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## PAIKA REBELLION OF 1817: AN ORGANISED ARMED REVOLT AGAINST BRITISH AUTHORITY

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The history in recent years has undergone against the colonial forest laws and encroachment a metamorphosis. The quest for history from below on their traditional rites. The struggle was to look has yielded popular insurrections, resistance, lack into the past when life was much better. The rebellions, agitations and uprisings against British movements were mainly restorative in character colonial rule. These resistance movements are to and the sense of solidarity even transcended be studied by rare empathy and archaeology of ethnic boundary.

knowledge. Though it is difficult to ascertain any **Historical Background:**

definite views of any confrontations, yet the strong link between the popular insurrections during pre- the military strength of once powerful Odisha lost nationalist era in our long struggle to freedom its political supremacy and independence. Though, should be established in its true perspective. The there was revival of Odisha's glory during Gangas respectability and autonomy of such rebellions, & Gajapati dynasty, yet, finally it passed into the however brief and abortive, is to be highlighted. hands of Afghans. Before the Afghans could We came across a series of such protests consolidate, the Mughlisenetered the field in 1592 throughout India during 18th and 19th century. Mansinghannexed Odisha to Mughal empire. The manifesting people's resistance against exploitation territories to the south of the lake of Chilika became of British rule. These revolts were driven to resist the tract called Northern Sircar was ruled by the at early British rule and its innovative measures Nizam of Hyderabad. This fell into the hands of British which had unsettled the traditional way of life and in 1765, when it was garmented to East India Government on occasions the company Govt. had Company. After the magnus, Odisha came under to face serious challenge to their authority. the rule of the Marathas. In order to establish

However, those rebellions have been the link between Bengal and Madras Presidency referred by colonial Historians as usually local in and facilitate the movement of army and provisions, character and the leadership was traditional posing the conquest of Odisha from the Marahattas no real challenge to British power. Similarly, the became inevitable to the Britishers. They wanted popular movements among the Tribals known as to ensure the neutrality of the Raja of Khurda with "fituris, melis", 'hools' and ulgulan were mainly the promise of giving one lakh of rupees and the

restoration of the four praganas like Jimlai, Rahenga, Chhabiskud and Sarai.

Jayee Krushna Rajguru, who was the chief Priest and the Regent of minor king Mukunda Deva II did not back the proposal, yet ultimately respected the desire of the king. Jayee Rajguru was doubtful of the integrity of British Commitment as he believed that Britishers have no permanent friend or permanent enemy but only have permanent interest. In the war against Marahattas, Britishers in 17th December 1803 got the province of Cuttack including the District and port of Balasore from the Raja of Nagpur in perpetuity.

Thus Odisha did not come under British all at a time. Instead it was a piecemeal process, during which different portions were annexed for administration under various administrative units. This had pernicious effect on the homogeneity of the odia race and seriously jeopardized their integral development.

#### **First resistance in 1804 and Jayee Rajguru**

In the meantime, Bhoi danasty was established in Khurda by Rama Chandra Deva I, who had constructed an impregnable fort at the foot of Barunei hill. The fort stood on an area of 11,000 square miles covering a large part of Odisha. It was located at the center of a cluster of 71 forts and 31 Zamindaris. A number of smaller forts also existed under the command of Dalabeheras and Dalais owing allegiance to the king. The king with the title Gajapati (Thakur Raja) had tremendous spiritual impact on the Rajas of feudatory states and the people of Odisha as a whole. After the

conquest of Marahattas in 1803, the British Govt. did not honour the promise given to Raja of Khurda and prevaricated the issue particularly returning the four Praganas. Jayee Rajguru was upset by the betrayal of British govt. and proceeded to the court of Harcourt at the head of a contingent of forces in order to pressurize the Govt. But, Harcourt categorically denied the claim and said that as the praganas belonged to Marahattas, they legally come under the possession of the British Govt. However, he was prepared to pay the money as agreed. Jayee Rajguru felt insulted and returned back with strong determination to give a frontal battle to drive out the Britishers. He reorganized the palkas, trained them with modern technique of war, concluded a tripartly agreement with the Rajas of Kujanga and Kanikaand declared a war against the British in 1804 under the banner of the king. Though he had initial success, yet he was defeated after defending the fort for long twenty one days ultimately the fort was captured and Jayee Rajguru along with the king Mukund Deva II were arrested. The king wrote a compassionate Letter expressing innocence on what had happened. But Jayee Rajguru took to himself all the responsibilities and sentenced to death by the court. He exhibited exemplary heroism and patriotism and ultimately executed in a brutal way. After the capture of the kingdom of Khurda, it came under direct (khas) administration of Major Fletcher, and the king was banished to Ball Sahi Nawar at puri & permanently fortified the kingdom of Khurda. The martyrdom of Jayee Rajguru is venerated with great respect and



admiration. Thus, the armed resistance in 1804 against the British policy of deceit and treachery is regarded as the precursor to the great revolt of Paika in 1817 under the strong leadership of Buxi Jagabandhu, the commander of forces of the Raja of Khurda.

#### **Marital Tradition of Paik :**

The History of Odisha is the history of military and chivalrous people known for their sturdy, stubborn and adventure. They are being favoured by geographical phenomena and natural boundaries. The numerous literary and epigraphic description, display of paintings, evidence on coins, terracotta, wooden carvings and large quantity of original weapons and accessories gives us enough source materials to compile an authentic account of the military tradition of the people of Odisha.

This Paiks constituted the main back of the army and enjoyed hereditary rent free land (Paikanama Jagir). They were the landed militatorming the infantry (Padatika) division in uniform. They were functioning as farmer and soldier in uniform. They were not only in charge of defence, but also functioned as watchmen of strategic forts, the royal palace, arms depots, royal treasury, Prison and many other duties. The paiks have been described in a graphic manner by Kanhai Champatroy in the book "Paika Kheda". This book gives a detailed account of paik martial art including the heritage, tradition, the weapons, the dress, war drums and different strategy of operation. Mayadhar Mansingh in his book "History of Oriya literature" published by Kendrya Sahitya

Academy says, 'Paika Kheda should be taken as a valuable military document in the entire field of Indian Literature.'

LSSO Malley being convinced of their strength and fighting spirit opined that "A body of landed militia of this kind might have been a tower of strength to the British Govt. had liberal and conciliatory measures been adopted from the first" originally the paikas were recruited from Pesant (Khandayat) caste. But there was no caste bar. Every able bodied persons of lower castes like Bauries, Panas, Kandariscould join the Jagas and Akhadas. In each village there were Akhadas for the training and practice of martial art. People with physical deformity and suffering from chronic disease were not allowed to join.

We get the description of different categories of Paiks like Gherrua Paik, Checa Paik; Dekua of Paik, Dhawaja Paik, Rahua Paik, Andharua Paik, Marudi Paik, Badya Paik, Pota Paik, Veda Paik etc. Veda Paiks were the part of espionage system. They collect secret informations of the enemy camp. Cheka Paiks were trained in 'Gurila' warfare. The Pota Paiks or Botta Paiks were efficient in managing the boats in the rivers and sea, which are named Krajiaga, Ganga Prasad, Nandia, Khudupa and like. The Pota Paiks were like coastal guards looking after the maintainances and security of the parts. The Paiks used weapons like Jambura, Jalai, Dhankuni, Dhala, Mudgara, Banka Chhuri, Bajranali, Katari, Kuntachandaka, Habuda, Chakra, SaleliPetachitalandhuka flint guns, daggers, swords, shields with piercing appendage

The swords were also different types like Dhyoja bandha, Raga bandha, Pana bandha, Nakkha bandha. The bows in the armoury of the Paiks were Bandha were of thirteen types and prominent among them were Kantia (Thorny), Ksura (Sharp blade), Ardha Chandra (half moon shape), septamula (seven roots), jodi-aguli (twin arrows) etc. Each arrow top was made of iron and shaped to connote the names gun powder and some had poison tainted tips. There were also Paiks called Pahadias, Dhenkias and Bannas. The military strategy (Vyuhas) had formulations like Chakra, Jalandhara, Suchi, Ardha Chandra and Sena Sanyana and like. The march to the battle started with worshipping the ancestral divinities (Sita Deval/Dev) accompanied by motley charous of musical bands comprising drums, Mrudanga, Changu, Kathia Mala, Khuti, etc. The march includes luggage bearers (Boghia), suppliers (Joganias) flag bearers (Dhawage/Dhari) medical contingent (vaidyas) and cooks (Rosoya). The description given in Paika Kheda shows an elaborate preparation of a National army of any country of people. This military document should be read with the unpublished manuscripts like Sangram Lahari, Viraparakrama, Veera Sarvaswa, Chakada Pothi and Chakada Besana edited by Sudhakara Pattaniak, the military history of Orissa "by Ramesh Prasad Mohapatra, Samara Taranga by Brajanath Badajena, 'Aharasasatara' & Kankalara Artanada of Godavarish Mishra, Lachoma of Fakir Mohan Senapati and many other literary works. The heroism of the Paiks is reflected in the war songs and Paik Bolis of Krushna Chandra Tripathy.

Hence, the Paik tradition which goes back to the epic age and Kalinga war (261 B.C.) in recorded history, prevailed through out Odisha. They were not confined to Khurda alone as the colonial historians allege. Further, the allegation that 1817 Paik rebellion was a peasant uprising resulting in the loss of land and appropriation of economic surplus by the ruling class is concocted and motivated to marginalize the people's revolt against British authorities. Again, the recent trend to identify the legacy with dance form like Chhau and Danda also is the perversion of truth. Buxi Jagabandhu inherited such a huge martial tradition, when he came forward to give leadership to the accumulated anger of all the segments of society against British maladministration and exploitation.

#### **Causes of Popular unrest :**

With the extinction of Jayee Raiguru and the settlement with Mukunda Deva II, the kingdom of Khurda was brought under the direct administration of British East India company. The Govt. wanted to end once for all the theocratic Sovereignty of the Gajapati of Khurda and their influence over the Feudatory states of Odisha. Though the king lost political power and his kingdom yet, he continued to be the hereditary superintendent of Jagannath Temple. The first victim of British rule were the Paiks who were deprived of their rent free land and asked to pay tax to the Government. A number of revenue settlements were effected in quick succession. The short term revenue settlements seriously affected



the royats due to repeated assessment. Many royats could not pay the tax in time and became impoverished consequently many deserted their houses and left the country.

Those, who were happy and contented had to face the serious hardship and lost everything including the Personal belongings. Their condition became miserable when they were overburdened with many unauthorized abwabs or impositions. The demands were arbitrary and oppressive. All these things happened because, the Britishers failed to study the system with which the royats were conditioned for generation and forcibly introduced the new laws dislocating their traditional life pattern. This, ultimately crystalized into mass discontentment.

The zamindars also became victim to the heavy and ever increasing assessment. In case of it non-payment of taxes, the estates were auctioned in Calcutta at throw away prices. The Bangalies and the native British officials purchased the defaulting estates. This led to the rise of absentee Land lordship causing extreme hardship. There was systematic uprooting of Odiazamindars, as they did not have any agents at Calcutta to defend their estates with all these miseries, the exclusion of OdlAamas from the post of trust added to their plighl. For example, GulamKadir, Mirza Mehadi Khan, Shyam Sunder Rai, Krishna Chandra Singh, Gaurahari Singh, and many others were posted as Tahasildars and Darogas of important places. They utilized their position and amassed huge wealth illegally by engaging them in Private trade WEwer

reported that almost all Amalass Sherladass, Nazirs Police and sail Darogas with a whole herd of inferior miscreants, dependent instruments and parasites thrived on the business of loot, plunder and speculation. The similar opinion has also been expressed by British Historian Hamilton. (within a period of ten years (from 1806 to 1816) the number of estates sold by public auction amounted to 1013 an average of 101 yearly)

From time immemorial caurrie (shell) was the medium of exchange in Odisha. A large quantity of caurrie was imported to Cuttack for Maladives Island. In 1804, British Govt. demonetized caurrie and introduced silver (Shika) coins which were manufactured at Bengal and Arcot of Madras. They collected the revenue in silver coin rather than in cowrie. The Govt. also fixed the rate of exchange such as 4 Kahanas and 2 Panas for 1 silver coin. Due to fluctuation of supply and demand, the market rate of exchange was about 7Kahanas: the rupee. The royats suffered a loss from the exchange of cowries for silver.

Thus, "sudden imposition of new currency in place of the century old medium of exchange was highly detrimental to the best interest of the people. It quite upset the whole system and brought in chaos and confusion in the trail. It was a piece of injudicious rash act which resulted in disastrous effects on the inhabitants of the province.

During the Marathata rule there was restriction on the manufacture of salt and sale of salt. Odisha having anextensive coastal belt produced finest quality of salt. The salt policy of

the British Govt. was gradual. It introduced the salt Regulation in 1804. Subsequently the introduction of salt monopoly resulted in shooting of the price from 3 to 4 annas a maund to rupees two or more. Mr. M C Bacher, the salt agent at Cuttack reported that "Deprived or curtailed in the article of life, essential to their comforts, the inhabitants of Khurda experience in greater degree than any other in the district. The operation of salt monopoly, in the interior of the country where the royats were poor, it was very difficult to purchase the salt necessary for his consumption. Exter writes "During my tour of the district it was with the greatest difficulty, I could procure sufficient salt for the daily consumption of my camp." He further added " it must be admitted that the advantages thus far derived by the Govt. by the extension of salt monopoly but poorly compensate for the privation and discontentment occasioned by that measure to their subjects in Cuttack. "Thus, the salt policy added salt to the injury of the people, who made a cry for salt to live with comforts. This was the last straw on the camel's back which ignited the people at large to free themselves from the snackle of colonial rule.

#### **Buxi Jagabandhu:**

Buxi Jagabandhu was born at Rorang Garh on approximately 1769. He had an aristocratic lineage. His full name was Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Bhamarabar Ray. He was the commander in chief of the armed forces of the Raja of Khurda. The post was held by his ancestors on hereditary basis. As he inherited the office of Buxi he was popularly

known as Buxi Jagabandhu. He was assigned large jagir lands called Bakshi Bar and other perquisites, besides the estate of Villa Rorung. His family life consisted in his two wives Radhamañjemadei and Chaturmani Jemadaì. Gopinath Vidyaghara was his biological son and Shyam Sundar Ray was the adopted son. Because of his exalted position, immense wealth and formidable command, he was being respected by the people of Odisha, as a whole next to the Raja. He has strong common sense and judged the situation as a practical statesman.

Soon after the British conquest of Odisha and the suppression of 1804 uprising, he lost his Bakshi Bar and reduced to a common tax payer. Subsequently, he became a victim of conspiracy and had to forfeit the Killa Rorung. He was disappointed of the trend of British administration and this disappointment generated a thirst for revenge. The temporary settlement followed by rigorous collection of revenue, oppression of unscrupulous Amalas and Darogas extensive sale of zamindars, entry of absentee Landlords and their loyal officials excessive rise in the price of salt and demonetization of courie created a chaotic state of affairs, bringing miseries to all classes of people. Buxi Jagabandhu was determined to give leadership with the help of support from the disgruntled tribal people of Ghumisar and Banapur Particulariy Kandhas and Panas. The resistance came from all classes of people, when traditional order and life pattern were jeopardized by the innovative British rule. As a leader, Buxi Jagabandhu optimized himself



the mouth piece of aggrieved people. His extraordinary personality, indomitable courage,

strong determination and wise guidance kept the British authorities in perpetual anxiety for a long period of seven years. As a Seasoned strategist and farsighted statesman, he planned to take people of all categories into his confidence irrespective of caste, creed and social status. It included the warring tribal people, the Dalais, Dalabeheras, Nayaks and Patks. The Rajas of

**Banpur :** A meeting was held at Banpur along with the Dalais, Dalabeheras and patks to chalk out the course of action. They attacked police station and other Govt. buildings and ransacked them. It is reported that the insurgents killed many people and looted the Govt. treasury. When the salt agent of southern division tried to escape, his boat in the Chilika lake was capsize and plundered.

**Dalabeheras, Nayaks and Patks. The Rajas of Khurda :**

Feudatory states who were burdened with exorbitant rent and the rigour with which it was collected also extended sympathy and support. He also raised the revolt under the banner of Gajapati (the former Raja of Khurda) in order to gather the support of millions of people and the Ganjam chiefs. Toynbee writes, "It burst with such a relentless fury as to threaten our expulsion, if not from the whole of Orissa, atleast from the territory of Khurda."

Being emboldened and encouraged by the success, they marched to Khurda and sacked the Tahasildars office and ransacked the office furniture. The official ran to safety and in the process, the personal attendant of Daroga was killed. The insurgents also attacked the Govt. Treasury and confiscated the money to facilitate the implementation of their plan. Khurda was in full control of the rebels.

#### **Spread of the Revolt:**

**Lemlai :** A section of the army entered the pragna

The revolt heralded in the last week of March 1817. The March of a body of Khonds from Ghumsur championing the cause of the restoration of Srikar Bhanja to Godi (throne) assembled at

**Panchagath :**

They entered into Panchagath which was under the rule of Rani Mukta Dei of Sambalpur. The residence of the rani was ransacked and her encroachment on their traditional belief and rituals. They joined with the forces of Buxi Jagabandhu, as he was related to the royal family of Ghumsur, Dewan Sadasiva Rai. However, the Rani escaped Badamba and shergada. They were also joined with Sachidananda Pattnaik. Buxi Jagabandhu souras, who were employed as agents to carry out apprehending the movement of forces from cutlack the plan of revenge. stationed a contingent of veteran patks at

Gangapada. The initial reverses was a surprise to the Govt. because, they remained under the impression that the people are happy with the benevolent and enlightened administration of the British. Immediately, the measures were taken to quell the revolt. Lt. Prideausewas advised to remain at Khurda. Lt. Faris was deputed to Pipil to protect the Lembai Pragana. Impey himself with 60 sepoy's advanced to Khurda and reached the entry point at gangapada.

**Gangapada:**

British army's objective was to help Lt Prideause in suppressing the rebellion at Khurda. But it failed because, Impey could not advance due to the blockade at Gangapada by the Paiks and cutting down of the provisions. Again at the surge of the Revolution at Khurda, Lt Prideause was frightened and fled for his safety. Impey also decided to retreat on 4th April 1817. Thus, being encouraged by the flight of British officials the rebels chased the British army and put them into loss. Many local chiefs were encouraged to join the fight against British rule. Finding no alternatives, the Govt. imposed martial law in Khurda.

**Pipil/Puri :**

The main contingent of rebels marched towards Pipil and joined with Balabhadra Chhotaray of Padmpurgarh and engaged with arson and loot. The main body of paiks including the Khonds of Ghumusor entered Puri under Buxi Jagabandhu through Lokanath Chat and were engaged in retaliating against British officials. The officials who were stationed at Puri abandoned the area being

frightened. The priests and sevayats of Jagannath temple welcomed the rebels. The King Mukund Deva-II was approached in his residence for acknowledging the leadership of the fight and to proceed back to Khurda to reclaim the kingdom. But the king being reminded of his torture and treatment during 1804 uprising politely refused. He could not venture to incur further humiliation by the British govt. Instead it is said that he sent a message through Mukhtar Parsuram Bihari seeking military aid for his security. This however did not discourage Buxi Jagabandhu, who tried to appeal to the rajas of Garjat states in the name of Thakur Raja for support.

**Other areas affected by the revolt :**

Gop, Tran, Kujanga, Sarangarh, Marichpur, Harispur, Kanika, Asureswar and PattamundeI became the theatres of revolt. The Paiks instigated the people for insurrection and engaged in revengeful activities. Dharmu Harichandan of Sarangagarh and karunakar/Sardar of Gop, Raja of Harispur the Raja of Kujanga, Bamadev Patajoshi, Narayan Paramguru, Banamali Narendra, Karunkar Paramguru and many other also participated in the uprising. It also spread to Baripada and Balasore. Many parts of western Odisha including Sambalpur and Nagpur in central province had also joined in this movement. The tremor was also felt in the odia living tracts of Bengal and Andhra. Thus, the movement had spread to larger geographical area

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guns and gun powder Major general Martindell restored order in Khurda by his superior military skill By 10th April 1818, Britishers were in full control of possession. But, the rebel leader Buxi Jagabandhu could not be captured along with many other companions.

### **Buxi Jagabandhu and Gurilla warfare in Incoognito :**

The flight of Jagabandhu with his trusted soldiers to forest and the witch hunt carried on by British Govt. is a romantic chapter in the paik Revolt of 1817. The Govt. felt that the restoration of tranquility in Khurda is incomplete without the capture of Buxi Jagabandhu. A reward was announced on his head to capture him dead or alive. But the gurilla warfare for a long period of seven years shows the audacity determination and patriotic fervour against all adversity. Constantly being followed by British forces, he continued to fight from the jungle of Ghumsur, Sheragah, Baud, Dasapalla and finally at Nayagarh. The Govt. even announced more rewards and arrested all his family members in order to exercise pressure for his surrender. But all in vain. On 19th April 1819, Jagabandhu wrote a letter to Lt. Melville for restoration of minor king Ramachandra Deva (Mukund Deva-II died in prison) to his gadi, which will solve all problems.

But this proposal for giving general amensity and extending beneficiary measures by amending some of the provisions in laws and regulation, Raja of Nayagarh was threatened to persuade Buxi Jagabandhu to accept the terms of British

Government. Ultimately, Buxi Jagabandhu was persuaded to surrender with the mediation of Bewartabarju Paikaray. An elaborate arrangement was made to being him to Cuttack. S.K. Waz Mohammad was deputed to accompany and strict instruction was issued to the police to prevent any interference with Jagabandhu way of journey. He arrived at Cuttack in a procession on the elephant back and signed an agreement on 20th may 1825.

It was stated that Jagabandhu will not leave Cuttack without the permission of the commissioner. He had to forfeit the title of buxi. He was allowed to stay with his family at Cuttack with a monthly pension of Rs. 150/- per life long. The Agreements was devoid of any impolite condition. Thus, the surrender was not an object surrender. He did it in a manner commensurate with his dignity. He has been referred by colonial historian as an "unfortunate celebrity".

Infact, British Govt. virtually admitted defeat by accepting most of the demands for which he fought. Buxi Jagabandhu emerged as a hero without any indignity associated with his surrender. It was really a crusade which he fought most diligently and became successful in achieving it. He breathed his last at Cuttack on Saturday 24th January 1829. His pension stopped from that date. Reviewing the Course of events, it is observed that

Buxi Jagabandhu possessed strength of mind, iron will, dogged resistance and determination to uphold the cause with unflinching devotion. For long eight years, he kept the British Govt. in perpetual anxiety. That speaks eloquently his powerful personality &



organizing genius. He was a patriot & a celebrated leader in the saga of Odisha's freedom movement. The Revolt of 1817 was not an isolated event prompted by despair, hatred & thirst for revenge on the part of Jagabandhu. The movement was deeply connected with the grievances & discontentment of the people against exploitive colonial rule. In fact, it was a mass movement of the people of Odisha in general fought for the freedom, being imbued with a spirit of patriotism and nationalism to throw away the shackles of alien rule. The Paik revolt of 1817 deserves its rightful place as the 1st war of independence.

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