

Vrindavani Bastra may come to Assam



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Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti 21 November 2013 8945 views

Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva (SSS) has extracted a categorical promise from Richard Blurton, the Curator of British Museum that the Vrindavani Bastra will be allowed to be brought to Assam for public display. The President of SSS Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti called on Richard Blurton, the Curator of British Museum, London on November 21 in Guwahati. They had an elaborate discussion for 75 minutes on the intricacies of Vrindavani Bastra and exchanged information on this great textile art. During the discussion Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti highlighted the fact the Vrindavani Bastra is a glorious heritage of Assam. He asserted the claim of people of Assam on the Vrindavani Bastra. It should be returned to Assam, he said, especially since Britain had procured it inadvertently from third party. Now that the rightful owners have been identified, Britain should return the same to Assam. Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti gave a representation to Blurton. The curator promised that the cloth will be sent to Assam for public display for a few days. The only thing was that a pre-determined temperature, humidity and light intensity will have to be maintained for the cloth, Blurton said. Dr Borkakoti assured that there were enough expertise in Assam to take care of that. The full text of the representation is given below. The curator was also presented several books on Srimanta Sankaradeva beside *Gamocha* and *Chelleng*.

November 21, 2013

To,

*Richard Blurton,
Curator, South Asia and South East Asian Collections,
British Museum, London*

Subject : Vrindavani Bastra woven by Srimanta Sankaradeva

Dear Blurton,

It is a great pleasure to find your all-round interest in the life and culture of Assam as evinced by your tour in the nooks and corners of the state. That you carried the videos of the great textile art Vrindavani Bastra woven by Srimanta Sankaradeva wherever you went proves your genuine interest in the Sankari culture permeating the Assamese lives. You have fully realised the importance of the heritages created by the great medieval reformer for the people of Assam.

Vrindavani Bastra woven by Srimanta Sankaradeva in 1554 is a symbol of Assamese culture as the medieval reformer left a legacy of cohesive pluralistic culture created from out of ethnic cultures of the region. This piece of cloth is one of the most valuable relics of that era when Srimanta Sankaradeva was creating history.

We fully understand that your museum collected this piece of cloth from third source without meaning to deprive us of our cultural heritage. We are also grateful for your deft preservation of this invaluable object. Now it would be in the fitness of the things for your institution to recognize the historical value of the Vrindavani Bastra and return the same to its lawful owner, the people of Assam. We will offer whatever assistance that may be necessary on our part for the expected transfer.

We are certain that your institution will take appropriate step in this context.

Sincerely

Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti
President, Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva

Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti

BY SANJIB KUMAR BORKAKOTI

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