

Orality and Beyond

A North-East Indian Perspective

Edited by

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Sahitya Akademi

Contents

Introduction	i
Orality and Historical Reconstruction	
Orality and Beyond : The Story of U Manik Raitong <i>Sylvanus Lamare</i>	1
Cultural History and the Genesis of the Khasi Oral Tradition <i>Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih</i>	8
Relevance of Oral Literature <i>Carolyn R. Marak</i>	13
Orality and the Tale-Type	
Folktale, North East India and a Tale-Type Index <i>Mrinal Medhi</i>	20
‘Promises are Meant to be Broken’ : An Oicotype Study of Two Tales <i>G. Badaiasuklang Lyngdoh Nonglait, Rimika Lanong and Desmond L Kharmawphlang</i>	27
Orality and Worldview	
Orality Alive : Recapturing the Tale <i>Esther Syiem</i>	38
The Philosophy Behind Khasi Myths <i>Philomena Kharakor</i>	51
Orality and Written Khasi Literature <i>Badaplin War.</i>	59
Oral Tradition of Origin and Migration of the Mishmis of Arunachal Pradesh <i>R. P. Athparia</i>	68
Mizo Values (as reflected in oral traditions) <i>R. L. Thanmawia</i>	76
Traditional folk Music of the Garos <i>Julius L. R. Marak</i>	84

Orality in (Con) text

Orality and Literacy : Towards an Understanding of Contemporary Problems in Oral Traditional Poetics in North-east India

Anil Kr. Boro 88

Writing Orality

Temsula Ao 99

Oral Tradition in Transition : The Koireng Example

T. Neishoning Koireng 113

A Semiotic Study of Ka *Shad Tyngkoh* of the Khasis

Promod Jhingan 117

Tenyimia Folklore and Verse : A Quest for Beyond

D. Kuolie 127

Oral Frames of References : Khasi Myth Chanting and

Perspectives of Definition

Desmond L. Kharmawphlang 141

Special Supplement

Two Sisters: A Biате Folktale (Special Supplement)

T. K. Dareni 147

List of contributors

155

Introduction

In the context of North-East India it is impossible to speak of one monolithic tradition, given its cultural and linguistic plurality. The term North-East India refers to the geographical location of the region that comprises the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Topographically, the region lies in an extension of the sub-Himalayan zone consisting of mountainous terrains and hilly tracts, of plateaus and valleys fed by rivers and streams. The presence of a baffling mix of ethnic communities add to the diverse cultural patterns which are reflected most strongly in the folklore and specifically, in the life breathing oral traditions of the communities of North-East India.

Oral tradition expresses self-identity and upholds social organizations, religious practices, ethical values and customary laws. While being a wealthy repository of mythical, legendary and historical past, it provides examples for the sustenance of contemporary social order. It articulates protest and dissent and simultaneously voices concerns of reform and redress.

Orality is a complex phenomenon which configures its own ways and means of expression and transmission. It is that great highway of information where an exciting intersection of ideas, forms and styles takes place at different levels, creating processes and dialogues with inter-linkages between form and content, genre and theme, visual and aural, local and regional, traditional and contemporary.

With the aim of bringing together the individual efforts of scholars in the field, sharing and exchange of ideas, methodologies and experiences, Sahitya Akademi and the Centre for Cultural and Creative Studies, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong organized a two-day Regional Seminar on 'Orality and Beyond : A North-East Indian Perspective' on 26 and 27 July, 2005. This volume comprises papers presented during the seminar. As editors of the

volume, we have taken the liberty of including our own contributions to the seminar, one a seminar paper, and the other, the key-note address.

To speak generally about the papers that were presented during the seminar, it would be honest to state that all were, in their own inimitable ways, concerned with the ideas of orality as the authors understand it, in the context of the traditions and communities they were writing about. In the present volume, we have tried to retain the basic thematic structure of the seminar and the papers are grouped accordingly.

1. Orality and Historical Reconstruction

Sylvanus Lamare's paper, entitled, 'Orality and Beyond: The Story of U Manik Raitong' seeks to offer an alternative source for the legend of U Manik Raitong. The story, both riveting and tragic, revolves around the adulterous relationship between an orphan boy, U Manik Raitong and the wife of the chief of the *Hima* or the traditional state. The fruit of this liaison was a boy-child and as a consequence, Manik Raitong was burnt alive in a pyre. Legends, it is well known, have been used effectively for historical reconstruction and the legend under study reveals how crucial the oral-literary interface is for such purposes.

Kynpham S. Nongkynrih's presentation details the genesis of the Khasi oral tradition and provides illuminating examples of the various narrative genres and how this vast repertoire is being employed by the Khasis.

Caroline R. Marak's paper is an impassioned plea for the preservation of the oral traditions. Citing examples from her own Garo community, she laments the fact that narration of tales, myths, chants relating to the agricultural calendar, funeral poetry and the singing of folk songs are fast disappearing even in villages. The paper also questions the feasibility of relying on electronic formats of documentation and probes the issue by discussing, at length, the erosion of the A. chik language.

2. Orality and the Tale Type

Folklore is describable not only in terms of the genres of which folkloristic data are examples, but also on the basis of identifiable and distinguishable types. The study of traditional tales paved the way for the first successful attempts to be made in isolating type sets and laid the foundation for the conceptualization of the telling of a traditional tale as a folkloristic datum, on the one hand, and as a version of a tale type on the other. Two papers, the first by Mrinal Medhi and the second by G. Badaiasuk Lyngdoh Nonglait and Rimika Lanong were devoted to developing tale type configurations. Mrinal Medhi's paper entitled 'Folktale, North-East India and a Tale-type Index', makes a case for the classification and typology of North-East folktales into tale type index following the model of classification given by Antti Aarne and taking into account some Assamese folktales. G. B. L. Nonglait and Remika Lanong co-authored a paper entitled 'Promises are meant to be Broken : An Oicotype Study of Two Tales.' The paper is an oicotype investigation of a Khasi and Angami tale respectively and the exercise has indeed lent a new dimension to the perception of orality vis-a-vis cross cultural studies.

3. Orality and Worldview

Insights of the worldview of communities have, since the earliest times, generated much interest among scholars and have, to some extent, provided the scholar with vital information about the community. Esther Syiem, in her paper entitled 'Orality Alive: Reconstructing the tale', tried to bring out first, the status of Khasi females, taking an example from *Ka Noh Ka Likai* tale. Aligning her argument with the myth of the *Dieng Iei* tree, which metaphorically accounts for man's first defilement of sacred space, she talks about man's alienation leading to his exile from a world of contentment and the abrogation of the bond with the tiger, his closest ally. The paper presented by (Sr.) Philomena Kharakor was entitled "Philosophy Behind Khasi Myths." Her paper provides an incisive reflection on a few myths and didactic stories associated with Khasi

beliefs. Badaplin War's paper was read by Wanda Shisha Rynjah, a research scholar in her absence. The paper was entitled 'Orality and Written Khasi Literature.' The paper does a study of the tradition of *Ka Longkur Longjait* or clan lineage as reflected in *Ka Tiew Larun*, a play written by the celebrated Khasi writer, S. J. Duncan. The paper, while analyzing the play, talks about how Khasi clans trace their lineage through the female member. R.P. Aphantaria's paper was entitled 'Tribal Oral Tradition of Origin and Migration of the Mishmis, Arunachal Pradesh.' In the paper, the author focuses on the origin and migration of the Mishmis as reflected in legends. R. L. Thanmawia presented a paper entitled 'The Mizo Values' (as reflected in oral traditions). In the paper, the scholar brings out the social values, qualities and belief of the Mizos as depicted in folksongs and folk narratives. The last paper in this group was presented by Julius L.R. Marak entitled 'Development of Garo Folk Music'. The paper is a summary of folk music and musical instrument of the Garos and the different occasions in which they are used. The paper is also an attempt in trying to systematize certain Garo sung utterances and genres.

4. Orality in (Con)text

The papers grouped under this heading, try to investigate the oral-written dichotomy in the context of the multi-ethnic culture of North-East India. Anil Boro, while conceding that early folklore scholarship recognized the dichotomy between orality and the written as two distinct (and sometimes opposing entities), underlined the inherent relationship between the two traditions. His paper entitled 'Orality and Literacy: Towards an Understanding of Contemporary Problems in Oral Traditional poetics in North-East', discusses the privilege of speech over writing, referring to the existence of the oral-written continuums in contemporary studies. The writer also mentions how and when the oral tradition of North-East, like tales, songs and proverbs have been found in printed form and how they played a role in expanding the oral tradition. Temsula Ao's paper begins with a series of valid questions about oral literature. The discursive work refers to native American poetry, African orature

and the writer also samples some poems (including her own) written by our North-Eastern poets to probe the texture of orality as it is understood as an identity marker, a creative metaphor and as a developmental paradigm. The paper 'Oral Tradition in Transition: The Koireng example', by a research scholar, T. Neishoning Koireng, talks about perception of story telling in the microscopic Koireng society and how the members of the community variously interpret the existing oral literature. P. Jhingan's paper entitled, 'A Semiotic Study of Ka *Shad Tyngkoh* of the Khasis' dwelt at length on the structural analysis of Ka *Shad Tyngkoh*, a performance which is pivotal in the superstructure of the Nongkrem festival. Koulie, a Tenyimia scholar presented a paper entitled 'Tenyimia Folklore and Verse: A Quest for Beyond'. The paper focuses on the folklore and verses of the Tenyimia (Angami). The writer gave examples of Tenyimia folklore from popular legends and made comparisons between folk and literary poetry. 'Oral Frames of References: Khasi Myth Chanting and Perspective of Definition', a paper presented by Desmond L. Kharmawphlang explores the definition of myth taking into account the parameters of form, content, function and context, outlined by a visual presentation of a myth chanting.

As editors, it gives us pleasure to present you a Biate folktale as a special supplement. The tale, 'Two Sisters', was collected by T. K. Darnei from Mualsei, a remote village tucked away in a corner of Jaintia Hills District of the state of Meghalaya. Shri Darnei is an indefatigable social worker who has striven hard for his community, the little known Biates, in the areas of education, health care and welfare.

We place on record our deep appreciation, first of all, to all the contributors for their generosity with their advice and time. We are thankful to the Sahitya Akademi for readily agreeing to publish the seminar papers in the conviction that they will represent a strong book. We owe a debt of gratitude to Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay, Regional Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, Kolkata and the Akademi office for all the assistance rendered during the shaping of the book. Two organizations, the Indian Council for Social Science Research, NERC, Shillong and North East Zone Cultural Centre, Dimapur have been

pivotal in helping us get the Seminar on 'Orality and Beyond' together and for that we are indebted to both. Therefore, the labours of this book is as much theirs as ours. The supporting staffs of the Centre for Cultural and Creative Studies, NEHU, Shillong, have displayed exemplary devotion to work throughout the Seminar and also in the phase when pages of this book began their first few tentative steps. Shri Wallambor Nongrum and Shri Fabian Dkhar worked long hours typing the manuscript. To both of them a big *Khublei*.

Soumen Sen

Shillong, April 2006

Desmond L Kharmawphlang

A Semiotic Study of Ka *Shad Tyngkoh* of the Khasis

Prabodh Jhingan

All that is on the stage is a sign- Jiri Veltrusky (Prague School)

The World is a stage- William Shakespeare

Different scholars look at 'orality and beyond' in a different manner. One studies folk discourse of the oral tradition and also of the great traditions of the epics, poetry and drama. However, there is also a beyond. One has to consider that folk discourse is not limited to folk literatures and oral tradition. It is to be extended to the realm of performance. There is a tradition of folk dance forms, folk theatre, drumbeats, music and above all the hidden choreography in each form. We all know that oral traditions in Indian life and culture are undergoing a transformation. However change in the non-verbal forms is almost negligible. Scholars have mostly focused on the written and the oral text. There is little work in the field of the performance text. On the surface it is an ever-changing phenomena from one performance to another. But at the level of the deep structure it has a permanence that could have a time frame of at least a thousand years. Areas of study like choreography, proxemics, gesture study, tonal quality of performance is more as a footnote to the text studies as mentioned above. In fact experts who study the written text treat the experts of the oral text in the same way as they (the experts of the oral text) treat the one who study the non verbal communication in a performance. In academics all could live and stay together but it does not really happen.

Not that these kinds of studies have not been undertaken elsewhere in the world. In the Indian context, folkloristics has come of age. However it is limited at best to the literature and the oral tradition. It is quite clear that a new poetics is required. Those who look at it as a semiotics of performance have undertaken it.

Earlier scholars have studied performance from different point of view. Two anthropologist Victor Turner & Richard Schechner thought in terms of ritual and theatre. Then we have experimentalist in theatre like Grotowski , Peter Brook and Richard Schechner. There is again another set of people who had been interested in studying theatre in performance, Prague School and the semiotist. They used performance as an object of study. Mention can be made of people like Keir Elam, Paul Buissac, Andrei Helbo, Ann Ubersfeld and Patrie Pavis. It can easily be seen that they work in an interdisciplinary area of work. From Indian scholarship we can include Kapila Vatsayan and Kapil Kapoor who looked at performance from point of view of the Sanskrit tradition¹.

For the purpose of this paper we chose Victor Turner. Richard Schēchner, Keir flam, Kapila Vatsayan & Kapil Kapoor.

Turner talks of how ‘Postmodern theory would see in the very flaws hesitations, personal factors, incomplete, elliptical, context-dependent, situational components of performance, clues to the very nature of human process itself, and would also perceive genuine novelty, ...What was once considered contaminated promiscuous, impure is becoming the focus of postmodern analytical attention.’ (Turner 1986b: 77)

For Turner ‘If man is a sapient animal, a toolmaking animal, a self-making animal, a symbol-using animal, he is, no less a performing animala circus animal may be a performing animal, but in the sense that man is a self-performing animal his performances are, in a way, reflexive, in performing he reveals himself to himself’ (Turner 1986b:81).

Talking of structure Turner feels ‘Structure is always ancillary to, dependent on, secreted from process. And performance, particularly dramatic performances, are manifestations par excellence of human social process.’(Turner 1986b:83)

For Turner ‘Performances are never amorphous or open-ended, they have diachronic structure, a beginning, a sequence of overlapping but isolable phases, and an end. But their structure is not that of an

abstract system: it is generated out of the dialectical oppositions of processes and of levels of process. In the modern consciousness, cognition, idea, rationality were paramount. In the postmodern turn, cognition is not dethroned but rather takes its place on an equal footing with volition and affect. The revival of what has been termed psychological anthropology.' (Turner 1986b: 73-74)

We then turn towards Richard Schechner . For him 'In all entertainment there is some efficacy and in all ritual there is some theatre', (Schechner 1983: 151)

Regarding theatre and performance Schechner says 'theatre is actually an attitude on the part of the spectator- to set up a chair in the street and to watch what happens is to transform the streets into a theatre', (Schechner 1983: 163) and 'The performance is itself the text.' (Schechner 1983: 175),

Schechner has compared the Western approach to a ritual and performance to the Indian approach, by comparing the Turner's category of Liminal (an authentic ritual event) and liminoid (a voluntary performative event) with the Hindu concept of Lila and Mela. 'There is a saying in India: Every lila (performance) is surrounded by a mela (fair and market),' (Schechner 1983: 180)

Discussing about illusion and reality, 'acting is playful illusion'. In fact he finds that, 'in Asia the masks is often credited with being closer to the way things are in the world than the face behind the mask can be : acting becomes not a species of lying but a means to the truth,' (Schechner 1983: 206)

Schechner compared a field worker with a performance director 'My restatement of this process as it applies to the field worker is: The stripping away of his own culture-habits-a brutal separation that is the deepest struggle of fieldwork, which is never completed, learning to see with the native eye. The field worker always lives in between. So does the director who is part of the audience to the performers and part of the performers to the audience. Field workers and theatre directors are restorers of behavior. The time is on us when field workers, like directors, produce for us not only versions of faraway cultures but performative works of our own multiple

actualities. ...Theatre workers, field workers: we are one with the clowns and jugglers, the double agents and dissimulators, the con men and shamans.' (Schechner 1983: 231)

Keir Elam is one person who has gone into every aspect of theatre as a performing art. According to him 'In the theatre the basis icon is the body and voice of the actor' (Elam: 21-22)

He tries to define what a semiotist of theatrical performance should do. He felt that such a person 'will be equally concerned with modes of signification and with the resulting acts of communication and will wish to provide a model that accounts for both.'

Biarn talks of the Prague school scholarship on semiotics of performing art. They were successful in forming a typology of performing art. According to him it was Tadeusz Kowzan who formed a typology of thirteen systems. They are listed as language, tone, facial mime, gesture, movement, make-up, hairstyle, costume, props, decor, lighting, music and sound effects (including noise off).

This brings us to the question of competence of the audience to appreciate a performance. The fact of the matter is that a performance can be enjoyed or aesthetically appreciated only if the audience is of the same level as the performers are. Natya Shastra assumes that for enjoying a theatrical performance the spectators should be 'Sahradaya'. Meaning thereby that the audience should be competent to appreciate the performance. This is the condition laid down by the ancient Indian tradition. Similarly in Linguistics Noam Chomsky talked about 'Linguistic competence' and Keir Elam talks of a 'theatrical competence'.

This is set in the audience as 'Transactional conventions are sufficiently powerful to ensure that there is no genuine ambiguity concerning the frame (i.e. everyone in the theatre knows more or less what is going on)' (Elam: 88-89). To continue 'An aesthetics of theatrical reception, a genuine phenomenology of audience competence founded on empirical research- of the kind being conducted on readers- is an indispensable, though so far neglected. component of any proposed theatrical poetics.' (Elam: 94)

Elam further theorizes '... The performance text becomes, in this

view, a macro-sign, its meaning constituted by its total effect. This approach has the advantages of emphasizing the subordination of all contributor elements to an unified textual whole and of giving due weight to the audience as the ultimate maker of its own meanings' (Elam: 7)

Turning towards the Indian scholars we find that Kapila Vatsayan does not agree with the *desi* and *margi* theory. She finds a common pattern of performing arts across the Indian continent. For her there is no dichotomy between classical dances and the folk and tribal dances. It is she who found the sign of a swastik in the choreography of the Zeliang Nagas.

For her 'the terms of folk and classical though are not simple categories representing undevelopment and development rural and urban, pre-industrialized and industrialized social order or a capturing of moments of antiquity in a fossilized state on two levels. The terms, though inadequate signify many complex cultural processes. The folk forms are constantly changing and transforming themselves. They are, therefore, not mere vestiges of primitive societies, of groups, of underdeveloped minorities, subsisting in a large urban civilization as in the West. It is also true that what we see as tribal art has a borrowing from the so-called main stream tradition. In fact borrowing has occurred both ways. The highly stylized forms of today have direct correlation with what would be called as folk or tribal dance.' (Vatsayan).

Vatsayan links the Tribal with the Vedic 'The many forms of rituals, even magic and trance dances known to Asia and India, and today witnessed only on the context of tribal and folk dancing, can be traced back to the rites and rituals of the Yajur Veda. In hymn X.94, there is a vivid description of a community dance. With the sisters they have danced, embraced by them, reading of the hymn tells us of a circle, and of couples who moved in the circle to a humming sound. *Couples dancing in circles is popular in all parts of India, even today*² while the humming sound reminds us of the Omkaras of Naga dancing, the couple formations and circular pattern recall the innumerable types of Rasa dances, seen practically everywhere'

(Vatsayan)

In the Indian tradition Prof. Kapoor's contribution to Sanskrit poetics is incomparable. He demarcates different ways of looking across the Western and the Indian culture.

'Consider next the questions of creativity, creative process and the sources of creativity. In the Western tradition, Plato discusses the carpenter as the paradigm artist. A whole worldview informs this choice. The carpenter is a geometrician- he quantifies, measures, segments and rearranges the "reality" (wood in his case). He is the master, the "maker." In Indian thought, the potter *kumbhakara*, is the paradigm artist.'

The potter does not segment or rearrange his material- he puts his hands on the lump of clay and the form in his mind flows through his fingers and becomes one with the form that inheres in the clay. The form is there in the clay and the potter makes it manifest, makes *avyakta*, *vyakta*, gives *rupa* to *dravya*. The potter sees what is not perceptible and images its essence, the *bhava*. The artist/craftsman is not a creator- he is a *sadhaka*, a worshipper, a *yogi*, an ascetic, a *bhakta*, a devotee full of love and reverence for the object of representation. In this sense, the aesthetic experience in India is a sacred experience.' (Kapoor:2002)

To conclude a post-structuralist study of a performance would go for the particular performance of the day for its analysis. One has to look at the stage and assume that everything on the stage is a sign. The role of audience is the most important one. The Sanskrit category of 'sahriday' is the key for enjoying the performance.

Ka *Shad Tyngkoh* of the Khasis

A structural analysis of the Khasi dance *Ka Shad Tyngkoh* is attempted in this paper. *Shad Tyngkoh* is one of the dance which is danced during the Nongkrem festival, at Smet near Shillong. We all are aware of the importance of the Nongkrem dance and its importance to the culture of the Khasis. Elsewhere this festival and the Nongkrem dance has been discussed in detail.³ We give below

the details of *Ka Shad Tyngkoh* :

Ka Shad Tyngkoh

Place : Main hall- in presence of *Rishot blei* ' holy pillar'

Time : towards early morning but before sun break

This is a dance which is danced in a pair in front of *Rishot blei*. This follows the fish distribution ceremony. The pairs are in the following manner. This data is from the dance during 1988:

1. Head Priest and Head Drummer

2. Nongbrih and Head drummer/another mantri

3. Mawlei and Marehshan

4. Nongkynrih & lawai

5. Nongkseh and Nong unlong

6. Head drummer and junior drummer

7. Syiem and Lyngskor. (In case lyngskor is not present then lyngdoh/mantri dances)

8. Deputy syiem/one from syiem family and a mantri/lyngdoh/son of a former syiem/cousin of syiem

The dance order during 1990 was as follows:

During each dance- one male drum, a padiah, a tangmuri and cymbals are played.

However when the Syiem dances only the female drum is played. This relates to the matrilineage social structure of the Khasis.

The lyngdoh of Nongkrem is afraid of dancing as there is some dispute-*Thandlieh-Thaniong*. It is a dispute of 6th clan. They have been banned in religious ceremony. Of course administrative duties of Nongkrem can take place. This is an ancient dispute. This happened when the syiemship separated from Hima syiemship.

The dance is interesting and unique to the Khasi society. Before dancing the pairs bow with folded hands to *Rishot blei* and then to the *Syiem*. Afterwards each dancer hops on alternate legs and moves towards the *Rishot blei*. This is done very slowly. Drumbeats are *Sing shad tyngkoh*. Then the two cross over and return to the beginning. Again they cross over and go towards *Rishot blei* and cross to the other side. All the time the slow dance continues. Finally after some time they reach the hearth and stop. The next pair takes over. What is

of interest to note is that the pattern of foot movement is sinuous. The dance is slow. With the *Rishot blei* in the centre and the sinuous movement towards it and back is a motif which is commonly observed in the Pan Asian designs. Another aspect, which is not clear to this scholar, is that the current *Soh blei* 'head priest' always wears a tie and a suit at least for this dance.

Only when the Syiem dances the drum changes. Two men stand near the *Rishot blei* with torch and fire. Female drum is played. This as said earlier is indication of Khasi being a matrilineal society. The king has both the roles. Male drums are played when there is a council meeting. Councils comprising of the *Syiem, myntris, basans and bakhraws* only. The council symbolizes the political authority of the members.

There is a close relationship between the state and religious aspect of the Khasi society.

Though I was allowed by the Syiem to observe the ritual and the dance, the syiem in a conversation with me (November 11, 1988) felt that maybe it was not wise to allow outsiders to watch the ceremony. I had agreed with him. I had not liked a Christian priest who had entered our house during a ritual in my family. Moreover the mystic levels of a religion and a dance associated needs the only one who is of the same faith. One should not allow the outsider and certainly not the anthropologist.

Similarly at some time during the past when electric bulb was brought to the *ling sad* the people vehemently opposed it. It was then removed. The same situation has been dealt in a similar manner in some of the Hindu temples. What is not realised is that darkness creates its own sensuality when the deity is seen through light of burning lamps.

A semiotic study

This dance normally follows a ritual. Turner would probably look at the dance along with the ritual. As the ritual is another performance we shall have to study this dance independently. Again elsewhere³ I have found a sinuous movement in this dance's choreography. This is similar to the movement of individual girls who dance *Ka shad kynthei*

on the 4th day of the festival. This follows a similar method used by Kapila Vatsayan to study the dance of the Zeliang Nagas. She has found the swastika in the choreography of their dance, which in turn she links it to the vedic period.

However this study looks at the dance of an individual drummer⁴ on the day. The way he danced was in the same manner as the other danced but it was different. It was different because he moved his hips in a manner, which was sexual. Not in a blunt bump and grind manner of the bollywood cinema but sexual certainly. What is more important is laughter emanated from the audience. It was a kind of enjoyment of a new form without realizing that it was sexual in nature. All laughed. Children, women and then men laughed guardedly. There was no expression from the Royalty. I looked for the man in the coming years but he did not come. Also in the subsequent years the dance followed the old classical method, which must have come down during ages. It is clear that dance movements either seen in movies or on the TV influenced him. It could also have come from his exposure to the Republic day and festival of India visits. However the last part is a conjecture. Was it a case of finding a new form on one's own creativity? However this question is fraught with all kinds of danger. One could ask whether a drummer who for ages has been practicing in the same way, dared to change the grammar of this dance. It can be answered in both ways. However to confirm, one needs an interview which alas could not take place.

It is also true that this performance could be taken as an exception to the rule. But post structuralism would not accept it. The transitory is more important than the traditional regular performance. It forces us to look at the plurality of meaning in the performance text. The important part is that the audience laughed. It laughed with gusto. This aspect I have never seen in the Nongkrem performances⁵. This laughter makes the audience as 'sahraday' in their aesthetic appreciation. In this analysis we have to understand that the entire setting of the dance is full of signs. There is a history of this performance. This is evident in the choice of actors or the political people. Then the position of *Rishot blei*. The sensuousness of the entire hall with its dim light.

And what about the drum beats. We have already discussed about the choreography of the dance. One can also look at the subtle and slow hand movements. And the way the two actors cross each other. In fact in the Keir Elam manner there is a density of signs. Above all we must be clear that the entire episode is a performance and every actor knows it. It is also performed in what Richard Schechner would call as the environment theatre. Inside the hall is the 'lila' and when the fishes are distributed amongst the audience then it is a 'mela'.

So one thing is very clear that there are multiple possibilities in this performance. For understanding it we have to develop new tools of our trade. One way could be blending of disciplines like anthropology and performing artist.

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Endnotes :

1. Birendranath Datta has worked extensively on folk performing art of the North-East part of India

2. Emphasis is mine.

3 Presented a paper: 'Nongkrem Dance- Some Patterns' in a Seminar-Cum Exhibition on the 'Timeless Tribal Art and Culture of North-East India', organised jointly by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi and Arunachal Pradesh University, 19-21 November 1995.

4. Ph. D. thesis 'Information transfer in a bi-cultural situation using theatre as a system' as submitted and approved by the Centre of Linguistics and English, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.' I have looked in my field notes and tried to find his name. I have not been able to find out. But I have written in my notes and hope to rectify this lacuna.

5. I have started auditing the Nongkrem festival since 1984.