



Daily Rituals of Lord Jagannath



Bhagaban Mahapatra

The daily rituals of Lord Jagannath performed in the temple are popularly known as *nitis*, which signifies a particular religious rite. The religious rites are performed by the particular *sevakas*. For the performance of various rituals in the temple, a large number of *sevakas* use to extend their services on hereditary basis. The *nitis* start functioning daily from 5 AM in the morning to 12 in the mid night. Everyday rituals reflects the life style of God which closely characterizes human attributes; that is the rituals of bathing, brushing of teeth, dressing up, taking of food at certain intervals and at night (*pahuda niti*) to take rest etc. It is believed that this system has been in force from 13th Century A.D. when Ganga king Anangabhim Dev was the ruler of Orissa. He had completed the construction the present temple, installed the deities, introduced the daily rituals, appointed different *sevakas* to perform these rituals. These *sevakas* are not remunerated on monthly basis for their duties but they are entitled to receive a portion of *Kotha-bhog* daily which is known as *khei*. As per R.O.R.(record of rights) of the temple prepared in 1952, about 119 categories of *sevakas* perform the daily rituals of Lord. Gajapati Maharaja of Puri is regarded as first *sevak*(*Adya sevak*) of Lord. Some *sevakas* are presently paid daily according to a prescribed scale fixed by the Managing Committee of the temple which is known as *puraskar*. There is a provision of special *puraskar*

by the temple administration during car festival to most of *sevakas* for their satisfactory performance of *seva*.

In Sri Jagannath temple the timing and methods of rituals which are performed on daily basis are given below :-

Dwaraphita and Mangal Alati (5 AM)

Dwaraphita means opening of the entrance door of *Garbhagriha* of the temple at 5 AM. Presence of five servitors (*Bhitarachhu Mohapatra*, *Muduli*, *Pratihari*, *Akhaanda Mekap* and *Palia Mekap*) are essential for performance of *Dwarapitha* rite. Their duty is to examine the seal on pad locks that has been placed in the last night at the time of *Pahuda niti*.

After *Dwaraphita niti*, *Mangal Alati* i.e. offering of sacred lamps to deities starts by *Bhitarachhu Mohapatra* and two other *Pushpalak* *sevakas* standing below the *Ratnavedi*.

Mailam (6 AM)

After offering of sacred lamp i.e. *Mangal Alati*, *Mailam niti* starts. *Mailam* means change of dress used by God in night. The *sevakas* engaged for this *niti* are *Pushpalaks* (three persons; *Khuntia*, *Changada Mekapa* and *Dhoba* (washer-man)). After removal of night dress, the deities wear another set of dress called *Tadap* and *Uttariyas* for taking bath in the morning. Everyday deities wear clean and washed clothes



which are washed by Dhoba sevak who is a Brahmin by caste.

Abakash (6 AM- 6.30 AM)

Abakash means brushing of teeth and bathing of deities. This niti are performed by servitors like Pushpalak, Suarbadu, Paniapat, Mukhapakhal sevak, Khuntia, Darpania, Pratihari, Amla Ghatuary, Bhandar Mekap, Mahabhoi and Khurinayak. Three Pushpalaks perform this bathing niti on three brass mirror kept in front of deities, sprinkle water mixed with camphor, curd, amla and sandal paste wood. Before this niti, they also perform both brushing and scrapping tongue of deities through the brass mirror stand on which the image of deities reflect. During this niti, the astrologer of the temple (Jyotish) reads out the tithi and other astrological information of the day.

Besa Mailam (6.45 AM)

In this niti, the deities change their cloths (tadap and uttariya) and wear another set of clean dress. The servitors associated with this niti are Pushpalak, Changada Mekap, Suarbadu and Dhoba etc. From the dress of deities one can understand the day of the week. It means for seven days of the week, the deities are dressed with seven different colours. For Sunday, deities wear red coloured Patta, for Monday black and white colour, for Tuesday Barapatia Patta, for Wednesday Patta of blue colour, for Thursday Patta of yellow colour, for Friday Patta of white colour and for Saturday Patta of black colour.

Sahanamela (7 AM to 8 AM)

Sahanamela, a local term which means public are allowed to have a close and free darshan of deities in Garbhagriha near the Ratna Vedi. This opportunity normally comes once in a day and on some specific festive days twice in a day i.e. after Sandhya Alati. During Sahanamela devotees are not allowed to touch the deities. The Sahanamela niti continues for one hour. For this

purpose sevakas such as Pushpalak, Khuntia, Mekap, Tadaukaran, Gochhikar, Pratihari, Suarbadu and some temple police personnel remain alert. Sometimes depending on volume of gathering Sahanamela Darshan continues to one hour more.

Besha Ulagi

Besh Ulagi means change of dress. After Sahanamela niti, besha ulagi niti starts between 8 AM to 8.30 AM in the morning. During this niti the deities are dressed with the specific colour of the day and gold ornaments studded with precious stones. Besides, the deities are decorated with scented flower ornaments i.e. Guna, Jhumpa, Adharamala and Tulasi garland.

Rosa Homa

The scheduled time for this niti is normally to start at 8.30 AM. Rosa Home means oblation to the fire in the kitchen of Lord. After this niti, the fire is used in the hearths of kitchen of Lord. Performance of this niti is the duty of temple Purohit, a Brahmin, but Pujapanda sevakas are presently doing this niti. Generally Rosa Home and Besa Ulagi nitis are performed at one time. It is a matter of surprise that the kitchen of Lord is such that in a very short time food for ten thousand people can be prepared and even on specific festive day lakhs of people get the opportunity to take Mahaprasad from the temple. It is therefore a rarest place in the world.

Surya Puja

Surya Puja means worship to Sun God which is performed near Muktimandap inside the temple. For this niti Pujapanda, Suarbadu, Patribadu, Garabadu and Ghatuari servitors remain present.

Dwarapala Puja

Dwarapala Puja means worship to the gatekeepers of Lord. They are Jaya and Bijaya. This puja is performed by a Pujapanda sevak near



Natamandap of the temple. This indicates Lord Jagannaths' greatness. He offers food first to his gatekeeper before he takes.

Gopala Ballav Bhoga

This indicates the breakfast niti of Lord. The scheduled time for this niti is about 9 AM. in the morning. Gopala ballav bhoga consists of Khai, Kora, Khua laddu, fruits ripe banana etc. After the puja, the deities are offered pana (betel) which is Lords favorite. Three pujapandas perform this niti.

Sakal Dhupa (Morning Meal)

The word Dhupa means offering of bhoga to deities. The prescribed time for Sakal Dhupa is about 10 AM morning. The sakal dhupa is commonly known as Kotha Bhoga or Raja Bhoga. Earlier Gajapati Maharaja of Puri was the Superintendent of the temple and he used to bear the entire cost of this morning meal of Lord. At present the cost is born by the temple administration as the management of the temple has been taken over by the Government of Orissa. Three Pujapandas perform this puja in the garbhagriha sitting on Ratnavedi. Supakaras known as Suar who used to cook the food carry the same in kudua (earthen pot) to the garbhagriha for the purpose of puja. After the puja, alati is offered to deities by the Pujapanda.

After alati, a certain portion of Prasad is taken to the temple of mother Bimala where it is reoffered to Goddess Bimala and thereafter it becomes Mahaprasad. The glories of Mahaprasad have been described in Padma Puran. The sakal dhupa consists of Kanika(sweet rice) khechudi, Dal, vegetable curries, fried vegetables etc. Besides various types of cakes (pitha) like Kanti, Mathapuli, Hansapuli and jhili etc are offered to the deities.

Mailama

After Sakal dhupa, the deities change their dresses, which are known as Mailam. After this niti, Bhoga Mandap niti starts.

Bhoga Mandap Bhoga

The prescribed time for this niti is about 11 AM. A large quantity of bhoga such as rice, dal, vegetable curry of different types, cakes of different kinds are offered to the deities in a big hall known as Bhoga Mandap Griha at the back side of Garuda Stambha in Natamandira of the temple. This bhoga is prepared by the Suaras on commercial basis to provide large quantity of food to the public. The temple administration does not bear any cost for this bhoga. Three Pujapandas perform this puja in Bhogamandap Griha. On certain festive occasion and depending on high demand of bhoga, bhogamandap bhoga may be performed two to three times a day after Dwiprahara dhuapa (mid-day meal).

Dwiprahara Dhupa (mid-day meal)

The time for this dhupa is prescribed at 1 PM. This niti is performed in the same manner as in Sakal dhupa. Three Pujapandas perform this puja in Garbhagriha with same categories of food arranged in Sakal dhupa. After puja, alati is offered to deities and certain portion of food is re-offered to mother Bimala. Varieties of cakes are offered to deities.

Madhyan Pahuda(mid-day rest)

If nitis are performed in time and time permits, the deities retire between 1.30 PM and 2 PM. During this time, Jaya Bijaya dwar and Beheran dwar (south gate facing to Muktimandap) remain closed.

Sandhya Alati (Evening lamp offering)

If there is Madhyan Pahuda, after opening of doors, the deities change their dresses. This niti is performed by Taluchha and Palia Pushpalak. If there is no Madhyan Pahuda, then after Madhyan dhupa and change of dress, sandhya alati niti is performed. In this niti, the deities are decorated with large quantity of scented and favourite flowers along with Tulasi. This sight is really unforgettable one.



Sandhya Dhupa (Evening meal)

The prescribed time for this niti is about 8 PM. This puja is performed by Pujapandas in same manner as in sakal and madhyanna dhupa. Items of food offered to deities are Subas Pakhal(water mixed rice) and pitha(cakes) like Mahapuli, Takua, Bhogapitha, Kakara, Chadheineda, and Amalu. After puja, alati is offered.

Mailam and Chandanalagi

If time permits sometimes Sahanamela (public darshan) is allowed free of cost to the public for going to Garbhagriha. If there is no Sahanamela, then mailam i.e. change of dress and Chandanalagi niti means sandal wood paste mixed with camphor, kasturi and kesar is applied on the body of deities. This niti is performed by the Pushpalak sevak assisted with Suarbadu, Ghatuari. Muduli, Palia Mekap, Garabadu and Hadap Naik and Palia Khuntia, Palia Padhiari.

Badasinghara Besa

After Chandanalagi, the deities are dressed up again which is known as Badasinghar Besa. It is the last besa niti of deities and with this besa deities retire in bed for the night. In this besa the deities put on Barulagi patta on which his most favourite song Gitagovinda verse is woven. The deities are decorated with scented flowers ornament like Chandrika, Padak Tilak, Jhumpa and Chausara. Really this besa is very very beautiful and at this moment the environment is such that one can not remove his sight and like to gaze till end of the besa. The deities look so nice and magnificent that cannot be expressed in words.

Badasinghar Dhupa

After besa, Badasinghar Dhupa starts at about 11 PM at night. The items of food offered to deities are Pakhal, Kanji and Kadalibhaja. The puja is performed by the Pujapandas in the Garbhagriha on the basis of Pancha Upachar Puja which takes a little time to over. After puja, Alati is offered by Pujapandas.

Khata Sejulagi and Pahuda

This is the last niti of the day and the time is around 12 mid-night provided nitis are performed in time. The arranged bed and bed sheets of the deities are taken to Garbhagriha. Then the Sayan Thakur is brought from the Bhandar ghara and at Jaya Bijay Dwar a niti is performed in which Paida (green coconut) is offered to deities along with pana (betel nuts). There after alati is offered. The Sayan Thakur is then taken to Ratnavedi and placed near Lord Jagannath. During this niti, Bada Chhata Math performs kirtan and bhajan, the essence of which is to please the deities at the time of retiring to bed. After this the deities retire to bed, lamps are made off and the Kalahat dwar, Jaya Bijaya dwar and Beheran dwar are sealed by the sevak Taluchha Mahapatra. Then all visitors and sevakas are allowed to vacate the temple premises. Some special temple police men remain inside the temple to make watch and ward at night.

In addition to above daily prescribed nitis, there are some other nitis which are special in character such as: Ekanta niti on Thursday, Nakhetra Bandapan, Ekadasi niti, Amabasya niti, Sagar Bijay, Banaka lagi, Solar and Lunar eclipse niti and Mahasnan niti are also performed in the temple.

In fact, although prescribed time for each niti has been fixed, it is not correctly adhered to for which delay occurs in performing the nities. Further nities are so correlated that unless earlier one is completed next one cannot be performed. It is traditionally fixed. As particular servitors' attendance is necessary for particular niti, sometimes punctuality is not correctly adhered to by the sevaks in the temple, for which daily rituals of deities are delayed.

Bhagaban Mahapatra lives at Sarbodaya Nagar, Sri Gundicha Vihar, Puri-752002.