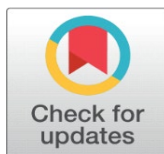
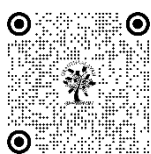


TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, CULTURE AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF TRIPURA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WATER (TWI)

Sukhendu Debbarma ¹

¹ Professor, Department of History, Tripura University (A Central University), Suryamaninagar-799022



DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i2.2024.4338](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i2.2024.4338)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the traditional Indigenous knowledge, culture, and religious practices of Tripura, with special reference to water “twi”. For the Borok people, water is not only a physical resource but also a divine, life-giving force connected to spiritual beliefs, rituals, and social customs. Water plays a central role in numerous ceremonies like birth, death, healing, purification, renewal, etc. The water Goddess “Twima” is worshipped to protect communities from water-borne diseases. Water is also tied to various folktales playing its dual symbolism of life and death. The sacred water “Twipora” is an integral part of rituals and traditional healing practices.

The most prominent folktales are that of two sisters, Raima and Saima, whose lives are intertwined with water. In this tale, water symbolizes both life and death exploring the themes of love, loss, and transformation, as water plays a central role in submerging the two lovers’ unity, leaving Saima alone. Another significant folktale is about a brother and sister in Chethuang, where the brother falls in love with his own sister, an act condemned by society. In this story, water becomes a vehicle for purification, with the sister using water to cleanse herself and escape her tragic fate.

Even many places and villages are named after rivers, such as Twisa Rangchak “golden river”, Twi Jilik “sparkling water”, and Twi Kormo “yellow water” reflecting the deep bond between the land, people, and water. Ultimately, this research is connection between the Borok people and water, illustrating its central role in their worldview, practices, and ongoing relationship with the natural environment.

Keywords: Indigenous Knowledge, Water, Purification, Water Goddess, Traditional Healing, Folktales, Cultural Practices

1. INTRODUCTION

Oceans, seas, lakes and rivers including plants and animals associated with them are interwoven to every culture and form an explicit or implicit part of religious beliefs and cultural heritage in all parts of the world particularly the Indigenous people. Water (Twi) plays a pivotal role in many cultures and religions since time immemorial. Water becomes the focal point in the traditional knowledge, myth, folklore, cultural and religion. Traditional indigenous cultures and religions around the world maintain a unique relationship with water. Water has always been considered sacred in many cultures around the world. For instance, the late Philip Deere from Oklahoma, a medicine man of the Muskogee Nation, called rivers and streams “the veins of the world”. (Darrell Addison Posey, p.402) The Maoris of New Zealand uphold the sacredness of their rivers. They waged a legal battle on behalf of their rivers. A plan was made to build a sewage treatment plant along the banks of their sacred Kaituna river. From a Maori point of view, it is unimaginable that effluents and treated wastes should be channeled into a natural body of water. Eva Waitiki, one of Kaituna’s defenders says: “We told the judges about our river, its power and its uniqueness. We told them that Kaituna is like a brother to us. We even spoke of the Taniwha, the protecting water spirits. We explained to them that the sickness

of the soul which we call Mate Maori, can only be healed by a healthy river" (Darrell Addison Posey, p. 402). This is expressive of the significance that water has in one's culture.

Ever since the first civilization arose in the Nile, Euphrates, Tigris and Indus river basins, water has been a matter of prime concern. The importance of water is recognized in many of the world's religions where water is used as symbol and as sacrament. From early human history when the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water were identified as sacred vessels of life processes to later sacramental uses of water in baptism or purification ceremonies, water occupies a central place in the human imagination and religious consciousness. Contemporary culture is born out of religious traditions and the conditions of our knowledge are embedded in religious discourse. Therefore, culture and religion are interconnected, and as a result cultural views on water are generally based on the predominant religious views. Consequently, a discussion of water in religion is pertinent to the discussion of water in culture. The qualities of water and its necessity to life result in it being a significant part of religion and culture.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam having originated in the Middle East provide a rich source for religious beliefs surrounding water. Egypt's male god Hapi is depicted with two breast, from which flowed the waters of the upper and lower Nile. Apsu, the Sumerian god, governed sweet water. Mesopotamia Ea, god of water, set his palace at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates. Nun, god of Babylonia, provided the view that water was the origin of all life from which the earth sprang as did all creations.

In Judaism, the elements of air, fire, earth and water have symbolic weight but water is the mother of the elements. According to Judaism, the world was created from water and water symbolizes the primordial ocean from which all fertility is derived and in which the formless takes shape. The ancient Hebrew viewed the sea as the mother of all elements that emerged in the disguise of gods. In the words of prophet Jeremiah, the Lord Yahweh, one of many Hebrew terms referring to God, is called "the fountain of living waters".(Gary Chamberlain P.41).Water's power or the power of God expressed in water became a key element in the story of Hebrew deliverance, the exodus from the oppression of Egyptian Pharaoh. The exodus story relates to Moses using water for deliverance many times. Water's purifying power in the ceremony is called Tashlich (meaning "to cast away" in Hebrew), which takes place during Rosh ha- shanah.i.e Jewish New Year.

Christianity, like Judaism, also shares the story of creation that the world was created from water. Baptism in water provides spiritual birth, and purification from past sins. Other segments of Jesus' life reveal the power of water as a central symbol for purification, healing and sanctification. To cite one instance, a blind man was healed by Jesus after washing his eyes in the pool of Siloam (John 9:6). In short Christianity has instilled a set of religious value in water-baptism, holy water, sacrament etc.

In Islam, like in Judaism and Christianity water plays an important part in purification- physical and spiritual. The importance of water's purity emerges in the muhtasib practice meaning caring for the environment. Water should not be wasted. Wudu or ablution or ritual cleansing with water is the ultimate symbolic action that the Muslim performs every time he prepares himself for prayer.(Gary Chamberlain,p.53).The Qur'an describes ritual cleansing: " when you come to fulfill the prayer, wash your hands as far as the elbows, and rub your head and feet up to the ankles"(Qur'an 5:6). Further the ahadit, Islamic law places strong emphasis on cleanliness and on avoiding pollution of water. (Gary Chamberlain, p.54) An ancient Islamic ritual involves washing the dead bodies. (Gary Chamberlain, p.54).

In Hinduism also water is considered sacred. The five elements when the world was created are: earth, air, fire, water and space. All these five elements are interconnected and interdependent. The earliest Vedic text, Rig Veda reads: "Darkness was there, all wrapped around by darkness, and all was water indiscriminate"(Gary Chamberlain,p. 16). Rivers are linked to god and goddesses mostly representing female because water is looked upon as generating and nurturing. There are numerous tales indicating the sacred status of oceans, seas and rivers. Thus, salvation and purification in bathing is one of the fundamental beliefs in Hindu religion.

In Buddhist religion water in its various forms serves as powerful symbols. When Buddha Gautama was born, for instance, a tank of clear water miraculously appeared (Coomaraswamy 1993). Water also features in ceremonies and rituals such as bathing and funerals. For example, as water is poured into a bowl placed before the dead body and overflows, the monks say the words: "As the rains fill the rivers and overflow into the ocean, so likewise may what is given here reach the departed" (Gary Chamberlain, p. 32). In the Mahayana tradition, friends and relatives gather around the deceased for a bathing ceremony in which water is poured over in one hand of the dead. (Gary Chamberlain, p. 32). In many cultures, water is used not only to purify the dead body for the afterlife but often this process is also a symbol

of rebirth. Besides this, cleansing is also one of the most important properties of water in religious practices, and ablutions before prayer, weddings, or other ceremonies are common across the world.

From the earliest times, healing cults have been associated with water sources. Water features strongly in the funeral rites of the Borok people as in the case of Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam, to name a few religions.

In many cultures, water, like many other natural elements, is imbued with a spirit, or a life force. The spirit, a physical manifestation of water, can appear in human, animal or supernatural forms. Serpents are perhaps one of the most common forms assumed by a water spirit. This is found particularly in India, South East Asia and Africa but this belief is also very much prevalent among the indigenous Borok people of Tripura. Water has been fundamental in shaping the history of Southeast Asia, and its characterization as a “world of water” seems eminently apt (Boomgaard 2007). Keeping in mind the importance of water in many traditional indigenous religions and cultures around the world, the paper will highlight the importance of water in the traditional indigenous culture and religious practices among the different indigenous tribes of Tripura and perhaps see the similarities regarding beliefs in water across cultures. Water is at the heart of the spiritual tradition. Life itself is seen as inseparable from religion.

Since time immemorial, the indigenous people have been very intimately attached to rivers or water. Water and rivers have played a key role in the continuing practices of cultural process by the indigenous tribes of Tripura since the remote past. It may be pertinent to mention here that the traditionally indigenous tribes of Tripura are not familiar or acquainted with seas or oceans. Apart from being useful, rivers or water has also social and religious connotation.

The name ‘Tripura’ seems to have been derived from the word, ‘twi’ and ‘pra’ where ‘twi’ means water and ‘pra’ means adjoining. Many of the names of the areas or villages are also named after the rivers/streams. Let us see some of the names of those villages where it is associated with the names of the rivers/streams viz. ‘Twisa rangchak,’ ‘twisa’ meaning river or stream and ‘rangchak’ meaning gold i.e. village where gold flows in river. ‘Twi kormo’, where ‘twi’ meaning water and ‘kormo’ refers to yellow/golden i.e. village where the river water is yellow/ golden. ‘Twi jilik’ where ‘twi’ is water and ‘jilik’ meaning sparkling i.e. village where water sparkle or clean water. ‘Twidu’ where ‘twi’ meaning water and ‘du’ meaning accumulate thus meaning village where water accumulate. ‘Twi baklai’ where Twi meaning water and ‘baklai’ meaning distributed or separated i.e. village where river is distributed or separated. ‘Twi wandal’ where Twi meaning water and ‘wandal’ meaning a kind of bamboo thus meaning village wherein and around water where one get a particular kind of bamboo species and ‘Twi Thaiplok’ where ‘twi’ meaning water and ‘Thaiplok’(Dillenia indica) or elephant apple thus meaning where near/adjoining water elephant apple fruits are available. Thus, indicating the traditional strong bond of the people with the river of the particular area as well as things found.

The Borok people are generally very religious and the religion is based on tradition. Most of their religious beliefs are centered on the worship of nature. It is believed that the spirits inhabit in places like deserted homestead, streams, hills, water, jungles etc. The existence of the supreme God who is the creator of the universe & mankind is believed to live in waters. The benevolent spirits associated with water is commonly personified as motherlike figure. Twima or the water goddess as in the case of Coventina (Celtic origin), Anahita (Persian origin). Twima is worshiped as a household as well as village deity and ritual is carried out in the rivers or stream to propitiate the goddess. She becomes more important in the villages and communities when there is the outbreak of water borne diseases such as cholera, poxes etc. As the water spread these diseases so they try to appease her by offering a male-goat or a buffalo. The worship of ‘Tuior’ or female water deity/ spirit among the Molsom tribe in Tripura also believed to live in water. If anyone is possessed by the spirit, it causes water borne diseases such as cholera, poxes etc. In order to appease the ‘Tuior’ or female water deity /spirit, the traditional priest ‘Ochai’ perform rituals sacrificing a fowl in the stream or river. Among the Kokborok speaking community as soon as the child is born, the mother and the baby is cleaned with water. Washing the dead body before cremation is also prevalent. It is to be mentioned here that the place for cremation is always near the river. After the cremation the ashes are thrown in the river. Even after becoming Christians the bathing of the deceased still continues. The act signifies the cleansing of the soul of the dead rather than cleaning the physical body.

‘Twipora’ or spiritual water prepared by chanting of mantras by the ‘Ochai’ or traditional priest. It is usually used as medicine for curing different aches in the body. Water, which is considered sacred, is collected from the nearby river (twi tan) before the marriage ceremony- in which two pitchers of water are carried during this ceremony. The water so carried is used for the bathing of the bride and groom. After the marriage- lampra wathop deities are worshiped. The ‘Ochai’ takes bath before performing the lampra wathop ceremony. The ‘Ochai’ first sprinkles the spiritual water of the lampra wathop to the newly wedded couples and later the elders and relatives sprinkle the spiritual water on the newly

wedded couples. The sprinkling of the spiritual water to the newly wedded couples indicate symbol of fertility, life and wealth as well.

There are numerous folktales around the world relating to water. The Das Wasser Des Lebens or the Water of Life of Germany, the Fish and the Leopard's wife or why the fish lives on water of Southern Nigeria, the Dance for Water or Rabbit's Triumph, Crocodile's Treason of South Africa, the Secret Water and the Water Ghost of the Chinese are some of the examples. In the North East India water spirit have been beautifully portrayed in the folk tales of the Tangkhul Naga tribe 'Mansingla' of Manipur, Puri or water spirit of the Khyntiam Khasis of the East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya, Ngaiteii's and Mauruangi's folktales of the Mizos of Mizoram, Tayen & his brothers, Kongliang Otsu of Ao Nagas, Hunchibili of Angami Nagas of Nagaland, the Raja and seven wives of Singpho, the Elephant and its nose of Assamese, Assam to name a few. These folktales keep the indigenous knowledge and culture alive generations after generations.

The most popular folk tale of the Borok relating to water (twi) is about two sisters- Raima & Saima. Their father is Ochai Kotor or Chief Priest who performs rites and rituals for the welfare of the villagers and is always busy drinking and in merry making. He does not have time to think for the family and the mother follows the father. The two sisters are left by themselves most of the time. The family is dependent on huk or shifting cultivation and as the parents do not have time, it is the two sisters who are involved in the cultivation. In such cultivation, the need of a garing or temporary hut is essential to protect themselves from rain and sun, and takes rest when needed. Both the sisters repeatedly told their father to build a garing for them but to no avail.

One day while the two sisters were in the huk there was a sudden storm and as both the sisters did not have a garing they were left un-protected. In such a situation, the elder sister Raima out of deep sorrow and anguish made a vow to marry any body or any creature whoever would build a garing for them. A python heard Raima's vow and the python built a garing for the two sisters. Raima and Saima also came to know about the python/serpent, but it is pertinent to mention here that it was only Saima who could see the python/ serpent as python/ serpent but in the eyes of Raima the python/ serpent was a handsome young man. Raima immediately fell in love with the python/serpent.

Whenever the two sisters start early in the morning for huk or shifting cultivation, they usually carried their lunch with them. The python/ serpent ate the lunch meant for the two sisters and the sisters shared the little that was left over. The sisters became thin and unhealthy, as they were deprived of proper lunch. One day the father asked the younger daughter as to why they were pale and thin and the younger daughter was forced to disclose the entire happenings. When the father came to know about it he was very angry. One day he went to the huk along with his the younger daughter Saima. Saima called for her sister's lover i.e. the python/ serpent. The python/ serpent appeared and the father immediately killed it. As soon as the python/ serpent was killed one of the ear rings of Raima fell in the ground indicating bad omen. The head of the python/ serpent was buried in the dungur, or waterfall. The next day both the sister came to the huk. During lunch time the elder sister Raima told her younger sister Saima to call python/ serpent. After calling for three to four times, python/ serpent did not appear as it did before. Thereafter, Raima forced her younger sister Saima, the eyewitness, to tell her what had happened. After knowing that her father had killed her beloved i.e. python/ serpent, Raima became melancholic. The sisters while trying to locate where the head of the python/ serpent was buried came across beautiful blooming khumpui (*hedychium coronarium*) flowers. Hardly did Saima placed her tender hands on them, all the flowers withered instantly. Saima was shocked and called for her sister Raima. The same withered flowers touched by Saima become fresh as soon as the hands of Raima were placed on them. Raima began to call for her dongoi or beloved and her call was responded by the python/ serpent and slowly the water in the dungur or waterfall started to rise up. It may be mentioned here that before the dungur or waterfall there is the confluence of two rivers. The water submerged the two lovers and united them leaving Saima alone.

Saima asked for advice from her sister as to how she will live all alone by herself. Raima before she submerged suggested that she should go to a pipal tree in the nearby jungle and climb there and sing that she aspires to become a queen and give birth to seven male children. One day the king's men came for hunting in the jungle and heard Saima singing that her sole desire in life is to become a queen and give birth to seven male children. Feeling strange the Maharaja's (King) men reported the matter to the Maharaja. Immediately, the Maharaja's men came and brought her down from the pipal tree and marched to the palace. When Saima was brought before the Maharaja, she told about the whole incident and the advice of her elder sister Raima. The Maharaja immediately agreed to marry her and give her the status of a queen. All the previous queens of the Maharaja became jealous of Saima. As days passed by, Saima conceived and was prepared to give birth. All the other queens jealous as they were told the nurse that once she gives birth to the newborn child, the child should be thrown in the pond (water tank). Further the nurse was instructed by the jealous

queens to collect few bamboo sticks to show that Saima gave birth to those sticks. Each time a child would be born to Saima, the new born child would be thrown in the pond (water tank) and beside her always bamboo sticks and such incident happened seven times, meaning thereby that Saima gave birth to seven children. News began to spread far and wide that the Maharaja's queen Saima gave birth to bamboo sticks rather than human. The Maharaja felt ashamed and humiliated and ordered that Saima be thrown out of the palace and be tied to a tree in a near by jungle. The children of Saima thrown in the pond (water tank) in the mean time began to grow. Each time the women of the palace would go to fetch water from the pond (water tank), the pitcher would be pierced and thereby spoiling the pitcher altogether. The news of the incident again spread far and wide and the matter was reported to the Maharaja. It was decided by the Maharaja that all water would be drained out from the pond (water tank), to find out as to why pitchers are pierced as and when anyone goes to fetch water from the pond (water tank). As water began to be drained, to the surprise of everyone, seven handsome children were found playing. The seven children were asked about their identity but they were not able to tell. The Maharaja paraded one by one all the queens before the seven children and other women of the palace; the children did not identify any one of them as their mother. Rather they told the Maharaja that for the woman to be their mother, if any woman would squeeze her breast and the flowing milk would automatically come to their mouth. Again all the queens, women of the palace and other women also tried but none of their milk reached the seven boys. Suddenly the Maharaja remembered Saima, the queen who was thrown out of the palace in a near by jungle. The Maharaja's men were sent to her and as per the instruction, Saima was asked to squeeze her breast and the milk that flowed reached the seven boys. This confirmed that the seven boys are the children of Saima. The Maharaja conducted an inquiry and found that the queens who were jealous of Saima instructed the nurse to throw the newborn babies in the pond (water tank) and keep beside her some pieces of bamboo. The queens responsible for the incident were punished and thereafter the Maharaja, Saima and the seven children lived happily.

Another important folk tales relating to water is about brother and sister 'Chethuang'. The brother is elder and the sister is younger. One day both of them were on their way to huk or shifting cultivation. They had to cross a river and on that particular day the river was at spate. The sister was ahead of her brother and while trying to cross the river, she lifted her rignai (lower garments worn by borok women) and the brother saw her thigh. The brother immediately fell in love with his own sister. When they got back from the huk or shifting cultivation, the boy was moody. The behavioral change in the boy was noticed by everyone in the family and ultimately the grandmother intervene and asked the about his being moody. The boy told the grandmother that he wished to get married. The grandmother spelt out all the names of the young girls of the village whom the boy would get married. The boy rejected all the young girls and ultimately the only young girls left was his own sister. The boy confessed that he has fallen in love with his own sister. In spite of counseling that it is wrong and unsocial on the part of a brother to fall in love with his own sister but the brother was unyielding and insisted on getting married. Thereafter, without much hype preparation began for the marriage. While the paddy was being sun out in the courtyard for husking it into rice for the marriage, fowls began to feed on that paddy. The grandmother chased the fowls saying that the paddy being sun out is for the marriage of her grandson and granddaughter. The sister overheard what the grandmother said while warding off the fowls and clarified about the marriage her grandmother is taking and was shocked to hear that her marriage is being fixed with her own brother. The sister was shocked to know the whole matter and felt very annoyed, as it was unsocial. She could not concentrate in her works and one day saw in her dream that to get rid of her agony she was asked to plant a seedling of 'chethuang' (*alostonia scholoris*). She did as was instructed in her dream. She planted a 'chethuang' (*alostonia scholoris*) seedling and poured water and worshiped. The tree began to grow as she sung a song 'lok chethuang lok, anole dada bai se kainani hnwa (grow alostonia scholoris grow as preparation is going on to give me marriage with my own brother) ultimately she disappeared in the sky. Before she disappeared broke the shoot of the tree by her feet and to bear this testimony our people believe that 'chethuang' (*alostonia scholoris*) is without a bud. Today if anyone out of curiosity ask or want to know as to why 'chethuang' (*alostonia scholoris*) is without bud like any other trees then one has to narrate the whole folktale. The folktale indicates that marriage within the traditional sibling is not permissible in the borok indigenous society. With the advancement of medical science, it is also advised that marriage within the sibling is not desirable as children born have life threatening defects. Thus, indigenous knowledge is far ahead of the medical sciences.

In the Hrangkhawl community of Tripura the importance of water in the cultural and religious affairs can be right from the time the child is conceived in the mother's womb till the last rite performed for the death. Before the birth of the child i.e. when the child is in the womb a sacrifice of small fowl is made. First the small fowl is cleaned with water in the river and sacrifice is made. Thereafter the intestine is taken out and washed with water and the intestine is examined by the traditional priest 'Ochai' to see whether good or bad omen. Just before the birth of the child the expectant mother

is cleaned with water and as soon as the child is born is also given bath with water 'Naitwirisilti' and given lukewarm water to drink. Thereafter, the umbilical cord is washed with water and cut with green bamboo silt and placenta is thrown in the river. Thanks giving sacrifice follows thereafter by the side of the river.

Childbirth is considered impure and in order to purify, water collected from the river is sprinkled and the entire house is polished with water. At the same time all articles associated with childbirth is washed with water for purification. During child consecration or naming ceremony, 'Nairwmingpho' the child is first given bath. Thereafter the water collected from the river is sprinkle on the child and name of the child is announced.

When a child get sick or unwell, water is collected from the river 'Twipai' and to cure the sickness the name of the child is pronounced either by the priest, mother or elder of the community or family who does the rituals and again the water is thrown in the river. Thus, indicating that the river will cleanse the sickness of the child. In some cases of sickness in order to get cure a handful of rice is taken by the priest or elder in the family and the rice is smeared on the body of the sick person and thereafter the rice is thrown in the river. This process of curing sickness is called 'Saisum'.

When the girl child grows up and before the attainment of puberty initiation ceremony is held, 'Risabom' or 'Rawlkai'. Before the ceremony takes place the girl is given bath. During the ceremony she is sprinkled water with either by the 'Ochai' (traditional priest) or elder of the community. The Molsom, Kaipeng and the Bongcher communities of Tripura, also perform this ceremony.

In case of death, the dead body is first washed with water. At the same time the entire house, articles as well as compound is washed and cleaned with water. Cremation usually takes place near the riverside. For the funeral pyre usually eight pillars are erected. After the cremation is over, may be the following day, the un-burn portion of the pillars are dugout and thrown in the river along with the ashes.

In the traditional religion, the Darlongs believed that 'si' or salty springs water is the abode of demons. The demons of such places could capture the soul of people and cause death. Passing through these places was considered dangerous. If any person fall sick, they would go to such a place and offer sacrifices of fowls, goat etc. to appease the demons and get rid of the sickness. Apart from that any spring found wherever it is not expected is known as 'tuivamit' and 'tuilut' which is equally revered and similar sacrifices are made.

In the traditional Lushais or Mizos religion, they believed that the hills, rocks, the streams and trees are inhabited by various demons known as 'huai'. Those inhabiting in the water were known as 'tui huai' or water demon and in order to appease the demons sacrifices were made. The Lushais or Mizos believe in life after death. The spirit world is believed to have two compartments, separated by a river called 'pal'.

Among the Chakmas also water plays a very important role in the social, cultural and religious life. The vestige of the primitive animism that is believed to have been the religion of the Chakmas still survives. In the festivals called 'shongbasa' - worship of wood and stream. In the 'thanmana puja' literally meaning the worship of water and the place is usually celebrated on the bank of the river or bend of stream but puja performed for the purity and well being of the family is generally performed on the bank of the river. Gang puja is the worship of the river goddess for the protection from all kinds of accidents. The Chakmas cremate their dead body. Before their cremation, the dead body is given bath, washed and dressed properly. The cremation usually takes place on the bend of the river where the water is in rapid flow. The bones of the deceased are immersed in the river Niranjana at Bodhgaya, which is considered to be the holiest among all the places in Buddhist religion.

Among the Mog or Mugh community, Sangrai (in the month of April) is the most important festival. The people of the Mog community in general and the young boys and girls in particular celebrate the day through cultural programs to invite the New Year. Cakes are prepared at every home and people move from house to house to take cakes. On this day water is carried through auspicious pitchers and respected persons are given bath with this water. The young boys and girls indulge in splashing water on one another signifying that the past is washed and welcoming the New Year with purity. Paste of fragrant sandalwood and water of green coconuts are sprinkled in every house. There is myth and merriment everywhere and in the midst of pomp and grandeur fragrant water is poured on the root of 'Bodhi Briksha'. The festival continues for three days. In the same manner Sangken festival is celebrated with great festivity by the Khampati, Singpho, Tai Khamyang and Tangsa tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. This festival is also similar to Songkran of Thailand.

Thus, one can see the powerful meaning of water in creation stories, folk tales and songs, abode of spirits, initiation, purification, healing and rituals. In initiation rituals water confers a 'new birth', in magic rituals it heals and protects from harmful spirit, and in funeral rites it assures rebirth after death

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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- (Paper presented in the National Seminar on, 'Religion and Society in North East India from 19th Century to Contemporary Times', Organized by Department of History, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, 26th -28th November 2009)