

# Kalighat Temple

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Entry tags: Religious Group, Religious Place, Shrine, Hinduism, Shaktism

Kalighat Temple is a Hindu temple situated in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. The temple name is a Bengali compound made of Kālī—the name of a Hindu goddess—and ghāṭ—the landing stage of a river. Kalighat temple, conforming to the name “the landing stage of Kālī”, is situated beside the Adi Ganga River, the old course of Hooghly river, which is an eastern distributary of the sacred Ganges. The Kalighat Temple is dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kālī, a powerful goddess associated with time, death, and destruction in Śakti tradition. Kālī is also considered an incarnation of goddess Satī, whose myth gives sanctity to the Kalighat Temple. It's widely believed that the right toes of Satī fell in the position of Kalighat, and the relics of Satī's body are alleged to be found in the Kundupukur tank of the Kalighat Temple. Due to this connection with the myth, Kalighat is listed among the fifty-one śaktipīthas (seats of goddesses), which are pilgrimage sites for goddess worship. Built in the 19th century, Kalighat Temple is a temple complex that hosts not only Kālī, but also Śiva, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and other local goddesses of Bengal. Nowadays, thousands of devotees visit the Kalighat Temple daily to worship and receive the grace of goddess Kālī. As one of the religious centers of Kolkata, Kalighat attracts pilgrims from all over West Bengal and India. In addition to its religious importance, Kalighat Temple is also a thriving economic body, depending on which thousands of sevāyets (temple proprietors), pāṇḍās (priests), shop owners, hawkers, and beggars earn a living. Kalighat Temple is well-known for its animal sacrifice. Goat sacrifice, namely pāthābali in Bengali, is performed daily in the temple. One goat is sacrificed every day at noon as the midday meal for goddess Kālī, who is pleased by offerings of blood and flesh. In addition to this regular daily sacrifice, more goats are immolated if devotees come to make goat offerings. Buffalos are also sacrificed during the Durga Puja. The sacrificial violence strongly contradicts the non-violence upheld in mainstream Hinduism, attracting wide criticism from orthodox Hindus, vegetarians, animal lovers, and modernizers. Despite controversies incurred within the Hindu tradition and in the public sphere, animal sacrificial is still performed today as a living tradition in Kalighat Temple, providing an example of how the sacrificial killing prescribed in the medieval scripture Kālikā Purāṇa is performed in contemporary practices.



Date Range: 19 CE - 21 CE

Region: Kalighat Kali Temple

Region tags: Asia, South Asia, India

Kalighat Temple is situated in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), West Bengal, India.

## Status of Participants:

✓ Elite    ✓ Religious Specialists    ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

## General Variables

### Sources and Excavations

#### Print Sources

Print sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Moodie, D. (2019). *The making of a modern temple and a Hindu city: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press.
- Source 2: Basu Roy, I. (1993). *Kalighat, its impact on socio-cultural life of Hindus*. Gyan Pub. House.
- Source 3: Gupta, S. (2003). *The Domestication of a Goddess: Caraṇa-tīrtha Kālīghāṭ, the Mahāpīṭha of Kālī*. (Rachel McDermott Fell, Jeffrey Kripal J, Ed.), *Encountering Kālī: In the Margins, at the Center, in the West*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

### Online Sources

Online sources used for understanding this subject:

– Source 1 URL:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20030630031321/http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/fr/2003/05/09/stories/2003050901460>;

– Source 1 Description: Balakrishnan, S (9 May 2003). "Kali Mandir of Kolkata". The Hindu.

– Source 2 URL: <https://kalighatkalitemple.com/>

– Source 2 Description: The official website of Kalighat Temple

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Has this place been the focus of excavation (pre-modern, illicit, or scientific):

Answer 'Yes' for each period or type of excavation.

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

### Topographical Context

Is the place associated with a feature in the landscape

– Body of water (as distinct from source)

Notes: Kundupukur, the tank of Kalighat Temple, is believed to connect to a subterranean distributary of the sacred Ganges river.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Does the place involve human-made features besides structure:

Other features might be ground clearing, terracing, other modifications of the local environment.

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is the place situated in an urban or significantly urbanized area:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is there a distinct boundary between the place and the urban fabric:

— Yes

Notes: The temple wall separates the temple complex from the surroundings and the markets around the temple.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is the place located significantly within the urban fabric:

Is the place centrally located, or at the crossroads of significant pathways?

— Yes

Notes: The temple is close to the subway station and the bus stop named "Kalighat". The district in which the Kalighat temple is situated is named after the temple as "Kalighat".

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is the place situated in a rural setting:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is the place situated far removed from non-religious places of habitation:

— No

Notes: Kalighat Temple is situated in a lively market, which is always crowded with people looking for street food and pūjā items (items for worship, such as incense, beads, and candles). A few blocks from the temple, there is also a neighborhood of idol-makers who make and sell idols, and clothes and ornamentations used to decorate idols.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

## Structures Present

Are there structures or features present:

Instructions: Answer once for each structure/feature or group that can be differentiated.

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ A single structure

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ One single feature

– Other [specify]: A flat space in the city.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ A group of structures:

– Yes

Notes: Kalighat Temple is a temple complex consisting of a main temple that hosts the goddess Kālī, a Rādhā-Κῖῤῥῇῃ Temple for Rādhā-Κῖῤῥῇῃ, a Natmondir—a rectangular platform in which devotees sing evening prayers, a Sosthi Tala—an altar on which three mother goddess are worship, a Harkatha Tala—a sacrificial pavilion for animal sacrifice, and two kitchens in which food offerings for deities are prepared.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are they part of a single design/construction stage:

– No

Notes: The construction of Kalighat Temple was initiated in 1799 and completed in 1809. The Sosthi Tala was constructed in 1880. The Rādhā-Κῖῤῥῇῃ Temple was constructed in 1843, and a Dolmancho was added to it in 1858.

Reference: Roy Basu, Indrani. Kalighat, Its Impact on Socio-cultural Life of Hindus. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, n.d.. p.pp.1-14

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ A group of features:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is it part of a larger place/sanctuary:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ What is the function of the structure/feature or group:

Answer "Yes" once for each distinct function

– Worship

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Worship:

– Other [specify]: Both communal and individual worships are performed in the temple.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

– Sacrificial

Notes: Goat sacrifice is performed daily at noon. Buffalo sacrifice is performed during Durga Puja.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is the structure/feature finished:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Was the structure/feature intended to last beyond a generation:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Was the structure/feature modified through time:

– Yes

Notes: There is no major change in the overall temple structure, but renovations happen throughout time. For example, Harkath Tala, the sacrificial pavilion, was enclosed by a wall that is only four-foot high. In 2006, a seven-foot wall was established to conceal the bloody scene of killing.

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.143

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Was the structure/feature destroyed:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Has the structure/feature been reconstructed:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

### Reasons for Creation/Construction/Consecration

Is the place used for the worship of/communication with non-human supernatural beings:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Dedicated to a supernatural being:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Dedicated to more than one supernatural being:

– Yes [specify]: The main shrine is dedicated to goddess Kālī. Within the temple complex, there are also other small shrines in which Śiva, Ṣaṣṭhī Mā, Rāthā-Kṛṣṇa, and other deities are worshiped. Śiva is the consort of Satī, another form of the goddess Kālī. Three local goddesses—Ṣaṣṭhī, Sītala, and Chandī—are worshipped as three stones placed on an altar. Rāthā and Kṛṣṇa are hosted at the shrine in the west of the main temple. Because Rāthā and Kṛṣṇa are vegetarian Vaiṣṇava deities, their food offerings are prepared in a separate kitchen.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is the place used for the worship of a semi-divine human being:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is the place used for the worship of non-divine ancestors:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Was the place commissioned/built by an official political entity:

A political entity is a local power structure that leverages a workforce.

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Were the Structures built by specific groups of people:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Was the place thought to have originated as the result of divine intervention:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Was the place created to mark or commemorate the birthplace of a supernatural or human being:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Was the place created as the result of an event:

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Specify

—Other [specify]: Myth

Notes: The sanctity of Kalighat derives from the myth of goddess Satī, which is mentioned in several purāṇas popular in eastern India, such as the the Kālikā Purāṇa and the Devī Bhagavata Purāṇa. In the myth, Satī committed suicide in sacrificial fire because her father Dakṣa humiliated her husband Śiva. Śiva, grieving over the death of his beloved wife, carried her body and roamed around the world. Satī's body was scattered and fell on more than fifty places, which are known as śakti pīṭhas. It's believed that the right toes of Satī fell in the Kundupukur tank of Kalighat. Therefore, the myth makes Kalighat a sacred place in Śakti tradition.

Reference: Roy Basu, Indrani. Kalighat, Its Impact on Socio-cultural Life of Hindus. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, n.d.. p.pp.15-19

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.49-57

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Was the creation of the place sponsored by an external financial/material donation:

— Yes

Notes: The construction of the temple was sponsored by the Sabarna Roy Choudhury family, who are the local landholders (zamindars) of Kolkata.

Reference: Roy Basu, Indrani. Kalighat, Its Impact on Socio-cultural Life of Hindus. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, n.d.. p.3

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.172, n.7

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Is this sponsor of the same religious group/tradition as the main usage of the place:

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Was the establishment of the place motivated by:

— Expectation of favor in return

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Was the place built specifically for housing scriptures/sacred texts:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE



## Design and Material Remains

### Overall Structure

Is the place made up of multiple built structures:

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are any of the structures attached to or associated with a landscape feature:

— Yes

Notes: A tank named Kundupukur is situated southeast of the temple outside the boundary. The water of the tank is believed to be associated with the Adi Ganga, the distributary of the sacred Ganges river. The water is turbid, and three attempts to cleanse the tank—made respectively in 1871, 1887, and 1981—failed. The failure seems to prove its subterranean connection with the Ganges. It is believed that the right toes of Sati fell into this tank, thus, the water is sacred and powerful in granting the boon of a child to women.

Reference: Roy Basu, Indrani. *Kalighat, Its Impact on Socio-cultural Life of Hindus*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, n.d.. p.p.13

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are any of the structures attached to other structures:

— Yes

Notes: An over-bridge connects the main temple with the kitchen, so the meat offering (bhog) for Kālī can be directly sent to the inner sanctum.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is there a hierarchy among the structures:

— Yes

Notes: The main temple, which hosts the image of Kālī, is higher in hierarchy, and is the highest among the temple structures.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is monumental architecture present:

Monumental architecture is defined here as a built structure that surpasses average human proportions and in general is larger and more complex than is necessary to fulfill the structure's utilitarian function(s).

Examples of monumental architecture include Mesopotamian Ziggurats, Egyptian Pyramids, Greek and Roman temples, Mesoamerican Pyramids, North American and Aegean burial mounds, etc.

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is the structure/feature made out of natural materials:

Answer [Yes] for each material type

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is the structure/feature made out of human-made materials

— Yes [specify]: Clay bricks and terracotta. The wall that demarcates the temple boundary is made of cement.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

## Decoration

Is decoration present:

— No

Notes: Kalighat temple is a typical chala-style temple, which resembles thatch-roofed huts in rural Bengal. The roof is decorated in color. It's believed that the top stick is made of gold.

Reference: Roy Basu, Indrani. Kalighat, Its Impact on Socio-cultural Life of Hindus. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, n.d.. p.2-3

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

## Iconography

Are there distinct features in the places iconography:

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Eyes (stylized or not)

— Yes

Notes: The icon features three wide, red eyes. The third eye shows that she is related to Śiva, the three-eyed one (Trinetra). Although Kālī is a goddess without a consort, she is considered an incarnation of Śiva's wife Satī. The color of the red eye conforms to the Kālikā Purāṇa (8.10), which describes Kālī as the one with red eyes (āraktanayanā).

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

#### ↳ Supernatural beings (zoomorphic)

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

#### ↳ Supernatural beings (geomorphic)

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

#### ↳ Supernatural beings (anthropomorphic)

– Yes

Notes: The icon of Kālī in Kalighat Temple is a piece of black, oval stone with three red eyes, and a protruding golden tongue. She has four hands. The upper right hand is in abhaya mudrā, the gesture of no fear, and the lower right hand is in varada mudrā, the gesture of granting wishes. On the left side, the upper hand holds a sword, and the lower hand holds a severed human head. The body of the icon is covered with a Saree, which is regularly changed throughout the year. The iconology conforms to the portrait of Kālī in the Kālikā Purāṇa (8.9-11): "Seeing Kālikā standing upon a lion, black, breasts full and high, with four arms, a sweet mouth, holding a blue lotus, auspicious, (9) giving varada and abhaya, a sword in her hand, provided with all qualities, her eyes some-what red, lovely unloosened hair, enchanting, (10) then Dakṣa, Lord of the creatures, praised Mahāmāyā with uttermost joy, bending his neck in modesty. (11)" (Translation by Kooij)

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press, n.d.. fig.1.1

Reference: Van Kooij, Karel R.. *Tantric Teachings of the Kālikā Purāṇa*. Leiden: Brill, n.d.. p.187

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

#### ↳ Supernatural beings (abstract)

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Portrayals of afterlife

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Aspects of doctrine (e.g. cross, trinity, Mithraic symbols)

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Humans

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Supernatural narratives

– Yes

Notes: The iconology of Kālī, especially her protruding tongue, is related to her myth in the Devī Māhātmya. A demon named Raktabīja is able to reproduce himself through his blood drops, so he duplicates when wounded by Durgā on the battlefield. Summoned by Durgā, Kālī sucks blood from Raktabīja's body, defeating him after draining all his blood and eating up all of his duplicates (Devī Māhātmya 8.49-61).

Reference: Coburn, Thomas B.. Encountering the Goddess: A Translation of the Devī-māhātmya and a Study of Its Interpretation. Albany, N.Y: SUNY series in Hindu studies, n.d..

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Human narratives

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Other [Specify]

–Other [specify]: The lolling tongue and four hands are made of gold.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

## Beliefs and Practices

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### Funerary Associations

Is this place a tomb/burial:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is this a place for the worship of the dead:

— No

Notes: Roy mentioned that some families hire Brahmins of Kalighat to perform ancestor rituals, such as śrāddha. According to her study, Kalighat Brahmins were known for performing simplified versions of rituals, so they could help to save time and expense of the ritual.

Reference: Roy Basu, Indrani. Kalighat, Its Impact on Socio-cultural Life of Hindus. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, n.d.. p.102-103, 110-112

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is this a place for treatment of the corpse:

— No

Notes: Although Kalighat Temple is not a funeral place, it is adjacent to the Sha Nagar Keoratala Burning Ghat and Keoratola Mahasashan, which offer funeral and cremation services. Because the goddess Kali is a goddess of death and destruction, the adjacency between the Kalighat temple and the funeral ground is reasonable.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

Co-sacrifices are animal/human sacrifices prompted by the death of the primary occupant of the tomb/burial.

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Are grave goods present:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Are formal burials present:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

## Supernatural Beings

Is a supreme high god is present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Are they anthropomorphic:

– Yes

Notes: In Śakti tradition, goddess Kālī is considered a supreme high god. She is neither a sky nor an underworld deity, but a fierce goddess who is honored by all other gods.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Are they sky deity:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Are they chthonic (underworld)

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Are they fused with king/kingship role (king = high god)

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Are they the monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:

– No

Notes: Durgā, another incarnation of Kālī, is considered related to the monarch. Durgā is the state goddess who protects the kingdom and ensures victory in battles in medieval India. In Durgā Pūjā, Kālī is also invoked to receive animal sacrifices.

Reference: Sarkar, Bihani. *Heroic Shāktism: The Cult of Durgā in Ancient Indian Kingship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, n.d..

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are they kin relation to elites:

– No

Notes: On the contrary, goddess Kālī is originally associated non-elite people who are peripheral to a society, such as robbers and thieves. In the Gauḍavaho, she is worshipped by Śabaras, who are tribals marginal in a Hindu society. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Kālī is worshipped by a band of thieves who perform human sacrifices.

Reference: Kinsley, David R.. "Kālī". In *Encountering Kālī: In the Margins, at the Center, in the West*, edited by Rachel McDermott Fell and Jeffrey J. Kripal. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, n.d.. p.24

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are they other type of loyalty or connection to elites:

– Yes

Notes: Military goddess

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are they unquestionably good:

– No

Notes: Kālī is an ambiguous figure in the Hindu tradition. On the one hand, she is a fierce goddess who violently consumes blood and flesh, and is always associated with death and destruction. On the other hand, she is the mother goddess who grants boons and protection to her devotees. The contradiction and ambiguity in her character indicate the complexity of the historical development of Kālī. Elites such as Ramakrishna and Hāldār Brahmins who manage the Kalighat Temple contribute to the domestication of this ferocious mother goddess.

Reference: Gupta, Sanjukta. "The Domestication of a Goddess: Caraṇa-tīrtha Kālīghāṭ, the Mahāpīṭha of Kālī". In *Encountering Kālī: In the Margins, at the Center, in the West*, edited by Rachel McDermott Fell and Jeffrey J. Kripal. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2003.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are they other:

– Other [specify]: Goddess Kālī is often identified with, or considered an aspect of other

goddesses, such as Cāmuṇḍā, Durgā, Vindhyavāsini, and Caṇḍī.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Does the supreme high god communicate with the living at this place:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Are previously human spirits present:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Do human spirits communicate with the living at this place:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Are nonhuman supernatural beings present:

— Yes

Notes: In addition to the deities worshipped as icons, there are also guardian deities and semi-gods who are invoked to the ritual site to ensure the success of rituals. Bāṭukas, Yoginīs, Kṣetrapālas, and Ganapati are present during the animal sacrifice. Although they are unperceivable, blood and flesh offerings should also be presented to them.

Reference: "The "self-animal" and Divine Digestion: Goat Sacrifice to the Goddess Kali in Bengal". *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 3 (January 1, 2003). <https://doi.org/10.2307/2059730>. p.789

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Nonhuman spirits can be seen:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Nonhuman spirits can be physically felt:

— No



Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

Do nonhuman spirits communicate with the living at this place:

— No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

Are mixed human-divine beings present:

— No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

Do mixed human-divine beings communicate with the living at this place:

— No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
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Is the supernatural being/high god present in the form of a cult statue(s):

— Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

↳ Is the cult statue visible:

— Yes

Notes: The statue of Kālī is placed in the inner sanctum of the main temple. The body of Kālī is covered with Saree, but her face, hands, and feet are visible. Devotees line up to circumambulate her to take a full view of the statue. Alternatively, people can also see her face in the Natmondir.

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

↳ Is the cult statue hidden:

— No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

## Supernatural Interactions

Is supernatural monitoring present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Supernatural monitoring of norm adherence:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Supernatural beings care about or expect offerings:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Libations:

– No

Notes: Although liquor is a common Tantric oblation, there is no mention of using liquor in the Kālī worship in Kalighat as far as I have observed. Kālikā Purāṇa prohibits Brahmins from offering liquor to goddess Kālī. The Kālikā Purāṇa 67.51 states that “after offering liquor (madya), a Brahmin falls from Brahminhood.”

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Offerings of food:

– Yes [specify]: Sweets, fruits, milk and cooked dishes are pleasing to Kālī. These offerings can be bought from shops and vendors around the temple.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Animal sacrifice:

– Yes [specify]: Goat sacrifice and buffalo sacrifice

Notes: Goat sacrifice is performed daily in Kalighat. A goat is sacrificed every day around 12:30 pm for the midday meal of goddess Kālī. Buffalo sacrifice is performed during Durga Puja. Animal sacrifices are performed in the Harkath Tala, which can be “seen” by Kālī from the main temple.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ **Human sacrifice:**

– No

Notes: Although human sacrifice is prescribed in the Kālikā Purāṇa (67.18-19, 46, 73-91), it is not performed in Kalighat as far as I have observed.

Reference: Van Kooij, Karel R.. *Tantric Teachings of the Kālikā Purāṇa*. Leiden: Brill, n.d.. p.157-178

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ **Sacred objects:**

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ **Daily life objects:**

– Yes [specify]: Saree, Rupees, coins and flowers can be offered to Kālī.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ **Other:**

– Other [specify]: None

↳ **Supernatural beings care about sex:**

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ **Supernatural beings care about or expect proper ritual observance:**

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ **Supernatural beings care about or expect performance of rituals:**

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

↳ Supernatural beings care about or expect maintenance of the place:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

↳ Supernatural beings care about or expect personal hygiene:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

↳ Supernatural beings care about honoring oaths:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

↳ Other:

–Other [specify]: None

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

Do visitors communicate with the gods or supernatural beings:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

↳ Do visitors communicate with gods:

– Yes

Notes: Visitors communicate with Kālī by taking darśana of the goddess. Darśana, which means vision, refers to the visual perception of the sacred. On the one hand, devotees behold the image, honoring the goddess with their sight. On the other hand, devotees are also seen by the deity, thus receiving the auspicious sight of the goddess.

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE  
Region: West Bengal

↳ Do visitors communicate with other supernatural beings:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

## Ritual and Performance

### Sacrifices, Offerings, and Maintenance

Are sacrifices performed at this place:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are there animal sacrifices:

– Yes [specify]: Goat sacrifices are performed daily in Kalighat Temple, and buffalo sacrifices are performed during Durga Puja.

Notes: Goat sacrifice, namely pathaboli in Bengali, is performed daily in the temple as a living tradition. A goat is sacrificed every day around 12:30 pm for the midday meal of goddess Kālī. In addition to this regular daily sacrifice, more goats are immolated if devotees come to make this offering. Buffalos are also offered during Durga Puja. The sacrifice is performed in the Harkath Tala, the sacred sacrificial pavilion in which two alters are established side by side. The tall one is for buffalo sacrifice and the short one is for goat sacrifice.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are there human sacrifices:

– No

Notes: Although human sacrifice is prescribed in the Kālikā Purāṇa (67.18-19, 46, 73-91), it is not performed in Kalighat as far as I have observed.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are the sacrificed humans associated in some way:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Are there self-sacrifices present:

– No

Notes: Although Kālikā Purāṇa (67.5, 67.155-162) enjoins offering blood drained from one's own body, self-sacrifice is not performed in Kalighat Temple as far as I have observed. However, I find that devotees perform ritual actions that symbolize self-sacrifice. Devotees usually touch sacrificial altars with their heads, as if they are offering their heads just as offering a goat's head. People also crack coconuts as substitutes for their own heads and pour coconut water over sacrificial altars. These acts analogous to self-sacrifice show their devotion and complete surrender to goddess Kālī.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Are material offerings present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Are material offerings mandatory:

– No

Notes: Material offerings are not mandatory, but are highly recommended. Vendors around the temple also persuade visitors to buy the offerings.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Are material offerings composed of valuable objects:

– No

Notes: Most material offerings including flowers, sweets, and radishes can be easily purchased from vendors around the temple. The prices are cheap according to my experience in 2017 and 2019. For example, a garland made with red joba flowers (China rose) costs 10 rupees. A radish, which is considered pleasing to the goddess, costs 15 rupees. The only exception is the goat. In 2017, the price of a live goat is around Rs 500-600 per kg. Most sacrificial goats are very small, appearing to be no more than 10 kilograms. An interlocutor I interviewed in 2019 told me that she thought only rich people perform goat sacrifice, because a live goat is quite expensive.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Are material offerings composed of daily-life objects:

– Yes

Notes: Flowers and sweets are very common in the daily life of Hindus. These substances are used not only in temple worship, but also in daily worship at home.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are material offerings interred at this place (in caches):

– No

Notes: Edibles such as sweets are distributed to devotees or consumed by temple workers. Withered Flowers are cleared up everyday in the afternoon. Coconuts are usually taken away by devotees after pouring the coconut water over the sacrificial altars.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Other

– Other [specify]: Devotees offer also rupee notes and coins to Goddess Kālī when they circumambulate the inner sanctum, although they know money finally goes to the priest who serves in the sanctum.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is attendance to worship/sacrifice mandatory:

– No

Notes: The worship and sacrifice to Kālī are considered kāmya rituals (optional rituals that people perform from desire of benefit).

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is maintenance of the place performed:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is it required:

– Yes

Notes: The Kālīghāṭ Temple Committee (KTC) is responsible for the maintenance of Kalighat Temple. The employees involved in maintenance should be paid by the KTC with the income of the temple.

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.90-92

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is there cleansing (for the maintenance):

– Yes

Notes: As I have observed in 2017 and 2019, cleansing is conducted every afternoon. Temple workers cleanse the floor with water, and remove withered flowers and other rubbish from the temple.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are there periodic repairs/reconstructions:

– Yes

Notes: According to the directive issued by the High Court of India in 2006, the West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation allots three crore rupees for the repair works of Kalighat Temple.

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.121-122

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is the maintenance performed by permanent staff:

– Yes

Notes: In addition to permanent staff employed by the temple, children who live around Kalighat Temple also help to do some cleaning work. They are compensated by food oblations and coins placed on the altars.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Other

–Other [specify]: None

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

## Pilgrimage and Festivals

Are pilgrimages present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ How strict is pilgrimage:

– optional (common)

Notes: Kalighat Temple is a pilgrimage site for śāktas (the worshipper of goddesses who are



śaktis in Hindu tradition). According to my interviews, many devotees from West Bengal, Bihar, and Assam come to honor Kālī in Kalighat.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are pilgrimages the main reason for construction/establishment of the place:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are pilgrimages to this place associated with significant life events:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Does pilgrimage to this place involve following established routes (roads):

– No

Notes: The official website of Kalighat Temple offers a few tour packages of temple tour. However, these routes are not mandatory for pilgrimage.

Reference: <https://kalighatkalitemple.com/>. "Official Website of Kalighat Temple". <https://kalighatkalitemple.com/>, n.d..

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is this place a venue for feasting:

– Yes

Notes: Vegetarian food is freely distributed in the temple in the afternoons. It is often rice, dal, or other curry dishes placed on a leaf plate. Devotees can also buy cooked mutton as prasāda, the food first presented to the goddess Kālī, and then distributed to devotees as the grace of Kālī. Moreover, hundreds of beggars around Kalighat Temple are fed as forms of god Viṣṇu.

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.15, 86

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is feasting connected to the worship/sacrifices performed at this place:

– Yes

Notes: The food distributed in feasting is considered prasāda—the food consumed first by the goddess. To prepare the midday meal for Kālī, the temple kitchen cooks rice, vegetable

curries, and mutton curries every noon. A portion of the food will be offered to Kālī, and the rest of the food will be shared by priests, temple workers, and other visitors.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is feasting sponsored by the same entity that built/maintains the place:

– Yes

Notes: The cost of feasting is paid by the sevāyets (or shebait in Bengali, temple proprietor), who manage the temple in turn. Part of the cost is covered by donation.

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.15

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Priests

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Local elites

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Private contributions

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Other

– Other [specify]: Half of the monetary offerings received by the temple is given to sevāyets, who pay for feasts and other services in the temple.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Does feasting occur in a specific location within the place:

– Yes [specify]: The distribution of food usually occurs in front of the Harkath Tala in the

southern part of the temple.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Are festivals present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Frequency of festivals

– specify: Durga Puja and Kali Puja are yearly festivals.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Do all members of the society participate in the festival(s):

– All members

Notes: The festivals are open to everyone including foreigners and outcastes.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Are festivals a defining element in the construction/decoration of the place:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



On average, how many participants gather at this place:

– number: Thousands of people gather in Kalighat during the festivals.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Is feasting part of the festival(s):

– Yes

Notes: More devotees come to enjoy the prasāda of Kālī during Durgā Pūjā and Kālī Pūjā.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is food consumption limited to certain members of the population:

- Elites
- Non-elites
- Religious professionals

Notes: Food consumption is open to the public. There is no particular limitation regarding who is qualified to enjoy the feasting.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

## Divination and Healing

Is divination present:

- No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is healing present/practiced at this place:

- No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Do rituals occur at this place:

Rituals are visibly enacted behaviors by one or more people for the purposes of religious observance.

- Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Do large-scale rituals take place:

- Yes

Notes: Goat sacrifice is performed daily in the temple. During the Durga Puja, people also sacrifice buffalos in the Harkath Tala. In the evening, devotees convene to perform the evening ārtī, in which devotees worship the goddess with a lamp, chant Kālī's name and sing songs in praise of Kālī.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Do small-scale rituals take place:

- Yes

Notes: Personal worship happens throughout the day. Devotees can make offerings to and take darśana of the goddess Kālī anytime except when the inner sanctum is closed. People are not allowed to enter the inner sanctum from 2pm to 4pm, when goddess Kālī enjoys her lunch and rests.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ On average how many participants are present in large-scale rituals:

—specify: More than 50 people are present during daily worships. More than hundred people gather for festivals such as Durga Puja and Kali Puja.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ How often do these rituals take place:

—specify: All of these rituals are performed daily.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are there orthodoxy checks:

—Yes

Notes: The violence involved in animal sacrifice apparently conflicts with the doctrine of non-violence upheld by mainstream Hinduism. To account for this conflict, priests in Kalighat Temple are inclined to de-emphasize the sacrificial violence, interpreting the animal sacrifice as a devotional practice to please the goddess.

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks:

—Yes

Notes: Most rituals performed in inner sanctums are quite standardized as they are supervised by purohit, but it is not the case of animal sacrifice. A standardized procedure of animal sacrifice is prescribed in ritual manuals, such as Śrīśrīkālīpūjā Paddhati and Purohita Darpaṇa. However, most pāṇḍās perform the ritual in simplified ways, and the ritual performance varies depending on the personal preference of pāṇḍās.

↳ Are there synchronic practices:

—Yes

Notes: During the evening worship, devotees chant the name of Kālī or Kālī Mā (Mother Kālī) synchronically. During the animal sacrifice, women will utter together the sound of ulu (ululi in Sanskrit, ulu dhvani in Bengali), which is a high-pitched sound produced by the rapid back and forth movement of the tongue. The ulu dhvani is considered an outcry indicative of auspiciousness.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are there intoxicants used during the ritual:

— No

Notes: Although liquor is a common Tantric oblation, it is not employed in the rituals in Kalighat temple as far as I have observed.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

## Institutions and Scriptures

### Religious Specialists

Are religious specialists present/in charge of this place:

Religious specialists are individuals whose primary duties within a population group are not concerned with subsistence or craft production but the maintenance of the religious landscape and culture of the group.

— Yes

Notes: Three groups of specialists are present in Kalighat. Sevāyets, or shebaites in Bengali, are temple proprietors who manage daily worship and other affairs in the temple. All sevāyets in Kalighat are male decedents of Bhavānīdās Cakravartī, who was the first sevāyet of Kalighat Temple. These Sevāyets belonging to the Haldar family inherited the rights of managing the temple from their ancestors. More than one thousand sevāyets take turns (pālā) to manage the temple. Purohitas are priests who are in charge of daily worship in the inner sanctum of Kalighat temple. Pāṇḍās are ritual specialists who do not have official positions in Kalighat. They roam about in the temple to find devotees who need ritual service. They guide visitors through worship and prayers in various shrines, and are paid with dakṣiṇā (ritual fee) by visitors. Most pāṇḍās are not well-trained in Sanskrit and they only perform simple versions of rituals. Pāṇḍās also perform goat sacrifice for those who want to offer a goat. As far as I have observed, they only perform the purification section prescribed by the ritual manual Purohit Darpan, and then they hand over the goat victims to Bāgdi people, who are in charge of immolating the animal. Three groups of specialists are present in Kalighat. Sevāyets, or shebaites in Bengali, are temple proprietors who manage daily worship and other affairs in the temple. All sevāyets in Kalighat are male decedents of Bhavānīdās Cakravartī, who was the first sevāyet of Kalighat Temple. These Sevāyets belonging to the Haldar family inherited the rights of managing the temple from their ancestors. More than one thousand sevāyets take turns (pālā) to manage the temple. Purohitas are priests who are in charge of daily worship in the inner sanctum of Kalighat temple. Pāṇḍās are ritual specialists who do not have official positions in Kalighat. They roam about in the temple to find devotees who need ritual service. They guide visitors through worship and prayers in various shrines, and are paid with dakṣiṇā (ritual fee) by visitors. Most of pāṇḍās are not well-trained in Sanskrit and they only perform simple versions of rituals. Pāṇḍās also perform goat sacrifice for those who want to offer a goat. As far as I have observed, they only perform the purification section prescribed by the ritual manual Purohit Darpan, and then they hand over the goat victims to Bāgdi people, who are in charge of immolating the animal. Although pāṇḍās are called “sāthī Brahmins”, some of them are born in lower castes or even of Muslim origin. They are notorious for cheating, overcharging, and other misconducts such as sexual harassment.

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.140-144

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Present full time

— Yes

Notes: Sevāyets manage Kalighat Temple through a mechanism of pālā (turns), so each of them is only allocated a few days or even a few hours per year. Pāṇḍās stay in the temple to find customers for as long as they want. Pāṇḍās stay in the temple to find customers as long as they want.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Present part time

— Yes

Notes: Sevāyets manage Kalighat Temple through a mechanism of pālā (turns), so each of them is only allocated a few days or even a few hours per year. Pāṇḍās stay in the temple to find customers for as long as they want.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are the religious specialists of specific sex/gender:

— Yes

Notes: All the ritual specialists are male.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are the religious specialists of specific ethnicity:

— Yes

Notes: Brahmin priests must be Hindus. The temple workers in charge of immolating sacrificial victims are Bāgdi people, who are tribals in eastern India.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are the religious specialists of specific class/cast:

— Yes

Notes: Theoretically, priests must be Brahmins since only Brahmins can ensure the purity of ritual. However, in reality, some of the pāṇḍās are born in lower castes or even of Muslim origin.

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.141

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are religious specialists dedicated to the place for life:

— Yes

Notes: Sevāyets are dedicated to Kalighat, but purohitas and the pāṇḍas are not necessarily affiliated with the temple.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Are the religious specialists stratified in a hierarchical system:

— Yes

Notes: Sevāyets are highest in the hierarchy as they inherit legitimacy from their family lineage. Purohitas, though inferior to Sevāyets, are prestigious ritualists who are qualified to serve the images in the inner shrine. In contrast, Pāṇḍās are the lowest in the hierarchy, and are notorious for cheating, pickpocketing, and sexual harassment. Most Pāṇḍās do not consider their job decent or lucrative.

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.140-142

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Is access within the space segregated by this hierarchy:

— Yes

Notes: Pāṇḍās are not allowed to enter the inner sanctum, since they are considered not as pure as purohitas.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Does this place incorporate a living space for religious specialists:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Is this place used for the training of religious specialists:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Are there formal institutions for the maintenance of the place:

Institutions that are authorized by the religious community or political leaders

— Yes

Notes: Two institutions are responsible for the maintenance of Kalighat Temple: the Kalighat Temple



Committee (KTC) and the Executive Committee of the Council of Shebaites (ECCS). The KTC is in charge of the overall management and financial issues of the temple. The KTC pays the temple employees with the half of temple income, and ensures that the other half of the income is distributed to the sevāyets based on their pālās (turns). According to the ruling issued by the Supreme Court of India in 1961, the KTS should include 5 sevāyets and 6 Hindu public representatives. However, in reality, the KTC today is comprised of sevāyets alone. The ECCS is in charge of the daily worship and allocating pālās to sevāyets. The ECCS is subject to the KTC.

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.90-93, 147

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

## Bureaucracy

Is there a formal bureaucracy present at this place:

A bureaucracy consists of a hierarchical system of accounting and rule maintenance primarily concerned with material wealth.

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Is a bureaucracy present permanently:

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal



Is a bureaucracy present on a temporary or seasonal basis:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Does this place control economic resources (land, goods, tools):

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

## Public Works

Does this place serve as a location for services to the community:

– Yes

Notes: Kalighat can be considered a charitable institution to some extent, as hundred of beggars who gather around Kalighat are fed by the temple funding every day.

Reference: Moodie, Deonnie. *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kalighat and Kolkata*. Oxford University Press, n.d.. p.15, 86

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Public food distribution and/or storage:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Place for civic functions (census, elections, others):

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Place for the practice of justice (trials, executions, etc.):

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Function for water management:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Part of the transportation network:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

↳ Other

–Other [specify]: None

## Writing/Scriptures

Is non-religious writing stored at this place:

Economic documents, records etc.

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

Are there scriptures associated with this place:

— No

Notes: Although most ritual manuals circulated around Kalighat Temple attribute their scriptural authority to Kālikā Purāṇa, Kalighat is not mentioned in the Kālikā Purāṇa.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 19 BCE - 21 CE

Region: West Bengal

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