



NONGGIN

NAMA 2018 Newsletter



www.namaonline.org

Issue 6 December 2018

Greetings!

During the Holiday season more than ever, our thoughts turn grateful to those who have made our progress possible. And in this spirit, we sincerely say Thank You and Best Wishes for the holiday season and a Happy New Year!



Like us on:



NAMA is a non-profit, nonpolitical, educational and secular organization with the aim of fostering and promoting social, cultural, educational heritages of the people of Manipur in the North American continent and to defend any just cause that affects them.



NAMA Convention 2018

NAMA ANNUAL CONVENTION 2019

The annual NAMA convention 2019 will be tentatively held on 5th and 6th July 2019 at Chicago, IL. Final date will be announced later. Looking forward to all the Manipuri living in United States of America to participate in 2019 NAMA convention.



Nongin – The State Bird of Manipur, also known as Mrs. Hume Pheasant

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NAMA Convention Meet & Greet



Dear members, friends & families of NAMA

On behalf of NAMA executive team, I would like to say sincere thank you to all NAMA members for your continued support and membership in the NAMA. To those who have not yet joined the NAMA, I encourage you to join the NAMA for the interest of your children to bring a sense of pride in our shared heritage, without going through an identity crisis in this diverse land of America. Let me reiterate, NAMA is for all the ethnic communities of Manipur.

I would also like to welcome those new arrivals to the North America and have recently joined the NAMA. For those new arrivals on short term visa, I encourage you to attend NAMA convention to network with fellow Manipuri and also do not hesitate to reach out and network with NAMA members, should you need any assistance. As you know 27th NAMA convention was held at Tulsa, Oklahoma on July 6th & 7th 2018. We made history again by having Manipuri Kuki communities of Tulsa host the NAMA convention. Thank you, Tulsa host team for your hard work to host this event successfully. It was indeed amazing to discover a thriving Manipuri Kuki community in Oklahoma.

Highlights of the 27th NAMA convention, I welcomed the honorable chief guest Mrs. (Dr.) Binadevi Raghuvanshi and several guests of honor, followed by welcome of attendees in Meiteilon and different dialects of Manipur, Thadou, Paite, Tangkhul, Moyon, Anal, Lushai (Mizo), Liangmail and Rongmei. On the cultural program aspects, there were several Kuki community dances, a Texas Lady Manipuri dance and several songs including Meiteilon songs sung by Manipuri Kuki & Naga attendees. On the invitation list, we invited Chief Minister, Education Minister of Manipur, General Secretary, Manipur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Kuki idol. Unfortunately, either due to scheduling conflict and other issues, none of the invitees couldn't make it, though CM made every effort through his Chief Secretary to change the convention schedule.

NAMA continue to represent Manipuri diaspora in the North America. This year NAMA participated in the "India Day Parade" on Aug. 19 at New York. NAMA continue to serve the NAMA communities by reaching out to all the ethnic communities of Manipur for any assistance NAMA can do when there is any natural calamity such as hurricanes in Carolinas or Florida this year. NAMA also continue to assist and work as a bridge between the NAMA communities and Manipuri communities around the globe, particularly the one from Manipur (India) & Bangladesh while they visit North America for sport event, seminar and transitioning to the North America as a student or a professional taking up a new job or a company short term assignment. NAMA executive team is making an attempt to convert NAMA organization into a tax-exempt organization, despite the difficulties to do so late at this stage of the organization. Furthermore, NAMA executive team and Board of Directors are also looking into how best we manage our financials moving forward, either to invest some part while some part are kept in the bank.

28th NAMA convention is planned to be held at Chicago, Illinois during the July 4th weekend of 2019. Details with specific date would be announced sometime early next year. On behalf of NAMA executive team, I appeal to all Manipuris living in the US & Canada, to come and attend 28th NAMA convention to celebrate our heritage, meet new people, make friends and empower your children to learn our culture & heritage, and make them proud of their heritage. Based on several feedbacks to attract more attendees during the NAMA convention, we are evaluating all options including sponsoring some Meitei, Naga or Kuki music artist or celebrities to entertain during the NAMA convention if there is enough interest among the North American Manipuri diaspora.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all NAMA executive team members who have worked tirelessly, despite their busy work & life schedule to work on this "2018 Nongin" publication. Last not the least, I thank all those NAMA members who have contributed articles or pictures to be shared in this publication. Lastly, on behalf of NAMA executive team, I wish you all a Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas and Happy & Prosperous New Year 2019.

Sincerely

Bish Moirangthem (AKA Moirangthem Bishwambhar)
President, North American Manipur Association (NAMA)





The 27th NAMA Annual Convention, 2018

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The 27th Annual North American Manipur Association (NAMA) Convention was celebrated on 7th July 2018 at Tulsa, Oklahoma. Keeping the tradition of NAMA, people from different ethnic groups of Manipur from different part of United States attended to make this event more inclusive. This event highlighted NAMA's continued efforts to bring different Manipuri diaspora of different ethnicities together. It also provides an opportunity for the younger generation of Manipuri American to learn and value our rich and diverse Manipuri culture. By engaging the members in the cultural performances and discussion, the idea of community spirit and our Indian root is strengthened.

This event was the outcome of several months of planning and coordination between the executive team and the Tulsa Team. Hegin Haokip and Shanti Thokchom with the strong team efforts of Tulsa Manipuris work together to make this event successful.

Meet and Greet

July 6 2018

The social event of the convention was held at Kuki Worship Service, Tulsa, OK USA. Meet and Greet event started with a warm and friendly welcome from Tulsa Team.

The event took off with a welcome speech by NAMA President, Bish Moirangthem, on behalf of the host team, and then followed by the member introduction round. Attendees introduced themselves or their families and expressed their happiness about attending 27th NAMA convention.

Socializing was followed by a sumptuous dinner that was highlighted by traditional Manipuri delicacies reminiscent of festive feasts back home.

The social evening came to a close after everyone enjoyed a game of Tambola popularly known as Housie.

Convention

July 7 2018

The main event held at Marriott, Tulsa OK, USA kicked off with Reception and Registration. The event hosts, Mimi Haokip and Isaac Haokip introduced and welcomed the guests of honor and the chief guest for the day. The chief guest was Dr. Binadevi Raghuvanshi and guests of honor were RK Borosana Patel, Raj Patel and Dr. D.P. Haokip.

The event kicked off with the melodious tune of a patriotic Manipuri song, "Hingmingnasi Eikhoi".





President of NAMA, Bish Moirangthem continued the proceedings by welcoming everyone to the 27th Annual NAMA Convention in different dialects of Manipur. He recognized the founding members of NAMA, Dr Surajal Sharma and Dhrita Singh NAMA will not probably exist. He emphasized on NAMA being organization for all the communities of Manipur.



Our respected Chief Guest, Binadevi Raghuvanshi thanked Mr Bish, Ms Sarju and entire NAMA team for inviting her to be the Chief Guest of the event and expressed her pleasure in joining NAMA convention 2018. She reminded everyone that even though Manipur is small and not many people know about it, we as Manipuris have to remain proud of our heritage. Being an expert in health, beauty and wellness, she encouraged everyone to stay healthy.

Dr. A. Surjalal Sharma, Chairman of Advisory board and one of the founding members of NAMA, expressed his happiness that NAMA is prospering. He mentioned about how NAMA has evolved from few members to a strong organization representing people from different communities of Manipur across North America. NAMA has a Constitution and has two distinct bodies Executive Team and Board of trustee. One important aspect we are focusing is to manage finance properly and in a more structured way. We are working toward it and encourage members to help achieve it.



The Chairman of Election committee and one of the founding members of NAMA, Dhrita Singha thanked all the first time members for their support. He emphasized that the members are the backbone of NAMA community and concluded by thanking Tulsa Team for being a great host.

Hori Singha is so glad to see NAMA progressing every year. Manipur and Manipuris all around are very strong and hard working. We should be proud of our history and remember that we gave the world Polo.



RK Borosana Patel thanked to the NAMA founding members, Executive team, Tulsa host team and the next generation of NAMA for keeping the tradition alive halfway across the world. Being a victim of the flooding during Hurricane Harvey, she thanked NAMA for supporting her by raising funds and supporting them.

Peraly Meyer thanked NAMA for supporting her, when her husband Sam Meyer unexpectedly passed away. She recollected how excited Sam was attending 2017 NAMA Convention in Houston. She remembered Sam as a man of people and believed in sharing and caring and was full of life. He was deeply compassionate toward NAMA Convention. He constantly reminded her never to forget our roots. Mrs. Meyer also donated to NAMA in memory of Sam.





NAMA Executive team updates:

Updates were presented by members of the NAMA Executive Team led by Bish Moirangthem – President of NAMA, Roshan Ngangom- General Secretary, Sarju Laishram – Assist. General Secretary of NAMA, Kelvin Asem – IT Secretary of NAMA.

President: NAMA Executive has a very diverse team inclusive of Meitei, Kuki and Naga. We tried to reach out to all the communities to be part of the NAMA family. We also need diversity in the locations for hosting convention and that is why we chose Tulsa for 2018 Annual Convention. NAMA as community has come together to support and contribute toward the flood relief fund to help the victims of flood in Manipur, Hurricane Harvey. We kept our community informed about well-being on the aftermath of Hurricane Irma and emotional support for the loss of Peraly Meyer's beloved husband, Sam Meyer.

General Secretary: Mr. Roshan Ngangom talked about the past year being a year of transition and how NAMA and its members reacted to some of the events that occurred. He also talked about the efforts towards transitioning NAMA to a 501(c)(3) status to make it easier to raise funds and the challenges ahead in doing so. He mentioned about the ongoing efforts by NAMA to reach out to more communities of Manipur and to have a more diverse representation within NAMA.



Assistant General Secretary (Financial Update): Sarju Laishram provided detailed financial report for the year 2017-18. Since 2008, NAMA financial status has grown eightfold. She thanked all the members for their strong support and faith, without whom NAMA would never be able to stand strong. She mentioned about the source of fund and the status. Lastly, she appealed everyone to continue supporting NAMA.

IT Secretary: Kelvin Asem highlighted some of the IT development work done in the past year which included keeping the pages up-to-date.



Cultural Secretary

Mr Hegin Haokip being one of the leading members of the local organizing committee welcomed everyone to Tulsa. As a cultural secretary, he encouraged everyone to speak or converse in Manipuri as much as possible.

NAMA Election for Advisory Committee update. The following individuals are the members of Advisory Committee Dr. Lalit Pukhrambam, Dr. Ruhikanta Amom, Hori Irombam, Nongthang Langpoklakpam, Rakesh Moirangthem, Shanti Thokchom, Gautam Thokchom, Sarita Moirangthem.



Convention Entertainment:

Like NAMA conventions of the past there was entertainment in galore with performances by attendees young and old.



Lai Haraoba Jaogi



Jaang Kol Laaam



Ke ke mo mo! (Yaiphabi)



Oshin on Flute



Laksh Ngangom



Hibachi by Manthang



Sagol Kengkhai



Thabal Chongba



Thabal Chongba



Gama (Guitar) & Priyo



Okrepan & Joy



Binadevi & Borosana



Hoinei Haokip



Gautam Thokchom



Julia & Leonard



Mimi & Isaac



Clay Kipgen



Mimi & Minthang



Shunghring



Kiyamba on Piano



Mercy Haokip



Rabina, Sally & Jenitta (Reception)



Different cultural artifacts on display at the convention



Highlights of the entertainment and cultural performances included

- Jaang Kol laaam dance, Lai Haraoba dance, Sagol Kengkhai dance, Manipuri pop dance by Laksh
- Cultural fashion show displaying beautiful and colorful traditional attire of different ethnicities in Manipur including Hmar, Meitei, Moyon, Tangkhul, Thadou-Kuki added glamour to the convention.
- Group song “NAMA Macha na Helli” by the Tulsa team.
- There was talk show on the world of Entrepreneurship by Gautam Thokchom and Roshan Ngangom.
- A series of instrumental performances wowed the audience. Oshin Aslot performed a heart touching flute recital
- Laksh & Kiyamba displayed their piano exploits
- Songs by Priyobarta, Gama, Arushi, Clay, Mimi & Minthang, Shunghring, Mercy, Hevei Haokip, Bina Devi & Borosana
- After the cultural program, it was the time for much awaited ‘Thabal Chongba’. Everyone joined in and danced to the exhilarating rhythms of Thabal music ending the convention in joyful mood.
- Comedy show by Shanti Thokchom
- Hibachi Show by Mangthang



One of the highlights of NAMA 2018 was the song “NAMA Macha Na Helli” composed & sung by Kuki idol Mr. Lenchung Haokip. The song was composed for the sole purpose of NAMA. We want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Haokip for this wonderful song.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fnsfrtMNt0

Thank you, Tulsa Team, for a fabulous NAMA convention. Special mention to Hegin Haokip & Family, Shanti Thokchom, Mimi Haokip, Minthang Baite. Thank you, Mimi Haokip and Isaac Haokip, for wonderfully hosting the convention proceedings.



NAMA Excellence Awards

Continuing the initiative to recognize and motivate members in the field of Academics, Arts and Sports, the following were awarded the 2018 NAMA Excellence Awards:

Academic:

Oshin Rajkumari Aslot, finished her 4th Grade in Cactus Ranch Elementary school, Round Rock ISD, Round Rock TX. She qualified for the TAG, Talented and Gifted program, starting this fall 2018. She has consistently scored above 95th percentile in all STAAR tests she has given so far, from 3rd Grade onwards. She is one of the top performers in her grade level in Cactus Ranch and has consistently scored above 90 throughout her class exams in her school. She is very creative with her writing and enjoys sometimes writing song lyrics and poems, and stories too.



Sports:

Simi Moirangthem has been swimming competitively since the age of 5 and qualified for the 2008 Junior Olympics in Lansing, Michigan. When she started high school, she was not only selected for the swim team but was picked for the varsity as a freshman. She also participated in the All-Star swim meet for 2 years. When Simi joined UT Dallas, she had the honor of swimming with the UT Dallas swim club which is a competitive team one step above the intramural sports but one step before becoming a D3 level competitive team. The girls team in UT Dallas broke the relay records for the 200m Medley Relay, 200m Freestyle Relay, and 400m Freestyle Relay.



Arts:

Arushi Sharma is an 8th grader at Canyon Vista Middle School in Austin, Texas, and she is in the Women's Varsity Treble Choir, or Honor's Choir. In her past 3 years at Canyon Vista, she has made the All-Region Choir, gotten solos in school concerts, and been in two musicals. She competed in the All-Region Choir as a 2nd-Soprano in 7th grade, and as a 1st-Soprano in 8th, and placed top 15 out of hundreds of girls. As she goes to Westwood High School, she will continue in the choir program and hopefully have a future in music.





2018 NAMA Photography Contest



1st Prize
Raj Patel



2nd Prize
Sally Longjam



3rd Prize
Sarju Laishram



Newly Registered NAMA Members

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Name	City	State
Preetiranjana Roy Lairikyengbam	Syracuse	NY
Albert Rajkumar	Houston	TX
Jyotilal Longjam	New York	NY
Gama Sharmulailatpam	Irving	TX
Sadanand Oinam	Malden	MA
Sushmita Singha	Chicago	IL

Welcome to NAMA!



Courtesy: Shanti Thokchom

We had the great fortune of attending the "India Day Parade " in New York city this year again to represent the NE India, especially our home state of Manipur. We took part in the parade under the banner /float of " Make in India " of the Consular General Office of India, New York.



There was enormous pride while representing our home state of Manipur in such a prestigious parade held every year in Manhattan, New York city organized by the tri state federation of India Associations of New York, New Jersey & Connecticut. I had to inquire about it and email back and forth with this FIA & CGI's office if we would be allowed to participate or not. They required us to have at least 15 -20 members to be able to join the parade. So, we had to look and search for willing NAMA families or individual members to participate voluntarily. It was a hectic, stressful period trying to request and convince our brethren to come out to join us in this parade. There were so many skeptics and I was pulling out all my whatever available hairs I had.



I must say sister Ruati from Houston, Texas was my most ardent supporter and reached out to many Manipuris. We want to thank Mr. Kam Ngaité (former officer @ the CGI, New York) for guiding us through the process, even though he was unable to participate as his impending retirement increased his workload. Even then, he was able to connect us with Mr. Mishra



at the CGI about our plans to join the India Day parade and represent NE India & Manipur. Mr. Mishra was surprised to as to how I was able to get his office phone number. He asked me about it again and again. I told him that "where there is a will, there is a way". He was surprised when I told him that, we plan to join the parade with 15 or more Manipuris from Texas, Oklahoma, New Jersey & New York. He said it was wonderful to know that there were many NE Indians in across US. He then asked me if I knew Hindi, I answered him in the affirmative. At the same time, it was disappointing that not many people had much knowledge about the NE India. Participating in events such as this will increase awareness about NE India

Roshan Ngangom 's son Laksh was dressed as "KHAMBA" which was a big hit with the people lining up the Manhannttan streets watching the parade.



Roshan Ngangom & family, Ruati Johnsen & family, Peraly Meyer, Rabina Mangsatabam from Texas; myself and son from Oklahoma; Surjit Konjengbam & his son, Markmang Haokip, Sushil & Renu Laishram & family & the young lady Elizabeth Vavenai from New Jersey; Julia Gangte Ryhal & her family from Upstate New York were there in full force to show the world "HUM KISSISE KAM NAHI"-

we are not less than anyone. Everyone wore beautiful and colorful ethic attires representing the vibrant culture of Manipur.





My tryst with Space Architecture.

I strive for the next "fight" in my life to be the biggest one so far, and that is how I know I am ascending. My current ascent is into architecture in the space domain. I am a grad student pursuing a Master of Sciences in Space Architecture degree in a program offered by the University of Houston. I received my primary and secondary education from Maria Montessori School (2006), Koirengei and Kendriya Vidyalaya, Langjing (2008). And I have a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi (2016). My interest in space architecture was first ignited during the third year of my undergraduate degree program. I have never looked any other way since.

As part of the Master of Sciences in Space Architecture program, graduates conduct studies and learn about operational factors which contribute to the design, such as logistics, orbital mechanics, transportation cost trades, etc. For my first semester out of three, I am working on a group project, collaborating with personnel from NASA to design a common habitat for Lunar, Martian and deep space transit missions. Additionally, as a group of three, we are writing a technical paper on how biomimicry can be applied to space missions on and near the Moon. Lastly, I am also working on a group project which explores the possibilities of Augmented reality and Virtual Reality in our other projects and beyond.

I appreciate the interdisciplinary and intercultural nature of the program. We have engineers, architects, human factors professionals from all over the world who bring their own expertise and points of view to the table. Due to this, there usually comes an outcome which would have never been possible in isolated environments.

I decided to pursue MS in Space architecture to enhance my expertise in an intercultural environment and consequently contribute to endeavors in space and applications on Earth. Justifiably, space habitats have been conventionally dominated by engineering concerns. However, with factors like human performance in longer durations of habitation, and marketability gaining more priority in space programs every passing year, architects have an essential role to play. It is inspiring to know that I can make my contribution in this prospect. My immersion into this program is the articulation of my conviction. By joining the program, I hope to play my part in pushing the frontier of architecture and consequently bringing humanity to a more sustainable and harmonic capacity.

After course completion, I dream of doing professional research in the space architecture field. I am painfully aware of the guarded nature of information in the space domain among nations. But I have a strongly held view of cooperation among nations as exhibited by undertakings such as the ISS. So, I hope to accomplish the professional research for the prominent NASA, ESA, ISRO, and JAXA in the future. Five years in the future, I see myself working for a space enterprise, as a space habitat designer. Enterprises such as SpaceX, Bigelow, JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency) and ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization) are first choices due to their cost efficient yet effective and innovative approaches. After acquiring technical expertise and knowledge, I would like to work to fulfil my aspirations of creating an interdisciplinary and intercultural platform for professionals to lead the world towards a sustainable and resource efficient future.

Albert Rajkumar

(Graduate student, University of Houston.)

(Registered Architect, with Council of Architecture, India.)



Oshin's Poems

Snowflakes

Snowflake, Snowflake, thin and sleek,
Landing on my warm small cheek.

Seeing the world after reforming again,
To Ireland and Big Ben.

Snowflake, Snowflake, thin and sleek,
Landing on my warm small cheek.

The Ocean

The water so blue, the ocean so true,
Where the sand meets the waves and crabs live in caves.

The water so blue, the ocean so true,
Where seaweeds will sway, and we love to play.

Mind's World

Down by the stream, where I make my dreams
Where in the sun, I do bask and have no one task.

Birds fly with their wings, as I sigh and they sing,
And there in my world, is where I relax.

Christmas Joy

Stockings hang from the fireplace,
while around the tree toy-trains race.

Toy-filled presents and sweet hot coco,
Fun and frolic in the snow, down the hill away we go!

A Happy New Year comes with joy and glee,
Merry Christmas to all, and Merry Christmas to thee.



Swimming has been a part of my life before I could even run

By Simi Moirangthem

Swimming has been a part of my life before I could even run. I began swim lessons in the YMCA when I was about three years old and joined a USA Swim Team when I was 5. It wasn't until I qualified for the 2008 Junior Olympics in Lansing, Michigan, that I realized that maybe I was a pretty decent swimmer.

In 2010, I showed up for the swim try-outs at my new high school unsure if I would make it on the team. Lo-and behold, I not only made the team, but I was picked for varsity which as a freshman was a big deal since not a lot of freshman qualify for the varsity team.

Throughout high school I went on to place in our district's finals meet for events such as 100 backstroke and 100 freestyle. Due to an injury of tearing my ACL, I had to recuperate for some time but thankfully with physical therapy and training, I got even faster and qualified for the TISCA meet which is a big meet that only select swimmers go to if they have fast enough times to compete.

I also swam in the summer league in our neighborhood and qualified for the All Stars meet two years in a row where swimmers from other summer leagues of all levels compete at the Don Cook Natatorium to earn their respective teams' more points for the league competitions.

My last chapter in competitive swimming ends with my college years, where I had the honor of swimming with the UT Dallas swim club which is a competitive team one step above the intramural sports but one step before becoming a D3 level competitive team. D3 is just a ranking among colleges that do not give out athletic scholarships for students while D1 schools for example are schools that will give athletic scholarships. The very first meet I swam at UTD, the girls' relay broke three of the relay records for the 200m Medley Relay, 200m Freestyle Relay, and 400m Freestyle Relay. Now, my very long Manipuri last name hangs in the UTD natatorium for all to see and wonder where in the world my ethnicity must be.





Memoirs of England and Scotland

By Jamuna Devi Advani

Today is the sixth day of our Southern England tour, and I still look forward with speculation and enthusiasm to see more of the interesting new places. As we proceed toward the charming city of Bath and our coach passing through the picturesque countryside, I capture the greeneries of the vast field and some places full of cows grazing quietly without paying any attention to the surroundings. Seeing two cows having symmetrical belt-like white color on their backs as if they are wearing white rags folded in square, arouses curiosity in me for the rest of my life. My phone is almost full, and the power almost gone I see if there is any charging station in the bus. Luckily our coach has the facility. Capturing the breathtaking landscapes has become a part of my insatiable hobby and no doubt it has also become a source of inspiration for my life's journey.

The city of Bath founded by the Romans as thermal spa is a site for tourist attraction. As we wait for our tickets to get into the Bath Abbey, we see incessant flow of tourists coming in and out. Once tickets are in our hands, we are also given a headphone each to carry inside so that we could listen to the descriptions of the rooms as we enter. We learn the details of what we see around and inside the Bath Abbey. Surprising images pop up through the screen, men and women in old Roman robes engaged in day to day activities. It displays the scene of the old Roman way of life in their daily activities.

Coming out to the other side of the Abbey is the balcony where I stand looking down the water below. To me the water reflects the color of stagnant one. The layout of the pond area reminds me of some of historical Mughol Empire's architectures in India. The history of Bath is related with hot springs. An age tribe called Dobunni erected a shrine in honor of Goddess Sullies as people believed that the Goddess had healing power. Romans invaded Britain during 43 AD and built a religious spa on the site, then turning it in to socialistic center known as Aqua Sullies. When the Romans withdrew in the 5th century the baths were neglected. It was rebuilt in 18th century and it is now become a tourist spot and a source of delight. The Georgian architecture of the 18th century of Bath is indeed a city worthy of admiration.

About three fourth of a mile away from the Roman Bath Abbey is the museum of Jane Austen. My friends Myrna from LA and Angie from Philippines are also excited to learn about this museum and hence, we after hurriedly having our lunch at one of the tea houses in the back street, we proceed toward the museum. As the museum is situated on a higher slope we walk up on the slope with bit of strenuous stride. As we realize that we have limited time we walk past without paying attention to the rows of stalls, vendors displaying various interesting goods and items. Once we reach the museum, we are astonished to see the two figures standing near the entrance of the museum as if welcoming us. Even though we desperately want to go inside we don't have enough time and hence we engage ourselves only taking pictures. After bidding farewell to Jane Austen, we return toward our coach which is waiting for us. On the way back, we are tempted to taste the food on the side street as the smell coming from their cooking so tempting but due to time limit, we have to sacrifice our desire to do so.

Walking back with nostalgic memories of my earlier days reading Jane Austen's books "Pride and Prejudice" and "Emma" come back flashing by. As I have read the book which I purchased recently about Jane Austen, I learn more about her life. She started writing when she was a teen ager and her books were published anonymously with the help of her brother. She never got married and died at the age of 41. Till now she is still one of my favorite authors along with Pearl S Buck, Emily Bronte, Oscar Wilde, William Shakespeare. My favorite modern authors are too many, so I prefer to skip the long lists



Visiting Windsor Castle, where the Queen loves to spend her leisure time and Blenheim Palace where Winston Churchill lived and Shakespeare's birthplace Stratford-Upon-Avon are unforgettable ones. Also visiting the Oxford University which is second oldest university in the world gives me the glimpses of the site where ivy clad colleges famous for its architectural beauty. Christ Church college where scenes of Harry Potter movies were shot are also interesting sites to reckon for. Last not the least is the Stonehenge, named as UNESCO world heritage site, is the most mysterious monument and supposed to have started 5000 years ago and completed 1400 years later. Its construction still defies belief.

After nine days of exciting tour with the group we are now on our own. Walking whole day at Hyde Park, Kensington Park and then having lunch at Kensington Palace café, it will always remain as our memorable adventures. The experience of travelling by train from London to Edinburgh is also noteworthy as we watch the train passes by each and every station till, we reach Edinburgh. Scotland has its own beauty and charm. During the one-day tour of the Highland, watching and listening to the historical and mythological stories narrated by our coach driver we find that she is no doubt is an excellent storyteller and guide. Travelling with the group and later, on our own has become a unique adventure and expanded horizon. Our new friend from Philippines reminds me that friendship is always a responsibility never an opportunity, as we three have had our share of conflicts and compromises. Whatever has happened, I treasure it as part of the sweet memories only, and we bid goodbye after hugging each other. As I write this journey, I wish to include a quote from "Teach me life." *But the most beautiful things in life are not things. They are people and places, and memories, pictures. They are feelings and moments and smiles and laughter.*

Confession

Dear Receptionist,
It is my letter of apology to you
If I don't write it today
pricking my conscience is going to go on forever.
I want you to know what we did and
why we did it.

Perhaps you have forgotten but not me.
Long ago it was July 6, 1992 when my husband
and I came to your hotel near the Tokyo train
station.

Arriving at Narita, Japan, we looked forward
to our long-awaited plan of visiting Tokyo.
Happily, we boarded Narita Express Train.
It was immaculate, polished and gleam,
silent, and flawless.

I cannot find another word.
Sliding like a white snake it caught my attention,
my awe.

Among all the other rides we had,
Japan's trains excelled in every respect.
Wonderful Japan.

Within less than an hour
We got out at Tokyo train station and
toured the adjacent areas walking,
unaware of how time had passed.
Realization dawned on us that it was

time for us to return to Narita,
we had to catch the flight to India early next morning.
Alas, all the banks were closed,
we needed more yen to buy
return ticket for train to Narita.
Unlike some other countries,
no shopkeepers were ready to give us yen
in exchange of our dollars.

Our last resort was to try in your hotel.
So here is my confession.
Your welcoming smile I still remember,
"What can I do for you sir?" you asked.
"We plan to have dinner at your restaurant,
But we need to pay the taxi standing outside.
Need some yen in exchange of dollar," Rup replied.
Unsuspectingly, you handed over yen for our dollar.

Then we walked out of your hotel,
and we had no intention of coming back.
My guilt still lurks inside me.
I have carried it till this day,
wondering what must have been
the impression you had of us.
My sincere apology comes today.
I hope you'll accept it.
Sincerely,
A traveler in distress.

(An epistolary poem by Jamuna Devi Advani)



By Clay Letkhohao Kipgen

The Kuki community in USA celebrated the much awaited Chavang Kut at Dallas in Mount Lebanon Baptist Retreat Center, Texas, USA from 3rd - 4th Nov, 2018 under the theme of "UNITY THROUGH CULTURE" with much exuberance and pompous zeal.

The festival was organized under the banner of Kuki Inpi USA in collaboration with the Kuki Inpi Oklahoma. The program was attended by Mr. Henkholun Dounge as Chief Guest, Dr Harry Angam Haokip as Guest of Honour while Dr Konkhogin Haokip was the Kutpa (Master of the Ceremony).

The Kut festival is a traditional post-harvest festival of the Kuki ethnic groups since time immemorial. It's a time of harvesting crops for the farmers and of feeling blessed after days of toiling throughout the year and also of having peaceful time for respite and recreation. Kut festival also symbolizes peace, communal harmony, friendship and forging new ties.

Dr Thien Haokip rendered an invocatory prayer followed by Lemna Thusei (welcome speech) by Pu Jammang, Kuki Inpi President USA.

The chief guest and guest of honor in their speeches stressed the importance of unity and exhorted all to join hands and work together in one spirit.

The KUTPA stressed the importance of the word Kukis that should not be forgotten. He stated that the Kuki is the only solution that can solve political crisis and wished everyone to strengthen the bond of unity among the people

The event was celebrated for two consecutive days. All together 58 people attended the event. There were seminars, annual assembly and sightseeing on the first day of the event. In the evening the celebration was enlivened by variety of songs followed by traditional Lenkhom (by dancing around in circle)

The second day was celebrated as the main event day. The audience were enthralled by the songs. Variety of food items and sweets were eaten during the festival as a part of love and mutual understanding. After annual report was given by Doulet, Dr Veikhoneng made a special benedictory prayer which marked the end of the celebration.





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Thank You

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