CHAPTER- IV

HOLY ARTICLES AND OLD MANUSCRIPTS
OF THE SATRAS
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OF THE SATRA

4.1 The most of the Satras have preserved many old
and rare articles, such as different images of Lord
Krishna, Balaram, Gopal, traditional wooden Guru-asana and other
various articles made of brass and bel-metal. A brief
account of these materials are given below:

4.2 (A) GOALPARA:

4.2.1 RAMRAYKUTI SATRA: In the Ramraykuti Satra the
following important articles are preserved:

Chaturbhuj Narayana: It is four feet high
image of the four armed deity i.e., Narayana in sitting
pose with four different ayudhas made of Tulasi tree.
The colour of this image is deep blue. It is placed on
the right side of the sinhåsana in the main Kirtanghar
of the Satra. Locally it is called Chaturbhuj Thåkur.
Paduka: - A pair of old wooden Paduka locally called 'Kharam' i.e., foot-wears is kept in the Gurugriha. Locally, it is known as 'Sri Ram Chandra's Paduka'. These foot wears have some legendary stories regarding its placement in this Satra. According to that story Sankaradeva collected the foot wears from Badarikashram and brought it to Madhupur, but when the properties of Madhupur was divided then Niranjan Atoi took it to Baguan, where from hari Atoi brought it to this Ramraykuti Satra. The foot wears are eight inches in length.

Chariot: - A Chariot made of brass metal is preserved in a separate house in the Satra campus. This Chariot is considered to be very important by the people of Assam. The design is very beautiful and it is nicely decorated with fine artistic engravings and paintings. It is eleven feet high. This beautiful Chariot was donated to the Satra by Zamindar, Late Probhat Chandra Barua of Gauripur. Such Chariot is not available in any Satra of Goalpara and therefore, this beautiful Chariot is considered as a rare articles.
Akshay Banti: - An Akshay banti i.e., eternal light has been preserved in the Bharāl i.e., store house of the Satra. Since the day of establishment of the Satra this banti has been burning without break and this practice will be continued in future as per Satra's rule. In addition to these there are quite a good number of brass made utensils in this Satra. From such beautiful and artistic materials give us sufficient clues to know about the wealth of the Satra in the bygone days.

4.2.2 JINKĀTĀ SATRA: The following articles are kept in Jinkātā Satra and looked after with much devoted care. The articles are called 'Sewār bastu' i.e., articles to be worship.

Chitābbhasma and Silikhā: - The ashes from the funeral pyre of Madhavadeva and a piece of Silikhā fruit used by him are carefully preserved in the Gurugriha of Jinkātā Satra. These were gifted to this Satra by Late Bhalak Chandra Bhakat of Jinkātā. It is said that these
two articles were collected by Harinarayan and Ramnarayan from Madhupur Satra after Madhavadeva's heavenly departure at Sela Satra. The forefathers of Bhalak Chandra Bhakat collected these articles from them.

Chaturbhuj Vignaha:— The traditional Chaturbhuj Nārāyan Murti brought from Jhingapurni Satra are carefully preserved in the Manikut of this Satra. It is made by wood and place on the 'Chaudal' i.e., swinging seat in standing pose with different āyudhas.

Moreover the Satra authority has also preserved some other personal belongings viz., stone, knife, etc. of the previous Ātās. These sacred articles are also considered as very rare and worshipable goods by the followers of the Jinkatā Satra.

4.2.3 DHARMAPUR SATRA: The important articles of the Satras are briefly described below:—
Guiu-āshana: The main 'Guru-āshana' is preserved in the Kirtanghar. There is another guru-āshana in the adjacent temple. The holy book 'Bhāgawat' is placed on each of these āshanas. These Guru-āshanas are decorated with coloured engravements and each of these āshana is 4 ft. in height. The size of the āshana actually 4 ft.: 4 ft.: 4 ft.

Gaḍura: There are two big images of Gaḍura: bāhana of Śrīkṛṣṇa in the Kirtanghar. These are made of wood and each of them is 3 ft. in height. These are placed on the floor of the Kirtanghar, but never worshipped.

Vigrahas: The Vigrahas are preserved in the Manikut. These Vigrahas are Śhyamrāi i.e., Śrīkṛṣṇa, Laxmidevi, Laruā Gopal (= Gopal taking Laddu) and Sālāgrām, a symbolic stony idol of Lord Siva. All these are worshipped. During the Dōl i.e., holy festival these image are brought to the outside of the Manikut and placed on the swinging seat to be worshipped with discourses in there praise. In addition to these another wooden Chaturbhuj image has been
Preserved in the floor of Manikut. This is brought from Vidyabashi village near Bijni a few years ago.

4.2.4 DALGOMÃ SATRA: There is a few important holy articles in this Satra as narrated below:

Padasilã :- There is an Assam type 64 sq. ft. house known as Padasilã Griha. It is very near to the Kirtanghar of Dalgoma Satra. There is foot-prints in this Padasilã, but it is still remained unidentified. Regarding this foot-prints there are some legendary stories. It was kept in the house of Kanthabhusan Adhikari for several years, later on he brought it to this Padasilã griha. The footprints was engraved on a soft black stone. This is also worshipped by the followers with much reverence.

Kirtan-ghosã and Nam-ghosã :- In this Satra kirtanghosã and Namghosã written in sâanchi leaf have been preserved in a wooden box and properly keeping in the sura-āsana of Kirtanghar.
Chaturbhuj image: - In the Manikut the image of Chaturbhuj Nārāyan has been preserved and perform daily worship. This image is not old enough. This is newly made by cement plastering and the height is approximately 1½ ft.

4.2.5 SHYAMRĀI SATRA: The important sacred articles preserved at the Shyamrāi Satra are stated below:

Asthi: - The important sacred article of the Shyamrāi Satra is 'asthi'. A piece of asthi i.e., burnt bone collected from the pyre and preserved in the Math of the Satra. Regarding this asthi there are a few legendary stories, all are connected to Sri Sankaradeva. According to these stories preserved this was first in Madhupur Satra, and later on took away to Shyamrāi Satra.

Gajāsana: - In the Kirtanghar there is a sinhāsana locally known as Gajāsana in the Satra, because the wooden seat of the āsana is placed on the shoulder of four elephants in their standing pose. Structurally this asana is like this-
there are four wooden tortoises set on the floor. Four wooden elephants are kept in a standing position on those tortoises. Four wooden lions are sitting with an attacking gesture on those elephants. There is a wooden Chariot on without wheel. The plateform of the Chariot is placed on sixteen lions, and each corner four lions are engraved. The great Bhāgavata with a Phulām Gāwochā i.e., decorated towel is placed inside the Chariot.

Vigraha :- There are Shyamrāi Vigraha with Radha and Laruā-Gopal, which are placed on the alter of the Manikut. The Shyamrāi Vigraha is 10 inches, Radha is 8 inches and Laruā-Gopal is 2 inches in height. The Shyamrāi Vigraha is made of black coloured stone and others are in brass metal. Moreover 8 pieces of Sālagrām are also placed on the alter. All are worshipped by an appointed priest. The local people said that these were bought from Calcutta a few year back.
4.2.6 AMGUHI SATRA: The important articles of the Satras are described below:

**Gopinath Vigraha:** In the Manikut of the Amguri Satra Gopinath i.e., Krisna image is preserved. It is 1 ft. high. This is made of bronze and its colour is deep black. The Vigraha is in the flute playing pose, which is locally identified as Banshidhari Krisna. A few other brass made Krisna image are also kept in the alter of Manikut.

**Padasilā and Silar Pakhali:** A Padasilā of one square feet in size and a Silar Pakhali i.e., a deep spot are kept in the Manikut carefully. There are a few legendary stories regarding this Padasilā and Silar Pakhali. All these are connected to Madhavadeva. According to these stories Sudra Patgiri established that Padasilā and Silar Pakhali in the Satra.

**Wooden images:** There are ten wooden images of different deities at the outside of the Manikut.
pieces are 2 ft. 10 inches high, three pieces are 1½ ft. high and others are only 6 inches in height and six images are hanging over the post of the Manikut. The craftsmanship of the images are artistic and very beautiful.

Old manuscripts :- There is a Kritanghosā of 12 inches in length and 4 inches in breadth. It is written on sanchi leaves and preserved with care at the Satra.

4.2.7 BISHNUPUR SATRA : The following important articles are preserved in the Satra :

Pādukā :- The most sacred and venerated articles preserved in the Manikut of Bishnupur Satra are two pairs of wooden 'Pādukā' i.e., foot wears one pair is 8 inches in length while the other is 6 inches long. According to local belief that one pair was used by Sankaradeva and the other one by Chaturbhuj Thakur.

Old Stick :- There are two pieces of cane made sticks kept in the Manikut of the Satra. Each stick is 3 ft. in length. It is said that these were used by Chaturbhuj Thakur.
Padasilā :— A piece of Padasila with footprints are preserved in the Manikut. The colour of this Padasilā is black and 4 sq. ft. in size. There are a few legendary stories about this Padasilā. According to these stories this Padasilā is belonged to Sri Sānkara-deva.

Old Manuscripts :— There are fourteen different old manuscripts in the Satra Manikut. All these are Bhāgavat Vol. X written on sānchi leaves in same size i.e., 12 inches in length and 4 inches in breadth. These are kept in a wooden box of 22 by 12 inches in size covering with red clothes.

Guruāsana and Other images :— The attractive two Guruāsanas are preserved in the Kirtanghar. One of these made on small boat. It is very rare in the other Satras of Assam. This highly attractive article is now partly broken. There are wooden images of hanumana, Gadura and Uḍhava by the side of the Guruāsana. These images are 3 ft., 4 ft. and 2½ ft. high respectively. Moreover quite
a good number of peculiar images are also placed in the floor of Kirtanghar. These are the works of expert craftsman.

Other articles:— There are two iron made stands to light many other bantis. One is with a capacity to light two hundred earthen banti while the other is with the capacity to burn one hundred and fifty earthen banti. These are placed in the both sides of the Guruāsana. An old wooden bed is also kept in this Manikut. According to the local belief it is considered as bed of their Guru.

4.3 (B) NORTH BENGA AL:

4.3.1 MADHUPUR SATRA: The sacred articles of worship preserved at the madhupur Satra are narrated below:

Chaturbhuj Vigraha:— In Kirtanghar, on the right side of the Guruāsana a Chaturbhuj image is placed. It is made of wood and is in sitting position i.e., 'Pādmacāna'
with four Āyudhas. The colour of this image is deep blue and 1½ ft. in height. During the reign of Koch King Pranarnarayan this Chaturbhuj Vīgraha was placed by Banamalidev at Madhupur Satra.¹

Pādukā :- A pair of wooden Pādukā i.e., foot wear is preserved in a box of the main temple. It is 8 inches in length. There are a few legendary stories regarding this Pādukā. All these give us clue to think that the Pādukā was used by Madhavaśeva. This is also worshipped by the followers with much reverence.

Others sacred articles of Gurugriha :- The following sacred articles are also preserved in the main temple of Madhupur Satra.

(I) An old cup and a pencil.
(II) One piece of Narayani coin.
(III) Tilak with a pot (Tilak i.e., sacred dyes during worship).
(IV) A piece of old wooden garland known as 'Vaijoyanti hār'.

It is said that all these articles were used by Sri Sankaradeva during his lifetime. Satra authority has nicely preserved them.

Vigraha of Manikut:— The Vigraha of Madan Mohan i.e., Krishna in flute playing pose is placed in the altar of the Manikut. This Vigraha is 8 inches tall and made of brass. In addition to this there are five pieces of Salagram i.e., image of black stone placed on the altar of the Manikut. These are worshipped daily by an appointed priest.

Other old and rare Manuscripts:—

(i) Bhagavat Vol.X:— It is written on sānchi leaf in traditional manner. It is 18 inches in length and 4½ inches in breadth. The Bhāgavata is preserved in a glass made box. There are a few legendary stories about this Bhāgavata. According to these stories this Bhāgavata Vol.X is known as 'Buri Dasam' collected by Madhavadeva from Bāndukā.
(ii) Bhakti Ratanwali :- The book is preserved in an ordinary wooden box at the floor of Kirtanghar. It is also written on sānchi leaf, length of this book is 15 inches and breadth is 5 inches and it is completed in 108 pages. This was copied by Bhola Saikia and the date is 20 Bahā, Thursday, 1733 Saka era.

(iii) Ramayana Ādikānda :- It is kept in a wooden box and preserved in the wall box of the main temple rapping with a red cloth. The preservation is not at all scientific. The copist of this book is Deuri Ātoi and it was written on sānchi bark. It was copied on 1726 Saka era and its size is 16 inches by 6 inches.

(iv) A copy of Gunamālā is also preserved in the sinhāsana of the Kirtanghar. It is said that this Gunamālā was written by Sankaradeva and his handwritings are still preserved here in this manuscript.

Moreover, many other old manuscripts are in decaying condition in the Satra due to lack of proper preservation of the Satra authority.
4.3.2 BAIKUNTHAPUR SATRA: The Satra has preserved a few important articles as noted below:

Vigraha: - A Baikunthanāth Vigraha i.e., Krisna vigraha in flute playing pose is preserved in the Baikunthapur Satra. This Vigraha is made of brass and it is 6 inches in height. An image of Balaram of the same size, and a image of Gopala 2½ inches high are also kept at the altar of the Satra house. Moreover there are four pieces of Sāla-grāma in the altar.

Literary contribution: - Deva Damodar, the preceptor occupies a very distinguished place in the annals of the evolution of Vaisnavite religion in Assam. Though this holy saint did not have much contribution of his own except one or two poetic hymns imbuing spiritual passions. Literary pursuit by other scholars under his indirect influence went a long way in enriching the Assamese literature. His contribution to the preaching Vaisnavite religion in this part of the country was undoubtedly highly encouraging.
Gopal Chandradvija composed Bhāgawat, canto 3rd while he was in Baikunthapur Satra. He also composed verses in praise of Deva-Damodar and he translated 7th and 8th cantos of Bhāgawat, Sankaradeva's Bhakti Ratnākara and a portion of Haribangsa. Haridas Pathak a direct disciple of Deva-Damodara used to live with the holy saint in Baikunthapur Satra and composed 3rd and 5th cantos of Bhāgawata under the direct supervision of Deva-Damodara. This translation is really impressive for its lucid language. Moreover, the translator was very faithfull and maintained the original spirit and meanings.

All these references are available, but no manuscripts of these writings are now preserved at Baikunthapur. The internal controversies over the status and position of Satradhikāra of this Satra among the disciples, lack of knowledge in the art of preservation of old and rare manuscripts and books, shifting of the Satra from place to place were some of the reasons for loss of the old scriptures at Baikunthapur Satra.

2 Sarma, S.N.; 1981 'Asamiya Sāhityar Samikhatmak Itivirtta', p.196
3 Ibid., p.198
4.3.3 MADHAPUR SATRA: The Satra has preserved only a few articles.

Ramkhanti: A piece of metallic stick known as 'Ramkhanti' is preserved in the Gurugriha of the Madhapur Satra. According to popular belief it was used by Harihar Ata.

Padasila: A tringler size piece of stone embossed with the foot-prints is also preserved in the Gurugriha. Regarding this stone there are a few legendary stories, which give us clues to believe that it was used by Harihar Ata.

Markandeya Puran: The 'Markandeya Puran' written on sanchi bark is placed on the Guru Asana of Kirtanghnr. It is 16 inches in length and 5½ inches in breadth. Only 30 leafs are kept in the Asana and the rests are destroyed.

Chaturbhuj image: An earth made Chaturbhuj image in sitting pose is placed near by Guru Asana. Moreover, a
few other idols ingraved on wood are also preserved. The wooden idols appear to be images of different annimals.

4.3.4 BHELÄ SATHA: The Satra has also retained a few articles.

Holy articles: In a dilapidated house there are a Chaturbhuj Nārāyan Mārti, a brass made idol of Srikrisna, a Balaram, a Gopal. All these are kept on the alter. It is said that the Chitābhasma of Madhavadeva i.e., funeral pyre of Madhava deva are also preserved in an earthen pot. Moreover, a few other pieces of white sand stone and an old banti are kept in the house.

4.3.5 HARIPUR SATRA: The Satra has retained a Sivalinga of black stone inside the temple. No other articles are preserved.

4.3.6 NĀKAHKHAṆĀ SATRA: The Satra articles mainly a few brass made images of Gopala are preserved by Lakshimi-mai Bhakatani in an Assam type Kirtanghar.