

Celibacy

Author: Rajib Borah

Translation & Notes: Bhaskar Jyoti Nath

The author known chiefly as a poet with a poetic cadence of his own and originality of style Rajib Borah emerged as a poet in the early twenty first century. He picks up any day today issues and heightens it to a different dimension with his gifted poetic brilliance. With equal ease and grace he deals with turbulent times of covid 19 while seeking new meaning in ordinary trivial things. Of late Borah has made his mark felt in the realm of fiction as well. He has contributed to the Assamese literary criticism with his volumes of critical works. His literary world centre's around his exquisite and idyllic childhood spent in the riverine island Majuli and he has collected his "life and food for future years "from Majuli which played a pivotal role in his literary works as well. Tatini tiror khela (2005), Dhou(2006), pani bhawna (2013) , jonakoto phute phoring(2017) , Manu cherai basi thoka najay(2022) are his poetic works. Bibartan Anubartan, Bindur pora Sindhu, Sat Samudrat Bajisene Sangkha are his critical and edited works.

Celibacy

Prologue: Childhood yowls when it is chained to the unbroken stream of tradition. It's an exasperating journey from mother's lap to the land. I have seen the sparkles in the faces glimmering after tangled debates of meaning and meaninglessness. I have also seen the painful gaze of cow herding peers in the river *char* . I saw the childhood hiding it's head in the thickets of reeds walked away to christen as monk. The free bird attempted to unfetter itself from the tight fisted cycle of discipline. One day he escaped.... Then again the cycle resumed. One day I saw him! Attired in the cold garb of self renunciation he became a stranger for us whose path was vowed of firm resolution. How firm he stood while we all were shivering in the fierce boyhood like a plaitain fore leaf of a tree! How indifferent this world is to the human beings stuck in customs and decrees after crossing the tidal pull of the mossy ocean of inner conflicts !!!

Plot:

From afar visible are the
King of jungles facing each other
Brought to life by the anonymous sculptor
The stone claws scraped my panic stricken heart
I couldn't dare to ask that question
Why is the gate adorned with elephants instead of flowers.
Guru said- *Naam is Simha*

Having lost the sunshine of affection
For the sake of the sun itself,
I took upon my head
The sacred *debutter* land
Fathers earning was too meagre

For seven souls

Mother sisters and brothers and playmates

Othiro dhana jana.....

Repeating and abstruse riddle

Young aide's tender hand slowly turned to wood

Graceful rhythm of dance lingered in his fingers

That once used to wipe away a runny nose

This is an endless torrent of eternal journey

Crawling and rolling like a palmful of water

From the stream of tradition

Where is the sea?

Where is the oath of great life?

For how long the water hen bewails in the deep caverns of heart

How long galloping horses

Half white half black

Keep coming in dreams

The sound of earthen pitcher breaking

The sound of earthen pitcher filling up

Curse!

Accursed!

Blessings- *sarbabijang porong Brahma Krishna Ityavidiyate*

It's a scripture of silent sufferings

A mossy ocean of self renunciation

An invincible pillar at the eternal horizon

A strange distant tune is played at the flute

Epilogue:

That day I saw him suddenly

Throwing off the

burden of celibacy

He is now a total householder

Tilling and harrowing life with *xoraxoposar*

: How do you do?

: Again heard that same voice

The voice so private to everybody

That hangs on the eyes with an yowl of discontent

Notes and references & study tools:

1) celibate monk; denotes the devoted religious souls who embraced that vaisnavite marg of shankar Deva and abstain from any worldly pleasure like marriage etc

4)'clad in the attire of self diminution'—after accepted the celibacy of monastery tradition a monk undergoes a severe metamorphosis from external to the deep moral and spiritual. one used to wear the traditional satriya apparels that is *dhooti* and *kamiz* etc

5)'from afar visible are the lions'-- the gateway of satra adorned with the sculpture of lions

standing tall and stout signifying the root of origin of religion ...that originates from the etymological root 'Dhr'- which means to hold, uphold, bear, maintain or support

6) *Naam Simha*: A meaningful sculptural motif usually seen in gates of Naamghar-i.e. Vaisnavite temples where symbols of elephant and Lions are curved. Elephant is seen surrendering before the lion while the lion holding it on it's head and neck with it's claws. In the religious vaisnavite tradition of *Naam dhrma* lion symbolizes the strength of *Naam dhrma* – the gyan and bhakti marg and elephant symbolizes the illusions-enormous greed and material cravings of earthly life. *Naam Dharm* i.e. Shankar Deva's vaisnavite egalitarian way of worshipping the supreme deity through *Naam*- chanting of Lord's Vishnu-Krishna. References to *Naam Dhrama* are elaborately made in Shankar Dev and Madhav Dev's Borgeet-Noble songs/Swan Songs, *Kotha Guru Charit* and *Guru Charit*. Eg- “Punya aranyar maje/Madhavar Naam Simha/Prokash koroy oti bore/Jar dhowni bhoeye/Moha pap hosti choye/Polayo oti traxat lowore” (Nam Ghoxa)

7) Debutter land: Assets owned and managed by trustees of religious centres. In Assam satra institutions and Kamakhya temple etc hold assets of its own and regulate on it's own terms. Satras sometime grant or allot land to landless people associated with satras.

8) *Othiro dhana jana*: A line from Vaisnavite preacher and social reformer Shankar Deva's *Borgeet- Paw pori hori*. It's to be performed in Raag-Kedar. A soulful deeply intimate and spiritual song which ponders on the meaninglessness of earthly life and surrenders to almighty god.

9) *xoroxoposar*-- sixteen elements used to offer during religious ceremonies and worship.

10) *sarbabijang porong Brahma Krishna Ityavidiyate*: This phrase of *Brahmaviavarta Puran* refers refers to the concept that Lord Krishna is the supreme, ultimate source (Brahma) of everything, from whom all living beings and the universe emerge and eventually dissolve. It identifies Krishna as the "All-Seed" (Sarbabijang) or the origin of all causes. Everything on the universe created, sustained by Lord Krishna and merges back to him. It establishes Lord Krishna as the supreme deity even causing *kaal* (time/death) to function.

About the Translator: *Bhaskar Jyoti Nath is a literary critic, writer and police officer. He earlier worked at premiere English daily The Sentinel as Sub Editor for a brief period. He has authored two critically acclaimed volumes of literary criticism- Path Aru Bikshyan(2019, Assam Publishing Company, Guwahati) , Abhibyonjona(2025, Assam Publishing Company, Guwahati). His upcoming book Itihasor poharat Moulavi Syed Sir Muhammad Sadulla is a pioneering historical monograph about erstwhile Premiere Syed Sadulla. A socio-historical account Axomiya Manuhar Itibritta (A history of Assamese People), penned by Nath is being published in series in literary magazine Anyayug. He also writes short stories occasionally. He contributes articles to premiere news dailies and literary journals of the state.*