

“ A study of Religious Practices Prevalent in Mayong”

A Project Report is submitted to
the controller of examination,
Gauhati University, in partial ful-
fillment of requirement of the
award of the Degree of “*Bachelor
of Arts in History*”



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Project Report - 2020-21

Topics:

A STUDY OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICES PREVALENT IN MAYONG
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EVALUATION OF PROJECT WORK

Maximum Marks	Awarded Marks

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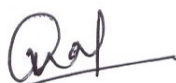
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CERTIFICATE

It is certified that the project report entitled “ **A study of Religious Practices Prevalent in Mayong** ” Submitted by Ajay Rongphar, 6th Sem, G.U. Roll Code-UA-181-340, G.U. No-0004,b G.U. Registration No- 18018315 to the controller of examination, Gauhati University, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Degree of Bachelor of Arts in History is a record of bonafide and independent research work carried out under my supervision and guidance. It is further certified that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this work has not been previously submitted for any Degree of this or any other University or any institution.

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DECLARATION

I, Ajay Rongphar, hereby declare that the project report entitled "A study of Religious Practices Prevalent in Mayong" is a bonafide record of independent research work submitted to the Controller of examination, Gauhati University, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in History and not previously submitted for any Degree of this or any other University or institution.


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Semester	: 6 th
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G.U. Roll No	: UA-181-340-0004
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Place:-

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Introduction :-

Mayong, an important small area in Morigaon District of Assam, about 40 (forty) k.m. away from the capital of Assam, Dispur, is an area famous for its 'Tantrism' and 'Black Magic' since ancient times. At present, Mayong is only one of the Mauzas of the District of Morigaon. The land from the mighty Brahmaputra in the north to the Kolong River in the south and from the Pakaria (a rivulet) and the Manaha Lake in the east to the meeting point of the rivers Kolong-Kapili and the Brahmaputra in the west is known as Mayong.

Mayong Royal family is said to be the descendants from the Dimas-Kachari Royal family of erstwhile Dimaapur of Maibong in the present North Cachar hills district of Assam.

From South Cachar, a Dimas-Kachari royal

prince left his ancestral kingdom for Mayong where he settled in the early part of the 16th century A.D. after the death of the local king of Mayong kingdom Sainat Singha ascended the throne of Mayong. Thus opening a new chapter in the history of Mayong.

Objectives ÷

The shortly has the following objectives —

- (i) To bring into light the different religious sects in Mayong.
- (ii) To explore the different religious Shringis in Mayong.
- (iii) To bring into light the impact of the different religious sects on the Society.
- (iv) To highlight the religious works by the people of Mayong.

Methodology:

This research paper is based on records of both primary and secondary sources, field study and interviews.

For the Primary sources I have visited all of the religious places in Mayong area and the religious practices places in Mayong. Some of the data were I collected by meeting some Person like priest, in Mayong area.

The secondary data were collected through various books, articles and used an android mobile with internet connection. I have used some pictures to understand, when I reported on this project.

Hypothesis :-

- ① Saktism and Jainism and the oldest religious sect in Mayong.
- ② Vaishnavism entered the land of the Mayong during the reign of the Medieval period.
- ③ Brahmanism had been the forerunners of all religious sects in Mayong.
- ④ Traditional Society of Mayong.

Religious life of Mayong:-

The religious life of the people of Mayong was as usual as in the other of the country. All the great branches of Hinduism, Brahmanism, Jainism, Saktism and Vaishnavism were practiced in the kingdom of Mayong. The traditional system of knowledge of the people of Mayong in the district of Morigan manifests various types of Socio - religio - political aspects of the religion. Religious life of Raja Mayong is related to certain rites, festivals and practices of traditional institutions like - Magic, Tantrism, Temples, Shrinis, monasteries, namghars and Sattras. It controls the religious sects of Raja Mayong village. Every cast and community of Raja Mayong has certain taboos and religious sanctions which are to be obeyed by the villagers.

The Practice of Brahmanism ÷

The origin of the Brahmanical religion and Aryan Culture goes back to the vedas. It consisted of the elements of nature, but later on it was developed into the worship of personified duties. Kamrupa came into contact with vedic culture in very early times. Kamrupa kings policy of establishing Brahmanas in different part of the country led to the rapid expansion of vedic culture and conversion of the non - Aryans to Hinduism.

The Brahmanical religion entered into the kingdom of Mayong very late. The Mayong Rajvansavali tells us that king Sarascha chandra singha (1599-1624 A.D) brought four families of Brahmanas from outside Mayong village and made them pujaris to the different thans founded by him.

There is no any instance

that there were Brahmanas in Mayong before Sarascha chandra singha's reign. These Brahmanas were responsible for practising vedic rites in Mayong. One of these Brahmanas was appointed as royal priest. He was responsible for performance of Yajnas, marriage ceremonies according to the vedic rites. They had to study interpret the vedic and Bhagawatas and other Brahmanical religious book. This system continued upto the reign of king Naraya Singha.

Sainism :-

The worship of Siva in his different manifestation and both in his phalic and iconographic representation has a great antiquity in Assam. Originally a tribal god, Siva, continued to receive homage from both the ruling families and the tribal communities.

"The Bodo-Kacharis believed that they have originated from Bathau-Sivarai identical with Siva. Deori chutiyas recognize them as "Gira-Grachi" or pravadema. Or the Dimas as Siva had assumed the name Sivarai. Siva and Parvati are the principal deities for the Tifras and Tiwas. The Rabhas have given the names Lana Raja and Lanadevata to Siva. Sonowal Kacharies worship Siva as Khiring Raja or "Baith" and Karbis as "Mahadai".

In Mayeng various Siva Temple have been found

in different place. Notable among the Siva shrines, Kachashil Siva temple is worth mentioning. The Mayang royal family took special care of this temple. Siva linga is worshipped here. Sivaratri is celebrated in the Kachashila every year with flying colours. King Sarascha chandra Singha constructed a Kachashila and Ganesha temple of Hatimuria. The water of this tank was only used for the worshipping of Lord Siva. Hara-Gauri twin shrine is at Chanaka, one at Buxhamayang and other Hara-Gauri Jugal-Murti is founded near the Pabitora Forest office. But the Dimarua king was defeated by King Sarascha chandra Singha. Since then this Jugal Murti has been worshipping with devotion by the people of Mayang.

Saktism ÷

"Saktism is the cult of worshipping a female goddess as the supreme deity who is variously called Devi Durga, Kali, Kalika, Chandi, Karmakhyia and so on". The goddess is worshipped in various iconic representations or in the form of a "Yoni" symbolizing the creative principle. The sakti as a cosmic energy, personified as a female, is one of the oldest faiths in India and it is almost certain that Saktism had a non-vedic origin. The fertility goddess worshipped by the tribes was later on accepted by the Brahmins as Sakti and since ancient days. Assam has been an important centre of Sakti worship.

The cult of Saktism has been persisting in Mayang since immemorial times.

Worshipping of Devi Kamakhya Dham at Bharghat:

There is a popular belief among the people of Mayong that the "Thigh" part of the body of Sati Devi fell on the Mayong pahar (Near Burhamayong). The place where the part of the body of Sati fell is called by the people of Mayong "Kamakhya Dham". A stone "Monikut" is there at Burhamayong, a few feet uphill the Barghat stream. According to this theory, Maa Kamakhya comes from Nilachal hill to Mayong hill for doing "Lila" every year on the 6th Bahag. 33 core Deva, Devis also accompany Devi Kamakhya to this place. The Mayong Rajvamsavali also tells that "Pancha-gosains" of Mayong are also taken to this Kamakhya Dham on that day every

year. The Rajvamsavali tells that king Sarascha chandra Singha. The subject, the Bangthe, Baishayas, patar, Senapati and others worshipped Devi kamakhya. The Deori was the main priest in this puja. Earlier human sacrifice was practised during the puja. Cocks, ducks, pigeons, the goats etc. were also sacrificed. Due to the lack of human victim white cock was sacrificed. Everything needed for puja before the Devi, was supplied from the royal store. The Mayong Rajvamsavali tells that king Sarascha chandra Singha appointed Tepora and Meheng - the two men for the arrangement of the puja pendals.

Worshipping of Bhagawati :-

The Bhagawati than was established at the Bhaluka Suba of Hatimuria village. A Deori from Konch community was appointed to look after the 'Than'. This Deori is also the Pujari of this 'Than'. Since than ancestor of the Konch Deori has been offering Puja before Bhagawati till today. Earlier, the Brahman priest offered puja according to the vedic rites.

Worshipping of Burhi Aai :-

The Burhi Aai 'Than' is at Pheti para Suba at Hatimuria village. Burhi Aai originally a tribal deity Hatimuria as ~~tribal~~ Sitala was the Goddess of small-box is adored with Aai-nam. King Sarascha Chandra Singha

appointed one Deori from Kench Community for offering Puja before Aai. The ancestors of this deori has been looking after the 'Than' and offering puja to Burhi Aai.

Worshipping of kechai khaiti ÷

King Sarascha chandra Singha established

'kechai khaiti 'Than' at Barna Suba of Rajamayang village. One Deori from Yogi Community was appointed to look after the 'Than'. Ducks, cocks, pigeons and black coloured goat were sacrificed to propitiate the Devi. The worshipping of kechai-khaiti is still prevalent in this Than. The worshipping offer Puja with devotion.

Worship of Maroi ÷

King Sarascha chandra singha according to the Mayong, Rajramsavali had a dream by which he was directed to worship "Bishahari Maroi". A tribal goddess called Maroi, Hindressed as Manasha was worshipped in an elaborate way in some parts of the country in times of pestilence and disease.

The king called upon a meeting of the ministers and other courtiers and discussed about his dream. The meeting decided to celebrate the "Bishahari Maroi Puja" at celebrate the Sonaipare village. One Lehooram keot of Lehpati village was given responsibility to make arrangements for this puja. The Deori and Oja needed for this puja, were brought Darrang and Kamrup.

Vaishnavism of Mayong ÷

The Bhakti or Neo-vaishnavite movement launched by Sankardeva and his disciple Madhadeva took the shape of revolution in Assam in the 16th and 17th centuries. The wave of the Neo-vaishnavite movement reached every nook and corner of Assam through its satra institutions and Namghars. The wave this vaishnavite movement also reached this remote region of Mayong, Hridayananda Alias Ananta Ata established a Satra on the bank of the Kalshila Beel. This Satra was called "Kalshila Satra". On the other hand, Damodardeva's grandson Aniradda deva established another Satra called Sildubi Satra at Sildubi village.

The Daipara Missamari Satra a vaishnavite monastery has been playing a role in the

Socio-cultural life of the people of Mayong.

The Daipara Missamari Satra has been propagating the vaishnavism founded by chaitanyadeva of Bengal. This Satra had a great impact upon the area. The yogis of Rajamayong are the disciples of this Satra. The people belonging to different communities in and around the Satra have been initiating by this Satra.

Vaishnavite Satras of Mayong -

Kalshila Satra, Mayong Kalshilapar :-

Hridarananda Kayastha alias Ananta

Ata founded a Satra, known as "Kalshila Satra" on the southern bank of the Kalshila Lake of the then Mayong kingdom in 1564 Saka i.e. 1642 A.D. belonged to the purush Samhati founded by Chaturbhoy thakur. Ananta Ata come from Barpeta Baradi Satra and having an order from Aai Kanaklata, he founded this Satra. But his son Bhubaneswar-dev transferred this Satra from Mayong Kalshilapar to Doloi Suba of the Dandua Kingdom in 1694 Saka i.e. 1772 A.D.

Dr. Kamal ch. Nath writes, "now-a-days there are all together seven Kalshila Satras, namely, Doloi Suba, Naokata, Tamulibori,

Torabori, Habibarangabari, Moran Dabakhat and Gasonibari." Although the original Satra at Kalshilapar of Mayong was transferred bag and baggage to Doloi Chuba in 1672 A.D., yet the plot where this Satra had been situated is still intact. Only one big tree (Ahat) is standing alone there.

Sildubi Satra, Sildubi:

The Sildubi Satra is an important Neo - vaishnavite religious institution founded by the grandson of Sri Sri Damodardeva Acharya Siromani Goswami in 1590 A.D. He established this Satra under instructions from the great vaishnava. Saint Mahapurush Sri Sri Damodardeva during the reign of the great King of Mayong. Savarachah chandra Singha in 1590 A.D. The King, Samiram Sinha adopted "Sharan" at Sildubi Satra Since then,

the linkage between master and disciple has been continuing in the king's dynasty of Raja Mayong.

The sole deity of the Satra is the Basudeva or Bengshi - gopal of Salagrama. Salagrama is traditionally worshipped by Brahmins only in the Damodoriya sect of vaishnavism.

Thousands of disciples of this Satra are scattered in the Mayong area. The Satra began the worship of the Kunch Community under the king of Mayong pay a visit to the Gosain and also pay a tax called Guru kar to the Gosain.

Brahampur Satra, Brahampur:

The Brahampur Satra was founded in 1860 A.D. The founder Satradhikar of this Satra was Raghudeva Goswami. This is

a Satra belonging to the Brahma Samhati. The Satradhikar of this Satra belong to the 'Patbaushi Satra of Barpeta' lineage of family of 'Baishtha Gotra'. Sri Sri Munindra Dev Goswami, son of Jogendra nath Dev Goswami Since nov. 2003.

The Satra has two bighas of land in its name. The Satra has a Congregational prayer hall and a 'Grabhagriha' made of bamboo and reed. Indeed, the Satra is in its dilapidated condition. The Satra has a gate made of bricks. This Satra has a number of disciples pancha Devota, Vishnu, Siva, Ganesha and Surya along with Salgram are offered puja deity in the Satra Monikut.

Khulagaon Michamari Satra :

There are all total three chaitanyiya Satra in the District of Morigaon. ① khulagaon Michamari Satra ② Daipara Michamai Satra and ③ Kumura guri Michamari Satra Baragabari. The principal among them is the khulagaon Michamari Satra situated in the Ghogua Mouza on the Dibika lake. The founder of this Satra was one Nityananda Goswami. The progenitor of the Michamari Satra in Assam was Krishna ch. Bairagi. He came from Nawad-wip Dham, Bengal.

Daipara Michamari Satra :

Daipara Michamari Satra was founded by Sabhananda Goswami, elder son of Nityananda Goswami, the first Satradhikar khulagaon

Michamari Satra. The senior member of the family to selected as the Satradhikar. This Satra has thousands of disciple. This Satra building is in good condition. The Satra has three bigha of land in its name.

Panche Gosain Mela and Garh - Bhaga Utsava:-

The panche Gosain Mela and Garh-Bhaga Utsav has been celebrating every year in Mayong since the dages of king Saracha Chandra Singha (1599-1624 A.D). According to Mayong Raja-vamsavali after becoming king, Saracha Chandra Singha and Crown prince prem Singha along with a few trusted persons went for a pilgrimage to the various pilgrim centres of India. The king brought ten deities (Gosains) to Mayong for the well being of his kingdom. These ten Gosains were Basudeva, Gopala, Laxmi-Narayan, Siva-parvati and five Salgrams and one Gadur pankhi. The names of these five Salgram statues were - ① Jugal-Milan, ② Dhadhimukhi Brahman, ③ two Gandukhis and ④ Sudarshan Chakra Murti.

Basudeva, Gopal, Laxmi - Narayan and Siva - Parvati were of metal statues where as five Salagrams were of stone statues and the Gadur pankhi was of wooden statue.

Earlier all these statues were kept in the Royal Namghar and a royal priest was appointed to offer pujas to these Gosains. But later on, it was decided to keep Basudeva, Laxmi - Narayan and Salagrams in the royal Namghar and the rest were given to four Medhis belonging to yogi Community for maintenance. These Medhis were - (i) Dandadhar Nath from pani Marajak, (ii) Gahin Nath from Kona jak, (iii) Gadaram Nath from Godhajak and (iv) Sukman Nath from Noa - Medhi khel. Since then all these Gosains are taken to the Raj-chora on 4th Behag every year and the Gosain Uliowa Mela is being celebrated.

on the 5th Bohag, all the deities (Gosain) except Laxmi are taken to the Bamun Gosain Than of Hatimuria on 'Dula - palangins. The king, Deka Rajas, Banghe, Bishayas, Medhis, Thakurias, Tamuli, Patar, senapati and other courtiers Than on foot. The Karbis wearing their tribal dresses and having Dhal (shields) and Baru (sword) in hands perform Karbi Dance and play with Karbi Dhal (drum) and 'Murit' Gayan - Bayan, Dholia - kholia and Bardholia play with their musical instruments while accompanying the Gosain. When the Gosain reach the gateway of the Bamun Gosain Than of Hatimuria, the Raj Medhi of this Than receives the Gosains with garlands, betelnut and Dhop - dnipa. Thereafter, the Gosains are placed on an altar. Basudeva Gosain is placed in the middle and the other Gosains are placed on their respective seats (altars). The Bishaya - the so-called Mala Deiya Bishaya - gives

Malas (garlands) to the king and the eminent persons present there. Thereafter, the Karbis perform their tribal dance and the other people and Gayan - Bayan do perform Naam. Thereafter, the mela is postponed for the day. Thereafter, the Gosains are taken to the Kechai Khaiti Than of Raja mayong and every body offer prayer to his deity and then go back to their own homes.

On the 6th Bohag, all the Gosains are taken to the 'Raj-chora'. Thereafter, the Gosains are placed in the palanquins (Dula) and set out for Burhamayang. The king, the Deha - Rajas, Bangthe, senapati, Medhis, Bishayas and other courtiers including eminent persons of Mayong accompany the Gosain on foot. On the way to Burhamayang, every householder receives the Gosain with garlands, Dhoop - Duipa and offer prayer. After crossing the Baruen Gosain

Than, the Karbis receive the Gosains to the Bhagwati Than at Buxhamayong. At the Bhagwati Than, the Gosains are placed on respective seats (altars). The king and others also take their respective seats and the mala-diya Bishaya gives everybody Mala (garlands). The Karbis do their karbi dance like the previous day. Thereafter the Gosains are taken to the kechai - khaiti Than of Buxhamayong. At the kechai - khaiti Than the Pancha Devatas of Mayong and the Baragan Devatas - Basudeva, Bhagawati, kechai-khaiti, Hara - parvati, Siva Baba, Noa Gosain, Silghar, Tini Udhania, Tatsal and Ronthali etc. are offered prayer." After taking a rest at kechai-khaiti Than, the Gosain are taken back to Rajarmayong. The Karbis accompany the Gosains upto the Barnun Gosain Than of Matimuria.

When the Gosains arrive at the gateway of the royal Namghar, they are prevented from entering into the Monikut. An artificial barricade is made by the devotees of Laxmi Devi. After a little skirmish between the two parties, the devotees of Basudeva break this artificial barricade and enter into the premise of Namghar. The devotees of Laxmi Devi also welcome Basudev to the Monikut of the Namghar. The king, the Deka Rajas and others go round the Monikut seven times and finally enter into the Monikut. This is called the 'Garh-Bhanga Utsav' of Mayong. Then the Basudev Murti is placed on the permanent altar and the other Gosains are taken back by the respective Medhis to their permanent Monikuts. With this the Pancha Gosains Mela and Garh-Bhanga Utsav of Mayong come to an end.

Conclusion:-

In conclusion, it can be said that the religious life of Assam has been playing a major role in the cultural life of the Assamese people from the 16th century religious in origin. It is mainly responsible for controlling Assamese society for it has been administration to the spirited and cultural necessities of Assamese people. Also like as the Satra institutions of Mayong has been also playing a major role in the cultural life of Assamese people of Mayong. Though the various Satras are founded in Mayong the Kalshila Satra could not rise or it did not get Royal patronization for which it fled away to Dalsi chuba. The Damodaraya Satras, Sildubi Satra and Barhampur Satra have been able to attract thousands of disciples to their side. The Satras irrespective to their creed have been playing a good role for the socio-cultural harmony among the various sections of people.

The above said discussion proves that during the Medieval period the Society of Mayong consisted of various ethnic groups like Karbis, Kacharis, Dimasas - Kacharis, Jogis or Nath, Kalitas, Bhuyans, Keots. The Socio-cultural life of Mayong is very praiseworthy, because we have seen that all the ethnic groups together celebrated pancha Gohain mela and Garbhaga utsav, Ganesha mela, Devi Bhagawati puja, Kachai khaiti puja etc. Throughout the 20th century many people belonging to Hindu Bengali and Muslim communities from the erstwhile East Bengal came to this land and established many villages within the natural boundary of Mayong. Besides, a few Nepali families also came who are now found at Rajamayong and Hatigarh villages.

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