

Routledge New Horizons in South Asian Studies

CASTE AND EQUALITY IN INDIA

**A HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF DIVERSE
SOCIETY AND VERNACULAR DEMOCRACY**

Akio Tanabe



Caste and Equality in India

This book presents an alternative view of caste in Indian society by analysing caste structure and change in local communities in Orissa from historical and anthropological perspectives.

Focusing on the agricultural society in the Khurda district of Orissa between the eighteenth century and 2019, the book links discussions on the current transformation of society and politics in India with analyses of long-term historical transformations. The author suggests that, beyond status and power, there is another value which is important in Indian society, namely ontological equality, which functions as the politico-ethical ground for asserting respect and concern for the lives of others. The book argues that the value of ontological equality has played an important role in creating and affirming the diverse society which characterises India. It further contends that the movement towards vernacular democracy, which has become conspicuous since the second half of the 1990s, is a historically groundbreaking event which opens a path beyond the postcolonial predicament, supported by the affirmation of diversity by subalterns based on the value of ontological equality.

This important contribution to the study of Indian society will be of interest to academics working on the social, political and economic history, sociology, anthropology and political science of South Asia, as well as to those interested in social and political theory.

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Preface

This book presents an alternative view of caste in Indian society by analysing caste structure and change in a local community from a long-term perspective. It primarily focuses on agrarian society in Khurda district in Orissa¹ state between the eighteenth century and the present.

Based on research that began in 1990, I initially planned to examine the place of ‘power’—dominance, kingship and state—in Indian history and society as a critique of the then prevalent academic focus on ‘status’ or brahmanical hierarchy proposed by Dumont. However, as I trod the path of my research, I began to sense that, along with the hierarchy of status and the centrality of power, there was another, perhaps more profound, value that has supported socio-political integration in India, namely ‘ontological equality’, i.e. the equality or oneness of all beings at the ontological level, which, though philosophically orthodox, remains a socially subaltern value as opposed to the hegemonic ones of hierarchy and dominance.

This book is an attempt to locate the subaltern value of ontological equality in the history of India as a diverse society over the past three hundred years. It argues that the value of ontological equality has played an important role in providing the means and place of livelihood for diverse social groups, despite the hegemony of hierarchy and dominance. That is to say, ontological equality has been the basis of diverse society. It supported the life of diversity-in-common.² This book, moreover, contends that the deepening of democracy from below in the post-postcolonial transformation of Indian society from the 1990s—the emergence of what I call ‘vernacular democracy’—is supported by the contemporary actualisation of the affirmation of diversity based on the value of ontological equality.

In the three hundred years that this book covers, Indian society has undergone many changes. To understand these changes, I categorise modern Indian history into three key periods: ‘early modern’ refers to the period from the mid-sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century, ‘colonial modern’ to the early nineteenth century onwards and ‘contemporary’ to the period after independence (1947).³ Early modern India is characterised by the deepening and expansion of marketisation, the penetration of state power into localities, greater connectivity in socio-cultural–economic life and increasing utilisation of natural resources (Richards

1997, 2003, Kulke and Rothermund 1998, Stein 1998, Kotani 2007, Roy 2013). We call it early modern since we can identify the formative development of features we recognise as modern, that is, of today's age.

Early modern development significantly affected the workings of the social system that largely regulated the lifeworld of local society, ensuring the livelihood of diverse social groups. However, from the mid-eighteenth century, Indian society was gradually colonised, the region of Orissa coming under British rule in 1803. Although the British began to rule as one of the early modern post-Mughal successor states, India experienced a definite transformation of regime in the 1820s and 1830s with the development of colonialism. Collision and confrontation occurred, as well as negotiation and compromise, as India's own historical dynamism met new ideas and institutions introduced by the British. Eventually, a socio-political system was created that included inconsistencies and ambivalences particular to colonial modernity. Here Western modernity, represented by rationality and freedom, and Indian tradition, represented by religion and caste, were seen in contradistinction to each other. This colonial dichotomy has made the value of ontological equality invisible.

Striking vestiges of the colonial experience can be seen in independent post-colonial India. Postcolonial refers to a condition in which political independence has been achieved, but elements of colonial systems and values persist. The colonial dichotomy persisted in postcolonial India. Yet, the postcolonial condition contains the creative potential to transcend its own predicaments. It has offered India a chance to search for a new self. Social changes after the second half of the 1990s appear to indicate that India has finally moved beyond the postcolonial to the post-postcolonial period. Part of this book attempts to illustrate the extraordinary significance of this transformation from the viewpoint of a local community through three hundred years of its history.

I use the methods of historical anthropology to understand the dynamism of Indian society, going back and forth between the past and the present. I analyse a combination of historical records and fieldwork to do so, using oral and written sources collected in the field to trace and reconstruct a microhistory spanning more than three centuries. In this book, historical transformation and social memory are combined with ethnographic research of contemporary society. The latter not only provides primary data for analysing present-day socio-political relationships, but also supplements the understanding of historical resources through cultural semantic exegesis. Memories of the past are also analysed as expressions of peoples' historical consciousness.

Concentrating on the interaction between the historical and the everyday, this book will attempt to illustrate how the patterns of meaning and relationships that shape the lifeworld of Indian society emerge and change. For, while our everyday lives preserve continuity as traditions supported by history, they also achieve historical change. In this respect, the lifeworld of the everyday holds its own historical depth while also working in concert with the world's historical changes.⁴ I aim to depict and problematise the relationship between the structure of the everyday and historical transformations.

Re-examining the historiography of modern India from the perspective of historical anthropology we see an important principle underlying Indian history—the value of ontological equality—being overlooked. Since the colonial period, this value has been hiding in the shadow of caste hierarchy and the politico-economic structures of dominance. Yet, it remains important in the socio-cultural sphere of everyday life and is reappearing as a principle that can potentially reshape modern Indian society. This book contends that the trend towards vernacular democracy, conspicuous since the second half of the 1990s, is a historically groundbreaking event supported by the affirmation of diversity based on the value of ontological equality. By vernacular democracy, I mean a form of democracy that is embedded in the vernacular lifeworld, the formation of which involves both the vernacularisation of democratic politics and democratisation of social relationships. It is produced by the creative mediation between embodied cultural practices and values and democratic ideas and institutions.

The concept of equality in the Indian tradition does not in itself give rise to any concrete socio-political relationships or institutions, unlike the idea of ‘equality of right’ in modern political philosophy. Nevertheless, I maintain that the value of ontological equality has provided the ethos for people to care for and recognise the existence of diverse others in human–human and human–nonhuman relationships and that this is an essential, if latent, principle of life in India. Ontological equality or the equality of being is the idea that the Absolute, while transcending all beings, is at the same time immanent, permeating each being in the world. This means that all beings—whether human or nonhuman, alive or non-alive—are equal at the ontological level, as their essence is one and the same.

This is expressed in the ‘great words’ (*mahāvākya*) of the vedas in such phrases as “I am Brahman” and “Thou art That”.⁵ In India, this idea is not only orthodox, but has also expanded into many forms, and is a popular idea that is widely shared. In the history of India, it has been expressed not only in the vedas but also in various other philosophically diverse forms, such as in Buddhism and the Bhakti movements. In early modern Orissa, it was sonorously expressed, for instance, in popular Vaishnavite movements.⁶ Though ontological equality has attracted many scholars and intellectuals in the field of Indology and religious studies, less attention has, however, been paid to its social and political implications.

In what ways is socio-cultural diversity in India connected with the value of ontological equality? I would like to explain this by taking up the Indian logic of tetralemma (*catuskoṭi*) that goes beyond the law of excluded middle and allows the co-existence of A and not-A (Yamauchi 1974, Kioka 2014). Against the law of excluded middle in Aristotle’s syllogism, which has had a strong influence on the history of Western thought, classical Indian logic accepts the ‘middle’, namely, ‘both A and not-A’ and ‘neither A nor not-A’. In real life, diverse beings exist in relation to each other—each reflecting and containing the other (Izutsu 1989: 54). The logic of tetralemma grasps the world of mutual dependency, rather than the world of division and exclusion.⁷

The point will be made clearer if we compare Indian logic with Western logic. According to orthodox Western logic, A is A. It cannot be ‘both A and not-A’

or 'neither A nor not-A'. It has to be 'either A or not-A'. This means that A and not-A must fight over truth and existence. Either A or not-A will be the master, and the other must be subjugated and enslaved.⁸ However, in the world of Indian logic, A and not-A can coexist along with many other diversities. In fact, the Absolute or the ontological equality can find its expression in the world only in the form of diversity. The totality of the One expresses itself in the Many that are interdependent and mutually reflect and contain each other. This principle of life allows for the existence of diversity, where various beings share and participate in the world together.⁹

Focusing on the value of ontological equality is crucial to understanding the dynamics of India as diverse society in the long duration of history. Against the notion that diversity in society is a feature of modern, liberal and open civil society, and not of traditional, closed and hierarchical society, this book suggests that India demonstrates a form of diverse society that challenges such progressivist and dichotomous thinking. Diverse society in India is not based on individual freedom but on the principle of affirmation of diverse beings in their interdependent and mutually reflecting relationships.

To put it schematically, India's history, society and politics have been characterised by the interaction of the three values of 'the hierarchy of status', 'the centrality of power' and 'the equality of being'. It is certain that status and power together have played essential roles in defining Indian society from above. However, the social relations pertaining to castes are not regulated by these concepts alone. When social and political structures have become too rigid, threatening the basic flow of life, the value of the equality of being has provided an ethical foundation for the criticism of and resistance to these socio-political systems. It has functioned as a cultural resource that supports social change from below.

The complementary and contradictory interaction of the three values—the hierarchy of status, the centrality of power and the equality of being—also constitutes the mechanism of what Indian tradition has identified as the basic principle and root metaphor of life: sacrifice. Sacrifice is the act of offering the self for the whole in order to realise this ontological equality and to regain the self as a part of the whole. Offering the self for the whole does not mean the priority of the community over individuals. The whole here cannot be equated with any political or social unit. The idea of sacrifice in India entails the existence of a deity or the Absolute that represents the supreme whole, to which sacrifice is offered. In the Indian tradition, community is not the object of sacrifice for which individuals offer their lives. It is rather a site of sacrificial organisation or a place of 'diversity-in-common' to offer sacrifice to the Absolute. It is important to note that the self as 'a part' that offers sacrifice and the sacrificed object are ontologically equal to the 'whole' to which sacrifice is offered.¹⁰ The hegemonic structure—the disparities of the many, based on status and power—can exist only on the basis of this underlying oneness. In the sacrificial principle, there are such contradictions and mediations between the ontological equality and the structure of status and power.

My core understanding of Indian society and history is based on the above view of the sacrificial principle. Its mechanism of contradiction and mediation underlies the basic structure of Indian society and politics and manifests itself in different forms throughout history. However, under colonial rule, only the structures of status and power within this were taken up as the Indian tradition. While colonialism represented India as a society of rampant discrimination and oppression, in an attempt to distinguish and distance itself from India, it also utilised that structure of hierarchy and power within its own rule system. In this process, the mechanism for mediating the contradictions between the ontological equality and the hegemonic structures in the Indian principle of sacrifice was lost in the polity and economy and preserved only in the limited areas of religion and ritual. However, currently, as India leaves the postcolonial period and heads into a new era, the principle of sacrifice and, in particular, the value of ontological equality are on the verge of playing a new role in the reconstruction and reinterpretation of Indian society.

From the mid-1990s in Orissa, members of the conventionally marginalised 'low' castes began to participate in local political processes, and the socio-political environment is currently substantially changing. Accompanying this, the meaning and practices of inter-caste relationships are undergoing a significant shift. Central to this book is understanding the significance of these social changes as part of the democratisation of the everyday in Orissa, without neglecting the transformation of inter-caste relationships in long-term history.

A major concern of studies such as this is that depicting caste groups as low or high reproduces the hegemonic framework of discourse, and I would like to avoid it where possible. However, it is difficult to find appropriate expressions other than these to indicate the social position imposed on them. Therefore, I am left with no choice but to use them. Such a situation in which one cannot but use these words indicates the difficulty of relativising the hegemonic framework of discourse. This in turn illustrates the necessity of crafting new ways of speaking of the world to further enable new ways of imagining the world. This book encompasses such attempts.

The democratisation of Indian society is a complex process. The permeation of democratic ideas and institutional changes are cornerstones to the direction and importance of the country's composite social change. However, it is also crucial to consider the agency of the people who attempt to imagine and actualise new forms of sociality, as well as the thickness of the culture and history that support such creative imagination and practices. The democratisation of Indian society was not established on the rejection of past culture and history; it has grown, albeit gradually, on the reconstitution of these elements through constructive criticism.

Thus, caste was not simply abandoned as a hindrance to democratisation. Rather, the meaning of caste was reconsidered, and the reconstruction of inter-caste relationships has been attempted. In recent years caste hierarchy and dominance have been heavily criticised and repudiated, especially by low castes. At the same time, in Orissa's local society, the value of the ontological equality that

resides in the depths of caste tradition has gained new importance, emerging as an important role in the process of democratisation.

I believe that through people's agency, caste is undergoing a creative reinterpretation. It is manifesting its potential to be used by diverse social groups as a cultural resource: as a tool to cooperate on an equal footing while acknowledging mutual differences. This is a gradual transformation of everyday social relationships and cultural values, where vernacular forms of ordinary life make themselves compatible with the process of democratisation in the wider world. It is a groundbreaking movement in which the vernacular everyday and the world's historical momentum are articulated together to form a new lifeworld featuring vernacular democracy.

Indian society at present is evidently undergoing radical transformations. There is a path dependency within history in which the forms of culture and nature largely guide the course of that dynamism.¹¹ Cultural resources accumulated in a place—local and regional—over centuries influence the way people understand and perform social practices. However, the past does not unequivocally decide the present. There is a plurality of possibilities for a new future. Therein lies the potentiality for human ethics and freedom.

In colonial and postcolonial frameworks, tradition and modernity have been perceived as being mutually opposite. Nevertheless, these accumulated cultural resources do not simply wane with the advent of modernity. Instead, the addition of modern socio-political ideals and institutions of democracy enrich the pre-existing reservoir of cultural resources, opening opportunities for new hybrid potentialities.

In this process, the sacrificial principle, in conjunction with the ideas of democracy, is given new form and meaning. Here, caste is reinterpreted from the perspective of ontological equality and is mediated by new democratic ideas and institutions, indicating the emergence of a form of vernacular democracy. It may, in fact, be considered a post-postcolonial transformation that marks the beginning of a new epoch in Indian history. To properly ascertain the meaning and importance of this transformation, this book positions the current era of Indian society within the context of long-term historical changes and attempts to understand its significance from a total, anthropological perspective.¹²

Let me briefly summarise the chapters that follow.

Chapter 1 delineates the problems and perspectives of this book in relation to the debates on caste, moral-ethical agency, democratisation and the post-post-colonial transformation of Indian society. Since the mid-1990s, there has been increasing subaltern participation in local politics. A core aim of this book is to understand the ethical basis of this democratisation process. This issue is directly related to the postcolonial version of the liberal-communitarian debate in India, in which liberals argue for the promotion of universal human rights through state-led modernisation and the communitarians call for the reappraisal of traditional ethics and virtue.

This book argues, however, that the very framework of this debate is a historical product of colonialism, putting the 'modern state' and 'traditional society' at

opposite ends, reflecting India's postcolonial predicament. It argues for a third perspective which sheds light on the creative agency of those who are trying to reconfigure a viable ethical practice and discourse, which reconciles vernacular and embodied cultural values with the ideas and institutions of modernity and democracy. It also reviews the debates on caste in India that discuss whether it is the value of hierarchy or domination which provides the best explanation. I bring to light the existence of a third value, i.e. ontological equality, which functions as the moral-ethical basis for enabling people to reconstitute and reinterpret existing interpersonal and inter-caste relationships.

Chapter 2 investigates the history of state and social formation in the Khurda kingdom in the early modern period. An integrative process took place in which the state and local society, the coast and the interior and human society and the natural world began to be increasingly connected. Instead of seeing this increasing connectivity as a result of the penetration of modernising forces from outside, clearing the forest and expanding agriculture, this chapter looks at history from the inside out, how the frontier was opened from the interior of the forest. Forest-dwellers responded to new opportunities and used their environmental knowledge and martial capabilities to become warriors, peasants and herdsmen, thus enabling state and social formation from below. In the course of this, social and ecological spaces opened at the interface of the coastal plain and the interior forest, accompanied by the twin processes of Hinduisation and tribalisation, allowing the diversification of resource utilisation and lifeways. Inner transformative dynamics arose from the engagement between and the management of these diversities.

Chapter 3 looks at the local system of managing diversity and how it was connected with the larger state, market and religious systems. Socio-ecological relationships in the local community were based on the patrimonial 'system of entitlements'. Here, each family played a role in the state and community and received shares from the local produce. The system of entitlements was based on the sacrificial principle in which each family served a whole that was represented by the local goddess. This system, however, was incomplete at the local level without the symbolic presence of the king both as grantor of entitlements and as central sacrificer. In the early modern period, the Khurda king became divinised as the earthly representative of Jagannātha (lord of the universe), the 'true ruler of Orissa'.

The development of divine kingship and the popularity of the Bhakti movement led people to understand the performance of their prescribed duties as a sacrificial service to the local goddess and Jagannātha. Thus, the system of entitlements in the context of the 'sacrificer state and sacrificial community' gave meaning to everyday activities at the local level and functioned as the basis of people's social, political and religious identities. It should also be noted that a market economy based on cowry money developed in local societies, and the fort areas in Khurda were among the basic sites of production in the hinterlands that provided various products, mainly cotton textiles, for maritime trade in the Indian Ocean. In this way, the local community, state and market shared a complementary relationship in early modern Orissa.

Chapters 4 and 5 look at social transformations under colonialism. Colonial rule brought about major changes in two stages. Chapter 4 depicts the early colonial transformation. The introduction of private land ownership some decades after colonisation led to the collapse of the system of entitlements, and the formation of the dominant caste-centred jajmani relationships based on unequal land ownership. Caste hierarchy was strengthened by the colonially adopted brahmanical ritual hierarchy, overlapped with the economic landholding hierarchy. Early colonialism thus ‘traditionalised’ hierarchy and dominance in local society. The sacrificial idea of the cooperation of ontologically equal parts and duty as a devotional service to god came to be confined to the religio-ritual sphere and was cut off from socio-economic relationships.

Chapter 5 discusses the second major transformation of society that came with the commercialisation of agriculture in the mid-nineteenth century. A class of new rich emerged, while some of the old dominant classes became impoverished and the poorer classes were reduced to the status of agricultural labourers. The imperial economy increasingly penetrated local society, but in the colonial framework, ‘native society’ was clearly distinguished from ‘the modern state and market’. Nationalist movements, which began in the late nineteenth century, also reflected this colonial dichotomy. Elite nationalism was based on the ideals of rationalism and liberalism, whereas mass patriotism was based on caste, kingship and religion. Although these two movements converged at certain points in history, they remained essentially contradictory.

Chapters 6 and 7 describe the dichotomy between the socio-cultural sphere and the politico-economic sphere in the postcolonial period. This was a continuation of the disjunction between native society and the modern state and market during colonial times. In the socio-cultural sphere, organic relationships between body, land and entitlements were emphasised and the logic of kinship and inter-caste cooperation was recognised and practiced. However, this organic whole was contained within the limited sphere of the socio-cultural and did not constitute the moral basis of the politico-economic sphere. The idealised religio-ontological identity was stressed precisely in contrast to the politico-economic realities.

Meanwhile, factional politics and corruption became dominant in the politico-economic sphere, where cultural ethics do not apply and *mātsya nyāya* (literally, the logic [law] of the fish, corresponding to the English phrase “law of the jungle”) prevails. In this state, as the *Mahābhārata* says, “the strong would devour the weak like fishes in water”.¹³ The percolation of democratic politics in India was linked to populist policies by the state. There was greater popular participation in the political process, especially after 1960s, and, as political parties needed to secure popular electoral support, they often resorted to distributing money to rural society in the name of development and welfare. This led to people fighting for shares in state resources through factional politics. Core members of factions belonged to the dominant *khaṇḍāyata* caste, reflecting the power structure of local society in Khurda. The agenda for postcolonial India was hence the mediation of democracy with cultural ethics, which also involved the issue of how to overcome the colonial dichotomy. However, as long as these ethics were based on

brahmanical hierarchy and the centrality of the dominant caste, traditionalised under colonialism, there could be no successful mediation between cultural ethics and the spirit of democracy. What then can provide the basis of the cultural ethics necessary to perform this task? This issue is taken up in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 8 depicts and analyses the festival of the local goddess, Rāmacaṇḍī. It argues that this ritual can be seen as an enactment of the sacrificial drama of regeneration, where the three values and social configurations of equality, hierarchy and power unfold and interact to reproduce the community. The three phases of the ritual represent ‘revolving values’ which are legitimate, plural and multi-faceted cultural resources that people use to valourise their existence and their social practices. This chapter also analyses how the ritual form and the structure of patronage changed historically (ritual in history) and how the ritual invokes historical memory in the form of myths, legends and family narratives (history in ritual). The ritual can be seen as a representation of local history, not as linear transformation but as an accumulation of the past.

The blending of history and ritual enables people to reflect on their past and present. This not only legitimises the status and power of the upper castes but also unsettles their hegemony by questioning prevailing practices. In the postcolonial situation, there is, on the one hand, the hegemonic attempt by old and new elites to ritually assert the colonially constructed structure of status and power and, on the other hand, subaltern attempts to emphasise the importance of devotion and service, thus placing weight on ontological equality as the immanence of the divine power (*śakti*) of the goddess. Here, we observe dilemma and tension between the hegemonic values of hierarchy and centrality and the subalternate value of ontological equality. In this way, ritual not only reproduces the structure of status and power, but also illustrates the potential for subaltern resistance against the hegemonic structure.

Chapter 9 discusses transformations in inter-caste relationships in local society in order to discover democratic potentialities in postcolonial India. It shows how the contestation and negotiation between hegemony, based on status and power, and its critique and resistance from below, based on the principle of equality, can be found not only in ritual structure as seen in Chapter 8 but also in the actual dynamics of Indian society. Social relationships in India are not just determined by norms and power relations. They are constructed by moral–practical agents who reflect on and negotiate ethically desirable social relationships. Most of the *jajmani* relations formed during the colonial period were gradually replaced by market-driven relationships. This process involved efforts by lower caste associations to improve their status. Lower castes negotiated with the dominant caste to get rid of patron–client relationships and introduce the market principle. It is notable, however, that the division of labour by caste was retained in the ritual sphere. Lower castes did not abandon their caste identity *per se*. Rather, they tried to reformulate the content of their ritual roles to enhance the dignity of their caste identity. Here we see the attempt to redefine tradition from below. For lower castes, tradition that guaranteed their identity, was not a structure of hierarchy and dominance. It was about equal and indispensable parts serving the whole. Here

the positioning of the cultural politics of ethics over desirable social relationships is evident.

Chapter 10 argues that the transformation of social relations from below began to extend into politics from the mid-1990s. By the beginning of the 1990s criticism against factional politics mounted and lower castes began to demand equal participation in local politics. However, since factional politics provided valuable cash income, the dominant caste did not easily abandon their interests. This situation changed after economic liberalisation in 1991 and the panchayat (local self-government) reforms in 1992. The panchayat reforms guaranteed reservations for lower castes and women. This reduced the monopoly of politics by men of the dominant caste and limited the influence of factions.

Lower castes and women who have begun to participate in local politics try to redefine politics as a means for the development of the whole through equal participation, service and cooperation, instead of the control of resources by the powerful. This is as an attempt to mediate the subaltern sacrificial ethics, based on ontological equality, and the practice of democratic politics. However, it should also be noted that the decline of factional politics and the change in panchayat politics are partly due to the increasing influence of the market following economic liberalisation. One of the reasons why the dominant caste has lost interest in local politics is because the market has become a new source of cash income. Also the growth of the Indian economy after liberalisation supports the huge redistribution of state resources to local society, contributing to thriving local self-government. Thus, a new agenda for Indian society is how to mediate democracy and global capitalism.

Chapter 11 is the concluding chapter. It suggests that the transformation of local society today can be understood as a process of overcoming the hegemonic structure of hierarchy and power strengthened by colonialism and the establishment of a vernacular democracy that connects subaltern sacrificial ethics with the spirit of democracy. This entails a mediation of the colonial dichotomy, reflected in the postcolonial version of the liberal–communitarian debate, between the principle of the modern state (based on rights and rationality) and the cultural ethics of local society (based on duty and service). This book contends that such developments indicate the shift of Indian society into the post-postcolonial era. The cultural politics of ethics in defining desirable social relationships remains significant and valid for fostering a democratic ethos for living together diversely and equally in the face of global capitalism’s new structures of hegemony in India today.

Notes

- 1 Although in 2011 the name of the state was changed from Orissa to Odisha and the name of its language from Oriya to Odia, this book uses ‘Orissa’ and ‘Oriya’, respectively, to avoid confusion, as it covers both the Orissa and Odisha periods. Khurda district was formed in 1993 by the division of former Puri district into Puri, Khurda and Nayagarh districts. In 2000, the district name was changed from Khurda to Khordha. This book uses ‘Khurda’ uniformly.
- 2 This is an adaptation of “being-in-common” by Nancy (1991, 2000).

- 3 It is appropriate to consider the early modern period in Orissa as having started from 1568, with the collapse of the medieval Orissan empire.
- 4 According to Kiyoshi Miki, “Complete understanding of the fundamental historicity of human beings can be reached by mutually illuminating and criticizing the understanding of it from both historical and everyday perspectives”. Miki also said, “Anthropology that explores human beings from the point of view of historicity ... is called historical anthropology” (Miki 1967: 87). I combine the historical and the everyday perspectives in historical anthropology, as Miki does.
- 5 The ‘great words’ are phrases that evince the highest principle of identifying Brahman (the essence of the universe and the ultimate reality) with *Ātman* (the true self) in the *Upaniṣad* (sacred Hindu treatises). These are conventionally identified as the following four: “Consciousness is Brahman”, “This Ātman is Brahman”, “I am Brahman” and “Thou art That”.
- 6 In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Orissa there was a mixture of Orissan-style *Utkaliya* Vaishnavism, Bengali-style *Gaudiya* Vaishnavism, Jagannātha cult and Chaitanya worship. See Chapter 3 for details of Vaishnavism in early modern Orissa.
- 7 Most articulately expressed by Nagarjuna (c. 150–c. 250 AD), the four logical possibilities of tetralemma—(1) A (affirmation); (2) not-A (negation); (3) ‘both A and not-A’ (both); and (4) ‘neither A nor not-A’ (neither)—express the logic in the world of relative truth (*saṃvṛti satya*). These are all negated in the face of the absolute truth (*paramārtha satya*), which is beyond the four logical possibilities of relative truth. In other words, it is the very existence of the Absolute (*śūnyatā* or ‘emptiness’ in the case of Nagarjuna)—that is, the level of what I call ontological equality—which makes the coexistence of A and not-A possible. If there is absolute truth beyond the relative world, A and not-A can coexist as relative truths, with both reflecting the absolute truth in relative ways.
- 8 According to the Hegelian scheme, “History will be completed at the moment when the synthesis of the Master and Slave is realized, that synthesis that is the whole Man, the Citizen of the universal and homogeneous State” (Kojève 1969: 44). Here, diversity must be denied in order to reach the final truth.
- 9 Such an idea, in fact, is not limited to India. It is a universal idea that finds resonance in Japan as well as in Europe. Let me quote Gilles Deleuze as an example.

Opening is an essential feature of univocity. ... Only there does the cry resound: “Everything is equal!” and “Everything returns!”. However, this “Everything is equal” and this “Everything returns” can be said only at the point at which the extremity of difference is reached. A single and same voice for the whole thousand-voiced multiple, a single and same Ocean for all the drops, a single clamour of Being for all beings: on condition that each being, each drop and each voice has reached the state of excess.

(Deleuze 1994: 304)

This quotation from *Difference and Repetition* seems to me as if to describe the vibrancy of vernacular democracy to come in India, where there is a clamour of diverse voices mingling and interacting with each other to form an inseparable whole. It is at the extremity of difference and diversity that ontological equality can be recognised. And it is based on this ontological equality that there can be the thousand-voiced clamour of multiplicities.

- 10 *Bhagavad Gītā* (IV-24) succinctly states this as follows: “Brahman is the oblation; Brahman is the (offering of) melted butter; by Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahman; Brahman verily shall be reached by him who always sees Brahman in action” (Sivananda 1995: 117, parenthesis added). There is only Brahman (the

Absolute) that takes multiple forms (with different status and power) for actions in the phenomenal world.

- 11 With regard to the current political and economic performance, the ‘path dependence’ perspective, which says that such performance depends on the course that society has pursued, is correct to an extent. However, even if they do not bring about direct advantages for current political and economic systems, pluralistic cultural resources that have accumulated through history can be helpful in imagining/creating a new future or in responding to new situations in the future. It is surely too hasty to attempt a value assessment of society or culture with a short-term field of vision that assumes the current political and economic system.
- 12 For the perspective on long-term changes in history, I am indebted to Braudel (1992, 1995). However, the way in which this concept is used here does not necessarily stay faithful to Braudel—it is used in a broader sense. For a study that effectively uses the concept of long-term changes in Indian history, see Ludden (1989).
- 13 Śānti-Parva, LXVII, 16-17; LXVIII, 11-12, quoted in Sarkar (1921: 80). The concept of mātsya nyāya is also discussed in *Manu Samhitā*, *Rāmāyana* and *Arthaśāstra* (Sarkar 1921: 80–1).

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Note on transliteration

I have adopted the standard system for transliterating Oriya words. A minor reformulation is that I have adopted ‘ṛ’ and ‘ṛh’ for rolled versions of retroflex ‘ḍ’ and ‘ḍh’, e.g. ‘*kauṛi*’ and not ‘*kauḍi*’ for cowry and ‘*Āṣāṛha*’ and not ‘*Āṣāḍha*’ for the name of the month. I have retained the original spellings in the historical documents even where they seem to deviate from the more conventional orthography.

Glossary

<i>achuāṃ</i>	untouchable
<i>adharma</i>	injustice, unlawfulness
<i>ādi śakti</i>	primordial power
<i>ādivāsi, ādibāsi</i>	lit. ‘original inhabitants’; tribals
<i>ādyā sebaka</i>	first servant; <i>Gajapati</i> is considered the first servant of <i>Jagannātha</i> . This is ritually represented in his duty of sweeping (<i>cherā pahaṃrā</i>) the chariot in the <i>ratha jātrā</i> (chariot festival) in Puri
<i>agnijaḷā pūrṇimā</i>	lit. ‘burning full moon’; the full moon day of <i>Māgha</i> (January–February)
<i>akṣaya tṛtīyā</i>	lit. ‘invincible third’. Third day of the bright fortnight of <i>Baiśākha</i> (April–May); an auspicious day to start work
<i>āmara loka</i>	our people
<i>amābāsyā</i>	new moon day
<i>aṅka</i>	regnal year
<i>aṅka bheṭi ṭaṅkā</i>	silver coin gift given as new regnal year greeting
<i>aṅki dwāri</i>	boundary guard
<i>anukūḷa</i>	auspicious beginning
<i>anukūḷa kiāri</i>	lit. ‘field of auspicious beginning’, where paddy seeds are first sown on the <i>akṣaya tṛtīyā</i> day
<i>āraṇya</i>	forest
<i>artha</i>	power and wealth
<i>asparśaka</i>	untouchable
<i>aṣṭamī sāra bhoga</i>	cooked offerings on <i>aṣṭamī</i> day
<i>aṣṭarājya</i>	eight kingdoms; name of a unit of caste association
<i>aśubbha</i>	inauspicious
<i>asura</i>	demon
<i>aśwapati</i>	lord of horse
<i>Āświna</i>	a lunar month around September–October
<i>Āṭharagara</i>	lit. ‘eighteen forts’; name of a little kingdom
<i>bāhāra loka</i>	outsiders
<i>Baiśākha</i>	a lunar month around April–May

<i>baiṭhi karaṇa</i>	lit. ‘sitting scribe’; an office of scribe
<i>bājantari</i>	military musician
<i>baksi</i>	army general
<i>Baḷabhadra</i>	elder brother of <i>Kṛṣṇa-Jagannātha</i> , constitutes one of the <i>Jagannātha</i> trinity
<i>baḷi</i>	sacrifice, usually animal sacrifice
<i>baluta</i>	system of village servants
<i>baṃśa</i>	lineage, clan
<i>bana</i>	forest
<i>bandāpanā</i>	ritual of respect and honour
<i>bandhu</i>	relatives by marriage alliance
<i>barakandāj</i>	guard
<i>bārapalli</i>	twelve villages under a fort
<i>barhei</i>	carpenter caste
<i>barṣā</i>	rain; rainy season
<i>basanta</i>	spring season
<i>bāṭi</i>	a unit of area: 1 <i>bāṭi</i> = 20 <i>māṇa</i> = about 9 acres (after 1823)
<i>beherā</i>	head
<i>bāuri</i>	labourer caste
<i>beherā pradhāna</i>	principal village head
<i>behoraṇa gumāstā</i>	state tax collector
<i>Bhādraba</i>	a lunar month around August–September
<i>bhāga</i>	share
<i>bhāga cāṣī</i>	share croppers
<i>Bhāgabata</i>	Oriya translation of the <i>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</i>
<i>Bhāgabata ghara</i>	lit. ‘house for <i>Bhāgabata</i> ’ where villagers recite and listen to the <i>Bhāgabata</i>
<i>bhaidika brāhmaṇa</i>	vedic brāhmaṇa
<i>bhakti</i>	devotion, devotionalism
<i>bhāi</i>	brother
<i>bhaṇḍāri</i>	barber caste
<i>bhāt</i>	meal; cooked rice
<i>bhaya</i>	fear
<i>bhiāṇa</i>	record of rights, land records, rent roll
<i>bisarjana</i>	immersing the image of a deity or a divine object in water as the concluding rite of a festival
<i>bhītara</i>	inside
<i>bighā</i>	a unit of area: 20 <i>bighā</i> = 1 <i>bāṭi</i> (in precolonial times)
<i>bhoga</i>	offering to deities
<i>bhoi</i>	village accountant
<i>bhuim muḷa</i>	fort-level accountant, lit. ‘roots of the earth’
<i>bhumi</i>	earth
<i>bhumi bhāga</i>	land part; resources given in the form of land
<i>bhūta</i>	evil spirit, ghost

<i>biṛā barttana</i>	sheaf salary
<i>birja</i>	seed, sperm
<i>bisi</i>	county, a unit of administration, fort area
<i>biṣodhana</i>	acquitting, discharging, as a debt
<i>biṣodhana patra</i>	a receipt, an acquittance
<i>bisoi</i>	chief of a county (<i>bisi</i>), usually the same person as <i>daḷabeherā</i> in a fort area
<i>biśwā</i>	1 <i>biśwā</i> = 4 <i>kani</i> = about 49 sq. ft.
<i>brahmadeya</i>	land donated to the brāhmaṇa
<i>brāhmaṇa</i>	brahman caste
<i>brāhmattār</i>	lands donated to the <i>brāhmaṇas</i>
<i>bratā</i>	votive rituals
<i>Bṛṣabha</i>	a solar month around May–June
<i>cākhaṇḍa</i>	length from the tip of the middle finger to the bottom of the palm
<i>cālāka</i>	clever, sly
<i>cālanti Viṣṇu</i>	lit. ‘the walking Vishnu’, i.e. earthly Vishnu referring to the <i>Gajapati</i> king
<i>cāndanā, chandina</i>	homestead lands of those who held no entitlement and paid high rent and tax to the community
<i>caṇḍī</i>	goddess with ambivalent power
<i>caṣā</i>	peasant caste
<i>catuṣkoṭi</i>	the Indian logic of tetralemma (four possibilities of a proposition)
<i>caula</i>	rice
<i>chākirī</i>	service; employment as a salaried office worker
<i>chaṇḍā</i>	chick peas
<i>chandinadar</i>	holders of <i>chandina</i> (<i>cāndanā</i>) tenures
<i>chāṛa khāi</i>	feast after fasting
<i>chātiā</i>	watchman of the village, called <i>chaukidar</i> in other parts of India
<i>Chatiśgara</i>	lit. ‘thirty-six forts’; name of a little kingdom
<i>Chitālāgi amābāsyā</i>	new moon day of <i>Śrābaṇa</i> (July–August)
<i>chitau piṭhā</i>	cake offered to the earth goddess on <i>Chitālāgi amābāsyā</i> day
<i>choudhuri</i>	revenue collector in a fort area
<i>cuṛā</i>	flattened rice
<i>daḷa</i>	faction, group, troop
<i>daḷabeherā</i>	chief of the garrison at a fort, usually the same person as <i>bisoi</i> , lit. ‘chief of troop’
<i>daḷai</i>	military leader, sub-chief of a fort garrison
<i>dalit</i>	lit. ‘broken’, a self-applied name for people of the ‘untouchable’ caste
<i>dāna</i>	donation

<i>daṇḍa jātrā</i>	lit. ‘stick festival’, a festival of ordeals held in <i>Meṣa</i> (April–May)
<i>daṇḍāpāṭa</i>	district
<i>Daśaharā</i>	autumn festival that takes place on the tenth day of the bright fortnight of <i>Āśvina</i> (October–November); also called <i>Bijaya Daśamī</i> (victorious tenth)
<i>daśaharā bheṭi</i>	services to patron households on the day of <i>Daśaharā</i>
<i>dasturī</i>	a fee or commission
<i>debattār</i>	land donated to gods and goddesses
<i>ḍehrī</i>	a marshy land
<i>desa</i>	village, country
<i>desa bhoi</i>	village accountant
<i>desa pradhāna</i>	village head
<i>deva-rājā</i>	divine king
<i>Devī Māhātmya</i>	lit. ‘Glory of the Goddess’; Sanskrit text recounting the goddess as creator of the universe
<i>dharma</i>	cosmic law, justice
<i>dhāraṇa</i>	penance and prayer
<i>dimand</i>	dowry; from the English word ‘demand’
<i>diwān</i>	the minister of the state
<i>doḍa</i>	the second preparatory ploughing
<i>doḷa maṇḍapa</i>	swing platform
<i>doḷa pūrṇimā</i>	the full moon day which marks the end of <i>Phālguna</i> (February–March)
<i>dr̥ṣṭi</i>	seeing, evil eye
<i>duāra</i>	door
<i>Durgā</i>	Hindu goddess of war, strength and protection, bestower of victory, guardian of fortresses
<i>dvāpara yuga</i>	third of the four <i>yugas</i> (world ages)
<i>dwāra</i>	door
<i>Ekharajat Mahal</i>	<i>Ekharājāt Māhāl</i> , tax-free land given to <i>Jagannātha</i> temple (1858–1974)
<i>Gahmā pūrṇimā</i>	lit. ‘cow mother full moon’; the full moon day which marks the end of <i>Śrābaṇa</i> (July–August), cows are worshipped as mother on this day
<i>Gajapati</i>	lit. ‘lord of elephants’; title granted to the foremost king of Orissa
<i>gām muha</i>	mouth of village
<i>gaṇḍā</i>	a unit for cowry calculation: 1 <i>kāhāṇa</i> = 16 <i>paṇa</i> = 320 <i>gaṇḍā</i> = 1,280 <i>kaḍā</i> = 1,280 <i>kaurī</i> (cowry)
<i>gara</i>	fort, often spelt <i>garh</i> in place names
<i>gara dwāri</i>	fort gate guard
<i>gara rahanī</i>	fort watchman
<i>gara sebaka</i>	fort servant

<i>Garbhaṅā saṃkrānti</i>	lit. ‘pregnant <i>saṃkrānti</i> ’; first day of <i>Tulā</i> (October–November)
<i>go mātā</i>	cow mother
<i>gomā parba</i>	mother cow festival
<i>gram panchayat</i>	<i>grāma pañcāyat</i> , elected village level institution of local self-government
<i>grāma, gāṇ</i>	village
<i>grāma debatā</i>	tutelary deity of village
<i>grīṣma</i>	summer season
<i>guhāri</i>	penance and prayer
<i>gumāstā</i>	tax collector, <i>gomasta</i>
<i>gunṭha</i>	a unit of area: 1 <i>gunṭha</i> = 16 <i>biśwā</i> = about 784 sq. ft.
<i>guṛiā</i>	sweet-maker caste
<i>hājira karaṅa</i>	lit. ‘attending scribe’; an office of scribe
<i>haḷiā</i>	lit. ‘carrier of ploughs’; bonded agricultural labourer
<i>hakadāra</i>	holder of right (<i>haqdār</i> in Hindustani)
<i>haq</i>	right (Hindustani)
<i>haq-e-sarbarāh</i>	the right of management (Hindustani)
<i>hāri</i>	sweeper-drummer caste
<i>Hari bola</i>	‘chant the name of <i>Hari</i> ’; <i>Hari</i> is one of the names of <i>Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa</i>
<i>harijan</i>	a name coined by MK Gandhi for people of the ‘untouchable’ caste, which means children (<i>jan</i> , people) of god (<i>Hari</i>). Today, the term <i>dalit</i> is more common
<i>hāṭa</i>	(weekly) local market
<i>hemanta</i>	autumn season
<i>hetā</i>	community service land
<i>hetā maguṇi</i>	payment made by village to village heads
<i>hinhayat jagir</i>	tax-free land for one generation
<i>Holi</i>	spring festival when people play with coloured powder and paints
<i>homa</i>	ritual of fire sacrifice
<i>homa ghia</i>	clarified butter for fire sacrifice
<i>huḷahuḷi</i>	auspicious high pitched ululating sound made by women
<i>inām</i>	tax-free land mainly in premodern South India
<i>iṣṭadebatā</i>	tutelary deity
<i>Jagannātha</i>	lit. ‘lord of the universe’; the state deity of Orissa
<i>jagir</i>	land given by the ruler to a state officer in lieu of his service, Oriya <i>jāgiri</i>
<i>jajmāna</i>	patron-sacrificer in a ritual, Skt. <i>yajmāna</i> , also the patron family in jajmani relationships
<i>jami khāibā</i>	lit. ‘eat the land’; entitlement holder feeding his body from crops of the allotted land

<i>jaṅgala</i>	forest
<i>jaṅgala loka</i>	forest people
<i>jaṅgali</i>	forest-dwellers
<i>janmāṣṭamī</i>	Krishna birth festival
<i>jāti</i>	endogamous caste group
<i>jāti pañchāyat</i>	caste council
<i>jāti sabhā</i>	caste association
<i>jāu</i>	porridge
<i>jautuka</i>	dowry
<i>jivātma</i>	individual soul
<i>jñāna</i>	knowledge
<i>juna</i>	grass for the roof of the sword hut
<i>Jyeṣṭha</i>	a lunar month around June–July
<i>kaḅāri</i>	fuel wood provider
<i>kacheri</i>	royal court (katchery in anglicised spelling)
<i>kaḅā</i>	a unit for cowry calculation: 1 <i>kāhāṇa</i> = 16 <i>paṇa</i> = 320 <i>gaṇḅā</i> = 1,280 <i>kaḅā</i> = 1,280 <i>kauri</i> (cowry)
<i>kaḅhāṇa</i>	the first preparatory ploughing
<i>kāhāṇa</i>	a unit for cowry calculation: 1 <i>kāhāṇa</i> = 16 <i>paṇa</i> = 320 <i>gaṇḅā</i> = 1,280 <i>kaḅā</i> = 1,280 <i>kauri</i> (cowry)
<i>kalāḅiḅha</i>	elevated land
<i>kaḅāśa</i>	pot filled with water with coconut and cloth placed on top, functions as a medium of divine power and symbol of auspiciousness
<i>kaḅi yuga</i>	lit. ‘age of discord’; dark age of decline, Skt. <i>kali yuga</i>
<i>kāḅiśī</i>	medium
<i>kāma</i>	work, action, Skt. <i>karma</i> ; sexual desire, Skt. <i>kāma</i>
<i>kāmanā ghara</i>	wish house
<i>kaṇḅārā</i>	watchman
<i>kāṇḅi</i>	labourer
<i>kani</i>	a unit of area: 1 <i>kani</i> = about 12.25 sq. ft.
<i>kāṅkaṇa</i>	kind of vegetable that grows in the forest
<i>karaṇa</i>	scribe, name of a caste or a post
<i>karaṇi akṣara</i>	scripts used by the <i>karaṇa</i> (scribes) in the precolonial period
<i>kartabya</i>	duty
<i>karttā</i>	lit. ‘doer’ or ‘performer’, indicates the main worshipper in a ritual, usually the head of family or community
<i>Kārttika</i>	a lunar month around October–November
<i>kauri</i>	cowry (also spelled cowrie), marine snail shells used as money, <i>Cypraea moneta</i>
<i>kauri bhāga</i>	resources given in the form of cowry part
<i>kauri bhagiā</i>	cowry accountant in a fort; lit. ‘cowry distributor’
<i>kāyastha</i>	scribe caste in Bengal and North India
<i>khāi debā</i>	lit. ‘eating up’; corruption

<i>khaṇḍā</i>	sword
<i>khaṇḍāyata</i>	peasant-militia caste, also referred to a ruler of a small region
<i>khañjā</i>	originally ‘arrangement’; hereditary assignment
<i>khañjā dara</i>	<i>khañjā</i> supplies
<i>kharāra</i>	receipt
<i>kharāra patra</i>	written receipt
<i>kharcha</i>	fees
<i>khela</i>	play
<i>khilat</i>	vestment, a ceremonial robe or other gift given by a superior as a mark of honour
<i>kilā</i>	fort
<i>koṭha</i>	state or collective
<i>koṭha bartana</i>	state salary
<i>koṭha karaṇa</i>	lit. ‘state scribe’; an office of scribe
<i>koṭha bārika</i>	lit. ‘state barber’; an office of barber (messenger)
<i>Kṛṣṇa</i>	Hindu god, often equated with <i>Jagannātha</i> in Orissa
<i>kṛta yuga</i>	first of the four yugas (world ages), another term for <i>satya yuga</i>
<i>kṣetrā pāla</i>	lit. ‘provider in the field’
<i>kṣetrā pāla pūjā</i>	agricultural ritual where a sheaf of paddy stalks is worshipped as the ‘provider in the field’
<i>kumbāra</i>	potter caste
<i>kuśa</i>	sacred grass, <i>Eragrostis cynosuroides</i>
<i>kusi</i>	happy
<i>lābh māriji</i>	love marriage, from English
<i>lakhirajdar</i>	rent free land
<i>Lakṣmī</i>	goddess of wealth and prosperity
<i>lilā</i>	divine play
<i>mā</i>	mother
<i>mada maṃsa</i>	alcohol and meat
<i>Mādaḷā Pāñji</i>	<i>Jagannātha</i> temple chronicle
<i>Māgha</i>	a lunar month around January–February
<i>māguṇi</i>	toll
<i>mahāsaptamī</i>	lit. ‘the great seventh’; the seventh day in a lunar fortnight of the autumn festival of the goddess
<i>mahāṣṭamī</i>	lit. ‘the great eighth’; the eighth day in a lunar fortnight of the autumn festival of the goddess
<i>māhāra</i>	watchman
<i>mahājan</i>	money lender
<i>mahārājā</i>	great king
<i>mahinā</i>	salary
<i>mahinādāra</i>	salary holders
<i>mālī</i>	gardener caste, they also serve as caretakers in <i>Śiva</i> temples

<i>mālika</i>	owner
<i>māṇa</i>	cane measuring basket which can contain one <i>nauti</i> (<i>gauni</i>) or four seer of paddy; a unit of area: 1 <i>māṇa</i> = 25 <i>guṇṭha</i> = about 19,600 sq. ft. = about 0.45 acres
<i>māṇa basā</i>	festival when harvested paddy in a measure (<i>māṇa</i>) is worshipped as <i>Lakṣmī</i>
<i>māṇḍiā</i>	finger millet, <i>Eleusine coracana</i>
<i>mantra</i>	set of sacred syllables with religio-magical power
<i>mārāphatadāra</i>	trustee
<i>Mārgaśīra</i>	a lunar month around November–December
<i>matha</i>	monastery
<i>mātr</i>	mother, motherly
<i>mātr pūjā</i>	worship of mother goddess
<i>mātsya nyāya</i>	lit. ‘the logic (law) of the fish’ where the big fish swallows the small fish; corresponding to the English phrase “law of the jungle”
<i>majukuri</i>	state administrators stationed in the fort, derived from the Persian <i>mazkūri</i>
<i>Meṣa</i>	a solar month around April–May
<i>mināha, minyā</i>	<i>minhā</i> or <i>minhāt</i> in Hindustani. Deduction from the assessed revenue of an estate; tax-free residential areas
<i>mirasi system</i>	system of entitlements in early modern South India
<i>mohara</i>	new regnal year gold coin
<i>mokṣa</i>	liberation, the fourth and final aim of man
<i>mouza, mauza</i>	an administrative village for revenue collection
<i>Mukti Maṇḍapa</i>	
<i>Paṇḍit Sabhā</i>	lit. ‘liberation pavilion scholars/priestly council’, the supreme council of <i>brāhmaṇa</i> scholar-priests in the <i>Jagannātha</i> temple
<i>naḍu</i>	unit of local community in South India
<i>namaskār</i>	greeting
<i>narapati</i>	lord of man
<i>nazar, nazarana</i>	tributary offerings
<i>netā</i>	political leader
<i>niji gaṛa</i>	‘fort itself’ in a fort area
<i>nimakahārāma jāgiri</i>	traitor’s jagir
<i>niyāma</i>	norm
<i>oṛa</i>	peasant-militias in Orissa, present <i>khaṇḍāyata</i> caste
<i>Oṛiā</i>	Oriya
<i>osā</i>	fasting
<i>oyārijā</i>	<i>wārijā</i> , land records
<i>paḍihāri</i>	doorkeeper
<i>pāika</i>	foot soldier, often spelt ‘paik’

<i>pāika ākharā</i>	martial arts of the foot soldiers in Orissa
<i>pāika bartana</i>	payment for foot soldiers
<i>pāika bidroha</i>	Paika Rebellion (of 1817)
<i>pakhāla</i>	watered rice
<i>palli sabha</i>	hamlet assembly
<i>pāna</i>	betel leaves
<i>paṇa</i>	a unit for cowry calculation: 1 <i>kāhāṇa</i> = 16 <i>paṇa</i> = 320 <i>gaṇḍā</i> = 1,280 <i>kaḍā</i> = 1,280 <i>kaurī</i> (cowry)
<i>paṇā saṃkrānti</i>	first day of <i>Meṣa</i> (April–May), <i>paṇā</i> is a sweet-sour drink made from <i>bela</i> (wood apple, <i>Aegle marmelos</i>)
<i>panchayati raj</i>	<i>pañcāyati rāj</i> , local self-government
<i>panchayat samiti</i>	<i>pañcāyat samiti</i> , block-level council for local self-government
<i>pāṇi bodā baḷi</i>	lit. ‘water sheep sacrifice’ offered to Goddess <i>Rāmacaṇḍī</i> for a good rain
<i>paramparā</i>	tradition, lineage
<i>paramārtha satya</i>	the absolute truth
<i>parganā</i>	district
<i>paścima dwāra</i>	west
<i>paṭā</i>	deed of right to land
<i>peshkash</i>	tribute
<i>phagu</i>	coloured powder
<i>Phālguna</i>	a lunar month around February–March
<i>pradhāna</i>	village head
<i>prakṛti</i>	nature as the generative and dynamic principle of the phenomenal, functions as the principle of forming differences
<i>prasāda</i>	sacred leftover of items offered to deities
<i>preta</i>	spirit of the dead, ancestral spirit
<i>pūjā</i>	ritual of worship
<i>pūjārī</i>	<i>brāhmaṇa</i> temple priests
<i>puñji</i>	offering of mixture of raw rice, milk and egg made into small mounds with a little local liquor poured on top
<i>pūrba</i>	tradition
<i>pūrṇimā</i>	full moon day
<i>pūrṇimānta</i>	calendar system in which each month ends on the full moon
<i>puruṣa</i>	man; cosmic man (<i>Puruṣa</i>); the spirit that is immanent as the essence of all beings, functions as the basis of oneness and ontological equality
<i>puruṣārtha</i>	lit. ‘aim of human’, refers to the four proper goals or aims of a human life in Indian tradition, namely, <i>kāma</i> or sensual enjoyment, <i>artha</i> or power and wealth, <i>dharma</i> or cosmological law and <i>mokṣa</i> or liberation