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Religious Literature of Ahom Reign: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

The Founder of Ahom Rule in Assam, Chao-Lung-Siu-Ka-Pha when arrived at the Brahmaputra Vally, Soumar Provience along with some followers, they had their own culture, traditions religious beliefs. Siu-Ka-Pha lived here for thirty nine years four months and fifteen days. He ruled for nearly sixteen years. He died in AD 1264. It is a rare thing in world history for one race to have ruled for more than six hundred years. This achievements belongs only to the Ahom Chuphas of kings Siu-Ka-Pha is the symbol of having vision of this dream society. The Ahom kings had certain grate qualities because of which this became possible and because of their unprejudiced nature, they were able to lend an impetus to the sense of cultural and racial identity. The Ahom period signifies the emergence of a period of a new culture and society in history of medieval assam as with the advent of the ahoms there was born a new kingdom-‘Assam’ and a new nation-‘Assamese’. The Ahom advent and the founding of Ahom Kingdom in the Brahmaputra valley was an epoch making event of immense political significance with far reaching consequences not only to Assam but also to the north east India. The Ahom kings ruled Assam spread over a period of six hundrad years. Among the 42 Nos. Ahom kings swargadew Rudrasingha (1696-1714) is considered to be the greatest Ahom king. Swargadew Sivasingha (1714-1744), swargadew Rajeswarsingha (1751-1769) and swargadew Kamaleswarsingha (1795-1811) who contributed to a great extent in the field of literature. Many wise and learned persons, scholars of different fields graced the Ahom courts. During this glorious period the Ahom kings patronised learned and noble persons to write or translated many important books. Religious literature is on the outstanding literary creations during the Ahom era. The present paper deals with Religious literature of Ahom reign may be great resource for the upliftment of the new generation.

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Introduction

Early in the thirteen century (1228 A.D) Ahoms came to Assam under the ladership of Chao-Lung-Siu-Ka-Pha. The coming of Ahoms was a turning point who brought about a complete change in the socio-economic status and political scenario as well. They started writing chronicles for the first time. Siu-Ka-Pha totally reorganised Assamese socity and laid the foundation of greater Assam (BAR ASOM) integrating various local tribes into thier territory.

Siu-Ka-Pha was a far-sighted king. He was succeeded by 42 Nos. of Ahom kings sight up to the period of swargadew chandra kanta singha during the span of glorious six hundrad years of thier rule. Chao-Lung-Siu-Ka-Pha was a great visionary who brought about a conglomeration of local culture, rituals, language and literature. This made the way of giving Assamese language a universal form.

Many wise and learned persons, scholars of different fields graced the Ahom court. Under royal patronage many great writers did literary works in thier respective field. Swargadew Rudrasingha (1696-1714) is considered to be the greatest Ahom king. Under his patronage the Assamese literature flourished by leaps and bounds. The immediate successors of Rudrasingha were swargadew Sivasingha (1714-1744), swargadew Rajeswarsingha (1751-1769) and swargadew Kamaleswarsingha (1795-1811) who contributed to a great extent in the field of literature.

During the period of thier reign important literary works were done with great versatility subject matters viz. Astrology, science, Mathematics, Religion including some translation works etc. Among these, religious literature is mention worthy, which were greatly flourished during those days. The reasons were accepting Hinduism by swargadew Rudrasingha

and establishing Assamese language as the royal language and above all precaching vaishnav Dharma by Srimanta Sankardev. The works can be tabulated into five different classes viz:

1. Translating works.
2. Drama.
3. Biographical works.
4. Songs.
5. Miscellaneous works.

Since the time of accepting Hinduism, the Ahoms put their concentration in enriching Assamese language. So, Different steps were taken in order to flourish Assamese literature. During those days, most of the Hindu books were written in sanskrit language. Therefore under the patronisation of Ahom swargadews they were translated by some wise persons. Among those, which were translated from Mahabharata were- 'Vishma parba' by Ram Mishra Udyogparba' by Ramananda Dize, 'Santi parba' by Lakhinath Dize, 'Mukhal parba' and 'Swargaruhan parba' by Pithuram Dize and 'Druna parba' by Dahutia Bora.

The translating works which based on superbstories of Ramayana are 'Balir Digbijoy' or 'Satrunjay' by Raghunath Mohanta, 'Advot Ramayana' and 'Katha Ramayana' were translated by Raghunath Mohanta as well. 'Lanka kanda' of Sanskrit Ramayana was translated by advot Achajjya. 'Siva Purana', 'Kalika Purana', 'Brahmaboiartta Purana', 'Kalki Purana', 'Dharma Purna', 'Padma Purana' etc. are the main works which are translated from Puranas.

With the encouragement of Ahom kings, a number of books were translated from Bhagawata. They were mainly 'Bhagawata Astom skandha', 'Bhagawata sastha skandha', 'Bhagawata Dwadash Skandha'. Almost all the blocks were translated during those days, but some of them were damaged. Moreover, some books were translated from different ancient scripts. 'Hitupadesh', 'Yogini Tantra', 'Hoigrib Madhab', 'Ananda Lohari', 'Geet Gobinda of Joydeva', 'Sakuntala Kabya', 'Haribansha', 'Nitalatankur', 'Shangkachur Badh', 'Sambharachur Badh', 'Rabana Bodh', 'Kankha Badh', etc. are mentionworthy.

With the surge of vaishnav Dharma or movement, the Ankia Nat created by Srimanta Sankardev took a stupendous development during those days. They are called as 'Vaunas' and performed in order to entertain the Ahom royal families and to teach a right lesson to the common illiterate people. So, creation of various plays too took place. They are mainly- 'Kamkumar Haran', 'Kishak Bodh', 'Kankha Bodh', 'Dharmodoya', 'Nirisingha yatra', 'Haramohan', 'Srikrishna proyan', 'Shankhachur Bodh' etc. are very popular.

Emphasis were given on the biographical works too. A number of biographical works were composed during those days under the commission of Ahom kings. They are 'Sankardev Chorit', 'Ram Gopal Atar Chorit', 'Santa Samprada Keshabdas Chorit' etc.

Besides the plays and literary works, songs plays a miracle part in the movement introduced by Srimanta Sankardev. The royal poets composed hundrads of ethical songs in commemorating God and Goddesses, idle figures etc.

'Geet puthi', 'Geetor Bokola' are famous compositions. Among those poet 'Sonatandev', 'Jagabandandev', 'Brindabanchandradev', 'Bollavchandradev', 'Brajandandev', are famous.

Alike songs and plays, some works were created with a view to describe socio-economic condition and political condition of different regions of India. One of those books was 'Brindaban Chorit'. It describes Ram Mishra's tour to Brindaban.

Review of Literature

The various consulated books are: Ahomar Din by Barbaruah, Hiteswar, Beli Mar Gool by Gogoi, Lila, Medieval and Early colonial Assam, Society Polity Economy by Guha, Amalendu. Tai Sanskritir Ruprekha by Gogoi, Lila. Asom Dekhar Buranji by Devi, Laxmi, Etihakhe Huwara shakhata Basar by Rajkumar, Sarbananda, Ahom Rajsabhar Sahityar Buranji by Bokotial, Bhadreswar, Asomiya sahityar chamu Buranji by Goswami, Jatindranath etc.

Objectives of Study

Following are the objectives of the study are:

1. To give a detail study on the religious literature flourised under royal patronage during the Ahom period.
2. To make the new generation aware of the translating works flourised under royal patronage during the Ahom era.
3. To bring the focuss this important works that has so far been confined to handful of readers.
4. Socio-economic and political of scenario of the contemporary society.

Methodology

The historical and descriptive methods are applied for the study. The paper is mainly based on secondary sources like books, journals, newspapers and internet etc.

Conclusion

Study on 'Religious Literature of Ahom Reign' is something like rediscovering a valuable asset. It is hoped that upcoming generation will be benefited a lot using this paper work as an important hand book in pursuing higher studies. It also reflects on the socio-economic status of the period which will arrest the attention of the social scientists as well.

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