



Review Article

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MAYONG: THE HERITAGE OF BLACK MAGIC AND TRADITIONAL TREATMENT

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Received on: 23/12/13 Revised on: 19/04/14 Accepted on: 22/04/14

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DOI: 10.7897/2277-4343.05247

ABSTRACT

Mayong, a village under morigaon district of Assam state, India is also known as village of magic or black magic. Usually the village has drawn the attention due to the traditional occult and folklore practice. Till today few people in the village maintain the tradition too. Not only, the traditional herbal practices but also the witchcraft was in practice by the people of this area. Several herbs have been used for both the purposes. Out of curiosity a tour was conducted to the village and several palm leaf manuscripts were found preserved with valuable information both on occult and folk practices. Attention was given to explore the remedial measures possible for further research on health issues through herbal formulations.

Keywords: Assam, Mayong-black magic, Ayurved-manuscript

INTRODUCTION

North-East is regarded as a 12th bio hot-spot of global scenario. Not only for flora and fauna but for its cultural remaining, today 70 % of the tribal population rely on the herbal medicine available in its environment which is a traditional way continuing from generation to generation¹. These practices are documented in hand written manuscripts. Every village is having a tradition of Gaon bhura (head baij/Ojha) (Physician/Occult therapist) to treat all sorts of disease through herbal mixtures and chants (mantras) which is still in practice in the tribal areas of North-East². Magic has always fascinated human minds. Whether it is children or grown ups, any form of magic still seems to enthrall them. The unsolved tricks, unanswered queries led to an unending curiosity about magic and its real existence. The interest in magic was revived after JK Rowling's Harry Potter and the Hogwarts School of Withes and Wizardy but Northeastern India seems to have its own real mesmerizing land of magic-Mayong. Mayong the village of magic where practitioners of the occult were rumored to have a predilection for turning people into creepy, crawling creatures, is ready to cast it's spell on people across the country in a more positive way. Apart from the seat of occult, the people of Mayong being rich in treating all sorts of ailments combining both occult and herbal mixtures. Today it also witnesses the traditional practitioners in its vicinity. Magical Mayong a small village in the Morigaon district of Assam, India. Mayong has always been famous as the land of black magic and mystery. It is a remote and interior region on the outskirts of Nagaon district and has been famous for School of Magic Art since the days of the Yogini Tantra. There are citations of Mayong and Pragyotishpura in several mythological epics including the Mahabharata, King Ghatokacha of Pragyotishpura took part in the Mahabharata war with his magical powers. Legend has it that centuries ago, a king of Nepal brought magic to the Brahmaputra valley. He established a small kingdom. Rajamayong became its capital and the Burhamayong evolved as the firmament of radical

tantrism. Through the glorious era of the Ahom, the natives diligently nurtured the magic of Mayong. Even today, the few people of Mayong are true followers of those beliefs, which they consider as God gifted capabilities for solving their day-to-day problems and they still depend on magic and their indigenous herbs. Mayong throughout history is only known for its black magic and occult practices. Again, there is a lot of conflict regarding the origin of the name "Mayong". Some propose that the name originated from Maya, which indicates illusion and fascination, while others hold that Manipuris from the maibong clan used to inhabit this area and therefore, the name Maibong became Mayong with the passage of time. This enchanting destination has a lot of appeal since past. It is an unexplored treasure chest of magic, spells and occult practices. It was a regular habit for people of this region to depend on magic even for their daily chores. This magical land has a treasure of magic peculiar to itself and boasts of being the only capital of black magic in the whole of Assam, India. This land was the home to some rare tricks which may look like aberrant practices in the backdrop of modern era but are substantial enough to make someone to re-think about the existence of magic. Among many such tricks are fortunes telling via korriss (sea shells), palmistry, and future projection through a piece of broken glass, which are almost unbelievable. Not only this, here magic is also used to cure the illnesses of the local populace. The people cut a handful of plants and recite some spells or mantras, whatever one may prefer to call them, and the ailing person experiences immediate relief³. However, one of the most outstanding magic acts, which still exist, is the curing of back pain via village witch doctor who utters a magic chant and uses a copper dish to track where the pain originates. The plate gets stuck to the body and the local believe that this dish eats away the pain. The local witch doctor demonstrates the magical act and if the person is really suffering from back pain, then the copper dish becomes hot like fire within seconds and it gets smashed automatically. Besides, this thrilling place also

boasts of mantras to create attraction between two individuals. They have the Mohini mantra, Boshikaran etc. People in the olden days in Mayong claimed to have the power of moving to any place they wanted within minutes by the use of the uran mantra or the chant to fly. A few households at Rajamayong and Buramayong still possess some of the manuscripts in a lesser form. Knowing the amazing history of mayong, the village with black magic and occults a curiosity arises by the author during his tenure at Guwahati, Assam, India and planned to visit the place along with few staff of the Regional Research Institute of Ayurveda, Guwahati, Assam, India. Several places were visited with old people/traditional practitioners of this area. It was also an opportunity to visit a museum situated amidst the forest of pobitora wild life sanctuary which was running by the help of local people of this area to keep the heritage alive. The museum

holds a lot of materials starting from palm leaf manuscripts to terracotta items, bronze items with archeological importance of more than century old. The author took interest to examine the palm leaf manuscripts found unfolded for years together known to be items of the museum. However, it was desired by the Author to have a glance over the palm leaf manuscripts. The old and original manuscripts of magic containing the spells and magic words were still preserved by the oldest living individuals of the village

Enumeration of Palm Leaf Manuscripts

The lists of manuscripts tabulated bear a little information. It can only be confirmed about the specification/content after thorough reading of literature in detail.

S. No.	Name of the Manuscripts	Numbers	Conditions	Remarks/Subject/Contents
1.	Sannipat jara Mantra	1	Complete/good	Treatment of sanipat jwara with various chants along with some herbal mixtures.
2.	Sarpa maniraja Mantra	1	-do-	Treatment of snake bite with mantra and herbal mixtures. The herbs described to be used in snake bite are written in local assamese language.
3.	Kalam Mantra	2	Incomplete/good	The manuscript is written in regional language with some mantra for various purposes.
4.	Shingimari Jhara Mantra	1	Complete/good	The manuscript describes about certain antidote for sting bite by specific fish varieties along the some herbal application.
5.	Gokarati Mantra	2	Incomplete/good	Treatment for cows (Veterinary medicine. The manuscripts describes about various diseases and their remedial measures through mantra and medicinal plants.
6.	Vayu Mantra	5	Complete/Good	Neurological disorders. There are certain mantras found for various magic performances in this manuscript.
7.	Rudra Kariti Mantra	2	No Colophon Good	The manuscript is not having colophon but bears few descriptions on remedial measures to diseases with herbs and mantra
8.	Murar Mantra	1	Complete/Good	Treatment for Head. The manuscript describes certain mantra and herbal application for various conditions of mental faculties.
9.	Harajhara Mantra	1	Incomplete/Good	Few portions of the manuscript contain some mantra along with herbal application for bone diseases especially fracture and joints dislocation.
10.	Ban Kata Mantra	1	Complete/Good	The manuscript deals with the remedial measure for harmful application to human being with its remedial measures.
11.	Manuhar apakarkara Mantra	1	Incomplete/Good	Treatment/black magic. It contains certain Chants/Mantra which can harm human being, if applied.
12.	Sridevahara Mantra	1	Incomplete/Good	It contains certain Chants/ Mantra.
13.	Rakshya Mantra	1	Incomplete/Good	Few Mantras are described for protection from various evil effects.
14.	Rajagharia Mantra	1	Incomplete/Good	Certain Mantras/Chants are written which were in use by kings for specific purposes.
15.	Mantra Pothi	1	Incomplete/Good	A Manuscript with various mantras for different purposes.
16.	Mohini Mantra	1	Incomplete/Good	A typical manuscript for basikarn or mesmerism to bring any person under control with herbal mixture and mantra.
17.	Gurudiksha Mantra	1	Incomplete/Good	Few mantras were written for a person to get a guru to learn or before going to apply the mantra how it is being learnt from the teacher.
18.	Mahabharata SabhaParba (1 Part)	1	Incomplete/Good	Legendary the description on part of Mahabharata
19.	Narasingha Mantra	1	Incomplete/Good	The manuscript deals with certain mantra/chants in the name of Narasingha for protection.
20.	Dharani Mantra	1	Incomplete/Good	Few mantras with regional descriptions related to black magic.
21.	Without caption	20	Incomplete/Good	These manuscripts are found without any caption and the conditions of these manuscripts are not so good. However they contain mantras only.

CONCLUSION

This place is the home of magic in north eastern India or may be even the whole of India. The natives of this place know their magic well. They have inherited this art over the centuries from their ancestors and still take pride in practicing it and talking about it. It reveals that the practitioners are still in force though not through occult, but from the vast flora and fauna for the ailments. A lot of information is buried under these manuscripts and the

time has come to locate, preserve and document this information. Further steps are needed to explore more numbers of manuscripts of this region with proper documentation and clinical validation. The time has come to explore the remedial measures through herbal assistance for their genuineness to the context usefulness towards human being welfare available in various old literatures in the hidden form.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Author is thankful to Director General, CCRAS for inspiring and giving the moral support. The Author is also equally thankful to Mr. S. R. Talukdar, SRF (Botany), NEIARI, Guwahati, Assam, India Mr. Utpal Nath, lecturer (Economics) of Mayong College cum Secretary of Mayong Central Museum for providing related information.

Disclaimer

We do not support or promote black magic of any kind but the paper is based on the collection of information related to century old manuscripts having some buried medical prescription. The place is known century old for its name as "black magic village". We have tried to provide the information for future research to explore the formulation available in the manuscript for wider benefit of human health, if any.

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Cite this article as:

G. C. Nanda. Mayong: The heritage of black magic and traditional treatment. *Int. J. Res. Ayurveda Pharm.* 2014;5(2):235-237 <http://dx.doi.org/10.7897/2277-4343.05247>

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared