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# Ahom Patronage To Chamariya Satra

**Dr. Nara Kanta Adhikary** Associate Professor Department of History Dakshin Kamrup Girls' College Mirza, Kamrup, Assam.

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## Abstract

Amongst the Satras of Kamrup district Chamariya Satra is the prime one. It is one of the important Satra amidst the Satras of Assam. Following the advice of Mahipurusha Madhavadeva, his most favourite disciple Sri Sri Bar-Vishnu Ata established this Satra in 1410 saka (1588 A.D.). Chamariya Satra is situated in the present Chamariya village under Chamariya circle of Kamrup district of Assam at a distance of 15 k.m. North of Boko town. The Satra is named Chamariya according to the name of the village.

In the Chamariya Satra, a conical structure with concrete brick wall is situated on the northern side of the eastern end of the Kirtanghar, which is locally called Math. The Math was built by the Ahom Swargadew Lakshmi Singha in 1693 saka (1771 A.D.). The Swargadew also granted 800 bighas of land for the purpose to run the Satra without any difficulty along with a Copper Plate inscription which gives us all information in detail.



The Math with Guru-Griha of Chamariya Satra

The architectural design and technique including the materials of the Math is of the Ahom vintage. It is a striking example of Ahom architecture of medieval period of Assam. The measurement of the Math is noted below-

High -	80 feet.
Outer surrounding area -	100 feet.
Thickness of the wall -	10 feet.

Breadth of the brick -	1 foot.
Length of the brick -	1.5 feet.
Thickness of the brick -	1.5 feet.

The Math is the North Indian Sikhara type gradually tempering upwards from the Skandha. The structural pattern of the Math is marked by vertical broad ridges or bands as in the Siva emple in Sibsagar or the Vasudeva temple in Kalabari in the Lakshimpur district. The Math is also marked by the Ayudha (as Cakra) over the Kalaci (Pitcher). The Math consists of Gopuram, Garbha-Griha and Mandapa with the Vimana which consists Jangha, Skandha and Sikhara. Unlike Sikharas of North Indian temples, Sikhara of the Math of Chamariya Satra is attached to the Jangha and Skandha parts of the sanctum sanctorum. It is noteworthy that the upper portion of the Sikhara is surmounted by 3 (three) miniature brick-made round utensils or vessels one over the other in place of Beki or Amalaka. Above these three utensils the kalaci is placed and then over the kalaci (It is said that there was a golden pitcher (Sonar Kalaci) on the top of the Math, but the golden pitcher had been stolen long time back) the Ayudha is superimposed at the top of the Sikhara. There is no pillar in the existing Math. It needs mention here that the Adhithana of the Garbha-Griha consists of Triratha. The Garbha-Griha or the sanctum sanctorum of the Math is attached to the Guru-Griha (Manapa) which is two roofed (do-chala) brick structure resembling Assamese thatched gabled houses. The Math with Jangha and Vimana is surrounded by curvilinear Sikhara. The shape of the Sikhara is Sukanakriti (the shaped like the nose of a parrot) with vertical ridges, called kardai-siriya, because the shape resembles the Kardai, a citrus fruit with vertical ridges.

The existence of Bandhana and Barasta on the Jangha is noteworthy. There are 30 terracottas with Prakosthas in square angles which are inserted on the jangha in place of Tirekha-Bandhana in general are also noteworthy. There are terracotta plates of supernatural deeds of Lord Krishna inserted both sides on the Janghas of the Guru-Griha or Manapa which are square in size. Both the Janghas of the Manapa and Guru-Griha bear terracotta sculptures with the scenes depicting Kaliya Daman, Rasa Lila, Anantasayani Vishnu (Vishnu on the serpent, Ananta), Suryadeva, Brahmawith long whiskers, Agnideva, Kartika, Four Handed Vishnu in Samapada-Sthanaka pose with Sankha, Cakra, Gada, Padma, scenes of Dasavatara (ten incarnations of God) etc.

The Copper Plate Inscription of Chamariya Satra which is inscribed is found to contain a land grant charter (800 bighas of land) along with devotees issued by the Ahom Swargadew Lakshmi Singha in the name of Ramnath Satriya, the then Satradhikara of Chamariya Satra, in the saka 1693 (1771 A.D.) in the month of Jestha. The copper plate measures 22 inches in length and 11.4 inches in breadth. The language of the epigraph is Assamese. But the first line started with in Sanskrit. The composition is in prose. The execution of the writing is very

good and the letters are almost uniform in size and clear. The text begins from the left upper hand. The



**THE COPPER PLATE INSCRIPTION OF CHAMARIYA SATRA**

writings cover one side with a total of 30 lines. Out of these 30 lines, first two lines and the last two lines altogether four lines are running. Another 26 lines of the middle are sectioned into 11 pillars.

The records begins with the mystic anji symbol, often translated as Siddham in the name of God, which is followed by the word Svasti. The first line is in adoration of the goddess Kamakhya and in honour of the donor Ahom Swargadew Lakshmi Singha. The second line is in regards of the description of the donee and notification to the all land lords i.e. Barua, Barkayastha, Choudhury, Patowary, Talukdar, Thakuriya and Gairah etc.

There is a royal seal on the extreme right hand side pillar of the plate. The seal divided into two halves. The lower part contains a figure of lion, being the royal insignia of the Ahom kings, while upper part contains the name and honour of the donor king in four lines. The names reads -

- (1) sri sri swarga
- (2) narayanadeva sri
- (3) lakshmi singha nare
- (4) svaranang

The contents of the last two lines, viz. 29 and 30, are:

(29) The Mahajana (i.e. the donee) will be blessing the Swargadew from generation to generation along with the above mentioned devotees. The land made immune from revenue and all kinds of official harassment (i.e. kara, katala, pada, pa=caka, betha, begar, jalakara, jakshyar, cinala, dhumusi, maresa)

30) By this charter all the offences (i.e. hata, ghata, danda, bandha, data, khuta) have been abandoned. Nobody will go against this charter. saka 1693 month Jestha.

The names of the devotees are in line 26 in the middle of the charter are sectioned into 11 pillars.

There were two Rock Inscriptions in Chamariya Satra. These Rock Inscriptions were inserted both sides in the lower Prakostha of the front side wall of the Guru- Griha (Mandapa). But the right side Inscription had been destroyed, long time back. The left side Inscription bore some portions of writings to a few years back. I have tried to read the Inscription. But the letters having badly effaced, not a single sentence could be made out except a few words or phrases here and there.

The Inscription seems to have contained 15 lines of writings, as may be seen bellow:

(1) sriram \*\*\*\* (2) \*\*\*\* (3) \*\*\*\* (4) narendra prat \*\*\* (5) \*\*\*\* (6) padaravinda madhu \*\* pratap \*\* (7) \*\* utpod \*\* vikrama prat;ip (8) \*\* matha Brahmaputra sya tiraih : (9) \*\*\* sandikoi (10) baja barhspbiura svarganaresvarah : (11) \*\*\* paro srimana \*\*\* (12) satro\*\*vaisnava \*\*\* (13) \*\*\* vishnu kabhi \*\*\* (14) sakendu \*\*\* vedo sundara (15) vishnu mandirang

There is a wooden image of Caturbhuja in the Chamariya Satra. Actually it is an idol of Lord Krishna with four hands. That is why the idol is called Caturbhuj. The height of the Image is 2.5 feet and the breadth is 2.5 feet. It is decorated with blue colour and colourful dresses. This Image was made by a devotee of the Satra. At the early stage, there was no image or idol in the Satra campus. It is said that the Ahom Swargadew Lakshmi Singha expressed his desire to grant royal patronage in favour of Chamariya Satra. But Ahom Swargadew Lakshmi Singha was the worshipper of Sakti cult. Therefore he was not interested to grant royal patronage without any idol or image in the Satra. At that moment the devotees and the villagers discussed the matter seriously. In order to avoid the evil eyes

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**Satra**



The Royal Seal

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of the ruling Ahom king and in fear to lose the royal patronage they made the Image of Caturbhuj immediately and installed it in the Satra. For the instalation of this image the Satra was granted the plot of land and the Math by the Ahom king. From this incident, it may be said that this Image of Caturbhuj had installed in the year 1771 A.D. Because, at that time Swargadew Lakshmi Singha granted 800 (eight hundred) bighis of land and he built the Math by issuing the copper plate.



### **Metal Seal**

Again from the **Metal Seal** found in the Chamariya Satra, we can learn the relations of the Chamariya Satra with kings court along with the other official activities under which process it maintained.

Reference:

- 1) Coper Plate Inscription of Chamariya Satra.
- 2) Metal Seal of the Chamariya Satra.
- 3) Field visit.

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