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Nabakalebara of Lord Jagannath in the Temple at Puri in Odisha India: The Re-Embodiment of the Divine

By Dr. Chinmayee Satpathy

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Nabakalebara of Lord Jagannath in the Temple at Puri in Odisha India: The Re-Embodiment of the Divine

Dr. Chinmayee Satpathy

Abstract- Lord Jagannath is an ancient deity of the Hindu religion in the Indian sub-continent. He symbolizes the Lord Krishna and Lord Vishnu. This article illustrates about the Nabakalebara Ceremony of Lord Jagannath in the grand temple of Jagannath at Puri in Odisha. This is a very grand and unique ritual which is not found in any other Hindu shrine and temple in India and elsewhere in the world. This is a non-recurring ritual which takes place once in every 8th or 19th year when intercalary Odia month of Asadha falls. As per the tradition of the Jagannath Temple in Puri during this period it is convenient to perform the Nabakalebara Ceremony of the Chaturdha Murty i.e Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan which are worshiped as the main deities of the temple. The deities are made up of Neem wood which necessitate renewal of the deities within a definite time span through performing the Nabakalebara Ceremony. This write up broadly narrates about how a series of rituals are observed during the Vanayaga Journey which continues for nearly three to four months in searching and identifying four sacred Neem trees from which the four idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan are constructed. Thereafter, the core ritual of Ghata Paribartan i.e transforming of Brahma Padartha or the soul substance takes place secretly inside the main temple in the midnight in closed door by the intimate servitors of Lord Jagannath such as Pati Mahapatra and Daita Servitors. Apart from this, it throws light upon the social cultural and religious significance of Nabakalebara Ritual and how the great ancient tradition is maintained till date.

I. Introduction

India is well known across the world for its rich spiritual heritage, diverse cultures, and sacred inheritance since time immemorial. Odisha is a premier state located in the East India. Since ancient times, the geographic territory of the state had been extended from the belt of river of Mahanadi in the East to the Godabari in the South during the reign of royal dynasties like the King Kharavela, Emperor Ashoka and others. The state had a long maritime history since and trading relationship with the South East Asian Countries like Sri Lanka, China, Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam and islands of Indonesia like Bali, Java, Borneo, Malay and Sumatra etc. In terms of history, it is a heartland of powerful kingdoms of Kalinga, Utkal, Odra, Kosala, Tosali and Kangoda. From early fifteenth century onwards, it is called Orissa and now Odisha. The state was formerly known as Kalinga which is associated with its rich sculptural and artistic excellence in the subsequent periods, the two names are still evoked with honour to designate the whole of Odisha. (Pradhan 2003). However, despite many upheavals and cataclysm faced by the state in the past, it has still retained its ancient glory and cultural identity alive for generations blooming within the pan-Indian culture and heritage. The mushrooming of innumerable ancient shrines, intricately designed temples and monuments in beautiful Kalinga style of architectures, art and artifacts, dance and music, folk and classical literatures which have made the state splendid and magnificent. Besides, the presence of diverse communities like the Hindus, Buddhist, Jain and sixty-two tribal communities have made the land so diverse and distinct. Besides, the state has abundant natural resources, wide varieties of flora and fauna, long coastline and hill ranges. It has been rightly said by the great men that, in the land of Utkala situated inn Bharat (India) is Purusottam Dham which is like a paradise on earth Here Lord Jagannath in the wooden form is residing to grant fearlessness to the devotees. Just like within a full bloomed lotus, after the petals have formed, there is the stigma, stamen, and kesara, the filament of the flower, with honey or ambrosia which emits a wonderful aroma that delights the mind of the people similarly the Antarbedi is like the core of the lotus and everything surrounding, like the devas and devis are the lotus petal In the centre in the form of Kesara there is the presence of Lord Jagannath with Balabhadara, Subhadra and Sudarshan. Because of the auspicious presence of Purusottam Dham the land of Utkala has attained incomparable glory throughout the entire world (Das 2012).

'Sri Jagannath is worshiped as the Presiding Deity (*Ishtadevata or Kuladevata*) of Odisha, in India. Besides, the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains in the East Indian states like the *West Bengal, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar* and North-Eastern states like *Assam, Manipur* and *Tripura* worship Lord Jagannath with great devotion. The culture, religion, and philosophy of the land are surrounded by the enliven deity of 'the Purusottam Lord Jagannath' who remains the pivot of Odia life and culture. The story of Jagannath has been inextricably interlinked with the history of Orissa, its people, cultures, sociology, religion, politics and

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philosophy. It is a magnificent synthesis of beliefs and ethics down the centuries and in the process wielding varied influences into an integral scheme of living. The Jagannath Culture in the final analysis has acquired a distinctive identity of its own blending aspects of belief of low culture with lefties religious and metaphysical expectations of high culture (Dash 2003). Further, it is pertinent to say that, Lord Jagannath is not simply an icon of wood, but is a perennial source of inspiration for all Indians and Odias of all caste, class, race and gender. The multi-stream flow of Jagannath Consciousness is a powerful inter-connecting link deeply rooted in the Odia psyche and emotion which is intensely felt and realized in all spheres of life. Whether it is an artistic invention or literary creation, or cultural expression in the form of dance, music or theatre, every facets of Odia life is enriched with the essence of Lord Jagannath.

After all who is Lord Jagannath? Jagannath is a combination of two words i.e Jagat (world) Nath (Lord/master) of the universe. In totality, Lord Jagannath is the Lord of the universe. It is said "*Sarbam Rahasyam Purusottamasya*" which denotes the origin of Purusottama Jagannath is mysterious and enigmatic. In the Hindu Sanatana Dharma, Jagannath is considered as a divine form of Lord Vishnu and Lord Krishna. If anyone seek to visualize Purna-Brahma, the absolute, one can perceive Lord Jagannath as a simple crude wooden idol with two wooden stumps as hands, conspicuous absence of legs with two big round eyes indicating sun and moon emerging from a big black face which symbolizes the Universe. Lord Jagannath is worshiped as the Daru-Brahma. The auspicious presence of mysterious divine substance called Brahma Padartha considered as the soul i.e installed within the wooden idol of Jagannath has made him unique and different from the other deities of the world. It is also interesting to note that, the construction of four wooden deities of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan is mysterious which does not follow any prescribed form of idol making in the Shilpa Sastras and traditional Hindu scripture. Lord Jagannath has accepted the wooden form in order to relieve the humanity from the pains and sufferings of the material world. The word Daru is derived from Da-Dukha or sorrow and Ru-to give. "*Khandanat Sarba Dukhanan Akhandat Dana Anandam*" -i.e which offers infinite bliss removing pains and sufferings of the world and devotee, seeker or common men who can perceive him easily and instantly. Being of wood the images require periodical renewal, and this is a matter about which there is considerable mystery. A neem tree is sought in the forests, on which no crow or other bird has even perched, it is known to the initiated by certain marks (Malley 1908). The wood is taken from a chosen neem tree from which the idol is constructed by the Viswakarma or the carpenters and then entrusted to certain servitors called Pati-Mahapatra who do the most secret and ritual of transferring the Brahma-Padartha from old idols to the new-idols and concurrently on the same night the old idols are buried in the Koili-Baikuntha in the temple premises by a group of Daita servitors of Lord Jagannath. The new idols are then installed on the Ratna-Simhasana and are worshiped.

The Brahma is the core concept of Hindu Philosophy which is the highest Universal Principle and the ultimate reality. It is all pervasive, infinite, eternal bliss and ultimate truth which remain unaltered and intact from the beginning till the end but is the cause of all changes in the universe. The concept of Brahma is connected to Lord Jagannath. He is worshiped as Daru-Brahma, the Patta Painting worshiped during Anasara Ritual every year are venerated as Patti-Brahma, Mahaprasad, the offering of Lord Jagannath is known as Anna-Brahma, the chanting of his auspicious name is Sabda-Brahma, the script of Saura tribe is worshiped as Akshayra Brahma which is connected to lord Jagannath. The worship of Purusottam Jagannath as the Daru-Brahma i.e Brahma within wooden idol is rare and auspicious. Purusottam or the Brahman is described as "Na Stri Na Puman na Sandah", neither feminine, nor masculine nor even neuter. It has transcended the Jiva - dharma by transcending the genders. Lord Jagannath therefore does not contain any indication of gender and is very different from men. That is why he is Purusottama for the Vedantis and conveniently interpreted hi as Krishna Vasudeva or Dakshina -Kalika. But, basically the form symbolizes the first attribute of Brahman as genderless (Rath 2019). Lord Jagannath symbolizes the Pranava, the essence of all Vedic thoughts. The Pranava appears as the supreme consciousness or Purusottama Consciousness representing Lord Jagannath (Panigrahi and Bibudharanjan 2015). Further, Puri was known as Purusottam Puri and Jagannath Puri once upon a time. The word Puri or Pura has several meanings such as house, country, city or body. So, the soul dwells in everyone's Pura i.e body is called Purusha. As Puri is a dwelling place of Lord Jagannath it is known as Purusottam Puri and Jagannath Puri. Later the name is shortened to Puri (Mahapatra 2018). So, Puri is considered the holiest of the holy pilgrimage destinations of India. The national reverence for holy places has been for ages concentrated in the city, sacred to Vishnu under his title of Jagannath the Lord of the world. Here, in Puri situated the national temple whither the people flock to worship from every province of India (Sahu 2005).

The crude wooden idol of Lord Jagannath with two hands and absence of legs with the mysterious divine substance signifies the Daru-Brahma Jagannath who is known as *Purusottama* or Lord Krishna in the Bhagavat Geeta told Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra: "*Since I am beyond the perishable world of matter or kshetra, I am superior even to the imperishable*

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soul; hence I am known as Purusottama in the world and in the Vedas"'. Lord as Cosmic Being is imperishable and wields control over the three worlds, upholds and maintains all. The four-fold celestial idols of the Chaturdha-Murty represents oneness in four-idols. Sri Jaganatha is the '*Nirakara Param-Brahma'*, Sri Balabhadra is the '*Shravana'* (hearing power), Devi Subhadra is the '*Ichhashakti'* (Will power) and Sri Sudarshan is the '*Chalat' Shakti* (Working power). Further, the scholars perceive the fourfold divine idols as four Vedas, i.e. Sri Balabahadra (*Shama Veda*), Devi Subhadra (*Rig Veda*), Sri Jagannath (*Yajur Veda*) and Sri Sudarshan (*Atharva Veda*). Lord Jagannath is worshiped as the *Lokayata Brahma* (God of People), and Jagannath Dharma is Gana Dharma (religion of mass). The 'Brihat Samhita' and 'Vishnu Samhita' say when God is worshipped as *daru*, the four aspirations of the worshipper such as *Aygu* (longevity), *Sri* (wealth), *Bala* (strength) and *Vijaya* (victory) are fulfilled.

II. Lord Jagannath in the Vedas and Upanishads

Lord Jagannatha is worshiped as Saguna Brahma (with definite form and quality/attribute) and Nirguna Brahma (without any form and quality/attribute) as well. Though, there is no reference of any deity or Jagannath in the Vedas, a Vedic prayer of Purusha-Sukta of the Rig Veda says '*Brahmadaru Smarami*' which indicates an '*Apuruseya Daru'* (log of wood) or '*Adi-Brahma*' floating in the ocean since time immemorial. Lord Jagannath is known as Purusottama, the symbolic representation of Great Purusha as conceived in the Vedas which signifies the great man who is the creator of the world. The Vedic Purusha is one and the non-dual. A hymn of *Purusha Sukta* of *Rig Veda* also illustrates that: "*Om Sahasrashirsha Purushah Sahasrakshah, Sahasrapad Sa Bhumim Vishvato Vritva atyatishthad Dashangulam*" - which says manifestation of a Giant *Purusha* i.e a cosmic entity having thousand heads, thousand eyes and thousand feet enveloping the whole universe yet hyphenated with a space of ten angulas" The *Purusha Sukta* of the *Rigveda* is recited in all religious worships of Lord Jagannatha which denotes that he symbolises Lord Vishnu and Lord Krishna. The Yajurveda also describes *Parama-Purusha* which is similar to the shape of Jagannatha. The 'Tapering Flame' a U-shaped (vessel of Agni in the Vedas) on the forehead of Lord Jagannath is the '*Atmajyoti'* is the '*Kundalini'*, awakened consciousness i,e a fiery power of Lord Vishnu. The Atharva Veda also mentions about the '*Apuruseya Daru*'.

Further, the Upanisads designate Him as the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Truth-Sense-Bliss) Swarupa of the Brahma, the Eternal Entity pervading the whole Universe. The description of the '*Apada Sirsha*' in the *Mundaka Upanishad* signifies that God has neither foot nor head which symbolizes Lord Jagannath. The *Svetasvatara Upanisad* describes the Brahman: *Apanipada Javanograhita, Pasyatyacakshuh Srunotyakarnah*" which means that the Brahma sans feet moves faster, sans hands accept everything, sans eyes see all around and sans ears hears all sounds. The lore that the world has been created from the body of a *Primordial Purusha* is ancient and is illustrated in many Hindu scriptures. Lord Jagannath is conceived as Maha-Vishnu who is always in the company of his celestial wife Maha-Laxmi who is said to be there in three forms Sri Bhu and Nila while revealing the nature of Virat Swarupa or the Cosmic God. The Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda says that Lord Vishnu possesses Bhu-Devi and Sri Devi as two wives who are two forms of Goddess Laxmi. So, Sri or Laxmi is used a prefix (Pattanaik 2015). Lord Jagannath symbolising Lord Vishnu is worshiped with Bhu-Devi and Sri-Devi in on the Ratna-Vedi in the Jagannath temple in Puri which is known as Sri Mandira.

III. Lord Jagannath and Ten Incarnations of Lord Vishnu

Some scholars hold that Lord Jagannath is the Maha Vishnu who is '*Avatari*', from whom the Dasabatara the ten *Avataras (*divine incarnations or fundamental entities) like *Rama Krishna* and others have been originated. In the *Satya Yuga.* Matsya (Fish) and Kurma (Tortoise), Baraha (half animal and half human form), Nrusimha (half animal and half human form). In the *Tretaya Yuga* Bamana (Dwarf God), Parsurama (God with Bow and Arrow) and Rama, the King. In the *Dwapara Yuga,* Balaram and Krushna, the King and in the *Kali Yuga* (Present Age) the Baudha (Enlightened) and Kalki (War God). Further it is said that Lord Jagannath as Lord Vishnu represents the four deities in the four Yugas i.e Nrusimha in Satya Yuga, Rama in Tretaya Yuga, Krishna in the Dwapara Yuga, Lord Jagannath in the Kali Yuga. He is Vishnu under whatever for and by whatever title men call upon his name (Hunter 2018). It is said that, though the leelas of the deities of three Yugas Satya, Tretaya, Dwapara in three Dhamas like Badrinath Dham, Rameswaram, Dawraka Dham have been completed, the leelas of Lord Jagannath in Puri Dham is continuing till date. It is said that Lord Vishnu takes bath in the Rameshwam eat food in Puri, administers in Dwaraka, and sleeps in the Badrika Dham. Therefore, the fifty-six varieties of food offerings of Mahaprasad offered Lord Jagannath is called Abhada as it is not distributed but taken by all together without any bar of caste or class. The holy land of Puri is located in the South East corner of Odisha and the Jagannath Temple is located in South East Corner of Puri. The temple represents the fire (Agni moola) in Vasthu Sastra which is fit for placing kitchen facing towards East which represents prosperity

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where the sun rises to give energy and breeze of happiness and bliss from southern direction.

Jagannatha is perhaps the most inclusive manifestation of the Hindu faith. In the syncretic character of Jagannath faith are included the five main strands of worship in the Hindu system and much more (Pani 2017). He is considered as a paramount deity seated on the Ratna Simhasana in the innermost part of the temple in Puri (Patnaik 2006). The *Chaturdhamurti* (four-fold divine idols) comprising *Sri Jagannatha* (symbolizing Vishnu), his elder brother *Sri Balabhadra* (symbolizing Siva) and his younger sister *Devi Subhadra* (symbolizing Shakti) are the centre of religious worship in Sri Mandira situated at the navel of Sankha-Kshetra Puri which comprises most of the religious centres. The shape of Puri as Kshetra is like that of a conch shell (Sankha) which is one of the Aiyudhas (weapon) of Vishnu who resides in the naval or central part of the Conch shell in the form of Lord Jagannath as Lord Vishnu. The Jagannath Trio worship three fundamental deities of Jagannath, Balabhadra Subhdra and *Sri Sudarsan* (symbolizing Surya and weapon of Lord Vishnu) is fourth divine manifestation. Besides, the deity of '*Madhav'* (moving image of Jagannath which is taken out of main temple during some rituals), '*Shri-Devi'* (Goddess of Wealth) and '*Bhu-Devi'* (Goddess of Land) are worshipped with them. So, the Saptadha Bigraha (seven idols) worshiped on the '*Ratnavedi*' (Jewelled Platform) in the main temple in Puri are unique, enigmatic and unparallel to any other Hindu shrine in India in terms of iconography and religious worship as well. The trio worship of Jagannath is more than religious (Padhi 2015). It is said, that the tri-coloured deities represent three colours -white, yellow and black represent three major races of the world. Lord Jagannath represents black i.e people of India and Africa, Balabhadra represents white i.e people of England and America and Subhadra represents Yellow i.e the people of Mongolia and China. The distinctiveness of the temple religious worship are also found in other aspects such as the *Nitis* (rituals), the *Veshas* (dresses and ornaments), the *Dwadasa Yatra* (twelve festivals), the *Chhapan Bhoga* (fifty six varieties of foods offering to the deities) the temple architecture and the *Nabakalebara* Ceremony (renewal of deities) are the distinct features of Sri Jagannatha culture and philosophy. While it has all the trapping of highly ritualised worship conforming to the traditional Vedic rites and later forms, it is primarily based on a very simple principle of a loving relationship of the devotee and the divine based on the foundation of complete, intimate and unconditional surrender by the worshiper before the worshiped (Pani 2017).

IV. Lord Jagannath in the Epics and Folk Literature

Sir Jagannatha was worshipped by the Aryans and the non-Aryans together in the Utkala (Odisha) during ancient times. So, He is equally claimed as the original deity of the Hindus and the tribes as well. He is not treated simply as a religious icon but as a magnificent divine force influencing the state, society and culture of India. Sri Jagannath remains a great cultural unifier who symbolizes the Odia identity. From Ramayana it is known that the family deity of Ikshvaku was Jagannath, Similarly, the Mahabharat, Vishnu Purana (7th Century AD) and Trikandadesa (9th Century AD) mention the other name of Vishnu as Jagannath. In Saura literature reference to the Sun as Jagannath is well known (Mishra 1995). Besides many epics, folk literature, mythologies and history mention about Lord Jagannath. However, the Utkala Khanda of *Skanda Purana* and *Brahma Purana* give elaborate account of the '*Jagannathapuri'* during the reign of King *Indradyumna*. The '*Purushottama-Mahatmya*' in *Utkala Khanda* of the *Skanda Puran* illustrates '*Sisho Manuso Leela*' i.e Lord Jagannatha is manifested in the Purusottama Kshetra Puri to exhibit humanly leelas. It says that in early times Jagannath was worshipped by the Sabara tribal community especially *Viswavasu* Savara as Nilamadhav a 'Indranilamani Vigraha' crafted in a precious jewel, which was the earlier form of Lord Jagannath. *Indradyumna*, the king of Malwa or *Malab* (known as Avanti or Ujjain located in Madhya Pradesh) sent his minister *Vidyapati* to bring *Neelamadhava* from *Viswavasu* to find the Lord and Vidyapati after locating the Lord, informed the king Indradyumna about Lord's presence. But, when the king visited the place the Lord disappeared. With disappointment, the king performed Aswamedha Yajna and while offering final oblation the Lord evolved from the sacrificial fire as *Nrusimha*. The king was advised by the Lord in dream to salvage a log of wood from the *Chakrateertha, Puri*. Accordingly, the wooden log was brought and the divine idols were constructed in the king's palace in a sequestered room by a strange carpenter named Anant Maharana. When the king opened the door before the contract period of 21 days, the king saw the half-made four-fold image of *Chatrudha-Murty.* From that day the structure of the four divine idols remain un-altered and are being worshiped in the main temple of Jagannath in the *Neelachala-Dham* (Puri) today. Some scholars hold that at first Lord Jagannath was a unitary primordial deity and later transformed into four deities and are worshiped in Puri temple.

The great Odia scholar, Sarala Dasa in his *Odia Mahabharat* in 15th century has written that Jara Savara wounded Lord Krishna and after Krishna's death, His last rites were performed by the Pandavas. But, the soul of Lord Krishna remained unburnt and floated by Arjun

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into the sea which later transformed into a wooden log and found floating in the sea near Puri. From this wooden log the Jagannatha trio was constructed in the King *Indradyumna* which are worshiped in the temple till date. The *Madala Panji* (Temple Chronicle (Mohanty 1940) narrates about the transformation of *Neelamadhava* as Lord Jagannath. The *Savara* connection of Lord Jagannath is also revealed in the *Daru-Brahma Geeta* of *Jagannatha Dasa* and *Deula Tola* of *Sisu Krishna Das*. Even today, the Neelamadhava Temple is found on the bank of Mahanadi River surrounded by hills and forests in the *Kantilo* area of the Nayagarh District of Odisha. The '*Neeladri Mahodaya', 'Bamdev Samhita'* and *'Sri Kapila Samhita'* have also give the same references. The '*Vishnu Puran', 'Matsya Puran', 'Agni Puran', 'Padma Puran'* and '*Kalika Puran'* have referred about the *Odra, Puri, Nilagiri, Nilachala Dhama, Jagannatha Kshetra*. Two main Hindu scriptures like the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat* have also described about the holy shrine of *Purushottama Kshetra* and the word Jagannath is cited many times. In the Ramayan, Lord Rama advised Bibhishana to worship Jagannatha "*Aradhaya Jagannatham, Iksvaku kula daivatam.*" In the Mahabharat it is said that the Pandavas came to Puri to worship Lord Jagannath. The Buddhist scholar Indrabhuti (9th CenA.D) in his '*Gyan siddhi*' (Vajrayana Treaty) has mentioned that "*Pranipatya Jagannatham Sarvajina Bararchitam"* -I bow down before Lord Jagannath who is the Lord of the Universe. In Odisha, the Pancha Sakha, the five eminent scholars like *Jagannatha Das, Ananta Das, Balaram Das, Acthyunanda Das* and *Jasobanta Das* popularised Jagannath culture through their writings. These are early references of Lord Jagannath in the epics and folk literatures of Odisha. But they do not present unanimous views about the origin and ancientness of Lord Jagannath. So, it is presumed that before *Indradyumna* legend gained credence, Lord Jagannath might have prevailed in the folklores of Odisha.

The eminent Odia Scholar Jagannath Dasa in his Odia Bhagabata has written that Lord Jagannath possesses all six divine attributes like knowledge, power, majesty, strength, energy and self-sufficiency. When Jagannath is worshipped alone with only his face devoid of his arms and torso, He is known as '*Patitapavana'* (the redeemer of the destitute), the merciful aspect of the God. In the 19th century, the British used the term '*Juggernaut'* for Lord Jagannath which refers to a massive inexorable force or enormous entity with powerful crushing capabilities which cannot be stopped. Some scholars hold that Sri Jagannatha is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu or Lord Krishna, while others claim that He is the embodiment of 'Buddha' or 'Jina'. Others maintains that He is a Lord of tribal origin as many facets of Jagannatha culture are identical to tribal culture. So, the metaphysical and philosophical confluence of many religious streams like Buddhism, Jainism, Saktism, Saivaism etc. are assimilated within the grand spectrum of Jagannatha consciousness enhancing it spiritual eminence over the centuries.

V. Sacred Wooden Idols of Chaturdha-Murty

The 'Skanda Purana' and 'Sarala Mahabharata' have given description about appearance of the Lord Jagannath as a 'daru' or sacred wooden log from which four new idols of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan were constructed which are worshiped in the main temple at Puri today. The historians like Satyanarayan Rajguru opine that earlier the idol of Sri Jagannath was made up of stone and later transformed into wood. The 'Skanda Purana Purushottama Mahatmya' has also mentioned about the '*daru*' or wooden structure of Lord Jagannath (Das 2012). In the 'Vrihat Samhita' of Varahamihira. In the Shilpashatra' of Kashyap, wood is described as the best material to construct the deities. In 'Bhavishya Purana' the use of wood is stressed for constructing the idols of Suryanarayana or the sun god. In this epic' it is also said that '*Nimbadyah sarvavarnanam vrikshyah sadharanah smrutah*'. which means the idol made from neem wood' can be worshiped by all sections of society. It is mentioned that though the logs of peepul, mahua, deodar, sandal, bel, khadir, anchan, neem, sriparna, jackfruit tree, arjun and raktachandan (red sandal) are suitable wood to construct the idols, but choosing Neem wood for constructing the deities of Sri Jagannath temple is quite meaningful. Further, it is said that 'Pratima Lakshana Soudhagama' says '*Nimba pradhanmetasham pratima cha binirmitou*' which says among all wood, the *Neem* is the best. In Sri Jagannath temple the servitors of all class like the successors of Brahmin Vidyapati, Kshatriya King Gajapati and the tribal inheritors of Biswabashu play key role in performing different rituals of the deities. So, the idols made of the Neem wood can be worshiped by all caste and class of the society. The tree worship and idol making in wood is a distinctive feature of world's ancient civilizations like the Greek, Mesopotamian, Indus Valley and Mayan civilization. Further, the trinity is considered as the state deity. The Raja or king of Puri is the Sevayat of the present day. The trinity is the Kula-Devata or Family Deity of the Raja or the king. So also, it is State Deity, because the family whose Kuladevata it has the position of a ruler of a kingdom (Servorum 2015). The concept of state deity is as old as the Egyptian civilization. The scholars say that the Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath and the Opet Festival of Egypt are very similar. The explanation signifies the ancient origin of Lord Jagannath. Presently, Lord Jagannath has taken the center stage of global pantheon of all gods and presently He is worshiped in and around 3000 Hindu Temples across the world and his Ratha Yatra is

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celebrated in all major cities of the world which signifies the transnational significance of the Jagannath consciousness.

VI. Nabakalebara of Lord Jagannath: The Re-Embodiment Ritual

The Nabakalebara signifies the renewal or re-embodiment ritual of the wooden idols of the Chaturdha-Murty of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan. Like human, the wooden deities are subjected to decay for which they take up new '*kalebara*' or body in definite interval of Nabakalebara. The Jagannath temple in Puri, Odisha is the only temple in India and the world where the Nabakalebara Ritual takes place once in every 8th or 19th Year when the intercalary month of Asadha (Odia month) falls when it is convenient to perform the Nabakalebara of the deities as per the Jagannath temple tradition in Puri. The timing for performing the Nabakalebara of the deities in the temple is done as per the astronomical and astrological calculation.

a) *Ritual Experts and Functionaries Performing the Nabakalebara Ceremony*

The traditional servitors of the Jagannath Temple constituting four major castes such as the Brahmin, Kshyatriya, Vaishya and Sudra take part in the Nabakalebara Ceremony and perform their roles as traditionally prescribed in the Nabakalebara Ceremony. For centuries, the Gajapati Maharaja or the King of Puri who has been the traditional ruler is the main sponsor of the Jagannath Temple remain the first servant called Adya Sevak of Lord Jagannath. During Nabakalebara Ritual, the king who is a Kshatriya serves as the head or Jajamana makes official commencement of the Nabakalebara Ritual by performing the Gua Teka Ritual by handing over the Arcenut and Coconut to his Rajguru or Royal Counsel in his palace. The king invites two ritual experts to perform the Nabakalebara Ceremony. One is the Srotriya Vedic Brahmin who promises before the King by accepting Akhyata or raw rice and coconut to act as Acharya to perform all the Vedic rituals and fire sacrifices with a group of Brahmin Priests near the four holy neem trees. The Second Ritual functionary or expert who is officially invited by the king is Viswavasu who promises before the King by accepting Akhyata or raw rice and coconut to move into the forest in order to identify the Neem tree having sacred symbols of the Sankha (Conch-Shell), Chakra (Wheel), Gada (Mace) and Padma (Lotus) from which the deities are to be constructed. The Viswavasu symbolises the tribal descendent of the savara devotee who were early worshiper of Nilamadhaba the former form of Lord Jagannath. Besides, a group of carpenters known as Viswakarma also used to go to the forest to cut the selected neem tree and subsequently construct the deities in the temple. It shows that all the four categories of servitors belonging to four different castes perform their traditional roles and the ancient tradition of Nabakalebara Ceremony is maintained.

The Nabakalebara Ceremony observed in Shri Mandira, Puri, is generally of three types.

A. *Sampurna Nabakalebara (Complete Renewal):* This is complete renewal of the four wooden deities of *Chaturdhamurti* and transferring the '*Brahma-Padartha'* divine substance into the new bodies from the old ones. The new idols are given '*Purna-Rupa'* or complete shape like the human forms in '*Saptavarana Vidhi'* i.e covering the idols with seven layers like the '*Netapata*' (red silk cloth), *Phulurilagi or Tailalagi* (medicated oil), '*Chandanlagi*' (sandalwood paste), 'Jhunalagi' (resin), *Khadilagi (quicklime), Khalilagi (white flour paste)* which are pasted on the idols and Gada (loin cloth), *Ghanalagi* (silk ropes) are covered and the *Chaka-Apasaralagi* (circular cushion) takes place which symbolizes the feet of the idols. This is done by the 'daitas', the up-keepers of the bodies of the deities.

B. *Sri-Angaphita (Partial Renewal):* This is minor repairing of the four wooden idols without touching the *Brahma-Padartha* within the deities. Since Nabakalebara is a very expensive affair, *Sri-Angaphita* of the deities is performed at times instead of complete renewal of the deities. During the *Anasara* Ritual every year, *Sri-Angaphita* of the deities is done in *Saptavarana Vidhi* as per the necessity. Finally, the idols are painted by *Datta-Mahapatra*, a temple servitor followed by the *Chakshyu Dana (painting eyes* of deities) and *Nabayauban Darshan* of the *Chaturdhamurti* is made by the devotees in Sri Mandira.

C. *Special Nabakalebara:* During some special contingencies the Nabakalebara Ritual of the four-fold divine idols are performed in Shri Mandira, Puri. At times due to the foreign invasions on Shri Mandira by the Hindu and Moghul Kings, the Sri Bigrahas are shifted to different places by the temple servitors for protection of their iconic sanctity. These incidences necessitated the Nabakalebara of the deities before re-installing them on the *Ratna Singhasan* or the divine platform in the sanctum sanctorum of Shri Mandira Puri.

b) *Timing of Nabakalebara*

The Nabakalebara is an established ritual of the Puri temple as it is necessary to change the wooden deities for definite reasons. Though, it is very difficult to trace the origin of Nabakalebara, the *Madala Panji* (Temple Chronicle) holds that the Nabakalebara Ceremonies are being held in definite intervals from the time of King Ram Chandra Dev (popularly known as *Duti Indradyumna or Avinav Indradyumna)* of the Bhoi dynasty

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since 1575 A.D. During the twentieth Century, the previous Nabakalebar Ceremonies are conducted during the year 1912, 1931, 1950, 1969, 1977, 1996; and the latest is being held in the year 2015 which is the first Nabakalebara Ceremony of the twenty first century.

The *Nabakalebara* Ceremony is a complex ritual of Shri Mandira, Puri which includes a series of rituals that continue for three to four months starting from the month of March or April to July. The Nabakalebara Ritual usually begin aftermath of the Ram Navami on '*Chaitra Sukla Dasami'* i.e 10th Bright Full-moon Day of Odiya month of '*Baishakha'* (April). The Nabakalebara Ceremony in the Puri Temple normally takes place in every 8th, 12th or 19 years when '*Joda Asadha'* or when the intercalary month of '*Asadha*' falls. The extra '*Ashadha*' is also known as '*Mala Masa*' or '*Purusottama Masa*' or '*Adhimasa'* which is considered auspicious to perform the Nabakalebara Ceremony of the deities. As per the Puri temple tradition, when a leap month of '*Asadha*' falls, it is convenient to perform the Nabakalebara Ceremony as one extra month is available for constructing the new idols. The astrologers of Shri Mandira announce the extra Ashadh after calculation. According to the lunar Hindu calendar in every three years a lunar month is excluded from calculation to strike a balance between lunar and solar years. However, the Nabakalebara of the deities is not necessarily performed whenever a intercalary month of Asadha falls in a year. So Nabakalebara of the deities is performed only when necessity arises.

c) Necessity of Nabakalebara Ritual

The worship of the wooden idols of Jagannatha Trinity in Sri Jagannatha Temple is an exception. Unlike the Hindu deities, generally made of either metal or stone, the four deities are made of neem wood which is subject to decay over a period of time which necessitate the Nabakalebara of the deities. The Srimad Bhagabata has prescribed eight types of idols eligible for religious worship namely, stone, wood, metal, painting, drawing, sand pictures, psychic and gem considering the longevity of these materials which varies from one another. The longevity of photo or painting or drawing is one year, for wooden image it is twelve to nineteen years, for metal it is one hundred years, for stone it is one thousand years and for gem it is ten thousand years. The grand religious ceremony of the Nabakalebara signifies the re-embodiment of old idols of *Chaturdha-Murty* i.e. Sri Jagannatha, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan. Though the *Brahma-Padartha* or the soul of the deities remain intact within, but the wooden idols gradually start perishing due to frequent drawing, pulling, hanging, pushing, dragging and shouldering of the deities during pahandis in Snana Yatra and Rath Yatra every year. Further, due to external attacks, the *Sri-Bigrahas* of the '*Chaturdha- Murty'* are damaged which necessitate to perform Nabakalebara of the deities at different time intervals.

VII. Nabakalebara Ceremony, 2015

a) Gua Teka or Authorisation Ritual- March 29, 2015

The long ritual of the Nabakalebara of Lord Jagannath started on the auspicious day of the Chaitra Sukla Dashami (bright fortnight of Odia month of Chaitrya) which happened on 29th March in the year 2015. On the very day early morning the Gajapati Dibyasinha Dev the king of Puri, known as Adya Sevak or the first servitor of Lord Jagannath, after completion of some customary worship in his palace, perform Mahabakya Sankapa by handing over the gua, coconut and betel nut to the Rajguru (royal counsel). This ritual is known as gua teka or the authorisation ritual which marked the beginning of Nabakalebara Ceremony. The king through his Rajguru gave authorization to the temple servitors such as Daitas, Brahmin and Biswakarma Servitors to go to the forest in search of Neem tree for construction of the wooden idols of Chaturdhamurty of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan within definite timeframe.

b) Obtaining Ajnamala from Chaturdha-Murty and Sadhi Bandha Ceremony

On the same day afternoon, the Ajnamala Bije ritual took place, when after Madhyanha Dhoopa (afternoon oblation) of the deities in Sri Mandira, Puri the servitor Pati Mohapatra made special offerings to the Chaturdhamurti on Ratnabedi and took four Ajnyamalas i.e the garland of divine directive from the deities of Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan. He kept the Ajnamaala of Sri Sudarshan with him as he served as Badagrahi of Sri Sudarshan, he offered three Agnyamalas to three Badagrahi Daitas of Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Jagannath respectively. After the Ajnamala Bije while the Banajaga Party come from Garbhagriha and reach the Kalahata Dwara of the temple, the Sadhi Bandha ritual is done by a servitor called Bhitarchu Mahapatra. The Sadhi Bandha is tying 12 hands long Geeta Govinda Khandua Silk on the head of the Banajaga party like Pati Mahapatra, Badagrahi Daitas, Daitas servitors, Deula Karana, Tadhau Karana which at the Anasara Pindi of the main temple. The cotton sarees are tied over the heads of the Lenka and Biswakarma Servitors at the Jaya Bijaya Dwara of the temple. Besides, the Makap servitor apply sandal paste on the foreheads of members of the Banajaga Party. Meanwhile the Acharya Purohita and Brahmin Pandits performed Yajna or fire sacrifice at new Darugriha in Koili-Baikuntha of the Puri temple.

The most expected moment came when after long waiting a group of servitors like Daitas and Patimahapatra with red Khandua tied on their heads

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holding Angyanmalas (garland of divine orders) in hands came out in the Baisipahacha in four bands one after the other in the Lions Gate of Sri Mandira, Puri and moved towards the Sri Nahara (Kings Palace) of Puri Gajapati Maharaj, in a grand procession on the Grand road of Puri where the Rajguru handed over Sankalp Gua to the Daiatapati's as a symbol of entrustment of responsibility to go in search of Darus and return to the temple in time to construct the new idols. The Gua-Teka ritual signifies the official commencement of sacred journey or expedition of Banajaga Yatra (searching of sacred wood or Daru Brikshya) with the direction of Lord Jagannath. The Banajaga Yatra is the vital aspect of the Nabakalebara Ceremony. The devotees and visitors from different parts of the state, country and even from different corners of the world joined and became a part of this grand event.

c) *Banajaga Party Halted at the Jagannath Ballav Matha, Puri*

After receiving the arcnut and coconut from the Rajguru in the king's palace the search party then proceed to the Jagannath Ballav Matha in a grand procession accompanied with music, trumpets, drums and groups of devotees demonstrating colourful flags. This brilliant evening has brought many exciting and memorable moments which were indeed a heart-warming experience which can hardly expressed in words. The grand road of Puri flooded with huge crowd of devotees and visitors came from different parts of the world. The groups of devotees holding momento of Lard Jagannath singing the glory of God and dance on the road with beats of Murdanga (drum), while other groups holding multi-coloured flags moved in grand processions. The whole scenario looks very colourful and majestic. Everybody became excited as a part of this grand ceremony. The Banajaga team constituting a large team of servitors of the Jagannath Temple such as the Pati Mahapatra, Deula Karana, Tadau Karana, Lenka, Behera Khuntia, Biswabasu, Bidyapati, Biswakarma, Badagrahi Daitas, Acharya Brahmin and a group of Brahmin Priests.

The Banajaga Party halted for a day in the Jagannath Ballav Matha where they started initial preparation of their journey. While leaving home, the wives of the Daitas made Bandapana to them praying God for making their long journey successful. Once the Banajaga team left home for this sacred journey, they don't return home under no circumstances. If it so happens, they are not allowed to take part in the journey again.

d) *Journey of Vanayaga in search of Sacred Neem Tree*

After spending one day in the Jagannath Ballav Math at Puri, the next day mid night, the Banajaga Party proceeded towards the Deuli Matha, Kakatpur which is known as the original pitha of the Goddess Mangala. The distance is around 50 kms away from Puri. The main purpose of the Vanayaga Journey is to find sacred Neem tree in the forest. During this journey the Vanajaga Party carry the four '*ajnamala*' with them in bullock cart. As per tradition, a servitor called Lenka holding the Sudarshan Chakra move ahead of the Banajaga Party. Besides, the Banajaga Party was escorted by police,temple officials and public in big procession. In every village the Banajaga Party was highly welcomed by the local villagers as they are considered as the representative of Lord Jagannath. The womenfolk greeted them with Bandapanas, offering flowers, blowing conch-shells, decorating roads with jhotis and implanting Banana tree on roadside, burning lamps and keeping Purna Kumbhas in front of their houses which is considered sacred. Besides, the male-folk beated Mridanga and made kirtan welcomed the Banajaga Party. During this occasion, the villagers observed fast or took vegetarian foods to maintain sanctity. Accompanying, the Banjaga Party is a wonderful experience by the author the heart filled with eternal joy, contentment and bliss. The journey took three to four days with a halt at three to four places and finally the Banajaga Party reached the Deuli Matha, Kakatpur. The servitors took shelter in the Sabarpalli, made up of thatched roofs and floors with leaves and bamboo strips etc. During these days the Banajaga team especially the Daitas who play crucial role in the sacred Daru expedition observe strict discipline and conduct like making Habisya-Anna (partaking vegetarian food once a day), made bare foot journey and slept on floor during Banayaga Yatra in order to purify their bodies and minds and devoted to the cause. It shows to attain divinity one must observe strict discipline in life.

All the necessary arrangements were made by the state Government of Odisha by constructing Savarapallis for accommodating the Banajaga Party. The Sabarapalli were temporary shelter made up of leaves and bamboos with all amenities and facilities for living like cooking, bathing, sleeping etc. Besides, the fast aid medical check-up by the doctors and para-medical staffs and security arrangements were made by appointing a group of police personnel. Besides, regular monitoring was made by the officials of the Jagannath Temple Administration and the various departments of the Govt of Odisha.

e) *Ritual Bath of the Goddess Managala: Date 4th April 2015*

Next day early morning, after receiving a letter of invitation from the Goddess Mangala Temple, Kakatpur, the Vanayaga Party moved to the temple in a big procession. There the chief priest of the temple arranged a special Majana(ritual bath) of the Goddess Mangala, after ritual bath Goddess was decorated with new sarees, flowers and was offered food offerings like Gajamanda and Chadheineda brought by the Banayaga Party from the Jagannath temple, Puri. After the ritual,

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Banayaga Party returned to Deuli Matha where they recite Swapanbati Mantra 108 times before they sleep seeking dream indication of the Goddess Mangala about the location of sacred Neem trees for construction of the four idols of the Chaturdhamurti. Since the Nabakalebara Ritual relates to the birth of Lord Jagannath, the Goddess Mangala, Kakatpur is conceived as the mother of Lord Jagannath plays important role in the Nabakalebara. Besides, a group of Stotriya Brahmins also recited Saptasati Chandi in the Goddess Mangala Temple, Kakatpur to appease the Goddess Mangala.

f) Identification of Sacred Neem Tree

The Daitas after getting 'Swapnadesha' or dream indication from the Goddess Mangala, Kakatpur about the location of the sacred Neem Tree/ Daru-Brikshya. moved in that direction in search of the Daru-Brikhya having sacred symptoms of Sankha (Conch), Chakra (Wheel), Gada (Mace) and Padma (Lotus) and other symptoms. After the Neem Trees are identified by the Biswakarmas, the Badagrahi Daitas selected the Neem Tree or the Daru Brikshyas. The four sacred Neem trees or the Deba-Daru Brikshya from which the idols of the Chaturdhamurty are to be constructed were identified one after the other. At first the sacred Daru of Sudarshan Daru was identified followed by the Darus of Balabhadra, Shubhadra and Sri Jagannath in similar ways. After identification of the sacred Neem tree or '*daru vriksha*', the 'agnyamala' of the respective deities are touched to the identified Neem tree by the 'Badagrahi Daita' and Pati Mohapatra. The trunk of the tree was extracted as '*daru*' from which the deity was constructed. The significance of taking Ajnyamaala of Lord Jagannath is that everything is done with the divine directives of Lord Jagannath in sending the '*agnyamala* through his servitors like Badagrahi Daita and Pati Mohapatra who only serve as the carriers or messengers of his divine orders.

g) Construction of Sabarapalli

The Sabarapallis are constructed at four different places where the sacred Neem Trees or Daru Brikshya are identified for accommodation of the Banayaga Party. The Banayaga Party took shelter in Sabarapalli during their Banajaga journey for a period of three to four months. By staying in the Sabarapalli, the Banayaga Party performed a series of rituals surrounding the Daru Brikshya or the sacred Neem tree.

h) Series of Rituals surrounding the Sacred Neem Tree

After identification of the Sacred Neem Tree or Daru Brikshya, a series of rituals performed in and around the area where the Sacred Neem Tree or Daru Brikshya is located. The series of rituals in a sequence are as follows

1st Day– Bhumi Sudhi, Ankura-Ropana and Daru Snana in the evening,

2nd Day- Yajna reciting Patala Nrusimha Mantra and performing Vedic Rituals,

3rd Day- Purnahuti Final Oblation, cutting of Maha-Daru

4th Day– Daru Chaupata and Construction of Daru Sagadi

5th Day- Transporting Daru to the Jagannath Temple, Puri by the Daita Servitors

8th-9th Day– Daru halted at Alam Chandi Temple at Puri

10th Day– Entry of Daru Sagadi in Koili Baikuntha of Sri Mandira

1st Day- Bhumi-Suddhi, Daru-Snana and Ankuraropana

The whole area was cleared and purified by sprinkling sanctified water. The Chakra Narayan i.e Sudarshan chakra brought by Lenka sevayat put under a tree. The Yajna was performed by the Brahmins reciting Vedic hymns to purify the place form evil spirits. After sun set in the evening as moon appears the ritual bath of the identified sacred Neem tree was made by the Daita servitors by sprinkling sacrificial water by chanting the Purushsukta hymns of the Veda. Then the tree wrapped in white clothes, sandal paste and vermilion applied, and flowers offered. Then the Badagrahi Daitas touched the Ajnyamala and Darubrikhya, parikrama surrounding of sacred tree was made thrice by the Patimohaptra, Daitapatis and Lenka. After that, the Ankurarpoana ritual was done by the Brahmin priests in a closed space adjacent to the Yajna Mandap or Platform surrounded by read-black cloth. The servitors made Habisyanna and observe street discipline while performing the Vedic rituals.

2nd Day Maha Yajna or Fire Sacrifices

On the second day the Maha Yajna or Fire Sacrifices was performed on the Yajna Mandapa by the Acharya with a group of Brahmin Priests by reciting Patala Nrusingha Mantra 1100 times which continued for a period of one and half day,

3rd Day Purnahuti of Maha Yajna and Daru Chedana

On the third day, the Purnahuti or final oblation of fire sacrifice was done after complete recitation of Patala Nrusigha Mantra for 1100 times by the Acharya and Brahmin priests. After that, the rituals of Maha Daru Chedana i.e cutting of Sacred Daru took place. The Acharya worshiped the Golden, Silver and Iron axes on the Yajna Mandap offering flowers, sandal-paste, ghee and honey to axes and handed over Gold Axe to Bidyapati, Silver Axe to Biswabasu and Iron Axe to Biswakarma. At first holding golden axe, the Acharya uttered a Mantra and handed over it to Bidyapati or Pati Mahapatra who encircled Daru Brikshya three times from left to right direction reciting Mantra-raj mantra and then stroke the tree thrice with golden axe. Then the Acharya took over silver axe reciting Sudarshan Mantra

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gave to Biswabasu (Daita) who surrounded the Darubrukhya and stroke the tree thrice. At last Acharya uttered Sudarshan Mantra holding iron axe and handed over to Biswakarma who finally cut the tree reciting Hari-Hari-naam. Apart from this, several other rituals were conducted before felling of Daru-Brukhya (sacred tree).

4th and 5th Day Daru Chaupata (sizing) and Sagadi (Cart) making

After cutting the sacred Daru-Brukhya, the unrequired branches and leaves are buried in a pit and was not used for any other purpose. The trunk of the tree was cut into required size called Chaupata (quadrangular). Simultaneously 'four Shagadis' or four wheeled carts were made specially for carrying the four Darus of Sri Sudarshana, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra to Sri Jagannath Temple in Puri.

6th-8th Day: Consecration of Shagadi Carts

The Daru sagadis or carts were sanctified by Shrotriya Brahmins and the Darus covered with Khandua silk cloth loaded on the Daru Sagadi or four wheeled carts. As per tradition the 'shagadis' or carts of Sri Sudarshan moved at first followed by the Daru Sagadi of Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Jagannath were drawn by the people and the police towards Srimandira Puri

9th Day

When the Daru Sagadi rolled towards the Jagannath Temple Puri escorted by the Daitas, Devotees and public in huge gatherings. On its way to Sri Mandira, while crossing the roadside villages, the Daru Sagadis halted at several places, where grand welcomes were made by the devotees and they worshiped the Sacred Darus beating ghanta, conch and kahali etc. The Darus of Sri Sudarshan, Sri Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra halted at the Alam Chandi Temple while entering Puri whereas the Daru of Sri Jagannath halted at Nrusigha Temple after reaching Puri. When the Daru sagadi reached Puri it was intimated to the Gajapati Maharaja and Sri Jagannath Temple administration. The Daru Sagadi in grand procession on the grand road of Puri reached Srimandira through Koili Baikuntha where the sacred Darus are kept in the temporary sheds and daily worship and food are offered to the sacred Darus until Deba Snana Purnima.

VIII. Maha Anasara

During the Nabakalebara Year the Maha-Anasara continue for a period of 45 days unlike every year when the Anasara continues for 15 days. Due *to* the fall of Joda Ashadh intercalary month of Asadha which constitutes three Pakshas or fortnight, when it is convenient for constructing the four idols. The word Anabasara means to have no free time. Which in this context means that, the God are thought to have no free time when they are separated, ill, and hidden from public sight (darshan) (Hardenberg 2001). During the period of Anasara, the idols are concealed in a sequester chamber as they are said suffer from cold and fever due to ritual bath during Snana Purnima. For this reason, the idols are given herbal medicines and fruits and drinks called Pana as they suffer from illness. The repairing of idols made by the Daitapatis as they are said to be the family members or descendants of Lord Jagannath. During this Maha-Anasara period, the construction of deities takes place along with Yajna or fire sacrifices and consecration of Nyasa Daru in the Koili Baikuntha (burial place of the deities). Afterall the rituals of Ghata Paribartan i.e transference of Brahma is done by the Daitas and Pati Mahapatra as intimate servitors of Lord Jagannath.

Phase–I During first fifteen days of Krushna Paksha or dark fortnight, the carving of four wooden idols and *Brahma* Padartha or soul substance was transferred from old idols to the new bodies in highly conspicuous manner by Pati Mahapatra and the Daitas who are the up-keepers of the *Shriangas* or bodies of the holy trinity as inherited for generations in the Jagannath Temple. The choice of the darkest hour of the dark night in a year of double Asadha is neither accidental nor arbitrary. This day happens to be day Lord Krshna abandoned mundane earth in favour of the world celestial (Bibudharanjan 2008).

During Nabakalebara Year a Gupta Rath Yatra or secret car festival was held inside the temple. The engraving of the new deities and the life infusing ceremony of the Nyasadaru is opleted the 14th day of the dark fortnight of Ashadha. A small chariot a miniature replica of Nandighosha Chariot of Sri Jagannath was made in whih the '*nyasadaru*' is kept and dragged by the Daita servitors and Pati Mahapatra round the main temple seven times beating cymbals, holding *chhatra*, *chamara*. After Gupta Rath Yatra, the Nyasadaru was taken to the 'Nirman andap' where the Biswakarma divided '*nyasadaru*' into four pieces.

Ghata Paribartan -June 15, 2015

On the auspicious day of Krushna Chaturdashi which fell on the day of 15th June 2015 the core ritual of 'Ghata Parivartan' took place in the midnight inside the main Jagannath temple Puri. A selected servitor from Pati Mahapatra's family take out original image in a box which is then transferred to the new image (Malley 1908). After installation of the Brahma Padartha or soul substance within new idols, the Nyasa-Daru was used as shut door of internal cavity or '*Brahmakothari*' of four idols of Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan. To utter surprise, the basil leaves, sandal paste and flowers offered to the deities during the last Nabakalebara ritual 8th or 19th years before remains fresh as long as they are in touch with the Brahma-Padartha. But once these are removed from the Brahma Padartha they get paled as experienced by the Pati Mahapatra and Daita servitors involved in this ritual.

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After completion of the core ritual of transferring Brahma-Padartha to the new idol which is installed on the Ratna-Simhasan for worship. Concurrently, on the same night, the old idols are done Patali or buried underground in the Koili-Baikuntha in the premises of the Jagannath Temple by a group of Daitas, known as the intimate servitors of Lord Jagannath. The Ghata Paribartan during the Nabakalebara ritual, the Lord Jagannath gives the message that everything is temporary in this mortal world which signifies that in the Kali Yuga nobody is conscious of death. Through this ritual, the Lord says "O man do good deeds so that you can get rid of your past karmas and can move upward after life.

Phase–II Sudhi Kriya (Purificatory Rites) by the Daitas and their families

During second fortnight, the *Patali* or the burial of the old idols in the *Koili Baikuntha* and the *Asaucha Bidhi* is observed by the Daitas. The Nabakalebara is an inimitable humanly leela of Lord Jagannath, so also after burial or Golaka Vishrama of the deities in the Koili Baikuntha, the servitors and their families observe Sudhi Kriya (Purificatory Rites) or obsequy rites for a period of ten days as per the Hindu rituals. The Daita servitors are believed to be of same lineage of Lord Jagannath. They treat Lord Jagannath as their family members. So, during this period the Daitas and their families don't go outside homes or nor visit their friend and relative's house and don't accept food from outsiders. If any of their family members die during this time, they don't observe mourn for the dead person of their family. On the 10th day of burial of the deities, the daita servitors tonsured their heads, wear new clothes after taking birth in the Markanda tank. Then they come to Sri Mandira for holy darshan of the deities. During this Nabakalebara of 2015, the Daitapati Nijog of the temple at the end of the rituals on 13th day i.e on 27th June, arranged a customary feast on the Grand Road where Mahaprasad was distributed to the people.

Phase–III During third fortnight Maha *Anasara*, the wooden body needs seen layers of coating which is called Saptabarana. It is strange how the Deities pose themselves to be dressed up in human form. The skeletal frame gets anointed with perfumed oil and various types of paste at suitable intervals (Padhee 2015). The new idols are given final shape by wrapping them in new silk clothes and applying preservatives and scented materials like medicinal oils, sandal-paste, Kasturi (musk), karpur (camphor) which act like veins, blood, muscles, bone marrow etc. During the last two days of the Dark fortnight, the idols are painted in indigenous colours known as Banaka-lagi ritual leaving the pupils of the eyes which was done by the Dutta Mahapatra a Brahmin servitor on the day of Pratipada, i.e 1st day of Shukla Paksha or the bright fortnight of Odia month of Ashadha. This ritual is known as Chakhyu–Daan rite. On this auspicious day of Netrouchaba the devotees made Nabajauban Darshan of the deities.

IX. Nabakalebara Rath Yatra 2015

The *Rath Yatra* of Lord Jagannath, Puri is a national festival of India which commences on the auspicious day of *Asadha Sukla Dutiya*, i.e. the second day of the bright fortnight of Odia month of *Asadh*, (during June or July). This is a nine-day journey of the deities to *Sri Gundicha* temple. This grand spiritual event attracts millions of devotees and scholars from all over the world down the centuries. In the '*Kotha Upanishad'*, the chariot is well explained as "*Atmaanam Rathinam Vidhi Shreeram Rathamevatu, Buddhim tu Saarathi Vidhi Manah Pragrabameva Cha*" -This means as the soul is installed in the body so also the deity is placed on the chariot. The wisdom serves as the rider of the chariot which controls the mind and the intellect.

Sri Jagannatha is the Lord of the Universe, on this auspicious day, He with Sri Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra come out of the sanctum sanctorum of the temple to give darshan to the millions of devotees to bestow His divine grace. This grand festival is known as *Patita- Pavana Yatra* or *Ghosha Yatra* as the devotees across the world of all caste, colour, sex or religion participate in this festival. The construction of chariots for the Car Festival begins on the auspicious day of *Akshi-Trutiya*, i.e., third day of the bright fortnight of Odia month of *Vaisakha* which continues for 58 days. Nearly, 200 temple servitors like Viswakarma Maharana, Blacksmith, Chitrakaras or Rupakaras (Painters) and tailors are engaged in construction of three grand chariots. During the Nabakalebara Rath Yatra, three Chariots along with '*parshwa devatas'* (peripheral deities) like *sarathi* (wooden charioteer), *ashwa* (horse), *dwarapala* (gate keeper), *olota shua* (inverted parrot) etc. are newly constructed. But in other years only three chariots are newly constructed, but the peripheral deities of the chariots are reused in the Rath Yatras of the successive years.

a) Taladwhaja (Chariot of Lord Balabhadra)

The chariot of Lord Balabhadra is known as *Taladwhaja*. It is draped in green and red cloths. The height of this Chariot is 46 feet. 4 inches. It has 14 wheels and has four wooden black horses known as *Sthira, Dhruti, Sthiti and Siddhaki*. The sarathi is known as *Sudyaumna* and the *rathapala* is *Ananta*. The name of the flag on the chariot is *Unnani*. Nearly 763 pieces of wood are used to make this chariot.

b) Debadalana (Chariot of Devi Subhadra)

The chariot of Devi Subhadra is known as *Debadalana*. It is draped in black and red cloths. The height of the Chariot is 42 feet. It has 12 wheels and four horses known as *Prajna, Anuja, Ghora* and *Aghora*. The

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name of the sarathi is Arjuna and that of the *rathapalika* is *Vana Durga*. The name of the flag is Nadambika. Around 539 pieces of wood are used to make this chariot.

c) Nandighosa (Chariot of Lord Jagannatha)

The chariot of Lord Jagannatha is called *Nandighosa* which is wrapped in yellow cum red cloth. The height of the chariot is 45 feet 11 inches with 16 wheels each 6 feet diameter and four white horses. The Sarathi or charioteer is known as *Daruka* and the Rathapala is *Shri Nrusimha*. The *Garuda* is found in the crest of the chariot. The flag of the chariot is called *Trailakyamohini*. Around 832 pieces of wood are used to make this chariot.

d) Pahandi of the Deities

The four deities of Sri Jagannath Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan are brought from the main temple in a grand ceremonial procession called *Pahandi* which is also called *Pada Hundana* or forward and backward rhythmic movement of the deities. The *pahandi* of the deities is performed during *Rath Yatra, Bahuda, Neeladri Bije* and *Deba Snana Purnima* when the deities are brought by their servitors from the main temple. This is an elaborate and unique ritual exclusively found in Sri Jagannath Temple. There are two types of Pahandi: '*Dhadi Pahandi'* and '*Goti Pahandi'*. On the day of Rath Yatra the deities come to the Chariots in '*Dhadi Pahandi*' (movement of the deities one by one at a time) while during '*Bahuda Yatra*' (return journey) the deities come out of Gundicha Temple in '*Goti Pahandi*' (movement of single deity'). On the day of the Rath Yatra, the Pahandi of Sri Sudarshan is made at first followed by Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra; and Sri Jagannatha at the last accompanied by thousands of devotees beating the *ghanta, kahali* and *telingi baja*.

e) Chera Panhara by the King of Puri

The '*Chhera Panhara*' is the valedictory ritual accomplished by the Gajapati Maharaja or the King of Puri on the day of the Rath Yatra and Bahuda as well. The ritual of sweeping the chariots by the king is known as *Chhera Panhara* (sprinkling sandalwood water and then sweeping). The Gajapati sweeps the floors of the three chariots of Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Jagannatha with a gold-handled broom and sprinkling sandal-paste water. This ritual signifies that though the king is considered as the monarch of the kingdom, he expresses his utmost loyalty through rendering the humble services as the first and foremost servitor of the Lord Jagannatha. This shows that under the Lordship of Sri Jagannatha there is no distinction between a powerful king and a common man.

f) Pulling of the Chariots

On the day of Car Festival, thousands of devotees in Odisha, India and abroad are assembled on the Grand Road of Puri to celebrate the grand spiritual event. After completion of *Pahandi* and *Chera Panhara*, the devotees pull the chariots of Sri Balabhadra at first followed by Devi Subhadra's and finally of Jagannatha. During this moment, the devotees filled with devotion, joy and cheerfulness pull the chariots continue from morning till sunset till the three chariots reach Sri Gundicha temple. At times the chariots halt on their way and pulling of the chariots takes place next day.

g) Hera Panchami

The fifth day of the Rath Yatra is known as '*Hera Panchami*'. On this day while the Sri Jagannatha Trinity is worshipped at Sri Gundicha Temple, the Goddess Laxmi goes near Sri Jagannatha Chariot placed before Sri Gundicha Temple and breaks off a piece of wood of the chariot which express her anger as not being taken during the car festival. Goddess Laxmi returns to Sri Jagannatha Temple through Hera Gouri Sahi instead of the Grand Road of Puri. This ritual is performed in the late night.

h) Bahuda Yatra

The return journey of the deities of Sri Balabhadra, Sri Jagannatha, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan from Sri Gundicha Temple to the main temple is known as Bahuda Yatra. The Trinity is worshipped on the '*Adapa Mandap'*, which is also known as the birth place of the deities where they are worshipped for seven days every year. On the ninth day of the festival i.e on the bright fortnight of '*Asadha*', the Bahuda or the return journey of the deities takes place following the same schedule like the Rath Yatra. On the way back to the main temple, the '*Nandighosa'* Chariot of Sri Jagannatha halts for a while near the Mausima temple known as Ardhasini temple where '*poda pitha'* (a kind of sweet cake made of rice, lentils, jaggery and coconut) is offered to Lord Jagannatha as prasad.

i) Laxmi Narayan Bheta

During Bahuda Yatra, Goddess Laxmi sees the movements of Chariot of Lord Jagannatha from '*Chahani Mandap'* of Sri Mandira. When the chariot of Lord Jagannatha reaches near *Sri Nahara* (King's palace), the Goddess Laxmi comes near the chariot in a grand procession and after obtaining the *Ajnamala* of Lord Jagannatha returns to Sri Mandira. This ritual is known as '*Laxmi Narayan Bheta'*, i.e., meeting of the celestial deities of Laxmi and Narayan in the presence of Gajapati Maharaja, the king of Puri.

j) Suna Vesha of Sri Jagannatha Trinity

The *'Suna Vesha'* or 'Golden attire of the deities' is also known as '*Raja Vesha*' or '*Badatadau Vesha*' which is a part of Nabakalebara Rath Yatra. The word '*Suna Vesha*' constitutes two words, '*Suna*' ('gold') and '*Vesha*' ('costume). It falls on the day of *Sukla Ekadashi* (11th day of bright full moon) of Odia month of *Ashadha* (June or July) when Sri Jagannatha, Sri Balabhadra and

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Devi Subhadra are adorned with huge numbers of gold ornaments and give darshan to the devotees on chariots before the Lion's Gate of the Puri Temple. The huge number of gold ornaments of three deities include the crowns, necklaces such as *Harida Mali, Bahada Mali, Sebati Mali, Kadamba Mali, Bagha Nakhi Mali, Tabija Mali, Mekhala, Swarna Kirita, Adakani, Karna Kundala, Kamarpati, Adakani, Tilaka, Chadrika, Sri Payara* (legs) and *Sri Bhuja* (hands). Besides, the gold limbs of Sri Balabhadra and Sri Jagannatha is seen but not of Devi Subhadra. Sri Jagannatha holds a chakra (disc) made up of gold in his right hand and '*Panchajanya'* (a silver conch) in left hand. Sri Balabhadra holds a gold plough in left hand and a golden mace in right hand. Sri Jagannatha Sri Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra are decorated by the servitors named *Bhitarcha Mahapatra, Talucha Mohapatra* and *Pania Puspalak* respectively. The scholars say from the reign of *Anangabhima Dev* III, the tradition of *Suna Vesha* of the deities is continuing. Others hold that King Kapilendra Dev had started Suna Besha of the deities.

k) Neeladri Bije

This is the last part of Nabakalebara Rath Yatra when the deities of Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Jagannath enter Sri Mandira in a grand ceremonial procession. At first a drama of domestic tiffs is re-enacted by closing the Lion's gate of the temple which symbolically shut upon Lord Jagannatha by his wife Goddess Laxmi out of anger, jealousy and frustration articulated by a group of servitors and another group representing Lord Jagannatha responds with entreaties and endearments. Finally, the doors of the temple are opened, and the celestial couple enters the main temple.

X. Some Important Concepts of the Nabakalebara Ceremony

a) Ajnyamaala and Sadhibandha Ritual

The Nabakalebara Ritual begin with receiving 'Ajnyamala' from the deities of Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan in the temple thereby giving permission to go in search of '*daru*' or sacred Neem Tree for renewal of the deities. The word Ajnyamala constitutes two Sanskrit words 'Ajnya (permission) and mala'(garland). The 'Ajnyamala' is a mark of divine directive of the deity to the servitors to accomplish a particular task. The 'Ajnyamala' tradition of Sri Jagannath temple is based on the scriptures. It is believed that Almighty God is the '*kartta*' or the ultimate doer and He is also '*akartta*' as he never does anything but everything in this universe happens at His directive. He is only a '*Sakshi Purusha*' who silently witnesses everything in his large round eyes. Therefore, He is called 'Jagat Chakshu' or eye of the universe. Many rituals in the Jagannath temple start after getting the 'Ajnyamala'. There are 27 such '*chalanti pratima*' or proxy idols and eight animate and inanimate entities who take part in various festivals of Jagannath Temple. The person in the garb of Ravana in 'Ravana Vadha' on Baisakha Krushna Dwitiya gets the '*ajnyamala*'. On the day of Ram Navami for '*abhishek utsav*' or coronation ceremony of Sri Ram his '*ratnapaduka*' is given '*ajnyamala*'. The '*agnyamala*' is given to three chariots on the day of Rath Yatra. During the Nabakalebara, 'Badagrahi' or leader of the Bada (ritualistic group) touches the ajnyamala to the sacred Neem tree in which the respective deity is made. The Ajnamaalas were 12ft long made specially for the purpose of Nabakalebra Ritual.

b) Lord Jagannath and Gitagovinda Khandua

The Nabakalebara is an inimitable humanly *leela* of Lord Jagannath. There is a '*shadhi bandha*' tradition for '*banajaga Party*' before they start their Vanayaga journey in search of 'daru'. After getting the 'Ajnyamala' of Chaturdamurti in the temple, three '*badagrahi*' daita servitors and Pati Mohapatra reached 'Kalahata' dwara, where 'Bhitarchha Mohapatra' a servitor ties up Khandua silk sarees over the heads of the Daita servitors. It is believed that the Geeta Govinda Khandua silk serve as their armour against evils during '*Banajaga yatra*'. During '*majana*' rituals of the Goddess Mangala at Kakatpur a Khandua silk is also placed on head of the Goddess. The 'Gitagovind Khanduas' contain a couplet of Gitagovinda written by Poet Jayadev during medieval *bhakti* era which narrates "Kansarirapi sansara basanabaddha Srinkhala. Radhamadhaya hrudaye tayaja brjasundari". It means, bearing the bonds of mortal desires and emotions of Sri Radha in his heart, Sri Krishna left behind beautiful lasses of Gopa. The Gitagovinda speaks about the importance of Sri Radha as the embodiment of emotions, power of bliss, joy and *leelas* of Sri Krishna. It is believed that Lord Jagannath symbolises Lord Krishna. So, the deities wear Geeta Govinda Khandua especially during sleep at night.

c) Significance of the Vanayaga Yatra

The Vanayaga is the core ritual of the Nabakalebara. The word '*Vanayaga*' constitutes two words i.e Vana means forest and Yaga means Y*ajna or fire sacrifice.* As a whole Yajna which is performed in the forest. The Vanayaga Journey is performed by the servitors to collect the sacred Neem wood '*daru'* for construction of the four idols of Chaturdha-Murty. The Vanayaga Yatra is of two types Vahir Vanayaga Yatra and Antar-Vanayaga which takes place one after the other during the Nabakalebara Ceremony. At first, the Vahir Vanayaga takes place in an open environment when the Vanayaga Party moves into the forest in search of Deva-Daru Brikshya or the sacred Neem trees. The servitors seek permission from the Goddess Mangala to give dream indication about the location and direction of the sacred Neem tree. Accordingly,

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thereafter, the servitors move to the place where the sacred Neem Tree is identified. After some Vedic rituals near the sacred Neem Tree such as the Bhumisudhi, Daru Snana Ankura Ropana, Performing Yajna, Purnahuti, then Daru Chedana cutting of sacred Neem tree, Daru and then carrying the Sacred Daru to the Koili Baikuntha of Shi Mandira, Puri.

After that, the Antar-Vanayaga takes place in a closed door inside the Koili Vaikuntha of Sri Mandira where some Mandapas or open platforms were made for conducting various rituals such as fire sacrifice in the Pratistha Mandap or Yajna Mandap, storage of the articles in Sambhara Mandapa, Ankuraropana or germination of grains, sacred bath of Daru in Snana Mandapa or Adhibasa Mandapa during Snana Purnima, construction of four idols by the Biswakarma or carpenters on the Nirmana Mandapa or Karushala. The consecration of the Nyasa Darus is done and finally the Patali or the Golaka Vishrama or burial the Chaturdhamurti is done in the Koili Baikuntha after transference of Brahma to the new idols. This signifies what takes place outside also continue within body. Evolution and involution are parallel process of creation of the universe.

d) Importance of Chakraraj Sudarshan in the Vanayaga Journey

Sri Sudarshan is worshiped on the left-side of Lord Jagannath on the '*ratna simhasana*' not as a weapon but in subtle form of a pillar. However, both pillar and circular forms of Sri Sudarshan are spiritually one and same. Besides, Sri Sudarshan represents Nilachakra a blue wheel found on the top of Sri Mandira. The scriptures say that, at first divine '*daru*' of Jagannath floated at the 'Banki Muhana' of seabeach of Puri. A stone carved Nilachakra known as Chakra tirtha is worshipped. After getting '*ajnyamala*'of the Chaturdhamurty, the Banayaga Party moved to Sri Nahara or royal palace of Gajapati Maharaja, the king of Puri to receive the symbolic directive of Gua and coconut from Raj-Guru given by the Gajapati Maharaja. From there, the Banayaga Party travel to Sri Jagannath Ballav Math where they halted for a day and then proceeded to the Deuli Math at Kakatpur. During the '*banajaga*' rituals Sri Sudarshan plays a key role in leading the *'Banajaga* Party all the way by escorting them. The Chakraraj Sudarshan is kept in the '*bahara bhandara ghara*' (outer store house) of Sri Mandira. The circular shaped Sudarshan Chakra made in silver and attached to a wooden handle is placed on the left side of Goddess Mangala during '*majana*', ritual bath or consecration of the Goddess. After identification of the sacred Neem '*daru*. at first the Chakraraj Sudarshan is placed at the base of a tree and then the *yajna* for '*daru chhedan*' or cutting of '*daru*' starts. After completion of *yajna*, three axes of gold, silver and iron billhook are worshiped in '*astra mantra*' i.e chanting Sudarshan *mantra* since Sudarshan is the deity of the '*astra mantra*'. Further Sri Sudarshan is tightly bound in front of '*daru*' wrapped in the Khandua silk loaded on a four wheeled carts called '*daru* sagadi.. 'Bahirbanajaga' or outside rituals of Nabakalebara concludes when the '*daru*' of Jagannath reaches Koili Baikuntha of Sri Mandira and Sri Sudarshan returns to the Bhandara Ghara or store house of the temple. As per *yoga tantra,* backbone and brain are the centre of consciousness which lead to enlightenment. Sri Sudarshan is a *chakra* in the backbone, so it is worshipped as a pillar rather than as a *chakra in* Sri Mandira.

e) Mystery of Swapnabati Mantra

During Nabakalebara, the Daita servitors chant 'Swapnavati Mantra' for 108 times before their sleep at night to appease the Goddess Mangala' and Saptasati Chandi is recited by the Srotriya Brahmins before the Goddess Mangala in the temple to appease the Goddess Mangala' to give indication of the directions of the Neem tree or '*daru*'. Goddess Mangala is known as 'Swapnavati' as found in 'Sri Durga Sahasra Nama'. The 'Swapnavati Mantra' is also known as the 'Swapna-manabaka Mantra. The word '*manabaka*' means a child or a person devoid of Vedic knowledge who surrender before the mother goddess like an innocent, ignorant child and pray Her to provide the clues to locate the '*daru*' Neem tree. This Swapnabati *mantra is also* dedicated to Lord Vishnu named 'Swapnavati' which says "O, the Lord Vishnu the ruler of the universe, the omnipresent of this universe, Lord of all dreams, I bow down before you, take refuge before You; please fullfill my wish". Besides, the seventeenth verse of ninth chapter of the Gita Lord Krishna says, "*Pitahamasya jagato mata dhata pitamahah*". It means 'I am the father and mother of this universe; I am the father's father, the ultimate doer'. So, there is no difference between Him and the mother goddess. So, Maa Mangala can be appeased through prayers to Lord Vishnu. The '*Swapnavati Mantra*' is a Vaishnavite *Mantra*. If it is chanted with proper dedication and concentration, 'Darubrahma' through His power, awaken the soul of daita servitors and give insight as they undergo penance to locate the direction of 'Mahadaru' through dream indication of Goddess Mangala (Mishra 2015). This is a realisation of equanimity between 'Jibatma' (microcosm) and 'Paramatma' (macrocosm) which is the essence of Shakti Tantra, and Adwaita philosophy. The dream became reality with the blessing of 'Darubrahma' and Goddess Mangala.

f) Importance of Triguna-Ankura

The rituals like, '*ankuraropana*' (sowing of seedlings) is an integral part of *yajnas which* marks the beginning. Three types of earthen pots are used for the purpose. As prescribed, four pots called 'Sarab' are considered as the abode of Lord Shiva, four 'Palika' pots as the dwelling place of Lord Vishnu and four

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'Panchamukhi' pot for Lord Brahma. Three pots dedicated to each of the deities are placed at the four doors of the *yagnashala*. at each door the 'ankurpatra' (pot with seedlings) of the divine trinity who is the manifestation of the mortal world. The trinity also denotes three *gunas, Satwa, Rajas* and *Tamas*. The equanimity of the divine trinity at the doors leads to the *yagnashala*, where the rituals of 'Nabakalebara' take place. It denotes that the real essence of life is beyond three deities and *gunas*. The real journey of birth of consciousness starts from the doorstep when one realises that the trinity is the manifestation of single deity who is omnipresent.

g) Union of Prakriti and Purusha /Vishnu-Laxmi

Before the fire is ignited in the *yajna the Acharya* uses *muruja* (organic coloured powder) to draw holy designs at the base of '*yagnakunda*' (altar vessel) putting a bed of *kusha* grass over it that symbolises the Goddess Laxmi sleeps on this *kusha* bed. Over this the 'Vaishnabagni' fire is placed. This fire is the '*virya*' or life force of Lord Vishnu. So, *yajna* denotes unity of Prakriti and Purusha, Mother Nature with ultimate energy of the universe with doer. It indicates manifestation of eternal energy in a mortal form of the creation.

h) Kushmanda (Ash-gourd) sacrifice

The 'Purnahuti' or final oblation of the *yajna is* made by reciting the 'Patala Nrusimha Mantra'. Besides, a 'Kushmanda Bali' or sacrifice of an ash gourd as a '*gupta niti*' or secret ritual takes place near the 'Neem tree which is a symbolic representation of animal sacrifice. Four sticks are crossed to a watermelon which look like a standing animal and a small stick forms a tail. This watermelon in a animal form is cut from the middle with a billhook consecrated with '*astra mantra*' earlier. After this sacrificial offering, the ash gourd is cut into small pieces and then inside material mixed with black gram and turmeric is given as sacrificial offering to '*Dashadigapala*' (protectors of ten directions) and '*bhutas*' (spirits) moving around. Roland Hardenberg opined that 'obliteration of one existence with the birth of another'. Many scholars opined that sacrifice is like sacrificing our animosities before the deities. The watermelon represents a human skull like hard covering with watery jelly within like the brain with emotion and action as the basis of mortal existence. This ritual sacrifice denotes that surrendering oneself to the Almighty, when a new life begins. According to Hardenberg, this ash gourd sacrifice ritual can be linked to another secret ritual of fish sacrifice done after construction of idols and before the '*purnahuti*' of the '*pratistha yajna*'. This '*matsya bali*' fish sacrifice preceded '*jibanyas bidhi*' or invocation of life within the idols. It is a symbolic of higher *yogic* and *tantric* philosophy. The *Ida* and *Pingala nadis* of backbone intertwined like two slimy fishes of *Ida* and *Pingala* leads to Sushumna through which life force is raised to the ultimate level of consciousness.

i) Drawing a figure of an Inverse man

After completion of '*Pratistha Yajna*', the holy ash, water and remnant ghee of yajna are smeared on the trunk of Neem tree followed by '*suddha snana*' or consecration. Then a white cloth is covered on the trunk of the tree and is worshiped reciting the hymn of the deity whose idol is to be constructed. Before cutting of the tree, an image of an '*olatamanushya*' or an inverted human figure is drawn on the trunk with bunch of kusha grass dipped in sandal paste. The first hymn of fifteenth chapter of Bhagwat Gita_narrates that this inverted human figure is '*Urddhwa mula madhah shakham ashwottham prahurabyayam, chhandamsi yasya parnani yastam veda sa vedabit.*' which means 'this existence is like a Peepul tree whose roots represent its top, and its branches are its base. Those who know this are the masters of the Vedas. Similarly, the 'Kathopanishad' says '*Urddhwamuloabakshkha esoaswothah sanatanah*' ie the base of this world is in the form of a Peepul tree which is the abode of Brahma. He is at the apex and is indescribable. Our body is also a simile of an inverted tree or '*olata vriksha*'. Brain is accepted as the base and our appendages as branches. The 'Sahasrara' *chakra* at the top of the brain is accepted as the abode of Brahma. The immortal lyrics of ancient Odia literature is based on this metaphor like '*olata vrikshe kheluchhi lotani para"*. This inverted human image in the four idols are made from trunk of the Neem trees. The hands of the idols are crafted from branches of respective trees. This ritual is done to keep the common mass aware.

j) Touching of Gold, silver and iron axes to the Sacred Neem Tree

The axes made up of gold, silver and iron are smeared in ghee and honey and empowered with 'Sudarshan Mantra' before being used to cut the tree. Vidyapati uses gold axe, Biswabasu silver axe and Biswakarma uses iron axe to cut the '*daru*' tree. During '*Ashwamedha yagna*' three queens of the king namely Mahishi, Babata and Paribrukti poke needles made up gold, silver and iron on the body of the '*yajn ashwa*' or the sacrificial horse one after the other. This pattern is repeated in case of axes made up of gold, silver and iron to cut the '*daru*' tree. During '*Ashwamedha yagna*' the sacrificial horse is killed while its head faces east and legs face north. In the similar manner the neem tree is cut down and made fall towards east or north direction.

k) Significance of the Nyasa-Daru

The '*Nyasadaru*' (a piece sacred daru) is taken from the Daru of Lord Jagannath during Nabakalebara. During Antar-Vanayaga, the '*nyasakarma*' starts from the fifth day of yajna and ends on the ninth day of *yajna. A*ll rituals such as '*abhisheka*' or consecration of nyasadaru

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was done with 108 pots of water by a '*sahasradhara kumbha*' (vessel with thousand holes) when Purushasukta for Sri Jagannath, Nilasukta or Rudradhyaya of Yajurveda for Sri Balabhadra and Srisukta for Devi Subhadra are chanted. The '*nyasadaru*' is worshipped in the Nrusimha Gayatri Mantra through '*shodasha upachara*' using sixteen types of holy materials. The '*nyasakarma*' or consecration work started from the next day. The various body parts imagined on the '*nyasadaru*' are consecrated with every syllable, word and stanza of the Nrusimha Mantra. Through this *Nyasadaru* begets the image and qualities of Sri-Nrusimha. The '*nyasa*' is done thrice for each three deities. After this '*Keshavadi nyasa*' is done for Sri Jagannath, 'Srikanthadinyasa' for Sri Bhalabhadra and 'Kalanyasa' for Devi Subhadra is. Thirty kinds of '*nyasa*' is done on different parts of *nyasadaru*'. After '*nyasa*', '*prana pratistha*' of '*nyasadaru*' or invocation of life is done through prana *pratistha mantra*' imagining *prana* (breath), *mansa* (flesh), *rakta* (blood) and sense organs in *nyasadaru*.

l) Yajna Nrusimha and Darubigraha (daru idols)

Lord Nrusimha is the main deity of the Nabakalebara Ritual. The sixteenth chapter of 'Skanda Purana' says that on the auspicious day of Vaisakh *sukla ashtami* with *Pushya* constellation in the sky, the daru bigraha or wooden idols of Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan are established in the main temple. The eighteenth chapter describes how Lord Brahmaa invoked the *mantras*, and the '*daru bigraha or wooden*' idols appeared as Sri Nrusimha miraculously before the Lord Brahmaa and King Indradyumna in the form of '*kalagni*' or glowing fire with innumerable eyes, ears, faces, noses, waists and appendages pervaded the heaven and earth as if engulfing the whole universe. Seeing this terrifying image, the sage Narada asked Lord Brahmaa that, why the Lord has taken this frightening form in '*pralaya*' or destruction of the whole world? What kind of *leela* of Lord Vishnu is this? The 'Lord Brahma with a smile replied, "Hey Narada, imagining it as '*daru bigraha*' or wooden form, the ignorant persons may neglect or disrespect this '*Brahmarupi*' (form of Brahma). After being worshiped in '*Parameshthi mantra*' the Lord has taken this terrifying form. In the past, the Lord had appeared as Nrusimha and killed the demon Hiranyakashipu. The deity when worshiped as '*kalagni*' or colossal glowing fire gives *nirvana* to the worshiper. The 'Skanda Purana' describes that Sri Nrusimha and Sri Jagannath are one and inseparable. Sri Nrusimha is a scary form of Lord Vishnu whereas Lord Jagannath is a calm and peaceful form. It gives the message that everything in this universe is a manifestation of energy either in fiery or calm form. The Nrusimha is described as '*Yajna Nrusimha*' as he evolved during Yajna or fire sacrifice. Therefore, the Patala Nrusimha Hymn is recited 1100 time while performing Maha-Yajna during Nabakalebara for eradicating evil forces. Even before '*pratistha yajna*',Laxmi-Nrusimha is established on the '*Chakrabja Mandal*' at the Agni corner of the '*yagnashala*'. This denotes that everything in the universe is the manifestation of Almighty who is eternal and omnipresent.

m) Mandalas: The Sacred Symbols

Lord Jagannath is is worshipped as on the 'R*atna-Simhasana*' in Sri Mandira in the 'Sri Krishna Govinda Gopijanaballava' and not as Nrusimha. During Nabakalebara on the first day of '*pratistha karma*' the '*Chakrabja mandala*' and '*Swastik mandala*' are drawn in Agni corner of *pratistha mandap*', '*Sarvatobhadra mandala*' and '*Nabagraha mandal*' in *Aishanya* corner and '*Vastu mandal*' in *Nairruta* corner. Sri Nrusimha and other deities are set on '*Chakrabja mandala*'. '*Nidraghata*' is worshipped on '*Swastik mandala*'. '*Snanaghata*' (water pots) for '*abhishek*' and kept on the '*Vastu mandal*'. Besides, other *mandalas* are drawn for '*ashtadasha matrugana*' or eighteen mother entities, Dasa '*Digapala*' or ten cardinal directions as protectors, '*nabagraha*' nine planets and other deities. In the *Vayu* corner of '*pratistha mandap*' the tools of Biswakarma or carpenter servitors are worshipped on '*Ashtadalapadma mandala*'. A day before *yagna*, the metal idols of Laxmi-Nrusimha brought from '*dakshini ghara*' of Sri Mandira is set on the '*Chakrabja mandala*'. These two *mandalas* i.e the '*Chakrabja mandala*' and 'Ananta Chakrabja mandala' is found in Vaishnav Y*ajna* and '*pratistha*' of '*yupa*' or sacrificial post, where *chakra* and idols are placed. During '*pratistha*', after holy bath of the idols, the *chakra, trishul,* and '*yupa*' are placed on *'Swastika mandala*'. The '*pratistha*' of '*nyasadaru*' is done during '*pratistha*' of '*daru*' bigraha or wooden idols. After '*abhishek*' '*nyasadaru*' and Nrusimha are placed on '*Chakrabja mandala*' in '*pithasana*' (erect) or '*sayanasana*' (lying position). The '*Sasutra-Mandala Baridhi*' gives detail of '*Swastik mandala*' and '*Mahaswastik mandala* used for slumber of the deities after their '*snana*' (bath). From the first ritual after selection of '*daru*', *yajna* till the last rituals of Nabakalebara the importance of Nrusimha is seen.

XI. Conclusion

Lord Jagannath is worshiped on the Ratna Simhasana in the main temple as the 'Darubrahma' who is the real manifestation of the 'Parambrahma'. Looking at the image of Vishnu Lord Brahma pays homage "O Lord You represent the "Sama Veda". You are placid and tranquil. You are holding conch, disc, mace and lotus. Your are holding conch, disc, mace and lotus. You are omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. You are formless but can take any form at the same time. You are all giving and all forgiving. You are the Lord of the universe. So you will be called Jagannatha."(Tripathy

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2015) Although the '*Chaturddha-Murty*' are worshiped as four Daru Bigrahas they are originally one and the same Brahma or the cosmic entity of Lord Jagannath. Sri Jagannath is worshiped on the Ratna Simhasana as the 'Supta Nrusimha' or inert state of Nrusimha. The 'Niladri Mahodaya' scripture says that the ritualistic worship of Lord Jagannath as 'Sri Krishna Gopi janballava' and not in the fiery form of Nrusimha on the '*ratna simhasana*. Lord Jagannath as the Lord of the universe sitting like '*achala mahameru*' (inert great mountain) on the '*ratnabedi* regulates and control the whole universe at His directives. The twenty first *mantra* of the second chapter of the 'Kathopanishad' says "*Aasino duram brajati shayano yati sarvatah, kastam madamadandebam madanyo gnyatumarhati*". The 'Upanishad Prakash' says "Although in the inert form the Brahma reaches far, which makes everyone active, although in state of inactivity He reaches everywhere". The Lord of death Yamaraj had told Nachiketa that except him how one can realise this blissful egoless glowing entity? Yamaraj stated in the 'Kathopanishad' that unless one understands and realise the death one cannot perceive the timeless eternal energy. The Nabakalebara reminds us not to fear death but to accept it with knowledge and to perceive Almighty. Therefore, the 'Nrusimha Mantra' says '*mrityormrutyu namamyaham*' meaning "I bow down before annihilator of death." Lord Brahma cautioned Indradyumna not to think the '*darumurti*' or wooden idols as non-living idols. In the 'Mahapurusha Vidya' the Parambrahma' says "I am not of Indranilamani jewel or '*daru*'; to destroy delusions of living entities I have taken the shape of '*Daru murtti*' to provide endless bliss and to remove sorrows." All living and non-living beings are part of the eternal Brahma. The Nabakalebara rituals depicts the cycle of life and death of Sri Jagannatha. The living beings feel equanimity with the eternal divine reflects whosoever manifested in this mortal world has to go through the life cycle. If we consider ourselves living, how can be the deity of Lord Jagannatha different from us?

XII. Glossary

Aksaya Trutiya: The third day of bright fortnight of Odia month Baishakha is considered auspicious for starting the Chariot making and Chandan Yatra of Lord Jagannatha.

Ankuraropana: This is key ritual performed by the Vedic Brahmins during Vanayaga Yatra of Nabakalebara Ceremony. Ankuraropana signifies germination of seeds which marks the beginning of Vanayaga 'Yajna' or fire sacrifice.

Ajnamala: This is a conjunction of two words 'Ajna means order (directive) and 'Mala' means a garland. Obtaining Ajnamala from the deities signifies a directive from them for initiation of Vanayaga Yatra. This is a flower garland especially made for the occasion.

Badagrahi: The chief servitor of the deity, generally a senior person of respective Bada (Kula or Lineage) is selected as Badagrahi. There are four Badagrahis of four respective Badas of Sri Jagannath Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarashan.

Baishi Pahacha: A flight of twenty two steps leading to Sri Jagannatha temple of Puri from the Eastern Gate known as Singha Dwara (Lion's Gate).

Bhudevi: The Goddess installed on the right side of Sri Jagannatha on the Ratnavedi in the inner sanctum sanctorum of the Puri temple. She is also known as Viswadhatri.

Viswavasu: The Savara Chief who was the early worshipper of Sri Jagannatha in the form of Neelamadhaba

Brahma Padartha: The divine substance that is considered as the soul of Jagannath.

Ghata Paribartana: This is a process of transference of Brahma from old wooden idols of Sri Jagannnatha, Sri Balabhadra, Debi Subhdra and Sri Sudarshan to the new ones.

Viswakarma (Carpentor): The temple servitors who carve the idols of Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan. They also construct the three chariots.

Chaturdhamurti: The four wooden idols of Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan.

Chapana Bhoga: Fifty six verities of food offered to the deities in the Puri Temple.

Chhera Panhara: A ritual of sweeping the floors of three Chariots by Gajapati, the King of Puri during Rath Yatra.

Daita: The temple servitors and functionaries who identify the sacred neem tree and also perform secret rituals during Nabakalebara Festival.

Daru: The log of Neem wood for making the idols of Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sudarshan.

Daru-Brahma: Sri Jagannath is known as Daru-Brahma which denotes the Prime Soul enshrine in wood.

Daru Sagadi: A cart specially made for carrying the sacred log of wood.

Deula Karana: A servitor of Sri Jagannath Temple who supervised and supplies materials for Vanayaga Yatra. He also monitors Nitis (daily rituals) of the temple and also keeps the accounts.

Deuli Matha: A monastery located near Kakatpur which is the original place of worship of the Goddess Mangala. During Nabakalebara, the Vanayaga party halts at this place.

Gajapati: The king of Puri as the first servitor of Lord Jagannath oenes the Vanayaga Yatra through Gua-Teka Ritual (Authorization Ceremony). Besides, the king also makes Poornahuti (final oblation to Yajna) in Koili

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Vaikuntha and performs Cherapanhara rites during the Car Festival.

Guateka: The first rite of Navakalevara Ceremony which marks the beginning of Vanayaga Yatra by the Gajapati or King of Puri entrusting a group of servitors to go in search of neem tree from which the four divine idols of Lord Jagannath Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra are constructed.

Geeta Govinda: A Sanskrit Verse written by eminent poet Sri Jayadev in the 12th Century which narrates the inimitable Leelas of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna. It is said that Lord Jagannath is fond of Geeta Govinda which was recited in the Puri Temple every night.

Geeta Govinda Khandua Silk: A kind of silk clothe of Sri Jagannatha. Some lines from Geeta Govinda Khandua are woven in the texture of clothe which is tied round the heads of the servitors as a symbol of authorization for doing a particular ritualistic service.

Gundicha Temple: On the day of Car Festival the deities of Sri Jagannatha, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan come out of Sri Jagannath Temple and move to Gundicha Temple in chariots and are worshipped there for seven days.

Jagannath Ballav Matha: A monastery situated on the grand road of Puri where the Vanayaga Party halts for a day and starts the initial preparation for Vanayaga Yatra.

Joda Ashadha: When the intercalary (two months) of Odia month of Asadha falls the Nabakalebara Ceremony takes place. The extra month of Asadha is known as Malamasa, Adhimasa or Purusottam Masa.

Koili Vaikuntha: `Koili means "burial ground" and Vaikuntha means "Heaven". It is a place near northern gate inside Puri Temple where the sacred Darus are kept during the Nabakalebara Ceremony. The new idols are carved and the old deities are buried here.

Lenka: A servitor of Sri Jagannath Temple who holds the Chakra-Narayan (which symbolizes the Sudarshan Chakra) and moves ahead of the Vanayaga Party

Maha-Anasara: When Nabakalebara Ceremony takes place, the interim period or grand recess extends up to 45 days (three fortnights).This Anasara is called Maha Anasara.

Mandap: An elevated platform with or without a roof over it. This is used for various purposes like performing religious rites and conducting meeting etc.

Matha: The monastery perform four-fold functions like propagating the Hindu culture and especially Jagannatha Culture, preaching disciples, giving shelter to pilgrims, accommodating poor meritorious students and giving them financial help. Apart from these, they perform certain important rituals in the Puri Temple.

'Nyasa-daru': A piece of wood taken from 'daru' or a log of wood in which the divinity is invoked and it becomes 'Nyasa-daru'. The process of invocation of the divinity in 'Nyasa-daru' is called 'Nyasa karma'.

Nilachakra: A big wheel on the top of the Sri Jagannath Temple which is made up of Astadhatu (eight types of metals).

Nabakalebara Ratha Yatra: The first Car Festival of the new deities celebrated in every 8th or 12th or 19th year in huge congregation of devotees and visitors at Puri.

Pahandi: The forward and backward movement of the deities of Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra during Rath Yatra and Snan Yatra. There are two kinds of Pahandi i.e Goti Pahandi or movement of single deity' when it reaches then only the other deity starts. Dhadi Pahandi is simultaneous movement of the deities one after the other.

Patitapavan: When Lord Jagannatha is worshipped alone with his torso He is known as Patitapavan, the redeemer of the fallen.

Purusottama: The supreme man or person which is another name of Lord Jagannatha.

Patali: This is the burial ritual of old wooden deities of Sri Jagannatha, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan in the premises of Koili Vaikuntha of the Puri Temple.

Pati Mahapatra: A Brahmin servitor of Sri Jagannath who is known as the successor of Vidyapati. During Vanayaga Yatra, he serves as the Badagrahi of Sri Sudarshan. Besides he also plays a leading role in the core ritual like transference of Brahma in the temple.

Ratnavedi: An elevated platform of stone in the sanctum sanctorum of the Puri Temple where the Chaturdhamurti along with Sri Devi, Bhu Devi and Madhab are worshipped.

Sadhi-Bandha: This is a ritual of tying of Geeta Govinda Khandua (handloom silk saree) on the heads of the Vanayagis like Daitas and Pati Mahapatra by a servitor of Sri Jagannatha called Bhitarchha Mahapatra inside the Puri temple after the Badagrahis get Ajnamaala from Chaturdhamurti on the day of initiation of the Navakalevar Ceremony.

Savarapalli: This is a temporary shelter with basic amenities made for accommodation of the Vanayaga Party during the Vanayaga Yatra of the Nabakalebara Ceremony.

Saptavarana: Seven layers covering of wooden idols of Sri Balabhadra, Sri Jagannath, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan which include musk, sandal wood, perfumed oil, resin and many other rare substances.

Singha Dwara: The main gate of Puri Temple faing towards east. This is also known as the Lions Gate.

Snana Yatra: The deities of Sri Jagannatha, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan are

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brought to the Snana-edi of the Puri Temple where the deities are bathed in 108 pitchers of water on the auspicious day of Snana Purnima.

Sudhi Kriya: The purification or obsequies rites observed by the Daitas and their families after burial of the old deities in the Koili Vaikuntha.

Srotriya Brahmin: The Vedic Brahmins who perform the sacred rites and rituals reciting Vedic mantras.

Vanayaga: The term Vanayaga constitutes two words Vana means forest and Yaga means Yajna. During initiation of Nabakalebara Ceremony, the Daita, Pati Mohapatra, a group of Brahmins and other servitors set out a journey in search of sacred Neem trees.

Yajna Nrusimha: He is another aspect of Lord Nrusimha. He is the guardian deity of all rituals of Navakalevara' Ceremony. In Indian mythology, Sri Nrusimha is the fourth avatar of Lord Vishnu who is in half human and half lion form.

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