This thesis entitled "A critical edition of Niladri-Mahodayam and its study" represents mainly the results of the investigation carried on by me as a Research Student at the Utkal University from 1977 to 1984 under the guidance of Dr. G.N. Mahapatra, M.A., Ph.D., Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Directorate of Correspondence Courses, Utkal University, Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

The whole work is divided into two constituent parts. The first part of the work deals with the critical edition of the text of the Niladri-Mahodayam while the second part of the project is carried on the critical analysis of the puranic materials contained in it. This Sthala-Purana, the Niladri-Mahodayam, in 91 chapters (Adhyayas), is one of the biggest works in Sanskrit literature and the biggest in the whole field of Jagannatha-Cult. Though this huge work came to light as early as about 1922 when the unedited text of a manuscript was published by Sri Maharaja Sir Sri Biramitrodaya Sihmadeva of Sonapur State of the-then Orissa, has not so far been fully analysed and critically edited in detail anywhere. The king referred to above, was the feudatory Chief of Sonapur State and was popularly known as Dharmanidhi, Jnana Gunakara, K.C.I.E.M.R.S. Feudatory Chief of Sonapur State.

This unedited printed manuscript of the Niladri-Mahodayam is spotted at Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar. Its reference number in the Catalogue is 556 RH. Written in Oriya
character, this printed script unfortunately contains many scribal blunders along with genuine variants. Another printed copy of the same text, which runs up to only 8 chapters (Adhyāyas) under the title "Śrī-Jagannātha-Mahātmyam" has been collected from Śrī Veṅkatesvara Press of Bombay. This is a Devanāgarī manuscript which carries a lot of spurious verses and includes a number of significant variants. Regarding the readings of particular passages, words or phrases, no manuscript is sacrosant and every reading has to be tested by its intrinsic probability.

A positive microfilm of one MS preserved in the India Office Library and Records, London has been collected with a small description given by Eggeling. The printed copy of the same manuscript (i.e., the reader-printer) has also been collected from the same source. This is an incomplete MS up to 32 chapters (Adhyāyas) and is said to be a Mackenzie Collection. This is also one unedited Devanāgarī MS having many significant variants. It is true that no two manuscripts, unless they are exact copies of each other, are entirely identical; because every scriber makes his own mistakes, indulges in petty alterations, emends, transposes, or interpolates verses here and there. But once the text-tradition of a particular class or group of manuscripts is established, the deviations of fresh manuscripts of the same class or group are, on the whole, found too insignificant to justify further collation of manuscripts of that class.
We collated, for instance, three Devanāgarī manuscripts and seven Oriya manuscripts whose readings do not differ materially from each other. One of the Oriya MSS is seen to be fairly old, even older than the MS collected by the feudatory Chief of Sonapur State. As recorded in the MS itself, the scriber copied it from the original text of the purāṇa in the year 1910. It would be interesting to note in this connection that the Devanāgarī and Oriya manuscripts are generally of the same character in presenting the facts of the purāṇa, though remarkably differ in interpolated verses and scribal errors.

Therefore, it became necessary to critically edit the text of theNilādri-Mahodayam after proper scrutinization of the manuscript materials available from all the possible sources inside India and abroad. We have carefully considered the manuscripts, not on the ground of subjective preference, nor again merely from the standpoint of taste and style, which are at best unsafe guides, but on the actual evidence furnished by the text and supported by intrinsic probability. No doubt, scribal errors have been responsible for some peculiar readings; but in some cases genuine variants arise from the misplaced ingenuity of the scribers themselves. A careful examination of the several manuscripts has convinced me that a few only of the various readings have probably arisen from the ignorance of the scribers.

Thus, an intensive comparision of the ten manuscripts,
both Devanāgarī and Oriya characters, makes it appear that further collection of fresh MSS of the same type would not fruitfully improve the text of the Nīlādri-Mahodayaṃ. As a matter of fact, after noting the variants from these standard MSS we took into account their readings and edited the text accordingly.

The extent of materials, as well as the method of editing has been indicated in the following chapters like

I. Manuscript material,
II. Description of the manuscripts,
III. Lacunae in the manuscripts,
IV. Plates with their exact readings,
V. Detailed notice of the contents of all the 99 chapters of the Nīlādri-Mahodayaṃ,
VI. The text.

Let me hope that this work does not only solve the long standing problem of the critical edition of the Nīlādri-Mahodayaṃ, but also help the readers for the study and enjoyment of this masterpiece on Jagannātha Tattva and Jagannātha Nāhātayam.

My thanks are due to the authorities of Utkal University for giving me an opportunity to carry out research work under my esteemed teacher, Dr. G.N. Mahapatra. I could not have tracked the tropical forest of such manuscripts as the Nīlādri-Mahodayaṃ if my revered teacher had not given his kind guidance at every step. I am highly obliged to Dr. K.K. Chaturvedi Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Jabalpur University, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh for his valuable suggestions.
and guidance in the textual edition of the purāṇa. He had advised me to go through the editing works of Dr. V. Raghavan, Dr. S. K. De and others and accordingly, it became possible for me to complete my work.

Among those teachers and authorities who readily assisted me in the discovery of the manuscripts, I express my humble gratitudes to Late Professor Prahalad Pradhan, Former Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Utkal University and first Vice-Chancellor of Śrī Jagannātha Sanskrit University, Puri; Dr. K. C. Mishra, Retired Professor of Oriya, Berhampur University, Orissa; Dr. H. C. Dash, Superintendent, Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar; Dr. A. C. Swain, Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Utkal University, Vanī Vihar, Bhubaneswar; Dr. K. C. Acharya, Reader in Sanskrit, Utkal University and Dr. U. N. Dhal, Reader in Sanskrit, Utkal University; and Dr. B. Mohanty, Professor and Head of the Department of Oriya, Utkal University for their kind help and suggestions. I return my sincere thanks to Pandit Sadasiva Ratha Sharma of Puri; Pandit Nilamani Mishra, Curator, Manuscript Section, Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar; Pandit Srinibas Rath, Incharge, Manuscript Section, Utkal University; and Pandit Bhikari Mishra of Pallishasan, Nayagarh, Puri who have helped me a lot in spotting as well as in supplying the manuscripts of the Niladri-Mahāvāyaṃ.

I am indebted to Mr. M. O'Keefe, Assistant Keeper, India Office Library and Records, London for his uniform
courtesy in sending me the positive microfilm and the reader-printer copy of the manuscript of the Nilādri-Mahodayam preserved there in India Office Library and Records.

It remains for me to express my indebtedness to my pupil Late Banambar Mishra of Pallishasan who had rendered his utmost sincerity in the collection of some of the manuscripts from remote rural areas of Nayagarh Sub-division of Puri district. He had also helped me in many ways in comparing the manuscript materials for this edition. I return my sincere thanks to Dr. A.C. Dash, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, S.V.M. College, Jagatsinghpur, Orissa for his uninterrupted assistance in editing the Nilādri-Mahodayam. I must thank to the photographers of former J.B. Photostudio of Nayagarh, who had prepared the photo copies of some of the folios of the MSS collected from private sources. I am also thankful to Dr. P.S. Hebber, Head of the Department of Vedāntābhārya, Sadāsiva Kendriya Sanskrit Mahāvidyālaya, Puri, Orissa for his untired effort in typing the Devanāgarī Versions of this Sthala-Purāṇa.

In addition to the editing, the attempts have also been made to critically study this purāṇa from various angles of vision. The details of the study along with its specific preface have been analysed in the beginning of the second part of this work, as a constituent one.

Finally I surrender to the almighty, the Lord of the Universe who probably steer the whole project in encouraging me to complete the volume in its own way.

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