



Jay Jagannath ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ



# SOUVENIR



23rd **FOLK FAIR** 2025

*Celebrating Heritage, Connecting Cultures!*

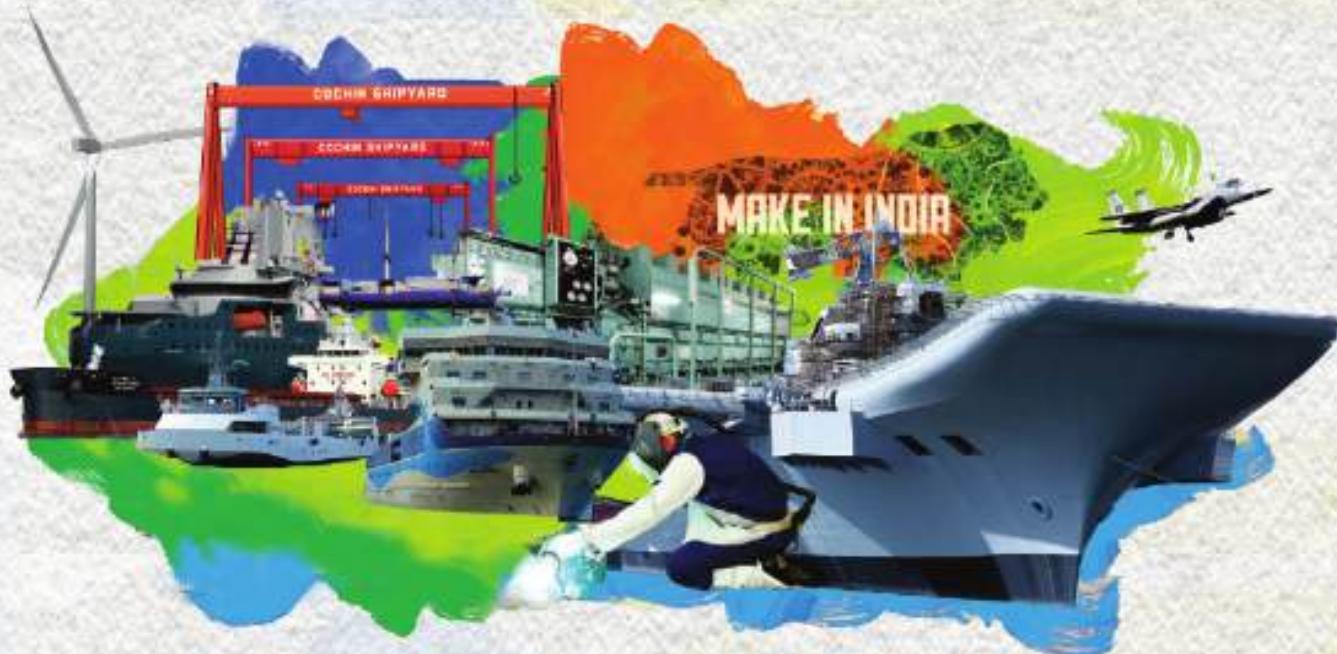
**NATIONAL TRIBAL/ FOLK SONG & DANCE FESTIVAL AND  
NATIONAL LEVEL EXHIBITION**

**Date:- 16th – 20th June, 2025**

**Location – Golden Sea Beach, in front of Mahodadhi Niwas, Puri**

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# 23rd FOLK FAIR 2025

Celebrating Heritage, Connecting Cultures!

# SOUVENIR

## National Tribal/Folk Song and Dance Festival with National Level Exhibition

### Supported By



MINISTRY OF CULTURE, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



Odia Language Literature & Culture Department  
Government of Odisha



Handlooms, Textiles & Handicrafts Department  
Government of Odisha



ଜିଲ୍ଲା ପ୍ରକାଶନ, ପୁରୀ

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, PURI



SPORTS, YOUTH & CULTURAL  
ACTIVITIES DEPARTMENT  
Government of Gujarat



Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



South Zone Cultural Centre  
Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India



पश्चिम क्षेत्र सांस्कृतिक केन्द्र, उदयपुर  
West Zone Cultural Centre, Udaipur



Creativity & Culture Commission  
Goverment of Andhra Pradesh



Department of Art & Culture.  
Government of Manipur



कला एवं सांस्कृतिक कार्य विभाग  
Art & Cultural Affairs Department



Art, Literature, Culture & Archaeology Department  
Goverment of Rajasthan



Directorate of Research  
Department of Cultural Affairs  
Government of Arunachal Pradesh



Development Commissioner (Handlooms)  
Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India



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Government of Odisha



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Shree Shrikhetra Soochana

Raghunath Bhawan, Narendra Kona, Puri -  
752001, Odisha

We Build People to Build the Nation



ଶ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀକ୍ଷେତ୍ର ସୂଚନା  
Shree Shrikshetra Soochana



ଶ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀକ୍ଷେତ୍ର ସୂଚନା ସମ୍ବାଦପତ୍ର ପରିବାର ପକ୍ଷରୁ  
ଆପଣ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ପବିତ୍ର ରଥପାତ୍ରାର ହାର୍ଦିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ

Heartfelt Greetings on the Auspicious Rath Yatra from  
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धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान  
धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान  
Dharmendra Pradhan



शिक्षा मंत्री  
भारत सरकार  
Minister of Education  
Government of India

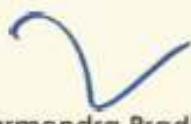


## MESSAGE

I am happy to know that **Shree Shrikshetra Soochana, Puri, Odisha** is going to organise "23<sup>rd</sup> Folk Fair - 2025" at Jagannath Dham, Puri, Odisha during 16-20 June, 2025 and to mark this occasion, a Souvenir is being brought out.

Folk traditions in Odisha have enriched the socio-cultural life of the State, with their innate beauty and strength. At a time when the people are grappling with myriad challenges of modern day living, native folk traditions with rich content in music, art and culture provides a solace and brings peace, happiness and contentment in life. I am sure, the Folk Fair will present excellent opportunities to the folk artists to showcase their talent and expand their outreach.

I wish the "23<sup>rd</sup> Folk Fair - 2025" all success.



(Dharmendra Pradhan)

सबको शिक्षा, अच्छी शिक्षा

MOE - Room No. 301, 'C' Wing, 3rd Floor, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi-110 001, Phone : 91-11-23782387, Fax : 91-11-23362365  
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Vice Chairman, Islands Development Agency

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**Sri Vijaya Puram - 744101**  
Tel : (O) 03192-233333  
(R) 03192-233300  
Fax : 03192-230372



#### MESSAGE

It is a matter of immense pride and joy to learn that Shree Shrikshetra Soochana is organising the 23<sup>rd</sup> National Tribal and Folk Song & Dance Festival, in conjunction with the National-Level Exhibition – Folk Fair 2025, at the sacred and historic Jagannath Dham, Puri.

This celebration stands as a vibrant tribute to the rich cultural heritage, enduring spirit, and artistic brilliance of our tribal communities. Through the soulful rhythms of traditional music, the exquisite craftsmanship of indigenous artisans, and the timeless resonance of ancestral narratives, the festival offers a living tapestry of India's diverse and ancient folk traditions.

Such events are far more than cultural showcases—they are vital platforms for preserving our intangible heritage, fostering intercultural dialogue, and inspiring pride in our shared identity. They remind us that tradition is not merely a memory of the past but a guiding light for the future.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the organisers, community leaders, elders, and youth whose unwavering dedication and collective vision have made this celebration possible. Their efforts ensure that the unique voices and traditions of tribal India continue to be honoured, celebrated, and passed on to future generations.

May this festival be a joyous confluence of cultures—a space for learning, unity, and celebration—and may it further strengthen the bonds of harmony and respect among all.



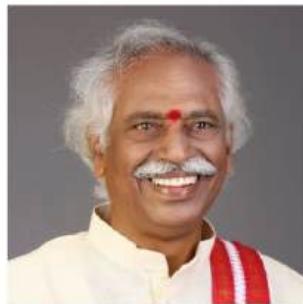
(Admiral D K Joshi)  
PVSM, AVSM, YSM, NM, VSM (Retd.)  
Lt. Governor, A&N Islands  
&  
Vice Chairman, Islands Development Agency



**Bandaru Dattatraya**  
Governor, Haryana



बंदारु दत्तात्रेय  
राज्यपाल, हरियाणा



### MESSAGE

No. HR8/PRO-MSG/2025-63

22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2025

I am delighted to learn that Shree Shrikshetra Soochana is organizing the 23<sup>rd</sup> 'National Tribal, Folk Song and Dance Festival' alongside a national-level exhibition under the banner of Folk-Fair-2025. The event will be held at the Open Air Pendal, Golden Sea Beach, Puri, Odisha, from June 16 to 20, 2025.

This festival holds profound significance as it brings together the rich traditions, vibrant art forms, and indigenous knowledge systems of our tribal and folk communities from across the nation. Events such as these serve as vital platforms for showcasing the extraordinary cultural diversity of India, which has been the cornerstone of our collective identity for centuries.

Preserving and promoting our tribal and folk heritage is essential not only for honouring the creativity and resilience of our indigenous communities but also for fostering a more vibrant, inclusive, and cohesive society. By celebrating the unique music, dance, crafts, and traditions of different communities, we strengthen the bonds of unity, promote mutual respect, and build a future where diversity is seen as a source of strength and inspiration.

The 'National Tribal, Folk Song and Dance Festival' offers an invaluable opportunity for artists, scholars, and audiences to engage deeply with the living traditions of our land. It also provides a platform for younger generations to connect with their roots and appreciate the richness of India's cultural mosaic.

I extend my heartfelt best wishes to the organizers, participants, and visitors for the grand success of Folk-Fair-2025. May this celebration of heritage and harmony inspire us all to cherish and nurture the diverse traditions that define the soul of our nation!

(Bandaru Dattatraya)

हरियाणा राजभवन, चंडीगढ़ – 160019  
Haryana Raj Bhavan, Chandigarh - 160019

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FAX - 0172-2740557

e-mail : [governor@hry.nic.in](mailto:governor@hry.nic.in)



**La. Ganesan**  
Governor of Nagaland



RAJ BHAVAN  
Kohima - 797001



May 03, 2025

### MESSAGE

I am pleased to know that Shree Shrikshetra Soochana is organizing the 23<sup>rd</sup> National Tribal/Folk Song & Dance Festival with a National Level Exhibition, "Folk Fair 2025" at Jagannath Dham, Puri.

India's tribal and folk traditions are invaluable cultural treasures that reflect the diversity, resilience, and creativity of our people. Such festivals not only celebrate our rich heritage but also provide a vital platform for tribal communities across the nation to showcase their artistic excellence. Odisha, with its vibrant tribal culture, is a befitting host for this significant event.

I applaud the organizers for their dedicated efforts in promoting and preserving indigenous art forms. I am confident that this festival will inspire greater appreciation and participation among the youth and help in fostering national unity through cultural exchange.

I extend my best wishes for the grand success of the event.



( La Ganesan )

Tel : +91-370-2242881 (O) +91-370-2242898 (Fax) Email : [rajbhavankohima@nic.in](mailto:rajbhavankohima@nic.in)

**Acharya Devvrat**  
Governor, Gujarat  
Gandhinagar-382021



आचार्य देवव्रत  
राज्यपाल, गुजरात  
गांधीनगर-३८२०२१



### Message

It gives me immense pleasure to know that Shree Shrikshetra Soochana is organizing the 23rd Folk Fair-2025, a National Tribal and Folk Song & Dance Festival with a National Level Exhibition, to be held at Puri, Odisha.

Odisha, with its deep-rooted tribal heritage and spiritual legacy, has always stood as a vibrant reflection of India's rich cultural tapestry. The significant participation of tribal communities across the country in this festival will not only showcase the diversity of our nation but also reaffirm our commitment to preserving and promoting indigenous art forms.

Tribal music and dance are profound expressions of community identity, resilience, and tradition. Festivals like these play a crucial role in nurturing cultural pride among youth and connecting generations to their roots.

I commend the efforts of the organizers for providing such a commendable platform to talented artists and for their continued dedication toward cultural preservation and social harmony.

I extend my best wishes for the grand success of Folk Fair-2025 and hope it continues to foster unity, creativity, and cultural understanding.

  
(Acharya Devvrat)

नायब सिंह  
NAYAB SINGH



मुख्य मन्त्री, हरियाणा,  
चंडीगढ़।  
CHIEF MINISTER, HARYANA,  
CHANDIGARH



Message

Dated ..... 07-05-2025

I am pleased to learn that Shree Shrikshetra Soochana is organizing the 23rd National Tribal/Folk Song and Dance Festival along with a National Level Exhibition, under the banner of "Folk Fair 2025," to be held in Puri, Odisha from June 16 to 20, 2025. I am also glad to note that a Souvenir is being released to mark this occasion.

The effort to preserve and promote India's rich cultural heritage is indeed commendable. This festival will witness the participation of tribal groups from across all states and union territories, who will showcase their traditional music and dance forms. It is a true reflection of the spirit of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* - the world is one family.

I am confident that this vibrant celebration of India's tribal and folk traditions will serve as a powerful platform to unite people from diverse backgrounds through their colorful rituals, spirited performances and soulful expressions of art.

I convey my best wishes for the grand success of Folk Fair 2025.

(Nayab Singh)

ড° হিমন্ত বিশ্ব শর্মা  
Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma



মুখ্যমন্ত্রী, অসম  
Chief Minister, Assam



#### MESSAGE

It gives me great pleasure to extend my best wishes to Shree Shrikshetra Soochana on the occasion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> National Tribal and Folk Song and Dance Festival, along with the National Exhibition Folk Fair 2025, being held in the sacred land of Lord Jagannath at Puri from 16 to 20 June 2025. I also welcome the release of a commemorative souvenir to mark this vibrant event.

Folk fairs celebrate the richness of our cultural heritage, preserving traditional art forms while fostering intergenerational connections. In our diverse society, tribal festivals hold deep cultural and historical significance, serving as powerful expressions of indigenous identity, values and the profound bond between community and nature.

I am confident that Folk Fair 2025, set against the picturesque Golden Sea Beach, will promote unity, strengthen social bonds and offer a meaningful platform for cultural exchange and learning. It is heartening to see such efforts encouraging inclusivity, awareness and respect for our shared traditions.

I commend the organizers for their vision and dedication to celebrating India's diverse folk legacy. I especially urge the youth to immerse themselves in the spirit of the festival and draw inspiration from its kaleidoscope of music, dance and tradition.

Wishing the festival every success and hoping the souvenir becomes a valuable tribute to our cultural mosaic.

  
(Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma)

Shrikumar Bandopadhyay  
Officer on Special Duty (OSD)  
Head of Task Force  
to the Governor of West Bengal

618- 6  
No. ....



Raj Bhavan, Kolkata- 700062  
Tel: (033) 22001641 (ext.209)  
headoftaskforcerajbhavan@gmail.com

23/4/25  
Date: .....

### Message

I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to Shree Srikheta Soochana and all participants, organisers, and well-wishers associated with the 23rd National Tribal/Folk Song & Dance Festival with National Level Exhibition, to be held at Jagannath Dham, Puri from 16th to 20th June 2025.

Odisha stands as a vibrant confluence of indigenous traditions, wisdom, and living heritage. The contribution of tribal art, dance, music, and rituals to the socio-cultural fabric of the state—and indeed of India—is both unique and invaluable.

This annual festival not only celebrates the aesthetic richness of tribal and folk expressions but also reinforces the role of cultural dialogue in fostering inclusivity, empowerment, and sustainable development. Platforms such as this create opportunities for tribal youth to display their talents, connect with wider audiences, and preserve their artistic legacies for future generations.

I appreciate the untiring efforts of Shree Srikheta Soochana, a pioneering organisation devoted to the socio-cultural upliftment of tribal communities, for organising this inclusive and spirited festival with dedication for over two decades.

May this year's edition of the festival be a grand success, bringing together the melodies, movements, and messages of unity that define the soul of our diverse nation.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shrikumar Bandopadhyay'.

Shrikumar Bandopadhyay

Prof. Harekrishna Satap  
Chairman, SS-cum-Former Vice chancellor  
National Sanskrit University, Tirupati  
Raghunath Bhavan,  
Narendra Kona, Puri 752001(Odisha)  
E-mail- folkfair2025@gmail.com



## For the Grand Success of 23rd Folk Fair 2025 we owe our gratitude to



**Shri Narendra Modi Ji**  
Hon'ble Prime Minister  
of India



**Dr. Hari Babu  
Kambhampati**  
Hon'ble Governor of  
Odisha



**Shri Mohan Ch. Majhi**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister  
of Odisha



**Shri Dharmendra  
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**Shri Jual Oram**  
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Affairs, GOI



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Minister, GOI



**Shri Giriraj Singh**  
Hon'ble Minister of  
Textiles, GOI



**Shri Gajendra Singh  
Shekhawat**  
Hon'ble Minister of  
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**Shri Kanak Vardhan  
Singh Deo**  
Hon'ble Deputy Chief  
Minister of Odisha



**Smt. Pravati Parida**  
Hon'ble Deputy Chief  
Minister of Odisha



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C Dept., Govt. of  
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**Shri Pradeep Bal  
Samanta**  
Hon'ble Minister H T &  
H Department, Govt. of  
Odisha



**Dr. Swami Sakshi Ji  
Maharaj**  
Hon'ble Member of  
Parliament, Unnao(LS)



**Dr. Sambit Patra**  
Hon'ble Member of  
Parliament, Puri(LS)



**Dr. Rabindra  
Narayan Behera**  
Hon'ble Member of  
Parliament, Jajpur(LS)





## For the Grand Success of 23rd Folk Fair 2025 we owe our gratitude to



**Shri Subhasis Khuntia**

Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha



**Shri Vivek Aggarwal IAS**

Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India



**Smt. Ranjana Chopra IAS**

Special Secretary & FA, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India



**Shri Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra, IAS**

Principal Secretary, OLL&C Dept., Govt. of Odisha



**Shri Hemant Sharma, IAS**

Principal Secretary, MSME Department, Govt. of Odisha



**Mrs. Guha Poonam Tapas Kumar, IAS**

Commissioner Cum Secretary, HT & H Dept., Govt. of Odisha



**Shri D. Prasanth Kumar Reddy, IAS**

Director of Industries, Odisha



**Smt. Pranati Chhotray, IAS**

Director, Handicrafts, Govt. of Odisha



**Dr. Ranjit Rath**

Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), Oil India Limited (OIL)



**Shri Chanchal Rana, IAS**

Collector & District Magistrate, Puri



**Shri Pinak Mishra, IPS**

Superintendent of Police, Puri



**Shri Akhil Kumar Mishra**

ADG PIB-cum-CBC, Bhubaneswar



**Shri Sharat Chandra Behera OAS(SG)**

Additional District Magistrate(Gen), Puri



**Shri Sarat Chandra Mohapatra OAS (S)**

Additional District Magistrate (Rev), Puri



**Shri Nilamadhab Bhoi, OAS(S)**

Additional District Magistrate (Protocol), Puri



**Shri Abhimanyu Behera, OAS(S)**

Executive Officer, Puri Municipality



# Organisers



**Braja Kishore Tripathy**  
Former Union Minister -cum-  
Chief Advisor, SSS, Puri



**Jayanta Kumar Sarangi**  
Former MLA, Puri, Odisha-  
cum-Chairman, Organising  
Committee



**Ramchandra Das Mohapatra**  
Senior Sevayat Shree Jagannath  
Temple ,Puri-cum- Chairman ,  
Reception Committee,  
23rd Folk Fair-2025



**Shankarsan Parida**  
Former President ,Zilla  
Parishad,Puri-cum- Chairman ,  
Festival Committee,  
23rd Folk Fair 2025



**Prof. Harekrishna Satpathy**  
Chairman, Shree Srikhetra  
Soochana, Puri -cum- Former  
Vice Chancellor, NSU,Tirupati



**Badri Mishra**  
Chairman, Administrative  
Committee,  
23rd Folk Fair-2025



**Chakradhar Mohapatra**  
Eminent Social Activist-cum-  
Working Chairman,SSS,Puri



**Rajesh Kumar Mohanty**  
National Youth Awardee-  
cum- General Secretary ,  
SSS,Puri



**Prafulla Kumar Samantaray**  
Chairman , Cultural Committee  
, 23rd Folk Fair-2025 -cum-  
Former DCO,Puri



**Bharat Nayak**  
Vice Chairman,SSS,Puri



**Jagannath Pujapanda Samanta**  
President Pujapanda Nijoga, Shree  
Jagannath Temple, Puri -cum-  
Chairman Programme Committee,  
23rd Folk Fair-2025



**Madhab Chandra Pujapanda Samanta**  
Secretary Pujapanda Nijoga,  
Shree Jagannath Temple, Puri -  
cum-Chairman Managing  
Committee, 23rd Folk Fair-2025



**Satyabrata Dash**  
Organising Secretary, SSS,  
Puri



**Narayan Patra**  
Treasurer,SSS,Puri



**Dr. Pradyumna Sathua**  
Secretary Media & Publicity ,  
SSS, Puri



**Biswanath Mishra**  
Chief Coordinator , 22nd Folk  
Fair-2024 & 15th Krishi Fair  
2024



# Organisers



**Shyam Prakash Senapati**  
Cultural Secretary, SSS, Puri



**Chandrabijayee Mishra**  
Stage Anchor & Coordinator  
22nd Folk Fair-2024



**Ritesh Kumar Mohanty**  
Secretary IT , SSS, Puri



**Siba Sundar Mishra**  
Logistics Secretary



**Bhabani Shankar Sahoo**  
Asst. Logistics Secretary, SSS  
Puri



**Bidroha Keshari Singh**  
Joint Secretary , SSS, Puri



**Debendra Mohapatra**  
Joint Secretary , SSS, Puri



**Soumyaranjan Mishra**  
Joint Secretary , SSS, Puri



**Puskar Sahoo**  
Executive Body Member, 22nd  
Folk Fair 2024 & 15th Krishi Fair  
2024



**Pratap Chandra Dalei**  
Executive Body Member, 22nd  
Folk Fair 2024 & 15th Krishi  
Fair 2024



**Satya Narayan Maharana**  
Executive Body Member, 22nd  
Folk Fair 2024 & 15th Krishi  
Fair 2024



**Raj Kishore Mukhi**  
Executive Body Member, 22nd  
Folk Fair 2024 & 15th Krishi  
Fair 2024



**Prasanta Kumar Sahoo**  
Executive Body Member, 22nd  
Folk Fair 2024 & 15th Krishi  
Fair 2024



**Purna Chandra Ojha**  
Executive Body Member, 22nd  
Folk Fair 2024 & 15th Krishi  
Fair 2024



# MEMORIES OF



23rd

# FOLK FAIR 2025

*Celebrating Heritage, Connecting Cultures!*

**NATIONAL TRIBAL/ FOLK SONG & DANCE FESTIVAL AND  
NATIONAL LEVEL EXHIBITION**

**Date:– 16th – 20th June, 2025**

**Location – Golden Sea Beach, in front of Mahodadhi Niwas, Puri**



ଶ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀକ୍ଷେତ୍ର ସୂଚନା  
Shree Shrikshetra Soochana



ଶ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀକ୍ଷେତ୍ର ସୂଚନା ସମ୍ବାଦପତ୍ର ପରିବାର ପକ୍ଷରୁ  
ଆପଣ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ପବିତ୍ର ରଥପାତ୍ରାର ହାର୍ଦିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ

Heartfelt Greetings on the Auspicious Rath Yatra from  
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# Memories of 23rd – Folk Fair 2025



# Memories of 23rd - Folk Fair 2025



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Shree Shrikshetra Soochana



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# Daru - Vrksa to Darubrahma : Vedic and Agamic Ethics in God Incarnation

*Padmanabha Mahapatra*



*biswasya jagatah pratistha*'. (Mahanarayana Upanishad 79.7) The seeds of this, which is well-known as 'barna-asrama-dharma' is found in the Purushasukta of Rigveda (10th Mandal 90-1 to 16) and Sri Purusottam Jagannath is that 'Saharshshirsha Purushaah'.

*"Urdhwa mulo-avak- shakha esho ashwatthah  
sanatanah*

*Tadeba shukram tat brahma tadebamritamuchyate  
Tasminlokah shrutih sarbe tadu natyeti kashchana.  
Etad bai tat"*

*(Kath-Upanishad . Part II. Canto III-1)*

"*Urdhwamulah*", it is the tree which has its root above, this root is the state of the supreme Brahman. This tree is the symbol of the world, it comprises everything from unmanifested to the immovables. It has been expressed as a "vrksa", a tree because it is being felled. This tree has its birth, old age and death, it changes itself every moment. Such a tree is subject to hundreds of

it is natural for the human intelligence to conceive of a beginning for this creation and to posit an eternal God who existed before the creation and from Whom the creation proceeded. 'Sadeba somyeda-marga asit, ekameb-dwitiyam \*\*\* tadaiksata bahu syam prajayeya iti'. In the beginning 'sat' alone existed, the One without a second. It reflected -'May I become many! May I be born!' (Chandogya Upanishad 6.2.1-3) The 'many' that were created, needed a central integrating force, a law or a principle, for, otherwise, chaos would result. This law or principle is the Purusottam Dharma. This Purusottam Tatwa is the firm foundation upon which the entire universe rotates – 'dharma'

branches symbolizing the heaven, hell and the states of beasts and ghosts. This tree is present from the time immemorial, no one knows its date of germination, so it is 'Sanatanah'. 'Tat eba' 'shukram' - such root of the tree of the world is semen, it is white, pure, resplendent, – really being the light of the Self, it is the consciousness. 'Tat brahma, tat eva amrtam ucycate' – that is the Brahman, the greatest of all. That is also called indestructible under any circumstances (amrtam), hence it is the supreme truth. During creation, existence and dissolution of the world no modification trespasses Him.

**The real nature of Brahman —**

The entire universe moves on due to the existence of Brahman. He is like a raised thunderbolt and out of fear everyone abides by His law. Those who actually realize this Brahman become immortal. Because of Brahman's inevitable law, Fire burns, Sun shines, Indra, Bayu and Yama

doubts in the minds of the skeptics, its reality is determined in its true colour, by the seekers of truth, its essence lies only in its root, it is the supreme Brahman, ascertained in Vedant. Such tree grows out of the seed of ignorance, desire, action and the unmanifested but its sprout is Hiranyagarbha. This Brahman comprises of two powers, i.e. the knowledge and the action. Its leaves are the Vedas, the Smritis, the learnings and the instructions. Its charming flowers are the symbols of charity, austerity and sacrifice. Its different tastes are the feelings of happiness and sorrow. Its varieties of fruits are the life-substance of the worldly beings. It is felled by the weapon of detachment consisting of the realization of the identity of Brahman and the Self as enumerated by the Vedanta.

The name of this tree is '*asvatthah*', this is tree of the world, its nature being ever unsteady. The tree is '*avaksakhah*', it has four downward evaporated into the cosmic infinity diminishing its glaze to zero. Hiranyagarbha is infinite effulgence without any definite shape. '*Na tasya pratima asti yasya nama Mahadasya Hiranyagarbhabhah*'. Initially He had no image. He desired so '*kamayata bahu syam prajayeyeti*'. (Taittiriya.2/6) First He became quadruped. '*Sarbam hi etat Brahma ayam atma Brahma sah ayamatma catuspat*' (Mandukya Upanishad -2). This means—All this is surely Brahman. This self is Brahman. The self, such as it is, is possessed of four quarters.

#### Then what are those four quarters?

The first quarter is Baiswanara whose sphere of action is the waking stage. He leads in diverse ways all the Bishwa and the beings (naras). Sri Balabhadra is the Jagaratabastha of Parambrahma Purusottam. Taijasa is the second quarter, the dream state, as its sphere of activity is 'swapnasthanah'. Mother Subhadra is the Swapnabastha of Parambrahma. The third quarter is the 'Prajna', who has deep sleep as His sphere, in whom everything becomes undifferentiated, who is a mass of mere consciousness, who abounds in bliss, who is the doorway to the experience of the dream and waking states. Sri Jagannath represents to this third phase, the Susuptabastha of Parambrahma. The fourth phase is the lord of all; He is Antaryami, the inner controller. He gives birth to the universe together with its diversities, He is the source of all, He is the place of origin and dissolution of all the beings (bhutam). Sri Chakraraj Sudarshan represents to this Turiyabastha of Parambrahma. Keeping this aspect in view, four Neem trees are being identified for embodiment of four Bigrahas.

the lord of death, all proceed with their respective duties as assigned to them. His form does not exist within the range of human vision and nobody can see Him with the normal eye—'*Na sandrishe tisthati rupamasya na cakshusha pashyati kashchanainam*'. He can only be apprehended through a pure transparent mind imbibed with intuitive wisdom borne out of unalloyed devotional practices in the very core of one's own unstinted heart. Those who have really got the opportunity of having such vision, have gained the final beatitude.

Parambrahma Purusottam Jagannath is the very root of the world. He is '*Hiranyagarbhabhah*'. '*Hiranyagarbhabhah samabartatagre*' (Yajuh-23-1). At the cycle of creation, the great Sun and the Sauramandala, Meghamala within the Navomandal, the green Earth and the deep Ocean etc. got lost in the Hiranyagarbha and ultimately the Hiranyagarbha

*tadahamarjuna*'. (Gita 10/39) The worldly seed originates from the tree and in course of time vanishes after producing the tree. Shri Purusottam is not born, He has created innumerable world, He remains as He is. So He has declared Himself to be eternal and imperishable seed within world tree. He has assumed the form of a fish, a tortoise, a boar and what not. He may assume any form at any time, but always it is only He. He in the form of Hiranya-bidarak Nrusimha lacerates Hiranyakasyapu but in the form of Laxmi-Nrusimha He blesses all His devotees. Sri Nrusimha is the first 'Archa Bigraha' of Mahavishnu, so He is the only worshippable deity through fire sacrifice in the entire Nabakalebar process within the 'Kalasha' placed on the Yajna Mandap. Even though four Daru Pratimas on the Ratnasimhasan attract the notice of the devotees, actually they are one, so far as their consecration is concerned. Only one Nyas Daru is consecrated on the Pratistha Mandap and thereafter cut into four pieces as per the prescribed size, to be suitably fixed as lids, so as to cover the cavities in the chest portions of the new Bigrahs containing the 'Brahmapadarsh'. These lids are known as 'Brahma-kapatas'.

We have already discussed, Brahman comprises of two powers, the first is the knowledge and the second is the action. Jnana and Karma are the two poles recognized, either they may be combined in practice (samuccaya) or regarded as mutually exclusive (vikalpa). In the entire process of Nabakalebar the first part, the Yoga of knowledge, is practiced by the Shrotriya Brahmins and the second part, the Yoga of action, is practiced by the Daitapatis and the Biswakarmas.

his family, as they might claim with a sense of vanity that the temple was built by his ancestors. For this tremendous sacrifice of Indradyumna, Lord was very much pleased and granted the last boon. This has been given in much detail in "Deula Tola" by Nilamber Das.

The Sevaks or servitors called Daitapatis are of Sabar origin and they are engaged in worship and services of main deities especially at the time of *Nabakalebar* and Car festival. During Nabakalebara, on the day of transfer of Brahma from old images to new images, Daitapatis perform the burial of old images at *Koili Baikuntha* in the precinct of the temple and observed' the funeral rites like Hindus in traditional manner; because they think themselves that they are *Gyanti-Sahodar* (family member of Lord). They use to shave their head and take bath in *Markandeswar* Tank with their family on the final day of funeral rites and they put on new clothes and take *Mahaprasad* as observed on funeral day. They therefore treat themselves as related to the family of Lord Jagannath.

Daita means "the most beloved one of Lord." After bathing festival on full moon day of Jyestha, the deities are worshipped in a secret chamber (Anavasara) for full two weeks by the Daitas. Except Daitas and Patimahapatra, none are allowed to see and do the worship of Lord during Anavasara, car festival and Nabakalebar. Anavasara means engagement without rest. The worship is so engaging and continuous that Daitas do not get time to relax. Hence, this period of two weeks has been correctly named as Anavasara. During this period, they offer fruits and Anavasara - pana (water mixed with sugar, milk cream etc.) to the deities and they take that as Prasad there. It is believed that the deities are in sickness. Normally one likes to see his close relatives at the time of sickness. With that belief,

as Daitas are treated as close relatives of lord's family, they are only allowed to sit with him during this period and sing different hymns in a very low voice to please the deities. From the way of their worship and engagement it appears that they have devoted themselves most affectionately, closely and heartily to the deities. During Car festival, they decorate the Deities in the chariot in tribal costumes. At the time of *pahandi*, they use to sing a type of song called *malasree* which has a traditional belief that such songs and wordings would protect and safeguard the Deities. Besides, just before pahandi they use to tie up charms and talismans made up of roots and leaves on the arms of deities in order to protect their bodies. This is characteristically a sabar mode of belief and indicates their affection for deities.

It may be observed that Daitas have no privilege to participate in all other festivals of Deities, which are celebrated according to Aryan tradition. Thus in Sri Jagannath culture there is a fusion of celebration of Aryan and non Aryan worshipping without any conflict. Tradition and practices followed in the Jagannath temple indicate that Lord Jagannath is of tribal origin.

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## Jagannath Cult and its Linkage with Tribal Culture

Dr. Chitta Ranjan Mallia

The origin and antiquity of Lord Purusottama-Jagannath, the Lord of the universe, are shrouded in considerable to know how and when the God came to be worshipped at Puri and became one of the prominent deities of Hindu pantheon. It is also difficult to know whether the God was originally an Aryan deity or a tribal deity later on Aryanised due to the mingling of the Aryan and non-Aryan cultures.

According to the tradition recorded in the "Utkal Khanda"<sup>1</sup> of the Skanda Purana, Indradyumna, the ruler of Avanti in the Satya Yuga and a great votary of Lord Visnu, sent Vidyapati, the brother of his family priests, to Odradesa to locate the exact place where Lord Nilamadhava (Visnu) was worshipped secretly. Coming to Odradesa Vidyapati took shelter in a Sabara village, very near to the Blue-Mountain (Nilasaila).

As directed by the Lord in the dream, Indradyumna ordered for fashioning beautiful images out of the sacred "Daru". But strangely no carpenter was available. At last Visvakarma, the Divine Builder appeared in the guise of an old carpenter and agreed to build the images on the condition that he be allowed to remain undisturbed inside the temple for twenty one days. As days passed on the sound of the carpenter's tools became thinner and thinner and when no sound was heard, queen Gundicha became impatient and curious. On her insistence, when the doors of the temple were opened no carpenter was found inside and the images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra were found incomplete.

Winning over the friendship of the Sabara chief Visvavasu and marrying his daughter Lalita, Vidyapati was able to see Lord Nilamadhava. After tracing the route to the shrine of Nilamadhava Vidyapati went back to Avanti to inform his sovereign Lord Indradyumna the whereabouts of Nilamadhava. The King, accompanied by Narada, set-out for Odradesa to pay homage to the Lord. But at the border of the country he came to know about the miraculous disappearance of the Lord. He became extremely sad. Narada consoled him saying that the Lord would appear in the form of a Daru (Sacred Wood). A few days after, Lord Nilamadhava Himself appeared in a dream to Indradyumna. The next day the king and his attendants brought the "Daru" from the sea-shore and placed it on the Mahavedi with respect.

Jagannath resembles the log of wood as spoken of in the Sruти (Sa bhagavan srutuykta Daru akrtih). The Sabaras worshipped a deity named Kitung who had ten synonyms. One of those familiar synonyms was Jaganta or Jaganaelo.<sup>8</sup> The Sabaras who were the worshippers of Jaganta made of wood, were also devout worshippers of Madhava, the predecessor of Lord Jagannath according to another tradition recorded in the Skanda Purana<sup>9</sup>. This leads us to believe that Lord Jaganta of the Sabaras in course of time was converted into the Aryan god Jagannath, who is no other than Madhava or Krishna. With gradual Aryanisation the Sabaras were influenced by the Brahmanical form of Hinduism and incorporate

This legend, with slight variations, is also mentioned in the Brahma Purana<sup>2</sup> as well as in the Odia Mahabharat<sup>3</sup> of Sarala Das. Very interestingly Indradyumna legend associating the Sabaras with Lord Nilamadhava (Jagannath) is also supported by epigraphic and historical evidences. The Sabaras, who belonged to the Proto-Austroloid tribe, were the worshippers of tree in the Vindhya range and Mahendragiri from the earliest times. They were the worshippers of the Sthanumurti<sup>4</sup> (a branchless trunk) which in course of time replaced the primitive tree worship. Later on this worship of the Sthanumurti seems to have mingled with the worship of the God Purusottam Visnu. In the Rig Veda<sup>5</sup>, there is a passage which refers to the Lord of Daru (Adojad Daru Plavate Sindohpare a Purusam). According to the fourteenth century Vedic commentator Sayana<sup>6</sup> (1300-1380 A.D.) this Daru represents the image of Purusottama – Vishnu. This view is also supported by a fifteenth century tradition as recorded in the Kondavidu copper plate grant<sup>7</sup> of Gandeva of the time of Gajapati Kapilendradeva. According to the tradition

It is very interesting to note a lot of similarities between the tribal ritual of renewal of the “Post” representing Stambhesvari or Khambesvari and the Navakalevara ritual of Lord Jagannath at Puri. According to the tradition followed in the Jagannath temple, during Navakalevara the Patimahapatra<sup>12</sup> (head of the half-Sabara Brahmins who were the descendants of Brahmin Vidyapati and Sabari Lalita) who leads the party of the Daitas (Sabaras who were the descendants of Visavavasu) to find out the Daru for the four Deities (Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana) and goes Kakatpur and told in a dream by Goddess Mangala the exact location and the appearance of the Darus. In case of the renewal of the tribal deity Stambhesvari the Goddess Herself appears in a dream to the Bhejini<sup>13</sup> (medium) and indicates the spot where the tree is to be found. The tree to be selected must display certain features which are similar in both the cases. In case of the tribal custom the new tree, before being cut off, is worshipped with the sacrifice of a sheep or a goat and the first stroke on the tree is always performed by the Dehury (chief priest of the tribal deity). In case of the Daru of Lord Jagannath the sacrificial ritual is symbolically performed and the first stroke is performed by the chief priest called Acharya.

the principles of Brahmanism in their socio-religious life.

In this connection there is a very interesting tradition recorded in the Vizagapatnam plates<sup>10</sup> of Anantavarman Chodagangdeva of the year 1119 A.D. This tradition says that Kamamava conquered the Mahendragiri region towards the close of the fifth century A.D., acknowledged a tribal deity of the Sabara tribe as Siva-Gokarnesvara and worshipped it as the tutelary deity (ista devata) of the family. Bestowed with grace by the Lord, Kamarnava climbed down the mountain, killed the chief of the sabar tribe and conquered Kaling. This tradition speaks of the Aryanisation of a tribal deity. This process of Aryanisation started due to the migration of Vedic Brahmins from North to other parts of India and the spread of the Aryan culture. A verse in the Bhagavata Purana<sup>11</sup> informs us that the Kiratas, the Hunas, the Pulindas, the Abhiras and other tribal people were influenced by the worship of Lord Visnu. This process of intermingling of the Aryan and non-Aryan cultures led to the Aryanisation of many tribal deities.

from drinks and drugs and to lead a pure life<sup>15</sup>. Just as the sacred Daru is inserted into the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra before their consecration, five metals (gold, silver, iron, copper and brass) are inserted into the ‘post’ (Stambha) of the tribals before it is consecrated.

Moreover, the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra are crude and have “a tribal look”<sup>16</sup>. The ‘post’ representing stambhesvari is also crude and sometimes the figure of Nrusimha (an aspect of Jagannath-Vishnu) is carved on the ‘post’ in a very crude form. Wooden image of any Hindu deity is not found anywhere in India except at the Puri temple. All these similarities between the Puri Navakalevara ritual and that of the tribal deity Stambhesvari lead us to suggest a close link between the Hindu god Jagannath and the tribal deity Stambhesvari. The marriage of Brahmin Vidyapati with Sabari Lalita is an important step towards the assimilation of Aryan and non-Aryan cultures.

The Sabaras also play a distinct role in the daily worship of Lord Jagannath at Puri. A special group of priests, the Daitas (descendents of the Sabara chief Visavavasu, the first worshipper of Lord Jagannath in the hoary past), who are

is performed by the chief priest called Acnarya. In both the cases the tree should fall to the east and should not touch the ground in any case. The tradition that the logs should be carried in a special cart exclusively pulled by human hands and should not touch the ground is followed in both the cases. The carvings of the images of the Puri temple is done by carpenters in a closed room and nobody except the Daitas and Pati Mahapatra are allowed to enter the place where the figures are being carved. The carpenters are to lead a pure life and observe certain rituals during this period. In case of the tribal custom the carpenter is to abstain the cars in north-west (isana) direction whereas in Aryan process the procession moves towards eastern direction. Hence, the north-west movement of the deities towards the cars obviously points to the impact of the Sabara convention on the festival".

Since the Daitas (Sabaras) claim Jagannath as a member of their family, they sit together with the Lords and take the "Gyantisara" (the dishes taken by the members of the same family together). As descendants of Lord Jagannath the Daitas claim on the articles used by the deceased Jagannath after Navakalevara. After disposing of the old figures the Daitas take both and observe mourning because of the death of one of their clan members. They weep on the death of Lord Jagannath and for ten days they remain in a state of impurity, observing all sorts of obsequies prescribed in the Hindu Dharmashastra. On the tenth day they cut their nails, shave and take a purificatory bath in the Markandey tank.

The very fact that the Daitas even today consider Lord Jagannath as a member of their clan and observe all sorts of obsequies, is a clear proof of a strong and definite link between Lord Jagannath and the Sabaras. This process of Aryanisation of Hinduization began with the migration of Brahmins from north-west to other parts of India, the supremacy established by the Aryans and the rise of the Hindu kingship.

Anthropologists talk about 'Great Traditions' and 'Little Traditions'. The little traditions of the rural society or tribal communities are plentifully observed in the Indian society. Jagannath cult is derived from the little traditions of worship by the Savara tribal has been sanskritised by Brahman priests and Rajas at Puri. The new seat for worship is located here. But this ritual has undergone universalisation by being

called the relatives of Lord Jagannath, is entrusted with many important services. During the anavasara<sup>17</sup> (sickness of the deities) ceremony of the deities, it is not the Brahmins but the Daitas who take up the worship. During this period the Vedic offerings and rituals are stopped.

The Daitas also play important roles at the outset of the Car festival. During this period the Deities are worshipped not in Vedic lines but in tribal lines. Even the Deities are dressed in Sabara costume. Moreover, Dr. K.C. Mishra<sup>18</sup> points out very rightly "The Deities move towards elevated the supreme godhead of the Hindu life. Jagannath has been identified as Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of the Universe. He is the penultimate incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Professor L.K. Mohapatra, the noted Anthropologist observes : If this is a process of Universalisation, in Odisha the cult itself has undergone the process of parochialisation too, as in Western Odisha, where each village celebrates Ratha Yatra of Lord Jagannath in its own ways in emulation of the world famous Car Festival of Lord at Puri. Similarly, if the supreme godheads of holy trinity Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma belong to great tradition, their worship has been parochialised in the little traditions for the last two hundred years or so in Odisha by holding Trinath Mela.

Integration of little and great tradition is exemplified in Jagannath Cult. This cult has evolved as the magnetic central cult of Odisha with all aspects of regional cultural development. The associated values of tribal heritage in this cult the basic fraternity and equality of all men as devotees of the Lord, the absence of commercial taboos among castes while partaking of the sanctified food offered to the Lord, the folk medicine administered to the god at the time of illness and the divine directions in dreams visions and miracles are all integrated into the cult system. Here, the 'Little traditions' associated with the Lord co-exist and are valued along with elements of 'great traditions' rituals and institutions introduced and mediated by the Brahman priests and Rajas. (Mohapatra)

#### **Lord Jagannath – The Tribal Deity**

The sacred temple of Lord Jagannath stands on the hillock "Blue Mountain" in the heart of Puri. It represents a lovely picturesque panorama of great Odishan Architecture. It's a monument of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. with all the

richness and novelty of the Kalingan style of architecture known as "Sikhara", which is mainly predominant in Eastern India. The temple of Jagannath Puri was built by Ananta Barman Chodaganga Dev during 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and was completed by Ananga Bhima Dev, and this temple is one of the tallest monuments in the country; height is about 65 metres i.e. 214 feet 8 inches from the ground level. It stands on an elevated platform of stone measuring about 10 acres, which is located in the heart of the town and presents an imposing sight.

The temple is bounded by two enclosures. The inner enclosure is 400' x 278' size and known as Kurma Bedha. The outer enclosure is of 665' x 644' size with the height varying from 20' to 24' and popularly known as Meghanad Prachir. The temple has four gates at the eastern, southern, western and northern midpoints of the Meghanad Prachir. They are called Lions gate, Horse Gate, Tiger Gate and the Elephant Gate.

#### Legends of the Lord

Legendary account as found in the Skanda-Purana, Brahma Purana and other Puranas and later works in Odia state the Lord Jagannath was originally worshipped as Neela Madhab by a Savar king (tribal chief) named Viswavasu. Lord Nilamadhaba (formerly worshipped as Kitung) appeared in a dream of Indradyumna, the legendary king of Malawa, and told him to bring back the Lord to "Malawa. Then the King sent "Bidyapati" to trace out the deity who was worshipped secretly in a dense forest by Viswavasu. Vidyapati tried his best, but could not locate the place. But at last, he managed to marry Viswavasu's daughter Lalita. At repeated request of Vidyapati, Viswavasu took his son-in-law blindfolded to a cave where Neelamadhab was worshipped.

after which profound changes took place in the social and religious life of the Odia People, the impact of which fell on the worship of Lord Jagannath. Under the Maratha Rule, Odisha got no patronage and religious place, but the institution of Jagannath flourished, because of the zeal of the Maratha nobles. Not only architectural additions were made by way construction of "Meghanada Pachery of 20 feet height but an all-round architectural and religious development was made in this sacred Temple. Brahmachari Gosain, a Maratha Saint who had political influence got the dilapidated temple of Jagannath decorated

Vidyapati was very intelligent. He dropped mustard seeds on the ground in the route. The seeds germinated after a few days, which enabled him to find out the cave later on. On hearing from him, king Indradyumna proceeded immediately to Odra desha (Odisha) on a pilgrimage to see and worship the Deity. But, the deity had disappeared. The king was disappointed. The Deity was hidden in the sand. By seeing this, Indradyumna made his mind that without having a *darshan* of the deity he would not return to his palace. Then he observed fast unto death at Mount Neela. Then a celestial voice cried-thou shall see him. Afterwards the king performed a horse sacrifice and built a magnificent temple for Vishnu. Narasingha Murti brought by Narada was installed in the temple. During sleep, the king had a vision of Lord Jagannath. Also an astral voice directed him to receive the fragrant tree on the seashore and make idols out of it. Accordingly the king got the image of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra Subhadra and Chakra Sudarshan made out of the wood of the said tree and installed them in the temple.

#### History of Jagannath Cult

The Hindu devotee believes that Lord Jagannath is eternal. Thus, we have two versions of the origins. One is the popular legends based on Puranas and Folklore. The other is the statements of the scholars who have tried to collate evidences from known history, archaeology and ancient literature to drag sumises about the history and the origins. Eminent writers and poets like Sarala Das, Jagannath Das, Balaram Das, Achyutananda Das propagated the cult of Jagannath. After the visit of Shri Chaitanya in A.D. 1501 this cult of devotional love predominated in Odishan religious life and literature. Odisha came under the Muslims in 1586, use Mundari dialect as means of communication. Besides language, close similarity is noticeable in their religious thought and worship, and in the form of their presiding deities. Among these tribals who spoke Mundari dialects, tree or Khamba (pillar or post) worship was in vogue. In trying to give a human shape to the tree or Khamba (post) they in fact gave it strange shapes. Perhaps that might have originated the shape of Lord Jagannath. We see a unique combination of shape and shapeless in this tree of Khamba deity. This structure is their own original creation. That, Lord Jagannath is being worshipped in Shreekshetra Puri from time

with these relics. The famous work of this saint was the removal of one Anuna Pillar from Konark to the Singhadwar of Puri Temple where it is found today.

#### **Tribal Deity- Legendary and Historical Views**

Although scholars differ on the origin and evolution of Lord Jagannath, all of them agree that Lord Jagannath is basically a tribal deity from legendary as well as from historical evidences. According to some, this evolution has started with the appearance of the primitive man and has undergone the process of evolution till ultimately worshipped as Rastra Devata, Jagannath. From legendary point, it can be stated clearly that Biswabasu belonged to Savara tribe, who worshipped the Lord Jagannath. Apart from the above mentioned faiths, all historians agree that Vindhya region in the west constituted the habitat of the Savaras. Savaras speak Mundari dialect. The Mundari dialect is the primitive form of modern Odia and Purva Magadhi language. Though the tribals speaking Mundari language were divided into different tribes like Savar, Kandha, Munda and Gonda etc., they primarily belonged to a larger community. The descendants of these primitive people still inhabit the hilly regions and forest lands of Odisha. Some of them Hieun-Tsang and Puspagiri Vihar was destroyed after his departure. But by that time Jagannath was accepted and recognized as the most popular deity. Therefore, after 80 years from the rule of Sasanka and Madhav Raj-II, we see Indrabhuti as a worshipper of Jagannath in 717 A.D. There are various opinions about the place where the image of Jagannath was lying buried. Madalapanji (the temple Chronicles) identifies this place with the village Gopali of Sonepur. The Madalapanji records legend of king Yayati recovering the wooden images of Jagannath from the Sonepur region where it was lying buried for over 144 years. Since, the images were damaged, new images were made out of the trees brought from Sonepur. Even now in the forest of Kakdein and Kotsamalai of Sonepur lives a Savar tribe that knows the technique and art of making Jagannath images out of neem wood. A good number of them in the past were settled at Puri as tribal priests through the patronage of Yayati-I for worshipping Jagannath. The Odra kingdom inhabited mostly by primitive Savaras was famous even from the time of Mahabharat. We find the mention of Odras in the Dharma Sastra of Manu. The name of an Odra king is found in the Mahabharat. From the ancient time, the primitive Savaras were the worshipper of Khamba.

immemorial is based on Puranic evidences given by scholars. However, there is no historical evidence of worship of Jagannath at Puri prior to, the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. when Yayati Kesari was the ruler. But we come to know from the Indrabhuti's Jnanasiddhi about the place of Jagannath. Pt. Neelakantha Das has mentioned that the Savaras were worshipping the image of Jagannath made of neem wood in a place called Sambal (Samal, now in Talcher of Angul District) in Uddiyan, the kingdom of Indrabhuti. We can say that Jagannath was worshipped in some part of Uddiyan prior to the rule of Yayati-I. Indrabhuti has described Jagannath as Buddhist deity in Jnanasiddhi. In the opinion of Indrabhuti Jagannath was worshipped by the Savaras in one of the Buddha Viharas.

The Puspagiri Vihar which has been mentioned in Hieun-tsang's travelogue has not yet been discovered. Possibly it has been completely destroyed. Although history is completely silent over this issue, it may be said that it was destroyed due to anti-Buddhist activities of king Sasanka and his feudatory chief Madhav Raj-II in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Prior to its destruction Jagannath was shifted to a place in Sonepur in Uddiyan and kept hidden under the earth. Jagannath was shifted before the arrival of Puri, around whom the religious life of Odisha has evolved from hoary past has been shrouded in myths and legends. Analysing the legendary association of Jagannath with a class of aborigines, called Sabaras, the peculiar nature of the wooden icon of the deity and association of a class of non-Brahmin priests, called Daita, who are presumed to be of tribal origin with the worship of the deity, some scholars hold that Jagannath was originally a tribal deity. Anncharlott Eschmann holds that the Navakalevar ritual, i.e. the ceremony of periodical renewal of the deity is a tribal custom. Such practices of renewal of wooden deity are found among the primitive tribes like Saoras and Khonds. If Lord Jagannath was tribal in origin, at what stage and how was he metamorphosed into a Hindu deity ?

The legends regarding the origin of Jagannath, which have been recorded in various sources such as Mahabharat of Sarala Das, Deula Tola of Nilambar Das, Skanda Purana, Brahma Purana, Narada Purana, Padma Purana, Kapila Samhita etc., suggest the tribal as well as Brahmanical links of the deity in the initial stage. According to Sarala Das's Mahabharat, the deadbody of Lord Krishna, transformed into wooden form, landed at the Puri seashore; Jara Sabara, an aborigine, picked it up and worshipped

Whether the Khamba tradition came to Odisha through the practice of Vedic religion or through primitive tribal worshipping is not very clear. It has to be noted that the concept of Lord Jagannath has a tribal history behind it. Sabaras, the earliest tribal inhabitants of Odisha, were tree worshippers, and all their rituals involved dancing and singing before the 'Kitung' or 'Jaganta' or God. It is believed that when the Vedic people occupied Odisha, they adopted many of the local tribal traditions, which included the transformation of Jagannath from 'Jaganta'. The Origin of Lord Jagannath, the presiding deity of the holy city of considered him to be quite an ancient figure of pre-Christian era. If we accept the version of Sarala Dasa's Mahabharat, we may feel inclined to identify him with Indraratha, the Somavamsi king of tenth century A.D. But identification of Indradyumna with Indraratha, built the Jagannath temple at Puri.

Regarding tribal origin of Lord Jagannath, it is said that Nilamadhava was worshipped by Savara King Viswabasu inside the dense forest of Nilagiri (the Blue Mountain). Subsequently Nilamadhava disappeared and reincarnated in the forms of three deities Lord Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabhadra. These three deities together symbolize Nilamadhava (Nila-Ma-Dhaba). Nila (Blue) represents Lord Jagannath, Ma (Mother) represents Goddess Subhadra and Dhaba (White) which represents Balabhadra who are worshipped at Puri. The Savaras became known as Daitas who are the hereditary servitors of Lord Jagannath. They observed the funeral rites of Lord Jagannath during Navakalevara (when the deities change their body and the sole responsibilities of Snana Jatra and Sri Gundicha Jatra are bestowed upon these Daitas. The worship of Lord Jagannath by Savara is also mentioned in Darubrahma Gita written by Jagannath Das in 16th Century AD and in Deula Tola written by Nilambara Das in 17th Century AD. Regarding origin of Lord Jagannath, historian William Hunter also remarked that the aboriginal people worshipped a Blue Stone inside dense forests as Nilamadhava the Dravidian God, who was offered *kacha* (Raw) food by the primitive tribes and with the passage of time as the Aryan elements introduced Jagannath into Hinduism he is worshipped as God of Aryan (a more civilized race) who is offered *pakka* (cooked) food. At present these two fold worship coexist side by side. Till today the Sauras or Savaras worship trees "the Nature God" known as "Kitung" which means God. They do not cut

it; subsequently, Indradyumna, the king of Somavamsa, got three wooden images made out of the log and built a temple for the deities. According to Deula Tola, Indradyumna, the king of Malava, got piece of sacred wood which was the metamorphosed shape of God Nilamadhava from the Sabara chief, named Visvavasu, and out of the wood he carved three images. Both the stories suggest the Vaishnavite origin of Jagannath, but Indradyumna remains a legendary figure, and his historicity cannot be established on any safe ground. Some have identified him with the Indradyumna of original Mahabharat and trees because they believe that Kitung dwells inside the tree. Kitung is otherwise known as Jagant and according to them Jagant is the 10th incarnation of Vishnu. As it is said the word Jagannath is not a Sanskrit word nor it is a Pali word but a derivation of Austric word Jagant.

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