

(X-81-4) the word wood (Daru) is used to indicate the material of which the universe (Jagat) is made. Jagannatha is specifically known as 'Daru Brahman' (world substance symbolised in wood) both in the Puranas and by the people'²³. Jagannath has also been identified with the mystic *bijamantra* OM. Mono Mohan Ganguly is of the opinion that Buddhism is an off-shoot of the Hindu religion and the idea of the Tri-Ratna has been taken from the parent stock. "I believe the figure of Tri-Ratna has been copied from the trilateral syllable aum (OM), and hence is due the resemblance of the figures of the Brahminical triad of Jagannath, Subhadra and Balaram to the holy Pranava"²⁴. Mr. Paterson also traces the origin of Jagannath to the adoration of the mystic syllable A. U. M. coalescing into Om.²⁵ Prof. Prabhat Mukherjee in his book 'The History of Medieval Vaisnavism in Orissa' apparently admits the deformed uncouth figures of Jagannath to be due to its Savara origin, but traces the influence of Krishna-Vasudeva worship of the Bhagabat cult on Jagannath during the Gupta rule which was marked by the spread of Vaishnavism all over India. According to Prof. Mukherjee, in about 5th century A. D. Sankarshna and Vasudeva came to be known as Jagannath and Balaram in Orissa'²⁶. "*The Brihat Samhita* of Varahamihira (6th century A. D.) enjoins to place Ekanamsa between Baladeva and Krishna (Ekanamsa karya devi Baladeva Krishnyomadhye). In the *Harivamsa*, Ekanamsa is spoken of as the daughter of Nanda, and also as the sister of Balarama and Krishna".²⁷ So, under the influence of the Bhagabata Cult Ekanamsa came to be worshipped as Subhadra and was placed between Balabhadra and Jagannath.

Many arguments and counter arguments have been put forth by the scholars in support of their respective views regarding the origin of Jagannath as referred to above, but no one has been able to deny the intimate association of the Savaras with Jagannath worship even from its very inception. The story of finding Vishnu with the Savaras appear in different forms in Oriya folk-lore, medieval Oriya literature and the Puranas. One of the versions of the story is briefly as follows:

After Vishnu saved the world from deluge in his Baraha incarnation, Brahma asked him of the means of salvation of all creatures. Vishnu said, "I am being worshipped as Nilamadhava on the Blue Hill in

23. Orissa Review, Vol. XXVI, No. 12, p. 25.

24. *Orissa and Her Remains*, pp. 406-407.

25. *A History of Orissa*, edited by Dr. N. K. Sahu, p. 277.

26. The History of Medieval Vaishnavism in Orissa, pp. 17, 7.

27. Dr. Karuna Sagar Behera, *Orissa Review*, No. 11, p. 3.

Purushottama Kshetra. The highest form of salvation could be attained by beholding me there". This was a cause of apprehension to Yama, the god of death, as he could not discharge his duties properly. On Yama's request Vishnu assured him to disappear from the Blue Hill after some days.

The sacred Rohini Kunda was situated to the west of the all-bestowing *Kalpa-Vriksha* whose branches had spread for one *krosa*. The shrine of Nilamadhava was situated to the west of the Kunda, known to all excepting the Savara who worshipped him and the gods who came to pay their daily oblations at his altar. In Satya-yuga the pious and learned king Indradyumna of the Solar dynasty ruled in Avanti. He was anxious to see Vishnu. A wandering sannyasin informed him that God Himself was being worshipped as Purushottama on the Blue Hill in Odra desa. Indradyumna sent Vidyapati, the brother of his family priest, to Utkala as his emissary. Vidyapati came to Utkala and settled in a Savara village situated to the west of the Blue Hill. After being acquainted with Visvvasu, the fowler, Vidyapati revealed to him the secrets of his mission and entreated him for a sight of Nilamadhava. He also told the fowler that his royal master would not touch food until his return. Out of compassion for the king Visvvasu took Vidyapati through a narrow track and showed him the shrine of Nilamadhava. After seeing Nilamadhava Vidyapati returned to Avanti.

In the meanwhile in order to fulfil His pledge given to Yama, Lord Vishnu made the shrine of Nilamadhava invisible under the sand. When Indradyumna accompanied by Narada set out with a vast army and reached the borders of the kingdom of Utkala its king informed him about the disappearance of Nilamadhava. Indradyumna was completely disheartened with the news, but sage Narada assured him that God would reappear in the form of *Daru* (a log of wood). Thus being consoled Indradyumna visited the Blue Hill and offered a thousand *aswamedha* sacrifices there.

On the closing day of the *aswamedha* sacrifice Nilamadhava appeared to Indradyumna in a vision, and at his bathing time the attendants came and informed him that a *Daru* with four branches was floating on the sea. The king with due ceremony brought the *Daru* and placed it on the *Mahavedi*. While discussing with Narada about fashioning the log into an image, the king heard a voice from heaven saying, "God Himself will make His own image. The aged carpenter standing with his tools should be shut up in a room for fifteen days and utmost secrecy should be maintained about the construction of the image". Things were arranged accordingly [8 Rev.—101]

and at the end of the allotted time Jagannath, Balabhadra, Suvadra and Sudarsana appeared on the *Mahavedi*. Being directed by a voice from heaven the king adorned the images with silken cloth and painted them with their respective colours. He also built a temple one thousand cubits high to install the images.

Indradyumna went to heaven to invite Brahma to consecrate the temple. Brahma was listening to music, and the time that intervened amounted to many ages of mortal life. In the meanwhile a king named Gala had taken possession of the temple and was worshipping an image of Madhab in it. At last Brahma came. Indradyumna and Gala were reconciled to each other and the image of Madhab was shifted to a smaller temple. Brahma consecrated the temple and the images. After leaving the temple in charge of Gala, Indradyumna proceeded to *Brahmaloka*.

A slightly different version of the story is found in the *Musali Parva* of the Mahabharata written by the great 15th Century Oriya poet Sarala Das. According to him Narayana or Savarinarayana was being worshipped by the Savaras in the forest and being informed about it, king Galamadhava of Kanchi proceeded to the Savara village to take possession of the deity. But the deity had disappeared in the meanwhile. King Galamadhava was angry with the Savaras thinking that they had hidden the deity, and waged a war against them. He had killed all the Savaras, excepting one, when the voice of Visnu from heaven asked him to desist from the holocaust as the Savaras were His great devotees. God Visnu also cursed Galamadhava that his entire line would be extinct. The story of Indradyumna begins after this. Lord Krishna was killed by the arrow of Jara, a fowler, Arjun consigned the body of Krishna to flames, but the flames could not consume it. Being directed by a voice from heaven Arjun threw the body of Lord Krishna into the sea, and at length it floated in the form of a *Daru* to Nilasundara on the shores of the sea. Jara had followed the body of Krishna along the sea-coast. King Indradyumna, knowing that Visnu will appear at *Nilagiri* (the Blue Hill), had constructed a temple there with the help of the Bramhin Viswvasu. Krishna informed Jara in a dream that He would appear in Rohini Kunda in the shape of *Daru* (log of wood) Indradyumna got the information from Jara and sent his men to lift the *Daru* from Rohini Kunda, but all his efforts failed. Then being directed by the Lord in a vision Indradyumna employed the services of Jara, the fowler; and Vasu, the Bramhin; who jointly lifted the *Daru* from Rohini Kunda. Jara and Viswakarma together fashioned the log into the three images of Balavadra, Suvadra, and Jagannath who, according to poet Sarala's version, stood for Siva