

Name of the Element: Baul Gurubad or Baul Perceptorship_

Name of Inventory: Test Inventory 1 (T1)

Serial No: D4-00001

One of the defining characteristics of Bauls, a category of wandering minstrels, spiritual practitioners or initiates into a system of esoteric practices, is their devotion to the guru or *murshid* (the Sufi term for preceptor), as the continuity of tradition depends upon these gurus and the devotee's fidelity to their teachings. Primarily, Bauls reject the orthodoxy of scriptural religion and its *anumana* or 'inference' of truth, while privileging knowledge gained through 'existent' and 'embodied' practices, to which they are initiated by the 'Guru' or preceptor. Primarily, the Baul belief system is a renunciation of worldly desires, and submission to the Guru, who initiates devotees into the '*sadhana*', or practice, of body-centered rituals, till an initiate reaches complete 'freedom' from worldly desires and becomes the 'living dead'. This is highlighted by the white garbs worn by them, signifying the white cloth in which the Muslims shroud their dead.

The Baul Guru is also known as 'Shadhu' – a person who has realized truth, or is an adept at the esoteric, embodied practices. Shadhus meet often at Shadhusangas, an assembly of Shadhus, where they discuss the meaning of Gurubadi sadhana, or practices taught by preceptors, debate on various aspects of Baul life and practice Baul songs following traditional norms and manners. The songs follow the mode of questions and answers. These songs are categorized by the time of day, in which they are sung - dawn, morning, noon, afternoon, evening and night. People of any religion can take initiation in Baul doctrine. There is no gender discrimination - man, woman and other gender including socially so call lower or upper cast can take initiation. Baul doctrine is never confined in performance, it's a complete code of life that can contribute to build a hunger free, equal peaceful society - tolerant and diverse.

<https://geographical.co.uk/people/cultures/item/3548-Baul>

Region: Baul communities are prominent In Kushtia, Jhenaidah, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Magura, Jessore, etc. of Bangladesh.

Photographs: Roushan Fakir

Video:

Consent: Signed by Roushan Fakir

Submitted by: Md. Nurunnabi Shanto, Executive Director, Bhab-nagar Foundation

E-mail: shantonabi@gmail.com; Website: <http://vabnagarfoundation.com>