

P R E F A C E

The mysterious deities of Jagannātha Balabhadra and Subhadra of Puri, have engaged the minds of scholars regarding their origin and cult. Neither in the early historical accounts nor in other ancient Indian texts (up to the 5th or 6th century A.D.) we get any explicit reference to these deities. The Āgamas as well as the Purānas do not clearly refer to the rituals and the iconographic features of these peculiar images of Puri; though, in some of them, some implicit allusion to these deities is found.

Many scholars have worked on the historical background of the worship of Jagannātha. Mention may be made here of some of them. W.W.Hunter, A.S.Sterling, M.M.Sadāsīva Mishra of Puri, R.L.Mitra, R.D.Banerjea, M.M.Ganguli, Pandit Nīlakantha Das, Pandit Kedāra Nath Mahāpātra, H.K.Mahatab, Sūryanārayan Das, Benimadhava Padhi, Gurudas Sarkar, Sundarananda Vidyabinoda, and others have dealt with this topic in their various publications. In spite of all these previous attempts to solve the origin of the cult, there is still much scope for original research about its obscure beginning and development. It is not an exaggeration to say that the early history of Orissa is still, to a great extent, dark. I have long been contemplating to do some original work on this topic and have been patiently collecting materials for this purpose. I could not give any concrete shape to my ideas for various pre-occupations, and it is only during the last year and a half I have taken up the

the work in right earnest. I have been fortunate enough in having the close guidance of Dr.J.N.Banerjea in this matter, and I have followed his advice and instructions to the best of my ability.

The history of the religious development of Orissa which was in ancient days known as Kalinga with its sub-divisions of Tosali, Kongada ^{and} Daksin Kosala could not be properly dealt with on account of the paucity of data. To study the history of religion of this country we have to consider two important factors; one connected with its general history and the other with its ethnology. The original inhabitants of this region were some aboriginal tribes whose faith differed from those of others who came to settle there in subsequent ages. But in course of time there was an admixture of religious beliefs and practices. This commingling moulded the religious concepts of the indigenous people to a great extent. I have tried to explain the synthetic growth of the religious spirit in this land advanced by animism, Brahminism and Buddhism.

Another important aspect I have considered, while explaining the gradual development of the cult of Jagannātha, is the form of the worship of 'Trinity'; this aspect of the cult, I may humbly state, has not been given due consideration by previous scholars. I have shown in the first chapter that in the days of yore there was a belief in Orissa that each Rāṣṭra (Kingdom) was protected by a divinity which was considered to be its supreme authority. He was installed in the capital, and the members of the royal family used to worship that deity.

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If the God was originally installed by some aboriginal tribes it was patronised by the kings who allowed these tribal people to continue their services in the temple in some form or other. The result is that many deities in Orissa are upto the present days being worshipped by tribal people although they have been accepted as the presiding deities (Rastradevatas) of a particular kingdom. It is not out of place to mention here that the religious conception of the people changed from time to time and with the changes, new ideas crept into the minds of the people, thus emphasising the composite character of the faith. The developed cult of Jagannatha became so great a religious factor in the lives of the Vaisnavas of Eastern and parts of Southern India that various temples were built in these regions housing the exact replicas of the sacred icons of the Puri temple. Mention may be made here of comparatively modern temples of Jaganathapur (Ranchi, Bihar), Mahesh (Bengal), Coconada (Andhra), Rajim (C.P.) etc. Moreover they became so popular that the sanctity of the shrines and the deities was highly proclaimed in literature. It is needless to emphasise that in almost every part of Orissa, temples of Jagannatha are still extant.

Finally I have discussed at length the modifications of tantrism and Buddhism which culminated into Vaisnavism in Orissa being polished by great teachers like Sankaracarya, Ramanujacarya, Madhva and Caitanya. All their associations contributed to the growth and development of the composite cult of Jagannatha.

I have divided my thesis into seven chapters

entitled " (i) Background of the cult of Jagannātha, (ii) History of Jagannātha, (iii) Jagannātha in tradition, (iv) Temple and the Icon, (v) Temple administration, rites and festivals, (vi) Mode of worship, ^{and} (vii) Theology. " I have also added to these chapters as many as five short appendices dealing with such topics as (i) Ekānāśā and Subhadrā (ii) Jayadeva the poet of Orissa (iii) Muslim desecration of the Jagannātha temple (iv) Chatīśā Niyoga (36 kinds of temple servants) (v) List of Mathas, Bhogas, dresses and ornaments. It will thus be seen that my treatment of the subject is not simply historical but also fairly comprehensive.

Before giving an account of the theology underlying the cult in the last chapter, I have treated in brief outline, the various ritualistic traits as well as the present system of the temple administration in the preceding ones. While giving the detailed account of the mode of worship, I have laid stress on the worship of "Om̄kār or Pranava". The appendices deal with topics which are also intimately connected with the cult as it flourishes at present. Thus I may humbly state that I have approached the subject from different points of view in my own way, and I beg to claim some amount of originality in my treatment. In course of my continuous work on the theme I have been helped by various scholars of repute, the foremost among them being my guide and supervisor Dr. J. N. Banerjea.

I may also mention the names of such distinguished scholars in this connection, namely, the National Professor Dr.S.K. Chatterji, Dr.D.C.Sircar, Pundit Satyanarayana Rajguru, Dr. K.C.Panigrahi, Dr. N.K.Sahu and Sri S.K.Chattopadhyay who have given useful suggestions to me. My thanks are also due to Pandit K.Sankar Sarma of the National Library for his help in connection with the collection of some necessary data; I am also indebted to Sri Gauri Sankar Bhattacharya for helping me in the final get up of the thesis.

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