

to obtain as much money as he could from the temple treasury, and if he failed to get satisfaction, showed his zeal by damaging the temple. It was only during the Maratha rule that the temple was left undisturbed and received additional grants from the general revenue.

It may be added that besides the damages done by the Muslims, a hurricane once blew down the wheel on the temple top. From the Madala Panji it appears that the temple top with the wheel was replaced twice, once in the time of Ramachandra Deva, the first Bhoi king (1568 to 1598) and again in the time of Divyasimha Deva I in 1719A.D.

On the 1st March, 1881 the followers of Mahima Dharma marched in a body from Sambalpur to Puri and raided the Jagannath temple with the object of destroying the image of Jagannath. There was a clash with the priests of Jagannath in course of which one of the raiding party was wounded and later died. For the details of the raid the appendix on 'Mahima Dharma' in the Dhenkanal District Gazetteer (p. 444) may be seen.

The temple was plastered and whitewashed not less than three times before the nineteenth century. Recently, a crack has been observed in the upper part of the tower and during heavy rains water collects near the Kalaghatdwar. Instances of plaster falling from the ceiling of the shrine have occurred several times. On the 2nd February 1974, one Sevayat and two visitors were injured due to such an accident of falling plaster which has created grave concern among the people. The Government of India, on special grounds, have taken over the preservation of the temple and have appointed a Committee of technical experts to go into the whole question of the preservation of the monument. The conservation work started in 1975 and is now in progress.

The first electrification of the Jagannath temple at Puri was done in 1929. Lights were fixed on the outer boundary wall. On account of the objections of the Pandas electricians did not enter the temple compound. The Raja of Puri switched on the lights in the presence of the Collector, Shri Nilamani Senapati, I. C. S. However, on the 9th October, 1966, the temple area and the interior of all the monuments were electrified.

The plaster is now being removed from the temple under the supervision of the technical experts appointed by the Archaeological Survey of India. On the north-west portion of the temple a few sections have been uncovered which reveal beautiful sculptures, geometrical and floral designs. The Lakshmi temple on the north-west corner of the main Jagannath temple has been fully de-plastered and reveals a wealth of sculptures and decorative designs.

Removal of
plaster from
the Temple