

Chapter-V Annual rituals

In this chapter, we shall examine the annual calendar of the rituals in the temple and in the localities of the village. Before the abolition of the zamindari system (1953), it counted fifty-two animal sacrifices to perform at the temple in the various rituals occasions of a year. The list of annual rituals before 1953 is given in Table-14. The annual rituals in the village can be divided into three categories, namely, the rituals solely performed in the temple, the rituals performed in both the temple and the localities, and the rituals performed mainly in the localities. According to the annual ritual list given below, we shall examine each annual ritual following three categories in turn. Through the analysis of these rituals, we can understand the relationship between the temple and the localities, the organization within the localities, and the changes of these rituals both in the temple and in the localities.

Table-14 Annual ritual before 1953

Bengalisan	Name of Ritual	Sacrifice by the Maharaja [after 1954]
Caitra, Sank.	Jogadhyapuja	
-Jaishta, 4		
Caitra, Sank.	<i>Kshirkalas</i>	
	Jogyakundu	<i>Panthabali</i> (1) [Raja-1]
	<i>Guyadak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)
Baishakh, 1	<i>Mahabhog</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)
15	<i>Lagna-utsah</i>	
27	<i>Homa, Jogyakundu</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)

		<i>Ramayanpath</i>		
		<i>Mayurnac</i>		
28		<i>Ramayanpath</i>		
		<i>Mayurnac</i>		
29		<i>Ramayanpath</i>		
		<i>Path-naran</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	[Raja, Ray-1]
		<i>Mayurnac</i>		
30		<i>Homa, Jogyakundu</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	[Raja-1]
		<i>Hal-nagal</i>		
		<i>Ramayanpath</i>		
Sank.		<i>Ugalpuja</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	[Datta, Caudh. -1]
		<i>Mayurnac</i>		
		<i>Domacoyarikhera</i>		
		<i>Mahapuja</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (7)	[Raja-1, UKY-7]
		<i>Mahabhog</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
		<i>Mahishbali</i>	<i>Mahishbali</i> (1)	[Raja-MI]
		<i>Masi-Pisi-Jhuri</i>		
		<i>Shankha-Para</i>		
		<i>Guya Dak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	[UKY, Baiti, BHM]
Jaishta, 1		<i>Merya Katha</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	[Dom-1]
	4	<i>Abhisheka</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	[Ray-1]
		<i>Ugalpuja</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
	Sank.	<i>Guya Dak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Ashar, S. 9		<i>Ugalpuja</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (2)	[Raja-2, UKY-10]
	Sank.	<i>Guyadak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Shraban, Sank.		<i>Guyadak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Bhadra, Sank.		<i>Guyadak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Aswin, K. 8		<i>Durgapuja</i>		
-S. 10				
	K. 9	<i>Badhnahami</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	

S. 4	<i>Catrutipatrika</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
S. 7	<i>Saptamipuja</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	[Caudh. -1]
S. 8	<i>Asthamaipuja</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
	<i>Mahabhog</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
S. 9	<i>Nahamipuja</i>	<i>Mahishbali</i> (1)	[Raja-M1]
		<i>Meshali</i> (1)	
		<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
S. 10	<i>Vijaydashami</i>		
	<i>Ugalpuja</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (2)	[Caudh. -1]
S. 15	Kojagari Lakshmipuja		
Sank.	<i>Guyadak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Kartik, K. 14	Shyamapuja	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
S. 9	Jagadwatripuja	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Sank.	<i>Guyadak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Agrahayan	<i>Nabannotsab</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
	<i>Mahabhog</i>		
Agrahayan, Sank.	<i>Guyadak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Poush,	<i>Pausalla</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
	<i>Mahabhog</i>		
15	<i>Ugalpuja</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
28	Grahapuja	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Sank.	<i>Pisthakotsab</i>		
	<i>Mahabhog</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
	<i>Guyadak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Magh, S. 7	<i>Makarishaptami</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (2)	[Raja-2, UKY-10, BHM-1]
Sank.	<i>Guyadak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Magh, Sank	<i>Nishidhambal</i>		
-Phalgun, Sank.			
Phalgun, Sank.	<i>Guyadak</i>	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	
Caitra	Nilpuja (Kshireswar)	<i>Panthabali</i> (1)	

1. Before Estate Acquisition

As already stated, in the former days of the Maharaja, the deb-seba-office, the court of the Raj in Bardhaman, sent every year for the expenditures of all the sacrifices dedicated in the rituals of the Jogadya temple. There were forty-one occasions in a year to perform the sacrifices and it counted fifty-two animals totally. These are two buffalos (*mahis-bali*), one sheep (*mes-bali*), and forty-nine uncastrated goats (*pantha-bali*). The largest number of the sacrifices was in the month of Baishakh and the second largest was in the month of Aswin. The sacrifices in the ritual of Vedic *homa* were performed on the last days of every month regularly. The budget of the court of the Raj covered all the occasional expenditures for the sacrifices as well as for the daily service in the temple. After Independence, most of the budget were reduced and it was left to only ten sacrifices sponsored by the Maharaja spread over eight occasions. That included two buffalos and eight goats. Some of them have now been taken over by the villager such as the lineages of Caudhuri observed Durgapuja.

2. The temple rituals

a) *Nisi-dhanbar*

During a whole month of Magh, which is from the night of the *sankranti* of the month of Pous (*pous-sankranti*) to the *sankranti* of Magh, a Baiti has a special performance of his drum called *nisi-dhanbar* in the Jogadya temple every night. This is the drum playing consists of eight kinds of strokes by the Baiti and it takes palce for about thirty minutes after midnight that is the second *prahur* of the night in the Bengali ritual time. The Baiti who performs *nisi-dhanbar* must keep the special vegetable diet, which contains *atop-caul* and *ghi*(clarified butter). It is called "*habishanna*". He observes it for a whole month and sleeps on the floor in

the separate room as a ascetic (*brahmacari*). He is selected from the lineage of the Baiti for this duty according to their shift.

At the beginning of *nisi-dhanbar*, a Baiti plays the drum on the way to Jogadya temple to announce the time of *nisi-dhanbar* to the villager (*tengai*). At the gate of the main temple, he puts a bandage of sevenfold clothes over his eyes, and steps in the interior of the temple through his right foot. His left foot is outside. Keeping this stance, he performs the tunes of *nisi-dhanbar*. He is forbidden to see and talk with anyone of the villager on the street from his house to the temple. The villagers are also prohibited from walking on the streets of the village while the drum is playing. They never see the playing in the temple and just sit inside the house to hear it. If the playing has started on their walking, they must rush to their nearby house and stay there till the performance ends.

In the village, the people believe that during the playing of *nisi-dhanbar* the goddess Jogadya dances inside the temple following to the rhythm of the drum. The heavenly maidens attend to the goddess and the evil spirits appear in the courtyard of the temple. Because of this belief, they never enter the temple during the time of *nsis-dhambar* except the Baiti who is also blindfolded. The Baiti claims to feel the presence of the goddess inside the temple while he plays his drum. He can even hear the faint sounds of the foot rings (anklet) trembling according to her dance and sense a sweet aroma of the goddess. There are many folklore passed down by the villagers telling that bad luck befalls on the person who trespasses a taboo during *nisi-dhanbar* due to the carelessness.

The tunes of *nisi-dhanbar* are prohibited from playing except on this ritual occasion. The Baiti explains that all these tunes are compiled from the basic patterns of every ritual tune performed on various occasions such as Durgapuja, Kalipuja, and so on. The Baiti plays it usually following the rhythm of seven beats (*sat-tal*) of the Bengali drum but if he is highly skilled in the drum, he plays it according to the rhythm of twelve or eighteen beats. The tunes of *nisi-dhanbar* handed down to the lineage of the village Baiti are eight kinds at present

as given here:

- 1) *Tengai* and its *Danshpahari*
- 2) Drum playing for *mayurnac*
- 3) Drum playing for *mayurnac* of Malakar after the *bisarjan* of Durgapuja
- 4) Drum for forming a line with hands up in the ritual of Gajan
- 5) Drum for the dance imitating the gestures of frogs in Gajan
- 6) Drum for dancing of *kalilapata*
- 7) Drum playing to fill up the pot in the time of "*badhan*" with water.
- 8) Drum playing the rhythm called "*sanki nacan*"

b) *Makarisaptami*

On the seventh of the lunar month of Magh, the Brahman-sebait perform a ritual called *Makarisaptami* at the Jagyasthan which is a square basin designed for *homa* ritual located at the northeastern corner of the Natmandir of the Jogadya temple. At first, the temple *paiks* make a square flat pedestal from a large quantity of ashes on the ground of the south side of the Jagyasthan. They also bring a pot, put inside frogs and *cyen* fishes which they caught the day before from the fields. Meanwhile, a Malakar prepares a copper pot and put it down at the northwestern corner of the Jagyasthan. He also prepares many offerings which include seven nuts of *kuru*, seven leaves of *akand*, milk, unthrashed rice, sesame seed, *dhurba* grass, *atop-caul*, and paste of sandalwood. A Baiti of the temple and two *patakadharis* of Bagdi holding the flags of the Maharaja in their hands remain standing there. A Brahman-sebait sits on a seat of the western side of the Jagyasthan towards the east. The Malakar stands beside him towards the south. Before the ritual (*ghatasthapan*) on the Jagyasthan, the Brahman-sebait performs a ritual called "*suryarga*". This means roughly "offerings for the sun".

After this ritual, they perform another called "*cyen-bcng* (*cyen* fishes and frogs)" at the pedestal of ashes. At the beginning, a Brahman-sebait purifies

the pedestal by flowers and water. Then, the Malakar performs a ritual cultivation on the pedestal by a *kajalata* (hand holder of Indian black ink) in his hand. He simulates it for cultivation by scratching the surface of the pedestal. First, he puts it on the outer portion of the surface, then he pushes it to the center likewise drawing an eddy which encircles the middle point of the pedestal. Reaching to the middle point he turns it towards south and then cuts through straight. The direction of the circle on the pedestal of ashes is the same with the way of the procession in *pradhaksin* around the temple and around the outer fringe of the village in *Hal-nagal* of Jagadyapuja.

The Malakar sprinkles the unthrashed rice all over the surface of the pedestal. The Brahman-sehait stands up and dedicates an offering over it which consists of a nut of *kuru*, a sesame seed, milk, and *dhurba* grass on a leaf of *akand* with paste of sandalwood. This offering is also called "*suryarga*". He dedicates it over the pedestal seven times with sacred verses. After that, the Malakar releases the *cyen* fishes and frogs from the pot over the pedestal. At that moment, people surrounding there rush to catch the fishes and the frogs by their hands. They also bring a little amount of the ash back to the house from the pedestal. They sprinkle them over their agricultural fields, or mix them with the manure for their cultivation. This is believed to bring them a good harvest..

After that, the Malakar goes out of the temple being attended by the *patakadharis* of the Bagdi and the Baiti playing drum and gong. The procession moves through the eastern gate of the temple and goes towards the northern side of the village to the streets of Uttar-para and then turns to Manasa-para. They pass by the pond Natunpukur and reaches the agricultural field in the northern side of the pond Karuapukur. The Malakar stands at the northeastern corner of the field and dig a small hole again by the *kajalata* in his hands. He puts a little bit of *chire* and *murukhi* in the hole. Then, the procession returns to the temple again accompanied by the sounds of drum and gong.

Arriving at the temple they have a ritual to prepare for the marriage ceremony of the goddess. A daughter of the Malakar dressed up with the wedding

sari enters the temple. The lineage of Babataran Bhattacharyya has the duty to help her get dressed. She has the pot of the goddess under her arm and stands beside a boy of the Malakar in front of the temple. Just the same way as the ordinary marriage ceremony. The ends of their clothes are tied up and a priest gives them blessing with the sacred verses. Then, they go out of the temple through the eastern gate and proceed to the cow shed owned by the lineage of Bhattacharyya, which is located on the northeastern side of the temple. They stand on a low stand (*pire*) at the door of the cow shed. The head of the lineage gives them a reception with leaves of *pan* and nuts of *supari* by his hand, as in the ritual reception at the entry of the bride in the second day of the marriage ceremony (*baran*). The women surrounding them receive the couple with the sounds of *ulu* and sprinkle over them *murukhi* and *cire*.

This ritual is supposed by the villager as the marriage ceremony between the goddess Jogadya and the god Kshirkantak (another name of the god Siva). The villagers solemnise their own marriage rituals in the village only after the day of *Makarisaptami*. All through the month of Magh, it is thought to be suitable time for ordinary Hindu to have their marriage ceremony according to the Hindu almanac. But, in the village, they are prohibited from performing any marriage ceremony before the ritual of *Makarisaptami*. The villagers were also used to till their agricultural fields after the day of *Makarisaptami*.

c) *Grahapuja*

On the day before the last day of Pous, *Grahapuja* is performed at the foot of an old *saoragac* located in the rear garden behind the locality of a Bagdi's lineage entitled Sinha. They belong to the Kusmethi-Bagdi section. Many pieces of broken images of stone gods and goddesses are gathered at the foot of the tree and installed into a small shrine. The people of the locality practice their *nityaseba* to the stone pieces everyday. This place is called "*gorel-para*".

The word of "*graha*" means planet. So "*grahapuja*" means the worship of the

sun and other planets which is performed in order to propitiate them. Usually, it count nine houses in astrology.

The priest for the *puja* is from the lineage of Sat-bhai of the temple Brahman-sebait. Priest who belong to the higher rank of Brahman (*uccasreni-brahman*) are prohibited from engaging in this *puja*. The lower rank of Brahman (*nimnasreni-brahman*) may practice the *grahapuja* exclusively as well as the rituals of *shyama-santi* and *dosh-katano*, and such other. In this case, a lineage of Bhattacharyya who used to live in the village performed it in the past. They belong to a section called *kathal-brahman* in Bengal. They were one of the *nimnasreni-brahman* in the village and are engaged exclusively in family rituals of the jajman who belong to the lower castes such as the Bagdi and the Muci.

At around three o'clock in the afternoon, people gather to the *gorel-para* carrying the offerings on plates. The priests prepare for the *puja* at the shrine. A Baiti goes round the village playing the drum to tell the time of the *grahapuja* and arrives at the *gorel-para* in the end. People dedicate the offerings to the shrine and daub the sacred stones with paste of turmeric, *sarsa-teil*, and *sindur* one after another. The priest purifies first his body, the seat, and the surrounding by sacred water and then starts the ritual of *sankalpa* in the name of the Maharaja of Bardhaman. After the *puja*, they perform sacrifice of an uncastrated goat. The priest sprinkle sacred water over the goat and a sword of the Maharaja. A Karmakar has the sword in readiness. People gather around there. With the sound of the drum, he brings it down on the neck of the goat. The fresh blood from the sacrificed goat is poured onto the stones at the shrine. People make a deep bow to the poured blood on the altar. They receive a part of the offerings on each plate which they bring back as *prasad*.

Formerly, the budget of the court of the Raj covered the expense for this sacrifice. Nowadays, the people in the locality (*sinha-para*) of the Tetuliya-Bagdi dedicate the goat for the *grahapuja*. The meat of the sacrificed goat is shared among them who dedicate it.

3. The rituals of the temple and the localities

a) *Nabanna-utsab*

Nabanna-utsab is a harvest festival. It is one of the most important rituals of agricultural affairs in rural Bengal. *Nabanna-utsab* is performed in the lunar month of Agrahayan everywhere, but the date of the ritual is not prescribed in almanac of *Bengalisan* as the other rituals are. Every village has own date of the *nabanna-utsab* in Agrahayan. It is fixed by the villager. In the village Kshiragram, the *Sabha-pandit* decides the date of the *nabanna-utsab* every year and proclaims it to the villager. In this decision, he takes it into consideration that the harvest time of the Aman rice in the village and the auspicious times in the month of Agrahayan. In this way, most of the villages have their own *pandit* (a learned man in religion) or *moral* (an influential person in village) to decide their date of the ritual. This ritual shows how the agricultural affair is connected to the village life and society.

From early in the morning of *nabanna-utsab*, every household of the village prepare for the ritual. The most important offerings of the day is made from the new rice of the year which is a type called; japonica. It is called *laghu-caul* or *nabanna-dhan* in the village. It is not a common type of rice like; indica. Many people plant this rice only a little amount for the ritual. The *laghu-caul* has less production than the usual ones of Aman variety. But for the ritual, the people this rice and keep it as *atop-caul*, which means not being processed of boiling, but just exposed to the sun. From these *nabanna-dhan* people make various kinds of food for the ritual. The first is *caul-nabanna*, which is a kind of *naibedyā* dedicated to the deity. It usually consists of *kshir*, banana, and other fruits and vegetables. After the *puja*, people mix them and eat raw as *prasad* in the *jal-khawa-samay*. Some villagers grind the rice with mortar and block (*sil-nora*) and serve on a leaf of banana with fruits and sweets. The second is *bhat-nabanna*, which is made of boiled rice from the *siddha-caul* (processed of boiling) of the *nabanna-dhan*. They serve it at the lunch time with other dishes. The third

is the *caul-pithe*, which is made from the meal of the *siddha-caul* of the *nabanna-dhan*. It is mixed with wheat flour and *gur*, then is fried deep in *sarsa-tel*.

They have many other dishes in the day such as *fuluri* made from *kali-karai* and *begun-bhaja* (fried aubergine). Usually, they have vegetable diet until afternoon. The dishes of fish are served at the dinner. The day after the *nabanna-utsab*, they eat the meat of castrated goat (*khasi*) and celebrate their harvest with relatives. In the village, the occasion of the *nabanna-utsab* is the biggest function in a year when relatives assemble.

i) *Nabanna-utsab* in the temple budget

People in the village have the altars of the *nabanna-utsab* to dedicate the offerings and to participate in the ritual in the households in the shrines of locality and in the temple of Jogadya. In the village women take an ablution in the morning, dressed up in their new sari, and bring the dishes of offerings to the temple. They stand at the interior room of the temple and place them on the floor. After the *tengai* of the Baiti to the villager, the Brahman-sebait belonging to the lineage of Sat-bhai perform the *puja*. The *Sabha-pandit* and the *Rajkachari* perform the ritual inside the temple. Every representative of the Ugra-Kshatriyas assemble there. After the *puja* at the altar of the temple, the priest sprinkles sacred water over the dishes on the floor and dedicates them with flowers. During the *arati* (dedication of fire), every member in the temple stand up with the sounds of *gang* and *ulu* and make a deep bow to the floor. The women who dedicated offerings in plates bring them back it to their respective houses and cook the offered rice (*prasad*) to the *caul-nabanna*.

After the *puja*, the *Rajkachari* distributes his offerings from a big plate to everyone by his hand. The Brahman-sebait addresses each title of the Ugra-kshatriya standing at the threshold of the temple and offers the wreath of *sara* grass to every representative. The offerings of nine unglazed bowls at the altar are also handed over to the representatives of the Ugra-Kshatriya with address of their titles by turn. They bring the offerings in the bowls to their localities

and share them among the families to cook the *caul-nabanna*.

The storehouse of the temple is filled up with the huge piles of the offerings which the village people dedicated on the occasion. In particular, the lineages of Bara-ray, Chot-ray and Caudhuri offer *atop-caul* of 21 Kg and vegetables respectively. This is the second time of their quota in a year after the offerings in Durgapuja. The Brahman-sebait prepare the *annabhog* in large quantity after the noon time at the Bhogmandir. It is a special *annabhog* cooked from the offerings of *atop-caul* of nabanna. For the *annabhog* of this day, the Brahman sebait use an earthenware pot in addition to the ordinary brass utensils. They boil the rice by the unglazed pot at the hearth of the Bhogmandir. Then closing the door of the Bhogmandir, they dedicate the *annabhog* to the goddess. Inside the room (*rannaghar*), the Brahman-sebait performs his *puja* with a special verse (*bhogmantra*) for the goddess and sprinkles sacred water over the boiled rice, *dal* soup, and stewed vegetables, and fishes (*tarkari* and *macer-jhal*). Then, he opens the door and strikes a gong from the Bhogmandir announcing end the time of *annabhog*. Brahman-sebait serve the *bhog* to the many people sitting on the courtyard of the temple.

After cooking, the Brahman-sebait break the unglazed pot by an iron scoop to the nine pieces. They dish out the boiled rice, vegetables, and fishes on these nine pieces of the pot. Standing on the veranda, the Brahman-sebait addresses again each title of the Ugra-Kshatriya by turn, and puts down the nine pieces one by one. Every representative of the lineages bring back to their localities the *prasad* and share the same among them. This is called "*tikra-biri*" in the second time after Durgapuja.

ii) *Nabanna-utsab* at the shrines of the localities

The ritual in the day of *nabanna-utsab* is called Annapurnapuja observed at temporary shrines. Four such shrines were constructed in the village in 1994. In this ritual, they enshrine the image of the goddess Annapurna at the altar and invite priests for the *puja*. The sequence of the ritual is nearly the same with

the other *pujas* like as Kalipuja and Kartikpuja. The ritual organizations in the village are all based on mutual cooperative. Such rituals are also called "*barayaripuja*".

Table-15 Annapurnapuja in the village

Locality	Patron	Priest	Establish
Josh-para	Josh-para	Satbhai	about 100 years ago
Badyagacitala	Samant-para		about 50 years ago
Caudhuri-para	Caudhuri/Brahamn	Adhikary	
Kshideshwaritala	Brahman	Bhattacyaryya	about 20 years ago
Sani-para	Sani (Suta-sguri)	Kalidas	unidentified
Purba-para	Hajra (Hari)	Mantu	in 1994

The oldest organization can be traced back to almost one hundred years ago. The others are organized voluntarily in each locality one after another. Now the rituals have festivity with decoration and music. Only the lineage of the Sani of the Ugra-Kshatriya in the village maintains the Annapurnapuja in the traditional form as their lineage ritual. They have their own shrine for the Annapurnapuja at the corner of their residence. They enshrine a image of the goddess Annapurna on the altar every year. In 1994, a shrine has been newly built in the locality of the lineage of the Hari. Altogether six such *pujas* are observed in the village.

The procedure of the *puja* is almost same with the other *puja* such as Kalipuja and Kartikpuja in terms of the *upacarapuja* by priests. The ritual starts with *ghatastapan* by priests and the ritual steps on *sankalpa*, *shuddhi*, *baran*, and *arati* in order. On the next day, they perform *puja* and *homa* in the morning and

sandhyarati in the evening. This continues for three days and *bisarjan* of the image is done on the fourth day.

The Annapurnapuja and the Saraswatipuja are yearly occasions of amusement for the people in the village. People enjoy their decorations and magnificence of the image in the temporary shrines modeled on the myth of the *Kamayana*, from which motifs enable them to produce imaginative sceneries of various deities, besides the basic orientation of the god Siva and the goddess Annapurna. The music over loud speakers, various kinds of stalls on the streets, and dramas (*jatra*) of youth clubs give delights to the villager.

At the square of the temple of the goddess Manasa, the priests (*deyasin*) of the lineages of the Bagdi put unglazed pots in front of the Manasa temple and the shrine of the god *Panchanan*. People dedicate a part of their offerings of *caul* in it. The offerings of the pots are received by the priests and shared among their lineages. One pot of the Manasa temple is for the priest. The other pot in front of the god *Panchanan* is divided into two lineages, namely *patakadhari* and *mula-paik* in the same way with the other occasions. Every family of the village prepare meat of castrated goats (*khasi*) for their dinner. Only at the shrine of *Panchanan-thakur*, they perform the sacrifice of a uncastrated goat (*panthabali*) in the second day of the *puja*. Many people of the locality go to Katwa to take ablution in the Ganga in the same way as during Kalipuja.

b) *Pousalla*

A few days before of the last day of the lunar month of Pous, the daily *annahog* of the Bhogmandir is prepared at the western bank of Kshirdighi. That is called "*pousalla*". In general, *pousalla* means a popular event in the winter season by villager to go on a picnic on a vacant land at the outskirts of villages. They have some recreations for a day, cook outside, and take lunch together (*ban-bajna*) in the open air. But, in the *posalla* at the bank of Kshirdighi, it is not confined to an amusement also. They perform ritual acts of the temple Jogadya as

well.

The date of the *pousalla* is decided at the time of *ugalpuja* of the fifteenth of Pous by the *Sabha-pandit* and the *Brahman-sebait*s. According to the other events of the village and the almanac of the year, they usually fix the date a few days before the last day of Pous (*pous-sankranti*). On the day before the *pousalla*, the *paiks* of the temple dig hearths at the slope of the bank in the western side of Kshirdighi, on the opposite shore where the image of the goddess is sunk. On this day, *mula-paiks* and the Doms of the temple are in charge of preparation for them. On the day of the *pousalla*, a Brahman-sebait practices his duty for the *nityaseba* at the altar of the temple. At the same time, other Brahman-sebait prepare the *annabhog* for *pousalla* at the Kshirdighi bank. Many villager bring *atop-caul* and vegetables to the bank as offerings. Only on the day of *pousalla* in a year, they have an *anna-bhog* at the bank outside the temple. As it takes much time to prepare the food for many people, the ritual of *bhog* starts almost after three o'clock. At that time, the Brahman-sebait in charge of the day, the *jhi* of the Bhogmandir, every one of the nine lineages of the Brahman-sebait of the temple, and *paiks* help in preparation of the *bhog*. The materials of the *bhog* on the day depend on the dedications by the villager at present, which is called *siddhe*. For cooking the *bhog*, they use water of Kshirdighi in the same way as ordinary *anna-bhog*. Formerly, a goat dedicated by the Maharaja was sacrificed here and served in the dishes of the *pousalla* as *mahaprasad*. Now this has gone into disuse.

At the beginning, the *bhog* is served to the goddess. A Brahman-sebait strikes the gong telling the time and performs the puja in front of the hearths at the bank in the same manner as in the Bhogmandir. At the bank, a few of big brass pots are prepared for cooking food for many villagers. Nevertheless, he picks up a small unglazed pot for *puja* of the goddess. At the first step of the ritual, he puts cooked food in the pot such as boiled rice and vegetables for the goddess. After his puja with *bhogmantra*, he puts a part of it into the food of the other cooking pots. After that, they break the pot into nine pieces again, and serve rice, vegetables, and fishes on them. The priest addresses each title of the nine lineages

of the Ugra-Kshatriya and their representative receive the *bhog* on nine pieces of the broken pot by turn. It is called *tikla-biri* and the procedure to serve them is almost the same way as in the *nahanna-utsab*. Then many other people of the village surrounding there sit down on the bank here and there and receive the *bhog* on the plate of banana leaves from the Brahman-sebait.

All participant to the *pousalla* sit in a place and eat together. Most of them belong to the so-called *bara-lok*. After serving, the Brahman-sebait begin to eat themselves. The leftovers of the *bhog* in the pots are shared among them who take part in the preparation for the *pousalla*. They divide all food, and share them according to the specified quota. They put them into buckets severally and bring back home. The quota of the *bhog* is one ration of the *bhog* for the lineage of the Dom, two rations for the lineage of *mula-paik*, eight rations for the lineage of Sat-bhai of the Brahman-sebait, eight rations for the other Brahman-sebait, and one ration for the priest in charge.

3) *Pous-sankranti/Pistaka-utsab*

On the last day of Pous, the Brahman-sebait make *caul-pithe* which is a kind of boiled rice cake, as *bhog* for the goddess in the Bhogmandir. In every household in the village, they make *caul-pithe* for the family usually in the day before of *pous-sankranti*. But, the *caul-pithe* made at the Bhogmandir is very large as about the size of 20cm each, and in large quantities. There is the special rice field of about fifteen *katha* (0.25 acre) called "*pithe-bhumi*", which belongs to the temple. They make the *caul-pithe* for the rice fields. They would make the *caul-pithe* of new rice of about twenty seers from the rice field along with other ordinary dishes of the *bhog* for the goddess.

At the time of the *bhog* of this day, they perform the *tikla-biri* at the platform of the Bhogmandir. This is the fourth time that *tikla-biri* is observed in a year. They put *caul-pithe* on the nine pieces of the broken pot as well as the ordinary *bhog* of boiled rice, vegetables and fishes. Formerly, they performed a

sacrifice of a goat donated by the Maharaja for the goddess and served the meat as *mahaprasad* which is no more in practice.

4. The rituals of the localities

a) Kalipuja

i) The sequence of Kalipuja

During a couple of days before Kalipuja, people of the village visit Katwa to take ablutions at the bank of the Ganga (the Hugli river). That is called "*ganga snan*", or "*ganga can*". Many of village women, especially of the lower castes, go together to Katwa on the day before Kalipuja observing fast (*upas*). They keep their abstinence until the end of the ritual and have the offerings of bhog as prasad after the sacrifice in the Kalipuja. In case they are busy and not able to visit Katwa, they take an ablution in their house. They go to a cow shed and sprinkle the Ganga water on their body.

ii) The fourteenth of the lunar month of Kartik

Kalipuja of the lunar month of Kartik starts in the night of the fourteenth of Kartik, which is a day before the new moon. The people of every locality (*para*) in the village enshrine clay images of the goddess Kali at temporal altars and prepare offerings for them. At first the Baiti in the Jogadya temple beats the drum telling the time of starting the Kalipuja over all the localities in the village. The Brahman-sebait begins his ritual for the goddess in the temple, and every priest starts to perform the puja at their altars.

In all altars, the priests at first purify themselves and then the seats on the altar. Then they perform *sankalpa* in the name of their patron. This is followed by *gathastapan* and *baran* of the goddess. Next is the sacrifice, usually of

made goats. After that, the priests please the deity by the votive lights (*arati*) and lit the *homa* fire. On each altar the priest performs *homa* in front the patron. People receive the offerings from the altar as *prasad* and eat them as the *bhog*. In the Jogadya temple, the Brahman-sebait specially addresses the titles of the Ugra-Kshatriya in order and gives them a necklace made of *sora* tree.

Women mostly belonging to the lower castes receive the ritual fire of the goddess Kali on her heads, if she has some personal prayer to make (it is called "*mansik*" in Bengali). They sit in front of the altar and put an unglazed bowl on their head. Incenses keep burning in the bowl. The priests sprinkle the incense powder (*dunu*) into the bowl. The incense powder flares up the flame on their head. The area around her thus gets filled up with white smoke and sweet fragrance. This ritual is called *dunu-purao*. Most of the special prayers are for recovering from diseases on getting children.

iii) The new moon (*amabasya*) of Kartik

The day after the *puja*, the priests extend some services to the deity in the morning and perform the ritual of *bisarjan* to the pot at the altar. The villagers invite their relatives for a meal of *prasad* of the sacrifices. The image of the goddess is retained until night. At night the villagers from each locality move out in procession around the village. At the altar, people rush to touch the feet of the image and make a deep bow (*pranam*). They get the *sindur* as a *phonta* on their foreheads. The men bear the image of their locality on the holder of bamboo. With the sound of *ulu* performed by the women, they swing the image a little in the beginning in front of the altar and then start the procession. At first, they go to the Jogadya temple and in front of the gate of the temple, they bring down the holder of the image to the ground once. Soon they shoulder it up again in order to join a parade around the village.

The processions of the lower castes also visit the residences of their landlords or the masters. They bring down the images once to the ground just the same manner as at the Jogadya temple. Then, they receive the bow of the masters

to their image of the goddess Kali and get some cash offerings (*canda*). The labourers carry the image of their landlords or the masters, with whom they are engaged as agricultural labourers.

b) Distributions of the Kalipujas in the village

We must look more carefully into the distribution pattern of Kalipuja among various caste groups of the village. The sub-caste of the Ugra-Kshatriya called "*jana-aguri*", the Goer, and the Muci never organize *Kalipuja* as their locality ritual. For the Bauri caste in the southern outskirts of the village, the Kalipuja of the lunar month of Magh is the main festival of all, and they have no Kalipuja in the month of Kartik. The localities of Brahman, the Kayastha, the Bagdi, and the Hari, and the sub-caste of *suta-aguri* of the Ugra-Kshatriya organize the Kalipuja of Kartik in the village. The organizations of the Kalipuja in the Bagdi locality are *barayaripuja* (cooperative organization of the ritual) to mobilize the people in their locality. On the contrary, all the Kalipujas of the Brahman caste are *paribarpuaj* (family ritual). Some lineages, divided into a few families, perform it in yearly rotation by turn. The following is the total list of the Kalipujas in the month of Kartik, 1994 in the village.

Table-16 Kalipuja in the village

Patron	Para	Location	Type	Priest
1) Satyashankar Mukher.	Josh	Thakurghar	Paribar	Nabakumar
2) Nimai Bhattacharyya	Josh	Ucubangla	Paribar	Nabakumar
3) Rajkumar Cakrabartty	Brahman	Thakurghar	Paribar	Pranabkumar
4) Shibnath Chaterjee	Brahman	Thakurghar	Paribar	Nabakumar
5) Reul Mukherjee	Josh	Thakurghar	Paribar	Dhanugopal

6) Debprasad Bhat.	Brahman	Thakurghar	Paribar	Pranabkumar
7) Pranabkumar Bhat.	Brahman	Thakurghar	Paribar	Rajkumar
8) Jitiprasad Mukherjee	Brahman	Thakurghar	Paribar	Nabakumar
9) Surjakant Chatterjee.	Brahman	Thakurghar	Paribar	Nabakumar
10) Kalidas Cakrabartty	Brahman	Thakurghar	Paribar	Calandra Bh.
11) Kalacand Cakrabartty	Brahman	Thakurghar	Paribar	Pranabkumar
12) Anandamahan Majumdar	Brahman	Thakurghar	Paribar	Bishwanath Ca.
13) Bhaktaprakas Cakra.	Brahman	Thakurghar	Angshadar	Lakhsinarayan
14) Bishweshwar Mukher.	Samant	Thakurghar	Angshadar	Rajkumar
15) Nimai Bishwas	Josh	Thakurgahr	Paribar	Rajkumar
16) Jatyprakas Caudhuri	Caudhri	Thakurghar	Paribar	Paramsuk
17) Bararay (Caudhuri)	Caudhri	Kalibangla	Angshadar	Kalacand
18) Bagdi (Tetuliya; Tet.)	Sinha	Thakurghar	Barayari	Bhaccur
19) Bagdi (Tet.)	Khirdi.	Thakurghar	Barayari	Bhaccur
20) Sukumar Sinha (Tet.)	Sinha	Thakurghar	Paribar	Bhaccur
21) Shaktapad Sinha (Tet.)	Sinha	Nathakur	Mandir	Bhaccur
22) Bagdi (Tet.)	Dakhin	Road	Barayari	Bhaccur
23) Tinkal Bag (Tet.)	Manasa	Thakurghar	Angshadar	Bhaccur
24) Ganapati Diger (Tet.)	Manasa	Thakurghar	Deyasin	Bhaccur
25) Aniram Santra (Kus.)	Purba	Thakurghar	Angshadar	Madan
26) Sukumar Mallik (Kus.)	Purba	Thakurghar	Paribar	Madan
27) Kelaram Dhara (Kus.)	Manasa	Thakurghar	Deyasin	Madan
28) Bagdi (Tet. /Kus.)	Manasa	Thakurghar	Barayari	Madan
29) Sudhir Hajra (Hari)	Purba	Thakurghar	Paribar	Mantu
30) Puspanjari Hjara (H.)	Purba	Thakurghar	Paribar	Mantu
31) Bardmanmaharaja	Mandir	Mandir	Mandir	Sebait

b) Jagadatripuja

Except in the Jogadya temple, none in the villager perform the Jagadatripuja at present. Even in the temple, the priests perform the *puja* only to the copper pot on the altar. Formerly, two families of the village namely, the *Sabha-pandit* and Mukhopadyayya used to observe the ritual at their residences every year. But, they have no image in their altar. They adopted only a small icon of the goddess and made the *puja* to a small pot.

As one of the 51 sakta-pithas, people in the village observe especial customs. The sakta-pitha means the abode of the goddess Sati (another name of the goddess Durga). Goddess Jogadya is one of the incarnations of the goddess. Hence, people think the goddess stays in the temple of the village all through the year. The goddess of the village is, therefore, not a temporary visitor on particular ritual occasions such as Durgapuja and Kalipuja. Because of this religious belief, people never worshipped the anthropomorphic image of the goddess inside the village. There is no restriction on the image of Kartik or Radha-Krishna, but people never brought the images of goddess Durga and her incarnations in the village. The goddess Jogadya and the goddess Jagadatri are of course incarnations of the goddess Durga. People would not bring even the image of the goddess Kali in former times. However, it has now changed in several localities of the lower castes and among a few Brahman families. But, concerning the goddess Durga and the goddess Jagadatri, they still observe the custom strictly.

c) Kartikpuja

Kartikpuja is famous and elaborate in the towns of Cuncunra and Katwa. In the village, none performs Kartikpuja periodically. Only those who have a personal prayer (*mansik*) for the god, set up the altar of the Kartikpuja and invite their family priests (*kula-purohit*) to perform worship. Most of their prayers are for getting children by barren women. The god Kartikeya is believed as a god of children by the village people. They can begin the *puja* on the sankranti of the month of Kartik in any year. But, if they start it once, they must continue for

other two years at least. Most of the patrons of this *puja* are the village *baralok*, because of its huge expenses. In 1994, four families of the *suta-aguri* of the Ugra-Kshatriya and one Goera family performed Kartikpuja.

In the night of the Kartik sankranti, people set up the altar of the god Kartik and invite their priests. The patron, the prayer, the priest, and one who has *mansik* observe fast from morning until the end of the *puja*. At first, the patron of the *puja* put a small pot on his head and go to draw the water of a pond in company with a Baiti playing his drum. He puts the pot on the altar and the priest starts the *puja*. The patron sits aside the priest and follows the instructions by the priest. The priest proclaims the beginning of the *puja* in the name of his patron. The patron makes donations of *pan* leaves, *supari*, *paita*, clothes and such others to the priest.

The ritual includes a number of ritual steps such as *ghatstapan*, *pranapratishtha*, *cakrdan*, and *arati*. After the *puja*, people receive *prasad*. This is done when they observe Kartikpuja for the first time. They perform it another three times until very late at night. The basic procedure is almost same with other ritual such as Kalipuja. But, in this ritual they must add a sweet called "*naru*" as offering for the god. It is made of *muri* and *gur* rounded into a ball. This is a very favorite sweet for children and the image of Kartik has always *naru* in his right hand.

The day after the *puja*, the patron gives *dakshina* to the priest. Then he puts the pot on his head and goes to the pond to pour water. The *prasad* served after the ritual immersion is called *dadikarma*. This is a kind of sweet mixed with yogurt, *naru*, banana, and other sweets. At night, *bisarjan* of the image takes place. The procession of the image accompanying drums parades round the village. An empty pot and a coconut on top of it is left at the altar for other eight days.

d) Saraswatipuja

Saraswatipujas in the village are mainly organized by the youth clubs of the

village as a *barayaripuja*. The origins of these *pujas* are of recent years as compared with the other *pujas* in the village. The oldest *puja* in the village is in the building of the Kshiragram high school adjacent to Kshirdighi. The students and the teachers of the high school manage it. The sequence of the *puja* is almost the same as the other *pujas* in the village. The images of the goddess Saraswati go generally to the *bisarjan* two days after the *puja*. Table-17 gives the list of Saraswatipujas organized in 1994.

Table-17 Saraswatipuja in the village

Organizer	Place	Major member
1)Kshiragram High School	School building	Students, teachers
2)Bhisubhiyas Pragatishil Club	Carshibtala	Youth of Brahman
3)Tarun Sangha	P. H. of Kayashta	Youth of Brahman, Aguri
4)Saurabh Club	Samant-para temple	Youth of Samant
5)Datta-para	Datta-para	Youth of Dattapara
6)Frends Cultural Association	Caudhuri-para	Caudhuri (Na)
7)Agradut Club	Kalibangla	Caudhuri (Bara)
8)Manasatala	Manasa-para	Bagdi
9)Uttardas-para	Das-para	Muci
10)Kshiragram Primary School	Natunpukur	Students and teachers
11)Kshirdighi-para	Kshirdighi-para	Tetuliya Bagdi
12)Bus Satand	Bajar	Storekeepers
13)Jogadya Sangha Club	Mayarpukur-para	Caudhuri
14)Sinha-para	Sinha-para	Tetuliya Bagdi
15)Miran Sangha Club	Chaterjee	Youth of Brahman
16)Kalimata Sangha	Mujherjee-para	Youth of Brahman, Aguri
17)Ashim Samant	Private house (P. H.)	Paribarpuja

18) Jabgatbandu Josh	P. H.	Paribarpuja
19) Swapan Cakrabartty	P. H.	Paribarpuja
20) Sibaram Caudhuri	P. H.	Paribarpuja
21) Narayan Hajra	P. H.	Paribarpuja
22) Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya	P. H.	Paribarpuja
23) Sudhir Ray	P. H.	Paribarpuja
24) Tapas Caudhuri	P. H.	Paribarpuja