

A brief History of Mising Language and Literary Practice

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ABSTRACT

Mising Community is the second largest Community in Assam. They are belonging in general to the Tibeto-Burman family of the great Mongoloid race. They live in the eastern region of Brahmaputra Valley in Assam, India. The Mising community people are living in different districts of Assam like Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Tinisukia, Sonitpur, Darang, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar and Majuli. There is no written history of Mising about their migration from Northern China to the plains of Assam, but history was passed down orally in the form of folk songs and stories by ancestors from generation to generation. The Mising language is a very old and rich, originally had a script of its own said to be written on a deer's skin. But it was eaten away as food. In this way they lost their scripts, but not their language.

The Mising language emerged in written forms only recently first in wake of the movement led by the 'Mising Agom Kebang' the biggest literary organization of Misings. It is the result of consistent and dedicated efforts of some yong educationists who started such of works in the late sixties at Guwahati. With an object in view to give the Mising language in written forms, they formed 'Gauhati Mising Kebang' in 1968. The 'Agom Kebang' should endeavour to its level best to uplift the the Mising language and literature by carrying out investigative and research works, publishing books and periodicals, thereby promoting a revolutionary thought amongst the people and thereby contributing to develop the Mising language and literature in the recent years to come.

1. Introduction

The Misings officially recorded as *Miri* in the list of Scheduled Tribes of India under Constitution Order 1950 are originally a hill tribe of the Himalayan region of North Eastern India. Either for their better Wisdom or in their necessity of cultivable land. They migrated down along the Siyang River in several small groups in different period of history. It is believed that the first group of Misings landed in the upper region of the valley sometime between 13th and 14th century A.D. When the area around Sadiya was ruled by Chutia kings.¹ The Mising tribe of Assam, previously known as the *Miris*² forms a fragment of greater Mongoloid horde occupying the hills and dales of north-eastern India. Sir George Grierson³ has categorically divided these Mongoloids into (a) primitive long headed, (b) less primitive short headed and (c) Tibet to Mongoloids, Linguistic researches reveal that the Mongoloids of India excluding only the Khasis and Jayanties speak Sino-Tibetan group of languages; and the Misings who form a fraction of this race, fall in the category of Tibeto-Burman speakers of the greater Sino-Tibetan groups.⁴

According to 2011 census, the total population of the community was 6, 87,310; of which 3, 95,790 are male and 2, 67,520 female.⁵ They are mostly found in the districts of Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Tinisukia, Sonitpur, Darang, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar and Majuli.

The Mising people are divided into some groups having different characteristic dialect of each group. Hence the Mising language can be divided into some dialectical groups based on their Morphological, Phonological, Vocabulary and Intonation characters. These groups are:⁶

Group 1: Oyan, Pagro, Delu, Dambug.

Group 2: Sha:yang.

Group 3: Mo:ying and Somua

Group 4: Samuguria, Temar, Bihia etc.

2. Aim and Objective

- This study will introduce a brief history of Mising language and literature.
- This study will analyse about Mising language and literary practice
- This study will try to find out the literary organization of Misings 'Agom Kebang', Christian Missionaries and other reason are how to contribute of developing Mising language and literary practice.

3. Method of the Study

In this paper, Analytical method has been applied for the discussion of the topic. This study is based on Primary and Secondary source or data.

4. A brief History of Mising Language and Literary Practice

4.1 A Rule of the 'Mising Agom Kebang' (Mising Literary Association)

The standard Mising language should be formulated taking into considerations all different dialectical characteristics of each subgroup. The Mising language emerged in written forms only recently first in wake of the movement led by the 'Mising Agom Kebang' the biggest literary organization of Misings. It is the result of consistent and dedicated efforts of some yong educationists who started such of works in the late sixties at

Guwahati. With an object in view to give the Mising language in written forms, they formed 'Gauhati Mising Kebang' in 1968. Being entrusted by the association Sri Nahendra Padun published a book called *Mising Bhakhar Lipi: Eti Porikhyamulak Asoni* in 1969.

The *Mising Luyir* was published jointly by Sri Tabu Ram Taid and Sri Nahendra Padun using Assamese script. At the same time, some educationists and writers studied experimented using Roman script and preferred the same for the Mising language. To avoid such a controversy and formulate a common and scientifically acceptable script, a seminar was convened at Murkongselek, Jonai of Assam in 1971 in which a consensus opinion favoured formation of literary association with T. R. Taid and N. Padun as its president and secretary respectively. At that seminar the association asked them to submit a study report for the Mising language. Ultimately, the Mising nation convention held at Disangmukh, Sibsagar district, gave birth to the 'Mising Agom Kebang' on 18th April, 1972 with T. Taid as its President. After its formation, this organisation has tactfully formulated issues and scientifically studied script for the Mising language. Finally, the most acceptable script came into being in 1974. The Roman script in a modified form known as Mising script was formally accepted by the 'Mising Agom Kebang'. The Govt. Of Assam has introduced this language in the primary schools of the Mising areas of Assam in Oct. 1986.

The Mising language was studied and books were published even before the formation of 'Mising Agom Kebang' by some interested persons. *Miri Duan* (1915) by S. Panyang Katakay is the first book on the Mising language. Later on *Mising Path* (1958) by K.C. Padun, *Mising Agom* (1963) by B. Pegu etc was published. After the formation of 'Mising Agom Kebang' it has initiated and encouraged writings as well as publication of books, Journals, periodicals, Newspapers etc. from time to time. To mention some of them are: *Mising Agom Mimang* (1974) by N. Padun, *Posang Otsur-I* (1982) by R. Perme, *Mising Bhakhar Banan Paddoti* (1982) by T.R. Taid, *Mising Agom Lega:pe Roman Abig* (1980) by T. Taid. N. Padun & B. Kagyung, *Poman Moman* (1983) by T. Taid, *Gomlam* (1989) by N. Padun, *Posang Otsur-II* (1989) by I. Pegu.

The 'Mising Agom Kebang' has also entrusted experienced teachers and educationists to write text books. It also forms committees whenever necessary for compiling dictionary, glossary etc. some of which are yet to be brought into publication.

The following is a list of publications carried out 'Mising Agom Kebang' on Mising language and literature till inception. (1983 to 2012)

Name of Books	Name of Writer	Year
Mising Bhashar Banan Poddhoti	Tabu Taid	1983
Poman Moman	Tabu Taid	1987
Posang Otsur I	Rotnesor perme:	1987

Posang Otsur II	Indresor Pe:gu	1987
Mising Gomlam	Nahendro Pa:dun	1987
Probonda Chayan	J.J. Kuli (Ed.)	1996
Me:tom Abi	J.J. Kuli (Ed.)	1996
Mising Agom Kebang Lусar	J.J. Kuli (Ed.)	1996
Kebang Abubuluk Lunam	J.J. Kuli (Ed.)	1996
Leke Ni:tom	J.J. Kuli (Ed.)	1996
Gomig	N.C. Pegu (Ed.)	1997
Banki Banki Amin	Diram Kumbang	1997
Ko:kang Poman	J.J. Kuli (Ed.)	1997
Mising Agom Kebang Lусar	Peotap Sondro Pao (Ed.)	1999
Mising Agom Kebang Lусar	Khogen Pe:gu (Ed.)	2001
Mising Agom Kebang Lусar	Khogen Pegu (Ed.)	2003
Mising Gomnu	Nahendra Pa:dun (Ed.)	2003
Do:ying	Bhobo Dole: (Ed.)	2003
Out Line Grammar of the Shayang-Miri Language (Reprint)	J.F. Needham	2003
Mising Agom Kebang Lусar	Khogesor Pe:gu (Ed.)	2004
Ya:yok Do:ying	Tabu Taid & A.K.Pegu (Ed.)	2005
Mising Agom Kebang Lусar	Khogesor Pe:gu (Ed.)	2005
Mising Gomug	Horen Dole:	2005
Agom Gamig	Khogesor Pe:gu (Ed.)	2005
Mising Ni:tom	Nahendra Pa:dun	2005
Mising Agom Kebang Lусar	Ghono Kt. Dole: (Ed.)	2005
To:di Do:ying	Thakur Pd. Pe:gu (Ed.)	2007
Turying	Thakur Pd. Pe:gu (Ed.)	2007
Do:deng	Ghono Kt. Dole: (Ed.)	2007
Mising Agom Kebang Lусar	Ghono Kt. Dole: (Ed.)	2007
Prabandha Sankalan	Sabonti Pe:gu	2007
Mimang Tikumsunam	Ghono Kt. Dole: (Ed.)	2007
Ekuki Nibandha	Tabu Taid	2007
Glimpses	Tabu Taid	2007
Mising Agom Kebang Lусar	Anil Kr. Pe:gu (Ed.)	2009
Leke Do:ying	Khogen Pe:gu (Ed.)	2012

Do:deng	Rupnath Pe:gu (Ed.)	2012
Me:tom.	Kalinath Pangging (Ed.)	2012
Mime Mitomlok Me:tom	Rita Medok (Ed.)	2012
Bogum Turdag Ajon	Indresor Pe:gu	2012
Umorke Me:tom	Dipok Kr. Dole:	2012
Do:sog	Gobin Noro	2012
Gomsar	Muktinath Pe:gu	2012
Gomnu	Nahendro Pa:dun (Ed.)	2012
Kinpenam Gompir	Diram Kumbang	2012
Mising Lok-Sanskriti	Bidyesor Dole:	2012
Mimang	Joyonto Koman (Ed.)	2012
Bangki Bangki gom	Tulesor Pe:gu	2012

The 'Mising Agom Kebng' used to publish news paper called Mimang regularly at Bi-monthly interval, the first publication being in the year 1989 under J.J. Kuli as the founder editor.

4.2 A Rule of Christian Missionaries

Before the conception to bring the Mising language in written forms came, some foreign missionaries studied and published books and articles as pioneering works on the Mising language. The works include *Comparison of Indo-Chinese language* by Rev.N.Brown, Journal of the Asiatic society of Bengal, Dec (1837), *On the Aborigines of the Eastern Frontier* by Brian H.Hodgson, Esq. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Sept. (1849), *Notes on the Daflas and peculiarities of their language* by William Robinson, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. XX (1852), *Note on the languages spoken by the various tribes inhabiting the valley of Asom and its mountains confines* by William Robinson, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, March, (1949), *A Descriptive Account of Assam by William Robinson, August (1841), An outline grammar of the Dafla language as spoken by the tribes immediately south of the Apa Tanang Country*, Shillong (1900) by R.C.Hamilton, *A Dictionary of the Abor Miri language with illustrative sentences and notes* (1907), Shillong by J.H.Lorrain, *Outline grammar of the Shaiyang Miri language as spoken by Miris of that clan residing in neighbourhood of Sadiya* (1885), Shillong by J.R.Needham, *Linguistic Survey of India, Voll. III. Part-I, Abor Miri and Dafla*, (1909) by G.A.Grierson etc.

Among the Christian Missionaries, Nathan Brown was the first systematic worker on the Adi-Mising language. His works were published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and in the Christian Observer. Brown considered the Mising and the Adi languages as the same language. He mentions "The Miri is a dialect of this Abor language which is spoken by the people of plains but is said not to be essentially different from the language of the high land." Robinson's works can be considered as the beginning in the field of Mising grammar. His

articles contained the basic principles of grammar of some languages like Assamese, Bengali, Garos, Bodos, Misings etc. The grammar of J.F. Needham can't also be considered as a complete grammar on the Mising language, because it contains descriptions of a particular group among the Misings that is the Shaiyang. Grierson mentions "The dialects spoken by the Miris and the Dafla are so closely connected that they may be considered as one and the same language".

4.3 News Papers and books contributing in exploring literary works on Mising Language

The newspapers contributing in exploring literary works on Mising language are: *Lutad* (1981) ed. N.Pa:dun, *Megab* (1986) ed. H.N.Dole:, *Agom* (1986) ed. K. Pe:gu, *Le:bang* (1988) ed N. Pe:gu & J.J. Kuli, *Mimng* (1989-90 and 1996-97) ed. J.J.Kuli etc. The books written in this direction are *The Misings of the Brahmaputra Valley* (1956) by N.C. Pegu, *Mising Songskritir Alekhyia* (1989) ed. B.Kagyung, *Folk literature of the Misings* (1992) by J.J.Kuli, *Mising Leke Do:ying* (1992) by R. Pegu, *Me:bo Ni:tom* (1972) ed. By B.Doley, *Mising Anu Ni:tom* (1985) ed. T.Pamegam etc.

Among the Journals and periodicals, the most important are: *Murong* (1985. 1994) ed. J.J.Kuli, *Asi Jili* (1986) ed. N.Doley, *Ginmur* (1986) ed. D.Patir, *Gomug* (1988) ed. K.Pegu, *Li:sang* (1989) ed. D.Doley, *Dongkong* (1992) ed. B.Pegu etc. and also the annual mouthpiece publications of the 'Mising Agom Kebng', 'The Mising Ba:ne Kebng', 'Takam Mising Porin Kebng', 'Mising Dirbi Kebang' and 'Takam Mising Mime Kebang'.

The richness of the Mising literature has also been adorned by the addition of modern poetry. There are a number of books published containing collections of poems such as *Leke Ni:tom* by Doley, *Mising Oi Ni:tom* (1980) ed N.Padun, *Ni:tom Doksiri* (1984) ed. I.Pegu, *Ngok Ni:tom* (1991) ed. N.Padun, *Ngok Me:tom* (1991) by B.Doley, *Ngoluk Me:tom* (1992) ed. G.Patir, *Kangkinsulai* (1991) ed. P.Patir, *Songkid* (1989) by G. Pegu, *Otsur* (1990) ed. R.Pegu, *Asinang Okitng No* (2009) by B.Doley, *Asin Do:di* (2014) by T.Taid, *Me:tom Dokpun* (2018) by Mising Adne Oe:, *Ma:mo Lennam-II* (2019) ed. S. Pangging etc. These poems reflect a new revolutionary thinking and some of their socio-cultural problems and changes.

Other literary works published in the eighties and nineties are *Mising Okomniya Path* (1981) by N.Padun, *Mising Glossary* (1987) ed. P.Vein, *Mising Agom Paring* (1988) ed. J.J.Kuli and N.Pegu, *A Dictionary of the Mising Language* (1995) by T.Taid etc. This works included some aspects of grammar, glossary, idioms, phrases, vocabulary etc. on the Mising Language.

5. Conclusion

From the above discussions, it has become clear that to explore and develop the Mising Language and Literature, more research works and publications are to be brought in every aspect. In this regard, the 'Mising Agom Kebang' in particular and the Mising people in general have to shoulder a great responsibility. The 'Agom Kebang' should endeavour to its level best to uplift the Mising language and literature by carrying out investigative and research works, publishing books and

periodicals, thereby promoting a revolutionary thought amongst the people and thereby contributing to develop the Mising language and literature in the recent years to come.

References (End Note)

- ¹ Kuli, Jawahar Jyoti Kuli (Compiled & Edited). *The Misings Their History and Culture*. p.61
- ² The term Miri which is a Mising word itself means a man (W. Crooks. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.1, pp.33 ff); and it has got an antonym *Mipak* meaning a 'man to be avoided'—a term which is applied by the Misings to denote non-Mising.
- ³ G.A.Grierson. *Linguistic Survey of India. Vol. 1*. Calcutta, 1927, Introduction, p. 40
- ⁴ S.K.Chatterji. *Kirata Jana Kriti*. Calcutta 1974, p.20
- ⁵ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mising_people, date: 06.07.2019
- ⁶ Ibid. *The Misings Their History and Culture*. p.134

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