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Buxi Jagabandhu

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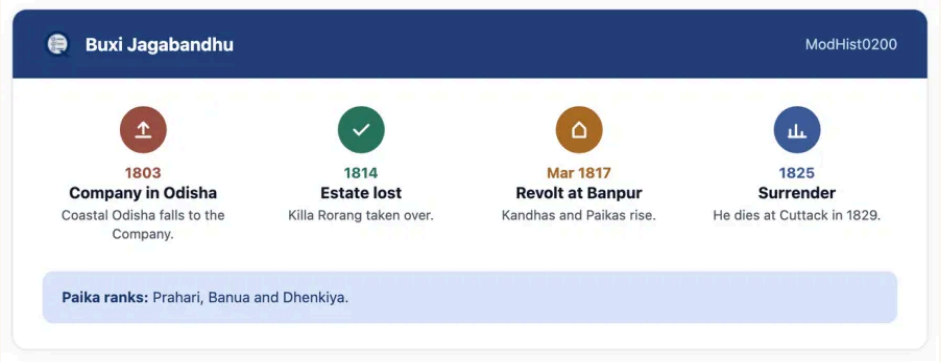
Buxi Jagabandhu

In March 1817 a band of hill fighters crossed into Khurda, in Odisha. They burned a police station and a post office.

Local farmer-soldiers joined them. Their leader was a man whose family had lost its land. His name was Buxi Jagabandhu.



Modern statue of Bakshi Jagabandhu in Odisha, shown on horseback. Photo by Balaji, 2011. CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons. It is a modern likeness, not a portrait from life.



Turning points in the life of Buxi Jagabandhu, from standard sources.

> **Who.** Jagabandhu Bidyadhara Mohapatra Bhramarbara Raya, called Buxi Jagabandhu.
> **Title.** Buxi was a military rank, second only to the Raja of Khurda.
> **Cause.** The Company took his estate in 1814 and burdened the Paikas.
> **Revolt.** The Paika Rebellion began in March 1817.
> **End.** He surrendered in 1825 and died in 1829.
> **Memory.** A memorial near the Barunei Hills, begun in 2019.

Paika: a peasant soldier who held rent-free land in return for military service.

Buxi: a hereditary title and military rank, held by Jagabandhu's family.

Khurda: the seat of the Gajapati rulers in Odisha, near present-day Bhubaneswar.

1 Who was Buxi Jagabandhu?

Odisha was ruled for centuries by the Gajapati kings. Their capital in later years was Khurda. The kings kept a militia of farmer-soldiers called Paikas.

The Paikas held land free of rent. In return they fought when the king called. They stood in three ranks. The Prahari were guards with swords. The Banua were archers and marksmen. The Dhenkiya were the sword and shield men at the front.

Above them stood the Buxi. This was a title and a military rank. Only the Raja of Khurda ranked higher. In the family of Jagabandhu, the title passed down by inheritance.

His full name was Jagabandhu Bidyadhara Mohapatra Bhramarbara Raya. His family estate was at Killa Rorang. Some old pages spell it Rodanga. That estate would soon be his reason to rebel.

- Ruler: the **Gajapati** kings of **Khurda**.
- Paikas: **peasant militia** on **rent-free land**.
- Ranks: **Prahari**, **Banua**, **Dhenkiya**.
- **Buxi**: a hereditary rank, **second to the Raja**.
- Estate: **Killa Rorang**.

> **Quick check 1.** The Paika Rebellion in Odisha began in 1817 under the leadership of Buxi Jagabandhu. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

2 Why did the Paikas lose patience?

The Company took over coastal Odisha in 1803. It dethroned the Raja of Khurda in 1804. The Raja was sent into exile at Puri. The Paikas lost their king and their patron.

One early storm came in 1804. Jayee Rajguru, the Raja's chief adviser, led about 2,000 Paikas against the Company. The Company had not handed over some parganas as promised. He was arrested and

executed in 1806.

The new rulers then changed the land system. The Paikas' rent-free lands were taken away, and they were taxed. Jagabandhu's own estate was seized in 1814. His family lost its income and its standing.

Daily life grew harder too. The Company took control of salt in 1814, and its price rose. The old cowrie shells were no longer accepted as money. Taxes had to be paid in silver. Many farmers could not find it.

- **1803**: Company takes Odisha. **1804**: Raja dethroned.
- **Jayee Rajguru**: led about **2,000 Paikas**; executed **1806**.
- Paikas lost their **rent-free lands**.
- Jagabandhu's **estate seized** in **1814**.
- Salt control and **silver taxes**; **cowries** abolished.

3 How did the revolt of 1817 unfold?

In March 1817 a party of about 400 Kandha tribal fighters came from Ghumsur into Khurda. Paikas under Jagabandhu joined them. The rebels burned the police station and the post office at Banpur.

They then marched on Khurda. The Company had left it, and the rebels took the town. They plundered the treasury. The local magistrate in Cuttack sent officers and troops to the area. One officer, Lt Faris, was killed near Pipli.

In April, 550 men were sent to Khurda. They retook it a few days later and declared martial law. Puri, meanwhile, fell to the rebels. By 18 April the Company had pulled back to Cuttack.

The revolt had wide support. Some zamindars and rajas of Kanika, Kujang, Nayagarh and Ghumsur helped. A Muslim rebel, Dalabehera Mirhaidar Alli of Jadupur, also fought beside the Paikas. It was not a one-community rising.

- March **1817**: **Kandhas** from **Ghumsur** enter Khurda.
- Targets: **Banpur** police station and post office.
- Rebels take **Khurda** and its **treasury**.
- **Puri** falls; Company retreats to **Cuttack**.
- Support from **Kanika**, **Kujang**, **Nayagarh** and **Ghumsur**.

4 How did it end?

The Company struck back. Captain Le Fevere retook Puri and captured the Raja. By May 1817 the Company had restored its control. Judges at Khurda tried the rebels. Some were executed, some were sent across the sea, and some were jailed.

But the fighting did not stop at once. Rebels kept up raids from the jungles until about 1826. Jagabandhu was among them. He lived in hiding for years.

He finally surrendered in 1825. Accounts say he did so on negotiated terms. He was held as a prisoner at Cuttack. He died there in 1829. Some sources give the date as 24 January 1829.

The Company also set up an inquiry into the causes. Its remarks admitted that the land and tax changes had caused much misery. Robert Ker was then made Commissioner of Cuttack.

- **Le Fevere** retook **Puri** and captured the Raja.
- Company control restored by **May 1817**.
- Jungle raids continued to about **1826**.
- Jagabandhu **surrendered in 1825**.
- Died a prisoner at **Cuttack**, **1829**.

5 How is he remembered?

For years the revolt was a local memory. Then Odisha pressed for wider fame. In October 2017 the state asked that it be recognised as the first war of independence.

The Union government gave a different answer in 2021. Its Culture Minister said the revolt could not be called the first war of independence. But he said it would be added to the NCERT Class VIII textbook. So it has a place in the national story.

Odisha has honoured Jagabandhu in its own ways. BJB College in Bhubaneswar carries his name. His statues stand at Bhubaneswar and Khordha. President Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundation stone of a Paika Rebellion Memorial near the Barunei Hills on 7 December 2019.

- **October 2017**: Odisha seeks **first war of independence** status.
- **2021**: Centre says no, but adds it to **NCERT Class VIII**.
- **BJB College**, Bhubaneswar, is named after him.
- Memorial: **Barunei Hills**, stone laid **7 December 2019**.
- Compare with Jayee Rajguru.

6 What are the exam traps?

Keep the names, dates and places apart.

- The Paika revolt began in **1817**, forty years before **1857**.
- **Jayee Rajguru** came first, in **1804**. **Jagabandhu** led in **1817**.
- **Buxi** was a rank, not a first name.
- The estate was seized in **1814**, three years before the revolt.
- The Centre did **not** accept it as the first war of independence.
- Jagabandhu **surrendered** in **1825**. He was not killed in battle.
- Read about Kittur Chennamma.
- Read about Tilka Manjhi.

> **Quick check 2.** Jayee Rajguru and Buxi Jagabandhu led the same rising in 1817. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Remember: Buxi Jagabandhu, hereditary Buxi of Khurda. Estate seized in 1814. Led the Paika Rebellion of 1817. Surrendered in 1825 and died a prisoner in 1829.

Think it through: Why did farmers, tribal fighters and local chiefs all join one revolt?

Each group had lost something to the new rule. The Paikas lost their land, the Kandhas faced new taxes, and the chiefs lost their rank. A shared loss made a shared cause.

Quick check 3. Buxi was a hereditary military rank second only to the Raja of Khurda. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Practice MCQs

1. What hereditary position did Buxi Jagabandhu hold under the Raja of Khurda?

A. Royal treasurer

B. Commander-in-chief of the Paik militia

C. Chief tax collector

D. Court physician

See answer ↓

2. Which earlier Khurda royal custodian led a smaller 1804 armed protest against British policy, seen as a precursor to Jagabandhu's revolt?

A. Harcourt

B. Mukunda Deva II

C. Jayee Rajguru

D. Bhramarbar Ray

See answer ↓

3. How did Buxi Jagabandhu's involvement in the rebellion end?

A. He died fighting in a final battle in 1817

B. He was captured immediately after the Banpur attack

C. He surrendered under negotiated terms in 1825, and died a prisoner in 1829

D. He escaped to Nepal and was never heard from again

See answer ↓

4. What personal setback in 1814, three years before the Paik Rebellion, is believed to have pushed Jagabandhu toward revolt?

A. His arrest on false charges

B. His son was imprisoned

C. The British confiscated his family estate

D. He was stripped of the Buxi title

See answer ↓

5. In October 1804, armed Paikas attacked the British at which place, alarming the Company force?

A. Puri

B. Ganjam

C. Cuttack

D. Pipili

See answer ↓

6. In the Paika organisation, which rank was made up of archers and marksmen skilled with matchlocks?

A. The Dhenkiya

B. The Banua

C. The Khandayat

D. The Prahari

See answer ↓

7. In 1814 the Company extended its control over which commodity in coastal Odisha, a move that angered people before the Paika revolt?

A. Indigo

B. Salt

C. Cotton

D. Rice

See answer ↓

8. Who laid the foundation stone of the Paika Rebellion Memorial near the Barunei Hills on 7 December 2019?

A. Naveen Patnaik

B. Narendra Modi

C. Pranab Mukherjee

D. Ram Nath Kovind

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **B.** "Buxi" was the hereditary post of commander-in-chief of the Khurda Raja's Paik militia. ↑ Q1
2. **C.** Jayee Rajguru led a smaller armed protest in 1804 and was executed in 1806, a direct precursor to the 1817 Paik Rebellion. ↑ Q2
3. **C.** He evaded capture for years, surrendered under negotiated terms in 1825, and died as a British prisoner in Cuttack in 1829. ↑ Q3
4. **C.** In 1814, the British confiscated Jagabandhu's own family estate, a personal loss believed to have pushed him toward the 1817 revolt. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** A group of armed Paikas attacked the British at Pipili in October 1804. The Khurda fort fell after a long fight. ↑ Q5
6. **B.** The Paikas had three ranks. The Prahari were guards with swords, the Banua were archers and marksmen, and the Dhenkiya were sword and shield bearers on the front line. ↑ Q6
7. **B.** Heavy tax and control over salt raised its price in 1814. Together with the silver tax rule and loss of service lands, it fed the 1817 revolt. ↑ Q7
8. **D.** President Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundation stone. The Union Ministry of Culture is building the memorial. ↑ Q8

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** ↑ 1
2. **False.** ↑ 2
3. **True.** ↑ 3

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