

REPORT ON
DOCUMENTATION OF LIFE AND WORKS OF
PROMINENT TRIBAL PERSONALITIES

CONDUCTED BY
ASSAM INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH FOR TRIBALS AND
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NARAPATI BASUMATARI

Early Life

He is regarded as the greatest social reformer of the Bodos from South Goalpara. He was born at the time when the Bodo community was passing through a most difficult situation. Narapati Basumatari was born at Khara Lalpara village near Dudhnoi in 1866. His father was Nablasing Basumatari and mother was Jangkhri Basumatari.

Education

He completed his lower primary school from his village Primary School. He got enrolment in M.V. School but could not continue due the urgent call of the public for agitation against the British rule. He actively joined in the reformation movement of the Bodo community. He married Tileswari Basumatary of Tilapara village. He was blessed with six children who were well established.

His contribution to society

He formed the “Howraghat Bodo Students Union” in 1912 and started reformed movement for Bodo society which was passing through a critical stage of religious and ethnic identity. He organised many social meetings and pointed out the glorious past of the Bodos. To consolidate the social binding of the Bodo society he compiled a book on Bodo social laws which was known as “ *Boroni Fisa Rrw Aiyen*” and printed in 1915. He later helped Satis Chandra Basumatary, Modaram Brahma and Rupnath Brahma in establishment of ABSU in 1919.

His role as writer

He was also a writer and written many books for school children on mathematics named “*Galai Khannaai*” in 1922. He also wrote a book on traditional medicine named “*Gotho Gidid Jarigra Kitap*” in 1925. He was also traditional eye specialist and treated any eye problem. He prepared medicine for treatment of eye and brand of his medicine was known as” *Bathou Marka Boro Bunti*” He also learned the art of weaving and imparted training to the young boys and girls and tried to bring a revolution in Bodo society.

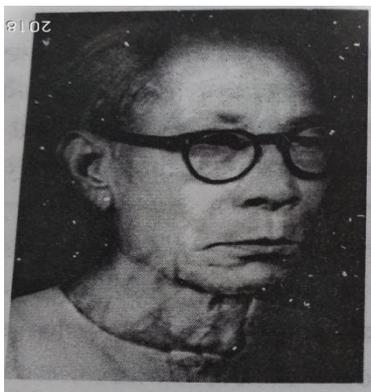
Narapati Basumatari was influenced by the preaching of Brahma religion (dharma) of Gurudeb Kalicharan Brahma and took active part in preaching Brahma religion in Sothern part of Goalpara district 1930. He also became an active patroniser in establishment of Dinanath Shanti Ashram with the help of others at Loreng hill of Daranggiri in 1940. This

was treated as the centre of Brahma religion in South Goalpara. He was a member of Bodo Mahasanmilan and joined in great event held in 1929 at Roumari of Bongaigaon.

His role as freedom fighter

Narapati Basumatari actively joined in the freedom movement of India. He was public secretary of the Congress Party of Dudhnoi and he became close associate of Gopinath Bordoloi. He participated in non-cooperation movement, Civil Disobedience movement and Quit India movement of 1942. He was arrested by the British when he was leading a public mob in protest of land tax imposed on the farmer and he was sent to jail for three months when he was 75 years old. He was again sent to Guwahati jail for one year where he met his son Nikunja Bihari Basumatari who was already in jail but Narapati Basumatari was released after completion of nine months due to ill health. After release from jail he became physically too weak and breathed his last in 1946.

SITANATH BRAHMA CHOUDHURY



Early Life

Sitanath Brahma Choudhury was born in 8th October of 1908 at a time when Bodo community was under the shadow of complete darkness. It was the time when Bodo people were suffered by social prejudices, doubts. He was born at a village Bhalukmari near Dotma of Kokrajhar district. His father was Monbaru and mother was Lausi (Lakhi). Sitanath Brahma Choudhury had two brothers and he was the youngest one. His father had run a timber business which gave them a sound economic support. Monbaru was very active and enlightened personality of that area where there was no educational and other civic amenities were available. His father was very inquisitive in nature and tried imbibe knowledge of varied nature. He attempted to bring a change in his locality by introducing new ideas of social reformation. He died in 1927, when Sitanath Brahma Choudhury was 19 years old.

His father Monbaru accepted the faith of Brahma religion preached by Kalicharan Brahma. The people who accepted 'Brahma' religion could write the surname 'Brahma' after their names. So, Monbaru used to write the title Brahma after his name. Moreover he was the owner of vast areas of land and he wrote Brahma Choudhury after his name as 'Choudhury' was used to mean the landlord.

Education

During Brahma Choudhury's time there was no primary school at Datma. So his father opened a school at his own house and appointed a teacher named Sadananda who was hailed from Goalpara. Sitanath Brahma Choudhury started his primary education in his father's school. But this school was closed down within a short span of time due to non availability of students, because the local people did not encourage education to their children and the tribal people of that locality did not allow their children to get enrolment in school. They were completely ignorant about the meaning and value of education. So, Sitanath Brahma Choudhury was compelled to search for another school in around his locality. He later had to rush to Ghilaguri primary school which was opened in the same year. After

completion of his primary education he was admitted in Puthimari M.V. School. In 1923 he passed the M.V. Examination obtaining Merit Scholarship. Thereafter, he went to Dhubri for higher education. He was very much inspired by his eldest brother Sobharam Brahma, who was first I.A. passed Bodo young gentleman. Both of the brothers Sobharam Brahma and Sitanath Brahma Choudhury had studied together in Dhubri but Sobharam Brahma got education in Bengali medium and Brahma Choudhury opted Assamese medium. During his student life he was very much influenced by the soft touched of nature and its beautiful creatures. He attempted picked up the beauty of nature by his soft expression in the form of poems. He was enchanted by the beautiful junk of the river Longa and its petals floating on it. This mystic feeling compelled him to write poems during his student life. He wrote a poetry book 'Kamal Kali' what was supposed to be published by his eldest brother Sobharam Brahma. Unfortunately, Sobharam Brahma died in 1924 at the age of thirty one. His sudden death slowed down their business field and a depression occurred in the family which hampered Brahma Choudhury's pursuit of education. It gave him tremendous pain and deactivated him from all sorts of his works. He felt helpless and became aimless. Nevertheless, his middle brother Nibaran Brahma Choudhury came forward for taking care of him who took all pains and necessary cares for Sitanath Brahma Choudhury. Further he helped Sitanath Brahma Choudhury in publication of his poetry book 'Kamal Kali'. Being a youth of strong determination and high ambition he did not stop his momentum of study. Therefore, he came out for study by staying with his relative cousin brother Dr. Jinaram Narzari who used to stay at Tezpur during that time. Tezpur was rocked by the impact of freedom movement of India, when came to Tezpur with an aim to proceed his further study. He was admitted at Tezpur High School. In Tezpur he came into contact with many good personalities what helped him a lot in making his challenge of life more strong. He was fortunate enough to meet here Kala Guru Bishnu Prasad Rabha with whom he developed very close relation.

His family life

He married Kala Guru's cousin sister Kamala Rabha daughter of Gopal Chandra Rabha, when he was a high school student. Unfortunately Kamala Rabha died suddenly after three months of their married life. In the mean time Dr. Jinaram Narzari was transferred to Sibsagar and in this situation Sitanath Brahma Choudhury compelled to rush with Dr. Narzari and began to stay at Sibsagar. At this time he was student of class X. He started his education at Sibsagar with deep sense of responsibility. Again in a very short span of time Dr. Narzari had to transfer to another place leaving him at Sisagar. And Brahma Choudhury began to stay with Dr. Dhabaram Mech for a short period of time who was the brother-in-law of Kala Guru

Bishnu Prasad Rabha. Because Dr. Dabharam Mech also got transferred to an another place on account of his government duty as doctor. This time Brahma Choudhury was compelled to stay at hostel under such circumstances.

In 1930 he passed the Matriculation from Sibsagar securing first division. In 1933 he passed I.A. Examination and 1936 he passed B.A. Examination from the Cotton College of Guwahati.

His works and contribution to literature

Brahma Choudhury was originally a man of literature and that is the reason, when he got opportunity he began to write poems, stories and other such writing which gave him tremendous pleasure. He was very much influenced by the beauty of nature and the unorganised situation of the human society where he was an indispensable part. He had burning thirst of knowledge. Therefore, as soon as he completed his education up to minimum level i.e. graduation he fully engaged in social works. Since 1939 he remained himself engaged in social works and confined himself in Bongaigaon. He settled in Bongaigaon and thereafter he married Amababati Brahma Choudhury, the daughter of Gohin Chandra Brahma of Dhaligaon in 1939. During this time he met some important personalities like Rupnath Brahma and Satish Chandra Basumatary by whom he was inspired to a considerable extent. On 8th March 1939 he established Birjhora High School. In 1946 Sitanath Brahma Choudhury became the Vice-Chairman of Dhubri Local Board and very next year he also became a member of School Board. In 1964 he established Bongaigaon College. Being the Vice-Chairman of Dhubri Local Board, he got opportunity to visit the interior and isolated villages. He observed the lack of basic facilities like education, roads, hospital etc in those areas. Therefore, he established many schools, developed road communication, medical facilities etc. He received encouraging responses from the Minister of those times. Even the then Finance Minister Bishnuram Medhi had also visited those isolated areas at his request and extended desired support to him. Thus he establish his good will among the down trodden section of people of those areas irrespective of caste and creed. He later re-started his village primary school what was first opened by his father Monbaru Brahma and closed down due to non availability of students of that time.

Sitanath Brahma Choudhury was a man of true work. He was himself an art of social work. His work, consistency and dedication to people gave him a strong platform. He became the unique leader for all.

His socio-political life

In 1952 he became the Member of Parliament from Goalpara Garo-Hill Constituency. He kept close touch with the President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Vice President Dr. Radha Krishnan and the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. By dint of his progressive thought he became an acceptable tribal personality among the Indian intelligentsia. He got many chances to represent India in many National and International Platform. As a member of parliament (M.P.) he got an opportunity to visit Nepal and Bhutan. He visited some important Bodo dominated areas in Nepal like Mahirang, Birgang and had diplomatic discussion with them in connection with their problems. During his time the West Bengal Government tried to include the then Goalpara district into West Bengal as a part of their state under the wave of State Reorganisation Movement. He vehemently opposed this move and he was firm to keep the district within the state of Assam. In this state of hue and cry he took the help of Late Sarat Chandra Singha. Both the leaders took tremendous pain and strongly protest the move and staged dharna and organised mass movement within the state and as a result of their strong protest and mass movement the Goalpara district remained with Assam.

As it stated earlier that Brahma Choudhury was a man of literature and therefore whenever he got scope he remained himself engaged in writings of various articles, poems, stories etc. In 1940 he wrote one valuable essay known as “Gaon Sangathan” for which he rewarded by the Government of Assam. Moreover, he also wrote many Assamese poems on love and beauty of nature which were published in different times. Some of such books on poems were “Kamal Kali” published in 1925, “Chakulo” (1929), “Abeg” 1929, and “Fuleswari Daimari” what was published in 1967.

Nevertheless, he was not confined only in Assamese writings. He also gave equal stress in writing Bodo poems. His poetic outcome in Bodo language were “Chimangni Chanai” and “Kasmir Hadatni Belshri” which were widely accepted and read by the Bodo poem lovers. One of his Bodo poem named Ruati” was published in Bongaigaon College Magazine. Moreover, some other poems written in Bodo language was published in Bodo Magazine “The Bihar”. Later due to lack of appropriate care some of his important writings were lost.

Honour

He was one of the first Bodo gentleman and literature, politician, social worker having versatile approach in pluralistic field who was honoured by giving prestigious Presidential position in great and prestigious literary organisation the Assam Sahitya Sabha for two consecutive terms in 1981 and then in 1982. His first session of Sabha was held at Tinsukia and next session was held at Diphu. It ought to note here that before becoming the President

of Assam Sahitya Sabha, it was ironic that in 1956, he happened to be that personality who inaugurated the open meeting of Assam Sahitya Sabha which was held at Dhubri. He was man of literature and always advocated for peace rather than violence. He wanted to bring a great social reform, social awareness through literature. He was very transparent and clean in his speech due to which he was widely admired by all irrespective of caste, creed. He proved himself as a popular personality among all sections of people.

In later part of his life he was involved in the study of Astrology and it became his main hobby. He formed an Astrological Club where he practiced Astrology along with his friends. It was the centre for study of Astrology and every evening he along with his friends gathered here for Astrological study. He studied the Horoscope of the great personalities of the world.

He died on 23rd November in 1982 at the age seventy four when he was an active President of Assam Sahitya Sabha of Diphu session. He left behind him three sons and five daughters along with a host of grand children and numbers of admirers and well wishers.

RUPNATH BRAHMA

Early Life

Rupnath Brahma was an eminent personality among the Bodos. He may be termed as the pioneer of Bodo community. He was born on 15th June of 1902 at Owabari village of Kokrajhar district. His father was Dhajendra Nath Narzari and Khadaimaisree was his mother. His father was a prominent business man who liked to work for the welfare of his society. He spent most of his time in social works. Rupnath Brahma lost his mother when he was 8 months old. He was then taken care of by his step mother Santasree. Santasree was very wise and sincere. She took extreme care of Rupnath Brahma like his deceased mother. She never left him alone. She treated him as her own son. That is why she did not give birth another child of her own.

Education

He started his primary education at Kokrajhar. During this Kokrajhar was a very small place with no civic amenities. Road communication was too poor and the entire area was surrounded by jungles and big trees. The only accessible road communication was rail. There was a small railway station at Kokrajhar and this was the main centre of small business and people's gathering. Other than station there was not a single place of human habitation in around the station. There was only a primary school at Kokrajhar where Rupnath Brahma was admitted.

Rupnath Brahma passed primary school in 1913 obtaining merit scholarship. Thereafter he left for higher studies to Dhubri in 1914, because there was no other educational institute in around Kokrajhar or its adjacent areas. He along with some other students from Dhubri and Koch Behar studied in that school. He successfully passed his Matriculation Examination in 1920-21 securing good marks and awarded him merit scholarship. Soon after his Matriculation result he left for Guwahati got admitted in Cotton College. He was a brilliant student and can earn any language and art of talking very easily. He could speak English, Bengali, Boro, Sanskrit and Assamese language very fluently. He earned the art of organising meetings, symposiums, talks among the students and gained good popularity.

His family life

Rupnath Brahma married from a Jamindar family. His father-in-law Katimal Daimary was a very rich man of Dhoulaguri village of Parbat Jowra having huge bighas of cultivable land and other non-removable properties. He was famous for his social activities. He donated his lands and other assets for the welfare of the Boro society. Damayanti Daimary was Katimal Daimary's daughter who got married with Rupnath Brahma. She was one of the four daughters of Katimal Daimary who was well known among the Bodos of that time because of her education. She was one and only young girls who passed the M.E. Examination from the region during that period.

Rupnath Brahma was brilliant students of Arts who used to write articles, poems on sensitive issues of the people and societies what he had overcome during his early life. In 1925 he passed B.A. Examination from Cotton College. He went to Calcutta to study M.A. and Law. He was very unfortunate during that year because he was severely suffered from disease due to which he could not appear the M.A. Examination. Fortunately he somehow appeared Law Examination and successfully cleared the examination and he became the first B.A. B.L. among the Bodos of Assam.

From his student life he was very much influenced by the principle of Kalicharan Brahma and some other dignitaries like Satis Chandra Basumatari with whom he kept close touch in his later life. He undertook many social welfare activities among the Bodos and other backward communities. Of course it was his inherent nature and he enjoyed a lot by helping the poor and needy people of his areas.

His works and contribution to society

After completion of his Law, he started practicing Law at Dhubri Court but he did not like this profession and left it. He later got elected as member of the Local Board of Dhubri. He dedicated himself for the betterment of the life of the Bodo community who were under distress situation. He observed his society, people from close circuit and felt pathetic by seeing the unorganised socio-cultural, economic life of his community members. In 1936, he with the help of Bhimbar Deori he formed the Assam Tribal League so that he can raise the problems of the tribal people of Assam in a proper way. In this way he began to motivate by the then political system. He thought that the problems and issues of the tribal people could be possible to deal with the political dialog with the Government. Therefore he arranged numbers of meeting, discussions in different areas of Assam to sensitise the tribal people in respect of their problems and rights. In this way he became a popular tribal leader. In 1937 he joined into politics and fortunately in the same year he became the member of Assam

Assembly without contest. He became the first tribal member in Assam Assembly. He was able to draw the attention of other politician of that time. In 1938, he became the Minister in Lok Priya Gopinath Bordoloi Cabinet. He was an active leader and politician that impressed everyone in the Cabinet. Probably it was his goodness that made him an unanimous leader among the tribal communities of Assam. He thus continued his bold position as Minister till 1967. He exerted utmost pressure on Government to introduce Assamese Medium in the educational institutes of Dhubri. Because at that time Bengali was the medium of education in undivided Goalpara district. He took the help of Kalicharan Brahma and Sarat Goswami who were technical enough in this process.

Rupnath Brahma was man varied nature and qualities. He liked hunting and fishing and therefore, when he got a little bit free time he immediately rushed for hunting in the nearby forest. He was a very honest man and lived a very simple life. He liked to serve the people with a motto to grow a good humanity. He enjoyed village life rather than so called artificial and modern urban life. He got many golden opportunities to serve the poor and backward people of Assam by being the Member of Advisory Committee of the Minority Sub-Community and the Tribal Sub-Committee. He demanded certain important facilities to the Central Government which may serve and protect the interest of the poor, needy, backward classes and the tribal people.

He visited his own village very frequently along with his family and tried to enjoy the beauty of village. He tried to learn the grievances, problems and other burning issues of the rural people and further he made plan to solve their problems. He loved the folk songs, dances of his community. He used to enjoy Bodo songs in his normal way of life. It was merely for his bold effort that the Bagrumba dance form was first shown in the Republic Day Ceremony in Delhi. It attracted the mind of the other Indian citizen to this particular community and their culture. He was appreciated by all and got a special recognition in his political platform.

He liked to study biography of great personalities, religious preachers and pious man. He studied the life history of Bhagawan Buddha, Hazarat Mohhamad, Jesus Christ and influenced by their religious ideology. He studied Gita and attempted to employ some of the philosophies in his practical life. In 1959 his wife Damayanti died what made him too lonely. He married Sarmamayee for the second time. She was an educated lady served as teacher in her later part of life.

The 23rd January 1968, was very dark day for the Bodo Community as well as for the state's citizen, because this iron man took his last breadth at the age of 66 years. During this

day he was delivering lecture in a meeting held at Gambari Bil at Kokrajhar. As soon as finished his nice lecture he abruptly fell down and became senseless. He was rushed to Hospital located at Kokrajhar what was actually established by him during his tenure as a Minister. Doctor declared him dead due to heart attack. Thus we lost an active dedicated terrific tribal personality.

GANGACHARAN PATGIRI

Early Life

Gangacharan Patgiri was one of the most serious and dedicated Bodo personality of Goalpara district. He had tremendous contribution in Bodo society and Indian freedom movement. But unfortunately history is silent regarding his great sacrifices extended to nation during freedom movement of India. So far investigation is concerned in regard to his exact date of birth, no clear evidence was found. It is presumed by his present generation that he was born at Kurhiamari village near Dudhnoi in 1890. His father was Bogaram Patgiri and mother was Bhaluki Patgiri. He was from a rich family because Bogaram Patgiri worked as a revenue collector under Bijni estate. He was well in the area because of his father's position.

Education

Gangacharan Patgiri went to his village Primary School. After completion of his Primary level of education he joined Middle Primary School at Goalpara. He studied there for two years and thereafter he left his school and took active part in social works of that area.

His Works and Role as a Freedom Fighter

In 1910, he joined the local administration office at Rongjuli as a clerk and worked there till 1932. He was very efficient in making social strategy and helped the people to being active and well aware of the prevailing situation of those times. He attempted to mobilise the rural people to raise their voices against wrong policies of the British Government. Due to his active habits of social work he could not control his mind though he was a Government worker. He could not stay away from the prevailing volatile situation of the nation. He silently involved in the political activities of that time and sensitised the people against the British Government which was an act against of his service rule. He joined in the Congress Party and began to participate secretly in the freedom struggle. He also began to make provocative speech against British rulers.

In 1920, the Congress Party declared Non-Cooperation movement throughout the nation and Gangacharan Patgiri did not stop his voyage of struggle. He frequently visited Guwahati and met the Congress leaders and shared his views. He frequently gave the stock of the situation of Goalpara district and developed future plan and programmes sitting together with senior party leaders at Guwahati. Gangacharan Patgiri made a habit of attending the party meetings secretly and used to make anti-government statement in the meetings. His speeches irked the British Government. The Government was in search of an opportunity to pick him up in red handed. Therefore, once when he was on his way to join in a Party

meeting in Guwahati, he was arrested and sent him into jail for six months. He was terminated from his job with an immediate effect. He was tortured mercilessly and forced him to confess the linkages of Party activities. He was rigid in his decision and did not confess any clues of the activities what was being carried out by the Party in the areas of his domicile. British Government confiscated his parental property and he was made a pauper. He became homeless, penniless and even he did not find any space to take rest for a while, when he was released from jail.

These atrocities did not dishearten him rather he became more and more aggressive against the British rule. He had an indomitable spirit and instead of deserting his political activities, he rather cultivated more mental strength and participated in the freedom struggle with full vigour and spirit. Independence of the country from the British rule became his goal of life and Mahatma Gandhi became his ideal and mentor of his struggle.

He was appointed as the Coordinator of the Dhupdhara Congress Party. He thus got an opportunity to make close relationship with state and national leaders. He travelled all the isolated areas of Goalpara, Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon etc. and made the tribal people aware of the British hegemony and gathered them to march boldly against the British rule in the banner of Congress Party. He organised many demonstration, dharna and involved in underground activities against the British Government. He formed the Shanti Sena Bahini and appointed volunteers to collect information on the action to be taken by the British rulers against the Party workers and common people. He participated in the great Pandu Mahasabha of the Congress Party in 1926 which was attended by his political ideal Mahatma Gandhiji. He also engaged for the welfare of the downtrodden people of the society under the banner the Assam Kishan Sabha, a socialist organisation formed by Pabitra Roy of Bengal. In 1939 he organised a great and first meeting of his Shanti Sena Bahini at Kothakhuthi village. It was a remarkable step or event for him being a lone worker of a huge area and many like-minded personalities, volunteers, youths attended the meeting from across different parts of the country.

He participated in Gana Satyagraha movement of 1940 organised by the Congress Party and Quit India movement of 1942. He was arrested and sent to jail for second time where he along with other party workers had to face physical punishment. Even then he never stopped his mission and carried out activities against the British rule. He boldly came forward with public mob and staged Dharna, Strike, Picketings and mass processions in different parts of Goalpara, Dhubri, Bongaigaon and Kokrajhar. During this time except Dhubri Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon areas were too small with scanty population. These areas were surrounded by dense forest, rivers and communication was least possible. He never cared the natural

obstruction as a barrier of his true mission. He crossed all the boundaries of natural obstruction and very easily appeared in those areas and met the people and helped them, encouraged them. The British Government got annoyed to him and further planned to bring him into jail for the third time. The British Government therefore imposed revenue tax two to three times more upon the farmers. Moreover, they imposed the collective fine on the common people in order to make the common people economically weak. This was an extreme step of the British Government that made the law and order situation more and more volatile. But people did not stop to protest against them and finally most of farmers, leaders had to face tremendous corporal punishment. The people were compelled to spend many nights into deep water in the cold season. The people did not care for it and continued their activities and finally the Government subdued.

In 1947, when India got independent on 15th August of 1947, Gangacharan Patgiri's joy crossed the bar of earth. He celebrated the day in his village with his co-workers in a huge prom and grandeurs where thousands of people assembled there from here and there. Thus his dream of a free India had been realised.

Honour

On August 15, 1966, the Congress Party honoured Gangacharan Patgiri for the sacrifice he had made during the freedom movement. The central Government also honoured him with Tamrapatra on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee celebration of the country's independence. He was also given pension for his service during the freedom movement. This dedicated personality breathed his last in 1973.

SOBHA BRAHMA



Sobha Brahma (Somho) as a student of class-VIII

Early Life

Sobha Brahma was born on October 14, 1929 at Bhumka village under Gossaigaon Sub-Division of Kokrajhar district. He was the eldest son of Haricharan Basumatary and Debashri Basumatary. Sobha had two brothers - Ranendra Narayan Basumatary (Ex-Chairman, APSC) and Lahendra Nath Basumatary (Advocate). After conversion to Brahma religion, Haricharan Basumatary changed his surname to Brahma.

Haricharan Brahma was a timber merchant. Timber business brought him fortune and thus he became a rich man. According to the then custom, he married for the second time a woman named Sundaari Basumatary. He had eight children from his second wife. They were- Purneswari Basumatary, Kantho Basumatary, Prabhat Basumatary, Hongleswari Basumatary, Sajjid Basumatary, Moneswar Basumatary, Loken Basumatary and Anita Basumatary.

Sobha Brahma was known as Somho during his childhood days. As he was comparatively dark, he was called by this pet name. His friends also used to address him by this name.

Education

There was no Lower Primary School at Bhumka village at that time. Therefore for his primary education he had to go to the nearby school located at Chakma 2 km away from his native village. As the teacher of the school was from general caste, he could not pronounce the name Somho and he was given a new name as Sobha Ram Brahma. In course of time he

omitted the middle name “Ram”. Thus later he came to be known as Sobha Brahma to one and all.

After passing completion his primary school from Chakma Lower Primary School, he pursued his middle level school education at Sapatgram Amalgamated High School. After passing his middle standard education he got admitted for his high school level education a Dhubri Government High School. In 1950, he passed Matriculation Examination in the First Division with Letter Marks in History. Thereafter, he joined Cotton College and passed IA Examination in 1952. In 1952, he went to Santineta and studied Bachelor of Fine Arts at Kala Bhawan for five year. In 1957, he passed BFA with flying colours.

His family life

Sobha Brahma married Vijoya Champramary, daughter of Shyamachanran Champramary and Nathur (Laxmi) Champramary of Satali, Mandalpara in West Bengal on 1st March, 1960. His wife acted in a film titled “*Ekti Mech Paribarer Kahini*” produced by Publicity Department of West Bengal Government. She was known in the film as “*Daduri*”. They had a son and two daughters.



Sobha Brahma with his wife

His post marital Life

During those days, Bhumka village was surrounded by beautiful jungles and other natural beauties. Freshness of the nature prevailed upon the earth. Being a rural energetic youth and brought up in such beautiful surroundings, Sobha Brahma was attracted very much by innate beauty of nature. As the days passed by, lush green forests, animals and birds

created impeccable imprints in his mind. He wondered the beauty of the trees, rivers, plants and animals created by God. He started to sketch these natural beauties on paper with pencil. He made this from his school life. He began to explore his talent of drawing pictures from his school days when he was a student of middle school. He continued his practice of drawing and honing his skills even at Dhubri. Whenever he used to go to his village during holidays, he used to capture his beautiful experiences and surroundings in paper by drawing them. In this way he felt much closer to the nature and felt an untold attachment with the nature. While this habit gave him immense satisfaction, it in other way annoyed his father. Because his father expected something else rather than drawing pictures. He scolded him for idling away his time instead of reading books. His father wanted him to do good job whereby he can earn a handsome amount.

Haricharan Brahma therefore sent him to Guwahati for higher studies. But Sobha could not fulfil the hopes and aspirations of his father. When he came to Guwahati for higher education, his creative art found an added momentum. He was taken aback by the magnificence and charm of Kamakhya temple, Madan Kamdev, Sukleswar temple and various ancient sculptured forms preserved at the museum. These created more curiosity in his mind and he drew these ancient temple and other historical monuments. This changed his life. So instead of studying general course, he pursued Bachelor of Fine Arts to satisfy his zeal of curiosity for art and sculpture.

After passing Bachelor degree of Fine Arts, Sobha Brahma joined Tarini Charan Choudhury High School as an Art teacher. While at T.C. High School, he used to collect wooden pieces thrown here and there, and created beautiful art pieces from them. He also drew several paintings that drew attention of everyone. He did not want to confine his creative ideas within the four walls of T.C. School. He wanted to enrich his knowledge with more practical experiences through further studies.

Sobha Brahma's found hope was soon fulfilled. After a year he got a research project for study of Tribal Art and Culture from Guwahati University. This helped him to make himself available to a more intricate study of tribal art forms and idoms. He did research work on the Bodos, the Dimasas and the Rabhas. During that time he met Professor Maheswar Neog and Tirthanath Sarma who gave him constant support in his research work.

After completing his research work, Sobha Brahma joined at Art and Crafts School, Guwahati as a teacher in 1960 to earn his daily bread. On 31st January 1964 this school was converted to Government College of Art and Crafts. As he was the only BFA degree holder

from Kala Bhawan, Santiniketan, he was made Principal of the college. He got retirement from that college in the year 1989.

After retiring from Government service, Sobha Brahma did not sit idle at home. He knew his dreams were yet to be fulfilled. He must do something in the field of art and crafts. So he engaged himself in creative activities at his home. He drew and sketched numerous paintings and sculpted many wonders which brought laurels to him.

From 1999 to 2003, Sobha Brahma was elected and appointed as the Vice-Chairman of Ananda Ram Barooah Institute of Language, Art and Culture. He was again elected and appointed as the Vice-Chairman of Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in 2003. He continued in that post till 2008. As a Vice-Chairman he contributed a lot for the expansion of Kalakshetra.

Sobha Brahma as an artist and sculptor

As an artist and sculptor, he had faced two conflicting views in his initial stage. When he came back from Kala Bhawan, Santiniketan, he encountered with two different creative conflicts on whether he should continue with the Indian mainstream tradition or produce art specific to fit with the Northeast region, free from the influences and the trapping of any school or style. After two years of his struggle he got rid of from the influence of Santiniketan and went on to establish an independent style unique to the region. He was the first artist from this region who attempted to create an art specific to the region with a distinct idiom.

His role in the field of Art and Crafts

Sobha Brahma, a man of nature lover, who was fortunate enough to be born and brought up amidst of natural beauties, full of trees, jungles, flowers, hills with undulating plains, rivers etc. which created a deep imprint in his mind from his early childhood. Traditional and colourful dresses of the Bodos, their typical gestures, lusted folk dances made him crazy. It deeply inspired his creative spirit. He became restless when he enrolled as an IA student in Cotton College. He was in search of a way whereby he can transform the scenic beauty of nature and his feeling into perfect reality. So he went to Kala Bhawan, Santiniketan. Moreover, his research project from Gauhati University provided him an added advantage to grow his knowledge and experiences on arts of the Northeast region.

His working experiences on Art and Crafts as teacher in Government Colleges of Art and Crafts matured him in this direction of paintings and sculpting. The practical experiences gathered by him as a teacher expanded his ideas and helped him enriching his artistic thought. Thus his area of artistic operation got a trend which flourished his carrier in an unique way.

Sobha Brahma organised thirteen major one man Shows of paintings, sculptures and drawings at Guwahati, Shillong, Kokrajhar, Calcutta, Mumbai and New Delhi. Some of the noteworthy exhibitions organised by him are-

In 1965, Sobha Brahma organised his first ever exhibition at the District Library, Guwahati. This exhibition gave him a scope of detecting his shortcomings in art. He realised that he should be more proactive in art and sculpting. It helped him to overcome his lacunae in the field of art and sculpting. He took ten years long tenure for organising his second exhibition. He realised and decided that his work should be confined only in Northeast region rather he should cross the boundary and he later attempted to organise it in national level so that he may earn a decent recognition. Accordingly in 1976, he organised his exhibition at All India Fine Arts and Crafts, New Delhi. This exhibition strengthened his confidence and he was able to draw the attention of the people at national platform. During his tenure as the Principal of the Government College of Art and Crafts he participated at All India Sequential Autumn School at J.J. Art School, Mumbai in 1969. In 1982 he again organised an exhibition at J.J. Art Gallery, Mumbai. He was lauded by many prominent personalities like Artists, Sculptors, and Literatures and received felicitation from various organisations. He was showered by praise and admiration. In 1995, he organised an exhibition at Birla Akademi. He also sculptured many forms of figures.

Sobha Brahma also attended international exhibition in Bangladesh Biennial of Asian Art, Triennial of Realistic Art, Sofia, Bulgaria etc. He also attended many seminars, workshops on Art and Culture.

His role in literature

Sobha Brahma was not only a painter and sculptor; he also a prolific writer. He wrote several books of his experience gathered during his walk of life. Some of his books are- Shilpakalar Nabajanma, Bharatiya Chitrakala, Gwdan Uji (Bodo), Leonardo da Vinci (English), Roses Red and Gold (English), Khonthaianjali (Translation of Geetanjali in Bodo) and Primitive Tribal Art (English). He also published many articles in magazines and daily news papers.

Awards and Honours

Sobha Brahma dedicated his life in paintings and sculpting many forma and figures what was out of thought of others. He established a new trend in art and sculpture. He brought the world of art in his close circuit. He painted and sculptured forms and figures for

more than six decades establishing an unique and independent idiom for the region. He thus established a niche both in the country and abroad.

As a mark of his recognition in creative art, the Government of Assam gave him Shilpi Divash Award in 1977. In 1990, the Assam Government gave him Artist Pension. He received Kamal Kumari Award for culture in 1991 for his immense contribution to society. In 1996 he was awarded Bishnu Prasad Rabha Award. In 2002 he was awarded Pranab Barooah Shilpi Award and in the same year i.e. 2002 he was again awarded Sadbhavana Award and Assam Sports- Cultural Festival Award. In 2006, he was awarded Man of the Year Award by Engkhong Trust Committee. In 2006 was again awarded the Bodoland Territorial Award, 2006 for Art and Culture. In 2007, he was awarded Lalit Kala Ratna by Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi.

Apart from these awards, he was conferred upon D.Litt. Degree by Dibrugarh University in 2001. Rabindra Bharati University also honoured him by conferring D.Litt. Degree in 2006.

Sobha Brahma was a man of pure soil. He tried to draw the picture human reality and eternal beauty of nature. He did not want his work to be lost in oblivion and realised the importance of preservation for future generation. He therefore constructed a Kala Bhawan at his residence to preserve his immortal creations. He thought that Kala Bhawan will popularise the importance of Art and Crafts among the coming generation.

Sobha Brahma was a man of unparalleled creation whose arena of contribution extended to diverse directions. This wonderful the avant-garde artist passed away at the age of 82 years and the 5th day of March 2012 was a dark day for the Art and Crafts episode of Northeast region that this noble and creative ideology slept on the divine bed for good. His death has brought an end to an era of art and sculpture of the Northeast region and thus creating a vacuum that perhaps, will never be filled in.



Sobha Brahma with the President of India

PADMASRI MODARAM BRAHMA

Early life

Modaram Brahma was basically an educationist, a noble man of an extraordinary personality. He was born in an interior remote village named Ghunghunikhata in 1903. His father Roshna Brahma and mother Baisagi Brahma were very pious and ideal persons. They had close contact with Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, who very often encouraged them to educate their children. They were advised to do hard labour keeping in mind the genuine needs of a simpler life. They often visited the place of their Guru Kalicharan Brahma and took necessary advices from him. When they fell in any unwanted crisis, they rushed to their Guru and got help from him.

Education

During Modaram Brahma's time there was no school or any other academic institute in around their localities. As his parents were thirsty of education, so they tried their son to sent any school located anywhere outside of their locality. He was therefore admitted in Phutkibari Lower Primary School, a few miles from his village. He completed his primary education in 1914. Thereafter, he enrolled his name in Tipkai M.E. School. Meanwhile, his parents shifted their residence to Bhabanipur, on the north bank of the river Aie and settled their permanently. Modaram Brahma passed M.E. School from Tipkai M.E. School in 1920. Later he was admitted at Dhuburi High School. He was a student of extra talent. He passed his Matriculation Examination in 1923 from Dhubri High School. He secured first division with letters in Mathematics, Sanskrit and Bengali language. In those days there was no high school through the district. He was admitted in Cotton College for his intermediate Arts Course and he passed Examination successfully in 1925.

Modaram Brahma married Rupeswari Brahma in 1928. She was Katimal Brahma's daughter who was a renowned timber merchant of Dhaoliguri.

As a student

Since his student life, Modaram Brahma devoted most of his time for developing Bodo literature. In 1923, he along with Rupnath Brahma edited "*Khanthai Methai*" a book on poems and songs. He used to write regularly in a Bodo magazine "*Bibar*" publish by Bodo Chatra Sanmilan. This magazine is regarded as the first Bodo magazine and the beginning of an era of Bodo literature. Some other prominent writers of this magazine were Rupnath Brahma, Promod Chandra Brahma, author of the first Bodo Dictionary. In 1926, he wrote one book named "*Boroni Gudi Sibsa Arw Aroj*" that dealt with the principal concept of Bodo

faith and hymns. This book narrates the hymns recited by the Bodos during 'Kherai' festival to appease Lord Siva at the *Bathou*. He was also a dramatist and wrote dramas on tribal folk life. His dramas evoked good responses from the people. During his time there was no such organised drama group. His dramas were played by the local untrained artists in certain traditional festive occasions. People gathered to enjoy his drama. Group of people from far flung areas came to see his drama with their deepest interest. Some of his social dramas like- "Raymali" (name of a young Bodo girl), "Dimapur Rajiw Bainai" (The down fall of the Kingdom Dimapur), "Sadang Bairagi" (Sadang, the Renouncer) were very popular and widely staged in many places and the theme was heartily accepted by the viewers. Moreover his book on short stories named "Phangseao Bibar Barnwi" (two flowers in one stem) was read by all and now regarded it as mouth speech of Bodo literature. In his later part of life i.e. in 1988, he compiled a book named "Rupesri Raythai Khanthai" It was a collection of poems, songs and criticisms.

His works

He was an active worker and dedicated most of his golden times for uplifting Bodo societies of those times. He was closely associated Bodo Chatra Sanmilan which was instrumental in awakening the Bodo masses. He visited the interior Bodo villages and tried to understand the shortcomings of the people. He in this way picked up folk elements of the society and wrote books on these aspects. He felt sorry seeing the unorganised Bodo society and their socio-economic condition. Simultaneously, he also stated a religious movement among the Bodo society and attempted to establish a hatred free peaceful society. He encouraged the people to work hard and show respect to their unique tradition and life ways. He shouldered the responsibility of hoisting the joint conference of Bodo Chatra Sanmilan. He also took the pain of organising Bodo Mahasabha at Rowmari in 1919 as a general secretary of the Reception Committee. He had to face tremendous pressure for making the both programme a grand success. He visited numbers of Bodo dominated villages one after one for collection of funds. He toured all Assam and met different Bodo personalities whom were invited for the conference organised by him. He went naturally difficult interior Bodo inhabited villages and made aware of the people about the deteriorating socio-economic and political situation of the Bodos. As an active worker of Bodo Chatra Sanmilan he collected money for students welfare fund from various sources, persons, business men who donated voluntarily passing through tremendous hazards. He went to deepest forest where Bodos were found to reside. He distributed the money so collected among the poor and needy students. Thus with the help of Chatra Sanmilan he encouraged the students for study and doing other creative works related to education.

After passing IA Examination though Modaram Brahma got admitted in B.A. degree course in Cotton College, he could not succeed on account of his mother's sudden demise and his wife's serious illness. It was too tough for him to maintain academic balance in such a condition. He remained mocked for months together. He became restless and tried to remain silent for sometimes. He tried to confine within his four walls; but he could not do that. Because he was mesmerised by the call of his people and finally came out again to treat the diseases of the society of his community.

He was fortunate enough, because when he was suffering from mental agony, in that time he was invited to join as Sub-Inspector of Police by then Superintendent of Police Ananda Chandra Agarwala. But did not join as a Sub-Inspector of Police rather he preferred timber business what he did. He thought that business is the only way that may give him freedom of work whereby he can serve the people freely and provide help to the needy. Ironically he had witnessed heavy loss in his timber business and he compelled to abandon his timber business. He could not give proper attention in his business due to serious involvement in social activities. At that point of time he got an invitation from Father of the Baptist Mission of Harisinga, A.C. Devision, who offered the job of a school teacher at Harisinga. He did not refuse it and very soon he joined as the Head Master in Harisinga Middle School and served for some time. He along with the Father got involved in many social-economic, cultural and developmental activities.

After serving some years as Head Master at Harisinga Middle School, he left the job and came to Kokrajhar. Here he met some important social worker like Bishnu Charan Basumatary, Rupnath Brahma. They worked hard for establishment of a high school so that the aspirant students may take their basic education within their locality without any lose of their hard earned money. He with the help of some other socially active local people finally formed a Committee with Rupnath Brahma as President and Modaram Brahma as Secretary. After one year of their hard work and public contribution the school finally stood up. Modaram Brahma served as Honourary Head Master for some time. He also played a poignant role for establishment of the Kokrajhar College, which was started in 1956. He was only founder member of the college. Moreover he was actively associated with most of the existing educational institutes of Kokrajhar. During the tenure of his honourary service he was elected as member of Dhubri Local Board for two times from 1938 to 1945. He fully availed the scopes and opportunities for welfare and development of the people. He never wasted the chance being offered him as a member of the Local Board. After independence he was invited by the Government of Assam to serve as Block Development Officer. He easily accepted the invitation and served the people with his maximum strength. He utilised his

powers and scopes to satisfy the people and applied his skills for uplifting the rural masses with Government Schemes, projects etc. He served the people in that post till his retirement in 1961.

He inaugurated the first session of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha held at Basugaon on 16th of November, 1952. This day 16th November is observed as the Bodo Sahitya Dibash every year with great respect and honour.

Awards and Honour

Modaram Brahma was a man dedication who spent his golden days for the plight of the Bodos. He contributed his life for uplifting Bodo language, culture, literature and the society at large. His selflessness was recognised by all irrespective of castes and creeds. He was a well accepted noble man of pure earth. He was the architecture of the society. His contribution and dedication drew attention to all. In 1957, he got the invitation from the central Government to lead a Bodo cultural troop on the eve of celebration of Republic Day of India in New Delhi on 26th January. Leading by him and other members the team comprised of some important personalities like Ustad Kamini Narzary, Sebaram Brahma, Biren Mushahary, his third daughter Anjali Brahma and Kamala Bala Basumatary. It was a first event for the Bodo community that their folk song and dance form was exhibited in such a prestigious moment of the nation where the entire nation and other countries were the living witness of such a beautiful moment. It was duly rewarded. The troops exhibited their excellent performances and widely appreciated in all the national papers. The troops had to stay for some more days in the Capital. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of India and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India invited them to their residences as a mark of honour and appreciation.

This great personality was given high appreciation and due recognition by the Government of India by awarding the title, 'Padmasri' for his dedicated service for the cause of Bodo people, their culture, language and literature in an auspicious day of 26th January, 1988. He occupied a place of high esteem among the Bodos. This noble son died on the 6th day of September, 1990.

UPENDRA NATH BRAHMA



Early Life

Upendra Nath Brahma came to lime light through Bodoland agitation. He was the man whom Bodo movement got a special momentum and drew attention of all. His name may not be separated from the Bodoland movement. He was the young architecture of present state of Bodoland. Upendra Nath Brahma was born in 31st March, 1956 in an isolated village at Boragari under Dotoma block in the district of Kokrajhar. Manglaram Brahma was his father and Lebswari Brahma was his mother. Manglaram Brahma and Lebswari Brahma had three sons and two daughters. Upendra Nath Brahma was the youngest one. Bimal Chandra Brahma and Shyameswar Brahma are his elder brothers, Rambhabati Brahma and Jibeswari was his elder sisters.

Education

Upendra Nath Brahma had to face hardship right from his childhood as his parents were very poor. He lost his parents at his early age and he was brought up by his elder brother Shyameswar Brahma. Upendra Nath Brahma's school life began in 1963 at the village school. Mokokrapara L. P. School located in his own village was his initial step of primary education. He completed his primary school stage with a merit scholarship in 1968. He got his high school education from Shakti Ashram H.S. School. He was there up to class-XII. After completion of class XII Examination, he went to Kokrajhar College for higher education. He passed B.SC. with Honours in Physics in 1981. Thereafter, he came to Guwahat and joined at Guwahati University for M.SC. Degree and passed it in 1986. He also passed B.A. in the same year and got admitted in Law.

From his school life he was very active in students' politics and had maintained a good and sincerities with organisations and very often he attended various meetings, strikes,

hartals etc. called by the student union of Assam. He never lost the scope of attending students meeting and delivered lectures when the responsibility was given to him.

His role as a student leader

After completion of his Masters Degree he actively involved in organisational activities. He shouldered the heavy responsibility as President of All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU). At the 18th ABSU conference held at Rowta Chariali in 1986 he was elected the President along with Rabiram Brahma as General Secretary. As President, he submitted the memorandum to the Chief Minister of Assam on 1st January and to the Governor Bhisma Narayan Singh on 10th January of 1987. Separate state with the status of Union Territory for the Plains Tribal of Assam was strongly in his Memorandum submitted in subsequent times. Upendra Nath Brahma presided over the Dudhnoi ABSU conference held on 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st February in 1987 where decision to launch the movement from 2nd of March, 1987 was taken. After phases of movement a mass rally was organised at Guwahati judges Field on 12th June 1987. Sujit Narzary (16) a student of class X of Kokrajhar Higher Secondary School was killed by unidentified miscreants at Nath Kuchi (Nalbari district) while returning from the rally held at Guwahati. The incident became the turning point of the movement. ABSU decided to launch the movement more rigorously involving the all Bodo people. Bodo People's Action Committee (BPAC) from among the public was constituted at the initiative of ABSU, which was formally declared at 20th Annual Conference of ABSU held at Basbari from 19th to 22nd of December, 1988. Upendra Nath Brahma presided over the Conference, where he was again re-elected as the President of ABSU. The significance of this conference is that the demand for a Union Territory was raised to the demand for full-fledged state. Further the nomenclature of the state was specified as Bodoland. The movement of Bodoland started more vigorously with the combined forces of ABSU and BPAC. The agitation got extreme momentum during 1988-89.



President U. N. Brahma along with his party colleagues marching towards New Delhi for participating in 2nd round tripartite talk

In 1989 Rajiv Gandhi Government formally invited President Upendra Nath Brahma for a tripartite talk between Assam Government, Central Government and ABSU and BPAC on August 28th 1989. Upendra Nath Brahma led 50 members ABSU and BPAC team in the first round of tripartite talk held at New Delhi. Mr. Brahma showed his shrewdness, promptness and intelligence in the talks. In the first talk before anybody could speak he requested the team to stand up and observe one minute condolence for those of his movement supporters who had sacrificed their life. The representative of the Assam Govt. headed by Chief Minister, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, Union Government led by the Welfare Minister Dr. Rajendra Kumar Bajpayee also joined the condolence. The first talk is also marked for refusal to accept the Assam Government's hospitality. Not a single glass of water was accepted by any of the members of the team all throughout the discussion that took hours together.



U. N. Brahma and his party colleagues after a meeting

In the 5th round of tripartite talks held on 18th April, 1990 one small Eight Member Committee was formed to resolve the issue consisting three from the Govt. of Assam, three from ABSU and BPAC and two from Central Government with Shri P. S. Krishnan, Union Welfare Secretary as the Convenor and Shri Vinay Shankar, Joint Secretary, in the Ministry of Home for NE region as the Co-Convenor. Upendra Nath Brahma himself declared the names of Shri Sansuma Khungur Bwiswmuthiary, Convenor, BPAC (Later President of ABSU), Shri Rabi Ram Brahma, General Secretary, ABSU and Shri Satyendra Nath Brohmo Chaudhury, Legal Adviser, BPAC as member in the Eight Member Committee on Bodo issues while Shri M. P. Bezbaruah Special Commissioner (Home and Political), Shri T. K. Kamilla, Secretary WPT and BC and Shri P. C. Sharma, Secretary (Home and Political) of the Government of Assam were members. In the mean time he suffered from cancer. He was admitted in the CMC Hospital in Vellore, where from he attended the Second (5th October, 1989) and Third (11th January, 1990) round of talks. But his physical condition became day by day too critical and he was advised to go abroad in USA. Government of Assam proposed to offer all medical expenses for his treatment abroad. But he politely refused to accept any offer from Government and he preferred to rely on public contributions. At a critical moment of his health he had to be admitted in Tata Memorial Institute in Bombay, where from he attended 5th round Tripartite talk after getting blood transfused on the previous day. After attending the 18th April talk he went back to Bombay and breathed his last in the intensive care unit of the Tata Memorial Institute on 1st of May, 1990. His dead body was flown to Bagdogra and carried to his native village by car. Lakhs of mourners stood by the side of National Highway to have a last look to their most beloved leader. On 4th May, 1990 his dead body was finally laid to ultimate rest at Dotoma amongst lakhs of mourners, who paid their homage shedding tears. There at Dotoma he was honoured as “Father of the Bodos” by the

ABSU, by which he is now popularly remembered. He is one of the great leaders, whom the Bodos would ever remember.



A bronze statue of 'Bodofa' U.N. Brahma at Kokrajhar

KATI RAM RABHA



Early life

Kati Ram Rabha was a great personality, a social activists, social reformer, freedom fighter and pioneer of Rabha society of South Kamrup. He was born at Kenduguri village of Boko of Kamrup district in 28th October, 1919. Since he was born in the month of Assamese Kati month so he was named as Kati Ram. His grand-father was Garoram Gaonburah working under British Rule. He was a wealthy and head man of the area having a huge plot of land. He had donated a few portions of lands to his landless people. Kati Ram Rabha's father's name was Pani Ram Rabha and mother's name was Tara Rabha. Kati Ram Rabha had two sisters named Ratibala and Hatibala. Kati Ram Rabha lost his father in early childhood and his mother left him alone soon after the death of his father. He was brought up by his grand-father. He had to pass a very terrible life due to lack mother's care. Because his grand-father was a very busy man and had to visit the villages attending various meetings, social occasions and other socio-political events. Grand-mother had to look after her daily household matters. She got little time to take his necessary care. He had to go for cultivation at a very tender age since his grand-father did not get enough time to cultivate his huge plot of land. When he was 12 years old, he took almost one third responsibility of agricultural works of his grand-father's family including collection of fire wood, vegetables, catching fishes from the streams, rivers and also from other sources available in their field.



Kati Ram Rabha with his wife and grand child

Education

Though his grand-father gave him the task of agriculture and other household works, yet he did not discourage him from taking formal education. In 1925 he was enrolled at 380 no. Boko Primary School when he was six years old. It was located at Boko daily Bazar. Late Bolo Rabha, Raghu Rabha, Kamala and Naren Rabha were his bosom friends in his primary school. After completion of his primary level of education from Boko, he was admitted at Chaigaon M.V. School for higher education, which was 25 kilometres away from Boko. The head master Sripati Sarma of the M.V. School was a very kind hearted man who taught him the lesson of pure humanity and sacrifice to nation. He was a Sanskrit Pandit and Byakaran Sastri. Kati Ram Rabha was very much influenced by his personality and loving behaviour. He therefore took Sanskrit subject as one of their main subject of study and did good result in the examination too. During his time road communication to Chaigaon was not easy. As the entire area was surrounded by dense forest and easy pasture land for wild animals so he had to stay at Chaigaon now and then. He was sincerely engaged with his study at Chaigaon High School after passing M.V School. But when the wave of freedom movement spread through Assam he stopped to go to his classes and involved in various programmes organised by the agitators. Thus he remained absent in his classes for a prolong periods. The head master Harichandra Das cancelled his name from register of Class-X. Thus his study remained incomplete

His role in the freedom movement

In the mean time the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 and 1932 launched by Mahatma Gandhiji got a stern momentum throughout India and this had also touched every nook and corner of Assam. Kati Ram Rabha and his other colleagues were influenced by the call of the leaders of the Congress Party. Moreover, he also encouraged by the wave of non-cooperation movement. He had also planned to join the movement. Like other friends he also used to attend various meetings, dharnas, hartals, strikes, picketings etc. In 1942, when the nation eager to make India free from the mighty British rule, the movement was not obscure in Assam too. The nation led by Mahatma Gandhi took a critical turn. In Assam the movement got extensive form under the leadership of Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi and his colleagues and little Boko did not stay behind. It is worth mentioning to say here that in a day of 1942, a huge public meeting was organised at Boko. In that meeting Gourikanta Talukdar of Guwahati and Nabin Chandra Kalita, one of the most powerful and veteran leader from Boko delivered their strong speech that rocked the heart of Kati Ram Rabha and his friends. In that very day they joined in the movement whole heartedly. After listening the speech of Nabin Chandra Kalita the then Congress Party's right hand worker, he and Bolo Boro became the chief disciple of him (Nabin Chandra Kalita). They decided to leave their concept of higher education and jumped in the movement discarding their all household works. Kati Ram Rabha wrote in his article *“ Part of Freedom Movement 1942 and Awareness among the people of Boko”*, where he stated the day of Ahar month of 1942, a huge public meeting was staged at the playground of Raipara Kechukhunda Lower Primary School. In one side of the meeting ground Late Amal Prabha Baideo was spinning in a spinner wheel to encourage the people towards spinning and weaving and Nabin Chandra Kalita was delivering his tremoring speech. People were listening to his speech with pin drop silence. Thereafter, Late Amal Prabha Baideo started her speech with tremendous power and we became restless to fight against the British Rule. In that very day we the people of Boko promised there itself to sacrifice our life for the sack of nation. Practically that was the beginning of an organised movement in Boko area and 1042 perhaps would remain as an epoch making moment for me. From that day we got chance to come into close contact with Nabin Chandra Kalita.” Kati Ram Rabha now became the local leader of the freedom movement. He was given the responsibility of organising meetings and other such programmes as per directives of central committee of Congress Party. Being a serious youth he took the advantage and began his work. He used to visit the nearby villages located in interior areas of Boko, Singra, Dudhnoi, Dhupdhara, Nagarbera, Chaigaon and some interior parts of present Meghalaya. He travelled all the areas on foot in day and night along with some of his young friends. He made

awareness programmes among the rural people and tried to inculcate the people about the wrong deeds operated by the British administration. He gathered the village youths and formed Volunteer force and with the help of this volunteer force he started anti Government activities. British administration got annoyed with the role played by his volunteer force and in 9th September 1942 he along with Kamini Das, Golok Deori and Kamala Rabha of Paneri village were arrested from a meeting organised in an interior village of Boko. They were sent to Guwahati jail. They spent three months of rigorous imprisonment in Guwahati jail. Being involved in anti Government activities and his long days of absence in school, the head master of his school dismissed his admission and removed his name from attendance register. Thus his study remained close at class-X level. After dismissal his name from school he got a scope to involve more freely and seriously in the movement. In the mean time his guru of freedom movement Nabin Chandra Kalita died abruptly. He became again father less. But he never stopped his mission and carried on with full energy and faith on the people. Kati Ram Rabha along with Bolo Boro, Rabi Das, Gobinda Rabha, Surendra Mohan Das Betha Ram Boro now started to meet the people of Boko and Bongaon Mouza and made aware the people. He gave door to door visit of the villagers and arranged meetings at Chatabari Namghar campus, school campus at Kurkhala L.P.School and gave an extra momentum to this movement. Finally this freedom movement got its real success at the midnight of 15th August, 1947.

His family life

After gaining a great success, Kati Ram Rabha thought to start a new life. He was elected as member of Guwahati Local Board. Therefore he planned to start a normal family life. He married a girl named Janaki Rabha from Haladhi Para village near Mouman in 1949. He again entered into second marriage with Puspanjali Rabha of Panerigaon when he was 40 years old. His second wife served as school teacher at Boko M.V, School. His first wife had five sons and three daughters and second wife had five daughters and one son. His all sons and daughters are well established.

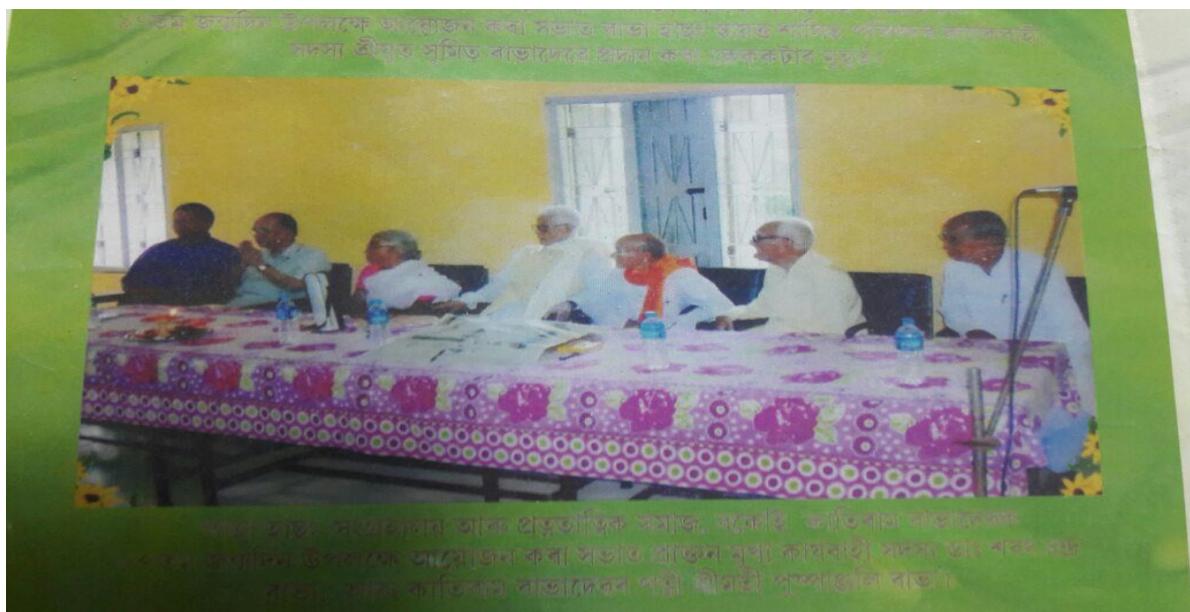


Kati Ram Rabha with his daughter

His works

Kati Ram Rabha was a big compliment towards the Boko area to make it at today's form. He was one of the main sculptor and designer who endeavoured in making Boko rapid advancement. He, however, may be considered as the artful craftsman of modern Boko. Since his speak of the career as a social worker he was trying to keep his efforts steady by relishing even in troubles for that brings out all his fighting qualities for the improvement of Boko. He invested his all efforts and experiences steadily for making Boko a place human residence. He was free from embroiling in any corruption, selfless leader and a social worker. He established Boko M.V. School in 1938 with the help of some forward looking and society lover personalities, as there was no such school except a Lower Primary School where he happened to be a student in 1925. In M.V. School Kati Ram Rabha himself rendered free teaching service to the students along with Tanu Ram Boro and Bolo Ram Boro. He felt the extreme need of a High School and a college in his area and it gave pain in his mind. He tried to gather the educated people of Boko and its adjacent areas. He expressed his pain to those people whom he got opportunity to talk about. After independence he with the help of Achyutananda Adhikari and others established Boko High School. Achyutananda Adhikari became the founder head master of Boko High School. In 1964 he took initiative to establish Boko Jawaharlal Nehru College which was his burning dream.

Kati Ram Rabha laid more emphasis on women education. He therefore involved himself in establishing a girl high school at Boko. In his last part of life he opened a high school named Navoday High School situated in his own village and it bore his rare wisdom and spirit of uncompromising life. It is blooming like an eternal flower.



Kati Ram Rabha in a school meeting

Kati Ram Rabha as stated was a man of earth having uncompromising attitude towards the development and growth of the society. He left no space for anti social elements that can bring detrimental wave for the society. He tried to give message to his people, society not merely by his skilled works, but tried to express his inner feelings through his literary works. It is epitomized to say that he is dexterous on both poetry and prose. As he was a man of yore, he had generally composed the prosodical poems rather than those should like a modern poet. He has to his credit for a book named ‘Viyallishar Swadheenta Sangramar Echhova aru Bokor Raojar Jagaran’ written discemibly drawing the plot of the movement of freedom in 1942. He also had to his credit ‘Puspanjali’, a collection of poems in the manuscript from along with a book written as the biography of Kalaguru Bishnuprasad Rabha named ‘Yayavar Bishn Rabha’. Having peeped a wonderful cameo, his writings, treatises as well as poems, have been published in many local and un-local magazines or periodicals now and then.



Kati Ram Rabha at the age of 90 years

Mr Kati Ram Rabha's useful career was not ended; even at the age of ninety plus, he was surprisingly physically as well mentally much more strong. He was much more stronger than some juvenescent youths which may lead us to be aware of the clue of his top secret of keeping his body in such a stage at more than ninety years ago.

This man who brought a dramatic change of Boko area with his beautiful contributions left this earth leaving behind his well wishers, family members and others on 27th February, 2018.



Kati Ram Rabha as a speaker in a meeting

MANABENDRA RABHA

Early life

Manabendra Rabha or Gadadhar Rabha was born on 21st June, 1954 at Dudhnoi. His father's name was Jatindra Narayan Patgiri and mother's name was Abala Rabha. Jatindra Narayan had nine nos. of sons and daughters. Manabendra Rabha was seven nos. Son of his family. His father was school teacher.

Education

His father admitted him in his village Primary School. After completion his Primary School, he went to Dudhnoi Boys' High School. In 1982 he passed H.S.L.C examination and later admitted at Dudhnoi College. When he was a student of Dudhnoi College, he joined in the Student movement of Assam lead by the All Assam Students Union and engaged as a student leader till 1985.

Role as student leader

In 1992 he further made engaged himself with Rabha Jatiya Sangram and in 1992 he was elected as the Executive Secretary of Rabha Hasong Demand Committee. Later he handled the responsibility as publicity secretary of Demand Committee. He was main key maker of the Committee. Without his consistency and perseverance, perhaps the the Rabha people could not have seen the present status of Rabha Hasong Council. Initially he was ridiculed by his people and faced lots of problems and challenges. Some Rabha people questioned him about the future of his uncertain journey and tried to restrict his activities. But he did not stop in his objectives. He moved from village to village

As a social worker he was both politically and socially engaged with several organisations and institution till the last moment. His enormous endeavour for the upliftment of the society has been the pivotal hallmark throughout his entire lifespan. Culturally he immensely enlightened the Rabha society to enrich the socio-cultural sensibility and responsibility of the people of his society. His capacity of leading the society has eventually been the absolute reason behind his self-establishment as a holistic social being. His contribution for the wellbeing of the society has set a remarkable milestone for the entire generations to have a gracious livelihood

He was suffering from critical health problems at the age of 60 and made him took weak but did not lost mental power. Even he remained busy with social work. He tried to make himself fit and active through his hard physical work. But the creator did not allow him to go further

and very pathetically on 21st February, 2018 he breathed last and took shelter in heavenly abode leaving his numbers of well wishers and family members here in this earth.

RAJEN PAM



Early Life

Rajen Pam was born in Goalpara district of Assam, at a very backward village named Chetimatiya under Dudhnoi Assembly constitution. His father was very simple uneducated peasant. His mother's name was Genashwari Rabha and father's name was Ragun Ram. He belonged to a very poor family and his parents were not able to give him education or to make him well educated. But he was a burning thrust on study. He was also very interested to music and dance from his childhood

Education

Rajen Pam who wanted to become an educated person faced all hard obstacles. He was not encouraged by his parents for study, rather compelled him to work on field. But he did not care for it. He carried on his study under the shadow of hope. For his primary education he used to go in the primary school located at 10 km away from his village which was beyond imagine during that time. Through his own intelligence and courage he was able to got high school education at Nalbari Damdama High School and Sonaram High School at Guwahati.

His works

After passing his matriculation examination, he got engaged as an Assamese teacher under NEFA, now is in Arunachal Pradesh under the guidance of Indira Miri. He never forgot about his tribe. He was not able keep himself attentive to his job and left the job after some year working there. After returning to his village he saw that his village was in that poor condition when he left.



Rajen Pam at Governor's residence of Bihar in 1972

He wanted to work for the upliftment of the culture and language of the Rabha tribe of the region. After leaving the job in NEFA, he got another job as a 'Social Education Organizer' in Garopahar district. During that time, Meghalaya was not separated from Assam and that way he got a chance to undergo training from 'Bishwa Bharati Institution' of Santi Niketan in Kolkata city which was the core centre of Britishers and Indian civilization enhanced continuously. Warm imagination grew in his mind to work for his tribe and to work for the enrichment of his culture. Therefore two Rabha songs and two Bangeet of written by him were recorded in gramophone by the HMV Company, in 1962. The lyrics of these songs are like this-

Amar Gaonr maje maje.....

Aghunor potharote.....

In Rabha language-

Hasu Subayi aabh.....

O' Aayi song, O' Singi song...



Organiser Rajen Pam with Rabha Cultural Group from Chotomatia of Goalpara district participating at Republic Day celebration at New Delhi in 1962 along with Rudra Barooah and Kamal Narayan Choudhury sitting on bench

Rajen Pam was an accomplished singer, musician as well as lyricist, patriotism, love glorification of nature. Rabha folk life was the prominent theme of his songs. He spent most of his memorable time with Anandi Ram Das dev when he was studying in Sonaram High School. Therefore lyrics and tune of his songs were reflected in Rajen Pam's songs. He was a regular boardcaster in All India Radio, Guwahati. He took part in Bihu programmes and in other cultural programmes held at Latashil for many year with his Rabha Folk dance group. .He was closely acquainted with Purushattam Das dev who was a music producer, musician, lyricist and the writer of the song "Shri Mayi Asomi" which was sung at the time of flag hosting of Rongali Bihu. He worked in All India Radio, Guwahati's music department from some days. For the enrichment and upliftment of lyrical literature and culture of Rabha tribe he resigned many govt. jobs. He was not enchanted with the govt. jobs and therefore he left one by one what he got. He was the follower of artist Bishnu Prasad Rabha. Therefore he was able to took part in the conference of "Bharatiya Ganantya Sangha" comprising a very little number of artists in the Rabha folk dance group with him. He met Bishnu Prashad Rabha, Hemanga Bishwash, Keshab Mahanta, Dilip Sharma, Sudakshina Sharma, Moghai Ojha and many such persons. Among them he spent most of his beautiful moments with Luit Konwar Rudra Barua, who was the director of cultural department Govt. of Assam. He got golden opportunity to work in the cultural society which was proudly chaired by Dharani Choudhuri, Anand Mohan Bhagawati, Girija Prasah Das and thus he got encourage. Therefore, he took main role in publishing a long play record of 12 Rabha songs.



Rajen Pam with the Cultural group of Soviet Russia

He had to take the responsibility of making a documentary film for the first time on ethnic festival of Rabha which was known as “Baykho” and necessary assistance in this connection provided by the Directorate of Tribal Research Institute of Assam., Indrajit Narayan Dev was the producer of the film.

He wrote some dramas and novels on life and culture of the people. His novels Dandi and Janong-Jing earned good response from the people of Assam. He was also a regular Rabha artist at the All India Radio Guwahati. His dramas like “Rengoni”, “Moroha Ful”, “Kukur” and “Lakhuti” played in All India Radio Guwahati evoked enviable response from the audience. Moreover many short stories written on Rabha tribe had published in various magazines and news papers. He was very keenly related with various social and cultural institution of Rabha tribe.

Rajen Pam was responsible for the popularization and spread of Rabha lyrical literature and was working with the cultural institution named “Sodow Rabha Kristi Sanmilan”. He was a founder secretary of “Rabha Vakha Parishad”. Rajen Pam was felicitated by Assam Sahitya Sabha at Abhayapuri session He also got the opportunity to inaugurate the cultural evening of of Assam Sahitya Sabha held at “Shri Madhabdev’s Samannay Khetra”, Bihpuriya.

He took part in various cultural programmes of Assam through cultural department, Govt. of Assam. He and his Rabha folk dance group took part in many National level programmes held in many cities of India, New Delhi, Bihar, West Bangle, Tamil Nadu etc.. Engaging himself in such many social and cultural programmes he felt extremely happy. His first lyrical collection about Rabha tribe published was “Karha Nolor Mou Sora Sur”.



Rajen Pam receiving award from the President R. Venkotramon at New Delhi

He received artist pension from Govt. of Assam in 1987. He was the first “Sangeet Natak Academi” Award winner artist from Rabha tribe. He died in 1998 at his own home after suffering an incurable disease. In the presence of the kind people, on the way of his funeral ceremony, a committee named “Rajen Pam Memory Conservation Committee was formed. The aim and objective of the committee was to celebrate his death anniversary every year and to organize a talent hunt essay competition as well as to preserve the songs written by him.

SUKRACHARYA RABHA



Early life

Sukracharjya Rabha was born on 10th April, 1977 at Rampur village, 5 kilometres away from Agia of Goalpara district. His father was Nilkanta Rabha, who died a week after of his son Sukracharja Rabha's death. His mother Shri Mati Panibala Rabha is living with her daughter-in-Law, wife of late Sukracharjya Rabha, Shri China Rabha. Though his father practised agriculture to his livelihood, he was a literate person and he also used to write drama and encouraged the rural youths to cultivate Rabha culture, Rabha folk music etc. He made every attempts to enrich and unearth endanger Rabha folk stories and cultural items. He gave training to his rural people towards the development Rabha tradition and culture. Till his death, he was engaged in the study of Rabha literature and writings of Rabha songs, drama etc. Late Nilakanta Rabha wrote twelve nos. of drama which depicted the true folk story of simple Rabha society which drew attention of the common people. Sukracharja got such training from childhood and got well acquainted with tradition and folk history, culture. He therefore was interested to culture and music from his school life.

Education

Sukracharja Rabha was born and brought up in the lap of nature. He got ample opportunities to touch the beauty of nature. He felt the soft impact of nature what made him a man of true nature lover. His village was surrounded by dense forest and Sal tree gave him a special feelings. During his time there was no school in his village. So, he along with his friends had to go a few kilometres away for gaining primary education. After completion of his primary education he enrolled his name in Jogendra Nath Memorial Higher Secondary School, Goalpara in 1989. From Jogendra Nath Memorial Higher Secondary School he passed HSLC Examination in 1992. Thereafter, he got admission as a class-XI student of science in Goalpara College. In 1993 he passed class-XII final examination and enrolled his

name in B.Sc. in the same college. He took Botany as one of his Major subject. He completed his graduation from Goalpara College in 1997.

Family

He got married with China Rabha. He has one son Anurag Rabha and a small kid Kadambini Rabha. Till his death, his father was alive. But after one week of his sudden demise, his father took last breath leaving his family alone in this earth.



Sukracharja Rabha with his family

His works

He was basically inspired towards music and drama by his father who used to write drama on folk people and music having the message of culture and tradition. He had an inherent interest on music and drama, poems. He recited poems in his college competition and won prizes. He learnt the art of acting from his village and Goalpara College initially. He proved his efficiency by directing a drama when he was a student of Goalpara College. He tried to produce a Rabha feature film when he was a student of Goalpara College. But he failed due to lack of financial support. In this regard his friend Dhrubanarayan Rabha helped him a lot. Later on both of them tried to organise the Rabha students of the college to have a common platform of Rabha students so that necessary helps may be provided to the needy Rabha students. In 1996 a general meeting was held in the college premises and meeting was chaired by Dhrubanarayan Rabha in presence of Mr. Ranjit Kumar Rabha, then President of Goalpara District Students Union. In this meeting decision was taken to form a unit of Rabha Students Union of Goalpara College and a unit of Rabha students Union was formed in Goalpara College and Sukracharja Rabha was selected as the President of the unit. Thus he entered into the students politics of Assam. But he did not leave his very objectives of his

life. In the mean time he also planned to start a business on the articles made up of bamboo and cane locally made available in his locality. He gave enough stress in this matter and requested Dhruvanarayan Rabha to take it seriously. Both of them latter visited some areas in this connection and met some personalities working at Goalpara district industries. They got assurance from the district industries authority regarding the financial support. But soon after the final result of B.Sc. examination Dhruvanarayan Rabha had to leave his college and became the Secretary of Goalpara District Students Union. Sukracharja Rabha also came into deep touch with the 'Assam Natya Sanmilanee,' and participated in the central workshop held at Lakhimpur in the month of July. His efficiency and role in drama drew attention of 'Assam Natya Sanmilanee' and he was called and given the opportunity to participate in the Drama Convention held at Lakhimpur in 1995. Noted dramatist Mahendra Talukdar accompanied him and participated in the programme. In his subsequent periods i.e. in 1998 he further met Dhruvanarayan Rabha (with whom Sukracharja lost contact abruptly) along with Gunadhar Barchung and Lalit Rabha in a workshop of drama held at Duliajan in the month of July. This workshop was coordinated and guided by Umesh Sarma, Chetana Das, Ramani Barman and Mohammad Naser. Thereafter such workshops were held at Amguri, Maladhara and these workshops produced many young artist like Rayanti Rabha, Sudarshan Rabha, Bhagyabati Rabha and Modan Rabha. In 2001 Sukracharja Rabha was selected as the President of Goalpara district Rabha Students Union. But he quit the post due to some internal party disturbances. He now paid interest solely on his inborn subject on drama and music and began to promote Rabha culture and music. He worked hard to promote the Rabha culture and the language using theatre as a medium and connecting it to its root, along with using the medium to promote environmental awareness. He was a good singer and sang his cultural songs very nicely. He sang the songs written by his father. He said, Drama is heart, drama is prime stay of his life.

He learnt the art of theatre initially in workshops on theatre direction and design at Guwahati. Further he tried to improve his acting. So, he met Hisanam Kanhailal and unearthed his eagerness. Knowing his intention Kanhailal agreed to teach him. Thereafter, he moved to Kalashetra, a drama institution of Kanhailal situated in the heart of Imphal, Manipur and learned more acting and direction for two years under the direction of Kanhailal and his wife Sabitri, an internationally acclaimed theatre personality whose theatre rooted in their art and culture. Later he assisted Shri Kanhailal in the workshop productions and the project, Nature-Lore in 2005. He founded his theatre group, Badungduppa, a rural based theatre centre at his village in 1998 and made a mark as a young talent early in life. He has directed 12 plays in Rabha, Bodo and Nepali languages. Some of the plays are *Tikhar*,

Changkoy, Rupalim, Hati Aru Fandi, Lovita, To'Poidom, Madaiah Muchi, Dangai and Damukchi and were performed widely. Sukracharja Rabha also conducted workshop under the project 'The Ritual in Theatre,' jointly by Dayna Martinez Moraless in collaboration with Theatre Embassy, the Netherlands. Shri Rabha is regularly organizing workshops for rural artists and a theatre festival named 'Under the Sal Tree Festival' annually with his group.

Rabha founded his theatre group "***Badungduppa***", a rural based theatre centre at his village Rampur, in 1998 and had directed several plays in Rabha, Bodo and Nepali languages. He used forests and bamboo groves as its stage. Rabha and the group of 27 artistes launched a project titled "***Under the Sal Tree***" and experimented with theatre presentation. He used to organise the annual open air theatre festival "***Under the Sal Tree***" which brought theatre lovers from across the country and abroad to remote village in Goalpara district. His prominent plays are '*Tikhar, 'Chankoy, 'Rupalim, 'Lovita, 'To'Poidom, 'Madaiah Muchi, 'Dangai and 'Damukuchi*'. .



A scene of a drama along with director Sukracharja Rabha and audiences



An interesting scene of the drama To'Poidom



A scene of the drama "Rather Rachi" directed and produced by Sukracharja

Rabha

He was a very diligent disciple of H.Kanhailal. As advised by his Guru, Sukracharja selected his venue for the performance. Thereafter, he developed this open-air theatre under his guidance. Without cutting a single tree in the forest, the low-cost stage and the seating arrangement are made on space that existed naturally among the Sal trees. The silence of the Sal groves created a unique atmosphere for the performance. The pure natural atmosphere under the trees inside the forest gave the performing actors a feeling of their natural attachment with nature.

Sukracharja's theatre had an organic relationship with human body and nature. He understood the relationship with mother-nature and human future and that is the reason he always laid his emphasis in maintaining natural harmony through his drama and his real life. He was genius and had inborn quality. So, within a short time he had become one of the popular theatre personalities not only in North East but also in India as well. Sukracharjya Rabha was entitled to get prestigious award such as 'Ustad Bismillah Khan in 2009, Yuva Puraskar' from Sangeet Natak Akademi, Pratima Pande Award etc. his notable talent in the field of theatre direction.



Sukracharja Rabha at the time of awarding Ustad Bismilla Khan Yuba Award, 2009

Though his immortal creation "***Badungduppa***" may be a rural based theatre centre in the village it has brought a unique identity in the theatre field. The creation of Sukracharja Rabha

has become a new phenomenon and made a mark as a young talent early in life. He performed the drama of different language like Rabha, Nepali, Bodo, Assamese etc. and showed his excellent personality. He thereby tried to blend the humanity, harmony and integrity.

He was an environmentalist and worked hard to promote the Rabha culture and the language using theatre as a medium and connecting it to its root, along with using the medium to promote environmental awareness.



Sukrucharja Rabha under the Sal tree

Sukrucharja Rabha picked up every folk element from his society where he passed his early tender life. He observed the delicate part of his culture, struggle of his people and society, which were on the verge of extinction. He felt the cry of nature what was dismayed by common people. So, he made every attempt to project those real items of society and nature through his medium of theatre. The birth of *'Badungduppa'* was such a medium, a self styled creation of Sukrucharja Rabha through which he staged all his dreams and pains of society, culture and nature in the form of drama. It was a unique style of plotting his dreams to the people and society as well. He picked up the village talents who had an inborn ties and traditional association with the stories of his society, whom he thought as perfect player of his drama.



A scene of audiences under the Sal tree

He staged his drama in the midst of forest, where one can feel fresh, relaxed and energetic and by watching his theatre people's observation and perspective had widened.

The theatre expression that '*Badungduppa*' developed was no doubt inspired by Kanhailal's '*Theatre of the Earth*', which is an orchestration of the movements of the body, breath, mind and rhythms of nature. However, Sukracharja Rabha was not an imitator but an innovator. Though he learned the music of theatre from his master, he took the power of silence beyond what was prefigured in Kanhailal's theatre. The notes and beats of simple primeval instruments like '*Badungduppa*' and Manipuri *tongpung*' (bamboo percussion) resonated beautifully with the verbal content of his plays, which were more an innovation than a conversation and seemed to be an extension of the natural sounds of the Sal grove. To imbibe all these qualities Sukracharja Rabha fought a lot and made struggle as the root of his journey of life. Like Habib Tanveer and Hisanam Kanhailal, Sukracharja Rabha's theatre also picked up folklore materials and improvised in his theatres. In India these three theatre personalities are very unique and exceptional and created a new phenomenon and performed and did for the rural folk people. So, it can be said that he was an ardent follower of Habib Tanveer too.



Audiences enjoying drama

After the death of Kanhailal theatre persons were looking for Sukracharja Rabha; unfortunately, this renowned young theatre artist, who gained nationwide recognition for his open air theatre festival unexpectedly passed away on 8th June, 2018, friday night. He was 41. After Kanhailal demise in 2016, all his friends, fans and followers were looking forward to Sukracharja Rabha keeping the torch burning. According to family sources the actor cum director died at around 10.30 pm at his residence at Rampur village in Agia area of Goalpara district due to cardiac arrest.



Preparation of Drama festival at Rampur

MANI RABHA



His Early Life

Moni Rabha was born on 1st November, 1944 at Trikikila in west Garo Hills of Meghalaya. His father Gaogaram Rabha and mother Jagir Rabha were well known for their social activities and open mindedness in the village. His father was a very sincere social worker. In his childhood days he was known as Mockel and the local Muslim villagers used to call him as Mockeluddin.

Education

Like other children Monindra Rabha began his early education at Trikikila Lower Primary School. After passing his primary standard he joined in Trikikila High School. He passed his Matriculation Examination in 1959. He passed his I.A. Examination in 1962 and soon after his result he joined at Darangiri M.E. School at Dudhnoi as a teacher. In 1965 he completed B.A. and joined as Assistant Teacher at Bapujinagar High School in Goalpara.



Moni Rabha as Cabinet Minister of Meghalaya

His Works

After rendering his service as an Assistant teacher in Goalpara for sometimes, he returned to his home town Trikikila and joined an Assistant Teacher at Trikikila High School. He was also acted as In-charge Headmaster of his school. When he was holding the post as In-charge Headmaster, Meghalaya state was recognised and created a new district in the name of West Garo Hills in 1971. At that time there was a growing demand from the public of the locality on him to contest in the state Assembly election from West Garo Hills as a candidate. Moni Rabha under the constant pressure from the people of the locality contested the Assembly election of Meghalaya held in 1972 and won the election by defeating Md. Nurul Islam. As a successful politician of the region, Moni Rabha has been served the capacity of Speaker in the Meghalaya State Assembly. Rabha has served the Meghalaya Assembly as minister in different portfolios like irrigation, boarder trade, forest and environment, etc. He was a Cabinet Minister for five years. Despite holding distinctive ministerial post and actively involved in state politics, Mr. Rabha has simultaneously been engaged himself in literary activities. Moni Rabha, since the first half of sixty's has been contributing to the Rabha and Assamese literature by writing in journals, souvenirs, newspapers and by publishing books.

Moni Rabha was basically a poet and essayist. His literary works among others include poem, language and literature of the Rabhas. He was a man of multifaceted personality.



Moni Rabha with a few members of All Assam Rabha Sahitya Sabha at Debotola Convention

His literary contributions and authorship

He was associated with almost all the social works and social organisations. A visionary, Moni Rabha was an active social activist. He was a constant source of the Rabha community. He was the founder president of All Assam Rabha Sahitya Sabha. As a president he did lots of work to develop literary society among the Rabhas. During the tenure of his Presidentship people voted for the formation of Standard Rabha Language, comprising of three dialects of Rabhas namely 1. Koch, 2. Randania and 3. Maitury and thus voted for the implementation of the Rabha language in the Rabha dominated Primary Schools which came into effect in 1988, where Rabha Language was introduced in seventy Primary Schools appointing seventy Rabha teachers.

As to his contribution towards the literature, as a writer and a poet, he had contributed many writings and poems both in Assamese and Rabha Language. His literary works among others includes dictionary on Rabha language, book on social and customary laws of the Rabhas etc. Some of his works are- “Sathar” (1963), “Binani” poem (1963), “Mor Parichoi” (1963), “Rabha Bhasa Sikar Pronali” (1970), “Rabha Buranjir Pratidhani” (1972), “Rabha Sanskritir Dhara” (1975), “Rabha Bhasar Fokora-Yozona Aru Jatua Thas” (1994), Rabha Samajor Samajik Ain Aru Dandabidhi” (1994), Hai maru Chay” (2001)



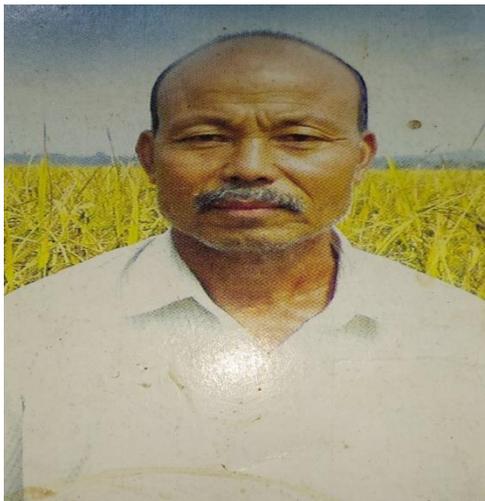
Moni Rabha as a Speaker of Meghalaya Assembly and his Cabinet Colleagues along with P.A. Sangma in 1972

Apart from these published books, Rabha has a high number of unpublished manuscripts ready for publication. Among them mention may be made of Dictionary on Rabha language (more than 15,000 words, written in Rabha-Assamese-English), Mondakini, Gunjan, Shillonger dawar, Kalidasar Meghdoot (translated), Charpakni Khurung (Rabha poem), Mayur Kuwari (Rabha folk tale), Tribhasa (word meaning), Bubureaga (compilation of Rabha songs), Kimbadantir Sadhu (legendary folk tale), ‘Rabha Buranjir Pam Khedi’, ‘Rabha Lokageet Sangraha’, ‘ Rabha BhasarKhandabaika-Jatuathas’, etc. His book ‘Sathat’, is the collection of folk songs being presented in the ‘Baikho’, festival of Rabhas. His publication- ‘Hai maru Chay’, is a collection of ballads relating to Dadan Marukshtri, the legendary hero of the Rabhas.

Award

Moni Rabha was conferred ‘Rebanath Sarma’ award by a leading Guwahati based literary organisation-‘Guwahati Sahitya Kanan’ for his outstanding contribution in literary works. This extra ordinary personality quietly left his earthly abode, his belongings, his family members, relatives and well wishers and friends on 1st May, 2014, which is a great loss for the people of Rabha community and Assam as well.

Black Rice cultivator Upendra Rabha



Location of village of Upendra Rabha

Amguripara is a village in Goalpara district near Assam- Meghalaya boundary. Through the 37 no National Highway from Dudhnoi, we can reach Amguripara village after passing Dabili and crossing Chotmatia village and Nalbari- Ghorapota. Distance is about 12 k.m. we can also reach Amguripara village from the place Bekipul near Krishnai to the south 9km away. On the otherhood, there is an another place ‘Damra’, 6 km far away from Dudhnoi. From Damra, after passing 10 km through Mandipathar, We can reach Amguripara village. The village is significant by its surrounding natural beauty. To the south of the village, there is beautifull hills near the Assam-Meghalaya Border, water flowing with its bubbling over rocks, railway line to Mandipathar near the hills, and the east, west and north of the village there is a vast area of land for cultivation surrounding the village. This village is the place of residence of the Rabha tribe, attracting people by its natural beauty.

About 70 families lived in this village. Total population is 320. Ghorapota L.P. School and Ghorapota M.E. School is situated in the village. After completing their primary and secondary education, students have to go another place for further study. The village was very unknown to people before 2013. But from the mids of 2013, the village name became very famous. The only reason for its popularity of the village is of its resident and farmer Upendra Rabha.

Early life

Upendra Rabha was born on 17th April in 1964 at Amguripara village under Ghorapota revenue circle. His father Din Nath Rabha spend his life as a farmer at that very backward village. Father of Din Nath Rabha and grandfather of Upendra Rabha, Late Ram Mohan

Rabha was also a farmer, mother of Din Nath Rabha was Bamuni Rabha, number of children of Ram Mohan Rabha wear seven. Names of them were: Peteng Rabha, Din Nath Rabha, Satish Rabha, Utheshwari Rabha, Sita Nath Rabha, Ramesh Rabha, Sipti Rabha.

Father of Upendra Rabha, Din Nath Rabha had to bring out his children with very hard labour. Because Din Nath Rabha had 9 children. He had two wives. Mother of Upendra Rabha was Thasheswari Rabha. The names of Upendra Rabhas Brothers and sister were: Late Hireswar Rabha, Late Kalti Rabha, Serni Rabha, Paltan Rabha, Late Jabeleng Rabha, Nagen Rabha, Khagen Rabha, Hendili Rabha and Upendra Rabha.

Education

Upendra was very beloved son of his parents. Upendra Rabha had lost his father when he was only 3 years. His family was not strong economically. But Upendra Rabha's mother never lost her patience. Upendra Rabha started his primary education at Ghorapota L.P. School and Ghorapota M.E. School respectively. After that he started his high school education at Manikganj now is in Meghalaya. But for his family problem he could not complete his high school education. Because, at that time the village was very much effected by Assam movement. Beacause polices went to the village searching for fighters. Upendra Rabha also had to run away from home for his link with assam movement. But later on passed hid matriculation examination from Chotamatia High School as a private candidate.

At his childhood Upendra Rabha was very shy in nature. He was known as very fool to his friends. He always very scared of doing bad things. But he was very attentive to his study. He alwasy got the 1st position at primary classes. His teachers love him very much. But due to his family problem he could not keep his mind in his study. From class four, he had to go to field for cultivation. From such a very early stage of his life, he had to think about his family. His family prolems and their scareities were increasing when their land areas were devided among his brothers. Thus he had to grew up by ploughing and clumping over land and mud.

His works

Upendra Rabha got to know about using various scientific techniques in the production process or in cultivation through a radio programme named "Krishi Darpan" and from 1985 he started to cultivate using scientific techniques. When he faced any problem he felt regret and tried to find out the reasons of his failure or tried to solve his problems facing in the cultivation process mustard seeds, potato, tomato, brinjal and chillis in his cultivated area.

After being completed 5 years of his farming by his own guidance, in 1990 Mr Sarat Sarkar, gram sevak of agriculture deptt. of Assam govt and agricultural development officer Mr Dulal Das approached to him to see his cultivation. They discussed with him about his cultivation. At that time, as the roads to Amguri para were very inconvenient or transport systems are not so convenient, therefore officers used to go by their bicycles to Amguri para.

Upendra Rabha got rice seeds of "IR-36" varieties from agriculture deptt. which he used in his cultivation using scientific techniques. Agricultural officers advised him to cultivate three times in the same land area in a year. As he followed their advice he got positive result and his production was increased.

Following officer's advice, Upendra Rabha started to produce mustard seeds after completing production of rice seeds "IR-36" varieties. After production of mustard seeds he started to produce ladiesfinger in the same land area. At that time, there is availability of cowdung and for using cowdung in the cultivation, production outputs were increased. Other farmers of the village or of nearer places used to cultivate in the same process as was done by Upendra Rabha. It can be said green revolution came out in the village at that time. As Upendra Rabha tried out his efforts very attentively in the cultivation process, he was able to increase his production and got positive result.

Upendra Rabha has not got any certificate from govt as he was the first farmer to cultivate mustard seeds in Goalpara district. Plastics were supplied to Upendra Rabha for making green house to cultivate vegetables from DRDA of Goalpara district. In 2008 luckily he met agriculture scientist Benjamin Kaman in Krishi Vigyan Kendra of Goalpara district at Dudhnoi High School field. Farmers of the Ghorapota region were given training from 'Krishi Vigyan Kendra' at the 'Ghorapota Baikho Bhawan' near the Assam Meghalaya Border in Goalpara district. He again met the scientist Mr Benjamin Kaman and Mr Biswajit Dey in the training. A very warm relation grew up between the Krishi Vigyan Kendra and Upendra Rabha. Dr. Uttam Kumar Baruah, a scientist in the Krishi Vigyan Kendra of Goalpara and other scientists also gave him valuable advice in regard to his cultivation. Dr. Uttam Kumar Baruah gave him seeds of the variety of black rice. For the help of Dr. Baruah and of the other scientist, Upendra Rabha is able to become a progressive farmer of district's Amguri para area and become a memorable person among people in his life. With the support of scientists of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, black rice varieties were newly named as "Upendra Rice" by the agriculture deptt. of Goalpara district.

His family

In 1994, he got married with the daughter of teacher Bhaben Rabha, resident of Chadakpara village. Her name is Nandita Rabha. Now he is living a very happy life with her.\

His appreciation and contribution

Upendra Rabha was appreciated for his banana cultivation by agriculture department. At that time Sarat Ch. Rabha, a chief executive member of Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council was given a charge by agriculture department to distribute banana plants among the farmers. Therefore farmers of Goalpara district were given banana plants to cultivate and Upendra Rabha also got 20 nos. of banana plants. These plants are called tissue culture plants in banana. These banana plants were very small. With good management and efforts of him, he was able to earn appreciation for his banana garden. Agriculture officer Mr. Ananda Karmakar who is now Co-Director of Agriculture department of Government of Assam and Mr. Murari Mohan Rai, agriculture officer of Dudhnoi approached to him for inspection of his banana garden. Once a time, this banana garden was able carry gratification to the people of Amguripara. Because Upendra Rabha got first prize for his banana garden from the Krishi Vigyan Kendra and similarly the second position was awarded to Mr. Kinaram Rabha, of Salpara village.

Even today, Upendra Rabha is very active and investing his skill for development of cultivation with new innovative ideas. Every year, he shows his credibility by getting envious success in farming of varieties of crops like vegetables such as pumpkins, cucumbers, bananas, lettuces, potatoes and cauliflowers etc.

In 2014 and 2015, Upendra Rabha got varieties of seeds and manuresto use in his cultivation and got in subsidies rate from the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA). In 2008, he was given fertilizers and medicines to use in his cultivation in about 80 bighas of land from Krishi Vigyan Kendra of Goalpara.

KAMALA MIRI



Early life

Kamala was born on 1894 in a very backward area called Pachim Gulung Tamera Gaon Mishing village under Rangamati mauza of West Bokakhat block of Golaghat district under Dergaon police station. He was one of the conspicuous freedom fighter from Mishing community of Assam. His father was an ideal cultivator and trained his child to be sincere, active and dedicated to the nation.



Present family of Saheed Kamala Miri

Education

He had no formal education. During his days there was no educational institute in Badulipara and its adjacent areas. His father's name was Sirkou Loying and mother was Mongoli Loying. He was a landlord and cultivated a huge plot of land. His father encouraged him to for school education. He along with some of his village friends tried many times to go to Golaghat the then head quarter of the district. During that time there was no communication system available for them. There was a small route which was covered by jungles and rivulets. It was not possible for him to communicate everyday for school. Moreover there were numbers of wild animals, which were a great threat for his life. On the other hand he had to help his father in his agricultural works. Being a agricultural family, his father required the assistance of additional man power. Because the area was a flood prone area and they had to complete their agricultural works before flood. And the lack of communication facility and excessive pressure of domestic works virtually blocked his golden way of education. It was rather tough to reach Golaghat for the purpose of education. Moreover there was only one educational institute for entire Golaghat area. But he had earned some primary knowledge from his senior person and colleagues when he was engaged in freedom movement of India.

His family life

According to his community custom he married and his wife name was Kaniki Loying. He had two sons and three daughters.



Saheed Kamala Miri file photo

His works

Saheed Kamala Miri Sacrifice his life for our nation. It is a great contribution for our nation. In the year 1921 Mahatma Gandhi started the ‘non co-operation’ movement which exerted dominant impact over Assam. In response to Gandhiji’s call for nation he also actively participated in the freedom struggle. In the year 1928 he joined the Indian National Congress and started Swadeshi Movement with help his friends and other senior Congress leader like Sankar Baruah, Kamala Miri, Dwarikanath Goswami, Naren Sarma, Rajen Baruah. He was the first leader representing from Mishing Community who took active part in Indian Freedom Movement.

Like other leader of freedom movement, he dedicated himself in the movement of 1942. His team of workers consisted of Mishing youths like *Boloram Paw, Kula Pathori, Atiram Paw, Basu Paw, Adik Morang, Bepung Pathori, Dhonaram Loying* etc. Kamala Miri and his co-workers organised a volunteer force in Bonkual village and recruited number of Mishing youths for the purpose. These volunteers propagated the message of non-violence and boycott of foreign goods and use of swadeshi among the Mishing people. Some other who joined the movement from the nearby villages were *Chenikon Loying, Abhiram Paw, Alidhar Doley, Sondhon Pegu, Atin Paw, Soru Taid and Sambhuram Pathori* and two Mishing girls like *Promila Kaman* of Medok village and *Bhogimola* of Bortika village. *Kamala Miri* was the president and *Boloram Paw* was the secretary of the volunteer force.

From 1940, Kamala Miri became the active member of the District Congress Committee. On 21st September, 1942 Kamala Miri led a twenty member team of Santi Sena on foot to Golaghat Congress Committee office. Getting the scent of this development the police raided the Congress office on the night of 23rd June. ‘Quit India Movement’ was the most remarkable mission for the nation and Assam as well. His call to give up of foreign goods, and other machine made household materials, opium, wine etc. evoked a good response from the people. He laid emphasis on the importance of handloom or handmade cloths and the village cottage industry. He also gave importance on agro-based product for making people self independent. His dream was equal society and trying to solve the caste system existing in the society. His way of agitation gave a great blow to British administration. The British police was in search of Kamala Miri and attempted to arrest him in order to demoralise the agitators. Unfortunately in 1942, Kamala Miri and some others were arrested and sent to jail. In 9th February, 1942, Kamala Miri started indefinite fast in Jorhat jail as a token of respect to Gandhiji's fast. In jail his health began to deteriorate due to fast and heart ailment. The jail

authority tried to persuade him to apply for release by signing a bond of not joining the movement in future. But Kamala Miri turned a deaf ear to this and undauntedly replied, if I am to die, I shall die here in jail but would not sign discharging the nation. I shall get out of prison only when India attained her freedom. Later he was given medical treatment by the doctor of jail, but day by day his health was deteriorating. Finally on 22nd April, 1943 it was decided to release him along with others. But very unfortunately on the midnight of 22nd April, 1993 Kamala Miri took his last breath in the lap of Narendra Nath Sarma, a co-prisoner of Miri. In this way this young personality dedicated his valuable life for the sack of nation.



Saheed Kamala Miri Tomb at Jorhat Jail

Government of Assam recognised him as freedom posthumously with freedom fighter pension. Moreover he was honoured by giving copper plate on 15th August, 1997.



Copper plate of Kamala Miri

KHAGESAWR BORI



Freedom fighter Khagesawr Bori

Early life

Khageswar Bori was a freedom fighter, a social reformer, an ideal cultivator who attempted to bring an agricultural revolution among the tribal youths of his time

simultaneously along with his revolutionary spirit of freedom movement. He was born in the month of November 1906 at Namtemera of Dhanshree Gaon under Dergaon police station of present Golaghat district. His father's name was Dhaniram Bori and mother's name was Luhumi Loying. Dhaniram Bori was a cultivator having a good plot of land. Dhaniram Bori had three sons and three daughters. Khargeswar Bori was the eldest one who earned an inherent spirits of dedication and sacrifice in the interest of the Nation.



Freedom Fighter Khageswar Bori's Sons, daughter-in-laws and his grand children

Education

He went to Golaghat Govt. Bezbaruah School in 1916 for his Primary education and completed his Primary education from Golaghat. During his time earning education was a tough job, because it was not easily accessible for all. And there was no single educational institute in around his locality. Moreover, communication from one place to another was not easy. It was a subject of a rich man or family. Since his father was a rich farmer so he got an opportunity to carry on his study. But he could not proceed for higher education because of

the socio-political pressure of freedom movement. He left his school and joined in the freedom movement.



Freedom Fighter Kageswar Bori along with his wife and grand child

When he was in school he got opportunity to meet some important personality. Though he was a school student, he was loved by his senior students and thus he got the opportunity to develop friendly ties with them. After completion of his primary school he came back to his native village and helped his father in his agricultural works. In the evening time he met the village youths and discussed about the problems of their society. He organised the village youths and began to work for the community members. He formed Krisak Sabha to help the rural needy farmers. In the mean time the Indian freedom struggle rocked the every corners of the state with no boundary. He could not stay at his home. He came to Golaghat and joined in the Congress Party. He was then eighteen years old. He met there some eminent freedom personalities like Kushal Kowar, Kamala Miri, Sankar Baruah, Duleswar Dutta, Mohen Baruah, Debeswar Rajkhowa, Bishnu Kakoti, who were actively involved in the freedom movement of India. He was influenced by the ideology of these personalities and inspired by the great mantra of freedom struggle. He joined the volunteer force organized by Kamala Miri. They oath to organized for quit Indian Movement. Golaghat Government Bezbaruah High School became the meeting point of the youths or volunteers for some times, where he got the scope of cultivating knowledge of freedom movement. He used to participate in various meetings, processions, picketing etc. along with his other friends. In the year 1936 he participated in a workshop organized by Sankar Baruah. The people from 18 nos. of Mouzas of Golaghat district. The basic objective of the workshop was to fought against the British rule and also promised by the people to carry out the movement

with a spirit to do or die until and unless the objective was fulfilled. In the same year they started their agitation with full vigor and continued for more than 9 month. He believed the ideology of non-violence. He inculcated the villagers to restore peace and tranquility among them. He fought against the evil practices of the villagers like social prejudices, consumption of opium and other such harmful things. He taught the people to be united and work for the welfare for the people as well for the nation. He advised the people to discard the foreign goods and trained them to be self dependent.

He joined as active member of National Congress in 1921 and took part in picketing. He picketed in many places in Golaghat and other parts of the nearby localities in front of shops and other business establishments associated with the foreign goods which were asked to discard by the National Congress.

He was arrested u/s 17 (I) in 1921-1922 for anti-government activity and sent to jail for six months. He was later released on giving undertaking not to participate in National Congress movement. But he did not follow his undertaking given to the British rulers and continued his activities against the British rule.

Though he contributed a lot in the freedom struggle of India the Government of India did not recognized his contribution till 1985. He was not being considered as a freedom fighter. It was only in the year 1985, eye of the state Government has opened and he was given finally the status of freedom fighter. He was conferred the honour in 15th August, 1985 and given a cooper slate as a recognition of his great contribution in Indian freedom movement.

CHENI CHANDRA LOYING



Cheni Chandra Loying

Early life

Cheni Chandra Loying was a freedom fighter who was born at Namtemea Gaon under Dergaon police station of Golaghat district in 9th February, 1910. His father's name was Atoram Loying and mother was Baneswari Loying. His father was a farmer. He had ten sons and five daughters. Cheni Chandra Loying was one of them. He married Jonaki at the age of 24. He had three sons and four daughters. From his childhood Cheni Chandra Loying liked to work for rural people. When he was 12 years old, he organized the village youths and formed a football club. He along with other friends met once in a day and planned how to make them good players. Since he was from a rich family, he did not have any problems of finance. He

therefore could help the friends who were economically weak. He was an active social worker and active member of Congress Party.



Cheni Chandra Loying's present family

Education

He completed his primary education from Golaght Government Bezbaruah School. His father was land lord and had huge agricultural income. His father encouraged him for study and to work hard. But due to non availability of higher educational institute in their locality he could not continue his further studies though he was interested. Moreover the socio-political situation of his time was not conducive which compelled him to leave his study. He along with other brothers helped their father in agriculture. As he had a little bit knowledge of the politics he was very much influenced by the teachings of the leaders of that time who very often visited their village in connection of the movement. 1930 he joined in the volunteer party formed by Kamala Miri and made himself engaged in the awareness campaign against the British rule. He advised the people to boycott foreign goods. He attended many dharnas, hartals and picketed in front of the Government offices. He along with his friends visited the villages and advised the people not pay excessive tax or revenue to the Government. Thus he became a well leader among the rural people. In 1921 he was arrested by the British police for his illicit involvement of some anti Government activities.

He was sent to jail for a few days. But he did not leave his involvement and carried on his activities along with other friends.



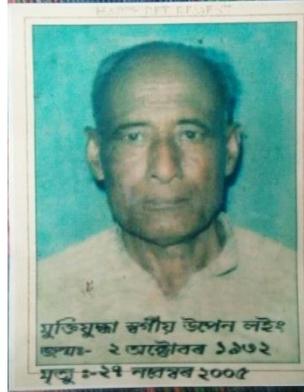
Cheni Chandra Loying (from right 2nd line 1st) with his freedom fighter group

His contribution in society

After independence, in 1964 he became the Panchayat President. As President he motivated the people of his areas to work hard for the nation. He taught the people about the importance of Panchayati Raj System. He opened a co-operative trading system for Panchayat. He also helped and motivated the people in establishing cottage industries and other such institutions which may develop the skill of the rural people. He was very much influenced by the Gandhian philosophy what he tried to apply in his post independent life. He laid emphasis on establishing small scale industries in each and every village of Assam. He therefore took utmost initiative in establishing cane and bamboo industry in his areas. He encouraged the women and helped to extend their weaving industry. Awards: In the year 1963 Govt. of Assam considered for his Freedom Fighter Pension

He suffered a lot in the freedom struggle. He faced severe torture by the British police. In his later life he became physically weak. But he was a man of strong mentality. Government of Assam conferred him freedom fighter status in 1963 along with pension. This strong and dedicated personality took his last breath on 30th August, 1968.

UPEN LOYING



Early life

(Born in 2nd October, 1932, Died on 27th November, 2005) Upen Loing was born in Namtemera village which was popularly known as Naigaon, under Kamargaon mouza and Bokakhat sub-Division in the district of Golaghat, on 2nd October, 1932. His father's name was Maniram Miri (Pawo) and mother was Nagini Pathori of Gutunggaon. Although his father was illiterate, yet he adorned the post of Gaonbura. As such he had to maintain a close relation with the Mouzadar, police personals and other Government administrative officers of the British Government. It is worth to be mentioned here that Upen Loyal's forefather Atin Miri son of Kalong Miri was also a Government Gaobura, who was issued "*Sanad*" (an official document) by the then Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar district on 2nd February, 1910. Late Maniram Miri had four sons and five daughters. Upen Loyal was the eldest son of Maniram Miri. Maniram Miri was a cultivator. He had to maintain a large family of eleven members with the income derived from cultivation. Upen Loyal had grown up in the open lap of nature. The River Disoi gave him the challenge of life and passed his childhood playing with water at Disoi river, playing hide and seek, singing Oi-Ni-Tom, grazing cows, tilling soil in the field.

Family life

Upen Loyal had two wives. Bamadoi Loyal of Dhansiri Temera Gaon was his first wife and Kutum Loyal of Elengmari village was his second wife. He had six sons and seven daughters. His first wife gave birth three sons and four daughters and second wife gave birth three sons and three daughters.



Upen Loying's present family

Education

Upen Loying received his primary education from Misimiati Lower Primary School located 5 kilometres away from his village. During his time there was no primary school in around his village. He had to travel a long distance for his primary education. Moreover, communication was also very poor, because there was no proper road connection. After completion of his primary education he enrolled his name at Golaghat Government Bezbarooah High School.. As it too far from his village, he had to live in a boarding house. Fortunately, Shankar Barua, a veteran freedom fighter provided a boarding house free of rent in his residential campus in Golaghat town for him and other students coming from remote areas of Golaghat.

His role as a freedom fighter

It was a period of great political turmoil when he was student middle primary school. The situation was disturbed due to the outbreak of world war-II (1939-1945) and the

movement launched under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The wave of the national movement sparked the political scenario of Assam. Golaghat was not lagging behind in this regard. Many patriotic people of Golaghat including Kamala Miri, Shankar Baruah and Rajen Baruah took extensive role in augmenting the movement in a perfect direction. They staged dharnas, picketing, hartals and compelled the people boycotting foreign goods. The British administration always observed the movements of these leaders with stern look. Therefore they had to take safety shelter in remote tribal dominated areas, jungles and sometimes in Mishing villages. This gave an opportunity to Maniram Miri and Upen Loying to come into close contact with these patriotic leaders. At night of 27th September, 1942, Martyr Kamala Miri was arrested along with some of his colleagues when they were sitting in a meeting in Congress Office at Golaghat town. In such situation, Kamala Miri's wife sent some of the boarders of Shankar Baruah's house to enquire where about Kamala Miri. Upen Loying was one of them who took initiative in gathering information of Kamala Miri's arrest. Thus Upen Loying and his father were influenced by Shankar Baruah, Dwarikanath Goswami, Rajen Baruah Naren Sarma and Kamala Miri, who were active volunteers of the movement and played strategic role in functioning the movement in right direction. They took stern responsibility in organising the mass people. In 1942, they made lots of socio-political events and gathered the mass people and Loying and his father captured by the ideology of those leaders and compelled them to work for the freedom fighters. Loying had to go through various socio-political events and made maximum efforts as it was done by other freedom fighters. Thus time went on and the day caught in the fate of the Indian people. India was given the right to use all powers, resources and many more and on 15th August of 1947 She got freedom British Colonial regime.

His works

After independence he was rewarded by giving various prestigious social share what helped him in changing the social scenario of Mishing society of those localities where from he was hailed. He was elected as the Vice-President of Golaghat district Congress Committee. He became the President of Bokakhat Bolck Congress Committee. He was elected as President of the Gram Panchayat. He had to quit politics in 1995 due his ill health.

He was social worker of untiring zeal and indomitable spirit. He devoted his life for establishment of Lower Primary School, M.E. School in his own village and he remained engaged for developing an atmosphere of education. But time too tough to create a situation like education during his time due to socio- political turmoil. He took enough pain for construction of Golaghat Tribal Rest House where financial grant of Rs. 30,000/- was earned from Government under his restless effort. He was the only executive member of Golaghat in

the central Committee of Assam Tribal Sangha. As a member of All Assam Tribal Sangha, he actively participated and felt the proud privilege of holding the two sessions of All Assam Tribal Sangha in his own district in 1973 and 1982 respectively. He was the Chairman of Panbari Farming Corporation of Bokakhat. During his tenure 150 poor Tribal Farmers were settled in the Farm. He was the state Secretary of Assam '*Bane Kebang*', the biggest socio-economic organisation of the Mishing. His work *Bane Kebang* portrays the life of the ethnic groups of Axom. His other works include *Mishing Coneng*, *Sonpahi*, *Axomiya Kristir Samuh Abhash*, and *Atit Axom*. Thus he contributed his most of his valuable times for the nation and for development of the people. His restless activities and selfless dedication made him physically weak and in his later part of life he was suffering from various ailment and that is why he quit politics in 1995 due his severe health problem. He was later suffered from paralysis. And this bold and ideal personality breathed his last at 10 pm on 27th November, 2005 at his residence.

PROMILA MEDOK



Promila's son and grandson with daughter in-law

Early Life

Promila Medok was born in 1903 at Medokgaon about twelve kilometres north-west of Dergaon of Golaghat district. Bikram Medok was her father and Memeri Medok was her mother, who passed their life under darkness due to economic hardship in their family. Her father was a hard worker and cultivated his flood affected land with limited access, the product of which was not enough to sustain their family. But he imparted wise lesson to his child to be dedicative and sincere to serve the interest of the country. Bikram Medok had four daughters and a son and Promila was the youngest one. She was brought up with much care, love and affection by her parents, brother and sisters. She was grown up in the midst of nature, with having the soft touch of nature and its surroundings. Like other children of her village she was an open bird and played with other village kids with full of joy and merriment. Thus she passed her childhood days by merry-making, swimming in the river.

Paomila's father was illiterate, but he wished that his younger daughter should get proper education. Promila somehow learnt to write her name due to her father's ardent effort. She learnt her domestic works from her brother and sisters. She even helped her father in agricultural work. She was also an expert weaver, a good singer and dancer. She used to sing 'Onitom' very melodiously.

Her works as freedom fighter

She was an illiterate woman knowing little about patriotism and other virtues of society and human life. Between 1930 and 1932 the wave of Civil Disobedience Movement and Quit India movement of 1942 broke out everywhere in India and Assam was not an exception in this regard. It spread like wild fire throughout Assam. This national movement ignited her to be freedom fighter. In her teenage, Promila could understand Assamese language a little bit. She learnt a little from the discussions held at her home and in around her localities among some important personalities like Kamala Miri, Nonigopal Mitra, her cousin Yadab Medok. In fact these discussions influenced her and propelled her into the wave of freedom movement and finally began her patriotic activities. At the same time noted freedom fighter Shankar Baruah of Golaghat organised the tribal villages and the people inhabited by the Mishing people living on the bank of the river Brahmaputra, Disoi, Dhanshiri and Gelabil and picked up Kamala Miri, Charu Miri, Atin Miri, Shambhuram Miri and many others to fight against the British Rule with more solid and strong foundation. Promila was lagging behind. She took permission from her father and brother Jadab and joined in the movement with strong determination and objectives to drive out the Britishers from Indian soil. She was accompanied by Baghmola Morang of Bortikagaon.

As it was advised by Gandhiji to give up the use of foreign goods to discourage the foreign businessmen, Promila Medok was seriously torched by that very mission called by Mahatma Gandhiji. She gave up mill made products like cloths and other household materials manufactured by big foreign industries. Promila organised tribal villages and women who were the main source of grass root energy of the society. She developed awareness among the rural Mishing women and sensitised them about the exploitation made by the British rulers. She compelled the tribal women to avoid the foreign cloths and other house hold materials used by them in their day-today life activities. She took active part in burning of foreign cloths and other materials made available by the British Government. Shankar Barua and Rajen Barua of Golaghat took an initiative in organising the people of different localities in the movement of burning of foreign goods. She also took part in picketing along with other senior worker before wine shop, opium vendors in order to save the life of the people from drug addiction, which was purposefully made legitimised by the British Government to

destroy the healthy atmosphere of the Assamese society. As a result of her serious involvement in the freedom movement, she received severe and savagery blows and torture from British rulers. She was beaten mercilessly as a result of which her two ribs were broken and got serious injury on her chest and her two broken ribs were not treated properly and she had carried the pain of the ribs till her death.

During the movement Shankar Barua and Rajen Barua the two renowned and dedicated worker of Golaghat had to take shelter in Promila's house to avoid police atrocities of British administration. This has given another blow to her and she was served notice for arrest by Golaghat Administration twice. She later remained aloof from common people and passed an underground life and carried out her activities from behind the screen.

In 1937 Kamala Miri organised "Peace Volunteer Force" in Golaghat and Promila Medok became his main companion in his organisational works in 1942. Promila along with her leaders and co-workers extended valuable human service for the evacuees coming from Burma to India during the second the world war. In the mean time Gandhiji's Quit India movement got extra momentum that began rocking the Nation. Promila Medok immediately jumped into this movement and started her do or die activities. British police were annoyed with role played by Promila Medok. She was encircled by police and Indian Militaries for the purpose of arresting her and to imprison her in a far distance jail. But Promila with her inborn intelligence managed to escape from the scene. While doing this she had to run fast to a place of safety but in that run she had tumbled on the ground and lost a few teeth of her mouth.

After India's independence on 15th August, 1947, Promila got a chance to think about her personal life. She got married to Deuram Tayung of Dergaon according to the Mishing custom. Promila stated a new life but her husband passed away very soon leaving her alone in this earth. She could not succeed her married life after her husband's death. She came back to her brother's house, but after a few years her brother also died. She became lonely once again. Later she adopted a male child who took care of her in her old age. As a reward of her stern participation in Quit India Movement she got severe pain and physical torture from the colonial police and she survived with two broken ribs till 2010. She was associated with various social institutions like rural Panchayat, Gram Panchayat, Schools and Cooperative society in that unknown tribal village. . She was the prime member of village L.P. School establishment in the year 1938. After independence India in 1947 a M.E. School was established by leading personalities. She was also a member of her village High school S.M.C. in the year 1960. She was also associated with her village primary health centre and Mishing "Bane Kebang. Government of Assam gave her recognition as freedom fighter and

gave freedom fighter pension and also honoured her in 9th August, 1993 during the time of 50 years of Golden jubilee celebration ceremony of Indian independence. She was also honoured by Government of Assam with a Copper Plate in 15th August, 1997. After a prolong days of bone injury this bold and noble lady took her last breath in 2010.

TABU RAM TAID



Early life and Education

Tabu Taid was born on 1st August 1942 in a geographically remote and economically challenged village Ghunasuti Avengia in Lakhimpur district of Assam. His father was Ubbang Taid. The village, 'Ghunasuti Ayengia' is a settlement of an indigenous tribe of Assam, the Mishings or Miri. Often visited by floods during the monsoon season, the villagers were poor subsistence level farmers. As of 1942, education or awareness of the need for formal education was not much prevailing in rural Assam. However, Ubbang Taid, being able to read and write in Assamese, the major language of the region, understood the need of formal education and sent his sons (excluding the eldest) to school.

Education

He had to face lots of challenges and obstacles during his school life. At one time taking formal education was a matter of serious concern, but he pursued education single-mindedly. Tabu Taid performed well in his academic life. After finishing lower primary in his native village, and upper primary and high school in the nearest town North Lakhimpur, Tabu Taid went on to receive intermediate and undergraduate level education under Calcutta University and postgraduate level education at Delhi University. Earlier, when Tabu Taid was in the 7th standard, the infamous 'Bor Bhumikampa', 1950 Assam Tibet Earthquake devastated the Lakhimpur area in Assam, affecting the already poor, disadvantaged people living there, quite significantly. To top it, the flood situation worsened owing to the change of course of the rivers in the area due to the earthquake. So Tabu Taid's family was suffering acute financial crisis at that time. But, being a brilliant student, he was helped by the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Narendrapur in Kolkata. They agreed to bear the cost

for his post-Matric education. He received his graduation with honors in English from the Ramakrishna Mission Residential College, Nrendrapur under Calcutta University in 1963 and moved on to Delhi for higher education, he enrolled in the Hindu College University of Delhi in 1964. After completion his education in English he started his career as a lecturer of English language in Cotton College, Guwahati. He went to the United Kingdom after being awarded a scholarship under a competitive State Overseas Scholarships Scheme, where he obtained a Postgraduate diploma on Applied Linguistics from University of Reading, UK (1973–1974). He also completed a certificate course in Distance Education at the University of London Institute of Education, UCL Institute of Education, (1982) under a British Council fellowship program.

Work as an educator and education administrator

After completion of graduation, he worked as a school teacher in Delhi for sometimes. He served in various senior level posts in various educational institutes of the Government of Assam. Tabu Ram Taid started his career as a school teacher. After completing his higher education, he joined as a lecturer in English at Cotton College, Guwahat. Tabu Ram Taid left the teaching post he held at Cotton College for fourteen years (1967–1981) and joined as an educational administrator in 1981, served the post of a Deputy Director of Public Instruction. Later he was elevated to different higher posts such as Director, SCERT, Director of Secondary Education, Director of Higher Education, Chairman, Board of Secondary Education, Chairman, State Selection Board (higher education), etc. under the Education Department of the Government of Assam. The state government had also deputed Prof. Taid as the first Director of the state-sponsored Institute, named Anundoram Borooh Institute of Language, Art and Culture, entrusting him with the responsibility of building it up as an institute for research and publications, especially in the areas of indigenous languages, literature and culture, a job which he accomplished well. He retired from state government service in the year 2000, but continued as the Chairman of the State Selection Board (higher education) till February 2004. During the years of his assignment as the chairman of the board of Secondary Education, Assam (1996–2000), he was the unanimous choice for the chair of the Zonal Council of Boards of Secondary Education (COBSE), North-East Zone. He was formerly the Member, Education Reforms Commission, Assam, 1993; Member, Publication Board, Assam; Member, Regional Committee (Assam), Sahitya Akademi and National Book Trust; Member of a Committee, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India (for selection of institutes/organizations for disbursement of grants for tribal art and culture); Member, Executive Council, Guwahati University; Member, Executive Council, Dibrugarh University;

Member, Board of Management, Krishna Kanta State Open University; Consultant for the National Council of Educational Research and Training project on State Studies in School Education (for the state of Assam); and he was due to take over as the Chairman of the national body (COBSE) on 4th April 2001, but meanwhile he had returned to his parent post on 1st April 2000.

He was recommended for the Indian Foreign Service by the Union Public Service Commission, Government of India, making him the first person in the Mishing community to attain such an honorable distinction. However, he could not join the service due to health problems at that time.



Prof. Tabu Ram Taid and his Library

Authorship and Editorial Work

He was the founder President of the Mishing Abong Kebang (Linguistic Society of the Mishing, also known as Mishing Sahitya Sabha, the apex body of the Mishing community aiming for the preservation and development of the Mishing language. His body of work includes the 'Mishing Gompir Kumsung' (a 900 page dictionary of the Mishing language with an introduction to Mishing grammar), *Ekunki Nibondho (Bouquet of Articles)*, a collection of selected articles written in Assamese, 'Glimpses', a collection of articles written in English, research work on the Mishing and Assamese language, editorial work on traditional Mishing literary artifacts like folk songs, along with lexicographical works like dictionary, grammar and phonology of the Mishing language. 'Banikanta Kakati, the Man and his Works' was

compiled and edited by Prof. Tabu Ram Taid and Prof. Ranjit Kumar Dev Goswami in 1987 and published by the Publication Board, Assam. His work on his mother tongue, Mishing, is his invaluable contribution to the Mishing community and also to the Assamese people and culture at large. Tabu Taid authored a series of lessons in English for school students which have been broadcast over radio multiple times since the mid-1970s. He has also authored a number of English textbooks for elementary students and several key volumes about Mishing, *Mishing Bhaxar Banan Poddhoti* (an orthography). He has contributed three research papers on the Mishing language published in the journal, 'Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area', University of California, Berkeley, USA in 1987 and 1995.

Honours and Awards

Prof. Tabu Ram Taid was honoured with the title of 'Agom Migang' conferred by the Mishing Agom Kebang (Mishing Sahitya Sabha) in 2007. He was awarded the prestigious 'Bhasha Samman Award' by the Sahitya Akademi for his contributions to Mishing language and literature, in 2010. The Sahitya Akademi instituted 'Bhasha Samman' in 1996 to be given to writers, scholars, editors, collectors, performers or translators who have made considerable contribution to the propagation, modernization or enrichment of various Indian languages. The awards are given to three or four persons every year in different Indian languages on the basis of recommendation of experts' committees constituted for the purpose.

Mr. Tabu Taid was conferred the Sukapha Award 2011–2012, by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Assam, in recognition of his valuable contribution to education, literature, culture, scholarly work, linguistics, arts, authorship and public service. He was presented with the award on 2nd December 2011, by the Chief Minister of the State, Mr. Tarun Gogoi in a ceremony held in Dibrugarh, Assam.

The 'Basudev Jalan Award', 2012, was awarded to Prof. Tabu Ram Taid by the Assam Sahitya Shabha. The award is conferred on an individual who has contributed towards the growth of language, literature and culture of the ethnic communities in the region.

Prof. Tabu Taid was honoured with the title 'Axom Shreshtho 2015' for his lifelong contribution to Education in the state of Assam. The 'Axom Shreshtho 2015' awards are an endeavour of The Telegraph (Calcutta) to celebrate and honour to eminent people who have made the state of Assam proud.

DR. JATIN MIPUN

Early life

Dr. Jatin Mipun was born on 1st August, 1952 at Gandhia Mishing Gaon under Nakachari Mouza in the district of Jorhat. Originally his father was an inhabitant of Majuli Sub-Division, the present Majuli district and later he shifted to Jorhat town. Mipun was grown up in the lap of nature. Because his original village was a boon of nature, where he could exploit the beauty and flavour of untouch treasure of nature. He passed his childhood playing in waters of Tiyok and Puthinoi, playing hide and seek, grazing cows and buffaloes in the large unabated field and so on. Sebiram Mipun was his father and Padmini Mipun (Paw) was his mother. Sebiram Mipun had four sons and four daughters. Dr. Jatin Mipun was 5th son of Sebiram Mipun. The name of his brothes and sisters are Late Kusum Mipun, Late Jagneswar Mipun, Anu Mipun, Dulal Mipun, Manikanta Mipun, Ranumani Mipun and renu Mipun.

Education

Jatin Mipun was admitted in 221 no. Gandhia Mishing Lower Primary School in 1960 and he completed his primary education in 1963. Thereafter he was enrolled in Hemlai M.E. School. He studied class-V and class-VI in Golaghat Government High School. In 1969 he passed Matriculation (HSLC) Examination securing 2nd Division. He then got admission in PU Science stream (Night Section) in Sivasagar College and passed the final examination in 3rd Division. After completion of PU examination he enrolled in B.A. Degree course in Sivasagar College and in 1973 he passed B.A. examination. After completion iof his graduation, he went to Dibrugarh University for higher study. He passed M.A. in sociology securing second class. He did not waste his time in search of engagement or job rather he carried out research study in Sociology and in 1983 he conferred Ph. D. Degree by Dibrugarh University.

His works

Soon after completion of his study he joined as lecture in Dhemaji College in 1976 and as a lecture on adhoc basis in sociology, under Dibrugarh University. He served as Research Officer in District Research Office, Diphu, Karbi Anglong in 1979. Later he joined as an ACS Officer in 1980 and served as an Extra Assistant Commissioner, Dhubri. In 1983 he joined in Indian Police Service. He attended training programme of National Police Academy at Sibsagarpalli at Hyderabad in Andhrapradesh. He rendered his dedicated service as an Assistant Superintendent of Police at Jorhat, In-Charge Sub-Divisional Police Officer at Golaghat, Additional Superintendent of Police, Kokrajhar and Assistant Commandant Second Assam Battalian. He also served as Additional Superintendent of Police, Sivasagar in 1988,

as Commandant third Assam Police Task Force (APTF) at Makum. Later on APTF Makum, shifted to Khajuwa Beel, Darrang. He transferred and posted as S.P. Goalpara in 1993. He served as a superintendent of Railway Police, Assam. He became the DIG of Boarder in 1996-97 and also the DIG of Bureau of Investigation. He joined as the Director of State Fire Organisation in 1997. He was promoted to I.G.P. on 14th August, 2002 and remained as Director of SFSO till his death.

Mipun as a writer

Dr. Jatin Mipun was a prolific writer. He was a novelist and short story writer and a Research Scholar. He was a novelist, a short story writer, a poet and essayist and one act play writer. He wrote a good numbers of novels and books on short stories. Some of his such writings are-*Miksijili (1993)*, *Ratan Rabha, (1996)* published in Agradoot, Rangali Bihu issue, *Mipak Ajan (2001)*, *Paramananda Medak, (2001)*, *Parin Ajon (2004)*, *Murkong Chaparit Appun (2003, published in Asamiya Pratidin, Puja isse)*, *Atai, 2005 (Published in Assamese Pratidin, Puja Magazine, 2005)*. Other than this he had also wrote short stories. Some of his short stories are-*Joyshri'r Kathare, (2002)*, *Kangkana'r Prithivit, (1998)*, *Mipak Magba (2001)*. Moreover he edited a few articles like Lazzar Deshat Lazpai Ahiloo, 2005, January. It consists of twelve articles, Asom Darshan, 1992, consists of nineteen articles and Katibihur Ruprekha, 2003 October, consist of sixty articles of different writers.

Dr. Jatin Mipun was brought up in a culturally rich family. His father Sebiram Mipun was Sarkari Gaon Bura. From his childhood Jatin Mipun was deeply influenced by Shankari culture because his father was a sincere follower vaishnavite religious ideology who discarded his ancestor worship with his traditional rice beer and sacrificing of pig or hen. He used to recite the hymns of 'Kirtan', 'Ghosa', till midnight. Jatin Mipun learned this art of recitation of holly books when he was a student of class VIII. He saw the artistic skill and the performance of his paternal uncle from his tender age. This gave him a wide scope of enriching his cultural personality. He therefore used to write one act play simultaneously along with his regular study.

After entering in Government job as an administrative officer, he got many opportunities of undergoing extensive tour within and outside the country. He visited the foreign countries like U.K., Bangladesh and Thailand. He was invited to visit Rajshahi University, Bangladesh to take part in seminar. He presented the topic "Mishing Tribes, Social and Cultural Change-A Geographical Evaluation". He was also invited to UK to participate in an inaugural world forum organized jointly by voluntary organization "International Biographical Centre Cambridge, England and American Biographical Institute, Raleigh USA.

Dr. Mipun was popular among the general public as well as the elite groups. He had deep love for the land and the people of Assam. He was a source of inspiration of the new generation. He was liberal, simple and straight. His demise was very unfortunate the people of Assam. On 14th January, 2007 at the age 54 years, Dr Mipun left this earth suddenly leaving his family and many others who loved him. He was in Goa with his family for passing holiday times and enjoyed the site scene at different areas of Goa. But suddenly on 14th of January he felt uneasy in breathing in the hotel Vista-De-Rio at midnight. He was immediately rushed to Goa Medical Hospital, at Bamboolim located at a distance 10 km from the place of his stay. He was declared dead due to cardiac failure.

Though he has gone to the heavenly abode, yet one would cherish his memory, not only as the first Mishing police officers, but also as a man of amiable disposition, a social worker and as a literary and cultural worker. Mipun was really a man of 'Nipun' signifying well versed in all multifarious activities of life.

Award and Honour

He was awarded gold medal by the Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, "Ambikagiri Raichowdhury Prize by Assam Sahitya Sabha in 1996 for his novel "Miksijili" and "Syed Abdul Malik Agradut Prize" in 2003 for his contribution to Assamese language and literature. He received "Bharatjyoti Prize" in 2003 by the International Society of Delhi. His premature and sudden demise brought a huge and irreparable loss to the Assamese society in general and Mishing society in particular.

Dr. Nomal Chandra Pegu



Early life

Dr. Nomal Chandra Pegu was born in a respectable family of Sonari gaon that was situated in the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra opposite to Dibrugarh town within the old Lakhimpur district of Assam. The word “Sonari” derived from the good name of his great grandfather Onari Pegu Gam who in turn was the grandson of the legendry, Late Porsi Pegu. Dr. Pegu was born on 27th August, 1925. His father was Late Mangal Sing Pegu and mother was Late Muwadoi Pegu. Late Mangal Sing Pegu was a man of strong character and transparent honesty and his mother Muwadoi Pegu was a pious lady and expert weaver of tapumgasor and gadu (jim) who contributed greatly to the economy when the family was sailing on rough weather.

As a highly qualified doctor, he preferred a life of dedicated service to suffering humanity irrespective of dedicated service to suffering humanity irrespective of caste, creed and locality to the lure of local politics and thus he joined the Assam Medical Service. And after a very useful service in different places of the then undivided Assam, he retired as the first “Civil-Surgeon” (Chief Medical and Health Officer) of his community creditably in 1st September 1986. Moreover, in spite of his very busy schedule as a physician, he fully associated with all the welfare activities of the people in general and the Mishing people in particular and at the same time, he proved himself a prolific writer in Mishing, Assamese and English Language. If not for anything else, Dr. Pegu would be remembered as the writer of two important books in English- (The MIRIS- 1956, and the Mishings of the Brahmaputra

Valley-1981) which brought the little-known world at large. Thus, his name has found place in the galaxy of writers (Directory of Indian Writers and who's who of Sahitya Academy).

Education

Sonarigaon had no institution of any kind, not even a primary school though Dibrugarh- the headquarter town was not far distance from Sonarigaon. Therefore, young Pegu was first admitted in the Chahakichuk Primary School situated about 4 miles downstream. But the school building was washed away by flood water in the year he was admitted. In this way there came the first break in his school career for almost a year till a new building was constructed at a safer site at Burisuti village much nearer to Sonarigaon. He completed his primary education from Chahakichuk School and passed the qualifying examination held at Graham Bazar M.E. School, Dibrugarh in February 1936. As there was neither M. E. nor H.E. School within the radius of 20 miles around his village and his parents, did not allow his ward to study at Dibrugarh due to their anxiety about the ill health of young Pegu, there came another break in his career.

Thus, facing mental agony about a year, on persistent request from the Secretary of the Kherkata Venture M.E. School he was admitted at Kherkata in January, 1937. Needless to say, that the school was situated 50 miles down stream from Sonarigaon which could be reached only on foot or by a country-boat. In spite of it, young Pegu took up study with all seriousness securing highest mark in the class in the promotion examination to highest mark in the class in the promotion examination to class-V. Unfortunately, he fell a victim of serious illness from 'Pox' and had to be carried home by a country-boat which took 2 days to reach Sonarigaon. Scared, his parents did not send him back to Kherkata even after his complete recovery. Thus, there came the third break in his student career and his parents made no attempt to admit him anywhere.

However, looking at his strong desire to attend school he was admitted at George Institution, Dibrugarh in class V, mid term in October, 1938 and continued there till class IX. During the period, young Pegu showed his academic promises, in spite of his ill health, securing highest mark in his class in the promotion examination to class IX. But his promising career was again cut short by the blazing World War II. After bombing of Singapore and Rangoon by the Japanese planes, the schools and colleges were closed down to accommodate thousands of refugees coming from Burma, in April 1943. Dejected, young Pegu returned home bag and baggage.

The "Quit India" movement under guidance of Mahatma Gandhi spread throughout the country during the period and young Pegu was greatly influenced by the ideals and

teachings of Gandhiji and he tried to emulate some of the teachings like “Simple living and high thinking”, refraining from smoking and alcoholic drinks, use of Khaddar etc. Opium was freely used in the villages even after the Assam Prohibition Act was passed in 1938. So, he tried to spread the message of Gandhiji by organising group meetings, visiting villages. He composed his first song in Mishing “Kumdung Runenom” inspired by the national song “Vande Mataram” in 1943 followed by several patriotic songs and used them in his campaign against opium as given below.

Kaniyangc Kakoiya, relle, relle

Kaniyangc Baboia, relle, relle,

Ei Scmci Tvteika, relle, relle,

Adinsemei doteika, relle, relle,

Kanidemc tvlyoika, relle, relle. Etc.

As the war continued, his father’s business had gone away. And he gave up totally and returned to cultivation for livelihood. Indeed, the war made many a pauper a prince and a prince a pauper. His father came under the second category and became much poorer after the war. Therefore, his father wanted young Pegu to give up study and settle in life marrying a local girl. But he was a different boy from the boys next door. He vehemently protested, not that he was against the girl, nor any girl for that matter; but he was against early marriage in principle. Therefore, young Pegu advocated a change of attitude and took a solemn pledge to reform it if he could, set an example at least if we could not.

Irony of fate was that his father wanted him to do just the same. To escape the tightening knot, he escaped one day from home and enlisted himself as recruit of “M.T” (Military Training) at Dehradun with some friends. Coming to know of his secret plan, his parent prevented him from joining “M.T.” just in time with an assurance to get him admitted to school. Following the assurance, he got himself readmitted in his old alma mater in class IX after 10 years, in October 1944. His friends who joined “M.T.” never returned to school even after the end of the war in 1945.

During his schooldays at George Institution, he wrote some more songs in Mishing and a parody in Assamese in the style of Late Dandinath Kalita’s “*He hori, Ki Korila, desh tololoi gol*” and got them published by Mg. Kaluram Pait (of Tongani Majgaon) in the name ‘*Kaje Molajo*’ (Come, let’s sing) in the year of his return from military service in 1945. Some of the songs were written to encourage the parents to send their ward to school. He actively participated in organising the Dibrugarh district Miri Sanmilon holding its session at Mechaki

Tonganigaon in 1945. The session was Presided by late Bhimbar Deuri, ex- M.L.C. followed by a cultural show in the evening where his 'Chilo Melo' was successfully staged.

Dr. Pegu passed matriculation from George Institution (now Bagmibor Nilmoni Phukan H.S. School) under Calcutta University in March, 1946, securing second division. Immediately after the result was out, he was offered a Government scholarship of Rs. 30/-PM tenable to study at Cotton College, Gauhati for 2 years. There was no first division boy from plain tribes in that year. A day in Cotton College was his childhood dream. But to his disappointment, his father said: "this far and no further". It is noteworthy that even becoming a Matriculate was a very tall order in the Mishing society and only a dozen or so had matriculated by then. However, after days of persuasion, he was allowed to join college at Guwahati in July 1946.

He passed I. Sc. securing second division from Gauhati University in 1948. At Cotton College, his manifold talents unfolded. His first essay in Assamese "Miri Sobdar Parichoy" was published in Dainik Asomiya on 7th December, 1947. He worked as "Learner Teacher" in the school of Art and Craft Assam, started by Late Jibeswar Baruah of Panbazar, Gauhati (Nucleus of the present Govt. Art College). He secured several prizes in Fine Arts competition held at Cotton College and later at Dibrugarh, and later at Dibrugarh, and he edited the mouth-piece of the student body- 'Lolad' from Gauhati in 1947. His first Mising song "Kumdung Runcrom" was printed in the cover page. (The page is found missing in its reprint 1997). He actively participated in the student movement of Cotton College, particularly of Mising students, in holding its ninth session at far flanged place like Tarigaon of Murkongselek. The session was presided by Dr. Jagandish Medhi M.A. BL PH. D of Gauhati.

After the results I. Sc, was out, his father tersely declared: enough is enough, no more education, not a pie could be spared, as he had four sons to look after. Therefore, young Pegu looked for an avenue where he can persecute studies while earning. So, he applied for a job at Civil Secretariat of Assam Govt. located at Shillong. In the meantime, the first Medical College of Assam was established in 1947 at Dibrugarh, but there was dirt of student passing I. Sc. with biology in those years particularly in 1948. Providence brought young Pegu face to face with Dr. Hem Baruah, the first principal of the Medical College one day and impressed by the talents and his bio-data, Dr. Baruah offered him seat in his college (15seats were lying vacant) and assured him of some scholarship from Govt. in due course.

In the same time, he received an offer for a post of L.D.A. at Assam Civil Secretariat and a wire offering a scholarship to study veterinary science at Patna. But, many of his well

wishers pressed him to accept the seat at Medical College. Knowing the Medical education was expensive and he had to worry for his 2 square meals at that moment, he was at a loss for a moment. But he took a hard decision and joined the Medical College at Dibrugarh in August, 1948. Even under such circumstances he passed the final MBBS examination in 1954 from Gauhati University with the credit securing 12th position. Thus, he became the first MBBS doctor from the back warded Mishing community of Assam a pathfinder in the field of higher technical education. After the mandatory P.R.C.A. and a term of houseman ship, he joined the Assam Medical Service as Assistant Surgeon Grade-I at Diphu in July, 1956.

From Diphu he was transferred to Shillong as I/C of the police and Jail Hospital in 1957. While he was there, he obtained a foreign scholarship to study paediatric Medicine in United Kingdom for 2 years. But for some reason, his departure was delayed and instead, he was posted at Assam Medical College, Hospital. During the period, he tied the nuptial knot with Smti Monumati Kutum, daughter of Late Numolia Kutum Gam- a veteran politician of Lohitmukh, on May, 1959. Ultimately, Dr. Pegu left India for United Kingdom from Bombay (Mumbai) on 28th January, 1960 on board S.S. Staithe den and reached Tilbury dock of London on 14th February, 1960. He was the first doctor from Mishing community to avail a foreign scholarship to study in Great Britain.

His literary contributions

His published books are not many; but his various writings and colourful career graph have not been properly assessed yet. Most people know him as Dr. N.C. Pegu a small-time actor, lyricist, artist, dramatist, social reformer and above all, a writer of repute in 3 languages- Assamese, English and Mishing.

His first Assamese essay appeared in the 'Dainik Asomiya' in 1947 followed by his first poem "Adhikar" (in Arohon, Jorhat) his short story "Phiringoti" (in Ramdhenu), "Satabdir Parihas" (in Bhromor, Sibsagar), "Shillongar Sithi" (Barengka), "Sister Bijoya (in Chetana) and so on. He has written numbers of thought-provoking articles on Mising Language (in Assamese) like "Misingbhasar lipi" (Dakroplai, Jorhat), "Mising Bhasa Charcha" (Lusar-Disangmukh session, 1992) "Mishing Agom Kebang eti dristripat" (Murong, January 1994), "Asom Buronjit Mishing Sokalar Prasanga" (Arsang 1994) and so on.

His first article in English appeared in the first issue of AMCOL- the college magazine of Assam Medical College in 1949.

Social activities

His love of literature, social justice and social service are inseparable. Little known to many that he actively associated himself with the Mishing Bane Kebang Delegation that put the first demand for an autonomous district for the Mishing people to the 'Tribal sub-committee', headed by Late Gopinath Bordoloi at Sadiya on February 1947. He is closely associated with numbers of social organisations like Mishing Kristi Kebang, Mishing Banekebang, Mishing Agam Kebang, Dibrugarh Town Mishing Kebang, Indian Red Cross Society, Govt. Pensioner's Association and life members of many organisations including Asom Sahitya Sabha and Mishing Agom Kebang.

It was Dr. Pegu who precisely placed the demand of the Mishing people for a Govt. holiday for celebration of Ali-aye-ligang-the national festival of the Mishings, to the visiting Chief Minister, Late Bishnuram Medhi at Dewrighat (a place near Kulajan) on 10th April, 1955. Convinced, the Chief Minister late Medhi accepted the proposal on the spot in presence of a huge gathering of Mishing people. Dr. Pegu is a Gandhian on principle: Non-smoker non-alcoholic. He kept abreast of political development in the country and has many friends in political circles having diverse ideologies. In spite of opportunities, he detested from jumping into the fray, as he felt, there was no catholicity left in political morality at present. He loved punctuality at any time and punctuality in any matter. He worked with honesty of purpose for good of people, not hankering after money, office or recognition out of the way.

DUMBI KAMAN



Early life

Dumbi Kaman was born at a village Aflagaon under Golaghat West block of Kamargaon police station of Golaghat district in 1918. He was from very remote area of that time where there was no communication. He came from a rich and wealthy farmer's family. He inherited abundance of wealth from his parents. His father name was Sike Kaman and mother was Ande Kaman. He had two brothers and three sisters. His wife name was Gramini Kaman. He had 6 sons and three brothers.

Education

During his time there was no educational institute within the reach of the common people of his locality. Though he was from wealthy family and had interest to carry on study, he did not able to receive the scope of education. Therefore he had remained illiterate. But he somehow learned to read and write from his senior friends who had got education from town.



Present family of Dumbi Kaman

His contribution

He was a silent freedom fighter of our nation. He participated in the freedom movement and made all possible arrangement to proceed further for the movement. He was also a social worker. He was closely associated with many social institutions. He had given birth of many such institutions which helped the people in bringing out some social changes during the post independent periods. He donated more than two bighas of his land to establish his village L.P. School and he became the founder president of the School Managing Committee (SMC) in the year 1955. Moreover, he was also the S.M.C.President of Bortika M.E. School in 1978 and Bortika Afala High School. He was also involved with the establishment of Mohuramukh High School, Kamargaon College and Kamargaon Police Station as a member of establishment committee.

Awards

Govt. of Assam offered him freedom fighter pension, but he refused it because he felt pain to see the down trodden section of his society who were living under starvation. Therefore he appealed the Government of Assam to provide Government schemes and financial assistance to those poor and needy people instead of him. Thus he showed an excellent example of dedication towards the upliftment of the rural poor.

GONGA MOHAN MILI



Early Life

Gonga Mohan Mili, a prominent Mishing personality and prolific writer of various books, who is hailed from Afla Mishing Gaon village of Sivasagar district of Assam. Afla Mishing Gaon village falls under Demow block under Dichangmukh police station. He was born in 1968 in an economically sound family of his village.

Education

Gonga Mohan Mili completed his Primary and High School education from his native village. He passed his HSLC examination from his village High School “Afala Miching High School” in 1984. He went to Sivasagar govt. HS School for Higher Secondary courses and completed successfully from that school. After completion his Higher Secondary courses he went to Jorhat College for higher study and he passed B.A. Degree with major in Economics 1989. Later he went to Dribrugrah University for Post Graduation and obtained master degree from Dribrugrah University in 1993.

After completion Masters Degree in Economics, he joined as school teacher in his village High School. He worked there for a few months. Later he got an opportunity in Life Insurance Corporation of India and began rendering his sincere service as an officer in Life Insurance Corporation of India.

Family Background

Gonga Mohan Mili has come from a rich and prestigious family. His father was a well educated person of the locality, who encouraged and provided him necessary support in pursuing his education. His father name was Indreswar Mili and mother was Mai Mili, who was illiterate. Ganga Mohan married to Kanaka Mili. They have a son and a daughter. Kanaka Mili is an educated lady and she works in a high school as an Assistant teacher.

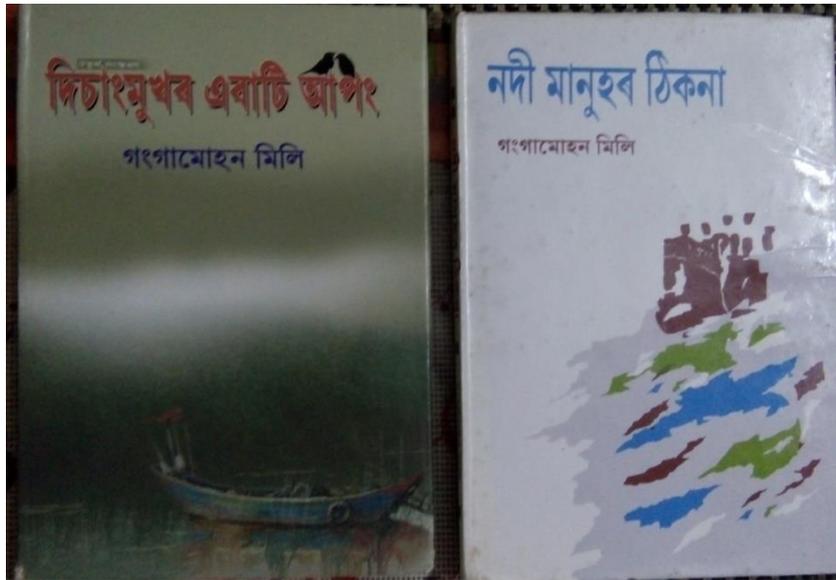
Gonga Mohan's daughter is a student of a technical institute and his son is a student of Higher Secondary courses. At present he is residing at Sivasagar town.



Gonga Mohan Mili and his family

His contribution and achievements

Gonga Mohan Mili is a prolific Assamese writer, book composer, poet, short story writer. He has written handsome numbers of beautiful poems in Assamese language. He also has also written a few numbers of fiction and edited books. He is the author of seven books in Assamese. Some of his important creations in the form of poems are- *Noi Ghatore Suhuri* (1990), *Dichangmukhar Ebati Apong* (1998), *Nadi Manuhar Thikana* (2000), *Oinitomor Prithivi* (2003), *Sukan Narar Chaki* (2005), *Matmorar Bikhadgatha aru Anya Kobita* (2010) *Mati Mayabi Malita* (2014), *Dichangmukh Ahorlang Langpay Isi* (2017) (a translated book on Karbi language) and *Nadi Manuhar Thikana*



Books written by Mili

Gonga Mohan Mili grew up under the twin influence of Mishing Tribe and the Assamese mainstream culture. He was deeply influenced by the natural beauty of the revering habitat of his community and his culture. In his poems he strongly appeals people to consume abundance natural beauty and cultural heritage of the bank of Dichangmukh river and the dwellers. He gives the message to his people that he loves his people, culture and beauty of nature.

Trough his writings, he wants to explain the people that good will, well behavior are the powerful asset of human being by which any people can easily mix up with other community. The Mishing are an indigenous revering tribe, they like to reside on the bank of Brahmaputra and others river of Assam and it is there old age habit and revering culture of living. A predominately agrarian community having distinctive pile dwelling houses covering the boundary with bamboo and other planted trees are still a living tradition of the Mishing community. They have a rich ethic culture with a variety of folk songs and myths which are the mirror of the community. He is proud of for his rich tradition and wonderful culture.

He edited two souvenirs on occasion of “Porag Festival” where history of his native village was keenly presented. He is also an author of two books which were written in connection with the celebration of “Dichang Festival” and the two books are “Dichang Abung” and “Swatrosrini”. His poems are published in ‘Sahity Academy Journal’, and Assamese premier Assamese Daily News Paper like Dainik Janambhumi, Janambhumi, Asomiya Protidin, Asomiya Khabor, Amar Axom, Satshori, Goriyashi, Prakash, Sadin etc. Mrinal Kanti Das produced a documentary based on his writing on “Noi Poria Kolaz”.

Awards

Ganga Mohan Mili is a prolific Assamese writer who has contributed a lot in enrichment of both Assamese and Mishing literature. He received a good number of awards for his noteworthy contribution in Assamese literature. He received “Poet Ram Gogoi Memorial Award” for his anthology “Dichangmukhor Ebati Apong” from ‘All Assam Kabi Sammilan’ in 2000. He received “Munin Borkotoky Award” for his fiction “Nadi Manuhor Thikana” in the year 2002. He was felicitated by Sivasagar District Administration on the occasion of Republic Day Celebration on 26th January 2006. He was honored by Eastern and North –East Youth Kabi Sammilan held at Kolkata on 2004, which was organized by Sahitya Academy. “People Choice Award” by NETV for 2006 best litterateur. He was also awarded by ‘Sobdra Prakashan’ Jorhat in 2011.



Citation received by Mili

JADAB PAYENG



His early life

Jadav Payeng was born in 1963 at Aruna sapor, a river island on the Brahmaputra of Jorhat district. He was third among 13 siblings, which included seven sisters, living in a small and poor family. His father Lakhiram and mother Aphuli Payeng sold milk for a meagre living. The 1965 deluge wrecked Aruna sapor and forced Payeng's family, among others, to move 12 kilometres away to Majuli on the other side of river. But that was not the only parting. Before relocating, acute poverty compelled his parents to leave five-year old Jadav in the care of Anil Borthakur, a court-master at the District Judge Court in Jorhat, who looked after his schooling.

Jadav Payeng belongs to Mishing tribe. He lives in a small hut in the forest. At the age of 39, on the insistence of village elders, Payeng married 25-year-old Binita and they have three school-going children - daughter Munmuni, 16, and two boys Sanjiv, 14, and Sanjay, 13. It was for their schooling that Payeng moved with his family to Eklong Mishing Gaon, Kokilamukh, Jorhat, in 2011. Binita, his wife, and his three children who accompanies Mr. Payeng in his mission. He rears cattle and buffalo on his farm and sells the milk for his livelihood. This is basic source of his income. He completed his education upto class-X from Baligaon Jagannath Baruah Arya Vidyalaya in Jorhat and was about to loop strangely back into a different phase of his life. He therefore, left his further study paid attention in other sphere of daily life. He is a noted environmental activist, true son of nature and forestry worker. He is popularly known as the *Forest Man of India*.



Payeng with daughter Munmuni, the first of his three children, all of whom share his love for nature

His works

It was the scorching summer of 1978 when Jadav Payeng, a Mishing teenage boy, returned to his birthplace at Aruna saponi, a river island on the Brahmaputra, after passing his school days at Jorhat. On reaching, Payeng witnessed a sight that shook him to the core. More than a hundred snakes curved, looped and twisted lifelessly on the deserted sandbar. The boy's heart broke. Distressed and seeking counsel, the boy went to the nearby Deori community village. The snakes had been washed up to the sandbar by floods and had died without tree cover. The villagers exhorted him to grow trees to save the reptiles. For where there are trees, there are birds, and where there are birds, there will be birds' eggs and fledglings - food for snakes and their ilk. Along with their native wisdom, the villagers offered the boy 50 seeds and 25 bamboo plants. The young lad, just 15 or 16, set out all alone in April 1979 to plant life on the tough terrain of the eroded island covered with sand and silt. He sowed the seeds and shoots.



Jadav Payeng on the way to his work place

Over the course of several decades, he planted and tended trees on a Sandbar of the river Brahmaputra turning it into a forest reserve. The forest is called “Moloi” forest after him is located near Kokilamukh of Jorhat and encompasses an area about 1,360 acres/550 hectares. He started working on the forest in 1979, when social forestry division of Golaghat district launched a scheme of tree plantation at 200 hectares at Aruna Chapori situated at a distance of five kilometres from Kokilamukh. Jadav Payeng, who is also known as “Moloi” was one of the labourers who worked in that project which was completed after five years. He chose to stay back after the completion of the project even after other workers left. He not only looked after the plants, but continued to plant more trees on his own, in an effort to transform the area into a forest. Normally in the fertile period between April and June, he planted the forest. He rattles off the species, like names from an intimate family tree: bamboos, baheda, teak; gambhari; custard apple, star fruit, gulmohur; devil’s tree, tamarind, mulberry; mango, jackfruit, plum, peach, banyan; elephant grass and medicinal plants and many more.

The rest of the year, he collected seeds and saplings. He said that ,“he covered a distance of a kilometre in five years” and in stages it got covered with dense vegetation dominated by trees.” Local inhabitants nicknamed him ‘Molai’ meaning ‘forest’ and dubbed his woodland ‘Molai Forest’. This meant that now his day breaks even before dawn, at 3 am, and a localised steeplechase begins.



Payeng makes daily trips to his forest and is planning to stretch its boundaries

The forest, which came to be known as Molai forest, now houses Bengal Tigers, great one horned Rhinoceros and over 100 deer and rabbits, besides of course, the snakes, who were at the genesis of this extraordinary story. Molai forest is also home to monkeys and several varieties of birds, including a large number of vultures. There are several thousand trees, including valcol, arjun (*Terminalia arjuna*), ejar (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*), goldmohur

(*Delonix regia*), koroi (*Albizia procera*), moj (*Archidendron bigeminum*) and simolu (*Bombax ceiba*). Bamboo covers an area of over 300 hectares.

A herd of around 100 elephants regularly visits the forest every year and generally stay for around six months. They have given birth to 10 calves in the forest in recent years.

His efforts became known to the authorities in 2008, when forest department officials went to the area in search of a herd of 115 elephants that had retreated into the forest after damaging property in the village of Aruna Chapori, which is about 1.5 km from the forest. The officials were surprised to see such a large and dense forest and since then the department has regularly visited the site. In 2013, poachers tried to kill the rhinos staying in the forest but failed in their attempt due to “Molai” who alerted department officials. Officials promptly seized various articles used by the poachers to trap the animals. Molai is ready to manage the forest in a better way and to go to other places of the state to start a similar venture. Now his aim is to spread his forest to another sand bar inside of Brahmaputra.



Jadav Payeng viewing the forest

Honours

In 2015, Jadav Payeng received Padma Shri award the fourth highest civilian award in India from the President Pranab Mukherjee for outstanding contribution in accelerating the tremendous growth of natural vegetation in a huge area covered by the river Brahmaputra. Jadav Payeng was honoured at a public function arranged by the School of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University on 22nd April, 2012 for his achievement. He shared his experiences of creating a forest in an interactive session, where Magsaysay Award winner Rajendra Singh and JNU Vice-Chancellor Sudhir Kumar Sopory were present. Sopory named Jadav Payeng “Forest Man of India”. In the month of October, 2013, he was honoured at the Indian Institute of Forest Management during their annual event Coalescence. He received honorary doctorate degree from Assam Agricultural University and Kaziranga University for

his outstanding contribution in social forestry. Payeng revealed that he has lost around 100 of his cows and buffaloes to the tigers in the forest, but blames the people who carry out large scale encroachment and destruction of forests as the root cause of the plight of wild animals

Payeng has been the subject of a number of documentaries in the recent years. A locally made film documentary produced by Jitu Kalita in 2012, "*The Molai Forest*" was screened at the JNU earned good responses. The 2013 film documentary "*Foresting Life*" directed by the Indian documentary filmmaker Arati Shrivastava, celebrated the life and works of Jadav Payeng in the "Molai" forest.

Jibon Narah



Early Life

He was born at Morangial Gaon of Golaghat district under Rongagoraghat police station of Golaghat West development block on 4th November, 1970. From his childhood he was very sincere and amiable in nature. His village was communicably very isolated and it was a small Mishing village. The village was badly affected by flood water every year. Therefore he has to face many problems in connection with education and other civic amenities. Even then he did not care much on this problem. He very easily came across all these problems of nature. He was encouraged by his father. His father did not show any discrepancies in providing him facilities regarding education.

Education

He went to his village primary school at Morangial. He completed higher secondary and graduation from J.D.S.G. College, Bokakhat and Master Degree from Guwahati University.

Family

He was born in a socially well reputed family. His father was a popular social worker. His father's name was Umam Narah and mother was Purini Narah. He has three brothers and three sisters. Jibon Narah married to Utpola Narah and they have a girl child. Narah grew up under the twin influences of Mishing tribal culture and the Assamese main stream culture. He spent his childhood in his village near bank of river Gelabil besides Brahmaputra river. He spent a revering and ethic rich traditional culture in school life.



Jibon Narah, his mother and family

His contribution

Jibon Narah is a young and dynamic writer. He has written many books, poems on present day world. His writings have a specific smell of native literary environment. Needless to say, Shri Narah, is one of the noted young author of both Assamese and Mishing literature. His publication which has enriched the Assamese literature are- (in the field of poetry), *Momaideur Phulani, Suna mor Phul Koli, Ta-Ri-Ri., Suwarani San, Dhou Khela Lorali San, Tumi Poka Dhanar Dore, O, Mor Dhuniya Kapou Phul, Salodhiya Upoma*. Moreover he has got many poems which are translated to other language like English, Bengali and Marathi. Such translated poems are, “The Buddha and other poems”, Listen my flowerbud: Miching tribal oral poetry of Assam. His Bengali translations are- “*Nirvachito Asomiya Kobita, Suvonshiri Aru Jonbeli*. Jibon Narah has written many novels and story books on the following names-such as ‘*Bhumi Phul*’, ‘*Oikili (Novel)*’, ‘*Saritha Romantic Probandha, Shuhor Mushona Aru Premor ati Bart, Swa Pitambor shymboronor Megha Ure (Novel)*. Moreover his adited books are- *O, Mor Aponar Desh (Lakshinath Bezbarooa), Bezbarooa Jatiya Sangeet Sasha Aru Somonoyar Path, Bezbarooa –sadhu aalomot ankito sobi aru akoni sadhu*, His poems are also published in famous international edition like Penguin, Oxford , NEHU anthology and Sahitya Accademi.

His remarkable works

Jibon Narah is not only a college lecture in Assamese but also a popular and dynamic modern poet., who has contributed a lot in Assamese literature. He enriches the Assamese poetry by putting the traditional elements of Mishing culture and their socio-cultural background. By his poems he attempts to depict ethnic picture of Mishing society and their rich cultural heritage. He wrote near about 114 poems, 80 (articles) fiction and essays, also

made some entertainment programme (audio and video) on Mishing and other regional language.

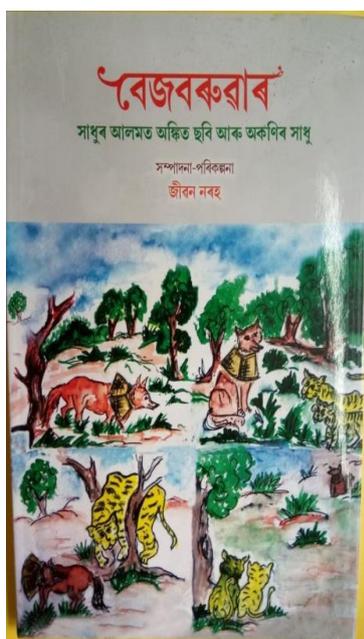
By his writing and editing art he able to get introduce Mishing and Assamese culture to the Indian culture. One of his vital job is that he has translated the Assamese Jatiya Sangeet (Anthem) “ O:Mor Aponar Desh” into different language like English and other regional ethnic language like Mishing, Tiwa, Bodo and Nepali.

Shri Narah is also associated with socio-cultural organization like “PARIDHI” and educational institute Navarup Jatiya Bidyapith, Nagaon, Assam. He is organising lecture, seminar, workshop, Kabi Sanmilan, Cultural exhibition in major cities of Assam under the banner of his organisation. By associated Navorup Jatiya Bidyapith he leads to quality education among Childs especially poor section of the society.

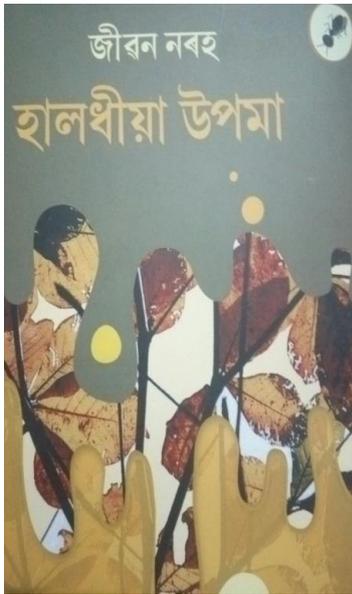
Awards

The Assam Sahitya Sabha awarded twelve prominent personalities of the state by “Century Sahitya Sanman” for their contributions in different fields in literature in 3rd June, 2016 where Jibon Norah was given the respectable honour. Similarly he was also honoured by “Sabda Award” in “Bangladesh Poet Meet” for his grand literary contribution.

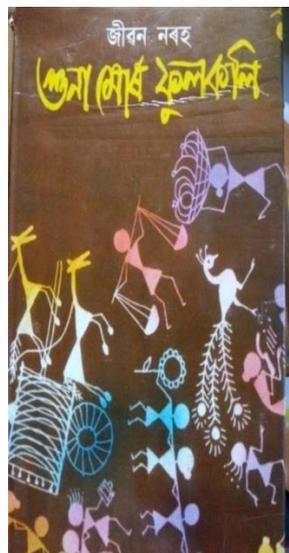
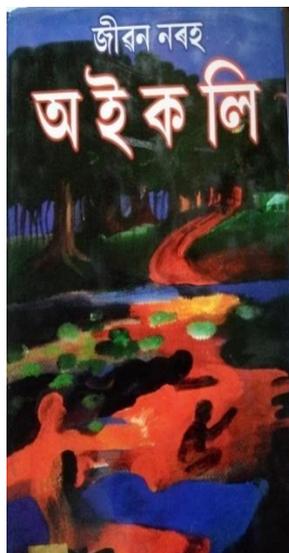
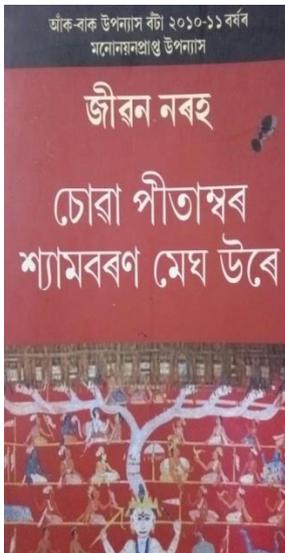
In 21st March 2018 he was also honoured in World Poetry Day, where he was given the opportunity to recite his poems along with other two noted young poets Anita Thampi and Mohan Himthai.



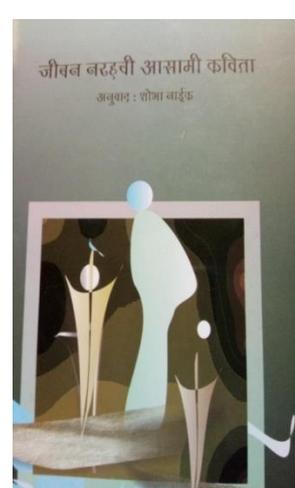
Jibon Narah's publications as an editor



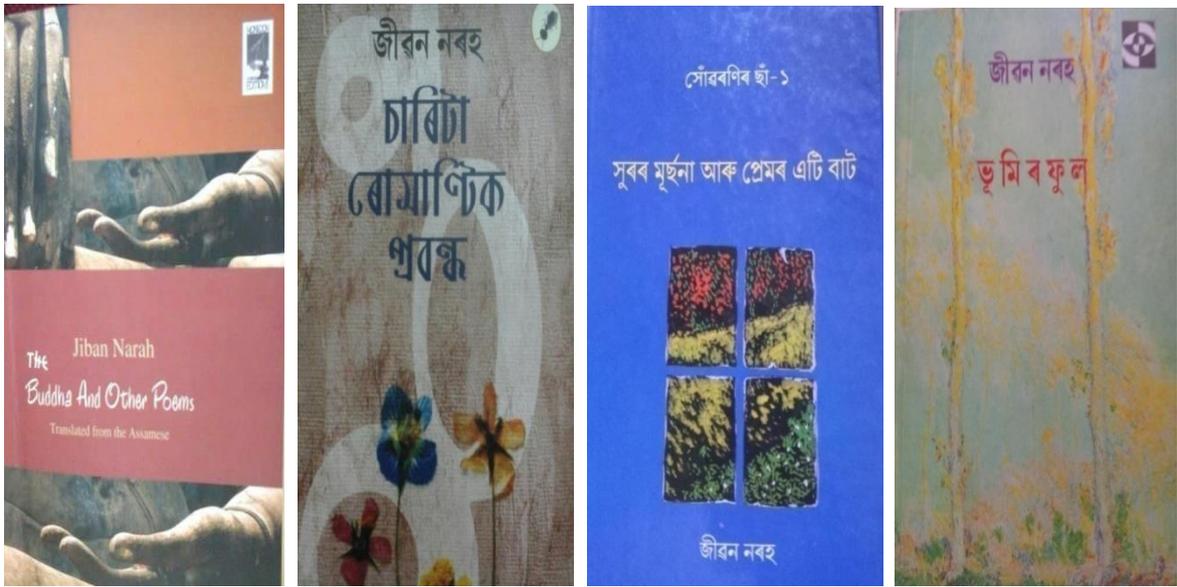
Novels of Jibon Narah



Novels written by Jibon Narah



Novels and Pose written by Jibon Narah



Fiction and Translated poems of Jibon Narah

BHRIGUMONI KAGYUNG



Early Life

A simple man with simple habits, Bhrigumoni Kagyung popularly known as Monibar is a multifaceted personality. He has distinguished himself as an author, an artist, a great librarian, an educationist and a socialist. Bhrigumoni Kagyung hails from the famous historical place of Dikhowmukh in the district of Sibsagar. Dikhowmukh, the gateway to the Ahom Kingdom is situated on the confluence of the river Brahmaputra, Dikhow and Dorika. Bhrigumoni Kagyung was born in a village called Alimor Mishinggaon in October 1934. He was guided in his early days by his elder brother, Late Chhakobhal Kagyung, B.A., B.T. and retired as D.I. of schools and Ex-MLA of Majuli Assembly constituency.

Education

His life has not been easy all through. But his perseverance helped him to overcome different types of obstacles in his life. Passing out from primary school in 1942, he continued his education till class X. During this time, he migrated from school to school. Among them, mention may be made of Kamalabari H.S. School, Majuli, Sibsagar Government High School and Gaurisagar High School. Unfortunately, his father expired while he was studying in Gaurisagar High School. It was a great setback in his life and as a result, he had to leave school and engaged himself in domestic works. At this time an M.E. school was started in Dikhowmukh at the initiative of Late Kamala Nanda Saikia, a noted journalist of Assam.

Bhrigumoni Kagyung, had no other alternative and joined in the school as one of the founder teacher and continued there for three years.

His works

During this period he engaged himself in various organisational works of the Mishing community so as to educate the backward community. With this idea in mind, the All Assam Miri Social Reformation Committee was formed under his leadership. The first session of this conference was held in his village Alimor and many dignitaries took part in a discussion. Shri Moti Ram Bora, the then Honourable Minister of Revenue, Assam allotted twelve thousand bighas of land to Alimor Mishinggaon from the Jakaichuk Mouja. The rest days session was presided over by Shri Khogendra Nath Borboruah the then M.L.A. of Amguri Assembly Constituency who was a great advocator of the doctrine of communism in Assam. In such ways, Shri Kagyung engaged himself in the early part of his life for Mishing community in particular and people of Dikhowmukh in general.

After a long gap Bhrigumoni Kagyung availed a chance to participate in a training course for the Secondary School teachership certificate at Jorhat. Four candidates including Kagyung were selected from Sibsagar Sub-Division for the aforesaid course and paid remuneration at the rate of twenty rupees per month. He took admission in the Institute in 1955. He engaged himself heart and soul in his study and passed the course and the matriculation Examination too in the same year, in 1958. In this way, a long cherished dream came true in his life.

After some initial hiccups, he got admitted in J.B. College, Jorhat in intermediate in Arts stream in the night section and also, in the Industrial Training Institute (Vocational Course) at Jorhat for the course of “Cutting and Tailoring” in the day section.

After passing the I.A. he appeared in the B.A. Examination in 1964 but could not clear it. He finally cleared it in 1987 from B. Baruah College, Guwahati, and he completed the M.A. course in Assamese (in Linguistics) from Guwahati University.

Shri Kagyung joined the Jorhat Vocational Collegiate High School in 1958 as a founder teacher and as part time instructor of Jorhat Industrial Institute. His creditability in various disciplines and perseverance became widespread in Jorhat. Later on, he was appointed in Jorhat Government Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Boys High School as a teacher in 1964 and worked there till 1966.

Shri Kagyung soon established himself as a promised and talented writer in Assamese literature. He started writing of prose and poetry right from a young age. His interest in literature took shape after his admission in Sibsagar Government M.V. School in 1943. He began to compose poems and impressed the teachers as well as his school mates. He was fortunate enough to come into contact with the galaxy of great writers like Bishwa

Narayan Shastry, Late Abdul Sattar and Priyo Borborah who were not only his teachers but also his friends, philosopher and guide in Sibsagar Govt. High School.

During the great earthquake of 1950, Bhrigumoni Kagyung along with the Mishing Mahila samity under the leadership of Miss Sarnawati Pegu visited Subansiri to extend their helping hand to the flood affected people and saw for himself, the pathetic condition of the inmates of the river valley. The ravages caused by the earthquake entirely changed the topography of the river Subansiri and its adjoining areas. The suffering of the people moved him so much that he composed a poem about the events: it goes like this :Nai / Sei / subansiri / Prakrity / Lila / Bhoomi / Kabye / Karang / Sajay / Kamyā / Kannat / Nisthur / Nioti / Dhale / Sarbba / Shrantā / Kari / Nile / Jibanta / Prakriti / Nei-i-rajyat.

Needless to say, Bhrigumoni Kagyung, is one of the pioneers of the Mishing in the field of Assamese literature. He never hankered after personal gain in life. He devoted his whole life to literary activities and depicted vividly the culture, and socio-economic activities of the Mishing people in his articles published in the leading newspapers and magazines. The most valuable piece of work that he had done for the Mishing society is said to be portrayal of Mishing culture into myriad social, religious and literary aspects. It has been prescribed by the universities of Assam in its syllabus as Assamese Language and Literature. Bhrigumoni Kagyung in this way, brought about an unprecedented intellectual awakening among the Mishing people and gave an impetus to the talent in them. He also authored many books. '*Kabita Kali*', a collection of his poems was taken by Baneswar Mili to Shillong for publication but accidentally, the manuscript was lost in the printing press at Shillong. '*Kabita Kusum*', another collection was published by Shri Bhanu Pegu of Majuli while he was studying in J.B. College, Jorhat. '*Anahota*' is the third poetical work of Shri Kagyung which was published by the Southern Mishing students Union in 1970-71. This work won the national award for literary work in the National Indian Languages. The fourth piece of poetical work, '*Manbananir Jui*', brought for him the National Award in 1994-95 and earned him much name and fame.

It will certainly not be out of place of list here the books written, compiled and edited by him.

His written works are: -

1. Kabita Kali
2. Kabita Kusum
3. Anahota
4. Manbananir Jui

5. Mising Kristir Somu Abhas
6. Anchalik Bhasha Bonam Tri-Bhasa Sutra
7. Mising Lujan (Part I 1989)
8. Mising Jonajiban Chinta Sampratik Samasya, Sikshya Aru Bhasha.
9. Abegik Okya Sadhanat Srimanta Sankar Dev Prasangikata.
10. K: Kang Motcm.

The books compiled and edited by him are: -

1. Mising Sanskritir Alekhya
2. Mising Agomclang ABVGE
3. Asomor Janajitir Giti Sankulan (Published by Pathsala Sahitya Sabha)
4. Taron Chandra Pamegam Rachanawali (Part I 1988)
5. Taron Chandra Pamegom Rachanawali (Part II)
6. Achin Anurag (1991 written by Shri Narendra Padum)
7. Prominent Mising Personalities of Assam (co-editor, Mr. Nabin Ch. Teye).

Bhriyumoni Kagyung was also associated with All Assam Tribal Language and cultural Development Council. All Assam Miri Reformation committee, Assam Academy for Cultural Relation, Sangit Natak Academy of Assam, Language High Power Committee of the Government of Assam, Publication Board of the Government of Assam and Tribal Research Institute of the Government of Assam. 'Asomar Janajati,' a mouth piece of the All Assam Tribal Language and Cultural Development Council was projected and published under the sponsorship of the Tribal cell of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee and it was continued upto 1973-77. This covered the seven tribal languages like Bodo, Mising, Rabha, Karbi, Dimasa, Deuri and Tiwa (Lalung) besides Assamese and English.

Bhriyumoni Kagyung was also associated with various state level Mishing organisations like Mishing Agom Kebang, Mising Bane Kebang and Mishing Bane Kebang etc. He was also associated with the North East Language Teaching Centre as part time instructor in Mishing Language and associated heart and soul with the Assam Sahitya Sabha as a sincere worker. He meticulously attends seminars of the Sabha in every session.

It is an undisputable fact that Bhriyumoni Kagyung's writings immensely influenced the Assamese people and the Mishing community particularly in the field of literature. For his dedication to Assamese Literature, the Government of Assam has awarded him the Sahitya pension in 1999.

Oi Appun Ganesh Pegu



Early life

Oi Appun Ganesh Pegu a man of multifaceted talent was born on 20th August, 1936 at a typical Mishing village named Bheuchuk Kumarbari in Jengramukh which is situated in the heart of the river island. He is the second son of Late Haliram Pegu and Mala Pegu. In his childhood, young Ganesh very often used to gaze at nature, was enormously fascinated by the sandy look of large beach, the steep cliffs of the river banks where from he used to dive, the rippling waves of gay water and so on.

Ganesh Pegu has been deservedly bestowed on an endowed with the crown of accolade 'OI APPUN' that literally stands for 'flowers of Oi-Ni-tom' because he began his career as singer with Oi-Ni-tom and availed himself of singing an Oi-Ni-tom in the Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's first film in 1956 when he was not yet out of his teens. In as much as he was highly imaginative by nature from the early days of his childhood, he was to play an important role in his young mind Ganesh, therefore, could, by no means, escape from the lures of natural beauties. Born and brought up in a country side, he drank to his satisfaction in his artistic creations and this is the fact that made Pegu's Oi-Ni-tom melodious and popular all the time.

When the spring approached, especially in the month of March, his young heart got inspired and filled with fountain head of Oi-Ni-tom. His hearing senses grasped the notes of music that, frequently vibrating everywhere around him, echoed and re-echoed in the gentle nod of tender leaves of trees, the whispering breeze, quiet noises of flowering water etc. At that moment, he got himself lost in the sweet scent of wild flowers, wanton delight of the floating clouds and the sweet smile of the rainbow. To be precise, his young mind got embellished with and tenderly nourished by the magical touch of natural objects. All that he perceived from such enchanting surroundings planted in his prolific mind later on, flourishing luxuriantly in his maturity of life.

His works and challenges

Every individual talent has to revolt one way or another, against the established norms of traditional belief. It seems to have been the same with Ganesh Pegu too. In those days when young Ganesh began to sing Oi-Ni-tom, people had simmering discontent with it. They looked down upon the one sang it, because Oi-Ni-tom, at that time, was considered as a song of obscenity. Ganesh Pegu had to endure showers of filthy abuses even from his fellowmen who derogated him. For Ganesh it was not only a challenge, but also a revolution to make his peoples realise their rich musical heritage as well as to bring about a radical change to their outlook in respect of Oi-Ni-tom. However, Ganesh, paid no attention to all that happened, successfully carried on his efforts of elevating Oi-Ni-tom from the level of vulgarity, and in the long run, he enshrined it in people's heart. Nevertheless, he was fortunate enough to have an opportunity to sing an Oi-Ni-tom and dance in the first Assamese film of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, "*Era Bator Sur*" in his teenage. This performance of young Ganesh Pegu paved the way in contact with such famous personalities as Bishnu Rabha, Phani Sarma, Maghai Oza etc. besides Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, and his name rode on the crest of a wave. By degrees, his ambit of performance as a singer grew widened after he had presented two Oi-Ni-tom on radio that were broadcast from AIR Shillong Gauhati Station in 1957. Since then, Ganesh Pegu has sung and still keeps singing lots of Oi-Ni-tom most of which were either solo or duet except the two which were sung by groups. Of these two, first was presented in AIR Gauhati Station under the leadership of Ganesh Pegu and Indreswar Pegu in 1963 while the second was sung as Mising Geet by a group led by Ganesh Pegu alone in Dibrugarh station of All India Radio in 1971. In the meantime, a few youths although small in number offered themselves to sing Oi-Ni-tom on radio and Ganesh Pegu came to be considered as their pioneer. However, Ganesh Pegu, by that time, preferred singing Mishing Geet (Mishing Modern song, Viz light music) to Oi-Ni-tom. In this respect too, Ganesh Pegu's lucid lyrics and sweet melody arrested the attention of both the youth and the old alike.

His remarkable contribution

Apart from his immense contribution towards song and music, he also presented a number of talks in Assamese on radio. Some of them are: (1) DohToropiyaMisingGhar, (2) Mishing Geeti Sahitya, (3) Asomiya Sanskritiloi Mishing Sakalor Borongoni, (4) Mishing Jati Aru Bohag Bihu, (5) Mishing Bhaskar Udbhov Aru Iyar Bikash, (6) Asomiya Bhasa Sahityat Miri Ba Mishing Sakalor Sthan etc. He was also interviewed at North Lakhimpur in 1977 on Twentypot Programme by Hare Krishna Deka of Dibrugarh Radio Station, at Gogamukh in 1978 on Mishing culture by Kamal Sarma of the same station and at Burai

Mukoli Gaon in 1983 on Mishing Language by Dharendra Kumar Rabha of Guwahati station of All India Radio.

In addition to his considerable performance on radio, Ganesh Pegu had exhibited a great deal of success in the field of film also. As a matter of fact, for Pegu, the first opportunity that he made best use of was a privilege that paved the way in contact into the world of film. As a result, he had opportunities to sing an Oi-Ni-tom each in Jiban Bora's films "Polashar Rong" and Dr. Bhupen Kaman, Besides his songs and roles in the films and telefilms, he also equally did in TV serials as "Bare Boraniya" etc, a lot of creation, not to speak of his performance in the documentaries of 1987, 1991 and soon. Still he keeps presenting programmes of TV.

As a writer

Ganesh Pegu's books provide ample evidence of his literary taste. He has a keen interest in and a good command on literature, in his adolescence, he tried his hand at writing poems in Assamese and these appeared in some local magazines like "Aloran" "Jeuti" etc, but he could not earn name and fame as a poet. However, his inherent talent finds expression in his essays that are published in leading magazines. News papers and souvenirs of Assam. His literary works that have so far, been published in the form of book are: Tani-Agom or Manav Bhasa (1974), (2) Songkid (a collection of his modern songs in Mishing (1989), (3) Mising Sanskritir Rengoni, (1995), (4) Rohaniya Mishing Samaj Aru Bhasa Sanskriti Gati Bidhi, (1996), (5) Mishing Sadha Aru Kingbodontir Hitopadesh (1997), (6) Lake Nitom (edited)

Apart from the above, he also participated in a workshop organised by CIIL for production of Mishing Nursery Rhymes "Ngoluk Moman" to which he contributed with rhymes. By profession, Ganesh Pegu who has already retired from his service as a teacher in Gogamukh School. During his in service period of like, he was diligent enough to keep himself involved in various programmes of Asom Sahitya Sabha and Mishing Agom Kebang in spite of his preoccupied busy routine of academic duty.

Honour

He was aptly felicitated as an artist by the "Sadau Asom Jana Sanskritik Parisad" in its cultural conference in 1999 and the "Asom Sahitya Sabha" in its 58th Goreswar Session in 1992. Ganesh Pegu is a man of well-built physique with small eyes bearing the genealogical significance of Mongoloid origin. As a kind hearted and benevolent, Pegu's personality is always endowed with benign demeanour. Unlike many of his comedies, he has no greed for riches. He still travels from Sadiya to Buruli (Bharali) in quest of note of music entertaining one and all like a minstrel.

