Jagannath in the South Asian Literary and Folkloric Tradition

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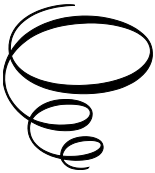
Edited by

Shruti Amar and Swati Samantaray

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



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For Śiva

Adharam Madhuram, Nayanam Mdhuram, Hasitam Madhuram
Hrdayam Madhuram, Gamanam Madhuram, Madhuradhipater Akhilam Madhuram

Krishna's lips are like honey, his eyes are also like honey, and his smile, it is also like honey
His heart is like honey, and what to say his walk is also like honey, everything about him is just like honey

—Vallabhacharya

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Fig I The Temple of Jagannath in the Evening. Courtesy of Self.

INTRODUCTION

THE CULT OF ŚRI JAGANNATH

If you visit the Jagannatha temple in the evening, you will find a group of devotees with bells and gongs in their hands, continuously singing "Hare Ram, Hare Krishna". The sound of the bells and gongs with its rhythmic pattern transposes you for a moment into a world of ecstasy where you are submerged in an unfamiliar world which seems so distant, yet so close. Similarly, a glorious summer afternoon with shifting sunrays in the temple gives you new experiences, as the falling sunrays invigorate the glorious architecture with its musical sculptures and mystic red bricks. But what makes the whole experience unique is the "love" that you receive from the surroundings. Jagannatha himself as "love" incarnate binds you through his love; often it becomes difficult for a devotee or anyone else for that matter to escape from the warmth that he provides to his devotees.

Being a mystic God, it often becomes difficult to define characteristics of Jagannath or understand his different *gunas* (qualities). According to Pandit Ganeswar Parida, Śri Jagannath is a "mystic god" who is both *nirgun* (without qualities) and *sagun* (with qualities). He in his most ardent form symbolises the parabrahma (Parida, 2016, 78). All of the senses of the deity are said to be in an "active" state and in spite of having no ears he is said to listen to all that goes into the world. He is also infinite (asim) and therefore according to Parida, he cannot be imagined in the form of an object (Parida, 2016, 78). To make ordinary readers understand the "infinite" form of the deity, Ganeswar Parida lovingly cites an example from the Krishna līla where Yashoda tries to bind Hari in a rope, but even after continuous effort she is not able to do so (Parida, 2016, 78). Later, Hari binds himself stating that it is only through unbound "love" that the deity could be approached.

Jagannath often worshipped as Krishna is also the lord of the "bhavas"; he can only be attained through devotion. Also, he himself binds his devotees through his love, making it impossible for them to leave his abode. While explaining this "madhura' bhava of Jagannath, a *panda* (priest) of the temple once narrated to me the tale of Hanuman (the monkey God) and his love for Jagannatha:

> Once Jagannatha, who is also often referred to as Purusottam or Vishnu/Krishna became troubled to hear the sound emanating from the tidal waves. As the legend goes Vishnu or Narayana is married to Laxshmi, the goddess of wealth and in his love he likes to settle near the sea coast as the Sea is considered the parental home of the devi. So, the lord of the universe to please his beloved Hari came down to earth and settled in the Srikshetra also famously known as Puri, but was being annoyed by the sound of the waves.
>
> To ease the dilemma of his lord Narada requested Lord Hanuman to come and settle in the temple and nullify the sound of the waves through his power. Hanuman accepted the request and came down to Puri for a while to ease off the stay of Narayana in Kaliyuga. He turned his left ear towards the Sea and soon after absorbed all the sound. Jagannatha was now able to stay calmly in his abode along with his consorts. After a few days, however, the great bhakta of Lord Rama, Hanuman asked the permission of the lord to leave his abode and go back to his own abode, but the chains of love were such that the powerful lord was not able to move and had to stay in the Jagannath temple along with all other deities beloved to Jagannatha.

The devotion (bhakti) or self-surrender or innate love for the lord, therefore, "constitutes the most dominant note in the religious tradition of Jagannatha and before the lord of the universe all are deemed as equals and co-sharers of the Mahāprasad" (Mishra, 1971, 2019). Such a rejection of the rigid caste and gender boundaries in the tradition of Jagannatha has given rise to an eclectic form of bhakti tradition in Odisha and its adjoining areas. Soon after the construction of the temple by Chodaganga Dev in 1137 AD, the image of the Jaggannatha with all its magnificence became central to vaisnav theology and led to the rise of the bhakti cult that celebrated the amorous play of gopis with Krishna, declaring it as the most obvious form of devotion to Jagannatha. Radha, being the leader of

the gopis, began to be worshipped as the divine consort of Krishna and her arduous relationship with the lord became central to the Krishna devotion. Jagannatha in the form of Purushottama allowed for the liberal manifestation of the orthodox ritualistic tradition, finally giving ordinary devotees a space to enjoy the bliss of the lord of the Universe. While defining bhakti, Jack Hawley explains:

> Bhakti, as usually translated, is devotion, but if that word connotes something entirely private and quiet, we are in need of other words. Bhakti is heart religion, sometimes cool and quiescent but sometimes hot – the religion of participation, community, enthusiasm, song, . . . It implies a direct divine encounter, experienced in the lives of individual people. These people, moved by that encounter, turn to poetry, which is the natural vehicle of bhakti, and poetry expresses itself just as naturally in song. (Hawley, 2019, p. 3)

Hawley defines bhakti as an act of communion and participation, but bhakti is not limited to interplays of song and divine encounter; rather, it is an act of self-realisation and self-surrender to the divine. Swami Vivekananda, while defining bhakti yoga argues "Bhakti-Yoga is a real, genuine search after the Lord, a search beginning, continuing, and ending in Love. One single moment of the madness of extreme love to God brings us eternal freedom" (Vivekananda, 2019, 3). Bhakti, therefore, is "intense love to God". A "love" that is bereft of earthly benefit and is greater than karma because, while Karma is intended for an object in view, bhakti is its own fruition, its own means and its own end" (quoted from Vivekananda, 2019, 3) Jagannath epitomises bhakti, and around his image a cult has developed in Orissa and its adjoining areas that has swayed the continent for centuries. Since he is *bhavagrahi*, someone who adorns "bhava", "simple love", argues Ganeswar Parida, "the bhakti becomes quintessential to his devotion" (Parida, 78, 2016). He is so overtaken by sheer love that he used to "take the coconut shells of the devadasis by extending his arms" (Parida, 2016, 78). He was originally bound by the devotion of King Indradyuma and on his request, he settled along with his consorts, Lakshmi and Bhudevi in the Nilachal. Also, seeing his devotion, Jagannath assured King Indradyuma that he would never leave the region popularly called *ŚriPurushottamKshetra.* The popular legend that

delineates the relationship between Jagannath and Indradyuma is as follows:

Long ago, there lived on the Mahendra Mountain twelve families of the Śabara tribe who built twelve houses for themselves. They were known as the Bāra-Ghariās (twelve settlers). They used to worship and protect their supreme Lord Nilamādhava which was installed in the form of a divine log (Dārubrahma) and was worshipped by Satrusala Śabara who lived in a Śabara village on the summit of the Mahendra Mountain.

Once upon a time, a king named Indradyuma of the Maga clan wanted to remove the Nīlmādhav from the Śavara village. For the fulfilment of this objective, he captured the Śavara-Satṛusal whom he confined but soon liberated when he heard a divine voice telling him to set them free. The same voice advised him to (construct a lofty temple at Nilakandra Puri).

Accordingly, the temple was built; but where was the deity (image)? The King then employed a Brāhamana named Vidyapati, to go in search of the deity, Nilamādhava. The Brahmana started for the Śavara village on the Mahendragiri (Mahendra Mountain) where he met a handsome Śavara girl named Lalitā and fell in love with her and at last married her. Being the spy, employed by King Indradyuma, Vidyāpati was all the time searching for the deity which he could spotted out in the dense forest of the locality and sent the news immediately to the King. Some young men of the Śavara tribe were appointed to bring the sacred log (Dārubrahma) for building the images of the supreme lord.

According to the wishes of the King, the sacred log was removed from its original place and brought to a port called Bānkimuhāna near Puri. From there with great pomp and ceremony the log was taken to the temple where three images were built as they are seen upto the present day. It is believed that the God himself had appeared before the King in the guise of an old carpenter who undertook the task of building the deities on condition that the doors of the temple should be kept closed until completion of his work. But that condition was not duly honoured by the King. So, the images remained half-finished (Mishra, 1971, 24-25).

The god Nīlamādhava, worshipped by the chief of theŚabara tribe, Visvasu, thus transformed into Puruṣottam-Jagannātha. The assimilation of Puruṣottam-Jagannātha with Nilamādhava of Jara Śavaras is a "remarkable feature" of Orissan Vaisnavism (Mishra, 1971, 24-25). The primitive god later assimilated into the Brahmanical religion in the form of Purushottam and his cult unified diverse features of different sects.

Since the early 7th or 8th century the Purushottam-Jagannath form of Vishnu has remained a popular deity of Odisha. One of the copper plates discovered at the village of Maihar situated in the Satna district of Madhya Pradesh clearly shows the popularity of the deity among the devotees as the last stanza of the inscription puts the words in Brahaspati's mouth stating: "this child will come back to you as a result of being drowned in the sea after having seen Purushottam in the ọdra country" (Mishra, 1971, 35). K. C. Mishra, therefore, rightly claims that the "above epigraphical record shows that Purushottama of Odra desa was so famous that it attracted many people from Madhya Pradesh" (Mishra, 1971, 35). Apart from that one finds an earlier reference to Purushottam Jagannath in the Kailan copperplate of ŚridhārṇaRāta, the chief of Samatata (S. E. of Bengal). The chief, who was a Paramvaiṣṇava, considered Bhagavān Purushottam to be the creator, preserver and destroyer (Mishra, 1971, 35).

Popularised during the early 7th and 8th centuries, Purushottam was linked to two other forms of Vishnu, Krishna and Narasimha. According to G. C. Tripathy, "the term 'Vishnu' refers to the Bhāgvat-Vasudeva aspect, 'Narsimha' the furious aspect and 'Purushottam' the amorous aspect of the same God" (Tripathy, 1978, 42). Purushottam was also said to be the embodiment of Vishnu's cosmic significance as one copper plate inscription clearly asked who, other than King Chodagangadev could have built the temple of the lord "whose feet are the word, whose navel the mid-region, the head the heaven, the ears the directions and the two eyes the Suns and the moons respectively" (Tripathy, 1978, 41). However, the interesting aspect of the Purushottam in the medieval period was his eroticism. The deity, like many other Gods of the Hindu pantheon, was said to derive his powers from his divine consort, Laxmi and, therefore, in *Shardatillak* Pandit Lakshman Deshika urges the devotees to meditate on Purushottam Jagannath "as being tightly embraced by Laxmi" (Tripathy, 1978, 44).

Such veneration of eroticism or *Sringar* in the daily worship led to the rise of an eclectic cult around Jagannath that abolished orthodox ritual practice and adopted liberal ascetic ideas that enthralled devotees into a loving communion with God. For example, seldom did the deities of the temple in South Asia leave their asana/garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum). Jagannath, during the *Rath Yatra* (annual Car festival), willingly goes out and gives his devotees his *darsan* who for some reason are not able to otherwise see and visit him in the temple. Such is the magnificence of the lord.

Also, in building the temple for Jagannath, Anantavarman Chodagangadeva (1078-1147 CE) was clearly imitating the Chola ruler Raja Raja I by building a courtly culture where amorousness was considered as divine (William Reddy, 2012, 230). The great King Rajaraja, being the connoisseur of art and aesthetics, constructed a grand temple of Śiva named Rajarajeshwar, an ambiguous phrase that means "Śiva, the lord of Raja Raja" in 1003 in Tanjore. He generously granted the land to the temple and according to an inscription: "Hundreds of Brahmins and temple servants were brought to Tanjore, among them 400 dancing girls, 212 dancing masters, musicians, drummers, tailors, goldsmiths, accountants, etc. (Kersenboom-Story, 1987, 24-28). " Chodaganga sought to "legitimate" his rule by constructing the temple. Chodaganga was, by family traditiona Shaiva (a worshipper of Śiva), but to please his subjects, who were mostly Vaisnav, he constructed the temple of Purushottama-Jagannath (Reddy, 2012, 229). While doing so, the king also ensured that all of the cultural and religious traditions– both brahminical and non-brahminical –were incorporated within the cult of Jagannath and so apart from the tribal ritual practice, the rituals of Shaiva and Shakta cults were given prominence.

The inner sanctorum became the dwelling space of three siblings: Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. While Jagannath epitomises Purushottam, Balabhadra is idolised as Śiva and Subhadra as devi (goddess) Śri. However, the erotic elements were later sanitised by the popular bhakti saint Ramanujan and Subhadra was transformed into a loving sister who of course represented goddess Durga. According to Ecshman, Kulke and Tripathi, "The erotic element and the idea of divine couple was not continued but repressed. Subhadra was reinterpreted as the

sister of Jagannath, though original relationship became secretly known" (Eschman, Kulke and Tripathi, 1978, 184). The daily temple rituals were, therefore, structured to incorporate both the erotic and orthodox practices. "By these careful accommodations", argues, William Reddy "the temple rituals were structured to provide every pilgrim, every worshipper with the form of devotion he or she sought to have" (William Reddy, 2012, 233). After Chodagangadeva, the Oriya Vaishnavism flourished under the patronage of Kapilendradeva. Sarala Das wrote his popular Oriya Mahabharat during his rule. K. C. Mishra argues that during this period several writers and poets came to prominence and this led to the consolidation of the bhakti cult of Vaisnavism in Orissa (Mishra, 1984, 54). After Kapilendra and his great warrior son Purusottamadeva, it was during the reign of Prataprudradeva that Vaisnavism in Orissa became widely popular. It is believed that Sri Caitanya visited the region with some of his associates in February and March 1509 AD and was greeted by Kashi Mishra. Soon after his arrival, he began to influence the masses. The first disciple of Caitanya in Puri was Vasudeva Sarvabhuama, the great Navya Nyaya scholar patronised by the Gajapati Prataprudradeva. Later, the great saint met Rai Ramananda, a Governor under Prataprudradevaon the banks of the Godavari. The Caitanya Charitamrita gives us a long account of a dialogue between the master and Rai Ramananda (Mishra, 1971, 169).

Fig II The Statue of Chaitanya at the famous Swargadwar Temple at Puri

Caitanya's bhakti teachings, later canonised as the Vaishnava Sahijiya cult, were immensely influenced by Jaydeva's *Geetgovinda*, originally written in the twelfth century. The lyric poetry celebrates the Radha-Madhav love in a deep dark forest and offers its listeners an immense sense of joy. It is recorded in *Caitanyacaritāmrita* that Caitanya derived great joy from hearing the *Geetgovinda*, as well as the songs of the Bengali poet Chandidasa and the Maithili poet Vidyapati. According to Barabara Stoller Miller, "there is no reference to the origin of Caitanya's devotions to the songs of Geetgovinda, but it is likely that he heard them in the temple of Jagannatha" (Miller, 1984; 2016, 6).

The bhakti cult that promulgated around Jagannath in the medieval period was thus based on "erotics" and offered its devotees the freedom of an unabashed exploration of their sexuality. Such a liberalisation of orthodox ritualistic tradition inspired later poets, painters, and artists as well as ordinary devotees to create a large corpus of vernacular literature in praise of the beloved deity. The disciples of Caitanya, notably, the Pañca-sakhā (the famous five associates), namely Balaram Das, Jagannath Das, Achyutananda Das, Ananta Das and Jasobanta Das considered Radha as the feminine principle of this world and identified Radha-Madhav love as the most finite representation of divine bliss, *parmananda*. Jagannath Das composed his Bhagavata in Oriya in fifteenth century and it is said that he used to recite the Bhagavata to the pilgrims under the Banyan Tree near BataGanesha Mandir in the temple precinct. It is said that he met Caitanya for the first time at this place and formed such an intimate relationship with him that the historians consider that together they represented the enigmatic relationship between Radha and Madhav (Satpathy, 2000, 104). Later in the colonial period, the temple of Jagannath became a seat of politics. Hermann Kulke argues that the importance of Puri and its Jagannath cult for the consolidation of British rule in Orissa became obvious during the first Car festival under British rule. When, in July 1804, Commissioner Harcourt visited the *rathayātrā* he was greeted "with shouts and clapping hands" (Kulke, 1978, 438). Harcourt then concluded:

On all occasions when the subject of that valuable acquisition the province of Cuttack is under considerations, the important possession of the Temple of Juggernaut must stand in a prominent point of view; *in a political light its value is incalculable* (quoted from Kulke, 1978, 438).

However, the British administration entered into a vicious feud with the Mukundadeva. Charges of "idolatry" were imposed on the cult of Jagannath and Claudius Buchanan in 1806 gave a famous speech declaring that the idol of Jagannath "had the character of cruelty and impurity". Later, in 1823, James Peggs launched a vicious campaign against the temple of Jagannath, declaring it to bees-'the stronghold and fountain-head of their idolatery (Peggs, 1846, 371). The trials of the missionaries did not last long and contrary to their efforts they caused "an unexpected strengthening of the Jagannāth cult and the position of Rājā" (Kulke, 1978,

449). The influence of the Rājā's on the management of the temple continued during the colonial period and after decolonization in 1952 the Temple Act was passed by the Orissa State Assembly that conferred the managerial duties upon a Board of Trustees of which the Rājā Viralishoredeva and his successors became member. Still, it is noteworthy to understand here that after the continuous campaign by the Christian missionaries during the early nineteenth century, the upper caste Brahmin particularly belonging to the bhadralok community of Bengal became wary of these unorthodox traditions. They collided with the British monarchy in condemning the religious traditions that celebrated "erotics". The famous nineteenth-century Bengali writer Bamkim Chandra Chatterji considered the representation of Krishna in Geetgovinda as "womanly", and declared Jayadeva as the "poet of an effeminate and sensual race":

From the beginning to the end, it does not contain a single expression of manly feeling – of womanly feeling there is a great deal – or a single elevated sentiment. The poet has not a single new truth to teach. Generally speaking, it is the poets (religious or profane) who teach us the great moral truths which render man's life a blessing to his kind; but Jayadeva is a poet of another stamp. I do not deny his high poetical merits in a certain sense, exquisite imagery, tender feeling, and unrivalled power of expression, but that does not make him less the poet of an effeminate and sensual race (Bagal, 1969, 3:98).

Such a classification of Jayadeva as the poet of an effeminate race was the product of the classification of literary texts, oral songs, tales, rituals, and traditions as"obscene" and "genteel". The songs, rituals and traditions that had an abundance of sexuality were considered as "polluted" and were gradually marginalised (Ghosh, 2006, 20). But many of these traditions did survive and form a huge repertoire of the cult around Jagannath. In this collection, we intend to focus on these alternative traditions in order to understand the various ways that religious traditions have been shaped in South Asia. The focus is particularly on the feminine within the cult of Jagannath. What are the different modes of representation? How is it represented through various rites, rituals and specific traditions?

Themes and Chapters

We have organised the chapters into four different parts–"Jagannath in the devotional movement", "Celebration of Jagannath in GeetGovinda", "Jagannath in Popular Oriya Culture", and "Making up of Oriya". We begin with "Jagannath in the devotional movement" in order to locate the representation of Jagannath in Vaisnav bhakti tradition. Then we proceed to "Celebration of Jagannath in GeetGovinda", where we highlight the contribution of Jagannath in the rise of an eclectic religious tradition that openly celebrates "erotics" as divine. We particularly emphasise the "feminine" as it forms the core of the cult around Jagannath. Next, we move on to explore the various ways that Jagannath has shaped the popular culture in the vernacular Oriya tradition. The presence of the deity can be widely seen throughout the state and adjoining Bengal. The popularity of the Lord of the Universe is such that it has given rise to a number of songs, tales, myths, and legends, as well as painting, music, and dance around his image. Even the clothes and food are influenced by the deity. Finally, we proceed to "Making up of Oriya Identity", bringing to light different sorts of instances in which the cult around Jagannath has served as social, religious, and political glue. We offer these thematic distinctions as an aid to the readers and by doing so we aim to provide them with a glimpse of this glorious tradition.

The first part has five different chapters that systematically look at the idea of bhakti as conceived in *BhagvadGita*, *BhāgvatPūrana* and Assamese Vaisnav tradition and the scholars link each of these traditions with Jagannatha and how the image of the beautiful god inherits within itself the idea conceptualised in these texts. The section also has the place of Sudarshan as the fourth entity within the cult of Jagannath. It begins with the chapter entitled "Women and Bhakti in South Asia with Particular reference to the Cult of Jagannath" by Rekha Pande where she elucidates the space of women within the bhakti tradition particularly with reference to the cult of Jagannath. In Chapter Two, 'Philosophical Exploration of Prapatti or Self-Resignation with special reference to Shrimad BhagvadGita", Amar Nath Jha focuses upon the idea of Prapatti as described in the *BhagvadGita*. The *BhagvadGita* is considered as the fundamental Hindu text that elaborately discusses the idea of bhakti.

Professor Jha brings out this subtle form of bhakti devotion called Prapatti or self-resignation in the *BhagvadGita*. In the third chapter, Shruti Amar looks at the representation of women in the *BhāgvatPūrana*. While speaking about the feminine in the Bhāgvat, scholars have mostly built on the Krishna's relation with the gopis. While the focus here is also on the Krishna's amorous plays with the *brajabalas* (the gopis of the braja as they are affectionately called), she moves on to include other women characters that appear within the text.

Drawing on Graham Schweig's analysis of feminine in Vaisnav theology, she argues that Bhāgvat intertwines the very of concept of women and devotion in its representation of the *katha* of Krishna-Vasudeva. In Chapter Four, Swati Samantaray looks at the place of Sudarshan within the cult of Jagannath. Sudarshan as one of the principal deities has not received much attention within the scholarship on Jagannath. Samantaray brings out this interesting facet of the Jagannath tradition and, thereby, she establishes the position of Sudarshan within bhakti theology around the triad – Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath. In Chapter Five, Rashmi Saikia explores the influence of Jagannath on the Vaisnav bhakti tradition of Assam as developed by the celebrated bhakti saint Sankardeva. Sankardeva, like, Caitanya, visited Puri after the demise of his first wife; he stayed in the temple city for a long period. After his return he ushered in a new era of Vaisnav religious tradition in Assam and in its adjoining areas. Saikia looks at the ways in which Sankardeva was influenced by the Cult of Jagannath and how this influence led to the rise of Vaisnavism in Upper Assam.

The second part is entirely devoted to the celebration of Jagannath in Jayadeva's *GeetGovinda*. It has now been established that after his arrival in Puri, Jayadeva settled in the well-known Srikumar village established by Ramanujan and a seat of Vaisnav theologians patronised by the Gangas and Gajapatis of Orissa. Soon after his arrival, Jayadeva, who was a devout celibate scholar, fell in love with Padmavati, a devadasi and married her at the command of Jagannath himself. Padmavati, herself a famous devotee of Jagannath, inspired him to write lyric poetry that is widely celebrated for its representation of *Śringar rasa*. The two chapters in this part focus mainly on the adoration of Jagannath as Krishna in

GeetGovinda. Ileanea Citaristi in her chapter describes the links between *GeetGovinda* and Jagannath; whereas Neelam Kumari and I look at the ways that Jayadeva explores female sexuality within the text.

Fig III A Chitrakar Selling Pattachitra Paintings at Raghurajpur, Puri

The third part of the collection mainly looks at the representation of Jagannath within the vernacular tradition. The enigmatic presence of the triad – Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath – within the sphere of Jagannath bhakti tradition has led to the creation of an interesting popular culture in Orissa and its adjoining areas. The two chapters in this tradition are particularly designed to record the interesting popular culture around the triad. In Chapter Eight, "Songs of Radha and Cult of Jagannath", I particularly look at the veneration of Radha-Madhav love in popular Oriya folklore. I primarily focus on the prominence of the "madhurya" form of bhakti in Oriya folk songs. According to Rupa Goswami there are five forms of bhakti, namely, *vatsalya* (considering the deity as one's child), *sakhya* (considering the deity as a friend), *dasya* (considering the deity as a lord), *santa* (contemplative adoration of God) and *madhurya* (considering

the deity as a lover). "Madhurya" is the most revered but difficult form of devotion to God in which a devotee considers the lord as their lover. I argue that "madhurya" is the most significant form of devotion in the Jagannath bhakti cult and is often referred to in popular Oriya songs sung in praise of Radha. Ankita Ananya Gaya in her Chapter, Visual Tradition around Jagannath: The Anasara affair" emphasises the importance of *Ansarpattis* that which are the miniature paintings of clothes offered to Jagannath. She particularly looks at the ways in which the whole process of painting *Ansarpattis* turns into bhakti, a form of bhakti devotion. What is the belief or response that the masses or artisans are trying to appropriate or articulate? Is there any way that these beliefs are culminating in a particular art form? The chapter attempts to explore the visual traditions associated with the Jagannath culture with particular reference to the Anasara period.

The fourth part mainly looks at the ways and means by which the image of Jagannath and the tradition around him have led to the rise of nationalism as well as the formation of an Oriya identity. The section begins with an interesting chapter," The Indolent Native as the Insolent Rebel: The unexplored history of Puri's Grain Riots "in which Ujaan Ghosh discusses an interesting event in Oriya history – the "Puri Grain Riots" – in order to classify the space of the deity in the formation of Oriya cultural identity. In Chapter Eleven, "Religious and Cultural Identity of Oriya Diaspora: The Cult of Śri Jagannath", Mohaiminul Islam maps the contours of religious and cultural identity of the Oriya diaspora, locating the presence of Jagannath in a wider dimension of religious tradition popular among those of the diaspora. Islam in this chapter seeks to focus on the questions of how the Lord of the Universe, Śri Jagannath, provided an opportunity for those of the Indian diaspora to reconstruct their identities and how practising Indian traditional rituals enabled them to negotiate their roles in their respective foreign spaces. The final chapter by Adyasha Das, "Odia identity, Gender and Jagannath Culture in Odia Cinema", explores the appropriation of gender in the cult of Jagannath through local Odia cinema. She goes on to examine various films centred on Jagannath and his siblings in order to locate the position of feminine within the cult.

—The Editors

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PART I:

JAGANNATH IN POPULAR DEVOTIONAL MOVEMENT

CHAPTER ONE

WOMAN AND BHAKTI IN SOUTH ASIAN TRADITION WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO JAGANNATH

REKHA PANDE

Despite globalisation and modernization, the South Asian region is defined by people's and families' attachment to traditional values, culture, and religion. Families that were once known as joint families have evolved into nuclear and extended families that are patriarchal but continue to play an important part in people's lives even today. South Asia as a whole has a family-oriented culture that values interdependence over independence. Personal objectives and desires are expected to take a back seat to families. Elders and males serve as role models for family decision-making and culturally and individually appropriate behaviour. As the state bears no substantial social responsibilities, particularly in the areas of health care and old age, it is the family that is responsible. Globalization is now changing the family structure and we have a broad division between the haves and the have nots giving rise to two different kinds of families. Yet one thing is common; there is a continuity from the past to the present in the importance of religion and bhakti in the everyday lives of the people here.

South Asia's religious landscape is both complex and interesting. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam, and Christianity are among the many religions practised here. In the religious life of the subcontinent, therefore, both the majority andminority traditions play an important role, encompassing both popular and elite expressions of religious faith; and there is a strong sense of historical continuity. One can see this continuity in the religions in south Asia by studying the reality of religious life and

the ways in which the traditions have been practised on the ground since time immemorial. The dynamic regional kingdoms – Pallava, Pandya, Chalukya, and Chola – that patronised the religion that we now name Hinduism began to acquire a recognizable shape during this period.

In this chapter, we analyse a religious movementfrom the 12th to the 17th centuries in medievalIndia and showhow women used bhakti literature to express their views and ideas to create a place for themselves. Women have negotiated numerous layers and levels of life during centuries of patriarchal control, working out various forms of resistance through diverse means that have frequently gone unrecognised. Women had access to bhakti, which was one such medium. It's worth noting that, while the women were outspoken and sought a place to live their lives on their own terms, the men's attitudes toward women remained unchanged. On theother hand, the movement tended to reinforce and repeat pre-existing ideas about women, their roles and family.

Searching for Historicity of the Bhaktas

If we look for historical figures of female bhaktas in the same way that we look for male bhaktas, in Odisha or elsewhere in India, we will come up against a brick wall. There isn't a lot of information available about these women for history only talks about men and most of the archives give us information about them. Gerda Lerner emphasises that women have a history and women are in history. She remarks that women are essential and central to creating society; they are and always have been actors and agents in history. Women have "made history". Yet women have been kept from knowing their history and from interpreting history, either their own or that of men (Gerda Learner, 1986, 5). These words have gone a long way in thinking about gender. Instead of accepting feminine identity as natural and essential, historians and other social scientists are now treating this as being constructed. Today, the words gender and women are often used interchangeably in many texts, though Terrell Carver published, *Gender is not a Synonym for Women much* earlier (Carver, 1996, 1).

The majority of the Bhakti tradition was passed down orally. Like any other traditional sources for writing about the past this too is elitist and

male-biased, and women's voices are completely absent. No court biographers have praised any of these women, and there is no religious hagiography about them from the time they are thought to have lived. Much of their history has been rebuilt much later by writers and biographers from the emerging middle class, and there have been several interpolations throughout the years. As a result, we must look to their bhajans and poems for collective memories and remembrances. We can acquire a few insights into the lives of these medieval women through these sources. The majority of these women lived between the 12th and 17th centuries. Despite any interpolations that may have occurred over time, a review of these women's writings reveals that they fought for what they believed in and aggressively resisted when their ideas were questioned. Similarly, women produced crucial ideas that provide us with whole fresh perspectives on female religiosity and its uniqueness in the medieval world. An enormous number of women participated in this movement. The vast number of women who took part in the movement gave it the feel of a popular movement. In medieval times, religion was the only valid space available to women, and it was via this legitimate space that women could define their activities and objectives, engage in public gatherings, visit pilgrimage sites, compose their own songs, and personally approach God through bhakti (Pande, Rekha, 2010, 67-68).

Meaning of the term Bhakti

Bhakti is a Sanskrit word meaning "devotion," "participation," "reverence," or "adoration." For the average person, the term is only associated with religious devotion. This phrase was not used in historical books on Hinduism written before the nineteenth century by western scholars. Various ideas about the movement and its beginnings have been proposed since the second half of the nineteenth century. H. H. Wilson used the term to describe Krishna bhakti among Bengal's Vaishnavas (Wilson, 1846, 78-79). Monnier Williams didn't just use the term to refer to the Krishna Cult; he used it to refer to all of Vaishnavism (Monnier Williams, 1891, 83). George Grierson was the one who came up with the concept of bhakti as a religion, a cult, and an ideology (Grierson, 1909, 85). The medieval period