

## Puri Jagannath and his Mystics



*"Sarba Rahasya Purusottamasya  
Deva Na Janati Kuta Manusya."*

The meaning is that the mystery of Lord Jagannath cannot be known by the Devas, what to speak of man!



- The mystery that has been floating in the air since ages is the reverberating, roaring noise of the sea which is well heard till the entrance of the Singha dwar, but as we climb up the Baaisi Pahachas, the roar of the sea dies. It is believed that the noise of the sea disturbed the Lord and hence he built the great Meghanada Pacheri (wall that surrounds the temple premises) to act as a tremendous acoustic against the noise of the waves.
- After making our way up the Baaisi Pahacha, one would find an age-old Kalpa Bata Vriksha (Tree) (Divine banyan tree) while touring inside the temple. The spiritual belief of devotees is that the tree has special powers and fulfils desires. It is believed that one's wish turns true and asked desire is realized if one ties a strand of sacred thread on the branch of the Kalpa Bata Vriksha (Tree). This custom continues till date and the Kalpa Bata Vriksha (Tree) is covered with millions of sacred thread all over itself. Tying thread around trees is common religious gesture in various places in India. However, the sheer number of threads around the Kalpa Bata Vriksha (Tree) is a sight to behold and makes one contemplate if there might be some truth in the folklore due to which people haven't stopped tying threads on to the tree or it is a standing proof of the blind faith of the devotees on their Lord Jagannath.
- Right next to the Kalpa Bata Vriksha (Tree) is the Kanchi Ganesha. The idol of Lord Ganesha placed in this temple was allegedly brought from Kanchi. In front of the Kanchi Ganesha is a small idol of a Musika (mouse) which is the bahana (legal animal follower) of Lord Ganesha. In Indian mythology, every God has a legal animal follower who accompanies him/her everywhere and is a major help to devotees. It is said that bahanas are the principal secretaries of the particular Gods/Goddesses and devotees whisper their wishes in the ears of these bahanas guarding the entrance of the God's house so that they can help the worshippers to get a quick revert on the expressed wish. The body idol of the Musika, dutifully standing outside the gate of Kanchi Ganesha's temple, has a thorny, prickly surface ever since the day of its establishment. Visitors do not forget to touch the idol of the Musika to get a sense its peculiar thorny surface;

it is almost a ritual to do so. Scientifically, regular friction on any stone object is supposed to make the surface smooth with time. But, even today, the body of the Musika feels like a rough, prickly surface despite being touched by thousands of devotees daily over times immemorial.

- The Maha Laxmi Mandir (temple of the wife of Lord Jagannath). Here, one can feel the cool breeze of the Bay of Bengal with the soft murmuring sound of the sea. It's the only place within the premises of the Jagannath Puri Temple where the sound as well as the breeze of the sea is distinctively felt. Astonishing but true, the sound dies the moment one climbs down the steps of the Maha Laxmi Mandir. Folklore testifies that since Goddess Laxmi happens to be the daughter of the mighty ocean; there still persists a strong bond between the two, which is experienced at her house inside the temple.
- There are several Gods and Goddesses residing in the premises of the Jagannath temple. The Jara Thakurani (Triplet Goddesses who cure fever) are worthy of mention in this context. They reside at the entrance of the Sun Temple (the original idol of Lord Surya or Sun God is kept behind a curtain and a dummy idol is worshipped since plunderer Kalapahada damaged the original idol in his attempt to steal it out of the temple). The Jara Thakurani are known to cure any form of fever be it malaria, typhoid, dengue or viral. Thousands of devotees bear testimony to the same. The existence of these three in one Goddesses is known to a select few and it is said that if one makes an offering of milk and bananas to them and prays for the concerned patient, the fever abates almost miraculously and immediately.
- The flag always flaps in a direction opposite to the direction in which the wind is blowing.
- Gaze from any place in Puri, and you will always find the Sudarshan chakra at the top of the temple always facing you.
- Normally during day-time, the wind blows from the sea to the land and in the evening, the opposite happens. But in Puri, the opposite happens.
- Birds do not fly above the temple.
- The shadow of the main dome is invisible at any time of day.
- The quantity of cooked food inside the temple remains same the entire year. And the same prasadam can feed whatever be the number of devotees - a few thousand people or 20 lakh people. It never gets wasted.
- In the temple kitchen, seven pots are kept on top of each other and cooked on firewood. In this process, the contents in the top pot get cooked first, lastly, the bottommost one!
- On entering from Singhadwara, as one takes the first step inside the Temple, you can't hear any sound produced by the ocean. But when you cross the same step outside the Temple, you can hear it.
- When the steam cooked food is carried to Lord in slings of earthen pots no flavour comes up from the food but when the same is carried back to the sale point after being offered to the Lord a delicious smell spells along in the breeze to the pleasant surprise of the devotees. Now the food is blessed.

## Lord Jagannath-The mystic Deity

Lord Jagannath is a mystic Deity, and there are many phenomena surrounding Him which cannot be explained by modern science. Not only do sages, seers and people from

different parts of the world come to see Him, but inhabitants of other spheres come as well. As He is considered the Master of the universe, He attracts all. There is documented evidence to support many of these occurrences in the form of eyewitness reports and objects left by divine beings when they came. These events are also documented in ancient epics, palm-leaf scripts, and in texts written by scholars and sages of the past. Some are as follows:

- *Manima Daka Sloka* from Niladri:

*"Mahodaya  
Rajadhi Rajarajeshwar  
Ishwara Thakur, Manima  
Anantakoti Brahmanda  
Ishwara Thakur, Manima  
Chaturdasha Bhubana  
Ishwara Thakur, Manima"*

In the daily rituals of the temple this sloka is recited at the time when Lord Jagannath retires to bed. The meaning is this:

*"Oh Lord Jagannath  
You are king of kings  
You are master of many universes  
You are the controller of all creations"*

The *khuntia* worshipper who recites this sloka then scatters flower petals up into the air to welcome all the divine beings who have come that evening to observe this ritual.

- *Kadachit Kalindi* sloka by Saint Adishankar in his Sanskrit verses, "*JagannathAstaka*":

*"Rama, Samvu, Brahma, Surapati  
Ganesharchhit Padam  
Jagannatha Swami, Nayana Pathagami, Bhavatume"*

The meaning is:

Even Gods like Rama, Shambhu (Siva), Brahma the creator, Surapati, the king of Gods, Ganesh, the god of wisdom, who all belong to Devaloka, worship Lord Jagannath at Puri.

*"Jatta Chhaya Lokamatra*

*Tribhubana Janata Badhate  
Na Tritap"*

This means that the inhabitants of all Lokas, or spheres are under the protection of Lord Jagannath. This sloka is taken from *Brahma Geeta* (writer not known).

- *From Kapila Samhita:*

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- *From Skanda Purana:*

*"Byomatit Byomarupa Prakasa  
Byomakar Byapino Byomarudha."*

The glory of Lord Jagannath is described here. He can take on any shape. He is as limitless as the sky itself. He is even beyond that.

The whole cosmos of life is divided into many spheres or Lokas. These are described in the palm leaf scripts *Lokabimarsa*, *Lokatattwa* and *Lokamimansa*. As life evolves from lower to higher forms, consciousness becomes more individualised and expansive.

Paranormal events occur on earth when beings from these other regions are present. According to the Loka they come from, they appear in different ways.

**1. Patala Loka:** It is said Vasuki, the snake who holds the world in proper balance, lives in Patala Loka. He comes to Jagannath Temple only during special darshan times. If he is present, there will be a loud rustle in the crowd.

**2. Talatala Loka:** When inhabitants of this Loka come, there will be rays of light of various colours which can be seen by the naked eye. These beings come in disguise of

blind, lame, one-eyed, or other deformed persons. They carry flowers in their palms to offer to the Deities, and in the crowd this can be seen easily.

**3. Rasatala Loka:** If a strong wind passes through the crowd and a hot place becomes cool suddenly, beings from this Loka have come. They often come also as children and sing loudly during Kirtan, even though they know nothing about all these things. They smile in the crowd after seeing the Deities.

**4. Vitala Loka:** Beings from Vitala Loka come as birds although not as vultures, who signify bad days ahead when they are seen.

**5. Mahatala Loka:** Beings from this sphere come as animals such as cats, monkeys and dogs. As dogs can not enter the temple, if one is spotted inside, it is said to have come from this Loka. If this happens, it is felt that the food that day was cooked in an impure way. All offerings must be stopped and the food to be prepared again. This dog is called *Kutama Chandi*. He always disappears mysteriously.

**6. Atala Loka:** Sages and saints with long beards who are deep in meditation often come from this sphere. They even walk into the temple with half-closed eyes. Only when looking at Lord Jagannath Himself do their eyes open fully.

**7. Bhutala Loka:** Those who sweep the temple floors, make garlands for the deities, prepare the wicks and lamps, make the earthen pots for the kitchen, and fetch the water are often from this region. Their duties are not hereditary, but are done purely for spiritual pleasure.

**8. Pitra Loka:** These beings are the ancestors from one's family. They come to the temple of Lord Jagannath at dawn when there is less rush. If one feels attracted to some unknown person, he is certainly related and has come down from this Loka. Inhabitants of Pitraloka come to the earth as human beings.

**9. Matru Loka:** These beings give the same signs of their presence here, but they are from the mother's side of one's family.

**10. Preta Loka:** This is the region of bad spirits and beings of evil demonic nature. They come inside the temple, but only to the outer portions, not into the inner altar of the Deities. They criticise, joke, and make noise or other disturbances in spiritual gatherings there. Their coming is signaled by a bad smell, like that of a dead body.

**11. Yaksha Loka:** People in a crowd wearing gorgeous dresses are often yakshas in disguise. They have come to this earth for worldly comforts and bad motives, such as how to collect money from those present in the crowd. They wear gold ornaments and precious gems to impress others.

**12. Swarga Loka:** Swarga means Heaven. Beings from this sphere have this sign: In darkness, suddenly there will be light. Many people present may experience a divine feeling without any visible reason at all. Not flowers but petals only will be found scattered on the floor afterwards

**13. Divya Loka:** When divine beings of this Loka come, auras of different colours will fill the atmosphere. Even in darkness, these can be seen slightly. Some of the temple lamps (Dipas) may be mysteriously extinguished at that time. Beings from Divya Loka do not come in form, but only as light and auras. There are other signs, but mortal man cannot have concrete experiences of them.

**14. Kinnara Loka:** When Kinnaras come to the temple, they come as dancing girls. They are eight in number, Rambha, Urbasi, Menaka, Tilottama, Manjulosi, Rochika, Mochika and Sundaree.

They come as Devadasis also, only to dance before Lord Jagannath before He goes to bed. They are decorated in flowers only, no ornaments.

**15. Gandharva Loka:** During devotional singing these beings are always present, both inside and outside the temple. They sing in chorus spiritual songs known as Bhajans, meant only for the Deities. If an ordinary person's singing is especially sweet one night, or soft sweet music is heard in the midst of silence, a Gandharva is present.

**16. Deva Loka:** Many gods come to Jagannath Temple to pray every night, such as Indra, God of Rain, Varuna, God of the Ocean, Vayu, God of Wind, & Saraswati, Goddess of Wisdom. The sign of their presence is complete tranquility and peace in the midst of a huge crowd. It would appear as if nobody at all was there. After they go, flowers of different varieties are usually found scattered on the floor of the temple.

**17. Goloka:** From Goloka come Sri Krishna's beloved gopis. Even though there might be a big rush inside the temple, everybody will love the gathering. All present will feel attracted towards something unseen and smell soothing fragrances all around. In the crowd there will be more ladies than men. Most significant of all, all will hear a mysterious sweet laughter in the air.

- From Shiva Loka: Shiva comes on Snana Purnima day to see the Bathing Ceremony of Lord Jagannath. He comes in disguise of a sage with trisula.
- Lord Vishnu comes to see Dola Festival held in the temple during Holi celebrations in the beginning of Spring. He comes as any other devotee but he would have with him big garlands, to be offered to Lord Jagannath.

- Brahma comes during Chandan Yatra, or Spring Festival. He stays for twenty-one days. He can be identified with one who recites Vedas in front of the Deities.
- From Asura Loka: Asuras, or beings of demonic physical instincts come at the time of rice offering, especially at the time of mid-day Bhoga.
- Yama, the King of Death: Someone from his Loka comes when a dead body is found in the premises of the temple.

On Ratha Yatra day every year, not only do people come from all over the world, but also beings from all Lokas and planets. Lord Jagannath's chariot, known as Nandighosha, is guarded by the following devas:

1. the Flag by Hanuman from Mahatala Loka.
2. the Chariot itself by a being from Bitala Loka.
3. the Rope by Vasuki from Patala Loka.
4. the Wheels by Mother Vimala from Sakti Loka.
5. the Entrance by Gatekeepers Jaya and Vijaya from Divya Loka.
6. the devas surrounding the Chariot being: Ram, Laxman, Krishna, Nrusingha, Narayan, Chintamani, Yoga Maya and Kubera, all from Devaloka.
7. the sages all around the chariot being: Narada, Vyasa, Suka, Parasar, Rudra, Vashista and Viswamitra, all from PitruLoka.

The chariots of Balabhadra and Subhadra are guarded by many divine beings also.

Reference : <http://jayjagabalia.blogspot.in/>