



*"Dolecha Dologovindam, Chapecha Madhausudhanam
Rathetu Bamanam Drustwa, Punarjanma Nalabhyate"*



"Dola Purnima" is a popular local festival celebrated in the coastal districts of Orissa. It falls on the full-moon day in the Oriya month of *Falguna* or *Phaguna* (within Feb-Mar). Through the festival the spring season is welcomed and enjoyed with jollity and merriment. This festival has been referred to in the *puranical* texts as *"Basantotsaba"* or the spring-festival. Some scriptures testify that the *"Madanotsaba"*, the festival held in honour of *'Madana'* which was later transformed as the *"Dolatsaba"* or swing-festival of Krishna. Therefore, Krishna is propitiated on this occasion as *"Madanamohana"*.

In Orissa this festival is celebrated for five days. It starts from the tenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Falguna* known as *"Fagu Dasami"*. This festival is named so as Lord *Jagannath* is worshiped as the name of *Dologovinda* in this festival. On this day Oriya calendar becomes ready and it is worshiped on *Dolabedi* in front of *Dologovinda*. This year *Dola Purnima* is going to be celebrated on 28th February all over Orissa. This festival is also called as *Dola Jatra*.

THE LEGEND

On the fourteenth day of the fortnight there is a function in which a straw-hut is set to fire amidst much amusement and excitement. This is known as



"*Holipoda*" (burning of *Holi*). The legend about it is that, '*Holika*' was the most beautiful sister of '*Hiranyakashyapu*', the demon-king. As A great devotee of Shiva she got the boon that she would never die of drowning



or burning. In spite of all heinous attempts *Hiranyakashyapu* couldn't kill his son '*Prahlada*', the devotee of Vishnu. Then he planned to burn him to ashes. As *Holika* would never get burnt she was asked to walk into the blazing fire with the child in her arms. Surprisingly the child came out unhurt but *Holika* was burnt to death due to her ill thinking of killing somebody.

Remembering this, the *Holikadahan* is celebrated on the day of *Dola Purnima*.

THE CELEBRATION

This is a festival of five days as it is mentioned earlier starts from the day of *Phagu Dasami*. Smearing the heads with '*Abira*' (coloured powder) the people take round the idols of *Madanamohana* in richly decorated palanquins known as "*Veemana*". The



procession is led by village drummers, pipers and the '*Sankirtana Mandalis*'. It halts in front of each household and the deity is offered '*Bhog*' made from the recent harvest and fruits. In return, the deity distributes different powdered colors for the *Holi* festival. The procession is accompanied by singers and musicians. The daily rounds of the deity for the four days are called "*Chachery*".

On the final day of the *Purnima* the celebration culminates in a swing-festival (*dola jatra*) for the deities. The idols carried in *Veemanas* (Palanquin) from a number of villages assemble in an important place



where swings are fixed on a platform. Then, the deities are swung to the accompaniment of devotional music. Devotees come for *Darshan* in the evening, offer *Prasad & Abira* (coloured powder) to the deities. There is also a

keen competition among villages in decorating the *Veemanas* in which the deity is carried around. The colour festival of *holi* is celebrated usually on the day following *Dola Purnima*.

