



The appearance of Jagannatha

Guru Ratikant Mohapatra

Dean & Professor

Faculty of Arts, Communication & Indic Studies

Sri Sri University

Cuttack

Abstract:

One popular myth about the origin of Lord Jagannath is associated with the legend of King Indradyumna and the divine appearance of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra. Here's a summarized version of the myth:

King Indradyumna was a devout ruler who desired to build a grand temple for Lord Vishnu. He heard about the deity Nila Madhava, a form of Vishnu, and embarked on a quest to find and worship Him. The sage Vidyapati guided the king in his search and revealed that Nila Madhava resided in a secluded forest.

Unable to find Nila Madhava, the king performed severe penance. During his meditation, the deity appeared in his dream and instructed him to build a temple at a specific location on the Nilachala Hill in Puri, Odisha.

Following the divine guidance, King Indradyumna built the Jagannath Temple at Puri. However, he faced challenges in finding an appropriate image of Lord Vishnu to install in the temple. In another version, the god Brahma, pleased with the king's devotion, instructed him to carve the deities from a divine log that washed ashore.

The king commissioned skilled artisans to carve the deities but set a condition that the artisans should work without interruption until the task was complete. One night, when the artisans' wife came to visit them, she found the incomplete idols. This interruption, according to legend, led to the deities having large, uncarved eyes.

These unfinished but consecrated idols became Lord Jagannath, along with his siblings Balabhadra and Subhadra. The Jagannath Temple in Puri became one of the holiest pilgrimage sites in Hinduism, attracting millions of devotees annually.

This myth emphasizes devotion, divine intervention, and the concept of divine grace in the creation of Lord Jagannath's iconic forms.

The purpose of this article is to dispel the myth surrounding the origin of Lord Jagannath and cite authentic sources.

The scriptural record of origin of Lord Jagannath

The most popular version of Jagannatha's appearance is a summary of the accounts found in Utkala Khanda of Kapila samhita and Madala Panji, as well as compiled by Shishu Krishna Das in the 18th century in Oriya language under the title Deula tola ("The building of the temple"). 89 A slightly different account is found in Narada Purana (Utkala Khanda), where Indradyumna comes to Sri Kshetra to worship Vishnu and is instructed in a dream to search for a particular tree; the King finds it on the beach, guarded by Vishnu Himself in the form of a brahmana boy and by Visvakarma, the craftsman of the heavenly planets, who agrees to carve the Deities. There are also other famous versions, such as the one told by Sarala Das in the 15th century Oriya version of Mahabharata, more or less confirmed in the 16th century by Jagannatha Das. This particular version claims that the remains of Krishna floated from Dvaraka to Puri, where they were collected by a Sabara (called Jara or Vasu) who worshiped them as Nila Madhava. In Utkala Khanda of Skanda Purana we find that before the times of Indradyumna several great personalities had visited Purushottama kshetra. There Brahma saw a crow fall in Rohini Kunda and immediately attain the sarupya mukti. In the same text, it is said that Yama obtained the darshana of Lakshmi who told him that She resides there with Nila Madhava. In the Niladri Mahodaya the original Deities are listed as seven: Janardana (Jagannatha), Baladeva, Subhadra, Sudarshana, Visvadhatri (Bhudevi), Lakshmi (Nila or Sridevi) and Nila Madhava (said to have been originally installed by Gala Madhava). These are the Deities still sitting on the Ratna simhasana. Jagannatha is seated on a lotus. Balarama, also seated on a lotus, has a seven-headed serpent over His head. Gaja Lakshmi has four arms (two with lotus flowers, two with abhaya and varada mudras); She is seated on a lotus and is attended by elephants bathing Her from jugs held in their trunks. Visvadhatri is white, with two arms (the right hand in jnana mudra, the left holds a lotus). Several chapters of the Skanda Purana are dedicated to describing the story of Indradyumna and the appearance of Jagannatha, also stating that during the entire first half of Brahma's life, Lakshmi resides with Jagannatha in the form of Ekanamsa, whose Deity is made of black stone. The Utkala Khanda of the Skanda Purana asks: kasmin yuge sat u nripa indradyumno bhavan mune? "In which yuga did Indradyumna establish his kingdom at Purushottama kshetra?" The answer for this question is also mentioned in the Utkala Khanda: asit krutayuge vipra indradyumno mahanrupaha surya vamse sa dharmatma stasthu panchamapurusha. "During Satya yuga, there was a great king, Indradyumna, who possessed all the qualities of a brahmana. He was born in Surya vamsa in the fifth generation from Brahma and was a very religious man." It is said that in the first half of Brahma's life (parardha), the Lord took the form of Nila Madhava and appeared in Sankha Kshetra in order to give His blessings to the sinners of this world. In the second parardha, in the first Satya Yuga of the first Manvantara, a King named Indradyumna or Indrasavarni took birth in the Solar dynasty as the 5th descendent of Brahma and ruled over the land of Malava, making his capital in Avanti (now Ujjain). Therefore he is also known as Avanti Naresh. Being a great devotee of Vishnu, Indradyumna became very eager to have a direct vision of the Lord. One day Lord Vishnu Himself, in the form of a Rishi named Jatila, visited the court of king Indradyumna to tell him about the glories of Nila Madhava. Excited, the King sent the younger brother of his Raj Guru, Vidyapati, and many brahmana messengers accompanying him, who traveled all over the country to search for that Deity and bring Him to the palace to be installed there. Finally, Vidyapati reached a remote tribal Sabara village and was invited by the head of the tribe, Visvavasva, to spend the night in his house. This particular meeting is an important incident in the temple history where two complete separate and vibrant cultures i.e. the brahminical Aryan tradition and the tribal Sabara cultures joined to form the very unique tradition of the Vratyas. Still today,

the most intimate servants of the Deities of Jagannatha, who are exclusively in charge of Their personal service especially during the period of Anavasara and during the Ratha yatra, are the Daitas and the Patis. The Daitas are considered the Sabara descendents of Visvvasu; they are not considered brahmanas and they do not follow the specific ritualistic regulations characteristic of the brahmanas. The Pati Mahapatras are the brahmana descendents of Vidyapati belonging to the Kaundinya gotra, who move the brahma from the old Deities to the new ones during the Nava kalevara. According to the Niladri Mahodaya Visvvasu was already aware of the arrival of Vidyapati and invited him to have the Darshana of Nila Madhava. 90 After having Darshana of the divine form of Nila Madhava, Vidyapati vowed never to return to Avanti. It was Visvvasu who reminded Vidyapati of the original purpose and also informed him that Nila Madhava would reappear in another form. It has been mentioned that as soon as Vidyapati set forth from Purushottama kshetra, Indranilamani Madhava and Rohini kunda vanished from their original places. The Devas started lamenting and said, “O Lord! Where did You vanish? What shall we do now? Should we roam around in the aranyas growing matted locks of hair and wearing tree bark?” Then they were instructed to visualize the form of the Deity in this Kshetra and in return they would get the benefit of attaining Vaikuntha. The Indranilamani Purana (a secret text used in the temple also known as Sthala Purana) mentions that Vidyapati arrived in Avanti on the morning of Asadha Purnima day, that is celebrated as Guru Purnima, and he handed over the flower garland he had brought with him for Indradyumna. Vidyapati narrated to Indradyumna his arrival in Purushottama kshetra, saying that as soon as he arrived there in the evening he could smell a divine fragrance in that area. A gentle breeze was blowing, and he heard voices shouting, “yahi, yahi” (“go away”). He realized that those were the devas who instructed him to go away as they were performing secret rituals for Nilamadhava. So guided by Visvvasu, he went to the Rohini kunda, where he took bath and sat under the Kalpa Bata in meditation for some time. After the Seva was completed, the Devas returned to Svargaloka and Visvvasu handed over the offered arland and mahaprasada to Vidyapati. In this chapter Vidyapati describes the Deity of Nilamadhava, which he says was 81 angulas (fingers) tall and standing on a golden lotus flower. Nilamadhava is a Deity of Vishnu, but in one hand instead of the lotus flower He carries Subhadra Lakshmi Devi (who is also called Kamala). Amazed, Indradyumna vowed to move his capital to Purushottama kshetra and remain there for the rest of his life to start a royal standard of daily worship rituals for Lord Jagannatha:

*tatrasavam karisyami purvadurgani chaivahi
satopacharahe srinatham pujayishye dine dine*

“There I will make my residence as I had already decided, and there I am going to perform perfect ritual worship to the Lord every day.” While Vidyapati was narrating, Narada Muni arrived at the court of Indradyumna, saying he was just coming from Badrinarayana. Narada told Indradyumna, “O King, you must go to Purushottama kshetra, where the Lord will manifest Himself in four forms.” Immediately the King arranged to go to Purushottama kshetra with all the residents of Avanti, and the departure day was fixed on sukla paksha sasthi in the month of jyestha, on a Wednesday. This day is still celebrated as Sitala Sasthi in the Jagannatha temple and the anniversary day of Shiva’s marriage; on this day Madana mohana and Shiva (in the form of Pancha Pandavas: Lokanatha, Yamesvara, Nilakantha, Kapalamochana and Markandesvara) feast together. According to the Vana Parva of Mahabharata, the Pandavas reached Puri on this day for the first time in the company of Krishna to get the Darshana of Purushottama, and they remained for three days. After the disappearance of Krishna the Pandavas again visited Puri on this day under the guidance of Shiva and Parvati. Indradyumna’s journey was prepared according to the ancient rituals mentioned in the scriptures. First the Purohita performed the Abhisheka to king Indradyumna with Sri sukta, Vahni sukta and Daivata sukta, then performed the Nandi sraddha, homa, navagraha puja, vardhani puja, graha kumbha

snana, and the worship of the raksha kavacha known as Sanju, wrapped in a thin cloth. The King wore all pure white clothes and was adorned with turban and crown, the urdhva pundra (Vaishnava) tilaka made with chandana, and some durbha grass tucked behind his ear. First Indradyumna went to get blessings from his ista deva, Nrisimha and Durga. Finally holding Narada Muni's hand he ascended his chariot, drawn by ten horses, by stepping with his right foot first. According to Indranilamani Purana, the King was accompanied by Narada Muni, four brahmanas each expert in one of the Vedas, two body guards, one minister, the Queen, and four trusted friends. These fourteen people formed the closest group of the royal retinue. Starting from Avanti (the modern Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh), they first arrived on the northern bank of Mahanadi, where they rested for the night. In the morning, Indradyumna asked Narada Muni to tell him something about the place where they had rested, and Narada explained that the source of the Mahanadi river was in the far east, on a mountain where Brahma had installed the footprints of Sri Vishnu and worshiped them. This river offers the same spiritual benefits as Ganga and on her banks there are two very important pilgrimage places: one is Suvarnesvara Madhava and the other is the abode of Madhava (Kantilo Madhava). 91 The King took bath in the tract of the river known as Chitrotpala, then he had the Darshan of Charchika, Vishnu's Yogamaya. According to the Tantric tradition, Charchika is a very important Deity of the Odiyana or Udrakhya tantra pitha. Still today, at the time of Navakalevara, when the Sabara sevakas or Daitapatis start their vanayajna yatra for daru sandhana, on sukla paksha dasami in the month of Chaitra (celebrated as Vasanti Dasahara), they seek permission from the King in front of the Deity of Charchika. Also, when the Daru is carried to Puri, it is taken first to the Charchika temple in Banki (near Khurda). According to the 34th chapter of Kalika Purana: udrakhyam pratama pitham dvitiyam jalasailakam tritiyam purna pithantu kamarupa caturthakam udra pitha pascime tu tathaibodresvarim sivam katyayanim jagannatham utresam ca prapujayet "The first pitha is Udra or Odiyana, the second is Jalasaila or Jalandhara. The third is Purna pitha or Purna giri, and the fourth is Kamarupa. On the western side of Udra pitha, Udresvari resides, and on the northern side Katyayani is worshiped along with Jagannatha." After visiting the temple of Charchika, Indradyumna followed the Chitrotpala entering the forest named Dhatukandara by crossing the Vaitarani river (the abode of Goddess Viraja) towards Ratnagiri, famous for the cave known as Brahma gumpha. After crossing the Vaitarani, Indradyumna reached the middle course of the Mahanadi at Kantilo, where he worshiped Nilamadhava and then set up his camp for the night. While Indradyumna was in his tent, the guards informed him that the King of Utkala was waiting to have his Darshan at the Devas' gate. During this meeting Indradyumna asked the King of Utkala about Purushottama kshetra and he was very disappointed to hear that in that region there was no human settlement yet. Narada Muni comforted him saying, vaishnavanam na vancha hi viphalajayet kvacit: "A true Vaishnava's wishes never go unfulfilled". The King of Utkala showed Indradyumna the way to Ekamra Kanana, and Indradyumna resumed his journey. After crossing the river Gandhabaha he heard divine sounds of mantras being chanted, and he thought he had reached Purushottama kshetra. However, Narada Muni explained to the King that he had arrived at Ekamra kshetra (today's Bhubaneswar), a place that had been created by Sri Vishnu with His Sudarshana chakra when He rested here as Ananta Vasudeva after killing the demons. Later, Lord Shiva left Kashi (Varanasi or Benares) to come and live here on the bank of Bindu Sarovara along with Goddess Parvati. This place was called Ekamra kanana after the name of Goddess Eka, a form of Goddess Parvati. Narada Muni instructed the King to take bath in the Bindu Sarovara and take Darshana of Ananta Vasudeva and Lingaraja. Lord Shiva blessed Indradyumna and spoke to him about the glories of Purushottama kshetra, telling him also that He resides there as the Astha Sambhu (Shiva in eight forms). After visiting Ekamra, Indradyumna resumed his journey and arrived on the bank of the Bhargavi river, where he had the Darshana of Kapotesvara Shiva. This name is derived from the fact that during His meditation on Lord Jagannatha, Lord Shiva was immersed in such a spiritual ecstasy that His body shrunk to the size of a pigeon. From there Indradyumna saw the fumes of the sacrificial fires rising from the forest and he set out to find the place where the

fires were burning. He discovered that it was the ashrama of Bhrigu, and the sons of Bhrigu were performing the yajna. The King asked them the way to Purushottama kshetra, to which the muni kumaras (the young Munis) replied, “Purushottama kshetra is an extremely secret place, and we cannot give you its exact location.” Then Narada Muni heard the sound “Narayana Param Brahman” emanating from a tree. They searched the tree and found out that the mantra was chanted by two doves. With great happiness, Narada Muni told the King that Shiva and Parvati themselves were personally giving him indications to continue the journey. From there, Indradyumna arrived at Bilvesvara (Belesvara). When Krishna visited Purushottama kshetra with the Pandavas, He also came to this place and worshiped Shiva with a Bilva (Bel) fruit, asking for the power to defeat the Daityas (Sabaras) who lived in this area. From Bilvesvara, the King and his party arrived at Nilakanthesvara under the guidance of Margadevi (Batamangala). At that time, Indradyumna observed some ill omens: his left eye started twitching and his left arm was quivering. He asked Narada Muni why this was happening, and Narada answered that although the King was on a spiritual mission for the benefit of all, still he was trying to get the Darshana of Nilamadhava, and Nilamadhava had disappeared after been seen by Vidyapati. Indradyumna was struck dumb with this revelation. Again Narada comforted the King, saying that it was eventually his destiny to install that Deity, but in order to be able to see Indranilamani Madhava, the King should first perform one thousand asvamedha yajnas. When the Asvamedha yajnas were completed, Nila Madhava appeared in a dream to king Indradyumna, revealing that he would eventually be able to achieve success, but in a different way. Instead of finding the original Deity of Nila Madhava, he would have to retrieve the sacred Daru from the ocean and prepare new Deities to be installed in a grand temple. It is mentioned that Vidyapati had the Darshana of the Indranilamani Madhava Deity on the Amavasya of the Purushottama masa during Asadha, after which the Deity had disappeared into Patalaloka. On this particular day during the Navakalevara ritual the descendents of Vidyapati belonging to the Kaundinya gotra move the nabhi brahma (considered as the Indranilamani) from the old Deities to the new ones. Then the old Deities are given samadhi at Koili Vaikuntha. Encouraged by the dream, the King and his party started climbing the Nilachala hill, arrived at Kalpa Bata and had the Darshana of Adi Nrisimha. Here Indradyumna was instructed to worship Adi Nrisimha. He heard an incorporeal voice said he should organize the asvamedha yajna under the guidance of Narada, who had been sent by Brahma. Narada asked Indradyumna to return to the place where they had the darshana of Nilakantha. There Brahma had installed a Nrisimha Deity (Yajna Nrisimha): that was the most suitable place for the yajna to be performed, and as Narada Muni was going to stay with the King for a short time only, the yajna had to start immediately. According to the instructions received, Indradyumna immediately built a palace facing west, where Narada himself installed the Deity of Nrisimha as the ista deva of the yajna. Ardhasini or Mausima was installed as the yajna shakti. After all the arrangements were made for the yajna, Indradyumna invoked the blessings of Indra and invited the other Devas to come and remain with him until the purnahuti (the last oblation of the fire sacrifice). Obliging, the Devas arrived in the guise of Sevakas. The ritual started with Pitru karma, Nandi sraddha etc, then the king performed the varana (invitation) ceremony for the ritvik brahmanas using the svasti mantras. In turn the ritvik brahmanas initiated the King and the Queen as the yajna kartas, and invited them into the yajna sala. Then they installed the Agni (fire), performed the prokshana karma (purification of the five elements) and the dasa digapala puja (the worship of the Guardians of the ten directions). A suitable horse was chosen as the asvamedha horse, and after verifying all the auspicious symbols on its body, it was let out and the King and the Queen silently sat on a black deer skin. The yajna was performed in a kunda 14 x 7 hasta (about 7 x 3.5 feet) wide, according to the specifications for the Vaishnava Samskaras. The yajna ceremony was so elaborate that it was unprecedented for any of the yugas, and made Purushottama kshetra the most important kshetra of the universe. The night before the last day of the ceremony, Indradyumna had a dream in which he had the Darshana of the Yajna Purusha (Yajna Narayana), visualizing the form of Jagannatha. Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshana

(also called Caturdha murti). This day was Asadha sukla Navami, which is still celebrated as Sandhya Darshana (Indradyumna Mahotsava) during the annual Ratha Yatra festival. In the dream, Indradyumna saw:

*diptam balarka-koti prabhamanalashikam
sapta-jihvagrajvalam madhye subhram
prashantam phanimukuta manishobhitam kamapalam
tanmadhye shankrachakra nalinavala gadan dharinam
lakshminathan bhadramalingya vakhyama
pasyan rupa tan saccidanandarupam*

“Among the seven radiating tongues of Agni, that appeared to be brighter than thousands of new Suns, in the center, he saw Kamapalam Balabhadra, white in color with a peaceful expression and a crown of snakes decorated with gem stones. In the center he saw the Lord of Lakshmi Devi (Lakshminatha), holding sankha, chakra, gada and padma and embracing Subhadra on the left side of His chest. Sudarshana appeared as the radiance around Them.” The yajna ceremony continued for ten days, of which seven were for the fire sacrifice itself, characterized as sapta jihva homa (offerings for the seven tongues of Agni, namely Helakali, Karali, Manojaba, Sulohita, Dhumravarna, Sphulingi, and Visvaruchi). At the end of the ritual, the King distributed many cows and other gifts to the invitees, especially to the brahmanas. It is said that the nearby Indradyumna Sarovara (artificial lake) where pilgrims bathe before visiting the Lord, was formed by the hooves of the cows that Indradyumna gathered there to donate them to the brahmanas. According to the scriptures a ritualistic bath ceremony called the avabhrita snana is performed at the end of the asvamedha yajna ceremony on its final day; the yajna karta, accompanied by his wife, carries the jupa danda (the sacrificial ladle) on his shoulder. He is accompanied by Vedic Panditas who chant the Pavamana and Asuhushisano suktas, etc. Some servants who accompany the karta and his wife carry the twelve articles that have remained after the completion of the yajna: the somaghata or vardhani kalasa (ceremonial pot), the kushodaka (water with kusha grass), the bhasma (ashes from the yajna), the cow dung, the pranitodaka (the leftover water), the odana patra (a type of container), the purodasha kharpara (the stick used to remove the ashes from the yajna pit). After reaching the bank of a water body, the yajna karta and his wife take the ceremonial bath amid the chanting of the Vedic mantras and then they all return in a royal procession accompanied by chatras (royal umbrella) and chamaras (royal fly whisks). Thus, following the rituals as prescribed in the Soma yajna paddhati, king Indradyumna accompanied by his queen completed the avabhrita snana in the Mahodadhi (the ocean) in the place that became famous as Rakta tirtha or Chakra tirtha, between Bilvesvara in the north and the Mahavedi in the south. The Deities installed at this place (now known as Chakra Nrisimha temple) are Chakra Nrisimha, Adi Nrisimha, and Lakshmi Nrisimha. As soon as the bath ceremony was completed, a huge log of wood arrived on the shore, its roots still pointing to the ocean. The tree was marked with the symbols of the chakra and sankha, and it was surrounded by divine scents. The King asked Narada what this log was, and Narada advised that before discussing about this matter, the King should offer oblations to the Sun, reciting the Surya sukta. The King complied, then Narada explained that this huge log was actually one hair of Vishnu from Svetadvipa. The Daru (the sacred log) was taken to the Adapa mandapa (the yajnasala) at the present day Gundicha, passing in front of the Alambadevi or Alama Chandi temple in the northern direction known as Devajana marga (the path of the devas). There the worship to the Daru started. Indradyumna asked Narada Muni what kind of Deity should be carved from the log, and Narada replied that it was not a good idea to try to conceptualize the Deity: the Lord would take care of the matter directly. At that time, an incorporeal voice said:

*suguptayam mahavedyam svayam so' avatarisyati
prachadyatam dinanyosah jabat panchadashani vai*

“This log of wood has come to be installed on the Mahavedi as per its own wish. You must seal this area completely for the next fifteen days.” These fifteen days are still celebrated as Anavasara. At that time an extremely old man appeared and requested to be taken into the Karusala, saying he was going to carve the Deities. The old man (who was actually Visvakarma, the architect and craftsman of the heavenly planets) said he would carve the Deities, but on one condition: that no one should disturb him in his work. He wanted to work in a secluded room behind closed doors, and no one was to be allowed to enter the room for the next fifteen days. In the meantime, outside the sala there should be musicians playing all the time so that no sound of the carving work could be heard. If this condition was not respected, he would leave immediately without completing the work. Visvakarma started his work. On the first day he thought of carving Surya, the Adi Deva (primeval Deity) of the Vedas, but then he thought that the worship of Surya could only be done in the daytime, and he decided otherwise. On the second day he thought of carving the form of Agni, the most important Deity of the Vedic period. Again he changed his mind because he thought that fire attracts insects and burns them. On the third day, he thought of carving the Deity of a tree, but then it came to his mind that trees become old and eventually die, and he gave up the idea. On the fourth day he decided to carve the Yoga Chakra, but then again he thought that people would be unable to understand the concept, and he decided otherwise. On the fifth day he thought of carving the vigraha of Rudra, the most important Deity of Yajur Veda. Then he thought that such Deity, showing an angry form, would not be suitable for everyone to worship. On the sixth day, he decided to carve the bhoga sayana murti of Vishnu (Ananta Vasudeva), but then he thought that again such worship would not be accepted by all groups of people. 94 On the seventh day, he decided to carve the Deity of Adya Bhubaneswari, then he thought that the worship around such Deity would encourage only tantric adepts and transform the place in a Shakti pith only. On the eighth day he decided to carve the Deity of Maha Ganapati, but then he thought that such form, too, would not be preferred by all. On the ninth day, he decided to carve a Shri Chakra, but gave up his idea because nobody would be able to understand its meaning. On the tenth day, he finally decided to carve a pranava Deity, as pranava includes all traditions and appeals to everyone. So he started carving the four Deities of Balabhadra, Subhadra, Jagannatha, and Sudarshana, representing the four elements of the Pranava syllable, forming the face of Jagannatha. On the eleventh day the lepa samskara (the wrapping of the body in layers) of Jagannatha was started. Visvakarma first applied sandalwood paste on the entire body, then the sapta-varti lepa (also called vajra lepa) followed: the first layer was sugandha taila, scented oil (also called pushpa drava) the second layer was patta vastra, or indigenous silk the third is jhuna, frankincense resin mixed with oil the fourth is patta jallika, a kind of gauze cloth the fifth is chehalijina vastra, another type of cloth the sixth is avaleha (also called khali), a paste made of medicinal herbs the seventh is sri mukhaota, a kind of gum, and then finally paint. Finally, on the fifteenth day, known as Ubha amavasya, the doors were opened and the king was able to contemplate the caturdha murti on the Ratna simhasana. This day is celebrated as Nava yauvana darshana (also called Netra utsava). The King was advised to construct a temple on the Nilachala hill: the building was to be a thousand hasta (about 500 foot) long. After the completion of the temple, Indradyumna was advised to invite Brahma for the consecration ceremony of the Deities, so the King left for Brahmaloaka to call on Brahma. However, he was stopped at the gate by a guard named Manikodara because he was still holding an earthly material body; finally Narada Muni arrived to plead for him and they were both allowed inside. Brahma gladly accepted the invitation, instructing the King to start with the arrangements and promising that he would soon arrive. As Indradyumna had had to wait one day in Brahmaloaka before being allowed to see Brahma, a complete Manvantara (a cycle of 71 maha yugas, equivalent to 4,320,000 earthly years) had passed on Prithviloka (the planet Earth), and

during that long time the temple he built had sunk into the sand. In the absence of Indradyumna, the then king of Utkala, Gala Madhava, had the temple pulled out from the sand but falsely claimed to have built it himself, so when Indradyumna reached back, there was a controversy. On the sacred banyan tree by the temple lived a crow named Kaka Bhushundi, who age after age chants the name of Rama and witnesses everything. The crow testified, “It was Indradyumna who built this temple. It sank into the sands during his absence and Gala Madhava came and lifted it out.” Narada pacified Gala Madhava and convinced him to cooperate. Indradyumna confirmed that Gala Madhava would also be welcome to worship Jagannatha together with him, and that the Deity installed by Gala Madhava would also be worshiped on the main altar as one of the seven main Deities of the temple. This Deity is called Nila Madhava (although the form is Jagannatha’s) and is still sitting on the Ratna Simhasana. Narada instructed Indradyumna to construct three chariots to transfer the Deities from the Adapa mandapa (Gundicha) to the new temple that had been built on top of Nilachala. Thus three beautiful Rathas were built and all the paraphernalia for the journey and the installation was prepared. The Ratha of Balabhadra was called as Taladhvaja and was decorated with green and red cloth. It had 14 wheels symbolizing the 14 brahmandas (universes). Subhadra’s was called Padmadhvaja and was decorated with black and red cloth. It had 12 wheels symbolizing the 12 bhuvanas (worlds). Jagannatha’s was called Garudadhvaja and was decorated in yellow and red. It had 16 wheels symbolizing the 16 characteristics of the Supreme Purusha. 95 The Madala panji mentions that 6 chariots were prepared, because the Deities were moved from one set of chariots to the other after crossing the river Banki Malini Nadi that ran across the path, which is now Grand Road. Madhvacharya, who came to Puri during the reign of Kapilendra Deva, explained that it was not auspicious to have six chariots and advised the king to fill up the river and make the path smooth from the Jagannatha Mandir to Gundicha. After setting the Deities on the chariots, the procession journeyed to the new temple. Brahma also arrived, accompanied by his wives Savitri and Sarasvati, and was welcomed by Durvasa and Narada who were already there and helped him dismount his airplane. Brahma circumambulated the chariots and recited the following prayer to the chaturdha murti: namostubhyam namo mahyam tubhyam mahyam namo namah aham tvam tvamaham sarvam jagadetacharacharam “You and I are non-different from each other (as we are Your manifestations). Thus, by paying obeisances to You, I am offering respect to myself, too. You are the one who actually creates, maintains and destroys the universe through us. You are the seed of the universe.” Finally the Deities were transferred into the temple and seated on the Ratna simhasana, then Brahma chanted mantras from the Rig Veda for Balabhadra, from Yajur Veda for Subhadra and Jagannatha, and from Atharva Veda for Sri Devi and Bhu Devi. Then he installed Bharadhvaja as the yajna acharya, Agastya Muni on the brahmasana, and Vasistha, Durvasa and Narada in the role of pracharakas (preachers). Then, on the sukla paksha astami of the month of Vaisakha (falling on a Thursday) the abhisheka ceremony was performed, accompanied by the recitation of the Purusha sukta for Balabhadra, Sri sukta for Subhadra, Narayana sukta for Jagannatha, and Pavamana sukta (Chakra sukta) for Sudarshana. This day is still celebrated as Niladri Mahodaya astami.

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