

Copy  
No. 175

From

The Assistant Superintendent of Police,  
In charge of Puri District

To

The Magistrate of Puri  
Dated Puri the 11<sup>th</sup> March 1881.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your memo of this day's date forwarding the Commissioner's No.79 dated Cuttack the 9<sup>th</sup> instant.

The facts are follows :

On the 1<sup>st</sup> instant 12 men and 3 women went into the temple and created a disturbance. There was a crowd and some hustling took place during which one of the 12 men mentioned appears to have fallen or been accidentally pushed over. The occurrence took place on the steps inside the inner gate apposite the lion gate. I was personally speedily at the temple and the police at once arrested 7 men and 1 woman. The rest of the 16 persons who commenced the slight disturbance which took places ran off and were pursued by the police and eventually arrested.

The man who met with the fall and the civil Surgeon certified that death was caused by a fall after the heavy mill. As the people arrested at the temple appeared to me to be somewhat lunatically inclined and talked a deal of rubbish about a band of fanatics who were coming down the Cuttack Road to burn Jagannath. I set enquiries at first and no being able to gain any reliable information at 10 o'clock at night. I sent a patrol along the road with orders to arrest and bring such gang. I also placed a few extra men about the vicinity of the temple and requested the temple people to keep their big gates shut during the night.

The patrol I sent along the road brought in a gang of 6 men and 11 women who had 11 small children with them. They spoke of burning of Jagannath too and belonged to the band who had already made a disturbance. They were sent up

under sec. 94 of C.P. Code and the 4 men were convicted under Sec.143 I.P. Code. The women were discharged. The people who created the disturbance in the temple on the 1<sup>st</sup> were sent up under sections 147, 295, 296 and 297 I.P. Code and are still under trial.

The death which occurred was returned as an accidental one.

No person or persons were wounded such a case as above. I believe I was not called upon to report specially to you moreover I knew from conversation that you were in full possession of the facts.

I have the honour to be.

Sd-

Asst. Supdt. of Police,

In charge of Puri District.

True Copy

Khetra Mohan Basu, Head Clerk

True copy

Sd/- Illegible

11.7.63

No. 222

Pooree Magistrate Office

Dated the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1881

From

J.S. Armatrong Esquire C.S.  
Magistrate of Pooree

To

The Commissioner of Orissa, Cuttack

Sir,

In continuation of my letter no. 220 dated 12<sup>th</sup> instant on the subject of the scuffle which took place in the temple at Pooree, I have the honour to inform you that the proceedings called for by you were not completed today as I expected they would be because the Deputy Magistrate Babu Kamulanath Ghose has called for additional evidence I cannot say that he is wrong in doing so though I think the facts are clear enough already. In the meantime I have heard Mr. Clerks letter copied and it is enclosed herein. As soon as the proceedings called for by you are completed they will be forwarded together with my comments on the occurrence.

You will see from Mr. Clerk's letter that the case of these persons who were travelling along with road when they were arrested has been finished . The case which is pending is considered more importance as it is related to the scuffle which took place inside the temple and the death of the individual whose fate is reported.

I have the honour to be

Sir

Your most obedient servant

Sd-Illegible

Magistrate

True Copy

Sd-Illegible

1.7.63

Year 1881

No. 224

Pooree Magistrate's Office

Dated the 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1881

From

J.S. Armstrong Esquire, C.S.

Magistrate of Pooree,

To

The Commissioner of Orissa Division

CUTTACK

Sir,

In continuation of my letter of yesterday No. 222, I have the honour to inform you that the Deputy Magistrate has concluded his proceedings and I enclose copies for your information. A copy of the Civil Surgeon's deposition somewhat diffusive and conveying ample information is also enclosed.

2. From the enquiry made into the circumstances attending the death of Data Ram it is evident that it must be attributed to accident or in other words he called in police phraseology an accidental death. No unnecessary violence was used towards him and no weapons were employed. The vergers of the temple used the rattans which they habitually carry. The man died from a fall on the stones. The expired soon after leaving temple.

3. The fanatics appear to be worshippers of an invisible being and to be inspired with hatred of idolatry. They bow down to Alek the formless on eat sun rise and at sunset and as they represent they came hereby his command to burn the idol of the Hindoos.



4. Sambalpur is their place of abode, and they are half savage. They were nearly naked when they entered the temple but afterwards appeared clothed. Water they use only for drinking being persuaded the ablution is a superfluity.

5. They came to the temple on the 1<sup>st</sup> instant. An eyewitness, one of the doorkeepers described the scene. He was on duty at the lion Gate. About 20 naked man and women came up shouting "Alek, Alek". They had some cooked rice in an earthen pot. They had eaten some as it appeared from the state of their hands. They were about to enter the temple but the witness shut the gate, which the naked men pushed open in spite of him and his companion. The party then went in and about 200 pilgrims pushed in with them. One of the naked men still held his rice pot and the witness strongly objected to his taking it in. The man then consented to leave it outside and was allowed to enter. The party then broke down the door of the bhog-mandap, the room in which the offerings are arranged. There were no offerings at the time. They then made their way into the great hall in front of the shrine. Witness followed. The crowd of spectators had now doubled. The door called Jaibejoi was shut and the fanatics went out into the enclosure. They rushed about like mad men to find an entrance by some other way and one of them fell on the stone pavement. Two or three others lifted him up and helped him out of the temple. The crowd of pilgrims had now increased very much being by the witness supposed to be about a thousand.

6. None of the witnesses examined admitted the use of the rattans by the temple people but from the marks on the shoulders of the assailants it is plain that some resistance was made. From the examination of the accused it appears that they were driven out with blows and yet the hurts were so slight that the Deputy Magistrate attributes them to the rattans of the guardians. Some of the eyewitnesses deny that any blows were given. The resistance made was not very vigorous since so small a party was allowed to break the door of the Bhogmandale.

7. Mr. Clerk was on the spot before I heard of the matter and his report was forwarded to you yesterday. On ascertaining that more fanatics were coming Mr. Clerk consulted me and suggested stopping them on the way before they could do any mischief and this was accordingly done. It appeared that the second party were coming on with similar intentions and the two cases were tried by the Deputy Magistrate who sentenced the fifteen persons who had made the disturbance in the temple to undergo vigorous imprisonment for 3 months and 4 persons of the second party who had not actually done any thing to vigorous imprisonment for 7 days. There were some women among the fifteen persons convicted of rioting but not among the others.

6. There seems to be no reason for doubting that the rioters were actuated by the motive to which they ascribe their actions. The leader appears to have hurt himself in breaking the gate and he was probably jammed against the wall. That he fell, one was pushed down on the stone flooring in the courtyard

is certain. His party were pushed out by main force and no wounds were inflicted on any of them. Th slight rattan marks on the backs of three of them showed that they were struct by the vergers, as they were being pushed out. The riot was not at all formidable. But the death of the leader .importance. The medical evidence supports the statement of the witness that it was due to a fall on the stone and it might not have been fatal had not the man just risen from a full meal. It is plain that the temple people had a right to resist him as he was destroying their property and it is also clear that they had no intention of killing him.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant

Sd-Illegible

Magistrate

Sd-Illegible

1.7.63

Copy

Jagua Singh \_\_\_\_\_ Prosecutor

Vrs.

Dhani, Situ, Bhagat Moyaran, Mallik, Phanor, Bira, Hari, Momad, badhan, Tharo,  
BundaheSeekuara,

Parbati and Reuti \_\_\_\_\_ Deffds.

Charges under Sec.1 to 7 and 297 of the Indian Penal Code

The Deftds are barbarous people of Sambalpur and are fanatics. They say they are the followers of Alek an airy being having no forms. They generally call him Guru. The cause of their coming to Pooree as related by them appears to be that one of their coreligionists named Dasaran persuaded them that the Guru commanded him to bring the images of Jagannath, Balaram and Subhadra out of the temple at Pooree and then to burn them on the road. Defdts were under such great delusion that some of them said that they heard the voice of their Guru when giving the order for burning the said images. For the purpose of executing that order they left their homes in a body bringing their children with them. Wen they came within a few miles or Pooree, 16 out of them came ahead to Pooree leaving the rest behind. Amongst these 16, was the said Dasaram. They all entered into the temple of Jagannath and broke open a door of the Bhogmandap. They tried to get into the room of Jagannath, but as the door of that room was shut against them and the pilgrims raised an alarm they were obliged to come back. After they came out of the temple, the said Dasaram died on the platform before the Lion Gate. Defdts. have admitted that they came to burn the image of Jaganath and that they entered the temple for the that purpose. But they do not say how their companion Dasaram died. Their religious frenzy is so deep rooted that some say that the Guru has taken him (Dasaram)

P. 1314

the religious feelings of any person, but they could not fail to know that by taking out and burning the image of Jaganath the feelings of his worshipers were likely to be wounded, besides low caste people and barbarous people who have no distinction of caste such as the Defdts. are not allowed to enter the temple of Jaganath. It appears from the evidence that all the Defdts entered into the temple. I sentence each of the Defdts. to two months vigorous imprisonment under sec.297 of the I.P. Code. The second sentence will have effect after the expiration of the first.

14<sup>th</sup> March,  
185 1

Sd/- Kamal Nath Ghose  
Deputy Magistrate

True Copy  
Sd-Illegible  
11.7.63

Express : Maya, Bhajo, Jira, Hira Badunti, Bimda, Jhali, Ghasi, Behari, Monlart,  
Budhiari, Susmat, Janaki, Sumitra, Gundura, Ganesya, Dhirja  
- Defdts.

The police arrested the Defdts. under section 94 C.C.p. as persons having no extensible means of subsistence. But it appears to me that these persons are no of the character as would bring them under that sec. of the Criminal Procedure Code. They are beggars like hundreds of beggars who come to pooree. The extensible means of their subsistence is begging and they do not live in a style as would raise suspicion that they earn their livelihood by misconduct. They are all in rage. But four of them viz. Maya, bhojo, Jira and Hira admitted that they came from home with others to take out Jaganath, and other images from the temple and burn them. Their statement amounts to being members of unlawful assembly punishable under sec.143 of the I.P. Code. It is true that the other Defdts. were also in the assembly but there is no proof that they had the mischievous intention of burning Jagannath. It appears to me that they only accompanied the said four Defdts in as much as they were their co-religionists and fanaticism would not let them part from them. I maintain this view of the case as most part of these are women and little children.

Under the circumstances I sentence the Defdts. Maya, Bhojo, Jira and Hira to 7 days rigorous imprisonment and discharge the rest.

True Copy  
Sd-Illegible  
11.7.63

Sd/- Kamal Nath Ghose  
Deputy Magistrate

## Copy

The Deposition of Surgeon B.B. Gupta

The Civil Surgeon

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1881 about 5.30 P.M. I examined the body of an unknown man of about 35 years of age. The body was sent to me for examination by the police and was said to have been brought from near the Lion Gate of Jagannath's Temple. There was nobody present who could identify the body. The body was well preserved that is it was fresh. I found one bruise one inch long and half an inch broad on the outer aspect of the lower part of right with well defined borders. Three small livid discoloration marks on right elbow. Two small abrasions on lower part of right chest. One small abrasion and several scratches over the region of the stomach. One livid discoloration over the superior internal angle of left scapula. Small scratches over the same bone. Small livid marks on the left shoulder one livid discoloration on left hips, one on left leg. Another on left ankle and another on the left little toe. One small contusion on right hip, three small ones on right knee and one on right ankle. All these were external injuries. The internal appearances were as follows. The scalp and the skull were normal. The membranes of the brain were slightly congested and some plain serum escaped on opening them. The brain was normal. Its vessels were slightly congested. Ventricles were normal. The internal organs of the chest were generally normal except this that the pericardium contained a little plain serum. The stomach was distended with a large quantity of rice and water perfectly undigested. The vessels of this organ were fuller than

P. 1317

normal. Small intestines were congested. The spleen was about 4 times as large as in the normal state. It was hard kidneys were highly congested. The remaining of the abdominal organs were healthy. The bones of the ribs and chest were in normal state. The external injuries were fresh, none of them was severe so far as can be judged from their extent. The injuries described over the region of the stomach were likely to have been serious in their consequences, not from the extent of physical damage observable but from the nature of their situation. I am, therefore, of opinion that this unknown man died of shock due probably to injuries might have been caused either by blows or by fall upon hard surface. The injuries did not appear to have been inflicted by Lathies (Clubs) applied flatly. Some of them might have been caused by the ends of sticks. All the injuries could not have been received by one fall. The injuries on the left shoulder, that is the small livid marks described above might have been caused by peltig of stone or by being rubbed against a stone. No cross question.

The above was read to surgeon B.B. Gupta and by him acknowledged to be correct.

9.3.81

True Copy  
Sd- Khetramohan Basu  
Head Clerk

Sd/- Kamal Nath Ghose  
District Magistrate

Sd/- Illegible  
11.7.63

1881

Alekha & Kumbhipatias  
No.H/1 dt.16.3.81

To

The Secretary to Government

On the 19<sup>th</sup> instant it came to my knowledge that a report was prevailing in the town of Cuttack that the party of fanatics had entered the temple of Jagannath at Puri with a view to take possession of the idol and burn it at the Lion Gate. That the people of the temple had resisted and that one of the assailants had been killed and two wounded and a further party of the fanatics had been arrested by the Puri Police. No information on the subject had been recorded from the Magistrate. I, therefore, wrote to him asking for report.

2. I enclose the copy of the report of the Magistrate and his replies 220 of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 222 of the 14<sup>th</sup> instant and the annexure of the letter.

3. The information given is extremely meagre. But the letters disclose that there was a disturbance inside the temple that a man was killed in the disturbance accidentally for otherwise when the District Superintendent arrived at the temple the parties who had created the disturbance were, Mr. Clark says, lunatically inclined and talked a deal of rubbish about a band of fanatics who were coming down the Cuttack Road to burn Jagannath. Mr. Clark sent up a patrol to look after them and they brought in 6 men and 11 women and 11 children. They were sent up U/S 94 C.P.C. and the 4 men were convicted under section 143 I.P.C. It is not also clear how 6 persons being spoken of the district Superintendent says 4 were convicted and puts to arrest for two. There is also discrepancy in the earlier part of the report when the persons who created the disturbance are first spoken of as twelve men and three women and then as 16 persons.

4. The Magistrate has given no information who the fanatics are nor whence they came nor what motive they are supposed to have for wishing to burn the idol.

5. It is not also very clear at present how the four or six persons arrested by the District Superintendent Patrol on the road and who had taken no parts in the disturbance have been convicted under Section 143 I.P.C. As conviction

includes that sections implies the existence of a common and unlawful object. This appears to show that in the judgement of the trying magistrate there was much in the occurrence. The lunatics inclination and talk of rubbish.

6. I have called for the record of the case decided and for information as to the fanatics and there motives and a further report will be submitted.

Sd/- Illegible

11.7.63

No. 96 dated 19.3.1881

To

The Secretary to the Government

In continuation of my R/1 of the 16<sup>th</sup> instant I forwarded a further report 224 of the 15<sup>th</sup> instant from the Magistrate of Pooree with annexures giving the particulars of the disturbance of the temple.

2. It appears from Dr. Gupta's deposition that the man who lost his life was subjected to some violence in addition to the fall to which his death was probably due. It does not however appear to have been serious and as his party were the aggressors it is not probably that any further action will be needed. I have sent for the record for examination.

3. Considering that the accused came from their houses from Sambalpur to burn the idol of the Hindus it does not appear to me that the sentences of the accused were the side of severity.

J. Mahapatra  
11.7.1963

Sd/-

No.1862/96

From : F.C. Berry Esquire C.S.  
Off. Assistant Secretary to the Chief Commissioner  
To

The Offg. Under Secretary to the Government  
Bengal, Judicial, Political and Appointment Department,  
Calcutta

Dated Nagpur the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1881

Sir,

With reference to your letter No.. 1494 J. of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ultimo, and annexures as marginally noted , No., 96 dt. the 19<sup>th</sup> March I am directed to submit for 1881, with annexures the information of his honour the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, copy of a letter from the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur containing a brief account of the sect of persons who call themselves the followers of Alekh.

I am to add that the further information promised by the Deputy Commissioner regarding these people will also be supplied when received.

I have and ca  
Sd/- F.C. Berry  
Offg. Assistt. Secretary

Copy of a letter no. 1612 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1881 from W.A. Nraham Esquire, officiating Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to the Commissioner, Chhatisgarh Division.

With reference to your No. 2570 of the 28<sup>th</sup> ultimo I have the honour to enclose extract from my preliminary census report giving some information about the people in question. I am making further enquires and will duly communicate the result. Extract from letter No. 1145 dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 1881 from the Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to the Deputy Superintendent Census Central Province.

x x x x x

There is a peculiar sect of Hindu dissenters in this district, known as Kumbhupatias. Their religion also known as that of Alekh appears to have originated in Angul and Dhenkanal Tributary States, attached to the Cuttack district, about the year 1866. The name of the founder of the religion appears unknown and its followers state that he is a spiritual being without form, who lives in the heavens. His chief disciple Gobind Dass is dead. Another known as Narsing Dass has erected his math (temple) in Banki. The Kumbhupatias have another temple in Malbahar in Banki. They have a book called malika, which contains predictions. They are divided into 3 sects, the Kumbhupatia Gosains, the Kanapatia Gosains, and the Ashritas. The 2 former sects have renounced the world, the followers of the one do not eat with those of the other. They appear to be of dirty habits, not washing after eating themselves, and not bathing at all. The third sect called 'Ashrita' do not renounce the world, nor deem celibacy essential nor are they turned out of caste. They look up to the other 2 sects as their Gurus or spiritual guides and follow their religion. They bathe in the early morning and all 3 sects turn their faces towards the sun at the time of rising and setting and prostrate themselves 5 or 7 times. They do not eat after sun set. Each sect has a separate temple or place of prayer. They recognise 'Bhagat' in the Hindu religious books but interpret it differently to the Hindus. They do not respect the images of the Hindu Gods, arguing that as no one has ever seen the supreme being it is impossible to form his image. They believe in the existence of 33 crores of Hindu Gods and Goddesses but do not obey them asserting that it is not necessary to obey the servant but only the master. Their worship consists of prayer and praise to the immaterial being when they call Alekh. I am not aware of any other sect

sect of Hindu Dissenters.

No.2473 J

Copy forwarded to the Commissioner of the Orissa Division with reference to the correspondence ending with his letter No. 96 dated the 19<sup>th</sup> march last and with a request that he will be as good as to make enquiries regarding the origin and growth of the sect and report the result.

By order of the Lieutt. Governor of Bengal  
Sd/- Illegible  
Under Secy. To the Govt. of Bengal

Cuttack  
Judicial the  
13<sup>th</sup> June, 81  
True Copy  
Sd-Illegible  
11.7.63

Banki Tahsil Office  
The 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1881

To  
The Commissioner of Orissa Division, Cuttack  
Sir,

With reference to your No. 224 of the 23<sup>rd</sup> June last I beg to submit an account of Alekh religion as far as it is known in Banki.

I have the honour to be  
Sir,  
Your most obedient servant,  
Tahasildar

Account of the Alekh religion

The Alekh religion did not originate in Banki. It is said to have originated on the Kapilass Hill in Dhenkanal. There was a hermit there named Makund Das. He was at first 'Achari Boishnab' believing in and worshipping Hindu dectus. He is said to have lived for some time only drinking water and then for nearly 12 years only drinking milk and to have worshipped idols while he continued an 'Achari Boishnab' till about the year 1856. When he despised and pelted stone at them, threw off his cloth Koupin (or rag to cover nakedness and kautha' or string of beads worn round the neck ) wore 'Kumbhipot' i.e. the pat or back of a tree called 'Kumbhi' to cover his nakedness left Kapilash went to Pooree where he lived for about 6 years at Lokanath Pada on the sand near Lokanath Mahadebs temple in mud hut which he made there. He then came to Darutheng in Khorda where he built a house (worth about Rs.150) and stayed there now and then but mostly moved here and there.

At Darutheng he first deified and entitled and renowned as 'Mahima Gosain's orders, discipled Narasingh Das of Killah Bodh, Bhogoban Das of Brahmanbasti in Ph. Sailo in

Zillah Cuttack and Krushna Das and Bhoig Das of Andharua and Madhab Das, Krupasindhu Das and Achutananda Das of Darutheng in Killah Khorda. These disciples went in several directions to propagate the religion. Mahima Gasain burnt the house at Darutheng and built a house in the jungle near the Andharua village. After some time he burnt that house and went to built a large house at Damua near Gadkhon in Killah Patia. Subsequently he burnt that house and went to built a house at Khuntuni in Killah Atgarh. There he gave a great feast and attracted the general faith and worship of the common people and the reputation of his excellencies spread far and wide. After some time he pulled down the house at Khuntuni and after wandering about in several directions for some time he came to Malbehadpur in Killah Banki about 1866 and there built a very large house worth about Rs.1000. He made a Dhuni on great religion fire I the house and leaving Narsingh Das in charge of it roamed in Dhenkanal, Angul, Talcher and other Killahs and again visited Killah Khorda and thence came with a thread 300 feet long to the Dhuni house at Malbehadpur and stopped and ate at a distance of 300 hats from round the house and gave some feasts in the banks of the Marsh called Ainapa. Numerous persons were Kumbhipat in the Dhuni house under the Mahima orders and they went to several parts of Orissa and to the Sambalpur and Ganjam districts to propagate the creed. This went on for about 7 years. During these period large numbers of domestic men and women adopted the faith and became devoted to the Mahima and were entitled Asrito (i.e. protected). In 1869 the Mahima Gosain demolished the dhuni and at Malbehadpur and built another house of 84 hats worth about 2000 rupees and after building several other houses and destroying them he left the Banki Killah and rambled and built houses in Dhenkanal, Angul, Talcher, Deonjhar and other killahs.

It was perhaps in Dhenkanal that the use of Kanapat (i.e. wearing a rag to cover nakedness) began.

About 4 years before the Mahima's coming to Banki Govinda Das died at Darutheng. About 1873 Kumbhipat got mad, committed homicide and was transported for life and Narsingh Das having abutted the offence was imprisoned for a year in the Cuttack jail. On his release from prison he came to Dhenkanal and he is still at Mahulpal in that Killah.

In 1875 the Mahima Gosain died in his house at Joranda in the same Killah. After his death the house left at Malbehadpur and Dhenkanal were sold by government as interstate property. The followers of the religion believed that the Mahima Gasain was divine and immortal but when he died like a mortal man the faith of the people in his religion gradually decreased and numerous 'Asritas' reverted to their former religion.

The Kumbhipatas and Kanapatias are ascetics they are of very dirty habits. The Kumbhipats neither bathe nor clean their teeth though they wash after easying (eating ?) themselves. The Kanapatias bathe but do not wash their teeth. Both classes take food cooked by people of all castes but they do not eat with each other. They do not take their meals within houses or from plates but in the open air and from earthen pots. The Asritas continue in their society and caste. They regard the Kumbhipats as their Guru or spiritual guides and follow their religion. They bathe early in the morning. All the 3 sects turn their faces towards the sun at its rise and set and prostrate themselves 7 times to Alekh. They do not eat after sunset. They misinterpret the Bhaghat so as to show that the Hindu religion is false. They do not obey or believe in the Hindu deities. They only worship the supreme being whom they call Alekh.

P.1327

There are now no Kumbhipatias or Kanapatias in Banki. They are mostly in the central provinces. There are a very few Asritas in Banki but they do not now openly and firmly profess the religion. They have almost lost their faith in it and

have only kept up some forms of it as they have not the moral courage to relinquish it entirely and return to their former religion. In fact they never learnt or understood what it really was but adopted it and had blind faith in it in ignorance. Being misled by the show of extraordinary qualities which they took to be super human and divine in the Mahima Gosain. The religion has thus almost died out in Banki.

Sd-  
Tahasildar

Banki  
6<sup>th</sup> August, 1881  
True Copy  
Secretary  
Board of Revenue, Orissa  
Cuttack,  
Sd/-Illegible  
11.7.63

1881

P.1328

No. 513

Angul Tahasil Office

The 12<sup>th</sup> August 1881

From

The Tahasildar of Angul

To

The Commissioner of Orissa, Cuttack

Sir,

With reference to your memo No. 224 dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June last and enclosures, I have the honour to submit my report regarding the origin and growth of a sect of Hindu dissenters called 'Alekh' or Mahima.

2. The founder of the sect called 'Mahima Swami' in this quarter is said to have lived at first in the Regulation District and for a long time at Puri when he was called 'Dhulia Babaji' a name applied to a sect of Hindu ascetics who besmear their body with ashes. In his 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, he is said to have lived in Kapilas a celebrated holy place in Dhenkanal where he was known as 'Phalahari Babaji' that is, to say an ascetic who lives on fruits. This state of his life extended for 12 years after which he was designated 'Kshiranira Payi' or an ascetic who lives on milk and water only for a period of another 12 years. During this third state he used to visit the late Moharaja of Dhenkanal whose mother is said to supply milk as token of respect towards him.

3. Towards the end of this 3<sup>rd</sup> stage he commenced to preach the new principle of Alekh or mahima, who is an invisible being without form and the only master of the universe. He first built a Tungi or place for worship at Darutheng a place in Dhenkanal which was afterwards abandoned and removed to Malbaharpur in Banki which is considered now the sacred place among the followers of Mahima and where the truth of Alekh or Mahima appears to have been discriminated about the year 1866. The

the Mahima Swami established a sacred pile of fire which is called 'Anahata Dhuni' or unextinguishable fire and which was the only altar for worshipping 'Mahima'.

4. The followers of Alekh or Mahima are seen to have been divided into 3 sects viz. the Kumbhipatias, the Kanapatias and the asritas. The former two have renounced the world and deem celibacy essential, the males amongst them are called 'Babas' or fathers and the females matas or mothers, the only difference that is found amongst these two classes is that the Kumbhipatias use barks of a tree called Kumbhi for their dressing whereas the Kanapatias, pieces of rags. They beg from door to door and are accustomed to take their food only in day time at an open place beside a public road. They have no distinction of caste nor have they any objection to beg boiled rice which they called Bhikshya from any man excepting the Raja, the Bramhin and the washerman whom they consider the only sinful beings in the world, Raja being responsible for the sins committed in his estate, the Brahmin being the spiritual guide accepts all sorts of offerings which is called 'Dan' or gift and the washer man who washes dirty clothes of the people owns the sin of others and is always impure. They are also no accustomed to live at any place for more than a day or to beg twice from one house. They are prohibited by their principles not to wash the teeth or to bathe, but they all preserve big-matted hairs which are called 'Jatas'. They turn their heads towards the sun at the time of rising and setting and lay prostrate for saluting 'Alekh' or Mahima and begging his shelter.

5. The 3<sup>rd</sup> sect viz. 'Ashritas do not renounce the world nor do they deem celibacy essential. They look upon the other two sects as their 'Gurus' or spiritual guide. They bathe generally early in the morning and wash their teeth by means of cow dung which they say they have been allowed by 'Mahima Swami'. They also do not keep matted hairs nor are seen to use 'Kumbhipata or Kanapata' like the

other two sects but use red clothes which are called 'Kasu or Cairikabasan like the brahmachari or Jogis amongst Hindus. They do not observe any Hindu ceremony or festival nor do they obey the gods belonging to the Hindu pantheon though they seem to own their existence. They perform their marriage ceremony in a very simple manner upon the public road or thoroughfare where the bride throws garland of flower round the neck of the bridegroom as a token of offering herself to him. When the friends and relatives of both the party call out loudly their Alekh Swami to protect the new pair from the worldly career of this life. It is also said that polygamy is prohibited among the asritas. For any misconduct, commitment of sin they penance by drinking cow dung solution. The asritas that are found in this killah are very few in number consisting of all classes of people. The principles of Mahima appear to have worked a very good example amongst the pans of Angul who on accepting them seem to hate burglary, a practice not uncommon amongst the Hindu Pan brethren. The asritas of Angul are also seem to have been out-cast or excommunicated by their Hindu brethren and to have formed a community of themselves. But they appear to observe caste distinction as they never take food from any one excepting from their fellow brethren.

6. The disciple of Mahima consider self denial and shelter in God as the source of their salvation. They have no ambition for any thing in the world nor they appear to possess self respect. Their principles appear in many wages to resemble with the principles of Nirvana amongst the Buddhists and Dasya Bhakti among the followers of Chaitanya. They appear to have no prescribed mode of worship but praise of god and prayer for his mercy. They recognise Bhagbat one of the Hindu religious books but interpret it in a different way to the Hindus. They have got a Malika a book of predictions which treats of the incarnation of Alekh in the shape of Mahima Swami to save the world from the burden of sin and to show way towards salvation. Besides this they have got other sastras or religious books of their own which contains songs and dialogues interpreting the truth of Alekh. Most of these songs are said to have been composed by one Bhima Bhoi a Khond by caste, who was born blind but afterwards said to have been endowed with the powers of sight by the Mahima Swami. They do not recognise the demise

of the Mahima Swami but say that he has disappeared and may at any time come to them as their saviour. It is said that Narsing Das is the principal follower of Mahima Swami who is at present living in Dhenkanal. But he is not seen to have any superiority over the other Kumbhipatias who are equally respected by each other and by the asritas. In fact the followers of Mahima appear to have no leader after the death of Mahima Swami. They have been scattered in almost all the Garjata of Orissa, in the Chhatisgar division of the Central Province in the regulations districts of Orissa and Ganjam among the Garjata their members are more numerous in the Estates of Dhenkanal.

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Banki, hindol and Angul than elsewhere.

No authentic accounts as to the origin, birth place and previous life of Mahima Swami could be found among the religious works of Mahimas. The Mahimā Swāmi is said to have built 21 tungis in the Estates of Augul, Banki, Dhenkanal and Hinol within the jurisdiction of which he used to preach his religion. He is also said to travel every day from one Tungi to another and would never stay at any place or beg his good or bhikhya before reaching a Tungi the relative distances of which were the limits of his journey. On his arrival at every Tungi his feet were washed by his followers and ashritas with Suptambrita being a mixture of milk, curd, sugar, honey, sandal wood powder and camphor, differing from the punchamruta of the Hindus by the addition of camphor and sandal which they used to drink as some thing holy for their salvation. In Angul there is a Tungi at Augarbandh which is at present repaired at Government expenses and reserved for the purpose of staying. The religion does not appear to be in progress in the quarter after the death of the Mahima Swami. Most of the disciples of his time have at present abandoned their principle and taken into the caste and community to which they formerly belonged. It is said that it has at present become more popular in the district of Sambalpur than anywhere else.

8. In the year 1857 on full moon (Purnima) day of the month of kartik a fair was held at Jaoka a place in Dhenkanal where a large multitude of the followers of Mahima had assembled. They had brought with them various kinds of valuables and precious kinds of cloth etc. to present Mahimā Swāmi who after their exhibition

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caused them to be burnt them in the sacred fire of fire or Dhuni. It is also said the Swami had offered them to the late Maharaja of Dhenkanal who declined to accept. The fair was first arranged to be held at Augarbandh in Angul but was afterwards removed to Dhenkanal with the intention of receiving assistance from the Maharaja who it is said, was a great friend to the Mahimā Swāmi and had patronised the spread of religion. The Mahimā Swāmi died in the month of Fagun following the fair.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant

Sd-

Tahasildar

1881

P. 1334

No. 40

From

Babu Banamali Sing  
Manager of the Dhenkanal State

To

The Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals, Orissa  
Dated, Dhenkanal, the 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1881

Sir,

With reference to your memo No. 224 of the 23<sup>rd</sup> June last I have the honour to submit the following report regarding the origin and growth of the sect called Kumbhipatia's.

2. The founder of the sect came to Dhenkanal about 30 years ago, he was then a follower of Hindoo Religion and was of the Vaisnava Sect. He lived in the Kapilash hills near the shrines of the Mahadev there for about 12 years . While there he used to drink with only and did not take any other food and was called Phalahari Gosain.

During the time he was at Kapilash, he was a devout worshipper of the Mahadev and took much pains in improving the place by cutting jungles and making gardens and looking after the Bhog of the idol and taking care of the pilgrims who went there. The Maharaja's mother had great respect for him and his food was supplied by her. He gradually succeeded in securing the respect of the people of the surrounding villages and it was believed by many that through his intercession they could get their objects fulfilled by the idol. Kapilash being a place naturally of good climate, many sick people generally go there and succeed after in restoring their health. The Phalahari Gosain used to take great care of the sick people who went there and

and he used to go to the temple of the Mahadeva in the dead of night after everyone had gone to his bed. It is supposed that these circumstances created a belief in the mind of the people that he was in secret communication with the idol and could by intercession relieve them of their diseases.

3. After thus remaining several years at Kapilash, when he found he had sufficiently established a reputation and secured the respect of people, he left the place and openly gave out to the people that the Mahadeva and other idols worshipped by the Hindoos were nothing else than stones and wood and that the worship of these destructible objects was quite useless.

4. When he left Kapilash he went towards Patiya and Khorda and made some disciples who went to different parts of the country and preached the new religion – a place of worship was first established at Darutheng in the Pooree District and a few days after another house of worship called Tungi was built at Marbeharpur in Banki, and gradually when the number of followers increased many other Tungis were built in almost all the Tributary States and in Sambalpur and the Cuttack Districts.

As far as I know the followers of this religion are almost all ignorant and illiterate people of the lower class of the Hindoo Community who were induced to adopt the new religion by hopes of enjoyment if they followed, and threats of perdition if they did not follow the precepts of the disciples.

3. The man who was at first called phalahari Gosain was afterwards designated Mahima Gosain and was believed to be an incarnation of the Almighty God. In the year of 1874 while I was on tour in the interior of Dhenkanal, the founder of the Mahima or Alekh religion went with me from place to place and was with me for about a week and I also saw him on several other occasions, but I never heard from him that he profess to be the creator of the world as disciples and followers believed him to be. From what I heard from him I concluded that he believed that the creator of the world was a spiritual being omnipresent and

omniscient without any form whom he called mahima and also Alekh Prava, and that he along could communicate with the Alekh Pravu and get down whatever he wished. He believed in the existence of the Hindoo Gods and Goddesses but said that they were under his command and that they were bound to obey whatever he wished them to do.

6. The Mahima Gosain who is the founder of the Alekh religion made Govind Das his first disciple, this man went towards Sambalpur and spread the religion in that side. A tungi (place of worship) was built at Marbeharpur and Narsing Das, the 2<sup>nd</sup> disciple was placed in charge of it. This man with the assistance of other minor disciples spread the religion in the Tributary Mahals and in Mahima Gosain succeeded in making many disciples and followers and on the days of full moon, thousands of men and women from distant parts were seen going to the Tungis at

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Marbeharpur and also at other places with Bangy loads of ghee, sugar, silk clothes, silver and brass utensils and many other valuable things.

7. At least the founder of the religion who was believed to be everexistent died, and the Tungis together with the goods which they contained were sold and most of the followers finding that the Mahima Gosain was no better than an ordinary man, disbelieved what he had taught and came back to the Hindoo religion. The disciples and followers who had left their homes and been out-casted could not go back to their families and were obliged to continue in the new life they had opted.

Some of the followers also who did not renounce the world, but were special favourities still follow the Mahima religion.

8. At present there are only two places of worship, in Dhenkanal, one at Joranda where the Mahima Gosain. Died and was burried, and another at mahulpara where Narsing Das now lives. The Kumbhipatia go to Joranda and the Kanapatiyas to Mahalpara and these two sects are not in good terms with each other.

9. During the time the Mahima Gosain. Lived the Kumbhipatias and kanapatias were not considered as different sects. A man who wished to adopt the new religion first became an Assrita which means a dependant. In this state he was not required to leave his home or caste – afterwards if he wished to renounce the world he was to eat with everybody without distinction of caste and remain always at

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at one of the places of worship called Tungis. In this state he was allowed to wear cloth, and was therefore called Kanapatiya. After remaining in this state for some time if any of the Kanapatia was considered fit be Kumbhipatia, the Mahima Gosain used to favour him with a Kumbhipata bark of a tree called Kumbhi and from that time he would never wear cloth but only the bark of Kumbhi tree.

10. The Kumbhipatias and Kanapatias do not bathe but wash after eating themselves and them do not eat after sunset. They have no books of religion except a few songs in praise of the Mahima and Alekh which they sing when they meet together in the evening.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your most obedient servant

Sd- Banamaly Singh

Manager of the Dhenkanal State

1881

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No. 402 dt. 1.11

To

The Secretary to Government,  
Judicial Department

Sir,

With reference to your endorsement no. 2473 J of the 13<sup>th</sup> June last I have the honour to submit the following report on the origin and growth of the sect of Hindus dissentors who profess to be the followers of Alekh.

2. The founder of the sect is said to have been Mokound Das. He lived for a long time in Puri as an Achari Voisnub and was known as the Dhoolia Babaji, from the fast of body with ashes.

3. About 30 years ago he left Puri and came to Dhenkanal one of the feudatory states of Cuttack, where he selected as his dwelling place, the Kapilas hills, near shrine Mahadev. During the 1<sup>st</sup> twelve years of his residence at Kapilas, Mokounda Das live on fruits and accordingly known as the 'Phalahari Babaji'. The next twelve years was passed on milk and water which secured him the cognomen of Khirnir Payi. During his sojourn at Kapilas he was known to be a devout worshipper of the local idol and took much pains in improving the place by cutting jungles, making gardens, looking of to the Bhog or sacred food of the idol and taking care of the pilgrims who visit the hills periodically. This procured him the respect of the mother of the later Maharaja of Dhenkanal, who supplied his food. He gradually succeeded in securing the respect of the people of the surrounding villages and the popular belief was that he was in secret communion with the idol and could successfully intercede with it on behalf of its votaries. The

currency of this belief was further facilitated by the fact of his taking special of the sick people who restored to Kapilas for the benefit of their health and being generally

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succeeded in getting it restored and his visiting temple at the dead of the night while every one had returned to rest.

4. After thus remaining at Kapilas for several years and finding that he had sufficiently established his reputation and ..... the respect of the people Mokound Das left the place and began to preach that Mahadev and the other idols worshipped by the Hindus were nothing else but stone and wood and that the worship of these destructible articles, was useless and of no avail that the creation of the universe was Alekh or Mahadev for literally means glorious a spiritual being without from omnipresent and omniscient and that he along could held communion with him and get his prayer granted. He exchanged his Kapin (waist cloth) and kauti (wooden band) worn round the neck) the two distinction feature in the exterior of a Voisnub and wore Kumbhipat ( the bark of a tree called Kumbhi ) to cover his nakedness.

5. From Kapilas Mokound Das went Puri when he remained for sometime in about on the lands near the temple of Lokanath Mahadev. He next came to Darutheng in the government state of Khorda in Puri where he built a Image ( a place of worship) and commenced to propagate the new doctrine. It was at this place that Mokound Das was deified and began to be addressed as the Mahima Gosain. It appeared that one Govind Das was his first and Narsing Das his second disciple others followed them example and in course of time all these followers dispersed on all sides for the propagation of the new doctrine. Thirdly after a place were opened in some other remaining feudatory states as well as in Sambalpur, Puri and Cuttack at some of these places of worship, the Mahima Gosain gave large feast which were numerously attended.

In 1857 in the month of Kartik on the day of Full moon fair was held at Jacka in Dhenkanal where a large number of followers of the Gosain assembled with rich presents including valuable clothes, silver utensils etc. it is said that the Babaji or Swami as he was also addressed offered those presents to the late Maharaja of Dhenkanal and on his decline to accept them, they were openly burnt in the fire of the sacred Dhuni (fire kept at by religious mendicants). Thus in a few years the Mahima Gosain succeeded in making many disciples and followers and on the days of the full moon thousands of men and women from distant parts of the country might have been seen wandering their way to the Tungis, with heavy loads of ghee, sugar and other valuable presents. It is said that at present the new faith is more popular in Sambalpur and in any other districts. It is confined mostly to the ignorant and illiterate people of the lower classes of the Hindoo community who were it is said induced to adopt the new religion by hopes of enjoyment if they followed and threats of perdition if they did not follow its precepts.

7. The disciples of the Mahimā Swāmi incalculated self denial and resignation to the God as the sources of salvation. They do not aspire of the world greatness or pleasures extreme humility is one of their characteristics. They have no prescribed modes of worship except praise of God and prayer for mercy. They recognise the Bhahat, but interpret it in a different way from the hindoos. They have a Malika which treats of the incarnation of Alekh in the shape of Mahimā Swāmi to redress the world from sin and to indicate the way to salvation. Besides this they have got another book containing songs and dialogues interpreting the truth of Alekh. Most of those songs are said to have been composed of Bheem Bhoi,

a Khond, who is said to have been born blind and obtained suddenly with sight of the Mahimā Swāmi.

8. The following extract from the report of the Manager of Dhenkanal throws some light on the real sentiments of the swami.

The man who was at first called the Phalahari Gosain was afterwards designated Mahima Gosain and believed to be an incarnation of the almighty God. In the year 1874, while I was on tour in the interest of Dhenkanal the founder of the Mohima of Alekh religion went and also saw him on several other occasions but I never heard from him that he professed to be the creator of the "World as his disciples and followers believed him to be from what I heard from him I concluded that he believed that the creator of the world Gusa spiritual being from the present and omniscient without any from whom he called Mohima and also Alekh prabhu and that he along could communicate with the Alekh pravu and get down what he wished. He believed in the existence of the Hindoo Gods and Goddesses that they were under his commands and that they were found to obey whatever he wished them to do.

9. The follower of the Alekh Swami are divided into 3 sects ( 1) the Kumbhipatias (2) the Kanapatias and (3) the Asritas. The males are called Babas and the females Matas, the difference between them being that a Kumbhipatia wears the bark of the kumbhi tree and Kanapatia pieces of rag. They beg from door to door, have no distinction of caste and take their food only during the day time at an open place on a public road. They eat food cooked by people of any caste except the Raja, a Brahmin and Washer man, whom they consider as sinful beings in

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they consider as sinful beings in this world, the Raja as he is responsible for the sins committed in his state, the Brahmin as he accepts all sorts of gifts from the sinful persons and the washerman as he washed sinful people's dirty clothes. They are not accustomed to live at any one place for more than a day or to beg there from the same house. They wear long matted hair and also do not bathe. They turn their head towards the sun at the time of rising and setting and prostrate themselves several times to beg shelter and mercy of the Alekhsami. The asritas do not forsake the world nor do they deem celibacy essential, they bathe generally in the morning and clean their teeth with cow dung. They do not wear long hair nor do they use Kumbhipat or Kanapat like their conferees, but use Gerua

Basan or clothe coloured with Gerua or red earth, like the Brahmachari of the Hindus. They do not observe and Hindoo ceremony or festival neither do they respect Gods of the Hindus. They perform their marriage ceremony in a very simple way by the side of a public road a thoroughfare. The bride puts a garland of flower round the neck of his bridegroom in token of offering herself to him and her friends and relatives of both bands call upon their Alekh Swami to protect the new pair in their career through life. Polygamy is prohibited among the Asritas. For any misconduct and offender is made to do penance by drinking a solution of cowdung. The asritas consider the other two sects as their Gurus or spiritual guides. The Tahasildar of Angul report that the new faith of Mohima has brought a change for their better out-turn. Pans of that Killah who were notorious for Those who have accepted the new faith regard theft with abhorrence.

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10. In 1875 the Mahima Swami who was believed to be immortal died at Joranda in Dhenkanal and the Tungies together with the goods they contained were sold as intestate property. Most of the followers of the new faith finding that the swami was no better than an ordinary mortal disbelieved what he had inculcated and reversed to Hinduism those of his disciples and followers who had left their homes and friends and had embraced .

11. At present there are only two places of worship in Dhenkanal, one at Joranda where the Mahimā Swāmi died and was interned and another at Mahalpada where Narsing Das lives. The Kumbhipatias resort to the former and the Kanapatias to be latter of those places. They are reported not to be in good terms with each other during the life time of Mahimā Swāmi . The Kumbhipatias and Kanapatias are not regarded as distinct sect. Any person who wished to adopt the new religion first became as asritas which literally means protected was not required to live his house and friends obtaining if he wished to forsake the world, he was required to eat with every person without distinction of caste and to remain at any of the places of worship called Tungis. In their noviciate he was allowed to wear cloth and was therefore called Kanapatia. If after trial any of the

Kanapatias was considered fit to be a Kumbhipatia the Mahima Swami favoured him with a Kumbhipat, bark of the Kumbhi tree and from that time he was prohibited to wear clothes.

12. The followers of the Mahima Swami appear to have now leader after his death , they are scattered throughout the Garajata of Orissa in the Chhatisgarh.

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Division central province, in the regulated districts of Orissa and in Ganjam. The adjoining districts of the Madras presidency the system has however taken most in Sambalpur district than elsewhere.

Regd No. 490

1881 Judl Department

From

Under Secretary Government of Bengal

No. 4209 dated 21<sup>st</sup> October

Received 28<sup>th</sup> -do-

Collection – 4 Mis.

Copy forwarded to the Magistrate of Cuttack/Pooree/Balasore/Oriya Translator to Govt.

File No. 13

Sub : - Forwarded a copy of Government resolution of the 21<sup>st</sup> October, 81 describing the origin and growth of the Alekh religion.

.....

Judicial

Dated Calcutta, the 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1881

Read the order under mentioned papers regarding an attack made on the Temple of Jagannath in Pooree by a party of fanatics called 'Alekh' or Kumbhipatias and regarding the tenets and customs of the sect. :

Letter from the Commissioner of Orissa, Div. No. H.I. dt. 16<sup>th</sup> March 1881 & enclosures.

Letter from the Commissioner of the Orissa Division No. 96 dated the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1881 and enclosures.

Letter from the Assistant Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Province No. 1862-96 dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1881 and enclosures.

Letter from the Assistant Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces No. 3069-161, dated the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1881 and enclosures.

Intimation was received by the Commissioner of Orissa on the 9<sup>th</sup> March last, that a party of fanatics, consisting of twelve men and three women, had entered the Temple of Jagannath in Pooree on the 1<sup>st</sup> idem, with the object of burning the idol of Jagannath, and that a disturbance had taken place, in which one of the fanatics had lost his life. The party in question were residents of Sambulpore in the Central Provinces and they stated that they were induced to come to Pooree in consequence of one of their co-religionists (the deceased) having been commanded by their 'Guru' an invisible being without shape or form, to bring the images of Jagannath, Balaram, and Subhadra out of the temple and to burn them on the road. For the purpose of carrying this order into effect, a large body of men and women left their homes in

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in Sambalpur, taking their children with them, but when within a few miles of Pooree, twelve men and three women separate themselves from the main body and proceeded them to the temple.

2. The disturbance formed the subject of an immediate investigation by the local authorities, from the reports submitted by them the following facts have collated.

One of the door-keepers of the temple, who was on duty at the Lion Gate when the disturbance occurred, in describing the stated that about twenty men and women who were almost in a state of nudity, came up to the temple shouting 'Alekh, Alekh'. They had with them an earthen pot containing cooked rice, of which, judging from the state of their hands, they had evidently only recently partaken. The door keeper tried to prevent them from entering the temple by closing the gate, but they succeeded in pushing it open and forcing their way into the building accompanied by some 200 pilgrims. One of the fanatics still held in hand the pot of rice, but on being remonstrated with by the door keeper, he consented to leave it outside, and was then permitted to enter. The party next proceeded to break down the door of the Bhogmandap, the apartment in which the offerings of the worshippers of the shrine, the crowd of spectators having by this time doubled. Finding the door called Jai Bijai shut, the fanatics went into the enclosure and rushed about like mad men and women, endeavouring to find an entrance in some other direction. The crowd of pilgrims at this time was estimated to number upwards of a thousand, and a great deal of pushing and struggling took place, in the midst of which one of the fanatics fell or was pushed on to the stone pavement.

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He was lifted up by some of his companions and was assisted out of the temple, and shortly he expired.

3. The rioters were arrested by the Police and were placed on their trial on charges framed under section 147 and 297 of the Indian Penal Code before the Deputy Magistrate of Pooree and on conviction were each sentenced to three months rigorous imprisonment.

4. Shortly after the arrest of the party of fanatics above referred to the Assistant Superintendent of Police learnt that a Second Party were on their road to Pooree with a similar object in view, and he accordingly sent out a patrol and

caused a them to be arrested before they could enter the town and do any mischief. The second party consisted of six men, eleven women and eleven women and eleven small children. The adults were placed on their trial as persons having no ostensible means of subsistence, but they were acquitted by the Deputy Magistrate on the grounds that they were in the same position as hundreds of other beggars and that there was nothing in their case to raise a suspicion that they earned their livelihood by improper means.

5. The rioters being inhabitants of Sambulpore, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces was asked to favour the Lieutenant Governor with information regarding the tenets of the sect to which they belong, and pursuits. In compliance with this request, the Chief Commissioner furnished this government with the following particulars on the subject.

6. There is a peculiar sect of Hindu dissenters in the Sambulpore district, known as Kumbhipatias. The Kumbhipatias is derived from Kumbhi the name of a kind of tree, and 'pat', the bark of a tree, and the sect is so called because its followers make ropes from the bark of the tree and wear them round their waists.

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The religion is also known as that of Alekh, and its followers claim revelation as its foundation. Alekh Swamy, the god incarnate, used, it is said, to reside in the Himalayas, but about the year 1864 he came to Malbabarpore in Banki, Zillah Cuttack and revealed the religion professed by the Kumbhipatias to 64 persons, the principal of whom was Govind Dass, and it is chiefly owing to the exertions of these disciples that the religion was propagated. Alekhswamy (which signifies 'the lord whose attributes cannot be described in writing) removed to Dehenkanal, a feudatory state in Cuttack, where, for three years immediately preceding his death, he led the life of a mendicant and wanderer. Although the religion originated in Cuttack it spread more rapidly in the Sambulpore, and men of all classes, except the Uriya brahmins, are freely embracing it. It is not so much the peculiarity of the rules of any particular cast or sect that tends to increase the number of converts to it as the position in life of the converts themselves: thus in Khinda the people of a whole village embraced the Kumbhipatia religion because

the Gaontia had done so. The names of some thirty villages are given as those in which the Kumbhipatias chiefly reside.

7. There are three sects of Kumbhipatias (1) the Kumbhipatias proper, who wear ropes made of the bark of trees, (2) the Kanapatias, who wear rags, and (3) the Asritas or Grosthes, who lead a family life. The first two sects renounce the world and make no distinction of caste. They eat food given by people of any caste, except by a Raja, who is supposed to accumulate his wealth by oppressing and torturing his subjects, by a Brahmin or Bhandari, because he accepts gifts made in shradh ceremonies, by a washerman, because he washes

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the clothes of all classes of people, and by a hadi, because his occupation is filthy. The third sect do not renounce the world nor deem celibacy essential, nor are they turned out caste. They look up to the other two sects as their 'gurus' or spiritual guides and follow their religion. They bathe in the early morning.

8. Each sect has a separate temple or place of prayer. They believe in one supreme Being, who is called Alekh, truthfulness, obedience to spiritual guidance, and faith are the principal tenets of their religion. They believe in the existence of the thirty three crores of Hindu Gods and goddesses, but they do not respect their images, as they argue that it is impossible to represent the form of the Supreme Being whom no one has ever seen, nor do they worship the Hindu gods and goddesses, there is indeed reason to think that, unlike the followers of Ramanand, Kabir and Chaitunya, they have an antipathy to them as they dislike to touch the tulsi plant, because it is held sacred by the Hindus, and will not eat the flesh of a goat, because it is offered in sacrifice to the Hindu goddess Kali. They eat and drink only in the day time, if they feel hungry or thirsty at night they can drink water only. They pray in the open air everyday (morning and evening) with their faces turned towards the sun and with their hands folded in the prayer, one of the them recites in humble words and suppliant voice, the praises of the Almighty, the others repeating the words after him. They bow down, prostrating themselves to the ground, 64 times, corresponding to the number of discipline, but rely on the help of their god alone

for recovery, in case of severe illness, they take a little earth from the prayer ground, mix it with rice water and drink the mixture.

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They take a little earth from the prayer ground, mix it with rice water, and drink the mixture. During the past two years the Kumbhipatias have divided into sections. Formerly Bhima Kondh of Snepore to have been endowed with natural talents of a superior order. Though unable to read and write, he had some Oriya religious books, such as Mahabharat and Srimat Bhagbat, read to him, and the education he thus received enabled him to compose two or three volumes of verses in praise of the Almighty, which, it is asserted, would do credit to any Oriya scholar of the present day. He exercised great influence over his followers. The relations existing between him and a female companion, however, excited suspicion among his adherents, who however, did not venture to question the purity of his conduct until the women became pregnant. Bhima endeavoured to deceive his followers by telling them that the women would give birth to Arjun, who would root out all unbelievers. They believed this story and waited until the child was born, when, to their great surprise, they found that the woman gave birth to a girl. Bhima accounted for this by saying that it had recently been revealed to him that the woman would give birth to a female, who would destroy all unbelievers by means of her charms. The child, however, died a few days later, and Bhima then tried to mislead his followers still further by saying that the fairy had quitted this world because she had found it filled with vices of mankind. He was now deserted by most of his followers, who formed a separate faction but he is still highly adored and honoured by the remainder. He has erected an altar over which he and his wife sit in the morning. His followers worship them and move round the altar until the time for their morning meal arrives

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when their feet are washed with milk, which is afterwards drunk by their adherents. Another cause of dissension was because Bhima pretended that he himself was their God.

9. The Kumbhipatias who made a crusade against Jagannath were resident of Chunderpore. Dasaram, the leader of the party which proceeded to Pooree, and who was killed in the scuffle at the temple, thought that if Jagannath were burnt, it would convince the Hindus of the futility of their religion, and that the whole world thereby embrace the true religion. This account is given by some of the Kumbhipatias whereside in Sambulpore, and it is not improbable that the man was actuated by dreams, in which the Kumbhipatias firmly believe. If any member of the fraternity breaks any of the rules, speak an untruth or commits a crime, he is ex-communicated. A man undergoes an examination before he is admitted into the sect. It is stated that the Tahsildar of Ungul in Cuttack has been successful in reducing crime within his jurisdiction by encouraging a criminal class called 'Pans' to embrace the Kumbhipatia religion.

Order – ordered that this resolution be published in the Supplement to the Calcutta Gazette and that a copy of it be communicated to the Commissioner of the Orissa Division.

By order of the Lieutenant Governor  
Of Bengal  
Horacea Cookrell  
Secretary to the Government of Bengal

No. 4209 J

Copy forwarded to the Commissioner of the Orissa Divn. for information, in continuation of endorsement No. 2473 J dated the 13<sup>th</sup> June last.

Calcutta  
The 21<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1881

By order of Lieutenant Governor  
Sd-  
For Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal