

A
HANDBOOK OF
FOLKLORE MATERIAL
OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

10 1994

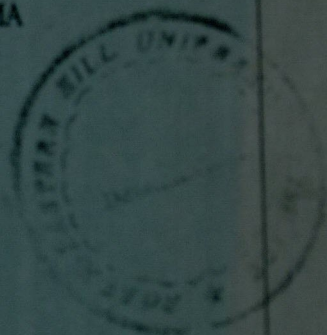
BIRENDRANATH DATTA

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ANUNDORAM BOROAH INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE, ART & CULTURE, ASSAM
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948
Published by Shri T.R. Taid, Director, Anundoram Borooah
Institute of Language, Art & Culture, Assam.

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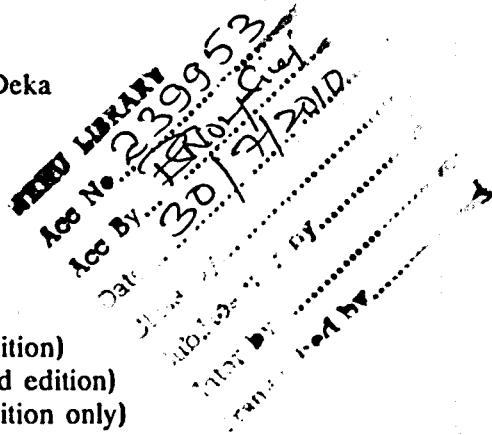
Cover design: Shri Dhruba Deka

First published 1994

Price: Rs. 425/- (Library edition)
Rs. 120/- (Low priced edition)
\$ 15 (Library edition only)

Lasersetting by: ABILAC, Ambikagiri Nagar, Guwahati - 24.

Printed at: Bharat Offset
Ananda Kutir Road
Zoo-Road Tinali
Guwahati - 781 003



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

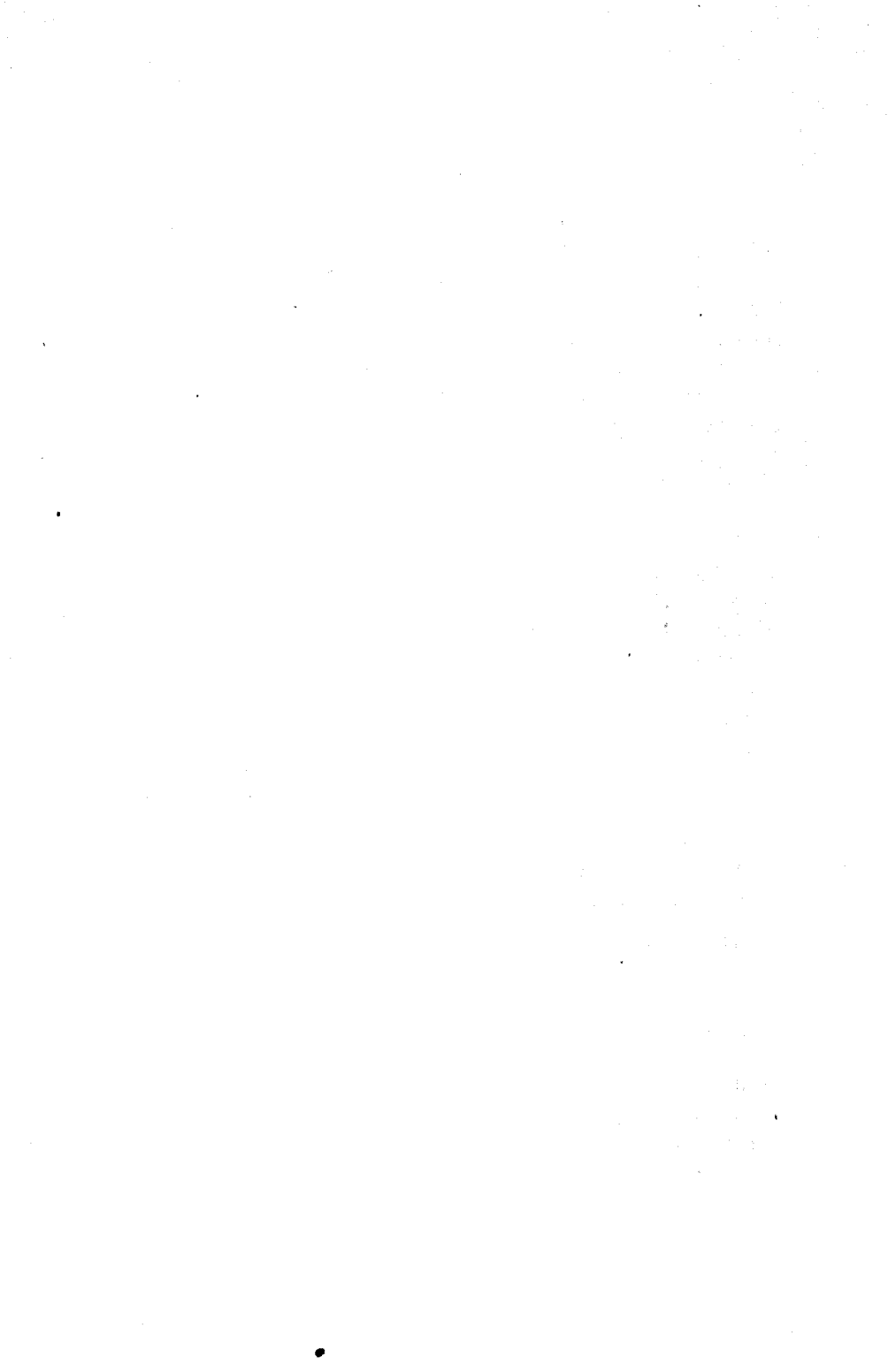
Folklore and oral traditions form one of the several areas of work for the Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language, Art & Culture, Assam (ABILAC). The Institute has a subcommittee consisting of folklorists including Dr. Praphulladatta Goswami and Dr. Birendranath Datta to recommend research and publication programmes relating to folklore and oral traditions. Still in the take-off stage, the Institute has not been able to contribute much to the discipline, although there have been quite a few recommendations from the subcommittee. In fact, the present work is the first publication of the Institute in the area of folklore and oral traditions. However, the Institute has been offering a few fellowships to M. Phil students of the Folklore Research Department of Gauhati University for the last two years for the promotion of folkloristic studies. The scheme is continuing. Schemes such as collection of folk-songs and ballads of the Barak valley and the Karbi Anglong district, publication of a treatise on the festivals of Assam, etc. have also been undertaken in the meanwhile. It is expected that folklorists will hear a little more of ABILAC in the years to come.

The great ethnic diversity of North-East India should deter anyone from undertaking a work of the present kind, particularly if one has to look for primary sources. But, as has been mentioned by the authors in their preface, the need for such a work has been there all through, which prompted them to embark upon the project. Although the book contains material from quite a few secondary sources, its usefulness as the only work so far that provides a window on the folkloristic world of the North-East as a whole should be quite evident. ABILAC is glad to associate itself with such a pioneering venture.

Our grateful thanks are due to the authors for coming up with such a work, particularly to Dr. Birendranath Datta, professor and head of the Folklore Research Department of Gauhati University, for his active co-operation with the Institute at all stages of the production and publication of the present work.

Ambikagiri Nagar
Guwahati - 781024
15 Feb, 1994

T.R. Taid
Director



PREFACE

The importance of folklore studies is being increasingly recognised in academic circles of India and the number of universities in the country introducing folklore studies as an academic discipline is growing from year to year. It is a matter of pride and satisfaction for North-East India that Gauhati University happens to be a pioneer in this regard and its Department of Folklore Research has the distinction of being one of the oldest independent university departments exclusively devoted to folklore studies. Folklore courses have also been instituted in the Manipur University and the North-Eastern Hill University.

As is well known, North-East India is extremely rich in the matter of its folklore heritage. Although a fairly large crop of books and articles having a bearing on various aspects of the folklore of the region — ranging from the highly academic works to the patently laymenlike efforts — have been published both in English and Assamese and also in some other languages, the need for a handy compendium that could give a comprehensive picture of the folklore scene of the whole region was being felt by all concerned, particularly by those involved with its study as an academic pursuit.

It was against the above background that the present work was taken up as a departmental project of the Folklore Research Department of Gauhati University under the University-level Book-writing Scheme of the University Grants Commission. We are beholden to the UGC for the support it gave to the project.

After the draft was ready, we had been on the look-out for a publisher when, fortunately, the Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language, Art & Culture, Assam came out with the generous offer to undertake the publication of the book as one of its schemes in the field of Folklore and Oral Traditions. We are really grateful to the Institute, and in particular to its Vice-Chairman, Dr. P. Goswami and Director, Shri. T.R. Taid, for this laudable gesture.

The book itself has been divided into two parts. The first part contains discussions on the various aspects of the folklore material of the North-East while the second part is chiefly made up of the specimens of different types of folklore items, mostly culled from different published works. Some additional matter has been incorporated in the Appendix. While some photographs have been given in a section called Illustrations, we have also appended a comprehensive bibliography for the preparation of which our special thanks are due to Dr. K.K. Bhattacharjee, our junior colleague in the Department.

We take this opportunity of acknowledging our indebtedness to all those from whose works we have culled various material, and also to those who have otherwise supplied information needed for various contents of this book. As far as practicable, the sources have been duly acknowledged. However, special mention must be made of the Director of Research of Arunachal Pradesh for their kind permission to reproduce material from their publication.

We are extremely grateful to Professor P. Goswami, the doyen of folklorists of North-East India for the inspiration and guidance at various stages of the work. Apart from the fact that we have freely and copiously drawn from his works, he has also kindly allowed us to reproduce an essay written by him in the Appendix section. Our sincere thanks also go to Dr A.N.M. Irshad Ali, Professor of Anthropology, Gauhati University, for kindly giving his consent for the incorporation of one of his articles in the Appendix section.

Our expectation is that this volume would serve the purpose of not only academic folklorists but also the interested general readers both inside and outside the region.

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CONTENTS

Publisher's Note

Preface

PART ONE

Introductory

Chapter 1 · North-East India and Its Socio-Cultural Milieu 1

Chapter 2 · North-East India's Folklore: The Integrated View 20

Verbal Folklore

Chapter 3 · Oral Narratives 36

Chapter 4 · Folksongs and Allied Material: Assamese 48

Chapter 5 · Folksongs and Allied Material: Languages other than Assamese 79

Religion, Beliefs and Customs

Chapter 6 · Folk Religion, Beliefs and Customs: Assam 116

Chapter 7 · Folk Religion, Beliefs and Customs: States other than Assam 136

Ceremonies and Festivals

Chapter 8 · Festivals: Assam 151

Chapter 9 · Festivals: States Other than Assam 173

The Arts

Chapter 10 · Folk Performances, Arts and Crafts 205

PART TWO

Specimens

Chapter 11 · Specimens of Oral Narratives: Assam 227

Chapter 12 · Specimens of Oral Narratives: States Other than Assam 267

Chapter 13 · Specimens of Songs, Chants, Proverbs and Riddles 324

A Handbook of Folklore Material of North-East India

APPENDICES

(I) Folklore in North-Eastern India	373
(II) Influence of Indigenous Folk Traditions on the Assamese Muslims	386
(III) A Note on the Musical Modes of the Folksongs, their singers and the present state of Folksong performance in Assam	395
Illustrations	
Notes & References	399
Bibliography	415

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

NORTH-EAST INDIA AND ITS SOCIO-CULTURAL MILIEU

I. NORTH-EAST INDIA AS A HOMOGENEOUS ZONE

Introduction

The term North-East India— or simply the North-East— obviously refers to the geographical location of the region. But there are many other ways in which the term holds great significance.

Topographically, the north-eastern region of India lies in an extension of the sub-Himalayan zone— consisting of lofty mountainous terrains and moderately high hilly tracts interspersed with plateaus and river-fed valleys. While this geographical and topographical situation has made north-eastern India into a naturally homogeneous zone, the partition of the sub-continent literally cut it off from the rest of the country— barring a narrow corridor— accentuating, as it were, the specificity of the region.

The specific character of the North-East, however, extends beyond its physical features; it has its own distinctiveness also in respect of its population component and cultural pattern. Since very early times the North-East has been the home of the Kirātas or Indo-Mongoloids. Although Austric and Dravidian sub-strata have been discerned by scholars in the racial and cultural make-up of the region and although waves of Aryan culture have swept over parts of the region— particularly the valleys in Assam, Manipur and Tripura— the predominance of the Indo-Mongoloid

CHAPTER 2

NORTH-EAST INDIA'S FOLKLORE: THE INTEGRATED VIEW

I. AN INTEGRATED AND MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH FOR THE STUDY OF THE FOLKLORE MATERIAL OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

Folklore means folk learning; it comprehends all knowledge that is transmitted by word of mouth and all crafts and other techniques that are learned by imitation or example, as well as the products of such crafts... Folklore includes folk art, folk crafts, folk tools, folk costume, folk custom, folk belief, folk medicine, folk recipes, folk music, folk dance, folk games, folk gestures and folk speech, as well as those verbal forms of expression which have been called folk literature but which are better described as verbal art.¹

Folkloristics is most emphatically a discipline in which, to a large extent, progress follows trends within neighbouring disciplines. Stimuli have been taken from fields such as history, comparative literature, psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, comparative religion and linguistics. It would seem, however, that many of the stimulating impulses available at present will be ignored and not applied to folkloristic problems if folklorists do not recognise that not only should traditional texts be the object of their study but also that the events that accompany the transmission of the tradition should be treated.²

CHAPTER 3

ORAL NARRATIVES

I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Story-telling has been an integral ingredient of the cultures of all societies throughout human history. Narratives recounting unusual happenings accepted as truth on faith, or incidents rather vaguely believed to have taken place, and stories of purely fictitious formulations are told and retold. Correspondingly, myths, legends and folktales have been accepted as the three basic forms of narratives of universal distribution. These three have generally been taken as "prose narrative forms" in western folklore scholarship. It is, however, to be noted that this three-fold classification of narratives does not apply to folklore material in all societies, and, secondly, such narrative genres are not necessarily in prose form in all societies. Thus in various north-eastern societies, both tribal and non-tribal, the lines between the three categories— myth, legend and tale— are not very clearly drawn, and even if the notion of distinction between them is present, separate terms to designate them are not available. While folktales normally do have the prose character, other narrative items which have the contents normally associated with myths and legends are more often than not in the verse form and they are chanted or sung. This is particularly true of items connected with ritualistic beliefs and practices. The best examples are provided by the *nyibu āgoms* of the Adis, the *mibu ābāngs* of the Misings and the *keplāng āluns* of the Karbis.¹

In Garo folklore, however, practically very little distinction is made between prose and verse and most narratives are told

CHAPTER 4

FOLK SONGS AND ALLIED MATERIAL: ASSAMESE

I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Except for the material in Assamese, Manipuri (Meitei) and one or two tribal languages, the bulk of the folksong material in the other languages of the region remains to be systematically collected and classified. Any treatment, therefore, of the folksong heritage of the region as whole can only be rather tentative at this stage.

However, the fact remains that so far as the oral folklore of the region is concerned— and this is perhaps true of many other parts of India— folksong is a most inclusive category and as such, the total volume of material usually lumped together under this blanket category is extremely rich both in variety and quantity. Since almost all sung, chanted and recited forms of oral poetry are designated as 'song' in most communities, the category includes such diverse material as folk epic and ballad, myth and legend, hymn and invocation, and even rhymes and runes. The Assamese term for all kinds of sung forms is *geet*, the Manipuri term is *ishei* ; the corresponding Karbi, Mising, Bodo and Khasi terms are *lun*, *ni:tom*, *methái* and *jingrwái* respectively.

Some groups have specific native categories to designate different kinds of song material. Thus the Adis put the long 'inspired' compositions sung by the priests in a category (*nyibu ábāng*) separate from other sung forms.

Some groups have their own systems of classifying the various

CHAPTER 5

FOLKSONGS AND ALLIED MATERIAL: IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ASSAMESE

I. THE BODOS AND THEIR FOLKLORE (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FOLKSONGS)

The Bodos (also known as Boro-Kacharis) constitute one of the most numerous and prominent tribal communities of the region. Spread over a fairly large area, their main concentrations are to be found in western Assam, particularly on the north-Bank of the Brahmaputra. Most Bodo-speaking can also speak Assamese and the two languages have many elements acquired from each other.

“As regards the Bodo language”, says M.M. Brahma, “it is true that this language is very rich in vocabulary and is noted for its phonological peculiarity. But though this language is still current in Assam and in some areas of west Bengal, yet we do not find any trace of books or any inscriptions in this language. So, in the absence of authentic evidence, I find it difficult to say that once the Bodo language was used as a written language in the state.”¹ However, today Bodo has a growing crop of written language and the language is recognised as one of the associate official languages in Assam.

The Bodo language is rich in folk literature. According to M.M. Brahma, “Their traditional folksongs depict profound thoughts and imagination, and have a beautiful rhyme. While one hears the spontaneous flow of songs from the mouths of unlettered Bodo women, he is bound to think that they possess

CHAPTER 6

FOLK RELIGION, BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS— ASSAM

I. FOLK RELIGION OF THE ASSAMESE HINDUS

The Assamese Hindu society is one which has assimilated into itself various erstwhile tribal groups. Again, many tribal groups have moved towards the Assamese Hindu fold through integration, accepting customs and beliefs current in the non-tribal society. Consequently, tribal features have made inroads into the broader Assamese Hindu society in the field of religion and customs. The historical background of Assam has, perhaps, played a significant role in the field of such developments. The trend of Sanskritization of the tribal society started from an early date here. When the tribal chiefs and kings had started accepting the Hindu faith and patronising it, there started the process of assimilation and mutual exchange among the people. Moreover, the great neo-Vaishnava movement under the leadership of saint Sankaradeva and his disciples and followers in the 15th and 16th centuries had influenced all societies of people in the land in such a manner as to bring a kind of synthesis.

The Assamese Hindus believe in and worship Vishnu, Siva, Ganesh, Durga and other gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. Vishnu, Siva and Devi have different names and manifestations at the folk level. They are worshipped on various occasions and times. Among them, Siva is a very popular folk god for all sections of people. He is worshipped at the beginning of every phase of cultivation.

CHAPTER 7

FOLK RELIGION, BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS: STATES OTHER THAN ASSAM

I. MEGHALAYA

Traditional Religious Beliefs of the Khasis

The Khasis believe in a Supreme God. But the concept of the Supreme God is rather vague. They propitiate different spirits by sacrifices and other such means. This propitiation is carried out by their priests known as *lyngdoh*. They believe in a future state after death. According to their belief, man was created by God and put on the earth. But to His dismay God found that the evil spirit destroyed man. So God created the dog who kept watch and prevented the evil spirit from carrying out his work of destruction.

The Khasis also have faith in a number of household deities. These are said to have sprung from a woman of the name of Kataben. They worship many spirits— the god of the state, the god of water, the god of wealth, etc. They also believe in some minor spirits, such as, the spirit of cholera, the spirit of fever, etc. The Khasis believe that diseases and epidemics are caused by these spirits, and perform certain ceremonies to appease them. Fowls or goats are sacrificed to the disease spirits. Sacrifices are made also to the spirits which are believed to dwell in rivers, tree and hills. They are worshipped as deities of nature. Punatit is the river goddess and goats are sacrificed to her before the start of fishing in a certain area. The hill god of the Rableng hill is propitiated by the sacrifice of a goat or a cock, while that of the Sumper hill offered a goat or a bull.

CHAPTER 8

FESTIVALS AND CEREMONIES: ASSAM

I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Festivals are the external expression of social behaviour. Scholars like Jacob Grimm, Max Müller, Andrew Lang, Wilhelm Mannherdt, James Frazer and so on have made attempts to link primitive beliefs and magical rituals with the modern festivals. We can assume that the tradition of the modern festivals emanated from the beliefs and magical rituals of the ancient communities. The ancient communities performed those magical rituals to make the days grow longer, to expel severe cold, to appease deities of the fields and forests as well as sky and water. They also performed magical rituals to satisfy the rain-god or to appease the deadly deities of diseases and to please the malevolent dead and to appease the village ghosts as well. Even the ancient communities solemnized those magical rituals to promote fertility. Rightly does William H. Hendleson observe: "Festivals held by the primitive peoples consisted of collective magic or religious rites for propitiation of evil spirits and invocation of friendly supernatural powers, and were held on such occasions as the admission of new members to a tribe, disposal of the dead; and preparations of fishermen for the catch, hunters for the chase and warriors for battle. A communal meal was usually a part of the festival. The development of agriculture was accompanied by new festivals, also consisting of magical religious rituals, in connection with the seasons, specially with the vernal equinox and the winter solstice. Planting and harvesting were important festive occasions."¹

CHAPTER 9

FESTIVALS AND CEREMONIES: STATES OTHER THAN ASSAM

I. FESTIVALS OF MEGHALAYA

Khasi-Jaintia

The Khasis are a dance-loving people and as such, all the festivals current amongst them are wedded to dance and song. They observe different festivals in the different seasons of the year.

The Nongkrem dance is one of the most important and ancient festivals amongst those observed by the Khasis. It is an annual religious festival of the Khyrim Syiemship (Syiem = Chief), which is popularly known as the Shad Nongkrem. The Shad Nongkrem has a long antiquity and it has not suffered much change in the structure as well as motive due to the effect of modernity.

The origin of the festival goes back to the days when the Khasis used to live together in the Khasi hills under one king undisturbed by the outside world. According to a tradition current amongst the Khasis, U Shillong, the first ancestor of the Syiem clan of Khyrim and Myllicm, was the founder of the state. It is impossible to determine the exact date when U Shillong had founded the state, since the Khasis have no written history.¹

The legendary heroine Ka Pah Syntiew (the flower-bewitched) is still regarded as the common ancestress of both the Syiems of Myllicm and Khyrim states. According to a myth current amongst the Khasis, Ka Pah Syntiew lived in a cave near the

CHAPTER 10

FOLK PERFORMANCES, ARTS AND CRAFTS

I. FOLK PERFORMANCES

Folk Drama: A General Survey

Assam is particularly rich in the field of folk drama.

The *bhāonās*— theatrical performances on the model set by the great saint-artists Sankardeva and Madhavadeva— constitutes a most valuable item of the Assamese artistic heritage. Although an ideal *bhāonā* performance of a play written by the two great saint-artists and some of their followers has more of a classical than a folk flavour, yet the links of the *bhāonā* with the local folk tradition are unmistakably clear. While many elements of the model for the *bhāonā* have been drawn from earlier folk-drama institutions, an actual *bhāonā* at the performance level takes on a distinctly popular and folk character.

The *ojā-pāli* institution also incorporates within itself ingredients of folk theatre. It is customary for the principal singer-dancer, *ojā*, to enter into dramatic dialogues with his principal assistant, *dāinā-pāli*, every now and then. In some performances, particularly in *mārc-goā* and *rāmāyan-goā* forms, more elaborate dramatic interpolations constitute a part of the structure.

The *dhuliyās* of the Kamrup region are parties of drummers who provide music on auspicious and festive occasions, perform acrobatic feats and, over and above, present dramatic skits replete with wit, humour and social criticism.

CHAPTER 11

SPECIMENS OF ORAL NARRATIVES: ASSAM

Deuri Origin Myth:

The Beginning of the World

At the beginning of the world was just water. There was nothing but water. God at that time lived in his domain up in heaven. He felt like creating animal life in the world and in order to find if land had emerged anywhere he sent down the peacock and the *tintim* (the wagtail?). The birds came down and noticed that a little land had come into view. They alighted, but while the peacock started to eat the shapely pebbles lying scattered, the *tintim* straight away returned and reported that land had appeared. The peacock remained entangled in the meshes of worldly charms, but he had been devoted to God and the latter missed the bird. When God came down to the earth and began to create men and animals, the peacock begged for his forgiveness. God was moved at repentance and out of affection and for the reason that the peacock happened to be the first resident on the earth, he put on the bird's plumes on his headgear. On the other hand, because the *tintim* had been loyal to him, this bird maintained her access both to heaven and earth. For three months in summer the *tintim* lives in heaven and gives birth to her children, and in the dry season she visits the earth and roams about joyfully. But before God had sent the bird to the earth it was the spider who had prayed to him to be sent to find if the land had appeared. As he was not sent, God, as a consolation gave him three boons. In accordance with one boon thread comes out of the spider's mouth; the second

CHAPTER 12

SPECIMENS OF ORAL NARRATIVE: STATES OTHER THAN ASSAM

I. MEGHALAYA

Khasi Explanatory Myth:

What Causes the Eclipse

Very early in the history of the world a beautiful female child, whom the parents called Ka Nam, was born to a humble family who lived in a village on the borders of one of the great Khasi forests. She was such a beautiful child that her mother constantly expressed her fears lest some stranger passing that way might kidnap her or cast an 'evil eye' upon her, so she desired to bring her up in as much seclusion as their poor circumstances would permit. To this the father would not agree; he told his wife not to harbour foolish notions, but to bring up the child naturally like the other people's children, and teach her to work and make herself useful. So Ka Nam was brought up like the other children, and taught to work and make herself useful.

One day, as she was taking her pitcher to the well, a big tiger came out of the forest and carried her to his lair. She was terrified almost to death, for she knew that the tigers were the most cruel of all beasts. The name of this tiger was Ukhla, and his purpose in carrying off the maiden was to eat her; but when he saw young and small she was, and that she would not suffice for one full meal for him, he decided to keep her in his lair until she grew bigger.

CHAPTER 13

SONGS, CHANTS, PROVERBS AND RIDDLES

I. SONGS AND CHANTS

A. Assam

Assamese:

(1)

Maniram Dewanar Geet: The Ballad Of Maniram Dewan

[Opening portion describing the arrest of Maniram Dewan by the British Government and the common man's anguish at his execution]

You smoked on a gold hookah, O Maniram
You smoke on a silver hookah.
What treason did you committed to Royalty
That you got a rope around your neck!
How could they catch you, O Maniram,
How could they catch you?
Jorhat on this side, Golaghat on that,
Through a letter did they catch you,
Secretly did they arrest you, O Maniram,
Secretly did they arrest you;
Holroyd Sahib on the Tokolai bank
Had you secretly hanged.
The stubble of *bara* paddy, O Maniram,
The stubble of *bara* paddy.

FOLKLORE IN NORTH-EASTERN INDIA[†]

Prof. Praphulladatta Goswami

Before any study of folklore can be set afoot the material has to be taken notice of any and such things as tales, songs and sayings have to be collected and made available. The seeds planted by Western missionaries and administrators began to bear fruit when Indians themselves turned round to find interesting items of culture in their own social environments. Songs had been sung and tales had been told but that these had any special significance was a new idea. To speak of Assam and north-eastern India in general, folklore started haltingly with some publication in Assamese as well as English. Let me mention some of the earliest publication in order to show what items of traditional lore were taken notice of.[†]

Assamese

- Bhadrasen Bora, *Ramcharit* (riddles), 1899, Dibrugarh
" *Phulkowar* (ballad), 1903, Dibrugarh
" *Manikowar* (ballad), 1903, Dibrugarh
Gopalchandra Das, *Asamiya Patantarmala* (proverbs), 1900,
Dibrugarh
Lakshminath Bezbarua, *Burhiar Sadhu* (folktales), 1911, Howrah
" *Kakadeuta Aru Natilora* (folktales, 1912,
Calcutta
Jogeshchandra Tamuli, *Nichukani* (folksongs), 1916, Calcutta.

[†] Reproduced from B. Datta (ed.): *Focus on Folklore of North-East India*, 1985, Guwahati.

APPENDIX II

INFLUENCE OF INDIGENOUS FOLK TRADITIONS ON THE ASSAMESE MUSLIMS

Dr. A.N.M. Irshad Ali

Introduction

It is generally held that the Muslims of India adhere strictly to the basic tenets of Islam as embodied in the shariat, the religious law of Islam. However, such a wide-spread impression does not conform to the actual empirical reality. The empirical observations of the socio-cultural life of the Muslims of India, made by anthropologists and sociologists, have suggested that the religious and the social life of the Muslims of India exhibit a peculiar synthesis of Islam and the local folk traditions (Ahmed 1973, 1976; Dube, 1969; Hashim, 1970; Ittoman, 1976; Kutty, 1972; Misra, 1964; Uddin, 1972; Vreede-de-Steurs, 1968).

The socio-cultural life of the Muslims of India shows coexistence and interaction of the Islamic culture and the local cultures that have become islamized. Islam, as known and practised by the Muslims of India, is not a replica of the traditional Islamic society. On the other hand, Islam in India is conditioned to a great extent by various historical, social and cultural forces and factors operating in the Indian milieu. The Indian Muslim society is the product of a prolonged interaction between the Islamic Great Tradition and the Indo-Islamic Little Tradition which is largely based on folk, unwritten customs, conventions and habits handed down from generation to generation. (Momin 1975:580).

† Reproduced from B. Datta (ed): *Focus on Folklore of North-East India*, 1985, Guwahati.

APPENDIX III

A NOTE ON THE MUSICAL MODES OF THE FOLKSONGS, THEIR SINGERS AND THE PRESENT STATE OF FOLKSONG PERFORMANCE IN ASSAM

(a) The Musical modes

The musical modes associated with the different types of Assamese folksongs range from the most elementary to the delightfully complex, both in melodic and rhythmic features.

i) In the songs of the rhyme type, in which musical quality is not of much consequence, only two or three notes are used in a chanting fashion and a simple rhythmic movement is maintained.

ii) The pentatonic musical pattern in the major scale in which the dominant is seldom used is found in some lullabies with a relaxed rhythmic swing.

iii) Most of the *ai nāms* (pox-goddess songs) and other types of *nāms* (choral hymns) make full use of the pentatonic major scale.

iv) *Bijā nāms* (marriage songs) are more varied in melodic patterns while some use the pentatonic major scale as in the lullaby already noticed, others have a more complex melodic structure based on a pentatonic minor scale, sometimes using the flattened sixth.

v) The basic *Bihu* melodic structure is also of the pentatonic minor scale in which stress is given on the third. In fact, this is the most characteristic and dominating melodic modes of Assam, particularly of the Upper Assam region, where such types as

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CHAPTER 4

1. Due to unusually heavy influx of population from outside, particularly from across the international borders in the last several decades, the proportion of indigeneous population has considerably gone down, giving rise to serious economic, political, and above all, eco-cultural problems in the state. As for the earlier settlers like the tea-garden labourers there has been a more or less smooth assimilation with the local socio-cultural milieu.
2. Apart from the books by P. Goswami and a few others, many papers and research articles have been written and published both in English and Assamese. Several doctoral dissertations dealing with the folklore of this region have been accepted for Ph.D. and a number of others are in various stages of preparation at the Department of Folklore Research, Gauhati University.
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Section IV

- * The contents of this sub-section have been received by courtesy of Dr. H. Behari Singh. —Ed.

Section V

- The contents of this sub-section have been collected from Dr. Lalruanga's *A Study of Mizo Folk Literature*, an unpublished Ph.D. thesis of Gauhati University, 1984.

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Section VI

Material collected from *Census Of India*, 1961, Vol. XXVI, Tripura, Part VII. B.

CHAPTER 10

1. Earliest extant example of illustrated manuscript of the Sattriya School of Painting. Dated A.D. 1539. Published in book form with both colour and monochrome reproduction, Nalbari, 1949, Ed. Harinarayan Dutta Barua.
2. A profously illustrated treatise on elephants. Dated A.D. 1734. Published in book form with full colour reproductions of all folios, Gauhati, 1976, Ed. Dr. P.C. Chowdhury.
3. M. Neog, *The Art of Painting in Assam*, Gauhati, 1959.
4. V. Elwin, 'Folk Paintings of India' in monograph of the same name published by International Cultural Centre, New Delhi, 1961.

5. The caste system itself is much less rigid in Assam than in other part of India and there is considerable scope for inter-caste mobility as far as trades and professions are concerned.
6. Some of these institutions are: *Suknānni* or *Māre-goā ojāpāli* in mangaldoi area of Darrang and in Kamrup, *Mārei-gān* or *Mārāi-gān*, *Padmā-purān* and *Bāsi-purān* in Goalpara. All of them combine singing of the narrative songs of the local Manasā cult with choral support, some dancing and occasional dramatic interpolations.



**A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS HAVING RELEVANCE TO THE
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