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## The Practice of Saṃskāras in Assam, a Northeastern Part of India: A Note Jagadish Sarma

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# The Practice of Saṃskāras in Assam, a Northeastern Part of India: A Note

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## Abstract

The *saṃskāras* or the sacramental rites are said to be the religious purificatory rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect of an individual, so that one may become a full-fledged member of the community. The *saṃskāras* are performed at different stages of the life of a person. The numbers of *saṃskāras* are different as per the different *Smṛtis*. Assam, a northeastern part of India, was known as *Kāmarūpa* or *Prāgjyotiṣapura* in the epic and post-epic period. Being in the eastern periphery, it developed its own socio-religious customs and ritualistic procedure without deviating from the basic principle and with the broad framework of the Vedic culture. The Vedic culture was deep-rooted and the study of the Vedas was also carried on in this state strictly in accordance with the prescribed norms and approved procedure since the seventh century, A.D. In Assam, Assamese Hindu families performed ten kinds of *saṃskāras* accordance with the procedure as stated by the *Smṛti* digest writers of the “*Kāmarūpa School*” of *Dharmaśāstra*. Some also follow the rules and regulations as laid down by the *Smṛti* digest writers *Raghunandana* and *Halāyudha*. The *Kāmarūpa School* was developed in this region of India in the early twelfth century, A.D. Nowadays, though all these *saṃskāras* are performed, they are not observed in the same manner as the *Smṛti* writers would have expected. In this paper an attempt has been made to trace some aspects in performance of the *saṃskāras* by the Assamese Hindu people of this region of India.

**Keywords:** *saṃskāras*, *Smṛtis*, *Dharmaśāstras*, *Kāmarūpa*, Assam.

## Introduction

Human beings are social lovers and they like to live in a socially attached environment in the globe. In common practice, no man can live separated from the existing social behavior. For smooth function in a society, men frame some rules and regulations which to be followed by everybody lived in a particular so-

ciety. Abiding by the laws, every human being can easily fulfill their social responsibility. In India, the rules and regulations regarding customs, by which one can attain the social status and social responsibility, are termed by the word *saṃskāra*. By *saṃskāras*, one can purify oneself in terms of physical as well as mental, and live a better life in the society. As a part of India, in Assam, people also abide by the rules and regulations as stated in the digests for peaceful development of their society.

### A brief sketch on Assam:

Assam is the frontier province of India in the Northeast. Northeastern India is located between 22° N-29.5° N and 89.7°-97.5° E. The region comprises of seven Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, and covers an area of 255,036 sq. km. It consists of three structural units. The central part, covered by the Brahmaputra and Barak Plains, is depositional plains filled up with alluvial sediments laid over tertiary bedrock. The two other smaller plains are the Tripura Plain, which is a pediment in the foothill areas, and a lacustrine plain located at the central part of Manipur. The Northeastern Region is the home of 45 million population (2011 census report of India) of which 65 percent lives in the state of Assam alone.

The state of Assam extends 89° 42' E to 96° E longitude and 24° 8' N to 28° 2' N latitude, with an area of 78,438 sq. km. On three sides the province is shut in by great mountain ranges. To the north lie the Himalayan regions of Bhutan and Tibet. The Brahmaputra river system is the lifeline of Assam. Assam is divided into 33 administrative geographical units of districts, which are further divided into 78 subdivisions, which are the administrative units. Assam has 155 Revenue circles, which represent revenue collecting units under a district administration, and both are treated as sub-districts.

The modern name of the province, Assam, is actually of quite recent origin. An independent country since the epic age, in ancient times Assam was referred to as *Prāgjyotiṣapura* or simply *Prāgjyotiṣa*, and *Kāmarūpa* in the epic *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahābhārata* and some *Purānas* and *Upapurānas*. F. E. Pargiter observes about *Prāgjyotiṣapura* in his translation of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* that “*Prāgjyotiṣa* was a famous kingdom in early times and is often mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. The references to it, however, are rather perplexing, for in some passages it is called a Mleccha Kingdom ruled over by king Bhagadatta, who is always spoken of in respected and even eulogistic terms (*Sabhāparva*, *Udyogaparva*, and *Karṇaparvas* of the *Mahābhārata*) and other passages it is called a *Dānava*

and Asura Kingdom ruled over by demon Naraka and Manu (*Vanaparva, Udyogaparva* of the *Mahābhārata*; *Harivaṃśa*; the *Rāmāyaṇa*).<sup>1</sup>

As per the *Kāmrūpar Burañjī*, a history book of Assam, the Kingdom of Kāmarūpa stretched from the river Karatoyā in the west to the river Dikrāi in the east and from the mountain Nandaśilā, on the north to the Brihagācala in the south. The region included roughly the whole region of the Brahmaputra valley, besides Rangpur, Bhutan, Coochbehar, Mymensingh and the Garo hills. The boundary between Kāmarūpa and the Muslim territory of Lakhanawati towards the beginning of the thirteenth century was the river Karatoyā.<sup>2</sup>

The *Kālikāpurāṇa*, a book composed in Assam in the ninth century A.D., gives a vivid description of ancient Assam and its conquests. It is said here that Lord Viṣṇu merged into the Gaṅgā, taking Naraka and Bhūmi with him, and within a moment arrived at Prāgiyotiṣapura situated in the midst of Kāmarūpa, where Kāmākhya is the presiding deity. Prāgiyotiṣapura's kingdom exclusively belonged to Śambhū, and was inhabited by the Kirāta people of golden colour and with shaven heads. Naraka, at the behest of Viṣṇu, killed Ghataka, a Kirāta king, in battle, drove away the other Kirāta people, and settled some of them, with the consent of Śambhū, on the sea coast.<sup>3</sup> As per some epigraphical evidence, there were four main royal dynasties which ruled over Prāgiyotiṣa as well as Kāmarūpa since the fourth century A.D. Within these dynasties the Bhau-mavarman dynasty, founded by Naraka, was the first. Bhāskaravarman, an illustrious king of this dynasty, was an ally of Harṣavarddhana of Thānesvara-Kanauj and most probably ascended the throne in the closing years of the sixth century, or the beginning year of the seventh. The second dynasty was established by Sālastambha immediately after the death of Bhāskaravarman or after his immediate successor in the later part of the seventh century. This dynasty is known as Sālastambha dynasty. The third dynasty established by Brahmapāla after the death of Śrītyāgasimha of the previous dynasty, known as Pāla dynasty. The fourth dynasty is founded by Vaidyadeva or Vallabhadeva. There were some other small kings who might have ruled over small principalities allied to the king of Kāmarūpa. The royal dynasties in Kāmarūpa came to an end of the twelfth century or in the first part of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>1</sup> Pargiter 1969: 328-29.

<sup>2</sup> Sharma 1994: 12.

<sup>3</sup> Shastri 1992; *Kālikāpurāṇa* 38.100.

Assam came under the rule of Āhoms in 1228 A.D., under their leader Sukāphā. The Āhoms accepted Hinduism and the culture and language of the Assamese people. It may be mentioned that many of the land grants issued during the Āhom rule were made through charters in Assamese, where Sanskrit was used in the preamble. From the ancient times Assam is inhabited by people of different faiths and customs. People of different castes, creeds and tribes of the big Hindu society are living in this land. The ethical conviction of the people of Assam is based on all that is connected with Brāhmaṇical religion. Being in the eastern periphery and far away from the centre of the mainstream, Kāmarūpa developed its own socio-religious customs and ritualistic procedures without deviating from the basic principles and within the broad framework of the Vedic culture. The Vedic culture was deep-rooted and the study of the Vedas was also carried on in the state strictly in accordance with the prescribed norms and approved procedure has been testified by the royal land grant inscriptions from the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. onwards.

Innumerable rite, rituals, fasts and festivals are observed by the Hindu in Assam from ancient times. They are the vital important means for the development of the socio-cultural history of the people of Assam. The basis of these rite, rituals, etc., as observed by the Hindus is provided by the Dharmasāstras. Under the process of its continuations, many local customs incorporated them within its own field. With this influence, a “Hindu” way of life acquired a variety of rites and rituals embodied in local customs and conditions.

### Samṣkāras and their purpose:

The *saṃskāras* or sacramental rites are “religious purificatory rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect of an individual, so that he may become a full-fledged member of the community.”<sup>4</sup> The *saṃskāras* are, in a fact, expressive and symbolic performances. Social privileges and rights were also connected with the *saṃskāras*. The *upanayana* (initiation) ceremony was eligibility for admission into the Aryan community and its sacred literature. For officially ending the education and for entering the married life one had to perform the *samāvartana* (convocation) ceremony. The *Parāśarasmṛiti* states that “just

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<sup>4</sup> Pandey 1987: 27-28.

as a picture is painted with various colours, so the character of a person is formed by his undergoing various saṃskāras properly.”<sup>5</sup>

In general, as per astrological calculation, an auspicious day is fixed to observe a particular saṃskāra. These saṃskāras are associated with the religious rites, like the worship of Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa, Gaṇeśa, Śiva, and other deities. Performances of the *nāndīmukha* or other *śrāddha* rites, *homa*, etc., are also performed in connection with these saṃskāras. Some local customs which are very familiar with the locality, like singing of folk songs, etc., are attached with that particular saṃskāra. As per the rules of the Śāstras, feasting for the friend and relatives is an important part of a saṃskāra.

### Saṃskāras and their performance in Assam:

Like other parts of India, various sacramental rites have been performed in the Assamese Hindu society since the period of the early royal dynasty. In the region of Assam, Assamese Hindu family performed ten kinds of saṃskāras. To perform these rites, most Assamese people follow the procedures as stated by the *Smṛti* digest writers of the Kāmarūpa School of Dharmaśāstra, propounded by a galaxy of *Smṛti* scholars like Dāmodara Miśra, Nilāambarācārya, Vedācārya, Pītāmbara Siddhāntavāgiśa and others who flourished between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Kāmarūpa School of Dharmaśāstra was developed in this region of India in the early twelfth century. However, in the beginning of the eighteen century, a section of the Assamese Hindu people began to follow the rules and regulations for performing these rites as laid down by the *Smṛti* digest writers Raghunandana (1510-1580 A.D.) and Halāyudha of Bengal. An early nineteenth century Assamese writer records that all ten saṃskāras were observed by the people of Assam. Nowadays, though all these saṃskāras are performed, they are not observed in the same manner as the *Smṛti* writers would have expected. It may be mentioned here that Raghunandana School gives more attention to the ten sacraments (saṃskāras) than the rites connected with the death. Rather, it gives more elaborate and lengthy description on the sacramental rites other than death rites. On the other hand, the Kāmarūpa School gives equal importance to both the series of rites.

The fundamental principle on which the social life of the ancient Indians was based is the *varṇāśramadharmā*. The Assamese life also was not exception. On the basis of the epigraphically as well as literary evidences, the scholars opine

<sup>5</sup> *citrakarma yathānekair raṅgairr unmīlyate śanaiḥ | brāhmaṇyam api tadvat syāt samskārair vidhipūrvakam ||* (Parāśarasmiṛti 8.19).

that Brāhmanical culture was started in this land at least from the sixth century A.D., when it was the systematic policy of the rulers to create *agrahāras* for Brāhmaṇas.<sup>6</sup> The Brāhmaṇa class usually observed all the *saṃskāras* right from the *garbhādhāna* to the marriage ceremony. Although, each ceremony was held separately but sometimes two or more ceremonies were held commonly due to unavoidable reasons. The following *saṃskāras* were performed and still being performed by the orthodox section of the Brāhmaṇas. These are: (i) *garbhādhāna* (conception), (ii) *pūṃsavana* (ceremony for begetting a male child), (iii) *sīmantonayana* (parting of hair), (iv) *jātakarma* (natal rites), (v) *nāmakaraṇa* (name giving ceremony) (vi) *niṣkrāmaṇa* (ceremony of bringing out the new born to the view of sun), (vii) *annaprāśana* (the first feeding with cereal food), (viii) *karṇavedha* (bor-ing of ear lobes), (ix) *cūḍākaraṇa* (tonsure), (x) *vidyārambha* (first learning of alphabets), (xi) *upanayana* (initiation with sacred thread), (xii) *vedārambha* (initia-tion into the Vedic study), (xiii) *keśānta* (cutting of hair), (xiv) *samāvartana* (gradu-ation) and (xv) *vivāha* (marriage).<sup>7</sup>

Early Assamese writer recorded that all ten *saṃskāras* prescribed by the later Smṛti *nibandhakāras* were observed by the people of Kāmarūpa. The ten *saṃskāras* are also variant as per the various scholars. Still, these ten *saṃskāras* (*daśasaṃskāras*) are: *garbhādhāna*, *pūṃsavana*, *sīmantonayana*, *jātakarma*, *nāmakaraṇa*, *niṣkrāmaṇa*, *annaprāśana*, *cūḍākaraṇa*, *upanayana*, and *vivāha*. Some scholars also included the *anteṣṭi* or *smaśāna* in the domain of the ten *saṃskāras*. Nowadays in all places of Assam, not all of these *saṃskāras* are per-formed; rather, only a few *saṃskāras* are arranged as per the individual family tradition. Some of the minor *saṃskāras* like *garbhādhāna*, *sīmantonayana*, *karṇavedha*, or *niṣkrāmaṇa* were not probably observed independently; rather, these are performed as a part of a major ceremony like *cūḍākaraṇa* and *up-anayana*. Rites like *karṇavedha* or *niṣkrāmaṇa* were performed by women with-out recourse to the Smārta procedure.

It also mentionable that though *saṃskāras* are performed, they are not observed in the same manner as the Smṛti writers insisted. What follows is a short description of the *saṃskāra* rituals and manners that are mainly observed by the Hindu community in Assam.

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<sup>6</sup> Choudhury 1959: 335.

<sup>7</sup> S. N. Sarma 1989: 220.

## Garbhādhāna (Conception ceremony)

The rite through which a man placed his seed in a woman was called *garbhādhāna*. It is a rite consummating the marital relation leading to parenthood. A treatise called the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* states that before cohabitation the husband and the wife should observe a certain *vrata*, and at the end of it cooked food is to be offered into the fire by reciting certain Vedic verses. In present day, in Assam, this ceremony is not generally performed.

## Puṃsavana (Ceremony for a male child)

Puṃsavana, as it literary means, is a rite to reproduce a male child. After the conception was ascertained, the child in the womb was consecrated by the saṃskāra named *puṃsavana*. The *Gṛhyasūtras* and *Smṛtis* opine differently regarding the time of performance of the rite. As per the *Smṛtis*, from the second to the eight month of pregnancy of a woman, this ceremony is observed. In some places of Assam, this rite locally known as *puhanbiyā*, is usually performed in the eight month of pregnancy only by the Brāhmaṇa caste. The śāstric rules as well as local rites, like worship to gods, performance of a *homa* and the fetching of water are observed in the puṃsavana ceremony.

Here, it should be mentioned that this saṃskāra seems to be almost neglected at the present time. In this connection a local practice called *jeurā* may be mentioned. In this custom the expectant mother is ritually fed by her female relatives in the fifth, seventh, and ninth month of her pregnancy. *Jeurā* is offered to the woman with a view to producing a healthy child and keep the mother healthy and happy.

## Sīmantonayana (Hair-parting ceremony)

In the saṃskāra named *sīmantonayana*, the hairs of a pregnant woman are parted upwards. The purpose of this saṃskāra was partly superstitious and partly practical. This saṃskāra was observed on the fourth, sixth, or eight month of the first pregnancy with a belief to bring about prosperity to the expectant mother and long life to the coming child. In the present day, it is found rarely performed. In some places it is performed with the puṃsavana.

## Jātakarma (Birth ceremony)

The birth of a child was a very impressing scene for the early man. This ceremony is too performed just after the birth of and before the severing the navel cord of a

child. In the *Gṛhyasūtras* this saṃskāra is fully described. The father of the child has to offer a homa first to Agni and other gods. After that, uttering a prescribed mantra, he is to give the child a little amount of honey and ghee. In the present day, the severing of the navel cord is not considered an occasion for this rite. Other rituals like homa, *āyusya*, etc., are also not largely being performed. Some local customs are also seen in this connection today.

### Nāmakaraṇa (Name-giving ceremony)

From the time of evolved language, men have tried to give names to things of daily use in their life. With the development of the social consciousness, individuals were also named, because without particular names of individuals it was impossible to carry on the business of a cultured society. The Hindu community very clearly realized the necessity of naming persons and converted the naming system into a religious ceremony. According to the *Smṛtis*, the name is the primary means of social intercourse, brings about merits, and is the root of fortune. From a name, man attains fame. Therefore, naming ceremony is very praiseworthy.

Though the *Gṛhyasūtras* have prescribed different dates as auspicious for performing the ceremony, viz., the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, hundredth day or after a year of the birth of a child, in Assam it is usually performed in the fifth or eleventh day. This ceremony is more popularly known in some part of Assam as *ganani* (calculation). The astrological calculation regarding the future life of the child plays an important role in this ceremony.

### Niṣkrāmaṇa (First outing ceremony)

Every essential step in the progressive life of the child is a very joyful occasion for the parents and the family. This moment is celebrated with appropriate religious ceremonies. The first outing of a new born baby is known as niṣkrāmaṇa. When the taboos of the maternity house were withdrawn, the mother came out of the small room and began to take part in the family life again.

In Assam, the ceremony is performed usually on the fifth day from the date of birth. In this connection the mother dresses the child in new clothes, takes it out and keeps it in the sunshine for a while. Then a little amount of *pañcāmṛta* is given to the child. In some places of Assam, the child is taken out on the eleventh day. On that day mother throws out areca-nuts towards the Agni, Vāyu, Īśāna and Nairṛta directions.

## Annaprāśana (First feeding ceremony)

Feeding the child with solid food is the next important stage of a human life. From the time of birth, a child has been fed on the mother's milk. After six or seven months, a child's body has developed and requires large amounts of food, as well as different types. The ceremony of the first feeding of the child with solid food is called annaprāśana.

In some part of Assam the ceremony is known as *bhātcuwani*, i.e. the first taking of rice by the child. From the date of birth of a male child, the ceremony is celebrated usually in the sixth or the eighth month; again, in case of a female child it is held in the fifth or the seventh month. *Nandiśrāddha*, homa, and other rituals like feeding the child amidst merriments and the offering of presents are performed in this ceremony. However, in a case of a female child, the śrāddha and homa are not generally performed.

## Cūḍākaraṇa (Tonsure ceremony)

At the time of first shaving of the hair of a child, a ceremony is performed known as cūḍākaraṇa. *Cūḍā* means a lock or tuft of hair kept on the head when the remaining part of hair is shaved. So, the *cūḍākaraṇa* means that rite in which a lock of hair (*śikhā*) is kept after shaving the other portion of hair for the first time after birth. The purpose of this saṃskāra as given in the scripture is the achievement of long life for the recipient. According to *Suśrutasaṃhitā*, shaving and cutting the hair and nails remove impurities and give delight, lightness, prosperity, courage and happiness.<sup>8</sup>

In Assam, no tuft is generally kept on the head, though all other rituals, viz. *vṛddhiśrāddha*, homa, the shaving of hair by a barber, etc., are performed as stated in the different treatises. It is found that the ceremony is confined to the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas alone. This saṃskāra is generally performed in the third year of a child, but sometimes it is delayed. Sometimes it is performed along with the upanayana ceremony.

## Upanayana (Initiation ceremony)

In the ancient scriptures, the upanayana ceremony falls under the educational saṃskāras. It is performed in connection with the arrival of youth. The objective

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<sup>8</sup> *pāpopaśamanaṃ keśanakharomāpamārjanam | harṣalāghavasaubhāgyakaram utsāhavar-dhanam || (Suśrutasaṃhitā, Cikitsāsthāna 24.72).*

of this ceremony is to prepare the young men entering on the active duties of citizenship. The initiation was a passport to the literary treasures of the Hindus.

In Assamese the term *upanayana* is called *lagun-diyani*. It is generally understood today as a ceremony of a Brāhmaṇa boy with the sacred thread. In early days, however, this ceremony was performed by Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas. In modern days, besides Brāhmaṇas, some Kṣatriyas also perform it. In this ceremony, the prescribed rites and rituals like the worship of gods and goddesses, nāndīśrāddha, and homa are performed, besides some local customs.

### Vivāha (Marriage ceremony)

The vivāha is the most important of all the Hindu saṃskāras. The *Gṛhyasūtras* presuppose that every man, in his normal conditions, is expected to marry and run a home. Marriage received great importance from the early Vedic period. According to the *Tattirīyabrāhmaṇa* (2.2.2.6), marriage is regarded as a sacrifice. When religious consciousness developed, marriage was not only a social necessity but became a religious duty. The marriage ceremony is performed in accordance with the Vedic procedure not only by all the upper caste Hindus but almost all the lower castes utilized the service of a Brāhmaṇa priest. In modern times, in a few places of Assam, the vivāha ceremony is conducted by replacing the Smārta marriage rituals with *nāmakīrtana* and the exchange of garlands.

The vivāha ceremony is termed as *biyā* in Assamese. As per the *śāstras* there are eight forms of marriage, viz. *brāhma*, *daiva*, *ārṣa*, *prājāpatya*, *gāndharva*, *āsura*, *rākṣasa*, and *paiśāca*. The marriage system of Assamese Hindus presents a mixture of rules and formulas of the different kinds of marriage. Generally, the *prājāpatya* type of marriage is found to be practiced in most parts of Assam. There is also the inclusion of local tradition and custom. Unlike some other parts of India, the dowry system is not prevalent in Assam as a social custom. It may be also noted that while the original practice of prohibiting marriage between the persons of a common ancestral descent, called *gotra*, is still prevalent amongst the Brāhmaṇas, still there also some exceptional cases. The ancient tradition of marrying girls before their attainment of puberty has been discontinued in the present-day system. In earlier times, as the custom of pre-puberty marriage was prevalent among the Brāhmaṇas and the Kāyasthas of Assam, the bride was not escorted to her husband's home on the marriage day. In case of other castes or subcastes, married (post-pubescent) girls were carried their grooms immediately after the conclusion of the ceremony. In present society, this custom is not relevant.

## Antyeṣṭi saṃskāra (Funeral rites)

The last sacrament in the life of a Hindu is the antyeṣṭi or the funeral with which one closes the finishing chapter of his life. The Hindus have given no less importance on the rites and rituals connected with the death than on those concerned during the life-time of a person. As a convention, the performance of the sacramental rites secures for one a good life on the earth and that of the funeral rites helps the soul of the deceased to obtain peace and prosperity in the next world.

In Assam, the popular method of the disposal of corpses is the cremation or burning the dead body. In case of a minor the system of burial under-ground is also found. A vrata of ten days is observed from the day in which the individual dies. Śāstric as well as local tradition is also followed in various performances in this rite. *Caturthā, dahā, śuddhi, sapinḍīkaraṇa, matsyasparśa*, etc., are familiar activities of this saṃskāra.

The Vedic rites mentioned earlier were uniformly performed by Brāhmaṇas of ancient and medieval Assam. In recent times, the performance of these rites has considerably slackened. For various reasons, except the Brāhmaṇas, the other castes and subcastes of Assam usually do not perform the above-mentioned Vedic rites; rather, only a few important saṃskāras were performed. Even in modern times, Brāhmaṇas are also no longer interested in performing all of those rites, except some important ones. For instance, the Kāyasthas, a subcaste of Assam, performed only six sacraments, viz., jātakarma, annaprāśana, cūḍākaraṇa, karṇavindhana, upanayana and vivāha, for which they were called *ṣaṭkarmī*.<sup>9</sup> So far as other castes were concerned, the early literature does not provide any evidence regarding the saṃskāras observed by them, except the vivāha. But somewhere it is also found that rites like the jātakarma, annaprāśana, niṣkrāmaṇa, and karṇavedha were performed, and are still performed, in accordance with the Vedic procedure, or according to the popular procedure without the service of the Brāhmaṇa priests.

## Conclusion

The ancient Hindu system realized that life is a most intricate art that required constant care, cultivation, and refinement. The Hindu saṃskāras are just an attempt to fathom and to facilitate the flow of the mystery. As in philosophy the ritual life is regarded as a cycle, starts from birth and ends in death. All the saṃskāras and their ceremonies emanate from the centre or life and are concur-

<sup>9</sup> Lekharu 1951; *Kathāgurucarita* 23.51.

rent with its circumference. In the modern society the relevance of the saṃskāras cannot be overlooked. The saṃskāras help an individual to develop his personality in the society. Thus, in Assam also, in accordance with the objectives of the saṃskāras, the ten principal saṃskāras are still performed and will be performed for the social development of the entire society.

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