Glossary
(Arranged in Sanskrit alphabetical order)

adhivasa : the preliminary ceremony performed on the preceding day of any solemn rite.

ambuvaci : the supposed menstrual period of the mother Earth.

asauca : ceremonial defilement.

asthi : the calcined bone.

akasa-vanti : lamp tied to the tip of a long erect bamboo or bamboos and displayed during the month of Kartika.

akhai : puffed rice.

agdiya : a function performed just after the completion of marriage rituals by the bride's or groom's mother and other female relatives in their own homes.

acarya : a religious preceptor.

athpariyā : watchman of a temple.

ābir : a kind of red-powder.

ārati : a religious function consisting of waving a burning lamp, incense and resin in front of the image/images of a deity/deities along with the ringing of a bell, blowing of a conch and beating of drums in the evening.


vāsana : the seat of a deity or of a respectable person.

utsava : festival

upacāra : offerings to a deity.

urukā : The Māgh-bihu eve when community feasts are generally arranged.

uruli : (Skt. hulahuli) a sonorous sound caused by the repeated vibrations of the tongue, particularly of women on religious occasions.

ewā lāru : a ball shaped cake, prepared from rice-powder mixed with boiling molasses.

ojāpāli : a performance in which group of professional singers and dancers sing in praise of the deities (like Durgā and Manasā) during the time of their worship. The songs are accompanied by the playing of cymbals and rhythmic dance.

kamya : performed for some particular object, optional.

kulā : a winnowing fan made of bamboo.

kēcā bhog : uncooked offerings to a deity (a preparation of rice-powder, curd, ripe banana, milk, ghee or honey, sugar or molasses. This is an indispensable offering to the deities like Satyanārāyaña, Suvacañi and Gopāla-Kṛṣṇa).
kriyādhāri : a chief performer of the obsequies.
khuliyā : one playing on a khol, a diminutive type of drum.
gandha : (Assamese gondh) sacred fragrance, the auspicious beginning of an important festival.
gāji : (1) a combined preparation of rice, pulses, salt or sugar; (2) a covered bamboo-basket (japā) used in the puberty ceremony.
gānjā : the Indian hemp.
gāmocā : a towel.
guru : a spiritual preceptor.
gopāla-bhog : see, kēcā-bhog.
ghōtā : an intoxicating drink made of a combination of milk, sugar, hemp and different varieties of spices.
caru : an earthen can.
ciyā : a kind of mystic and devotional song.
cirā : flap rice made out of parched half boiled paddy.
cuṅā-pitā : a kind of solid cake made of rice-powder cooked in a bamboo tube.
japā : a kind of covered bamboo basket generally used for keeping clothes.
jāpi  : a wicker hat used as an umbrella or sun-shade.

ṭhaγl : a kind of wooden tray with one stand. Also used as a substitute for naivedya.

dhuliyā : a drummer.

tithi : a lunar day.

tilaka : a mark generally put on the forehead.

tīrtha : a holy place.

tulasī : basil plants.

thān : a holy place; a seat of the religious head of the Vaiṣṇavas; a place of worship.

dakṣiṇā : sacrificial fees or gifts of money paid to Brāhmins or the priest.

dadhi-mathan: churning of milk.

dalā : a bamboo platter or tray.

daśopacāra : ten varieties of offerings to a deity. (See, śrođa-śopacāra).

duṇari or duṇi: a small basket.

dūrvā : grass-green.

deva-grha : temple
devī-gaṭha: the consecrated pitcher where offerings to the goddess Durgā (Devī) are made.

devī-pakṣa: the bright fortnight (pakṣa) when the worship of Devī is performed.

dhemanī or: a woman taken as a wife without performing the formal marriage.

nandīmukha śrāddha or: a kind of ceremony performed in honour or memory of the manes of the performer. It is a preliminary function to some religious occasions.

nāma: name of Almighty.

nāma-kīrtana: prayers or prayer-service.

nāma-prasāṅga: singing Lord's praise by the devotees.

nitya: daily

nirmāli: (Skt. nirmālya) articles like flowers, a garland of flowers, dūrvā-grass, tulasī leaves, bilva-leaves and rice which are first offered to a deity and then taken by the devotees with reverence; garland of flowers offered by a guru with a blessing.

naimittika: occasional

naivedya: offerings presented to a deity.
pañca-gavya : a mixture consisting of milk, curds, ghee, cow-dung and cow-urine.

pañcāṃpta : a mixture of milk, curd, ghee, honey and sugar.

pañcopacāra : an offering consisting of five items. (See, soḍaśopacāra).

paramāṇa : a preparation of rice boiled in milk, sugar and spices.

pradakṣiṇa : circumambulation of an idol or a place where a religious function is held.

prasāda : offerings consisting of husked rice, pulse, ripe banana and other fruits presented to a deity.

pāchbiyā : nuptial

pāṇḍā : pilgrim guide belonging to the Brahmin community.

pāyasa : See, paramāṇa.

piṭhā : cake

piṭhāgūrī : powdered rice.

piṇḍa : ball of rice, curd, milk, sugar, ghee and ripe banana offered to the manes. In some cases it is prepared only with cooked rice.

pirā : a kind of low wooden stool.
pīṭha : an altar; a holy place.

pūjā : worship

phāku : (See, ābir)

phehu : the first milk of a cow.

bali : sacrifice of animate or inanimate objects.

bāhibiyā : a ceremony performed on the following day after the marriage in the groom's house.

bāhibhoj : a feast given on the fourteenth day of someone's death.

biānām : choric songs connected with marriage.

bihuwān : an article like towel, handkerchief, dhoti, etc., presented to friends and relatives on the occasion of the bihu festival.

behughuwōwā : a custom followed at the end of the marriage.

bokā-caul : a kind of rice which softens when soaked in water.

bodhana : the act of rousing one from sleep; the act of infusing the spirit of the goddess Durgā into the idol on the eve of the Durgā pūjā.

bhakat : clerics.
maju : a palanquin-shaped structure made of plantain barks. It is about three feet in height and is decorated with flowers and vermilion. Sometimes it is made of cork.

maṣikūṭa : a shrine or a small house situated on the eastern end of the prayer-hall for installing the idol of a deity or the holy scriptures.

maṇḍapa : a pandal; a pavilion.

maṇḍala : a holy diagram

mantra : a mystic syllable.

mahāpuruṣīya : The followers of Śaṅkara-deva.

māṭimāh : black gram

māsa : a month

meji : (Skt. medhya) a pile or a column of straw. See, bhelāpūji.

mēlā : a fair

mukhāgni : ceremonial placing fire on the mouth of a deceased lying on the funeral pyre.

yācāguḍā : offerings to the members of a bereaved family consisting of rice-powder, gram, sago and fruits.

raṅālī-bihu : a bihu festival held in the month of Bahāg (April-May).
lāru : a sweet ball prepared with rice-powder and molasses, sesame, coconut, sugar, etc.

vilva : wood-apple

vāra : a day of the week.

vrata : fasts or religious vow.

vrata-kathā : story or stories relating to the birth-episode or prowess of a deity generally told at the end of the worship of a particular deity.

srāddha : annual offerings and prayers made by the Hindus to the deceased ancestors.

śloka : a Sanskrit couplet.

ṣoḍaśopacāra: a set of sixteen items offered to a deity, viz. gandha (perfume), puṣpa (flower), dhūpa (incense), dīpa (lamp), naivedya (food-offering), pāḍya (water for washing), arghya (offering of water containing rice, dūrvā-grass and flower), ācamiṇiya (water for sipping), snāṇiya (water for bath), vandana (obeisance), āsana (seat), svāgata (welcome), madhu-parka (ghee, honey, milk, curd and sugar), punarā-camiṇiya (water for sipping second time), ābharāṇa (ornaments) and vasana (dress). Out of these sixteen offerings the first five offerings are called paṇcopacāra, while the first ten offerings are called daśopacāra.
śaṁkrānti : the last day of a Hindu calendar month.
śaṁskāra : Hindu sacramental rites.
sattra : a religious estate; a Vaiṣṇavite monastery.
satī : a woman who accompanies her dead husband in the funeral pyre.
sabhā : village fair.
sidha : a collection of items like rice, gram, vegetables, fish, mustard oil, salt, fuel and earthen pot with which one or more meals are prepared and taken by the receiver.
hulahuli : see, uruli.
homa : oblations offered to deities by pouring ghee into the sacred fire.