A SAKTA-PITHA IN BENGAL:
KINGSHIP, CASTE AND SACRIFICIAL ORGANIZATION IN A VILLAGE SOCIETY

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The data used in this thesis have not been published in part or in full or submitted to the said University or any other institution for a Degree or Diploma.

Calcutta
Nov. 20, 1996

Professor Ajit K. Danda

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Abbreviations

[Land Type]

BGN	Bagan	Garden
BHT	Bhiti	Raised land
BST	Basta	Homestead
DBA	Doba	Marshy ditch
DKN	Dokan	Shop
DNG	Danga	Upland
DO	Do	Double-cropping land
GRK	Garlayck	Unculturable land
MDR	Mandir	Temple
PKR	Pukur	Pond
PTH	Path	Street
SHL	Shali	Rice land
SNA	Suna	Rice land

[Caste]

BGD	Bagdi
BHM	Brahman
BIT	Baiti
BNE	Bene
DOM	Dom
GER	Goera
HRI	Hari
MLK	Malakar
UKY	Ugra-Kshatriya

[others]

B. S.	Bharat Samrat
C. P.	Caturthipatrika
H.	Hari
H. H.	Household
N. P.	Nabapatrika
P. H.	Private House
Bh.	Bhattacaryya
Ca.	Cakrabartti
Kus.	Kusmethi-Bagdi
Tet.	Tetuliya-Bagdi
Dag	Plot No. in each mauza on Land regsiter
JL	Jurisdiction List No.
	7; J. L. No. 127
	8; J. L. No. 128
	9; J. L. No. 129

Glossary

adhibas	preliminary ritual to any ceremony
ahaban	invitation/invocation
aman	winter rice crop
angsha	quota of ritual duty and right allotted on the basis of the calculation system of *sola-anna*
angshidar	holder of *angsha*
anna	one sixteenth of a rupee
annabhog	offering of boiled rice
arati	reception with sacred fire to the deity
asan	seat
astami	the eighth day of bright or dark fortnight of a lunar month
bangsha	lineage
bel	tree (Aegle marmelos) endowed with ritual role
bhandari	store keeper
bigha	area of land (equivalent to a third of a acre)
bhog	food offering for the deity
balidan	animal sacrifice
Brahman-sebait	priest of the Jogadya temple
brahmattar	rent-free land granted to Brahmans
brata	religious vow
cakran sampatti	land granted for service tenure
Candi	another name of the goddess Durga, or sacred literature of the goddess Candi, a part of the *Devimahatmya*
Candipath	recitation of the *Candi*
Candipathak	reciter of the *Candi*
caukidar	village watchman

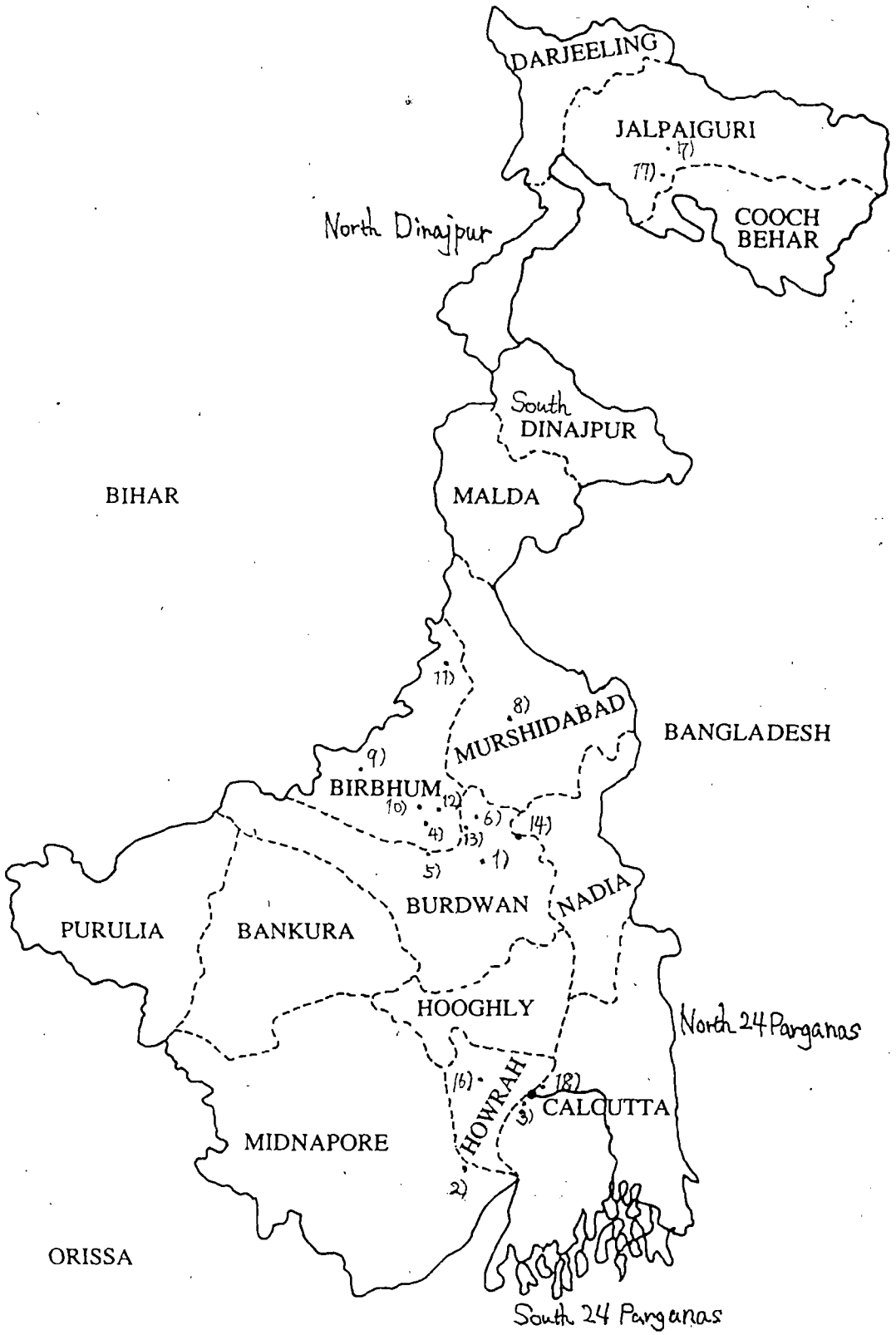
caturthi	the fourth day of bright or dark fortnight of a lunar month
caturthipatrika	*patrika* of four kinds of plants
cire (cinra)	rice flattened after boiling and thrashing
choto-lok	lower caste people in rural area
dai	yogurt
daksina	gift offered to a priest in return of his ritual service
dan	gift
danda	measure of time equal to twenty four minutes
dasahara	the tenth day of bright fortnight of Asar
dasami	the tenth day of bright or dark fortnight of a lunar month
debattar	rent-free or revenue free land granted to temples
deyasin	priest of non-Brahman origin, votary versed in *mantra*
deyasini	female *deyasin*
diksha	initiation sacred verses (*mantra*)
diksha-guru	spiritual master who gives initiation and mantra
Gajan	ritual of Siva in the end of the month of Caitra
gasthi	agnates
ghat	ritual pot for the deity
ghatsthapan	ritual placing of *ghat* filled with sacred water on the altar at the commencement of ritual
gamastha	village agent of landholders
gamcha	towel
ganesmund	stone plinth at the foot of the eastern wall of the Jogadya temple
gotra	clan
Grahacarya	priest for almanac
gram	village
gur	molasses
guyabeti	stone plinth for *guyadak* in the Jogadya temple
guyadak	ritual of the Jogadya temple on every *sankranti*

Hal-nagal	ritual tilling on the 30th of Baishakh
homa	oblation of fire
jajman	clientele on whose behalf priest performs ritual
jati	caste
jhapan-gan	ritual song with snake's dance by *ojha*
kachari-bari	office of the management
khai	puffed rice
khatiyan	land register
kshir	milk condensed by boiling
Kshirkalas	ritual on the first day of the Jogadyapuja, or the ritual pot used on the day
kula-purohit	family priest
Lagna-utsab	ritual for the proclamation of the new year almanac
lakheraj	revenue-free or rent free-land
luci	flour-puff fried in *ghi*
madal	drum used in the Jogadyapuja
mahalay	new-moon day before the autumnal Durgapuja
Maharaja	great king
Makari-saptami	ritual on the seventh of Magh
Manasa-tala	altar of the goddess Manasa
manda	sweet
mandal	village headman
mangalkabya	Bengali folk literatures
mansik	offering or sacrifice promised and dedicated to the deity if the vow is fulfilled
mauza	revenue village
mayurnac	ritual dance performed during Jogadyapuja
merya-khata	the final sacrifice in the Jogadyapuja performed by the Dom
mula-paik	chief-servants of the Jogadya temple
murkhi	parched rice coated with molasses

nabami	the ninth day of bright or dark fortnight of a lunar month
nabapatrika	*patrika* of nine kinds of plants
nabasakh	nine castes of clean *sudra* in Bengal
naibedya	offering to the deity, in which *atop-caul* is a main item
nityaseba	daily service to the deity
ojha	medicine man
paik	temple servants
paita	sacred thread put on the shoulder by the Brahman and other upper castes
pandit	learned Brahman
panjika	almanac
pala	turn to ritual duty or right
paladar	a person in the turn of ritual
panchami	the fifth day of bright or dark fortnight of a lunar month
panchapradip	votive light having five wicks
paramarsa	conference
pargana	revenue unit of the medieval Bengal
patakadhari	holder of the Maharaja's red flag
patrika	bundle of plants as a symbol of the goddess
pattanidar	intermediaries under a zamindar
phonta	sacred mark put on the forehead of devotees
Pradhan-purohit	chief priest
pradakshin	act of going around
pradip	votive light
prasad	food offering taken by devotees after the ritual
puja	worship
pujari	Brahman priest employed in ritual
purohit	Brahman priest who serves for his jajman
puspanjali	offering of flower
raiyat	tenant

raja	king
Rajkachari	superintendent of the Jogadya temple organization
Sabha-pandit	overseer of the Jogadya temple ritual
sadasa-upacarapuja	sixteen steps of *upacarapuja*
sandhya	evening
sandhyarati	evening service to the deity with fire
sankalpa	announcement of the purpose of ritual at the commencement
sankranti	the last day of any lunar month
sannyasi	ascetic
saptami	the seventh day of bright or dark fortnight of a lunar month
sarsa(sarisa)-tail	mustard oil
sasthi	the sixth day of bright or dark fortnight of a lunar month
sebait	temple priest
ser (seer)	an Indian measure of weight, = 1/40 man,
siddhi	leaves and shoots of hemp
sindur	vermilion
sital-bhog	evening food offering to the deity
sola-anna	one rupee, traditonal calculation unit, symbolically it means totality
sraddha	funeral rite
supari	betel-nut
tala	rhythm
tantra	scripture, ritual system, sacred book of the cult of sakta and sometime of other sects
tantradharak	assistant priest who chants sacred verses
tarpan	ritual form of ancestor worship
tengai	notification of the time of ritual by drum playing by the Baiti
thakur	deity

thana	police station
tikla-biri	*annabhog* allotted to the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya on special occasions
ugalpuja	ritual of pulling up the goddess's image from pond
ulu	sound by women made by moving their tongues within the mouth on any ritual occasion
upas (upabas)	abstinence from food
Vaidik-purohit	priest eligible for Vedic *homa*
zamin	land
zamindar	landholder



Map-1 Distribution of Sakta-pithas in West Bengal

1) Kshiragram, 2) Tamluk, 3) Kalighat, 4) Kankalitala, 5) Kogram,
6) Ketugram, 7) [illegible]lbari, 8) Kiriteswari, 9) Bakreswar, 10) Saithiya,
11) Nalhati, 12) Labhpur, 13) Dakshin-dhihi, 14) Juranpur, 15) Birat,
16) Amta, 17) Jalpes, 18) Dakshineswar,

Contrastive list of sakta-pithas in West Bengal

Texts:

A: the *Mahapithanirupana.*

B: the *Sivacarita.*

C: the *Benimadhab Siler Fhul Panjika.*

D: the *P.M.Bagcir Dairektari Panjika.*

E: the *Gupta Press Dairektari Panjika.*

F: the *Madan Gupter Daikektari Panjika.*

G: the *West Bengal District Gazetteers.*

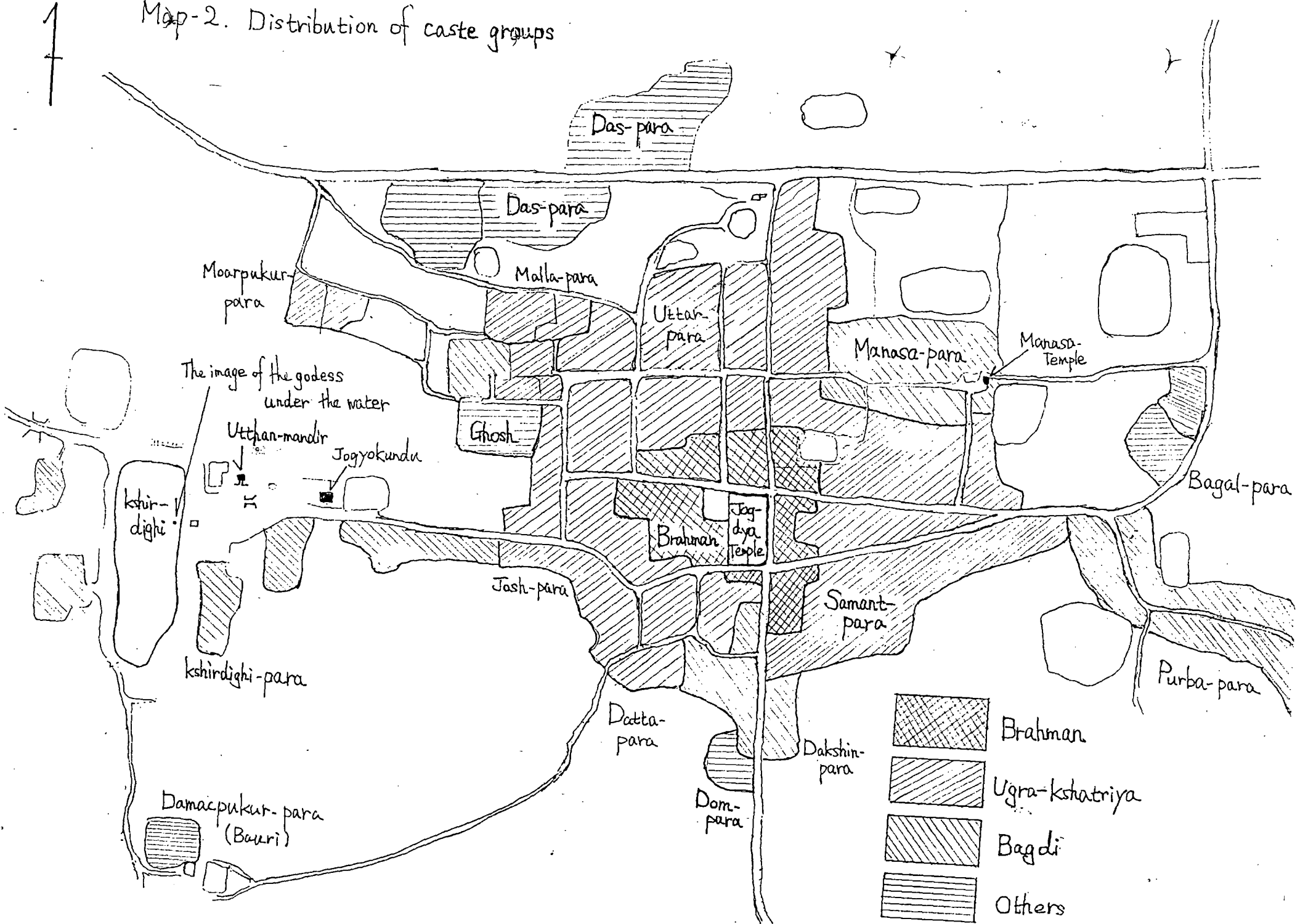
Abbreviations:

*: Sakta-pitha, ?: Suppostion, -: Upa-pitha,

+: Supplemented names in the later version

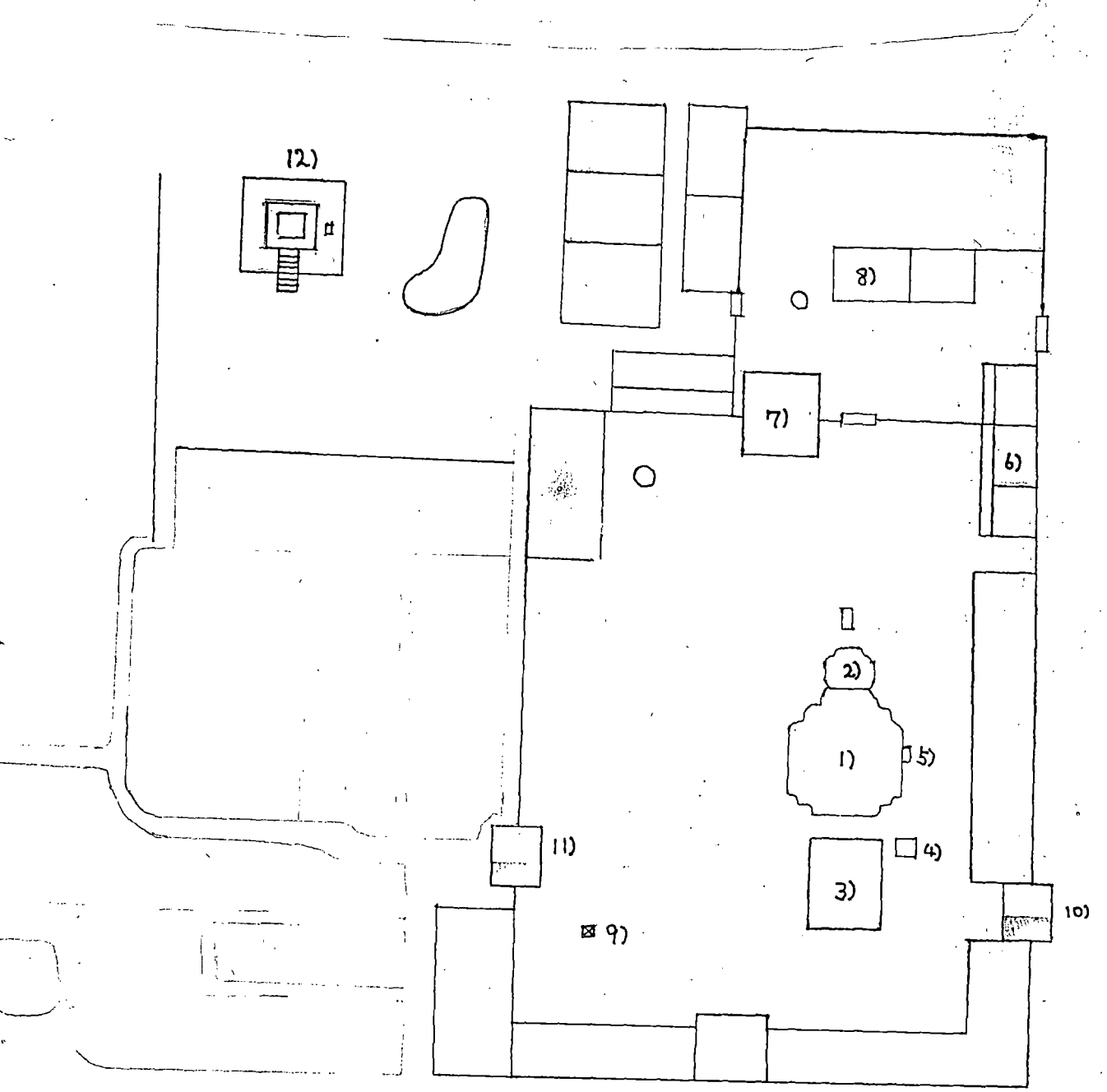
place / texts	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1)Kshiragram	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2)Tamluk	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3)Kalighat	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4)Kankalitala	*	*	*	*	*		*
5)Kogram	*	*	*	*	*		*
6)Ketugram	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
7)Salbari	*	*	*	*	*	*	
8)Kiriteswari	*	-			*	*	
9)Bakreswar	+	*	*	*	*	*	*
10)Saithiya	+	-	*	*	*	*	*
11)Nalhati	+	-	*	*	*	*	*
12)Labhpur	+	-	*	*		*	*
13)Dakshin-dhihi	+	-	*				
14)Juranpur	+	-					
15)Birat	+		?	?	*		
16)Amta							*
17)Jalpes							*
18)Dakshineswar							*
total number	15	14	12(1)	11(1)	12	10	13

Map-2. Distribution of caste groups



Map-3 The Jogadya temple

1) Main temple (*ardhamandap*), 2) Stepped designed tower (*ratna*),
3) Natmandir (dance hall), 4) Jogyasthan, 5) Ganesmund,
6) Bhogmandir, 7) Syamsundar-mandir, 8) Kachari-bari,
9) Guya-beti, 10) Eastern gate, 11) Western gate,
12) Kshireshwari-mandir,



Introduction

This thesis is about a village society and its relationship with a Hindu kingship in the light of the ritual system of an old temple, which includes service tenures granted by the local Maharaja and the ritual organization based on caste and kinship system in the village. The village; Kshiragram, is famous for being one of 51 sakta-pithas in Bengal, and the village temple (*jogadya-mandir*) was prosperous under the patronage of the Bardhaman Raj in the early eighteenth century.[1] The temple history is, however, far older than this as inferred from the mystical legends of the goddess Jogadya recited by the villagers. The ritual system of the temple is fundamentally designed for sacrifice. In the medieval period, it is said, there used to be human sacrifice in front of the image of the goddess, which is implied now by various ritual evidences remained in the ritual courses.

1. The village society and the temple

a) The village setting

The viiage society consists of eighteen castes. But, there are the three major population strenghs: a) the Ugra-Kshatriya, b) the Bagdi, and c) the Brahman. The Ugra-Kshatriya is dominant landholding caste as well as the largest population strengh in the village. They are the main patron of the Brahman and the other service castes. They claim the status of Kshatriya caste in the village, and are

1 "Kshiragram' is the literary name of the village. The popular name is "kshirgram', however, sometime it is called "kshirgan' colloquially. In this thesis, I adopted the formal name; "kshiragram' to refer to the village.

called "*aguri*" colloquially.[2] The Bagdi who constitute the majority among the untouchable castes in Rarh area of Bengal, are the second largest population strength in the village. They provide agricultural labourers to the village landholders. In company with the other service castes, they also play an important role in the temple ritual. The village Brahmans are the third largest population strength. They engage themselves mainly in "jajman-purohit" relationship as household priests with the village Ugra-Kshatriyas. In this way, the village society has a caste organization which is woven by the so called "jajmani" relationship of the dominant caste with the family priests and the relationship between the patron and other service castes.

The ritual system consisted of ritual posts and roles of various caste groups and it is organized in a hierarchical order with the Brahman at the top. Under their supervision, the calendarical rituals of the temple are performed in the village. The Brahmans are always referred to as the highest rank in the village and regarded as the authority of ritual practices. It is, however, the Bardhaman Raj who is regarded as the ultimate authority and source of honour to the temple ritual organization. The Raj family is the grantor of the temple service lands as well as the temple properties. Moreover, the Maharaja used to be a large zamindar who was in possession of many estates including the village before Independence. There are, therefore, four important parties included in the temple ritual system; 1) the dominant landholding caste, 2) the Brahman priests, 3) the other service castes, and 4) the Maharaja as the supreme authority. They are interdependent with one another through mutual and sometime asymmetrical relationships such as jajman - priest (*purohit*) [1)-2)], patron - service castes [1)-3)], kingship - temple ritual organization [3)-1), 2)], zamindar(landlord) - farmer (*raiyat*) [1)-3)], and so on.

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2 According to the ideal model of the caste system in Bengal, there is neither Kshatriya nor Vaisya [see, e. g. Sarma 1980]. Nevertheless, there are a few castes who claim the status of Kshatriya such as the Rajbangshi in north Bengal, the Tetuliya-Bagdi in south Bengal, and the Mahato in Puruliya. The Ugra-Kshatriya is originated from the agricultural caste[Oldham 1894:17]. They mainly inhabit in the district of Bardhaman as the raiyat or the jotdar in rural area. Most of the Ugra-Kshatriya in the villages enjoyed the dominance of the landholdings as well as the status of the upper castes. In this point, see Risley, H. H. [1981:12-13] See also, Sanjib Banchu, *Ugrakshatirya Pariciti*. 1986.

These relationships could be summarized in brief as kingship, caste, and ritual organization.

The particular focuses in the thesis are mainly based on the following three materials: the first is the ritual organization consisted of the ritual posts and roles of the Jogadya temple, th second is the system of th ritual duties and rights in the temple ritual and rituals in the localities, the third is the ritual processes, in which each caste and lineage is assigned with the various ritual roles throughout the year. They are inextricably interwoven with each other around the temple ritual courses. It is on these elements that the ritual system of the temple has been based for a long time and they still continue to sustain it. For the beginning, we shall overview the village society and the temple based on the historical accounts.

b) Historical background

During the late Mugal period, the family of the Bardhaman Raj became a zamindar in the village Baikunthapur, near the town of Bardhaman, under the Mugal empire. Soon they began rapid expansion over the present Bardhaman district, and then all over western Bengal. Around the time of the beginning of the British rule, they became the largest zamindar over Bengal in terms of their record of the revenues paid to the government. They exercised great authority over the kingdom in the sense of protection as well as oppression to the people.[3] The Raj family rebuilt the Jogadya temple of today in the village during the reign of the Maharaja Kiritchand(1702-1740). After that, they embarked on building many temples over the kingdom.

During the British period, the Maharaja's estate came under the Permanent Settlement(1793) and the Raj family became one of the most powerful zamindar under the British Government. It continued to be so until the Estate Acquisition

3 See, in particular, Maclane [1993: 69-95].

Act(1953), with two interruptions of direct control by the court of ward of the British government.

Under the Bengal Tenancy Act(1985), the rights of owner-cultivators are prescribed in relation with zamindars and it is the first administrative category which stipulates "*raiyat* (farmer)" in Bengal. This was a prerequisite in order to transfer the tenurial rights of the *raiyats* by the intermediator to the direct control under the government. Most of the households of the Ugra-Kshatriya and of the Brahmans in the village fall under this category. It is also important that the Bengal Tenancy Act provided the operation of the Survey and Settlement of each district over the Bengal Presidency, which is the first attempt to survey each plot of the estates systematically and settle the rents on the record book called "*khatiyan*" by the British administrators. The rights of tenants and agricultural labourers, who are mainly scheduled caste (untouchable) of today, were practically prescribed after Independence, especially under the Gram Panchayat administration.

In this way, the village society consists of the compound relations between the kingship and the village society, the dominant caste and the Brahman or the service castes, the zamindar and the farmers, and so on. This gets reflected particularly in the ritual course of the village temple which occupies the central core of the village society. The field-data collected from the village seems, therefore, suggestive to understand village society from the view point of an indigenous political formation. It is the religious aspect of kingship and its impact on village society that were overlooked so far under the influence of the theory on Hindu society by L. Dumont. In this sense, this monograph intends to reconsider the village social form from the view points of kingship, dominant caste, and other service castes in place of the view of village society which is based entirely on a religious dichotomy of pure and impure. It will be important at this stage to outline the recent tendency of anthropological studies on South Asia to place the topic for this dissertation clearly in perspective.

2. Anthropology and village study

a) anthropology in the 1980s

After the publication of *Homo Hierarchicus* (in 1970 in English) by L. Dumont, many anthropologists have tried to criticize the theory of his book. They also started paying attention to the theoretical issues regarding the Hinduism. Thus, the village studies of the social structure model became very few in number compared with in the 1950s. Many anthropologists shifted their attention from the village studies to the studies on the religion since 1980s. This fact, however, raises an important question: Does the decline of the village studies necessarily mean the worthlessness of studying in the village any more or does it simply mean the shortage of the elaborate perspective in the village studies ?

According to Fuller & Jonathan[1990], the issues regarding Hindu society discussed within the post-Dumontian framework as they refer to it, in the 1980s could be understood through the following three key figures; namely Brahman-priest, ascetic renouncer, and kingship. It could be added some other subjects, such as the rethinking on the concept of pure and impure by Sekine[1989], and the relationship between Hinduism and Hindu society which C. Fuller [1979] himself once discussed.

In the framework of L. Dumont, it is well known that the status of the Brahman is fundamentally based on his priestly occupation[1980:47]. Many scholars argue that this opinion is of doubtful acceptability. For example, J. Parry [1980] discussed the degenerated status of funeral priests or the Mahabrahmans at the cremation ground of Benares, the major sacred centre in north India. Because of their permanent role in death ritual and acceptance of *dan* (gift), they are treated "much like Untouchables". Fuller [1984] systematically looked into the matter of the Brahman-priests through the analysis of priest organization at the great centre of the Hindu pilgrimage, the Minaksi temple of Madurai. He presented enough persuasive ethnographical data which demonstrates the relative inferiority of priestly Brahmans to the non-priestly Brahmans.

It was well known that the Kulin-Brahman (*kaulinna-pratha-brahman*) in Bengal holding the titles such as "Mukherjee (*Mukho-upaddayya*)", "Banerjee (*Bandyo-upaddayya*)", and "Chatterjee (*Choto-upaddayya*)", never practiced priesthood, and their superiority was strengthened by the status as bride-taker to the other Brahmans[e.g. Risley 1900]. It is ironic that this wife-taking relationship provided a basis for the argument in the marriage alliance theory presented by L. Dumont[1983]. At any rate, as shown by the theoretical study by Quigley [1993:ch.4], it is now widely accepted that the Brahmans are not always priests in Hindu society and often the "ideal" Brahman is not seen as a priest [see, also Burghart 1990; Heestermen 1985; Van de Veer 1985].

With regard to ascetic renouncers, Dumont thought, as we know, that the renounced ascetics are only an exceptional element in the holistic society of the Hindu, and they correspond to the individuals in western society. This comparison is itself interesting, as this is certainly a comprehensive attempt to contrast Hindu society with western society after Max Weber. However, there is much evidence which suggests that they are never outside of Hindu society. Regarding this point, Van der Veer[1989] has observed through the analysis of the organization of priests and renouncers in the Rama temple, the famous pilgrim centre of Ayodya in Uttar Pradesh, that religious ascetics never exist independently, and earn their economic assistance from the temple management. Burghart [1983] also argues that there is no simple dichotomy between the Brahman householders and the renouncers. Similar studies abound[e.g. Barford 1985; Heesterman 1985; Parry 1982]. We have known of similar examples in the tradition of Bengal, particularly, among the Vaisnava and Muslim. Despite their idea of the egalitarian fraternity among castes, the disciples of Caitanya, a famous sect of Vaisnava (*baishnab*) in Bengal, have reproduced a caste ranking in their sect[Dimock 1966]. It is also well known that there are caste-like hierarchies in the rural Muslim societies[Sengupta 1973].

The ethnohistorical study such as Van der Veer's is actually effective in verifying the static descriptions based on the so-called "ethnographical present"

such as structural analysis represented by L. Dumont. However, the simple historical data clearly needs to be distinguished from the ethnohistorical synthesis; because it sometimes lead to the overemphasis of socio-economic factors and overlook the peculiar religious or ideological factors in the context of Hindu society. This problem is commonly shared not only in South Asian anthropology but also by many contemporary anthropologists. We have tried to avoid oversimplifying both ideological and economical factors since attempts of Levi-Strauss, Geertz, Sahlins, and so on. To quote Sahlins[1985], "there is no phenomenal ground-let alone any heuristic advantage- for considering history and structure as exclusive alternative".

In this respect, I shall mention two studies, namely *An anthropologist among the Historians.* by Cohn[1987] and *The Hollow* Crown. by Dirks[1987]. The former is based on the anthropological history or the reconstruction of history under the influence of E. Hobsbawm [1983] and it could lead to the field of Sabartan studies, which is an attempt to collaborate between anthropology and history on Indian societies. The latter is an attempt to synthesis of the structure and history as shown in the study by M. Sahlins [1985], which leads to an emerging field of colonial studies[see, also Appadurai 1981; Breckenridge & Van der Veer 1993; Inden 1986, 1990; Quigley 1993:ch. 1, etc]. In both cases, the approache leads inevitably to the rethinking of history during the colonial period and its impact on the indigenous political forms of pre-colonial India, that is the topic of Hindu kingship.

b) Study on kingship

During the 1980s, many anthropologists focussed their attention to the study on the Hindu kingship, especially to the studies regarding transformations during the British rule. It can be summarized as follows. At the beginning, the discussions chiefly concentrated on the criticism of the concept of encompassed power to the religious values by Dumont. In opposition to Dumont's opinion about a secularized king, the religious functions of the king were pointed out through examples such as the king's role as *jajman*(patron/*yajamana* Skt.) of priests, and

his chief position in sacrificial rituals[e.g. Derrett 1976; Fuller 1984:104-6; Heesterman 1995]. On the other hand, Biardeau [1989], taking to the tradition of French Sociology, considers the Brahman-Kshatriya relationship to be the core of the structure of the Hindu society. According to Biardeau, the king is the delegate of the gods and the goddesses on the earth and for the protection of the kingdom, he plays the role of *jajman* in the sacrificial rituals performed by the Brahman priests. Thus, he thinks the king occupies the primary position in the Hindu society.

These theoretical queries led to the revaluation of the theory of A.M.Hocart. Quigley [1993:ch.6] argues that it is an alternative to the theory of Dumont and tries to provide a new perspective to the caste society on the basis of a reinterpretation of Hocart's theory. This attempt further stimulates the reconstruction of another holistic view on Hindu society on behalf of Homo Hierarchicus[Tanabe 1993].

Hocart considers the caste system as a "sacrificial organization" in which "castes are merely families to whom various offices in the ritual are assigned by heredity" [1950:20]. It is worth noting that three aspects of his theory are connected with the subjects discussed in the thesis. First, Hocart suggests that the king or Kshatriya belongs to "the first caste" , because they command other castes to play definite roles in the rituals in performing sacrifices, which regenerate the cosmological order and then secure the prosperity of the community. It is worthwhile to mention here that a keen insight into cosmological analogy of the sacrifice to the world order and prosperity has been presented in the excellent book by Hubert & Mauss[1964]. The second important point in his theory is his emphasis on initiation for caste membership[ibid.:56]. It seems natural that if the caste system is designed for the sacrificial ritual, then initiation is indispensable, because the descent of caste is not a sufficient condition for each member to participate in the ritual. The third point is the idea of the reproduced structures of the kingship in miniature[ibid.:68], which is suggestive enough to recall the later studies on the local political structures[e.g. Cohn 1962; Stein

1980], and the images of the polities[e.g. Geertz 1980; Tambiah 1976]. Regarding this fluid political boundaries, Quigley argues: "caste results when kingship attempts to assert itself against kinship" [1993:129]. This viewpoint would be useful in explaining a relationship between the caste organization and the kingship. It is also connected with the concept: "imperial formation" presented by Inden[1990:ch.6], which enables us to see the indigenous polity of India as an incessant generative process.

Another point to the study on kingship concerns the changing circumstances around the kingship under the British rule. As Fuller [1977;1989] acutely pointed out, the self-sufficient village economy, which has so far been understood to refer to the jajmani system, is the result of the colonial administration. Most field workers overlooked the facts that the British government has taken over, especially through the revenue administrations, the position where the Hindu kingships reigned over hierarchical polity of the kingdoms in the medieval period. It is, therefore, misleading if anthropologists describe the villages of today as "traditional culture', because they see the villages which have transformed drastically during about 150 years of the British rule. Inden [1990] considers this matter systematically, and also describes the formation of the western views about the Indian society as a dynamic process of interaction between the west and the east. This forms broadly the argument of Orientalism presented by Asad[1973], Said[1978], and so on.

In contrast to the perspectives of Hindu kingship, some scholars pay attention to the problem of the kingship and the dominant caste in village society. Raheja's [1988a] contribution is most remarkable in this respect. She suggests that the jajmani relationship is based on the *dan* (gift) which conveys the inauspiciousness or religious sin from the dominant caste as *jajman* to the Brahman priests. It is well known that Dumont understands *jajmani* relations to be fundamentally encompassed by the concept of pure and impure[1980]. This enables us to reconsider village society as a central and peripheral system, which consists of the relationship of the dominant caste and the other service castes based on the

idea of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. This is important as an alternative to the view represented by Dumont in which the village society is hierarchically structured by an axis between the relation of the Brahman and the untouchables based on the idea of pure and impure.

c) Methodological problems

Notwithstanding these theoretical advancements anthropologists have failed to accumulate sufficient data concerning the organization of polities and their relationship to the village society from the fields of South Asia. There are indeed some reports on the interviews with the ex-Maharaja [Mayer 1981] and the splendid ritual at the former court of Raj[Ostor 1980]. However, during the long-continued British rule, the sovereignties were practically handed over to the British government and, moreover, the handing over was completed in post-Independence India with the abolition of the princely states in 1971. With the establishment of the modern administrations the indigenous organization of the kingship has been changed drastically in rural areas while the ritual systems of the villages basically controlled by the Brahman priests have remained relatively unchanged. It is under such circumstances that many anthropologists began their field research in the 1950s,

This matter has no doubt been appreciated by some anthropologists, but there were very few monographs about it primarily, because of the methodological problems. Since the 1980s, many anthropologists began paying attention to this aspect and they resorted mainly to two methods to tackle these problems. The first is the ethnohistorical approach in which the historical materials preserved in the British offices, such as, state archives and record rooms of the revenue office are used. The analyses of the historical documents of the colonial rule explain the changing processes of the local political systems at that time and also throw light on the former aspect of the Hindu kingship. It has already been mentioned in the studies by Appadurai [1981], Cohn[1987], Dirks [1987], and such others.

In the second approach the ritual data preserved in the Hindu sacred places

are used. These data consist mainly of the ritual systems traditionally followed in the old Hindu temples. Formerly, most of the famous temples were supported by the local kings which used to function as religious centres in the respective kingdoms. Despite post-Independence changes in their patronage from the kings, there still remains some old features kept within the ritual systems of these temples. Many anthropologists have tried to reconstruct an outline of the relationship between the kings and the priests from these ritual systems. The studies by Fuller[1984], Marglin[1985], van der Veer[1989], and so on, are good examples of this kind.

A noticeable trend in the decline of the village studies started in the 1980s as already discussed. Many anthropologists turned from the village studies to the studies on religious centres belonging to the so-called "great traditions". This tendency seems, however, to be confined to the description of the Hindu society, because these studies have mainly depended on a certain system, which was specifically formed within the religious traditions, and they often are quite apart from daily life of rural people. For example, Tanaka [1993] shows the case of the Brahman priests of the Nataraja temple in the famous sacred place; Chidambaram in South India where the priest community forms a self-contained society and they are not dependant either economically or ideologically on the patrons. This case is important to provide a counter evidence in opposition to the view that the ideal Brahman has to be free from the subordinative jajmani relations. It is, however, an exceptional case as the Nataraja temple mainly depends on the donations of the visiting worshippers and is separated from the village society. This case suggests that within a specified system, the superiority of Brahman can be maintained and at the same time, the data from such particular cases should be distinguished from the observations in village society.

It follows from what has been said that more detailed data on the Hindu kingship during the colonial rule and before that is necessary. In this respect, it still seems important to analyze the data in the village enough to overcome these methodological difficulties, to supplement the historical materials with

them, and to reconstruct from both. In this sense, this synthesis of historical studies and village studies is never a regression to the field works in the 1950s and a restriction of their objects exclusively into the religion either. It is through a productive combination with feasible varieties of materials that L. Dumont also could construct such an attractive perspective.

3. Methodology

a) Selection of the research village

Selecting a suitable sample village for the purpose of the present study was not an easy task due to the above mentioned methodological problems. It was after a pilot-survey of six villages of West Bengal that I was able to select the present village, viz., Kshiragram. The present village was selected considering the following four conditions; 1) a village which has an old temple managed by a well organized ritual system, 2) a village isolated from abundant modern transportation facilities thereby turning it into a tourist centre, 3) a village having an adequate population balance among the dominant landholding caste, the Brahman caste, and the unouchables, and 4) a village maintaining a close relationship between the village society and the landlord (zamindar). As already mentioned, the village Kshiragram seemed to satisfy all these conditions.

It was revealed after I started visiting the village that the village was related to the kingship of the Bardhaman Raj even before the Permanent Settlement in many respects, and the temple was under the direct control of the Maharaja till Independence. Furthermore, its relationship with the Maharaja continued in the various ritual processes. It seems, therefore, that it would enable us to understand how the Hindu kingship has been viewed by the villagers and to what extent it has influenced their social life. At the same time, it can provide counterevidences to Dumont's views of village society consisted of the Brahman-untouchable axis.

The pilot survey was done from October, 1992 to March, 1993. During the time, I visited more than one hundred villages in various geographical areas from the frontier villages of Sundarban to the villages on the foothills of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Purulia. Through this survey, I found that ritualistic traditions preserved from the pre-colonial Indian tradition have remained in more traditional forms in the areas where there used to be the strong political forms such as Rarh area and Koch Bihar rather than in frontier villages. I, then, started to visit the villages having temples of sakta-pithas one by one. The reasons were:

First, the cult of sakta is primarily connected with the rituals related to sacrifice. Second, in the rituals of Durgapuja, which were for the most part patronized by the Kshatriyas and the kings, the rituals for sacrifice are often concerned with the rituals of kingship. Third, the cult of sakta generally belongs to the older tradition than the cult of Vaisnava (*baishnab*), which is a popular religious sect centering around the town of Nabadwip in Bengal. The cult of Vaisnava is in contrast with the sakta cult and strictly prohibits any killing (*ahinsa*). Fourth, although there are many places where sacrifices are made in the *puja* rituals, the temples of the sakta cult seem to have well organized ritual systems containing of various caste groups in which sacrifices are made through out the year. Finally, it seemed logical to compare all the sakta-pithas for selecting the most suitable village for the present research purpose. A list of 51 sakta-pithas is given in Appendix-1.

b) Distribution of sakta-pithas of Bengal

According to a Bengali almanac (*panjika*): *P. M. Bagcir Dairektari Panjika*, there are eleven sakta-pithas in West Bengal out of fifty one all over the Indian subcontinent. There are, however, many local legends about those pithas. For example, there are twelve sakta-pithas as existing in West Bengal according to another almanac: *Benimadhab Siler Phul Panjika*. Besides, the West Bengal District

Gazetteers mentioned thirteen pithas. Of thirteen sakta-pithas, five are reported as existing in the Birbhum district, three in the Bardhaman district, two in Calcutta, one each in the Medinipur district, Hugli district, and Jalpaiguri district. According to a famous text, the *Mahapitahanirupana*, there are fifteen names of pitha which can be identified to the present pithas in West Bengal. Among them, seven pithas are the names added in the later version as discussed later. But, any classical texts never refer to the actual locations in the map, and just mention the names of the goddesses and their fallen limbs of the goddess Sati. Hence, it always remains certain possibilities to regard some local shrines as sakta-pitha in connection with the names of pithas on the texts by the local people. For example, the temple of the goddess Melai Candi, the town of Amta, the Howrah district, is regarded to be a sakta-pitha at which, according to the local people, the left shank of the goddess Sati fell. However, this pitha is usually thought to be the Jayanti temple in the village Baurbhag, Jayantiya pargana, Srihatt, Bangladesh.

Appendix-1 gives a list of the fifty one sakta-pithas commonly recognized in Bengal. It has been compiled from the almanac: *P.M.Bagcir Dairektari Panjika*. This list mentions most of the popular places recognized as sakta-pitha at present. Besides, all pithas of West Bengal mentioned in the various texts and almanacs are shown in Map-1. It is attached a constrative list of these sakta-pithas. The Kalighat temple in Calcutta is very famous, and it is undoubted that the temple of Kalighat has grown with the commercial development of the great city of Calcutta [Roy 1993]. Now, it becomes the great centre for the pilgrimages of the Hindu from all over the Indian subcontinent. But, the situations of the other places are very diverse.

For examples, the Dakshineshwar temple in north Calcutta and the Bakreshwar temple in Birbhum are well known as the pilgrim centres in Bengal. The former is very famous in connection with Sri Ramakrishna, the great mystic of Bengal, and the latter is also known for the hot-spring therapy. On the other hand, the Kalipitha, the Jaydurga temple near Katwa, the Kaliganj block, the Nadia district and the

Mangalcandi temple at Kogram, the Mangalkote block, the Bardhaman district are visited only by the neighboring villagers and visitors from outside are rare, though these places was prosperous during the medieval period. It is natural that the temples in places which have developed commercially or have other facilities including conveyance attract people from distant places.

There are a few pithas which are called by the same name and considered as the same sakta-pitha. For example, there are two Phullara temples regarded as a sakta-pitha, one is near the town Labhpur, at Labhpur Block in Birbhum District, and the other is at the village of Dakshindhihi, Nirolgram, at Ketugram Block in Bardhaman District. Both these temples have many devout worshippers in the neighboring areas and were under the patronage of the landlords before Independence. The temple at Kankalitala near Bolpur in Birbhum District is identified as a pitha with the name "*kanci*". It is interesting that there is another sakta-pitha with the name; Kancipuram near Madras in Tamilnadu, which is famous for as "southern Benares". Furthermore, the *Srimadan Gupter Dairektari Panjika* identifies the name of "*ujani (ujjayni)*" with the famous pilgrimage place of Ujjain, in the western part of Madhya Pradesh, where is famous for the great triennial Kumbha Mela festival. It is, however, usally identified with the village Kogram, Natunhat at Mangalkote Block in Bardhaman District. This place was called *ujani* in the medieval period, and mentioned in the various Bengali folk literatures called the *Mangalkahya*. In particular, this place is famous for as the native place of the heroin Behula in the *Manasamangal*.

c) Field work in the village

The village Khsiragram is located at the centre of the Kshiragram Gram Panchayat area, the eastern end of the Mangalkote block in the Bardhaman District. The whole village consists three mauzas, namely JL. No. 127, No. 128, and No. 129 in the Mangalkote Block. It takes about thirty minutes by bus from the local town of Katwa and two hours by bus from Bardhaman town. It takes more than six hours

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by bus to reach there from Bolpur. This includes the time required for changing buses three times and crossing the river Ajoy by boat.

The total area of the village is 1,268.03 hectares (3,133.26 acres) according to 1991 Census. The total irrigated lands amount to 817.86 hectares (2,020.90 acres), unirrigated lands amount to 461.34 hectares (1,139.96 acres), and the rest is 200.17 hectares (494.61 acres). There are three primary schools, one high school, and one rural health centre in the village. At the outskirt of the village, there is the Gram Panchayat office. Within the jurisdiction of the panchayat office there are seven villages.

The population of the village, according to 1991 Census, is 4263 (Male 2191, Female 2072) and the number of households is 729. A detailed discussion on population composition will be presented in the next chapter.

I began to go to the village Kshiragram from April, 1993. But it was after February, 1994 that I started to stay in the village continuously. Before staying inside the village, I discussed with many persons regarding local administration, parties, colleges and universities concerned with reference to the village and the area. My first stage of field work in the village continued till May, 1995. After that, I visited in October-November of 1995 and January-February of 1996.

d) Description of the thesis

A preliminary statement about the description style in this monograph seems important here. The book, *Writing Culture* by Clifford & Marcus [1986] calls attention to the possibility of misinterpretations caused by the description of ethnographies of status quo based on the so-called "ethnographical present". Regarding this village, the village temple has undergone drastic transformation five times in the past due to the following historical happenings: 1) the invasions by the Muslims, 2) the rebuilding of the temple by the Maharaja Kirtichand (around 1730), 3) the Maratha invasions(1742-1751), 4) the Survey and Settlement by the British government (1927/28), 5) the abolition of the Zamindar(1953).

After the criticisms on the approach of structuralism, many scholars began

to pay attention to various social conditions, which could lead to the structural changes. It is generally agreed now that the description of a certain social process depends on the framework of the interpretation by the researcher. In this monograph, I tried to trace back to the situation in the age of the Maharaja Kirtichand according to the subjects of this study. There is, however, always some doubt about the credibility in the detailed ritual processes, because many parts of them, let alone the social aspect, seem to have transformed already.

The data on the present situation were collected by the direct observations and interviews. The rest, which seem to have changed and in some cases even lost after Independence, were supplemented by the recollections of the villagers and by other historical materials.[4] In particular, the data on the land tenures of the village have been mainly collected from the land records of 1927/28 preserved in the District Settlement Record Room. As a result, the description of the thesis is basically based on the direct observations by the author, but it is also supplemented by other historical data enough to reconstruct the former state of the temple traced back to the 1920s.

e) Composition of the thesis

The composition of the thesis is as follows. In chapter-I, I have discussed two points: i) the religious aspect of the village and its temple, which characterizes the village as a sacred place, and ii) the social background of the village. In chapter-II, the ritual organization of the temple has been discussed through an examination of the temple properties and the service lands granted by the Maharaja. The ritual cycle of the temple has been examined in chapter-III with special emphasis on the rotation system of the Brahman-sebait. In chapter-IV, the process of Jogadyapuja, which is the biggest ritual occasion in the village in the

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4 In particular, I owed much to the efforts by the historians in the village. It would be fairly impossible to bring this thesis to the present stage without help of following three books: *Bardhaman: Itihas o Sanskriti.* Sri Jogeshwar Caudhuri, 'Kshiragramer Pracin Oitijjya.' in *Pashcimbanger Puja-Parban o Mela.* the late Sri Satya Narayan Mukhopadhyayya, *Saktimahapitha Rarer Kshiragram o Debi Jogadya.* Sri Sanat Kumar Cakrabartti. All these authors came from the village Kshiragram.

lunar month of Baishakh (April-May) has been analyzed, and the organization of the ritual posts has been discussed in this ritual course. In chapter-V, the annual ritual cycle of the village of past and present are examined, which are analytically divided into three parts, namely the rituals connected with the temple, the temple and the localities, and the localities. Chapter-VI concerns the Durgapuja mainly supported by the lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriyas, and gives a description of a typical rotation and succession system of the Duragapuja by each lineage. Chapter-VII is about Manasapuja, which is mainly supported by the village untouchables(scheduled castes). The Manasa temple in the village is granted to the Bagdi-priests by the Maharaja. But the rituals of the goddess Manasa are closely connected with the ritual organization of the Joagadya temple. Finally, a discussion on the influence of the kingship on the temple rituals and the village social life and the villagers' way of recognition have been attempted.

Chapter-I Outline of the village

1. Religious aspects

a) From manuscripts

The sample village is one of the 51 sakta-pithas scattered all over the Indian subcontinent. The word "*pitha*" means "altar", or "seat".[1] The pithas in the various places are supposed to be the dwelling places of the Devi; these are, therefore, also called "*devisthanas*".[2] The sakta-pithas have a special significance as sacred places associated with the cult of Sakta. There is a popular myth called "*daksha-jyogya*" regarding the origins of these pithas, which says that the differnt limbs of the goddess Sati (one of the incarnations of the goddess Durga) fell in them after she had been cut by the discus (*cakra*) of Vishnu; the worshippers of sakti have made them centres for worshipping the goddess. Every place believed to have part of Sati's body became the centres for the worship of the sakti-cult afterwards. The worhsip of the mother goddess, which is often under the infulence of the indeginious culture of the pre-Aryan races, is represented by the female principle called "sakti". The religious thought of an union between the female principle and the male principle, which is represented by the god Siva as a spouse deity accompanying the goddess, is mainly based on the religious texts of Tantrism.

In spite of popularity of the tradition of the sakta-pithas, the actual number and the location of each pitha are different accoding to various religious

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1 D.C.Sircar, *The Sakta Pithas* (Delhi;MLBD 1973[1948]), p.3. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford 1899), mentiones the word as seat, chair, and "names of various temples erected on the 51 spots where the limbs of Parvati fell after she had been cut to pieces by the discus of Vishnu". P.629.

2 S.G.Bagchi, *Eminent Indian Sakta Centres in Eastern India:An interdisiplinary study in the background of the pitha of Kalighata, Vakresvara and Kamakhya*(Calcutta;Punthi Pustak, 1980). pp.1-3.

texts.[3] Some of the early Tantric texts, such as, a Sahajiayana text entitled *Catuspithatantra*, and the famous tantric text in Bhuddhism, the *Hevajratantrak*, refer to four pithas. According to the *Kalika-purana*, which is a popular tantric text in the Durgapuja of Bengal, gives an account of seven pithas. Besides, the *Rudrayamala* mentions ten places as principal pithas, the *Jnanarnavatantra* lists eight important pithas, and the *Kularnavatantra* refer eighteen pithas. The *Kubjikatantra*, which is supposed to be a fairly early work discussed later, enumerates the forty-two places as *siddha-pithas*. We also find even a list of one hundred and eight places as pithas in the *Matya-purana*, although the number of the sakta-pithas accepted by the majority at present is fiftyone listed in the *Pithanirnaya*, or *Mahapithanirupana*.

According to Dr. D. C. Sircar, the *Mahapithanirupana* was composed about 1690-1720, which enlisted a number of places in the rural Bengal, and afterwards they became popular with the eminence of the tantric thought in eastern India.[4] He presumed the fifty-one pithas in the original text of the *Mahapithanirupana* is partially followed the *Kubjikatantra* which is reffering the name of forty-two as *siddha-pithas*. By the influence of another text the *Sivacarita*, the verses 48-55 of the *Mahapithanirupana* "were added to the original text at a later date".[5] These verses included eight names of sakta-pithas later modified; as Nalahati, Kalighata (Kalipitha), Vakresvara, Yasora, Attahas, Nandipura, Lanka, and Virata. These places are mostly famous sakta-pithas of Bengal at present. The names of these pithas correspond to the present place names, namely Nalhati, Bakreshwar, Attahas, and Nandipur in the Birbhum District, Kalipitha near Katwa in the Nadia District, and Yasora near Jessore in the Bangladesh of today. As shown in the evolution of the temple Kalighat in Calcutta, Sirkar thinks the Sakta-pithas in Bengal "rose to eminence in the medieval period and became a great rival of the

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3 The following discussion is mainly quoted from D. C. Sirkar, *The Sakta Pitha*. pp. 3-42.

4 D. C. Sircar, *The sakta Pitha*, p. 24.

5 D. C. Sircar, *The Sakta Pitha*, p. 39. See, also Niguranand, *Mahatiirth Ekannapither Sandhane*. 1978.

north western school" .[6] Furthermore, it is noteworthy that through the name of the village Kshiragram is not included in this additional list, it is mentioned in the original text of the *Kubjikatantra* as a *siddha-pitha.*

The oldest mentioning to the name of "Kshiragram" is supposed to trace back to the verses on the the manuscript; *Kubjikatantra* preserved in Asiatic Society, Calcutta as follows:

Kshiragramang Baidyanathang Janiyadbamalocane
Kamarupang Mahapithang Sarbhakamaphalapradam

But, besides in the *Kubjikatantra*, we also find references of the village and the goddess in the other Sanskrit literary compositions, such as, the *Niltantra*, the *Rudrayamalatantra*, the *Sivacarita*, the *Saktananda-tarangini*, and the *Mahapithanirupana.*[7] In the *Tantracuramani*, the the names of the goddess Jugadya and Kshirkanthak as the Bhairabha of the goddess have been mentioned. Also in the *Mangalkabya*, a series of medieval Bengali folk composition, viz., the *Candi-mangal* by Mukundram Cakrabartti, the *Candi-mangal* by Ramanand Jatir, the *Shri-dharma-mangal* by Ghanaram Cakrabartti, the *Dharma-mangal* by Ruparam Cakrabartti, the *Kalika-mangal* by Balaram Cakrabartti, the *Abhaya-mangal* by Ramdas Adak, the *Manasa-mangal* by Ketakadas Kshemanand, the *Dharma-mangal* by Manik Ganguli, and the *Annada-mangal* by Bharatcandra Ray Gunakar references of both the village and the goddess occur.

According to Prof. Satya Narayan Mukhopadhyaye the *Kubjikatantra*, discovered in Nepal by Dr. Haraprashad Shastri, was compiled in 6th century.[8] It is difficult to infer the actual year of the manuscript; but we have discussed already that among

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6 D.C. Sircar, *The Sakta Pitha*, p. 24. On the evolution of the temple Kalighat, and its relations with the development of the local trade and market, see Indrani Basu Roy, *Kalighat; Its Impact on Socio-Cultural Life of Hindus* (New Delhi;Gyan 1993).

7 Jageshwar Caudhuri, *Bardhaman;Itihas O Sanskriti*, Tritiya Khanda (Bengali). Calcutta: Pustak Bipani, 1994. pp. 80-91.

8 Satya Narayan Mukhopadhyaye, 'Kshiragramer Pracin Oitijjya', in *Pashcimbanger Puja-Parban O Mela*, Pancham Khandu (Bengali), ed. Ashok Mitra, Govt. West Bengal, 1961.

the popular names of fiftyone of sakta-pithas in the *Mahapithanirupana*, forty-two of the pithas are believed to have originated from the *Kubjikatantra* and eight have been added later in the other version by the influence of the *Sivacaritra*. In the original text of the *Mahapithanirupana*, the names of sakta-pithas corresponding to the present pithas in Bengal are Kalighat (Calcutta), Cattala (Candrasekhara in Cattagram), Vibhaṣa (Tamluk), and Kshiragram.[9] The other seven pithas of Bengal are mentioned after in the later text and the *Sivacaritra*, notwithstanding their present popularity in rural Bengal. It would be, therefore, misleading to make an assumption such as by Dr. S. G. Bagchi that Mukundaram mentioned nine pithas in his *Candi-mangal* even the names of "less known Bengal pithas" such as Kshiragram, "probably because he happened to be a man of place".[10] All what have been said make it clear that the name Kshiragram inherits at least the older tradition along with Kalighat and Tamluk and had aquired more popularity since the medieval period than the other seven names of the pithas, in spite of their present popularity in Bengal.

b) The history of the temple

The most popular epical poem of the goddess Jogadya is the *Jogadyabandana*, which tells that the goddess Sati's toe of right foot fell on to the place where the Jogadya temple (*Jogdya-mandir*) of today is located. The temple was rebuilt around 1730 under the rule of Kirticand, the Maharaja of Bardhman. According to Shri Jogeshwar Caudhuri, the construction of the temple Jogadya is the first main achievement in the temple making venture of the Maharaja Kirticand during his rule.[11] The succeeding monarches followed the zealous aspiration as shown in Appendix-2. In 1732, the Maharaja Kirticand built the temple of Gopeshwar Siva in

9 D. C. Sircar, *The Sakta Pitha*, pp. 35-7. It is very difficult to conclude that the names on manuscripts have to be related with the places which are believed currently as actual sakta pithas such as a case of Kanci (No. 28),

10 S. G. Bagchi, *Eminent Indian Sakta Centres...* p. 7.

11 Jogeshwar Caudhuri, *Bardhamna: Itihas O Sanskriti*. Dbitiya Khanda. pp. 213-4.

the village Baikunthapur, which is the original place of the Raj family in Bardhaman and the temple of Sarbamangala near the Raj palace in Bardhaman town. It is said, however, that the broken pieces of bricks of the former temple which are now buried beneath the present temple can be traced back to 11th or 12th century.[12]

The Jogadya temple building consists of the three main structures, viz., the stepped designed tower (*ratna*), the main temple (*ardhamandap*), and the dance hall (*natmandir*).[13] The altar of the goddess Jogadya is enshrined inside the tower, which has two stires of the steeple. The main temple, attached to the tower, is covered with a big dome and people worship the goddess inside the domed hall. The Natmandir (dance hall) is a stage built in wellhole style, which is designed for various ritual performances. In the temple ground, there are many other constructions around the temple as shown in Map-3. The Bhogmandir (kitchen for offerings) is the temple kitchen for every day service to the goddess and the worshippers. The Shyamsundar-mandir is the temple for the god Krishna and his spouse Radha. The Kachari-bari (office of the Raja) is the former office of the Maharaja for the temple management. The *Rajkachari* ("*daroga-babu*" in colloquial) used to supervise the temple rituals and members of the service castes from this office. The Kshideshwari-mandir is the temple for the god Ksirkantha (another name of the god Siva) as the spouse of the goddess Jogadya.

According to the myth regarding the goddess Jogadya (the *Joagadya-bandana*), when Hanuman saved Rama from the under ground in the country of Srilanka, he returned carrying the goddess Durga on his back and reached the village of Kshiragram.[14] In another version of the *Jogadya-bandana* of the famous poet Krittibas Ojha, it is described that Hanuman went around the whole world with the goddess on

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12 Principal, N. B. Sanyal, 'A Tale of a Pilgrimage.' *Kalna college magazine*, 1961. This article is reprinted in *Kshiragram Sri Jogadya-banipitha Patrika, Platinam Jayanti Sankhya*. 1969. pp. 41-46.

13 David J. McCutchion classified the Jogadya temple into the Stepped designs(M(1).) in the outside regular classification of late mediaeval temples of Bengal(1972). But, he didn't refer to the date of the temple's foundation.

14 *Jogadya-bandana*, Sri Bancharam Bidyaratna Bhattacaryya(compiled).

his back to find a suitable place to perform the *puja* and at last found the place where now the Jogadya temple is situated.[15] The same story is recorded also in the *Candi-mangal* (folk-literature of Bengal). It is interesting to note that a popular belief in the village is that the village Kshiragram is the centre of the world and Hanuman selected the village for its central position.

c) The village customs

As the inhabitants of the sakta-pithas (the abode of the goddess), the villagers observe certain special customs in addition to the usual ones followed by the Hindu in general. These particular customs mainly consist of various kinds of taboos observed during the Bengali lunar month of Baishakh, the period of the biggest ritual occasion of Jogadyapuja in the village. There were some other taboos observed permanently such as not allowing the castes, viz., Karmakar, Kumbhakar, Tody and the Muslim to stay in the village; not making brick houses (*pakka-bari*) more than second flour, and so on. It is very difficult to observe these customs in these days of modernization, transportation facilities, and cement houses in rural area. But, still in the lunar month of Baishakh, many villagers try to observe the special village customs prescribed for this period. The following is a list of these customs:[16]

1) Useing sandals and umbrellas when walking in the village,

2) Grinding turmeric with mortar,

3) Useing wooden spatulas in cooking of boiled rice,

4) Twisting wicks for lights,

5) Useing potter's wheel and the wringer for mustard oil,

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15 *Jogadya-bandana*, attributed to Sri Krittibas Ojha. This bandana is compiled by Sri Sanat Kumar Cakrabartty (resident in Kshiragram) from the manuscripts in the Punthi-Bibhag, Visva-Bharati University. See, Jogeshwar Caudhuri, *Bardhaman: Itihas o Sanskriti*, Dbitiya Khanda. pp. 443-448.

16 These customs are described on every *Jogadya-Bandana* or *Jogadya-akhyan*, though there are some defferences in the selection among them. In this respect, see also, Jogeshwar Caudhuri[1994: 80-91].

6) Threshing rice,

7) Tilling the agricultural fields with plough before the ritual of *Hal-nagal* (on the 29th day of Baishakh),

8) Staying of the pregnant women in the village,

9) Sexal intercourse between husband and wife in the village,

10) Holding any marriage ceremony before the ritual of *Lagna-utsab* (on the 15 day of Baishakh),

11) Living in rooms having doors on the north,

12) Writing with pens during the first five days, the last five days as well as on the fifteenth of Baishakh; and on the other days of Baishakh, writing in any colours of ink except in red ink,

Let us now consider these taboos in the light of the following three points: The first point to be discussed is that some items such as No. 1) are basically observed to show their respect for the goddess Jogadya. People usually do not enter inside the temple with shoes on or visit sacred places of the great tradition with open umbrella. The shoes would bring the pollution to the temple and it is only over the seat of the deity that umbrella is put up inside the temple. It may be assumed that the whole area of the village becomes a sacred place just like a temporary temple ground during the month of Baishakh. According to the analysis of M. Bloch, on the concept of perfectness and imperfectness embodied by a ritual idealogy, the emphasis is on the imperfectness as humanbody in contrast to perfectness and the uniqueness of the deity through ritual contexts[Bloch 1989]. It is, therefore, possible to assume that it enables to show their respects to the goddess through restriction to build brick house or to put umbrella on their heads in the village.

The second point to notice is the item connected with agricultural affairs such as No. 6) and No. 7). The month of Baishakh is the preliminary season for the cultivation of Aman rice. It is a vital question in rural area to decide the suitable time to start the step for cultivation in fields. It was, therefore, very

popular in rural Begnal to perform the various agricultural rituals such as Halakarshan and Bikalapan and to hand down the oral traditions regards with agricultural affairs such as Khanar-bachan, although most of all are outdated now. The ritual of Hal-nagal in the 29th of Baishakh includes the typical characters of this ritual for cultivation. The ritual of traction of plough and making a round the village admits to interpret as a ritual of fertility, which shall be discussed in detail in chapter-IV. The items of No. 7) also provide the distinctive time to start the use of their ploughs in the fields after this ritual. In the village, there is another occasion prescribed to start the cultivation which is the ritual of Makari-saptami on the seventh of the bright fortnight in the lunar month of Magh. The day after the ritual of Makari-saptami is the beginning day of traction of ploughs for the rice. Similar examples are numerous to show the connection between the religious customs and the agricultural affairs in the village. It could be supposed that these ritual taboos consisted an element of traditional culture regarding the agricultural affair of Bengal along with the oral traditions and the ritual systems, most of which are nowadays lost in rural area.

The third point to notice in this connection is the taboo prescribed on sexuality and reproduction on the human activity such as No. 8), No. 9), No. 10). It is very popular among the general Hindu to restrict on the suitable month and day for their marriage ceremony according to the ritaul almanac. The month of Phalgun, for example, is the suitable month for the marriage but Caitra is an unsuitable month.[17] Usually, it is the concept of auspicious (shubha) and inauspicious (ashubha) to decide the day for the marriage prescribed on the almanacs. In case of Kshiragram, the restriction on the day of marriage ceremony in the month of Bashakh is not only for this concept. The villagers say that the ritual of Jogadyapuja of Baishakh means the occasion of marriage of the goddess and so they never allow their marriage ceremony to occur before the goddess's marriage. It

17 It is a custom for the Hindu to have marrige ceremonies in the lunar month of Baishakh, Jyaistha, Asar, Sraban, Agrahayan, Magh, and Phalgun. It is inauspicious to have marriage ceremonies in the months of Bhadra, Aswin, Karttik, Paus, and Caitra.

could be assumed the people show their respect to the goddess through restriction on their observance of marriage ceremony.

There is another reason which might be more important. That is the ritaul of sexuality is always connected with the ritual of fertility. It goes without saying on the rich works by J.Frazer that the cultures in many countries prescribe restrictions on their sexuality with the rituals of agricultural affairs [Frazer 1911-36]. It is supposed that the control over sexuality would mean fertility of their field. In the agricultural societies it enables to obtain blessing of the goddess of crops, whom they try to propitiate through their practice of asceticism. This kind of the rituals are categorized generally as "imitative magic" in curtural anthropology. It can, therefore, be explained that the restriction on sexuality prescribed in items (No.9) and (No.10) correspond to the sexuality of the goddess in a symmetrical relationship. To use the technical terms of Levi=straus, it could be supposed that the reproduction in the human activity would bring the fertility metaphorically in the fields [Levi=straus 1967].

In this way, we can notice that these three points form not necessarily the separated factors but rather consist the metarhorical structure of meanings with regard to goddess, the human activity, and the agricultural affairs in the village.

d) The rituals in the village

On the altar inside the temple, there is only a small hole which is, according to the villagers, for connection with the under world, from where Hanuman rescued the goddess. The people worship the altar without any idol. Only in the month of Baishakh, they put the copper pot on the altar, which is filled up with water of a pond called "Kshirdighi". The stone image of the goddess Jogadya is usually kept at the bottom of the Kshirdighi on the western side of the village. It is only once in a year that the image is pulled up from the bottom of the pond and is placed on the special altar called "Utthan-mandir" so as to open the image to the public. Except on that day, the village people are prohibited from having acsess

to the stone image directly. There are many anecdotes telling how one fell sick or some even died as a result of their unintentional approach to the image under the water.

On the occasions of the temple rituals, many caste groups in the village occupy various posts in the ritual organization and play diverse roles. The Brahman-sebaits who are divided into nine families naturally play important roles. But, not only the Brahman-sebait, the general as well as the Scheduled Castes also have their own roles and posts in the temple ritauls severaly. The village dominant caste, the Ugra-Kshatriya (*Aguri*), is assigned the role to fetch a pot of water of Kshirdighi on his head to purify the altar and to perform the ritual dance called "*mayurnac*". A lineage of the Bagdi caste assumes the role as the holder of the Maharaja's flags in the processions in front of the altar and also the role for preparing the buffalo for sacrifice. The representation from the Dom caste is to offer a few drops of the blood from his own finger by slicing it in front of the image of the goddess before dawn of the final day of Baishakh. Besides, the Malakar, the Karmakar, and the Baiti also have definite roles in the ritual system. It would, therefore, be possible to suppose that the social structure as well as the ritual organization of the village is based on the system of the roles and the practices of the temple ritual.

Various castes of the village are organized centering the ritual system of the Jogadya temple, especially, the ritual for sacrifices forms the nucleus of the ritual system of the Jogadyapuja. On the last day of Baishakh, the buffalo sacrifice is held in front of the image of the goddess at the Utthan-mandir by the people of the Bagdi caste. In palmy days of the Maharaja, it is known that human sacrifices were performed every year in stead of buffalo sacrifice.

2. Social background

The population of the village, according to the 1991 Census, is 4,263

(Male=2,191, Female=2,072), and the number of households is 729. The population of the Scheduled Castes is 1,930 (Male=990, Female=940), and the Scheduled Tribe is 28 (Male=10, Female=18). All the Scheduled Tribes belong to the Santal community who migrated to the village mainly after Independence, and even have few roles in the temple ritual. In its geographical lay out, the village is constituted centering the Jogadya temple in order as is shown in Map-2. The Brahman caste occupies the central part of the village. The other castes occupy concentric circles around the temple, the Ugra-Kshatriya, the Goera, the other service castes, and the Bagdi caste located in this order. The Bauri, the Dom, and the Santal occupy the outer fringe of the village. Thus, the higher is the socio-ritual position of a group, the closer is its location to the temple.

Table-1 shows the population composition of the village with respect of caste. This indicates that the largest group in the village is the Ugra-Kshatriya. The second largest group is the Bagdi, and the third largest is the Brahman. The number of households of these three groups counts 480; that is 73 % of the village total. These caste groups have important social function too. The Ugra-Kshatriya possess relatively the greater part of the agricultural land of the village. They claim to be the Khsatriya of Bengal. They are divided into two sub-castes, namely "*jana-aguri*" and "*suta-aguri*", and also into 9 lineages which are distinguished by their titles: viz., Datta, Samant, Malla, Sani, Ray, Bara-ray, Josh, Chota-samant, and Caudhuri. Each lineage send a representative to participate in the temple ritual. Thus, the Ugra-Kshtriya can be considered as the dominant caste of the village with respect to population, landholdings, and ritual status.[18]

18 The term of "dominant caste" is definied first by M.N.Srinivas. See, Srinivas [1987].

Table-1. Caste Composition of Kshiragram

Caste/Sub-Caste	No. of Households	
Ugra-Kshatriya	217	
Jana Aguri		84
Suta Aguri		133
Bagdi	178	
Brahman	85	
Muci	71	
Gaera	50	
Bauri	11	
Tanti	7	
Dom	6	
Santal	6	
Sutradhar	4	
Kayastha	3	
Bene	3	
Hari	3	
Napit	3	
Baiti	3	
Maera	2	
Malakar	2	
Sunri	1	
total	655	

The Bagdi caste is the largest Scheduled Caste in Bardhaman District. They are mostly landless and mainly engaged in aguricultural labour in rural area. In the village Kshiragram, the Bagdi live for the most part in poverty. Neverthless, they have been entrusted with important ritual roles in the temple and are regarded of relatively higher rank in the caste hierarchy of the village than the other lower ranked castes, i.e., the Bauri and the Dom. They are divided into two endogamous sub-castes, namely, the Kusmethi-Bagdi and the Tetuliya-Bagdi.

The Brahman occupy in the highest rank of the village as elsewhere in the country. But, they also can be divided into three hierarchical groups as is generally observed in rural Bengal. The highest status group is called "Kulin-Brahman" (*kaulinna-pratha Brahman* in literary) who never serve as priests for other castes. The number of the Kulin-Brahman in the village is relatively less and they have only few role in the temple service. It is said, they migrated over here later. The second highest are the Brahman-sebait, who are mainly engaged in religious services for the Jogadya temple as well as the family priests of their *jajmans* of the Ugra-kshatriya caste.[19] They are divided into two lineages which have the titles of Cakrabartti and Bhattacaryya. The lineage of Cakrabartti is the priests (*pujari*), who serves varisous temple rituals. They are divided into nine families and share the daily shifts for the temple services through the year as will be discussed in chapter-III. Only a clan of the *Sabha-pandit* granted the title of Bhattacaryya by the Maharaja. The lineage of Bhattacaryya is the priests for the *Caidipathak*. They are divided into two families. The third highest is the so called "Varna-Brahman", who have the *jajman* of the Scheduled Caste in the village. They sometimes engage themselves in minor works for the Brahman-sebaits. They are called "Bhatraj-Brahman" in the village. Some priests come from other villages for the family ritual of the lower castes in the villlage. They perform the ritual services for their *jajmans* which they inherited for generations.

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19 In the village, they are called *sebait*, but usually the word of "*sebait*" means temple servants including the other service castes in Bengali. So that, the Brahman priests for the temple ritual services are refered as Brahman-sebai in this thesis.

These three caste groups have distinctive features, and are closely interdependent. The Brahman and the Ugra-Kshatriya are linked by the so called "jajmani relation" and the Bagdi serve for the landlords as agricultural labourers. The Ugra-Kshatriya is the main patoron for the village rituals. In particular, Durgapuja is the biggest function in the localities of the Ugra-Kshtriya. The Bagdi caste has their own priest (*deyasin*) for their temple of the goddess Manasa. Manasapuja is the biggest festival for the Bagdi caste.

Chapter-II Ritual Organization and Land System

In this chapter we shall discuss the categories of land holdings related to the ritual organization of the temple Jogadya. The first is the fixed properties attached to the temple Jogadya, which consist mainly of the sacred pond Kshirdighi and the sites for various institutions of the temple. Since the Settlement Record by the British Government, these lands were classified as lakheraj lands, which are exempted from taxation by the government. The second are cakran lands. The various castes and lineages coexisted of the ritual organization were granted the cakran lands by the Maharaja in return for the duties for the ritual services. They provide the main basis of the ritual organization. Cakran land is usually meant as the service land such as caukidari cakran, which is occupied in return for a duty for maintaining the order of the village. It is neither *debattar* in general meaning, nor *brahmattar*, despite the fact that it is occupied in return of religious services. The third is the allowance of the court of the Raj given to the temple servants. A discussion attempted here on them is expected to make clear how the foundation of the ritual organization formed through the land managements and the supervision by the court of the Raj of Bardhaman.

1. Lakheraj land and the temple institutions

The landlord properties attached to the temple institutions of the goddess Jogadya, according to the villagers, granted lands by the Maharaja of Bardhaman. There are some other lands for other religious institutions which belonged to the *pattanidar* (intermediary land holders) under the zamindari system of the British

period.[1] At the beginning, we shall adopt a historical material on the Cadastral Survey Record (C.S.Record) on the village, though it stocks with too vast amount of the land data to examine even if we limit our analysis into a village. By the means of the computer analysis, we shall make clear the structure of the land holdings regarding temples in the village at that time.

The purpose of the Survey and Settlement Operations in Bengal is prescribed under the Bengal Tenancy Act (1885) that: "extend the system of "records-of-rights" to all kinds of estate".[2] The settlement officer in each district recorded the mutual rights and liabilities of landlords and tenants in detail and connected them with the Plot No. (dag No.) in the mauza map in a fixed standard. The operation began in 1898 in Bengal. In the district of Bardhaman, it was practied from 1927 to 1934, and on the village Kshiragram, which consist of three mauzas, namely Ksharija Kshiragram, Kshiragram and Cak Ksharija Kshiragram (JL. No. 127, 128, and 129), the operation was done in 1927/8 under the supervision of the settlement officer, Sri K.A.L.Hill, I.C.S. Table-2 gives a list of the plots regarding the religious institutions such as the Jogadya temple and the Kideshwari temple in the village, which are picked up from the cadastral records of the mauzas. Most of the plots were recorded to be under the ownership of the Maharaja of Bardhaman. There are only a few plots which were under the other *pattanidar* and the *raiyat* (owner farmers) outside the village for religious use.

For the present, we shall draw attention to four points about the land holdings in the list. First, most of the lands regarding the rituals of the goddess Jogadya are registered under the ownership of the Maharaja of Bardhaman on the pages of the *khatiyans*. In the Settlement Record, it was as a matter of form that the rights of supreme ownership over the estates were endowed by the British

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1 In this respect, see, MacLane, *Land and local kingship in eighteenth-century Bengal.* 1993, pp. 287-305. See also, Ray, *Change in Bengal Agrarian Society, c. 1760-1850.* 1979

2 Government of Bengal, *Guide and Glossary to Survey and Settlement Records in Bengal.* 1971, p. 2.

Table-2 The lakheraj lands of the village religious institutions
(Abbreviations, see p.viii)

Institutions	Dag(JL)	TYP	Area	Upperowner	Underowner	Remarks
Jogyakundu	8(7)	BHT	0.11	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Utthan-mandir	10(7)	MDR	0.01	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Kshirdighi	22(7)	PKR	13.5	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Kshirdighi	29(7)	DNG	0.04	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Kshirdighi	9(7)	DNG	0.54	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Kshireshwari	7(9)	MDR	0.07	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Kshireshwari	9(9)	BHT	0.03	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Kshireshwari	18(9)	PTH	0.03	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Jogadya-mandir	20(9)	BST	0.1	B.S.	Maharaja	Kachari
Jogadya-mandir	24(9)	BST	0.88	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Jogadya-mandir	25(9)	MDR	0.03	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Jogadya-mandir	42(9)	BHT	0.02	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Jogadya-mandir	108(9)	DNG	0.05	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Graha-thakur-tala	6261(8)	BGN	0.03	B.S.	Maharaja	Kathali
Devi-bisram-sthan	4995(8)	DNG	0.15	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Jogadya-mandir	5611(8)	SHL	0.57	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Gajan-tala	45(9)	BST	0.08	B.S.	Maharaja	Public
Panchanan-tala	84(9)	BHT	0.02	B.S.	Maharaja	Bagdi
Sib-narayan	78(9)	BST	0.07	B.S.	Maharaja	Karmakar
Sib-narayan	79(9)	BST	0.1	B.S.	Maharaja	Bhattacarya
Manasa-mandir	83(9)	BHT	0.02	Maharaja	Bagdi	Debattar
Dharmaraj-tala	66(9)	BHT	0.01	Pattanidar	Bagdi	Debattar

Emperor (Barat Samrat) to the upper holder of the ownership. It is, however, the family of the Maharaja of Bardhaman who is still regarded by the villagers as the owner of the estates on these plots of the temple. On the pages of the *kshatiyans*, it may be interpreted that the family of the Maharaja is registered as the holder of the ownership to the usufructuaries of the plots which the villagers held. For example, the Rajkachari of the temple supervised the temple management in the name of the Maharaja before Independence. It is in the name of the Maharaja still now that the priests proclaim at the beginning of the ritual processes, which is called "*sankalpa*". This proclamation of the name of the Maharaja by the priests corresponds with the fact that the name of the Maharaja is placed as the prime *sebait* for the ritual in the Maharaja estates in each pages of the *khatiyans* on the Settlement Record. These things signifies that the name of the Maharaja is placed the ultimate position in the stratified organization of the temple service in the village, which included the nine clans of the Brahman-sebait and the other service castes serving to the temple. This will be discussed again in the later chapters.

Secondly, these lands were classified as "lakheraj land" simultaneously under the settlement operation by the British Government. Lakheraj land means simply the tax-exempted lands, when they were registered for the purpose of some public welfare and service in the Settlement office. According to the definitions in the Settlement Record, the lakheraj means "lands held revenue-free" and "sometime used loosely also for rent-free land". [3] As shown in Table, it is evident in this case that these plots were mostly held revenue-free by the Maharaja to the government.

On the other hand, the purpose of these plots as "lakheraj lands" on the *kshatiyans* was defined in the additional section as follows: "for the general use by all the Hindu". Actually, most of the lands of the temple institutions and the

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3 Government of Bengal, *Guide and Glossary to Survey and Settlement Records in Bengal*. 1917 (reprinted in 1938) p. 39. In the Bengal Tenancy Act, "lakheraj" is described as follows: "The word of lakheraj is often used loosely: in strictness, it indicates a freedom from liability to revenue, but it is constantly used as indicating exemption from liability to pay rent." Sen, 1925, p. 25.

altars of the goddess Jogadya are immovable estates. It is naturally that these are unrestricted to worship by all the Hindu in the village. The granted lands to the temple institutions are usually called Debattar in Bengal. The Debattar land was defined as "a form of rent-free tenure or revenue-free property" on the Settlement Record.[4] A grantor of Debattar land could be entitled to resume it. In other words, usually only a right of the tenure over the estate is granted from the upper owner without taxation.[5] On each page of the *khatiyan* of these plots, however, the purpose of the land was clearly prescribed for the general use by all the Hindu, although the holder of the upper-ownership was registered as the Maharaja. These lands were, therefore, declared more explicitly for these public interests. In this regard, it could be said that all the villagers had the usufructuaries without rent over the estates, which were assured and/or donated to them from the Maharaja. Many villagers regarded them as lands of rent-free tenure. As the public institution, the temples and other altars were ensured to be open to all the Hindu and allow them to worship inside without any restrictions on the basis of caste or sect for generations.

With some exceptions, these prescriptions assured them the exclusive rights of the families over the ritual services and/or the *de facto* occupancy rights over the plots. Only a family of the Bagdi caste who were prescribed as the servants of the deity Panchananthakur can perform the ritual service at the altar called *panchanan-tala*. In the same way, a family of Kathali-Brahman exclusively performed the ritual service to the deity Grahathakur. They are granted the lands by the Maharaja like as the Debattar land so far as they continue their ritual duties at each plot. Hence, it can be said that this relationship is equivalent to the relationship between a Bagdi priest and the Maharaja with respect to the Debattar land of the Manasa temple, or the relationship between a Brahman family and the

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4 Government of Bengal, *Guide and Glossary*. p. 32.

5 In this respect, the Bengal Tenancy Act prescribes it as follows: "Where there has been a rent-free grant by a proprietor there is a relationship of landlord and tenant between the grantor and the grantee." Sen, 1925, p. 24.

pattanidar of the Dharmaraj temple given in the lower lines of Table.

Third, only the temple organization would provide the restrictions on the access to the deities in the particular occasions according to the custom, which will be discussed in the later chapters. It is naturally for the villagers to observe the religious taboos as is often the case within such sacred places and even in an ordinary altar. There are the other customs of the village, such as the fishery in the pond of Kshirdighi and the gathering of the fruits from the trees of tamarind (*tetul-gach*) on the bank of the pond. It is the temple servant who is allowed to gather the fruits from the branches of the tamarind tree in season for sale. The profits thus accrued go to the temple management. If some villagers catch fish in the pond of Kshirdighi, the haul is shared by the temple and the fishers. They dedicate the caudal fin to the goddess at first and then divide the catch into two halves between the temple and the fishers. They keep aside these sale proceeds for the temple management. At this point we can appreciate the nature of land regarding the temple institution, which is not merely a public property opened to everyone but rather a temple estate controlled by the temple ritual organization.

In this way, the rights over the estates of the religious institutions are not prescribed in a simple interest regardless of donated lands from the owner to the villagers, which is unlike the ordinary transferred lands. They maintained the rights customarily, which are quite complicated relationships with the nominal ownership and the tenure which moreover include the rights for the usufruct by the temple servants. It could be ironically said that the Operation of the Settlement Record by the British Government at that time brought rather the more complicated records of the interests through their attempts to categorize these customary arrangements of the land managements according to the unified standards over Bengal.

Finally, it is interesting to see the composition of land types of the Jogadya temple in the list. There are no cultivated lands belonging to the temple which ordinarily constitute a large part of the donated lands. The size of pond

of Kshirdighi is the largest. The second largest is that allotted for the residence of the service castes. The pond of Kshirdighi is itself a sacred place and constitutes one of the temple institutions. The image of the goddess is laid down usually at the bottom of the pond and only on the last day of the lunar month of Baishakh the image is pulled up and enshrined in the Utthan-mandir. The villagers have many customs to restrict the entry and use of water of the pond. They also relate many stories of the evil consequences for violation of the associated taboos. This problem of the land type of the temple estate has been discussed in the next paragraph.

2. Cakran land and the ritual posts

a) The posts assigned by the Maharaja

The next subject to be discussed is the posts assigned in the temple rituals organized through duties in the temple services and the privileges to occupy the lands which were granted by the Maharaja without taxation. These lands are generally called "*Maharaja cakran sampatti*". *Cakran sampatti* means roughly the service land, which ensures the occupancy right of the land owened by the Maharaja in exchange for the duty to the temple services. The type of cakran include agricultural field, residential land, pond and waste land. The sizes of these plots are not fixed. The usufructuaries of the cakran lands are also varied - from a household to a large lineage in the village. It could be supposed that the succession rule over the inseparable rights over the lands from their duties for the temple services brought such diverse types of the land holdings, and simultaneously the division of succession of their lands, the share of the duties among the families, and the rotation of the services and privileges over the temple rituals, which shall be discussed in detail later.

First, we have prepared a list of the cakran lands, the occupiers, and their roles in the temple services. The list is made from the Settlement Records of

1927/28 of this area. In the village, it is said that before 1927/28 there were only a few families who occupied the cakran lands and performed the temple duties except for the names on the list. But, the names and the descriptions regarding the cakran lands exclusively depend on the Settlement Record.[6] The items on the list follows order as this: (a) concerned group for each duty, (b) duty for the temple service, (c) rule for the sharing duty at present. The descriptions on the topic (b) are directly translated from the records on each page of the Khatiyans in Bengali. The performances in the actual ritual context at the temple have complicated impressions. This is the direct quotation so as to enable us to compare with the analysis of the ritual processes discussed in the later chapters.

b) The duties of the occupiers of the cakran lands of the Maharaja

The *Vaidik-purohit* (the priest for the Vedic homa)

a) The two lineages having the title Bhattacaryya in the village Nigan

b) To perform the Vedic Homa on every last day of months

c) A priest according to the shift of the two families

The *Grahacarya* (the specialist for reading the ritual almanac)

a) The lineage having the title Bhattacaryya in the village Ramdaspur (the block Katwa)

b) Proclamation of the royal almanac of the new year in the ritual of *lagna-utsab*

c) The *Pradhan-purohit* perform the ritual on behalf of the *Grahacarya*

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6 It is known that there was a family of *bhandari* who had cakran lands and a residence beside the temple. They had migrated out of the village before 1920s. Because of this, their lands have not been recorded on the pages of khatiyan at the time of Settlement operation.

The Brahman-sebait (the priests for the temple services)

a) The nine lineages of the Brahman priests in the village Kshiragram having the titles Cakrabartty and Bhattacaryya

b) The daily service and the special rituals for the goddess Jogadya

c) The daily shift for the temple service among the nine families

The *Candi-pathak* (the reciter of the *Candi*, viz., the *Devimahatmya*)

a) The two lineages in the village Kshiragram having the title Bhattacaryya

b) The recitation of the *Candi* at the daily service and the special rituals

c) At the daily service the Brahman-sebaits perform their duty; and at the special rituals a priest of the families performs it

The priest for the Shyamsundar temple

a) The lineage in the village Kshiragram holding the title; Bhattacaryya

b) The daily service in the temple of Shyamsundar

c) A priest of the lineage performs it

The decorator for the daughter in *Makari-saptami*

a) The lineage of Babataran Bhattacaryya in the village Kshiragram

b) The decoration and the reception of foods for the daughter in *Makari-saptami*

c) Suspension

The Datta

a) The lineage of the Datta in the village Kshiragram

b) To perform *mayurnac*, to carry the *kshirkalas*, and *pradhakshin* in the *Hal-nagal* in the month of Baishakh

c) A family of the Datta continues the duty

The Samant

a) The lineage of the Samant in the village Kshiragram

b) *Mayurnac* in the month of Baishakh

c) A family of the Samant continues the duty

The Ghosh

a) The two lineages of the Ghosh, namely Raghunath Ghosh and Bhushan Candra Ghosh in the village Kshiragram

b) The preparation of the buffalos in the rituals of *nabami* in the month of Ashwin and the Mahapuja in Baishakh

c) A family of the Ghosh continues the duty

The *paik*

a) The lineage of the sub-caste of Kusmethi-Bagdi in the village Kshiragram

b) *Paik* (preparations for the rituals)

c) Two families of the lineage have a shifts to do their duty

The *patakadhari*

a) The lineage of the Kusmethi-Bagdi in the village Kshiragram

b) To draw water for ablution from bank of the Ganga in Katwa, the upholding the flags of the Maharaja, and to the guard the goats for sacrifice

c) Three families of the lineage continue the duty

The Dom

a) The lineage of the Dom in the village Kshiragram

b) The guard of the altar of the goddess, to make the bamboo basket in the Jogadyapuja, and to perform the sacrifice in the ritual of *merya-khata*

c) The family of the lineage continues the duty

The Malakar

a)The lineage of the Malakar in the village Kshiragram

b)The preparation of flowers for the daily service and arrangements for rituals in the temple

c)The family of the lineage continues the duty

The *jharudar*

a)The lineage of the Hari caste in the village Kshiragram

b)To sweep the temple ground

c)Three families of the lineage continue the duty

The *badyakar* (*dakhi*)

a)The lineage of the Baiti caste in the village Kshiragram

b)Playing drum

c)They have a shift among the three families of the lineage

The Muci

a)The lineage in the village Gobardanpur and Bhuichi

b)The leatherwork on the *madals*

c)The families of the lineage continue the duty

The Karmakar

a)The lineage of the title Pramanik in the village Nigan

b)Sacrifice on the western Bank of Kshirdighi for a zamindar

c)The family of the lineage continues the duty

Table-3 The cakran lands classified by the ritual posts

Post/Type	Caste	SHL	SNA	DO	BST	BHT	PKR	DBA	DNG	合計	%
Brahman-sebait	BHM	20.5	0.17		0.27	0.3			0.29	21.54	43.6
Candipathak	BHM	4.24								4.24	8.6
Vaidik-purohit	BHM	0.54								0.54	1.1
Shamsundar	BHM				0.17					0.17	0.3
Grahacarya	BHM				0.06					0.06	0.1
Makarisaptami	BHM					0.02				0.02	0.04
Datta	UKT				0.57		1.23	0.06		1.86	3.8
Samant	UKT				0.19					0.19	0.4
Ghosh	GEK				0.08					0.08	0.2
Mula-paik	BGD	5.81			0.24					6.05	12.2
Patakadhar	BGD	0.37			0.24	0.06				0.67	1.4
Badyakar	BIT	5.88			0.12					6	12.1
Malakar	MLK	2.6			0.1		0.8			3.5	7.1
Hari	HRI	1.24			1.39					2.63	5.3
Muci	MCI	0.86								0.86	1.7
Dom	DOM	0.15		0.06	0.27		0.35			0.83	1.7
Karmakar	BNE								0.15	0.15	0.3
Total		42.2	0.17	0.06	3.7	0.38	2.38	0.21	0.29	49.39	100

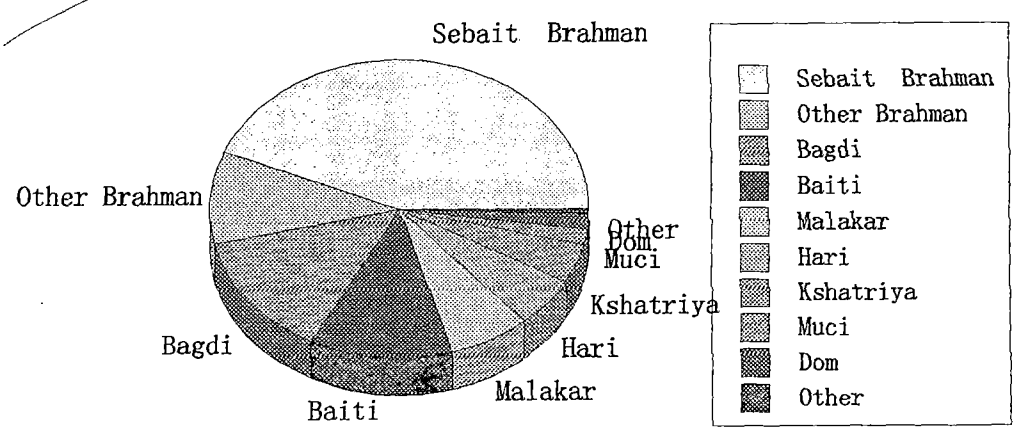


diagram-1 Pie chart of cakran lands by caste groups

c) The cakran lands granted to the posts outside the village

The priest to carry a basket

a) The lineage having the title Acaryya in the village Gobardanpur

b) Carrying a bamboo basket to the Jogadya temple on the day of the Mahapuja

c) The family continues the duty

d) The Bastta land of 0.06 acres

The preparation for the goats for sacrifices

a) The lineage having the title Ray in the village Jobagram

b) To dedicate the two goats for the goddess on the day of the Mahapuja

c) A family of the lineage continues the duty

d) The Shali land of 0.54 acres

The Baiti

a) The lineage of Baiti in the village Gobardanpur

b) The daily service at the goddess temple in Gabardanpur

c) A family of the lineage continues the duty

d) The Shali land of 3.91 acres and Do land of 0.35 acres

Table-3 on the following page shows the cakran lands classified by each ritual post held by the caste groups compiled from the list, and Pie chart-1 below it shows more distinctly the share of cakran lands classified by the caste groups.

d) The cakran lands and the ritual organization

Cakran land is a kind of service tenure in Bengal. In South India, it is well known as "*inam land*" to signify various kinds of service tenures. In Bengal, cakran land was usually assigned to village caukidaris by landlords, though most of them were abolished by the British government. Debattar and Brahmattar are common names of service lands for religious purpose. In the village, cakran lands, however, were allotted to various caste groups for religious purpose and these were deeply connected with the temple ritual organization. Because of this, most of the lands remain in the village as service tenure still today despite the repeated reforms of land administration after Independence as well as during the British period. We shall try to highlight four issues through this analysis regarding the cakran lands.

First, unlike the untouchable at the temple rituals in the South India, it is interesting that the lower castes of the village such as the Bagdi and the Dom were assigned important posts and engaged in the indispensable roles in the temple ritual. The untochables in South India were generally not allowed to enter inside the temple, and even deprived of the any kinds of the land holding in rural area. But, it is important to indicate that in Bengal a system of land holding involving the lower castes was established. These lands distribution legitimatised by the name of the Maharaja through his direct endowment to the temple servants.

The Brahman-sebait occupies the largest percentage of the holdings of the cakran lands classified by the ritual posts. It is rather easy to explain their high proportion because, first they are the largest group consisting of nine families: second, they exclusively perform the various kinds of *puja* in occasional rituals as well as daily services, and third, the family of the *Sabha-pandit* who is the supervisor of the ritual performances is included as the Brahman-sebait. But, in spite of their high proportion, it is rather interesting that they do not cover more than half of the total cakran lands of the temple: precisely, it is 43.6%.

The sum total of land holding by the so called "*chota lok*" in Bengal which is the caste groups of the Bagdi, the Dom, the Baiti, and the Hari, amounts to 34.4%. As contrasted with the case of the untochables in South India who were alienated from the temple ritual performances in most cases, it is important that here the relatively greater part of the ritual organization was dependent on such lower caste groups. It is supported also by the distribution of the sort of the cakran lands that the productive double-cropping lands are allotted for the Dom, and the irrigation ponds are distributed for the Dom and the Malakar. These facts indicate that the lower castes were not necessarily handicapped in relation to the upper castes in respect of distributed lands.

Second, under the form of the land use, it is interesting that the lands for residence are not included in the holdings by the families dwelling outside the village. They visit to the village only at every occasion of the temple ritual. Most of their lands consisted of cultivated lands of the village, and in practice were sublet to tenant farmers of the village. The land held by the village lower castes is always either the residential lands or the cultivated fields. It could be supposed from these facts that these sets of lands were intended to enable them to settle down in the village, to maintain their households, and to look after and perform each ritual duty of the temple organization by way of the providing them with the cost of both residence and earning.

The residential lands are comparatively less in the cakran lands allotted for the Brahman-sebait, though they consist of a large number of plots. Most of the Brahman-sebait have their own patron, that is called "*jajman*" in Bengali, and they could get the economical supports easily from their patrons. Besides, in many cases they even held own cultivated lands. Therefore, as contrasted with the lower castes, their settlement in the village was ordinary and easy. For many Brahman-sebait, the cakran land was not that essential for their living, but rather regarded as surplus for their production purposes. It seems that the distinction between the so-called jajmani-relationship between the priest (*kula-purohit*) and the patron (*jajman*) and the employment relationship between the other service

castes and their masters corresponds to the difference of allotment of the cakran lands between the lower castes and the Brahman-sebait.

Third, the right of occupancy for the cakran lands and the duties to the temple rituals are inseparably related. It is, therefore, both an obligation (*daittya*) and a privilege (*adhikary*) of each of the castes to engage in the services of the temple organization. It is regarded as the indispensable obligation for the beneficiaries of the cakran lands to render their services for the temple rituals. In other wards, each plot of the cakran lands is severally assigned, and the occupancies for the plots by the households of each caste groups automatically leads to the engagement for the ritual services classified by the caste statuses of the village. At the same time, the successions by the households of the specified caste groups legitimatize their exclusive engagement for the temple services. It is a matter of course that the attributions of their caste groups assure their engagement in the specified roles in the ritual organization, but what is more important is that the patrilineal groups, who succeeded the cakran lands of the Jogadya temple, inherited simultaneously the exclusive right for the engagement in each role of the temple services attached to the cakran lands. Because of the inseparable relation of the rights of occupancy and the obligations for ritual services, they could maintain the basis of the ritual organization of the temple, notwithstanding the division of succession to the cakran lands among the households of the large lineage. Before the Estate Aquitision Act, 1953, they were prohibited from the disposal of the lands at will under the supervision of the *Rajkachari*. Each post and role in the temple ritual are, therefore, sustained for generations, as each plot of the cakran lands remains in the village in spite of migration of any caste group outside the village. This ensures the legitimacy of their lineages to the posts in the temple services and prevents the migrated persons outside the village from newly entering in to the organization.

Finally, this combination of the obligations and the privileges through the mediation of the cakran lands seems to compose a basis of the total system of the ritual status and role which consists of the ritual organization of the Jogadya

temple. This also at the same time is associated with the ritual for the goddess as the central figure. Each household of the holders the cakran lands is indispensable as a part of the total division of labour in the ritual system on one hand and on the other their attributions as the caste groups resulted in a hierarchical structure of the ritual organization. These enable each household of economic independence that provides the basis of the temple organization through the units of their caste status and ritual role. They apparently have no association with pure and impure as their caste attribution itself. It is the omnipotent kingship that assures their legitimacy of the ritual positions by means of grant of cakran lands, and organizes a hierarchical system for management of the temple rituals.

3. Jogadya temple and the Land Settlement

This form of the temple management, the way of the maintenance of the households, and the influence through the granted properties by the kingship raised an interesting question in the fields of the land management at the time of the Land Settlement by the British government, which intended to standardize the land register all over Bengal. First, we shall examine the percentage of land classified by the land-type. The brief analysis on the land-type is shown in four Tables (Nos. 4-7) given here.

Table-4 gives a list of the land distribution classified by the type of the land use, which includes all kinds of land category, in the whole area of the mauza; Cauk Kharija Kshiragram (J. L. No. 129). Table-5 shows the distribution of the land types regarding to the cakran lands in the village for the temple service granted by the Maharaja to the villagers. Table-6 is the distribution of the land types of the lakheraj lands directly regarding to the Jogadya temple, which were actually endowed by the Maharaja. Through an examination of these Tables, it would be possible to point out a few facts on the land distribution concerning the temple.

Land Type	Acre	%
SHL	140.23	69.9
PKR	27.33	13.6
DO	11.39	5.7
SNA	7.28	3.6
BST	4.67	2.3
PKP	4.44	2.2
RST	1.97	1.0
BHT	1.92	1.0
DBA	0.83	0.4
BGN	0.29	0.1
DNG	0.15	0.07
MDR	0.1	0.05
DKN	0.09	0.04
GRK	0.06	0.03
Total	200.75	100

Table-4 Ratio of the Cauk Kharija Kshiragram classified by land type

Land type	Acre	%
PKR	13.5	82
BST	1.23	7.5
DNG	0.78	4.7
SHL	0.57	3.5
BHT	0.21	1.28
MDR	0.11	0.67
PTH	0.03	0.18
BGN	0.03	0.18
Total	16.46	100

Table-6 Ratio of lakheraj lands classified by the land type

Land Type	Acre	%
SHL	42.2	85.4
BST	3.7	7.5
PKR	2.38	4.8
BHT	0.38	0.8
DNG	0.29	0.6
DBA	0.21	0.4
SNA	0.17	0.3
DO	0.06	0.1
Total	49.39	100

Table-5 Ratio of cakran land classified by land type

Land Type	Acre	%
SHL	42.77	65.0
PKR	15.88	24.1
BST	4.93	7.5
DNG	1.07	1.6
BHT	0.59	0.9
DBA	0.21	0.3
SNA	0.17	0.3
MDR	0.11	0.2
DO	0.06	0.09
PTH	0.03	0.05
BGN	0.03	0.05
Total	65.85	100

Table-7 Ratio of sum of cakran land and lakheraj land classified by land type

First, the lakheraj lands directly belonging to the Jogadya temple mainly consist of the estates of the temple institutions, the sacred pond related to the temple, and the lands of the residences for the some temple servants, but are not included as the means of production such as the cultivated lands and the irrigation ponds. On the other hand, the cakran lands belonging to the various temple servants mainly consist of the cultivated lands and in addition the residential lands for the cultivators of these lands. It is noteworthy that the percentage of the cultivated lands and the residential lands in the cakran lands are very high as compared with the composition of land types in the whole area of the mauza; Cauk Ksharija Kshiragram. Besides, Table-7 shows the abstracted composition from the sum total of the lakheraj lands and the cakran lands, which means the total land regarding to the Jogadya temple rituals in the village. This table indicates that the composition of the land types of the total lands regarding the temple rituals seems to bear a resemblance to the general composition of the whole land of this mauza as shown in Table-4.

These suggest that the registered lands in the Settlement Record as Laksheraj land and/or cakran land composed of a part of the donated lands to the temple and the total area of the mauza; Cauk Ksharija Kshiragram (JL. No. 129) and Ksharija Kshiragram (JL. No. 127) constituted as a whole the composition of them. It is very difficult now to ascertain the details about the temple estate at one time but one could conjecture that the total land belonging to the Cauk Ksharija Kshiragram and the Ksharija Kshiragram were the donated land to the temple for a religious purpose. The name of the mauzas; Ksharija, which means "transferred", supports this conjecture that the estates named "Ksharija Kshiragram" were separated from the estate of Kshiragram at one time and made them to belong to the Jogadya temple.[7]

7 On the pages of the Settlement Records the ward "Kharija" is explained as follows, "Separated independent taluk" and is "one separated from the zamindari under Regulation VII of 1793 and now a separate estate. A tenant is kharija when the landlord allows him to pay rent separately from his co-sharers for which he has opened a separate account (dakhil)." Guide and Glossary to Survey and Settlement Records in Bengal, 1917 (reprinted in 1938). Govt. of Bengal.

Before the Settlement by the British government, the donated lands for the religious purpose were called as Debattar or Brahmattar in the case of Hindu estate, which means the land belonged to some deity and the Brahman. Under the Survey and Settlement Records in Bengal, the land categories such as lakheraj and cakran did not prescribe definitely the purpose of land use, such as a religious service. The Settlement officer put the land category; cakran, which means usually the service land for the village servants such as *gamastha* or cukidar in the Toshildhar system of the British local administration and was abolished at that time in contrast to the service lands regarding to the Jogadya temple included the lands for the Brahman castes.[8]

The British administrators registered the estates directly attached to the temple. They also registered the residential lands for some servants like the *Rajkachari* as lakheraj land under the ownership by the upper landholding of the Maharaja. And again they prescribed the purpose of them as public uses simultaneously. Under the regulation of Bengal Tenancy Act (1885), it was clarified and registered by the operation of the Survey and Settlement that the upper ownership of the land holding is the Maharaja in these estates and the lower ownerships are the tenants of various service castes of the temple, who were exempted of their rents in exchange of the duties for the various temple services. Although it is not sure that they understand well such customary arrangements concerned with the rights for the temple management and the member of the temple organization, it functioned for ages. At any rate, we can make sure that after the register in the Survey and Settlement of the land records, the customary interests regarding the temple were settled in written forms at the same time, and it included the right of the Maharaja as the upper landholder.

As already examined, the temple organization for the ritual services was closely connected with the interests of the villager regarding the whole estates.

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8 In this respect, see in particular, Palit, *Tension in Bengal Rural Society: Landlords, Planters and Colonial Rule, 1830-1860.* 1975, pp. 26-59. See, also, Sinha, The law of service tenures in Bengal. 1911, pp. 74-80.

After the abolition of the zamindari system by the Estate Acquisition Act (1953) and the Land Reform Act (1955), it brought a paradoxical result that most of the cakran lands for the temple services were newly imposed a tax, and at the same time registered as the private properties under the Revenue Settlement Records. In contrast, the lakheraj lands attached to the temple were registered as the tax-exempted land under the name of the Maharaja except for some cases. It is natural that this caused some confusion on the management of temple organization. For example, the residential land for the *Rajkachari* was originally attached to the ground of Jogadya temple and the office for the *Rajkachari* (*kachari-bari*) where the family of the *Rajkachari* have dwelled for generations. On the Settlement Records by the British government, the land type of this plot was included in the lakheraj lands under the name of ownership by the Maharaja, but it practically corresponded with the residential lands among the cakran lands for the temple servants as a matter of form. It occurred two times in the Land Settlements in 1920's and again around Independence.

4. The allowances given by the court of the Raj

Before abolition of the Zamindari system, the deb-seba-office, a office attached to the court of the Maharaja of Bardhaman, supervised directly some aspects of the temple management through the office of the *Rajkachari* next to the Jogaday temple. The word of "deb-seba-office" means the office of the service for the deity. They allotted the budget for the temples in the kingdom under the court of the Raj every year, and received reports about the settlement of accounts from the temples at the end of year. In the village of Kshiragram, all the service castes who were assigned cakran lands for the temple ritual were under the supervision of the *Rajkachari*. The *Rajkachari* usually controlled the temple organization for the ritual in the *kachari-bari* and at the same time he owed a duty to report about their temple management regularly to the deb-seba-office in the

town of Bardhaman. In the final three days of the lunar month of Baishakh, even from the deb-seba-office, the superintendent of the court of the Raj visited the village to attend the sacrifice of buffalo in front of the Utthan-mandir by deputy for the Maharaja once in a year. In addition to the cakran lands for the service castes, the court of the Raj sent the monthly allowance to the principal posts for the temple management and the ritual performance. The *Rajkachari* received it directly from the deb-seba-office and kept records. The heads of every service caste received it monthly in the office of *kachari-bari* in the village.

In this way, the court of the Raj in the town of Bardhaman supervised the temple ritual in the village through allotment of budget and the directions at times. The budget to the temple ritual was divided mainly into two parts, namely, the daily service and occasional dedications consisting of particularly goats and buffalos for sacrifice. The distribution and the content of these offerings shall be discussed in the next chapter in detail.

The following list shows the official posts in the temple which got the monthly allowances from the *Rajkachari* for their duties. The items on the list are (a) concerned group for each duty, (b) their assignment to the cakran lands, and (c) the contents of the main duties for the temple service. Table-8 given below shows the list of the allowances which were paid for each service groups in those days.

a) The posts who received the monthly allowance from the court of the Raj

The *Rajkachari* (the superintendent)

a) A head of a lineage having the title Mukhapadyaya in the village Kshiragram

b) No cakran land by the Maharaja

c) (i) Supervisor on the all kind of works in the Jogadya temple

(ii) Keeping accounts the budget for the temple management and the payment for the specified posts

(iii) Annual report to the court of the Raj

The *Sabha-pandit* (the overseer of the ritual processes)

a) A head of a lineage having the title Bhattacharyya in the village Kshiragram

b) Shared with the other Brahman-sebaits

c) (i) Supervisor on the ritual processes of the Jogadya temple

(ii) Assistant priest (*tantradarak*) in the major rituals in the temple

(iii) Declaration to begin the Jogadya puja in the name of the Maharaja

The *Pradhan-purohit* (the chief-priest)

a) A head of a lineage having the title Cakrabartty belonging to the lineage of Shat-bhai in the village Kshiragram

b) Shared with the other Brahman-sebaits

c) The representative of the Brahman-sebait

The *bhandari* (the store-keeper)

a) A head of a lineage

b) The residential land was allotted as the cakran land, which is now included in the temple estate

c) The preparation for the ritual utensils for the temple services

The *mula-paik* (the chief-servant)

a)Paiks belonging to a lineage of Kusmethi Bagdi holding the title Dhara in the village Kshiragram

b)Shared with the othe *paiks*.

c)The preparation for all the ritual services

The piyan

a)A family

b)No cakran land

c)Assistant works for the *Rajkachari*

The guardians of the pond

a)Lineages of the Kusmethi-Bagdi in the village

b)No cakran land

c)Regularly guard on the bank of Kshirdighi

The sacrificer

a)A lineage of the Karmakar in the village Nigon

b)The total area of cakran land is 0.15 acres.

c)The sacrifice in the temple rituals by the goddess sword

Post	Allowance	Number of persons
Rajkachari	50(17) taka (rised up)	1
Sabha-pandit	3.5 thaka	1
Pradhan-purohit	4 anna	1
Bhandari	4 anna	1
Mula-paik	2 anna	2
Piyan	2 taka	1
Guardian	25-30 taka (seasonaly)	1
Sacrificer	2.5 taka	1

Table-8 Allowance of the temple servants

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 same 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 "Bhattacaryya" . 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 *sebaits*, and the other

Table-9 Role assignment in the Jogadya temple

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

(*panchapradip*) 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-sebaits, 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

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

Annabhog

Atop-caul	2.5 *seer*
Milk	1.25 *seer*
Sweets (*misthi*)	10 *catak*
Ghi (clarified butter)	5 *catak*
Fish	5 *catak*

Service for visitors

Rice	8 *catak*

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 anouncing 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-sebaits

Let us how 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-sebaits 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 temple[3]

Lunar month	Heads of each lineage (the name of priests)
Baishakh	
1-8	Bholanath(Bhaktaprakash/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/Pramkumar/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(Bhaktaprakash/Kshirodmahan)

8-11 Shripati(Sanjib/Ciranjib)

12 Kailash(Ramnarayan Kalo/Naren)

13-18 Bholanath(Krishnadulal/Rajkumar/Pramkumar/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 Jaishta
Phalgun	same with Asar
Caitra	same with Jaishta

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 *sebaits* 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-sebaits 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 *sola-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 "Bhattacaryya" 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 *Jajurbed* (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 *Jajurbed* 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]	
Sabha-pandit	Chief priest
Brahman-sebait	Assistant priest, sacrificer of goat
Datta	Dedication of votive light and incense
	Preparation of offerings
Samant	Assistant for Datta, offerings
Mula-paik	Setting of *puja*, guardian of the sacrifice
Dom	Dedication of flaming torch
[Access to the image not allowed]	
Patakadhari	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-sebaits enshrine 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	*Path-naran*
M. P.	31/Baishakh	Mahapuja
J. 4	4/Jaisth	*Abhisekh*
A. 9	9/Asar	*Ugalpuja*
B. 10	10/Durgapuja	*Bijay-dasami*
P. 15	15/Paus	*Ugalpuja*
M. 7	7/Magh	*Makari-saptami*

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*.

Chapter-IV Jogadyapuja in the lunar month of Baishakh

Jogadyapuja is the biggest occasion among various village rituals during the whole year. It is not only important as a cultural function of the village but an essential occasion to integrate the village society through the ritual organization. In this regard it is important to look carefully into the ritual process including the ritual positions and roles of the caste groups and lineages of the village. The following discussions incorporate the ritual sequence from the last day of the lunar month of Caitra to the fourth day of Jaisth. A series of the rituals associated with the Jogadyapuja are observed for more than one month. With the sacrifice of buffalo on the last day of Baishakh, the people's excitement reaches its peak.

1. The Process of Jogadyapuja

a) The 31st of the lunar month of Caitra; *Kshirkalas*

Kshirkalas is the first step of the ritual of Jogadyapuja observed on the last day of the lunar month of Caitra. This is a ritual of invocation of the goddess through a copper pot (in the narrow sense "*kshirkalas*" means the pot itself) to the alter. Consequently, we can call it a *ghatastapan* to use a common phrase in Hindu ritual context. It involves all rituals observed on this day generally, though the pot is used continuously in the Jogadya temple over the whole month from this day till the 30th of the lunar month of Baishakh. The entire process of Jogadyapuja begins with this. In addition to it, the rituals at the end of every month, which is called Vedic *homa* (*Vaidik-hom*) and *guyadaks* as mentioned earlier, are held on

this day. The lunar month of Caitra is the last month of a year in the Bengali calendar. Thus, the Jogadyapuja of Baishakh is the first occasion of the Bengali new year in the village life as well as the biggest function ever.

The ritual starts on the ritual platform designed for Vedic *homa*, called Jogyakund, at the fair (*mela*) ground located in the western side of the village. On this occasion, the members to assemble around the alter are shown in Table-12. The *Sabha-pandit* functions as the assistant to the priest who supervises the organization of all the temple priests and other persons involved. The *Pradhan-purohit* (chief priest) performs the *puja* for the goddess's pot. A Malakar brings the goddess's pot and a basket with materials of the ritual in it. The positions assigned to caste groups are ranked and collectively organized for an execution of sacrifice. The table denonstrates the mutual relationships of them.

All members must observe a regular fast (*upas*) from morning and come after ablution from their respective houses. It is the period of strict abstinence and discipline for priests, the Malakar, and representatives of the lineages of Datta and Samant. Only they are allowed to ascend the platform of the altar (Jogyakund). The relationship of the *Pradhan-purohit* and the *Sabha-pandit* can be understood as the same relationship between a priest (*pujari*) who invokes deities through unglazed pot by the various steps of ritual procedure (*upacarapuja*) and a assistant priest (*tantradharak*) who supports him by incantation of sacred verses (*mantra*) in the ritual courses. Only the *Pradhan-purohit* can approach to the goddess's pot (*kshirkalas*) during the Jogadyapuja, just as only the priest (*pujari*) can approach the pot on the altar directly during the steps of *upacarapuja*.

The priest who belongs to "Bhattacharyya" lineage in the village Nigan can exclusively perform Vedic *homa* on the Jogyakund. None of the priests in Kshiragram can perform the rituals of the *homa* conforming with Vedic style (*Vaidik-hom*) since they know only the Tantric style (*tantra-hom*). For that reason, the Bardhaman Maharaja endowed cakran lands to the lineage of Bhattacaryya in the village Nigan, specifically for this duty. On the last day of every lunar month (*sankranti*), a priest of the lineage comes to the Jogadya temple in Kshiragram to perform the Vedic

Table-12 Role assignment in *Kshirkalas*

Post	Role
Sabha-pandit	Assistant for the priest
Vaidik-purohit	Priest for the Vedic *homa*
Pradhan-purohit	Chief priest of the rituals to the pot
Brahman-sebait	Priests
Malakar	Preparing for the goddess's pot and the basket
Ugra-Kshatriya	Representatives of the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriyas
Patakadhari	Holding of the Maharaja's flags
Badyakar	Drummers for the sacrifice
Paik	Guardians of the sacrifice
Karmakar	Sacrificer

homa and then bestows sacred marks (*phonta*) on foreheads of every member of the village Ugra-Kshatriya. The *homa* of Caitra on the platform of Jogyakund is also considered a part of the monthly rites on the days of *sankranti*.

On the platform of the Jagyakund, representatives of two lineages, namely Datta and Samant have to put on sacred threads (*paita*) around their body, which is usually considered as an exclusive possession of the Brahman. This thread is a little smaller in diameter than those used by ordinary Brahmans. However, just as with the Brahman while they wear it, they are prohibited from ploughing the agricultural fields and must keep their purity by observing regular abstinence. It used to be customary for the Ugra-Kshatriya in the village to put on the sacred thread even in their daily life. Because of strict associated practices, most of

them deviate from the custom now. Neverthless, they still wear it on the specified occasions such as, marriage ceremony of themselves or their children. This sacred thread is put on during all days of Jogadyapuja of Baishakh in particular around the bodies of the representatives of the Ugra-Kshatriya.

The Malakar is in charge of preparation for all utensils for the ritual and is the only rather low caste admitted to ascend the platform among the various service castes such as the Bagdi and the Dom. The *mulapaik* Bagdi prepares animals for sacrifice and they are admitted to stand in front of the image of the goddess at the bank of the pond during every *ugalpuja*. The *patakadhari* Bagdi holds the red flags of the Maharaja around the platform during the sacrifice. The villagers regard these flags as the symbol of the sovereign (*rajatba*) of Bardhaman. All of the members are organized under the supervision of the *Sabha-pandit*.

Now let us have a look at the sequence of the ritual at the Jogyakund. At first, a Malakar brings the goddess's copper pot filled with water of Kshirdighi to the altar. At the beginning of the ritual, all the members who are assigned duties of the ritual receive a garland from the Malakar and wears it around their neck. These garlands are made of special flowers (*togal-phul*) and mango leaves. The chief priest put the goddess's pot on a base which is made of earth and unhulled rices. After the ritual purification for himself, the priest utters the name of the patron of the ritual; that is the Maharaja of Bardhaman, and his *gotra* (legendary originator of the lineage) at the first ritual stage (that is called *sankalpa*). The present patron is Sri Pranay Cand Mahatab Tratri Barman, and his gotra is Kashyap. Then, the priest starts to perform a ritual invitation for the deity to the pot as the same context in ordinary *puja*. [1]

After that, the Bagdi *paiks* drag a male goat to the platform of altar after taking it for ablution to a pond. The priest purifies the goat and the sword for

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1 In Bengal, the basic system of *upacarapuja* is composed of the five steps to receive the deity, which is called *pancopacarapuja*. In the formal procedure of *upacarapuja*, priests adopt the sixteen steps for the reception, which is called *sadasopacarapuja*. In the *upacarapuja* for the goddess Jogadya, the chief priest naturally follows the latter formality.

sacrifice with sacred water on the platform. Then, the *paiks* bring it again in front of the platform. The Bagdi *paiks* hold the head and feet of the goat both in front and rear firmly. The Baiti beats a drum hard. The Karmakar holds the sword up. And, with the deep sound of a drum, the Karmakar decapitates the goat. The *paiks* bring the body of the goat to the altar immediately. Spouting blood from the beheaded body is poured on to a peeled banana on an earthen plate. They think this blooded banana means the goddess accepts the animal of sacrifice. In a moment, the *Vaidik-purohit* prepares a *homa* ritual on the fireplace of the platform, and lights a fire. He throws *ghi* (clarified butter) and mango leaves repeatedly into the fire with sacred verses. The ashes of *homa* are then gathered and mixed with melting *ghi*. In the end, the priest gives ash mark (*phonta*) on foreheads of all around in regular order standing on the platform.

The priest calls each title to offer *phonta* by turn. The first title is the Brahman-sebait and the other Brahmans. Next comes the Ugra-Kshatriya. The priest calls nine titles of the Ugra-Kshatriya lineages in the village. The order of the nine titles is Datta, Samant, Malla, Sani, Josh, Bara-Ray, Chota-Ray, Chota-Samant, and Caudhuri. The priest first offers *phonta* to the Datta and the Samant who are sitting on the platform. Then, addressing each title in this order, the priest gives phonta to the representatives of other lineages who are fasting for this ritual and waiting around the Jogyakund.

The other service castes such as the Malakar, the Bagdi *paiks* and the flag holders, the Baiti, and the Karmakar also receive *phontas*. As no Brahman priest can offer *phonta* directly by his hand to the foreheads of Untouchables (that is called usually "*chota-lok*" in Bengali), he gives the vessel to the Malakar on the platform to perform the job.

The Malakar is not included among Untouchables, but a so-called "*sudra*" in the village. Strictly speaking it belongs to one of the *naba-shakh* of Bengal.[2] After receiving the *phonta* from the priest and the vessel, the Malakar puts on

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2 *The tribes and Castes of Bengal.* H.H.Risley. Calcutta:1891.

phonta on the foreheads of the other service castes by his hand. This example of phonta-giving in the *homa* ritual makes it clear that the order of the *phonta* indicates the ritual status of caste groups itself.

The status groups are first divided here into two categories, namely phonta-giver and phonta-receiver, and secondly the order among the *phonta* receiver. The priest performs the *upacarapuja* and the *homa* ritual. But Vedic *homa* (*Vaidik-hom*) is monopolised by the *Vaidik-purohit* of the village Nigan. They give *phonta*s to the Ugra-Kshatriya exclusively. The Malakar gives it to the other service castes. The Ugra-Kshatriya and the other service castes are, therefore, precisely distinguished by the *phonta*-giver. In the *phonta*-giving order, the Datta is the highest rank and the Samant is the next among the Ugra-Kshatriya castes of the village. The other Ugra-Kshatriyas are also ranked in the order of *phonta*-giving. Among the other service castes, except for the Malakar all are separated from direct connection with the Brahman. They are mutually ranked in this *phonta*-giving by Malakar.

After the *homa*, a ritual procession of *kshirkalas* sets out from the Jogyakund to the Jogadya temple. The first day of Jogadyapuja as already stated, is in the last day of the lunar month of Caitra. This day is also the final day of Gajan (i.e., *carakpuja*, a folk ritual of rural Bengal observed in the end of the month of Caitra). Then, *sanyasins* of the Gajan ritual lead this procession dancing in particular step. This is called "*caraknac*" (dance of the ritual; *carak*). The Bagdi *paiks* hoist their flags and follow them. The Baiti plays his drum in the procession. The Karmakar lifts his bloody sword up in the line. The priest puts the goddess's pot on the head of the Datta's representative. The goddess's pot on the head of the Datta occupies the central position of the procession. The *Pradhan-purohit*, the Sabha-pandit, and the other Brahman-sebaits follow it. The representatives of the Ugra-Kshatriya, the other service castes and all other participants accompany them.

The procession proceeds along the southern side of the temple and enters through the eastern gate. The Datta lays the pot on a stone plinth (*ganesmund*), which is at the foot of the eastern wall of the temple. The goddess's pot on the

plinth is surrounded by the *Sabha-pandit*, the *Pradhan-purohit*, and other attendants. At this time, the *Sabha-pandit* proclaims to the assemblage the commencement of the Jogadyapuja of Baishakh; "The goddess's Mahapuja has come. Perform all rituals according to the custom, and accomplish the puja of Sri Devi Jogadya !" Then, the Datta brings the pot inside the temple and enshrines it on the goddess's throne (*sinmhasana*).

In the evening, that is "*sandhyasamay*" , a Brahman-sebait performs the *sandhyarati* as usual inside the temple. After that he pours water from the pot into another copper pot used in the temple. The representative of the Datta puts the empty pot on his head and brings it again to the Jogyakund with a Brahman-sebait and a Baiti beating a drum. On the platform of the Jagyakundu, the Brahman-sebait performs his *puja* to the pot. They return to the temple again soon. Then they start a ritual at a stone protuberant plinth (*guyabedi*) in the ground of the temple, that is *guyadak*. Finally, the pot filled with water of Kshirdighi is left on the throne inside the temple for a whole month of Baishakh. Brahman-sebaits perform the *puja* to the pot twice a day (i.e., *nityaseba* and *sandhyarati*). Except for the month of Baishakh, there is nothing else to symbolize the goddess on the altar inside the temple.

b) The 14th of Baishakh; *Jal-ana*

On the day before *Lagna-utsab* (the 15th of Baishakh), people go to the ablution bank of the Ganga river (that is the Hugli river) at the town of Katwa to draw sacred water of the Ganga. It is 22 km distance from the village to Katwa. People start from the village at midnight. In former days, people used to go to Katwa by foot, draw water, and return early in the next morning. Nowadays, they go by bus

but return on foot. However, it takes still a whole night to return from Katwa. Accordingly, they think it still a hard penance not suitable for everyone but the young people.

People carry a pole on their shoulder suspending small pots at both ends. During the course of their walking, they are forbidden to put down the pots filled with the sacred water of the Ganga on the ground even for a moment. They must walk all the way by foot and never take rest anywhere. If they need to urinate, they must put the pole on branches of tree and after urination they must take ablution in a pond before carrying it again on their shoulder. During the whole night, they all abstain from having food and water. Because of the severity of this practice, it is the younger generation at present that participates in it for the most part. Recently, the participants count around twenty. People say that women and the elderly generation, used to do this practice and the number of such devotees counted more than one hundred from the village. At that time, the date to draw the water of the Ganga was the 27th and the 30th of Baishakh as well as the 14th of Baishakh. The Ganga water brought by people is used for every ritual in the Jogadya temple during the lunar month of Baishakh by the temple priests.

c) The 15th of Baishakh; *Lagna-utsab*

The word "*lagna*" means "auspicious moment" or "time", and astrologically it means "the time of the sun's transition to a zodiacal sign". The ritual called *Lagna-utsab*, therefore, means the "ritual of time". An almanac of the Bengal lunar calendar for the new year (*panjika*) plays an important role in the ritual. After the *Lagna-utsab*, people start to read new calendars in their houses. In this manner, "time" is a main theme actually in this ritual.

On the day of *Lagna-utsab*, the Baitis play a pair of *madal*, which is a small cylindrical drum just like "*mridangam*", in the place of the ordinary drum of

sandhyarati in everyday use. The special artisans who belong to the Muci caste in the village Baici and the village Gobardanpur make the *madals* for this ritual once a year. The Maharaja of Bardhaman granted them cakran lands for this duty. A few days before *Lagna-utsab*, they come and stay at the small cottage called "*gajantala*" situated at the square in front of the Jogadya temple and sit on seats of *kejur* leaves.

It continues for two weeks from the day of *Lagna-utsab* to the thirtieth day of Baishakh to use the *madals* in the temple. After the sacrifice of buffalo in the Mahapuja, the Baitis bring the *madals* to the special place in the northwest fringe of the village (that is called *madal-bhanga-mathi*), and break the *madals* into pieces. During two weeks, the Baitis play them on particular occasions such as *sandhyarati* every evening in the Natmandir, and they have specified rhythms to play on them.

In the early morning of *Lagna-utsab*, a Baiti walks slowly from his residence to the temple playing a drum to inform the beginning of the ritual for all the villagers. That is called "*tengai*". A Baiti performs it five times during the day between the residence and the temple, and the last *tengai* in the afternoon is actually the beginning of *Lagna-utsab*. The Dom caste of the village makes a bamboo basket (*jhuri*) and dedicates it to the altar of the temple in the morning. Basket making once a year by the Dom caste is one of their duties. For this duty, they are also granted cakran lands by the Maharaja. The Brahman-sebaits put sweets (*manda*) and *murki* donated by the Maharaja in the basket. Bangles of conch-shell and *sindur* donated by the lineage of Sureswar Cakrabartti are also in it. They also offer a mango and its leaf, pigment of red (*aruta*), a floral wreath, turmeric, and a piece of silk sari with the basket on the altar. A piece of cloth (*gamca*) coated with turmeric covers them.

In the ground of the temple the representative of the Datta's lineage put a bamboo basket on his head. The other participants form a procession before and behind him. The composition of the procession is given in Table-13.

Table-13 Role assignment in *Lagna-utsab*

Post	Role
Samant	Sprinkling water for purification
Brahman-sebait (Sureswar Cakrabartti)	Scattering *atop-caul*
Datta	Carrying the bamboo basket
Malakar	Blowing conch-shell
Baiti	Playing *madal*
Patakadhari	Holding seven Maharaja's flags

The head of the line is the representative of Samant's lineage who sprinkles sacred water for purification with a twig of a mango tree from a small vessel (*kasakusi*) in his hand. The second is the scattering of *atop-caul* (sun dried rice) by the Brahman-sebait belonging to the lineage of Sureswar Cakrabartti. The third is the Datta's representative with the basket. Then, a Malakar moves blowing a conch-shell and Baitis play their *madals*. In the last of the line, seven *paiks* of the Bagdi caste holding seven red flags follow them. The procession goes round the main temple anti-clockwise seven times. That is called "*pradhakshin*". After this procession, all members sit inside the temple and there the new calendar is proclaimed by the *Grahacarya*.

In the interior of the main temple, the *Sabha-pandit*, the *Grahacarya*, and the Malakar take a seat in the line on the left side to the altar. The Brahman-sebait belonging to the lineage of Sureswar Cakrabartti, the Datta's representative, and the Samant's representative sit on the right hand side. Both

sides of members face one another. Baitis and *madal* makers wait in the Natmandir outside the main temple. The Bagdi *paiks* holding the raja's flags remain standing in the ground of the temple.

The sequence of the ritual inside the temple is as follows. The Brahman-sebait performs puja in an ordinary way to the goddess's pot on the altar. Then, the *Grahacarya* (astrologer) starts to chant sacred verses (*mantra*) holding an almanac of the new year calendar.

Grahacarya comes from the Brahman family in the village Jobagram and the village Nigan in order to proclaim a new calendar at the Jogadya temple once a year. For this duty, the Maharaja granted cakran lands for them. After announcement of the calendar by the Grahacarya, all members present bow down to the almanac in his hand three times. Then, the Grahacarya aannounces auspicious times written in the new calendar before the members inside the temple. He gives blessing also by holding the almanac up to the foreheads of each member. The Brahman-sebait then, gives *phontas* on each forehead with paste of turmeric which is an auspicious symbol. The Datta's representative puts the basket again on his head and comes out from the interior of the temple accompanying the other members. With the sound of *madals* playing, all members assemble at the *guyabedi* at the southwestern corner of the ground of the temple. Many villagers awaiting there surround them. The *Grahacarya* stands in front of *guyabedi* and proclaims again the auspicious time prescribed in the new year calendar twice in front of the villagers. This is the first occasion in a year to show the new calendar to the public. Formerly, the calendar was written on many pages of palm leaves, which was sent from the deb-seba-office of the court of Raj of Bardhaman every year. At the end of the ritual, the Grahacarya used to distribute the copies of this palm-leaf-almanac to the villagers. Every villager around him rushed to get the palm leaves.

Nowadays, the *Grahacarya* merely reads a new calendar at the *guabedi*. The Datta carries the basket on his head and the Brahman-sebait stands beside him. Then, the seven *paiks* of Bagdi, who are standing in a line opposite the Datta, dedicate their

flags to the basket on the head of the Datta with the particular rhythm of the *madal*. The new calendar which the *Grahacarya* proclaims before people is still sent from the deb-seba-office of the court of Raj in a printed almanac (the *Gupta Press Dairektari Panjika*). Every social function of the village was performed according to the times as being "auspicious" or "inauspicious" in the almanac of the court of Raj. After the popularization of the printed almanacs from Calcutta, anyone can get and refer to their ritual times readily. People in the village, however, keep up the old custom even now and before the day of *Lagna-utsab* they never open the almanacs of the new year. Although a new year actually begins on the first day of the lunar month of Baishakh (*Bangla-San*), people can read their new almanac only after the proclamation of the new year by the *Grahacarya* in the ritual of *Lagna-utsab* on the fifteenth of Baishakh.

d) The 27th of Baishakh; Jagyakundu

After the *homa* ritual of the first day of Jogadyapuja on the *sankranti* of Caitra, The *Vaidik-purohit* performs the *homa* for the second time on the 27th of Baishakh at the Jagyakundu. The participants at the altar are the same as before. The *Pradhan-purohit* invites the deity to the goddess's pot and burns fire on the altar. The representatives of the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya and the other participants receive *phonta* of *homa* on their foreheads in the same order. The difference from the previous *home* is that the bamboo-basket, which the Dom made and dedicated on the day of *Lagna-utsab* is offered in front of the altar. Besides, Baitis play the *madals* in the place of ordinary drum, and *tengai* from the Baiti's house to the Jogyakund walking across the village seven times on this day. Priviously, the Karmakar used to practice a sacrifice to a goat (*pantha-bali*) on this day also, which has gone into disuse since 1954.

In the procession from the Jagyakundu to the goddess's temple, the

representative of the Datta puts the basket on his head which is covered with a cloth (*gamca*). The representative of the Samant puts the pot this time on his head. The followers such as priests, Baitis, and Bagdis are the same as before. But, in place of the *sanyasins* dance of the Gajan, the holders of the Maharaja's flags of the Bagdi pay respects to the Maharaja with their flags by means of dedication to the basket on the Datta's head on their way. This is the same gesture with the dedication of the flags on the day of *Lagna-utsab*. The procession stops to dedicate the flags seven times at the specified places on the passage to the temple. Baitis play *madals* to the dedication of the flags by the Bagdis.

Thus we see that the ritual of the first day and of the 27th's have the common basic pattern in procession, *pradhakshin*, sacrifice, and *homa*. Although there are minor differences in details according to the ritual processes of each day. The course of the processions from the Jogyakundu to the temple is quite the same as on the first day. In the procession on this day, they perform "*mayurnac*" at the same place of the dedication of the flags on the first day.

When the procession arrives before the southern wall of the temple, the reciter of the *Ramayana* (*ramayanapath*) comes out from the temple and dedicates his small brush (*camar*) to the basket. At the foot of the southern wall, a small hole was made to look into the interior alter of the goddess's temple from outside wall. The Datta's representative and priests stand here at the back of the hole in the wall. Towards the basket on the Datta's head the Bagdis dedicate the flags again, and the reciter of the *Ramayana* chants a stanza of the *Ramayana*. At night, he begins the recitation of the *Ramayana* at the Natmandir of the temple. The *Ramayana* which he sings with his performances and drum playing is a famous version translated by Krittibas Ojha into Bengali. During the four evenings from the 27th to the 30th of Baishakh, he recites the part of killing of Mohiraban of the *Ramayana* at the Natmandir.

After the chanting by the reciter of the *Ramayana*, the procession enters through the eastern gate of the temple and proceeds to the foot of the eastern wall of the temple *(ganesmund)*. The Samant lays the pot down there. It is the second

assembly (*paramarsa*) by the members of the *homa* at the Jagyakundu. The *Sabha-pandit* proclaims here; "The Mahapuja has come. Let's prepare carefully and receive visitors warmly!" The Datta pours water of the pot into another copper pot on the throne inside the temple.

After the *sandhyarati* of the temple, the reciter of the *Ramayana* reads the *Jogadyabandana* at first and then begins to recite the *Ramayana* of Krittibas at the Natmandir. Incense, lights, and the sword for animal sacrifice are offered before him. He recites the *Ramayana* here with the gesture and the accompaniment of a drum. It takes approximately three hours every night.

After the recitation, every member of the *homa* ritual gather again in front of the Jagyakundu. They make a procession again and perform "*mayurnac*" on the way to the temple. Many villagers think it as a part of entertainment for the goddess's amusement. This performance, however, has no relation with on appearance of the peacock, and is really not so entertaining. Rather its gestures are a little odd and eccentric. The Datta puts on a crown made of *sara* grass and stands up in front of the flag holders of the Bagdis. According to the *madals* playing by Baitis and the dedication of the flags by the Bagdis, he raises his right hand and foot sideways, and shakes them in a strange way. Then, he makes an upright position again, and then raises the left hand and foot in the same manner. He repeats this movement three times, and finally jumps up straight.

In this strange dance, some villagers found vestiges of an ancient custom of human sacrifice. They think the movements of Datta indicate the manners of a man struggling from a stake of sacrifice. Datta performs *mayurnac* from the 27th to the last day of the Mahapuja four times on various occasions. They accordingly suppose that a man to be sacrificed was captured and detained on a stake for four days and taken about on the street of the village every night in the same course of "*mayurnac*". The field covered with bushes on the northwestern side of the village is called "*nara-bandha-math*" still now. On the last day of Baishakh, the sacrifice used to take place, which is substituted by a buffalo now.

e) The 28th of Baishakh; *Ramayanpath*

On the 28th of Baishakh, the recitation of the *Ramayana* is from the chapter about the killing of the demon Raban and return of Rama. From the 28th to the 30th the offering of boiled rice (*annabhog*) to the goddess at noon time is stopped and *luci* (baked wheat) is offered instead of rice. It is called *pukkannabhog*. People think that the goddess observes her fast during the three days. As the killing of Raban is in recitation for these days, out of the grief of the goddess from the death of the demon Raban, she abstains from eating rice for three days. After the *Ramayanpath*, the same members as on the 27th perform *mayurnac* from the Jogyakund to the temple again.

f) The 29th of Baishakh; *Pat-naran*

The ritual of *Pat-naran* is one of the *ugalpujas* for pulling up the image of the goddess Jogadya from a pond of Kshirdighi on the western side of the village, and a preliminary ritual for the Mahapuja on the day after as well. The Mahapuja is the only occasion for ordinary people of the village to see the image of the goddess Jogadya. In this *Pat-naran*, the Brahman-sebaits cleanse the image, worship, and sink it again to the bottom of the pond to a near by place to facilitate pulling out of it easily on the day of the Mahapuja.

In the morning of the *Pat-naran*, a lineage member of Cakrabartti of the village Narashana brings offerings to the temple like, rice, mango, fish, a kind of herb (*gulanca*), leaves of *bel*, and a garland of *joba* flowers. At noon, a lineage member of Ray dedicates a male goat for sacrifice and straw rope for the ritual. They get the offering at the temple after the *annabhog* at noon time at the Bhogmandir but never attend the ritual in the night. In the same way as on the

28th of Baishakh, the recitation of the *Ramayana* is performed after *sandhyarati* at the Natmandir. The villagers offer huge piles of rice and vegetables on the floor of the Natmandir. These offerings are dedicated for Lakshman, because the recitation of the *Ramayanapath* falls on the chapter of Lakshaman's banquet in this night.

After the recitation, the *paiks* of the Bagdi call the names of the main three lineages in a loud voice from the eastern stage of the temple. He calls: "*Datta mahasayera go, Samant mahasayera go, Domera go.*" This addressing for three titles is called "*ahaban*" , and this ritual calling is performed over again in the other *ugalpujas*. The member for the *pat-naran* is the representative of the Datta, the Samant, and the other lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya, the lineage of the Dom, the *paik* and guardians of the Bagdi (*mulapaik*), the *Sabha-pandit*, and the other Brahman-sebaits. After the calling by the Bagdi, they assemble at the bank of the pond.

The image of the goddess is pulled out by the new straw ropes and then rests on the platform by the side of the bank. At this time, the Datta, the Samant, and the Brahman-sebaits pull the ropes of the image. The Bagdi *paiks* hold the Raja's flags, but after the installation of the image, they must leave the place of worship. Only the Bagdi guardians of the sacrifice (*mula-paik*) can remain there. The Brahman-sebaits cleanse it and purify it with turmeric and refined butter (*ghi*) and dedicate a floral garland. The *Sabha-pandit* himself worships it. The Datta and the Samant keep incenses and votive lights ready for the image. The Dom burns the straw torch (it is called "*mahagni*") during the ritual. It takes nearly one hour to finish all the ritual. In the end, the goats dedicated by the Ray and the Maharaja are sacrificed in front of the image and then they sink the image again at the bottom of the pond attached with ropes. The Datta subsequently performs *mayurnac* for the third time from the Jogyakund to the temple.

g) The 30th of Baishakh; *Hal-nagal*

On the day before the Mahapuja on the last day of Baishakh, the *homa* ritual on the Jogyakund was performed for the third time and a pair of bulls cultivate fields of the village with a traction plough. This ritual ploughing makes a round of the village. A Baiti plays his drum as *tengai*, the notification of the ritual for villagers nine times from the early morning to the afternoon. Then, the members of the *homa* ritual assemble around the Jogyakund and practice the ritual in the same manner as before. They sacrifice a male goat in the name of Maharaja, and the priests give ashes of *homa* to the foreheads of all the members in order. On this day, a Bagdi *paik* belonging to the lineage Khara newly joins the members and gets a garland around his neck. He has the duty to drive the bulls with a traction plough. There is a goddess's pot on the altar instead of the Dom's basket as on the 27th.

After the *homa*, they form a procession to the temple again. The Datta's representative carries the pot on his head and puts it down on the *ganesmund* of the temple. Here, the *Sabha-pandit* proclaims the Mahapuja on the next day for the third time. Then the Datta brings the pot inside the temple and pours water into the pot enshrined on the altar. The foregoing is nearly the same procedure as the privious two, but this time the ritual ploughing is performed after that. The Datta returns once to his house to take rest for a while. At this time, a Bagdi *paik* carries him on his shoulders and two *paiks* flying Maharaja's flags lead him to the house. A Baiti playing his *madal* also follows them. In the courtyard of the Datta's house, many villagers already gathered. While he takes rest, his family serve *cola* beans soaked in water, fruits, and vegetables to everyone gathered there as *prasad*. He puts on a piece of cloth (*gamca*) coated with turmeric and returns to the temple on the *paik*'s shoulder again.

In the temple ground, a crowd of people is massing. A Brahman-sebait belonging to the lineage of Kailas Cakrabartti brings the pot enshrined in the temple to the veranda of the Bhogmandir. He stands on the veranda and sprinkles water from the

pot with a twig of mango over the crowd of people. Then he hands over the pot to the Datta when he returns to the temple. The Datta himself starts to sprinkle water over the villagers. It causes an excited atmosphere among the people in the temple ground. Soon, a pair of bulls arrive at the temple led by a few Bagdi *paiks* belonging to the lineage Khara. The bulls have a relationship of maternal uncle and cousin. Most of the Bagdi boys are drunk with local liquor. They begin to go around the building of the temple seven times (*pradhakshin*). The drummers beat their drums vigorously, and follow them. Finally, they set out from the temple through the eastern gate.

The Datta sprinkling water from the pot takes the lead of the procession. The Bagdis holding the flags and the Baitis with drums follow him. A few Bagdi boys drag a pair of bulls. The head of the Bagdi lineage Khara brings a plough on his shoulders. This plough is made of a *bel* tree. In the morning, the Karmakar in the village Jabagram made it in the ground of the temple from a specified *bel* tree. The procession marches along the main street of the village to the Utthanmandir. In front of the house of the Ugra-Kshatriya belonging to the lineage of Josh, the pair of bulls stand and wait on the street. The Brahman-sebait puts garlands around the bulls' necks and *sindur* on their foreheads. The Bagdi head of Khara lineage joins the plough to the bulls. Then, the ritual tillage starts from this place.

They go round the exterior of the village tracing the old road of which some parts are now turned into agricultural fields. Map-4 shows the route of the procession of *Hal-nagal*. The procession goes ahead to the Utthanmandir and passes by it to the locality of Moarpukur-para, and Das-para. On both sides of the street, village women are dressed in fine sari and make a deep bow on the ground (*pranam*) to the procession. The Datta sprinkles the sacred water from the goddess's pot over them. The Bagdi *paiks* come later with the bulls and the plough. They think, even barren women could become pregnant by purification and blessing of the sacred water.

In each locality (*para*) of the village people rush to the plough and the

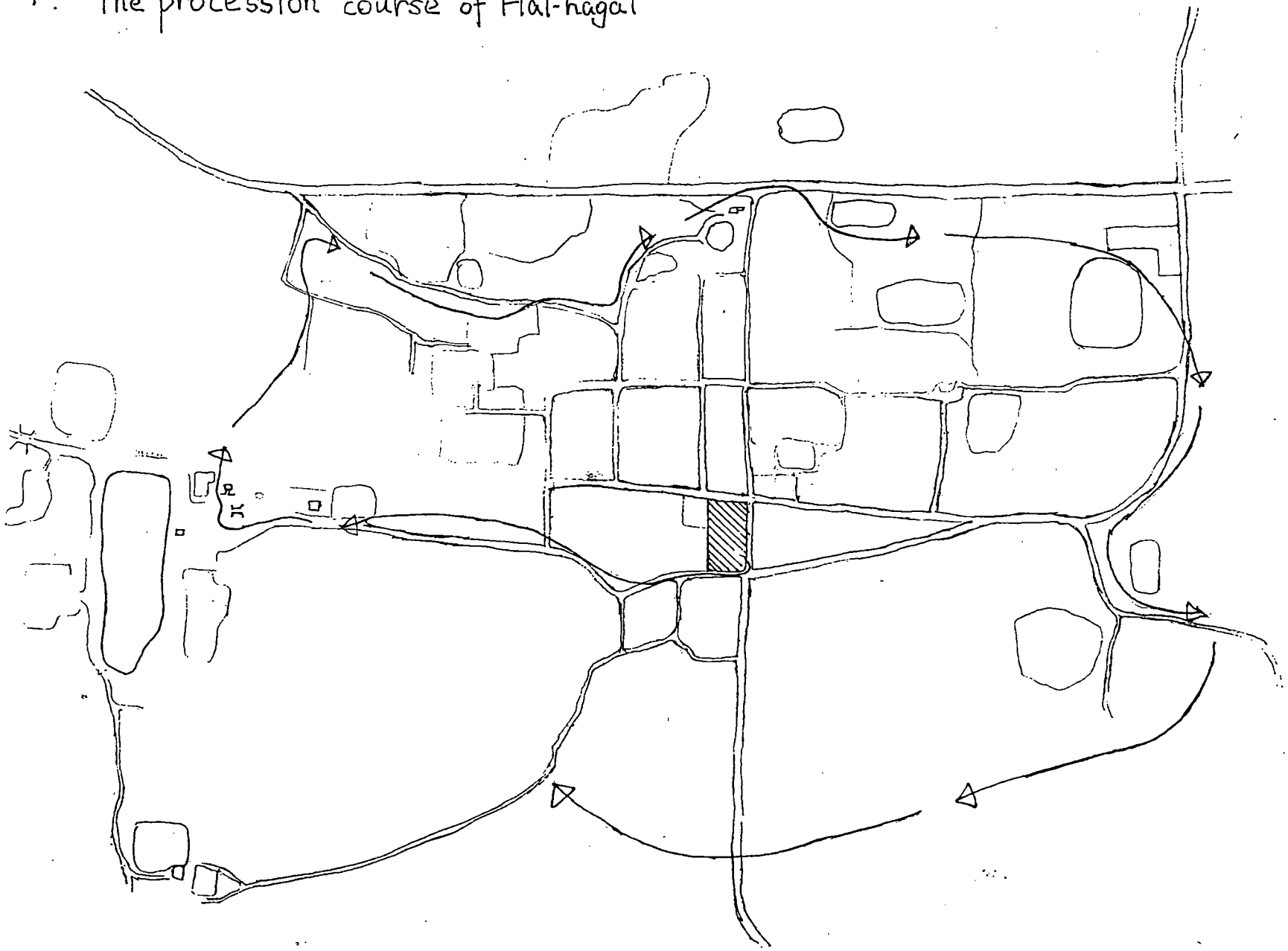
bulls to touch them. Women make a deep bow to the bulls on the village street. The route of the pot and the plough is a round of the village perimeter. Therefore, it includes many localities of the lower castes such as the Bagdi, the Muci, and the Dom as shown in Map-4. From the house of Josh-para, they pass by Utthanmandir, and Moarpukur-para, and then, the western and the eastern part of Das-para. The residents of them are mostly the Muci. Then, they pass by the side of a pond of Pudipshaher next to Manasa-para, Durgodighi of the Bagal-para and the locality of Purba-para. Most of them are the Kusmethi Bagdi's residence. On the street of Purba-para, the Bagdi *paiks* fly their flags in the presence of the representatives of the families of Bandyopadyay and Raycaudhuri from the village Ittya. They used to be present on the back of elephants sent from the court of Raj at the town of Bardhaman. A lineage of Caudhuri in the village Ittya sends the offerings to the Bhogmandir.

The procession goes ahead to the southern part of the village and cut through Dakshin-para, where Tetuliya Bagdi and Dom live. Finally, they reach the side of the south road from Datta-para to Damacpukur-para. This place is called "*halchuti-para*". This means the place to unfasten the plough from the bulls. The procession ends here. The Datta throws the pot to the ground. Then, he picks it up again and gives it back to the storekeeper of the temple. Formerly it was the duty of a lineage of bhandari. In the evening, the recitation of the *Ramayana* is performed at the Natmandir. It is the final day of the *Ramayanapath*.

h) The 31st of Baishakh; the Mahapuja of the goddess Jogadya

Before dawn on the last day (*sankranti*) of Baishakh, the Mahapuja of the goddess Jogadya starts at the bank of the Kshirdighi pond and it continues for 24 hours until dawn on the next day. The specified castes who are assigned the duty of pulling out the stone image from the pond. There are seven times to pull out

Map-4. The procession course of Hal-nagal



the image (*ugalpuja*) on the bank in a year. But except on the day of the Mahapuja, ordinary people are not allowed to approach the image of Jogadya. It is the only occasion in a year for showing the image to the village people.

Before the dawn in the *sankranti*, A Baiti beats a drum to inform the beginning of ritual to the villagers and the Bagdi *paiks* make a calling (*ahaban*) to assemble for the representatives of the Datta, Samant, and Dom in the same way as in the other *ugalpujas*. But actually this time all the representatives of the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya in the village gather in front of the Bhogmandir of the temple. In the poor light before daybreak, they light ten torches which are made by the Hari caste of the village the day before. It is up to the representatives of the six lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya, namely the Datta, the Samant, the Malla, the Sani, the Josh, and the Caudhuri to hold flaming torches in their hands. The beat of drums by Baitis get the people in the ground of the temple and drives them to a level of excitement. In this course of excitement, the *Pradhan-purohit* stands on the stage of the Bhogmandir, purifies them by sacred water, and refers to the titles of each Ugra-Kshatriya. The order of calling the titles is the same as on the occasion of *homa* ritual at the Jogyakund. That is Datta, Samant, Malla, Sani, Ray, Josh, Chota Ray, Chota Samant, and Caudhuri. Then, he gives red marks of *sindur* (*phonta*) to their foreheads after calling each of the titles in this order. Then, everyone set out for the bank of Kshirdighi where the image of the goddess is pulled out. The Karmakar holds the sword, the Bagdi *paiks* fly the flags and drag goats, and the Dom carries torches of straw. They follow the Ugra-Kshatriya and the Brahman-sebaits in a procession The spectacle filled with excitement is like a scene of soldiers marching to battle through the fields.

Those who haul the ropes of the cart on, which the image of the goddess is placed, are the Datta, the Samant, the Malla, the Sani, the Josh, and the Caudhuri. At the bank of the Kshirdighi pond, the image on the cart rests for a while. During this time, a Brahman-sebait sacrifices the goats by his hand, which the Datta and the Caudhuri dedicated to the goddess. The Datta brings the decapitated

bodies of the goats and pours the blood onto the image with sugar, sweets, and a little wine. The Brahman-sebaits sit on the cart with the image. The cart is pulled by the people until it reaches the Utthanmandir. The image is then enshrined on the altar of the Utthanmandir and unveiled to everyone. The Villagers rush to the altar of the Utthanmandir to worship the goddess and women in particular dedicate bangles of iron, conch-shell, and *sindur*. The Utthanmandir is situated at a little higher place, and someone brings water of the pond and pours it onto a slope of earth in front of the Utthanmandir. Those who are deeply touched throw themselves on the slippery, muddy slope. This way of showing devotion to the goddess is called "*satyarangada*" .

In the mean time, the Brahman-sebaits, the Datta, and the Bagdi *paiks* perform *mayurnac* from the Jogyakund to the temple again. Then, they perform *domacoyarikhera* in the temple.

i) *Domacoyarikhera*

Domacoyarikhera is a ritual to perform the mock fight between the Brahman and the Dom and between the Brahman and the Ugra-Kshatriya. At the daybreak of the Mahapuja, the Brahman-sebait, the Datta, the Samant, and the Dom assemble in the ground of the temple. At first, the Dom's representative raises bamboo sticks in both hands over the *Pradhan-purohit*'s head standing in front of the door of the main temple. The Purohit receives them by iron swords crossed in both hands. In the playing of *madal*, the Dom raises his sticks again and again over the Purohit. They step back from the door to the eastern gate of the temple in the course of the fight and return to the front of the door again. Finally, the Dom puts down his sticks on the ground and makes a deep bow (*pranam*) to the foot of the Brahman standing in front of the door of the temple. It is supposed by villagers that the *pranam* means the surrender of the fighter Dom to the Brahman. Then the Dom brings

out a fan made of *khejur* leaf by himself and uses it for the Brahman. In this way, they take rest for a while.

Next is the Datta and the Brahman. He holds bamboo sticks in both hands and get ready to attack the Brahman. In the slow rhythm of a madal, he slashes over the Brahman's head, and the Brahman receives it by his iron sword. Finally, Brahman defeats the Datta. He puts down the sticks and makes a deep bow to the Brahman's foot. The third is the Samant and the Brahman. He performs mock fight with the Brahman in the same way, and makes a deep bow to the Brahman. In the end, the Dom serves his fans for the Datta and the Samant also. It is said that this mock fight is portraying the battle between the Brahman and the Dom, and the Brahman and the Ugra-Kshatriya.

j) The Mahapuja

In the early afternoon, the sacrifice of buffalo is carried out at the front space of the Utthanmandir. A crowd of people surrounds it and holds their breath. It is on this day that the excitement of people reaches the peak in a series of rituals in the lunar month of Baishakh.

In the temple of Jogadya, the *Vaidik-purohit* practices the vedic *homa* in the morning. This is one of the rituals appointed at the last day of every month (*sankranti*). Immediately after the burning *homa* inside the main temple, the Brahman-sebait and the Karmakar begin the sacrifice of goats in the ground. This time, the goats are offered by a family of the *Rajkachari*, a family of *Sabha-pandit*, a zamindar of the village in previous times known as "Bajarer Mallik" and a lineage of the Baiti. Usually a few personal offers follow subsequently but the first four are always in this order.

The Bagdis of *mulapaik* family lead a buffalo to the temple. They enter into the ground of the temple with the buffalo where crowds of people are waiting. The Baitis begin playing their drums furiously and the *paiks* start to jump up and down

and into a dance with the beat of drums. At the same time, the other Bagdi *paik* brings a basket of ritual utensils on his head. He goes ahead to the Utthanmandir in advance attended by the flags of the Maharaja with the drums playing. In the meantime, the *paiks* use their sticks on the buffalo to lead it around the main temple. The head in this procession is the Maharaja's buffalo, and the next is the other buffalos of personal offerings. The third is the goddess's pot on a *paik*'s head. The fourth is the Maharaja's sword for the buffalo sacrifice held up by the Karmakar who executes the sacrifice. Then the Baitis play their drums and the Bagdi *paiks* fly the Maharaja's flags. This procession goes around the main temple seven times and people surrounding the courtyard of the temple reach a state of excitement.

After the procession, they assemble in front of the Bhogmandir. The *Pradhan-purohit* stands on the stage, and gives red marks of *sindur* on their foreheads one by one. At one time, the *Pradhan-purohit* gives *sindur* on the foreheads of the member of the Ugra-Kshatriya. The lower castes receive *sindur* from the hand of the Malakar. After the procession, the buffalo is made to enter the temple and receives a mark of *sindur* on its forehead. Then, they start for the Utthanmandir.

In the place around the Utthanmandir, crowds of people are waiting for the arrival of the buffalo. At the muddy ground in front of the Utthanmandir, the uproarious youth are gathering. Most of them are the lower castes such as the Bagdi and the Muci. They are half-naked and put on merely a waistcloth (*gamca*). On a muddy place like morass, they are found shoving and pushing one another. From the morning, many devotees bring and sprinkle a pot of water from Kshirdighi over the muddy slope. They sprinkle water before the goddess one after another.

With the arrival of the buffalo at the Utthanmandir, devotees reach the peak of their excitement. The half-naked youths jump up and down, grapple with one another, and pull each other down onto the ground of morass. Rows of spectators surround the muddy square. Into the tumultuous crowd, the Maharaja's buffalo enters into the place for the sacrifice. A thick wall of youths of the Bagdi and the Muci close around the buffalo. They jostle and scuffle with each other and

drag the animal to the block of sacrifice. The spectators are waiting for the moment with breathless interest. Among the throng of the naked youths, a small circle of men forms around the buffalo. At the centre of the circle, the Karmakar holds high up a sword of the Maharaja and swings it downward at one stretch. Instantly, the youth shout out, shake their hands, and begin to dance boisterously. The spectators also chant and cry out the name of the goddess Jogadya in an uproarious atmosphere. It throws the whole square into a state of feverish excitement.

The youths compete for the carcass of the buffalo and scramble. The man getting the freshly severed head begins to dance putting it on his own head. The body is dragged around the muddy ground. Everyone struggles for the penis of the buffalo especially, tear off a little piece, and eat it immediately. Youths of the lineage *mulapaik* take away the head and the carcass finally to their residences. At one time, the Dom used to receive the carcass at the end and dispose it off. Nowadays, the migrated families of Santal tribe receive it.

After the sacrifice, devout spectators begin to throw themselves onto the muddy road, stretching out their hands and legs. Even a woman wearing the finest sari for formal occasions expresses her deep faith to the goddess by throwing herself on a veritable sea of mud. It expresses their deep faith for the goddess. On this occasion, they follow the long rout from Kshirdighi or the Jogadya temple to the image of goddess at the Utthanmandir. The way of the most pious is to advance every step by throwing their body on the ground. So that it is necessary to guide the steps by an attendant who has a stick to mark the ground. The devotee must throw themselves from the position where their heads were laid down. The way of expression of faith in such a pious manner is very unusual except in the Mahapuja. However, we can see a long queue of devotee on the muddy road till the Utthanmandir on this day.

All through the 24 hours when the image is enshrined on the Utthanmandir for all the people, the Brahman-sebaits and the Bagdi *paiks* guard the image in rotation. The Brahman-sebaits stand in front of the image and receive the dedications from the villagers. They return a part of the offerings to the

villagers as *prasad* of the goddess and give a *phonta* of *sindur* on the image and onto their foreheads. The Bagdi *paiks* watch and regulate the thronging people. They stand at the gate of the Utthanmandir both at the entrance and the exit.

k) *Merya-katha*

People's worship and dedications of flowers, sweets, iron bangles, and *sindur* in particular by women continue all day long until after midnight. They form a long queue to the image of the goddess at the Utthanmandir. A little while before dawn, he image is sent to the bottom of the pond again.

At first, in front of the image they lit up two torches of straw, which are about three meters long. The torches are then dedicated by the lineages of Josh and Ray (Caudhuri), but used to be the donation by the Maharaja Krishnacandra from the court of Krishnanagar of the Nadia District every year. Hence, it is still called "*nadermashal*", which means "torch from the Nadia". In the light of the torches, they load the image very slowly onto the cart made of *sal* tree. People gather around the Utthanmandir, and drag the ropes connected to the cart of the goddess.

At the bank of Kshirdighi, the Brahman-sebaits prepare for the altar of the sacrifice. In front of them, the head of a lineage of the Dom caste is waiting for the arrival of the goddess holding a sword in his hand. He brings a goat to dedicate. In the light of torches, many villagers bring the cart to the bank, and set up the image of the goddess in the altar of the sacrifice. At this time, the sacrifice is performed without purification by sacred water or *mantra* (sacred verses recited by priests). They use also no sacrificial block (*tasla*) but only with a rope hang up the animal. The head of the Dom executes the sacrifice by his hand. The blood spouting out from the decapitated body is poured onto the image of the goddess at the altar. At that moment, the Dom shouts, "*Ma! Nara Rakta Khao!*"

This means "The Goddess ! Drink the blood of human ! " This ritual is called "*merya khata*" . Before Independence, the Dom used to cut the own finger of his own right hand and dedicate the blood to the goddess.

Watched by a crowd of people around the bank, the Brahman-sebaits slowly sink the image of the goddess in to the water. The Bagdi *paiks* stand around the slope of the bank holding the raja's flags in their hands. During this time, people used to sing a song in praise of the goddess in the rhythm of the drum by the Baiti as follows; "*Shyama Digambari Ranamajhe Naco Go Ma !* " This means "The Goddess ! The figure of the goddess Shyama. Dance in the battle field ! " Having sunk the image under the water, the water of the pond is splashed over the surrounding people on the bank. The Brahman-sebaits then return to the temple.

1) The forth of the lunar month of Jaistha; *Abhisekh*

Three days after the *merya katha*, that means the fourth of Jaisth, the image of the goddess is drawn up onto the bank for about one hour for one of the *ugalpujas* again. The image is cleaned up and worshipped. Then, they send it again to the deeper place at the bottom of the pond to keep it there until the next year.

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 loacalities.

Table-14 Annual ritual before 1953

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

	Ramayanpath		
	Mayurnac		
28	*Ramayanpath*		
	Mayurnac		
29	*Ramayanpath*		
	Path-naran	*Panthabali*(1)	[Raja, Ray-1]
	Mayurnac		
30	*Homa, Jogyakundu*	*Panthabali*(1)	[Raja-1]
	Hal-nagal		
	Ramayanpath		
Sank.	*Ugalpuaja*	*Panthabali*(1)	[Datta, Caudh. -1]
	Mayurnac		
	Domacoyarikhera		
	Mahapuja	*Panthabali*(7)	[Raja-1, UKY-7]
	Mahabhog	*Panthabali*(1)	
	Mahishbali	Mahishbali(1)	[Raja-M1]
	Masi-Pisi-Jhuri		
	Shankha-Para		
	Guya Dak	*Panthabali*(1)	[UKY, Baiti, BHM]
Jaishta, 1	*Merya Katha*	*Panthabali*(1)	[Dom-1]
4	*Abhisheka*	*Panthabali*(1)	[Ray-1]
	Ugalpuja	*Panthabali*(1)	
Sank.	*Guya Dak*	*Panthabali*(1)	
Ashar, S. 9	*Ugalpuja*	*Panthabali*(2)	[Raja-2, UKY-10]
Sank.	*Guyadak*	*Panthabali*(1)	
Shraban, Sank.	*Guyadak*	*Panthabali*(1)	
Bhadra, Sank.	*Guyadak*	*Panthabali*(1)	
Aswin, K. 8	Durgapuja		
-S. 10			
K. 9	*Badhnabami*	*Panthabali*(1)	

S. 4	*Catrutipatrika*	*Panthabali*(1)	
S. 7	*Saptamipuja*	*Panthabali*(1)	[Caudh. -1]
S. 8	*Asthamaipuja*	*Panthabali*(1)	
	Mahabhog	*Panthabali*(1)	
S. 9	*Nabamipuja*	*Mahishbali*(1)	[Raja-M1]
		Meshbali(1)	
		Panthabali(1)	
S. 10	*Vijaydashami*		
	Ugalpuja	*Panthabali*(2)	[Caudh. -1]
S. 15	Kojagari Lakshmipuja		
Sank.	*Guyadak*	*Panthabali*(1)	
Kartik, K. 14	Shyamapuja	*Panthabali*(1)	
S. 9	Jagadwatripuja	*Panthabali*(1)	
Sank.	*Guyadak*	*Panthabali*(1)	
Agrahayan	*Nabannotsab*	*Panthabali*(1)	
	Mahabhog		
Agrahayan, Sank.	*Guyadak*	*Panthabali*(1)	
Poush,	*Pausalla*	*Panthabali*(1)	
	Mahabhog		
15	*Ugalpuja*	*Panthabali*(1)	
28	Grahapuja	*Panthabali*(1)	
Sank.	*Pisthakotsab*		
	Mahabhog	*Panthabali*(1)	
	Guyadak	*Panthabali*(1)	
Magh, S. 7	*Makarishaptami*	*Panthabali*(2)	[Raja-2, UKY-10, BHM-1]
Sank.	*Guyadak*	*Panthabali*(1)	
Magh, Sank	*Nishidhambal*		
-Phalgun, Sank.			
Phalgun, Sank.	*Guyadak*	*Panthabali*(1)	
Caitra	Nilpuja(Kshireshwar)	*Panthabali*(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 "*sani ki nacan*"

b) *Makarisaptami*

On the seventh of the lunar month of Magh, the Brahman-sebaits 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-beng* (*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 *lal-nagal* of Jagadyapuja.

The Malakar sprinkles the unthrashed rice all over the surface of the pedestal. The Brahman-sebait 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 passes 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 Bhattacaryya 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 Bhattacaryya, 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 *ciro*.

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 *naibedya* 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-sebaits 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 sebaits 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-sebaits 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*, *haran*, 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 *Ramayana*, 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 *annabhog* 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-sebaits*. 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-sebaits 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 *siddha*. 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. Neverthless, 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 *nabanna-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-sebaits.

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-sebaits 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-sebaits, and one ration for the priest in charge.

3) *Pous-sankranti/Pistaka-utsab*

On the last day of Pous, the Brahman-sebaits 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 move 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 followin *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 patter 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 Bhattacaryya	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	Calcandra 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 *bara-lok*, 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*, *pranapratishta*, *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 Bhattacaryya	P. H.	Paribarpuja
23) Sudhir Ray	P. H.	Paribarpuja
24) Tapas Caudhuri	P. H.	Paribarpuja

Chapter-VI Durgapuja of the Ugra-Kshatriya

In this chapter, we shall discuss the rituals of Durgapuja of the Jogadya temple and in the localities of the Ugra-Kshatriya. Analysis of the rituals will be particularly on two topics namely, the relationship between the temple and the locality in the course of the rituals, and the ritual organization within the localities.

Durgapuja is the biggest annual function of Bengal. In the village, they perform five Durgapujas in the localities of the Ugra-Kshatriya as well as in the temple. Let us at the outset examine in detail the sequence of Durgapuja in the temple. The temple Durgapuja is regarded the a standard model for the other Durgapujas of the localities in the village. Neverthless, each Durgapuja is closely connected in various aspects of the ritual course. These Durgapujas in the localities are integrated into the Durgapuja of the temple systematically. There is aalso a rotation system of the ritual organization of the Durgapujas. A case to be examined here is on a locality of the Ugra-Kshatriya called Uttar-para (Caudhuri-para) in the northern part of the village. The rotation system of the rituals of the lineages is called "*sola-anna-puja*", which has already been discussed in chapter-III. This topic is amplified further here.

1. The sequence of the Durgapuja

Table-18 presents a series of the ritual items of the Durgapuja at the Jogadya temple in their ritual sequence. Durgapuja is a popular urban festival in Calcutta. In this case, the Durgapuja is held for four days from the seventh to the tenth bright fortnight in the lunar month of Aswin (from *saptami* to *dasami* in *suklapaksha*). In the village, the Durgapuja in each locality is held as per the

ordinary schedule. But in its traditional style in the old temple such as the Mrinmaymandir in Bishnupur of Bankra District, it takes sixteen days from the ninth of dark fortnight in the lunar month of Bhadra to the tenth bright fortnight of Aswin (from *nabami* in *krishnapaksha* to *dasami* in *suklapksha*). The Durgapuja in the village Kshiragram has, however, the schedule of seventeen days from eighth dark fortnight in the lunar month of Bhadra (from *krishna astami* to *vijaydasami*) in the temple.

The first column of the table given the date of Durgapuja according to the lunar calendar which begins with the ritual of *belbaran* in the seventh of the dark fortnight to the *vijaydasami* in the tenth of the bright fort night. The next is the date in the Bengali almanac in 1994, which begins in the tenth of the lunar month of Aswin to the twenty-seventh of Aswin.

Table-18 Sequence of Durgapuja at the temple

Dark fort night	Lunar month of Ashwin	Calendar in 1994 A.D.	Ritual names
7th	10th	Sep, 27th	*Bel-baran*
8th	11th	28th	*Bad-nabami*/ *Puja(belphal)/sandhyarati/tarpan/durgaghat*
9th	12th	29th	*Puja(ghat)/sandhyarati/tarpan/durgaghat*
10th	13th	30th	*Puja(ghat)/sandhyarati/tarpan/durgaghat*
11th	14th	Dec, 1st	*Puja(ghat)/sandhyarati/tarpan/durgaghat*
12th	15th	2nd	*Puja(ghat)/sandhyarati/tarpan/durgaghat*
13th	16th	3rd	*Puja(ghat)/sandhyarati/tarpan/durgaghat*
14th	17th	4th	Mahalay/ *Tarpan*sraddh/*Puja(ghat)/sandhyarati/durgaghat*

The new moon

	18th	5th	*Puja(ghat)/sandhyarati/durgaghat*

The bright fortnight

1st	19th	6th	*Puja(ghat)/sandhyarati/durgaghat*
2nd	20th	7th	*Puja(ghat)/sandhyarati/durgaghat*
4th	21st	8th	*Caturthipatrikapuja* (abbr. C.P.)
			Puja(C.P.)/*sandhyarati/durgaghat*
5th	22nd	9th	*Puja*(C.P.)/*sandhyarati/durgaghat*
6th	23rd	10th	*Sashtipuja*
			Puja(C.P.)/*sandhyarati/durgaghat*/Nabapatrikapuja
7th	24th	11th	*Saptamipuja* (to *Nahapatrika*; N.P.)
			*Nabapatrika*snan/Pathabali
			Sandhyarati/durgaghat
8th	25th	12th	*Mahastamipuja* (N.P.)
			Sandhyarati/durgaghat
			Sandhyipuja/Panthabali
9th	26th	13th	*Nabamipuja* (N.P.)
			Moshbali/hom/Candipath/sandhyarati/durgaghat
10th	27th	14th	*Dasamipuja* (N.P.)
			Bisarjan/Vijaypranam
			Ugalpuja

2. The Durgapuja in the Jogadya temple

a) The tenth of the lunar month of Aswin; *Bel-baran*

Bel-baran is the first ritual step to invoke the goddess Durga through the worship of the *bel-tree* (Aegle marmelos) at the bank of Khelopukur. Formerly, there were planted one hundred and eight bel-trees on the bank of Khelopukur next to the Das-para on the western side of the village. The Durgapuja in the temple begins with the ritual invocation to the bel-tree on the seventh of the dark fortnight every year. In 1994, the day for bel-baran is on the day of the tenth of the lunar month of Aswin. In 1995, it is on the thirtieth of the lunar month of Bhadra.

After the regular *sandhyarati* at the temple, a Brahman-sebait belonging to the lineage of Sat-bhai marches through the street of the village from the temple to the Khelopukur with a Baiti playing his drum. At the base of the *bel* tree at the bank of Khelopukur, he sits in front of the tree and performs the ritual of *badan*. It is a ritual invocation to the goddess Durga inside the tree. People think that the bel-tree symbolizes the abode of the goddess Durga as a wife of the god Siva, and she usually stays with him. The ritual to the bel-tree, therefore, is the invocation to the goddess living in the tree to the altar of the puja on the earth once a year. The priest offers to the goddess sugar, sweets (*manda*), vegetables, incense, *sindur*, flowers (*durba-phul* and *jaba-phul* in particular), and leaves of *bel*. He uses the ritual utensils such as a small vessel (*kasakusi*), conch-shell, and bell, but without using the pot as in the *badan* in the other ordinary *pujas*. After the purification of himself, his seat, and the utensils, he starts the *sankalpa* (the proclamation of the beginning of the ritual) in the name of the Bardhaman Maharaja. Then, he performs the Badan to the bel-tree.

At the end of the ritual, the priest cuts down a pair of *bel* fruits on the tree to which he performs the *puja*. He carries them in his hand and marches back to the temple accompanied by the Baiti playing his drum. He enshrines the pair of

bel fruits on the altar of the temple. In every ritual occasion during the Durgapuja, the priests perform to the fruits at the altar until *bisarjan* in the final day of *dasami*.

b) The eleventh of Aswin; *Bodnabami*

The ninth of the dark fortnight is traditionally regarded as the first day of Durgapuja, although the village priests start their ritual two days before the ninth in the temple. In 1994, the ninth of the dark fortnight (*krishnapaksha-nabami*) fell on the eleventh of Aswin, which means the twenty eighth of September, 1994. The ritual starts at the temple in the afternoon. At this time, the Brahman-sebait, the Baiti, the *paik* of Bagdi, and the Malakar assemble at the temple. They make a procession from the temple to the Khelopukur again. The front position of the procession is occupied by the paik beating the gong in his hand. The Brahman-sebait holding the ritual utensils follows him. The Malakar with the copper pot on his head and the Baiti playing his drum follow them. On both sides of the street of the village, many villagers are waiting for the arrival of the procession. The housewives (*ginni*) receive them with incense and votive lights. They make a deep vow to the street for the procession passing through them.

At the bank of the Khelopukur, the Malakar takes an ablution in the pond, and draws the water with the pot. Soon, the procession returns to the temple. Many villagers receive them again on the street. Inside the temple, the *Sabha-pandit* and the *Candipathak* are waiting for the procession. The pot is enshrined at the left side on the altar of the temple. They begin the ritual of *upacarapuja* and *candipath*. After the *puja*, the *Sabha-pandit* performs the ritual of reception (*arati*) with *pancha-pradip*, conch-shell, and flowers accompanying with the sound of the gong by the Malakar. Then, the Brahman-sebait stands at the threshold of the main temple and gives the garlands made of *sara* grass to the every lineage of the Ugra-Kshatriya. At first, he calls the name of "*Daraga babu*" , and then

"Pala-dhar". *Daraga babu* means the *Rajkachari* of the Jogadya temple. The *Pala-dhar* means the person who is in charge of holding the head of the buffallo in the sacrifice of *Nabamipuja*. The lineage which is in charge must offer the special offerings to the temple. Then, he calls the names of the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya in the same order as in the Jogadyapuja of Baishakh. Therefore, the calling order by the Brahman-sebait at this time is *Daraga babu*, *Pala-dhar*, Datta, Samant, Malla, Sani, Bara-Ray, Cato-Ray, Josh, Cato-Samant, and Caudhuri. Every representative of the lineage receives the garland in front of the door of the main temple from the hand of the Brahman-sebait and puts it over their heads. He puts *phonta* as of *sindur* (sacred symbol of vermilion) to their foreheads. From this day, the pot is enshrined until *bisarjan* at the end of Durgapuja and the Brahman-sebait performs the *puja* to it twice a day.

c) The seventeenth of Aswin; *Mahalay*

On this day, many villagers go to the bank of the Ganga at Katwa to have an ablution in a specified moment described in the almanac. This is still a very popular custom all over Bengal. In case of being occupied for some works, the villager take an ablution in the pond of Kshirdighi or sprinkle water of the Ganga over their body entering into the cow-shed. Some villagers make a group to visit Katwa accompanying their priest of the lineage (*kula-purohit*) and perform the ritual of *tarpan-sraddha*. Some others invite the priest to their houses in the village and perform the ritual. At first, the priest performs the ritual of *tarpan*, then the ritual of *tarpan-sraddha* for the spirits of the ancestors of his cliants. This is followed by the ritual of *pitri-bhoj*. Villagers pay the priest with lunch or sweets. It is actually the first day of the ritual of *tarpan*. The priest continues to perform the ritual of *tarpan* every morning from this day until *bisarjan* at the end of Durgapuja. Further details of *tarpan* and *tarpan-sraddha* will be given at the appropriate content.

d) The twenty-first of Aswin; *Catruthipatrika*

Before the *nityaseba* in the morning, a Brahman-sebait of the lineage Sat-bhai prepares a *patrika* which is a bundle of plants, at the interior room of the temple. The *patrika* in the fourth of the bright fortnight is called "*caturthi-patrika*" , which is made of the four kinds of plants, namely banana, *man* (arum), *kacu* (taro), and *dhan* (rice). The bunches of *man*, *kacu*, and *dhan* are put around a branch of banana tree with wide opened leaves. The people think that these plants together constitute a symbol of the goddess Durga.

All altars in the village does not have images of the goddess Durga as is generally found in the pandals in Calcutta. They enshrine only a bunch of the plants of the *caturthipatrika* and the *nabapatrika* at the altars and worship them as symbols of the goddess. The village Kshiragram being one of the 51 sakta-pithas, the people over have usually restrain from bringing any anthoropmorphic figures connected with the ritual. They think that the temple Jogadya is the abode of the goddess for all the year round and the goddess Jogadya is an incantation of the goddess Sat, viz, Durga. As they have already the goddess in their village, they can not bring other the goddess into the village.

The Brahman-sebait carries the *caturthipatrika* in his arms and goes to the bank of Kshirdighi with *mula-paiks* striking a gong and a Baiti playing the drum. At the stairs of the ablution bank of Kshirdighi, they perform ablution of the *caturthipatrika* (*caturthipatrika-snan*) accompanying the beat of drums and the gong. The Brahman-sebait returns to the temple carrying the *caturthipatrika* and enshrines it on the altar of the temple. He performs the *nityaseba* (daily service) in the morning at the altar of the temple. After the *nityaseba*, the *Sabha-pandit* and the Brahman-sebait of the lineage of Sat-bhai take seats in front of the altar. The Brahman-sebait performs the *caturthipatrikapuja* and the *Sabha-pandit* assists the Brahman-sebait as a *nabapatrika* with the chanting of the sacred verses. They put

a simple mask of the face of the goddess on the *caturthipatrika* and dedicate a wreath to the neck of the *patrika* and put paste of *sindur* on the forehead. After the *puja*, they stand up and perform *arati* with *pancha-pradip*, conch-shell, flowers, and ritual brush (*camar*) to the *patrika* with the playing of drum and gong. Finally, they make a deep bow to the altar. From this day, they enshrine the *caturthipatrika* on the altar and perform the *puja* every day until the day of *nabapatirkapuja* on the ninth of the bright fortnight.

At the threshold of the main temple, the Brahman-sebait calls the titles of the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya again and gives the garlands of *sara* grass to the necks of every representative of the Ugra-Kshatriya in the same way as on the day of *bodnabami*. He also gives *phontas* of *sindur* on their foreheads. The Malakar gives *sindur* and sweets to the *paiks* and the Baiti.

e) The twenty-third of Aswin; *Sasthipuja*

After the *sandhyarati* on the sixth of the bright fortnight, the Brahman-sebait bundles the nine kinds of plants in the interior of the temple, which is called *nabapatrika*. The way of setting the *nabapatrika* is the same as in the *caturthipatrika*. The nine kinds of plants are banana, *kacu* (taro), *haridra* (turmeric), *bel* (stone apple), *jayanti* (egyptian sesban), *dadima* (pomegrante), *asok* (asok tree), *man* (arum), and *dhan* (rice).[1] The *Sabha-pandit* and the Brahman-sebait sit in front of the *nabapatrika* and put offerings to the altar and start the *puja*. At the directions of the Brahman-sebait inside the temple, the Baiti standing at the Natmandir plays the drum intermittently according to the course of the ritual steps. After the *puja*, they perform *arati* to the *nabapatrika* with the gong beating

1 The botanical names of these plants and the the goddess associated with each plant are as follows: banna [musa sapientum; Brahmani], kacu [alocasia indica; Kalika], haridra [curcuma domestica; Durga], bel [aegle marmelos; Siva], jayanti [sebania sesban; Karttiki], dadima [punica granatum; Raktadantika], asok [sarca indica; Sokarahita], man [colocasia esculenta; Camunda], and dhan [oryza sativa; Laksmi].

by the Malakar standing inside the temple. The *nabapatrika* is left on the altar of the temple for the night. At every altar of Durgapuja in the localities of the village, they prepare *nabapatrika* the same way as in the Jogadya temple. The next morning, all priest of different altars of the village bring the *nabapatrikas* out of the temple or the altar in the localities and set out to the bank of Kshirdighi so as to give them ablution in water.

At night many Baitis visit the temple. They are employed from the other villages for playing drums during Durgapuja in different localities of the village. They form usually a group of four members which consists of two drummers and gong players. They stand at the Natmandir and play their instruments in order to dedicate their performances to the goddess of the temple. They visit the temple at first and then go to each locality of the village to play their drums in the *pujas*.

f) The twenty-fourth of Aswin; *Saptamipuja*

In the early morning of the seventh of bright fortnight, they perform the *puja* for the *nabapatrika*. Before the dawn, a Baiti plays *tengai* signifying the beginning of the *puja* for the *nabapatrika* of the seventh (*saptamipuja*). First, a Brahman-sebait brings out the *nabapatrika* enshrined on the altar of the temple to the front of the door of the main temple. The Brahman-sebait lays the *nabapatrika* down on a special palanquin made of bamboo and covers the same with a fine sari. At the signal of the sound of the drum by the Baiti at the Natmandir, the priests bring out each *nabapatrika* from the altars of every locality in the village the same way. The priests carry them on their shoulders. The Baitis accompany them playing drums and gongs. Boys from the localities carry the pots of the goddess Durga on their heads. The other followers hold the incense burners, brushes (*camar*), and large plates of offerings in their hands. All the *nabapatrikas* of

the localities of the village go towards the Jogadya temple together. They enter through the eastern gate of the temple and assemble at the Natmandir. The *nabapatrika* of the Jogadya temple in placed at the head of the line at the front of the door of the main temple. The other *nabapatrikas* form a line sideways on the floor of the Natmandir. When all the *nabapatrikas* have lined up, they start the march simultaneously to the bank of Kahsirdighi accompanied by priests and Baitis playing drums and gongs. Many attendants holding offerings and other ritual utensils follow them. Then the other villagers follow. They go out through the western gate of the temple straight ahead to the stairs of the ablution bank of Kshirdighi.

At the bank of Kshirdighi, every priest holds the respective *nabapatrika* in hands, and stand in knee-deep water of the pond facing towards the bank where the *Sabha-pandit* stands. At the side of every *nabapatrika* the assistants for the priests are waiting. They hold the plates of *adhibas* for the purification of the *nabapatrikas*. At the signal of the *Sabha-pandit*, every priest performs the ritual of taking ablution of the *nabapatrikas* in the pond (*nabapatrika-snan*). According to the recitation of the sacred verses by the *Sabha-pandit*, the priests make ablutions ten times with a series of ten ritual items. Finally, they pour water thoroughly on the *nabapatrika*. Then, they bring them back to the bank again and cover them with sari. The attendants put the *nabapatrikas* on the palanquin to carry on their shoulders. The pots carried by the boys are filled with water of the pond and a twig of mango leaves put onto the mouth of the pots. Boys carry them on their heads again.

The procession of the *nabapatrikas* goes back towards the Jogadya temple. They assemble once at the Natmandir in the same manner as in the beginning. After making a line in front of the main temple, each *nabapatrika* returns to the altars in the localities. At each altar, the priests perform the ritual ablution called "*mahasnan*" to the *nabapatrika* with the water of the pot and the other ritual materials. The *nabapatrikas* are enshrined on the altars and regular services to the goddess in the morning starts. The order of the *saptami-puja* in the morning

is almost the same as the ordinary *puja* at the altar but the difference is a procession made for the sacrifice of goats to the localities after the *saptami-puja*. This procession for the sacrifices make clear the relationship between the temple ritual and the other rituals in every locality of the village.

Soon after the *saptami-puja*, the Karmakar of the village Jabagram performs the sacrifice of the goat at the ground of the Jogadya temple. With the sound of the drums and gongs, the *paiks* of the Bagdi hold the head and legs firmly at the block of the sacrifice and the Karmakar brings down his sword. The decapitated head and the body are offered to the altar. The Brahman-sebait starts the *arati* to the *nabapatrika* inside the temple. Immediately after the arati at the temple, the procession of the Karmakar, the *paiks*, and the Baiti set out from the temple to every altar of the localities of the Ugra-Kshatriya. At the head of the procession, the Karmakar is holding the bloody sword of the sacrifice up in his hand. The *paiks* of the Bagdi beat the gongs and the Baiti plays the drum. At first, they visit the locality of Malpukur-para in the north western extremity of the village. Then, they go to the locality of Malla-para, Ray-para, Kalibangra, and Samant-para in the end, which is on the eastern side of the village. When this procession moves, the participants virtually run.

At every altar of the localities, each priest performs the *puja* according to the same ritual time described by the almanac. At every altar, they finish the *pujas* at almost the same hour and await arrival of the procession from the temple. They stand ready with the goats to perform the sacrifice in front of the altars. When the procession arrives at the altar, they put the goats on the block of their altars. The Karmakar of the temple has the bloody sword ready in his hand. The *paiks* and the Baiti play their instruments. In the same manner as in the temple, the goats are sacrificed by the Karmakar. The blood of the goats are poured on the altars. Then the procession runs for the next altar without delay. The priests of the localities begin *arati* to their *nabapatrikas*. In this way, the sacrifice of the Jogadya temple is performed first, and then other sacrifices are performed at various altars of the village.

After *arati* in the Jogadya temple, the Brahman-sebait calls the titles of the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya again at the threshold of the main temple. Every representative receives garlands of *sara* grass from his hand. The order of calling the titles is the same as in *badonabami* and *caturthipatrika*. The Malakar offers sweets to the *paiks* and the Baiti. In the evening, *sandhyaratis* to the goddess is performed at every altar in the ordinary way.

g) The twenty-fifth of Aswin; *Astamipuja*

In the morning of the eighth of the bright fortnight, some villagers observe the abstinence from food for a whole day. Otherwise, many of villagers at least abstain from boiled rice and *muri* and eat only *ruti* made of wheat in the afternoon. People in the village dedicate many offerings to the altars of each Durgapuja on this day. The three lineages of the Caudhuris (the Ray) in particular dedicate the fixed offering to the Jogadya temple every year. The contents are 20kg of *atop-caul*, spices, and vegetables per lineage. They dedicate these offerings in return for the right to hold the head of the buffalo at the block of the temple for the sacrifice of *nabami-puja*. Every three years, they select a representative from each lineage by turn for this role. They have the duty associated with this role to prepare a goat for the sacrifice in *Pat-nalan* on the 29th of Baishakh as well as the offerings on this day. The person and sometimes the lineage in charge of holding of the buffalo every three year is called *paladhar*. In addressing the titles of the Ugra-Kshatriya by the Brahman-sebait, this *paladhar* is the second to call aloud after *daroga-babu*. Then, it follows the titles of the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya in the same order as in the Jogadyapuja.

In the afternoon, the Brahman-sebait prepares *annabhog* on an unglazed pot at the hearth of the Bhogmandir in the same way as in *nabanna-utsab*. After boiling the rice, they break the earthen pot into nine pieces. They serve boiled rice, *tarkari* (vegetables), *dal* (bean soup), and cooked fish on them. They strike the

gong signifying the time of the *bhog* and call each title of the nine lineage of the Ugra-Kshatriya by turns standing at the veranda of the Bhogmandir. The order of calling is the same as in the other rituals. This food served to the Ugra-Kshatriya is called "*tiklabiri*" . The *annabhog* with vegetables and fish on the plates is dedicated in front of the altar inside the temple. There is only one occasion to serve the *bhog* inside the temple each year. Otherwise it is served at the Bhogmandir.

h) *Sandhyipuja*

The liminal moment between the eighth and the ninth of the bright fortnight is called *sandhyi* in Bengali. This literally means border and occupies an important place in the ritual of Durgapuja. In the village, the *Rajkachari* gives the signal of the moment of *sandhi* in the Jogadya temple to all the altars in the village. Every altar of Durgapuja follows the direction of the *Rajkachari* in their procedure of the *sandhyipuja*. This is another case to show the close relationship between the temple ritual and the rituals in every locality.

At the Jogadya temple, the Brahman-sebaits perform *sandhyipuja* inside the temple. On the middle point of the floor inside the room of the temple, they prepare a stack of sand with piles of offerings on plates and perform the sacrifice of a goat on the stack. The *Rajkachari*, the *Sabha-pandit*, the *Candipatak*, and the Brahman-sebaits prepare for the *puja* inside the room. The ritual of *sandhyipuja* starts at twenty-four minutes (i.e., one *danda* in Bengali traditional calculation) before the moment of the *sandhyi*, which is described on the Bengali almanac. The Brahman-sebaits make many devotees come out from the interior room of the temple. Without the Brahman caste, the other people are prohibited to enter inside the temple during the ritual of *sandhyipuja*. The Brahman-sebaits close the door from inside and cover the window of the temple by a cloth. A few minutes before the time of *sandhyi*, the Brahman-sebaits light flaming torches of straw inside the room.

Being filled with the smoke of torches, they perform sacrifice of the goat on the stack of sand. A little while before the moment of *sandhyi*, two of the Brahman-sebaits put the goat into position and tie the head and legs with ropes on the stock. A Brahman-sebait holds the sword of the goddess in front of the altar. The others Brahman-sebaits surround the goat holding the torches in their hands. The *Rajkachari* stands beside them looking at a watch in his hand. At the signal of a shout by the *Rajkachari*; "O ! Ma !", the sword is brought down onto the stack at one stretch. The spouting blood is dedicated to the altar. Immediately after the sacrifice, they open the door of the temple and give the signal of the sacrifice to the Baitis waiting at the Natmandir. The Baitis begin to play at the Natmandir all together. At the sound of the drums from the temple, every priest at the altars in the localities know the time to start their sacrifice to the goddess. At every altar, they already finished their *sandhiyapujas* and was prepared for the sacrifice in front of the *nabapatrikas*. They are standing ready to perform the sacrifice at the signal from the Jogadya temple. Immediately after the sound of the drums from the temple, the sacrifices are performed at each altar.

Formerly messengers were posted in the fields of the village in every direction. They used to relay the signal of the time of *sandhi* shouting; "Ma !" from Kshiragram to all villages around. The people who stood in readiness for the sacrifice at every altar of the villages, executed the sacrifice at the moment they heard the signal of the time of *sandhi* from Kshiragram. It is also known that they used to employ an earthenware and a small plate which has a very small hole at the bottom for their measurement of the time. They set afloat the small plate on the surface of the water that the earthenware is filled with. They measured twenty-four minutes (one *danda*) by the time of a sinking of the plate. They grasped the exact time of the *sandhiyapuja* with this measurement of a danda and the almanac sent from the court of Raj.

At the Sarbamangala temple of the Maharaja at the town of Bardhaman, they fire a cannon at the time of *sandhi* still now at the Kamantala in front of the temple. It is called "*kamandak*". All the altars neighboring the town of

Bardhaman followed their time of the *sandhyipujas* at the sound of the cannon from the temple of the Maharaja. Even in Kshiragram, which is sixty-four kilometer distance from the town of Bardhaman, the people could hear the sound of the cannon if the time of *sandhyi* is in the silence of the middle of the night.

After the sacrifices, the Baitis set out from the temple to go round the altars of the village playing their drums. Within the next twenty-four minutes every priest at the altars must finish their *arati* to the goddess Durga in their respective localities and the Baitis return to the Jogadya temple again. After arrival of the Baitis at the temple, the Brahman-sebait starts *arati* at the altar inside the temple. Hence, the *arati* in the Jogadya temple is the last one of all the *aratis* in the village.

After that, the Brahman-sebait addresses the titles of the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya again and offers necklaces of *sara* grass to them. This is the end of the ritual of *sandhyipuja*. After all rituals are over people rush to receive remnants of torches and ropes used to hold the sacrifice inside the temple and bring them back to their houses.

i) The twenty-sixth of Aswin; *Nabamipuja*

The ritual in the morning of the day of *Nabamipuja* is almost the same as in the other days of the *puja* besides the sacrifice of a buffalo, which is performed in the afternoon at the temple. The *paiks* of the Bagdi bring the buffalo to the temple. In front of the Natmandir, they set a special block for the sacrifice of a buffalo. The people of the village surround the place. The Brahman-sebait purifies the block and the large sized sword for the buffalo sacrifice. The *Sabha-pandit* chants sacred verses at the block. The Karmakar holds the sword in his hand beside the buffalo. A *paik* of the Bagdi holds a copper pot of the goddess on his head with a twig of mango inside. Surrounding the buffalo at the block, a crowd of youths gather and jostle each other. Most of them belong to the lower caste of

the village such as the Bagdi, the Muci, and the Bauri. They are all half-naked wearing a short piece of cloth (*gamca*) on their waists. A large crowd of the villagers make a wide circle further around them. The courtyard of the temple overflows with people during the occasion.

After the chanting to the buffalo, the priest makes a purification of the buffalo with the sacred water. He throws a piece of fresh cloth (*gamca*) over the body of the buffalo and puts the paste of *sindur* on the forehead and the horns. He makes the same to the sword with the water and *sindur*. Before the time of the sacrifice, the excited youths enclose and hold the buffalo. But the person who holds the head at the block is the representative from the lineage of the Caudhuris. People swarm the roof of the Natmandir and the eastern gate of the temple for watching the jostling youth. At the centre point of the block, the Karmakar raises the sword and brings it down. At this moment the people reach the peak of excitement. The drums and gongs are beaten vehemently. The half-naked youths cry and dance boisterously lifting up their hands at the floor of the Natmandir. Some rush to the block of the sacrifice and make a deep bow and tumble about on the ground soaked with the fresh blood of the buffalo. Some others scramble for the freshly severed head of the buffalo and puts it on his head and joins dancing. Others struggle for the beheaded body and bring it to the locality of the *mula-paiks* of the Bagdi.

After a little while, a dancing march sets out from the temple to the village with wild striking of drums and gongs. The Bagdi *paik* with the head of the buffalo on his head and the Karmakar lifting the sword in his hands are at the head of the parade of the excited people. They go round the streets in the village and visit altars in every locality of the Durgapuja. The route of the parade is the same with the procession for the sacrifice of *saptamipuja*, that is the locality of Malpukur-para, Malla-para, Ray-para, Kalibangla, and Samant-para. When the parade has arrived at the altars, they begin at once to perform the sacrifice of their goats. They already await for the arrival of them. The parade comes in the square of the locality with great excitement. The people of the locality treat the dancing

youths with country liquor. The Karmakar proceeds in front of the block of goat sacrifice, and holds the sword up, which was used for the sacrifice in the Jogadya temple. After the sacrifice in the locality, they go to the next altar. The decapitated heads are carried on the shoulders of the Bagdi *paiks* who join the dancing parade on the streets of the village.

Soon after the sacrifices, each priest of the altars perform the ritual of *arati* to dedicate the fire to the goddess and the ritual of *puspanjali* to dedicate flowers to the goddess. Then, another priest performs the ritual of *homas*. In the Jogadya temple, a Brahman-sebait performs it in the style of Tantaric *homa* inside the room of the temple. After the *homa*, the *Candipathak* starts the *candipath* (the ritual recitation of the passages of the *Mahisasramardini* in the *Devimahatmya*) in front of the altar. The Brahman-sebait calls aloud the titles of the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya again and offers the necklaces of *sara* grass to them. At every altar in the village, the people of the localities participate in the ritual of *puspanjali* to dedicate flowers to the goddess in accordance with the recitation of the sacred verses by the priests. The rituals of *tantra homa* and *candipath* follows afterwards.

j) The twenty-seventh of Aswin; *Dasamipuja*

The final stage of Durgapuja is the ritual immersion or *bisarjan* of the goddess Durga, which is performed after the *Dasamipuja* in the morning at each altar. In the village, *bisarjan* for the *nabapatrikas* is performed only after they complete Bhagabatipuja, which is a ritual for cows in cow-sheds. After all the Bhagabatipujas in the village are over, the Baiti of the temple plays a drum announcing the hour to perform *bisarjan*. At the altars in the localities, every priest completes the final ritual for the pot of the goddess, which is also called *bisarjan* according to the *Durgapujapaddhati* (the ritual text for the Durgapuja in Bengal). People gather at the altars and bid farewell to the *nabapatrika*, the symbol

of the goddess.

At the signal of drum by the Baiti, people move the *nabapatrika*s carefully from the altars to the palanquins of bamboo with the sound of conch-shell and *ulu* by the women. Persons carrying the palanquins on their shoulders at both ends swing the *nabapatrikas* back and forth several times. People think that this gesture means the farewell to the goddess at the altar, which is her temporary abode on the earth. They dress a fine sari over the *nabapatrika* on the palanquin. With the white smoke of incense burners (*dhunuci*) and using fans for the palanquin, the *nabapatrika* set out to the temple Jogadya. Already many *nabapatrikas* have assembled at the temple. The priests and followers attend to each palanquin holding the plates of offerings, incense burners, and brushes (*camar*) in their hands. Some carry pots and flowers of the altars. From the locality of the Brahman of the village, many people bring trees of Manasa from their garden and join the parade of the *nabapatrika*. These were planted on the day of Manasapuja in the lunar month of Bhadra. The family who enshrines a Durga-pot in their household altar brings out the pot putting a twig of mango in it and participate in *bisarjan*. In the same manner as in the *nabapatrika-snan* of the day of *saptamipuja*, each *nabapatrika* form a line in the Natmandir once and then the procession of the *nabapatrikas* set out to the bank of Kshirdighi.

At the stairs of the ablution bank of Kshirdighi, every priest hold the *nabapatrika* in his hand and stands in a line in the water of the pond. All the priests look toward the *Sabha-pandit* who is standing on a raised ground of the bank. According to the recitation of the sacred verses by the *Sabha-pandit*, they perform the ritual of *bisarjan* of the *nabapatrika*. At the same time, the other utensils used in the ritual such as for carrying flowers, incense, and the pots of water are thrown into the pond. The trees of the goddess Manasa and the pots of Durga (*durga-ghat*) are thrown too. After the *bisarjan*, the priests give a vine of *aparajita* (butterfly pea) to the people, and put it around their left hands at the bank. Some receive a mark of *sindur* on their foreheads form the priests in exchange of a deep bow made to them.

From the bank of Kshirdighi to the Jogadya temple, they used to perform *mayurnac* after *bisarjan* of Durgapuja in the same manner as in the ritual of Jogadyapuja . At any rate, people return to the temple to make a bow once and then go back to the altars of their localities. At the altars, the people accept *prasad* which is called *dadikarma*. It consists of *muruki*, *cire*, *khai*, sweets such as *gur* or *misthi*, and yogurt as offerings to the goddess Durga. At the end of the ritual, the villagers celebrate the triumph of the goddess over the demon Mahisasura, and drink a kind of juice mixed with water, sugar, lime, salt, and *siddhi*.

In the evening of the day of Dasami, people perform *Vijay-pranam*. The people of the village visit the elder persons of their locality, relatives, and the house of the family priest (*kula-purahita*). They celebrate the day of *Vijay-dasami* (the day the goddess Durga's triumph over the demon Mahisasur) and make a deep bow at the feet of the elder person, and embrace each other three times. This manner of embrace is called "*kalakuli*" . They embrace, if they are friends of the same locality or relatives in the same generation. The people belonging to the lower caste of the village visit the house of their masters belonging to upper castes. They dedicate a pair of small fish in a sieve of bamboo to the master. The master puts paste of *sindur* on the fish and offers it to the household altar. Afterwards they cook them and eat. Neverthless, they offer *prasad* of *dhadikarma* in exchange of the fishes to the lower caste who visit them. The custom to visit the house of the upper caste or the master by the tenants ar agricultural labours continue till the day before Kalipuja in the village. Within this period, the people of the lower castes of the village visit many houses of the upper castes simply to receive food such as *cire* or *muri*.

3. Durgapuja in the localities of the Ugra-Kshatriya

a) Patronal lineage

As already mentioned, there were five Durgapujas in 1994 in the village beside the puja in the Jogadya temple. These pujas are organized by the five Ugra-Kshatriya lineages of the village. Each lineage forms a small local community in the village society. The following is the list of the Durgapujas in different localities held in 1994.

Table-19 Duragapujas of the Ugra-Kshatriya

Locality	Patronal lineage	Priest	Place
1) Uttar-para	Bara-Ray	Kalacand	Durgabangla
2) Uttar-para	Na-Ray	Kalacand	Ray-para-mandir
3) Moarpukur-para	Caudhuri	Taradas	Moarpukur-para
4) Malla-para	Malla	Kalacand	Malla-para-mandir
5) Samant-para	Chotasamant	Sat-bhai	Samant-para-mandir

All of the Durgapujas are thought to have the founders who belong to the particular lineages of the Caudhuri (the Ugra-Kshatriya) in the village. With regard to the Durgapujas of 1), 2), and 3) in Uttar-para and Moarpukur-para, it is possible to trace back the lineages of the founders of the ritual five generations before. For the Durgapujas at Malla-para and Samant-para it is difficult now to trace back the generations from the original founder. Neverthless, they regard it as an exclusive ritual to the other lineages.

The locality Samant-para is divided into the two sub-localities, namely the

Bara-Samant-para and the Chota-Samant-para. According to their oral tradition, they share common ancestors among the members dwelling in the present two localities. Once they branched off into the two sub-lineages, they can not trace back to the name of their common ancestor through their genealogy. But, they think that it is obvious from the fact that all of them have the common title Samant live in the neighboring two sub-localities in the eastern side of the village. They have, now, even marriage relations in a few families between the two sub-localities. Some villagers regard that the members within the seven generations as a lineage (*bangsha* in Bengali) are not allowed to have marriage relations among them. If it is beyond the seven generations, however, they could marry one another, although they still think they have the common ancestor as an agnate (*gashti*).

It is said that the two sub-lineages of the Samant have branched off before seven generation, and the originator of the sub-lineage of the Chota-Samant is the founder of the Durgapuja of their locality. This fact suggests that the Durgapuja of the locality in the village are basically based on the member sharing the common founder of the ritual and this means the supporters of the Durgapuja in charge of the year are always the descendants of the common ancestor of the lineage. The case of the Durgapuja in the Caudhuri of the Uttar-para would be effective to examine as a further example.

b) On the genealogy of the lineages of Caudhuri

It is no longer remembered by anyone in detail the genealogical relationship of the lineages of the Caudhuri as a whole from their origin in the village. They, in fact, consist of four sub-lineages now name after the four main localities in the northern part of the village. This is collectively called Uttar-para. The three lineages of them are already mentioned as the lineages participated in the temple ritual as the Bara-Ray, the Chota-Ray and the Caudhuri. The other one is the lineage of the Na-Ray, which is one of the patronal lineages of the Durgapuja in

Uttar-para. At present, each of them introduce themselves with the title of Caudhuri, although the three lineages of them have the title Ray in the ritual discourse in the Jogadya temple.

Some elderly persons still remember the genealogy of a few generations of the Caudhuris. According to the persons belonging to a branch of the Jaykali, for example, they can tell about the founder Jaykali and his four sons. Now, most of the children of these four sons are the heads of each family of the branch. There are more than twenty households within this branch of Jaykali. They could recognize the kinship relations among them easily. Jaykali had a younger brother named Nahar. Nahar had two sons and the descendants of them counts more than ten households now. It is also easy to acknowledge the kinship relations among the lineage members of Nahar, although only a few elderly persons in the locality can exactly recognize the kinship relations between the two branches, namely the Jaykali and the Nahar. What is called the lineage of the Bara-Ray, however, is the descendant of these two branches collectively and it could trace back their ancestry from the father of Jaykali and Nahar. According to an elderly person, Haradan was the father of Jaykali and Nahar. Thus, Haradan is the original founder of the lineage Bara-Ray. This is one of the titles which consist of the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya of the village and the four lineages of the Caudhuris as well. In the rituals of the Jogadya temple, the Brahman-sebaits call aloud the names of these titles. Diagram-2 helps to explain the detailed genealogy of the lineages of the Caudhuris. The following discussion shall make clear the relations of the Caudhuris according to this Diagram.

Diagram-2 The genealogy of the lineage of Bara-Ray and its *angshidar*

The first is "De" Title

The Bardhaman Maharaja endowed with the titles of "Caudhuri" & "Ray Caudhuri"

Raja Udaycand Ray

Lakshancandra Ray (Eruyar; 1746/7)

Badancandra Ray (Kshiragram; 1774/5, Bararam Raycaudhuri)

Bara Ray ⇒ Haradan

Meja Ray ⇒ migrated

Seja Ray ⇒ migrated

Na Ray ⇒ Dubraj ⇒ Bancharam ⇒ Bara, Meja, Seja, Na, Chota

Chota Ray ⇒ Gopal Caudhuri

[Bararay]

Haradan(16)

Jaykali(8)

Kunjyabihari(2)

Lakshinarayan(1)

Rajkrishna(1/3+1/6)

Rajkumar(1/2)

Parimal

Ratindrakumar

Danday

Prankrishna(1/3+1/6+2)

Taraknath(5/4)

Santanu(5/4)

Bishwanath(5/4)

Anilkrishna(1/3) → Rajkrishna/Prankrishna

Kartikgaswhar

Gopeshwar

Shushibhusan(1)

Bamuk[illegible](1)

Kamarkant(1/5+2/15)

Unknown(1/3)

Ganapati(1/5+2/15)

Siddhinath(1/6)

Madusdan(1/6)

Basudeb(1/5) → Kamar/Ganapati/Nimai

Minarkant(1/5) → Kamar/Ganapati/Nimai

Nimaicand(1/5+2/15)

Tapas(1/6)

Tarun(1/6)

Ramlal(2)

Debnarayan(2)

Atul(1)

Jagatbandu(1/2)

Apurba(1/10)

Ashok(1/10)

Ashishu(1/10)

Kalyan(1/10)

Anupu(1/10)

Kripashindu(1/2)

Shupriya

Shushoban

Abhaykali(1)

Jageshwar(1/4)

Mukreshwar(1/4)

Dipankal(1/4)

Shwarbeshwar(1/4)

Samacaran(2)

Mahadeb(2) → Prankrishna(2)

Matilal(2)

Ketranath(2/3) → share with all Angshidars

Anukulal(1/3)

Anant(1/3)

Subasu(2/3)

Jyogyesh(2/3)

Bagubat(1/6)

Prabasu(1/24)

Prakas(1/24)

Anangamahan(1/24)

Rajibracan(1/24)

Shamarket(1/6)

Ashokkumar(1/6)

Shibakali(1/6)

Candasekar

Krishnakali(1/6)

Hemantkanak(1/18)

Basantbikas(1/18)

Jayant(1/18)

Sharat(2/3)

Tulusicaran(2/3)

Shudanshusekar(1/6)

Manik(1/6)

Sasthicaran(1/6)

Keshab(1/6)

Nahar(8)

Gasthabihari(1)

Ekkari(1) → Dulal(1/2)/Renupad(1/2)

Dulal(1+1/2+1/2)

Basudeb(2/3)

Jyatirma

Paramshuk(2/3)

Tanumay

Rabindnath

Cinmay

Budeb(2/3)

Jayant

Sumant

Acint

Nandadulal(1) → Dulal(1/2)/Ratancand(1/2)

Renupad(1+1/2+1/2)

Dhanakrishna(2)

Ratancand(2+2)

Unknown(1+1)

Arindam(1)

[Bhaktimati](1/2+1/2)

[Shanti](1/2+1/2)

[Kanti](1) → [Bhaktimati]/[Shanti]

[Unknown]

Unknown(1+1)

Radagabind(2)

[Jamuna](1)

[Narayani](1)

Unknown(1) → Unknown/Unknown

Unknown(1) → Unknown/Unknown

Let us now examine the historical evidence referring to the origin of the lineages of the Caudhuri in the village. The family of Raycaudhuri is scattered over the pargana Dhenya ("*pargana*" is a collection boundary of taxes in the Mugal period), which roughly corresponds to the Mangalkote block at present. This has handed down the main family of Raycaudhuri in the village Caitannyapur near Kaicaur at the eastern part of the Mangalkote Block. According to the chart, the actual founder of the lineage of Caudhuri in Kshiragram came from a lineage entitled "De" in the village Eruyar situated in the Bhatar block of today as shown in the following quotation:

> *The chart of the lineage of Raycaudhuri family...*
> *The original founder of this lineage (bangsha) is the Raja Udaycand Ray Deb Tatri Barnman. The people of him were a family entitled "De" in the pargana Dhenya, and their original gotra was "Bishnu" ...*
> *The original founder in the village Eruyar was Lakshan Candra, who came into the village in 1154 (Bengalisan; B.S.)...*
> *The original founder in the village Kshiragram was Badan Candra (his wife's name is Parbbati), who came into the village in 1182 (B.S.)...*
> *Ram Candra (his wife is Harasundari) lived in the village Caitannyapur in 1202 (B.S.)...*

These descriptions indicate that the original family of Raycaudhuri came into the village Eruyar around 1746/7 A.D. and they migrated from the village Eruyar to the village Kshiragram around 1774/5 A.D. and then to the village Caitannyapur around 1794/5 A.D. These suggest that Badan Candra Ray De is the original founder of the lineages of the Caudhuris of today in the village Kshiragram. Many of the elderly persons in the village say that all those who are called Caudhuri now used to be addressed as Ray by the other localities a few decades ago. Just after Independence, most of the members of the Ray in the village began to introduce themselves as the Caudhuri. This is supported by the fact that in the ritual of

the Jogaday temple, the Brahman-sebaits still call aloud their old titles such as Bara-Ray and Chota-Ray referring the present lineages of the Caudhuri.

We have some further clues from the materials inside the village to examine the origin of the lineages of the Caudhuri. It may be noticed that in the ritual discourse the titles of the lineages of the Caudhuris have five names. At the Jogadya temple, the Brahman-sebaits call aloud three titles of the Caudhuris; these are "Bara-Ray" , "Chota-Ray" , and "Caudhuri" . In addition to these titles, there is another one lineage called "Na-Ray" , which is one of the lineages of the Caudhuris organizing Durgapuja in the village. The old tradition in the village tells that the branches of "Meja-Ray" and "Seja-Ray" had migrated out from the village long time ago. These mean that the lineage of Caudhuri, which used to be called "Ray" , is composed of the five sub-lineages originating from the five brothers at a point of time. It is, therefore, possible to assume that each branch of the four lineages of Caudhuri of today had a common ancestor although now it is difficult to recognize them as of the same lineage. The upper lines of Diagram shows the reconstructed relationship about the original founder and the descendant of the Caudhuri.

As reported by an old man of the lineage Bara-Ray, their lineage began with Haradan who had two sons, namely Jaykali and Nahar as already mentioned. The younger generations of the lineage of today regard their ancestor as four brothers, namely Kunjalal, Ramlal, Shamlal, and Matilal. The father of the four brothers is Jaykali. Who is the father of Haradan could not be traced.

Their legendary ancestor was a local chief in former times. The name of the chief is Bararam Raycaudhuri and his original title was De. He came from the village Eruyar and had five sons. Bararam is the actual ancestor of the branch of Bara-Ray in Kshiragram and the eldest son of Bararam Raycaudhuri corresponds to the original founder of the Bara-Ray. These lead us to an assumption that the other lineages of the Na-Ray, Chota-Ray, and Caudhuri in the village share the same traditions as their ancestor with the Bara-Ray. The Chota-Ray had Udaynarayan Raycaudhuriit as their ancestor, who is supposed to be related by birth with

Bararam Raycaudhuri. This is the same case with the lineage of the Caudhuri of the village. According to a written document preserved in a family of the Caudhuri, their original ancestor is described as the Raja Bararam Raycaudhuri. Thus all can draw an inference that the members of the lineages holding the title Caudhuri at present in the village have the common ancestor, Bararam Raycaudhuri, as is shown already in Diagram.

The branches of "Bara-Ray", "Chota-Ray", and "Na-Ray" among the lineages of Caudhuri have performed the Durgapuja for generations. The ritual organizations within them bear the distinctive rotation system (sola-anna-puja) to maintain their rituals. The following discussion regarding the case of this system in the lineage of Bara-Ray shall indirectly support this assumption through the genealogy of the Bara-Ray.

c) The *Sola-anna-puja* of the Bara-Ray

The lineage of the Bara-Ray performs their own Durgapuja every autumn on the yearly shift among each head of the lineage. As is already discussed in chapter-III, it is the duty for the Brahman-sebait to perform the daily service every day without interruption, but in the case of Durgapuja, it is the responsibility of each lineage to continue their ritual every year for generations. This sort of organization of Durgapuja is also called "*sola-anna-puja*" in the village, in contrast to the modern style of Durgapuja in the towns, which is usually called "*barayaripuja*", or "*sarbajaninpuja*". Let us now look more carefully into the inner system of the ritual organization of Durgapuja in the localities.

The shift assigned to each head of the lineage means the duty to perform the Durgapuja in the allocated year according to the quota of each member. The quota (*angsha*) of each *angshidar* (holder of the quota) of the Bara-Ray is shown after each name in parentheses in the Diagram. Every member recognizes his own ratio, and their sons inherit the ratio attached to the duty and the right to perform the ritual of the lineage evenly from the father. The three sons of Rajkumar, for example, Parimal, Rathin, and Danday in the upper lines of Diagram think their

share of the ratio will be 1/6 *anna* each, after inheritance from their father. The quota of each member is always connected to the total sum (sixteen *anna*), and indicates the position of their own among all the members of the lineage. Parimal's ratio from 1/6 *anna*, therefore, will represents of 1/96 proportion of the total, if we calculate *sola-anna* as the unit (16:1/6 = 96:1). This means his duty to perform their lineage Durgapuja is once in every 96 years. In 1993, Rajkumar performed in practice the Durgapuja on behalf of the lineage. Because of his ratio of 1/2 *anna*, the next turn of his family in the lineage will be after thirty-two years (16:1/2 = 32:1). If the three sons have succeeded this duty, the sons would perform it every 32 years by turn. This means once in 96 years each. That is the quota of 1/96, namely 1/6 *anna*(1:1/96 = 16:1:/6). In the extreme case of Bagubat in the middle of Diagram, his four sons will succeed 1/24 *anna* each. This means the duty to perform the ritual will be in once in 384 years (16:1/24 = 384:1). It is not possible to discharge his duty during his lifetime.

Usually, the holder of the quota (*angshidar*) is the head of the household. Each head recognize the quota (*angsha*) of his own, which indicate directly his position among the members of the lineage. The duration to bear the duty as an *angshidar* is since the death of his father till his own death. During this period, when his quota falls under the sift of the yearly Durgapuja, he has to make all arrangements for the ritual and performs it pompously on behalf of the lineage. Only after the death of the head, the sons can succeed their own part of the quota. Then, he becomes an *angshidar*. But, about their potential position in the lineage, they can easily presume by way of the peculiar calculation system of *sola-anna*. In case of the family without successors such as no sons, they can transfer their quota to the other branches of the lineage. Normally, it is transferred to one's near kin. In the case of Rajkumar, his grandfather is Lakshinarayan held one *anna* as his quota of the ritual. He had three sons, and they succeeded to 1/3 *anna* each after his death. One of the sons, Anilkrishna, wanted to give up his duty and the quota on some personal reason. Then, he divided his quota into two (1/6) and gave it to his two elder brothers. As the result of this transfer, his two brother held

1/2 *anna* (1/3 + 1/6).

If any one *angshidar* of the lineage is missing, they can not continue to perform the ritual in its total form. Reckoning the quota of each *angshidar* of the lineage, each member can recognize easily the position of the ancestor as well as the other members in the lineage. For example, the father's quota is the sum of the quota among his brothers. The quota of the grandfather counts the total sum of his brothers and cousins. In this way, he can understand easily his position in the patrilineal relations of his lineage, if he knows the quota of each member. His upper generations always possess a relatively larger ratio and ultimately the original founder of the ritual holds the total amount of the quota, namely *sola-anna*.

In the case of the Bara-Ray, each *angshidar* recognizes precisely their own quota of the ritual still now, though they do not know who is the actual founder of the ritual. Through the quota keeping among the members, we can calculate the quota holding by the upper generations. As far as the villagers know, Lakshinarayan has one *anna*, and he had one younger brother. So that, we can estimate easily the father of Lakshinarayan had two *anna*, and Jaykali, the grandfather of Lakshinarayan, had eight *anna*, because he had four sons. Then, we can see that the holder of the *sola-anna* of the lineage was the father of Jaykali and Nahar, whose name is Haradan. All these make it clear that the actual founder of the ritual is Haradan, who is supposed to be the original founder of the lineage Bara-Ray as one of the lineages of Caudhuri in the village. This calculation on the ritual quota of the Bara-Ray supports what the old man of the Bara-Ray had said. All the members of the Bara-Ray are branched off from this original ritual founder and they can recognize the patrilineal relationship among them by way of the calculation of the quota of Durgapuja.

On the occasion of Durgapuja, the *angshidar* represents all the members of the lineage. As an *angshidar*, he is regarded as the symbol of totality of the lineage. If he fails to perform the ritual successfully, all the members of the lineage would think that they have to miss the favour of the goddess.

d) The offerings

At the altar of Kalibangra in Uttar-para, the lineage of Bara-Ray performs their Durgapuja jointly. It is the patron of the shift of the year among the people of the lineage who prepare the offerings by turns as mentioned below.

The sacrifices prepared by the *angshidar*

Male goat not emasculated

1 head	*Saptami*	Jogadya temple
1 head	*Dasami*	*Ugal-puja*
3 heads	*Saptami*	Kalibangla
	Sandhyipuja	Kalibangla
	Nabami	Kalibangla

Share in the three goats of *saptami*, *sandhyipuja*, and *nabami*

The hind legs for the *Candipath* and the *hom*

The heads of the three for the Karmakar

Sheep

1 head *Nabami*

Wax gourd

1 head *Nabami*

The other offerings

Bhujhu for the all housholds of Brahman in the village

Siddha-caul, vegetables 82 plates

Naibedya for the *pujari* and the *tantradharak* at the altar

Atop-caul (2.5Kg per day), vegetables 8 plates (for four days)

Dadibandya for the *pujari* and the *tantradharak*

Siddha-caul, *purna-patra*, *syajyeru-hari* 1 plate per day

Baran-bastra for the *pujari* and the *tantradharak* in the day of *sasthi*

Dhuti 2 pieces

Utsarga for four days

Sari 4 pieces for the *pujari* and the *tantradharak*

Gamca 4 pieces for the *pujari* and the *tantradharak*

Cadar 2 pieces for the *pujari* and the *tantradharak*

Gamca 2 pieces for the Candipatak and the *homa* in Nabami

Dakshina 5 Rs each for the *pujari* and the *tantradharak*

Kalapata-naibedya 1 plate per day for the *homa*

Bara-naibedya in the day of *astami*

Atop-caul (2lKg, 3 plates)

2 plates for the *pujari*, 1 plate for the *tantradharak*

Sweets and fruits for four days

for the *pujari* and the *tantradharak*

Banana 1 *kafun* for the *pujari* and the *tantradharak*

Dhādikarma

Cire, *murki*, *gur*, *dai*, and *siddhi*

for the assemblage, the *pujari*, and the *tantradharak*

The others

Baiti	*Naibedya*	4 plates
	Money	180 Rs
pujari	Money	151 Rs
tantradharak	Money	150 Rs

Naibedya donated by the *paladhar* of the year

Annabhog for the temple

Atop-caul (20Kg), vegetables, and spices

e) Durgapuja in the households

During the period of the Durgapuja of the temple Jogadya, the village people

have several ritual practices in their households. Mainly these rituals are performed by the dominant caste groups of the village such as the Brahman and the Ugra-Kshatriya, although some parts of the rituals are held by all the villagers.

i) The *puja* to *durgaghat*

The housewives of each household perform the ritual to a small pot, called "*durga-ghat*" (pot of the goddess Durga), at their household altars every day during the Durgapuja. In the day of *badnabami*, which is the ninth of the dark fortnight in the lunar month of Aswin, they bring out small copper pots in the houses at the signal of the sound of the drum by the Baiti in the temple Jogadya. Soon a procession of the pots starts from the Jogadya temple to the Khelapukur. They ordinarily draw water from the ponds neighboring their houses. But ritual march of the pots from the temple to draw the water from Khelapukur has become a part of the tradition. The housewives at the northern locality of the village hold the pot in their hands and stand on both sides of the street from the Khelapukur to the temple. They light incense and votive lights, and make a deep bow to the march of the pot on the street. Then, they bring back their pots to their houses to enshrine on the altar and put a twig of *bel* onto the pots. They perform same ritual associated with the pots every morning and evening. Most of the households of the dominant castes of the village enshrine them in their houses except for the families belonging to the lineages which organize Durgapuja of the locality such as the Bara-Ray and the Na-Ray.

They bring out the pots to the neighboring ponds again in the day of *caturthipatrika*, which is the fourth of the bright fortnight, and replace the water at the signal of the *caturthipatrika-snan* by the Baiti at the temple. In the day of *nabapatrika-snan*, which is on the seventh of the bright fortnight they repeat the performance for the third time to the sound of the Baiti. They continue to perform the *puja* to the pot twice a day until the day of *Vijay-dasami*, which is the tenth of the bright fortnight. At the time of *bisarjan* of the *nabapatrika* at the altars, they bring out the pots along with the procession of the *nabapatrika* and

throw the water inside the pots into the ponds.

Some households of the Brahman-sebait in the village perform this ritual in a little different way. They draw the water in the day of *bodhan*, and throw the water in the early morning the next day. They draw again in the day of *caturthipatrika-snan* and throw it the next morning. They perform the *puja* to the pots only during the four days from the day of *saptamipuja* to *Vijay-dasami*. They throw the water at the time of *bisarjan* in the end.

ii) *Tarpan*

After the *nabami-bodhan* in the day of the dark fortnight, the households of the Brahman perform the ritual for the ancestors of the seven generations. That is called "*tarpan*". The Brahman-purohits perform *tarpan* every morning from the day of *Nabami-bodhan* till the day of *Mahalay* in their houses. Some devout families of the dominant castes perform it too, although they need the guidance of their *kula-purohits*. The day of *Mahalay* is in the new moon before Durgapuja. It is generally supposed as the day of beginning to recite the sacred teach of the goddess Durga (the story of the *Mahishasramardini*) and the final day of *tarpan* for ancestors as well. On this day, the *kula-purohits* bring the heads of the jajman families to the ablution bank of the Ganga and perform the ritual called *tarpan-sraddha* to them. The sequence of the *tarpan-sraddha* is as follows in the village. 1) *risitarpan*, 2) *debtarpan*, 3) *manushtarpan*, 4) *bistatarpan*, 5) *jamtarpan*, 6) *ramtarpan*, 7) *lakshantarpan*, and 8) *agyattarpan*. These rituals consist roughly of the three steps of reception, namely, reception for the spirits of the seven generations of their ancestors, the various kinds of deities, and the reception for the *kula-purohits*.

Chapter-VII Manasapuja among the lower castes

In this chapter, we shall discuss a ritual of serpent worship called "Manasapuja" , which is one of the famous folk cults in rural Bengal. Manasapuja is usually observed on the last day of the lunar month of Bhadra (*bhadra-sankranti*). But, the series of the ritual complex with regard to the goddess Manasa actually starts on the day of the tenth of bright fortnight in the lunar month of Asar. Some parts it continues until on the day of *bisarjan* in Durgapuja in the village. Manasapuja is the biggest ritual occasion for the lower castes in the village. The priest of the Bagdi (*deyasin*) performs the most important role in the ritual course. The analysis on this ritual will, therefore, bring us a perspective to see the village social structure from the stand point of the lower castes. To use the phrase adopted by Menchar [1974], we can see the village structure by the view of "bottom up" of the village.

1. The composition of the cult of the goddess Manasa

The Manasa temple is situated in the locality of Manasa-para at the north eastern side of the village. It is the main place for worship of the goddess Manasa in the village. The majority of this locality is Kusmethi-Bagdi who worship the goddess. In the country of Rarh (roughly corresponds to the present districts of Birbhum, Bankra, Purulia, and Bardhaman), the cult of the goddess Manasa enjoys great popularity in the rural area. The main worshippers belong to the lower castes such as the Bagdi, the Bauri, and the Muci. The snake goddess has always the ambiguous meanings in the sphere of the folk culture. Because, the goddess Manasa always makes her appearance as the highly poisonous snake and at the same time she would become the benevolent goddess to protect the people from the danger

of snake bite. It is the deadly poison of the snake that the people fear, when they move along the fields, in the rainy season. The people pray to the goddess Manasa for their protection and cure from the poisoning.

At the Manasa temple in the village the people of Manasa-para perform the the worship. At the time of periodical rituals such as Manasapuja, they dedicate many offerings to the goddess. The priest of the temple is called "*deyasin*" who belongs to the Kusmethi-Bagdi caste. He performs the daily service at the temple and leads the other service castes and the worshippers in the special ritual occasions. He took initiation as priest of the goddess Manasa from a spiritual master (*diksha-guru*) of another village and can recite the sacred verses of the goddess. He is usually called "*ojha*" in the village who has the special skill for handling snake. *Ojha* is usually a kind of medicine man and a snake charmer in rural area. However, at the Manasa temple, the priest of the Kusmethi-Bagdi has not only the knowledge on the herbs as an *ojha*, but he also was given the special authority by the Maharaja of Bardhaman as a *deyasin* of the Manasa temple in the village. The family of *deyasin* is endowed with the tax-exempt lands for his duty of the daily service and the ritual performance in the Manasapuja. Except for the *deyasin* of the family, nobody can perform the rituals at the temple. Even the Brahman priest in the village has no right to receive the offerings during the rituals. The ritual organization for the Manasapuja is as follows:

Deyasin; a member of the Kusmethi-Bagdi lineage which was endowed with land by the Maharaja

Drummer; a member of the lineage who plays drum in the Jogadya temple

Malakar; a member of the lineage who works in the Jogadya temple

The lineages of the Drummer and the Malakar are the same in the ritual of the Jogadya temple. These three members are given the posts by the Maharaja and have

the duty for the occasional rituals in the Manasa temple. Moreover, they have equal right to share the offerings after the ritual.

Although the Manasa temple is the most influential place of the cult of Manasa in the village, there are many other places to worship the goddess such as the small shrines (*manasa-tala*), the small altars in the gardens, and the wild trees of Manasa (*manasa-gac*). The following is the list of the places to worship the goddess in the village:

1) The Manasa temple
2) *Manasa-tala* (eight places)
3) The courtyards of the Brahman
4) The courtyards of the Muci
5) The kitchens of the Ugra-Kshatriya

The *manasa-tala* means the small shrine for the goddess under the Manasa plant. There are eight places for the goddess Manasa in the village, namely the locality of the Dom (Bagal-para), the locality of the Muci (Das-para), the Kusmethi-Bagdi in the eastern side of the village (Purba-para), the Bauri in the south fringe of the village (Damacipukuru-para), the Tetuliya-Bagdi in the western side of the village (Kshirdighi-para), the household of a Caudhuri family (Uttar-para), the household of Gyan Kundu, and the household of a Bauri family. The shrines managed by the localities belong to the lower castes in the village. Only two families, a Caudhuri and Gyan Kundu, belong to the Ugra-Kshatriya. They founded the shrines privately. There are many small altars even in the courtyards as kitchens of the households of the Brahman, the Muci, and the Ugra-Kshatriya in the village. These are temporary altars under a small plants of Manasa. Neverthless, they observe rituals for the goddess seriously. In the households of the Brahman and the Muci, they perform the rituals at their courtyards during the periods from

Table-20 Sequences of Manasapuja by locations

Location	*Dasahara*	*Panchami*	*Sesipanch.*	Bhadra.	Aswin.
Manasa temple	◎	○	○	◎	
Bauri-para	○	○	○	◎	
Das-para	○	○	○	◎	
Purba-para	○	○	○	◎	
Kshirdighi	○	○	○	◎	
Gyan Kundu	○	○	○	◎	
Caudhuri	○	○	◎		
Bagal-para	○	○	◎		
Muci H.H.	○	○	◎		○
Brahman H.H.	○	○	○		○
Ugra-Kshatriya H.H.			○		

Abbreviation:

a) *panchami*; *Panchamis* in every lunar month(*pratan-sesh*)

b) *Sesipanch.* ; *Sesi-panchami*

c) Bhadra. ; *Bhadra-sankranti*

d) Aswin; *Bisarjan* in Durgapuja

e) P*uja* ; ○

f) Sacrifice ; ◎

g) Offering ; △

the day of *dasahara* to the day of *bisarjan* in the Durgapuja. Only the households of the Ugra-Kshatriya put their altars near the hearth at their kitchens in the day of *sesi-panchami*. The main occasions to perform the rituals for the goddess are shown in Table-20.

The day of *dasahara* related to Manasapuja means the 10th day of the bright fortnight in the lunar month of Asar. The ritual of the goddess Manasa begins that day at every altar of the Manasa without in the kitchens of the Ugra-Kshatriya. The days of *panchami* mean the fifth day of the bright and the dark fort night in the month of Asar and Sraban after the day of *dasahara*. It is called *sesi-panchami* in particular that is the last day of the *panchami*, which means the last *panchami* in the bright or dark fortnight before the day of *sraban-sankranti*. The most important day for the Manasapuja is *bhadra-sankranti*, which is the end of the month of Bhadra, though the rituals in the temple of Manasa starts two days before *bhadra-sankranti*. In cities like Calcutta, the day of *bhadra-sankranti* falls on the day of Vishwakarma-puja. But, in the rural area of Bengal, it is still very popular as the day for the Manasapuja in many villages.

The *bisarjan* of Durgapuja means the tenth bright fortnight in the month of Aswin. In this day, twigs of the Manasa plants also join the procession to the pond of Kshirdighi along with the processions of the *nabapatrikas* to be thrown into the pond. The following cases will supply further information in this respect.

2. Manasa temple

a) *dasahara*

On the tenth day of the lunar month of Asar, the people of the locality of the Manasa temple worship to the earthen pot enshrined in the temple Manasa. In the morning, people come to the Manasa temple and dedicate offerings at the altar. The Malakar prepares a basket of flowers to dedicate to the goddess. The Baiti comes to play his drum telling the time of the beginning of the Manasapuja in the

morning of *dasahara*. The Malakar and the Baiti are of the same lineages who have duties for the rituals at the Jogadya temple. At the altar of the temple Manasa, the Bagdi priest prepares for offerings, water of the Ganga, and the ritual utensils for the goddess. He belongs to the lineage of Kusmethi-Bagdi, to whom the Maharaja of Bardhaman endowed tax exempt lands. He lives in the house next to the temple in the locality of Manasa-para.

The Bagdi priest at the Manasa temple prepares the votive lights and incenses. First, he purifies himself with sacred water of the Ganga, and he sprinkles the water and the flowers over the altar. The next step in the ritual is *sankalpa*. The priest proclaims the beginning of Manasapuja at the altar in the name of the Maharaja Bardhaman. Then, he invokes the goddess Manasa at the altar. He dedicates through sacred verses various offerings to the earthen pot of the goddess (*Manasa-ghat*). In the same way as the Brahman priest in the temple, he holds lights, flowers, and offerings in his hand, and performs *arati*, and reception to the goddess. After the ritual reception to the goddess, he leads the procession of the pot of the goddess to the bank of a pond called Natun-pukur.

With the sound of the drum, the Bagdi priest holds the pot of the goddess in his hand, and brings it to the bank next to their locality. At first, he himself bathes in waste-deep pond and then get the pot an ablution. He puts the pot down on the ground, and performs the ritual with flowers and sacred water with recitation of sacred verses. The Baiti stands beside him and plays the drum in a specified rhythm for the goddess Manasa. Then they return to the temple and the priest enshrines the pot at the altar of the temple again. Next is the sacrifice to the goddess Manasa. They prepare for an uncastrated goat and a few geese at the square in front of the temple. People of the locality gather around the square of the temple. The goat is donated by the Bagdi priest and the geese are the personal offerings. After purification of the animals and birds with sacred verses, they set up a block for sacrifices in front of the temple, and hold down the body of the goat. With the sounds of the drum, a Bagdi youth cuts down the head of the goat with a sword. They pour the blood from the beheaded body to the wall of the Manasa

temple and the head is dedicated on the altar. Then, they sacrifice the geese to the goddess. Finally, the Baiti plays the drum announcing the end of the ritual.

After a series of rituals, the Bagdi priest prepares a big earthenware pot on the exterior of his house. Before ten days, he prepared local liquor fermented from rice in the pot. This liquor is commonly called *pacui* in Bengali. This pot is called *bharar*, and the ritual associated with the pot is called *bharar-puja*. He also performs same ritual associated with the pot on the veranda in the afternoon and then treats the men of the locality with drinks. The priest, the participants in the ritual of the day, and the women who dedicated offerings to the goddess are required to observe a fast (*upas*) from the morning until the end of the ritual. After that, they can eat *cire* soaked in the water, but do not allow to eat boiled rice and food made from flour that day.

b) The distribution of the offerings

There are two occasions to dedicate offerings to the Manasa temple, namely the direct dedication and through making collection by the wife of the Bagdi priest. The first is the dedication by the worshippers who came to the temple from the locality of Manasa-para and the neighboring localities such as Caudhuri, Samant, and Brahman. Most of the worshippers are housewives of each locality. From the morning until the start of the ritual, they bring the plates of offerings to the temple on behalf of their family. The main items to offer to the goddess are fruits, vegetables, rice, *gur*, *sarsa-teil*, milk, and *sindur*. They hand over the plates to the Bagdi priest of the temple and make a deep bow to the goddess. The priest adds the offerings to those already in a basket on the altar. Then, he picks up a little amount of them from the basket as *prasad* and returns the plates to the dedicators with the *prasad* of the goddess. The major part of the offerings is left in the basket on the altar. The piles of the offerings are then shared equally among the Malakar, the Baiti, and the Bagdi priest once the ritual is over.

The second occasion to dedicate the offerings is making a collection from every house in the village by the wife of the Bagdi priest (*deyasini*). It is

called "*bari-adaye*" in Bengali. She visits mainly the households of the upper castes of the village (*bara-lok*) such as the localities of Samant-para, Datta-para, Josh-para, and Gosh-para. The circuit which she makes around the village covers nearly the whole area of the upper class localities except for the locality of the Caudhuri. The main items of offerings are more or less the same as in the temple. She goes round every house of the localities carrying a big basket under her arm. In the houses of *bara-lok*, she sits down on the ground of the courtyards. The housewife puts the offerings into her basket. Usually, it is prepared in their household altars in the early morning.

The wife of the priest only receives the offerings but does not return anything as *prasad*. Her basket gets heaped up high with offerings soon. The total amount of offerings after the making collection of the village is equivalent to several baskets. These offerings are dedicated to the temple Manasa once and become their share afterwards. Like the Bagdi priest, his wife also got initiation with the sacred verses for the goddess Manasa from their spiritual master (*diksha-guru*) from a remote village. She also could perform the ritual service on behalf of her husband at the Manasa temple.

b) The ritual in each day of *panchami*

The rituals in each day of *panchami* are performed in the fifth of both the bright fortnight and the dark fortnight in the lunar month of Asar and Sraban. It counts, therefore, four or five times according to the almanac of the year. It is called "*panchamipuja*" generally in the village. The ritual sequence is almost the same as the ritual in the day of *dasahara* in the month of Asar. But, in these *pujas*, they have no performances for ablution of the pot, sacrifices, or *bhararpuja*. The villagers only visit the temple to dedicate their offerings for the goddess Manasa. The quantity of the offerings is not much on the day of *dasahara*. The Malakar, the Baiti, and the Bagdi priest share them equally after the *puja*. The wife of the Bagdi priest goes round the village to collect the offerings from among the households as usual.

c) *Bhadra-sankranti*

The rituals in the Manasa temple are performed for three days, beginning from two days before the end of the lunar month of Bhadra. During the three days, the Bagdi priest of the Manasa temple carries the pot of the goddess Manasa in his arms and makes a round of the village. On the final day, he calls at the Jogadya temple and on the *Rajkachari* at the temple who makes a bow to the pot of the goddess Manasa.

During the two days before the day of *bhadra-sankranti*, the Baiti plays his drum in front of the temple of Manasa once in the morning announcing the beginning of the first day of the Manasapuja. In the evening, the Bagdi priest starts his ritual in the name of the Maharaja of Bardhamna at the altar of the temple and performs the ritual reception to the pot of the goddess Manasa. He carries the pot in his arms and goes round the temple once and then he starts to go round the village accompanying the Baiti. This procession of the pot of the goddess Manasa proceeds to a small altar at the foot of the Manasa (*Manasa-tala*) plant in the locality of Kshirdighi-para in the western side of the village. The villagers at the both sides of the streets hold flaming torches in their hands to illuminate the path of the procession. At each lane in the village, they make a bonfire and light torches over them, particularly in the localities of the lower castes. In the light and deep smoke of the fire, the pot of the goddess in the arms of the Bagdi priest moves. This procession of the pot repeats three times during the three days. Especially, in the end of the lunar month of Bhadra, they have more elaborated sequence of rituals than in the other days including the sacrifice. Let us now examine in detail the process of the ritual on the day of *bhadra-sankranti*.

The Baiti plays his drum five times in the end of the month of Bhadra. After the first play in the early morning announcing the beginning of the ritual, the people of the locality come to the Manasa temple to dedicate the offerings. At the signal of the drum for the second time in the early afternoon, the people of every locality of the village gather around the temple carrying the goose severally in their hands. The Bagdi priest begins his ritual at the temple altar in the same

way as in *dasahara*. The youth in the locality of Manasa-para set up for block of sacrifice at the square of the temple. The priest purifies the sword at the altar. The square is filled with a large crowd surrounding the temple. The villagers bring the goose to the altar of the temple for purification. The priest dedicates every geese once in the altar. He sprinkles sacred water over them and chants sacred verses.

The ritual of sacrifice begins after the purification by the priest all goose brought there. At first, they sacrifice an uncastrated male goat dedicated by the family of the Bagdi priest with drum beats by the Baiti. The youth of the lineage of the Bagdi *paiks* hold down the body of the goat to the block and hold up the sword. After sacrifice, the blood of the goat is poured to the wall of the temple. The body and the head are then dedicated at the altar. The next sacrifice is of rams, which are offered by the some private worshippers. The way of the sacrifice is the same as the goat. Finally, they sacrifice the goose. The people bring the goose to the block in front of the temple one after another. The youth of the locality sacrifice them successively. At the altar of the temple, the priest performs the ritual to dedicate the heads of the goose bringing them from the block immediately after their sacrifice. As the number of the goose is very large, it takes time to complete dedication of all the goose. The donators receive the beheaded bodies of the goose and carry them home as *mahaprasad* of the goddess Manasa.

After the sacrifice of all goose brought there, they perform the ritual sacrifice to a few wax gourds and sugar canes in the ends. They put a wax gourd on a sheaf of straw on the ground. Just the same way as the sacrifice to the animals, they hold up the sword and cut down the gourd into two pieces. Immediately after that, the pieces of the gourd are thrown over the head of the sacrificer to the people gathering around. They rush to catch and scramble for a piece. After the sacrifice of wax gourds, they put a trunk of sugar cane on the straw. After its sacrifice, the people scramble for pieces again. It repeats four or five times in case of sugar canes. People bring pieces of wax gourds and

sugar canes to their respective house and put them into the manure pit. After all the sacrifices, the people around receive some offerings from the hand of the Bagdi priest as *prasad*.

The Baiti plays his drum for the fourth time in the day a little while after the sacrifice. With the sound of the drum, the priest carries the pot in his arms and goes round the temple building once. He makes a temporary altar for the pot outside veranda of his house. It is situated next to the temple. He dedicates a basket piled up with the offerings and places the ritual utensils aside. He enshrines the pot at the centre of the altar. Many floral garlands dedicated by the villagers are put on the pot. Besides, three flat baskets with coveres are dedicated beside the pot. Inside of these baskets, three poisonous snakes are put severally. The *ojha* in the locality caught these snakes alive. He extracted the venoms of the snakes and kept them inside the baskets. These snakes are necessary for the ritual songs called *jhapan-gan*. These songs are performed the day after the *bhadra-sankranti*. Nobady is allowed to open the baskets with snakes inside to the public before the day of *jhapan-gan*.

In the evening of the day, people of the locality gather in the square of the Manasa temple. When it gets dark, they light the torches of straw and the leaves of palmyra in their hands and make bonfires in the square. Being thick with the white smoke of the fires in the square, the Baiti plays his drum for the fifth time in the day. This notifies the hour to start the procession of the goddess Manasa. The Bagdi priest carries the pot to the veranda in his arms and sets out for the procession of the goddess. The priest is attended by many followers such as persons sprinkling the sacred water over the pot, making the smoke by the incense burner, holding the ritual utensils in their hands, playing the drum and so forth. All members of the procession get illuminated by the fire of the torches of the people in each locality. The procession proceeds through the dense smoke of the torches, the bonfires, and the incense.

At first, they pass through the locality of the Caudhuri and turns to toward left to the Jogadya temple. The people on both sides of the streets lit fire to

watch the procession passing off. They go through the locality of the Brahman and enter into the ground of the Jogadya temple at the gate of *kachari-bari* in the north eastern side of the temple. Many villagers already assembled there for arrival of the procession. They also hold torches in their hands. At the center portion of the square in front of *kachari-bari*, they set up a small altar to enshrine the pot of the goddess Manasa for a while. The *Raljkachari* who supervises the organization of the temple Jogadya stands at the middle of a row in front of the altar. The Bagdi priest carrying the pot in his arms proceeds to the *Rajkachari* and puts it down at the altar. The Rajkachari lights a flaming torch in his hand over the pot and offers his reception. The Bagdi priest sits down there and begins his *puja* to the pot. Afterwards, he gives a *phonta* of *sindur* on the forehead of the *Rajkachari*. The priest picks up one of the floral garlands put on the pot and puts it around the neck of the *Rajkachari*. The *Rajkachari* makes a deep bow to the ground in front of the pot of the goddess where the priest is sitting before it. Then, the priest carries the pot again in his arms and leads the procession to the locality of Kshirdighi-para. The route of the procession is from the gate of *kachari-bari* of the Jogadya temple where they entered, through the locality of the Brahman, the branch street beside the temple of Kshideshwari, the locality of Josh-para, and again through the main street of the village to the small altar of Manasa in the locality of Kshirdighi-para. On either side of the street and corners of the village, the people throng to see the procession and hold up the torches in their hands over them. Everybody surrounding there are almost chocked by the smoke of the fire and the congestion.

At the altar of the Manasa tree in the locality of Kshirdighi-para, the people of the locality gather and dedicate offerings in front of the MAnasa plant. The priest in this locality (*deyasin*) already prepared for the ritual. They all belong to the sub-caste of Ketuliya-Bagdi. The people in the locality of Manasa-para belong to the Kshmethi-Bagdi sub-caste. When the procession arrives at the altar, the priest of Manasa-para puts down the pot at the middle of the altar and sits down. The priest of Kshirdighi-para also sits down aside him. They make ritual

offerings to the pot and dedicate the offerings on the altar. The priest of Manasa-para picks up one of the garlands on the pot, and puts it around the neck of the priest beside him. He also gives a *phonta* of *sindur* on the forehead of the priest of Kshirdighi-para and then to the forehead of every member of the locality surrounding there one after another.

After the ritual at the altar of Kshirdighi-para, they go to another altar of Manasa at the neighboring house of a family of the Bauri caste in the locality of Pashcim-para. The priest performs the ritual to the pot again in the same way as in the locality of Kshirdighi-para. He offers a garland and a *phonta* to the head of the family of the Bauri sitting beside him. Then, the procession returns to the streets inside the village by way of the locality of Datta-para and the main street facing the Jogadya temple. They pass along the locality of Samant-para, and returns to the Manasa temple in the locality of Manasa-para. It is customary for the villagers who see the procession off on the streets to say the following phrase to their family at the gate of the house when they enter:

"Ghare Kena Alo ?"

(Why is a light burning in the house ?)

The family answer:

"Ginni Gechen Ban Berate. Sabai Ache Bhalo. "

(The housewife has gone out to the woods. Everybody is fine.)

After recitation of these phrases, they enter the house. It is said that the housewife (*ginni*) in this sentence means the goddess Manasa and her going out to the woods means the procession of the goddess going round the village. The ritual of Manasapuja comes to an end at this point. The villagers add the ashes of the

torches and the bonfires to their manures for their agricultural fields.

3. The small altars of Manasa (*manasa-tala*)

At the temples, small shrines, or the altars of the goddess Manasa, there is always an association of Manasa (*manasa-gac*) plant. It is believed that the Manasa plant is the abode of the goddess and in many cases, the plant itself symbolise the goddess. In the village, there are the eight shrines with Manasa plants to worship the goddess. They have a small altar to perform the ritual in front of the plants, but most of them are only a bush tree without a paling except for the days of the Manasapuja. During the days of the ritual, they decorate the bush with garlands, enshrine a pot for rituals, and dedicate many plates of offerings. In many altars of the plants, they invite the Brahman-priest of the village to perform the ritual, instead of the *deyasin*s or the women of the locality who usually worship trees. The following descriptions will outline in brief the rituals observed at each altar of the Manasa in the village.

a) The locality of Dom

The biggest Manasa bush in the village is in the locality of the Dom at the eastern fringe of the village. This locality is called Bagal-para. Many villagers even from the locality of the Brahman and the Ugra-Kshatriya come to fetch the twigs from the thickly grown branches of Manasa in case of need for their rituals. The households of the Dom caste have the title Pandit. Some other families belonging to the Kusmethi-Bagdi section came afterward into the locality and made up now a mixed community with them.

At the foot of the Manasa tree, they have the ritual for the goddess in the days of *dasahara*, each *panchami*, and *bhadra-sankranti*. The ritual process is not so complicated as in the Manasa temple. Except for the day of the last *panchami*

(*sesi-panchami*), a priest of the locality performs a ritual which consists of dedications of flowers, sweets, fruits, and the sacred water to the foot of the bush. The people of the locality prepare for these offerings to the goddess. None of the priests of the Brahman caste come to perform the ritual to the tree. The Bagdi priest of the Manasa temple and the Baiti playing the drum drop in the place at the time of their procession in *dasahara* but never perform the ritual there. They have their own priest who succeeds the ritual night for generations within the lineage of the Dom. At present, an old widow of the locality (*deyasini*) takes it over and continues to perform the ritual. She performs the daily service for the goddess in the morning and the evening and in rituals on special occasions.

The most important occasion of rituals of the year is on the last day of *panchami* (*sesi-panchami*). Only this time every household of the locality offers goose for sacrifice to the goddess Manasa at the foot of the tree. They can also offer to the goddess womething else for fulfillment of some personal prayers but it is the only day to perform the sacrifice by all the households in the locality. They prepare some special dishes for the goddess and for themselves. Nowadays, they arrange loud speakers for music like a function in the marriage ceremony. They can enjoy it for a whole day. In other localities, the rituals of the last *panchami* are almost the same as in other days of *panchami*. Hence, only this locality has a special arrangement to enjoy the festivity in the village on this day.

b) The locality of Das-para

The locality of Das-para is a large one situated in the northern fringe of the village. The people here belong to the Muci caste. The priest of the altar of Manasa planted a bush by the side of the neighboring road a few years ago. He is called *ojha* by the villager. He brought a branch of the plant from the yard of the house of Gyan Kundu. The people in the locality of Das-para used to come to worship goddess Manasa at the place of Gyan Kundu. The late Gyan Kundu was known

for his expertise in the ritual of the goddess Manasa and as *ojha*. He brought the bush of Manasa for the Manasa temple and planted it in his own house.

The *ojha* in Das-para belonging to the Muci caste assisted Gyan Kundu. On occasion of Manasapuja at his altar. He learned much of the skills as *ojha* from Gyan Kundu and took even an initiation of the sacred verses from him. Then he became an *ojha* in Das-para. Now he performs daily service to the goddess Manasa at the altar of the Manasa bush planted by himself.

The rituals of Manasapuja, as already indicated, are performed on the days of *dasahara*, each *panchami*, and *bhadra-sankranti* in the locality. In all these days the *ojha* of Das-para himself performs the ritual at the altar. Only on the day of *bhadra-sankranti*, the Brahman priest of the village is invited to perform the ritual. On this day, they dedicate the snakes to the goddess at the altar. These snakes are used in the ritual songs called *jhapan-gan* held after the day of *bhadra-sankranti*. The *ojha* performs his ritual by purification and the ritual reception of the goddess in the same way as the Brahman priests do in other rituals. On each day of the rituals people of the locality dedicate offerings such as sweets, flowers, and fruits to the goddess from early in the morning. Many of the housewives observe fast until the end of the ritual in the afternoon. They can, however, eat soaked *cire* and *muri* afterwards, but not eat boiled rice and preparationof flour. They have no sacrifice at the altar. They only dedicate the goose to the goddess on the day of the last *panchami* at their yard of the house.

c) The locality of Purba-para

The locality of Purba-para situated in the south eastern fringe of the village, is inhabited by the Kusmethi-Bagdi. The locality of Manasa-para is also inhabited by the Kusmethi- Bagdi. It is said that the people in Purba-para actually migrated from Manasa-para. They used to come to the temple Manasa in the locality of Manasa-para so as to dedicate offerings to the goddess on the days of Manasapuja. Nowadays, they perform their ritual at the own altar at the foot of

a small bush of Manasa in the corner of the locality. After some disputes with the people of Manasa-para, they planted the Manasa bush and built as altar a few years ago. They have no priest of their own so far. Usually, the women in the locality come to worship and dedicate some offerings to the altar in the morning and evening. On special occasions, they invite a Brahman priest in the village in order to perform the ritual. On the days of *dasahara*, each *panchami*, and *bhadra-sankranti* the Brahman priest visits to the altar and performs the *puja*.

d) The locality of Damacipukur-para

The locality of Damacipukuru-para is situated at the outskirt of the village toward south. There the people have an altar of Manasa beside an altar of goddess Kali. The inhabitants belong to the Bauri caste. The *ojha* of the locality of Das-para used come to perform the ritual of Manasapuja to the altar. After foundation of their own altar at Das-para, he transferred his right to perform the ritual to a man of the Bauri caste of this locality. The house of his family is located in front of the altar of the Manasa tree. He is a head of the family. In the rituals of Manasapuja, he performs in the name of this locality. He is, therefore, called the *deyasin* in this locality.

He performs the rituals at the foot of the bush in the days of *dasahara*, each *panchami*, and *bhadra-sankranti*. Usually he dedicates the sacred water, *sindur*, and flowers to the tree and performs the ritual with the sacred verses. Only on the day of *bhadra-sankranti*, every family of the locality dedicates a goose to sacrifice to the goddess along with many other offerings. They have no Brahman priest so far.

e) The altar of Gyan Kundu in his yard

Gyan Kundu was a well known person about his experiences in the skill as *ojha* in the village. It is well known too that he trained many disciples and made them *ojhas*. After his death, there are three other who are considered experts in the

technique of *ojha* in the village. All of them learned it from him. The villagers believe that an *ojha* can cure snake bite and other diseases by supplying various herbs and amulets. Especially, he can counteract the venomous snake bites, which otherwise may cause death in many cases. In the folk-belief, the Manasa tree regarded as an effective antidote to venomous snake bite. The *ojha*, sometimes the ordinary villagers also, plant Manasa trees in their garden for use in treatment in case of snake bites. It is necessary to make ritual services to the Manasa tree in their garden as an incarnation of the goddess Manasa.

In the garden of the house of Gyan Kundu, he planted a fine tree of Manasa for the purpose of his works as an *ojha*. At that time, it is said that he offered a prayer to the goddess Manasa in the Manasa temple and brought the spirit of the deity to the tree so as to build the Manasa altar newly in his garden. Then, he started to perform the ritual to the Manasa tree. After the migration of his family outside the village, the ritual to the Manasa tree has been continued by the *ojha* of Das-para. The neighboring people dedicate offerings to propitiate the deity. They perform special ritual on the days of *dasahara*, each *pnachami*, and *bhdra-sankranti*. On these occasions, a priest of the lineage of Bhattacharyya comes to perform the ritual to the tree. He was the family priest (*kula-purohit*) of Gyan Kundu.

f) The household altar of the family of Caudhuri

In the locality of the Caudhuri (Uttar-para) in the village, there is a small altar of Manasa by the side of the street. It is said that at the time of marriage of the former head of the family, the bride brought a branch of Manasa tree along with her trousseau from her native house in the village Kaicaur. She planted the tree at this place and this is the origin of their Manasapuja at this altar. The ritual at the foot of the tree is, therefore, connected with the ritual in the village Kaicaur. The Brahman priest who comes to the altar to perform the ritual for the goddess is the *kula-purohit* of the family. He performs rituals on the days of *dasahara* and each *panchami*. The day of the last *panchami* (*sesi-*

panchami) is the biggest occasion for them to offer sacrifice of an unacastrated goat for the goddess. But, they have no rituals on the day of *bhadra-sankranti* within the family. This reflects the same pattern as in the village Kaicaur.

g) The household altar of the Bauri caste in the locality of Pashcim-para

In the yard of a house of the Bauri caste in the eastern side of the village, that is called Pashcin-para, they have an altar beside their household of *tulsi-gac*. Usually, the housewife of the family make offerings to the altars every day. Only on the day of *bhadra-sankranti*, they invite a Brahman priest who is their *kula-purohit* to perform the ritual of the goddess Manasa. They have to sacrifice an uncastrated goat for the goddess and the neighboring people dedicate the goose. In the evening of *bhadra-sankranti* the Bagdi priest of the Manasa temple visits to the altar on their way back to the Manasa temple carrying the pot of the goddess in his arms. He performs the ritual at the altar in company with the head of the family.

h) The locality of Tetuliya-Bagdi (Kshirdighi-para)

Beside the square of the Kshirdighi-para, they have an altar of Manasa. This is the dwelling of the Tetuliya-Bagdi. Usually, women of the locality make offerings to the goddess Manasa at the altar every day. The head of the family, that is, the lineage of Bhuniya located in front of the altar, succeeds the position of *deyasin* of the goddess for generations. He performs the ritual in the days of *dasahara*, each *panchami*, and *bhadra-sankranti* at the altar. The family of Bhuniya performs a sacrifice of an uncastrated goat on the day of *bhadra-sankranti*. The Brahman priest, who is the *kula-purohit* of the family, comes to perform the ritual. Each household of the locality dedicate a goose for sacrifice to the goddess. In the evening, the people in the locality with flaming torches in their hands await arrival of the procession of the pot from the Manasa temple. The Bagdi priest who

belongs to the Kusmethi-Bagdi section of Manasa-para sits down and performs the ritual in front of the altar. The *deyasin* of the locality of Kshirdighi-para sits beside him. As a representative of the locality, the *deyasin* puts a garland for the goddess on the pot.

Table-21 and 22 show the caste affiliation of each priest at the Manasa altars, distribution of main worshippers of the Manasa rituals, and genealogical relations centering around each altar.

Table-21 Caste affiliation of priests of Manasa

(*Dyasin*; ◎、*Purohit*; ○、other; △)

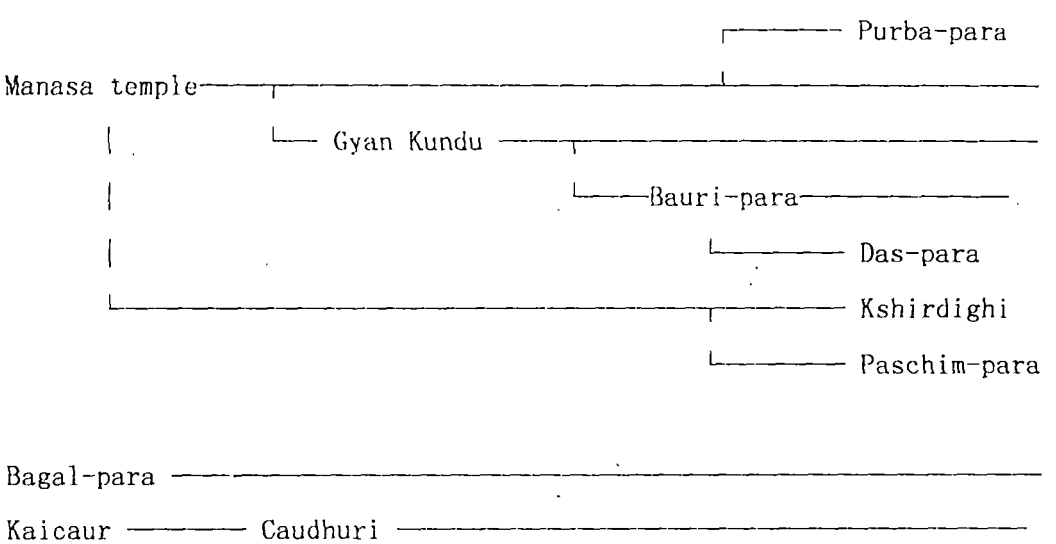
	Bagdi	Bauri	Muci	Dom	Brahman	Ugra-Kshatriya
Manasa temple	◎					
Bagal-para				◎		
Bauri-para		◎	△			
Das-para			◎		○	
Kshirdighi	◎				○	
Gyan Kundu					○	(◎)
Purba-para	△				○	
Caudhuri					○	

Table-22 Distribution of worshippers of Manasa

(total participation ; ◎、 partial participation ; ○)

	Brah.	UKY	Bagdi	Muci	Bauri	Dom	Other
Manasa temple	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎
Bagal-para						◎	
Bauri-para					◎		
Das-para				◎			
Kshirdighi			○				
Purba-para			○				
Gyan Kundu	○	○	○				○
Caudhuri		○					

Diagram-3 Distribution of *manasa-talas*



4. At the altars in the households

a) The households of the Brahman

On the day before *dasahara*, every household of the Brahman caste in the village fetch a twig of Manasa tree from the field and plant at the courtyard of their own houses. They ordinarily plant the twig beside the household shrine of *tulasi-gac*. On the day of *dasahara*, they invite the Brahman priest of their family (*kula-purohit*) to perform the ritual to the goddess Manasa in their yards.

At the beginning, the housewives prepare for the ritual utensils and dedicate offerings such as *manda*, *caul*, *cire*, flowers, *sindur*, *sarsa-teil*, turmeric, milk, and a little money (*paisa*) on the plates in front of the Manasa tree. The priest lights incense and dedicates a votive light. After purification of his body and the ritual place with the sacred water, he puts *sarsa-teil*, turmeric, and *sindur* on the tree and offers *cire* soaked in milk. With chanting the sacred verses, he pours sacred water to the tree. He sprinkles milk, flowers, and *caul* to the tree, blows a conch-shell, and makes a deep bow to the tree in the end. From in the morning, the housewives in the Brahman family observe fast. After the end of the ritual, they can have *cire* soaked in water, milk, *gur*, sweets, and fruits as *prasad* of the goddess once a day. They would not eat boiled rice or products of flour for the whole day.

After making a small altar of Manasa tree in their courtyards, they continue to perform the daily service in the morning and evening in the same way as to the altar of *tulasi-gac*. On each day of *panchami*, they invite the priest to perform ritual to the goddess Manasa almost in the same way as on the day of *dasahara*. But, the day of the last *panchami* (*sesi-panchami*) is the final day to invite the Brahman priest to their house and they have no ritual on the day of *bhadra-sankranti*. In case of some diseases and accidents by the snakes, they would make use of the leaves of the tree for treatments. On the day of *Vijay-dasami* in Durgapuja in the lunar month of Aswin, they pick it up from their courtyard. Along with the

procession of the *nabapatrika* at the time of *bisarjan*, which is the ritual fare well to the goddess Durga, they put the plant of Manasa on the bundle of the *nabapatrika*, and throw into the pond of Kshirdighi.

b) The households of the Muci

On the day of *dasahara*, the people of the locality of Das-para (they are belonging to the Muci caste) fetch a twig of Manasa from the fields and plant it beside the altar of *tulasi-gac* in the courtyard of their own houses. The housewives perform the daily service to the altar from this day. On special occasions such as *dasahara* and each *panchami*, they never invite the priest of the Brahman or the *deyasin* of their locality. Each head of the household performs the ritual at the altar for the goddess Manasa by himself. They dedicate to the goddess *sindur*, turmeric, *sarsa-teil* and other items as the offerings. It is nearly the same things as dedicated in the households of the Brahman by the Brahman priest. They repeat the ritual to the altar on the days of each *panchami*. On the day of the last *panchami*, it is the most pompous festivity. They dedicate and sacrifice a goose per household. This then become the main dish in the evening as *mahaprasa* of the goddess. At the time of *bisarjan* on the last day of Durgapuja, they pick up the plant of Manasa and throw into the pond along with the *nabapatrika*. In these rituals, they have no relation with the temple Manasa in the locality of Manasa-para.

c) At the kitchens of the Ugra-Kshatriya

In the localities of *jana-agruri* (they are the village Ugra-Kshatriya having the titles of Samant and Datta), they have the ritual for the goddess Manasa at the hearths of their households only once in a year. On the day of the last *panchami* (*sesi-panchami*) in the lunar month of Srabana, they perform the ritual.

The day before the last *panchami*, they prepare the twigs of Manasa in their

kitchens. They perform the ritual at the hearths made of soil on the earthen floor of their kitchen. In the early morning, housewives cleanse the kitchen and draw various kinds of auspicious designs with powder of rice on the hearth and the ground. It is well known as "*alpana*" (a Bengali traditional folk art by the women). They put a twig of Manasa into the hearth. It looks like a twig grown up through the opening of the hearth. They dedicate various kinds of offerings on a few plates in front of the hearth. Someone puts paste of *sindur* on the twig, and waits for arrival of the Brahman priest. The housewives must keep fast for the day. After the end of the ritual, they can eat *cire* soaked in water and *muri* but not boiled rice and flour for the whole day.

In the morning, the Brahman priests visit each family of their *jajmans*. They sit down in the kitchen, and perform ritual to the twig in the hearth just the same way as the ritual at the altar of Manasa tree. They bring offerings back to their house and leave a little bit for the family of the *jajman* as *prasad*. Some priests in the village perform the ritual for the goddess in small temples in the locality where he is in change of the services. After this ritual is over, they keep the twig in the hearth for the whole day. Throughout the day, they are forbidden to fire the hearth for cooking. Thus, nobody eats food cooked with fire such as boiled rice and *ruti* of flour that day. The next morning, the housewives go to the ablution bank along with the twig and throw it into the pond while bathing.

Conclusion

As is evident from the details supplied so far, the sample village has a close relationship with the Hindu kingship through various ritual processes. It is also conspicuous that the dominant landholders of the village were connected with the zamindars in term of the tenurial relationship. Besides, the villagers had a strong relationship with the kingship on the basis of the temple ritual system. Each caste group has the indispensable role and associated duties to perform during the temple rituals. The village social life is systematically integrated in to the kingship through the annual ritual cycle of the Jogadya temple. The supreme authority of the temple is the Maharaja of Bardhaman. This relationship between the villagers and the king is always reaffirmed and demonstrated through various ritual processes in the Jogadya temple.

The rituals of the localities in the village, on the other hand, are held on the basis of the kinship relations and cooperative organizations. In particular, the rituals of the Brahman and the dominant caste have the stratified order with the other service castes in the village society. This ritual hegemony of the Dominant caste seems to be an important element in keeping with their social solidarity and the authority over the other villagers.

a) The ritual of kingship

The Maharaja of Bardhaman occupies an important role in the temple rituals. The Maharaja is the prime *sebait* of the temple. At the beginning of every ritual process observed in the temple, the Brahman-sebaits declare the beginning of the ritual in the name of the Maharaja (i.e., *sankalpa*). It is not only in the big religious occasions such as Jogadyapuja, but also in the daily service (*nityaseba*) to the goddess when the priests announce the name of the Maharaja. The Maharaja himself usually never appears at the site of the temple. But the office in the

charge for the management for the rituals sends a representative to the village to supervise the sacrificial ritual every year at the end of the Joagadyapuja. Every service tenure of the temple was granted to the villagers in the name of the Maharaja and it is regarded as the source of the hournor and the authority, by which every member is assured to play the ritual roles of the temple exclusively. Regarding this matter, it can be pointed out from the viewpoints of three major parties, namely the servants of the goddess, the patrons (*jajman*) of the rituals, and the untouchables.

The temple priests are the servants with whom the Maharaja entrusted the services for the goddess on behalf of him. In this sense, every service caste of the ritual is allotted a role in relation with the Maharaja and not in relation to the Brahman. Therefore, the ritual ranking of the temple ritual organization is not always parallel with the caste hierarchy in the village.

The representative from the lineage Datta occupies the seat for the jajman in front of the Vedic altar(*Vaidik-hom*). The seat could actually be regarded as the place for the Maharaja. The Datta occupies the highest rank among the nine lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya of the village and they are one of the dominant landholders of the village. This means that the Datta represents the dominant force of the village in the ritual. At the same time, he plays the role of the delegation of the Maharaja in the rituals.

The untouchables of the village are assigned with definite ritual roles in the same manner with the other service castes. This gives them certain ritual authority in the village. For example, in the Manasapuja (the ritual to the goddess Manasa), even the Brahman priests (*pujari*) pay their respects to the Bagdi priests (*deyasin*).

It thus appears that ritual organization of the local temple provides an important opportunity for the kingship to legitimize its polity and involve the local society into it. The superiority of the Maharaja in the village is beyond question and even above the religious authority of the Brahman as well as the dominant power of the Ugra-Kshatriya. As the Maharaja has the supreme role in the

temple rituals it endowed the Maharaja with the religious authority in the temple ritual organization. It is through the ritual processes to the temple that the image of supremacy of the Maharaja is established established and perpetuated. It evidently provides a counter evidence to the concept of secularized king of L. Dumont. We can point following four points as the features of the ritual process regarding kingship, namely 1)ritual ranking, 2)ritual time, 3)initiation for sacrifice, and 4)fertility and sacrifice.

1) Ritual ranking

The ritual ranking is always emphasized in the ritual of kinghsip. The order of the *phonta*-giving will provide a good example. While *phonta*-giving by the priests, they address each title of the representatives of the Ugra-Kshatriya and the other ritual posts at the Jogyakundu. Then, they go in procession through the village from the Jogyakundu to the temple. The ranking of the participants in this ritual is as follows. i)Brahman, ii)Datta and Samant, iii)other lineages of the Ugra-kshatriya, iv)Malakar, v)other service castes, and vi)others villagers. All participants including the untouchables, receive *phonta* on their foreheads. Similar ranking is observed in the ritual of offering garland in Durgapuja and *tikra-biri* in *nabannotsab* and *poushalla*, and so on. It is the ritual ranking classified by the ritual posts which is emphasized in these ritual processes.

2) Ritual time

Another element is the control over the ritual time by the court of the Raj. The ritual of *lagna-utsab* on the fifteenth of the month of Baishakh is a good example of this matter. Before the *lagna-utsab* every year, the deb-seba-office sends a Bengali almanac to the villagers, which gives a list of every occasion to perform the temple ritual. The yearly cycle of annual ritual, rite of passage, and daily life of the villagers are fundamentally based on the ritual cycle of the Jogadya temple. It is, therefore, clear that the village life was synchronized with the ritual in the court of the Raj through the ritual of the temple. In those days,

it is possible to suppose that the standard almanacs of the kingship ensured the unified and synchronised ritual cycle in various temples all over the kingdom. It leads towards the assumption that the regional variation of the folk culture of Bengal, such as Rarh area and Barendra area, is based not on the geographical difference, but rather on the former political composition of various indigenous kingships of the state. For example, the ritual of Doljatra (*holi*), which is famous for its uproar with colour water and powder, is commonly observed on the day of full moon of Caitra (*purnima-upabas*), but in the district of Bardhaman it is celebrated after one day.

At any rate, it seems to be an efficient way for kingship to regulate the ritual time of the kingdom through the almanac, who is regarded by the local priests as a fundamental authority to find out the auspicious occasions to perform the various rituals for their jajmans. In other words, the permeation of the printed almanac from Calcutta all over Bengal ushers the beginning of formation of the so-called "popular Hinduism", in which the modern Bengali almanacs give an uniformity of ritual cycle and its style beyond the regional differences over rural Bengal.

3) Initiation for sacrifice

The third topic is about symbolism regarding death and initiation observed in the ritual sacrifices, especially in *ugalpuja*. It is an important matter for the patron of the ritual to keep enough number of the members to allot them appropriate posts in the ritual and to make them carry out their duties. In the ritual of *ugalpuja*, the descent of the jati or the lineage belonging to the specified ritual family is not a sufficient condition as the membership to participate in the sacrificial ritual. It is only after his initiation that a youth of the ritual family is admitted to enter the place of the altar of the sacrifice on the bank of Kshirdighi. The young man must offer a goat to the goddess when he participates in *ugalpuja* for the first time. After the sacrifice of the goat, which means a substitute for himself, he becomes a full-fledged member of the

ritual organization. The symbolism of death of a scapegoat and its regeneration is a necessary condition to qualify them to participate in the rituals of *ugalpuja*, and this is commonly observed in the rituals of initiation [see, Bloch 1977; Turner 1969; van Gennep 1960]. All the participants must acquire eligibility for the ritual no matter whether they belong to the Brahman or the Bagdi caste.

4) Fertility and sacrifice

The fourth point is about the ritual of fertility and sacrifice. As already discussed in chapter-I, the fertility of crops, control of sexuality, and sacrificial ritual are interrelated under the complex ritual system of the goddess Jogadya. Among the plentiful ritual traditions centering the Jogadya temple all through the year, the ritual of fertility is always observed in various stages of ritual processes. In rural Bengal, every stratum of the society depends on agricultural productions, and the native farming techniques have been handed down for generations along with the ritual traditions. It is natural that various rituals of agricultural affairs are associated with the sacrificial rituals through an idea of fertility in Bengal.

In this respect, there seems to be a scope for revaluation of the study by J.Frazer in order to reconsider the rich tradition of agriculture in South Asia. Only one example will be illustrated here.

The story in the first part of the *Jogadya-bandana* tells about human sacrifice to the goddess. The legendary king: Hari Datta had seven sons and he had to offer them to propitiate the goddess one after another for seven years. After sacrifice of all his sons, the king allotted the responsibility for supplying a child for sacrifice every year from the families of the village by turn (*pala*). This story seems to support the logic of the escaped king (regicide) presented by J.Frazer. According to J.Frazer, the fertility of the kingdom is ensured by the sacrificial rituals performed by the king, who is an embodiment of the cosmological order of the kingdom. The condition of the king's health is identified with the order and prosperity of the kingdom. In the crisis of the kingdom, even the king

is sacrificed to regenerate the kingdom. This concept can provide another view to interpret the relation between a rural society and the kingship through the ritual of fertility in Hindu society.

b) Organization of the caste and the kinship

The Durgapujas among the Ugra-Kshatriya are organized through a rotation system called *sola-anna-puja* by each lineage. This is a ritual organization to perform the puja among the members of the lineage by turn on the basis of traditional calculation unit, viz., *sola-anna*. This idea enables to recognize easily the kinship relation of each member to his lineage (*bangsha*). In this ritual organization, every head of the family is regarded as a cooperative patron of his lineage rituals. Hence, Durgapujas among the village Ugra-Kshatriya strengthen the unity of the member of the lineages through kinship relations within the lineages.

Besides, each Durgapuja in the village is integrated into the Durgapuja at the Jogadya temple through every ritual step. The Durgapuja at the Jogadya temple control all the other Durgapujas, which are organized by the village dominant castes. The Maharaja of Bardhaman is the main patron of the Jogadya temple. It is, therefore, clear that the supreme authority of the Maharaja over the villagers is embodied in the ritual process of Durgapuja. The Durgapuja in the village intensifies the stratified order of the village social structure as well as the egalitarian unity of the kinship relation.

Of the lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya, the Datta enjoys the highest status in the ritual ranking. The legendary story of the goddess recited by the villagers adds legitimacy to the status. It is a belief that the king from the Datta ruled the village in the legendary period of *tureta*. Another name of the Raja Bharat Datta is also addressed in the ritual of *guyadak* in every *sankranti*. These ensure the ritual post of the Datta as the chief representative among the Ugra-Kshatriya. This ritual status might reflect his former status as a regional chief, in which he ruled over the territory. It is quite important to suggest the existence of a little kingdom in this region, a concept of which is presented by Cohn[1962].

In this connection, it is further important to notice the ritual roles of the Dom especially in the ritual of *domacoyarikhera*. In this ritual, the Dom is considered as the original worshipper of the goddess. Besides, the name called first in the ritual of *guyadak* is "*Phopal mashay*", who is thought as the chief of the Dom at one time. These rituals correspond to the village folklore that the people of the Dom caste were the original residents of the village but later gave away to the rule of the Datta and the Brahman. In this respect, it is possible to suppose that the ritual course of *domacoyarikhera* reflects certain historical facts. These ritual performances are regarded by the villagers as a basis of authority, which paradoxically ensures their legitimacy regarding legendary origin of specific posts in the rituals.

c) Untouchable

The above mentioned rituals have the character of well regulated organization and affects the ranking order in the ritual course. There is, however, another important point to be discussed regarding ritual performances. It is well known that V. Turner [1969] proposes to analyze a ritual in two aspects, namely structure and anti-structure. It seems to be useful to analyze the rituals performed by the Bagdi caste from this point of view, because the rituals such as boisterousness in the procession of buffalo in Jogadyapuja and Durgapuja stand as contrasts to the usual orderly and decently observed temple rituals. It is easy to point out the character of anti-structural aspect in the rituals mainly performed by the Bagdi youth in contrast to the structural aspect, which has a character of normative behaviour and consequently reinforce the order of existing social relations.

For example, the procession of buffalo by the Bagdi towards the Jogyakundu is in marked contrast with the procession of the pot of the goddess by the Datta towards the Jogadya temple. The excited youths of the Bagdi drag the buffalos to the altar of sacrifice with furious roll of drums. Most of them get drunk before they start from the Jogadya temple and some get too drunk to follow the procession.

They dance and romp around the buffalos to the beats of the drums. Over-excited, someone even lose consciousness.

It is obvious that the Bagdi youths lead the procession in contrast with the procession of the pot, which the Brahman-sebait and the Datta lead. It is an egalitarian order which is emphasized in the procession of the Bagdi, while a hierarchical order is stressed in the procession of the pot. In the egalitarian order, every member participates equally as an independent individual in the chaotic ritual which is a state beyond the ordinal social relation and even transcending self. Similar examples are abundant.

d) Kingship and Sacrifice

It is clear that the ritual system of the temple has been controlled by the stratified organization which is based on the granted lands, the assignment of roles, and the allotment of offerings and sacrifices. Although this organization is ultimately grounded on the authority of the Maharaja, the lineages of the Ugra-Kshatriya hold their own legendary origin which provides legitimacy to their ritual roles. The Dom caste also has own legendary history in relation to the temple ritual. This ritual system of the temple, therefore, includes these castes and lineages having their own legendary origin and the legitimacy of the ritual roles in which each caste and lineage has been ensured its peculiar status in the organization. But the rituals of the temple as a whole put them into a classified organization in terms of relations with other castes and with the kingship.

As Quigley [1993: ch.6] adequately suggests, the theory of Hocart has potentialities to see the Hindu society from the view-point of a combination between kingship and caste. His stand enables to explain Hindu society as a process of interaction between the kingship and the village society which is based on caste and kinship. In opposition to the attempt to legitimation by kingship, the dominant caste always tries to establish its hegemony over the service castes in the village through rituals within the locality. This interactional process could appear again between the dominant caste and the lower castes.

The rural society of Bengal has retained rich agricultural tradition, which is often associated with the sacrificial rituals especially in connection with the rituals of fertility. This is the reason that the kingship attempts to establish his legitimacy through sacrificial rituals in the rural areas. This sacrificial ritual is further appearing from every stratum of the rural society. The dominant caste organizes itd own rituals of sacrifice showing their authority and power over the other castes in the village. Even the lower castes have the own rituals of sacrifice through the interaction with other castes, though these rituals are ultimately integrated into the rituals held by the dominant caste and the kingship. These sacrificial rituals, therefore, suggest the continual rising rivalries around the hegemony of power and authority in rural society. It is the sacrificial rituals which are performed always within the dynamism of powers and symbols between the kingship and the local dominant forces, the landlords, the tenants, the village dominant caste, the service castes, and so on. In brief, the formation of sacrificial organization can be understood as a consequence of interaction of power and authority in the Hindu society.

Appendix-1 List of 51 of Sakta-pithas[1]

	Sakta-pitha	Goddess	Body's part	Location
1	Hingla	Kottari	Palate	Paksitan
2	Sharka/Karbirpur	Tin Cakshu Devi	Three eyes	Pakistan
3	Jbalamukhi	Ambika	Tongue	Dharamsala, Pathankot
4	Sugandha	Sunanda	Nose	Bangladesh
5	Bhairab Parbat	Abanti	Upper lip	near Ujjayin
6	Attahas	Phullara	Lower lip	Birbhum
7	Prabhas	Candrabhaga	Belly	near Mathura
8	Janasthan	Bhramari	Chin	--
9	Godabari Tir	Bishwamatrika	Left cheek	--
10	Ganduki	Gandukicandi	Right cheek	Bihar, the source of the river Ganduki
11	Sucides, Anal	Narayani	upward teeth	--
12	Karatoya Tat	Aparna	Left back	Bangladesh, Bagura, Serpur
13	Sri Parbat	Srisundari	Right Back	--
14	Karnat	Jaydurga	Ears	--
15	Brindaban	Uma	Hair	Uttar Pradesh
16	Kirit	Kamla	Crown	Bandel, Elahiganj, Batnagar
17	Srihatt	Mahalakshmi	Neck	Bangladesh, Srihatta
18	Nalhati	Kalika	Trachea	Birbhum
19	Amarnath	Mahamaya	Throat	Kashmir
20	Ratnabali	Kumari	Right shoulder	--

1 This list is made from a list given in a Benga almanac: *P. M. Bakcir Dairektari Panjika.* Puja Paddhati. pp. 37-38. Calcutta: P. M. Bakci and Co. There is naturally a scope for regional differences of the places in Bengal as well as in the Indian subcontinent. This is an example to be commonly accepted as 51 places of sakta-pith in West Bengal of today.

21 Mithila	Usa	Left shouldr	Madhyapradesh, Janakpur
22 Cattagram	Bhabani	Right arm	Bangladesh, Sitakund
23 Manabekshetr Manas Sarobar	Dakshayani	Right hand	Tibet
24 Ujani	Mangalcandi	Left elbo	Guskara, Kogram
25 Manibed	Gayatri	Wrist	--
26 Prayag	Lalita	Fingers	Uttarpradesh, Allahabad
27 Bahula	Bahula	Left arm	Bardhaman, Ketugram
28 Jalandhar	Tripuramalini	Left breast	Jbalamukhi
29 Ramgiri Citrakut Parbat	Sibani	Right breast	Bilaspur
30 Baidyanath	Jaydurga	Heart	Bihar, Santalpargana, Deoghat
31 Utkal	Bimal	Navel	Puri
32 Kanchidesh	Debgarbha	Skeleton	Birbhum, Bolpur
33 Kalamadhab	Kali	Left hip	
34 Sonanad	Sonakhya	Right hip	--
35 Kamrupa	Kamakhya	Vagina	Assam, Guyahati
36 Nepal	Mahamaya	Knees	--
37 Jayanti	Jayanti	Left shank	Bangladesh, Srihatta, Jayantipargana, Khasiya
38 Magadh	Sarbbanandakari	Right shank	--
39 Tripura	Tripura	Right foot	Agartala, Udaypur,
40 Jugadya	Mahamaya	Right big toe	Bardhaman
41 Kalighat	Kali	Right toes	Calcutta
42 Kurukshetr	Sabitri	Right heel	Hariyana
43 Bakreshwar	Mahisamarddini	Brow	Birbhum
44 Josor	Josoreshwari	Palm	Bangladesh
45 Nandipur	Nandini	Necklace	Birbhum, Sanithiya
46 Baranasi	Bisalakshmi	Earring	Baranasi

47 Kanyasram	Sarbbani	Back	--
48 Lanka	Indrakshmi	Anklet	Srilanka
49 Birat	Ambika	Left toes	--
50 Bibhas	Bhimrup	Left heel	Medinipur
51 Trisrota	Bhramari	Left foot	Jalpaiguri, Salbari

Appendix-2 List of the temples founded by the Raj family of Bardhaman[1]

Temple	Place	Year	Founder
Jogadya	Kshiragram	1730	Kirticand
Gopeshwar Sib	Baikunthapur	1732	Kirticand
Sarbamangala	Bardhaman	--	Kirticand
Barduyari	Kanchannagar	--	Kirticand
Barduyari Ghat	Danihat	--	Brajkishori
Lalji	Kalna	1740	Brajkishori
Siddheshwari	Kalna	1741	Citrasen
Sib	Kalna	1746	Ramdeb Nag
Gopinath	Bharatpur	1747	Rajrajeshwari
Krishnacandra	Kalna	1751	Lakshmikumari
Rameshwar	Kalna	1753	Changakumari
Candreshwar	Bardhaman	--	Changakumari
Mitreshwar	Bardhaman	--	Indrakumari
Anantabasudeb	Kalna	1754	Trilokacand
Baikunthanath Sib	Kalna	1754	Brajkishori
Giridhari	Kalna	1758	Brajkishori
Rupeshwar Sib	Kalna	1761	Rupakumari
Bijay Baidyanath	Kalna	1763	Lakshmikumari
Sib	Kalna	1763	Bisankumari
Laksminarayan	Bardhaman	--	Trilokcand
Sib	Kalna	1764	--
Kasinath Sib	Kalna	1765	Tulasi Debi
Gopal	Kalna	1766	Krishnacandra Barman

1 This list is made from the data collected by Sri Jogeshwar Caudhuri, see, *Bardhaman: itihas o saskriti.* Dbitiya Khandu. pp. 213-214.

Kishor Kishori	Danihat	--	Trilokcand
Bardhamaneshwar Sib	Danihat	--	Trilokcand
Rajrajeshwar Sib	Danihat	--	Trilokcand
Karpureshwar Sib	Danihat	--	Trilokcand
Gangadhar Sib	Danihat	--	Bisankumari
Trilokeshar	Khasahabheli	--	Trilokcand
Rameshar Sib	Kalna	1783	Bisankumari
108 Sib	Nababhat	1789	Bisankumari
Sib	Sundarbag	1800	The empress of Tejcandra
Sib	Sundarbag	--	The empress of Tejcandra
Sib	Anandabag	1801	The empress of Tejcandra
Sib	Anandabag	1810	The empress of Tejcandra
108 Sib	Kalna	1810	Tejcandra
Rameshar	Bardhaman	1812	Tejcandra
Kamaleshwar	Bardhaman	1812	Kamalkumari
Kali	Tejganj	--	Tejcandra
Kali	Borahat	--	Tejcandra
Sib	Kalna	1842	Gnga Dasi
Kasinath Sib	Kalna	1845	Debaki Debi
Pratapeshwar Sib	Kalna	1849	Pyarikumari
Baikunthanat	Kalna	1850	Pyarikumari
Radhaballabh	Sankatigar	1860	Pyatikumari
Bhubaneshwari	Bardhaman	1899	Narayankumari
Narayaneshar	Bardhaman	1899	Narayankumari
Kshireshar	Kshiragram	1900	Bijaycand

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