

Sri Krishna Kathamrita



Bindu

Issue 549

Snana-yātrā-mahimā

The Glories of Jagannath's Birthday Bath





Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

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JAGANNATH'S BATHING CEREMONY

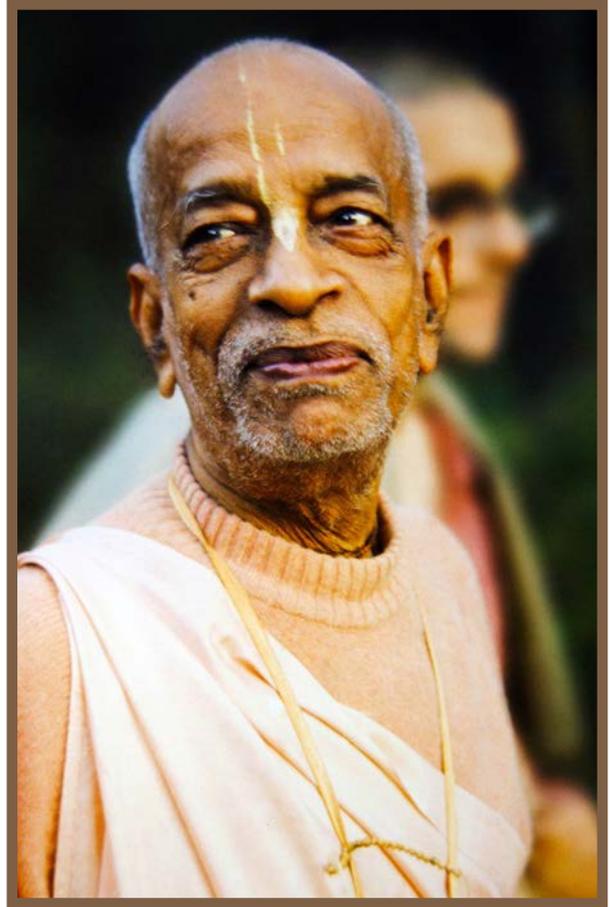


His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Regarding your first question, the bathing ceremony of Lord Jagannath is observed by his Lordship standing in a bathing tank while each of the devotees in turn offers prayers and obeisances, then pours water to bathe the Lord, then offers obeisances, and the next devotee follows the same procedure. All the other devotees are holding *kīrtana* throughout the bathing ceremony, which takes place on June 19th.

Regarding your second question, after being bathed, Lord Jagannath catches fever and at that time you may carry him along with Balaramji and Subhadra to my room for recovery. During this time, up to *Ratha-yātrā*, any repairs may be made. In Jagannath Puri, during this recuperation period the deities are completely repainted. But that is especially in Jagannath Puri. Then Lord Jagannath reappears on the day of *Ratha-yātrā* festival. During his convalescence, *bhoga* is offered



as usual, but no visitors are allowed to see the Lord. (Letter to Yamuna, 4 June 1970.) 🍌

Cover: Photo of the deity of Jagannath being bathed at Snana Yatra in Puri.
Unknown photographer.

Unknown photographer



The Snana Yatra bath for Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra in Jagannath Puri

SNANA YATRA IS JAGANNATH'S BIRTHDAY



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

According to *Skanda Purāṇa*, *Jyeṣṭha Pūrṇimā*, the full moon day of the month of *Jyeṣṭha* (May-June), is the birthday of Jagannath. Jagannath is Krishna, but Krishna's birthday is *Janmāṣṭamī*, the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Bhadra. Therefore, when it is said that the *Jyeṣṭha Pūrṇimā* is Jagannath's birthday, it is understood that on that day Krishna appeared in his form with big, dilated eyes, a round face and his hands and legs shrunken. This is known as *mahābhāva-prakāśa*, or the ecstatic manifestation of Krishna, Balaram and Subhadra.

Krishna and Balaram are the sons of Vasudeva. Krishna's mother is Devaki, and Balaram, his elder brother, is the son of Rohini. Their sister Subhadra is the daughter of Vasudeva and Devaki. So they are brothers and sister, and they appeared in their forms as Jagannath, Baladeva and Subhadra in Purusottam Kshetra.

Because *Jyeṣṭha Pūrṇimā* is the birthday of Jagannath, on that day he takes public bath along with his brother and sister. This festival is known as *snāna-yātrā*, and hundreds of pots of water are poured over them. Because of this, Jagannath's color fades away and for fifteen days he will not give *darśana*. This is known as *anavasara*. During this time, he will be painted with new colors, therefore he cannot give *darśana*. It is generally said that Jagannath falls sick, but that is not correct. The people say this, but it is not mentioned in the scriptures such as *Skanda Purāṇa*. *Śāstra* says that during these fifteen days his wooden form, carved out of neem wood, is repainted. Another name for Lord Jagannath is *dāru-brahma*. 'Dāru' means wood. So a thin piece of cloth is pasted over that *mūrti*. The old cloth is removed during this period and replaced with a new cloth on which the new colors are painted. Then, one day prior to *Ratha-yātrā*, Jagannath gives *darśana* in his fresh color and young appearance, known as *nava-yauvana-veśa*. This is how it is described in the *Skanda Purāṇa*. 🍊

— *The Embankment of Separation*. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Pocketbook edition. 2004.

Unknown photographer



Two of Jagannath's artists known as citrakāras working on parts of a special painting known as the ānasara-paṭi. The deities of Jagannath, Baladev, and Subhadra in Jagannath Puri are painted with natural colors which become smeared after their Snana Yatra bath. After the bath the deities go into seclusion and are renovated for a fifteen day period called anavasara. During that time they are worshiped through the ānasara-paṭi, which is installed like a deity.

Paintings by Narayan Maharana and Harihara Maharana. From the book *In the Absence of Jagannatha*, by Eberhard Fischer and Dinanath Pathy.



The ānasara-paṭi of Jagannath, Baladev, and Subhadra in Jagannath Puri that was worshiped in the year 1990.

LORD JAGANNATH'S SPECIAL BACK SUPPORT



There is deep significance and ceremonial importance attached to even seemingly insignificant aspects surrounding Lord Jagannath. One notable example is the special back support supplied for his use during the *Snāna-yātrā* and *Ratha-yātrā* festivals.

Each year, a Bakul tree is cut and sent to the Jagannath Mandir in Puri shortly before the commencement of *Snāna-yātrā* and *Ratha-yātrā*. This tree is obtained for a specific purpose known as *bahu-kañṭaka*, which is meant to provide protection during the time when the deities of Jagannath, Baladev, and Subhadra are moved to the bathing platform for *Snāna-yātrā* and later to the chariots for *Ratha-yātrā*. This sacred movement of the Lord in the Odia language is called *pahandi*.

Located approximately twenty miles north of Jagannath Puri, near the ancient village of Sakshi Gopal, is the forest of Satyabadi. This forest is considered to be Lord Jagannath's sacred retreat, where he goes to relax. The Bakul tree used for the back support originates from this sacred forest and is ceremonially brought in a procession to the temple of Jagannath. With the wood from that tree, some specific *sevaka* carpenters, known as *bābu-kañṭaka*, utilize the wood from this

tree to fashion a support that is subsequently fixed to the backs of the four deities: Jagannath, Baladev, Subhadra, and Sudarshan. The purpose of this support is to provide both ceremonial and physical protection to their Lordships during the festivals. 🍌

(Note: This information is based on the context provided in an interview with Kabiraj Deba Dash, a resident of Sakshi Gopal.)

JAGANNATH'S ELEPHANT DRESS



The twenty-ninth chapter of the *Puruṣottama-māhātmya* section of the *Skanda Purāṇa* lists twelve original festivals that are considered in Jagannath Puri to be *pradhāna-yātrās*, primary festivals. The first observance mentioned is *Snāna-yātrā*, also known as *Jyeṣṭhā-snāna* — Lord Jagannath's public bath. As mentioned above by Gour Govinda Maharaja, this day is considered to be Lord Jagannath's birthday, as it commemorates the day on which he was originally installed by Lord Brahma.

Tradition in Puri

Every year in Puri, after completion of his bath, Lord Jagannath dresses up in a unique costume known as *hāti-vesā*, "elephant dress". This decoration of Lord Jagannath is described in the *Nīlādri-mahodaya*,



Photo by Kabiraj Deba Dash

Ceremonial procession for the wood for Lord Jagannath's bahu-kañṭaka going from Sakshi Gopal to Puri



Unknown photographer

Lord Jagannath at Snana Yatra in Puri



Unknown photographer

Snana-yātrā in Puri

a Sanskrit *sthala-purāṇa*, local history, that focuses on the worship and tradition of Lord Jagannath. *Nilādri-mahodaya* is considered by the *paṇḍās*, the priests of the Puri temple, to be the highest authority on temple rituals. The fourteenth chapter describes the *hātī-veśa*:

*harau samarpya mālyaiś ca nānā-puṣpa-kulodbhavaiḥ
kari-śreṣṭhāḥṛitayā veśam ca kārayet tadā
etādṛśam balasyāpi veśam kuryān nṛpottama*

Having offered to Hari a flower garland made of various kinds of flowers, one should then dress him as Ganesh, the best of elephants. One should also dress Baladev in the same way, O best of kings.

In the Oriya book *Dāḍhyatā-bhakti*, the following story is given to explain this tradition:

In the village of Kaniyar in the South Indian state of Karnataka lived a devotee of Ganesh known as Ganapati Bhatta. He once came to Puri to see Lord Jagannath's *snāna-yātrā* festival. Upon his arrival, he saw *dāru-brahma*, Lord Jagannath, as Krishna. Unhappy at not seeing his worshipable Ganesh, he thought, "Jagannath is said to be *dāru-brahma*, the transcendent Supreme Lord in whom is contained all incarnations and demigods. Not seeing Ganesh here in Jagannath, how can I accept this as true?" Lord Jagannath is known as *vāñchā-kalpataru*, the fulfiller of the desires of his devotees. Happy to see the one-pointed faith of this devotee for Ganesh,

Photo by Amritesh Gaura Das



Snana-yātrā at ISKCON Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Unknown photographer



Snana-yātrā at ISKCON Zurich



Photo by ISKCONMayapur.com

Snana-yātrā at ISKCON Mayapur



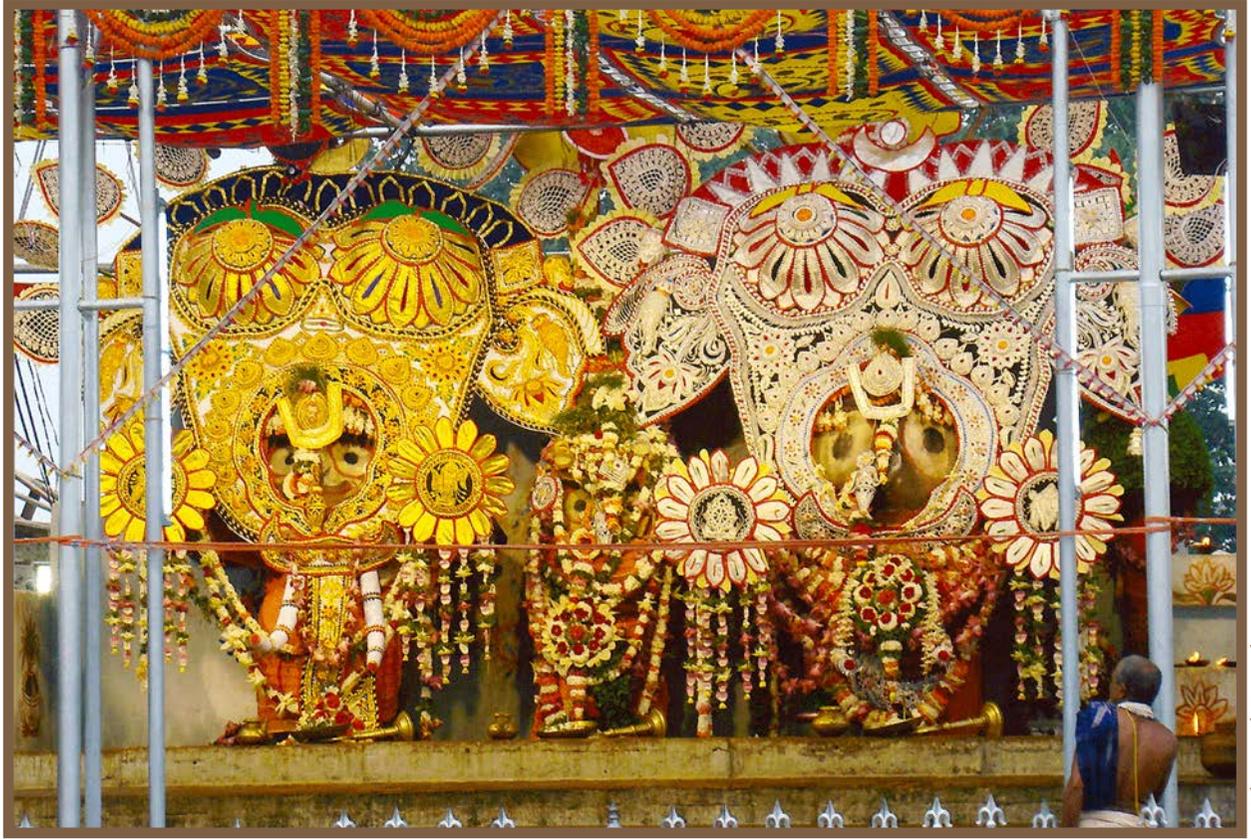
Unknown photographer

Snana-yātrā at Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Agartala, Tripura, India



Unknown photographer

Hati-veśa in Jagannath Puri



Unknown photographer

Jagannath and Baladev in their hati-veśa, while Subhadra is in padma-veśa, the lotus dress, in Jagannath Puri.

he manifested himself like an elephant, *gajānana-rūpa*. According to the prayer of this *gaṇapati-bhakta*, in order to establish his position as *vāñchā-kalpataru*, as long as the moon and the sun are in this universe, Jagannath will accept this dress on the auspicious *snāna-yātrā* day. From that day until now, every year on the day of *snāna-yātrā*, when Jagannath and Baladeva sit on the *snāna-vedi*, the bathing platform, they dress as Ganesh. And putting many lotus flowers around the face of Subhadra Devi, the *pañḍās* dress her in the *padma veśa*, lotus dress. Arranging for Subhadra's *padma veśa* is a service carried out by the head priest of the Sri Gopal Tirtha Math.

Contemporary Use

Although this dress was never commented on — either favorably or negatively — by Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, there are a number of temples in his society today that dress Jagannath in this way. Aside from that social aspect, however, some questions have been raised as to whether or not the *hātī-veśa* is acceptable for the followers of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition.

In defense of using the dress, some point out Krishna's nature of adopting many moods and their

corresponding forms. Lord Brahma prays to Krishna in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.9.11), *tat-tad-vapuḥ praṇayase sad-anugrahāya* — “You are so merciful to your devotees that you manifest yourself in the particular eternal form of transcendence in which they always think of you.”

In his purport to *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 8.18.12, Srila Prabhupada states:

An actor changes dress to play different parts, but is always the same man. Similarly, as described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.33, 39), the Lord assumes many thousands and millions of forms (*advaitam acyutam anādim ananta-rūpam ādyam purāṇa-puruṣam*).

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.40.7), this same point is made by Akrura in his prayers to Krishna, *bahu-mūrti eka-mūrtikam* — “Although manifested in many forms, you are one.” In his purport to *Cc. madhya* 20.173, Srila Prabhupada comments on this verse:

In the Vedas it is stated that the one becomes many (*eko bahu syām*). The Supreme Personality of Godhead expands



Hati-veśa in ISKCON Bhubaneswar



Photos by Amrutesh Gaura Das

Jagannath in his elephant dress, and Subhadra in her lotus dress at ISKCON Bhubaneswar



Unknown photographer

Hati-veśa in ISKCON Soho Street, London

himself in various forms — *viṣṇu-tattva*, *jīva-tattva* and *śakti-tattva*.

Philosophical Concerns

However, the above evidences do not mean that Krishna will manifest in absolutely any form that the worshiper desires. The forms that Krishna manifests are all eternal, transcendental *viṣṇu-tattva*. From a strict perspective of *vaiṣṇava* Vedantic philosophy, there are problems if someone considers that Jagannath has *become* Ganesh. Forms of the *devatas* such as Ganesh cannot be classified under any category of Krishna's forms as mentioned in the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛtam*, viz. *vilāsa*, *svāmśa*, *āveśa*, etc. In other words, Srila Rupa Goswami has not accepted the idea that Krishna directly manifests a form as Ganesh.

Another concern some might express is that by dressing Jagannath as Ganesh one would have to accept the conclusion that Jagannath's identity has undergone a transformation. In other words, one would be saying, "Jagannath was Krishna, but now has transformed into Ganesh. This concept of the Lord's nature changing from *viṣṇu-tattva* to *śakti-tattva* or *jīva-tattva* is technically known as *brahma-pariṇāma-vāda*, the theory that the Supreme Lord undergoes a transformation. The *vaiṣṇava*

ācāryas from almost all schools have spoken against *brahma-pariṇāma-vāda* in their commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtras* and other compositions.

Another philosophical concern is that worshipping Jagannath as Ganesh is similar to the process of worship known as *pañcopāsanā*, which is followed by persons who adhere to the conclusions of *māyāvāda*. In the impersonal *pañcopāsanā* process of worship, one considers Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Ganesh and Surya to be transformations of that one ultimate impersonal *brahman*, and by worshipping any of these forms one gets the same benefit, *mokṣa*.

It is based on philosophical concerns such as the above that some *vaiṣṇavas*, such as members of the Sri Sampradaya, do not accept Lord Jagannath's *hātī-veśa*.

Non-different from the Lord

Our Gaudiya Vedanta *ācārya*, Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan, offers another conception. He indicates that due to their services to him, the *devatas* are sometimes described as non-different from Vishnu. He states in chapter three, text nine, of his *Siddhānta-ratnam*:

*abhedokta-vastu tad-āyatta-vṛttikatvādibhiḥ saṅgacchante,
srjāmi tan-niyukto 'haṁ haro harati tad-vaśaḥ*

Photo by Aradhya Gauranga



Hati-veśa in ISKCON Mayapur

Photo by Gokularanjana Das



Hati-veśa in ISKCON Zurich



Unknown photographer

Hati-veśa at the Bhaktivedanta Ashram temple in Bhadrak, Odisha

The demigods are sometimes described in the *sāstra* as being non-different from Lord Vishnu. Great authorities explain that these descriptions mean that the demigods are non-different in the sense that they have functions that are delegated by Lord Vishnu.

In text twelve of the same book, Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan explains that within the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-stotra* are names of the Lord that are generally considered to belong to the *devatas*. He cites the names, “Indra”, “Brahma”, “Shiva”, “Shambhu”, “Rudra”, and “Mahadev” as examples. In text thirteen he quotes evidence from the *Skanda Purāṇa*:

*nārāyaṇādini nāmāni vinānyāni sva-nāmāni
druhiṇādibhyo dadau*

*kr̥te nārāyaṇādini nāmāni puruṣottamaḥ
prādād anyatra bhagavān rājevarte svakaṁ puraṁ*

Lord Purusottama kept some names for himself, like “Narayana”, etc., and others of his own names he gave to the demigods:

A king keeps a palace for himself and he gives residential quarters to his ministers and subordinate officers. Like that, Lord Vishnu keeps some of his names like “Narayan” for himself, and other names he gives to demigods because they are his subordinates.

Adopting the Mood of a Devotee

Aside from the above consideration, Gaudiya Vaishnavas also recognize that sometimes the Lord

performs pastimes in the mood of one of his devotees. A few of the many examples of this include in the eighth chapter of the *madhya-līlā* of *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (texts 96-103), which recounts how, once, after hearing the prayers sung by a devotee of Lord Shiva, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu manifested the mood of Shiva. Text 99 states that he climbed on the shoulders of that singer and *hunkāra kariyā bale* — “*muṇi se śaṅkara*” — he began to loudly shout, “I am Shankar, Shiva!” Vrindavan Das Thakur states in the next verse that the devotees saw Mahaprabhu with dreadlocks playing the horn and *ḍamaru* drum of Lord Shiva. The same story is recounted by Srila Lochan Das Thakur in his *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala* (*madhya* song 16, texts 50-63) where he says that upon seeing the mood of Mahaprabhu; Srivas Pandit, and Mukunda Datta began reciting prayers to Lord Shiva.

Similarly, the *madhya-līlā* of *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (8.91) mentions how Mahaprabhu was sometimes in the mood of the great devotee Prahlad Maharaja. Chapter eighteen of the *madhya-līlā* of *Caitanya-bhāgavata* describes how Mahaprabhu once relished the mood of many of his consorts including Maha Lakshmi and Durga. Text 165 recounts how when the devotees saw him in that *janani-āveśa* or mood of a mother they began offering prayers:

*keha paḍe lakṣmī-stava, keha caṇḍī-stuti
sabe stuti paḍe yāhāra yena mati*

Unknown photographer



Unknown photographer



Jagannath hand art in Puri

Hati-veśa at the Baladev Jiu Mandir in Kendrapada, Odisha

Some recited prayers to Lakshmi, and some offered prayers to Durga. Everyone offered prayers according to their realization. (Text 166)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati comments on this verse:

Seeing Sri Gaurasundar in the dress of a śakti, consort, persons who were situated in false egos of goodness began to pray to him as Narayani Maha Lakshmi. Others who were situated in false egos of ignorance offered Him the prayers known as Caṇḍikā-stotra.

Yet another example in kṛṣṇa-līlā is when Krishna sometimes dresses up like Srimati Radharani.

When seeing these various moods and dresses of the Lord, Gaudiya devotees don't consider that because of these pastimes that the Lord has changed and has thus become a different personality. They don't consider that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has become Balaram or Shiva, nor do they consider that Jagannath has become Ganesh. Rather, their conception is that Mahaprabhu and Jagannath have manifested the mood of their devotees in these pastimes.

Deity for this Age

Lord Jagannath is described in many places as the deity for this age. In his Prameya-ratnāvalī (1.5) Srila Baladev

Vidyabhushan quotes the Padma Purāṇa: catvāras te kalau bhāvya hy utkale puruṣottamāt — “In the age of Kali, the four vaiṣṇava disciplic successions will appear in Utkal from the Supreme Lord, Purushottam Jagannath.”

Gauranga Mahaprabhu similarly states in Caitanya-caritāmṛta (madhya 15.134-135):

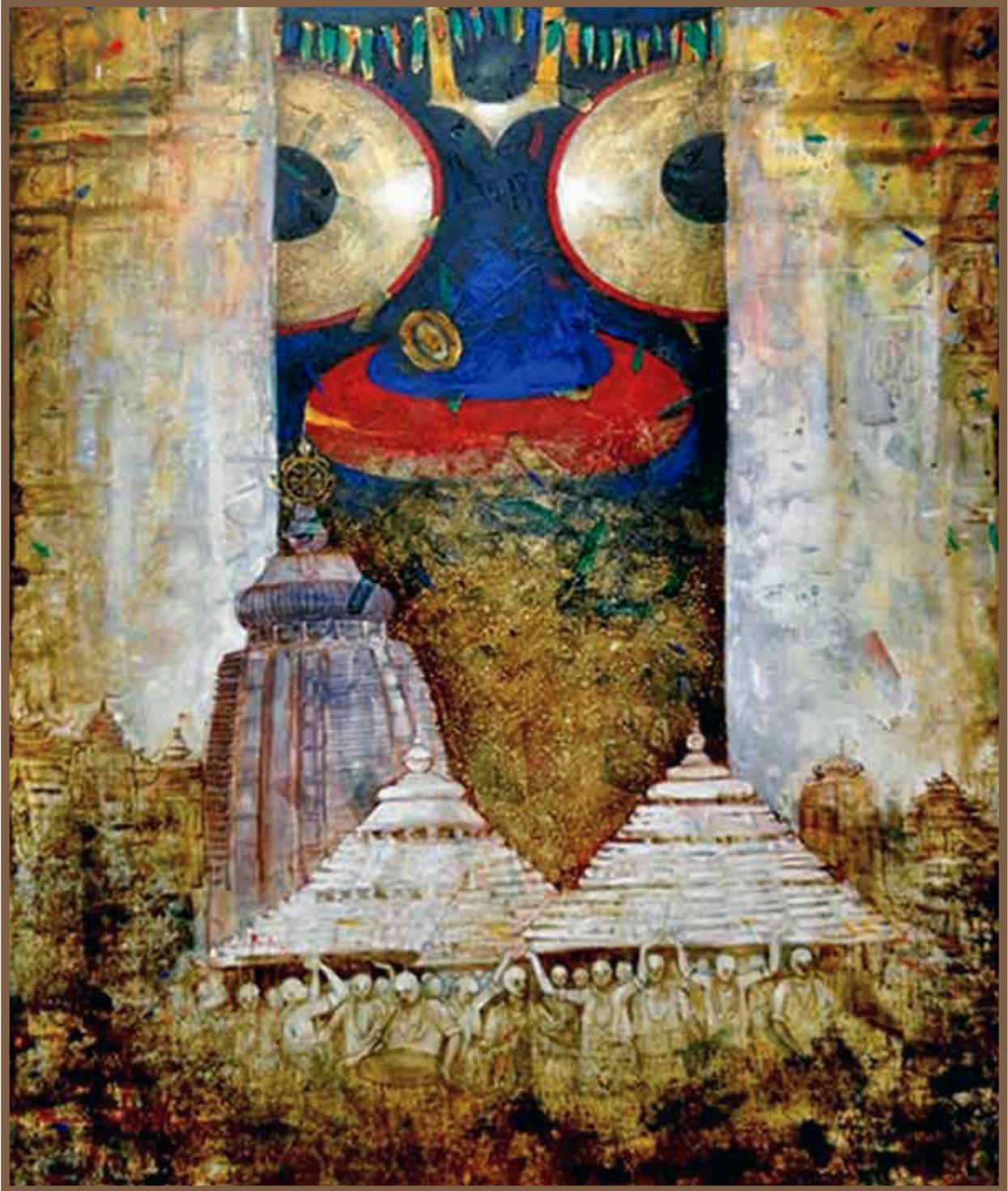
‘dāru’-jala’-rūpe kṛṣṇa prakāṣa samprati
‘daraśana’-’snāne’ kare jīvera mukati

“In this Age of Kali, Krishna is manifest in two forms, wood and water. Thus, by enabling the conditioned souls to see the wood and bathe in the water, he helps them become liberated.

‘dāru-brahma’-rūpe — sākṣāt śrī-puruṣottama
bhāgīrathī hana sākṣāt ‘jala-brahma’-sama

“Lord Jagannath is the Supreme Lord himself in the form of wood, and the river Ganga is the Supreme Lord himself in the form of water.”

Lord Jagannath allows and accepts the worship of everyone. This is Krishna's nature, as stated by him in the Bhagavad-gītā (4.11), ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham — “I reciprocate with everyone according to how they surrender unto me.” A similar point is made by Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur in his Caitanya-bhāgavata (madhya 23.465), je rūpa cintye dāse sei rūpa haya — “The Lord manifests himself in the form that his dear devotee wants to see.” Lord Jagannath's mood is thus described in the Skanda Purāṇa (5.2.2.23.67): dharmi-grāha-pramāṇena yādṛg dṛṣṭah sa eva saḥ — The Lord appears exactly according to the inclination of the worshiper to serve him.



Jagannātha-jagatera-nātha

The *Subhāṣita-ratna-bhāṇḍāgāram* similarly states:

*deve tīrthe dvije mantrē daivajñe bheṣaje gurau
yādṛṣī bhāvanā yasya siddhir bhavati tādṛṣī*

In relation to a deity, a holy place, a Brahmin, a mantra, an astrologer, a physician or a guru — one obtains reciprocation according to the degree and type of one's faith. (*Dharma-vivekaḥ*, 18 of Halayudha, quoted in *Subhāṣita-ratna-bhāṇḍāgāram*, pp. 168)

In answer to devotees who may want to know if such a dress is correct or not to practice; ultimately, what makes worship “right” or “wrong” is that it should be conducted with devotion in accordance with the directions of spiritual authorities. As stated by Srila Prabhupada in a lecture in Vrindavan on 29 October 1972, “We should not manufacture in our own way. ...It must be confirmed by the spiritual master.” — MD. 🍌

MAHAPRABHU'S OBSERVANCE OF SNANA YATRA



*Adapted from Caitanya-caritāmṛta
mahākavya, chapter 14*

The Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Mahākāvya is a Sanskrit work describing the life of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Although this book is generally accepted by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas and is quoted by Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in his purport to Cc. ādi 10.135-136, there is some question as to its authorship. In his purport to Cc. ādi 10.62, Srila Prabhupada states:

According to expert opinion, Chaitanya Das was the author of the book Caitanya-carita (also known as Caitanya-caritāmṛta), which was written in Sanskrit. The author was not Kavi Karnapur, as is generally supposed. This is the opinion of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur.

[One year, a group of devotees set out from Nabadwip to go to Puri for Ratha-yātrā and to see Lord Gaurāṅga. The party was organized by Shivananda Sen and headed by Adwaita Acharya, and included Srivas Thakur along with his younger brother Sriram Pandit, the great singer Mukunda, Murari Gupta, Haridas Thakur, Vasudev Datta, and many other associates of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.]

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Mahākavya* (14.39) describes them:

*advaito 'yaṁ nidhir abhūt śrīvāso bhakti-parvataḥ
amṛtaṁ kīrtanam abhūt haridāso mahā-maṇiḥ*

Adwaita was the water, Srivas was a mountain of bhakti. Kīrtana was the nectar arising in the ocean. Haridas was the kaustubha jewel.

When the devotees arrived in Puri, Mahaprabhu embraced them with his pillar-like arms. With great bliss, Sivananda Sen offered his respects to the Lord. He and Vasudev Datta had brought two jars full of water from the Ganga, which they offered to Lord Chaitanya. Seeing the sacred water, Mahaprabhu began to sing its praises. Understanding the desire of his devotees, he instructed that the water should be divided into two portions. One should be given to Lord Jagannath and the other left with Mahaprabhu himself.

The ocean of mercy then inquired, “Where is Murari? Where is Murari? Bring him quickly!” Hearing this, many devotees ran with zeal and came quickly to the bank of Narendra Sarovar.



Unknown photographer

Deities inside the Baladev Jiu Mandir in Kendrapada, Odisha

They saw Murari lying on the ground, trembling and crying with a miserable heart. They said, “Quickly come.” Hearing these words, Murari, in great joy, trembling, his eyes full of tears, covered with dust, sobbing pitiful words, and completely despondent, went to see the Lord. Perspiring and stunned, he stumbled about continually. He covered his throat with the border of his cloth. Holding grass in his teeth, he moved like lowly grass. He wore a pearl garland of tears on his chest. As if blinded by *prema*, he gazed at the Lord for a long time. He could not speak because tears choked his throat. Then with a choked, pitiful voice, feeling most miserable, he uttered some words and held the lotus feet of the Lord. Tears flowed from his eyes upon the Lord’s lotus feet.

With his blossoming lotus eyes, the Lord also sprinkled Murari with his tears. The people present cried along with his crying, absorbed completely in his emotions.



Unknown photographer

A rare photo of Lord Jagannath's snana-yātrā in Puri from the 1800s

*udyad-vibhrama-śoṇāśya hāśya-rañjita-candrikah
svāṅga-jyotsnācchaṭā-śāsvat-snāpitāśā-vadhū-mukhaḥ*

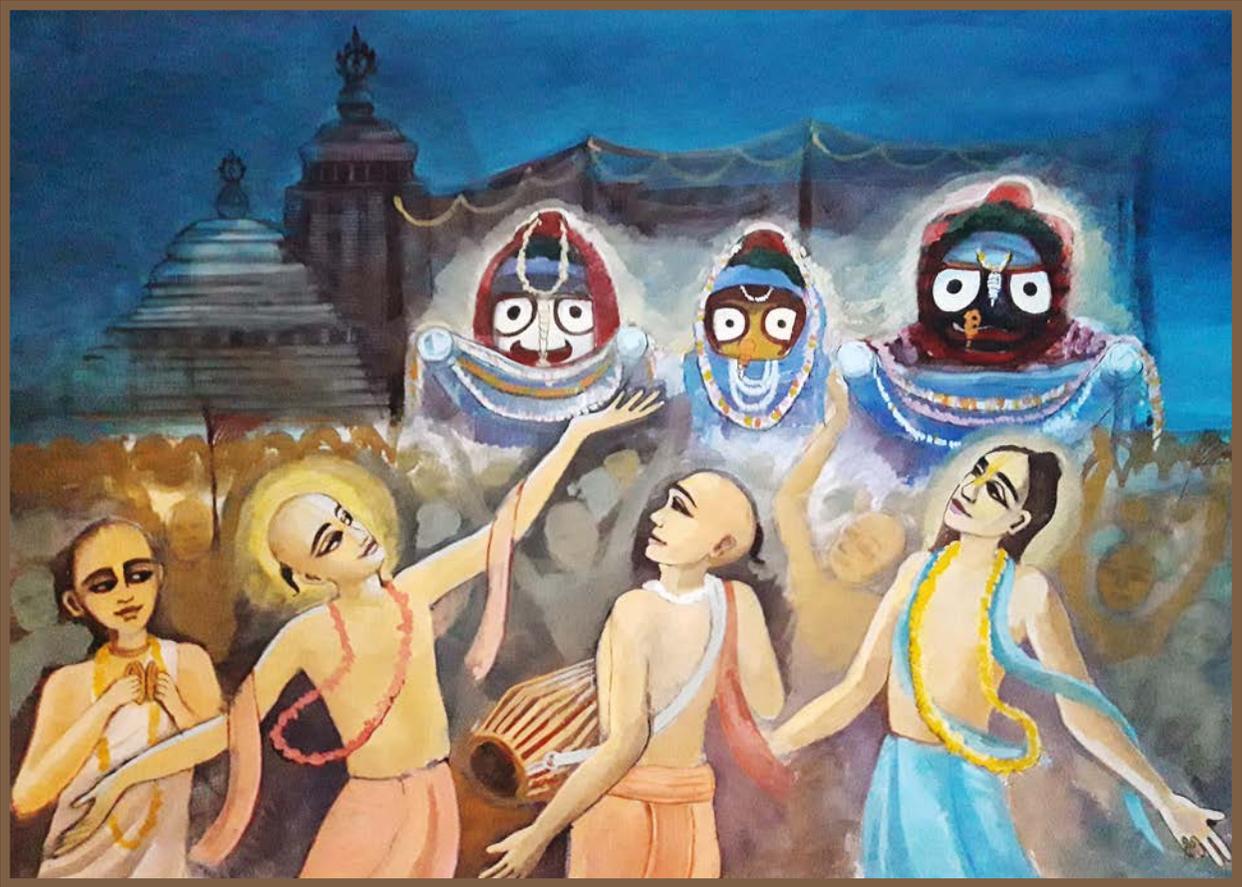
The moon of Gauranga, smiling, tinged with beautiful red lips, bathed the faces of the directions in the effulgence of his limbs. (Text 119)

Greedy for the nectar of Lord Chaitanya's feet, the devotees became anxious to see the bathing festival of Jagannath.

On *Ekādaśī*, the devotees happily saw the marriage festival, and on the full moon day they saw the purifying bathing festival.

[**Note:** This marriage festival, called *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa* or *Rukmiṇī-vivāha*, takes place inside the temple.

It enacts the marriage of Lakshmi Devi to Lord Jagannath, who is represented by the Madan Mohan deity. One of the priests dresses up as Sishupal and tries to oppose the marriage. A popular part of the ceremony is when the mock Sishupal is tied up and made prisoner, following which Balaram comes and releases him. As part of the ceremony, some cloths belonging to Lakshmi and Jagannath are tied together. Jagannath and Lakshmi's wedding ceremony takes place on the *Śukla Ekādaśī*, which is also known as *Pāṇḍavā Nirjala Ekādaśī*, of the month of *Jyaiṣṭhā* (May-June). For more information about this ceremony, see our



Mahaprabhu and his associates at Snana-yātrā

article “Only Hindus Allowed” in issue 13 of the printed *Sri Krishna Kathamrita* magazine.]

The city of Puri was most attractive and pleasing with mansions, watchtowers and gates. It had beautiful palaces which touched the white clouds. In that city, Lord Jagannath’s bathing platform, permeated with nectar, seemed like a moving person. On the previous day, when the sun set, some people had started to decorate the platform. When the full moon rose, the platform shone, making the great city beautiful. The moon, full of nectar, as if serving the Lord, cleansed the platform with its hand-like rays. The bathing platform was decorated with abundant flower garlands, with an attractive archway, with a huge network of flowers, and with small shining, jingling bells. Its beauty attracted the whole world.

On the order of Gauranga, the devotees, anxious to see the bathing of Jagannath, fixed themselves on top of a wall. Their chests shining with sandalwood paste applied by the hand of Gauranga, they shone like *devatās* in the sky in front of Mahaprabhu.

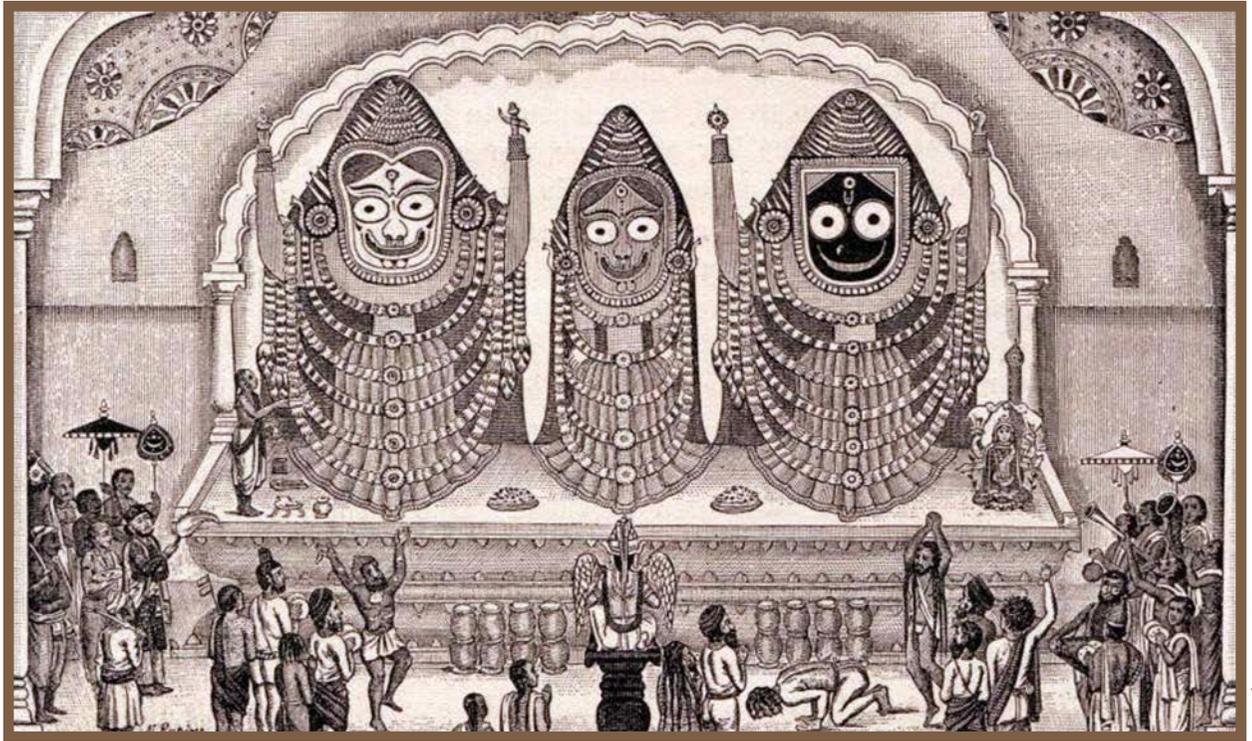
When dawn came, the servants of Jagannath fastened the pure ropes on Jagannath’s body.

First, Balaram desired to go. He came off his throne, shining like a million moons. Then Subhadra, and then Jagannath, came off their thrones, producing astonishing beauty. Gaurachandra, came in front and saw the victory path of the three deities, one by one. Shaking the earth with his footsteps, moving from pillow to pillow, Jagannath appeared like the moon moving from constellation to constellation.

While people shouted “Jaya!” and rang bells, the Lord, the crown jewel of Niladri, ascended the spotless platform, which was decorated with networks of flowers, and which surpassed the beauty of the milk ocean with trembling waves.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, surrounded by devotees, was in the front. Streams of tears fell from his lotus eyes onto his chest. Seeing Mahaprabhu, shining Jagannath was overcome with joy and also bathed himself in his own tears.

This great festival of Jagannath, which is rare for the *devatās* like Lord Brahma to see, gave sweet



Unknown artist

"Idols in the temple of Jagannath". From the book, *India and its Native Princes*, by Louis Rousselet, 1878

bliss to the eyes of all the people. It was beautiful with simultaneous loud shouts of "Jaya! Jaya!" ever increasing in joy, and with showers of flowers similar to verses of praise.

*snānāmbu-dhārāpluta eṣa nīla-
giriśvaro gaura-sudhākarasya
viccheda-bhāvena rudan vireje
cirāya gupto bhaviteti devaḥ*

Covered with the bathing water, Jagannath seemed to be crying in separation from Gauranga, thinking, "He will be hidden from my vision for a long time." [Text 139]

[**Note:** Jagannath was thinking that he would not see Mahaprabhu for the 15 days of the *anavasara* period between *Snāna-yātrā* and *Ratha-yātrā* when the body of Lord Jagannath is refurbished. In his *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭakam* (page 321) Srila Kavi Karnapur relates a similar point regarding Jagannath's feelings of separation from Mahaprabhu. He presents a discussion wherein Maharaja Prataparudra asked Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, "Since Vrindavan is the dearest place to the Lord, why did he stay there such a short time and then return here to Puri? Sarvabhauma replied, *jagannāthena tad-viraham asahamānena samākṛṣṭa iva* — "Lord Chaitanya was drawn back by Lord Jagannath, who couldn't bear separation from him."]

Pleased with the sweet liquids of the bathing festival, Jagannath remained there for some time in bliss. After the bath, his two arms were again held by groups of servants. Endowed with beauty, he began to move gloriously on pillows. As Lord Jagannath set out, Kurma seemed to sink, Sesa seemed to tremble with all his hoods, the earth seemed to quake, mountains seemed to explode, the universe seemed to break apart, the ocean seemed to flood its shores, and the sun seemed to flee away.

Desiring to produce great pains of separation in his devotees living in Puri, Jagannath, wearing the cloth of invisibility, then disappeared from the men's vision, along with Lakshmi, for repairs. [**Note:** This refers to the *anavasara* period of 15 days when Jagannath does not give *darśana*.] Jagannath disappeared to play with Lakshmi alone. Their minds disturbed with sorrow on not seeing the Lord, the devotees living in Puri suffered greatly on being deprived of the Lord's presence.

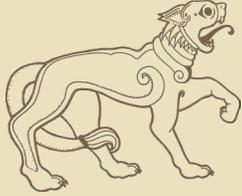
Deprived of seeing Jagannath, Mahaprabhu was greatly pained. He manifested the same sorrow that the *gopīs* of Vraja felt in separation from Krishna. Gaurachandra appeared to wear a necklace of constantly flowing tears on his chest. Becoming thin, present only by his name, he became despondent due



Old painting of Jagannath, Baladev, Subhadra

Ślokāmṛta

GLORIES OF OBSERVING SNANA-YATRA



From chapter 31 of the
Puruṣottama-jagannātha-māhātmya
of the Vaiṣṇava-khaṇḍa of Skanda Purāṇa

The following was spoken by Jaimini Rishi to the sages at Naimisharanya about the glories of witnessing the bathing ceremony on Lord Jagannath's birthday known as Snāna-yātrā.

tāni sarvāṇi kṣīyante paśyatām śnapanaṁ hareḥ
nātaḥ paratarāṁ karma hy anāyāsena mocanam

For those who witness the snāna of Hari, all sinful reactions are vanquished. There is no other similar act that liberates one without exertion. (2.2.31.77)

jyeṣṭha-janma-dine snānaṁ harer yad avalokitam
snāna-dāna-tapaḥ-śrāddha-japa-yajñādayas tu ye
vidhayaḥ koṭi-guṇitāḥ koṭi-janmopapāditāḥ
snāna-darśana-puṇyasya hares te na tulāṁ gatāḥ

All other ritualistic acts, viz. holy baths, charities, penances, oblations to ancestors, japa, fire sacrifices etc., may be multiplied millions of times and performed over many lives. Yet, they can never be compared to the devotional piety of witnessing the snāna ceremony on the appearance day of Jagannath in the month of Jyeṣṭha. (2.2.31.77-78)

bhaktiyā yaḥ śnapanaṁ viṣṇor ekasmin vatsare 'pi vā
paśyen na śocate viprā iha saṁsāra-mocane

Dear Brahmins! A person who witnesses this snāna ceremony of Jagannath with devotion even once in any particular year does not experience any grief when it comes to getting liberated from the material world.

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit on <https://www.wisdomlib.org/>

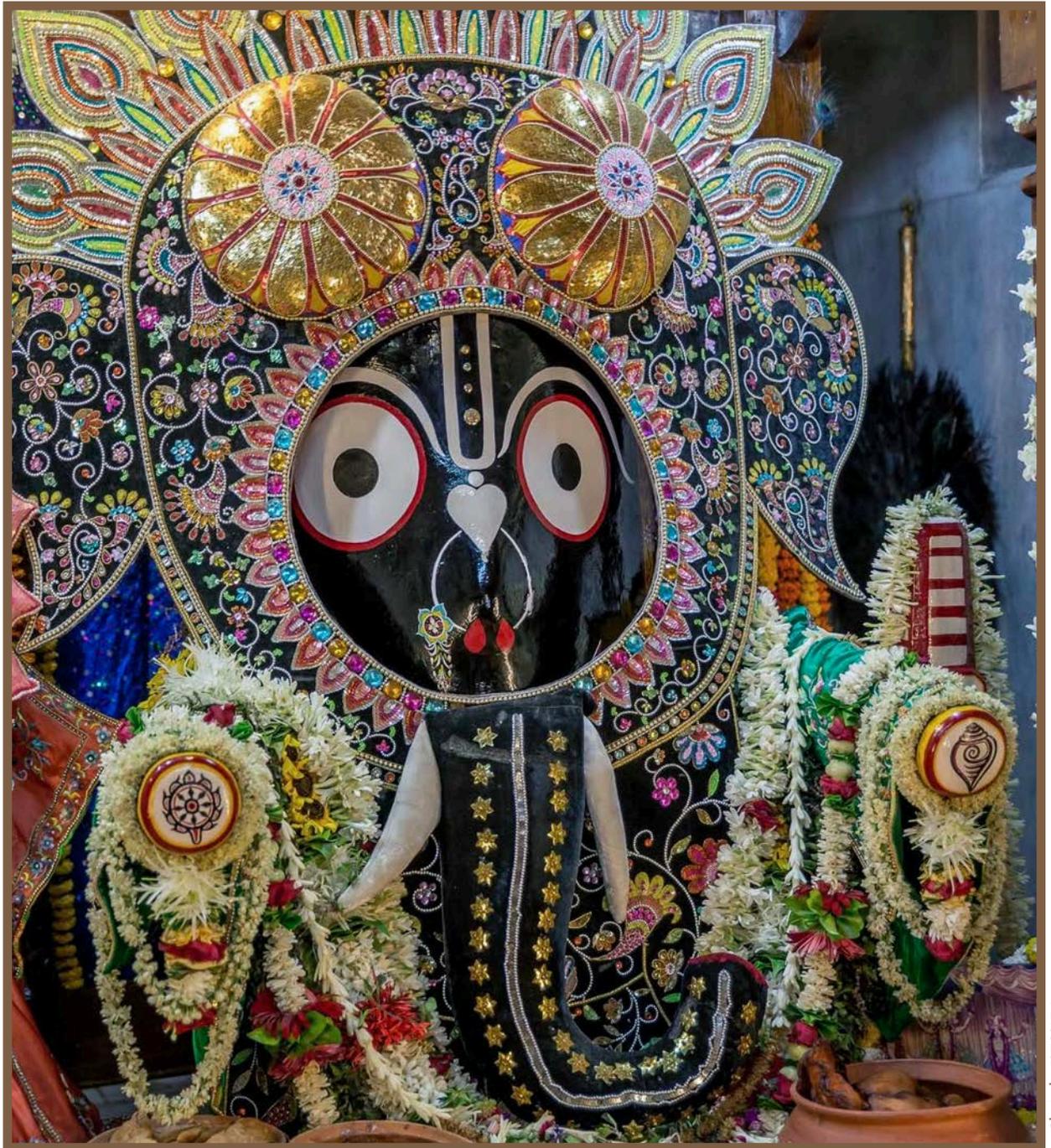


Photo by ISKCONMayapur.com

Hati-veśa in ISKCON Mayapur

to the long separation. He became thinner by the day, sprinkling tears from his pink lotus eyes while exhaling hot wind in long sighs. As the forest fire of sorrow doubled by not seeing Jagannath, the ocean of mercy granted some peace of mind considering that the Lord would return.

Jagannath, with a flute in his hand; mounting an attractive swing, viewed the artistic dancing of the best temple women at the three junctures of the day. He enjoyed charming songs, while sweet *mṛdaṅgas*

and other drums sounded. The floor of the room became white from the constant showers of flowers.

His heart despondent because of separation, Gaurachandra passed his days crying loudly and incessantly and only attained some relief by seeing his companions. Gaurachandra then decided to thoroughly clean the place known as Gundicha along with the devotees dedicated to his lotus feet. 🍊

— From an unpublished translation by Bhanu Swami from the online transliteration at www.granthamandira.org, which in turn was taken from an undated edition published by Sri Prankishor Goswami.



Unknown photographer

Lord Jagannath in Puri on his Ratha-yātrā cart

SNANA-YATRA SONG



As the deities are being bathed in Puri, some devotees sing the following kirtan:

*nāce re gaurāṅga-hari bhakta-gaṇa sātha
sināna maṇḍape heri śrīla-jagannātha*

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See Gauranga dance in the company of his devotees, looking at Lord Jagannath on the Snana Mandap.

[Note: The word “sināna” in this verse is colloquial Bengali for “snana”.]

*pūravaṛa bhāve nāce śrī-śacinandana
jagannātha dekhe jena vrajendra-nandana*

*vṛndāvana mājhe jena devī paurṇamāsī
abhiṣeka karichena parama haraṣī*

As he dances, the son of Sachi remembers his previous life and sees Jagannath as the son of Nanda in Vrindavan, where Purnamasi is joyfully giving him the coronation bath.

*svarūpere bale gorā hāsiyā hāsiyā
hera go lalitā tomāra parāṇa baṇdhua*

Gauranga turns to Swarup Damodar, laughs, and says, “O Lalita! Just look at your boyfriend!”

*bhāvera taraṅge gorā adhīra ha-ila
mātiyā rādhāra bhāve nācite lāgila*

Then, overcome by waves of emotion and absorbed in Radharani’s feelings of love, he dances wildly.

*keha nāce eha gāya vibhora ha-iyā
bhūme gaḍi jāya keha premāviṣṭa haiyā*

In this atmosphere of love, some of the devotees sing, some of them dance, and some fall to the ground in the throes of ecstasy. 🍌

— Translated by Jagadananda Das from *Carita-sudhā*, Vol. I, p. 86.