

Byanjana Dwadashi

February 24, 2022

In news—The festival of Byanjana Dwadashi ended in Odisha's temple town of Puri recently.

About Byanjana Dwadashi-

- It is **celebrated by adherents of Vaishnavism, a sect within Hinduism.**
- The festival **celebrates a variety of food (Byanjana in Odia) on the 12th day (Dwadashi) of the Sukla Paksha** or waxing phase of the moon in the month of *Margashira* (mid-December to mid-January).
- **Vaishnavites, through this festival, commemorate an episode of the Mahabharata where Yashoda observes that her son Krishna is pale and weak.**
- **She realizes that this is because of lack of proper nutrition** at a time when Krishna has devoted all his energy in fighting demons.
- In order to fulfill his nutritional requirements, **she prepares a lot of delicacies and feeds him.**
- Krishna is not the only consumer of these delicacies but his friends – the Gopala Balakas or cowherd boys – also eat with him.
- **This episode was re-enacted in the Vaishnava mutts of Puri by the medieval seer and mystic, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu,** after he reached Puri around 500 years ago.
- **This tradition of celebrating varieties of traditional food and sharing them has been going on since then** and is prevalent in the Vaishnava mutts of not only Puri and other parts of Odisha, but throughout the country.
- **The ingredients used for such food include** locally available seasonal vegetables, fruits, roots, nuts, grains, pulses and greens. Devotees also offer milk and milk products, molasses, oil and sugar.

About Chaitanya Mahaprabhu-

- He was a 15th century Vedic spiritual leader, who is considered an avatar of Lord Krishna by his followers.
- He **founded Gaudiya Vaishnavism**, which is a religious movement that promotes Vaishnavism or worship of Lord Vishnu as the Supreme Soul.
- Gaudiya Vaishnavism teaches the acceptance of **Bhakti yoga as a method to realize the ultimate truth**.
- He is credited with popularizing the 'Maha Mantra' or 'Hare Krishna Mantra.'
- **'Siksastakam,' a 16th century prayer of eight verses, is the only written record of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings.**
- The teachings and philosophy of Gaudiya Vaishnavism are based on this Sanskrit text.

Further

reading:

<https://journalsofindia.com/chaitanya-mahaprabhu/>