



Dainandina Niti in Sri Jagannath Temple

Sarmistha Pasayat

In this paper an attempt has been made to study the *dainandina niti* (daily rituals) of the Shri Jagannath Temple, Puri (hereinafter referred to as the Temple). The word *niti* in Oriya and Sanskrit refers to a principle, a rule or a policy. But in the Temple, this word is used in a more general sense, which signifies a particular religious rite. The *nitis* in the Temple are elaborate and complex in nature. It involves a multitude of *sevas* and *sevakas*. Hence, it is essential to understand briefly something about the *sevas* and *sevakas* of the Temple. For the performance of various *nitis* in the Temple, a large number of *sevakas* have been engaged on hereditary basis. It is believed that Raja Anangabhima Deva of Ganga dynasty, a sovereign ruler of Orissa in the 13th century AD, had initiated a well-knitted administrative system of the Temple. He had established *Chhattisa nijoga* (36 different associations of *sevakas*). Subsequently, the number of *nijogas* (associations) has increased but the nomenclature of *Chhattisa nijoga* is still in vogue. Over the years, the number of *sevakas* has also increased considerably. Gajapati Maharaja of Puri is the first *sevaka* (*Adya sevaka*) of the deities. He represents the sovereign ruler of Orissa. As per the tradition, he had constructed the Temple, installed the

deities, arranged for *seva-puja* (ritual services), arranged different types of *nitis*, appointed different categories of *sevakas* to perform these *nitis* and administered the establishment. During the foreign rule, Gajapati Maharaja was known as the Superintendent of the Temple. There is a list of various classes of *sevakas* and others associated with different types of *nitis* and management of the Temple in Part-3 of the Record of Rights (ROR) of the Temple, prepared in 1952. It is voluminous to narrate the details of each *seva*. However, for the understanding of *nitis* in the Temple the list of 119 categories of *sevakas* mentioned in the said ROR is given below:

- (1) Gajapati Maharaja, (2) Parichha or Rajaguru, (3) Chhattisanijoga Nayaka Pattajoshi Mahapatra, (4) Bhitarchha Mahapatra, (5) Taluchha Mahapatra, (6) Mudirasta or Mudihasta, (7) Deula Purohita, (8) Pujapanda, (9) Badapanda, (10) Pushpalaka, (11) Mahajana, (12) Mudra, (13) Khuntia, (14) Bhandara Mekapa, (15) Palia Mekapa, (16) Akhanda Mekapa, (17) Changda Mekapa, (18) Khata Seja Mekapa, (19) Pratihari, (20) Daita, (21) Pati Mahapatra, (22) Patribadu, (23) Garabadu, (24) Suarabadu, (25) Khuri Nayaka, (26) Mukha Pakhala, (27) Ghatuari,



(28) Gochhikara, (29) Suna Goswami, (30) Muduli, (31) Alati Balita Sevaka, (32) Purana Panda, (33) Datta Mahapatra, (34) Lugadhua and Panikunda Sevakas, (35) Ballabha Jogania, (36) Bimanabadu, (37) Anasara Suddha Suara and Suddha Suara, (38) Hadapa Nayaka, (39) Bidia Jogania, (40) Khatuli Sevakas, (41) Asthana Pratihari, (42) Kotha Bhoga Jogania, (43) Pradhani, (44) Paika, (45) Lenka, (46) Suara Nijoga Naika, (47) Suara Nijoga and Mahasuara, (48) Jagia Mahasuara, (49) Badu Suara, Thali, Tuna and Amalu Suara, (50) Panti badu, (51) Amalu Tola, Pura Kharada, (52) Tolabadu, (53) Rosa Paika, (54) Bahara Deuli Suara, (55) Bahara Deuli Jogania, (56) Rosa Dho Pakhalia, Angarua, Gobara Pania and Rabadia, (57) Handi Jogania, (58) Birimunda Samartha, (59) Kotha Bhoga Pania, (60) Paniki Pata, (61) Nikapa and Gandhana Nikapa, (62) Biribuha, (63) Daudi Bola, (64) Chunara, (65) Sabata Nijoga, (66) Paniapata, (67) Mandani, (68) Chaka Apasara, (69) Mulia Suansia, (70) Binakara, (71) Darpania, (72) Kotha Suansia, (73) Mahabhoi, (74) Gita Gobinda, (75) Bhitara Gaani, (76) Samprada Nijoga, (77) Dayana Mali, (78) Madeli, (79) Prasadabadu, (80) Tatua, (81) Patrabintha, (82) Bajanti, (83) Chhatara Nijoga, (84) Kahalia, (85) Sankhua, (86) Parba Jatra Jogania, (87) Chitrakara, (88) Rupakara, (89) Bania, (90) Tamara Bisoi, (91) Karatia, (92) Benta Bindha Paika, (93) Patara Bisoi, (94) Kalabethia, (95) Daraji, (96) Kumbhara Bisoi, (97) Ratha Bhoi, (98) Malachula, (99) Banua, (100) Chakra Dihudi, (101) Ojha Maharana, (102) Ghanta Seva, (103) Ghantua, (104) Ratha Dahuka, (105) Badhei, (106) Baidya, (107) Amunia Chhatara, (108) Chhamu Dihudi, (109) Chapa Behera,

(110) Chapa Dalei, (111) Mapa Saita Karana, (112) Tadhau Karana, (113) Deula Karana, (114) Baithi Karana, (115) Kotha Karana, (116) Charcha Karana, (117) Dayana Patri, (118) Chaula Bachha Karana, (119) Matha and Byaktigata Seva. Another Seva called (120) Behera Karana Seva, which was not included in the original list of the Record of Rights, has been revived in 1988. Out of these *sevas*, in the mean time, some *sevas* have been discontinued. These are (1) Kotha Karana, (2) Churha Karana, (3) Mapa Saita Karana, (4) Samprada Nijoga, (5) Madeli, (6) Bhitara Gayani, (7) Binakara, (8) Rajaguru (Patuara Seva), (9) Banua, (10) Kalabethia, (11) Prasadabadu, (12) Patrabintha, (13) Sankhua, (14) Mulia Suansia, (15) Badapanda, (16) Kumbhara Bisoi, (17) Malachula, (18) Dandibala, (19) Gitagovinda, etc.

These *sevakas* do not receive any salary from the Temple Administration. On an average, 70 to 80 *sevakas* perform *seva-puja* (ritual services) every day. Each of them is entitled to get a portion of the *Raja bhoga* or *Kotha bhoga*. This is called *Khei* of the day. *Sevakas* in general are paid daily remuneration, which is known as *Purashkar* (cash reward) according to the scales prescribed by the Managing Committee of the Temple. Some *sevakas* get rewards both in cash and kinds. There is also provision for special cash reward over and above the *Purashkar*. For example, each year after the Ratha Yatra is over most of the *nijogas* and also some individual *sevakas* use to get special cash rewards from the Temple Administration for their satisfactory *seva* during the festival.

Nitis of the Temple can be broadly divided into the following three parts: (1) Daily



niti, (2) Occasional *niti* and (3) festival *niti*. The fixed *nitis* are observed daily. Secondly, the periodic or according to the specialty of certain days, months etc. or occasional *nitis* are observed. In this context, mention may be made of some specific occasions like *Ekadasi* (eleventh day of fortnight), *Sankranti*, *Amavasya*, *Grahana* (eclipse), *Nakshatra* or any mishaps in the Temple. Thirdly, there are various festivals observed through out the year, some outside the Temple like Snana yatra, Ratha yatra, Chandana yatra etc. and some inside the Temple like Jhulana yatra. Each *sevaka* has his specified duty to perform in these *nitis* having terms and times specified. Various *nitis* that are observed in the Temple commence at about 5.00 A.M. early in the morning every day and continues till midnight. The daily *nitis* in short are described below.

Dwaraphita and Mangala Alati :

Dwara means door or entrance and *Dwaraphita* means opening of doors and Mangala alati refers to auspicious lamp offerings to the deities early in the morning. As per the ROR, the doors of the Garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) are to be opened by 5.00 A.M. in the morning. In the months of Kartika (October-November), Dhanu (December-January) and also on certain specific days, the doors are to be opened much before 5.00 A.M. i.e. between 2.00 A.M. to 3.00 A.M. Five categories of *sevakas* namely (1) Bhitarchha Mahapatra, (2) Pratihari, (3) Muduli, (4) Akhanda Mekapa and (5) Palia Mekapa are required to remain present to perform this *niti*. As per the tradition, the doors are opened after Bhitarchha Mahapatra examines the seals, placed on the padlocks on the previous night by another *sevaka* known as Taluchha Mahapatra. On some days, it becomes difficult

to do *Pahuda* (*niti* related to closing of Temple doors after the final *niti* is over at night) on account of extra *nitis* or delay in completion of *nitis*. On such occasions, the question of *dwaraphita* in the following morning does not arise and the *nitis* commence as usual only from Mangala alati onwards.

The subsequent *niti* after *Dwaraphita* is Mangala alati. Bhitarchha Mahapatra and two other Pushpalaka *sevakas* perform this *niti* standing below the *ratnavedi* / *ratnasinghasana*. Talichha Mahapatra is entitled to perform this *niti* in the absence of Bhitarchha Mahapatra. As per the tradition, Bhitarchha Mahapatra or Talichha Mahapatra performs Mangala alati to Jagannath, Sudarsana, Madhava, Sridevi and Bhudevi. It is worth mentioning that the Badachhata Matha performs *kirtan* every day at the time of Mangala alati. Every day, in fact, alati is performed seven times. These are (1) Mangala alati when camphor, pithau and 21 *bati* are required for the purpose. This is performed by the *sevakas* as mentioned earlier, (2) Sakala Dhupa Alati when camphor and 21 *bati* are required and this alati is performed by the Pujapanda *sevakas*, (3) Madhyahna Dhupa Alati when camphor and 21 *bati* are required and this alati is performed by the Pujapanda *sevakas*, (4) Sandhya alati when camphor, 21 *bati* and pithau are required and this alati is performed by the Talichha Mahapatra and Palia Pushpalaka *sevakas*, (5) Sandhya Dhupa Alati when camphor and 21 *bati* are needed and this alati is performed by the Pujapanda *sevakas* (6) Badasinghara Dhupa alati when camphor and 21 *bati*/salita are needed and this alati is performed by the Pujapanda *sevakas* and lastly (7) Pahuda alati when camphor and pithau are required and this alati is performed by the



Pushpalaka *sevakas*.

Mailama :

This means removal or taking off the clothes, dress, flowers, tulasi etc. of the previous night. The schedule time of this *niti* is about 6.00 A.M. in the morning. But it depends on the time taken for Mangala alati. The *sevakas* associated with this *niti* are (1) three Pushpalakas, (2) Khuntia, (3) Changda Mekapa and (4) Dhoba. Pushpalaka *sevakas* change the clothes, flowers and tulasi leaves of the deities worn on the previous night. After removal of clothes, the deities wear another set of clean and washed clothes. It is known as *tadapalagi*. The clothes are called *tadapa* and *uttariya* like towels. These are made of cotton worn by the deities for morning bath. As per the tradition, these clothes are washed by the Dhoba *sevaka* in the kunda (water tank) near Bata Ganesa. This Dhoba *sevaka* is actually Brahmin by caste. It is worth mentioning that every day the deities wear different types of clothes (Bastras) in different times of the day. These bastras are (1) Tadapa, (2) Uttariya, (3) Paharana, (4) Phuta, (5) Sirkapada / Srikapada, (6) Baralagi Pata (set), (7) Srimukhabala (made of cotton), (8) Suta luga (cotton clothes), (9) Chandana Guda, (10) Suta Chadara, (11) Gita Govinda Khandua bastra etc.

Abakasa :

It means cleaning of teeth and bathing. The time is between 6.00 A.M. to 6.30 A.M. in the morning for the purificatory rites of the deities such as brushing of teeth and bath. These *nitis* are performed by the following *sevakas* namely, (1) Bhitarchha Mahapatra, (2) Palia Pushpalaka, (3) Suarabadu, (4) Paniapata, (5) Mukhaphala *sevaka*, (6) Khatuli *sevaka*,

(7) Darpania, (8) Padhiari, (9) Amla Ghantuari, (10) Bhandara Mekapa, (11) Mahabhoi and (12) Khurinayaka and (13) Jyotisa. This does not mean that the deities actually take bath. Three Pushpalaka *sevakas* perform this *snana bidhi* in *pancha upachara paddhati* sitting on the floor below the Ratnavedi. They sprinkle water mixed with camphor, curd, amla and Chandana (sandal wood paste) on three brass mirrors (darpana), each about two feet high, symbolizing the bath. Before that they also show the tooth sticks and tongue scrappers to the deities symbolizing brushing of the teeth. During this *niti*, the Temple astrologer (*Jyotisa*) reads out the *tithi* and other astrological details of the day. After this *niti*, Garuda in the Nata mandapa takes bath for which the Garuda / Chunara *sevakas* perform the *snana bidhi*.

Mailama and Besa :

Specified time for this *niti* is about 6.45 A.M. in the morning. The deities change their clothes and wear another clean and washed set. Every day the deities also wear different types of flower ornaments made of different types of flowers, leaves of tulasi, banana, panasa and patuka etc. These flower ornaments are (1) Kara Pallava, (2) Kundala, (3) Tadagi, (4) Chandrika, (5) Gabha, (6) Alaka, (7) Tilaka, (8) Jhumpa, (9) Nakuasi, (10) Dayana, (11) Adhara Mala, (12) Makara Kundala, (13) Sripayara Mala, (14) Hrudaya Padaka, (15) Kali Padaka, (16) Kaustubha Padaka, (17) Chausara Mala, (18) Guna etc. A *sevaka* known as Akhanda Mekapa keeps in the *Garbhagriha* the *Akhanda Baitha*, which is not extinguished and burns till Pahuda i.e. time of retirement of the deities to beds. For this til oil is provided to the Akhanda Mekapa from the Kotha Bhoga godown of the Temple Administration. The following *sevakas* are



associated with this niti : (1) Pushpalaka, (2) Changda Mekapa, (3) Akhanda Mekapa, (4) Suarabadu and (5) Dhoba etc. It is worth mentioning that the colour of bastras/dress (clothes) of the deities varies as per tithi (day). For instance, on Sunday the deities wear red pata, on Monday they wear black and white pata, on Tuesday the clothes are called Barapatia pata (combination of five colours), on Wednesday they wear blue pata, on Thursday they wear yellow pata, on Friday the deities wear white pata and on Saturday they wear black pata.

Sahanamela :

It means *sarbasadharana darsan* or public *darsan* of the deities. As per the ROR, the specified time of sahanamela is 7.00 A.M. in the morning. During this time, the *yatris* are allowed to go into the *garbhagriha* near the ratnavedi to have a close darsan of the deities and circumambulate with out paying fees for the same. It takes place twice a day, once in the morning immediately after *abakasa* and for the second time during night immediately after *sandhya alati*. However, in practice it is being held only once generally after mailama on account of the delayed performance of nitis. On certain festive occasions, sahanamela is held after Sandhya dhupa (evening bhoga). In the month of Kartika, it is held after Sandhya alati. Sometimes, it is held after Sakala dhupa and on certain festive days like Sri Gundicha yatra, Bahuda yatra, Niladrimahodayastami, Nrusinghajanma, Dhulia Gundicha, Kartika Sukla Ekadasi (Lakshmi-Narayana vesa), Kartika Sukla Chaturdasi (Lakshmi-Nrusingha vesa) and during *anavasara*, there is no provision of Sahanamela at all. It is generally held to enable the common people to go near the ratnavedi in the *garbhagriha* to have a close

darsan of the deities. After darsan of the deities, the pilgrims do *parikrama* along the lane behind the Ratnavedi and then come out of the *Bhitara Pokharia*. Pilgrims are not allowed to touch the deities. If any body accidentally does so, the deities are supposed to be polluted and a Mahasnana takes place. In case, any one vomits or passes urine or any one is injured and blood falls inside the Pokharia that also amounts to pollution of the deities and Mahasnana takes place. The following sevakas remain present during sahanamela : (1) Pushpalaka, (2) Khuntia, (3) Mekapa, (4) Tadhau Karana, (5) Gochhikara, (6) Pratihari, (7) Suarabadu and (8) some Temple as well as Police personnel. Though it is conducted only for one hour, in the months of Magha and Pousa, Sahanamela continues for two to three hours in view of large gatherings in the Temple during these months.

Besalagi :

After sahanamela the deities change their clothes again. This is performed between 8.00 A.M. to 8.20 A.M. in the morning. This time, the deities wear different robes and gold ornaments studded with precious stones to suit different festive occasions and seasons. Also, the deities wear flower ornaments like Guna, Jhumpa, Adhara Mala and Tulasi Gabha.

Rosha Homa :

The time is between 8.00 A.M. to 8.30 A.M. *Homa* (oblation to the fire) is performed in the *Rosha ghara* (sacred kitchen) of the deities. Thereafter, that fire is used in all the *chulis* (hearths) for cooking the food for deities. This niti is performed by Pujapanda sevaka. It is said that previously Deula Purohitas were performing this niti. The other sevakas engaged in this niti are Dhopakhalia and Nikapa. Generally, Rosha Homa and Besalagi nitis are



performed simultaneously. It is worth mentioning that on account of this Rosha ghara, the Temple may be described as the biggest hotel on this earth. It can feed even one lakh persons per day. The method of preparation is very hygienic and the traditional processes of food preparation for many people in a very short time take many by utter surprise.

Surya puja (worship of Sun God) :

Surya puja is performed in the Bhitara bedha (inner enclosure) near the Mukti Mandapa. For this niti presence of the following sevakas namely (1) Pujapanda, (2) Suarabadu, (3) Patribadu, (4) Garabadu and (5) Ghatuari are required.

Dwarapala puja :

It means worship of the dwarapalas or guardian deities who are divine gatekeepers at the Jaya Vijaya dwara which is the entrance/door between the Mukhasala/porch and the Natamandapa of the Temple. This puja is performed by a Pujapanda sevaka.

Gopala Ballabha Bhoga :

The word *bhoga* in Oriya and Sanskrit means enjoyment. This word is commonly used in Orissa in the context of food offerings made to the deities in the Temple. Every day and through out the year, fifty-six varieties of dishes (*Chhappan bhogas*) are prepared and offered to the deities. Apart from this, several other varieties of dishes are also prepared and offered on the occasion of different festivals. Similarly, on specific occasions, special drinks are also offered to the deities. The prescribed time of this niti is about 9.00 A.M. in the morning. This may be termed as the morning breakfast of the deities, which consists of *khai* (sweet popcorn), *kora* (coconut sweets), *khua laddu*, ripe banana, curd and chipped

cocoanuts. The offerings are made at Anasara pindi / Ballabha pindi which is the place between the Kalahata dwara and the Bhitara katha in the Mukhasala. It may be mentioned that Kalahata dwara/Kalaghata dwara/Chhamu dwara is the dwara or entrance/door between the *Garbhagriha* and the Mukhasala/porch. Three Pujapandas perform this niti in a brief manner with *Pancha upacharas* only. Pancha upacharas or five upacharas refers to (1) Gandha (Chandana), (2) Pushpa (flower), (3) Dhupa (incense), (4) Dipa (lamp) and Naivedya (food). Other sevakas associated with this niti are (1) Sudu Suara, (2) Ballabha Joganja, (3) Suarabadu, (4) Patribadu, (5) Garabadu, (6) Palia Mahasuara, (7) Pradhani and (8) some Temple officials. It is worth mentioning that the deities change their dress at each meal and after each meal *pana* (betel nuts) are offered to them as a part of the niti.

Sakala dhupa (morning meal):

It means morning food offerings. The word *dhupa* is commonly used in the Temple to mean the offering of a *bhoga* to the deities especially Sakala Dhupa (morning meal), Madhyahna Dhupa (midday meal) and Sandhya Dhupa (evening meal) when the nitis performed are a little elaborate. It is worth mentioning that *alati* is offered at the end of each Dhupa. The prescribed time is about 10.00 A.M. in the morning. This bhoga is known as Kotha Bhoga or Raja Bhoga. Previously, the Raja (Superintendent of the Temple) used to bear the entire cost of materials for preparation of this Bhoga. At present, the cost is shouldered by the Temple Administration after the Temple was taken over by the Government. All the raw materials like rice, wheat, ghee, sugar, fuel, *kudua* (earthen



pot), vegetables etc. required for the cooking of bhogas are supplied by the Temple Administration. Three Pujapandas perform the Bhoga puja with *Sodasa upacharas* which means that the puja has 16 aspects namely (1) Asana (seat of image), (2) Swagata (welcome), (3) Padya (water for washing the feet), (4) Arghya (offering of flower, chandana etc.), (5) Achamanya (water for sipping), (6) Madhuparka (ghee, Madhu or honey, khira or milk, dahi or curd offered in silver or brass vessel), (7) Achamaniya, (8) Snana (bathing), (9) Bastra (clothes), (10) Avarana (jewels), (11) Gandha (scent and chandana), (12) Pushpa (flower), (13) Dhupa (incense stick), (14) Dipa (lamp), (15) Naivedya (food) and (16) Vandana (namaskara or prayer). This puja is performed in the *garbhagriha*. Three Pujapandas worship three deities respectively. But the Pujapanda who worships Jagannath also worships Sridevi, Bhudevi and Sudarsana. Nilamadhava is not worshipped separately, as he is considered to be identical with Jagannath. It is worth mentioning that there are seven images seated on the Ratnavedi. After bhoga, the same is distributed as *Khei* (dues) among the sevakas of the day including the Gajapati Maharaja. The following sevakas namely (1) Pujapanda, (2) Suarabadu, (3) Paniapata, (4) Pradhani, (5) Pratihari, (6) Palia Mahasuara, (7) Pantibadu, (8) Garabadu, (9) Rosha Paika, (10) Palia Patri, (11) Changada Mekapa, (12) Muduli, (13) Chandana Ghatuari, (14) Palia Mekapa, (15) Palia Khuntia, (16) Hadapa Naika, (17) Bidia Jogania, (18) Sudusuara, (19) Gochhikara, (20) Dakshinighara Pratihari, (21) Ghantua, (22) Baijayantri, (23) Dhukudidwara Pratihari, etc., are engaged in this niti. After Bhoga puja, alati is offered to the deities. This is known as Sakala dhupa alati, which is offered by the Pujapandas.

The food is simply called *Prasad* when it is offered to the deities. But after certain nitis performed in the Bimala temple, this very *Prasad* becomes *Mahaprasad*. The bhoga after being offered to the deities is re-offered to goddess Bimala and then it becomes Mahaprasad (*Maa+Prasad*). Thus, Bimala temple plays an important role in giving extraordinary religious and spiritual sanctity to the food offered to the deities. In this regard, there is a beautiful story. After the construction of the main Temple and before installation of the deities in it Goddess Bimala was occupying this Temple during that intervening period. When the deities arrived there, they had to obtain permission from Bimala to enter into the Temple. She allowed the deities to occupy the Ratnavedi on the condition that the bhoga of Jagannath after being offered to them each time every day has to be re-offered to her. As per the condition agreed upon, the Prasad of the deities is again offered to Bimala in each session and then only the same Prasad becomes Mahaprasad. The glories of Mahaprasad have been described in the *Padma Purana* and the *Bhagavata Purana*. It is believed that instant liberation is achieved by taking Mahaprasad. So, it is also called Kaibalya. It is worth mentioning that while eating of cooked food is prohibited on sacred *tithis* (days) like Ekadasi (eleventh day of the fortnight), Sankranti and during upabasa (religious fasting) etc, there is absolutely no restriction in taking Mahaprasad on these occasions. Sakala dhupa consists of *Kanika* (sweet rice), *Khechudi*, *Dali*, vegetable curries, *saga* (green leaves), *pitha* (cakes) etc. Various preparations of black gram like Bada Kanti, Sana Kanti, Mathapuli, Hamsapuli, Kakatua Jhili, Ada Pachedi, Saga, Khechudi, Pithapuli, Bundia Khiri etc. are offered to the deities.



Mailama and Bhoga Mandapa Bhoga:

The prescribed time is about 11.00 A.M. in the morning. After Sakala dhupa, the deities change their clothes and again puja takes place in Bhoga Mandapa, a place behind the Garuda stambha of the Nata mandira. Huge quantity of bhoga such as rice, dal, curries, cakes of different kinds, saga etc. is offered to the deities. Pujapandas perform Bhogapuja with Pancha upacharas only as discussed earlier. The Temple Administration does not bear the cost of this bhoga. Traditionally, this bhoga is offered in order to provide sufficient Mahaprasad to different *Mathas* (monasteries), other institutions and private individuals who eat *Mahaprasad* as their principal meal. In other words, the *Suaras* (authorized cooks) of the Temple prepare sufficient quantities of food in the *Rosha ghara* on commercial basis for pilgrims and others. It would not be out of place to mention that one should be pure in mind and body while taking *Mahaprasad*. No outside food is taken along with it. As a mark of utmost regards to *Mahaprasad* it is taken by sitting on the floor. Care is also taken to see that the water does not fall on the feet when hands are washed after eating *Mahaprasad*. It is not an exaggeration to mention that *Mahaprasad* is free from caste discrimination prevalent in orthodox Hindu society. Persons belonging to all caste do partake *Mahaprasad* from the same plate without any caste hesitation. The sevakas associated with this *niti* are (1) Pujapanda, (2) Mahasuara, (3) Suara, (4) Changda Mekapa, (5) Palia Mekapa, (6) Palia Pushpalaka, (7) Bhoga Mandapa Pratihari, (8) Suarabadu, (9) Khuntia, (10) Patribadu etc. On most of the days Bhoga Mandapa puja is normally performed once a day after Sakala dhupa. But on festive occasions, it is performed after the Dwipahara

dhupa/Madhyahna dhupa. On certain occasions, Bhoga mandapa puja is also performed twice or thrice a day i.e. after Sakala dhupa, Madhyahna dhupa and Sandhya dhupa to meet the high demand of pilgrims and as per the necessity of *Mahaprasad*.

Madhyahna dhupa (mid-day meal):

The time is between 12.30 P.M. to 1.00 P.M. in the afternoon. Three Pujapanda sevakas perform the Bhoga puja in the *Pokharia* (the space around the *Ratnavedi* in the *Garbhagriha*) with *Sodasa upacharas* in the same manner as in the Sakala dhupa. This time the bhoga items are more in number than that of Sakala dhupa. The same categories of sevakas as in the Sakala dhupa are engaged in this *niti*. As it has been noted earlier, Madhyahna alati is offered to the deities by the Pujapanda sevakas after the Madhyahna dhupa.

Madhyahna Pahuda :

After the Madhyahna Dhupa, the deities enjoy a siesta, called *Pahuda*. It is worth mentioning that if *nitis* have been performed in time and if time permits, then only the deities retire for afternoon nap. Kalahatadwara / Kalaghatadwara, Jaya Bijaya dwara and Beherana dwara / Dakshini dwara (south gate of the porch/Mukhasala) remain closed. This *niti* is performed generally between 1.00 P.M. to 1.30 P.M. in the afternoon.

Sandhya Alati (evening lamp offering):

After opening of the doors, the Sandhya alati is offered to the deities by the Taluchha and Palia Pushpalaka sevakas. If there is no Madhyahna Pahuda, then the Sandhya alati is offered after the Madhyahna dhupa and after the change of clothes.



Sandhya dhupa (evening meal):

The time for this niti is between 7.00 P.M. to 8.00 P.M. in the evening. The puja upacharas and manners i.e. Sodasa upacharas are similar to that of Sakala dhupa. The items of this Dhupa are mostly *Pakhala* (watered rice), *pitha* (cake). It includes varieties of puddings; confections and delicacies called Kanla puli, Takua, Mathapuli, Bhogapitha, Gotali, Kakara, Amalu, Jhadeineda, Kadamba and Subasa Pakhala. After this Bhoga puja, again alati called Sandhya dhupa alati is performed by the Pujapanda sevakas. This alati is also known as Jaya Mangala alati.

Sahanamela (public darsan of the deities):

As per the provision sahanamela is arranged thereafter. Nowadays, Sandhya dhupa very often takes place at a very late hour at night on account of the delayed performance of nitis, and consequently sahanamela at that late hour is ignored. As it has been mentioned above, this is free darsan when no body is required to pay any fee for going into the *Garbhagruha* (sanctum). Excepting at the scheduled time of sahanamela, no pilgrim is allowed to enter into the Bhitara Pokharia or Garbhagriha without payment of proper *Paramanika* fees. Thus, the pilgrims are offered an opportunity of *sahanamela* or *sarbasadharana darsan* of deities in the evening hour also. If there is no sahanamela, then the subsequent niti called Mailama follows.

Mailama and Chandanalagi :

This time the deities change their clothes and anointed with *chandana* mixed with camphor, kesara and kasturi. This niti is performed by the Pushpalaka sevakas. Other sevakas needed at the time of this niti are

Suarabadu, Ghatuari, Muduli, Palia Mekapa, Palia Padhiari, Garabadu, Hadapa Naika and Palia Khuntia.

Badasinghara Besa:

After chandanalagi, the deities are dressed up again which is known as Badasinghara besa. This time they wear Baralagi pata (silken robes). Some portion of the Gitagovinda of Jayadeva is woven into the texture of these robes. The deities wear flower, flower garlands and floral headgear. This besa is very attractive to look at. It is worth mentioning that Jagannath Ballabha Matha supplies flower ornaments like Tilaka and Jhumpa for this besa of the deities. Similarly, the Emar Matha supplies Chandrika and Chausara, made of flowers for this besa of the deities.

Badasinghara Dhupa:

This is the last bhoga of the day offered around 11.00 P.M. at night. For this, bhoga puja is performed by the Pujapanda sevakas following the principle of *Pancha upacharas*, sitting on the floor down the Ratnavedi. This time the quantity of bhoga is much less and the items are *Pakhala* and *Kanji*, some fries like *Kadalibada* and sweets like *khiri*. Thereafter, the Badasinghara Dhupa alati is offered to the deities by the Pujapanda sevakas.

Khata Sejalagi and Pahuda:

The time of this niti is around 12.00 at mid-night when the bedsteads of the deities are arranged. The Pushpalaka sevakas carry the idols of Sayana Thakura from Bhandara ghara to Ratnavedi and place the idols near Jagannath. This is a metallic conjoined idol of Purusa (Vishnu) and Prakruti (Lakshmi). Then follows offering of *Paida* (green coconaut), *pana* (betelnuts) and camphor alati to deities. It



would not be out of context to mention that Bada Chhata Matha performs Kirtana at the time of Pahuda alati offered by the Pushpalaka *sevakas*. Earlier, at the time of *alati*, the *Bhitara gayani*, a Temple Devadasi (lady *sevika*) used to sing devotional songs from the Gitagovinda standing at the Kalahata dwara. Presently, this *seva* has been discontinued after her death. Thereafter, Sayana Thakura is taken to the Jaya Bijaya dwara where *paida*, *pana*, *pushpa* and camphor alati are offered to Sayana Thakura. Thereafter, the idol is taken to the bedstead of Jagannath and then to the *Bhandaraghara*. Thus, the deities retire to their beds, after which follows sealing of locks on the Kalahata dwara, Jaya Bijaya dwara and Dakshina/Beherana dwara. Taluchha Mahapatra puts the seal. The Temple premises are vacated of *sevakas* and visitors, which is called *sodha*. Only a few

Temple police, officials and *sevakas* keep watch at night.

In brief, this is the *dainandina nitis* (daily rituals) observed in the Temple. It is usually not possible to follow the time prescribed for each *niti* because of various practical difficulties. As per the tradition, unless a particular *niti* is performed, the next one cannot take place. As a result of this, punctuality fluctuates to ensure attendance of various categories of *sevakas* required for a particular *niti*. Also, on specific festive days, additional *nitis* are performed. Accordingly, changes in timings and alterations in the routine *nitis* are made.

Sarmistha Pasayat lives at Qrs.No. VA-24/2, Unit-II, Bhubaneswar.

