

Chapter-III Ordinary Rituals of the Temple

In this chapter, we shall discuss the daily rituals of the Jogadya temple. The ritual system of the temple composed of the statuses and roles of the inhabiting castes of the village about which some reference has already been made in chapter-II. Here, we propose to highlight three main aspects regarding the ritual organization in the Jogadya temple, namely the formation of the ritual organization through combination of caste occupations and the ritual roles, the periodical shift of the roles of each lineage in the organization, and the way of the status ranking among the ritual posts in the organization.

First, let us discuss the daily ritual service in the temple with examples of the ritual process of the day. We broadly presume that the various caste groups of the village are indispensable for the ritual organization and perform even the daily service for the temple. Second, the daily shift of the Brahman-sebait for *nityaseba* (daily service) in the temple has been examined. It is noteworthy that the peculiar rotation system of the temple priests, being a kind of daily shift assigned to each lineage of the Brahman-sebait, is sufficiently effective to maintain their stable organization. Third, we have examined the rituals on the last day of each month (*sankranti*) and the ritual of *ugalpuja*. The *sankranti* is the last day of every lunar month of Bengal. On the days of every *sankranti*, they perform the special ritual of the Vedic *homa* and the ritual convocation. The *ugalpuja* is the ritual of pulling out the image of the goddess Jogadya from the pond called Kshirdighi by the eligible members of the ritual organization. It is performed seven times a year. These rituals show how the posts associated with the caste groups are ranked in a ritual hierarchy in the different rituals, such as, the *phonta*-giving (sacred marks on foreheads) by the *homa* and/or the restriction the access to the goddess. They also show how various status groups in the hierarchy form the background of the caste organization of the village and that of

the ritual organization at the same time.

1. Daily services in the temple

a) Ritual process in a day

At the outset, let us examine the rituals in the ordinary temple service in a day. Table-9 shows the list of the posts and the roles of various caste groups, all of which bear the duties for the daily service in the Jogadya temple. In the ordinary temple service, we can easily point out the ritual position of various castes of the village such as the Brahman, the Malakar, the Hari, the Baiti, and the Bagdi. The specific roles they perform are naturally related with their caste occupations in the village society.

The Brahman hold many posts in the village society. They perform household rituals on various occasions as family priests (*kula-purohit*) of their patron families (*jajman*) and periodical rituals as *pujari* as well as the Brahman-sebait in the Jogadya temple. In most cases, they normally hold more than two posts concurrently. At the same time, in the temple, their services are subdivided and specialized to the division of roles. In the case of the priests in *nityaseba* (daily service for the goddess), they have two divisions of the posts at the time of the ritual, namely, the *sebait* and the *candipathak*. The work of *sebait* is ritual serviced for the deity (*thakur-seba*) at the altar of the Jogadya temple. They have the title of "Cakrabartti", and are constituted of nine lineages of the village. The *candipathaks* have two lineages now, whose title is "Bhattacharyya". Their role in the ritual is to recite the sacred stotras and the verses as an assistant to the *sebait*. One of the lineages takes charge in the daily service in company with the *sebait*s, and the other

Table-9 Role assignment in the Jogadya temple

Time	Post	Role
Before dawn (<i>Bhore</i>)	Hari	Sweeping the temple ground
Morning (<i>Sakal</i>)	Malakar	Cleaning the temple inside Preparation of flowers for ritual Arrangement of the ritual utensils
9:00am	<i>Bhandari</i> ¹	Arrangement of offerings
	Brahman	<i>Nityaseba</i> (Jogadya temple, Kshideshwari temple)
	Brahman	<i>Candipath</i> (Jogadya temple)
	Malakar	Gong (<i>kashial</i>)
Noon (<i>Dupure</i>)	Brahman	<i>Annabhog</i> (offering of boiled rice)
	<i>Jhi</i> ²	Assistance for Brahman
Evening (<i>Sandhya</i>)	Brahman	<i>Sandhyarati</i> <i>Sital-bhog</i> (<i>luci</i> , <i>manda</i> and milk)
	Baiti	Drum (<i>dhak-bajana</i>)
	Malakar	Gong (<i>kashial</i>)
		Cleaning away after the daily service

1 It is not a caste name, but a post. A Brahman family used to occupy the position. They moved out of the village before 1920. Only a residence allotted for the duty now remains beside the temple.

2 It means the maid-servant. Usually, a Brahman woman does the work.

in charge of the annual *pujas*. In this way, each caste group and even the lineages of the castes have the specialized roles in the organization of the temple ritual.

In the case of other Brahmans, the duty is to prepare daily offerings for the goddess as an assistant of the Brahman-sebait in the daily shift. This offering at noon time is called *annabhog*. Another Brahman family has the duty called as *bhandari*. Priestly Malakar is looking after the job. This function is to keep and manage the ritual utensils in the temple storehouse.

We shall have a clear look at the daily service of the temple in the ritual course of a day. In the dim light before day break, a woman of the Hari caste sweeps the temple ground with a broom. They have partial responsibility of the work among the three lineages of the village Hari in rotation and have the division of the area with the Malakar too. Inside the temple, a Malakar cleans up before the daily *puja* in the morning. Around nine o'clock, the Malakar prepares flowers from gardens and brings every ritual utensil to the altar such as a plate of brass, sacred water, and offerings. The Brahman-sebait in the shift, after taking his ablution, performs the ritual of *nityaseba* in the way of the reception to the goddess in the sixteen steps (*sodarasha-upacara-puja*) at the altar of the Jogadya temple. Soon after the ritual, he goes to the Kshideshwari temple and performs the daily service to Siva. Sometimes he performs the ritual as required by some devotees at their private petitions. After the *nityaseba*, he remains at the Bhogmandir in company with an assistant of a Brahman woman in order to prepare the daily offering of *annabhog*. At the Bhogmandir, they prepare the food for the goddess, which are offered by the villager, with the water of the sacred pond of Khsirdighi.

In the evening, the Baiti in the shift tells the time of *sandhyarati* by beating his drum in a specified rhythm. In the temple inside and outside, the village people gather to dedicate and receive the offerings for the deity. The Brahman-sebait performs his service to the goddess in the same way as the *sodarasha-upacara-puja* in the morning. At the end of a series of offerings, he begins to dedicate a votive light which has five wicks in a brass stand

(*panchpradip*) in his hand. He stands up and holds it up to the altar. During the time of the dedication by the priest, every villager in the interior of the temple stand up and pay their respects to the goddess. The Malakar beats a brass gong very loudly and the women inside the temple utter the sounds of *ulu* to pay homages to the goddess. The Baiti plays his drum at the Natmandir. In the end, people rush to receive the offerings of the goddess (*prasad*) from the hand of the Brahman-sebait. The Baiti returns to his house playing his drum signifying the end of the ritual of *sandhyarati*. The Malakar cleans up the altar and locks up the door of the main temple. In this manner, the ritual process of the daily service of the temple is based on distinctive functions of the roles assigned to each caste group and lineage. Every role is essential enough to carry out the ritual thoroughly, which is observed even in a daily service.

b) Offerings

There are three occasions as already discussed for dedicating the offerings to the goddess in the daily service, namely: *nityaseba*, *annabhog*, and *sitalbhog*. In former days of the Maharaja of Bardhaman, the Brahman-sebait, the *Bhandari*, the *paiks*, the *jhi*, and the Malakar, who are in charge of the daily temple services, prepared the offerings under supervision of the *Rajkachari* in the office of the *Kachai-bari*. The Deb-seba-office, the court of the Raj in the town of Bardhaman, appointed the *Rajkachari* to the office in the village and endowed him with the cakran lands and paid the wages for this duty.

In addition to the monthly allowance to the temple servants, the Deb-seba-office would send a yearly budget sufficient for meeting the daily expenditures of these temple services. They offered, moreover, contributions for specified ritual occasions such as *Jogadyapuja* and *Durgapuja* and many goats and buffalos for the sacrifices. The following is a list of the items to be offered in daily ritual service, the expenses of which used to be carried by the Maharaja in those days.

Nityaseba

<i>Cola</i> (grains) soaked in water (<i>bhije cola</i>)	5 <i>catak</i> (5/16 <i>seer</i>)
Sweets (<i>misthi</i>)	5 <i>catak</i>

Annabhog

<i>Atop-caul</i>	2.5 <i>seer</i>
Milk	1.25 <i>seer</i>
Sweets (<i>misthi</i>)	10 <i>catak</i>
<i>Ghi</i> (clarified butter)	5 <i>catak</i>
Fish	5 <i>catak</i>

Service for visitors

Rice	8 <i>catak</i>
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In this manner, they had sufficient amount of the offerings from the budget. This is obvious from the measure of *atop-caul* dedicated to the goddess in *annabhog* at noon time everyday. The quantity of 2.5 *seer* of rice is approximately 2 kg. rice, which means enough cooked rice for about twenty persons. Now the quantity of rice for *annabhog* depends on the irregular donations by the villager, and most of the donations of rice are not the type of *atop-caul* but ordinary rice which corresponds to the cost much less than half or one-third of the same amount of *atop-caul*. The fish is an essential item for the Goddess's *Bhog*. Every day of the year they use fish for her *Bhog* except during the four days in the lunar month of Baishakh when the goddess is supposed to observe her fast. If one day they miss fish for the daily service, they let cooking water once pour through a basket which is used for fish (*amis jhuri*).

The Brahman-sebait who is in the shift to *nityaseba*, remains in the

Bhogmandir, and prepares the *annabhog*. The *bhanadari* arranges cooking utensils. The *paiks* manage fish and other vegetables, if they did not receive enough donations. The maid servant (*jhi*) in the Bhogmandir makes preparations for *annabhog* and washes the pots and pans after the service. Only the Brahman-sebait has the duty to light a fire in the hearth of the Bhogmandir to cook, and to make offerings to the goddess. During cooking, nobody is allowed to look inside the cooking room of the Bhogmandir without the Brahmans. When the Brahman-sebait finishes the preparations, he closes the door of the cooking room. Inside the room, he makes a *puja* with a small vessel (*kosakusi*), paste of sandalwood (*candan*), and flowers, and serves the *annabhog* to the goddess with a specified sacred verse (*mantra*) and sprinkles sacred water over the plates. Thereafter, he opens the door. He stands on the veranda of the Bhogmandir and tolls a bell announcing the time of *annabhog*; and for the devotee gathering there to receive the *prasad* of the goddess's *bhog* from his hand. At this hour, those who are in-charge of the daily service can receive the *prasad* regularly. These are the Brahman-sebait, the *Jhi* (Brahman), the *Bhandari*, the Malakar, the *Badyakar* (Baiti), the *Majunis* (Hari), and the *paiks* (Bagdi). The temple has special times for the visiting ascetics (*sadhus*) who go on pilgrimage to the temples of the sacred places. They could receive the service of food three times a day (*nityaseba*, *annabhog*, *sital-bhog*) for three days from the temple.

At the time of *sandhyarati*, the Brahman-sebait serves *sital-bhog* to the goddess, which consists of luci, sweets (*manda*), and milk. It is now donated regularly by a president of the rice mill in Kaicar near the village. In former days, they used to put a small table beside the bed of the goddess inside the temple. After the *sandhyarati*, the Malakar offered a glass of water, a *pan* on a plate, and a votive light on the table. Although he closed the door of the temple and locked it up every night, it is said that people found sometime the water and pan had been left half eaten the next morning.

2. Role assignment of the Brahman-sebaitis

Let us now look at the assignment of the daily shift among the nine lineages of the Brahman-sebait in detail. They have a peculiar rotation system for the temple ritual services as a result of which there is no competition among the lineages of the Brahman-sebaitis and at the same time there was stability of the share of the cakran lands among the families. We will examine here four points of view so as to make clear the outstanding functions of the system for the temple management. At first, we will discuss the daily shift of each day of the year. The following is a list of the shift allotted to each lineage for each day of every month for the daily service in the temple.

a) Annual shift of the daily service for the Jogadya temple³

<u>Lunar month</u>	<u>Heads of each lineage (the name of priests)</u>
Baishakh	
1-8	Bholanath (Bhaktaparakash/Kshirodmahan)
9-12	Shripati (Sanjib/Ciranjib)
13	Kailash (Ramnarayan Kalo/Naren)
14-19	Bholanath (Krishnadulal/Rajkumar/Pramkumar/Haradan)
20-25	Heranbanath (Nanugopal/Nimaicand/Paramasukh)
26-Sank.	Amiyanath (Dhanugopal/Nabakumar)
Jaishta	

³ This list is compiled from the data on the book: *Saktimahapitha Rarher Kshiragram o Debi Jogadya*. Sri Sanat Kumar Cakrabartti, 1988.

1-2 Bholanath (Krishnadulal/Rajkumar/Prankumar/Haradan)
3-5 Heranbanath (Nanugopal/Nimaicand/Paramasukh)
6-8 Amiyanath (Dhanugopal/Nabakumar)
9-12 Kalacand Cakrabartty
13-19 Abhyayapad Cakrabartty
20-21 Kalacand Cakrabartty
22-27 Amalapati Bh. (Pranabkumar/Pankoj)
28-sank. Shripati (Sanjib/Ciranjib)

Asar

1-7 Bholanath (Bhaktaparakash/Kshirodmahan)
8-11 Shripati (Sanjib/Ciranjib)
12 Kailash (Ramnarayan Kalo/Naren)
13-18 Bholanath (Krishnadulal/Rajkumar/Prankumar/Haradan)
19-24 Heranbanath (Nanugopal/Nimaicand/Paramasukh)
25-Sank. Amiyanath (Dhanugopal/Nabakumar)

Shraban same with Jaishta

Bhadra same with Baishak

Aswin same with Jaishta

13-16 Sureshwar (Kalidas/Taradas)
17-19 Abhayapad Cakrabartty

Karttik same with Asar

Agrahayan same with Jaishta

13-17. Sureshwar (Kalidas/Taradas)
18-19 Abhayapad Cakrabartty

Pous same with Baishakh

Magh same with Jaishtha

Phalgun same with Asar

Caitra same with Jaishtha

The heads of the lineages listed in the days of each month must send a *pujari* of the lineages to the temple to perform the ritual of the daily service. It is called "*pala*" in Bengali that is a shift of the duty to perform the ritual allotted for each day. Only the person who is on the shift (*pala*) can perform the ritual for the day. If they do not have a distinctive shift assigned to each lineage of the Brahman-sebait, they may compete among the nine lineages and even within the lineages over the right to perform the ritual. It is more attractive for the priests of the temple to perform the ritual service on the specified days. In the days such as *Bipattarini-brata* and *Laskshmipuja*, the priest in charge of the day could get more worshipers and their offerings at the altar of the temple than usual. Besides, they might leave the ritual on ordinary days, for the reason that they can not get enough offerings as on the days of the special rituals. The most important responsibility for the Brahman-sebait is to continue the daily service of the temple for the goddess and not to miss a day in a year. This rotation system is secured enough to maintain the daily ritual of the temple without interruption or competition.

All the members of the Brahman-sebait have the title "Cakrabartti" as the Brahman caste, and all of them must belong to any one of the nine lineages of the *sebait* of the temple. They have the oral tradition that they share with the common founder of the lineages in one time and divided from him into the nine lineages over the generations. The name of the legendary founder is Krishna Sharma by the oral tradition and at one time, it is said, they got the new title of Cakrabartti from the Maharaja. This story assures them the legitimacy to perform the temple

ritual exclusively and thus the nine lineages of the temple priests compose an exclusive group as *sebait*s of the village temple. The second important point regarding organization of the temple priests is to debar priests outside to participate in the ritual of the temple. Otherwise it would lead to disorder of the ritual organization. The rotation system which is originated from their traditions assures the legitimacy of the nine lineages to perform the temple ritual.

Among the nine lineages of the Brahman-sebait, each lineage is given the assignment of daily service to the temple. The quota of the number of days are fixed among each lineage, and is worked out according to the rule of sixteen system of traditional Bengali calculation. This is usually called "*sola-anna*" in Bengali, and the ritual based on the calculation is called "*sola-anna-puja*". "*Sola-anna*" means the sixteen annas in Bengali that is equivalent to one Rupee (*ek taka*) in the traditional currency unit of Bengal, and it corresponds here to the total amount of the daily services of a whole year.

In the culture of Bengali Hindus, the number sixteen is regarded as a symbol of totality, in particular in the ritual discourse such as *sodas-upacara-puja* (the sixteen steps for the ritual reception to deities) and *adhibasi*, which consists of the sixteen ritual items.⁴ In the sixteen system of Bengal, one *anna* is equivalent to four *paisas*, and one *paisa* is equal to three *pai*, or five *ganda*. On the other hand, one *ganda* is equal to four *kara*, and one *kara* is to three *kranti*. These calculations can be put in a chart as shown here:

4 J.Gonda discussed the dominance of the number 16 in Indian culture through the examination on various classical texts(Gonda 1985:115-130).

Diagram-2 Traditional calculation Unit of Bengal

1 *rupee* = 16 *anna* = 64 *paisa*

1 *anna* = 4 *paisa* = 12 *pai*

= 20 *ganda* = 80 *kara* = 240 *kranti*

1 *kara* = 3 *kranti*

The villagers state that the original founder, from whom the priest lineages of the temple have branched out, is the holder of the sixteen *anna* in the ritual right. This means that the right of the daily services of the temple over a whole year was inclusive. If he has two sons, they share the right of the ritual in halves and count both of them as eight *anna* holders. If they have two sons each, these four grandsons will become the holders of four *anna* and share the one fourth right over the temple ritual simultaneously. This means the duty to perform the ritual for three months of a year. The total amount of *annas* which the Brahman-sebaitis hold respectively for the ritual duties of a year in the temple is always sixteen, namely one *rupee*. The holders of some quota are usually the heads of the lineages, and it is called "*angshidar*" in Bengali, which means literally the holder of the quota (*angsha-dar*). In the case of the holders of one fourth right over the ritual, they are called "*car-anna-angshidar*" (the holder of the four *anna*). Each day in the twelve months of a year is invariably assigned to one of the priests of the nine lineages of the Brahman-sebait. He is naturally in possession of a certain quota of *annas* corresponding to both his duty and right to the ritual of the temple in the specified days. This quota is always indicated according to the Bengali calculation of *sola-anna*, and so connected to the total right and duty over the temple service. That is the reason why they never miss the duty of the daily ritual on any day, in spite of the subdivision of the lineages of the priests for generations: In other words, it is an effective system to make it clear to everyone who is in charge of the daily ritual on each day, and consequently to

avoid the conflict over the right for the service. In this way, it is the third important point of the system to show the clarity of the shifts through the traditional calculation unit shared with each lineage and within the lineages as well.

The last unique point in this system is that the duty on the ritual is closely connected with the right of inheritance of the cakran lands according to this calculation system. The succession of the father's right over the ritual means the inheritance of the cakran lands by them at the same time. The cakran land is also shared among the present nine lineages of the village Brahman-sebait. This means the owner of the total area of cakran lands was the original priest of the temple ritual. He is accordingly called the holder of the *soJa-anna*, not only because he holds the right over the temple service but because he is supposed to be the owner of the total cakran lands of the temple cakran. The owner of half of the total cakran lands has the right in the ritual to the half days of a year. He is called the holder of eight *anna*, for his share of the cakran lands and the right over the ritual as well. If two sons succeed to a certain quota of the ritual of their father, it means the succession of the father's right to the fixed days for the ritual service, and simultaneously the inheritance to the cakran lands of his possession. As a result, the two brothers divide the lands and inherit equally in accordance with the rule of Bengali succession, viz., *dayabag*. It is, therefore, two sides of the same coin, the duty to perform the ritual and the right over the inheritance in this Bengali calculation of sixteen system. More detailed examinations of this succession rule will be given shown in chapter-VI through an example of a lineage of the village Ugra-Kshatriya regarding the rotation of their performance of Durgapuja.

3. The rituals on the days of *sankranti*

Sankranti is the last day of every lunar month in the Bengali calendar. On

these days of *sankranti*, the *Vaidik-purohit* performs the ritual of the Vedic *homa* in the interior room of the main temple and goes around each household of the village Ugra-Kshatriya so as to give a *phonta* of the *homa*'s ash on their foreheads. In the evening of the *sankranti*, a ritual called "*guya-dak*" is performed at the *guyabeti* in the temple ground after the regular service of *sandharati* for the goddess Jogadya.

a) Vedic *homa*

A member of a lineage entitled "Bhattacharyya" living in the adjoining village of Nigan, who was endowed with the cakran land by the Maharaja for his duty, comes to the temple every *sankranti* day to practice the Vedic *homa* (*Vaidik-hom*). Besides these periodical performances of the *homa* in the temple, the *Vaidik-purohit* performs it two times at the Jogyakundu during Jogadyapuja of Baishakh, although it is included in the *homa* of every *sankranti* in the lunar month of Caitra. This is an exclusive duty for the priest who has special knowledge and experience of sacred verses (*mantras*) of the Vedic *homa* in particular. The lineage of the *Vaidik-purohit* in the Nigan village has succeeded to this duty of the temple for generations. The other priests in Kshiragram can perform *homa* also on various occasions such as *biye* (marriage ceremony) and Kalipuja. But, they follow the way of the tantric *homa* (*tantrik hom*) in their rituals using the tantric mantras, and never follow the way of the Vedic *homa* taking the sacred verses in the Vedic sutras (*Vaidik-mantras*).

In the early morning of every *sankranti*, a Baiti plays his drum announcing the day of the *sankranti* to the villager. After the *nityaseba* by the Brahman-sebait of the village on the day shift, the *Vaidik-purohit* begins the *homa* at the interior room of the temple. At first, he blows the conch-shell and purifies the central portion of the floor of the temple by the water of the river Ganga. He sets up a small altar by a few chips of *bel* tree on the floor, and pours *ghi* (clarified butter) on it, and he lights a fire while chanting some mantras. Into the blazing altar, he throws 108 *bel* leaves dipped in *ghi* one by one. In former times, a sacrifice of a goat used to be done during the time of the full blazing.

This sacrifice is recently done only on the day of the *sankranti* of Baishakh. After burning up the chips and the leaves, he gathers the black ashes into a vessel, and adds some *ghi* again in order to make paste for *phontas* (sacred symbol of the *homa* to put on the foreheads). At first, he dedicates the *phonta* of the ashes to the goddess Jogadya putting it on the front wall of the interior room of the temple by his hand. Next is the foreheads of the Brahmans sitting around there, and then to the rest of the audiences.

After the *homa* ritual in the temple, the *Vaidik-purohit* goes around each locality (*para*) of the Ugra-Kshatriya with the vessel in his hand. At first, he visits the Datta-*para* and then the Samant-*para*. Next he visits the Caudhuri-*para* which is composed of four lineages now. Then, he visits further Malla-*para*, Josh-*para*, Sani-*para*, and the other localities where other Ugra-Kshatriyas of the village live in. In his youth, he could go around every house of the Ugra-Kshatriya in the village all day long. Now he can cover only the principal families of the Datta, the Samant, and the Caudhuri. It still takes until the afternoon to finish putting *phonta* to the foreheads of members in these localities.

In each house, the members of the family stand in a row at the courtyard or the veranda of the house to receive the *phonta* from the *Vaidik-purohit*. After receiving *phontas* in turn, they make a deep bow (*pranam*) to the *Vaidik-purohit*. The housewives also pay offerings to him. The contents of the offerings are usually rice, sweets, milk, and some vegetables, which they keep ready in their house shrines (*thakur-ghar*) in the early morning. On his round in the village, the *Vaidik-purohit* soon gathers too much offerings to carry. Besides, he is treated cordially with tea and lunch by some families.

The prescribed duty of the *Vaidik-purohit* by the Bardhaman Maharaja includes this *phonta*-giving, to go around every family of the Ugra-Kshatriya as well as the *homa* ritual at the Jogyakundu of Jogadyapuja. In the village, it is the verses of the *Jaipurbed* (the *Yajur-veda*), which the family priests of the Ugra-Kshatriya follow for the rites of passages (*sanskar*) such as *biye* and *sraddha* (funeral rite) for their patron families. The *homa* ritual in the temple by the *Vaidik-purohit*

follows the *Ja-jurbed* too. However, the Brahmans in the village perform their rites of passage according to the verses of the *Sambed* (the *Sama-veda*). These together indicate that the *Vaidik-purohit* practices the *homa* every month primarily for the village Ugra-Kshatriya. The order in the *phonta*-giving for every lineage of the village Ugra-Kshatriya has some defined pattern, which will be elaborated in the next chapter.

b) *Guya-dak*

Guya-dak is performed after the *sandhyarati* on every *sankranti* at the courtyard of the temple. Immediately after the ritual of *sandhyarati*, a Baiti walks back and forth seven times between the Natmandir and the *guyabedi*; i. e. a stone protuberant plinth at the south-western corner of the temple ground. He also plays on his drum with a specified rhythm (*tala*) called *danspahari*. A boy of the Malakar caste put the goddess's copper pot filled with the water of the Ganga on the *guyabedi*. The Datta's representative brings the leaves of pan and the nuts of *supari* in his hand and stands in front of the *guyabedi*. Many villagers also gather around the *guyabedi* in the ground. The Malakar holds a betel leaf and a nut in his hand and raises his hands over the head. In the light rhythm of the drum, he turns around himself uttering loudly the following phrases:

Phopal mashaier guyo

Bharat Datta shas mallaber guyo

Eroyer aguri ke acho

Nasigramer aguri keu acho

Kusungramer aguri keu acho

Kurmuner aguri keu acho

Kolganyer acho

Majhi

After this calling, they return together to the temple with the drum playing, and then make a bow to the altar. The ritual of *guya-dak* is finished here. It is said that "*Phopal mashai*" is the chief of the Dom, and "*Bharat Datta*" is the chief of the Datta in Kshiragram. This belief is accepted by the villagers including the Brahman, and it is connected with the ritual fight called *Domacoyarikhera* in the Jogadyapuja discussed in the next chapter. All the following names referred in the ritual, viz., "*Eroya*", "*Nasigram*", "*Kusungram*", "*Kurumun*", and "*Kolgan*", are the names of the villages where the Ugra-Kshatriya is the dominant caste in the present Mangalkote block and the Bhatar block. The word of "*Majhi*" is not reach a consensus among the villagers. Someone think it is a calling to show the end of the ritual. Another think it means the name of the village of Majhigram in the Mangalkote block, where the Ugra-Kshatriya is dominated, and it is famous for the temple of the Goddess Sakambhari (the goddess of crops).

The villagers suppose that the ritual of *guya-dak* is the vestige of the former local reign of the Datta Raj (*Bharat Datta*) who had a conference in Kshiragram every month summoning the chiefs of the Ugra-Kshatriya from the villages mentioned in the phrases. It is said it is a ritual invocation retaining traces of its former appearance in previous time.

4. Ugalpuja; ritual of pulling up the image from pond

The only occasion for ordinary people to see the image of the goddess Jogadya in the whole year is during the twenty-four hours of the day in the Mahapuja at the Utthanmandir. Except on the day of the Mahapuja, however, when the stone image of the goddess Jogadya is pulled out from the bottom of the pond of Kshirdighi to the bank six times in a year. All these occasions are in the night of the *asar-nabami* (the ninth of Asar), *bijaya-dasami* (in Durgapuja), *paus-panera*

(the fifteenth of Paus), *Makari-saptami* (the seventh of Magh), *Path-naran* (the twenty-ninth of Baishakh), and *Abhisekh* (the fourth of Jaisth). It takes only about one hour to install the temporary altar on the bank, and soon after the image is sent back to the bottom of the pond again. Only a few members of each restricted lineage for this duty can participate in the ritual of the *ugalpujas*. The eligible lineages for this ritual are the Datta, the Samant, the Brahman-sebait, the *mula-paik* of the Bagdi, and the Dom. Although the lineages of the *patakadhari* belongs to the Bagdi, the Caudhuri, the Mandal, and the Malakar bear sepcific roles in the ritual. They, however, are not allowed to stand in front of the image on the bank. They must wait behind the bank until the ritual is over. Among the Datta and the Samant, even the unmarried men can not approach the image to say nothing of the women. After their marriage, they must dedicate a goat to be sacrificed to the goddess at the altar at the time of their first participation in the ritual. Many of the Datta and the Samant put on sacred thread (*paita*) on his body to get on the altar on the bank still now. At ordinary times, the image of the goddess lies down at the bottom of the pond. A red flag is set up to indicate the place where the image is sunk. Except for the days of the *ugalpuja* and the Mahapuja, nobody is allowed to approach the image under the water. Table-10 gives the list of posts and roles in the *ugalpuja*. This system has basically the same pattern among the six rituals.

During nights of *ugalpuja*, a Bagdi paik calls aloud (*ahaban*) at the platform of the temple addressing the three titles three times as follows: "*Datta masayra go, Samant masayra go, Domera go*". This mens "Here goes, Sir Datta! Here goes, Sir Samant! Here goes, Dom!" At this calling by the Bagdi, every member assembles at the bank of the pond of Kshirdighi. The members of the Datta and the Samant bring plenty of offerings for the goddess on plates in their hands. The contents of the offerings are mainly *atop-caul*, sweets, vegetables, and fruits. But, according to the seasons of *ugalpujas*, they prepare particular items for the goddess, such as *kshir-kanthal* (milk condensed by boiling and jack-fruit) in the

Table-10` Role assignment in *ugalpuja*

Post	Role
[Access to the image allowed]	
<i>Sabha-pandit</i>	Chief priest
Brahman-sebait	Assistant priest, sacrificer of goat
Datta	Dedication of votive light and incense Preparation of offerings
Samant	Assistant for Datta, offerings
<i>Mula-paik</i>	Setting of <i>puja</i> , guardian of the sacrifice
Dom	Dedication of flaming torch
[Access to the image not allowed]	
<i>Patakadhari</i>	Putting up the Maharaja's flags
Bara Ray (Caudhuri)	Preparation for a rope
Other Ugra-Kshatriyas	Offering of goats
Mandal	Offering of straw for torch

month of Asar, *narikel-laru* (dry sweetmeat of coconut) in *Bijay-dasami*, *murir-laru* (sweet of fried rice) and white radish in the month of Pous, and *til-patali* (sweet of sesame and molasses) and *caul-bhaja* (parched rice) in *Makari-saptami*.

The Bagdi paiks lead the many goats to the altar on the bank for the ritual sacrifice to the goddess. The *patakadharis* of the Bagdi stand by the Kshirdighi bank putting up the Maharaja's red flags. The particular lineages of the village

and the Maharaja dedicate these goats for the sacrifice following the specified quota on each day of the *ugalpujas*. The private dedications are added to them. The regular quota of each lineage in each *ugalpuja* are shown in Table-11. The total number of goats to be dedicated by each lineage and the Maharaja comes to forty-three in a year. Mainly the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya dedicate them. But, the Maharaja is the biggest donator among them. Although the Dom dedicate only once in the Mahapuja, they have the important role of sacrificing the goat for the goddess during the last month of Jogadyapuja.

Let us examine briefly the ritual process of the *ugalpuja* taking up an example in the day of *Path-naran*. First, the Dom illuminates the dark surface of the pond with the flaming torches which are made of the straw dedicated by the lineage of the Mandal in the village the day before. That is called '*mahagni* (great flame)' in Bengali. At the sign of a flag put in the pond, the Brahman-sebait knows the place where the image of the goddess lays down at the bottom of the pond. They draw ropes tied to a small cart on which the stone image rests. The lineage of Bara Ray (Caudhuri) dedicated the straw ropes for the *ugalpuja* before the day of *Path-naran* of Baishakh. The image is pulled out on the bank along with the cart. The Brahman-sebait enshrines the image on the platform of the altar on the bank. They remove stains from the image, dedicate a floral wreath, votive lights, and incenses. In front of the image, the *Sabha-pandit* sits alone and performs a *puja* for the goddess without being accompanied by the *tantradarak*. After the *puja*, they sacrifice the goats dedicated by the Maharaja, the Brahman, and the nine lineages of Ugra-Kshatriya in turn. The *Mula-paiks* of the Bagdi hold down the goats in front of the altar. The Brahman-sebait has a sword in his hand and decapitates them. After the sacrifice, they send the image again soon to the bottom of the pond. The ordinary process of the *ugalpujas* ends here. The *paiks* bring the sacrificed goats

Table-11 Allotment of sacrifices for *ugalpujas*

	Pa. N.	M. P.	J. 4	A. 9	B. 10	P. 15	M. 7	Total
Maharaja		1		2	2	1	2	8
Brahman							2	2
Datta				1	1		1	3
Samant				1	1		1	3
Malla				1	1		1	3
Sani				1	1		1	3
Ray				1	1		1	3
Bara Ray	1		1	1	1		1	5
Na Ray				1	1		1	3
Josh				1	1		1	3
Chota Samant				1	1		1	3
Caudhuri				1	1		1	3
Dom		1						1
Total	1	2	1	12	12	1	14	43

Abbreviations:

	Date	Name
Pa. N.	29/Baishakh	<i>Path-naran</i>
M. P.	31/Baishakh	<i>Mahapuja</i>
J. 4	4/Jaisth	<i>Abhisekh</i>
A. 9	9/Asar	<i>Ugalpuja</i>
B. 10	10/Durgapuja	<i>Bijay-dasami</i>
P. 15	15/Paus	<i>Ugalpuja</i>
M. 7	7/Magh	<i>Makari-saptami</i>

back and cut them up into pieces, which every member shares according to the custom. For example the Brahman-sebait receive the heads of the goats, the person who sacrificed the goat gets the front legs, the meat of the bodies is for those who dedicated, the goats dedicated in the name of the Maharaja are for the Brahman-sebait, and the rest are for the *paiks*.