

of one solid block of *nim* wood (*Melia Azadirachta*). The height of Balabhadra is given as 85 *pavas* or a little above 7 ft., 'one *pava* being equal to one inch'.⁴⁵ The heights of Jagannath, Suvadra and Sudarsan are 84, 52 and 84 *pavas* respectively. Jagannath is painted black with brilliant round eyes and a crescent-shaped mouth. The colour of Balabhadra is white and that of Suvadra is yellow. The painting is not directly on the wood, but on silk which is pasted round the wood in several layers. The deities are painted every year during the fortnight preceding the car festival which period is called *Anasara*. The wood is renewed every 12--18 years when there are two months of *Asarah*. The rules and detailed specifications as laid down in *Niladrimohodaya*, Utkala Khanda of *Skanda Purana* and other religious texts are strictly followed at the time of the construction of the deities. The deities are adorned with different kinds of dresses in a day which forms a part of the daily ritual of the temple, and wear festive or ceremonial dresses on specified occasions in a year.

Ritual *

The rituals or *nitis* of the temple of Jagannath may be classified under three heads : (a) the daily *nitis* which are fixed and are observed everyday as of routine course; (b) the special *nitis* according to the speciality of certain days (Thursday, Amabasya, Ekadasi etc.), months, *naksyattras*, eclipses, or some mishaps in the temple, (c) the various festivals observed during the year, some outside the temple and some inside, come under the category of festive *nitis*. Besides these, there are some *nitis* which by tradition are kept secret. These *nitis* are performed by certain section of the temple functionaries according to the old customs and practices and usages of the temple. The procedure followed at the time of *Nabakalebar* of the deities and some rituals during *anasara* come under this category. As there are *nitis* for the main temple of Lord Jagannath, so also there are *nitis* for the subsidiary temples. All the details regarding the *nitis* and usages of the temple of Lord Jagannath find mention in the chronicles of the Temple called the *Madala Panji*, and other sacred texts like *Niladrimahodaya*, *Ksetramahatmya* etc.

The following is a brief account of the daily ritual of Jagannath.

The first *niti* begins in the early morning with the opening of the doors of the temple. The Bhitarchu Mahapatra, a temple servitor, accompanied by Palia Mekap, Pratihari, Akhanda Mekap and Muduli examines the seal put on the main door (Jaya Vijaya Dvara) by the

45. Dr. Kanhu Charan Mishra, Op. Cit., p. 112.

* The accounts given on Rituals, Festivals etc., are based on the Report of the Special officer under the Puri Shri Jagannath Temple (Administration) Act, 1952, and the Record-of-Rights compiled by him.

Talicha Mahapatra on the previous night. If the seal is intact, he breaks it, unlocks the padlock and opens the door. In the same way the door of the inner sanctuary is also opened. The object of this inspection is to see that there has been no defilement of the sacred buildings in which case a purifying ceremony is necessary. After the cleaning of the inner sanctuary Mangal Arati is performed to the chanting of hymns and the play of *mangalavadyam* or auspicious music. This is followed by *mailamlagi* or change of dress. The dress of the previous night is removed and *tadapa* (a kind of dress) is supplied to make the deities ready for the succeeding *niti* of *abakas* i. e., cleaning of teeth, bathing and dressing. The priests pretend to clean the teeth of the deities by sitting in front of the mirrors in which the images are reflected and then bathe them by pouring water on the mirrors. After the deities are adorned with new clothes, flowers and ornaments *sahana mela* takes place i. e., the devotees are allowed to go near *Ratnavedi* to have a closer view of the deities. After *sahana mela* is over the deities again change their dress. In the meanwhile *rosa homa* or starting of the sacred fire to cook the Lord's food in the kitchen, Surya Puja and Dvarapala Puja are performed. *Gopal Ballabha* consisting of sweetmeats, fruits, curd, butter, green coconut, etc., are offered to the deities by way of early breakfast. The next important *niti* is Sakal Dhupa or Raj Bhoga served at 10 a. m. in which various preparations of black gram like Bada Kanti, Sana Kanti, Enduri; other preparations like Matha-Puli, Hansakeli, Kakatua, Jhili, Ada Panchedi, Sag, Khechedi, Pitha-puli, Bundia Khiri are offered. Betel-nut is offered to the deities at each meal time. Next follows the change of dress and then the Bhogamandapa Bhoga. The food offerings made at the Bhogamandapa or Refectory is not a part of the compulsory routine of *nitis* followed in the temple. It is traditionally done in order to facilitate the pilgrims, the various *mathas* and other institutions, private individuals as well as the Suaras (temple cooks) who sell *Mahaprasad*, to offer *bhog* in large quantities, as in *sakal dhupa* offerings from the Temple fund only are allowed, besides the offerings of a few other persons who have got rights for it. *Madhyana dhupa* or mid-day meal is offered at 1. p. m. in which rice, pulses, vegetables and a variety of other items of food are offered. It is on record that as many as 435 items of food were being offered to the deities at this *dhupa* in 1910. After their mid-day meal the gods change their dress and enjoy a siesta, the cots being taken from the store room and placed in front of them. Betel-nut, green coconut and perfumed water are kept by the side of the cots and Arati is performed. The doors are then sealed. In the evening the doors are again opened by an elaborate procedure as in the morning. The Sandhya Arati is performed at 6 p.m.

The next *niti* is Sandhya Dhupa in which rice is not offered, but sweets and other preparations of various kinds like Kanla-puli, Takua, Matha-puli, Bhoga-pitha, Gotali, Kakara, Khuruma, Amalu, Jhadaineda, Kadamba and Subas-pakhal form the speciality of the *dhupa*. Elaborate rituals including special Aratis are performed after which the inner sanctuary is thrown open for the public. Next follows the change of dress of the deities, and *chandanalagi* i. e., sandal paste is applied to the person of the holy ones. The gods are again dressed with new clothes, flower crests, garlands, Tulsi (holy basil), etc., at about 10:30 p. m. which is known as *badasinghar besa*. *Badasinghar bhoga* is offered at about 11:30 p. m. The last *nitis* are *bina-lagi*, *gana*, *khataseja-lagi*, *puspanjali*, *pahuda*, *muda* and *sodha*. The couches are put in front of the Ratnavedi. Three green coconuts are placed close by with some betel-nut and flowers. The Vinakar Sevaka plays on Vina to lull the deities to sleep. Gita Govinda of the famous Oriya poet Jayadeva is recited. Thus the gods are left to their slumber. The doors are then sealed by Talicha Mahapatra with his golden seal. All persons excepting those required to watch the temple are cleaned out of the Temple precincts. This, in short, is the daily round of *nitis* of the Lord.

On Thursdays, Amavasyas (new moon day), Ekadasi (11th day of the dark or bright fortnight), or when the temple precincts are defiled due to the death of a person or other mishaps special *nitis* are performed which have been termed as periodical *nitis*. In winter months from *Odhan Sasthi*, the 6th day of the waxing moon of Margasira (November-December) up to Basanta Panchami and in a modified form up to Phagu Dasami in Falguna (February-March) the deities are dressed in warm raiments which is called *ghodalagi*. Weekly retouching of the deities with paints (on Wednesday or Thursday) called *banaklagi* or *srimukh simhar* is another such periodical *niti*.

Festivals

Festivals are common to all the religions and they are to provide for the laity mirth, gaiety and entertainment mixed with religious ardour. More than sixty-five ⁴⁶ festivals are celebrated in a year in honour of Jagannath and most of them find mention in the annual almanacs of Orissa. Snana Yatra, Gundicha or Ratha Yatra, Sayana, Daksinayana, Uttarayana, Parsvapari-bartana, Utthapana, Pravarana, Pusyapuja, Dola, Damanaka Utsava and Chandana Yatra are called the *Dvadasa Yatra* or the twelve main festivals of Jagannath. ⁴⁷ (A

46. Report of the Special Officer under the Puri Shri Jagannath Temple (Administration) Act, 1952.

47. Jagabandhu Singh, *Prachina Utkala*, Orissa Sahitya Akademi Publication, p.524.