

Doul Festival of Barpeta



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Doul festival is a famous festival in India. Apart from the rest of the country it is also a colourfully celebrated by the people of Assam, specially it is the tremendous occasion for the people of Barpeta. During the “doul utsava” the hearts of Barpetians are overwhelmed with festivity and joy. It is a festival of colour and happiness. *Doul* festival is a great source of happiness among the people of Barpeta. During this festival the people of Barpeta forget their sorrows and agonies and celebrate this festival with traditional gaiety and enthusiasm. *Doul utsava* is also called ‘holi’ or ‘rang’. In the month of “phagun” and “Chot” the spring comes, the world is filled with the green leaves of the trees, the flowers bloom, birds used to sing sweet songs, the gentle wind blows with fragrance and everything of this world changed into a different one. And it is this sweet moment when Doul Utsava of Barpeta is celebrated.

Holigeets of Barpeta are remarkably popular which enthralls the heart of every Assamese. These *holigeets* are the exquisite compositions in praise of Lord Krishna. People from different places visit Barpeta Xatra with a view to see this *doul utsava*.

Doul utsava was started by Mahapurush Sankardeva after his great work *chihnajatra* and wrote some *holigeets* too ---

*“Range phagu khele chaitanya banamali
Duhate phagur gunda sichanta murari.*

At Barpeta, Mathura Das Bura Ata first celebrated *doul* festival in the model of *vaikuntha*(heaven) because *doul utsava* was first celebrated in heaven. Thereafter, *doul* festival has been celebrated with *satriya parampara (traditionally)* till today at Barpeta *satra*. Barpeta *satra* is called *Ditiya vaikuntha*(second heaven) *puri* also.

Doul festival is celebrated three to five days. The three days *Doul* is called “Deka *Doul*” and four or five days *Doul* is called “Bura *Doul*”. According to the tradition four days *doul* is held in the month of “Phagun purnima,a” (full moon) and three days *Doul* is held in the month of “Chot purnima”(full moon).The first day is called *gandha* or *banhutsava*. It is an important day on which *Vaishnavas* bring *nal,khagari and ekara* for *meji*. That evening *Mahaprabhu Doul Govinda* and *Kalia Thakur* are brought out from *manikut ghar* to *mathar chotal* with *gayan bayan*. *Mahaprabhu* is then brought near the *meji* and after alighting the *meji*, *mahaprabhu* takes seven rounds around it. It is called *meji puoa* or *magh puoa.atachbaji* or *phanuch* are the main attraction of *gandha*.people of Barpeta dance with colourful joy and gaiety during this festival.

Mahaprabhu is brought to *jagmohan ghar* after *meji puoa* and in asacred moment at night *mahaprabhu* is brought to *doul ghar* walking around the seven steps(*sapta thak*) and then the people of Barpeta sing the *holigeeets* with great enthusiasm –

*Phagu khele karunamay
ananda kumara
devara durlava keli
phagur bihar. (Madhabdev)*

The second day is called *bhar doul*. The Vaisnavas have *naam-prasanga* at *jagmohan ghar*. On that day after completing the morning song *ojapali* and *gayana-bayan* is held. *Dhuliya nritya* is also a memorable show which is held during these days.

The last day is called *phakua or suweri*. In the morning *mahaprabhu* is brought out from *jagmohan ghar* and is placed in the former place inside the *kirtan ghar*. At noon *Kaliya Thakur* and *Mahaprabhu* are again brought to *mathar chatal*, and the people of Barpeta showers *phakuguri* with joy. *Holigeets* and its echoes are spread all over Barpeta-

*"Aji range range akakar
aaha bhai khelo sabe
mili prane pran
aaji Barpeta bardhame chouishe phagu ure
abir chandan badanate
aaji basanti kino rang dhaliche
parane parane naba siharan jagiche.*

In this memorable day *mahaprabhu and kaliya thakur* are seated on a beautiful *dola* and as soon as *mahaprabhu gosain* reaches from *Baradi satra*, the *Vaishnavas* bring three *mahaprabhu* to *kanara satra* with a view to have *heketa*. In this *jatra* many people assemble and sing *holigeets*-

*Aaji khele holi
range brindabane
gopa gopi sabe nache
phakur anande*

Mahaprabhu returns from *kanara satra*. As Lord Krishna is not permitted to come in by Lakshmi after his return from the house of Ghunucha a *mahaprabhu* is to be prevented by the *Vaishnavas* with four bamboos with four bamboos in front of *Kirtan ghar*. These four bamboos are divided among three *haties-uttarhati*-two bamboos, *nahati*-one bamboo and *dakhinhati-bamboo*. After breaking these four bamboos *Mahaprabhu* walks around *kirtan ghar* seven times. Thus, after seven days with Ghunucha, Lord Krishna returns to Lakshmi. Lakshmi defeats Lord Krishna and after being defeated by Lakshmi Lord Krishna gives Rs 300 and then is admitted into *Kirtanghar*. Like this, the *bhaktas* of *mahaprabhu* fine him of Rs 300 and brings *kalia thakur* to *bhaj ghar*.

“Sandhya samayat karia anek utsava

Doular bhitar goiya pailanta Madhava.” And thus ends this famous *doul* festival of Barpeta.

Juthika Das

Journalist from Barpeta.

BY JUTHIKA DAS

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