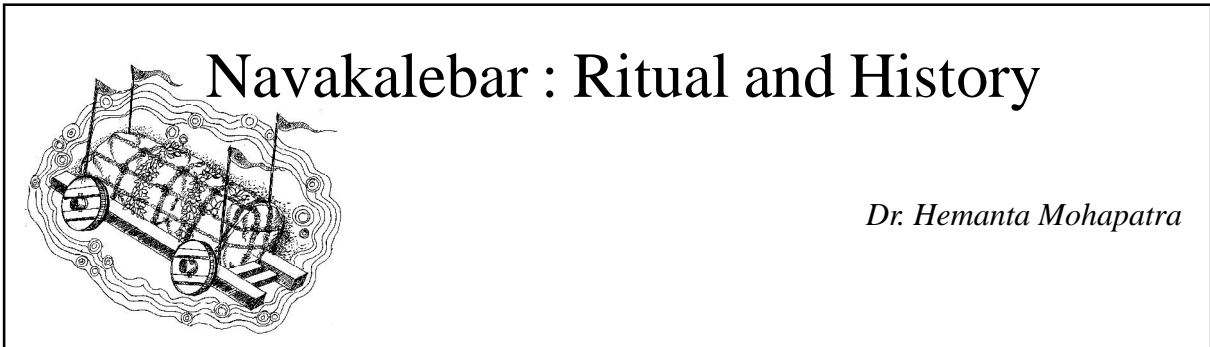




Body decays. Soul lives on. As the soul is eternal it needs new body at times. On the basis of this concept renewal of the wooden *Chaturddhamurati* (the four deities on *Ratnasinghasan* of *Srimandira* at Puri is required. *Navakalebar* is in fact the combination of two words namely *nava* and *kalebar* which mean 'new body' respectively. So the assumption of new body (shape) may be called *Navakalebar*. In Jagannath cult it is a periodical renewal of the wooden images of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan. *Navakalebar* ritual is not a yearly feature in the Jagannath *dham*. Generally it occurs on 12th and 19th year of the previous *Navakalebar*.

'*Purushottamamasa*'. The four deities of Ratnasinghasan undergo the process of *Navakalebar* in the year in which falls this *Adhimasa*.

Periodical renewal of the bodies of the deities is required because the images are carved out of wood and not from durable materials like stone and jewels. The images are actually made out of *Nimba* wood. Wooden images are not generally used for the worship in the other shrines. But in the case of *Srikshetra* the images are wooden ones. *Nimba* wood is considered to be one of the best and most auspicious materials for making the images of *Vinshnu*.¹ Regarding the carving of images from wood *Bhavishya Puran*



Navakalebar : Ritual and History

Dr. Hemanta Mohapatra

The principle adopted to fix the year of *Navakalebar* is to find a year in which there are two *Aasadhas* (*Doaasadhas*), or the month of *Aasadha* in which there are two fullmoons. In the Lunar Hindu calendar in every three years a lunar month is excluded from calculation to strike a balance between the lunar and solar years. This period is called "*Adhimasa*". It is also known as a 'Malamasa'. No auspicious rites are conducted in this month by common human beings. But for the spiritual purpose this month is very much auspicious. Hindu religious scriptures depict this *Adhimasa* as highly auspicious and suitable for all types of spiritual attainments. As a '*Doaasadha*' is considered very much connected with the cult of Sri Jagannath it is also called a

has given an exhaustive guidance when it states that wood of different trees will be used in making of images by different castes.²

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Auspicious for Brahmins | - <i>Suradaru, Sami, Madhuka, Chandana</i> |
| Auspicious for Kshatriyas | - <i>Arista Khadira, Tinduka, Asvastha</i> |
| Auspicious for Vaishyas | - <i>Khadira, Chandan</i> |
| Auspicious for Sudras | - <i>Kesara, Amra, Sala, Sarjaka.</i> |
| Auspicious for all castes. | - <i>Nimba, Sriparma, Panasa, Arjuna</i> |

So the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan are being carved out of *Nimba* wood as Lord Jagannath is worshipped by all castes and the other deities are his



associates. Such a view is confirmed by the *Bhavishya Purana* in its chapter 131 and sloka. Further the *Vaikhanasagama* says that woods are of three genders; male, female, neuter. *Nimba* belongs to the male category. *Nimba* is also considered as the strongest and the best wood material for the carving out of *Vishnu* images. *Nimba* is also not damaged by pests and insects.

By worshipping the wooden *Vigrahas* the worshippers get the four vital ingredients of life like *Ayu* (longevity), *Sri* (Wealth and Beauty), *Vala* (strength) and *Jaya* (victory). Whereas by worshipping images made of stone or jewels or other *dhatu*s (metals) one can get only one or two of the aforesaid ingredients of life. Texts like *Kasyapasilpa* and *Vishnu Samhita* also recommend for the carving of images from wood. The *sabaras* (a tribal community) of Odisha are also in the habit of worshipping wooden images. As *Jagannath* is most probably a tribal God his image is carved out of *Daru* (wood).

This *Navakalebara* rituals is also called *Jirna Bera Parityaga*, literally means leaving the old deity and consecration of new one. Twenty second verse of the second chapter of *Srimat Bhagavat Gita* mentions

“*Vasansi jirmani yatha Vihaya
Navani grhnati naroparani
Tatha sarirani vihaya jirna-
nyanyani sanyati navani dehi*”³

As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless one. This philosophical view stands as the background of the tradition of *Navakalebara* of Sri *Jagannath*.

The rituals associated with the tradition of Navakalebar

The ritual of *Navakalebar* formally starts on the tenth *Tithi* of the fullmoon day of the month of *Chaitra* (*chaitra sukla Dashami*). Commanded by the *Gajapati Maharaja*,

Vidyapati, *Daitas* and the Brahmins well versed with the Vedas make preparation to go in search of the *Daru* or tree. The details of the party goes to fetch the *Daru* is as follows. The number given below is minimum. More members can join the party.

- 1) *Patimahapatra* - 01
- 2) *Daitapaties* - 20-30 members
- 3) *Sui Daitapati* - 03
- 4) *Lenka* (who holds the *Sudarshan Chakra*) - 01
- 5) *Deula Karan* - 01-03

This party is also accompanied by a police party of sufficient numbers to ensure the smooth travel of *Daru* to *Srimandir*. The police has to manage the crowd and see that no harm is done to the *Darus* at the time of transportation.

In *Srimandir*, the functions start after the mid-day ‘*Dhupa*’ of the deities on *Sukla Dashami of Chaitra*. The blessings of the Lord is sought. A garland of twelve feet made specially for the day is offered to the Lord and his siblings. After worshipping the Lord the garland which is now named “*Ajnyamala*” or the garland as a token of Lord’s permission, is given to *Patimahapatra*, who is there to lead the procession to fetch the ‘*Daru*’. He would from then on carry the huge garland until the sacred tree is located.

After getting the *ajnyamala* the *Patimahapatra* and four *Daitapaties* carry it to the “*Anasarapindi*”, where all of them put on new clothes provided for the occasion. Both garland and the clothes are significant in the sense that it is indicative of the Lord himself travelling with them. *Patta* clothes used by the Lord are also given to the *Lenka* family representatives and the nine *Maharanas* who accompany the group. Once the *Mekap* family members touch the forehead of each members of the procession with the Lord’s sandal, the procession officially takes



off. They also go to Jagannath Ballav *math*. The Gajapati Maharaja of Puri after offering auspicious articles such as unboiled rice, cocoonut and pieces of cloth to *Daitapaties*, make formal request to start for the forest in search of *Daru*.

From the palace of the Gajapati Maharaja the party proceeds to Jagannath Ballav Matha and from there they go to the famous temple of Mangala at Kakatpur, a village around 60 Km from Puri. There the party stays at *Deulimath* for several days and the oldest Daitapati sleeps inside the temple. He must have a dream during this stay in which the goddess Mangala tells them the exact location of the '*Darus*'. The tree for each of the four deities is found in different places. The stay of the party at Kakatpur varies from 15 to 30 days. During this time they live on the *Prasad* of Maa Mangala. Sometimes *Mahaprasad* from Srimandir is also supplied to them. After the dream in which Maa Mangala reveals the location of the *Darus*, the party goes on its mission to find out them.

Identification of the Darus

For the identification of the Darus the following conditions and signs are taken into consideration. The *Daru of Sudarshan* should have three branches. The skin (bark) of the *nimba* tree should be reddish. The tree should have a sign of *chakra* with a small of depression in the middle.

The *Daru of Balabhadra* should have seven branches. The skin of the tree should be of light brown or white colour. It should have a sign of plough and pestle etc. Nearby the tree there should be a heritage and also a graveyard etc.

The *Daru of Subhadra* should have five branches. The bark of the tree should be yellowish. There should be the sign of lotus flower on the tree.

The *Daru of Sri Jagannath* should have four main branches. The bark of the tree should be dark in colour. The tree should have the sign of *Sankha* and *chakra* on it. There should be a cremation ground near the tree. There should be an anthill near the tree and a snake hole at the roots of the tree. The tree should be near a river or pond or a crossing of the three ways or else to be surrounded by three mountains. There should not be nests of birds on the tree and no bird have ever perched over the tree. The tree should be surrounded by other trees preferably *Varuna*, *Sahada*, *Belva*. There should be a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva in the neighbourhood. There should be some heritage nearby and the tree should be free from *Nirmulilata* (Parasite plants) and creepers.

For the information of the readers the following table is inserted to show the places from where the *Darus* of different deities were located in the *Navakalebaras* of 20th Century.

Year	Daru of Jagannath	Balabhadra	Subhadra	Sudarshan
16 th July, 1912	Prataprudrapur	Niali	Polar Mahal	Fetehgarha
17 th July, 1931	Gabapada	Satwikpur	Niali	Kakatpur
16 th July, 1950	Khadihara	Nuapatna	Durgeswar	Jalarpur
16 th July, 1969	Champajhar	Bhakar Street	Kanhupur	Balara
18 th July, 1977	Rayachakradharpur	Bhogeswar	Baraboi	Niali
17 th July, 1996	Dadhimachhagadia	Ramakrushnapur	Malada	Bisoidiha



On discovering the tree the Daitapati places the garland (*Ajnamala*) on the tree. They clean the place around the tree and sprinkle perfumed water on the place. Then they erect a platform and an altar for the performance of Vana-Jaga ceremony on the foot of the tree. The party also erect huts in a nearby place and establish a temporary *Sabar palli* there. The search party stays in this 'Sabar palli'.

All the four *Acharyas* namely *Brahma*, *Adhwarju*, *Hota* and *Udgata* conduct the *Yajna*. Daitapati, *Vidyapati* (*Patimahapatra*) and carpenters participate in this holy fire. The Daitas and other attendants sit in meditation for three days. At the end of the *Vanayaga* the *Vidyapati* touches the tree with a golden axe. The *Daitapati* touches the tree with a silver axe. Lastly the head wood carver of the *Maharana* family would touch it with iron axe. During the cutting of the tree, the 108 names of the God are chanted incessantly. Once the tree is felled the entire trunk along with the branches are placed in a wooden cart (*sagadi*) and dragged by the Daitapatis and others in the group to the temple of Sri Jagannath at Puri. The *Sagadi* has four wheels and should be newly built.

Thus the trees for making of the four images are located from different places (as shown in the previous table). All the sacred logs are covered by new silken clothes and drawn by the *sevakas* are brought to the temple compound through northern gate and kept at *Koili Baikuntha*. 'Koili' means a living being. *Koili Baikuntha* is a place where *jiva* mingles with the ultimate soul (*paramatma*). That means here in *Koili Baikuntha*, living being gets his salvation. 'Koili Baikuntha' is the most primitive place and Sri Jagannath has emerged from this place. During the *Navakalebara* this *Koili Baikuntha* assumed the status of utmost importance.

Carving of images from the Daru

On the Snana Purnima day, the sacred logs are bathed simultaneously with the old deities.

Then they are taken to their sheds named *Daru Ghara* (stacks for the sacred logs). One hundred and eight Brahmins perform prescribed rituals and the construction works of the images begin. The carving of the images begin with three oldest wood carvers taking the charge of carving the images of Sri Jagannath. The images of the Lord Balabhadra and Subhadra are simultaneously carved by two other teams consisting of three carvers each. More than fifty carpenters work as assistants to the main carvers.

The work is done with utmost confidentiality and not even the head priest of the temple is allowed to visit the place of the work. There is a special enclosure inside the temple premises where the carving of the Lord is done. The enclosure is open at the top but is attached with very strong doors. The wood carvers are not supposed to consume any thing (eat, drink or smoke) once inside the enclosure. The carvings are completed in 21 days and during these 21 days the carvers are not supposed to leave the temple premises. They would sleep in the temple courtyard and have their dinner in the form of Mahaprasad. Devotional songs are sung outside the *Koili Baikuntha* day and night throughout during this period of 21 days. This chanting of devotional songs is called 'Akhandha Bhajan'. It is sung by the Devadasis and temple musicians. The Brahmin priests chant *Vedas* continuously.

According to *Niladri Mahodaya* the image of Sri Jagannath is based on *Cakrayantra*. The significance of presenting the *Cakrayantra* for Jagannath is evident from the colour of Chakra as well as that of the deity and the name *Cakradhari* given to Jagannath. At the time of carving of the image it is seen that the height of the image of Sri Jagannath is 5'7". The image of Balabhadra is 5'5" high and is based on *Sankhayantra*. This is prescribed for Balabhadra as the colour of the *Sankha* (conch) is white. The image of Subhadra is based on *Padmayantra*.



This is appropriate because the colour of Subhadra is the same that of *Padma* (Lotus). The image of Subhadra is less than 5'. Sudarshan image is erected in the form of long log. The image of Sudarshan is based on the *Gadayantra*. Its height is 5' 10".

Ghata Paribartana

After completion the images are brought to the 'Anasarapindi' inside the main temple after circumambulation for three times. The new images are carried inside the inner sanctum of the temple and placed in front of the old deities facing them. This is again an act that is done with utmost confidentiality as nobody is allowed inside for a *Darshan* of the Lord, not even the temple priests. The three new deities are carried inside only by descendants of the *Daitapati* family.

The '*Ghata Paribartan*' or transfer of *Brahma* from the old to new deities is performed by *Pati Mahapatras* in the dead of the night of the *Krishna Chaturdashi of Asadha*.⁴ Generally the three oldest men among the *Pati Mahapatras* perform this secret ritual of transferring the *mysterious Brahma*. The right of this great transformation are accorded only to the *Daitapaties* as they are considered to be the descendants of the *Daitapati* who was the first worshipper of Lord Jagannath. This ceremony takes place three days before the Chariot festival. The *ghata parivartan* is complete once the 'Brahma' or *pinda* is transferred from the old deities to the new ones.

During this act of *ghata parivartan* the *Daitapaties* must adhere to certain rules and regulations. They are as follows:

- The three *Daitapaties*, one each for Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra must be blindfolded.
- They must bind a piece of Lord Jagannath's cloth around their hands during the entire process of *ghata parivartan*.

- This rite is considered to be the most auspicious ritual of all in the temple of Sri Jagannath. This *ghata parivartan* or the transferring the *pinda* from the old to new deities is the real *navakalevara* ceremony. The three *Daitapaties* fast and meditate the whole day inside the temple. Only after the midnight does the transfer of the *Brahma Padartha* occur and that to in total silence.
- The members of all *Daitapati* families wear new clothes on this day of transfer of 'Brahma'. The secret ritual (*ghata parivartan*) is performed on *Amavasya* (dark moon day) in the total darkness of mid night. A special *bhoga* is offered to the old deities before transfer of the *Brahma*. This *Bhoga* is known as the *Sarbanga Pankti Bhoga*. This is the last *bhoga* of the old deities. Only after that the *Brahma* is transferred from the old to the new deities. As soon as the *Brahma Padartha* is taken out of deity, the corresponding deity is considered dead. The dead deity is then loaded on the cart on which the corresponding new deity was brought and carried to the *Koili Baikuntha*. The deities are buried in the same grave where the previous deities were buried. But interestingly remaining of previous burial was never found in the grave. During this time not only the old deities are buried but also all the subsidiary deities (*Parswa devatas*) of the three chariots are also buried here and new subsidiary deities are made for next car festival.⁵
- The old images along with their beds, pillows are buried in the wells of *Koili Baikuntha* and the *Daitas* observe mourning till the tenth day and on the eleventh day, they perform *Suddhikriya* as it is done after the death of the member of a family. The *Daitas* consider Lord Jagannath as the head of their family.



- During the midnight, when the old deities are buried in the *Koili Baikuntha* there is darkness not only in the Srimandir, but also in the entire Puri town. It is said that if anybody from outside happen to see this secret rite, be it from a roof top or otherwise, he is sure to die. The Government of Odisha therefore orders a full blackout of light on this night in the whole town of Puri.

There is a general curiosity among all to know what this *Brahma Padartha* or *Pinda*. What is it ? Different religious sects have different assumption on it. But nothing is confirmed and beyond doubt. The Buddhists see the *Brahma Padartha* (the soul matter) mysteriously hidden inside the body of Lord Jagannath is a tooth of Gautam Buddha. The *Vaishnavas* say that it is to be a live '*Shalagrama*' (a pebble with natural symbols) which fell from heaven into the Gomati river of Nepal. The tribals think that this *Brahma Padartha* is nothing but the unburnt navel portion of Srikrushna.

Noone has seen the *Brahma Padartha* till now, the mystery relating to this topic is still unrevealed. When asked of their experience at the time of *ghata parivartan*, the *Daitapaties* say, it is very difficult rather impossible to express the feeling of the *Brahma or Pinda*. But a powerful feeling is very much present, like a rabbit jumping in our hands. This is our experience. Beyond this exactly what this *Brahma* is that is so powerfully felt, nobody is able to say.⁶

The Tribal (Savara) tradition during Navakalevara

The impact of the Sabaras on the Jagannath cult is well known. In the temple tradition they are known as *Daitapaties*. Their service to the main deities became multiplied in the process of *Navakalebar*. As they are the family members of the Lord Jagannath they perform all the secret works of *Navakalebar*

including the transferring of the '*Brahma*'. After the burial of the old images they observe funeral rites for 10 days and undergo *suddhi* on the eleventh day.

One Jara Savara had killed Sri Krishna in a place (*Sialilata Kunja*) which is identified with the present *Koili Baikuntha* or *Kaivalya Baikuntha*. The *Sabaras* too had found the '*Indranilamani*' from this place. Biswabasu was the son of Jara Sabar. He was worshipping the *Nilamadhav* in the Blue mountain.

Jara Sabara aimed his arrow at the lively lotus feet of Sri Krishna on the *Krishna Chaturdashi tithi of Asadha*. The memory of the myth even today leads to the celebration of *Navakalebara* on the fourteenth day of dark fortnight of *Asadha*. During the '*anasara*' all the '*sevas*' connected to the Deities are performed by the *Daitas* which means the most beloved ones.

Navakelebar in history

From the outset it must be made clear that there is no pure historical evidence about the primitiveness of this *navakalebar* ritual. However efforts are made to construct a continuous story of the *navakalebar* festival from semi historical sources. Sometimes myths and hearsays are also analysed along with the Jagannath temple chronicle '*Madalapanji*' to construct a trustworthy history of *Srimandir*.

From the description of *Madalapanji* the first *Navakalebara* is assumed to have taken place during the reign of the Somavamshi ruler Jajati. In the 2nd anka of *Sovandev* one foreigner *Raktabahu* had invaded Puri. *Raktabahu* has been identified differently by different historians. Dr. *Krushnachandra Panigrahi* identified *Raktabahu* as the *Rastrakuta* ruler *Govinda III*. He is of the view that *Sovandev* of *Madalapanji* is none other than the *Bhaumakara* king *Subhakardev I*. *R.D.Banerjee* identified this



Raktabahu with a Kushan commander-in-chief. Some other historians are of view that Raktabahu was a Srilankan invader, who came to Puri by sea-route and created havoc in Srikshetra. So the very name 'Raktabahu' is a fictitious character but the event associated with this name was a fact. Out of fear of such an invasion the priests of Puri had shifted the deities to Sonepur (Suvarnapur) where the deities were kept under earth near a banyan tree in the village Gopalgaon. In this 'Patali' condition the deities were kept for one hundred and forty four years. The deities were rescued in dilapidated condition by king Yajati of Somavamshi dynasty. This king built a temple for the deities, organized the ritual of *Navakalebara* and the deities of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan were installed on *Ratna Singhasan*. There is no evidence to prove that any other Somavamshi ruler had organized *Nabakalebar* of the deities.

Historically the next *Navakalebara* took place at the time of the Ganga king Ananta Varman Chodagangadev. He built the temple of Sri Jagannath and installed new deities on the *Ratna Singhasan*. This is substantiated from an epigraph of Nrusingha temple where the words "*Naba Vighraha Pratisthapan*" are mentioned. But the rules and regulations of such *Navakalebar* is depicted nowhere. But after Chodagangadev, there is no evidence to prove that other Ganga kings organized such a festival.

During the rule of Gajapati kings Vaishnavism became a powerful religious force in odisha and Puri became the epicenter of *Vaishnavite* philosophy and literature. But nowhere the historians could find the mention of a ritual like *Navakalebar*. Hindu rule in Odisha came to an end with the death of Mukundadev at Gohiritikira. Kalapahad the army general of Suleman Karani, the Afghan ruler of Bengal, was a known iconoclast who destroyed many images of Odisha. Kalapahad's expedition to the Puri

district of Odisha was a mere raid. Soon after he turned his back, Ramachandra Dev carved out a kingdom in Southern Odisha with Khurda as its capital.⁷

However apprehending the vandalism of Kalapahad the *sevakas* of Srimandir shifted the four deities to Parikudgarh inside the Chilika lagoon. But Kalapahad brought the images from Parikud, took them to Bengal and burnt them on the bank of river Ganges. One *Vaishnav* devotee named Bishar Mohanty brought the 'Brahma' of the deity to Kujanga. Gajapati Ramachandradev collected the *Brahma* from the Raja of Kujang and organized the *Navakalebar* festival and installed the new deities on Ratnasinhasana. As he had reinstalled the deities he is termed as the *Dwitiya Indradyumna* or the second Indradyumna. It is assumed that he organized the *Navakalebara* festival twice, once at Khurda in 1574 AD and for the second time in 1593 AD at Puri.⁸

The son of Ramachandra Dev, Gajapati Purushottama Dev ruled from 1600 to 1621 AD. During his time a Rajput Jagirdar named Kesodasmaru plundered the temple of Sri Jagannath, burnt the chariots of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. He also compelled Purushottam Dev to sign a very humiliating treaty. The Subedar of Orissa Kalyanmalla also invaded Khurda during the time of Sri Purushottamdev. Two other Subadar Makaram Khan and Ahmad Beg also invaded Khurda during the time of this Gajapati king. During this period *Nabakalevara* ritual was organized in Puri in a very modest manner due to the nuisance of Keshudas Maru in 1608 AD.

The invasion of Kalyanmalla in 1615 AD compelled the king to shift the deities to Banapur. But during his life time he could not bring back the deities and died with utmost dissatisfaction. Six years after his death the *Navakalebara* could be organized only in 1627 AD. In this



Nabakalebar the Muslim Subedar of Odisha Ahmad Beg contributed 100 *madhas* of gold for *Navakalebara and Rathayatra*. By the time Ahmad Beg was very much influenced by the Vaishnava saint of Odisha Rashikanandadeva Goswami.⁹

The next *Navakalebar* was held in a very difficult situation in 1646 AD. At that time the king of Khurda was Gajapati Narasinghadev. A part of his reigning period was peaceful.¹⁰ But in 1647 AD he was killed by the Subedar of Odisha Mutaquad Khan and his nephew Gangadhar was made the king of Khurda.¹¹ The next *Navakalebara* was organized in 1665 AD during the reign of Mukundadev, the king of Khurda. That year *Daru* was collected from Khallikote area. The same king Mukundadev was ruling over Khurda when *Navakalebar* ritual was observed in 1684 AD. During the reign of Badsaha Aurangazeb, the deities of Srimandir were not safe. The deities were shifted to Banapur again. However in 1696 AD, Gajapati Dibyasingha Dev brought the deities to Puri and conducted '*Sriangaphita*' which was not a complete *navakalebar*. In this tradition '*Brahma*' is not shifted. However complete *Navakalevara* was observed in 1711 AD. Some historians are of view that this *Navakalebar* took place in 1714 AD. *Daru* was collected from Madhupur and Raja Divyasingha Dev organized this ceremony at Puri.

The next *Nabakalevara* was also conducted in a very difficult situation. Due to the fear of attack of Taki Khan, the *Sevakas* of *Srimandir* like Narayan Mohapatra and Dama Mohapatra shifted the deities to Hantuhada of Banapur. However the *Navakalevara* was celebrated in a traditional way after the collection of *Daru* from Nimabania by the *Daitapaties* in 1730 AD.

It is also said that the deities then were shifted to Athagarh, where they stayed for two

years. In 1735 the deities were brought back from Athagarh and installed on the Ratnasimhasan. From this time onwards till today the deities are never shifted due to the fear from the renegade or iconoclasts.

During Raja Birakeshari Dev's reign there were *Navakalebaras* in 1749, 1768 and 1790 AD. For the *Navakalebara* of 1749 '*Darus*' were collected from Garudia Panchana, Sujanpur and Nuapada. This festival was celebrated under the direction of the Marathas, as they were in charge of the administration of Odisha. Gajapati Birakeshari Dev was a minor and that is why Ujjaldev was in charge of the entire ritual. For their commendable works Damodar Bhatta Mishra and the Daitapati were rewarded by the Maratha Administration of Cuttack. They were given land as *Jagir* for their commendable work.

The next *Navakalebar* was held in 1768 AD. With the active co-operation of the Maratha Subedar of Cuttack, Raja Birakeshari Dev of Khurda organized the ritual. In 1768 AD *Daru* were collected from the bank of the river Devi and Dhenkanal. The king of Dhenkanal offered 100 *Madhas* gold for the expenditure of *Navakalebara*. Next *Navakalebara* of the deities was due in 1780 AD as there was *Do-Aasadhas* in that year. But the time was not opportune. The Raja of Khurda Birakeshari Deva murdered his sons and were in the custody of the Marathas at Cuttack. As the time was very much disturbing for the royal family of Khurda, *Navakalebara* ceremony was avoided.

But *Navakalebar* was held in 1790 AD with much pomp and grandeur. This year on the invitation of Jayee Rajaguru Chimabai, the mother of Raghujee Bhonsle came from Nagapur to Puri. With the combined effort of the Subedar of Cuttack and Raja Divyasingha Dev of Khurda the *Nabakalebar* was conducted in Puri.

The next *Navakalebar* was held in 1809 AD under the supervision of the Britishers. The



Land Settlement Commissioner of the Revenue Division, Charles Bullar granted Rs.5,500/- for the expenditure of this *Navakalebar*. *Daru* was collected from Khandapada. The Rajas of Khandapada, Ranapur and Athamalik also helped the organizers financially for this *Navakalebar*. The claim of Madalapanji that the Navakalebar was held in 1817 is not trustworthy. During this Navakalebar ceremony the British sepoy were deployed on the grand road at the time of *Rathayatra*.

With the grant of Rs.5500/- by the Commissioner Pakenham the next *Navakalebar* was organized in 1828. At that time the Gajapati Raja was Ramachandra Dev. This year *Daru* was collected from Bhusandpur. The next *Navakalebara* was due in 1853, but actually it was organized in 1855 AD. It was said that due to this untimely *Navakalebar* a number of natural calamities occurred. Due to incessant rain '*Darughar*' was broken. Stone fell from the temple due to lightning. In this festival two lakhs devotees gathered but due to lack of effective crowd management seven people were killed in the stampede near the lion's gate. This was reported by magistrate Andrews of Puri.

In 1874 A.D. the *Navakalebar* was celebrated on the supervision of a committee appointed by the magistrate of Puri, Armstrong. During this ceremony the Gajapati of Puri, Divyasingha Dev was a minor and his guardian was Suryamani Patamahadei. The next *Navakalebar* was observed in 1893. This year *Daru* was collected from *Chudanga tota*.

In the twentieth century *Navakalebaras* were held in the years of 1912, 1931, 1950, 1969, 1977 and 1996 AD. During such *Navakalebaras* and *Ratha Yatra* ceremony each time around a million people gathered on the grand road and Puri town became immensely active. The first *Navakalebara* of 21st century is due in

the year of 2015 AD. This year it is expected that more than thirty lakhs devotees will gather in Srikshetra to take part in this twin festival of *Navakalebara* and *Rathayatra*. This year the devotees can see the new deities and they can also see the new images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan on the chariots. Positively this will be a new and once-in-a life experience for the devotees. The government is gearing up to provide all the civic facilities and convenience to the *yatries* who shall throng into Puri during this grand festival '*Navakalebar*' and *Ghoshayatra* of the four deities of Srikshetra.

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