

ODISHA REVIEW

VOL. LXXI NO. 10-11

MAY - JUNE - 2015

MADHUSUDAN PADHI, I.A.S.
Commissioner-cum-Secretary

RANJIT KUMAR MOHANTY, O.A.S., (SAG)
Director

DR. LENIN MOHANTY
Editor

Editorial Assistance
Bibhu Chandra Mishra
Bikram Maharana

Production Assistance
Debasis Pattnaik
Sadhana Mishra

Cover Design & Illustration
Manas Ranjan Nayak

D.T.P. & Design
Hemanta Kumar Sahoo

Photo
Raju Singh
Manoranjan Mohanty

The *Odisha Review* aims at disseminating knowledge and information concerning Odisha's socio-economic development, art and culture. Views, records, statistics and information published in the *Odisha Review* are not necessarily those of the Government of Odisha.

Published by Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar - 751001 and Printed at Odisha Government Press, Cuttack - 753010.

For subscription and trade inquiry, please contact : **Manager, Publications, Information & Public Relations Department, Loksampark Bhawan, Bhubaneswar - 751001.**

Rs.100/- (One Hundred Rupees / Copy)

**E-mail : iprsec@rediffmail.com
Visit : <http://odisha.gov.in>
Contact : 9937057528(M)**

CONTENTS

Editorial

Nabakalebara of 1969	<i>Nilamani Senapati</i>	...	1
Navakalevara – 1977 : An Account	<i>Dr. Purna Chandra Mishra</i>	...	4
Shrimandira - the Navakalevara of Chaturddha Murti - the Chariot Festival, 1996	<i>Rajkishore Mishra</i>	...	10
Daru Devata : The Symbol of Indian Culture	<i>Dr. Benimadhab Padhi</i>	...	17
Jagannath and The Tribes	<i>G.N. Das</i>	...	20
Navakalevara Festival and Odia Culture	<i>Giridhari Dash</i>	...	22
Navakalevara and Ratha Yatra in the Purushottama Kshetra	<i>Dr. Kailash Chandra Dash</i>	...	30
Navakalevara Through Ages	<i>Prof. Jagannath Mohanty</i>	...	37
Playing the Mortal Game	<i>Chandrasekhar Rath</i>	...	40
Nilamadhava-cum-Purusottama and Jagannath	<i>Dr. S.N. Rajguru</i>	...	42
Odisha and Jagannath	<i>Dr. Mayadhar Mansinha</i>	...	45
Legends of Jagannath	<i>Padmalaya Das</i>	...	49
Jagannath : The Symbol of Peaceful Co-existence	<i>Gouri Kumar Brahma</i>	...	58
The Role of Mathas in Navakalevara Festival	<i>Bhaskar Mishra</i>	...	64
Navakalevara	<i>Dr. Himansu S. Patnaik</i>	...	67
Lord Jagannath and Odisha	<i>Siva Prosad Das</i>	...	71
Nabakalebara	<i>Harihar Patel</i>	...	75
Navakalevara of the Deities	<i>Banamali Suar</i>	...	77
Navakalevara Ceremony of Lord Jagannath	<i>Dr. Bidyut Lata Ray</i>	...	81
The Navakalevara of Lord Jagannatha	<i>Janaki Ballav Patnaik</i>	...	88
Puri, The Abode of Lord Jagannath	<i>D.N. Das Mahapatra</i>	...	91
Date of Niladrimahodaya	<i>Dr. Basudev Mishra</i>	...	95
Lord Jagannatha : An Apostle of Humanism	<i>Dr. Siddhartha Kanungo</i>	...	98
Navakalevara	<i>Anima Biswal</i>	...	101
Dasia Bauri	<i>Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab</i>	...	106
	<i>Trans : Satyanarayan Mohapatra</i>		
Balaram Das and Lord Jagannath	<i>Dr. Braja Kishore Sahu</i>	...	110
To Quell the Pangs of a Burning Navel	<i>Praharaj Satyanarayan Nanda</i>	...	115
Navakalevara and Sri Jagannath	<i>Pandit Ramakanta Kar</i>	...	116
The Topic of Navakalevara in Garrett's Report	<i>Mahimohan Tripathy</i>	...	119

Editor's Note



This is a special endeavour on the part of the Government of Odisha led by popular Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik on the occasion of the first Navakalevar ceremony of this century. A compilation of selected articles on Navakalevar by eminent writers and personalities covering a span of more than 4 decades which includes 3 Navakalevar ceremonies conducted in 1969, 1977 and 1996. Few of the learned writers are no more with us but their glorious writings are still informative and are respected more.

As I pen down my note, I am awestruck at the response received by the wooden cart "Shagadi" carrying the Divya Daru of Lord Sri Jagannath. The Divya Darus of Sri Sudarsan, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra have already reached "Koili Baikuntha". The preparation of chariots for the ensuing Ratha Yatra is also going on in full swing. The Government of Odisha is working in a co-ordinated manner leaving no stone unturned.

In the Srimad Bhagavat Geeta, Lord Srikrishna elaborately explained to Arjun regarding the Body and Soul. The 'Soul' is eternal whereas the 'Body' is transient. Navakalevar, being an important part of the Jagannath Cult justifies this belief. It also exhibits a perfect balance between the tribal origin of the cult and Brahminical Hinduism. Navakalevar means the new embodiment- a periodical renewal of the wooden body divine of the deities. The legend credits King Indradyumna to fashioning of wooden images for worship in Puri.

An attempt has been made to throw light through the writings of eminent personalities on various aspects of Navakalevar ceremony of the deities. We are grateful to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Minister, I & P.R., Chief Secretary, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, I & P.R. and Director, I & P.R. and many other dignitaries for guiding us in bringing out this wonderful publication. We would consider our efforts praiseworthy if this issue is appreciated by our esteemed readers.

JAI JAGANNATH.

Editor, Odisha Review



Nabakalebara of 1969

Nilamani Senapati



There is so much of confused notion about Nabakalebara that I propose to set down what exactly is happening in the year 1969 at least for record for the future.

The year in which the body of Jagannath will be changed is fixed by the astrologers. It is a year when there are two months of Asharh. The lunar month being a little less than 28 days and the solar month being 30 days, to bridge the gap of nearly a month every year, astrologers sometimes prescribe two months instead of one. In this way they preserve approximately the season in which lunar festivals are held, so that people who can easily follow the changing phases of the moon can have the festivals approximately in the same season every year. In 1969 there are two Asharhs, from the middle of June till the middle of August instead of being from middle of June to middle of July. The car-festival of Lord Jagannath which falls on the second day after the new moon of Asharh comes this year on 16th of July.

Nabakalebara which literally means new body is made out of a newly cut Neem tree and will last till the next Nabakalebara which may come from 12 to 18 years from now.

A notion which is widely held is that the tree which is cut this year will be kept for the next Nabakalebara and that the Nabakalebara of this year will be made out of the wood which was cut during the Nabakalebara of 1950. This is a wrong notion. The tree which has been cut on the 16th of May, 1969 will be the Jagannath who will appear for public view on the day of Netrotsab on 15th of July, 1969.

The ceremony of Nabakalebara starts on the day a party of priests go in search of Daru, i.e., the tree. This year it started on 28th of March, 1969, the 10th day after the new moon of Chaitra. The journey is known as Bana-Jatra. The party which went out consisted of 28 Daitas, 1 Pati Mohapatra, 4 Brahmin priests, 4 Viswakarmas (carpenters), 5 members of the temple police, 1 Lenka carrying the Sudarsan Chakra (the wheeled emblem of Vishnu), 1 Kahalia (bugler), 1 Deula Karana (accountant) totalling 45. They had to carry lots of material for the ceremonies which they have to perform at every Daru. The materials required two bullock-carts. After spending the first night at Puri they went to Kakatpur and stayed at Deulia Math. According to stories the Pati-Mohapatra dreamt the



directions in which the 4 Darus of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsan have to be looked for. They were blessed by Mangala, the presiding Goddess of Kakatpur. Then they set out in different parties looking for the Darus. The dream may or may not have happened, but there is no doubt that information had come from before of possible areas where the Darus could be found. I have definite information that news about Lord Jagannath's Daru at Champajhar near Khurda was sent to the Daitas sometime before Bana-Jatra. The party which was looking for Jagannath's Daru made straight for Champajhar first. They would have looked for a Daru elsewhere if the Champajhar Daru did not satisfy the criteria prescribed for selection. It has to be a very old and fat Neem tree.

The ten signs are :

1. A Barun bush in the neighbourhood. The notion that there must be also a Sahara bush is not correct.
2. The tree must stand near a river.
3. There must be an Ashram (hermitage) near the tree.
4. There must be a cremation ground near it.
5. There must be the four sacred signs of Chakra (wheel), Sankha (conch-shell), Gada (mace), and Padma (lotus).
6. The tree should have no branches up to a certain height (probably 12') from the ground and all the branches must be in trees.
7. There must be an ant hill at the foot of the tree.
8. There should be no bird's nest on it.
9. There should be a cobra at the foot of the tree.
10. There should be no creeper or parasite on the tree. At Champajhar the top branches were entwined with branches of a tamarind tree. The tamarind tree has also been cut for making a cart for carrying the Daru.

At least 5 of these signs must be there before a tree is selected. At Champajhar the tree had the following signs :

1. It was near a cremation ground.
2. It had two of the sacred signs, i.e., the wheel and conch-shell clearly visible on the bark.
3. It branched in threes.
4. There was an ant hill at the foot of the tree.

5. There was no bird's nest.
6. 3 cobras had been seen coming out of the ant hill.
7. It was a very old fat tree with a girth of 11' at ground level and free of branches up to a height of 12'.
8. There was no creeper or parasite.

Location of Daru :

Jagannath's Daru stood on plot No.928 belonging to Gobardhan Brahma in village Champajhar of Puri district which belongs to the Ekharazat Mahal, the landed property of Lord Jagannath.

Balabhadra's Daru was found at village Bhakarsahi hamlet Gada Chari Pada in Balipatna Police Station of Puri district belonging to Keshab Chandra Patra.

Subhadra's Daru was found at village Kanhupur in Police Station Govindpur in Cuttack district on plot No.254 which is Gochar (belonging to the whole village).

Sudarsan's Daru was found at village Balara near Banamalipur in Police Station Balipatna of Puri district.

After the Daru has been located, Homa is performed until the auspicious day for cutting it. At Champajhar it lasted for three days and cutting of the tree started in the afternoon of the 16th of May, 1969. Crowds collected during this period, causing sanitation and law and order problems for the authorities. Although it is laid down in Sankha Puran that "Swarupam Ba Arupam Ba Napashyet Chheden Abadi", that is, people should not see the Daru before it is cut, the rule was not known to the people and nobody told them to desist from visiting the Daru. Crowds not only collected but started chipping off bark in spite of the priests trying to dissuade them.

The cutting started at 3 p.m. on the 16th of May, 1969. Biswanath Pati Mohapatra of Bidyapati family first touched the Daru with a golden axe. Then Daitapati Rajkishore Das Mohapatra touched it with a silver axe. Then the 4 Viswakarmas (carpenters) started cutting. They soon got tired and wanted the help of the village which was at the beginning not forthcoming. Later they came forward and helped.

During the Nabakalebara of 1950, Balabhadra's Daru was found at Jalapur near



Kakatpur in Puri district. The owner was a Mohammedan who first refused to give it. But his wife not only gave permission to take the Daru, but engaged men to cut it and entertained the whole party during the few days they stayed at Jalalpur.

The wheels of the cart on which Jagannath's Daru was carried was made out of the tamarind tree which stood near the Daru at Champajhar. The wheels were like disc wheels without spokes.

The Darus have been shaped into the four deities in secret. On 13th June, the inner contents of the deities were transferred from the old bodies into the new bodies and the old bodies were buried at a place inside the temple precincts called Koili-Baikuntha. The four men who performed the ceremony were selected on 28th March 1969. They are all Daitas. The person who transferred the soul of Jagannath is an old man of 80. According to tradition he should die soon after performing the ceremony. The transfer of the souls or the inner contents was done in a closed and locked room with the Daita blind folded and hands wrapped in cloth so that he could neither see nor feel what he was transferring. The selection of the 4 Daitas was made by the 28 families of Daitas in consultation with their elders.

While the four Daitas transferred the souls of the deities, prayers (Archana) were offered by a Pati-Mohapatra who is a Brahmin. All the ceremonies after the bathing festival (Snana Jatra on full-moon of Jaistha which this year fell on 31st May) up-till Netrotsab (the day before the car festival that is on 15th July) are secret. The period is called Anasara.

The next stage is covering the wood with silk. There will be several layers of silk pasted on the body and then a Chitrakar (painter) will paint it to become the deity. In other words what is visible to the public is the painted silk which has been pasted on the wood.

Car Festival

As in previous years the timber for building the cars came from Daspalla, ex-princely State of Orissa which is traditionally the donor of the timber for the car festival of Puri. After integration of the State with Orissa in 1948 the Government of Orissa honoured the traditional commitment and directed the Divisional Forest Officer of Daspalla to despatch the annual requirement of timber in good time. This year the timber was floated down the Mahanadi,

Kathajori, Bhargabi and landed 3 miles from Puri. According to the temple manager the size of the timber has been gradually getting smaller, so that it has to be supplemented by purchase from the market. The entire timber is of Sal (Shorea robusta) which remains strong and hardly even though it may crack on loss of moisture. The fact that the size of the timber is diminishing shows depletion of the Sal forests of Daspalla which needs special care for honouring the traditional commitment of supplying timber for Lord Jagannath's car festival.

The building of the cars started on the date of Akshaya Trutiya (on 19th of April 1969). The carpenters are hereditary Jagir holders, but on account of partition and sale of Jagirs they cannot render full free service which they did before. Now they have to be paid concessional wages of Rs.3.25 per day per head.

The size and dimension of the cars has remained unaltered. The size of the car of Jagannath being 45' high and 45' square at wheel level. The wheels are 7' in diameter for all the cars and the number of wheels prescribed is 16 for Jagannath, 14 for Balabhadra and 12 for Subhadra which will remain unaltered this year. The covering of the cars used to be woollen previously. But for want of sufficient woollen material Markin cotton cloth is now being used. The Markin is dyed and dried before it is used on the cars. The colour of the covering is as follows :

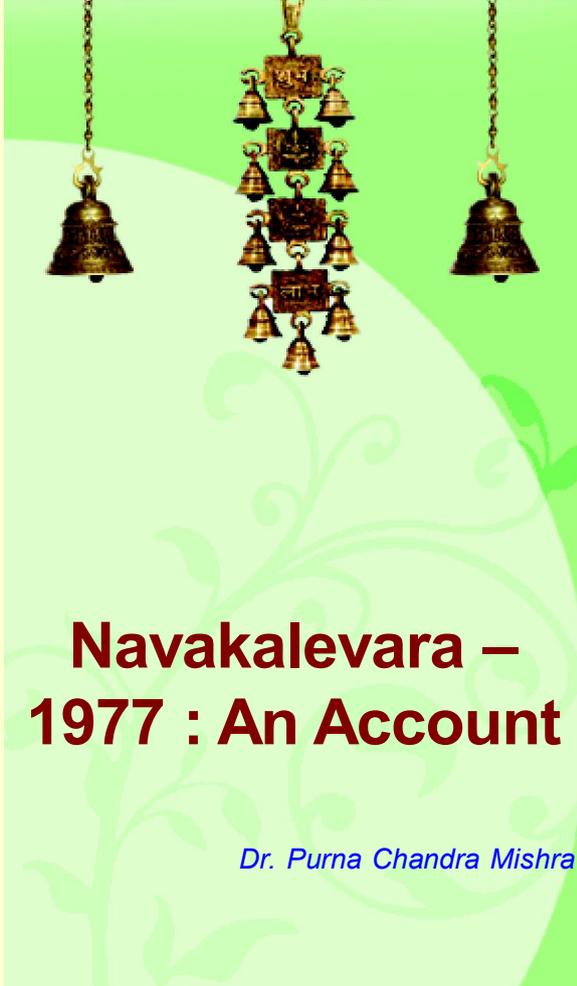
Jagannath	:	Red and Golden
Balabhadra	:	Red and Green
Subhadra	:	Red and Black

The number of ropes used for pulling each car is 4. Occasionally a 5th rope is tied when the car goes off the middle of the road and has to be steered back to it.

The cars travel a little more than a mile and half. The exact distance between the gates of Jagannath temple and Gundicha temple where the deities will be taken for 8 days, being 8,327 ft.

From the date of the full-moon of the bathing festival till the deities return from Gundicha temple, this year, from 31st May till 24th July, the deities remain in charge of Daitas who are supposed to be the descendants of a Savara Princess who was married to a Brahmin youth called Vidyapati.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review July, 1969.



Navakalevara – 1977 : An Account

Dr. Purna Chandra Mishra



Puri, the holy city of Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe, is known by various names like Sankhakshetra, Shrikshetra, Nilachala, Uddiyanpitha, Purushottama Kshetra, and Jagannath Dham etc. from very ancient times. It is famous for various religious festival associated with Lord Jagannath. The temple of Lord Jagannath is one of the greatest religious monuments of India. Pilgrims and tourists from different countries of the world come to visit the sacred temple of Lord Jagannath. Not only do they visit the temple of Lord Jagannath but they enjoy the natural beauty of the sea-beach too, whose rolling waves and pleasant breeze lift them to a transcendental height.

The name of Puri has been derived from the word 'Purushottama'. But some scholars have traced out the meaning of this word Puri as 'full' or 'whole'. Amongst its other religious attractions is the temple of Srilokanath, Kapalamochan, Markandeswar and Jambeswar.

The geographical situation of the shrine is Lat-19°18'17" and Long-85°51'39". This temple was originally built by Jajati Keshari of Somavansa (Lunar dynasty). Some scholars attribute the construction of the temple to Ananta Varman Chodaganga Dev, who was known as Duti Indradyumna.

Puri is a place of entertainment where thirteen main festivals and nearly hundreds of other rituals are observed in the temple of Lord Jagannath during a calendar year. Car festival or Ratha Yatra is one of the best amongst them in which Lord Jagannath has physically



participated. In the year, 1977, an important function of Lord Jagannath was celebrated which is known as Navakalevara-the renewal of the icons.

The icons are renewed at an interval of twelve years¹ Navakalevara has been celebrated in the year in which two Ashadhas fall.² This is known as Adhimasa, Malamasa. Purushottamasa or intercalary month. In this intercalary month, no auspicious rites and rituals are performed. But the wooden images are replaced by new images in the Navakalevara ceremony. As per recorded history, this ceremony had been performed for five times so far i.e. in the years 1863, 1893, 1931, 1950 and 1969. After lapse of eight years the intercalary month of Ashadha had fallen again in the year 1977.

There are two types of Navakalevara. The first one is the construction of new icons in which the sacred Brahma – the inhering spirit is changed and other is 'Srianga Phita' which means renovation of the image.

The sacred Navakalevara was held in the month of July 1977. For this purposes the searching of Sacred 'Daru'³ began from 6th April 1977. Before the searching of Daru there were some important functions which were held in the temple premises and in the Rajabati or the palace of Gajapati Maharaja (the first servant of the Lord) of Puri.

The tradition was that the ceremony for searching of sacred Daru was to be started from the 10th day of bright fortnight of Chaitra (March-April) which fell on 30th March 1977. But due to some unavoidable circumstances, it was held from 6th April 1977 instead of 30th March 1977.

On 6th April at 1.32 p.m., the Patimahapatra gave four garlands which is known as 'Ajnamalas', to the Daitapatis or Badagrahi Daita or the leader of the Daitas from Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. He himself kept the *ajnamala* of Lord Sudarshan. After receiving the *ajnamalas* the Daitapatis, Patimahapatra, Viswakarma Viswabasu were supplied with new clothes by Bhitarchu at Anavasara Pindi,⁴ which is called as "Sadhibandhaniti". In the meantime the Purohita or the priest of the temple and Rajaguru etc. used to start with Yajnas and Homas at new Darughara near Koili Baikuntha, a sacred place in the north side of the main temple. After these functions they went to the palace of Gajapati Maharaja of Puri in a procession.

There the Rajaguru brought coconut, unboiled rice, betel nut etc. and a piece of new cloth which are known as 'Patani' and the said things were given to Acharya and Biswakarma only. By giving these things the Gajapati requested the group of inquisitors for bringing the sacred Daru to Puri with proper care for the construction of new icons. This function is known as 'Guateka'. It was celebrated on the same day i.e. 6th April 1977 at 3 p.m. In the palace of Gajapati.

After that the inquisitors of sacred Daru consisting of five Brahmins, four Badagrahi Daitas, forty two Daitas, four Viswakarmas, four temple police, one Viswabasu, one Patimahapatra, (Vidyapati), one Lenka, Deulakarana etc. started their expedition with five carts for carrying the bag and baggages of this group. The duty of the Lenka is to lead



the party with a Çakra', which is the sacred symbol of Lord Vishnu.

In the year 1977 five Brahmins, namely Pt. Krushna Chandra Rajaguru as 'Acharya', Pt. Bisweswar Mahapatra, the temple priest (purohita) as 'Brahma', Pt. Mahadeb Mahapatra as 'Çharu', Pt. Keshab Chandra Rajguru as 'Samidha Acharya' and Pt. Balaram Dash as 'Pustakacharya' accompanied this party.

After the celebration of Guateka' at the palace of Gajapati the group went to a religious endowment at Grand Road Puri namely Jagannath Ballabha Math⁵ near the Municipality market. The group of inquisitors stayed there for one and half day then proceeded to Kakatpur.

From the day of starting to the last day this group is required to abide by certain traditional restrictions. They are to observe 'Habisis'⁶ daily. The Brahmins are allowed to take rest in a Math or in any public building like schools etc., but the other members of the party are not. They are required to rest themselves under a shady tree on the banks of a tank or a reservoir during the course of their search. They are not allowed to return to their homes before the Daru entered the temple of Lord Jagannath.

After taking rest for sometime the Daru inquisitors started for Kakatpur, the holy place of Goddess Mangala via Chaitana, a cross-country route from Puri, at 2 a.m. of the 7th April 1977. They took three days on the way to reach Kakatpur. They also took rest in different places like Chaitana, Nagapur and Gop on the way to Kakatpur.

On the way people gave a good and nice reception to these inquisitors. Off and on a grand and marvellous preparation for reception to the inquisitors had been made by different villagers. People standing by the side of the road began to make obeisance to the inquisitors of the sacred Daru. They (the inquisitors) arrived at Deuli Math the original place of Kakatpur Mangala on 9th April 1977 at 4.30 p.m. by walk.

On the 10th April 1977, early in the morning the inquisitors went to the river Prachi to complete their ablutions. After that they prepared themselves to go to the temple of Goddess Mangala, which is situated nearly one and half kilometres from Deuli Math. On the way to Mangala, the people gave reception with a big procession.

Here a question arises that though there are so many Goddesses in and around Puri or in Srikshetra, why the inquisitors particularly went to the temple of Goddess Mangala of Kakatpur, before searching the sacred Daru ? This question is best answered by Puranas.

In Puranas it has been described that Astachandis are guarding Srikshetra, They are Ramachandi near Konark, Mangala of Kakatpur, Sarala of Jhankad, Charchika of Banki, Tarini of Bhusandapur, Bhagavati of Banapur, Harachandi near Brahmagiri and Alamchandi near Atharanala. Among these Astachandis, the Mangala of Kakatpur is not only very famous and popular but also has close relations with the temple of Lord Jagannath, So the inquisitors are constrained to go to the temple of Goddess Mangala before searching the sacred Daru.



The inquisitors arrived at the temple of Goddess Mangala with a great procession. Then they began a special Majana⁷ and after the completion of Majana, the five Brahmins began to worship the deity through Chandipatha etc. All these rituals were finished on that day i.e. 10th April at 3 p.m. Then they prepared their food and completed the *habisya* for that day. All night they meditated on Swapnavati, the Goddess of dream for giving them information about the sacred Daru and the necessary sense of direction.

In the meantime some leaders of the Daitas began their *adhia* work to please the Goddess Mangala. By this, being pleased with the worship of the inquisitors Goddess Mangala allowed them for searching the sacred Daru on 11th April 1977. So after this the Daitas went to different directions for searching the Daru and the Brahmins began the Chandipatha, by the blessings of Mangala the Daitas were able to get the inaccessible sacred log (Daru).

On the 19th April 1977 at 5 p.m. the inquisitors started for collecting the sacred Daru of Sudarsan at Singha Sahi of Niali, Dist-Cuttack. After arriving there they prepared Ankuraropana Mandap, Yajnasala etc. for Banajaga and Sabarapali for the shelter of Daitas. The Brahmins began the Banajaga process on a holy day of Baisakha. i.e. Akshaya Trutiya on 21st April 1977. On that day at 4 p.m. they started the Vishnu Puja and offered ghee in the holy fire 108 times with Mantraraj Mantra. On the 22nd April, the Brahmins again began to offer ghee in the sacred fire for 250 times with Patal Nrusingha Mantra, and 800 times with Mantraraj Mantra.

They also made the Astrapuja and other Pujas on that day. On the 23rd April 1977, the sacred Banajaga was finished and the cutting of Daru began by the Biswakarma. They cut the sacred log from the root. Then they prepared the log for transporting to Puri. This preparation is known as *Çhaupata*⁷. After that they put all the dispensable portion of the Daru in a big hole.

A trolley (Sagadi) was prepared for the transportation of the Daru to Puri. The different parts of the trolley had been made of wood like tamarind, Kendu and Bela etc. The sacred log for Sudarsan⁸ had been proceeded to Puri on the 26th April 1977, via Niali, Nimapada, Pipili, Sakhigopal and Chandanpur. The sacred log was arrived at Puri on the 30th Aril 1977 with a great procession.

In this process the sacred log for Balabhadra was collected from Dhamnagar near Bhogeswar from 28th April to 5th May 1977, Daru for Subhadra from Beraboi near Delanga from 6th May to 13th May 1977. Lastly they collected the sacred log for Lord Jagannath from Hatasahi near Sakhigopal from 14th May to 25th May 1977. All these Darus arrived at Puri one after another in great procession. The nearby villagers and devotees helped the inquisitors for pulling the trolley. The sacred Daru of Lord Jagannath arrived at Puri on 28th May 1977.

It is a tradition that if the sacred Daru came through Pipili, Sakhigopal, it was kept near Alamchandi temple near Atharanala. If it came through Chaitana etc. It was kept near Nrusingha temple near Gundichaghar. When the trolley arrived near any one of these temples the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri was



informed. He took the sacred log to the temple of Lord Jagannath with a beautiful procession. The Darus entered in the temple premises through the north gate and kept in the Darugharas temporarily constructed in the Koili Baikuntha. Anyway all the Darus must arrive at Puri before the Debasnana Purnima, the sacred bath ceremony of Lords.

After this the construction of images and the Pratistha (consecration) work began after the Daru Snana⁹ or the sacred bath of the logs on 1st June 1977 to 15th June 1977. In the meantime the Bhagabat Patha, Gita Patha, Chandi Patha and different types of Suktas etc. started in the temple premises for the success of construction of the icons and completion of the consecration ceremony. In the year 1977, fifty one Brahmins excluding five Brahmins from the inquisitors of sacred logs were engaged for this purpose.

On 15th June 1977, the newly constructed images took bath in holy water mixed with the herbs. After that the Prananyasa was performed. Gajapati Maharaja of Puri, then came and gave Purnahuti or completion of sacred Homa, donations etc. Then the consecration work was completed before evening.

Then the Daitas took over the charge of the newly constructed images and prepared them for changing of Brahma. This ritual was performed at the mid-night of the 14th day of the dark phase of Ashadha i.e. on 15th June 1977. The changing of Brahma was completed by the Patimahapatra (Bidyapati) with ceremonial offerings, Puja etc. After the changing Brahma from old images to new

images, the old icons along with the Sarathis, different other images, Horse etc. of the cars were buried in the Koili Baikuntha by the Daitas.

Completing these things the Daitas were celebrating funeral ceremony of the Lords in the traditional Hindu way. This ceremony was completed on the 27th June 1977. On the day of completion i.e. 13th day of the obsequies of icons nearly ten to fifteen thousands of monks, Sevakas, Brahmins, widows and the eminent persons were invited for taking Mahaprasad, the sacred offering of the Lords.

Then from the next day Daitas began other works of the icons like 'patadora lagi' i.e. silk thread with one type of paste made out of til oil and resin were pasted on the icon. Then the Khalilagi, Khadilagi, Banakalagi were started. These works must have been completed before the new moon day of Ashadha. On this day the colouring of eyes were completed which is known as 'Netrotsava'. This day is also known as 'Navajouvan Darshan'. After this Lords were prepared for Car Festival.

This is a brief note on the description of Navakalevara ritual which occurred in the year 1977.

Notes :

1. Though it is roughly calculated as twelve years, the twin Ashadhas have not so far fallen exactly in twelve years. Sometimes it falls in eight years, sometimes in eleven years, nineteen years and twenty seven years.
2. Normally, Ashadha according to Hindu calendar falls approximately around June-July. But depending on the Hindu leap year



calculation, an extra month is added, in order to adjust the short fall. Therefore, at times we get an extra month. When such a month comes, normally Lord Jagannath's Navakalevara is being celebrated.

3. Sacred log of Neem (or margosa) out of which the images are carved.

4. The Lord enter into a fortnight long rest. The Lord is humanised here. After twenty one days of water frolic at Narendra tank during Chandana Jatra and sacred bath at Snana Mandapa on Devasnana Purnima the God needs rest. It is also known that the God is ill. That is the only fortnight when the devotees will not be allowed to see the original images. It is called Anavasara. Anavasara Pindi' is, therefore, is a temporary hide out of Gods, where they take rest.

5. The reason of staying at Jagannath Ballabha Math is that if anybody of the inquisitors' group will be seriously ill, he will not return to his residence till all the sacred logs (Darus) came to Puri. So he can return to

Jagannath Ballabh Math and wait till the sacred logs came to Puri. Another reason behind this is to prepare themselves for going to search the sacred log secretly.

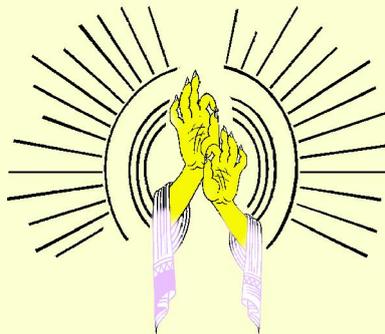
6. Habisya : The term means taking only one meal a day. The meal must be purely vegetarian and prepared in the purest cooking medium ghee. It is a sort of discipline which the inquisitors have to observe.

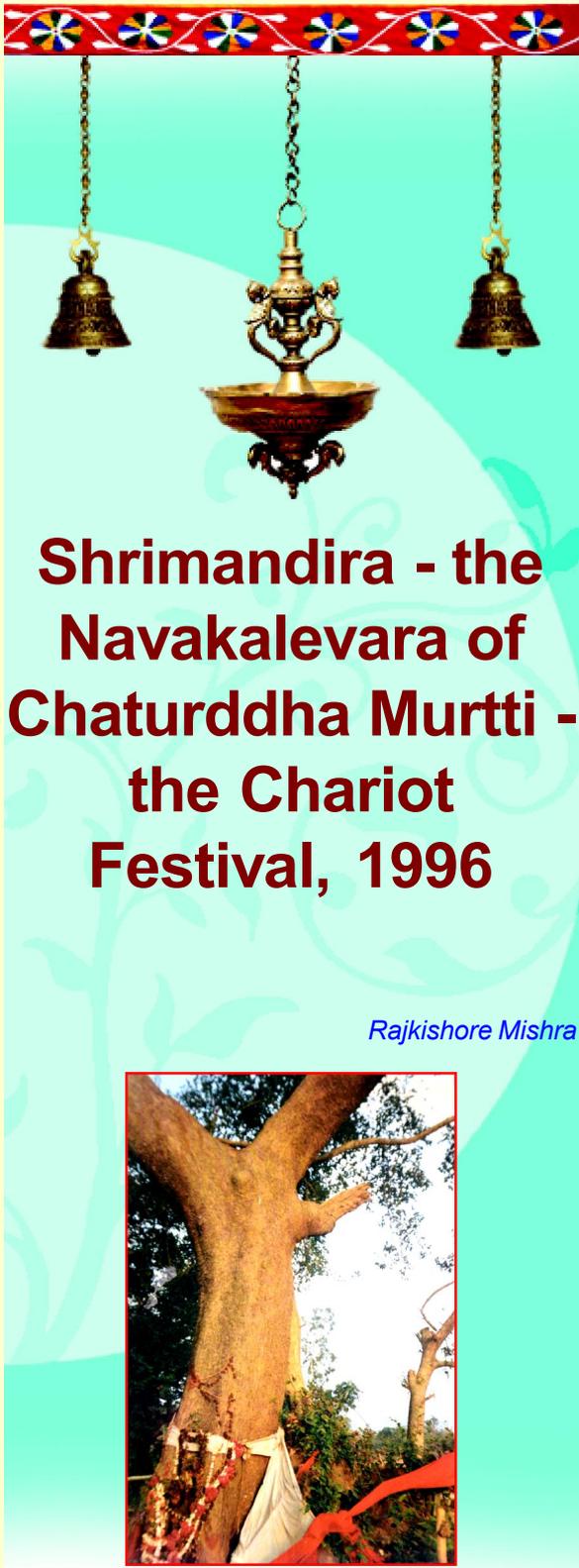
7. Majana : A ceremonial bath given to the deity. In the special *majana* of Kakatpur Mangala, nobody except some of the inquisitors are allowed to see this.

8. The disc that Lord Vishnu holds as his weapon. In the temple of Lord Jagannath it is given a special status.

9. Daru Snana : The sacred bathing of the logs collected by the inquisitors. 108 water jars are prepared with holy water and herbs for this purpose.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.





Shrimandira - the Navakalevara of Chaturddha Murtti - the Chariot Festival, 1996

Rajkishore Mishra



The Temple Abode of Shri Jagannath

The temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri is one of the few important sacred pilgrimage centres in India. Every pious Hindu makes it a point to visit Purusottama Jagannath at Puri at least once in life. Here Shri Chaitanya had stayed for long eighteen years. Shri Shankaracharya, Tulsidas, Nanak and Shri Ramanujacharya had left their imprints here. Rishis, prophets and preceptors from all over India right from the 7th century have set up their *ashramas*, *maths* and temporary abodes in this seashore resort town, famed as Purushottama Kshetra or Shankha Kshetra or Shrikshetra or Nilachala. It is also known as Dasavatara Kshetra. The profound religious aura of this place makes it appear as Nitya Vaikuntha, the abode of Brahman.

In the sanctum sanctorum are majestically placed on the Ratna Simhasana the three massive wooden manifestations of the Divine to the utter bafflement of seers, philosophers, indologists and researchers. Each sect has tried to identify Lord Jagannath as its personal God. But He transcends all barriers - religious, communal, national and international. Even historical research in digging out the antiquity of Niladri and Purusottama Jagannath is still at its cradle and no final word has yet been pronounced, though for most of the devotees the Darubrahma Jagannath himself is the only answer which is transmitted in a transcendental and metaphysical wavelength. Nay, even the very sight of the 160' long Banner (Dhwaja) hanging from the temple spire or the Nila Chakra thereon does silence many an agitation in the mind of an eager devout.



The temple was rebuilt on a huge sand dune, resembling a dark or blue hillock (Nilashaila or Nilagiri) sometime during 1113-1150 A.D. It is said to have been consecrated in 1230 A.D. It is a three-tier rekha temple (214.8") with curvilinear superstructure on a pancharatha plan at the cost of 12,50,000 madhas or 9250 kg. of gold. It consists of Deula (the sanctum), Jagamohan (square Audience Hall in front of the sanctum), Natamandira (dancing Hall 69' x 67') and Bhoga Mandapa (Refectory or Hall of Offering 58' x 56'). As a marvel of Kalinga temple architecture, it has fourfold vertical divisions - Pitha, bada (vertical portion below the bada), *gandi* (curvilinear spire) and the mastaka. The Natamandira and Bhoga Mandapa are later (15th C) additions to the temple. The temples of Pataleshwar, Ishaneshwar, Kapalamochana and Agnishwara in the Jagannath Temple Complex are indicative of the antiquity of the place as a Shaivite centre.

The temple has two massive enclosures. The two concentric stone walls known as Kurma Bedha (or inner wall measuring 400' x 278') and Meghanada Prachira (or outer wall measuring 665' x 644' with height varying from 20' to 24') were constructed in the 15th C during the reign of Purusottama Deva (1467-1497) and Kapilendra Deva (1435-1469) respectively. The whole temple complex comprises an area of 10.7 acres.

The temple has four gates at the eastern, southern, western and northern mid-points of the outer wall, known as simha Dwara (Lions Gate), Ashwa Dwara (Horses Gate),

Vyaghra Dwara (Tigers Gate) and Hasti Dwara (Elephants Gate). They represent dharma, Jnana, vairagya and aishwarya. In front of the Simhadwara is installed the Aruna Stambha, made of single solid chlorite stone and upon it squats beautiful Arun in obeisance.

Navakalevara

The 1996 Ratha Jatra has turned out to be a historic one. It is expected that more than 20 lakhs of people will assemble at the sea-town Puri on 17th July to participate in the Chariot Festival of Lord Jagannath who shall gracefully appear on the Nandighosh chariot in His sixth Navakalevara form of the present century. The 20th century has already witnessed five Navakalevaras or periodical renewal of the wooden images in 1912, 1931, 1950, 1969 and 1977. The Navakalevara falls during intercalary lunar months of Asadha (Asadha mala masa) preceding the Ratha Jatra. The Daitas as per the temple tradition are assigned with the task of finding out suitable Nim trees (Daru) in the State for construction of the images. They are assisted by Pati Mohapatra, Brahmin Priests, Viswakarmas (carpenters), Lenka, temple guards, temple accountant (Deula Karana) and others during the Bana Jatra which commences on the Chaitra Shukla Dasami. The search - Party receives ajnamala from the Temple, goes to Gajapati Maharaja for a ritual send-off, enjoys over-night stay at the Jagannath Vallabh Math nearby, proceed to Kakatpur Mangala in the Prachi valley for obtaining necessary directives in dream regarding the location of the required Nim trees for the four deities. This year the Darus were collected



from village Panimal (Puri district), Ramakrushnapur (Cuttack district), Malada (Puri district) and Dadhimachhagadia (Khurda district) for Sudarshana, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath respectively. While selecting the Daru, the search party cautiously verifies all the prescribed features of the tree and the surrounding. Soon after selection, various rites are performed in the vicinity which include recital of Vedic hymns, yajna or sacrifice, elaborate puja of Sri Nrusingh and other brahmanical rites. When the initial consecration is over the Darus are brought to the Temple in newly built wooden carts and are brought to the Koili Vaikuntha through the northern gate. On the Snana Purnima Day (this year it fell on 1st June) the Darus are given a ceremonial bath. Images are carved out of the Darus after an elaborate Puja in Koili Vaikuntha with utmost care. On Asadha Krushna Chaturdasi, after midnight, the New Wooden Images are brought to the sanctum sanctorum for transference of the Brahma Padartha from the old to the new images which takes place in the mysterious dark amidst pervading silence. This year the Transference of Brahma Padartha took place on 15th June. The Old Images then look insipid like corpses and they are buried inside the Koili Vaikuntha. After this Mahaprasthanana the Daitas observe obsequies in profound grief, as their dear one is departed. The New Deities remain sealed to the public for a month during which the Daitas prepare the deities, i.e., administer necessary paste and wrap them with required silk. The painters then provide coats of paint. The whole process is carried on during the Maha Anavasara (as against the annual routine anavasara lasting

for 15 days). On the first day of the bright fortnight of Asadha (this year 16th July) the Deities give Darshan on the Ratna Simhasana and this maiden appearance is called Nava Yauvana Darshan and Netrotsava. The day following commences the historic Ratha Jatra, i.e., on July 17, 1996.

Sri Mandir Parikrama (the Holy Circumambulation) :

Following is the prescribed order that a pilgrim should undertake while paying his visit to Lord Jagannath.

1. Standing behind the Aruna Stambha one should look at the temple spire, Nilachakra and the Flag and pay respect to them.
2. Enter through the Lions Gate, pay respect to Patita Pavana on the right and Fate Hanuman on the left.
3. Climb the Baisi Pahacha. On the 3rd stair, visit Kasi Viswanath.
4. Enter the inner enclosure, keep on to the left, visit Agnisvar, Sri Satyanarayan (Janardana) - Bata Gopal - Radhakrushna - Bata Krushna - Bala Mukunda (a cute tiny image sleeping on a banyan leaf and sipping his toe to test whether it is nectarine) - Hari - Sahadeva Siva (supervisor of Lord Jagannath's cattle wealth) - Batavihari Jagannath or Bata Avakasha) - Shveta Ganesh-Kalpa Bata-Pancha Pandava Siva (Markandeya, Lokanatha, Kapala Mochana, Nilakantha and Yameshwara) and Bata Mangala - Ananta Basudeva - Kuttam Chandi.
5. Mukti Mandap - Adinrusingha - madanmohana - Jalakridamandapa - Rohinikunda - Ganesha (12- armed image in



front of Vimala Temple, south facing) - Goddess Vimala - Venimadhav - Sri Nanda Maharaja - Sri Ramapadapadma - Sri Sakshi Gopala - Bhandra Ganesa - Saraswati - Bhadra Kali - Nilamadhava - Lakshmi - Navagraha - Suryanarayana - Pateleswara - Padapadma (foot prints of Sri Chaitanya) Ekadasi Devi. Then approach the Temple through the northern Inner Gate, climb seven stairs and stand behind the Garuda Stambha and have a quick glimpse of the dear Lord.

The Chariots

The three chariots are built anew annually excluding the Kalasa, 14 subsidiary deities, charioteers and horses. 1072 pieces of logs (i.e. *phasi, dhaura, male, simili*) are brought from Dasapalla and Ranpur forests. Nearly 125 temple carpenters (including helping assistants) work for 58 days at the *Mahakhala* (infront of the palace) and chisel out 2,188 pieces of wood for the construction of three chariots. The construction work

commences on the Akshaya Trutiya. Each chariot is covered with new cloths of radiant colour. Nearly 1,090 metres of cloth are used for this purpose. The chariots are fastened with four long sturdy ropes (each 240' - 250' with 8" diametre) each so as to facilitate the devotees to pull them. The Kerala Coir Corporation provides these specially manufactured coconut fibre ropes. Iron nails, brackets, clamps, etc. used for this purpose are indigenously prepared by the native smiths near the Dolavedi and it takes them more than a month. The techno-engineering details of the chariots are indeed a technical marvel by any standard for their static and dynamic stability. The Rath's superstructure (above the sheels) contains eighteen pillars and roofs at various stages which are known as *bhuin, potala, parabhadi*, etc. Each chariot contains nine *parswadevatas* (subsidiary deities), two *dwarapalas* (door keepers), one sarathi (charioteer) and one presiding deity of the crest banner (*dhwaja devata*), all made of wood.

Description of Chariots

	Chariot of Jagannath Nandighosha/ Garudadhwaja/ Kapidhwaja	Chariot of Balabhadra Taladhwaja	Chariot of Subhadra Darpadalana / Padmadhwaja
Number of wheels	16	14	12
Total number of wooden pieces used	832	763	593
Height	13.5 m.	13.2 m.	12.9 m.
Length & Breadth	34'6" x 34'6"	33' x 33'	31'6" x 31'6"
Colour of cloth wrappings	Red, Yellow	Red, Bluish Green	Red, Black



Guarded by	Garuda	Basudev	Jayadurga
Names of the Charioteers	Daruka	Matali	Arjuna
The Flag	Trailokyamohini	unnani	Nadambika
The Horses	Shankha, Balahaka, Shweta, Haridashwa	Tibra, Ghora Dirghashrama Swarnanava	Rochika, Mochika, Jita, Aparajita
The Ropes	Sankhachuda	Basuki	Swarnachuda
Presiding Nine Deities	Varaha, Govardhan, Krushna, Gopi- Krushna, Nrusimgha, Rama, Narayana, Trivikrama, Hanuman and Rudra	Ganesha, Kartikeya Sarvamangala, Pralambari, Halayudha, Mrutyunjaya, Natamvara, Mukteshwar, Sheshadeva.	Chandi, Chamunda, Ugratara, Vana- Durga, Shulidurga, Varahi, Shyama Kali, Mangala and Vimala

(Variant forms of these descriptions are also found mentioned elsewhere)

THE RATHAJATRA PROCEEDING

Morning Rituals (Inside the Temple)

Arati, Avakasha, Rosa homa (puja in the temple kitchen), Surya and Dwarapala Puja, Sakala Dhupa (morning offering-specially cooked food) Mangalarpana, Doralagi, Puspanjali and Tuli offering, Mailam lagi, unfastening of deities and preparation for the Pahandi.

Pahandi (from the Sanctum to the Simhadwara)

(*Dhadi Pahandi*) The deities are taken out (one after the other) in the following order - Sudarshana, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath from the Ratna Simhasana in a ceremonial procession amidst sounds of *Ghanta*, *Kahali* and *Telengi Baja*. At the Seven-

Stairs (northern exist from the Natamandapa) the three deities assemble, receive *taya* or *tahiya* (a massive headgear made of sola) offered to them by the head of Raghav Das Math. Then the deities one after the other are ushered through the Ananda Bazar, Baishi Pahacha and Simhadwara and finally to their respective chariots as per the set protocol, i.e. Sudarshana - Balabhadra - Subhadra - Jagannath. Sri Jagannath is installed in Nandighosha, Sri Balabhadra in Taladhwaja and Subhadra and Sudarshana in Darpadalana chariots respectively.

When the deities are installed in their respective Rathas, the following rituals are observed on the eve of commencement of the journey. The crowd watches the following sequences with excitement :



1. *Chaka apasara-s* (circular cushions) are provided to the deities.
2. Proxy divinities, i.e. Madanamohan and Ramakrishna are brought from the Temple and placed in Nandighosha and Taladhwaja respectively.
3. Two big chests containing provisions, raiment and other necessary articles for use of the deities during the journey and sojourn are kept in the chariots.
4. Chitas (special head ornaments made of sola and studded with artificial gems) and flower decorations are provided to the deities.
5. Chhera Pamhara (moping of the Ratha platform by the Thakur Raja of Puri). The Raja comes from the Palace by palanquin, offers garlands, performs arati, pays reverential salute (*danda pranama*), fans the deity by golden chamara (flywhisk) and symbolically sweeps the platform round the deity. Thus, the Raja, as the foremost servitor performs the ignoble job of a scavenger as a mark of utmost humility in the presence of the State Deity.
6. Sarathi-s (three wooden charioteers one for each chariot) are then fastened on the chariots by the Bhois.
7. Charas (improvised wooden flights of stairs to the chariots) are then unfastened and taken out.
8. Wooden horses (four to each chariot) are yoked.
9. Lakhs of devotees, men, women, young and old - irrespective of caste, creed and nationality scramble eagerly for a touch of the 250 feet holy coir cables to pull the chariots

along the 3 km. long Grand Road culminating at the Gundicha Mandira in the north-east. They enjoy to their hearts' content the much-cherished sight of Patitapavana - Vamana - Jagannatha on the chariot.

The Chariots Rumble Through the Masses

First moves the Taladhwaja, the chariot of Balabhadra, then Darpadalana and lastly Nandighosha. During the journey, the deities are presented with holy offerings (*pankti*) on behalf of various Maths and institutions.

Destination Reached

(Stay in the Rathas - from the following night to the next day evening)

After the chariots are parked in front of the Gundicha Mandira.

1. The deities undergo a ceremonial *mahasnana*.
2. They are dressed in Bairani cloth (intricately woven and with wide border).
3. Various offerings are made i.e. *bhoga*, *arati*, *badasimhara dhupa* and *khandua lagi*, etc.

They Proceed to Gundicha Temple, the Adapa Mandapa : (Next day evening)

1. The Vijayakahali (the trumpet announcing deities august entry) leads the procession of Goti Pahandi.
2. Madanmohan and Ramakrushna are first of all taken inside.
3. Mailam (change of dress) is conducted on the Rathas.
4. Daitas carry the deities inside Gundicha Mandir ceremonially.



A Week long rest (In the Gundicha Temple)

The Simhasana there unlike the Ratnavedi is known as Mahavedi or the Janmavedi. It is said that the deities were born here and here Raja Indradyumna conducted the historic *aswamedha yajna*. During their sojourn in Gundicha (adapa) the deities are dressed in Dasavatara Vesha.

Forlorn Mahalakshmi

Sri Jagannath alias Sri Narayana is yet to return to Niladri. Four weary nights have already passed. Mahalakshmi becomes disconsolate. She goes to the Gundicha temple on the 5th day (Hera Panchami), Lo, upon her arrival the main doors of Gundicha Temple are suddenly closed with a bang. She returns after a brisk glance of her Lord with a heavy heart and in a fit of anger breaks a small part of the Nandighosh and returns to the Temple via Hera Gouri Sahi.

Bahuda Jatra or Return Journey (on the 9th day)

After spending a week inside the Gundicha Temple, the deities commence their Bahuda Jatra on *Asadha Shukla Dashami*. The preceding evening is exclusively meant for Sandhya Darshan. On the previous day, the chariots are placed south-west. The return journey follows the same protocol and schedule as is found during the Ratha Jatra.

At Ardhasani (Mausima), the deities are offered *podapitha* (sweet cake). Nandighosha halts at Rathakhala (infront of Raja's palace)

whereas Darpadalana and Taladhawaja move forward and are parked at Simhadwara.

In the meanwhile Mahalakshmi steals a glimpse of Nandighosha from the Chahani Mandap, hurries to Narayan by palanquin, meets him, receives a loving garland and goes back to the Temple where she awaits Jagannath-Niladri.

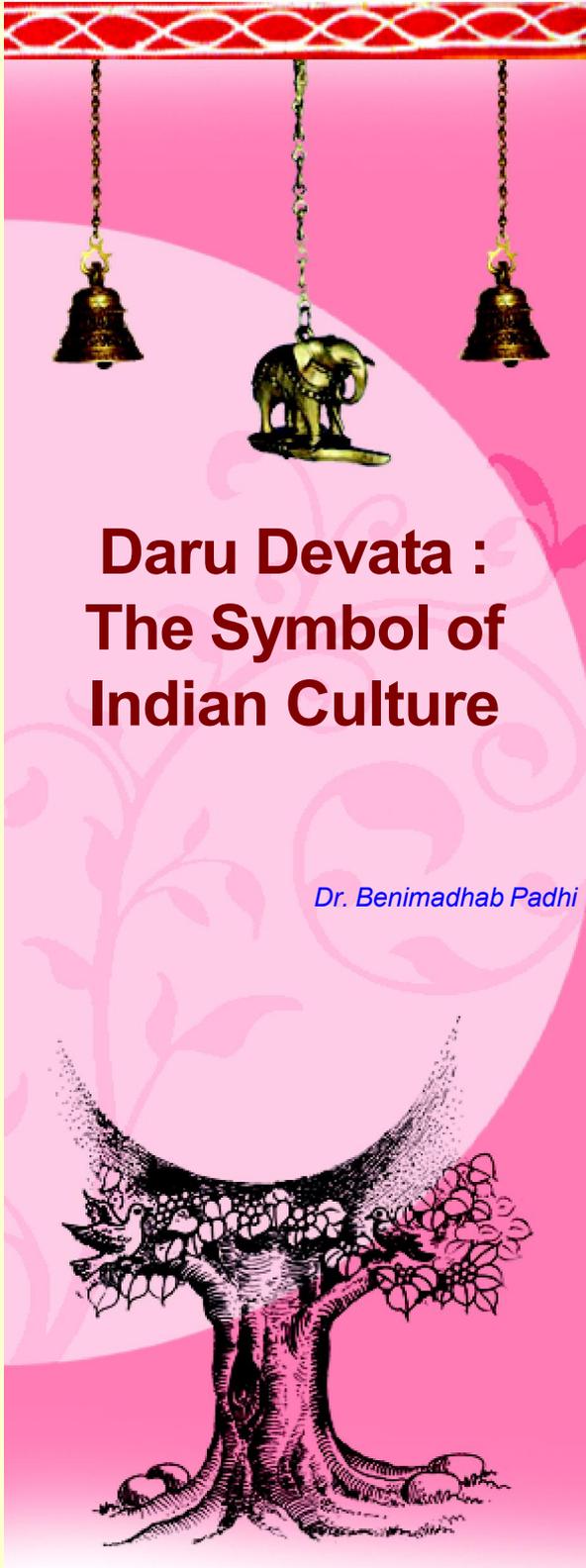
Journey's End and the Valedictory Rite

1. On the days of Bahuda the deities remain in their respective chariots.
2. The next day (*ekadashi*), the deities are dressed in glittering gold (Suna Vesha) in their chariots.
3. Niladri Vije or Dwadashi Jatra (Re-entry)

After the evening ritual, the deities enter Niladri in *goti* pahandi. Balabhadra and Subhadra are taken to the sanctum sanctorum without any impediments whereas the entry of Jagannath is met with many a pleasant hurdle. Devadasis at the behest of Lakshmi close the main entrance for a spell and then they close the Jaya-Vijaya Dwara and engage themselves in a pleasant repartee with the Daitas. After that, Jagannath is made to sit beside Lakshmi where a ritual of reunion is rehearsed and finally Lord Jagannath ascends the Ratnasimhasana and rejoins his brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.





Indians are proud of their antiquity and their culture. Some have suggested that pre-Aryan culture was posterior to theirs. They have even assumed that India was the mother-fount of all civilisations whence all the basic ideas spread to other parts of the world. Such claims may be exaggerated and thus may be regarded as an over-estimation. But it remains a fact that Indian culture dates back to the hoary and dim past to which no exact date can reasonably be ascribed. It has been largely determined and shaped through the ages by the influences of the Indian way of life, thought, social behaviour and religious beliefs.

The word 'culture' is variously understood with reference to different branches of academic decretives like history, literature, anthropology and such other social studies. Sometimes it is interpreted as tradition or the way of life or group behaviour. But *Sanskriti*, the Indian equivalent of 'culture', has a very wide connotation, in as much as it embraces everything pertaining to the life of the people or peoples. Through this interpretation Indian culture can be explained lucidly.

Indian culture is a vast Ocean which absorbs all the river-like external elements without discrimination of time or place. This power not only permits the new to enter into it but, having entered, even to maintain its dignified individuality. Scholars are trying hard to discover this fact through their researches on the civilisations of various nations. Their attempts are, of course, laudable; but if they could know the essence hidden in the worship of Sri Jagannath at Puri their work could be made far easier.

Unlike the culture of the present day, it is not easy to understand that of the distant past. Historical data are so scanty that one cannot have a definite idea about it. For this purpose investigations are conducted into the architecture of Ellora, the inscriptions of Jaugada, the excavations of Mahenjodaro, and the Rig Vedas, the Zend-Avestas and the Tripitakas. Their findings show that all the cultural excellences in various ages bear at their very centre the stamp of our ancient past. But no one of them individually can represent the whole gamut of Indian culture, though each has some valuable property of ancient India. Only Sri Jagannath of Puri clearly and adequately



symbolises the entire culture of India and through Him only one can easily unfold the secret of the Indian mind.

Though there are so many opinions about the origin and worship of Sri Jagannath (because different critics try to prove Him as the symbol of different isms like Jainism, Brahmanism, Shaivism and Saktism), it has been accepted that He was being worshipped in India as a tree by a proto-Australoid tribe from the pre-Mahenjodaro period and even from the time of the ancient Babylonian civilisation. After some time the tree became a Daru, which means a branchless trunk. This has been very significantly called in Oriya as the Madala. Then the Madala was transformed into an unfinished image with two large round eyes and a projected nose. Subsequently it was believed as a manifestation of the Supreme Power.

But belief is not of a divine Godhead. No one does see anything divine in it since it is a clear symbol of a social and rational concepts as : तमिन्द्रमिदमागहि बहिष्ठा गावभिः सुतम् कुविन्वस्य तृणावः in the Rigveda. Here the concept of Indra is that of a god, but the treatment is completely human. So also with Sri Jagannath. Otherwise neither any social function like Deepavali and Paya-Shraddha in the temple nor the cremation ceremony of Sri Jagannath at the time of Naba Kalevara (the new form of Sri Jagannath) would have been observed. Here the God is treated as a social being, almost man like but at the same time the Supreme Being. He is a first class host and friend of all.

When a friend or relative comes into a house there must not be any fetters in meeting him. So also is the rule in the temple of Sri Jagannath. Here the devotee treats Jagannath as a friendly host but dedicates himself to Him as his Supreme Lord. In this manner one can enter the temple whenever one wants. From such a faith, we can say, the concept of Dhulia Darshan has arisen (to see the Lord even with dusty feet). Here one does not feel the godliness in the worship, divinity in aristocracy or the difference between the mortal and the immortal, but expresses pure love, sincere devotion and true friendship.

Whenever and whatever is offered to Him in the real spirit of devotion He readily accepts, but

does not take with His hands. The devotee gets Kaivalya or salvation by this. So there is no need of mantra, yantra, yajna or yoga to please Him but love - pure love. Therefore, He takes unboiled, unripe fruits from the hands of a low caste Savara. Here we do not differentiate the devotee from the Lord, the dedicant from the dedicatee and the subject from the object. Both are the same in essence and yet both are humanly. This is the cream of our culture - Indian culture.

The peculiar imagery of the Daru Devata is much more wonderful and mysterious. God is not a human being. Flesh and blood are unessential for the construction of the Divine Corpus. There is no necessity of ears or legs and hands as in the human form, because He only observes things and keeps quite. He neither rescues nor does He take revenge on any one directly. He has no hands. But, He is the Great, Omnipotent, Almighty, yet touchable by all. Untouchability is a hideous sin in the society of mankind. He is a man (Purusha), the greatest man (Purushottama). So He has a right to lead the most luxurious life like an emperor. From morning until midnight He enjoys fifty-six varieties of food (bhoga) and thirty-six kinds of services (khatani Niyoga). Here the conception of God is fully human and majestic.

Besides, trio-worship in Jagannathism is more than religious. The trio are of three different colours - white, yellow and black. The first Balabhadra is white, the second Subhadra is yellow and the third Jagannath is black. These colours meant for the gods represent the colours of the human races. In the colour conception the yellow faced Chinese, the white skinned European and the black coloured Afro-Indian races are clearly indicated. In other words, the Austro-Asiatic family of the Indian peninsula, the Chinese race of the Tibetan land, and beginning from the Turkish and Mongoloid family of North and Central Asia with the Indo-European descendants to the Negroes of Africa and the tribal races of South America are also included.

For this reason, we can assume that the King of Nepal coming from a distant Himalayan region acquires his right to step on the Ratna Sinhasana and worship Daru Devata whenever he wants. For the same reason, the holy-treasury of



Sri Jagannath (Kotha-Bhandar) is full of golden ornaments and precious stones and pearls of the kings of Kashmir. So the god is called by the significant name of Jagannath, the *nath* or Lord of the Jagat, which means the universal flux; He is the prime mover of the universal flux.

Besides this, the secular idea in the worship of the Daru Devata is also magnanimous. In this self-centred age integration is the most important factor to survive in society. Everybody talks of national integration, but how to bring it about? The way selected is not a correct one. National unity cannot be achieved through celebrations or exhibitions.

Articulation of a word without knowing its implication is very dangerous like *Indra Satru* in the Vedas. It is known to Indians from the beginning of civilisation. So the Savara-Devata Jagannath was being worshipped by Jains and Brahmins alike assimilating the Kaivalya and Purushottama concept with Darubrahma and Vaikuntha. But the element of the image is as it was. Besides, devotees of other religious cults also accepted Him as the Supreme God.

So He is worshipped by all without distinction of caste and creed. All are equal here. sectarianism is out of question. Beginning from the highest to the lowest all can take *Anna Mahaprasad* (meals dedicated to Sri Jagannath) from the same plate. By doing this the Jainas achieve their Kaivalya (salvation) and the Brahmins can reach Vaikuntha. So the Jainas pray

‘प्रणिपत्य जगन्नाथं सर्वजीनवरचितम्’

and the Brahmins sing

‘निलाद्रै शङ्खमध्ये शतदलः क्रमले रत्नसिंहासनस्थम्
सर्वालङ्कारयुक्तं नवधनरुचिरं संयुतं चाग्रजेन ।
भद्राया वामभागे रथचरणयुतं ब्रह्मरुद्रेन्द्रवन्द्यम्
देवानां सारभीशं स्वजनपरिवृतं ब्रह्मदारु स्मरामि ॥’

as the Vajrayanis pray on one hand

‘सुभद्रा प्राणनाथाय जगन्नाथाय ते नमः’

the Muslim devotees sing

*'Aahe Nila Saila Prabala Matta Barana
Mo Arata Nalini Banaku Kara Dalana'*

on the other. Notwithstanding the above prayers gay Adivasi damsels of distant Kalinga forests dance to the accompaniment of the melodious song

*'Udisha (Puri)ku jibibali kinithili pata
Udishara luka mate na chadile bata'.*

We can now conclude that the symbolic colour adopted for the trio is nothing but the colour of the most civilised Aryan-Brahmins including the white skinned inhabitants of Europe and the orthodox people of the Savara tribe, coupled with the Afro-Asian black skinned people and the yellow faced Sino-Japanese races of Central Asia. So, the Daru Devata is not only the symbol of the Indian mind but also of universal unity, which is the essence of Indian culture. Here we enjoy liberty in worship and equality in religion and fraternity of mankind. This is called Jagannathi culture which is the essence of Indian culture.

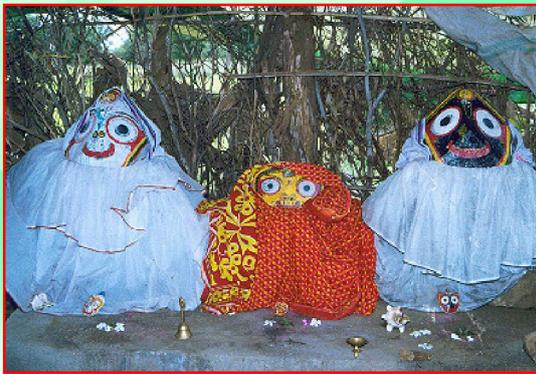
It is said that idol worship was adopted by the Aryan immigrants from Jainism in later days. Whatever it may be, this much is true that in no other religion brothers and sisters are worshipped in one temple as at Puri. This is unique. This is the pure expression of universal fraternity. The relation between Sita-Ram, Hara-Gauri or Radha-Krishna is matrimonial. Here the trio are exceptions. Though in the later stage Sri Jagannath was supposed as Vishnu and Mahalakshmi as His spouse, She has no right to sit by the side of Her husband. She has a separate temple. Moreover, at the time of the Ratha Yatra, sister Subhadra and brother Balabhadra join with Sri Jagannath but not Mahalakshmi. Here Indians establish the sweetness of fraternal relationship through their Daru Devata at Puri. The implication of this is that all human beings should love each other as brothers and sisters. This relationship is the loveliest tie in the world. Men must realise this fact and try to conduct themselves like their God. This is Indian culture and the cultural deity is Daru Devata, the loftiest manifestation of universal brotherhood.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1969.



Jagannath and The Tribes

G.N. Das



The legends about Jagannath contained in the *Puranas* and the *Odia works* of Sarala Dasa, Nilambara Dasa, Krishna Dasa and Jagannath Dasa refer to him as originally a god of the tribal Saoras (Savaras).

With regard to these myths, W.W. Hunter wrote : "We find the aboriginal people worshipping a blue stone in the depths of the forest. But the deity has grown tired of the jungle offerings of the primitive people and longs for the cooked food of the more civilized Aryan race. When the Aryan element at length comes on the scene, the rude blue stone disappears, and gives place to a carved image."

Whether the modern Saoras (Savaras) have anything to do with the people mentioned in literature is anybody's guess. For as pointed out by Thomas Burrow, the eminent Oxford Sanskritist, the term Savara has been used in ancient Indian works "indiscriminately" for any and every forest tribe".

The *Utkala-khanda* of the *Skanda Purana* says that no controversy should be raised about the nude wooden forms of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. It further directs that they should not be viewed without the wrappings of silk cloth. Otherwise people might be scared and suffer from sin, epidemics, famine and loss of progeny. Is this further proof of the non-Aryan character of the images ?

Be that as it may, there are several living links between Jagannath and the tribal people.

There is a place called Seori-Narayan in Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh. It is named after an old Bhil hermit named Sawar who is said to have worshipped Jagannath. The Saoras of this region call themselves Seori-Narayan Saoras.

The Saoras of Keonjhar district, who are much Hinduised, are reported to worship Jagannath with offerings of fruits. They have Brahman priests who give them a sacred thread to wear every year after it is worn by god Balabhadra at Puri. They say they are descended, among others, from Vasu Savara, Jara Savara and Lalita who was married to king Indradyumna's Brahman emissary Vidyapati. All these Saoras figure in the legends regarding Jagannath.



In the past the Bhuiyan tribals of Keonjhar supplied logs for making the chariots used in the annual Rath Yatra at Puri as well as ropes made of creepers for pulling them.

The Kharias of the Similipal hills of Mayurbhanj district claim to be descendants of Vasu Savara or Viswvasu. Some Kharia families enjoy the privilege of putting a silk cloth on the chariot of Jagannath during the Rath yatra at Baripada. They style themselves Brahman Kharias. They say they are descended from Jara Savara. They have earned the title of *Patabandha*. Perhaps the Kharias were formerly a branch of the Saora people.

A subdivision of the Saoras, called the Kalapithia, take part in dragging the chariot of Jagannath at Puri, along with others. They live near the town and enjoy rentfree lands. They put on the sacred thread, avoid taking liquor and fowl and regard themselves as members of a high caste.

The Saoras of South Orissa are acquainted with the legends of Jagannath, including the one in which Jara plays a part. This tribe has several subdivisions, one of which is called Jara.

These Saoras have a deity called Jananglo. They hold a festival before Jananglo in the month of Asadha (June-July) - the month associated with the Jagannath chariot festival. Then they engage themselves in agricultural operations.

To the Saoras, Kittung is for all practical purposes the supreme god. There are also a number of different Kittungs. One is the maimed Kittung. He is the discoverer of fire. His image, which is similar to that of Jagannath, is worshipped. The legend about him is as follows : "One day on the Rawangiri mountain, Kittung Mahaprabhu broke open a rock and fire came out. The rock burst and a bit of it flew up and hurt Kittung's head on the left side. So fierce was the fire that Kittung's hands and feet also were burnt; the wounds were so bad that he remained lame and maimed on Rawangiri".

The Saora pantheon contains two other gods who have links with Jagannath. One is Maprusum, probably mahaprabhu or Jagannath. Whoever brings food to the village has to offer a little to him. If not, he will fall sick.

The other god is Orissa-Manjorasum. According to Verrier Elwin, "He is represented in

ikons as two men with a woman between them, an obvious reflection of the images of Jagannath."

Some of the functionaries of the Jagannath temple at Puri appear to have tribal affiliations. It is likely that the Suars, who cook the holy food, have a Saora ancestry. The Daitas claim to be descendants of the Saora Fowler Viswvasu.

It is the Daitas who play a leading role in the performance of the rituals of the deities from the day of the bathing ceremony to the end of the chariot festival. For fifteen days, while the gods are being repainted, they are offered only fruits, flowers and leaves and no Mantrams are uttered. The income from pilgrims during this period is appropriated by the Daitas.

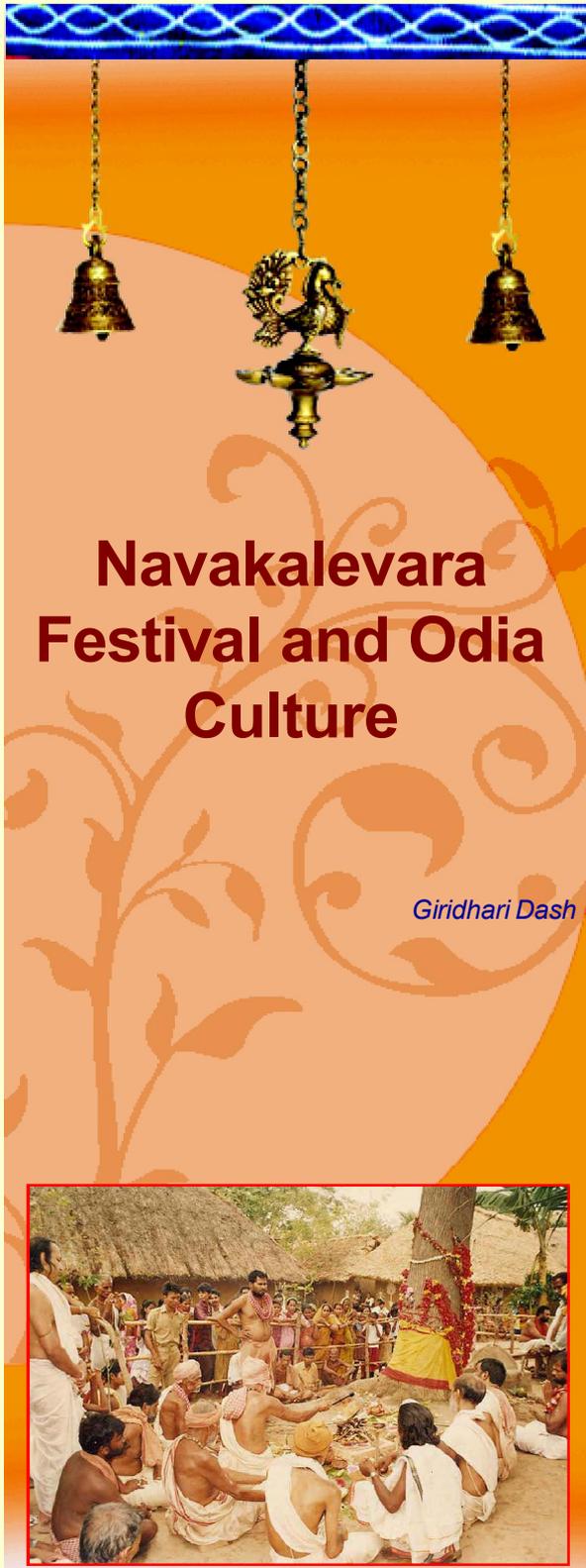
When an important person of this community dies, his body is taken near the Lions' Gate of the Jagannath temple. It is subsequently cremated with some fire from the temple kitchen.

Following the burial of the old image in the Koili Baikuntha during the Nabakalebara ceremony when new idols are made, the Daitas observe funeral obsequies. Probably to them Jagannath is not only their god but also a kinsman.

These facts, significant as they are should not be interpreted to mean the definitive or ultimate tribal origin of the Jagannath cult, which has been advocated by several scholars. For, as remarked by A.L. Kroeber, the famous American anthropologist, "the origin of any movement or institution, in the strict sense of the word, is simply not a historically valid conception. A good historian does not really pose the question. It would violate his two fundamental axioms of the uniqueness of all historical phenomena and of the continuity or unity of history."

Nevertheless, the tribal connections of Jagannath are clear. This is nothing to be wondered at in view of the deep interpenetration of tribal and non-tribal cultures in Orissa. In addition, the evolution of Hindu religion has been much influenced by a number of primitive gods and goddesses as a result of Austric or proto-Australoid and Dravidian contacts. Of these, the serpentine deities, the water spirits, Aiyana, Murugan and Siva with his phallic symbol are notable examples.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1969.



The ceremony 'Navakalevara', the periodical renewal of the wooden images of the deities in the temple of Jagannath is a unique ceremony in many respects in the Hindu religious worship. It is an unavoidable consequence of wooden images of Deities which are prone to decay and therefore require periodical renewal. The ceremony falls after a gap of 7, 12 or 19 years depending upon occurrence of Second Asadha month.¹

How old is the festival ? The research has yet not been able to pinpoint the probable date or period of the origin of this unique festival. Sri G.C. Tripathy, in his illuminating article 'Navakalevara' observes "If the above presumption is correct and historical facts as well as the literary evidence make it seem very probable, it would mean that though the rite of Navakalevara itself may well have existed at all times, envisaged to be performed as and when the necessity to renew the images was felt, its celebration at the regular intervals of 11 (or 19 years) has been introduced after the reinstallation of Jagannath figures in 1590 A.D.² It is however improbable that the ceremony was performed at regular intervals during the period of 160 years (from 1590 A.D. to the establishment of Maratha rule in Orissa) when the temple was subjected to brutal and atrocious attack by the Hindu and Mohammedan government of the Mughals and Subedars of Bengal.³ L.S.S.O. Malley in his Gazetteer Puri, writes that the ceremony was not performed in 1893, though *Jodaah Asadha* month fell in that year.⁴ He further writes, "popular belief is that the festival depends upon the durability of the wood of which the images are made.⁵ It therefore appears that festival



has become a part and parcel of Jagannath Cult since 1590 A.D., its continuity has been maintained unless the impediments were too high to overcome.

Orissa had passed through recurring periods of religious depression on account of brutal and ruthless raids on the temple and the Deities by the Hindu as well as Mohammedan Governors of Mughals and then, successor Nawabs of Bengal. The festival Navakalevara in those critical periods of her history had succeeded in keeping alive the devotion of their people towards their Lord and "had made them well prepared for any new sacrilege on the temple without getting hurt in their strong beliefs in the Lord of the world and in their devotional feelings towards Him."⁶ If the cult has survived till today, it is on account of deepest reverence and unflinching faith of her people through Navakalevara and other periodic and regular religious festivals of the temple.

Rituals Performed in 'Navakalevara'

Coming to the various rituals performed from the beginning of the ceremony till new images are made ready for Rathajatra festival, we find four distinct stages. They are, (1) Searching out the *Daru*, (2) carving out wooden structure, (3) consecration of the images and insertion of life substance in them and lastly giving the images final shape through repeated covering by cloth etc. and by applying paints on them. For performing each function, published texts are consulted, and previous experience serves as guide. Two works which are presumably in use are (1) *Vanayaga Vidhi* (the procedure of consecrating Daru in the locality, where it is located) and (2) *Cala-Sri-*

murti-pratistha Vidhi (the text containing nyasa mantra). These texts are more than 400 years old.⁷ The rituals prescribed in the text are followed religiously in each and every department of the festival. Though little changes here and there were inserted in the multi-form ceremonial practices in the later years to meet certain exigencies and compulsions of changed situations, the basic structure and character of the cult has remained unaltered. Since Jagannath cult is a perfect manifestation of the culture of Orissa, the Navakalevara festival being an integral part of the cult epitomises some of the finest particles of her cultural heritage.

The March :

The great march in search of daru (divine wood for carving the wooden structure of the Deities) commences on the 10th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Caitra, more than 2 months before the Snana Purnima (the bathing festival). The party usually consists of Daitas, who claim to be descendants of Sabar Visvasvasu, the Pati Mohapatra, the descendent of children born out of the marriage of Lalita with the Brahmin minister Vidyapati, 4 Viswakarmas (carpenters), the Lenka (the temple servants who carries the discus of Vishnu fixed on a long wooden shaft), the Brahmin priests for performing forest sacrifice, the temple functionaries and various others to look to the party's worldly needs. Before undertaking journey, they obtain the blessing of the Lord through *ajnamala*, which are offered to them by Pati Mohapatra.⁸ The Daitas and others are offered *sadhi* in the temple by the order of or on behalf of the temple management, which symbolises administrative authorisation on the persons for carrying out



assigned job. They are also offered sandal paste and red powder. The whole party then moves out of the temple to the accompaniment of music, conches, drums, gongs etc. and proceed to the palace of Raja of Puri. The Raja of Puri offers two plates containing articles like coconut, arecanut, gold, rice, coloured thread to his Rajguru, who keeps one for himself and his fellow Brahmin priests and offers one plate to the leader of the party of the Daitas. The party after obtaining blessings of spiritual as well as temporal power proceed on their sojourn in a joyous mood being led by the person carrying the discus of Vishnu fixed on a long wooden shaft. The journey being full of hazards and task extremely onerous, only those who are found mentally and physically equipped to handle the job, are selected as members of the group and once selected, they undertake their respective job to the best of their ability. The party proceeds to Kakatpur, a place about 50 kms. from Puri after an overnight stay at Jagannath Ballav Math, and at one or 2 places, in the midway, if occasion demands. They go barefooted and take only one frugal meal a day consisting of unboiled rice, dal and one or two vegetable curry.

Camp at Kakatpur and search of Daru :

Kakatpur which is situated on the Prachi Valley, once upon a time was a place of renown for its wooden forest, scenic beauty, shrines and monasteries. Almost all the religious faiths and ideas mingled there in the period of her eminence and left their footprints. The valley was dotted with innumerable shrines and Maths of heterogeneous religious faiths and beliefs, the Goddess Mangala, representing Shakti cult, who according to one author, a Param Vaishnavi,⁹ shining like a luminous star. The

party on reaching there makes its headquarters till the Daru of Lord Jagannath, the last in the order is cut and taken to the temple. After reaching there, Goddess Mangala's blessings in the endeavour are sought, by offering *puja* and *prasad* (the holy food) of Jagannath which the head of the party has brought with him. The worship of Goddess Mangala is performed extensively in which Acharya, the Brahmins and the Pati Mohapatra take active part and stay inside the temple till they receive instruction from the Goddess. They mutter Mantras and await the instructions in the dream. If, no instruction is received for a period of 3 days, another extensive worship of the Goddess is performed in which the statue is completely bedecked with flowers. The first fall of flower from the body of the Goddess gives the clue as regards the direction, the Darus are to be searched. Thereafter the members of the party move out in that direction to search out the Darus.

Selection of Daru :

The selection of Darus is the most important item of the ritual. The selection is made after looking into various features of the tree specially its colour, age, growth and location. Though there is divergence of opinion as regards suitability of trees for the purpose of Daru between the older authorities and the practice followed in the temple, the age and the growth of the tree are given weightage in the selection process,¹⁰ irrespective of the caste or community of the person in whose land the tree is located.¹¹ For each Deity one tree is selected, cut and taken to the temple. The order of selecting the trees for the four Deities is (1) Sudarsan, (2) Balabhadra, (3) Subhadra,



(4) Jagannath. The same order is followed in bringing the Darus to the temple.

The search for the Darus is an extensive affair, may take a couple of days.

The Ceremony of Vanayaga and Cutting of trees:

As soon as the first Daru in the order noted above is found out, the place surrounding the tree is swept clear, sanctified with water, cowdung and clay. Sandal paste, vermilion are then applied to the tree and the tree is wrapped with a piece of new cloth and *ajnamala* of the Deity brought from the temple is placed on it, thus symbolising the identity of the Deity and the Daru.

Before cutting the tree, the surrounding is purified by Homa (Forest Sacrifice), for which a Yajnasala (sacrificial pavilion) with a thatched roof is erected, alongwith a cluster of cottages (Savarapalli) for the residence of the party. One of the important rites in the Vanayaga is Ankuraropana or the sowing of some seeds for germination.¹² The Ankuraropan is an important rite, which is almost invariably observed in every significant religious ceremony. The Ankuraropana Vidhi or the sowing of different seeds for germination suggests the agrarian character of the society, and the importance of agricultural products in an agrarian society. This rite has become a part of the cult and is followed in; good many religious ceremony, which suggests imposition of Vedic rituals on the original tribal cult at a certain period.

In the Vanayaga ceremony, after Ankuraropan is over, the sacrificial fire is offered for 3 days and thereafter trees are cut. The trees are cut first by the golden axe,

uttering Sudarsan Mantra, after applying sandal paste and flower by the Pati Mohapatra, followed by silver axe by Visvabasu or the Daita Pati who strikes the tree at its lowest part uttering the Mantraraja and finally by the iron axe, (or axes) by the Visvakarmas or the carpenters having charged it with Sudarsan Mantra and uttering the name of Hari to the accompaniment of loud music. In between, specific rituals are performed, which are not described here. The rituals are meant to invoke blessings of the Vedic Gods and obtain highest level of purity and sanctity. Nrsimha is venerated as the presiding deity of the entire ceremony, his Mantraraja (basic Mantra) forms the central point of all offering, sacrificial or otherwise. After the Darus are cut, the trunk of the tree as well as thick branches are transported to the temple for fashioning the images.

The Darus are transported in carts constructed indigenously with the wood of Kendu, Vata and Tamarind trees. The Darus are covered with coloured cloth pieces and tied up with silken cords firmly with the carts. The carts are dragged by human beings throughout the journey, the first pull given by the Acharya in the direction astrologically considered auspicious. The Darus are brought to the temple in the same order as they are collected and should reach the temple before the annual bathing festival.

Carving of the wooden structure of the images:

Before the Darus are brought to the temple, the temple administration constructs separate structures for housing the Darus and for construction of wooden structures, by the



carpenters. This work is performed in the first two weeks following Snana Purnima, which are considered as Sudha Asadha. The process of carving the images as well as measurements of different parts of the statues are considered a closely guarded secret. No one is allowed to see the fashioning of the images or even hear the sound. The fashioning is done within a closed enclosure. Nobody except the Daitas and the Pati Mohapatra are allowed to enter the compound in which the statues are fashioned.

Parallel to the fashioning of the images, the Brahmin priests of the temple, the Raj Guru and some others, selected by the temple administration undertake the ceremony of consecration (Pratistha). The Pratistha ceremony starts from the second day of Asadha. Since the construction of the wooden images of all the Deities is not yet over, the consecration ceremony is performed on a piece of wood cut from any one of the four Darus, brought from the forest, which is known as Nyasa Daru and after an extensive ceremony of consecration lasting for 2 weeks, the Nyasa Daru is cut into four pieces of prescribed size and each one of these four parts serve as lid to cover the cavity in the belly (or in the heart) of a wooden image, after the Brahmapadartha (life substance) has been inserted into it.

Before the ceremony of consecration of Nyasa Daru takes place, a small Puja of Nrsimha is performed to initiate the ceremony by the Acharya and thereafter the blessings of Vedic Gods as well as Gods and Goddesses of later ages are sought including the door attendants of Vishnu. The Daru is bathed, performed and offered Upachara and is made

to lie down on a bed while the priests recite Purusasukta. Nyasa is an important rite, the purpose of which is to impart the character of the Deity to the Daru.¹³ After the Mantraraja-Nrsimha-Nyasa, own Nyasa of the Deity is performed. After the specific Nyasa of the Deities, other Nyasas numbering about 30 are performed, which are followed by Pranapatistha (endowment of life substance) through Pranapatistha Mantra.

Alongwith Nyasa of the Nyasa Daru, fire sacrifice is conducted in a specially constructed Vedi inside Pratistha Mandap in the prescribed meter with Vedic Mantra. The oblations precede with 10,000 Mantras of Anustupa-Nrsimha Mantra, followed by Vasudev Mantra (the Mantra of Balabhadra), Gopal-Ballav Mantra (the Mantra of Jagannath), Bhubaneswari Mantra (the Mantra of Subhadra) and Sudarsan Mantra. The last day is reserved for subsidiary Ahutis to Lakshmi, Saraswati, Siva, Kali, Vimala, Durga and other Gods and Goddesses of Hindu Pantheon.

Transference of life substance:

By the 14th day, the consecration ceremony of the Nyasa Daru, as well as fashioning of wooden structures being over, on the night of that date, the Nyasa Daru is taken in a small cart to the temple, and handed over to the Daitas, and then is cut into four pieces according to the measurement laid down in the Shastras. On the next night, the wooden images are taken around the temple in the order of precedence (Sudarsan, Balabhadra, Subhadra, Jagannath) and are subsequently brought inside the temple and are placed near the old statues. The lights are put out and with



the help of small lamps of ghee the life substances are transferred from the old Deities to the newly constructed ones, after stripping off the coverings from the old Deities. The person who is entrusted to the job of transference of life substance is blind-folded and his hands wrapped up to elbows, so that he can neither see nor touch Brahma Padartha. This work is done at the dead of the night after ensuring that no outsider remains present during this ceremony. After transferring the life substance, the cavity of the new image is covered with one of the four pieces of the Nyasadaru which has been consecrated earlier.

The Purificatory rites:

One of the finest features of the cult is the feeling of oneness of the devotees with the Deities. After the Brahmopadartha is removed from the old Deities and the images are buried inside the temple premises, the Daitas and their family members who consider themselves to be direct descendants of Lord Jagannath mourn the loss and observe purificatory ceremony for a period of 10 days.

During this period they remain in a state of impurity, take only one meal a day and observe all the obsequies prescribed in the Shastras. All the male members shave their heads on the 10th day, take bath after rubbing oil in their bodies. The female members too observe the obsequies as enjoined in the Shastras. The cooking utensils, and perishable household articles are replaced with new ones, the houses are given fresh coat of colour and on the 11th day they and all their family members adorn new clothes and on the next day they feed the poor, the indigent, the Brahmins, the co-Sevayats and others who

attend. As the descendants of the great Lord, all the articles used by the old images and the articles used for the performance of various rituals are claimed by them, a few of which are given to them and those, whose retention is considered desirable, cash equivalent is given to them by the temple administration. The purificatory ceremony and its observance by the Daitas is an excellent example of synthesis of tribal-Hindu dichotomy. The ceremony equally suggests that God and His devotees are one and indivisible; each one is identifiable with the other; the joy and sorrow of one, is the joy and sorrow of the other and God in His manifestation is human being in flesh and blood.

Fashioning of the images:

That God in His manifestation is human being in flesh and blood is symbolically demonstrated in the fashioning of the images during the Navakalevara festival. The wooden frames, after insertion of Brahmopadartha is considered as skeletons over which various limbs are added with the help of silken cord, resin, sandal paste, perfumed oil, camphor, musk etc.

The process of preparing the image and infusing in them flesh and blood starts after the asaucha (ritual impurity) period is over i.e. from the dark fortnight of the extra Asadha. Since the wooden structure is identified with bones, perfumed oil is rubbed which represents the marrow inside the bones. Strips of coloured Pata cloth are wrapped around on every limb of the statue, which represents the blood and the veins. A thick paste of resin (of sal) with oil, camphor, musk and sandal paste is then applied on the structure which is



identified with flesh. The paste (resin with oil) is again wrapped up with strong cords of cloth which represents the skin. The starch is applied to strengthen the cloth pieces and to prevent it from getting loose. In the process, due care and attention is given to bring out specific feature and contours of each deity. After having infused flesh and blood in the skeleton and after the statues attain final form and shape, the statues are made over to the Chitrakaras (painters) to colour the deities with indigenous colours, according to the prescribed specifications. But the painters are not allowed to paint the pupils of the eyes of the Deities, which work is left to Brahmin Sevakas to be performed on the auspicious day.

Netrotsav Festival :

The Netrotsav festival is the most auspicious of all the rituals performed during Navakalevara and carries a great deal of sanctity and religiousity. This ritual is also performed every year after the termination of Anasar period and in the year of Navakalevara after the final touches are given in the preparation of the images. It is a function of great significance, which is considered very auspicious by the Hindus. Here, we notice a nice imposition of Brahmanical authority on a cult which was tribal in origin and suggests that at a later stage, necessary accommodation was made in the cult to give it tribal Hindu character.

Like the cult of Jagannath, in whose worship we find a perfect synthesis and integration of all the religious faiths and beliefs, the Orissan society has reshaped itself in the course of her history by taking clues. Both the cult and the society uphold the principles of

equality of all, and the dignity of labour. The organisational profile of the temple resembles a Buddhist Sangha which admitted people to its fold without distinction of caste and creed and assigned specific duty to its members and subjected them to a code of discipline and ethics. Chherapamhara which is performed by the spiritual head of the temple during Rathajatra festival is an outstanding example of dignity of labour.

Concluding Remarks:

The Navakalevara festival, which is an important part of Jagannath cult exhibits a perfect balance between the tribal origin of the cult and Brahmanic Hinduism which was superimposed on it at a later period. Each one is assigned a distinct duty in the multiform rites, performed during the ceremony, there is no overlapping nor any possibility of encroachment by any one over the other. The Daitas, who are avowedly of tribal origin play the role of image-maker. It is they who search out the Darus, transport them to the temple premises, supervise construction of wooden structures, and give final form to the images. The Vanayaga ceremony and consecration of Nyasa Daru are Brahmanical functions performed by Brahmin priests of the temple. They are not allowed to participate in the construction work of the wooden images. They are not allowed to enter the Nirman Mandap during construction stage. They are away from knowing life-substance as this work is done by the Daitas and Pati Mohapatra in strict secrecy. All these suggest that though the cult has yielded to Brahmanic, Hinduism at a subsequent period of her history, it has maintained its tribal origin inviolate. The tribal-Hindu synthesis is the dominant theme in the



Navakalevara festival, which is an integral part of the cult.

Notes:

1. The second Asadha is an extra month which is added to the lunar calendar after every 12 months and 16 days in order to make up the deficiency of a lunar month. (29.9 days) as against a solar month of (30.44 days) i.e. of 0.9 day of every month.
2. The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa-Page 230.
3. Madala Panji-Prachi Edition H.K.Mahatab 1960.
4. " It was celebrated in 1853, in 1877 and in 1912. It was expected in 1893, but was not celebrated according to one account because of a popular tradition that the carpenter, a Brahmin priest and one of the Raja's household would die within the years" Puri District Gazetteer, L.S.S.O Malley-P.115.
5. Ibid, page-115.
6. Navakalevara, G.C.Tripathy (The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Traditions of Orissa, page 224).
7. G.C.Tripathy, The Cult of Jagannath and Regional Traditions of Orissa-Page 226.
8. Offering of Ajnamala signifies symbolic authorisation to a person to perform any duty. Taking out of garlands from the person of the Deities and offering the same to some one, implies authorisation to him to perform any ritual or function in the temple.
9. Dr. Radhacharan Panda in his book "Historical opulence of Prachi Valley" P. 96. It can not be definitely concluded as to why the party selected Kakatpur for search of Daru when a

few centuries ago virgin and unexplained forests containing Nima trees were abundantly available throughout the state. Three reasons may be ascribed-one, the sanctity of the place, which it had attained in the middle ages, when Prachi valley was in its full glory and splendour (2) abundance of trees of required age and quality and lastly proximity and accessibility of the place.

10. " Brhatsamhita of Varahamihira enjoins that the tree chosen for fashioning the image of a deity should not be ill formed, should not have been smitten by lightning or have been broken by storm, nor previously cut for any purpose nor destroyed by the elephants and must be free of beehives. He further states that one should avoid taking trees which stand on a cremation ground, in the neighbourhood of temple, bear ant hill, in a penance grove at the confluence of river or which have been nurtured with water brought in pitchers. It is strange that in the ritual of Jagannath the trees having these characteristics (except the last) are highly recommended." G.C.Tripathy, page 218.
11. During the Navakalevara of 1950, Balabhadra's Daru was found at Jalalpur near Kakatpur in Puri district. The owner was a Muhammedan who first refused to give it. But his wife not only gave permission to take the Daru, but engaged men to cut it and entertained the whole party during the few days they stayed at Jalalpur. Puri District Gazetteer-Page 849 Edited by late N.Senapati, ICS.
12. G.C.Tripathy, The Cult of Jagannath and Regional Traditions of Orissa, page 240-241.
13. Ibid page 258.

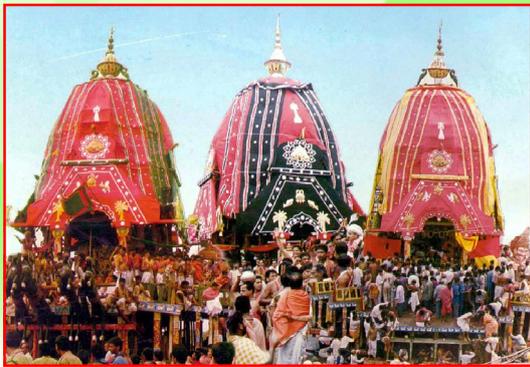
N.B. : Reprinted from *Orissa Review*, July, 1996.





Navakalevara and Ratha Yatra in the Purushottama Kshetra

Dr. Kailash Chandra Dash



Countless pilgrims and visitors throng the shrine of Purushottama-Jagannath to see the famous *Ratha Yatra* (Chariot Journey Festival) of Jagannath and His Associates in the month of Asadha (June-July) every year. The festival is associated with Snana-Yatra (Bathing Ceremony) and Navakalevara (the ceremony of the periodical renewal of the wooden images in the Jagannatha temple). Navakalevara involves a total replacement of the worshippable images through the new ones after an interval of 19 years, sometimes even after 12 years. The reason why the ceremony takes place either in the 12th or in the 19th year is that it is performed only in the year having two Asadhas. The first half of the Asadha, starting from the day following the great bathing festival on the full moon day (Purnima) of the month Jyestha is used every year for the repainting of the coloured images and for making the necessary annual repairs on them. During this period (Anavasara) the sanctum is closed and the people may not have the Darsana of the deities who are popularly believed to be sick. In the year with an extra Asadha, the new Asadha is intercalated after the first fortnight of the regular *asadha*. The period of the sickness of the deities (Anavasara) thus extend itself to three fortnights and this gives sufficient time to the temple to construct new wooden images and to consecrate them before the temple is reopened on the first day of the bright half of the regular Asadha to make preparations for the chariot festival which starts from the next day. *Navakalevara* is not bound to take place every time when two Asadhas happen to occur



in a year. It is an expensive affair and is performed only when necessary. There is also a sort of small *Navakalevara*. When the intercalary Asadha occurs after just eight years, only the various coverings of the icons are renovated and not necessarily the wooden structure.

The very nature of the material used for the images implies their occasional renewal or replacement, but the period of first observing the ceremony is not clearly known. Purushottama Kshetra Mahatmya of Skanda Purana presents the details of the festivals connected with the Jagannath temple but it does not refer to the term Navakalevara. Niladri Mahodaya, a comprehensive text on Jagannath and his temple but it does not refer to this specific ceremony. Two important texts referring to the performance of this ceremony are *Vanayagaviddhi* and *Chalashri-murti-pratishtha Viddhi* are works of the post-Suryavamsi Gajapati period. But as stated by G.C. Tripathy in his well-documented paper on Navakalevara (published in 1978) the tradition of the ritual of Navakalevara is older than the time of the two texts stated above. He has found a reference on this occasion in a Rajabhoga (Manuscript) compiled during the period of Narasimha Deva of Khurdha dynasty. The text states that the text followed for the Vanayaga is the method of Vidyakara Vajapayi of the family of Sambhukara. The Nityacharapadhati of Sambhukara Vajapayi and Vidyadhara Vajapayi was compiled during the 13th or 14th century A.D. Madalapanji of Prachi Samity refers to the renewal of the images for the first time during the period of Yayati Kesari. G.C. Tripathy has

accepted this version of Madalapanji on this aspect;

The compiler of the Panji was aware of some historical tradition according to which the worship of the Lord has to be interrupted for quite some time (142 years according to tradition) after which the statues were rebuilt and the worship instituted. *Madalapanji*, as the chronicle of the Jagannath temple is not expected to be interested in inventing and propagating such an interruption of the cult unless there has been some older tradition to this effect.

The Indradyumna legend as incorporated in the Purushottama Kshetra Mahatmya does not refer to this tradition directly but it contains an indirect hint about it in the eighteenth chapter which states that the fashioning of the images was not an event of the time of Indradyumna only but a recurring incident. But so far knowledge goes there is no text of the pre-Gajapati phase to point out the time of this festival of the extra Asadha.

The festival which was observed in the Purushottama Kshetra and which had great appreciation in the Indian cultural life in the 10th-12th century A.D. was the famous festival of the month of *Jyestha*. This has been stated in the texts like Kalaviveka of Jimutavahana, Naisadhiya Charita of Sri Harsadeva. We do not find any reference to Ratha Yatra of the month of Asadha during this phase. The Yatra stated in the drama Anargha Raghava Nataka of Murari Mishra can only refer to this Yatra of the month of Jyestha. The famous Ratha Yatra



was not known till the 12th century A.D and this has been justified by a text of 11th century A.D. It was Rajamartanda. It was very important text on thith, uratas and utsovas for India and it was composed by Bhoja, the Paramara king in the first phase of the 11th century A.D. The text refers to the famous sacred places of India which were the centres of religious activities for different months. According to that text;

Gangadvare cha Vaisakhi Jyesthi to Purushottamam
Asadhi Kalakhalechaiva Kedare Sravani tatha
Mahabhadradi vadayam tu Kubjoyamcha Mohasvini
Puskare Karttiki Kanyakubje margi sada smrta
Ayodhyayam Mahapausi etah syuh sumahaphalam
Mahamaghi Prayaga tu Naimise Phalguni tatha
Salagrama Mahachaitri etah punyatamah smrtah.

According to this version the month of Jyestha was famous for the Purushottama Kshetra during that time and the area of Kanakhala was famous for the auspicious occasions in the month of Asadha. This clearly indicates that the famous Ratha Yatra was not observed in the Purushottama Kshetra in the 11th century A.D. Had it been known in the Purushottama Kshetra as a distinct festival during that phase Rajamartanda would not have used Kanakhala area for the month of Asadha. Ratha Yatra was a very important festival of the Purushottama Kshetra and was well-known to India in the 13th-14th century A.D. and so it would have been definitely stated in the Rajamartanda if it was known as a distinct festival in the Purushottama Kshetra in the 11th century A.D. It can now be contended on the basis of this reference of the text Rajamartanda that the festival was unknown in the

Purushottama Kshetra till the end of the 12th century A.D.

The text Rajamartanda not only refers to the month of Jyestha for Purushottama but also states about the Mahajyestha occasion of the place. According to the text;

Jyesthe samvatsare chaiva Jyestha masasya purnima
Jyesthabhena yada yukta Mahajyesthi prakirtita
Aindresasi guruschaiva prajapatye Ravistatha
Purnima Jyesthamasasya Mahajyesthi bhavettada

This Mahajyesthi Yoga of the Purushottama Kshetra has been stated in Purushottama Kshetra Mahatmya of the Skanda Purana in the context of the Snana Yatra. On the basis of these references we can state that Purushottama Kshetra was famous in India in the 11th and 12th century A.D. for Jyestha snana and Mahajyestha yoga. Ratha Yatra as a distinct festival was unknown during that time. Although sufficient evidences are not available, in the pre-Ganga period the ritual of Navakalevara was observed in the Purushottama Kshetra on this Mahajyesthi occasion. This will remain a hypothesis till further evidences try to confirm if or contradict it. It also seems quite probable that this occasion might not have been frequent. The term Navakalevara became popular after the destruction of the wooden images by Kalapahar and their re-making during the period of Ramachandra Deva, the first ruler of the Bhoi dynasty. It was probable that it got a distinct status in the ritual life of Purushottama Kshetra only during that period. According to Madalapanji, one Bisara Mohanty collected the remains of the burnt images by Kalapahar and



during the time of the Bhoi king Ramachandra Deva of Khurdha they were used for making the new images. In all probability the life substance of Jagannath was rescued by Bisara Mohanty which could not be burnt and destroyed by Kalapahar and incorporating this substance into the wooden frame the images were again worshipped in the Puri temple. During that precious moment the term Navakalevara was coined by the Brahmans as the name of the new ceremony. No doubt images were renewed during the Ganga Gajapati period; but this name Navakalevara for this occasion began to be used from the Bhoi period. Although the work of the renewal of the wooden images was known in the Ganga-Gajapati period as stated earlier in this paper, no Puranic text of this period or any Sanskrit text of this phase refers to this particular name. The absence of this name (Navakalevara) in the literary texts of this period clearly indicates that the festival was observed in the Purushottama Kshetra during the Snana and Ratha occasions and had no independent ritual status.

A study of the rituals of the Ratha Yatra and the association of the kingship with the cult help us to conclude that Ratha Yatra was introduced as a separate festival in the Purushottama Kshetra only in the Ganga period. i.e. after 12th century A.D. An important ritual can be studied in this context. It is described in the Chaittanya Charitamrita (a text of about 16th and 17th century A.D.) and in Niladri Mahodaya (a text composed after 16th century A.D.). On the fifth day of the departure of

Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana to Gundicha Mandapa, the Herapanchami is observed. On that day Lakshmi who was like a disillusioned wife after the departure of Jagannath makes her journey to Gundicha by a Palanquin. As soon as She approaches the chariot of Jagannath, a temple servant receives her. After the Madhyanha Dhupa (Mid day offering) of the Lords is over in Gundicha Mandapa he takes the garland from Jagannath and delivers it to Lakshmi. With this garland Lakshmi comes to the chariot of Jagannath. Then her servants break some part of the chariot of Jagannath and return to the temple. We have no information about the exact period when the Hera Panchami was first observed in the Purushottama Kshetra, but from the fact that Jagannath does not accompany His wife Lakshmi to the Gundicha Mandapa. It is clear that Ratha Yatra was observed in the Purushottama Kshetra only when the four wooden images were worshipped there.

On the basis of the inside story of Lakshmi's agony in the Hera Panchami we may state that this festival was unknown in the pre-Ganga period in the Purushottama Kshetra when Lakshmi and Purushottam were worshipped. Lakshmi was in agony because the festival was introduced in the period when Jagannath was worshipped in the temple with his brother and sister and she was neglected by her husband. We can argue that Balabhadra is the elder brother of Jagannath. So Lakshmi, the wife of Jagannath should not see the elder Balabhadra and for this traditional taboo (as



known in Orissan society) Jagannath does not like to take his wife to Gundicha. But this taboo is not a cogent argument to connect Ratha Yatra with the Purushottama Kshetra in the pre-Ganga period. The priests of the Purushottama temple would not like to change the tradition of the visit of Lakshmi and Purushottama to Gundicha Mandapa during the Ratha Yatra phase. In a family in Orissan social life an elder brother should not see the wife of the younger brother but it does not mean that in any ceremony the wife of the younger brother will be totally neglected for the presence of the elder brother there. On the other hand, we may state that probably the Ratha Yatra was not known in the Purushottama Kshetra in the pre-Ganga period when Lakshmi and Purushottama were the chief deities. The introduction of the worship of Balabhadra, Jagannath, Subhadra and Sudarsana indicates the phase of the Krishnaization of the deities worshipped in the Purushottama Kshetra. The identification of Purushottama - Jagannatha with Krishna who could sit on his popular chariot Nandighosa suggests that Ratha Yatra was introduced as a separate festival in the Purushottama Kshetra in the Ganga period.

The place now called Gundichanagara was probably a centre of worship of a tribal deity before it became popular as Purushottama Kshetra. A temple for Sri Purushottama was built somewhere the sea-shore of this zone before 9th-10th century A.D. Sri Purushottama was a wooden image. The wooden image was painted and decorated. But we cannot be certain that after the decoration the wooden image was taken round the

Purushottama Kshetra once a year. The Jyesthi festival was probably connected with the bathing of the Lord, his simple decoration and the public Darsana (a glance by the people) of the decorated image. All these rituals were completed in the platform of the Gundicha Kshetra and probably the Jyesthi festival was identical with Gundicha Yatra during this period. It was the period of the Somavamsi kings in Orissa. Although they took interest in the development of the Kshetra they were not connected with the ritual of the deity worshipped there. Sri Purushottama was the subsidiary Rashtra-devata in Orissa where Siva-Lingaraja had ascendancy. In the 12th century Chodaganga, the founder of the Ganga family in Orissa, built a gigantic temple for Purushottama. But the exact spot was not utilised before him as the seat of Purushottama. Chodaganga in his 37 regnal year (A.D. 1114-15) granted an endowment for the anga-bhoga of Sri Purushottama. This anga-bhoga is probably the arrangement for the decoration of the deity after his bath and it also includes some other arrangements for the worship of the deity. This anga-bhoga for Purushottama by Chodaganga can also be interpreted as the king's connection with the Gundicha Yatra shortly after his conquest of the Soma-vamsi kingdom. But we do not find any evidence about the Ratha Yatra during this period. After the completion of the construction of the huge temple in the Purushottama Kshetra Sri Purushottama was worshipped there Gundicha Kshetra was near the old temple of Purushottama and so the rituals in connection with the bathing of the Lord (Jyesthi festival)



were successfully observed there. But before the completion of the new temple the image was probably shifted to another temple (probably the old temple for Purushottama was dilapidated) which was near to the Jagannath temple. This was only for a temporary period, i.e., till the completion of the construction of the huge temple. Hence the Yatra in connection with the bathing of the Lord and his Darsana by the pilgrims could not have been conducted in the Gundicha Kshetra from the point of view of distance. In all probability, there was a temporary platform near the temple where all these rituals were observed. During this phase there was a move to change the iconology of the deity Purushottama, but it became successful only during the period of the Ganga king Rajaraja III. Thus for about fifty years. (A.D. 1147-1197) Gundicha Kshetra remained empty and the festival performed there in the month of Jyestha in the pre-Ganga period was observed in a temporary platform near the new Purushottama temple. This was done because Gundicha Kshetra was not near the new temple. During the period of the Ganga kings Rajaraja-III and Anangabhima-III Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana-were worshipped in the new temple. Anangabhima III for the first time after his successful military career declared himself the Rauta (Deputy) of Lord Purushottama in his eighth regnal year. Such a declaration by the Ganga king highlighted Purushottama- Jagannath cult in the religious thought sphere in Orissa. Later on he declared himself the deputy of Lord Jagannatha under whose command he was ruling over the extensive kingdom. In all probability during the

period of Anangabhima III the chariot festival was introduced in the Purushottama Kshetra. The Snana Yatra was separated from the original Gundicha Yatra and it was observed in the platform near the Jagannath temple. But as this work was done in the Gundicha Kshetra in the pre-Ganga period it was probably decided that the decorated deities after the bath would visit the Gundicha Kshetra in their chariots. From the point of view of the distance from the Gundicha Kshetra to the new temple this was necessary. By this way Ratha Yatra was identified with the Gundicha Yatra in the Ganga period and the Snana Yatra was excluded from it. Originally Gundicha Yatra was a combination of the Snana Yatra of the deity Purushottama and a public view of the new image after the bath. But in the Ganga period in order to respect the Gundicha Kshetra which was the venue of the Jyesthi and Mahajyesthi occasions of the Lord Purushottama the deities were taken to that place in their chariots. In course of time the Mahajyesthi occasion lost all significance and was attached to Snana Yatra and the renewal of the images (Navakalevara) was completed on another occasion. This will remain as a hypothesis till we get more reliable evidence for it.

An interesting description of Navakalevara has been presented by Charles Grome in his report to the Secretary to the Commissioners for the affairs of the province of Cuttack in 1805. According to his version :

When Assar happens to be an intercalary month it is necessary to take off the



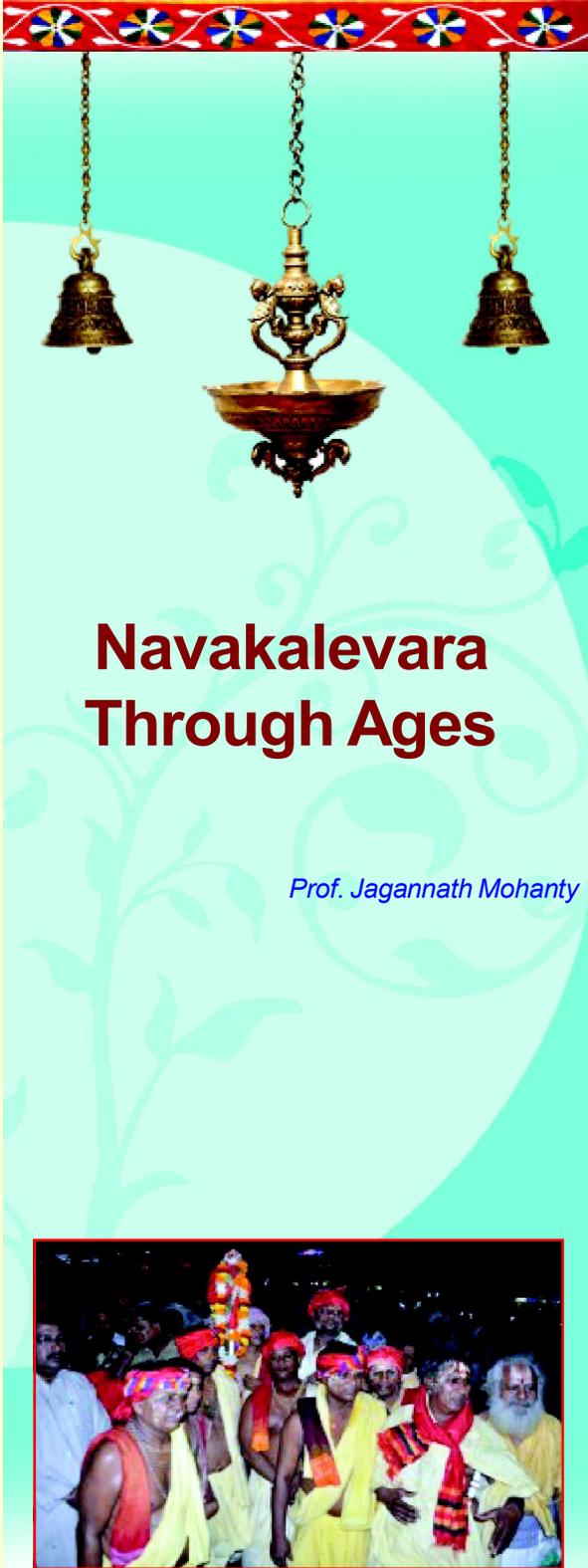
idols' cloths and have the body completely experienced, when if any part of them is gone to decay. A new case or body must be made to contain the sacred deposit and the Dythas and Puttees who remove the sacred substance from the old case to the new one are blindfolded and have the seals of the Purchas fixed on the cloth over the eyes – no one knows what the articles encashed in the figure of Jagannatha is, but the Sastra says it was put there by Brahma. A Dyta now living at that place (Purushottama Kshetra) was struck blind attempting to remove the bandage from his eyes to see what this deposit was and as it is firmly believed that those Dythas and Puttees who remove his deposit from the old to the new case die shortly after. They are endowed with large portions of lakraj lands. The expense attending this ceremony amounts to some thousands of rupees. It is therefore proposed that when it occurs the Dewal Karan makes out an estimate of the expenses specifying every particulars which the Purchas are to forward for the information and orders of government with least possible delay.

References :

1. G.C. Tripathy, 'Navakalevara : The unique ceremony of the birth and the death of the Lord of the world.' The cult of Jagannatha and the religious tradition of Orissa, 1978, Delhi ed. Eschmann, Kulke and Tripathy. P.223-264.
2. Purushottama Kshetra Mahatmya (Skanda Purana), Venkateswar Press.
3. P.V. Kane, "Passages from the Rajamartanda", Annals of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, Vol.XXXVI, p. 306-339.
4. Kailash Chandra Dash, "Date and builder of the temple of Purushottama Jagannatha", Orissa Historical Research Journal. Vol.40 (1995).
5. Markandeswar Silalipi, Konark, Orissa Sahitya Academy, Bhubaneswar, 1989, September-October, p.61-68.
6. Epigraphia Indica, Vol.XXXIII, p.181-185.
7. Kailash Chandra Dash, "Narasimha cult at the shrine of Purushottama Jagannatha." Journal of Asiatic Society, Calcutta, Vol.XXXII. No.1 and II p.29-39.
8. H. Kulke, Early royal patronage of the Jagannatha cult". The Cult of Jagannatha and the Regional Tradition of Orissa, 1978, Chapter-VIII.

N.B : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996





Navakalevara Through Ages

Prof. Jagannath Mohanty

There are a large number of mythological stories and legends relating to the establishment of the temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri and the installation of the deities therein. But there are no definiteness, validity and reliability in these Puranic stories and poems. According to the Madala Panji, the Temple Chronicle, the original temple was rebuilt by Yayati Keshari in the 9th century A.D. The history says that Chodaganga Deva, the founder of Ganga Dynasty reconstructed the existing temple in about 1135 A.D. but the work was completed by Anangabhima Deva towards the end of the 12th Century A.D. It is not definite when the Navakalevara ceremony was introduced for first time. The Madala Panji however reports that Yayati Keshari rebuilt the image of Sri Jagannath after rebuilding the temple.

In the past, so many invasions from outside have caused great damages to the temple, its deities, its treasury, its arts and architecture. These external attacks have brought about irreparable loss to this holy shrine, the more valuable treasure-house of Orissa. Due to these unfortunate incidents the images of the deities have been shifted and brought back for security and sanctity on several occasions. All these changes might have been associated with Navakalevara. According to the first historical evidence, in 1509 A.D the invasion by Ismail Gari, the Commandar of Bengal Sultan resulted in shifting of the images from the temple, which were kept hidden in Chadhei Guha hill inside Chilka and then brought back for reinstallation. Several times, the images were, either burnt or thrown to water by the invaders.



The most unfortunate incident occurred when Kalapahad, caused irreparable loss to all aspects of this world famous shrine. It is said that Kalapahad was a Hindu Brahmin and married a Muslim girl as a result of which he was ostracised from the Hindu Society. Subsequently, he repented, but was not allowed to re-enter into the Hindu fold by the religious leaders. he was therefore disappointed and took a vow to destroy and denigrate the Hindu temples, deities and the religion itself. As the Commander of the Bengal Sultan he invaded Orissa in 1560 AD and demolished the temples and images of the deities. He also attacked the Puri and rampaged as well as ransacked the entire system. He even, out of bitterest vengeance took away the images of Jagannath and Balabhadra and burnt them. According to Madala Panji, while Kalapahad was burning the images, his own body was bursting to pieces. As the wise men observed that all this due to disdaining the Lord Jagannath, his son threw the half-burnt images to river Ganges. At the nick of the time Bisar Mohanty who was desperately pursuing the Muslim army carrying the deities, could salvage the images, particularly the inner cores called Brahmas and concealed the same inside his drum. He brought the "Brahma's to Kujang Garh and kept them in the house of a Khandayat. It is aptly mentioned by Krupasindhu Mishra (Utkal Itihas, p.163) that Kujanga Raja made the images of the deities and preserved Brahma inside.

The history has also reported that the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra were reinstalled by Sri Rama Chandra Deva of Bhoi dynasty in 1575. This is said to have been the first historical account

of Navakalevara which was held in the month of Asadha. Most probably since then it has been the tradition to celebrate Navakalevara in the particular year having two Asadhas. Sri Ramachandra Deva started the Car Festival after eight years and is given the national honour as "Abhinav Indradyumna" or the "Duti Indradyumna" or the second Indradyumna.

After the death of Akbar his successors were not benign to Hinduism and they connived at the Muslim subedars to discourage Hinduism and denigrate its deities and temples. in the year 1609 Subedar Cuttack Makaram Khan attacked Puri and to save the image of Sri Jagannath from the savage hands of the enemies, it was kept hidden in Kapileswarpur, twelve kilometers from Puri. Dola festival of the Lord was celebrated there only. During the year 1610 another Moghul Subedar named Keshudas invaded Puri during the Car Festival and set the Cars into fire. *Madala Panji* has reported that subsequently the images were saved and installed in the temple. Again in 1615 Kalyan Todarmall, son of King Todarmall attacked Khurda and with the fear that he may denigrate the deities, Sevakas of Jagannath took away and concealed the image of Jagannath in the Mahisanasi hill on the coast of Chilka.

In the year 1622 during the reign of Sri Narasingh Dev of Bhoi dynasty Subedar Ahmed Baig assailed Puri and the King's family alongwith the image of Lord Jagannath took shelter in the Manitri Fort of Ranpur and again in 1625 Jagannath's image was reinstalled in the Puri temple and Navakalevar festival was celebrated as usual. During the reign of Aurangzeb, Hinduism faced serious setback



again and in 1698 Naeb Subedar Ekram Khan attacked Jagannath Temple Daru Brahma of Lord Jagannath was kept hidden at the back of the Bimala temple and the king Dibyasingha Deva kept himself concealed. Ekram Khan looted the temple's treasure and destroyed the deities. After he left Orissa, Navakalevara of Lord Jagannath was held and other functions were celebrated with pomp and grandeur.

Thus intermittently the temple of Lord Jagannath was assailed by Pathans, Moghuls and others. Lastly in 1733 Sri Ram Chandra Deva II brought back the image of Lord Jagannath from Tikabali on the Khallikote border (now in Phulbani) to Puri. That year also there were two Asadhas and Navakalevara function was held according to the old tradition. After this period, Orissa came under Marhatta rule and kings like Bira Kishore Deva extended full cooperation to the Marhatta rulers. As the Marhattas were devout Hindus, they took interest in all the important rituals and festivals of Lord Jagannath and promoted the welfare of the temple. After the Marhatta rule, the British administrators also did not venture to interfere in the normal celebrations of Lord Jagannath including Car Festivals and Navakalevaras.

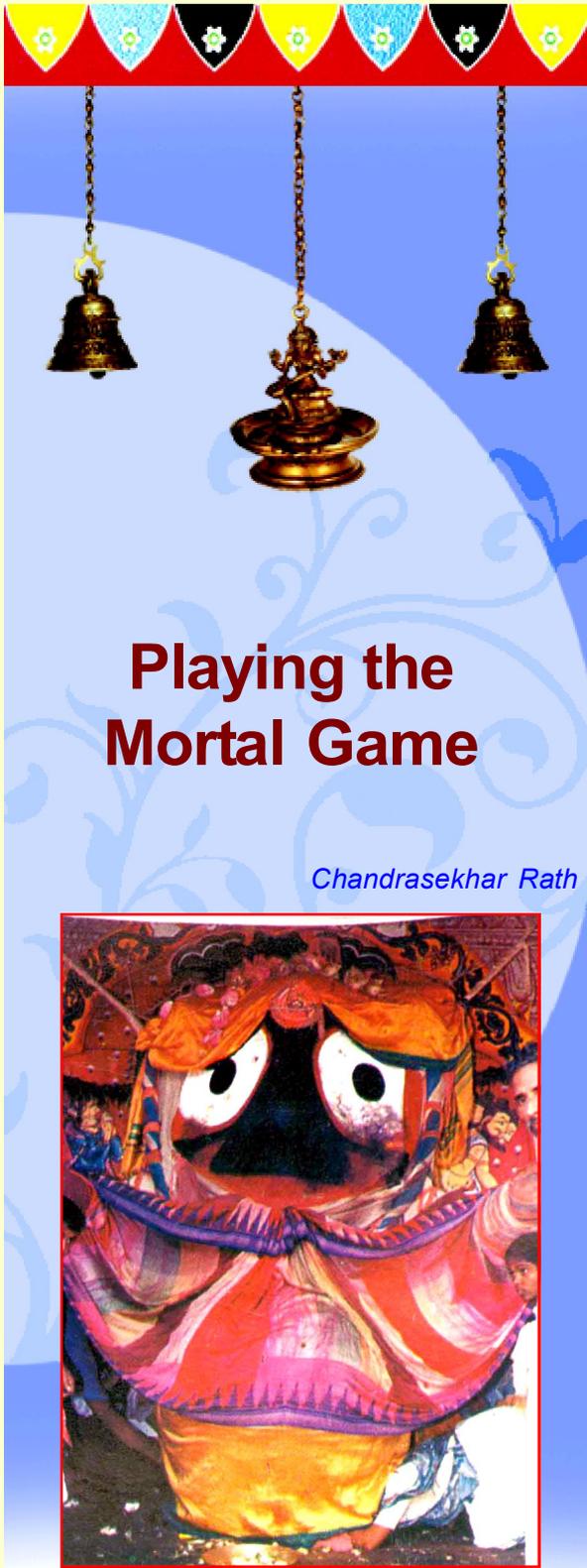
As already mentioned Navakalevara is celebrated in the year having two months of Asadha which occur usually once in 12 to 20 years. The new bodies of deities are prepared out of the newly cut Neem trees which are selected through a very detailed and sacred procedure called *Banayaga Yatra*. This Banayaga yatra is started on the 10th day of the bright half of Chaitra after a special Puja is offered to the three deities. Three garlands are

brought from these deities and given with Sudarshan Chakra to the Daitapatis who leave in a procession from Srimandir to Gajapati's palace. After receiving betel-nut from the royal priest sent by the Gajapati Daitapatis go to Jagannath Ballav Math and then to Kakatpur where the presiding deity Goddess Mangala plays an important role in selection of suitable Neem trees for making the images.

These Neem trees are known as "Darus" which are brought to Puri in carts specially built for the purpose. In the morning of Snana Purnima, three deities are brought and bathed at Snana Mandapa and then taken to *Anasara Ghara* and kept there. On the same day, the carpenters are kept in a closed room for start making the images. On the first day of the bright half of Asadha, the newly made images are taken round the temple seven times in a chariot. The new celestial idols are brought to Anasara Ghara on that night and Daru Brahma is transferred from the old to the new ones.

As sung in the Sri Bhagabat Geeta the man discards old clothes and takes new ones, similarly the living beings cast off old bodies and embody the new ones. This eternal truth of the transmigration is very well depicted in the Navakalevara festival which points out that the divine mystery is impenetrable as well as commonly applicable to all living beings. Navakalevara is really an interesting and enlightening festival of great cultural and religious significance.

N.B.: Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996



Playing the Mortal Game

Chandrasekhar Rath

Normally a Monarch is not bound by the law he prescribes for others. He remains in Majestic isolation far above the reach of law which governs the kingdom. But greater is the majesty of the Monarch if he permits the law to prevail even on himself. Thereby the law assumes an inviolable authority for everybody and gets settled.

Mutation is the inexorable law writ large across the phenomenal world which is a constant flow or flux. There is nothing that can get over this all-consuming law in this mortal world. Anything which has a beginning, therefore, has to have an end. Forms appear and disappear like bubbles in a stream.

Admittedly Lord Jagannatha is the Monarch of Jagat which is the eternal flux or the cosmic dynamism in play. Lording over the flux, He is obviously not governed by the laws of the flux. He is the Static Principle of the universe, immutable and form-less. The Unmanifest is indeed incomprehensible beyond the logistics of time and space. The scriptures are eloquent in the praise of the immutable Purusha who defeats all human efforts of speech and thought to comprehend Him. *Na tasya pratimasti* declares the Yajur Veda and conceptually Jagannath who is the Purusottam has no form.

But not only did the one and the non-dual Purusha wish to manifest the multiple, He also ordained the process of manifestation in a cycle sequence of life and death. Anything born with a form is therefore bound to die. And he took a symbolic form given to Him by His worshippers to worship the formless in a form. What one finds installed in the sanctum of the great temple of Puri is a symbol of the Vedic Purusha, very unfamiliar and profoundly meaningful, and yet a form of sort.

Regardless of the fact that it represents the Supreme Lord, is not this 'form'



still a part and parcel of the phenomenal world and, for that reason, subject to the law of the mortal world ? In other words, shouldn't this 'form' of Jagannatha fall precisely in the same way as the forms of lesser mortals do ?

Yes, of course, it must ! Having entered the phenomenal world of death, the Lord agrees to accept His own law and play the game of the mortals. Thus we witness the extraordinary ceremony called Navakalevara in which the Immortal Lord plays the mortal game. It is so because He wishes it to be so. It could very well be otherwise. But He plays the game to its logical end.

An old body falls off like an old garment when death occurs. But death is not the end. In the composition of matter is involved the Spirit which is not subject to death. The Spirit is the dweller in the abode of matter. It is immortal and immutable. The phenomenon of death is nothing but this immortal component passing from one body to another. The Navakalevara of Lord Jagannatha is nothing but this very process of discarding the old body for a new one. We therefore witness the death and re-embodiment of the deathless in this strange ceremony. When the Lord deems it fit to play the mortal game, we too willingly suspend our disbelief and silence our inquisitive mind to participate in the game as mortal associates.

There are a few spoilsport among us who go by the apparent and refuse to see beyond what meets the physical pair of eyes. They say that Lord Jagannatha and the other deities of the temple are worshipped in wooden images and these are perishable material needing replacement from time to time. They are right in their own way. And the Lord faithfully remains as no more than a log of wood for them. That is what they get because that is what they deserve. They never feel curious to know why at all in so splendid a temple made

of stone only a wooden form is installed for worship. They also never bother to ask why the Lord assumes such a strange form.

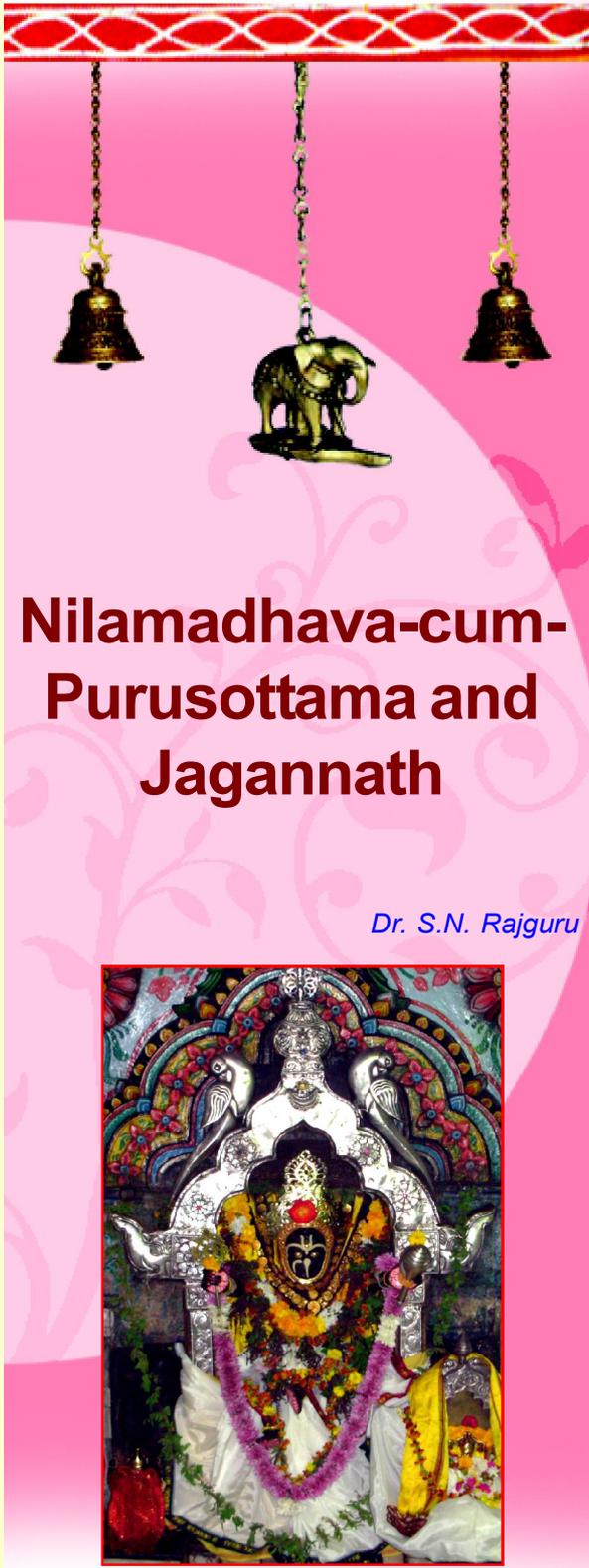
There is another group of sceptics who question the very basic concept of the manifestation of this universe. The only reality for them is matter and nothing but matter governed by its own physical laws. There is nothing called divine unless man chooses to imagine such a stuff and weave all kinds of stories for his own entertainment. Someone among the no-god theorists said God is dead and nothing happened. But when God said he is dead that someone disappeared. The Lord obviously chooses to play another game with them and let that too go on.

But for the bulk of us the message of the Navakalevara is precise and clear :-

The form you worship is much more than what meets the eye. It is a symbol with a transparency which you are supposed to penetrate in order to comprehend the Divine referent represented symbolically by this form. The verbal definitions of the gender-free Sakshi Purusha who has no beginning, middle or end and the omnipotent who is the non-doer are concretised into this lovable form. In order to hammer it into your heads that the form you worship is not the Divine it symbolises, this cruel game is enacted or else you would always be missing the wood for the tree. And the second important thing to remember is that death is a mere change of garment. That is to be taken in the stride as the inexorable law of this mortal world since the lord too has to undergo the process because He has accepted a form of sort.

We get your message all right, Lord ! but couldn't it be otherwise ?

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.



Nilamadhava-cum-Purusottama and Jagannath

Dr. S.N. Rajguru



It is an important question which is perplexing many visitors to the Temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri, that why the image is so crippled and disfigured and is not in compliance with the iconographic rules of many Visnu image ? This problem seems to have been addressed in later days, when the 'Madala Panji' was written in Orissa in about 16th century A.D. A story is narrated in it, saying that image was originally worshipped by Visvvasu, a Savara (Adivasi) who lived in a forest with his daughter, Lalita by name. Once a Brahmin named Vidyapati was sent to bring that image by a king named Indradyumna who had built a temple for the installation of the same image, God Nilamadhava in it. Vidyapati went to the forest where he took shelter in the house of the Savara Visvvasu, who secretly kept the God Nilamadhava in the forest' Vidyapati married the Savaras's daughter, Lalita and lived there for some time. Once he asked Lalita to show him the God, Nilamadhava. To oblige him Lalita requested her father to take Vidyapati along with him to the place where he worshipped daily the great God Nilamadhava. Visvvasu agreed to take his son-in-law with him only on one condition, that Vidyapati's two eyes should be blind-folded. Vidyapati agreed to this condition, but played a trick to keep track of the path. He carried some mustard seed in his upper garment so that a small quantity would fall on the ground as he walked in the jungle path. After a few days, the mustard seed grew up into sapplings and the path was readily traced. But the deity, Nilamadhava, disappeared. In the night the great God told Visvvasu to worship

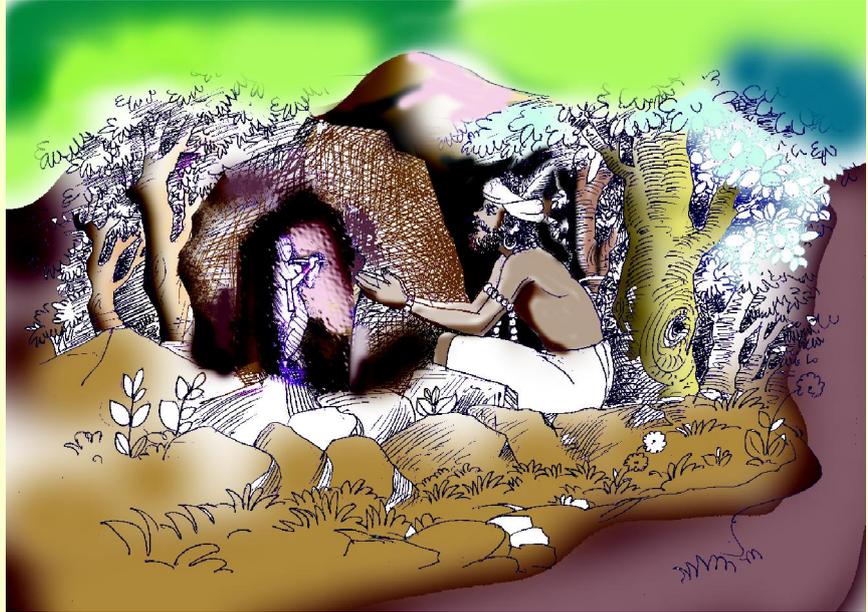


a crippled image and present the same to the king Indradyumna for installation in the temple.

The above story was expressed in different forms by the later writers. But we cannot depend on that fiction because the Sanskrit names like Visvvasu and Lalita were never used by the Adivasi Savara until a separate branch of that aboriginal race had come into being called “Jara Savara”.

If the image of the Jara or ‘Sudha’ Savara was introduced in the SriMandira in a later age. i.e. at end of the 14th century, then what was the form of the previous image called ‘Purusottam’? In one of the inscriptions of the Nrsimha Temple of Puri he was named “Kamalaksadeva”(whose eyes were like lotus bud).

‘The village named ‘Purusapura’ was inhabited by some Vedic Brahmanas who had ‘Kausika Gotra’ as stated in Basubandhu’s work. He embraced Buddhism although his ancestors were Vedic Brahmins. Similarly some Brahmins also adopted ‘Jaina’ religion Manatunga’s book named ‘Bhaktamala Stotra’ is a Jaina literature where the earliest name of Purusottama is written, comparing Him with Buddha or Sankara. The English translation of the passage made by Dr. Maurice Winternitz writes :



“Thou art Buddha, because the Gods praise
The awakening of the mind.
Thou art Samkara, because thou workest out
The salvation of the three worlds Creator art thou,
Because through the doctrine thou hast created
a pathway to salvation;
Thou, ‘O’ Lord, art Purusottama,
the highest of all the beings”.
(History of Indian Literature, Vol, 2) p. 550

Prior to that Purusottama’s name was mentioned by Varahamihira in the Vrahat Samhita’ alongwith the image of Madhava in the 5th century A.D. Both the figures of Purusottama and Madhava possessed four arms in which they held-Sankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma. Therefore, the ‘Nilamadhava’ worship was made popular in Odra Desa (Orissa) by the kings of the country. Although the name Nilamadhava was introduced by the ancient ‘Bhanja’kings near ‘Gandharadi’ on the bank of Mahanadi, it was no other than Purusottama Visnu, who was worshipped by the



'Maudgala' kings of that region. Therefore, they named Madhava as the 'Maudgala Madhava'. From these events we have come to the conclusion that Madhava worship was popular throughout India and neighbouring countries. Therefore, a Sailodbhava king gave the name 'Madhavaraja' to his son who ruled in Kangoda country about the 6th century A.D. One of his inscriptions discovered from Ganjam records the date as 'Gupta Sambad 300' corresponding to 720 A.D. The Nilamadhava was worshipped by the Bhanjas at the Gandharadi. In or about the tenth century A.D., the Bhanjas were driven away by the Somavamsi kings while the whole Odra country came to the possession of Yayati Kesari. It is he who is supposed to have built two Visnu temples for worship of 'Nilamadhava' alias Purusottama'. Each temple contained the figures of ten incarnations of Visnu on their walls. One of the temples was at Bhubaneswar and the other was built in Puri just near the present Mukti Mandapa. We have no information so far to know if the deities were called 'Nilamadhava' or 'Purusottama', but the second name was popularly used after Chodagangadeva during his time of reign, in the 12 century A.D. That name and the system of worship as Visnu was continued after the time of Narasimhadev II or his son, Bhanudev II, and during his reign a great fight took place, between him and Giasuddin Toglok. Soon after the Muslim raided against the great temple the figure and the name was changed in the great

temple which was supported by all classes of people, although the iconography of the Hindu Shastras does not agree with the image. The then king of Orissa must have taken advice of his Guru Narahari Tirtha, who was a great learned figure at that time. I need not give any detailed hypothesis about this to explain that great change which must have annoyed the Hindu world.

The figure of Purusottama, Balabhadra and Subhadra were installed in the Nrsimha temple by Chodagangadev who believed that he wanted to have co-operation among the Saivas, Vaisnavas and Saktas. The same principle was adopted by Narahari Tirtha in later age when he wanted to create co-operation between the Adivasi Savaras and also the Buddhists and Jaina monks who lived in this country to propagate the respective religions. If this view is to be accepted, then we can explain about 'Ratha Jatra' with the wooden images or 'Daru Brahma' and also the 'Mahaprasada' which cannot be contaminated by the touch of Shudras and many similar affairs. Therefore, from the time of Chodaganga and onward there was a regular attempt made by the thinking section of Orissa to amalgamate all different religious formalities by introducing them in the temple of the Lord Jagannath.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July 1996.





Odisha and Jagannath

Dr. Mayadhar Mansinha



It could not be that the deity that is the 'Lord of the Universe' (Jagannath) did not belong to Orissa whose soil He has significantly blessed as His habitation.

Naturally enough, Orissa's glorious Gajapatis treated their sprawling empire as no more than a Trust from Him, to be looked after, in correct conscience, themselves being only its humble care-takers. When they returned victorious from military expeditions' which were almost day-to-day affairs in those spacious times, they surrendered all their precious spoils to Him as rightly His and to the innumerable feudal chiefs of the empire. There was no greater moral curb to any sort of treasonable thought or behaviour against the central power, than the fear of dire divine retribution from the Omnipotent 'Lord of the Universe'.

If the Lord spiritual thus helped and co-operated with Orissa's Lords Temporal in the down-to-earth daily matters of administration. He was never any distance away also, from Orissa's frequent military expeditions to neighbouring land. If the Oriyas won glorious military triumphs over all their national enemies, for over twenty centuries continuously, Orissa's king and chiefs of staff were wise enough not to arrogate all that glory entirely to their brawn, arms, courage or their skills in combat-deployments, but attributed all that to the graces flowing out of Jagannath's lotus feet. The legends, so widespread in Orissa, and immortalised in painting, sculpture and poetry of Jagannath and His elder brother Balabhadra, riding on black and white chargers, ahead of king Purosottam's Orissan



Army, marching to wreak vengeance on the impudent Prince of Kanchi, is only the symbolic mythification of this universal feeling of the Oriya people that the great Lord Jagannath was an active participant in all their national as well as personal affairs and that whatever prosperity that fell to them either as a nation or as individuals, was surely, merely His grace.

The Lord of Compassion and Democracy

And this attitude of emotional detachment, reducing oneself to a complete zero, as preached in the Bhagvat Gita with such consistent vehemency is not merely a bye-gone demonstration of history, but is being enacted today, even in these modern, god-less mechanical times, in and through the world famous car festival of Jagannath. Year after year, Orissa's still surviving titular Gajapati, the Raja of Puri, wields the symbolic golden broom-stick as like a scavenger, to sweep clean the road, before the Lord's chariot starts on His Journey of compassion, for the unwashed millions proclaiming to the whole world, by that very act, that he was no higher than the commonest of his subjects, before the king of kings, from whom only, all our worldly status and prosperity and all our achievements, rightly stemmed.

Jagannath, among all the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, is the God of Democracy, par excellence. He alone, unlike all other divine celebrities of this great sub-continent, was born out of the spiritual aspiration of the common man. If He came to Orissa's illiterate and unsophisticated Savara tribals in the dim past when perhaps even the

earliest chants of the Rig Veda were not heard or known, He, appeared also, on the same plane of existence as that of His devotees, gladly accepting an open-air habitat under a forest-tree, along with the crude food of His simple worshippers. He has kept up, through centuries that kingship with the common folk, in the midst of royal luxuries that were showered on Him later on, demanding, through the car festival, close association of the descendants of those pre-historical Savara devotees of His and remaining content with uncooked food such as the latter offered Him in His forest hide-out somewhere on the bank of the Mahanadi.

In and through the car festival, Jagannath performs also the Bodhisattwa ideal of vicarious redemption, first to be promulgated in the world, by the Mahayani Buddhists, but later to become the main plank of Christian theology. Rides forward and backward on the dusty Broad Way (Bada-Danda) of the holy city of Puri, in the celebrated car festival, not Jagannath, that is Omnipotent Lord of the Universe" but He, who is All merciful Patita Paban, the Redeemer of the Lowly, the Sanctifier of the contaminated. This is a reversion also to His days in the forest secrecy, in close association of and deep happiness with the humble folk, wrenching Himself from the royal grandeur in which he has been made to live by the successive royal dynasties of Orissa, inside the sanctum sanctorum. The Lord out of His sheer merciful consideration for those millions of common men and women who lack the knowledge of books and have no things but love in their hearts to offer Him,



exposes himself to the risks and rigours of a symbolic journey on a dusty road familiar to these millions, just for the opportunity of showering blessedness on them all.

A symbol of National Integration

If Jagannath is the peoples god in practising absolute caste-lessness in proclaiming His faith in an egalitarian society and in His concern for the common folk in arranging for them, out of His grand kitchen, delicious, balanced food at cheap rates. He stands also as a spectacular symbol of National Integration, the free India's most burning problem. The blue stone that the Savaras had picked-up, is supposed to be the fossilised un-burnt heart of Sri Krishna, thrown into the waves of the sea, that had floated all along the Indian sea-board, to rest at last, on Orissa soil. In this interesting myth, we clearly see an attempt, at a spiritual link of the entire Indian sub-continent from sea to sea. If Jagannath is Krishna, as well as Rama, He also is the Buddha, as the ninth Avatar of Vishnu. In His daily worship, the blue-blooded Brahmin gaily rubs his fair shoulders with the transformed but still dark-skinned aboriginals thus putting into daily practice, the most vital line of king Asoka in his famous Kalinga edicts-sabamanisa me paja-All human beings are link my own dear children. Thus national integration has been a reality for centuries with Jagannath. Though it might be much talked of now at Delhi or Calcutta with hypocritical loudness.

Orissa's Tributes

The grand concepts described above which are day-to-day realities around

Jagannath's divine personality, have had deep impacts on Orissa's social life. If Orissa is the least caste conscious state in India, the credit might directly be attributed to Jagannath. If the Oriya people as a whole, have been so immensely benefited by their patriotic Rajas and Maharajas, it is because, there was the ideal standing before them all, of a whole empire being looked upon as a holy trust from the Lord and no personal property of anybody to be squandered away, according to one's personal whims.

As the Lord condescended to so completely identify Himself with the Oriya people, they on their part, have tried to offer in His services, the best that their culture could offer, their dance, their poetry, their cuisine and all other luxuries they could think of Jagannath, in a very real sense, may be said to be the custodian of the finest flowers of the Orissan way of living. Least contaminated by outside influence. Rigorously rejecting such novelties as milk-sugar, potato or cabbage and tomato in his holy kitchen, Jagannath stands also the most swadeshi, the most patriotic of gods in Hindu India.

The entire ancient and medieval Oriya literature is deeply charged with Jagannath cult. Many a precious jewel that Orissa's monarchs offered to the Lord has disappeared from his treasury. But the simple, passionate tributes that Orissa's poets have paid to the Lord are shining in eternal light. This humble writer could not do better than ending this short sketch with the deeply devotional tribute that the greatest of Orissa's medieval poets, Upendra Bhanja, the most celebrated Romantic in Oriya



literature, has paid to our Lord's Liberal Personality, in his famous *Kavya, Koti Brahmanda Sundari* (The most Beauteous in million worlds), says Upendra:-

“Let it be known even to those who know
That there is a city in India that is so holy
For being the Lord's very tabernacle.

That its-very soil can redeem people
Of even the deadly sin of murder of holy men;
No less a person than Lord Shiva,
Standing witness thereto.

He Himself having left Kasi.
And taken up His residence here,
Convinced, that this is the very crown-jewel
Of all sacred places in the world:
Here, there is no need for expiatory penances
As, the twin holy acts of listening.

To the resounding sacred music
at the Lords shrine
And partaking of His food offerings,
Are enough to exercise one,
Of all the evil effects of sins.

The proud royal banner on the Lord's Tower
Loudly declares, therefore, but this -:
“There is a more cherishable spot
Than this, in the whole world.”

The eternally roaring sea,
Nature's moat to the Lord's Fort,
Does nothing but roar away, so to say,
All the spiritual ills,
Just through a mere dip in its waves : for,
Jagannath, the Sovereign Lord of this
conch-city

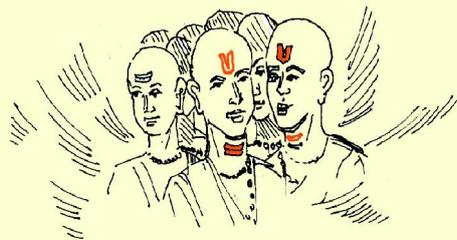
Distributes blessedness to all castes
Without any discrimination:
Though to Him at whose feet
Even Lord Shiva bows in reverence,
The epithet of an earthly 'sovereign'
Is but metaphorical.

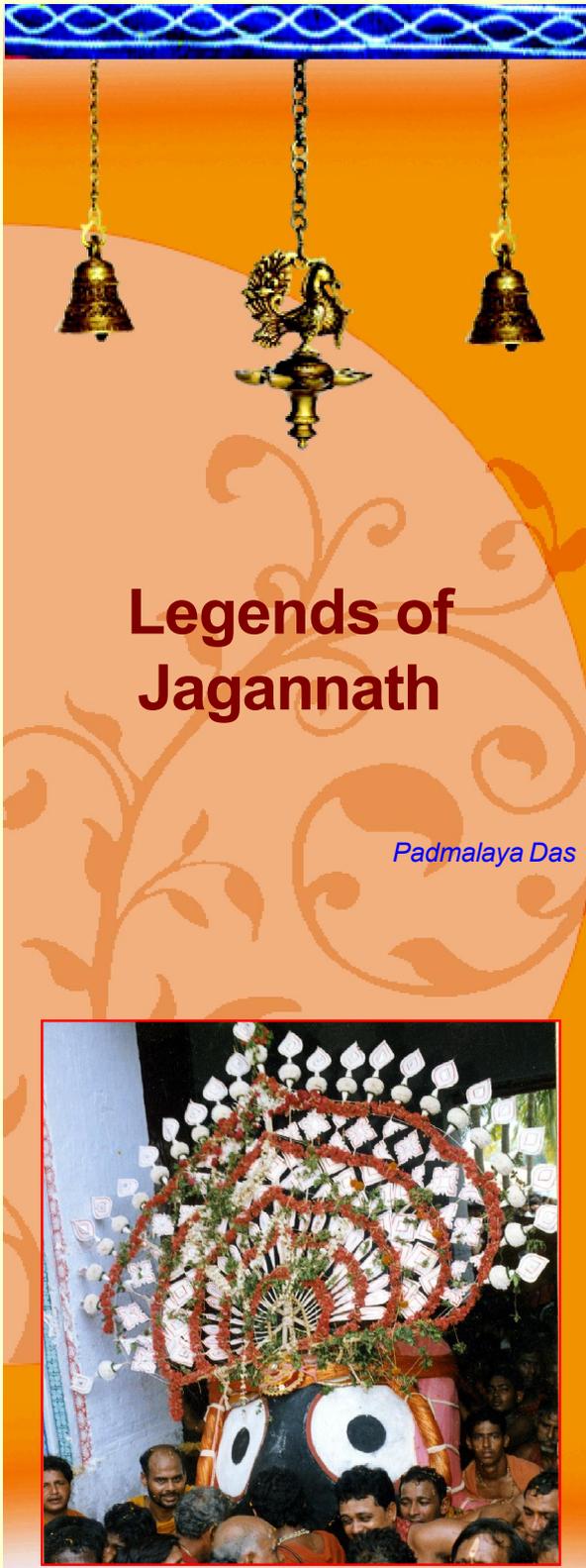
People come in millions,
from all quarters
To this holy city of Lord Jagannath,
As they have heard of a good Master here,
Who is All-merciful and Compassionate
Redeeming the Lowly and
all who are in distress.

Indeed through the twin festivals of
Bathing and of the Car journey
It is as the Redeemer of the downtrodden
That the Lord comes out of His palace,
to broadcast
Blessings of Release and Redemption
On All and sundry,
Lucky indeed am I to have been able,
To thus describe the glory of our Lord
And as I do this,
Each of my hair quivers
In sheer beatitude.”

If This humble Upendra
Has had the renown of a Poet
Among his People:
What doubt, my Lord
Is there that is but Thine Mercy.-
The fulfilment, by Thee
Of mine humble wishes ?

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1969.





Legends of Jagannath

Padmalaya Das

His cult spans millennia. Countless have come from every corner of the country to catch a glimpse of that black face, those saucer-like eyes, that plump shapeless figure.

He has not been made in the image of man. Tribal descendants play an important role in His daily worship and festivals. His holy food is partaken of by priest and Pariah alike from the same plate. Why ? Many answers come to mind to someone steeped in his lore.

A tribal god. A Jain Tirthankar. The Buddhist Trinity - Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Tantricism. He embraces all with those stumplike outstretched arms, Symbol of a grand synthesis.

A god of such hoary antiquity. A temple eight centuries old. So legends lace Jagannath like the fragrant garlands that adorn his broad bust.

Skanda Purana

The Utkala Khanda of the Skanda Purana relates this story about the origin of Jagannath.

Vishnu, in the form of a boar, rescued the Earth Goddess after the Great Deluge. Brahma created the entire universe. When Brahma asked Vishnu how all living creatures could attain salvation, Vishnu told him that He Himself would be living at Purushottam (Puri) in the form of Nila Madhava. Whoever had his Darshan would attain heaven. But due to the sanctity of this place, the work of Yama (the God of Death) was hampered. So he sought a remedy from Vishnu. And the god promised that He (Nila Madhava) Himself would vanish after



sometime, but Yama's glory would not continue in this place.

On top of Nilgiri (the eminence on which the present temple of Jagannath stands) is the mighty Kalpa Vriksha. To the west of the tree is the *Rohini Kunda* (a water cistern still in existence). To the north of it Saora Viswvasu worshipped Nila Madhava. At that time the glory of this place of pilgrimage was still a secret. But the heavenly denizens daily descended to worship Nila Madhava here.

In the Satya age the fifth generation descendant of Brahma, Indradyumna of the Surya dynasty, reigned at Avanti. He was a great Vaishnavite, learned in the scriptures. One day he convened a meeting of learned men and asked, "Where can I really see Vishnu with my own eyes ?" A mendicant-pilgrim replied, "At Purushottam the Lord Purushottam himself resides. Obtain his Darshan and worship him."

So Indradyumna sent his priest Vidyapati to Utkal or Orissa. Vidyapati reached Purushottam and stayed at a Saora village to the west of Nilgiri. He introduced himself to Viswvasu there and told him the cause of his journey. "Indradyumna will be fasting till my return. Make arrangements for me to have Darshan of *Nila Madhava*."

Viswvasu pitied Vidyapati and took him by the hand, led him over a narrow track to the top of Nilgiri and showed him *Nila Madhava*. Then the Brahman returned to Avanti. Meanwhile, in keeping with his promise to Yama, *Nila Madhava* hid himself beneath a mass of sand.

With Narada, the divine sage, for guide, Indradyumna started on his journey to Purushottam. On the frontier of Utkal, the King of Orissa met him. He crossed the river Mahanadi, went via Bhubaneswar and had Darshan of god Kapoteswara. Then he reached the Nilakantheswar temple on the eastern boundary of Purushottam. There he was saddened to hear from Narada that *Nila Madhava* had disappeared. The divine sage consoled him by saying that God himself would give him *darshan* in the form of four wooden figures. Then the king reached Nilgiri. On the advice of Narada, the king built near Nilakantheswara a temple for god Narasimha. Narada himself performed the consecration ceremony on the fifth day and installed the image in the temple.

Then Indradyumna made arrangements for performing the 1000 horse sacrifice. Madhava appeared to Indradyumna in a dream.

For the ceremonial ablutions after the sacrifice, a bath-house was built near Beleshwara temple on the sea-shore. The servants reported to Indradyumna that a mighty tree with four branches was floating in the sea and moving towards the bath-house. It emitted rays like the rising sun. Red in colour, it had a conch-shell mark. The king questioned Narada about this mystery. Narada said, "The god who appeared to you in your dream - it is the hair fallen from his body that has been transformed into this tree. Bring this Vishnu-form tree, build a Mandap (pavilion) for it and make idols from it.



With great ceremony Indradyumna duly brought the tree and placed it on the Mahavedi (Great Altar). While he discussed with Narada about the construction of images, a divine voice said, "Jagannath will Himself come to the Mahavedi for the construction of the image. The Mahavedi will remain covered and secret. For 15 days the Mandap will remain closed. This old man with tools that you see, take him and place him inside the Mandap and close the door. Till the images are ready, various types of musical instruments must be played outside. For, if the sound of construction reaches the ears, it will result in deafness, blindness, death of sons and life in hell. Therefore, never see the work being done or enter the place of image construction. If any one other than the person appointed to do the task sees this, what king what kingdom, all will be mortally afraid." And Vishnu himself arrived there in the guise of an old man.

The king placed the old man inside and locked the door. After 15 days, the images of Balarama, Subhadra, Jagannath and Sudarshana were found. Again the divine voice directed the king to dress the images beautifully in silk, to build a magnificent palace of specified proportions for them at a specific spot and take the images there. The king followed the instructions, installed the images and worshipped them. He gave away innumerable gifts to Brahmans. The hole dug by the milling hooves of the cows that were gifted to the Brahmans got filled up with the water used for washing hands at the time of the gift-giving and was transformed into a sacred lake - the present Indradyumna tank. Then Indradyumna started building a temple.

All the contemporary kings of India were engaged in this temple-building. Before the temple-building was over, on the advice of Narada, Indradyumna went to heaven with the divine sage to invite Brahma for consecrating the temple.

Brahma was completely absorbed in listening to music at that time. When he spoke to Indradyumna at last, a long time had elapsed. Brahma said to Indradyumna, "This music festival is over. But for you it's a very long age. During the period of your stay here one age has passed. None of your descendants are also left. Go down soon to the earth, and bring the gods and the temple under your control. I am following you."

Indradyumna reached earth with Narada, Brihaspati and other heavenly denizens. He was happy to find the temple had been completed. He prepared three chariots and brought the images in them from the *mahavedi*.

While Indradyumna was away in heaven, a king called Gala had gained control of the temple and was worshipping an image of Madhava he had installed. Indradyumna had the image removed to another small temple. On hearing about this, Gala got wild and rushed to Purushottam with his army. But on seeing the preparations of Indradyumna, the presence of the heavenly beings and hearing about his journey to heaven, he did not dispute further, but aided Indradyumna. He expressed regret for not having worshipped the wooden images so far. Brahma arrived and consecrated the temple and installed the images.



Indradyumna handed over the temple to Gala and left for *Brahmalok* (heaven).

So ends the story.

The Brahma Purana, Narada Purana and Padma Purana do not possess the wealth of details given in the *Skanda Purana*. Both the Brahma Purana and the Narada Purana mention only three images - Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath, and say that Brahma and Vishnu together made the images. The Brahma Purana says stone was brought from the Vindhya mountains for building the temple. There is hardly any difference between these two Puranas. But the Skanda Purana described the images of Balabhadra and Jagannath as having four arms and of Gala's annexation of the temple.

Sarala Dasa

Sarala Dasa, the 14th-15th century poet and author of the Oriya Mahabharata mentions that Jagannath appeared after the death of Krishna.

In the Vana Parva and Musali Parva of his Mahabharata he relates the story of Jagannath thus :

After the death of Krishna, with the help of Jara the Saora, Arjuna made arrangements for the funeral. He lighted the pyre, but only the logs burnt, not the body. Arjuna was disconsolate. So a divine voice told him, "Fire cannot devour this body. It will be worshipped for a long time on the Nilasundar hill. Put out the fire. Remove the body and set it afloat on the sea." One night and one whole day the fire had burnt, but the body did not burn. Only both the hands, legs, ears, nose and face had been

burnt. Arjuna placed the body in the sea. After instructing Jara to follow the body and find out where it would touch the shore and become famous, Arjuna returned to Dwaraka.

One day Krishna appeared in a dream to Jara and told him to worship his body. And Jara discovered near him an image of Vishnu. So he took it to the Dhauli hill, kept it beneath a tree there and worshipped it reverently with offerings of wild fruits, leaves and water. He kept it a secret even from his son and wife. Some years passed.

Gala Madhava, the king of Kanchi, was a great devotee of Vishnu. Daily he used to see the picture of Vishnu in the handful of water with which the ritualistically offered food to the god, before eating. After the death of Krishna, he no longer saw the god's reflection in the water. So the king fasted. He then heard that arjuna had set the body of the god afloat on the sea. So he sent messengers in the four directions.

Vasudeva the Brahman went to the south and finally reached the village of Jara, the Saora. He made friends with the Saora's son and stayed in the village for some time and ultimately found out the secret place where the image was hidden. Jara agreed to show it to him. He blind-folded the Brahman and took him to the foot of the tree. All along the way Vasudeva secretly flung handfuls of barley. He returned to Kanchi and told Gala Madhava everything.

But when the king came to the Dhauli hill and reached the hiding place, he found only faded flowers, but no image. The Saoras must have hidden it, he thought, and massacred



them. Only Jara escaped because he was not present there at the time. Displeased with Gala Madhava, the god cursed him, "Let Jara Saora's tribe increase. Let none remain of your line."

After this, the god did not desire to live in the Saora village. So according to his directions Gala Madhava brought the Vishnu image to Nilgiri, installed it there and worshipped it. Formerly the Saoras had been worshipping it as Savari Narayana.

Meanwhile Jara was on the sea-shore near Konark on the lookout for the floating body of Krishna. Indradyumna, the son of Madhu Kesari of the Birat dynasty, had heard that god would come to live at Nilgiri. He came there and with the help of a Brahman named Viswvasu built a temple for the god at Nilgiri. But he had no further news about the body. So he asked Jara. The Saora meditated on Krishna who told him that he desired to appear for some time in the form of the Buddha. According to his previous promise, he would stay on the Nilgiri for some time. He would change his form in the Rohini Kunda and take on the form of the Buddha, and the unburnt body would be transformed into wood.

Indradyumna and Jara together came to Nilgiri. And the god changed his form into a log of wood in the Rohini Kunda. Jara, Indradyumna and Vasudeva the Brahman together lifted the log from the cistern.

Jara undertook the task of making the image. Viswakarma, the celestial architect, himself came down to help Jara, the Saora. The log was cut into three parts. All the doors of the temple were locked according to his

instructions. They were not to be opened till the images were finished.

After a fortnight, when no sound issued from within, the king feared Jara might have secretly left the place, so he got the doors opened.

People saw three images seated on the throne. Krishna then advised the king that no one should see his colour in the Kali Age, so he must bring resin from the Sal tree and apply it on his body. At night Jara applied the resin on the god's body and camouflaged the wooden image. No one knew. The images of Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath came into being.

Deula Tola

In the Oriya ballad Deula Tola or "Temple Construction" we get a slightly different version regarding the evolution of Jagannath. There are several authors of the story. Here is the one by Krishna Dasa.

Indradyumna, the king of Malwa, sent messengers in search of *Nila Madhava*. Vidyapati the Brahman found that Viswvasu the Saora secretly worshipped Nila Madhava somewhere in the depths of a forest on the eastern shores of India. Vidyapati married the tribal fowler's daughter Lalita and contrived to obtain Darshan of the god. The day Vidyapati saw the god, Nila Madhava did not accept the simple wild fruits the Saora offered usually. The god told him he would now leave the form of Nila Madhava and take on the form of Daru Brahma (the wooden god Jagannath) and live in a temple. And that he craved for cooked food. Vidyapati had secretly flung handfuls of



til (sesame seeds Lalita had tied to his cloths). So he could find out the way again. He informed Indradyumna. The king came with a mighty army to Orissa.

But angered by the king's pride, the god had vanished. King Indradyumna suspected the Saoras must have hidden the god and surrounded their village with his soldiers. Viswvasu prayed to Nila Madhava. And the divine voice of Jagannath told the king. Free the Saora. Build a temple on the Niladri hill. After you finish building the temple, call me and I'll come.

Accordingly the king built a magnificent temple for his god. Then he wondered where he could get a worthy enough Brahman to consecrate the great temple he had built. So he went to heaven to invite Brahma himself. When Indradyumna reached heaven, Brahma was sitting in meditation. By the time Brahma's meditation was over, although it was not long by heavenly standards, aeons had passed on earth. A great storm passed over Nilgiri, covering the temple completely with sand.

A king called Suradeva had reigned and died. His son too. His grandson Gala Madhava ascended the throne and reigned now over Nilgiri. All this happened while Indradyumna waited beside Brahma. One day Gala Madhava had a sea-bath and then went deer-hunting in the forest adjoining Nilgiri. He was returning home after the hunt when he espied the massive heap of sand. He raced his horse over it. His horse's hoof struck something hard in the sand. This irritated the king. He ordered the sand to be excavated and himself stood watching the work when suddenly

to his surprise the Nila Chakra (the discus on top of the temple steeple) was revealed. He ordered the men to dig further till the whole temple stood revealed in its pristine grandeur.

My ancestors had built such a grand temple, he wondered. I will instal images inside it and worship, he decided.

Meanwhile Brahma's meditation ended. And Indradyumna repeated his invitation to consecrate the temple. I will go, but the temple you built no longer belongs to you. King Gala Madhava now reigns over your subjects, Brahma informed the waiting king. Indradyumna and Brahma descended together to earth and went to the Nilgiri hill.

But Gala Madhava claimed he had built the temple. So the two kings quarrelled. Brahma appeared on the scene and said the king who had built the temple must produce a witness. I have none, said Gala Madhava. Is a witness necessary to testify to the construction of a temple ? scoffed the false claimant.

Finally, the dispute was settled by the testimony of turtles. In the Indradyumna tank there were many turtles. They had carried stones on their backs for constructing the temple. When the three reached the tank, the turtles were sunning themselves. they plunged into the water the moment they saw Indradyumna. Brahma called out to them to bide a moment so that he could question them. The turtles told him that they were scared because he had brought Indradyumna with him. Because of him one lakh of our species perished, they said. But Brahma persisted. Whose temple is it ? He asked.



Indradyumna's, answered the turtles. We have carried stones for the construction of the temple. Indradyumna built the temple and went to fetch you. Gala Madhava removed the sand. Ultimately Gala Madhava gave in. Brahma said, since you removed the sand, half the credit goes to you. But since you told a lie, you will remain unworshipped in the Kali age.

But there was no idol in the temple. And Indradyumna started fasting. Jagannath appeared to him in a dream and told him that he would find him floating in the sea in the form of a log of wood with holy marks. The log was found. But the king's elephants and all the king's men could not move the log an inch. The divine voice told the king that this was so because the king had been trying to impress him with his imperial might. Even if all the people in your kingdom tried, they can't move me. At dawn tomorrow bring a golden cart and place it near the log. Place a silken pillow at one end. And call Viswvasu, the Saora. He was my original worshipper. I will move only when he comes.

The king followed the instructions. The Saora held one end and Brahman Vidyapati the other, and the log was placed on the cart and taken to the temple. But no carpenter of his realm could make even a dent on the log. Their tools broke. At last Jagannath himself arrived in the guise of a doddering old carpenter to prepare the images in a locked room.

He warned the king not to open the doors till twenty-one days elapsed. But his queen Gundicha got worried on the fifteenth day and insisted that the frail old carpenter

must be dead since no sound could be heard from the room. So the king himself broke open the sealed doors to find the ancient carpenter had disappeared, leaving behind four half-finished images. The king regretted his haste and was penitent.

Jagannath appeared to him in a dream. He told Indradyumna that the sons born in the home of the original Saora who had worshipped him as Nila Madhava would serve as temple functionaries called Daitas. The descendants of Vidyapati will be his actual attendants (prakruta sevaka). The sons born of the union of the Saora's daughter and Vidyapati will serve as his Suars (cooks).

Then Jagannath told Indradyumna to ask any boons he wished and he would grant them. Indradyumna asked for the following. Every day at midnight your doors will be closed. Three hours before dawn will they open. Altogether you will sleep for three hours. Eating and tasting, your hands will never be dry. You will stay and eat Bhog (food offering) the whole day long.

All these things you have asked are only for my welfare, said Jagannath. Ask something for yourself, and I will grant your wish.

Then grant me this, O Lord, said Indradyumna. Let none remain of my line.

Why do you ask this ? Questioned the god. For, with you, I will reign through the ages.

No, said Indradyumna, I have no use for that. My glory will remain forever. My sons and grandsons will claim this temple is ours. If they say it is ours, all my *dharma* will be lost, said the noble king.



Jagannath said this is a sweet statement you have made. Your wish be granted, O King.

Thus ends the story of temple building by Krishna Dasa.

Dardhyatabhakti

There are innumerable legends about Jagannath's love and affection for his devotees, be he sinner or saint. Here is one taken from an old book entitled *Dardhyatabhakti* by Rama Dasa.

Balaram Dasa was a great devotee of Jagannath. But he had one weakness. He kept the company of prostitutes. Once at Rath Yatra time, on hearing the gongs, he rushed straight from the house of a prostitute and climbed on the chariot of Jagannath to have Darshan of his beloved god on the great day.

The priests saw his dishevelled looks and guessed from where he had come. So they heaped insults on him and pushed him down from the chariot. In sorrow and anger, Balarama Dasa repaired to the seashore and drew three chariots on the sand to carry his beloved god and berated him roundly for caring so little for his devotees.

Jagannath foresook his chariot and came to sit in the one his devotee had drawn. And he was accompanied by his brother and sister. Tears of repentance and joy coursed down the cheeks of Balarama Dasa. Meanwhile, the mighty Nandighosa, chariot of Jagannath, would not budge, however hard people pulled. Despite the efforts of even elephants.

Then Jagannath appeared in a dream to the Raja of Puri and told him to make amends

and honour his devotee. This was done. And to everyone's delight, the Redeemer of Sinners completed his Rath Yatra without further hindrance.

Conquest of Kanchi

There is another interesting legend of Jagannath and Balabhadra becoming knights errant to aid a devotee.

Purushottam Deva, the Raja of Puri was to marry Padmavati, the daughter of the Raja of Kanchi. Once his would be father-in-law came to watch the Rath Yatra. He was astounded to find his daughter's fiance busy sweeping the ground before the chariots with a golden broom. He does the job of a sweeper, this king of Orissa has no caste, he thought, and decided he would not give his daughter in marriage to such a contemptible person. How was he to know that this ceremonial sweeping symbolised the equality of all men in the eyes of god.

Angered by the insult, Purushottam waged war against the Raja of Kanchi but was defeated. He prayed to Jagannath for help and set out again for the south with his army. This time without his knowledge his army was followed by Jagannath on a black horse and his brother Balabhadra on a snow-white one. Enroute the brothers twain felt awfully thirsty. So they pawned a ring and bought curds from Manika the cowherd woman and drank their fill.

Purushottom was victorious this time and returned home with Padmavati for prize. But he had decided not to marry her. He had vowed he would wed her to a sweeper. But when Rath Yatra came round again, and he



was sweeping the floor round the chariots, his wise minister brought Padmavati and handed her to the Raja, saying that since he was a sweeper now, he should marry her and thus fulfil his own vow. And everybody was happy. To this day the Raja of Puri performs the ceremonial sweeping of the platforms of the chariots.

Lakshmi and Jagannath

Jagannath holds sway over the hearts of sinners and saints, kings and commoners alike. In fact, he is very much a part of the common man's life in Orissa. And they address him endearingly in a very familiar manner. So naturally Jagannath has tiffs with his wife like, anybody else. This is beautifully illustrated in Balarama Dasa, the 16th century Oriya poet's narrative poem Lakshmi Purana. This story not only reveals that gods are also fallible but also gives the reason for the remarkable observance of castelessness regarding the holy food of Jagannath.

Once Lakshmi, the consort of Jagannath entered an outcast woman's house and was about to re-enter the big temple without purifying herself. But apprised of the facts and egged on by his big brother Balabhadra, Jagannath barred her path. They had a thundering big quarrel and Lakshmi said that though she seemed destitute, she was not an unchaste or widowed daughter that she would return to her father's house. Despite her husband protests she flung at his feet all her fabulous jewellery and left for an unknown destination. But she cursed Jagannath before

leaving, "I am leaving as a low untouchable woman, this is my curse, O Lord. As long as the sun and moon rise and set, food you will never get. You will eat only when I, the low-caste woman, will serve you."

With the help of some other gods, and by employing some womanly wiles, Lakshmi did succeed in making her curse come true. After suffering much hardship, the brothers were forced to fast till Lakshmi relented at last and cooked food for them herself. So they ate from the hands of Lakshmi whom they had driven out as a low-caste woman. And the angry goddess gave Jagannath a bit of her mind when he came to seek her pardon on the advice of his now repentant big brother.

"Shame on your words! Shame on your might ! Shame on your brother !" She said with angry contempt.

Jagannath could not say a word in defence. He remained silent. Then he said that by forcing them to beg, she had humiliated them in the eyes of the world and humbled their pride. So he beseeched her to forget her anger and accompany them back to the temple. But Lakshmi laid down a condition-all should partake of the holy food, of the temple without distinction of caste. Brahmans would take it from the hands of sweepers and vice versa. Jagannath agreed. Then hand in hand they entered the big temple with great pomp and pageantry.

N.B.: Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1969.





Jagannath : The Symbol of Peaceful Co-existence

Gouri Kumar Brahma



The origin of Jagannath is shrouded in mystery. Legends and traditions as well as Puranic accounts of the 'Kshetra' (seat of divinity) of Purushottama do not positively converge at a point of unanimity. It is a fact of history that Buddhism took deep roots in Orissa from the time of Asoka in the 3rd century B.C. The Baudhayana Dharma Sutra states that Anga, Vanga and Kalinga shall not be visited for purposes other than pilgrimage. This has led some to think that these three regions were considered to be profane for habitation in those days. But one is apt to put this question - "Were there centres of pilgrimage in these so-called profane regions ?" The answer is as simple as it is clear. Anga, Vanga and Kalinga were undoubtedly holy lands prior to the spread of Buddhism. But when Buddhism held sway over these regions, a section of the orthodox community put forth the view that normally none from Aryavarta should visit these places : if one wanted to do so, he would do it only for the sake of pilgrimage. Thus, the statement of the Baudhayana Dharma Sutra confirms the religious sanctity of Kalinga long before the evolution of Buddhism in as much as the existence of centres of pilgrimage therein is corroborated by it.

It is a pity that in determining the antiquity of Jagannath, the present temple of the Lord is inextricably associated with the 'Peetha', i.e., the seat of the deity. The Peetha exists from time immemorial, but temples after temples have been built there at different periods of history. It is said that King Indradyumna who is inseparably connected with



the installation of the idols, built a temple one thousand cubits high. Students of Sanskrit literature know that such numerals as one hundred and one thousand signify not any particular number as they appear to be at the outset, but convey a sense of plurality or multiplicity. Thus, in mentioning the names of the lotus, the celebrated Amarakosha states :

*Sahasra Patram Kamalam
Sata Patram Kusesayam.*

The lotus is called 'Sahasra Patra' and 'Satapatra' at the same time. From the first name, it is clear that the lotus has one thousand petals, but the second name connotes that it has only one hundred petals. Hence, Sahasra and Sata indicate Vahutwa or multiplicity and not what they literally mean. Similarly, it may be reasonably deduced that the temple built by Indradyumna of Puranic fame might not have been exactly one thousand cubits high, but must have been a lofty one befitting the greatness of the deity on the one hand and that of the King on the other.

From the geographical point of view, Orissa does not fully belong either to South India or to North India. Its location has enabled the people of the land to come into closer contact with the cultural cross-currents of the South and the North. The empire of Kalinga earned wide reputation even more than two thousand years ago, when the Sadhavas (merchants of Kalinga, so named) carried on maritime commerce with the Far East. Thus, a cosmopolitan culture based on the most

commendable catholicity of religious outlook developed in Kalinga or ancient Orissa.

There are in India numerous religious cults with distinct sectarian philosophies of their own substantiated by scholarly works, based in their turn, on scriptural evidences. In many parts of India the most celebrated religious shrines and the deities that adorn them are so deeply associated with particular religious sects that they do not attract devotees of other religious groups freely. For many centuries in Southern India, a most uncompromising attitude was prominently seen among the Alvars and the Nayannars. The worshippers of Siva and Vishnu were so diametrically opposed to one another that a Vaishnavite refused to take refuge in a nearby Siva temple when he was attacked by a mad elephant. He preferred to be crushed under the feet of the chasing elephant rather than take refuge in a Siva temple, because, it was considered by him to be something abominable to come into contact with Siva. Likewise a Vaishnavite scholar refused to say -

"Sivat Parataram Nasti"

"there is no Lord who is superior to Siva". When a devotee was forced to repeat this sentence, he immediately and with admirable presence of mind spoke out in the form of another quatrain : -

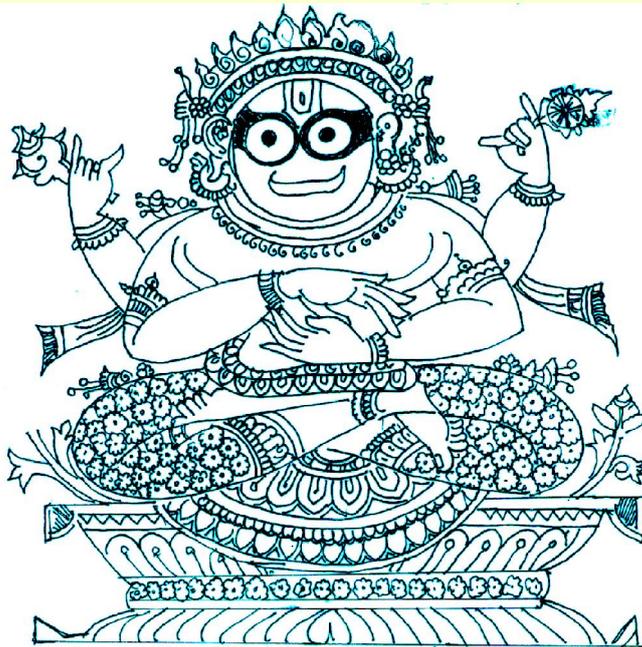
"Dronamasti tatah param"

i.e., Drona is still greater (than Siva : hence Siva cannot be the greatest). To understand its meaning, it is necessary for one to know that in Sanskrit Siva and Drona also are the



names of two measures. To make the sense further clear an example may be given here, keeping in view an ordinary, lay reader. Supposing, there are two measures-the one is equal to either one seer one Kg. and the other is equal to half a seer or half a Kg. Now, for our purpose it is sufficient if we take it for granted (though inaccurately) that the name of the former measure (one seer or one Kg.) is Drona and the name of the latter measure is Siva.

Thus, the Vaishnavite devotee who was antithetical towards Saivism attempted to escape the danger of even repeating a sentence that described Siva as the greatest of divinities. The history of the differences between



Saivism and Vaishnavism can only reveal how, why and when the 'Prasad' of Siva was considered inferior (or rather unworthy of being taken) to the Prasad of Vishnu as is reflected in the well-known quatrain which reads thus:-

"Na grahyam Sivanirmalyam."

In the Vedic age, natural forces were personified as divinities and worshipped for the gratification of desires by devotees. Gradually the Puranic gods had their evolution. Presentation of detailed accounts of the

greatness of the Puranic gods necessitated the creation of the vast Puranic literature which constitutes the basis of religious life of India at present. The worship of the Mother Goddess exerted the most incomprehensible influence over the Indian mind for several centuries prior to the birth of Sankaracharya in the last quarter of the 8th Century A.D. Thus Buddhism, Jainism, Tantric gods, Siva and Vishnu shone

bright in the firmament of Indian religious worship from pre-Christian centuries.

Though Buddhism and Jainism were the offshoots of Hinduism which is identical with 'Bharat Dharma ' or the 'Religion of India' with the Vedas and the Geeta as its basis, still these two

religious cults remained outside the purview of Hinduism for the simple reason that the authority of the Vedas was not accepted by them. The number of divinities in Indian literature is perhaps as vast as the number of the stars in the sky. But as long as diversity of the highest order exists in the human society in the context of brain-powers, attitudes, aptitudes and power of comprehension of individuals, so long the large number of divinities found in Indian literature cannot be considered either preposterous or



unnecessary, if it is believed that worship of the divinities is conducive to spiritual amelioration.

But then, in the midst of a large number of divinities, the Pancha Devatas occupy the most exalted position. They are Siva, Vishnu, Durga, Ganesha and Surya. There are many in India who worship one of these five deities and they are known as devotees of that particular cult. Thus, a true-blue Vaishnavite does not worship Siva, a true Saivite does not worship any of the forms of Vishnu such as Narayan, Krishna, Vala Gopal, Madhava and so on. But there are the others who worship all these five deities without any discrimination; they are called the Smarttas. In Orissa, the Smarttas had predominance for a long time and the influence they exerted over the rulers of the country was great indeed.

The far-famed religious preacher of India, Sri Sankaracharya visited Orissa in the first quarter of the 9th century. The name of Sankaracharya is generally associated with Saivism. But Acharya Sankara was never a Saivite in as much as he worshipped the other important deities held high with esteem by many cults of India in those days as is evident from his stotras (prayers in poetical form). Till the emergence of the Somavansi Kings and particularly, Yayati, who is believed to have built a big temple for Jagannath which was rebuilt in the 12th century (and that is the temple that stands now), Orissan kings, at different periods of history are definitely known to have embraced Buddhism, Jainism, Brahminism, Vaishnavism, Saivism, etc. Thus, through royal patronage and also through the active co-

operation of the people who were prone to accept the essence of all religious faiths and cults to the total exclusion of none, religion of the people of Orissa took an integrated shape which ultimately found expression in Jagannath. This is the reason why four important theories have been adduced with regard to the origin of Jagannath. These theories in their turn are based on the forms of worship, nomenclature of the deity, shape of the idols, etc., belonging simultaneously to any one or more of the following-Brahminism, Buddhism, Jainism and Savara culture (of the aboriginal tribes inhabiting Orissa from ancient times). The truth seems to be that Jagannath, the representative national deity of the land and people of Orissa is an embodiment of the dominant characteristics of all these four types of Indian religious culture. The same magnanimity of outlook is seen maintained even to the present day as a result of which Jagannath attracts pilgrims and spectators alike from the entire Hindu world, no matter, which of these was the 'Prime Mover' of the Universe of this 'Universal Seat of Worship.'

From the days of Sankaracharya, almost all the great religious preachers of India have considered Puri to be a centre of extraordinary importance for the propagation of their theories and religious ideologies. Ramanuja, Madhava, Vallabha, Nimbarka, Sri Chaitanya, to name only some of the great preachers have tried to identify Jagannath with their own religious forms, but he has remained as Jagannath only and has not become the representatie deity of any particular sect or group of worshippers. This is the secret of the



greatness of Jagannath. He is the Natha (Lord) of the entire Jagat (the world or the people in general) and not so of any religious preacher or religious sect however powerful or popular He or it might be.

It is really interesting to note that 'Jagannath', though essentially 'Vishnu-manifested' is not wholly a Vaishnavite deity. Scholars have attempted to show that He is the Purushottama of the Bhagavad Geeta on the basis of this Sloka -

**Atosmi Loka Vede cha
Prathitah Purushottamah (15:18)**

But in course of centuries, 'Vishnu Purushottama' has been imperceptibly transformed into 'Jagannath' only, embodying the best of many religious cults, sects and practices that were in vogue in India and that influenced the minds of the people of Orissa through cultural intercourse. To a common man it strikes thus - Had Jagannath been only a manifestation of Vishnu, then, His spouse Laxmi should have been the most revered goddess within the Jagannath temple. But it is not so. Goddess Vimala, the tantric female counterpart of Siva is really the most revered deity inside the Puri temple. So great in the institutional glory of Vimala in the Puri temple that the food offered to Jagannath does not and cannot become 'Mahaprasad' without the sanction of Vimala in the form of her worship in the traditionally ordained manner. Similarly, Subhadra, who adorns the "Ratna Simhasana" (the dignified seat studded with precious stones on which the deities are seated) inside the sanctum sanctorum is worshipped in the

'Bhubaneswari Mantram' which can not be explained if She is taken merely to be the Sister (or even as Laxmi) of Jagannath, who, in this context, is "Krishna-manifested". This has led many to think that three of the important religious movements of India have found in Jagannath the most animating and unifying expression. Thus Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabhadra represent Vaishnavism, Saktism and Saivism, respectively : Orissa - nay, the entire Hindu world, has therefore, harnessed the diverse religious cults and creeds into one integrated whole, where every one has lost its individuality and where the individuality of each is clearly perceptible to the enlightened minds.

Students of 'comparative study of religion in India' may be much delighted to know that in a temple in the district of Cuttack in Orissa, a single deity is worshipped as the Panchadevatas. The temple is known as 'Mahavinayaka' and is located at the foot of a hill by the side of the Calcutta-Madras Railway line near Dhanmandal Station. A gigantic monolith which appears to have been cut out of a huge piece of stone that perhaps forms part of the foundation of the temple is being worshipped for about a thousand years past as Siva, Durga, Vishnu, Ganesh and Surya and portions of the monolith have been earmarked for each one of these five deities. The twin temples of Siva and Vishnu at Gandharadhi in the Phulbani district also bear eloquent testimony to the fact that the two deities of extraordinary importance in Indian religious life through centuries have been given equal status, indicative of a high standard of catholicity of religious outlook. It may be



remarked that this phenomenon of happy and harmonious blending of diverse, distinct and different ideologies manifested through idol-worship is only characteristic of the mental temperature of Orissa, the holy land of Lord Jagannath, where differences have abnegated their individuality for the evolution of the unified whole.

In the present-day world when countries and communities are rent as under with political turmoil, social inequities and autocentric tendencies, the lofty ideal of "peaceful co-existence" is considered to be indispensable for attaining universal peace, amity and good will. Ever since the dawn of history, religion (Dharma) has been the watchword of Indian life, Indian philosophy, Indian ethics and Indian polity. The idea of godhood has been the solid foundation on which poets, philosophers, preachers and prophets have built the splendid superstructure of their ideals and ideologies, themes and theories of life.

Hence, it was through worship of God, through temples and shrines built to facilitate

the inculcation of devotional fervour in the devotees that Indians attempted to bring together vast sections of their countrymen in order to promote fellow-feeling and better human understanding among the citizens. The 'Peetha' of Jagannath in Orissa has stood perhaps for more than two millennia past as a light-house of peaceful co-existence in the domain of Dharma, interpreted in terms of devotion, worship, divine bliss and spiritual amelioration of mankind on the one hand and amity, good-will, equality and tolerance on the other.

Thus, in the ultimate analysis, Jagannath is not merely a seat of theosophical realisation, but a socio-cultural institution of incomprehensible magnitude, conveying the soul-purifying message to the world of giving scope to every individual and every community to put forth its best and to allow the others similar facilities for the promotion and perpetuation of peace in the world.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1969.





The Role of Mathas in Navakalevara Festival

Bhaskar Mishra



Long years ago, some Mathas situated in Shrikshetra, Puri are directly involved in various rituals as well as different festive occasions in Sri Jagannath Temple. For that many facilities like “Saraghara” “Oven in the Kitchen” “Khandua Pata”(Silken Cloth) and Mahaprasad Khei, etc have been provided for them inside the Temple premises. It is ascertained that some specific Mathas are also involved in the Navakalevara festival of the Deities. Out of the few Mathas, which have got an important role at different stages in the Navakalevara of the Lords, the Jagannath Ballabh Math, Deuli Matha at Kakatpur (under Emar Matha of Puri), Raghabadas Matha, Radhakanta Matha and Bada Oriya Matha are some among them. The detail rituals of the aforesaid Mathas in Navakalevara are described as follows :-

The Year in which the Navakalevara of Sri Jagannath Mahaprabhu falls, the “Banajaga” ritual starts from the day of “Chaitra Sukla Dasami” that is in the month of March - April of the said year. On this day the Sevayats like Daitapatis, Pati Mohapatra, Lenka, Deulakarana, Tadhaukarana, Brahmins, etc. proceed to “Srinahar” that is the residence of Maharaja, Puri in search of Daru after performance of Sadhi Bandha Nitis and receiving garland of the Deities (ajnamala) as per the old tradition of the Srimandir. After that they go straight to Jagannath Ballabh Matha situated on the Grand Road, Puri and take rest for one and half day. During their stay all expenses for them towards Mahaprasad and other expenses are borne by Sri Jagannath Ballabh Matha. From this Matha the Daitapatis



and other Sevayats proceed to Deuli Matha which is situated one and half kms. away from Kakatpur Mangala temple.

Deuli Matha : The Deuli Matha is existing on the bank of the river Prachi at Kakatpur since long. It is ascertained that this Matha which is under the control of Emar Matha, Puri is directly involved with Navakalevara rituals of the Deities. The Sevayat (Banajaga) groups which come from Puri in search of Daru used to stay at this Deuli Matha. As ascertained from the old legends, Maa Mangala appeared first in this Matha. This area is named as Mangalpur as Maa Mangala has been kept at this place first. This Deuli Matha which is situated in the bank of the river Prachi is full of natural scenes and scenery and as such looks very beautiful. During Navakalevara year specific arrangements are being made on behalf of Emar Matha, Puri for necessary repair of Deuli Matha and cleaning of the adjacent garden. Even this Matha used to supply two trips of fire-wood for preparation of 'Habisanna' (Sacred rice) for the Daitapatis during their stay at Deuli Matha. Though the Matha premises are very small in area it has got an ancient status and tradition. The God Patitapaban is being worshipped in a small temple situated inside the Matha premises. The priest of this Matha who has seen four Navakalevara of the Lords, that is during 1931, 1950, 1969 and 1977 says that the Daitapatis and Sevakas involved with other Nitis took shelter in this Matha premises during all the Navakalevara period except in 1977. The Matha is in a dilapidated condition now for want of proper care and interest of the Mahanta of Emar Matha, Puri since 1977. During 1977 Navakalevara, the Daitapatis and

other Sevakas had just visited this Matha in order to maintain the previous tradition but stayed at Swameswar Mahadev Temple premises near Kakatpur as the Matha premises was not suitable for accommodation.

After arrival of the Sevakas in Deuli Matha, news is sent to Mangala temple at first. Then all Sevakas like Daitapatis, Pati Mohapatra, Lenkas, Deulakaran and Bramhins, etc. proceed to the Temple of Maa Mangala with garland, Mahaprasad and other puja materials in a colourful procession and after their arrival special rituals i.e. "Majana" of Maa Mangala are observed. It may be mentioned here that this "Majana" Nitis of Maa Mangala are observed secretly. Outsiders are prohibited to witness the special Puja offering of Maa Mangala and even the entrance of outsiders to the inner sanctum of the temple is strictly prohibited. All Sevakas return again to the Deuli Matha after observing all the Nities of Maa Mangala. They stay there up to the identification of the Darus of Lords. All Sevakas take the sacred Rice (Habisanna) which is prepared in this Matha premises every day. Now a days a canal is flowing beside Deuli Matha. It is ascertained that the Commissioner of Endowments has recently given instruction to the Emar Matha, Puri to take proper care and necessary repair of this ancient structure.

Radhakanta Matha : When the Cart (Sagadi) carrying the Darus of Lords reach the entrance of Puri that is near Alamchandi temple or near the Nrusingha temple behind the the Gundicha Mandir, they are carried to Srimandir in a large procession through the north gate and are kept at Daru Gruha at Koilivaikuntha. The



Vaishnavas of the renowned Radhakanta Matha take part in the Sankirtan while Darus of the Lords are carried in the procession, the right of which they have got from the period of King Prataprudra Deva. Apart from this, some Vaisnavas and monks of different Mathas of Puri also take part in this procession.

Raghabadas Matha : During the period of Navakalevara huge quantity of articles as well as the “Sarbanga Pankti Bhog” are offered by this Raghabadas Matha (which belongs to the famous Ramanuj Sect of Puri). It is stated that the change of body “Ghata Paribartan” of the old Deities are being done only after offering of this “Sarbanga Pankti Bhog” on behalf of this Matha during the period of Mahanabasar. As such this Bhoga is so to say the last Bhoga offered to the old Deities. The entire cost of this Bhog is borne by this Matha.

Bada Oriya Matha : Til oil which is supplied every year during the period of Anabasara of the Deities for “Phuluri Lagi Nitis” is also supplied during the period of Maha Anabasara on behalf of this Matha. Apart from this the new “Trimundi Chandua” which is tied over “Ratna Simhasana” is supplied on behalf of this Matha.

The Suddhikriya (Dasaha) of the Deities is observed after the old idols are buried at Koilivaikuntha as per the tradition. Thousands and thousands of Brahmins as well as Sevakas are provided with Mahaprasad on

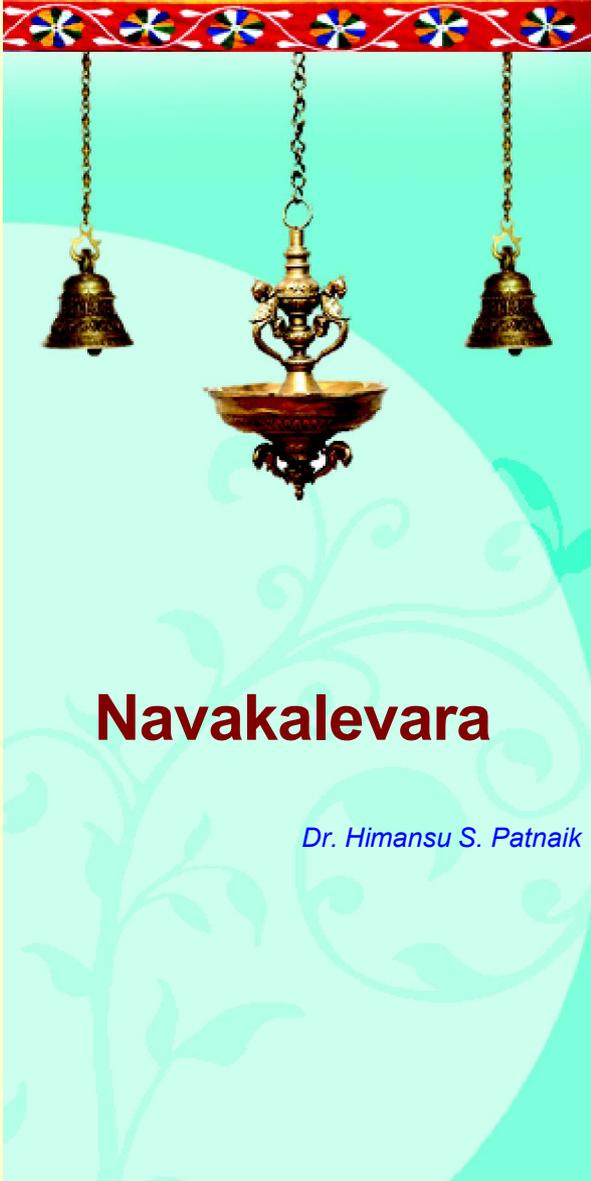


this auspicious day of Trayodasi which falls on bright fortnight (Sukla Paksha) of Mala Asadha. This Mahaprasad is supplied on behalf of many benevolent persons and Sevayat Niyogas as well as different Mathas like Emar Matha, Uttarparswa Matha, Siddha Bakula Matha, Radhaballava Matha, Dakhinaparswa Matha, Raghabdas Matha, Punjabi Math, Trimali Matha, Bada Oriya Matha, Radhakanta Matha, etc. of Puri town according to their own capacity.

Really it appears that some specific Mathas of Puri are directly involved in the Navakalevara ritual of Sri Jagannath since long, and thereby they maintain the prestige of their own Mathas as well as make themselves honoured by offering their Seva before the Almighty.

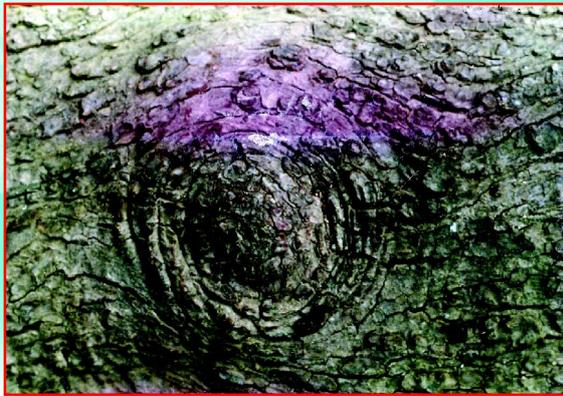
N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July 1996.





Navakalevara

Dr. Himansu S. Patnaik



Ancient texts speak of four types of images, i.e. Rekha or drawn, Darumayi or wooden, dhatumayi or metallic, and manisailamayi or jewel/stone images. Subject to renewal are these images at regular intervals so as to perpetuate their heritage in spite of the ravages of time. The intervals prescribed are 1, 12,000 and 10,000 years respectively.¹ The Mrunmayi or clay images have to be renewed every month. In case of the Jagannath Triad, Navakalevara or assumption of new body occurs almanac-wise. Whenever two months of Ashadha occur in a year and this normally occurs once within 12 to 19 years. Such a month is known as 'Purusottama-masa' all over India. The 'Anavasara' period is spread over 45 days-a stretch of time sufficient to get the new images constructed. The concept of the attributeless transcendent self yet possessing the attributes of the space-time world as reflected, thus, in the Jagannath Dharma conforms to what Krishna told Arjun in the Gita.² The Daitas, Khuri Nayaka and the temple administrators finalise the year of the next renewal after the Daitas examine the deities during 'Sriangaphita'. Normally when the renewal occurs during 7-8 years, the seven layers of resin, cloths and sandal paste are renewed but not the deities. But that was not so on the last occasion of 1977.

As per 'Deulatola' of Nilambar Dasa³ written during the reign of Divyasingha Deva-I (1689-1715), the descendants of Sabara King Vishwabasu were known as Daita and their leader came to be known as Pati Mahapatra. He must transfer the 'Brahmapadartha' from the old to the new Jagannath image. However, Navakalevara rituals are conspicuously absent from the mid-18th century work Niladri



Mahodaya, that otherwise is a comprehensive catalogue of the Temple rituals. Two other works however are profuse in their details about the Navakalevara rituals. A microfilm of Rajabhoga, with South Asian Institute, speaks of the older antiquity of Navakalevara. In more explicit terms the Madalapanji traces the antiquity of Navakalevara to King 'Yayati II who salvaged the remains of the deities from near Sonepur, regrouped the scattered Daitas and Patis, re-constructed fresh icons and got the worship re-instituted in the 10th century after 142 years of an interval caused by some political disturbances.⁴ This could not have been a figment of any chronicler's imagination. The Skanda Purana mentions Navakalevara without linking it to two Asadhas. The Tekkali Temple of wooden Dadhivamana (1150) showed the trend of those times. The iconoclasm of Kalapahara and the subsequent role of Bisara Mahanti in sneaking away the Brahmapadartha to Kujang to worship it there till 1586 and then of Raja Ramachandra Dev re-consecrating the images at Khurda and in 1590 at Puri constitute the backdrop to several other escapades of the priests with the deities, on threatened Muslim sacrilege. It seems to connote that the Brahmapadartha is one absolute and eternal matter, contained in the myriad forms of the phenomenal world of images renewed within every 12 to 19 years gap over a cycle of centuries.

Since 1590, these instances have been systematically lexicographed. In recent historical memory such festivals have occurred in 1714, 1733, 1744, 1752, 1771, 1790 and during the company rule in 1809, 1828, 1836 and 1853. The one in 1893 was attended by over 2 lakh pilgrims. Ever since then, there

have been descriptions galore of the ones in 1931, 1950, 1970 and 1977.

The Process :

The long and arduous process of Navakalevara commences 65 days prior to the annual bathing ceremony of the deities. It is sufficiently a protracted period to fetch the 'daru' which must also be bathed alongwith the old images, 28 Daitas are chosen for the task to fetch the 'daru' including 7 who serve as reserves. Four garlands are removed from the deities, after the mid-day worship, by Pati Mahapatra-the group leader. He keeps the garland (Ajnamala) of Sudarshan to himself and hands over the other three to each leader of the 3 sub-groups representing Badabada (Balabhadra), Majhibada (Subhadra) and Mahaprabhada (Jagannath). These ajnamalas are a prerequisite for any ritual, major or minor, and are offered by Pujapandas in the morning to be taken out after mid-day.

Each 'bada' leader gets a silk sari of 6 meters, from the temple's store as a symbol of royal approval, tied to his head at the Jayavijaya gate. The Accountant (deulakarana), the guardian of rites (Tadhaukarana) and designer (Behasana Khuntia) get silk headgear. White cotton sari given to each of Padiya Karana, four Visvakarmas (divine carpenters) and Lenka (bearer of Sudarshan). The party proceeds to the palace where the king greets them with two plates loaded with coconuts, areca nuts, gold pieces, rice, coloured thread etc. The Rajaguru receives the two plates, gives one to Pati Mahapatra and retains one for himself—symbolic of confluence of tribal-brahminical rites. The royal gesture signifies a wish to ward off evils and a request to succeed in fetching



the divine logs. The party led by Rajguru then retires to the Jagannath Ballav Math (a monastery where Visnuswami, Rai Ramananda and Chaitanya had stayed). Within a couple of days they set out on foot for Kakatapur's Mangala temple in the Prachi Valliy. There they stay at Siddha Deuli Math of Shri Vaishnava faith. The party offers to Mangala through her priests, some Mahaprasad and garment. Afterwards the four 'bada' leaders offer worship and Pati Mahapatra prostrates himself in seclusion before the goddess. He recites 'svapnavati' and Nrsima Mantra at least 108 times Mangala gives him the exact location of the Daru for each, through a dream. Once located, the Daru is worshipped amidst kindling of a divine fire with Vaisnavite Mantra and Nrsimha Mantra. On eve of final rites (Nyasas), the Mantra of Radha is also placed on the Daru, a typical post-Chaitanya influence as evident from the source entitled "Haribhakti bilashantargata chala srimurti pratistha vidhi".

Chopping of the specified Neem tree (*Azadiracta Indica*) commences with blows with gold and silver axes, after three days of worship. Each deity's divine log is typical in having some unique and distinctive feature that have baffled the silviculturists till this day. The tree is free of termites and bird's nest, must be at the centre of the crossing of three paths (like a "T") and bears characteristic texture designs resembling a cymbal or lotus or disc or club or any combination of the four. The virgin tree is constantly guarded by a cobra at its trunk. The sized pieces of divine logs are brought back to Puri⁵ in four specifically constructed carts made of wood (wood of ficus bengalanis, Tamarind indica and Diospyros melanoxylong), covered in rich cloth all the way. The entry to the temple

is via the northern gate where, among others, the 'Devadasis are present to welcome these in.

The images are carved out during the dark fortnight of 'Sudha' Asadha before the Divine Matter is transplanted into them. The fire sacrifice as per Vedic rites is done after which the old images are given a burial in Koili (Kaivalya) Vaikuntha. The new images are purified by Rig. Vedic hymns and make their first public appearance on the new moon day of Asadha, two days before their maiden car-festival.

The entire process is conducted under the watchful eyes of the king, under the volitional impulse of filial obligations to others and as a deified authority himself. King Yayati II was a 'Pratinidhi' of Madhusudan.⁶ Anangabhima III considered himself as 'Raut' and 'Putra' of three deities (Purusottama, Rudra, Durga). There has been little evidence to substantiate to the hypothesis of a few scholars that this as well as the Çherapamhara' tradition are indicative of either the priestly insubordination of royalty or the legitimisation of the King's own 'Seva' without priestly help. Ancient texts are replete with admonitions against any priestly encroachments of royal authority. Taittiriya Brahmana (111.9.14) establishes the king's potential overlordship over the Brahmins. Aitareya Brahmana (VII. 29) admits the authority of the King to expel Brahmins. And Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (1.4.10) speaks of the highest social status of the Kshatriyas and the Brahmins "sits lower than and next to him". There is the instance of Sarmistha reprimanding Devyani (mbh. 1.72.9-10). Since Vedic times, it is an acknowledged fact that the king was not an instruments of



the priest. The royal function in the context of Navakalevara and the car festival is to balance out the tribal origins in the folds of Sanskritization. From Murari Misra's Anargha Raghava (c. 850 A.D) and through multiform cultural-spiritual synthesis during the visits of Adi Sankara, Ramanuja, Nimbarka and Madhvacharya and even 'Geeta Govinda' and 'Prithvirajraso', through the 12 ceremonies (Dvadasayatra) started by Anangabhima II (1216-38) alongwith the golden well, and even the stone pedestal in place of the wooden one at Shri Gundicha Temple, 3 cars after the filling up of 'Banki Muhana' instead of the old necessity of 6 cars, and the embankment over Atharnala as done by Narasimha II – in a word, from mists of antiquity till the end of Prataprudra's reign, there is little evidence to dim the lustre of the transcultural generality of the cult of Jagannath and its institutional set up. Hall's words ring true, organization is the natural state of the organism. It is built into the system from the beginning and the integrity of the organism is not permitted to be lost or destroyed by analysis.⁸

Thus, "Orissa presented a special challenge to the Missionaries since it contained the Temple of Jagannath, the Mecca of Hindustan, the Sebastapol of Hindu idolatry"⁹ From Buchanan's 'Moloch' and Sterling's examples of intended suicides under the chariots to Wellesley's admonitions, evangelisation was a grand flop because "the English people were considerably ignorant of the real character"¹⁰ of the cult of Jagannath.

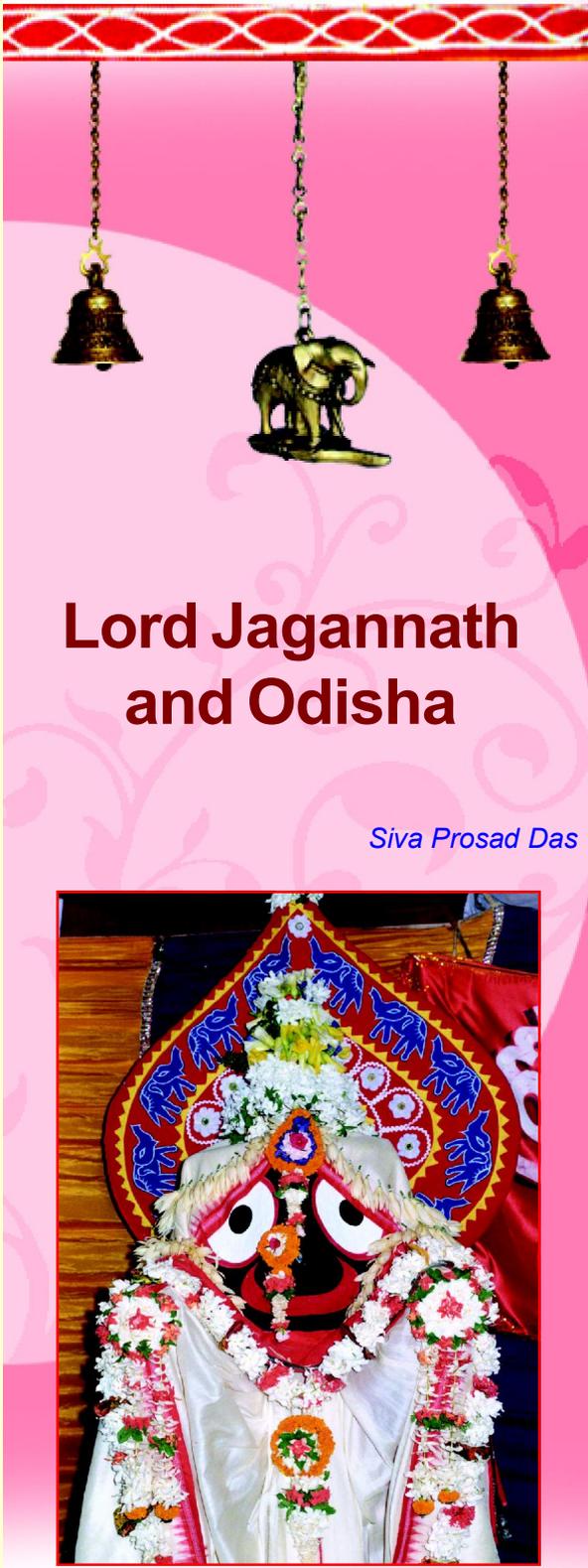
Any attempt to investigate the substance that lies behind the serene facade of the phenomenality would reveal value endowed paradigms of the social economic

and cultural factors and their inter-connections in course of the centuries old processes of nativisation and acculturation. Fostering inter caste relationships and multilateralization of obligations in a disciplined format of division of labour has been a beacon aspect of humanizing the entire system based on egalitarian self esteem. The hierarchy of the Raja of Puri is not a structured power but tinged with paternalistic fervour. In fact, the entire process serves as a source of mutuality and adjustment-inclined inter-personal relationship among the 140 odd categories of servitors of the temple. Every step, here, echoes with the devotional outcries from a timeless past. Indeed, it is a living thing, not for museums to applaud.

References :

1. Bhuvana Prakasa, Quoted by A.Dash, 1969.p.-36
2. Bhagavat Gita, Ch.II. SI.22
3. K.N. Mahapatra, Khurdha Itihasa. 1969.p-158
- (i) Vanajagavidhi, part of Narasimha Vajpeyi's 'Pratistha Pradipa'-vide K.N. Mahapatra. OHRJ.Vol.II,I, 1953, pp.I-16.
- (ii) Calasrimurtipratisthavidhi of Gopal Bhatta's Haribhakti Vilasa, mid -16th century-vide S. K. De 1961.pp.-139-40.
4. N.K. Sahu, History of Orissa, Vol.II, 1956, p.368.
5. Vide Record of Rights
6. 1.0.Vol. IV. P.227
7. S II, Vol, IV, No.1329
8. S.C. Hall, G.Lindsay, 'Theories of Personality,' 1978. New York p.224
9. Peggs. A Brief Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Cuttack, 1858 p.4
10. F. Kaye. Christianity in India. 1854.p. 397

N.B.: Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.



Lord Jagannath and Odisha

Siva Prosad Das

Damaghosh was the Shatwata Chedi King of Vidarbha. His son was Shishupala and Shishupala's son was Saubharaja. Their capital Shuktipura was on the bank of river Shuktimatee close by mount Shuktiman which was one of seven Kulachalas of India.

*Mahendro malayaha sahyaha suktiman gandhamadanaha.
bindhyascha paripatrascha sapteite cha kulachalaha.
(Mahabharata-Bhismaparba-nabama adhyaya-11th Sloka)*

These seven with the Himalayas constitute the Eight Kulachalas of India. A branch of Shisupala Chedi of Vidarbha founded south Koshala and Kalinga.

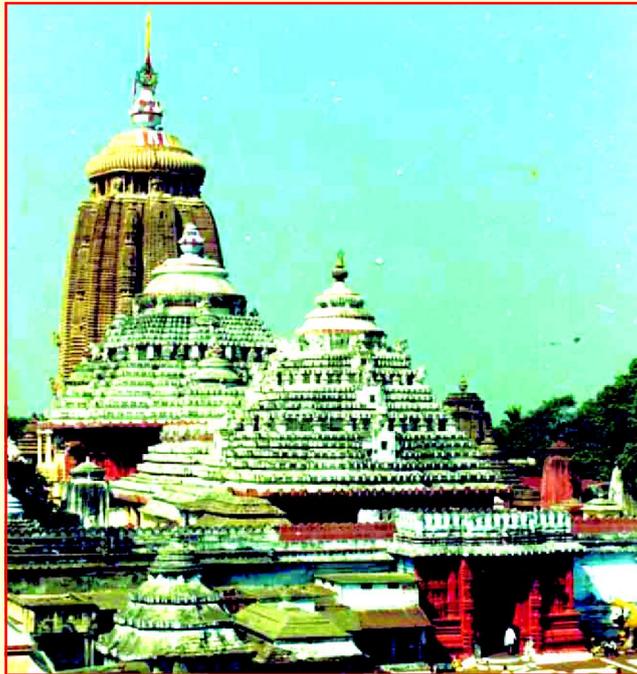
According to the Puranas the Bhojas, the Shatwatas and the Andhakas were offshoots of the Yadava family. Krishna was the Chief of the Shatwatas. The Chedis were an offshoot of the Shatwatas. Hence, it was the descendants of Sri Krishna who founded Kalinga. When Arjuna Pandava burnt the corpse of Krishna, his visceral remnants flowed by the ocean as far as the coast of Kalinga and from this visceral people built the image of Jagannath. The legend suggests that the Shatwata Chedis founded Kalinga.

The Andhra Kings were otherwise called Satabahanas or Shatwatayans. The country of Andhra has been named after the Andhaka branch of the Shatwata family. It is evident that the Andhakas founded Andhra. The Aitareya Brahmana mentions Vidarbha, Andhra and Kalinga together at one place as the two latter countries were colonised a little later than Vidarbha.



The legend of Gaya is in resonance to all above-mentioned facts, which legend tells us that the Shatwata Bhojas founded Anga, Vanga and Kalinga. This Kalinga extended from the Krishna River to the Kapisa and Andhra became a separate country afterwards.

It is undisputable that Andhra, Kalinga and Koshala stretching right from the sea coast and including the hinterland of Vidarbha in days of yore were inhabited by the Savaras. We learn from mythological sources, specially from the Kapila Samhita and from Madala Panji of Puri temple that one Savara King, Viswvasu, was the ruling Savara Chief of the area, where



now Jagannath temple exists. There was then no human dwelling in that area and the Savara chief used to worship a blue stone image (Neelamadhab ?) on the top of a hill (Neelachal or Neela Saila ?). The tract round the hill was full of forests and the coastal land there being low, the tract used to be inundated during flow tide just as we find at Chandipur. Due to storms and cyclones the land emerged from the sea and the hill with its deity became covered up by deposit of sand, where later on people inhabited the place and built a temple there,

and the sea nearby became deep and navigable for being a harbour.

*Nilachalabare bipraha Pura nilasharupadhk.
Idanim tu Jagannatho bhati darablilaya |8|*

(Addhyaya-3 - Kapila Samhita)

It is said in Kapila Samhita that Indradyumna, king of Malawa, came to Purusottam in train of army, people, priests and learned people, versed in the Shastras, and found Rohini Tirtha submerged into the Patal and Vishnu covered under sand (Chapter IV). He erected a temple on the hill top and installed new wooden images therein. Indradyumna had to face a quarrel with Galamadhava, the then ruling Savara Chief as to the

ownership and worship of the deity. But, this wrangling was patched up. Gala gave his daughter in marriage to a Brahmin and the descendants of this couple had the right of service of the deity and became the Daitas and Suaras of the temple.

Whatever may be the veracity of the two legends or anecdotes of the viscera of Shri Krishna and Indradyumna, they indicate events and facts of past history. It was the scions of the Yadava family of Saurashtra and Malwa, who founded settlements in Koshala, Kalinga and



Andhra, and built a town at Purusottama Puri and installed Lord Jagannath in a shrine. We come across the following lines in Chapter II of Kapila Samhita.

*Pura treta yuge brahman sukantinamtaha shrutaha.
Bramhanaha sarbasastrajna naitijnaha pulahatmajaha [6]
mahendra parbate tisthan sa praha pitaram dyujaha.*

* * *

Brajatwam sumana bhutwa phaladam bindhyaparbatam [9]

* * *

Bindhyadamat gamishyami paschat purbasagaram [16]

* * *

Mahanaditi bikhyata gamishyamyat sarbada [32]

The Brahmins were the explorers of the length and breadth of India, and were the forerunners and advisors of the Kshatriya race. According to their discoveries the Kshatriyas in the vicinity of the Vindhyas settled in and occupied Koshala, Kalinga and Andhra.

This Indradyumna might be a mythical King, but the story is there and the facts are there, and we cannot set the Puranas and Samhitas at naught. It can be presumed that he was a forefather of our Kharavela.

During heyday period of Kalinga's oversea trade and overseas empire. Puri harbour played an important role. Nature helped its formation and construction. Sand mass of the bed of the sea rose up to the rock on the coast and there was both a town and a harbour.

The Brihat Samhita lays down that a place that has no daily congregation of ships and where valuable commodities and treasures

like gold, jewels, gems and pearls are not put for sale does not deserve to be a holy place of pilgrimage.

*Athaba samudratire kushalagtaratnapota sambadhe
ghananichulalinajalachara sphitamushabalikrutapante.*

On the sea coast where safely come ships loaded with gems and meet at places of water splashed by sea-animals hiding in the dense cane plants.

(Brihat Samhita)

The Kalinga people, who were commercial - minded, ascribed to ports and harbours virtues of a pilgrimage to attract people's assemblage. There was no holy place which was not also a trade centre. Thus there grew up several trade centres and pilgrimages where world famous pagodas were erected, Jagannath, Konaraka, Viraja (Dhamra) and Bargabhima (Tamluk). Thus the port and harbour of Puri acquired the virtue and privilege of being one of the four greatest pilgrimages or Dhams of India, and as late as the seventh century of the Christian era it could attract the interest and attention of the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang who visits and describes it as Shreekshetra (chilichetala).

In course of long years, nay centuries, the temple, erected by Indradyumna, dwindled, and the present world famous pagoda of Lord Jagannath was constructed by the Cholaganga king, Anangabhima Deva.

The Lord and His temple have exercised untold influence and hold not only on the Oriya people but also on all Indians. At a time when Indian religion was at stake in North India and religious sites like those of Somnath, Mathura



and Varanasi were desecrated by Muhammadan invasion from the North, Orissa gave a new vigour to our religion and religious sites, and holy centres. World famous pagodas of Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konarka were erected, and attracted all people from every nook and corner of entire India. Jagannath Puri became the supreme centre of our religion and culture. The monumental supreme structure of the pagoda of Jagannath made the life of the Oriya people buzzing. People became so earnest and zealous that a hundred-thousand temple had been erected throughout the length and breadth of Orissa, where our Lord Jagannath has been installed. Go to any village in Orissa, one will find the Lord - installed in a temple, if not in a temple at least in many of the households.

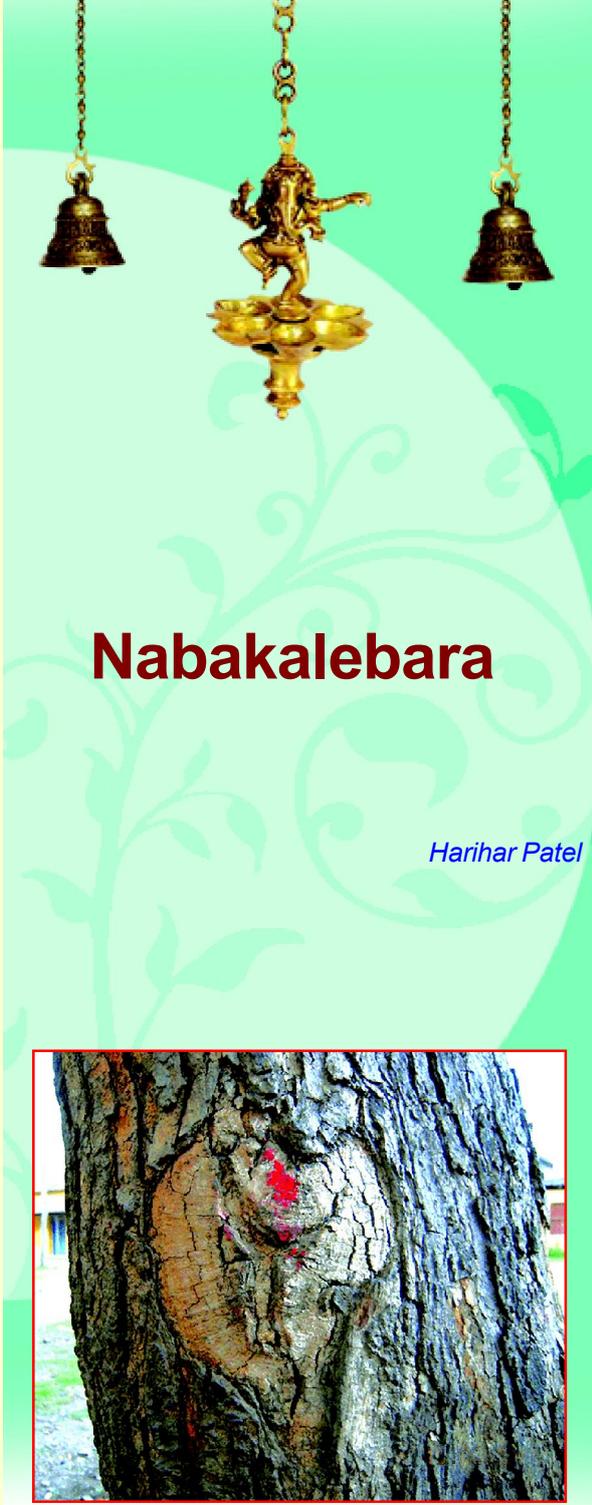
Any Indian has great reverence to see the Lord on the car during the car festival in the month of Asharha. They have a great zeal to come to Puri at the time of the festival. People from all parts of India assemble at Puri to witness the festival, and to have a Darshan of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra, the three deities. They do not mind if on the occasion for strain of journey or other reasons they lose their lives. They believe there is no rebirth if one sees Lord Vamana on the Car, and consider it a pious boon to die at Puri.

Indradyumna installed wooden statues of deities instead of stone statue of Nilamadhava. But wood is liable to perish or deteriorate in time. The trunk of neem tree being worm-proof, that wood is used for this purpose and in about every twelve years, when there cyclically come two lunar months of Asharha, the statues are rebuilt with new neem trunk which is called Nabakalebara of the deities. Our deities will have Nabakalebar this year.

The Mukti Mandap Mahasabha of Pandits, versed in Shastric lore, guide us and decide all social and religious problems of Oriyas. A number of Maths sponsor and encourage education and learning. The Lord has tied up all Oriya people by a knot of fraternity and cultural unity. Everywhere throughout the country one would see a Jagannath temple and the deity in all considerable villages with a group of smaller villages, clustering round the larger ones and celebrating the car festival in a sense of unity. All the Oriyas are dedicated to the Jagannath Dharma.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1969.





Nabakalebara

Harihar Patel



Nabakalebara literally means taking a new body. The soul is immortal but it resides in body which is mortal. In death the soul departs from the body only to take a new body. So death is regarded only as transmigration of soul. This is how the theory of rebirth is explained. God is regarded as Paramatma and the Atma or soul is part and parcel of the Paramatma. There is Abatar of God at times to manifest and to highlight the relationship of the Atma and Paramatma. The Abatar in the world has also to take the shelter of an earthly body. Nabakalebara only indicates that.

The legend says that navel of Lord Krishna did not burn fully during cremation of his dead body and came floating on the sea in the shape of a log of wood. The image of Lord Jagannath was built and navel of the image constituted of this log of wood which came floating. It is said that Adi Sankaracharya came to Puri for Darsan of Lord Jagannath and according to his advice the images of Balabhadra and Subhadra were also put along with that of Lord Jagannath as symbol of Shiva and Sakti respectively. It is also said that the image of Lord Jagannath was built for the first time in a year which had two months of Ashadha. Since then Nabakalebera is being instituted whenever there are two months of Ashadha in any year. The Daita Patris who build the new images on this occasion observe almost all the death obsequies.

Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra appear in Naba Jouban or in new



youth on the first day of Ashadha. On the second day, they move in the chariots and people get glimpse of them in the chariots as Patita Paban or the saviour of the suffering humanity. Whatever may be the legend regarding Nabakalebar, we should think more about the philosophy behind it, the significance of it. Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra symbolise so many ideas and conceptions. It is not necessary to discuss about those in details. In brief, we ought to realise that Nabakalebara is an occasion to initiate ourselves to new aspirations, new consciousness and new hopes.

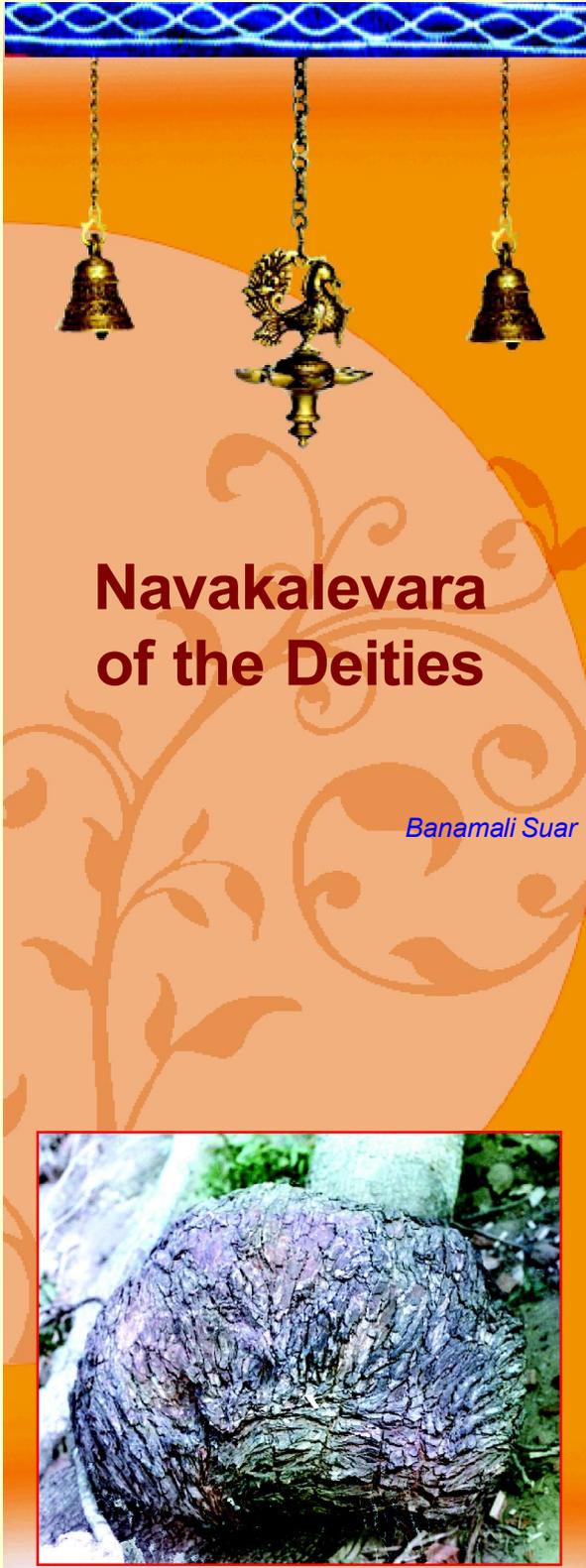
Ashadha symbolises everything earthliness. There is an initiation of all sorts of desires, longings and activities or, to tell in brief, initiation of earthly pursuits during this month. With the advent of rains the peasants initiate themselves to cultivation in right earnest during the month. In the words of Kalidas, Ashadha also brings in intense feelings and emotions in the heart of the lovers. The barren and rude looking earth starts appearing green which is the symbol of earthly beauty during this month.

Indian Philosophy, Indian culture has not discarded the body. May be many people

have shown great examples of Tapa and austerity- almost withdrawal from the world in the past and we adore them today. But on the whole, Indian culture speaks about a life in which body has all importance and significance. That is why it is said “Sarira Madyam, Khalu Dharma Sadhanam” or look after the body first and then religious pursuits, or perhaps ‘the body first for religious pursuits.’ It has been said time and again that in our life it should be our goal to achieve Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Bhagabad Gita amply speaks about such a life to be lived. Nabakalebara also imparts the same message. The body of the image is changed but the same navel which symbolises soul is being inserted in the image from the very beginning. Every birth is to be regarded as a new pace on the path of evolution. So Nabakalebara ought to infuse in us inspiration, strength and fortitude to go ahead to create a higher moral life in the process of evolution. Let the society also advance on the same path, the path of evolution. This is what we pray before Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1969.





During Navakalevara i.e. Maha Anabasar many secret rites and rituals are performed. Maintaining strict secrecy as prescribed by Shastras, customs and usages, a short history of facts are narrated below.

The Navakalevara of the deities, Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Sri Subhadra and Sri Sudarsan is a special and unique custom and function in whole of the religious world. This year 1996 marks this special occasion. Generally Navakalevara comes when there are two months of Asadha. This intercalary month i.e. *mala* month of Asadha is calculated to be the year of Navakalevara according to the prescribed procedure of astronomy. This year 1st June is fixed to be Snana Jatra that is bathing ceremony. This day is the full moon day of *jyestha* month. Car festival of the new deities commences on 17th July. The Maha Anasar days are 45 days instead of 15 days of Anasar. According to the customs and usages the Navakalevara proceeding i.e. the first step for searching out the Darus (Neem trees) starts from the auspicious day following Ram Navami. This year this customary rites and rituals start on 29th March, 1996. On that day after lunch (Madhyahna Dhupa) Pati Mahapatra Sevayat goes to Ratna Simhasan and brings four garlands from four deities. These garlands are treated to be an express order of the deities (Ajnamala).

The Pati Mahapatra Sevayat then gives three garlands to the heads of respective Daitas of respective deities except Sri



Sudarsan. The garland of Sudarsan is carried by Pati Mohapatra himself. Then the Sevayat Bhitarchhu Mohapatra ties Sarees on the heads of all the Daitas and then all the Daitas receive Khanduas (clothes). This function is done near Kalahat door inside the temple. This function implies a kind of readiness and starting for Banajatra. At this time Deula Karan and Chadhau Karan after receiving Khanduas (clothes), Patajoshi Mohapatra then ties new clothes, i.e. Boirani clothes on the heads of Lenka Sevayat and four Biswakarma Sevayats (carpenters). This function starts near Jaya Bijaya door. At this time according to custom and tradition the traditional trumpet made out of three pieces of silver pipe is played and the traditional tom tom drum (Telingi drum) is also played. The Lenka Sevayat holds a silver wheel of the deity near Bhattar Katha. Another Sevayat holds a traditional royal umbrella. Then the procession starts from that place and the procession goes through 7 steps (Sata Pahacha) via Ananda Bazar and comes to the Lion's Gate. From Lion's Gate a ground procession starts to the king's palace where king and his Rajguru welcome the procession and the king gives sun-dried rice and a betel nut to one Biswabasu Sevayat through his Rajaguru. From the palace the procession goes to Jagannath Ballav Math where the party rests. On the next day the journey starts to Kakatpur Mangala deity. There the procession

is welcomed and certain rites and rituals are observed. The Goddess Mangala takes a grand bath with 108 pots of water. She is offered dresses and *bhogas* and Homa is performed there. After completion of this function the Daitas move to different parts in batches after obtaining permission of the Goddess. The following are signs and environments for selecting the Darus. The signs are (1) the Neem tree must be old and there must be a river or tank near it (2) there



must be a hermitage nearby (3) there must be a cremation ground near it (4) the tree must have three branches and must not be very tall (5) there must be an ant hill near it (6) there must not be any bird's nest on it (7) there must be living the cobra nearby (8) there must not be any parasite and the most important signs are Chakra (wheel), Sankha (conch), Gada (mace) and Padma (lotus) on trees for selection of the four Darus.

After location of Darus, according to the customs Banajag i.e. Homa is performed



and the said trees are worshipped. Pati Mohapatra touches the Daru trees with golden axe and Biswabasu touches with silver axe. Then four Biswakarmas start cutting of the Darus in order of preference. The general public and devotees are strictly prohibited under Shastras to see the cutting. Sankha Purana says, "Swarupam ba Arupam ba Napasyet Chhedan Abadhi." Then all the Darus are in order of preference i.e. Sri Sudarsan Daru, Sri Balabhadra Daru, Sri Subhadra Daru and at last Sri Jagannath Daru are carried on newly constructed bullock carts having four wheels. The Darus are kept in newly constructed Daru room in Koili Baikuntha. The Darus enter the temple through the northern gate of the temple. The bringing of Darus must be completed before Snana Yatra. On Snana Yatra the old deities go to Snana Mandapa for usual bathing ceremony and on that day all the preparations start for making new body. For that inside Koili Baikuntha for four days from the day of Snana Purnima Yajna Bedi (altar for Homa), Nyasa room, Mandap for Darus and Purna Kumbhas are constructed. Then Nrusingha is brought to the newly constructed Daru rooms. Viswvasu invites Brahmins in prescribed manner and then starts Homa for 11 days and construction of Darus also starts from that day and after completion of the inner shape of the deities the constructed Darus are taken on a Rath to circumambulate 7 rounds in Bhattar Bedha and there after the Darus are brought back to Koili Baikuntha. On each day of Homa 2100 times offering of ghee with Vedic Hymns are offered. On the last day the king gives the last offering and completes the Homa. Thus after completion of all customary functions

the Nrusingha deity is taken back to its own shrine and Darus are taken on *pahandi* method to Anabasara room where the old deities by the time used to have completed 15 days Anabasar. Then at night the change of Brahmas takes place. The Brahmas are brought out in complete darkness by opening the small rooms made inside the old deities. After due worship of the Brahmas they are kept in the new bodies respectively with fresh Tulsi, Sandal Paste and certain white scented flowers and there the Brahma Kabati, i.e. the small door for Brahmas are closed. The old bodies are carried and buried in Koili Baikuntha (cremation ground of Lord Jagannath). During construction of inner shape of Darus in previous 11 days, life is ordained in the Darus. There all Darus daily wear *pata* clothes, use sandal paste, musk and camphor and breakfast lunch and dinner are offered.

After the cremation ceremony of the deities in Koili Baikuntha, the 12 horses, 3 Sarathis (drivers of Rathas) and 36 wooden side-deities of Rathas are also buried in some other place in Koili Baikuntha. After change of Brahmas from old deities to new Darus, further construction of the bodies of the deities starts. All the above rituals are performed secretly. The writer plays a vital service during this period of Maha Anabasar. The Anabasar room is situated in between Kalahat door and Bhattar Katha. At Bhattar Katha temporary shed walls with pieces of bamboos are constructed and covered. Out side Bhattar Katha 10 deities called Dasa Avatar are worshipped and during the period of Anabasar and Maha Anabasar rice Mahaprasad is offered to these 10 deities. During this period Daru Brahmas are offered

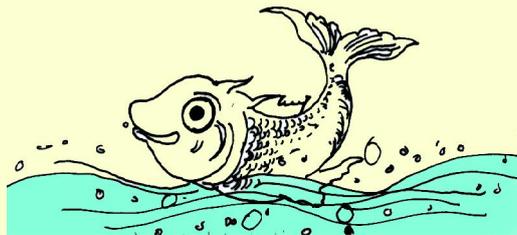


sweet fruits such as ripe jackfruit and ripe mangoes and sweet water mixed with milk cream. The Anasar room has a wide *altar* about 6 inches high and it is permanent. The Darus day by day take the form of original deities. To bring the Darus to the complete shape many materials are used. The process of making of the bodies quite resembles the human body. Human body comprises bones, veins and arteries, flesh and blood and skin. While making the bodies of the deities this theory and conception is followed. So layers after layers with Pata clothes and ropes with a paste made out of the mixture of water, til oil and *sal* resin powder are given. The lower parts of the deities are round-shaped. It is called Sripayar (lotus feet). This round shaped part is designed to be earth which is composed of many layers and having longitudes and latitudes. Quite similar to this, the Sripayar of the deities is constructed with Pata clothes and Pata ropes. Lastly red coloured clothes with certain white pastes made of wheat flour is covered on the upper part and thereafter again with white clothes on the 13th day after full moon. This ritual is called Khali Lagi. Previous to it there occurs Osualagi. During this period the deities are offered 84 bits of medicine prepared out of 10 medicinal herbs. The Osuas and Khalis are prepared and worshipped and then applied. The above process has further secrecy and that has not been disclosed as strictly prohibited by Shastras. Thereafter the colour application

ceremony starts. The conch shell, Haritala and Hingula are used in the colour of the deities. Thereafter first public Darshan, i.e. Naba Jauvan Darshan of the deities starts. On the day of car festival the deities are brought to respective Rathas in *pahandi* procession. White, yellow, red and black colours are applied to the deities. During Maha Anabasar the following categories of Sevayats such as Daitas, Sudu Suaras (writer's family), Pati Mahapatra, Bhattarchhu Mohapatra, Lenka, Biswakarma, Deula Karan, Tadau Karan, Charuhata, Patra Hota, Acharya take part in their respective services.

The writer has narrated a short history beginning from the starting of Bana Yatra to completion and Darshan of the new deities. It is remarkable that the Daitas and the writer's family and Dutta Mohapatra Sevayats first observe purification ceremony one day before Snana Yatra and second Suddhi Kriya after the change of Brahma. On the 13th day after change of Brahma a grand feast of Mahaprasad is arranged. This is called Teroi Bhoga. Near about 25000 devotees, invitees and Sevayats join together in the grand feast. This is unique in the religious world. Nowhere such a close relation between the deities and Sevayats and devotees is found in any society in the religious world.

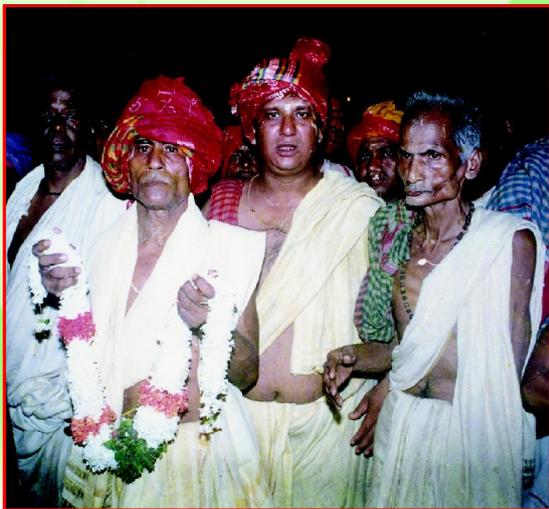
N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.





Navakalevara Ceremony of Lord Jagannath

Dr. Bidyut Lata Ray



The great Navakalevara festival of Lord Jagannath does not occur in every year. It comes just once in every twelve or nineteen years. New images of the four deities Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana are made on this occasion and a lot of rituals are performed to install the images on Ratna Simhasana.

Navakalevara is the unique ceremony of the 'Birth' and the 'Death' of the 'Lord of the world'. The word 'Navakalevara' means the new embodiment, so is called the ceremony which goes for the periodical renewal of the wooden images in the Jagannath temple. This ceremony is unique in many respects in the field of Hindu religious worship. It involves a total replacement of the four worshippable images through the new ones after an interval of 19 years or sometimes even after 12 years. The old statues are then discarded and buried underground.

The main principle adopted to fix the year of renewal is to find whether that year has two Asadhas. This other Asadha is an extra month which is added to the lunar calendar of the Hindus after every 32 months and 16 days in order to make up for the deficiency of a lunar month (29.5 days) against a solar month (30.44 days), i.e., of 0.94 days every month. The extra Asadha month is known as 'Purusottama Masa' all over India. It is sometimes also called as Adhimasa, whereas the common people term it 'Malamasa'.

The Daitas play a very important role in the ceremony of Navakalevara. They are believed to be the descendants of the Savara Visvvasu, who, according to the legend of the foundation of the Jagannatha Temple,



worshipped Jagannatha (in the Nilamadhava form) in a forest before Vidyapati, the Brahmin Minister of the king Indradyumna of Malwa could find Him out with the help of this Savara. According to some popular versions of the legend, the Savara did this favour to Vidyapati only at the request of his daughter Lalita who had been deeply in love with this Brahmin from Malwa. The off-springs of Lalita and Vidyapati are known as (Vidya) Pati Mahapatras. They also discharge important functions in the temple. Besides the Daitas and Pati Mahapatras, the Brahmin priests, especially the Rajaguru of the Gajapati king of Puri have the important functionaries in the ceremony of Navakalevara. They take the charge of performing the forest sacrifice and the consecration of the images.

Setting out in search of Daru

A sacred journey for finding out the Daru (wood) for the deities commences on the tenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Chaitra. The expedition starts by the orders of the Gajapati King of Puri. The temple servants who constitute the nucleus of the party are the Daitas, the Pati Mahapatra, the three Karanas (Deula Karana, Tadau Karan and Padiya Karana), four Carpenters and Lenka. The rest of the party consists of the Brahmins required for performing the fire sacrifices as well as the persons like police constables and the like for discharging various worldly functions. The other temple servants who take part in the function are Bhitraccha Mahapatra, Mekapa, Rajaguru and the Beharana Khuntia.

To locate and fetch the four Darus, 28 Daitas are selected, 21 of whom go to the forest whereas 7 stay back in Puri as a sort of 'reserve force' to be called to the forest if and

when required. After the mid-day 'Dhupa', the Mahapatras take down the four garlands (Ajnamalas) from the deities and distributes the three garlands of Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannatha to the three leaders of the group. The Ajnamala of Lord Jagannatha indicates the deity's permission for the expedition. Then the Daitas are offered silken Sadhis by Bhitraccha Mahapatra. The chiefs are presented the silken cloth of 6 meters length. Whereas, others receive the same cloth of only 2 meters length. Another temple servant called Mekapa then applied sandal paste and red powder, etc. on the forehead of all the Daitas to mark the auspicious beginning of the yatra in search of the Darus. The store keeper (Bhitraccha Mahapatra) then comes to the 'Jayavijaya' gate and binds a full length of the silken sadhi on the forehead of the Deula Karana, Tadhau Karana and the Beherana Khuntia.

The whole party including the four carpenters, three Karanas, twenty one Daitas, the Pati Mahapatra, the Lenka, the Brahmins and the administrative authorities proceed to the palace of the King of Puri. The party moves with the accompaniment of the music of conches, trumpets, drums and gongs, etc. The King greets the party with the help of his Rajaguru.

Thereafter, the party together with the Rajguru leave for Jagannatha Ballabha Matha, from where they resume their expedition to Kakatpur, a place situated on the bank of the river Prachi. This place is famous for the Goddess Mangala. There is a dense forest containing mostly Nima trees at a distance of nearly 6 kms from the town of Kakatpur. The



Nima trees are used in the construction of the images of the deities– Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana.

Characteristic features of the four Nima trees :

The Nima tree which is sought after has some special attributes, like the 'Apauruseya Tree' (which was discovered floating on the sea). By the different characteristic features of the Darus, they are distinguished from each other and from the other common trees. A complete list of all these features¹ is given below :

Characteristics of Daru

	Jagannatha	Balabhadra	Subhadra	Sudarsan
Colour	Dark	White	Yellowish	Reddish
Branches	Four	Seven	Five	Three
Mark	Sankha & Cakra	Plough & Pestle	Lotus flower with five petals	Chakra

Apart from the above list, the tree of Lord Jagannath bears some specific features :

- The trunk must be straight, pleasant to look at and should have a height of 7 or 12 cubits.
- The tree should stand near a river or a pond or on a crossing of three ways or else be surrounded by three mountains.
- There should be a cremation ground near the tree.
- There should be a temple dedicated to Siva in the neighbourhood of the tree.
- There should be some hermitage not too far off from the tree.

(f) The tree should be free from parasite plants and creepers.

(g) There should not be the nests of birds on the tree - "no bird had ever perched over the tree."

(h) The tree must not have been struck by lightning nor partially broken before by storm, etc.

(i) There should be an ant hill (Valmika) near the tree.

(j) There should be at least a few snake holes at the roots of the tree or one could spot a few snakes creeping around in its vicinity.

(k) The tree should not stand alone but be surrounded preferably with the trees of Varuna, Sahada and Bilva. They should be away from a human settlement, but should not stand in a swamp surrounded by marsh or mud.

Similarly, another remarkable feature of the tree of Balabhadra is that the upper branches and twigs etc. of the tree should form a canopy looking like the hood of a cobra.

In the selection of the trees, the tree for the deity Sudarsana is spotted first which is followed by the tree of Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannatha in order. The same order is maintained in bringing the Darus to the Temple and also for the ceremony of changing the life-substance of the Deities. The search of the Darus may last for a couple of weeks when such trees are discovered, the "Vanayaga" ceremony is performed.

Rituals performed during Vanayaga

The Sudarsana Cakra brought by the Lenka from the Temple of Jagannath is put up



near the roots of the tree immediately after spotting it. This is done toward off the evil. The bushes, shrubs and thorns surroundig the tree are cleared off. The place is swept, be sprinkled with water and possibly smeared with clay or cowdung, etc.

The first ritual observed is the purification of Acharya. The Brahmins and the Acharyas make themselves ritually pure by taking a bath etc. and perform a small fire sacrifice under the tree in which 108 oblations of clarified butter are poured in the 'Vaisnava' fire with the *anustubha-mantra* of Nrsimha. The Purusottama Mahatmyam of the Skanda Purana includes descriptions on the religious efficacy of this Mantra.²

The ritual bath of the tree is completed by sprinkling it with sacrificial water. The tree is then applied with sandal paste and vermilion etc. Flowers are offered to it. A piece of new cloth is then wrapped round the tree. Finally, the Pati Mahapatra place on it, the *ajnamala* of the deity (brought from the main temple) of whom it is going to assume the form. Thereafter, Yajna is performed in the sacrificial pavilion erected on the western side of the tree.

The next important rite is that of *ankuraropana* or the sowing of some varieties of seeds for germination. the seeds of the plants selected for sowing are barley (yava), paddy (sali), wheat (Godhuma), Sesamum (tila), white mustard (sarsapa), green beans (mudga), black beans (masa) and black wild rice (syamaka). The seeds are washed with luke-warm water to the utterance of the vijamantra 'vam'. Some drops of the holy water of the Ganges are sprinkled on the seeds for purification. Finally, the seeds are sown in

rectangular bed (in East-West direction) dug in the earth.

During the Vanayaga ceremony, some worships are offered to Varuna and Agni. A *bali* is also offered to the sacrificial fire. On the morning of the third day of the function, the *purnahuti* takes place and the *homa*-ritual is finished. The tree axes made of gold, silver and iron which are kept in the North-West corner of the *yajnasala* are then worshipped with the Astra-Mantra.

At the end of the Vanayaga, the Vidyapati or Pati Mahapatra touches the tree with the golden axe and then the carpenters begin to cut the tree into logs. All the Brahmins present there chant the Vedic hymns especially the *Visnusukta*³ at this time. After being cut, the tree should fall only in the eastern, northern or the north-eastern direction. Falling in other directions is considered to be inauspicious.⁴ Only the trunk of the tree is required for fashioning the images. A log of about 2.5 metres in length is cut out from the tree trunk and the rest of the tree is buried underground at that very spot. The Daru is disbarred and given a quadrangular shape.⁵ It is then wrapped up in silken clothes.

Transportations of the Daru to the Temple

The logs are transported to Puri by the carts made of the wood of a *kendu* tree. The wheels of the cart are made of a *Vata* tree whereas the axle is made of a tamarind tree. Vedic hymns are chanted while lifting and placing the Daru on the cart. The Daru is covered with coloured cloth pieces and tied up firmly with the cart in order to avoid the risk of falling down from it. These carts are drawn by the people of the localities through which it passes on its way to Puri.



On reaching Puri, the logs are, for sometime, kept at Nrsimha Temple of Gundicha house, and then at Alam Chandi, where from they are carried in a procession to 'Daru-ghara' of Koili Vaikuntha. Thus, the logs are finally passed through the northern gates to be finally deposited in the temple compound.⁶

Rites observed in the temple

The logs (Darus) are bathed together with the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana on the occasion of the 'Snana Purnima'. After the bathing ceremony of the deities on the fullmoon day, the temple is closed for public. In a year with double Asadha, the temple remains closed for one and a half month. During this period of six weeks, the following phases of work are performed :

1. The carving of the wooden form of the images.
2. The consecration of the images.
3. The burial of the images and the purificatory rites of the Daitas.
4. Giving the final form of the wooden images and their painting etc.

The carving of the wooden form of the images

After taking ritual bath, the Darus are brought to Nirmana-Mandapa where the task of carving is begun by the carpenters (Maharanas) all of whom belong to the class of Daitas.⁷ The king of Puri offers silken turbans (or *Sadhis*) to these carpenters on the first day of the dark half of Asadha. This offering symbolises the permission of the king to the carpenters to proceed with their work.

The work of carving starts on the second day and simultaneously with it, the ceremony of Ankuraropana is initiated for the consecration of the Nyasadaru by Brahmins. Nobody is allowed to see the images in their making except the Daitas and the Pati Mahapatras. The Purusottama Mahatmyam of Skanda Purana⁸ as well as the Niladri Mahodayam⁹ strictly forbid any one else to see the fashioning of the images or even to hear the sound. Tumultuous noise is, therefore produced with several musical instruments outside the Nirmana Mandapa in order to suppress and subdue the sound of the cutting and chopping, etc. of the wood going on inside the closed doors. After the construction of the wooden structures of the deities, the Brahmapadartha (soul of the image) is replaced by the concerned Daitas and the Pati Mahapatras. This mysterious object is placed in a cavity which is cube in its form. K.C.Mishra opines that the length, breadth and depth of this cavity amounts to 12 Yavas each.¹⁰

The consecration of the images

During the construction of the images, the Brahmin priests of the temple, the Rajaguru and some other Vedic scholars undertake the ceremony of consecration (Pratistha). This ceremony lasts for two weeks. The piece of wood that the Brahmin priests consecrate is known as Nyasa-Daru. At the end of the ceremony, the Nyasa-Daru is cut into four pieces which serve as the lids to cover the cavity after the Brahmapadartha has been inserted into it.

The consecration ceremony takes place in the so-called Pratistha-Mandapa which is erected towards the east of the Nirmana Mandapa on the first day of the Pratistha



Ceremony, several Mandalas are drawn at the different places of the Mandapa of which the Chakrabja - Sarvatobhadra and Vastu - Mandalas are more important. The Acharya wears white cloths and offers worships to Nrsimha, Ganesa, the Dikpalas, Bhairavas, Nagas, etc. He also offers *bali* to the Dikpalas and the Bhutas outside the Mandapa. Then, the rite of Ankuraropana is instituted. During the ceremony, the other deities worshipped are Vasudeva, Lakshmi-Narayana and Nrsimha.

On the sixth day, the Nyasadaru is brought into the Pratistha Mandapa. Ritual bath (abhiseka) is given to the Daru while bathing the Daru, the Brahmins recite the Purusasukta for Jagannath, the Rudradhyaya or the Nilasukta for Balabhadra and the Srisukta for Subhadra. After Abhisek, the Daru is worshipped in sixteen upacharas.

The next day, the Acharya performs (avarana puja) and worships the deities belonging to the *chakrabjamandala*. Then, the letters, syllables, words, word-groups and the four metrical feet of the Anustubha - Nrsimha - Mantraraja of Nrsimha are placed on the different parts of the 'body' of the Nyasadaru.¹¹ The Mantraraja-Nrsimha-Nyasa is followed by the own Nyasas of the Triad of Jagannatha, i.e. for Jagannatha the Kesavadi-Nyasa, for Balabhadra the Saivite Srikanthadi-Nyasa and for Subhadra the Kala-Nyasa is performed. In this way, a series of Nyasas numbering about thirty are followed. Thus, the Daru gets life through the Nyasas and the Pranapratistha Mantra is uttered one hundred times.

At the end of Pratistha Ceremony, the fire sacrifice is usually conducted when Nyasadaru is transferred to the Pratistha

Mandapa, the fire is kindled in the Vedi inside the Mandapa in the prescribed manner with Vedic Mantras. The deity Nrsimha is worshipped again on the 11th day 1008 *ahutis* are dropped with the Vasudeva Mantra. On the 12th day the same number of *ahutis* with the 18 syllabic Gopala Mantra and on the 13th day the same number with the monosyllabic Bhubanesvari Mantra as well as with the 6-syllabic Sudarsan Mantra. On the 14th day, *ahutis* are offered to the deities Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Siva, Kali, Vimala and Durga, etc.

In the night of the 14th, the Nyasa Daru is placed in a small cart and is taken around the main temple (in the inner precincts) seven times. Thus, the Daru is cut into four pieces to represent the Brahmapadartha of the deities. The newly fashioned images are taken around the temple thrice on the next day in the night one by one (in the order : Sudarsana, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath). The change of the life-substance is effected by the Daitas, only that of Jagannatha is accomplished by the Pati Mahapatra himself. During the transfer of the Brahmapadartha, the Daita does not see or feel it, since his eyes are blind-folded and the hands are wrapped up to elbows. The work is done in the dead of night and no body is also allowed to see it.

The burial of the images

The old *murti* is considered to be dead after the 'life-substance' is taken out of it. The old wooden images are then carried to Koili Vaikuntha (Kaivalya Vaikuntha) where the images are buried. Koili Vaikuntha serves as the graveyard for the old deities and the Daitas are supposed to be the kinsmen of Lord Jagannatha. They mourn the ritualistic death



of the deities. The Lepa Samskara of the Lord is therefore, assigned to them only.¹²

The final form of the wooden images

The wooden structure of the statues is considered simply to be the skeleton of the images. In the beginning of the dark fortnight of the extra Asadha, these images are entrusted to the care of the temple servants known as Datta Mahapatras. They apply on them different substances and wrap them up with several cloth stripes.

The Niladri Mahodayam gives a detailed description of the annual repairs on the statues of the deities. The wooden structure is identified with the bones, to represent the marrow inside the bone, perfumed oil is first rubbed on the wooden structure. Stripes of the coloured "Netra Pata" are wrapped around on every limb of the statue which represent of vein and the blood flowing into them. The thick paste of camphor, musk and sandal paste applied on the structure symbolises the flesh of the images. Strong stripes of cotton cloth are then wrapped up to represent the skin of the statue. The author of the *Niladri Mahodayam* interprets the starch applied from above to strengthen the cloth pieces with the corporal hair. The Purusottama Mahatmyam of the Skanda Purana also makes reference to the annual repair of the statues and mentions the use of pata (cloth), niryasa (resin or gum of trees) and *Valkala* for repairing.¹³ However, *Valkala* (thin bark of the trees) is not used now-a-days.

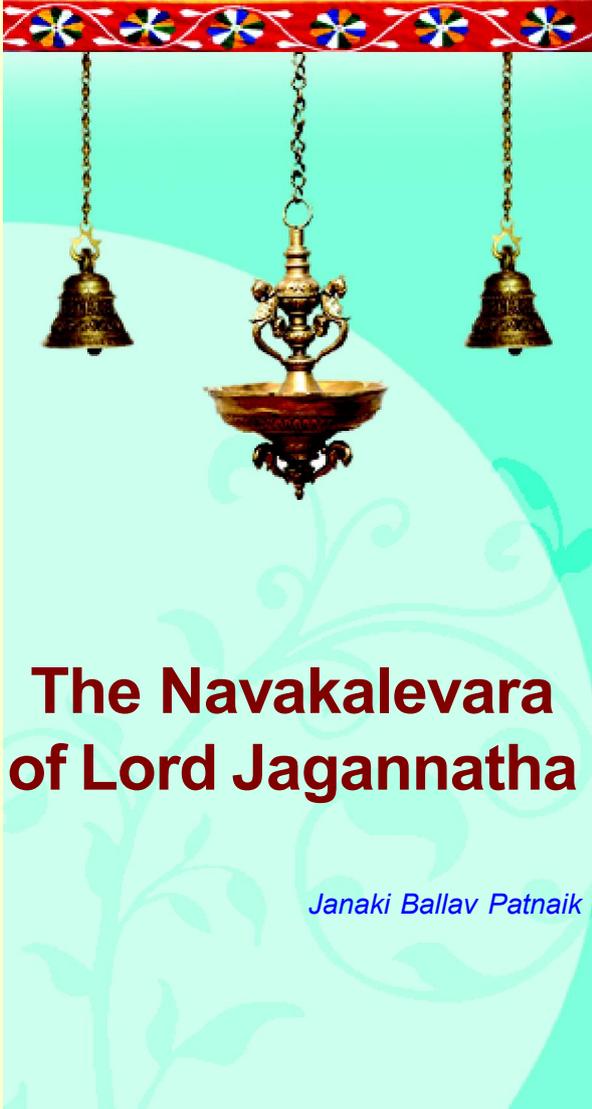
The statues achieve their final shape and form after being painted by the Chitrakaras (chitrakaras or painters) with indigenous colours. The final touch in painting is given by

the Brahmin priests of the Temple who paint the pupils of the eyes of the Deities. Then, the deities take bath with scented water which is followed by the 'Netrotsava'. This function has purificatory character. The ceremony of Navakalevara comes to an end after the last act of the purification of the new images is performed.

References :

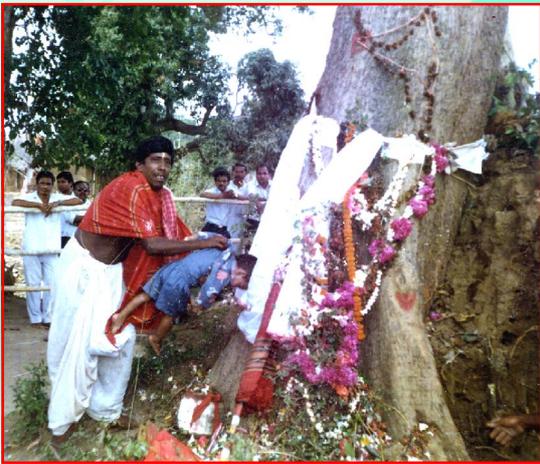
1. Brddha Harita Smrti, ch.VI, Sl.s.1-6.
2. Niladri Mahodayam, Ch.6/14, 16-18, 25, 32.
3. Purusottam Mahatmyam, 45/2 Yatra Dvadasa Punya Ya uddista Bhagavat Priya.
4. Yatra Bhagavat, p.1 (b)-p.13(b), p.2(a) b(b).
5. Ibid Ch.24, p.65(b)
6. Padma Purana, Guru Mandal, p.1052
Kriya Yoga-Khanda, Ch.18, Sl.s.31-53
Sasthamuttara Khanda, Ch.65, Sl.s.8, 15.
Also Padma Purana, 4th part, p.221.
7. Cult of Jagannath and Regional Traditions of Orissa, p.223 and fn.1
8. This other Asadha is an extra month which is added to the Lunar Calendar of the Hindus after every 32 months and 16 days in order to make up for the deficiency of a Lunar month (29.5 days) against a solar month (30.44 days) i.e. of 0.94 day every month.
9. Niladri Mahodayam 6/122 a ltham Dvadasa-yatra me pavitrah Sar-Vakamadali.
10. Niladri Mahodayam, 6/99-120
11. Niladri Mahodayam, 6/99(b), Avatirnah Svayam Jyesthyam tatra Janmadinam Mama.
12. Niladri Mahodayam, 6/100 Talpaurname dine bhupa Snamam me Karyamadarat, Mahasana Vidhan bhaktya Yathavidhi Mahotsavaih.
13. Records of Rights prepared under the Puri Sri Jagannatha Temple Administration, pt.11, p.57.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.



The Navakalevara of Lord Jagannatha

Janaki Ballav Patnaik



In the *Srimad Bhagavatgita*, Bhagavan Srikrishna has explained to Arjuna regarding the body and the soul - the soul is eternal, whereas the body is transient. When the body becomes old, the soul discards it and takes on a new body, which is similar to discarding an old cloth to take a new one.

वासंस्मि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा-
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

Sri Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan do change their images in a similar fashion. The change of Vighrahas is known as 'Navakalevara'. In none of the temples in India where idol worship is performed does exist such a system of renewal of the images. Of course, the system of worshipping wooden idols is rare.

The human body after attaining lustre in youth gets gradually deteriorated on account of old age and finally it succumbs to death. Thereafter, the *Jiva* accepts a new body to take a rebirth. The Navakalevara proclaims this truth. According to the Gita :

देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तन्न न मुह्यति ॥

There is an old story about the wooden images of Sri Jagannatha. After Srikrishna left His mortal body being shot at the arrow of Jara Sabar, His body was consigned to fire. While the body was reduced to ashes, the navel portion remained unburnt. It was immersed in and subsequently changed its course to reach



the Puri coast of the eastern sea in the form of a piece of wood. King Indradyumna (under a divine command) retrieved this log of wood to construct the idol of Lord Vishnu.

Before constructing the idols, Viswakarma cautioned the king not to open the door before the expiry of twenty-one days during which he would be constructing the idols inside a closed room. But after twelve days, when the king and the queen didn't hear any sound of the construction work, they grew impatient, broke open the door and entered the room. They saw to their utter dismay that the maker of the idols had disappeared leaving behind the half-made idols. These idols had no feet, no ears and hands were incomplete too.

अपाणिपादो जवनो ग्रहीता
पश्यत्यचक्षुः स शृणोऽत्यकर्णाः ।
स वेत्ति वेद्यं न च तस्यास्ति वेत्ता
तमाहुरभ्यां पुरुषं महान्तम् ॥

But He is all- pervading and all-knowing. The icon of Lord Jagannatha has a special appeal to the devotees over ages which has made them spellbound. They still wonder at the beauty and grace of this unique image. Although Sri Jagannatha has been conceived as the image of Lord Vishnu, the Bauddhas, the Jainas, the Saivas, the Saktas, the Ganapatyas and the Sauras have all accepted Him as their own presiding deity. In such manner Sri Jagannatha has been prayed in the following verse :

यं शैवाः समुपासते शिव इति ब्रह्मेति वेदान्तिनो
बौद्धा बुद्ध इति प्रमाणपटवः कर्तेति नैयायिकाः ।
अर्हन्नित्यथ जैनशासनरताः कर्मेति मीमांसकाः
सोऽयं यो विदधातु वाञ्छितफलं त्रैलोक्यनाथो हरिः ॥

At the *Simhadwar* the *Patitapavana murti* was installed to facilitate the daily Darshan of Sri Ramachandra Dev, the Gajapati king of Puri who was converted to Islam. Santh Kavir came to the temple at Puri and sang his Bhajan :

ठाकुर ! भले विराजो जी
ओडिशा जगन्नाथ पुरी में ।

Salbeg in his innumerable Bhajans has also sung the glory of Sri Jagannatha.

Normally people believe that the Navakalevara occurs in every twelve years. But according to historical records the Navakalevara has never been held at an interval of twelve years in the past. It is prescribed that the Navakalevara shall be held when two lunar *asadha* months conjoin in a year. Accordingly, the Navakalevara festivals were celebrated in the past which fell only at an interval of nineteen years.

There are two exceptions. In 1893 there fell two *asadha* months where the idols of Lord Jagannatha were not changed. Although the wooden images existed, the clothes on the upper portion were only changed which could be called a partial Navakalevara. The queen of Puri didn't allow the Navakalevara to be celebrated on the plea of "cumbersome process and heavy expenses." Of course, the Car Festival was held with much pomp and grandeur that year as it fell during the



Navakalevara. The second incident relates to the year 1977. The Navakalevara of Sri Jagannatha was held under a piquant situation with utter discontentment. A judicial inquiry was ordered to probe into it. Historical records show that there were huge congregations at the time of Navakalevara in the past. According to a description in 'Utkal Deepika' about 2 lakh people had congregated at Puri during the Navakalevara of 1893, a century ago. The Navajauvan Darshan was not permitted in 1893. Deepika reported, "The Pandas and Sevakas could not muster courage to safely provide the Darshan to such a huge congregation apprehending massive turn out of pilgrims. They were also reminded of the casualties during the preceding Govinda Dwadasi. Therefore, the officials acted judiciously by shutting the doors of the temple to the pilgrims. The most important facet of the

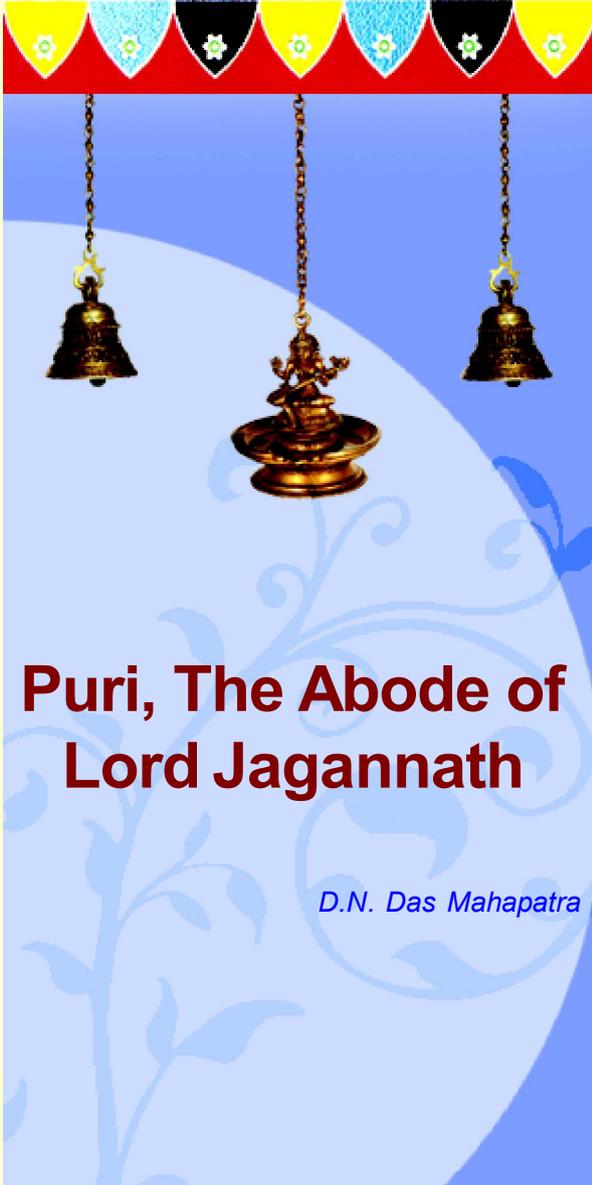
Car Festival is to have a Darshan of the deities on the Car. Since this has been accomplished without any impediment there is nothing to feel sorry about it". In 1912 the Navajauvana Darshan was also not permitted for fear of huge congregation and this was also repeated in 1931 and 1969. In 1977 there was a total chaos and mismanagement as the system of "Parmanika" and "Sahanamela" was allowed for "Navajauvan Darshan."

It is said that the year in which Navakalevara passes off peacefully, it turns out to be auspicious for the state and the country as well. We pray to Lord Jagannatha, to shower His blessings on the innumerable devotees and let the Navakalevara this year pass off smoothly and peacefully.

N.B.: Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.



Sraddha Vesha



Puri, The Abode of Lord Jagannath

D.N. Das Mahapatra



*Mahodadyottare Parswe Kaivalyam Khetramuttamam
Sada-Nityam Punyahavam Viditam Pavanam Puri*

(Vamadeva Samhita)

Puri, evidently deriving her name from Jagannath-Puri, is situated by the side of the sea and is famous as a sacred place of pilgrimage and sacred offering to Lord. It is also known as the city of the down-trodden, cursed, fallen people of the society who trek all their way to Puri to find solace and to get themselves purified by a simple visit. The religious sanctity and adoration attached to the place, has attracted people from all over the country to this city from time immemorial. Today the attention of the world is drawn to this city for her perennial spring without any modern amenities of artificial airconditioning. The compliment given by the ex-ambassador of the United States, Prof. Galbraith, that Puri is his "second home", reveals in almost glowing terms the fascination of foreigners for this beautiful city. Apart from the religious significance attached to the city as a place of pilgrimage, Puri is fast growing in popularity as a wonderful tourist resort on the eastern coast.

The city is known by various names, Puri, Nilachal, Purusottam, Srikshestra and Sankha Kshetra, etc. In the early British records, it was described as the city of Jagannath and the Collector, Puri, was known as the Collector of Jagannath.

Situation

The town of Puri is 60 miles from Cuttack and 41 miles from Bhubaneswar and is divided into two parts (i) Balukhanda or the sandy tract along the sea coast, (ii) The town proper to the south of Atharnala bridge. The Balukhanda area extends from Chakra-Tirtha on the east to the Swargadwar and beyond on



the west. The Government house constructed in 1913 stands in between the two. The town proper includes the area round the main temple and lies between the two on both the sides of the main road, known as "Bada Danda" which extends up to Gundicha temple and Indradyumna Tank on the northern extremity. The different portions of the town are known as Sahi. The town is bounded on the south by sea, on the west by the Pragana Chabiskud, on the east and north by Pragana Rahanga. This area of the town is five miles in length and 1½ miles in breadth. According to ancient Sanskrit text, the town consists of 5 *kros* equal to 10 miles. It lays between the temple of Lokanath on the west and Bilweswar on the east and between the sea on the south and Matia river on the north.

Ancient Literature

The Skanda Purana, Narada Purana and Kurma Purana elaborately describe the sanctity of the place and its presiding deity with slight difference here and there. The Utkal Khanda of Skanda Purana mentions about the Purusottam Kshetra in detail. The narration comes from the mouth of Vishnu, who has described the sanctity of the place in the Namisa forest in the assembly of gods.

Historical Tradition

In the earliest stage of its existence, Puri was a forest having a blue hill or Nilachala at the centre. The area was inhabited by Savaras, a tribe belonging to the Proto-austro-loid ethnic stock, who were supposed to be worshipping an inimitable image of Vishnu in Sapphire, known as Nila-Madhava. The offering of flower and fruits no longer was palatable to the God and He expressed his desire to have cooked rice and sweets. Hence the blue God vanished to reappear in the form of a log of wood to be shaped like Jagannatha, the Lord

of the Universe. This is the traditional account of Jagannatha.

The second period in the history of Puri dates from the advent of Buddhism in Orissa in 5th century B.C. to its decline in 5th century A.D. after a lapse of nearly 1,000 years. With the Somavamsi rulers on the throne of Orissa, Hinduism again revived its ancient glory. The importance of the town did not lose its hold on the masses. On the other hand a systematic attempt was made to convert Jagannath as a Buddhist God. It was said that the image contained the relic of Buddha, which led famous scholars like R.L. Mitra to identify Puri with Dantapur of Kalinga mentioned in Buddhist Jatakas. But during all these years, Jagannath maintained its individuality in tact in order to assimilate Buddhism into its fold in the long run. Through the political vicissitude of the rise and fall of the different dynasties, Puri maintained its independent headway completely unaffected by wars of succession. The political activities of the time centered round Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Khurda and Jajpur.

The early years of post Buddhist period in the history of Jagannath is shrouded in mystery. But since 7th century A.D., the Madalapanji, irrespective of irrelevant matters recorded in it, gives considerable assistance to later historians. The Somavamsi rulers were Saivites and under their strong patronage, Saivism, Saktism and Tantricism gained impetus, giving rise to Saiva Kshetra, Bhubaneswar as a formidable place to play a vital role in the religious history of Eastern India. Jagannath remained completely unaffected by the religious currents and cross currents. If some historical authenticity is ascribed to the story of Gala Madhava's discovery of the temple, which was lying buried under sand, then perhaps during this period Jagannath



remained a forgotten deity till the Ganga kings with strong Vaishnavite leaning came to power. These rulers ruled for nearly 4 centuries and the construction of the present gigantic structure started during the reign of Ananta Varman Chodaganga Deva, the most powerful ruler of the line who ruled from 1042 A.D. to 1112 A.D. Another ruler of the dynasty who ruled from 1189 A.D. to 1223 A.D., to perform the grand expiration of having killed a Brahmin, completed the temple of Jagannath with all its structures including the temples dedicated to Bimala and Lakshmi. The dancing hall and the offering hall were added to the structure during the reign of Purusottam Deva and Prataprudra Deva in 15th century and early part of 16th century respectively.

Different Raids on Puri

The earliest raid on record was by one General Hussain Saha of Bengal in 1509 A.D. The next attack was in 1568 by Kala-Pahara, who burnt the images. Besides these two important attacks, there had been frequent raids on the temple in between 1568 and 1742 A.D. In spite of these attacks and raids by Muslim Governors, the temple of Jagannath has withstood successfully all the vicissitude and has remained a symbol of unity in the midst of diversities of India.

During the Marhatta rule in 1775 A.D. a regular payment of Rs.27,000 was sanctioned by the Marhatta Government. The 35 feet high Arun Pillar with 16 shafts was brought from the Sun Temple of Konarka and was placed in front of the temple during the period which still stands today.

in 1590 A.D. when Raja Manasingh conquered Orissa, he selected Raja Ramachandra Deva of Bhoi dynasty to be the Superintendent of the temple. After the treaty of Deogaon, the province was ceded to the

British in 1803. In the same year Lord Wellsely, the Governor General, issued an instruction to the O/C of British troops in Orissa not to interfere with the affairs of the temple. The right of the Raja of Khurda on the temple remained unrecognised till 1809 A.D. and the British Government wanted to take charge of the temple. At last the case had to be compromised and the right of Raja of Khurda was recognised as the hereditary superintendent of the temple. Today the Raja of Puri continues to be the chairman of the board of the Managing Committee of the temple as a titular head and the day-to-day affairs of the temple are being managed by Government through an administrative officer responsible to the Committee.

A Tourist Resort

If you like to see India, her colourful people and her rich heritage, pay a visit to this small town and stand in front of the Lion's gate. Thousands of pilgrims from all over India come to Puri daily to pay homage to the Lord of the Universe. You will find different people speaking different dialects, dressed in their traditional costumes and ornaments coming from different parts of the country. A colourful sight of India concentrated at one place will leave you amazed. If you are a sight-seer, interested in people, Puri will perhaps afford you the greatest opportunity to know India and her people.

If you are a scholar or antiquarian, the Cult of Jagannath, Who is Himself a grand synthesis of all the religious cults and principles of India, will afford you an interesting study. Puri is rightly regarded as the epitome of religions of India.

If you are a holidayer, seeking retract from the din and bustle of the urban life, the lovely sea-beach of Puri with its excellent



seaboard, ideal for walking, surfing, lounging and bathing, will make you lose yourself in the vastness of the distant horizon.

For all types of tourists Puri offers something of everything.

Cultural Heritage

The religious heritage of the place dates back to the pre-historic era so also its cultural heritages. The origin of Odissi dance can be traced back to the presence of two Gandarvas, Ha-Ha and Hu-Hu, who came to dance from heaven in the consecration ceremony of Lord Jagannath. Rambha, the heavenly nymph, taught the art of dancing to the girls of Srikshetra, who as Devadasis were participating in the daily religious rites of Jagannatha. Thus the internationally famous Odissi dance of today owed its origin to Puri.

It was Jagannath, who inspired and prompted Jayadeva to write his famous work Gitagovinda, a rare treasure of literature. Jagannath has inspired writers, devotees, poets to sing and write poems of rare literary excellence even today. Bhima Bhoi, Salabeg and others are to be mentioned as a few who have composed *bhajans* of rare literary excellence.

In the field of art, Puri enjoys a rare honour for its famous Patta-Chitra paintings and soap-stone images. There are still families living in the town engaged in this great artistic tradition as humble representatives for their magnificent past. The international recognition given to the artistic creations of Puri, attract souvenir hunters to Puri in large numbers even today.

In fine, contrary to the pronouncement of the American Professor mentioned above, here is a historian of 19th Century, W.W. Hunter who, writing on Orissa in 1872, make

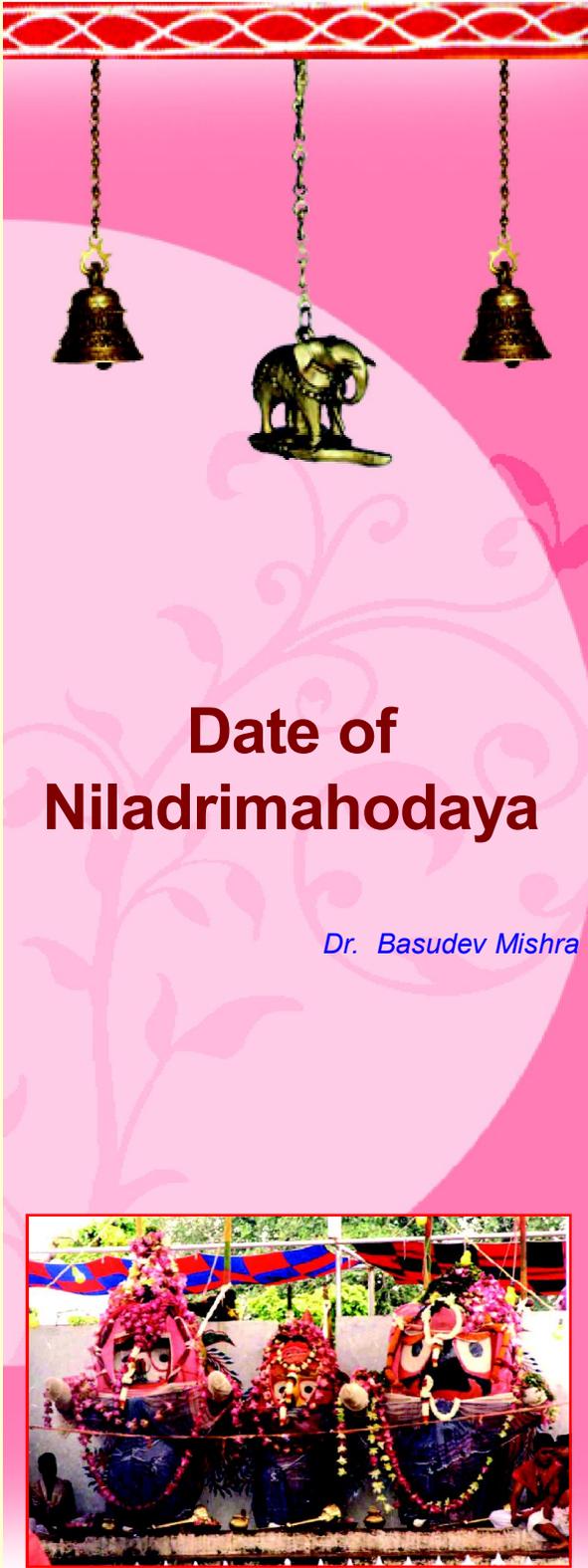
some observations which are not only unsavory but astonishing. In his opinion, "in literature, the peculiar glory of Indian race - the Oriyas have no conspicuous triumphs. They have written no famous epics, they have struck out no separate school of philosophy, they have elaborated no new system of Law".

We should not be too harsh in our judgment on the sentiment of Hunter who writing the history of Orissa against manifold difficulties of language, race and prejudice, was guided by a sense of superiority complex which stands out fallacious when subjected to critical reasons. In the field of art, philosophy, and literature Oriyas have won many a laurel. The Oriyas still claim a few big achievements and use the word "great" to important institutions and objects. Still the main road through which the Car of Lord Jagannath passes is known as "Great Grand Road", the main temple is called the "Bada Deula" or great temple and the idol is known as "Bada Thakur" or Great Lord and Jagannath as the Lord of the Universe.

Thus the contribution of Jagannath and Puri to the sum total of Indian culture is as great as Jagannath is worshipped as the symbolical representation of "Param Brahma" of Upanishadas. As a source of creation, he is nowhere depicted as an object of creation. Thus he stands as a grand synthesis in the midst of the bewildering facades of rituals and various religious beliefs.

Puri is a city of conflicts and compromises, and that is perhaps the greatest philosophy - a philosophy of national integration and solidarity which Orissa preaches today.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1969.



Before the compilation of commentaries and digests of the Smrtis, it was of the chief concern of the Puranas to give details of analysis of the Smrtis for the description of abstract knowledge contained in them. Therefore, when the commentaries came up, the Puranas assumed a different role introducing other materials which related to the royal dynasties. In this juncture, they influenced the Smrtis, its commentaries as well as the authors of the Smrti digests. In course of time, a new class of Smrti oriented texts arose on the basis of Puranic literature. These were considered to be the Puranic-Smarta¹ texts. Niladrimahodaya, our present object of study belongs to this category. The subject matter deals within it relating to the cult of Lord Jagannath resorts to the developing principles of Acara² in the Puranic Smarta way of presentation which are derived from social conditions in the form of rites and rituals with reference to various occasions as well as daily functions.

From the very sentence,³ read at the end of every canto of the text Niladrimahodaya, it is learnt that the text is an extract from Sutasamhita. Rituals and festivals, observed daily, monthly, yearly and occasionally in Purusottam Kshetra are mentioned here at length. Out of them some have already fallen into oblivion and some, with their comparative recent origin.

Unless and until the date and provenance of Niladrimahodaya are ascertained, it will not be possible to trace the evolution of the cult of Lord Jagannath. Therefore an attempt is made here to determine



the date of Niladrimahodaya with the help of the rituals mentioned therein.

Scholars argue⁴ that Niladrimahodaya was composed towards the later half of the eighteenth century and it is also the general accepted opinion.

(i) Niladrimahodaya refers⁵ to the outside and inside boundaries i.e. Meghanada and Kurma Prachira and Bhogamandapa as well other constructions which were built in 1448, 1472 and 1470 A.D. respectively.⁶ Therefore, it is held that the text is compiled after that period.

(ii) The Dolayatra of Lord Jagannath is celebrated in the month of Phalguna (Jan-Feb) and the deity is taken to Dolavedi which is situated at the Aisanyakona (north-east corner) of the temple. In the year 1561 A.D. the rope of the Dola (swing) severed due to strain.⁷ From that year, the presiding deity was substituted by Govinda on this festive occasion. Niladrimahodaya records this yatra in the list of the festivals. In its 34th canto, Govinda, the representative deity, is described to be taken to Dolavedi after the completion of prescribed rituals.⁸ Therefore, it may be concluded that the text is compiled after 1561 A.D.

(iii) Kalapahad, the general of Sulayman Karani, on his conquest of the country attacked the shrine, flung the image into fire and burnt it and afterwards cast it into the sea. In the year 1575 A.D. the deities were reinstalled on the Ratnavedi. In Cakada manuscript, it is stated that, in order to remember this day, to a ceremony which pertains to the incidence related to the reinstallation has been added.

This is called Niladrimahodaya. This has been enlisted in the rituals and recorded in the Skanda Purana.⁹ Since Niladrimahodaya was not compiled by that time, Skanda Purana might have been taken into account as the first hand record to prescribe the rituals.

(iv) The Snanotsava of Lord Jagannath is held on the full moon day Jyestha (May-June). The images of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana are brought in precession to the Snanavedi. And there, being on their respective seats, they take a sacred bath and thereafter put on the costume of an elephant. This costume (Hativesa) is referred to in Niladrimahodaya.¹⁰

Mention may be made here that introduction of the elephant costume was made during the reign of the Marahattas in Orissa. During this time, Ganapati Bhatta, a devotee of Ganapati had visited Lord Purusottam on the same day (Snanotsava). He could not find the form of the elephant headed God Ganapati and was disappointed. Then the Lord appeared before him in the costume of Ganesa. Later on, one of the Subedars of the Marahattas made permanent arrangement of this elephant costume to perpetuate the memory of the Marahatta devotee from the year 1624 A.D. Since this matter has been included in Niladrimahodaya. It is asserted that this text might be compiled thereafter.

(v) In 1636, Vasantagundica Yatra was introduced.¹¹ Precise reference of this Yatra is found in the text of Niladrimahodaya being termed as Vasantotsava.¹² Hence it is maintained that the text was compiled after that period (1636 A.D.).



(vi) The Jalakrida Mandapa, which has been referred to in Niladrimahodaya was built by Talucho Banamali Mahapatra during the reign of Gajapati Mukundadev (1657-1689 A.D.).¹³ Hence, it is held that the text of Niladrimahodaya was compiled thereafter.

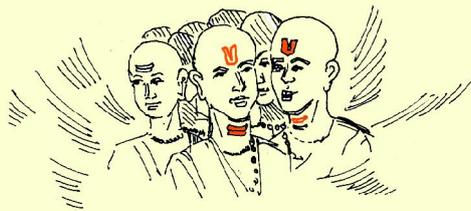
The Examination of materials found in Niladrimahodaya and the assessment made by eminent historians¹⁴ leads to the conclusion that the last phase of the seventeenth century A.D. is the date of compilation of Niladrimahodaya which corresponds to the period 1688 to 1716 A.D. as determined by K.N. Mohapatra.¹⁵

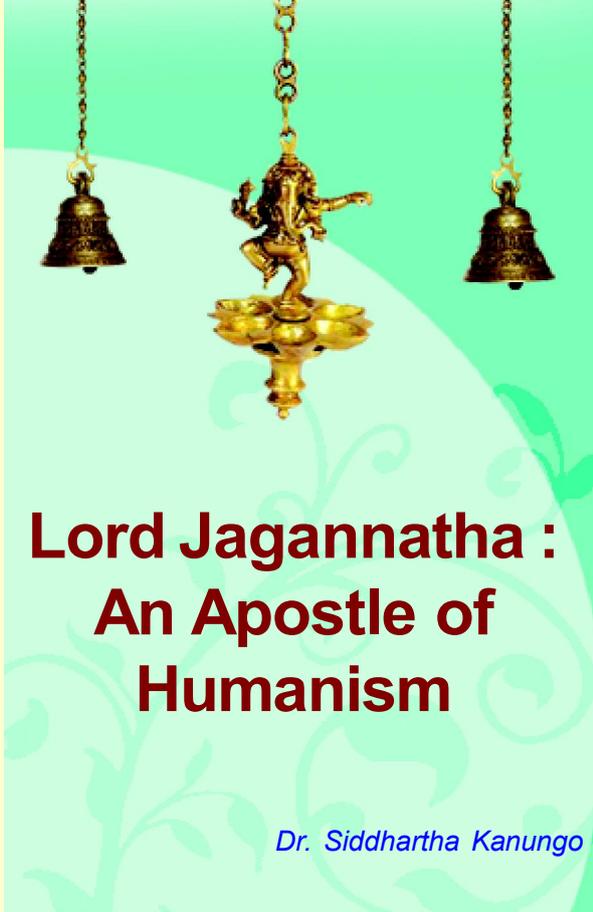
References :

1. Puranic rites and customs - R.C. Hazra.
2. Acara and Parampara are two different terms used in Dharmasastra. The former refers to custom (action) whereas the later to the legend. Both record the human action. The subject matter of Dharmasastras at first rests upon it. It controls Vyavahara and Prayascitta in the real sense of the subjects dealt within it.
3. Iti Sri Sutasamhitayam Niladrimahodaye etc.
4. The compilation of Niladrimohadaya is ascertained by the scholars placed under :
 - (a) H.K. Mahatab - 1450 A.D. Odisha Itihas, 3rd Ed., Vol.II, p.17.
 - (b) K.N. Mohapatra - 1688 - 1716 A.D. Khurda Itihas 2nd Ed. Vol.1., P.143.

- (c) G.C. Tripathy - 1750-1775 A.D. Jnanamrta Ed. Prof. A.C. Swain, 1st Ed. 1985, pp.119.
 - (d) Sridhara Mohapatra - 1435 A.D. Niladrimahodaya Bhumika, 1st Ed. P. Kha.
 - (e) Bidyullata Rai - Later part of 14th century, Jnanamrta - 1985, pp.112.
- 5.(a) Manoharataram tavat Prakara dwayavestitam 34/4 NM.
 - (b) Tasyagre mandapah Karyah bhogasthapanahetave 30/4 NM.
 6. S.N. Das, Sri Jagannath Mandira O Jagannath Tattwa Part-I, pp.179.
 7. K.C. Mahapatra Sriksetra - Sri Jagannath 1st Ed. 1985, pp.120.
 8. Niladrimahodaya - Verses, 112-135/Canto 34.
 9. K.N. Mahapatra - Khurudha Itihas, 2nd Ed. p.11-12.
 10. Karisresthakrtitaya Vesam ca (Karayettado - NM - XIV-85.
 11. K.N. Mohapatra, Khurudha Itihas, p.72 ff.
 12. Vasantagundicetyevam pasyan yanma ca yo vaset NM - XXX - 59.
 13. Khurdha Itihas - p.III.
 14. Cited in the work previously.
 15. We agree to the calculations of Late K.N. Mohapatra.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.





Lord Jagannatha : An Apostle of Humanism

Dr. Siddhartha Kanungo



Centuries of myths, legends and history have all mingled into a grand composite culture centred round Jagannatha, the Lord of the Universe, one of the most revered deities of the Hindu pantheon. He is not only the Lord of the Hindus or Indians but also the Lord of the suffering humanity, the deliverer and the redeemer of the entire human civilisation in all ages and times. We find the earliest references to Lord Jagannatha in the Puranas and ancient literature though the details of His Origin and evolution are still shrouded in mystery. According to legendary sources, Jagannatha was originally worshipped by a tribal Shabar Biswabasu in the form of Neelamadhab. The most important evidence of this belief is the existence of a class of Sevakas known as Daitapatis who are considered to be the tribal lineage and who still pay a dominant role in the various services to Lord Jagannatha in His temple.

The Cult of Jagannatha is not a sectarian religion, but a cosmopolitan and eclectic philosophy. In course of time, the cult of Jagannatha took an Aryanised form and various major faiths like Saivism, Shaktism, Vaishnavism, Jainism and Buddhism have been assimilated into this cult. Thus Jagannatha cult stands as an all-pervasive and all-inclusive philosophy symbolising Unity in Diversity. In Jagannatha Temple, Jagannatha is worshipped as Purusottama or Vishnu, Balabhadra is worshipped as Siva and Devi Subhadra is worshipped in the form of Adyashakti Durga. Finally, the fourth one Sudarsana Chakra symbolising the wheel of Sun's chariot attracts the Sauras to the Centre.



Some scholars like Pandit Nilakantha Das are of the opinion that the three main images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra represent the Jain Trinity of Samyak Jnana, Samyak Charitra and Samyak Drusti. While others believe that three images represent the Buddhist Triad of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. It is also believed that the soul of Jagannatha most secretly hidden within the image of Lord Jagannatha, is nothing but the Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha. The philosophy of Tantra which in course of time became an integral part of Buddhism has also significantly influenced the rites and rituals of the Jagannatha temple. "This one temple in its premises arranges a wonderful meeting of different combinations with one goal of life which can be attained by one way, unchanged for all times to come". Whatever may be the origin of this cult, it has been admitted both by the scholars as well as persons belonging to different religious traditions and faiths that this culture is the centre around which in course of time divergent currents and cross currents have revolved.

The philosophy of Lord Jagannatha thus defies all definitions and is yet comprehensive enough to perceive Unity among beliefs of all sects and castes.

Jagannath cult symbolises humanism. The main aspects of humanism are deeply implanted in the institution of Lord Jagannatha. Jagannatha is the God of His devotees. Salabeg, the Muslim poet, Dasia Bauri, the lowest of the low, Balaram Das, the poor saint and Bandhu Mohanty, a wretched beggar have got His blessings.

Historians say that Kabir, the famous Bhakti-saint also visited Puri, There is a Kabir Math in Puri. The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak visited Puri and established his Math which is situated near the Swargadwar of Puri town.

Besides Kabir and Nanak saints like Sankar Dev of Assam also visited Jagannatha temple. It may be pointed out that two great saints like Sankaracharya and Ramanuja had not only visited Jagannatha temple but also established Sankaracharya Math and Emar Math respectively.

Jagannatha's offering, popularly known as Mahaprasad bears testimony to a classless and casteless society which is main aspect of humanism. It is through Mahaprasad that friendship is established among all castes-high and low, Brahmins and Chandals can take Mahaprasada from the same plate without any hesitation. Prof. U.C. Mohanty has rightly opined "Mahaprasad relationship is considered the most sacred and highest type of relationship, not only between man and man, but also between tribes and clans, between village and village, a principle of fraternal love, respect, reciprocity and co-operation.

Some scholars have gone to the extent of saying that the three colours of the deities (Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra) represent the three basic races of the world namely, black, white and yellow. Hence, the Trinity of Puri represents the mankind.

In the daily rituals and various festivals of Lord Jagannatha, people from both high and low castes participate on equal footing. It is to



be borne in mind that during Anavasara (a particular ritual in which Lord Jagannatha is supposed to fall ill). It is Daitapatis (the descendants of the tribal Shavara Clan) and not the Brahmins who perform the rituals of Lord Jagannatha. This bears testimony to the human aspect of Lord Jagannatha.

The humanisation of Lord Jagannatha is manifested in His Car Festival which is popularly known as Patitapaban Yatra. In this festival, people without distinction of caste, colour and creed join together and pull the chariots with great enthusiasm. Various rituals during the Ratha Yatra like the 'Pahandi', Chherapamhara by the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri, the stopping of the Lord's chariot enroute at his aunt's place to partake his favourite rice cake (Podapitha) and quarrel between the Lord and Mahalaxmi when the Lord returns to the temple bear testimony to the humanisation of Lord Jagannath.

From Cradle to Grave, Lord Jagannatha is the friend, philosopher and guide of Odias. He holds a unique place not only in the history of Odisha but also in the lives and culture of its people. On the auspicious occasion of marriage in the family the householder will never forget to invite Lord Jagannath. He first of all sends an invitation to the Lord Jagannatha believing that He (Lord) will bless the young couple. Surendra Mohanty has rightly opined "He may be Lord of Universe,

the highest Supreme Deity, the Purusottama, to the countless millions of the Hindus living in India and outside, but his relationship with Odisha and the Odias is almost overwhelming."

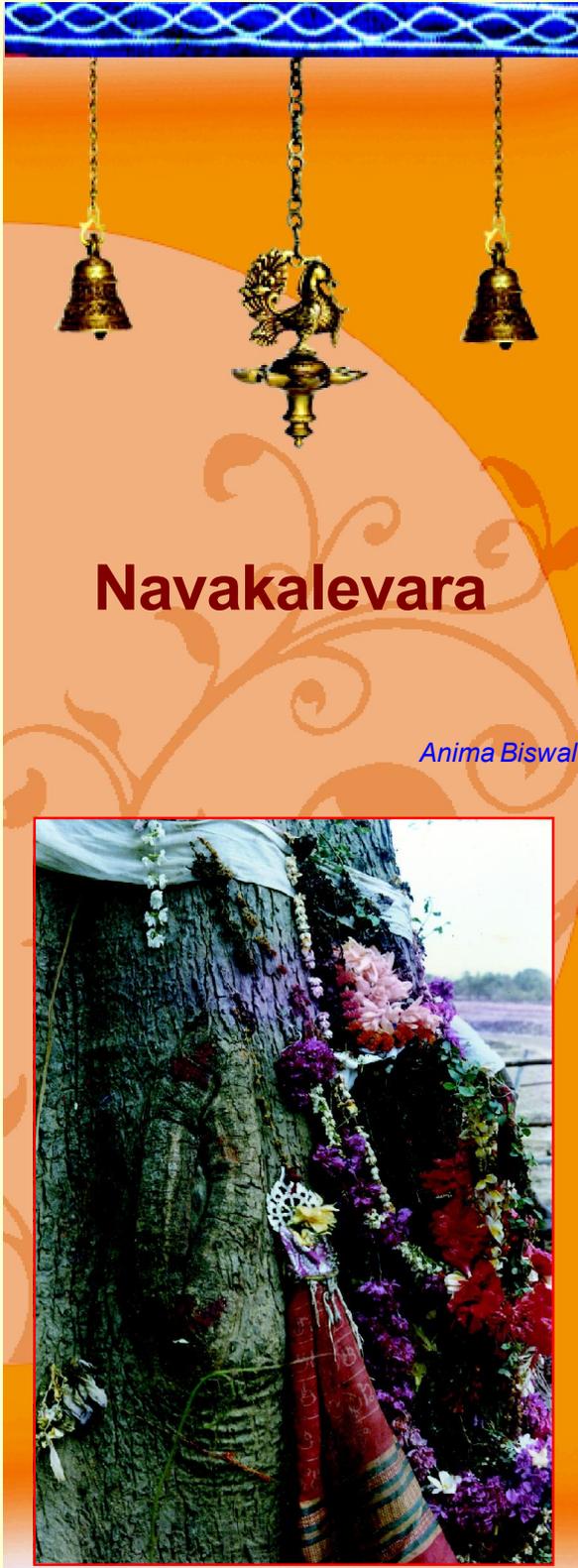
Jagannath is the most democratic God. His philosophy bears a significant message to the modern civilisation which has been fragmented by all kinds of barriers on the grounds of caste, colour, creed, religion and sex. However, Jagannath cult can tackle these problems very nicely because Lord Himself stands as symbol of equality, fraternity and progress of the entire human civilisation.

References :

1. Mohapatra Gopinath, Jagannath in History and Religious Tradition of Odisha, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1982.
2. Mohanty Surendra, Lord Jagannath, Sahitya Akademi, Bhubaneswar.
3. Hunter, W.W., A History of Odisha.
4. Mansingh M., Saga of the Lord Jagannath, Cuttack.
5. Kar, Bijyananda, "Humanism in the Cut of Jagannath", an article published in cult and culture of Lord Jagannath", Panda Daitari and Panigrahi Sarat Chandra (Ed.) Cuttack, 1984.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.





Orissa, the best of ancient and modern India, has naturally evolved an eclectic culture and the symbol of this synthesis is the Lord Jagannath of Puri, the greatest deity in the Hindu Pantheon. Even today, its daily practices show the Jaina, Buddhist and Saivite characteristics. Jagannath is the most democratic and the most human by nature, overlaps all the barriers set up by caste, creed and class. The worship of Jagannath aims at Catholicism which embraces every form of Indian beliefs. It is said that 360 festivals are observed in the Jagannath temple of Puri. Out of all, the most significant is the Car Festival and it becomes most important when associated with the Navakalevara.

Navakalevara is the periodical renewal of the wooden images of Sudarsana, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath. It is the most unique festival in the Hindu religion which involves the replacement of four worshippable images with the new ones and old images are buried underground. This occasion comes once in 12 years or 19 years or even more and in such year, which has *Joda Asadha*. From the day following the great Bathing Festival, the 'Debasnana Purnima', the deities are believed to be sick and thus stay in Anavasara or Anasara hut. During this period the sanctum remains closed and Darshana of the deities are prohibited. During *Joda Asadha* the period of sickness is extended to three fortnights and gives sufficient time for replacement of old images by new one.



History :

The origin of Jagannath and his cult is always a matter of controversy. But from some legendary account, we may go abck to the date of the King Indradyumna of Birata dynasty. He was directed by Jagannath in a dream to build a temple for Him on the Nilasundara mound or Nilagiri hill. He went on searching, but could not find Jagannath on the hill and the king worshipped Shivamarkandesvara because at that time Puri was already a centre of Tantric-Saivite worship. Markandesvara, pleased with the Puja, directed him to meet tribal leader Jara. Indradyumna met Jarasabara and through their joint efforts found a piece of Daru or log of wood floating in the Rohini Kunda, which is said to be the remnant of unburnt body of Krushna. From this wood the sacred images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra were carved out and placed in a temple at Puri. As the strucutre is made of wood, after few years it gets spoiled and thus the old images are changed by new ones. Since then Navakalevara has been taking place at certain intervals of time and ceremony takes place through certain phases.

Banayaga Yatra or Searching of Daru

First phase of Navakalevara starts with the Vanayaga Yatra or searching of Daru. It is a very crucial job. The ceremony commences on the 10th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Chaitra. On this day, after mid-day worship, the Pati Mohapatra or the tribal-Brahminical priest, takes out three Ajanamala or the garlands of orders, which are pieces of red strings tied with Nirmalya in the middle. He

distributes it to the Daitas and retains the Ajanamala of Sudarshan with himself. Then Bhitara Chho Mohapatra, a functionary connected with the management of temple rituals, ties sarees of 12 'hastas' in length on the head of Daitas and that of Pati Mohapatra is a longer one. The Daitas, Priests, Viswakarma etc. leave for Kakatpur Mangala for her blessings and guidance and offer prayer for the success of their mission. There, they observe fasting and lie prostrate which in Oriya known as 'Adhia', for guidance. The goddess rewards the devotion of Daitas and directs them, in dream, to the places from where the logs are to be collected.

The Darus of different deities are characterised by different features. The following are characteristics which are to be followed :

For Sudarshan

1. The bark should be reddish in colour.
2. The tree should have three branches.
3. There should have a sign of Chakra with a small depression in the middle.

For Balabhadra

1. The bark of the tree should be light brown or white in colour.
2. The tree should have seven branches.
3. The tree should have the sign of plough and pestle etc.
4. Nearby tree there should be heritage and also graveyard etc.

For Subhadra

1. The bark of the tree should be yellowish.
2. It should have five branches.



3. Mark of a lotus flower with five petals.

For Jagannath

1. The colour of the tree should be dark.
2. Four main branches.
3. The tree should be near a river or a pond.
4. Presence of cremation ground near the tree.
5. Presence of heritage nearby the tree.
6. Presence of ant hill near the tree and a snake hole at the roots of the tree.
7. Signs of Sankha and Chakra etc.

After the Darus are located, the place is swept and sprinkled with water. The Brahmins and Acharyas make themselves ritually pure by taking bath and a small fire sacrifice is held under the tree. Then they circumbulate the tree seven times and sprinkle it with sacrificial water to give a ritual bath. The tree is wrapped with a piece of new cloth after applying sandal paste, vermilion, flowers etc. Finally Ajnamala of the deities are hung on the respective trees by Pati Mohapatra.

The temporary shelter is built around the tree for the Daitapatis, called 'Sabara Dweepa'.

After that a Yajnasala is erected on the western side of the tree and a Vedi or altar is constructed which is 16 hastas in length and a canopy is tied over the Vedi.

Then the next important rite, is the Ankuraropana. Some varieties of seed are sown for germination. After the seeds germinate, the main parts of the ceremony starts. The last

phase of Vanayaga Yatra comes to an end and then Yajna starts. Homas are made reciting Vedic Mantras. The ceremony continues for two days. The Yajna comes to an end (Purnahuti) by reciting one lakh *Nrusimha Mantra*. Then the tree is worshipped with several *upacharas* and then axes are worshipped. Then Pati Mohapatra strike the tree with golden axe, then Viswvasu or Daitapati with silver axe and at last the Visvakarmas with iron axe cuts down the tree. A log of 5 *hastas* in length is cut out from the trunk of the tree and other portions including the branches, leaves etc. are buried underground at that spot. Then the Darus are wrapped up with silken clothes. During this period the party do not take either food or water.

Transportation of Daru

The Darus are transported to Puri by a specially constructed cart made up from the wood of Kendu tree, Vata tree and tamarind tree. The cart is pulled by human hands only upto Puri and they are taken to the temple premises to the Koili-Baikuntha, through the north gate. The Darus must reach the temple before the annual bathing festival or 'Snana Yatra.'

Carving of Images

On the full moon day of *Jyestha* i.e. on the day of Snana Purnima, after receiving ritual bath, the logs are carried from Koili-Baikuntha to the Nirmana Mandap, where the deities are carved by Viswakarmas (Carpenters). The temple doors remain closed and nobody except Pati Mohapatra and Daitas are allowed to enter the Mandap. The height of Sudarsana, Balabhadra and Jagannath are each 84 yavas*



and the height of Subhadra is 62.5 yavas. The length of each arm of Balabhadra is 36.75 yavas, where the length of side arm is 13.75 yavas and front arm is 23 yavas. The length of each arm of Jagannath is 42 yavas where the side arm length is 20 yavas and front arm is 22 yavas. All the images contain cavity meant for keeping the mysterious Brahma Padartha, which is considered the 'Soul' of the image. the length of cavity is 12 yavas.

Consecration, Abhiseka of Nyasadaru and fire sacrifice

The consecration ceremony is also known as Pratistha ceremony on the very first day, the 'Nyasadaru** is cut into four pieces and each one of them serves as a lid to cover the cavity on the belly of wooden images. Then Puja is offered to various Hinduistic deities like Ganesh Laxmi Narayana, Dikpalas, etc. and also to Bhutas to counteract any possible evil. The rites continue for four days and on the sixth day the Nyasadaru is brought to the Pratisthan Mandapa. Then Abhiseka ceremony starts where the Daru is given bath with water of 17 pitchers containing flowers, fragrance, the sand of Ganga, etc.

Fire sacrifice is held at the end of *Pratistha ceremony where ahutis are offered to different Gods and Goddesses.*

Change of Brahmopadartha

After consecration ceremony is over, the Nyasadaru placed on a cart is taken around the temple seven times after which the same is taken inside the temple premises. Then the

newly built images are taken round in a similar manner for three times and taken inside the temple and placed near old statues. Then the Brahmopadartha or life substance is taken out of the worshippable images by Daitas and installed in the new images, at the dead of night of the 14th day of dark fortnight. Their eyes are blind folded and hands are wrapped up with clothes so that they can neither see nor feel the mysterious life-substance. No one knows that what is this life substance. It is said that it may be a live Salagrama or may be tooth relics of Lord Buddha. Till now it is a controversy.

Burial of old images

After taking out life-substance from the images, it is declared dead. The old images are brought to the Koili Baikuntha and buried underground by Daitas. In accordance with Hindu Dharmasastra they remain as "Asaucha" and do not participate in any sacred activities upto 10 days. On the same day they take purificatory bath and after that on the 12th day give a feast to the servitors of the temple.

Infuse of life to images

In the dark fortnight of *asadha*, the new images are applied with various substances to give life to the skeleton images. Red cloth pieces, resin of the tree, perfumed oil, sandal paste, etc. are used as blood, flesh, marrow, fat respectively. Then the face and hands are painted by Brahmin priest on the 1st day of bright of *asadha*. Then the images have bath in perfumed water and Navakalevara comes to an end.



Navakalevara in 1996

The year 1996 is the most important year of this decade as it sees the unique festival, Navakalevara. The one and half month festival has already been started and the Darus have already been traced, cut and transported to the Puri temple. In the first phase, the Banayaga Yatra started on 29th of March. After mid-day worship, the Daitas, Acharya, Viswakarma, Pati Mohapatra, Lenkas, etc. proceeded towards Kakatpur Mangala, alongwith four Ajnamala of Sudarsana, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannatha. In the evening, on the same day they reached Jagannath Ballava Math and stayed there till next day midnight. Then they moved to Kakatpur Mangala. After worshipping Maa Mangala, they observed 'Adhia' by reciting Swapneswar Mantra - mother of Goddess pleased with their penances and in dream guided them to the place, one by one, from where the wood to be collected. The sacred log for Sudarsana was located in Panipal of Post Niali, the log of Balabhadra found at Ramakrushnapur of District-Cuttack, the log of Jagannath was found at Dadhimachhagadia and that of Devi Subhadra was found at Malda of Puri District. As soon as all the trees were identified, a series of rituals were observed. Till now the log of wood for Sudarsana and Balabhadra have been transported to the Jagannath Temple at Puri and the fire sacrifice

near the tree of Devi Subhadra has been started.

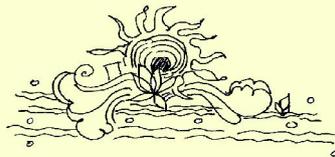
The Snanayatra of the Lord will be held on the 1st of June and after that the devotees will be prohibited from the *darshana* of the images and on the second day of the bright fortnight of *asadha* i.e. on 17th of July, the world's biggest colourful festival will be held amidst lakhs of devotees.

Conclusion

Navakalevara is the most critical, expensive and auspicious occasion in the cult of Jagannatha. In the Hindu pantheon, the cult of Jagannath has a separate identity. Though the characters in the Hindu Dharmasastra are supposed to be based on legends, there are exceptions. And Jagannath is the exception. He is considered the best friend, philosopher and guide of the people of Orissa. He is one among us and His Navakalevara presupposes the death of old God and the birth of new God.

- * One yava is the length of middle part of the middle finger which is approximately one inch.
- ** A piece of wood cut from any one of the four Darus, called Nyasadaru.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.





Dasia Bauri

Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab
Trans : Satyanarayan Mohapatra



Humble mind and self confidence are the two wings that make a man nearer to God. This is not possible by endless Sadhana, Fasting, Yoga or Pranayam. To realise God it is necessary to surrender before the Lord with an air of self-confidence. Irrespective of the caste or creed, irrespective of the position in which you are placed, one may be high or low, rich or poor, wise or foolish, one should draw upon the inner springs of Bhakti towards the Almighty whereby God will pull the devotee to his fold finally resulting in a communion. This happens irrespective of the caste, religion or class to which he belongs.

Two miles away from Puri in the village Bali stands the cottage of Das Bauri. Das is Khadal by caste. This caste is treated alike the Sabara caste though with contempt. He was childless. He and his wife eked out their livelihood by weaving clothes. During festivals when Bhajan is chanted, Holy Puranas are read, young Dasia hears them with rapt attention, eventhough unable to understand the contents of those recitals. The only thing he understands was *harinam* or exultations to God as the only prop in this world consisting of happiness and sufferings. If one treats the happiness and sufferings alike and devotes his full time by Harikirtan, one can attain salvation. He does not understand what salvation is. Hinduism proclaims 'Rebirth' or birth after death known as 'Poonarjanma' which is a mystery no the devotees of other religions.

This life is full of miseries. If one takes 'Harinam' as a malady to all the sufferings one will not be reborn after death and hence to further miseries. This is the gist which Dasia



understands about Mukti or Moksha. He thinks that God has given him rebirth as a human being for committing sin in the past life by being born in the lowest caste. If he earns 'Punya' by good deeds then only he may be reborn in the later life in a higher caste. Then only he will attain salvation - this is the essence of the consolation which Dasia gets from 'Hari Sankirtan' or chanting of Harinama.

It was the day of Ratha Yatra or Car Festival at Puri, and innumerable people surrounding the village Bali and nearby areas were proceeding towards Puri to have Darshan of Lord Jagannath. Suddenly it came to the mind of Dasia that he will visit Puri to have Darshan of Lord Jagannath and he too accompanied the villagers. From a distance, he had a glance of Lord Jagannath on the Chariot. The radiant face of the Lord with black hue surrounding the idol, the enchanting red coloured lips and the white wheel encircling the valiant big eyeballs and the glittering black cornea inside made him spellbound in a spiritual trance and tears at once came rolling down his cheeks. He then fell flat on the ground fully surrendering himself before the Lord, adorning the Chariot.

With folded hands Dasia prayed "O' Lord ! I am the greatest sinner, please offer me salvation." He realised that Lord Jagannath is the only truth and all other things are mere falsehood. This belief was ingrained in Dasia and he returned to his village with a sense of satisfaction.

Customarily his wife had to give holy feeding to her husband who has returned fresh after having holy visit to Puri. What is the food

after all. It is 'Peja' or rice gruel and a little 'Saaga' (greens). In a new earthen pot she cooked some *aru* rice, and kept a little 'Saaga' over it. Dasia saw in the 'Peja' or 'Saaga' the reflection of the face of the Lord with two big round eyes with the glittering cornea. Suddenly he stood up and cried "O' Lord Jagannath ! Jagannath !" In the entire house he roamed about restlessly and shouted 'I will not take this ! I will not take this ! His wife thought some enemy in Puri has commanded a demon or devil to devour her husband. She called the villagers for help. On being questioned by the villagers Dasia retorted in resounding voice "This is the white circle surrounding the black big round of the Lord Jagannath. How shall I eat up ?" The villagers finally understood the entire thing and asked his wife to separate the 'Saaga' from the 'Peja' and his wife did the same. Thereafter Dasia took his food in utter delight. The villagers had an idea about the Bhakti (devotion) of Dasia towards Lord Jagannath. Thereupon the villagers renamed Dasia as 'Baligaon Dasa'.

Returning from the Car Festival and having Darshan of Lord Jagannath on the holy chariot, Dasia was reminded of 'Chakadola' or the round face of the Lord with the glittering eyeballs inside, and sounds of the Ghantas. Whatever work he did, wherever he moved, Dasia had the vision of the Lord, "white circle surrounding the big eyeballs in the form of Lord Jagannath." Visibly moved he enquired of Lord Jagannath 'Should he not be blessed with his vision ? There is a saying that 'whatever the mind feels, this comes to happen or pass as a matter of co-incidence. The writings of Bhagavata at last became a reality.



Once Lord Jagannath gave Darshan to Baligaon Dasa in a dream. Giving consolation, Jagannath told Dasia "Do not think yourself low simply because you are born in a lower caste, I treat all alike. Above all Bhakti attracts me most. I always remain with my Bhakta or devotees. I am in them and they are in me. Alright! ask me any favour that you desire most." Dasa told "Prabhu, I am not begging any thing special. I only want your Darshan and wish that my mind be with you always. Another favour, whenever I would offer the same physically and eat and whenever I desire, you will give me your Darshan". Lord Jagannath nodded His head before Bhakta Dasia and told "Your desire would be fulfilled" and thereafter disappeared.

There was no limit to the delight of Baligaon Dasa. He did not feel proud at all for the boon given by Lord Jagannath. He lived the simple life as usual. Always he chanted the names of Lord Jagannath. Even he took the name of the Lord at the time of weaving. After weaving a piece of cloth he went to the village to sell it. While showing the cloth to a Brahmin, accidentally he caught sight of a coconut tree with a coconut over it. He thought to offer the coconut to the Lord. He wanted to take the coconut in exchange of the cloth. The greedy Brahmin seeing the devotion of Dasia towards the Lord told him that the price of coconut equals with the price of the cloth. Dasa never thought for a moment at Brahmin's words. He wanted money to purchase rice for the day's cooking. He came home, freshened up himself by taking bath and went to the Brahmin and fetched the coconut. On his way he found a Brahmin proceeding towards Puri with offerings

like jackfruit, mango, banana and cheese. Dasia was delighted at the sight and his spirits went higher up. He could not go to Puri then. Giving the coconut to the Brahmin devotee he told "Listen please, after offering your Manohi (offerings) to the Lord give this coconut and tell Him that Baligaon Dasa had sent this for Him. If he stretches his palm to accept the same, give the coconut or else get back my coconut, please". The Brahmin laughed in utter dismay and thought "it is useless to argue with this mad fellow; let me take this, I shall get it back." Agreeing he took the coconut. Dasia experienced greater delight and waited in excitement to find out if Lord Jagannath took the coconut in His hands. The Brahmin reached Puri and gave his offerings to the Sevaka for Manohi before the Lord. He took the Prasad after Manohi. While he stood up he was reminded of the request of Baligaon Dasa. Holding the coconut near the Garuda Pillar inside the temple he called Jagannath with a sense of devotion "O, Lord! Baligaon Dasa had sent this coconut for you. If you desire please take in your own hands or else he has asked me to take it back." The Brahmin being unable to realise the mystery spoke out these words very lightly. The poor Brahmin was stunned to find a bright big hand approaching towards him and disappeared in a moment after taking the coconut from his hands. Bewildered at the spectacle the Brahmin forgot the name of Lord Jagannath and was praying 'Baligaon Dasa' in his mind. Thanks to the Bhakti of Dasia! Thanks to his soul! By this time the Bhakti of Baligaon Dasa had spread far and wide, yet he is poor and by caste the lowliest, besides being illiterate. Hence his



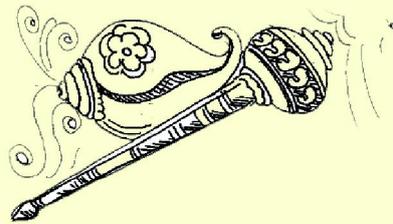
Bhakti has not been accepted by the Pandas and Sevakas of the temple.

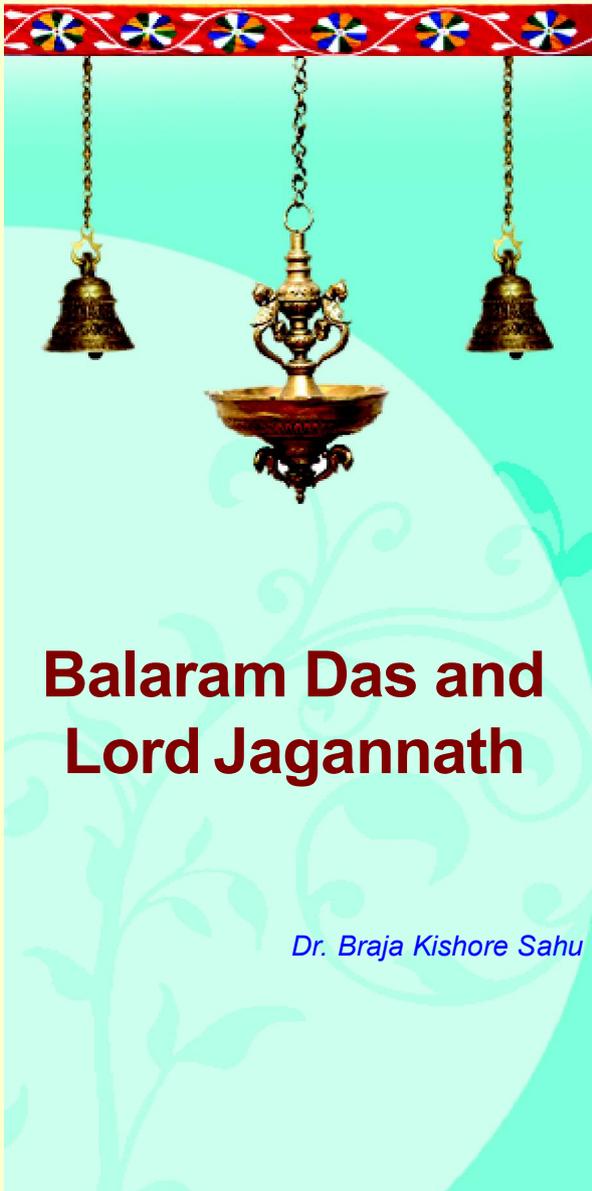
Once Dasia collected sweet ripe mangoes and proceeded towards Puri to handover the same to Lord Jagannath. On reaching the Lion's gate or 'Simhadwara' he was surrounded by the Pandas, who wished to take them to offer the same before Lord Jagannath. The Pandas became aggressive and vied with each other to take the same. Dasia laughed at this and told "I will not give these mangoes to any one of you. I will hand over the same to Lord Jagannath and he will eat the same before me. You will see it for yourself." The Pandas laughed at Dasia for his brave words and followed him up to take the same for Manohi as Sevaka. Dasia looking at the Nilachakra on the top of the temple with utter devotion cried "O" Prabhu ! I have brought the ripe mangoes for you. Please come and accept this from Dasia." The crowd consisting of Sevakas and other visitors were bewildered to find an unseen hand taking mango one after the other from the basket and the basket was soon empty. "Where are the mangoes ? Where are the mangoes ? The crowd raised the voice. Dasia told them "See, Lord Jagannath Himself if eating the mangoes."

With disbelief, half-belief a few of the Sevakas, went towards the Ratna Simhasana of the Lord. To their utter surprise they found remnants such as mango peels and mango stones strewn here and there and they were spellbound, their vision stopped for a moment. They immediately ran back with 'Dhandamal' and adorned the neck of Dasia and thanked Dasia for being able to physically conquer the heart of Lord Jagannath through his unmatched devotion. The name of Baligaon Dasa finally was a reality and his name was chronicled in the galaxy of Bhaktas or devotees.

It is said that after hearing the prayer of Baligaon Dasa, Lord Jagannath was so pleased with Dasia that he favoured him to have a glimpse of all his incarnations or Avatara. Dasia never wished for money or wealth neither any favour for enjoyment nor any earthly pleasure. He had Bhakti and he was a Bhakta par excellence. Thereby he was included in the family of the dear and near ones of the Lord Jagannath. His name is being remembered ever since and it finds place in the Oriya Purana 'Dadhyata Bhakti'.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.





Balaram Das and Lord Jagannath

Dr. Braja Kishore Sahu



It was an event of fifteen century. Five eminent spiritual leading friends (Panchasakha) were renowned at that time. Their wisdom, devotion, austerity had greatly influenced and awakened the people of Orissa. By composing religious poetry and epics, they had shown new directions to the people of Orissa. Balaram Das was the eldest among them. He was the composer of the lofty, huge epic "The Dandee Ramayan". From his childhood his heart was filled with pure devotion towards Daru Brahma Lord Jagannath. Having been adorned with all divine qualities, his character had a spot of blemish as he had illicit attachment with a prostitute.

It was the holy day on which the great celebrated car festival fell in. On that very day, people in great numbers from different parts of the world were coming in swarms to Srikshetra, Puri. All were standing and waiting on the sacred dust of the Grand Road (Bada Danda) to pull on the rope of the Car of Lord Jagannath. All were filled with divine excitement.

There was a two-storeyed building near Sri Mandir. It belonged to a young, blooming beautiful harlot. But it was a very strange event. Balaram Das had already forgotten Lord Jagannath, His festival and His journey to the "Mausima Mandir".

Balaram Das entwined in the sweet embrace of the whore in one of the amorously decorated rooms. Perhaps he could not restrain his lustful desire even on this holy day.

Gradually the Lion's Gate (Simhadwar) was crowded and noisy sound vibrated the



whole atmosphere. The indistinct sound of gongs, bells became gradually more distinct and audible. Having been moved and swung leisurely this way and that way among the assembled devotees, Sudarshana, Subhadra, Balabhadra and Jagannath occupied the decorated wooden-cars. The people of Orissa joyously applauded when Gajapati Maharaja engaged himself in sweeping the Cars and sprinkled the scented water on the cars among the cheerful people.

All on a sudden Balaram Das could hear the sound of gongs. The dragging of cars had started. Balaram Das was no more attracted by the harlot and could not stay with her any more. His whole body started trembling like palm leaves. Continuous flow of tears trickled down and wetted his face. It seemed as if the spring of devotion had started to flow down. He came out speedily from the brothel and reached the Grand Road. Struggling through the crowd with difficulty he stood near Nandighosh, Car of Lord Jagannath. He was absorbed in devotion. His whole body was drenched in sweat and eyes were filled with tears.

Lord Jagannath was in front of him. It seemed to him as if he was casting his large round eyes on His innumerable devotees and inviting them to exchange a cordial embrace by His two large arms.

Being mad, Balaram Das climbed the flight of stairs of Nandighosa Car. His heart was filled with love and anguish. His vital being was infatuated. He was shouting "Jai Jagannath" delightedly. There was thick black dishevelled on his head. There was the mark of saffron

and lac dye on his graceful, fair-complexioned body. The remains of chewed betel were on his smooth and oily cheek. The scarf had been left aside from his shoulder. Commotion started among priests when they found Balaram Das in this condition. They scolded him and told, "O stupid ? Why do you climb up car so unclean. There is mark of betel spittle. Your body is stained with saffron. You have slept in the whore's house till now. You have not taken your bath and have not cleaned your body. How do you dare come up the Car without cleaning and purifying your body ?" After telling these words, priests turned him out by force and engaged themselves to purify the Car. Having been rebuked, insulted and slighted by the priests, Balaram Das could not stay there. His sorrow-laden heart cried out. Oozing tears incessantly, he reached a mound of sand near Banki Muhan on the sea shore. His body was trembling with grief. He gathered sand and made three temple like-cars out of it and consecrated those temples putting images of Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath and remained absorbed in meditation.

After coming back to the normal State, he prayed in devotion to God with tearful eyes and folded hands. He told, "O God ? Have I worshipped and served you till today to be humiliated like this ? Your priests pushed me by the neck and drove me out of the car. Don't you feel ashamed of it ? What have you got by pushing me out by your priests. You have driven me out. But how can I drive you out of my loving heart ? Still I know that you are the lover of devotees and knower of the thoughts of the devouts. If you are really kind to me, then you will be present in my temple made of sands'.



The heart of God melted with compassion by the self-conceited and restless prayer of the devotee. He came down from the Nandighosa Car and remained in the Car made of sands by the devotee. When Balaram felt and saw the cosmic presence of Lord Jagannath, his joy knew no bounds. He started to pray loudly in obeisance and remained absorbed in cosmic, blissful spirit.

Slowly and gradually people started to assemble on the sea-shore. People ran in swarms from the Grand Road to the sea-shore to see Balaram Das who remained absorbed in cosmic consciousness.

Miraculously some disturbances occurred in dragging the Car. The Car did not move forward. Attempts were made to drag it, but in vain. The people refrained from dragging it as they failed utterly to do so. When the king got this news, he became astonished and engaged elephants to pull the Car. Still the car did not move an inch. The priests were afraid. They investigated into the matter but failed to get the cause of it. They could not know the desire of Lord Jagannath. A news came to the King that the people were growing in number around Balaram Das who had made three sand-temple. He was singing prayers with loud voice and people were hearing his prayers engaging their ears whole-heartedly. Perhaps the car would roll only on his coming to the Grand Road. It was also the belief of king Prataprudra. He had known about Balaram Das and had heard his praise also. He got very angry and repented greatly on hearing the disrespect of the devotee on the car. But that was not the time for repentance. So he reached

the seashore with the priests and saw Balaram Das singing prayers with tears in his eyes. The king embraced him with love and gave royal treat to him. He brought him to the Grand Road requesting him again and again. A royal seat was offered to him and the king fastened his head with a silk saree. Creating ripples of pleasure in the minds of the people, the Cars started to role on again. From every side the sound hailed, glory to Balaram Das-victory to Lord Jagannath”!

There is also another supernatural and uncommon chapter in the life of Balaram Das.

Once Balaram Das desired to see the night strolling of Laxmi-Narayana. To fulfill his desire he prayed to Lord Jagannath with tremulous voice to witness it by standing at the Garuda Pillar. God is bound by the devotion and love of the devotee. He gave words to the devotee to fulfil his desire. But when Laxmi, the Mother of the universe got this news, she became suffused with anger. She became impatient of knowing this type of impossible desire of the son-like devotee to see the divine play. But when Lord Jagannath had given permission, that could not be otherwise. Still Laxmi cursed Balaram Das in his dream and said, “Balaram ! You are my devotee: being a child of mine, is it possible to see the divine play of ours ? You are so lustful as you have desired to see our play. You are a disgrace to the divine kingdom. Had a desired I would have turned you into ashes. But Lord Jagannath has fulfilled your desire. I won’t go against the desire of the Lord. But this is the curse upon you, Balaram; though you have got everything as a devotee you cannot stay at Puri in the last part of your life”.



All on a sudden, Balam got up from sleep. He cast his eyes in each direction. His heart shivered, in tearful eyes he prayed to Lord Jagannath for its remedy. By the eager prayer of the devotee Lord Jagannath appeared near him and said, “Balam! Do not be sorry. As Laxmi has cursed you, you will have to suffer from it. Still then I command you to go back to your village. Build a temple there and establish Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra. By my blessings you will have the fruit of living at Shrikshetra Puri in your ‘village’.

Obeying His order, Balam Das returned to his village “Erabanga”, a village in Gop Police Station in Puri district. He built a temple and established Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra in the temple and endowed landed property for the management. Priests had been appointed and engaged to serve in the temple.

Still then, Balam Das could not forget Srikshetra Puri. Everyday morning he used to go to Puri and come back to his village after seeing the ritual offering of lighted candles in the evening. Gradually old age made him very lean and weak. He could not go to Puri. But it was quite impossible to take food without seeing the evening ritual wave of lighted candles. Hence without food he became from lean to leaner. The gem-adorned pedestal of Lord Jagannath started to shiver due to dreadful pain of absence of his beloved devotee. He appeared near the devotee and said, “Balam! You will see me in your village temple in the evening ritual.”

Henceforth he saw Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra in every evening in

the village temple. After this he used to take Habishyanna and remain immersed in the love of Hari.

After some days Balam Das remained bed-ridden. Recollecting the curse upon him he became sorry and prayed to Lakshmi to forgive him for his sin. Suddenly one day a desire sprouted in his mind to reach Srikshetra. Strengthening his mind he came out of his home to go to Puri with his water pot, clothes and hand-stick. He had to cross the nearby river Kushabhadra. The sun had moved in the sky to some height. The tender new leaves creating beautiful scenery started to dance coming in contact with the rays of the sun. The petals of the bunches of flowers at the call of a new day were smiling and dancing in the lap of air.

Balam Das reached near the river Kushabhadra. With the intention to take bath he got down to the river bed. His body became exhausted and powerless. He could not move a step forward. He fell down on the sand helplessly. He could feel that his life would pass away. He started to sob and cried. “Jagannath, Jagannath”.

Remaining at great distance God could hear the call of the devout. It was not a difficult thing for Him to hear the call of the devout as he had heard the restless prayer of Draupadi from Hastinapur remaining at Dwaraka and also heard the call of the king among elephants from a distance of lakhs of miles.

After sometime it was found Laxmi and Narayan were getting down from the back of Garuda and stood before the devotee. At that



time his lips were powerless to greet them. Without being able to speak he expressed his gratitude in devotion for Laxmi and Narayan with folded hands. Laxmi was mirthful at seeing the success of Her curse upon Balaram Das. Narayan, the destroyer of pride cast his eyes to smash her pride and told. "You have misunderstood. You have taken it that your curse has been translated into reality. It is not true that due to your curse Balaram Das is not able to enter Srikshetra. What is Srikshetra famous for ? Srikshetra is not famous because of the living of thirty three crores of gods, Batamangala, Bataganesh, Kalpabata and Bimala, as this place is dear to them. It is named so because of the living of Laxmi and Narayan themselves. Srikshetra is present where Laxmi and Narayan are present. Now both of us are present before the devotee. Srikshetra is not there but here. Since today this place will be

famous as "Gupta Srikshetra". People coming from distance will sing the glory of "Gupta Srikshetra". Due to our presence here and burial place of holy Balaram Das, this will be a sacred and uncommon place for all".

At that time the body of Balaram Das had become lifeless. His soul got salvation at that very place without going elsewhere.

From that day it remained a sacred place at the bank of the river, Kushabhadra which was named as "Gupta Srikshetra". A heap was built upon the burial place of Balaram Das and is worshipped there. That is known as "Balaram Gadi". Today that "Gupta Srikshetra" and "Balaram Gadi" at the bank of Kushabhadra attract the pilgrims from distant places.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.





To Quell the Pangs of a Burning Navel

Praharaj Satyanarayan Nanda

Then there was moon. The neem trees buttered by beams
scanned the dreams of man in sleep,
the commands in dreams had come through ages
And who smarted up on the floor ?
Who counted the hour of someone descending layers of skies ?
Who caught the idea lurking in a circle of sighs -
The circle of sighs betraying fragile truth !

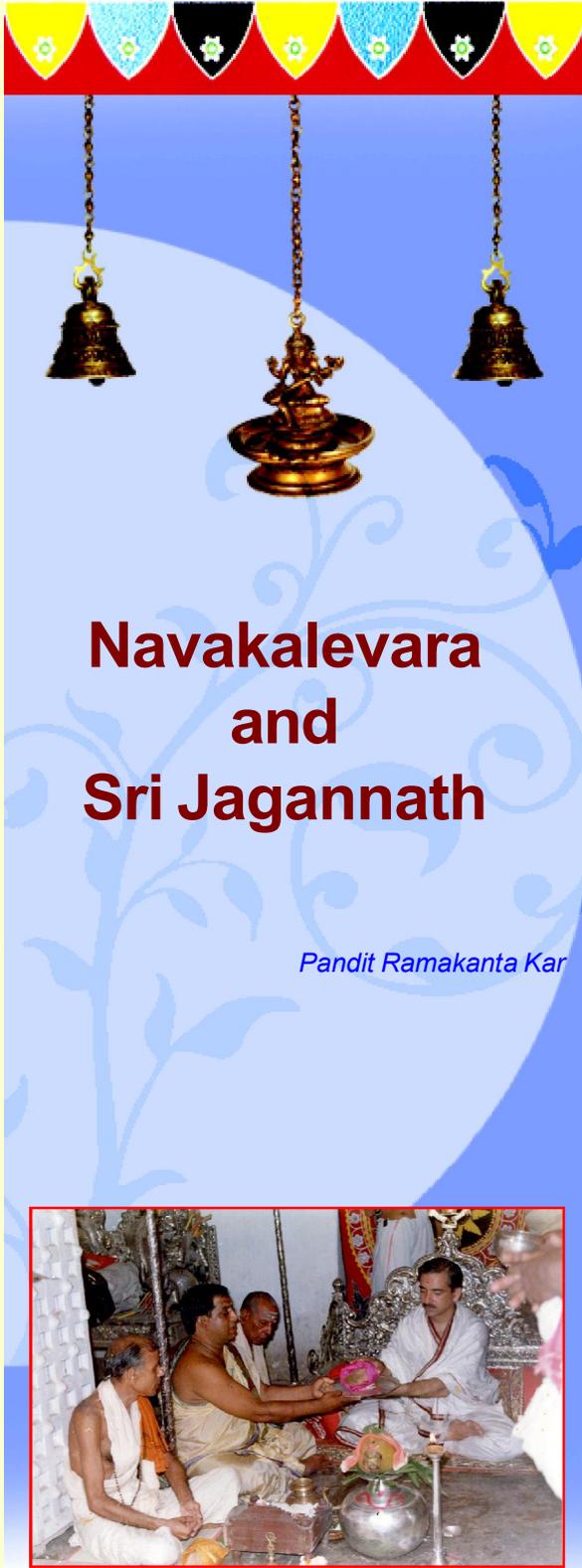
You who dwelt afar scoffed at man of lesser penance
to embrace the soul for the sake of a nation,
for the sake of the beings and the universe
You goaded the beings to measure distance as age withered.

Some veil of ecstasy enwrapped us and the sea roared
A stream of cloud entailed an island on the swimmers
When they dragged a tree-trunk the waves rolled.
Seeds untied from cloth-end trickled across blades of grass
The earth which hid embryo and dreams in love
Looked up, to embrace the endeared one gracefully
knowing that moonshine did not quiver on the edges of Neem leaves.
The trimmed thoughts craved for cooler caress in midnight.

Dreams bred familiarity through many a legend
and death and birth levied dues on the native land,
area demarcated for entrance and exit on river bank
measured the distance of an Ashram.
The span of a cremation ground
The dark sketch of a tall tree with cobras in the foot holes.
Some semblance of weapons you wielded
flashed beneath the barks.

Hour of ushering-in prompted a pilgrimage for Vanajaga
Time heeded to the commands of soul even in distress
the desires streamlined by pangs of rotation
clung to the boughs of clouds and seeds drifted
to spot out some sod, a circuitous, path,
A sway into the shifting zone of seven stars
to vindicate the compassion of a deity
who drunk moonbeams to quell the pangs of a burning navel.

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.



Sri Jagannath cult is a special cult in the Universe. He is the Lord of Universe. All the rules and regulations of the temple of Lord Jagannath are based on traditional customs described in different traditional ancient Sashttras as Skanda Purana, Niladri Mahodaya, Niladree Chandrika, Jatra Bhagavat, and Bamadev Samhita. The rules and regulations and traditions are specially performed in the temple of Puri.

The wooden deities : Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Maa Subhadra and Sri Sudarsan leave the Ratna Simhasana to other places in different times, but at the time of Navakalevara, a ceremony takes place inside the temple at the time of new structure of the bodies of *Chaturaddha Murati*. Old wooden deities do not return again. There is deep faith of the Hindus that Sri Jagannath dies as a common man and His body is taken to the burial ground called Koili Baikuntha, between the outer and the inner compound wall of the north-western corner. It is traditionally believed to be the place where Lord Krishna was cremated after He was killed by Jarasabara. That is the reason why, when the body-change-over-ceremony takes place (locally called as Navakalevara) and new images are installed in the temple, the old ones are buried here at a depth about twenty feet from the ground level. So there is the importance of the Northern direction. 'Uttare Sarvadevatta Uttare Sarvatirthaani.' That means all the Gods or Goddesses are in the North direction.

The work relating to Navakalevara is very confidential and secret. The bodies of four deities have been chiselled out of the logs of



wood of the Margosa tree, so it is called as a Daru Brahma or wooden soul or universal life force. The old images are replaced by new ones. Normally this takes place once in twelve years but really the shortest period is eight years and the longest is about nineteen years. The last Navakalevara was celebrated on 16th July 1977.

This Navakalevara Ceremony starts from *Vanajaga Bidhi* that means the rituals to get the particular *Margosa Tree* from the forest areas. Then comes Brahma Parivartana and ends when the old images are buried in Koilibaikuntha.

Vanajaga Bidhi starts from tenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Chaitra*. Daitas (the relatives of Lord Jagannath), Pati Mohapatra (the Guru of the Daitas), Lenka (the different servants of Lord) start their journey from Puri to Kakatpur near Konark taking Ajnamala (garland of order) from Gajapati Maharaja. The party of searching Daru for Navakalevara takes rest in the premises of Maa Mangala. They try to implore the mercy of the Goddess Mangala there, so that they will be able to spot out the Margosa Tree which is finally procured to provide the material for the body of the Deities. There are many specifications about the environment, location, height, age and other signs of the trees which should be thoroughly checked before they are procured for the purpose. They worship Mangala and wait for Her order through dream. Mother orders about the vparticular directions of the particular places where that Darus of Lords are available. Then they proceed to that particular spot. Four Darus for four deities are

collected and are borne by charitos to Puri in a beautiful procession.

Darus enter the temple through northern gate to the Koilibaikuntha. Darus are bathed by Pati Mohapatra at Darumandap and Mahaprasad are offered to the Brahmins by Gajapati Maharaja.

On Snana Purnima, Darus are taken to the Snana Mandap (the bathing platform). After the bath of the old images, new Darus are bathed. Then the Darus are brought to Karusala (the room in which Daru is structured). Gajapati Maharaja starts Yajna (fire of sacrifice) inviting hundred eight Brahmins before the construction of new Deities and offers a valuable Saree to Biswakarma (the leader of the carpenters) for starting the construction. Gajapati Maharaja offers *Purnahuti* on the 13th day. On the third day of Yajna, a Seula Machha (a kind of fish) is offered to Maa Uttarayani at the northern gate.

The work of construction of Deities is completed within this period. Newly constructed four deities are established on the presence of Sadhus, Santhas, Mahantas, Sevakas and Brahmins on *Nirmana Mandap*. Then the new four Deities are taken by a Cart to outside with a procession and after circumambulating seven times around the temple, they enter the room of Anasara (the place where old Deities suffer from fever). Now new four Deities are kept in front of four old Deities. Then the new Deities are covered seven times by Chandan (Sandal) and Kasturi etc. Required Kasturi is offered by the King of Nepal. On Amavasya, Ghata Parivartana (Brahma is removed from old bodies to new bodies) programme is



performed by four senior most aged Daitas. They confidentially remove Brahma from old Deities to new Deities carefully with covered eyes in the mid-night of Amavasya (dark fortnight). None is able to see or to know what is covered with red clothes and placed inside three Deities covered with soil of Koilibaikuntha. When old Sarathi (the Driver of the Cart), Ghodas (the horses of the Cart), Parrots, Kalasa Dhvajadanda (the staff of the flag) and side Gods and Goddesses of the cart of Lord are covered by the soil.

Daitas celebrate rituals and on the 10th day after the death of their own relatives : Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan. They all cry with sorrow. They apply oil on their bodies and rub sitting near Muktimandapa. They proceed to Markanda Pond for bath. There they finish their *Tutha Karmas*. They return from Markanda Pond and come to the Baisi Pahacha of the temple at the Lions Gate. They pour water on their feet and take Santi Jala (water of peace) before entering the temple. They put on new dresses offered to them by Gajapati Maharaja. Within the 9th day of bright fortnight of the month of 1st *Ashadha*, these are performed in the

temple and the ritual of Khadilagi of new Deities is performed too. Then the traditional rules and regulations of *Anasar* are performed. *Nava Jaubana Darshana* (general public Darsana) to the new deities on *Amavasya* and the next day Netrotsava programmes are performed on first day of the month of Ashada. Then the new Deities get prepared to mount their respective cars during the Car Festival.

On such Navakalevara occasion, Puri witnesses the largest crowd and in recent years, the number of foreign tourists is on the increase.

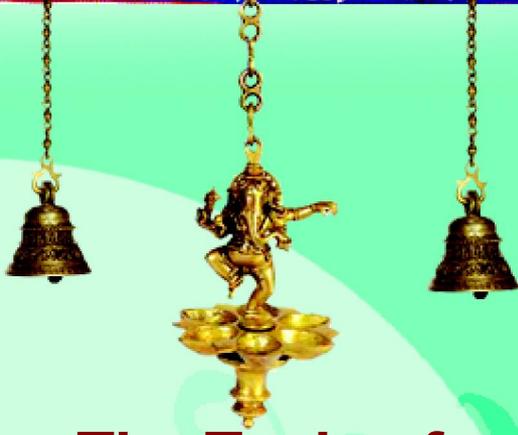
In the Navakalevara, Lord Jaannath is, perhaps, made to play the role of an individual soul on the earth. In this connection, we are reminded of the following description of the Bhagavat Geeta (2/22) -

'Vaasaamsi Jeernaani Yathaa Vihaaya,
Navaani Grihanaati Naroparaani.
Tathaa Sariraani Vihaya Jirnaa
Nayaniani Sanjaati Navaani Dehee.

Jai Jagannath

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.





The Topic of Navakalevara in Garrett's Report

Mahimohan Tripathy



Navakalevara means new body or the periodical renewal of the sacred images of Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath, Devi Subhadra and Sudarshan. There is a wrong conception in the minds of many persons that 'Navakalevara' occurs once in twelve years. During the current century, 'Navakalevara' has taken place in the year 1912, 1931, 1950, 1969, 1977 and in this year i.e. 1996. Thus it is evident that it occurs not exactly at an interval of twelve years. It is performed only when the month of 'Asadha' becomes an intercalary month. In the past, 'Navakalevara' has not been performed in certain years eventhough two 'Asadhas' occurred in those years. In such a year, the various coverings of the Icons were only renovated, but the images were not renewed. This procedure is known as "Srianga Phita". The rituals regarding procurement of Daru (Neem wood), construction of new images, change of life-substance (Brahma) etc. are not done, if only "Srianga Phita" is performed. The last "Srianga Phita" was perhaps done in year 1893.

There is a succinct reference to "Navakalevara" in the report dated the 30th December, 1901 of Mr. A Garrett, Joint Magistrate of Puri, sent to the Government of Bengal. The relevant portion from the report is reproduced below, which may be of interest to the readers.

*****The Kalevar** - The Kalevar has not been performed for so long a time that the word has now become to be regarded as mysterious, and the police authorities of India regard it with the gravest suspicion. Confidential enquiries



have been made from the Central Provinces and other districts in 1893 and 1901 to know what the mysterious word meant. The word is really Kalevara-Bengali and Uriya-Kalebar, meaning the body.

Popularly it is known by a variety of names Kalwa-Kaliwa.

It is one of the festivals depending on certain astronomical conditions. It takes its name from the fact that on the occasion of its celebration, the neem-wood bodies of Lord Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabhadra are renewed in entirety. The astronomical conditions are the occurrence of Do Ashari of two months of Ashar in the same year, i.e., when there is an intercalary month, as when the lunar month of Asar does not coincide with the solar month, and there are two Amavasyas or two new moon days.

This is known as the Mala Mash of Asar. The popular belief in that the festival depends on the durability of the neem-wood of which the figures of the Gods are made.

If the festival depends on astronomical phenomena, this would account for the intervals at which it is celebrated. If the festival falls at an interval of one yuga (12 years) or more, the bodies are entirely renewed and the old ones buried in great secrecy; but if the festival occurs more after than once in 12 years, only a partial renovation is necessary, the point is cleared off and a limb or so removed. This is called Sri Anga Phita.

From the records it appears that a Kalevara took place in 1853, during the latter

half of the life-time of Raja Dibya Singh Dev, and it was attended with an accident resulting in the death of several persons. The next Kalevara was in the 18th Anka of Raja Dibya Singh Deb, which would be about 1877. From the confidential reports of 1893, it appears that it was expected that there would be a Kalevara in 1893, but as the Raja was then a minor, his grand-mother, guardian and Mahafiz Rani Suryamani, Pata Mahadei preferred a Sriangaphita as she was loathe to fulfil popular prediction, that on the occasion of a Kalevara, the carpenter, a Brahmin priest and one of the Raja's family household must die within a year of the celebration.

Last year 1900, there should have been a Kalevara according to the Bengali, but not according to the Uriya almanacs and the latter prevailed.

The Kalevara is not popular with the Raja as it entails a very large outlay of money. The Daitas and the Daitapatis have to be supplied with funds during their journey through the Garjats in quest of the sacred neem logs. The logs have to be brought and carried to Puri. Many Brahmins have to be entertained for the performance of the necessary Jogyans (yajnas) and maunds of ghee to be burnt in ceremonial sacrifice, coarse cloth, gara, silk and satin have to be provided for the new images. The Brahmins, Daitapatis, the Daitas and the carpenters have all to be rewarded with presents of cloths and etc.***

N.B. : Reprinted from Orissa Review, July, 1996.