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Dr. Ambika Tripathy
HOD, Department of English,
B.S College, Nuahat, Jajpur,
Odisha, India

Nabakalebar: Soul's transmigration

Dr. Ambika Tripathy

Abstract

The concept of the transmigration of soul and its application are applied in the Jagannath Culture, a cult of Hinduism, through Nabakalebar, observed randomly within a span of eleven to twenty six years interval. As the soul leaves dropping body dead, the wooden body of the Gods and Goddesses are separated from the souls. The souls called brahmhs are planted in the new wooden bodies which is called Nabakalebar.

Keywords: Nabakalebar, soul, transmigration, chariot, culture, Gita, Kali, Anasar, Ratnabedi, Daitapati

Introduction

Mortality is undisputable for any earthly creatures. After death, the soul drops the outdated and dilapidated dress of body for the search of a new one. The soul is supreme and indestructible. The wooden deities of Sri Mandir are destructible. So Jagannath, Balavadra and Subhadra only got their soul transferred from the old to the new wooden deities made up off neam logs. This process is the usual cycle of soul which has been defined in the Gita.

Such transmigration soul deities are not observed in cases of other Hindu deities worshipped in different temples in India for thousands of years. God getting different incarnations in the shape of human being in this mundane world have to depart as human being. The Kalki incarnation of Jagannath in the Iron Age follows the same principles of the transmigration of soul symbolically. Every year Jagannath stays in the chamber of *Anasar* for a fortnight just after his holy bath on the occasion of *Snana Purnima*. Bathing in hundred eight pitchers of water from the golden well, Jagannath and his family got cold and fever, so he goes to take rest in his Anasar chamber leaving the Ratna Bedi. During this period the devotees are not allowed to visit the gods. The Daitas or the Ayurvedic doctors nurse them to recuperate by the holy massage. The massage oil is made up off the forest products which the tribal people use for different diseases. It indicates that the gods live on this mundane world like his devotees. He is not different from his devotees.

During Nabakalebar, the deities go through three fortnights of rest in the chamber of Anasar. It is the long period of forty five days. One month is meant for making three deities from the wooden logs and the rest period of fifteen days is for the rest.

The system of transmigration of soul or the Bramhma is only found in Jagannath culture. Gods and goddesses of other sects of the Hinduism are made up of stone so they need not change the deities. As Jagannath is made up of the wooden logs and it gets decayed quicker coming the contact with water, oil and other things in time of worship. So the deities need to be changed in a specific interval of time before losing luster.

The origin of the Nabakalebar is really unknown. *The Madalapanji* could not bring any factual information regarding its origin. The historical evidence of the Nabakalebar goes back to 1658 A.D. The servitors of Jagannath purify the deities which were attacked by the outsiders. It known from the record that Sri Madira was attacked for seventeen times. Each time the servitors purified the deities and Sri Mandir premises. The souls are exchanged only what happens after death. Saints say that someone leaves the body without uttering the word death. A person is known from his soul not from the mortal body. Body is the carrier of soul. The spiritualism always stresses for the development of soul which is the real knowledge. Other things are only information.

July is the month of Nabakalebar. It is the Joda Ashadha, the lunar years of the calendar prepared by the royal astrologers of Puri.

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Ambika Tripathy
HOD, Department of English,
B.S College, Nuahat, Jajpur,
Odisha, India

The royal calendar is known as the Khadiratna Panjika. In the interval of nineteen years every Odia month become twin month or Joda Masa. It is the Joda Ashadha falls in the month of July brings us nabakaebar. If we go back to the history, it found that the Nabakalebar is always observed in the month of July. Nabakalebar was observed on 15th July, 1893, 16th July, 1912, 16th July, 1931, 16th July 1950, 16th July 1969, 18th July 1977, and 17th July 1996. In most of the case July 16 is the common day of the observation.

As per the research of Dr. Jayanarayan Satgru Nabakalebar was observed in the following years of 1593, 1608, 1615, 1617, 1622, 1625, 1646, 1665, 1684, 1711, 1730, 1749, 1768, 1790, 1809, 1828, 1855, 1874 and 1893. In these years the Nabakalebar was observed in the same process as it is being done now.

Most of the rites and rituals of Jagannath are similar with the tribal religions. So the researchers link Jagannath Culture with tribal. It owes its origin from the tribal culture but got modernized by the royal patronage. All the regions are strengthened and lengthened only by royal parsonage in ancient times. Jagannath cult, a sect of the Hinduism, could become the religion of the Odia race because of the royal patronage of the Gajapaties of Puri. In the later part of the Eighteenth Century, Mahima Gosain preached Mahima Dharma severely opposing Jagannath cult severely but it could not be so popular only due to lack of the royal patronage. A crowd of Mahimaites once attacked Sri Mandir but they failed to reach the goal.

Really the Nabakalebar is the rarest of the rare concept in the religious world. Such practice of soul's transmigration is metaphorically observed to lesson the people about the mortality of man. So mortality and its realization keeps people in balance getting himself detached from the mundane pleasures which the main causes of the sorrow. When man realizes that his existence in the world is for definite span of period, he renounces the world and does his works without aspiring for the result.

Nabakalebar reminds the people that god, even, is not free from death which is the end of life. To lessen the trauma and tension of demise of someone's nearest and dearest thing the immortality of the soul. The Buddhism, Jainism, Sakata, Saiba and the Vaisnabs find their own identities and similarities in Jagannath Cult which is its significance and uniqueness. Religions and sects are distracted from each other due to differences. These religions often lock horns with each other for their differences which are the reasons of violence and bloodshed. Jannatha Cult bridges these gaps in love and devotion by uniting all. So scholars from different religions and sects opine that the Jagannath Cult owes its origin from their religions. They bring out similarities of their religions with Jagannath and its origin and also put forth the solid reasonable grounds to prove their viewpoints. Some scholars opine that the Buddhism has a lot of similarities with Jagannath Cult. During the time of the Navakalebar, the teeth of Buddha are exchanged as the *Bramha*. It is said that the teeth of Buddha were collected after his demise and sent to different places to be preserved as the holy relics. One of such teeth was discovered in Lalitagir and is kept in the national Museum of India. As the transfer of the Brambha from the old deities to the new is a matter of secrete, different theories run regarding this. But the historians do not approve of such theory saying that the deities were even worshipped there much before the arrival of Buddha in Odisha. Buddha may not be older than

Jagannath but some scholars opine that Navakalebar has been observed since 1568 after Kalapahada's attack on the temple. The deities were abducted and immersed in water after getting them half burnt. Bisara Mohanty rescued these floating deities from water. The indestructible Bramhas were transplanted in the new deities known as Navakalebar. Different scholars give different opinions regarding the beginning of Navakalebar. *The Madalapanji* skeptically informs about the beginning of Navakalebar.

Jagannatha is linked with a tribe known as Sabar. It is tribal god. In course of time the cult got the royal patronage as result it became the royal religion. As the myth runs after the death of Sri Krisn by the arrow of Jara Sabar, he was cremated by the Pandabas. His unburnt naval part along with his ritual ashes were thrown to the sea, the unburnt part is used as the Bramha which is transferred to the deities during the Navakalebar. As per the history, age of Dwapar is not older than that of the, Lord Jagannath. Krisn died on the fourth day of the black fortnight of the month of Asadha. On that day of the Joda Asadha fall in the interval of every nineteen years, the transfer of Bramha is performed by the senior servitors. It is strange that the Tulasi leaves kept in the Bramha remained fresh and green even after nineteen years. It is the evidence to link jagannath with Lord Krisn. The soul of Krisn is transferred to Jagannath who takes new incarnation in the Iron Age. This incarnation is known as the Kalki. Odias accept Jagannath as the incarnation to eliminate Kali or sins. It is a wide belief that Jagannath is Lord Krisn. Other theories are not accepted by the Odias. As the Buddhists are atheists they neither come to Sri Mandir nor do they worship Jagannath. Due to certain ritual similarities and the resemblance of the deities with the sculptures of Buddha such conclusions are drawn but Jagannath culture does have any similarities with the Buddhism.

History and myth connecting Jagannath culture always clashes each other. The devotees believe that Indradwimn built both Jagannath and Sri Mandir. The saint king has been revered not only installing Jagannath in Sri Mandir but also establishing his magnanimity by asking the God not to bless him with offspring to claim the ownership of the temple. In this way the ownership of the Jagannath culture goes to the devotee throughout the world. The greatness of this system is to unite the world through the brotherhood forsaking all the mundane desires of possessions as Indradwimn. The mundane desires haunt people keeping them in a state of restlessness and sorrow. The example of Indradwimn and his renouncement is the solace to save them from such pang of lack of possession.

The relationship between Jagannath and his devotees is very unique. Such bond is rarest of the rare. The God controls the devotees throughout the years but devotees rein Him one day in a year i.e., on the occasion the Ratha Yatra. Jagannath decrees His devotees rein Him. It is a great devotional game between the god and his devotees.

It the rarest of rare because everyday devotees come to the Sri Mandir for the holly dashan but one day the god come out of his abode with his family to see his devotees thronged in *Badadanda*. Such visiting of the god to His devotees is not generally seen anywhere except in Jagannath Cult.

It is the rarest of the rare thing that both the god with his family and the devotees has their funeral pyres in the same premises. The last pilgrimage of a devotee is to Swargadwar, the divine graveyard. After Nabakalebar the

three deities along with Sudarsan got their holly Patali in the Koili Baikhunta, the graveyard of Jagannath and his family. It implies that both the god and his devotees belong to the same family. The last destination of both the god and devotees are same i.e. to heaven through Koili Baikunth and Swrgardwar. In the premises of Lord Jagannath, devotees get their last desires translated into reality to attend Baikunha. In the last phase of the Mahavarat, the Pandabsa along with their beloved wife Draupadi, ascended to the Himalayas to reach heaven. All fell down one after another except the Dharmaraj Judhistira. Here Lord Jagannath devises the very easiest way to ascend heaven by getting cremated in Swargadwar. Every devotee of Jagannatha dreams and desires to have his or last pilgrimage to swargadwar for cremation.

Kalpa Bruskhy stands on the spot in the holly premises that every wants to go and tie thread to translate their dreams into reality. Beliefs prevailed that Jagannath assists to translate the desires of His devotees into reality if one ties thread in this divine banyan tree meditating the god. In this way a devotee is empowered in the beliefs that the god's blessings are with him and he is supposed to come out victorious. Such force within mind energies him to go ahead in his action without any hesitation.

The ways of life in Odisha is directly lined with Jagannath Cult. The day to day rituals of Lord Jagannath in the temple premises has influenced the Odisha social structures and social process. Odias have made Jagannath in their own images.

The Buddhism, Jainism, Sakata, Saiba and the Vaisnabs find their own identities and similarities in Jagannath Cult which is its significance and uniqueness. Religions and sects are distracted from each other due to differences. These religions often lock horns with each other for their differences which are the reasons of violence and bloodshed. Jannatha Cult bridges these gaps in love and devotion by uniting all. So scholars from different religions and sects opine that the Jagannath Cult owes its origin from their religions. They bring out similarities of their religions with Jagannath and its origin and also put forth the solid reasonable grounds to prove their viewpoints.

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