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BATHOU RELIGION AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIAL AND CULTURE OF THE BORO COMMUNITY

Barhungkha Mwchahary*¹

Research Scholar, Singhania University, Rajasthan.

ABSTRACT

Bathou religion is traditional religion of the Boro Community. Bwrai Bathou is the supreme God in Bathou religion. Boro community worship Sijou tree (*Euphorbia Splendens*) as the living symbol of Bwrai Bathou. This religion has been played a significant role in the field of social and cultural life of the Boro community. They observe various ceremonies and festivals with their traditional musical instrument which is internally related to their Bathou religion. Bathou religion has some related art forms which have sprouted from the worship of Bwrai Bathou. This religion involves traditional musical instruments like Kham (Drum), Siphung (Flute), and Jotha (Cymbal). The different art forms of dance of Boro Community are originated from the Kherai festival.

Keywords: Bathou religion, rite and rituals, social and religious festival, traditional musical instruments, traditional dance.

INTRODUCTION

The traditional religion which is worshipped Sijou tree (*Euphorbia splendens*) as the immortal symbol of Bwrai Bathou (supreme God) at the altar by the Boro community is called Bathou religion. At the centre of the Bathou Sijou tree (*Euphorbia splendens*) is planted and surrounded by a round fence of the small bamboo strips folded with five fastenings symbolizing the religious and spiritual principles grouped in five. In the right side basil tree (*tulosi*) and in the left side of Sijou tree *yatrachi* (*justica assamica* Clarke) trees are planted as the symbol of god of wealth and god of education. As the traditional rule there is no provision of idol worship in Bathou religion. Rev. S. Endle said "He (Bathabrai) is never represented in idol form, but is well in evidence through His living symbol of the Sijou tree (*Euphorbia splendens*) which is often to be seen in the Kachari homestead surrounded by a circular fence of split bamboo". (Endle 1911: 36) During the kherai festival Boro community worship other gods and goddesses along with Bwrai Bathou at the altar. They are -1. Bura ailing, 2. Khaji, 3. Abla Khungur 4. Agrang 5. Khwila, 6. Rajputra, 7. Rajkhandra, 8. Sanjani Alibura, 9. Aidibaoli, 10. Aibimani, 11. Manasu, 12. Burleyburi, 13. sarini Jwmwn, 14. Bagraja, 15. Basmumati, and 16. Soudri. In some places they are worshipped by sacrificing birds and animals but nowadays to adjust with the modern religious thought the practice of animal sacrifice to Bwrai Bathou and other gods and goddesses is gradually giving up and worshipped them with flowers and favorite food articles. In Kherai festival above mentioned deities are worshipped with the melodious tune of traditional musical instruments.

In their present social life Boro community pray and worship Bwrai Bathou for their safety, security and prosperity for the welfare of the common people at the Bathou (altar) with the following verse:

Oh, apha Bwrai Bathou
 Khangdw nwngni
 Ogian phisaphwrkhau.
 Nwngnw Rangrachi, Gwhwrachi
 Mwitha haji,
 Bari gongthamni Biguma
 Nwnng saseanw satham, sathamaw sase.

The English rendering of the above verse is as follows:

Oh, father God Bwrai Bathou
 Save you ignorant childrens
 You are the creator, Preserver and destroyer. You are the
 owner of the three bhuban (heaven, on the earth and hell)
 You are the one in three and three in one.

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

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the study of Bathou religion is:

- (1) The main purpose of this project is to make clear about the social and cultural impact of Bathou religion of the life style of Boro community.
- (2) The main study is an attempt to examine, evaluate and make a critical assessment of the process of development at different places of Boro inhabited area how they worship Bwrai Bathou.
- (3) To give good suggestion for the richness of Bathou religion.

METHODOLOGY

The proper study of Bathou religion broadly needs primary as well as secondary data. The primary data can be collected from the different places of Boro inhabited area and take interview from the Bathou religious personalities, personal workers, 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

Bathou religion is internally connected with the life style of Boro community. This religion has been played a significant role in the field of socio-cultural life of the Boro community since

primitive age till today. Bathou religion incorporates rites and ritual, social norms, custom, traditions, culture, ethics and philosophy of Boro community. Boro community observes different kinds of ceremony and festival in relation to their birth, wedding, death, agriculture activities along with their Bathou religion. Their distinct culture, custom, tradition and other social activities is internally connected with their religious activities. Birth ritual is one the most important and unavoidable ceremony of the Boro society. After seven days after the birth of new born child they pray Bwrai Bathou for the good of new born child and celebrate "Dwisarnai" ceremony. It is celebrated to pay gratitude to the village midwives who have taken trouble at the time of child birth. The traditional marriage system of the Boro community is Hathasuni, khurnai. This system is performed by Douri. Douri pronounces the holly hymns and introduced the bride and groom to the Bwrai Bathou and Mainaoburi at the Bathou (altar).

As the agriculturist they observe different kinds of agricultural rights and worship god of property to get more product. During the whole year they observe different kinds of social and religious festival. Bwisagu is one of the merry making and greatest jubilant seasonal festival of the Boro community. They welcome New Year by dancing and singing and bid fare well old year. On the first day of the bwisak they pray Bwrai Bathou at the altar for the good of whole year and enjoy with their traditional musical instruments. Domashi is harvesting festival. During this festival they make different kinds of cake and offer to Bwrai Bathou at the altar. Kherai festival is greatest religious festival of the Boro community. This festival is celebrated for the purpose of having bless from Bwrai Bathou and Mainaoburi for the welfare of the village and for the prosperity of agriculture. They observed Garja puja once in a year to protect the villagers from the evil spirits and to purify the impure village.

Bathou religion has some related art forms which have sprouted from the worship of Bwrai Bathou. The art form consist of dance form, song and music performances related to kherai festival. This religion involves traditional musical instruments like kham (Drum), siphung(flute),and jotha (cymbal).The traditional dance like Bardwisikla dance, Mwshaglangnai dance, Dhal thungri dance etc. all are originated from the Kherai dance. The practice of their religious activities, custom, tradition, rites and ritual, social and religious festival and daily life style of the Boros are the main and principal background of the Boro dance.

CONCLUSION

To have clear picture of the Boro community the study of their rites and ritual, custom, tradition, law and different kinds of social and religious festivals are necessary. Bathou religion is the core and hearth of Boro community because the clear social and cultural picture of the Boro community can be found only in the hearth of Bathou religion. Their culture reflects their nature, character, activities, habit, belief and daily life style of Boro community. Hence Bathou religion can be said as the pillar of Boro community. This religion also like other religion has played a significant role in the field of socio-cultural life of the Boro community and contributed lots to the development of the common people and created unified society among all sections of the

people. This religion teaches lesson of sacrifice, service, love, devotion, removing, selfishness etc. 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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