

## **History of Radhakanta Temple of Khardaha**

It is about 600 years ago, one kulin Brahmin Shri Hari Mishra ,descendent of five brahmins of Konouj (UP) came to Village Khardah situated on the bank of river Ganga. He settled there along his three sons namely Jogeshwar Pandit, Kamdeb Pandit and Bhudeb. At that point of time khardah was full of Jungle and water bodyarea.

Out of three sons of Hari Mishra, Jogeshwar Pandit and Kamdeb Panditlived were having Historic personality. They created a system of “twenty one Mail” with the help of their cousin Debibar Ghatak for the purpose of bondage amongst Kulin Brahmtn.Those mail were known as “Khardah mail ,Phulia mail ,Sarbanandi mail etc” . From that point of time their title became Mukhopadhyay,Bandopadhyay, Chattopadhyay etc but they were better known by Pandit due to their Schorlarly activities.

Kamdeb Panditwas residing on the east of present cremation ground”Nathupal Ghat” and due to their legacy the area wse named KULINPARA. His grandson pandit Chand Mukhopadhyay was a pandit in Sanskrit language and devotee of Lord Krishna. He was the man who brought the Idols of Radha and Radhakanta from Gour,the then Capital of Bengal.

According to Pitritarpan, a book written by Justice Rash Behari Mukhopadhyay, a scion of the family, Chand Pandit had a dream. It is said that Radhakanta Jew appeared in his dream and told him that He and Radha were lying hidden in a jungle in Gour in a most uncared condition. The owner of the deities, a poor Brahmin, feared destruction of his temple and the deities from the Muslim rulers

of Gour who were against Hinduism. In the dream Chand Pandit was asked to rescue the deities from Gour and install them in his residence at Khardaha.

Next day Chand started on foot for Gour and after five days journey he reached there and started enquiring about the Brahmin who had hidden the deities of the Idols.

During this period Sultan Ruknuddin Barbak Shah was the ruler of Gour. According to famous historian Romila Thapar's "History of Gour", Ruknuddin reigned during 1481 and 1485 A.D. So it can be safely said that Chand was in Gour around 1478 A.D. approximately.

Chand ultimately traced the Brahmin who owned the idols and narrated his dream to that Brahmin. Chand requested him to hand over the deities to him. The Brahmin said that he was unable to look after the idols in fear of Muslim antagonism and finding Chand to be a real devotee of Lord Krishna, handed over the idols to Chand under the condition that the name of Radhakanta Jew must not be changed after installation at Khardaha.

Chand Mukhopadhyay agreed to abide by the agreement and brought the present idols in his residence at Khardaha. He arranged for a "Jagya" in presence of the eminent persons of Khardaha with all religious ceremonies. Chand's residence was a thatched Kutir, located where one of his descendent Sukesh Mukhopadhyay has built his house. Radhakanta Jew was worshipped there for nearly 300 years till Narahari Shiromoni (Mukhopadhyay) built a temple at Nathupal Ghat Road in Kulinpara in the year 1825. Radhakanta Jew and Radha were installed in the present temple after all religious ceremonies.

The temple, however, could not be fully completed by Narahari Shiromoni for need of funds. Ten years later Pandit Gobindo Chandra Bidyaratna, Narahari's eldest son completed the Natmandir.

The present idol of Radha is not, however, the original one, as she was stolen from the Mandir. A new idol was brought from Nbadwip and installed after a religious celebration. A society has been formed to manage the affairs of the temple with office bearers from the family of Kandarpa Siddhanto Bagish, father of Narahari Shiromoni.

Source : (i) "Pitritarpan" Book written by Rashbehari Mukhopadhyay.

(ii) "History of Gour" Book written by Romila Thappar.

(iii) Narration of Sunity Mukherjee based on "Sruti".