

# To Be One With The Gods: The Jagannath Cult and the Chitrakaras of Puri

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A unique composite culture revolves around *Lord Jagannath*, the presiding Hindu deity of Odisha. A number of myths and legends, along with a variety of religious creeds and sects, have mingled together to give rise to the *Jagannath cult*. At the same time, a myriad of faiths, including Jainism, Buddhism, Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism was assimilated into this cult. *Lord Jagannath* is today worshipped along with *Lord Balarama* and the female deity, *Subhadra* in temples all over Odisha.

The artists' village of Raghurajpur occupies a unique site in the cultural map of India. Raghurajpur is located in the Puri district of Odisha, at a distance of 10-12 km from Puri town and about 50 km away from Bhubaneswar, the state capital. Originally a craft village, Raghurajpur became a heritage destination in 2002, for its outstanding artistry. In this village, each and every art form has a highly religious connotation. Although 10 different types of handicrafts are practised here today, the most authentic art heritage of the village lies in the *pata paintings*<sup>1</sup> executed by the *Chitrakara community* belonging to the *Kalakara caste*. It has been confirmed that the technique of *pata painting* here originated from the art of painting the Trinity and artistry in this village is highly impacted by the *Jagannath cult*.

The primary purpose of this paper is to ascertain the exact impact of the *Jagannath cult* on the life and works of the *Chitrakaras*<sup>2</sup> of the Puri district as a whole, and Raghurajpur in particular. Another objective is to assess the social attitudes of the *Chitrakaras* with regard to the *Jagannath cult*.

A thorough study of the various themes used in depicting the *patachitras* would help to understand the religious views and cultural inclination of the *Chitrakara community* of Raghurajpur.

Further, the study would help the researcher to analyse and understand the festivals associated with the Jagannath Temple.

The study area is confined to the village of Raghurajpur, the main seat of the *pata painters* of Puri district. This is the most productive area for *patachitras* in Odisha. The exact location of the village is on the southern bank of Bhargavi river, a tributary of the Mahanadi. In the north lies the *ashram*<sup>3</sup> of Bhrigu. It is said that the *Nila Chakra*<sup>4</sup> was created here. In the west is found the temple of *Kateswar Mahadeva*, known to have been established by *Lord Rama*. Thus, an atmosphere of holiness pervades the surroundings of Raghurajpur. A series of local temples run along the middle of the road. The *pata painters* dwell in a particular locality called '*Chitrakara Sahi*'.<sup>5</sup> The *Chitrakaras*, at present, practise *patachitra painting* for which they are well-known all over the world, *talapatachitra*, i.e., palm-leaf engraving and etching, *bhitichitra* or mural painting,<sup>6</sup> stone carving, wood carving, making cow-dung toys, coconut-painting, *tusser painting*, making *ganjappa*<sup>7</sup> playing-cards and designing paper mache masks and other articles of paper mache. Besides, they are exponents of *Gotipua* – an ancient dance form. Most of the *Chitrakaras* of Raghurajpur bear the surnames Maharana and Mohapatra.

## History of Chitrakara Community of Puri

The term, *Chitrakara* denotes a painter. *Chitrakaras* are a community of traditional folk painters who paint pictures on cloth, hence, their creations are known as '*pata*' – a term that probably originates from the Sanskrit word '*patta*'. *Chitrakaras* belong to an outcaste sect in the Hindu *varna* (caste) order. In the Brahmapurana,<sup>8</sup> they have been identified as the children of *Viswakarma*, the Hindu deity of art and architecture and *Ghritachi*, *apsara* woman taken to be the spouse of *Viswakarma*. Thus, they belong to the *Nabhasakha*<sup>9</sup> group. In the Brahmapurana, it has been said that all the members of the

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*Nabashakha* group, including the *Chitrakaras* (painters), *Malakaras* (garland makers and those engaged in *shola* craft), *Karmakaras* (blacksmiths), *Sutradharas* (carpenters), *Kumbhakararas* (potters), *Sankhakaras* (those working on conch shells,) *Swarnakararas* (goldsmiths), *Tantubayyas* (weavers) and *Kangsakararas* (those working on bell-metal) were cursed by Lord Brahma<sup>10</sup> that they would be eternally engaged in manual labour. However, while other artisans could purify themselves, the *Chitrakaras*, the youngest of the lot, remained impure and in course of time, became the subaltern.

The *Chitrakaras* form a community tied not by any caste or religion, but by a common traditional bond. This bond exists in their profession — artistry, and their passion for painting. *Pata painting* is an inherited skill, handed down through a traditional teacher-pupil relationship. Traditionally these folk painters also fall in the category of performing artistes as they are wandering bards singing to their painted scrolls, narrating stories. But the Odishan *patas* are not scroll paintings and therefore, the *Chitrakaras* of Puri have never been wandering bards. Originally, in order to preserve the secrets of their painting process, the *Chitrakaras* were not allowed to marry outside their caste. In fact, they were forbidden to marry beyond *Atharanala*,<sup>11</sup> as they felt that the sanctity of their paintings and the identity of their craft would be vitiated through contact with people outside this boundary.

As in the case of all folk artists, the *Chitrakaras* have no formal academic training, nor do they indulge in 'fine art' or 'high art.' However, they are an exceptionally talented group of artisans. The *Chitrakara community* had been commissioned to paint the wooden images of the Jagannath Temple in Puri and to decorate the ceilings and walls of the temple, as well as the chariots for the *Rathayatra Festival*. Originally, the *Chitrakaras* were appointed by the kings of Puri to dedicate themselves to the *seva* (service) of Lord Jagannath, as the Jagannath Temple came up in the twelfth century A.D. This custom, according to the temple chronicle *Madala Panji*, was known as 'Niyoga' and was introduced by King Anangabhima Deva. The service rendered by the *Chitrakaras*, was totally voluntary. However, some have expressed the opinion that the *Chitrakaras* were paid in kind for their services. In any case, *pata paintings* were used to spread the Jagannath cult throughout Odisha in the fifteenth-sixteenth century and even thereafter. The Ganga kings of Puri popularized the Jagannath cult in the wake of the *Bhakti Movement*,<sup>12</sup> which swept the whole of Odisha at the time. Hundreds of *Chitrakaras* came to stay in Puri and offered to serve Lord Jagannath. As their numbers swelled, they could no longer be accommodated within the temple precincts. Soon they scattered themselves in the cluster of villages around Puri, namely Raghurajpur, Dandasahi and

Basudevpur, where they still reside, devoting themselves to the art work and are engaged in worship in local temples at other times.

The *Chitrakaras* of this area are divided into three main classes — *Atharaghar Chitrakaras* (*Chitrakaras* of eighteen families), *Choudaghar Chitrakaras* (*Chitrakaras* of fourteen families) and *Choyghar Chitrakaras* (*Chitrakaras* of six families). The first category is engaged in creating *Jagannath patas* while the second and third categories paint *patachitras* of *Balabhadra* and *Subhadra* respectively. Besides, it is said that in the remote past, some *Brahmins* were brought to Odisha from Kanauj and some of them took to *pata* drawing.<sup>13</sup>

At present, Raghurajpur is purely an artisans' village where the *Chitrakara community* predominates. Since Raghurajpur became a Heritage Village in 2002, the number of families in the village increased drastically. Whereas in 2002, there were 102 families in Raghurajpur, the number increased to 123 in 2005 and 128 in 2014. Primary survey in the field shows that while in 2003, 34 families practised *patachitra* painting, the number was 60 in 2014. It was gathered from interviews that while the older generation is engaged in agricultural pursuits, the present generation is taking up *pata painting* as a means of livelihood, which indicates that artistry is progressively becoming a lucrative occupation for the *Chitrakaras*. In fact, primary survey indicates that between 2005 and 2012, there was a marked increase in the number of *pata* painters, palm-leaf engravers and those engaged in other sectors of handicraft in Raghurajpur.<sup>14</sup>

### The Cult of Jagannath

Legend has it that *Lord Jagannath* was originally worshipped by a *Sabara* (tribal) named Viswabasu. The *Sabararas* brought with them the cult of totem worship which formed the concrete basis of their tree worshipping cult. They worshipped their deity in Puri on the Blue Hill, hence, Puri is referred to as *Nilachal*. Later, this tribal deity came to be identified with *Lord Jagannath*. It has been pointed out by scholars that *Lord Jagannath* has a pre-Aryan, tribal appearance. The totem-like appearance of *Sri Jagannath*, as is represented on iconographic paintings, is suggestive of this.<sup>15</sup> The icon of *Lord Jagannath* is represented as a carved and decorated wooden stump with a conspicuous absence of hands or legs. The face is symmetric with large, round eyes. The worship procedures, sacraments and rituals associated with the Lord are syncretic. However, in the course of time, the cult of *Jagannath* became Aryanised and *Lord Jagannath* came to be revered as *Purushottama* or *Vishnu*. The *Madala Panji* mentions that the temple complex has accommodated monasteries of different sects. Hence, *Lord*

*Jagannath* is a non-sectarian deity and the rituals and procedures of worship of this deity do not conform to classical Hinduism.

Some are of the opinion that originally, the inner sanctum of the Jagannath Temple was constructed with the purpose of housing only two deities — *Jagannath* and *Subhadra*. *Balabhadra* was a later addition. Therefore, at no point before the entrance to the inner sanctum can one get a full view of all the three images.

Some scholars refer to a Buddhist origin of *Lord Jagannath*. They say that the Triad represents *Dhamma*, *Chakra* and *Sangha*<sup>16</sup>. Some others have investigated into the origin of *Lord Jagannath* and have identified the Lord as a *Jain Tirthankara*.<sup>17</sup>

It is believed by some that in *Lord Jagannath* is manifested *Bhairav*, the God of Destruction. In this case, the Lord is held as the epitome of *Tantric*<sup>18</sup> worship. The symmetry in iconography, the use of *mandala*<sup>19</sup> and geometric patterns in its rites support the idea of *tantric* connection. *Lord Jagannath* is regarded as the consort of *Goddess Vimala*<sup>20</sup> by *Shaivite* and *Shakta* sects and the priests of the Jagannath Temple are *Shaktas* by faith. In this case, *Subhadra* is worshipped as *Goddess Durga* and *Balabhadra* as an incarnation of *Seshanaga*.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, most people believe that *Jagannath* represents *Lord Vishnu* and the 10 incarnations of *Vishnu* are derived from Him. Likewise, they are of the opinion that *Nilachal* encapsulates all the holy places — Dwarka, Mathura, Vrindavan, Kasi, Gokul. Puri is regarded as one of the four *dhams*.<sup>22</sup> The Puri district is shaped like a conch shell and it is said that this is the conch shell held by *Lord Vishnu*. Because of the sanctity of the place, Puri came to be known as *Sankhakeshtra Puri dham*. Jayadeva, an ardent devotee of *Sri Krishna*, claims that *Lord Jagannath* appears in all the incarnations on earth. Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*, in which he addresses the Lord as 'Jagadish,' is adored and read in every village of Odisha. Various fables related to Jayadeva and *Sri Jagannath* as well as the *Dasavatara* poems of the poet are recited in the temple of *Lord Jagannath* in Puri.

### The Stages of Pata Painting: Themes, Techniques and their Relation with the Jagannath Cult

The creation of the *pata* paintings is a disciplined art form. The *Chitrakaras* maintain a rigidity in their use of colours, restricting them to a single tone. The traditional artist uses five main colours in creating his pictures. These five colours are drawn from natural resources — primarily vegetative matter and natural stones and are associated with the divine colours of *Sri Jagannath*, *Balabhadra*, *Subhadra*, *Sinhasana* (the throne) and the *Nila*

*Chakra* (the Blue Wheel) by the folk painters and saints of Odisha. These are called *pancha tatwa* — a name for the five ingredients. According to the colour conventions used by the *Chitrakaras*, white is used for *Balarama* and *Narasimha*<sup>23</sup> incarnations, *Shiva* and *Varuna*,<sup>24</sup> yellow for *Matsya*,<sup>25</sup> *Kurma*,<sup>26</sup> *Parashuram*<sup>27</sup> and Buddha incarnations, besides *Radha*, *Sita*, *Laxman*, *Brahma*, maids and other female characters. *Narayana* and *Yama* are coloured in black, blue is used for *Vamana*<sup>28</sup> and *Kalki*<sup>29</sup> incarnations and for painting *Lord Krishna*. *Agni*,<sup>30</sup> *Mangala*<sup>31</sup> and the face of *Hanuman* are painted in red. Other colours, such as green and grey, are used for depicting *Varaha*<sup>32</sup> and *Rama* incarnations, demons and snakes. The white, red and black colours represent the '*sattvika*' (pure), '*rajasika*' (royal) and '*tamasika*' (dark) aspects of the gods. The characters have their own colours according to the '*rasa*' or mood portrayed by them. For example, '*hasya*' or laughter is depicted in white and '*Raudra*' or furious in red, '*Adabhuta*' or strange in yellow and so on. *Sri Jagannath* has been described as *Jyoti Rupi*<sup>33</sup> for the divine light which *yogis*<sup>34</sup> could perceive in the Lord. It is said that the *pancha tatwa* or five colours are but the different manifestations of the *jyoti* and lastly merge into the Divine — a philosophy that has been envisaged by the folk artists of Odisha in their colour schemes.

The paints for creating the *patachitras* are fully prepared from indigenous materials. In bringing about the indigenous paints, the gum of *kaitha* tree is used as a base for making different pigments, on which diverse raw materials are applied to create diverse colours. In the book, '*Manashollash*,<sup>35</sup> it has been said that in the past, the *Chitrakaras* used to obtain the pure white colour by burning conch shells. Today, powdered conch shells are used to obtain white, while black is derived from lamp-soot or charcoal. In the *Puranas*, three distinct sources of red colour are mentioned — *hingula*, *alaktaka* and *gairika*. The *Chitrakaras* obtain red ochre from *hingula* by powdering the stone with the paste stone. The *harital* stone is ground with water for yellow. The *hingula* and *harital* thus prepared are formed into tablets and dried.

The green colour is obtained by boiling the juice of the green leaves, which is mixed proportionately with the gum of the *kaitha* or *bilwa* fruit. Sometimes, special types of green stones are used to make green. Blue is obtained from indigo or the *rajabarta* stone.

The canvas for *pata painting* is also prepared by the *chitrakara* himself and illustrates the sanctity of the activity. Tamarind seeds are soaked in water for three days and then heated in an earthen pot. The paste so extracted is given a sacred name — '*niryas kalpa*.' This tamarind paste is used to adhere two or more pieces of cloth together, which becomes a canvas. This is coated with powdered

soft clay stone. It is again mixed with tamarind paste and brushed on the canvas with a handmade brush. Finally the canvas, called the '*pata-astra*' or '*pati*,' is polished with a rough stone and then with a smooth stone, sea-shell or a piece of wood so that the surface becomes leathery and ready to paint upon.

The painters mix the colours in wooden bowls of dried coconut shell. The root of the *keya* plant is used for making the common, coarse brush. On requirement of finer brushes, mouse-hair is attached to wooden handles.

Life in Puri revolves around the temple of *Lord Jagannath*. The *Chitrakar*s of Puri and Raghurajpur had long been associated with painting the Trinity for the *Nava Kalevara* and other ceremonies associated with the temple of *Jagannath*. *Nava Kalevara* means 'Making of the New Body.' The ceremony is held every 12 years, when the Triad is repainted. Just as the soul casts away the old body and enters a new one, so also the dresses and ornaments of the deities are removed and the deities are adorned in their new dresses to be painted fresh, which signifies *Nava Kalevara*. For the *Nava Kalevara* ceremony, the *Chitrakar*s prepare the wooden image of the Lord secretly in a secluded room. After the completion of the work, the *Chitrakar*s tie up the wooden image with ropes and thereafter, they cover the ropes with a holy cloth, which they name *Sri Kapada*. This cloth is affixed to the ropes by a paste called *Khadilagi*,<sup>36</sup> which they themselves prepare. The *Chitrakar*s treat the *Daru* (wood) as bone, the *Aswalagi* (paste) as flesh and the *Sri Kapada* (cloth) as skin. After colouring the idol, the *Atman* or *Brahma* (soul) is inserted into it in a secret worship ceremony. For all these reasons, the image of *Lord Jagannath* is given the name 'Daru-Brahma'.

According to Eschmann, the *Nava Kalevara* ceremony is a tribal custom analogous to the practices prevalent among primitive tribes such as Saoras<sup>37</sup> and Khonds.<sup>38</sup>

Also the Trinity is newly painted for the *rath yatra* (chariot festival) every year, before which the three chariots of *Lord Jagannath*, *Balabhadra* and *Subhadra* are decorated by the *Chitrakar*s. Floral designs, swans and different figures are used to decorate the wheels. Again, painting the idols is frequently necessitated as the colours are washed off by the water used during the daily worship. Besides, the deities are repainted on several auspicious days of the lunar cycle such as *trayadosi*<sup>39</sup> and *chaturdosi*.<sup>40</sup>

An important ceremony associated with the temple of *Lord Jagannath* is *Snanotsava* or the Bathing Ceremony. Every year, on the full-moon day of *Jaishtha* (May-June), also called the *Devasnana Purnima*, the deities are placed on a platform and holy water is poured on them, after which they are said to become sick for a fortnight and are

confined inside the *Anasara Ghar* or secluded chamber. In reality, the colours are washed away during the holy bath and the deities are repainted during this short interval between the *Devasnana Purnima* and the *rath yatra*. During the transition period between these two festivals, when the deity is kept in the secluded chamber, the Trinity is represented in three different *patachitras* and worshipped secretly, with offerings of fruits and coconuts, by a successor of Viswabasu Sabara, the tribal chief who first worshipped *Lord Jagannath*. This *patachitra*, prepared by the *chitrakar*s, is called the *Anasara Pati*. It is quite different in appearance from the classical images of the deities. In this painting, the deities are represented with full hands and legs in *padmasan mudra*.<sup>41</sup> The totem-like appearance is completely done away with. *Lord Jagannath* is represented as *Narayana*, with four hands holding the *sankha* (conch), *chakra* (wheel), *gada* (club) and *padma* (lotus). *Balabhadra* is depicted as *Sesha Deva Ananta*<sup>42</sup> and holds *sankha*, *gada*, *hala* (plough) and *mushala* (club or pestle). Likewise, *Subhadra* is represented as *Bhubaneswari*, holding *sarpa* (snake) and *ankush* (goad) in her two hands, the other two hands depict *abhaya* and *varada mudra*. Sometimes, instead of *sarpa* and *ankush*, *Bhubaneswari* holds two lotuses. At the entrance of the temple, near the *Singhadwar*, *Patitapaban* is also represented in a *patachitra*. This is called *Dadhivamana Pati*.

Preparation of the *Anasara Pati* starts on the auspicious day of *Akshaya Tritiya*. On this day, the *Chitrakara* receives a piece of cloth, meant to be the canvas, from the temple administration, on which he works for several days. In order to preserve its sanctity, women are not allowed to touch the painting. When the *Chitrakara* completes the work, the family priest comes to his house and performs a *puja*. On the next day, a priest from the *Jagannath Temple* arrives with a garland, accompanied by men carrying a *ghanta*, (gong) a *chalti* (ritual umbrella) and a *kahali* (pipe). Another *puja* is performed. Then, in a ceremonial procession, the *Anasara Pati* is carried to the *Jagannath Temple* by the *Chitrakara*.

The concept of the *Anasara Pati* started during the reign of King Anangabhima Deva, who ruled Odisha from 1190 A.D. to 1198 A.D. The pictures of the Divine Triad are known as the *Srikshetra Pati* or *Sri Jagannath Pati*. The source of origin of *pata painting* in Odisha is the presentation of the Trinity in three painted *patas* by the folk artists of the temple. All these evidences point to the fact that the relationship of the *Chitrakar*s with *Lord Jagannath* and His cult is more than structural and is associated with ritualistic performances.

The same ingredients that are used to paint the Trinity, are used by the *Chitrakar*s in creating their *patachitras*. Also there is a strong resemblance between the techniques

employed in painting the Trinity and the techniques of *pata painting*. This makes it obvious that the tradition of *patachitra painting* in Raghurajpur originated from the concept of painting the Trinity and is hence, strongly related to the *Jagannath cult*.

The *Chitrakar*s also base the themes of their *patachitras* on religious connotations. The traditional *patua* still clings to the themes based on *Vaishnavism*. Each of these themes has deep-rooted mythological stories that abound in the social and religious life of the inhabitants of Puri and Raghurajpur. The most popular one is the *Sri Jagannath Pati*, centred around the Trinity. These represent the holy Triad in the temple, the Triad on the Chariot during *rath yatra* and the Triad in the *Anasara Ghar*. In these paintings, Lord Jagannath is represented in a variety of dresses called *Vesas*. These *Vesas* include *Gajanan Vesa* (elephant-faced Jagannath), *Raj Vesa* (the dress of a king), *Suna Vesa* (Golden form), *Bonobhaji Vesa* (picnic attire), *Rajrajeswara Vesa* (dressed as the Supreme King), *Thiakiya Vesa* (adorned in *keya* flower), *Krishna Balarama Vesa* (in the attire of *Sri Krishna* and *Balarama*), *Radha Damodar Vesa* (dressed as *Radha* and *Damodar*), *Gaja Uddharan Vesa* (as rescuer of an elephant), *Banka Chuda Vesa* (decoration with a twisted hair-do), *Padma Vesa* (lotus dress), *Kaliya Dalan Vesa* (standing on the hood of a serpent), *Harihara Vesa* (dressed as *Vishnu* and *Shiva*), *Sadha Vesa* (ordinary dress), *Chandan Vesa* (dressed in sandal oil and flowers), *Lakshmi Narayan Vesa* (dressed as Goddess *Lakshmi* and *Vishnu*), *Raghunath Vesa* (dress of Purushottam Ramchandra), etc.

The second category includes *patachitras* on *Raslila*<sup>43</sup>, *Vastraharana*,<sup>44</sup> *Rama-Ravana Yuddha*,<sup>45</sup> *Krishna* playing on the flute, *Aghasura*<sup>46</sup> and the like – some of which are of life-size.

The third category includes *Tapoi*<sup>47</sup> and *Goddess Mangala*, *Nava Gunjara Vesa* of *Krishna*, *Malu-Vaidya*,<sup>48</sup> etc. The concept of *Nava Gunjara* is mythical. The story goes thus - *Krishna* appears before Arjuna in a strange form to break his penance. In this form, the body of *Krishna* consists of several parts of human beings and animals. The head is that of a cock, the neck is of a peacock, the hump of a bull, the tail is that of a snake and the waist of a lion. Three of the legs are those of a tiger, horse and elephant and the fourth is a human hand holding a lotus. Sometimes, instead of lotus, a mirror or *chakra* (wheel) is seen.

The fourth category encompasses all Hindu gods and goddesses such as *Saraswati*, *Lakshmi*, *Durga*, *Dasha Mahavidya*,<sup>49</sup> *Kali*, *Bankeswari*,<sup>50</sup> *Tara*,<sup>51</sup> *Bhairavi*,<sup>52</sup> *Chandi*,<sup>53</sup> *Chamundi*,<sup>54</sup> *Chhinnamasta*,<sup>55</sup> *Vishnu*, *Bhairav*, *Parvati*, *Ganesh*, *Parashuram* and so on.

There is yet a fifth category which displays *Kandarpa Ratha* (Number of damsels arranged in the form of Cupid's chariot), *Kama Kunjara* (Nine damsels arranged

in the form of an elephant) and sixty-four amorous postures.

The other most popular forms are the *patas* based on different episodes of the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas* and the *Kavyas*. Others are *patachitras* on the *vratas*<sup>56</sup> and different modes of worship. Some *patas* revolve around the Gajapati Kings of Puri. Another popular subject is the conquest of the kingdom of Kanchi by Purushottamdeva, the ancient king of Puri.

The theme of *Kanchi-Kaveri* is a favourite subject of the *Chitrakar*s. It shows *Jagannath* and *Balabhadra* mounted on horseback, with *Manika* (the milkmaid) standing before them. Apart from painting *Kanchi-Kaveri patas*, the *Chitrakar*s paint this scene on the top left-hand corner of *thiā-bandhiā pata*.<sup>57</sup>

In *pata paintings*, the borders are highly decorated with winding creepers and floral motifs. Procession of animals such as geese, deer, elephants, swans are also found on the borders. This kind of ornamentation in *pata paintings* owes its origin to the temple sculpture of Odisha in the medieval period.

In the early days, the *Chitrakara community* was highly austere and observed strict rituals during painting. During the course of the assignment, the *chitrakara* had to be fully vegetarian and had to sleep on the bare ground. He also had to put on a new *dhoti* during that time every day. After the painting was over, a *Mahasnana* (Grand Bath) had to be taken by the *Chitrakara* with the chanting of *mantras* (holy chants). After that, the paintings were placed in front of the deity along with other offerings. Subsequently, these paintings were preserved at the temple store. These rituals are no more observed now, but the sanctity of *pata painting* still remains in Raghurajpur village.

However, the caste system in Raghurajpur is not at all rigid and irrespective of caste, all are engaged in painting. Almost all the inhabitants belong to the *Jagannath cult*. Perfect communal harmony prevails in the village.

The *Chitrakar*s of the Puri district were highly patronized by the Ganga kings, the rulers of the Bhoi dynasty and the Suryavansi Gajapatis. During the reign of Narasimha Deva, they were appointed to paint the ceilings and walls of the *Jagannath Temple*. During the reign of Mahaliya Mukunda Deva, *pata-art* found expression on the walls of *Jagmohan*<sup>58</sup> of the *Lakshmi Temple*, the *Gundicha Temple*<sup>59</sup> and the *Jhulan Mandap*.<sup>60</sup> The *patas* depicting the Kanchi expedition of Purushottama Deva are found on the walls of *Sri Jagannath Temple* and this is considered as one of the oldest of the *patachitras*.

More importantly, the socio-economic conditions of the *Chitrakar*s of Raghurajpur have been strongly tied up with the *Jagannath Temple* of Puri since the temple came up in the twelfth century A.D. The *Chitrakar*s have never

deviated from their passionate attitude towards *patachitra painting* and their attachment to the *Jagannath cult*. Each *Chitrakara* clan in Raghurajpur owns a family sketchbook which is handed down from generation to generation and is worshipped along with the family gods.

## Conclusion

The *Chitrakaras* and their art works not only owe their origin, but also their sustenance to the Jagannath Temple of Puri. In the initial stage of the construction of the temple, the *Chitrakaras* settled around the temple, which is, till today, visited by pilgrims from all over the world. Puri is regarded as *Srikshetra* by all Hindus. The *Chitrakaras* came to be recognized with the service of *Lord Jagannath*, the theme of their paintings revolved around the *Jagannath cult* and the pilgrims formed their main clientele. These pilgrims were eager to take back to their native land some kind of a souvenir from their place of visit. Often, they would purchase the *patas* which were sold around the temple premises. As the *patas* were sold to the pilgrims who sojourned in Puri to offer worship to the 'Lord of the Universe,' these *patachitras* came to be known as '*Yatri Patis*' or pilgrim paintings. The business associated with the *Yatri Patis* was the first step towards the popularization of the *patachitra* and the establishment of the *Chitrakara community* of Puri, Raghurajpur and Dandasahi.

## Notes

1. Folk paintings on cloth
2. Painters
3. Hermitage
4. The Blue Wheel is the most auspicious symbol in the cult of Jagannath.
5. The word, '*sahi*' means 'alley'. In Puri district, there are a number of localities called *sahis*, inhabited by communities practicing different professions such as fishing, painting, etc. *Chitrakara Sahi* is one such locality belonging to the *pata painters*.
6. Mural painting is a traditional art of Raghurajpur. This art was especially promoted by INTACH in the late 1990s to give the village a heritage look. INTACH was assisted with funds from NORAD in this matter.
7. *Ganjappa* is the local term for *ganjifa* — a game of cards.
9. Choudhury, Dulal (ed.) "*Banglar Loksamaskriir Biswakosh*" (in Bengali). Kolkata. Academy of Folklore Press. 2004, pp. 384-386.
10. The group of nine children to which *Viswakarma* and *Ghrītachi* gave birth. These children are engaged as manual labourers. They belong to the artisan community.
11. The Hindu God of Creation.
12. The religious boundary of the Jagannath Temple.

12. The *Bhakti Movement* was a movement propagating love and respect for *Lord Krishna*. It was propagated by the *Vaishnavas*. This movement spread all over India in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and had a long lasting effect. It was punctuated by songs and poems written in praise of *Lord Krishna*.
13. Basu, Anita, "*Odishar Patachitre Jagannath Sanskriti*." (in Bengali). Kolkata, Gangchil, 2018.
14. Chandra, Sharmila, "*The Patuas of West Bengal and Odisha: An Evaluative Analysis*." Himalaya Publishing House, Mumbai-400004, 2017, p. 82.
15. Mohanty, B. (1984). "*Pata Paintings of Orissa*." New Delhi, Publications Division.
16. The three jewels of Buddhism.
17. *Tirthankaras* were regarded as preachers of Jainism. There were 24 in all *Tirthankaras*. Mahavira was the 24th and the last *Tirthankara*.
18. The word '*tantric*' is derived from '*tantra*'. *Tantra* is a particular practice prevalent in both Hinduism and Buddhism. *Tantrism* follows principles of non-Vedic worship and centered mostly on the *Shakti cult* and to some extent on *Vaishnavism* and *Shaivism*. The modes of worship associated with the *tantras* are very rigorous.
19. Spiritual and ritual symbols. These symbols are used for meditation in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. They represent the cosmos.
20. A form of *Goddess Durga*.
21. A form of *Lord Shiva*.
22. Sacred places intensified with holiness.
23. The fourth incarnation of *Vishnu*.
24. The God of Water.
25. The first incarnation of *Vishnu*.
26. The second incarnation of *Vishnu*.
27. The incarnation of *Vishnu* with the axe in hand. It is said that *Parashuram* slayed his own mother with the axe.
28. The dwarf incarnation of *Vishnu*.
29. The tenth incarnation of *Vishnu*.
30. The God of Fire.
31. A form of *Goddess Durga*.
32. The third incarnation of *Vishnu*.
33. Embodiment of Light.
34. People who maintain contact with God through meditation.
35. A text written by the Chalukya king Someshwara II.
36. Gum made out of soft clay stone.
37. A tribe which inhabits the Koraput and Malkangiri districts of Odisha. This tribe is remarkably adept at painting folk motifs.
38. A virgin tribe dwelling in the forests of Chhattisgarh, MP, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal.
39. The thirteenth day of the lunar cycle.
40. The fourteenth day of the lunar cycle.
41. Sitting position on a lotus.
42. A hooded serpent. This serpent is said to hold the Universe.
43. Love episodes of *Radha* and *Krishna*.
44. An episode in which *Krishna* stole away the clothes of the maidens when they went to bathe in the Yamuna river.
45. Battle between *Rama* and *Ravana*.

46. A demon slain by *Lord Krishna*.
47. The only sister of the *Sadhavas* – the seven brothers belonging to the merchant class of Odisha.
48. The patient and the doctor.
49. Ten forms of the *Goddess*
50. A form of *Goddess Kali*.
51. A form of *Goddess Kali*.
52. A *Mahavidya* Goddess.
53. A form of *Shakti*.
54. A form of *Goddess Kali*.
55. One of the *Dasamahavidyas*, a form in which the Goddess severs Her head and drinks Her own blood.
56. Religious vows for the fulfillment of one's desires, usually taken by women.
57. A very significant *patachitra* of ancient times. This *patachitra* shows all the important features of the Jagannath Temple. It is almost extinct now.
58. The second chamber of the temple.
59. The temple to which the chariots travel with the deities on the day of *rath yatra*.
60. The structure constructed for the swinging of *Radha* and *Krishna* on the occasion of *Jhulan Purnima*.