Chapter VII.

Rituals and Devotional Practices

Ordination or Initiation

The ritual and devotional practices particularly those relating to daily ceremonials (nitya-prasāṅga), and congregational prayer of the Puruṣa Saṅhāti has been codified by Puruṣottama Thākur in 1597 A.D.

1 Both the Sīrī, and the NāŚī, have dealt with the Vedantic background of the Vaiṣṇava movement, religious and ethical teachings, place of idol-worship, gradation of sattra functionaries and its ceremonials, rites and practices, devotional functions and the process of initiation of the Vaiṣṇavas as a whole. But there are some differences among the Saṅhātis and even within various sattras of a particular Saṅhāti regarding the things above. Our observations, therefore, are confined purely to the four principal sattras of the Saṅhāti under review. The informants are- (i) The late Satrādhikār Sivendra Deva Goswami of the Bāli-sattra of the Narowā group, (ii) The present Satrādhikār Sri Sri Bhogendra Deva Goswami of the Kowāmarā-sattra, Sibgagar, (iii) Sri Rabichandra Mahanta of the Cāmāguri-sattra, Nowgong and (iv) Sri Janardan Mahanta of the Dīghalī-sattra, Jorhat, unless otherwise mentioned.

2 Dvārikā, vv.2282-2301; 2320-2327.

3 Dvārikā, v.2328.
He formulated various ways and modes for that. But it was Lakṣmīdeva of the Narowā-sattra who in the early half of the nineteenth century compiled the elaborate Vaisnavāṁnika, wherein the daily devotional and ritual acts to be observed by the Vaisnavas are incorporated. The rules laid down in the work, however, were not confined to the Narowā group of sattras alone but, with slight variations, these were observed by almost all the Vaisnavas of the schism. The procedure of initiation as described by Dewan cannot be accepted as fully authentic, because even within the sattras of the Purusa Samhati, there are some differences in the 'guru-vākyā'(the word of the guru, meaning the four fundamental reals, i.e., 'cāri-vastu'). The serial order of the above four fundamental principles in the Purusa Samhati is—(i) guru (ii) deva (iii) nāma and (iv) bhakat and not nāma, deva, guru and bhakat as is generally found elsewhere. That is followed by the Brahma Samhati alone.  

4 Dewan, ff. 44(b)-48(b).  
5 Bhadracāru, vv. 736, 770.
The process of initiation and counting of beads of the rosary is not uniform in all the sattras of the schism, but the variance is, however, negligible. This has come down to our period only through oral traditions. Secrecy is always maintained regarding the 'guru-vākya' and discussion about it between the guru and the disciple or between co-disciples are only permitted. People not getting themselves initiated are forbidden to listen to such discussion. The process of initiation or ordination is called 'bhakat-howā', 'śaraṇ-howā' or 'śaraṇ-lowā' and the administering into it is known as 'bhakat-karowā' or 'śaraṇ-diya'. This is the first requirement of a person to qualify himself as a member of the Vaisnava community. Nowadays the initiation comprises of two stages, the second stage being known as 'bhajan'. Persons who like to observe some strict discipline of the Order, generally receive 'bhajan' from his guru or, in some sattras, from some elderly monks (budhā-bhakat). The character and conduct of the person who seeks 'bhajan' is tested by the guru. If these are found satisfactory, a devotee can
obtain the small rosary (kara-mālā) if he so desires. The long rosary (sayekīya-mālā) is allowed to be taken by an accomplished Vaiṣṇava only.

As a general rule, a person may be administered ordination even if he is a minor. At present people generally receive initiation just before their marriage. As for the Brahmans and Mahantas of sattras, the rite is performed immediately before or after taking the sacred thread (upanayana). Women are administered initiation only after their marriage. It is notable that Brahmans, women and kings are not required to prostrate themselves before the altar while they are initiated. Instead of that, they are only to bow down before the altar in the presence of the guru. Generally

6 Guru-carita by Gadādhara, ff. 14(b)-15(a). Gait, p. 187, describes the process of the ceremony with regard to Rudrasimha's aversion to accept Vaiṣṇavism. He writes that the 'neophyte prostrates himself before the gurū'. Dewan gives a detailed account of the procedure prevalent in different sattras affiliated to different Samhātis.
a person is initiated by the preacher (Mahanta) and not always by the Adhikār alone) with whom his family is traditionally connected. The members of the family of a particular sattra are administered initiation by a qualified guru (preceptor) of the same group of sattras. This is followed by the four main sattras of the Samhāti. In other sattras, the Gosāis are in the habit of taking initiation from a Sattrādhikār (Superior) of the above four main sattras. Of course, they may be initiated by a Mahanta of the same sattra of their preference.

7 For example, the present Sattrādhikār Sri Purnachandra Deva Goswami of Bardowa was administered ordination by the late Sattrādhikār Sivendra Deva Goswami of the Bālisattra, following a tradition of the present Sattrādhikār's father.

8 It may be mentioned in support of the fact that the Leţugrāma Sattrādhikār Sri Mitradev Mahanta Adhikār of Jorhat received ordination from the late Sattrādhikār Ratneswar Mahanta of the Cāmaguri-sattra, Kaliyābar, Nowgong. Likewise, the Bhoţ-maric Sattrādhikār of Dergaon was also a disciple of the above deceased Cāmaguri Sattrādhikār.
The procedure of initiation: The person seeking initiation keeps himself clean in body and mind and observes complete fast on the previous night. After sun set of the previous day, he does not drink even a drop of water till the ceremony is over on the next day. Next day the person after his morning bath goes along with the Gosāi to the Kīrtan-ghar and places there a 'sarāi'(a tray) containing rice, areca nut and betel leaf, money (according to the ability or wish, as much as he likes) and a piece of cloth (a dhuti or gāmocā or cādar) before the scripture (or before the altar) or before the holy relics like Padasīlā or sandal, where such relics are preserved. The guru then explains to him the necessity of taking initiation and advises him to lead a pure and pious life. He is then acquainted with the history of the Saṅhati to which the sattra is affiliated, and the principal names of apostles and devotees, called 'sādhu-sāli', are told to him. The person then bows down and takes a vow in his mind to dedicate his life to the

9 Keśava Caruta, v.95.
four fundamental reals, called 'cāri-vāstu', viz., guru, deva, nām and bhakat as well as to the One Supreme Being.

The following 'guru-vākya', based on the above four principles, is imparted to the disciple. The guru secretly utters it to the disciple and the disciple reproduces the lines accordingly. According to the Guru-carita by Gadādhara¹⁰, there is 'kāya, vākya, mane' in the third line, instead of 'satye, satye, satye'. The word 'satya' is used by the sattras like Kowāmarā(Salaguri), Cāmaguri etc. The Narowā group of sattras uses 'kāya, vākya, mane' which is supported by the above work and others also.

I. (A) ŚRĪ ŚĀNKARADEVESE GURU
(B) ŚRĪ ŚĀNKARADEVAR CARANAT ŚARAY
(C) KĀYA, VĀKYA, MANE, ŚRĪ ŚĀNKARADEVAR CARANAT ŚARAY

(Śrī Śāṅkaradeva is the only guru; (I take) shelter (initiation) at the feet of Śrī Śāṅkara-deva; by body, words and mind, (I take) shelter at the feet of Śrī Śāṅkaradeva).

¹⁰ vv.327-328.
After this stage, the person is required to prostrate before the altar touching the ground with eight parts of his body (aṣṭāṅga prāṇāma), (or to kneel down in case of Brāhmans, women etc.)

II. (D) DAIvakīnandaṇaṇ Devese Deva

(E) DAIvakīnandaṇaṇ Devaγa Devanat Saran

(F) KAYA, VAKYA, MANE, DAIvakīnandaṇaṇ Devaγa Devanat Saran

(Son of Daivakī = Kṛṣṇa is the only Deva = Supreme Deity; (I take) shelter at the feet of Daivakī's son, - the Deva; By body, words, and mind, (I take) shelter at the feet of Daivakī's son - the Deity).

The person prostrates himself for a second time as he does at the end of the first stage.

III. (G) Nameṣe Dharama

(H) Nameat Saran

(I) KAYA, VAKYA, MANE, Nameat Saran

((Name = name, i.e., chanting the name of God, is dharma (religion); (I take) shelter at that name= name-dharma; By body, words and mind, (I take) shelter at that name= Name-dharma).

At the end of this stage also the person is required to
prostrate again.

IV. (J) Ekānta bhakat= sole devotee is the only best friend; (I take) shelter at the feet of such a bhakat; By body, words and mind, (I take) shelter at the feet of a sole devotee).

The neophyte prostrates himself again at the end of this. With these words, the first part of simple ordination comes to an end.

The next part, called bhajan, includes the esoterical and philosophical instructions which may not be given at the time of simple initiation. In the first part, the disciple is to prostrate himself on the ground altogether five times, first before imparting of the 'guru-vākya' and subsequently at the end of each of the above four stages. In the three principal sattras, except

11 Kesāva Carita, vv. 128-129.
the Narowā sattrā, the phrase 'satye,satye,satye' in place of 'kāya,vākya,mane' is used in saying the words of 'sāraṇa'(initiation). The Narowā group of sattras gives an explanation for not using this 'satye,satye, satye'. It is said that a house-holder may not be able to adhere to this 'satya'(oath), as even Arjuna himself could not keep his oath when he promised to keep the Brāhmaṇ's son alive after birth.

The person receiving initiation in that way from a Gosāi is called 'śic'(śiṣya) or bhakat of that Gosāi. He is also called a 'sevak' (such as Narowār sevak = disciple of the Narowā-sattrā, or Dhaneśvar Ātār śic= disciple of Dhaneśvara Ātā etc.). There is, of course, a difference between and śic and bhakat. A person who simply receives initiation is called śic. Bhakat is one who receives bhajan part also. Ordinary disciples are not generally termed bhakats. A disciple must be a devotee to qualify himself as bhakat and must have the

---

12 Ai Lakṣmi-carita,vv.183,199. But instead of twelve, the Kesava Carita,v.95, mentions 'six satyas'.
13 Information gathered from Sivendra Deva Goswami,Sattrā-dhikār of the Bāli-sattrā.
14 vide Kirtan-ghosā, Vipra-puttra-ānayana Khaṇḍa.
conferment of a rosary. But the word bhakat may be used in a loose way to mean the lay disciples living in a particular village (such as Bardowar bhakat, Ram-puriyā bhakat etc.).

As the process of administering initiation is performed in secret, an elaboration of the formalities and some sort of fictitious interpretations called 'caracani' (Saṃskṛt carec) of everything related to the faith, tended to grow. A quantum of such literature also developed simultaneously. Some of them may, no doubt, bear some intelligent or philosophical meaning, but in most cases these appear to be baseless and confusing.

From the next day of receiving ordination, the devotee is to practise the process (which is called 'guru sevā', 'Īsvar-sevā', 'īstācāmā' or 'gosāi-sevā' etc.), always after the morning bath at a suitable place.

---

15 Bhadracāru, vv. 465-495, states that during the time of Gadādharamāha's persecution, the Vaiṣṇavas used to keep their holy pedestal (thāpanā) in a corner of the cook-shed as the Kūrtan-ghar was burnt at that time. It was probably from then that the people, who do not have a separate chapel of their own, used to put the holy pedestal in a corner of the cook-shed.

If, for any reason, the worship is done at a place other than the fixed one, it is called 'man-sevā' (prayer performed mentally).
for that. A Vaiṣṇava does not take any food or even water without finishing this part of his daily worship.

The devotee is to take a jug of water for the purpose of his worship. He will mutter the 'guru-vākya' as many times as he can (but not less than four times) as he was taught to do. Here, of course, he is not required to prostrate himself before the altar. Simply sitting on a mat the devotee may perform his prayer. The process being over, he will take four marks (phōṭī= tilaka) on his head (śīra), forehead (centre of eyebrows), neck and chest, in the name of guru, deva, nām and bhakat respectively. These marks may be applied of gāṅgā-mṛttikā (soil of the Ganges), prepared from a mixture of local soil and a little soil from the holy Ganges, or of sandal paste (generally, if that is offered to the idol where there is such idol). The simple daily prayer of a devotee thus comes to an end. Where there is no fixed place for it, the devotee can sit anywhere facing the east and can perform it. The process is to be strictly followed even during journeys and illness.
If, however, the devotee fails to observe it due to ill health, he will have to observe fast for a night afterwards and pertake holy water (pādodaka) and food-offerings (mahāprasād) on the next day. After this the original daily process is to be resumed without break. In the case of gross negligence of the set principles and severe sinful actions on the part of a Vaiṣṇava, a devotee is to undergo some purificatory rites (prāya-scītta). Then onward, the person will again continue to practise the daily worship.

Some sattras allow to take only two or three marks (tilaka) and the Gosāis, who have their images to worship, apply even more than four marks like the Brāhmaṇs. In the four principal sattras, women are directed to apply only one mark on their forehead with four nāmas (guru, deva, nām and bhakat). Widows, of course, follow the custom applicable to men. It is significant that sometimes two neophytes can be administered initiation at a time as co-disciples. Such co-disciples are called 'hari-bhakat' or 'ātai', and they address each other
as such. But the practice has got some limitations to some extent in the Narowā group of sattras. In other sattras, these co-disciples may be from any caste or community. In the Kowāmarā group sattras, particularly the Salaguri-sattra, this is treated always as a necessity and the co-disciples are chosen even from among their relatives. It was encouraged because if one forgets the teachings of the guru, the other helps him by reminding or correcting the same. Thus in the Salaguri-sattra, the Kāyastha Gosāis never hesitate to select a co-disciple from the non-Kāyastha community also. It is observed that the co-disciples may sit together to worship. The Gosāi community of the Narowā group of sattras, however, do not have such co-disciples.

Thus, like the three sāraṇas of the Buddhism and the sixteen oaths of allegiance of the Dīkṣā institution of the Caitanya Vaisnavism, the Vaisnavas of Assam have the four reals or principles. This means

the ceremony of taking the solemn oath of allegiance to the above four. Like Sikhism, it is also one of the few faiths where a scripture is worshipped. Again like Buddhism, the faith was preached in the common speech.\textsuperscript{17}.

The second part: bhajan: The second part of ordination, called bhajan, is meant for those who want to move a step further in pursuit of their bhakti or devotion. This is preceded by 'nām-kathā sikā' (learning of the glorification of the lord and his lores), 'śauc-sadācār' (purity and good conduct), 'māṭi-pānī' (cleaning the parts of the body with soil and water) etc. Generally at this stage, the Gosāi explains to the disciple the story of the explanation of bhakti to Brahma as contained in the 'catuh-ślokī-Bhāgavata' (\textit{Bhāgavata Purāṇa}, II, 9, 32–35) wherefrom the essence of the 'four fundamental reals' are said to have been extracted. The four things, jñāna (knowledge born of scriptures), vijnāna (understanding

\textsuperscript{17} Dimbeswar Neog: \textit{Lahāpurushiyāisīm}, Jorhat, 1949, pp. 11-12.
or intuition), tadaṅga (the means of knowledge) and rahasya (devotion), are explained to the devotee at that time. This is a kind of higher ordination which comprises of esoteric and philosophical instructions. Some of the topics explained at this stage are included in the Anādi-Śtan by Śaṅkaradeva and in the various Samtanāla. Esoteric interpretations of various tenets, rites and practices of the cult, description of ten vital winds of the human body (daśa vāyu), five subtle elements (pañca tanmātra), five gross elements (pañca mahābhuta) and ten organs (daśa indriya) are given. The difference between manas and ātman and the process of achieving their unity and cosmological and cosmogonical accounts are also explained. The theological doctrines and detailed rules of Bhakti and the ways and conduct of life and other such allied topics are explained to the devotee.

18 vv.1080-1224; 1230-1278.
The novice, as in the first part of the ceremony, will go to the prayer hall with his guru and offer him some presents consisting of rice, areca nut and betel leaf, money and a piece of cloth. This time the devotee is, however, not required to prostrate himself before the altar, as is required in the first part of ordination. The preceptor will then advise the disciple to mutter the following lines. This is to be done just after the first four māmas(names) as many times as he has done in the first part.

I. (A) Śrī Śāṅkara-deva-var caṇa-yat śa-la deviations
   (B) kāya, vākyā, mantra, śrī Śāṅkara-deva-var caṇa-yate
       bhajilo
   (C) bhajilo, bhajilo, śrī Śāṅkara-deva-var caṇa-yat
       delā samājilo

   (I take shelter at the feet of Śrī Śāṅkara-deva; by body, words, and mind, I offer my devotion at the feet of Śrī Śāṅkara-deva; I offer my devotion, I absorb myself( seeking sole refuge), I dedicate my life at the feet of Śrī Śāṅkara-deva).
II. (D) DAIVAKINANDAN DEVAR CARANAT SARAñ PASÌŁØ
   (E) KĀYA, VĀKYA, MANE, DAIVAKINANDAN DEVAR
       CARAṆATE BHAJILØ
   (F) BHAJILØ, MAJILØ, DAIVAKINANDAN DEVAR
       CARAṆAT DEHĀ SAMARPILØ

( I take shelter at the feet of Daivaki's son=Krśna; By body, words and mind, I offer my
devotion at the feet of Daivaki's son; I offer
my devotion, I absorb myself (seeking sole re-
fuge), I dedicate my life at the feet of Daivaki's
son).

III. (G) NĀMAT SARAñ PASÌŁØ
   (II) KĀYA, VĀKYA, MANE, NĀMAT BHAJILØ
   (I) BHAJILØ, MAJILØ, NĀMAT DEHĀ SAMARPILØ

( I take shelter at nām (the glory of the name
of God); By body, words and mind, I offer my
devotion at nām; I offer my devotion, I absorb
myself (seeking sole refuge), I dedicate my life
at nām).

IV. (J) EKĀNTA BIHAKATAR CARAṆAT SARAñ PASÌŁØ
   (K) KĀYA, VĀKYA, MANE, EKĀNTA BIHAKATAR CARAṆATE
       BHAJILØ
   (L) BHAJILØ, MAJILØ, EKĀNTA BIHAKATAR CARAṆAT
       DEHĀ SAMARPILØ
(I take shelter at the feet of ekānta bhakat
(sole devotee); by body, words and mind, I
offer my devotion at the feet of ekānta bhakat
(sole devotee); I offer my devotion, I absorb
myself (seeking sole refuge), I dedicate my life
at the feet of ekānta bhakat (sole devotee).

The formal process of bhajan comes to an end with
the advice given for meditation referred to in the
above four parts. Then only the marks of Gaṅgā-mṛttika
(tilaka) can be applied as stated above. It is notable that in absence of a preacher, a novice can accept
another person expert in the line as his adviser, called
'nām-kathā śikowā', 'aṅjanīyā-guru' or 'nām-aṅjanīyā'.
The process of the ceremony is very simple but the tenets
are not easy to be remembered by a novice. So he is to
keep frequent contact with the guru to qualify himself
as a devout Vaiṣṇava. In this way the devotee receives
the proper devotional guidance of the faith.

19 But in some sattras, a devotee uses the above marks
before meditation.
Though the preceptorship has now become heredity to all the Gosais of a sattra, the necessity of a proper guru has never been ignored for the acquisition of bhakti. The Gosais cite few verses from the Nimi-nivasiddha-samvada by Sankaradeva in support of this.

A person at this stage must be acquainted with religious practices, social and legal customs and usages, compulsory and occasional duties and ceremonies of a Vaisnava. It is to be noted that like the Bengal Vaisnavism, the choice of proper month, day and planetary influence for initiation is not essential for the followers of this faith. The ceremony can be performed on any auspicious day excepting on intercalary month (malamāsa). The devotee is to perform his daily prescribed duties such as washing hands and feet according

20 Nimi-nivasiddha-samvada, vv. 137-139. In the work entitled Guru-seva āru Bhakti by Sivendra Deva Goswami, the author enumerates the required qualities of a guru, citing verses from the works of Sankaradeva, Ādhavadeva and Purusottama Thākur etc.

to set rules and take bath before his daily prayer. The rules and modes of washing hands and feet before his bath, whether he goes to the latrine or not, are enumerated in the succeeding pages under the head 'daily observances of a devotee'.

Conferment of Rosary (mālā-vāstu): Some Vaisnavas do not encourage the practice of counting of beads of the rosary and they say, 'kōṭhar mālā phāṭe-phāṭe, manar mālā kāṅ ā cuṭe' (a rosary of wood may be broken out but where can the rosary of the mind go?). But the use of rosary is prevalent in the Puruṣa Samhati as a whole.

The beads of the rosary are generally made of the following trees: Tulasī (sacred basil), Śāti (the white sandal wood), Āgar, Padma, Saral (pine), Uī-kāṭh (deodār), Bakul (mimus opselengi), Nāgēśvara (messua ferrea), Campā (michelia champaca), Samidha (acacia suma), Khair (acacia catechu), Sōṅaru (cassia fistula), Kāṭhāl (jack tree), and Ācukari and the like. There are two varieties of rosary,—long and short, known respectively as 'kāṇṭhamālā' (neck-lace rosary) and 'karaṇmālā' (hand rosary).
Generally a devotee takes the 'kara-mālā' which consists of twenty five beads. After taking the rosary, a devotee qualifies himself to be appointed to any service like 'Nām-lagowā', 'Gāyan', 'Sūtradhāra', etc., if he receives training accordingly. Caste distinction never stands in the way of holding such occupations. If a devotee desires, he may take both the rosaries at a time from his guru. But the taking of the rosary must be preceded by the bhajan part of initiation. A person may select, if he so likes, other than his preceptor who first administered him initiation, any qualified person (guru) of the same Saṃhati to confer the rosary on him. The long rosary consists of one hundred and eight beads. This is also called 'bar-bhāgi vastu' (the major real) as opposed to the short one, which is called 'saru-bhāgi vastu' (the minor real).

---

22 Some monks, however, prefer the number 101 stating that 108 is a number used in the Tantra cult. Moreover, women are given only 100 beads in almost all the sattras of the Puruṣa Saṃhati.
Some Vaisnavas do not put the largest bead in the central joint (called maru) of the rosary. The practice differs from sattra to sattra of the same schism, but within one group of sattras, it is always uniform. The Kowamara group of sattras do not use the 'meru' in their rosary. It is said that such a rosary should not be shown to others. All the three main satras, excepting the Narowā group, have got a certain number fixed for the counting of beads of the rosary. Different modes are also practised in muttering, such as 'vastu magā' (praying for the 'vastu'), 'abhaya khelā' (which is muttered at the end) etc., in different satras. Only the Narowā group of sattras do not have a fixed number for the counting of beads. The number, of course, should not generally be less than ten at a time. The process is called 'mālā japā'.

23 Santamālā, vv. 177-178.
24 Information supplied by Bula Mahanta of Maranhat, who originally belonged to the Tarābarī-sattra, Nowgong, of the Kālśilā group.
Having consecrated by dipping it in holy water
the rosary is given to the devotee along with nece-
ssary instructions for counting the same. The process
of muttering rosary is simple. The devotee, after com-
pletion of his usual daily prayer as stated above,
will bring the rosary (first the short one) from the
place of his worship and hold it by both hands touch-
ing the forehead. In that way, he will meditate the
following 'nām-ghosā' first:

'DĀNTE TRNA DIARI HARI CARAṆAṬE LĀGO
TAYU IŅA HĀSARA XANIKĀ EKA XĀGA/
RĀM LULI TARITE DĀṆHĀI ĀCŌ ṬANA
TUMI DIARI DĪṆAVANDHU PATITA DĀVANA/
DAĪI KARĀ DAĪI KARĀ MORE HĪ RĀM
TOṆAR CARAṆA HARI HĪḌAYA PAṆKAGE DIARI
MUKHE LAṆĪ TUWĀ GUṆA HĀM HĪ YADULAI ṬE/'
(O God, lying at your feet with humbleness, I pray
for a drop of Your graciousness; I am sure to
attain salvation by uttering the name 'Rāma', Thou
the friend of the poor and restorer of the degraded,
O God I bless me, favour me, Rāma; contemplating
Your feet in my heart, I will utter Thy name, O Yadu-
laṇī š).

Then the devotee holds the rosary before his nose and
meditates the following two lines:
(The Bhāgavata is the tree of wishes in paradise, the best of its fruits being the glory of God).

Now keeping the rosary on the chest, the following lines from the Kṛtana-ghoṣa are to be meditated:

'MUKE LAUKA NĀMA MORA KARNE TAVA KATHĀ
MĀDHAYATA PĀDA-PĀDA TILĀKOKA SARVATĀ/
SAJJANARA SĀṆGA NUGUCOKA SARVAKŠANE
EKAM PRASĀDA LAGO TOLĀRA CARANE'\textsuperscript{25}

(Let my mouth utter Your name and the ear receive it, let Thy lotus-feet be planted in my heart for good; let not the holy men shun me at all moments, for such a grace I pray at Thy feet).

The devotee then smells the central joint of the rosary and touches the forehead again by meditating the word 'guru'. Then he starts counting the beads from the right hand side beginning from the bigger bead adjacent to the central joint. Each bead has 'the root four names', 'Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kari Rāma' (Dvīrūkā kṛṣṇakṛṣṇetī harerrāmetī\textsuperscript{26})

\textsuperscript{25} Kṛtana-ghoṣa, Haramohana Khanda, v.524; also Bhāgavata Purāṇa, VIII, v.653.

\textsuperscript{26} This is reported to be an extract of the Sātvata-tantra, wherefrom the rosary is said to have been taken. So the statement of the Sārāṇa-saṁhitā, ff.13(b)-14(a) relating to the four names does not apply to the Puruṣa Saṁhati.
tat parāt), to be uttered inaudibly and the finger will slip over one bead after another. When a round is completed at the last bead, the devotee is to smell the central joint again and touch his forehead with the rosary meditating the word 'guru'. In this way he will count for a minimum of ten times at a stretch. After finishing the short one, the long rosary is to be counted in the same process. When the minimum number is over (the prescribed number for the long rosary is five times at a time), the devotee keeps the rosary touching his forehead and meditates the following lines from the Kīrtana-ghosā by Sāṅkara-deva:

'YAITE YAITE HAKHA NAIJIA LAKHØ MAI ĀJONA KARMĀRA GATI
TAITE TAITE HAKHA TOJĀRA CARANĖ THĀKOKA ERIHĀ MAHĀRATI'²⁷

( My Lord, whereever I am born according to my deeds, let my firm devotion be rested at Thy feet).

Then the rosary is to be put on the chest and once more the following lines from the Kīrtana-ghosā should be meditated: 'GEHIE LAUKA MAHA ............. TOJĀRA CARANĖ'.²⁸

²⁷ Kīrtana-ghosā, Odesā-varṇāna, v.2118.
²⁸ see p.280, fn.25.
The devotee smells the rosary for the last time and puts it again on his forehead inaudibly uttering the word 'guru'. The counting process thus comes to an end. It may be stated here that some sattras use some verses of the Nām-ghosa only before or after counting the beads of the rosary. With the multiplication of numerous sattras, probably the process also underwent some changes, perhaps, due to bad memory.

When the devotee is invested with the rosary, the guru narrates to the conferee its origin and explains to him the esoteric significance of beads and the thread of the rosary and also the four names of the deity. The guru then puts it on the head of the devotee. During the meditation, a devotee is instructed not to speak or move his body without completing a round. He can, however, do so if necessary, at the end of a round. If, for some unavoidable reasons, he fails to complete a round, he will have to repeat it from the beginning. The meditation becomes fruitless if a woman attending menses is seen during the process.
A woman devotee is forbidden to touch the rosary for six days from the date of her attending menstruation. During that period she will, however, meditate on it on the fingers. While lying in, a woman devotee meditates in the same way for the month. Except on restricted days, such as 'jananāśāuca', 'mṛtāśāuca' etc., a devotee is not allowed to leave his rosary for more than three days. On such occasion, while away from home, he will count it on the fingers. But if the rosary is left away for more than three days without any reason, the devotee, on the very day of resumption of muttering, will have to complete the counting of total enumerated minimum numbers required during the period. On restricted days, the muttering is done on the fingers and the 'ꦥḥोᤀ(tilaka) of Gaṅgā-ṝṣṭikā are also not applied.

The muttering of the rosary must be done at least once a day just immediately after 'guru-sevā'(daily prayer). Moreover a devotee, if he so desires, can engage himself in muttering the rosary at any time
according to his convenience and also for as many times as he wishes; but he must first finish the minimum number prescribed for once a day. In some satras where there is a fixed number for counting, the devotee mutters one name (Rama) against each bead towards the last part and in that way finishes his meditation. The Mahantas who worship the idol (which is of secondary importance in all the satras affiliated to this Samhiti), do so after the muttering of the rosary. The above ceremonies, viz., initiation, conferment of rosary etc., can be performed by the guru at any suitable place like Namghar, or outside the sattra campus when they go on official tour called 'cahar-phurā' to see and meet their disciples at different villages.

DAILY CEREMONIALS OF A SATTRA

The fourteen 'prasāṇga's or ceremonials as laid down by luruṣottama Thākur, are observed by almost all the

29 Information supplied by Bula Mahanta of Maranhat.
30 Dvārikā, vv. 2282-2301, 2320-2328; Kesāva-carita, v. 366; Bhadracāru, in v. 407, however, gives sixteen instead of fourteen; The KG., and Santamāla, vv. 292-293, inform us that the above fourteen prasāṇgas were fixed by Mādhava-deva.
sattras of the Samhati. Nowadays some sattras, however, observe only two prasanga, i.e., forenoon (degh-pariyā) and evening (sandhiyā). But in the month of Bhādra, they try to maintain completely the daily prayer services. These daily services are called 'prasanga', 'nām-prasanga' or 'nām-pāth'. These ceremonials are divided into four groups—the matins (muwār prasanga), the forenoon services (degh-pariyār prasanga), the afternoon services (bijalir prasanga) and the evening services (sandhiyār prasanga). These four groups include the fourteen prasangas, but in the month of Bhādra some more prasangas are included particularly on some festivals like 'gurukirtan', tithi of Mādhavadeva and Jānmaśṭamī.

I. Matins (muwār prasanga):

1. Tāl-kobowā (playing the cymbal)

Started with 'bhakata vāndhava haribol, haribol, haribol, haribol'. This will be followed by a gīta (without rāga) and four 'ghosā'. The singer first finishes the gīta while seated and then he moves around the campus of the sattra singing the ghosās. Lastly, he resumes his seat and finishes the prayer.
2. Manjirā-nām: It includes one gīta with rāga, one kīrtna, two duladhi-ghosā and lastly upadesa. It is so named because the singing is accompanied by the 'manjirā tāl' or 'Khuti tāl'. These two prasāṅgas are to be finished before sun-rise.

3. Ai-sākalar or bhūdhi-bhānakatī syari prasāṅga: In the morning, the women folk assemble in the prayer hall and sing in the following way:

(a) One gīta (they never use rāga prior to the gīta or anywhere and are forbidden to play the cymbal)

(b) Usual prasāṅga as done by the male folk, consisting of five ghosās and also on some particular occasion, 'na-ghosā', one kīrtana (in the midst of which different 'dīhā' are sung. After the kīrtana, verses composed describing the genealogy of a particular sattra, called vamsāvalīr dīhā or vamsalatā are also sung on certain occasion), two duladhi-ghosā and no upadesa.

With these the matin comes to an end.

31 Only used in the Narowa group of sattras. This is followed by some other sattras like the Kālsīlā and the Elenī group of sattras also.

32 Except in the Kowamara group of sattras, vide Evārikā, v.2983.

33 'satṛīyā anusthānat surar bhūmikā', R.G. Students' journal, University of Gauhati, 1960. These fine verses, which are the compositions of the women folk, are nowhere recorded. The creative genius of the composers deserves appreciation.
II. Fore-noon services (देश-पारियार प्रसांगा) :

4. Jora-prasanga or Khol-prasanga : After playing the drum and the gong, the 'gayan-bayan' party with 'tāl-khol' will sing a gīta.

5. Dedha-parīyār prasānga : This is started with a gīta, seven ghosās and one Kīrtana, two dulaqhi-ghosās. At the end, six 'jaya' and Haridhvani. The prasānga can be performed with the help of 'bhor-tāl' or 'pāti-tāl'.

6. Kāth (उपादेशा) : This is started with a separate rāga, and on the basis of that rāga, a chapter from the holy scriptures (like the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Rāntāvalī or any other works of Sāṅkaradeva or Madhavadeva) is read. After that again 'jayadhvani' is chanted. If, however, the reading is not done and, instead of that only 'upadeśā' (admonitions from the works of Sāṅkaradeva and Madhavadeva) is cited from memory, no 'Jayadhvani' but simply 'Haridhvani' will follow.

34 For example, 'pāti-tāl' was used at the Pāli-sattrā of the Narowā group till the days of the presently deceased Sattrādhi-kār, except on festive occasions where 'bhor-tāl' is used.
The fore-noon services are treated as the main function of the day and, therefore, kindling of light precedes the 'jorā-prasāṅga'. Before 'Ai-sakalar nām' also the light is trimmed up. Upto the 'dedω-parīyār prasāṅga', gītās composed of the following seven rāgas can only be used. They are- Ahir, Kalyāṇa, Kau, Lalita, vūravī, Syām and Syānagedā. It is noteworthy that excepting the Narowā group of sattras, all other sattras use to sing the rāga based on the words like 'Kṛṣṇa Sāṅkara Guru Hari Rāma' and only the Narowā sattras use 'Kṛṣṇa Sāṅkara Hari Rāma' etc. 35 The food-offering, called 'irasaḍ' or 'Yogān', is also given in the 'dedω-parīyār prasāṅga'. Food-offerings are separately offered where relics are kept. The daily offering of food consisting of unboiled rice, peas, salt, ginger and banana or other fruits, is called 'Yogān'(supply). Sometimes rice may be boiled in cow-milk (called bhoga, pāyasa

35 The Kesāva-carita, vv.402-403, gives an explanation how instead of words like 'Kṛṣṇa Sāṅkara', the Korcoṅg-sattra replaced 'Śrī Sāṅkara' etc. But reason for eliminating the term 'Guru' by the Narowā sattras is not known.
or paramāṇa) and it can also be offered. Unboiled rice mixed with curd, banana and sugar is also offered. This is called 'gopāla-bhoga'.

III. Afternoon services (biyalir prasaṅga):

7. Jorā-prasaṅga or Khol-prasaṅga: One gīta is sung by the 'gāyan-bāyan' party with 'tāl-khol'.

8. Ghosā-kīrtana: This is, like a prasaṅga with 'bhor-tāl', started with a gīta and four subsequent ghosās. Then one kīrtana, in the midst of which, 'dihā's relating to the kīrtana, is sung. This follows a pair of dulādi-ghosā and the first part of the function is finished with it. Leaving the cymbal, again like prasaṅga-yā-nām, the second part is started. It consists of 'nāma chanda ghosā', four other ghosās, one kīrtana, two dulādi-ghosās and conclusion. The cymbal is played accordingly.

9. Āi-sakalar or Budhībhakatir biyalir nām or prasaṅga: The process of this service is the same as that of the morning service. It consists of one gīta, four ghosās, one kīrtana, two dulādi-ghosā, 'Jayadhvani' and 'Hari-dhvani'. In the middle of the kīrtana, many dihās may be included.
IV. Evening services (Sandhiyar prasaṅga):

10. Tāl-kobowā (playing the cymbal): This is started with 'bhakata vāndhava haribol, haribol, haribol, haribol' etc. The process is the same as stated in No. 2 above.

11. Sandhiyar gun-gowa āru prasaṅga: Immediately after sun set, the light in the Kīrtan-ghar is kindled and the drum and the gong played. The prasaṅga is started with a gīta. Then a chapter from Guna-māla by Śaṅkaradeva is recited first. This is followed by the recitations from a chapter of Lilāmālā of the Kīrtana-ghosa, one Upadeśa (admonitions of a chapter from any work of Śaṅkaradeva, like the Bhāgavata Purāṇa), one Capaya, one Deva-bhāțimā, Toṭaya (the hymn by Śaṅkaradeva of which the first line is 'Madhu Dānava Dārāṇa Leva Baraṁ', etc) and the guru-bhāțimā by Mādhavadeva. This is called 'gun-gowa'. Again a gīta is sung and then the actual prasaṅga will follow. This comprises five ghosās, one Kīrtana, two duladhi-ghosās and six 'jaya's like (1) Jaya Rāma (2) Jaya Nārāyana (3) Jaya Gopinātha (4) Jaya Jagannātha (5) Jaya Krṣṇa
and (6) Jaya Śāṅkara. This is followed by 'pātha' or 'upadesa', but where there is no 'pātha', 'Jayadhvani' should not be used, only with 'Hari-dhvani' the function is finished.

12. Jorā-prasāṅga or Khol-prasāṅga: The process of performing this is also the same as stated in No.7 above.

13. Ghoṣā-prasāṅga or Ghoṣā-kīrtana: This is also the same as stated in No.5 above.

14. Sēṣ-pāl jorā: The concluding function of the day is performed by 'gāyan-bāyan' with 'tāl-khol' like other khol-prasāṅga. The function comes to an end with 'Hari-dhvani'.

The process stated above is followed by a good number of other sattras also. It is prepared with the help

36 The use of six 'jaya' by the Narowa group instead of generally used four, viz., (1) Jaya Rāma, (2) Jaya Nārāyaṇa, (3) Jaya Kṛṣṇa and (4) Jaya Śāṅkara, is in practice as was introduced by Bhagavāna Ātā of the Korcong-sattra, vide Keśava-carita, vv.295-296. We have references to four 'jaya' in the same work, v.101, which is supported by Dvārikā, v.2297, also.
of some expert on the line as well as on the basis as laid down in the Nāmar-pankti of unknown authority, obtained from the Dāli-sattra where the process delineated in the work is followed. It is to be noted that Cakrapāṇī Vairāgī Ātai, who later on used to live among the Salaguri group of sattras (saru-phāl, coṭa-hissā) of Bardowā, is reported to have mixed some modes and ways of chanting 'nām-kīrtana'\(^{37}\) and, therefore, there are reasons to doubt the origin and antiquity of the processes of 'nām-kīrtana' of that side at Bardowā.\(^{38}\)

**SPECIAL DEVOTIONAL FUNCTIONS**

On certain occasions the sattras follow a fixed programme. Of them, the month of Bhādra deserves special

---


\(^{38}\) For explanation on this point, see also 'Bardowāt sangīt carccār dhārā' by the present author pub. in the I.G. Students' journal of the University of Guwahati, ed. by Nirode Chaudhury, 1958-59. The same paper has been incorporated in the Maṅcalkēkhā by Atul Chandra Hazarika, Guwahati, 1967, with due acknowledgement.
attention. Three special ceremonies are held in this month. Most of the sattras have their fixed gīta, ghosā and Kīrtana etc., for these occasions. The first and the most important of them is the tithi of Saṅkaradeva, called 'Guru-kīrtana', which falls on the day of the second bright half of the lunar month in Bhādra. Food offering (prasād) is given in all the sattras throughout this month. New officers like 'gāyan', 'bāyan', 'sūtra-dhāra', 'deuri', 'hāṭimatā' etc., consider this date as very auspicious to assume their posts. Another feature of the month of Bhādra is the 'sūnya-pāṭh' (reading from the scriptures), which is maintained throughout the month as a part of the daily routine. It is held after the evening services. In it, 'jayadhvani' is not required. During this month, the 'gāyan-bāyan' and the dancers of the sattrā practise every gīta (composed by Saṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva) each with four to five different tunes and tālas and with various types of dances. This process, which has now become almost obsolete in most of the sattras, was called 'bhār-gowā'.
Guru-Kīrtana: After the second item of matins, the Jorā-prasaṅga or Khol-prasaṅga is performed on that day. On the previous day also, a ghoṣā is sung by the 'gāyan-bāyan' party in the evening 'jorā-prasaṅga' after the scheduled gīta. The morning gīta should be 'jaya jaya sakala maṅgala Vāsudevam' etc., by Rāmacandra Ātā of the Narowa sattrā. This is the last gīta (rāga- Kalyāṇa, Kharamān Tāl) of the drama Kamsavadha. (The drama is performed at night).

In the morning prayer of the women folk, six Ma-ghosā by Purusottama Thākur starting from 'purvata Kṛṣṇara eka-sarana bhakati patha' etc., is sung instead of usual Nām-ghosā by Ādhdavadeva.

In the forenoon 'khol-prasaṅga', two gītas (Uddhava vandhu he Madhururi rahala Murāru and Jaya jaya sakala maṅgala Vāsudevam) instead of usual one are included.

The deōh-parīyār prasaṅga will include nine ghoṣās beginning with 'dīna dayāsīla deva Dāmodara ṇari' to be followed by three Kīrtanas- (a) Rāma Viraṅjaṇa,
The last Kirtana is sung only with clap and no cymbal is played.

At night two bhoonas are performed. First, the Bhojana-behur by Madhavadeva is started in the evening. Here a gita of the raga Kambod is sung by the Vairagis (reference to which is found in the Katha gurucarita). The gita is neither recorded nor found elsewhere except in the above four main sattras of the Purusa Samhati. It has come down to our period only through oral tradition. In the last part of the

39 KGC., p.211; APVC., f.4(b), (original f.199(b)), states how Cakrapani Vairagi played the role of such Vairagi in the drama. The gita goes like the following:

YAMUNA TIRE PHIRE YADURAYA/BRAHMA THAKURE DHENU CARAY//
KUTILA UDE JURAI RANDHI MATHE/KANAKA PANCHANI DAKSISHA HATE//
VATSA PUCCHA DHARI E VAMA KARE/DHAWE YADUMANI YAMUNA TIRE//
NIRUPAMA BRAHMA RUPA SAANGHAT/EYAYE MANUSA YAMUNA TATE//
BRAHMA TUTI KARE CARI VAYANE/SO HARI GOPINI DEKHE NAYANE//
GHAGARA GHUGURA NUPURA PAWE/GODHULI LAGICHE SAMASTE GAWE//
SISU DADHIMBA KAHE RUPA PRAMANA/RUPA HRDAYE RAHU MIRI PRAMANA//
drama, a typical music, called 'Vṛṇḍāvanīyā-thelō', is performed by the 'gāyan-bāyan'. At the end of Bhojana-behār, Kamsavadha in the Yarowā and Rukmini-haraṇa in the Salaguri sattra at Bardowā will be performed. The drama Kamsavadha by Rāmacandra Ātā was reported to have performed first at the consecration ceremony of the Vāsudeva image at the Vāsudeva Thān at North Lakhimpur. The above mentioned concluding gīta of the drama, therefore, eulogises the Vāsudeva like following:

'jaya jaya sakala maṅgala Vāsudevaṁ, surāsure karu yāka sevaṁ'.

The peculiarity of the drama is its inclusion of three different types of dances, called 'nandi-bhaṅgi', 'payān-bhaṅgi' and 'cāli-nāc', performed by Kṛṣṇa and

40 Here the principal bāyan sings:
'dhunduli kuṭā dhunduli kuṭā śudā dhunduli kuṭā, loṇ nāi nāi tel nāi nāi śudā dhunduli kuṭā', and prior to this, he sings -
'kānāi balāi duṭi bāñi vṛṇḍāvane dheru carāy'.
Singing these, the principal bāyan plays exactly the sounds of the above words.
Balarāma. In the 'cāli-nāc', the gāyan-bāyan party sings the following verse with a peculiar tune and tāla and the duet dance is performed accordingly:

'E GORingly NāCE LĀTE TĀLI BAJAY E'.

It is notable that only on this occasion nine ghosās beginning with 'Mari lailō Mari lailō śaraṇa ṣāveti' etc., are sung in the 'ghosā-dhemāli' part of the bhaona. Generally on other occasions the same amounts to seven or eight ghosās only.

Tithi of Madhavadeva: The ceremony falls on the day of the fifth dark moon of the month of Bhādra. The function of the preceding night is the same as that followed on the occasion of the 'Guru-kīrtana'. The third item of matins is a khol-prasāṅga where the gīta 'Jaya jaya jaga jana tāraṇa kāraṇa' etc., (the concluding gīta of the drama Arjuna-bhāṅjana by Madhavadeva) is to be sung. In the morning budhī-bhakatir nām as well as in the fore-noon khol-prasāṅga, the gīta 'śunalo paṇḍita, Hari pada sewā rase thira karu citta' by Madhavadeva is included. The khol-prasāṅga, will,
however, include the other gīta sung in the matin above. In the middle of the Kīrtana of the women folk, many fine dihās relating to the drama Arjuna-bhaṅjana are sung.

In the deśh-parīyār prasaṅga eight ghoṣās, starting from 'Hari Rāma Śrī Rāma jaya jaya Rāma Rāma', and two Kīrtanās from the 'sīsūlīlā' chapter, viz., 'He karuṇāmaẏ Rāma Kṛṣṇa prabhu Raghuvātī' and 'Rāma Govinda Hari Kṛṣṇa Gopāla Hari Rāma' are to be sung. At night the drama Arjuna-bhaṅjana, also called Dadhimathan, is performed. It is to be noted that the rôle of Kṛṣṇa is not allowed to be played by a person not belonging either to the Gosāi or to the Brāhmaṇ community.

Jannāṣṭami: The function of the preceding night, called 'gandh-gowā', is the same as has been followed in the above two occasions. The matins will include khol-prasaṅga where only one gīta may be sung. In the morning Āi-sakalar nām, many dihās relating to the birth of the Lord Kṛṣṇa, are included in the Kīrtana. The fore-
noon khol-prasanga consists of two gītas—(1) Govinda cintahū bāla Gopālaṁ by Mādhavadeva and (2) E Daivakī satī bolata Kāmsara mukha cāi by Gopāla Ātā, and a ghoṣā 'Krṣna sūryya bhailanta udita' of the Kīrtana-ghoṣā.

The dedā-parīyār prasanga is started with the gīta 'Hari mora e dīna dayāla, ke jānite pāraya tomāra thākurāla'. After the 'nām-chanda ghoṣā', eight ghoṣās beginning with 'He dayāśila deva āmodara he, tomāra caraṇe bolōho kākūti vāṇī' follow. There are two Kīrtana-nas to be sung—(i) 'Krṣṇa Gopāla karuṇāmaya Rāma Rāma Hari' from the śīṣulilā chapter and (ii) 'Krṣṇa sūryya bhailanta udita, nāma dharmā karilā vidita' of the Kīrtana-ghoṣā. At night the drama Jānmayātrā by Gopāla Ātā is performed.

The next day, or generally after few days, Nandotsava, also called rācatī, is performed by both the sexes separately. It is surprising to note that a woman having no knowledge of the three R's, can even sing the gīta 'Harāse gopiṁīdacaye ghares ghar śūna śūna sakhi gaṇa' of
the drama Janmotsava by Gopāla Ātā. The gīta, in the rācati performance, is sung in the Yati-tāl, consisting of three parts, fourteen mātras and eleven beats, thus creating very much difficulty to a modern singer. The rācati function is also called 'bokā-yātrā' or 'bokā-bhāonā'.

The first and the last Sahākrāntis of the month of Bhādra: In the khol-praśānga as well as before the nām-kīrtana, the fixed gīta for the first Sahākrānti is 'Uddhava vandhu he Madhupuri rahala Murāru' by Śaṅkara-deva. Two kīrtanas from the rāsaliṇī chapter of the Kīrtana-ghosa, viz., (i) bōla Bari nāma Mūkunda Murāri and (ii) Bhavahāri Nāri tāraku Mūkunda Murāri, are to be sung in the dedh-parīyār prasānga. In the afternoon khol-praśānga, the gīta 'vālaka Gopāle karata keli' is sung. On the last Sahākrānti of the month, the fixed gīta is 'nāi nāi harika vicuri kata rahabi' by Śaṅkara-deva, which is followed by a ghosa. The function 'Bām-sānarā (concluding the devotional services) is an elaborate process which includes dance with different gaits.
In Pūrṇimā, Amāvasyā and Ekādaśī of the month of Bhādra, a ghosā is sung at the end of the forenoon khol-prasaṅga. In the Ekādaśī tithi of any month, one more Kīrtana at the ded-paryā prasaṅga is to be added. On the Daula-yātra (Daulotsava or Phākuwa), only the Kīrtana,'raṅge phāku khele caitanya Banamāli' is sung.

Ceremonials observed on the occasion of Bihu:

On the Caitra Samkrānti day the ded-paryā prasaṅga is started with the gīta 'parabhāte śyāma Kānu dhenu laiyā saṅge'. Seven ghosās, beginning with 'dīna dayā-sīla deva Dāmodara ṇāri Dāmodara', and two Kīrtanas, (1) 'raṅge phāku khele' and (ii) 'jaya Jagannātha, Jagannātha, Jagannātha ṇāri' from the odesā chapter of the Kīrtana-ghosā are sung. Next day also the same procedure is followed. On the second day of the month of Vaiśākha, called 'gosāi-bihu', auspicious music is played in the evening and the idol or scripture is fanned. Since then only, people are allowed to use fan.

On the preceding day of the Phāguha-bihu, people use
to sing dihā-nām at the Kīrtana-ghar as well as at the house of the Superior (Adhikār) and other Gosāis of the sattra. In that way they collect donation from the gurus for the 'bherā ghar'(a temporary shed).

Dihā-nām also sung on the next day at the Bhārā ghar and after burning it, people use to come to the Kīrtana-ghar singing the Kīrtana 'Rāma Ṣanamālī, Gopāla Ṣanamālī' of the Kamsavadha chapter.

During Śāth (Ambuvācī) food offerings are cancelled in the Kīrtana-ghar and the playing of drum, gong etc., are also prohibited. The cymbal may be played and the Bhakti-ratnāvalī is read in the pātha (reading from the scriptures). In the Rāsa-yātrā festival, the drama Keli-gopāla is performed where possible. But other dramas are generally not performed.

The lāl-nām or Bacarekiyā-nām (annual service) is another important ceremony, where ghoṣās and Kīrtanas are sung in different ways, modes and tunes. So also 'thiya-nām', prevalent in some sattras, is a peculiar
feature. Dvārīkā includes another item \(^{41}\) called Ṣīrān which, however, not found in the four main sattras of the Saṁhati.

Tithi ceremonies: The death anniversaries of the founders of different sattras are celebrated with due solemnity. The death anniversaries of Puruṣottama and Caturbhujā are celebrated by all the four principal sattras as well as by other sattras of the Saṁhati. The tithi of Dāmodara Ātā and those of others of the Narowā sattras were celebrated even by other sattras of the schism like the Korcoṅ-g-sattrā. The Kesavā-carita narrates the incident from whence the Korcoṅ-g-sattrā and their disciples declined to celebrate the tithis of the Narowā Gosāis.\(^{42}\)

Dāmodara's death anniversary is considered more important at the Bāli-sattrā of the Narowā group where he breathed his last. The death anniversaries of founders and other principal apostles of the sattrā concerned

---

\(^{41}\) V.2286.
\(^{42}\) vv.417-419.
are celebrated in the same way. The tithis of the following preachers are celebrated in the Varowā group of sattras, besides the anniversaries of Śaṅkara-deva and Nādhavadeva. 1. Āruṣottama Thākūr- (on the day of the fourteenth dark moon of the month of Jānuṣa). 2. Caturbhūja Thākūr- (fourth bright moon of the month of Jānuṣa), 3. Dāmodara Ātā- (fifth bright moon of the month of Kārtika), 4. Rāmakānta- (first bright moon of the month of Vaiśākha), 5. Rāmacandra- (fourth bright moon of the month of Āṣāḍa), 6. Rāmadeva- (ninth bright moon of the month of Jaiṣṭha), 7. Bhadradeva- (fourth dark moon of the month of Jānuṣa), 8. Lākṣmīdeva- (second bright moon of the month of Āṣāḍa), 9. Dhaneśvara- (fourth dark moon of the month of Śrāvaṇa). The Kowāmarā group of sattras celebrates the death anniversary of Anantarāya Ātā with due pomp and dignity, on the seventh dark moon of the month of Āṣāḍa. The tithis of other preachers are also celebrated likewise. Anantarāya has been given the epithet 'Īśvara-purusa' (God-incarnate) as has been applied to Lākṣmīdeva of the Varowā sattva
because they were the founders of the Kowāmarā and the Bāli-sattra respectively. Lakṣmīdeva, of course, was not a founder but a reclaimer of the Bāli-sattra.

On the previous day of the tithi, evening khol-prasaṅga, called 'sandha-gowa', is performed. Where the fourteen prasaṅgas are regularly maintained, only a ghoṣā is added to the list in the khol-prasaṅga. Next day, prayer and devotional services are done as in the month of Bhādra. At night a bhāona is performed as the concluding item of the day's agenda.

Yām-sāmarā: (concluding the devotional services):

On the last day of the month of Bhādra (or at some sattras, the next day), the ceremony is celebrated by the male-folk. Like the afternoon prasaṅga, it is started with a gīta which is followed by nine ghoṣās beginning with 'dīna dayāśila deva Bāmodara Hari' etc. In the last ghoṣā, a dihā (Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma) is to be sung followed by the 'pada'-Krṣṇa eka deva dukhahārī etc. (six couplets from the 'lechāri-ghoṣā' of the Nām-ghoṣā by Mādhavadeva). Then the following
ghoṣās are sung:

'E Raṁa jaya Hari jaya' etc., from No. 967 to No. 997 of the Raṁ-ghoṣā (except the last four), up to 'kāhaya ṛādhava dāse'. Then again the party starts singing three ghoṣās beginning with 'Raṁa Viraṇjaṇa, ō Raṁa Viraṇjaṇa' to 'dayāśīla deva dīna-vandhu re Raṁa Raṁa'. Here the Kīrtana 'hera pāilō pāilō re prāṇadhana Mukunda Kūrāri' from 'rāsalīlā' chapter of the Kīrtana-ghoṣā is sung as usual. The second Kīrtana is 'Raṁa Hari e he' of the 'hali-chalana' chapter. In the line 'uthi kato Kīrtana karanta tāla dhari', the party stands up and sings the dihā 'bolahu Raṁa Raṁa bhābio Raṁa Raṁa', and in this way finishes the Kīrtana. Then the following twelve ghoṣās are sung, accompanied by different gestures:

1. Vārūyaṇa e hari re he jaya Raṁa
   — the corresponding dance for this ghoṣā is named as 'uthā khoj-mān'.

2. Jaya jaya Raṁa sarana maṅgala jaya jaya Vāsudeva jaya yaduṛati agatīra gati tuwā āwe karō sewa
   — the dance is 'ciral-cīrīkā'.

ghoṣās are sung:

'E Raṁa jaya Hari jaya' etc., from No. 967 to No. 997 of the Raṁ-ghoṣā (except the last four), up to 'kāhaya ṛādhava dāse'. Then again the party starts singing three ghoṣās beginning with 'Raṁa Viraṇjaṇa, ō Raṁa Viraṇjaṇa' to 'dayāśīla deva dīna-vandhu re Raṁa Raṁa'. Here the Kīrtana 'hera pāilō pāilō re prāṇadhana Mukunda Kūrāri' from 'rāsalīlā' chapter of the Kīrtana-ghoṣā is sung as usual. The second Kīrtana is 'Raṁa Hari e he' of the 'hali-chalana' chapter. In the line 'uthi kato Kīrtana karanta tāla dhari', the party stands up and sings the dihā 'bolahu Raṁa Raṁa bhābio Raṁa Raṁa', and in this way finishes the Kīrtana. Then the following twelve ghoṣās are sung, accompanied by different gestures:

1. Vārūyaṇa e hari re he jaya Raṁa
   — the corresponding dance for this ghoṣā is named as 'uthā khoj-mān'.

2. Jaya jaya Raṁa sarana maṅgala jaya jaya Vāsudeva jaya yaduṛati agatīra gati tuwā āwe karō sewa
   — the dance is 'ciral-cīrīkā'.
3. Śrīmanta Śaṅkara hari bhakatara
   jānā yena kalpataru
   tālānta bināi nāi nāi āmāra parama guru
   — the corresponding dance is 'saru-juti'.

4. Dayāvanta sānta sītāla svabhāva
   parama guṇe mahanta
   Kṛṣṇara bhakati pantha prakāśiyā
   pātaṅka tārīlanta
   — the related dance is 'epakīyā-citika'.

5. Virgūna Kṛṣṇara guṇaka prakāśā
   karilā Śrī Śaṅkare
   Śrāvaṇa kīrtana hari mahā sukhe
   pāṅko saṁsāra tare hari e
   — the dance for it is 'bar-juti'.

6. Now a 'dīhā' is given as follows:
   'Kṛṣṇa Hari e he Rāma, Rāma hari Kṛṣṇa Rāma'.
   Here the two lines—
   'dei eka calu jala tulasīra pāte,
   eteke vikraya kṛpāmaya honta tāte' are sung as 'pada'.
   — the corresponding dance is 'dpakīyā-citika'.

7. Sahajānanda hari Svarūpānanda,
   Ardayānanda hari Saranānanda
   — the dance to be followed is named as 'khuvalī-picalā'.

8. Govinda govinda daivakī-ndana hari
   Rāma 'Nārāyaṇa'
   — the dance for this ghoṣā is called 'saru-calā'.

---

---
9. Gopāla jaya Kṛṣṇa Govinda jaya Rāma
—the related dance is termed as 'Ād-juti'.

10. Madhusūdanadeva Madhusūdanadeva,
tumi bine agatira gati nāhi kewa
—the dance for it is 'bahi-ciral'.

11. Jagajīvana Rāma Jagajīvana Rāma,
jagatara sunaṅgala tuwā guṇa rāma
—the dance is 'bagali-khuṭiowā'.

12. O Hari e hari he Hari he O Hari he
—the dance for this ghosa is named 'khubalipicalā nupūr-calowā'. In the middle of it, the member of the party bows down to each other forming pairs and sings the following line:
'bhakata vāndhava praṇāmo Rāma'
Again the ghosa along with the dance will continue.

After this, the 'ṭotaya'(the hymn by Śaṅkaradeva of which the first line is 'Madhu dāhava dāraṇā', etc.) with a peculiar tune and rhythm is sung. Immediately at the end of it, the first chapter of Śaṅkaradeva's Guna-mālā is sung. The party will then start running following one another headed by the māl-lagowā in a cris-cross way on the floor of the Kīrtana-ghar.

At the end of it, a couple of dulaṭi-ghoṣā is sung,
where the Nam-lagowa occupies his position. The function is concluded like a prosanglya-nam ended with jaya and path and then jayadhvani again. Thus the celebration of the function, which is of very peculiar form prevalent particularly centering around Bardowa, comes to an end.

Gradation of sattra functionaries 43

(i) Superior (Adhikar or Sattra-dhikar):

The highest authority in religious and other social matters of the sattra institution is the Superior, who is also called Mahanta or Gosai. The other members belonging to the family of the Superior, whether Brahmans or Kayasthas, are also called Mahantas or Gosais.

The Superior is to perform and attend the religious duties and ceremonials. The succession to the office in the early period was determined on the basis of intellectual

43 This section is merely a reproduction of the S.I.T., p.332-341. I have only added to the list few more officers and other functionaries not included in the work.
attainments only. Later on, however, the same became hereditary in almost all the sattras. The rule of becoming an Adhikār is based on two principles,—according to (i) seniority and (ii) lineage. The first rule is applicable to the Salaguri-sattra and the second to the Jarowā-sattra at Bardowā.

(ii) Āl-dhara:

The personal attendants of the Superior are called Āl-dhara. Acyuta Deva Goswami of the Jarowā-sattra was waited on by Raṅgāī Āl-dhara and the former reclaimed the Vāsudeva Thān with the help of the Āl-dhara.44 Sri Nanoram Dutta Mān-lagowā, an old monk of Bardowā, is the youngest son of Raṅgāī Āl-dhara of the village Jāl-bhārī, North Lakhimpur.

(iii) Medhi:

The Superior may delegate his powers to the Medhis. The Medhi is, in some cases, the representative of the Superior. The Medhi is to collect from the disciples, the

regular tax payable to the preceptor (kar, gurur kar). So, there may be many Medhis of a sattra at various places. The Medhi is, therefore, to keep account of money and other things donated or presented to the guru by the disciples. Pakhi-medhi is subordinate to the Bar-medhi.

(iv) Pācanī:

The Pācanī is a messenger of the Superior and, therefore, in some sattras, he has to work like the Āl-dharā also. His duty is to inform the disciples living in the sattra and other villages as well, of all matters of the sattra and the Superior concerned.

(v) Luktiyār:

The Luktiyār is like a Majumār of some sattras. He is to keep the accounts and issue general orders in the name of the general body of bhakats. Sometimes a Luktiyār is entrusted with the duty of a revenue officer in places where the sattras possess their own khāts. Generally, the Luktiyār is the registrar of the sattra institution.
(vi) Khataniyar:

A Khataniyar is a sattra official who maintained relations between the government and the sattra.

(vii) Hāṭi-matā:

The duty of the Hāṭi-matā is to summon the clerics in the 'hāṭi's (sets of cloisters) to prayer services or to some meeting of a general import.

(viii) Nām-gharīya:

The person who is appointed to the task of sweeping the Kīrtana-ghar and wiping the floor of it with wet pieces of cloth, is named as Nām-gharīya. Such a person is appointed in some villages also and the villagers contribute equally to pay something to him for his service.

(ix) Lāla-dharīya:

The duty of the Lāla-dharīya is to keep watch over the Kīrtana-ghar and other buildings of a sattra.

(x) Nām-lagowā:

The Nām-lagowā is the official in charge of the prasaṅgas of the sattra. He is to lead the prayer services of the sattra. So, he should be an expert in sattrīya music. Nām-lagowās are graded into two-śīrār Nām-lagowā
(the principal Jom-lagowā) and dohārar nām-lagowā
(the assistant or helping Nām-lagowā).

(xi) pāṭhak:

The pāṭhak is to recite occasionally the metrical works of Saṅkaradeva and Ṭāḍhavadeva. The scriptures are recited and expounded by the pāṭhak to the congregation after the prasaṅga.

(xii) Bhāgavatī or Bhāgati:

The duty of the Bhāgavatī is to recite the scripture immediately after the congregational prayer. Sometimes this is done by the pāṭhak. The Bhāgavatī should, necessarily be well versed in Saṅskṛt learning as he is to expound the Bhāgavata in the sattrā.

(xiii) Gāyan-bāyan:

'The sattrā orchestra, giving music performances during prasaṅgas (services) and dramatic representations, is called Gāyana-vāyana and is formed by a number of drummers (vāyana) and singers (gāyana)'. The principal singer is called Bar-gāyan and the principal drummer is known as Bar-bāyan.
(xiv) Sūtradhāra:

The Sūtradhāra is the chief nātuva (dancer, actor) of the sattra. He is to impart training in dance and music of the bhāona performance to the dancers and actors. As such, he should be an expert in sattraīyā music and dance.

(xv) Deuri or Bilanīyā:

Offerings, made to the God in prasāgas, are distributed in the assembly as sacred food (prasāda). For this purpose, persons of any caste or community are appointed as distributors. They are called Deuri or Bilanīyā. The helpers of the principal Deuri (Bar-deuri) are called rāli-deuri.

(xvi) Bhāgāli:

The duty of this person is to maintain the storehouse of the sattra. He is in charge of all materials like rice, salt, banana, writing materials etc.

(xvii) Likhak:

The copyists of a sattra are called Likhak. They had to copy both the rare and the new manuscripts for
Another class of artisans among the monks is that of the Khanikars (painters and engravers), who paint, engrave and decorate the walls and posts of sattra buildings. They also provide miniature illustrations to manuscripts, copied by the Likhaks. Moreover, they use to make effigies (pratimā), masks (mokhā) and other articles required for dramatic representations.

There are other sattra functionaries like Ojā-pōli (who provide small choral performances), Ojā (the master musician or instructor in music), Bahuvā (the clown, who makes the people laugh in the midst of dramatic performance and also at other occasions) etc.

POSITION OF SUPERIORS: RITES, CEREMONIALS AND
FORMALITIES RELATED TO THE JALANTA COMMUNITY:

Position of Superiors: The Adhikār or Satrādhikār, the head of the sattra institution, is respected by each and everybody of the sattra. But like the Adhikārs of the
Brahma Samhuti, he is not placed almost on an equal footing with the deity. There is, in this Samhuti, a difference between the guru and the Adhikār. The members of the family of the Sattra Adhikār can also administer initiation and are regarded as guru. So the total number of disciples of a particular group of sattra cannot exactly be enumerated. The number of disciples of the Narowā group of sattras is estimated at sixty thousand at present.

All the male members of the family of an Adhikār, therefore, become preachers. However, the Adhikār in the Kirtana-ghar is entitled to get a reserved seat on the main post of the north side (lāi-khuṭā) of the prayer-hall. Others, as a general rule, are not allowed to occupy that seat in presence of the Adhikār. While distributing food-offerings (prasāda), the distributor will have to give the first part to the Superior (Adhikār) in a 'śarāi' (tray). Next it will be distributed among the

45 NMSIA., p.146.
members of his family according to age and honour. Then the prasāda will be distributed to other devotees.

The Adhikār must be expert in all aspects of the sattra life, like religious, cultural etc. It is for his accomplished learning and aptitude that an Adhikār is respected by all. The Mahantas as a whole, must maintain purity in moral and religious spheres. Fines, imposed on disciples for certain offences, are divided, the major share being offered to the Superior which is called 'dharma-danda' (religious tax).

The Adhikār, as a rule, is to appoint new officers of his sattra, but new appointments of lesser responsibility can be made by other Mahantas or officers also. Only the final approval of the Superior (Adhikār) will be required in such cases. The Adhikār and other Gosāis of the sattra are equally respected by the bhakats. In presence of the Gosāis the disciples will not sit on a higher or even equal seat. At first sight and also at the time of leaving, the disciples generally bow down
to the guru. This respect is shown to other members, even to a minor also. The custom to bow down to the venerable persons at the first sight is prevalent among the relatives of the Gosāis.

People generally address the Adhikār as Jaga-nāth, irabhu, Ātā, Bāp or Ātā-Īśvar etc. He is referred to as Garākī, Gosāi-Īśvar, Ātā etc. Other Gosāis are also addressed as irabhu-Īśvar, irabhu, Gosāi-rām, irabhu-rām or, in some cases, Bār-gosāi, Háju-gosāi, Saru-gosāi, or Bār-irabhu, Háju-irabhu, Saru-irabhu etc. The wife of the Adhikār and the other female members are addressed as Āi-tr, Āi-mātr, Āi or Āi-rām. Minor female members are addressed as Āi-kaṇ, Āiṭi etc., while minor males are addressed as Bopa, Bopa-kaṇ, Bāpāi or Bāpāi-rām etc.

The Gosāi community, as a general rule, do not pay a visit to the house of disciples. If, however, they are to visit, they will be offered to sit at a place covered with a new piece of cloth or with a cādar. The Gosāi will take there only areca nut and betel-leaf.
The Adhikār and the other Gosāis have got the power to punish a disciple involved in offences.

It is noteworthy that in the four main sattras of the Saṅhāti, there is no office of the Dekā-adhikār as a rule. The Adhikār in consultation with other well-wishers of the sattrā, may nominate a suitable person to be the Adhikār after him, where there is no rigid rule of becoming Adhikār according to seniority (jyeśṭhānukrama) or according to lineage (putrānukrama).

Official tour (cahar-phūra): The Superiors use to go out on their sojourn in a dignified way. They perform the journey on the back of elephant, on boat or on a 'khāṭolā' carried on by two or four persons on their shoulders. The khāṭolā is the litter or sedan like the dolā. The only difference is that the dolās have no wooden cover but the khāṭolās have a cover. It is an oval-shaped hollow boat-like seat with a curved or straight ridge-pole. The Adhikār and the members of his family enjoyed the use of this type of
conveyance. The Gosāi is accompanied by fifty to sixty members in his tour. 46 The use of the dolā or khāṭolā has now become almost obsolete, but in old days, there were communities who were in charge of maintaining and carrying the dolā and the khāṭolā. They were selected even from the higher castes like Khāyastha, Kalitā etc. Some prominent sattras have their own dolā or khāṭolā carriers. Persons who used to carry and accompany the dolā and khāṭolā of the Gosāi of the Visuṣupur-sattra are known as 'Dūliyā-caudhārī'. 47 It was considered as a matter of pride and fortune to carry the Gosāis and other members of their family by their disciplies. Even woman used to travel on a dolā. 48

The Gosāis use 'ūhar-pāci' (a pair of bamboo baskets with covers, carried on shoulder) where articles

46 KCSI., p. 119.
47 They used to live at Cenga near Barpeta. The Caudhārī family of Cenga is reported to be the members of the community.
48 Vidyānānda, vv. 96-97, states how aruwā Atā (Gaurīkānta) and one Kusāi carried Kāliyā Devī Ai Gosāi, wife of Saṅkara deva, from Janīyā to Sundarīdiyā in a dolā.
of worship and other necessary things are kept. This is a peculiar type of bamboo-case used only by Adhi-kārs and other dignitaries of the sattra. The Gosāis also use a kind of big sun-shade called 'bar-jāpi' made of palm or other similar leaves. This is to be fastened on the back of the elephant if the journey is performed on its back. Otherwise, a person will hold it over the khaṭolā and will walk along the side of the conveyance. On other occasions also, the khaṭolā, dolā and the bar-jāpi are used. The Gosāi is accompanied by the gāyan-bānya musical party and his journey starts with a pompous procession. When he reaches his destination, he is welcomed by the villagers with gāyan-bānya by 'tāl-khol' music. The local officers of the village are informed in advance so that necessary arrangements could be made before his arrival at that village. The Gosāis are not to touch the ground with bare feet while they alight. There is a peculiar type of song called 'guru-ādarā gīt' (guru welcoming song) sung by the women folk to welcome
the Gosāi. 49.

The guru will put up in the village nām-ghar or in a temporary hut called 'bāhar'(a camp). The disciples keep the Gosāi in their village for few days. They offer articles for his food, called 'sidhā' or 'bhujanī'. The tithe or the regular tax payable to the preceptor (gurur kar), if there is any, for the year, is also collected by the Medhi (an officer) from the disciples. The Medhi will hand it over to the guru. Before leaving the village, the Gosāi will be offered money, cloth and other presents by the disciples. This is called 'sevā-jānaṇī'. 50.

49 A specimen of such a song is:
"cānde dharīle chāṭī, sūruje dharīle chāṭī,
sice sevākiyāi āvari dharīle mahāpuruṣare nāti'.
(= the moon held forth the halo of light, the sun held forth the halo of light, the grandson of Mahāpuṣa is surrounded with disciples and devotees).

50 According to the present Sattrādhikār, the Kowāmarā group of sattras calls this 'sevā-jānaṇī'. 
Even when new crop was harvested, the first part was to be offered to the guru. Then the Gosāi leaves for another village, the disci.les accompany him to a short distance with usual 'tāl-khol' music and other songs.

Marriage ceremony of the Mahanta community:

The marriage ceremony is performed according to the śastric rites conducted by Brahmāṇ priests. The Gosāis offer something to the Kīrtana-ghar for the marriage of their girls. In the days of yore, the selection of bride was a problem for the four main satras and, therefore, some Gosāis had to live a celibate. Their marriage was restricted to the four main satras and they never established matrimonial relations with the Gosāis of other satras. In some cases, they preferred to make such relations with the Kāyasthas of lower Assam than to make it with other satras of the same Samhāṭi, or with satras affiliated to other Samhāṭis. However, the Kālsilā-sattra became an exception with whom the four main satras made such relations perhaps due to the reason that they used to live in 51 [P. 134]
and around Bardowā. The grown up girls of the above four sattras, however, were married to the other sattras of the Saññati. The practice of establishing matrimonial relations with the Kāyasthas of western Assam was, of course, in vogue since very early period.

There are some peculiarities in the marriage ceremony of the Līhautas. The gāyan-bāyan musical party is always a necessity besides other music like ḍhol, kālī etc. The gāyan-bāyan will accompany the female folk singing a gīta when they go to draw water for ceremonial bath. The main lady will go on a dolā along with the bar-jāpi held on her side. The bride or the groom is also carried on the dolā on such occasions. During the time of ceremonial bath, the gāyan-bāyan party performs a gīta and plays the

52 For example, Purusottama and Caturbhuja married from Kāmarūpa, who were daughters of Kāyasthas. Anantarāya, the head of the Kowāmarā-sattra, Sib-sagar, also married the daughter of a Kāyastha of western Assam.
particular type of music called 'caṭā-marā' or 'maṅgal-kowā', when rice will be sprinkled (āc-cāul diyā). In some sattras, a ghoṣa is sung at that time.

When the bride is taken out to the fixed place of the 'hom-ghar' or 'homar-guri' (a place where the 'homa' is performed), the gāyaṇ-bāyan sings either of the following two gītas:

(i) 'ānande rāja-nandinī hāse
    svāmika pāse calaya layalāse' of the drama Rāma-vijaya by Śāṅkaradeva.

(ii) 'raṅgiṇī sankhī saṅgīṇī kālā
    calali yaice cāndakeri kālā' of the drama Rukmiṇī-haraṇa by Śāṅkaradeva.

At the time of 'bar-hou' or 'kāhāhati' the gītā 'kāhātu vidhātā vedaku vānī' by Śāṅkaradeva, will, likewise, be sung.

The disciples are to intimate the arrangement of their marriage to the guru in a prescribed manner, called 'niyō-jānai' (informing about a marriage). They must offer curd, molasses, and 'komal-cāul' (specially prepared), a kind of Assamese rice, along with
areca nut and betel-leaf to the Gosāi before they entertain the villagers. After the marriage ceremony of a girl, the disciple is to give a present called 'biyā-dānī' (donation for marriage) to the guru consisting of money and a piece of cloth called 'khanīyā-kāpor' (a folded cloth). But in case of the marriage of a son of the disciple, the above offer is not required. On the contrary, a piece of cloth and other help, where necessary, is extended by the Gosāi himself. The bride, after few days is to go to the Gosāi's house for receiving 'sara Ja' (initiation). She is not allowed to cook food or serve meals to the superiors unless she is initiated.

Obsequial rites: On the death of a Gosāi, purificatory rites are performed and the life of the deceased is formally dedicated by a Brāhmaṇ priest (called 'citā-amarga' or 'prājotsarga'). Disciples assemble and join the funeral procession. The information is circulated by beating the drum (dābā). Besides dhol, kāli and other musical performances, the gāyan-bāyan
also sings an appropriate gīta while accompanying the procession. The women folk also sings the Kīr-
tana 'pmā ha ri sālā cri c' in a different tune. Other devotional songs are also sung. The gāyan-bāyan
generally sings a gīta of the 'kharnān-tāl'. Here also the bar-jānī is used. All the disciples bow down to the deceased for the last time on the cremation ground. The impurity on the death of a guru lasts for three nights to be observed by the disciples. At the end of one month, the purificatory rite is performed according to Brahmanical rites. At night at least one bhaonā (dramatic performance) is performed. The procession carrying 'śrāddha-oblation' (pinda) to the deceased is accompanied by the gāyan-
bāyan musical party singing a gīta. The women folk sings the 'pinda-dānar gīta'\(^53\) (song relating to the

\(^{53}\) A specimen of such a song is:

'solare rūpare jakhala naaōle covāre nāre dhūli, vaikumthare para guru nāmi āhe nāti pinda diche kuli' (= the golden and silver ladder is brought down, a whisk made of the tail of yak is flown; the guru comes down from the Vaikuṭha as his grandson offers oblation).
'śrāddha' oblations offered to the deceased). This is also a peculiar type of sūrya. The lar-jāli is used on that occasion. In the death anniversaries of Adhīkārs and other Gosāis, the same procedure is followed.

When a disciple dies, his successors are to offer something to the guru. In some sattras, the best one of the sixteenth gifts,(which are called 'mṛtyu-dānī') is given to the guru.54

Investiture(dhop-diya or airmāli-lowā) ceremony:
The installation of a Mahanta to the Superiorship was performed in the presence of the bhākats of the Order even in old days. Lādhavadeva is reported to have proclaimed Turuṣottama as his successor.55 Likewise, Turuṣottama is said to have nominated his younger brother Caturbhuj as his successor.56 Caturbhuj adopted Dāmodaradeva as his son and invested him with the headship

54 Information supplied by Uṣā Devī and Bhogendra Deva Goswami of the Bāli-sattra and the Kowāmarā-sattra respectively.
56 Harinarayana,v.382; Dvārikā,v.2639.
after Caturbhuja. The nomination of Dāmodara Ātā has been affirmed by Hadan Ātā also. The appointment was finally approved by twenty four Mahantas at the request of Kanakalata. In the same way, Nirānja Gābharugiri was offered 'nirmāli' (nirmālya) as Adhikār by the twelve Mahantas and Anantarāya was also installed to that position by the Mahantas.

Heads of sattras belonging to other Sañhitās were also invited to attend such function and approve of the appointment. It is narrated that Anantarāya, the head of the Kowāmarā-sattra, attended such a function at the Aunāṭī-sattra and offered 'nirmāli' to Rāgācaraṇa and Dāmodara of the same sattra. Dāmodara Ātā of the Nārowā-sattra came to the investiture ceremony of Bhagatratha

57 Harinārāyaṇa, vv.427-428.
58 HS obtained from Dānuṭi Nām-lagowā. The oft-quoted verse in the words of Caturbhuja is:
'dharma śāstra bhāgavata sahite āmāra,
āji dhari Dāmodara jānā Adhikāra'/
59 Dvārikā, vv.2633-2636.
60 Dvārikā, v.2567.
61 Dvārikā, v.2837.
62 Bhadracāru, vv.823-828; also cited in ḪXI., pp.112, 243.
(of the Korcong-sattra) at the Garā-sattra and offered 'nirmāli' to him.63 Bhagīratha nominated Bharata as his successor and the latter was also formally appointed an Adhikār first by Rāmacandra Ātā of the Narowā-sattra and then by Anantarāya Ātā and other twelve apostles by offering him 'nirmāli'.64

Even today, the ceremony has much pomp and dignity. The function is also known as 'dhop-diya' (offering of dhop = meaning garland and flowers offered to the Superior). A detailed description of the ceremony has been incorporated by Dewan in his Durānji-viveka-ratna65.

The nominee for the Superiorship (Adhikārship) is to observe fast on the night previous to the installation. Special nām-Kīrtan (devotional functions) is held on the day and followers of the sattra and other invitees from far and near assemble in the Kīrtana-ghar of the sattra.

63 Kesava-carita, vv. 331-335.
64 Kesava-carita, vv. 430-434.
65 ff. 44(b)-46(b).
Special seats are also kept for the new Adhikār as well as for the heads of different satras according to their rank and position. As soon as some preliminary formalities are over, the expert on the line stands and starts describing the history of the Saṅhāti with particular reference to the sattrā. This is a must in course of the whole ceremony. Reference to this has been made by Dvārīkā when Dāmodara Ātā appointed the apostles following the suggestion offered by Keśāva Ātā of the Koroṅg-sattrā. At last the 'nirmāli' (nirmālya) is offered to the nominee by the attending Gosāis one by one declaring him as the Adhikār. Auspicious musical instruments are played on. Then the Sattraṅdhiṅkār is invested with the position, honour and dignity of his office. From that day onward, he is formally acknowledged as the Adhikār by each and everybody of the sattrā, as well as by other sattras also. Another important feature

66 v.2767. Similar verses are also there in the work in connection with the investiture ceremony of Yadunaṅgi. vide vv.3164-3165 etc.
of the function is that a drama which should be, as a general rule, the composition of the new Adhikār,\textsuperscript{67} is performed at night.

**DAILY OBSERVANCES OF A DEVOTEE:**

The work *Vaisnavāhini* by Lakṣmīdeva\textsuperscript{66} is the only available work in verse to help in our present discussion. A Vaiṣṇava is to observe the code strictly since the day of his receiving initiation. These are generally transmitted through oral traditions in minute details. Therefore, it is likely that these codes would differ from sattra to sattra. However, the code, as laid down in the work noted above, is generally followed by the four main sattras, particularly the Narovā group of sattras as a whole.

Rising from the bed in the morning, a Vaiṣṇava is to meditate the child Kṛṣṇa and utter the word "Mādhava", "Mādhava", before he sets his foot on earth. He then

\textsuperscript{67} Dr S.K. Bhuyan has noted this fact more than once in some of his works and papers.

\textsuperscript{68} see supra.
leaves the bedroom and goes for passing urine at the end of which, 'māṭi-pāṇi' (soil and water) is to be used for cleansing the hands and the organ. It is stated that soil and water is to be used once in the genital organ, three times in the left hand and once more in both the hands for purification.

For the purpose of passing stool, one should go to a distance that may be covered by an arrow shot from a bow. The nose should be covered with cloth in squatting for easing and the surface of the earth should be covered with grass on which stool is to be passed. At this time one should not set one's eye on cows, brahmans, nakṣatras, trees, the sun, the moon and water etc. For cleansing the hands and feet, soil and water is to be used again. It is said that soil and water should be taken once in the genital organ, three times in the anus and ten times in the

---

69 v.9.
70 v.10.
71 op. cit.
72 v.11.
left hand. Then the person is to smear seven times on both the hands and three times on each of his foot. Lastly, he smears ten times on both the hands. By selecting a clean spot the Vaisnava is to put aside the surface to the depth of four digits, to take soil for smearing. During day time, he is to sit facing the east and at night, the north, for the purpose of cleansing work. He should cleanse the teeth and the tongue with some wood-picks. Oil should be rubbed on the body but before that three drops are to be struck off from the nails on the earth uttering the name Aśvatthāma. Oil is to be applied on the toe of the left foot, then on the right foot and then on the navel. But Brāhmans should apply first on the toe of the right foot.

Plunging into the water up to the waist, the Vaisnava is to perform the 'Gaṅgā-āvāhana' and then thoroughly cleanse the body sinking five times into water. He then puts on clean clothes and sings the 'guru-bhātina' by Mādhavadeva and the 'toṭaya' by Śāṅkara deva.
The Vaisnava then should not enter a place which was not already cleaned. He is to enter the domestic temple again after cleansing his hands and feet with simple water and to sit on a mat for prayer. He should meditate the 'gayatri-mantra' (if he is a brahman or a kshatriya), do the 'guru-sewa' as taught at the time of initiation and count the rosary as prescribed. A Vaisnava thus performs his prayer and comes out of his chapel.

The Vaisnava is to offer in his mind five handfuls of meal in the name of Hari before he takes it. After meal the mouth should be cleansed with picks and with water. Uttering the word 'Sri-vasu', the Vaisnava should then take areca nut and betel-leaf or other things as mukha-suddhi. The place where he takes meal is to be washed twice with water and once again with cow-dung and water.

The Vaisnava should not punish his subordinate by pulling his or her hair or in other similar ways. Meals

74 vv.27-28.
should not be taken two times a day on the śrāddha ceremonies of the guru and the father, on Amāvasyā, Pūrṇimā and Samkrānti. On Caturṛdaśī and Āṣṭamī, shaving and smearing oil on the body should be avoided. A Vaiṣṇava is to abstain from taking the following seven kinds of intoxicants - opium (kāni), hemp (bhāṅg), tobacco (dhpāṭ), stramonium (dhuturā), wine (mad), onion (panaru) and garlic (naharu). The above main codes are to be followed by the monks and the lay disciples also. When going to bed, one should utter the name 'paḍmaṇāṭha' and should remember one's guru as well as the four reals (cārī-vastu).

Influence on other Samhatis and the Caitanyite sattras:
The furious Samhāti has influenced, to a great extent, the other Samhātis, particularly in matters of formal ceremony. It is noteworthy that some sattras of the Brahma Samhāti even use Sa-ghosā by Purusottama Thākur in their
Different ways and modes of singing and chanting congregational prayers, as laid down by Kurusottama, have been freely admitted by some sattras belonging to other Samhatis. In fact the Purusā Samhati has influenced some prominent sattras of the Brahma Samhati like Gađanūr, Kuruwāhāhī etc., to such an extent that there is no practical difference between the sattras of the above two Samhatis so far as their devotional functions are concerned.

Even the daily prasāgas and special functions like 'pāl-nām', 'bar-sabāh' etc., have got striking similarity with those of the sattras of the Samhati under review. The 'bhaona' performance also deserves special mention in this context. In their old age, devotees belonging to other Samhatis use to live at Bardowā, particularly those residing nearby or around the Bardowā Thān. Therefore, the influence of the Bardowā school of music can easily be perceived on those sattras.

77 Bap Chandra Mahanta: Mahapurus Śaṅkaradeva.
In support of this view, reference may be made of the Sravana-sattra of Kaliyār (which is not included in the iurusa Samhati) where there is no difference at all in matters of devotional functions with those of the Bardowā group of sattras.\textsuperscript{78}

The iurusa Samhati influenced the Caitanyite satras also in different aspects. The Caitanyite sattras of Nowgoug have been gradually becoming identical with the sattras of the iurusa Samhati in matters of form. These satras have Nām-ghar and Maṇikūt like other sattras.\textsuperscript{79}

The Kāhuwātalī-sattra of Nowgong has completely turned 'mahāpurusītyā' and, therefore, it has now become difficult to trace any affiliation with the Caitanyite school. The above Caitanyite sattras use the Kīrtana-ghosā and the Nām-ghosā in their prayer services and also use drum, gong, tāl-khol etc., like the sattras of the Purusa Samhati.\textsuperscript{80} It may be discern from the above that the Caitanyite sattras of Assam have borrowed a lot in various

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{78} \textit{Neog : Pavitra Asam}, ed. 1, Jorhat, 1960.
  \item \textsuperscript{79} \textit{Neog : Pavitra Asam}, ed. 1, Jorhat, 1960, pp. 33-34.
  \item \textsuperscript{80} \textit{Pavitra Asam}, ed. 1, Jorhat, 1960, pp. 143-144.
\end{itemize}
aspects of their institutional functions from the sattras, particularly from their neighbouring sattras which are evidently affiliated to the Purusa Samhati.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{31} The sattras referred to above are the Kālsilā-sattra and the Śukdal Barbarī and the Śukdal Sarabari sattras of the Purusa Samhati, located nearer to the Caitanyite-sattras in Nowgong (Assam).