

Sunday Special

Poetry Section

The Kite Runner

By:- Parthajit Borah.
(A Poetic Congratulation To Hima Das
For Her Victory In Finland)

A dream chaser of age, chases
the dreams not in night but in heart.
A rainbow chaser of passion chases
the deeds beyond imagination.
A mover of the earth, moves from
emotion to reality at a little distance.
A fast cry of track, cries from India to
the world in search of deserved crown.
A puller of colour at the lap of motherland,
who draws the victory flag
in the world's heart.
A kite runner of happy sky runs after
the dream rights,
A runner of peace from the south east
to the doorway of the world.

The mystery of nine

By:-
Dr. Nunglek Pam Premi Devi
Independent Scholar

Nine O'clock; Nine O'clock
Not later than nine; come home at nine
Hurry! Hurry! You should be at nine
I remember; a voice so strong
So afraid; so obedient and so ruling
All I do, all I imagine! Nine is all my time
How excited I am! How lovely I think?
How truthful I behave? Just for a nine time
I make no hassle; and I bother not crying
I intrude not; and I pounder billions happiness
I throw out my charm; my charisma
And I must go and I must dance.

Nine O'clock; Nine O'clock
Not later than nine; come home at nine
Hurry! Hurry! You should be at nine
The day has brightened me; but still
The day has persuading; blarney
And I sing of seasonal maneuver;
Dong-ki ta-ki, taki-ta taki,
Dong-ki ta-ki, taki-ta taki
I am entralling; and I am dreaming
Dreaming of color; red, blue and green
All delighted and all captivating
What should I chose? Bewildering
Still I doubt? That smooth talk voice
Energetic all I presume; guessing
Calculating my entire ethos; flavoring
This feeling too strong; I envy most

Nine O'clock; Nine O'clock
Not later than nine; come home at nine
Hurry! Hurry! You should be at nine
Sailing all by my side, I know no boundary
I speak of my cherish and I dream of my love;
This hour is all I consider;
T's Bright serene moonlit night; under her coat
Harboring my thousand emotions;
I try and I try inclining handsomely
Holding and engaging divine hands;
How sweet! How lovely! I fly
How heavenly! How pleasantly! I move
With this rhythmic rhythm; we follow
Dong-ki ta-ki, taki-ta taki,
Dong-ki ta-ki, taki-ta taki

Nine O'clock; Nine O'clock
Not later than nine; come home at nine
Hurry! Hurry! You should be at nine
Awe! All I wonder
Would never be again; this mystery nine
I am jiggling all my way; so valid
How unfortunate! Crack me in the middle
Oh! Sweetness, my mother
Echoing through me; Nine O'clock; Nine O'clock
Leaving phantom emotions, shadowing upon thee;
This dance; this rhythm,
Still Silhouettes my many mystery.

Historical Evaluation of Puya Meithaba:
A Contemporary Re-interpretation

By- Dr. Lokendra Arambam

The entries at the Cheitharol Kumbaba recording the actions of the monarch mention a systematic exercise of state power to erase the cultural memory of the people, and establishment of the ritual forms and practices under the new tenets of the Indian religion. In he was still constructing the Krishna temples as well as the Kalika temples (1717?), and inaugurated the Krishna temple with pomp and splendour. The first forceful step towards the Ramandi religion was perhaps the prevention of meat-eating by the seven clans, and the prohibition of domestication of pig and poultry in the interior of village households, and in 1723, there was the official declaration of the rejection of the indigenous Umanglai deities and destruction of their abodes. In Nov 1723, Brahmin priests were allowed to serve the native deities namely Lainingthou Nongshaba, Yimthei Lai, Panthoibi and Taibang Khaiba (Lord Sanamahee). In 1724, there was the ritual cremation of ancestors according to new precepts at the banks of the Chindwin river, and the new cremation system introduced by Shanti Das became the mortuary rite norm. Also the start of addressing the king as Maharajah was made at this year. In 1725, Gomati (Wahengbam chanu Paikhu Lanthabi) became the chief queen. In 1726, the first incident of the priest Shanta Das participating physically in war preparations were seen in construction of the Prum Pan. The Ningthem Pukhri was also dug at this year through collective labour. Krishna and Kalika deities were transferred at this site since then. The nine Umanglais were buried at the Mongbabanba site (Mahabali) in June 1726. Destruction of the temples of the indigenous deities of Layingthou, Panthoibi, Laiwa thiba, two Lammapis, (Mayengbam and Leishangthem), Soraren, Hoidon Pokpi etc. were effected. In 1727, the Guru physically supervised construction of market sheds at Shallungthen. The Shingjamei bridge was constructed by him at this year. He also physically participated at the war against the Tripuris (Takhel) during the year. He again with the monarch went into the punitive expeditions against the Marring tribes, as well as against the Shairem tribes. In June 1728, the stone from the market was pulled towards the Mongbabanba site to erect the statue of Hanuman. During this period the crisis in the destruction of the iron statue of Lord Sanamahee had its ramifications and the king undertook the restoration of the statue of the Lord in 1729. Along with the restoration of the native deity however, there was the ritual ablation of both the priest and king at Lillong which was a collective acknowledgment of the official contract between king and people for acceptance of the new faith for seven generations (Nongkhrang Iruppa). Sacred thread wearing ceremony was undertaken by the king through the priest. And finally in Oct 1732, the burning of the sacred scriptures were effected with ritual precision and care. The use of the elephant procession to collect native literature was important since monarchical power, imperial authority and royal magnificence was theatricalized to project the farewell to the thousand years of indigenous knowledge and philosophy, and the floodgates to the western door was opened. Some one hundred twenty sacred books on religion, ritual and philosophy were burnt. Incidentally the burning of the Puyas were effected by the British colonial power in 1891, after the

defeat of the Manipuris as well (B. Kulachandra, 1995). What is the cultural and political significance of this momentous event is history? Is it similar to the near recent destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992, which began another chapter in the cleavage of Indian society in the fog end of the twentieth century? Is the act of the monarch purely a result of sheer manipulation of wills by a crafty Brahmin priest, which is normally the assumptions of the gullible contemporary public, or was it a deeply concerned, radical action taken by a powerful personality at the height of his intellectual and mental powers? A careful consideration of the unreported inter-relation of forces beneath the seeming flow of events and meticulous rerecording of the social and political compulsions, along with the world view of the eighteenth century Manipur population would be necessary to unearth the reality behind the historic event. From personal history of Pamheiba's growth, maturity and pre-dilections as he ascended the throne, we are aware that the court in which he grew was an environment of liberal thought and behaviour, which enabled the representatives of Sanskrit culture to have access to patronage, the inner realms of decision making in the chamber of the queens, as well as the freedom to engage in rituals and ceremonies in the religious establishments patronized by the court. At the same time with tremendous agricultural expansion from domestic cultivation as well as rampages in outlying territories under a martial economy, the royal power had substantial surplus to spend on lavish ceremonies, constructions of buildings and temples and grants of land to the beneficiary Brahmins. The fluid movement of tribal and ethnic populations, the necessity to impress royal authority required extra-theatrical dimensions of power and exhibit the body of the monarch on occasions of public celebrations. Control over population, and not on possession of land was rather the principal focus of the ethno-state, and the relationship with people and populations could only be secured through control over the rituals and rites which ensured the link of the subordinate realms in cosmological relationship with the forces governing the polity. The ritual theatre state (Clifford Geertz 1966) which was an embodiment of power exercise in medieval Southeast Asia, which rationalized authority relations in a cosmic world view based on ancestral beliefs and practices were heightened with the novel system of rites and regulations which the Hindu world view could enhance. It was therefore not as much a story of personal devotion to the supreme authority or Godhood which impressed the ruler of the expanding realm, but rather the building of power and hierarchy and enhancing of personal authority of the king which attracted the religion of the other in the fast changing world of political fluctuations in the pre-modern Manipur which induced personal conversions into the same. The indigenous, communally oriented tribalistic religion alone was found wanting in the environment of war, political confrontation and clashes of world civilizations and cultures. It is therefore the developing concept of God-king (Lainingthou) as an indigenous philosophy embellished by Hindu rituals and practices which propelled the Manipur kings since the seventeenth century to experiment

conversion into various sects and practices of Hinduism to meet internal political and social needs. The Devaraja concept of Kampuchea, which was an indigenous Southeast Asian concept of kingship based on ancestral traditions led to enhancement of the powers of the king as well as later deification of the rulers that the king himself became equated with God. The king, with an installation of the shiva linga on his coronation, became equated with the great god of ancient Cambodia (Nidhi Auesrivongse 1976). The divine right of the kings of Southeast Asia to rule over the realms of people and populations were accentuated with rites and rituals emanating from the cultural sources of Sanskrit and Indie philosophy. Pamheiba himself modelled his own actions and behaviour on the principles exuded from Rama, the prince of Ayodhya. It was here that we have to undertake the enquiry into the thought processes of medieval rulers and their psychological associations with the Hindu divinities. In the words of Frank E. Reynolds 'For the most part, these Hindu crystallizations set the story of Rama in a primordial time situated at or near the beginning of the present era when the gods are very much involved in human affairs and the character of decision making in the chamber of the queens, as well as the freedom to engage in rituals and ceremonies in the religious establishments patronized by the court. At the same time with tremendous agricultural expansion from domestic cultivation as well as rampages in outlying territories under a martial economy, the royal power had substantial surplus to spend on lavish ceremonies, constructions of buildings and temples and grants of land to the beneficiary Brahmins. The fluid movement of tribal and ethnic populations, the necessity to impress royal authority required extra-theatrical dimensions of power and exhibit the body of the monarch on occasions of public celebrations. Control over population, and not on possession of land was rather the principal focus of the ethno-state, and the relationship with people and populations could only be secured through control over the rituals and rites which ensured the link of the subordinate realms in cosmological relationship with the forces governing the polity. The ritual theatre state (Clifford Geertz 1966) which was an embodiment of power exercise in medieval Southeast Asia, which rationalized authority relations in a cosmic world view based on ancestral beliefs and practices were heightened with the novel system of rites and regulations which the Hindu world view could enhance. It was therefore not as much a story of personal devotion to the supreme authority or Godhood which impressed the ruler of the expanding realm, but rather the building of power and hierarchy and enhancing of personal authority of the king which attracted the religion of the other in the fast changing world of political fluctuations in the pre-modern Manipur which induced personal conversions into the same. The indigenous, communally oriented tribalistic religion alone was found wanting in the environment of war, political confrontation and clashes of world civilizations and cultures. It is therefore the developing concept of God-king (Lainingthou) as an indigenous philosophy embellished by Hindu rituals and practices which propelled the Manipur kings since the seventeenth century to experiment

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sin-relieving, blessedness giving story (L. Arambam 1991). Though Pamheiba is suspected to have self-glorified his achievements, his valour in war and conquest and his generosity towards the poor under Indianized concepts of polity governance, he was however conscious of the omnipotence of his household deity, the Lord Sanamahee, whom Shantadas Goswami was learnt to have accepted as his God Vishnu himself. The context of the conversion into Hinduism and structural transformation of Meitei society therefore was always accompanied with the anchorage provided by the native religion, and in the early eighteenth century, probably the structural assimilation between the two cultures were not theorized or systematized. It was probably in the later eighteenth century during the rule of his grandson Chingthangkomba that a philosophical readjustment of the two religions took place, and the concept of the Godking which was a developing phenomenon undertook a radical transformation when Bhagyachandra accepted the Lord Govinda (equated with the ancestral Pakhangba) as king. The core principles of assimilation between the two cultures were systematically restructured by the spiritually oriented monarch who relieved himself of the task of governance and undertook the cultural theorizing of the Indianization process. Earlier he balanced the outside cultural influences in equal status with the collective self, and the indigenous elements was accepted at par with the incoming culture. Only the establishment however of a Brahmasabha at the social spectrum with increasing search for hierarchy and status under Hindu principles led to the gradual restructuring of Hindu society in Manipur, which became oppressive in colonial times. It must be understood also, that Bhagyachandra relegated the God Rama as senapati in the cosmic hierarchy while Govinda (and Pakhangba) was placed at the centre, whereas his grandfather had Rama in the centre of the Pantheon itself. Necessary wars of liberation had to be fought inspite of changes in world view and cosmological concept. All these events and historic events had extensive fall outs which perhaps shaped the future history of the people and the state. Pamheiba's tumultuous events, his glorious confrontations with the rising Burmese empire, his interventions in the politics of the upper Shan principalities to fight against the Burmese power, his depositions over the Kabaw valley, his relations with Tripura and other extra-territorial powers were of the most exemplary character which led the imprint of the national formation of the Manipuri people. His wars were substantially helped in execution and implementation by the ethnic communities in the peripheral frontiers of the region. He left a territorial legacy extensively beyond the present boundaries of the state, which marked the substantial martial energy of these racial categories in a plural order. (Contd. on previous issue)

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