

EVOLUTION OF MARABAK JAGOI

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ABSTRACT

The colourful Kaleidoscope of Manipur society and culture has been a topic that aroused the inquisitiveness in the minds of erudite scholars and researchers all across the world. One intrusion of cultural movement from outside in Manipur in the beginning of the 20th century was the British proscenium theatre. PrabasMeelan, the MandapLeela which was previously played at the royal palace was for the first time played at the British proscenium theatre in 1902.. The first half of the 20th Century was time of a big change of Manipuri culture with the entering of the movements of MarabakJagoi in Manipur. The dancing of MarabakJagoi usually by two women wearing sari and Ghungru (Nupur) at the ankle, to the tunes of musical instruments i.e. harmonium, table, sitar etc., as well as, the singing by good oja (teachers) of songs based on Jaydeva's Geetgovinda, VaisnavaRadavali, ShrimadBhagavat, Mahabharata etc. was the best audience pulling show of the time. In performing a MarabakJagoiprogramme the services of artistes who can play harmonium sing kirtan and other songs and various other musical instruments are very much needed.

Key Words: MarabakJagoi, Rasaleela, Pasakhela, BaijiJagoi, Radha-Krishna AndGovindaji

INTRODUCTION

A rare occurrence and a sudden shift emerge in the 20th century in the history of Manipur. The 20th century considered to be the most significant time period of Manipur. Hefty changes occurred and can be seen in the society as a whole. Manipur Robust political cultural and social scenario have been shifted to a greater extent and evolve. The directly proportional link of social and culture is very natural and a common phenomenon. This can be support by R.M. Maciver and Charles H. Page

“... .. certainly all cultural change involves social change involves social change, far, as we have seen, the social and the cultural are closely interwoven.”

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES

The colourful Kaleidoscope of Manipur society and culture has been a topic that aroused the inquisitiveness in the minds of erudite scholars and researchers all across the world. The big and important change which the 20th century brought about in Manipuri society were the Education, Women empowerment and the Religion.

The Britishers knew the courage and skill of Manipuri Women very well. So, since the beginning of their rule after the conquest of Manipur they begun to encourage Manipuri Women in many ways. As for example, the exclusion of women from the traditional MandapLeelas was lifted and the British government allowed them to participate in the plays.

MARABAK JAGOI

One intrusion of cultural movement from outside in Manipur in the beginning of the 20th century was the British proscenium theatre. PrabasMeelan, the MandapLeela which was previously played at the royal palace was for the first time played at the British proscenium theatre in 1902. Government officers and teachers along with students of the dance school all participated in the play. Proceeding further, proscenium theatres begun to grow up at other places of Manipur and the movement was gladly welcomed by Manipuri audiences.(**AyekpamSyamsunder Singh, Manipuri SumangLeelaamasung theatre, page – 30**)

As there was trend of forming drama groups and playing plays all their own courtyards by young people who had great penchant for theatre many theatre organizations sprang up at many places of Manipur, but the pity was that many of them had disappeared, viz. Narasingh Drama sansthan, Navayug Theatre, Imphal Theatre, Navanatyia Manipur, GourangaNatyamandir, City Theatre, ChitrngadaNatyamandir etc.Anyone who was fond of Leela (Play) had some cash in hand and owned a comely appearance organized drama shows by improvising his sanggoi (out-house) and courtyard as a proscenium stage for playing important roles of the drama. It was regarded as an honourableendeavour and conspicuous act. Groups of young men formed drama parties, and small groups of actors split from eminent and established drama organizations.

In the middle of the 20th Century A.D. many theatre halls were set up. There came up in the heart of Imphal town, Manipur Dramatic Union (1931), Aryan Theatre (1935) &RupmahalTheatre (1943), and they are existing still actively. The first half of the 20th Century was time of a big change of Manipuri culture with the entering of the movements of MarabakJagoiin Manipur. Formerly the MarabakJagoiwas played by boys only who acquired dancing skill well from the dance school at the royal palace, but when girls were also allowed to learn dancing in the school, they wrested the vocation from the boys and they

monopolized it. During the Royal tenure of his highness ChandrakritiMaharaj i.e. 1850-1886 in Manipur, the intrusion of Kathak dance from outside this land became very popular to the audience during the above period. With imitation and echoing of some styles of Kathak dance, a kind of dance performance known as MarbakJagoi was also prevalent popularly that time. This dance was taught to young people by skilled teachers at ShriGovindaNatyashala of the royal palace which was also called JagoiSabiLoisang and they gave performances. In the plays performed at the palace as MandapLeela, usually male artistes acted as female characters and did this style of dancing at appropriate times. At the time, the dancing of handsome youngmen keeping long hair by taking the role of women, was used as a good means of amusing the audience. So, this form of dance was being learnt by young men at JagoiSabiLoishang of the royal palace generation after generation.

The students of the dance school were mostly children of the royal family, noblemen, big officers and famous men of art. The main roles in MandapLeelas were usually played by princes and high dignitaries. Briefly speaking the mandapleelas of the time may be regarded as plays performed by members of the royal family and high dignitaries.

“When DraupadiVastra Haran was staged Maharaj Kumar Gandhar Singh, son of Chandrakirti took the role of Draupadi, the main character of the play. R.K. Raichandra and BajaiTolchou represented Bhima and Duhsasan respectively. They were gifted actors.” (Dr. M. Kirti Singh, Religious development in Manipur in the 18th& 19th centuries, Page – 234).

After Manipur was conquered by the British and when SrijutNarasingh’s grandson Churachand was crowned the King of Manipur in his minority, the British ruled Manipur as a regent and at the time when a new palace was built there made room for the JagoiSabiLoishang thereby enabling to continue imparting of dance education many MandapLeelas were produced. In Churachand Maharaja’s time girls were also allowed to learn dance at the dance school and to take roles in the Mandap plays.The girls who attended the dance school and played roles in plays first were children of royal family. Brahmin girls, daughters of noblemen and persons very close to them. To identify, some of them were AngomSijhal, Kangabam (Takhellambam) Meipakpi, KangabamAhanbi, KangabamTombi, SairemKeina, ThouraniKumari and ThouraniMikoi etc. It seemed that those girls who acted roles in Goshta (Sanshenba) plays and Rasaleela which were performed on Parvadins (days related to religious occasions) continued to further learn MarbakJagoi.

Of the changes to have come during the reign of ChurachandMaharaj in the matter of dance and music, the participation of women in Leelas(plays) was one of them. At the time, the women participated not only in MandapLeelas but acted roles fully in British proscenium theatre which were newly established in the course of time also.Most of the Manipuri actress

had their origin in the MandapLeelas and the then very popular dance and music forms especially MarbakJagoi, Pasakhela, KhubakIshei etc. most of the famous Manipuri actresses of pre-war time were good artistes of the mentioned art forms. In those days there was a trend of interpolating scenes, without considering propriety, in dramas, such as episodes of Prastabana, Prasason and Pathik scenes for amusement of the audience mainly, and so, though adept female artistes who can main roles were very few, the lesser skilled artistes had a chance for participating in the plays for that reason. The demand for female artistes increased. On the other hand, in those days as no Manipuri women dared to come forward for drama acting, the dramatists found it convenient and easy to employ women who had already set foot on dance and music, for their plays.

The famous Kangabam (TakhellambamMaipakpi Devi, known as Kamalabati Devi outside Manipur) who was a leader of MarbakJagoi, a good singer and noted for singing Bangla Kirtan song was one of the earliest students of JagoisabiLoishang of the royal palace. About the year 1920, in struggling for existence, she travelled to Assam, Bengal, Dhaka, Nabadwip and Tripura for earning money by singing Kirtan and dancing. In the pre-war time the names of two singers i.e. Kamlabati and Harimati were famous throughout Bengal for singing Bangla Kirtan. She was a woman of comely appearance and could not only sing well but also could play harmonium, Khol and Tabla very skillfully and so she shone out as an extra ordinary artiste. After the Japan War (2nd World War) by returning to Imphal she lived a long life happily with her children and Breathed her last in her native land in 1970.

The dancing of MarabakJagoi usually by two women wearing sari and Ghungru (Nupur) at the ankle, to the tunes of musical instruments i.e. harmonium, table, sitar etc., as well as, the singing by good oja (teachers) of songs based on Jaydeva's Geetgovinda, VaisnavaRadavali, Shrimad Bhagavat, Mahabharata etc. was the best audience pulling show of the time. It was in this at form that the twin sisters KangabamAhanbi and Tombi of NinthemPukhriMapal reached the high pitch of their fame. The elder of the famous twin sisters got close acquaintance with a noted man of the time named LaishramNgangbaSubedar when they participated in the MandapLeelas performed at MaharajChurachand's royal palace, as well as other occasions of dance, song and kirtan signings and ultimately she became his wife; and the younger sister was married to ShriNongmaithemThanil Singh, the famous artiste of the time. In the post-war time there used to perform Kirtan singings by the noted singers ShriNanbamThonglen, ShriRebati Thakur Sharma and others on every day of Ekadashi fasting at NongmaithemMandap, Imphal for a long time in which the twin sisters visualized the songs through MarabakJagoi(dance) and their beauty and enjoyment remained unforgettable and lingering to the spectators Kangabam (Takhellambam) Maipakpi Devi of KangabamLeikai was little

senior to the twin in age, but KangabamAhanbi and Tombi the twin sisters of NingthemPukhriMapal along with SairemKanya were contemporaneous students of the first batch of JagoiSabiLaishang (Dance School) and trio artistes became equally famous.

Smt. SairemKanya (1891-1961) beside being an artiste of MarabakJagoi and MandapLeelas participated in the dramas of the newly introduced British proscenium theatre and became a pioneer Manipuri actress. When MaharajChurachand allowed girls to learn MarabakJagoi (dance) at ShriShriGovindaNriyaShala and to play roles in MandapLeelas, the number of dance students (girls) increased year by year and many dancers of MarabakJagoi were produced. This type of dance which was formerly done by male dancers was completely taken over by girls dancers. As the dancing of MarabakJagoi by female dancers grew popularity and acceptance by Manipuri society, it was performed not only at all nooks and corners of Manipur but also did at places outside Manipur, like Dhaka, Tripuraa, Assam, Bengal and Burma etc. At that time the name Meitei Jagoi meant particularly 'MarbakJagoi' only.

As new girl students came out to learn the popular dance form of MarabakJagoi at JagoiSabiLoishang year after year the number of female dancers increased very much. Again, such dancers started to form groups of their own in their localities and begun to go outside Manipur for earning money. Of the many such dancers some who were well known were Smt. AnandiShija, Smt. NungshitombiShija, Smt. PhurailatpamNingolRadhe Devi, Smt. ChiromGourmani Devi, Smt. LourembamTombi Devi and Smt. WangoiChaobi Devi etc. Most of the women artistes who passed out of the JagoiSabiLoishang of the palace seemed to have entered the career of theatre by the influence of the king. Smt. NingthemchaOngbiNungshitombi Devi (1911-1985) also was an artiste of the sort.

In performing a MarabakJagoi programme the services of artistes who can play harmonium sing kirtan and other songs and various other musical instruments are very much needed. But, an artiste can sing while dancing the service of an able player is unavoidable. Besides this some instrumentalists are also indispensably required. So, the local dance groups used to keep a team of musicians at their disposal. Among the MarabakJagoi dancers who could act in plays were very few. And the experience female dancers never remained unengaged for they were hired by the newly set up local dance parties all the year round. Smt. PhurailatpamNingolRadhe Devi (1913-1985) was also such an artiste.

ChurachandMaharaj's keen interest in dance, music, MandapLeelas and drama as well as his great encouragement of girls for participation in performing art will be beyond description. We have heard of a story of the banishment of ShriSapamPatra from Manipur by MaharajChurachand in his rage for the former's grievous hurting of the forehead of his wife

Kangabam (Takhellambam) Maipakpi the famous MarabakJagoiartiste with a cymbal when there was quarrel between the husband and the wife after he had shown his dislike of her vocation of dancing, and of the husband's living in exile in Tripura very long and of the returning of the husband to Manipur after the death of the King. And there are instances of talented female artistes living in remote villages having been kept in the palace compound by the king and enabled them to participate in MandapLeelas and dramas. Among them Smt. LourembamNingolTombinou was one such artiste.

PASKHELA: THE FIRST TRANSFORMATION OF MARBAK JAGOI

After continuing for a long time the practice of forming small groups of dancing girls and musicians at villages for showing MarabakJagoi, some enterprising men thought of creating a full MandapLeelasof MarbakJagoi artistes by taking the help of expert dance teachers and it was culminated in the founding of new type of play called 'Pasakhela' which was much appreciated and received popular acceptance. The MandapLeela known as Pasakhela was a play performed exclusively by girl artistes of MarabakJagoi. It was a play mainly of song and dance expressing the love affairs of Radha-Krishna written by Vaisnava writers and which was translated into Manipuri by good literary persons. Girls artistes acting as Shri Krishna, Shubal, Madhumangol and Gopies used to wear silk dhoties, printed dhoties at the waist, velvet blouse, on the body, belts (girdles), khawon (cross straps), and small head gears with pea-cock feather and their dhoties had kunjias (folded hanging) in the front. They put on garlands, tals (armlets) anklets, nupurs (linklets) etc. and beautified to have divine appearances. ShriRadha, Lalita, Bishakha, Brinda and gopis garlands, necklaces, armlets, bangles and girdles etc. as well as nupurs, anklets etc. at the ankle. Young girls were made up to look like old when acting as Jatila and Kutila and they wore sari.

The Pasakhela besides being an attractive show or its performance in the accompaniment of the resonant tunes of Tablas, khol, pakhawaj, harmonium, sitar, esraj, flute, clarinet and other musical instruments, it was loved all the more by audiences irrespective of age and sex for the singing of Kirtan songs sweetly, alluding of the sequences by songs and the dances expressing the love story of Radha Krishna and the using of Manipuri language in the play. It was demanded at all villages. The precursor of this art form was ShriThiyamIboton Singh of Keishampat Segalambi, Imphal. Considering his granddaughters' (his daughter's daughters) craze for dance and music he consulted various eminent dance gurus and formed a dance group at his home in 1930 and thus the pasakhela was born.

Smt. LaishramNingolAmumacha Devi and her younger sister Pishakmacha Devi, as well as Smt. MutumNingolIbeni were grand daughter of ShriThiyamIboton Singh, born by his daughters. All the three women were brought up at their grand father's home and so, they

were known as ThiyamNingols (girls of Thiyam family). As they had a great interest in song and dance. They were in a group with the daughters of NongmaithemBrajabidhu, the then renowned drummer and other friends in the neighbourhood joined the ShriGouranganatyamandir founded by the renowned ShriKeishamAmuba Singh and begun to act in dramas. They played the main character of the drama 'Manipur Fongba', a dance drama and gave performances in many places of Manipur and begun to earn fame and popularity. It was at such a moment that their grandfather ShriThiyamIboton formed a Pasakhela group of artistes at his home. The girls in the Pasakhela group were LaishramNingolAmumacha Devi, LaishramNingolPishak Devi, MutumNingolIbeni Devi, NongmaithemNingolIbemhal (BimolaAchoubi) Devi , NongmaithemNingolIbeyaima Devi, NongmaithemNingolIbetombi Devi, YengkhomNingolSakhi Devi, YengkhomNingolRuhini Devi, HaobamNingolBhanu Devi, PhurailatpamNingolBhanumati Devi, HuidromNingolBhanu Devi, ThiyamNingol Mani Devi, LeimapokpamNingolTriveni Devi, SapamNingolNupimacha Devi and Sabitri Devi of Kwakeithel etc. The teachers and instructors were masters TongbramKhoimu Singh, NongmaithemBrajabidhu Singh, RajkumarSuryaborosana Singh, KongjengbamToyaima Singh, ChingangbamKalachandShastri, ThokchomChaobhal (Tomchou) Singh, KhangembamMitchao Singh, ChongthamNingthemjao (Mayurdhaja) Singh and KhumanthemMadhumangol Singh etc. And the Mandap plays which were collectively known as Pasakhela played by girls exclusively were prabhaskhanda, MaanBhanjan, Murli Haran, DaanGhat etc. Among the above named girls some were actors who were actively involved in the rising British proscenium theatre of the time and became renowned artistes, as for example LaishramNingolAmumacha Devi (1918-1942) was a noted theatre actress of the pre-war time. MutumNingolIbeni Devi (1925-1988) was regarded as a ThiyamNingol (a girl of Thiyam family) also like her two sisters became a notable actress of the pre-war time. In having close acquaintance, through drama, with ShriHaobamIbungoyaima Singh, a noted actor of the time, she became his wife and thereafter she left song, dance and drama for good. Among the artistes of ThiyamPasakhela Group, the one who acted most in theatre halls was NongmaithemNingolIbemhal (BimolaAchoubi) Devi. The noted singer of drama played many important roles in the dramas of Aryan Theater and Rupmahal Theatre etc. in the pre-war time.

BAIJI JAGOI: THE SECOND TRANSFORMATION OF MARABAK JAGOI

Some artistes of Marabakjagoi begun to form performing groups by collecting some instrumentalists in their own localities for money earnings. They earned money by singing and dancing during the time from DurgaPujah to Kali Pujah by going to places like Guwahati, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Tripura, Nabadwip, Sylhet and other towns of Assam and

Bengal. The number of these commercial artistes known as MarabakJagoiSabi (dancer of MarabakJagoi) increased very much in the second world war known in Manipur as Japan Lal. Artiste groups consisting of girls and married young women earning money with the art existed in many localities.

In the second world war troops of Japan and Indian National Army under Subhaschandra Bose arrived at Manipur coming through Burma attacked the British arm of a fierce encounter ensued and Manipur became a war theatre. Besides Negro and British soldiers, there was heavy reinforcement of soldiers of various nationalities at Imphal. While repeated bombings were being done at Imphal by Japanese planes the Indian National Army hosted their flag at Moirang and with setting up of its camp they exchanged fires with the British army.

As there were many army camps at various places of Imphal there was the need of entertainment programs of dance and music for recreation of the troops in their leisure time and it offered a golden chance to the MarabakJagoidancers for big earnings. So, the number of dancing group increased by leaps and bounds. Led by skilled dancers the semiskilled artistes also had a good chance of earning big money. For amusing and pleasing the non-Manipuri soldiers of the British army, the dancers shamelessly sang English, Hindi, Nepali and Assamese etc. songs and danced erotically ignoring the sense of decency and modesty. People thought this changing style of dancing as similar to the dancing of Baijis in Kholas (rooms) in Indian cities for earning money and some educated citizens called it “BaijiJagoi” and it came to be known by the name. And this style of dancing was regarded as a less honourable and debased form of dance.

*“After Manipur war it was very much degenerated so much so that the gentleman class hated to see it and it was used as an instrument for extorting money from the low-class people of Manipur and neighbouring provinces. This hatred for the dancing girls spread amongst the young generation subsequently the dance itself began to be hated.”***(LairenmayumIbungohal Singh, Introduction to Manipur, S. Ibochouba Singh, 3rd Edition. 1987, P-122)**

Though the British troops were will-drawn after the war from Manipur after staying for about two years, the BaijiJagoi which was transformation of MarabakJagoi remained and the artistes used to go to cities and towns of Assam and Bengal to earn money by singing and dancing. Among the numerous dancers of MarabakJagoi the most eminent and popular artistes were LaishramNingolPishak Devi, LaishramNingolIbemhal Devi, AribamNingolmanbi Devi, SamanduramNingolNupimacha Devi, SamanduramNingolTondon Devi, LaimayumThambalngou Devi, GurumayumBinodkumari Devi, WangoiChaobi Devi, KangabamYaimabi Devi and KangabamTombi Devi etc. Smt.

LaishramNingolNingthemchaOngbiNayaniShija Devi was not only acting for different theatre halls before the Japan War, but also became a renowned teacher of dance and music afterwards.

Most of the artistes of MarabakJagoi were girls of the same parents or contemporaneous girls of the same places. Hence such girls made a group they became more daring and less shy. As the two sisters KangabamAhanbi and Tombi were famous in the earlier days of MarabakJagoi, AribamNingolIbemhal and Tombi, the two sisters were also equally famous in their days for the art. Smt. AribamNingolIbemhal Devi (1921-1988) was an artiste actively involved in drama of the time.This was not the end of coming into prominence of twin sisters in the field of marabakjagoi. Smt. KangabamNingolYaimabidevi and her younger sister Tombi Devi were the twin dancers who were very famous and popular. Smt. KangabamNingolYaimabi Devi was an artiste who actively played roles in the newly introduced stage drama in the pre-war times. Smt.KangabamNingolTombi Devi also in tandem with her elder sister went in tough with theatrical and other art activities. In her early career she acted in many plays of M.D.U.Besides KangabamNingolYamabi and Tombi Devi, Smt. SamanduramNingolNupimachaDevi and her younger sister Tondon Devi were also a pair of MarabakJagoiartistes known throughout Manipur.

For learning Marabakjagoi, girls in the early days used to attend the dance school in the royal palace. But about the time of the Japan War fewer girls went to the school for learning the art as many skilled male and female teachers begun to teach students at their homes. At the time, LaimayumNingolThambalngoubi Devi being a girl having a great penchant for song and dance learnedBaijiJagoi which was a form of Marabakjagoi and participated in performances. But as soon as she knew the decision and disregard of the MarabakJagoifemale artistes by the society, she learned from renowned dance teachers, Manipuri Raas which became a classical dance after Indian independence and she became a dance teacher. Over and above this, she was involved in the drama movement of Manipur in the pre-war and post-war times.

Smt. GurumayumNingolBinodkumari Devi, having great fondness of dance, song and drama from childhood participated in activities of BaijiMarabakJagoi and became a well known artiste. As she did stage acting from her childhood she became a famous actress much after Manipur attained statehood and remained as such.

THE LAST CHANGE IN MARBAK JAGOI

As the dance group known as BaijiJagoi, a changed form of MarabakJagoi, was formed at various places of Manipur and when some Baiji dancers had begun to give shows in an erotic style without shame and decency in solely commercial manner, the elite and respectable section of Manipur society begun to despise and look down upon them, and there

came a stage when an artiste felt shame of identifying herself as an artiste of MarabakJagoi. But, the social decision and abhorrence was a big hurt to those artistes who sincerely liked the art form and learned systematically and had a sense of decency and modesty. So, some artistes of MarabakJagoiturned to the newly introduced art i.e. theatre or Manipuri dance particularly RaasLeela which had been included in the list of Indian classical dance by the Government of India. Thus, some professional dancers of MarabakJagoi, as a last resort, created plays like pasakhela as MandapLeela and pursued the art of MarabakJagoi. Among the Pasakhela groups of artistes established after the Japan War, the two groups of Smt. ThokchomNingolBrindasabi (Ibetombi) Devi of Thangmeiband and WangoiChaobi Devi of SingjameiChingamakha showed plays at different parts of Manipur and became very popular.

Though the dance was based on the story of Radha – Krishna and showed the love story of them, it was quite different from the Raasleela. The actors acting as gopis wore ghagras velvet blouses and wrapped their bodies loosely with their saies to imitate Brajamais and the actor playing Krishna wore a dhoti at the waist and put on a chura on the head but it was quite different from the Natwar dress of Krishna in the Raasleela. Over and above this, all the dancers wore Ghungru at their ankles and danced to the locating of tabla in purely Hindustani rhythm of music and had close affinity with Hindustani dance.

The pasakhela play called Mathur Bihar which was created after four or five years of the second world war popularly known as Japan War by Manipuris became very popular and was engaged for shows at many places of Manipur. ThokchomNingolIbetombi Devi who acted in the play as ‘Brinda’ came to be known as ‘BindraSaabi’ and taking after her pseudoname the dance group was known as ‘Brindasabipaskhela group.

After the bringing out of the play Mathur Bihar of Brindasabi’sPasakhela Party, not much later WangoiChaobi also created her performing group and produced plays, such as Nouka Vilas, MaanBhanjan and NimaiSanyas etc. in succession at the interval of some years and they received warm public acceptance. There was a wave of Pasakhela and they were ordered for shows.WangoiChaobi’s group was playing not only Pasakhelas based on the love affairs of Radha and Krishna but also played another Pasakhela called NimaiSanyas based on GouraLeela.The instrumentalists of WangoiChaobi’sPasakhela group were – ShriThokchomJoykishore Singh (Sanatombi’s father played tabla and khol, Smt. WangoiChaobi played harmonium while singing Sutra song, ShriBirmangol Singh of NaoremLeikai played clarinet and Mangi of NaoremLeikai and R.K. Birchandra played side-drum and esraj respectively.WangoiChaobi, earning a considerably huge amount of money by showing various dances at the military camps lying feathered at different places of Manipur during the Japan war, bought a piece of land at Nabadwip at last and set up a dance

Centre there. In one of her journey to Sylhet for dance performance after the war, she came across tabla and khol artiste ShriThokchomJoykishor Singh and his daughter Sanatombi and told them to come to Nabadwip. At the time of the partition of India and Pakistan Jaikishore Singh with his family fled to Nabadwip and later joined WangoiChaobi's dance group. At the time, Chaobi made Joykishore's daughter Sanatombi a dance partner of her adopted grand-daughter who was later known as AshemThambalmani and afterwards by including other girls also complete Pasakhela group was formed.

ShrimatiThokchomNingolSanatombi Devi arrived in the world on 22nd October, 1938 at SylhetKhunou in Bangladesh as a daughter of ShriThokchomJoykishor Singh and Smt. Dhanabati Devi. She has two elder brothers, one elder sister and one younger brother and they are five brothers and sisters. Living at SylhetKhunou was difficult and unsafe at the time of the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, they left their birth place and settled at Nabadwip in West Bengal. As she was interested in music, she became a disciple of WangoiChaobi.

CONCLUSION

Manipuri dance underwent several changes during the 20th century A.D. In the beginning of the 20th Century, when a new palace of Manipur was built in 1910-11,there included a temple of ShriShriGovindaji attaching there at ShriShriGovindaNatyasalawhere learning the art of dance formally and regularly is taken place in the discipline of dance likeMarabakJagoi, Dhap, Kalawati, Manoharshai etc.

Not only in Manipur, MarbakJagoi was very popular outside Manipur. So, boys and girls who had learned the art of dancing from Natyashala very well has formed a groups and went outside Manipur for the lucrative vocation. Later, many of them begun to earn fairly by using their skill without consideration of humility, decenary and honour, only for the sake of money, and ultimately the society began to despise and belittle them. Because of public despise and disinterestedness by future generations, the marabakjagoi faded gradually and disappeared at last to be untraceable.

Then, there sprang up a new type of dance called "Paskhela" in which the characters of Shri Krishna, Radha, Lalita,Bishakha, Jashoda, Narda etc. were played by girls. The themes of the new dance "Paskhela" were Radha-Krishna Leelas, Jogibesh, Manbhanjan, Murliharan, NaukaBilas, Jalakeli, PrabasKhanda etc. mainly. Lastly, the dance groups were set up at various parts of Manipur because of the new dance's high public liking and popularity. So, dance groups known as Kongpal Pala, Wangkhei Pala, Thangmeibandpala etc. came up, as well as, groups known by an individual dancer's name like WangoiChaobi's and AshemTombisana'setc were set up.

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