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## India's Unsung Heroes



Haipou Jadonang was a Naga spiritual leader and political activist from Manipur, British India. He established the Heraka religious movement, which was based on the ancestral Naga religion, and declared himself to be the "messiah king" of the Nagas. At a time when Christianity and Vaishnavism of Manipur were trying to make inroads into the Naga territory, Jadonang sought to standardize the traditional Naga belief systems. The Heraka religion emphasized the worship of the supreme being "Tingkao Ragwang". His movement was widespread in the Zeliangrong territory before the conversion to Christianity. The Heraka movement faced opposition from the Christian converts as well as the traditional believers. Besides its religious aspects, Jadonang's movement had a political aim: he wanted his people to forget the past hatred of the inter-village feuds and communal tension, and unite against the foreigners. Jadonang had heard about Mahatma Gandhi's plans for civil disobedience movement in India, and wished to express solidarity with him. In January 1927, he made arrangements to take a dance troupe of 200 Naga boys and girls to welcome Gandhi at Silchar. However, Gandhi's visit was canceled, so Jadonang could not meet him. In January 1931, the British officials received reports that Jadonang was planning to declare a war against them by the end of that year. There were reports about secret meetings and collection of guns in the Naga villages. By February 1931, all the British officers in the area agreed that Jadonang's movement had to be suppressed permanently. On 19 February 1931, Jadonang was imprisoned in the Silchar Jail, after being arrested while returning from the Bhuvan cave with Gaidinliu and 600 other followers. On 13 June 1931, Jadonang was declared guilty of the murders at a trial by the British Indian authorities. He was hanged to death on 29 August 1931 at 6 am, on the bank of the Nambul river behind the Imphal jail.

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## Border disputes only stall progress

North East India, home to the largest number of indigenous tribal population of our country, was largely peaceful in olden days, perhaps because of inaccessibility, lack of communication advantage and absence of expansionist attitude. Although there were small clashes and infrequent skirmishes with the British colonial regime and neighbours because of localized disputes but there were seldom inter-community turf wars amongst the diverse communities living in the area and nearby.

The seeds of dispute and discord over initially agreed geographical state boundaries were sown long after India became independent, especially after three new states of Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland were carved out of Assam and North East Frontier Agency was renamed as Arunachal Pradesh. The poison tree that emerged due to these new demarcations appear to be growing and acquiring strength aided and abetted by misguided political elements, motivated foreign forces as well as greedy and selfish land grabbers living near the borders.

Border disputes between various states in north eastern India have become very common since the 1960s. It is a historical fact that all these border disputes have their origins in colonial times and reflect the consequences of the British policy of creating and recreating boundaries for their own benefits. The government of India made several attempts to resolve the disputes but could not achieve the success it aimed for, primarily because one or the other state remained non-cooperative and adamant over their claims. These disputes have given rise to strong community sentiments amongst the states concerned resulting in interstate security breaches. None cared for peaceful co-existences and inter community brotherhood.

One of the first recorded instances of the enforcement of political borders between Assam and Lushai Hills (now Mizoram) was in 1933. The subsequent North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 is based on the 1933 notification. However, Mizoram disputes the usage of the 1933 notification. Though Mizoram initially accepted the border with Assam but now opposes it categorically. Consequently the clashes continue till this date. The central government stepped in to assist in de-escalating the immediate situation between the rival state police forces, but the success is minimal.

As with the case of the Assam–Mizoram, the Assam–

Nagaland dispute, has a decade-old history which worsened due to the creation of Nagaland as a separate state in 1963. Nagaland claims parts of Golaghat district, Jorhat district and Sibsagar district. Hundreds of lives were lost and thousands displaced due to internecine clashes between the people and the police of these states. Despite the best efforts of Sundaram Commission (1971), Shastri Commission (1985), Variava/Tarun Chatterjee Commission (2006), Mediations by Sriram Panchu and Niranjana Bhatt (2010), no long term resolution of the Assam–Nagaland dispute could be achieved till date.

The boundary dispute between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh started with the failed demarcation exercise of 1972. Arunachal Pradesh disputes transfer of 3,648 sq. km of the plains area comprising the present-day Darrang, Dhemaji districts to Assam. The Arunachal Pradesh Government claims that it has traditional and customary rights over these lands which were also recognised by the British as well as the Ahom rulers. Both the states are adamant about their claims hence a solution appears to be remote.

Amongst the hopeless situation of boundary disputes between the states of north east, only Meghalaya has responded positively and has agreed to settle six of the twelve disputed points of Assam–Meghalaya boundary. The eagerness to settle border disputes between Assam and Meghalaya should inspire other feuding states. The warring states should remember that only the size of a state does not guarantee progress and all round welfare of its citizens. City state of Singapore and very small countries of Bhutan, Qatar, Switzerland, Netherland and Denmark have achieved real progress on all fronts despite their small size. The leaders and the people of NE states should also remember that the fight for more land is a never ending exercise. It ends with total destruction of both the feuding parties. Only peace and brotherhood can guarantee happiness for all. Let us not be provoked by the machinations of mischievous countries, power seeking politicians and greedy land mafias and strive for peaceful settlement of all land disputes. We need peace to grow. Let us give it a chance.

*Romen Chakraborty*

**Chief Editor**



# ‘Patang’ – the unique agricultural ‘labour companions’ of the Apatanis

Dr. Hage Tabyo

The entire populace of the state of Arunachal Pradesh belong to an agrarian society. Rice is the chief staple food for all tribal population of our state. Unlike some or many of our native tribal neighbours of the state, who prefer to do jum-cultivation in their hilly terraces, the Apatanis do practice permanent wet-rice cultivation in their territorial terrace fields since many centuries beginning with their regular settlement.

Apatanis as a tribe are identified by their attribute of an unflinching respect and pride in their indigenous cultural institutions, customs, art and crafts, costumes and other traditional practices of own along with a passionate attachment to their small homeland, Ziro, making it a veritable garden kind of their own in a unique fashion by dint of sheer and continuous labour.

There is no better example of an Apatani traditional institution, ‘Patang’, that has been existing since centuries.

By the simplest of definition, Patang is a team of ‘working mates’ or ‘labour companions’. This ‘patang’ is the Apatani tribe’s uniquely institutionalized traditional community youth group of labour gang for mainly performing agriculture works.

The Patang has been in existence since time immemorial which is simply a ubiquitous scene wherever you look at the cultivation fields in Ziro valley during the seasons. However, this indigenous system of agricultural practice is an archaic and out-of-the place kind, one may say, yet it still can be considered as a relatively cost effective traditional agricultural methodology in terms of involvement of human labour force. Nonetheless, this Patang entirely depends on the willing cooperation of participant youth members

in the community whatsoever.

This troupe of working companions, i.e. Patang is basically composed of members from several households, usually belonging to the same age group of both boys and girls of the same clan or of neighbouring clans of the same village.

It is noteworthy that Apatanis since the recorded past are never known to have used the ploughing method or used any machinery, tools or equipment but resorted only to their indigenous tools of implement like wood and bamboo made kits.

Apatani as a tribe has the attribute of having considered a work in an agriculture field in no way as ‘demeaning’. It is very rare that an Apatani man with a moderate quantity or a large private land holding engages only himself and family members alone, which is virtually not possible in the field farming works without employing a Patang on a hired basis or at least in a participatory basis within it. In other words, the physical involvement in works of agriculture and related activities essentially revolves on an undeniable understanding and uniform participation of the community youths in a cooperative system.

The number of the regular members in a patang, usually ranges from five to fifteen, but may be smaller even up to 2 to 3 only. The mode of working share among members is the reciprocal assistance amid each patang in a rotation. The formation of patang takes place informally by way of an unconditional agreement amongst them. But, once a patang is made up of by all and sundry, the members usually stay together for years unless a serious dispute induces a member to opt out, which however is very rare.

All members of the patang normally use to work together day after day throughout the cultivating

season. They work in rotation in the fields of their members', and, a man whose son or daughter joins such a patang has thus the right to the services of the entire gang, when his or her turn comes. This service is free except that the owner of the field has to feed their day-lunch on the service day.

A rich man with large land holdings uses to hire a patang sometimes out of turn for wages paid in cash in which case, the amount is divided among all members(of patang), or else the wage is entirely paid to the one (patang member) against the quota of that member as hired by the former.

This group of associations (patang) has an ample time while doing in field labour works in tandem not only to enjoy the mutual companionship, but also to share information of all hues and about, and disseminate knowledge of diverse subjects while absorbing funs and frolics that include songs and folk music- like, bwsis and ayus as well during their day-long working session in the field. In due course, a patang thereby significantly builds up a strong, cohesive and unconditional emotional bonding as a unit among themselves that would last long enough even after the patang itself ceases to exist when all members become adult and older lots.

There are two types of patang basing on the time schedule of the day's work. One is known as 'Konchi patang' in which the members work only in the early morning hours preferably from 5 am (when the day light breaks, or may be earlier) up to 7-30 am, and then return home, have their meals at own homes. Thereby, no meal has to be provided by the owner of the field, and the hire charge, if any is relatively low. While the other one is called, 'Allo patang' and such a one works during the day time from about 9 am to 4-30/5 pm, eating a mid-day meal(lunch) in the field at the expense of the owner where the patang works. The Konchi patang works only seasonally and in pre-agriculture transplanting, from February to May-June, whereas Allo patang works at all times of the year.

The hiring of patang is one of the means by which rich men obtain the labour force necessary for

cultivating their large field holdings. The rate of wage per head in the case of Allo patang for each male with mid-day meal was @300/- in 2019, while for females, @200/-. In the case of lunch being not provided by the field owner (in such a case, each patang would take their own lunch pack from own home), wage would be @600/- and the females @400/-

In a case of a patang, that is comprised with members of different clans it sometimes so happens in course of time that opposite sex working colleagues may become lovers at one stage (only if not related) and some of them get married when they become adults. When a man marries he would still work with his regular patang group, but a girl usually leaves her patang after marriage, as her new domestic obligation interferes for her full time cooperation, except her joining forces in the team only on the day of working on her family's field at the turn of her husband's patang specially during time of tedious work of transplanting paddy seedlings and harvesting season.

It is, however an undeniable fact that the trend in patang system is at present, fast evolving a drastic change with the passage of time specially since the most youths and elites have developed a considerable distaste in agriculture labour works even in case of a jobless/ school drop-out youth, which warrants a great deal of motivation and pump-up endeavors though.

In consideration of the kind of uniqueness for having preserved the ancient and undiluted heritages like systematic preservation of the native landscape, traditional ritual emblems like Lapang and Babos, indigenous institutions like patang, innovative ways of farming techniques like paddy cum fish culture etc., Ziro valley of Arunachal Pradesh is included in the Tentative List for UNESCO's 'World Heritage site' tag for the 'Apatani Cultural landscape' category. ❖

(The author is a Retired –Director of Family Welfare, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh and President of Apatani Danyi Pulo Meder- nello Council, Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar)

# The deity worship tradition of the Limbu Tribes

Sandhya Subba

## 1. Heem Sammang (Ghar ko Pooja)

This worship is performed at every Limbu household to offer devotional homage and prayer to Yuma Mang and other deities coming from outside the home. This worship is performed to deities for bestowing us peaceful life, good health and fulfilling all our wishes. To protect humans from bad omens, keep our home safe, positive and prosperous and wellbeing to them. This pooja is done in the evening hours with closed door or in secrecy. No one is allowed after the commencement of the ritual until the finishing of the rituals. Family members or others has to be present before the pooja begins because they cannot enter in the middle. It's a one-day ritual and performed once in a year, any month or day except the month of July-August (sawan/ saun).

There are two types of Heem-Sammang:

1. He:wa- Performed with Sacrifice with chickens and eggs.
2. He:wa Menneh:ba- performed with fruits.

Heem-Sammang is performed by Phedangma and Samba. It cannot be performed by Yebas.

## 2. Sappok Chomen (garba pooja)

This is a rite of womb worship for the protection of a child in the mother's womb. It is a rite of propitiating gods, for the good health of the mother and baby in the womb as well as successful delivery of the baby. It is usually held within nine months of pregnancy and if it is not done due to unavoidable reasons during that period, it can be observed even after birth, but it must not be missed. Limbus believes that the divinity Labhakcha Pakchana, Nambhakcha Pakchana (Apchara Pakchanama) makes the pregnant women unable to give birth and causes illness and birth defects to the baby in the womb. It also causes pains in the stomach, headache, dizziness and other health problems. So, the propitiation of Labhakcha Pakchana Nambhakcha Pakchana (a divinity of the crossroads/crosspaths) is almost

necessary. Similarly, one of the most important rites is the invocation of Wagongma who lives or plays in water and protects the womb. Wagongma worship is sometimes a synonymous of Sappok Chomen. It is conducted by Phedangmas. The ritual of Sappok Chomen takes three days to complete. The rituals of two days are conducted outside the home and the rest of the rituals of one day inside the home. Lots of chickens, ducks, eggs, pigs, fishes, pigeons, etc., are kept ready for sacrifices to different divinities. one of the most important parts of Sappok Chomen rite is the worship ceremony of the supreme goddess Yuma.

## 3. Akwanama (Mool Khamba/main pillar pooja)

Akwanama is one of the most important rituals performed to the divinity of the house, living in the main pillar (Hang Sitlang). She protects the house and family members of the house from insects, wild animals, thunderbolt and landslides. This worship is performed before starting the construction of the house and after the completion of it. It is normally done during house-warming function. After that, it has to be followed once in a year or once in a three years gap. This worship is performed to offer prayer dedicated to deity Lok Fagen Singheem Mang one who resides on the main pillar of every Limbu household. This worship is done to protect the house from thunder-lightening, storm, Yongsong Thukwa (landslides), k:jong:gen surit (wind), Wa:phelling (flood), aa:bu sikme (fire) etc. It is performed during the evening hours by Yeba and Samba.

## 4. Mangena (Seer Uthawney)

This worship is performed for good health, happy and glorious life. It is an act of worship to raise one's head, a ritual ceremony for a person feeling dejected and suffering in hardship in order to rejuvenate him/her spirit. It is done to protect oneself from accident, disputes, enemies, fight, war and jealousy to achieve



success in desired field. It is performed by Yeba, samba and Phedangma. It can be performed any time when felt needful during the evening hours. This is a worship which can be done by all individuals or members of a family. Today, a rooster is sacrificed for women (daughter) and a hen for man (son).

### **5. Nahangma**

It is a rite of restoring martial quality of the head of the house and thus bringing good health and harvest to his family. This is a ritual of around welfare of the head of the family. It is often conducted to recuperate from deteriorating health and depression and overcome difficult situation. It has many practical values. Unlike Mangena, it is conducted only to the head of the house. If a son is separated from his father's house with his due share of his ancestral property, he becomes the head of the house and can conduct the Nahangma rite. If father is not in the family than Mother can perform it; if mother and father both are not alive in the family then it can be performed by the eldest son or eldest daughter in the family. This worship is also performed by Phedangma, Samba and Yeba for themselves. Nahangma is conducted usually in every three years. It can be conducted every year also if someone can afford it. It is performed at the evening hours inside the house.

### **6. Chasok-Thisok**

This worship is performed to offer newly harvested crops and crop products and fruits to Yuma Mang. They also offer "thi" (fermented beer) from the cooked millet grains. With the offering of newly harvested crops and crop-products to the Goddess; then only they can take these crops and crop-products themselves. This worship takes place in every Limbu household once in a year. It can be performed by all Peli Fangsam/ Shamans during the evening hours.

### **7. Ingmang or Yumang (Sansari pooja)**

The term 'Ing-mang' was derived from original Limbu termonology, however, the term has been gradually distorted and of late being used as 'Yumang'. The term 'Ingmang' or 'Yumang' connotes to invoke the 'Natural divinities' or earth-bound energies to call upon of the locality for welfare and prosperity of the individual members of the village.

This worship also signifies the worship of mother earth. The inhabitants of the whole village gather at a hill top common place thereby collecting the share contribution i.e., cash and kind as a token of gift called 'Hukwa' from individual household family. This invoking is done before getting involved in farming activities. This worship is usually performed during the month of March-April 'Charengnam Therang-nam' season. The mythological reason behind this worshiping is praying for timely rain fall, balanced weather, bumper harvest, avoiding and dreadful epidemic, unwanted and untoward incidents, other natural calamities like landslide, floods, hail-storm and for prosperity of each member of every household of the particular village. Besides food-grains, fermented millet and other several items such as chicken, goat, pigeon, pig, duck, fishes, buffalo etc. were sacrificed and offered to the divinities. Every household of the village must share in the offering. Feasting with the sacrificial meat and locally fermented millet beer is common on this occasion.

### **8. Tongsing**

It is an act of cooperation, coming together, coming in agreement or conciliation, becoming correct or fitting. It is a ritual of winning cooperation of ancestors and divinities through invocation, incantation, dramatic performances and using symbolic paraphernalia. This rite is to please the supernatural forces and thus to avoid befalling distresses and misfortunes. It is a ceremony of invoking various divinities or functional deities to bestow good harvest, better opportunities and prosperity and to ward off illnesses, difficulties and natural calamities. Various myths, legends, narratives and oracles are believed to be linked with this which guide the social, ethical and religious concepts and shape the attitude and behavior of Limbus. It is said that it should be conducted every year, if possible, if not at least once in three years. There are two kinds of Tongsing: 1) Hing-Tongsing: It is performed for the living beings for their good health, protection from evil and long life. 2) See-Tongsing: It is performed for death people. Tongsing is performed especially by Sambas during the evening hours. Ya-Yebas can perform it only at the unavailability of Sambas.

*(Contd. to Page 15)*

# Ao Naga traditional food - Anishi/Nuoshi

Imsennaro Longchar

Anishi/Nuoshi is an Ao Naga delicacy of fermented Taro/Yam leaves made into patties and smoked over the fire or sun-dried. Anishi/Nuoshi is prepared from the leaves of the edible Colocasia genus mainly by the Ao Naga tribe. Pork cooked with Anishi/Nuoshi is a Naga delicacy famous for its wonderful taste. It is known as Nuoshi Aon in our local dialect, which means a special treat of the Ao tribe of Nagaland. Nuoshi/Anishi with Pork is a signature recipe of the Ao tribe of Nagaland. An age old recipe of Ao Nagas of Nagaland, it is worth it...as at the end we get to taste a delicious unique curry. It is best suited with smoked pork and a hot plate of rice. It can also be used as a condiment in different curries.

Anishi/Nuoshi is mainly prepared by the Ao, Konyak tribes of Nagaland. The product is a beautiful end result of a pure natural preservation process. No preservatives are added in this recipe. Naga delicacy of fermented leaves of Colocasia is prepared and cooked and it is eaten by Ao Naga from the ancient times and is one among the most culturally important foods for the Ao (Naga) tribe of Nagaland in the North East India. This is a traditional recipe of the Ao Nagas. Smoked pork with Anishi/Nuoshi is a common and popular delicacy which you will find in every Ao Naga household. Special get togethers, festivals and occasions of the Ao Nagas is incomplete without this unique delicacies in the menu.

## Meaning of Nuoshi/Anishi

The word 'Nuoshi' means fermented yam/taro leaves. 'Nuo' means yam/taro leaves and 'shi' means fermented. "fermented or processed taro leaf."

## The process of Baking Anishi/Nuoshi

The fresh mature edible green leaves of Yam/Taro are harvested, stacked together and finally

wrapped with banana leaf and kept in a covered basket and stored for about a week until the leaves turn yellow. Once the leaves become yellowish in colour it is pounded in a traditional wooden Mortar or pestle. It is the vital part of the process to make the perfect paste. The grounded paste needs to undergo the baking process by wrapping well in a multiple layers of banana leaves and kept warm in low fire for couple of hours till it is cooked. After the paste is cooked, it is removed from fire place, unwrapped and then small cakes like patties are made out of it. The cakes are then smoke-dried over the fire place or sun dried till it becomes hard and dark in colour. The process of making it takes days and demands manual labour. The making of *Anishi* is a simple but time-consuming process.

## Method of cooking Nuoshi/Anishi Aon (Curry)

Anishi/Nuoshi is mostly prepared by the Ao Nagas and taste best when it is cooked with smoked pork, smoked beef, smoked chicken as also smoked eel. The dish has made many tastebuds addicted to it.

Before using the Nuoshi cakes, it is warmed over charcoal fire place and is slightly pounded to make it little soft. It is then washed with water and poured into the pot. Smoked pork, Raja Mircha, green chillies, tomatoes, salt to taste and water are then added. It is then brought to a boil, the pot is kept covered and the preparation is cooked till the pork becomes soft and tender.

Once it is cooked, the Nuoshi /Anishi, chillies, tomatoes are taken out and pounded with the help of mortar and pestle and mashed nicely. Mashed paste is then placed into the pot and coarsely grounded ginger garlic, dry roasted sichuan

peppercorns is then added, The concoction is the brought to boil and the heat is taken off.

**Notes :**

⇒ Adding Raja Mircha is optional.

⇒ Green Chilly can be substituted with dry red chillies.

⇒ Naba also known as Naga basil can be added.

This is a variation and it make the dish more flavourful. Potato or rice flour can be added to the recipe to make the curry more thick and to add volume. Mongmong tu/jang (mezenga leaves/seed) can be added to the recipe which again makes the dish more flavourful and delicious.

Nuoshi/Anishi can be further pounded into powder and store in airtight containers in powdered form. This can be used in curries and chutneys too. Using the powdered one makes the cooking time less and one can use the powdered one when one is running short of time or in a hurry to spice up something delicious.

**The complete process: from Leaves to *Nuoshi Anishi***

a. Fresh Colocasia taro plants in the field. The leaves are harvested during May-September to make *Nuoshi /Anishi*.

b. Freshly harvested leaves are stuffed into a container or a gunny bag and stored in a dry shed away from direct sunlight or rain for fermentation.

c. Partially fermented taro leaves ready to be



pounded into a paste to make *Nuoshi Anishi*.

d. The Taro leaves are to be pounded with large traditional wooden mortar and pestle.

e. The taro leaves after being pounded into a paste are wrapped in plantain or banana leaves and baked over the fireplace overnight that turns it into soft dough.

f. Baking the taro leaf paste turns it into soft dough which is now edible and is dried to make the *Nuoshi Anishi* (patties/cake).

g. The baked taro leaf dough is flattened and made into patties of desired size and shape, usually round, and compacted with the palm of the hand. They are then placed on a net tray and kept over the fire till it dries.

h. The *Nuoshi /Anishi* in its purest state after drying in kitchen fire or sun.

i. Some locals add salt and chili powder to the dough before drying it in smaller sizes which, when dried, is either powdered or served as a condiment or simply as a chewy accompaniment in whole for its unique flavor.

The traditional Naga cuisine is known for its variety and simplicity, offering palatable treats to indulge in. One of the most appreciated culinary delights when it comes to traditional Naga food is the *Nuoshi/ Anishi* cooked with smoke-dried pork. The smoke-dried pork is chopped into bite-sized pieces before being boiled with *Nuoshi/ Anishi* in a thin soup that traditionally includes yam or potatoes, tomatoes and chili. Thus cooked is the pleasing dark textured toothsome stew with the *Nuoshi / Anishi* giving the pork a unique aroma and flavor. Smoke-dried eel is also often cooked with *Nuoshi/ Anishi* in the same process.

⇒ The making of *Nuoshi /Anishi* is a simple but time-consuming process.

⇒ Fibrous cords of the ground taro leaf that remain in the paste are then scrupulously removed. The paste is then wrapped in plantain or banana leaves and baked over the fireplace overnight that turns it into soft dough.



⇒ The baked taro leaf dough is now edible and some prefer adding salt and dried chili to it to be served as chutney or as sauce base. However, to make the *Nuosbi/ Anishi*, the baked taro leaf dough is flattened and made into patties of desired size and shape, usually round, and compacted with the palm of the hand. They are then placed on a net tray and kept over the fire till it dries.



**It can be cooked in multiple dishes.**

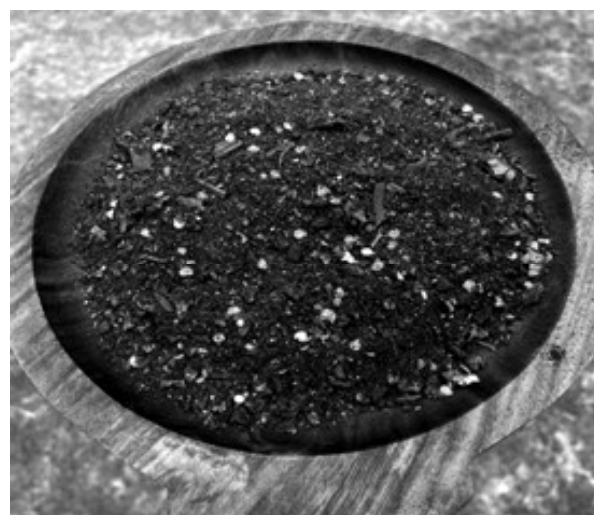
⇒ *Nuosbi / Anishi* is processed without adding any preservatives. The *Nuosbi / Anishi* to be used as a cooking ingredient is usually dried without adding anything but some add salt and chili powder to the dough before drying it in smaller sizes which, when dried, is either powdered and served as a condiment or simply as a chewy accompaniment in whole for its unique flavor.

⇒ *Nuosbi / Anishi* can be made in various forms but the most common is the plain one which is used as a cooking ingredient. *Nuosbi / Anishi* has a long shelf life and can last up to 24 months if stored properly in airtight containers.

⇒ Of the several indigenous taro varieties, there are basically two types of *Colocasia* plants locally called “*nüba*” and “*jungken nü*” whose leaves are used for making the best *Nuosbi/ Anishi*. With the growing popularity of *Nuosbi/ Anishi* among food lovers and rising demand, Sungratsu villages in Mokokchung have ventured into its commercial production but meeting the market demand by producing it in the traditional method remains a daunting challenge.

**Conclusion**

Today, *Anishi/Nuosbi* is produced in relatively small quantities as compared to the past. It is mainly prepared for personal or family use, but sometimes very small amounts are also sold at markets. Today, changes in taro cultivation and pests and diseases are negatively affecting *Anishi/ Nuoshi* production. A trend of selecting only higher-yielding varieties has led to a loss of genetic uniqueness, and *Phytophthora* leaf blight and the corn borer are harmful to taro production. Changing food habits, particularly among younger generations, also mean less attention is given to traditional foods such as *Anishi/Nuosbi*. The *Colocasia* plants are available in the hilly region, and is also available in the plains, but it varies in taste as well as color. Blessed with a fertile plain, the Tzürang valley nestled between the hills of Nagaland and the plains of Assam provides the right soil to let it grow abundantly. It provides a means of livelihood for many of the families too. Changes in taro cultivation and pests and diseases are negatively affecting *Anishi* production. A trend of selecting only higher-yielding varieties has led to a loss of genetic diversity, changing food habits, particularly among younger generations, also mean less attention is given to traditional foods such as *Anishi/Nuosbi*. ❖



# Chasing the History of Kamakhya Temple

Dhiren Saikia

(Contd. from Previous Issue)

Ruplekha Devi is a popular writer related with literature and culture. She has presented various legends and traditional folk tales of Paharbari of Kamakhya, from the Bhubaneshwari hill or Mayra stone to the temple of Goddess Bhairabi, pond of tortoise etc in her novel. Ruplekha Devi has placed all these subjects like the large gossip of the Tukreshwari temple, the hillock of Pilli Mama, the Tantriks who wear black clothes (with the examples of seven tantriks), the temple of the Goddess Bogolimukhi, Philosophies of the scholars, the house of sacrifice, the tigers, raptiles, wild pigs, deers of the forests of the Kamakhya hill etc beautifully in her novel. We searched a lot of books related to Kamakhya, but it was not sufficient. We have to mention about the book 'Kamakhya : A town of Assam' (Published by Ministry of Home Affairs) by late Mohan Chandra Sarma and the article 'Kamakhya Temple Structures' in the book 'Temple Sculptures of Assam' by Dr. P.S. Suryah. Moreover, 'Kamakhya Temple' of Kali Prasad Goswami, 'Mother Goddess Kamakhya' of Dr. Bani kanta Kakati and 'Devipithor Tez' of Mamani Raisam Goswami are notable books. It is above mentioned that the Koch king Naranarayan (1540-87 AD) got victory over one after another states for 47 years rapidly. Ahom, Jayantia, Tripura, Manipur, Srihatta etc states were too won through Chilaray. This quickness is stopped after arresting Chilaray by Suleiman Kararani of Bengal. He continued breaking the Kamakhya temple after arresting Chilaray and exploitation. The complex of the temple became empty after the invasion of Kalapahar in Kamakhya. Then, Naranarayana reconstructed the Kamakhya temple through Chilaray. In 1565 AD, the Kamakhya temple was reconstructed by Naranarayana and Chilaraya with the help of a sculptor named Meghamukdum. Though in 1553 AD, Kamakhya temple was destroyed by Kalapahar and in 1565 AD the temple was reconstructed, the temple was

abandoned for these 12 years. It is not known that how the Goddess was worshipped during these 12 years. Another noted point is the description of the worshipping of Goddess Kamakhya in Kamrup, the country of Kirata in the book of 'Anyatra Biral Devi Kamrupor Grihe Grihe'. It is mentioned in the book 'The Brahmaputra' by Shiva Sarma that Lord Bishnu cut down the dead body of Sati which was carried by Lord Shiva in his shoulder, into 51 pieces by His Sudarshan Chakra, one of the pieces fell down on the Nilachala and that's how the Kamakhya holy place was established. Shiva Sarma also writes that to the East of the Kamakhya temple, there is 23,635 bigha lands of the Bhubaneswari temple with the temple on the top of the Brahma hill. It is also mentioned in the book that Narakasura constructed four roads- Braghradwar, Hanumantadwar, Swargadwar and Singhadwar. This book also gives information that there are a few temples like Kali, Tara, Chinnamasta, Bogola, Bhairabi, Dhumabati, Kameshwar, Siddheswar, Kotilinga, Matangi and Kamala etc near by the Kamakhya temple. There are stone scripts of Rajeswar Singha and Pramatta Singha in Kedarmotra Temple and Amrateswar temple respectively. There is a mention of 'Soubhagyakunda' of Goddess Kamakhya named 'Krirha Pushkarini' made of stone near by the temple in his writings. It is believed that people, who takes bath to the west of this kunda, become fortunate. According to history, in 1745-46 AD, the king Pramatta Singha developed the Kamakhya temple in the hope of getting children.

There are historical tales about the Kamakhya in 'Devipithor Tez' of Mamoni Raisom Goswami. The writer mentioned story as of 1930 in this novel. She clearly described about the cruelty of sacrificing buffalo, cutting of the buffaloes by the people of Garo village, the rules and regulations of sacrificing buffaloes, the scene of carrying the meats of the buffaloes after sacrifice, the pain of the beheaded,

the worried immolator Shambhudev, Bhubaneswar, Padmapriya etc between the description of the character of Padmapriya. The characteristic of the novel is the beautiful description of the great sounds of drum and bell metal during the time of sacrificing in the holy place. At present, the responsibility of the temple management was handed over to Bordeori community from Devottor board from the year 2015. This happened due to the order of the court in the year 2015. From 1658 AD, the responsibility of management of the Kamakhya Temple and Kamrup was taken over by the Ahom kings from the Koch kings. According to Internet, the Ahom kings Rudra Singha, Shiva Singha, Pramatta Singha etc took over the responsibility of sponsorship of the Kamakhya temple and donated land properties in the name of temples. There were no revenues imposed on these land properties. This revenue free land system was called Lakheraj. Kamakhya was included in the lakheraj lands. In the same way, the land given to the priests was called 'Debottar land'.

The Ahom kings specially Rudra Singha brought Krishnaram Bhattacharya, a Shakta priest from Malipota (Shantipur), of Nadia district, West Bengal to Kamakhya temple. In history, it is also, mentioned that he was designated as 'Parbatia Goshai' by sufficient properties. The Goddess Kamakhya, who was called Tribal Goddess became one with our civilization and cultures by changing to Aryan later.

**The Kamakhya temple during the reign of Ahom kings :** After the death of the king Rudra Singha, Shiva Singha started worshipping of the Kamakhya after obeying Krishnaram Bhattacharya as his guru. According to Maheswar Neog, the king Shiva Singha established the residence of Krishnaram Bhattacharya in the Nilachala hill and provided him with lands, paike-servants, devottor-brahmottor etc. During that time, his honour was higher than the Vaishnavists. Krishnaram Bhattacharya was behind the incident of Phuleswari Kunwori becoming the ruler of Ahom kingdom. But there is a complain against Krishnaram Bhattacharya of spreading racism which was prevalent in Bengal. Parbatia Gosai also refused to accept Lakshmi Singha as his disciple. It is known that after the Koch kings, the Ahom kings also donated to this Kamakhya temple and patronaged it. In the temple, there are still copper

plates of Gaurinath Singha and Rajeswar Singha. It can be assumed from this that both of the kings patronaged this temple. The anthropologists called the sculptures of 7th-8th century.

**Sikh Guru Tag bahadur in Kamakhya :** Sikh Guru Tag Bahadur came with the King Man Singh in 1666 AD while he came to Assam to invade according to the order of Aurangajeb. He stayed for some days. The Pandas of Kamakhya took care of Tag Bahadur. He wrote a message in cotton paper while returning to his home. The archaeologist Rajmohan Nath wrote an essay named 'Kamakhya Sikhguru Tag Bahadur', where a brief description of the visit of Tag Bahadur to Assam was added. There are copper plates of the Ahom kings Rajeswar Singha and Gaurinath Singha in the Devi Natya Temple of the Kamakhya temple. Both of the kings patronaged the temple very well.

Late Sarbananda Rajkumar wrote in his 'Tihakhe Suwora Sokhota Bosor'- In 1498 AD, the Kamatapur was destroyed by Hussain Shah of Gaurha and thereafter many small states were formed in Kamatapur. In 1515 AD, Biswasingha established the Koch kingdom. He constructed the Kamakhya temple and brought the Brahmans from Kanauj, Benaras in his state. In future, to remove the disturbance, Naranarayana distributed the East side of Sonkokh to Raghudev and west side to his son Lakshminarayana. The East side of Sonkokh is called Hajo and the west side is called Koch Bihar. During this time, Naranarayana reconstructed the Kamakhya temple.

The location of Kamakhya and the benefits of worshipping Kamakhya are briefly described in a few chapters of Kalikapuran. In the chapter of 'Unasititomohadhyay', there is a mention of Nilakuta hill, the location of Kamakhya and the navel of Kamakhya and Manohar on that hill. The God says in Dwishastitamohadhyay, Kamakhya has come to Mahagiri to fulfill desire with me, therefore, the Goddess in Nilakuta hill is called as Kamakhya. That's why, Kamakhya is also known as Kamoda, Kamini, Kama, Kanta and Kamangadayini. Because She is Kamanganashini, therefore She is also known as Kamakhya. According to Kalikapuran, the hill became cerulean immediately after the fall down of vagina of Goddess Parvati in Nil hill. In this way,



the place became holy and also became the reason of destruction of sins of the sinners. The Lord Brahma, Lord Bishnu, Lord Hara and all other deities stays here to worship the Goddess of desire, Kamakhya. The Pancharupa, Mulbhuta, Sanatani, Jagadhatri and Mahamaya Kamakhya always stays here. To the East of that hill, the favourite son Ganapati, popularly known as Siddha is in the door of the Goddess.

**The Sculptures of Kamakhya Temple :** Dr. P.S. Suryah writes in the article 'Kamakhya Temple Scriptures' in his book 'Temple Sculptures of Assam' that the painting styles of the temples of Mathura, Deogarh of 6th century can be seen in the sculptures of Kamakhya temple. Specially, different kinds of paintings and sculptures of Lord Shiva is seen in this holy place. Along with Lord Shiva, the sculptures of Lord Surya, Goddess Gouri, Lord Brahma, Goddess Uma are clearly seen here. The affects of painting styles of the Gupta era are also seen in the dancing idols of the Gandharbas and the fairies. The flowers and other decorations are of the same style of Da-Parbatiya. The sculptures is sculpted in purely realisticmaner. The western gateways of the Kamakhya temple contain some charming carvings revealing exceptional sculptural skill. Among them, a flute playing image, which is called as Venugopal is inscribed on the Surface of the gateway. He has headdress, which is shape of conical cap. Mousumi Kandali writes in the book 'Bharatiya Charukalar Rengoni'that- 'There is a deep relation of Kamakhya with the sculptures of Ganga, Yamuna. The beautiful sculptures of Kamakhya were also affected by the sculptures of the temple of Madan Kamdev. Some of the sculptures are assumed to be of 11th-12th centuries. The flow of five trends is observed between the sculptures of Kamakhya temple. Those are- classical style in the first stage, sculpture style and mid Indian style in the next stage and the second stage style of middle era art of Assam. There is a deep relation of Kamakhya with the sculptures of Ganga-Yamuna Valley. Another notable idol is the idol of Lord Shiva with lute. This idol is playing lute with four hands above a deadbody. A special idol of the sculptures of Kamakhya attracts the eyes of the visitors. That idol is carrying a big stone in hand. The face is assumed to be tired and dim in pain.

**More Informations from the Umachala Inscription :** The Umachala Inscription, which is in the natural stone of the East of the Nilachala hill in fifth century, plays a very important role in the research and analysis of the most ancient time of the history. In this inscription, there is a description of Surendra Barman, a powerful king, establishing a cave temple in the name of a deity named Balabhadra. This inscription is in Brahmi script and Sanskrit language of four lines. The temple made by the powerful king Surendra Barman is assumed to be the contemporary and of the Kamakhya temple and in location that temple is near by the Kamakhya temple. This Surendra Barman is recessed to be the king Mahendra Barman of Barman dynasty in sixth century. I think that if the historians are able to find the reigning time of Mahendra Barman, then it will also be possible to find out the making of Kamakhya temple. I found a book written by Shivakrishna Sarma, Panda Bishnukanta Sarma in district library while searching books related to Kamakhya. The name is Kamakhya Mahatyam. This book has translation of the shlokas related to Kamakhya of Yogonitantra and Kalika Puran in both Assamese and Bengoli. It is mentioned in a famous shloka of Yoginitantra that- the person who worship the Goddess Kamakhya Mahamaya in the Kamakhya hill, his all desires fulfilled in this earth and after death he receives Shivatva. There is no other activity in this earth like this. That person is blessed with long livess by getting all desires fullfilled. The dignity of the Goddess Kamakhya is in every Vedas, in generosity of this Goddess, the Lord Brahma has gained Brahmopada, the Lord Bishnu has gained Bishnutva and the Lord Shiva has gained Shivatva. Therefore, you should worship the Goddess Kamakhya carefully. You will always be safe when the Goddess is satisfied and it wil be enormity if the Goddess is not satisfied. That's why you should always worship the Goddess Kamakhya.

According to another story, once the Lord Bishnu met the Goddess Kamakhya in the sky while travelling on his flying charioteer Garuda. Instead of stopping, Keshab told the Garuda to ignore the Goddess. After hearing this, the Goddess stopped Lord Krishna with Garuda by invisible arrows. The Garuda also stayed stable not being able to resist

the charming beauty of the Goddess. Lord Krishna then tried to lift the whole Nilaparbat (Blue hill) by his two hands. The angry Goddess threw the Garuda to the sea by attacking him. Under the sea, the Goddess again attacked the Garuda. After that, she was also in fight with the lord Bishnu. In this war, the Goddess kept the Garuda and Lord Bishnu captivated under the sea for many years. The Lord Brahma too was captivated under the sea while searching for the Lord Bishnu. Later the Lord Mahadeva found them. In the 3/956 shloka of Devi Puran, the worshipping of Kamakhya in the cave of Kamakhyagiri by Naraka and his son Bhagadutta with splendour is mentioned clearly. Moreover, according to Yoginitantra, the worshipping of Kamakhya Devi is running as Shakti Puja in Assam from the days of Dakshaprajapati of Satya Era. In fact, Rukminidevi, the daughter of the king Bhisma, worshipped the Goddess Kamakhya in North-East for the desire of getting Lord Krishna as

husband. The Assam Buranji books also gives the information of the Khasis worshipping Ka Maikha, Garos worshipping Phajaou, Tiwas worshipping Bauli Devi, Karbis worshipping Haimu, Mech worshipping Bathu Burhi, Dimasas worshipping Hermadi and Rajini Gakiba Devi, Rabhas worshipping Baikho and Tamaidevi, Sonowal-Kacharis worshipping Lakhimi and Bharali, Chutiyas worshipping Kesaikhati Goshani, Ahoms worshipping Subasani Devi etc. Even in some places, human sacrifices were also seen to satisfy these Goddesses. But there is no information of human sacrifice in Kamakhya Temple.

According to Dr. Banikanta Kakati, it is also said that Naraka, the adopted son of the king Janaka, brought a trend of worshipping Kamakhya from Mithila to Pragjyotishpur, like worshipping Kameshwar-Mahagaouri in Tamrasashana, rescued in Tezpur. ❖

(Contd. from Page 6)

## The deity worship tradition of the Limbu Tribes

### 9. Tingding Nahen (Akhi Dei/ jealousy)

This worship is performed to protect us from evil eyes, jealousy, envy, and negativity. This worship protects the family from bad forces and any kind of bad impact. It brings positive energies and good luck around us. Normally it is performed when someone's work is procrastinated due to unfortunate events and evilness. This ritual has to be performed in the west direction towards the direction where sun sets. One egg and chicken are required to perform this ritual. It is a one-day ritual performed by the Yeba. It is performed either day or evening time as per the time availability of the Yeba.

### 10. Sakmura (Gali-Sarap Pooja)

This worship is performed by the Limbus to get rid of curses, jinx, malediction and evil eye that inflicts harm, evilness and injuries. This worship cast away all evil curses passed on by the ancestors. Normally curses could affect in landed property, border disputes, and fights. When somebody is hurt,

angry or annoyed, curses flow naturally. Hence, to get rid of those evil curses Sakmura- Khoma is performed. This ritual is performed in river shores. It can be performed for maximum one to three days depending on the choice and desire of the people who are doing it. The worship requires chickens, goats, eggs, pigs etc., for the sacrifice. This pooja is performed by individual household or relatives belonging to same subtitle (Thar). It can also be performed by a group of villagers combinedly. It is performed once in a year or once in a three years gap. Normally this pooja takes place during the day hours by the Yebas. ❖

#### Source:

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2. Karna Hang Tamling, M.A. Limbu Language, Sikkim University, Gangtok.
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# The Khas Tribe of Assam- the little known community

Om Prakash Basnet

A sect of people residing in Assam whom we generally call 'Nepali', anthropologically they are not Nepali. Though they speak Nepali language and their culture and languages are akin to the culture and language of Nepal, their Nationality is not Nepali. They are Indian Gorkha. They are neither the outcome of Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950, nor any immigrant who came to Assam in search of food and shelter as most of the times people want to term them out. There are three types of Nepali speaking people in Assam. One is the indigenous Gorkha who speak Nepali language, another is the immigrants, who have come to Assam by virtue of 'Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship 1950' and the last one is the dual citizenship holders who are the citizen of Nepal as well as of India at the same time, which is contrary to the laws of both the countries. Here we are talking about those Indian Gorkhas who have no relation with Nepal or any other country so far as their Nationality and Citizenship are concerned. The 'Gorkha' is a big community. It is a combination of 'Khas' (Caucasian) and 'Kirata' (Mongolian) people. The 'Khas' people came to this part of the globe from the North West corridors and the 'Kirata' came to this part from the Eastern sides crossing the Patkai Mountain before 12<sup>th</sup> century. Speaking about them Majumdar points out that "the Khasas are either Rajputs or Brahmins...Although the Khasas are tribal people in India, they belong either to the Proto-Australoid or to the Mongoloid racial stock. The Khasas, even if they have been different in blood by mixture with the Mongoloid of the upper Himalaya or with the Doms of the lower region, belong to the Mediterranean stock and some among them represent the true Mediterranean features." If we go to the writing of an eminent writer Dr. Rakhil Das Banerji we find some traces of Khas

king 'Khadga' Raja's presence in the Brahmaputra Valley before 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century. In his book 'Prehistoric Ancient and Hindu India' R D Banerji writes "A Dynasty of king whose names ended with the word *Khadga* ruled over the lower part of the valley of the old Brahmaputra in the eighth and ninth centuries."

The 'Khas' people of Assam are one of the constituents of 'Gorkha' community. The Gorkha people possessed all the features to be a part of schedule tribes as per provision of Indian Constitution. The Khas are regarded as one of the most ancient tribes in the world with primitive traits and distinctive culture. This Pre-Vedic primitive tribe of Indian Sub-Continent generally found all over Himalayan foothills from Kashmir to the North-East regions. "The Khas appeared in the Himalayan range long before the origin of Hinduism and Buddhism and even before the Indus Valley Civilization of Bronze Age which flourished between 3300 and 1300 B.C" (Adhikari, 2011) They led a nomadic life and worshipped nature. Originally the religion of this hunting race was not Hinduism they were the proponent of Matri (Nature worshiper). In the 'Linguistic Survey of India' AG Grierson states, "the Markandeya Purana mentions the Khasas as a mountain tribe". Kalhan in his book Rajatarangini states that the Khasas were rough, violent, and turbulent people. Most of the intellectuals and historians are of the opinion that the term 'Khas' is the deformed form of the words like 'Caucasus' or 'caucas' or 'Cas'. Many references of the 'Khas' people have been found in the Mahabharata, the various Puranas, the Manusmritis, the Rajatarangini, and many books and articles by modern writers and historians from far and wide. The Khas were non-Aryans people and found no mention in the Vedas, but they were

mentioned in the Puranas. Their non Aryan evidence can be found from Mahabharata too where they took the side of Kauravas and were called 'Anarya' or 'Rakshsa'. Historical evidences show that they escaped from Central Asia and were scattered over North-west India. The Mahabharata mentions that the Khases were dwellers in the banks of the river 'Sailoda' flowing between the Meru and Mandara mountain. 'Khas-Kura' was the language of Khas people and their script was 'Kharosti'. The modern Nepali language is in fact, a derivative form of "Khas Kura", the original language of Khas tribes.

There are many divergent views regarding Khas's origin, later history and areas of occupation. Atkinson believes that the "Khasas were a very powerful race like the Nagas who came at a very early period from that 'officina gentium' central Asia and have left their name in Kashmir and recognizable colonies at the present day in the hills from Kashmir to Nepal and in various parts of the plains and that the Khasias of Kumaon are of same race."

The Khas have been variously described in the literary texts. The '*Vishnu Purana*' states that the Khasa is the daughter of Daksa, wife of Kasyapa and mother of Yaksas and Rakshasas. In The *Mahabharata*, 'Khas' do not occur in the great list, but they are mentioned in the *Karna-Parvan* as living in the Punjab, between the Arattas and Vasatis. Pliny mentioned about Khasas in the first century and further describes that "after the Attacori we find the nation of the Phuri and Tachori and in the interior the Casiri of India race who look towards the Scythians."

The Khas are an ethnic group of four sub-sects namely- Chettri, Bahun, Thakuri, and Sanyasi with a distinct history, identity, culture, religion and language. They are said to have originated in the ancient land of Kusadvipa near Kashyap Sagar. It is presumed that the land in between the Caspian Sea and the Ural Sea was the place of their origin. Colonel Eden Vansittart in his book "GORKHAS: Handbooks for the Indian Army, Calcutta, 1906,

reprinted 1950" (page 68) writes- "Here again we find fresh proof that the KHASA existed as tribes at some period long anterior to the Mohammadan invasions"

The rituals of Khas were conducted by very learned Shamans, whom they called Jhaakri or Dhami (Celebrant). This being a very sensitive ritual, all the Gods of the Khas tribe irrespective of clan are invoked. Thaan or alter are made for all the Ancestral Deities/Masto, namely:-Khappar Masto, Babiro Masto, Adi Masto, Buda Masto, Dahre Masto, Dudhe Masto, Lato Masto, Tedi Masto, Kalo Masto, Sheela Masto, Budo Masto, Sheem Masto, and Mudule Masto as well as prominent Gods like Sansari Mai, Obhuali Mai, Udhaulai Mai, Shikari, Ban Devi were worshiped by the Khas people.

The Khas tribes were not only nature worshippers but nature lovers too. Sansari Mai is the Goddess of them whom they believe having supreme command and control over the entire universe. The Khas people believed that worshipping of Sansari Mai (Goddess) in a year, either individually or collectively would relieve all miseries. 'Goth Dhup', 'Udhouli-Ubhuli', 'Dawali', 'Naubhawani', 'Fulpati', 'Naula', 'Marhanne', 'Dasain', 'Tihar', 'Deusi-Bhaili' are some of the religious and cultural celebrations of Khas tribes. This community exhibits some special practices of totemism, naturalism, animism, taboo and bizarre rituals which are exclusive traits of the Indian tribal.

The demographic survey of the Khas tribes reveals that in Assam a lion's share of Gorkha population are Khas. The sub communities of Khas are Bahun, Chetry, Thakuri, Snneshi, Damai, Kami, Kumale, Sarki etc. In Kiratas we find Mangars, Gurungs, Newars, Khabbus (Rai). Takthumbas (Linbus), Murmis (Tamangs), Lepchas, Sonowars, Yakhyas, Bahing, Kulungs, Khaling, Bantawas, Samlongs, Thulungs, and Jerangs. The Khas and Kiratas are living together as a single entity in Assam whom we know as Gorkha people. If we see with a broad perspective we find no such linguistic and cultural difference between Khas and

Kirata people except few distinctive features which both the entities are possessing.

In the pretext of India Government's initiatives to incorporate six communities of Assam in Schedule Tribe list, the matter of enlisting the 11 Gorkha communities into Schedule Tribes has taken its course once again as the Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi had promised in a meeting in West Bengal that the eleven sub castes of Gorkha community would be included in the Scheduled Tribes list. The Khas is one of these 11 communities of Gorkha who's report has already been submitted to the government of Assam for necessary approval and further actions are awaited.

As per a survey made by the Assam Gorkha Sammelan, in 2018, the total population of Khas tribes in Assam is 943056, among whom 480411 are male and 462645 are women. The literacy ratio of Khas tribes in Assam is not satisfactory at all. With a ratio of 60.97% a total of 575024 Khas people are literate and with a ratio of 39.03%, a total number of 368032 Khas are still illiterate. With 34.32%, a total number 331320 Khas are farmers and with 1.29% a total number of 12361 people are having government jobs. With a ratio of 89.17%, a total number of 840899 Khas are living in villages and with 10.83%, a total number of 102157 Khas are living in urban areas. The literacy rate of Khas tribes in Assam indicates that a good number of Khas people are still not covered by the light of education and development in Assam. As per the govt. census report of 2011, the literacy ratio of India and Assam are 74.04%, and 72.19%, respectively, which are far larger than the Khas tribes. Most of the Khas people of remote rural areas are poor and living in an unhygienic background. As per 2011 census report, the ratio of urban and rural people of India is 14% and 84% respectively. The situation of Khas is very astonishing as because 97.35% of Khas people live in rural area such as bank of rivers, fringe area of the forest, hill tops, and geographically very isolated

ones. Most of the Khas tribes living in Guwahati are engaged in Dairy farm. As per report, a total of 12361 Khas are working as government employee, who are mostly school teacher, defense personnel and grade four employees. However a few Khas are found working as Doctors, Engineers, ACS, APS, but none of them are found working as IAS, IPS, Ambassadors, Justice, Scientist and Minister in the central government disposal. Due to their poor family background, most of the Khas youths are engaged in private sector business or working as daily waged labours. They are away from their home state in search of livelihoods. The main professions of Khas people of Assam are Agriculture based work like-Farming and Dairy. Most of the Khas families of Assam are affected by flood and erosion during summer season. A large number of Khas people are still suffering from homelessness and landlessness as they are being affected by flood and erosions every year.

So it is very important to protect their art, culture and language. Most importantly, these people are suffering from Nationalitylessness. They are always been doubted as foreigners and intruders. But in reality they are the son of the soil. We have to go to the deep roots of history to find the fact that Gorkhas are the indigenous people of Assam. Central government's initiation to incorporate 11 sub communities of Gorkha where 'Khas' is also a part, in to the Schedule Tribe list is a very praiseworthy step. Hope that the state government would realize the agony of 'Khas' as well as the Gorkha people of Assam and take necessary steps to send the Ethnographic Report (which is already submitted to the WPT department, Govt. of Assam) to the Central Government so that the path to enlist these 11 Gorkha sub communities in to Schedule Tribes may be opened. ❖

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## Veterans of 1971 Indo-Pak war from Assam State honoured

Veterans of the 1971 Indo-Pak war were felicitated by the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh recently at a function held in Guwahati. More than 300 war veterans and their families attended the felicitation ceremony organised by the Government of Assam to honour the valour, dedication and sacrifice of the bravehearts who ensured victory in the 1971 war. Some of the veterans of the 1965 war were also in attendance. In the event, nine war widows were provided with Rs 10 lakh each, eight personnel who suffered injuries with Rs 5 lakh each, two ex-prisoners of the war with Rs 2.5 lakh each and Rs 2 lakh each was given to 86 war veterans.

Lt. Col Quazi Sijjad Ali Zahir (Retd), a Bangladeshi veteran of the 1971 war who was awarded with the Padma Shri, Assam Governor Jagdish Mukhi and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, among others, attended the function.

Paying tributes to those who made the supreme sacrifice in the service of the nation, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described the veterans as “important assets” of the nation who are in inspiration to every Indian. “An in-service soldier is India’s strength and a veteran is an everlasting inspiration to stand by that strength,” he said. Appreciating the Assam Government for felicitating the veterans, he said that the event reflected the sense of respect not only for the armed forces, but also for the country’s democratic values. He paid homage to Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, General Jagjit Singh Aurora, Lt Gen JFR Jacob, Major General Sujana Singh Uban and Air Chief Marshal IH Latif for leading India to a historic triumph in the 1971 war. “Our force in the 1971 war comprised soldier from every religion. But that did not win us the war. It was the strong thread of Indianness that held our soldiers together which ensured our victory,” he said. Reiterating that it was the Government’s duty to ensure the well-being and satisfaction of the ex-servicemen, Rajnath Singh assured the veterans of all possible support. He spoke of some of the steps taken by the Ministry of Defence to achieve the Prime Minister’s vision of

‘Aatma Nirbhar Bharat’.

Earlier, India was counted amongst the defence importers. Today, we are ranked among the top 25 defence exporters of the world. In the last few years, we have increased our defence exports by about 334 per cent. We have set an export target of Rs 35,000 crore by 2024-25,” he said, exuding confidence that this decade will be known as ‘Roaring Twenties’ in India’s defence manufacturing.

The Defence Minister also released a book ‘The Brave-hearts of 1971’ on the occasion.

Earlier, he also inaugurated an exhibition organised by the Directorate of Sainik Welfare at the Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra. The exhibition is being organised to showcase the valour and supreme sacrifice of the armed force in the 1971 war.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, “We salute our war veterans and offer tributes to those who made the supreme sacrifice in the 1971 Indo-Pak war. Today’s felicitation is an endeavour to recognise the contribution of soldiers from Assam in India’s victory in the war that liberated Bangladesh.”

Sarma said that State Government has made efforts to recognise and compensate the sacrifices made by the soldiers by offering Rs 50 lakh as ex gratia, jobs for next of kin, 2 per cent reservation in Government jobs and reservation of seats in medical studies.

Paying tributes to the war veterans, Governor Mukhi briefed the gathering about the 1971 Indo-Pak war.

Speaking on the occasion, Lt Col Quazi Sijjad Ali Zahir (Retd) said that at the time of need, the Government of India and the country’s armed forces stood besides the people of Bangladesh. “We fought for nine long months and won the war. The war heroes and their families sacrificed a lot for the people of Bangladesh,” he said. ❖



## Tangsa Tribe celebrates Moh-Mol to welcome the New Year

Moh-Mol is a pre-harvest festival celebrated by the Tangsa community of Changlang district. It is to seek blessings for a bumper harvest from the Goddess of Crops – Tunguja Chamja. They offer prayers called rom-rom and perform the Sapolo, a popular folk dance of the community.

The Tangsa tribal community of Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district are celebrating their new year today, April 25, as the Moh-Mol festival. Considered the most important festival of the northeastern state, Moh-Mol is a harvest festival of the local tribal communities whose livelihood revolves around agriculture. It is celebrated with religious fervour and devotion.

While some communities of the Tangsa tribe in Changlang district observe this festival as the beginning of agricultural activity in the field, some do it for sowing paddy whereas others welcome new crops into their homes. Changlang district is covered with picturesque hills in the southeastern corner of Arunachal Pradesh and is home to a number of tribal communities.

To welcome the New Year, people recite mantras for a good harvest of their crops, pray for prosperity of their wealth, livestock, family and community. The highlights of the festival include offerings, sacrifices, food, drinks, folk songs and dances to the tunes of drum beats and gong reverberations.

The local people also seek blessings, for their bumper harvest, from the Goddess of Crops – Tunguja Chamja – by offering prayers called rom-rom. They also pray for the accumulation of wealth from the Goddess of Prosperity and the longevity of the Nong culture.

The celebrations involve playing of the traditional musical instrument Bong whose sound reverberates through the mystic setting of the Tangsa villages. Sapolo folk dance, one of the most popular folk dances of the Tangsa community, is also one of the main highlights of the festival. The time of the festival varies with the time of particular agriculture activity but in present days, it's officially celebrated

on April 25 every year.

Moh-Mol marks the end and beginning of the new calendar year and people of all ages come together to celebrate this occasion. It's seen as an opportunity to let go of the old painful memories and fatigue, and welcome the new year with enthusiasm and energy.

Just like other festivals, Moh-Mol is an opportunity for people to exchange gifts with their loved ones. People look for moh/mol to meet and greet their distant relatives. Moh/mol also provides an important opportunity to build new friendships and acquaintances. Strangers are able to connect with each other on this day and establish permanent relationships.

Some sub-tribes of the Tangsa community bid ritual farewell to departed souls of their family. The tribal people believe that the soul of the deceased dwells in the family who needs farewell by offering food and drinks for their peaceful rest. Weaving is a very integral part of every household of Changlang's Tangsa community as it displays the culture and traditions of the people. They have their own hand-woven unique designs on their dresses for both women and men. ❖



## Report of the National Seminar on “ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTION OF NORTH EAST IN FREEDOM STRUGGLE OF INDIA”

**The Seminar, sponsored by the INDIAN COUNCIL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH,  
was organized by Heritage Foundation, Guwahati on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2022  
and was held at NEZCC, SHILPAGRAM, PANJABARI, GUWAHATI Auditorum.**

There were about 150 participants which includes eminent academicians from different parts of North-East, research scholars, students, audiences who actively participated in the academic deliberations. In the lush green environment of Shilpagram with the vibrant presentation, discussion and observation made the topic of the seminar a successful event. The National Seminar was held for two days 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022, began with an inaugural session followed by 5 (Five) technical sessions in which around 25 papers were presented, a special interaction session was also there for the participants and at last a valedictory function in the auditorium.

### **Inaugural Ceremony of the Seminar**

The inaugural session witnessed the gracious presence of Chief Guest Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State for Education & External Affairs, Govt. of India, Prof. Dr. Sagar Boruah, Former Principal, Khagarijan College, Mr. Jaleswar Brahma, Chairman of Heritage Foundation. The inaugural session began with the Deepam Jyoti Prayer followed by lightning of lamp by Chief Guest Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh and other dignitaries after which they were felicitated with a Horai, Memento & a Traditional Gamusa. Dr. Indrani Medhi, Convenor of the Seminar warmly welcomed the guest with her speech followed by the keynote address by Dr. Sagar Boruah. At the foremost he extended his extreme thanks to the organizers for this seminar as India is going to complete 75 years of Independence and we are celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. The main purpose of this seminar is to commemorate the sacrifices made by the valiant sons and daughters of this soil and their contribution for the country who fought irrespective of their caste, creed and

religion so enthusiastically during that time.

He talked about rise & growth of nationalism in India mainly focusing on North-East of India as North-Eastern people have played a significant role in all the phases of the movements and made remarkable contributions. Further he said the Seminar topic “Anti-Colonial Movements and Contribution of North East in Freedom Struggle of India” can be divided into 3 segments - The resistance movement in 19th century, the struggle for independence in 1922, INA movement under the leadership of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

The resistance movement in the colonial period is emerging. The treaty of Yandaboo (1826) is a turning point for North East India, he talked about the Prince & Nobles of Ahom court, Division of Bengal. He focused on the leaders and their contributions namely Gomadhar Konwar, Piyoli Borphukan etc on the resistance movement. He also focused on the people from other parts of North East how they revolted against British like Kuki, Khamti rebellion etc. He also focused on how Revolt of 1857 changed the whole environment, how leaders like Maniram Dewan started the revolt and became source of inspiration, the revolt also led peasants uprising to a great extent creating “Raiz Mel” to protest against the land and revenue taxes, Phulagiri Uprisings (1861) other peasant movements creating Riot Sabha, Sarbojonik Sabha. It is worth mentioning that with the beginning of the Non Cooperation Movement (1921) a new phase of anti-colonial struggle with the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi began which could be termed as National Struggle for Independence where all the people of Assam men, women, students, peasants all joined the

movements. The declaration of Second World War expectedly was a turning point in the Indian Freedom Struggle. He also spoke on Kushal Konwar how he was hanged, police atrocities but people were not afraid. He said that it would be incomplete if we do not take the name of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's contribution in North-East India Freedom Struggle where he showed a "New ray of Hope" among the people. He also said that proper study of INA is not done so the new research scholars have the opportunity to explore it through archival documents, eminent personalities talk & interview and also from war memorial. At last he urged that it is the time to join together uphold the unity and integrity of the country and asked all the historians to play a responsible role so that government and public be educated about it.

Next speaker was the Chief Guest Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State for Education & External Affairs, Govt. of India spoke that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked him to find out 100 unsung heroes of freedom struggle against Britishers from North-East. He said our future depends on how strong and rich our roots are. We have to know our past as our future is rooted in the past. We need to take lessons from past to secure our future. The topic of the seminar made him think how in the past 75 years of Independence were marginalized and contribution of our forefathers in the freedom struggle from North East. It is high time we celebrate, acknowledge, and make it known to young ones not only in North-East but across India. He highly appreciated the event organized by Heritage Foundation which will generate ideas, no matter how small platform is but discussion will mainstream the ideas which will be fruitful. He focused on Rani Gaidinliu, Tikendrajit Singh from Manipur, Kushal Konwar from Assam, Tiro Singh from Meghalaya and others how they revolted so bravely. Although there were many unsung heroes in the region who fought against the British and sacrifice their lives. He focused mainly on Manipur as he belongs from there and informed by forefathers how Paona Brajabashi fought with sword only, innumerable other soldiers from Manipur are also there but names are not taken as they are

unsung heroes. He also spoke about Subedar Niranjan how he scoundrel from British Army and joined Manipur Army to fight against Britishers, Manipuri Maharaja (Kula Chandra Maharaja) never compromised with British and about his 60 followers deported to Mount Harriet but luckily now our Hon'ble Home Minister Amit Shah renamed it Mount Manipur in Andaman & Nicobar Island, so this are all unsung heroes. He mentioned Manipur's heroes but also spoke that many heroes are there from Assam, Meghalaya so on. He emphasized on the role of women in the freedom struggle too, mainly Manipuri Womens- First Nupi Lan, Shanti Bhusa (Tripura), Bhogeswari Phukanani (Assam). It is the high time to enlist & documented unsung heroes, as it is a wish of our Prime Minister too. If we do not give respect and recognition to our forefathers for their contribution now, we will be a nation without roots as our strength will be very weak. A conscious effort is in need. Our young ones will not appreciate our rich past, if heroes are neglected then we will fail in our duties to pass on the information to our younger ones. He further acknowledged the efforts of Heritage Foundation once again in this area and urge to study and work more on it as he hoped that more study and research in this area will bring glory to the unsung heroes of this nation instead of keeping their sacrifice and valoras just a foot note in history books.

Mr. Jaleswar Brahma, Chairman of Heritage Foundation spoke about how they conducted these kinds of seminar on the present ongoing issues to bring unity & integrity, by publishing magazine 'Heritage Explorer'. They invite dignitaries, academician, scholars to share their views and experiences for the further references. They try their level best to minimize the communal clashes of different tribes. He further thanked all the august gathering for this noble cause and urged to attend the seminar to get better understanding & knowledge of our unsung heroes.

#### **Technical Session I: "Early Anti Colonial Uprisings" (From 1826 to 1857)**

The session was chaired by Dr. Niranjan Kalita, Hon'ble Member, APSC and Resource Person of the session was Biswajyoti Dev Mahanta, Associate

Professor, Pragiyotish College. The session began with the felicitation of the dignitaries on the dais & followed by the speech of Dr. Niranjana Kalita where he said that the seminar will be a great one to commemorate our unsung Heroes, and struggle for independence. He spoke on the epics Ramayana & Mahabharata how they have changed our identity. His talk focused on Shri Krishna, Ramchandra, Buddhism, Sanatan Dharma, Chanakya Sastra, Manu-smriti how ancient India was evolving & glorious Indian history is known to everyone. He quoted Pandit Jawaharhal Nehru- I am Hindu by accident, I am Muslim by culture, I am Christian by birth. Therefore he co-related the present scenario with the ancient and medieval India.

In this session four papers were presented, first one on “Dhanjay Bargohain: The unsung hero of the first anti-British movements of Assam (1828 CE-1830 CE) presented by Dr. Sangita Gogoi, HoD, Department of History, Mangaldai College, second paper was on “Gomdhar Konwar and the Early phase of the freedom movement in Assam” presented by Dr. Binita Das, Associate Professor, Puthimari College, third paper on “Landmark places of the freedom movement in North-East : Latu Malegarh-The symbol of courage”, paper of Mriganko Krishna Gogoi, Tinsukia, paper read by Ankur Deori, fourth one on “Resistance movement in Eastern Arunachal Pradesh: A study of the Khamti Tribe from 1826-1843 , paper of Dr. Rubu Tani, Assistant Professor, Dera Natung Government College, Itanagar, paper read by Dr. Indrani Medhi.

After the papers were presented Resource person of the session, Biswajyoti Dev Mahanta gave his observations on each paper, followed by an open house discussion.

### **Technical Session II: “Post Sepoy Mutiny Insurrections” (From 1858 to 1905)**

The session was chaired by Dr. Oinam Ranjit Singh, HoD, Dept. Of Ancient History and Archaeology, Manipur University and Resource person of the session was Dr. Nityananda Gogoi, Retd. Principal, Biswanath College. The session began with the felicitation of the dignitaries on the dais with a traditional gamusa and a memento. A total of six papers were presented in this session. The first

paper was on “Urbanizing Assam through emerging Nationalism” presented by Hemango Akshay Hiwale, Assistant Professor , Department of History, St. Anthony’s College, Shillong, Second paper was on “Reading the Early Assamese periodicals as resistance texts against colonial ascendancy” presented by Dr. Bedika Bhattacharjee, Researcher, Gauhati University, Third paper on “To the Unsung Heroes of Manipur who sacrificed their lives for the motherland” a joint paper of Sukhdeba Sharma Hanjebam, Oinam Ranjit Singh, Aheibam Koireng Singh, Manipur, paper was presented by Sukhdeba Sharma Hanjebam, fourth paper on “Thangal General : An Unsung Hero Of Manipur , presented by Kabirdas Mayengbam , Research Scholar, fifth paper on “ Role of Press in the Anti- colonial movement in Assam , a joint paper by Barnali Kalita , PhD Scholar , Heera Sarma Tezpur College , sixth paper was on “Phulguri Dhewa : Retrieving the Narrative” presented by Dr. Indrani Medhi , Assistant Prof, Dispur Law College, Guwahati.

After the completion of the paper presentation Resource Person Dr. Nityananda Gogoi gave his overall observations.

### **Interactive session: Dr. Samudra Gupta Kashyap, State Information Commissioner, Assam**

The session began with the felicitation followed by the speech of Dr. Samudra Gupta Kashyap. He said the above speakers in the respective technical session talked about 1826 heroes, but actually the story began in the year 1765 or 1766 from Goalpara region of Assam, how in 1788 the young Zamindar of Mechpara organized a 500 army attached against British under the leadership of Ranaram Choudhury, after which the resistance began as Assam was annexed to British India in 1826, several Ahom gathered together and made Gamodhar Konwar their king and later revolted along with other fighters with the Britishers. He talked about Ranuwa Gohain, son of Sodiya Khuwa Gohain, how he in 1928 established a school called Khamti Educational and Cultural Centre at Sadiya, one of the oldest school and made huge contribution during those days but not given due recognition. He also talked about Maniram Dewan and his contribution in the

freedom struggle, being the first man to popularized tea in Assam, his preparations for 1857 uprisings, and how he was hanged by British. His talk also focused on the two stories of women named Lombei Aaidieu and Rupahi Aaidieu as they were part of the conspiracy of 1857 against British. In general, we do not talk about this women but only talk about Kanaklata, as those women are still unsung heroes. His talk also focused on Mungri Memsahab, first women martyr of anti-colonial movement of Assam. He also mentioned about (1861)- 1<sup>st</sup> Peasant Uprising against British in India, he said it our greatest drawback that we did not celebrate 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary years of Phulagari Uprisings, we did not celebrate 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary years of Maniram Dewan, we did not inform the world as well as to ourselves what our forefather had done for us, no intellectual, colleges, universities, NGO, Government celebrated the occasions. He also talked about the local folklore Dolipuran, formation of INC where two Assamese namely Laksmi Nath Bezbaruah & Bholanath Baruah already were members. He even mentioned about first civil society, organization of modern Assam i.e. Jorhat Sarbajanik Sabha 1884, after few years Manik Chandra Baruah formed the Assamese association, after that the trio merged and created Asom Association Jaganath Baruah, Manik Chandra Baruah & Prabhat Chandra Baruah, his talk also focused on Guneswari Devi's statue at Kaliabor as she was the first women from Assam to be arrested & sent to jail.

Shri Kasyap even talked about Gandhiji's visit to Assam and how Gandhiji asked for women participation although at that time women of Assam had already set up Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samiti afterwards Mahila Samiti in Dibrugarh at 1880, he also told how young women Chandrapabha Saikiani opposed and uprooted the system of bamboo screens between men and women at Assam Sahitya Sabha session at Nagaon, also he mentioned about 59 years old Bhogeswari Phukanani how bravely she acted and sacrifice her life. He even spoke about other heroes' story of North-Eastern part like Tikendrajit Singh, Niranjan Subedar, Kajao, Paona Brajabashi so on. Though we spoke so much about

the battles fought by Assam & Manipur with British but we hardly talk about Naga's and Mizo's contribution. His talk focused on Battle of Khonoma, Rani Ropuliani 1893 how bravely she fought but we don't recognize her too. We actually do not recognize many heroes who acted & protested against British inspired by their great contribution & sacrifices. At last he told about 1942 first flag hoist incident at Chatiya, where one beggar & monk at Dhekiajuli have lost their lives, also about 12 years old girl named Tileswari Baruah who sacrificed her life at this young age for our motherland. So these are the unsung stories we must all share, if not during this 75<sup>th</sup> years of Independence, then when? We could hold more such seminars even in our schools & colleges to aware our young ones & make them more patriotic & resourceful about our rich history. Followed by the speech we had a fruitful discussions and interactions with the participants as well as the audience present in the auditorium.

### **Technical Session III: Early 20<sup>th</sup> century uprisings/movements (From 1905 to 1935)**

The session was chaired by Romen Chakraborty, Editor, Heritage Explorer and Resource person of the session was Dr. Akunthita Borthakur, Associate Professor, Cotton University. The session began with the felicitation & followed by the speech of Romen Chakraborty where he spoke that we are almost 75 years late to give the recognition to our unsung heroes. Today we have to look ourselves and promise to identify more names & do more research to list them in the history books so that they are known by all.

In this session a total of five papers were presented, first one on "Participation of the people of Darrang in the freedom movement of India" presented by Dr. Satyendra Kr. Sarma, Associate Professor, Tangla College. Simultaneously after each paper the resource person commented & gave the observation with an open house discussions, it was really a good session where everybody present in the auditorium participated enthusiastically in every paper discussions. Second paper was on "Freedom Waves: The Unsung Heroes of Mishmi Hills" paper by Dr. Razzeko Dele, paper read by Khindiko Mega, after that paper was open for discussion and resource

person highly appreciated the paper as it was a nice paper to know so much about the Mishmi. Third paper was on “Trilochan Pokhrel : India’s lost freedom fighter from Sikkim , presented by Bimala Devi Bhattarai, Department of History, Rhenock Government College, Sikkim, fourth paper was on “Contribution of Unsung Heroes to the Indian Independence movement in the 20th century”, presented by Subrata Dutta , Subject Teacher History, Bijni Bidyapith HS School, this paper was highly discussed as it had many heroes name mentioned who’s identity is still a stake, whether they are really unsung or not. Fifth paper was on “The role of songs, ballads and poems related to freedom struggle”, presented by Bhaswati Kalita, it was quiet an interesting paper where the house literally enjoyed & appreciated our rich culture & traditions which led the freedom struggle to an different level, few suggestions from the resource person as well as from the house was suggested to modify this paper to an exceptional level.

#### **Technical Session IV: Post Government of India Act and Attainment of Freedom from (1935 to 1947)**

The fourth session was chaired by Prof. Paromita Das, Professor of History Gauhati University, Assam) and Resource Person of the session was Prof. Gajendra Adhikari, Professor, Centre for North East Studio, MahapurushShankardev University.

In this session a total of five papers were presented. First one on “Role of Dhekiajuli in Indian Freedom Struggle”, presented by Shree Om Prakash Basnet from Dhekiajuli. The second paper was “ Introducing the Unsung Heroes : M. Koireng, L. Guna Singh, K. Nilomoni, P. Tomal Shingh, Naki Ahmad Choudhury and Ringshi Keishing” , submitted by Dr. S. Jayalaxmi Devi, Imphal and Dr. W. Dhiren Singh, Manipur and was presented by Dr. W. Dhiren Singh. The third paper was Anti-Colonial Movement and Contribution of North–East India in the Freedom Struggle as Reflected in the Seluted in English Novels and was presented by Shree Jintu Bora. The fourth paper was Freedom Movement of 1942 and Mrityunjay of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya: A Brief Description and was presented by Dr. Rumi Barman, Associate Professor, Dept. of

Assamese, Puthimari College, the fifth paper was “The Human Values of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya in His Writings” presented by Shree Neetamoni Deka, Kamrup College, Chamata.

After the presentation Resource Person Prof Gajendra Adhikari gave his observation on the paper presenter’s and gave a very insightful speech related to the struggle in the period 1935 to 1942 and its imprint that is left in the society and literature.

Chairperson gave her valuable comments and put forward her observations to the scholars regarding their presentations and there was a vibrant discussion on this important theme of the Seminar. She also pointed out the papers that were presented in Assamese Language could be translated in English after their final completion for reaching a wider audience.

#### **Technical Session V: Women of North-East in the Freedom Struggle of India**

A parallel session was held in another conference room which was chaired by Dr. H. Sukhadeb Sharma Assistant Professor, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Manipur) and Resource Person of the session was Mrs. Bimala Devi Bhattari, HoD History, Govt. College Rhenock , East Sikkim.

In this session three papers were presented. First one on “Role of Women in Freedom Movement : With Special reference to Assam”, presented by Srabani Das , Assistant Professor, Rabindrasadan Girls’ College , Karimganj, second paper was on “Participation of Assamese women in the Quit India Movement : A historical study, presented by Ankita Kalita, Asst. Professor, Puthimari College, third paper on “Debunking patriarchy, reversal of gender roles in the Bronze Sword of Thengphakhri Tehsildar, paper of Sukanya Goswami, Lecturer , Diet , Nalbari , paper read by Dr. Indrani Medhi.

After the presentation, the Resource Person Mrs. Bimala Devi Bhattarai gave her observation on the paper presenter’s and highly appreciated our Indian women role in sacrificing their respective lives for their motherland. The Chairperson of the session gave valuable comments to the scholars regarding their presentations and there was a vibrant discussion on this important theme of the Seminar.



### Valedictory Function:

The National Seminar was concluded by a Valedictory Function in which the Chief Guest was Dr. Ranaj Pegu, Hon'ble Minister of Education, Government of Assam. The function started with the Puspanjali Arpan on Bharat Mata by the dignitaries on the dais, followed by the felicitation of the Guest with a Xorai, traditional gamusa and a memento. The Research Observer of the seminar Dr. Sangita Gogoi, HoD Dept of History, Mangaldai College gave a brief report of the papers presented and on the summary of the two-days national seminar, followed by the certificate distribution to the paper presenters and resource persons of the technical sessions on the dais by Hon'ble Minister Dr. Ranaj Pegu. This was further followed by the speech of our Chief Guest Dr. Ranaj Pegu, Hon'ble Minister of Education, Government of Assam. He first of all thanked Heritage Foundation for these two days seminar on "Anti-Colonial Movements and Contribution of North East In Freedom Struggle Of India", he also thanked Indian Council of Historical Research for sponsoring a very significant national seminar to know the India's freedom struggle especially in the year where we are celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. This seminar will focus on the light of great contribution and resistance for the people of North-East who fought against imperialism against colonialism. With the change of Govt. in Delhi in 2014, so many things have changed, the attitude, the focus on the North-East has been dramatically changed. The Prime Minister of India refers North-East as new engine of growth and very often sends his cabinet ministers or officials to North East for the monitoring. In our past years we have not seen so much of attention given to North-East from Delhi and it is helping for mainstreaming North-East, as now people's attitude for North-East is changing and helping us in our growth.

He said when we talk about freedom movement we take the name of Mahatma Gandhi and in Assam freedom struggle started long back in 1826 where Britishers invaded Assam and signed Yandaboo Treaty and from that period onwards people started resistance and fight in the colonial

period . He mentioned about Mangal Pandey, first martyr of India in the freedom struggle but before that in 1830 Piyoli Phukan and Jiuram Dulia Baruah were hanged by Britishers , not to dishonour Mangal Pandey but definitely the first martyr of India were actually from Assam itself. Even he mentioned the story of Gomdhar Konwar how Assam Government in this Amrit Mahotsav is planning to preserve the memories and create a memorial of him in the place where he had first camp to attend the British, he also talked about Maniram Dewan, where in Chinamara he along with CM had visited and thought to preserve the Maniram Dewan's martyrdom too. Since, he belongs from the Missing tribe, he specially mentioned about their folk song 'Oinitom' where there are so many references of killing 'Welam Saheb' (British officer) by Abors & Missing tribes, many expedition were there but for us as they are the heroic resistance which was fought by indigenous people of north-east. Now it is the time we recall & glorify these unsung heroes in documentation. He mentioned few papers from this seminar although have not read all the papers presentation. He even talked about immense contribution of Adivasis and Tea tribes in the British colonial fight; we have stories from every nook & cranny, Nagaland, Tripura, Meghalaya who have heroic sacrifices and unsung heroes & stories.

At last he thanked Heritage Foundation, all the scholars who presented their papers & as an incharge of the education department, he ensures Heritage Foundation that the papers will be published and government will give full support and cooperation in documentation of this research paper in book form so that it is available to everyone to know about our history. Lastly, he gave his heartiest tribute to the heroes of the freedom struggle.

Jaleshwar Brahma, Chairman, Heritage Foundation greeted all the paper presenters and the invitees present in the auditorium and said it would not have been possible without the efforts of the research paper presenters to gain so much of knowledge.

The proceedings of the Seminar concluded with vote of thanks offered by Dr. Indrani Medhi, Assistant Professor, Dispur Law College and Convenor of the Seminar. ❖



**Some glimpses from the Seminar titled  
“ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENTS AND  
CONTRIBUTION OF NORTH EAST IN FREEDOM STRUGGLE OF INDIA”  
sponsored by the INDIAN COUNCIL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH,  
and organized by Heritage Foundation, Guwahati  
on 9th and 10th APRIL 2022 at NEZCC, Shilpagram, Panjabari, Guwahati**



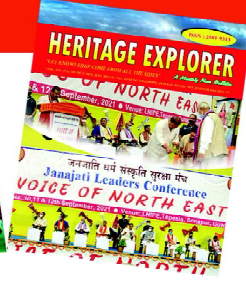
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