

Kartik Purnima



The whole month of 'Kartik' is considered to be the most sacred among all the twelve months of the year. During this month all the pious Hindus refrain from eating fish, meat or egg. All of them take bath before the sunrise and visit temples as a matter of routine.

The last five days of the month called "panchuka" are very auspicious. For all the five days the women after purificatory bath in the early morning draw beautiful flower-designs around the 'chaura' (a small temple like structure with a 'Tulsi' plant overhead) with colour powders produced indigenously. Fasting for the day is commonly observed. Most of the Shiva temples get crowded with devotees offering prayers to Lord Shiva who is said to have killed the demon 'Tripurasura' on this day. Group singing of 'kirtans' and loud beating of 'Mrudanga' and cymbals continue for the whole day. The last day is known as the 'Kartik Purnima'. It falls on the full moon day of the 'shukla paksha' (waxing moon) of the 'kartik' month.

Kartik purnima has a significance to the ancient history of Orissa. This reminds the maritime glory of the State. In olden days the 'Sadhabas' (Sea traders) used to sail off to distant islands like Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Ceylon etc. for their trade by huge boats ('Boita'). The women of the community were giving them a hearty send off on this day. The days are now gone, but the memory is still alive. Now, people float tiny boats made out of cork and coloured paper or bark of the banyan tree while remembering the past glory. This is called "Boita Bandana".

In some places like Cuttack, Lord 'Kartikeswar' is worshiped on this day. After the completion of this month the idol is taken out in a procession and immersed in a river. After this a big fair known as "Bali Yatra" is held for about three-four days.