

The Suara Badu brings the fire from the temple kitchen and the Patri arranges *dhupa* and *dipa* using this fire. After the *dipa* offering the inner door is closed. The Puja Panda leaves after the Aarati. Then the Bojhia carry the Bhoga from the Pokharia to outside.

11.00 am Mailama and Bhoga Mandapa offering

After the Sakala Dhupa there is another change of dress, then another food offering is presented. The Sevakas needed for Mailama and Bhoga mandapa are:

Palia Pushpalaka, Changada Mekapa, Palia Mekapa, Bhogamandapa Pratihari, Suara Badu, Bhogamandapa Dvara Pratihari, Suara, Maha Suara, Palia Khuntia, Patri Badu, Gara Badu, Charcha Bala, Puja Panda.

The Bhoga Mandapa or Chatra Bhoga is a large offering of food, consisting mainly in plain rice, ghi rice, lemon rice, *kichedi*, *dali* and *dalma*, eggplant sabji, jahni sabji, patola sabji, *besara*, *mahura*, *sag* and pancakes of various types, *khotta*, *kanika*, *khiri* and *khaja*. In ancient days 435 different items were offered at this time, but now only about 20 or 25 items are offered. Generally the Chatra Bhoga in the Bhoga Mandapa is performed only after the Sakala Dhupa, but sometimes it may be also offered a second time in the afternoon or even a third time during the evening to meet the demand of Mahaprasadam, as the offered food is both for internal distribution among the Sevakas and for selling to the public. This food offering is presented at the Bhoga mandapa with 16 *upacharas*, while other Sevakas (Ghantua, Bajantri, Purana Panda, Jhanja Pitaman) play musical instruments and recite *sastra*.

During Sakala dhupa, the Charcha bala calls the three Palia Pushpalaks, Changada Mekapa, Palia Mekapa and Bhogamandapa Pratihari to stay inside the temple and continue the rituals after the Sakala Dhupa. After the area is cleaned, the Palia Khuntia calls for the Pushpalaka to do the Mailama. The three Pushpalakas climb on the Ratna Simhasana and do the Veshas for the Deities. The Changada Mekapa brings in the clothes and the Suara Badu arranges the pedestal on which the Pushpalakas stand and change the head scarf of the Deities.

The Bhoga Mandapa Ghara had been cleaned by the Suara Badu the previous night and by the Pratihari at the beginning of the day; now again the Suarabadu pours water and the Maha Suara brings the Bhoga inside. The Pushpalakas leave after dressing the Deities and the Charcha Bala calls the Patri to arrange the *puja* articles in the Bhoga Mandapa Ghara. After the necessary arrangements, the Puja Panda offers the Bhoga with *pancha upachara*. The other door of the Bhoga Mandapa Ghara is closed and the Deities enjoy the food placed in the Bhoga Mandapa Ghara. After the offering the Bojhias carry the Bhoga out of the room.

On specific days, the Bhoga Mandapa offering is done after Madhyana Dhupa instead of the Sakala Dhupa. This is not a regular ritual. It is done to facilitate the Mathas and other devotees to order special Bhoga and offer it to the deities. There is no specific preparation for this ritual, it all depends on the dish ordered.

12.30 – 1.00 pm Madhyama dhupa

The noon meal is offered in the Pokharia near the Ratna vedi, with 16 *upacharas* and it is supposed to last for one hour. It is also called Dinardha Dhupa (midday meal). The Bhoga is the largest meal, with all kinds of rice, curries, *sag*, soups, cakes, and different sweets. The minimum number of items is 56, but there is no maximum limit to the number. The number of Sevakas is similar to what is required for the other food offerings, while the *puja* articles include water, scented water, *parakha*, *muruja gunda*, *asana*, *pidha*, 16 *upachara*, *tulasi* leaves, cloth, the three brass mirrors, *vidya* and *bhoga*.

After the Bhoga Mandapa is over, the Pratihari ties the *tera* again and the Suara Badu pours water to wash the floor at the place where the previous offering had taken place. The Paniapata cleans up all the *puja* articles and hands it over to the Suara Badu. The Suara Badu washes the articles once again and arranges the articles in front of the four Deities. The rituals are similar to the Sakala Dhupa.

The Ghantua plays the *ghanta* and the Purana Panda recites *slokas* from the *Puranas*. After the Bhoga is offered and the *tera* is opened, Arati is performed. After the Madhyana Dhupa, the Bahara Deuli Bhoga is offered to the *utsava vigrahas* in the Dakshina Ghara.

1.00 pm Mailama and Madhyana Pahuda

After the meal the Deities' clothes are changed again, and three palanquins are brought before Them.

There is an offering of green coconut, *betel* and scented water, a camphor lamp *arati* is performed, and then the Deities are put to rest. The Sevakas needed are:

Suara Badu, Palia Khuntia, Pushpalaka, Changada Mekapa, Khataseja Mekapa, Palia Pratihari, Badadvara Pratihari, Muduli.

After the Madhyana Dhupa, the Suara Badu cleans the entire Pokharia. Then the Palia Khuntia calls for the Pushpalakas to do the Mailama. The Changada Mekapa arranges the Khandua (silk sari), Siri Kapada (scarf), and the flower garlands, and the Pushpalakas offer them to the Deities. Then the Khata Seja Mekapa arranges four beds. The Pushpalakas climb down the Ratna Simhasana, Arati is done, the Jaya Vijaya Dvara is closed and the Akhanda Mekapa extinguishes the lamps. The Bada dvra Pratihari calls out the Lords as "Manima" and invites Them to sleep to their respective beds and finally closes the Kalahata Dvara. The Muduli locks the doors and the inner southern gate is closed.

2.30 pm Pahuda

During the months of Kartika and Pausa, the Deities go to sleep after lunch and the doors are closed (*pahuda*). The Kalahata, Jaya Vijaya and Beherana gates are locked and the Deities take rest.

The ritual is supposed to be completed before 1.30 pm, but this rarely happens. Sometimes the afternoon rest is totally cancelled, and the ritual schedule continues without interruption.

5.00 pm Pahuda pitha

After the noon rest, the Bhitarcha Mahapatra again examines the seals and locks like in the morning ritual, and the doors are opened again.

6.00 pm Sandhya arati

The ritual is done by the following Sevakas:

Bhitarcha Mohapatra, Palia Mekapa, Akhanda Mekapa, Muduli, Khataseja Mekapa, Palia Pushpalaka, Garabadu, Talichu Mohapatra, Khuntia.

The Muduli unlocks the Kalahata Dvara upon orders from the Bhitarcha Mohapatra. During this time the Pratihari shouts "Manima, please wake up from your Ratna Palanka and climb onto the Ratna Simhasana". After the Khataseja Mekapa brings the beds out, the Kalahata Dvara is completely opened and the Suara Badu lights 21 lamps. The Pushpalakas, the Talichu Mohapatra and the Gara Badu stand below the Ratna Simhasana: the Palia Pushpalakas stand before Bada Thakura and Subhadra whereas the Talichu Mohapatra stand before Jagannatha and then all of them offer camphor lamps and 21 ghee wick lamps) from the Jaya Vijaya gate.

The rituals are the same as Mangala Arati. After the Arati, the Pushpalakas climb on the Ratna Simhasana and do the Mailama, changing the Deities' dresses. On some occasions when there is no time for Madhyana Pahuda, Mailama is done immediately after Madhyana Dhupa and then Sandhya Dhupa takes place. On Ekadasis, the clothes of the Deities are changed again after the Arati.

7.00 – 8.00 pm Sandhya bhoga and sandhya dhupa

This offering of food is presented at the Ratnavedi pokharia and includes worship with 16 *upacharas*.

The food offering consists of: 19 *oli* pots of *chupuda pakhala*, 23 *oli* of *pani pakhala*, 2 *oli* of *sana oli pakhala*, 5 *oli* of *sakara*, 3 soft *puli*, 22 *matha puli*, 7 *amalu*, 21 *bada amalu*, 83 *sana amalu* (pancakes etc.) In this offering the famous *chadhei neda* and *kadamba pakhala* are offered: the original recipe was a mixture of all the leftovers from the daily cooking. Plain rice is not offered. After Bhoga camphor Arati is offered, with 21 wick lamp and rice paste, then 2 more lamps (*jaya mangala arati*) on a silver plate.

8.00 pm Jaya Mangala arati

After this Arati, the curtain is drawn in front of the Deities. Sudarshana is offered a separate Arati with a 7 wick lamp. From 8 onwards, Veda students assemble in the Jagamohana to recite Vedic hymns, such as *Purusha shukta*, *Vishnu sahasra nama*, etc.

9.00 pm Sahana mela

At this time again the Deity room may be open again for the meeting of the Lord with His devotees, with the same method as the morning Sahana mela. If there is no time for the Sahana mela in the evening, the Deities' clothes are changed right away.

10.00 pm Mailama and Chandana lagi

The Chandan Ghatuari brings the Chandana (sandalwood paste) and the following Sevakas conduct the rituals:

Suara Badu, Pushpalaka, Ghatuari, Muduli, Palia Mekapa, Palia Pratihari, Gara Badu, Hadapa Nayaka, Palia Khuntia

The Suara Badu cleans the Pokharia after Sahana Mela. The Pushpalakas do the Mailama and dress the deities with Khandua, then the Muduli mixes the *chandana* with camphor, musk and saffron and keeps the mix in a silver bowl. After the Mailama is completed, the Palia Mekapa brings the silver bowl into the Pokharia, the Gara Badu takes the silver bowl from the Mekapa and hands it over to the Pushpalakas, who apply *chandana* on the Sri Anga (the bodies of the Deities). At the same time the Hadapa Nayaka offers Bidia Pana (Betel) to the Deities and the Palia Khuntias call the attention of the Deities by crying, "Manima! Manima!".

After the Chandana lagi and until the door is locked, the singing of *Gita Govinda* is executed by the Bhitara Gayani (lady servant), standing at the Kalahata dvara, while the Vinakara plays the *vina*. At this time the Nachuri Mahari used to dance. At the time of Sri Chaitanya, Ramananda Raya organized and performed the *Jagannatha Vallabha Nataka* inside the temple for this evening entertainment.

10.30 pm Vesa parivartana or Bada Shinghara Vesha

The Deities are dressed again, with the gorgeous night dress called the Bada sringara vesa – long silken cloth, *jhara* (long necklaces) and many decorations, including the *nakuasi* (nose pendant made with flowers, decorating the left nostril), the *adharamala* (very long garlands touching the base of the simhasana), the *padaka* (a round garland put as a base for the feet, made with flowers, tulasi, jackfruit leaves and ketaki leaves), the *karapallava* (hand fingers made with flowers), flower earrings and flower bangles. The purpose of such elaborate dress at the time of going to sleep is that Lord Jagannatha is enjoying with His wives and family. At this time the Deities also wear the red *chadar* called Gita Govinda Patta with the entire *Gita Govinda* woven into it.

11.15 pm Bada sringara Bhoga and Dhupa

After the completion of the food offering to the various smaller shrines within the temple compound, the Bada sringara bhoga is presented to Jagannatha at the Ratna vedi, with 5 *upacharas*.

This is the last food offering, composed of several varieties of watered rice, such as dahi pakhal, ghia pakhal, sweet rice, *dali*, *dalma*, *khatta*, pancakes, fried banana chips, *kanji* (a preparation of broken rice with vegetables), *sura pani* (green coconut water with camphor offered in a bronze container) and *ghasa pani* (a special drink of water mixed with *ghi*, *japhal*, *chandana*, *karpura*). No lamp Arati is given after this food offering.

11.45 pm Khataseja Lagi, Veena and Gayana, Puspanjali, Pushpa lagi, Pahuda, Muda and Shodha:

The ritual preparations for the Deities' night rest are also called *khata seja lagi* (bringing in the beds). The following Sevakas conduct the rituals:

Muduli, Bada Dvara Pratihari, Khataseja Mekapa, Suara Badu, Bhandara Mekapa, Palia Pushpalaka, Temple Police Officers, Hadapa Nayak, Bhitara Gayani, Vina Kara, Palia Khuntia, Palia Pratihari, Talichu Mohapatra, Gara Badu, Basi Palia Gara Badu.

During the Bada Singara, the Bada Dvara Pratihari brings the green coconuts to be offered later. The Suara Badu cleans the Pokharia after the Bhoga is offered and the Khataseja Mekapa puts one Ratna Palanka (bed for the Deities) below the Ratna simhasana. The Bhandara Mekap brings the Shayana Thakura from the Bhandara Ghara. The Sayana Thakura, the form in which the Lord goes to sleep, is also called Vasudeva Kamala. This is the Ardhanarisvara form of half Vishnu and half Lakshmi, seated on a throne with 8 arms holding the conchshell (*sankha*), the disc (*chakra*), two lotus flowers (*padma*), a manuscript, a mirror, and a pot filled with gems. S/He usually stays in the Palanka or Bandhara Ghara, but at the time for the bed ceremony is brought to the Simhasana near Jagannatha.

The Palia Pushpalaka applies *chandana* on the Shayana Thakura and places Him near Jagannatha, then the Mala Samskara is performed; the flower garlands are offered first to Jagannatha and then the same garland is given to to Shayana Thakura. The other two beds are brought into the Pokharia and placed before Bada Thakura and Subhadra. The green coconuts are offered by the Bada Dvara Pratihari, and then they are sent to the shrines of Lakshmi, Vimala, Nrisimha, Sarasvati and to the Dakshina Ghara.

The Hadapa Nayaka offers *bidia pana tambula* (betel refreshments), then Arati is performed while the Bhitara Gayani (Mahari) stands beside Jagannatha and sings verses of the *Gita Govinda*. The Vinakara sits near Bada Thakura and plays the *vina*. The Sajapalia carries the Shayana Thakura to the Jaya Vijaya Dvara while the Palia Khuntia offers white flowers.

The Khataseja Mekapa puts a stand on the Jaya Vijaya Dvara on which the Shayana Thakura sits. There, green coconut, *tambula* and *puspanjali* are offered and Arati is done to the Shayana Thakura, after which the Shayana Thakura is carried back to the Ratna Simhasana. A container with sandalwood paste is placed near Jagannatha, then the beds (*ratna palanka*) are placed in front of the throne and the *karpura* lamp Arati is offered by the Pushpalakas. The Sayana Thakura is invited to sleep with His beloved companions in the bedroom (*agaccha sayana-sthanam priyabhih saha kesava, divya-puspadhya-sayyanam, sukham vihara madhava*), and then He is again carried into the Bandhara ghara. The Palia Pratihari closes the Jaya Vijaya Dvara, then the south gate is closed invoking the Lord (“Manima!”). The Palia Mekapa carries the *chamu* lamp around the Ratna simhasana and inspects the area while the *akhanda* lamps are extinguished.

When he comes out, he closes the Kalahata Dvara, the Muduli locks the Kalahata Dvara and puts a clay seal on it, which is inspected by the Talichu Mohapatra. Then the area between the Kalahata Dvara and Jaya Vijaya Dvara is cleaned, the rings of the Jaya Vijaya dvara are tied with rope, then the Muduli and Talachu stick wet clay around the rope with the Madana Mohana mudra seal, under the control of the Chau or Bhitarcha Mahapatra, then the Jaya Vijaya dvara is locked and the Beherana dvara is sealed. The temple police inspect the entire temple to ensure that no one remains inside the temple precincts, finally all the entrance doors are locked and sealed. The Muduli and the Bada Dvara Pratihari keep guarding the Jaya Vijaya Dvara while the temple police guard the other doors. A burning lamp is left all night outside the Jaya Vijaya dvara. All the Sevakas and visitors leave the temple premises, except for the night guard, composed by the temple policemen and some Sevakas from the Palia Muduli and the Palia Mekapa groups.

Periodical Rituals

Rituals on Thursdays:

Every Thursday, after the Sakala Dhupa, the whole temple is cleaned and the deities have a ritual bath. The following Sevakas conduct the ritual: six Mahajans, Sudu Suara, Parva Yatra Jogania, Asthana Pratihari, Chandana Ghatuari, Puja Panda, Bhitarcha Mohapatra, Palia Pushpalaka, Vimana Badu, Chatara, Ghantua, Khataseja Mekapa

Every Thursday the Majana Mandapa is cleaned and the Mandapi ties a *chandua*. After the Sakala Dhupa is finished, six Mahajanas bring Sridevi and Bhudevi from the Ratna Simhasana and Madana Mohana from the Dakshina Ghara and install Them in the Majana Mandapa. The Sudu Suara arranges the *puja* articles, the Mahajanas perform the Majana (bath) of the Deities with yogurt and place Them on a cot. The Bhitarcha Mohapatra then applies *chandana* to the Deities’ bodies. One Puja Panda does the Bhoga offering, then the Bhitarcha Mohapatra performs camphor Arati and ghi wick Arati.

Then *vandapana* is done with uncooked rice and *darbha* grass. The Deities are then brought back to their respective places before the Madhyana Dhupa.

In the night, a special ritual called Ekanta is conducted. After the Sandhya Dhupa, the Mahajanas carry Madana Mohana from the Dakshina Ghara to the Ratna simhasana. The Vimana Badu brings one *palinki* and places it in front of the Jhulana Mandapa, then the Mahajanas carry Sridevi and Madana Mohana from the Ratna Simhasana and place Them on the *palinki*. The Ghantua plays the *ghanta* and the Chatara holds the royal umbrella. The Vimana Badus carry the *palinki* and place it in front of Nisha Nrishimha, near the Bhuvaneshvari Temple. The Mahajanas then carry the Deities to the Sarasvati shrine and then to the Jagamohana of the Lakshmi shrine, where the Deities are placed on a cot. The Puja Panda offers Bhoga to the Deities, Arati takes place and then the Deities are carried in the same *palinki* to the Garuda Stambha, from where Sridevi is carried back to the Ratna simhasana and Madana Mohana returns to the Dakshina Ghara.

This Ekanta Niti does not take place from Janmashtami till Bhadrava Shukla Dashami. It also does not take place if Ekadashi falls on a Thursday. Also, this ritual is not done till for seven days after Kumar Purnima, from Rama Navami until the Abhisekha on Pushya Nakshatra, from Snana Purnima until Niladri Vijaya, on Nandotsava, Dayana Chori (Damanaka Chaturdashi) and for the sixteen days of the Durga Puja. During the 21 days of the Chandana Yatra, Majana takes place at the Chandana Bedha and Ekanta is done after the Deities return from the boat ride at the Narendra Pushkarini.

Nakshatra Vandapana:

This ritual is done on the day of the birth Nakshatra of each Deity. The Vandapana is performed after Madhyana Dhupa. The following Sevakas perform the rituals:

Jyotisha Abadhana, Mudirasta, Pati Mohapatra, Puja Panda, Asthana Pratihari, Kahalia, Chatara, Ghantua, Khataseja Mekapa, Mahajana, Vimana Badu.

During the Abakasha the astrologer does the calculation of the *tithi*, *nakshatra* etc and on the day of the birth *nakshatra*, *vandapana* is performed after Madhyana Dhupa.

The birth *nakshatra* of the Deities are as follows:

- Bada Thakura: Shravana Makara (one extra Vandapana for Bada Thakura is done)
- Subhadra: Jyeshtha Vrschika (all the three Deities have equal Vandapana)
- Jagannatha: Rohini Vrisha (one extra Vandapana for Jagannatha)

After the Madhyana Dhupa, Madana Mohana is carried from the Dakshina Ghara to the Ratna Simhasana by the Mahajana. Then camphor Arati and *vandapana* are done to all the Deities by the Mudirasta (for Bada Thakura), Pati Mohapatra (for Subhadra), Puja Panda (for Jagannatha). Then after receiving the *ajna mala* from Jagannatha, Madana Mohana is carried to the *palinki* standing near the Mukti Mandapa. The Vimana Badus carry the *palinki* and walk around the temple, while the Ghantua plays the *ghanta* and the Chatara holds the royal umbrella. Then the Mahajanas carry Madana Mohana to the Jaya Vijaya Dvara. The Pratihari closes the Jaya Vijaya Dvara and Madana Mohana is placed on a stand, the Puja Panda offers Bhoga to Madana Mohana and performs the Arati. After the Arati is completed, the Jaya Vijaya Dvara is opened again and Madana Mohana is carried back to the Dakshina Ghara. *Nakshatra vandapana* is not done during the 10 days of the Ratha Yatra, till Niladri Vijaya.

Ekadasis

A special ritual is performed on every Ekadasi, after the Sandhya Arati. The following Sevakas are required:

Ghatuari, Panda, Pati Mohapatra, Mudirasta, Palia Pushpalaka, Vimana Badu, Palia Pratihari, Khataseja Mekapa, Asthana Pratihari, Sudu Suara, Chunara, Parva Yatra Jogania, Chatara, Ghantua, Bhitarcha Mohapatra, Palia Mekapa, Amania Chatara, Palia Khuntia, Puja Panda, Akhanda Mekapa.

On every Ekadasi, Chandan Lagi is done to the Deities after Sandhya Arati. Before the Sarvanga Chandana Lagi, the Mahajanas carry Madana Mohana from the Dakshina Ghara to the Ratna simhasana. After Madana Mohana receives the *ajna mala* from Jagannatha, the Mahajanas carry Him to the *palinki* placed near the Mukti Mandapa. Here Madana Mohana is placed on the *palinki* and is taken around the temple in a procession amidst the playing of *ghanta* and *kahali*, while the Chatara holds the royal umbrella.

The *palinki* is finally placed near the temple of Sarva Mangala, from where Madana Mohana is carried to the Jaya Vijaya Dvara. The Jaya Vijaya Dvara is closed from inside and Madana Mohana is placed on a stand outside the Jaya Vijaya Dvara, then the Puja Pandas offer Bhoga and perform Arati.

After the Pratihari opens the Jaya Vijaya Dvara, Madana Mohana is carried back to the Dakshina Ghara. On every Ekadasi night, Mahadipa Arati is performed. The Chunaras arrange the Maha Dipa and hand it over to the Patri, who in turn hands it over to the Puja Pandas. The Puja Pandas perform the Maha Dipa Arati and carry the Maha Dipa around the temple and go to the shrine of Ganesha and finally to the shrine of Goddess Vimala. There, the Puja Pandas hand over three *kalashas*, *chandana* and *tulasi* to the Chunaras for the Nila Chakra. At the same time the Ghatuari hands over three Chandra Udiyas to the Chunaras. The three Chunaras put the *kalashas* aside and climb the temple dome towards the Nila Chakra, holding the Maha Dipa and Chandra Udiya. They offer the *chandana* and *tulasi* to the Nila Chakra, circumambulate the Nila Chakra thrice and light three Chandra Udiyas each in all directions. There they pray for the well being of the Gajapati King of Puri.

If Ekadasi falls on a Thursday the Deities are given a Mahasnana with *panchamrita* after Sandhya Dhupa. Then Mailama is done followed by Chandan Lagi and Bada Singhara. After Bada Singhara, the Bhitarcha Mohapatra, Mudirasta, Palia Mekapa, Amunia Chatara, Palia Khuntia, Akhanda Mekapa and Sudu Suara perform the Danda Chatra Niti: the Bhitarcha Mohapatra brings out the silver umbrella from the Bhandara Ghara after the Mudirasta performs the purificatory rite, and holds it near Jagannatha's side. The Palia Mekapa climbs on the Ratna Simhasana and kneels on the Ratna Simhasana holding the same umbrella like Hanuman. Then the Mudirasta offers the Bhoga, after which Raja Niti takes place. For the Raja Niti, the Mudirasta performs camphor Arati with a golden Arati lamp. Then the Alata and Chamara Seva are also offered with a golden *alata* and golden *chamara*. At the same time the Palia Khuntia offers white flowers to the Deities and the Akhanda Mekapa stands with a lamp.

Then Bhoga is offered and after performing the purificatory rites for the Danda Chatra, climb down the Ratna Simhasana and the other rituals continue.

Sambhu Ekadasi

If the Ekadasi falls on a Monday it is called Sambhu Ekadasi.

On this day the *palinki* carriers of Lokanatha bring the palanquin to the main temple, and after the Gopala Vallabha offering is done and Bhoga has been offered to Bhandara Lokanatha, Bhandara Lokanatha is carried in that *palinki* to the Lokanath temple, a few kilometers away from the Sri Mandira, where He stays the whole day. After Madhyana Dhupa, Madana Mohana receives the *ajna mala* from Jagannatha and is carried around the Sri Mandira in a *palinki* carried by four Vimana Badus, then travels to Lokanatha temple, where He stays along with Bhandara Lokanatha in Banambar'as Gambhira and Panthi Bhoga is offered there.

The Parva Yatra Jogania carries the Bhoga to be offered and the Sudu Suara carries the *puja* articles. The Palia Puja Panda offers Bhoga and Arati, to the Deities. Then after *vandapana*, Madana Mohana and Bhandara Lokanatha are carried back to the temple in the same *palinki* through the streets of Baseli Sahi and enter the Sri Mandira through the western gate. The *palinki* is left near the Mangala shrine; from there, the Mahajanas carry the Deities to the Jaya Vijaya Dvara, which has already been closed from inside by the Pratihari. The Deities are seated on a stand provided by the Khata Seja Mekapa. There, Ekadasi Bhoga is offered and after Arati the Jaya Vijaya Dvara is opened and the *utsava vighras* travel back from where they were brought.

Starting from Asadha sukla Ekadasi (Hari Shayana Ekadasi) till Kartika sukla Ekadasi (Hari Utthapana Ekadasi), the Deities do not travel to the Lokanatha temple, but the Sevakas of the Lokanatha temple come to perform the rituals at the Jaya Vijaya Dvara. Also during the Chandana Yatra and Rukmini Harana (if they fall on Sambhu Ekadasi), the Deities do not travel to the Lokanatha temple.

Amavasya Niti and Sagara Vijaya

If Amavasya overlaps on the Pratipada day, this ritual is performed after Sakala Dhupa.

The following Sevayats are required: Mahajana, Palia Puja Panda, four Vimana Badus, Homa Palia Puja Panda, Asthana Pratihari, Basipalia Garabadu, Ghantua, Chatara, Kahalia.

In the morning, during the Vesha, Jagannatha is offered one *ajna mala* made of *tulasi* and flowers. After the Sakala Dhupa the Mahajans carry the *utsava vigraha* of Narayana from the Dakshina Ghara and place Him on the Ratna Simhasana. One Puja Panda offers Jagannatha's *ajna mala* to Narayana, then Narayana is carried by the Mahajanas to the *palinki* waiting for Him near the Jhulana mandapa.

From here, four Vimana Badus carry the *palinki* through the Ananda Bazar to the ocean at Svargadvara, and the other Sevakas accompany Narayana for the Sagara Vijaya. At the ocean, the Gara Badu collects the sea water in a silver bowl and hands it over to the Puja Panda, who in turn performs the *samskara* and offers it to Narayana. Then Pana bhoga is offered to Narayana. After Arati and *vandapana*, Narayan is carried to the Haridasa Thakura Matha, to the temple of Yamesvara into the Gambhira there, to the musical accompaniment of *ghanta*, *kahali* and *chata*. Narayana is given a Mahasnana with *panchamrtia* and *puja* is performed with *pancha upachara*, then Sitala Bhoga is offered. After *vandapana* the Mahajanas carry Narayana back to the *palinki* and then through Harachandi Sahi and Manikarnika Sahi into the Sri Mandira and back to the Dakshina Ghara. This ritual is not performed during Asadha Amavasya.

Banakalagi or Srimukha Sringara

This ritual is done every Wednesday or Thursday after Madhyana Dhupa, and consists in reviving the natural colors of the Deities, in a sort of "make-up".

The following Sevakas carry out the ritual: Palia Khuntia, Gara Badu, three Palia Pushpalakas, Changada Mekapa, three Datta Mahapatras, Mudul, Puja Panda.

After the Madhyana Dhupa, the Palia Khuntia calls for the Pushpalaks to do the Mailama. The Deities change into a towel (*tadapa*), then are decorated with flowers and camphor. After the Vesha, Arati (Madhyana Pahuda Arati) is performed. Then the Pratihari closes the Jaya Vijaya Dvara.

By this time the Datta Mohapatras have performed the Banaka lagi and kept the Banakas in a silver bowl. After the Madhyana Pahuda Arati, the Datta Mohapatras climb on the Ratna Simhasana and do the Banaka lagi, which takes approximately two hours. After the Banaka lagi, the Palia Mekapa washes the Ratna Simhasana and the Puja Pandas perform Mahasnana for the Deities with *panchamrita*.

Benta or Shikar

On Vasanta Panchami the Deities wear the Chacheri Vesha after the Madhyana Dhupa, from Shivaratri to Pratipada, Chaturthi, Ashtami, and Dvadasi (in the month of Phalguna). On this occasion the Deities go out for hunting (*shikara*) after Mangala Arati.

The following Sevakas perform the rituals: Mahajana, Homa Palia Puja Panda, Gara Badu, Vimana Badu, Ghantua, Chatara, Kahalia, Bhitarcha Mohapatra, Lenka

On the days mentioned above the Mahajanas brings Dola Govinda from the Dakshina ghara and places Him on the Ratna Simhasana. Jagannatha's *ajna mala* is offered to Dola Govinda by the Puja Panda and then the Mahajana carries Him to the *palinki* kept outside the Nata Mandapa. The Vimana Badus carry the *palinki* to the Jagannatha Vallabha Matha amidst beating of *ghanta* and playing of *kahali* while the Chatara carries the royal umbrella. Here Sitala Bhoga is offered. After the Bhoga offering, the Bhitarcha Mohapatra does the Arati, then the Mahajana carries Dola Govinda to the Benta Pokhari in the Matha, where the Bhitarcha Mohapatra hands over five iron arrows to the Lenka after performing the *samskara*. Five green coconuts are placed symbolizing five deer; the Lenka shoots arrows at these green coconuts and after this ritual Dola Govinda returns to the Sri Mandir and is carried back to the Dakshinai Ghara.

Lunar and Solar eclipses

During these days, during the *paka tyaga* time no rituals are conducted. Before the *paka tyaga*, the Deities wear a towel (*tadapa*) and the kitchen is thoroughly cleaned. At the time of the eclipse the Puja Pandas perform the Mahasnana of the Deities. Then Rosha Homa, Surya Puja and Dvarapala Puja is performed. Then the Pashupalaks do the Grahana Vesha with clothes, flowers and Tulsi. During this ritual the Jaya Vijaya Dvara remains closed. After the Vesha the inner *tera* is tied. Then the Palia Mahasura brings in the Sitala Bhoga and the Puja Panda offers the Panthi Bhoga.

If some accidents happens inside the temple, for example someone passes stool, urine or spits inside the temple or touches the Deities, the whole temple is thoroughly cleaned and washed with lime water. The Deities have Mahasana, all the food already cooked is buried, and the *puja* articles are thoroughly washed. All the disposable materials like wood, bamboo etc are thrown out of the temple, the kitchen is thoroughly cleaned and Bhoga is cooked again. The rituals resume from the point where they stopped, immediately after the Mahasana.

Regular Veshas

Abakasha Vesha:

Every morning for Mangala arati the Deities wear a cotton *sari* called Chemedi.

After Mangala Arati and Mailama, the Srijius (the Deities) get ready for Their bath, a ritual known as Abakasha that includes brushing the teeth, scraping the tongue and taking shower. The Deities wear a cloth of orange and white color, 16 x 4 feet, called *tadapa* and an upper garment called *uttariya*. This is also known as Tadapa Uttariya Vesha. The Srijius symbolically brush Their teeth with a special type of wood called *muturi katha* and clean Their tongue with gold scrapers.

After the ceremonial bathing in the morning, the Deities are usually dressed in the Bada Shringara vesa, consisting of colored clothes of different colors according to the day of the week:

- on Sunday, two pieces of red cloth for each Deity,
- on Monday, white cloth with black decorations,
- on Tuesday, five colors mixed (*pancha ranga yoda*), or red
- on Wednesday, the cloth is green or sky blue,
- on Thursday, it is yellow (called *vasanta*)
- on Friday, white
- on Saturday it is violet, blue, black or brown

The daily decorations are made by the Sevakas called Khuntias, Shringaris and Mekapas. The flowers used for the daily decorations and garlands are white, yellow, gold, orange and pink, usually jasmine and marigold, while the lotus flowers can be white, pink or blue.

Among the flower decorations generally used for the Deities there are: *chandrika alaka panti* (forehead decoration), *tilaka* (a flower garland surrounding the *chitta* or third eye), *karapallava* (hands and fingers made of flowers), *makara kundala* (earrings), *padaka* (a round or heart-shaped flower decoration covering the heart, about 50 cm in diameter), *guna*, *jhumpa* (nose pendants), then various flower garlands 12 feet long, and *tulasi* garlands wrapped on bamboo sticks and tied together to form a crown. After the morning Darshana the Deities are offered the *uttari*, a 24 feet silk cloth used as *chadar*.

Bada Shringara Vesha: This is the last Vesha of the day.

Every day at different time periods the Srijius are decorated with clothes called Vastra Shringara, with ornaments called Bhushana Shringara and flowers called Pushpa Shringara. The Sri Jius wear a special type of *sari* 12 feet long and a red silk shawl called Gita Govinda Khandua, a special type of Khandua sari on which verses from the *Gita Govinda* are woven, plus a special head cloth called *srikapada*, a light blue cotton cloth 3 x 1 feet. During *pahuda* (bed time) the Deities wear the *makhmala*, a special white silk cloth used for bed time, and in *pahandi* procession They wear the *neta phuta*, a cloth that is 26 x 4 feet.

For the special bath called Mahasana, when some impurity comes into the temple, the Deities wear the *srikapada*. Other usual dresses are the *desi sari*, a kind of skirt used in the month of Kartika from Dipavali to Rasa purnima, of the size 18 x 4 feet; Jagannatha white with yellow border, Subhadra white with red border, Baladeva white with black border. For other special occasions They wear the *pata* or *patani*, which is a fine silk, 12 meters long, arranged like a skirt or *sari*. In addition to these more usual outfits, the Deities are traditionally offered special dresses according to a scheduled calendar of festivals.

Mani chuda

This large diamond, set in a golden lotus flower, is the daily decoration of Jagannatha every day except during the period of the Ratha Yatra (when it is kept in the store). A traditional story about the origin of this jewel says that it was found by an Orissa merchant who was travelling by sea. Seeing a bright light, he recovered the jewel from a snake's hood under a thorny bush and he took it away. Chased by the snake, the merchant fled on his ship and escaped by the mercy of Jagannatha, so when he returned home he offered the priceless jewel to the Deity. The original diamond *chuda* belonging to Jagannatha is accompanied by a similar one for Subhadra (studded with emeralds) and Balabhadra (studded with lapis lazuli).

All the three *mani chudas* are used daily in the decoration of the Deities, except for the time from Snana yatra to Ratha yatra, when they are removed and stored away.

Special Veshas

- * Hati Vesha: Jyestha Purnima (Snana Purnima)
- * Suna Vesha: Ashadha sukla Ekadasi (always done on the Ratha), as well as on Kartika Purnima, Pusha Purnima, Dola Purnima, and Ashvina sukla Dasami (Dasahara)
- * Vanabhoji Vesha: Bhadrava krishna Dashami
- * Kaliya Dalana Vesha: Bhadrava krishna Ekadasi
- * Pralambasura Badha Vesha: Bhadrava Krishna Dvadasi
- * Krishna Balarama Vesha: Bhadrava krishna Trayodasi
- * Vamana Vesha: Bhadrava sukla Trayodasi
- * Radha Damodara Vesha: From Asvina sukla Ekadasi till Kartika sukla Dasami (permission is sought from Mahalakshmi to allow the worship of Radha along with Jagannatha for one whole month)
- * Thiakia Vesha: Kartika sukla Ekadasi
- * Bankachuda Vesha: Kartika sukla Dvadasi
- * Adakia Vesha: Kartika sukla Trayodasi
- * Dalikia Vesha: Kartika sukla Chaturdasi
- * Nagarjuna Vesha: Starting from Kartika sukla Dvadashi till Chaturdasi, in the year in which Panchuka is celebrated for six days instead of five, this Vesha is done on that extra day.
- * Padma Vesha: On any Tuesday or Saturday between Magha Amavasya and Vasanta Panchami.
- * Gaja uddharana Vesha: Magha Purnima
- * Chacheri Vesha: From Phalguna sukla Dasami till Chaturdasi.
- * Ghoda Lagi Vesha: From Margasira sukla Sasthi till Vasanta Panchami
- * Jama Lagi Vesha: From Vasanta Panchami till Dola Purnima
- * Chandana Vesha: for 41 days starting from Akshaya Tritiya
- * Raghunatha Vesha: in the month of Vaisakha. This Vesha is has not been offered for many years.
- * Giri Govardhana Vesha: Previously done on Bhadrava krishna Trayodashi, this Vesha was stopped for a couple of years and from 1947 onwards on this days Krishna Balarama Vesha is done instead.
- * Navanka Vesha: the day before Makara Sankranti.
- * Senapata Vesha: offered every time the Sri Jius move out from the Ratna Simhasana
- * Sandhya Dhupa Vesha: every evening during Sandhya Dhupa.
- * Sraddha Vesha: during the three days of Deva Dipavali Utsava in the month of Margasira (Amavasya)
- * Makara Chourasi Vesha: on Makara sankranti
- * Pushya Abhisekha Vesha: on Pushya Abhisekha
- * Tahyalagi Vesha: during Pahandi, on Bahuda and Ratha Yatra
- * Nava yauvana Vesha: the day before Ratha Yatra
- * Tadapa Uttariya Vesha: everyday during the Abakasha
- * Bada Shringara Vesha: the last daily Vesha, offered at night during Bada Shringara
- * Sakala Dhupa Vesha: everyday during Sakala Dhupa

Suna Vesha

Suna Vesha is held five times in a year: on Vijaya Dasami (Dasahara), Pushya Purnima (Pushya Abhisekha), Dola Purnima, Kartika Purnima and Ashadha sukla Ekadasi. The Suna Vesha on Ashadha sukla Ekadasi is done on the chariots. The ornaments used for the purpose are made of gold and invaluable gems. The names of the ornaments are as follows:

* Balabhadra: Sripayara, Sribhuja, Kirita, Odiyani, Kundala, Chandrasurya, Adakani, Ghagadamali, Kadambamali, Tilaka, Chandrika, Alaka, Jhobakanthi, Hala and Mushala, Bahadamali, Baghanakhimali, Sebatimali, Trikhandika Kamarapati.

* Subhadra: Kirata, Odiyani, Kana, Chandrasurya, Ghagadamali, Kadambamali, Tadagi, Sebatimali.

* Jagannatha: Kirita, Sribhuja, Sripayara, Odiyani, Chandrasurya, Kana, Adakani, Ghagadamali, Kadambamali, Tilaka, Chandrika, Alaka, Jhobakanthi, Chakra (gold) and Sankha (silver), Haridakadambamali, Bahadamali, Tabijamali, Sebatimali, Trikhandika Kamarapati.

The Suna Vesha during Dasahara is offered on the Ratna Simhasana and is known as Rajadhiraja Vesha.

Padma Vesha

It is said that this Vesha was started in the 17th century by Raghubara Das, the Mahanta of the Badachhata Matha. This Vesha has a very interesting story: one *sadhu* from North India named Manohar Das, who was a great devotee of Jagannatha, wanted to have Darshan of Jagannath and so started for Puri on foot. He had to walk a long distance and when he got tired he would rest in a Matha or under a tree. While walking he felt extremely thirsty and saw a pond nearby; he took bath and drank water from the pond to his content and while he was going back, to his great surprise he saw beautiful lotus flowers in the pond. It was winter and lotuses usually don't bloom at that time. Considering this as a special opportunity to serve Lord Jagannatha, he plucked the lotuses and tied them up in his personal towel to resume his journey, arriving at Puri on Magha Amavasya. By the time he reached Puri the flowers had dried. The *sadhu* handed the used towel with the dried flowers to one Sevaka asking him to offer the flowers to Jagannatha but the Sevaka, outraged, threw away flowers and towel, abusing Manohar Das and driving him out of the temple. Manohar Das, feeling very humiliated, picked up the flowers and walked out of the temple, collapsing near the Bada Chhata Matha. The same night the Gajapati King was informed in a dream about Manohar Das and was instructed to do the Badashringara Vesha of the Srijius with the lotus flowers brought by Manohar Das and offer *khiri* prepared with lotus seeds. The Gajapati went to meet Manohar Das and requested him to offer his lotuses to the Srijius for the Veshas, to which Manohar Das happily consented. He was granted a grand welcome to the Ratna Simhasana and as soon as the dried lotus touched the Srianga, they bloomed into fresh ones. Everyone was pleased with Manohar Das' devotion and offered him the *khiri* Mahaprasad made of lotus seeds that was offered to the Srijius. This Vesha is done at the time of Bada shringara on a Saturday or Wednesday between Magha Amavasya and Vasanta Panchami using lotus flowers made of *solopith* as lotuses are not available in that season. It is the only Vesha that is not removed at the time of Pahuda and stays until the next morning.

Gaja Uddharana Vesha

This outfit is offered every year on Magha Purnima on the Ratna Simhasana. Jagannatha sits on Garuda, and Balabhadra sits in the *padmasana*. It celebrates the story of Gajendra, the king of the elephants who was saved by Vishnu from the attack of a crocodile while he was bathing in the Varuna lake on the higher planets. Gajendra had been a virtuous king on the Earth but still had some animal propensity, so in his next life he attained the heavenly planets in the form of an elephant, albeit with a level of consciousness that was much higher than the consciousness of an ordinary elephant on this planet. While he was sprinkling himself with water, Gajendra was bitten by a crocodile that started pulling him into the lake. Finding himself helpless, the elephant desperately prayed to Lord Jagannatha to deliver him. The Lord answered his prayers and sent the Sudarshana Chakra to cut the crocodile into two pieces. This is a very old Vesha and according to records it was first started by the Bhauma queen Bakula Mahadevi. On Magha Purnima after Madhyana Dhupa and Mailama, Sarvanga Chandana is done, and the Sri Jiis are then dressed. For the Vesha Bhoga, *khiri* and *amalu* are offered and then Sandhya Dhupa is celebrated. After Sandhya Dhupa the general public is allowed to have Darshana (Sahana Mela), then Mahasana is done and the other rituals take place.

Raghunatha Vesha

This Vesha is a royal costume and includes lots of invaluable ornaments. It was created to commemorate the coronation ceremony of Lord Rama's, in the month of Vaisakhha, but it was discontinued in 1905. According to some sources this Vesha was started by Ramanujacharya, while records show it was not done before the 16th century, and in fact the tradition was started by Gajapati Ramachandradeva. Jagannatha is dressed as Ramachandra, Balabhadra is dressed as Lakshmana and Subhadra as Purnamasi.

According to the *Ramayana*, the father of Sri Ramachandra, king Dasaratha, had three main wives (Kaushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra) and also seventy two other wives, one of whom had given birth to a girl before the birth of Rama. The girl was adopted by Rishi Yajnavalkya and then married Rishi Rishyashringa. During the marriage a divine voice stated that this girl was none other than the Mother Goddess Purnamasi. Thus in this special Vesha Subhadra is dressed as Purnamasi. To the left of Raghunatha (Jagannatha) stand images of Bharata and Satrugna, while Sri Devi sits as Sita on Jagannatha's left thigh. An image of Hanuman sits on the right while Angada, Jambavan, Vibhishana, Nala, Nila, Gabaya, Gabakhya and Sugriva also stand near Raghunatha. The other Deities that used to be made for the occasion are Dadhimukha, Nala, Vayumukha, Narada, Indra, Brahma, Kubera, Nairitti, Vashishtha, Vamadeva, Javali, Kashyapa, Katyayana, Suyagna, Gautama, Vijaya, Vayu, Rishabha, Dwividha, Niyudha and Sumanta.

Chandana lagi Vesha

This is a regular Vesha, used every evening when the Deities are anointed with sandalwood paste mixed with camphor. Apart from the regular Chandanalagi Vesha, the Deities are anointed with sandalwood paste in a special way during the 42 days of the Chandana Yatra, that include the first 21 days of the Bahara Chandana and the last 21 days of the Bhitara Chandana.

Gajanana (Hati) Vesha

This Vesha is offered on Snana Purnima (Jyestha Purnima). On this occasion the Deities come out of the Ratna Simhasana to go to the Snana Mandapa, where the Mahasana is performed. After the Mahasana the Lenka Sevaka brings out the outfits in a procession, Balabhadra's and Sudarshana's being provided by the Gopala Tirtha Matha and Subhadra's and Jagannatha's being provided by the Raghava Das Matha. After the outfits arrive, the Gajapati or in his absence the Mudirasta perform the *vandapana* and *the chera pahanra*, then the Deities are covered with the huge "masks" resembling elephant heads, with a relatively small hole in the middle for the face.

The origin of the Vesha, in the 15th century, is said to be connected to a great saint from Maharashtra, belonging to the Ganapatya sect, named Ganapati Bhatta. This saint arrived in Puri on Snana Purnima day, but after paying homage to the Sri Jius he was not satisfied, because he had heard that Jagannatha was the supreme Lord and the concept of the supreme Lord is that He is worshipable by all.

Since Ganapati Bhatta's *ishta deva* was Ganesha, he wanted to see Jagannatha in the form of Ganesha. He left the temple rather upset and confused, but near Muktesvara's shrine, he heard a divine voice instructing him to return to the temple. There he saw Bada Thakura dressed as a white Ganesha and Jagannatha dressed as a black Ganesha: Ganapati Bhatta was completely overwhelmed by divine love. The Ganapati Vesha is removed late at night, after which the Deities enter the Anavasara Griha.

Ghoda lagi Vesha

This Vesha is offered daily after Madhyana Dhupa starting from Odhana Sasthi till Vasanta Panchami. It is a winter outfit where the Deities use shawls, mufflers and caps made of velvet. On these days the colour of the winter clothes varies according to the days of the week. From Vasanta Panchami until Phagu Dasami the Deities wear lighter winter clothes and are not fully covered, as the intensity of cold slowly decreases.

Nabanka Vesha

This Vesha is offered on the day before Makara Sankranti, and the outfits are provided by the Dakshina Parsva Matha (Srirama Das Matha).

Banabhoji Vesha

This Vesha is offered during the Sandhya Dhupa on Bhadrava krishna Dasami during the Janmashtami celebrations, and is considered a “picnicking” dress. It includes cows made of *solapitha*. It is said it was started in the 16th by king Prataparudra Deva, on the suggestion of Sri Chaitanya who had initiated the King into the Gaudiya sampradaya. According to their concept, Bada Thakura was worshipped as Balarama and Jagannatha as Krishna.

Kaliya Dalana Vesha

During the long Janmashtami celebrations in the Sri Mandira, this Vesha is offered after the Madhyana Dhupa on Bhadrava krishna Ekadasi to commemorate the defeat of the serpent king Kaliya. This Vesha, too, was started by Prataparudra Deva in the 16th century. Jagannatha is dressed as Krishna, while a Kaliya serpent made with wood and cotton cloth is placed at the feet of Jagannatha. Balabhadra is dressed as Balarama and Subhadra is dressed normally. The tail of Kaliya is placed in Jagannatha’s left hand and in His right hand He holds an *amruta laddu* (a sweet ball). Similarly, Balabhadra holds a lotus stalk in His left hand and *amruta laddu* in His right hand.

Pralambasura Baddha Vesha

This Vesha is offered after Madhyana Dhupa on Bhadrava krishna Dvadasi to commemorate the killing of Pralambasura mentioned in the 19th chapter of the 10th canto of *Bhagavata Purana*. One day, when Krishna and Balarama were playing with all the cowherd boys, the demon Pralambasura arrived there sent by Kamsa with the intent to kill Krishna and Balarama. Pralamba disguised himself as one of the cowherd boys to play with them, but Krishna detected him and started a new game called ‘Raja-Praja’ where Krishna and Balarama would be the kings and the other boys would be their subjects. In the game all the boys had to test their fighting skills, and the one who was defeated had to carry the winner to Bhandiravana. Krishna started fighting with Dama, while Pralambasura disguised as a cowherd boy fought with Balarama. Pralambasura cunningly decided to lose the fight so that he could take the opportunity to carry Balarama away, and instead of going to Bhandiravana he rose high up in the sky with Balarama on his shoulders, but Balarama smashed Pralambasura’s head with His fist and Pralambasura’s dead body fell near Govardhana. This Vesha was also started by Prataparudra Deva in the 16th century. For this Vesha, a four feet image of Pralambasura is made with wood and placed at the feet of Balabhadra.

Krishna Balarama Vesha:

This relatively recent Vesha (started in 1945) is offered on Bhadrava krishna Trayodasi. Before this Vesha was started, the Bada Odiya Matha used to prepare the Giri Govardhana Vesha that was quite ancient. Since the Giri Govardhana Vesha was discontinued, the Krishna Balarama Vesha was started.

This is its story: one Raya Saheb Chaudhari Gopabandhu Mishra of Salepur was childless. After having Darshana of Lord Jagannatha he was blessed with a son and wanted to offer something to the Lord in gratefulness. Late Padmashree Sadashiva Rathsharma requested him to renew the Giri Govardhana Vesha. Thus Gopabandhu Mishra met the Mahanta of the Bada Odiya Matha, who was preparing the Vesha, but the Mahanta rejected his request, saying the Vesha was very difficult to make. After discussing with the Pushpalaka Sevak Alekh Kar, Rathsharma suggested to make a Krishna Balarama Vesha instead. Gopabandhu Mishra sought the permission of the Gajapati Bira Kishore Deva and since then the family of Gopabandhu Mishra has continued to finance the preparation of this Vesha. The special images that stand along with the Sri Jius are Brahma, Narada, Indra, the young *gopas*, Nanda, Upananda, Vasudeva, Yashoda, Chaya, Maya, Devaki, Rohini, and calves. Jagannatha holds a flute and Balabhadra holds a horn. Subhadra is dressed as Bhuvaneshvari.

Radha Damodara Vesha

This Vesha is offered daily in the month of Kartika starting from Ashvina sukla Ekadasi to Kartika sukla Dasami. It is mentioned in the *Puranas* that while Akrura was returning to Mathura and on the way he stopped to take a dip in the Yamuna, he had Darshana of Radha Damodara within the waters of the Yamuna.

It is said that this Vesha was started in the 12th century, when worship of Radha gained prominence through the great popularity of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*. Other poets like Chandidas and Vidyapati also glorified Radha in their poems. According to some, however, this Vesha started in the 16th century after Sri Chaitanya's arrival at Puri, as most of the Veshas pertaining to the Krishna lila started during the reign of Prataparudra Deva.

Hari-Hara Vesha

Every Monday, starting from Kartika Amavasya until Kartika Purnima, Balabhadra is dressed as Hari-Hara. This Vesha is done very early in the morning after Abakasha and the Gopalaballabha offering takes place while the Deities are dressed in this outfit. A special morning offering called "Bala Dhupa" is presented during this Vesha.

Here is a very interesting story related to this Bala Dhupa: one day a Sevaka of Jagannatha named Taluchha Narayana Mohapatra removed the flower nose ring of Jagannatha after the Madhyana Dupa and Mailama, and took it for his concubine Lavanyabati Devadasi. According to the rule Jagannatha's flower nose ring should not be given to anyone other than the King. While Narayana Mohapatra was in the company of Lavanyabati, he was informed that the Gajapati was arriving for the Sandhya Dhupa Darshana and would find out that Jagannatha's nose ring was missing. Fearing for his life, he took back the flower nose ring from Lavanyabati and sent it to the Sri Nahara. The Queen found a hair on the garland and was really upset. The King demanded an explanation from the Taluchha, who came up with the wild story that the hair belonged to Jagannatha. The King instructed the Taluchha to be present during the Sakala Dhupa the next day, when he would verify whether Jagannatha really had hair. The Taluchha ran to the temple and threw himself on the ground before Jagannath, begging forgiveness for his audacity and surrendered himself completely to the Lord. The next day he personally dressed the Deities and waited for the King, who was dumbfounded when he actually saw hairs on Jagannatha's head, taking this exceptional event as a special sign of favor by Lord Jagannatha to His servant. The King was pleased with the Taluchha's devotion and announced a special Bala Bhoga would be done during the Kartika Month.

Lakshmi Narayana Vesha

This Vesha, also called Thiakia Vesha, is offered after Abakasha during Kartika sukla Ekadasi. It was started in the 12th century and is said to be a favourite of the Sri Sampradaya, as Ramanujacharya became overwhelmed after seeing it. Gopala Vallabha, Sakala Dhupa, Bala Dhupa, Bhoga Mandapa etc are performed while the Sri Jius are still wearing this outfit. This Vesha is removed after Bhoga Mandapa and then Madhyana Dhupa takes place.

Bankachuda Vesha

This Vesha is offered after Sakala Dhupa during Kartika sukla Dvadasi and removed after Bhoga Mandapa. It is said that Akrra had Darshana of Krishna and Balarama in this Vesha when he came to take Krishna and Balarama to Mathura.

Adikia Vesha

Also known as the Trivikrama Vesha, this Vesha is a favourite of the Atibadi (Jagannatha Das) Sampradaya. It is offered on Kartika sukla Trayodasi after Abakasha.

Lakshmi Nrisimha Vesha

Also known as the Dalikia Vesha, this Vesha is offered after Abakasha on Katika Shukla Chaturdashi and kept until the end of Sakala Dhupa. It was started by the Mahanta of Sriram Das Matha, Ramjayati Das, who had received a land grant from the Mughal emporer Alamgiri, with th cooperation of the Mahantas of Bada Chatta Matha and Jejeram Matha.

Nagarjuna Vesha

This very special Vesha is not done every year; the last time it was done on 16 November 1994. Previously it was done on 26 November 1993, 3 November 1968, 16 November 1967, and 26 November 1966.

It is used only very rarely in special astrological circumstances, when during the last five days of the Kartika month generally called Panchaka, an extra (Purushottama) day is sometimes added extending the Panchaka to six days. It is said that the Vesha commemorates the victory of a Hindu scholar in a debate with a Buddhist scholar named Nagarjuna. The Naga dance of the temple festivals also originated from this day: it is a warrior's dance of victory for the triumph of Jagannatha. The Naga or the warrior culture is very prevalent in Puri, so this Vesha has the special flavor of showing the Sri Jius in the outfit of a warrior.

There are other two stories related to the Vesha. One is about Parashurama who killed Kartavirjya or Sahasrarjuna; since Parashurama was a Naga, the Vesha was known as Nagarjuna Vesha. Another story concerns a fight ensued between Arjuna and his son Nagarjuna. Arjuna was killed and was reborn on the Mala day of the Kartika Month, a special event commemorated by this Vesha.

Rajarajeshvara Vesha

This Vesha is offered after Abakasha on Kartika Punima and includes the same ornaments of the Suna Vesha.

Vamana Vesha

dole to dola govindam chape to madhusudanam rathe tu vamanam dristhva punarjanmam na labhyate

“On the Dola Vedit you are Govinda. During the boat ride you are Madhusudana. After seeing your form as Vamana on the chariot one will be delivered from rebirth.”

This is a very important Vesha of Lord Jagannath and is done after the Vamana Janmotsava rituals are over and Madhyana Dhupa is completed. Bada Thakura is dressed as a Raja, Subhadra is dressed normally and Jagannatha is dressed as Vamana. This Vesha is offered on Bhadrava sukla Dvadasi, the appearance day of Vamana. Jagannatha is said to be in the form of a dwarf or Vamana, and is dressed like an orthodox *brahmana*, with an umbrella in His left hand and a water pot carrying the *kusha* grass in His right hand.

It is said that this Vesha was started by Yajati Keshari.

Sraddha Vesha

This Vesha is offered after Sandhya Dhupa for three consecutive days, Margasira krishna Chaturdasi, Margasira Amavasya and Margasira sukla Pratipada, also celebrated as Deva Dipavali. On these three days the Sri Jius offer Sraddha oblations to Their fathers. On the first day oblations are offered to Dasaratha and his Queens, on the second day to Nanda, Yasoda, Devaki and Vasudeva and on the third, to Indradyumna and his Queen. The Mailama of the Vesha is done before Ratra Chandana Lagi.

The Sri Jius are all dressed in white, Jagannatha's with a red border, Bada Thakura's with a black border and Subhadra's with a yellow border. These outfits are popularly known as Kashi Dhadia or Nagapuria. The temple is also decorated with special type of lamps called Chandra udiya.

Chacheri Vesha

This Vesha is offered after Madhyana Dhupa from Phalguna sukla Dasami till Phalguna sukla Chaturdasi.

Mahaprasadam

The residents of Puri have a very special tradition about honoring Mahaprasadam. It is said that the presence of the Lord can be more fully appreciated through the taste of the Mahaprasadam than through the direct Darshana of the Deity. Practically speaking all aspects of life in Jagannatha Puri revolve around Mahaprasadam: the main marriage ritual is considered performed simply by the act of husband and wife partaking Mahaprasadam. The Puri-vasis (“residents of Puri”) say this is the real marriage, everything else is just celebration.

All the Samskaras here are solemnized by Mahaprasadam - birth, death, name giving, initiation, etc - both by consuming it and by distributing it to the *brahmanas*, family members, relatives, friends and neighbors. Even at the beginning of some important work, like the inauguration of a building site or the opening of a new house or shop, the occasion requires distribution of Mahaprasadam to workers and neighbors. Another interesting thing is that, when honoring Mahaprasadam with a large number of people, like in these celebrations, the customary rule allows a quick cleaning and a quick serving of a new batch of guest: everyone must start eating at the same time (as soon as the *ghi* is poured on the guests' plates over the plain rice, which takes only a few seconds) and when the first guest stands up indicating that he has finished his meal, everyone else is supposed to stop eating and get up to leave.

While taking Mahaprasadam everyone is considered on the same level, with no difference of birth or social position, and it is also common to see two or more people eat from the same plate without any problem, something that could never happen in the case of ordinary food. The devotees who honor Mahaprasadam should humble themselves by sitting on the bare ground. It is considered an offense to sit on an *asana* or even on a piece of cloth or mat while honoring Mahaprasadam. As customary with all other foods, Mahaprasadam is only eaten with one's right hand. As a mark of respect, Mahaprasadam should never touch the ground, and to serve and eat Mahaprasadam, generally hands are used rather than spoons.

After taking Mahaprasadam one should not rinse one's mouth by spitting the water out; the water should be swallowed so that whatever remains of the Mahaprasadam are not disrespectfully spitted on the ground. One should also wash one's hands before touching other things.

The glories of Mahaprasadam are stated in the shastra.

Padma Purana:

sushkam paryushitam vapi nitam va dura-desatah prapta-matrena bhoktavyam natra kala-vicharana na desa-niyamas tatra na kala-niyamas tatha praptam annam drutam sishtair bhoktavyam harir abravat

“One should never hesitate to accept *prasadam* without any consideration of time and place, and even if it has dried, it has been tasted by someone else, or if it has come from a long distance. Sri Hari teaches that a learned person will accept *prasadam* immediately without hesitation as soon as he receives it.”

Padma Purana (7.11.3-15):

chandalena samsprstam grahyam tatrannam agrajaih sakshad vishnur yatas tatra candalo'pi dvijottamah tatrannapachika laksmih svayam bhokta janardanah tasmad tad annam viprarshe daivatair api durlabham hari-bhuktavasishtam tat pavitram bhuvih durlabham annam ye bhunjate martyas tesham muktir na durlabha

brahmadyas tridasah sarve tad-annam atidurlabham bhunjate nityan adatya manushyanam cha ka katha na yasye ramate chittam tasminn anne sudurlabhe tam eva vishnu-dveshtaram prahuh sarve maharshayah pavitram bhuvih sarvatra tad-annam papa-nashanam tatha pavitram sarvatra divyam yadyapi dvija-sattama

tathapi vajra-tulyam syat papa-parvata-darane purvairjitani papani kshayam yasyati yasya vai bhaktih pravartate tasminn anne tasya durlabhe bahu janmarjitam punyam yasya yasyati samkshayam tasminn anne dvija-srestha tasya bhaktih pravartate

“Even the highest among the *brahmanas* will accept the Mahaprasadam rice that has been touched by a *chandala*, because there in Puri even the *chandalas* are not different from Vishnu, and therefore equal to the best of the *brahmanas*. In Puri, Lakshmi Herself takes charge of the cooking, and Lord Janardana (Vishnu, who takes care of all people) eats the food She cooks. Such type of food is difficult to obtain even for the Devas. The leftovers of the Lord's meals are extremely pure and holy, and difficult to obtain in this world. Those mortal beings that succeed in obtaining such food will easily attain liberation. All the Devas, starting from Brahma, ardently aspire to obtain that food and always search it, what to speak of the value of the *prasadam* for the human beings. One who does not feel great joy in accepting the *prasadam*, that destroys all sins, is to be considered as hostile to Vishnu. Although this food is sweet and soft, it is actually as powerful as thunderbolt in destroying sins, increasing the pious merits and arousing pure devotion in those who consume it.”

According to the rituals followed in Hindu temples throughout India, it is mandatory that food cooked by a Brahmin male can be offered to the presiding Deity. In the Jagannatha temple, the food is cooked by Suaras, who are not Brahmins.

This is an exceptional rule, as according to the strict rules of worship, if Suaras cooked food in any temple other than the Jagannatha Temple in Puri, their food would be considered unfit for offering to the Deities.

Purushottama Kshetra is considered to be the most important seat of Tantra, known as Oddiyana Pitha, and the presiding Deity of the Pitha is Bhairava Jagannatha and Bhairavi Vimala. Jagannatha is worshipped as a Tantric Deity: *vimala bhairavi jatra jagannath astu bhairava*. According to Tantric practices, anyone who is a Tantra Sadhaka is qualified as a *brahmana*. Thus generally in the Tantric Culture there is no discrimination between caste or race. This is further confirmed by *Kularnava Tantra*:

pravritte bhairavi chakre sarve varna dvijatayaha nivritte bhairavi chakre sarve varnaha prithak prithak

“Anyone who is inside the Bhairavi Chakra is a *brahmana*, while people outside the Bhairavi Chakra have various social positions”.

Since the Jagannatha Temple is inside the Bhairavi Chakra, thus the Suaras are automatically qualified as *brahmanas* and thus food cooked by them can be offered to Jagannatha.

A unique word used for the food offered to Jagannatha before it is offered to Vimala (after which it is called Mahaprasad) is “Manohi”. The word “Manohi” is used to indicate the food offered to any Deva or royal representative especially the ruling King. Food offered to Jagannatha is called “Sarpamanohi”, food offered to Nilachakra is called “Chakramanohi”. Food offered to the three principal Deities is called Amrita Manohi Bhoga since the Deities cast their nectarous glance on the food.

Only the food offered to Jagannatha inside the Jagannath Temple at Puri is called Mahaprasadam because of the following reasons:

- * Before the food is cooked, a Roshia Homa is performed using the rituals of the Vaishnava Agni Samskara, and this Vaishnava Agni or fire is used for starting the stoves. The clay stove used for the cooking is also constructed in a Tantric way as Satkonatmaka Agni Yantra, with six elevations to hold the pots. Then the Navachakra or nine cooking pots are placed on top of the Agni Yantra stove.
- * Mahalakshmi Herself cooks food inside the temple kitchen.
- * The food was served to the Deities on a golden or silver plate (now plates are made of brass) is kept on top of the Sri yantra (made with ground rice powder) near the Ratna simhasana.
- * The water used for the ablution is empowered with the Patala Nrisimha Mantra.
- * The three plates are empowered with the *bijas* for the three Deities: *shrim* for Bada Thakura, *hrim* for Subhadra, *klim* for Jagannatha.
- * After being offered to Jagannatha, the food is offered to Vimala. After being offered to Vimala, the Annabali is offered to the eight Sattvika Vaishnavas: Visvakshena, Sukadeva, Prahlada, Narada, Hanuman, Garuda, Devala and Indradyumna.

Only at this point the food is known as Mahaprasada.

The present kitchen of Jagannatha is made of 32 rooms and a total of 752 stoves, producing 5,000 kg of food every day. During some special festival time, like in Kartika, the daily amount arrives at 10,000 kg.

About 600 cooks work in Jagannatha’s kitchen every day, of whom 200 are Suar, who actually cook the preparations on the fires, 200 are Joganya, who help the chefs by lighting the fires, washing the pots and utensils, fetching water etc, and 200 are Tunya, who work in a special area called *agana* in front of the kitchens by cutting vegetables and fruits, grinding coconut, spices, grains for flours etc. The *masala* (spice mixtures) are always prepared fresh, grinding together on stones the dry uncooked ingredients, sometimes with a little water or *ghi* to obtain a paste. The temple standards are very conservative: no gas or kerosene is used (everything is cooked on wood stoves) and only a limited variety of ingredients are allowed.

So in the Mahaprasadam in Puri you will never find potatoes, tomatoes, cauliflowers, cabbage, peas, capsicum, chilli or coriander, cucumber, karela, bhindi, green beans, beans, or parboiled rice. The pumpkin used in the recipes is a local indigenous variety.

A number of preparations are also banned from Jagannatha’s kitchen, notably *panir* (pressed cottage cheese) and *chapati (roti)*, although one type of *chapati* (called *khali roti*) is prepared with boiled flour and *puri* are regularly offered. The most popular item in Jagannatha’s kitchen, however, are pancakes (called *pithas*), of many different types.

The ingredients used are as follows:

- * vegetables: *muli, patola, johni, desi alu, khanda mula, saru, kankana*, plantain (green banana), spinach, pumpkin, eggplant, mango flowers, tala flowers,
- * fruits: coconut, amla, tala fruit, banana, mango, apple, grapes, sitaphal, chikku, guava, orange (tangerine), raisin,
- * spices and condiments: ginger, black mustard seeds, cardamom, red cardamom, cinnamon, black pepper, ajwain, nutmeg, cloves, gur (unrefined cane sugar), white sugar,
- * pulses and grains: urad dal, harar dal, mung dal, chickpeas, besan (chickpea flower), atta (whole wheat flour), maida (white wheat flour),
- * milk products: milk, dahi (yogurt), makhana (butter), chenna (fresh cottage cheese), rabri (creamy cooked down milk), khua (solid cooked down milk), khiri (milk and rice pudding), ghi (clarified butter).

Our information about the daily offerings to Jagannatha in Sri Mandira has been obtained from the Record of Rights of the temple. As a detailed explanation and description of the various preparations would take too much space, we have decided to publish it separately in another volume.

Daily offerings

Vallabha Bhoga: Paga khai, Sana naria patti, Bada nariya patti, Pati khurdi nariya, Dahi, Kaduli, Kora, Khua laddu.

Sakala Dhupa: Badakanti biri, Mathapuli, Sanakanti, Chanda matha puli, Kakatuajhili, Ada pachedi, Enduri, Sag, Thali khechudi, Lukhura khechudi, Angabasa oli khechudi, Kanika, Pithapuli, Bundiakhiri, Tata khechudi, Mendhamundia, Hansapuli, Pithapuli, Jjhili, Bhaja.

Madhyana Dhupa: Suara Arisa, Dhaula, Pushpalaka Dhaula, Sana Arisa, Bada Arisa, Sana Dhaula, Mathapuli, Badibada, Sanabada, Tisuri, Tatanadi, Tatamanohara, Tatarisa, Bhoga manohara, Bada kakara, Sanakakara, Marichaladdu, Badanadi, Ghianadi, Badapitha, Sanapitha, Sara, Pana, Mugamaricha, Pani, Badi khirisa (sana), Bada khirisa (bada), Amrutadudha, Thalianna, Oriya, Kadamba, Angabasa oli, Subasa pakhala, Sakara, Sanagaja, Badagaja.

Sandhya Dhupa: Jhadei neda, Suara manohar, Adha jhadei neda, Parijataka, Mandua, Jhadei neda kadali pitha, Jenamani pitha, Hamsa ballabha pitha, Thali paka, Matha puli, Pheni, Kanala puli, Suari.

Bada Shringara: Bada amalu, Sana amalu, Takua, Bhoga sarapuli, Suara pitha, Roshapaika pitha, Khairachula, Kadalibada, Khiri, Kanji, Tabha pakhala, Subasa pakhala.

Special offerings for festivals

Navanna Bhoga (offering of the new rice harvest): Bada nadi, Sana nadi, Trumurti, Bada pitha, Sana pitha, Bada hansakeli, Sana hansakeli, Bada sulis, Bada kakara, Bada kanti, Sana kanti, Panasua, Bada dalimba, Gaja, Bada kada, Sana kada, Chanda mathapuli, Sana dalimba, Mathapuli, Bada arisa, Sana arisa, Bada amalu, Sana amalu, Kanika, Odiya, Muga, Maricha pani, Khira, Pana, Sana kakara, Tata, Nadi, Dhaula, Khairachula, Sana arisa.

Odhana Adhivasa (the day before Odhana Sasthi): Sanapitha, Odiya, Muga, Khiri, Sana kanti, Sana kakara, Badasana arisa.

Odhana Sasthi: Sanakanti kakara, Badasana arisa, Ghia nadi, Bada arisa, Sana pitha, Gaja, Bada dalimba, Badi khirisa, Khiri, Kanika, Odiya, Muga, Sakara, Nadi, Dhaula, Khairachula, Sana arisa.

Pahili Bhoga: Bada jhili, Darasua badi, Darasua jhili, Bada bada, Kakeri, Sana amalu, Nali, Kakara, Arisa, Enduri, Mugei, Jhadei neda, Chattu, Chuda khua, Badi, Kantei, Tata, Gaja, Khairachula, Gaintha, Manda, Bada bada.

Bakula Amavasya: Gaintha, Nadi baula, Pheni baula, Chuna baula, Nadi, Chuna, Ghia nadi.

Pushya Abhisekha: Ghia nadi, Dhaula, Khairachula, Sana arisa, Khiri, Adha tadia, Amalu sana, Amalu bada, Takua sara, Khiri, Khiri oli, Chandamathapuli, Bada kanti, Bada kakara, Sana kakara, Sana kanti, Puli pitha, Bada pitha, Bada hansakeli, Sana pitha, Bada nadi, Ghia nadi, Bada arisa, Gaja, Bada dalimba, Panasua, Sana arisa, Muga, Khiri, Sakara, Pana, Khirisa, Sana dalimba, Odiya, Kanika.

Navanka: Sarapuli pitha, Bada arisa, Sana arisa, Khiri.

Makara Chaurasi: Bada kanti, Bada kakara, Marichanadu, Sana dalimba, Tata makaranadi, Tata tripuri, Tata nali bada, Dhupa nadi, Ghia nadi, Pheni, Sana tripuri, Bada jhili, Bada pitha, Puli pitha, Sana kanti, Sana kakara, Bada hansakeli, Sana hansakeli, Bada arisa, Sana arisa, Sarapuli, Sana pitha, Mathasuli, Jhadeineda, Antarikhya manda, Nahunia manda, Bada bada, Sana bada, Sarakampa, Kholabada, Bada amalu, Sana amalu, Ghiudi, Modia, Dhani sarana, Tariakhola bada, Bada dalimba, Sana manohara, Bada gaja, Sana gaja, Panasua, Takua, Pheni, Mandua, Saru chakuli, Chena keli, Parijataka, Chena nadu, Sodhua, Goti kakara, Chati bhata, Kadamba, Serikia bhata, Dahi pakhala, Tabha pakhala, Khiri, Muga, Pana, Sakara, Khirisa, Badi mahura, Manja kadei, Kadali talia, Alu kadali rasa, Ada pachedi, Phenatika, Nadi sakara, Chachi sakara, Bada kora, Khanda manda, Enduri, Charaju, Chana kora, Khandabadi, Bundi, Sara saraba.

Vasanta Panchami: Ghanadi, Khaira chula, Dhaula, Sana arisa, Sana kakara, Sana kanti, Bada sana arisa, Adhika manohara.

Magha Saptami: Bada dalimba, Sana kakara, Nadu.

Bhisma Ekadasi: Ghia nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Sana kanti, Sana kakara, Bada sana arisa, Odiya.

Bada Shringara Dhanda Chatra: Sana Arisa, Bada arisa, Sana kanti, Khiri.

Phagu Dasami (Chacheri Bhoga): Sana arisa, Bada arisa, Dhaula, Ghia nadi, Khaira chula, Dhaula, Khiri.

Dola Purnima: Puli, Bada pitha, Bada hansakeli, Bada kanti, Sana kanti, Mathapuli, Bada bada, Sana bada, Bada nadi, Ghia andi, Bada kakara, Sana kakara, Bada arisa, Sana arisa, Sana pitha, Gaja, Abada dalimba, Sana dalimba, Panasua, Sana hansakeli, Kanika, Pdiya, Khiri, Muga, Sakara, Khirisa.

Dola Bedi Bhoga: Khai, Chana ukhuda, Chana mua, Bada kora, Manda enduri, Khusitaraju, Khanda badi, Nadi sakara, Chachi sakara, Phenatika, Khaja, Pana.

Navapatrika (in the month of Chaitra starting of Vasanti Durga Puja): Tata jhili, Arisa, Pakhala, Harada dali, Bhaja, Dhaula, Bada arisa.

Chaitra Gundicha: Bada dalimba, Sana kakara, Nadu, Khiri.

Rama Navami : Jhili, Sana arisa, Odiya, Khiri, Kadali talia, Ramajanma sanakanti, Sana kakara, Tatapaya nadi, Khaira chula, Dhaula, Sana arisa, Adhika manohara, Bada sana arisa, Muga.

Pana Sankranti: Ghiudi, Pana, Enduri.

Dayana Chori at Jagannatha Vallabha: Khiri, Sana mandua, Bada mandua, Bada dalimba, Adha manohara sana, Nadu, Keli, Parijataka, Chena nadu.

Damanaka Chaturdasi: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Sana arisa, Khairachula, Adhika manohara, Nadi, Sana pitha, Gaja, Patuarisa, Sanakanti, Kakara, Bada arisa, Sana arisa, Odiya, Muga, Khiri.

Akshaya Tertiya and Chandana Yatra: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Adhika manohara, Ghia nadi, Sana pitha, Gaja, Bada arisa, Kanti kakara, Odiya, Bada arisa, Sana arisa, Muga, Khiri, Khirisa, Sana bada, Sarapuli pitha, Jhili, Pana, Sakara, Pakhala, Saga.

Niladri Mahodaya: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Adhika manohara, Kanti kakara, Bada arisa, Sana pitha, Nadi, Gaja, Oriya, Muga, Khiri, Khirisa.

Nrisimha Chaturdasi: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Adhika manohara, Kanti kakara, Bada arisa, Sana pitha, Nadi, Gaja, Arisa badasana, Khiri, Muga.

Rukmini Harana Ekadasi: Nadi tata, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Adhika manohara, Kanti kakara, Sana pitha, Ghia nadi, Bada arisa, Gaja, Sana arisa, Matha puli, Sana badi, Oriya, Muga, Khirisa, Khiri.

Champak Dvadasi: Tata nadi, Khaira chula, Dhaula, Sana arisa, Adhika manohara, Kanti kakara, Bada arisa, Sana pitha, Nadi, Gaja, Oriya, Muga, Khirisa.

Snana Purnima: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Ahika manohara, Sana pitha, Puli pitha, Hansa keli, Sana kanti, Bada kanti, Matha puli, Bada bada, Sana bada, Sana pitha, Gaja, Bada arisa, Panasua, Bada dalimba, Bada kakara, Bada nadi, Ghi nadi, Bada arisa, Sana kakara, Sana dalimba, Bada amalu, Sana amalu.

Panthi Bhoga: Kora, Manda enduri, Kadali, Panasa, Dhua muga, Paida, Khai, Pana, Kanika, Oriya, Khiri, Khirisa, Muga, Sana hamsa keli.

Netrotsava: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Adhika manohara, Bada pitha, Puli pitha, Hansa keli, Sana kanti, Bada kanti, Matha puli, Sana bada bada, Sana pitha, Bada nadi, Ghi nadi, Bada arisa, Sana kvara, Gaja, Sana arisa, Panasua, Bada dalimba, Bada kakara, Sana dalimba, Oriya, Kanika, Khiri, Muga sakara, Maricha pani, Khirisa, Pana.

Ratha Yatra

(On the chariot): Kora, Khai, Bada kakara, Utha kakara, Maha prasastha manohara, Bada amalu, Jhadai neda or takua, Mandua, Takua, Ratha manohara, Maricha ladu, Bada sana manohara, Pashu palaka kakara, Nadi, Bada sana gaja, Pheni, Kakar, Dalimba, Suara nadu.

(At Gundicha): Kanika, Pitha puli, Takua, Sana kanti, Chanda kanti.

Gundicha: Bada kanti, Sana kanti, Sana hansa keli, Matha puli, Bada kakara, Sana pitha, Bada pitha, Puli pitha, Sana bada arisa, Bada arisa, Gaja, Panasua, Bada dalimba, Sana dalimba, Sana bada, Bada bada, Bada nadi, Ghi nadi, Tipuri, Bada amalu, Sana amalu, Jhadei neda, Takua, Sarabata pitha, Sana kakara, Maricha nadu, Adhika manohara, Dhvaja puja pitha, Kanika, Pakhala, Khiri, Khirisa, Muga, Sakara, Pana, Oriya.

Hera Panchami: Sana pitha, Sana arisa, Bada arisa, Kanti kakara, Oriya, Muga khiri.

Karkata Sankranti: Sana pitha, Bada sana arisa, Kanti kakara, Oriya, Muga, Adhika manohara, Khiri, Tata nadi, Khaira chula, Dhaula, Sana arisa.

Chitalagi Amavasya: Tata ghiudi, Tata chitau, Ghiudi, Chitau.

Shola Puja for Vimala: Bada kanti, Adha pali, Enduri, Khechedi, Bada mua, Sana mua, Oriya for Madhyana Dhupa, Sana pitha, Sana kakara, Muga, Maricha pani, Pachila kadali, Sana kakara, Pakhala for Sandhya Dhupa, Sakara, Matha puli, Sana arisa, Bada arisa, Khai, Pedu, Kora, Takua for Bada Shringara, Khiri, Gaja manda pitha, Bada arisa, Tata gaja manda, Jhili, Sana arisa, Pakhala, Dhaula, Dali bhaja.

Dasahara: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula sana arisa, Adhika manohara, Kanti kakara, Sana bada arisa, Oriya, Khiri, Muga.

Bala Dhupa: Tata kora, Khai, Dobhaja lia, Nadia khudi, Paida, Dahi, Papudi, Kadali, Sana kora.

Kumara Purnima: Manda

Tula Sankranti: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Adhika manohara, Kanti kakara, Bada sana arisa, Sana pitha, Oriya, Khiri muga.

Kartika Purnima: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Manohara, Kanti kakara, Bada sana arisa, Oriya, Khiri, Muga.

Prathamashthami : Enduri, Sanapuli pitha, Ghi nadi , Gaja, Bada dalimba, Tta nadi, Khaira chula, Dhaula, Sana arisa, Manohara, Kanti kakara, Bada sana arisa, Oriya, Khiri, Muga, Mula Saga.

Dipavali: Pakhala, Kadali dhalia, Bada sana arisa.

Garbhana Sankranti: Tta nadi, Khaira chula, Dhaula, Sana arisa, Manohara, Kanti kakara, Bada sana arisa, Oriya, Muga, Khiri.

Jhulana Jatra: Sana amalu, Khiri, Sara, Khai, Kadali, Kora.

Gamha Purnima: Manda, Kanti kakara, Bada sana arisa, Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Adhika manohara, Oriya, Muga, Khiri, Kadali dhalia.

Rekha Panchami: Patu arisa, Suara arisa, Pakhala, Jhili, Sana arisa, Tata tuna, Baya tuna, Oriya, Khiri.

Janmashtami: Rasi muan, Nadia kora.

Nanda Utsava: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Manohara, Ghi nadi, Gaja, Bada arisa, Sana pitha, Kanti kakara, Bada sana arisa, Oriya, Muga, Khiri, Khirisa.

Saptapuri Amavasya: Kakara, Tada, Adha tada, Chautha, Chautha tada, Bada kakara, Suara, Kakara.

Ganesha chaturthi: Kanti kvara, Bada manohara.

Parsvapariavartana Ekadasi: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Manohara, Sana arisa, Kanti kakara, Bada arisa, Sana arisa, Sana pitha, Oriya, Muga, Khiri.

Vamana Janma: Tata nadi, Dhaula, Khaira chula, Sana arisa, Adhika manohara, Kanti kakara, Bada arisa, Sana arisa, Oriya, Muga, Khiri.

Pitri pakshya Amavasya: Tata nadi, Khaira chula, Dhaula, Arisa, Adhika manohara, Chatu, Khiri.

Festivals in Sri Mandira

The religious and cultural tradition of Purushottama kshetra finds a colorful and elaborate expression in the many festivals celebrated all the year around in Puri and Orissa. Most of such festivals revolve around the religious and cultural heart of Purushottama kshetra, the great temple of Jagannatha in Puri, called Sri Mandira, and therefore we have given special attention to the programmes that are performed there. However, it would have been a mistake to avoid mentioning the other religious and cultural traditions observed in the region, including the events that were established in more modern times but are considered characteristic of the spirit of Orissa or important in the life of the people.

For example, thousands of people queue up to get Darshan at Sri Mandira on 1st January every year, although this recurrence has nothing to do with the Vedic calendar that establishes the days of festivals according to the movements of the Sun, the Moon and the Stars. The 1st January on the modern international calendars is a totally arbitrary date and as such it holds no particular religious significance. However, the devotion for Sri Jagannatha inspires people from all walks of life, from the Ministers of State to the humblest workers, to visit His temple on this day to invoke auspiciousness on their lives. Similarly, whenever the people of Puri purchase a vehicle, they take it to the temple of Bata Mangala (Marga Devi) to be blessed. There are also other festivals that are always highlighted in the official presentations of Orissa's cultural heritage, the most important being the Puri Beach Festival (in November or December), the Konark Festival (usually 1-5 December), the Dhauli Festival of Odissi dance and martial arts (usually in January), the Adivasi Melas (one is from 26 to 31 January in Bhubaneswar and another is in November).

Many other festivals and cultural programmes are organized during the year, especially to present Odissi dance, tribal arts, typical handicrafts and so on. The Adivasi (tribal) culture, that also forms a substantial part of the "heritage presentations" and the professional hospitality services brochures, has recurrent festivals based on the Hindu calendar as well as weekly market days that constitute an important occasion for gathering, socializing and celebrating and not simply a time to buy and sell products. We will discuss more about these in the chapter about the Adivasi tradition.

The 12 most important festivals celebrated in the Jagannath temple are:

1. Snana Yatra
2. Ratha Yatra
3. Sayana Yatra
4. Dakshinayana Yatra
5. Parsvaparivartana Yatra
6. Utthapana Yatra
7. Pravarana Sasthi
8. Pushya Yatra
9. Uttarayana Yatra
10. Dola Yatra
11. Damanaka Yatra
12. Chandana Yatra

Here is the list of various the festivals celebrated in the Jagannath Temple along with their Hindu dates:

- Snanotsava: Jyestha Purnima
- Netrotsava: Asadha Amavasya
- Ubha Yatra: Asadha sukla Pratipada
- Ratha Yatra: Asadha sukla Dvitiya
- Hera Panchami: Asadha sukla Sasthi
- Bahuda Yatra: Asadha sukla Dasami
- Sayana Yatra: Asadha sukla Ekadasi (Suna Vesa)
- Dakshinayana Vandapana: karkata Sankranti

- Parsvaparivartana Yatra: Bhadrava sukla Ekadasi
- Utthapana Yatra: Kartika sukla Ekadasi
- Pravarana Sasthi: Margasira sukla Sasthi
- Pushya Vandapana: Pausha Purnima
- Uttarayana Vandapana: Makara Sankranti
- Dola Yatra: from Phalguna sukla Dasami to Phalguna Purnima
- Damanaka Mahotsava: Chaitra sukla Chaturdasi
- Akshaya Mahotsava: Vaisakha sukla Tritiya
- Chandana Yatra: first 21 days known as the Bahara Chandana that includes the boat ride in Narendra Sarovara, starts from Vaisakha sukla Tritiya and the next 21 days is known as the Bhitara Chandana and this continues till Jyestha sukla Chaturdasi
- Srikshetra Parikrama: Margasira krishna Panchami
- Prathamasthmi: Margasira krishna Ashtami
- Deva Dipavali: from Margasira krishna Chaturdasi to Margasira sukla Pratipada
- Bakula Amavasya: Margasira Amavasya
- Bhoumi Ekadasi: Magha sukla Ekadasi
- Rama Navami: Chaitra sukla Navami
- Niladri Mahotsava: Vaisakha sukla Ashtami
- Nrisimha Janma Mahotsava: Vaisakha sukla Chaturdasi
- Rukmini Vivaha: Jyestha sukla Ekadasi
- Champaka Dvadasi: Jyestha sukla Dvadasi
- Chitalagi Amavasya: Shravana Amavasya
- Balabhadra Janma: Shravana Purnima
- Rahurekhalagi Mahotsava: Bhadrava krishna Panchami
- Krishna Janma: Bhadrava krishna Ashtami
- Saptapuri Amavasya: Bhadrava Amavasya
- Rishi Panchami: Bhadrava krishna Panchami
- Vamana Janma: Bhadrava sukla Dvadasi
- Shakra Dhvaja Mahotsava: Bhadrava sukla Dvadasi
- Sahasra Kumbhabhisekha (Mulashtami): Ashvina krishna Ashtami, this marks the beginning of the 16 days festival of Durga Puja
- Durga Puja: from Ashvina sukla Saptami to Ashvina sukla Dasami
- Kumarotsava: Ashvina Purnima

Chandana yatra

It falls in the month of Vaisakha, on sukla Tritiya, a day also called Akshaya Tritiya observed as a country festival all over Orissa with the ceremonial sowing of the seeds for the next harvest and offerings to Lakshmi Devi or Anna Lakshmi. Akshaya Tritiya is also known as the day when Ganga first descended to the Earth.

However, the most important significance of the Chandana yatra festival is celebrated in Puri as an occasion to please the Deities with refreshing applications of sandalwood paste (*chandana*) and daily pleasure boat rides that offer ample opportunities for interactions between the Lord and His devotees.

The festival lasts for 21 days in Narendra sarovara (*bahara chandana*) and another 21 days in the Jala Krida Mandapa inside Jagannatha temple (*bhitara chandana*). The last day of the external festival is called Bhaunri (from *bhramari* or “going in circles”). The boats move around touching each corner for 21 times. One of the Khuntia Sevakas is engaged to constantly offer flowers to the Deities and the boats are sprinkled with turmeric water. The internal (private) festival is performed in the Jala Krida Mandapa inside the temple, and the Deities are immersed in brass vessels filled with sandalwood water. The names Chandana Yatra and Gandhalepana Yatra (another name of this festival) are derived from the refreshing sandalwood paste (*chandana*) used to smear the Deities with the purpose of cooling Their bodies in the heat of the summer.

Sandalwood paste is a favorite offering for Jagannatha, especially when mixed with Tulasi leaves. The sandalwood is provided by the Raghava Dasa Matha and is consecrated on the Dvitiya day, one day before the beginning of the festival.

For the whole period the Deities of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra are dressed in the Chandana vesa, a special white silk cloth, 12 x 3 feet, called *phula badi cheda*.

Madana Mohana is dressed with different outfits every day:

- day 1: Tritiya, Natavara veshā
- day 2: Chaturthi, Hari janma veshā
- day 3: Panchami, Khatadoli veshā
- day 4: Sasthi, Rajadhiraja veshā
- day 5: Saptami, Vatsacharana veshā
- day 6: Ashtami, Vatsaharana veshā
- day 7: Navami, Gomati krsna veshā
- day 8: Dasami, Aghasura bada veshā
- day 9: Ekadasi, Chakra Narayana veshā
- day 10: Dvadasi, Navakeli veshā
- day 11: Trayodasi, Rasa mandali veshā
- day 12: Chaturdasi, Nrisimha veshā
- day 13: Purnima, Kandarpa ratha veshā
- day 14: Pratipat, Sad bhuja Gouranga veshā
- day 15: Dvitiya, Raghunatha veshā
- day 16: Tritiya, Vastra harana veshā
- day 17: Chaturthi, Giri puja veshā
- day 18: Panchami, Giri teka veshā
- day 19: Sasthi — (no special veshā, just regular outfit)
- day 20: Saptami, Gajoddarana veshā
- day 21: Asthami, Kunja doli veshā

Chandana Chaturthi

The first day of the Chandana festival, Akshaya Tritiya, is also considered very auspicious to start new things and new projects, so on this day the Ratha anukula ritual is performed, inaugurating the work for the construction of the chariots that will be used for the Ratha Yatra. During the procession of the *chalanti pratima* Deities to Narendra, Madana Mohana stops at the palace of the King of Puri, Sri Raja Nahar, to give the order to start the building of the chariots. Three Acharyas are appointed to supervise the work and the Maharanas (carpenters) who will actually cut and carve the pieces of the chariots. A fire sacrifice is celebrated and the logs are consecrated.

The wood has already been gathered there in Grand Road outside the King's palace. It is generally from the *dhaura* and *asana* trees, giving a very strong wood. The logs for the chariots (and for Jagannatha's toothbrushes) used to come from the forests of Ranapur and Daspalla (in Nayagarh district) supplied by the Kings of Ranapur and Daspalla, but due to the increasing problem of deforestation in Orissa, it is now necessary to look for wood in a larger area. In June 2000 the Chief Minister of Orissa, Naveen Patnaik, created the "Jagannatha Bana Prakalpa" project to expand the reforestation on 2800 hectares of land along the Mahanadi River in the districts of Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Phulbani, Cuttack and Dhenkanal.

The work of building the chariots is executed by 125 carpenters who use 1072 logs and 2188 pieces of wood, and working from Vaisakha sukla Tritiya to Asadha krishna Chaturdasi. No metal part is used in the construction of the chariots: all parts are kept together by expert craftsmanship of wedges and wooden pins, including the huge wheels that support the immense weight of the chariot, the Deities and a great number of Sevakas who will also travel on the chariot. A number of important festivals fall during the 42 days of the Chandan Yatra. Since these festivals are significant, they are mentioned separately.

The Deities are bathed and dressed in the morning, then the sandalwood paste is carried in procession three times around the temple before being presented to Them.

After the *pancha upasara* worship, the main Deities (Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra, Lakshmi, Sarasvati and Nila Madhava) are decorated with ornaments and then offered the sandalwood paste. After the Bhoga Mandapa food offering the *chalanti pratima* Deities, Madana Mohana and Rama Krishna, sit on the Ratna Simhasana and the Sevakas apply *chandana* (sandalwood paste) on Their bodies. Later, these Deities are presented with a special food offering called Jata Bhoga.

Rama Krishna and Madana Mohana are brought to the Ratna Vedi, where the King prays for the permission to take Them to the Narendra Sarovara, also called Chandana Sarovara. Then Rama Krishna, Madana Mohana, Lakshmi and Sarasvati are carried through the north gate of the temple to the Sarovara in a *vimana* palanquin, accompanied by the temple elephant decorated as Gaja Lakshmi.

The first Deity in the procession is Rama Krishna, carried in a palanquin called *palinki*, a kind of boat with a curved pole at each end for handling. The *palinki* is covered by the royal umbrella. In the palanquin the Deity sits at about 3 feet above the ground, carried by the temple Sevakas who hold the pole on their shoulders; sometimes the Sevakas allow people to come forward and touch the feet of the Deities.

The second palanquin, called *chaudala* and carried on two straight poles by four Sevakas a little higher than the first one, is the vehicle for Madana Mohana, who sits there with Lakshmi and Sarasvati.

On all the twenty-one days the entire road from the Jagannatha temple leading up to the Narendra Sarovara as well as the houses on both sides are decorated with flags, mango leaves, flowers and so on. At some places, especially in front of Mathas or at cross-roads, big *toranas* (arches) and *chamundias* (canopies) are erected with bamboo poles and thatched roofs. Here the Deities take casual rest and receive simple offerings (*panti bhoga*) and worship, particularly by the representatives of the various Mathas, and are entertained by songs and dances, generally by the Gotipuas. The procession is led by a colorful party of dancers from the Durga Medha and Naga groups (generally performing during the Sahi yatras) and by devotees variously dressed as Nanda Maharaja, *gopas*, *gopis*, Garuda, Hanuman, etc.

Traditionally, the devotees from the Siddha Bakula Matha walk in front of Rama Krishna's palanquin, singing, "Nitai Gaura Radhe Shyam", followed by devotees from Radha Kanta Matha and various other Gaudiya Mathas, while Madana Mohana is accompanied by Oriya devotees singing *kirtana* and songs by Jayadeva Gosvami. Behind the two main carriages come the five *caudhala* palanquins of the Pancha Shivas (Lokanatha, Yamesvara, Kapalamochana, Markandesvara, Nilakantha), also starting from Sri Mandira. These main Deities are also followed by different Deities from other temples of the town.

When the procession reaches the Narendra, the Sarovara is vividly illuminated, with thousands of spectators milling and jostling all around in expectation of the arrival of the procession. Many people take advantage of the occasion to sell and buy food and various articles around the lake, and many sit around the shores to eat. Several boys dive, swim and play around in the water, especially while the boats are traveling. In the middle of the Narendra Sarovara there is a small island with three temples, the largest of which accommodates Madana Mohana, Lakshmi and Sarasvati. There is also a well that provides clean water for the bath of the Deities.

After arriving at the Chandana Mandapa inside the Narendra Sarovara, the Deities take bath, play in vats of sandal water and receive a food offering, then They are dressed and sit in the two boats together with Their servants. Formerly, the Devadasis and the Gotipuas used to dance on the boats (on Madana Mohana's and Rama Krishna's boats respectively) accompanied by drum players, on the tune of romantic "boat songs", but the tradition was dropped in the 1970s. Both boats are designed to look like huge swans floating on water.

In one boat, decorated with white cloth, Madana Mohana sits with Lakshmi and Sarasvati. In the other boat, decorated with red cloth, Rama Krishna sits with the Pancha Shivas. The boats, rowed by temple servants that are traditionally considered from the caste of fishermen, move around the Sarovara several times, once before the bath (*dina chapa*) and the other after it (*ratri chapa*). Finally, after midnight, the Deities return to the respective temples on their palanquins. The worship of the main Deities in the temple (Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra) is also special during the Chandana Yatra. Until a few decades ago, the Devadasis had an important part in the rituals both on the boats and in the temple, dancing twice during the *alata lagi* and performing the *gupta seva* (secret service) for Balabhadra in the middle of the night. The Devadasi offering this service entered from the southern door instead of the northern door as usual, and walked in complete darkness into the room, only snapping her fingers while she walked to ward off snakes. The *akhanda dipa* had been removed from the hook and hidden behind the Ratna Vedi under a pot.

In this ritual, only three Srngari priests remained in the temple, sitting at the feet of the Deities and fanning Them, and they were replaced by another 3 Puja Pandas around the middle of the ceremony. The Devadasi did not wear tinkling ornaments, flowers or scents, and she had a vermilion line on her forehead instead of the usual round *bindu*. When she reached the door to the Pokharia, she uncovered the upper part of her body to dance. The Deities, too, were dressed scantily with a thin white cloth. The dance was accompanied by the singing of the *Snanotsava chalisa*, a song written by Dina Krishna Das, expressing the sorrow of not being able to see the beautiful bathing festival.

Niladri Mahodaya

This is the day when the Deities were originally installed on the Ratna simhasana in the second *prahara* of the Satya yuga by Brahma in the presence of Narada Rishi and King Indradyumna. This day falls on Vaisakha sukla Ashtami. On the previous night after Chandana lagi, 108 pots of water provided by the Kotha Bhoga Pania Sevaka are purified and kept under a *chandua*. On the Ashtami day, when the food offering called Bhoga mandapa is over, the Sevakas known as Garabadus cover their faces and carry the 108 pots of water (after purifying them again) to the Ratna simhasana, to the accompaniment of various musical instruments. The Puja Pandas perform the *samskara* for the 108 pots of water and is offered to the seven Deities on the Ratna Simhasana. Then, after the Pushpalakas have applied *chandana* to the Deities, Yatrangi Bhoga and Madhyana Dhupa are offered. When this *arati* is over, Madana Mohana and Rama Krishna are presented with a food offering called Dakshina Ghara Bhoga and then carried from the Dakshina Ghara to the Ratna simhasana. The Mudirasta offers the food and the Puja Pandas perform the *sodasha upachara puja*. After the *vandapana* is over, the festival Deities receive the *ajna mala* and go on a procession for the boat ride.

Nrisimha Chaturdasi

Vaisakha sukla Chaturdasi celebrates the appearance day of Nrisimha, the half-man half-lion *avatara* of Vishnu, a *tattva* that constitutes a very important part of the Jagannatha tradition, as we have discussed in the chapter about Jagannatha and the concept of Purushottama.

There are many temples dedicated to Nrisimha in Puri and in the entire region, and all of them celebrate Nrisimha Chaturdasi with great enthusiasm. Devotees usually fast until dusk, the specific time of the day when Nrisimha appeared to protect His devotee Prahlada from the demoniac Hiranyakasipu. The story, narrated in the *Puranas* says that the powerful Hiranyakasipu (son of Kashyapa and Diti) had secured from Prajapati Brahma an “almost-immortality” boon, granting him that he would not be killed by any man or animal, or by any resident of the heavenly planets. He was also promised he would not be killed during the day or during the night, on the ground, in the water or in the air, indoors or outdoors, or with any weapon. Believing himself to have become invincible, Hiranyakasipu persecuted all good and religious people, including his own young son Prahlada, who was a devotee of Vishnu. As Prahlada had stated that God is present everywhere, Hiranyakasipu challenged God to appear from a pillar of his royal assembly hall and fight with him. So Nrisimha appeared from the wooden pillar, in a wonderful form that was neither a man nor a beast nor a denizen of the heavenly planets, and holding the demoniac king on His lap (which was neither ground or air nor water) He killed him with His own sharp nails, on the doorstep of the palace and at the time when the day fades into the night.

Inside Sri Mandira, on the occasion of Nrisimha Chaturdasi a special Narasimha yajna is performed and Jagannatha wears the Lakshmi Nrisimha vesha. After the offering of Jata Bhoga the festival Deities (Madana Mohana, Sridevi, Bhudevi, Rama Krishna and the Pancha Mahadeva) go for the Chandana Yatra and Madhyana Dhupa is offered in the temple. After the festival Deities return to the Sri Mandira, the Homapalia Panda carries the *ajna mala* from the *srianga* of the main Deities to the Chakra Narayana temple through the Simhadvara and Dola Mandapa Sahi and returns after offering the *ajna mala*. In the meanwhile, after Mailama Arati is over, the Mahasnana is performed with *panchamrita* for the three main Deities. The seven Deities on the Ratna simhasana wear new clothes and are decorated with ornaments and a single *ajna mala* is offered. Then Sandhya Dhupa takes place. After this is over, the Mahajanas carry Nrisimha from the Dakshina Ghara to the Ratna Simhasana. After receiving the *ajna mala* Nrisimha is carried to the Mukti Mandapa, where the Pandas perform the Mahasnana of Nrisimha, while the Pati Mahapatras perform the Mahasnana of Mukta Nrisimha.

Then Sitala Bhoga is offered and after completion of the pancha upachara puja, Nrisimha is carried on a *vimana* to the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens, where Bhoga Vandapana is done. The other rituals in the temple take place only after Nrisimha returns from the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens.

Jala Krida

This is a special ritual where the festival Deities play with turmeric water. It is performed on Jyestha Krishna Ekadasi, Savitri Amavasya and Sitala Sasthi. On Jyestha Krishna Ekadasi after the morning Chandana lagi, Madana Mohana receives the food offering called Dakshina Ghara Bhoga and is then carried to the Ratna Simhasana. After the *pancha upachara puja* on the Ratna Simhasana, the Mahajanas receive the *ajna mala*, then carry Madana Mohana and Sridevi on a palanquin to the Jala Krida Mandapa. Before the arrival of Madana Mohana and Sridevi, a vessel is filled with water and scented flowers. The Deities arrive at the Jala Krida Mandapa, enter the vessel and a food offering is presented.

Then the Deities play with sandalwood water and drink *pana bhoga* while still inside the vessel. The Sitala bhoga provided by Raghavadas Matha is also offered with *pancha upachara* rituals. Finally the Deities get out from the vessel and are decorated with fresh clothes and flowers. Sridevi returns to the Ratna Simhasana and Madana Mohana to the Dakshina Ghara. On Savitri Amavasya and Jyestha Sukla Ekadasi the Jala Krida rituals take place in the same way, with the only exception that on Jyestha Sukla Ekadasi the festival of Rukmini Harana is celebrated, so Dola Govinda takes the place of Madana Mohana and Sridevi for the water playing.

Sitala Sasthi

On Jyestha Sukla Sasthi, the day celebrating the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, great festivals are held at all Shiva temples. According to the tradition, on Caturthi day Shiva sends a letter to Parvati's family house to propose the marriage; a Sevaka of the Shiva temple (Lokanatha mandira, for example) carries the letter to a temporary shrine built as *pandal* for Parvati outside the temple premises.

There the letter is rejected by a Sevaka playing the part of Parvati's father at the *pandal*. On Panchami evening (after Sandhya dhupa, around 8 or 9 pm) some Sevakas of the Shiva temple carry the Deity of Shiva (the *chalanti pratima* of the temple) to the *pandal* to "kidnap" Parvati (*kanya chori*) and take Her to the temple. Usually this Parvati Deity is worshiped inside the Shiva temple, so She just returns to Her normal place.

On Panchami evening the marriage (*vivaha*) is celebrated, then on Sasthi Shiva and Parvati travel together to visit the various temples and places in the city in a grand procession. In Jagannatha temple in Puri (Sri Mandira) on Jyestha Sukla Sasthi, after Sandhya Dhupa, Dola Govinda receives the *ajna mala* in the Khata Seja Ghara. In the meantime, the Bada Shringara Bhoga is offered. The Pancha Pandavas (the Pancha Mahadevas) also receive the *ajna mala* and sit on the cot placed in the Jagamohana. Then Dola Govinda comes from the Khata Seja Ghara to sit along with the Pancha Pandavas. Sitala bhoga is offered with *pancha upachara* rituals and after *vandapana* Dola Govinda returns to the Dakshina Ghara. If it is still night, then *ratra pahuda* takes place. The Pancha Mahadevas remain in the Jagamohana until the next day, when They go on a Nagara Parikrama after the Vallabha bhoga food offering.

Rajendra Abhisekha

This festival celebrates the coronation of Lord Rama and is also called Pushya Abhisheka. On Jyestha Sukla Dasami, after Sandhya dhupa Madana Mohana receives the *ajna mala* and sits on a cot placed near Bhoga Bata Ganesha. During this time the Jaya Vijaya door is closed and the Jagamohana remains dark. In the meanwhile the main Deities are fanned (*alata lagi*) inside the Pokharia. One Sevaka is chosen to present Madana Mohana with Rukmini's marriage proposal; Madana Mohana then instructs the Sevakas to perform the Rajendra Abhisekha. The Mahajanas carry Madana Mohana to a small chariot parked below the Kalpa Bata. The chariot is taken once around the temple by the Bimana Badus and stops exactly where it started from. One Sevaka, who plays the part of Koutaka Rishi, receives Madana Mohana in his Ashram (Dakshina Ghara). Here Madana Mohana is offered a *panchamrita* Mahasana to the accompaniment of various instruments, and after dressing eats Sitala bhoga and *khiri*. After this, Pana Bhoga and the other usual rituals continue inside the Pokharia.

Rukmini Harana and Marriage

Jyestha sukla Ekadasi is also called Rukmini Harana Ekadasi; on this day Krishna pleases Rukmini by kidnapping and marrying Her. The *Bhagavatam* relates how during the Krishna lila, Rukmini had fallen in love with Krishna but Her brother Rukmi insisted that She should marry Sisupala. So Rukmini secretly sent a message to Krishna asking Him to stage Her abduction and marry Her. The re-enactment of this *lila* is particularly elaborate in the Jagannatha temple. During this period, Jagannatha wears a special dress called Baula Pata. One month later, on Jyestha sukla Dvadasi, the Deities of Krishna and Rukmini visit the city in a festival called Rukmini Krishna bhramana lila (“going around”). After the morning rituals these Deities are brought to the Ratna vedi to “take permission” from Jagannatha, then carried to the temple of Yamesvara, for a special worship and a fire sacrifice. Finally, They return to Their shrine in the temple.

On Rukmini harana day, while Sakala Dhupa takes place, Madana Mohana is dressed in the Dakshina Ghara. After Sakala Dhupa is over, Sridevi gets the *ajna mala* and is carried by the Mahajanas to a palanquin placed near Mukti mandapa, from where the Bimana Badus carry Her to the Mahalakshmi temple. Sridevi is then placed on a cot in the Jagamohana of the Mahalakshmi Temple, where Her Mahasnana is performed with *panchamrita*. While Sridevi is being dressed, the Tadau Pattanaik (who acts as Lakshmi’s confidante) arrives with a palm leaf sheet (*chitau*) and a pen. The Bhitarcha Mahapatra presents the paper and pen to Sridevi and then hands it back to the Tadau, who in turn writes a letter on behalf of Rukmini to Her beloved Krishna, telling Him about Her love. When Madana Mohana is dressed, He is carried into the Pokharia and sits on the Ratna simhasana for the Bhoga Mandapa food offering, then He is carried to the Jagamohana. The Jaya Vijaya door is closed, while the main Deities are being fanned (*alata lagi*) inside.

The Bhitarcha Mahapatra hands over the letter to Sridevi, sticking it to Her hand with *chandana*, then one *brahmana* is chosen to carry the letter to Madana Mohana, who is waiting at the Jagamohana. Here in the Jagamohana, a dialogue (*vachanika*) takes place between the Puja Panda, the Purana Panda and the Palia Sevaka. Then Madana Mohana is placed on a chariot and goes to the Vimala shrine where He waits for Rukmini (Sridevi), as Rukmini is expected to arrive at the Vimala shrine to worship the Grama Devi (in the form of Vimala). In the meanwhile Rukmini arrives, accompanied by a Mahari, and worships the Grama Devi. After receiving Vimala’s *ajna mala*, Rukmini comes out and Madana Mohana (represented by the Bhitarcha Mahapatra) abducts Rukmini and places Her on the chariot, fights with “one lakh kings” (represented by a few Sevakas) and defeats Sishupala in front of Bhubanesvari’s temple, tying Sishupala to his chariot.

In the meantime, Baladeva arrives from the Dakshina Ghara, releases Sishupala and returns to the Dakshina Ghara. Madana Mohana and Sridevi are offered Panthi Bhoga on the way, then They arrive at the Jala Krida Mandapa (functioning as marriage hall), where They are offered *chandana* (Chandana lagi). In the meantime Jata Bhoga is offered to the main Deities inside the Pokharia. Then only Dola Govinda is brought for Jala Krida (water playing). After Jala Krida is over, Madhyana Dhupa takes place. Then after Sandhya Arati the main Deities are bathed (Mahasnana) and offered new clothes. After Sandhya Dhupa the marriage takes place and Pancha Grasi Bhoga is offered with *vandapana*. The new bride and groom enter the Pokharia for Bada Shringara, where They remain for the entire night. They go to the Dakshina Ghara only after Mangala Arati on the following day and after the newly wed couple comes out, the Abakasha of the main Deities takes place. In the next few days the knot of husband and wife stays until the day before Snana Purnima, Jyestha sukla Chaturdasi.

Champak Dvadasi

This celebration takes place the day after Rukmini Harana Ekadasi. On this day after Sakala Dhupa and the food offering in Bhoga Mandapa, the Deities are fanned (Alata lagi). Then Mahasnana takes place and the main Deities wear new clothes. Then Chandana lagi follows. After Madhyana Dhupa the newly weds are again carried into the Pokharia where *vandapana* is done. On receiving the *ajna mala*, the couple sits on a palanquin that was waiting for Them near the Mukti Mandapa. The Bimana Badus carry the palanquin around the temple once, then they carry the palanquin to the Sri Nahara where the Gajapati Maharaja receives the newlyweds and places Them on a cot in the royal courtyard. Here *pancha upachara puja* takes place. After Prasada Lagi and *vandapana* (here *vandapana* is done personally by the Gajapati) everyone comes out and the main door of the palace is closed. The King, the Queen and other members of the royal family offer *dakshina (bheta)*.

Then the couple is carried to the Yamesvara temple where Pancha Grasi Bhoga and *vandapana* take place. Upon completion of these rituals the Deities return to the Dakshina Ghara inside the Jagannatha temple, by the end of Sandhya Dhupa. After Bada Shringara the Deities reenter the Pokharia and spend the rest of the night inside.

Jyestha Sukla Trayodashi

From this day on, the Daitas take full charge of the main Deities, in preparation for the imminent Snana yatra. After Bada Shringara is over, Sridevi and Madana Mohana are carried into the Dakshina Ghara and Madhava and Bhudevi are carried into the Khata Seja Ghara. Then the Palia Pushpalakas cover the faces (*srimukha*) of the main Deities with the *srimukha khandua* and hand over the responsibility of Their worship to the Bhandara Mekapa. The Daitas then enter the Pokharia and tie ropes to the arms of the main Deities. Sudarshana is placed on a cot next to Balabhadra. Then makeshift steps are constructed with bamboo poles.

Jyestha Sukla Chaturdasi

After the *charamala* (makeshift bamboo ramp) is fastened the Daitas, along with the Pati Mahapatras, climb onto the Ratna simhasana and after offering flower and Tulasi garlands, open the ropes by which the main Deities are tied to the Ratna simhasana. Then Senapati lagi takes places. Sudarshana and Madhava-Bhudevi are placed on the Ratna simhasana where Mangala arati is done. All the rituals go on as usual till Sandhya Dhupa. After Sandhya Dhupa, Chaturthi (“fourth day” of the marriage) Homa is done for the newlywed couple in the Dakshina Ghara. After Badashringara Dhupa the couple enters the Pokharia and sits on the Ratna simhasana. Then Pahuda arati takes place, after which Madana Mohana and Sridevi return to the Dakshina Ghara while Madhava and Bhudevi return to the Khata Seja Ghara. In the end Mangalarpana is performed and the main Deities start their procession to the Snana Mandapa.

Snana yatra or Deva Snana

This famous festival of the ritual bathing of Sri Jagannatha falls on the full moon (*Purnima*) of the month of Jyestha. Jagannatha was earlier worshipped as Nila Madhava by a Sabara chief called Visvavasu. Till now the Daitapatis, descendants of the Sabaras (tribals) have the exclusive right to take care of the Deities during the long cycle from Snana yatra to the completion of Ratha Yatra.

Tribals called Saoras belonging to the southern part of Orissa still perform a ritual to bathe their Deities ceremonially on the last day of the month of Jyestha. For this purpose, they collect water from remote jungles where it remains untouched even by the shadow of the animals. The temple festivals that are held in a larger and more elaborate scale in the important temples of Puri and Bhubaneswar, are also held simultaneously in all the other small temples of the respective Deities, though in a more modest scale, all over Orissa.

In the Utkala khanda of the *Skanda Purana* Jagannatha instructs king Indradyumna to find and clean the ancient Sitala Kupa (well) that is under the Akhsaya Bata, the eternal Kalpa Vriksha tree, because the water in this well contains water from all the holy places. It is from this well that the temple Sevakas ritually collect the water for the solemn public bathing of Jagannatha. This ceremonial public bathing has a deep significance and importance in Vedic culture, as it represents the consecration or installation (“anointing”) of the worshipable authority – the Deity and also the King. The Abhisheka is in fact the most important part of the ritual of installation because it is a public celebration where the installed authority graciously receives offerings in the most evident and basic way – getting them poured on his body. A very similar ritual was used in ancient cultures all over the world, when the King or the Deity was anointed as a ritual act of consecration. The annual ritual of Abhisheka or Snana celebrated for Jagannatha takes place on the platform called Snana vedi, situated on the east side of the outer wall and visible from the outside of the temple so thousands of devotees can assemble to participate to the festival. The festival celebration is also broadcast live on local TV channels. A temporary structure is built on the platform and decorated. The traditional royal emblems such as white and black parasols and *chamaras* are also an important part of the scenery. Flags and *toranas* (arches) are also erected as symbols of celebration.

On Jyestha sukla Chaturdasi after Bada Shringara, the Mahajanas carry Sridevi and Madana Mohana to the Dakshina Ghara while Madhava and Bhudevi sit on Their bed. Then the Puja Pandas and Pati Mahapatras perform the *mangalarpana* at the three Badas (Bada Bada, Mahaprabhu Bada and Majhi Bada).

Silken ropes are fastened around the Deities after which They slowly start climbing up to the Snana Mandapa. The Dhadi pahandi (the special ritual procession when the Deities come in a row) begins with Sudarshana, then Balabhadra, Subhadra, Jagannath and then Madana Mohana move out. The main Deities are carried by the Daityas and Madana Mohana is carried by the Mahajanans.

When the Deities reach the Sata Pahacha (the 7 steps on the north side of the temple that leads into the Jagamohana), They are decorated with a *tahiya* (a traditional head gear made of *sola pith*, *malati* flowers and *durbha*) and the *chula* (Tulasi tufts) provided by the Raghava Das Matha. Then the Suna Gosvami and the Mudirasta bring 108 pots of water that had been collected from the Suna Kua (golden well) in Sitala Devi's shrine near the north gate and kept in the Adhivasa room. *Chandana*, camphor, saffron and *chua* oil have been added to the water, after which one coconut were placed on each of the 108 pots of water.

While the water is being purified again the Deities are fastened to Their seats at the Snana Mandapa. The usual rituals take place starting with Mangala arati, Abakasha and Mailama. Then the Datta Mahapatras wash the face of the Deities with camphor water and wipe them, as the Deities' bodies start sweating.

The Deities are dressed with a special type of silk *sari* called Boirani Pata and are decorated with flower garlands and Tulasi. After the Puja is completed and the Mandapa is cleansed again, the Garabadas bring the 108 pots of water from the Adhivasa Ghara to the accompaniment of various musical instruments. They have cloth wrapped around their faces (only the eyes are visible) to avoid any chance of contaminating the pure water by sneezing etc. This fashion of tying cloth around the face and head is called *Bagha mukha*.

After completing the *sodasha upachara* rituals the Puja Pandas start pouring water from the silver pot held by the Mekapa who in turn refills it from the pot held by the Garabada. This whole ritual is conducted to the accompaniment of musical instruments.

By this time the costumes for the Hati vesa are brought from Gopala Tirtha Matha (for Balabhadra) and Raghava Das Matha (for Subhadra and Jagannatha) and kept in the Jagamohana near the Garuda stambha. Meanwhile royal rituals are taking place at the Snana mandapa where the Mudirasta performs the Chera Pahanra (royal sweeping ceremony). After this ritual is completed the Pushpalakas and Datta Mahapatras dress the Deities with the Hati Vesha.

The story of this very particular outfit is narrated in the Oriya *Dardhyata bhakti* as connected to a great devotee of Ganesha, called Ganapati Bhatta, who had come from the village of Kaniari in Karnataka. It is said that Ganapati Bhatta wished to see his beloved *ista devata*, Ganesha, while having Darshana of Sri Jagannatha. The outfit mainly consists in two huge and elaborately decorated elephant head "masks" that only show a small portion of Jagannatha's and Balabhadra's faces within a round or oval-shaped hole in the center. Also Subhadra's face is half hidden – so that the paint smearing from the bathing is not very visible. The Bhitarchha Mohapatra ties a *sari* around the head of the Mahanta of Raghava Das Matha in recognition for the service of providing the wonderful outfits. After the Hati vesa is completed, the Puja Pandas present the Sakala Dhupa food offering, then the Pandas, Pati Mahapatras and Mudirastas perform the *vandapana* for the Deities, and the devotees are allowed to get close-up Darshana of the Deities (Sahana Mela). After Sahana Mela the Mudirasta offers Pushpanjali and unties the ropes by which the Deities are fastened to the Snana Mandapa, then the Deities return inside the temple.

The particular procession used in this case is called Goti Pahandi: the Deities come one after the other i.e. the Pahandi of the second Deity starts only after the first Deity has reached the Simhasana. The Deities again wear new *tahiyas* (head gear) and *chulas* on the Snana Mandapa steps and arrive at the Anavasara Pindi. This completes the Snana Purnima rituals and begins the Anavasara rituals.

During the Anavasara period the Garbha griha remain closed and no one is allowed to see Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannatha, so most of the devotees go to visit the temple of Alarnath, or Alvarnath, an ancient Vishnu temple in Brahmagiri, about 20 km south-west of Puri.

The tradition of Alarnath Darshana during the Anavasara period was also exemplified by Sri Chaitanya, who manifested strong symptoms of ecstasy in separation from Lord Jagannatha, so much that while visiting the temple of Alarnatha he lost the external consciousness and the power of his *mahabhava* melted the stone on which his body fell. The stone bearing the imprint of Chaitanya's body is still visible within the temple of Alarnatha, where an image of Sadbhujā Gaurāṅgā is also worshiped.

Anavasara

The period of Anavasara, in which the Deities remain hidden from the general people, goes from Snana Purnima to Ashada Amavasya. After the Deities return from the Snana mandapa and reach the Anavasara Pindi, the Tadau Sevakas remove the *rahu rekha* and *chittas* (*tilaka* marks made of sapphire, ruby and diamond for Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannatha respectively) from the heads of the Deities and hand them over to the Deula Karana who in turn covers the ornaments with the *srikapada* brought from the Changada Mekapa and puts them away safely in the Bandhara Ghara.

Then the Daitas cover the faces of the three Deities (Balabhadra, Subhadra, Jagannatha) with three Khandua *sisis* brought by the Changada Mekapa, after which the Suasias put a bamboo boundary around the Anavasara Pindi. After this, the Pokharia or Garbha Griha is closed from outside. In the meanwhile the *patti dias* (*pattachitra* paintings of the three Deities, Vasudeva for Balabhadra, Bhuvaneshvari for Subhadra and Narayana for Jagannatha) are brought from the house of the Chitrakaras. The Mahajanas bring Dola Govinda, Rama and Nrisingha for Balabhadra, Sridevi and Bhudevi for Subhadra and Madana Mohana and Krishna for Jagannatha. The seven Deities, along with the three *patti dias*, are called the Dasa Avatara Thakura. All these ten Deities are placed on a cot on which Their Snana takes place with *panchamrita* and Vallabha Bhoga is offered to all the ten Deities.

During the Anavasara period all the daily rituals of the temple take place before these ten Deities. However Mailama takes place only twice, once during the day and then at night, while that during the rest of the year Mailama takes place after every food offering or Dhupa. Until the Madhyana Dhupa for the Dasa Avatara Deities is over, the Dakshina Dvara remains closed. After the Madhyana dhupa the Jaya Vijaya Dvara is closed and the Pati Mahapatras ask the Mudulis to open the Dakshina Dvara. Then the Daitas perform Mailama for the main Deities inside the Anavasara Pindi. It is to be noted that no one other than the Daitas and Pati Mahapatras are allowed entry into the Anavasara Pindi. After the Mailama, the Pati Mahapatras offer Pana Bhoga to the main Deities. After the Bada Shringara of the Dasa Avatara Deities and before their Pahuda, Chakata Bhoga is offered to the main Deities. This Chakata Bhoga consists of washed bean sprouts and ripe jackfruit; it is prepared by Daitas and stored in the Mukta Nrisimha temple. A “medicine” is offered, called *pana* and made with medicinal herbs and plants collected in the forest, mixed with water, yogurt, green coconut water, nutmeg, camphor and *chandana*. Only white flowers are offered to the main Deities during this period.

Anavasara Panchami or Phulari Lagi: on this day the Daitas anoint the Deities with sesame oil, camphor and *chua* oil, provided by the Oriya Matha and the King. This ritual is called Phulari lagi.

Anavasara Dasami or Chaka Vijaya: on this day the Deities sit on a round stone structure called Chaka. As it is understood that He is “indisposed”, Sri Jagannatha is offered a medicine called *dasamula naivedya*.

Anavasara Ekadasi and Chandana Lagi: the Raghava Das Matha and the King provide sandalwood from which paste is prepared by the Ghatuary Sevakas. On Ekadasi the *chandana* (sandalwood) is brought into the Dakshina Ghara, where a paste is prepared with camphor and saffron under the supervision of the Deula Karana. This camphor and saffron paste is added to the sandalwood paste. The main Deities along with the Dasa Avatara Deities are anointed with this sandalwood-camphor-saffron mixture, to the accompaniment of musical instruments.

Anavasara Dvadasi and Raja Prasada: on this day a number of silver trays (the number of silver trays used equals the number of living members in the royal family) are placed on a piece of cloth spread by the Asthana Pratihari. Then they are covered by silk cloth and carried into the Anavasara Pindi by the Daitas. The Daitas put the remains of the *srianga chandana*, *karala chandana* and silk ropes on the silver tray and carry the trays outside. The trays are then sent to the Sri Nahara.

Anavasara Trayodashi: on this day the Deities are covered with a special white paste prepared with wheat flour, a ritual called Khali lagi. Also, the Sudu Suaras clean out the unused materials from the Anavasara Pindi.

Anavasara Chaturdasi: on this day after Bada Shringara, Pana Bhoga and Chakat Bhoga, the Datta Mahapatras repaint the Deities: this ritual is called Banaka lagi.

After this, Mangala Arati is performed for the Dasa Avatara Deities and five of them (Dola Govinda, Rama, Nrisimha, Madana Mohana and Krishna) are carried by the Mahajanas back to the Dakshina Ghara and Sridevi, Bhudevi are put on a cot in the Khata Seja Ghara. By this time it is the early morning of Pratipada and the doors of the Garbha Griha are open to the public. The special Darshans on this day is called **Nava Yauvana**, as the youthfulness of the Deities has been renewed with the new painting.

Traditionally prepared black colour is brought in a silver vessel and the eyeballs of the three Deities are painted by the Puja Pandas. This ritual is called **Netrotsava**, as the eyes of the Deities are “opened” and They can look upon the devotees. The festival is also called Ubha yatra. In the meanwhile the *patti dias* are “uninstalled” (a ritual called *visarjana*). At the same time, with a traditional ceremony the chariots are positioned ready to start.

After the morning meal, the flower garlands are carried from the temple to the chariots in procession with accompaniment of conchshells, bells and musical instruments. After being garlanded, the chariots are pulled from the Sri Nahara (the King’s palace) to the Simha Dvara of the Jagannatha temple – first Balabhadra’s Taladhvaja, Subhadra’s Darpadalana, and then Jagannatha’s Nandighosha.

On the same day after Sandhya dhupa, the 3 *kalasas* are carried to the chariots and mounted on top of them. The *kalasas* used to be made of gold but now they are made of *astadhātu*. The flags are fastened, too. The consecration of the chariots is completed with the Ratha Pratistha, celebrated in the Chahani Mandapa. A *mandala* in the shape of a 36-petal lotus flower is drawn in the Chahani mandapa, Varuna is worshiped, then the officiating priest declares the *sankalpa*, the intention to perform the Ratha yatra. Narasimha is worshiped and a fire sacrifice with 1008 *ahutis* is performed. Finally after the Bada Shringara dressing and the bed time arati, the Deities are changed again into the Sena-Patta (“military dress”) and Sukla Sajja (“white dress”), for the next day travel.

Sukla Pratipat: Gundicha marjana.

The celebration of **Gundicha marjana** (the cleansing of the Gundicha Ghara) was started by Chaitanya and is still performed by a party of Temple Sevakas and Mahantas of the Mathas of Puri.

The Mahanta of the Oriya Matha goes to Gundicha with *panchamrita* to clean the Simhasana there. Then the Simhasana is washed with sandalwood water.

Ratha yatra

The famous Chariot festival falls in the month of Asadha, from 2 sukla to 10 sukla, for a total of 9 days.

The particular period of the year is significant because it is an integral part of a precise cycle, both ritualistic and natural. Jagannatha’s Ratha yatra is connected to the beginning of the monsoon season. The popular songs and comments of the Dahuka (the Sevaka charioteer) during the journey of the rathas are connected to fertility. It is also said that Dahuka is also the name of a bird that starts chirping at the beginning of the monsoon. It is said that the Sabaras of the Gunupur-Ganjam belt in Orissa still observe a Car festival on the eve of the monsoon. Wooden chariots with four wheels (but without Deities) travel from the Godali (“starting point”) and when the chariots reach the next village old earthen pots containing cooked rice are broken before them to propitiate a good harvest for the next year.

The tradition of Ratha yatras or Car Festivals is very ancient and widespread, and is still followed today on a variety of dates in many places. Specifically, the date of the festival is strictly connected with the personality traveling on the chariot. Lingaraja’s Ratha yatra is traditionally held in Bhubaneswar on Ashoka Ashtami (Chaitra sukla Ashtami), and lasts for one day. In Nepal the Ratha yatra festival is held every year in the month of Vaisakha; Bhairava is traveling on the ratha instead of Jagannatha. Similarly, in Bengal there are Ratha yatras for Radha and Krishna during the month of Kartika and on Janmashtami.

Buddhists in Sri Lanka hold Ratha yatras on Buddha Purnima, taking the Buddha’s relics in procession on a chariot. Even politicians on electoral campaigns have their own Ratha yatras, using special chariots for their parades, and nobody has anything to complain about. However, Jagannatha’s Ratha yatra can only be performed on the specific day as per traditional calculation - on Asadha sukla Dvitiya.

Jagannatha's Ratha yatra is mentioned in *Skanda purana* (Utkalakhanda, 27.13-63) when Brahma comes to Puri to install the Deities, and it commemorates the 9 days of the Asvamedha yajna performed by Indradyumna. It is also mentioned as the Mahavedi Yatra, going from the Jagannatha temple to the Yajna Vedi in Gundicha Ghara once a year (*Skanda purana*, 29. 25-44). While the Ratna Simhasana is known as Antar Vedi, the Gundicha Ghara is known as Maha Vedi or Adapa Mandapa.

It is said that while king Indradyumna had gone to Brahmhaloka to ask Brahma to come and perform the installation rituals, on Earth many long years had passed and the temple built by Indradyumna had disappeared into the sands. One king of Orissa, called Gala Madhava, excavated the old temple and installed his own Deities there, so when king Indradyumna came back from Brahmhaloka there was a dispute over the utilization of the temple. Finally Indradyumna was recognised as the genuine builder of the temple and the installation proceeded. So for the people of Puri the annual Ratha Yatra represents the celebration of the original appearance of Jagannatha at the Yajna Vedi (in Gundicha).

In the *Skanda purana*, Utkala khanda, Lord Jagannatha tells Indradyumna, "On Ashadha sukla Dvitiya, place Subhadra Devi, Balarama and Me on chariots and celebrate the Navadinatmaka Yatra. Take Me to Gundicha, the house where I was born, and where you performed a thousand Ashvamedha sacrifices." The tradition of the Ratha yatra in Puri is particularly ancient and popular, attracting pilgrims from all over India.

The early Christian missionaries who visited Puri with the purpose of converting the local people spread the idea that Jagannatha was a blood-thirsty Moloch who required blood sacrifices, and created the expression "Juggernaut", described in dictionaries as "a massive inexorable force or object that crushes whatever is in its path".

The large chariots roll on heavily, pulled by devotees and pilgrims, and sometimes in the rush of the crowds one or two devotees were accidentally crushed under the massive wheels. A few people (probably suffering from mental illness or some particularly painful chronic disease) may also have chosen to commit suicide in this way, but according to the records of the British government itself, these deaths were very rare cases, and the missionaries purposefully exaggerated the casualties for propaganda purpose.

In any case, today the police cordon off the chariots and strictly control the devotees who come forward to pull the ropes. Still, as several hundreds of thousands of people participate to the festival and try to get as near to the chariots as possible, now and then someone needs medical help as fatigued pilgrims may feel sick, especially in the heat of the early monsoon. Ambulances are ready and the unfortunate pilgrim is quickly carried away in a stretcher above the crowd by voluntary workers.

Today the only casualties in Ratha yatra are shoes and slippers, as many devotees remove their shoes to offer homage to the Deities on the chariots and have no time to recover them before hurrying aside for the crowd to move in. Also for security reasons, all the movable stalls and street vendors that usually stay in Grand Road are removed so that the road is as clear as possible. Some permanent shops close, but others are turned into observation posts from which devotees can watch the procession.

The Chariots

Three chariots are prepared, one each for Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath. The wood required for the chariots is traditionally provided by the King of Daspalla feudatory to the Thakur Raja of Puri, who supervises the collection of wood from his forests in Daspalla and Ranpur starting from Vasanta Panchami. A total of 1072 logs of proper size are sent to Puri.

After the fire ceremony, none chief carpenters in groups of three start to work on the logs, assisted by 125 skilled and semi-skilled carpenters with brand new chisels, wooden hammers etc. The chief carpenter is honored with the sari-turban (of red, yellow and blue) by the Padia Karanas. All the parts of the chariots except Kalasha, the Parsva Devatas, Sarathi and horses, are remade every year; these will be renewed only on the occasion of Navakalevara. The logs are cut into 2188 pieces, 832 pieces for Nandighosa, 763 for Taladhvaja and 593 for Darpadalana. Each chariot has 34 components from wheels to flag: *chakra, dandia, ara, banki, hansapata, kani, sankhadhvaja, jali, gajapata, simhasana, kanakamunda, bhumin sola nahaka, makaradanda, vasanta, kubir ghoda, sarathipida, kumbhapati, rahupati, athanahaka, banki, pida, rusipata, danda, parabhadhi, khapuri pada, olatosua, dodhinauti, kalasa, kashi, danda, chakra, kapiketana.*

Balabhadra travels on the Taladhvaja ratha, Sudarshana and Subhadra ride on the Devidalana ratha and Jagannatha is on the Nandighosa ratha.

Taladhvaja is 44 feet high, has 14 wheels (6 feet in circumference) and is covered with red and green cloth. Its charioteer Matali is dressed in blue.

Devadalana is 43 feet high, has 12 wheels (5 feet in circumference) and is covered with red and black cloth. Its charioteer Arjuna is dressed in green.

Nandighosa is 45 feet high, has 16 wheels (7 feet in circumference) and is covered with red and yellow cloth. Its charioteer Daruka is dressed in yellow.

The flags on top of the chariots have also names: they are called Unmani (for Balabhadra), Nadambika (for Subhadra) and Trailokya Mohini (for Jagannatha). Dhvaja Puja or worship of the chariot flag takes place everyday starting from Ratha Yatra until Niladri Vijaya. Everyday after Madhyana Dhupa, the Patri arranges the Ratha Bhoga that is offered by the Puja Panda to the flags Unmana, Trailokyamohini and Nadambika.

The guardian Deities (Parsva Devatas) of the chariots, portrayed on its sides, are as follows.

For the chariot of Balabhadra: on the right Ganesha, Kartikeya, Sarvamangala, on the back Pralambari, Halayudha, Mrityunjaya, on the left Natamvara, Muktesvara, and Sesadeva. In the front at the two gates, the keepers are Rudra-Shakti and Astavasu. The chariot is guarded by Vasudeva.

For the chariot of Subhadra: on the right Chandi, Chamunda, Ugratara, on the back Vanadurga, Sulidurga, Varahi, on the left Syamakali, Mangala, Vimala. In the front the two gate keepers are on one side Sridevi and Bhudevi and on the other side the Rishi pata and Bhairavi. The chariot is guarded by Jayadurga.

For the chariot of Jagannatha: on the right Govardhana, Gopikrishna, Nrsimha, on the back Varaha, Rama, Narayana, on the left Trivikrama, Hanuman, Rudra. In front, on one side Indra and Brahma and on the other side Marici with the seven Rishis. The chariot is guarded by Garuda.

Four ropes, each 8 inches diameter and 250 feet long, are attached to each chariot. In ancient times, the *brahmanas* of the Sasana villages around Puri supplied the ropes. The *charamara* or access ramp is made of palm tree planks, tied together temporarily and dismantled for the journey.

The construction of the chariots is completed by Ashadha Amavasya and on Pratipada the chariots are pulled to the Simhadvara. On the Ratha Yatra day the rituals start very early in the morning, beginning with Mangala Arati, Abakasha and Vesha and after Rosha Homa, Surya Puja and Dvarapala Puja, Sakala Dhupa is offered. The Sakala Dhupa on this day consists of special *khechedi* along with other dishes. *Khechedi* is considered to be a very light Oriya meal, so Jagannatha eats light before going on a journey.

After the *sodasha upachara puja, nangalarpana* is done at the three Badas by the Panda, Pati Mahapatra and Mudirasta. Then the Mudirasta fastens ropes to carry the Deities, the Daitas remove the Vesa and untie the rope by which the Deities are tied (*rundha*) to the Ratha simhasana. Then the much awaited Pahandi starts to the accompaniment of various musical instruments. This type of Pahandi is called Dhadi Pahandi, when the Deities are carried one after another in a row lead by Sudarshana. At the 7 steps (the leads into the Jagamohana), the Deities wear the *tahiyas* provided by the Raghava Das Matha.

The Deities are carried through the Ananda Bazar to the Grand road, and onto Their respective chariots. Sudarshana sits with Subhadra on Her chariot.

According to the tradition, pillows are placed in front of the walking Deities so They never actually touch the ground. A large number of Daitas are engaged in carrying the Deities, especially Balabhadra and Jagannatha who are very big and rock forward and backward, arms and body supported by strong servants both directly (by grasping or by pushing and pulling) and indirectly (by pulling at the silken ropes fastened to the Deities' bodies).

When all the Deities are seated on Their respective chariots, the Changada Mekapa brings three pillows, one for each of the three Deities and after the pillows are placed behind each Deity, the Deities are fastened to Their sitting place. Now the Mahajanas carry Madana Mohana and Rama Krishna from the Dakshina Ghara to the palanquin waiting for Them under the Kalpa Bata. Then the Bimana Badus carry the palanquin first to Balabhadra's Ratha, where Rama and Krishna are placed. Then Madana Mohana is carried to Jagannatha's chariot.

Then the luggage comes: two trunks, one with the outfits and the other with the ornaments and puja paraphernalia, are placed on Jagannatha's chariot by the Kothasuasias. The Lanka and Paika Sevakas bring the three *chittas* (Tilaka-shaped ornaments made of *sola* with gold and precious stones at the centre) from the jeweller's house and perform Chittalagi.

It is to be noted that the three original *chittas* (made of Sapphire, Ruby and Diamond) had been removed before Snana Purnima. Then Mailama and Mala Phula lagi is performed.

Chera Pahanra

This ritual is conducted by the Gajapati King of Puri. After the Mala Phula Lagi is over, the Gajapati arrives from his Sri Nahara in a *mehena* (silver palanquin), also called *tanjan* in a procession accompanied by various musical instruments especially *bira kahali* (bugle), as a symbol of his authority.

The King climbs first on the Bada Ratha (Taladhvaja). In this ritual, the King is assisted by the Mudirasta, the Daitapatis, the Panda, the Sudha Suara, the Muduli, the Suara Badu, the Pati Mahapatra, the Palika Khuntia, the Changada Mekapa, the Vimana Badu, the Ghantaras, the Chatara, the Kahalia, the Bajabala, the Tunia, the Lenka, the Paika and the Kotha Suasia. He is also accompanied by relatives and tributary Rajas, by the two Raj Gurus, by the palace attendants and by State policemen.

On the chariot, the Daitas offer Mala Chula to Bada Thakura in the Gajapati's presence and then the Gajapati prostrates before Bada Thakura and offers *pushpanjali*. He then offers camphor Arati on a gold Arati stand and offers the *suna chamara* (a whisk with a gold handle). Then he gets down from the Simhasana and the Rajguru hands him the golden broom after performing the required *samskara*. The Bhandara Mekapa holds a silver bowl containing white flowers that he keeps throwing around the chariot, walking ahead of the king while the king sweeps off the white flowers. Then the Rajguru hands the Bhandara Mekapa a silver bowl containing *chandana* water, after doing *samskara*, and then the King sprinkles the *chandana* water around the chariot floor that he had previously swept.

While the King performs Chera Pahanra, the Deula Karana and the Tadau Karana walk with him. This ritual is done on all the three chariots starting with Tala Dhvaja and ending with Devi Dalana (Subhadra's chariot). After this is over, the King returns to the palace carrying a garland from the Deities and some cloth. The Bhois place the Sarathis (charioteers) on the chariot, starting with Matali (Balabhadra's driver), then Arjuna (Subhadra's charioteer) and Daruka (Jagannatha's driver). Then the *charas* (access ramps made of palm tree trunks) are removed and the wooden horses are yoked.

Balabhadra's horses are the black Tivra, Ghora, Dirgha and Svarnanabha. Subhadra's red horses are Mochika, Rochika, Jita and Aparajita. Jagannatha's white horses are Shankha, Balahaka, Shveta and Haridashva. The pulling ropes are attached, too: Vasuki is the rope of Balabhadra's chariot, Svarnachura is the rope of Subhadra's chariot and Sankhachuda is the rope of Jagannatha's chariot.

The chariots can begin to roll. The time when the chariot start moving is generally not fixed, although in recent years delays have been greatly reduced. Balabhadra's chariot starts first, followed by Subhadra's and finally by Jagannatha's. There is generally a Dahuka (a Sevaka who monitors the chariot with a stick) on each Ratha. These Dahukas generally shout typical calls and songs that instigate the devotees to pull the chariots harder and faster.

In ancient times the strength of the devotees and pilgrims, often tired from the long travel and fasting, was not sufficient to pull the chariots all the way to Gundicha, especially because the road was very sandy and the chariots used to get stuck very easily. So some dedicated devotees from nearby villages called the Kalabheriyas were assigned to the task of getting the chariots going all the way: 1400 for Jagannatha, 1200 for Balabhadra and 1200 for Subhadra. In return for their service, they were given free accommodation in Puri during the festival. The Kalabheriyas considered this service as a family inheritance. Now the system has been discontinued.

Balagandi

Previously the chariots were made in two sets (for a total of 6) because the road from Jagannatha temple to Gundicha was cut in half by the Banki Malini and Saradha rivers. The Deities were then moved from one set of chariots to the other set, by crossing the river. At the times of King Narasimha, both the Atharnala bridge and the Malini bridge were built.

It is said that King Kapilendradeva met Madhvacharya who was visiting Puri at that time, and Madhvacharya advised the King to fill up the rivers. The area is now known as Sraddha Bali, where the temple of Mausima and the Salabega Matha still stand.

Jagannatha's chariot stops at Mausima to take *podapitha* (a special pancake). Some say that Mausima ("aunt") is Sriya (the daughter of hunter Jara) who used to offer the same dishes to Sabari Narayana (Nila Madhava).

On the way many Mathas of Puri come forth to offer Panthi Bhoga. The journey of the chariots along Grand Road is the peak moment of the festival, with the religious sentiments surging in the crowds that welcome the approaching Deities from the road as well as from all the buildings along it. During the Ratha Yatra day devotees climb practically on every roof and balcony, crowd all windows and shops. House owners and shopkeepers also make some extra money by renting space and chairs from which pilgrims can watch the procession. Groups of *sadhus* and devotees sing and dance in the road, sometimes carrying the picture of their Guru or other sacred symbols such as banners with *mantras*, potted Tulasi plants, and sometimes even small Deities. Sometimes devotees, especially with children, bring miniature chariots to the festival and perform miniature Yatras in areas that are relatively free from crowds. From time to time, devotees and pilgrims take turns in joining the police force in pulling the ropes of the chariots.

Finally the chariots reach the temple of Gundicha – called Gundicha Ghara rather than Gundicha Mandira because it is used as a temple only during the Ratha Yatra. If they cannot reach Gundicha in the evening of the same day, the chariots stop at whatever place they have reached and spend the night there. *Darshana* goes on continuously until late at night and many people climb on the chariots to go and embrace the Lord. Then the next morning the chariots start again and travel until they reach Gundicha.

In front of Gundicha a Mahasana (a special bathing ceremony) is performed by Puja Pandas, then the Deities are dressed in Boirani cloth and offered, with a worship ceremony with 16 *upacharas*, a lunch of dry food that has been cooked at the Chunamundi (kitchen) at the Gundicha Temple. Madhyana Dhupa is followed by all the usual rituals such as Sandhya Arati, Sandhya Dhupa, Chandana Lagi and Bada Shringara, all of which take place on the chariots. Then after Badashringara the Palia Pushpalakas cover the Deities with the *srimukha khandua* and leave the chariots.

The Paharabalas (security guards) tie a curtain around the Simhasana of each chariot. In ancient times all the Sevakas and devotees used to spend the night around the chariots, but this tradition has been discontinued and only policemen stand guard to the chariots during the night.

The next day all the rituals starting from Mangala Arati till Sandhya Dhupa take place on the chariots. Finally the Deities enter the Gundicha Ghara in the *pahandi* procession called Goti Pahandi – Sudarshana, Baladeva, Subhadra and Jagannatha, accompanied by the sound of the *vijayakahali*, the "trumpet of victory". The Mahajanas carry Madana Mohana and Rama Krishna and place Them on the throne in the store house in Gundicha, called Bhandara Ghara. This ceremony is called Adapa Vijaya, just like the return into Jagannatha temple is called Niladri Vijaya.

After the change of dress the Daitas unfasten the large Deities from the seats on the chariots and carry Them down. The Chamu Khuntia calls the Lord, "Manima! Manima!" and the Pujaris present garlands, *chandana* paste and refreshments. The worship continues with offering of incense, camphor lamp, 7 wicks lamps, *durba* grass with raw rice, sweet *betel* and other articles, then the Deities enter Gundicha and are offered Panthi Bhoga on Their way into the Adapa Mandapa.

Inside Gundicha

When the Deities reach Adapa Mandapa They are fastened to the Simhasana.

Then the Pati Mohapatras perform Sarvanga Chandana Lagi at the three Badas and after *vandapana* they cover the Deities with *srimukha khandua*. The Kotha Suasias remove the *chara* that had previously been tied to the Simhasana to facilitate the Deities in climbing the Simhasana. Sudarshana is installed on the Simhasana by the Daitas. After cleaning the Deities' inner room, the Sudu Suara arranges the Snana materials brought in by the Gandhana Mekapa, and Mahasana is performed for the three Badas. Three Pashupalakas perform Mailama and the Deities are decorated with flower garlands. By this time it is already early morning and the usual rituals take place starting with Mangala Arati. The rituals followed at Gundicha are the same as that in the temple.

The only difference is that the Deities have daily Mahasnana, Sarvanga Chandana Lagi and wear new clothes every day after Bhoga Mandapa. Here the Deities are presented the food offering called Sarpa Manohi.

Lakshmi vijayotsava

The festival of Hera Panchami takes place on Asadha sukla Sasthi; it is called Panchami because it is celebrated exactly five days after Ratha Yatra. Another name of the festival is Kashta Bhaghna, because on this day Lakshmi Devi gets angry at Jagannatha and goes to “break the chariot” of Balabhadra.

The Mahajanas bathe Lakshmi in the Bhandara Ghara, Banaka Lagi is performed and then She wears the Pata sari provided by the Changada Mekapa and is decorated with ornaments from the Bhandara Ghara.

The Puja Pandas offer Panthi Bhoga, then the Mahajanas carry Lakshmi to the Kalpa Bata, near which a *vimana* is waiting of Her. Lakshmi sits on the *vimana* and is carried by the Vimana Badus through the Simhadvara to Grand Road and up to Jagannatha’s chariot, in a procession accompanied by various musical instruments. At the Gundicha Ghara, Lakshmi waits near Jagannatha’s chariot. Here the Pati Mahapatra climbs on one horse of the chariot and offers *vandapana* and *chamara seva*. Lakshmi is offered Ghasa Bidia (*betel*) and Dahi Pati Manohi.

In the meanwhile Madhyana Dhupa is completed, the Deities are attired in new clothes and Arati is performed. When Arati is completed, a *panchamrita* Mahasnana is done at Mahaprabhu’s Bada. Then Sarvanga is done at the three Badas and the Deities are again dressed and Sandhya Dhupa is performed.

Lakshmi arrives at the Jaya Vijaya Dvara of the Jagamohana where She receives the *ajna mala* of Jagannath and goes out through the Nakachana Dvara and waits near the tamarind tree. Here the Bhitarcha Mohapatra performs *vandapana* and Dahi Pati Manohi. Then one Sevaka breaks a piece of wood from Balabhadra’s chariot and Lakshmi returns to the main temple through Hera Gohiri Sahi. On this day, after Sakala Dhupa, three Puja Pandas carry three *ajna malas* to the three chariots and the chariots are turned southwards facing Sri Mandira. In recent times, the habit has started to turn the chariots on Saptami rather than on Sasthi.

Gundicha Ghara Rasa (Saptami, Ashtami and Navami)

On these three days, every evening after Sandhya Dhupa, the Mahajanas carry Madana Mohana to the Jagamohana where they place Him on a Simhasana. Here the Puja Panda offers *kora* (sweet balls) and *vandapana* is performed. Navami Sandhya Darshana is a very auspicious day: many devotees come to have Darshan and also to feed the *brahmanas*. On Navami after Badasinghara the Pushpalakas cover the Deities with *srimumukha khandua*.

Two Daitas bring Sudarshana and place Him on the Simhasana beside the Bada Bada, and the Kotha Suasias tie the *chara*. The Deities are then dressed in a completely white outfit provided by the Raghava Das Matha. The Palia Pushpalakas and the Bhitarcha Mahapatra perform the Arati and Abakasha. Rosha Homa, Surya Puja and Dvara Pala puja are celebrated and Sakala Dhupa (*khechedi*) is offered along with Ballabha Bhoga and *sodasha upachara puja*. All these offerings are completed before dawn. The Daitas tie the Senapata cloth, the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta perform the *mangalarpana*. The Mudirasta ties the rope to the Deities and offers Pushpanjali, the Vira Kahali bugle is blown and Pahandi (Dhadi Pahandi) starts. At the Jagamohana Dvara the Deities are decorated with the *tahiya* provided by Raghava Das Matha. Here the Mahajanas also quickly repaint the Deities.

The Pati Mohapatras perform *vandapana*, camphor Arati, seven wicks Arati and offer Ghasa Bidia (*betel*). The Deities are then carried to Their respective chariots and fastened to Their seats. The Mahajanas carry Madana Mohana and Rama Krishna from the Bhandara Ghara to Nandighosa and Taladhvaja rathas respectively. Then either the Gajapati or the Mudirasta performs Chera Pahanra on the three chariots exactly like at Ratha yatra. After the *charas* are removed and the horses are yoked, Bahuda yatra starts.

Bahuda

The return Ratha yatra is called Bahuda. It is started on Asadha sukla Dasami, the 9th day of the festival. The Kahalia blows the bugle (Kahali), and while the chariots are pulled forward, the Dahuka sings what is called the Dahuka Gita. Subhadra’s Ratha starts rolling when Bada Thakura’s Ratha reaches Bada Sankha. Finally Jagannatha’s Ratha starts rolling. On the way, the Deities are offered Panthi Bhoga.

Taladhvaja and Darpadalana arrive at Simha Dvara, whereas Nandighosa halts at the temple of Mausī Ma (Ardhasoshini). The Sevaka of the Mausī Maa temple prepares *chhena poda pita* (a special type of cheese cake) to offer to Jagannatha. Next, Nandighosa arrives at the King's palace. By this time, Mahalakshmi is dressed with Pata sari and flower garlands and waits in Her *palinki* near the Sata Pahacha (inside the Sri Mandira). The Bimana Badus take the *vimana* and place it at the Cahani Mandapa, where Mahalakshmi confirms the arrival of Jagannatha. Then Her *palinki* is brought to Jagannatha's Chariot. Here the Jatra Jogania offers Dahi Pati Manohi. All this happens in front of the Sri Nahara, in the Gajapati's presence. After the Dahi Pati Manohi, Mahalakshmi's *palinki* circumbulates Nandighosa once and upon receiving Jagannatha's *ajna mala*, Mahalakshmi returns to the Sri Mandira. After this ritual Nandighosa is pulled towards the Simha Dvara, where the daily rituals start with the Madhyana Dhupa offering (of dry Mahaprasada only) and then the other rituals are performed. The Deities remain on the chariots until Dvadasi.

Suna Vesha

The next day is Ekadasi, and is very famous because the Deities wear the Suna (a contraction of "suvarna") Vesha, meaning "golden dress".

This outfit includes huge solid gold ornaments, including *sri hasta* (hands), *sri payar* (feet), *sri sankha*, *sri chakra*, *sri gada*, *sri padma* (the golden symbols or weapons of Jagannatha), *sri hala* and *sri mushala* (plow and club, the weapons of Balabhadra). There are also several others gold ornaments, such as *srimukuta* (crown), *sri mayura chandrika* (golden peacock feather), *sri chula pati* (a golden ornament worn on the forehead), *sri kundala* (earrings), *sri rahu rekha* (the half square aura around the face), *sri malas* (necklaces of different designs, like the flowers *padma*, *sevati*, *agasti*, *parijata*, *kadamba*, *kanti*, *champa* and peacock feathers), *sri chitta* (head ornament made with gold and diamonds that represents the third eye).

Adhara Pana Bhoga

On Ekadasi Adhara Pana is offered on the chariots after Madhyana Dhupa. Adhara Pana should actually be offered to the Deities on Dasami after the chariots reach Simha Dvara, but because usually on Dasami there is not sufficient time, the offering is done on Ekadasi. The materials for preparing the Pana (milk, fresh cottage cheese, banana, coconut, sugar, sweet spices) are supplied by Raghava Das Matha and the Bada Oriya Matha. In the presence of the Mahasuaras, the Bhittarcha Mohapatra, the Talucha and the Majhi Bada Palia Pushpalaka tie a *tera* in front each pot. The Puja Pandas make the offering by *pancha upachara*. Then all the pots are broken. This ritual is also performed on Dvadasi before Pahandi starts.

Sayana Ekadasi

The rituals on this day are exactly the same as on any other Ekadasi, the only exception is that the Deities are still on the chariots. Mahasnana takes place after Bada Shringara and after the Snana is over, the Bhandara Mekapa brings the Shayana Thakura for the three Deities (Lakshmi Narayana yugala-murti).

After the Shayana Thakuras reach their respective chariots, Puja Pandas perform Mahasnana for the three Shayana Thakuras. The Shayana Thakuras are offered Sarvanga Chandana, wear new Patani sari and are decorated with flower garlands. Then the area is washed and *tera* is tied. The Palia Padihari, Taluchha Mahapatra and Pradhani bring the Ballabha Bada Shringara Bhoga to the three chariots to the accompaniment of various musical instruments. Any *bhoga* offered after Bada Shringara is called Ballabha Bada Shringara Bhoga. Three Puja Pandas offer the Bhoga with the *sodasha upachara* rituals. Then camphor Arati is performed and three Puja Pandas carry the three Shayana Thakuras to the Bhandara Ghara and lay them on the beds. The Mudirasta performs Prasada Lagi, Pushpanjali, camphor Arati, seven wicks Arati and *vandapana* with uncooked rice and durba grass. Then the door is closed.

Niladri Vijaya

The procession by which the Deities return into the temple at the end of the Ratha yatra celebrations is Goti Pahandi. It is celebrated on the Dvadasi day after Sandhya Dhupa, and the starting moment is announced by the Kahalia playing the Bira Kahali. Before the Pahandi starts, a *chandua* has been tied to the Trimundi at the Ratna simhasana. Sudarshana, Bada Thakura and Subhadra directly arrive on the Simhasana.

While on the way, each Deity is offered Ghasa Bidia (*betel*) and *vandapana* is made by the Pati Mahapatras at the Sua Sari Mandapa and Jagamohana. As soon as Jagannatha starts climbing down His chariot, Mahalakshmi arrives at the Cahani Mandapa and sits on a Dambaru. Here the Bhitarcha Mahapatra does *vandapana* and Mahalakshmi returns to the Bhandara Ghara.

However, Mahalakshmi is now determined to prevent Jagannatha from entering the temple, because She is still resentful for having been left back home for the Ratha Yatra journey, remaining alone for nine days. So She instructs Her servants to obstruct His way. Before Jagannatha arrives at the Simha Dvara, the Maharis (Devadasis) close the Simha Dvara, and reopen it as soon as Jagannatha arrives there. Then Jagannatha arrives at the Jaya Vijaya Dvara and again the Maharis close the Jaya Vijaya Dvara upon His arrival. Here a fight ensues between the Maharis representing Mahalakshmi and the Daitas representing Jagannatha. Jagannatha tries to pacify Mahalakshmi and presents Her with a gold necklace and *rasagullas*. Then the gate is opened and Jagannatha reaches the door of the Bhandara Ghara where Mahalakshmi is waiting. Here the marriage knot (*ghainthala*) is opened (the knot that was tied during Rukmini Vivaha) and *vandapana*, a Bhoga offering is done. After the Bidia Manohi offering, Jagannatha climbs onto the Ratna Simhasana and the regular rituals resume.

Garuda Sayana

This day is observed on Ashadha sukla Dvadasi. The Parba Jatra Jogania provides the paraphernalia for Garuda's Mahasnana. On this day after Sandhya Arati, the Sudu Suara arranges the paraphernalia and one Puja Panda performs the Mahasnana of Garuda. Then Sitala Bhoga offering, Arati and *vandapana* are performed.

Dakshinayana Vandapana

This festival is observed on Dakshinayana (Karkata) Sankranti, which may fall on different lunar *tithis*. It celebrates the change of course of Surya in the sky, starting into south direction. On this day after Sakala Dhupa and Bhoga Mandapa, the Pushpalakas do the Mailama for the Deities. Then the Sudu Suaras clean the Pokharia and obtain the Mahasnana paraphernalia from the Palia Pradhani and Lenka Mekapa. The Puja Pandas perform the Mahasnana, then the Palia Khuntia calls for the Pushpalakas to dress the Deities with the Boirani Pata. The Ghatuari brings sandalwood paste in three silver bowls and offers it to the Deities. Then the Madhyana Dhupa offering takes place. After the offering one Puja Panda, Patri and Suara Badu come out of the Pokharia and offer the Bali Bhata (Anna Bali) given by the Runa Suara around the Sri Mandira. Then they go inside and after the Puja is over, the Tera is opened and Arati takes place. After Arati, Panda, Pati and Mudirasta perform *vandapana* at the three Badas.

If Dakshinayana Sankranti falls when the Deities are on the chariot, these rituals are performed on the chariot, except for Annabali, where instead of cooked rice, uncooked rice and lentils are used. If the Sankranti falls when the Deities are in Gundicha Ghara, the rituals are exactly the same as done in Sri Mandira.

Chittalagi Amavasya

This festival is observed on Sravana Amavasya.

The *chittas* (tilaka shaped ornaments) for the Deities are made of pure gold. Bada Thakura's *chitta* is studded with sapphire, Subhadra's *chitta* is studded with ruby and Jagannath's *chitta* is studded with diamond. These *chittas* were removed from the Deities' heads before Anavasara and replaced with temporary ones made with semi-precious stones.

While Sakala Dhupa is taking place, the Bhandara Mekapa hands over the *chittas* to Tadau Deula Karana, who in turn hands them over to the temple jewellers (Bania) and the Tata Lenkas provide them with fire from the temple kitchen. The King's superintendent provides the jeweller with the cleansing material, and the jeweller cleans the *chittas*. After Sakala Dhupa and Bhoga Mandapa, the Palia Khuntia calls out for the Pushpalakas to do the Mailama.

They remove the *jhoba kanthi* and hand it over to the Bhandara Mekapa. The Pushpalakas carry Sridevi and Bhudevi to the Khata Seja Ghara. Then the Daitas are called by the Palia Khuntias. The Bada Grahi Daita and Pati place the *chittas* on the *srimumkha* and tie them with silken ropes provided by the Patra. Then the Mekapa cleans the Ratna simhasana. The Mahasnana takes place and Pushpalakas do the Mailama.

Then Sridevi and Bhudevi are brought from the Khata Seja Ghara to the Ratna simhasana, Madhyana Dhupa takes place and the Panda, Pati, and Mudirasta perform *vandapana*.

Badi Nrisimha Vijaya

This is observed on Sravana sukla Navami and celebrates the day of installation of Badi Nrisimha (the *chalanti pratima* Deity of Nrisimha inside Sri Mandira). Besides this festival, the Deity of Nrisimha goes out from the temple only for Nrisimha Chaturdasi, when He goes with Jagannatha's *ajna mala* to visit the temple of Yajna Nrisimha near Gundicha. After Madhyana Dhupa, Nrisimha is brought from the Dakshina Ghara and upon receiving the *ajna mala* near Jhulana Mandapa, travels to the four Ashrams: Markandeya Ashram (Markandeswara Sahi), Angira Ashram (Dola Mandapa Sahi), Pandu Ashram (Bali Sahi), Bhrgu Ashram (Harachandi Sahi). Here Sitala Bhoga is offered and after the visit Nrisimha returns to the Sri Mandira.

Jhulana Yatra

This festival starts from Sravana sukla Dasami and continues for seven days up to Pratipada. On the first day after Madhyana Dhupa three Pushpalakas do the Mailama at the three Badas. Then the Palia Mekapa hands over three silver bowls, filled with *chandana* provided by the Ghatuary, to the Pushpalakas, who perform the Sarvanga Chandana Lagi and then do the Veshas. In the meanwhile the Mahajanas carry Sridevi and Bhudevi from the Ratna Simhasana and Madana Mohana from the Dakshina Ghara and place the three Deities on a cot at the Dakshina Ghara, where the Deities are decorated with various ornaments. After the Veshas are over, the Palia Khuntia offers three *ajna malas*, one on the right hand of Jagannatha and two on the left. After the Bhoga offering is brought into the Pokharia, the Puja Panda comes to the Dakshina Ghara and offers Mandua Sarpa Manohi.

Then Madana Mohana, Sridevi and Bhudevi are brought by the Mahajanas to the Ratna simhasana, where the Pushpalakas sprinkle the Deities with camphor and perform the Sandhya Arati. After Sandhya Arati the Puja Panda offers the *ajna mala* that was on Jagannatha's right hand to Madana Mohana and the two *malas* that were on the left hand are offered to Sridevi and Bhudevi. Then the Mahajanas carry Sridevi, Bhudevi and Madana Mohana to the Jhulana Mandapa through the Jagamohana and Bata Dvara, in the presence of the Chamu Dihudi.

Here They are placed on a swing and Bidia Manohi is offered by the Hadapa Nayaka. After Sandhya Arati, *tera* is tied at the Jhulana Mandapa and Sitala Bhoga is offered with *pancha upachara* rituals. Then the Mudirasta performs *vandapana*. After Chandana Lagi, the Mahajanas perform Mailama at the Jhulana Mandapa and carry Madana Mohana to the Dakshina Ghara and Sridevi, Bhudevi back to the Ratna simhasana.

Jhulana Ekadasi

After Sarvanga Chandana, the Mahajanas carry Sridevi and Bhudevi and place Them on a cot. Then Dakshina Ghara Bhoga is offered and after Vesa for the Deities, Madana Mohana, Sridevi and Bhudevi are brought to the Ratna Simhasana, where They receive the *ajna mala*. Then Madana Mohana sits on a palanquin and is carried around the temple once by the Bimana Badus: this brief journey is known as Ekadasi Bedha Bula. Then Madana Mohana is offered Ekadasi Bhoga at the Jaya Vijaya Dvara. After *vandapana*, Sridevi and Bhudevi are brought near Madana Mohana and then all the three Vighras are taken to the Jhulana Mandapa for swinging.

Jhulana Purnima

On this day after Bhoga Mandapa, Mailama and Mahasana are performed at the three Badas, then Sarvanga Chandana is offered. The Boirani Patani sari is used to dress the large Deities, then another Vesa is offered for Madhyana Dhupa. The *ajna mala* is offered, one on the right hand and two on the left. After cleaning the Pokharia, Sasthi Markanda Baruna Puja is performed at the Bada Bada by the Panda, Pati, and Mudirasta. Then four *rakhis* (made of silk and gold, provided by the King's superintendent) are tied and the Deities are decorated with *guanramali*. Then *tera* is tied and Madhyana Dhupa and Jatrangi Bhoga are offered simultaneously with *sodasha upachara* rituals. After the offering, *tera* is opened and Arati is done. The Sudu Suara arranges the paraphernalia for *mangalarpana*, which is performed at the Bada Bada by the Puja Panda.

When this ritual is finished, the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta do the *vandapana*, then Madana Mohana is placed on the Ratna simhasana. After receiving the *ajna malas*, Madana Mohana, Sridevi and Bhudevi go to the Jhulana Mandapa. Then one *ajna mala* is given to Sudarshana and the Daitas carry Sudarshana from the Ratna simhasana and place Him in a *chaudala* in the Jaga Mohana, where a Patani sari is offered to Sudarshana. The Bimana Badus carry Sudarshana's *chaudala* to the Jhulana Mandapa, where Sudarshana is offered a necklace of gold and pearls.

Then Sudarshana is carried to the Markandeya Ashram, where the potter prepares a Deity of Balabhadra with clay and the Puja Pandas perform the Prana Pratistha and the Jata Karma (birth rituals) of Balabhadra. Then the Mudirasta offers Bhoga and the Puja Panda offers the Sitala Manohi with *pancha upachara puja*. After *vandapana*, *visarjana* is done for the clay image of Balabhadra. After this, Sudarshana is carried to the four Ashramas (Bhrigu, Angira and Kanduk as the birth rituals are performed at the Markandeya Ashram). After Sudarshana's return to the Ratna Simhasana, Mahasana is done and the Deities are dressed again. Then Sandhya Arati and Sandhya Dhupa are offered. After the Bhoga offering, *vandapana* is done at Sudarshana's Bada and the Mudirasta offers Prasada to Sudarshana.

Balabhadra Purnima

The appearance day of Lord Baladeva is celebrated on the full moon day of Sravana. The same rituals observed for Krishna on Janmashtami are performed for Balabhadra on this day.

An image of Baladeva is made with *sola* and installed; after *puja* the image is immersed in water. On this day the Sevakas perform the worship of Sasti, Markanda and Varuna, Ganesha, Navagraha, Indra, Dasadigapala and Gramadevata, on behalf of Balabhadra. On Purnima after Sandhya Arati and during the Sandhya Dhupa Vesha the Deities are decorated with gold ornaments.

The Jaya Vijaya dvara is closed after Sandhya dhupa. The Sudu Suaras clean the area in front of the Bhandara Ghara and the Panda makes the *sarvatra bhadramandala* with *panchavarna muruja*. Then the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta sit on the Janma Chakada and recite the *sankalpa*. Then they perform Varuna Puja on the *kalasha*. They place one Baladeva Janma Patti (a Patta painting depicting the birth of Baladeva) on a silver lotus petal taken from the Bhandara ghara. Nine Deities are carved on the petal: Devaki, Vasudeva, Nanda, Yashoda, Lakshmi, Ugrasena, Baladeva, Garga Rishi and Krishna. This petal is placed on the *mandala* along with the clay Baladeva Deity (that is given to the Panda at the end of the *puja*).

Then nine Panthi Bhogas are arranged, Chandana lagi is done and garlands are offered. Then the Puja Panda offers the Panthi Bhoga with *pancha upachara* rituals. The Mudirasta offers the Dhandi Prasada *ajna mala* of Jagannatha to Rama (of the Rama Krishna couple), then the Deity is carried to the Janma Chakada where Garbhodaka Samskara is performed and Sitala Bhoga is offered using *sodasa upachara* rituals. The Panda performs the Nabhi Chedana (the cutting of the umbilical cord) with with a blade of *kusha* grass and performs Mahasana with *panchamrita*. Sitala Bhoga is then offered with *pancha upachara* rituals and *vandapana* is done.

The Mahajanas carry the Deities to the Jagamohana and place Them on as wing made by the Kotha Suasias, then the Sitala Bhoga is offered, where the Mudirasta does the Prasada Lagi and the Puja Panda offers the Bhoga with *sodasha upachara* rituals. Then again *vandapana* is done. Rama Krishna and Madana Mohana climb down the swing and are placed on a cot and after Snana and dressing, Pahuda is done.

Raksha bandhan

On the popular festivity of Raksha bandhana, the Deities are also offered *rakhi* bracelets by devotees. In Sri Mandira, as Subhadra sits together with brothers Balabhadra and Jagannatha, the ceremony is performed between the three Deities also. So Subhadra ties the Raksha Bandhana to Jagannatha and Balabhadra. The Mudirasta performs the ritual.

Rahurekha Lagi

The Rahurekha is the golden frame of the Sri Mukha used as ornament and planetary protection. On Bhadrava krishna Panchami, after Mangala Arati, Abakash and Gopala Vallabha, the Tadau Karana and Deula Karana ask the Bhandara Mekapa to bring the gold *rahurekhas* for the Deities that had been given to the jeweller for cleaning.

After Bhoga Mandapa the Palia Pratihari closes the Jaya Vijaya Dvara, the *jhoba kanthis* of the Deities are removed and Sridevi and Bhudevi are carried to the Khata Seja Ghara.

The Palia Khuntia calls for the Daitas near the Landabarta steps. The Daitas arrive, wash their feet and climb onto the Ratna simhasana, where they purify their hands. The Palia Mekapas hand over the *rahurekhas* to the Pati Mahapatras, who in turn purify the *rahurekhas* with *samskaras* and hand it over to the Badagrahis. Then all of them fix the *rahurekhas* to the *srimumkhas* and climb down the Ratna simhasana. After this, the Palia Mekapa cleans the Ratna Simhasana and then the Puja Pandas perform Mahasnana with yogurt at the three Badas. Sridevi and Bhudevi are brought back from the Khata Seja Ghara by the Palia Pushpalakas.

Then Mailama and Vesha are done. When Madhyana Dhupa is over, *vandapana* is done by the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta.

Krishna Janmashtami, Nandotsava and Krishna Lila

One of the most popular and colorful annual celebrations is the birthday of Krishna, that lasts several days. To better understand the various rituals, we recommend our readers to become acquainted with the story of Krishna as described in *Bhagavata Purana*, that is narrated in the chapter about Hindu culture. The Janmashtami celebrations in Sri Mandira are described here below.

On Bhadrava Krishna Saptami after Sandhya arati the three Deities are decorated with gold ornaments. Then Sandhya dhupa is offered, the Pokharia is cleaned and the Jaya Vijaya dvara is closed. *Tera* is then tied and Jeunda bhoga (consisting in *sak*, *khari*, *piha*, *jhilli*, *khiri* etc) is brought from the kitchen to the Anavasara Pindi and Mudirasta does the Prasada lagi. Then three Puja Pandas offer the Bhoga using *pancha upachara* rituals. After the Bhoga offering the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta perform *vandapana* at the three Badas. One extra *vandapana* is done at Mahaprabhu Bada. This is known as Garbhodaka *vandapana*.

Janmashtami

On Bhadrava Krishna Ashtami after Sandhya arati and during the Sandhya dhupa Vesha the Deities are decorated with gold ornaments. The Jaya Vijaya dvara is closed after Sandhya dhupa. The Sudu Suaras clean the area in front of the Bhandara Ghara and the Panda makes the *sarvatra bhadramandala* with *panchavarna muruja*. Then the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta sit on the Janma Chakada and recite the *sankalpa*. Then they perform Varuna Puja on the *kalasha*. They place one Krishna Janma Patti (a Patta painting depicting the birth of Krishna) on a silver lotus petal taken from the Bhandara ghara. Nine Deities are carved on the petal: Devaki, Vasudeva, Nanda, Yashoda, Lakshmi, Ugrasena, Balabhadra, Garga Rishi and Krishna. This petal is placed on the *mandala* along with a golden Krishna Deity (that is given to the Panda at the end of the *puja*).

Then nine Panthi Bhogas are arranged, Chandana lagi is done and garlands are offered. Then the Puja Panda offers the Panthi Bhoga with *pancha upachara* rituals. Madana Mohana is brought, without any clothes, from the Dakshina Ghara. The Mudirasta offers the Dhandi Prasada *ajna mala* of Jagannatha to Madana Mohana, then Madana Mohana is carried to the Janma Chakada where the Garbhodaka Samskara is performed and Sitala Bhoga is offered using *sodasa upachara* rituals.

Two Mahajanans, dressed as Devaki and Vasudeva, enact the scene of Krishna's birth. After the enactment, the Mudirasta performs the Prasada Lagi. The Palia Mahasuara brings yogurt and butter that is offered by the Panda. Camphor Arati is done, then Madana Mohana is carried on a silver plate given by the Bhandara Mekapa through the Jaga Mohana out to the Sarasvati's shrine within the temple, representing river Yamuna.

The Sevaka carrying the small Deity of Krishna and the Sevakas playing the role of Devaki and Vasudeva walk without the accompaniment of any musical instrument. The Behara Khuntia walks behind Vasudeva carrying the seven-headed Vasuki. At the Sarasvati's shrine, one member from the Puja Panda family dresses as Ugrasena and offers *dandavat pranama* to Madana Mohana, then the Mudirasta performs Prasada Lagi and *vandapana*. Madana Mohana is carried to the Nabhi Kata Mandapa in a musical procession and placed on a cot there. In the meanwhile Rama Krishna arrive from the Dakshina Ghara and are also sit on the cot with Him; the Panda performs the Nabhi Chedana (the cutting of the umbilical cord, made from whole wheat flour) with with a blade of *kusha* grass. Honey is applied on the "cut", the Nama karana ritual is performed and the Sevakas offer Mahasnana with *panchamrita*. Sitala Bhoga is then offered with *pancha upachara* rituals and *vandapana* is done.

The Mahajanas carry the Deities to the Jagamohana and place them on a swing made by the Kotha Suasias, then the Sitala Bhoga is offered, where the Mudirasta does the Prasada Lagi and the Puja Panda offers the Bhoga with *sodasha upachara* rituals. Then again *vandapana* is done. After Bada Shringara, the Bijuli Kanya lila is enacted. One Sevaka brings the Deity of Bijuli Kanya (Durga) from the Dakshina Ghara. She was to be born as the seventh child of Devaki and Vasudeva, but She moved from Devaki's womb to Yasoda's in Gokula to be born as Yogamaya. After camphor Arati, Durga returns to the Dakshina Ghara. In the meanwhile, Rama Krishna and Madana Mohana climb down the swing and are placed on a cot. After Snana and dressing, They are placed on a *palanki* and brought to the Jagamohana of the Lakshmi temple.

The Bhittarcha Mahapatra dresses as Nanda Maharaja, and accompanies Rama Krishna and Madana Mohana to the Sri Nahara, where the Gajapati Maharaja welcomes Them and offers Bhoga. Then They return to the Majjana Mandapa for Mahasnana. A cow is brought by the Tata Lenka Sevaka to the Lakshmi temple; a milkman informs Nanda about the birth of Krishna and takes him to the Lakshmi temple. Here Nanda milks the cow and offers the milk to the Deities at the Jagamohana of the Lakshmi temple. Sesame *laddus* are offered and *vandapana* is done. Then Nanda places his sons (Rama-Krishna, Madana Mohana) on a swing in the Jagamohana. After swinging, Madana Mohana returns to the Dakshina Ghara and Rama Krishna are placed on the Ratna simhasana. Then Pahuda is done.

Nandotsava

On Bhadrava Krishna Navami the temple celebrates the festival organized by Nanda Maharaja for the birth of Krishna. After Mangala Arati, Rama Krishna are carried to the swing at the Jagamohana by the Mahajanas along with Madana Mohana who is brought from the Dakshina Ghara. Then Sakala Dhupa is offered. Bhoga Mandapa is not done as the swing is hanging in the Jagamohana, instead Pani Paka Bhoga is offered.

After Mailama, Mahasnana is performed, the Deities wear new clothes and Sarvanga Chandana Lagi is offered. Then the Deities are decorated with gold ornaments. Here the Pushpalakas offer one *ajna mala* at the Majhi Bada and after doing camphor Arati, climb down the Ratna Simhasana. Sathi Puja and Markanda Puja are done at Majhi and Mahaprabhu Bada (as the festival celebrates both the birth of Krishna and Yogamaya).

The Madhyana Dhupa is offered, then *mangalarpana* is done by the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta at the Majhi and Mahaprabhu Bada. *Vandapana* is done at all the three Badas.

Subhadra's *ajna mala* is sent to Durga at the Bhandara Ghara, then She is carried from the Jagamohana to sit on a throne in front of the swing. Here Mahasnana is performed, Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* are offered, as the appearance day of Krishna is also the appearance day of Yogamaya, who took birth in the house of Nanda and Yasoda and was exchanged by Vasudeva for Krishna during the night of Janmashtami. After Sandhya arati, Durga returns to the Bhandara Ghara.

Krishna lila

On Bhadrava Krishna Dasami the temple celebrates various episodes of the Vrindavana lila, with the Banabhoji Vesa, Koli Bika, Bakasura and Aghasura Badha.

Badha means "killing" and refers to the re-enactment of the *lilas* in which little Krishna was attacked by evil *asuras* who tried to kill Him, but He killed them instead.

After the Madhyana Dhupa Vesa, two *ajna malas* are offered at the Bada Bada and one at Mahaprabhu Bada. After Madhyana Dhupa and Dakshina Ghara Bhoga, the Mahajanas carry Rama Krishna from the Dakshina Ghara to the Ratna simhasana. After the Panda offers Bada Bada's *ajna mala* and Mahaprabhu's Bada to Krishna, the Mahajanas carry Rama Krishna to the Bata Dvara, where a palanquin is waiting for Them. The Bimana Badus carry the palanquin to the accompaniment of various musical instruments, to the north of the temple, in front of the Lakhya Akhada (near the Bada Chatta Matha) and place Rama Krishna on a wooden *simhasana*. Here the Koli Bika lila (the purchasing of berries) takes place, re-enacting another famous childhood *lila* of Krishna, where He purchased a basket of fruits from a tribal lady (*sabaruni*). For this ritual one Sevaka dresses as Sabaruni and carries betel nuts, coconuts and berries in a basket and shouts "*panira phala singada ra koli khaiba asa e pua*" ("oh sons! come and eat these juicy berries"). The Bhitarcha Mahapatra purchases the berries from the Sabaruni and puts them in a silver bowl. These berries are then offered to Rama Krishna.

After the Panda offers Sitala Bhoga, the Bhittarcha Mohapatra does *vandapana*. After Rama Krishna return to the temple, the Pushpalakas do the Banabhoji Vesa for Sandhya Dhupa. In this Vesa, the Deities hold two silver bowls, one containing cream and the other containing juicy coconut; the Deities also wear a special garland called *peda mali* given by the King's superintendent and the Pattjoshi Mohapatra. In the meanwhile Rama Krishna are carried into the Jagamohana and placed on a cot there. One person from Bali Sahi dresses as Bakasura and another dresses as Krishna and there they enact the killing of Bakasura. Then one person from Harachandi Sahi dresses as Aghasura and similarly Aghasura's killing is also enacted. Finally Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* take place, and the Deities return to Dakshina Ghara.

Kaliya Dalana and Dhenukasura Badha

On Bhadrava krishna Ekadasi the temple celebrates the punishment of serpent Kaliya and the killing of the evil donkey Dhenukasura.

During the Madhyana Dhupa Vesa, three *ajna malas* are offered. After the Bhoga offering, Rama Krishna and Madana Mohana arrive from the Dakshina Ghara, receive the *ajna mala* and are carried to a palanquin placed at the Bata Dvara. The Bimana Badus carry the palanquin around the temple once and then to Labani Khia on Lokanath Road. On the way, the women of the Mahabhois offer cream and butter and perform *vandapana*. After the Sitala Bhoga offering, the Deities travel to Markandeya Pushkarini. One person (Sauti Subudhi) dresses as Kaliya.

At the Pushkarini, a snake made of cotton representing Kaliya "bites" the Deity. One person dresses as Garuda and arrives with *amruta laddu* to neutralize the poison. Then Kaliya Dalana is enacted and after Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* the Deities return to Sri Mandira and at Jaya Vijaya Dvara They are offered Ekadasi Bhoga and return to the Dakshina Ghara after *vandapana*.

Then Kaliya Dalana Vesa is offered to the main Deities. After preparations for Sandhya Dhupa are done, the *amruta laddu* provided by the Jagannath Ballabha Matha is offered to the Deities, then Sandhya Dhupa takes place. One *ajna mala* is offered. Madana Mohana is brought from the Dakshina Ghara and upon receiving *ajna mala* He is carried to the Jagamohana where He is placed on a cot. Here one person from Kundheibenta Sahi dresses as Dhenukasura and the killing of the *asura* is enacted. After Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana*, Madana Mohana returns to the Dakshina Ghara.

Pralambasura Badha

On Bhadrava krishna Ekadasi at Madhyana Dhupa the Pralambasura Badha Vesa is offered. After Sandhya Dhupa, Rama Krishna are carried from the Dakshina Ghara and after receiving the *ajna mala* are placed on a cot in the Jagamohana. One person from Dolamandapa Sahi dresses as Pralambasura and the killing of the *asura* is enacted. Then the Deities are offered two *koras* (sweet coconut balls) provided by the Jagannath Ballabha Matha.

Krishna Balarama Vesa

The highlight of Bhadrava krishna trayodasi is the Krishna Balarama Vesa offered at Sandhya Dhupa. Then Madana Mohana is carried from the Dakshina Ghara and after receiving the *ajna mala*, He is placed on a cot at the Jagamohana for Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana*, before returning to the Dakshina Ghara.

Satapuri Amavasya

On Bhadrava krishna Chaturdasi the Saptapuri ritual, the Bisois of Kubhara Pada tie a *bagha mukha* from Alama Chandi to the Satapuri Tada and bring the Tada in a procession to the Sri Mandira. After circumulating the temple once, they place the Tada on a cot at the Achanti Pahandi near the kitchen. After Sandhya Dhupa a Puja Panda carries the *ajna mala* in procession to the Bedha Kali temple. Here Bedha Kali's Sevaka receives the *ajna mala* and carries it through the Simhadvara, then he offers the *ajna mala* to the temple kitchen from outside.

Vastra Harana lila

This day is observed on Bhadrava Amavasya, also called Saptapuri Amavasya.

After Abakasha, Vesa, Gopala Ballabha and Sakala Dhupa, the Saptapuri Bhoga is brought in a procession by the Pradhani and Taluchha.

The Mudirasta does the Prasada Lagi and the Puja Panda performs the *sodasha upachara* ritual. Then after Arati the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta perform *vandapana*. Amavasya Narayana receives the *ajna mala* and goes to the ocean (this procession is called Sagara Vijaya).

After Sandhya Dhupa, Madana Mohana is carried to the Ratna simhasana and after receiving the *ajna mala* He goes to the Nata Mandapa, where people from Kalika Devi Sahi enact the Vastra Harana. Finally, after Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana*, Madana Mohana returns to the Dakshina Ghara.

Davagni lila

On Bhadrava sukla Pratipada after Sandhya Dhupa, Madana Mohana is carried to the Nata Mandapa and after the re-enactment of the Davagni *lila* by the people of Matimandapa Sahi, the Sitala Bhoga offering and *vandapana*, He returns to the Dakshina Ghara.

Nikunja lila

On Bhadrava sukla Dvitiya after Sandhya Dhupa, Madana Mohana is carried to the Nata Mandapa for the Nikunja Lila enactment by the people of Harachandi Sahi. After Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana*, He returns to the Dakshina Ghara.

Krishna lila

On Bhadrava sukla Tritiya after Sandhya Dhupa, Rama Krishna receive the *ajna mala*, sit on a palanquin and are taken to the Nakhi Udara on the northern side of the temple. There They are placed on a wooden Simhasana and people of Baseli Sahi enact the scene of the elephant. At the same time, Madana Mohana is carried to the Nata Mandapa. After Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* all the *calanti pratima* Deities return to the Dakshina Ghara.

Ganesha Chaturthi

On Bhadrava sukla Chaturthi after Sandhya Dhupa, Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* are offered to Bata Ganesha and Kanchi (Bhanda) Ganesha, and then to Bhubaneswari. The Madala Panji is placed on a cot within the temple room and a *patani sari* is tied to it. Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* are performed, then the Karanas offer 22 coconuts provided by the King's superintendent.

Rishi Panchami, Daha lila

On Bhadrava sukla Panchami after receiving the *ajna mala*, Mahalakshmi is carried by the Mahajanas and placed on a palanquin waiting for Her at the seven steps. From there She travels to Markandeswara Temple, where She enters the Gambhira and is offered Snana and Balakalagi. Then one Panda narrates the importance of Rishi Panchami as a day to honor and express gratitude the ancient Rishis who devoted their life to the spiritual progress of society. It is believed that a person who follows this *prayaschitta vrata* will be purified by any sin or mistake. Sitala Bhoga is offered and finally Mahalakshmi returns to the Sri Mandira. In the meanwhile after Sandhya Dhupa, Madana Mohana is carried from the Dakshina Ghara, receives the *ajna mala*, and sits on a cot at the Nata Mandapa. Here people from Goudabada Sahi enact the Dahalila and then Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* are offered.

Krishna lila: the killing of Bimbasura and Dhenukasura

On Bhadrava sukla Sasthi and Saptami after Sandhya Dhupa Madana Mohana receives the the *ajna mala* and goes to the Natapa Mandapa; there people from Markandeswara Sahi enact the killing of Bimbasura (on Sasthi) and from Kalikadevi Sahi enact the killing of Keshi (on Saptami). On both these days after Krishna Lila, Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* are offered.

Radhashtami

On Bhadrava sukla Ashtami after Sakala Dhupa, Mahalakshmi (Sridevi) receives the *ajna mala* then goes to the Lakshmi shrine and sits on a cot in the Jagamohana. Here Majana, Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* take place.

After Madhyana Dhupa, Mahalakshmi is brought back to the Ratna simhasana, then both Sridevi and Bhudevi go to the Khata Seja Ghara. Then Sudarshana gets the *ajna mala* and is carried by the Daitas to the Jagamohana where He sits on the *chaudola*, receives a *pata patani sari* and is carried by the Bimana Badus to the Jhulana Mandapa.

At the Jhulana Mandapa He is decorated with the golden *harada mali* and a garland of *dayana* leaves, circumbulates the temple once, and then travels to the Jambesvara (Yameswara) temple. Here Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* take place and then Sudarshana returns to the temple. After the Palia Mekapa cleans the *simhasana*, Mahasnana is done at the four Badas and then Sridevi-Bhudevi are brought back by the Palia Pushpalakas and are dressed for Sandhya Arati. After Sandhya Dhupa, Prasada Lagi is offered at Sudarshana's Bada and then *vandapana* is performed. On the next day, Tala Navami, the Deities are offered an extra Panti Bhoga of pancakes made with *tala* (palm) fruits.

Mathura lila and Labani Khia

On Bhadrava sukla Dasami after Madhya Dhupa, Rama and Krishna are carried from the Dakshina Ghara and after receiving the *ajna mala* go on a palanquin to the Labania Khia Chaak in Kundheibenta Sahi. On the way the women of the Mahabhoi houses perform *vandapana* and accompany the procession to the Labanikhia Khata. *Labani khya* means "eating butter" and celebrates the hearty welcome that the people of Mathura offered to Krishna and Balarama when They reached there, especially with offerings of yogurt and butter of which Krishna and Balarama are very fond. Here the Mahabhois offer cream, yogurt, butter and other dairy products, and the women again perform *vandapana*.

After Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* from the Bhittarrah Mohapatra, Rama and Krishna go to the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens where They enact the Akrura episode, then while returning to the temple They enact the killing of the washerman and the breaking of the bow. At the Sri Nahara, one Ghatuary dresses as Kubja and offers betel nuts. After Sitala Bhoga the procession continues towards the Singha Dvara, where They are placed on a cot and preside to the re-enactment of the clash with the elephant Kubalaya, the wrestling match and the defeat of Kamsa. One person dressed as Ugrasena receives the *sari* symbolizing the episode where Krishna entrusted the kingdom to grandfather Ugrasena. After Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* the Deities return to the temple.

Parshvaparivartana Ekadasi

This is the day when Narayana turns on the other side while sleeping, and is celebrated on Bhadrava sukla Ekadasi. After the Bhoga Mandapa offering, Mahasnana is performed at the three Badas. The Deities are dressed in new clothes and Chandana Lagi is offered. After Sandhya Arati, Madana Mohana is carried to the Ekadasi Bedha where Chandana Lagis is offered to Him. Madana Mohana then receives the *ajna mala*, circumbulates the temple once in a palanquin and is then brought to the Jaya Vijaya Dvara where Ekadasi Bhoga and *vandapana* are offered, and finally He returns to the Dakshina Ghara.

After Sandhya Dhupa, the Deula Purohita celebrates the Pavitra Adhivasa Homa inside the Ananta Purushottama shrine. After Chandana Lagi, Bada Shringara is performed. As soon as the Bhoga is offered, the Deula Purohita draws three *mandalas* with rice paste and installs a *kalasha*. In the meanwhile the Khata Seja Ghara is sealed. Then various ornaments and clothes like *krubanti mala*, *patani* and *chemedei* are placed on the *mandalas* and the Deula Purohita performs Varuna Puja and *adhivasa* or the preliminary ceremony. Then the Deities have Their Mahasnana and are dressed anew. Chandana Lagi is performed. After Bada Shringara, Ballabha Bada Shringara Bhoga is offered with *sodasa upachara puja*. Then the Khata Seja Ghara is opened and after receiving an offering of white flowers, the Shayana Thakura is turned on the other side.

The Mudirasta performs the *vandapana* and the door is closed. Pahuda is done after the Ghasa Bidia offering. If this day coincides with Sambhu Ekadasi, rather than Madana Mohana going to Lokanatha temple, Lokanatha will come to Sri Mandir, and both will have Bhoga *vandapana* at the Jaya Vijaya Dvara.

Vamana Janma

On Bhadrava sukla Dvadasi the temple celebrates the appearance of Vamanadeva, as well as Garuda Parsvaparivartana (Garuda turning on his side while sleeping), Indra Dhvaja Puja and Sunyia (beginning of the royal year of the Gajapati).

After Sakala Dhupa, Mahasnana and Sarvanga chandana, the Deities wear the *upavita* (sacred thread) for which *adhivasa* was done on the previous day. After Madhyana Dhupa, the Jaga Vijaya Dvara is closed and the area around the Chandani Argali is washed, then a *mandala* is drawn. After the *vandapana* of the three Badas, the Panda Patihari performs Varuna Puja.

The Dakshina Ghara Bhoga is offered to Vamana Dasa avatara, Bhudevi, Sridevi, Rama Krishna and Madana-Mohana, then They are carried to the main shrine, where They sit just outside the Anavasara pindi.

After receiving Dhandi Prasada, Madana Mohana is placed on the *sarvatrobhadra mandala*, together with a small golden Deity of Vamana. *Panchamrita* Mahasnana is performed for this Deity and Sitala Bhoga is offered. Then the umbilical cord is symbolically cut, and the *pancha upachara* rituals are performed.

The Deity of Vamana is covered with a silk cloth, the birth rituals are celebrated and cream, butter, sweet balls etc are offered, then the Mahajanans carry Vamana to the Jaya Vijaya Dvara.

In the meanwhile people from Markandesvara Sahi have arrived with a painting of Vamana. The painting is carried to the Majjana Mandapa and placed on a cot along with Durga Devi, who received the *ajna mala* and was carried by the Pati Mahapatras. Here the Pandas perform *vasordhara* and offer *yajna upavita* (the sacred thread). Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* are also offered. The Mudirasta performs the Prasada Lagi and milk is offered using *pancha upachara puja*. After *vandapana*, the Deity of Vamana returns to the Dakshina Ghara and Durga returns to the Bhandara Ghara. After Sandhya Dhupa, the Kotha Suasias prepare a *sapta megha* representation with wood and bamboo and bury it at the Chahani Mandapa. After the Dhupa offering, one Panda does the Puja there. This is called Indra Dhvaja Puja. At the end, Panthi Bhoga is offered.

Only on this occasion cooked *bhoga* from the kitchen is offered not to the main Deities but only to Vamana and then goes directly to the Ananda Bazar. *Vandapana* is done. Another special ritual on this day is that the *sapta megha* (Indra, Varuna, etc) are worshiped in the evening inside the Garbha griha, then is kept tied till Purnima.

Ananta Chaturdasi

The celebration for Ananta Sesha falls on Bhadrava sukla Chaturdasi. Mahasnana is done to Ananta at His shrine near Mukti Mandapa and Bhoga is offered. Then the *Ananta Vrata Mahatmya* is recited.

Bhadrava Purnima

It celebrates Indra Govinda puja, the episode when the King of Svarga Indra came to offer his homage to Krishna, recognizing defeat after Krishna had lifted the Gavardhana hill to protect the inhabitants of Vrindavana from Indra's torrential rains.

On this day after Sandhya Arati and Dakshina Ghara Bhoga, Dola Govinda is carried to the Ratna simhasana. After receiving the *ajna mala*, Dola Govinda is carried in a palanquin to the Bada Chatta Matha, where the Bhitarcha Mahapatra does the *vandapana* for Indra, Chandra and Govinda. One person from Baseli Sahi dresses up as Indra Hasti (Indra's elephant). After *vandapana*, Dola Govinda returns to the Dakshina Ghara.

Vimala Puja

This important and majestic puja starts from Ashvina Krishna Ashtami and continues for sixteen days; it is therefore also known as Sodasha or Sola puja ("the sixteen days puja").

On Ashvina Krishna Ashtami, the day also known as Mulashtami, Durga is carried from the Bhandara Ghara by the Pati Mohapatras and after receiving the *ajna mala* She is carried to the Somanatha Mandapa, where She is placed on a cot. Here, Panda, Pati and Mudirasta are invited to play the roles of Acharya and Brahma and they conduct the Sahasra Kumbha Abhisekha of Vimala (the main Deity of Durga within the temple), the special ritual bath with 100 pots of sanctified water. The bath is given with the Vanadurga mantra.

Then Durga is dressed and Sitala Bhoga is offered. The Mudirasta does the Prasada Lagi and the *pancha upachara puja* is performed by the Puja Panda. After *vandapana* She is carried to the entrance of the Bhandara Ghara. During Abakasha two *ajna malas* were offered to the main Deities. These two *ajna malas* are now given to Bala Purushottama (Madhava) and Durga Devi. After receiving the *ajna mala*, Madhava is tied to Durga and both of Them are placed in a palanquin. In the meanwhile the Sahasra Kumbha Puja of Vimala is completed. Varuna Puja is done for Brahma Varana.

Acharya Varana, Brahma Varana, Swasti Vachana, Chandi Varana and Sankalpa are performed. Bhoga is offered with *sodasha upachara* rituals. This particular Bhoga is called Vimali Manohi and consists of *kotha bhoga*, a plate of *pitha* and *khechedi*. Arati is offered with camphor lamp and the 21 wicks lamp.

Finally Durga and Madhava are placed on a cot inside Vimala's temple, where Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* are offered. After three Dhupas of Vimala and the Chandana Lagi of Srijius (the main Deities of the temple, i.e. Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra), Durga Madhava are carried to the Bhandara Ghara. They will remain tied together until Dasshera. The same rituals continue in the same manner for the first 8 days. From the 9th day onwards, Durga Madhava travel on a chariot to the Narayani temple in Dolamandapa Sahi (daily).

This is a very important festival, considered to be the Shakta Ratha yatra, known as Gupta ("hidden, secret") Gundicha. Because it takes place during autumn, it is also known as Sharat Gundicha. At the Narayani temple, Durga Madhava are bathed with camphor water and Bhoga *vandapana* is offered. This ritual takes place daily until Dasshera. On the most important days (Saptami, Ashtami and Navami) the main worship takes place at night, and three animals are sacrificed. After Bada Shringara, the sacrificial animals and Bhoga are brought in through the western gate. The sacrifice takes place near the pond near Vimala's temple and the blood is carried in an earthen pot. Cooked fish is also offered in a temporary kitchen. After the puja is over, the whole area till the western gate is sterilized with lime water. Vimala is dressed in a different outfit everyday.

During the sixteen days Puja for Vimala, no women enter the Vimala temple; the reason for this restriction is interpreted by different people in different ways; in fact the real reason is that Durga's Sevakas should show great respect to all women especially during these celebrations, so they would be supposed to get up from their worship rituals to pay respect to any woman walking into the temple. Thursday's Ekanta ritual is not done during this period. On the last four days, Vimala's *ayudha* (weapons) are worshipped inside the Bhandara Ghara. The celebrations of Durga puja are especially connected with the *kshatriya dharma*; it is said that Sri Ramachandra worshiped Durga on the occasion of Navaratri to obtain success in fighting against Ravana. The day following Dasahara is called Vijaya Dasami and celebrates Sri Ramachandra's victory.

Here are the vesas of Goddess Vimala during Durga puja:

- Vanadurga vesa (Vishnu kneels to remove a thorn from her foot)
- Bhuvaneswari vesa (with 4 arms)
- Narayani vesa (seated on Garuda)
- Rajarajesvari vesa (with 2 hands, holding a pot of nectar and a *japa mala*)
- Bagala vesa (showing *abhaya* and *varada mudra*)
- Jaya Durga vesa (Dhumavati the Mother of siddhis, holding 4 lotus flowers)
- Ugratara vesa (meditating in *padmasana*)
- Matangini vesa (with open arms)
- Dasa bhuj vesa (holding 10 weapons and killing Mahishasura)
- Harachandi vesa (in *padmasana*, meditating on Vishnu)
- Simhavahini vesa (Durga riding the lion)
- Kamala (2 hands showing *abhaya* and *varada mudra*, sitting on a lotus)
- Sodasi (a 16 years old girl, decorated with many beautiful ornaments)
- Bala Bhairavi (with 2 hands lifting a snake and 2 other hands holding a pot of nectar and showing *abhaya mudra*)
- Vira Bhadra (holding a parrot symbolizing the *jiva*, *japa*, *abhaya* and *varada mudra*)

Dvitiya Osha

This festival is observed on Ashvina Krishna Ashtami. On this day after Sakala Dhupa Sridevi receives the *ajna mala* and travels on a palanquin to the Lakshmi shrine, where She is bathed and dressed. Bhoga is offered and a Panda recites the *Lakshmi Vrata Katha*. Finally Sridevi returns to the Ratna Simhasana after Madhyana Dhupa.

Dasahara and Aparajita Dasami

Dasahara is observed on Ashvina Sukla Dasami. After Abakasha, Chandana Lagi is done and the Srijius wear new clothes and are dressed in a royal outfit called Raja Vasha.

The Deities' weapons are worshipped in the Bhandara Ghara, then after Sakala Dhupa they are brought to the Bhandara Dvara, where they are washed and Pandas perform Varuna Puja. These weapons are carried on three silver plates and taken in a procession around the temple thrice, and finally brought into the Pokharia, where they are offered to the respective Deities.

Balabhadra holds Hala (plough) and Mushala (club), Subhadra holds the lotus flower, and Jagannatha holds Sankha (conchshell) and Chakra (disc). Madana Mohana and Rama Krishna are dressed in the Vira Vesha and carried to the Mahakhala. Madana Mohana, Rama Krishna and Durga Madhava are carried to the Ratna simhasana and after receiving the *ajna mala*, They are carried to the Mahakhala where Prasada Lagi, Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* take place. After this, the Deities return to the Bhandara Ghara.

Dasahara Ekadasi

This festival falls on Ashvina sukla Ekadasi and inaugurates the beginning of the Kartika rituals. After Arati and Abakasha, Radha Damodara Vesha and Gopala Bhoga are offered. After Bala Dhupa, the Mudirasta performs the Prasada Lagi and then after Bala Dhupa, *vandapana* is done. During the entire month of Kartika, Puri is crowded with pilgrims.

Radha Damodara Puja

This festival takes place from Dasahara Ekadasi until sukla Dasami. From Amavasya until Purnima, Hari Hara Vesa is offered to the Bada Bada (this means that Balabhadra is dressed in half black and half white). From Ekadasi onwards, Lakshmi Narayana Vesa is offered. The next special outfits are Bamana Bankachuda Vesa on Dvadasi, Dalikia or Trivikrama Vesa on Trayodasi, Lakshmi Nrisimha Vesa on Chaturdasi and Raja Rajeshvara Vesa for the next days until Purnima. Bala Dhupa is performed regularly every day until Purnima. During Radha Damodara puja, devotees (especially widows) practice *japa*, *pancha-tirtha snana*, listening to the *Kartika Purana*, and go to the beach to worship Tulasi Devi on small mounds of sand.

Kumara Purnima

This festival falls on Ashvina Purnima. After Madhyana Dhupa, Sridevi and Bhudevi are carried to the Khata Seja Ghara, while Sudarshana receives the *ajna mala* and goes to the Jagamohana, is placed on the *chaudola* and then carried to the Jhulana Mandapa.

Here Sudarshana, worshiped as Sri Radhika, is decorated with ornaments and carried in a procession to the Yameshvara temple where Bhoga *vandapana* is done, then She is carried back to the temple where She is placed near the western gate. After Prasada Lagi and *vandapana* She returns to the Ratna simhasana. Mahasana is performed for the four Badas and Sridevi and Bhudevi are carried back to the Ratna simhasana. After Chandana Lagi, Vesha is done with new clothes. After Sandhya Dhupa, Madana Mohana comes to get the *ajna mala*, then Madana Mohana and Sridevi are carried in a procession to the Lakshmi shrine, where They sit in the Jagamohana to play a game of dice (the Mudirasta throwing the dice for Madana Mohana and the Bhitarchha Mohapatra for Mahalakshmi).

After the game, Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* are performed and the Deities return to Their respective places, then Chandana Lagi and Bada Shringara are offered to the Sri Jius. After Bada Shringara Dhupa, another game of dice takes place in the Pokharia and then another on the Ratna simhasana. Here Jagannatha loses the game to Mahalakshmi and Nila Madhava is tied for seven days in the Lakshmi shrine, returning to the Ratna simhasana on the 8th day after Abakasha.

Hari Utthapana Ekadasi

The festival celebrating the time when Vishnu gets up in the morning falls on Kartika sukla Ekadasi. Since on the higher planets one day lasts exactly one year calculated on our planet, there are cyclic annual festivals that for the Devas fall on a particular time of their day (on each of their days).

The Sayana house is opened and the Pujakas offer prayers to the Deities. After Arati, *puspanjali* and Maha snana, the Deities are decorated with *chandana*, clothes and ornaments, specifically the Trivikrama vesha (started by the Pancha sakha devotees of Jagannatha): it is a *kshatriya* dress complete with sword, *sankha*, *chakra* and *gada*.

The Arati is celebrated with camphor lamps and *vandapana*, then the *chalanti pratima* Deities go to Bandhara ghara and remain there. After Sakala Dhupa, *vandapana* is performed and all the rituals until Vallabha Bada Shringara are exactly the same as on Hari Shayana Ekadasi (the festival celebrating the time when Vishnu goes to bed in the night). Mahasnana is performed after Bada Shringara and then the seal of the Shayana Padi is broken. After camphor *arati* and *pushpanjali* the three Shayana Thakuras are carried to the Pokharia and given a Mahasnana, after which They are placed on the Ratna Simhasana. Then Chandana Lagi is done and the Deities wear new clothes. The Vallabha Bada Shringara is offered with *sodahsha upachara puja* and after camphor *arati* and *vandapana* the Shayana Thakuras are carried to the Bhandara Ghara. Finally green coconut and Ghasa Bidia are offered and the Sri Jius go to sleep.

Garuda Utthapana and Sharada Rasa

These two celebrations fall on Kartika sukla Dvadasi and Trayodasi. After Sandhya Dhupa the rituals for Garuda's Utthapana (getting up) are done in a similar manner as is done for Garuda Shayana (going to sleep). The Deities are dressed in the Bankachuda vasha, with Jagannatha showing His *bhanga* form (bent on one side); with bamboo structures and black cloth around His body, Jagannatha looks like He is bent on His right side (*banka* means "bent"). On the three following days (Trayodasi, Chaturdasi and Purnima) the Deities wear the Nrisimha vasha, the Nagarjuna vasha, and the Rajesvari vasha. For the two days of Sharada Rasa, Madana Mohana arrives after Sandhya Dhupa and after receiving the *ajna mala*, He is carried to the Jagamohana, where Bhoga and *vandapana* are offered to Him there. Finally He returns to the Dakshina Ghara.

Kartika Sukla Chaturdasi

On this day after Sandhya Dhupa, Madana Mohana is carried to the Ratna Simhasana. Sridevi and Madana Mohana receive the *ajna mala* and are carried to the Jagamohana where Bhoga *vandapana* is offered to Them. Finally They return to their respective places.

Kartika Purnima

This day celebrates the Saradiya Rasa lila and the end of Kartika vrata and Radha Damodara puja. After Sandhya Dhupa, Dola Govinda arrives from the Dakshina Ghara, receives the *ajna mala* and is carried to the Jagamohana, where He is offered *panchamrita* Mahasnana. After Prasada Lagi, Bhoga and *vandapana*, He returns to the Dakshina Ghara. Raja Rajesvara vasha is offered to Sri Jagannatha.

Tula Sankranti or Garbhana Sankranti

On this day after Bhoga Mandapa, Sri Jius are offered Mahasnana and wear new clothes. Chandana Lagi is done, then They are decorated with the various ornaments. After Madhyana Dhupa, Prasada Lagi is performed and Madhyana Dhupa takes place with *sodasha upachara puja*. Some rice is brought out and sprinkled around the temple as Annabali. *Vandapana* takes place after Arati.

Navanna

This festival is observed on a particular day calculated according to the astrological chart of the Sri Jius. On this day new rice is offered. Parva Jatra Bhoga is offered and after Madhyana Dhupa and Vasha, the Sri Jius are decorated with various ornaments and Prasada Lagi and *vandapana* are done.

Chada Khai

This festival is observed on Margasira krishna Paratipada. It is the day when people stop fasting (*havisyanna*) and start eating elaborate food. On this day after Madhyana Dhupa, Bhandara Lokanatha travels to the Lokanatha Temple where Bhoga *vandapana* are done, and then He returns.

Prathamashstami

This festival is observed on Margasira krishna Ashtami. After Bhoga Mandapa, Mailama and Mahasnana, Chandana Lagi and Vasha are performed. Then the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta celebrate the Varuna Puja. After Madhyana Dhupa, Mangalarpana and Prasada Lagi *vandapana* are done.

Pitru Sraddha

From Trayodasi to Amavasya in Krishna Margasira, Jagannatha wears the Sraddha vesa (plain white cloth with small yellow border) and offers lamps in the memory of His parents: on Krishna Trayodasi for Kapila and Aditi, on Krishna Chaturdasi for Dasaratha and Kausalya, on Amavasya for Vasudeva Devaki, Nanda Yasoda and Indradyumna Maharaja. This festival covers the three days of Margasira Krishna Chaturdasi, Amavasya and Sukla Pratipada, in which the Sri Jius offer Pitru Sraddha with Dipas (ghee lamps).

On Chaturdasi after Sandhya Dhupa, the Bhandara Mekapa draws a tree with uncooked rice below the Simhasana. The Palia Mekapa lights a lamp with ghee and cotton wicks on this rice tree and prepares three gold *arati* lamps. The Panda sanctifies the rice tree, then along with the Pati and Mudirasta he climbs onto the Ratna Simhasana to do the *vandapana*. Another rice tree is drawn by the Asthana Pratihari near the Jaya Vijaya Dvara. Three Palia Pandas carry the Mahadipa and sanctify the rice tree near the Jaya Vijaya Dvara, then they hand over the Mahadipa to the Chunaras, the temple Sevakas that light lamps at the top of the Sri Mandira. The Chunaras light a Chandra Udiya Dipa (a special lamp offered to the moon) and bless the King.

The same rituals are repeated on Amavasya. On Pratipada, while the rice tree is being drawn, Madana Mohana is carried in from the Dakshina Ghara. The Mudirasta performs the Prasada Lagi and after sanctifying the rice tree, the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta do the *vandapana*. Madana Mohana, Sridevi and Bhudevi receive the *ajna mala*, and the Mahajanas carry them to the Jaya Vijaya Dvara. Here the rice tree drawn by the Asthana Pratihari is sanctified and the Jaya Vijaya Dvara is opened. Madana Mohana, Sridevi and Bhudevi are then carried in a palanquin to the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens where another rice tree is drawn on a Bhadrāsana and a lamp is lighted on the rice tree. The Mudirasta performs the Prasada Lagi and after the tree is sanctified by the Panda, the Mudirasta performs the *vandapana* and the Deities return to the temple.

Odhana or Pravara Sasthi

This festival is observed on Margasira Sukla Sasthi. On Panchami evening, after Chandana Lagi, the warm shawls for all the Deities in the temple are purified by Adhivasha and kept in the Bhoga Mandapa. This Adhivasha is done by the Panda by drawing three *mandalas* in the Bhoga Mandapa. After Bada Shringara Bhoga and Mailama, Mahasana is done at the three Badas and Chandana Lagi is performed. Then Ghasa Bidia is offered and Arati is performed. On Sasthi, after Sakala Dhupa and Mailama, the warm shawls are carried in a procession three times around the temple and then to the Ratna Simhasana. Then Ghoda Lagi is done i.e. the Deities are covered with the warm shawls and decorated with various ornaments. Then Prasada Lagi and *vandapana* are done; finally Madhyana Dhupa is offered, after which the normal rituals continue.

Pandu Purnima

This festival is observed on Margasira Purnima. During Sakala Dhupa one *ajna mala* is offered. After Madhyana Dhupa, Nrisimha comes from the Dakshina Ghara to receive the *ajna mala*, then He is carried in a palanquin to the four Ashramas in Puri and finally returns to the Dakshina Ghara.

Dhanu Sankranti

For one entire month, starting from Dhanu Sankranti till Makara Sankranti, Pahili Bhoga is offered together with Gopala Vallabha Bhoga. Mangala arati is performed much before dawn, then Ghoda Lagi and Vesha are offered. Pahili Bhoga consists of cakes made of *urad dal* and wheat mixed with ghi, and is offered with *pancha upachara puja*. During this month Roshā Homa is celebrated immediately after Mangala Arati, to start cooking the Pahili Bhoga. Dhanu Muan is offered during the Dhanu Month. The Makara Chaula (first rice of the harvest) is offered on Makara Sankranti.

Bakula Amavasya

This festival is observed on Pausha Amavasya. Jagannatha is offered *gaintha*, a special pancake containing mango flowers. One *ajna mala* is offered after Arati. After Sakala Dhupa, the Mudirasta performs the Prasada Lagi and *gainthas* are offered with *sodasha upachara* rituals. Then *vandapana* is done at the three Badas. Then Chakra Narayana arrives to receive the *ajna mala* and proceeds on His journey to the ocean, called Sagara Vijaya.

Pushya Abhisekha

This festival is celebrated on pausha Purnima. It is called Deva Abhisheka to differentiate it from the Raja Abhisheka that is celebrated for the Gajapati Maharaja, that is held one day after Pushya or Deva Abhisheka. The Raja Abhisheka ceremony takes place in the Raja Nahara, where the Mukti mandapa *brahmanas* headed by the Raj Guru offer blessings to the King with raw rice and gifts. Pusyabhisheka is performed for Jagannatha in memory of the coronation of Lord Rama in Ayodhya. It is also the day of the first installation of the Deities, the Niladri Mahodaya.

For the preceding 4 days 81 pots of perfumed water and 21 pots of ghee are kept in the Bhoga Mandapa, then the snana is performed on Ratna simhasana by pouring the Abhisheka on the brass mirror. Maha Lakshmi comes to watch and is also worshipped. A sevayat representing Lakshmana holds a Pipli embroidered umbrella, another Sevaka (representing Hanuman) touches the handle. Deities are armed with flower bows and arrows in the Raja vesa, then the formal worship is celebrated with 16 *upacharas* and waving of lights (*vandapana*). Then Raghunatha, a marble Deity of Rama, goes to Maha Lakshmi temple, where both are bathed in a ceremonial way (Mahasnana), then He goes back to the southern chamber.

On the previous day after Chandana Lagi at night, 81 vessels of water from the temple kitchen well and 21 vessels of ghi are carried to the Bhoga Mandapa. The vessels are sanctified by the Deula Purohita performing Adhivasha and they are covered with a special type of cloth called *chemedi patani*. Then Bada Shringara is performed. After the Bhoga, the Adhivasha Darpana is kept before Jagannatha on a Bhadrāsana and Adhivasha is done using flowers and *chandana*. Then Pahuda is performed.

On Ekadasi, the Purohita does Ankuraropana near the Snana Vedi. On Purnima during Sakala Dhupa the Kotha Suasia builds a hut near the Pratihari Niyoga and in this hut the Deula Purohita and other *brahmanas* perform Homa. After Sakala Dhupa only Jagannatha changes into His bath towel (Tadapa Uttariya) and takes Mahasnana. The ghi in the vessels stored in the Bhoga Mandapa is melted with fire from the temple kitchen and mixed with the water, then the mix is carried by the Garabadu in a procession into the Pokharia. Here the Mudirasta does the Prasada Lagi and Sitala Bhoga is offered by the Purohita using *pancha upachara* rituals. The ghi water is poured over the Adhivasha Darpana in front of Jagannatha, then Jagannatha is dressed in new clothes and Chandana Lagi is performed.

Mahalakshmi receives the *ajna mala* and is carried in a palanquin to the Lakshmi shrine, where She sits in the Jagamohana. Here She is bathed, dressed and decorated with gold ornaments, camphor and various flowers; finally She returns to the Ratna simhasana. The Mudirasta performs the Prasada Lagi. In the meanwhile the Bhittarcha Mohapatra climbs onto the Ratna Smhasana and holds an umbrella, playing the role of Lakshmana, the younger brother of Sri Ramachandra. The Mekapa holds another umbrella as Hanuman. Jatarangi Bhoga is offered with the *sodasha upachara* rituals. Then *vandapana* is done and weapons made of flowers are presented to Jagannatha. Alata Chamara Seva is done and Ghasa Bidia is offered. During the entire ceremony the Akhanda Mekapa stands in front of Jagannatha with a lamp in his hand, and the Palia Khuntia calls out to Jagannatha, "Manima! Manima!".

After Mailama and Dakshina Ghara Bhoga, the small Deity of Raghunatha (Ramachandra) arrives at the Ratna Simhasana, receives the *ajna mala* and is carried in a palanquin to the Lakshmi shrine. Here Mahasnana is performed. Then Bhoga and *vandapana* are done and Raghunatha returns to the Dakshina Ghara. One Mudirasta ties a *sari* on his head and accompanied by the Palia Khuntia and Asthana Padihari, go to Yamesvara temple. Finally the Mudirasta returns to his house, where *mangalarpana* is done; from there the other two return to their respective houses.

For the last Vesha of the Pushya Abhisheka day, the Deities are offered a new dress and a golden sacred thread (*vajna upavita*); the old one is presented to the King. On this day Varuna puja and Nrisimha yajna are also performed.

Navanka or Navankura

This ritual is held the day before Makara Sankranti and celebrates the new rice harvest. The Deities wear a special long white cotton cloth with a red border which is folded over Their heads; it is said that this outfit was inspired by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, to signify the nine activities of devotional service.

On the day before Navanka, after Madhyana Dhupa, Madana Mohana and Rama-Krishna are carried from the Dakshina Ghara, receive the *ajna mala* are taken in a palanquin to Chota Rayapur, where a small sand stage is created. The milkmen of the village collect milk and hand it over to the Mahabhoi. Then the Deities are carried to the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens, where the Mahabhoi milks a cow and the Bhittarcha Mohaparta offers it to the Deities. Then the Deities are taken to the Lakshmi shrine, that is treated as Nanda Maharaj's house. Here Prasada Lagi and *vandapana* are done and then the Deities return to the Dakshina Ghara.

On Navanka, after Sandhya Arati, paddy is collected for Chaula Melana near the Singha Dvara. Here, the Pradhani Mahabhoi collects five measures of paddy on three plates and after circumbulating the temple once in a procession, he puts the plates in Indrani's shrine.

Phula Melana

On this day the Malis (gardeners) collect various garlands and other flower ornaments and circumbulate the temple in a procession before handing over the flower ornaments to the Khuntia. The Khuntia decorates the Sri Jius with the garlands and then Sandhya Arati takes place. After Sandhya Dhupa, the Parva Yatra Jogania goes to the Bhoga Mandapa, fills three bamboos with the paddy provided by the Kotha Suasia and keeps the bamboos on three separate *mandalas* drawn by the Panda. The bamboos are covered with various clothes like *chemedi* and *patani* and *adhivasa* is performed using flowers and *chandana*.

Then the Bhoga Mandapa door is closed. Badashringara Vesha is completed and one *ajna mala* is offered. Madana Mohana is carried in and Badashringara Bhoga is offered with the *pancha upachara* rituals. Then Madana Mohana circumbulates the Ratna simhasana four and a half times; the door is opened and Madana Mohana is taken in a palanquin four and a half times around the temple and to the Kalpa Bata. The Mahajanas then carry Him to the Jaya Vijaya Dvara; here at the Landavarta, Prasada Lagi and *vandapana* are done before He returns to the Dakshina Ghara.

Makara Sankranti

Makara Sankranti is one of the major festivals in the Hindu calendar. It marks the beginning of the Ganga sagara buda, the bathing festival that takes place for 15 days at the ocean (the pilgrims must immerse themselves completely, including the head). It is also a very important day for Kumbha Melas, and many other gatherings and celebrations all over Orissa and India.

On the day of Makara Sankranti, in the month of Magha, when days and nights are of equal length, a special worship is offered to the Deities with *vandapana* (lamps), offering of uncooked fresh rice from the newly harvested rice, mixed with cheese, fruit juice, sugar etc.

In the Jagannatha temple in Puri (Sri Mandira) the Deities wear Their Makara vesha, with huge decorations of tulasi leaves and flowers. On this day Mangala Arati and Abakasha are completed very early in the morning. Then the Sri Jius wear the Makara Chula on Their heads and Vesha is offered.

After Vallabha Bhoga, Mahasnana and Chandana Lagi are offered, and the Sri Jius are dressed in new clothes. Jatarangi Bhoga is offered along with Madhyana Dhupa using *sodasha upachara* rituals. Then one Panda brings one handful of rice to the outside and offers Diga Bali (offering to the Guardians of the directions).

After the Bhoga is offered, the Makara chaula (special pancakes) that had been kept in the Bhoga Mandapa the previous day, are put in three silver plates together with grated coconut, ghi, sweets, milk and cream. These plates are taken around the temple thrice in a procession and brought in to the Pokharia. In the meanwhile some more Makara chaula arrive from the Rosha Shala (the temple kitchens) in a procession. Similarly curd (yogurt) also is taken in a procession around the temple and brought inside. Then varieties of betel are prepared by the Hadapa Nayaka and brought inside to be offered. After the Mudirasta does the Prasada Lagi, the Panda offers the Panthi Bhoga using *pancha upachara* rituals. Finally *vandapana* is offered to the three Badas.

Padma Vesha

This festival consists in the offering of the special outfit called Padma Vesha, and is celebrated on a Tuesday or Saturday between Magha Amavasya and vasanta Panchami. The Padma Vesha has fresh garlands of pink and white lotuses across the arms and on Their heads, lotus petals made of *sola* on heads at sides, a crown of *sola*, and *sola* designs of lotus decorate the sides.

A special rice pudding is also offered during this festival. Both the outfit and the rice pudding are provided by the Bada Chata Matha. After Bada Shringara the Sevakas perform the ritual called Ratra Chandana Lagi and the Sri Jius go to sleep still wearing the Vesha.

Vasanta Panchami

This festival is observed on Magha sukla Panchami. After Madhyana Dhupa and Mailama the Sri Jius are dressed in a special type of cloth called *madhabali luga* and then Chandana Lagi is performed. Sridevi and Bhudevi travel to the Dakshina Ghara and sit on a cot at the Dakshina Ghara, with Dola Govinda in the centre. In the meanwhile Chacheri Vesha for the Sri Jius takes place and Mandua Sarpa Manohi is offered. Then Bhoga is offered in the Dakshina Ghara. Sridevi, Bhudevi and Dola Govinda are carried to the Ratna simhasana, where Prasad Lagi is performed and Bhoga is offered with *pancha upachara* rituals. After Chandana Lagi and *vandapana* the Mudirasta offers a type of coloured powder called *jhimiri phagu*. Then another special type of *phagu* called Phagu Chandana is used to anoint the Sri Jius and then Alata Chamara is offered.

A Phagudaba is offered to Sridevi, Bhudevi and Dola Govinda, then They are carried in a palanquin to the Narendra Sarovara, that for the occasion is called Vasanta Gundicha Tota. The Pancha Pandavas (Pancha Mahadevas) of Puri follow Sridevi, Bhudevi and Dola Govinda.

Dola Govinda is placed on a *chaudola* and Sridevi and Bhudevi are placed on a *jagati*. Then the Mudirasta will play colours with the Bhitara Gauni, on behalf of the Deities. Then Dola Govinda also goes to sit on the *jagati* with Sridevi and Bhudevi. Then come Sitala Bhoga and Prasada Lagi and Alat Chamara is offered. A hunting episode (known as Benta Shikara) is enacted where the Bhattarcha Mohapatra adjusts the bow and hands it over to the Lenka who shoots an arrow at a green coconut. Then the Deities are carried back to the temple and to the Jaya Vijaya Dvara for Chachiri. Here Prasada Lagi and *vandapana* take place. After Sandhya Dhupa, the *Panjika* (Almanac) is worshipped at Sarasvati's temple.

Tila Saptami

This festival is observed on Magha sukla Saptami. On this day after Sandhya Dhupa, the Deity of Surya is offered Abhisheka with sesame seeds (called *tila*). The Deity is then dressed and Bhoga and *vandapana* are offered. There is also a ceremony where fire is worshipped.

Bhauma Ekadasi

This festival is observed on Magha sukla Ekadasi. After Bhoga Mandapa, *panchamrita* Mahasnana and Chandana Lagi, the Deities are decorated with ornaments. The Mudirasta performs the Prasada Lagi and after the *sodasha upachara puja*, *vandapana* is done.

Gaja Uddharana Vesha

This Vesha is offered on Magha Purnima. This outfit was inaugurated in 1575 by the Queen of Bharatpur in Uttar Pradesh, as a token of gratefulness for having been healed from an incurable disease on the advice of a Temple Sevaka. The Gaja uddharana vesha celebrates the story of Gajendra rescued by Vishnu: Jagannatha has hands and legs made of *sola*, portrayed in the act of rescuing His elephant devotee from the crocodile. After Madhyana Dhupa and Mailama and Chandana Lagi, Sridevi is carried to the Dakshina Ghara. Then Gaja uddharana vesha is offered and Sridevi is brought back to the Ratna simhasana. After Sandhya Arati another Bhoga Mandapa is offered, and after the public Darshana, Mahasnana is performed.

Shiva Ratri

This festival is observed in the month of Phalguna. In Sri Mandira, after Vallabha Dhupa Bandhara Lokanatha is dressed in new clothes and carried to the Lokanatha temple for Hari Hara Bheta ("Hari meets Hara"). Devotees fast and remain awake the whole night, chanting and reading *shastra* and performing *puja*. Many devotees also observe a *nirjala upavasa*, in which they do not even drink water (some even avoid to swallow their own saliva, and spit it out instead).

The greatest celebration in Puri is in the Lokanatha mandira, considered the most important Shiva temple here. Celebrations start on Ekadasi with the special cleaning of the *kua* (well) in the Garbha griha of the temple, where the Linga remains immersed all year round.

The well is 15 feet deep and full of water coming from the Linga itself. The cleaning continues until Chaturdasi, the *jagran* day celebrating the appearance of Shiva Mahadeva.

On the morning of Chaturdasi after Sakala dhupa the Linga is offered a special worship and a Rudra Abhisheka is performed. The top of the Linga is covered with a paste made with *jaiphala*, *karpura*, *chandana* and *bhang*, that blocks the water flow. The water will start flowing again after Hari-Hara betha, at the end of the *jagran* day around 2 to 4 am of Amavasya. Then the Mahadipa is lighted at the top of the temple, Bandhara Lokanatha returns to the Jagannatha temple (Sri Mandira) carrying some money offering for Jagannatha as a gift to ask forgiveness for having left the temple without informing Jagannatha first.

During the *jagran* night a great number of devotees (around 200 or 300 thousand people) assemble at the Lokanatha Mandira to keep vigil, constantly keeping their *ghi* lamps burning, singing bhajans and kirtans. There is also a long queue for Darshana. When the Mahadipa is lighted, they offer *pranama* and go home to take food and rest. In Bhubaneswar, Shiva ratri is celebrated in a grand way at Lingaraja Mandira.

Dola Yatra

The festival of Dola Yatra is held from Phalguna sukla Dasami (called Phagu Dasami) till Dola Purnima.

Dasami

After Madhyana Dhupa the Sri Jius are dressed in red clothes to play with colors in the temple with the devotees. Powdered colors are applied to the Deities, then Chandana Lagi is done. Sridevi and Bhudevi are carried to the Dakshina Ghara for Chachiri Vesa. Then exactly like on Vasanta Panchami, Sridevi, Bhudevi and Madana Mohana are carried to the Jagannatha Vallabha Matha for the Benta also called Joudaba Khela.

Benta Shikara or Jau Daba Khela

This festival takes place from Ekadasi to Trayodasi. On Ekadasi the Deities travel only after Dola Govinda is offered Ekadasi Bhoga at the Jaya Vijaya Dvara.

Agni Utsava

This festival is observed on Phalguna sukla Chaturdasi. After Madhyana Dhupa, Mailama and Chandana Lagi, Sridevi and Bhudevi travel to the Dakshina Ghara for Chachiri Vesa. Then the Pushpalakas dress the Sri Jius in Chachiri Vesa. After Chachiri Bhoga and Dakshina Ghara Bhoga are offered, Sridevi, Bhudevi and Dola Govinda are carried to the Ratna simhasana where the Mudirasta performs the Prasada Lagi and the Panda offers the *pancha upachara* Bhoga. Then Chandana Lagi is done. Also *vandapana* is done at the three Badas. The Mudirasta offers Jhimiri Paghu, standing below the Ratna simhasana. Then Chandana Phagu is used to anoint the Sri Anga, and Alata Chamara is offered.

Sridevi, Bhudevi and Dola Govinda receive the *ajna mala* and are carried to the Lakshmi shrine, where the Samprada Mahari and Mudirasta play with colour powders in representation of the “playing colors” of the Deities. The Deities are carried to the Dola Vedi in Dola Mandapa Sahi for Agni Utsava, where the Panda conducts a *homa* at the Agni Utsava Ghara, the temporary straw hut built for Holika celebrations. Then Prasada Lagi, Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* are done, and Alata Chamara is offered. Finally the Agni Utsava Ghara is set ablaze and the Deities return to the Sri Mandira.

Govinda Maha Dvadasi

On a Phalguna krishna Dvadasi that falls in a particular astrological position, Puri celebrates Govinda Maha Dvadasi, the day when the Daru Brahman arrived at Chakra Tirtha, in the times of king Indradyumna. The last time was in 1962, next is 2009. Many pilgrims and *sadhus* converge on Puri, and before Mangala arati (in the very early morning, between 4 and 6 am) they take bath in the ocean and/or in the others of the Pancha tirthas, and then go to the temple for Jagannatha Darshana.

Dola Purnima

The famous Dola yatra continues for five days, culminating on Dola Purnima. Every day the Vijaya murtis of Jagannatha go on a palanquin to the Dola Vedi (in Grand Road) in a procession.

The festival includes a dramatization with two parties of 6 members each, telling stories, reciting *slokas*, singing and acting. The leader actor is called Gayaka.

On Purnima after Abakasha and Chandana Lagi the Deities are dressed in new Boirani saris. In the meantime Roshā Homa, Surya Puja and Dvarapala Puja are completed. Khai Kora Bhoga is brought inside and Dola Govinda arrives. Bhoga is offered with *pancha upachara* rituals, then Dola Govinda and Sridevi Bhudevi receive the *ajna mala*, circumambulate the Ratna simhasana seven times and then go to sit on a cot at the Nabhi Kata Mandapa, where Mahasana is done. The Deities are dressed with Pata sari provided by the Raghava Das Matha. Then Prasada Lagi is done, Sitala Bhoga is offered with *pancha upachara* rituals and *vandapana* is done. The Deities sit in a Vimana and travel seven times around the temple, then proceed to the Dola Vedi and circumambulate it seven times. Again they go around the Dola swing seven times and finally sit on the swing. Here Sakala Dhupa, Madhyana Dhupa and Sandhya Dhupa are offered with *sodasha upachara* rituals, and the Mudirasta circumambulates the Dola Bedi seven times. They are offered *phagu* (colored powders). The Deities are also decorated with the Raja vesha, with *pata* silk dress and many gold ornaments). After Prasada Lagi and *vandapana*, the Deities again circumambulate the swing and the Dola Vedi seven times before returning to the temple. Again They circumambulate the temple seven times and finally stop at Sarasvati's shrine, where Sitala Bhoga is offered and *vandapana* is done. Then they are taken to the Bhandara Ghara where *vandapana* and Jalalagi is performed. After Sridevi, Bhudevi and Dola Govinda leave for their procession, the Pushpalakas do the Raja Vesa of the Sri Jius. All Gaudiya Mathas celebrate the day as Gaura Purnima, the appearance day of Sri Chaitanya, and the next day as the feast organized by Jagannatha Mishra (Sri Chaitanya's father).

Holi

For this festival three *ajna malas* are offered during Madhyana Dhupa. After the Dhupa and Dakshina Ghara Bhoga, Dola Govinds is carried inside. Sridevi, Bhudevi and Madana Mohana receive the *ajna malas*, are carried to the Jhulana Mandapa and sit on a Vimana. Then They are carried to the Narendra Sarovara, where Prasada Lagi, Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* are performed before the Deities return to Their respective usual places.

Chaitra Gundicha

This festival is observed on Chaitra sukla Sasthi. After Sandhya Dhupa the Deity of Surya is given a Mahasana and dressed in the Surya shrine, then He is offered a special rice pudding, pancakes and *laddus*. This Bhoga is offered with *pancha upachara*.

Ashoka Ashtami

This festival is observed on Chaitra sukla Ashtami. After Sakala Dhupa, Bhandara Lokanatha is taken to Ishanesvara's shrine, where He is given a special garland that was first offered to Ishanesvara. Then Lokanatha is then carried to the Jagannatha Vallabha Matha, where Bhoga *vandapana* and Ashoka Manohi take place before He returns to the temple. This Lokanatha Ratha yatra is the equivalent of the Lingaraj Ratha yatra in Bhubanesvara and celebrates Lord Shiva's marriage.

In Sri Mandira, this day is observed as Radha charana Darshana as on Ola Navami.

Rama Navami Yatra

The festival of the appearance day of Sri Ramachandra starts with Jeuda Bhoga on the day before Rama Navami. After Sandhya Dhupa, Jeuda Bhoga is brought in and the Mudirasta does the Prasada Lagi. Then Bhoga Manohi is offered with *pancha upachara puja*. Then the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta do the *vandapana* at the three Badas. *Vandapana* is done for a longer period at Mahaprabhu Bada.

The Rama Janma celebration is observed on Chaitra sukla Navami. On this day after Madhyana dhupa, the Jaya Vijaya dvara is closed. The Sudu Suara cleans the area in front of the Bhandara Ghara, then the Panda draws the Janma Mandala and Madhyana Dhupa and Dakshina Ghara Bhoga are offered. Next the Deity of Rama (Raghunatha) is carried to the Ratna simhasana, where the Mudirasta offers Dhandi Prasada. Raghunath receives the *ajna mala* and sits on the *mandala*. Two Mahajanas dress as Dasharatha and Kaushalya and the birth rituals take place by covering the Deity with a Khandua.

Then Karpura Arati and *vandapana* are offered and the Mahasuara offers Gandusa Masala and milk. The Dasa Samskara for Raghunatha are celebrated, up to the thread ceremony. Finally Sitala Bhoga is offered and the Mahasuaras offer Charu at the Jaya Vijaya Dvara.

The Deities wear the dress called Rama raja vesha. The Raghunatha vesha used to be offered, with the Deities dressed as Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, with bow and arrows, and figures of Hanuman and monkeys made of *sola*, but the offering has been discontinued. On this day, and for 7 to 9 days, functions are held in various Sahis (streets of Puri), called Sahi yatra, with dramatic representations of Rama lila.

Yajna Raksha

The celebrations for the birth of Sri Ramachandra are followed by the re-enactment of some of His most famous *lilas*. The festival of Yajna Raksha revisits the episode where Sri Rama and His younger brother Lakshmana went with Vishvamitra to protect the Yajna (sacred ceremony) that Vishvamitra was performing, and that had been disturbed by some demoniac beings. The ceremony is observed on Chaitra sukla Dasami. After Sandhya Dhupa and Dakshina Ghara Bhoga, the Deities of Rama and Lakshmana are carried to the Ratna simhasana where They receive the *ajna mala*, then They go in a procession to the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens. The people of Harachandi Sahi also come on a procession (Jani Yatra), and finally the Deities return to the Dakshina Ghara inside Sri Mandira.

Sita Vivaha

The re-enactment of Sita's marriages is held on Chaitra sukla Ekadasi. Three *ajna malas* are offered to the Sri Jius during Sandhya Arati. After Sandhya Dhupa the Deities of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita are carried from the Dashina Ghara and after receiving the *ajna mala* They go to the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens. Here people from Harachandi Sahi arrive on a Jani Yatra procession, with one man dressed as Parashurama to re-enact the episode of the *Ramayana* when, after breaking the Shiva Dhanu in the Svayamvara of princess Sita, Sri Ramachandra is confronted by Parashurama who dares Him to handle Vishnu's bow. At that time, according to the *Ramayana*, Parashurama surrendered his powers to Sri Rama and retired. After this celebration the Deities return to the temple.

Vanavasa Kandarpa

The re-enactment of the period when Sri Rama, Sita and Lakshmana resided in the forest is observed on Chaitra sukla Dvadasi. Three *ajna malas* are offered to the Sri Jius during Sandhya Arati. After Sandhya Dhupa the Deities of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana are carried in from the Dashina Ghara and after receiving the *ajna malas* They are carried to the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens. Here people from Markandesvara Sahi enact the Vanavasa Lila. Finally Sitala Bhoga and *vandapana* are offered, and the Deities return to the Dakshina Ghara. After Chandana Lagi, a Kandarpa Patti (painting of Kamadeva) is worshiped. Mahasana is done to this Pati and Bhoga *vandapana* is offered.

Damanaka or Dayana Chori

This festival is observed on Chaitra sukla *trayodasi*. After Madhyana Dhupa, Rama Krishna are carried in, receive the *ajna mala* and go to sit in the palanquin waiting for Them near the Kalpa Bata, where the Kandarpa Patti (of which *adhivasa* was done the previous day) is already waiting.

The palanquin is carried to the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens with the Kandarpa Patti kept in front. At the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens a Homa is performed, then Bhoga is arranged and after the Prasada Lagi the Panda does the *pancha upachara puja* for the Bhoga. *Vandapana* is done and Alata Chamara is offered. The Najara (Mahanta) of the Jagannatha Vallabha Matha, accompanied by the Tadau Karana and the Deula Karana light a torch and visit the Dayana garden, collect six small Dayana plants and settle them near the temple of Jagannatha Vallabha Mahavira, inside the gardens. After the Bhoga offering, the Mahajanas quietly carry Rama Krishna to the six Dayana plants. Here, the Bhittarcha Mohapatra touches two plants to the Deities and brings the other four plants, covered with a Khandua, and places them in the palanquin. Then the Deities return to the Sri Mandira. Here, at the Bhoga Mandapa, a Chandua is tied while the Deities are returning to the Sri Mandira.

The Mahajanas remove the Dayana plants at the Garuda Dvara, then Bada Shringara Bhoga is offered. Madana Mohana, Sridevi and Bhudevi receive the *ajna mala* and are carried to the Bhoga Mandapa.

Three Dayana plants are tied to the hands of Madana Mohana, Sridevi and Bhudevi, then they are placed in three silver bowls on a previously drawn Mandala. The bowls are covered with Chemedi Patani.

Chandana and flowers are offered, then Sitala Bhoga is carried in and the Bhoga Mandapa is closed. The Lenka stands guard at the Bhoga Mandapa; finally Vallabha Bada Shringara is offered and Pahuda Arati is done.

Damanaka Lagi and Maya Mruga

This festival is observed on Chaitra sukla Chaturdasi. After Sakala Dhupa, Mahasnana and Chandana Lagi are performed. New clothes are used to dress the Sri Jius. Then the Panda, Pati and Mudirasta go to the Bhoga Mandapa. Three Pushpalakas hold the three silver bowls containing the Dayana plants. Madana Mohana, Sridevi and Bhudevi circumambulate the temple three times, and then are carried to the Ratna simhasana. The six Dayana plants are offered at the three Badas (two to each). Then Madhyana Dhupa is brought in, Prasada Lagi is done and then Madhyana

Dhupa is offered with *sodasha upachara*. After this, *vandapana* is done and the Dayana plants are removed from the Sri Anga and sent to the Sri Nahara. After Sandhya Dhupa, Rama Lakshmana receive the *ajna mala* and are carried to the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens, where people from Kundehibenta Sahi enact the Maya Mriga lila (the episode where the *rakshasa* Maricha takes the shape of a golden deer to distract Sri Rama so that Ravana can kidnap Sita more easily). Finally the Deities return to the Sri Mandira.

Lanka Podi

On Chaitra Purnima the devotees celebrate the enactment of this episode of Rama lila, in which Hanuman raided Lanka and set fire to the city. After Sandhya Dhupa, the Deities of Rama-Lakshmana receive the *ajna mala* and are carried in procession to the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens, where people from Dola Mandapa Sahi enact Lanka Podi (“burning of Lanka”); finally the Deities return to the Sri Mandira.

Setu Bandha

Vaisakha krishna Pratipada celebrates the enactment of this episode of Rama-lila, in which Sri Ramachandra and His army of Vanaras built the floating bridge to Lanka (Rama Setu). After Sandhya Dhupa, Rama and Lakshmana receive the *ajna mala* and are carried in procession to the Jagannatha Vallabha garden, where people from Bali Sahi re-enact Setu Bandha Lila, after which the Deities return to the Sri Mandira.

Ravana Baddha

The enactment of this episode of Rama-lila, in which the demoniac king Ravana is defeated and killed, is celebrated on Vaisakha krishna Dvitiya. After Sandhya Dhupa, one man from Bali Sahi is dressed as Ravana and stands near the Jagamohana Kotha. After receiving the *ajna mala* he visits various Sahis. After Sandhya Dhupa, Rama Lakshmana receive the *ajna mala* and are carried to the Jagannatha Vallabha garden, where people from Bali Sahi re-enact the killing of Ravana. Finally the Deities return to the Sri Mandira.

Rama Abhisekha

The celebration of the coronation of Sri Rama as King of Ayodhya falls under the constellation of Pushya Nakshatra. This ceremony celebrates the episode in which Bharata and Satrugna, the two brothers of Sri Ramachandra who stayed back in Ayodhya to take care of the kingdom while Sri Rama traveled in exile, welcomed Sri Rama to His rightful place as the King of Ayodhya. During the entire period of Rama’s exile, Bharata and Satrugna had never claimed the throne for themselves, but had installed Sri Rama’s shoes on the throne, and presented themselves merely as His servants and representatives. By presenting Sri Rama with His shoes, Bharata and Satrugna were re-uniting the symbol of kingship with the person of the King.

On this day, Jagannatha celebrates His Tara Suddhi (purification or propitiation of the birth star). After Sandhya Arati and Dakshina Ghara Bhoga the Deities of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman are carried to the Ratna simhasana and after receiving the *ajna mala* They are quietly carried to the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens. Here, two men from Gaudabada Sahi dress as Bharata and Shatrughna and arrive after receiving the Paduka (Sri Rama’s shoes as a symbol of their service to Him) from the temple Bhandara. Mahasnana is offered to Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman.

Then Abhisekha Bhoga is brought in, the Mudirasta does the Prasada Lagi, the Puja Panda offers the Bhoga with *pancha upachara* and *vandapana* is done. Finally the Deities return to the Sri Mandira.

Mahavishubha Sankranti (Pana Sankranti)

This festival is observed as the first day of the Oriya new year. After Sakala Dhupa, the Deity of Bhandara ghara Hanuman receives the *ajna mala*, visits the four Mahaviras guarding the four gates and goes to the Barabhai Mahavira, where small portions of the *ajna mala* are presented. Then Hanuman travels to the Jagannatha Vallabha Mahavira temple and the Dariya Mahavira temple, where some more portions of the *ajna mala* are presented. Hanuman returns to the Jagannatha Vallabha garden, where Bhoga *vandapana* is done. Then he returns to the Sri Mandira. While Hanuman leaves for His tour, Bhoga Mandapa and Mailama are offered and new clothes are used to dress the Deities. Chandana Lagi is done. Then Madhyana Dhupa is brought inside, the Mudirasta does the Prasada Lagi and the Bhoga is offered using *sodasha upachara* rituals. A Panda brings a handful of cooked rice and offers Diga Bali around the temple. After the Bhoga offering, *vandapana* is done. Other major festivals on this day are held at the Hanuman temple in the Jagannatha Vallabha garden, and at all other Hanuman temples.

Nava Kalevara

The meaning of “Nava Kalevara” is “new body”. The main Deities on the Ratna simhasana, Jagannatha. Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshana, are made of neem wood, a special type of wood with antiseptic and other medicinal properties and that cannot be easily destroyed by insects.

However, according to the *Silpa sastra* the wooden Deities need to be renewed from time to time, and this is done cyclically on a very special ritual that celebrates a human-like event of “death and rebirth” for Jagannatha.

The Nava Kalevara (“new body”) celebration takes place every 12 to 19 years, according to the astrological calculation. The astrologers must find a year with two full moons in the month of Asadha (*yoda asadha* or “double asadha”), which is called Adi Purushottama masa.

The last Navakalevara ceremonies were held in 1714, 1733, 1744, 1752, 1771, 1790, 1809, 1828, 1836, 1853, 1863, 1893, 1912, 1931, 1950, 1969, 1977, and 1996.

According to the *Suta Samhita*:

*yada bhavati cha sarho maso' yam tu malimluchah
tada bhavet prabhor guhyo-lila goloka-sambhavah*

“Among the months the Purushottama masa or Mala masa is the most important. Among the Purushottama masas, the Asadha Purushottama masa is also known as Guhya Purushottama masa, a very secret month in which Jagannatha exhibits His Goloka lila.”

The particular year in which there are two Asadha months is the year of the Nava Kalevara. On the day of Dasahara during the Vasanti Durga puja, the day after Rama Navami the Pokharia (inner sanctum) is cleaned after Madhyana Dhupa, then at an auspicious moment all the Daitas and Pati Mahapatras get together along with the Badagrahis (the four Sevakas who are responsible for the worship of the four Badas or “the four main groups of Deities”) in front of Jagannatha at the Ratna simhasana.

The Pati Mahapatra ascends the Ratna simhasana and gets the *ajna-mala* from Bada Thakura, then offers it to the Badagrahi. He then goes to Subhadra and Jagannatha and does the same thing, and holding the *ajna-mala* from Sudarshana he descends the Ratna simhasana among the sounds of the bugles (long trumpets).

The Pati Mahapatra leads the way with the *ajna-mala* from Sudarshana, followed by the Badagrahis holding the *ajna-malas* from Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannatha, and then by the Sabara Sevakas (Daitas) walking to the Anabasara pindi. The main *archaka* (priest) of Jagannatha, the Bhitara parikshaka, ties one of Jagannatha’s *khandua* (a typical Odissi sari that was used by Jagannatha) to the head of each of the Pati Mahapatra and the Badagrahis, and gives them some Mahaprasada as a symbol of permission from Jagannatha to perform this special service.

They all go to the Jaya Vijaya dvāra, where the sari-tying ceremony takes place for the Deula karana, Padiya karana, Lenka, Behera, Khuntia and Vishvakarma. Then they are officially requested to take up their respective tasks, and to the sound of the *bira kahalis* (a long bugle) they walk to the gate of the King's palace (Sri Nahara). There the chief of the Daitas called the Visvavasu accepts a sacred betel nut from the Raja Guru. The Raja Guru directs the King to perform the *acharya varana* ceremony to appoint the Acharya for the *vanajaga yatra* (the forest journey).

After obtaining permission, they walk to the Jagannatha vallabha gardens, where they place the *ajna-malas* on a special platform. They spend the day and the night there, and on the night of the next day they carry the *ajna-mala* towards the temple of Goddess Mangala at Kakatpur, situated on the banks of the river Prachi. The Lenka Sevaka holds a *chakra danda* made of silver, leading the way. Traveling on foot, they first reach the Deuli Matha, situated on the bank of the river Prachi.

The next day, the main Acharya of Goddess Mangala's temple is informed of the imminent arrival of the *vanajaga yatri*s; as soon as he gets the news he makes arrangements to receive them with great pomp and takes them into the temple. By this time, the Sakala Dhupa of Mother Mangala has been completed. The Lenka Sevaka places the *chakra danda* on a pedestal inside the temple, and the main Acharyas start reciting the *Chandi patha* in the Jagamohana of the temple as the Sevakas of the Goddess conduct the *upachara puja* and offer the Mahaprasada that has been brought for Her along with the flower garlands, in the presence of the Daitas and the Pati Mahapatras.

With the blessing of Goddess Mangalas, the Daitas and the Acharyas return to the Deuli Matha where they personally cook and eat *havishyanna*. After lunch they return to the Maha Mangala temple, where they solemnly deliver a letter to Goddess Maha Mangala asking for guidance in their search. Finally they sit inside the temple, and settle there for the night. At midnight the Goddess comes to them in a dream and gives directions.

The next morning the party splits into four groups consisting of equal number of Daitas, Acharyas, Visvakarmas and Karanas; each group goes to search for one particular tree in the indicated area.

During the entire period all the members of the groups are required to keep a clean mind and only eat *havishyanna* (a simple rice and *dal* dish cooked without salt, spices or oil).

Maha Daru Nirnaya

Maha Daru Nirnaya means "verification of Maha Daru". The following verse lists the particular signs that characterize the special neem trees destined to be carved into the Deities.

*darunam sruyatamatra tad ekadasa-lakshanam daru-nirnaya-belayam yatpramanam bhavishyati
prathamam jnayatametana nischitam daru-sannidhau smasanam vartate kinchit yadeva tada-duratah*

The Daitas must verify the eleven signs. They must visualize a flag above the chosen tree; by following the flag they reach the indicated tree.

The eleven signs refer to:

1. location
2. color
3. any living beings residing nearby
4. branches
5. snakes as protectors
6. marks of divine weapons
7. presence of an anthill
8. presence of a Tulasi plant
9. evidence of previous worship conducted there
10. divine sounds in the surrounding area
11. body sensation felt by the Daitas on seeing the tree

1. Location

bhaved daru puranam tat tasya punastvavasthitih vyavaharat vahirbhute grama-prante naditate na vajrapatopahatam na cha svapada-darshitam nanavrikshair mritangair va yuktam daru prasashyate
The tree should be a very old neem tree. It should be on the outskirts of a village, near a body of naturally flowing water and near a crematorium. No wild animals must have nested in it and no other tree should grow very near to it. It must not have been struck by lightning, burned by a forest fire or submerged in flood water.

2. Color

yad-daru balabhadrasya bhavet-tat-sukla-varnakam jagannathasya devasya ramaniyaka-daru tat syadishat krishna-varnadyam chatuh-shaka samanvitam sudarshanasya yad-daru bhavedarakta-varnakam saralancha sudhiringancha loka-lochana-sundaram
Balabhadra's Daru must be whitish in color, Sudarshana's reddish, Subhadra's golden yellow, and Jagannatha's blackish.

3. Any living beings residing nearby

na syat kanana-jantunamavasah pakshinam tatha tasmin daruni divye tu tritiyam lakshanam tvidam
On that Maha Daru Vriksha, no animal or bird would have ever lived.

4. Branches

The branches of the tree for Sudarshana must be upright and straight. Balabhadra's tree must have seven or more branches, Subhadra's tree must have three main branches, and Jagannatha's tree there must be five branches.

5. Snakes as protectors

bhayankaro vaset kashmid vishakto bhujago mahan
As soon as the *vanayaga yatri*s arrive at the spot, they must see a King Cobra snake protecting the tree.

6. Marks of divine weapons

jagannathasya daru sya-sankha chakradilanchitam chinnitam balabhadrasya halena mushalena cha devyah punah subhadrayah padmachinna-samanvitam
The marks of the divine weapons are Shankha and Chakra for Jagannatha, Hala and Mushala for Balabhadra, Padma for Subhadra and Chakra for Sudarshana.

7. Presence of an anthill

sya-daru-sannidhau nunam valmikancha puratanam pipilika-namavasah caturtham lakshanam tvidam
There must be an anthill filled with ants near the tree.

8. Presence of a Tulasi plant

There must be a black Tulasi plant close to the tree.

9. Evidence of previous worship conducted there

darshanam tasya vrikshasya kaschidamsah kadachana utharadi-bhiruchinno na syat kenapi karhicit
There must be evidence of previous worship on the tree (such as *sindhur* powder, turmeric traces etc). None of the branches must be broken.

10. Divine sounds in the surrounding area

ashtamau tu prayanat prak devadaru-samipatah karnatithir bhaved durat sankha kahali-nisvanah
The *vanayaga yatri*s must hear divine sounds of *shankha* and *kahali* (bugles).

11. Body sensation felt by the Daitas on seeing the tree

*durad-darshana-matrena svanga-sphurtir-bhavishyati
bhaktanam dayitanam vai navamam kathitam buddhaih*

As soon as the Daitas get near the tree, they will feel the hair on their bodies stand on end. After the Daru is recognized, the *chakra danda* who had been carried by the Lenka Sevaka is placed on the trunk of each tree and the Acharya draws the figure of one particular Deity on the trunk of each tree. All the members of the party circumambulate the tree and recite the 15th chapter of the *Gita*, entitled Purushottama yoga. Then they prepare a makeshift accommodation where the Daitas reside in complete purity of mind and body.

Vaidika karma

*tasyam shodhita-bhumau te karanah karma-charinah
kunda-mandapa-salanam kuryu nirmanam uttamam*

A *yajna sala*, a *mandapa* and a pond are prepared near the tree, a small and completely enclosed room is built towards the north of the *yajna-sala* between the eastern and western sides where the Sevakas do the *ankura-ropana* (planting the *yajna* trees). Then they perform the *yajna* for three days, invoking the Vaishnava Agni. The Nava Shaktis and other Devas are also invoked and 1008 *ahutis* are performed with the Patala Nrisimha mantra. Then *ahuti* is given to Balabhadra with the 12 syllable Vasudeva mantra, to Subhadra with the 11 syllable Bhubanesvari mantra, to Jagannatha with the 8 syllable Gopala mantra and to Sudarshana with the Chakra raja mantra.

Balabhadra is worshiped with the *Purusha sukta*, Subhadra with the *Sri sukta*, Jagannatha with the *Narayana sukta*, and Sudarshana with the *Pavamana sukta*. Then Nrisimha is worshiped with the 1 syllable mantra, and the purification of the hall is done with the Mushala Nrisimha mantra. The other rituals include the *pancha-devata puja*, the *abhyudayika sraddha sankalpa patha* (reciting the purpose and pacification of the energies), the *ashtadasa-matrugana-puja* (the worship of the 18 Mothers), the *vasordhara pradhana*, the *acharyadi varana karma*, *surya puja*, etc. These ceremonies are conducted exclusively by the Acharyas appointed by the King to this purpose. The *homa* is performed to Sudarshana first, and then separate *homas* are done for Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannatha. After the *yajna*, the tree is cut.

pathair vividha-suktanam saman tad-grama-vasibhih vilokya sobhanam kalam kartavyam daru-kartanam

Before the Daru chedana (felling of the tree) begins, water and milk are offered to the King Cobra, then the trees are first touched with a golden axe, then a silver axe and then an iron axe. The Pati Mahapatras conduct the cutting ceremony by engaging the Visvakarmas. Until the tree falls to the ground, the *brahmanas* and Daitas are supposed to fast; after the tree is felled, they can eat *havisyanna*.

Daru yatra

*uttara dvara-margena netabhyam daru yatnatah yena kena prakarena sri-snana-purnima-vadhi
karyam kaivalya-vaikunthe darunam rakshanam subham*

After the tree is felled, a cart (10 *hasta* long) with 4 wheels is constructed by using the strong wood of a nearby jackfruit, kendu or tamarind tree, then the cart is consecrated. The Sevakas lift the Daru and places it on the cart; the remnants of the tree are buried in that same spot.

The cart returns to Puri. As soon as the search party reaches the town outskirts, they are received by a procession that takes them back to the temple through the way of Alama Chandi temple, where a secret ritual is done. Walking to the north direction, they enter the Jagannatha temple from the northern gate and the Daru is kept at the Koili Vaikuntha, where the Daitas will conduct daily worship to the Daru. The Daru must reach the temple before Snana Purnima.

Karu sala

nirmatabya karu-sala nyasa-sala tathaiva cha ankura-ropani sala 'bhisekhasya cha mandapah

The important *salas* (yajna halls) in Sri Mandira are the Karu sala, Ankura ropana sala, Nyasa sala, Snana mandapa and Yajna mandapa. Among these, the Karu sala (the place where the Deities will be carved) is the most important. It is built in the northern corner in the Koili Vaikuntha.

During the Snana Purnima festival, when the Deities are having the Maha Abhisheka, simultaneously *abhisheka* is done to the Daru in Koili Vaikuntha, using the Maha jyestha mantras. Then the Visvakarmas start the carving of the Deities inside the Karu sala amidst the sounds of various musical instruments, so that nobody can hear the sound of the carving. The method of carving is very secret and cannot be disclosed. During this time, the Yajna karma is also started. The public is not allowed to enter in the area; only the appointed Acharyas, *homa brahmanas*, Daitas and Pati Mahapatras are allowed to enter. The *puṇahuti* is done on Sankranti, that also falls on the Amavasya.

pratisthayeī dhruvam tesham darunam-ista-manganam parito brahmanam kuryattato brahmotsavo bhavet

In the Anavasara griha, on the Sankranti Amavasya day, the new Deities are placed in front of the old Deities. The eldest and the most devoted Pati Mahapatra conducts the Brahma-sthapana ceremony. For this important and extremely secret ceremony, *krishnaguru*, *chandana*, wild flowers, and 1000 *tulasi* leaves are used. Around midnight, nobody is allowed to remain inside the temple and extra precautionary measures are taken to verify that no one other than the Daitapatis and the Pati Mahapatras are inside the temple. In the entire area of the temple the only light comes from a few lamps, and all the four gates of the temple are sealed.

The particular Pati Mahapatra who is going to move the Brahma is completely covered with *patta* cloth to ensure that no material eyes, bones or flesh ever come in contact with the Brahma padartha. Then he enters the Anavasara pindi and transfers the box containing the Brahma padartha (also known as Indranilamani) to the new Deities. During this time, the Pati Mahapatra remains in a state of trance, completely lost to external consciousness until he comes out. The entire ceremony is accompanied by the sound of conchshells and musical instruments.

nayeyur-uttara-dvara-margena-udvigna-manasah tushnim kaivalya-vaikuntham golokam prakriteh param

After the Brahma is transferred and the Pati Mahapatra comes out of the Anavasara pindi, the Daitapatis carry the old Deities to the Kaivalya Vaikuntha, where four big pits have already been dug under the Salmali tree. Here the Deities are buried, and the whole ceremony is carried out in the dead of the night on the same day, under the direction of the Mother Goddess Sitala Devi. The guardian of this graveyard is Tapasvi Hanuman, and the protectors are Isaneshvara, Pataleshvara, Lokeshvara, and the most important, Vaikuntheshvara.

The next day all the Daitas shave their heads, offer *sraddha* and begin the observation of the 11 days rituals as for the death of a family member. In the meantime, the rituals for the new Deities continue with the Anavasara period. Finally the Deities appear in public, on the Nava yauvana Darshana day (also known as Ubha Amavasya). From this point the regular rituals resume as with the annual anavasara period, and Ratha yatra celebrations follow.

The Sevakas

The temple of Jagannatha employs a huge number of Sevakas (temple servants), Pujakas and cooks, all strictly categorized. A Niyoga is a society or organization that is in charge of performing specific rituals in the temple. Every day thousands of pujaris are actively engaged in the worship, but as the total number of the temple servants is much higher, the chances for direct service in temple are distributed regularly according to the chart system called the Bedha Patra.

The Niyogas

The position of temple servant is strictly hereditary. Each family submit their sons at the proper age, applying to the temple administration for enrollment in the temple service. After some time the application will be posted at all 4 gates of the temple for one month, and if no one raises any objections, the candidate will be examined by the Chatisha Niyoga Mahapatra, under the authority of the Shankaracharya.

Generally, if the boy knows the duties of his service and does not have a bad character or contagious diseases, he is accepted. The initiation ceremony to temple service for *pujakas* is called *sari bandha*, or tying to the head of the boy a *sari* previously used by Jagannatha.

The temple kitchen has 5,000 to 6,000 Suaras (cooks), of whom 150 are present daily.

The **Vamadeva Samhita** (11th chapter) mentions the traditional following list of 11 categories of Sevakas:

1. Raja
2. Pujaka, performs the rituals
3. Brahma, occupies the brahmasana during the yajna karma
4. Charu Hota, prepares and offers the food for the sacred fire of the homa
5. Patra Hota, offers the ghi
6. Acharya
7. Yajnika, performs the fire sacrifice
8. Agni Sharma, supervisor of the fire sacrifice
9. Visvavasu Kulajata Sevaka, the descendents of Visvavasu (Daitas)
10. Vidyapati Kulajata Sevaka, the descendents of Vidyapatis (Patis)
11. Pratihari, temple security guards

Chatisha Niyoga

The traditional list of the organizations of the Sevakas is called Chatisha Niyoga (36 niyogas):

1. Bhitarcha Mahapatra, Talucha Mahapatra, responsible for opening and closing the temple gates
2. Purohita, performs the *homas* and other special rituals
3. Puja Panda, offers the Bhoga
4. Pushpalakas, responsible for the Veshas (dressing the Deities)
5. Badu, arrange materials for the puja
6. Pati Mahapatra, special rituals during Ratha Yatra and Navakalevara like changing of the *brahma* to the new Deities etc
7. Pratihari, temple security guards
8. Mekapa, security guards for the treasure room
9. Suara, cooks
10. Khuntia, the body guards of the Deities
11. Muduli, closing the temple
12. Daita, special rituals during Ratha Yatra and Navakalevara
13. Datta, painting the Deities
14. Karana, accountants and in charge of records
15. Hadapa Nayaka, preparing betel nuts
16. Ghatuari, preparing the sandalwood paste used for Chandana lagi
17. Mahaboi, preparing the sandalwood paste for Snana
18. Pania Apata, collecting the water for the rituals (including the Joganya and Tunya)
19. Bajantri, musicians (playing instruments)
20. Gayani, singer
21. Gita Govinda Sevaka, special singer for *Gita Govinda*
22. Chatara, carry the royal parasol for the Deities
23. Chakra Dihuli, torch-bearers
24. Kumbhara Bisoi, collecting the clay for making earthen pots
25. Suasias, general workers
26. Chunnara, whitewashing the temple
27. Jyotisha, astrologer
28. Vaidya, doctor
29. Sabuta Niyoga, collecting vegetables for cooking
30. Bhindhani, making earthen pots
31. Tirtha Matia, cleaning the temple when someone dies
32. Ojha Maharana, carpenters and wood carvers
33. Chapa Polei, boatmen
34. Asva Hasti Sevaka, in charge of horses and elephants

35. Maha Sethi, washermen
36. Palia Mahara, sweepers

Palia means “presently in charge”, and applies to those who, in all categories of Sevakas, are presently engaged in the service in the temple during a particular “turn” or “shift”. So we have Palia Puja Pandas, Palia Khuntias, Palia Mekapas, Palia Pratiharis etc

Record of Rights for the Niyogas

The list of the Record of Rights of 1952 lists 119 Niyogas or categories of Sevakas, as follows:

1. Gajapati Maharaja: the King of Puri is considered the first servant of Jagannatha; when he is absent from Puri, he is represented by the mudirasta,
2. the two Rajgurus or Paricchas are the preceptors of the King, considered the supervisors; the Bada Pariccha belongs to the Vatsasa gotra and the Sana Pariccha belongs to the Atreya gotra,
3. the Chatisha Niyoga Nayaka is the Pattajoshi Mahapatra, the general manager of the temple, whose approval is required for acceptance of candidates to temple service, and who can report Sevakas if found negligent.
4. the Bhitara Mahapatra, is always present at the opening and closing of the temple and checks the purity of the bhoga to be offered,
5. the Taliccha Mahapatra, who personally puts the seals,
6. Mudrahasta or Mudhirastha, the representative of the King in his absence,
7. Deula Purohita, perform the fire sacrifice and oversees the worship of the smaller shrines,
8. Puja Panda, the direct worshipers of the Deities.

All the Puja Pandas are expected to follow very strict purity regulations in their private lives besides their temple duty; they are never suppose to eat outside (like in restaurants or in other people’s houses), rather they bring home Mahaprasada for themselves and their family. In case the share of Mahaprasada they receive in exchange of their service is not sufficient for the family maintenance, the wife/mother is supposed to cook the food following very strict cleanliness rules. When they go to the temple for their service, they wear a special borderless *dhota* and *uttariya* called *palia makuta*, without any shirt or underwear, they remove watches and eyeglasses; only a little sandalwood paste on the forehead (with the vertical *tilaka*) and a *tulasi* necklace are permitted. If he is touched by a dog or some unclean person (even by their shadows), he has to return home and take bath again and change clothes. He must always be clean shaved (no moustache allowed, although mustache can be grown together with beard) and cut fingernails short. Their hair is tied on the back in a bun. Inside the temple he cannot sit on a straw mat but simply on the floor, and if it is raining on his service day, he can carry only a traditional palm leaf umbrella to the temple.

9. Bada Panda; they are the authorities for the Puja Pandas.

Those who work as pilgrim guides are traditionally known as Dhulias, and they not necessarily temple Sevakas. These Dhulias sometimes travel to distant parts of India to invite people to Puri and they keep a family register of the pilgrims they have cared for (*Yatri khata*). They are supposed to help pilgrims find accommodation in Puri, provide *mahaprasadam*, answer spiritual questions on the temple, and take good care of pilgrims in general,

10. Pushpalaka or Singharis, they dress and decorate the Deities,
11. Mahajana, take care of the representative Deities of Jagannatha, the *vijaya pratima* or *utsava vighras*, the maller metal Deities who go around for festivals.
12. Mudra, Mudirasta, or Pata Siropa Nayak, or temple executive
13. Khuntia, guard the Deities except for the period from Snana Purnima to Niladri Vijaya and during Navakalevara (when their work is done by Daitapatis)
 - Palia Kunthia, in charge of flowers and flower decorations for the Deities, take offerings from devotees and present them to the Deities, and do any other service instead of the other Kunthias,

- Behera Kunthia, during Ratha yatra they go to the King's palace to invite him for the sweeping of the chariots, lead the procession and lead the king around the Rathas,
 - Billei Jaga Kunthia, they guard the doors of the internal *mandapas* so that no cats enter while the bhoga is offered; if any cat gets in, the Bhoga is ruined and the whole offering has to be prepared again from scrap,
 - Godabharika Kunthia, they move the big bench used by the Singhari or Pushpalaka to stand for decorating the Deities on the Simhasana,
 - Rukmini Harana Kunthia, one of them plays the part of Krishna during the ceremony of the marriage of Krishna and Rukmini
 - Chamu Khuntia is the Sevaka for the King, he addresses the Deities calling Them, "*manima*"
 - Sri Khuntia is the Sevaka for Mahalakshmi
- The Mekapa, in charge of store and supplying various things from the store (including the *puja* utensils)
14. Bhandara Mekapa, in charge of the treasury room of the temple, called Bhandara Ghara, containing all the gold ornaments and jewels belonging to the Deities,
 15. Palia Mekhapa, substitute Mekhapa
 16. Akhanda Mekhapa, keep the *akhanda dipa* (eternal lamp) burning for 24 hours a day, without interruption. All other lamps are lit from this one, which is besides Lord Jagannatha on the Ratna simhasana,
 17. Changada Mekhapa, in charge of the Deities' clothes, he brings and returns them to a big bamboo basket called *changada* in the store room; he can sell used cloth of Lord Jagannatha to devotees,
 18. Khataseja Mekhapa, in charge of the beds
 19. Pratihari: door guards, who watch the devotees coming and enforce discipline, now helped by policemen (Jagannatha Temple Police or JTP); they also go to the kitchen and call for the food offering to be brought to the Deities
 - the Asthana Pratihari is in charge of *asanas* and the Kalahata Dvara
 - the Paraba Yatra Pratihari watches the representative Deities when They are coming out from the temple,
 - the Badadvara Pratihari is in charge of the internal doors,
 - the Khurijaga Pratihari keeps the time schedule,
 - the Chamudvara Pratihari is in charge of the temple front door,
 - the Duarghara Pratihari is in charge of other temple doors,
- The Gochikars help the Pratiharis in their service and guard the kitchen doors.
20. Daita or Daitapati, they perform special service during Navakalevara and from Snana Purnima to Niladri Vijaya; they carry the Deities from Ratna simhasana to Ratha and inside Gundicha. They have a great intimacy with Jagannatha □ lean against Him, sleep with Him, carry Him, act as His bodyguards and observe the family rituals as clan brothers of Jagannatha.
 21. Patimahapatras, descendents of Vidyapati specifically from the Kaundinya gotra; they change the *brahma* to the new Deities at Navakalevara.
- The Badus collect and prepare the materials for *puja*:
22. Patri Badu, check to see that all utensils are ready for *puja* throughout the day,
 23. Gara Badu, bring water from the temple well for *puja*,
 24. Suar Badu, wash all utensils needed for *puja*, like conchshell, water containers, *thali* before each *puja*,
 25. Khuri Nayaka, keeps track of time for the rituals
 26. Mukha Pakala, cleans the face of the Deities after They have taken food
 27. Ghatuari, prepares *chandana*, or sandalwood paste,
 28. Gochi Kara, collect flowers for puja
 29. Suna Gosvami, collect water from the Suna kua
 30. Muduli, also called Talucchha Mahapatra. He seals the temple doors at night after the Deities have been put to rest; he also checks the purity of the kitchen, and verifies the number of the *puja* utensils after puja (to prevent stealing of utensils),
 31. Alati Balita Sevaka, prepare the cotton wicks for the lamps (*dipas*)
 32. Purana Panda, they recite various scriptures like *Puranas* inside the temple every day, especially in the evenings,
 33. Datta Mahapatra, or Banaka Lagi, paint the Deities

34. Luga Dua or Maha Sethi, also called Pani Kunda Sevaka, washes clothes,
 35. Vallabha Joganya, arrange for the Vallabha Bhoga offerings
 36. Vimana Badu, carry the *vimana* palanquin
 37. Anasara Sudu Suar and Sudasuar, prepare the offerings during the Anavasara period,
 38. Hadapa Nayaka, prepare the betel offering (called *bidiya*)
 39. Bidiya Joganya, bring the betel *bidiya* for the offering
 40. Khatuli Sevaka, in charge of the small *asanas* for the Deities,
 41. Asthana Pratihari, guards the *asanas*
 42. Kotha Bhoga Joganya, arranges for the Kotha Bhoga offerings
 43. Pradhani, call the Puja Pandas and distributes *prasada* after *puja*
 44. Paikha, security guards for the entire temple
 45. Lenka, carriers of Sudarshana during various rituals
 46. Suara Niyoga Nayaka, head of the Suara Niyoga
- The Mahasuaras and suaras are all engaged in cooking; besides the basic cooking activity, they also prepare bhoga and place it for offering according to this subdivision:
47. Suar Niyog and Mahasuara, the cooks and the head cook in the temple kitchen,
 48. Jagya Mahasuara, supervises the cooked food
 49. Bada Suara, Thali, Turna (or Tunya), and Amalu Suara, arrange the plates for the offering
 50. Patri Badu, arranges the paraphernalia for the *puja*
 51. Amalu Tola or Purakharadi, remove the main plates after the offering,
 52. Tola Badu, remove the offered water
 53. Rosa Paika, security guard for the kitchen
 54. Bahara Deuli Suara, cook for the Deities of the smaller shrines
 55. Bahara Deula Joganya, bring the offerings for the Deities of the smaller shrines
 56. Rosha Dhopa Khalia, clean the kitchen, Angarua, removes the ashes from the cooking fires, Gobara Pania, brings the cow dung for purification, Rakatia, removes the vegetable peels etc
 57. Handi Joganya, Tola Bati, arrange the pots for cooking
 58. Birimunda Samartha, arrange for the black lentils (called *urad dal* or *biri*)
 59. Khotabhoga Pania, bring the water for the Khota Bhoga
 60. Paniki Potta, cuts the vegetables
 61. Nikapa and Gandhana Nikapa, assistants
 62. Biri Buha, carry the sacks of black lentils
 63. Dauri Bola, prepare the ropes (now discontinued)
 64. Chunnara, Sevakas of Garuda, they also white wash the temple; they tie the flags and place the Ekadasi Mahadipa and the flag on top the temple dome, which requires a climbing of over 300 steps at the height of over 215 feet above the ground. Until the flag is set up, no food can be offered. Today only one family is doing the job, the Kunja Mahapatras. On Deva Dipavali, the festival of lights in the temple (which is different from the general Dipavali observed in the homes), this family decorates the whole top of the dome with small lamps, and supervises the decoration with lamps of the other parts of the temple.
 65. Sabata Nijoga, temple cleaners
 66. Pania Pata, arrange the water for the offerings and clean the utensils
 67. Mandani, draw the *mandalas*
 68. Chaka Apasara, arrange the cushions for the Deities
 69. Mulia Suasia, build the chamundia canopies
 70. Binakara, play the *vina* (now discontinued)
 71. Darpania, arrange the mirrors
 72. Khota Suasia, arrange the Khota Bhoga
 73. Mahaboi, carriers of Mahaprasada
 74. Gita Govinda Sevaka, female Sevikas (Maharis) who sing the Gita Govinda (now discontinued)
 75. Bhitara Gauni, female Sevikas (Maharis) who sing inside the Pokharia (Garbha Griha)
 76. Sampradani Niyoga, female Sevikas (Maharis) who perform various other rituals (now discontinued)

77. Dayana Mali, collect Dayana leaves to be offered to the Deities
78. Madeli, Mardala drum players (now discontinued)
79. Prasada Badu, Badu Mahapatra, assistants for the Mahaprasada service
80. Tattua, divides the shares of Mahaprasada for the Sevakas
81. Pattara Bandha, prepare plates with leaves (now discontinued)
82. Vaijayanti, play the bugle (musical instrument)
83. Chattara Niyoga, carry the royal parasol
84. Kahalia, play the Vvira Kahali (musical instrument)
85. Sankhua, play the conchshell (now discontinued)
86. Parva Yatra Joganya, assistants during specific festivals
87. Chitrakara, painters (general)
88. Rupakara, painters of the main Deities
89. Bania, jewellers
90. Damara Bisoi, arranges the damaru shaped pedestals for the Deities
91. Karatiya, carpenters
92. Benta Bhinda Paika, arrange for “hunting expeditions”
93. Patara Bisoi, arranges the clothes for the Deities
94. Kola Bethia, general assistants (now discontinued)
95. Daraji Seva, tailors; they also fix the brass Chakra on top of each chariot for Ratha Yatra
96. Kumbhara Bisoi, make earthen pots for cooking
97. Ratha Bhoi, tie the ramp made of wood logs to the Rathas
98. Malachula, provide the garlands for the Deities
99. Banua, shoot the arrows on behalf of the Deities
100. Chakra Dihuli, light the lamp on Nilachakra
101. Ojha Maharana, carpenters, especially build the chariots
102. Ghanta Seva, arrange the *ghanta* (small metal gong)
103. Ghantua, play the *ghanta*
104. Ratha Dahuka, drive the chariots at Ratha yatra
105. Badhei, carpenters
106. Vaidya, physician
107. Amunya Chatara, parasol bearers for some special Bhoga offerings to the main Deities
108. Chamu Dihuli, light the lamps inside the temple room and for the King
109. Chapa Behera, milkman, provide milk for Chandana yatra
110. Chapa Dolei, boatmen for Chandana yatra
111. Mapa Saita Karana, keep accountings for the measurement of Deities’ clothes
112. Tadhau Karana, assistant accountants
113. Deula Karana, head accountants
114. Baiti Karana, keep accountings for ghi and lamps
115. Kotha Karana, keep accountings for the Kotha Bhoga
116. Charcha Karana, accountants (now discontinued)
117. Dayana Patra, arrange the *dayana* leaves for the offerings
118. Chaula Vastra Karana, keep accountings for the rice and clothes
119. Matha and Bhaktigata Sevaka, keep the contacts with the Mathas

There are also some other categories of temple servants that are not officially listed any more:

120. Jaripatuka, make embroidery decorations
121. Kansari, supply brass pots and plates
122. Gudia, supply sweets and milk
123. Teli, supply oil
124. Halua, gardeners
125. Kalabethia, move the chariot for the Ratha Yatra

126. Bara gothiala, take care of the cows
127. Chuhana, in charge of the rice store
128. Bandhari, barber
129. Kamar, blacksmith for special works
130. Luhara, make special iron works, like gate grills etc
131. Bauria, take care of the coconut trees
132. Sahukar, shopkeeper
133. Baitha Palia, hold the lamps

The temple administration

The properties of the Jagannatha Temple were established by the Kings from ancient times, and increased greatly when Lord Purushottama Jagannatha became the State Deity of the Ganga empire. The Kings of the subsequent Surya dynasty made extensive endowments in land and donated many valuable items of jewelry, and the Temple finances flourished until the death of Mukunda Deva, the last independent King of Orissa in 1568. Subsequently the Temple was subject to taxes by various governments. Under the British rule, the Raja of Puri was appointed as the Superintendent to manage the Temple administration.

In 1945 the State Legislature instituted a Committee and a Council of religious rituals for the administration of the Jagannatha Temple. Under this administration all the income, properties and donations of the Temple are subject to the control of the State Government.

After India obtained independence from the British empire, the State Government passed the "Puri Sri Jagannatha Temple (Administration) Act, 1952" with provisions to prepare the Record of Rights and Duties of the Sevayats of the Temple. This law was intended to prevent mismanagement and to ensure the smooth performance of the religious rituals in the Temple. In 1954 special officers were appointed, and L. Panda, head of the Commission, submitted the first report (called "Record of Rights") including the record of all the temples, the record of all Nitis or religious rituals, the record of the rights and duties of each category of Sevakas, and the record of the sources of income.

With the Orissa Act XI of 1955, also called "Sri Jagannath Temple Act", which came to effect from 27 December 1960, the general superintendence of the Temple and endowments was officially invested in the State Government, which gives the State Government the full power to sell and dispose of the Temple properties and income and to decide about the religious rituals. According to that Act, the Jagannath Temple Managing Committee, the Office of Administration and the Jagannath Temple Fund were established.

The number of the members of the Managing Committee may vary. The Chairman, the Raja of Puri, has an hereditary position, while all the others are appointed by the State Government. Besides the Chairman (the Raja), there is a Vice-Chairman (the Collector), a Secretary (Administrator), the Commissioner of Endowments, a member of the Mukti Mandapa, 4 members from the community of the Sevakas, one representative of the Mathas connected to the seva puaj, plus 2 other persons that do not belong to the group of the Sevakas or the Mathas.

All Sevakas receive a salary from the Temple Administration, plus a portion (called *khei*) of the Raja Bhoga or Kotha Bhoga. The Jatri Pandas traditionally take care of the pilgrims and their expenditures, therefore they receive a compensation called Panda pauna. The donations made by visiting pilgrims are also a considerable source of income for the temple. Atika is a donation for a specific purpose (as for example, to pay for for a Vesha, a 1 sq foot name plate on the floor or on a wall etc), while Pindika is a general donation offered directly to the Deities (could be cash, jewels, gold or clothes). For a flag put on top of the temple, the Sevaka Chunara Dhvaja Bandha Sevakas) gets a 5% of the donation. Parimanik is a special ticket to a direct Darshan, that is paid to the Temple Office.

A Hundi was placed in the Jagamohana of the temple on 23 August 1983: 90% of the proceeds is deposited in the bank as foundation fund; out of the interest money from the foundation fund 50% goes to the Temple Fund, 45% to the Sanskrit University and 5% to the Sevayats Welfare Fund.

The official website of the Jagannatha Puri temple offers this Members' List in 2008:

- Sri Dibyasingha Deb, Gajapati Maharaja, Puri, Chairman
- Sri Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, I.A.S. , Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Dept. of Energy Govt. of Orissa, Working Chairman.
- Sri Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, I.A.S., R.D.C. (CD) Cuttack & Chief Administrator
- Sri Tarunkanata Mishra, I.A.S. ,Principal Secretary , Home Department Govt. of Orissa, Working Chairman
- Sri S.N. Sarangi, I.A.S., R.D.C. (CD) Cuttack & Chief Administrator
- Sri Rashmi Ranjan Pattnaik, I.A.S. Collector, Puri & Deputy Chief Administrator
- Sri Bhaskar Jyoti Sharma, I.A.S. Collector, Puri & Deputy Chief Administrator
- Dr. D.P. Choudhury, Addl. Law Secretary, Member
- Sri S.K. Pattnaik, Addl. Law Secretary , Member
- Sri Asit Kumar Panigrahi, I.P.S., Superintendent of Police, Puri, Member
- Sri D. N. Dimiri, Superintendent of A.S.I., Member
- Sri Bijay Kumar Dash, Endowment Commissioner, Member
- Sri Jitendra Kumar Das, Endowment Commissioner, Member
- Sri Narasingha Das Mohapatra, Member
- Sri Purna Chandra Mahapatra, Member
- Sri Madanmohan Pujapanda, Member
- Sri Rabindranath Pratihari, Member
- Sri Rabinarayan Mahasuar, Member
- Sri Taluchha Bhagaban Mahapatra, Member
- Baba Sachidananda Das, Member
- Sri Bipin Bihari Rath, Member
- Sri Jayanta Narayan Panda, Member
- Sri Arun Kumar Sabat, Member

The Devadasis

A special mention should be given to the very important category of the Maharis (Devadasis), whose service was gradually emarginated and finally discontinued in the 1950s. It seems that originally the Maharis, as personal attendants of the Deities, were not only engaged in dancing and singing for Their pleasure, but they also had the service of fanning Them, bathing and dressing Them. Traditionally they would also play the role of Lakshmidēvi, Yashoda, Rohini etc during the many festivals and re-enactments of the divine lilas.

Their presence and service were considered essential as Mangala Naris, bringing auspiciousness not only to the temple but also to all social functions. Still today, all temples are decorated with the images of these Mangala Naris, sometimes shown waving a *chamara* or blowing a conch, and often scantily dressed. Hindu temples had special pavilions called Natya mandapas, or dance halls, and a number of dancers called Devadasis, “the female servants of the Lord”, performed during the main daily rituals for the pleasure of the Deities. These women were completely dedicated to the service of the Deity, considering themselves His wives or personal attendants. Such tradition was prevalent all over India, with clear archeological proofs in Kashmir, Bengal, Orissa, Saurashtra, Rajasthan, Maharastra, Andhra, Mysore, Tamil nadu and Kerala. Records of dance as a ritual in the temple are found in *Agni Purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Bhagavata Purana*, *Padma Purana* and *Vasudeva samhita*. The tradition of the Devadasis was strongly opposed by the Victorian morality of the British colonial rule that considered it no less than prostitution, and the legal persecution started with the Madras Act of Prevention of Dedication to Temple. This does not mean that the Devadasis were actually practicing prostitution: according to the Victorian standards, the label of “immoral women” also included simply dancing, remaining unmarried, wearing light clothes, using some form of makeup, speaking loudly in public, “taking up men’s occupations” (ordinary jobs in society, from the humble and menial to the administrative and governative posts) or demanding the right to vote or to get an education.

The same label of “prostitutes” had already been unjustly imposed by the Christian rulers to the ancient hierodules (female priestesses) in the pre-Christian temples in Europe and Middle East, before the patriarchal revolution that eliminated all women from culture and religion. Even the ancient Jewish tradition (up to about 500 BCE) had a custom of dedicating girls to the Temple besides a number of Prophetesses who spread God’s messages to society at large.

Patriarcal domination in government, culture and religion gradually spread to various regions and subsequently the worship in temples and the position of religious teachers was taken up by men “in the mood of women”, sometimes wearing dresses (like cassocks) or wearing long hair, or arranging it in a style that was different from the ordinary men of their period. Some even went to the extreme of castrating themselves, like some of the early Christian monks.

In Puri, the female priestesses dedicated as attendants and consorts of the Deity were called Maha Naris (“great women”) and with time the name became “Maharis”. Another local name of the Devadasis was *nachuni*, or “dancer”. Several famous and much respected women consecrated themselves as Devadasis in ancient times. Dancing women were also accompanied by a smaller number of male dancers and both male and female musicians, as we can see in the sculptures and bas reliefs of temples and archeological monuments. According to the ancient Vedic culture, music and dance were extremely respected and considered divine arts, taught to mankind by Shiva himself, who is also known by the name Nataraja, “king of dancers”.

The images of gods and goddesses are often depicted in dancing poses. This is very often the case of Shiva and Shakti, Ganesha, and Krishna and Radha – whose *rasalila* dance is considered the highest level of divine interaction. The art of dance and music is the characteristic occupation of the divine Gandharvas and Apsaras in the higher planetary systems, who constantly perform for the pleasure of the gods. One entire portion of the Vedic scriptures, the *Gandharva sastra*, deals with such arts that have been raised to the level of sciences. Such was the power of dance and music as expression of the higher sentiments of human beings, that even ascetic doctrines such as Jainism and Buddhism integrated dance and music into their system of values. In time, India was invaded by Muslims and then fell under the domination of the Christian British: both cultures minimized the role of women in religion. The dance of the Maharis became more and more reclusive and secret, and was performed only behind closed doors in the temples.

In the 15th century young boys started to be trained as dancers to perform in public instead of the Maharis, during festivals and celebrations. They came to be known as Goti puas (“single boys”). Gradually the Maharis became less and less respected, and due to lack of financial support they started to perform in the royal court and for wealthy patrons, to the point when they came to be considered on the same level of prostitutes. Finally their service was discontinued by the temple administration.

Probably the most famous book on the Devadasis is Frederique Marglin’s *Wives of the King God*. Previously, the Abbé Dubois in the early 19th century had written about the importance of the “dancing girls” who were considered on a par with the “sacrificers”.

We are planning to produce a separate volume on the tradition of the Maharis and the significance of sacred temple dance and the rituals connected. For more information please contact our office at Jagannatha Vallabha Vedic Research Center.

Here are two articles by Rahul Acharya that originally appeared on various publications and websites.

Mahari – The Divine Damsels

The expression “Mahari” is a derivative of two Oriya words ‘Mahan’ and ‘Nari’ meaning divine damsels. They were a professional group, a class of *sewayats* of Lord Jagannatha. They consisted of different categories of Sevikas, assigned different *sevas*. They are as follows:

Bhitara Gauni: She was supposed to sing in the inner precincts of the temple or the sanctum sanctorum. Her service was reserved for the night during the Badashingara Vasha of the Lord.

Bahara Gauni: She was supposed to render her seva beyond the inner precincts of the sanctum sanctorum. She was supposed to sing during the breakfast of the Lord or Sakala Dhupa and other festivals that were celebrated in the temple.

Nachuni: They were the dancer community who rendered their service through dance.

Patuari: They were the group who provided the costume or Patani of the Lord and were supposed to garb them.

Raj Angila: She was the attendant of the Gajapati Maharaja or King, who was considered to be Lord Jagannatha in flesh and blood.

Gahana Mahari: They were assigned special duties only on special occasions and they always rendered their service in groups. There was no individual seva for them.

The Rudra Ganika were ordinary courtesans appointed for the pleasure of the King, but they were in no way appointed by the temple or connected with any of its rituals.

It may not be mistaken that the dance of this Nachuni class of Mahari is not to be referred to as the Mahari Nrutya, instead it should be referred to as the Devadasi Nrutya. This class of Maharis performed the Devadasi Seva. It is said that after Chodaganga Deva ascended the throne of Utkal at Puri, with the help of a very famous Tantrik Nitei Dhobani by name who was an ardent devotee of Lord Jagannatha, he appointed virgin maidens from the southern parts of India to render their services to Lord Jagannatha. The present temple was built and according to the popular belief, the Mahari seva, was introduced by this king between the 11th and 12th Century. This of course does not mean that the religion of Lord Jagannatha was so young as to be dated some time between the 11th and 12th century. In reality the religion of Lord Jagannatha is as old as the creation of this universe. Other gods and goddesses were later developments. The most authentic and oldest text, the *Rig Veda* mentions about Lord Jagannatha in its 10th Mandala: *ado jaddharu plavate sindhou pare apurusham*

In fact no gods and goddesses find mention in the *Vedas*. Now if the culture was so ancient whether the rituals and hence the tradition of dance are also ancient? Actually earlier Lord Jagannatha was worshipped in a crude, non-Aryan way. The rituals, according to the norms prescribed in different texts, were performed for the first time only after Adi Shankaracharya. All the same, the tradition of dance is believed to be still older. This is however controversial. The origin of the Mahari as a professional group of Sevayats is still to be found out from the womb of history.

The selection of young girls to be apprenticed as Maharis was that any girl, evidently a child, could be inculcated as a Mahari, if she perfectly fitted the norms and conditions of the selection process. The young girl chosen for the apprenticeship should not be physically deformed. She should not have any signs of ugliness etc. These young girls were apprenticed as Maharis at a very tender age, before attaining puberty. On the day fixed according to planetary position the girl is bathed with turmeric paste. She remains on fast and decorates herself with sandalwood paste and puts on Khandua Patani and Swarna Alankara symbolically donated by the Lord, to show that she would be under the custody of the Lord. After this, she is brought to the temple and after a short ritual she is brought to the Sri Nahara where she seeks private audience with the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri, who is considered to be Lord Jagannatha in flesh and blood. She is then sent for being trained under the Mahari Guru and after being fit for *seva*, offers herself, dancing with complete surrender to the Lord. The rituals of Lord Jagannatha are prescribed in *Niladri Mahodaya* that is a part of *Suta Samhita*. *Niladri Mahodaya* just mentions about dance only once during the installation ceremony of the Lord. It says:

gitanrityatisamsabdoh dibyojani jada dvija mukharthamagatasarve sarvalokanibasinhaha

It is said that it was the Apsaras Menaka and Rambha, who adorned the court of Indradeva, that performed for the first time in the temple. The Maharis hail their lineage to these Apsaras. But no information provided directly by these Maharis can be reliable, the reason being they were neither well read nor knew anything beyond their *seva*. The Mahari seva was not a hereditary profession. Nor did the Maharis have any biological relationship as they were supposed to remain sexually inactive and maintain their virginity. Those who were found guilty or those who wished to set up families were debarred from rendering *seva*.

Dance was an essential part of ritual practices and accordingly was an important part of worship. This dance was performed by a section of Maharis called Nachunis. The times of the day when a Nachuni was supposed to render seva i.e. dance, was during the Lord's breakfast or Sakala dhupa and the same seva she was to perform in the Nata Mandapa right in front of the public eye. She was supposed to dance being unperturbed by the public. This dance was always a pure piece without any song accompaniment. The dance performed during the night or Bada shingara vasha was a more secret ritual and was held when the Lord retired to the bed.

During this period the Mahari used to step into the Kalahata Dvara as a Devi or a divine being and used to perform only for the Lord near his Ratna Simhasana. She used to render Abhinaya stances from the *Gita Govinda* and was normally accompanied by a vocalist and a percussionist who would remain outside the Kalahata Dvara. Besides this, the Maharis had other *sevas* during the festivals which if discussed would itself turn into a volume.

The Maharis had no social life. They used to live like queens in a Sahi called Mahari Palli or Anga Alasa Patana. They were never allowed free audience with any males and to be assured that they led a totally chaste unadulterated and pious life, they used to be monitored by the Mina Nahaka and the Sahi Nahaka.

I would like to mention here that Padmavati, the wife of Jayadeva, the famous poet saint of 12th century A.D and the writer of the famous legendary literary classic, the *Gita Govinda*, was a Mahari. She was said to have married Jayadeva under mysterious circumstances, under the divine guidance of Lord Jagannatha. She belonged to Paralakhemundi in the southern part of Orissa, then known as Kalinga. She was instrumental in aiding the creation of this world famous epic. Jayadeva is said to have written this masterpiece being charmed by her beauty. It is said that she used to dance radiating the effulgence of Shrimati Radharani and Jayadeva used to sing the *Gita Govinda* totally dumb struck by her charm. This has been mentioned during the initial chapters of the *Gita Govinda*. The verse follows: *padmavati charana charana chakravarti*,

It is a matter of regret that this great tradition of Maharis is totally extinct now. Some people were of the opinion that these young girls, unable to control their human instincts, were driven into prostitution. There is however no record to substantiate such an opinion. During an audience with the Gajapati Maharaja Sri Dibyasingha Deva, he stated that the Nachuni Seva died an abrupt death during the reign of his grandfather. He said there was no such instance of any kind of impurity with the Maharis. In the record of rights of the year 1952, a government chronicle of the temple, among the list of 119 *sevas*, Gita Govinda seva is mentioned in the 74th section. The 75th section mentions the Bhitara Gauni Seva. Most possible that by 1952, the Nachuni seva had already ceased.

Whatever might be the cause for it, the fact remains that the Nachuni seva has gone out of the temple precincts. Undoubtedly the dance performance involved in the Nachuni seva is a divine art form whose extinction would be a tremendous loss to the rich cultural heritage of Orissa. Should we not endeavor to preserve this traditional dance form in all its pristine purity?

From the mouth of a Mahari

The dance of the Mahari was said to be a treat for the eye. Her Bhramaris (rotational movements) to the tune of ‘Tham Thei’ of the Thai Nata or her portrayal of the erotic sentiments to the ‘Kuru Yadu Nandana’ of the *Gita Govinda* were unforgettable incidents for a spectator who had viewed them even once in his lifetime. It is said that their dance used to captivate the great Lord himself, not to speak of ordinary human beings and thus they were referred to as Maharis or great ladies, who had the power to enchant the Lord himself. A legend goes that Lord Jagannatha once accompanied a beautiful Mahari to her garden, who was humming ‘Chandana Charchita’ (another song from the *Gita Govinda*) while plucking Tulasi leaves. In the great temple, thorns were found sticking to His royal attire.

Such was the aura of a Mahari whose eye-lashes constituted the very essence of captivating the whole world, whose very gait brought about a complete stillness in the activities of the three worlds, whose bangles bejeweled with precious stones served as an unarranged candle during the dance, that these deer-eyed maidens were offered in devotion to Lord Jagannatha.

Everything seems to have ended abruptly without any logical explanation for its sudden demise. No longer are the Ghungroos (ankle-bells) heard nor do the drums play. There is seldom any recitation of the *Gita Govinda* inside the great temple, which still boasts to be the birthplace of the modern Odissi dance. Curtains will be drawn on the grandeur of the Mahari tradition after the death of the last two surviving ones: Sashimani and Parashmani, who have-not left any successor. It is doubtful whether the next generation will be able to know anything about them.

The Mahari seva (service) was once an integral part of the daily Nitis (rituals) conducted in the Jagannatha temple. Many researchers have given varied opinions about its inception as a seva in the temple.

But the fact is that it started from the day of installation of the temple Deities. This aforementioned argument is further proven in the *Niladri Mahodaya* (text in which the temple rituals are enshrined) where Lord Brahma instructs King Indradyumna about the mode of worship:

ghanta mardalayorabaha pujayam prtyaham nrupa pujabasanaparyanta mebam syanrutyaagitate
(N.M, Chap: 7, Sh:117)

“Oh king! During the ritual proceedings, daily, there should be arrangement for the playing of the Ghanta (brass-plate instrument), Mardala (percussion) and for dance. This should continue till the Puja (worship) is over.”

Another sloka mentions about the performance of dance and music during the Bada Shingara (night or bedtime) rituals:

malyoratulyarachanairvesham kuryanmanoharam gite nrutya cha purato jayamane muhurmu
(N.M, Chap: 8, Sh:49)

“The arrangement for a performance of dance and music is a must when the Lord is being adorned with garlands.” The Record of rights (government chronicle on the rituals of the Jagannatha temple) specifies the exact proceedings of the Bhitara Gauni seva (service of the inner musician):

alati samayare bhitara gauni (mahari) kalahata duare jagannathanka parsware basi gana kariba

“During the Arati (waving of lamps), the Bhitara Gauni or Mahari is supposed to sit at the Kalahata Dvara (a door of the main temple) towards the side of Lord Jagannatha and render her voice for praising the supreme Lord.”

This service continued until recent days. These ladies never married, but devoted themselves to the Lord, in temple service. It is said that the Mahari never saw the light of the sun. This meant that she never danced outside the temple, in public gatherings. She was only meant to entertain the Lord.

Now when we read about the past history, as Odissi dancers, it is a pity to say that there is nothing left to retrospect. There is no one to guide us correctly. Whatever is said or heard about this tradition is nothing more than textual. It is hard to realize that this pristine culture is no more.

The following is an account of my discussion with Sashimani Mahari. It is a narrative experience of Sashimani’s yesteryears and about the Mahari rituals. It is a step to let my readers know about the true life of a Mahari in her words. In the words of Sashimani:

“Those days, it was a norm to choose either Brahmin, Karana, or Khandayat girls as Maharis. The process of choosing was a very elaborate one and we were chosen strictly based upon our beauty. This was done to ensure that our beauty appealed to the Lord, as after we became Maharis we were not ordinary mortal ladies but were supposed to be great ladies. I was born to Suryamani Mahari, who was the sister of Harapriya Mahari, at Markandeswara Sahi (a locality of Puri). I never knew who my father was. As far as I can recollect, I have never seen a male in our place. We were brought up amongst ladies only.

I remember having started my dance lessons as a toddler at the tender age of three, under the guidance of my mother and Sri Mohan Mohapatra. We never had any strict grammar for dance. All lessons were quite spontaneous and we were supposed to feel the dance rather than doing it mechanically. My dancing lessons continued till the age of seven and then I was ready to enter the great temple to begin my seva. An auspicious day was fixed for my marriage with the Lord (according to Sashimani, they were married to the Lord). The ritual was called Sadi Bandana (tying of sari). That day was of great enjoyment for us as it was the only day we were allowed to socialize. After this day, we were not supposed to see any male’s face.

In the morning, on the said day, I was given a grand bath with sandalwood paste, turmeric and scented water and was dressed with Pata sarani (indigenous silk sari) and the best of the gold ornaments we had. I was then taken to our local Brundabati Chaura (Tulasi altar) with a handful of rice topped with a betel nut. The whole day I was on complete fast even without a drop of water. There, at the altar, our Kulaguru (family priest) gave me *dikshya* (initiation). After the ceremony, I was carried to the temple in a procession. There, inside the temple I stood at the Jaya Bijaya Dvara (another door of the main temple) where the sari was tied on my head. The Pattajoshi Mohapatra (a servant of the Lord) then garlanded me with the Lord’s flowers. Then a Ramanandi Chita (Vaishnavite mark) and a Sindura topa (vermillion spot) were drawn on my forehead. This was to show that I was married to the Lord. After this, I went round the temple seven times, as a married woman does around the fire altar.

After the temple ceremony, all returned to my house where we were entertained with Mahaprasada (food offered to Lord Jagannath). In the evening I was taken to the Sri Nahara (royal palace) to perform the Palanka-seva (cot rituals), which consisted of singing before the king's bed. There I sat singing, looking directly into the king's eye. This part of the ritual in the palace was observed as the Gajapati Maharaj (king) of Puri is venerated as the moving image of Lord Jagannatha. Though we were married to the Lord, we were supposed to remain spinsters all our lives, i.e. we were not allowed to accept any mortal husbands. Those who did were debarred from *seva*.

The next day was my first day of service. I was given a purificatory bath, dressed with elaborate costume and brought to the temple. Those days we wore only gold, however, modern Odissi dancers can afford only silver ornaments. This performance was during the Sakala dhupa (breakfast) and I performed to the accompaniment of *mardala* (percussion) and *gini* (cymbals), quite oblivious of the surrounding. The Rajguru (royal priest) was monitoring me with a golden stick in his hand. The dance was a Nritta (pure dance) without any song accompanying it. The second performance took place during Bada Shingara and this was performed under closed doors. During this time the dance was supposed to be expressional and the songs accompanying the dance were taken from the *Gita Govinda* alone.

This service continued each day, each month and each year. As far as I remember, I never skipped my performance even for a single day. I never fell ill and enjoyed performing for the Lord. Each day was a divine experience for me and I used to become ecstatic during my performances. I considered myself blessed as I was also receiving guidance from none other than Kokilaprava Mahari who was then serving as a Bhitara Gauni. Dance as a ritual was also performed in front of Goddess Vimala in the main temple and Goddess Kanaka Durga in the Sri Nahara on the Mahashtami (eighth day of the Durga puja) day, in the evening.

This service of mine continued for forty long years. All I used to get was twenty-five paise as *khei* (allowance) and a lot of divine love. I wanted nothing more. Those days we were a respectable community and were treated as goddesses. But this did not continue for long. Slowly we were suspected to be associated with Ganikas (prostitutes). This gave rise to a rebellion inside the temple. Little did we realize that this was the beginning of the end. All those people who respected us started despising us. Only my Lord knows what the truth was. Finally the rebellion became so strong that everything was stopped. Dance as a ritual was completely terminated and music became an optional ritual.

Thirty years have passed since then. No one is alive. Only Parashmani and I are surviving. I have nothing to do but to stare at the Lord all day. Now I am too old and even though I feel energetic, my body has become so feeble that it no more permits me to dance. I am still receiving a *khei* of one hundred and fifty rupees per month. As part of my service I am doing the Nandotsava *seva* (the day after Janmashtami), which is part of the Samprada nijog *seva* (outer ceremonial rites), that comes once a year. I still survive and am pulling on just because of my great Lord.”

Popular festivals and Temples

Traditional Festivals

The Oriya year starts with Mesha Sankranti, the day when the Sun enters the zodiac sign of Aries according to the Vedic calendar (which considers the gradual shifting of the equinox dates because of the inclination of the Earth axis) and the Moon enters the month of Vaisakha. In India the months and years are counted on the basis of lunar or solar movements. According to the solar system the month is counted from Sankranti to Sankranti and in lunar system it is counted from Purnima to Purnima. Visuva Sankranti is the first day of the month of Vaisakh (April) as well as the solar year. This is also called Mahavisuva Sankranti or Jala Visuva Sankranti.

There are specific reasons as to why the Visuva Sankranti is considered as the first day of the solar year. It is only on two occasions i.e. Mesha Sankranti and Tula Sankranti that the sun fully rests on the equator and on these two dates the length of days and nights remain equal.

After Mesha Sankranti the sun moves in the northern direction to our side, therefore, from this day of first movement of the sun from Mesha Sankranti that the New Year is counted. All over the country this day is considered auspicious and is celebrated with social, cultural and religious performances.

Mahavisuva pana Sankranti: Mesha Sankranti falls around 14 April, at a time of the year when the heat of summer is becoming stronger. In northern India it is called Jala Sankranti, in southern India Sakkar Pongal and in Orissa it is known as Pana Sankranti, named after *pana*, the main drink offering specially prepared on this occasion. The Purnima just before this month (Chaitra Purnima) also marks the beginning of Vaisakha vrata, a vow that is similar to the Kartika vrata and lasts for one full lunar month. People fast from non-vegetarian foods, visit the Jagannatha temple, take bath in *tirthas*, worship Lakshmi-Narayana, and give charity to *brahmanas*. Visuva Sankranti is also the final day of various popular festivals known as Chaitra Parva (starting 3 days before Sankranti), Jhamu Yatra, Hingula yatra, Patua Yatra, Danda Yatra, Uda Yatra etc. People distribute charity of *pana* (sweet water), *chhatu* (roasted and ground grains), wooden slippers, fans and umbrellas made of palm leaves and bamboo strips, to the *brahmanas* and to the poor people to relieve their discomfort due to the scorching heat. On this Sankranti people also start the Tulasi jala dana ritual (giving water to Tulasi); on the first day they offer *pana* (a mixture of milk, fresh cottage cheese, banana, coconut, sugar, sweet spices), and on the next 20 days they offer water. The offering is done by hanging a decorated clay pot (with a small hole on the bottom, from which three *kusha* grass blades hang); the liquid contained in the pot drips over the Tulasi plant. This is called *vasudhara*, “spring water from the earth”.

Also, a sunshade cover is offered to Tulasi, in the form of a loose mat made from coconut leaves. It is said that on this day Bhismadeva, the patriarch of the Kuru dynasty, was lying on his bed of arrows on the battlefield of Kurushetra and asked for water. Arjuna shot one arrow deep into the ground and created a fresh spring of pure water to quench the thirst of Bhisma, who blessed all those who would offer cool drinking water to thirsty people on this day, to become free from all their sins and to please their departed ancestors. Hingula Yatra (also called Patua Yatra) celebrates Goddess Hingula, the destroyer of all evil forces, who is said to walk through the villages on Visuva Sankranti.

One day before Sankranti, the devotees worshipping Hingula dress with a black skirt, a red shirt, and a black turban with two plaits of cloth on the sides, on which they place a staff balancing the holy pitcher (called *ghata*) that symbolize the Goddess. These devotees (called Patuas) led by the Bada Patua dance in procession, holding the ends of the turban cloth with stretched arms, sometimes on stilts, sometimes performing difficult steps, accompanied by singing and playing of big brass cymbals played with a cane stick and drums. Women worshipers (called Osati) prepare the offerings of ghi lamps, new cloth, *pana* (sweet beverage) and green mangoes. Both men and women fast on this day. In the afternoon they gather with their families at a Shiva or Shakti temple, or at a river or pond, with the women making the *hulahuli* sound and the men shouting “haribol”, drums rolling and everyone loudly singing in praise of Goddess Hingula or Mangala.

The Patuas are by now in trance and the priest (a non-*brahmana* called Jadua or Dehuri) pierces the skin and flesh of their back with sharp iron hooks, without any bloodshed or apparent pain in the devotees. Sometimes instead of the piercing the devotees who observe this *vrata* walk on thorns (they are called Kanta Patuas from *kanta*, “thorn”), stand on sharp swords (Khanda Patuas from *khanda*, “sword”) or on burning charcoals (Nian Patuas, from *nian*, “fire”), or immerse themselves for a long time in water (Pani Patuas, from *pani*, “water”). The Sikhs also celebrate this day as Vaisakhi or Baisakhi that is considered the appearance of the holy Khalsa Pantha. Several religious and charitable programmes are organized, including Dhandijatha and Langer community feasts.

Akshaya tritiya: Vaisakha sukla Tritiya is celebrated as Akshaya Tritiya - the beginning of the Chandana Yatra, the beginning of the construction of the Rathas (for the Ratha yatra festival). In this day the rural communities celebrate the planting of the new paddy seeds (a festival also called Muthi chuuan). Early in the morning the farmers take bath in a river or pond, wear new clothes and carrying the seeds in new baskets, go to the fields where they perform a puja to Lakshmidivi, then they plant the seeds praying for a good crop. In the evening they have a feast in their homes. The preparations are strictly vegetarian, also excluding green leafy vegetables. Akshaya Tritiya also celebrates the descent of Ganga from heaven, and the appearance day of Parashurama. As this day is considered very auspicious for beginning any new venture, it is generally chosen to start important works. On this day women also worship Sasthi Devi, popularly called Sathi Duchhei, who blesses women with birth of children. Small clay pots are filled with *khoi*, *chuda* and fruits, and worshiped as symbols of the Goddess.

Nrisimha chaturdasi : On Vaisakha sukla Chaturdasi the festival of the appearance of Lord Nrisimha is celebrated at all Nrisimha temples.

Thakurani Yatra: In the month of May the Thakurani Yatra is celebrated to worship Shakti, the Mother Goddess, especially in the Ganjam district, where major celebrations are held even in individual homes. The festival may continue for 5 days, 7 days, 15 days or 21 days. The Thakuranis of Ganjam district are so popularly worshiped through out the district with devotion and faith. They are known as the four sisters named as Thakurani of Berhampur, Khambeswari of Aska, Buirani of Kabisuryanagar, and Ramachandi of Purushottampur. A greater version of the Yatra is celebrated one year at Berhampur and the next year in Chatrapur, and every 12 years in Kabisuryanagar. The priest, called Desha Behera, calls the Thakurani as his daughter, and She comes in the form of a flower, that is placed in a pot. A woman takes the pot on her head and goes in procession from street to street every evening, accompanied by songs and music, and by dancing.

Savitri vrata: From Jyestha krishna Tritiya to Amavasya, married women observe the Savitri vrata to pray for a long life for their husbands. The name of the *vrata* comes from the famous Savitri, the wife of Satyavati. This Savitri is considered one of the Pancha Satis (five very faithful wives). Her story, narrated in the *Mahabharata*, says that she was the daughter of king Asvapati of Madradesha, and as customary in Vedic times she traveled around the kingdom searching for a suitable life companion. Finally she chose Satyavan, a prince in exile who lived in the forest with his blind father Dyumatsena; and she remained adamant in her decision even when she was informed that according to predictions, the young man would have a very short life, in fact he was destined to die within one year exactly. Savitri left the palace and went to live in the forest with her husband and his parents, and as the time of her husband’s sudden death approached, she prepared herself. On the final day, she insisted in accompanying him into the forest to collect firewood, and when he collapsed, she took him on her lap and held him. Yamaraja came to claim Satyavan’s soul, and Savitri simply followed them; Yamaraja tried to convince her to go back home but Savitri refused to do so, giving very intelligent answers: first she claimed that husband and wife are best friends, and that friends never abandon each other, then she said that it is the religious duty of a wife to always remain with her husband and go through all difficulties together, and finally she said that one should always remain attached to the company of good people. Every time, Yamaraja was pleased with her answers and offered any boon except for the life of Satyavan. So she first asked that her father in law would regain his sight, then that he may regain his kingdom. The third time, Yamaraja did not specify any conditions and Savitri immediately asked for Satyavan’s life. Savitri puja is usually observed by fasting (eating only fruits) and worshiping the *silapua* (the pestel of the grinding stone), that symbolizes the male principle. Some say that the *silapua* represents the Goddess, but this is very unlikely, as in Oriya *pua* means “son”, while *jhia* is “daughter”.

It is also unlikely that the Savitri of this particular story should be considered a direct form of the Mother Goddess, as Satyavan was an ordinary man (however virtuous and qualified), and the Mother Goddess, being the original Sati by definition, can never become the wife of one who is not Mahadeva. It is possible that people confuse this ordinary Savitri with Goddess Savitri or Gayatri who is the female counterpart of Surya and is worshiped daily by *brahmanas* as the Mother of all the Vedas, but that is obviously a serious blunder. The woman observing Savitri puja takes bath, wears new clothes and new bangles, and applies *sindhur* or *kunkuma* on her hairline. Then she washes the *silapua* and sprinkles it with scented sacred water; decorates it with turmeric and *sindhur*. She wraps it in a fresh cloth and decorates it with ornaments. Finally she offers ripe mangoes, coconut, banana, pineapple, jackfruit and other fruits, as well as soaked *dal* and rice. Traditionally, a twig of the banyan tree is also offered as a symbol of auspiciousness and long life.

Shiva vivaha: The celebrations for the marriage of Shiva Mahadeva start on Jyestha sukla Chaturthi, also known as Uma Chaturthi. Celebrations were particularly sumptuous in the Sasana villages and are still very important in Bhubaneswar and in Sambalpur; devotees act as the parents of the wedded couple and Vishnu is considered to act as the mediator, with all the formalities of a marriage in a Brahmin family. A proposal, written on palm leaf, is sent from the bride's side to the groom's father through an elderly *brahmana*, together with gifts of coconut, betel nut and new cloth, in a procession with torches, drums and other musical instruments. On the next day (Panchami) after midnight, Parvati goes into a procession in richly decorated palanquins accompanied by Vishnu to the temple of Shiva, Shiva also follows seated in a bullock cart. The procession stops at crossroads and other important places as a regular *barat* (marriage procession) with dancing, fireworks, playing of musical instruments and especially drums. Finally it reaches Shiva's temple where the marriage takes place, comprising a banquet of *prasadam*. On the next day, Sitala Sasthi (Jyestha sukla Sasthi) is the Nagara parikrama, in which the newlyweds visit the houses of relatives (other temples) within the celebrations of his marriage. The name *sitala* ("cooled") is believed to indicate the "cooling" of Shiva's *tapasya* with marriage.

Snana Yatra: On Jyestha Purnima people all over Orissa celebrate the Snana Yatra or Devasnana. Many people travel to Puri to participate to the festival there, but the festival is also held in all Jagannatha temples all over Orissa, and in fact all over the world. Among the tribals, the Saoras in the southern part of Orissa still perform a ritual bathing ceremony for their Deities on the last day of the month of Jyestha. For this they collect water from remote jungles where it remains untouched even by the shadow of the animals.

Raja Sankranti: The Raja festival celebrates the menstrual period of the Mother Goddess (as the Earth), and is celebrated especially in the districts of Puri, Cuttack and Balesvara (Balasore). It starts one day before Mithuna (Gemini) Sankranti and continues for three days; the first day is called "Pahili Raja" (Prior Raja), second is "Raja" (Proper Raja) and third is "Basi Raja" (Past Raja). On the first day, girls and women get up very early, massage their scalp and hair with oil, smear their body with turmeric paste and take a bath in a river or pond. For the following two days they do not bathe. Also for all the three days girls and women do not walk barefoot, do not grind or tear anything apart, do not cut and do not cook. They wear their best dresses and decorations, possibly new ones, eating delicacies, chewing *pan tambulas* distributed in the various homes, coloring their feet with red dye, playing, dancing *punchi* (one type of dance done almost crouching) and having fun. The most popular dish during the festival is *podapitha* ("burnt pancake"), made with rice flour, *gur*, coconut and *ghi*. Other favorite dishes are fried puffed rice (*muri*) and vegetable curries. Regular boiled rice is not used, especially by the younger girls. Another important feature of this festival is the swing playing. There are different types of swings (*doli*) such as Ram, Charki, Pata, Dandi etc. Popular and traditional songs, speaking of love, affection and community accompany the swinging. During these three days all girls and women are exempt from all work. Similarly, during these three days no work is done on land, to avoid disturbing Mother Earth who is taking full rest. Young men also engage themselves in eating good food and playing country games, especially Kabadi. In the night villages arrange for entertainment, with Jatra or Gotipua performances.

Ratha Yatra: Just like Snana Yatra, the annual Ratha yatra festival is celebrated not only in Puri but all over Orissa, although many people prefer to travel to Puri and participate to the biggest event.

Sravani vrata: The observance called Sravani vrata consists in carrying water to a Shiva temple by following precise ritualistic rules, and it continues for one month from Sravana pratipad up to Sravana Purnima. The *vratis*, both men and women, observe celibacy and a pure vegetarian diet for the entire period of the *vrata*; they wear simple red clothes and they walk barefoot, carrying only two earthen pots tied to a long stick, to a river or sacred pond.

There they fashion a Shiva Lingam with clay mud, perform a puja, then collect clean water in the pots, cover and seal them, and tie them back to the stick for carrying them. When they are ready, they start walking towards a Shiva temple, without breaking the journey and without taking food. The distance between the water reservoir and the temple may vary according to the strength of the *vрати* or the practical feasibility. If the distance is very long, the *vрати* will sleep on the road and observe fasting as much as possible (the *vрати* cannot carry food or drinking water). Once the *vрати* has reached the temple of Mahadeva, he or she offers the water to bathe the Lingam. During the period of Sravani vrata, *jala dana* to Shiva lingam is also performed permanently in temples; An earthen pot is hung over the Lingam, and from a small hole in the bottom and water trickles down along three blades of *kusha* or *darbha* grass.

Naga Panchami.: On Sravana krishna Panchami people celebrate the festival of Naga Panchami. In this season snakes leave their holes because the rain fills them, and get into gardens and sometimes into houses. Propitiating snakes through ritual offerings of milk, rice and prayers is an ancient tradition. However, the worship of snakes is also deeply symbolic as they are associated with Kundalini (the life energy that sits in every body), as well as with the Nagas (a very advanced culture that lived on the planet in Vedic times) and with Ananta Sesha, the Divine manifestation with thousands of heads, that is associated with Vishnu. Shiva is also closely associated with serpents, as He wears them as ornaments. Other famous extraordinary serpents in the sacred stories are Vasuki, Takshaka, Padma, Kanval, Karkotaka, Asvatara, Sankhapala, Dhritarastra, Pingala and Kaliya. According to some scholars, these were Naga Kings of various regions. Durga is also worshiped in the form of Manasa Devi, the Queen of Serpents. The symbolism of renewal of life is perfectly represented by the snake, that sheds its skin periodically. The serpent eating its own tail is found not only in Hindu tradition but in all the traditions of the world. Snakes are also an important part of the Buddhist and Jain iconography. It is believed that a large cobra snake protected the Jain Muni Parshvanath.

Snake charmers catch cobras about one week before the festival, digging them out from their holes and keeping them in covered clay pots, where they are fed with rats and milk. On the day of the festival the snake charmers carry these pots on their heads in procession, dancing and playing instruments, to the temple of Goddess Amba. There the snakes are set free in the temple courtyard and offered a bowl (painted in white) filled with small stones. The priest sprinkles flowers, turmeric and *kunkuma* on the serpents' heads, and after the *puja* the snakes are offered milk and honey. The snake charmers participate to the ritual by playing songs on their flutes.

Finally everyone pays homage to the Goddess, the snakes are put back in the pots and carried in procession on a bullock cart through the villages, where the women wait outside their homes for the procession, for the blessings of the snakes that are considered very auspicious for married life. One or two cobras are let loose in front of each house where men and women offer prayers, sprinkle puffed rice, flowers and coins, and offer arati with *dipa*, *dhupa* and *vandapana*. Nobody is bitten by the snakes during the festival, as the snakes are very satisfied with food and have become accustomed to the presence of the human beings and so they do not consider them a threat or a disturbance. In fact, snakes can only harm human beings when they feel threatened or disturbed by them, as obviously human beings do not constitute a food resource for cobras.

Chita lagi: On Sravana Amavasya the festival of Chitalagi Vesha or Chitou Amavasya is celebrated, both in the Jagannatha temple in Puri and in individual households. A special steam-cooked pancake called Chitaupitha is prepared with rice flour, shredded coconut and sugar. These pancakes, together with *khiri* (sweet rice pudding) are buried in one corner of the field to please Mother Earth and ask blessings for a good harvest. The field is also worshiped with flowers and other *puja* articles. Unmarried girls also offer these pancakes into ponds to protect their brothers and fathers from the leeches that thrive in rice fields flooded by the monsoon rains. While offering the pancakes they pray, "O Gandeisuni, be pleased by our offering and do not bite the legs of my father and brother". In the region of Sambalpur this festival is known as Harali kana. The Dakini Tandei or Gandeisuni (represented in a leech form) is worshiped with the offerings of Chakuli Pitha, and yantras are drawn by mothers under the navel of their children before nightfall. Then the cakes are consumed as *prasada*.

Jagulei puja: On Sravana sukla Panchami, a popular festival called Jagulei puja is celebrated for the Mother Goddess especially in the villages.

Jhulana Yatra: Krishna's swing festival begins on Sravana sukla Dasami and ends on Sravana Purnima. Jagannatha is amply identified as Krishna, due to the strong Vaishnava influence of Chaitanya, but especially because of the popularity of *Gita Govinda*.

In all temples and Mathas, decorated swings are prepared and the Deities are cradled in them by devotees who generally pull a decorated rope. The festival is observed for the Deities of Radha Krishna, Madana Mohana with Sridevi and Bhudevi, and also Durga Madhava. Bhajans, lila dances and dramatization, and celebrations continue every night.

Gahma Purnima: On Sravana Purnima people celebrate the famous festivals of Rakhi and Gahma. Rakhi or Raksha bandhana is the festival celebrating the relationship between brothers and sisters (not only blood relations but also friendly relations). On this day the brother goes to visit the sister's house and receives a Rakhi (a kind of bracelet symbolizing protection), they also exchange gifts and sweets. People also celebrate the festival by "tying the *rakhi*" with God in various temples, symbolizing a request of protection based on a very close and personal relationship. However, this relationship always remains on a peer level of brotherhood - *rakhis* are not offered to husbands or fathers or sons. Various versions are given for the origin of this festival; one says that on this day Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas, prayed Sri Krishna (who was her nephew) for the protection of her sons. The Gahma (or Gama) festival honors cattle as an important part of the life of human beings, as cows give their milk and bullocks till the fields and carry goods in carts. This day also marks the appearance of Sri Baladeva, called Haladhara ("who holds the plough") and as Shiva, associated with the bull as His *vahana*. It is said that Baladeva invented the plough and gave it to men so that they could achieve full success in their religious duty of growing food for society (*annam bahu kurveetha, tad vratam*). On this day the cattle sheds are thoroughly cleaned and newly plastered, often decorated with drawings of ploughs, bullock carts, cows and bulls. The animals themselves are bathed, decorated with flowers and sandalwood paste, their horns are massaged with oil, new cloth is offered them on their back and they are fed with rice pancakes, *gur*, and other suitable foods. In the afternoon the ritual called Gahma dian is performed; bullocks are taken to a field where all the farmers have gathered, and are led unto a kind of altar called Gahma Vedi.

Khudarakuni Osa : This festival is celebrated on the Sundays of the month of Bhadra (up to sukla Chaturdasi) by the unmarried girls, and especially in Bhadra krishna Pratipat. Goddess Durga is presented with Her favorite dish, fried rice in various versions such as fried broken rice (*khude bhaja*), fried rice (*lia*), fried rice with molasses (*ukhuda*) as well as coconut and thorn cucumber (*kantiali kakuri*). In the early morning girls go collecting flowers - malati, champa, mandara, kaniara, godibana, tagara and kain. They go to take bath in a river or pond, then they build tiny temples with earth and decorate them with flowers, pay obeisances to the Goddess and then return home. There they break their fast with two and a half mouthfuls of boiled rice mixed with water, without salt. Then they take salt. For the rest of the day they make garlands and decorate the Deities. Sometimes the Deity is worshiped in the *dhinkisala*, the place where rice is de-husked; the place is plastered anew with cowdung and clay and decorated with hanging garlands, the floor is decorated with drawings and the Deity is installed. In the evening the *puja* is performed, then the girls sing the story called Tapoi: the first episode (Malasri) is about Durga killing Mahishasura. Mahisha had become extremely powerful and even the Devas were afraid of facing him, so Durga as a beautiful girl went to the Vindhya mountains to perform *tapasya* in a visible place. Mahisha saw Her and immediately became lustful and proposed marriage. The girl replied that She would marry only one who could defeat Her in a fight, and so Mahisha eagerly started fighting, but was soon killed by Durga. So it is said that girls worship Durga to obtain the blessing of strength like Hers, so that they can fight evil.

The second episode (Tapoi) relates the adventures of a girl from the community of the Sadhabas (sea traders) at the times when Orissa was a prosperous kingdom of sea farers. This girl, named Tapoi, had seven brothers who were very affectionate to her and gifted her with anything she asked for, but one Brahmin lady from the neighborhood became envious of the girl's happiness. Unfortunately the father and mother of the girl died and the financial condition of the family worsened, so the brothers set out on journey to distant lands for traveling entrusting their young sister to their wives. Their minds poisoned by the malignity of the neighbor, who insinuated that the little girl was the cause of their poverty, the sisters in law started to mistreat her, denying her clothes and proper food, sending her to watch the goats in the forest and just allowing her to eat the discarded broken pieces of rice grains. The girl prayed Mangala for the safe return of her brothers, worshiping the Goddess with her friends and offering *khuda* because she had nothing else to give. The girl's brothers returned safely and found her crying, as she had lost one of the goats (Gharamani) and she was not allowed to return home, and they came to her defense. So the patience and determination of Tapoi brought her happiness in the end. After the worship ritual is over, the Deities are immersed in the river.

Janmashtami: Krishna was born at midnight, when the moon was in Vrisabha (Taurus) in the constellation of Rohini, on Bhadra Krishna Ashtami. So people usually observe fasting until midnight, then among a tumultuous sound of conchshells and gongs, there is a food offering and *arati* is celebrated. On the next day, Nandotsava, a banquet is prepared and people gather in temples and Mathas to celebrate the occasion. During the two days, and sometimes for several days afterwards, Krishna's childhood pastimes are re-enacted in song, drama and dance form, and people enjoy the "stick dance".

Ganesha Chaturthi: The festival of Ganesha puja is observed in the entire region on Bhadra Sukla Chaturthi. Ganesha has a particular importance in Hindu tradition as he is considered the remover of all obstacles on the path of progress, both spiritually and materially. Therefore he is invoked first in all rituals, and he is present as *parśva devata*, or guardian Deity, in almost all temples, shops and homes. It is said that the physical characteristics of Ganesha symbolize intelligence and memory (the elephant head), as well as determination and perseverance (the mouse carrier). The story of how he came to be awarded the honor of *agra puja* in all rituals is as follows. One day Ganesha and his brother Kartikeya were discussing about which of the two was faster, and would be able to perform the tour of the entire universe in the shortest time. With the blessings of Shiva and Parvati, the two brothers decided to have a try. Kartikeya immediately ran off to travel around the universe, while Ganesha simply bowed to his parents and circumambulated them respectfully, claiming that Shiva and Parvati were the all in all of the entire universe.

Rishi Panchami: Bhadra Sukla Panchami is celebrated as Rishi Panchami. Some (especially in north India and Nepal) observe the Rishi vrata for three days (called the Hartalika tej vrata), of which Panchami is the last. Besides fasting from all grains (eating only root vegetables), devotees visit a river or a water tank in the afternoon, purify an area with cow dung, clean their teeth with a stick from the root of the *aghada* plant, and take a bath. *Aghada* is a medicinal plant that grows in the months of Asadha and Shravana, and becomes ready to be picked up in Bhadrava; it helps the health of teeth and gums, and the juice is beneficial against cough and against the effect of poisons. Also the Dativan herb is used for bathing. After bathing, the devotees arrange a small wooden platform, place seven betel nuts representing the Rishis and offer *puja*. *Puja* is also offered to Shiva, with a special *kalasha*. Women honor their husbands before going to the river for the ritual Rishi Panchami is also observed by Jains who dedicate it to Rishabhadeva, the first and most important Tirthankara or Adinatha; the members of the Svetambara sect end their Parjushan Maha Parva on this day, while the members of the Digambara sect start from this day.

Nuakhai: This is a major festival celebrating the new rice harvest of the season, held in the *sukla paksha* (bright half, or waxing moon) of the month of Bhadra, on an auspicious day calculated from time to time. It is particularly popular in Sambalpur, Bolangir, Sundargarh, Kalahandi and Phulbani, but it is observed all over India. Different ethnic groups call it with various names, for example the Dud Khadias and Pahadi Khadias call it Jeth Nouakhia, the Orams call it Nouakhani, the Mundas call Jam-noua, the Santhals call it Janthar or Baihar Horo Nauabai. The Parajas of Bastar and Orissa called as Noua-aani, while the same tribes living in Bihar call it Noua-jam. The Birjias living in Orissa call it Nauaba and Jam-noua, while the same tribes living in the Nagpur area (the Ashur clan) call it Nouaa. Tribal groups in East Bengal and Tripura also celebrate this festival, that is called Navanna and Mikatal respectively. The houses are cleaned thoroughly, plastered anew (with fresh clay and cowdung) and decorated, and everybody wears new clothes.

Friends, relatives, neighbors celebrate together, returning to their village even from long distances, meeting one another, singing and dancing, and partaking of the *prasadam khiri* (sweet rice pudding) cooked with the newly harvested rice and offered to Lakshmidēvi, distributed by the eldest member of the family. Other special foods prepared for the festival are the popular pancakes (*manda pitha*), *puri* and other sweets and delicacies. In the evening they eat meat. The Kolha men in Keonjhar cook the new rice in a new pot and offer it (together with fowl curry and newly brewed rice beer) to Surya (Dharam Banga) on one leaf and to their ancestors on another leaf. During the festival, Lakshmidēvi is worshiped as Annapurna, who is both the bestower of a bountiful harvest, and a personification of food grains Herself. The new rice is also separately offered to the family Deities and to the Grama Devi, before it is used for daily cooking.

Bali yatra: There are three different Bali festivals in Orissa: one on Bhadra Krishna Tiritiya, one on Bhadra Sukla Tiritiya (or Ekadasi), and one on Kartika Purnima. It is possible that the first two dates were the occasion when the ancient sea traders set sail to leave for their voyages, carrying the newly harvested rice for their sustenance, while the last date (about 2 months later) was the time for their return, that coincided with the end of the monsoon and the end of the strict austerities and religious rituals observed especially by women during the month of Kartika.

From Bhadra krishna Tritiya, also called Kajoli tritiya or Angabetha, until sukla Tritiya (15 days later) married women observe a fasting and worship Shiva by fashioning a Linga with sand (“*bali*”). It is possible that the first 15 days of the sea journey were particularly difficult, so women spiritually supported their husbands, brothers and sons through their *vrata*.

On Bhadra sukla Ekadasi (8 days later) more rituals are observed in the Bali vrata - this time small sand structures called Bali (something like sand castles) were built with the sand from a stream or river, and various grains are planted in them to propitiate life and growth. Other rituals, performed by a Fakir called Bejju on this day include fire walking and swinging on a seat of nails, intended to produce a state of trance (altered consciousness) in which the mind controls the body so that burns and wounds are miraculously avoided even in such extreme circumstances. When in this trance, the Bejja dances continuously for three days resting only briefly to channel supernormal information, such as predicting good or bad events and granting blessings to the people. There are also animal sacrifices (goats, pigeons and other birds). The rituals of fire walking and swinging on a seat of nails is also observed in the coastal areas on other occasions.

Karama festival: This popular festival is observed by the tribal people of Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur, Bolangir, Dhenkanal and Keonjhar, as well as in Bihar and Madaya Pradesh. The ethnic groups that are most enthusiastic about it are the Hos, Kisans, Kols, Bhumijis, Oraons, Bhuiyans and Binjhals. The date is generally Bhadra sukla Ekadasi but it may vary, also in connection with the Bali festival that is celebrated in the same period. The story of the origins of the festival is told in various versions, the Hos, Bhumijis and Oraons speaks of seven brothers who lived together, six of them worked in the fields and the seventh, the youngest, was staying back with his sisters in law, often dancing and singing around a Karama tree that grew in the courtyard. One day they became so engrossed in their dancing and singing that they forgot to carry the noon meal to the brothers working in the field: when the young men came back home, they were so angry that they cut the tree and threw it into the river. The youngest brother also became angry and ran away. The joy and happiness left the house, and the elder brothers were stricken with misfortune, the crops failed and the house was damaged. In the meantime the youngest brother kept wandering around and finally he found the Karama tree floating down the river and begged forgiveness from the Karama Devata. He then returned home and explained his brothers that their woes were due to the offense committed against the tree, and since then the Karama festival was started. The version of the Pauri Bhuiyans speaks of a sea trader who returned home after a very successful voyage, his boat loaded with many valuable goods he had carried from distant lands, but his family failed to receive him properly because they were dancing and singing around the Karama trees, so he became angry and vented his temper on a tree, uprooting and throwing it away. Immediately he was stricken with misfortune, and his boat sank with all its goods. In repentance, the merchant procured another boat and set to sea to recover the tree; after duly worshipping the Karama Devata he was able to recover his wealth and good fortune. To celebrate the festival, people go to the forest in a procession with drummers, and ceremonially cut one or more branches of the Karama tree, representing the Karama (the Devata) and the Karamasani (the Devi). The cut branches are carried by unmarried young girls who sing in praise of the Deities; the procession reaches the center of the village where the branches are planted on a sacred platform plastered with cowdung and decorated with flowers. The tribal priest, called Jhankar or Dehuri, offers the Deities germinated grains and liquor, then a bird is sacrificed and the blood is offered to the branch. The glories of the Karama puja are narrated to the villagers, and then everybody celebrates drinking liquor and spending the whole night singing and dancing, which are essential parts of the festival. The expenditures of the festival can be shared by all the households or financed by one man who organizes the rituals in his courtyard and entertains the villagers. In the morning, the branches are removed and carried to the nearby water reservoir for *visarjana*.

Sashthi Osha: This form of the Mother Goddess is worshiped on Bhadra sukla Sashthi to ensure the welfare of children. It is said that She writes the baby’s future on his or her forehead on the sixth day after birth. The celebration, conducted especially by the mothers of the newborn children, is joined by the family members and neighborhood ladies.

Sunya: This day celebrates the beginning of the new year of reign for the Gajapati Maharaja, when the revenue collection begins. In old times the image of the Maharaja was coined in gold and the citizens paid their annual taxes to the treasury. It is held on Bhadra sukla Dvadasi.

The King also held a ceremony at the palace, where *brahmanas* were invited and entertained to propitiate their blessings.

Visvakarma puja: On Kanya Sankranti and Asvina Krishna Pratipat the festival of Visvakarma puja is celebrated, mostly by all craftspeople and people who work with machines or vehicles, as Visvakarma is known as the engineer or architect of the Devas, who built Dvaraka, Yamapuri and Lanka. His two daughters Sanjana and Saranya were married to Surya and his son Vaivasvata Manu. It is also said that the old carpenter who carved the Jagannatha Deity was actually Visvakarma in disguise. Workshops and factories are cleaned thoroughly, people polish their tools and repaint old machines and vehicles, also offering *puja* to them. Sometimes people fly kites and shoot fireworks in celebration. Festive pandals are organized with the Deity of Visvakarma and his elephant carrier. Visvakarma has four arms, carrying a water pot, a book, a rope noose and craftsman's tools.

Durga puja and Dasahara: The festival in honor of the Mother Goddess Durga is extremely popular all over India, and is usually celebrated twice a year, one in spring (*vasanti navaratri*) and one in autumn (*saradiya navaratri*). Some people say that this festival was introduced by Bengalis during a period when Orissa was under Bengali domination, but this idea is very unlikely, first of all because Orissa was never under the domination of any Bengali Hindu government, and certainly Muslim governors would never think of introducing the worship of Mother Durga anywhere. Rather, it is more likely that Bengal has been influenced by Orissa and especially by Puri, as for many centuries pilgrims from Bengal have flocked to Purushottama kshetra a long time before Calcutta became a city. In Orissa Durga puja is celebrated for 16 days (Sola puja) instead of the usual 9 days, and is connected particularly with the *vrata* performed by Sri Ramachandra to worship the Mother Goddess in order to obtain victory in His war against Ravana. Just like Sri Rama worshiped Durga during the *saradiya navaratri*, King Suratha worshiped Durga during the *vasanti navaratri*, therefore the festival has always been particularly popular with the warriors and Kings, and is celebrated in a grand way in Cuttack (the ancient capital of Orissa) and in Puri (where the Gajapati Maharaja resides as the Thakura Raja). During the festival (on Dasami), the King's weapons are worshiped, and also the Khandayats and Paikas polish and worship their weapons, also decorating the Akhadas especially by painting decorative designs on the doors. Each Akhada organizes a Sahi yatra, or a procession of men and boys variously dressed to impersonate avatars and Deities; these Sahi yatra continue for at least one week and are extremely popular.

Dasahara focuses on the worship of Durga Madhava, where Gosani (the Mother Goddess, also called Gopalini) is the consort of Gosvami or the Lord of the Cows. The connection between the Lord and the cows applies both to Krishna (Gopala) and to Shiva, a concept that is also expressed in the very popular concept of Harihara applied to Jagannatha. During the Durga Puja festival the people of Puri worship 27 Gosani images, such as Jahnikhai, Harachandi, Gelabai and Sunya Gosani. These images are characteristically very tall, without particular decoration other than the traditional ornaments of Orissan women (baju, bataphala, nothoguntha), turmeric and sandalwood paste, and are permanently worshiped in specific shrines, especially within the Akhadas and Jaga gharas. They are also accompanied by the image of a large bird called Sampati (18 feet tall with spread-out wings, with 8 generals sitting beside him), and sometimes by images of old couples with nodding heads that go around on bullock carts. These images are made in Markandesvara Sahi. The Barabati Durga near Nrusinghanath temple is the most spectacular in the town. The eight-armed goddess is huge, about 22 feet in height and wears a black and golden saree. She has a round glowing face smeared with turmeric paste, and Mahishasura is painted blue (in ancient times a real buffalo was used). The name Barabati ("20 acres") refers to a donation of land offered by the King for the maintenance of the Akhada. At the end of the Dasahara festival the temporary Deities gather in front of Sri Mandira before going in procession to the Musa river for *visarjana*.

On Sukla Sasthi the *vedis* for the puja are constructed and the Bilva puja is performed. Sukla Saptami is the first of the 3 main days of Durga puja, in which animal sacrifices (*bali*) are offered in Vimala's shrine and other temples of Durga and Kali.

In Jajpur, on the first day of the Durga puja celebrations (Amavasya), the Ratha yatra of Viraja Devi is celebrated. The last day of the Durga puja is Vijaya Dasami, the day when Sri Ramachandra achieved victory and killed Ravana. After Dasami, the temporary Deities worshiped in pandals are carried in procession to rivers and ponds and immersed with the ceremony called *visarjana*.

Mahalaya: The first day of the Durga puja celebrations, Asvina Amavasya (also called Somavati Amavasya), corresponds with the beginning of the Sraddha Paksha, the fortnight annually dedicated to honoring the departed ancestors, when people worship at a water reservoir (generally a *tirtha*) offering Pindadana. It is said that Karna, the famous hero of the Mahabharata, had distributed many gifts of gold and silver during his life and so when he attained Svarga he found himself very wealthy; however since he had never distributed food in charity he found himself in scarcity of food, so he prayed Yamaraja to allow him two more weeks on Earth to make up for this shortcoming. By the blessing of Yamaraja, all the offerings of food and water presented to the departed souls reach them, whether they were presented by their descendants or by other persons.

Dutivahana Osha: The observance of the Sraddha Paksha is connected to another festival in honor of Yamaraja. On Asvina sukla Dvitiya people celebrate the Yamesvara puja and Darshana, and five days later (on Asvina sukla Saptami) people celebrate the Dutivahana Osha, a ritual fast observed to worship Yama and Surya. Married ladies prepare 21 varieties of cooked vegetables and cereals, rice pudding, pancakes and fruits, and offer them to a temporary shrine made with Tulasi plants and banana trees. Everybody wears white clothes, fasts during the day and offers prayers in the night. The food offered is distributed among relatives, friends and children but not consumed by the fasting persons.

Kumar Purnima : The full moon of the month of Asvina celebrates the appearance of Kumara, also called Kartikeya or Skanda, the son of Shiva who became the god of war. In the early morning girls take bath and wear new clothes, then offer foods to the Sun at sunrise and to the Moon at moonrise. They observe fasting for the day (eating only fruits and puffed rice), sing and dance, and play various games, especially *puchi*. Janhi puja is offered to Tulasi plant in the homes' courtyards. The special preparation offered on this occasion is *chuda ghasa*, a mixture of rice flour and coconut with ghi, sugar, sweet spices and camphor. This festival is particularly popular in Dhenkanal, where it continues for one full week.

Lakshmi puja: The celebration of Kumar Purnima is also observed as Lakshmi puja. People worship Lakshmi in their homes and spend the night playing chess and other indoor games.

Kartika vrata: The full moon of the month of Asvina also marks the beginning of the last and most important month of the Chaturmasya period of austerities that coincides with the rainy season. People who follow the Kartika vrata abstain from luxuries, strictly fast from non-vegetarian foods, take bath early in the morning and regularly visit temples, worship Lakshmi Narayana and/or Radha Damodara, pay their respects to the Tulasi plant and engage in religious meetings, processions and devotional songs. Sometimes groups of widows assemble on the beach, make small mounds of sands on which they worship Tulasi, then they return to Sri Mandira where they listen to the recitation of the *Kartika vrata mahatmya*. As this vrata is also called Damodara vrata; Gaudiya Vaishnavas visit the Mathas where Radha Krishna are worshiped, and offer small ghi wicks wrapped around a wooden twig. A similar custom is observed in some families to honor the ancestors and guide them to descend to their villages and homes; a clay pot is perforated and covered, and hoisted on a pole with a lit lamp inside. The members of the family also offer jute stalk lamps praying for the safe journey of their ancestors in the afterlife, a ceremony called *Badabadua paka* culminating in the festival of Divali, celebrated on Kartika Amavasya. During the last five days of the month of Kartika, called *Bhishma panchaka*, people take food only once a day, eating a simple *kichedi* (rice and pulse preparation) without salt or spices, called *havisyanna* because it is usually offered during *homa* or *havi*. The small Tulasi shrines called *Chauras* are decorated with colored designs, and religious meetings continue especially with devotional songs.

Garbhadhana Sankranti: This festival is observed in Tula (Libra) Sankranti and is also called Garbhana Sankranti. Farmers celebrate auspicious rituals to start the new cultivation of rice and wheat, offering grains and branches of the Kara tree (that has insecticidal properties). On this day people also offer milk and Bhoga to the snakes in Lokanatha temple.

Dipavali: Probably the most famous Hindu festival, Dipavali or Divali is the “feast of lights”, celebrated on Kartika Amavasya. The festival is connected with the return of Sri Ramachandra to Ayodhya after the victory against Ravana; it is said that the citizens of Ayodhya welcomed Rama and Sita, who were flying in an airplane, by lighting thousands of lamps for their landing. The festival also coincides with Paya sraddha (offering *dipas* to the Pitris) and Shyama Kali puja. Another story says that once Lakshmi-devi was taken captive by Bali Maharaja in the nether world, and she was freed by Vishnu on this day; therefore some people worship Lakshmi on this day instead of Shyama Kali. In the evening all the homes are decorated and lighted with rows of clay lamps filled with oil (usually castor oil, that burns more slowly).

Many special dishes are prepared and distributed in all homes, and families and neighbors gather to enjoy the festivities; many shops offer special discounts on clothes and house appliances so people are encouraged to purchase new things, dress in their best fineries and exchange gifts. Firecrackers are a relatively new tradition for Divali and have often proved to be a dangerous nuisance; firecrackers can easily hurt or even kill people, especially when chosen for their large size or shot at a short distance from people. The loud bangs scare small children, aggravate the sick and the elderly (especially those who may suffer from circulatory or cardiac diseases or headaches), and can cause miscarriages both in women and in cows. Besides the noise pollution, firecrackers cause noxious and polluting fumes that aggravate asthma and respiratory problems, and a quantity of wrappers remain littering the streets, sometimes containing unexploded crackers, which add more danger even after the festivities are over. In the district of Mayurbhanj a festival called Bandana is celebrated for 3 days starting from Divali. Cows and bullocks are honored, bathed and decorated with *sindhur*. In the afternoon young bulls are tethered to poles with a strong rope and people play with them, one by one. One daring man gets near the bull and excites him by holding a tiger skin, and dancing around the bull when he charges.

Amla Navami: Also called Ola Navami, it falls on Kartika sukla Navami. Amla is considered a divine fruit because of its wonderful medicinal properties and is used in many Ayurvedic preparations, such as Chyavanprash and Triphala churna. Exceptionally rich in heat-resistant and oxydation-resistant vitamin C, it relieves acidity, ulcers, coughs and helps the immune system fight off all kinds of diseases. On this day traditionally Amla fruits are ground into a paste and used to bathe the Deity of Vishnu; the Deity is also worshipped under an Amla tree, and devotees chant the holy Names circumambulating the tree.

Kartika Purnima: This Purnima comes one month after Kumara Purnima and ends the month of Kartika. On this day, Bali yatra is celebrated with the Danga bhasani or Boita bandhana, the sailing of minuscule boats, made from the bark of banana trees, sometimes with a small *dipa*, on a river, pond or in the ocean. The festival, celebrated by the people of the coastal area of Orissa, especially Cuttack, Paradeep, Konark and Balugaon (Chilika), is connected with the return of sailors in ancient times; the small lamps in the boats welcomed them and showed them the way. A large fair is held at Cuttack at the Mahanadi near Shiva's temple, where many images of Kartikeya are immersed. It is also said that Mahadeva Shiva killed the demoniac Tripurasura on this day.

Margasira vrata: The month of Margasira is especially dedicated to the worship of Lakshmidēvi. Every Thursday of the month the women of the house renovate the floor and wall plastering (usually with clay and cowdung), decorate the floors by drawing traditional designs with *jhoti*, a mixture of rice flour and water. One of the most popular designs is the Goddess' footprints, generally starting from the door to the place of worship, to indicate that Lakshmidēvi has entered the house. The ceiling is also decorated with flower garlands and festoons. Bunches of ripe rice stalks are tied together and hung in the temple rooms. The Goddess is worshipped in the form of rice. Many preparations made from rice, such as *khiri* (rice pudding) and various pancakes are cooked, offered and distributed to everyone.

In the evening the *Lakshmi Purana* is read or recited, especially the part where the story of Sriya Chandaluni is narrated (see the chapter on the great personalities connected with Puri). Sriya was a lady born in an outcaste family, who won Lakshmidēvi's blessing with her deep devotion. When Lakshmidēvi returned to the Sri Mandir, Balabhadra decreed that She had debased Herself accepting food in an outcaste house, and Lakshmidēvi left the temple. Immediately the temple became bereft of all opulence, and after a short time both Jagannatha and Balabhadra found Themselves as wretched beggars and were forced to apologize for the mistake.

Prathamashdami: On Margasira krishna Ashtami, the first born child of each family is honored and taken to the temple to get the Darshana of the Lord. He or she is given new clothes and is made to sit on a wooden pedestal (*pidha*), under a small branch from a mango or coconut tree. The mother or an elderly lady places a clay pot full of water over some paddy grains, and wishes him or her long life and good health, praying Sasthi Devi. The first born child of a home is required to take responsibility for his or her younger siblings and protect them, often sacrificing his or her own pleasure and needs in favor of the younger children. A special pancake, called Enduri, is offered to Goddess Sasthi and then distributed to everyone. On this same day, the representative Deity of Lingaraj, Chandrasekhara, is carried on a palanquin to the Papanasini sarovara, just behind the temple.

Kanji Amla Osha: On Margasira Krishna Navami, also called Kanji amla Navami, women worship Goddess Sasthi. *Kanji* is the name of a particular soup made with rice water and vegetables, offered on this occasion. Amla or Amalaki berries are also offered. Some households also offer dried fish decorated with *kunkuma*.

Dhanu yatra: This festival, started in 1915 and reorganized in 1949 (by Rushana Kar, Murari Mishra and Late Pranabandhu Kar), is the re-enactment of Krishna's lila, culminating in the journey to Mathura, where He was invited by His maternal uncle Kamsa to the Dhanu Yajna. It generally goes from Pausha sukla Caturthi to Pausha Purnima, for 11 days. Baragarh in the Sambalpur district gets particularly serious in the celebration, transforming the town into Mathura, the river Jira into Yamuna, and the village Amapalli on the other bank of the river into Vrindavana (Gopapur). Almost all residents have a role to play, from the wedding procession of Vasudeva and Devaki (starting from the Panchayat Dharmasala), to the imprisonment of Vasudeva and Devaki (in the Radha Krishna temple in Hatapada), to the various adventures in Vrindavana. One of the major attractions is Kamsa riding a decorated elephant around Baragarh, with a retinue of ministers and soldiers, who capture people at random from the crowd and punish or fine them. A local police officer with a massive built and long hair, called Gopal Sahu, has been playing the role of Kamsa for many years. People move from place to place over an open-air theater over 5 km long, to follow the dramatic re-enactment of the Krishna lila, while entertainment programmes continue every night.

Samba Dasami : Pausha sukla Dasami celebrates the episode where Samba, the son of Krishna, worshiped Surya. Special pancakes (*kakera pitha*, *bhaja manda*, *arisa*, *biri nadu*, *dhala manda*, *chakkuli*) as well as *puri* and *luchi* are prepared both in the temples and in the houses, as devotees do not eat rice on this day. Worship is offered to Surya at sunrise, noon and sunset. The story, described in the *Samba Purana*, says that Krishna's son Samba, very proud of his own handsomeness, offended Ashtavakra Rishi, whose body was crooked in eight points. As a result, Samba became disfigured by leprosy and went to pray Krishna for advice. Krishna told him to go to Maitreya vana near Konark and worship Surya to obtain the blessing of good health. Samba remained there to perform austerities for 12 years, and it is said that he was cured on this day. Another version of the story calls the festival as Sambara Dasami, celebrating the killing of the demoniac Sambarasura, who had kidnapped Rukmini's son Pradyumna. Narada advised Rukmini to worship Surya, narrating the story of one *brahmana* called Gautama, who resided in Arka Kshetra (Konark), whose sons were restored to life as his wife Padmamukhi had worshiped Surya.

Magha parab: The Ho, Oraon, Kisan and Kol tribes celebrate this harvest festival during this month (the dates may vary); while the winter festival is called Magha parab, a similar festival in summer is called Damurai parab, and in the rainy season it is called Horo parab. The villagers wear new clothes and gather to worship the Mother Goddess, a ritual that comprises the sacrifice of a black bird and an offering of Mahua liquor. After the ceremony people drink, sing and dance together.

Makara Sankranti: The two main Sankranti of the year, Mesha (Aries) and Makara (Capricorn), mark the change of course of the Sun in the sky: on Mesha Sankranti (also called Mahavisuva or Visuva Sankranti) the Sun starts its southward journey, while on Makara Sankranti the Sun turns northwards, with the days becoming gradually longer and warmer. For this reason, this day is called Uttarayana yatra. As for Visuva Sankranti, preparations are started days ahead: two days before Sankranti there is Dugdha Melani Yatra, and the day before Sankranti is called Tanduladhivasa. Special rice mixed with fruit juice is offered to the Deities. In the houses people make special pancakes called *makara chaula*, made with green raw rice mixed with gur, coconut, *chenna*, honey and milk. These pancakes do not need to be cooked. They are offered to Surya and then distributed to everyone. On Makara Sankranti there is a famous festival at the Kalijai temple (Durga temple) on Kalijai island in Chilika lake; the festivities last for 5 days starting from Sankranti and consist of religious rituals (including animal sacrifices), Rama parayana (preaching about Lord Rama), a special market fair, etc. The Chitiki Raja (presently Golokachandra Deva) accompanied by the Queen (presently Usharani Devi) usually participates to the celebration, offering *arati* to Kalijai Devi. Other places where the festival is celebrated in a grand manner are Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Atri, Keonjhar, Jagatsinghpur., Ghatgaon, and Jashipur. The houses are cleaned thoroughly and re-plastered with a mixture of clay and cowdung, and painted in white, red and black. Before dawn people take bath in a river or pond and wear new clothes, then have a feast. In tribal areas men and women consume meat curry and liquor, and continue to sing and dance for about one week.

Various competitions are organized, such as archery games, ram fighting and cock fighting. Among the Kudumis, Bastits, and Rajuals, girls worship the Goddess, with the name of Tushu, and after the puja celebrate the immersion in a river or pond.

Vasanta Panchami: Magha sukla Panchami marks the beginning of spring and is celebrated as Sarasvati puja. Sarasvati is the form of the Goddess that presides over music, poetry, learning, eloquence, arts and sciences, therefore this festival is celebrated very enthusiastically in schools and educational institutions. Students and teachers observe fasting since morning, wear new clothes and gather to worship Sarasvati, singing traditional prayers, demonstrating what they have learned, offering *pushpanjali* (handful of flowers) at the end of the *puja*. During the rest of the day people celebrate by feasting and participating to various cultural programmes. The original Mother Goddess, Adi Bhuvanesvari, manifests Herself as Maha Lakshmi, Maha Sarasvati and Maha Kali. These in turn manifest as Lakshmi the consort of Vishnu, Sarasvati the consort of Brahma and Kali the consort of Shiva, as the original Shakti (power) that enables Them to maintain, create and dissolve the universe. It is very important to understand that the Deities in the Vedic tradition are not ordinary people and therefore are not subjected to the ordinary relationships that we observe in this world; when a form of the Mother Goddess is presented as a wife or sister, this means that the Shakti of that male Deity has a particular quality that is either identical (in the case of “sister”) or integrative (in the case of “wife”). In the case of Sarasvati, She is sometimes considered as the daughter of Brahma because Brahma manifested the universe by first uttering the “Verb” (Vacha), that Sarasvati represents, although there is no passage in shastra that presents Her in this way. For example, Narada Muni who is the son of Brahma (born from his mind) always addresses Sarasvati as his mother, and never as his sister.

Magha mela: On Magha sukla Saptami pilgrims assemble to take a sacred bath and offer their homage to Surya on the bank of the Chandrabhaga river in Konark (also called Arka Kshetra), the famous place of pilgrimage sacred to Surya. A big fair is also held at the Khandagiri caves near for a period of seven days from Magha Saptami.

Manabasa, Sudasa Brata: About 400 years ago, Kavi Balaram Das introduced this festival, still celebrated on Magha sukla Dasami in honor of Lakshmidēvi with a particular ritual that is very accessible to everyone, including people from lower castes. The *Lakshmi Purana* is recited, especially the episode about Sriya Chandaluni, and Mother Lakshmi is installed as a betel nut sitting on the newly harvested grains, on a small wooden seat. The Manda pancakes are also offered to Lakshmi and then shared as *prasadam*.

Shiva ratri: On Phalguna krishna Chaturdasi people celebrate the famous Shiva ratri, the “night of Shiva”. It is also called *jagran* festival because devotees stay awake all night, fasting, chanting, reading *shastra* and singing bhajans, offering puja to the Shiva lingam with *bilva* (*bel*) leaves and the *pancha akshara mantra Om namah Shivaya*, and keeping a ghi lamp burning all the time. Many devotees also observe a *nirjala upavasa*, in which they do not even drink water (some even avoid to swallow their own saliva, and spit it out instead). The next morning, they take bath and after worshipping Shiva again they break their fast. In *Shiva Purana*, Shiva says to His consort Parvati that no festival other than Shiva Ratri observed by his devotees gives Him so much pleasure and satisfaction.

The festival celebrates the day when Mahadeva swallowed the deadly poison produced by the churning of the milk ocean, when Devas and Asuras were trying to obtain the nectar of immortality. At first all the impurities frothed up and nobody else dared to take care of them, so Mahadeva volunteered for the dangerous task, and His throat became black blue: this is why He is also called Nilakantha. The Devas became worried and kept vigil through the night praying; their prayers are still used by devotees on Shiva ratri. It is also said that at the time of the destruction of the universe, when the world was covered in darkness, Mother Parvati restored light to the world by invoking Shiva. There are many stories about the effects of the observance of this festival. It is said that during his previous birth king Chitrabhanu of the Ikshvaku dynasty had been a hunter by name Susvara, making a livelihood by hunting birds and other animals and selling them. On a Shiva Ratri day he was roaming about in the forest and got a deer, but night fell before he could return home, so he climbed on a *bilva* tree and remained awake for the entire night, without eating or drinking. Since he had not taken any food or water for the entire day, he could not sleep due to hunger, and tossed and turned around, causing leaves falling to the ground where, unknown to him, there was a Shiva Lingam, just under the tree. At dawn he climbed down the tree and returned home, where he prepared food his family, and gave some of the food in charity to a beggar who came to his door.

Due to these meritorious actions, at the time of death he attained the abode of Shiva and later he was reborn as a King.

Another popular story says that one day Brahma and Vishnu wanted to measure the greatness of Shiva. Vishnu took the form of a boar and dived below while Brahma on his swan soared upwards; high above Brahma found a *ketaki* flower floating downwards, and claiming it was coming from the head of Shiva. So Brahma asked the flower how far above Shiva's head was, but the flower replied that it had forgotten for how long it had been falling. Brahma seized the flower and went to meet Vishnu, claiming that he had collected it from Shiva's head, but the flower exposed his lie and Brahma, angered, cursed the flower that from that day it would not be offered to Shiva. Vishnu, on the other hand, was pleased by the flower's truthfulness and blessed the flower that it would be offered on Shiva ratri. Still according to the tradition, the *ketaki* flower is offered to Shiva on this occasion. The greatest festivals for Shiva ratri are observed in Puri, Bhubaneswar, Mahendragiri, Gupteswar, Kapilas and Khiching.

Govinda Maha Dvadasi: On a Phalguna Krishna Dvadasi that falls in a particular astrological position, Puri celebrates the day when the Daru Brahman arrived at Chakra Tirtha, in the times of king Indradyumna. The last time was in 1962, next is 2009. Many pilgrims and *sadhus* converge on Puri, and before Mangala arati (in the very early morning, between 4 and 6 am) they take bath in the ocean and/or in the others of the Pancha tirthas, and then go to the temple for Jagannatha Darshana.

Dola yatra: Dola Purnima or Holi is celebrated from Phalguna sukla Dasami to Purnima. It is said that originally this festival was in honor of Kamadeva or Madana, but with the increasing popularity of Vaishnavism, Krishna as Madana Mohana integrated the character of Kamadeva and became the focus of the Dola yatra swing festival. The Deity is carried on a palanquin in a daily procession (called *chacheri*) accompanied by musicians playing various instruments and Sankirtana groups, and stops in front of households and Mathas, where food is offered. The Deity then is seated on a swing and "plays colors" with the devotees, and is smeared with purple powder called *abira*. For the entire day people go around and smear each other with colored powders, sometimes dissolved in water. The festival also allows opportunities for overcoming usually strict social boundaries, and sometimes men and women take liberties with each other. In some areas in the districts of Puri, Cuttack and Ganjam large fairs or Melanas are held, where the palanquins (*vimanas*) with the Deities of various villages come together, and villages compete for the best decorations. Many people participate to the fair buying and selling various goods, and sometimes firecrackers are used. Another popular ceremony during this festival is the Holi poda ("burning of Holi"). It is said that Holi was the sister of Hiranyakasipu, the demon king, and had received from Shiva the power of never dying of drowning or burning. When Hiranyakasipu failed to kill his saintly son Prahlada, he asked his sister to walk into the fire carrying the child, but Holi burned to death while Prahlada came out unhurt. When asked why His boon had failed, Shiva replied that His blessings were not intended to harm the innocent. To commemorate the event, a straw hut is built and set on fire. Another version of the story says that a demon called Mesha, who had the form of a ram, was causing terror in the universe so the Devas prayed Vishnu or Krishna to destroy him. So it is said that the straw hut that is set on fire on Holi represents the house of the demon.

Chaitra vrata

For the whole month of Chaitra the village streets in Orissa resonate with the *ghantas* (brass gongs) played by the Ghanta Patuas, non-Brahmin servants of the Deities, in accompaniment to their peculiar dance on the stilts which is very similar to the Karaga dance of Mysore. The Ghanta Patuas seek the blessings of the Mother Goddess in the temples, then they form groups. Like in the Hingula yatra on Visuva Sankranti, one of the Ghanta Patuas dress in female attire, with a black skirt and a black turban with two plaits of cloth on the sides, on which they place a staff balancing the holy pitcher (called *ghata*) that symbolize the Goddess, decorated with *sindhur*, *chandana*, flowers etc. After the procession the *sindhur* is distributed to the people, and the Ghanta Patua collects money and grains.

Taratarini Mela: It takes place on Tuesdays during the month of Chaitra at Taratarini Pitha, about 30 km from Berhampur. The third Tuesday is the most important day of the festival. Also on every Tuesday of the month of Chaitra at Chilika, Kalijai temple, a Jhamu yatra (festival of walking over fire) is celebrated. The Chikiti Raja also participates offering Arati to Kalijai Devi. On the last Tuesday of the month, a Bali (animal sacrifice) is offered to the temple.

Chaitra parva or Uda parva: For the entire month of Chaitra the tribal people in Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Baripada and Keonjhar celebrate the Chaitra parva or Uda parva, that in the last 200 years or so, has integrated with the Chhau festival. Chaitra parva was traditionally celebrated by Shiva Bhaktas, supported by the Maharajas of Mayurbhanj. The Bhaktas take bath in a river then go in procession with drummers to a field; they are tied to a long pole with a long cloth at their shoulders, and ankle bells are tied to their feet. Some devotees just hold to the pole without being tied to it. Then they start whirling around the pole, higher and higher, while they drop flowers from their garlands and green mangoes on the crowds underneath, that collect them eagerly. After the ceremony the Bhaktas go to offer prayers to Shiva and the Mother Goddess in Her forms of Hingula or Mangala. The same festival is called Bija Pandu by the Koya tribes in the Koraput district. In each Koya village there is a Biju gudi or sacred shrine dedicated to Mother Earth, called Gudimata or Bhumu. During the festival the men go out hunting and fishing in groups while women sing and dance. Before dark the men return home and they all celebrate together, worshipping their Deities with liquor and a blood sacrifice, then drinking and dancing together. Men wear buffalo horns decorated with peacock feather and cowries and play long cylindrical drums, women dance holding sticks with tinkling bells and striking them to keep the rhythm. Together they dance in circle singing about love and spring.

Baseli Puja: This festival is also called Chaiti Ghoda or Dummy horse dance, and is celebrated during the entire month of Chaitra, from Chaitra to Vaisakha Purnima. The description of the festival is presented in the *Kaivarta Gupta Gita* by Achyutananda Das. According to this text, during the time of the dissolution of the universe Sri Vishnu wanted to find a place to rest, so He manifested a form of a small baby to rest on a floating banyan leaf. He then created a man and asked him to hold the leaf still, while He slept soundly, but while He was sleeping a demoniac fish called Raghava swallowed the man and the leaf floated around again. Vishnu woke up, killed the demoniac fish and liberated the man, then turned the banyan leaf into a horse, and asked Visvakarma to build a boat. He then told the man that his descendents would be known as Kaivartas, and live in the land called Simhala making a livelihood by killing fish, as one fish had swallowed and almost killed him. He also instructed him that they should worship the horse Baseli as their *ista devata*. The horse died after a very long time, and turned into a girl as beautiful as Lakshmi, called Asvini Baseli. It is also said that the Horse Goddess distributed Her limbs among the fishermen (Keutas), the confectioners (Gudia), the oil merchants (Teli) and the cobblers (Mochi), who at first worshiped them separately but finally decided to reunite them. A fight ensued between the Kaivartas and the Gudias, when the Gudias locked the Deity in a house to prevent the Kaivartas from worshipping Her; the Kaivartas, feeling helpless, prayed the Deity for Her return and the Deity kicked down the wall of the house and escaped. The Gudias pursued Her and chopped Her head off, but even then the head continued to live to accept worship from the Kaivartas. The Keutas (Kaivartas), who traditionally work as fishermen and sellers of *chuda* (flat rice) worship the horse-headed Goddess Baseli, who sits on an earthen vedi and wears blood-red clothes. Baseli's sacred days are Saturdays and Tuesdays. During the festival, a horse head made of wood is worshiped in the *dinkisala* (the place where rice is de-husked).

On Chaitra Purnima, they worship a bamboo pole with *sindhur*, *chandan*, *arati* etc. Then the bamboo is split ceremonially into pieces out of which only twelve are taken out for preparation of the frame of the dummy-horse. The frame is dyed red with red clay, covered with a Pata silk cloth, and a painted horse-head made out of wood is fixed to the frame. A garland of red *mandara* flowers, sacred to the Mother Goddess, is placed on the neck of the dummy horse and it is worshipped till the Chaitra Krishna Ashtami, when it is taken out for dance. A man enters the cavity of the dummy horse, and dances to the rhythm of *dholas* (country drums) and *mahuris* (a kind of flute), while songs praise the Deity. If the dancer falls into a trance, another man replaces him. Along the dummy horse, a male and a female character (also played by a man) called Chadhua-Chadhuani or Rauta-Rautani also sing and dance. The male character dances with a long staff in his hand miming a fisherman rowing a boat, singing of love and daily household life. Finally the dummy horse rests in the center of the assembly and a song and dance competition continues for the entire night, to which both non-professional and professional groups participate.

With time, the Baseli yatra has become very popular also with other communities and is now celebrated at many Shakti temples in Orissa, especially in Puri and Cuttack. In Puri the dummy horses are decorated with many flowers and a beautiful *tahia* (head-gear of flowers).

When the festival ends the horse-head is taken out ceremonially from the frame and is preserved in a temple. Next year during the festival it is again brought out and repainted for worship and use during the dance.

Jhamu yatra: On Chaitra sukla Panchami the Jhamu yatra (walking on fire) is celebrated for Kakatpur Mangala. Thousands of devotees come to the temple of Mangala in the early morning, and after Mangala arati, Surya puja, Radha Krishna bheta and Sahana mela, the Patuas collect water from the Prachi river and seek the blessings of Mangala before firewalking. The ceremony continues into the night and is concluded with Snana Marjana and Kalika Nritya.

Ashoka Ashtami: On Chaitra sukla Ashtami, the Ratha yatra of Siva is celebrated. This day also marks the celebration of the last day of the Vasanta Navaratri festival for Durga. In Bhubaneswar the *chalanti pratima* Deity of Lingaraja, Sri Chandrasekhara, travels to the temple of Ramesvara (Mausima) and then returns after four days. The origin of the festival is related to the campaign of Sri Ramachandra against Ravana. It is said that in spite of His efforts, Sri Ramachandra remained unable to kill Ravana because Mother Kali was protecting him. Ravana's brother Vibhishana, who was a devotee of Sri Ramachandra, advised Him to also worship the Mother Goddess to get Her support, so Sri Rama prayed the Goddess for seven days with elaborate rituals, until finally He succeeded in killing Ravana. To celebrate the victory He organized a Ratha yatra for Shiva and Durga, and as the sorrow (*soka*) of Sri Rama was removed by the death of Ravana, this day is called Ashoka Ashtami.

Rama navami: Chaitra sukla Navami celebrates the appearance of Sri Ramachandra. Devotees take bath early in the morning, offer prayers to Surya, then visit the temple before breaking their fast. Sahi yatra and Rama lila celebrations are held for several days, especially in Asureswar in Cuttack district and Dasapalla in Puri district.

There are also some special festivals that are observed in exceptional circumstances.

One of these is called **Sveta arka viveha**, and is celebrated when two varieties of the auspicious banyan tree, the Bargad and the Asvattha, are found spontaneously growing together. The Bargad tree is considered the male plant, while the Asvattha is considered the female. When both these trees are found growing together, the villagers may decide to celebrate their marriage, so the parents of the "bride and groom" are chosen, and the traditional festivities follow.

Recently established festivals

Parab festival: Besides the ancient festival of tradition, in more recent times several festivals have been created to stimulate the cultural and artistic interest of people and favor handicrafts and trade. One of such events is organized during the period of Chaitra Parva by the District Council of Culture, Koraput, and continues since 1996. In a month-long festival more than 50,000 artists and sports persons participate in various competitions and programmes, such as Craft Mela, Boat Races, Rafting, Mountaineering, Artist Camp and Art Exhibition, Seminars, Book Fair, Kabi Sammelan, Quiz, Essay and Debate competitions among High School students, competitions among the physically disabled persons etc. Dance programmes include not only classical dance (Natyotsav) but also tribal and folk dances and songs. In subsequent years similar festivals have also been organized in other Districts such as Balangir, Bargarh, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Sambalpur, Ganjam-Surabhi, Malkangiri-Malyabanta etc.

Puri Beach Festival: The Puri Beach Festival is conducted by the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Orissa (HRAO), and co-sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the Department of Tourism, Government of Orissa, Development Commissioner of Handicrafts and the Eastern Zonal Cultural Center, Kolkata. It is held from 5 to 9 November, with a variety of events from classical Odissi dance to fashion shows.

Konark Festival: The Konark Dance & Music Festival is organized by eminent Odissi guru Gangadhar Pradhan's Orissa Dance Academy in association with the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre, Kolkata at Konark Natya Mandap in Konark every year. A brain-child of the Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee Odissi exponent, the festival is the oldest of its kind in the state to have recognition at the national level.

It is held from 1 to 5 December every evening. Another famous cultural festival is the **Muktesvara dance festival**, held every year from 14 to 16 January at the Shiva Muktesvara shrine (that is the most accessible temple in Bhubaneswar), the festival is organized by the Tourism Department of the Government of Orissa and broadcast live on TV.

Kalinga Mahotsava: This festival of martial dances is held every year on 4 and 5 February at Dhauli, the place where the ancient war of Kalinga was fought, and where emperor Ashoka converted to Buddhism. The connection between martial arts and Buddhism, a true religion of peace, is less unlikely than it seems, as demonstrated by the famous Shiao lin tradition in China. The Vedic tradition, too, upholds the positive connection between peace and martial arts, as only ethically qualified and trained *kshatriyas* can protect the peace and prosperity of the people. Some people think that a *kshatriya* is supposed to be some kind of violent and aggressive war-mongering fellow who likes to boss people around and finds his power in a gun or other weapon, much like some of the unqualified military or police personnel they see in degraded societies, but this is certainly very far from the Vedic concept. A *kshatriya* must be qualified and trained as a martial arts expert, motivated by selfless duty and compassion, and practice real *ahimsa* (non-violence) that is not a blind renunciation to the use of force, but the “absence of hatred” that is born from the absence of personal attachment. Another festival that is held in Dhauli is called **Dhauri Mahotsava**, and is celebrated from 25 to 27 March every year, organized by the Orissa Dance Academy, one of the premier cultural institution of Orissa, founded by Guru Gangadhar Pradhan in the year 1975. The festival was started in 2003 and highlights a variety of classical to folk items such as Odissi dance, Odissi vocal, Mardal recital, Chhau dance, Gotipua dance, Daskathia, Pala, Yajna, Sankirtan, etc. Near about 500 artistes from different disciplines perform on the different days of the Mahotsava.

Rajarani music festival: It is held in February or March (dates have been varying) at the Rajarani temple in Bhubaneswar. The temple is not active any more, but is preserved as an archeological site by the Government. The festival was conceived to be organized by the Department of Tourism in association with organizations like Orissa Sangeet Natak Academi, Bhubaneswar Music Circle, NALCO and the Union Ministry of Tourism.

Ekamra Mahotsava: The ancient name of Bhubaneswar was Ekamra kshetra or Ekamra kanana, from the mango grove where Shiva and Parvati reside. The Ekamra festival is a 10 days event that offers the tourists an exhibition package that includes not only Odissi dance and music, but also exhibitions of handloom and handicrafts, arts and crafts, and non-vegetarian cooking that the local people find “mouth-watering and finger-licking”.

Sri Khsetra Mahotsava: Started in 2005, the “extravaganza of art and culture” includes not only Odissi dance and music, but also exhibitions of handloom and handicrafts, sand-art, and non-vegetarian cooking. It is very deplorable to see that the local people and the cultural authorities present non-vegetarian food as an integral and important part of their culture, “on a par with Jagannath” as a “tourist attraction”.

Joranda mela, or Mahima mela: The Mahima sect was founded in the 1870s by Sadhu Sundara Das, called by his followers Mahima Gosain. Sadhu Sundara Das was temporarily converted to Christianity by British missionaries, but then declared himself as the reincarnation of Jesus Christ appeared in Puri and founded a new iconoclastic movement called Mahima Dharma. In 1881, after gathering some followers, he attacked the temple of Jagannatha in the attempt to destroy the Deities. Sundara Das subsequently died in 1888, but his Mahima sect continues to exist as a hybrid form of Christianity and Buddhism that still carries a lot of Hindu externals. The members of the Mahima Dharma strive to achieve nirvana/svarga after death, consider God to be an impersonal, formless void (which they call Alekh Brahma), burn *ghi* in a *jajnan kund* without mantras or offerings to gods, simply “to bring peace back into the earth’s life”, do not study Shastras but accept vows of generic renunciation (*vairagi* or *apara sannyasi*), and worship the Samadhi Pitha of their founder. It is said that the Mahima Mela was established for the first time in 1874 by the founder of the tradition, and since then it has been regularly celebrated every year for three days at Joranda in Dhenkanal district (about 25 km from Dhenkanal town) on Magha Purnima or Magha Shukla Chaturdasi. During the festival the members of the sect gather to strengthen their social and community ties, hold initiation ceremonies, and participate to a fair where many goods are sold and purchased.

Temples and Deities

When devotees visit a place of pilgrimage, they generally think about taking a bath in a holy *tirtha* and visit the traditional temple of the presiding Deity. This is usually just one temple, and sometimes a second temple is visited, for example the temple of the consort (as in Shiva and Shakti, or Lakshmi and Narayana) or a close associate (as in Hari and Hara, Sri Rama and Hanuman, etc). For example, pilgrims visiting Kashi take bath in the Ganga and visit the Visvanatha and the Annapurna temples. Similarly, pilgrims coming to Puri take bath in the Ocean and visit the temple of Jagannatha, often paying their respects in the Lokanatha temple.

With the passing of time, the number of temples in the places of pilgrimage grows, as Deities are gradually installed in the Mathas and Ashrams established to give accommodation and assistance to the devotees and to engage them in spiritual discourses and devotional service. The vast majority of the temples in India have been built in relatively recent times (less than 2,000 years ago) as Hindu tradition has always offered many alternatives to Deity worship - specifically meditation or Yoga, personal Japa or Bhajan, spiritual discussions and readings, Homas or fire sacrifices, worship in the home of the family Deities and Salagrama shila, direct worship of the Sun in the open (rather than the worship of a Deity of Surya in a temple), worship of sacred water reservoirs (Ganga and other sacred rivers etc), worship of hills (for example Govardhana and Arunachala) mostly by circumambulation, worship of beneficial plants (such as Tulasi, Bilva or Kalpa Vata), and worship of the Deity in the form of Yantras and Mandalas. Even many Deities and especially sacred stones (such as Govardhana shila, Shiva lingam etc) were often worshiped simply under a tree or in a cave rather than in a temple. Many temples are simply a tiny room with a small dome built directly in the open, sometimes on the road, where getting Darshana is extremely easy for anyone. At these tiny temples, too, devotees congregate to hold Sankirtana and religious discourses, especially in the evening and in special celebrations.

The *Puranas* speak of Nila Madhava and Adi Nrisimha worshiped in a cave in the Nilachala hill, near the Rohini kunda and Kalpa Bata tree. According to the *shastra*, king Indradyumna first built the Mahavedi or Adapa mandapa at Gundicha, installing Yajna Nrisimha as the presiding Deity of his Asvamedha yajnas and excavating the Indradyumna Sarovara. Then he built the Antarvedi or Ratnavedi at the present site of the Sri Mandira, and installed Sri Jagannatha there.

Some other very important temples were then established, specifically Lokanatha and the Ashta Sambhu (Kapala Mochana, Kama, Kshetrapala, Yamesvara, Markandesvara, Visvesvara, Nilakantha and Batesvara), who later became the Pancha Pandavas (Yamesvara, Lokanatha, Markanda, Nilakantha, and Kapalamochana).

The temples of Vishnu (including Narasimha) are recognized from the outside by the *chakra* on top of the temple dome, and by the Garuda sitting outside the entrance door. Shiva's temples are characterized by a *trishula* (trident) on top of the temple dome, and by the bull *vahana* (Vrishabha, sometimes called Nandi) sitting outside the entrance door. Shakti's temples have the lion *vahana* outside the entrance door. The temples of Hanuman do not have any *vahana* but they usually carry a trident on the dome as Hanuman is considered a manifestation of Shiva.

At present more than 200 temples exist in Puri, some of which very ancient, others less ancient or recent.

It is very difficult to calculate the antiquity of a place of worship because very often the more recent temples are built on the original place of a much more ancient shrine, just like more recent *vigrahas* are installed in the place of very ancient ones that were lost or damaged. The antiquity of a particular temple or matha generally adds to the importance of the place not because of historical reasons, but because of the intensity of the devotion that has been focused on the Deity or on the place by a great number of devotees. However, such power of devotion can be contaminated by the negative influence of materialistic people and by lack of sincerity of the temple management in the service of the Deities, and even a Deity that has been intensely worshiped for a long time will cease to manifest spiritual power when defiled and or maimed, as God is supremely free and independent, and can become manifest and non-manifest at any time. The difference between an ordinary statue and a *vigraha* is the direct manifestation of the divine power, that accepts to appear in that particular form, attracted by sincere devotion, in order to bless the devotee. When there is no scope for such devotion and worship, the divine presence can withdraw at any time.

The spiritual value of temples and Deities cannot be estimated according to material calculations as with ordinary antiques on the commercial market, but only according to the devotion and to the level of consciousness of the worshipers. For this reason it is extremely important to correct the bad habit of referring to the Deities with demeaning or downright negative terms, such as “statue” or “idol”. According to the Webster’s Dictionary of the English language, among the meanings of “idol” we find “a false god”, “pretender, impostor”, “a form or appearance visible but without substance”, “a false conception”, “fallacy”. The ONLY definition of “idolatry” (literally “worship of idols”) is “the worship of a physical object as a god” and “immoderate attachment or devotion to something”. The ONLY definition of “idolater” is “a worshiper of idols, a person who admires intensely and often blindly one who is usually not an object of worship”. The term “idol” is very derogative and is therefore never used to indicate the Christian cross or the images of Christ, Mary or the saints, or the Black Stone that is the center of worship and pilgrimage in the Muslim Kaaba at Mecca. It should therefore not be used to indicate the sacred images worshiped by Hindus. A statue is an image that has no particular meaning except the artistic, symbolic or historic and therefore is not usually an object of worship. Better definitions, besides the traditional *vigraha*, *murti*, *archa* *vigraha*, are “sacred image”, “Deity”, or “icon” in the case of a sacred painting.

Similarly, one should never use the intrinsically derogatory definitions of “myth”, “mythology”, “legend”. According to the Webster’s Dictionary of the English language, “myth” means “an unfounded or false notion, a person or thing having only an imaginary or unverifiable existence”. “Mythical” means “existing only in the imagination, fictitious, imaginary”, and “mythological” means “lacking factual basis or historical validity”. “Legend” means “a story coming down from the past, popularly regarded as historical although not verifiable”, while “legendary” means “fictitious”. Better definitions are “sacred stories”, “sacred tradition” etc.

In the Hindu tradition, historical verification through the presence of archeological relics, or even more so the lack of such historical verification, is not considered important or even relevant as evidence (or disproof) for the factual existence of an event or a person, or their position in time. In fact, it is not possible to prove that something never existed by claiming that there is no evidence of its existence in the past, because very easily such relics can be lost or destroyed, especially when civilizations burned their dead and favored natural biodegradable materials for their buildings and possessions. Even when such relics from the past have reached us, they are obviously only a small percentage of the original existing objects (human remains, tools, buildings etc), so we can easily conclude that in some cases the totality of objects were lost and therefore we would be unable to “historically prove” their existence although they did exist. At the best, we can only prove that something did exist, not that something did not exist. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

Another major defect of the so-called “historical mentality” is that it is based on the faulty concept of linearity in progress, from the simple to the complex, from the primitive to the refined, from the use of stone to the use of bronze and iron and then plastic. We now know that several different degrees and even different concepts of technology can coexist in time, as demonstrated by several groups of human beings who continued, well until the last century, to live happily and contentedly according to technology parameters that are generally classified as “stone age”. The linear concept of history also disregards the specific requirements and value systems of different cultures, for example the “fundamental invention of the wheel” makes very little or no sense for cultures that live on mountainous slopes or thick forests, and heavy shoes certainly do not improve the quality of life in hot climates where people walk on a flat sandy ground.

After clarifying this important point, we will report for each temple or holy place the time frame that is generally considered accurate, and in case of controversial information, we will simply mention it without implying that we consider it correct. The same applies with reference to the beliefs of the different groups of people and different traditions.

We will now give an overview of the most famous holy places and temples in Puri.

Bata Mangala or Marga Devi

This small temple is just outside the town of Puri (about 3 km from town) and is sometimes considered within Puri itself as guarding the access road. Here all the people going to Puri and leaving Puri stop and offer their *pranam* to the Mother for Her blessings to be able to return to the holy city. All drivers offer their homage to the Deity even without stopping the vehicle.

Also, the local people bring here their vehicles to be blessed when they purchase them and on special occasions. In this place Devi showed the way to Brahma who was coming to Puri for the installation of Sri Jagannatha, and therefore She is called Marga Devi, the Goddess that protects the road into Puri.

Mother Batamangala is sitting on a lotus flower and has four arms, holding the *trisula* (upper left), the *abhaya mudra* (lower left), the *sankha* (upper right) and the *varada mudra* (lower right). The *trisula* is the trident weapon of Shiva-Shakti and symbolizes the triads, including the control over the three *gunas*. The *sankha* or conchshell is an auspicious symbol of blessings for devotees and threat to demons. The *abhaya mudra* is the hand gesture intended to dissipate fear from the heart of the worshiper, and the *varada mudra* is the hand gesture of offering blessings.

The temple itself seems to be very ancient as the Garbha griha is several feet below the road level; the surrounding hall for the circumambulation of the Deity has images of the various forms of the Mother Goddess. However, the entrance has been decorated and painted in the bright colors characteristic of the Oriya artistic taste, and kept in excellent conditions. The Mahanta and the Pujakas are very nice and friendly, but if the rush of devotees makes the Darshana difficult, only a few meters further on the road there is a second very small temple dedicated to Batamangala where the Deity is easily visible even from the opposite side of the road.

At a short distance the Batamangala temple, on the opposite side of the road, we find a Muktesvara Shiva temple. A little further on, is the open temple of **Bata Mahavira**, a Hanuman temple. The tall standing Deity offers blessings to all. The names of these temples suggest that in previous times there was some famous Bata, or sacred banyan tree in the vicinity, but at present no such tree is visible.

Ma Vasantei or Basantei: This relatively new temple is between Batamangala and Atharnala; the two Deities there are Vasantei and Vimala.

Atharnala: The name Atharnala means “eighteen pillars”, and it is the name of the bridge where pilgrims coming from north (Bhubaneswar, Cuttack) cross into the town of Puri after getting permission from Marga Devi. It is said that the Atharnala bridge was built by king Bhanudeva I (1264-1278). It is 290 feet long and it crosses over a swampy river (called Madhupuri) that is a branch of the Mahanadi. It is still largely used for vehicles except for trucks and buses, that enter Puri from a backside road.

Next to the bridge, there is a small temple with the footprints of Sri Chaitanya, commemorating his ecstasy when he reached Puri: it is said that here Sri Chaitanya started to run wildly toward Jagannatha temple, and no one from his group could reach him. In the vicinity of the bridge there are two main temples, one dedicated to Nilakantha Mahadeva and another to Devi or Grama Devi. After Atharnala the bifurcation of the road leads on the right to the old city, and on the left to Konark.

Alama Chandi: A little ahead on the road into the old town of Puri after the Atharnala bridge gate, we find the famous Deity of Durga called Alamba or Alama Chandi. This Deity plays an important role especially during the Navakalevara festival, when the group of temple Sevakas, *brahmanas* and officers visit the temple to seek Her blessings for success in their mission, and especially when the Daru is brought here for a secret ritual before being carried into Sri Mandira. The Deity of Alamba Chandi is black, in a standing position, with thrilling eyes and four arms. The two lions at the gate dominantly crouch over elephants: it is the emblem of Mother Vimala. Just at the side of Alamba’s temple there is a small temple dedicated to Mahadeva, several feet below the road level.

Generally the pilgrims arrive in Puri by bus, train or car. As the present bus station in Puri is just next to Gundicha, they immediately get the opportunity to see this famous landmark of the holy city.

Gundicha ghara: Situated on the opposite end of the Grand Road, the temple of Gundicha is smaller than Sri Mandira, but has a very nice garden full of trees, including the Yajna Bata or the banyan trees next to which king Indradyumna originally installed the Deity of Jagannatha. The name is usually considered to be derived from the name of king Indradyumna’s wife Gundicha, although some say that Gundicha is a tribal name, since Gudisha or Gudi is the tribal name for a temple.

It is possible that both versions are true, in the sense that king Indradyumna’s wife may have been called Gundicha. In Sanskrit, *gotha*, *gudha* and *gund* indicate a hidden place, so it is certainly possible that in ancient times the Deity of Jagannatha (whose origins are clearly stated as a Deity worshiped by Sabaras or “tribal” *vanavasis*) was installed in a cave - which was the “tribal model of temple”.

Regarding the name of Indradyumna's queen, in our opinion there is no contradiction as she may already had that name or may have been given a new name at the time of the installation of Jagannatha, as it often happens in the Hindu tradition. Gundicha has two gates, separated by a temple office, and they are both on the same side facing the Sri Mandira. The second gate of the Gundicha ghara is called Nakachana dvāra, as it is said that the queen of Chodaganga Deva (Gundichora), pawned her nose ring (called *nakachana*) to build it.

On the corner of the outer wall of Gundicha, towards the temple of Yajna Nrisimha, we find a very small temple with a small Jagannatha (with two hands) standing on a lotus pedestal, and Tulasi Devi (also called Vrinda, which the people of Puri identify with the main *gopi* or Radhika) kneeling in front of Him with folded hands (and a Tulasi plant on her head). Inside, the walls of the temple room are decorated with images from the *lila* of Krishna and Rama. There are also some clay statues (images that are not worshiped) of Sādbhujā Gaurāṅgā with two devotees engaged in Sankirtana, and Krishna and Balarama on horseback as in the Kanchi abhijana *lila*, in front of which several *brahmanas* in two rows facing each other. This temple is rather particular because it does not have permanent Deities, and therefore it is called Ghara or "house" rather than Mandira. However, it is the center of the celebrations during the famous Ratha Yatra festival, when Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra, Sudarshana and the *vijaya murtis* of Madana Mohana, Sridevi, Bhudevi and Rama Krishna leave the Sri Mandira and travel to Gundicha, to remain here for seven days of celebrations. The rituals in Gundicha are performed by the King and seven other categories of Sevakas.

The *Puranas* call this holy place as Mahavedi or Yajnavedi (while the place of Sri Mandira is called Antarvedi or Ratnavedi), as it is the place where Jagannatha was installed originally. The distance from the Yajnavedi to the Ratnavedi is exactly 2,688.0696 meters — the length of the travel during the Ratha yatra. Different Sampradayas honor Gundicha by attributing a special importance in the *lilas* of their *ista devata*; for example the devotees of Sri Ramachandra believe that Gundicha is (or represents, which for the spiritual perspective is not very different) the place where Sitadevi appeared, and therefore call it Janaka Puri ("the city of Janaka, Sita's father").

The Gaudiya Vaishnavas honor it as Vrindavana, the holy place of beauty and simplicity where Krishna spent the early years of His childhood playing with His foster father and mother and especially with His intimate friends the cowherd boys and girls (*gopa* and *gopi*). In this perspective, the Gaudiya Vaishnavas consider the Ratha yatra as the re-enactment of the journey of Krishna, Baladeva and Subhadra who traveled from Their capital Dvaraka Puri to Kurukshetra on the occasion of a solar eclipse and met the inhabitants of Vrindavana who had also traveled there for the auspicious occasion. Seeing their beloved Krishna, the *gopis* were overwhelmed by the loving desire to take Him back to Vrindavana, and taking hold of the reins of the chariots, pulled Krishna, Baladeva and Subhadra back there. About halfway between Sri Mandira and Gundicha, there was a river with a sandy beach, called Sarada Bali. It is said that king Narasimha Deva built a bridge here, and then gradually the river disappeared. However, during heavy rainfall, this area is still the most prone to high water.

Near Gundicha, just on the eastern side, we find the temple of Yajna Nrisimha.

Yajna or Adi Nrishimha: This very important temple of Narasimha is situated just on the eastern side of Gundicha temple. It is a very nice temple, and the Mahanta and Pujakas are very friendly.

Lord Nrishimhadeva is the original Adideva of Sri Purushottama Kshetra, and it is said that Indradyumna first installed this Deity to obtain the blessings of the Lord to install Jagannatha. The Deity has four arms, and holds Srimati Lakshmidēvi on His lap. Other Deities are Prahlada, Garuda, Dasa avatara, Mahavira. The festivals are Nrsimha chaturdasi, Janmastami, Radhastami, Dola, Jhulana etc. It is said that the present temple was built by Nangula Nrsimhadeva Maharaja. When Nila Madhava disappeared during the Indraduymna lila, and Vidyapati could not find Him any more, at His place Narasimha appeared under the Krishna aguru Vriksha (as related in *Skanda Purana*, 15.91).

Here Indradyumna Maharaja started the *yajna*. Just in front of the temple of Yajna Nrisimha we find a small temple of **Bali Kapalesvara Shiva**, besides a large banyan tree.

A little further on, towards Grand Road and Sri Mandir, we find the **Dasa Avatara Matha** or temple (which in fact is pretty much the same), housing several Deities including Gopala Krishna (with a flute), Sri Rama with Lakshmana and Sita, Hanuman, a white Nrisimha, a blue Varaha, small Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadra, a four-armed Chaitanya next to a four-armed Narayana, Ganesha, and a Bhajana kutir room dedicated to the Guru, with a picture of the Pancha tattva and a picture of Sita Rama with Lakshmana, Bharata, Satrugna and Hanuman. Some say that Jayadeva Gosvami lived here with Padmavati.

Other Nrisimha temples

Kandu Ashrama, also called **Pandu Nrisimha** This very old temple is on the south of the Sri Mandira, inside Kandu Ashrama, near Yamesvara temple in Gaudabada Sahi. The Deity of Pandu Nrisimha has eight arms and is represented in the act of tearing the body of Hiranyakasipu. Other Deities are Lakshmi Nrisimha Narayana, Pandu Nrisimha, Nrsimhani, Ganesh, Navagraha, Mahavira. Inside the compound smaller shrines are dedicated to Krishna, Kali and Hanuman. The festivals are Nrsimha Chaturdasi, Janmashtami, Radhastami, Durga puja, Sola puja, Navaratri, Ganesha puja. The secretary of the administration committee is Raghunath Pratihari.

Markandesvara Nrisimha: This Nrisimha Deity is inside the compound of Markandesvara Shiva temple. Nrisimha is a major connection link between the worship of Vishnu and the worship of Shiva.

Singhada Nrisimha: This temple is situated in Harachandi Sahi and is also called Singhara Tota.

Chudanga Nrisimha: It is in Chodaganga Sahi. This Deity was worshipped by Bira Surendra Sai, an Oriya military general from Sambalpur, who fought against the English army.

Barabati Nrisimha: This Deity is inside the Barabati jaga ghara, installed by Samartha Rama Das, the Guru of Chatrapati Shivaji. When the original Deity was damaged, a new Deity was installed by Ramachandra Rathsharma, the father of Sadashiva Rathsharma.

Dinanath Nrisimha: This Deity was installed by Somapa Maharaja Dinanath, a Swami of the Dakshinaparva Matha.

Jejerama Nrisimha: This Deity was installed by Nirankariboha Jejeram from Punjab, near the Dodovala Dharmasala, now Jaduani Library in Kundeibenta Sahi.

Arka Nrisimha: This Deity is in was installed by M. Brahma of the Mahiprakash Matha, in the Chakra Nrisimha temple in Chakratirtha, together with a Deity of Lakshmi Nrisimha.

Chakra Nrisimha: This temple is on the east of Sri Mandira, in Chakratirtha road, and it is also called as the Abode of Varuna Deva, where Lakshmidivi comes to visit her father for one month every year. The Chakra Nrisimha Deity is closely encircled with a ring (*chakra*). The other Deities are Chakra Narayana, Adi Narayana and Lakshmi Narayana.

Rendha Nrisimha: This Deity was installed by king Kapilendra Deva; the temple is on the Brahmagiri road, towards Alarnath, and is described in the chapter on Puri district.

For more information about Nrisimha worship, please consult the Introduction.

Vishnu temples

Satya Narayana: This relatively recent temple is in Grand Road and is the corresponding external Deity of the Satya Narayana that is worshiped inside Sri Mandira. The concept of Satya Narayana became particularly popular during the Muslim domination of Orissa as a hybrid to accommodate the idea of Allah as the supreme male God that could be equated with Narayana. A similar Deity is also inside Sri Mandira; for this reason sometimes people say that inside Jagannatha temple there are even priests who recite prayers in Urdu and offer *namaz* like the Muslims. The temple tradition observes a special type of *kirtana* called *palla*, that consists in the musical recitation of shastra like songs, accompanied by with musical instruments.

Anantasayana: This very small temple is in the main beach walk at Svargadvara. Radha Damodara puja is done here every day during Kartika, and on Amavasya Narayana comes here for Sagara vijaya.

Patiarani mandira: The Patiarani temple is dedicated to Sri Sri Radha Krishna and gets its name from the Vaishnavi Queen who established it, dedicating her life to devotion to the Deities when she became a widow. It is in Grand Road, and it is open only briefly in the morning and in the evening for the puja, otherwise the doors are closed. Most of the Mathas in Puri have Radha Krishna Deities, and there are also some recent temples, such as the Radha Krishna temple at Indradyumna Sarovara.

Let's now visit the Tirthas (holy water reservoirs) and their temples.

Tirthas

The famous Pancha Tirtha of Puri are Indradyumna sarovara, Markandeya sarovara, Svetaganga sarovara, Rohini kunda (inside Sri Mandira) and Mahodadhi (the Ocean). To these traditional five, we can also add the Narendra sarovara, that takes the place of the Rohini kunda for the lower caste pilgrims generally not allowed inside Sri Mandira (the Jagannatha temple). Another important holy reservoir is the Parvati sagara (inside Lokanath temple). Each Tirtha has several temples that may be listed in the chapter on Mathas.

Mahodadhi

The "Great Ocean" along the beach of Puri on the south-east of Sri Mandira is called Mahodadhi, Sagara, Samudra and *sarvotirtha-maya*, "the essence of all the holy bathing places". The ocean beach is divided into two parts by the road connecting Sri Mandira to the beach: towards the south we have Svargadvara (where Brahma descended to Earth for the installation of Jagannatha) and Chakratirtha (where the Daru Brahman landed).

Chakratirtha: Here the holy wooden log originally used to carve the Deities of Jagannatha reached the shore on Phalguna sukla Dvadasi, also called Govinda Maha Dvadasi, where the Balgandi (Balukhanda) Nala empties into the sea, also called Banki Muhana, about 3 km from Sri Mandira. Govinda Dvadasi is a rare astrological occurrence that falls once every many years. The last was in 1962. The next is in 2009. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims assemble here to take bath in the Ocean, then they visit the temple of Jagannatha for Darshana and give charity to *brahmanas*. The place where the Daru Brahman landed is marked by a small temple with an image of Vishnu's Chakra that is regularly worshiped together with small Deities of Jagannatha, Balabhadra, and Subhadra. Next to it, a small temple dedicated to Sani (Saturn), and at some distance, a tank called Piligrama, where pilgrims perform Sraddha for their deceased forefathers.

Chakra Narayana: On the beach at Cakratirtha road, in Balukhanda, Banki Muhana, there is a very small and rundown temple which marks the place where the Daru originally came ashore. The Indra Nilamani Purana relates that the Daru arrived on Govinda dvadasi, in the month of Phalguna. Pilgrims come here in that day to take an auspicious bath. Very near is a temple dedicated to Sani (Saturn, a manifestation of Shiva) and the Navagraha or nine planets.

Chakra Nrisimha (also called Jagannatha Sasural): Another important temple in this area is dedicated to Chakra Nrisimha, said to have been installed by Kandu Rishi. The temple itself is said to have been built in the 1930s. There are three Nrisimha Deities in the temple - Chakra Nrisimha in the middle, Lakshmi Nrisimha to His west and Adi Nrisimha to His east - all accompanied by Lakshmi Devi. The name of the temple suggests a connection with Varuna, Lakshmi's father (called *jagannatha sasural*, of "Jagannatha's father in law"). The story of the churning of the Ocean of Milk says that when in Satya yuga the Devas participated in the churning of the ocean, Mahalakshmi appeared from the ocean and married Vishnu. Therefore she is considered the daughter of Varuna, the Deva of the ocean. Every year the Deity of Sridevi leaves Sri Mandira and comes here for the entire month of Margasira; Her return to the temple is celebrated with great solemnity. Every Amavasya, the Deity of Amavasya Narayana (from the Sri Mandira) goes to the ocean in procession as representative of Jagannatha.

Bedi Hanuman: The temple is in the Chakratirtha area called Balukhanda, and is also called Dariya Mahavira. Bedi means "chains" and refers to the fact that this Deity appears to be chained to the wall from the waist down. It is said that Jagannatha asked Hanuman to remain here and keep an eye on the sea because the local people were afraid that the ocean would overflow, but when Sri Ramachandra appeared at Ayodhya, Hanuman could not resist to the idea of joining Him in His *lila* and so he went to Ayodhya. Some people say that Hanuman could not resist the urge to go to Ayodhya and eat the special sweets there. So in the end Jagannatha decided to tie him up from his hip to the wall. When the 1999 cyclone hit Orissa and the waters went sweeping inland for kilometers, completely destroying the port city of Paradvip, for example, the waves stopped right in front of the temple and did not proceed further. The temple of Bedi Hanuman is also considered a Matha; the main celebration is the Hanuman festival on Pana Sankranti, on 13 or 14 April.

Puruna Nahara: The ancient King's palace (that was used at the time of king Prataparudra) is in the Chakratirtha Road area, near the beach, and includes within its campus the temples/mathas of Sonar Gauranga and Nadiar Gauranga. In the Sonar Gauranga Matha there is a golden *ashtadhatu* Deity of Sri Chaitanya and another golden Deity of Sri Krishna, said to have been installed by king Prataparudra.

Considering the liberal philosophy of Chaitanya, we must say that it is rather strange that this temple does not allow entry to foreign devotees. Next to it, we find the Nadiar Gauranga Matha. For more information about these temples, see the chapter on Mathas. The ocean beach comprises not only the Chakra Tirtha area, but after crossing the Temple Road (the street that connects Sri Mandira with the beach), it continues in the area known as Svargadvara.

Svargadvara: In this place Lord Brahma descended in the occasion of the installation of the original Deities of Lord Jagannatha, therefore it is known as the "road to the higher planets". The crematorium is also a place sacred to Lord Shiva. Inside the crematorium compound, there are small shrines to Bhutanatha and Smasani Chandi.

Indradyumna sarovara

The **Indradyumna sarovara** or Indradyumna Pushkarini is in the north-west area, in Matiapada, near Gundicha temple. The surface of the lake is 396 x 485 feet. Nilakanthesvara Shiva was installed by Indradyumna on the south west bank. Here water is offered to the forefathers on Asadha sukla Panchami, especially if it falls on Magha Nakshatra, as *Skanda Purana* affirms that offering *pinda* here accrues the merit of celebrating an Asvamedha yajna. It is said that the lake was formed by the hooves of the innumerable cows that were donated by the King to the *brahmanas* during the Asvamedha yajna, and filled with the water he poured on the hands of the *brahmanas* while delivering them as gifts.

Nilakantha: This is one of the most important Shiva temples in Puri. Inside the temple there is the Shiva lingam that is said to have been installed by king Indradyumna himself. The other Deities are Shiva Parvati, Narayana, Lakshmi Narayana, Kasi Visvanatha, Patita Pavana, Sarasvati, Vanambara Mahadeva, Savitri Mata, Kartikesvara, Ganesh, Mahavira, Gopinath, Radha Krishna, Gala Madhava, Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadra, Nrishimha, Dasa avatara, Narayana, Vana Durga. Here the leaves of Sami plant are offered to Shiva to appease Sani (planet Saturn), a very rare worship system. The festivals observed are Shiva ratri, Bhaunri puja, Dola purnima, etc In front of the Nilakantha temple, there is a rather recent temple with Deities of Sri **Radha and Krishna**. Just outside this Radha Krishna temple, there is a small shrine to **Swami Narayana**, who is believed to have lived here to engage in bhajana.

On the platform just above the Sarovara water level, there are two small shrines with the images of **Matsya Madhava** and **Bhuvaneshvari**, that the local *pujaks* are wrongly presenting as King Indradyumna and Queen Gundicha.

On the way to the ghat access to Indradyumna there is a small temple, called **Panchamukhi Hanuman**, houses a Deity of Hanuman who has actually eight arms and three faces. Another incongruence in the same temple is a rather tall Deity of Nila Madhava, that the *pujaka* calls "Narayana". This Deity holds a lotus flower in His hand, and on the lotus a small Lakshmi Devi (Kamala) is sitting; the *pujaka* states that it is Brahma, ignoring the fact that Brahma sits on the lotus that grows from the navel of Narayana, not on the lotus that He holds in His hand.

Markandeya sarovara

The **Markandeya sarovara**, described in *Skanda Purana* (3.49), is in the west area, in Markandesvara Sahi. It is said that during the time of *pralaya*, here Shiva heard a child crying and he found Bala Mukunda lying on a banyan leaf, sucking His big toe. On looking inside His mouth, he saw the fourteen worlds. He decided to dig a tank there, and then remained there in the form of a Shiva lingam. The tradition of pilgrimage to Markandeya Sarovara is shown by the images of pilgrims shaving their heads there.

Markandesvara Shiva: This is one of the most important Shiva temples in Puri. Its compound, built on the bank of the Markanda Pushkarini, or Markandeya Sarovara, is about 500 meters on the north of Jagannatha temple, in Markandesvara Sahi.

The present temple was built by Kundala Keshari (811-829) of the Somavamsa dynasty, is about 55 feet below ground level and has a heavy layer of plastering covering the original carvings. It is said that Markandeya Rishi himself excavated this Sarovara by order of Vishnu.

The story of Markandesvara Rishi is as follows: Markanda Muni had no sons, so he prayed Shiva to bless him with a child. Granting the boon, Shiva said that the child would die after seven years only. When the boy reached the age of seven, his mother was crying and advised the boy not to go outside the temple, but to embrace the lingam and chant Mahadeva's name. When Yamaraja came to take the boy away, the boy clutched the lingam so strongly that Yamaraja's deathly blow was absorbed by the Lingam, which broke into many pieces. The boy received the blessing of immortality, and still is known as one of the main sages, who lives through the annihilation of the universe. The Lingam sits in a small *kunda* full with water, and bubbles come up constantly to the surface from inside. On the opposite side of the compound there is a shrine dedicated to the Sapta Matrikas, excavated in relatively recent times, with Deities of Vaishnavi, Rudrani or Mahesvari, Brahmani, Sodasi or Kumari, Varahi, Indrani, and Chamunda, together with Vishnu and Ganesha. These Deities of the Mother Goddess are in black chlorite, 5 feet tall, seated on throne with a child in their lap; the upper two arms represent the terrible aspects, the lower two the benevolent aspect.

The Sapta Matrikas are the original Ashta Matrikas minus Lakshmidēvi, and are the precursors of the 64 yoginis. The *Durga saptasati* says the Sapta Matrikas appeared from Durga's body to kill Raktabija; according to the *Matsya purana*, the Sapta Matrikas were also invoked by Shiva in order to kill the Asura Andhaka. Within the Markandesvara temple compound there is also a temple dedicated to Shiva Dabalesvara, a small shrine dedicated to Lord Jagannatha, and another that contains a broken Deity of Narayana.

The Deities are Markandesvara Shiva lingam, broken in pieces since the time of Markandeya Rishi, Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadra, Ganesh, Ma Parvati, Ma Durga, Navagraha, Mahavira, Narayana (at present not worshiped because the Deity is damaged), Dasa Mahavidya. The festivals are Balarama Purnima, Shiva ratri, Durga puja, Sitala Sasti, Kartika utsava, Dola Purnima, Chandan yatra. The administration committee is managed by the Sevayat and the Sahi people.

Svetaganga sarovara

This Tirtha, mentioned in *Skanda Purana*, is south of Sri Mandira, in Svetaganga lane, Bali Sahi. Near the Svetaganga Sarovara, considered non-different from Ganga, are the temple of Kapalamochana Shiva and the Gangamata Gosvami Matha. As the temple of Kapalamochana Shiva is not inside the compound of Svetaganga, we have described it separately. For the description of the Gangamata Gosvami Matha, see the chapter on the Mathas and Ashrams. Sveta Madhava was a King of Treta yuga, and with his spiritual power he obtained the boon that any devotee who would take Mahaprasadam in his kingdom would not die prematurely. Here King Sveta Madhava installed Sveta Madhava (a Vishnu/Shiva form). The other Deities are Mother Ganga, Mahavira, Ganesha, and the Navagraha (nine planets). Next to the Sveta Madhava shrine, we find the Muktisila, the footprints of Vishnu. The festivals are Shiva ratri, Janmashtami, Durga puja, Rama Navami.

Narendra sarovara

This tank is also called Chandan sarovara because here the annual Chandana yatra is celebrated. Every day for 21 days the *vijaya murtis* from Sri Mandira come here to have a boat ride. For more information about the Chandana yatra, please see the chapter on Festivals. It is near Market Square, on the north-east side of the temple. The surface of the lake is 834 x 873 feet. In the middle there is an island with a small temple, connected to the shore by a bridge. The lake was built by Raja Narendra Deva. Although it is not traditionally considered one of the main Tirthas, recently the Daitapatis started to come to perform here the funerary rites of Jagannatha after Navakalevara.

Pancha Mahadeva

The Pancha Mahadeva or Pancha Pandava presiding on Puri as Kshetra palas are Lokanatha, Markandesvara, Yamesvara, Nilakantha, and Kapalamochana. In Krishna lila, these five forms of Shiva appeared respectively as Arjuna, Bhima, Yudhisthira, Nakula and Sahadeva. The *chalanti pratimas* of these five Shivas also go to Narendra sarovara for Chandana yatra together with Madana Mohana, Sridevi, Bhudevi and Rama Krishna.

Lokanatha is associated to Jagannatha not only during Chandana yatra, but also on Sambhu Ekadasi, Sivaratri, Ashoka Ashtami, Sitala Sasthi, Champaka Dvadasi and for Hari Hara bheta. Besides the celebrations of Chandana yatra, Yamesvara, Markandesvara (installed by Somavamsis), Nilakantha (the *svayambhu lingam* worshiped by Indradyumna) and Kapalamochana are associated to Jagannatha during Sagara Vijaya, Siva Ratri, Sitala Sasthi and Champaka Dvadasi.

Lokanatha Shiva: Without any doubt, the most important temple of Shiva in Puri is the Lokanatha temple. Sri Lokanatha Mahadeva is considered the guardian of the Ratna Bandhara (treasury store room) of Lord Jagannatha, and a *chalanti pratima* of Lokanatha resides in Sri Mandir as Bandhara Lokanatha. Like many other Shiva temples in Purushottama kshetra, Lokanatha Mahadeva is considered a manifestation of Hari-Hara or Madhava, that is Shiva as the presence of Vishnu within this material world. The other most famous Hari Hara temple is Lingaraja in Bhubaneswar (and the smaller nearby temple of Siddhesvara).

The main temple of Lokanatha Shiva is situated about 2-3 kms from Jagannatha temple, in the western direction, and is surrounded by a mango grove. It has small constructions (like huts) on both sides, smaller shrines and a low wall of white marble. The temple is about 28 feet high, with a door opening on the west side (in the style of the Pasupata temples) and a window on the opposite side (east wall). It is a very old temple, that appears to have been constructed before Sri Mandira. The compound of the temple is about 20 feet below the level of the surrounding area and this would normally indicate a great antiquity of the site, although some claim that the entire temple has been sinking into the ground because of the sandy nature of the soil.

The story of this Lingam is as follows. Ravana's mother was praying and worshiping Shiva on the beach of Lanka, but every day the ocean would wash away the sand Lingam she fashioned for the puja, so she asked Ravana to please get a *vyotir linga*, that she could install and worship properly. Thus Ravana went to Kailasha to perform austerities to please Shiva, accomplishing some remarkable feats and composing beautiful verses in praise of Mahadeva. Shiva was pleased and gave him the *vyotir linga*, warning him that wherever he would put it down, there it would remain. The Devas became worried about the growing power of Ravana and consulted with Ganga and Ganesha, so at that time Ganesha appeared as a boy and Ganga entered Ravana's body so that he would have to pass a lot of water. Ravana reached Puri, in the place where now Lokanatha temple stands, and he was looking around for the opportunity to relieve himself, when he saw the boy and requested him to take care of the Shiva lingam while he was attending nature's call. However, as soon as Ravana moved away, Ganesha put the Shiva lingam on the ground, so it was impossible to lift it again and Ravana had to return to Lanka without being able to carry the Shiva lingam with him. It is said that, while going to Lanka, Sri Rama stopped here in Puri and wishing to see Shiva, recovered the Lingam from the pond where it had sunk.

The Lokanatha Lingam has two golden Kundalini (cobra snakes). It stands within a square well (15 feet deep), submerged during the whole year into water coming from the Lingam itself and it becomes visible only in the night of Pankoddhara Ekadasi, three days before Shivaratri. On that occasion the *kunda* is cleaned. The same water seeps into the nearby Parvati Sarovara (or Parvati sagara), that is a little higher than the kunda, and is inside the temple compound. Tradition says that whoever will bathe in Parvati Sarovara will get children if childless, and health if diseased. Also, the temple has a great fame of miraculous healings, that attracts many diseased people and invalids, including a community of lepers that lives next to it.

The main Deities, besides Lokanatha Lingam, are Lord Shiva, Mother Parvati, Ganesha, Kartikeya, Surya Narayana, Chandra Narayana, Ardhanaresvara murti, Chandrasekhara, Harihara, Lakshmi and Sarasvati, Nandi, Bhrunji, Narasimha, Navagraha, Vanambara, Ramesvara, Visvanatha, Tripala sani, Bhairava, Chaturdasi, Satya Narayana, Hanuman, Sitala, Mangala, Santoshi, Dasa Maha Vidya, Rudra Ambika Ravaskara, Pancha Shiva, Rama Balarama, Uttama Chandi, Kailash Kalpata Mahavir. There is also one Kalpa Vriksha.

The food offerings follow a system similar to Jagannatha's temple. The Bala bhoga consists of *khai kora* (small white sugar balls with puffed rice and coconut pieces), bananas and fruits. The second offering is Sakala bhoga, consisting in *khechadi* and *sag*. The Madhyana dhupa consists of *sada anna* (plain rice), *mahura* (one vegetable), and *dali*. The Sandhya dhupa is made of rice, *dalma*, *khiri* (sweet rice pudding), and *khata* (chutney). The last offering is Pahuda bhoga or Bada Sringara bhoga, made of *mandu* (one kind of pancake). On Shiva ratri people prepare *khaja* (a kind of fried pastry) at home and bring it to the temple to offer to Lokanatha.

The most important festival observed in the temple is Saranti Somavara, the last Monday of the month of Vaisakha. On this day there is a solemn Rudra abhisheka and Bandhara Lokanatha comes from Sri Mandira to the Lokanatha temple for Hari-Hara betha (the meeting of Hari and Hara).

The other festivals are Shiva ratri, the Ekadasi day when Rama recovered the *lingam* (Panka uddhara Ekadasi), Dola Purnima, Sankranti, Bole Bam Utsava in the month of Sravana (when people make the vow of carrying sacred water on foot from long distance to bathe Shiva), Kartik Purnima, Shiva Chaturdasi, Divali, Kalipuja, Ganesh puja, Kartika janma utsava, Sitala Sasti, Durga puja. The Lokanath Sevayat Trust Board manages the temple under the Government authority (State Endowment Commissioner). The temple employs about 250 Sevayats under 24 *pali* or groups.

Another less famous Lonakatha temple is the **Bata Lokanatha** in Bali Sahi near the temple of Gaccha Kali.

Yamesvara Shiva: This temple, sometimes called Jamesvara or Jambesvara due to a pronunciation defect, is north west of Sri Mandira, in Gaudabada Sahi near Tota Gopinath. It is surrounded by a wall, and inside its compound there is small lake called Yavanika Tirtha and a Kalpa Vriksha.

Sri Chaitanya used to visit this temple daily, before or after walking to the Tota Gopinatha temple, in the ancient gardens south of Yamesvara temple called Yamesvara Tota. From these gardens, Chaitanya excavated a tall Deity of Gopinatha and had a temple built for Him, ordering his associate Gadadhara Pandita to reside there and conduct the worship. Gadadhara Pandita was also famous for his *Bhagavata Purana* readings. The temple of Yamesvara Shiva is much lower than the surrounding area - some say 45 feet, some say 100 feet, as it seems that nobody has really measured the level of the ground. From the road level, a flight of stone steps leads downwards to the courtyard, then to the Nata Mandapa and the Bhoga Mandapa. Two more steps lead to the Jagamohana, and a few more to the Garbha griha, where the Lingam is housed. On the three sides of the Garbha griha there are beautiful images of Kartikeya, Ganesh and Parvati. In the Jagamohana there is an image of Aja Shiva (with one leg only), and an image of Yama. Behind the Lingam there is a three-headed image of Triambaka Shiva (symbolizing creation, preservation, destruction).

According to *Skanda Purana*, this Lingam was worshiped by Yamaraja, therefore it is called Yamesvara. This particular Lingam is also Hari Hara, half Shiva and half Vishnu; and has the shape of half-human and half-lion, like Nrisimha. The worship is conducted by offering both *tulasi* and *bilva* leaves. Inside this temple there are both Garuda and Vrishabha sitting as *vahanas* of the Deity on their respective *stambhas* (pillars); there are also *chalanti pratimas* of these *vahanas* that accompany Lord Yamesvara's *vijaya vigraha* when He travels outside to visit the Sri Mandira. This *vijaya vigraha* is a four-armed Vishnu/Shiva form holding *trishula*, *damaru*, *chakra* and *sankha* (from the upper right hand to the upper left). It is said that by taking Darshana of this Deity, or dying in the vicinity of the temple, one can obtain Yamaraja's pardon. For this reason, Yamesvara is also called Muktisvara, the Lord that can grant liberation. The sacred story says that Shiva was worshiping Jagannatha here, controlling his senses completely with such an intense *tapasya* that it seemed that creation was coming to an end. Informed about the situation by Lakshmi Devi, Yamaraja became worried and worshiped Shiva to ask Him to stop His *tapasya*. Pleased, Shiva granted Yama this boon for the benefit of the world. A second shrine within the temple compound is dedicated to Parvati Devi. There are also Astha Sambhus here: Yamesvara, Kapalamochana, Markandesvara, Nilakantha, Visvesvara, Lokanatha, Sovakesvara and Angeshvara. On the steps down to the temple there is a Deity of Mahavira Hanuman, and near the Kalpa Vriksha there is also a temple of Surya Narayana.

The food offerings consist of *khai kora* and *anna prasada* (rice and vegetables) like in Lingaraja temple (in Bhubaneswar). Thirty Sevaka families traditionally residing in Gaudabadi Sahi (anciently the village surrounding the temple) conduct the temple rituals according to the pancha upasana method of worship. The temple was endowed with extensive land properties in the area of Dandapura for the maintenance of the Deities and festivals. On the last day of the Rathayatra, on the Ekadasi when the Deities wear the Sona Vesa on the chariot, Jagannatha does not accept offerings of rice. So, on that day, the kitchens of the Jagannatha temple prepare a full offering for Yamesvara Mahadeva, that is then considered as non-different from Jagannatha's Mahaprasada.

The two main festivals celebrated in the temple are Yama Dvitiya and Sitala Shasti; on Sitala Shasti a Ratha yatra is held here on the day after the marriage between Shiva and Parvati. Also, Sudarshana from Sri Mandira goes to visit Yamesvara every year on Balarama Purnima. Other festivals are Shiva ratri, Janmashtami, Ganesh puja, Durga puja, Champaka Dvadasi.

Kapalamochana Shiva: This very old temple is behind the temple of Jagannatha, on the west side, in Manikarnika Sahi, about 60 feet under the level of the surrounding grounds. This temple, too, has heavy plastering on the walls, most probably covering the original carvings and sculptures. The Deity of Trikala Shiva is worshipped here. Inside the temple compound there is a well called Manikarnika Tirtha described in the *Puranas* where the water is considered very auspicious and is only used for blessing people by sprinkling their heads. The story of the temple is connected to a pastime between Shiva and Brahma. It is said that once Brahma questioned the importance of Lord Shiva and minimized His position, refusing to consider the evidence clearly stated in the *Vedas*. So Lord Shiva slapped Brahma, smacking off his fifth face (that is now missing, as Brahma only has four heads). However, Brahma's head remained stuck on Shiva's hand. Embarrassed by the situation created by His anger, Lord Shiva sat down here to worship Jagannatha in meditation, and finally the head was released.

Inside the Kapalamochana temple also reside Patita Pavana, Rameshvara Mahadeva, Hara-Parvati, Shyama Kali, Dasa mahavidya, Santoshi Ma, Mahavira, Kartikeya or Kartikesvara, and Ganga. The festivals are Kartika utsava, Shyama puja, Durga puja, Anta vrata, Dola Purnima, Shiva ratri, Chandana yatra, Sitala Sasti, Ganesha puja. The administration secretary is Vijay Panda, who runs the temple under the control of the Government.

Nilakantha Shiva : This temple is described in details under the main Tirthas (Indradyumna Sarovara).

Markandesvara Shiva: This temple is described in details under the main Tirthas (Markandesvara Sarovara).

Other Shiva temples

As we have seen in the chapter on **Sri Mandira**, inside Jagannatha's main temple we also find many Shiva shrines. The most famous is the **Pancha Mahadeva** shrine, dedicated to the five manifestations of Shiva in Puri: first is Yamesvara, second is Lokanatha, third is Markanda, fourth is Nilakantha, and fifth is Kapalamochana. They are all Svayambhu lingam, except for Lokanatha. Two other Svayambhu lingam inside Sri Mandira are Patalesvara and Ishanesvara.

Other Shivas inside the temple are Gopesvara (Yogesvara), Kasi Visvanatha (near the eastern gate), Ramesvara Shiva and Siddhesvara Shiva (near western gate), Lokanatha (north gate), Ishanesvara (opposite Koili Vaikuntha) and the group of Shivas on the outer wall of Bhoga mandapa: Vaikunthanatha Mahadeva, Dhabalesvara, Pasunatha, Agnisvara Mahadeva and Bedha Lokanatha. In other areas of the temple we find Tandavesvara, Muktesvara, Kshetrapala, Panchavana, Dakshinesvara and Gokarnesvara.

As we have seen in the previous section, the Pancha Mahadevas also have individual temples in the city of Puri, visited by many local residents and pilgrims. After these, the most important and ancient Shiva temple is the Ashta Sambhu temple. The worship of Ashta sambhu, the eight forms of Shiva that stand guard to the Kshetra, is very popular in Orissa, and is found as often in the Prachi valley as the worship of Madhava. The **Ashta Sambhu** temple is in Bali Sahi, near the Shyamakali temple. It is said that a King installed the temple in gratitude for having been cured of a very serious disease. The Shiva Lingas in this temple have a special natural color, so that from a distance seem to be covered by red and white sandalwood paste. The temple also houses Deities of Radha Krishna and Hanuman. Puri also has the special tradition of Sahi temples dedicated to Banambara Shiva; one of such temples was built in each Sahi at the times of Chodaganga Deva.

More recent temples have also been established in various parts of the city. Here are some of them.

Muktesvara: There are three Muktesvara temples in Puri, one in Sarvodaya Nagar, one in VIP road. A more ancient Muktesvara temple is on the Highway No. 5 (the main road from Bhubaneswar to Puri) in front of the famous Batamangala (Marga Devi) temple. This temple is famous for distributing prasada bilva leaves that cure cysts and tumors.

Nilakanthesvara Shiva: Besides the main Nilakantha Shiva temple (one of the Pancha Mahadevas in Puri, situated at Indradyumna Sarovara), there are two Nilakanthesvara temples in Puri, one in Heragohiri Sahi and one in Station road, near to the railway station. In the Natamandir of this temple Kali is sitting in front of Shiva.

Mallisvara Mahadeva: At the railway crossing on the road to Siddha Mahavira temple, a shrine is dedicated to Mallisvara Mahadeva.

Ramesvara: Another new temple dedicated to Shiva is in College road, and is called Ramesvara. There are also smaller and less famous temples dedicated to Shiva around the city.

Shakti temples

The story of Puri as a Shakti pitha is connected to the time of the Daksha yajna, when Sati or Devi gave up her life to uphold the honor of Lord Shiva. Upon his arrival on the spot, Lord Shiva was deeply moved by Her sacrifice, and lifted the body of Sati carrying it around. He forgot about everything else, and He became so angry for the death of His spouse, that He wanted to destroy the universe. At that time Lord Vishnu convinced Him that the body of Devi would sanctify the whole land, and cut it to pieces with His Chakra. Different parts of the body of Devi fell in many spots, creating Shakti Pithas or holy places dedicated to the worship of the Mother Goddess. Finally Shiva arrived in Puri and placed here Sati's feet, the only part that was left of Her body, creating the Vimala pitha, also called Pada pitha.

The *Kalila Purana* states *vimala bhairavi yatra jagannatha astu bhairava*: in this holy place Vimala ("the pure") is Bhairavi ("the most powerful"), and Jagannatha, the Lord of the universe, plays the role of Bhairava ("the most powerful"). It is said that Vimala (Rajarajesvari Amba) has two ministers, Mantrini (Shyamala) and Dandini (Varahi), one presiding on the power of intelligence and the other on the strength of action.

We have already mentioned the temples of Bata Mangala (Marga Devi) and Alama Chandi at the beginning of the chapter, as the Deities guarding the entrance to Puri. We will now see the other temples.

Mausima: It is in Grand Road, half way between Jagannath temple and Gundicha. Her form is like Subhadra's. Also called Ardhasini, this is the form of Durga who drinks the waters of the *pralaya* (destruction of the universe) to enable a new creation. During Ratha Yatra, Jagannatha's chariot stop here to get special pancakes (*podapitha bhoga*) from "Auntie". The meaning of Mausi-Ma is in facts "sister-mother".

Baseli Ma: Baseli Devi is a form of Vimala Devi characterized by Her horse head. This temple is near the west gate of Jagannatha temple, in Baseli Sahi, that takes its name from the temple. Baseli or Basuli is a form of the Goddess that is very popular in Orissa but is not found in other regions. Achyutananda Das, one of the Pancha Sakhas, wrote about Her in his book *Kaibarta Gupta-gita*, explaining that She is worshiped particularly by the Kaibartas or Keutas (fishermen tribes). She is the center of the famous Baseli yatra (see the chapter on Popular Festivals) that feature the dummy horse dances, celebrated in many areas of coastal Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

In Puri, the dummy horses are decorated with many flowers and a special head gear (Tahia), similar to the one used by Jagannatha and Baladeva during Ratha yatra. At the end of the festival, the horse head of the dance is solemnly removed from its frame and kept in the temple until the next year, when it is again repainted and carried in the dance procession.

Besides the month-long celebrations of Baseli yatra (from Chaitra Purnima to Vaisakha Purnima), Baseli is traditionally worshiped every Tuesday and Saturday during the year. Baseli Devi gets *khoi* every day from Lord Jagannath's Kotha Bhoga. The Deities in this temple, besides Mother Baseli, are Narasimha, Varaha, Chamunda, Kapalamochana Mahadeva, Mahavira, Bodhi Ma, Iccha Ma, Navagraha, and Ganga Yamuna. The festivals are Durga puja, Rama Navami, Sitala Sasti. The present administrator is Niladri Mohan Kara, under the Government control and the local Sahi people.

Charchika: Durga is also the superintendent to the construction of the chariots for the Ratha yatra. The King and the carpenters offer her a special worship before starting the works. She was also worshiped by warriors before starting for a war. It is inside the Sri Mandira office on Grand Road, so it is not visible from the outside.

Marichika: The temple of the form of Durga called Marichika is near Grand Road, in Marichikota Chak, that takes its name from the temple. This Deity is mentioned in the *Skanda Purana* as one of the Ashta Shaktis of Puri

Narayani: This temple of Durga as the sister of Narayana is in Dolamandapa Sahi and is traditionally visited during Sola puja (the sixteen days of Durga puja) by Durga Madhava from Sri Mandira. These two important Deities travel to this temple for *vandapana* and *bhoga*.

Dakhina Kali: This very nice and old temple, visited by hundreds of people daily, in Kalikadevi Sahi, also called Balisahi Daksina Kali lane, between the beach and Jagannatha temple, and it is a famous place of tantrics. People come here to offer coconuts and betel nuts asking for blessings and they always receive them. Dakshina Kali is the protector of the kitchen of Lord Jagannatha and the cooks (called Supakars) enter the kitchen wearing Her *sindhur* as *tilaka*. In *Skanda Purana* She is called Kalaratri and Prasiddha Devi. The main Deities are Dakshina Kali, who holds a sword (*kharpura*) and Maha Kalesvara Mahadeva. On the sides of the entrance to the temple, we find Deities of Mother Vimala and Bhuvaneshvari. Above the door there are Lakshmi, Ganesha, Sarasvati, the Dasa Mahavidya, and another Ganesha. The food offerings only consist of *khai kora* and fruits that are distributed to the children and the local people. Fish is offered only for three days a year during Durga puja. The temple is famous for the daily reciting of the *Chandi stotra* (*Chandi patha*). A special festival is held for Saptapuri Amavasya. The other festivals observed in the temple are Sola puja or Durga puja, and Rama Navami.

Shyama Kali: This temple is near the old King's palace, together with the Ashta Sambhu mandir. So Shyama Kali is also called Raja pujita Devi, the Goddess worshipped by the King. The Deities are Ma Shyama Kali, Vimala, Chandrika, and Dakshina Kali, Siddhesvari, Jaya Durga, Sankha Mangala, with the Dvarapalas are Vyaghramukhi (with a tigress' head) and Sinhamukhi (with a lioness' head). Mahalakshmi is over the gate. Also inside the compound there is a Dvadasa jyotir lingam shrine (with twelve jyotir lingam), Sri Jagannatha vigraha, Dasa Mahavidya, Navagraha, Sri Yantra, Kali yantra, different Avatars and manifestations of the Mother Goddess. Food offerings are made regularly as Anna bhoga (rice, *dal* and vegetables), Sitala bhoga (fruits and snacks) and fish preparations. The festivals are Kali puja, Divali, all Tuesdays on Chaitra month, Durga puja, Kartik utsava (for the entire month), Ola Navami, Dasahara (when various vesas are offered, like Raja Rajesvari vesh, Maha Sarasvati vesh, etc). The main administrator is Krishnachandra Mishra, and the main Sevayats are Ramachandra Mishra and Bhagavan Mahapatra.

Another Shyama Kali temple is in Dolamandapa Sahi.

Harachandi: Also called Chanda rupa or Gaudabada Sahi Ma Durga, it is in Harachandi Sahi, that takes its name from the temple. Mother Harachandi gets *khei* every day from Lord Jagannath's Kotha bhoga.

Chamunda: One of the oldest temples of Puri, where the family of Sagar Pratihari used to worship, it is in Manikarnika Sahi. The Deities are Mother Chamunda, Varaha deva, Shiva linga, Mahavira Hanuman, Nrsimha, Ganesha, Shyama Kali. The festivals are Sola puja (Durga puja), Navaratri, Chandi puja (reading of *Chandi stotra*). The present in charge is Vamadev Pratihari.

Varahi Devi: It is in Balisahi, Varahi lane. It is also called Gachhakali. Varahi is one (the fifth, or Panchami) of the Sapta Matrikas, and is also called Dandini and Karyastambhini (blocking the actions and words of enemies). She is an Ugra Devi, the Maha Ghora commander of the forces of the Mother Goddess. While Kurukulla represents the full moon, Varahi is the new moon; both are the Mother of Sri Chakra (Lalita Tripura Sundari). Varahi Devi wears yellow clothes and ornaments, and a coral necklace. She is represented as having eight arms (holding *valampuri shankha*, *chakra*, sword etc) and three eyes, sitting under a Palmyra tree or moving around in a chariot pulled by boars, or residing on the Island of nine jewels, in the ocean of sugarcane. Those who want to perform a *vrata* to Varahi should wear yellow clothes and chant *japa* on a yellow *mani mala*. It is said that before going to war, both Ravana and Rama performed puja here. The Deities in this temple are Varahi Thakurani, Nrishimhani, Dasa Mahavidya, Shyama Kali, Jagannatha, Sarvamangala, Mahavira, Vanambar Mahadeva. The festivals are Durga puja, Navaratri or Navapatrika, Sitala Sasti, Shiva ratri, Kali puja. There are various offerings of food like Anna Bhoga (rice, dal, vegetables), *khira* (milk), *sankudi* (puffed rice with sugar), and fish preparations. Varahi gets *khei* every day from Lord Jagannath's Kotha bhoga. The main Sevayat is Ravinarayana Mahasuara. The administration secretary is Ramakrishna Mahesvara, but the managing is also under the Sahi council and the Government representatives.

Sapta matrika: This shrine is inside Markandesvara temple (see Shiva temples), in Markandesvara Sahi. So you will find a description also in the section of the Tirthas (Markandesvara Sarovara).

The Deities are: Vaisnavi, Rudrani, Sodasi, Varahi, Indrani, Chamunda and Kumari. There are also Ganesha and Narayana sitting on the sides.

Kanaka Durga: Kanaka Durga is the personal Deity of the King and is worshipped inside the compound of the current palace of the Gajapati Maharaja (Sri Nahara), in front of the Sri Jagannatha temple office. The administration of the Sri Jagannatha temple also supplies some of the ingredients for the Bhoga for their worship. Another famous temple dedicated to Kanaka Durga is on Brahmagiri road.

Kamakshya Durga: This historical temple dedicated to Kamakshya Durga is near Govardhana Matha, in Gaudabada Sahi. It is visited by many people who come to pray to be protected from diseases and ghosts.

Jayadurga Temple (Bharati Kotha): The administration of the Jagannatha temple pays for the daily Bhoga for the Goddess Durga at this temple near Narendra Sarovara.

Ramachandi: This is also a historical temple, near the railway station, in Ramachandi Sahi (taking its name from the temple).

Panapriya Thakurani: It is in Lokanath road. The Deity is a ten-armed Durga, known by this name because of the Pana (special sweet drink) that is traditionally offered to Her.

Smasani Chandi: In Puri there are three temples dedicated to Smasani (“crematorium”) Chandi: one is inside the crematorium at Svargadvara, another is near the temple of Panapriya Thakurani in Lokanath road, and the third is outside the town, on Brahmagiri road.

Vana Durga: There are two main temples of Vana Durga in Puri, one is in Manikarnika Sahi (with loose hair), and the other is in Baseli Sahi.

Gaccha Kali : In Oriya, *gaccha* means “tree” and therefore this form of Kali is connected with the worship of the sacred trees. In Puri there are two main Gaccha Kali temples, one also known as Uttarakali (in Matimandapa Sahi), (folded around Sri Mandira) and the other also called Bata Kali, in Bali Sahi.

Other well known temples of the Mother Goddess in Puri are Mangala (in Vimanabadu Sahi), Jayadurga (Narendra sarovara), Jaduani (in Kundeibenta Sahi), Jhadesvari (in Station Road), Barabati Durga (in Nagamath lane, Manikarnika Sahi), Gelabai Durga (in Manikarnika Sahi), Chakrakota Durga (in Harachandi Sahi), Mahantesvari Durga (in Manikarnika Sahi), Kanapurja Durga (in Lokanatha road), Bhogajaga Durga (in Dolamandapa Sahi), Jahni Khai Durga (in Dolamandapa Sahi), Sunya Gosani (in Bali Sahi), Sahi Durga (in Bali Sahi, Hajuri Gosani (in Manikarnika Sahi), Kakudi Khai, who is famous for having eaten a cucumber offered by a small boy (in Manikarnika Sahi).

Hanuman temples

The warrior-like spirit of the Oriya people find great inspiration in Mahavira Hanuman, the Great Hero of the *Ramayana*, manifestation of Lord Shiva and faithful friend and servant of Lord Ramachandra. Some people may be a little confused as Mahavira (“great hero”) is also the name of the historical founder of Jainism, but in Puri there are no Jain temples, and in Orissa in general Jainism is not particularly present. So any time we speak of “Mahavira” in connection with temples, it is understood that the name refers to Lord Hanuman. Like the temples of Shiva and Shakti, the temples dedicated to Hanuman are too many to be all listed, so we will give only a review of the most famous and popular.

Bedi Hanuman: Probably the most famous Hanuman temple in Puri, is near Chakratirtha, in Chaktatirtha road. Its description has been detailed under the Tirthas (Mahodadhi).

Siddha Mahavira: Situated on the limits of the Puri city, it is on the western side of Gundicha, on the way to Konarak. It is said that this is the temple where Tulasi Das remained in meditation asking the Lord to manifest Himself in the form of Sri Rama. After getting the Darshan of Lord Jagannatha in the form of Ramachandra, Tulasi das proceeded to write the *Rama Charita Manasa*.

Kanapata Hanuman: This temple is within the external boundary on the south side of the main temple (Jagannatha temple) and it is said to absorb the sound of the sea, so that Jagannatha’s rest is not disturbed.

Bargi Hanuman: This temple is situated in Lokanatha Road (the road connecting Jagannatha temple to Lokanatha Shiva temple). It was built by the Maratha warriors (called Bargis) to protect the holy city of Puri.

Makaradvaja Hanuman: This temple is at Atharnala bridge, at the entrance of Puri town.

Panchamukhi Mahavira temple: It is situated near the Indradyumna Sarovara. The Deity of Hanuman has five faces, like Lord Shiva. In fact, Hanuman is considered a direct manifestation of Lord Shiva, where Shiva exhibits a faithful and powerful loving service towards Sri Rama.

Kumuda (Masani) Mahavira: This Hanuman temple is in Bali Sahi, before the temple of Bata Kali and associated with it. It is said that while Jagannatha temple was being constructed, Bata Kali was displeased with something and would not allow the works to go on, so Masani Mahavira suppressed Kali's anger and stopped her from causing further obstruction.

Sundara Mahariva: Literally meaning "beautiful Hanuman", this Hanuman temple is found in Ramachandi Sahi, near the Government's Girl School.

Other rather recent temples dedicated to Lord Hanuman are **Satya Mahavira** (in VIP road) and **Vipadanasana Mahavira** (in Grand Road).

Mathas in Puri

Almost all the Mathas in Puri are also considered temples, so please consult both chapters (this one and the chapter on the Temples) to get a complete picture. As reported in the *Puri Gazetteer* (1929) the "Mathas are monastic houses originally founded with the object of giving religious instructions to *chelas* or disciples and generally of encouraging a religious life."

We could add that a Matha acts as learning center and preaching center, ashram and temple. The same issue of the *Gazetteer* stated that at that time there were over 70 Mathas in the town of Puri, listed in various orders. Of the 742 Mathas established over several centuries, only 167 now exist.

The system of Mathas originated when *sadhus* and saints of various lineages and founder Acharyas of religious schools visited Puri to get Darshana of Sri Jagannatha and established their centers on lands donated to them by Kings and wealthy people. The primary function of the Mathas was to render service in the Sri Mandira through participation to various rituals and supplying Bhoga and other ingredients, such as sandalwood or costumes for the Deities. Some Mathas have their own cooking stove inside the temple kitchen in Sri Mandira and a representative in the Jagannatha Temple Managing Committee. The second function was educational: they were traditionally patrons of music, arts, dance and literature, organizing philosophical and theological debates, and establishing yearly sums for the general education of people. They also had the duty to feed the poor and the widows who traditionally took shelter in the holy places, and especially to support and accommodate students and pilgrims visiting the holy places especially during the Ratha yatra and other festivals. Each Matha "specialized" in taking care of a particular type of pilgrims on considerations of language and social conventions but above all on the basis of sharing the same beliefs. The pilgrims from Bengal traditionally go to Gaudiya Mathas, the Advaitins to the Shankaracharya Mathas, the Marathas in the Bargi, the Gujaratis in Mahaprabhu-ki-baithak, and the Sikhs in Bauli, Punjabi and Mangu Mathas.

Some militant branches of the Mathas, called Akhadas, were also established to practice martial arts to defend the temples and the pilgrims, with the accent on the physical prowess of the Nagas or "valiant heroes" who would fight the attackers and invaders. For example, king Narasimha Deva I established four Akhadas (Bagha, Khaki, Hati and Nirmohi) to train strong Sadhus to guard the temple. The members of the Akhadas observe *brahmacharya* and *virakti* (or *vairagya*).

The directors of the Mathas are called Mahantas or Adhikaris; a Matha can be called Nihangi (when directed by a *sannyasi*) or Grihi (when directed by a family man). Originally the Mahantas of the Mathas were selected from among the celibates of the sect by the retiring Mahanta under approval of the King. The Ramanandi Mathas have a committee of five Mahantas to select a new Mahanta, while for the Shankara Matha the new leader may be a householder but he must be old, well versed in the Vedas, a scholar and a traveler.

In the course of time the Mathas continued to collect money and property, but with the decline of royal power as the guardian of public religion and morality, and frequent transfers of the Deities from Puri due to attacks, the Mathas gradually declined starting a vicious circle of poverty, corruption and degradation.

Gradually many of them failed to remain active and lost their assets due to bad management and encroaching by squatters and cultivators. Some Mathas have been taken over by the Indian Government, under the Endowment Act provisions.

List of the Mathas

Here is the list of the 81 active Mathas registered in this order supplied by the Governmental Department of Orissa Devottar Vibhaga (which controls the managing of the Mathas):

Bada akhada Matha, Bada santa Matha, Bauli Matha, Balagandi Matha, Chauni Matha, Damodara vallabha Matha, Emar Matha, Haladhiya Matha, Hati akhada Matha, Jay Jay Rama Matha, Jatya babaji Matha, Kaliti laka Matha, Kausalya Dasa Matha, Katak Matha, Bada Jhadu Matha, Visakha Matha, Balaram kot Matha, Bada Matha, Chikiti Matha, Dakhina parsva Matha, Ganga mata Matha, Indra Svami Matha, Haveli Matha, Jagannatha vallabha Matha, Arjuna Das Matha, Kota bhoga Matha, Kakudiya Matha, Lavanikya Matha, Brahmachari Matha, Bada Oriya Matha, Bada Chatha Matha, Bhagavan Das Matha, Chaulia Matha, Duhkhi Syam chata Matha, Gopal tirtha Matha, Haridas Matha, Janch pitha Matha, Jada Matha, Khajurya Matha, Kunja Matha, Khakhi akhada Matha, Mahiprakash Matha, Malla akhada Matha, Nandini Matha, Nua Matha, Nimakara Matha, Panjabi Matha, Ramji Matha, Raghava Das Matha, Siddha Matha, Govardhana Matha, Samadhi Matha, Sata bakharia Matha, Sata asana Matha, Tota Mahavira Matha, Venkata Acharya Matha, Mangu Matha, Lakshmi bhadra Matha, Nevala Dasa Matha, Narayana Chata Matha, Pandita Matha, Radha vallabha Matha, Raghunatha or Ghumusara Matha, Sankarananda Matha, Shiva tirtha Matha, Sana chata Matha, Satalahari Matha, Giridhari Matha, Torani chatra Matha, Jiyara Svami (Giri Svami) Matha, Nrishimha Acharya Matha, Naga Matha, Nirmohi akhada Matha, Papurya Matha, Revasa Matha, Radha kantha Matha, Suna Gosvami Matha, Sundara Das Matha, Uttara parsva Matha, Sana Jhadu Matha, Sana Matha Matha, Sisu Matha, Svargadvara chatta Matha. In 1981 a new Matha was established in Grand Road, called Kachra Matha, and was subsequently inscribed.

Participation to the rituals in Sri Mandira

At present, the following Mathas still have active duties towards the worship rituals in Jagannatha temple:

Govardhana Matha: inspects *seva puja* in the temple, offers *pranam* to Jagannatha when He comes on the chariot at Ratha yatra, offers Bhoga at the time of *pahandi* in Ratha yatra and in Gundicha (*panthi bhoga*).

Raghava Das Matha: provides the *vimana* for Chandana yatra; on Ratha yatra they provide a crown called *tahia* (made with bamboo, *sola* and flowers), then offer *khichedi bhoga* and garlands of *tulasi*, and when the chariots start, offer *panthi bhoga*. They also clean the well at Gundicha, build and manage a structure for cooking and distributing *prasadam* there. At Bahuda (return Ratha yatra) they prepare pancakes and *khichadi bhoga* for the offering. When Jagannatha returns to His temple and gives the Suna vesha Darshana, they prepare three *bhoga* offerings (*puri*, *sola* and *mohana bhoga*), on Dvadasi they offer 3 pots of *adhara pana bhoga*, on Trayodasi they supply flower crowns and on Niladri vijaya in Jagamohana they provide the *rasagullas* to appease Lakshmidivi. During Anavasara they make *kanaka mudi*, also offer *pan* and *chatta bhoga*, and 7 kg of mixed vegetable oil, at Khalilagi Dkadasi they offer 7 kg sandalwood paste, camphor, saffron and some items for Panthi Bhoga, some hand woven cloth, at Navayauvana Darshana they receive some *prasadam*.

Jagannatha Vallabha Matha: takes care of the temple garden and organizes several festivals for the *vijaya pratima*, the representative images of the Deities that travel around for external rituals, for example the Deities of Rama, Sita, Lakshmana on Rama Navami, Lakshmi Devi and Bhu Devi play together here on Dola Purnima, Nrishima comes here for *bhoga* and *vandapana* on Nrishimha Chaturdasi, and several Deities come for several days during the celebrations of Vasanta Panchami. The Matha also supplies Dayana plants for the Dayana chori ritual, some flower ornaments (*tilaka* and *jhumpa*) for the Bada Sringara Vesha, and *kora* (sweet coconut balls) for the Kaliya Dalana Vesha and Pralambasura Bada Vesha. At the time of Ratha yatra and Gundicha they offer Panthi Bhoga (three offerings when the chariots start, four offerings when they arrive in Gundicha, one offering on Hera Panchami, three offerings on Bahuda yatra, four offerings on Niladri vijaya) and some garlands.

Gopal tirtha Matha: provides the Hati Vesha *samagri* for the Snana Purnima, they offer the Makara chula for Makara Sankranti, Panthi Bhoga to Sudarshana during Bahuda yatra, Chakrabula Ekadasi, Sravana sukla Navami, Sravana Purnima and Kumara Purnima.

Mahiprakash Matha: supplies toothbrushes daily for Jagannatha seva.

Emar Matha: provides canopy to temple and materials for Vesha (dresses) on the day of Ratha yatra, Adapa Vijaya, Hera Panchami, Niladri Vijaya, offers Panthi Bhoga, and various services in Gundicha.

Jatiya babaji Matha also called **Samadhi Matha** or **Vijaya Krishna Matha:** supply ropes for Ratha yatra.

Bada Odiya Matha: at time of Netrotsava it supplies *patta vastra* cloth, supplies *bhoga* and sandalwood paste during six days in Gundicha, in Asadha sukla Dvadasi it provides worship articles; every year it supplies *chandua* for Jagannatha on the Simhasana, repairs the *kanaka mundi* and offers *patta vastra*; at Niladri Vijaya it cleans the Simhasana.

Chauni Matha: gardeners bring *sola citta* to the Matha and at time of Jagannatha's arriving in Ratha yatra, the Matha offers crowns made of *sola* (one kind of spongy white reed), also offering Panthi Bhoga during Ratha yatra, Bahuda and Niladri Vijaya.

Jiyar Swami Matha: during return Ratha yatra, when the chariots reach Simha dvara the Matha offers Naivedya (food) to Jagannatha and distributes the *prasadam* to those who worked for the festival.

Sri Ram Das Matha: at Gundicha yatra, Bahuda yatra and Niladri Vijaya, the Matha supplies Panthi Bhoga during Pahandi and at the starting of the chariots, prepares a structure for keeping the Bhogafor offering, offers *chamara* and fan during Ratha yatra.

Gangamata Matha: at the time of Gundicha, Adapa Vijaya and Bahuda yatra, it offers Panthi Bhoga.

Badachata Matha: provides *kirtana* every day in Bala Dhupa, Pahuda, Chandana yatra and Dola yatra.

Radhakanta Matha: cleans the main temple and the temple of Gundicha, provides lamps.

Darpanarayana Matha: the same service as Radhakantha Matha.

Trimali Matha: provides Mahan Bhoga.

Dakshinaparsva Matha: same as Trimali Matha.

Uttar parsva Matha: same as Trimali Matha.

Trimali bada Matha: provides Chandana Bhoga.

Darpa Narayana Matha: provides *chamara seva*, garlands etc.

Suna Gosvami Matha: provides *chamara seva*, 108 pots of water for Snana Purnima, ointments for Anavasara, and four *gaba* garlands and *kusha* for Vamana Dvadasi.

These Mathas offer *panthi bhoga* for Adapa Vijaya at Gundicha, Hera Panchami, Bahuda and Niladri Vijaya: Sanachata Matha, Sankranti Matha, Trimali Matha, Rebasa Matha, Uttara parsva Matha, Kendupara Matha, Sonar Gauranga Matha, Ghumusara Matha, Lavakanya Matha, Radha Vallabha Matha, Mangu Matha, Aula Matha. The Purva Saiva tirtha Matha used to offer Panthi Bhoga at Gundicha and Chahani mandapa, but because the Matha is not functioning any more, these services have stopped.

We will now discuss specifically of the various Mathas, categorized according to their particular tradition and lineage. Please note that the order in the list of the Deities was supplied by the person in charge of the Matha who was interviewed to collect the information and in our opinion, it was not necessarily in order of importance.

Shankara or Advaita Mathas

Govardhana Matha or Govardhana pitha

It was established by Adi Shankara Acharya, and it is the oldest and most important Matha in Puri. The Shankaracharya of Puri is the head of the Mukti Mandapa and is the final authority on the rituals of the Jagannatha temple. It was Adi Shankara who re-established the worship of Lord Jagannatha Purushottama at Puri after a long hiatus, also adding the forms of Balabhadra and Subhadra to integrate the various traditions and create a strong unity among the followers of Sanatana Dharma.

One day (on a Saptami) while he was collecting alms as usual, he arrived at the doorstep of a *brahmana* widow called Darbheshvari or Dubei. She was a very pious and extremely poor widow so she had nothing to give in alms, but she did not like the idea of driving him away empty-handed. So she offered the last food that had remained in her house (in some versions it is her last grain of rice, in others it is some dry *amla*). Moved by her sacrifice, Adi Shankara prayed Goddess Mahalakshmi and a shower of gold came down from the sky. These prayers are known as the *Kanakadhara stotra*, and the spot where this incident happened is known as the Dubei akhada. More information about Adi Shankara Acharya can be found in the chapter about the great personalities connected with Puri.

The Govardhana Matha is on the main road from Jagannatha temple to Svargadvara on the ocean beach, near Samudra Kula Thana. It also has 17 branches in Madhya Pradesh. The *sannyasi* names of this Matha are Vana and Aranya, and its *brahmachari* name is Prakasha. They study the *Rig Veda*, consider the ocean as their holy bathing place, and their Deities are Purushottama Jagannatha (Vishnu) and Vimala (Durga or Subhadra).

Their mantra is “*prajnanam brahma*”, from *Aitareya Upanishad*. Adi Shankara had received five *sphatika lingas* from Mahadeva himself; these *sphatika lingas* are received by the new Acharya of the Matha generation after generation. The *linga* in Govardhana Matha is called Chandramulishvara Mani. Although this is considered a *smarta* Matha, its *ista devata* is Sri Gopal. The shrines are dedicated to the Acharya’s pitha, Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadra, Kamala, Ma Vimala, Govardhana vighraha, Lakshmi, Durga, Narayana, Hanuman, Ganesha, Garuda, Rama, Bhagavati, Dasa Mahavidya, Salagram etc. At the four corners of the Guruvara there are the painted portraits of Adi Sankara Acharya, Madhusudana Tirtha, Bharati Krishna Tirtha, and Niranjana Tirtha. On one of the walls there are also images of Dasa Mahavidya and various forms of God. In front of the temple there are one Ardhanarisvara Shiva murti and a *dasabhuj* Shiva murti in fighting pose. There is also a *yajna kunda*.

The first Acharya was Padmapada Acharya, Shankaracharya’s foremost disciple, and the line has been continued by 144 other Acharyas. Generally the Acharya is chosen among former householders (called Gosains). At some point the Matha was left without an Acharya, so a *sannyasi* from Gongak Nakhil was appointed.

In the 1800s the Matha became involved in a dispute with the Sevakas of the Jagannatha temple, because the *murtis* of Shiva and Shankara had been removed from the Garbhagriha during some repair works and the Sevakas refused to re-install them after the repairs were finished. The then Shankaracharya asked the Maratha government for help, but finally Raghuji Bonsla took the Sevakas’ side, and the *murtis* were defaced and thrown into the ocean. The Shankaracharya presented a petition to the Sringeri Matha asking for support, and the Sringeri Matha informed the British government asking for help, but the British refused to interfere in the matters of the temple.

In the beginning of the 20th century the Matha was headed by Shankara Madhusudana Tirtha. In 1906 the Shankaracharya of Puri presided over the Sanatana Dharma Mahasabha at the Prayag Kumbha Mela, and with two other Shankaracharyas as vice-presidents, he organized the All India Hindu Sabha at Hardwar in April 1915. In 1918 the Shankaracharya of Puri, together with the Shankaracharya of Dvaraka and the Acharya of Shankesvara (Karvipith, a small Matha in Maharashtra that separated from the Sringeri Matha in the 16th century) presided the meeting where the All India Hindu Sabha became the Hindu Mahasabha, also including the Arya Samaj and other reformist organizations.

Bharati Krishna Tirtha took over as the Shankaracharya of Puri in 1925. Born from a south Indian Brahmin family as Venkata Ramana Sarasvati, he studied in a Christian college in Madras, obtained his MA in Rochester University in Bombay and was a teacher at Rajamahendri, Lahore and other places. When his family died (wife, son and daughter) he was initiated into sannyasa by Trivikrama Tirtha at Varanasi on 14 July 1919, and 2 years later he was installed as the Yuvacharya at Dvaraka pith. He met Aurobindo Gokhale and attended the session of the Congress party in Nagpur in 1920 (when Gandhi presented his program of non-cooperation).

In 1921 he participated to the All India Khilafat Conference in Karachi that defied the British Government, and Maulana Mohammed Ali declared that Muslims could not serve in the British army. Following the Conference, there was a court case in Karachi in which 6 Muslim activists were sentenced to 2 years in jail, but Bharati Krishna Tirtha was acquitted. From 1923 onwards (with the August meeting in Varanasi), Bharati Krishna Tirtha became particularly active in the Hindu Mahasabha and was candidate for presidency for the year 1925/26, however the orthodox reformist Lala Lajpat Rai was elected instead.

Bharati Krishna Tirtha then gave up the Hindu Mahasabha, when his group of conservative priests were defeated in their opposition against opening the temples to the public, in the voting of April 1926 on the Temple Entry issue.

In 1933, the Untouchability Abolition and Temple Entry Bills were to be discussed in the Legislative Assembly; Bharati Krishna Tirtha sent a telegram to C.S. Ranga Iyed, editor of the *Daily Herald*, who had been presenting the "Hindu Temple Entry Disabilities Removal Bill" on the *Herald*, and a hot discussion ensued.

In 1925, while he was the Yuvacharya at Dvaraka, Bharati Krishna Tirtha was called to Puri by Madhusudana Tirtha who wanted him as his successor. However, even from Puri Bharati Krishna Tirtha continued to take interest in the management of the Dvaraka Matha, and he tried to get one of his disciples installed as the Shankaracharya there, until finally in 1951 he obtained court recognition of his disciple Abhinava Sacchidananda Tirtha as Shankaracharya of Dvaraka. From 1952, Bharati Krishna Tirtha settled in Nagpur, where in 1953 he founded the Visva Punar Nirmana Sangha in cooperation with Aurobindo.

Bharati Krishna Tirtha visited the USA in 1958, on the invitation of the Self-Realization Fellowship (Yogananda's Organization), giving a speech in their Center in Los Angeles. During this time, Shankara Purushottama Tirtha supervised the Puri Matha on his behalf. Bharati Krishna Tirtha did not clearly indicate a successor, so when he passed away in 1960 there were 4 years of confusion. Finally he was succeeded by Yogesvarananda Tirtha, whose period was quite short as he passed away in 1961, leading to a brief period of uncertainty during which the succession at the Matha was being litigated.

In 1964 one of the candidates named in Bharati Krishna Tirtha's will, Chandrasekhara Shastri (principal of the Government Sanskrit College in Jaipur, a Gujarati known for his highly political views) prevailed over the other candidates in a contest that involved delegates from Dvaraka, Joshimatha and Sringeri, as well as the Governor of Uttar Pradesh Biswanath Das, the Chief Minister of Orissa, the Law Minister of Orissa, and the editor of the *Samaja*, Radhanatha Rath. Chandrasekhara Shastri was initiated into *sannyasa* as Niranjana deva Tirtha by his own disciple, and consecrated at the Puri seat by Abhinava Sacchidananda Tirtha of Dvaraka. Niranjana deva Tirtha was a leader of the 6 November 1966 protest (with about 200,000 people) against the failure of the ban for cow slaughter in India; the rally saw 8 people killed and a number of wounded (19 policemen and 45 other people), 750 people were arrested including 500 "holy men". The Home Minister G.L. Nanda resigned. Niranjana deva Tirtha started a hunger strike 14 days later; the Government arrested him in Pondicherry but released him from jail after a few day, he returned to Puri where he continued to fast. He broke his fast after 73 days, on 1 February 1963, without having achieved his goal. In the following years he continued to make news on the papers for his strenuous defence of untouchability, that according to him was authorized by the *Manu samhita*. In April 1972, with the Shankaracharya of Joshimatha, Om Prakash Tyagi and Jana Sangh (Rajya Sabha member from Uttar Pradesh) he organized the Anti Family Planning Conference against the program instituted by the Government; he declared that with such program Hindus would become a minority in India within 100 years, and coined the slogan, "Hindus, a dying race". In 1992 he stepped down after nominating Nischalananda Sarasvati as his successor.

The worship schedule in the Matha is: *mangala arati*, *bala bhoga*, *anna bhoga*, *pahuda*, *sandhya arati*, milk and fruit *bhoga*, and *mahaprasad samarpana*. The Matha also has a *patha sala* (school) for teaching Vedic karmas. The festivals observed by the Matha are: Shiva ratri, Sri Rama Navami, Sri Krishna Janmashtami, Dipavali, Sri Bharati Krishna Tirtha's nirvana celebration, Gita Jayanti on Margasira sukla Ekadasi, Rudra abhisheka on Sravana Ekadasi, the Panthi Bhoga on Ratha yatra, and the *sraddha utsava* of the main Acharyas. In 1995 the Matha started to observe the celebration of the foundation day, on Kartika sukla Panchami. A secondary organization of this Matha is called Aditya vahini.

The Matha used to own a lot of land properties, but much was lost in transactions. Even the land where the Matha presently stands used to be 35 acres, and now it is only 2 acres. Legally it is controlled by the Government, the Orissa Devottar Vibhaga department, but the management is independent. The temple Sevakas are trained in rituals in Govardhana Matha and receive a certificate of abilitation, that is later confirmed by the King. The Shankaracharya presides over the Mukti mandapa meetings.

Gopal tirtha Matha

This Shankarite Matha was established by Gopal Tirtha Maharaja; it is in Bali Sahi near Rani Pokhari. This is the area where the old King's palace was. They also have a branch near Lingaraja temple in Bhubaneswar.

One of the Raja Gurus of the Atreya gotra named Vasudeva Ratha was a follower of this Matha; a great devotee of Jagannatha named Ganapati Bhatta also was in charge of the Matha. The Deities are Bhuvaneshvari (the *ista devi*; the original *astadhātu* Deity was stolen in 1958 then a new *vighraha* was installed), the *asta dhātu chālanti pratima* of Bhuvaneshvari, then Kanaka Durga, Ashta Bhujā Durga, Chamunda, Lakshmi Narayana, Rama Sita Lakshmana Bharata Satrugna, Radha Krishna, three Deities of crawling Gopal, four Deities of Laddu Gopal, Bhairava, Mahalakshmi, Bagala, Patita Pavana, Narayani, Sarasvati, Salagrama and Nrisimha. The festivals are Sravana Purnima, Sitala Sasthi, Kumara Purnima, Dasahara, Janmashtami, Vasantika Durga puja and Saradiya Durga puja, Rama Navami, Snana Purnima. On Sitala Sasthi Bata Lokanatha of Bali Sahi kidnaps Bhuvaneshvari and marries Her here. The Dandi Swami of the Matha is allowed to sit in the Mukti mandapa. The Matha provides the Hativesha samagri for the Snana purnima, they offer the Makara chula for Makara sankranti, Panthi Bhoga to Sudarshana during Bahuda yatra, Chakrabula Ekadasi, Sravana sukla Navami, Sravana Purnima and Kumara Purnima.

Shankarananda Sarasvati Matha

It is in Balisahi, near the Gopal Tirtha Matha. It has a close connection to the Sringeri Math in South India and has a branch in Bhuvaneshwar. It is said that it was the Ashram of Sridhara Svami, the great teacher of the Bhagavata Purana. The main Deity is Nrsimha.

Mahiprakash Matha

Established in Harachandi Sahi by Ramakrishna Brahmachari of the Shankara Sampradaya, it is around 200 years old. It takes its name from the disciple of the founder, Mahiprakash Brahmachari. The main Deity of the temple is Nrisimhadeva. The other Deities are Bagalamukhi, Radha Krishna, Shiva, Patita pavana and 50 Salagrama shilas. They celebrate the festivals of Nrisimha Chaturdasi, Suniya, Janmashtami, Sitala Sasthi, Radhastami, etc. This Matha supplies the daily toothbrush twigs for Jagannatha.

Shivatirtha Matha

This Shankarite Matha is in Grand Road, Tyari Sahi, near the old palace. It was established by Jagannatha Tirtha Devala. The Deities are Patita Pavana, Linga shakti, Salagrama.

Languli Matha

It is also called Lakshmi bhadra or Dasanami; some consider it as a separate Sampradaya called Avadhuta Sampradaya. It is in Lakshmi Bazar, on the north side of Sri Mandir just off Grand Road, opposite the Snana Vedi. In northern India the Dasanami *sannyasis* are organized into a number of Akhadas, namely Juna, Niranjani, Mahanirvani, Atal, Avahana, Anand, Gudad and Agni. Except for the Agni Akhada, which is for *brahmacharis*, the members of all other Akhadas are *sannyasis* carrying the single staff. The ten names of *sannyasis* are Bharati, Sarasvati, Sagara, Tirtha, Puri, Ashrama, Giri, Parvata, Aranya and Vana.

During a Kumbha mela the leaders of the Akhadas, known as Mahamandalesvaras, are elected and a large numbers of new *sannyasis* are initiated. The Dasanami *sannyasis* tend to have only a nominal affiliation with their Mathas, but most maintain a closer relationship with their Akhadas as they do not have to be ordained at one of the Mathas, nor do they have to reside there for any period of time as they are supposed to be constantly traveling (*parivrajaka*) with no fixed home, except for the period of Chaturmasya in the rainy season. The heads of the Mathas are also supposed to travel around most of the time.

Mahi Prakash Brahmachari Matha

It is in Harichandi Sahi.

There are two more Advaita Mathas in Puri, called **Bharati Matha** (in Kundeibenta Sahi), and **Giriharibanta Advaita Brahmasram** (in Lokanatha road, Girmar pantha).

A recent Matha was established by **Adhokshajananda Swami** (near the Central Post Office). We were unable to trace other Advaita Mathas, so we will be grateful for any information about them, to be inserted in the next edition of this book.

Smarta sampradaya Mathas

Some Mathas are attached to a temple and they have no independent existence, such as the **Bedi Hanuman Matha** (Bedi Hanuman temple, in Chakratirtha Road), the **Ardhasini Matha** (Mausima temple, Grand Road), etc.

In the lists of the traditional Mathas we always find a number of historical establishments that are connected to the temple rituals, specifically for the tour of the Ashrams that the *utsava vighraha* of Nrisimha makes on the occasion of Badi Nrisimha Vijaya (Sravana sukla Navami and Margasira Purnima). Traditionally, this ritual was performed to pray for protection from contagious diseases such as cholera that used to be rather common during the periods when many pilgrims converged on Puri and there was not sufficient sanitation and drinking water. Mahalakshmi also visits Kandu ashram on Bhadrava krishna Panchami for Rishi Panchami vrata. Sudarshana goes to Angira, Bhrigu and Markandeya ashrams on the full moon (Purnima) of the month of Sravana (Gamha Purnima) and of the month of Asvina (Kumara Purnima), and to Kandu ashram on the day of Radhastami.

- Angira ashram, in Dolamandapa Sahi (Angira wrote the *Moksha Bhavartha* and produced fire from his eyes for his daily needs)
- Brighu ashram, in Bali Sahi (Brighu, author of the famous astrology treatise called *Brighu Samhita*, is mentioned 18 times in the *Rig Veda*; he was also called Agni because he could eat fire)
- Markandeya ashram, in Markandesvara Sahi (different from Markandesvara Shiva temple)
- Pandu ashram, in Gaudabada Sahi
- Kandu ashram in Harachandi Sahi (mentioned in *Ramayana*, *Vishnu Purana* and *Vamadeva Samhita*), is the place where Sri Rama met Kandu Rishi and asked him advice before accepting Sugriva's friendship and alliance
- Parasara ashram (also called Ugrasena ashram)

In each Ashram, Sitala Bhoga is offered to the Deity. These Ashrams are managed by different Committees.

Ramanuja sampradaya Mathas

There are 24 Ramanuja panthi Mathas, of which the oldest are Emar, Achari Matha (near Emar Matha), Dakshinaparva and Raghava Das. The Mahanta of the Raghava Das receives the tying of the *sari* on his head during Snana yatra and is called Mahanayaka, "great leader" The Ramanuja sampradaya Mathas are also called Achari or Sri Matha. All the Mathas from the Ramanuja Sampradaya are under the Totadri Matha (or Ashtagadi Matha) from south India.

Emar Matha

It is near the lion gate of Jagannatha temple, and it is the most important of the Ramanuja Sampradaya Mathas, established by Ramanuja himself for his disciple Govinda, whose Tamil name was Embarumanar, which was later shortened into Emar. This Matha was also called Ramanuja Kotha, Rajagopalacharya Matha, Raja Gopala Matha and Srinivasa Kotha.

The Deities are Patita Pavana, Rama Lakshmana Sita Hanuman, Lakshmi Nrisimha, Salagram etc. There are also two *vighrahas* of Ramanuja, one made of stone and one made of metal (the *chalanti pratima* that on one particular day in the month of Vaisakha travels to all the major Mathas in Puri). The most important festival celebrated in the Matha is Jhulana yatra. The most important contribution of the Emar Matha is the Raghunandana Library, in front of Jagannatha temple. Their service to the Jagannatha temple consists in providing flowers for the Veshas during Vallabha and Bada Sringara every day, specifically the *guna* and *jhampa* garlands for the Deities' nose, and the *alaka* garland for Their foreheads.

During Anasara they provide the Chataka Bhoga and in the month of Kartika the Vallabha Bhoga. On Snana Purnima and Ratha yatra they provide flowers and chandana; during Chandana yatra they provide the Pana Bhoga.

They offer the Panthi Bhoga during the 21 days of the Chandana yatra, Nrisimha Chaturdasi, Champaka Dvadasi, Ratha yatra, Dhulya Gundicha, Hera Panchami, Niladri Vijaya, Chakrabhula (Sravana) Ekadasi, Sravana sukla Navami, Gahma Purnima, Kaliyadalana Ekadasi, Rishi Panchami, Radhashtami, Dasahara, Kumara Purnima, Dipavali, Margasira sukla Chaturdasi, Vasanta Panchami, Agni utsava, Dola Purnima, Rama Navami, Pushya Abhisheka, and Amavasya of every month.

Uttara parsva Matha

It is near the north gate of Jagannatha temple, in Lakshmi Bazar, established by Bhoj Puri, a *vaishnava brahmana* from the Ramanuja Sampradaya. The Deities are Raghunatha (Ramachandra) Lakshmana Sita Hanuman, Radha Krishna, Balabhadra Subhadra Jagannatha, Lakshmi Nrisimha, Dadhi Vamana, Ramanujacharya, Gopinath jiu, Sri Nrisimha, another Patita pavana, Bhashyakara Swami, Lokanatha, Hanuman, Lakshmi Narayana and 65 Salagrama shilas. The main festivals are Nrisimha Chaturdasi, Vamana Dvadasi, Jhulana yatra, Janmashtami, Rama Navami, the 24 Ekadasis, Dola yatra, Durga puja, Dasahara, and the 10 days festival for Ramanuja starting from Vaisakha sukla Dvitiya.

In connection to the Jagannatha Temple, the Mahantas perform the *chamara seva*, provide the Mohana Bhoga, light the *akhanda dipa*, and have their own stoves in Jagannatha's kitchen.

Dakshina parva Matha, also called Raghava Das Matha

A Ramanuja sampradaya Matha, it was established in 1680 by Raghava Das from west India; it is near the southern gate (Asva dvara) of the Jagannatha temple, in Bali Sahi on a 2 acres area. It is also called Dakshina parsva Matha (a name that is also attributed to the Sri Rama Matha).

Raghava Das received the title of Mahanayaka from the Gajapati King. It is said that Raghava Das used to stand on the beach to meditate, without caring for the heat or the rain; parasols offered to him by friendly people were systematically blown away by the wind until one temple Sevaka gave him a parasol that had been used by Lord Jagannatha, which remained strongly fixed in the sand. From that time, the Matha provides parasols for Sri Jagannatha during Anavasara. The Deities in this Matha are Lokanatha Shiva, Parvati, Nrisimha, Salagram, Sita Rama Lakshman, Patita Pavana, Daru Jagannatha Balarama Subhadra Sudarshan. This Matha also has temples in others area. One is at Narendra Sarovara (Gopala Vallabha mandir), with the Deities of Gopala Vallabha, Sri Radha Devi, Sri Sita Rama Lakshman, Sri Gopika, Sri Salagram, Sri Patita Pavana. In Ranapur they have the Braja Bihari mandir, in Kalpara they have another temple dedicated to Nrisimha, in Satyabadi a temple of Raghunatha Dev, in Nallihana a temple of Gramesvara Mahadeva., in Rishipada a temple of Gopinatha, and in Atharnala a temple of Dadhi Vamana, although due to bad the managing the temple has lost thousands of acres of land. The Matha is offering regular service to Jagannatha temple, supplying the special crowns (called *tahia*) for the Deities on several festive occasions (Snana Purnima, Ratha yatra), the Hati Vesha for Snana Purnima, the cotton cushions for the Pahandi Vijaya, sandalwood for Khadilagi Ekadasi, garlands for Navanka Vesha and Panti Bhoga on several occasions.

Jiyar Svami Matha

A Ramanuja sampradaya Matha, it is Bali Sahi. It was founded about 800 years ago by Sitaram Svami, who came from south India, together with Sri Raghunatha jiu, a *vigraha* of Sri Ramachandra. The Deities in the Matha are Sri Raghunatha jiu, Sita Maharani, Lakshmana jiu, Sri Krishna jiu, Rukmini Maharani, Satyabhama Maharani, Sri Venkatesvara, Sri Devi, Bhu Devi, Lakshmi Nrisimhadeva, Sri Ramanuja and other Acharyas. The main festivals are Rama Navami, the *sraddha* of Sri Ananta Svami, Pana Sankranti (fire walking ceremony), Sri Asmat Svami utsava, appearance day of Sri Ramanuja, appearance of Nrisimhadeva, Snana Purnima, Gundicha ratha yatra, Jhulana yatra, Godamba utsava, Guru Purnima, Sri Krishna Janmashtami, Sri Vamana jayanti, Dasseru, Kumara Purnima, Dipavali, Sri Venkata Svami utsava, Ola Navami, Sri Kshetra parikrama, Sri Barbar Muni utsava, and the appearance days of various Mahantas. The present Acharya is Sri Indramani Ramanuja Das.

Trimali Matha

It is at the elephant gate of Sri Mandira. It supplies camphor (*karpura*) and frankincense (*jhuna*) for the worship of Jagannatha in Sri Mandira.

Sri Ram Das Matha

Also known as Bada Matha or Dakshina parsva Matha, this Ramanuja Sampradaya Matha is at the south gate of Jagannatha temple, in Manikarnika Sahi; previously it was situated in Bali Sahi. It was established by Ram Das, disciple of Ramanuja Acharya and Guru of the Maratha governor of Orissa. The main Deities are: a Salagrama shila shaped as Nrisimha, Rama Lakshmana Sita Urmila, 2 Deities of Lakshmi Narayana and 2 Deities of Radha Krishna, and 50 Salagrama shilas. In the Jagamohana there is Patita pavan, Hanuman, Radha Krishna, Laddu Gopala and a few Salagrama shilas.

The important festivals are Nrsimha Chaturdasi, Rama Navami, Janmastami, Vamana Dvadasi, Jhulan yatra. They provide Bala Bhoga in Kartika, Panthi Bhoga and *pana* to the temple on certain occasions, many flower ornaments for Bada Sringara, the Sankha Chakra Vesha for the Navanka, and the warm clothes for the Deities in Odana Sasthi. They also have their own stoves in Jagannatha's kitchen, where they cook the Amrita Manohi Bhoga. The Mahantas of this temple are allowed to do *chamara seva* for Jagannatha.

Venkata Achari Matha

A Ramanuja Sampradaya Matha around 300 years old, it is in Bali Sahi. Once the King of Vijayanagara visited Puri accompanied by his Raja Guru, and after having Darshana of Jagannatha, the Raja Guru decided to remain in Puri permanently. At the request of the King of Vijayanagara, the King of Khurda donated some land near the Mashani Mahavira in Bali Sahi (near the Smasana), so that the Matha could be built. The Deities are Patita Pavana, Vamsidhari Gopala, Sridevi, Bhudevi, Krishna, Venkatesvara, Rama abhisekha Deity, Ranganatha Swami, Goda Devi, and 40 Salagramas. They celebrate the festivals of Kumara Purnima, Rama Navami, Janmashtami, Vijaya Dasami, Pongal (Makara Sankranti), etc. The Mahantas offer the *chamara seva* to Jagannatha in the Sri Mandira and provide the Panthi Bhoga to Sudarshana on Kumara Purnima.

Nrisimha Achari Matha

A Ramanuja Sampradaya Matha, it is also in Bali Sahi, established by a Vaishnava family named Madrajigui. Together with the Venkata Achari Matha, the Nrisimha Achari Matha was established by the descendents of two prominent householder disciples of Ramanuja Acharya. Ramanuja had eight chief disciples, three of which were *grihasthas* and five were *sannyasis*. The Deities are Nrishimhadeva, Lakshmi Devi, Patita Pavana, Rama Lakshmana, Guru gadi, Salagram. The main festival is the appearance of Lord Nrishimhadeva, Jhulan yatra, and the appearance days of Sri Radha, Sri Krishna, Sri Rama. They offer Panthi Bhoga and *chamara seva* to Jagannatha during Ratha yatra.

Revasa Matha

A Ramanuja Sampradaya Matha, it is near the Jagannatha temple, on the side of Koili Vaikuntha. It was established by a Rajasthani scholar named Ramachandra Ramanuja Das, who was the Raja Guru of Jaipur. He was initiated by Tridandi Swami Raghava Jatendra Mahadeshi.

The Deities are Raghunathajiu Lakshmana Lal Mata Janaki, Hanuman ji, Gopal ji, Lal ji, Gopinath Deva, Radha Krishna, Caturdha murtis (Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadra Sudarshana), Lakshmi, Ramanuja Swami, and many Salagramas silas. The festivals celebrated are Jyestha Purnima, Snana yatra, Guru Purnima, Jhulan yatra, Janmashtami, Vamana Dvadasi, Suniya, Durga puja. They also celebrate a *yajna* for nine days during Ratha yatra. The Mahantas offer the *chamara seva* to Jagannatha and Panthi Bhoga during Snana Purnima, Ratha yatra and Niladri Vijaya.

Bada jhadu Matha

Established in Kalika Devi Sahi, ner the Samadhi Matha by Ramanuja Das of the Ramanuja Sampradaya, it was previously known as Ayodhya Ananta Kota. As the name suggests, this Matha was in charge of cleaning the floor of the Jagannatha temple. The Deities are Raghunatha jiu, Radha Krishna, Lakshmi, Satya Narayana, Laddu Gopala, 30 Salagramas, and Hanuman. Just next to it there is a **Sana Jhadu Matha**, too.

Subha Lakshmi Narayana chata Matha

A Ramanuja Sampradaya Matha, it is near Town Thana (city police station), in Grand Road.

The main Deities are Subha Narayana or Subha Lakshmi Narayana, Radha Krishna, Nitai, Gaura, Nrsimha, Madana Mohana, Garuda. The main festivals are Janmashtami, Radhashtami, Govardhana puja, Kahali bhoga, Nrishimha Chaturdasi, Guru Purnima, Jhulana yatra.

Siddha Matha

It is in Dolamandap Sahi. The Deities are Ananta Swami, Gopalji, Nrishimha, Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadra. The festivals are Radhashtami, Janmashtami, Hanuman jayanti, Kumara Purnima, Ratha yatra, Pana Sankranti.

Samadhi Matha or Jayarama Matha

It is in Kalikadevi Sahi, between the Bada Jhadu and Chhauni Mathas. It is also called Jayarama Matha, after a Vaishnava sadhu who lived here and used to regularly remain in *samadhi* every fortnight from Dvadasi until Dasami. Two other famous *sadhus* who lived here (between the late 19th and early 20th century) were Vasudeva Ramanuja Das and Damodar Ramanuja Das. Vasudeva was a *sannyasi* but out of humility he wore white clothes like a *babaji* and returned the obeisances that people offered him by saying, *daso 'smi*. He recited the *Bhagavata Purana* daily and built a small temple of Narasimha within the Sri Mandira near to the Sad bhuja Gauranga shrine. Damodar Ramanuja Das used to take care of the gardens inside Sri Mandira, investing money he collected.

Other Mathas in this Sampradaya are **Girisvami Matha** (in Shyama Kali Lane), **Vasudeva Baba Matha** (in Svargadvara road), **Achari Matha** (south east of Simha Dvara, in front of Narasimhachari Matha), **Jatiraj Matha** (on the sea shore), **Rima chhatra Matha** (in Grand Road), **Nua Matha** (in Marichikota Lane), **Sundaradas Matha** (in Marichikota Lane), **Kataki Matha** (near Uttara parsva Matha), **Bedi Hanuman** or **Mahavira Matha** (at Bedi Hanuman temple, Chakratirtha road), **Ranganayakachari Matha** (in Suara Sahi), **Narendra Mahala Matha** (on the right side of Radha Vallabha Matha on Grand Road), **Siddha Matha** (in Dolamandapa Sahi), **Pandita Matha** (also called Chakratirtha Matha, in Pathuria Sahi).

Ramanandi Sampradaya Mathas

The Ramanandi Mathas follow the tradition of Ramananda Svami, who was originally a follower of the Ramanuja Sampradaya (23rd generation) but then broke off. For more information see the chapter on the great personalities connected with Jagannatha Puri.

The Ramanandi Sampradaya has several differences compared to the Ramanuja Sampradaya.

The Ramanandis worship Sita Rama rather than Lakshmi Narayana. They wear *tulasi mala* around their necks all the time, whereas most Ramanujis usually put *tulasi malas* on only when they are reciting their *sandhya* mantras. When they retire from household life, they simply wear white *kaupin* and *bahirvasa*. The followers of Ramananda belong to two different groups, one considering him to be a complete incarnation of Ramachandra, the other considering him to be only a partial incarnation, and giving more importance to the connection of their line to Ramanujacharya. Today there are 29 Ramanandi Mathas at Puri.

Bada chata Matha

Arguably the most important Matha of the Ramanandi Sampradaya, it is about 150 years old. It started as a makeshift shelter built near the east gate of Jagannatha mandir by a Sadhu of the Ramanandi Sampradaya and with time it became a rallying point for other *sadhus* of the same Sampradaya who were keen on standing guard to protect the temple. It is one of the main Mathas that provide *puja* paraphernalia to the temple of Jagannatha, including the Padma Vesha. *Sadhus* from this Matha sing *kirtana* in Sri Mandira for Jagannatha at the time of Mangala Arati, Pahuda Arati and Bala Dhupa. It manages the Ghumasara Matha and also the Angira Ashram Matha, therefore sometimes the Angira Ashram Matha is listed under the Ramanandi Mathas.

The main Deities are Raghunatha jiu and Sita, Radha Krishna, Lakshmi Narayana, Rama Lakshmana Sita Hanuman, Nrisimha, Shiva, Matsya avatara, and hundreds of Salagrama shilas. There is an Agni kunda where the Matha has the exclusive privilege of keeping the Vaishnava Agni brought from the Rosha Sala of the Jagannatha temple.

It is also the only Matha in Puri that is entrusted the first and the last Seva in Jagannatha temple; as soon as the temple opens for Mangala Arati three Vaishnavas from this Matha sing in the Jagamohana and during the Ratha yatra they do the same at Gundicha.

The Matha celebrates all the festivals of the Jagannatha temple; as *seva* to the temple they perform *kirtana* daily during Mangala Arati, Bala Dhupa, and Pahuda Arati. They also perform *kirtana* for Chandana yatra and Dola purnima, they provide the first Panthi Bhoga when Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshana get on their chariots at Ratha yatra, and they offer the Padma Vesha for Jagannatha. During the Indra dhvaja puja in the evening of Bhadra sukla Ekadasi, they tie the flag of Indra in the Matha.

A Ramanandi saint from north India, named Manohara Das, was traveling to Sri Kshetra and on the way he saw many beautiful lotus flowers growing in one pond. He picked them and wrapped them in a *gamcha*, then continued his journey. He arrived in Puri in Magha Amavasya and entered the temple directly; he requested the Pandas to offer the flowers to Jagannatha, but the Pandas refused, saying that the flowers were too old. When he insisted, the Pandas drove him out from the temple. The saint, feeling extremely hurt, went to rest in the Bada chata Matha. That night, the Gajapati Maharaja had a dream where he saw that Jagannatha wanted those lotus flowers to be offered at Bada Sringara, so the Padma Vesha tradition was started.

Sana chata Matha

It is more than 250 years old, as it was established by Rama Das ji of the Ramanandi Sampradaya. It is near the Dola Vedi, north of the Simha Dvara. The Deities are Patita Pavana, Raghunath Deva, Rama Lakshman Sita, Lal ji, Radha Krishna, Lakshmi, Sita, Ram ji, small *chaturdha murtis*, and about 200 Salagramas. The festivals are Rama Navami, 42 days of Chandana yatra, Snana Purnima, Anavasara vidhi, Guru Purnima, Jhulana yatra, Vamana Dvadasi, Nrsimha Chaturdasi, Janmashtami, Govardhana puja, and Dasahara. The Mahantas offer the *chamara seva* to Jagannatha and Panthi Bhoga for Snana Purnima, Ratha Yatra and Niladri Vijaya.

Dasavatara Matha

It is said it was the house of Jayadeva Gosvami, the place where he composed the *Gita Govinda*. By divine intervention Jayadeva married Padmavati, a very expert Mahari in the Jagannatha temple and the daughter of a south Indian *brahmana* called Devasharma. Padmavati was Jayadeva's inspiration to write the *Gita Govinda*, the poetic drama that was included in the rituals of Jagannatha temple during the time of Anangabhima Deva.

Established in the 12th century near Gundicha, it is now managed by the Bada chata Matha in the Ramanandi Sampradaya, although some say Jayadeva was a follower of the Nimbarka Sampradaya. The Deities are Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadraji, Raghunatha jiu, Gopal jiu, Hanuman, all the Dasa avataras, Shiva and Ganesha. The main festivals are Ratha yatra, Pana Sankranti, Jhulana, Dola yatra.

Bada akhada Matha (Digambara akhada)

It is in Chodaganga Sahi, and the present Mahanta is Ganga Das. The Deities are Sita Rama, Rama Lakshmana Sita, Radha Krishna, Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadra, Madana Mohana, Salagrama, Gopalji.

The festivals are Janmashtami, Rama Navami, Sri Panchami, Dola Purnima, Ratha yatra, Chandana yatra, Makara Sankranti, Govardhana utsava, Snana Purnima.

Nirmohi akhada Matha

It is in Dandimala Sahi, near Narendra Kona market. The present Mahanta is Rama Narayana Das. The Deities are Raghunath, Salagram, Jagannatha Balabhadra, Rama Lakshmana Bharata Satrugna, Radha Krishna, Narayana. The festivals are Chandan yatra, Ratha yatra, Snana Purnima, Janmashtami, Rama Navami, Guru utsava.

Nirvani akhada Matha (Hati akhada)

It is in Daitapada Sahi, at Narendra Sarovara. The present Mahanta is Prabhu Narayana Das. The Deities are Patita Pavana, Rama Lakshmana Sita, Hanuman, Nrishimha, Raghunathji, Radha Krishna, Salagram. The festivals are Rama Navami, Hanuman jayanti, Janmastami, Vamana Dvadasi, Radhashtami. They offer *kirtana* in Bahuda yatra and Panthi Bhoga in Ratha yatra.

Chauni Matha

Established by Raghunath Das, it is on the left side of the lion gate of Jagannatha mandir. This Matha is also famous as the “Seat of the Guru of the King’s wife”. The Deities are Sita Rama, Pancha mukhi Hanuman, Nrishimha, Gopal jiu, Salagram. The main festivals are Rama Navami, Sita Navami, Magha krishna Saptami, Sita vivaha Panchami, appearance of Ramanandi, Janmashtami, Vijaya Dasami.

The Matha is also connected to Jagannatha temple, and offering *chamara* and fan service. The present administrator is Dr. Ayodhya Das, but the Matha is controlled by the Government.

Bada santa Matha

It is in Markandeya Sahi, also famous as Ramanandi Sampradaya Guru gadi. The Deities are Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra, Sudarsana, Nrishimha, Sudama, Subala, Sugriva, Krishna, Radha Devi, Narayana, Rama, Lakshmana, Sitadevi, Visakha Devi, Lakshmi Narayana, Surya Narayana, Ashta bhuja Thakurani, Bala Gopala, Lakshmi Thakurani, Parvati Devi. The main festivals are Dola Purnima, Snana Purnima, Chandan yatra, Sravana Jhulan yatra, Bakula Amavasya, Chitalagi Amavasya and the appearance days of Nrishimha, Rama, Krishna, Ganesha, Mahavira (Hanuman), Radha. Every Sankranti they perform *homa* in front of Sri Nrishimhadeva.

Ghumusara Matha

Located in Kundeibenta Sahi, near Marichikota lane, it was established in the 17th century in the Ramanandi Sampradaya. Kavisamrat Upendra Bhanja, a famous medieval Oriya poet, author of *Lavanya vati*, *Niladrisha chautisha* and *Vaidehisha vilasa*, resided in this Matha. He was a disciple of Sri Raghuvara Das of Chauni Matha. The main Deities of this Matha are: Rama Lakshmana Sita, Jagannatha Patita Pavana, Hanuman, six Deities of Gopala, two couples of Radha Krishna Deities, Durga, nine Raghunath Salagramas and thirteen more Salagramas.

The main festival is Jhulana yatra. The offer Panthi Bhoga to the Jagannatha temple on Hera Panchami, Chakrabula Ekadasi, Gama Purnima, Kamsa Vadha, Sravana sukla Navami, Kumara Purnima, Margasira sukla Chaturdasi, and Chaitra sukla Panchami.

Papudya Matha

Also called Jagannatha Dasa Matha. It is at Chudanga Sahi, in front of the present King’s palace.

It was established by Papudya Jagannatha Das, a Ramanandi Sadhu with beard and long matted hair who came to Puri at the beginning of the 20th century, in a terrible draught that had lasted 12 years. As soon as he arrived in Puri, it started to rain. It is said that Papudya Jagannatha Das had memorized the entire *Bhagavata Purana* and was a person of a very amiable and fun-loving disposition.

Kapurya Matha

Also called Manirama Matha. It is in Marchikota chhaka, in Grand Road, near the present King’s palace. It was established by Mahanta Maniram Das. The Deities are Rama, Lakshman, Sita, Hanuman, Gopalji, Laddu Gopala, Narayana Lakshmi, Radha Krishna, Salagrama. The main festivals are Rama Navami, Krishna Janmashtami, Guru Purnima, Cittalagi Amavasya, Gamha Purnima, Govardhana utsava, Makara Sankranti, Dola Purnima, and the *sraddha* of the previous Mahantas.

Nevala Dasa Matha

Situated in Dola mandapa Sahi, it belongs to the Ramanandi Sampradaya. It was established by Acharya Nevala Kishora Dasa, in the 16th century. It is the only Matha in Puri where two Sampradayas meet. It is believed that originally it followed the Ramanuja Sampradaya but later changed to the Ramanandi; Bhaskara Ramanuja Dasa, disciple of the founder, had no disciples so he entrusted the Matha to his brother Hayagriva Dasa, who was a follower of the Ramanandi Sampradaya.

The Deities are Jagannatha Patita Pavana, Rama Lakshmana Sita Bharata Satrugna Urmila Mandhavi Srutakirti (on the main altar), two Vishnu *murtis*, one single Krishna and three couples of Radha Krishna (on the second altar), Dvarikadhish and Laddu Gopala (the third altar), three Patita Pavana, one Patita Pavan with Lakshmidēvi, with Garuda on the left and Hanuman on the right (fourth altar), and 108 Salagrama shilas (on the fifth altar). There are also five *murtis* of Hanuman in the Jagamohana.

The important festivals are Rama Navami, Chandana yatra, Vyasa Purnima, Jhulan yatra, Janmastami, Hanuman jayanti etc. On the Ratha yatra day they offer the Panthi Bhoga before the Deities ascend the chariots, Panthi Bhoga for Sudarshana on Kumara Purnima when he rides in front of the Matha going to Angira Ashrama, and Bala Bhoga during the month of Kartika.

Balagandi chata Matha

Situated directly on Grand Road, near Salabega Samadhi Matha. It was established by Sri Maha Mandalesvara Sri Mahanta Jay Rama Das ji Maharaja. The main Deities are Sri Rama, Sita and Lakshmana, accompanied by several other Deities.

Panjabi Matha

It is in Bali Sahi, near the south gate of Jagannatha temple. The Deities are Sita Rama and Lakshmana, Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadra, Radha Krishna, Lakshmi Nrishingha Narayana, Hanuman, Laddu Gopala. The festivals are Rama Navami, the Sraddha utsava of the founder Acharya, Devasnana Purnima, Jhulan yatra, Govardhana utsava.

Bali Matha

It is in Markandesvara Sahi, the present Mahanta is Pramod Kumar Das. The Deities are Radha Gopala, Radha Krishna, Lakshmi Narayana, Dola Govinda, Laddu Gopala, Nrishimha, Salagrama. The main festivals are Dola Purnima, Janmashtami, Radhashtami.

Chota chata Matha:

It is in Lakshmi Bazar, on the northern side of Jagannatha temple.

Chota babaji Matha or Gopalji Matha

It is in Bali Sahi, the present Mahanta is Vishram Das Maharaja. The Deities are Ramji Lakshman Sita, Hanuman, Radha Krishna, Salagrama, Lakshmi Narayana. The festivals are Rama jayanti, Janmashtami, Guru utsava.

Sundara Das Matha

It is in Marchikota Sahi, the present Mahanta is Naval Kishor Das. The Deities are Rama, Lakshmana Sita, Jagannatha, Tirupati Balaji, Laddu Gopala, Hanuman, Salagrama, Lakshmi Narayana. The festivals are Janmashtami, Vamana Dvadasi, Rama Navami, Vasanta Panchami, Dola Purnima.

Harija Khandi Matha

Sometimes also called Haidakhandi Matha, it is near the Svetaganga sarovara. This Matha is one of the wealthiest in Puri, also having many branches in south India. The Deities are Sita Rama, Radha Krishna, Jagannatha and Lakshmi, and Narasimha Salagrama.

Balaram kota Matha

It is behind the Radha kanta Matha in Bali Sahi. It was originally a branch of the Ramanuja Achari Matha, but passed to the Ramanandis later on. The Deities worshiped here are Sita Rama, Nrisingha Shalagram Shila and Lakshmi Narayana.

Lavanika Matha:

It is in Patnahata Sahi, Lavanikya chhak. Jagannatha takes cheese here on Kaliya Dalana Ekadasi.

Svargadvara chhata Matha:

It is near the Ananta Sayana temple in Svargadvara, next to an ancient banyan tree.

Other Mathas belonging to the same Sampradaya are: **Bada santa Matha** (between the Sri Mandir and the temple office), **Kausalyadas Matha** (near the south gate of Sri Mandira), **Bagha akhada Matha** (also called Mahanirvani Matha, it is near the old Bus Stand), **Hati akhada Matha** (near the old Bus Stand), **Nilambari vaithaka Matha** (near Gundicha), **Kakhi akhada Matha** (near Gundicha), **Jejeram Matha** (the name was originally Jay Jay Rama, it is near Gundicha), **Karnamagiri Matha** (near Badasankha), **Maha Nirvani Matha** (near Badasankha), **Kimeria Matha** (in Baseli Sahi), **Purana Nahara chhata Matha** (near old King's palace, in Chakratirtha), **Mulaka chhata Matha** (also called Vidura Matha, it is near the Ananta Sayana temple in Svargadvara), **Svargadvara chata Matha** (near Svargadvara, it has a large banyan tree).

Other two Mathas are listed under this Sampradaya (**Patthara akhada Matha** and **Nua sundaram Matha**) but they are not active any more.

Nimbarka sampradaya Mathas

Just like the Ramanuja Sampradaya focuses on the worship of Vishnu and the Ramanandi Sampradaya focuses on Sri Ramachandra, the Nimbarka Sampradaya traditionally worships Radha Krishna, although sometimes all Sampradayas also worship other Deities as *parsva devatas*, or “companions” of the main Deities.

Sri Radha Vallabha Matha

It is in Dolamandapa Sahi, east of the Sri Mandira. This Matha contends with the Dasavatara Matha the glory of having been the residence place of Jayadeva, where he composed the *Gita Govinda*. The main Deities are Radha Vallabha, Madana Mohana, Radharani, Patita Pavana, Lakshmidēvi, Mahavira, and Salagrama. The main festivals are Jhulana yatra, Radhashtami, Hera Panchami. At the time of return Ratha yatra (Bahuda), it offers Panthi Bhoga to Jagannatha on the chariot. The present Acharya is Sri Rama Krishna Das.

Chaulia Matha

It is near the main Hospital, in Jhadesvari Sahi near Balagandhi chhak. The Deities are Radha Krishna, Gopala, Jagannatha, and Salagrama. They do not perform festivals because of lack of funds.

Other Nimbarkapanthi Mathas are **Sri Ramji Matha** (in Chodaganga Sahi), **Gopalji Matha** (near Dasavatara Matha), **Duhkishyam Baba Matha** (in Lokanath road), and **Chikiti Matha** (near Varahi temple in Baseli Sahi). Other Mathas also listed under this Sampradaya are Ramji Matha, Gopali Matha, Dukhyshyam Baba Matha, but it seems that they are not active any more.

Dasavatara Matha

Established in the 12th century near Gundicha, it is managed by the Bada chata Matha, therefore it is also listed under the Ramanandi Sampradaya Mathas, although technically the Ramanandi Sampradaya started later.

Vishnu Svami Sampradaya Mathas

Vishnusvami himself established the **Vishnusvami Matha** on Markanda pushkarini during his visit in Puri. Near to the Matha, we find the **Vishnu Svami akhada**, originally established as a martial arts training center, presided by the Deity of Mahavira Hanuman.

Sri Jagannatha Vallabha Matha

This famous Matha was established in the Jagannatha gardens (in Grand Road) by Ramananda Raya, a disciple from the Vishnu Svami Sampradaya and a close follower of Sri Chaitanya.

After Ramananda, this Matha became the Ashram of Baba Brahmachari, the high priest of the Maratha rulers, who developed the place and greatly increased its properties, so every year he is commemorated on the Founder's day (on the first day of Chandana yatra).

The *ista devata* of the Matha is Gopal jiu, with four arms, holding *sankha*, *chakra*, and flute. Other Deities are Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra, with Chaitanya and Ramananda. Inside the gardens there are five more temples: Bada Mahavira, Guabadi Mahavira, Gumpa Mahavira, Anjana Devi, and Budi (Adi) Thakurani. The main festivals are Radhashtami, Jhulana yatra, Krishna Janmashtami, and the Padma Vesha of Jagannatha. The Matha performs various services for Sri Mandira, and host various festivals for the representative Deities of Jagannatha. The present director is Sri Vipra Charana Gochayata, but the administration is controlled by the Government under the Endowment Commissioner.

Gaudiya Vaishnava Mathas

Most of the followers of Sri Chaitanya came from Bengal, therefore in Puri since the times when Chaitanya lived here there has been a considerable number of Gaudiya ("Bengali") Mathas.

In more recent times, the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition branched off with Bhaktivinoda and his son and successor Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, who established a religious Institution called Gaudiya Matha, including several centers all over India. To distinguish them from the traditional Mathas that were contemporary of Sri Chaitanya or in any case preceded the appearance of their founder in the early 1900s, the centers of this particular Institution founded by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati are called Sarasvata Gaudiya Mathas. We will describe them in the next section; in this section we list the original ones.

Radha kantha Matha (Gambhira)

In Bali Sahi, near Venkatachari, it used to be the house of Kashi Mishra, the Raja Guru of king Prataparudra Deva, and the residence of Sri Chaitanya in Puri. After meeting with Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya in Jagannatha temple, Sri Chaitanya came here to get the Darshana of the *murti* of Radha Kanta. These Deities, originally from Kanchi, had been installed in Sri Mandira but it is said They were eating the offerings of food before they were placed before Jagannatha, so the King decided to move Them out. On the request of Kashi Mishra, Sri Chaitanya remained to live here for the next 18 years, therefore it is a very famous pilgrimage place for Bengali and Oriya Vaishnava devotees. Sri Chaitanya regularly had Sankirtana here with his most intimate associates.

The Matha is still preserving Chaitanya's *kamandalu* (water pot) and sandals. The Deities are Radha Kanta, Radharani and Lalita sakhi, Sri Chaitanya, Nityananda Prabhu, Advaita Prabhu, Radha Krishna, Revati Balarama, Jagannatha, Laddu Gopala, Antua Gopal, Salagram, and Giriraja. The main celebration is Sankirtana, performed regularly every day. The Matha has many branches in Andhra pradesh, Vrindavana (especially in Sri Radhakunda), Navadvip, etc. The present director is Sri Sahadeva Patra.

Tota Gopinatha Matha

It is near the temple of Yamesvara Shiva, in Gaudabadi Sahi. Gaudabadi Sahi takes its name from the fact that Sri Chaitanya (Gaura) used to come this way every day with a Kirtana party to go to Jagannatha temple, and he liked this area very much because it reminded him of Vrindavana. In fact he often stopped here and he was very attracted by the sandy hill he called Govardhana and by the gardens at its foot. One day he discovered here the *vighraha* of Gopinatha, unearthed and then installed Him, having a temple built for Him. Gadadhara Pandita, one of his main four associates, was entrusted with the worship, and he continued in this service until the last days of his life. When Gadadhara Pandita became old, he had difficulties in his service as Gopinatha is very tall, and dressing and garlanding Him was not easy. So one day Gopinatha sat down in *padma asana*, with crossed legs, so that His *pujaka* could reach Him more easily, and He is still in that position.

Chaitanya also used to come here every day to listen to Gadadhara Pandita speaking on *Bhagavata Purana*. On his last day Chaitanya came to Tota Gopinatha and during the Kirtana he entered the Deity room.

When opening the room, the devotees saw that Chaitanya had disappeared and a golden line has manifested in the leg of the black-complexioned *vighraha* of Gopinatha. The same thing happened with Jahnava Devi, wife of Nityananda, who had become the leader of the Gaudiya Vaishnava community after the disappearance of Chaitanya and Nityananda. One day Jahnava was participating to a Kirtana in the temple in Tota Gopinatha, when she entered the Deity room and disappeared. The Deities in the Matha are Gopinatha, Radha and Lalita, all black complexioned, which is quite unusual. In a separate room, Balarama of white complexion is holding horn and plough, and is accompanied by His two consorts Revati and Varuni. In the third room in the temple there are Radha Madana Mohana and Gaura Gadadhara. Outside the original temple structure, in what is now the large Kirtana hall, there are the self-manifested Radha-pada, the marks of the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani.

The main festivals observed here are Janmashtami, the appearance of Gadadhara Pandita, and the festival of Ram Das Babaji, in memory of the day when this devotee brought an offering of rice to Gadadhara Pandita and was graced by the personal presence of Sri Chaitanya. The present Acharya is Viranchi Narayana Pattnaik. Just nearby are the Cataka Hill and the Bhajana kutir of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati.

Haridasa samadhi Matha

Haridasa Thakur, known as the Nama Acharya, was one of the main followers of Chaitanya and resided in Puri for the better part of his life. He was older than Chaitanya but had a great devotion for him, so when he felt that his life was nearing its end, he requested Chaitanya to be present before him at the time of his death. Chaitanya loved Haridas so much that he danced for a long time while holding his dead body. Then he personally took the body to the ocean beach and performed his entombing in the place where the Matha is standing today. After the funeral ceremony, Chaitanya took a bath in the ocean with all his devotees, and ordered that the disappearance day of Haridasa should be observed as a great festival every year by all devotees, in Ananta Chaturdasi (Bhadra sukla Chaturdasi).

The care of the Samadhi Matha was entrusted by Chaitanya to the followers of Gadadhara Pandita, but in time they became unable to perform their service properly, so they rented out the puja for the amount of 4,000 rupees per year. The Vaishnava community united to improve the conditions of the Matha, and Radha Charana Deva, Rama Dasa babaji, Govinda Das babaji, Siliguru Devi, Nityapada Das babaji and Advaita Das babaji gave their service in this regard. The Deities in the Matha are Radha Madana Mohana, Lalita, Jagannatha, sitting together with Chaitanya (Gauranga). In the same room with Nityananda Prabhu are Radha Syamasundara, Yogamaya, Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. In the room of Advaita Prabhu are Radha Madana Gopala, Giriraja, Narayana sila, and Balarama Gopal. In the middle area of the Matha there is the samadhi tomb of Haridasa with his *vighraha*, and a Tulasi pitha.

The main festivals observed are the disappearance of Haridasa, Gaura Purnima (Dola Purnima), Jhulan yatra, Janmashtami, Sivaratri etc. On the disappearance day of Haridasa (that falls on Ananta Chaturdasi) the devotees of the Matha go to Sri Mandira to collect alms in Mahaprasada, then they organize a great feast distributing Mahaprasada to everyone. Therefore they are known as Bhiksa Sampradaya.

Siddha Bakula Matha

It is near Radhakantha Matha in Bali Sahi. This Matha is also called the Bhajana kutir of Haridasa; in fact Haridasa resided here for the second part of his life, always chanting 300,000 Names of God every day. The place was chosen by Chaitanya himself, and also Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis stayed in this Ashram when they visited Puri. Chaitanya used to come every day here to visit Haridasa and chant with him; one day before Chaitra Sankranti, as Haridasa was sitting in the sun, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu wanted to give him some shade, so he planted a toothpick used by Jagannatha. Usually the twigs from the kumbhatua tree are used as toothbrush for Jagannatha, but on that day they went missing, so one twig from a bakula tree was used instead. As usual, Chaitanya was present at the Mangala arati in the Jagannatha temple, so he was presented with the twig as prasada, then he gifted it to Haridasa, planting it in his place, and it immediately became a large Bakula tree. As Haridasa was an example of perfection in spiritual life, this tree is also called Siddha Bakula.

Some years after the disappearance of Haridasa, the tree had become so large and strong that the king of that time decided to have it cut to build the chariots for the Ratha yatra. During the night, suddenly the tree cracked open and created a huge hollow in the trunk: when the carpenters arrived in the morning to cut it down, they realized that it would be useless to do so, because the wood was not suitable.

However, the tree continued to live and grow, and the new branches were perfectly normal. Still today, this Bakula tree is considered a Kalpa Vriksha, a wish-fulfilling tree, and the pilgrims tie a thread to its branches while asking for a boon.

The Deities worshipped in the Matha are Nrishimhadeva, Radha Govinda, Radha Madhava, Radharani, Lalita sakhi, Sadbhuja Gauranga, Nityananda, Advaita, Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra, and Haridasa Thakura at the entrance of the temple. The main festivals are the appearance days of Nityananda and Advaita Acharya, the disappearance of Haridasa, Janmashtami, Radhashtami, Nandotsava, Dola (Gaura) Purnima, Kartika Purnima, Govardhana utsava, and Snana Purnima. The present Mahanta is Srinivas Das Maharaja.

Jhanjhapitha Matha

This Gaudiya Vaishnava Matha is located between Dolamandapa Sahi and Suar Sahi. This area used to be a dense forest, where Nityananda had danced in Sankirtana with some young boys.

After the disappearance of Chaitanya, Narottama Das came to Puri to visit all the places where Chaitanya had manifested his *lila*. During this visit he instructed his disciple Sevadas babaji, who worshiped Radha Kantha in Vrindavana, to build a Matha in this place. Sevadas babaji became famous because every morning he used to go around with big cymbals (called *jhanja*) playing them loudly to wake up the people for Mangala Arati. This is how his Matha received its name.

The main Deities are Radha Kantha installed by Narottama Das himself, with three Salagrama shilas. The Matha perform the Pada-padma seva for Chaitanya's footprints inside the Jagannatha temple, are in charge of the Gundicha marjana and perform Kirtana in the temple on some occasions. It also receives one pot of Jagannatha Mahaprasada daily.

When the British took over the Government in 1804, an annual allowance of 550 rupees was allotted to the Matha, but due to very bad management by one Bhagavan Das, the Matha was totally destroyed. Bhagavan Das had appointed his disciple Krishna Das to succeed him, but Krishna Das decided to take over immediately without waiting for his Guru's demise. Guru and disciple ended up in court one against the other, selling off the Deities' jewelry and clothing, the pots and pans from the kitchen and even demolished the Matha's building to sell bricks to maintain themselves and the court battle. Finally, the land was mortgaged for 500 rupees to a money lender (a local Brahmin by the name Vrindavana Mishra), who later transferred the ownership of the land to one Fakir Satpati. However, when Fakir Satpati agreed to pay the debt and maintain the temple and Krishna Das, Vrindavana Mishra was not satisfied and filed a case against Fakir Satpati, demanding a much higher amount of money. The court ruled in favor of the money lender, sentencing that Fakir Satpati's possessions would be sold in auction, including the Radha Kantha Deities, that were "confiscated" by the police.

Radha Ramana Charana Das babaji, a famous Sadhu who lived in Puri (1853-1905) known for his Kirtanas (Nitai Gaura Radhe Shyam) intervened and through his disciples he convinced the Magistrate to reinstall the Deities in the temple so that they could still be worshiped while the auction was organized. On the auction day, Radha Ramana's disciples Advaita Das and Nityananda Das claimed possession of the temple. When Radha Ramana expired in 1905, the Matha came under the management of the Sri Mandira, and was later reclaimed by Nityananda Das, who assigned it to Rama Dasa babaji Mahasayi. Rama Dasa babaji built a new temple and Nata mandapa and repaired the ashram.

The followers of Rama Dasa babaji still assemble in Puri with other Gaudiya Vaishnavas on the day of Netrotsava Amavasya, re-enacting the Chaitanya lila through the text of the *Chaitanya charitamrita*. They visit the Gambhira (Radha Kanta Matha) and the temple of Tota Gopinatha, often with the descendents of the original devotees bringing the same gift described in the text. The Jhanj Pita Matha also participates to the rituals in Sri Mandira by performing Kirtana for Mangala Arati and Bada Sringara Arati.

Gangamata Matha

It is in Bali Sahi, near the Svetaganga Sarovara. It was the house of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, where Sri Chaitanya stayed for some days after arriving in Puri. In the small temple there are the two seats of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, where according to some, they sat down to discuss *Vedanta*.

Here we find the Gupta suranga, an old secret passage believe to lead to the temple of Jagannatha. The present Acharya is Sri Gopal Das.

Sri Puri Gosvami Matha, also known as **Paramananda Matha**

It is near Lokanatha road, inside a gate in Baseli sahi.

At present the place has been turned into a police station; the Bhajan kutir (about 5 feet wide) and the well (on the right side of the compound) have been separated from the rest of the area with a metal rail. The compound contains the Kupa (well) and Bhajana kutir of Paramananda Puri Gosvami, disciple of Madhavendra Puri and godbrother of Isvara Puri (Chaitanya's initiating Guru).

Sri Chaitanya came here and asked Paramananda Puri for some water to drink, but the water was bitter so Paramananda Puri hesitated to offer it. Then Chaitanya blessed the well invoking Mother Ganga into it, and since that day the water became very sweet. Many Mathas still use the water of this well for the ritual bathing (*abhisheka*) of their Deities, collecting it with silver containers and carrying it in procession to their place, accompanied by a Sankirtana party.

In 1904 Bhaktivinoda repaired the well with the assistance of Mrinalini Das, whose name was engraved on a commemorative plaque.

Naga Matha or Radha Damodara Matha

This Matha, also called Radha Damodara Matha, is in Harachandi Sahi near the Barabati Jagabara. It is considered the only Matha belonging to the lineage of Jiva Gosvami. While Jiva Gosvami was residing in Vrindavana worshiping Sri Sri Radha Damodara, he was impressed with a particular Vrajabasi, Krishnadasa Adhikari, whom he later initiated. Since that day Krishnadasa Adhikari came to be known as Krishnadasa Gosvami. Jiva Gosvami stayed in Vrindavana for 55 years; then he died in 1596 at 85 years of age. His disciple Krishnadasa Gosvami initiated another Brajabasi, Premadas. After the demise of Krishnadasa Gosvami in Vrindavana, Premadas came under the guidance of the Mahanta of the Chari Sampradaya Akhada, by the name of Naga Maharaja. Moved by his devotion to Krishna, the Mahanta accepted him as his successor and gave him the name Naga Sri Premdas Gosvami. While Premadas was touring the holy places he came to Puri, he initiated Sri Radha Charan Das babaji and handed him his Deities Sri Sri Radha Damodara and Salagrama sila.

Many people came to take initiation from him because of his devotion, and therefore the Matha was started here. The Deities of the Matha are: Radha Damodara, Jagannatha, Sri Chaitanya, Radha Damodara, Salagrama sila, three Deities of Radharani, Lalita, Vamana, Nrisimha, Laddu Gopala, Lakshmi, Radha Krishna, Varaha, Hanuman, Salagrama, and Jiva Gosvami in the Jagamohana.

The festivals are Chandana yatra, Nrsimha Chaturdasi, Snana Purnima, Sri Gundicha, Jhulan yatra, Sravana Purnima, Odana Sasthi, Pana Sankranti, Govardhana utsava, Dola Purnima, Makara Sankranti, Dhanu Sankranti, Radhashtami, Janmashtami, Vamana janma, Suniya, Gaura Purnima, Jiva Gosvami's *tirobhava* on Pausa sukla tritiya. In the month of Kartika they do the Bala Bhoga for Jagannatha, they also provide the daily Kathani Bhoga in Sri Mandira, as well as the Panthi Bhoga to Sudarshana on Kumara Purnima.

Narayana chata Matha

It is a very old temple, near the gardens of Jagannatha Vallabha. It is said it was established by king Anangabhima Deva for protection against problems in the reconstruction of Sri Mandira.

King Prataparudra gave this temple to the Gaudiya Vaishnava, but in later years it came under the management of the Ramanuja Sampradaya before returning to the Gaudiyas; due to bad management by all the sects the temple lost all the land properties it originally had for its maintenance and ended up under the Jagannatha Deva Estate, that kept the Deities on a broken altar under a banyan tree, worshiping Them with water and Tulasi leaves only. In the 1880s, Gopi Charan Das babaji (disciple of Sarvabhauma Jagannatha Das babaji) came to Puri and took over the service of the temple, maintaining it by begging and procuring the funds to rebuild the temple (from Ramachandra Arhya, a wealthy man from Calcutta who had settled in Puri).

Gopi Charan Das collected all types of rice for the Deities' service, including the parboiled rice that is usually not offered to the Deities; when he was criticized, the donors started giving sun-dried rice. As Gopi Charan Das used to distribute Jagannatha's water rice (*pakhal*) to the poor, many beggars used to come to search for food. One day the prasada finished before all the beggars were served and one of them threw the empty clay pot at Gopi Charan, injuring him. Impressed by Gopi Charan's tolerance, a wealthy visitor (Govinda Kumara Chaudhury) arranged for a daily donation of 3 rupees from his estates.

The Deities are Subha Lakshmi and Narayana Deva, in the form of Nila Madhava, with Lakshmi on His chest and Garuda on the pedestal.

Nandini Matha

It was established by a *vaishya (karana)* lady called Nandini Devi, initiated in the Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya (Sita Advaita Parivara); so it is also called Vaishya Matha. Nandini Devi was a great devotee since childhood, like Mirabai; it is also said that Mirabai stayed in this Matha while visiting Sri Kshetra. Nandini was a member of the Sakhibhava Vaishnava Sampradaya, said to have been established by Advaita's wife Sita, where the members dress like girls and reject marriage, acting as spiritual guides to the general people.

The Matha is in Markandesvara Sahi, and the Deities are: Vrindavana Chandra, Radharani, Visakha, Patita Pavana, Salagrama and Gopala. The Deities outside the temple are Hanuman, Garuda, Tulasi, Ganga and Yamuna. The festivals are: Dola yatra, Jhulana yatra, Govardhana puja, Janmashtami, Radhashtami, Snana Purnima, all the Ekadasis, Guru Purnima, and Bhagavata janma (the appearance of *Bhagavata Purana*).

Kota bhoga Matha

It is in Dolamandapa Sahi, established by Advaita Acharya, and has a strong relationship with the Nandini Matha. Traditionally, its Mahanta decorates the new Mahanta of the Nandini Matha with golden bangles during his installation. The Matha takes the name from the food offering in Sri Mandira that for some time was managed by it. The Deities are Sadbhujia Gauranga, Radha Vrindavana chandra, and Jagannatha. The residential complex within the property is larger than the temple, and is also renting out many rooms. The present Acharya is Sri Syamasundara Gosvami.

Nityananda Matha

This ancient Matha, dedicated to Sri Nityananda, is near Kota bhoga Matha.

Suna Gosvami Matha

It is in Bali Sahi, established by Suna Gosvami. It also has a small shrine within the Sri Mandira, and another branch at Markandeya Sahi (**Darpa Narayana Matha**).

The *ista devi* of the Matha is Anna Purna Devi, together with Sri Krishna, Ganesha, and Salagrama. The *ista deva* of the branch in Markandeya Sahi is Darpa Narayana, together with Chandrasekhara Shiva, Radha Krishna, Laddu Gopala, and Salagrama.

The Matha performs many services in Sri Mandira, like *chamara seva*, collecting the 108 pots of water for Snana Purnima, supplying the ointments for Anabasara, the Panti Bhoga to Dola Govinda for Agni Utsava, the 4 *gaba* garlands and *kusha* for Vamana Dvadasi, and the polish for the Ratna simhasana. The present Acharya is Sri Adhikari Sri Jnanendra Narayana Brahmachari, but the management is under the control of the Government.

Kunja Matha

Established by Rasikananda or Rasika Murari (disciple of Shyamananda, associate of Narottama), it is situated in Bali Sahi, on the land where a garden was cultivated to provide Jagannatha with fruits and flowers. Previously known as Phulatota Matha, it was from this Matha only that all the Maharis were taking initiation.

Rasikananda was traveling to Puri with Shyamananda for the Ratha yatra, but he was delayed and the Deities reached Balagandhi before Rasika could reach Puri. Suddenly the chariots stopped and refused to move, in spite of all efforts and even when horses and elephants were employed to pull them.

Jagannatha directed the Mudirasta to call Rasikananda and Shyamananda for help, and the king sent around his men to search for the two devotees, finally finding them at Atharanala. The King asked Shyamananda and Rasikananda to hurry to Balagandhi where the chariots were waiting, and when they reached the place, Rasikananda offered the Lord the gifts he had brought for Him (food, silken cloth and ornaments). After circumambulating the chariot, Rasikananda placed his head on it, and then the chariot moved. Rasikananda asked the King for the beautiful Deity of Bata Krishna from Sri Mandira, and installed Him with Radharani and Lalita, renaming Him Radha Rasika Raya.

The other Deities of the temple are Chaturdha murti (Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra, Sudarshana), Lakshmi Nrisimha, Visakha with three Gopala murtis and the *chalanti pratima*, 10 Salagramas, Ganesha and Hanuman. There is also a small shrine with a *vighraha* of Rasikananda, and the Samadhi of a Sannyasini from Gopiballabhapur who died while on pilgrimage to Sri Kshetra.

The important festivals are Shiva ratri, Nrisimha Chaturdasi, Rama Navami, Janmashtami, Radhashtami, Govardhana puja, Annakuta, Jhulana yatra, Snana Purnima, and the appearance and disappearance days of Shyamananda and Rasikananda. Originally the Matha was sending fruits and flowers to the Sri Mandira but it has reduced this service, although it still sends some flower garlands every day and for special occasions. The Matha is still managed by the descendents of Rasikananda, who live at Gopiballabhapur in Midnapore district (West Bengal). The Mahanta of the Matha, called Adhikari, is also the Mahant of Gopiballabhapur, Krishna Kesavananda Deva Goswami. The Matha had extensive land possessions in Midnapore, Balasore and Puri districts, and an important library of manuscripts that went lost due to mismanagement.

Visakha Matha

Located in Markandesvara Sahi, on the bank of Markandesvara pushkarini, it was established by Chaitanya's disciple Narahari Sarakara and it belongs to the Gaudiya Sampradaya. The *ista deva* is Shyamachandra, the other Deities are Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadra, crawling Gopala, Nitai Gaura, Lakshmi Nrisimha, Hanuman, Salagrama. The festivals celebrated are Radhashtami, Janmashtami, Shiva ratri, Ola Navami, Nanda utsava, Dola Purnima, Rama Navami, Suniya, Vamana janma, Sri Gundicha (Ratha yatra), Bhagavata janma, Sthana Purnima and all the Ekadasis. The Mahantas of this Matha perform the *chamara seva* of Jagannatha in Sri Mandira.

Lalita Matha

Also near the Vaisakha Matha at Markandesvara Sahi.

Bali Matha

It is in Markandesvara Sahi, near Bada Oriya Matha. It was established by Abhirama Thakura, one of the 12 Gopalas who were close associates of Nityananda Prabhu. The main Deity is Abhirama Gopal, the other Deities are Radha Krishna, Patita Pavana, Radha Madana Mohana and Salagrama.

Bhagavata ashram

It is near Gundicha. The Deities are Radha Krishna, Sri Chaitanya, and Salagrama. The festivals are Ratha yatra, Jhulan yatra, Janmashtami, Radhashtami, Dola Purnima. The present Mahanta is Chaitanya charan Das.

Purnamasi Matha

It is in Bali Sahi. The present Mahanta is Maharaja Advaita Charana Das. The Deities are Radha Govinda, Lalita, Purnamasi, Patita Pavana, Lakshmi Narayana, Nrisimha, Rama Lakshman Sita, Gopala, Radha, Madana Mohana, Radha Gopinatha, Gaura Gadadhara, Sri Nityananda. The festivals are Dola yatra, Chandan yatra, Jhulan yatra, Sola puja, Govardhana puja, Vasanti puja, Kartika puja.

Sonar Gauranga Matha

On Chakratirtha road, near the beach, there is a temple with a golden Deity of Sri Chaitanya and another golden Deity of Sri Krishna (called Gaura Gopala), said to have been installed by king Prataparudra. In fact, the temple and the Matha are within the old King's Palace. In the same place, within the compound of the ancient Palace, we find the **Nadiar Gauranga Matha**.

Patiarani Matha

This Matha is in Grand Road, at the old Bus Stand, and is described in the list of Vishnu temples.

Kali tilaka Matha

It is an ancient Matha in Markandesvara Sahi, originally established by Rupa Kaviraja of the Atibadi Sampradaya, it is now under the care of the Gaudiya Sampradaya. The Deities are Sri Sri Radha Madana Mohana, Salagrama Shila, and Gaura-Nitai. The present administrator is Sri Netrananda Malik.

There is a number of other Mathas from this Sampradaya that are not active any more, including **Nidhi Das Matha** (in Kundeibenta Sahi), **Phalahari Matha**, also called **Avadhuta sampradaya** (in Kundeibenta Sahi), **Gopala Vallabha Matha** (at Narendra Sarovara), **Jatia Baba Matha** (at Narendra Sarovara), **Aula Matha** (in Pathuria Sahi), **Baulia Matha** (near Gundicha), **Kadalipatuka Matha** (near Gundicha), **Giridhari Matha** (at the old Bus Stand in Grand Road), **Balagandi Matha** (near Balagandi), **Rangamata Matha** (near Balagandi), **Sitaran Das Matha** (on the sea shore), **Damodara Vallabha Matha** (just east of Nanga Matha), **Surangi Matha** (in Markandesvara Sahi), **Balabhadra Akhada chhata** (at Markanda Puskarini), **Bali Babaji Matha** (in Kundheibenta Sahi), **Rasabihari Matha** (in Svargadvara road), **Bada Tarala Matha** (in Svargadvara road), **Sana Tarala** (also known as Radha Krishna Matha, it is near the temple of Shyama Kali), **Brajasundar Deva Goswami Matha** (in Bali Sahi), **Jayapur Matha** (in Bali Sahi), **Shyama Kunja Matha** (also called Kunja Matha, it is in Baula Matha lane, near Siddha Bakula Matha), **Nunian Chowdhury Matha** (in Baula Matha lane, near Siddha Bakula Matha), **Bali Matha** (near the sea shore), **Ha Gauranga Matha** (near the sea shore), **Patara Matha** (near the sea shore), **Sana Matha** (in Daitapada Sahi), **Radha Ramana Giridhari kutir** (near Gundicha).

A few other Mathas listed as belonging to this Sampradaya were impossible to locate: **Madana Mohana Matha**, **Syamasundara Matha**, **Khajurya Matha**, **Sana Santha Matha**. The **Omkarnath Sitaran Das ashram**, also called **Nilachala ashrama**, in Svargadvara, is sometimes listed as a Gaudiya Matha.

Sata asana Mathas

These seven ancient Mathas are in Svargadvara, near the Samadhi Matha of Haridasa Thakura and the Bhakti kutir of Bhaktivinoda (that was later purchased by Iskcon and demolished to build a guesthouse). It is said that in this place the Sapta Rishis descended to Purushottama kshetra to get the Darshana of Lord Jagannatha; the name is connected with the “seven seats” of the Rishis. When the Mathas came under the control of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, they became known as Bada Asana, Kadali Pataka Asana, Giridhari Asana, Gumpha Asana, Madana Mohana Deva Asan, Krishna Balarama Asana, and Shyamasundara Asana.

In the times of Chaitanya, great personalities among his associates were taking care of this place and resided here, including Jagadananda Pandita, Svarupa Damodara Goswami and Bhagavan Acharya. Lands in the Jirakandi, Khatoari and Kantikera villages had been granted for the maintenance of the Mathas, but with the passing of time, mismanagement and corruption took over and now only the Madana Mohana Deva Asana is now receiving portions of Mahaprasadam and financial support from the Jagannatha temple.

Raghunath Baidya writes that the 18th century Bengali poet Bharata Chandra Ray, the court poet of Raja Krishna Chandra of Nadia, studied the Gaudiya Vaishnava rasika literature here. In 1901 Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati (the founder of the Gaudiya Matha and of the lineage of the Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavas) convinced the Mahantas (Radha Damodar Das, Gadadhar Das, Govinda Das, Balaram Das and Krishna Charan Das) to turn the property over to him, but they later opposed the reforms that Bhaktisiddhanta wanted to carry on and in the end the agreement was dropped. The Bada Asana and Gumpha Asana do not exist any more; the land was encroached, the temples demolished and private houses were built on them.

Madana Mohana Deva Asana

Some say that Raghunatha Dasa Goswami (one of the six Gosvamis of Vrindavana) lived here and worshiped the Deity of Madana Mohana. The other Deities are Radharani, Govindaji, Gopinatha, Lalita, Goura Nitai, Gopala, Lakshmi, Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra and some Salagrama shilas. Every month Sri Mandira provides this temple with *dal*, rice and *ghi*. Ten Samadhis of previous Mahantas are found here: Jahnvi Goswami, Parameswar Das Goswami, Narayan Das Goswami, Pushpagati Das Goswami, Kamal Goswami, Kunja Bihari Das Goswami, Sadananda Das Goswami, Mohan Das Goswami, Narottam Das Goswami, Lakshman Das Goswami. The present Mahanta is Muralidhar Dasji Maharaj.

Krishna Balarama Asana

It was the Bhajan kutir of Khanja Bhagavan Acharya.

The later Mahantas were Balaram Das, Gauranga Das, Raghunath Das, Ramananda Das, Shyama Charan Das, Gadadhar Das, and Krishna Das. The current Mahant is Adhikari Acyutananda Das. The Deities are Krishna Balarama, Radha Krishna, Rasa Bihari, Patita Pavana, Gopala, Salagrama. The festivals are Janmashtami, Radhashtami, Guru Purnima.

Giridhari Asana

It was the Bhajan kutir of Jagadananda Pandita. When Bhaktivinoda was in Puri, he arranged with the sub Registrar, Jagabandhu Pattanayak, to assign the service of Giridhari Asana to Bhaktisiddhanta. Fourteen Samadhis of previous Mahantas are found on the property, including Vraja Kishor Das, Bhagavat Charan Das, Sanatan Das, Govinda Das, Nimai Charan Das, and Gauranga Das. The present Mahantas are Krishna Charan Das and Kashinath Panda. The Deities worshiped here are Radha Giridhari (previously in Bada Asana, worshiped by Jagadananda Pandit), Radha Damodar (worshiped by Svarupa Damodara Goswami), Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra and many Shalagramas.

Shyamasundara Asana

It is said that the Radha Shyamasundara Deities worshiped in this Matha were worshiped by Brahmananda Bharati (Chaitanya's personal associate). The other Deities are Gaura Nitai and a few Salagrama shilas. The succession of Mahantas includes Madana Mohana Das, Ramachandra Das, Raghavendra Das, Nityananda Das, Radha Charan Das, Mohana Das, Kunja Bihari Das, Govinda Das. Presently, the Matha is under the administration of the Giridhari Asana.

Kadali Pataka Asana

A famous sadhu, Svarupa Das Babaji, lived in this Matha at the end of the 19th century. His Samadhi and Bhajan kutir are still on the property, but they are presently used for other purposes.

Considered in the same Sampradaya of the Bengali followers of Sri Chaitanya, there are several other Mathas on which no information is available: Sacinandana Das Matha, Pandita Matha, Karunakar Das Matha, Jagat mohini Matha, Suragi Matha, Damodar Vallabha Matha, Haveli Matha, Gopal Das Matha, Krishna Chaitanya Ashram, Sri Radhe Syam Matha, Gopal jiu Matha, Radha Kishore jiu Matha, Bada Matha, Baya baba ashrama, Gauranga Matha, Sri Uddhava Das Matha, Nrishimha Matha, Kanas Matha, Bhagavan Das Matha, Gopal Das Matha, RangaMatha Matha, Nilamani Matha, Kripasindhu Matha, Haladya Matha, Balabhadra akhada, Gopal Gosvami Matha, Jagat bandhu ashram, Rupa siddhanta Gaudiya Matha and Sri Sarasvata Gaudiya Asana.

Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnava Mathas

The Sarasvata Gaudiya Mathas have been founded by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati and his disciples and followers. Although they have become very famous all over the world, in Puri they are still an overlooked minority and a relatively recent presence. In fact, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati founded his original Gaudiya Matha in the 1930s only, and mainly developed its activities in Bengal. Under his instruction, his disciple Abhaya Charanaravindam Bhaktivedanta Swami went to preach in the West and established ISKCON (International Society for Krishna CONsciousness), opening many Krishna and Jagannatha temples all over the world. All the Sarasvata Mathas observe the common festivals of the appearance and disappearance of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, Gaura Purnima (Dola Purnima), Janmashtami, Radhashtami, Govardhana puja, the appearance days of the various *avatars*, and the appearance and disappearance days of the various Acharyas from the line.

Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Matha

It is directly on Grand Road, near the Jagannatha Vallabha gardens. It was originally the house of Bhaktivinoda Thakura (from 1870 to 1874, when he was Deputy Collector and Magistrate at Puri) and the birthplace of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati.

The building was purchased in more recent years by Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami and has been renovated and transformed in a beautiful temple. This feat has been considerably difficult. For many years while in the Gaudiya Matha (until 1954), Madhava Maharaja tried to convince the Matha's leader, Bhakti Vilasa Tirtha Maharaja, to reclaim the appearance site of their Guru, and in 1965 they met the Chief Minister of Orissa (Sadasiba Tripathy) and the Endowment Commissioner (Biren Mitra), to obtain the land property, that at that time was owned by the Dakshina Parsva Matha, leased to the Arhya family for 99 years. The property remained in litigation when the lease ceased, because a number of tenants refused to vacate the premises, but Madhava Maharaja offered to purchase the property even while occupied by the tenants. With the cooperation of the Dakshina Parsva Matha, permission for the change of property to the Gaudiya Matha was obtained from the Endowment Commission.

The problems were not over, through. Another branch of the Gaudiya Matha presented papers to the Governor of Orissa (B.D. Jatti), claiming possession of the property in the absence of Madhava Maharaja (who was in Amritsar on a preaching tour). Madhava Maharaja rushed back to Puri and succeeded to meet the Governor in spite of all odds, as apparently the Governor had not been informed about the appointment for the meeting that his secretary had given to Madhava Maharaja.

After many years of legal battles to evict the tenants, during which the devotees of the Matha camped in a room on the opposite side of Grand Road, on 15 December 1974 Madhava Maharaja and his followers were able to enter the premises with a Sankirtana, carrying a portrait of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati.

In the following years Bhakti Kumud Santa Maharaj of the Chaitanya Ashram in Gaurabadi Sahi provided help and support to Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj, the successor of Madhava Maharaja, and gradually the Matha developed the building considerably. On 28 February 1978 the Matha was officially inaugurated, and Madhava Maharaja expired on the same year. On 24 March 1980 the cornerstone was laid for a new temple, and the temple was inaugurated on 5 February 1982, on the appearance day celebration for Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati.

The Deities in the temple are Sri Radha Nayana Mani, Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra, and Srila Sarasvati. Around the Garbha griha, the four main Vaishnava Acharyas have also been installed - Madhva, Ramanuja, Nimbarka and Vishnu Svami. The main festivals are Snana Purnima, Jhulana yatra, Janmashtami, Radhashtami, and the appearance/disappearance days of the Acharyas. The Matha also has a large guesthouse.

The founder of the Matha was Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaja, disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati; the present Acharya is his disciple Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja, founding member of the Vishva Vaishnava Rajya Sabha. The Matha has an important temple and head office in Calcutta, and temples in Mayapur, Mathaura, Hyderabad, Guwahati, Chandigarh, Delhi, Vrindavana, Agartala, and Dehradun. In the last 20 years the Matha also made a number of disciples in other countries, as Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja and other leaders of the Matha have been traveling abroad to preach. The Matha also publishes a monthly magazine, called *Chaitanya vani*, a yearly Vaishnava calendar in Bengali and English, some literature, and organizes Parikrama in Mayapur every year (for Gaura Purnima) and a Parikrama in Vrindavana every three years, plus various festivals in the different centers and preaching tours abroad.

Chaitanya Chandra Ashram (Sri Krishna Chaitanya mission)

This Ashram is the headquarters of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mission, in the ancient Aitota gardens, inside a small alley just on the right side of Gundicha temple. Soma say that it was in this place that Chaitanya met king Prataparudra. The first time the King wanted to approach Sri Chaitanya, he was denied admittance because Chaitanya was very careful not to mix with powerful personalities; when the King came wearing ordinary clothes and presenting himself as a humble devotee of Krishna, Chaitanya not only received him, but embraced him fondly. From the roof of the Ashram it is possible to see inside Gundicha, so at Bahuda yatra lots of people come here to watch Jagannatha taking leave of His Vrindavana.

The Matha was founded by Bhakti Vaibhava Puri Maharaja, disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, and founding member of the Vishva Vaishnava Raj Sabha. BV Puri Maharaja was originally from Orissa (in Fulta, 5 km from Berhampur in the Ganja district), so he has a very strong relationship with Puri. He was born as Nrusimha on 27 January 1913, from Sri Damodar and Srimati Devi. After completing his studies in Ayurveda in the 1930, he became active in the Indian independence movement with Mohandas K. Gandhi.

He was originally from a family of Ramanuja Vaishnavas but obtained initiation from Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati on 3 Augar 1936 on Balarama Purnima. He took *sannyasa* in 1966 from Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Maharaja and started the Krishna Chaitanya Mission in Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh) in the same year. The Chaitanya Chandra Ashrama in Puri was opened in 1983. Bhakti Vaibhava Puri Maharaja also had many disciples around the world, especially in Italy. Puri Maharaja (as he was generally called, not to be confused with the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri) expired on 3 March 2009 at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, where he was undergoing medical treatment. His body was brought to Puri, where his Samadhi now stands within the premises of the Math.

The Deities of the Matha are Radha Vrindavana Chandra, Jagannatha and Gauranga Mahaprabhu, then in a separate shrine, Salagrama and Gopesvara Mahadeva. Also within the temple compound there is the Samadhi Mandir of Bhakti Vijaya Tirtha Maharaja, Godbrother of the founder Acharya. The festivals are Ratha yatra and especially Bahuda yatra, Janmashtami, Radhashtami, Rama Navami, Jhulana yatra, Kartika vrata, Nrsimha Chaturdasi, Gaura Purnima (Dola Purnima). The preaching is based on the importance of devotion and the Sankirtana as the yuga dharma for Kali yuga the simplest, easiest and surest way to attain God in this age. The Ashram also provides accommodation for the visiting devotees and distributes large quantities of prasadam to the visiting devotees especially during Ratha yatra. The head of the local Matha is Sridhara Maharaja.

The other branches of the Matha in India are:

- Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mission, at Mayapur, Navadvip (West Bengal)
- Sri Gaura Vani Vinod Ashram, at Khadakpur (West Bengal)
- Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mission Ashram at Rajmundi (Andhra Pradesh)
- Bhaktivinoda Ashram, at Berhampur (Orissa)
- Sri Krishna Chaitanya Matha, at Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh)
- Sri Krishna Chaitanya Ashram, at Diga Pahandi (Orissa)
- Srimad Bhagavad Gita mandir, at Kabur (Andhra Pradesh)
- Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mission, at Barbati, Balasore (Orissa)
- Sri Syamsundar Raghunath Mandir, at Cheliha, Ganjam (Orissa)
- Sri Radha Madhava Mandir, at Balasore (Orissa)

Gopinatha Gaudiya Matha

It is in the Chakratirtha Road area, near the Sonar Gauranga temple, in a side alley. The founder Acharya was Bhakti Pramode Puri Maharaja, one of the first members of the Gaudiya Matha and disciple of Srila Sarasvati. While living in Mayapur (the appearance place of Sri Chaitanya), Bhakti Pramode Puri Maharaja expressed the desire to spend his last days in Puri taking *kshetra sannyasa* following the footsteps of Gadadhara Pandita. He had also considered to settle in Vrindavana, but he remembered the instruction given by Chaitanya to Jagadananda Pandita, “go to Vrindavana, but do not stay there for a long time”, so he had decided to move to Puri. After searching for a suitable property, in 1992 the Matha acquired the present land, and the works were slowly started to build appropriate accommodation. On 1 May 1997 Puri Maharaja moved to Puri and remained there until his last day; according to his disciples he often manifested symptoms of ecstasy very similar to those attributed to Chaitanya in the last stage of his life.

Bhakti Pramode Puri Maharaja wrote and published many magazines, like *Nadiya prakash*, *Chaitanya Vani*, and *Gaudiya Bhagavat Darshan*. He revived the Vishva Vaishnava Raj Sabha in 1994 with the help of Paramadvaiti Maharaha, restored many temples and holy places like Keshi Ghat and Dauji mandir in Vrindavana, and installed over 80 Deities etc. The present Acharya is Bhakti Vibudha Bodhayan Maharaja. In the temple there are the Deities of Radha Krishna, Jagannatha, Balabhadra Subhadraji, Giridhari, Salagrama, Gauranga Mahaprabhu and Mahadeva. The festivals are Janmashtami, Radhashtami, Rama Navami, Nrishimha Chaturdasi, and Gaura Purnima (Dola Purnima). The present Mahanta of the local Matha is Gopinath das brahmachari.

Sri Chaitanya Sarasvata Math

It is in Gaudabada Sahi, near the beach, on Bidhava Ashram Road. It was established by Bhakti Sundara Govinda Deva Maharaja in 1985, disciple of Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Maharaja, disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati.

It has a three story guesthouse and a nice temple. The Deities are Nityananda (holding a *danda*) and Gauranga Mahaprabhu. The festivals are all the festivals observed by the Gaudiya Sarasvata Mathas. The present Acharya is Bhakti Sundara Govinda Maharaja.

Sri Purushottama Matha

It was founded by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati on 9 June 1922, in Gaudabada Sahi, with the installation of a Deity of Sri Chaitanya. On 17 July 1931, Bhaktisiddhanta set the foundations for a new temple on land donated by the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj. The present nine buildings on the property include the temple, the Kirtana mandapa, the Bhakti kutir of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, the Bhajana kutirs of Audulomi Maharaja and Bhakti Prasada Puri Maharaja (also known as Ananta Vasudeva), two guest houses, the office building, a residence for the local devotees, a goshala, and a separate kitchen.

This Matha is also famous as Chataka Parvata Matha, because it is near the sand hill described by Sri Chaitanya as non different from Govardhana. The Deities are Gaura Gadadhara and Radha Krishna. The Matha has an ashram-guesthouse, and the Bhakti kutir of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, that is on the hill. The festivals are Gaura purnima (Dola yatra), Chandana yatra, Devasnana Purnima, Ratha yatra, Janmashtami, Radhashtami, Giri Govardhana utsava, Annakuta utsava. For Snana Purnima and Ratha yatra the Matha organizes Kirtana seva. The present Acharya is Bhakti Srit Parivrajak Maharaja, who manages the Matha under the Gaudiya Mission (headquarters at Bagh Bazar Gaudiya Matha in Calcutta). A large property that belonged to the Matha was taken over by the Government to build the large water tower that stands south of the Matha.

Purushottama Gaudiya Matha

It is near the Samadhi of Haridasa Thakura in Svargadhara, established by Bhakti Vilas Tirtha Maharaja as a branch of the Chaitanya Matha. A large guesthouse has also been built. The Deities are Radha Govinda, Gauranga Mahaprabhu, Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadra, Salagrama. The main festivals are Ratha yatra, Jhulana yatra, Janmashtami. The present Acharya is Bhakti Vikas Sajjan Gosvami Maharaja, and the pujari is Uttam Krishna brahmachari.

Gaudiya Sarasvata Ashram

It is near Govardhana pitha, on Satasana Road, established by Srirupa Siddhanti Maharaja, a learned disciple of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, who wrote commentaries on *the Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita* and *Vedanta*. This Matha is famous for the beautiful bas reliefs covering all the walls of the temple, and for the *Bhagavatam* discourses that are attended by many people.

The Deities are Radha Govinda, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Syamasundara, Vinodjiu, Gopaljiu, Salagram sila, two Govardhan sila and a Shiva Linga on an altar behind Radha Krishna. The festivals are Ratha yatra, Janmashtami, Radhashtami, and Gaura Purnima.

Chaitanya ashram

It is near Gaudabada Sahi, and was established by Bhakti Kumuda Santa Maharaja, disciple of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati. The main center of the Matha is in Calcutta.

Nilachala Gaudiya Matha

It is near the Smadhi of Haridasa Thakura, in Gaudabada Sahi. It was established in 1972 by Bhakti Vedanta Vamana Maharaja (founding member of the Vishva Vaishnava Raj Sabha) and Bhakti Vedanta Narayana Maharaja (Gaudiya Vedanta Samiti), who inaugurated it on Rasa Purnima in 1978.

They offered this service to their Guru Bhakti Prajnan Keshava Maharaja, disciple of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati and author of *Vaishnava Vijaya*, a book that has the declared purpose of defeating Mayavadi philosophy. The Matha organizes a very large Parikrama in Vrindavana every year and publishes several magazines.

The Deities are Radha Vinoda Bihari, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and the founder Acharya.

The main festivals are: the appearance day of the Guru (celebrated on his birthday), Jhulana yatra, Gaura Purnima, Janmashtami, Ratha yatra, etc. The Matha has also a guesthouse that is rather popular among the Sarasvata Gaudiyas of various groups.

Sri Bhagavata ashrama

It is in Gaudabada Sahi. The Deities are Radha Krishna, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the *vigraha* of the founder, Sri Bhaktivichar Jajabara Gosvami Maharaja. The festivals are Gaura Purnima, Jhulana yatra, Janmashtami, Dola yatra, Balarama Purnima, Radhashtami, Vamana Dvadasi. The present Mahanta is Sanatana das Brahmachari.

Gaura Govinda Ashram

It is in Gaudabada Sahi. and was established by Bhakti Saranga Maharaja in 1943, so it has nothing to do with Gour Govinda Swami, a member of ISKCON who developed the Krishna Balanrama Mandira in Bhubaneswar.

The Deities of this Matha are Nityananda and Gauranga, Radha Vrindavan chandra, Radha Govindajiu, Gaura Govindajiu, Giridhari Krishna, Raja Rajesvara Bhagavan, Laddu Gopala, Madan Gopaal, Nita Gopala. The main festivals are Radhashtami, Janmashtami, Rama Navami, Jhulana yatra, Gaura Purnima, Annakuta utsava. The present Acharya is Bhakti Prasad Siddha Gosvami Maharaja. The head pujari is Guruvarga Sri Sanandan das Brahmachari.

Sri Jagannatha sanga

It was established by Bhakti Prapanna Damodara Maharaja, in Gaudabada Sahi. The present administrator is Lalita Madhava Dasadhikari.

Madhavaji Gaudiya Matha

It is in Balia panda, established by Bhakti Ranjan Sajan Maharaja, who is also the present Acharya.

Bhakti kutir

This is ISKCON's center in Puri. It is a tall guesthouse and restaurant built on the place where once stood Bhaktivinoda Thakura's Bhajana kutir, where he lived from 1900 to 1903 after retiring from his Government job. His disciple Krishna Das Babaji acted as his personal assistant, and in this same place Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati gave spiritual discourses. Although Bhaktivinoda wanted to spend his last days in Puri, he had to return to Calcutta in 1903, due to poor health, leaving a will that assigned the property of the land to the Bengali government, that put it up for auction. It was purchased by Iskcon. The original building was razed to the ground and a new building was constructed, with a restaurant on the ground floor, and a guesthouse on the higher floors. On the first floor of the building there is a temple room with small Gaura Nitai, and Bhaktivedanta Swami's fiberglass *murti*, and recently installed Radha Krishna. Another Iskcon center, the Bhaktivedanta Ashram, is situated outside the town in Sipasirubuli. The property has been in litigation for many years and also suffered because of other unpleasant events, so practically the land has been deserted and rented out to local residents. A few Iskcon members still live there and take care of the Gaura Nitai Deities that were installed in the times where the property was being developed on time share schemes.

Oriya or Utkalika Vaishnava Mathas

Bada Odiya Matha

Established by Atibadi Jagannatha Das, it is in Baseli Sahi on a property given by king Prataparudra Deva, amazed for the philosophical discussion that Jagannatha Das had with a Shankarite *sannyasi* by the name Brahmananda. Here Jagannatha Das started to preach about Jagannatha dharma. He recited daily four chapters of the *Bhagavatam*: two in the morning and two in the evening. He got many followers, so he became an object of envy for some people who tried to disgrace him by telling false tales about him to the King. Finally Jagannatha Das left this Matha and went near the ocean, in the place of the present Satalahari Matha.

When Chaitanya came to Puri and heard Jagannatha Das reciting the tenth Canto of *Bhagavatam*, he was very pleased with him and honored him with the title Atibadi. Jagannatha Das soon became a great friend and associate of Chaitanya.

The Matha has more than 400 palm leaf manuscripts in Sanskrit and Oriya, such as *Niladri Mahodaya*, *Vidagdha Madhava*, *Brahma sutras*, *Hari bhakti vilasa*, *Skanda purana* (Purushottama mahatmya), etc. The temple contains the wooden sandals and the last copy of the *Bhagavatam* touched by Jagannatha Das, called *Vasudeva pathi*. The main Deities of the temple are: Radha Rasika Raja, Patita Pavana, Maha Lakshmi, Radha Madana mohana, Rama Krishna, Anthua Gopal, Natua Gopala, Lakshmi Nrisimhadeva, Radha Damodara, Salagrama, Radha Gopinatha, Ganesha, Balaji, Rama Sita Lakshmana Bharata Satrugna and Hanuman, Sri Rama abhisheka murti, Govardhana sila, Vamana, and Garuda. The main festival are Jhulana yatra, the disappearance day of Jagannatha Das (Magha sukla Saptami), Radhashtami. Every day there is reading of four chapters of *Bhagavatam*. The Matha also serves Jagannatha in the main temple with *chamara* fanning, and Vallabha Bhoga etc.

Satalahari Matha

It is near the beach; its name derives from the fact that Jagannatha Das prayed the Lord for the ocean to give him some space (the name means “seven waves backed away”). Here is the Samadhi of Atibadi Jagannatha Das, in the place where he spent the second part of his life.

The main Deities of the temple are Patita Pavana, Radha Krishna, Salagrama, and a Deity of Jagannatha Das. Also the *Bhagavatam Vasudeva pathi* is kept here. It is said that once the Matha had a self-manifested Deity of Jagannatha Das, but the *vigraha* was stolen and lost about 50 years ago. The main festivals are Radhashtami (that is also the appearance day of Jagannatha Das) and his disappearance (Magha sukla Saptami) day. There are two other Mathas in the same Sampradaya: Padmacharana Das Matha and Sana Odiya Matha.

Balaram kota Matha

It is in Kalikadevi Sahi, founded by Balaram Das, the author of *Dandi Ramayana*. The Deities are Lakshmi Narayana and Sita Rama. It is under the Chauni Matha. The main festivals are Janmashtami, Rama Navami, Gaura purnima, Ratha yatra, Chandana yatra, Govardhana utsava.

Sana Oriya Matha

This Matha is also on the sea shore, established by Dvaraka Vallabha Das, a disciple of Madhavananda Das, disciple of Gopinatha Das (Mahanta of the Sat Lahari Matha), disciple of Jagannatha Das. From this Matha, Chaturbhuj Das traveled all over Orissa making many devotees.

Gandharva Matha

It is in Kundeibenta Sahi. It was the ashram of Balarama Das, the first of the Pancha sakhas. For more information about Balarama Das, see the chapter on the great personalities associated with Puri.

Other Mathas from this Sampradaya are **Sisu Matha** (the Matha of Sisu Ananta Das, in Heragohiri Sahi), **Barika Matha** (in Heragohiri Sahi), **Jada Matha** (in Heragohiri Sahi), **Khilara Matha** (near Kumbharapada), **Mahabhoi Matha** (near Kumbharapada), **Satyananda Brahmachari ashram** (near Haridasa Thakura Samadhi).

Other Sampradayas

Kabir chaura Matha

It is near Svargadvara, established by Saint Kabir (1440-1518) from Varanasi, when he visited Puri and resided here for some time. As a child, Kabir was adopted and raised by Ramananda Svami, but later he developed his own spiritual path, also inspiring other devotees in the difficult period of Muslim domination in India. Kabir's japa mala and his sandals are worshiped here. After Kabir's death his favorite disciple, Dharma Das, took permanent residence in the Matha. The Matha has many branches in north India and abroad and its philosophy constitutes a blend of Hindu and Muslim concepts. Although the philosophy of Kabir is called Nirakari, or contemplating the Absolute as without form or attributes, they worship the Deities, so obviously there is some deeper meaning to their teachings.

The Deities worshiped in the Matha are Radha Krishna, Jagannatha Balabhadra Subhadra, and Shiva Parvati. They celebrate all the full moon days (Purnima) and the appearance and disappearance of first disciple Dharma Das, and other Acharyas. Their main tradition, however, consists in distributing Torani, i.e. water mixed Jagannatha Mahaprasadam, which they use as *charanamrita*. The present Mahanta is Dhruva Charan Das Saheb.

Vidura Matha

It is a 500 years old Matha near Svargadvara. It is also called Mulaka chaura because it was established by Mulaka Das, a favorite disciple of Kabir. One day a saint, considered the reincarnation of Vidura, arrived in Puri riding a crocodile; he settled on the beach in Svargadvara and installed a stone Deity of Jagannatha there, offering rice pancakes. At that time Jagannatha in the temple stopped accepting the regular food offerings, with great concern of all the temple servants. Mulaka Das remained fasting for several days because he used to eat only Jagannatha's Mahaprasada. One night he had a dream where he saw Jagannatha explaining that He was eating Vidura's rice pancakes instead of the temple offerings; he informed the head priest who went secretly to verify, but as soon as the King arrived personally, Vidura vanished.

In the Matha there are two temples, one for the stone Jagannatha worshiped by Vidura, and the other with the Chaturdha murti (Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra, Sudarshana). The other Deities are Radha Krishna, Madana mohana, Rama Lakshmana Sita, Laddu Gopala, Vanavihari, Garuda and 100 Salagramas. The important festivals are Gahma Purnima, Dola Purnima, Makara Sankranti, Chitalagi Amavasya, Janmashtami, Rama Navami. This is the only Matha in Puri that is allowed to offer rice pancakes to Jagannatha in the temple.

Bauli Matha, or Nanak Chaura Matha

It is a Sikh Matha, established by Chandji Maharaja, the son of Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak's only direct disciple, Mardana, was a Muslim, and when he asked permission to enter the temple for the Arati, the Pandas refused. He then returned to the place on the beach where Guru Nanak was staying, and to the amazement of all, the Arati plate flew out of the temple towards the beach. The King of Puri followed the Arati plate and arrived in the presence of Guru Nanak and his disciple; Guru Nanak explained the omnipresence of Jagannatha.

In the Matha there is a well called Dedhasura *bhai-bohu kupa* ("the well of elder brother and sister in law"), built in such a way that two people drawing water at the same time will not be able to see each other. The Svargadvara nikuna, inside the Matha premises, is a place believed to have been built by Ravana who was trying to make a staircase to heaven. The main Deities are Patita Pavana, Radha Krishna, Gopala Krishna, Lakshmi, 22 Salagrama shilas and 5 Hanuman Deities. They also worship the Grantha Sahib and other sacred texts. They celebrate the festivals of Rama Navami, Janmashtami and Radhashtami, and all Sankrantis.

Mangu Matha

Situated very near the Simhadvara, this Matha is believed to have been established by Guru Nanak's son Sri Chanji Maharaja. Guru Nanak stayed here while visiting Puri. The Deities of this Matha are Patita Pavana, Durga Madhava, and Sri Chandji (the son of Guru Nanak). The important festivals celebrated in the Matha are Chandana yatra, Snana Purnima, Gamha (Sravana or Rakhi) Purnima, Janmashtami and Radhashtami.

During the 21 days of the Chandana yatra and during Snana yatra they offer Panthi Bhoga to the Deities of Jagannatha temple. During the 15 days of the Anavasara they provide the Pana Bhoga. They offer *mahajaga laddu* during Ratha yatra, Panthi Bhoga at Gundicha during Sandhya Darshana day, dry Bhoga on Sunavesha, Panthi Bhoga on Niladri Vijaya, Panthi Bhoga for Sudarshana on Chakrabula Ekadasi, Panthi Bhoga for Sudarshana on Rakhi Purnima and to the main Deities on Kaliyadalana Ekadasi and Ganesh Chaturthi, Panthi Bhoga for Sudarshana on Radhashtami day. They also provide all the materials and a ram for the *gupta puja* (animal sacrifice) for Goddess Vimala during Sandhi puja on Mahashtami, the Panthi Bhoga for the festival Deities of the temple for Dasahara day, Bala Dhupa for the main Deities in the month of Kartika, Panthi Bhoga for Sudarshana on Kumara Purnima, Panthi Bhoga for the festival Deities of the main temple starting from Phalguna Dasami to Dola Purnima.

As we already mentioned, there is a great variety of Mathas in Puri, and each and every Sampradaya has considered it a great fortune and a privilege to obtain the opportunity to build a center here. In this section we are listing a number of them, without a particular order of importance.

Balagandi chakha or Salabega Matha

Also called Salabega Matha, it is near Balagandi chakha on Grand Road. Some consider it a Ramanandi Matha, some consider it a Gaudiya Matha (as both Sampradayas have no prejudice in recognizing the genuineness of devotees), but it would be more appropriate to consider it as a Sampradaya in its own right, as Salabega did not belong to these Sampradayas but was a great devotee of Jagannatha himself, although he did not accept disciples. Salabega resided here for 7 years, and he used to stand here to sing his prayers to Jagannatha during the Ratha yatra. At first he just built a small hut with palm leaves, then the fame of his devotion came to the ear of the King, and he was allowed to build a permanent structure. For more information about Salabega, please consult the chapter about the great personalities connected with Jagannatha and Puri. The Deities are Patita Pavana, Rama Lakshmana Sita Hanuman, Nrisimha, Laddu Gopala, Radha Krishna and Salagrama silas. Here we also find Salabega's Samadhi. The important festivals are Rama Navami, Janmashtami, Govardhana puja, and Dola Purnima. During these festivals, as well as during Ratha yatra and Bahuda, the Matha offers Panthi Bhoga to Jagannatha.

Mahaprabhunka Baithaka

This Matha belongs to the Vallabha Acharya Sampradaya, and marks the place where Vallabha Acharya sat to deliver his spiritual discourses. It is on the left of Papudia Matha in Chudanga Sahi, in front of the present King's palace.

Siddha brahmachari Matha

This is the only Madhvacarya Matha listed in the records, but we could not find its location.

Nandini Matha

This Matha in Markandesvar Sahi, near the Markandeya Sarovara, and was established by the followers of Mirabai, the Rajput princess who chose Krishna as her husband and composed for Him beautiful love songs that are still extremely popular. One day young Mirabai saw a marriage procession and asked her mother what the festival was about; when the child asked her mother who her husband would be, her mother told her she could choose Sri Krishna, their worshiped Deity, as her husband. Thus Mirabai developed a strong relationship reciprocated by Krishna in miraculous ways.

Sri Jatiha baba samadhi ashram (Vijayi Krishna Matha)

It is at Narendra kona at Narendra Sarovara. Vijayi Krishna baba came to Puri in 1304 from Bengal, established this Matha and after his death his disciples made a Samadhi for him, where puja is offered. It is said he was a descendent of Advaita Acharya (the associate of Chaitanya), but he became a member of the Brahmo Samaj and was later initiated by Lokanatha Brahmachari. The festivals are the disappearance of Vijayi Krishna Gosvami, Jhulana yatra, and Magha Saptami. The Matha supplies ropes for the Ratha Yatra. The present mahanta is D.A.N. Guha.

Kachara Matha

Established in 1901, it is in Grand Road, Balagandi, and belongs to the Adhunik sampradaya. The Deities are Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra, with Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Shiva, Bala Gopala, Bala Krishna, and Mahavira. The main festival is Gamha Purnima.

Hati Gurudeva Matha

It is in Baseli Sahi, and belongs to the Ananta Sampradaya. The present acharya is Adi Kanda Das.

Rani Mata Matha

Also called Kharata Matha, it is in Gaudabada Sahi, and was established by a Queen.

Some other Mathas are listed by the records but are presently not active: **Avadhuta Matha** (in Matimandapa Sahi), **Marichikota Matha** (belonging to the Angira panthi, in Kundeibenta Sahi), **Purana Sabha Matha** (also belonging to the Angira panthi, in Kundeibenta Sahi), **Dagara Matha** (in Dolamandapa Sahi), **Poda Matha** (near Samadhi Matha), **Indra Swami Matha** (in Matiapada chhak), **Torani chhatra Matha** (near Uttara parsva Matha, now under the care of the Ramanandi Sampradaya). We were unable to find the location of the **Venkatacharya Matha** (belonging to the tradition of Sri Venkata Swami) and the **Niranjan chhata Matha** (belonging to the Aghora panthi).

Akhadas, Yoga and Jega Gharas

These centers of religious warrior spirit were very popular in Puri in the ancient times and every neighborhood had one. Here is a list of the traditional Akhadas:

Bali Sahi (Luhagara, Kadamba Gada, Hinjola, Gurujang, Panchavati Akhada, Khasu Jaga),
 Harachandi Sahi (Barabati Jaga, Jami Khuntia, Kusana Khuntia, Sankata Akhada, Dhvaja Gada, Adanga Tiadi Jaga, Tapanga Jaga),
 Dolamandapa Sahi (Tiadi, Jagat Pratihari, Champagada, Jagannatha Vallabha, Luha Gada, Malli Gada),
 Mochi Sahi (Chanya Gada),
 Markandesvara Sahi (Panda, Bhatta, Bada pokhari, Amina Jaga),
 Kundheibenta Sahi (Sundara, Bishuni, Siddha Mahavira),
 Matamandapa Sahi (Bhoga, Amina, Bada Tota),
 Gaudabada Sahi (Adangatiagi, Narasimha Vallabha, Dukha, Khas, Juanigada),
 Mali Sahi (Malisahi),
 Balagandi Sahi (Majana, Brahma, Ganesh, Guruja),
 Manikarnika Sahi (Panchuati),
 Chitrakara Sahi (Gopali, Malligada),
 Baseli Sahi (Rahas Mahanti, Satabakhara, Bada akhara jega),
 Kumbharapada (Kumbharapada Bada Jega),
 Jhadesvari Sahi (Jutigada, Debisingh, Jaitota),
 Chudanga/Chodaganga Sahi (Bada Mahapatra, Bada Bakhara, Duari),
 Grand Road (Majana Jaga, Khuntia Jaga in Khuntia Sahi near Salabega pitha).
 In Lokanath road we find the Bada Akhada, Krishna Khuntia, Yami Khuntia, Sankata, Tapang, Barabati, Subalagiri, Suara pila, Muduli, Isvara Vallabha, and the Nilachala Khandayata Kshatriya Mahasabha. One of the most famous Akhadas is the Balabhadri Akhada, also called Gaudiya Jamayet, established by the Gaudiya Vaishnavas but open to the members of all the Vaishnava Sampradayas. The temple is dedicated to Patita Pavana and Bala Gopala, with a shrine to Hanuman Mahavira. Within the compound of the Akhada there are shrines to the footprints of the founders of the major Vaishnava Sampradayas: Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, Nimbarka, and Vishnu Svami.

Modern Mathas

Divyadham Yoga Ashram

It is in Chakratirtha road, established by Gurumata Bhavamayi.

This is one of the most famous and successful ashramas, with many disciples from all over the world visiting and staying to study yoga and bhakti, as well as music, devotional dance and drama, and Indian philosophy, especially from Gita, Bhagavata and Upanishads. Not far from the main Ashram, a guesthouse called Gitadham Ashram has been built.

There is also a Banaprastha Ashram in Lokanath Road, Puri, another outside Puri, in Tapovana (village Motori), where large festivals are held, and a Satjana Sangati, inaugurated in 1999 in Jaga Mara near Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar. The Ashram has two goshalas (one in Banaprastha Ashram and one in Tapovan Ashram) also with unproductive old cows, and organizes a free distribution of prasadam every Saturday and Sunday within the premises. A bookshop also sells the spiritual books published by the Ashram in Oriya, English, Japanese, Spanish and French, as well as a monthly newsletter in English and Japanese.

The Ashrams are managed by the main disciple of Gurumata, Ananda Swamiji, who met Maa in 1971 and immediately became her disciple. The management is also shared by her son in law Rabi Narayana Rathsharma, the son of Pandit Sadashiva Rathsharma. Rather recently, a larger temple has been constructed for Gopinatha ji. Recent additions are also the samadhi temple of Mata Bhavamayi and a beautifully decorated kirtana hall.

The Ashram often has foreign disciples visiting and participating to the many festivals and spiritual training, and is recognized by the Government as the best Yoga school in Puri. The daily programs include Guru Puja to the Mother's Samadhi, Gita yajna, Rudra Abhisheka, Vishnu sahasranama patha, Devistuti patha and Havan and evening Satsang with Bhajan and Kirtan. They also celebrate a number of annual festivals, including Christmas.

Ma Bhabamayee Paramahansa born 23 February 1932 in a village of the Cuttack district. From the age of 18 she immersed herself in spiritual seclusion for some time, and then traveled to Rishikesh where she received initiation from Shivananda and remained there for one year. Then Shivananda instructed her to settle in Puri.

Ramakrishna Matha

The Matha is situated near the Central Post Office. In the year 1916 Ramakrishna Basu, son of Balaram Basu (a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna), donated one acre of his property to Swami Brahmananda to build one ashram. In 1932 Swami Shivananda Maharaja constructed the present ashram and affiliated it as a branch of Ramakrishna Matha and Mission, Belur. In 1954 Sudhansu Mohan Basu donated a nearby building, the Hari kothi, that had been built by his grandmother.

The Matha members perform Sankirtana on Ekadasis and have religious discourses every Sunday after evening arati. They observe various festivals like Snana yatra, Ratha yatra, Guru Purnima, Durga Mahashtami, Kali puja, Sivaratri, Rama Navami, Gaura Purnima, Adi Shankaracharya Panchami, Buddha Purnima and the appearance days of Sri Ramakrishna (Phalguna sukla Dvitiya), Ma Sarada Devi, wife of Ramakrishna (Agrahayana krishna Saptami), Swami Vivekananda (Pusha krishna Saptami), and Swami Brahmananda (the founder of the Matha in Puri, falling on Magha sukla Dvitiya).

The Matha has a large library, a medical unit and mobile dispensary, a handicraft training center for women and a school for underprivileged children in Pentakota.

Nigamananda Ashram

It is in Svargadvara, and it is also called Nilachala kutir, Nigamananda Smruti mandira or Nilachala Sarasvata Sangha.

Thakura Nigamananda was born in 1880 in Kutabpur, East Bengal, as Nalinikanta from Bhuvanamohan Bhattacharya and Manikyasundari Devi. Initially a skeptic about the existence of the soul, Nalinikanta had an extraordinary experience at the age of 20 when he had a vision of the astral body of his wife Sudhansubala, who unknown to him had passed away about one hour earlier in their house. At that time he was working as the supervisor in the Narayanapur Zamindari estate, a long distance away from his house. Anxious to know more, he approached the Theosophical Society and Adyar (Chennai), who were known for their knowledge of the astral dimensions, but was dissatisfied by their seances.

In that period he met Swami Purnananda Sarasvati, who recommended him to worship the Mother Goddess in order to fulfill his aspirations. One night in a dream he saw a Sadhu who gave him the Tara mantra written on a leaf. He then approached the great tantric master Vamakshepa and under his instructions he started the traditional meditation sadhana. Later, Nalinikanta accepted the order of Vedantik Sannyasa from Swami Satchidananda Sarasvati of Pushkar (Rajasthan), and became Swami Nigamananda Sarasvati in the Shankaracharya line.

After studying the Vedanta, he again felt dissatisfied and went to search for more knowledge, meeting Sumer Das (Koot Hoomi Lal Singh), who was waiting for him in a forest at Kamakshya in the north-east Himalayan hills, in Assam, and who taught him Yoga for several months, until he attained the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. At the 1907 Kumbha Mela at Prayag, with the blessing of the Shankaracharya of the Sringeri Math, Nigamananda received from Swami Satchitananda the title of Paramahansa for his synthesis of the paths of tantra, jnana, yoga and prema. Still restless, Nigamananda left again to search for Gauri Mata, a great Siddha Yogini who had already given him some instructions during his journey to the Himalayas. After receiving instruction and initiation into the Bhava Sadhana from Gauri Mata, Nigamananda returned to the Garo hills in Assam and experienced a prolonged period of ecstatic sentiments of Bhakti, during which he was attracted to the life and teachings of Sri Krishna Chaitanya, the famous Bengali saint.

Nigamananda wrote several books, namely Brahmacharya Sadhan, Yogiguru, Tantrikguru, Jnaniguru, Premikguru, and Vedantaviveka, and published a monthly magazine entitled Arya Darpan, intended for disseminating non-sectarian spiritual knowledge among the masses who are apt to be misguided by narrow religious faiths. In 1913 he established the Bangiya Saraswat Math with the altar for the Gurubrahma (Guru the supreme) at Kokilamukh in Assam and several Saraswat Ashrams in different zones of Bengal; the Math has expanded in more than 50 centers all over the world and initiated ten of his disciples into the Sarasvati order of the Shankaracharya line, including Nirvanananda Sarasvati (an erudite scholar, philosopher and writer who became famous as Anirvan later on) and Swami Prajnananda Saraswati. After appointing wami Prajnanandaji as the Mahanta and Trustee of the Saraswat Math and Ashram establishments, Nigamananda retired and resided in Nilachal kutir in Puri for several years until he passed away in November, 1935 in Calcutta.

Nigamananda was known as a rather introverted Guru although he had a great sense of humour; he disliked public appearances and speeches and preferred to take personal care of his disciples, offering personalized practices that would benefit each particular individual. He created the Jnanachakra chart, a pictorial representation of the spheres of spiritual cosmology in the micro and macro cosm: in the center he placed Krishna and Radha (whose manifestations in the material world are Adi Guru and Yogamaya) as the transition between Nirguna and Saguna Brahman, which he called Nitya and Bhava Lokas. To Nigamananda, the Guru was the embodiment of the teachings of Adi Shankara and Gauranga, or Shankarer Matha with Gauranger Patha.

Nigamananda's foremost disciple was Swami Visuddhananda Sarasvati (1906-1995), born as Bholanath and then initiated as a brahmachari as Bhola Chaitanya Brahmachari. In turn he initiated several disciples, such as Mata Anandamayi Sarasvati (formerly known as Ma Nandarani Mukherjee) and Swami Birajananda Sarasvati (previously Gurudas Brahmachari, now presiding Trustee of the Nigamananda Ashram in Midnapur). After the demise of Visuddhananda (in 1995), the mission is carried on by his disciples Swami Chetanananda Sarasvati (born in 1933) and Ma Amritamayi Sarasvati (born in 1936).

The Nilachala Sarasvata Sangha (Svargadvara) was founded on Sravana Purnima 24 August 1934 (Nigamananda's birth day) at Puri, for his Oriya-speaking disciples. In 1942 an oriya biography of Nigamananda was published, attracting a larger number of followers and developing the mission, that at present has more than 150 Sakha Sanghas in the various parts of Orissa, as well as more branches called Pathachakras in Delhi, Vrindavana, Kolkata, Jamsedhpur, Bangalore, Hyderabad etc, and more than 4000 family worship centers or Gruhasanas. The Sangha also developed a division called Nilachala Sarasvata Mahila Sangha (for women), a Sevaka Sanghas or Kishore Sanghas (for young men) and Kumari Sanghas (for unmarried girls), for a total of about 10,000 devotees. The Sangha has translated into Oriya all the books written by Nigamananda and publishes a quarterly Oriya journal called Sangha Sevaka.

Aurobindo ashram

It is in Svargadvara, established by Swami Champaklal, disciple of Aurobindo, on land donated by Ilapal Chowdry from Bengal. The ashram contains relics of Aurobindo and the Mother (Mirra Alfassa). They run a school on integrated education under the doctrine of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Every day they are having prayer and meditation class, morning and evening. There is also a hostel. The main festivals are 15 August Sri Aurobindo's birthday, 21 February Mother's birthday, 24 November siddhi day, 24 April the "final arrival day" of Mother, 17 November the celebration of Mother's maha parayana, and 5 December Sri Aurobindo's Maha parayana day. The present activities are conducted through the Aurojyoti Trust, headed by Niranjan Patnaik. The principal of the school is Gadadhar Mishra.

Satsang Thakurbari

It is in Chakratirtha road, it was established by Sri Amarendra Nath Cakravarti on 12 June 1989. The shrine is dedicated to the memory of Sri Thakur Anukulchandra, Sri Baur Ma, and Sri Boroda. Sri Anukulchandra was a renowned religious person with a large following of politicians. The festivals observed are: Utkal Agamani Smrti Mahotsava (when Anukulchandra with his family visited Puri on 2 Jan 1923 on request of Janakinath Gosh and his wife Parvati Devi, the parents of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose), Uddhava Dhan and Vighraha Pratisthata Mahotsav (12 June, the anniversary of the installation), disappearance days, birthdays etc. The present director is Ashok Chakravarti.

Dhyan mandir ashram

Established by Swami Brahmananda Maharaj, in Church road, near Central Post Office. A very peaceful atmosphere with garden surrounded by trees, with a prayer hall and beautiful Krsna vigraha. They have a very nice guesthouse. The festivals are: Annapurna puja, Janmashtami, Gita jayanti, Guru Purnima, Durga puja. The Matha engages in preaching on *Gita*, organizing *Gita* festivals and discourses, many social works and activities, helping schoolchildren etc.

Maa Anandamayai Ashram

It is near Svargadvara. Anandamayi Ma (1896-1982) was a Bengal ecstatic, who is considered by her followers to be an incarnation of the Mother Kali. She had an extremely wide following all over India. She is not to be confused with Amritananda Mayi, who is from Kerala and still lives and preaches there.

Bharat Sevashrama Sangha

Also called Pranavananda ashram, it is in Svargadvara. The present Acharya is Madhavanandaji Maharaja. The temple is dedicated to Guru Shiva Thakura who established the Matha. They have a school and a guesthouse. The main festivals are Ratha yatra, Magha Purnima, Shiva ratri, and Guru utsava.

Karar Ashram

The Guru of Paramahansa Yogananda (the founder of the Divine Life Society and author of the famous *Autobiography of a Yogi*), Sriyuktेशvar passed away in Puri on 9 March 1936, and has his Samadhi in Karar Ashram, in Svargadvara, on a small inner lane.

Kripaluji Ashram

It is in Navakalevar road, near Akhandal Mani Shiva temple, established in year 2000. They have a big hall with the vyasasana of Kripaluji, with daily prayers and Sankirtana. They perform some social work. The present in charge is Vibhuti Sahoo.

Other recent Ashrams in Puri are: **Abhiram Paramahansh Ashram** (in Marichikote Lane), **Haridas Ashram** (in Sarbodaya nagar), **Nalak Ram Das Matha** (near Gundicha), **Kuladananda ashram** (near Narendra Sarovara), **Chintamani ashram** (near Narendra Sarovara), **Guru Shyama Charana Lahiri Dham** (on the sea shore), **Sri Satyananda Brahmachari ashram** (near Jagannatha Dasa Samadhi).

There is also a number of other Ashrams outside Puri:

Hariharananda Ashram

In Balighai, on the Puri-Konark Marine Drive, we find this Ashram founded by Paramahansa Hariharananda, founder of the Kriya Yoga International Institute, that has many followers around the world. During the centenary year (2006 to 2007) of Paramahansa Hariharananda, more than 108 celebrations, which included conferences on world peace and other humanitarian concerns, interfaith forums, discourses on a variety of spiritual topics, were held worldwide in his honor, especially in the Kriya Yoga centers in Germany, Holland, and USA.

Swami Hariharananda was a famous saint who established spiritual centers and educational institutions such as the Chaturdham Veda Pathashala, a school for the study of Sanskrit and Vedic scriptures and the Youth Orientation Programme, a one-week free stay at the Ashram for college students (between 18 and 21 years of age, both male and female) to facilitate the understanding of body, mind and soul. The Shriyukteshwar Library at Hariharananda Gurukulam in Balighai was constructed in 2004 and carries a wide selection of scriptural teachings in Sanskrit, English, Hindi, Bengali and Oriya languages. Also, the Hariharananda Memorial Library was established at the Gopinath College in Balighai. After the disappearance of Hariharananda, his disciple Prajnanananda has become the leader of the Institution.

Harihara Ashram, not to be confused with the Hariharananda Ashram (also called Kriya Yoga Ashram) that is also in the same area, was started by Ambar Roy.

Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram

It is in Baliguai, on the ocean shore between Puri and Konark, and was donated in 1993 by Shantananda Swami to the Divine Life Society founded by Shivananda Swami. The Ashram had Deities of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra, and is now functioning as spiritual retreat for the main Ashram in Rishikesh, with a Mauna ("silence") Mandira for peaceful meditation. Swami Vivekarupananda is in charge of the Ashram. Besides the basic Deity worship, the Ashram has regular morning prayer class and evening Satsang, Mahamantra kirtan twice a month (24 and 25), and observes annual festivals such as Navaratri puja, Guru Purnima, Shiva Ratri, Janmashtami, Kartika Purnima, Rama Namavi, Sri Panchami, Ganesh Chaturti, Hanuman Jayanti, and the appearance days of Shivananda and Chidananda (8 and 24 September). The Annapurna kshetra of the Ashram serves daily prasadam to 25 people on the average and has a "tree adoption" program, a cow and a deer enclosure.

Jagannatha Vallabha Ashram

Jagannatha Vallabha Ashram is about 12 km from the Puri town, in the green countryside of Orissa. The nearest village is Piteipur, the nearest town is Chandanpur.

The Ashram was created in 2003 by Mataji Parama Karuna Devi who settled in Sridhama Jagannatha Puri in 1994. It does not belong to any Institution or Matha, and is completely independent. However, preachers, sadhakas and devotees from all Sampradayas are welcome to visit and cooperate, and students are accepted without any discrimination of origin, caste, race, nationality, gender etc.

The Deities installed in the Ashram temple are Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra and Sudarshana, Vimala, Mahalakshmi, Bhadrakali, Lingaraja, Salagrama, Govardhana, Madana Mohana, Sri Devi, Bhu Devi, Radha Gopinatha with Lalita and Visakha, Krishna Balarama, Gopala, Mangala, Hanuman and Ganesha. The daily puja includes four Aratis and three Bhoga offerings.

The festivals observed are Durga puja (Vimala Sola puja), Chandana yatra, Snana yatra, Ratha yatra, Dola yatra, Gaura Purnima, Jhulana yatra, Krishna Janmastami, Rama Navami, Nrisimha Chaturdasi, Shiva ratri, Balarama Purnima, Rukmini vivaha, Lakshmi puja, Sarasvati puja, Ganesha puja, Radhashtami, Odana Shasti, Makara Sankranti, Vyasa Purnima, Mesh (Pana) Sankranti, Gita and Bhagavata jayanti, as well as all Ekadasis and Sankrantis.

The Ashram has a goshala, a primary school (Oriya/English medium) with training programs on Shastra and Dharma, and a publication department (Jagannatha Vallabha Vedic Research Center) that also organizes courses and seminars on the culture of Jagannatha, including Sanskrit, study on *Gita*, *Bhagavata*, *Upanishads*, as well as Karma kanda, Tantra and Yoga, Odissi (Mahari training), Patta chitra, Ayurvedic and Naturopathic medicine, Vegetarianism, and compare philosophies and theologies.

The Kingdom of Lord Jagannatha

Orissa

In this chapter we will only give a brief review of the many wonders that can be found around Puri and in Orissa in general; we are planning to publish a separate volume that will describe them in greater detail. Purushottama kshetra is considered as covering a large part of the state of Orissa. Jagannatha Puri is more particularly considered as Sankha kshetra, while Gada kshetra is Viraja (Jajpur), Padma kshetra is Cuttack, and Chakra kshetra is Ekamra (Bhubaneswar).

Another categorization is according to the Pancha Devata worship introduced by Adi Shankara: Vishnu kshetra is Puri, Shiva kshetra is Bhubaneswar, Shakti (Ambika, Devi) kshetra is Viraja/Jajpur, Arka (Surya, or Aditya) kshetra is Konark, and Maha vinayaka kshetra is Chandikol.

In Orissa there are several **Shakti pithas**: Vimala (Puri), Viraja (Jajpur), Mangala (Kakatpur), Samalei (Sambalpur), Bhagavati (Banpur), Ramachandi (Konark), Bali Harachandi (Brahmagiri), Sarala (Jhankad), Hingula (Hindol), Bhattarika (Badamba), Charchika (Banki), Tara (Bhusandpur), and Tarini (Purushottampur). Dantesvari is in the neighboring state of Chattisgarh (Bastar). *Pranatosini Tantra* lists 108 of such Pithas, while *Hevajra Tantra* says that the most important Shakti pithas are Jalandhara, Oddiyana, Purnagiri and Kamarupa, two of which are in Orissa (Oddiyana as Puri and Puspagiri near the Chatur pitha complex of Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri, Udayagiri and Alutigiri).

There are also Gramadevi temples in every village. Grama Devi is the Goddess that protects the village, grants fertility and often accepts blood sacrifices. In this case, the form of the Devi is represented by a sacred stone sitting under a tree, or by a wooden pole that is considered the “younger sister” of the main Deity of a regular temple. This Vana Durga is installed by a *brahmana* and regularly worshiped by tribal priests called Dehuri and Kalisi, who, on Sankrantis, also perform the ritual of possession (*ubha*), in which the Kalisi observes fasting, wears new clothes and sits in front of the Dehuri, who worships his limbs and pours water, milk and *gur* water on his body, then offers incense and lamp and finally garlands him with the garland that was offered to the Deity in the morning. Then drums are played, heaps of uncooked rice (*punji*) and a blood sacrifice are offered to the Deity, and the Deity answers the prayers and the requests of the devotees. The temple of Hingula at Gopalprasad is particularly famous for these rituals.

All over Orissa, there are innumerable temples and places dedicated to the cult of Baseli, Jhaduani, Janhikhai, Kaludikhai, Kadambakhandi, Mangala, Pitabali, Hingula, Baunthi, Stambhesvari or Khambesvari etc. More information about the worship of the Goddess is found in the sections describing the particular temples.

From the geographical point of view, Orissa is a beautiful State on the east coast of India, on the Bay of Bengal. The area of the region is 156 sq km and the population 36.7 million. It borders north with West Bengali (Puri is about 500 km from Kolkata or Calcutta), north-west and west with the new states of Jharkhand and Chattisgarh, and south with Andhra Pradesh.

This entire area is rich in ethnic diversity, with a large and diverse population of Adivasi or Vanavasi (tribal groups), who constitutes a very important part of the culture of Orissa. The sceneries of the region are really beautiful and include lush green rice fields, enchanting groves and dense forests scattered with cool ponds and small rivers, rural villages and many temples. Part of the region has mountainous and hilly areas, creating several beautiful waterfalls that are very popular as picnic spots.

In ancient times, the entire State was covered by wild jungles breeding innumerable elephants, tigers, deer and other wild animals, of which only a small percentage remain in the various wildlife sanctuaries and reserve forests, such as Simlipal, Bhitarkanika, Ushakoti, Karjapat and Tikarapara.

There are several holy rivers of Orissa, the greatest being the **Mahanadi**, starting in the hills of south-east Madhya Pradesh, it enters Orissa at Cuttack, and the **Bhramani**, flowing in north-east Orissa.

Another major feature of the State is the great **Chilika** lake, the largest brackish water lake in Asia, where thousands of migratory birds of all species from Europe and Asia assemble during the winter months, and where the small olive sea turtles (an endangered species) come to nest from the deep waters beyond Sri Lanka. Chilika is also famous for its dolphins, although spotting them is not as easy as it would seem from the tourist brochures. The lake (about 48 km from Puri, but on mediocre roads) has several islands, such as Kalijai, Nalbana, Asthana, Badakuda, Varunakuda, Bhasramundia, Brahmapura, Cheliakudia, Ghantasila, Gopakuda, Kaliyugesvra, Kankadakuda, Malatikuda, Parakudi, Sagadia, Samal, Sanakuda, Tarnapara, Tua Gambhari and two “dredged islands”.

The most famous places are Satapada (a promontory that separates the lake from the ocean) as well as Mahisha, Rajhans, and Maggarmukha. Other wildlife monitoring stations are Balugaog, Devi near Rambha and Rishikulya (especially for turtle watching), Baradihi, Mangalajodi, Arkhakuda, Bhusandpur, Gouranga patna, Gokhara patna, Gangadharapur, Jadupur, Dahikhia, Jadupur, Garh Rorang, Kaluparaghat, Maluda, Gajapati Nagar, Sabulia, Keshapur, Pathara, Chandraput, Nairi, Baulabandha, Sorana. The best way to visit the lake is to hire a boat at Balugaon, Barkul, Rambha or Satapada.

The coast on the Bay of Bengal is extremely beautiful, decorated not only with coconut palms, but also with a variety of other plants and trees like pine trees, cashews, mangoes, and so on. In fact the soil is sandy but richer than the soil on other coastal areas. Many pristine forests are still present near the beaches, with wild deer and other animals, although the area is under a very serious danger of deforestation and degradation. Many local people increase their meager income by cutting and selling the unprotected trees that constitute the basis of the ecosystem preventing the desertification of the land. Precipitation is good, but the absence of very large rivers and the vicinity of the ocean create a very pleasant climate and avoid the danger of floods.

In the last few years, Orissa has seen a huge development, and the modern city of Bhubaneswar, already built in post-Independence times with ample roads and high-level infrastructures around the old town, is quickly becoming a real metropolis.

The district of Puri

The long white beaches of the coastal district, for a total length of about 150 km, have a width varying between a few hundred meters to more than 6 km, and raised sand dunes (called ridges) varying from a few meters to 6 km, preventing rivers from getting straight into the ocean.

It is important to notice that when the official websites of the Indian Government speak of the Surf (in the “triad” Sun, Surf and Sand intended to attract tourists) we must clearly understand that the surf of the Bay of Bengal should be watched from a distance only, without expecting to actually surf it with a board. The waves are not tall enough and the underwater currents are terribly dangerous, so that many people have drowned on this tract of ocean. Please note that the “lifeguards” who can be found on the beach in Puri in front of Svargadvara are usually unable to swim, what to speak of rescuing others.

Local people and Indian pilgrims and tourists rarely do more than immersing themselves briefly (“taking a holy dip”) in about 3 feet of water on the main beach, spraying each other in 1 or 2 feet deep water, or even better, enjoying a stroll or sitting on the sand, fully dressed. Actually, this is the meaning of the ambiguous declaration “Beach clothes are appropriate for this sea side resort” found on the official website of the Puri Tourist Department. The only islands in the districts are those in Chilika lake. There is no port in the district.

The rivers, not very large, are branches of the Mahanadi, a majestic river that crosses Cuttack and characteristically remain very low during the dry season while they fill up and sometimes spill out during the monsoon. Since they are not very large the overflowing is generally moderate, although when in spate the current can become strong and damage bridges. Flooding mostly comes from the water logging of undrained areas that are below the road level; especially around Puri many fields and lands have been excavated for clay (to make bricks and to produce the characteristic earthen pots especially for Jagannatha’s kitchen) and sand (for construction purposes), so the level of the ground is characteristically low. The situation worsens whenever the Government blocks the excavation of sand and clay from the river beds: contractors then turn to excavating the land in the Forest Reserve on the (supposedly protected) coastal area, that are also wildly looted and poached for wood, often cutting down trees when “nobody is watching”.

River Kushabhadra branches out as Chandrabhaga, Kuakhai and Nuanai a little before Konark, joined by the affluent Mugei. River Daya (also called Rakta Nadi) flows just outside Bhubaneswar, and then crosses the Puri district directed towards Chilika, joined by two small affluents, the Managuni and the Gangua.

River Bhargavi runs near Chandanpur and joins the Kuakhai. It is also joined with Kanchi, Kania, Nadi, Naya Nadi, Suna munhi, and Ratnachira. River Kadua is a monsoon stream falling into the river Prachi, which starts in the area between Puri, Gop and Jagatsinghpur, then after passing Kakatpur falls into the Bay of Bengal. Besides the enormous Chilika lake the district has another lake called Sar, that is rather not well known to the locals.

The Puri district is composed by 11 Blocks: Puri Sadar (the city of Puri), Satyabadi (including Sakhigopal and Konark), Brahmagiri (including Chilika, Ranpur, Balipatna, Ranpur and Nimapara), Pipli, Krushnaprasad, Kakatpur, Kanas, Delang, Gop and Astarang. It includes 1714 villages, for a total of 3051 sq km or 264,988 hectares. The cultivated area is 188,745 (85,438 of low land, i.e. lands below the flood level, 57,654 of medium land and 45,653 or high land). Almost all the land is cultivated with rice (170,658 hectares), while the rest is dedicated to coconut palms and a smaller percentage to other crops. The Government encourages the development of mining and live stock especially buffaloes, sheep, goats, chicken and pigs, as well as “aquaculture” (pisciculture fisheries).

The forest area is 18,175 hectares and disappearing fast, especially because of the great demand of firewood for cooking, both from Jagannatha’s kitchen and from the general population, as kerosene and LPG gas are expensive and hard to get because of the serious restrictions imposed by the Government. The total population is 1,502,682, of which 1,298,654 are living in rural areas, 273,917 belonging to the Scheduled Castes and 4,482 to Scheduled Tribes. The male/female ratio is almost equal (763,389 to 739,293). According to the census, the district has 3 English medium schools and 17 Police Stations.

The most important pilgrimage places in the district of Puri, besides the city of Puri are Kakatpur (with the temple of Mangala), Brahmagiri (with the temple of Alarnath) and Konark (with the temple of Surya).

Other famous pilgrimage places are Siruli Mahavira, the temples around the Bhargavi river, the village of Dasya Bouri, and the temple of Sakshi Gopala in Satyabadi.

Kakatpur

Kakatpur, also known as Mangalpur, is about 50 km from Puri and 45 km from Konark, on the Puri-Astaranga road, on the bank of river Prachi.

Mangala temple

This very famous temple has a major role in the rituals of the Navakalevara, the renovation of the bodies of the Deities, as the group of Sevakas and attendants who travel in search of the proper trees first visit Devi Mangala’s temple here to get directions for their journey and remain prostrated here until they get the proper message from Devi in their dreams. It is said that the Daru Brahma, the sacred log from which the Jagannatha Deities were originally carved by king Indradyumna, was found floating on the water at the confluence of river Prachi with the ocean at Banki Muhana (in Puri) in the place known as Chakratirtha; then on the advice of Narada Rishi one offered flower from the head of Kakatpur Mangala was touched to the Daru Brahma, which immediately split into three blocks for the three Deities.

Many devotees come in pilgrimage to this Mangala temple and remain prostrated (in *dharana* meditation) to pray for various blessings, and especially to be healed from disease. It is said that this Deity of Mangala Devi (Durga) was hidden in the middle of the raging waters of the river Prachi that flowed here, and was recovered by a boatman who had a dream of Ma Mangala asking him to install Her in a temple. The story says that later the boatman saw a crow dive in that exact spot of the river and not coming back: this is considered the origin of the name of the village (*kaka* for “crow” and *atka* for “stuck”).

Within the temple there is a bed made of solid stone, on which it is said that Ma Mangala rests after touring the entire universe every day; the bed looks rather worn out as if actually used for a very long time. In the temple there are several other Deities besides Ma Mangala.

The most important and famous festival celebrated here is Jhamu Yatra, falling on the first Tuesday of the month of Vaisakha; the devotees walk barefoot on a surface of burning charcoal fire, spread in a long trench, among the loud singing and beating of drums, carrying on their shoulder an earthen pot filled with the sacred waters of river Prachi. By the blessing of Mangala and by the power of their devotion, no one of them is ever injured or burned. Other ancient but ruined temples in this area are the Gramesvara Temple at Lataharana (near Kakatpur), and the Somesvara Temple at Somesvara near Kakatpur (Puri)

Chaurasia

This village (on the Nimapada-Kakatpur road, 14 km from Kakatpur) on the right bank of the river Prachi is famous for the temple dedicated to the Mother Goddess in the form of Yajnasini Varahi, built during the Somavamsi rule and presently under the Archeological Survey of India. She is a mother Goddess with the face of a boar, three eyes and a pot belly, holding a fish in one hand and a bowl in the other. She sits in *lalitasana* on a cushion, with Her right foot on Her buffalo *vahana*. The worship is conducted according to Tantric practices and fish is offered every day. The temple is decorated with many sculptures especially of Maithuna in 8 stages. Other temples in the area are the shrines of Lakshmi Narayana and Amaresa Mahadeva.

Tulasi chaura.

It is said that Tulasi Das (the compiler of the *Rama charita manasa*) had visited the Sri Mandira and was disappointed to see that there was no Rama Deity there. Tempted to leave Puri, he spent the night here and had a dream when Sri Rama manifested from the Deity of Jagannatha. From this place the pilgrims coming from Bengal can first see the tower of the Jagannatha temple.

Dakshina Kalika

Not far from Chandanpur (anciently known as Kamalapur), at Bira Govindapur, we find the famous temple of Dakshina Kalika, a rather recent shrine visited by many local people. The temple is famous for its Tantric worship and the pujakas welcome all devotees, often helping them with advice and blessings from the Mother Goddess.

Bhargavi river

The river Bhargavi (also known as Kancha Nadi or “golden river”) is considered a manifestation of the sacred river Yamuna, who is the daughter of Surya (also called Bharga or Kalinda). At Brahmagiri the Bhargavi flows near the temple of Alarnatha, and on the day of Krishna Janmashtami people celebrate the festival called Maha Yamuna Snana (at the Mangala ghat). It is said that Chaitanya also participated to this festival. Gaudiya Vaishnavas call it Dandabhanga Nadi, as according to their tradition in this river (near Chandanpur, a few km before Puri) Chaitanya threw the pieces of his *sannyasi* staff after Nityananda had broken it (some say Nityananda threw the pieces in the river after breaking the staff). According to Sarvabhauma’s *Chaitanya chandrodaya* and to Vrindavana Das’ *Chaitanya mangala*, this particular episode is very significant for the identification of Chaitanya with Krishna and for the evolution of his bhava. It is said that the bamboo is very dear to the Lord, so Krishna always carried it as His flute, while Rama used it as His bow, and Chaitanya carried it as a *sannyasi* staff. However, Chaitanya’s most important companion, Nityananda (indicated by the Gaudiya theologians as a direct manifestation of Sankarshana Balarama) chose to break his staff at the Shiva Kapotesvara temple. More elaboration is offered by Gaudiya Vaishnavas in reference to the *Bhagavata* verse 3.14.35, mentioning Shiva as *nyasta danda* (“breaker of *danda*”) and *dharta danda* (“holder of *danda*”), and implying that with this act, Nityananda broke the separation between Madhava and Uma Madhava, or Hari and Hara. It is interesting to note that also Sarvabhauma in his prayers addressed Chaitanya as the holder and breaker of *danda*. Besides the ordinary meaning of “staff”, the word *danda* contains a meaning of control and punishment, much like the sceptre of the ancient Kings. Every year during the month of Chaitra there is a festival called Maha Varuni Snana, celebrated at Ganga Narayanapur on the Bhargavi river, where we find an old temple dedicated to Narayana and Ganga, two ancient Deities that according to some people, were excavated from the river itself. It is said that this is the place where Ganga personally appeared, and it is called also Mukta Triveni Tirtha (to equate it with the famous Triveni at Prayag, today called Allahabad) because the river branches out in three streams here in a way similar to the Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati confluence.

Kapotesvara

The *Skanda Purana* mentions that when king Indradyumna first reached Purushottama kshetra, he visited this temple. Mahadeva engaged here in austerities to obtain blessings from Hari and fasted so much (surviving only through wind) that his body was reduced to the size of a dove (*kapota*). Hari was pleased with Shiva's penance and established this place as His to be worshiped. It is said that the area of the Kapotesvara dhama was filled with sharp grass and nobody could live there. The *Ramayana* also narrates that when Sri Ramachandra with Sita Devi and Lakshmana were traveling through the forest, They came upon a pond where Shiva Mahadeva was playing with Parvati; out of shyness, Shiva and Parvati transformed into two doves and flew into the forest. It is said that Chaitanya visited the temple to offer respects to Mahadeva here.

Brighu Muni Ashrama

It is said that Brighu Muni established here his *ashram* and *yajna kunda* because of the sanctity of the Bhargavi river. Deities of Sita Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, Satrugna and Hanuman are still worshiped in the small temple here. It is said that Chaitanya visited the Ashram during his journey to Jagannatha Puri; the episode and the story of the Ashram and Yajna kunda of Brighu Muni in this place are narrated by Govinda Dasa in his *Chaitanya Chadaka*.

Bali Kapilesvara

It is said that the place of this temple was covered by sand (*bali*). Here Mahadeva gave His Darshana to a devotee who was on his way to visit the Kapotesvara temple; besides the Lingam more Deities were excavated from this site, such as Parvati, Ganesha etc. According to tradition, pilgrims would stop here and rub the sacred sand to their sore bodies to get relief from fatigue and pain.

Budha Linga Mahadeva

It is said that this Lingam, also called Dadhi Bhandesvara, keeps growing larger with time, as witnessed by many people and even recorded by examinations conducted at a distance of 10 years. According to *Sri Chaitanya chakada*, this small Shiva temple was visited by Sri Chaitanya during his travel to Puri; he spent the night here and had a wonderful *kirtana*.

Yajnesvari Varahi

This small temple is in the area of Chandanpur. It is said that after Parasurama had decimated the rebellious *kshatriyas* in 21 military campaigns, his axe (*parasu*) had become so heavy with the accumulated reactions of such killings that he could not find any place that could bear its weight. Finally he came to Purushottama kshetra and found that Varahi Devi (Mother Earth) here could hold it. Even today this Deity holds the axe.

Other temples in the area are **Jodhalinga Mahadeva** and **Barala Balunkesvara**.

Sri Chaitanya Dandabhanga lila kunjia ashrama

This Sarasvata Gaudiya Matha has been established in recent times by Sachinandana Das, disciple of Gour Govinda Svami, near the Bhargavi river. It is said that this is the place where Nityananda broke the sannyasa staff of Chaitanya (*danda bhanga* means "broken staff") and threw the three pieces into the river, however there are other versions according to which this episode (described in *Chaitanya charitamrita*, Madhya 5.158) happened further north on the course of the river. The local version says that Chaitanya left his *sannyasi* staff because he wanted to take a dip in the river before going to visit the temple of Shiva Kapotesvara, that is very close by. When he found out that his staff had been broken and thrown away, Chaitanya apparently became irritated and decided to proceed alone towards Jagannatha Puri.

Raghurajpur

Another famous place in the area is Raghurajpur, a small village set among coconut groves and rice fields, characterized by a large colony of painters in the traditional Odissi Patta Chitra style, and by the Gotipua school called Dasabhujia Gotipua Odishi Nrutya Parishad, founded by Guru Maguni Das.

This is the traditional settlement of the Chitrakaras, “painters”, a clan of artists and artisans of various levels of talents, including some winners of National Awards. About 120 families of artists live here, in a number of houses all lined up on both sides of the main road. Every house in this village is studio and an art gallery. The techniques, themes and styles are passed from father to son through a long and careful training. Local apprentices are also treated like members of the family, according to the traditional Gurukula model, by which the student receives a full immersion experience by living and serving as a member of the family of the teacher. The village has a small temple dedicated to the Grama Devi, built at the head of the long road on which sides all the houses are lined.

Siruli Mahavira

One of the most important Hanuman temples in the region, together with Siddha Mahavira in Puri and Panchamukhi Hanuman in Cuttack. It is said that this Hanuman was guarding the Bandhana ghara in Sri Mandira, but he was snoring very loudly and Lakshmi Devi was unable to sleep so she complained with Jagannatha, and Jagannatha sent Hanuman to Siruli, about 33 kilometers north east from the temple. This Hanuman has a very long tail that is considered still growing, one eye (left) watching Jagannatha’s temple in Puri, to the south-west, and the other eye (right) towards Lanka, to the south.

The *vighraha* is about 10 feet tall, of black chlorite stone; in his left hand he holds a short sword and in the right hand he holds the Gandhamardhana mountain peak. Over his head there is a Shiva linga with a 7-hooded serpent, inside his heart (visible through the torn chest) there are Rama and Sita, on the right side of the pedestal there is Anjana (Hanuman’s mother) and below Hanuman’s feet there is the demon Murasura.

The temple, facing south, has a very old Asvattha (pipal) tree and two large lions at the main entrance gate, and the Navagrahas over the east gate. Its external walls are decorated with many figures of Hanuman, Shiva Linga, Mahisamardini Durga and Ganesha.

Dasia Bouri’s house

In the chapter on the great personalities connected to Puri we have described the great devotee of Jagannatha called Dasia Bouri. His village, Baligaon, was neglected for a long time but recently some Committee have been formed, and in 2005 a bronze statue of the saint was made by eminent artist Bipra Charan Mohanty. A 45-foot high temple for Jagannath being constructed facing east and in front of Dasia Bauri’s statue. In the same place we can also find Dasia’s Samadhi, a high conical shape with two eyes drawn on the body, and a Gaudiya Ashram established by Dasarathi Das in the 1600s, with images of Radha Krishna and Chaitanya, and a wheel that it is said to have been given to Dasia by Jagannatha Himself. The library has many rare manuscripts. The greatest festival is Kartika sukla Ekadasi.

Sakshi Gopala

The temple of Sakshi Gopala is in the small town of Sakhi Gopal (previously known as Satyabadi), about 20 km. from Puri on the road to Bhubaneswar.

The original Deity, of black complexion and about 6 feet tall, is said to have been installed in Vrindavana by the grandson of Krishna, Vajra, together with the other principal Deities of Sri Krishna. Others say that this Deity was in Varanasi. After a very long time two *brahmanas* from the same city of Kanchi went for a pilgrimage and the younger one served the older with so much affection and respect that the old *brahmana*, extremely pleased, promised before the Deity of Gopala to give him his daughter in marriage. However, after they returned to their village, the old *brahmana* was pressurized by his sons who strongly opposed the marriage, and to save the truthfulness and the religious principles of the old *brahmana*, the young man went back all the way to the holy pilgrimage place to seek the Lord’s help. Pleased by his intense devotion, the Lord agreed to walk all the way to Kanchi to bear witness of the promise in favor of His devotee, and stopped just outside his village. The Deity of Sakshi Gopala remained there for a long time, until the King of Kanchi installed Him in the capital. Maharaja Purushottama Deva, King of Puri, sought an alliance with the southern kingdom of Kanchi and requested a marriage with the daughter of the King of Kanchi but he was scorned and launched into a military campaign to subdue the Kanchi kingdom.

More information about the Kanchi-Kaveri expedition and how Sakshi Gopala was brought to Puri by the conquering Purushottama Deva can be found in the chapter on the history of Orissa. Some time later, a descendent of Maharaja Purushottama Deva was inspired by Krishna to install the Deity of Srimati Radharani together with Gopalji, on the auspicious Ola Navami day. On this annual festival, organized to celebrate that installation, Srimati Radharani mercifully shows Her feet to the visiting crowds to bless Her devotees. On Gosthasthami, Go-puja is traditionally performed in honor of Gopala, on Ola Navami the Radha pada Darshana attracts thousands of pilgrims, then on the auspicious Pavitra Devotthana Ekadasi the pilgrims traditionally unite for a mass Harinama Sankirtana, with the participation of many Sankirtana groups. The village is also very well known for its ancient tradition of scholarly Pandits, and particularly for the “Satyabadi pancha sakha” (Gopabandhu Das, Nilakantha Das, Hari Hari Das, Kripasindhu Mishra and Godavarisa Mishra, who worked hard to revive the ancient Vedic culture and give it back as a lively heritage to the uncultured people of this materially undeveloped area. In 1901 Pandit Gopabandhu Das opened his famous “village school” (*vana vidyalaya*) where he was teaching to all deserving children from every caste, sitting under the trees of the “Gupta Vrindavana” here in Bakulavana, near the temple of Gopala, becoming a very famous and loved figure. Rabindranath Tagore was deeply inspired by this revolutionary open air school and subsequently opened his Shantiniketana University.

The annual festival at Sakhi Gopala was first organized in 1985 by the Ekamra Club of Sakhi Gopal as a celebration of devotional songs and dance to glorify the Lord; the programme was inaugurated by Sj Biju Pattanaik. In 1995 it was extended in the name of “Gopal Utsava”, by creation of Awards, Panel Discussions, Kavi Sammelam and public addresses by eminent speakers. Near Sakhigopal we can also find the Gartsvara temple at Alugum, the Gopinath temple at Nuasomesvarpur, and the Gramesvara temple at Birpratapur.

On the way to Bhubaneswar and within the district of Puri, we find the famous handicrafts village of **Pipli**, with many shops displaying appliqué embroidery work and similar household items. Pipli has a strong presence of Muslims, and more recently of Christians, too. However, in the ancient past before the Muslim domination, there were several Shiva temples in the area, such as the Khilesvara temple at Khilor.

Brahmagiri

Still within the Puri district we find another very popular destination: the Brahmagiri hill, famous for the ancient temple of Alarnath. It is said that Brahma descended here in Satya yuga to worship Lord Narayana and personally fashioned the Deity of Alarnath.

Renda Nrisimha is an ancient and famous temple dedicated to Nrisimha, situated on the way to Alarnatha-Brahmagiri. It is a temple of modest dimensions, with a rather recently reconstructed structure, plain with a few large wall frescos, with Narasimha and Jagannatha. The Mahanta is very friendly.

Bali Harachandi.

On the road to Brahmagiri and Satapada (Chilika), about 27 km south of Puri, on a sand hill near the ocean, this large temple is connected with the Durga puja celebrations in Sri Mandira, specifically with Maha Navami (Asvina sukla Navami). Goddess Kali stands on the body of Shiva, holding a snake, a skull and a severed head. The temple is advertised by the Government as a tourist destination and a picnic spot.

Alarnath

At about 20 km from Puri, in the direction opposite to Konark, there is the famous Alarnath temple. The Deity is a tall black chlorite image of Vishnu and has four arms with the characteristic symbols of conch, disc, mace and lotus flower, and also exhibits the Kaustubha jewel, a golden crown, a pearl necklace, sacred thread, a diamond ring, clothes and anklets. Garuda is kneeling at His right foot, and two Devis stand at his sides. Small separate Deities of Sri Devi and Bhu Devi sit in the same temple room, while in a separate shrine, a tall Deity of Gaja Lakshmi Devi sits in *padmasana*.

In the inner courtyard there is also a Sadbhujā Gaurāṅgā *vigraha* flanked by paintings of Sri Krishna (Venu Gopala) and Sri Jagannatha. Within the temple compound there is also a shrine dedicated to Shiva Nataraja. It seems that the temple of Alarnath is about 200 years older than the Jagannatha temple in Puri. Originally the worship was performed by *brahmanas* of the Sri (Ramanuja) Sampradaya from south India, followers of the famous Tamil saints, poets and devotees called Alvars (“orphans”, as they considered Vishnu their only family and support). The temple was therefore called Alvar-nath, and subsequently became Alarnath.

The King had donated sufficient lands for the maintenance of the original *brahmana* families, but with time the families expanded and finally faced financial difficulties. In this period, the *brahmanas* started to travel to beg in the nearby areas. In this regard, there is a very interesting story. Sri Ketana, the *brahmana* in charge of the food offerings to Alarnath Deva, while going out on this collecting journey, asked his child Madhu to perform the Bhoga offering in the temple in his absence. Madhu was a small child and he did not know the procedures or the mantras for the food offering, and his father simply told him that he had to place the plate in front of the Lord and pray Him to accept the offering.

The child prayed with great sincerity, but was disappointed when he saw that, after his offering and prayers, the plate was still full. He did not know that the Lord can also eat with His eyes and other senses, and He does not need to leave the plate empty (like the child was supposed to do when mother gave him food) in order to accept our offering, so he felt that his offering had been unsuccessful, and insisted with the Lord that He should eat His food. After repeating the offering a few times, without any apparent success, the child became very disturbed and feared that his father would become angry at him for failing in his duty. So he started crying and begged the Lord to please eat up everything.

Finally, the child triumphantly brought the empty plate back to his mother, who actually expected to serve the *prasadam* to her family for their meal. Thus, mother and child fasted for three days, because Lord Alarnath was eating all the food to grant the prayers of the child. When Sri Ketana came back, he was also expecting to get some food, and when he was told that Lord Alarnath had been eating everything up, he could not believe such a story. So he told the child that he would have to repeat the offering again in his presence. The child began the offering and when the Lord took with His hand a container of hot sweet rice, the *brahmana* pounced on Him and grabbed His arm, causing some hot rice cream to spill on the Deity’s hand, where the mark can be seen still today. Lord Narayana spoke to Sri Ketana and said: “Since you have no faith, and believe Me to be just a statue or idol, you will all be destroyed. Only your son Madhu, who is a sincere soul, will be saved.” A few days later a great tidal wave swept off the entire village, and only Madhu survived.

For several centuries the temple worship languished, until the 15th century, when Maharaja Purushottama Deva, who was marching with his army against the King of Kanchi, came near the temple. Alarnath Deva asked him to provide for His worship again after coming back from the war, and King Purushottama obliged. The temple is traditionally visited by the devotees of Jagannatha during the period of Anavasara, when Lord Jagannatha retires from Snana yatra to Ratha yatra and is not visible to the people. The tradition was also observed by Sri Chaitanya who came here immersed in intense feelings of separation: such was the power of his ecstatic feelings that his body melted the rock of the pavement, creating very visible depressions in the spots where it pressed on the ground. It is said that Sri Chaitanya often visited Alarnath on other occasions, especially when he was irritated by his followers - when Paramananda Puri asked him to forgive Chota Haridasa, or when Bhavananda Raya asked him to plead with king Prataparudra for the pardon of Gopinatha Pattanayaka. He also visited there every time he left or returned from a travel outside Puri, resting on the bank of the lake, that he considered not different from the Radha kunda.

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati founded here the **Brahma Gaudiya Math**.

In 1926 he organized a meeting with the village leaders to renovate the temple in cooperation with the Emar Math from Puri (belonging to the Ramanuja Sampradaya) and was always present to encourage and assist personally in the work. Finally he installed the Deities of Vamana, Nrsimha and Varaha. During the renovation work, one old Deity was found in the excavations, and the Lord appeared in a dream to the pujari, ordering him to give the Deity to His dear devotee Bhaktisiddhanta. From that time, the Deity is worshipped in the Brahma Gaudiya Math. Subsequently, Gopi Gopinatha was also installed. In the same direction, the road leads to **Satapada** (Chilika), where we can find a number of important temples:

Kalijai on the Kalijai island is the most important shrine in Chilika, where a great Makara Sankranti Mela is held annually (see the Calendar of festivals).

Narayani temple at Nirmala Jhar, 10-km from Barkul.

Bhagavati temple, dedicated to Sati and Prajapati Daksha, is in **Banpur**, the capital of the Sailodbhava dynasty. In the temple there is the traditional wooden post representing the “younger sister” of the Deity, called Bhagavati kathi, to whom sacrifices are offered. Not far from Banpur, we have a temple of the Goddess in Ranpur, where the wooden post is called Khilamunda.

In this area we also find many Buddhist relics.

Another rather famous temple is the **Jagannatha temple** at Palur near Rambha.

Not far from Chilika, we find the **Taptapani** hot springs, with sulphuric curative waters and a health resort where the spring water is channeled into the bath tubs.

Konark

Also known as "Arka-Tirtha", Konark is known for its temple to Surya, the Sun god, situated on the seashore, 33 km north of Puri and 64 km from Bhubaneswar. Mistaking the sea at Puri for the Yamuna River, Sri Chaitanya jumped in and was washed by the ocean north to the Konark area, where an astonished fisherman caught him in his net.

The *Kapila Samhita* says that the main pilgrimage places in Konark are the Ocean, Ramesvara Shiva, the Surya temple, the Maitreya forest, the Mangala sarovara, the Salmali sarovara, the Chandrabhaga river and Arka kshetra, and the Arkaba vriksha.

Chandrabhaga

The *Samba Purana* narrates that one of Krishna's sons, Samba, came here to get cured from leprosy according to the personal instructions of Krishna Himself. The *Bhagavata Purana* and other Vedic literature also explain that worship of the Sun (Surya) is recommended to all those who wish to regain or maintain good health. The river Chandrabhaga is a small river that meets the ocean on the nearby beach. The major pilgrim attraction is Magha mela, on Magha saptami, when pilgrims come to bathe and watch the sun rise and set over the Chandrabhaga river.

Surya temple

Although one of the most famous architectural monuments of Orissa (and even India), the temple is not functional any more, and it has not been for a long time. It is said that Raja Narasimha Deva built this temple in the 13th century. The presiding Deity of Surya Narayana was brought to Puri during the period when the Muslim invaders raided and destroyed temples and sacred images, and is now worshiped in Sri Mandira. Also the Aruna stambha ("pillar") that is in front of the Simhadvara at Sri Mandira was originally here. In the subsequent decades the various structures of the abandoned temple were repeatedly pillaged and even their stone bricks removed and used for other constructions.

Still later the British removed the large magnet that used to keep the Deity suspended in mid air, because it confused the compass of the ships that sailed near the coast. At that time, several large and heavy non-rusting iron beams had to be removed (they are still preserved in the temple compound) and the entire structure of the Garbha griha collapsed. "To preserve the specimen of architecture" they called the "Black Pagoda", the British filled the interior of the Garbha griha with bricks. Gradually the ruined temple was also partially submerged by the sand transported by the wind.

In these last years the architectural structure has been cleaned and partially restored, and beautiful gardens have been made around and inside it; an entrance ticket is required to get inside the structure. Indians pay a very small amount and use the structure as a picnic spot, foreigners have to pay many times over. This is discouraging foreign visitors, and the few that actually come are also hard pressed by the "Government appointed guides" who demand excessive payments for their very colonialistic and often confused explanations about the Maithuna sculptures and other features of the temple.

The shape of the temple is an enormous chariot drawn by 7 horses and with 24 wheels, 12 on each side of the temple, as Surya travels daily in his chariot drawn by his charioteer Aruna. The main structure has a tall tower with many sculptures, a Jagamohana and a Nata Mandapa. Of the other smaller structures around the temple, dedicated to the consorts of Surya and his children, only very little remains.

The Sun Temple Museum, at some distance from the Surya temple, is run by the Archaeological Survey of India and has a good collection of sculptures that were removed from the temple ruins. A small, recent, undecorated and unassuming room functioning as a temple dedicated to the Navagraha (the nine planets of the solar system) is just at the side of the large structure, outside the "payment area", manned by a group of underpaid Brahmins worship the Navagrahas that were originally on the lintel of the main gate of the Surya temple. The famous Konarak Dance Festival is held every year in the Natamandir of the Sun Temple.

Beleshvar (Bilvesvara) Shiva temple

This ancient temple mentioned in the *Skanda Purana*, is said to have been founded by Sri Krishna when He visited Puri with the five Pandavas during their exile. The temple structure is rather recent, but the Lingam is sitting about 30 feet below the level of the surrounding grounds. The Deity takes its name from the Bel (Bilva) tree, the plant sacred to Lord Shiva that Krishna established here to benefit those who would visit the place in the future. Here Krishna worshiped Shiva with a Bilva fruit, asking Him to protect the inhabitants and visitors from the demons from Patalaloka who sometimes come here. Some say that this holy place was also visited by Sri Ramachandra while He was going to Lanka to defeat Ravana.

Not far from the temple, there is a beautiful pine tree forest and a very nice beach where many people go for picnics.

Ramachandi

This temple dedicated to Goddess Ramachandi is on the Marine Drive, about 7 km before Konark (coming from Puri), at the confluence of the River Kusabhadra and the Bay of Bengal. The Deity sits gracefully on a lotus flower. A smaller shrine is dedicated to Shiva Mahadeva, and a large banyan tree stands in front of the main gate. There is an old story that connects this temple with the story of Kalapahada, the dreaded Muslim convert who destroyed so many temples and Deities. After ravaging the Surya temple, Kalapahada came to Ramachandi to destroy this temple, too. Goddess Ramachandi Herself appeared in the form of a young girl (Maluni, "garland maker") and confused him. The temple is advertised by the local Government as a tourist destination and a picnic spot.

Other ancient (and ruined) temples in the Konark area are:

Akhandalesvara temple at Prataparudrapur (Kenduli)

Amareshvara, Charchika and Lakshmi Narasimha temples at Amareshvar

Vishvanatha temple at Krishna Prasadgarh near Amareshvar

Durga temple at Motia

Gangeshvari temple at Beyalisbati

Nilamadhava temple at Mudgala Madhava

Nilamadhava temple at Chahata

Kenduli temple ruins at Kenduli

About 8 km from Konark, the small Buddhist settlement of **Kuruma** has been recently brought back to light by archeological excavations. The first relic to be discovered was a stone slab with the Buddha, wearing a beautiful crown and necklace, sitting in *padmasana* and *bhumisparsa mudra*.

Near Kuruma, in the village Abdan there is a still functional temple of Chitresvari.

Other temples within the Puri district are Bhagavati and Dakshesvara temples at Banapur (Chilila area), Chandesvara temple at Chandesvar (near Tangi), Purnesvara temple at Bhillideuli (near Nimapara), the Somanatha temple at Ghorodia, the Vanivakresvara Temple at Kalupada and the Brahmesvara Temple at Beraboi (all near Delang).

Bhubaneswar

Now the capital of Orissa, Bhubaneswar was in ancient times known as Hemachala, Svarnadri Kshetra (“the golden mountain” as opposed to Niladri, “the blue mountain”) and Ekamra Kanana, the forest sacred to Lord Shiva, where He is said to have enunciated the *Bhagavata Purana* for the first time to Parvati soon after Their marriage. It is said that a pet parrot was sitting on a branch of the banyan tree where Shiva was sitting and heard the *Bhagavatam* from him, so in his next incarnation he appeared as Sukadeva Gosvami, who expounded the *Bhagavatam* to Maharaja Parikshit. Bhubaneswar is still called the “city of temples”, but only about 400 still remain of the 7,000 that were built in ancient times. A description of this ancient holy city is found in the *Skanda Purana*, *Ekamra purana* and *Svarnadri mahodaya*, that mention the presence of 10 million Shiva Lingam and 8 Tirthas, including Bindu Sarovara, Papanasana kunda, Ganga and Yamuna (at Gangesvara), Koti tirtha, Brahmesvara, Meghesvara, Ramesvara and Alabu tirtha. Other famous holy reservoirs are Devi pada tirtha, Suresvara tirtha, Rama kunda, and river Gandhavati, that is considered non-different from the Ganges.

On the way from Puri to Bhubaneswar, before entering the city we first find Dhauli giri and Hirapur, then we arrive at Bindu Sarovara.

Dhaulti

The Dhaulti Shanti stupa was erected to commemorate the conversion to Buddhism of Emperor Ashoka after the famous Kalinga war. Ashoka had come to Kalinga to expanding his empire through military conquest but he found a very stern resistance, and during the battle just outside the present Bhubaneswar, so many warriors died that the river became completely red with blood. Still today, the river is called Rakta Nadi — the River of Blood, while the bridge over it is called Daya (“compassion”).

While Ashoka was contemplating such disaster from the nearby hill, he was overwhelmed by compassion and felt that no kingship or earthly possession could justify such massacres and suffering. At that time a group of Buddhist monks happened to pass by, and offered him the enlightening doctrine of Buddha, that was spreading in the area. Ashoka converted to the new religion and established Buddhism and non violent government all over his empire with the famous Edicts that are still visible at the foot of the Dhaulti hill in a separate compound. According to a prophecy made in 1300s by Nichiren Daishonin, the famous enlightened Japanese Buddhist master, this place would become famous and act like a Dharmic connection between Japan and India for the universal spirit of enlightenment. Nichiren Daishonin based his teachings on the *Lotus Sutra*, the last teachings given by Sakyamuni (the historical Buddha) a sort of Buddhist *Bhagavad gita*. Before him another famous and great Chinese philosopher, T’ien-t’ai, had identified and explained the principles contained in the *Lotus Sutra*, but they had remained on the theoretical platform; on the other hand, Nichiren Daishonin gave a practical application that everybody could follow. This Sutra was translated into Chinese language by Kumarajiva in 406, with the title *Miao-fa-lien-hua-ching* or according to the Japanese version, *Myoho-rence-kyo*. The followers of Nichiren Daishonin, now present at global level and making many new converts in all countries, still base their spiritual practice on the daily recitation of the *Lotus Sutra* translated in Japanese language, which they call *Gongyo*, and especially on the central mantra, given by Nichiren himself, as *Nam-myoho-rence-kyo*. *Nam* is derived from Sanskrit and is intended to be “offering obeisances, dedicating one’s life”. Nichiren also wrote a commentary on the *Lotus Sutra*, entitled *Ongi Kuden* (Collection of teachings in the form of conversation). In 1930 the great priest of the Nipponzan Myohoji Fuji descended from Mount Minobu, the traditional holy place and seat of their school to fulfill the prophecy of Nichiren Daishonin and came to India to participate to the Independence movement. He resided in the ashram of Mahatma Gandhi.

In 1969 the first Buddhist stupa in modern times was erected in India in Bihar. Nityananda Kanungo, governor of Bihar but originally from Orissa, was present at the inauguration and he had the idea of erecting another stupa in the famous holy place of Dhaulti. The Kalinga Nippon Buddha Sang was then formed, and thanks to the efforts of Radhanath Rath, editor of the *Samaj*, and the financial support of the Nipponzan Myohoji, the Santi stupa was built. The work took 2 years and was completed on 8 November 1972.

It is fair to inform our readers that the Government has put up multiple entrance tickets barriers (toll gates) on the road to Dhaulti, to extract more money from tourists and pilgrims.

However, we believe it would be more profitable and pleasant to supply useful services against a reasonable payment (like public toilets for example, as they are totally absent) or even guesthouses, restaurants, bookshops etc, which would create more prosperity for the local people and the Government administration. On top of the hill, in front of the Shanti Stupa, there is still a small functional Shiva temple.

Chaushati (64) Yogini shrine

In Hirapur, on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, 15 km southeast of the city is a small, circular temple, the Chaushati (64) Yogini Temple, officially dating to the early ninth century. The temple is also called Mahamaya temple as Mahamaya is the presiding Deity. It is called hypaethral (open to the sky, that is without a roof) and belongs to a genre of architecture that is quite different from the characteristic temples in Orissa. Although it seems that temples of this type existed throughout India at one time, today only four remain, two of which are in Orissa: the shrine at Hirapur, and another in the western region of the state, at Ranipur-Jharial.

The temple's circular wall, which is barely 6 foot high, contains 64 niches within its internal wall and a few more on the external wall. Each one of them contains an image of a Yogini (also called Dakini), that is an attendant and representative to the Mother Goddess, that according to the *Puranas* were manifested by Chandi to destroy the demons. Among the other *vigrahas* we find Aja Ekapada, ten-armed Bhairava, Saiva Dvarapalas, and even a tall *vigraha* of Krishna that is now standing near the entrance of the compound, next to a recent Shiva temple.

Almost all the *vigrahas* of the temple have been badly defaced during iconoclastic attacks, with evident signs of having been hammered and burned—they are barely recognizable and mutilated yet one can glimpse a ray of the original beauty and sweetness of their features. It is said that the temple had been abandoned for a long time and was covered by sand until 1953 when the Orissa State Museum excavated it. At present some worship is conducted in the temple, but neither the very young *pujaka* nor the Government guide of the “famous tourist destination” have much knowledge or realizations about the meaning of the temple and the original worship there. Mostly, local people use the temple as a picnic spot or as a ground for other cultural or social events, including Odissi dance. The place is not easy to reach because of the very bad conditions of the roads; particularly one should be careful not to choose the left-side turn road that is very narrow and crosses a very rickety and damaged bridge. The other road, running on the right side bank of the canal, is definitely safer. In front of the temple compound there is a small lake.

Achyutananda Bal Kati ashram

It is situated near the Hirapur Yogini temple on the way to Bhubaneswar and it is the main Ashram of the followers of Atibadi Achyutananda Das, one of the famous five saints of Orissa.

The present structure is rather new, very decorated and well kept, and many people visit it especially to get astrological consultations on the payment of a ticket. It is said that when Achyutananda died, at the ripe age of 121, he left behind copper, silver and gold plates (*patti*) to guide his students.

Various religious programmes are also held, as a regular daily schedule and for special occasions; the mantra used by the devotees is *Trayi Achyuta* (“O infallible Lord, please rescue me”) and there is a good dress code for visiting the temple, facilitated by a few shops inside the compound selling *dhotis* and other traditional apparel.

Udayagiri - Khandagiri

Another famous tourist destination in Bhubaneswar is the cave complex (117 caves) of Udayagiri and Khandagiri, also used as a “scenic” picnic spot and leisure park by the local people. Particularly, the section of Khandagiri, separated from the Udayagiri part by the main road that cuts through the area, is very unkempt and in some places is used as a garbage dump. The Udayagiri section is surrounded by a boundary and its gardens are better kept; an entrance ticket must be purchased, that is much more expensive for the foreigners than for the Indian tourists. This approach not only discourages foreign tourists, but reinforces the inferiority complex that some Indians have towards the foreigners who come from “developed” countries, and validates the rather hostile, despising and exploitative attitude of the locals towards tourists and pilgrims alike.

The caves are officially presented as ancient dwellings for Jain hermits, that were later utilized as worship places, but we learn that previously these caves were known as Kumarigiri (from a name of the Mother Goddess) and still to the present day two small Kali temples remain, one at the foot of the Udayagiri hill, and the other on top of the Khandagiri, both apparently rather ancient.

The ruins of another ancient temple also remain on the top of Udayagiri. Some inscriptions connect the caves with the Chedi dynasty, specifically with the kings Kharavela, Kudepasiri and Vakradeva and prince Vadukha. It seems that under their patronage, the Jain monks took over the caves that were previously utilized by Tantric worshippers of the Mother Goddess.

It is said that at that time several reliefs of the Tirthankaras and the Sasanadevis were carved, while other previous images were obviously chipped away from the walls. The most important caves in Udayagiri are Svargapuri (cave 9), Hati gumph (cave 14), Bagh gumph or tiger cave (cave 12), Sarpa gumph (near cave 12), Ganesh gumph (cave 10), Rani gumph (cave 1), Chota hati gumph (cave 3), and Jaya Vijaya gumph (cave 5). The main cave in Khandagiri is the Ananta gumph (cave 3).

This Udayagiri is not to be confused with the ancient and ruined Buddhist settlements at Udayagiri, Ratnagiri and Lalitagiri, in the Jajpur district.

Bindu Sarovara

The still living center of the old town of Bhubaneswar is the Bindu Sarovara, with the surrounding historical temples, including Lingaraja, Ananta Vasudeva, a temple to Durga Ma Dvara-vasini (“protector of the door”), Yamesvara, Vaital, the Muktesvara group, Kedar gauri, Rajarani and Nagesvara. In the middle of the Bindu Sarovara there is a small pavilion used during the celebration of the Chandana yatra.

The sacred story says that Mahadeva suggested that Parvati would precede Him to Ekamra. When She arrived here, she found an effulgent black and white Lingam and She started to worship it. While returning from the forest where She had picked flowers, She saw one thousand pure white cows come out of the lake and bathe the Lingam with their milk, circumambulate it and then return to the lake. So She followed them and became their Gopalini (“cowherd girl”) for 15 years. One day two Asura brothers, Kritti and Vasa (sons of king Drumila, who had received the blessing of having two invincible sons) walked through the forest and saw the beautiful Gopalini, and falling prey to lust, they approached her for sex. Gopalini prayed to Lord Mahadeva, who appeared as a young Gopala and told Her She was the only one who could eliminate these two arrogant people, who could not be killed by any weapon. Gopalini then replied to the two brothers that She would fulfill the desire of the one who was able to carry Her on his shoulders, and they eagerly allowed Her to mount their shoulders. Gopalini then manifested Her universal form as Visvambhari and crushed them both to death. After this feat, Bhuvaneshvari felt very thirsty and Mahadeva created the Shankar Vapi for Her, but it was not sufficient. Then Mahadeva sent Vrishabha to collect water from the Mandakini on the heavenly planets and from all the holy places of the universe, and to invite Brahma and all the Devas for a great celebration. Thus all the holy waters from the Svetadvipa (the Milk Ocean), Svarga and Patala were collected, and also the waters from Ganga, Prayag, Ganga sagara, Gangadvara, Naimisharanya, Prabhasa, Pitri tirtha, Pushkara (the lake sacred to Brahma), Yamuna, Sarasvati, Narmada, Mahanadi, Krishna, Kaveri, Gomati, Godavari, Gandaki, Sindhu, Rishikulya, Satadru, Vipasa, Payosni, and all the other holy rivers and lakes. Mahadeva asked all the holy waters to offer a *bindu* (“drop”) each to the new lake, and thus the Bindu Sarovara was created.

The *Kapila Samhita* says that Lord Visvanatha then expressed the desire to leave Kashi (Varanasi) because it has become crowded of irreligious, materialistic and arrogant people, who do not care for the genuine principles of religion, so performing austerities and meditation there without disturbance would become very difficult. So at the time of the destruction of Kashi, both Mahadeva and Shakti would shift Their residence to Gupta Kashi Ekamra and the Bindu Sarovara would be the new Manikarnika ghat and Ganga.

Lingaraja

The temple of Tribhuvaneshvara Lingaraja (anciently known also as Krttivasas) is the most important center of spirituality in Bhubaneswar. It is a Svayambhu (self manifested) Lingam, a form of Hari-Hara. It has a crack in the middle dividing it into two parts, much like the Siddhesvara Lingam in the Muktesvara temple complex.

The Lingam sits in a *kunda* within the Garbha griha and is bathed with water, milk and bhang, while a constant flow of devotees present offerings of flowers, bel (bilva) leaves, fruits and foods, that are handed to the priests and taken beyond the low barrier that protects the inner sanctum.

Ekamra chandrika says that originally the Lingam was worshiped under a mango tree by the local tribal villagers; the name of Ekamra is said to have derived from this “one mango tree”.

Just like in Jagannatha’s temple in Puri the most intimate personal service of the Deities is traditionally a privilege of the non-Brahmin Daitas, the descendents of the Sabara tribal chief Visvvasu who originally worshiped Jagannatha in the forest, the tradition on the Lingaraja temple gives the tribal Badu priests the privilege of bathing and decorating the Lingam. It is said they are the descendents of a Shaiva saint, Siddha Bhuti, who married a Sabara lady. As in the other traditional mixed worship systems characteristic of Orissa, the Badus leave the Garbha griha when the Brahmins come to offer Bhoga.

A special characteristic of the Lingaraja temple is that at the Nata Mandira the two *dvarapalas* are Jaya and Vijaya (Vishnu’s doormen) rather than Chanda and Prachanda (Shiva’s doormen). Also, the prasada of Lingaraja is partaken by people from all social levels like the Mahaprasada of Jagannatha at Puri, while usually Shiva’s prasada is not distributed to the public.

As this book is not meant for dry academic scholars devoid of bhakti, we are not particularly interested in the architectural aspects of the temple, but on its spiritual and religious meanings, we will skip the detailed description of the building. It is said that the present temple was built by the three Keshari kings of the Somavamsa dynasty. The four structures (Deul, Jagamohana, Nata Mandira and Bhoga Mandapa) are all aligned in a row and surrounded by a large inner courtyard, with around 150 smaller shrines, starting with the Gopalini (Bhuvaneshvari) on the north of the Jagamohana, and the Savitri (south of the Deula), both of which have various forms of Devi as subsidiary Deities.

Other shrines around the courtyard are dedicated to Parvati, Narasimha, Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra (on the west side), Lakshmi Narayana (on the north side of the Bhoga Mandapa), Ganesha, Kartikeya, Surya Narayana, Ananta Vasudeva, Ekanamsa (Subhadra), Narasimha, Trivikrama, Sani and so on. On the right side of the main entrance, inside the temple, there is a wooden Deity of Brahma. The temple of Parvati has its own Jagamohana, Nata Mandira and Bhoga Mandapa, all lined up in a row. An inscription near the south door of the Jagamohana declares that king Bhanudeva gifted a daily offering to Goddess Uma of two earthen pots (called *atika*) filled with pancakes. The Deity of Parvati in the temple is not the original Umadevi *vigraha* that was damaged during invasions, but is a more recent *vigraha*, called Annapurna. On the southface of the Vimana of the temple, there are images of child Krishna with a bearded sitting Nanda and Yashoda churning the milk.

Near the Lingaraja temple, in the old town of Bhubaneswar, we find the **Kapilanatha** mandira (a Hari Hara Deity); this temple hosts a Hari Hara Betha between Kapilanatha and Lingaraja, and this Deity goes on Chandana yatra together with Lingaraja and Ananta Vasudeva. Kapilanatha also goes to Kedar Gauri for the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, and is invited to the Ratha yatra of Lingaraja on Ashoka ashtami - however, the ritual requires the Deity to decline the invitation, as the festival is attended by all types of people and Kapilanatha does not want to be touched by anyone who is not His servant.

Ashokashtami

Ashokashtami is the Ratha yatra of Lord Shiva celebrated with great enthusiasm at Bhubaneswar and is considered to be the most important festival of Lord Lingaraj. On Chaitra sukla Asthami the representative deity of Lingaraja, Sri Chandrasekhara, travels on the Ratha to the temple of Mausima and Ramesvara, where the chariot remains for a few days. Thousands of people participate to the festival. It is said that Lord Ramachandra found Himself unable to kill Ravana because Durga was protecting him, so on the advice of Vibhisana, the younger brother of Ravana, Sri Rama worshiped the Mother Goddess for several days (celebrated as Navaratri) and could finally win the war. To celebrate His victory and the removal of His sorrow (*soka*), Sri Rama conducted a joyful Ratha yatra for Durga and Mahadeva. According to others, the festival celebrates the happiness of Parvati in obtaining Mahadeva as Her husband.

Ananta Vasudeva

This ancient temple dedicated to Narayana is on the east bank of Bindu Sarovara and is the only Vaishnava temple remaining in Bhubaneswar after the widespread destruction of marauding Muslims. The main Deities are Krishna (Vasudeva), Balarama (Ananta) and Subhadra, and the *parsva devata* are Nrisimha, Varaha and Trivikrama (Vamana), these last two mutilated.

An inscription originally from the Ananta Vasudeva temple, presently in the London Museum of the Royal Asiatic Society, declares that the temple was built for Sri Krishna and Balavasa on the bank of the Bindu Sarovara in the year Saka 1200. The identification of Jagannatha and Balabhadra with Krishna/Vishnu and Balarama/Sankarshana is universally known.

The banisters of the north window have the figures of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, Hanuman and a monkey-attendant. According to an inscription in the temple, the present structure was built by Chandra Devi, the daughter of Anangabhima III, during the reign of his grandson Bhanudeva. Both the temples of Lingaraja and Ananta Vasudeva forbid entrance to Hindu converts of foreign origin, although many of the Sevakas would be very favorable to the abrogation of the ban.

Kedar Gauri

The temple of Kedar Gauri is still very active with worship and rituals and attended by the local people, yet it welcomes all visitors with a very friendly attitude that we believe should be encouraged as much as possible, with the required great amount of respect and attention during the spiritual visit, as well as with generous donations. Two separate shrines house Lord Kedarnatha (the largest shrine, on the left side from the entrance) and Mother Gauri (on the right side of the entrance). There are also smaller shrines for Hanuman, Ganesha, and other *parsva devatas*, a sacred well where the water is famous for its healing properties, and a small *kunda*. The temple is decorated with many sculptures, including Yakshas and Nayikas.

Other temples

Muktesvara

The Muktesvara temple complex (that includes also the temple of Siddhesvara, the sacred well and *kunda* and a number of other more or less abandoned shrines), is one of the most famous icons advertised by the brochures of the Tourism Department of Orissa, especially showing its beautiful small *torana* (auspicious decorative arch). Another similar ancient *torana* was excavated in fragments in a nearby area and is now in the Orissa State Museum. Every year, the temple complex hosts the famous Muktesvara dance festival, organized by the Government and featuring Odissi dancers from all over the world. On that occasion, a temporary raised platform is built for the artists to perform, and all visitors are allowed free entrance keeping their shoes on, with rows of chairs specifically prepared for them.

The temples are small (the dome of Muktesvara is 35 feet high) but exquisitely and richly decorated with sculptures and bas relief, starting with the roaring lion with attendants (found on many Tantric temples) on the south wall, Sarasvati with two female servants, Ganesha with his mouse and Lakulisa (founder of the Pasupatas) with two small yogis, a composite body (1 head, 4 bodies), horse-mounted warrior queens, composite animals, monkeys, peacocks etc. The tower dome has a delicately carved ceiling with various forms of the Mother Goddess. All the *parsva devatas* that were in the external niches have disappeared, and many of the sculptures have been defaced. The water of the sacred well, flanked by Nagini figures, is said to bless women with fertility.

The temple is still partly functional, as the *pujaks* keep it clean and offer simple *aratis*, *abhisheka*, bet leaves and flowers to the Lingam, and are happy to welcome visitors who pay their obeisances to Mahadeva. However, there seems to be no food offerings and many Indians who come here use the place as a "scenic spot" especially for photo sessions, and not only about Odissi dance.

Siddhesvara

The eastern edge of the terrace in front of the Muktesvara temple is lined by six small shrines.

In the northwest corner of the compound is the Siddhesvara temple, where the Lingam is also considered a manifestation of Hari Hara, as the very friendly *pujaka* (the same that is in charge of the seva for Muktesvara) is ready to show that it is composed of two very distinct halves.

This temple seems to be more neglected than Muktesvara, and has several bats living inside the high dome. Of the *parsva devatas* that were in the external niches, all have disappeared except Ganesha.

In the other smaller shrines within the compound, two small Lingams still exist, as well as a dancing Bhairava *vighraha* and a decapitated Durga that is still worshiped although in a very subdued way (with simple bathing and flower decorations) and that the *pujaks* sometimes try to pass off as Chinnamasta, and a Dhanvantari holding the nectar pot.

Parasuramesvara

Only a short distance from the Muktesvara temple complex, and next to the Koti tirtha kunda, the Parasuramesvara temple is considered the most ancient temple still standing in Bhubaneswar. Like in the Muktesvara and Siddhesvara temples, the management gives more importance to architecture, archeological antiquity and “scenic importance” than to spiritual significance, so the *puja* is usually kept to the minimum. Besides the ancient Lingam, the most important religious features of the temple are a composite Sahasra Lingam in the external courtyard and beautiful but defaced *vighrahas* of Kartikeya and Ganesha in the external *parsva devata* niches, plus more beautiful and defaced *vighrahas* of the Sapta Matrikas and Gaja Lakshmi on the external walls. All the other *parsva devatas* are missing from the niches. Among the figures on the external walls, we find an image of Lakulisa (the founder of the Pashupata Shaivism) with the famous *lakuta* staff and the *yogipatta* tied around his thighs, as well as other yogis and sadhus, and a very famous panel with a group of dancers and musicians.

A few meters south of Parasuramesvara temple, we find **Svarnajalesvara**, near the Koti tirtha. The temple is badly damaged, with only a few decorating images surviving: Shiva and Parvati with flying figures, Gaja Lakshmi and the Navagraha, Rama killing the golden deer, Rama killing Bali, the fight between Shiva and Arjuna and a damaged Naga holding a Purna Ghata.

In the same area, just next to the Koti tirtha, we find the **Koti tirthesvara** temple. Nearby, we find the **Talesvara** temple.

Yamesvara

This sandstone temple is rather damaged, and the *parsva devatas* and the other images on the external walls of the tower have disappeared, to the exception of a mutilated Ganesha. The compound wall has a series of empty niches for Lingams. Among the once lavish decorations, we can still see a Guru with a group of followers, horsemen, trotting elephants, and several other animal figures.

Near the Yamesvara temple we find the **Baskaesvara** mandira.

Mausima and Ramesvara

At some distance from the Muktesvara temple complex and the Lingaraja complex, we find another important and very ancient temple, where Lord Lingaraja comes every year for His Ratha yatra on Ashoka Ashtami. The temple compound originally comprised also the temples of Lakshmanesvara, Bharatesvara and Satughnesvara that are now separated from Ramesvara by a major and busy road that cuts directly between them (connecting the local railway station to the Lingaraja temple). All these temples are now under the Archeological department of the Indian Government, and used as a highly-manicured “scenic garden” for picnics of the local people.

Only a very minimum level of worship is conducted in the Ramesvara temple, while the large and beautiful sacred kunda within the temple compound is strewn with garbage, and the Mausima temple (just in front of Ramesvara) is now used as residence for an old couple - it is not clear whether they are in charge of the puja to Ramesvara, working as low-cost security or just squatting. They keep an old and rather tall chlorite Deity in the only room of the temple where they sleep, cook for themselves and keep their stuff, but the Deity is obviously not worshiped at all.

The temples of **Lakshmanesvara**, **Bharatesvara** and **Satughnesvara** on the other side of the road are in very bad conditions and mostly supported by temporary scaffoldings, but there is obviously some attempt to keep the garden looking nice, and ruined pieces of the old temples surface to the ground more or less everywhere in the compound.

Rajarani

Another famous temple transformed into an architectural and archeological monument (with an entrance ticket) is Rajarani, earlier known as Indresvara. The temple is in fairly good conditions, having been restored at the beginning of the 20th century, but the management is very interested in manicuring the gardens but does not allow any worship. There are many decorative figures of women, and on the corners of the temple tower we find the Digapalas, or “Guardians of the Eight Directions”, watching over the eight cardinal points. Beginning from the left of the entrance to the Deul and proceeding in a clockwise direction, they are:

Indra - East, Vedic god of rain and lightning

Agni - Southeast, Vedic god of fire

Yama - South, god of death

Nirriti - Southwest, deity related to suffering

Varuna - West, a Vedic deity of the ocean

Vayu - Northwest, wind god

Kubera - North, lord of wealth, shown here with a wish-fulfilling tree

Ishana - Northeast, a form of Shiva.

Other well known ancient temples in Bhubaneswar are:

Vaital or Kapalini

An ancient Tantric temple, it is characterized by a plain (undecorated) external surface of the tower. On the east side there is an image of Surya, with the dawn Goddesses Usha and Prayusha, and Aruna driving the chariot. The worship in the temple was centered around the Deity of Chamunda by the Kaula Kapalika Mahavratis, but was open to Vajrayana Buddhists. The doctrine of the Kapalikas is also known as Soma siddhanta and is focus on devotion to Bhairava. In the temple, human sacrifices were offered to Chamunda and Mahabhairava.

The Garbha griha of the Vaital temple is completely dark, and it is not easy to see the Deity behind the screen. She is seated on a corpse, with an owl and a jackal on Her sides, and wears a garland of skulls. On the inner wall of the temple there are 15 niches with still existing *parsva devatas*, while in front of the Garbha griha there is a four-faced Lingam, with a pole to which the animal was tied for the sacrifice. Another major feature is the Maithuna panel.

Sisiresvara

In the same compound of Vaital Deul, we find the damaged Sisiresvara temple, that still has all the *parsva devatas* in Their niches: the eight-armed Mahisamardini Durga, four-armed Ganesha, two-armed Kartikeya in the center, Aja Ekapada, Ardhanarisvara and Hari Hara on the sides, and a beautiful Nataraja on the window of the front.

On the external wall there is a figure of Lakulisa, the founder of the Pasupata Tantric Sampradaya, flanked by a Dhanvantari figure (covered by a serpent hood canopy, holding a pot and a rosary mala). On the internal wall there is another similar figure, as well as an image of Kamadeva with two Apsaras. On the floor of the Jagamohana there is a ten-armed Mahisamardini Durga image. The decorations and the other images of girls, Saiva guards, Nagas holding the Purna Ghata (symbol of prosperity), as well as elephants and lions.

Markandesvara

Very similar to the Sisiresvara temple, the Markandesvara temple is situated near the southwest corner of Bindu Sarovara. The usual Navagraha lintel has only eight figures as Ketu is absent, and under it there is a seated Parvati.

The *parsva devatas* in the niches on the outer wall of the tower are a ten-armed Nataraja, Ganesha, Kartikeya and a Parvati without ornaments but wearing a crown, Aja Ekapada, Ardhanarisvara, a four-armed Mahishamardini, a four-armed Brahma and two-armed Agni, Varuna holding a noose in his left hand, and a Saiva Dvarapala. The decorative figures include door keepers leaning on their staffs, worship of the Lingam, and Brahma offering homage to Shiva.

Brahmesvara

Quite similar to the Mukteswara temple although a later construction, its characteristic is that iron beams were used in its construction (generally metal is not used in building temples). Bhairava Shiva and Chamunda (standing on a corpse and holding a *trishula* and a human head) are depicted in various poses. The decorations include several dancers and musicians, and one (lost) inscription stated that queen Kolavati presented many beautiful girls as Devadasis in the temple.

Chitrakarini

The temple is dedicated to Chamunda, and the Deity is still worshiped. The temple is near the Papanasini kunda, not far from the Lingaraja temple. Like the Brahmesvara temple, the Chitrakarini temple has five main shrines and four smaller shrines at the corners. The decorations include the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, Krishna playing His flute among *gopas*, *gopis* and cows, a procession with camels, and many Maithuna images.

To the west of Chitrakarini, we find the **Varunesvara** and **Mitresvara** temples, side by side, the **Makaresvara** temple a little to the west.

Other temples

There are numerous other holy places and temples scattered throughout the locality of Bhubaneswar: the **Sari Deul** and the nearby **Bhavani Shankara** temple, **Meghesvara**, and the temples dedicated to Gopalini, Mohini, Satidevi, Gauri Shankara Ganesha, Papanasini, Ladukesvara, Astamurti, Suresvar, Bakesvara, Maitresvara, Vibhisanesvara, Uttaresvara, Valukesvara, Chandesvara, Bharatesvara, and Dakra Bhimesvara.

Recent temples

Rama Mandira

The most famous recent temple in Bhubaneswar is undoubtedly the Rama Mandira, next door to the local BJP headquarters. The temple is very well attended and constitutes a major center of social life for the local Hindus, with mothers taking their children to play, people meeting there and often organizing *prasada* feasts and meals for groups, several internal shops including a well furnished bookshop, and a dedicated parking lot. The temple authorities are usually very tolerant and mobile phones are also used by the *pujaks* guarding the Deities. The main altar is dedicated to Rama Sita and Lakshmana, while the right side altar has a Panchamukhi Hanuman and the left side altar has Radha Krishna. Several smaller shrines within the compound house the *parva devatas*, such as Shiva, Durga on the lion, Mahishamardini, Sarasvati, Sitala, Ganesha, and Sati Dadi.

The **Tridandi Gaudiya Math** in Bhubaneswar (near the Lingaraja temple) was established by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati himself, the founder of the original Gaudiya Matha.

Another Gaudiya Matha in Bhubaneswar is the **Giridhari Gaudiya Matha** in Garage chhak, near Kedar Gauri apartments

Krishna Balarama Mandira

Another recent temple is the Krishna Balarama Mandira in Nayapalli (I.R.C. Village), on the National Highway 5. It was built by Gour Govinda Svami (disciple of Bhaktivedanta Swami, the founder of ISKCON); within the compound there is also the small lotus temple of Sri Gopalajiu and the Samadhi of Gour Govinda Svami. The temple also has a restaurant, some gift shops and a guesthouse.

Gour Govinda Svami was born in the village of Jagannathapur, about 150 km from Jagannatha Puri, in an ancient family of strong Vaishnava heritage. His maternal grandfather Bauribandhu Giri was a descendant of a Gadei Giri who in the 17th century established the nearby Gadei Giri village and the temple of Gopala, and was famous for his learning and religiosity. Bauribandhu's daughter Pata Devi married Isvara Chandra Manik, also from a family with a strong Vaishnava tradition. Her child Brajabandhu Manik was born on 2 September 1929 about 7.30 am; since his early childhood he manifested a strong inclination to spiritual life, pure devotion, and study of the shastra (especially the *Bhagavata Purana*).

Brajabandhu left family life at a young age and traveled around the various places of pilgrimage in India as a Sadhu. In Vrindavana he met Bhaktivedanta Swami, who immediately awarded him all three initiations at the same time - the Harinama diksha, the Gayatri diksha and the Sannyasa diksha, instructing him to start a temple in Orissa and translate his books into the Oriya language. After obtaining some land in donation from the Kanungo family in Bhubaneswar, Brajabandhu (now Gour Govinda Swami) dedicated all his energy to preaching and developing the temple. Bhaktivedanta Swami visited the Nayapalli property in 1977, when it was only a bunch of temporary huts, and stayed for several days, during which he started the translation of the 10th Canto of the *Bhagavata Purana*. In 1986 Gour Govinda Swami was allowed by ISKCON's GBC to start accepting disciples, and in 10 years the temple flourished greatly. When Gour Govinda Svami passed away (in February 1996 at Mayapur during the ISKCON GBC meetings), the temple was taken over by Jayapataka Svami, who established his own followers in the temple management and evicted all the disciples of Gour Govinda Svami (mostly foreign-born devotees who had collected funds for the temple) except a small number of local *brahmacharis*. The foreign-born disciples of Gour Govinda Svami then moved out to separate premises, some settled in Western countries and some chose to stay in Orissa outside the temple, also establishing a small ashram in an apartment of the Krishna Tower just opposite. One of such disciples, Madhavananda Das, established and still manages the Gopal jiu publications, including the *Kathamrita* magazine with the cooperation of Fakir Mohan Das, a senior member of the Gaudiya Matha who was also entrusted with the care of Radha Madhava, the original Deities worshiped by Bhaktivinoda.

Another group of foreign-born disciples of Gour Govinda Svami moved outside town with the help of Fakir Mohan Das and Chaitanya Chandra Das (appointed by Gour Govinda Swami as Temple President of the Krishna Balarama mandira), establishing a Radha Govinda jiu temple in Gadeigiri, about 15 km from Jagannathapur, the birthplace of Gour Govinda Svami. A third and smaller group of disciples of Gour Govinda Svami, under the leadership of Sachinandana Das, moved near Chandanpur (Puri district) establishing an ashram at Danda Bhanga tirtha.

Outside Bhubaneswar

Kapilesvara

A famous Kapilesvara temple is in the Prachi valley at Adasapur, 37 km from Bhubaneswar, at the ancient Ashram of Kapila Muni. In the same Adasapur village there are also several other temples, including Madhavananda, Mahisasura Mardini, Nilakanteshvara Shiva, Svapnesvara, Varaha Narasimha, Gramesvara and Gokarnesvara (at Jamu-Goradi).

Other temples in the area surrounding Bhubaneswar are: Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Nuapatna, Somanatha temple at Budhapada, Gopinatha temple at Kakudia, Jalesvara temple at Kalarahanga, Buddhanatha Shiva temple at Garudipanchana.

On the way to Nandakanana, at about 15 km from Bhubaneswar, we find the **Chandi** temple at Sikharachandi, on top of the hill.

Within 15 km from Bhubaneswar, we find the historical fort of **Sisupalgarh** that defended Toshali, the ancient capital of Kalinga, at present excavated by the Archeological Survey of India.

About 32 km from Bhubaneswar, in the district of Khurda (that also includes the city of Bhubaneswar) we find the temple of Goddess **Barunei** or Varuni, on the bank of the stream Svama Ganga flowing from the mountain.

About 42 km from Bhubaneswar, we find the famous **Atri ashram** with the temple of Lord Hatakesvara, and the hot sulphur springs that remain a constant 55 degrees Celsius and are believed to have medicinal properties. At Banki we find the famous temple dedicated to **Charchika**, while the temple of **Tara** at Bhusandpur is on the Banki road after Khurda.

Wildlife sanctuaries

The famous Nandana kanana, 25 km from the city and around the Kanjia lake, is considered a major tourist attraction especially for the local people, but it can be rather disappointing as almost all the animals are kept in cages and totally depend on the zoo guardians for their survival. There is also a Botanical Garden and a Toy Train for the children.

From Bhubaneswar, one can also travel to visit many wildlife sanctuaries such as the Simlipal tiger reserve (Mayurbhank district), with more than 95 tigers as well as also leopards, elephants, mugger crocodiles and numerous reptiles, wild dogs, wolves, striped-necked mongooses, honey badgers, small Indian otters, sloth bears, barking deer, gaurs, wild boars, pangolins, rhesus macaques, Hanuman langurs, common giant flying squirrels and porcupines, the Indian pond terrapins, shell turtles, tent turtles, banded rock geckos, forest calotes, snake skinks, monitor lizards, pythons, banded kraits, spectacled and monocled cobras, king cobras and bamboo pit vipers, as well as 231 species of birds. However, since the forest reserve is very large (over 2000 square km) and the animals tend to hide when strangers arrive, it is best to just enjoy the forest (also blessed with a great plant bio-diversity) without trying too hard to see rare animals. Inside the forest there is the ancient Athardeuli, the site of 18 temples near Bakua, where tribals from all around the hills gather on Makar Sankranti. The reserve is open to tourists from 10th November to 15th June, with regular bus service from Bhubaneswar.

Another famous wildlife reserve is Bhitarkanika, on the delta of Brahmani-Baitarani river systems is located in Rajnagar Tehsil of Kendrapara district. It can be reached from Bhubaneswar through Cuttack, Patamundai and Rajnagar, and is open from mid-October to mid-March. This sanctuary is famous for its mangroves (63 species) and reptiles (especially crocodiles and turtles). Inside the forest, the Nahak Babu is a renovated Khakara temple and enshrines Durga, Uma Mahesvara and other Deities.

About 20 km from Bhubaneswar, the Chandaka elephant sanctuary lies on 180 square kilometers with a herd of 67 elephants as well as leopards, deer, wild boars, hyenas, sloth bears, pythons, monitor lizards, peacocks and many other birds. There used to be tigers, too, but they have now disappeared. In 1968 one of the last tigers from this forest (therefore called Kanan) climbed the walls of the newly constructed zoo in Bhubaneswar (called Nandan Kanan from her) to find a mate. Two of the elephants of the sanctuary, Abhimanuy and Ganesha, are particularly friendly with the guards and help keeping out forest poachers. Visitors use the watch towers (Ambilo, Kumarkhunti, Pithagadia and Kochilaberena) over the natural ponds to watch the animals drink and play. Visitors need a special permit to visit the forest unless they participate to the regular trips organized by the OTDC. No fires are allowed, and the visitors need to carry their own food and drinking water. Accommodations can be booked at Kumarkhunti, Ambilo, Deras and Michipatana. Within the forest there are also the remains of two ancient forts built by Chodaganga Deva (Bualigarh and Chudanga) with tunnels, water channels and tanks.

Viraja kshetra

It is said that There are 5 main Devi temples in Orissa: Viraja in Jajpur, Mangala in Kakatpur, Bhagavati in Banpur, Sambalai in Sambalpur, Sarala in Jankara.

Viraja kshetra, also called Nabhi Gaya or Parvati kshetra, is one the famous Shakti pithas in Orissa, dedicated to Goddess Viraja. It is the place where the navel (*nabhi*) of Sati fell, when Vishnu cut Her body to pieces to bless the land with holy places. The *Kubja Tantra* describes Viraja as the Mahesvari of Uddiyana (Orissa). The Kshetra has a triangular shape, with a Shiva temple at each of the corners: Varunesvara, Bilvesvara and Khitatesvara, according to the *Madala panji* these last two received gifts of lands from king Anangabhimadeva, who also established a Jagannatha temple here (that was later destroyed by invaders). The *Brahma Purana* describes it as Annakoti tirtha, meaning that in this holy place there were one less than one crore (10 million minus 1) Shiva Lingam.

As mentioned in the *Mahabharata* (Vana parva, ch.114), this holy place was visited by the five Pandavas accompanied by Lomasa Rishi. This pilgrimage place is also mentioned in *Kapila Samhita*, *Brahmanda Purana*, *Vayu Purana*, *Tantra Chintamani*, and *Astha pitha Mahatmya*. The *Brahma Purana* says that Brahma himself installed the Deity of Viraja in this place. According to the *Linga Purana*, Viraja appeared from the sacrificial *kunda* where Brahma celebrated a *yajna* here (the place now known as Brahmakunda at Jajpur). Besides Viraja, there are 68 subsidiary tirthas here.

This Kshetra is also associated with the story of Gayasura, a benevolent and pious Daitya who sacrificed himself to help people attain salvation. When the Suras came forth to kill him he accepted to die on condition that the parts of his body could become pilgrimage places to bless religious people: his head fell in Gaya (Bihar, also called Srigraya) near the Phalgu river, his feet in the Godavari river (at the place called Padagaya), and the navel (*nabhi*) in the Vaitarani river in the place called Nabhigaya, where people would perform the Sraddha ceremony for their ancestors. The Kshetra has its own *Panjika* with some different dates for religious celebrations and used to have its own Mukti Mandapa and Pandita Sabha. It is said that a pilgrimage to this Pitha gives liberation to seven generations of ancestors.

The town, that was the capital of Orissa during the Keshari dynasty, is on the bank of the Vaitarani river about 92 km from Cuttack and is now known as Jajpur or Jajpore. It should not be confused with Jajpur Road, that is a smaller town in the Jajpur district, or Jeypore, that is in Koraput district. Some say the name of the town is derived from Yajnapura ("the city of the Yajna"), some say it comes from the name of Yayati or Jayati Keshari. Part of the city is surrounded by the river, and the other part is surrounded by a canal.

Viraja temple

The Deity of Viraja Devi sits on a lion. One of Her hands holds a spear and the other holds demon Mahishasura's tail. The temple has a small tank called Nabhi kunda. Viraja wears a moon sliver on Her crown, and inside the temple there is a number of Shiva shrines, starting from the Isanesvara Lingam, that according to the *Viraja kshetra Mahatmya*, was the first Shiva shrine to be established in this Kshetra. The *Brahma Purana* says that Lord Brahma prayed Mahesvara to come and live in Abimukta Kshetra (another name of Viraja Kshetra) with Goddess Viraja, leaving His previous divine abodes. In front of the Nabhi kunda, we find the Visvanatha and the Gangesvara shrines.

Other Lingams gathered inside the Viraja temple (apart from the cluster in the north side of the boundary wall, known as Rudra Mela) and miniature shrines, are Trilochanesvara and Siddhesvara.

Sveta Varaha

This temple dedicated to the Varaha form of Vishnu is on the island in the middle of the river. In the Garbha griha there are three Varaha Deities in black chlorite slabs, while the original Deity of Lakshmi Varaha is said to have been stolen by the King of Aula. The Mukti Mandapa is partially buried by sand, and the upper part of the temple that had been damaged by the Muslim invaders was repaired by king Prataparudra in the times of Sri Chaitanya. Chaitanya himself spent some time here during his journey from Bengal to Puri.

Jagannatha temple

After the temple built by king Anangabhima was destroyed, a new temple was built for Jagannatha in the same place.

Dasasvamedha ghat

It is said that Brahma himself performed 10 Asvamedha yajnas here, attended also by Mother Ganga, who sent a flow of her waters that surfaced at Gonasika in the Keonjhar district, where the Vaitarani river starts its course. It is said that the gift of a cow in this place grants liberation. King Yayati Keshari of the Somavamsa performed here the Dasasvamedha Yajna at this Ghat on the Vaitarani river.

For this celebration, he brought 10,000 brahmanas from north India and settled them in various Sasana villages in the region. Here the Varuni Mela is celebrated every year

Sapta Matrikas

At the Dasasvamedha ghat we find the Deities of the Sapta Matrikas: Chamunda, Varahi, Indrani, Vaishnavi, Shivaduti, Kaumari and Mahesvari. Each one of them, about 8 feet tall, is seated on a lotus pedestal and holds a baby on the left arm. Together with them, there is a large *vighraha* of Ganesha and a beautiful Garuda. A monolithic pillar called Subha stambha and the Chandeesvara pillar are believed to be Vijaya stambhas installed by the Somavamsis. Among the other *vighrahas* one of the most imposing is Padmapani Avalokitesvara Buddha, called Shanta Madhava, 16 feet tall. Other Buddha figures are depicted in *bhumi sparsa mudra*.

The **Hanumanesvara** temple at Mahavir square contains the characteristic “hero stone slabs” commemorating the valor of great Kings, that later became object of worship as Gramadevis or Rautrani (for example, at Kuarnadei). In this regard, it is interesting to consider the parallel with the Ghoda Nacha, the “dummy horse dance” where the two dancers are called Rauta and Rautrani.

Cuttack

Cuttack was the capital of Orissa for a period. The most important temples inside the town are:

- **Katak Chandi** (also called Cuttack Chandi), one of the most ancient temples; Chandi is considered the presiding Deity of the city,
- **Dabalesvara Mahadeva**, on an island in the Mahanadi river; the temple was built by king Prataparudra,
- **Gada Chandi**, in the Barabati Fort,
- **Gada Gadia Mahadeva**, on the bank of the Mahanadi,
- **Varada Ganesha** at Kaligali, worshiped by Raghujji Bhonsle during the Maratha rule in Orissa (18th century).

In Cuttack there is also a special tradition focused on the worship of **Vruddha Ganesha** (“old Ganesha”, sometimes wrongly spelled Buddha Ganesha). This Deity got such name because he stays on in the *puja pandal* for another 12 days after the usual 10 days festival for Ganesha puja, refusing to leave the *pandal* until Dvitiya Osha, when he is immersed in the river after a last offering of Ghanta (a mixed vegetables preparation that is traditionally cooked on Dvitiya). The Deity's form is also particular: his eyes are very high on the forehead, and while the head is white the rest of the body is red (as bathed in his own blood when his head was first severed). He wears silver ornaments, with a golden Rudraksha garland and tusk. He is accompanied by Lakshmi and Sarasvati. The story says that about 600 years ago a wealthy Marwari silversmith from Cuttack, Jethimal Agarwal, who was still childless after 16 years of marriage, was advised by his friend and landlord Surendra Maharana to worship Ganesha and ask for a special blessing. Jethimal vowed to offer a Vesha to Ganesha in gratitude for a son, and indeed his wish was fulfilled. The other members of the Vaniya community also followed suit, and a tradition was established by which people worship Ganesha's *kadam* (wooden sandals) during the entire year and when Ganesha puja comes they offer dresses, ornaments and Bhoga Laddus (that are auctioned at the end of the festival).

In the area immediately around Cuttack we find the temples of **Amaresvara**, **Ramesvara** with a Go tirtha (there is also a Matha of the Ramanandi Sampradaya where special functions are held on Akshaya tritiya), **Bela vana** (with a Nrisimha temple where a Sadhaka started the ritual of food offering every evening before sunset, now his son Sudarshana Mishra is in charge); opposite the Devi river (infested by crocodiles) there is a **Jagannatha Mandira** called Gupta Vrindavana.

In the same area, on the way to Paradeep, there is also the Ashrama of **Budhya baba**, a temple of **Sarala Devi**, and **Udaya Bhat** (considered the place of appearance of Kalki avatara).

At some more distance from Cuttack we find the **Ashtasambhu** temple at Chaudar, the **Chatesvara** temple at Kishenpur, the **Indrasthana** temple at Amaravati, the **Padmesvara** temple at Banes varnasi near Narasinghpur, the **Champesvara** temple at Champeswar near Narsinghpur, the **Paschimesvara** temple at Amangai island near Khanderpur (Athgarh), the **Simhanatha** temple at Simhanatha island near Baidesvar, the **Panchapandava** (Vishnu) temple at Ganeshvarpur near Chhatia, and the **Tarakeshvara** temple at Ganeshvarpur.

At Niyali on the east bank of the Prachi, we find the **Sobhaneshvar** temple that after the destruction of the main Madhava temple there now houses 8 of the original 12 Madhava Deities and one *vighraha* of Varaha, also rescued from a destroyed temple. Also **Choti**, the birthplace of Bhaktivinoda, is about 15 km from Cuttack.

At Niyali we find a temple of **Nila Madhava**. This is not the original Deity described in the story of the appearance of Jagannatha - that temple is in Kantilo, 25 kms from Nayagarh on the bank of river Mahanadi. In this temple, Garuda kneeling on the left side of the Deity; it is said that one man had been killed by a snake bite but was revived by the *pujaka* who gave him the *charanamrita* of Garuda. Sri Chaitanya stayed in this temple for one night.

Near Niyali we find the **Angeshvara** temple at Pitapara, **Madhavananda** temple at Madhava, and **Trilochaneshvara** Temple at Sadansa, **Angeshvara** at Pitapara.

On the way between Jajpur and Cuttack we find the Ganesha kshetra, the **Mahavinayaka** temple at **Chandikol**. This temple is considered a very important kshetra sacred to Ganesha.

About 20 km from Cuttack, we find the ancient Buddhist settlements of Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri and Udayagiri, sometimes called the “diamond triangle”, or Pushpagiri Vihar, as it was known when it was visited by the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hieun Tsang. It is believed that the Pushpagiri could be the Langudi hill that is between Cuttack and Jajpur.

Ratnagiri is the nearest to Cuttack (18 km), in the Virupa valley. The Buddhist settlement and its university was in different periods under the Mahayana and the Vajrayana influence, so much that according to Pag Sam Jon Zang, Ratnagiri was a significant center for the development of the Kalachakra Tantra. It has two monasteries with a large courtyard and many residences, and many Stupas. The images found here are Avalokiteswara, Manjusri, Heruka, Jambhala, Kurukulla, Mahakala, Vajrasattva, Aparchana, Vajrapani, Tara, Aparajita, Marichi, Arya Saraswati, Vajra Tara, etc.

Udayagiri has a number of caves used as learning centers for Buddhist monks, as well as several monasteries and Stupas. One of these ancient monasteries was called Madhavapura mahavihar.

Lalitagiri is probably the oldest Buddhist settlement in the world. It has a large temple, many caves, monasteries and Stupas with relics of the Buddha. All the buildings are in very good conditions. The main Stupa was on the hill top, marking the place of the ancient Pushpagiri University. Three other hills are found in this place: Landa, Parabhadi and Olasuni, that was the seat of Arakshita Das (18th century).

It is said that Prajna came here from Takshashila to learn the philosophy of Yoga, and then went to China with an autographed manuscript of the Buddhist text Gandavyuha, from the then Orissan king Sivakara Deva I, to the Chinese Emperor Te-tsung. Other remains of ancient Buddhist settlements in Orissa are in Khiching in Mayurbhanj district, Ayodhya, Solampur, Kupari and Khadipada in Balasore district; Ramesvar, Banasvaranasi, Brahmavana near Salipur, Choudvar and Prachi Valley in Cuttack district; Boudh town in the Baliguda area, Paragalpur and Shyamsundarpur of Phulbani district; Banpur, Aragada, Bhubaneswar and Kuruma of Puri district; Visvanatha hill (with the ancient monastery of the Buddhist philosopher Dignag) and Ganiapalli of Sambalpur district. Some important sculptures found in the region are the Tara figures of Solampur, the three Vajrasattva figures along with a Buddha image from Haripur, Prajnaparamita from Banasvaranasi, Tara and other bronze images at Banpur, a Maitreyi image at Natara near Kendupatna, Avalokitesvara, Padmapani and Yamantaka images at Kuruma, Marichi and Vajravarahi at Ayodhya, Buddha from Khiching and Buddha figures of Ganiapalli. It is interesting to note that the back slab of a Buddha image at Solampur contains the story of Buddha, from his birth to Nirvana.

Kshira chora Gopinatha

The famous temple of Kshira chora Gopinatha is in Remuna, Balasore (Balesvara) district, on the way towards Calcutta. The name Kshira chora (“rice pudding thief”) of the Deity is connected to the story of Madhavendra Puri, who visited the temple and was gratified with a pot of a special sweet called Kshira Bhoga that Gopinatha Himself had kept aside for him. For more information about Madhavendra Puri’s story, see the chapter on the great personalities connected with Puri.

Previously this place was visited by Ramachandra, Sita and Lakshmana during Their exile in the forest. The nearby Saptasara (“seven arrows”) river is said to have been created by Sri Rama by shooting seven arrows into the ground to get water for Sita to take bath.

At Remuna we also find the Kutopokhari temple, while in the area of Balasore we find the Chandi temple at Sochanpurochana (near Nilgiri), and the Bala Maninagesvara Temple in the city of Balasore. In the same Balasore district we find the temples of Viranchi Narayana, Panchalingesvara (constantly bathed by a natural spring), Chandanesvara, Talasari, Bhushandesvara, Langalesvara, Balamgadi, and Ashtadurga. In the district of Balasore we also find the ancient Buddhist settlements of Ayodhya, Kupari, Solampur, Khadipada and Soro.

The other districts of Orissa

In this section we list the other districts of Orissa in alphabetical order for easier reference.

Baragarh

Kedarnath: this temple 36 km from Baragarh at the foot of Bara hill is one of the Ashta Sambhu and was built by Sri Dakhsin Ray, the dewan of Ajit Singh, the king of Sambalpur from 1695 to 1765. Behind the temple we find the ruins of Kedarnath fort.

Nrisinghanath, 110 km from Baragarh, was built by Sri Baijal Dev Bikari, the king of Patana in the 14th century.

Bhadrak

The district was separated from Balasore in 1993. The main river is the Salandi; two ports are there, Chandbali and Dhamara.

Bhadrakali temple at Bhadrak, about 160 km from Bhubaneswar.

Radha Madana mohana temple near Bhadrak, it preserves the original clothes of Sri Chaitanya.

Viranchi Narayana temple about 15 km from Bhadrak, in Patiala or Palia.

Akhandalamani at Aradi, about 10km from the port of Chandabali.

Bolangir

Gandhamardana hill and **Harishankara temple**: about 81 km from Bolangir and 140 km from Sambalpur, the Harishankara temple is dedicated to Hari Hara. Nearby we find the Papanasini springs and the famous waterfalls. Other temples near Harishankar are a Vishnu temple and a Bhairavi temple.

Ranipur-Jharial, about 104 km from Bolangir, it has the second hypaethral temple dedicated to the **Chaushati (64) Yoginis** (the other one is at Hirapur near Bhubaneswar). Near the Yogini temple there are also a Someshvara Shiva temple and the Indralata Vishnu temple, where an image of Lakulisa is sitting cross legged and holding his famous *lakuta* staff over his left shoulder.

Kosalesvara temple at Vidyanath near Bolangir.

Yogesvara Shiva temple at Jogisarada, about 25 km. from Bolangir. Also, on a nearby hillock there is a temple dedicated to Goddess **Lankesvari**.

Papakshya Ghat at Binka, where king Ananga Bhimadeva was cured from leprosy after taking bath. At Charda (4 km. from Binka) we find the **Kapilesvara** temple, **Radha Krishna** temple, **Navagraha kunda** and **Banha Bata**.

The ancient cities of **Patnagarh** (the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Patna, 38 km from Bolangir) and **Sonepur** or Sonapur (known as Paschima Lanka, 48 km from Bolangir) on the confluence of the rivers Mahanadi and Tel, have a number of temples, the most important being **Kosalesvara**, **Suvarnameru** and **Samalesvari**.

Boudh

This region, called Khinjali mandala, was an important center of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism as well as Shakta Tantrism. It is in the center of Orissa and became a separated district recently; the name comes from the colossal seated image of Buddha that still stands at the palace of the Bhanjas, feudatories of the Bhauma karas.

The Buddha is portrayed here in the cross-legged position known as Vajra-paryankasana, touching the Earth (*bhumi sparsa mudra*) calling her as witness to his victory over Mara, the death that consists of illusion and ignorance. The Buddha's Shakti is standing next to him, and some remnants of the ruins of an ancient monastery can still be seen. Other rather tall Buddhas, seated on a lotus in Bhumi sparsa mudra are located about 25 east of Boudh, at Samsundarpur (on the pedestal we find smaller images of Yakshas, elephants and one lion), and at Pargalpur, about the same distance from Boudh but on the bank of the Mahanadi (accompanied by Tara, Gandharvas, Yakshas etc).

The Danda Nata, the ritual dance vrata dedicated to Bhadrakali Bhairavi and Hara, originated here and spread in various regions including Angul, Sambalpur, Sonepur etc.

The temples here are:

Ramesvara, an ancient temple west of Boudh built under the patronage of the Bhauma Queens, celebrates the syncretism between Shakti Tantrism and Vajrayana Buddhism.

Bhairavi temple at Purana Cuttack, about 40 km from Kandhamal; in the district many other Shakti pithas are still active, dedicated to the worship of Durga, Kali, Dakshina Kali, Bhadrakali, Bhairavi and Mahesvari.

Charisambhu Vishnu temple, in the village that takes its name from it.

Dhenkanal

Hingula at Gopalprasad, Hindol, is one of the Shakti pithas in Orissa and the most important temple of the district. The Deity of the Goddess is regularly worshiped by tribal priests called Dehuri and Kalisi, who, on Sankrantis, also perform the ritual of possession (*ubha*), in which the Kalisi observes fasting, wears new clothes and sits in front of the Dehuri, who worships his limbs and pours water, milk and *gur* water on his body, then offers incense and lamp and finally garlands him with the garland that was offered to the Deity in the morning. Then drums are played, heaps of uncooked rice (*punji*) and a blood sacrifice are offered to the Deity, and the Deity answers the prayers and the requests of the devotees.

Bhatarika at Badamba in near Narasinghpur, on the way to Dhenkanal.

The **Shiva Simhanatha** at Baramba is a Svayambhu Lingam and is worshiped by non-Brahmin priests. Inside the temple there a shrine to Dakshina Kali where the regular Bhoga is reserved to the local fishermen, while the pilgrims take the uncooked Bhoga. The temple also has many murtis of Varaha and Nrisimha, and at the entrance there is a standing human figure with a lion head, holding a trident.

Kapilash, 24 km from Dhenkanal, is on a hillock and has the **Chandrashekara Shiva** temple and a deer park.

Saptasajya, 12 km from Dhenkanal, with the **Saptarishi** (“seven sages”) and **Raghunatha** temples. According to the *Mahabharata*, the Pandavas visited the place during their exile.

Kamakhya temple at Kamakhyanagar.

Joranda and Deulijhar, 13 and 12 km from Dhenkanal, are centers of the Mahima cult.

Gajapati

It is a new district, known for its cane and bamboo handicraft. The main city is Paralakhemundi, capital of the ancient kingdom. It is said that the five Pandavas lived here in five huts, among many Rishi hermitages.

Taptapani, 54 km. from Berhampur, is famous for its hot sulphur springs. Other places of interest are Mahendragiri, Harabhanga and Gandanati.

Ganjam

This district is known for the production of food grains and has contributed four Chief Ministers to Orissa.

Berhampur, the capital of the district, has a famous Jagannatha temple, a Satyanarayana temple and a temple dedicated to **Budhi Thakurani**.

Tara-Tarini, the famous Shakti pitha, has an important temple to the twin Goddesses, is on the Taratarini hill near Purushottampur, 40 km. from Berhampur. River Rushikulya flows at the foot of the hill. In Tara Tarini the two breasts of Sati fell. The *chalanti pratima* of the Deity consists in two brass heads. The temple also has a papier mache head mask of Kali that is taken out for the swing festival.

There are also two wooden posts, called Kali and Mangala, one post made of sal wood called Mahesvari, a rough stone worshiped as Durga, and smooth stones worshiped as Uma, Katyayani, Gauri, Bhairavi and Dakshina Kali. It is said that in Tara Tarini, Durga appeared as two beautiful girls who lived in the house of Vasu Prabharaja Arjhaka; one day they disappeared and later appeared to him in a dream, asking him to worship them in the form of stones on the hill.

Khambesvari in Aska (Ganjam): she appeared to Rishi Khambamuni and asked to be worshiped; the Rishi agreed on the condition that the Goddess accepted to live in his house as his daughter. The Deity is a stone pole with a disk as her head, nose and mouth slightly pronounced, a nose ring, three eyes and a protruding tongue. In front of the image there is a wooden pole (the “sister”) that presides over the yajna kudna. The priests are called Sudra Munis and worship the Goddess as Vana Durga. On Dasahara they offer non vegetarian bhoga that is distributed to all the people. Khambesvari in Paralakhemundi appears as a human being within a post, from which head and feet come out. In Ranpur, the wooden post is called Khilamunda, and in Banpur it is called Bhagavati kathi.

Vyaghra Devi, at Kulad of Bhanjanagar town, the temple of Vyaghra Devi (invoked in times of war) also Vag Devi (invoked for knowledge and wisdom in ordinary times), the eight-armed Goddess is riding a tiger that walks over a corpse. In front of the temple (called Bhogapith) guarded by two stone tigers there is a sacrificial site (called Yogapith), where blood sacrifices (both animal and human) were offered, and where warriors used to smear their bodies with sacred ashes that made them invincible. The main festival is Dola Purnima, when thousands of people, especially tribal Kondhs, assemble here to celebrate the Mother Goddess.

Traditionally, this form of the Goddess was worshiped by the Kondhs living on these hills. It is said that when the first Bhanja King, called Pratap, came in this area to build a fort, he fought and defeated the two tribal chiefs of Kulada, Kula and Daha, but allowed them to remain on the hill and worship their Deity. It is said that the Bhanja dynasty and their kingdom of Ghumusar could remain unvanquished and independent for a very long time due to the blessings of the Goddess. Also, the kingdom was free from drought and criminal activities such as theft, robbery or murder. The original Deity is still on the top of a hill not far from the present temple and is worshiped on Tuesdays and on Sankrantis, but because the site is very difficult to access, another Deity was installed in a more convenient place and the temple was built. The place chosen for this temple is also connected to an interesting story: once the pujaka was climbing down the hill after the rituals, when he realized he had forgotten his water pot. When he returned to get it, he found the Goddess eating the Bhoga in the company of her sisters; the pujaka was sorry for having disturbed them and the Goddess pushed the water pot out to roll down the hill to the place where the new more accessible temple would be constructed.

The Deity was also worshiped by an exiled Bhanja prince of Ghumusar, Upendra Bhanja, who had fallen victim to a court conspiracy. Prince Upendra took shelter in the Kulada forest, where he started to worship Vyaghra Devi under the guidance of Ramatarakamantara, a tantric who lived in Odogaon. Upendra then became a poet, famous as Kavi Samrat, and wrote beautiful poetry such as Vaidehisha Vilasha, Lavanyavati and Koti Brahmanda Sundari, narrating the love between Rama and Sita in elaborate Oriya language with etched illustrations (on palm leaves). At Badagaon near Bhanjanagar there is a famous **Shiva** temple.

Other famous temples in the region are:

Narayani temple on the hill top, 80 km. from Berhampur.

Nirmaljhar, 65 km. from Berhampur, has a complex of temples dedicated to Shiva, Radha Krishna, Vimala, Dadhivamana, and a stream forming a pool of crystal clear water.

Siddha Bhairavi at Mantridi.

Mahendragiri, in the south of the district, has a temple on top of the hill.

Budhakhhol: 3 km from Buguda, a temple of the Shiva and a natural spring.

Jaugarh, 35 km. from Berhampur, is famous for Ashoka’s Rock Edicts.

Janalei, a Tantric shrine, is at Hinjilikatu.

Gopalpur on Sea, 16 km. from Berhampur, was once an ancient sea port and is now a tourist resort.

Jagatsinghpur

About 60 km from Cuttack, the city of Jagatsinghpur has several important temples:

Bhagavati, at Parahat, about 10 km from the town of Jagatsinghpur,

Sarala, a famous Shakti pitha dedicated to Goddess Sarasvati, is at Jhankad about 15 km from Jagatsinghpur.

Bhimesvara, at Daraba, a temple commemorating the visit of the Pandavas.

Kanakadurga at Piteipur, a Tantric shrine where human sacrifices were performed. The Jagatsinghpur district includes Paradeep, with the famous port.

Jharsuguda

It became a district on 1st January 1994, and is famous for the Vikramakhhol cave.

Kalahandi

This district has hot water springs (Banshakela) and waterfalls (Phurli Jharan, Khanduala, Ravanadhara), as well as prehistoric cave paintings (Gudahandi).

Bhavanipatna is the capital of the district, famous for the temple to **Minakshi Devi** and several other smaller temples.

Dhabalesvara is a Shiva temple at Mohangiri; here a flight of steps to the southern ghat of the pond still has the image of Lakulisa, founder of the Pasupata Shaivism, portrayed next to an image of the Mother Goddess showing *abhaya mudra*.

Junagarh, the old capital, is 27 km. from Bhavanipatna, and still preserves some rock edicts. At a distance of a few km there is the old fort of Asurgarh.

Karlapat, 32 km. from Bhavanipatna, in the middle of the jungle, has a shrine to Goddess **Kanduala**.

Khariar has a **Dhadhivamana** temple, and Belkhandi (50 kms. from Bhavanipatna) has a Shiva temple and a museum.

Patalesvara temple is at Budhikomna near Khariar (Raipur).

Kandhamal

This district has a large tribal population. The important places are:

Nilamahadeva and **Siddhesvara** temples at Gandharadi near Bauda,

Chakapada (60 km) has a temple to **Virupaksha Mahadeva**,

Charisambhu or Jagati (60 km) has the temple to **Ananta Vishnu**,

Daringibadi (85 km) is nicknamed as the Kashmir of Orissa because of its mild summers.

Kendrapada

Also known as **Tulasi Kshetra**; according to the *Puranas*, Sri Balarama killed Kenderasura and married his daughter Tulasi, settling here. The most famous temple is dedicated to **Baladeva jiu**, 95 km from Bhubaneswar. The temple follows all the rituals of the Jagannatha Puri temple, including the Ratha yatra. In the district we find the temples of **Ma Gojabayani** and **Ma Bhagavati** (at Vatesvar near Salepur).

The Kanika palace, the seat of the Kanika rajas, was built by king Rajendra Narayan Bhanjadeo from 1909 to 1919. Here we also find the Bhitarkanika wildlife reserve (see the section about Bhubaneswar and Wildlife reserves) with the Nahak babu temple.

Keonjhar

This district is rich in mineral resources and waterfalls, and has a large tribal population. The capital has a **Vishnu temple** and a **Jagannath temple** and outside the town we find **Siddha Jagannath**, **Siddha Kali** and **Panchavati**. Sitabinji, on river Sita 30 km from Keonjhar, has an ancient fresco painting of a royal procession on a rock shelter called Ravana Chhaya.

Ghatagaon, 50 km from Keonjhar on the National Highway No.215 towards Cuttack, has a shrine to Goddess **Tarini**, a famous Shakti pitha visited by thousands daily.

Gonasika, 45 kms from Keonjhar, is the source of river Vaitarani and has a temple to **Mahadeva Brahmesvara**. Traditionally people offer gifts of cows in this place.

Mriga Mahadeva, a temple dedicated to Shiva, is on the Thakurani hill in Champua (65 km away from Keonjhar).

Gadachandi, a temple dedicated to Chandi and hosting a big Makara Mela, is on the Baula hill, 100 km from Keonjhar.

Chakratirtha near Baula hill, 95 km from Keonjhar, is known for the Akasha Ganga waterfalls and a Jain temple.

Bhimakunda, 28 km from Talcher, has a tall sleeping statue of Vishnu. Also near Talcher we find the **Bhringesvara Mahadeva** temple at Bajrakot, the **Kanakesvara** temple at Kualo (Kodalaka), and the **Manikesvara** temple at Sukleshvara.

Deogaon, on the river Kusei (88 km from Anandapur), has a temple dedicated to **Kosalesvar** visited by many pilgrims especially on Shiva ratri.

Koraput

The district has the highest mountain of Orissa (Deomali) as well as the Chandragiri mountain, and several waterfalls (Duduma, Bagra and Khandahati) and rivers (Machhakunda, Bansadhara and Kolab). Nandapur, 5 kms from Koraput, was the ancient capital of the kingdom of Jeypore; the royal throne with 32 steps is still present. In Nandapur there is a very tall image of Ganesha. Jeypore, 21 kms from Koraput, has a royal palace with a good collection of antiques.

Duduma, 65 kms from Jeypore: the waterfall is considered **Matsya tirtha** (sacred to Matsya avatara).

Guptesvar, 65 km from Jeypore, is famous for the shrine of **Guptesvar Shiva** inside a natural cave.

Other temples are one **Mallikeswar** at Paikapada near Rayagada, another Mallikeswar at Padmapur near Gunupur and a **Patalesvar** temple at Paikapada near Rayagada.

Malkangiri

It is a new district, known for its irrigation and hydroelectricity project at Balimela.

Mayurbhanj

It was an important kingdom, the largest among the 18 princely states; it merged with Orissa and became a district on 1st January 1949. It is the original place of the famous martial art called Chhau. It still has large forests, including the Simlipal national park (60 km from Baripada) with the **Athardeuli** temple complex.

Baripada is the capital of the district, with the **Banthia Jagannatha** temple (built by king Sri Srinath Bhanjdeo from 1863 to 1867) and ruins of ancient forts.

Bahalda, 16 km from Baripada, was the capital of the Mayurbhanj kingdom in the 14th century. It has a famous temple to Goddess **Kichakesvari**.

Mantri, 36 kms from Baripada, has a temple to **Kakharua Vaidyanatha** Mahadeva.

Khiching, near Panchpir 150 kms from Baripada, has a temple to Goddess **Chamunda**, a temple to **Kichakesvari**, and a temple to **Chandrasekhara Shiva**.

Haripur has a temple to **Krishna Rasikaraya**.

Navarangapur

This new district has ample natural resources and forests, and a large tribal population.

Papadahandi, has the famous **Sri Nilakanthesvara** temple, that includes also some Buddhist images.

Umarkot, has the temple to Goddess **Pendrani**, built by king Chaitanya Deva.

Kelia Mahadeva temple, on the Kelia hill in Debgaoon tahasila.

Nayagarh

Kantilo, 25 kms from Nayagarh on the bank of river Mahanadi, has the famous temple of **Nilamadhava** as well as the temple of Narayani.

Daspalla, 40 kms from Nayagarh, has a **Mahavira** temple famous for its Lankapodi festival celebrated on Dasahara.

Sarankul, 20 kms from Nayagarh, has the **Laddu baba** temple.

Odagaon, 5 kms from Sarankul, has a **Raghunatha** temple and a Sarovara; the temple is famous for the Ramalila festival.

Ranapur, 30 kms from Nayagarh, has a temple of Goddess **Maninagesvari** on the Maninag hill top.

Nuapada

It was recently separated from Kalahandi and is famous for the Patalaganga perennial mineral springs (40 km from Khariar) and for the pre-historic cave paintings at Yogimatha (9 km east of Khariar).

Phulbani

Barala Devi temple, at Balasgumpha, 18 km from Phulbani. Barala Thakurani is installed as Shiva and Parvati in an open mud house with a thatched roof; Shiva is a very small Lingam and Parvati is a large head raised from the mud wall and painted red. The priests are called Dehuri, Kalisi and Bahuka.

At Phulbani (also called **Purana Cuttack**) we find the **Bhairavi** temple, where a rock Goddess called Shiva Bhairavi is encircled with Shakti. This is particularly interesting in order to connect the worship of Shiva with the worship of Shakti, because usually a Svayambhu Lingam is a natural rock or stone encircled by Shakti.

At Bauda, near Phulbani, we find the **Ramesvara** temple. In the Baliguda subdivision of Phulbani district, 370 km (7 hour journey) from Bhubaneswar, on the way that crosses Khurda, Nayagarh, Sorada, Aska and Khallikote, Daringibadi is 914.4 metres above sea level, the home of the Kandha tribes and a popular market where many forest products are sold. Further on, after 2 hours journey into the pine, sal and palm trees forest, teeming with tigers, jackals, bears and deer, we find Belghar, with a log cabin guesthouse where all fires are prohibited (including candles and lamps). This place was an old summer retreat used by the British, who compared it to Darjeeling. During the winter the temperature falls almost to zero and sometimes there is even snow, which does not stop religiously minded people from attending the Varuni Snana Yatra and bathing in the **sources of the Rishikulya river** in the Dolary forest near the village of Kalinga.

Rayagada

Minajhola, on the confluence of three rivers, has a temple dedicated to Shiva (134 km from Rayagada).

Padmapur (94 km from Rayagada) has **five Shiva shrines** dedicated to Manikesvara Shiva, Dhablesvara, Mallikesvara, Nilakanthesvara and Padukesvara as well as a perennial water reservoir at the top. The **Jagamanda hill** is known as the hermitage of the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakirti.

Sambalpur

The city of Sambalpur was an ancient centre of diamond trade, visited by merchants coming even from Greece. It is mentioned in Chananya's *Arthasastra* as Indravana (the valley of Indravati, Tel and Mahanadi), rich in gemstones, and mentions river Telavaha (Tel). Panini's *Ashtadhyayi* describes the present Titlagarh as Taitilakadru as an important trade center.

The most important temple is **Ma Samalesvari** or **Ma Samalei**, a famous Shakti pitha, where the head of Sati fell on the earth. The Deity is a large stone that has the rough form of a head, with a projection similar to an elephant's trunk, a narrow groove in the middle considered to be the mouth, and depressions considered to be the eyes. It is said that the name of the Deity comes from the Semel (silk-cotton, *Bomax Malabareium*) tree under which the Goddess resides.

One of the *parsva devatas* of the temple in Sambalpur is called Pitabali, and exactly corresponds to the Goddess Kandhas worshiped by the tribal people of the area. Samlei is worshiped by non-Brahmin priests belonging to the Sahara clan, generally considered as untouchables, who also worship other tribal Deities such as Mauli, Budhima and Gramapati. Human sacrifices were performed in the temple, later to be substituted by sacrifices of buffaloes, and presently of male goats (*buka*) and cock. Sambala Tantra was taught here by a Siddha called Pithopada.

The famous king Indrabhuti, propounder of Vajrayana Tantric Buddhism together with his sister Lakshminkara, one of the 83 Siddha Gurus in Tantric Buddhism and founder of the Sahajayana Sampradaya, was a king of Sambalpur. The shrine received the royal patronage of the Chauhan king Balaram Dev, around 1348. It is said that when Kalapahada was pursuing the Jagannatha Deities escaping from the temple of Puri to Sonepur (Suvarnapur) where They had been hidden near the Mahanadi, Samalei Devi appeared in the form of a milkmaid and offered to the soldiers milk and curd that caused them disease and depression, so that they could be easily defeated by the army of king Balabhadra Deva.

There are Samlei gadis (“worship places”) also in Barpali and Sonepur (Suvarnapur), and almost every village in this area has a Samlei sacred stone worshiped under a tree. In the Samalei temple at Sonepur: besides the main murti there is a wooden post dressed with a sari, and called Bhaunthi (“sister”). In the Garbha griha of the temple there is also a Nrisimha murti. On Dasahara, Bhaunthi visits the shrine of Budha Raja (the *chalanti pratima* of the main Goddess).

The **Ashtasambhu** temples in the ancient kingdom of Sambalpur, under the patronage of the Chauhan rulers, are Vimalasvara at Huma, Balunkesvara at Gaisama, Kedarnath at Ambabhona, Visvanath at Deogaon, Manesvara at Maneswar, Svapnesvara at Sorna, Visvesvara at Soranda, and Nilakanthesvara at Niliji. Among these, the Kedarnath temple at Ambabhona has a famous image of Lakulisa, the founder of the Pashupata Shaivism, sitting in *utkutikasana* with the *yogapatta* tied around his thighs, and holding the *lakuta* staff on his right shoulder.

The **Pataneshvari** temple, also established by the Chauhan kings (who also ruled Bihar) is in Sambalpur as well as in Bolangir and Patnagarh.

Narasimhanatha temple at Nrusingnath near Padmapur. The Deity is a completely lion-like form, but only the head is visible for Darshana. The head has silver eyes, and a nose and whiskers are applied as ornaments. He is called Girija Narasimha, as He is a particular form of Nrisimha who appeared not from a pillar (usually called Sthuna Narasimha) but in a mountain cave. He is worshiped alone (and thus is called Kevala Narasimha) far from human habitations.

It is said that once Narasimha wanted to kill a demon living in the hills, so He appeared in the form of a wild cat; He was discovered by an old Khonda woman who was digging for roots. The present priests are said to be the descendents of this Khonda woman and are called Aranyaka Brahmanas. They offer puja and vegetarian Bhoga four times a day. It is said that the Pandavas lived on this hill for some time during their exile.

Huma, 21 km. from Sambalpur, has a **Shiva** temple.

The ruins on **Gandhamardana hill** are considered by some to be the remains of the Buddhist monastery called Parimalagiri by Huien T’sang; Ganiapali is an early site which has been recently excavated.

Hirakud, 15 km. from Sambalpur, has the longest dam of India decorated by Muslims with a Gandhi minar and Jawahar minar built on the top of two hills.

At **Bainda** near Sonepur (ancient Suvarnapur), at the Svapnesvara temple, the stone form of the Goddess Tara Tarini has two silver eyes, that every morning are changed and washed, then *kunkuma* is applied.

Subarnapur

It is a newly created district, called the second Varanasi or the “city of temples”, home of the poets Bhimbhoi and Chandramani Das.

Sundargarh

This is the district of Rourkela, the main industrial center of Orissa, with steel factories and chemical fertilizers production plants. The Khandadhar waterfall in the forest of Sundargarh is 800 meters high.

Vedavyasa, at the confluence of the river Sankara and river Koel, 8 km from Rourkela, is believed to be the ashrama of Maharishi Vyasadeva and has a Shiva temple.

Kumari Devi, at Bonai, is a Tantric shrine where human sacrifices were practiced.

Manikmoda has cave paintings of animals and hunters, and a fresh water spring inside the natural cave.

The culture of Orissa

The Vanavasis

Orissa's tribal population is about 24% of the entire population of the State, one of the highest percentages in India. The 62 different tribes are mostly concentrated in the districts of Koraput (and the new adjoining districts), Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj. From the religious and spiritual perspective, the Vanavasis ("forest dwellers") or tribal peoples are distinguished from the traditional Hindus because they do not follow the Vedic prescriptions of strict vegetarianism, abstention from alcoholic beverages, performance of Samskaras and Varna duties, study of the Vedas (*sruti* and *smriti*) etc. This also applies to the so-called Dalits, or "lower/scheduled castes" of Hinduism, considered "fallen" because they do not follow the Vedic prescriptions.

However, the philosophy and theology of the Vanavasis is not contrary to the Vedic teachings, rather we see that many beliefs and religious practices characteristic of the Vanavasis are also common to orthodox Hinduism - starting from the worship of Lord Jagannatha. All tribal peoples believe in one supreme God, origin of the universe, and a number of secondary divine manifestations that control the material world, some of which can be dangerous and malevolent. Rituals are observed for the passages through the various stages of life, offerings to the ancestors, agricultural events like sowing of the seeds, harvesting of crops, and seasonal festivals like Guar (among the Saora), Gohar (Gadaba), Push or Ponei (Juang), Kedu (Kondh), Chait Parab (Bonda), Magha Parab (Santal).

Puranas and *Itihasas* give a great number of examples of Vanavasis who were great devotees of Bhagavan, such as Visvavasu himself who worshiped Nila Madhava, Mata Sabari who worshiped Rama, and a great number of devotees of Mahadeva and Shakti. In fact, we can see that Bhagavan does not make any distinction based on birth or social life rules when it comes to Bhakti - not only Vanavasis are considered perfectly eligible to attain the highest level of devotion, but the same opportunity is open to the lowest members of human society, including the Chandalas, and even to non-human races such as Asuras, Danavas, Daitas, Rakshasas, Yakshas, Vanaras, etc. Even more interesting, we find that since very ancient times, Vedic tradition has offered ample opportunities for all these groups of people to reform their unrefined or sinful habits and to become full-fledged members of the orthodox Hindu community, through the performance of *prayascitta*, *vratyastoma* and other ritual ceremonies of initiation. Unfortunately, the advancing globalization of culture on the materialistic and consumerist model, and the demands of non-sustainable industrial development based on the capitalistic concept are eroding away the ancient traditions and spiritual values of the Vanavasi peoples, a situation that is aggravated by the loss of qualified and interested students and teachers, appropriate study material and facilities, and the necessary space.

Sometimes the Vanavasis are called Adivasis ("aborigines" or "ancient dwellers") as according to the Aryan invasion theory all the Indian continent was once populated only by these tribes, and only later the Aryans occupied the territory. This false concept is also supported by the mainstream academic idea of history as being a linear and progressive evolution from "primitive tribes" to "civilized peoples" where civilization is evaluated in terms of urbanization, strict social differentiation into classes, materialism and accumulation of material possessions, abundant and elaborate clothing, mechanical technology etc. We now know that the differences in cultures do not depend on a time line of technological progress or urbanization, as several different models of culture have been coexisting on the planet for many centuries and even thousands of years and up to very recent times, when cultural contamination from close contacts between groups has led to the weakening, subjugation and even disappearance of less aggressive cultures. How this can be considered a progress, we can judge by the negative effects on the environment, society (both in the previously isolated groups and in the subsequent mixed societies), health, ethics, economy and cultural richness.

The traditional subsistence economy of the Vanavasis, based on hunting and gathering, can be improved by sustainable irrigation and permanent forest gardening to replace the shifting cultivation system of "slash and burn" (called *podu chasa*), that is becoming increasingly problematic due to the shrinking territories where tribal peoples used to move around in a semi-nomadic way of life. The demographic expansion and the intensive exploitation of natural resources, as well as the increasing pollution and climatic changes at global level do not afford sufficient space for further deforestation and desertification, but the answer is not in chemical fertilizers, pesticides, genetically modified monoculture crops and centralized market agriculture or industrialization.

The traditional skills, artistic creativity and knowledge of the biodiversity of the forest environment can be put to the best use by support structures that respect cultural diversity and natural resources, through sustainable development and global networking of fair trade.

There is great potential in the handloom production, provided that such textiles are produced and distributed as cultural items together with sufficient heritage information for the market, so that the production will not be flattened, vulgarized and spoiled by the dubious taste of ordinary retailers or “modernist” officers of the agencies, to be reduced to the low rank of mere “small industry products” for a puny monetary income.

Tribal elders and experts in tribal cultural heritage should take the responsibility of traveling and organizing cultural exhibitions of the traditional handicrafts of their community, and wherever possible produce suitable literature, so that the objects created by their community will be considered more as genuine and valuable artwork than as cheap commodities. This will also help the tribal youths to recognize and to accept the proper value of their ancestral traditions. This work has already been developed with remarkable success by the tribal peoples native of the Americas, New Zealand and Australia, and the tribal peoples of India can get great inspiration from them.

Within the tribes, the use of a particular type of dress is very significant and reflects the cultural identity, with different costumes for festivals and ceremonies, different stages of life, etc. For instance, a Dhangedi (a maiden) likes to wear attractive clothes while the Gurumai, the priestess, wears formal clothes to worship the Goddess; the village chief, the revenue collector etc also wear special dresses. Clothes for daily work are very simple but all special occasions, including a visit to the local market, call for elaborate and elegant clothing. Clothes (and combs) are also considered as talismans, protecting against dangers and negative spirits. Not all tribes make their own clothes, but they certainly attribute great importance to them, although this essential part of their culture is dying out with the “modernization” of the people due to contact with outside groups, as especially the youngsters consider the ancient dress system as backward, non-developed, uncivilized and outdated.

The social foundations of the Vanavasi culture are the council of the elders and the youth dormitories, that enable all the members of the tribe to develop a sense of unity and brotherhood, functioning as the rough equivalent of the assembly of the *brahmanas* and the Gurukula educational system that are traditional in Vedic civilization. The youth dormitories are the cultural and social center of the village, when men and women gather to enjoy dance, music, religious rituals and traditional festivities, and where the elders also assemble. As in all tribal cultures, the religious traditions are shamanic in nature, with animal sacrifices and the pursuit of altered states of consciousness that open the doors to the understanding and harmonizing of the various dimensions of life and the universe.

The customs about marriage are very open, as arranged marriages are not in use, and the dowry is paid by the family of the boy to the family of the girl, either in goods or service. Separation and remarriage, as well as extra marital relationships, are normally accepted and do not create social ostracism, although they are not very common. Polygamy is also accepted, as a sign of prestige and importance. In some tribes, for example Bonda and Saora, women marry younger boys, who will be able to take care of them for a longer time.

Here is the alphabetical list of the tribes present in Orissa:

Bagata, Baiga, Banjara (or Banjari), Bathudi, Bhottada (or Dhotada), Bhuiya (or Hbuyan), Bhumia, Bhumij, Bhunjia, Binjhal, Binihia (or Binjhoa), Birhor, Bondo Poraja, Chenchu, Dal, Desua Bhumij, Dharua, Didayi, Gadaba, Gandia, Ghara, Gond (or Gondo), Ho, Holva, Jatapu, Jung, Kandha gauda, Kawar, Kharia (or Kharian), Kharwar, Khond (also called Kond, Kandha, Nanguli Kandha, Sitha Kendha), Kisan, Kol, Kolah Laharas (or Kol Laharas), Kolha, Koli (or Malhar), Kondadora, Kora, Korua, Kotia, Koya, Kulis, Lodha, Madia, Mahali, Mankidi, Mankirdia, Matya, Mirdhas, Munda (or Munda Lahora, Munda Mahalis), Mundari, Omanatya, Oraon, Parenga, Paroja, Pentia, Rajuar, Santal, Saora (or Sever, Saura, Sahara), Shabar (or Lodha), Sounti, Tharua.

The most notable of such tribes are described as follows.

Bathudi

They mostly live in plains and rural areas of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar rather than on the hills like many other tribes. They build mud huts with thatched roof and colored floral designs. Men dress in a simple dhoti, women prefer orange colored saris without any other piece of apparel, but they use silver ornaments. Khada, or tattoo, is very popular, especially with women, who get one or two floral designs on their forehead or arm before getting married. They are very religious and they worship the Hindu Deities, as well as sacred stones that represent their Gramadevis such as Basuli, Sundara Gauri, Hatiani etc. The puja is entrusted to the village priest, called Dehuri.

Bhumia

A considerably large tribal population of warrior spirit, they live in the Koraput, Ganjam and Sundargarh districts. The Bhumia and particularly Laxman Naik actively participated to the Independence struggle.

The village chief is called Mukhya ("chief") and a group of 20 villages is under the leadership of a Pattanayak ("general"). They do not like arranged marriages but boys and girls are encouraged to elope together, and marriage is officialized later.

Bondo Paraja

They call themselves Remo ("men"). They are a small and shrinking tribe of aggressive and independent people, that used to live in isolation on the mountains north-west of Machakunda river, in the Malkangiri and Koraput districts. Among them, confrontation and murder are considered a normal fact of life, so many members of the tribe end up in jail. They practice barter economy, do not like to use clothes, and women marry younger boys. They still weave their own clothes, including the Ringa that has a special social and cultural meaning connected to marriage and conjugal happiness.

They observe the famous Patkhanda Yatra at Mudulipada in the month of Magha. The Bonda of Koraput observe a particular festival called Sume Gelirak, starting on a Sunday and lasting for 10 days, during which men and women make dancing expeditions to other villages to choose a wife or a husband. The festival starts with religious rituals in worship of the village Deities, the Sisa (tribal priest) offering liquor and animal sacrifice that are subsequently distributed to the people as a feast.

A particular feature of the festival is the "friendship celebration" in which the males of the village pair up with others of the same age, starting from young boys and ending with old men, and while dancing, they strike each other with green branches cleaned from the leaves, as hard as they can, until they feel they had enough, or the Sisa decides that the fun has gone too far as blood starts flowing. Then the participants offer homage to each other, touch each other's feet, embrace affectionately, and share a distribution of pancakes while the Sisa lectures them on friendship and good behavior.

It seems that the practice does a lot of good to discharge and neutralize bottled up emotions and resentments, inhibitions and other psychological problems, also giving an opportunity to males to show off how tough they are in very controlled and relatively harmless circumstances.

Dharua

Also called Durua, they have independent language and culture and don't mix much with other tribes. Besides Orissa, they also live in Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. The Durua use a variety of combs, including the Gapa Patul (very small in size and intricately carved on its plate) gifted by Durua boys to their Baliphulas or girl friends as engagement present, and the Kakel, a square comb of three inches size, intricately carved with designs similar to Gapa Patul and also used as a gift item. The Tiri Murt is a large family comb, while the Churu Bandi is usually presented to younger sisters. Combs are never sold: this would be considered a betrayal of the spirit of the tribe, punishable by the spirits of the tribe ancestors.

Didayi

According to their tradition, the progenitors of the tribe were Bhoi Gadava, Asur Gadava, Kondo, Bondo and Didayi, a concept confirmed by the fact that they keep very close relationships and intermarry with the Bonda, Paraja and Gadava.

The Didayi are very religious, interested in their culture, in hospitality and health care, have their own language and live in five Panchayats of Malkangiri on the river Machhakunda, in the middle of the Kandakamberu hills. Their houses, made of colored wood and bamboo, are very clean and pleasant.

Gadava

The name they give themselves is Guthan. The language of this tribe, called Gadava, belongs to the Mundari or Kolarian group, but it is slowly dying out. Their name means “people carrying a burden on their shoulders” as they often work as bearers and palanquin carriers; according to their tradition they migrated towards north from the banks of the Godavari (where some of them remain as far south as Visakhapatnam) to be employed by the Rajas of Jeypore (in Nandapur). They now live in Malkangiri, Koraput, Kalahandi, Sundargarh, Ganjam, Sambalpur, Boudh and Phulbani, cultivating the land and raising cattle. Like several other tribes, they prefer to marry their relatives. They still weave their own clothes that have a special social and cultural meaning.

Gond

Also called Gondo, they are a warrior tribal people that has spread over the hills of central and southern India. They offer sacrifices to Mother Earth for the fertility of their fields, and the blood of the sacrificial animals (pig or fowl) is ritually sprinkled over the grain seeds. Marriages are preferred within one’s clan, including between brothers and sisters and brothers and sisters in law. Separation and remarriage are also frequent, and in regard to the dowry system it is the husband who pays money to the family of the wife, resulting in a greater respect for women in society.

Jung

Also called Juang, they are considered part of the Mundari ethnic group, originated in Orissa. They are one of the 15 tribes making special traditional combs as a part of their cultural and social heritage. The ordinary comb is for daily use, then they have a type that is used as a special gift item for lovers, and a comb that can also extract thorns from the body. The materials used are wood, bamboo, iron and cotton, and the decorations are rather complex, with scenes of their daily life.

Khond

Also called Kond, Kandha, Nanguli Kandha, and Sitha Kendha, they call themselves Kui. Khonds live in the hilly south-west of Kandhamal or Khondamal. Among the various sub-groups, the Maliah Khonds are the majority. They used to be famous for their human sacrifices (Meriah) to propitiate good agricultural harvests.

The Kutias Khond are famous for their combs (called Sireni), made by the boys of the community. When a newly married bride comes to her husband’s village, the family of the boy tuck the comb into her hair. Sometimes the bride takes the comb back to her village and presents it to the elders there, as a sign of a strong intention for a lasting marriage relationship. The comb called Gamberi Sireni is large and half circular in shape and is generally used by elderly men and women, or offered as a present to the leaving guests - male to male and female to female.

The Dangaria comb is called Kakua or Kakwa; it is not sold but only gifted as a token of love, women tucking it into their hair knot, and men into their loincloth. The special embroidered shawl they make is used as a symbol of marital happiness; they purchase the cloth from the neighboring Damas and they decorate it.

The Desia Kandhas, that live in plains and coastal areas and are more accustomed to the lifestyle of the surrounding populations, use two types of combs (Siredi), one made of shellac (plus several other materials) and the other of bamboo, quadrangular (used by men) or circular (used by women). According to the tradition, the use of combs was introduced by a King who prayed Jakini Penu (the *ista deva* of the tribe) and sacrificed a buffalo to get his help in fighting a head disease that was killing many people, and received the instructions about regularly combing hair with a special comb made of bamboo and fibers of the Sago palm. The Khond of Phulbani celebrate the Kedu festival, on dates and places that are decided from time to time.

The five day festival included Meriah, but human sacrifice has been substituted by the Kedu (buffalo sacrifice), on the third and fourth day; the animal is tied to the place of worship, then men and women get drunk and while dancing frantically they cut the animal into pieces, then carrying the blood and a piece of meat to their turmeric fields, where it is buried to propitiate Mother Earth, called Dahrani Penu. In the dance, women stand in a semi circle by keeping their hands on their companion's shoulders, while men sing devotional songs in Kui language and play mostly drums and flutes.

Kolha

They are the most numerous tribe of Keonjhar, also living in Nayagarh and Chamakpur mostly as farm laborers, having their own language that is now disappearing. According to their tradition, they migrated from the north-east during the last century. They are good bowmen and passionate hunters, eating all kinds of animals and drinking a fermented beverage called Handia. They worship the Hindu Deities and celebrate Hindu festivals, and have a special respect for rice, mustard oil, dogs and the Sajjana tree (that gives edible leaves rich in vitamins and minerals and with medicinal properties).

Koya

Part of the Gonda family, they live on the hills north of the Godavari, especially in the Malkangiri district, where they reached in the 1800s after migrating from other areas due to famine, and where they are the most numerous tribal group. They are semi-nomadic people, one village tribe consisting of 30 or 40 families living in small thatched huts. They cultivate rice and maize for subsistence and tobacco for selling, and raise pigs, goats, chicken and cows, although they do not drink much milk. Their favorite drinks are Mahula and Salapa, and they have a deep faith in spiritual and herbal medicine. Koya women wear a necklace called Isad made of very small combs strung together with a cotton thread. Vaidis or shamans use a longer comb to evoke a spirit into it in order to influence a particular person; they always carry this comb in their loincloth.

As per their social structure, the position of village chief (Peda) is hereditary, while the Muthadar, the head of a Mutha or Panchayat (a group of villages) is elected. The Koya Revolution of 1880, headed by Tama Dora, earned a special page in the history of the struggle for Indian independence.

Matya

Considered socially lower than other tribes, they live in Malkangiri, Dhenkanal, Bolangir and Kalahandi. Their main agricultural products are maize and tobacco.

Oraon

Probably the most progressive and laborious tribe, they consider divorce and remarriage as justified in case of laziness, bad temper or adultery of the partner. Very eager for economic development, they have already absorbed many "modern" values and facilities.

Paroja

Also called Paraja or Poraja, they are 7 to 12 different tribes (with different languages, called after the region they inhabit) that live on the hills of Ganjam and Koraput, Malkangiri, Kalahandi, Sundergarh, Dhenkanal, Phulbani, Puri, Cuttack and Mayurbhanj. Often exploited by the other people of their areas, they have become suspicious and cunning.

Santal

A tribe belonging to the Mundari ethnic group and living in the hills of Mayurbhanj, Balasore, and Keonjhar. They recognize a Supreme Personality of Godhead they call Thakur ji ("our beloved Lord") and a number of subsidiary deities (called Bonga) that manage the various aspects of the universe, to whom prayers and offerings are due, as well as bad spirits and ghosts that can live in mountains, forests, water or animals.

The Santal observe a grand spring festival called Salaipuja, that continues for three days and is characterized by dances and abundant libations of the traditional homemade liquor called Handia or Illi. Another festival is on Akshaya Tritiya, when they worship Mother Earth with a sacrifice of a cock, praying for a good harvest, good rain, good health and safety from dangers. The Sahari festival is observed by the women to honor the cattle, offering turmeric, flowers and special food.

Characteristically, the Santal have a sacred grove on the outskirts of the village and are very attached to cleanliness and beauty, especially to flowers. They collect silk cocoons in the forest and make tussar cloth.

They make 9 types of combs (they call Nakiz), used not as ornaments but for grooming their hair and even the house (the Nikharuncha type). The Santal scripts have been unified by Pandit Raghunath Murmu of Mayurbhanj district, to facilitate the publication of literature.

Saora

Also called Sabara, Sever, Saura, or Sahara, they are one of the most ancient tribes in Orissa, mentioned in the *Puranas* as the original worshipers of Nila Madhava Jagannatha. Saora villages are generally hidden in the forest, on hill slopes, and the men are strong walkers, expert climbers and hunters, often carrying an axe on a shoulder. They are expert terrace cultivators. Their racial features are similar to the australoid type, with prominent brow ridge, flat nose with a depression at the root of the nose, wavy and curly hair, dark brown complexion, long head, and fairly strong built body frame. The traditional dress of Saora men is a single cloth 6 feet long and 10 inches wide used around the hips, plain or decorated with red tassels. Women wear a short skirt (about 3 feet x 2 feet) with a waist cloth with a grey border, another cloth covering the upper part of the body, and modest ornaments made of beads, wood, grass, bell metal or aluminium. They are very attached to personal hygiene. The Lanjia Saora make special combs (called Arasai) with rich decorations. They do not buy or sell combs, but give and receive them as a gift only, especially offered by a boy to the girl he wants to marry. They also produce textile thread and give it to the Damas for weaving, purchasing the clothes from them.

Handicrafts

Appliqué work

The famous appliqué embroidery, characteristic of the Pipli village (but also found in Khallikote, Parlakhemundi and Boudh) is one of the most iconic handicraft products of Orissa, traditionally utilized for the cloth covering of the chariots used for Ratha yatra, as well as for ceremonial umbrellas (Chhata) and canopies and hangings such as Chandua, the insigna called Tarasa (a heart-shaped wooden sheet covered with embroidered cloth and mounted on a long pole), palanquin covers, pandals, fans, seats and pillows (especially the ones used for Snana yatra, known as Chakada Kama and decorated with motifs of 27 stars and geometrical forms). It is also used for the coverings of the Ghoda Nacha (“dummy horse”) during the Chaitra festival in Puri and other places. Traditionally, these clothes are made by the Darjis, a clan of professional tailors that is counted among the Sevakas of the Jagannatha temple, and whose families live in Puri and Pipli. In more recent times, several Muslims have also started to produce these handicrafts items. The same technique is used to make the Jhalar (a special border for canopies), Batua (a cloth pouch closed by a string), Sujnis (embroidered blankets or bed covers), and more recently beach umbrellas and regular umbrellas with aluminium and wood frames, handbags, lampshades, letter pouches, and even dresses. Patched of colored cloth and ribbons are embroidered on a basic fabric, all in vivid colors, forming decorative patterns or designs, especially elephants, parrot, peacock, ducks, creepers, trees, flowers like lotus, jasmine, half-moon, the Sun and Rahu. The traditional colors are green, red, blue, ochre and black, but more recently several objects of non-religious utilization have been produced in more delicate colors. The stitching process comes under six broad categories: Bakhia, Taropa, Ganthi, Chikana, Button-hole and Ruching. Sometimes small mirrors are also used.

Dhokra, brass and bell metal

The metal working craft is practiced by the people of the Kansari clan who can be broadly described as metal smiths living in Kantilo and Balakati in Puri district although fairly substantial numbers are found in Cuttack, Ganjam and Sambalpur districts. There are three methods for working metal: beating (locally known as *pifa*), casting and residual casting. Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc and bell metal is copper and tin.

The workshop is called Sala or shed and consists of a platform with a block of stone for the floor on which the beating is done, a heating furnace or *bhati*, a raised verandah with a local lathe for polishing. Tools used are hammers and anvils, pincers, hand drills, files and scrapers. The heating furnace with a crucible is fanned by a blower with leather bellows although of late the craftsmen have started using mechanical blowers.

The general process of metal casting consists of preparation of the material by melting the required materials in the crucible and then placing the molten metal into an earthenware container. After the molten metal sets, it is taken out and after repeated hammering and beating is given the desired shape.

Sometimes for making a single item two or three pieces are separately made and joined mostly with rivets. The major items manufactured in the beating process are plates or *thali*, deep round containers for *pokhala* (water rice) or *torani* (fermented rice water) called *kansa*, small containers called *gina* (tumblers), water containers called *gra* and buckets or *baltis*, large cooking utensils and storage vessels called *handi*, various types of pots and pans, ladles or *chatu*, perforated flat cooking spoons, as well as a number of items used for puja or worship including the *ghanta* (gong), *ghanti* (bells), *manjira* or *gini* (two circular cupped convex discs tied to strings and used for beating the rhythm), *ghunguru* (ankle bells tied in the feet of dancers), *rukha* (lamp stands) and *dipa* (smaller lamps) as well as *khatuli* (brass platforms for the Deities). Sometimes the surface of the items is engraved with various designs including floral and geometric patterns besides human and animal figures and occasionally they are also painted with enamel paints. Brass castings and Dhokra casting follow the lost wax or *cire perdue* process. Brass casting is done by the Kansaris and items produced include *vigrahas* - mainly Radha Krishna, Lakshmi, Ganesha, Vishnu and crawling Krishna called Gurundi Gopal, and so on. The *chalanti pratima* of the temples are generally in brass. It is interesting to note that at present there is no bronze casting being done in Orissa although the craft seems to have reached great perfection centuries ago as evidenced by the discovery of a large number of *vigrahas* from Achutarajpur near Banapur in Puri District. Again no casting is done in bell metal although this is quite common in South India.

The socio-cultural links of this handicraft are very strong. According to well-entrenched traditions the bride is presented with a set of brass and bell metal articles for starting off her new home, the quantity and quality varying according to the economic status of the family. While in the villages these are extensively used for eating and cooking, in the areas other materials like stainless steel, aluminum and ceramics have dislodged them. Dhokra casting is practiced mainly by Sithulias in Kuliana in Mayurbhanj district, Kaimatin in Keonjhar district, Sadeiberni in Dhenkanal district and Haradagararia in Puri district. During the lost wax process brass is mixed with scraps of other metals, which give it its typically antique look. Its motifs are mostly drawn from folk culture. While among the animals, the elephant is most popular, the other motifs include human heads, kings, Manas or miniature replica of measures, containers with lids, with or without locking devices, images of Deities like Ganesha and Durga, lamps and lamp stands, often in several intricate designs in shape of trees and branches with as many as a hundred lamps in one stand. Dhokra is also found in Bengal, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

Silver filigree

Locally called Tarakasi, silver filigree handicrafts are made specifically in Cuttack. Very pure silver (above 90%) is pulled through a series of consecutively smaller holes to produce fine strands of wire that are bent and soldered to make ornaments such as necklaces, brooches, ear pendants, anklets, hairpins, decorative key rings and bangles, as well as tie pins and cufflinks.

Filigree is also used to make decorative items like boats and chariots, replicas of temples, horses, elephants and other animals as well as utility items like ladies handbags, incense containers, vermilion containers, and special spoon called *belas* for feeding milk to young children, bowls for the Anna prasana ceremony, (usually presented to the child by the elders of the family, especially grandparents) and plates and cups for the food offerings to the Deities (usually presented to the bride at the time of entering her new home). In some temples, silver filigree crowns, necklaces and other ornaments are used to decorate the Deities

Patta chitra

The characteristic paintings of Orissa are generally characterized by strong lines and bright colors, and are used to decorate the walls of houses and temples as well as toys and masks, lacquer and papier mache objects, and especially the Patta Chitra, or "colored sheets", paintings proper that pilgrims carried away after visiting the holy place of Puri.

These sacred paintings were also part of traditional ceremonies within the families in Orissa. *Smriti* scriptures teach that sacred images or Icons can be modeled from various materials, including paint. A particular ritual is performed to consecrate or “install” the images for worship.

The paintings must be prepared according to very specific characteristics both regarding materials, that need to be pure and ethical, and regarding the iconographic symbols, expressions, postures, costumes, and even color schemes. Most paintings are polychromatic, but some are dichromatic (black and white). Silken or cotton cloth are reinforced with a mixture of chalk and tamarind seeds paste, that also serves to keep the painting safe from insects and moulds. The canvas is then dried before the figures are drawn and then painted in a very elaborate way that includes ornate painted frames with traditional decorative motifs.

The colors used are vegetable or mineral, but always natural and carefully prepared by the artists themselves. The black color, used both for paintings and palm leaf etching, is prepared from a mixture of coconut shell charcoal, turmeric and oil. Half coconut shells are used to contain the colors. A painting can take months to be completed, depending on the size and complexity.

The themes of Patta Chitra have always been exquisitely religious. Most depict Lord Jagannatha, with his large round eyes and big smile. Sometimes Jagannatha is sitting with Balabhadra and Subhadra in the forms that sit on the altar in the Puri temple, and sometimes He is depicted in a more human-like form. The Dasa Avatara (“ten divine incarnations”) are often depicted around Jagannatha or by themselves: Matsya (the Fish), Kurma (the tortoise), Varaha (the boar), Nrisimha (half man, half lion), Vamana (the dwarf), Parasurama (the warrior ascetic), Rama (the virtuous king), Balabhadra (the yielder of the plough), Buddha (the reformer) and Kalki (the destroyer).

Another favorite subject of Patta Chitras is the Krishna lila, as Jagannatha is generally identified as Krishna. From Krishna’s birth through the many wonderful and miraculous adventures of His childhood, to His youthful sports in the company of the cows and calves, the cowherd boys and especially the cowherd girls: the *gopis*. In several paintings we can see Krishna lifting the Govardhana hill to protect His friends from torrential rains, subduing a great black serpent by dancing on his many hoods, and enjoying loving exchanges with the damsels of Vrindavana and especially with Radha, His eternal companion. Other divine personalities are also depicted: Vishnu, Lakshmi, Shiva, Durga, Ganesha, Sarasvati, and practically all other Deities that are regularly worshiped in the temples and houses of Orissa.

The same themes are also depicted in monochromatic or dichromatic palm leaf etchings, called Tala Patta Chitra. The images are traced by using black or white ink to fill grooves etched on rows of equal-sized panels of palm leaf that are sewn together. These panels can also be easily folded like a fan and packed in a compact pile for better conservation. Often palm-leaf illustrations are more elaborate, obtained by superimposing layers that are glued together for most of the surface, but in some areas can open like small windows to reveal a second image under the first layer. The traditional instrument used to etch the images is similar to a sharp pen. The same technique has been used for centuries to write and copy texts of various nature, especially sacred scriptures and philosophical treatises.

Handlooms

The traditional textile handicrafts of Orissa are mostly based in Nuapatna, Barpali and in the Sambalpur and Sonepur area, and are characterized by specific patterns and designs. There is also a good production of silk saris in Berhampur. The name Boirani means “weaver” in Oriya; so when we speak of Boirani cloth, we mean handloom textiles made according to the ancient tradition. Unfortunately, this way of doing things is disappearing, because of the very low income of the weavers, who rarely have the opportunity to directly sell their products to discerning customers with sufficient information and appreciation of the work required. More often, they are forced to depend on wholesalers, retailers or agents, in a distribution system with too many links that are unable to actually understand the difference of value between a hand-made, natural and environment-friendly product on one side, and an industrial mill-made polyester sari with inaccurately printed designs and bad taste in colors and themes.

For those who are able to appreciate the differences in quality, and tell the difference between natural silk and plastic, the traditional handloom textiles of Orissa are a true wonder, a very rare treasure to find.

The cotton fabrics are made with very thin threads (120 to 130 threads per inch), so the final result is woolen-like soft, while the silk fabrics have a soft shiny look. Tusser silk is made from cocoons collected in the wild, rather than grown on mulberry trees; a good place to find this particular type of fabric is the district of Boudh, for example the village of Olasing that is a settlement of weavers.

Mostly, the traditional handloom fabrics consist in *saris*, the most popular dress for Indian women, that affords a unique opportunity to create masterpieces with precise designs and colors. In alternative, fabrics are also made to be sold by length, to make *churidars* (a set of tunic and comfortable trousers), shirts etc. Sometimes cushion covers are also made on looms according to specific designs, but unfortunately there is a communication gap between the craftspeople and the high level or international market, especially the Fair Trade network that would create great and new opportunities for creativity and artistic sense.

Traditionally, handloom clothes from Sonepur are gold embroidered, while Nuapatna is famous for producing Khandua silk and Ikat *saris*. The Bomkat style is heavily embroidered with ornate borders, with soft colors and often with religious symbology

The Bandha technique (also known as Ikat) is sometimes called “tie and dye” technique, which may bring people to confuse it with Batik, that in fact consists of tying the finished plain cloth in a series of complicated knots, submerging it in a dyeing color bath, removing the knots (the part of cloth that was tied up remains uncolored), making more knots and repeating the process. Sometimes Batik also uses application of heated wax on the cloth according to a precise design before the dyeing, to obtain clear contours of figures; the wax is then melted away after the coloring process. On the other hand the Bandha technique consists in weaving colored threads into geometric patterns on the loom. The process of “tie and dye” is applied to the yarn or thread that is subsequently woven together, a process that requires great ability because one single thread comes to have various sections of different colors.

The design is first drawn on paper, then the yarn is carefully measured and tied for the coloring in the proper length, then soak dyed, sometimes in multiple colors. In the 15 day process the cotton is “massaged” with castor oil, as water and cow dung paste, which makes them particularly soft and fixes the colors. The colors themselves are natural dyes, where the pink, red, maroon and brown are obtained from the red bark of the *aal* root, grown locally in the same weavers’ villages. The dye pots can be left in the sun during the entire day, so that the color turns deeper. The addition of iron in the dye pot makes the color turn to brown. In more recent times, yellow has been added to the color repertoire by using *haldi* (turmeric). *Saris* and shawls are generally done in two colors, a background (for example, white) and a decoration (for example, red).

Another 15 to 20 days are required to dress the loom, winding the bobbins, and actually weaving. When the yarn is woven into the cloth, the patterns appear in perfect alignment. A complex design of Bandha *sari* can take more than one month of work, even at the speed and skill of an experienced weaver. Sometimes the threads are arranged in a particular way as to create blurry edges in the borders. Handloom textiles from Sambalpur often have double-sided designs, with colored, silver and golden threads.

Tribal combs

As we have mentioned, for many tribes the art of comb making is an important traditional and social skill, generally practiced by boys. Combs are generally not sold, but given as gifts or exchanged for agricultural products or other goods as in an exchange of gifts, because of the strong cultural, emotional and social meaning that is invested in these objects. Often considered a talisman that contains all the love and affection of the family and tribe, it gives courage and protection from dangers.

Pottery

Particularly popular among the tribal people, terracotta items include not only utilitarian containers, but also offerings in the form of bulls, elephants and horses, temples and toys, that in many areas still closely resemble the objects found in the ancient cities of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. Unfortunately, transportation of these items is very problematic unless very well organized, therefore a true turning point for the promotion of these artworks on the international market would be a major export company connecting with big players in the Fair Trade circuit.

Stone carving

Orissa's rich and ancient tradition of stone carving is exemplified in the delicate and elaborate decorations of the many temples in the region. The materials most often used are the soft white soapstone or Khadipathara, the slightly harder greenish chlorite or Kochilapathara, the still harder pinkish chondolite or Sahanapathara or Baulapathara and the hardest of all the black granite or Mugunipathara. Besides the *vigrahas* of the various Deities, traditional subjects are the various dancers and musicians, flirting girls (*alasya kanya*), ladies under the Sal tree (*sala bhanjika*), the composite lion figures like Gajabidala and Gajasimha, the Konark wheel and so on.

Plant materials

Orissa was once covered by thick jungles, so wood of many types was a major resource; at present the deforestation has already devoured large areas and is still spreading, so wood has become more expensive and less popular for handicrafts items. Usually painted wood carvings are lacking in finesse, while plain wood carvings (made with white teak or gambhari wood, and dark rose wood of sisu wood) are more refined. The ancient style of elaborately carved house furniture and especially of house doors is becoming extinct, as the carpenters' clan generally known as the Maharanas except those of Cuttack and Puri, who still participate in the annual construction of the chariots for the Ratha yatra. Wood is still used for small Deities (especially Jagannatha), and the typical toys from Puri including small Rathas.

The more sustainable cane, bamboo, reeds, straw, grasses, coir (coconut fibers), fibers from the sago palm, flowers and leaves are amply used in Orissa for many objects of daily use. Some special leaves (including the lotus plant) are stitched together to make plates and cups amply used in temples or in feasts for food distribution to many guests. Leaves and flowers are also used to make hats. Solapitha, a particular kind of aquatic reed, gives a wonderfully light bark, similar to Styrofoam, that is traditionally used for ornaments (especially for the Deities), as well as household articles.

Bamboo and cane are very sustainable materials as they grow much faster than trees, and they can be more easily collected and utilized at village level, to make not only small household objects but also furniture and even houses. However the quality of the handicrafts product often suffers because of the idea that handicrafts made with low-cost materials do not deserve much time and care like the handicrafts made with costly materials. Decorative objects are considered as toys and are rarely artistic and refined, while they also contain plastic and carton that are considered also low-cost materials.

At present there is practically no communication between the craftspeople and the market, especially the international market of Fair Trade and environment-friendly products.

Masks

The tradition of making ceremonial masks, used in the various festivals and popular dances, is widely spread in Orissa, both among the general population and among various tribes.

Masks and small images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra, Durga, Hari Hara, Radha and Krishna and sakhis and various other Deities, the Nabagunjara, demons, characters of popular stories, animals such as horse, bull, elephant, lion, tiger, peacock etc are mostly made with light wood or solapitha (the light bark of an aquatic plant), and painted in vivid colors. Headdresses are also made and embroidered.

Papier mache has been introduced lately for the manufacturing of "tourist products" especially for masks and boxes; in spite of its versatility and easy utilization this material is considered low-class by the local people because all kinds of "garbage" is used in its production, from layers of old newspapers glued together on a clay mould, to waste cloth and other similar recycling materials.

Muruja, Jhoti, Chita

Although not precisely a category of handicraft, the tradition called Jhoti or Chita is a very genuine expression of the artistic spirit of the people of Orissa. During religious festivals, the floors and walls of the houses are decorated with white rice paste, called *pithau*. The drawings are very symbolic, traced by dipping the fingertips into the rice paste and applying it by hand to make the patterns.

Muruja, on the other hand, is the art of making designs by spreading different colored powders, very much like in the Tibetan Buddhist or in the Native American traditions.

The meaning is eminently religious, as the practice starts from the yantras and mandalas that are drawn by *brahmanas* in preparation for *homas* and other ritual ceremonies, but merely decorative patterns and designs are also used on various festive occasions and are drawn by the women of the house.

White powder is obtained from the grinding of stones, green powder is obtained from dry leaves, black from burnt coconut shells, yellow from the petals of marigold flowers or turmeric, and red from red clay. Tattooing, called Kutei Chita, is a similar form of artistic and cultural expression, symbolizing protection, belonging, or identity. It is made by utilizing black soot that is smeared over the pricked skin.

Dance traditions

Classical Odissi dance

When people speak of “cultural programme”, they generally mean traditional dance. The origins of the main form of classical dance in Orissa, Odissi, go back far into history, to a time when life, beauty, music and harmony were celebrated as divine manifestations and an important way to connect with God. The sculptures at the still existing ancient temples at Konark, Puri and Bhubaneswar remain as a powerful testimony to those times. The graceful positions of the bodies are not veiled by clothes, and each and every pose emanate a great joy and pleasure.

The celebration of life and pleasure in dance was assimilated to the dance and music of the natural elements: the movements of the sun and the earth, the flowing of wind and water, the drifting of clouds, the waves of the sea, the hammering of rain, and the sudden flashes of lightening.

Music and dance as harmonious and rhythmic movement were also exhibited by animals in various moments of their lives to express their emotions, peacocks and other birds, elephants, deer, lions, horses, and so on. The culture and civilization of ancient Orissa was lively and strong, warrior-like and assertive, with a close relationship with the tribal cultures that still exist in several regions of the State.

This character is reflected in the figurative arts, in the ceremonial traditions and also in the dance style. Odissi dance is powerful and assertive, with ample space for masculine interpreters and motives, yet graceful and deep in the expression of sentiments and symbolism. Interestingly, women dancers are also often portrayed in dance poses that are characteristically male, such as the Tandava or Siva’s dance of destruction.

The particular importance of “balance” in Odissi dance and several acrobatic postures called *bandhas* also connect it with the practice of yoga. The extensive use of *mudras* also connects dance both to yoga and to the tantric method of ritual worship. Dance has always been the main artistic expression of Indian culture, strictly connected with music, drama, poetry, symbolism and visual decoration and expression. The costume, ornaments, hair dressing and make up of the dancers are also very traditional. Figures of dance have been amply represented in paintings and sculptures, palm leaf etching and all forms of figurative arts. All festivals and festive occasions call for dance – from the seasonal harvest feasts to the celebration of the Ratha yatra, from marriages to the humble village entertainment shows.

By the 16th century, there were three kinds of dancers in Orissa: the Maharis in the temples, the Nachunis in the royal court, and the Gotipuas in the gymnasiums - who performed for the public. The religious revival of the 18th century saw a return of temple patronage to the arts. But the Maharis were slowly disappearing and their place was being taken by the Gotipuas, young boys dressed as girls. These boys were trained in physical culture in the Akhadas, and it was them who preserved the basic for restructuring of the ancient dance tradition. In fact, due to the degradation of the Mahari tradition in the course of several centuries, their art has gone almost totally lost, to the point that nobody really knows which rhythms and tunes were used and exactly what style was used. The present styles, tunes and positions have been reconstructed from the temple sculptures and the texts, and from the sensationalistic form created by the Gotipua for village entertainment. This new birth of Odissi was celebrated in the theaters of Cuttack in Orissa. The technique of Odissi is mainly based upon the Chowka posture, where the weight of the body is distributed equally on both the sides. It is the posture of Lord Jagannatha of Puri and reflects the balanced, all-encompassing and universal quality of the Dhama of Lord Jagannatha. It is a Sambhanga or equally distributed position in terms of weight.

Next comes the Abhanga position, in which body weight is displaced to any one side due to deflection of one or the other knee, in either standing or half sitting posture. Then comes the Tribhanga position, the three-bend posture, in which a series of triangles are formed in the body. The bends are made at the knees, the torso and the neck. It is a posture often represented in sculptures of female figures and is based upon the Hindu concept of iconography.

What is interesting about Odissi is that body position is not merely a part of the vocabulary or framework. The posture by itself conveys a particular mood or message. The names of these postures too express the moods they represent. The verses used by the Odissi dancer for narration are extremely ornate in content and suggestion. The finest example of these is of course, the Ashtapadis of the *Gita Govinda*. Several considerations would contribute to the description of these items for expressions in dance. They would mainly involve the spiritual and devotional aspect on one hand, and the Srngara (the aspect of love) on the other hand. The Abhinaya (descriptive expressions of the face and body) in Odissi is evocative and classical in its stylization and is often interspersed with Nritya (the pure dance), which interludes as connecting link between two verses or ideas. Items presented for an Odissi recital form are a pattern of development, which is both physically practical and aesthetic. The Mangalacharana is an offering made at the start of the programme. Rangamancha-Pravesha is the entry on to the stage with floral offering. Rangabhumi Pranam is the salutation to the stage and the earth, and is the first concept or idea. This is followed by the Ishtadeva Vandana - an obeisance made to the dancers' favourite deity. The Trikhandi Pranam follows, where salutations are made to the gods, the guru and the audience, thus concluding the item with Anjali-Hasta, a gesture of greetings and devotion.

The Batu is an item of pure dance that is derived from the influence of the Tantric worship of Balukeshwar Bhairava, an aspect of Lord Shiva. The Pallavi is an elaboration of both dance and music. Abhinaya comes next, involving enactment of a lyric, followed by the concluding item Moksha, which is liberation - which is the main aim of life and possibility of attaining is through devotional practice of the art of dance.

The costume of the Odissi dancer is a silk sari draped in a practical and comfortable style. Ornaments are the head ornament called Mathami, Kapa on the ears, Kankana on the wrists, armllets called Bahichudi or Tayila and an elaborate belt. The dancer wears on her ankles bells strung together on a single cord. A Padaka-Tilaka, a necklace with a locket rests on the chest. An Odissi dancer has elaborate hair-do in a knot adorned with the Tahiya, which represents a temple tower. Garlands of flowers are woven into the hair. Palms and soles are painted with a red liquid called Alat.

The musicians accompanying the dancer are mainly the Pakhavaj players, the flutist, and a singer. All dance performances begin with the offering of respect to God (especially Ganesha, who destroys obstacles on the path of perfection), to Mother Earth on which the dancer moves, to the Guru, and to the audience.

Folk dances

Singing and especially dancing are integral part of the many religious and social festivals especially in the villages, both as pure dance and as dramatization of popular sacred stories connected with the occasion. Organized by professional or semi-professional groups, especially by Gotipua schools that preserve and create choreographies, the Yatra shows are held in village squares or similar places, with the spectators sitting or standing all around. It is a sort of open theatre that plays a very important role in spreading at least a general knowledge of the Puranas and Itihasas, and often educates the masses about daily life.

The dramatic dance is introduced and then accompanied by the playing of mridanga and karatala, and sometimes also harmonium, tabla, and other instruments.

Krishna Lila is the re-enactment of the sacred stories of Krishna, usually performed on the occasion of Janmashtami, Holi and Rasa Purnima.

Similarly, the **Rama Lila** describes episodes from the Ramayana, and is performed during the celebrations for Saradiya and Vasanti Navaratri, that culminate with Vijaya Dasami and Rama Navami respectively.

Prahlada Nataka is also the re-enactment of the story of Narasimhadeva, the half-lion Avatara, in the form of a particular play composed of 120 songs, with about 20 characters, written in a mixture of Sanskrit and Oriya by Gopinath Parichha, who belonged to the court of Raja Ramakrishna Chhotray of Jalantar (now in Andhra Pradesh) and ruled from 1857 to 1905.

Dhanu Yatra (or Jatra) is a mass theatrical event that has become traditional in Sambalpur; it is a re-enactment of the Krishna lila to which all the residents and even visitor participate as characters. The river Jira becomes the Yamuna, Amapali becomes Gopapura (Vrindavana) and Badagada becomes Mathura. A simpler form of re-enactment of the sacred stories is presented by a smaller number of performers, where the story is sung rather than dramatized, by one or two persons only (instead of having a whole cast of characters).

The **Dasakathia**, characteristic of the Ganjam district, is performed by two people, a Gayaka (singer) and a Palia (accompanying singer), both of which play a pair of Kathi (sticks) to keep the rhythm. The two Dasas (“servants or worshipers”) wear luxurious dresses, turbans and a long silken coat.

Pala is a form of Yatra that concentrates on the songs mostly, as a practice of “singing” the stories from the Shastra, without dance and dramatization. It originated as a hybrid form of worship intended to mediate between intolerant Muslim invaders and the original Hindu tradition, also focusing on the worship of Satya Narayana, an expression of Vishnu that could be more easily accepted as similar to Allah, and the cult of Satyapir, whose story is recorded in the Pala of Krishna Haridas as follows. King Maidanab’s virgin daughter, Sandhyabati, was taking bath in a river when she saw a nice flower, and by smelling its scent she became pregnant. Driven away by her parents who considered her fallen, Sandhyabati met Hanila who under the orders of her unborn child built a palace for her. Here the princess gave birth to a ball of blood and flesh, and threw it into the river: the lump was swallowed by a tortoise, who then gave birth to Satyapir, and went to heaven. The boy was adopted by the Purohit (family priest) of king Maidanab. One day the boy found a manuscript of the Koran along the river and engaged in a discussion with the Purohit, explaining that there is no difference between a Purana and Koran, and that Hinduism and Islam are not hostile to each other. The Fakirs that are still very popular in Orissa, are hybrid Muslim/Hindu Gurus that are considered to be manifestations of Satyapir. The name “Satyapir” is a fusion between Satya Narayana and Pir, a title usually given to the religious leader of a particular Muslim sect from Persia. Each performance begins with an invocation to Satya Narayana, and is followed by poetic presentations of the sacred stories of the Puranas, in attractive, witty and sometimes humorous language composed by local poets. The performing group can be sitting (*baithaki*) or standing (*thia*), and consists of six people including the Bayak (drummer, playing the *mridanga*) and the Gayaka (chief singer), accompanied by side singers with *karatalas*.

Patua Yatra is a religious festival conducted annually from the end of Chaitra to the middle of Vaisakha as a festival to the Mother Goddess Gauri, and specifically for Sarala of Jahakada, Mangala of Kakatapur, Charchika of Banki, Katak Chandi of Cuttack. Sometimes the festival is also organized in times of danger, like during epidemics or natural calamities. The songs can be simpler (Pada bandia) or more complex with deeper meanings (Artha bandia) and focus on the stories of Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas.

A special category is constituted by the **Mask dances**.

The **Ghoda Nacha** (also known as Dummy horse dance), very popular in all the coastal areas of Orissa and also of Tamil Nadu, especially among the fishermen (Kaivarta) who worship the Goddess Baseli celebrating the Chaitra festival. A man (Rauta) wears the wooden and bamboo structure of a horse, holding it around the waist as if he was riding it, and dances with a female companion (Rautani), with whom he exchanges witty questions and answers, usually from the Kaivarta songs written by Achyutananda Das. The musical accompaniment is supplied by a drummer and a man playing the flute.

During the Thakurani yatra in the Ganjam district, the processions of the Deities and the marriage processions are accompanied by Mask dancers: two dancers get into a bamboo frame representing a horse, a tiger or a bull.

The **Medha Nacha** is a mask dance performed in the coastal districts of Orissa during Dassera, Dola Purnima (Holi), Kalipuja, Rama Navami, Sahi Yatra and other festivals when the Deities are taken out in procession for congregation (melan) or immersion. The procession halts at market places and road-crossings, thereby allowing the performers to show their skill, wearing huge papier mache masks of demons, Raja and Rani (King and the Queen) etc, to the rhythm of Changu and Dhol.

The **Naga dance** is a particular type of dance that unites the Mask dance characteristics with the Martial arts dance. It is performed mainly in the Puri district during religious processions and on festive occasions. The Naga warrior costume is heavy and elaborate, with a huge head gear decorated with silver ornaments, a false beard that almost covers the entire face, and heavy makeup. The dancer moves his shoulders and strides as a warrior, at the head of the procession.

The most famous **martial arts dance** in Orissa is called **Chhau**, performed during the entire year, especially in the princely states of Mayurbhanj, Nilagiri and Sareikala (now in Bihar). The dance used to be performed by Kings, too. The Sareikala and Purulia Chhau also use masks. Like in the Danda tradition, 13 male Bhakta belonging to any clan, sampradaya or social class perform a series of rituals to invoke divine blessings, and they initiate the new recruits on Dassera by tying a red thread is tied to their wrists; the training starts on Sri Panchami and after the training period, the performance takes place for three nights on Chaiti Parva (the spring festival). The dancers, each holding sword and shield, form two parties and execute various stances of attack and defence, in the original Rukmar or Matcha, the dance of mock fighting, expressing only the Tandava Bhava (fighting spirit or heroism). The stances were Sandhamar (“the strong man”), Dushman Pachhad (“chasing the enemy”), Pakalanka (“hot like a red chilli”), Bajra Maruni (“strong like a thunder bolt”), Singha (“confusing the enemy”), Chhauni (“armour for the chest”), Chheuka (“the stealthy hunting of cats and dogs”), Chhau Mariba (“taking a vow”), etc. In later periods, dramatization was added expressing various emotions such as anger, fear, laughter, wonder or sorrow, and often re-enacting stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, as well as from the Krishna lila, such as the stories of Mayashavari, Kiratia Arjuna, Satarathi, Garuda Bhan, Dvaparlila, Vastra Haran, Bhasmasura, Gita and Rangapanda, and so on. The characters of these dances are Krishna, Shiva, Rama, Parasurama, Hanuman, Shabara, Dandi, Jambavan, Indrajit etc; in the later period female characters were introduced to support the dramatization of the stories, but such female characters are still played by men. Thus a differentiation of styles was created: Hatiardhara (holding weapon, by masculine characters), Kalibhanga (a more delicate lyrical and non-martial characters especially females) and Kalikata (a mixture of the other two for both male and female characters). The dance is accompanied by a huge kettledrum known as Dhumusa, with reverberating powerful beats.

Another martial dance is the **Paika nritya**, where the word Paika is derived from the Sanskrit *padatika* (“infantry”). In ancient times the powerful Ganga and Gajapati rulers of Orissa extended their territory from the river Ganges in the north to Godavari in the south with the help of a vast army of valiant Paikas, a king of peasant militia, who were not paid a salary but received large land grants from the kings and the chieftains. The Paika villages in Orissa were grouped under the command of a Dala Behera or commander. Each village maintained the tradition of Paika Akhada, the village gymnasium where men assembled to train after the day’s work, exercising and practicing dance with sword and shield. On Dasahara all the Akhadas celebrated their annual festival, still continuing also in Puri as the Sahi yatra. The practice and performance ground are sprinkled with oil and water to soften the soul.

The **Patua dance**, similar to the Karaga dance in Mysore, is executed during the month of Chaitra in the villages, to celebrate the worship of the Mother Goddess in Her various forms as Sarala, Hingula, Charchika, Bhagavati, Chandi etc. The Patua dancers move in groups of two to four traveling for one entire month from one village to another and observing strict austerities; one of the Patuas wears a skirt with a black scarf tied around the head, with the two ends falling like plaits of hair. This dancer carries the Ghata (sacred water pot) on his head, decorated with flowers, chandana, sindhur and colored threads, and holds the ends of his head scarf while dancing, sometimes on stilts, and sometimes on a rope, also displaying yoga postures. The dance is accompanied by the playing of ghanta (brass gong) and dhola (small drum). When the dance is over, the flowers, sindhur and colored threads are distributed to the people, and the dancer accept gifts of money and grains.

The **Danda Nata** or Danda Yatra is also performed as a religious vrata (vow) like the Patua dance, but while the Patua is in honor of Shakti, the Danda Nata is performed in honor of Shiva, the Lord of dance (Nataraja), and also offers prayers to Vishnu, Krishna, Durga, Kali, Ganesha, and other Deities. The vrata starts on Chaitra Purnima and continues for two months, up to Pana Sankranti. It is preceded by the preliminary rituals from Chaitra Krishna Sasthi, in which people formulate their vows; the Jhamu yatra follows for 8 days, and the last 13 days are dedicated to the Danda yatra.

During the entire period, there are theatrical performances every night. All social classes and clans participate to the vrata that is based on self-inflicted austerities (danda also means “punishment” to develop self control over the Kaya (body), Vacha (speech) and Mana (mind). Those who attain this control are called Tri-Dandi. The participants (13 in number) are called Bhaktas; their leader is called Pata Bhakta and the others take up a particular service each, such as Deula Padia, Danda Swami, Nili Patra, Chandania Patra, Gobaria Patra, Danta Kathia Patra, Betua Patra, Dhupia Patra, Bhandaria, Chua Mali etc. They all follow strict purity rules for 21 days, keeping a strictly vegetarian diet and abstaining from all sexual contacts, while the Pata Bhakta also abstains from rice and only eats fruits and light snacks. All of them take only one meal per day, eating foods cooked by themselves, and sitting in a secluded place away from social life. In fact as it is said that they should stop eating for the entire day if they hear a human voice, sometimes they keep beating the drums until they have finished eating. Like in the Patua dance, the Bhakta holds on his head a Ghata, called Kamana (“desire”) Ghata, as by worshiping the Lord the devotee is seeking the fulfillment of his desire. A new kalasa (earthen pot) is ceremonially filled with pure water from a pond or river, to the sound of drums and conchshells, then it is worshiped under a banyan tree and kept in the Kamana Ghara, a special temporary hut built preferably in front of a Shiva temple. Two pieces of bamboo, representing Hara and Gauri, are kept near the Ghata and worshiped, and a Kamana Danda (staff) with 13 joints (representing the 13 Bhaktas) with a cloth tied to its top is also worshiped, too. A sacred fire is kept burning all the time in the hut: from this sacred fire the Pata Bhakta lights an oil lamp, loudly calling, Rushi putre (“this is an offering to the daughter of the Rishis”). Now and then frankincense and myrrh are added to the lighted oil lamp, which flares up while the Bhaktas call out loud, Kala Rudramani ki jay! After the vrata is completed, the Ghata is immersed into a pond or river. It is said that Kamana is the name of a Rakshasi that worshiped Lord Shiva and united with Him in the jungle; after some time Mahadeva left her, but gave her the blessing that at least once a year, the people of the earth would remember her.

The importance of trees in the spiritual and cultural tradition of Orissa is highlighted by the “staff dances” as well as by the tree dance called **Karama**, in honor of the Karam Devata or Karamsani Devi. It begins from Bhadra sukla Ekadasi and lasts for several days. This dance is very popular among the Binjhal, Buhyan, Kharia, Kisan, Oraon, Kolha, Ho, Baghti, and Kundha Mindah tribes in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Cuttack and Dhenkanal. In the afternoon of the auspicious day two young unmarried girls cut and bring two branches of the Karama tree from a nearby jungle, accompanied by drummers and other musicians. The two branches are then ceremonially planted for worship, then they are offered germinated grains, grass, flowers and homemade liquor.

The village-priest narrates the sacred story and then people start singing and dancing with the accompaniment of Madal drums, cymbals and similar instruments, for the entire night until sunrise. Boys and girls are dressed in their best, preferably in red with ornaments of peacock feathers and conchshells, holding hands or keeping hands on the companion’s waist, sometimes boys and girls together, and sometimes separately, to the tune of songs describing nature and expressing love, desires and aspirations, humor and prayers to the Goddess. An expert leader directs the steps, closely followed by the best dancers, while the youngest and less experienced remain at the tail of the line, dropping out when the steps become too fast and complicated. The dancing grounds are plastered with fresh clay and cow dung, and in the center of the courtyard a bamboo pole, partially split into four, is bent to form arches and decorated with festoons of mango leaves and water lilies, through which the dancers weave in and out. At sunrise the Karama branches are taken in a procession to a river or pond and immersed, marking the end of the festivities.

The **Dalkhai** is a characteristic dance of the girls of various tribes of Sambalpur, Bolangir, Sundargarh and Dhenkanal, with the musical accompaniment of drums and other instruments played by men. At the beginning and at the end of every verse of the song there is an invocation to “Dalkhai Bo”, or “girl friend”, talking about the lila of Radha Krishna or other sacred stories. Variants of this dance are known as Mayalajada, Rasarkeli, Gunji Kuta, Jamudali, Banki, Jhulki, Sainladi etc.

The **Kela Keluni** is the characteristic dance of a gipsy tribe in Orissa; they are not a nomadic tribe as they have permanent houses, but they often travel around as snake charmers and acrobats, singing and dancing, giving village shows by rope walking, and so on.

The show is performed by one couple only, where the Kela (the man) plays a string instrument called Ghuduki, sings and dances, while the Keluni (the woman) dances swaying her head, hips and legs, to the tune of the love and humor songs known as Kela Keluni Gita.

Stick dances are very popular in Orissa just like in the rest of India, and can be of various types.

Gopala laudi is performed traditionally by cowherd boys, in a group of 12 to 16 boys dressed in attractive costumes and holding wooden sticks, dancing on the songs of the Gayaka, who tells stories about the life of cowherds. The favorite times for these performances are Dassera, Govardhana puja, and Dola Yatra (Holi).

Apart from the Dasakathia, that we have described above (songs accompanied by the rhythmic sound of beating sticks), the **Kati Nacha** is more precisely a “stick dance” as the dancing boys demonstrate various choreographies of geometrical patterns while beating the sticks that can be shorter (as in the tribes of Mayurbhanj and Bolangir) or longer (as in the cowherd communities of coastal Orissa). The dance is accompanied by singers and drummers that move with the dancers.

The **Ranappa** dance is characteristic of the coast area of Ganjam; youngsters dance standing on stilts to the accompaniment of Dhol and Mahuri.

Another very popular dance, found also in other areas of India, is the **Baunsa rani** (“Bamboo Queen”), where girls sometimes also very young perform acrobatic steps by dancing over moving and crossing bamboo poles, at the rhythm of songs and drumming.

Kandhei or Sakhi Nacha is the puppet theater dance, executed by itinerant performance groups originally from Bhapur. The puppets can be moved directly by hands, by rods, or by strings connected with the fingers of the puppeteers, who stand behind a backdrop. The puppet dolls are nicely painted, dressed and decorated with ornaments, and also include animals. The show is done on a temporary stage, dramatizing historical, social or popular stories.

Some folk dances also take their name from the characteristic musical instruments used to accompany them. Yogis and Nathas play the **Kendera**, a sort of small violin, while going around to beg alms. A particular type of acrobatic dance is performed while at the same time blowing the Jodi Sankha (“double conchshell”); other accompanying instruments are the Changu baja and the Mahuri. The **Dhuhuki** is a wooden drum of medium size, covered in reptile (godhi) skin and tied with metal string; the Dhuhuki nacha dancers dress in costumes, sing and dance, and play their drums in the intervals. The **Ghumra** is also a typical drum, similar to a big pitcher with a long stem, made of clay and covered with reptile skin. It is tied to the body and played with both hands, while dancing, first with slow circular movements and then faster. This dance is usually performed on Sravana sukla Pratipad for the entire fortnight, until Gahma Purnima. The **Nisan** is a small kettledrum played with two sticks; the player remains in the middle of the center and gives the rhythm, while the dancers move in circle and then stand in a line. The singer enters, offering prayers to Sarasvati and other Deities, then sings Chhanda, Chaupadi and other folk songs, each couplet of the song is followed by a short dance. The **Changu** is a local variety of tambourine, characteristic of the Bhuiyan, Bathudi, Kharia, Juang, Mechi and Kondha of Sundergarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Phulbani. Men play the tambourine, sing and dance, while women dance, totally covered up in saris so only their hands and feet are visible. Women advance and men retreat, men advance and women retreat, and in between men have interludes leaping into the air and circling wide.

All tribes celebrate the coming of spring with a variety of joyful dances. The **Gond dance** is performed in honor of their Devata Bhimasena also on the occasion of the harvest and for marriages, and the Bhattara celebrate spring dancing in colorful dresses and turbans, silver ornaments and peacock feathers. The Kolha dance is performed by men and women at the time of planting the seeds, while young girls perform the Sua dance of the Sambalpur, the Santal dance to propitiate the ripening of the harvest, and the courtship dance of the Ho. The Koya men wear a head dress of Bison horns, while women dance with iron sticks. The Oron also dance in circle for all the festivals, including spring and autumn. Another simple forms of folk dance is the **Palla** (performed by men) and its equivalent Mahila Palla (performed by women), that cover the various roles of Gayika, Baika, Palia and Siri Palia. The **Jhuman** songs and dance are characteristic of the Sundargarh district, performed by the Mahanta and Munda clans. The **Samprada** or Bahaka dance is also a blend of singing, playing on a large mridanga and jhanja (kartal) and dancing, locally called Gayana, Vadana and Nartan. Bhajan (glorification of the Deity), Janana (prayers to the Deity), Chhanda and Chaupadi (popular songs) and Sanskrit slokas are recited while dancing.

Notes on specific terminology

The majority of technical terms in Sanskrit or Oriya have no satisfactory translation in English because there is practically no equivalent in the English-speaking culture, so we have chosen to utilize the original terms and definitions. Some of such words, such as yoga, karma, guru etc, have already entered in the daily life of English speaking people and can be found as “English” words in dictionaries.

However, there is a great number of other terms and definitions that have not found their way yet into the global culture, but they deserve to get known better by people in general, at least by all those who already have some knowledge about Vedic/Hindu terminology and knowledge.

However, for a ready reference and for any new student of Vedic *dharma*, we are enclosing their explanation and some general information in the Glossary, in order to better understand the topics of the book.

The Glossary contains common words and expressions used by the local inhabitants of Puri, as well as expressions used by the various schools of religious thought and institutions; most are in Sanskrit and Oriya/Hindi, but some are English words employed with an unusual significance.

Transliteration always presents some difficulty as in Sanskrit and in Oriya there are 48 letters, each of them with a precise character and pronunciation; all the consonants can further combine into compound consonants that also have a specific character and pronunciation. There are also 13 vowels, 3 of which can be long (i.e. of double duration in pronunciation) or short, and 4 semi-vowels, plus 2 “enhancing sounds” that respectively give a nasal sound and an echo to the letter they are associated with. For a precise rendition in scholarly works, special signs called diacritic marks are generally used, multiplying the letters from the English (Latin) alphabet such as n, m, d, t, s, c, j, k, g, p, b, r, a, i, u.

After some hesitation, we decided to use a common and simple transliteration of the Sanskrit and Oriya terms, without the diacritic marks. However, we avoided excessive “Anglicization” of the transliteration, like “ee” instead of “i”, “oo” instead of “u”, or “w” instead of “v”, which cannot be used consistently and therefore only produce confusion. Such habit was prevalent under the British rule in servile imitation of the morphological connection in the English language between spelling and pronunciation, and we believe it’s time to leave it behind as obsolete.

Mostly, we used “sha” and “cha” to render the equivalent pronunciation of the Sanskrit and Oriya consonants, although we consider that transliterating “cha” instead of a simple “ca” may be confusing for students of Sanskrit and Oriya scripts as there is another consonant that is more correctly transliterated as “cha”.

We have also decided, as a general rule, to use the spelling of the Sanskrit pronunciation of the Sanskrit words instead of the Oriya pronunciation that is sometimes confusing; an exception to the rule are those terms that do not appear in Sanskrit and exclusively belong to the Oriya/Hindi language. However, the Oriya version of Sanskrit words that are frequently used by locals appears in the Glossary.

In general, you will observe that in Orissa (and Bengal) the short “a” is pronounced quite closed, like an “o” (or not pronounced at all), while the sound “a” corresponds to the long “a” of Sanskrit.

The vowel “ri” is usually pronounced as “ru”, as in Krishna, that becomes “Krushna”.

Similarly, “va” is often pronounced as “ba”, even if it is correctly written as “va”.

The compound consonant “mha” or “nha”, which is the union of “h” with the *anusvara* or the nasal sound represented by “n” or “m” with a dot on top, is generally pronounced as “nga” as in Nrisimha, that becomes “Nrushunga”.

Another difference is the compound consonant “ksha”, which is very difficult to pronounce for Oriya people. Usually they pronounce it as “khya”, although the pronunciation does not correspond to the written letter: in fact there are two distinct characters for “ksha” and “khya”, and therefore confusion is created when the character “ksha” is read as “khya”.

The compound consonant “jna” as in *jnana* (“knowledge”) or *yajna* (“sacrifice”) is generally pronounced as “gya”, although this does not correspond with the characters used for writing it.

We hope that such information will be useful to help our readers to recognize words that they may have learnt in a Sanskrit or Hindi context, and avoid the confusion created by the difference of pronunciation.

Glossary

Abakasha: the morning bathing ritual for the Deities (including brushing teeth).

Abhinava: in Indian classical dance, the expression of sentiments acted out through the face, the hands and the body of the dancer, matching the text of the song that accompanies the dance.

Abhisheka or **Snana:** ceremonial bathing offered to Deities or Kings, indicating acknowledgement (or confirmation) of their exalted and powerful position; the ceremony is public in particular occasions.

Achaman: a preliminary purification ceremony performed with water, usually together with some *mantras*; also the washing of the mouth.

Acharya: a spiritual master who teaches by example and precept.

Achyuta: a name of God, “the unfallen”; it is also used by God’s servants to identify themselves as family members of the Lord by accepting to belong to the “Achyuta-gotra”. Also, Achyuta is the basic Hari Nama used by the followers of Achyutananda Das in their *japa* and *bhajana* (“*trahi acyuta*”).

Adhara pona (Oriya): a special drink made with milk, cheese, bananas and sugar, offered “to the lips” of Jagannatha at the end of Ratha Yatra.

Adhikara: right, entitlement; *adhikari* is one who is entitled to a right.

Adhivasa: preliminary rituals for a major celebration, usually performed on the previous day.

Adhivasha darpana: a special brass mirror used for bathing Jagannatha through His reflection; water is only actually poured on Jagannatha’s body only on Snana Purnima.

Adi purusha: the original father, in an absolute sense it applies to God and in a relative sense to the founder, or first progenitor of a dynasty or family.

Adi sevaka (Oriya: *adya sebaka*): “the first or foremost servant”, in Puri it applies to the King who is the most important servant of Sri Jagannatha.

Adivasi: “original dwellers”, indicating all tribal populations who do not belong to the mainstream Hindu culture, also defined as *vanavasi*, “forest dwellers”, as according to Tradition, Vedic civilization is the original and eternal culture of human beings since the times of Manu.

Adityas: “sons of Aditi” and Dyaus, the 12 main demigods or Devas residing on the higher planetary systems; they are Surya, Yama, Indra, Dhatri, Ravi, Mitra, Varuna, Savitri, Ansa, Aryaman, Bhaga, and Daksha.

Agamas: tantric scriptures; the main Agamas are *Vaishnava*, *Shaiva* and *Shakta* and contain technical specification for Deity worship, starting from the *bija mantras*.

Agarbatti or **dhupa:** incense stick; in Puri temple *dhupa* refers to the ceremony of offering incense, the incense used is a raw form of frankincense (resin crystals), called *jhuna*.

Agni: the personification of fire, the god of fire. Agni has several manifestations, one of which is the “fire of digestion” (*jatharagni*) in everyone’s stomach.

Agnihotra yajna, yajna, homa, or **havi:** a special sacrifice ceremony in which various articles, substances and mantras are offered into the sacred fire; this fire is considered as a direct manifestation of God, carrying the offerings to the Supreme Lord Himself and to all the *devatas*. The materials required for the ritual are called *samagri*.

Agni visarjana or **agni shanti karana:** cooling the intensity of the fire with raw milk at the end of the *homa*.

Ahankara: “I am the doer”, the false ego that identifies with the material body and mind (and material position) and leads to egocentrism and excessive pride.

Ahuti: oblation, or offering of ghi to the fire, considered liquid food for the seven tongues of Agni; the final oblation is called *puṇahuti*.

Ahya (Oriya): a married woman, also *sadhava*, literally “one who has a husband” as opposed to *vidhaba* that indicates a widow, “one who does not have a husband”.

Aisvarya: the quality of lordship, opulence and royal life of Krishna as the King of Dvaraka, as opposed to *madhurya*, the quality of sweetness of Krishna the cowherd boy in Vrindavana.

Aja: maternal grandfather, or the mother's father.

Ajatia: "without caste", where *jati* means "caste"; more precisely *jati* indicates the condition at birth, as the concept of rigid birth prejudice in social occupation known as caste is a later addition to the original concept of *varna*, determined by *guna* and *karma* and not by birth.

Ajnamala (Oriya *agyamala*): "the garland of command", a garland from the Deities that is ritually delivered to someone who is ordered to execute a specific duty.

Akhada or Akhara: a religious organization; in Puri it also defines the organizations of boys and men who meet to practice gymnastics, wrestling and sometimes Odissi dance (see *gotipua*).

Akhanda dipa: "eternal lamp", a special offering to the Deities consisting of a *ghi* or oil lamp (castor oil is most frequently used because it burns slowly) that is never extinguished or left to extinguish.

Alata: red dye used by married women to decorate their feet. See also *mehandi*.

Alata lagi: the offering consisting in fanning the Deities.

Amangala: inauspicious, as opposed to *mangala*, auspicious.

Amavasya: dark moon or new moon, see also the section on Vedic Calendar.

Amavasya Narayana: a Deity of Narayana that usually stays in Dakshina ghara and travels to the Ocean shore on Amavasya.

Amish: "non vegetarian", both applied to the person and to the food; in Puri it generally applies to fish, while meat and eggs are called *parityakta* ("garbage"). The contrary of *amish* is *niramish*, meaning "vegetarian". Strict (or "pure") vegetarianism also excludes onion, garlic and sometimes mushrooms.

Amrita: "nectar of immortality".

Amrita laddu: a special type of sweet.

Anabasara, anavasara or *anasara*: the time between Snana yatra and Ratha yatra when the Deities of Sri Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhara remain concealed and are re-painted freshly with natural colors.

Ananta: Ananta Sesa, the name of the serpent with unlimited heads on whom Vishnu rests.

Anga: limb, part (of the body); it also applies to "expansions" of Godhead as in the worship of the Deities in Tantric tradition.

Anjali: "homage with folded hands", gesture of greeting; in *pushpanjali* the same gesture is accompanied by an offering of flowers (*pushpa*) in the folded hands.

Anjali: "cupped hands", gesture of acceptance.

Ankuraropana: planting seeds to be sprouted before the *yajna* for auspiciousness; the good result of the *yajna* is also evaluated by the strength of the saplings at the end of the ritual.

Ankusa: elephant's goad, a symbol frequently found in the iconography of Deities, indicating control.

Anti: the front end of the *sari* (the traditional dress for women), also called *pallu*.

Anukula: "good beginning", an auspicious ritual performed before important ceremonies.

Anuloma: "proper", usually indicating an acceptable marriage between two castes where the bride is of the same or lower caste of the husband, as opposed to *pratiloma*, indicating an unacceptable union where the man belongs to a lower caste than the woman.

Anusvara: a special letter of the Sanskrit alphabet, conveying a nasal sound generally transliterated as "m" or "n" with a dot over it, as in the *pranava omkara (aum)*.

Apavitra: "impure", as opposed to *pavitra* (Oriya *pabitra*).

Apsara: one of the "water nymphs" or personifications of the power of water (*apsu-rasa*), also heavenly society girls who are considered very auspicious and are depicted on the walls of temples and houses and especially around doors.

Arati: worship ceremony in which God is offered various articles, symbolic presentations (see *upacharas*) and especially *ghi* and camphor lamps; see also *Mangala arati*, *Sringara arati*, *Bhoga arati*, *Sandhya arati*, *Sayana arati*.

Ardhangini: "half body", the wife as considered the half body of the husband.

Ardhanarisvara: the form of God that is represented as half male and half female, usually Shiva-Parvati.

Arghya: water or water mixed with auspicious substances, used as an offering to the Deity or honored guests or personalities.

Artha: “economic development”, one of the four purposes of human existence according to the Vedas; see also *dharma, kama, moksha*. Another broader meaning, usually expressed as *purushartha* is “whatever is good and worthy of being pursued by a human being”, indicating all the four purposes of human existence; a fifth (*panchama*) *purushartha* is also the supreme (*parama*), defined as *prema*, or the highest level of love for God.

Arua chaula (Oriya): white uncooked rice, used for auspiciousness in religious rituals.

Arya: “noble, civilized person”, a person who knows the real values of life and follows them; it does not indicate a specific ethnic race but a type of behavior. The concept of Aryan as an ethnic race was a colonialist invention that became the basis of the German Nazi ideology and has been disproved in academic circles for some time already.

Asakti: attachment, love, one of the stages of *bhakti* (love for God).

Asampurna: “non complete”, “partial”, as in a temporary ceremony.

Asaucha: “unclean”, as opposed to *saucha*, “clean”.

Asana: sitting place, also sitting position.

Ashoka mahohi: the extra food offering presented on Ashoka Astami.

Ashrama: a place used as residence by persons following strict spiritual practices and studying Vedic knowledge; also a stage of life (*brahmacharya, ghrihasta, vanaprastha, sannyasa*).

Asirbad: “blessing”, sought from God or great personalities by devotees or disciples who bow and touch their feet; the blessing usually touches his right hand to the head of the blessed or shows the “*varada mudra*”, a hand forward gesture with open palm.

Ashtheadatu: a traditional alloy of eight metals (gold, silver, copper, zinc, lead, aluminum, iron and mercury) to prepare *vigrahas*, it is heavier than brass and more expensive and rare to find.

Asti: bones.

Asubha: inauspicious, as opposed to *subha*, auspicious.

Asura: a demoniac personality who is opposed to God and His devotees, usually *asuras* make every effort to harass devotees and stop their worship to the Lord and to fight against the demigods or *suras*, who are the appointed managers of the universe.

Asvapati: “Lord of Horses”, a dynastic title; other dynastic titles are Gajapati (“Lord of Elephants”) and Narapati (“Lord of Men”).

Asvattha or *banyan tree* (English): a sacred tree (*ficus religiosa*), whose branches become roots and roots become branches, thereby spreading around the first sprout; it also has medicinal properties; under this tree Lord Shiva resides, and often *sadhus* sit or rest under it. This tree is also called Vata or Bata.

Atma: “self”, applicable in different contexts to the body, the mind or the soul; in its highest and truest meaning indicates the soul; the “supreme self” is called Param Atma, a “great soul” is called *mahatma*.

Aum: see *pranava, omkara*.

Avabhruta snana: the traditional bathing in a large water reservoir before the *pujahuti* of the Asvamedha yajna.

Avatara: an incarnation/manifestation of the Lord who descends among the conditioned souls of this world with a particular mission.

Avirbhava: appearance (birth) day, usually applied to great saints or teachers.

Ayudha: “weapon” or symbol held in a Deity’s hand.

Baba, or Babaji: “father”, an affectionate and general name given to *sadhus* living in a very simple way, even renouncing the formal dress and honors offered to *sannyasis*.

Bada (Oriya): “great, big”, as in Bada danda, the local name of Grand Road in Puri.

Bada: symbolic or imaginary boundary for the *puja* area; Bada Bada is for Balabhadra, Majhi Badi is for Subhadra, and Mahaprabhu Bada is for Jagannatha.

Bada Thakura: the affectionate name by which the people of Puri call the Deity of Balabhadra, Balarama, or Baladeva.

Bagicha: garden.

Bahara (Oriya): “outside, external”.

Bahu: married woman, usually to mean “daughter in law”; it is also used to address one’s mother or wife.

Bahuda: the return Ratha Yatra, from Gundicha to Jagannatha temple.

Baibahita bandhu (Oriya for *vaivahita bandhu*): “relative by marriage”.

Baidya (Oriya for *vaidya*): “one who knows”, name for a traditional physician; Ayurvedic doctors are also called *kaviraja*, or “king among the learned”.

Baishnab (Oriya for *vaishnava*): devotee or servant of Vishnu, a person who has dedicated his/her whole life to the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Bajantari (Oriya): musicians who perform sacred and traditional songs (*bhajans*).

Bala: boy, child; the rising sun is called “Bala Surya”. Bala Gopala is the form of little child Krishna.

Bali: sacrifice, tax due to the King, great personalities or the gods, ritual offering. In tantric worship, *bali* is the definition of animal sacrifice.

Bana: fireworks, often associated with festivities.

Bandana (Oriya for *vandana*): homage, ritual ceremony to welcome an honored guest (including God).

Bangsa (Oriya for *vamsa*): dynasty, family lineage; the *vamsa parampara* is the “family tradition”, the *vamsa sesha* is the “end of the lineage” when the last son leaves no male children, something that is considered a disaster because nobody is left to offer *sraddha* to the forefathers.

Bardhani (Oriya for *vardhani*): “increaser of prosperity or auspiciousness”, a form of the Deity symbolized by a full pot (*purna kumbha*) at ritual ceremonies; the pot is filled with water and sacred earths, then topped with mango leaves and a coconut. Generally the Bardhani is placed on a *yantra* drawn with colored powders and uncooked rice, and honored during the ritual ceremony.

Barika: barber; some religious rituals require the presence of a barber and his wife.

Barsika (Oriya for *varsika*): annual, yearly.

Basanda (Oriya): banning, forbidding entry into the temple, ousting.

Basordhara: the 7 streams of *ghi* with *sindhura* drawn on a wall during rituals, symbolizing the presence of the Sapta Rishis (Angirasa, Bhriugu, Kandru, Markandeya, Mudgala, Pippalada, Digatasama).

Bata: also Vata, it indicates the sacred banyan tree; it also indicates the Kalpa Vriksha or “wish-fulfilling tree”.

Beharana: royal cot, a special type of bedding.

Benta shikara: “hunting expedition”, a special celebration in which Jagannatha acts as a *kshatriya* King and “goes to the forest to hunt dangerous animals”.

Besa (Oriya for *vesa*): dress, outfit, decoration of the Deities.

Besya (Oriya for *vesya*): “decorated”, indicates the courtesans, who take special care of decorating themselves to attract attention.

Betel: the betel nut is the seed of the Areca palm and is chewed as a very mild intoxicant, the meaning extends to the “betel leaves” traditionally used to wrap up a mixture of shredded betel nut and other ingredients (also called *pan* or *tambula*) including lime paste (that helps to extract the alkaloid principle). Many people chew betel or *pan* in Puri. The main problem of chewing betel is a remarkable increase in the production of saliva that becomes colored in deep red, so that many people spit the red liquid around. Another problem is the erosion of the teeth, tongue, mouth and digestive system caused by the lime paste, often causing cancer, too. Another variety of chewing mixture is called “sweet betel” and contains only harmless spices and sugar.

Bhaba (Oriya for *bhava*): emotion, feeling, a stage of *bhakti*.

Bagha mukha: a particular way of tying a cloth over the face before cooking or carrying food or water for Jagannatha, used by temple Sevakas to avoid breathing over the food or water.

Bhagavan: “Lord”, who possesses the six *bhagas* or opulences: power or strength, knowledge, beauty, wealth, fame and renunciation; *Bhagavad Gita* is the “Song of the Lord”, while *Bhagavata Purana* is the “Ancient stories about the Lord”, a *Bhagavata* is a “devotee of the Lord”. The title of *Bhagavan* is sometimes used to address great spiritual personalities.

Bhagavad Gita, or *Gita*: the most famous book reporting Krishna’s direct instructions and teachings to His friend Arjuna; it is a part of the *Mahabharata* epic.

Bhagavatam, or *Bhagavata Purana*: the most famous *Purana* (“ancient story”) composed of 12 cantos for a total of 18,000 verses; it relates the glories, *avatars*, teachings and activities of the Lord.

Bhandara Lokanatha: the Lokanatha Deity guarding the *Bandhara ghara* or storehouse of Sri Mandira.

Bhargavi: a sacred river just outside Puri (at Chandanpur).

Bhajan: worship and meditation on the Lord, often executed with songs accompanied by sweet music.

Bhakta: devotee, a person who has love and devotion for the Lord and wants to serve God unconditionally, without expecting anything in return.

Bhakti: the principle of love and devotion, personified as the internal energy of the Supreme Lord.

Bhasya: philosophical commentary to some traditional scripture.

Bhat: simple boiled rice, the staple food in Orissa; also “meal”.

Bhava: the preliminary stage of transcendental love for God, characterized by symptoms of natural or spontaneous ecstasy and attachment to the service of the Lord; also feeling (see *bhaba*).

Bhaya: fear, one of the secondary *rasas* or sentiments in psychology.

Bhoga: food to be offered to the Lord, literally “pleasure”; it is one of the main articles of worship and represents the element earth; also the food offered to the Lord, called Naivedya.

Bhoga arati: the ritual offering ceremony (see *arati*), which follows the offering of foods to the Lord.

Bhrigu: a famous sage (Rishi); the *Bhrigu-pada* is the characteristic mark that is on Vishnu’s chest and distinguishes Him from His servants (Vishnudutas) who obtained the *sarupya mukti* (the type of liberation that consists in achieving a body similar to God’s). See also *Sarupya*.

Bibaha (Oriya for *vivaha*): marriage ceremony.

Bideshi (Oriya for *videshi*): “belonging to another place”, stranger, foreigner, sometimes opposed to *svadesi*, “from this place”.

Bidhaba (Oriya for *vidhaba*): “one who has no husband”, a definition for a widow (see also *sadhaba* and *ahya*); the English word *widow* comes from this term.

Bidhi (Oriya for *vidhi*): knowledge.

Bidi: leaf cigarette; also one kind of black gram (*bidi dal*).

Bighna (Oriya for *vighna*): difficulty, obstacle.

Bijuli Kanya: another form of Durga as the goddess of lighting; Her Deity takes part in the celebrations of Krishna Janmashtami as the seventh child of Devaki who was transferred to the womb of Yashoda.

Bilva or *Bel*: the tree (*aegle marmelos*) sacred to Lord Shiva, whose leaves are offered to Shiva just like the Tulasi leaves and flowers are offered to Vishnu; it has great medicinal properties and its fruits are very sweet and tasty.

Bimana (Oriya for *vimana*): originally “airplane” or “flying vehicle”, in Puri it specifically indicates the palanquin for carrying the movable Deities.

Bindu: “drop”, generally a symbolic mark of auspiciousness drawn with *kunkuma* or *sindhur*.

Brahma: the first created living being, born directly from the Supreme Lord Vishnu; after spending a considerable amount of time meditating on the Lord, he proceeds with the creation of this particular universe. It should not be confused with the *Brahman* or “Supreme Spirit”, the impersonal all-pervading existence of the Divine Reality (part of the Triad defined as Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan).

Brahma bandhu: “relative of a *brahmana*”, a person who belongs to a family of a *brahmana* but does not possess brahminical qualifications (i.e. *guna* and *karma*, or qualities and activities).

Brahma padartha: the mysterious relic contained inside the body of the Deity of Sri Jagannatha and passed into the body of the new Deity at the ceremony of Navakalevara; some say it is the remains of the body of Sri Krishna Himself, after His cremation about 5,000 years ago.

Brahmachari: a celibate student under the care of a spiritual master; the literal meaning is “one who learns to behave according to Brahman realization” (*brahma achari*), to signify that on the spiritual level there is no material identification and therefore no spirit of enjoyment or distinctions between different bodies based on the different amount of sense gratification one can obtain from such bodies.

Brahman: the Absolute transcendental spirit free from any material contamination, the living force that is contained in all living entities and in the entire creation.

Brahmana: a person who knows Brahman (*brahma-jana*), identifies with Brahman as pure spirit soul and sees all other living entities as pure spirit souls; a *brahmana* is free from the bodily identification and concept of life, both in regards to him/her self and to the others.

Brata (Oriya for *vrata*): religious vow or observance; in Puri it specifically refers to the ceremony of the sacred thread (*upanayana*).

Chaitanya charitamrita, Chaitanya bhagavata: two books describing the life and teachings of Sri Chaitanya, the great devotee of Sri Jagannatha, considered by his followers as an *avatara* of Lord Krishna Himself incarnated in the sentiment of His divine lover Radharani.

Chahani mandapa: a small *mandapa* above the Rosha shala and opposite the Snana Vedi; here Lakshmidēvi performs *vandapana* for Jagannatha during Niladri Vijaya.

Chakada, or Janma Chakada: the *pandal* on which the birth of the Deities in the Jagannatha temple is celebrated.

Chaka dola (Oriya): “big round eyes”, an affectionate name given to Sri Jagannatha by the people of Puri.

Chakara (Oriya): servant.

Chakra: disc, symbolizing the sun orbit and eternal time, the weapon in the hand of Lord Vishnu.

Chalanti pratima: the “walking Deities”, smaller Deities representing Sri Jagannatha, who usually go out of the temple in procession during many festivals. They are also called *viajaya murtis*.

Chalanti Vishnu: “walking Vishnu”, it usually refers to the king of Puri who is considered the direct representative and younger brother of Sri Jagannatha. The Maharis (Devadasis) used to be called *calanti Devi*, “walking Goddess” as wives of Sri Jagannatha and representatives of Lakshmidēvi.

Chamara: whisk fan (usually white) obtained from the hairy tail of the Himalayan yak; it is used for ritual worship and it is considered an emblem of royalty like the ceremonial umbrella (or canopy)

Chamundia: “the top” applied to anything associated with God, such as a palanquin, a temple etc.

Chandala: a degraded class of human beings who do not follow Vedic injunctions and rules, recognizable because they have dirty habits, do not bathe regularly, eat objectionable (non vegetarian) food and drink alcohol; the feminine form of the name is *chandaluni*.

Chandana: sandalwood or sandalwood paste; the sandalwood tree is considered very valuable as the wood has great medicinal properties, a very sweet smell (it is used for incense making) and a very cooling effect when applied in paste to the body; to make sandalwood paste, a piece of sandalwood is vigorously and patiently rubbed on a wet rough stone. Chandana yatra is one of the main festivals in Puri.

Chandua: a cloth canopy embroidered in applique that is tied over the Deities.

Chapa (Oriya): boat used during Chandana yatra.

Charamala: makeshift bamboo steps, used to facilitate climbing.

Chaudola: a tall palanquin (with four pillars) for carrying Sudarshana during the Chandan Yatra procession.

Chaula Melana: a special occasion when all the *utsava vigraha* Deities come together for some festival.

Chautisa (Oriya): a special type of poem called “34”, in which the each verse begins with one of the 34 consonants of the Oriya alphabet.

Chaya: (literally, “shadow”), name of Surya’s wife.

Chemedi dvāra: the north gate of the Sri Mandir, thus called because of the *chemedi* birds (swallows) who live there.

Chemedi patani: a type of *sari* used for the Deities.

Chenna: fresh cottage cheese that has not been pressed, usually served as a light meal.

Chenna poda: the typical Oriya steamed cheesecake made of *chenna* and sugar, with a brulee crust.

Chhera pahāra: the ceremony where the King of Puri cleans the floor of the chariots as a sign of humble service to Jagannatha.

Chitta: special jewels in the form of *tilaka* marks made of sapphire, ruby and diamond for Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannatha respectively; they are at the center of special rituals at the Sri Mandira.

Chitrakara: traditional painter, person from the painter community; see also *Patta chitra*.

Chora (Oriya): “thief”, sometimes used to indicate Krishna who used to steal butter from the store and love from the hearts of the cowherd girls in Vrindavana.

Chua: a small fruit from which the *chua* oil is obtained; the *chua* oil is one of the main ingredients for ritual worship and fire sacrifices.

Chuda (Oriya): rice flakes, considered uncooked even if it is briefly cooked before being flattened and dried; it keeps a long time and it can be washed and mixed with yogurt, unrefined cane sugar, bananas etc. for a quick snack or breakfast.

Chula: tuft of hair or *durbha* grass.

Chula: kitchen stove.

Churidar: a set composed by large trousers and a long tunic, sometimes accompanied by a light scarf, used by unmarried women; versions for men are also available on the market.

Chuti: “vacation”; this term is used for all the occasions where one is dispensed from working, whether it is one day of vacations when offices, schools and banks are closed, or the end of the work time within each particular day. It is opposed to *bandh* that means “closing down, blocking” as in strike or some kind of protest.

Chutighya: the period of ritual impurity (11 days) observed when there is a birth in the family. During this period social contacts are reduced to a minimum and the family members also abstain from visiting temples.

Circumambulate (English): “walking around” as a mark of respect; it is usually done in clockwise direction to show respect to temples, Deities, the sacred fire, etc.

Curd (English): yogurt, i.e. curdled milk; called *dadhi* in Sanskrit language, *dohi* in Oriya and Bengali, and *dahi* in Hindi.

Daha lila: the “burning” *lila*, applies to both the Holika festival and the re-enactment of the Davagni lila of Krishna (when Krishna burned the forest of Khandava to help the Pandavas build Indraprastha).

Daita (Oriya): a group of temple servants said to be the descendents of the original tribal worshiper of Sri Jagannatha. They are considered to be direct members of Sri Jagannatha’s family and take care of His body during Snana yatra, Anavasara, Ratha yatra and Nava Kalevara. More specifically, they are considered the descendents of Visvvasu, while the *Patis* are considered the descendents of his son in law Vidyapati.

Daitya: “sons of Diti”, relatives (half-brothers) of the Aditya (Diti is the sister of Aditi and both are wives of the powerful sage Kasyapa Muni, direct son of Brahma); they rebelled against the Supreme Lord and their godly brothers and became known as demons; they have considerable powers but they use them for their own personal selfish material power; sometimes in their dynasty, however, great Vaishnavas are born, like Prahlada and Bali, who are considered *mahajana*, great authorities on devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Dakshina: money offering or remuneration to a priest or teacher.

Dakshina: the southern direction, as in Dakshina dvara (the southern gate of the temple), Dakshina ghara (the store room on the southern side of the temple) etc.

Damaru: a small hand drum (double headed in a shape of two cones united at the top) that is characteristic of Shiva; it has a string with a small ball that alternatively hits each head of the drum when agitated.

Dana: donation, present, charity intended as generosity in sharing one’s wealth.

Danda: “stick or staff”, the ceremonial staff that *sannyasis* carry to indicate their social status (or better, lack thereof); Shankarite *sannyasis* carry a one-pointed staff called *eka-danda* (described as indicating the unity of all reality, i.e. Brahman), Vaishnava *sannyasis* carry a three-pointed staff called *tri-danda* (described as indicating the threefold reality, i.e. the Lord, His *bhakti* energy and His devotee).

Dandavat pranama: offering of respect by falling flat on the ground like a stick, see also *Pranama*.

Darbha (Oriya *durbha*): a special grass (the Indian relative of the European quack grass or witch grass, or *Agropyron repens*), with important medicinal properties, that is sacred to Lakshmidēvi and is offered to her and other forms of the Mother Goddess.

Darshana: “vision”, the sacred audience given by the Lord or His great devotees or great saintly personalities in general. Another meaning is “philosophical school of thought” as in the Sat Darshanas.

Daru: “sacred wood”, the special tree logs, marked with very auspicious signs that will be used to make the new Deities of Jagannatha.

Dasa: “servant” indicating a male servant, while *dasi* indicates a female servant (often with a derogatory meaning of “prostitute” as in *dasi putra*, “son of a maidservant”).

Dasa Avatara Vighraha: these *astadhatu murtis* of the ten Avatars of Vishnu are usually in the Dakshina ghara, and during Anavasara They are worshiped together with Bhudevi, Sridevi, Rama-Krishna and Madana-Mohana, next to Jagannatha, just outside the Anavasara pindi.

Dasa digapala: the ten Guardians of the Directions (see Digapalas), the Dasa digapala puja is the worship of these Guardians.

Dasahara: the 10 days period of Durga Puja; the name is an abbreviation of "*dasa vidha paap hara*", or "destroying 10 types of sins".

Dasa samskara: the ten purification rituals usually performed for human beings. They are also performed by the Daitapatis for the sake of Jagannatha during Navalakevera, after the *brahma padartha* has been moved.

Dayana: a plant similar to Tulasi, with small and very fragrant leaves, that is often offered to Sri Jagannatha and is at the center of the Dayana chori rituals.

Deha: body; the *siddha deha* is the spiritual body that the spiritual practitioner “develops” by spiritual practices (see *sadhana*) and/or by installation (*pratistha*) in order to remain situated on the spiritual platform and relate to the spiritual realities like in the direct worship of God.

Deity (English): see *Vigraha*.

Demigod (English): see *Deva*. The English definition of “demigod” is sometimes erroneously applied to the *devatas*, the gods or inhabitants of the heavenly planets who personify the energies of the universe. In fact in the ancient Greek lore a “demigod” is a “half-god”, or the powerful person born of the union between a god (a superhuman being from a higher sphere) and a human being, as for example in the case of Hercules who was born from Zeus and a mortal woman, or Achilles who was born from the divine nymph Thetis and the mortal man Peleus. The *Puranas* and *Itihasas* also have many examples of such demigods, as for example the five Pandavas or Bhishma, born from the union of a celestial being (god) and an ordinary human being. On the other hand, all the *Devatas* in Vedic lore are completely superhuman beings that are not generated with the help of a human being.

Deva: “Lord”, a close servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and a powerful administrator of the universe; *devas* or *devatas* incarnate and govern the principles of material nature; the term also sometimes applies also to the Supreme Lord, although more often in the form *deva-deva* (Lord of the Lords).

Devadasi: originally, female worshipers of the Deity; gradually their service was limited to dancing in front of the Deity of the Lord, then with the degradation of Indian society in Kali yuga they came to be treated as prostitutes. See also *Maharis*.

Deula: temple or main dome tower of the temple.

Devi: “lady” or “goddess”, a respectful form of address for women, including the various forms of the Mother Goddess. The popular local (Oriya) form of *dei* came to be used for the courtesans attached to the palace.

Dadhi pahandi: simultaneous procession of the Deities being carried in a row (Sudarshana, Balabhadra, Subhadra, Jagannath); as opposed to the *Goti pahandi*.

Dhanu mua: a special food preparation made with *khoi* (one kind of puffed rice) with *gur* (brown sugar) that is offered to Jagannatha during the solar month of Dhanu (Sagittarius).

Dharma: the capacity of rendering service by performing a favorable function for the benefit of the whole society, which is the essential quality of the human being; there are different temporary *dharmas* according to one’s material position and specific tendencies and qualifications, as well as an eternal *dharma* (*sanatana dharma*) which consists of serving the Supreme Lord faithfully; *dharma* is considered the first of the four purposes of human existence.

Dharma sala: a charitable institution that offers hospitality to pilgrims traveling in a holy place.

Dharma shastra: “the scriptures that define *dharma*”.

Dhoba: washerman, the feminine form is *dhobani*.

Dhoti: men’s garment, consisting in one piece of cloth that is draped around the lower body.

Dhupa: incense; in Puri parlance, it also refers to the worship ceremony, where the offering of sweet smelling frankincense (*jhuna*) is one of the main features; it represents the element air. See also *agarbatti*.

Dhyana: meditation, contemplation.

Diga bali: sacrifice offered to the Digapalas, the Guardians of the Directions.

Digapalas or Diggalas: Guardians of the Directors, “protectors “or personifications of the power intrinsically present in the space directions, they are routinely worshiped in tantric procedures.

Dig vijaya: “conquering the ten directions”, generally it indicates the preaching tour of an *acharya* who travels in the various directions to spread his teachings and challenge opponents in philosophical debate.

Dikhya (Oriya): see *diksha*.

Diksha: initiation to the practice of religious rituals and/or transcendental knowledge; also, the formal ceremony that is generally performed to formalize the mutual acceptance of *guru* and *sisya* (disciple).

Dina: day, as opposed to *ratri*, night.

Dipa: lamp, one of the important worship items in ritual ceremonies; usually a shallow clay or a brass bowl containing a cotton wick with *ghi* or oil; it represents the element fire.

Dola: swing, as in *Dola yatra* (the swing festival) and *Dola vedi* (the swing platform) inside Jagannatha temple (in the north-east corner) or outside the Sri Mandira (on Grand Road).

Dosa: a thin pancake made with ground rice and *urad dal* (black gram), characteristic of south Indian cooking and very popular all over India.

Dosha: fault, crime, illicit act, sin.

Drushti: Oriya for *drishti*, or “vision, sight, knowledge, wisdom”.

Durbha (Oriya): see *darbha*.

Durlabha: another plant (*ocimum indica*) of the Basil family, who is similar to Tulasi (*ocimum sanctum*) but has longer and narrower leaves; it is generally offered to the Mother Goddess (Durga). Also called *Vana Tulasi* (“forest Tulasi”).

Dvapara yuga: one of the four cyclic ages of the Universe, the second if counting from the most degraded (Kali) to the most pure (Satya), it precedes the present age of Kali.

Dvarapala: the guardians of the doors, generally in Vishnu temples these are the two doorkeepers of Vaikuntha, Jaya and Vijaya.

Dvi ja: “twice born”, a man who, belonging to one of the three higher castes (*brahmana*, *kshatriya*, *vaisya*), has received the spiritual initiation and is thus considered as born to religious life.

Ekadasi: a special day for remembering and serving the Lord; it falls twice a month in the eleventh day of the waxing and waning moon; usually devotees fast during this auspicious day (see also the section on the Vedic calendar)

Ekanta: the *lila* of Sri Jagannatha who goes to visit His wife Lakshmidēvi on Thursdays to enjoy private time with Her.

Gadhua (Oriya): bath.

Gaja mukta: a fabled special pearl that is said to be found sometimes inside the head of an elephant; it is considered very valuable and bringing good fortune.

Gajapati: “Lord of Elephants”, the dynastic title of the present King of Puri.

Ganges or **Ganga:** the most famous sacred river in India, it descends directly from the heavens after washing the feet of Lord Vishnu and falling on the head of Lord Shiva.

Ganika: society woman, i.e. an educated, expert and refined lady who appeared in public society; considered very auspicious in Vedic civilization, the *ganikas* are depicted on the walls of many temples.

Garbha griha: “womb room”, the inner sanctum of the temple, where the Deities reside.

Garuda: the powerful divine eagle that carries Sri Vishnu; he is famous for killing serpents.

Gauni (Oriya): female singer, one of the categories of temple Sevakas.

Gayatri: also called Savitri, is a very famous and auspicious *mantra* chanted by the followers of Vedic knowledge; it is related to the Sun and therefore is chanted at the three junctions of the day (dawn, noon and dusk) in honor of the cosmic sun, image of the inner sun.

Ghanta: small gong played during the ritual ceremonies in the temple, the *ghantuas* are the Sevakas who play them.

Ghara (Oriya): room or house, as in *ghara yajna* (ritual ceremonies performed within the house like marriages etc), *ghara loka* (members of a household), *ghara bhauni* (unmarried sister of the husband “who lives in the same house”) etc.; since Gundicha is used as a temple only during the Ratha Yatra, it is called Gundicha Ghara rather than Gundicha Mandira.

Ghasa Bidia: betel offering for the Deity.

Ghi: clarified butter, considered the best ingredient for cooking and lamp burning, also offered during fire sacrifices together with whole grains like sesame and barley.

Gīta Govinda: the most famous traditional poem (*gīta* means “song”), written in Sanskrit by Jayadeva Gosvami; it describes the ecstatic loving relationship between Krishna and Radharani.

Gopa: cowherd man or boy; it generally indicates the friends, relatives and devotees of Krishna in Vrindavana, who are mostly engaged in tending the cows.

Gopi: cowherd woman or girl; the *gopis* of Vrindavana are considered absolutely the greatest devotees and lovers of Krishna; the most important *gopi* is Radharani or Vrinda (Tulasi).

Gorochana: a special substance that is collected from the head of some cows after they are dead; it is believed to bring good luck.

Goti Pahandi: the procession in which the Deities come one after the other i.e. the *pahandi* of the second Deity starts only after the first Deity has reached the Simhasana.

Gotipua: “single boy”, a young male dancer of Odissi; *gotipuas* cannot perform in the temple rituals but only outside the temple, for example during Chandana yatra (on Rama Krishna’s boat), and in the streets and monasteries (*matha*) during festivals and functions.

Gotra: family or clan.

Govinda: a name of Krishna, who “gives pleasure” to “the earth, the cows, and the senses of the living entities” (all meanings of the Sanskrit word *go*).

Graha: planet or celestial body; there are nine major planets (*Nava Graha*) worshiped for auspiciousness in Hindu rituals, especially installed over the entrance to a temple.

Graha kumbha snana: bath offered to the Deities to appease their planetary influence (*graha dosha*).

Grama Devi: the particular form of the Mother Goddess that is worshiped in each village.

Griha: “house”, as in *grha stha*, “one who lives in a house” or married person, in *griha medhi*, one who “puts all his intelligence in the house or family maintenance”, and in *griha pravesha*, the ceremony of inaugurating a new house.

Gua (Oriya): betel nut, sometimes used in worship to symbolize or represent a *deva* or *devi*.

Guaramali: a golden necklace in the shape of long beads resembling betel nuts.

Guna: the three modes or qualities of material nature that influence all material creations: *sattva* or goodness, *rajas* or passion and *tamas* or ignorance (dullness, inertia).

Gupta: secret, hidden, concealed. The *gupta seva* is a secret worship, generally tantric in nature.

Gur: unrefined brown sugar made from sugarcane (also called jaggery).

Guru: teacher.

Habisa (Oriya for *havisya*): a partial fasting vow consisting in eating only rice without spices or salt; *havisya anna* is the purifying diet recommended for those who are engaged in austerity or religious rituals.

Hadi: sweeper, member of an untouchable caste.

Handi: cooking pot.

Hanuman: a direct manifestation of Lord Shiva, Hanuman appeared as a Vanara (a race of intelligent and powerful monkeys) and served very faithfully and lovingly the Supreme Lord in His incarnation as Sri Ramachandra; his adventures are narrated in the *Ramayana*.

Harada mali: a type of golden ornament, specifically a necklace of golden beads.

Hari: one of the many names of Sri Vishnu, “who takes away” sufferings, ignorance and illusion.

Hari Hara bheta: the meeting of Vishnu and Shiva, generally done during Shiva ratri celebrations.

Hasta granthi: “tying the hands together with a knot”, a basic part of Vedic marriage ceremony.

Havi: see *Yajna*.

Hindu: many consider it a misnomer created by the Arab Muslim invaders of India to define the populations who followed the Vedic *dharma* in their times; as Arabs were not able to pronounce “S” correctly, they mispronounced the name of the river Sindhu, beyond which lived those peoples who followed the Vedic culture.

Hiranyakashipu: a great atheist killed by the Supreme Lord in His incarnation as Nrisimhadeva, and father of the great devotee Prahlada Maharaja.

Homa: see *Agnihotra yajna* and *Yajna*.

Hula huli (Oriya): a characteristic sound made by Hindu women during auspicious ceremonies and events, it is produced by wagging the tongue inside the mouth while yelling.

Installation (English): the ceremony called in Sanskrit *prana pratistha* is the installation of the Deity, which means that the worshiper is calling the *tattva* of the Deity inside the form (*vigraha*) where the Lord will be worshipped; it can be a very complex and gorgeous ceremony or a simple one, depending on the means of the worshipper.

Jagaghara (Oriya): an association of men who practice gymnastics and body building.

Jaggery: unrefined cane sugar (*gur*), can be more or less rich in molasses and therefore darker or lighter in color.

Jala (Sanskrit): “water”, in Oriya *pani*.

Jala dana: the traditional method of offering water to the Shiva Lingam (or to Tulasi) during a special period (in the summer). An earthen pot is hung over the Lingam, and from a small hole in the bottom and water trickles down along three blades of *kusha* or *darbha* grass. Also see *Jalashayi*.

Jala krida: water pastimes or games; Sri Krishna enjoys playing in the water with His devotees.

Jalashayi: the ritual offering of a trickle of water from a suspended pot usually offered to Shiva or Tulasi. Also see *Jala dana*.

Janana: a kind of devotional song where the devotee pleads to the Lord asking for something.

Japa: soft chanting of *mantra* of Holy Names of God, counted on prayer beads or fingers; it is considered the best of sacrifices (*Bhagavad Gita* 10.25).

Jata karma: the birth rituals, also performed for the Deities on Their birthday celebrations.

Jatarangi bhoga: special food offering during any Yatra, consisting of Sitala bhoga.

Jati: the material situation acquired at birth, like family, ethnic group, race, and species.

Jatra (Oriya for *yatra*): festival, pilgrimage.

Jautuka (Oriya): dowry; in Vedic times the dowry remained exclusive property of the bride and could be used by her in times of distress like financial losses, disease or death of the husband, while now in the degraded social system the misunderstood tradition of dowry has become a source of sinful activities and untold miseries in this life and in the next. Instead of being a protection for women, it has become the greatest instrument and reason for exploitation, mistreatment and violence against women and girls.

Jaya and Vijaya: the two personal servants and door guards of Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha, installed at the entrance (called Jaya Vijaya Dvara) of the innermost room of the temple, where Sri Jagannatha resides.

Jhamy yatra: a special celebration in honor of the Mother Goddess, in which devotees walk on fire without getting burned.

Jhilli: a typical Oriya sweet made of *chenna* (fresh cottage cheese).

Jhimiri phagu: a special powder used to play *holi* for Jagannatha.

Jhoba kanthi: a special kind of hairpin for the Deities.

Jinisa (Oriya): things, stuff, objects in general.

Jiva: “living entity”.

Jnana: knowledge; when *jnana* becomes applied knowledge and wisdom, it is called *vijnana*.

Joda masa, or Purushottama adhika masa: the lap year that occurs cyclically. See also Purushottama adhika masa.

Jui (Oriya): son in law.

Jutika (Oriya): temporary contamination of the family members due to a birth in the family.

Jyestha: eldest, similar to *srestha*, “the best”.

Jyestha-amsa: “the eldest son’s share or part”, usually regarding the inheritance of property and privileges.

Kacha: glass bangles, generally used by girls and married women (not by widows). Red bangles are also offered ritually in Devi worship.

Kajal: a medicinal eye cosmetic made with the black soot of burnt castor oil generally mixed with camphor, it protects the eyes from the dust and the glare of the sun and is used also for children and sometimes by men (not only by women).

Kaka: father's younger brother.

Kakaa: "crow", as in *tirtha kakaa*, "a crow living in a pilgrimage place", a metaphor used to indicate a degraded and bad person who lives in a holy place, creating disturbances to good people and polluting the spiritual atmosphere.

Kala: eternal time, represented by the Chakra or disc, held by Vishnu in His hand as a weapon.

Kalasa: water pot, generally containing sacred waters, often installed on top of a temple tower; in ordinary rituals it is an auspicious pot filled with water, covered by a small branch of mango (with 7 leaves) and a coconut.

Kali: "the Black", a fierce form of the Mother Goddess.

Kaliya: one of the names of Sri Jagannatha, meaning "Black"; also, the name of a huge poisonous black serpent subdued by Krishna during His Vrindavana lila.

Kali yuga: an unfortunate period where human society falls into degradation and ignorance; the name does not come from Goddess Kali but rather from a masculine form of the adjective "black", meaning the personification of Kali yuga.

Kalpa: one entire day of Brahmaloaka, lasting one thousand cycles of *yuga* on this planet.

Kalpa vriksha or **Kalpa Bata:** "wish fulfilling tree", a spiritual tree that manifests in this material level sometimes as a banyan, a coconut tree, or similar auspicious trees.

Kama: "desire for pleasure" or "satisfaction of senses", one of the four purposes of human life; its rules and regulations are laid down in the *Kama shastra* or *Kama sutras*. Kamadeva or Kandarpa is also the demigod of love and is associated with the worship of Krishna with the Kama Gayatri.

Kamadhenu: "the desire-fulfilling cow", a divine cow born from the ocean of milk and considered the progenitor of all the cows of the world; she is said to supply not only unlimited quantities of milk but all other necessities: many sages and hermits of ancient Vedic times had a *kamadhenu* in their ashram.

Kapila: an incarnation of Sri Vishnu who appeared as the son of Devahuti and Kardama Muni, and taught the original Sankhya philosophy.

Kandarpa: the personification of erotic love, also called Madana.

Kanya: maiden, unmarried girl.

Kanya dana: "gift of a maiden", the most meritorious act of offering a daughter in marriage to a qualified man.

Karala chandana: sandalwood paste applied to the forehead, not only to the Deities but often also to Sevakas and devotees.

Karap (Hindi and Oriya): broken, bad, damaged.

Karatala: small brass cymbals used in musical accompaniment.

Karma: action performed according to scriptural regulations (as opposed to *vikarma*, meaning actions contrary to scriptural regulations); the fruits of one's actions.

Karma kanda: the division of the Vedas that deal with the religious duties for married men and the activities performed for the purpose of advancement and purification of individuals and society.

Karma yoga: action performed as service to the Lord, also called *akarma* (actions that entail no material consequences).

Karna bedha: "ear piercing", the ceremony where boys of *brahmana* families get their ears pierced for wearing auspicious gold earrings.

Karpura: camphor.

Karpura arati: offering of a lighted lamp burning with camphor.

Karta: "performer", the person who performs the sacrifices and rituals, or the head of the family (usually the eldest married son).

Kartika: a special month (October-November) dedicated to the daily worship of Krishna, also called Damodara vrata; it ends the Chaturmasya vrata (the four months of austerities observed by *sannyasis* during the rainy season). See also the section on Vedic calendar.

Kartri: the wife of the *karta*, see *karta* (the man who must be married to qualify as the head of the family and to perform house rituals).

Karusala: a workshop for the Deities, where carving and other work is done.

Kaunri baba: this generic name defines any person who observes the one month Sravana vrata in honor of Shiva. During the period of the *vrata* the devotee cooks separately, eating only pure vegetarian food, stops cutting nails, hair or beard, dresses in simple red clothes and observes abstinence. After performing the *sankalpa* (expressing the vow), the devotee goes to a river, performs a *puja*, then and collects some clean water in two earthen pots, seals them with fresh clay and fastens them to a long decorated stick to carry them. The devotee then walks barefoot to the temple of Shiva, where the water is offered for *abhisheka*.

Kaustubha: a special jewel worn only by Sri Vishnu, which distinguishes Him from His servants who have obtained a form similar to Him (*sarupya mukti*).

Kavi: poet.

Kavya: poem.

Khari: “curry”, or vegetable preparation cooked with a mixture of spices (called *masala*); a readymade mixture of such spices is also called *khari masala* or “curry powder”.

Khata seja ghara: the bedroom for the Deities.

Khechedi: a preparation made with rice and pulses, usually with spices.

Khiri: a rice and milk pudding, also called *payasa*.

Kirtana: loud glorification of the Supreme Lord, generally through songs with the accompaniment of music.

Kotha bhoga: dry food offering.

Krida: playing games.

Kriya: action to be performed, ritual.

Kshatriya: one of the four social classes (the second), composed by warriors, kings, administrators, and protectors of the land and the people.

Kshetra: field of activities, usually defining a holy land where auspicious religious or spiritual activities are performed, yielding a greater result than in other places.

Kula: family, dynasty, as in *kula purohita*, “family priest” or *kula devata*, “Deity worshiped in the family”.

Kumari puja: worship of an unmarried girl as representative of the Mother Goddess; it is very popular in Nepal but it is performed also in Orissa.

Kunda: pool, basin, pond (smaller than a *sarovara*).

Kunkuma: a red liquid used for auspicious decorations especially by married women.

Kusha: a special type of grass used in rituals as sitting mats, finger rings etc for ritual purposes.

Kutumba: family, blood relatives.

Lagi: in the ritual schedule for worship in the temple it means “bringing”, as in Chandan lagi (“bringing the sandalwood paste”), Prasada lagi (“bringing the offering of food”), etc.

Lajja (Oriya): modesty, shyness.

Lakshmi: the wife of the Supreme Lord, Goddess of Fortune and Beauty, also called Sri.

Lepa samskara: the wrapping of the body in layers, one of the rituals of the Navakalevara ceremony for the new bodies of the Deities.

Lila: playful activity performed without attachment to the results; all the activities manifested by the Lord and His pure devotees are in this category.

Landavarta: the area near Dakshina ghara, at the south opening of the Jagamohana.

Linga: “form”, generally used to indicate a sacred stone considered a visible manifestation of Lord Shiva, the male principle of the material universe; in popular language it indicates the male genital organ; in philosophical language it indicates the subtle form of the living entity who is inclined to enter in contact with material nature and therefore take a material body.

Loka: planet, level of existence, dimension etc, inhabited by a certain class of living entities.

Madala panji: the official Almanac and historical chronicle for the Sri Mandira; it was started in the Middle ages.

Madhuparka or *Panchamrita*: a traditional Vedic offering to respected personalities and guests; a pleasing mixture of honey, milk, yogurt, *ghi* and sugar.

Madhurya: the most intimate and deepest *rasa* (see *rasa*), called “sweet”.

Mahabhava: “great *bhava*”, or the highest manifestation of ecstatic symptoms of spiritual love.

Mahabharata: famous epic centered on the story of the five Pandavas and the war of Kurukshetra, which marked the beginning of Kali yuga.

Mahadipa: one big lamp lit on special occasions, such as Shiva ratri, Ekadasi, etc, on top of the temple dome.

Mahakhala: the area where the Deities are present.

Mahalaya: the last day of the fortnight of ancestor worship, also connected with the festivities of Durga puja.

Mahanadi: a great river flowing near Cuttack.

Mahanta: head of a monastery (*matha*).

Mahaprabhu: “Great Lord”, the name by which the people in Puri affectionately call Sri Jagannatha.

The followers of Chaitanya (Gaudiya Vaishnavas) call him Mahaprabhu intending that he was a living manifestation of Jagannatha.

Mahaprasadam: “great *prasadam*”, special spiritualized food that has been offered first to Sri Jagannatha and then to Vimala Devi.

Maharaja: “great king”, a title used generally to indicate the member of the royal family who is the present ruler of the kingdom; also within religious institutions, this is the title used to indicate and address important religious personalities.

Maharani: “great queen”.

Mahasnana: “great bath”, a purification ceremony of Sri Jagannatha’s temple that must be performed every time some cause of impurity appears to have manifested.

Mai: mother’s brother’s wife.

Maithuna: “sexual union”, a term generally used to indicate the depiction of men and women engaged in sexual activities, sculpted on the walls of temples for auspiciousness.

Majana (Oriya for *marjana*): “cleaning”, generally refers to ritual cleansing of some sacred area.

Majana mandapa: the hall of washing, where the smaller Deities take bath, it is near the larger Snana Vedi,

Makara chula: tuft of *darbha* grass of the Deities’ heads, used during Makara Sankranti and other special occasions.

Mandala: “area”, circle or sphere; it also applies to the *rasa mandala*, the circle of Krishna’s dance; also, a geometrical pattern closed within a square, symbolizing the throne of a particular Deity during *puja*.

Mandapa: pavilion, generally inside a temple or used for auspicious purposes (*kalyana mandapa*) where marriage ceremonies are performed.

Mandira: temple, a place where a form of God is worshipped.

Mangala: auspiciousness, as in *mangala charana*, an invocation of auspiciousness by remembering the lotus feet of Guru and God.

Mangala arati: “auspicious offering ceremony” (see *arati*), the first ritual ceremony in temples, just after the morning opening.

Mangalarpana: auspicious *vandapana* offering during all important occasions.

Manima: “O Lord”, the invocation or calling that the *pujaka* uses to invite the Lord for some special ceremony; it is also used to address the King.

Manohi: any type of food prepared for Jagannatha; the *sarpa manohi* (short for *samarpana manohi*) is the final offering of food to complete a ritual.

Mantra: a special sound vibration with the power to influence the mind (*mana*, “mind”, and *traya*, “protecting or liberating”).

Mardali: drum player in the temple, traditionally a brother of a Devadasi.

Martya loka: the world of mortals, as opposed to *svarga loka*, the higher planets of the *Devas*.

Maru: pollution due to menstrual blood.

Masika: menses.

Matha: religious establishment, generally with functions of teaching center and Ashrama.

Matula: the family lineage of mother's father.

Mausi: mother's sister, or any female friend of mother's generation ("auntie").

Maya: the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord.

Mehandī: a reddish brown dye obtained from the leaves of a plant (*Lawsonia inermis*) and used to color and strengthen hair and to draw designs on hands and feet; also called henna.

Mehena: a particular type of palanquin.

Mela seva: collective worship ritual.

Milana: meeting, union.

Mleccha: an ancient population described in the Vedas, who did not follow Vedic injunctions and came in contact with Indian civilization towards the end of the Vedic period; they are generally assimilated to the ancient Greeks.

Moksha: liberation, see also *Mukti*.

Mridanga: "whose body is made of earth", a special clay drum used in traditional music.

Mrutika: ritual contamination caused by death of a family member. During this period of 11 days, social contacts are reduced to a minimum and the family members also abstain from visiting temples.

Mudirastha: the representative of the king in temple rituals.

Mudra: special gesture of the hands taught by Yoga as the equivalent of bodily *asanas*; *mudras* are used in ritual worship but they also have physical effects on the body and the mind as the energy terminations on the fingers of the hands are held, touched and connected in different ways.

Muguni pathara: a special black stone traditionally used for making Deities.

Mukha: face, front, especially in "Sri Mukha", the lotus face of Jagannatha..

Mukhya: main, most important.

Mukti: liberation; there are different types of *mukti* but they all sum up as being free from material conditioning and identification. The five types of liberation (*mukti* or *moksha*) are *sarupya* (having the same form of the Lord), *salokya* (living on the same planet with the Lord), *sarsti* (having the same opulence of the Lord), *samipya* (enjoying the personal company of the Lord) and *ekatva* or *kaivalya* (merging within the Lord's consciousness).

Mula mantra or bija mantra: the "root" or "seed" *mantra* symbolizing a *tattva* (see *Tattva*) used during Tantric ritual worship and Kundalini yoga.

Naba: see *Nava*.

Nabhi Kata Mandapa: the hall where the umbilical cord is cut, during all the Janma niti rituals for the Deities.

Nacha (Oriya): dance.

Nachuni: «dancer», another name for a Devadasi dancer.

Naga: a celestial being, a kind of snake-man or dragon endowed with great mystic/magic/scientific powers, belonging to a people that lives below the Earth (see *Vasuki*), the feminine form is *Nagini*.

Naivedya: see *bhoga*.

Nakachana dvāra: the second gate of the Gundicha ghara, the queen of Chodaganga Deva (Gundichora) after whom the temple is said to have been named, pawned her nose ring (called *nakachana*) to build it.

Nanda Maharaja: Sri Krishna's foster father in Vrindavana.

Nandi sraddha: a special purification rite during major *yajnas*.

Narada Muni: a great *rishi* (sage), devotee of Lord Narayana (Vishnu) who travels anywhere to serve the Lord.

Narapati: "Lord of Men", a dynastic title of Kings.

Narayana: the four handed form of Sri Vishnu, "the refuge of all".

Nari: woman.

Nata mandapa: hall of dance, especially in traditional temples.

Nava (Oriya *naba*): “new” as in *nava yauvana* (Oriya *naba yaubana*) “new youth” and *nava kalevara*, (Oriya *naba kalebara*) “new body”; also “nine” as in *nava graha* (Oriya *naba graha*), “nine planets”.

Nava graha: the “nine planets”, or Surya (Sun), Chandra (Moon), Mangala (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Brihaspati (Jupiter), Sukra (Venus), Sani (Saturn), Rahu and Ketu (head and tail of the Dragon, also called lunar nodes).

Navagunjara: a very particular form of Sri Purushottama Vishnu that Arjuna saw during his meditation. This is a composite form, including a human arm holding the Chakra and limbs of a white cow, black elephant, tiger, rooster, snake and bird.

Neem or nimba: “bitter”, a special tree that grows in India (*margosa indica*) and has great medicinal properties; it is antiseptic and insect repellent, therefore it is the choicest wood to make Deities.

Netroscaba (Oriya for *netrotsava*): “festival of the eyes” (*netra*, “eyes”, and *utsava*, “festival”), the evening *darshan* of Sri Jagannatha before the Ratha yatra day.

Nijoga (Oriya for *niyoga*): categories of temple servants divided according to their service.

Nimantrana: invitation.

Niramish: vegetarian.

Nirmalya: “pure”, meaning the food and other articles (such as flowers) already offered to the Lord, and that can be accepted as *prasadam*; also dried cooked rice from *mahaprasadam*, which can be kept for long time.

Niti: system of worship, and knowledge thereof.

Nitya: eternal.

Niyama: regulation or norm, see also *yama*.

Nrushingha (Oriya for *Nrishimha*): an incarnation of the Supreme Lord in the form of half man and half lion.

Nyasa: a Tantric process for installing *tattvas* on and in the body of the worshiper.

Ointha: left over foods from someone else’s plate, considered very polluting and unhealthy, except for the leftovers from God’s eating plate (*prasada*, *mahaprasada*) that are considered very purifying (the same concept applies to the feet/shoes and the bathing water).

Omkaara: see *Pranava*.

Pabitra (Oriya for *pavitra*): “pure”, “holy”.

Paduka: footprints or sandals.

Padaka, *paduka* or *charanamrita*: the water offered to the feet of the Lord, the water used for bathing the Lord is considered very sacred.

Paddy: unrefined rice grains.

Paduka: shoes; generally silver or carved wooden shoes offered as an article of worship to the Deity, they are then touched by devotees in sign of respect. The term is also used for the footprints and for the footwash water of God’s manifestations or great saints.

Pahandi: the special ritual procession performed with pomp and royal emblems when the Deities leave the temple for Ratha Yatra. The *dhari pahandi* is for going out one after the other; as soon as one Deity leaves the next starts; the *goti pahandi* is the return procession, in which each Deity starts only when the previous one has reached Simhasana.

Pahili bhoga: a special offering done very early in the morning, starting from Dhanu to Makara Sankranti for one entire month, consisting in various preparations.

Pahuda: bed time for the Deities, when They retire for the afternoon nap or for the night.

Paita (Oriya), Sanskrit *upavita*: sacred thread worn by one who has received spiritual initiation (generally a *brahmana*).

Paka sala: see *Rosha sala*.

Paka tyaga: the particular time during an eclipse, in which no food can be cooked and no puja should be conducted.

Palanti: adopted, as in “adopted child”.

Pali: a Sevaka's rightful share of temple duties.

Palinki: a kind of palanquin used for processions.

Pana bhoga: a milk beverage with added *chenna* (fresh cottage cheese), banana, grated coconut, sugar, etc. It is offered to the Deities on various occasions, especially on the last day of the Ratha Yatra.

Panchamrita: a mixture of "five nectars" used in worship rituals; it contains milk, yogurt, *ghi*, sugar and honey.

Pancha mukhi: a name of Shiva, who has five Kalas (faces or manifestations), called Sayojata, Vamadeva, Aghora, Tatpurusha, and Ishana.

Panchanga pranama: offering of respect by bowing on the ground and touching the ground with five body parts (head, two hands, two knees), see also *pranama*.

Panchavarna muruja: a pattern drawn on the floor with powders of five colors for installing *kalashas*, around the *yajna kunda* etc.

Panda or **Pandita:** a learned *brahmana*, generally engaged in teaching Vedic knowledge or temple worship, see also *brahmana*. Also, a category of temple Sevakas (Puja Pandas).

Pandavas: the five sons of Pandu, called Yudhisthira, Arjuna, Bhimasena, Nakula and Sahadeva; they are considered as manifestations of Lord Shiva and actively assisted Sri Krishna during His descent and mission; in Puri the five main deities of Shiva are called "*pancha pandavas*".

Pani achua or **pani asprusya** (Oriya): "non touching water", those castes which cannot give water to *brahmanas*, as opposed to *pani chua* and *pani sprusya*, "touching water", or those castes which can give water to *brahmanas*.

Pani chua: see *Pani achua*.

Panjabi: a set composed by large trousers and a long tunic, sometimes accompanied by a light scarf, used by unmarried women; versions for men are also available on the market.

Papa: sin, crime, offence.

Para gotraya: belonging to another clan or family.

Parakiya: "woman belonging to another man" as opposed to *svakiya*, "one's lawfully wedded wife"; the term is also used to indicate the special transcendental love relationship of the *gopi* of Vrindavana with Sri Krishna, characterized by very intense sentiments.

Paramahamsa: a title used to honor exalted saints who only consider the positive qualities and activities of others; it means "supreme swan" and alludes at the swan being able to take only the milk from a mixture of milk and water.

Paramatma, or **Antaryami:** the Supreme Soul, or the Soul of everyone's soul, the direct manifestation of the Supreme Lord who resides in the heart of every living entity as the Witness and Teacher.

Param Brahman: "the Supreme Spirit", a name for God.

Parampara: tradition, generally used in regards to the transmission of the spiritual knowledge from teacher to student.

Paraphernalia: see *Samagri*.

Parasurama: an incarnation of the Supreme Lord who appeared in ancient times to overthrow the warrior class when they had become degraded.

Paribara (Oriya for *parivara*): household members or family members.

Parimanika darshana: the special Darshana in Sri Mandira, for which one pays a ticket.

Parityakta: "garbage", generally indicating non-vegetarian (objectionable) food such as meat and eggs.

Pashu: generally intended as "animal", the definition also includes those who took a human birth but have no culture or education.

Pashana vigraha: a sacred stone in which the Deity is worshiped.

Pati: literally meaning "lord, protector, husband". The term is used in names such as Praja-pati, Pasu-pati, Uma-pati, Lakshmi-pati, Yajna-pati, etc. Among the temple Sevakas categories, the *Patīs* are considered the descendents of Vidyapati (husband of Lalita), while the *Daitas* are considered the descendents of Visvavasu (father of Lalita), the first two worshipers of Jagannatha.

Patra: "container", a term used to indicate both a small (brass or copper) vessel to hold water for ritual worship. Also, a man who can be the recipient of homage and donations; the feminine form is *patri*.

Pattali sari: a *gamcha*-type cloth light texture in Abakasha time the Deities wear this *sari* before *snana*.

Patti dias (Oriya): *pattachitra* paintings that give Darshana to the devotees in substitution for the three Deities during the Anavasara period: Vasudeva for Balabhadra, Bhuvaneshvari for Subhadra and Narayana for Jagannatha.

Patuara: ceremonial procession.

Patta chitra: (literally, “painted leaf”), the traditional paintings of Orissa.

Payasa: a rice and milk pudding, also called *khiri*.

Peda mali: a garland made from sweet balls of condensed milk.

Phala: “fruits”, both in a literal sense (as fruits offered as food to the Deity) and a symbolic sense, especially of a ritual or religious activity.

Pilla: child, children.

Pinda: “lump, ball”, a type of food (balls of cooked rice) offered to the ancestors to guarantee their return in a human form, also the developing body of an unborn baby.

Pindi: a round pedestal for Sri Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshana to sit on.

Pith: generally sacred place established because of the appearance of an Avatara or some special event that happened in that place.

Pitha: a typical Oriya pancake made of ground rice, *suji* (semolina), or *urad dal*; the filling is made with *chenna* (cottage cheese), grated coconut, *gur* etc.

Pitri (Oriya *pitru*): ancestors, forefathers or departed elders of the family, *pitri loka* is the planet where they reside after being liberated by the worship of their descendents, *pitri paksha* is the fortnight annually dedicated to the worship of ancestors.

Pitru karma: worship of the forefathers performed by Jagannatha for His parents during Deva dipavali in the month of Margasira for three days, during these days the Deities wear the *sraddha vasha*

Prabha: the open throne used by the Deity.

Pracchanna: secret, hidden.

Pradosha: A special *tithi* (lunar period) that is sacred to Shiva and very auspicious for His worship.

Prahara: a certain point of time.

Prakriti: nature or energy (generally material nature), as opposed to *purusha*, the enjoyer of the nature or energy.

Prajapati: “protector of the living entities”, a title that is characteristic of the Father of this universe, Lord Brahma, but is also attributed to great rulers; the *prajas* are all the creatures that were born in the family or kingdom.

Pralaya: partial destruction of the world at the end of an age, usually by fire and water; *mahapralaya* is the greater destruction at the end of a longer era, after which the creation has to be manifested anew.

Prana: life air and energy; its control is taught in yoga as *pranayama* and its force is currently used in pranotherapy; it is not contained only in air/oxygen, but it is also absorbed from cosmic radiations and from the magnetic radiations of the living entities.

Pranama: offering obeisances, usually by prostrating on the floor in front of the Deity when visiting a temple or in front of a great saint; sometimes the quicker form is used by simply folding hands and slightly bowing one’s head; see also *panchanga pranama* and *dandavat pranama*.

Pranami: offering any amount of money as a sign of respect (even a small coin), usually to the Deity when visiting a temple.

Prana pratistha: “inauguration of the presence of the life force”, the ceremony in which the presence of the Deity is ritually called into the *vigraha* to accept worship.

Pranava or Omkara: the sacred syllable *om*, composed by the letters a-u-m (here the M is a nasal sound); it is the primeval sound vibration and the manifestation of spiritual energy of life (*prana*) in the material universe.

Pranayama: the yoga practice to control breathing and the energy that regulates the functions of the body and the mind.

Prasadam: food offered to God and thus spiritualized, it is distributed and consumed by devotees as His “mercy” or “kindness”; it also refers to any thing offered to God.

Pratiloma: reverse or improper, as opposite of *anuloma* (see *anuloma*).

Pratinidhi: representative, substitute.

Pravachana: philosophical, religious or spiritual speech for the edification of the listeners; see also Preaching.

Prayascitta: expiation of a mistake or sin, penance.

Preaching: spreading a particular teaching or knowledge among the general people.

Although the general meaning is applicable to the Hindu tradition of public philosophical and religious discussion, it is important to note that Hinduism does not proselytize, force a particular view or prohibit another, try to convert people or persecute those who believe in different opinions.

Prema: love, affection, used to indicate the highest stage of love for God.

Preta: ghost; *preta loka* is the planet or dimension of ghosts.

Priya: “dear”, “beloved”, with a short “a” is masculine, with long “a” is feminine.

Prithivi: Mother Earth.

Prokshana: a special purification ritual in Karma kanda.

Pua (Oriya for *putra*): son, male child.

Puja: ritual worship.

Pujaka or **Pujari:** priest engaged in ritual worship, the feminine form is *pujarini*. The difference between Pujaka and Pujari is that a Pujari also cooks for the Deity, while a Pujaka only performs the rituals.

Punya: merit or credit, obtained by performing a religious or compassionate act.

Purana: “ancient” scripture containing teachings about spiritual science inserted in stories of the Lord and His devotees; there are 18 main *Puranas*, the most famous being the *Bhagavata Purana*.

Purna: “full”, as in *purna kumbha*, “full pot”.

Purnahuti: the final offering of *ghi* into the sacred fire of the *homa*, that completes it.

Purnima: full moon day or night, considered very auspicious.

Purusha: enjoyer; the term is popularly used to indicate a man as opposed to woman (as in the sexual relationship the male mentality is based on enjoyment and possession, while the female mentality is generally based on giving), but in philosophical discussions it indicates the living entity (irrespective of the male or female body he wears) in relationship to matter.

Purushottama adhika masa: the special leap month that is observed once every 3 or 4 years, according to astrological calculations, no festivals are observed in this period; when the leap month happens to fall in the month of Asadha (this happens about every 12 years), the Deities get new bodies in the festival called Nava kalevara.

Pushpanjali: an offering of flowers presented by hand (usually by folded hands).

Pushpalaka: the Sevaka who dresses the Deities.

Rabri: condensed milk pudding.

Rahu: one of the nine planets (a dark one), in western astrology it is identified as Caput Draconis.

Rahu rekha: a sort of golden helmet or face frame for Jagannatha Deities intended to protect Them from the influence of Rahu; it is ritually offered to the Deities in the ritual called *Rahu rekha lagi*.

Raksha bandhana: a traditional custom by which a sister ties a small bracelet (usually made with thread and some decoration) to the wrist of the brother, signifying a request for protection. The festival of Raksha bandhana is celebrated on Raksha purnima, or Sravana purnima, also in temples. In Sri Mandira, the Mudirasta Sevaka binds the *patta suta* to Balabhadra’s and Jagannatha’s wrist in the name of Subhadra as Their sister.

Raksha kavacha: protecting armor or cloak.

Raja: vaginal secretion, including menstrual blood; also, an agricultural festival celebrated in the month of May/June to observe the “menstruation day” of Mother Earth.

Raja: king, *maharaja* means “great king” and is usually the simplest form of address for a King.

Rajaguru: the King’s family priest.

Rajas: also called *rajo guna*, it is the material quality of passion described in *Bhagavad Gita*.

Rakshasa: a demoniac human-like race that has always been visiting our planet since ancient times and often establishing military outposts and settlements as in the times of *Ramayana*; Rakshasas are traditionally expert in black magic, they enjoy blood, flesh and the suffering of other living entities; they can also mate with human beings.

Rakta: blood.

Rama: a name of the Supreme Lord, meaning “happiness, pleasure”; it usually designates Sri Balarama or Sri Ramachandra.

Ramaa (with long final A): a name of Lakshmi Devi, “who gives happiness”.

Ramachandra: the most famous *avatara* of Sri Vishnu, the perfect example of virtuous king and warrior; His story is narrated in the *Ramayana*.

Rasa: relationship with the Lord; there are five main relationships described in the *Bhakti smriti* as *santa rasa* (passive admiration), *dasya rasa* (active service), *sakhya rasa* (friendship), *vatsalya rasa* (maternal or paternal feelings), *madhurya* or *sringara* (conjugal love) which in turn is divided into *svakiya* (lawful marital relationship) and *parakiya* (paramour lover relationship).

Ratha: chariot, a beautifully decorated vehicle generally used for religious processions.

Ratha dahuka: the man who “calls the chariots”, or incites the crowd to pull the Ratha yatra chariots.

Ratha yatra: the Car festival or festival of the Chariots, originated in Puri for Sri Jagannatha.

Ratna: jewel, precious stone, also used as a metaphor for “most valuable person”.

Ratna vedi: the platform where the Ratna simhasana (the sitting place of the Deities) stands.

Ravana: a powerful atheist belonging to the race of Rakshasas; he was killed by Ramachandra after he kidnapped Sri Rama’s wife Sita.

Ritu: order or cycle of creation (as the manifestation of *dharma* on the natural level), also season or menses.

Rosha shala: the kitchen in Sri Mandira, also called Paka sala.

Rudra: “one who cries”, or “one who makes others cry”, one of the many names of Shiva’s destructive aspect; the *rudras* are eleven secondary manifestations of Shiva’s personality who are in charge of periodically destroying the universe.

Sabara: the aboriginal tribe from Orissa who originally worshiped Sri Jagannatha. Also *Saora*.

Sabaruni: the feminine form of *Sabara*, meaning a Sabara woman. During the Janmashtami celebrations in Sri Mandir, Jagannatha purchases berries from a Sabaruni.

Sacrifice (English): “sacred action” or work performed in service to the Lord, see also *yajna*.

Sadhava: “one who has a husband”, a married woman, one who is not a widow.

Sadhaka: one who performs *sadhana*, a regulated spiritual practice.

Sadhu: holy person, devotee, follower of Vedic principles, spiritualist.

Sak, or **sag**: a food preparation usually made with leafy vegetables but also with banana flowers or other vegetables; by extension, all leafy vegetables on the market.

Sakhi: female form for “friend”, while *sakha* is the male form; it usually refers to the younger *gopis* who are the friends of Srimati Radhika, the *sakhi bhava* is the loving sentiment of the young *gopis* for Sri Krishna.

Salwar, also *Salwar Kamiz*: a set composed by large trousers and a long tunic, sometimes accompanied by a light scarf, used by unmarried women; versions for men are also available on the market.

Samadhi: “constant awareness or intelligence”, complete and constant absorption in the transcendental consciousness (as in the topmost stage of yoga); also, the tomb monument of a great saint.

Samagri: the various instruments, articles and ingredients required for a ritual, *puja* or *homa*. Also called *Paraphernalia*.

Samarpana: presenting *mahaprasada* or *prasada* (food that has already been offered to God) to some Deva or Devi; this is done without the elaborate ritual usually required to offer food (that has not been offered before).

Samaya: time.

Sambhu ekadasi: the special Ekadasi when the 11th day of the moon (lunar *tithi*) falls on Monday.

Samhita: one kind of scripture, generally attached to a group of Vedic literature texts; also the collective name for the original Vedas.

Samprada Mahari: the Maharis who perform the external rituals on special festivals.

Sampradaya: “tradition”, generally intended as the teachings and practices in religious/spiritual life handed down from teacher to student, or from parents to their children.

Sampurna: complete, perfected.

Samsara: the cycle of births and deaths, attachment to material life, also “family life”.

Samskara: “impression” in the psychological sense, also a ceremony or rite of passage that is performed to mark the beginning of a new stage of life (birth, initiation, marriage etc) in order to mark the subconscious mind of the initiated with favorable impressions for his future life.

Sandhya arati: the ritual offering ceremony performed at sunset (see also *arati*).

Sankalpa: the vow or oath, or expression of the desire to perform the *puja* ceremony.

Sankarshana: “attracting towards”, the second of the original manifestations of the Godhead in the *chaturvyuha*; another name of *Sesa Naga*, also a name of Sri Balarama. The concept of Sankarshana is connected with the force of gravity that keeps all planets in their place.

Sankha: conchshell, an object that is considered very pure and auspicious and blown to invoke auspiciousness; the symbol of Lakshmi; also, one of the four symbols of Sri Vishnu (conchshell, disc, club and lotus flower). Shankara is one of the many names of Shiva that associates Him with the conchshell.

Sankhya: “counting, analyzing”; a scientific yoga system that analyzes and studies the various aspects of reality; it was originally taught by Kapila Muni, one of the *avatars* of Sri Vishnu.

Sankirtana: congregational glorification of the Supreme Lord, usually by chanting or singing God’s names, qualities, pastimes and forms.

Sankranti: the passage of the Sun into a zodiac sign, considered as a day sacred to Shiva.

Sannyasa: the renounced order of life, where one prepares for death by giving up all attachments, bodily identifications, personal motivations, material activities, and sense gratification.

Sannyasi: a man in the religious renounced order of life; today *sannyasis* generally belong to a religious Institution or Matha.

Sapa: curse, also *abhisapa*.

Sapta jihva: the seven tongues of Agni (namely Helakali, Karali, Manojaba, Sulohita, Dhumravarna, Sphulingi, and Visvaruchi); the *sapta jihva homa* is an offering specifically destined to Agni.

Sarasvati: the Mother Goddess as the personification of art, music, science and learning.

Sari: traditional dress of Indian women, it is one long piece of cloth draped around the body with several pleats in front. It is also sometimes used as a turban by the temple servants of Sri Jagannatha.

Sari bandhana: “tying the sari”, the traditional ceremony of dedication of a temple servant that is assimilated to the “marriage” of the temple servant (female or male) to the Deity.

Sarovara: lake or pool, generally artificial (tank), with large stone steps descending into the water for easier bathing; in holy bathing places they are often dug and paved.

Sarpa manohi (Oriya): short form for *samarpana manohi*, the final offering of food at the end of a ritual. See also *manohi*.

Sarupya mukti: one of the five types of liberation (*mukti* or *moksha*), which consists in obtaining a form that is almost identical to the form of the Lord. Almost, because there are a few special signs that distinguish the Supreme Lord from His associates who have a similar form: these are the Srivatsa, the Kaustubha, and the Brighu pada. See also *Mukti* and *Moksha*.

Sarvatra bhadramandala: a type of *mandala* (see *Mandala*).

Sasana brahmanas: a number of *brahmana* families that were originally established in some particular villages by a king, for the purpose of upholding Vedic culture in that area. The *sasana brahmanas* from the 16 main villages around Puri are traditionally members of the Mukti mandapa in the Sri Mandira.

Sasu: mother in law.

Sasura: father in law.

Sattva: the mode of goodness in material nature that favors maintenance and purification.

Satya yuga: the first of the four ages, characterized by virtue, wisdom and knowledge, in which all the religious principles were prominent and people were happy, see also *yuga*.

Sayana arati: the ritual offering ceremony just before the Deity retires for the night (see *arati*).

Sayana Thakura: “the sleeping Lord”, the special Deity form or *vigraha* who is put to bed in the night.

Sesha Naga or Adi Sesha: the divine serpent with thousands of hoods who is the first emanation of Sri Vishnu and serves Him by becoming His seat, bed, shoes, parasol etc; He is also called Sankarshana and is connected with the force of gravity.

Seva (Oriya *seba*): service to God, mankind or to an exalted personality.

Sevaka: sacred servant (male), also called *sevayat*; *sevika* is the feminine form.

Shakta: worshiper of the Mother Goddess, Shakti.

Shakti: “energy, power”, the feminine counterpart of the various manifestations of Godhead.

Shala: wife’s brother (considered an inferior position), it is sometimes used as an insult.

Shastra: revealed scripture.

Shayana Padi: a bed with mattress where the Deity sleeps.

Shila: sacred stone considered to be a direct manifestation of Sri Vishnu; there are Salagrama shilas, Govardhana shilas etc.

Shiva: the Lord in His form of father of the material world; also called Mahadeva, Shankara, Sambhu, Nilakantha, Bhuvaneshvara etc.

Shrine: sacred building or temple; usually a shrine is considered smaller than a temple and may be contained within a large temple.

Shruti: religious scriptures containing the direct words of the Lord, as opposed to *smriti*, traditional customs or elaborations on revealed knowledge.

Siddha: “perfect”, it may refer to anyone attaining the perfection of yoga, to naturally perfect beings and to a race of heavenly beings inhabitants of Siddhaloka.

Simha: “lion”, as in Simha dvara, “the lions’ gate”, the main (eastern) entrance to Sri Jagannatha’s temple in Puri.

Simhasana: “the lion’s seat”, the royal throne on which the Deity sits, also called Ratna Simhasana (bejeweled throne) or Ratna Vedi (bejeweled platform).

Sindhura: a red powder considered very auspicious, it is offered to the Deities and then touched to the forehead of devotees as a blessing; it is also used by married women to draw a mark on the parting of their hair; see also *kunkuma*.

Sishya or *chela*: disciple, student.

Sita: the Mother Goddess as wife of Sri Ramachandra; she is the personification of faithfulness and an incarnation of the Mother Goddess as the Earth.

Sitala bhoga: a non-cooked food offering that is presented first in the morning and in some particular occasions.

Sloka: Sanskrit verse.

Smriti: religious scriptures containing good instructions on how to worship the Lord, they are «memories» of the application of religious principles, as opposed to *sruti*, the scriptures of direct revelation.

Sola: one kind of spongy white reed used to make nice ornaments and decorations for the Deities; also “sixteen”, as in the *sola puja*, or the sixteen days of worship to Mother Durga.

Snana: bath, generally intended as the bathing ceremony of the Deities.

Soma: a special medicinal plant recommended by the Vedas to increase strength and health, it was offered during fire sacrifices to the demigods and consumed as *prasada* by the participants; today is it extinct or unknown.

Sraddha: religious ceremony to honor and please the deceased forefathers; also called *pinda* (more particularly, *pinda* is the ceremony intended to help the deceased forefathers to get a new good incarnation) and also the special food offering to the forefathers (consisting in cooked rice balls).

Srianga: the body of the Jagannatha’s Deity.

Srianga chandana: the application of sandalwood to the entire body of the Deities.

Sri kapada: a thin cloth used to cover the head of the Deities.

Srimukha: the face of the Jagannatha’s Deity.

Sringara: “decoration”, as in *sringara rasa*, the amorous sentiment that is enhanced by decorating the body; the *sringari* is the priests in charge of decorating the Deities. In Sri Jagannatha’s worship, the *Bada Sringara* is the best dress of the day, reserved for the evening darshan.

Sringara arati: the ritual offering ceremony after the ornate dressing of the Deity (see *arati*).

Srivatsa: a special golden streak or strands of hairs that mark the chest of Lord Vishnu; this mark is considered the residence of the Goddess of Fortune Lakshmi or Sri.

Stambha: pillar, usually erected in front of the main entrance of the temple; on top of it sits the *vahana* of the Deity.

Stri: women as a class.

Stupa: Buddhist monument, erected in memory of an important event, an important personality or for some relics (generally of Lord Buddha).

Stuti: prayer in Sanskrit language, usually in glorification.

Suara: the class of temple cooks.

Subha: auspicious, as opposed to *asubha*, inauspicious.

Suddha: pure, whereas *visuddha* means “very pure”.

Suddhi kriya: ritual for purification.

Sudra: one of the four social classes (*varnas*) mentioned in Vedic scriptures, composed of people who earn their livelihood by serving others and doing manual work/labour which requires only manual skills and no organizational skills; in Kali yuga the vast majority of the population are *sudra* by nature and need reformation through training and *samsaras*.

Sukhila bhoga (Oriya): dry food offering, usually fried sweets and snacks.

Suna (Oriya): gold, as in *suna vesa*, the “golden dress” of Sri Jagannatha.

Sura: demigod or *deva*.

Surya: the Sun as a manifestation of the Supreme Lord, also called Surya Narayana.

Svagotraya: belonging to the same clan or family.

Svakiya: the relationship with one’s lawful wife, as opposed to *parakiya*; see also *Rasa*.

Svami or Gosvami: “lord or master” or “master of the senses”, a title generally used in religious institutions to indicate a person in the renounced order of life (the female form of the word is *Svamini* or *Gosvamini*); in ordinary language “Svami” is the respectful address form used by a woman to indicate her husband, who in turn calls her “Devi”.

Svargaloka or Svarga: the higher planets of this universe, where the demigods reside; in Puri the crematorium is called *svarga dvara*, “the door to the heavenly planets”.

Tahiya: head gear for the Deities made of *solapith* and decorations (*durbha* grass and *malati* flowers) used when Jagannatha comes out from Ratna simhasana

Tamas or tamo guna: the mode of ignorance within the material nature (*guna*).

Tambula: a betel leaf wrap (a kind of mouth freshener with mild intoxicant properties) offered to the Deities during the worship ritual. Also called *pan*, the betel leaf wrap is very popular in India; people chew *pan* and then spit the red juice out.

Tanjan: the special silver palanquin used by the Gajapati Maharaja.

Tantra: “power”, the science of *siddha yoga* and the deep knowledge of material energy that enables the adept to influence the activities of nature; some tantrics devoid of sufficient knowledge may try to bypass the system by employing ghosts and spirits who execute their orders in exchange of some price.

Tarka: philosophical discussion in explanation of a proposition or text, also a commentary on scriptures.

Tarpana: “satisfaction”, an offering of oblations to ancestors or demigods.

Tattva: “reality”, a principle of existence, generally intended as a manifestation of the Supreme Godhead.

Tapasya: voluntary acceptance of some material trouble or difficulty for the sake of progress in spiritual life or acquisition of spiritual powers.

Tara suddhi: purification of the position of constellations in case of a bad astrological position, it is done by *puja*.

Tejas: “power, radiance, heat” usually in the spiritual sense; God has a perfect *tejas* but also individual souls can acquire *tejas* usually by dint of *tapasya*, worship, purification and knowledge.

Tera: large piece of cloth used to hide the food and the Deity (up to Their nose) from the onlookers during the food offerings to Jagannatha.

Thakura: “Lord”, name used to indicate God and also great powerful personalities or great saints; the female form of *thakura* is *thakurani*.

Thali: a plate used for offering, both for food offerings and for *arati* offerings; usually it is made of copper, gold, silver, brass or steel (in decreasing order of value).

Tilaka: a special design (made with sandalwood paste, *vibhuti* ash from the sacred fire, or sacred clay) on the forehead of a religious person, that defines his/her belonging to a group of spiritual lineage; the Shaivite *tilaka* consists of three horizontal lines, one over the other, while there are several Vaishnava designs, based on the “footprint” of Sri Vishnu, often accompanied by a Tulasi leaf. Each small variation of design identifies a specific religious group.

Tirtha: sacred bathing place, intended for material and spiritual purification; the idea is that the water where the Lord or His great devotees have taken bath is especially sacred and purifying; *tirtha yatra* means traveling to a pilgrimage place and *tirtha yatri*s are pilgrims.

Tirobhava: disappearance (death) day, generally applied to great saints and teachers.

Tithi: the lunar day, slightly shorter than the solar day; the Vedic calendar considers both the lunar and solar calculation (see Vedic calendar) and even the constellations (*nakshatras*).

Treta yuga: the second age in a great cycle of ages in the universe, characterized by a gradual decline in the good qualities in society.

Trimundi: three long sticks generally used for the crown (as for example the *sola* crown for various rituals).

Tulasi: a plant (*ocimum sanctum*) of the basil family, sacred to Sri Vishnu, considered the personification of Bhakti and also called Vrinda (in Puri she is called Vrindavati or Brundabati); her leaves and flowers are offered to the Lord regularly and her wood is used to carve *japa* beads and sacred necklaces; there are two plant manifestations of Tulasi, one called Krishna Tulasi (with purple flowers and darker green leaves) and the other called Rama Tulasi (with white flowers and light green leaves).

Ubha: Ubha yatra is another name of the Netrotsava ritual at the end of Anavasara, when Jagannatha gives His first Darshana and the eyes of the Deities are painted anew. As it falls on the Amavasya day, this is also called Ubha Amavasya.

Ucchista: “leftovers”, generally food; it is considered contaminated by the qualities and *karma* of the person who used it, so the “leftovers” of God or a great spiritual personality are considered to infuse (“contaminate”) with their qualities the person who consumes them.

Ulta: opposite, reverse, upside down.

Upabasa (Oriya for *upavasa*): fasting.

Upachara: articles or items for worship; ritual ceremonies include 5, 8 or 16 *upacharas* according to the complexity and opulence of the rite (see the chapter on ritual worship).

Upanayana: the ceremony where the sacred thread is awarded to the newly initiated boy; see also *Dvija*.

Upanishad: philosophical commentaries to the Vedas.

Upavasa: ceremonial fasting, a practice which “takes one to reside nearer” to God.

Utsava (Oriya *uscaba*): joyous festival.

Uttariya: a cloth used as an upper garment.

Vada vivada: philosophical discussion based on presentation of rebuttal to a faulty proposition. See also *Tarka*.

Vahana: carrier, usually the image of the carrier outside the sanctum of a temple identifies the Deity who is worshiped there. Each aspect of Godhead has a specific carrier who exemplifies special qualities of that manifestation; Vishnu’s carrier is the eagle Garuda, Shiva’s carrier is the bull, Durga’s carrier is the lion, Sarasvati’s carrier is the swan, Lakshmi’s carrier is the owl, Ganga’s is the crocodile, Yamuna’s the turtle, etc.

Vaikuntha: the spiritual abode of Sri Vishnu, literally “free from anxiety”.

Vaishnava: a devotee and servant of Sri Vishnu; a *vaishnava* is considered transcendental to all bodily and birth considerations, and not bound by the rules of mundane society.

Vaisya: the social class of entrepreneurs in all fields and on all levels, one of the four social divisions (*varnas*).

Vajra Mastaka: name of a Dvarapala usually on top of temples or houses.

Vamsa: royal dynasty, family or lineage.

Vanayajna jaga: going to the forest for *daru sandhana* (searching for the sacred wood) during Navakalevara.

Vandapana (Oriya *bandapana*): ceremonial waving of lights during the worship rituals, similar to *arati*, it is used to welcome a respected personality.

Varaha: the incarnation of the Lord as a Boar; He lifted back the Earth who had fallen from her orbit and sunk into the ocean of space; His Shakti is Varahi.

Varana puja: the ritual to formally install a priest to conduct a ritual. These priestly positions are called Brahma Varana, Acharya Varana, Svasti Vachana, and Chandi Varana.

Vardhani puja: worship of the main *kalasha* during all ritual performances.

Varuna: the ocean personified, father of Lakshmidēvi.

Varuna puja: worshipping the personification of water, an auspicious ritual done for most ceremonies.

Vasudeva: the first manifestation of Godhead in the *catur vyuha*; the name means “all pervading”, “omnipresent”, and also “pure goodness and pure existence”; also a name of Krishna and Balarama as sons of Vasudeva and Devaki.

Vasuki: the divine serpent king of the Nagas, a heavenly race of snake-men endowed with great scientific and magic knowledge that live on a planet below the Earth (some say “below the surface” of the Earth).

Vayu: the god of wind, considered the father of Hanuman and Bhimasena.

Veda: “knowledge”, the original and eternal knowledge, comprising all aspects of Reality; the main four Vedas are Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharva.

Vedanta sutra: the main philosophical body of knowledge, “the purpose of the Vedas”, written by Vyasadeva; many great realized teachers wrote commentaries to the *Vedanta sutra*.

Vedi: platform, usually raised, built for ceremonial purposes; the Ratna vedi is the throne of Sri Jagannatha, the Snana vedi is the platform where the ceremonial bathing of the Deities is performed at Snana Purnima.

Vidhi: see *Vidya*.

Vidya: knowledge; in Puri parlance, the ensemble of the rituals and their meanings according to the Tantric mode of worship (Dasa Maha Vidya).

Vigraha, or *Arca vigraha*: the representation of the Lord (can be made out of jewels or crystals, stone, metal, wood, clay, paint or mind) where the Lord may accept to manifest directly in order to accept service from His devotees.

Vijaya murti: a festival Deity that travels around as a representative of the main Deity of the temple; it is also called *chalanti pratima* (“walking representative”).

Vimana: airplane; also a part of the temple structure.

Vipralambha: the loving ecstasy of separation, when the lover is drawn to deeper and stronger meditation on the object of love due to physical absence, as opposed to *sambhoga* (“enjoying pleasure together”).

Virat rupa: the cosmic manifestation of the Supreme Lord

Visarga: a special letter of the Sanskrit alphabet, it conveys a kind of “echo” of the sound it is associated with; it is transliterated by “h” with a dot under it.

Visarjana: the ceremony in which the temporary *vigraha* (usually made of clay) or *kalasha* is taken to a water reservoir to “merge back” into the material elements of Nature at the end of the worship rituals.

Vishnu: “all-powerful”, a name of the Supreme Lord.

Vishnuduta: servant of Sri Vishnu, generally indicating the personal servants and associates of Sri Vishnu on the Vaikuntha planets; they have the same form of Vishnu (*sarupya mukti*) but without the special marks of the Lord Himself (*srivatsa, kaustubha*, etc).

Vrata (Oriya *brata*): a vow, usually a religious vow intended to increase the religious merits of the individual.

Vrindavana: the forest village where Krishna and Balarama manifested Their happy relationships and activities.

Vrishni: the dynasty to which Krishna’s father Vasudeva belonged.

Vyala: a composite animal, often modeled in sculptures decorating traditional temples in Orissa.

Vyasadeva: the writer *avatara*, he compiled the body of knowledge called Veda and instructed his disciples to expand it.

Yadava: “descendant of Yadu”, name of Krishna. Yadu was a great king who was the ancestor of Sri Krishna when He appeared on this earth about 5000 years ago.

Yajamana: the performer of a sacrifice.

Yajna: sacrifice, action performed in service to the Supreme Lord; also a name of the Supreme Lord as the personification of sacred activity.

Yajnasala: the area where the *yajna* or fire sacrifice is performed, it is a sacred space usually delimited by some kind of boundary to avoid intrusions and contamination. It is generally built as an open *mandapa* with a straw roof separately from the main building of a temple or house.

Yaksha: a race similar to the Rakshasas (see *Rakshasa*), originally from the area north of the Himalayas, also very expert in black magic and shamanism; the Yaksha culture mixed with Vedic culture in northern India originating some forms of Tantric knowledge, and later with Buddhist culture in Tibet originating the *vajrayana* Buddhism or Lamaism.

Yama or Yamaraja: “the binder”, also called Dharma or the personification of *dharma*; he is in charge of judging and punishing the sinners after death, and keeps with him the good people as his associates after their death; he resides in Yamaloka or Pitri-loka and his servants are called Yama dutas.

Yantra: graphic representation of God or His energies and/or aspects.

Yasoda mata: Krishna’s foster mother in Gokula and Vrindavana.

Yatra: festival or journey.

Yatri: traveler. A pilgrim, i.e. person who travels to holy places for religious purposes is called *Tirtha yatri*.

Yavana: an ancient population described in the Vedas, who did not follow Vedic injunctions and came in contact with the ancient Indian civilization; they are generally assimilated to the ancient Semitic peoples especially the Muslim invaders.

Yoga: connection, linking, of the self with the Supreme; control of the lower self by the higher self.

Yoga maya: the internal potency of the Lord, who governs the relationships of the living entities with the Lord.

Yogi: one who practices yoga in one of its many forms.

Yoni: “matrix”, popularly used to indicate the female genital organ, philosophically it refers to the “womb” of Mother Nature where all living entities are born; see also *linga*.

Yuga: one of the four cyclic ages of the universe, which rotate like calendar months; each is shorter than the previous ones (the most common calculation gives Satya 1,728,000 earth years, Treta 1,296,000, Dvapara 864,000, Kali 432,000); see also *Satya, Treta, Dvapara* and *Kali*.

The Hindu calendar

General definitions

The Hindu calendar is more complex than the ordinary calendar utilized today in most parts of the world as an International convention, because it considers both the lunar and solar movements and the position of the stars, which do not correspond every year. Therefore the new calendar must be calculated every year. For more references please consult the chapters on Festival.

Here are the meanings of the technical terms:

Solar calculation:

Sankranti: the day when the Sun passes on to a new astrological sign (*rasi*).

Rasi: astrological sign of the zodiac, in Vedic astrology this calculation considers the movements of the planet’s axis known as equinox precession so it is several degrees different from the Western standard astrology.

Ritu: season, calculated according to the inclination of the Earth in respect to the Sun.

It is interesting to note that in the Vedic calendar there are six seasons instead of the four seasons usually considered in the European calendar (winter, spring, summer, autumn). The six Vedic seasons are:

1. Vasanta Ritu (spring), comprising the two months of Chaitra and Vaisakha (also called Madhu and Madhava)
2. Grishma Ritu (summer), comprising the two months of Jyestha and Ashada (also called Sukra and Suciha)
3. Varsha Ritu (rainy season), comprising the two months of Sravana and Bhadra (also called Nabhas and Nabhasya)
4. Sarad Ritu (autumn), comprising the two months of Ashvina and Kartika (also called Isha and Urja)
5. Hemanta Ritu (winter), comprising the two months of Margasirsa and Pausha (also called Sahas and Sahasya)
6. Sisira Ritu (dewy season), comprising the two months of Magha and Phalguna (also called Tapas and Tapasya)

Lunar calculation:

Purnima: full moon

Amavasya: new moon

Pratipat: the first day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Dvitiya: the second day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Tritiya: the third day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Chaturthi: the fourth day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Panchami: the fifth day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Sasthi: the sixth day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Saptami: the seventh day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Astami: the eighth day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Navami: the ninth day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Dasami: the tenth day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Ekadasi: the eleventh day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Dvadasi: the twelfth day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Trayodasi: the thirteenth day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Chaturdasi: the fourteenth day of the moon (waning or waxing)

Sukla or *gaura* (*paksha*): the white fortnight of the waxing moon, from new moon to full moon

Krishna (*paksha*): the black fortnight of the waning moon, from full moon to new moon

Tithi: the lunar day, a little shorter than the solar day (this means that sometimes the two calculations are overlapping)

Recurrent celebrations

Ekadasi: The ritual observation called Ekadasi vrata is probably one of the most famous in the Hindu tradition, connected with Vishnu worship. It is said that most of the *avatara* of Vishnu appear on Dvadasi, and therefore devotees observe the *vrata* on the previous day, and then celebrate the festival. The devotee will fast for the entire day of Ekadasi and break the fast at a specific time (*parana*) on the morning of Dvadasi (the next day); the fasting can be observed in different degrees, the strictest even abstaining from water or from swallowing one's own saliva (called *nirjala ekadasi*). A milder degree of fasting consists in taking only water and *charanamrita* (the water from the bath of the Lord), and a milder degree still consists in only taking milk and fruits, preferably once a day only. Those who cannot observe this degree of austerity are required to at least abstain from all kinds of grains (rice, wheat, pulses and their derivatives) and if possible eat only once a day. However, many people in Puri observe Ekadasi simply by abstaining from boiled rice (*bhat*) that is usually considered the staple food in their diet, or take Mahaprasadam (including rice and everything).

The day of Ekadasi is ideally spent in chanting the Holy Names, reading Shastra (especially the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Bhagavad gita*), and performing other devotional services to the Lord. Ekadasi is observed in the Jagannatha temple (Sri Mandira) as follows:

On all Ekadasis: the Mahadipa is lit on top of the dome of the temple (after Sandhya dhupa), and *vandapana* is performed to Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra at Sandhya arati.

Every Ekadasi, Madana Mohana is given a special garland from Jagannatha and goes in palanquin to the Kalpa vata tree inside the temple compound, then after going around the temple reaches the Jaya Vijaya door, where He is offered *sitala bhoga* (fresh fruits) and arati before returning to His asana. The bodies of the Deities are smeared with *chandana* (sandalwood paste), and in the evening after the *puja a mahadipa* (big lamp) is placed at the top of the main dome, near the Nilachakra, by a specifically appointed servant who climbs up there. If Ekadasi falls on Monday (which is called Sambhu Ekadasi), Madana mohana and Lokanatha from the Bandhara ghara go out in procession to visit the Lokanatha Shiva temple (where He is offered fruits), and return to the Jagannatha temple. There He is offered *sitala bhoga* again at the Jaya Vijaya door, together with sandalwood paste and camphor lamp arati. If Ekadasi falls on Thursday, Jagannatha is decorated with golden arms and is dressed in the Bada sringara with a silver cane, silver parasol, and all the other signs of kingship. The Ekadasi ritual is suspended during the period between Rukmini harana Ekadasi and Bahuda Ekadasi, because Madana Mohana stays with Rukmini in the Vivaha mandapa.

Bada Ekadasi: there are four Bada (“big”) ekadasis: sukla asadha, sukla bhadra, sukla kartika, sukla magha. Asadha ekadasi falls during the Ratha Yatra and Jagannatha is offered the Sona vesha; bhadra ekadasi Jagannatha is offered the Lakshmi Narayana vesha; on kartika ekadasi the Tyakia vesha is offered to Jagannatha and Pralambasura vesha to Balabhadra; on magha ekadasi normal dress.

Trayodasi: Just like the Ekadasi vrata is observed to worship Vishnu, the Pradosha vrata is observed to worship Shiva. This very auspicious time goes from 16.30 to 18.00 of each Trayodasi evening. The origin of the Vrata is connected to the episode when Devas and Asuras churned the milk ocean to extract the Nectar of Immortality (*amrita*). As the churning first brought up a poisonous froth, Mahadeva accepted the difficult task to eliminate the poison by drinking it and keeping it in His throat, which is the reason why His throat became blue. At that time all sorts of wonderful things started to come out from the purified ocean, including the Nectar, and the Devas and Asuras rushed to get it without expressing their gratitude and appreciation for Mahadeva. This was a sin, and they soon (precisely on Trayodasi) realized it and begged forgiveness. Pleased, Mahadeva blessed them and danced between the horns of His bull mount.

The Pradosha vrata is followed in the following way: the devotee gets up during the *brahma muhurta* (around 3 am), takes bath and applies the holy ashes chanting *om sri gauri shankaraya namah*. Then start the Shiva Dhara (offering of water trickling from a suspended pot with *darbha* grass) and offer flower garlands and *naivedya* (milk, sugar, yogurt, rice, fruits etc). The devotee fasts for the entire day, sometimes not even drinking water or swallowing saliva, and keeps chanting the mantra *om namah shivaya*. In the evening between 16.30 and 18.00 the full Abhisheka is offered with a variety of substances including raw milk, ghi, yogurt, rice powder, sugarcane juice, *panchamritam*, lemon juice, sugar, green coconut water, cooked rice, sandalwood paste, etc. It is said that offering of these substances give respectively long life, moksha, good children, a melodious voice, freedom from debts, good health, wealth, freedom from fear of death, freedom from enmity, enjoyment, a royal position, and the blessings of Lakshmi Devi. During the Abhisheka, bilva (bel) leaves, kusha grass, flowers and camphor are also offered. After the Abhisheka *naivedya* and flower garlands are offered again, with prayers and *pranama*. Finally, the devotee drinks the *caranamrita* or *paduka*, and consumes the *prasadam*. A lamp with sesame oil behind the Shiva lingam is said to remove the bad influences of planets (especially Saturn), while a ghi lamp in front is said to bestow Jnana. Incense (*dhupa*) is also offered.

Amavasya: Sagara vijaya: Chakra Narayana from Sri Mandira goes to the sea shore at Chakratirtha, at the Chakra Narayana temple, where He is offered *bhoga*; then He goes to the area of ancient *bagicha* (gardens), where the temple of Tota Gopinatha is now, and He is again offered *bhoga*. Finally He goes to Yamesvara temple, accepts *bhoga*, and then returns to Sri Mandira.

Grahana: Eclipses: during the time of solar or lunar eclipse no rituals are performed in any temple, so all rituals must be completed within 12 hours before the beginning of the eclipse. During the period of the eclipse, there is *grahana puja* (in solar eclipse, Ketu is worshiped, in lunar eclipse, Rahu is worshiped) in Jagannatha temple (Sri Mandira). After the eclipse is finished, the Deities are given a Mahasnana and an offering of Vallabha bhoga, then the regular worship cycle is resumed. In the homes, people usually fast or only take uncooked food (because they do not start the fire); after the end of the eclipse they take bath, worship their house Deities and then start cooking normally.

Sankranti: On Sankranti, the people in Puri perform *homas* in their homes, visit Shiva and Hanuman temples; some fast by taking only Mahaprasada (once in a day).

Ravivara: On Sundays, after the Mangala arati and the dressing of the Deities, the Pushpalakas wipe the faces of the Deities with camphor before the morning bath ritual. During the month of Pausha, every Sunday there is a special worship for Surya, both in Sri Mandira and in people's homes.

Somavara: Usually on Mondays the devotees of Shiva fast or observe some special rituals or austerities. When a Monday falls on Ekadasi, it is called Sambhu Ekadasi and special rituals are observed in the Sri Mandira and in the Shiva temples.

On the last Monday of the month of Vaisakha the Saranti Somavara festival is celebrated at Lokanatha temple; there is a Rudra abhisheka and Bandhara Lokanatha goes from Sri Mandira to Lokanatha temple.

Mangalavara: In the month of Chaitra, women worship Mangala Devi every Tuesday; they gather in groups around one particular house, preparing a special sitting place for the Goddess in front of the house door, and then they offer ritual worship (*pancha* or *sodasa upachara*) and *lassi* as *naivedya*. Every Tuesday of the month of Chaitra at the Kalijai temple in Chilika a Jhamu yatra (festival of walking over fire) is celebrated. The Chikiti Raja also participates by offering arati to Kalijai Devi. On the last Tuesday of the month, a Bali (animal sacrifice) is offered to the temple of Kalijai.

Budhavara: Every Wednesday in Sri Mandira the Banaka lagi ritual is performed: the face of the Deities is painted fresh with herbal colors by a specifically appointed Sevaka called Datta Mahapatra. In the month of Bhadra, every Wednesday all women worship Bhu Dei Ma to get a male child.

Guruvara: On Thursdays (except on Ekadasi) Jagannatha goes to visit Sri Lakshmidivi for svakiya madhurya rasa lila (that is called *ekanta*, as Jagannatha is sitting alone with Lakshmi). The Deities of Madana mohana, Sarasvati and Lakshmi are taken to the Majana mandapa, where They are offered a bath, a special mixture of scents called *vanaka* (sandalwood paste, musk, saffron, *aguru* and *gorochana*), elaborate decoration, puja, and a ritual offering of turmeric, raw rice and *darbha* grass. The *vanaka* is then offered to Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra on the Ratna vedi. Two extra garlands are offered to Jagannatha, then after being put on Jagannatha's body, they are given to Madan Mohana and Lakshmi Devi. They go to visit Sarasvati's shrine (inside Sri Mandira), and then go in the daksina ghara (in the south of the temple) for privacy. Finally Madana Mohana is offered camphor and then again He returns to His asana on a palanquin. This ritual is not performed from Rama navami to Pusya nakshatra, during Devi puja, on Nandotsava and Dayana Chori. On Thursdays astrologers do not give readings, and in general people prefer not to spend money or to give away things (that includes throwing away old properties).

Sukravara: Every Friday within Sri Mandira there is a special worship at the shrine of Santoshi Ma. Also in all houses, girls and women perform the Santoshi vrata, fasting from sour foods (including raisins, mango, apples, fermented ingredients as in bread or *dosa*, oil, etc). In the morning, the devotee offers a complete *sodasa upachara puja*, with simple *naivedya* (dry roasted *chana* chickpeas and *gur*) and sing some *bhajan* and prayers, also remembering some miracles experienced by Santoshi's devotees. At the end of the *puja* some of the *prasada* is offered to cows and the rest is consumed. After 16 of these weekly *pujas*, a complete feast is offered to seven small boys and the vrata cycle is finished.

Sanivara: Some people fast on Saturdays and worship Kali Mata, Mahadeva or Hanuman. Sani (Saturn) is considered a manifestation of Shiva.

Janma Niti: Akhata lagi: the eve of the birthdays of Jagannatha (Janmashtami), Baladeva (Sravana Purnima) and Subhadra (Durga Ashtami) the Deities are offered puffed rice and *darbha*, then a camphor flame.

On the day of the constellation (*nakshatra*) of Rohini, Jagannatha is offered a special Mangala and Sandhya Arati. Similarly, on the day of the constellation of Sravana there is a special camphor Arati and a special Mangala and Sandhya ritual to Balabhadra, on the day of the constellation of Jyestha, Subhadra is offered new clothes, *vandapana* and special *bhoga*. Subhadra is offered special Janma Niti worship also on Durgashtami (which falls under the Vrischika *nakshatra*). On Jagannatha's birthday (Janmastami) also other Krishna Deities are offered the Janma Niti worship, namely Madana Mohana, Krishna (of the Rama Krishna couple) and Chakra Narayana. On Balabhadra's birthday (Bhadra Purnima) the small Deity of Balarama (of the Rama Krishna couple) is also offered the Janma Niti worship. On Subhadra's birthday (Durga ashrami) the Janma Niti worship is also offered to Vimala. On the birthdays of Nrisimha, Vamana and Ramachandra these specific Deities are offered the special Janma Niti worship. Janma Niti worship is also offered to Bhudevi (on Vasanta panchami for Sarasvati puja), Radharani (on Radhashtami), Sitadevi (on Sita navami), but not to Lakshmi.

Maha Snana: This special purificatory ritual consists in a full bath of the Deities like every morning, and a complete washing of the entire area between the Ratna vedi and the Jaya Vijaya door. It is performed any time when any place is contaminated by spit, blood, urine, stool, bone or leather, a dog or an impure person enters the temple, or in case the Deities are touched by someone who is not the pujakas. Similarly, if the food offering for the Deities has been contaminated in any way, all the cooked food is buried in a hole. Then the kitchen yajna is performed again, the fires are started again, and the entire offering is cooked anew. The full cost of the remedial measures is exacted from the person who is responsible for the contamination, or by the temple office.

Purushottama adika masa: Every 3 or 4 years, according to astrological calculations, a leap month (in a year of 13 lunar months is added to the other months, and is called Adi Purushottama masa. No festivals are observed in this period except Ekadasi. When the leap month happens to fall in the month of Asadha (this happens about every 12 years), the Deities get new bodies in the festival called Nava kalevara.

Ready reference with main festivals

The Oriya calendar year begins with Mahavisuva pana Sankranti (April-May), so the first large festival in the year is Chandana yatra. In the chapter of the Festivals, more information is given about the meaning, rituals and Veshas (oufits for the Deities) of each particular festival.

April-May: month of Vaisakha

mesha sankranti: also called Mahavisuva pana Sankranti. Hanuman jayanti, the appearance day of Hanuman. Beginning of Vaisakha vrata and of Tulasi jala dana. In villages people celebrate Hingula (Patua) yatra.

krishna dasami: the Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the *tirobhava* (disappearance day) of Vrindavana Dasa Thakura (writer of *Chaitanya Bhagavata*).

krishna ekadasi: Varuthini Ekadasi

amavasya: the Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the *avirbhava* (appearance day) of Gadadhara Pandita; festival at Tota Gopinatha.

sukla tritiya: Akshaya Tritiya. Beginning of Chandana yatra. Beginning of the construction of the Rathas. Appearance of Parasurama, Sasthi puja. Traditionally, people start important things on this day for auspiciousness. This is also the day when the farmers plant the paddy seeds.

sukla panchami: appearance of Adi Sankaracharya.

sukla sasthi: appearance of Ramanujacharya.

sukla saptami: Rishi Jahnu (father of Ganga) Saptami.

sukla ashtami: Niladri Mahotsava for Sri Jagannatha.; there is a *homa* and a thorough cleaning of the Simhasana. On this day there is the Gupta yatra within the Sri Mandira.

sukla navami: appearance of Sitadevi, consort of Sri Rama. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the appearance day of Jahnava Thakurani, wife and spiritual heir of Nityananda.

sukla ekadasi: Lakshmi-Narayana Ekadasi or Mohini Ekadasi. The worship of Lakshmi-Narayana is performed especially by widows.

sukla dvadasi: Rukmini Dvadasi (Rukmini jayanti). Some Sampradayas observe the appearance of Parasurama (Jamadagnya) on this day.

sukla chaturdasi: appearance of Nrishimhadeva; the Deity of Nrisimha travels to the Jagannatha Vallabha Matha.

puṛṇima: Chandana yatra puṛṇima, Buddha puṛṇima

On the last Monday of the month: Saranti Somavara festival at Lokanatha temple; Rudra abhisheka and Bandhara Lokanatha goes from Sri Mandira to Lokanatha temple.

May-June: month of Jyestha

vrishabha sankranti: as on all Sankrantis, in Sri Mandira there is a special *homa* and *graha puja* for Jagannatha. In this month the Thakurani yatra is celebrated in various villages.

krishna dvitiya: Narada jayanti.

krishna tritiya: beginning of Savitri vrata. On this day there is a special *graha puja* for Jagannatha; if any planetary position is inauspicious, Sankata Ganesha is worshiped.

krishna saptami: boat festival all over Orissa, end of external Chandana yatra.

krishna astami: *haldi pani* festival, washing the feet of the Deities with turmeric water.

krishna dasami: Rajendra Abhisheka, presentation of Rukmini's marriage proposal to Krishna.

krishna ekadasi: *apara* or *jala kruda* Ekadasi, beginning of internal Chandana yatra in Sri Mandira.

krishna dvadasi: special worship at Shiva temples. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the appearance day of Vrindavana Das (the writer of *Chaitanya bhagavata*).

krishna trayodasi: Shiva upavasa, pilgrimage around the shrines within Sri Mandira.

krishna chaturdasi: drawing water from the Suna Kua in Sitala's shrine within Sri Mandira.

amavasya: end of Savitri vrata.

sukla chaturthi: Uma Chaturthi and Shiva vivaha (starts).

sukla sasthi: Sitala Sasthi, the day celebrating the marriage of Shiva and Parvati. Great festival are held at all Shiva temples. Nagara parikrama: Shiva visits the houses of relatives (other temples) within the celebrations of his marriage.

sukla ashtami: end of Chandana yatra.

krishna saptami: *avirbhava* of Dhumavati (one of the Dasa Mahavidyas).

sukla dasami: Rajendra Abhisheka, Ganga Dasahara snana, Setubandha pratistha adhivasa (beginning of the construction of the Setu bridge by Sri Rama). Appearance day of Gangamata Gosvami.

sukla ekadasi: Nirjala Ekadasi, Rukmini vivaha.

sukla dvadasi: Champaka Dvadasi, Vana yatra.

sukla chaturdasi: Snana yatra adhivasa (preparations for Snana yatra), the water for Jagannatha's bath is drawn from the Suna kua within Sri Mandira.

jyestha puṛṇima: Devasnana Puṛṇima, Snana yatra, Hathi vesha, beginning of Anavasara.

June-July: month of Asadha

mithuna sankranti: starting from one day before this Sankranti, the Raja festival starts (and goes on for three days); it celebrates the menstrual period of the Mother Goddess.

krishna pratipat: Alarnatha Darshana at Brahmagiri.

krishna panchami: Phulari lagi for Jagannatha.

krishna dasami: Jagannatha is given medicine (*dasamula naivedya*).

krishna ekadasi: Yogini Ekadasi. A special Chandana lagi, called Khiladilagi, is performed for Sri Jagannatha.

krishna dvadasi: Raja prasada, leftover *chandana* from Sri Jagannatha is sent to the King's palace.

krishna trayodasi: Khali lagi.

krishna chaturdasi: Banaka lagi.

amavasya: Netrotsava, Nava Yauvana darshana. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the disappearance of Gadadhara Pandita at Tota Gopinatha. The Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavas also celebrate the disappearance day of Bhaktivinoda.

sukla pratipat: Ubha yatra, Gundicha marjana. Ladies start Nava dina yatra, a nine day fast to worship Jagannatha. On Panchami they take bath in Indradyumna Sarovara and distribute food to *brahmanas*. The ritual ends on Shasti.

sukla dvitiya: Jagannatha Ratha yatra begins.

sukla chaturthi: beginning of regular food offerings to Sri Jagannatha in Gundicha instead of Sri Mandira.

sukla sasti: Lakshmi vijaya or Kashta Baghna, also called Hera panchami as it is the fifth day from the beginning of the Ratha Yatra festival.

sukla dasami: Bahuda, return Ratha yatra.

sukla ekadasi: Sona vasha Darshana on the chariots outside the temple; Hari sayana; beginning of the first month of Chaturmasya vrata (some Mathas start from Purnima).

sukla dvadasi: Niladri Vijaya, Garuda sayana.

asadha purnima: Guru purnima or Vyasa puja, celebrated mostly in the Mathas.

July-August: month of Sravana

karkata sankranti: Dakshinayana yatra

krishna pratipat: beginning of Sravani vrata (carrying the water for Shiva) for one month up to Purnima. During this period, *jala dana* to Shiva lingam is also performed permanently.

krishna chaturthi: Angaraka Chaturthi, puja for Mangala graha.

krishna panchami: Naga Panchami.

krishna ekadasi: Kamika Ekadasi.

krishna chaturdasi: Chitalagi parva.

amavasya: Chitalagi Vesa.

sukla panchami: Jagulei puja, a festival for the Mother Goddess celebrated especially in the villages.

sukla saptami: Sitala puja (offering of *chandana* and *bhoga*) inside Sri Mandira, Tulasi Das jayanti.

sukla navami: Badi Nrsimha vijaya, Dakshina ghara Nrisimha goes to Jagannatha Vallabha Matha.

sukla dasami: beginning of Jhulana yatra (ends at Purnima).

sukla ekadasi: Pavitraropana Ekadasi., beginning of Jhulana yatra. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the disappearance day of Rupa Gosvami (prominent disciple of Chaitanya).

sukla dvadasi: Some Sampradayas celebrate this day as the appearance of Buddha avatara.

sravana purnima: appearance day of Balabhadra; Sudarshana visits the four ancient Ashrams. This day is also called Rakhi Purnima and Gahma Purnima. Raksha bandhana is observed in Sri Mandira and in the entire area. Raksha bandhana is the festival celebrating the relationship between brothers and sisters (not only blood relations but also friendly relations). On this day the brother goes to visit the sister's house and receives a Rakhi (a kind of bracelet symbolizing protection), they also exchange gifts and sweets.

August-September: month of Bhadra or Bhadrava

simha sankranti

krishna pratipat: end of Jhulana yatra; start of Kudrukuni upavasa, a vow observed by girls to get good husband or for the benefit of brothers.

krishna trititya: Bali trititya, married women worship Shiva by fashioning a Linga with sand ("*bali*"), also called Kajoli trititya or Angabetha.

krishna chaturthi: Ganesha Caturthi is observed inside Sri Mandira.

krishna panchami: Rahurekha lagi

krishna sasthi: Hala Sasthi (worshiping the *ayudha* of Balabhadra).

krishna saptami: celebrations for Janmastami start in Sri Mandira; Devaki santavana utsava.

krishna astami: Janmastami and Durga Janmotsava (appearance of Krishna and Durga); Mathura and Dvaraka festival.

krishna navami: Nandotsava.

krishna dasami: Vanabhoji vasha, Balakasura and Aghasura badha lila.

krishna ekadasi: Kaliya dalana Vasha; Madana Mohana goes to Markanda pushkarini for the enactment of Kaliya Damana lila, Garuda brings *amrita* for Madana Mohana.

krishna dvadasi: Pralambasura badha Vasha, Dhenukasura badha lila.

krishna trayodasi: Krishna Balarama Vasha.

krishna chaturdasi: Shiva upavasa.

amavasya: Saptapuri Amavasya, seven different kinds of Bhoga are offered to Jagannatha in Sri Mandira; Saptapuri yatra at Alama Chandi; Vastra harana lila at Sri Mandira.

sukla pratipat: Davagni lila at Sri Mandira.

sukla dvitiya: Chandra darshana puja upavasa, Nikunja lila in Sri Mandira.

sukla tritiya: Bali tritiya vrata upavasa (end of Bali tritiya vrata), Kuvalayapida lila in Sri Mandira.

sukla chaturthi: Sri Ganesha Chaturthi, the festival is observed in the entire region.

sukla panchami: Rishi Panchami, beginning of Lakshmi vrata, Mahalakshmi goes to Markanda Pushkarini. Nua khai parva festival (offering the first rice of the season)

sukla sasthi: Somanatha vrata begins (for Mahadeva) in Sri Mandira, Guru divasa, Saptamegha and Vajramuli puja. Sashthi Osha puja.

sukla saptami: Lalita Saptami, Durga sayanotsava, Dadhici jayanti.

sukla astami: appearance of Srimati Radharani, Durgastami vrata, Atibadi Jagannatha Das jayanti (the writer of Oriya *Bhagavata*); Sudarshana visits Yamesvara temple.

sukla navami: Tala Navami (making pancakes with *tala* fruits).

sukla dasami: Dasa avatara vrata, Mathura lila and Labani Khia in Sri Mandira.

sukla ekadasi: Parsva parivartana Ekadasi (Vishnu turns on the other side while sleeping), Lakshmi-Narayana vrata. Karama festival in tribal areas.

sukla dvadasi: appearance of Vamana, Garuda parivartana, Sunya (beginning of the new year of reign of the Gajapati), Vishnu shrunkala budha (festival of ritual bathing in the ocean). The Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the appearance day of Jiva Gosvami (prominent disciple of Chaitanya). Some Sampradayas calculate that this is the appearance day of Kalki avatara.

sukla trayodasi: Lingaraja parsva parivartana utsava, Shiva upavasa for Chaturdasi bedha parikrama (in Bhubaneswar). The Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the appearance day of Bhaktivinoda, with festival at Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Matha in Grand Road.

sukla chaturdasi: appearance of Ananta Sesa, Ananta Vasudeva vrata; end of Kudurukuni osha (a vrata performed by unmarried girls to worship Kudurukuni Mata), darshan of Viraja Devi abhista siddhi (in Jajpur). The Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the *tirobhava* (disappearance day) of Haridasa, festival at Haridasa Samadhi matha.

puernima: Indu puernima, Indra Govinda puja, Sri Bhagavata Purana janma.

September-October: month of Asvina

kanya sankranti

krishna pratipat: Visvakarma puja, beginning of the fortnight of Pitru sraddha.

krishna ashtami: Mula Asthami, the beginning of the 16 days Saradiya Durga puja (*sola* or *sodasha puja*), Sahasra kumbha abhisheka for Durga, Dvitiya Osha, Durga Madhava puja.

krishna navami: *anustaka sraddha* ceremony for the departed souls is performed in the houses.

krishna ekadasi: Indira sarvasammata Ekadasi upavasa.

krishna trayodasi: Shiva upavasa bedha parikrama, at all Shiva temples.

krishna chaturdasi: Mahalaya sraddha, Nabhi gaya Jajpur Viraja kshetra sraddha pinda dana (the Sraddha is performed on this day for the people of Jajpur only), Kavi Radhanatha Ray jayanti.

amavasya: Somavati amavasya, Mahalaya sraddha, beginning of the 9 main days of Durga puja, beginning of the Ratha Yatra of Viraja Devi in Jajpur.

sukla dvitiya: Yamesvara puja and Darshana.

sukla sasthi: Bela adhivasa, puja to the Bilva tree, preparing platforms of Durga puja.

sukla saptami: Maha Saptami, beginning of the 3 main days of Durga puja, Bali (animal sacrifice) in Vimala shrine and all other temples of Durga and Kali. Dutivahana Osha.

sukla asthami: Maha Ashtami, Sandhi puja.

sukla navami: Maha Navami of Durga puja.

sukla dasami: Rama Vijaya yatra, Dasahara festival, Aparajita Dasami for Durga, Durga Madhava Dasahara. Worship of the weapons. Appearance of Madhva Acharya.

sukla ekadasi: Papankusha Ekadasi, Vasani yatra (*visarjana* for Durga); beginning of Kartika vrata, Damodara Veshha for Jagannatha, beginning of Radha Damodara puja. *Tirobhava* of Gangamata Gosvami. *Tirobhava* of Krishnadasa Kaviraja (the writer of *Chaitanya charitamrita*).

sukla dvadasi: Padmanabha Dvadasi vrata.

asvin purnima: Rasa lila; Kumar Purnima, appearance of Kartikeya; Gaja Lakshmi puja; Pasapali (playing dice) between Lakshmi and Narayana inside Sri Mandira. Sudarshana visits the four ancient Ashramas. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the *tirobhava* (disappearance day) of Murari Gupta (writer of *Sri Chaitanya charita*).

October-November: month of Kartika

tula sankranti: Garbhana or Garbhadana Sankranti, people offer milk and Bhoga to the snakes in Lokanatha temple, auspicious rituals for starting the new cultivation of rice.

krishna pratipat: beginning of Kartika vrata, Radha Damodara Veshha, beginning of the last month of Chaturmasya.

krishna chaturthi: Dasaratha jayanti (Sri Rama's father).

krishna ekadasi: Rama Ekadasi.

krishna dvadasi: Go-vatsa Dvadasi, taking the cows into the fields.

krishna chaturdasi: Naraka Chaturdasi, celebration of the victory of Krishna over Narakasura.

kartika amavasya: Dipavali, Syama Kali puja, Poya sraddha (offering *dipas* to the Pitris).

sukla pratipat: Giri Govardhana puja, Go puja, Bali daityaraja utsava.

sukla dvitiya: Yama (Yamaraja) Dvitiya, Yamuna jayanti, celebrated especially at the Yameshvara temple; Bhratri Dvitiya (festival of the brothers), sisters offer *puja* for their brothers.

sukla chaturthi: Nagal Chaturthi, puja to Manisha Naga and Naguni.

sukla saptami: Sola sasana bhoga, the 16 Sasana villages offer Bhoga to Jagannatha.

sukla ashtami: Gostha Asthami, Go puja in Sri Mandira, Jagamohana bhoga is offered in Sri Mandira.

sukla navami: Amla or Ola Navami, Radha-pada Darshana in Sakhi Gopala and in Sri Mandira. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate Jagaddhatri (Lakshmi) puja.

sukhla dasami: end of Radha Damodara veshha.

sukla ekadasi: end of Kartika vrata, Hari utthapana Ekadasi, Thiakya ("standing") Veshha for Jagannatha.

sukla dvadasi: Tulasi vivaha; Garuda utthapana; beginning of Bhisma Panchaka; Pralambasura badha Veshha. Some Sampradayas also celebrate the Narayana vrata on this day.

sukla trayodasi: Bankachuda Veshha.

sukla chaturdasi: Adakiya Veshha or Trivikrama Veshha, in the night Dalikya Veshha or Lakshmi-Nrisimha Veshha.

kartika purnima: Saradiya Rasa lila, end of Kartika vrata and Radha Damodara puja; Tulasi-Salagrama vivaha (marriage); Bali yatra (especially in Cuttack and Konark), Boita bandhana festival (small boats made with banana bark are floated in the water); Raja Rajesvara Veshha of Sri Jagannatha; Kartikesvara puja; killing of Tripurasura by Lord Shiva; appearance of Nimbarka Acharya.

November-December: month of Agrahayana or Margashira

vrischika sankranti

krishna pratipat: Chada khai (breaking the fast from non-vegetarian food); the Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the beginning of the Katyayani vrata performed by the *gopis* of Vrindavana.

krishna panchami: Sri Kshetra parikrama (Kshetra bhramana utsava); Siddha Mahavira Naga Veshha.

krishna saptami: birthday of Sarada Devi, consort of Ramakrishna.

krishna asthami: Prathamashthami, the first born child of each family is honored and taken to the temple to get the Darshana of the Lord.

krishna navami: Kanji amla Navami, Sasthi puja in the houses (worshiping Sasthi Devi).

krishna ekadasi: Utpanna Ekadasi, also called Vaikuntha Ekadasi.

krishna chaturdasi: Deva Dipavali, beginning of 3 days Sraddha (Chaturdasi, Amavasya, Sukla Pratipad)

amavasya: Deva Dipavali Amavasya.

sukla pratipat: end of Deva Dipavali.

sukla sasthi: Pravara Sasthi, Odana Ghodalagi Veshha, warm winter clothes are offered to the Deities.

sukla ekadasi: Mokshada Ekadasi; advent of Srimad *Bhagavad gita*.

sukla dvadasi: Matsya Dvadasi (appearance of Matsya avatara).

puurnima: Pandu Purnima, Pandu Nrisimha (from Pandu ashrama) goes to Yamesvara temple. End of Katyayani vrata.

December-January: month of Pausha

dhanu sankranti, Pahili bhoga or Dhanu muha bhoga offerings begin, Lakshmidēvi goes to father's house in Chakratirtha. In Her absence, Vimaladevi takes charge of the kitchen. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas, who meditate on Jagannatha as Krishna, say that during this period it is Mother Yashoda who comes from Vrindavana to take charge of the kitchen. Dhanu yatra in Baragarh.

krishna chaturti: the Sarsavata Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the disappearance day of Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati.

krishna saptami: birthday of Vivekananda Swami.

krishna ekadasi: Saphala Ekadasi.

amavasya: Bakula lagi Amavasya, offering of the flowers of the mango tree; Sagara Vijaya, Chakra Narayana goes to the ocean beach.

sukla dasami: Samba Dasami; this day celebrates the episode where Samba, the son of Krishna, worshiped Surya. Special pancakes (*kakkerā pitha, bhaja manda, arisa, biri nadu, dhala manda, chakkuli*) as well as *puri* and *luchi* are prepared both in the temples and in the houses, as devotees do not eat rice on this day. Worship is offered to Surya at sunrise. On this day the followers of Sri Ramanujacharya celebrate his disappearance (*tirobhava*).

sukla dvadasi: Kurma Dvadasi, appearance day of Kurma avatara.

pausa puurnima: Deva abhisheka or Pusya abhisheka, Raghavendra puja.

January-February: month of Magha

makara sankranti: Uttarayana yatra; this day marks the Orissan new year; two days before Sankranti there is Dugdha Melani Yatra, one day before Sankranti there is Tanduladhivasa. Festival at the Kalijai temple (Durga temple) on Kalijai island in Chilika lake. Magha parab or parba in tribal areas.

krishna dvitiya: Raja Abhisheka (for the Gajapati Maharaja)

krishna tritiya: Navanka bheda, Mahalakshmi returns from father's house and is offered *makara chaula, mua, sakara, vidyapana* (as it is customary when a lady returns to her husband's house after such a visit). Such preparations were offered on Makara Sankranti.

krishna panchami: the Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the *avirbhava* of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, festival at Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math in Grand Road.

krishna shasti: disappearance of Jayadeva Gosvami (the writer of *Gita Govinda*).

krishna ekadasi: Sat-tila Ekadasi, Darshana of Lokanatha Mahadeva until Shiva ratri.

amavasya: Ganga sagara mela, Triveni Amavasya, Mahodadi snana, Viraja Devi janma utsava (in Jajpur).

sukla panchami: Vasanta Panchami, beginning of spring; Sarasvati puja. End of Godhalagi niti (winter clothes for Jagannatha). Phula melana, on that day five different types of flowers are offered to Sri Jagannatha. Dola Govinda, Lakshmi and Sarasvati go to the Jhulana mandapa in Jagannatha Vallabha Math. Panjika puja (worship of the Almanac). Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the appearance day of Vishnupriya Devi.

sukla saptami: Tila saptami, Chandrabhaga budha (festival in Konark). *Tirobhava* (disappearance) of Atibadi Jagannatha Dasa.

sukla saptami: Magha mela, on the bank of the Chandrabhaga river in Konark pilgrims assemble to take a sacred bath and offer their homage to Surya. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the appearance of Advaita Acharya (prominent associate of Sri Chaitanya).

sukla ashtami: Bhismashtami, Bhishma jayanti.

sukla navami: disappearance of Sri Madhvacharya.

sukla dasami: Manabasa and Sudasa Brata for Lakshmi Devi.

sukla ekadasi: Bhauma Ekadasi

sukla dvadasi: appearance of Varaha, Bhumi puja. Acharyabhisheka mahotsava at Radhakanta Math (Gambhira). Sri Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra wear the Padma Vesha.

sukla trayodasi: the Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the appearance of Nityananda (prominent associate of Sri Chaitanya).

puṇnima: Sri Jagannatha is offered Gaja uddarana Vesha; Maha magi agni utsava Purnima, on Simhadvara wood is burned; the Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate Sri Krihna madhura utsava.

February-March: month of Phalguna

kumbha sankranti

krishna panchami: the Sarasvata Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate the appearance of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati.

krishna ekadasi: Pankauddhara or Vijaya Ekadasi; cleaning all the Shiva temples from all old offerings.

krishna chaturdasi: Shiva ratri; *jagran* festival. Asta Sambhu puja.

Shiva ratri is a huge festival celebrated all over Purushottama kshetra; for more information about the celebrations in Jagannatha Puri temple see the chapter on festivals. The most important Shiva temple in Puri is Lokanatha mandir, here celebrations start on Ekadasi and continue until Amavasya.

In Bhubaneswar special celebrations are held in Lingaraja temple.

amavasya: Phalguna Amavasya

sukla dvitiya: birthday of Sri Ramakrishna.

sukla dasami: Phagu Dasami; Benta shikara; Sri Jagannatha plays *holi*, the *chalanti pratima* Deities go to Jagannatha Vallabha Matha; Sri Mandira pratistha adhivasa (anniversary of the inauguration of Sri Mandira). Dola yatra begins.

sukla ekadasi: Papanasini Ekadasi.

sukla dvadasi: Some Sampradayas observe this day as Nrisimha vrata.

On a Phalguna krishna Dvadasi that falls in a particular astrological position, Puri celebrates Govinda Maha Dvadasi, the day when the Daru Brahman arrived at Chakra Tirtha, in the times of king Indradyumna. The last time was in 1962, next is 2009. Many pilgrims and *sadhus* converge on Puri, and before Mangala arati (in the very early morning, between 4 and 6 am) they take bath in the ocean and/or in the others of the Pancha tirthas, and then go to the temple for Jagannatha Darshana.

sukla chaturdasi: Agni utsava, Holika (killing of Hiranyakasipu's sister), also called burning of Mesha Rakshasa.

puṇnima: Dola yatra, or Dola Purnima. Chaitanya jayanti. Publication of the new Almanac (*panjika*).

March-April: month of Chaitra

mina sankranti

During the month of Chaitra, villagers observe the Chaitra parva or Uda parva, and the Baseli puja. At Taratarini temple, the Taratarini Mela is held. Every Tuesday of the month of Chaitra at Chilika, Kalijai temple, a Jhamu yatra (festival of walking over fire) is celebrated. The Chikiti Raja also participates offering Arati to Kalijai Devi. On the last Tuesday of the month, a Bali (animal sacrifice) is offered to the temple.

krishna pratipat: Holi begins.

krishna panchami: Pancha dola, in villages the Deities are carried in five palanquins.

krishna ekadasi: Papamochani Ekadasi.

krishna dvadasi: at midnight, Varuni Snana in Svetaganga.

amavasya: Chaitra Amavasya.

sukla pratipat: beginning of Vasanti Navaratri puja for Durga.

sukla panchami: Jhamu yatra (walking on fire) for Kakatpur Mangala; *avirbhava* of Sri Ramanuja Acharya.

sukla sasti: Chaitra Gundicha yatra.

sukla astami: Ashoka Astami, Lingaraja Ratha yatra at Bhubaneswar; Lokanatha Ratha yatra at Puri. On this day, Sri Jagannatha wears *ashoka* flowers. Last day of Vasanta Navaratri, Durgashtami.

sukla navami: appearance of Sri Ramachandra, Sahi yatra begins for 9 days. Rama, Lakshmana and Sita go to the Jagannatha Vallabha Matha.

sukla dasami: In Nayagarh, Sri Raghunatha wears Tadaka Vesha, celebrating the killing of Tadakasura.

sukla ekadasi: Sita vivaha, Kamada Ekadasi.

sukla dvadasi: Vamana vrata.

sukla chaturdasi: Damanaka yatra or Dayana lagi. Rama Krishna go to the Jagannatha Vallabha Matha to get *dayana* plants. Dayana chori is also observed at Ghorodia near Pipli.

puernima: Gaudiya Vaishnavas celebrate Sri Krishna vasanta rasa and Sri Balarama rasayatra. All over Orissa, the village people celebrate Baseli puja (“dummy horse dance”) until Vaisakhi Purnima.

Note:

The following pages show a number of useful maps for the practical orientation of Orissa and Puri, as well as the streets and temples within Puri, the external parikrama of the Sri Mandira (the temple of Jagannatha in Puri) as well as the position of the various shrines within the Sri Mandira. There is more useful information that we could not add within this volume because the number of pages would have become excessive. We are therefore producing them separately, in the most appropriate form available.

So to better appreciate the information contained in the present book, you may request from our Research Center the following materials:

*Virtual Tour of Puri: a slide shown with spoken explanations (DVD format)

*comprehensive Index of the present book

* updated practical information and contact numbers about the appropriate accommodation available, the pure vegetarian restaurants, the transportation network (flights, trains, bus service, taxis and private car rentals, autorikshas, cycle rikshas), tour operators, handicrafts centers or experts, emergency numbers, etc
We are also planning to produce further printed and multimedia publications on the following:

* The Kitchen of Lord Jagannatha: a detailed description of the traditional food preparations offered in Sri Mandir

* Svarnadri Kshetra: a Pilgrimage Guide to Bhubaneswar

* Viraja Kshetra: a Pilgrimage Guide to Jajpur

* Tantric Culture at Global Level in Ancient Times (DVD presentation)

* Vimanas and Other Wonders of Vedic Civilization

* The Awakening of the Mother

* Living Bhagavad gita: A Translation for the Third Millennium

* Mind Training: A Simple Course on Meditation and Yoga

* Integration of Past Lives Memories

* The Highest Dharma: Compared Theologies

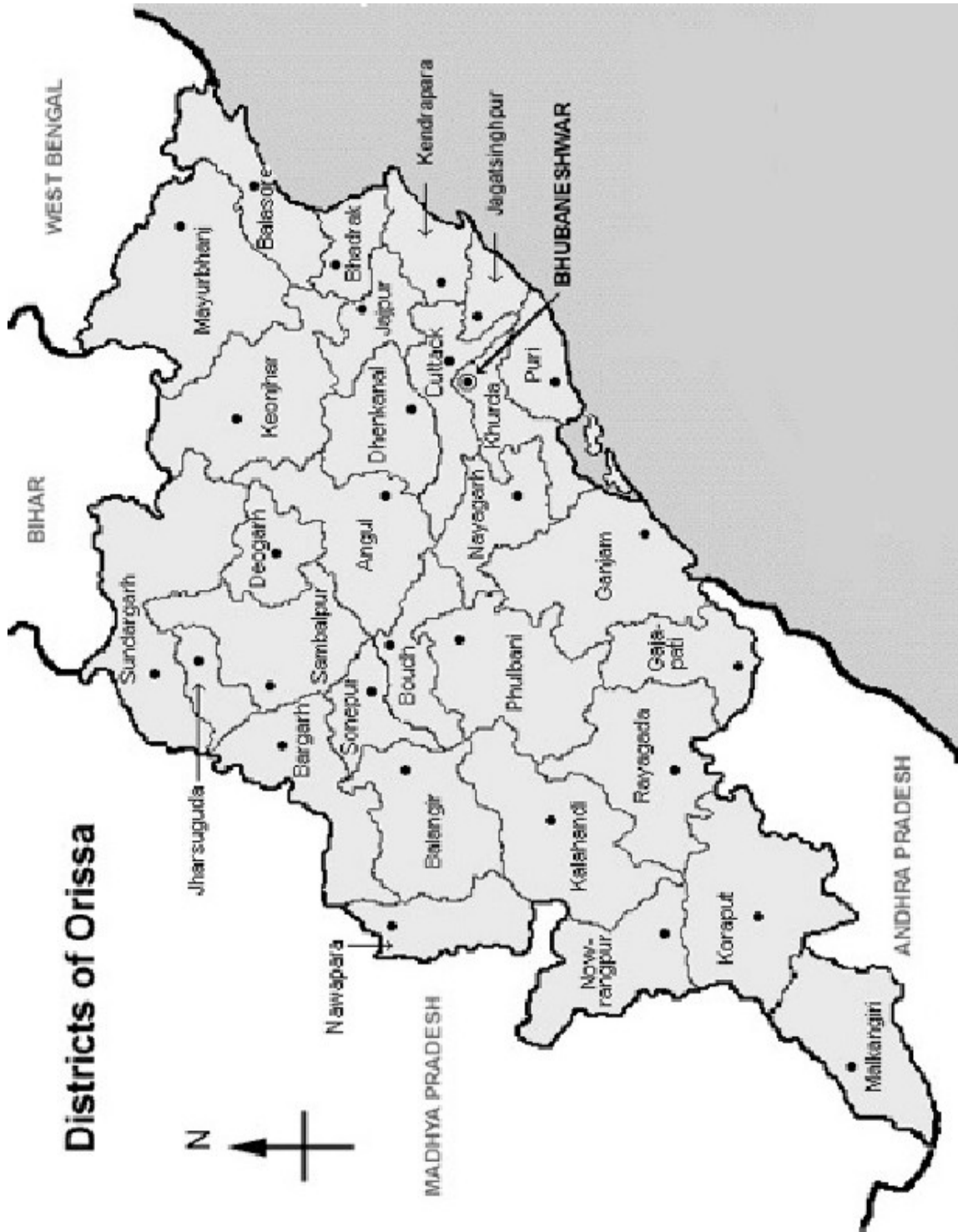
* The Book of Knowledge

The following publications will also be reprinted soon:

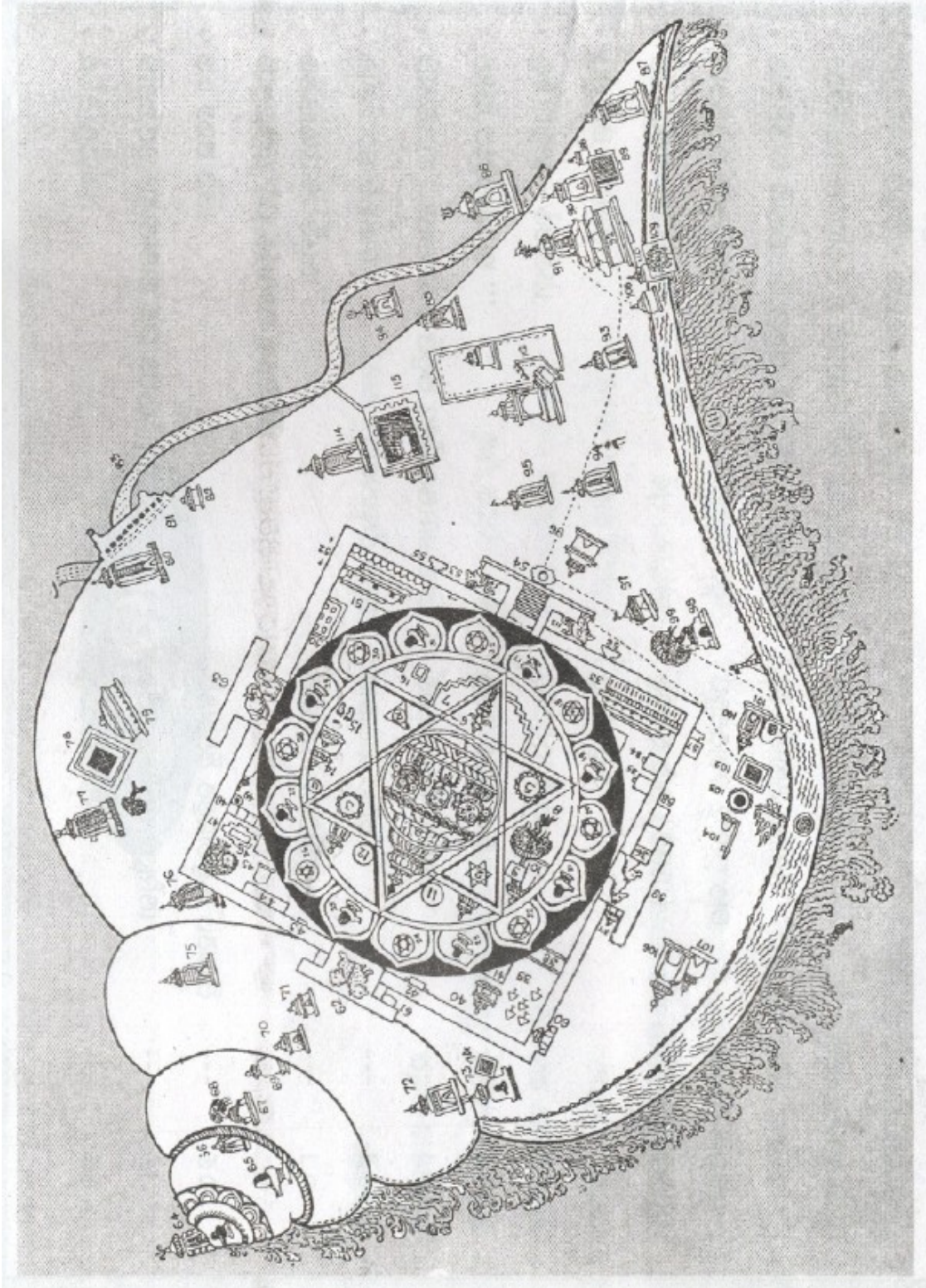
* The Power of Kalpa Vriksha (edited)

* Prasnotara ratna malika (edited), a translation of Sri Adi Shankara’s text

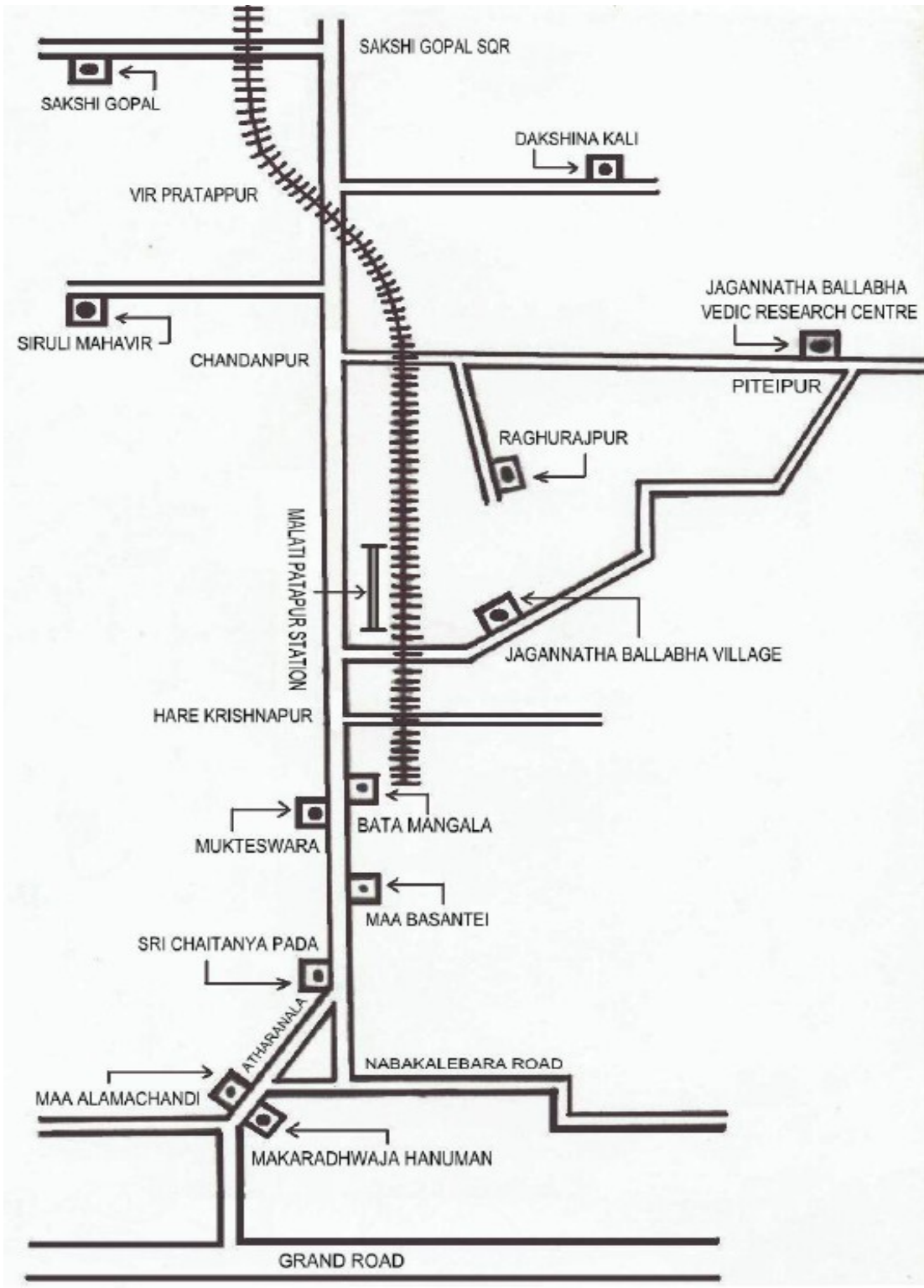


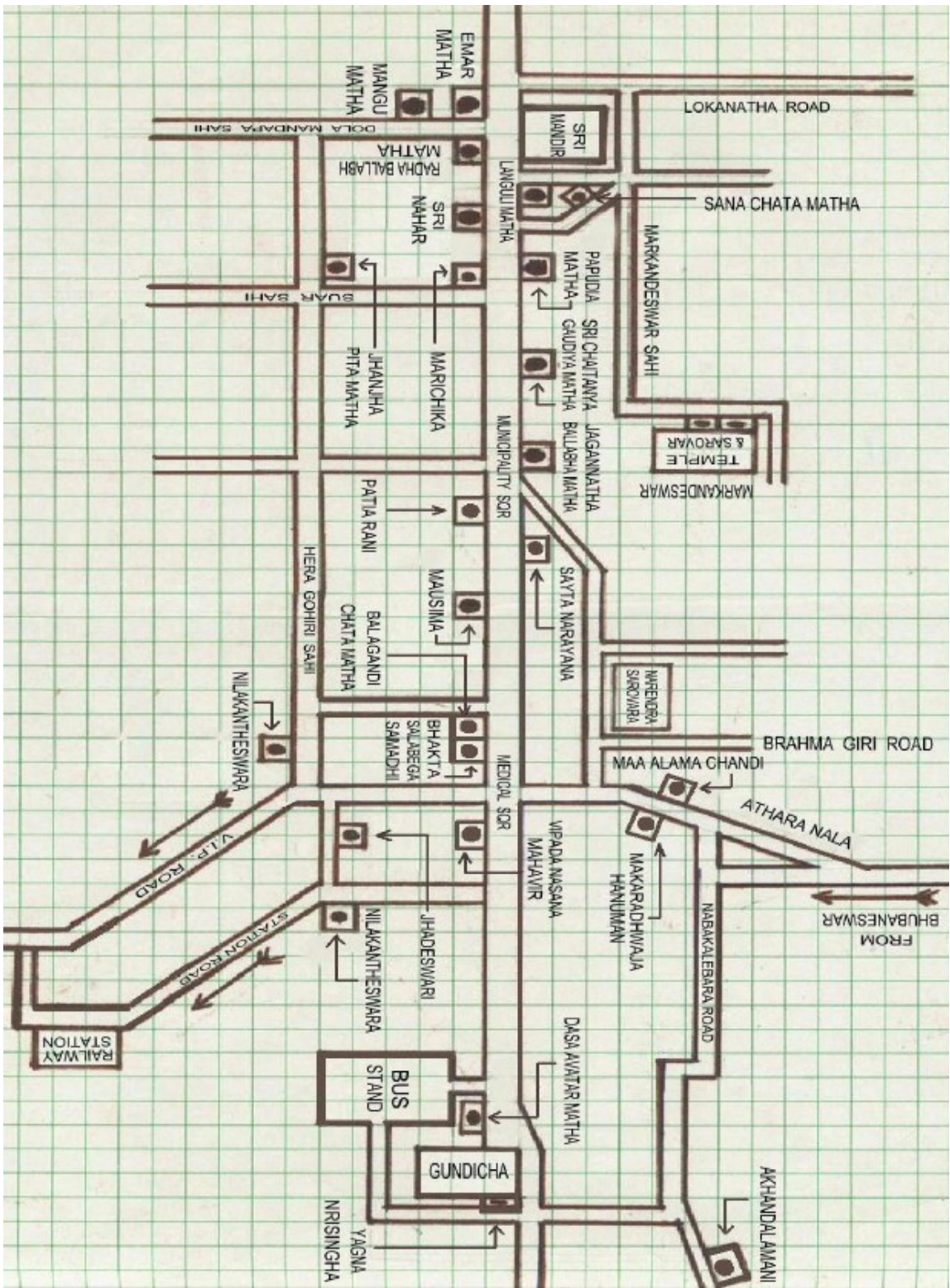


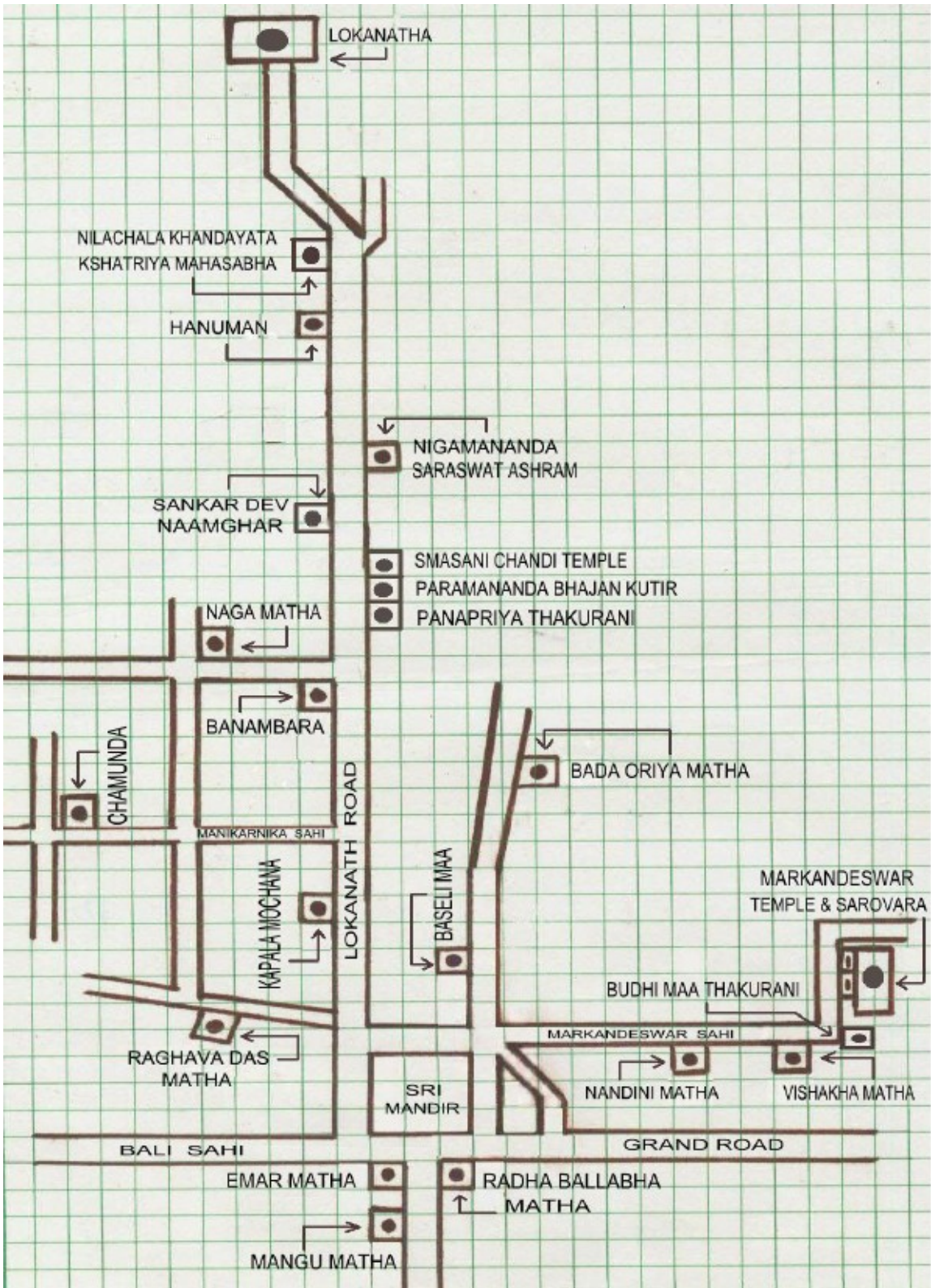
This map of the State of Orissa shows the Districts and can be used as a reference for the geographical distances of the various important places in the region.

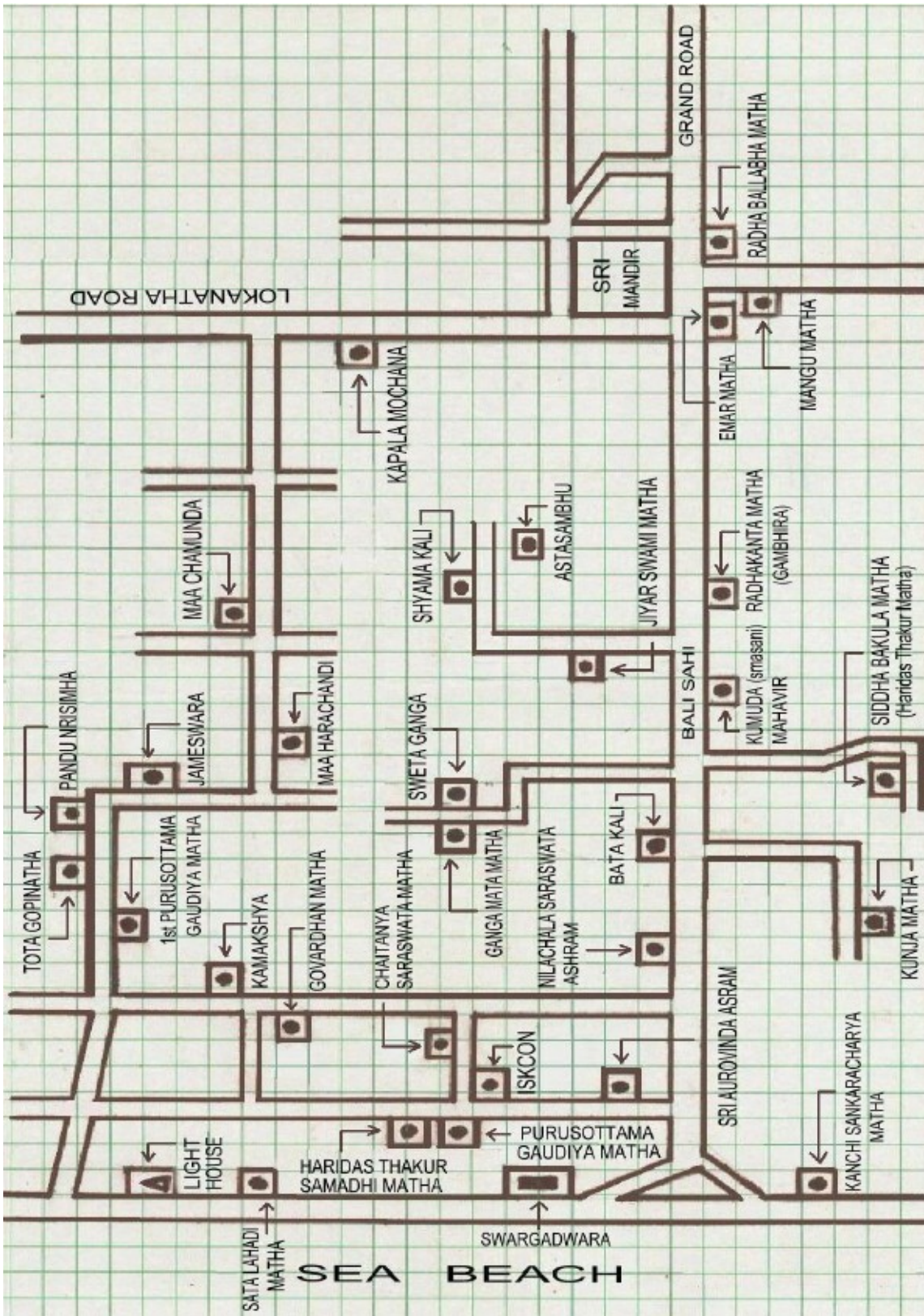


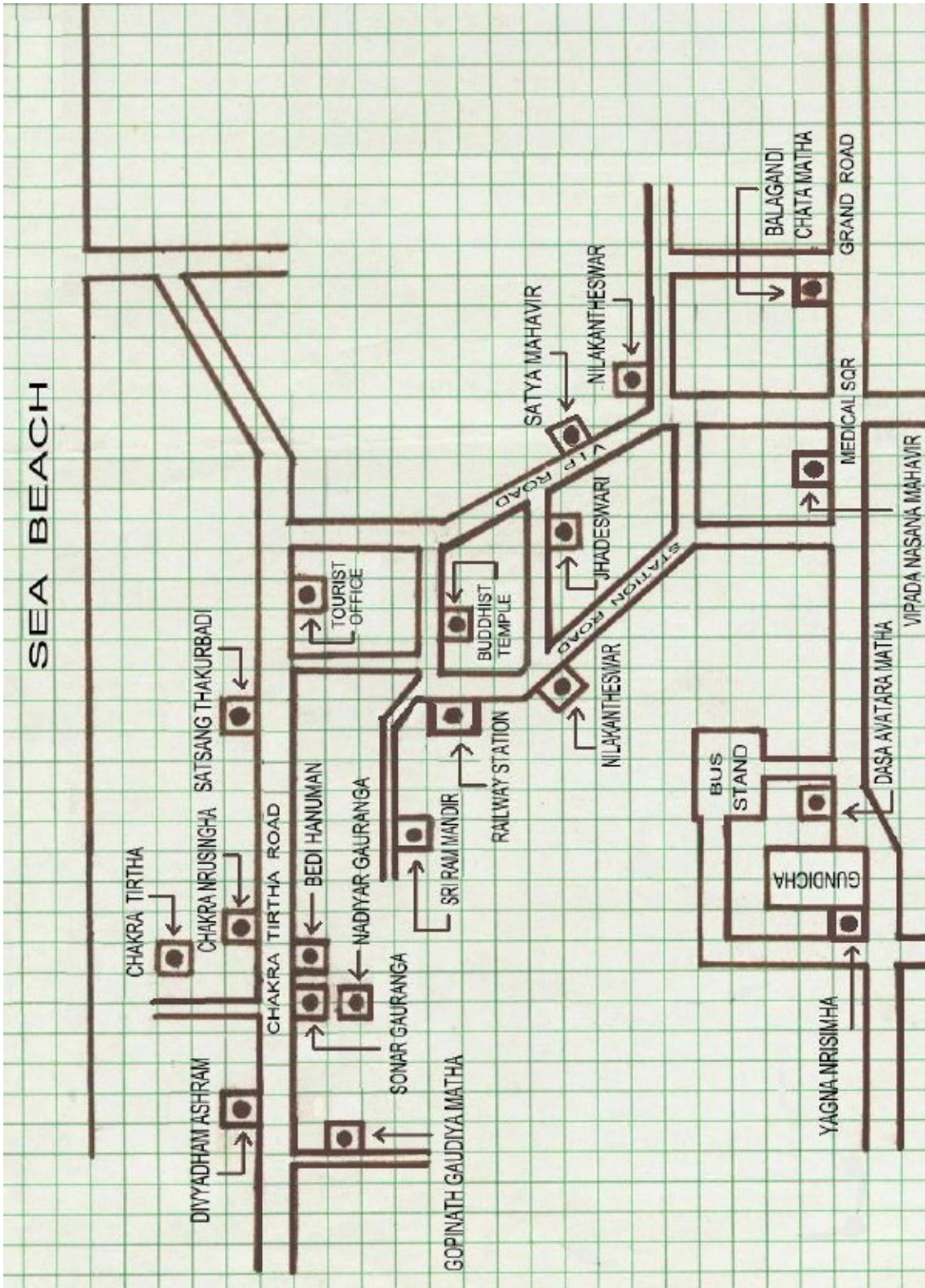
The traditional representation of Sri Jagannatha Puri Dhama as the Shakkha kshetra, with the abode of the main Deities, does not need to be geographically accurate and is only relatively useful in order to locate the temples.

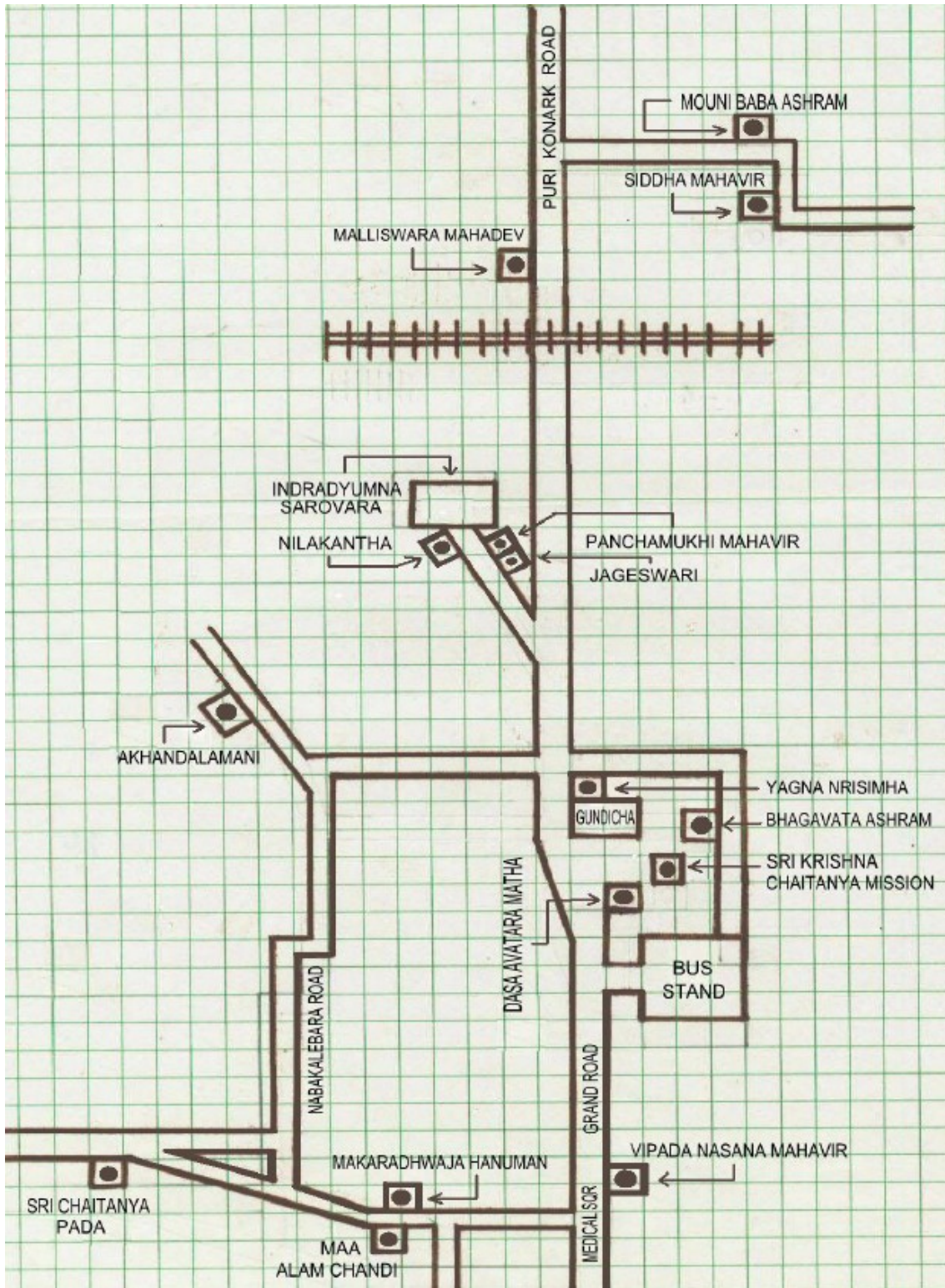


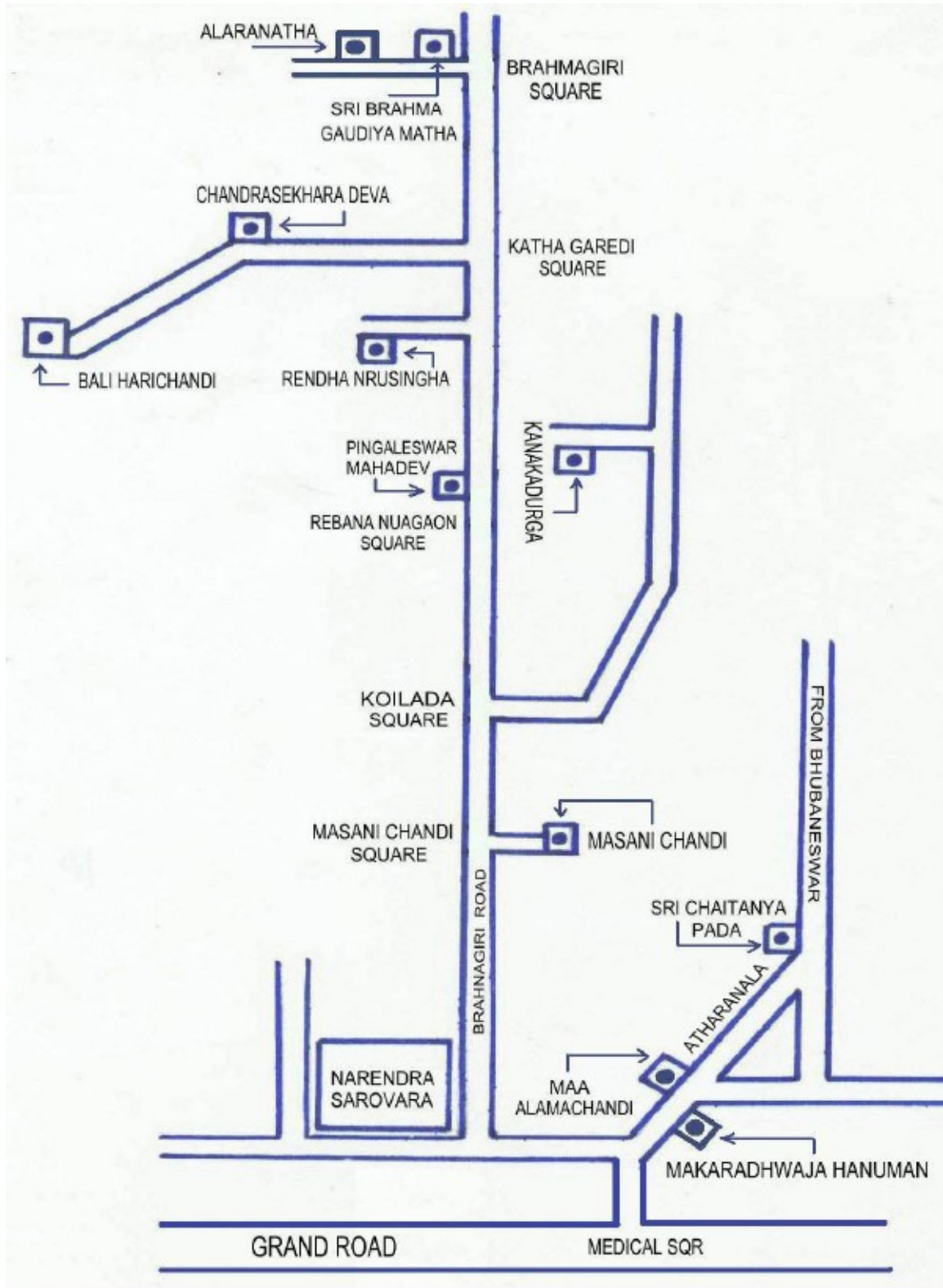


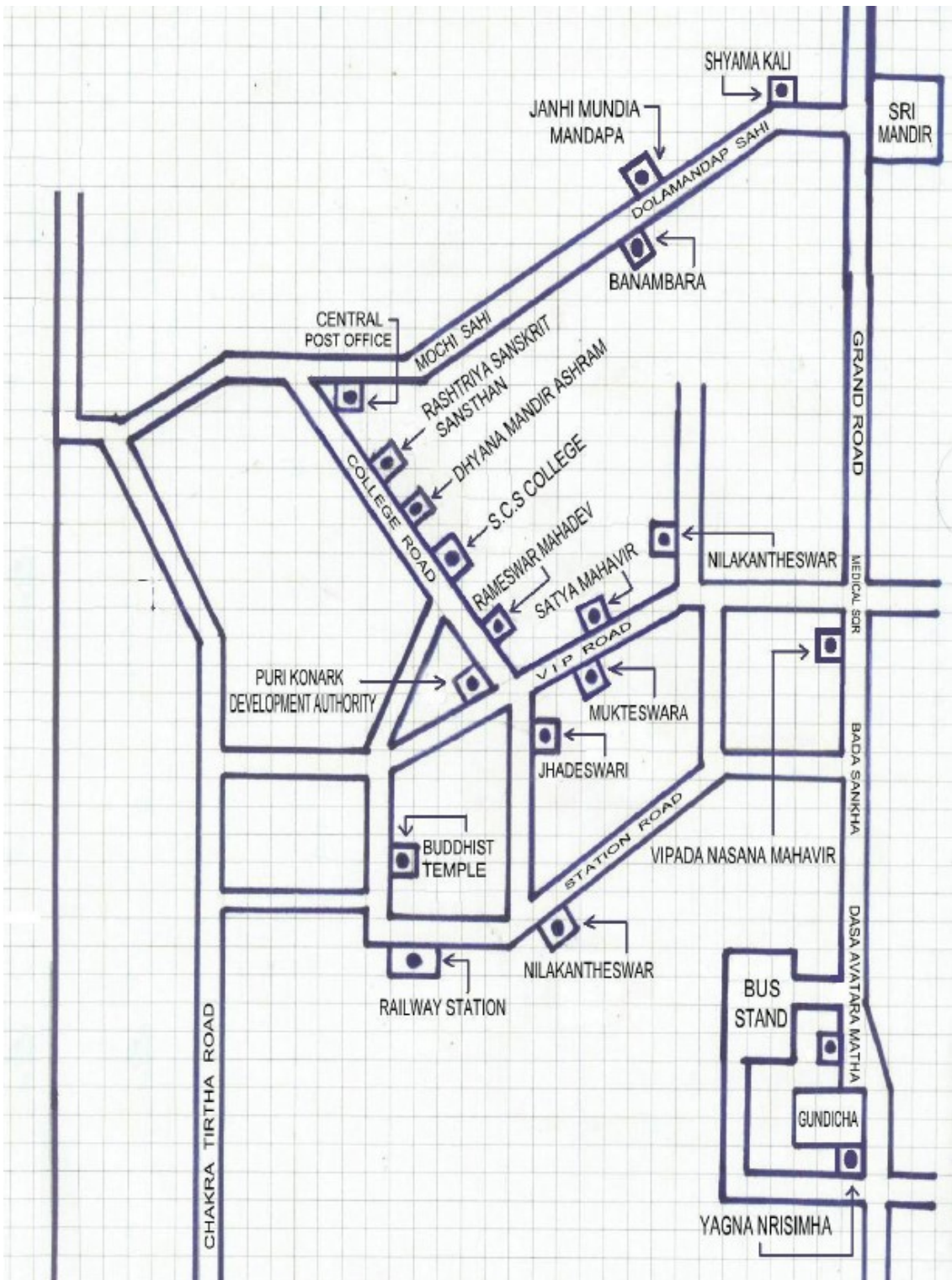


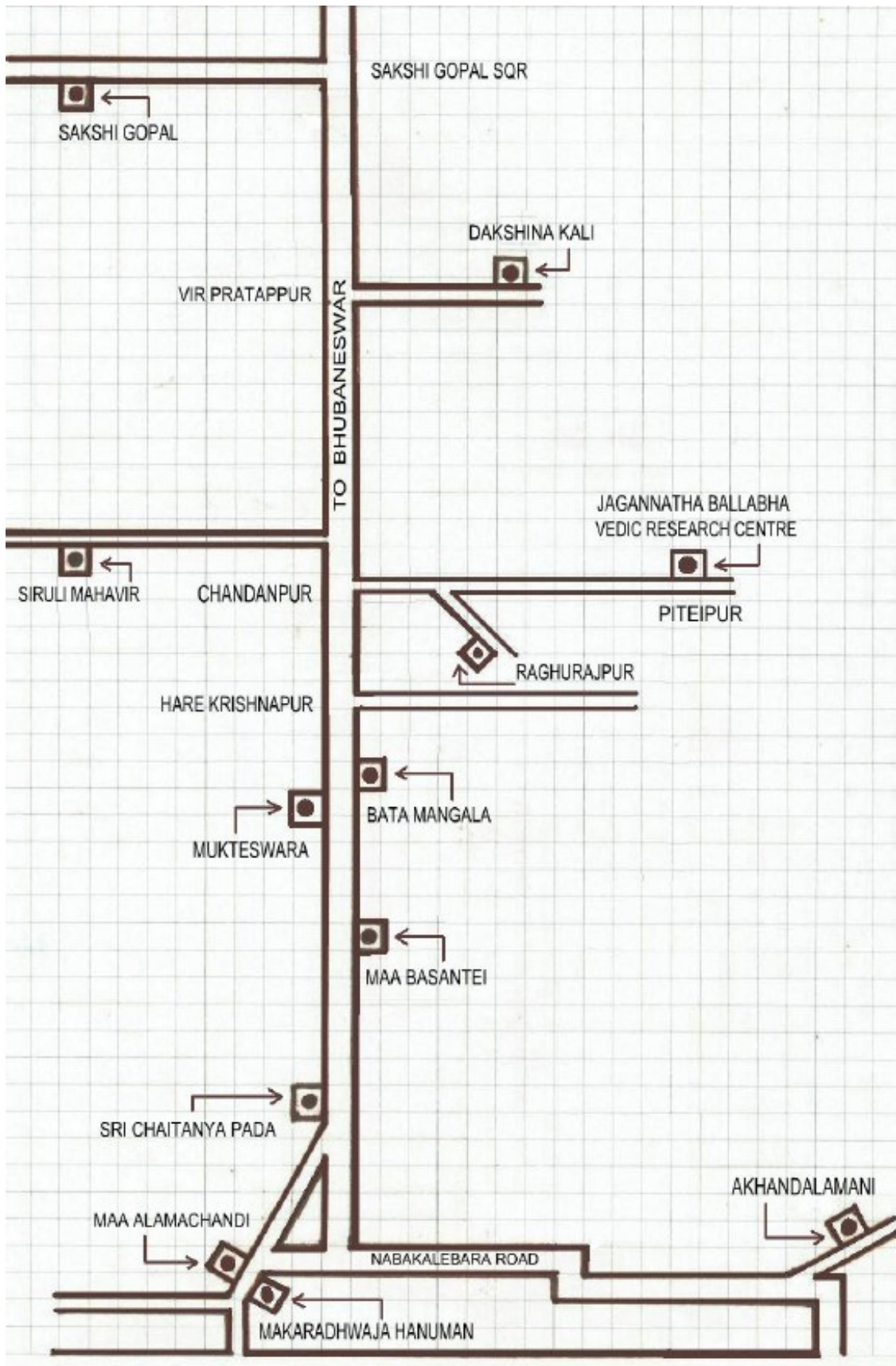












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