

F233  
258

# TAI-AHOM RELIGION AND CUSTOMS

Dr. Padmeswar Gogoi

Publication Board, Assam

GAUHATI-3



Gen/9.

© Publication Board, Assam

Published by  
C. P. Saikia, Secretary  
Publication Board, Assam, Gauhati-3

301.2954162  
GOG

ANNU LIBRARY  
Acc. No. 52577  
Acc. by... *Hpi* 22/9/80  
Class by...  
Sub. heading by...  
Date by...  
Transcribed by...

First Published  
July, 1976

Price Rs. 8.00

Printed at Swapna Printing & Binding Works  
101, Baithakkhana Road, Calcutta-9

## INTRODUCTION

Assam is a land of remarkable variety, not only geographically, but also from the point of view of ethnology. The appellation, 'An anthropological museum', is, therefore, justly applicable to this land of variegated racial and cultural patterns. A true student of the history of Assam, therefore, must have adequate knowledge, not only of the political history of Assam, but also of the various races and tribes with their distinctive cultural heritage and the inevitable interaction and synthesis thereof.

The present book, "Tai-Ahom Religion and Customs" by an eminent scholar, will definitely bring into focus much hitherto unknown or less known information regarding an important segment and constituent of Assamese culture, namely, the religious beliefs and various customs and rituals of the Tai-Ahoms. The Ahom rulers, before being converted into Hinduism, had their own religious practices and customs, which are even now preserved among only a limited section. The author has taken pains to collect data from field studies, besides depending on certain manuscripts. The book also throws valuable light on the history of the Mayamarias. An interesting aspect of the book is that Dr. Gogoi has attempted an assessment of the impact of Hinduism on the original Tai-Ahom culture.

We firmly believe that the book will prove to be a valuable supplement to anyone's study of the comprehensive history of Assamese culture.

We shall deem our pains amply rewarded if the book receives its due appreciation from scholars as well as the general readers.

Gauhati  
July 20, 1976

C. P. Saikia

## PREFACE

The book entitled **Tai-Ahom Religion and Customs** is a collection of ten research papers written during my tenure as a retired teacher at the University of Gauhati from March 1971 to March 1973 under the University Grants Commission's Scheme of 'Utilization of services of retired teachers'. Materials for the subjects dealt with in the book were drawn partly from rare literary sources and mostly from field studies for which travel grants were provided by the U. G. C. The Phrālung or Phurālung worship and the Omphā Puja, Saiphā Puja and Rik-khan ceremony were characteristic of the Tai-Ahoms. The Tai-Ahom marriage and burial customs have been published here for the first time in fuller detail. For the latter, I am indebted to Shri Tolan Chandra Saikia of Jorhat. The Ahom and Assamese puthis (manuscripts), as are available, give but imperfect accounts of the Ahom marriage system called Caklang. Little is known to the world about the religious beliefs and practices of the Māyāmarīyās. In this book for the first time a paper dealing with them is included. Hinduism with its sectarian forms, as adopted in Assam by the Ahom rulers, had tremendous effects on the administration and the Ahom society with lessons to be drawn from it.

I am very thankful to the Publication Board, Assam, for undertaking to bring to light these research papers in the form of a book by buying up their copyright.

**P. Gogoi**

## CONTENTS

Ahom Cosmogony	...	1
Ahom Deities	...	7
The Ahoms' change of religion	...	14
Ahom royal Custom of issuing <u>Coins</u> on Coronation	...	23
Background of Sectarian divisions among the present-day Tai-Ahoms	...	35
Religious institutions propagating the Esoteric Cults of Night-worshipping among the Tai-Ahoms	...	46
Laitu or Lao-Phalā	...	54
The Ahom marriage custom	...	63
The burial custom of the Tai-Ahoms	...	88
Ahoms in the Māyāmārā Sect.	...	105