

Historia

A Bulletin of the Department of History, Pragjyotish College

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A BEGINNING

In lieu of Editorial

It is a dream for any editor to be able to introduce the first issue of a publication and it was immensely pleasurable to be able to introduce 'Historia' to all my readers. *Historia*, is a Greek word, which means "inquiry, knowledge acquired by investigation".

'Historia', the bulletin contains information on departmental study tours which were organized for the benefit of students for enhancing their knowledge and help them connect socially. The bulletin also comprises, among others, briefs on departmental talks which were delivered by some renowned academicians and reports on interactive sessions with different people or special guests. The bulletin also provides news of student's involvement on environment issues, group discussion and departmental wall magazine. The bulletin covers almost-all important events during 2016 to 2018 involving the Department of History, Pragjyotish College.

The editor would like to extend his gratitude to all who contributed in bringing out the first issue of 'Historia' successfully.

Prasant Kumar Ojha
5th semester, Deptt. of History

"History consists of a corpus ascertained facts. The facts are available to the historian in documents, inscriptions and so on, like fish in the fishmonger's slab. The historian collects them, takes them home, and cooks and serves them in whatever style appeals to him."

— E. H. Carr (*What Is History*)



INSIDE

- ❖ Study Tour
- ❖ Departmental Talk
- ❖ Events
- ❖ Achievements
- ❖ Polyandry – a legacy
- ❖ Historical importance of Tezpur
- ❖ Snippets

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Sri Suryapahar, Goalpara

The department arranged a study tour to Sri Suryapahar, Goalpara on 3rd March, 2016. Students were accompanied by the faculty members Mr. Bishwajyoti Dev Mahanta, Dr Gargee Sharmah, Mr. Amarjit Gogoi and Ms Indrani Deka. The students observed some rare sculptures of Buddhist, Jain and Hindu pantheon and the ruin of an ancient Sun temple. They also interacted with the local people and gathered information about the importance of the local sites and its historical importance. It was a one-day trip.



STUDY TOURS

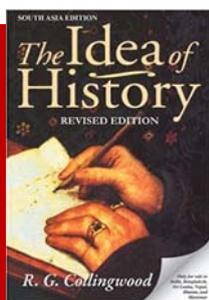
Pobitora and Mayong

The department organized another study tour to Pobitora Wild Life Sanctuary and Mayong (mythical land of black magic) on 1st April, 2017. Students had the opportunity of witnessing the one-horned rhinoceros, wild buffaloes, migratory birds etc. The students also visited the Namami Brahmaputra Festival at Mayong where they got the opportunity to witness the different aspects of local culture.



Sualkuchi, the silk village

A trip to Sualkuchi, also called the Manchester of India, was organized on 22nd February, 2018. On the way to Sualkuchi the students visited *Bastraudyana* (a museum-like institute) where they gathered some knowledge regarding sericulture. Afterwards, they visited Sri Hatisatra, one of the earliest Vaishnavite Satras of Assam situated nearby. They also visited Siddheshwar temple where they witnessed some medieval sculptures.



“History is for human self-knowledge...the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of **history**, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is.”

- R. G. Collingwood (*Idea of History*)

DEPARTMENTAL TALKS

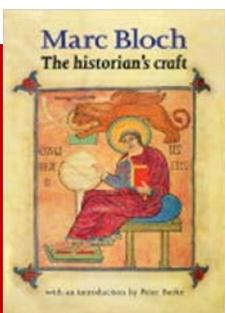
The department organized a talk on 15th September, 2016. **Prof. Paromita Das**, Head of History Department, Gauhati University delivered the talk on “Archaeological Sources of Ancient Assam, (5th-12th C.E.)”.



Her informative power-point presentation focused on the sculptures of different medium like stone, metal, terracotta etc. She discussed how archaeological sources help us to reconstruct the history of early Assam. After the event students and teachers discussed and interacted with each other.



The department also organized a talk on “Environmental history” which was delivered by **Prof. Rajib Handique**, Department of History, Gauhati University on 15th March 2018. The talk hugely benefited the students in gaining knowledge about a new branch of history. The talk was followed by a lively interactive session.



“The good historian is like the giant of the fairy tale. He knows that wherever he catches the scent of human flesh, there his quarry lies”.

- Marc Bloch

EVENTS

Interactive session with the Burmese people of Assamese origin

On 22nd November, 2016, the department in collaboration with IQAC, Pragjyotish College organized an interactive session with some of the Burmese people who claim themselves to be of Assamese origin. The four persons, hailed from Myanmar, were Ratnamani (75), Chandramayee (72), Pushpamayee (67) and Thant Zin (33). The event had a discussion on the topic - "In search of Root : an interaction with the Burmese of Assamese origin".



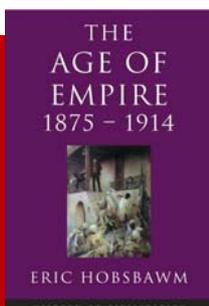
Environment Day celebration

On 5th June 2018, the department took a small but innovative initiative towards building awareness on importance of environment protection. Saplings were planted by the students and tried to create environmental awareness through some slogans. Instead of using paper, they wrote the slogans on leaves.



Group discussion

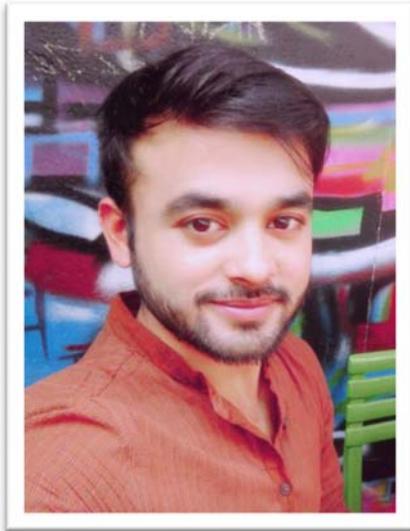
On 14th August 2018, on the eve of the Independence Day of India, the Department of History, Pragjyotish College organized a group discussion among the students of History (Major). The topic was "India's struggle for freedom" where majority of the students from different semesters took part on the topic and made the discussion healthy.



Nations without a past are contradictions in terms. What makes a nation is the past, what justifies one nation against others is the past, and historians are the people who produce it.

- Eric Hobsbawm

ACHIEVEMENTS



Prasant Kumar Ojha of 5th Semester, had participated in a one-day workshop on "Gender, Sexuality and LGBTQ Rights" organised by Xukia and supported by Foundation for Social Transformation on 2nd April, 2017 in Guwahati.

He was awarded the 3rd prize in intra-college debate competition in college week 2017-18. He also participated in the 21st Nanda Talukdar Memorial North-East Inter-college / university Debate Competition on 30th October, 2018.



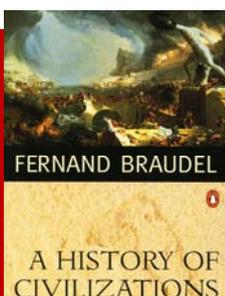
Deepti Deka, of 3rd Semester was awarded the 1st prize in the Modern Dance Competition in the college week 2017-18.



Mina Basumatary, a student of History (Major), secured 1st class in B.A. Final Examination, 2017.



Roshan Rai, a student of History (Major), secured 1st class in B.A. Final Examination, 2018



Everything must be recaptured and relocated in the general framework of history, so that despite the difficulties, the fundamental paradoxes and contradictions, we may respect the unity of history which is also the unity of life.
- Fernand Braudel

POLYANDRY-THE LEGACY

ARTICLE

Prasant Kumar Ojha
B.A. 5th semester

Polyandry means having multiple husbands. It was widely mentioned in the Mahabharata; and the text offers us instances of polyandry in four consecutive generations, albeit with a positive image of women who had several sexual partners (some premarital). Satyawati - the grand matriarch who gave birth to the Kuru clan - had two sexual partners (her legitimate husband and the sage who fathered Vyasa). Ambika and Ambalika, who were married to Satyawati's son, had also two legitimate partners - the king who died and Vyasa, through the levirate. Kunti had one legitimate husband called Pandu (son of Ambalika and Vyasa) but never consummated the marriage and had four sexual partners (gods and quasi-legitimates). Madri had three partners - the legitimate husband Pandu and two quasi-legitimate ones. Another Mahabharata queen named Madhvi, sold herself to four kings for several hundred horses each time and got restored her virginity after each encounter.

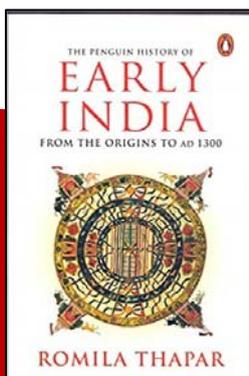
However, Draupadi was exceptional. She had five legitimate husbands - the five Pandavas. Her polyandrous path is truly exceptional and extraordinary. Though polygamy (having multiple wives) was the general rule at that time; and men used to have several spouses throughout most of the early period of history in

India (as indeed each of the other Pandavas, except Yudhishthira, had at least one spouse in addition to Draupadi), women most decidedly could not.

Since, there is no evidence at this time of a woman actually having multiple husbands; these stories can only be suggestive, if not incontrovertible, evidences of women's greater sexual freedom, or, perhaps, of men's fears of what might happen were women to have that freedom. Draupadi's hypersexuality may simply have validated an ideal that was understood to be out of reach for ordinary women, imagined precisely in order to be disqualified as a viable option. What else, then, can these stories mean?

Stories in this world are endless and infinite. And such stories also portray that nothing in this world has never happened. Every story teaches us the value of time and a part of men's society? No. human's society. Men have always been in stories and women just played a minute role in it; but is it not time to give a voice to the women? A chance to hear their stories too.

Reference:
Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus: an alternative history*, Penguin, 2009.



“Epic literature is not history but is again a way of looking at the past.”

- Romila Thapar (*Early India: from the origins to AD 1300*)

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF TEZPUR

Nafis Khan
B.A. 1st Semester

Tezpur is a place of historical importance. During the Salastambha period Tezpur was the capital of early Assam. Historical ruins from the 8th and 9th centuries dot the surrounding areas. The ruins of Bamuni Hills are the most famous. Accordingly, there are plenty of myths as well. The ruins of Da Parbatia are an example of the architecture of around 5th century AD.

Tezpur is also known as the cultural capital of Assam. The name Tezpur literally means the "city of blood". According to legend the original name of this place was '*Xonitpur*'. '*Xonit*' means blood. When the battle between Krishna's army and Lord Shiva, his disciple Banasura's army fought for the rescue of Aniruddha (who was the grandson of Lord Krishna, according to legend) there was so much bloodshed that the place was stained red. This led to the name of the place as Tezpur. The Shiva temples in and around Tezpur show the love and devotion of King Baanasur for Lord Shiva.

The historically rich city bears magnificent relics from its past. Some sites and monuments of importance are:

- Da Parbatia, Gate of the Gupta period
- Agnigarh
- Mahabhairav Temple
- Bhairabi Temple
- Hazara pukhuri- It was dug in the name of great Salastambha king Harzara Varman
- Cole Park also known as Chitralekha Udyan
- Stone statue of Lord Hanuman in Hanuman Mandir, Tezpur
- Ketakeshwar Dewalay - Shiva shrine
- Padum Pukhuri - Central lake with an island in the middle
- Rudrapath - Shiva shrine
- Bamuni Pahar
- Nag Shankar- Temple of lord Shiva
- Garh Doul - An archaeological site situated at Tarajan Kumargaon, Tezpur.

Reference:

Tezpur City of Assam - Tourist Spots and Historical Significance of Tezpur
<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tezpur>



Da Parbatia Gate, Tezpur

A GLIMPSE INTO 2016-2018

SNIPPETS



The departmental Wall-Magazine, "Satsari" being inaugurated in 2016



"Satsari" in 2018



A Cultural Procession brought out by department in 2018



Cultural Procession brought out by department in 2017

Acknowledgement:

We sincerely acknowledge the involvement and encouragement of Dr. Manoj Kumar Mahanta, Principal, Pragjyotish College. We are also thankful to all the contributors for their immense support in bringing out the first issue of 'Historia'.