CHAPTER III
THE GAME

The brainpower of human being is instrumental in devising all the exotic objects to play with. The same brain also designs the games to be played with those devices. When a system is developed, rules and regulations continue to be framed with changing cultural pattern and adaptations of contemporary requirements. Thus, the limited numbers of playing things accommodate more than one game types. The number of games that can be played using the 52 cards of a modern pack is many and varied. This concept can be observed to be more or less uniform all over the world. Likewise, the numbers of games that could be played with the 96 or more cards’ pack of Ganjifā were also several but they were not uniform throughout the nation even on regional basis. The type of cards and the game that had probably arrived first in India kept getting modified bit by bit in each region it touched. Not only from state to state but it changed even from town to town. So, we get to see assorted patterns of cards as well as games in one state itself. Here an attempt has been made to assemble all the types of Ganjifā games played in Odisha and their present rules and regulations. The endeavour will be to document in detail which seem enormous as the type of people playing and preparing the cards, the intricacies of the game, the length of the game gradually bring out most of forgotten rules. This aspect needs several sessions and long observation which will be taken up gradually.

Out of these many variations a vast majority has already gone extinct. From the remaining evidences of this game it seems that it was a very popular game but at present there are so few versions left that it is hard to imagine its ancient glory. Among the few set of rules that have survived, some are in the state of Odisha itself. Different towns have kept up different traditions active. Below are the details of the games that are still played in this state.
Before going to the specific rules of particular places, the rules that are common for all the types of games of Ganjifā can be mentioned first. In a pack of Ganjifā cards one suit has twelve cards- one King, one Minister and one to ten pip i.e. number cards. King is highest in value, followed by the Minister. The usual trend that is followed is that in the depiction on the card of the King, the image of the deity/character of the suit is seated on a throne or a chariot and in the Minister card the image is without it. The number-cards are painted with the insignias of the respective deities of the suits.

There is a peculiar system in this game: for if we take the eight-suited set, in four suits, i.e. in half the suits, the number-card ‘one’ will be highest among the number-cards and in the other four the number-card ‘ten’ will be highest. Likewise, in a sixteen-suited set, the number-card ‘one’ will be the highest in eight suits (half the suits) while the number-card ‘ten’ will be highest in the other eight suits. In other words, in half the suits the cards ‘one’ to ‘ten’ are in the descending order while in the other half it is just the reverse, i.e., the cards ‘ten’ to ‘one’ are in the descending order. The former group is called Bishbar and the latter is known as Kambar.

ODISHA

In Odisha some major centres of playing and preparation are still in practice. Due to phonetic limitations the name has changed to Ganjapā here. It is also called tās, sāra or pekā in Odisha. A decade ago there were more centres of playing and preparation of these cards but the gradual decrease of its fame is very evident over the years. The surviving places inside one state i.e. Odisha play different versions of it. Not just the rules and regulations but also the type of sets used for playing is varied. The research student collected all the information about the game from the players and other local people interested in the game and in documenting the heritage which is in a state of disappearance. In a few centres out of these local scholars and knowledgeable people have noted down the rules for the versions of the game in their area and
have published small booklets about them. However, they have just documented the theoretical rules and do not give any practical example of the game. A few other places like Puri do not have any such recording of their rules. So there is no pan-Odishan work done on the rules. The researcher has also documented the depictions on the cards and they have been dealt in detail in the next chapter.

**PURI:**

One of the most popular versions of the game of Ganjapā played in Odisha is that of Puri. The main reason for this may have been that the centre of paṭacitra is in Puri district. The tradition of the village of Raghurajpur that extends to the town of Puri is to prepare the paṭacitras in their conventional way. In Puri some of the temple-workers of the higher caste have tried to keep this game continue to be their evening stress-buster, though that population is thinning these days. Though the research student has done her master’s dissertation on this version of the game, there were more details that emerged out during further field visits to the place for the purpose of the doctoral thesis.

**The Suits**

The number of suits can be eight, ten, twelve, sixteen and twenty-four in the variation played at Puri. To distinguish the suits they are each painted with different colours. Every suit is dedicated to a deity and the numbers on the cards are denoted with the symbols of the respective deities. Below is a list of the names of all the twenty-four suits, the deities they represent. (Refer to Table 4.1 in Chapter IV)

The suits are classified into two groups below based on the highest number-card among their pip cards. Group A has ‘one’ as the highest and Group B has ‘ten’. The classification of suits into strong and weak groups is traditional.
Similarly as the number of suits increase they go on getting added to these two groups keeping the number equal under each group. In the sixteen-suited set eight more suits are added and they are categorised as below.

Table 3.2: The last eight suits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahādeva</td>
<td>Balarāma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yama</td>
<td>Indra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kacchapa</td>
<td>Brahmā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaņeša</td>
<td>Kārttīka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As to the groups of the rest of the suits, information was not available. As it is, only these sixteen suits are being played by the Puri players. Apparently, nobody plays the game with twenty-four suits now-a-days. They are just made against specific customer orders probably as souvenirs. It shows that there might have been a tradition of playing it with twenty-four suits which is now forgotten.
The Rules

The game of *Ganjapā* is regarded as a really tough one with very complicated rules even by its players themselves, leave alone the audience. With the passage of time, the numbers of sets have changed and many variations have been incorporated. Rules were changed, bent and new ones were invented. So it is almost impossible to trace the evolution of the rules as they are not chronicled anywhere; they are different for different players, groups, social strata and regions. The basic rules of the present version prevalent in Puri have been recorded. They are as follows:

1. Like all other card games these cards are also shuffled before starting the game to ensure uniformity in distribution among all the players.

2. If one player shuffles the cards the player sitting anti-clockwise to the former takes out a section of the pack.

3. Then the first player distributes them, four cards at a time to each one till the whole pack is complete.

4. The players, before they start playing, arrange the cards according to their raṅga (literally means colour, but actually means ‘suit’), i.e. cards of the same suit are kept in one place and are held together.

5. All the players have a close look at their cards and then the game is started by the person who believes that he has got a powerful collection of cards and is ready to call.

6. He takes out one card which, according to him, is the most powerful and useful card in his share. The criteria for choosing this card are:

   - The card should have a high value.
   - Generally the biggest card of that suit of which the player has the highest number of cards is chosen.
7. He takes that particular card out and puts it on the playing surface face-down, not letting anyone else know its value or suit.
8. Such elimination of one card renders invalid the other cards of the same suit but only those that are lower in value than the eliminated one.
9. Any of the other players may guess the value of the hidden card, take out another from his share equivalent to the former and asks the first player to exchange it for the first hidden card.
10. If the first player finds the second card to be satisfactorily substituting his hidden card, he accepts it and the first one is taken by the second player.
11. The first player can have another privilege of openly asKing all his co-players for a certain card that he wants and any of them having it should give it to him. But this step is optional.
12. If this step is taken then, generally, that card is the first one to be played.
13. All the other players are bound to play cards of the same suit as the first one given by the first player.
14. But if, by chance, they do not have any card of that suit then they have to play a card of any other suit but of a high value.
15. The same process continues and the player who had played first, starts off every new round.
16. Sometimes the first player may play more than one card at one go, but essentially of the same suit. In that case all the others have to play the same number of cards. They have to play all the cards of the same suit as the first player’s cards. And if their cards of that suit are exhausted, they will have to play high value cards of any other suit. And again, if they finish all the high value cards, then they play any other ordinary card of any other suit.
17. The objective of the first player, throughout the game would be to take all the tricks with all the cards in his hand. If he fails to do so and realises that he still has cards left in his hand whose values are not high
enough to be able to win tricks from the other players, he surrenders and loses the game.

18. The most important thing in this game is to remember and keep track of all the cards that have already been played and keep guessing what cards the others may have in their possession and play theirs accordingly.

An Example
To understand the game better the researcher recorded one round of the game played with the standard eight suits. This could be possible because of the kind co-operation of the players in Puri who spared so much of their valuable time to explain the intricacies of the game to the candidate with a live demonstration. The following example will be given trick wise, with every trick being numbered. The players have been named as ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’. The player who has started the game has been taken as ‘A’. The names have been given anti-clockwise. The example runs as below.

The pack of cards was shuffled by ‘A’ and was ‘cut’ (a part of the pack was taken out and put under the other part) by ‘B’ sitting anti-clockwise next to ‘A’. Then the cards were distributed to the four players who carefully arranged their respective hands observed by all the players. Player ‘B’ then took out two cards. One was *Phula King* with which the game had to start. Another one is kept face down. Player ‘A’ accepts these two and gives two other cards to ‘B’ in exchange.

TRICKS

1. A: *Kumäca* 10 and *Phula King*

   B: *Phula* 2 and *Kumäca* 2

   C: *Phula* 1, *Goläpa* King

   D: *Kumäca* 6, *Goläpa* 3
‘A’ takes the trick.

2. A: Phula Minister, 10 and 7
   B: Phula 3, 4 and 5
   C: Indra King, Kurma King and Cenga 4
   D: Gaṇeśa King, Brahmā King and Balarāma King
   ‘A’ takes the trick.

3. A: Balarāma Minister
   B: Balarāma 3
   C: Balarāma 2
   D: Balarāma 1
   Trick goes to ‘A’.

4. A: Indra Minister
   B: Indra 3
   C: Indra 1
   D: Indra 2
   Trick goes to ‘A’.

5. A: Brahmā Minister
   B: Brahmā 1
   C: Brahmā 3
   D: Brahmā 5
   The trick goes to ‘A’.

6. A: Phula 8
B: Kurma Minister
C: Indra 6
D: Gaṇeśa Minister

‘A’ takes the trick.

7. A: Kurma 1
   B: Kurma 9
   C: Kurma 7
   D: Kurma 6

   The trick goes to ‘A’.

8. A: Phula 7
   B: Surjya King
   C: Indra 4
   D: Surjya Minister

9. A: Phula 4
   B: Gaṇeśa 1
   C: Balarāma 9
   D: Brahmā 10

   ‘A’ takes the trick.

10. A: Barāta King and Minister
    B: Barāta 9 and 10
    C: Barāta 6 and 7
    D: Cenga King and Candra King
‘A’ takes the trick.

11. A: Cenga Minister and 1
   B: Cenga 6 and Gaṅeśa 2
   C: Cenga 9 and 10
   D: Cenga 2 and 3
   ‘A’ takes the trick.

12. A: Gaṅeśa 3
   B: Gaṅeśa 9
   C: Gaṅeśa 7
   D: Gaṅeśa 8
   ‘A’ takes the trick.

‘A’ runs out of cards which can take any more tricks. This means that ‘A’ loses the game as the aim of the game for him is to take all the tricks. The game gets dismantled. So the players mix all the cards face down. As the above game was not successful they continue it in another part by reshuffling the cards.

‘A’ shuffles again and ‘B’ cuts the pack. Then ‘A’ distributes it among the others. ‘B’ puts two cards with their faces down. One is taken by ‘C’ who gives Barāta King in exchange, with which the game starts. The other is taken by ‘A’ in exchange of another card. ‘B’ starts the game as he possesses the Barāta King.

1. B: Barāta King
   A: Balarāma 6
   C: Barāta 4
D: Barāta 10

‘B’ gets the trick.

2. B: Cenga King and 8
   A: Cenga Minister and 9
   C: Cenga 1 and 10
   D: Brahma King and Cenga 2

   The trick goes to ‘B’.

3. B: Mahadeva King, Minister and 1
   A: Mahadeva 8,9 and 10
   C: Mahadeva 7 and 3 and Balarama King
   D: Mahadeva 5 and 6 and Surjya King

   The trick goes to ‘B’.

4. B: Phula King and Minister
   A: Phula 1 and 5
   C: Phula 7 and 8
   D: Phula 3 and 4

   The trick goes to ‘B’.

5. B: Mahādeva 2 and 4
   A: Indra King and Rama King
   C: Balarama Minister and Barāta Minister
   D: Candra King and Brahma Minister

   The trick goes to ‘B’.
6. B: Cenga 3, 4 and 5
   A: Ganesa King, Candra Minister and Kumaca 1
   C: Golāpa King, Barāta 10 and Indra Minister
   D: Ganesa Minister, Kumaca Minister and Balarama 9
   The trick goes to ‘B’.

7. B: Phula 8, 9 and 2
   A: Kartikeya King and Minister and Kumaca 4
   C: Candra 10, Kumaca 2 and 3
   D: Phula 6, Ganesa 1 and Golāpa 10
   The trick goes to ‘B’.

8. B: Cenga 6 and 7
   A: Indra 10 and Candra 8
   C: Samsara King and Kartikeya 10
   D: Samsara 8 and 10
   The trick goes to ‘B’.

9. B: Golāpa Minister
   A: Golāpa 2
   C: Golāpa 8
   D: Golāpa 1
   The trick goes to ‘B’.

   ‘B’ loses any chances of getting more tricks. So the game gets dispersed.
   A new game is started altogether. This time the cards are mixed face up.
A successful game is very rare to see as it is very difficult for one person to take all the tricks. Almost invariably the games get disassembled.

**SONEPUR:**

The next most popular set of Ganjapā cards and Ganjapā game is the one that is played in Sonepur in Subarnapur district. It is the main version played in the western part of the state. Players and artists of this area believe that this was the oldest version of the game in India. An inhabitant of this town Harishankar Sarap has printed and published a small booklet himself to keep record for the generation that will not know the game.

The theme is based on twelve. There are twelve sets each with twelve cards. It is a battle of twelve Kings taken from one of the greatest epics of Hinduism. The twelve leaders are divided into two groups. Based on these facts, this version of the game can be equated with the one that Abul Fazl mentions in Ain-i-Akbari to have been invented by the ancient sages. The Kings are depicted on horsebacks or chariots and the Ministers are usually standing over one of the soldiers. The soldiers are monkeys in the Rāma group of suits and human beings in the Rāvana group. The number cards act like the army of the Kings.

**The Suits**

In Sonepur, there is only this twelve-suited set. To distinguish different suits they are painted with different colours. In the number cards the numbers are denoted with the symbols of the respective characters. Below is a list of the names of all the twelve suits, the characters they represent, the colours of the suits and of the symbols used in the number-cards. The Rāma group is the weak one and the Rāvana group is the strong one. (Refer to Table 4.4 in Chapter IV)
The Cards

The game in Sonepur represents the final war in Rāmāyaṇa between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. So the pack of cards or rather the 12 suits are divided into two groups, Rāma party and Rāvaṇa party. The Rama and Ravana parties include the following suits.

Table 3.3: List of weak and strong suits in Sonepur

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rāvaṇa Party</th>
<th>Rāma Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rāvaṇa</td>
<td>Rāma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuṇṭa</td>
<td>Lakṣmaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phāsa</td>
<td>Mānkaḍa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūḷa</td>
<td>Bhālu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaṭārī</td>
<td>Parbata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaṇḍā</td>
<td>Dhāḷa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rules

- This version of the game is also played with four players. The players sitting opposite to each other make up a team, like the game ‘twenty-nine’ played with the modern cards.
- The cards are mixed well with their faces down on the playing platform and then they are stacked up.
- Each one is given one card and the player with the highest card cuts the pack into two and declares the suit of the upper-most card of the second stack as the ‘raṅga’ suit. ‘Raṅga’ means colour but here it means the suit name.
- The player sitting at the right of the previous player will distribute the cards, four at a time. The round goes anti-clockwise unlike the modern card games’ rounds.
- Whichever team gets the King of the raṅga suit starts the game. The first game, however, is always considered Rāma’s game and the team with the Rāma King will start the game.
• If any one player stays deprived of cards of the colour suit, the game will be cancelled.
• The partners of the team starting the game will decide among themselves as to who will start the game based on the cards they have so that the game will have a smoother flow.
• The others will have to throw the lower-most card of the same suit in their possession.

Tipā

Suppose player A (one of the players) has seven cards of the Parbata suit e.g. King, Minister, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. The lowest one is 9, so that will go first. The others will be compelled to give one of their Parbata cards. Four cards of the Parbata suit will be used up. Eight more remain in different possessions out of which six are with player A. So if player A uses up his King and Minister, the others will have to get done with all their Parbata cards. So after the other two cards get over the rest of the Parbata cards player ‘A’ will become hukm (major cards) and when player A plays them the others will be compelled to give higher cards of other suits. Then Parbata will be called ‘Tipā’ (Recorded) game here.

Aṭipā

Taking Parbata again, if along with King and Minister player A also possesses 1, 2 and 7, 8, 9 then Parbata will become ‘Aṭipā’ (Unrecorded) suit because King, Minister, 1 and 2 are four continuous hukms. Moreover, there are four smaller cards along with them. So if player A starts one round with the King he can at the most collect three other cards of the same suit from the other players. He can occupy the remaining cards in just another round or two. The last Parbata cards in player A’s hands will become major cards for the other players.
**Badaraṅga**

In the situations given above the rest of the Parbata cards left in player A’s hands become major cards as other players have nothing left of that suit. So when player A plays Parbata, the others are bound to give big cards of other suits. Such cards are called ‘Badaraṅga’ cards i.e. cards not of the colour suit. But there are rules as to which they can be played. Suppose player B has King, Minister and 7, 8 of Gadā suit, he cannot play the 7 or 8 because there is a gap of 9 and 10 between the King and Minister and the 7 and 8. So after the King and Minister are used up, the 9 and 10 will become major cards in some other player’s hands. That third player has to keep track of the King and Minister of Gadā suit. Only after the 9 and 10 go, the 7 and 8 can be used.

**Magā Caki**

If one of the players, say player C, at some point runs out of major cards or does not have cards of the suit the round has started with, then he has to ask the player who has started the round, say player A, for cards he (A) might want him (C) to play. Player A will ask according to his priority. That card is called a ‘Magā caki’ (Asked-for card). Player A can ask for cards that he wants to get rid of in the game so that he will be able to play some of his own cards. Player C has to give the highest card of the suit player A wants.

Continuing this trick and acquiring major cards from the others would make the cards in player A’s hands major and he might even win the game.

Sometimes a game is neither tīpā nor aṭipā. After the player starting the game, say player A, finishes all his major and key cards, tells his partner to ask cards of him. The partner will ask cards of any suit according to his requirement and player A has to give the highest card of that suit. If and when both the partners run out of key cards, the game will stop.
Magā Bāji
If one of the teams has the King of the colour suit and the other has cards of high value of other suits, then the latter team will tell the former that they want to start the game. This is called ‘Magā bāji’ (Asked-for game). If the second team wants to lead the whole game they can ask the former repeatedly and when they will fail to lead it the game will stop.

Hukubās Game System
In this system suppose the player leading, say player A, has the King, Minister, 2, 3 of Markaṭa suit. This becomes a tipā game. Player A gives Markaṭa King and looks at his partner to hint to throw the lowest Markaṭa card in his possession so that player A can guess how many cards of that suit are there with his partner. If he feels there are a few of Markaṭa cards, he plays the Minister. And if to the Minister, player A’s partner gives 1, then 2, 3, etc. in player A’s hands will become ‘major cards’.

Thus by keeping track of each other’s cards through hints, it becomes easier to count the total number of colour cards at disposal.

The rules are a theoretical documentation. An example could not be recorded of this version of the game of Ganjapā as the people playing it had time constraint.

KALAHANDI:
An inhabitant of the village of Ichchhpur near Bhawanipatna, the district headquarters of the Kalahandi district and a professor of Odia language in a nearby college, Dasharathi Acharjya is very fond of the tradition that his and some of the other families still hold on to. His father himself is an expert player. So he has noted down all the history and rules of the game in detail and has published it in the 2002 issue of a local Odia magazine called Kala Jhara. Below are the rules according to Acharjya (Acharjya 2002).
**The Suits**

The older version of these sets had characters from Rāmāyaṇa painted on them. But now it is a secular game, without any religious associations because of the influence of Berhampur Ganjapā. The set played here has eight suits (one of the commonest sets) i.e. ninety-six cards. The names of the suits are those of the standard eight-suited set and they play the Ratha-Ghodā set. Each suit has twelve cards. There are ten numbered cards preceded by a King on a chariot and then a Minister on a horse. (Refer to Table 4.13 in Chapter IV)

**The Cards**

The Kings here are placed on chariots and the Ministers are shown riding horses. The King and the Minister cards are called the ‘Photo cards’ because of pictures drawn on them.

The grouping according to the descending or ascending order of the number cards is exactly the same like the Puri one.

**Table 3.4: List of strong and weak suits in Kalahandi**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candra</td>
<td>Surjya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phula</td>
<td>Cenga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sameswara</td>
<td>Kumāca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapheda (Golāpa)</td>
<td>Barāta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Game**

The most basic rule of the game is the player starting the game has to take all the tricks. If he does, it will be him who wins and if he does not, it will be he himself who loses. The other player of his team helps him and tries
Making tricks easier for him to win. The points scored by the other team also depend on his winning or losing.

The advanced rules of this game in Kalahandi are however different. The farmers generally play it in the summer afternoons but players doing other jobs don’t have a fixed time, they mainly play it at night. Four players sit on the floor and a local handloom towel, which is used in daily life, is spread in front of them and the cards are spread over that.

- After shuffling, rather mixing them, because it is hard to shuffle 96 cards, on the towel they are gathered and one of the players is asked to cut the pack and all the four players take one card each. Whoever gets the card of the lowest value, he distributes the pack.

- In this version, six cards are distributed at a time to the players. And thus it takes four rounds to finish all the cards. The players, on their part, take some time to arrange the cards suit-wise i.e. keep the cards of the same suit in sequence.

- Then they study their cards and decide whether they want to take the game or call the game off. In the latter case, they dismiss that game, mix the cards again and start anew.

- Unlike the modern pack of cards, here the player who starts the game is considered the main player or the hero of the game. And, as mentioned above, it is he who will win or lose, the other team’s point is also depends on him.

- The other players’ responsibility is to control the game by throwing the right cards at the right time. The partner of the main player escalates his chances to win tricks whereas the opposite team keeps trying to stop him from doing the same. If he loses even one trick, he loses.

The basic rule of ‘which card to play’ is to know which suits have 1 as the highest number card viz. Barāta, Kumāca, Surjya and Cenga and
which have 10 viz. Phula, Someswara, Candra and Sapheda. This is important to remember as it can be confusing as to which card is highest after the King and the Minister of a suit are played out so that when the player is planning on a card, he should know what value-card to spare. Say, of the Barāta suit the cards from King to the number card 5 have been played out. The player who has his turn does not have the number card 6 but has 7. But, he cannot play 7 unless 6 has been played because then he runs the risk of losing the trick or wasting the card 7, if he is in the opposite team.

There are some variations of this game and which of the variations will be played is decided by the players once they finish studying the cards in their possession. These variants decide how many points the playing team gains or it loses. It depends on the value of that particular variant of the game. A list of these variants is given below with their local names and explanations.

1. Lucā or Binā:

Literally these words mean ‘hidden’ and ‘without’ respectively. This is the lowest game of Ganjapā, one with the least value. Whichever player wants to take the call (Player A), he will say, “I will take Lucā game.” So one of the players of the opposite team will choose one card of lesser value from any of the suits from his stack and give it to player A without showing it even to him. The intention behind this is to create problems for him to take all the tricks. So the opponent will make sure of obstacles in the game with his donated card, well-chosen for this purpose. This card is called ‘Lāgana’ (attachment). And the action of passing of the card secretly, hiding from the other players is known as ‘Lageibā’ (to attach). In return, player A gives one of his unimportant cards back to the player who had given the Lāgana.
Then the actual game starts. Player A throws another unimportant card on the playing platform and asks openly to the other three players for the King of any suit he needs. Whoever has it picks up the card on the towel and gives that particular King to him. Then player A starts the regular game. If he wins all the tricks, he earns 1 point and if loses, the opposite team gets the point. The value of this variant of the game is 1 point.

2. Daršani:

This is one point more valuable than the previous. The name literally means ‘showing’. Player A has to say this word after the card distribution and show all his 24 cards to the other three players spreading them on the towel. Then, it is exactly the same as the first game. In other words, though it is exactly like Lucā, there it is played secretly but here actions are carried out openly, in the knowledge of all the players. That is the only difference.

When player A wins this game, he earns 2 points and if he loses, the opposite team earns the same.

3. Ṭipā

This variation is three points higher than the first one and two higher than the second. Player A does not exchange cards here with his opponents, as he does in the previous games, nor does he ask for a certain King that he desires. Here he directly starts playing which is called ‘Ṭipbā’. He starts the game throwing a King and an ordinary unimportant card. Then he spreads the rest of the 22 cards on the playing platform so as to show everyone and continues playing like that.

It has a value of four points i.e. when player A wins he will add 4 points to his score and if he loses, the opposite team will gain it.
4. **Atipā:**

Lucā is seven points, Darśani six points and Țipā is four points lesser than this game. Player A has to declare the name of the game i.e. ‘Atipā’ and start playing with just the King card of any of the suits he wants. No ordinary unimportant card accompanies it. Thus the game is commenced and taken further following the cards the players play. There are no rules for player A showing the cards to the other players or the opponents attaching a bad omen card to him or his as King of a King card, here.

Its value is 8 points and can make player A’s team score the same or the other team.

5. **Muṭhādekhā/Sanghiṣṭhā/Manobāji:**

The first word literally means ‘showing of the fist’. Here, fist refers the pack of cards that are clutched in a player’s hands. This variant is fifteen points greater than the first, fourteen than the second, ten than the third and eight than the fourth. This is the biggest game of Ganjapā of Kalahandi. Chances to play this variation comes very rarely as it depends on the distribution of the cards. After distributing, if one of the players feels sure that his share of cards is unrivalled and no one can beat or even put obstacles to him, he starts this game.

Here the player, who announces this game, will be the player A. Once he announces it, he has to show all his 24 cards to both the players of the opposite team. But his partner will remain deprived of this privilege. This is a sort of challenge of being single-handed. After both the opponents see player A’s cards one by one, hiding it from the former’s partner, they return it to him and he starts playing right away. There are no rules of Lāgana or asKing for the King in this type.

This game’s value is sixteen points. So player A will get or give sixteen points if he wins or loses respectively.
Among these whichever player A desires, he can play. He will decide that on the basis of the potential of his share of cards. One special rule of this game is, here the first player will have to play the cards after every trick, not like the normal rectangular cards’ game where the player who claims the last trick will start the next and it keeps changing after almost every trick. This system is again sort of a declaration of the main player that he has the ability to take all his 24 (or less for 24 is the maximum number of tricks that can be played with 96 cards) tricks continuously. So he plans his game and which card to play when, in such a way that whatever cards he needs eliminated the other players have to play them in response to his. And thus he keeps eliminating dangers from others with every trick.

There is another peculiarity of this game. In the normal cards, a player can play only one card at a time. But here there is no fixed number of cards that player A should play at a time. He can throw as many cards as he wants and as he feels confident about. Others are forced to play cards of the same number and thus player A hastens the process of getting rid of the dangerous cards as soon and as easily as possible. Just in the variants ‘Ṭipā’ and ‘Aṭipā’ player A has to give two and one card respectively when he starts the game i.e. the first trick. There come instances quite commonly when the players give away even 14 cards each in one trick. Cards more than the normal European pack get out of the game in just one trick here.

Who will start the game i.e. who will be player A? There are rules even regarding this. In the common card game it is very simple, the player sitting to the right of the player shuffling and distributing the pack, starts the game. However, here the privilege or right to start the game is given to losing team. Only after they refuse the offer, the winning team gets the right to take up the next game. Again that is not the only way it can be governed. If one of the players wishes to start a game of a lower value,
but another feels more confident about his cards and suggests a higher alternative, the latter gets preference. There will be no two opinions in such cases.

After the game starts and player A starts winning tricks one after another, the duty of his partner is to take up the stack of cards after every trick and call out loud which is the next highest card in every suit that have been played in that trick and keeps the stacks in his custody, by his side. There is a specific way to say it, “This suit reached this card.” This way all the players have an idea of what cards have already been used up and what is the next highest card in every suit. This helps in planning the next moves of all the players. And it is the toughest part of this particular game called Ganjapā, remembering all the, in this case, 96 cards. E.g. say in one trick Barāta’s King is there, Kumāca’s two is there (that means Kumāca King, Minister and one are already gone), Phula’s Minister (Phula’s King is gone) and Saphed’s seven is there (King, Minister, ten, nine and eight are gone). Here the partner of player A will call out the names of the cards next in the line of these suits i.e. “Barāta went to Minister, Kumāca to three, Phula to ten and Saphed to six. When, of any suit, the last is played i.e. all the card get over, he will say, “This suit is done.”

If the game is not dismissed halfway and if the team of player A takes it smoothly till the end, depending on the value of the game played, player A’s team is said to have won that many games (points) and the other team is said to have lost the same number of games (points). Or else, if player A fails to win the game or if it gets dismissed halfway, the playing team is said to have lost points twice the value of the game and the opponent team wins that many.

When one team accumulates five pints with it, it is said to have attained ‘Pancha Pandava’, named after the term that was used to call the five sons of Pandu in Mahabharata collectively.
The game of Ganjapā may seem to have been revolving round player A from most of the above descriptions. But it is not so. The partner of player A and the opponents also hold the strings of the main player. The partner mainly comes in handy when A runs out of cards of any colour/suit. To elaborate, if player A has a shortage of cards of any suit but they are needed to control the game at some point, the partner will come to his rescue and manage the game if he has cards of that particular suit or, in other words, will give the cards of that colour only carefully guessing what the opponents might have in store. He uses them in such a way that the opposite team is not able to keep the higher and important cards for a long time. This reduces obstacles in player A’s path to win more tricks. Then the partner carefully plays the major cards he has with him. At length, the duty of the partner of player A is to keep thinKing how can he make winning tricks for his partner easier and deprive the opponents of their major cards.

On the other hand, the opponents are always bent upon stopping the game and creating troubles for player A in taKing tricks. They have, basically, just one motto, how to not give certain cards in their possession which the main player wants to win his tricks. That is why they are always ready to put major cards of suits/colours that player A does not possess or has a shortage of.

Except the main player, the others are bound to follow some rules in the game.

a) Whichever suit/colour player A puts, others will have to play the same colour.

b) In case they do not have cards of the same suit, they will have to play some other suit but the cards have to be major cards.

c) In the variants like Lucā, etc. where the rule of player A asKing for the King of a certain suit is there, a pass card (a card of some other suit) can
be taken in exchange of the King if the former does not have a card of the same suit.

d) If they do not have a major card of any suit, they can give pass cards for anything player A plays. There are tricks even while passing a card. When the opponents pass one, the main player may or may not be benefitted, mostly he is not because they try to give cards that will either be of very low value or create some difficulty in getting tricks. But the pass cards of his partner are mainly intended towards supporting him win more.

e) The cards once used up are not open to the other players once they are collected from the playing platform and kept aside by the partner of player A.

f) If player A runs out of cards he can play, which is called ‘burnt hand’, his team is said to have lost games (points) as many as the value of the variant of the game played.

Appendix

Here is a list of terms that are used in this version of game of Ganjapā and are unique to it.

i. Khela Hejjibā (Game is done): The successful completion of a game without any hindrance.

ii. Khela Rahijibā (Game is stopped): Due to the absence of the right major cards the main player fails to carry the game any further and the game is dismissed.

iii. Ani Karibā (To arrange): After distributing the cards, they are arranged suit-wise.

iv. Hāta Pudibā (Burning of hand): If a player fails to give a card of the colour that is being played despite having it or gives a pass card despite having a major card, in that case it is said that his hand burnt. This
generally happens by mistake, unknowingly, and if anyone does it knowingly then it is considered cheating.

v. *Hukum* (Required cards): Keeping in mind the colour that is being played, the proper card (the highest at that moment) that should be played there is called Hukum. E.g. - Cenga 1 is already gone, now the highest card of the suit is 2. And when 2 will be gone, it will be 3. When that suit is being played, these cards are played in this sequence.

vi. *Mana* (Pass cards): When a player does not have a ‘hukum’ or a card of the suit being played, he gives a card that does not bear much importance. It is like the player giving a pass card.

vii. *Lāgana*: In the variants of Lucā and Daršanī, that card which one of the opponents gives to player A in the beginning is called ‘Lāgana’ or ‘Lagāna’ which literally means an ‘attachment’ because it is like a bad wish from the opponent which is attached to the main player to create hindrances in his success.

viii. *Rajāmagā*: It literally means asKing for a King. In the first two variants, Lucā and Daršanī, player A takes out a smaller, not-so-important card and asks for the King of any particular suit that he wants. This process is called Rajāmagā.

ix. *Ṭipibā*: Again in the first two variants, with the King that he had asked for and in the third one i.e. in Ṭipā with the King that he plays first, player A can throw any card that he deems could be a hindrance to his game. That card is called Ṭipā. He does not have to think of which suit’s it is or anything else while throwing this card; he has a free hand here.

x. *Dhāḍi*: It means a line. If one player gets many cards of the same suit/colour, that is called a line. A collection can be called a line when it has minimum 5/6 cards. And the line is named after the number of cards of the same suit that the player possesses. E.g. – if he has seven cards, it
will be called a line of seven. If the player has one or two such strong lines, then he generally does not face much problem in winning the game.

xi. *Niranga*: It literally means ‘colourless’. When player A runs out of any suit’s cards, it is said that he is *Niranga* of that colour.

xii. *Munḍa*: If there is only one card from one suit and if the card is one of the four highest cards of that suit viz. King, Minister, one and two or ten and nine (depending from which side the suit descends), that single card is called *Munda*. Other cards can also be called the same when there are no card higher to them is left and when they are the only card of that colour left in the player’s hand. A player can make a *munḍa* out of a card by throwing the other cards of the same suit. One player can have more than one *munḍa*. He plays the *munḍas* only in deep trouble. Otherwise he tries his best to save them.

**The Game**

Citing an example of a game played in necessary to show how actually the rules are applied in the practical field. Here an example has been given trick-wise and the tricks have been numbered. One of the players shuffled or rather mixed the cards on the towel, the playing platform, then stacked them up and offered to the player left to him to cut it. There is no permanent colour system here. The player, who shuffled the pack, also distributed it clockwise, six at a time. He repeated the process four times, giving 24 cards each. Then after arranging and having a proper look at the cards, one of the players volunteered to start the game. He has been named as player A. Players clockwise from A, have been named B, C and D.

The player A asks for the Barāta King and B had it. He took it and in exchange gave Cenga 10 to B. B had to accept it without any fuss. Then the tricks, one after another, followed like this:
TRICKS

1. A: Barāta King, Minister and 1; Cenga King; Saphed King and 3 and Candra King

   B: Barāta 7, 8 and 9; Surjya King; Cenga 8; Saphed 1 and 2

   C: Candra 9; Cenga 4; Phula King, 2 and 3; Surjya 10; Saphed 3

   D: Candra 1; Barāta 2 and 4; Kumacha King and Minister; Cenga 1; Saphed 10

   ‘A’ takes the trick.

2. A: Barāta 3

   B: Barāta 6

   C: Surjya 10

   D: Candra Minister

   ‘A’ takes the trick.

3. A: Saphed King

   B: Saphed 6

   C: Sameswara 4

   D: Cenga Minister

   ‘A’ takes the trick.

4. A: Saphed 4, 5 and 9

   B: Sameswara Minister; Surjya Minister; Phula Minister

   C: Cenga 2 and 3; Surjya 1

   D: Candra 9 and 10; Phula 1
‘A’ takes the trick.

5. A: Saphed 7 and 8
   B: Barāta 5; Surjya 7
   C: Sameswara Minister; Candra 8
   D: Candra 6; Sameswara 10
   ‘A’ takes the trick.

6. A: Cenga 5
   B: Cenga 6
   C: Surjya 2
   D: Candra 5
   ‘A’ takes the trick.

7. A: Barāta 10
   B: Surjya 3
   C: Sameswara 9
   D: Surjya 4
   ‘A’ takes the trick.

8. A: Cenga 8
   B: Sameswara 8
   C: Phula 10
   D: Candra 4
   ‘A’ takes the trick.

9. A: Cenga 8 and 9
B: Surjya 5 and 6
C: Phula 9; Sameswara 7
D: Phula 5 and 6

‘A’ takes the trick.

After these tricks the main player, player A showed the rest of his cards to all the other players. It is a way of claiming that he could take the rest of their cards too as they had nothing to match his cards. This style is called ‘Dugi’ which means ‘to kill the game’.

CHIKITI

Like the way Kalahandi cards are aloof from any religious association, so are the Chikiti cards. They also have the same eight-suited which have the same names.

Table 3.5: List of suits of Chikiti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Suit</th>
<th>Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surjya (Sun)</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candra (Moon)</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cenga</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulapa (Rose)</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumacha</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phula (Flower)</td>
<td>Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barāta</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samesara</td>
<td>Maroon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The Cards**

Chikiti cards are around 6 c.m. in diameter. There are no religious associations here either and the suits are the same as the standard eight-suited set with a little pronunciation difference of their names. In Chikiti in the King cards the Kings sit on thrones while the Ministers are shown on elephants.

**The Game**

During the enquiry it came to light that the royal family or rather the 91 year old King used to play this game in his young times. But during the interview with him, he confessed that he no longer remembers how it was played. However, a man, once the Khamāri (the caretaker of the King’s granary), had learnt it. Unfortunately he could also say nothing. According to him and a few other players who are his friends, these cards are used only for gambling now and that too once a year, on the day of Kumara Purnima, an important festival of Odisha. Gambling is known as Naksa locally. Here whoever completes 17 points first, wins the game. They play it with normal Europeanised cards too but these are more interesting because of their large number and they get to stretch the game longer and enjoy more.

**A Non-Oḍiā Game**

Dr. Rudolf von Leyden has also mentioned the rules of Ganjifā by giving reference of an article written by Michael Dummett. In this article, he describes the ‘daśāvatāra’ pack of ten suits. He gives us elaborate information about the ranking of cards, the terminology and the rules of playing the games. The account is based on the description given in part seven of the Marathi work Upayukta Camatkara Samgraha (Compendium of Useful Information) published in Poona in 1884 (Leyden 1982).

*Ranking of the cards:*

The ‘daśāvatāra’ pack of ten suits has these following cards:
Table 3.6: List of suits in Maharashtra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Cards (in Marathi)</th>
<th>Corresponding colours</th>
<th>Suit-sign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maccha</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaccha</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Tortoise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varaha</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Boar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narasimha</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vamana</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Water vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parashurama</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rama</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Bow and arrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishna</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Quoits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddha</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Conch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalamki</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Sword</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned in the Ganjifā games of Odisha above, here too the author ranks the raja and the wazir as highest cards. Also in the first five or the upper suits, the ace is considered higher than the 10 whereas in the other five or the lower suits, it is the 10 that gets the higher position than the ace. This peculiarity of order is universal throughout all Ganjifā games, whether played with eight, ten or twelve suits.

**The Terminology:**

Various special terms are used in the game of Ganjifā, the most particular being the one who needs to be established as the lead of the first trick. In all of the ganjifa games he is determined as the person holding a particular raja. This raja is called surkhya; if the game is being played during the day he is the raja
of Rama suit or in the night that of Krishna suit. The *hukm* is the term used for the highest card of any suit, besides the ones that have already been played. The person holding the *hukm* is obligated to play it; in case he forgets to play it, the card loses its trick-taking power and becomes the lowest card of the suit and it placed in the pile of worthless cards. *Gheni* is the term used when the person holds the *raja* but not the *wazir* of the suit; whereas the term *deni* is given when the player has the *wazir* but not the *raja* of the suit. There are also other terms used such as *bamda* i.e. the highest ranking numeral card other than those already played. The term *padabamda* is the term for the card lower than the *bamda*.

*Rules of the Play:*

This game is played by three players in a counter-clockwise manner. The person to the left of the dealer cuts the deck of the cards from the top and looks at the bottom-most card and keeps the cards without disturbing their order. If the bottom-most card is a *raja*, the cards are replaced and cut again. All the cards are then dealt out, in the rounds of four, starting from the person sitting on the right of the dealer. With the exception of the first and last rounds, the cards dealt face down in all the other rounds. Once the cards are sorted by all the players and if any of the players is devoid of a *raja*, the cards are reshuffled and dealt again.

*The First Trick*

The game is started by the person holding the *surkhya* which is accompanied by a lower card, known as its ‘throne’. In the present version of the game, it is played in two phases and their intermediate is marked by *tigasta*, which is a phase that occurs when each of the three players have lost their lead at some point of time during the game.
Rules of First Phase of the Game

The rules governing the first phase of the game are very simple and straightforward. If a player with the lead possess a dukkal i.e. hukm of any suit along with one or more cards in unbroken succession, he has to play the dukkal before any other lead, thus giving an advantage to the fellow players of knowing that he holds the hukm. A player with more than one dukkal has to play them in succession. If a person fails to play the dukkal and it caught, all the cards lose their trick-taking power except the lowest in the sequence.

After playing all the dukkals the player with the lead has to settle any deni if he has them left. A deni is given by leading a low card of the same suit which is then won by the person who has the gheni by playing a higher card and taking the lead.

When the deni is given, it is left for the new lead to decide whether he wants to make the same trick a double one. That it done by placing another card of the same suit and higher than the one originally led on the gheni.

After this, is the play of talafa, it is, however, optional. In this if the player with the lead does not have a hukm of the suit, but has the card immediately below it he can play that card to which the hukm has to played.

If the player does not wish to play the talafa, he has to play the utari, in which he has to simultaneously play all the hukm that he has till he is left with no winning card. Then in order to lose his deal, he shuffles the cards holds them face down in front of the other two players, who in turn discuss and decide any one card from the pack. That card is then played and whoever wins that round gets the new lead.

Rules of the second phase of the play:

Once the game reaches the tigasta, which is explained earlier, the second phase of the game starts. Though some of the rules of the first phase are followed such as the dukkal and the giving of the deni, the way in which the talafa is played differs slightly in this phase as the player is no longer obligated to play
the card of the same suit here. He play the card of another suit, face down, calling the name of the suit which he wants the hukm to be. Also the rule of playin the utari changes, as it is no longer an obligation to play every hukm simultaneously.

There are also a few optional possible leads that a player can play after his more obligatory plays of dukkal and deni. One of this is called the utaruna-sir, which is possible for a player whose possess the hukm and the low card next to next in sequence, the intermediate card not been played yet. Thus the player who has the intermediate card has to play it. So, one trick goes to the player who led with the hukm the other goes to the player who possessed the card below it. The third highest card of this deal is considered as the hukm.

Another of the optional possible leads is when a player holds the third highest card of any suit but not the higher twos. If he knows that both the higher ones are held by two different players, he can try to get these two out by playing a talafa, which is called as a natavani. It is similar to talafa, only it is made by a low card of the same suit not by playing a card of another suit face down. By playing this move the player apparently loses his turn but when he gets it back he has to play another move called the tavani, a second talafa to draw out another card. If he fails to do so the card that he wished to establish as hukm is burned.

In another scenario, if the player believes that the higher two cards are possessed by only one of the players, he can force them out in one go by playing a low card of the suit and saying ‘hardu’. If another player holds both the higher cards he is forced to play both of them, but if this is not the case the hardu is considered invalid. The card has to be then taken back and another lead has to be made.

The next possible trick to play is when the player who believes that both his counterparts are devoid of the cards of a particular suit of which he has few cards left. He can do so by simultaneously leading all his cards of that suit and
saying ‘sokta’. If he is right he wins multiple tricks. In case he is wrong, and one of the other players plays a card belonging to the same suit, that player wins the trick, irrespective of the rank of the card played.

The last card that leads the last trick is called the akheri. This is won by the player that holds the hukm of that suit. If the player that leads the trick does not win the trick and it is beaten by another player, it is called ‘killing’ the akheri or akheri-marne. In case both the players have cards beating the akheri, a rangeri is said to have occurred.

**The Next Deal:**

The main purpose of the game is to acquire more cards than were dealt earlier i.e. 40 cards. In case the player manages to win more cards from his opponents, the one who has lost the cards has to make payment before the start of the next game. The payment procedure is as follows. The player who has to make the payment is given the cards as any other game but face down. From these cards dealt, he has to keep aside first, second or last set of four cards, without looking at them. The player who has to take the payment chooses the number of cards that have to be paid from the cards set aside, without looking at them. He then looks at them and chooses the same number of worthless cards to be given back to the earlier player, which brings both players back to the number of cards with each of them being 40. During the payment, if the player finds a surkhya being given as payment, he has to return it back and choose another one in its place. The player has killed the akheri in the previous game and if a rangeri has occurred in the previous play, in such cases, none of the players are indebted to make payment to the player who had called the akheri.

Within the state of Odisha more than one version of game are played. To give a comparative view one version of a game from another state i.e. Maharashtra has been given. All the versions of the game are very different from each other especially the difference between those of the two states is very clear. The time available to the players, the nature of the group and the type of
set available might have been the deciding factors for the complexity of the rules. Formulation of such lengthy and complex rules must have called for the expenditure of a lot of leisure, energy and skill on the part of the players and the rule makers.