CHAPTER FOUR
DAILY AND MONTHLY SERVICES OF THE TEMPLE

The prescribed codes which are now being observed in case of daily and monthly services of the temple have been traditionally continuing since past. These are as follows:

DAILY SERVICES:

Early in the morning at about 6.00 AM doors of the temple are opened by the DUWĀRī (door keeper). DUWĀRī always stays in the temple compound. Very long ago deities were awakened by men from Jagaitola. They are called JAGĀI. Early in the morning they used to come with musical instruments. Those are DHOL (drum) and Īl (cymbals). They awakened the deities by singing PUWĀR GEET (morning song) with musical concert. Priest informed me that at present men from Jagaitola do not come to the temple for this service.

ĀTHPARĀĪ who always stays in the temple, proceeds to the compartment where deities are installed. Before this, ĀTHPARĀĪ takes his bath. He removes previous night’s flowers and MĀLĀS (garlands) from the deities. Then he cleans the floor of this compartment where offerings are placed. After that the main priest comes to this compartment to perform SNĀNAPARBA (bathing). Deities are now bathed with MAHĀSNĀNA DRABYA (mixture of milk, honey, sugar and water). After that the assis-
tant priest is called by the chief priest for supplying cloths and ornaments needed for deco-ration. With the help of these the priest changes the costumes of the deities. He just covers image with a piece of new cloth and garland of _TULASHI_ leaves (Ocimum sanctum).

In the mean time the door keeper washes all utensils needed for worship. Then both _ATHPARI_ and _DUWARI_ arrange necessary _NAIBEDYA_ (raw eatable offerings) and place these on the floor infront of deities. Lamps are lighted in the temple for the day time, but one of them burns always. Incenses are lighted. White flowers, _TULASHI_, leaves, three bael (aegle marmelos) leaves, a few blades of durba grass, a small quantity of rice and sesamum seeds, _GANDHAKA_ (sulphur), white _CHAN DAN_ (paste of sandal wood) are kept in a _PUSPAPATRA_ (a decorated copper platter) for worship. _PABITRA JAL_ (pure water) is kept in a _TAMI_ ( a wide mouthed copper beaker). When all arrangement are properly made, the priest arrives and seats himself in order to conduct worship. The priest starts worship and other members of the temple play on musical instruments.

Between 1.00 and 1.30 PM, the _PAKA BHOGA_ (cooked offerings such as _MUG_ pulses (phaseolus), vegetable curry, fried bringle, fried potato etc.) becomes ready for offering. These are prepared by the brahmin - _SUPAKAR_ (cook). When these are offered, the main door of the temple is closed for a while. It is during this worship that food offered by pilgrims is also offered infront of deities. On special festive occasions
such offering amounts to 70Kg - 80Kg of rice. The door is opened and pilgrims enter into the temple and pray to the deity with their offerings. Those pilgrims who come with paraphernalia for PAKA BHOGA (cooked offerings) do not enter into the temple for praying after 3.30 PM. After consecration, offerings are distributed among the respective pilgrims. But in the month of April, May, June, July, August, September and October other pilgrims come to visit and pray to deity upto 4.30 PM.

The deity, Hayagriva Madhava goes to take rest till 6 in the evening after the meal. Now the priest, ĀTHPARIĀ, DUWĀRI, SUPAKAR, KOTHBANIĀ are ready for the performance of the evening worship. The priest performs the evening worship by the five materials such as sulphur, flowers, incense, lamp and NAIBEDYA. After the end of worship the evening ĀRATI (the offering of lighted lamp, incense to deity in the evening) starts. It is the time of SANDHYĀ (evening) ĀRATI. The priest stands in front of the deity and waves the offerings such as lamp, DHUPTA (incense), DHUNĀ (a kind of incense) in a rhythmic rotary motion. Local devotees come to visit the temple at this time.

The Lakshmi temple is located by the eastern side of the temple. The goddess Lakshmi is daily worshipped by the assistant priest. Worship is performed in the daytime only. The devotees come to visit the goddess Lakshmi.

The daily work of the temple ends with the evening - worship. Then the deities go to take rest for the night. At about 9.00 PM the doors of the temple are closed.
for the night in the presence of other members of the temple.

MONTHLY SERVICES:

I shall now present a precise but comprehensive list of monthly services of the temple.

BOHAG (April-May): A religious festival starts on the day of SANKRANTI. On this day CHALANTA BIGRAHA (portable deities) from the Hayagriva Madhava, the Kedar and the Kameswar temples are separately carried in procession through the Hajo town and they assemble in the Ganesh temple.

JETHA (May-June): There is no festival in this month.

AHARA (June-July): There is no festival in this month. The main door of the temple is kept close for four days during Ambubashi.

SHONA (July-August): No festival is observed in this month. It is generally believed that from the first day of this month the deity Madhava goes into a kind of sleep for four months.

BHADA (August-September): JANMASTAMI - the birth day of lord Krishna is observed in the temple.

AHINA (September-October): There is no festival in this month.

KATI (October-November): No festival is observed in this month.

AGHONA (November-December): It is believed that the deity Madhava awakes from sleep on this month and takes charge of his duty.
PUHA (December-January): There is no festival in this month.

MĀGHA (January-February): In the day of MĀGHA SANKRĀNTI, people from far and near places assemble in the Hayagriva Madhava temple. In this day, CHALANIA (portable) deities from the Hayagriva Madhava, the Kedar and the Kameswar temple are carried in palanquins separately by procession for NAGAR BHRAMAN (journey through the Hajo town). The three deities meet together in the Ganesh temple. Moreover, birds-Bulbul fighting, egg-game are held centering the Hayagriva Madhava temple.

PHĀGUNA (February-March): Generally DAUL festival is observed in the full moon of the last part of this month or first part of the month CHAIT (March-April). Daul festival is observed in the Madhava temple also. Here two kinds of Daul festival are observed such as GOVINDA DAUL and RĀJĀ DAUL. The GOVINDA DAUL or Krishna DAUL festival is held on that day in which the DAUL festival is observed all over India. This festival lasts for three days.

The DAUL festival begins with the burning of a goat alive. A BHELĀ GHAR (a temporary square shaped house made of bamboo, reeds and a kind of grass) is made on the compound of the temple near the DAUL GRIHA. The goat is kept in the BHELĀ GHAR and is set fire to it during worship. After this the CHALANTA Madhava is taken to DAUL GRIHA from the Madhava temple. The deity is kept there for three days. The worship continues for three days. After three days, the deity is brought down to the compound from the DAUL GRIHA and is carried in procession through the Hajo town.
During the procession, the deities Kedareswar and Kameswar meet the deity Madhava. Sweet-feeding ceremony is performed at the foot of Manikul hill for the three deities. Then the three deities are carried in procession to the Satdala field. The deities are especially respected there. This system has been traditionally continuing since past. After this performance, the three deities are taken to their respective PITHA (seat).

The second Daul is RAJA DAUL. This DAUL begins at the second day of the bright half of this month after the main DAUL. It is performed in the same DAUL. GRIHA. It lasts for five days. The same religious codes observed in the GOVINDA DAUL, are also followed in performing the RAJA DAUL.

The permanent DAUL GRIHA was built by the king Pramatta Singha. The king distributed lands among many people to manage the DAUL. Such land holding people are found in the village - Tokradia, Hajo. The people of the Tokradia village render their help today also in performing this RAJA DAUL.

CHAIT (March-April) : ASOKASTAMI festival is observed in this month and it is celebrated at the Suwalkuchi village located on the bank of the Brahamaputra river. It is observed on the eighth day of lunar fortnight of this month. The village is not so far from the Hayagriva Madhava temple. Deities from temples of different places are brought to BALICHAR (the high sandy place) of the river Brahmputra near Suwalkuchi.

In the previous day of the ASOKASTAMI festival, some people from the Suwalkuchi village make a specious temporary shed on a BALICHAR for placing deities.
In the morning of the day portable deities of different temples are carried in procession in palanquins to that place. Like this, the portable deity Madhava is carried in an attractive and colourful procession to that place. Portable deities of Kameswar and Kedar temple are also taken here along with Madhava. They are carried in palanquins. **DOLĀBHĀRĪ** (palanquin bearer) carry these deities. Portable deities assemble in the Ganesh temple. The procession starts from this temple and advances through the Hajo town. Deities after reaching that place of Suwalkuchi are kept on altar already made by the local people. Then a ceremonial bath is given to deities in the Brahmaputra river. In the afternoon deities are taken to their respective places by procession.

The **MADAN** festival is also observed in the Hayagriva Madhava temple. This festival is held at the thirteenth day of the dark half of the month *CHAITA* after *RĀJĀ DAVUL*. This festival is known as **MADAN-CHAITRĀLI**. The three deities Madhava, Kedar and Kameswar are carried in palanquines in a procession around the Hajo town. Dance and songs are performed in front of the procession. Various musical instruments are also used. **PĀRBATIS** (locally made decorative light, decorative lights are fixed to the high and wide semicircular boards) are held by a local village in front of the deities. **MOTAR PĀNI** is sprinkled to deities during the procession. **MOTAR PĀNI** means - **MOT** means skin of a she-goat born on the day of *CHAITRĀLI* and **PĀNI** means a mixture of water and paste of scented spices. A **FICHKĀRI** (a kind of syringe) is made by skin of that goat. There is a service group in the village Talakhat near Hajo responsible
for making this item. The MOT is more or less bag shaped. There is a jet like tube made of silver. This is made by the goldsmith of Hajo. The MOT is filled up with a mixture of water and paste of about ten sweet scented spices. At first this mixture is sprinkled on the deities, then on the people. In this way the procession reaches the bank of the Lakhaitara river. This river is three kilometers far from the Hajo town. There, the most attractive programme of the MADAN festival - DALĀ KHEL is held. DALĀ KHEL means a game between the two parties. DALĀ KHEL is played in this river water between two parties. This is also called as water-fight. Prizes are given to the winner. After the end of this game, the three deities are brought to their respective PITHA (seat). In this way the festival ends.