

Philosophy of Traditional Bathou Religion of the Boro community

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Abstract:

The traditional religion of the Boro Community is Bathou religion. They worship Bwrai Bathou as their supreme God in Bathou religion. This religion has been played a significant role in the field of socio-cultural life of the Boro Community. The distinct culture, custom, tradition and laws of Boro Community is inseparably Connected with their religious activities. They worship Sijou tree (Euphorbia Splendens) as the living symbol of Bwrai Bathou at the altar (Bathou). Bathou religion is based on the philosophy of five. Boro Community has five laws to punish and purify their society. Bathou religion is Co-related with life style of Boro Community.

Key words: Bathou religion, Boro Community, Sijou tree, five philosophy of Bathou religion, Taboo (Baad).

Introduction:

Bathou religion is one of the oldest religions of the world. The practice of belief, habit, religious thought, and the worship of Sijou tree as the immortal symbol of Bwrai Bathou at the altar is called Bathou religion. This religion incorporates, rites, ritual, social norms, culture, tradition, ethics and philosophy of Boro Community. Bwrai Bathou is the supreme God in Bathou religion. The Sijou tree is planted in the centre of the Bathou (altar) and is surrounded by a round fence of the small bamboo strips folded with five fastenings symbolizing the religious and spiritual principles groups in five. In the right side basil (Tulosi) and in the left side of the Sijou tree a Yatrashi (Justica assamia Clarke) trees are planted as the symbol of god of wealth and god of education. Willingly Boro communities have the core idea of thinking the nature as the custodian of hidden power of the creator. Boro community use Sijou tree as the medicine to cure different kinds of disease. M.M. Brahma holds that the Sijou tree has medicinal value on its every knot of the stem, row of thorns sprouting leaves etc. Hence they pick up this tree as the living symbol of supreme soul, i.e. Bwrai Bathou. This tree has some characteristics to signify some social beliefs of the Boro community. First of all it is considered to be a symbol of highest immortality i.e. supreme soul. The second is, Boro community believes in regeneration of life by way of wed lock between male and female and to signify the necessity of union between male and female

for reproduction. Similarly Sijou tree has also a pair of short thorns. The third characteristics are, this tree has five ridges. It clearly denotes the five basic elements. These are- Bar (air), Dwi (water), Hah (earth), Orr (fire) and Ukhrang (sky). The justification of adopting Sijou tree as the symbol of Bwrai Bathou is very strong one and convincing as the replica of the creator the great Bwrai Bathou.

According to some scholar like Edward Stack, Bathou religion is animistic. Rev. S. Endle also said, “The religion of the Kachari race is distinctly of the type commonly known as animistic and is under lying principle is characteristically one of the fear and dread”. R.N. Moshahary opposes it. According to him “the traditional religion of the Boro community is not animistic, but Bathouism presided over by supreme God-Bathou Bwrai or Bathou raja”. Promad Chandra Bhattacharyya also said, “The Boros are not animistic. They are worshipers of Bathou, the supreme God. They have other gods and goddesses”. Bathou religion is not from fear and dread of ghosts and spirits. It is a matter of great that the other scholars do not have clear idea and concept on Bathou religion and most probably they found short in their study. Boros believe only one God who is infinite, Almighty, Absolute, Supreme, above of all and trinity in one and one in trinity like the combination of Hindu gods Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar. In their present social life Boro community pray and worship Him for their safety, security and prosperity at the Bathou (altar) with the following verse:

Rangrachi, gwhwrachi
Mwitha haji
gona gongtham
nwnw saseyanw shatham,sathamanw sase.

In English-

Thou are the creator, nutritor and dissolator.

The Tribhuban,

Thou are the one in three and three in one.

It clearly denotes that Bwrai Bathou is the owner of Tribhuban and everything is under His control.

Objective:

The main objective of the study of philosophy of Bathou religion is-

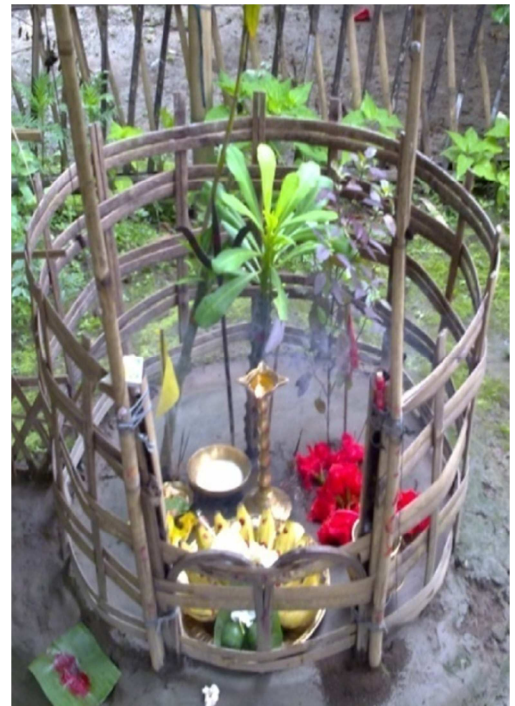
1. To study and access the importance of philosophy of Bathou religion.
2. To study and examine how Bathou religion is co-related with life style of Boro Community.
3. To give good suggestion for the richness of Bathou religion.

Methodology:

To have the proper knowledge about the philosophy of Bathou religion the proper study of Bathou religion broadly needs primary as well as secondary data. The primary data can be collected from the different parts of Boro inhabited areas and take interview from the Bathou religious personalities, social worker, old citizens, from the leaders of all Bathou religious union and other influential persons of Boro Community. The secondary data can be collected from the journal, magazines, newspapers and other published books etc.

Analysis:

The traditional religion of the Boro community is Bathou religion. Bathou religion incorporates rites and ritual, ethics, social norms, law and philosophy of Boro community. The holy word 'BATHOU' is composed of two words 'BA' + 'THOU'. Generally 'BA' means 'FIVE' and 'THOU' means 'DEEP'. The deep thought. Bathou religion is based on the philosophy of five or the principle of five. The five spiritual elements are ong, Hring, khling, fwt and che. These are the sound or roar of the Bwrai Bathou. When Bwrai Bathou roars the sound 'ong' air is drawn into His mouth and sky is produced and expel it as Hring and thus earth is created. Like that other elements are also created. The sound 'ong' is for 'sky', 'Hring' is for 'earth', 'khling' is for 'water', 'Fwt' is for 'fire' and 'che' is for 'air'. Bihuram Boro the former G. secretary of Bodo Shahitya Sabha said in his book 'Gibi Bithai' that Bar (air), Dwi (water), Hah (earth), orr (fire) and ukhrang (sky) are the five powers of Bwrai Bathou. Further he said 'B' is for Bar



(air), 'A' is for Hah (earth), T is for Dwi (water), O is for orr (fire) and 'U' is for ukhrang (sky).

The philosophical principles of Bathou religion play a vital role in the field of social, cultural and life style of Boro community. The principles of Bathou religion has well been expressed in the following piece of Bathou verse.

'Thaigirni bikhonga khongba
Sijouni siria chiriba
Siphungni gudunga gudungba
Bathouni Bandwya bandwba
Boro bwraini acharabw mwnba'.

The English rendering of the above verse is as follows:

The Dillenas indica fruit has five rinds, the Sijou tree (Euphorbia Spenders) has five ridges, the Siphung (Boro flute) has five holes, the Bathou has five knots and Boro old man (Guru) has five moral words.

Thaigirni bikhonga khongba: (Dillenas indica fruit has five rinds). The five parts of the human body is compared with the five rinds of Dillenas indica fruit. The five rinds are used as earthen lamp in different seasonal festival in the absence of earthen lamp in Boro society.

Sijouni siria chiriba : (Sijou is of five ridges) Sijou tree is worshipped as the immortal symbol of Bwrai bathou in Boro community. The word Sijou is composed of two words. 'Si'+Gwjou'= 'Sijou'. "SI" means 'Wet', immortal Soul. 'Gwjou' means 'high' the Supreme Soul. The word 'Sijou' means 'The highest immortal Soul, the supreme who never die'. That is why Boro community Pick up this tree (Euphorbia Splendens) as the living and immortal symbol of Bwrai Bathou (God) the Supreme Soul. Sijou tree has five ridges. It clearly denotes the five basic elements. These are Bar (air), Hah (earth), Dwi (water), orr (fire) and ukhrang (sky). Hence the justification of adapting sijou tree as the symbol of immortal Bwrai Bathou is strong one and convincing as the replica of the creator the great Bwrai Bathou.

Siphungni gudunga gudungba: (Siphung (Boro Flute) has five holes). Siphung is an air musical instrument. It is blown in kherai tune in kherai festival to pray Bwrai Bathou. The five sense organs of human body is compared with the five holes of flute. Boro community believes five gods and goddesses. Aileng deity (god of earth), Agrang (god of water), khwila (god of air), Sanjaburalee (god of fire) and Rajkhumbri (god of sky).

Bathouni Bandwa bandwba: (Bathou is of five knots) The five knots or five basic principles of Bathou religion is as follows:

1. The first principle is to create (sristi)
2. The second is to save the procreation by giving and taking birth.
3. The third is marriage and to spread offspring by means of wedding.
4. The fourth is for the old age. In this time he or she should be clam by praying and worshipping Bwrai Bathou.
5. The last one is for old man and death. In this stage he or she has to leave everything. This stage is called salvation (Mukti).

Boro Bwraini acharabw mwnba: (The great Boro old man has five moral words).

The five holy realizations are:

1. To think constantly of Sijou tree i.e. supreme Soul.
2. Adoration of the supreme Being.
3. Realization of the god of prosperity.
4. To realize the power of earth, water, air, fire and ether.
5. To execute one's duties on earth without negligence.

Fivefold practices:

1. Worship and meditation for Bwrai Bathou.
2. Helping othersto acquire religious knowledge.
3. Making charitable gift to the poor people.
4. Love and affection for all.
5. Doing together to solve the complex problem.

Five Senses of love:

1. Love for Bwrai Bathou
2. Love for wife and child.
3. Love for fellow beings
4. Love for animals and objects of nature.
5. Love for mother land and the world.

Hetret for five antisocial activities:

1. Hatred for killer.
2. Hatred for thief

3. Hatred for liar.
4. Hatred for indulging in illicit inter course.
5. Hatred for guilty person of offences.

To control society and to lead to the right way Boro old man (Guru) taught five moral laws. This is five achar or laws of punish called Baad (taboo) in Boro language. These are-

1. Agorbaad
2. Fongslodbaad
3. Daokibaad
4. Khaoyalibaad
5. Koulwbwdbaad

Conclusion:

Bathou religion is oldest religion. Like other religion this religion also played a significant role in the field of socio-cultural life of the Boro Community and contributed lots to the devolvement of the common people and created unified society among all sections of the people. This religion teaches the lesson of sacrifice, service, love, devotion, removing selfishness, helping others etc. Everyone has been created by one God and worships Him in different forms and names. In this way Bathou religion generates a sense of the brotherhood as a family and has always generated a sense of belongingness in society.

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