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## **Saga of Madankamdev Devalaya of North Kamrup Area of Assam**

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### **Abstract:**

*The term janasruti or kingvadanti is used to denote legends in Assam. This state of the North-Eastern region is well known as the home land of different deities. This temple of Kamrup district has legendary history. Different stories are found regarding its origin. It is said that the cult of this temple resembles Khajuraho temples. The department of Archaeology found other 12 (twelve) other temples near Madankamdev devalaya (temple) where Bakhtiar too shelter. Further, they are of the view that these are a group of temples destroyed by Bakhtiar. The devalaya occupies a prominent place in the life and culture among the people of the area. The legendary history regarding the origin of the temple is quite interesting.*

**Keywords:** Legend, Yogini Tantra, Madan, Lord Siva, Sexual Pleasure, Pati-Darrang,

### **1. Introduction**

Legend constitutes another branch of prose narratives, which are believed to have happened in recent past. These are considered to be true by the narrator and the audience and set in a historical period, which is far from being remote. Legends account for migrations, wars and deeds of past heroes, chiefs and things and local take of buried treasure, saints etc. W. R. Bascom says, "Legends are prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the narration and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today."<sup>1</sup> Generally speaking, legends are orally transmitted long and more often secular prose narratives supposedly based on facts with an intermixture of traditional material dealing with a person, a place or an incident.

The driving impulse behind telling a legend is to educate the people rather than to entertain them. There are three sub-types of legends e.g.

- (i) Etiological legends
- (ii) Historical legends
- (iii) Religious legends

#### *1.1. Pati-Darrangia Legends*

The term janasruti or kingvadanti is used to denote legends in Assam as well as in the area. Legends have manifold functions. They give historical knowledge to the folk. They also reveal the customs and diction prevalent during the time of their heroes. For example, the legend of Hardutta and Birdutta or Phingua show that during their times people were ready to sacrifice their lives in order to keep their words. Again, the legend of Sri Sri Arjundev reveals the culture and civilization of his time.

Thus, legends mould the behaviour of the people in different ways suited to their communities. They also serve in exercising social control in the society of the area. As legends are also of great value in socializing the people as they reflect various aspect of the life of the people of North Kamrup area. In the legends, the life of people in various aspects, like the social customs, language, arts, forms of governments, hair style of man and woman, design of residential houses, war weapons, economic and social standards, domestic articles, utensils, cookerries, customs for dances, food habits, religious faith, games and sports etc. are reflected. The legends of Northern Kamrup area can be classified into the following groups:

- (a) Mythological legends,
- (b) Historical Legends,
- (c) Place Name Legends,
- (d) Legends of Person,
- (e) Religious Legends
- (f) Etiological Legends

The term 'temple' in respect of North Kamrup area is popularly known by the words like Dol, Dewāl and Devālaya all from a Sanskrit origin. B.K. Kakati, however traces its origin to the Austric language.<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of our study, the concept 'temple' has been used to mean a place of worship of the Hindus with a masonry or brick built building, in standing order or in rains bearing endowments of land, men and other valuables, wherein daily and regular worship was performed or still being performed. The Kalika

Purana and the Yogini Tantra give a long list of tirtha and also make mention of Prāsāda, and Saudha such as Jalpiśa, Aśvagrānta, and Kedār etc. King Śrī Kumāra who flourished during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D., built a temple complex dedicated to a number of deities, like Ganeśa, Vishnu, Manasā etc. The ruins of the temples of Kāmākhyā, Madan Kāmdev, and Pingaleśvar are some of the sites which give a clear indication of old temple buildings there. It was to the credit of Rudrasingha for the survey of the temples and sacred places in Kamrup in 1534. His successor Śivasinha (1714-1744 A.D.) constructed 14 temples in Kamrup. A total of 22 temples we found to have been built in the district of Kamrup.<sup>3</sup>

The legendary stories of Madankamdev Devalaya are mentioned below:

### 1.2. Legends of Madankamdev Devalaya

Baihata Chariali is the centre of Pub-Kamrup area. The Madan-Kamdev Devalaya is situated about 4 km away from Baihata Chariali. The temple on the Madan-Kamdev or Diwangiri hill is regarded as a holy place by both Hindus and Muslims from ancient times. In the year 1902 Late Niyamat Ali Choudhury took the charge of management of the temple. The fact reveals Hindu-Muslim brotherhood among the people.

The Legend regarding the origin of the temple goes thus: Devi Sati died at his father's house when he rebuked her and Lord Siva. Lord Siva heard the incident and cut the head of Dakshy and gave him the head of a goat. He took her wife's dead body in his shoulder and started to travel the whole world. The Universe is in great danger. The God of Creation, Brahma and others went to Lord Bishnu and told him about the coming danger to the Universe. Lord Bishnu thing over the matter and with the help of his chakra he made 51 (fifty one) pieces of the dead body of Sati. Lord Siva after the event bathed in the river Sivaswati and started his meditation in the Modern Kamdev hill. At that time Tarakasura started to give trouble to the inhabitants of the universe. The king of heaven Indra and his courtiers went to Brahma. Brahma told them that the child of Lord Siva and Uma only could kill Tarakasura. Indra and his courtiers went to Madana, the god of love and requested him to stop Lord Siva's meditation. Madana applied his flower arrow of love to Lord Siva. Lord Siva's prayer was disturbed and his anger came out through his third eye and it destroyed Madana. This sorrowful incident was heard by Roti Devi, wife of Madana. She went to Lord Siva and offered her prayer in order to please him. The prayer of Roti and other gods and goddess convinced Lord Siva. Madana regained his body and life at that place. So, the place where Madana regained his body was named as Madana-Kamdev and the hill became famous as Madana Kamdev hill.

Another legend regarding the origin of the devalaya is found among the people of the locality. It is said that Madan and Rati were brother and sister. They went to the Madan-Kamdev hill. Rati was a very beautiful girl. There they enjoyed sexual pleasure. But their father saw their affection and unlawful dead. Both of them jumped into the river and died. The river Madankuri still exists by the side of Madan-Kamdev hill.

According to history it is not only one temple but the ruins of which all scattered there, but there all extensive ruins of about 18 in number, on different hillocks. The department of Archaeology has detected 12 sites of ruins. Scholars are of the view that Bukhtiyar took shelter at Madankamdev Devalaya during his invasion of Assam. Regarding the origin of the temple different Puranas states:

- Kalika Purana States –

In the east side of Manikut parbat a line of small hill is found which is named as Matchadhaj. There Madan who was burnt by the fire of the eye of Lord Siva. He regained his health by worshipping Brishadrajā, God Bishnu, and the disguiser of fish dwelt there and looked after the earth. There was a river named Swaswati which flowed towards the south and a dam called Kamsar. After having bath in the water of river Swaswati and drinking the water of the dam people can get rid of their sins and found a place in Sivaloka.<sup>4</sup>

- Dr. Maheswar Neog stated in Pabitra Assam –

In Yogini Tantra reference of Kader Mondir and Madanachal is found (2, 9, 65, 70) and about the observation of Kāmtrayodasi in the month of Choit (2, 9, 51). But it did not indicate the ruins of the temple.<sup>5</sup>

The religious minded people of the locality is observing different religious festivals from time immemorial. Janmastomi, Durgapuja, Sivaratri, Budhapurnima, Ganesh Chaturthi, Dol-Utsab, Ambubachi and New Year celebration. The main occasion of the devalaya is the Madan Tryodashi in the month of Choit.

It is widely believed that if anybody observes fasting in the Madan Tryodashi, he will be able to discard disease and become fortunate. It is also said that Hardutta and Birdutta came there every day to offer their prayer to Lord Siva.

## 2. Conclusion

It is hoped that these legends will give an assessment of the extent and value of cultural and religious beliefs of the area. Further, the motif behind the second legend is to prevent the marring system within the same family. Documentary evidence will preserve those legends, which is still in current on the word of mouth.

## 3. End Notes

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5. Neog, Maheswar (ed) :Pabitra Assam, P-236

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