

# Oriya Culture: Legitimacy and Identity

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In 1941 Surendranath Dasgupta, an eminent Indian Philosopher, made some valuable observations on the related issues of culture, civilization and nationalism that have been reasonably controversial in current intellectual debates. Dasgupta wrote:

Civilization in the main has been the product of our efforts for self-protection. Within a particular society and nation it has resulted in the exercise of control in the interests of mutual protection and mutual satisfaction. Legal, political and educational institutions train up the people of a community to desist from the transgression of mutual rights and privileges and punish those who commit any actual violence. But the progress of civilization has not yet been able to produce any institutions which are effective in controlling the relations between two or more different nations. In unfortunate countries where there are diverse religious sects which are more or less equal in strength, or in countries where there are different parties contending for supremacy in different ways we have a similar difficulty in evolving institutions which could work for mutual benefits. The evolution of civilization of a scientific type, such as we now find in Europe, has contributed immensely to the welfare and well-being not only of the people of Europe but of the whole world. The power of science, the might of accumulated wealth, and the energy of virile nations are being made subservient to motives of fear, greed and ambition. If our civilization is baffling us, may we seek our salvation in any other quarter? (1941/1981:352)

Studying the international situations during the world wars, Dasgupta observed, “Nationalism in modern times is in a large measure economic in its concept. The securing of economic advantage for a special country, the maintenance and furtherance of its economic interests are probably the strongest argument in favour of nationalism.”

On the other hand, Dasgupta observes, culture, as derived from the Latin *cultura* meaning cultivation, implies a special refinement or psychic improvement, a spiritual grasping that “represents not only the intellectual side of civilization but the

entire spiritual life involving the superior sense of value as manifested in morals, religion and art and the diverse forms of social and other institutions and forms and ways of life.” Although in ancient times cultures of different races, countries and nations, often opposed to one another, were associated with religion, morality, and the arts, in modern times culture is being impregnated by materialist economic tendencies, and the spirit of nationalism determined by this strong selfish materialism leads to political domination as manifest in colonialism and power conflict of the world wars. The invasion of this materialist nationalism into culture destroys the very core of the culture, i.e., the entire spiritual asset of the nation concerned: (350-373)

Dasgupta’s observations are still accurate, even in the current researches that focus on the interrelationship of several key concepts such as nation, state, proto-nation, nation state, region and empire in constitution and determination of social relationship among the diverse communities of human beings. No human being is identified as simply a living being as the very epithet “human” implies the properties interpreted in terms of the key concepts mentioned above. What grouped people in the pre-historical period is most appropriately to their nativity or birth (derived from the Latin *natus*) that gave rise to the concept of race or *ethnos*, reminiscent in the voice of Pharaoh Ka-mose, “my wish is to save Egypt and to smite the Asiatics” (Grosby,2)—a feeling that distinguished the Sumerian (brothers of the sons of Sumer) in the area of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (around 2500 B.C.) from the “foreigners” (non-Sumerian).

Kinship and territory then became the two major criteria of grouping the human beings into, what might be called in the current idiom, a “nation,” and the tendency to protect this nation against the foreigners is designated by the current term “nationalism” which is vitiated by, as Dasgupta rightly observes, a materialist political economy applied in usurping other nations exercising whatever mechanism possible even at the cost of violating all the criteria of humanity. This inhuman grouping of humanity, in fact, gave rise to a paradoxical materialist view of culture that advocates an anti-materialist appropriation of human existence in the guise of Marxist political economy.

The next criterion of the natal brotherhood became language and script as in the case of the Israelites and Chinese: “These are the sons of Shem”, records *Genesis* 10.31-32, “according to their clans and languages, in their lands according to their nations (*goyim*). These are the clans of the sons of Noah according to their lineage in their nations (*goyim*)”. So also records Herodotus for grouping the Greeks, (*Hellenics*) “Then there is our common Greekness: we are one in blood and one in language; those shrines of the gods belong to us (both the Spartans and the Athenians) all in common, and the sacrifices in common, and there are our habits, bred of a common upbringing.” (Grosby, 2) Religion and habits (customs, manners) are now added as criteria for grouping the humans. For Plato and Aristotle, language has been the major criterion for distinguishing the Greeks from the peoples of Asia Minor whom they call “barbarian” because they speak a language which is incomprehensible to the Greeks. The Greek word *barbaros* is an onomatopoeia coined after the sounds “bar-bar” the peoples of Asia Minor utter which the Greeks failed to comprehend. Thus the contemptive connotation of this word is only due to its linguistic incomprehensibility. As Plato

records in the *Republic*, the linguistic difference has been the major cause in grouping the Greeks distinguished from the “others”—barbarians, foreign, alien, enemies against whom they must assert themselves.(Grosby, 3)

Similarly, Patañjali, while commenting on Pāṇini’s aphorisms on the Sanskrit grammar asserts that the Brahmanas of *Āryadeva* are distinguished as civilized/ disciplined (*śiṣṭa*) because they speak Sanskrit, (the language of the bred) and are thus distinguished sharply from those who speak other languages such as Pāli used in the sayings of the Buddha whom the Brahmanas despised for his anti-Vedic revolution. (Patañjali does not use the word *Saṁskṛta*. He divides the language of the Āryans into two classes: *Vaidika* and *laukika*, the latter being referred to as *Saṁskṛta*—*Sam+ṛta* meaning “refined”.) Patañjali further following the Vedic authority, observes that there are four categories of language that these Brahmanas know (and use) whereas the common man speak only the fourth category, i.e., *Vaikhari*, the category that Bharṭṛhari (5<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.) elaborated later. Patañjali, however, comments that the language spoken by the people of lands such as Kamboja, Saurāṣṭra and Middle East (Prācya-madhyā) are not accepted as standard by the Āryans, and obviously, Pāṇini formulates the rules of the language used by the Āryans only. (*MBh.* I.1-4 and 5) Language, thus, has been a primary criterion for the identity of a group of people.

Modern linguists also acknowledge the major role of language in identifying a particular group of people such as English, German and French, and the degree of expressivity of a language is further a major criterion of the cultural status of the people who use it. Thus the French expression “*langue de culture*” (“*language of culture*”) is employed by the French speaking scholars for distinguishing what are held to be culturally more advanced from culturally less advanced languages, language rating thereby the cultural status of the users of that language. (Lyons, 1981: Chap.10) But this French notion of *langue de culture* was abandoned by the German thinkers like Johann Herder and Humboldt. Nevertheless, modern linguists recommend both the biological and cultural aspects of language arguing for a universal substructure in grammar, vocabulary and phonology as also a cultural superstructure that identifies a particular language. Patañjali exhibits his great insight in distinguishing the language of the Āryans that Pāṇini and he himself took up for analysis while distinguishing it from the languages of other lands and territories. Both of them anticipate modern linguistics in this regard.

It appears from Patañjali that a people’s identity is determined not so much by the territory as by the language it uses. In course of political expansion and imposition of administrative authority this language also exercises its domination; and what else is expanded along with this territory is the religious practices accompanied by the social manners, customs, habits and even superstitions of the people who use the language concerned. Plato, Herodotus and Patañjali all are unanimous in accepting this historical truth. Patañjali even does not hesitate to bring in the relevance of religious customs to the analysis of linguistic principles. Very significantly he observes that although language is a matter of use it needs a grammatical discipline for its codification so that the users must follow this system. Otherwise, he exemplifies, a man may speak anything

he wishes to speak a practice similar to a hungry man's eating a dog's flesh or a lusty man's cohibition with any partner for satisfying sexual appetite. *Dharma* and *âcâra* stand models for a system of language. (*MBh.* I-1)

## II

But Dasgupta's observations in distinguishing between culture and civilization have been disregarded in the Freudian discourse that considers both in terms of moral perspectives—learned behavioral functions of human beings, progressive developments from natural state, by means of 'repression' and 'sublimation'—*civil* and *cultura*, the roots of these words meaning to control and cultivate respectively. (Mulhern, 25-28) Both culture and civilization refer to systematic social practices in which human animals adapt their instincts for the purpose of coexistence—these practices being either persuasive or coercive in the individual and institutional levels. Thus society is an institution of which the individuals in their various groups are constituents. Social changes that constitute the course of human history both determine and are determined by the modes of correlation among these groups. One may not wholesomely agree with Karl Marx that the terms in which this correlation takes place are always material, i.e., production, distribution and exchange of commodities necessary for human survival—the economic principles that determine the political factors of human existence: "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of man that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." (Marx, 1859/1970:181) Freud's moral aspects of repression and sublimation attributable to a psychological phenomenon called 'consciousness' are reduced by Marx to material phenomenon.

Dasgupta's value-loaded notion of culture is founded, on the traditional Brahmanic ideology of the elitist world view as well as on the Victorian and modernist notions of culture reflected in both Mathew Arnold and Thomas Eliot. As an antonym of anarchy, Arnold understands culture as a perfection of discipline almost synonymous to civilization—with all its idealist references such as passion for sweetness and light, the best which has been thought and said in the world, a function of the right reason, the phenomena that are beyond the reach of common man. Similarly, the minoritarian cultural politics of Frank Leavis is also reflected in Thomas Eliot who proposes three kinds of culture—that of individuals, that of groups, and that of the whole society—one depending on the other. He *defines* culture by way of setting limitation to culture: "On the whole, it would appear to be for the best that the great majority of human beings should go on living in the place in which they are born." (52) In other words, it is for the best that the great majority should not or be taught to aspire to anything more than their familiar lot—clearly a capitalist bourgeois notion of culture that is denied to the common man. Culture as 'a whole way of life' is, for Eliot, something that cannot be placed by man's consciousness, except by a divine being (say God), and in its unconscious level, culture is an archetypal phenomenon unreachable for any conscious efforts. Thus culture and common man are on opposite poles.

But Eliot's notion of 'the whole way of life' is viewed in a radically different

perspective by Raymond Williams erasing the Eliotian 'limits' from the definition of culture. From its unconscious state of existence culture was transported to the state of a social consciousness that characterizes the very group of people concerned. Thus, like language (Saussurean *parole*) culture is always a particular social practice in a particular historical context. There is no universal culture with value-loaded idealist image that can be placed not by a man, but by a divine being. According to Williams, 'culture is ordinary' that covers the entire area of social practice of a particular people.

The social practice(s) of a people, that is called 'culture' includes language, world views, customs and manners, food habits, costume, religious beliefs and rituals, dance, music and related performances on festive occasions, arts and crafts. In identifying a culture, language is a major social fact that endows human behaviour, in a particular context, with meaning. Language is, in other words, the meaning-model of human behaviour. Thus in identifying a culture, among other factors such as territory and political unity, language plays the major role although, sometimes, religion dominates the linguistic factor as in the case of Islamic culture. Similarly, Chinese culture is divided into two religious camps—Buddhist and non-Buddhist irrespective of a common language it uses. Political unity sometimes tolerates differences in language in a single territory as in the case of the previous USSR that covered a vast area in terms of a single political ideology. But, as the history proves, this unity does not last long. However, language and religion have been the principal instruments in the emergence and identity of a culture. When territorial modification takes place by political factors, use of language is immediately affected, as in the case of people of Midnapore after its merger into the modern Bengal. In the event of the political unity of the Indian subcontinent under the rubric of a 'nation', while allowing the linguistic freedom of the regional states, a unifying language was in urgent need. Nevertheless, in the post-colonial era, identity of a national Indian culture is conceived not in terms of this single unifying language, but in terms of different languages used by the people of different regional territories that are either politically determined or are the determinants of the political territories. Therefore, within the single Indian (political) territory (nation) we can legitimately identify the regional (state) cultures based on language as a major factor, other social factors such as religion, arts and crafts remaining pan-Indian to a great extent. The concept of the Indian 'nationality', an integrated subcontinental territory, irrespective of differences in language and religion, is of the colonial origin: "The very completeness of Britain's empire helped give rise to national feeling. All of India was now linked by a common administration. This made it easier for people to conceive of the country as a nation. English education gave in different provinces a common medium of communication and a shared set of ideas. Among these was nationalism—a concept new to India, and even in Europe relatively of recent origin." (Heehs: 46)

Tagore's definition of nationalism anticipates this view: "what is the Nation? It is the aspect of a whole people as an organized power (p. 66)... the Nation which is the organized self-interest of a whole people, when it is least human and least spiritual. One intimate experience of the Nation is with the British Nation... we have to reorganise that the history of India does not belong to one particular race but to a process of creation to which various races of the world contributed—the Dravidians and the Aryans, the

ancient Greeks and the Persians, the Mohammedans of the West and those of central Asia... Therefore what I say about the Nation has more to do with the history of Man, than specially with that of India” (pp.8-9). Tagore’s concept of the “whole people” that constitute the Nation is not merely territorial and ethnic. It is an organic unification of several social practices such as language, religion and manners, a unification which is perhaps most spectacular in case of the Indian subcontinent that emerged politically and economically during the British rule. Tagore further adds: “A nation, in the sense of the political and economic union of a people, is that aspect which a whole population assumes when organized for a mechanical purpose. It is an end in itself. It is a spontaneous self-expression of a man as a social being. It is a natural regulation of human relationships, so that man can develop ideals of life in cooperation with one another. It has also a political side, but this is only for a special purpose. It is for self-preservation. It is merely the side of power, not of human ideals.” (p. 5)

Thus the Nation in its social perspective is a healthy concept with its humanist or romantic connotation whereas it is a disease in its political context—a threat for the whole humanity in its connotation of Nationalism as exemplified by the Nazi consciousness and more evident in the British colonial slogan—“Rule Britannia Rule the Waves.” Therefore Tagore declares, “Nationalism is a great menace.”

But paradoxically, the concept of Nationalism precedes the concept of Nation (Hobsbawm, 8-11) which is not a primary or an unchanging social unity. “It belongs exclusively to a particular, and historically recent, period. It is a social entity only insofar as it relates to certain kind of modern territorial state, nation-state, and it is pointless to discuss nation and nationality except insofar as both relate to it.”

Viewed in this light, it is both anachronic and illegitimate to think of an Oriya nationalist culture both in its medieval and modern colonial contexts. (Contra Nivedita Mohanty, *Oriya Nationalism: Quest for a United Orissa 1866-1956*, Cuttack: Prafulla, 2005.)

### III

If ‘nation’ is understood in its Latin origin *natus* (birth), then the issue of Indian ‘nation’ would be only a fiction in so far as for over centuries India has been a meeting place of several ethnic origins struggling for their people’s existence by way of political and cultural dominations all their perspectives in historical realities testifying to the truth of this statement. The age-old political history of India is, therefore, a history of the rival administrative groups struggling against each other for foundation of their sovereign states in different regions. Under such circumstances, the emergence of the state of Orissa (Odiûâ) cannot be traced beyond the 15<sup>th</sup> c. A.D., the rise of Kapilendradeva who claimed to be a descendant of the great Sun Dynasty of the mythical Raghur of the *Râmâyana*. The truth appears to be the fact that Kapila was born to a farmer’s family of *Odra* tribe (*Oda casâ*) and worked on the Ganga army eventually usurping the throne in 1435 A.D. (Panigrahi: 190 ff.) Claiming himself to be a descendant of the Sun Dynasty is clearly setting himself against the Kesari rulers who claimed themselves to be descendants of the Moon (mythical Sornavṛasî) Dynasty of the

*Mahâbhârata*— implying thereby that he was much more powerful than all his predecessors.

Ancient texts ranging from the *Mahâbhârata* (2<sup>nd</sup> c. B.C.) to the *Matsya, Vâyu* and *Bhâgavata Purâṇas* composed during the Gupta period (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.) mention several states in the eastern coastal zone such as Kaliṅga, Oḍra, Utkala and (southern) Kośala (Banerji, 37 ff.) although their topological references are not unanimous. *Manusâhita* that represents the Brahmanical ideology par excellence (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD) counts Odra as associated with the non-Arya races such as Draviḍa, Yavana, Ēaka and Paunḍraka, obviously with a pejorative attitude. Yuan Chwang’s placing of Oḍra, Kaṅgoda and Kaliṅga covering the coastal areas of the modern Midnapore–Cuttack, Puri–Ganjam and the Southern Ganjam–Northern Andhra respectively is rather more historical than the mythological sources, particularly his mention of behavioural and linguistic differences appears more significant.

But prior to the arrival of Yuwan Chwang, historians have recently pointed out (Samuel, 47), during the second phase of urbanization, in the post-Harappan period, around 550 B.C. there were settlements in the central Gangetic plain of the northern India that comprised sixteen mahajanapadas (city states) such as Kasi, Kosambi, Avanti, Saketa, Kośala, Magadha, Matsya, Aṅga, Vāṁsa, Chedi along with smaller republics (*gana*) such as Vrji, Papa and Kapilavastu. Somewhat later by a century, settlements also grew up at the deltas of the Ganges, Mahanadi, Kṛṣṇa and Kaveri. By the time Asoka invaded Kaliṅga and took over the Cholas and Andhras, the Mahanadi delta was under the state of Kaliṅga, rich for its agriculture and trading. Two ports were renowned for setting sails abroad Chelitola (mouth of Chitrotapala/ Mahanadi, the name occurring in Yuwan Chwang) and Palura (on the southern end of Chilika lake, now in Ganjam district). Asoka’s Buddhist missionaries sailed for the ‘Land of Gold’ (Suvarnadvipa/ Sumatra) from these two ports of Kaliṅga, Chelitola being then a very thickly populated port-township. This township might have been under the Oḍra region during the visit of Yuwan Chwang. (May: 11).

Yayâti’s unification of Kośala with Oḍra and Kaliṅga is an important political event during the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> c. A.D but it contributes little to the emergence of a *jâti* (a category by birth—from the Sanskrit root *jan*) that can be culturally identified as Oḍia. Similarly, the Gaṅgas also contributed little. As it appears, Kaliṅga was rather culturally dominant with its characteristic identity as a land of courageous people. Viuvanâtha Kavirâja the most influential Sanskrit poetician of the later Gaṅga Period (14<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.) cites a popular Sanskrit use *Kaliga Sâhasika* that refers to the courageous people of the land of Kaliṅga who fought against the conquest of Aśoka during the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C. (*SD*, II. 5 glass) Another influential author of the same period, Ūrîdharasvâmi, makes nowhere any reference to the Oḍiâs as a cultural category in his commentaries on the major Bhâgavata texts. If such are the facts by the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> c. AD, then the efforts made by historians (Behera, 7ff.) in exploring an Oḍiâ *jâti* in Pliny’s *Natural History* or in the records left by the Islamic travelers are only futile. Identifying the Oḍiâ people with a rice-eating category (*orua* derived from Pliny’s *Oretes*, meaning unboiled rice) makes no reference to any distinct cultural category with characteristic social

practices. For that matter, Andhras and Gaudas are also rice-eating people. Moreover, both the Gaudas and Odiâs do not eat *oruâ* rice, preferring commonly boiled (*usunâ/siddha*) rice whereas *Oruâ* is favoured by the Andhras (Kaliṅga). Mention of a dance type called “Odra-Mâgadhî in Bharata’s *Nâtyasâstra* does ‘not refer to any distinct cultural practice, not withstanding the probability that this particular dance type was popular in Odra and Magadha. The point is that without any linguistic practice, mere territorial or even the ethnic factors cannot determine a cultural identity. It is absolutely evident that till the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> c. A.D. Sanskrit was the language of the elite and of the court, notwithstanding the fact that the common people of Odra and Kaṅgoda were using the Mâgadhî form of Prâkrta before the Yayâtis I and II who mingled the Bhojpurî form of Prâkrta with Mâgadhî and thus caused the origin of a language that might be called proto-Oriya (Panigrahi, 284 ff.) with its considerable development during the last phase of the Ganga Dynasty.

Viúvanâtha claims to be a master of eighteen languages and has composed a multilingual poem titled *Prâstastiratnâvalî* (technically called a *Karambhaka* a specific poetic genre in Sanskrit) where he has used sixteen languages. But in the absence of this text, it is not possible to trace the varieties of language he has used. Assuming the use of several forms of Prâkrita and Apabhraṅśa, apart from Sanskrit, one might expect that he has also used the regional language(s) spoken by common people. That he was acquainted with the spoken language of his region is clear from his discussion of the poetic blemishes in *Sâhityadarpaṇa*. For example, he considers the first two letters of the Sanskrit word *pelava* (chap. 7), i.e., *pela* as vulgar (*ailîla*). In Sanskrit *pela* (derived from the root *pel* = to move, go) means movement, and as such cannot be vulgar. The word referring to the male genitals/testicles is certainly in its regional (*deîaja*) use. Similarly, Viúvanâtha considers the use of the Sanskrit word *vâyû* (wind) as vulgar (*grâmya*: pertaining to the folk use) in the expression *prasasâra úanaih vâyû vînâúe tanvi te tadâ* (The [vital=*prâna*] air passed away slowly at the time of your death). With the word *prasasâra* the word *vâyû* might refer to *apâna vâyû* (passing air through anus) instead of *prâna vâyû* (vital air). This use of *vâyû* is certainly not in the Sanskrit context, implying therefore a regional use only. But it is not at all clear what exactly is the identity of this regional language—Ođiâ, *Kalingî* or *Utkalî*. Even Vararuci, the celebrated author of *Prâkrta Prakâúa* (5<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.?), does not mention any regional language associated with Odra, although the editor of a recension of the text refers to Bharata’s mention of two tribal (*vanccara*) languages (*vibhâsâ*) such as *Ođrî* and *Andhrî* (P.10). But the historicity of his observation is not confirmed by any authentic sources. Among the six *Vibhâsâs* Bharata counts (XVII, 49) *œakârâ*, *âbhîrî*, *candâlî*, *úavarî*, *dramilâ*, *ândhrajâ* and Bharata among the seven (*deœa*) *bhâsâs*, he counts *mâgadhî*, *ardhamâgadhî*, *bâlhikâ*, *prâcyâ*, *âvantî úaurasenî* and *dâksinâtyâ* (XCVII, 48), Vararuci counts four major *prâkrta* languages—*mahârâstrî*, *paiúâci*, *mâgadhî* and *úaura (sura) senî*. Sûryanârâyana Dâsha, however, traces a form of *Kaliṅgî* Prâkrta in Khâravêla’s (1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C.) inscriptions. (Dâsha, 25) But, as noted earlier, his tracing an Ođra *vibhâsâ* (p. 15) on the basis of Bharata’s text quoted above is unfounded.

The political unification of Ođra, Kaṅgoda and Kośala by the Somavarṅsis and the subsequent unification of Kaliṅga by the Gaṅgas located their capital cities in

the Ođra region—Jajipur and Cuttack respectively—encouraging thereby an agrarian economy that formulated the basic cultural motifs of the state. Land grants to Brahmins invited from the Northern India for their final settlement in this state was particularly intended for circulation of Brahmanic ideology: “They not only helped their patrons in maintaining power but also acted as foci of culture, providing a moral and ideological anchor.” (Sharma, 341) Simultaneously a feudatory system of administration also required land grants to the warrior-leaders and other categories such as Nâyakas and Sâmantas. Sharma counts several such categories as- *bhûpâla*, *bhogî*, *mahâbhogî*, *vṛhadbhogî* so on and so forth (*ibid.* 334-6). As a result of this feudatory land grants, the tribal people of Ođra were gradually introduced to the rising social pattern of courtly life. Therefore, a type of culture that could be legitimately identified as Ođiâ with the rise of Kapilendradeva an Ođiâ by birth speaking himself Ođiâ language, is a feudatory courtly culture founded on an agrarian economy. What is reflected by the early phase of Ođiâ literature is therefore the agrarian and courtly culture of the state.

It is true that sometimes religion dominates language in identifying a culture. But in identifying Oriya culture, linguistic factor dominates because there is no religion to be identified as Ođiâ. Efforts for exploring an Oriya religion founded on the worship of the image of Lord Jagannâtha at Puri naming it alternatively as Jagannâtha religion are only misleading. Exploration of a Jagannâtha cult is still more misleading, because worship of Jagannâtha is not a cult in itself. A worship is considered a cult only when it forms a systematic pattern with its distinct initiative process (see Eliade: 1969) e.g., aboriginal and pre-Vedic worships and rituals such as those of the village deities (*grâmadevatâ*) and lake-deities. (viz., Kâlîjâi of Cilikâ in Orissa.) Besides, the Buddhist Vajrayâna cults of Târa, Vajravârâhî, Avalokiteúvara, the Brahmanic Pâñcarâtra cults and Bhâgavata cult. (See also Dasgupta, S.B.: 1969) In cult worships specific *mantras*, *maṅḍalas* with distinct methods of worship are used. Jagannâtha worship is a wing of Bhâgavata cult in its syncretic form tending to synthesize all the five branches of Brahmanic tantric tradition—Gânapatya, Saurya, Vaiṣṇava, Úaiva and Úâkta—with even the heterodox Buddhist and aboriginal religious cults. Even if this very syncretism is identified as an independent cult, not a part of Bhâgavata cult which is purely Vaisnavite in character with particular reference to the worship of Kṛṣṇa-Vâsudeva, there is no reason for marking it as an identity for Oriya culture on the ground that the shrine of Jagannâtha is in the territory of modern Orissa—actually belonging to the territory of ancient Kaṅgoda. In that case, the so-called Jagannâtha cult must be a pan-Indian religious phenomenon far beyond the confinement of any regional culture. But, not withstanding all these possibilities, the fact remains that it is the worship of Kṛṣṇa-Vâsudeva, the deity of Bhâgavata cult, that predominates the worship of Lord Jagannâtha as evident in the existing Oriya literature and festive rituals that emerged in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Surprisingly enough, in the Sanskrit writings of the three great Vaisnava personalities of Kaliṅga-Ođra state Jayadeva (12<sup>th</sup> c.), Úrîdhara Svâmî and Visvanâthâ Kavirâja (14<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.), Jagannâtha is nowhere mentioned as the representative deity of this state. Viúvanâtha is a devout worshipper of Lord Nârâyana a Vedic deity whereas Jayadeva and Úrîdhara are the devotees of Kṛṣṇa-Vâsudeva—the former with his

Sahajayâna foundation and the latter with his Brahmanic/Vedic tradition (my monographs on both the authors forthcoming with Sahitya Akademi, Delhi). Popularity of this deity in Oḍiâ culture appears to be simultaneous with the rise of Kapilendradeva, although the shrine was installed much earlier during the rise of the Gaṅgas (11<sup>th</sup> c.). Keeping aside all controversies regarding the history of this shrine, one can be sure that the shrine is of the post-Alvâr period (later than the 9<sup>th</sup> c. AD) because Puri has not been counted as one of the pilgrim spots of these South Indian Vaiṣṇavas, whereas Dvârikâ, Vṛndâvana and Naimisâranya feature on the list. Avoiding, however, all controversy in this regard, one can conveniently assert that Lord Jagannâtha appears as the representative deity of an agrarian economy with its feudal socio-cultural pattern as evident from its common accessibility, association with agrarian rituals and food habits, the deity being further acknowledged as the chief *Sâmanta* of the state the rulers whereof being his subordinates—*Râutas*.

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