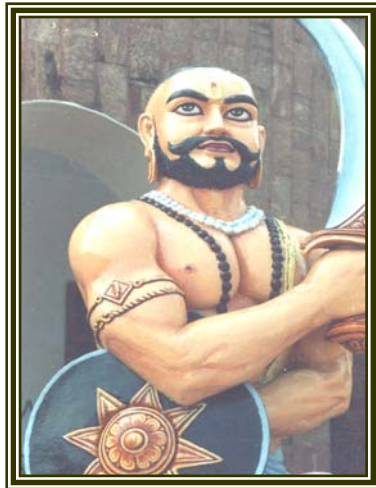


BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF CHAKHI KHUNTIA (CHANDAN HAJURI)

C*hakhi Khuntia* alias Chandan Hajuri, was the legendary figures of National Freedom Movement of India. Every year his birth day is celebrated by the Department of I & PR, Government of Orissa on 20th January.

LIFE HISTORY

This great man was born on the sacred *tithi* (day) of *Shamba Dasami* in the year 1827 in the famous *Hajuri* family of Puri *Harachandi Sahi*. His father Raghunath Khuntia alias Bhimasen Hajuri was a *sevak* (servant) of the Lord *Jagannath*. Since the child was born his father was dressing the Lord with sandal-paste (*Chandan*), for this he was given the name



"*Chandan Hajuri*". His mother was Kamalavati, a pious lady. In his childhood he was taught Oriya language and literature in a *Chatasali* (pre-school). With his own interest he learned Hindi to enable him for communicating with "*Yatris*" (Pilgrims) of Lord *Jagannath*. He had also desire to learn History and Geography of India, her hoary heritage and heroic tales of

her national leaders. Being a denizen of Puri he was always involved with all sorts of physical exercises at the *Akheda* or *Jagaghara* (local name for Gym) of Puri. At the age of 12 he got married to Sundarmani. He always accompanied his father for pilgrimage to northern India with the tourists. During that time he came closer with eminent personalities of India's Freedom Movement like Meropanth, father of Laxmi Bai, Laxmi Bai herself and attracted towards India's Freedom Movement.

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ROLE IN INDIA'S FREEDOM MOVEMENT

Chakhi Khuntia had played an important role in the Freedom Movement of India. In association with Laxmibai he fought against the British who were in favour of preaching Christianity all over India. It was *Chakhi Khuntia* who started resentment among the Indian soldiers called "*Sepoys*" and organised a mutiny which subsequently took the shape of Sipoy Revolt. For his active involvement in first freedom struggle, he was arrested many times and kept behind the bars.



CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE

Chakhi Khuntia spent the last days of his life at Puri. He spent all his time in literary pursuits and religious rites relating to Lord *Jagannath*. He has composed a lot of poems; most of them are devotional songs. It is told that one of his palm-leaf manuscripts is entitled "*Manubai*" original name of Laxmibai, queen of Jhansi. He breathed his last in 1870 at Puri.

It is matter of pride for us that this great son of Orissa soil of the 19th century was not only inspired by the heroic deeds of a host of Indians, but also he himself inspired a large number of soldiers who sacrificed their lives bravely on the holy soil of the Mother India. He will be ever remembered by us as an immortal poet, a national hero, a great patriot and renowned devotee of *Lord Jagannath*.