

“Bahuda Jatra- 12th July 2008”

Return Journey of Lord Jagannath from Gundicha Temple to Jagannath Temple, Puri



*“Gundicha mandapam yantam ye Pashyanti rathestitam
Krishnam Balam Subhadramcha te yanti Bhuvanam Hare
Ye pasyanti tada Krishnam saptaham Mandape sthitam
Halinam cha Subhadram cha Vishnu lokam brajanti te”*

(Brahma Purana 63)

Those who are fortunate to see the deities riding the chariots towards Gundicha Temple, the final destination of the procession of the chariots, go to Heaven, the abode of Hari and Vishnu.



The nine day pleasure visit period of the deities of *Shri Mandir – Lord Jagannatha, Lord Balabhadra* and *Devi Subhadra* comes to an end when they start their return journey from *Gundicha* temple on the decorated chariots. After staying with lot of comfort in the garden house which is also their birth place the deities feel the importance to comeback to their original residing place.

Bahuda Jatra is observed on the ninth day of the festival which falls on *Asadha Shukla Ekadasi*. Lakhs of devotees visit this pilgrim city which is also popularly known as *Gobardhana Pitha* during *Bahuda Jatra*. The pilgrims congregate at *Gundicha Mandira* on the day of *Bahuda Dasami* to pull the chariots of the gods to this twelfth century Jagannatha temple. Like *Ratha Jatra* the gods are taken with processions from the *Garbha Griha* of the *Gundicha* temple to their respective chariots.

The three deities come to their respective chariots in a serial colorful procession. This procession is called *Pahandi Bije*. *Pahandi Bije* is a ritual where everyone can see how the social values are given importance even by gods. Lord *Jagannatha* in a mark of respect to his elder brother *Balabhadra* and deep love towards his younger sister *Subhadra* goes to the chariots in the last phase of *Pahandi*.

When the three deities come on the chariots the loving devotees chant typical Oriya *Haribola* and *Hulahuli*. The atmosphere of *Badadanda* is submerged with spiritual ambience. Group of *Sadhus* and *Sanyasis* who visit Puri on this occasion makes this place sanctified when they dance in the tune of devotional songs. One must visit Puri in his lifetime during *Rath Jatra* to feel its ethereal importance. People dance in groups in the rhythm of *Sankirtan* to welcome their *Tranakarta* (*Saviour*).

The most interesting part of *Bahuda Jatra* becomes alive when the three deities stop for a short while at the place of their loving aunt, popularly known as *Mausimaa*. How a social bond should be in relationship is clearly reflected in *Bahuda Jatra* when the deities are served a typical Oriya cake, *Podapitha* by their loving aunt. After staying a while at *Mausimaa* the gods proceed towards the *Shri Mandira*. The gods reach the *Singhadwara* (*Opening Gate*) by the evening of *Bahuda Jatra*. This brings to an end to the much awaited *Bahuda Jatra*.

Those who lose the chance unfortunately to be at Puri for *Ratha Jatra, Bahuda Jatra* is the golden chance for them.