

A Study on: The Nabakalebara Tradition of Lord Shri Jagannath

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Abstract: -

The Nabakalebara of Lord Jagannath is an important event in Jagannath Temple of Odisha as per Jagannath Sanskruti. The Nabakalebara festival of Lord Jagannath is the most amazing festival in Jagannath Dham Puri. According to Hindu culture, a Human gives up his old body and assumes a new body as per his deeds. The death of every human being is inevitable. Similarly, Lord Jagannath also gives up his ageing body and takes on a new body. Nabakalebara means the rebirth of the deities as per the rituals of Sri mandir Puri. The Soul (Brahma Padartha) of the deities transferred from the old idols to the new idols.

Keywords: -

Nabakalebara, Deities transferred, Rebirth, Ritual, Soul, Equality, Bramha, Mahaprasada

Introduction: -

In Odia language “Naba” means “New”, and “Kalebara” means “Body”. This tradition is called Nabakalebara. In order to keep the equality between the lunar month and solar month, one extra month falls every 32 months. This extra month is also known as Adhimasa, Malamasa or Purushottam Masa. In our Odia Calendar a year in which two “Asadha” months is called “Do-Ashadhi” masa. In the same year, In the month of Asadha, a new idol of Lord Jagannath is made and the Bramha Padartha is placed in it.

Nabakalebara: -

According to the scriptures, statues or idols are 5 types. The names and life spans of those idols which renew or Nabakalebara required are,

1. Mani Vighraha or gem Idols (10 thousand years)
2. Dhatu Vighraha or Metal idol (1 thousand years)
3. Chitra Vighraha or Drawing Idols (1 year)
4. Mrunmaya Vighraha or Clay Idols (1 month)
5. Daru Vighraha or Wooden Idols (12 Years).

Nabakalebara of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Maa Subhadra: -

Usually the “Do-Ashadhi” month falls in 8 years, 11 years, or 19 years. The last Nabakalebara of Lord Jagannath was held in 2015 after a gap of 19 years. In that month, a new idol of Sri Jagannath is made and Brahma Padartha (Known as Heart of Lord Sri Krishana) is installed or put in. The next Nabakalebara festival will be held in 2034.

Brahma Padartha: -

It believed that the Brahma Padartha is the small body parts or the heart of Lord Krishna that was not burnt in a fire in Satya Juga. This body part was later found by the successor of the family of Jara Sabar's named Viswa Vasu. He has kept it in cave in a deep forest. The Buddhists believe that it is the Tooth of Lord Buddha. Some others believe that it is a Live Salagram or some parts of the first Daru which made in Satya Juga, etc. After Ghata Paribartana the old idols are buried at Koili Baikuntha and the Daitapatis perform the Bidhis or rules as per Sri mandira rule.

Agnyamala: -

To find holy neem trees (Darus), Sri Jagannath's 5 Brahmins, 28 Daitapati, 4 Vishwakarma's, Pati Mahapatra, Lenka, Deula Karana and Sri Mandira's Guards come out together and go to Gajapati (Thakura Raja). They carried the Angnyamala (Garlands) of three lords with them. Then the king sends them with a Barani Gua (Traditional Odia Culture of sending notice).

Banajaga Yatra (Forest Journey): -

Nine types of servitors take part in the Banajaga Yatra (Forest Journey). They are Daitapati, Jajamana Bramhana, Biswakarma, Priests of Lord Jagannath Temple, Rajaguru, Pati Mahapatra, Deula Karana, Lenka Sebaka. They go and first spend 3 nights at Jagannath Ballabha Matha. Then they go to Kakatpur Maa Mangala Temple. They take bath in the Prachi River and eat Habisha. Then they all fall at the feet of Maa Mangala as Guharia. Many events like Chandi Patha, Bhajana, Kritana, are performed on the occasion. Then Maa Mangala comes in the dreams the chief priest and directs them in which direction they have to go for searching Darus (Neem tress).

Holy Neem Trees (Daru Trees): -

Then they start their journey to search for the perfect Daru (Neem trees). They examine various neem trees in search of Darus. This new body of the lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Goddess Subhadra and Sudarshana need new Darus (Neem Trees) to be turned to new idols. All Daru trees (special Neem Trees) are different from normal neem trees. The special neem trees should have the following features to be treated as a Daru. Those characteristics are

- The tree has an ant hump at its base
- The tree should be near temples, cemeteries, river or ponds.
- No animals or birds should live in tree.
- Snakes should have guarded the tree.
- No part of tree has been cut before.

Daru transformation or Nabakalebara Yatra: -

This is the final process of Navakalebara Daru Yatra to Sri Jagannath Temple. 4 Darus are loaded on a newly made bullock cart wrapped in patakana and tied with Basunga rope. Chronologically, first the Daru of Sri Sudarshana, then Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and finally the Daru of Maha Prabhu Sri Jagannath are brought to Sri Mandira (Jagannath Temple). After arriving on the Jagannath Road. After a night's stay near Alam Chandi in Atharanala, the Darus enter Sri Mandira through the north door or Devayan route in a procession in the next morning. Similarly, Daru who come from Konark's side, after staying one night with Yagnya Narasingha, go in a procession the next day and enter Koili Baikunth through the north door.

Building Of New Idol: -

On the day of Snana Purnima, the construction of new idols starts after bathing the Darus. The designated person blindfolds his eyes and carefully transforms the Bramha from the old Idol to the new one. The garland of Tulsi used during the transformation of the Bramha remain fresh for a long time. The old bodies of Sri Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra are buried at the back at Koili Baikuntha on Amavasya night. This work starts from Chaitra Masa Shukla Pakshya Dasami Tithi (As per the Odia calendar). All the Shudhi kriya process after the death of a family member are performed as per the Odia culture. On the 10th day all Daitapatis get shaved and wear new clothes. Then on the 11th day, Mahaprasad is offered to all the devotees. This is the certification of the supremacy of Lord Jagannath towards Odia Culture.

After the transformation of Bramha, the Netrotsav festival is observed then and Ratha Yatra follows.

There are various types of rituals performed in this process. All the rituals are performed according to the Veda and Shastras. It is not possible to describe all the procedures step by step. But I have tried to cover the important steps in the Nabakalebara process in brief.

Conclusion

Nabakelabara of Lord Jagannath is a most auspicious ceremony of the Jagannath Temple. It is an important festival of Jagannath Sanskruti of Odisha. The Maha Prabhu Lord Jagannath bless the whole world and also pass a message to human beings that nothing is permanent in the world. The Lord of the Universe teaches us that every creation in the world will decay with time. Again, new things will generate. So, maintain peace and brotherhood in the society and lead a peaceful life.

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