

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF LATE SHRI TARUN CHANDRA PAMEGAM, THE FIRST LITERARY PENSIONER OF THE MISING COMMUNITY.

The Mising Tribe of Assam was officially recorded as Miri in the list of Scheduled Tribes of India under the constitutional order 1950. It is believed that the first group of Mising's landed in the upper region of the Brahmaputra Valley sometime between 12th and 13th Century A.D. when the area around Sadia was ruled by the Chutia kings. Today the Misings have become the second largest Scheduled Tribe (Plain) Community of Assam.

Among the literary contributors of the Mising community the name of Tarun Chandra Pamegam would be cited the first cite without any opposition. His literary contribution/works can be classified into different genres, viz Poetry, Drama, Novels, Essays, folktales, Short stories, Bulk, and Modern Lyrics and Speeches etc. With regard to his literary contribution, the Govt. of Assam honoured with a literary pension to Tarun Chandra Pamegam. He was the first literary pensioner amongst the Mising writers.

His Early life and Education :

Tarun Chandra Pamegam was born in the village of Bargayan, which is situated in Majuli (the biggest riverine Island of the world) under the Sibsagar District on the day of Bhudda Sankranti in 1924. The name of his father was Budbar Pamegam and his mother's name was Gunasiri Pamegam. He received early education in the village's L P School. After the completion of the primary education

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he was admitted into the Hem Chandra M.E. School at Kamalabari in 1935. He completed his education upto M.E. level in 1938. Unfortunately at that time there was not a single High School in the entire Majuli. Moreover, communications were also very difficult and during that time Majuli was almost cut off from the rest of the modern world. It was very difficult to proceed to Jorhat crossing over the mighty Brahmaputra and its tributaries were flowing through dense forest and riverine fields overgrown with all sorts of shrubs. He however, made up his mind to get admission in the Govt. High School at Jorhat for the Pursuit of higher education. Though his life was full of strenuous problems he was admitted in the Govt. High English School at Jorhat and completed the High school courses and prepared himself for the Matric Test Examination. On the first day of the Matric test examination he appeared for the Assamese first paper, and came out satisfied and cheerful mood from the examination hall but his cheerful mood was short lived for he heard the sorrowful news of his father's death, who met with a tragic accident while on his way to visit his son on his first day of the Test examination. His father was knocked down by a military truck on the way at Nimatighat Road near Jorhat town and killed on the spot in the year 1942 during the time of the Second World War.

After the death of his father, Pamegame could not pay proper attention to his studies and left Jorhat town and returned home without any further academic hope for his future life. The Second World War was still continuing and the atmosphere of the whole country was in a chaos. However, with the help of the Indian Army Pamegam joined in the Indian Air Force in Bombay and he was there for more than one year. As he possessed inherent artistic and literary genius, he was uninterested in the Air Force, and his hidden artistic bent of mind compelled him to tender his registration. He requested his higher officer several times through proper channel to release him from his job. At last, he got his long cherished release from the 'Indian Air Force' and he came back to his native village Borgayan, Majuli.

His Literary Works:

During his service period he wrote his famous Noval 'Pahar Puri'. Several incidents of his life during his service period can be

traced out from the Novel. At that time, there was newly started M.E. School at Jengraimukh, situated on the bank of river Lohit in Majuli. Pamegam had joined as an assistant teacher in that school in the year 1945. While he was working as a school teacher at Jengraimukh, he appeared for Matriculation Examination as a private candidate and passed in the first division in the year 1949. During his teaching life at Jengraimukh M.E.School, he composed a good number of melodious songs and wrote poems and various essays both in the Mising and the Assamese languages which he could not carry on his future family life. However, those songs were published in the song book 'Aavn murkong' edited by Shri Dimbeswer Pamegam.

In the year 1952 he joined as the Headmaster of Garamur M.E. School according to the advice of Late Shri Shri Pitambar dev-Goswami the Satradhikar of Garamur Satra and the National freedom fighter of India. Since 1952, Pamegam had been serving as Head Master till the end of his life. This school is now full-fledged High School in sadder area of Majuli District. He wrote many dramas namely **Papiya-Tara**, Historical drama **Nur-Jahan**, and **Dhatri-Pathna**. The Dramas were staged at Bangshi Gopal Natya Mandir. Casting was first introduced at Garamur Satra, with the advice of Late Shri Shri Pitamber Dev-Goswami. Pamegam was one of the best actors at that time. As a dramatist, Pamegam was respected by all including even Late Shiri Shiri Pitamber Deb-Goswami. Pamegame was a renowned actor, and a dramatist whom we will never forget. Pamegam was a writer, a dramatist, an actor, a director all at the same time. During his teaching life at Garamur, he appeared at three year Degree course examination in the year 1965 and passed it. He was subsequently deputed to B.T. Training at the post graduate Training College, Jorhat, though he could not obtain the B.T. Degree, he was unanimously chosen as the editor of **Shiksha** the College Journal.

From the M.E. School level, Pamegam had poetic inspirations, as a mere student in the Class v, he composed an excellent poem, "**Utta eti khyan, Miri chatragon karu ah pon, nohoba bimon**" which was published in the weekly paper of that time "Tarun Assam" Edited by prominent literary person Benudher Sarma. His

writings were published in various magazines and journals. It is now difficult to trace out all those writings. Some of the pomes were published in the periodicals like Rang-Ghar, Parijat, Puberun, Deepok, Arohan etc. of those days. At that time he also published two poetical books of poems, "**Chaka-Moka**" and "**Nari**" (women), and "**Lohitor Logori**" (Unpublished). Pamegam's dramas **Popia Tora**, **Nur-Jahan**, **Chand-Sodagar**, **Dhatri-Pathna**, were staged by dramatic troupes and he took upon himself the responsibility of direction. The dramas were staged at different places of Assam viz. Garamur Bangshi Gopal Natya Mandir, Srimanta Sangkardev Kristy Sangha, Majuli Milam Sangha, Jorhat Theatre, Lakhi Union Clud (Jorhat), Arya Natya Mancha, Kokrajhar Nat Ghar etc. The character he played as an actor included the role of kamsa, Ravana, Bhim, Sokuni, Bonbir, Mingimaha Tilua, Piyali Phukan, Junafa etc. His life was like a moving dramatic institution. He used to preserve all the manuscripts of his dramas, but he lost the manuscripts of his drama's except **Setu**, **Porachit** and **Fehujali** the three radio plays.

Once Pamegam was engaged as a Mising Folklore researcher by Dr. Brinchi Kumer Baruah. At that time, the Centre of the All India Radio Guwahati was newly started at Ujanbazar. Pamegam wrote some one act plays and broadcast them himself playing the part of one of the actors. His one act plays were **Somanyaral**, **Khadomdom** and **Formula**. He also gave a number of radio talks on various aspects of Mising culture and traditions. During his serious suffering from paralysis in 1981-82 he used to prepare the manuscripts of the one act Radio Plays like **Setu**, **Forachit** and **Fehu-Jali** by dictating to sam near and dear one. The one act play **Setu** was broadcast from the all India Radio Didrugarh Centre and the two other plays **Porachit** and **Fehu- Jali** were broadcast from the Guwahati Radio Centre. Pamegam's novels included **Samajor Shesh Seema**, **Paharpuri** both have been published after his farewell from the Indian Air Force, Bombay, he wrote a novel entitled **Shibirar-Shesh-Rati** (The last night in the Camp), but the manuscript of this novel was lost somewhere.

It has also been stated earlier that from that the early stage of his literary career till the end of his life, Pamegam wrote various

types of articles and all most all of them were published in school magazines, daily News papers, and others periodicals journals like **Jeuti, Arohon, Dainik Assom, Janashiksa, Prakash, Priyobhora, Obonori Billam, Asomor Jonojati** etc. Some of his articles have been published in anthologies like **Mising Sankhritisr Alekhya, Soumer Sahitya, Asomiya Katha Chayan** etc. He also edited some periodicals and souvenirs and devoted a great deal of hoe time and energy to such responsibilities. He edited the 'Arohon' published from Jorhat in the year 1948-49, **Ronganodir- Rangani**, Souvenir of the Mising Bane Kebang annual session held in 1975, **Shiksha**, the P.G.T.C. Journal Jorhat, B.T. College. He also headed a number of the editorial Boards of **Prakash**, published by the publication board, Assam. At the time of his Mising Folkore research, he did his field work in the areas thickly inhabited by the Mising people from Sadiya in the east and Boarali in the west, and colfeeted Mising folktales and folksongs. Some of the folk- tales collected by him were published in the '**Asomor Janajatia Sadhu**' an anthology of Tribal folk tales, and the Mising Sadhu was published by Asom Sahitya Sabha in 1962. Pamegame also wrote some sorth stories, which were published in various periodicals of the time. To named only a few, he wrote short Stories 'Abahan', Galpa and Kobita. **Shiksha, Bhromor, Dainik Asom, Asomor Janajati** etc. In the year 1975, he collected some of his stories and compiled a volume named **Galpaa Lecheri** which has already been published.

In 1957 Tarun Chandra Pamegam led a Mising Bihu group from his own village to participate in the Guahati Bihu Sanmilian Celebration at Latasil. The people of Gauhati had chance to have a glimpse of Mising traditional dance and music for the first time in Gauhati.

During his life time Pamegam held many responsibilities of public importance. He was a member of Board of Secondary Education, Assam, and a vice president of Asom Sahitya Sabha and President of Mising Bane Kebang (the parent organisation of the Mising Community), at the Kulajan Session 1966 which was held in active cooperation with the people of Arunachal and attended by the Prime Minister Mrs. India Gandhi as well as many Tribal leaders of

the North Eastern States. He was also associated with many public organisations and often played his part as a representative of the Mising society quite efficiently. In due recognition of his importance as a writer of the Mising society, the Govt. of Assam awarded the literary pension to him as has already been stated. In comparison to Pamegam's writings in Assamese, his literary contribution in the Mising Language is not very large. But whatever little he wrote in the Mising Language is quite significant. His Mising Lyrics, particularly his particularly songs and songs of awakening, served as sources of inspiration for the younger generation. But he was suffering from paralysis and became bed ridden since 1980 and died on 30th August 1983 at Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh.

These contributions of the Tarun Chandra Pamegam to the world of literature provide ample evidence to prove that he was a prolific writer of the high watermark and a profound social thinker who deserves a place of prominence in the glittering galaxy of great Assamese writers. ◆