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NONGIN

NAMA Newsletter

Greetings!

This holiday season, we are sending you warm wishes filled with love and affection. Happy Holidays from NAMA to you and your family.

Like us on:

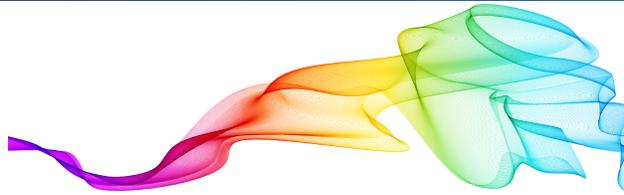


NAMA is a non-profit, non-political, educational and secular organization with the aim of fostering and promoting social, cultural, educational heritages of the people of Manipur in the North American continent and to defend any just cause that affects them.



NAMA Annual Convention
Houston, tx | July 1-2, 2017

JOIN US NEXT YEAR IN TEXAS



NAMA CONVENTION 2017

The NAMA Annual Convention 2017 will be held on July 1st and 2nd, 2017 at Houston, Texas. We look forward to bringing you another most prominent gathering. Make sure you attend the upcoming convention. Your participation counts!

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Dear Esteemed Members,

On behalf of the North American Manipur Association (NAMA) Executive Team, I would like to express my humble gratitude and appreciation for your continued support and cooperation that has tremendously helped NAMA meet its organizational goals and objectives.

As you may already know, NAMA turned 25 years old on July 4th, 2016. To mark this day, a grand convention was held at Charlotte, NC with over hundred members from across the country in attendance. On this day, NAMA reminisced the 25 years of its journey and accomplishments. NAMA has and will continue to celebrate many more such occasions in the future.

I would also like to thank the dynamic NAMA Executive team who've been dedicating their valuable time and energy to get things done for NAMA. Their due diligence in identifying needs for the Manipuri community has given birth to many valuable initiatives for this organization. The initiatives further allowed our members to contribute, collaborate, and communicate effectively for any causes we embrace to pursue.

I, on behalf of the NAMA Executive team, would like to extend my congratulations to the newly elected advisory board members and election committee members. Their participation and involvement in the growth of NAMA is greatly appreciated. I would also like to welcome all the new NAMA members who've trusted and joined this association this year. We promise that we will do everything to keep you informed and connected with our community.

Please be advised that the 26th NAMA Convention is scheduled to be celebrated at Houston, Texas. The Executive Team invites all the Manipuris in North America and abroad to attend this upcoming convention. To the members living in far-flung places in North America, the Executive Team would greatly appreciate your active participation in making the upcoming annual convention successful. Let us all take pride and continue to celebrate our rich Manipuri culture and heritage. More details will be sent out in the beginning of next year.

We hope you enjoy reading the 2016 Newsletter, Nongin. This newsletter is always full of interesting news and articles about what we do and how we do it. Please take some time to get a little more insight into the amazing works NAMA has done to strengthen this close-knit Manipuri community. As always, we love your feedback and recommendations that would aid in the growth of this association. Thank you for your support and participation. NAMA wishes you and your family a blessed and safe holiday season.

Sincerely,

Lukhloi Shoujgajam
President
North American Manipur Association





NAMA EXECUTIVE TEAM (2015 - 2017)



Lukhoi Shougaijam
President



Hori Irombham
Vice President



Shilpa Phairembam Weiss
General Secretary



Lily Sharma
Treasurer



Monica Laishram
Cultural Secretary



Nishi Asem
IT Lead



Johnson Elangbam
IT Assistant



Sarju Laishram
Executive Member

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Dr. A. Surjalal Sharma
Chairman, Board of Trustees



Lalit Pukhrabam
Member, Board of Trustees



Amom Ruhikant
Member, Board of Trustees



Sushil Laishram
Member, Board of Trustees



Ashish Yengkhom
Member, Board of Trustees



Shanti Thokchom
Member, Board of Trustees



Sarita Moirangthem
Member, Board of Trustees

ELECTION COMMITTEE



Dhrita Sinha
Chairman, Election Committee



Raj Chingakham
Member, Election Committee



Thoihen Heisnam
Member, Election Committee





<i>Name</i>	<i>City/State</i>	<i>Gender</i>
Baleswor Koijam	Charlotte, NC	M
Sheetal Namram	Phoenix, AZ	F
Nabakanta Wangkheimayum	Los Angeles, CA	M
Chingkhei Akoijam	Piscataway, NJ	M
Roshan Achom	Toronto, Ontario	M
Milanda Lairikyengbam	Winnipeg, Manitoba	F
Ajitkumar Thokchom	South Windsor, CT	M
Randeep Hidangmayum	Brockton, MA	M
Anil Laishram	Champaign, IL	M
Sarju Laishram	Richardson, TX	F
Gayatri Yambem	Seattle, WA	F
Giani Rajkumari	Jersey City, NJ	F
Feroz Khan	Cupertino, CA	M
Damarjeet Chanambam	Charlotte, NC	M
Avanta Singh	Lawrenceville, NJ	M
Rajkumar	Chicago, IL	M
Shyamsunder	Tempe, AZ	M
Jenitta	Fort Worth, TX	F
Tourangbam Shantibala	Notre Dame, IN	F
Rex RK	Dallas, TX	M
Rakesh	Miami, FL	M
Moutushi	Evanston, IL	F
Jogendro	Ypsilanti, MI	M
Robina	Gurnee, IL	F
Sellyna Huidrom	Toronto, Canada	F



Introduction

The North American Manipur Association (NAMA) celebrated its Silver Jubilee on 2nd and 3rd of July, 2016 at Charlotte, North Carolina, U.S.A. Approximately 100 members attended this convention. Members flew and drove in from different places in North America to meet, socialize and celebrate Manipuri traditions together under one roof. The convention is the perfect embodiment of the love and unity amongst people who share the same Manipuri values. It also provides an opportunity for the younger generation who are born and brought up in the USA to learn about Manipuri culture.

The untiring energy of the Charlotte Manipuri team truly made this convention successful. This event is the outcome of several months of planning and coordination between the executive team and the planning committee. Members were provided with delicious ethnic food and beverages, including Ooti, Eromba, Hawaichar, Nga-thongba, Paneer, Hawaii and more. The women and children dressed up in Manipuri attires. Candies, color books and crayons were provided for the children. The customized NAMA T-shirts were distributed to the members. Agendas, pens, NAMA Mentoring Program testimonials and 2016 NAMA Excellence Award recipients' information were included in the program and distributed to the families.

The masters of ceremony for the convention were Balesh Koijam and Rebecca Mairembam. The food and beverage manager was Chanambam Damarjeet. The key coordinator of the event was Sagar Adhikarimayum. The photographer was Johnson Elangbam. The web conference manager was Dhruv Aheibam. The convention planning committee comprised of: Sagar Adhikarimayum, Amom Ruhikant Meetei, Omnath Khundongbam, Nishi Asem, Martin Haobam, Balesh Koijam, Chanambam Damarjeet, Rosanta Nahakpam, Chirag Patel, Lukhoi Shougaijam, Hori Singha, Lily Sharma, Dhruv Aheibam, Tampha Patel, Monica Laishram, Johnson Elangbam and Shilpa Phairembam Weiss.

First Day, July 2nd 2016

The first day of the convention was held at the Weddington Swim & Racquet Club in Weddington, North Carolina. The registration and reception started around 2:00 PM in the afternoon. The program started with a welcome address by Lukhoi Shougaijam, NAMA President. A slide show that represented the emotions of the Manipuris living far away from their native place was played. These slides were meticulously put together by Balesh Koijam with an effort to let the viewers understand that no matter where in the world we live, we do have a part in our heart that always long for our far-away state.



Members who attended the convention came up on the stage and introduced themselves and their family. Lalit Pukhrambam, an Advisory Member of NAMA, spoke about the evolution of NAMA. "There was a time when the members communicated through postal mails," recalled Lalit. He further relayed on how NAMA has progressed from a humble beginning of about only 12 members in the U.S. and Canada to a 200+ members that we have today. He is proud to be a member of NAMA, the oldest international organization of Manipuris located outside of India.

Dilly Sharma enunciated on how happy she felt to attend the convention and the pride she felt to learn that NAMA has completed 25 years. "Attending NAMA convention is like attending a family reunion where we enjoy sharing our common heritage and culture. We see a mini-Manipur when we come for these conventions. For many of us who are far away from Manipur which we still call "home", the wonderful feelings we experience when we attend these conventions are indescribable," said Dilly Sharma. She further highlighted the importance of the members to attend the conventions if they would like to preserve Manipuri culture and heritage here in the U.S.

Kebola Wahengbam spoke about how nothing could stop her from attending most NAMA conventions. She expressed how she invested time and effort into molding their daughters into a perfect meeteilon speaking women. "If my daughters do not respond to me in meeteilon when I call them, I end the conversation," said Kebola. Ensuring that their daughters follow and understand Manipuri culture and traditions is her first priority. She witnessed first-hand the sleepless nights spent by the convention planning team to plan and discuss convention activities and thanked them for all their dedication and hard work.



Swornalata Pukhrambam spoke about how NAMA kept herself and others connected via telephone in its early stages. Swornalata stated, "NAMA conventions have allowed Manipuris to preserve the beautiful Manipuri culture. In addition, the conventions also provide an opportunity for people to meet and socialize." Swornalata strongly recommended that NAMA

Sarita Moirangthem highlighted her strong association with NAMA for the last 23 years. She also recollected an interesting experience that she encountered in the immigration counter with an Indian on her way to Toronto in 1997. She was on her way to attend NAMA's convention and she still remembers how hard it was to let the Indian immigration officer understand her originality - an indication of the limited Manipuri population in North America at those times. Sarita was the Treasurer of NAMA in the year 2007-2009, a member who has always been there for NAMA.



Nancy Yambem, a special member of NAMA, presented on how NAMA has progressed in the last 25 years. She recalled those times when NAMA was young and small. Nancy has been part of NAMA since its birth. She appreciated the current members for working hard to expand this organization. Nancy was presented a gift from NAMA as a token of gratitude.

The entertainment program started with Navya Asem's wonderful gymnastic performance. Amy Shougaijam played Dance of Fire on the violin. Savya Acharya sang and performed Fight Song on the piano.

The members and the songs presented on the first day were: *Hey Ima Manipur* by Amom Ruhikant, *Eigi Laibakki Chandan* by Aashvi Acharya, *Sumang Khuding Mera Wa* by Lukhoi Shougaijam, *Nangbu Nungshi* by Monica Laishram, *Hada Samudon Ayangba* by Airi Haobam and *Nungshinaringei Asuk Waaba* by Balesh Koijam. Simi Moirangthem sang *Thinking Out Loud* in dedication to the NAMA parents. Simi was accompanied by Ridhi Chingakham on the piano. Aisha Sobti played guitar and sang *Wild Things and Stitches*. There was a music performance by the NAMA band that comprised of Martin Haobam (Lead vocal), Thoihen Heisnam (Vocal and Guitar), Raj Chingakham (Vocal), Ashish Yengkhom (Vocal), Mohit Sobti (Vocal), Monica Laishram (Vocal), Rebecca Mairembam (Vocal) and Balesh Koijam (Vocal), Nishi Asem (Lead Guitar), Rosanta Nahakpam (Guitar) and Sagar Adhikarimayum (Drums).

Along with the band, Martin Haobam presented the songs *Yellow*, *Hard to Handle*, *With or Without You*, *Summer of 69*, and *Sweet Child of Mine*, Rebecca Mairembam presented *Shatkaire Thamoigi Leirang*, Rosanta Nahakpam sang *Let Her Go*, and Raj Chingakham and Martin Haobam together sang *Hotel California*. Ashish Yengkhom and Raj Chingakham together presented the song *Time*.

The musical performance was followed by a group photo session which was then followed by dinner. After dinner, members assembled to play Housie (Tambola). The housie was coordinated by Balesh Koijam, Ingoba Ningthoujam and Sagar Adhikarimayum. The housefull winners were Bish Moirangthem and Anjarani Ahongsangbam. The Quick Five and the second line winner was Priya Chingakham. The third line winner was Lily Sharma. The winner of STAR of Housie was Amrabati Adhikarimayum. The housie was the last activity for the day.



Second Day, July 3rd 2016

The second day of the convention opened with a bright sunny morning in Charlotte. The event was held at the William R. Davie Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. Breakfast was served at 9:00 AM and the attendants socialized. Best wishes sent from India were presented as a slide show. People who've sent their best wishes for the NAMA convention are: Halley Laithangbam (Popular Manipuri Model), Devdutta Sharma (President, Dynamic Manipur), Rajkumar Somio (General Secretary, Dynamic Manipur) Elizabeth Okram (Treasurer, Dynamic Manipur), Dr. Premi Nunglekpam (Member, Dynamic Manipur), Chinglemba Ngathem (Member, Dynamic Manipur) and Yengkhom Anilkumar (Member, Dynamic Manipur). Ridhi Chingakham's flute performance of the American and Indian national anthem marked the beginning of the event.

Lukhoi Shougaijam, the President of NAMA, welcomed everyone and appreciated the Charlotte team for hosting the event. An opening song Sanaleibak Manipur was presented by the team: Amom Ruhikant, Thoihen Heisnam, Balesh Koijam, Monica Laishram, Khumanleima Laishram, Memicha Khundongbam, Binata Waikhom, Rebecca Mairembam, Rangila Yengkhom, Kebola Wahengbam, Tampha Patel, Amrabati Adhikarimayum and Linthoi Angom. The song was accompanied by Sagar Adhikarimayum on drums.

A tribute to Jupiter Yambem, one of the founding fathers of NAMA was given by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, Dr. A. Surjalal Sharma. The chief guest and guest of honor for the day were Perry and Carrie Culpepper, founders of Broken Hearts Ministries, a registered global organization that provides support to orphans and widows. They were welcomed and introduced by Rebecca Mairembam. The chief guest, Perry Culpepper gave a speech. Perry thanked NAMA for inviting him to be the chief guest of the event. As a token of gratitude, NAMA presented a gift to the chief guest.

Dr. A. Surjalal Sharma spoke and expressed the pride he feels of NAMA's achievements. "I would strongly encourage our members to continue working together to achieve a common goal, putting aside individual views and preferences," said Dr. Sharma. Nancy Yambem also spoke about how NAMA started, how Jupiter Yambem and she was involved from the beginning, and how the organization has advanced. Dhrita Sinha spoke of Jupiter Yambem, retold some of the history of NAMA and the founding members, and his hopes moving forward. All the speakers expressed their love and commitment to NAMA.

The Executive Team presentation was given by Lukhoi Shougaijam, President of NAMA, Shilpa Phairembam Weiss, General Secretary of NAMA, and Lily Sharma, Treasurer of NAMA. Lukhoi highlighted the plans for the future of NAMA. The President also stressed the importance of streamlining the fundraising process of NAMA. He further discussed outreach programs that would bring publicity to the association. Shilpa summarized what NAMA has accomplished in the period of July 2015 – July 2016. NAMA has raised funds to support the flood victims in Manipur, a Manipuri contestant in the Mr. International contest, emergency support funds of a Manipuri family in the USA, and many more.

"NAMA will be starting Meetei-Mayek online education program in the near future. We will also continue supporting and working with the organizations namely Dynamic Manipur and National Institute of Technology, Manipur to uplift the educational status of the students in Manipur," stated Shilpa. Lily, NAMA Treasurer then provided the details on funds raised during the period July 2015 - July 2016 to support people in Manipur as well as here in the USA. Lily thanked all NAMA members for their strong support and faith in NAMA.





The Executive Team presentation was followed by Jay Moirangthem's presentation on "First Generation Manipuri". Jay articulated on how Manipuri kids of his generation have identity crisis as they try to blend with the diverse culture of USA. Jay appreciated NAMA for helping the younger generation shape into a proud Manipuri, and for teaching them Manipuri culture and traditions.

Lunch was served after Jay's presentation. During lunch members enjoyed the beautiful Manipuri slide show created by Johnson Elangbam and Monica Laishram. The slides displayed various cultural pictures that defines Manipur and its culture. Some pictures were Sangai, Meetei Yumjao, Loktak Lake, Lai Haraoba and many more.

After the lunch, members reconvened to congratulate the 2016 NAMA Academic Excellence Award recipients. NAMA Excellence Award program was initiated under NAMA's ex-President Amom Ruhikant's leadership in 2015. The main coordinator of the award program is Shilpa Phairembam Weiss. Through nominations and applications, NAMA selected the award recipients for 2016. The recipients for the 2016 NAMA Academic Excellence Award are:

Seine Yumnam, an Undergrad at Wabash College, Indiana, U.S.A. Seine is majoring in Economics and minoring in Mathematics. He has made the Dean's List for all the semesters for the past three years for achieving a GPA above the benchmark. Besides aiming for consistency in his performance in college, he tries to gain hands-on working experiences. He has worked for various companies ranging from consulting for BMW right after the freshman year to working as a trader at WallStreet bank this summer (2016). Going forward, he wants to pursue a career in the Financial Services Industry.

Arina Tayenjam is a 9-year-old girl studying 4th grade in Ackerman Elementary School Omaha, Nebraska She is the daughter of Jiten and Bijiya Tayenjam. In the month of September 2015, Arina was selected as an All-Star Student for the class. She participated in running club, coding club, choir, and other extra curriculum activities. Her hobby is reading and she has read 70+ story books. Some of the remarkable achievements of Arina are qualifying for the Millard Public Schools 3rd through 8th grade High Ability Program (HAL) for gifted children and scoring >97th percentile in math, social studies, writing, and science and health.



Levin C. Patel has completed 3rd grade and will be starting 4th grade soon in Gaston Christian School in Gastonia, NC. He has made numerous academic achievements. A mathematics enthusiast, he was recently awarded the Mathematics Award for his outstanding score in math. He has been placed on the A/B Honor Roll for achieving a high standard of academic excellence. He also received a Bible Achievement Award in recognition of his outstanding achievement in Bible. Levin is the only son of Chirag and Tampha Patel.

The Board of Trustees election was held and members voted for new Advisory Committee members and Election Committee members. The newly elected members to be part of Advisory Committee are: Sarita Moirangthem, Shanti Thokchom, Sushil Laishram, and Ashish Yengkhom. The elected members to be part of Election Committee members are: Dhrita Sinha (Chair), Thoihen Heisnam and Raj Chingakhom. The 2016 NAMA Photography Contest's results announcement followed the election. The online voting completed the night prior to the second day of the convention. Data revealed Balesh Koijam as the winner of the photography contest. The second and third prizes were awarded to Preetam Yengkokpam and Amom Ruhikant respectively. Hori Singha, NAMA's Vice President, then gave the vote of thanks and appreciated everyone who was involved in organizing the event. After the election, members gathered to take group pictures.



There were multiple cultural programs. Manas Yengkhom took out his very cute turtle named "Squirt" and showed and described about it to the audience. Children were thrilled to see the turtle. Levin Patel performed 'Yankie Doodle Went to Town' and 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' on the piano. Lilliane Pukhrambam played Sinfonia composed by Jeffrey S. Bishop on violin. The Khamba Thoibi Dance was performed by Lisa Adhikarimayum and Lamyamba Ningthoujam. Leima Jagoi was performed by Airi Haobam and Adina Yengkhom. The beautiful songs and the talented singers who performed on this day were: *Chingya Tamy*a by Carrie Culpepper, *Poinu Loubuk Uraga* and *Mamal Yaodra* by Amom Ruhikant and *Love in the Dark and Make You Feel My Love* by Pretzy Amom. Langlen Heisnam sang *My Favorite Things* and was accompanied on guitar by her father, Thoihen Heisnam. The talented team - Balesh Koijam, Rebecca Mairembam and Martin Haobam along with the NAMA band performed the song *Ningjaba Mana*. Furthermore, a duet song *Choirabi* was presented by Martin Haobam and Monica Laishram. The song *Mensinba Ngamdraba* was also sung by Balesh Koijam. Several songs and music was performed by the team that involved Raj Chingakhom (Guitar), Nishi Asem (Guitar), Brian Weiss (Guitar), Rosanta Nahakpam (Guitar), Sagar Sharma (Drums), Martin Haobam (Vocal), Thoihen Heisnam (Vocal), Tiken Salam (Vocal), Mohit Sobti (Vocal).

The musical performance was followed by *Mou Jagoi* by Kebola Wahengbam, Swornalata Pukhrambam, Khumanleima Laishram, Amrabati Adhikarimayum, Linthoi Angom, Lily Sharma, Rangila Yengkhom, Prativa Amom, Binata Waikhom, Priya Chingakham, Tampha Patel, Anju Aheibam, Prativa Amom, Neeti Shougaijam, Anju Rai, Nandini Sobti, Sarita Moirangthem, Memicha Khundongmayum, Anjarani Ahongsabam, Rosa Mutum.

As the evening set in, members prepared for the much awaited *Thabal Chongba*. Sagar Adhikarimayum was the drummer and the women initiated and danced to the tune of the drum. Following the traditional norm, men then joined in and everybody danced happily to the driving beat. The convention ended happily and successfully.

After-party

An after-party was hosted by Chirag and Tampha Patel in their house at Gastonia, North Carolina. Most of the members gathered in their house, sang songs, played music, danced and had dinner together.

Special thanks

The NAMA Executive Team would like to give their special thanks to Amom Ruhikant, Kebola Wahengbam, Tampha Patel, Chirag Patel, Omnath Khundongbam, Memicha Khundongbam, Chanambam Damarjeet, Balesh Koijam, Sagar Adhikarimayum, Amrabati Adhikarimayum, Dhruv Aheibam, Rebecca Mairembam, Ingoba Ningthoujam, Rosanta Nahakpam, Binata Waikhom, Martin Haobam, and Khumanleima Laishram for all the hard work they've put into making this convention successful.

Testimonials from members:

"We are very proud to be a part of the 2016 Silver Jubilee Celebration of NAMA! A big thank you to the Charlotte Team, the NAMA Executives and all the NAMA members! The convention was a big hit. Thank you for putting all the efforts, hard work, time and love to make it a very well cared-for function. We had a very good time meeting all the fun-loving people (familiar faces, new faces) and having all those delicious foods. Long live NAMA!" ~ Anjarani Ahongsangbam and Deep Acharya

"We are so happy to be part of NAMA family for the last 23 years. Also, we are happy to participate in this year's Silver Jubilee celebration in the beautiful city of Charlotte. The Queen City hospitality is awesome; I have no words to express. Next year in 2017 Houston will welcome you all to celebrate the 26th NAMA convention (we love to host in Texan/Manipuri style)." ~ Sarita and Bish Moirangthem

"I have always wanted to attend the convention but never got a chance. When it was celebrated in San Francisco, I was on my vacation to India. This time, I am so happy that I am able to make it. This event is so much fun and I truly enjoyed it." ~ Feroz Khan

"We're so pleased to be part of NAMA association. We just wanted to take a few moments to express our gratitude. It was such a nice pleasure to meet you all. We had a marvelous time at the 25th NAMA Convention. Our sincere Thank You to everyone." ~ Nandini and Mohit Sobti



**Conclusion:**

The convention is a perfect example of unity and love among the Manipuri community. Everybody, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, race all came together to celebrate Manipuri traditions. We do have a mini-Manipur in the U.S. To pass down the Manipuri traditions to the younger generation is one of the association's goals and bringing the children together works towards this end. The NAMA Executive team would like to thank all the members for attending the convention and making it a successful event.

The next annual convention will take place in Houston, Texas. We look forward to seeing you all again next year at Houston, Texas. If you know of any Manipuris living in the USA who are not aware of NAMA, please share our information with them and encourage them to join the association.



SEINE YUMNAM – Academic Excellence Award



Seine Yumnam is an Undergrad at Wabash College, Indiana, U.S.A. He is majoring in Economics and minoring in Mathematics. Coming to the U.S.A was a plan he made when he was in 5th grade. Everything he did during his middle and high school had a goal, that is, to get into a University in the U.S. 7 years down the line, he did, and he is already about to complete his college. Going forward, he wants to pursue a career in the Financial Services Industry.

He has made the Dean’s List for all the semesters for the past 3 years for achieving a GPA above the benchmark. Besides aiming for consistency in his performance in college, he tries to gain hands-on working experiences. He has worked for various companies during summer breaks ranging from consulting for BMW right after the freshman year to working at a Wall Street bank this summer (2016) as a trader.

During his free time, he enjoys trading, reading, and articulating his thoughts and sharing them with people. He has supported numerous Manipuri students by advising them about undergrad studies in the United States. He has been nominated by the NAMA members and he thanks the NAMA members for recognizing his hard work and dedication. He will continue supporting NAMA.

ARINA TAYENJAM – Academic Excellence Award



Arina is 9 years old, studying 4th grade in Ackerman Elementary School Omaha, NE. She has been in the elementary schools - Huff Elementary School, Mountain View, California 1st and 2nd grade in the year 2013-14 and Creek View Elementary School Atlanta, Georgia 3rd grade 2014-15. In the month of September -2015, she was selected for All-Star student for the class. She participated in Running Club, Coding Club, Choir, and other extra curriculum activities. Her hobby is reading and she read around 70+ story books, some of which are – The Trilogy Series, Charlie Bone, The Magic Tree House, Seraphina, The Poison Apple Books, Diary of the Wimpey Kid Series, Lone Wolf, The Lost Track of Time, Whatever Happens if the ..., The Girl from Felony Bay, Rump the true story of Rumpelstiltskin, Escape from Mr. Lemon cello’s Library, Charlie Bumpers V.S the Teacher of the Year etc. Some of the remarkable achievements Arina made are: Qualified for the Millard public schools 3rd through 8th grade High Ability Program (HAL) in Visual/Spatial taken by Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAt). 99.36% score in Math, E (Excellence) score in music, 99.15%score in social studies, 97.72% in writing, 97.95% score in Science and Health etc.

LEVIN C. PATEL – Academic Excellence Award



Levin Patel is currently in 4th grade and attends Gaston Christian School in Gastonia, NC. He has made numerous academic achievements. A mathematics enthusiast, he was recently awarded the Mathematics award for his outstanding score in Maths.

He has been placed on the A/B Honor Roll for achieving a high standard of academic excellence. He also received a Bible Achievement Award in recognition of his outstanding achievement in Bible. Levin spends his leisure time by playing videogames. His favorite game is basketball.





“I live 8000 miles from home, my children are born and brought up in the United States. As a parent, I try my level best to teach them Manipuri language. My wife and I only speak in Manipuri at home and speak in Manipuri to our children. However, they reply in English, a language they feel more comfortable speaking with. They understand Manipuri but they can't speak the language, in the same way that we understand Tamil but are not fluent in speaking. Such is my case with the Manipuri language in my home,” says one of the NAMA members.

This example is not an exception; it is the rule. This is a situation that most, if not all, Manipuri families experience. Upon learning the challenges of teaching and practicing the Manipuri language in households in North America, the NAMA Executive team discussed and took up an initiative that would help these children to learn basic Manipuri. The ability to communicate in Manipuri would also positively impact the relationships with their families back home in Manipur. After all, everything in life boils down to communication.

Through inquiries made to several people in Manipur by the Executive Team, they identified EL's Educare, a new company that is willing to fulfil NAMA's needs. The preference to have someone from Manipur offer this service to NAMA is an effort to provide employment and encouragement to the people in Manipur who are passionate about Meetei-Mayek and Manipuri language.

EL's Educare is led by Elizabeth Okram, M.Sc Zoology who has had four years of experience in online education. The instructor's name is Julie Oinam, MBA who has been teaching Meetei-Mayek for the past eight years. Despite the technological challenges and time differences between India and North America, these women strive to achieve excellence in the work they do and navigate these barriers. NAMA greatly appreciates and respects the work they are doing for us.





Since October 10, a handful of NAMA children have enrolled in this program and classes have been going in full swing. The number of students keep increasing and NAMA hopes that at least 80% of the students get enrolled in this valuable program by the end of 2017. El's Educare tailors the education program to the needs of the NAMA student with customized classes. Most classes are focused on basic communication. The class comprise of three levels – beginners, intermediate and high. There is no age limit and anybody can join this program. The details regarding how to make the payment can be discussed with Elizabeth. Parents' role is crucial in making this program successful. Parents need to share the same values as NAMA. NAMA gladly welcomes any questions parents may have regarding the classes.

The Executive team would like to appreciate the parents who have had their children enrolled in the Meetei-Mayek and basic communication online program. Your effort in making sure that your children don't lose their roots is vital in continuing our great traditions. Every child in North America deserves to know where their parents come from, how they grew up, appreciate and be proud of being a Manipuri. Enrolling your children to this program is an incredible gift for them and future generations.

Many members have recommended improvements to enhance the program. This kind of participation is exactly what NAMA has been seeking from our members. At the end of the day, our mission is to uphold our traditions and culture and your input on these matters is crucial in achieving and sustaining these goals.

Please continue to give strength to this association and make its existence worth it.

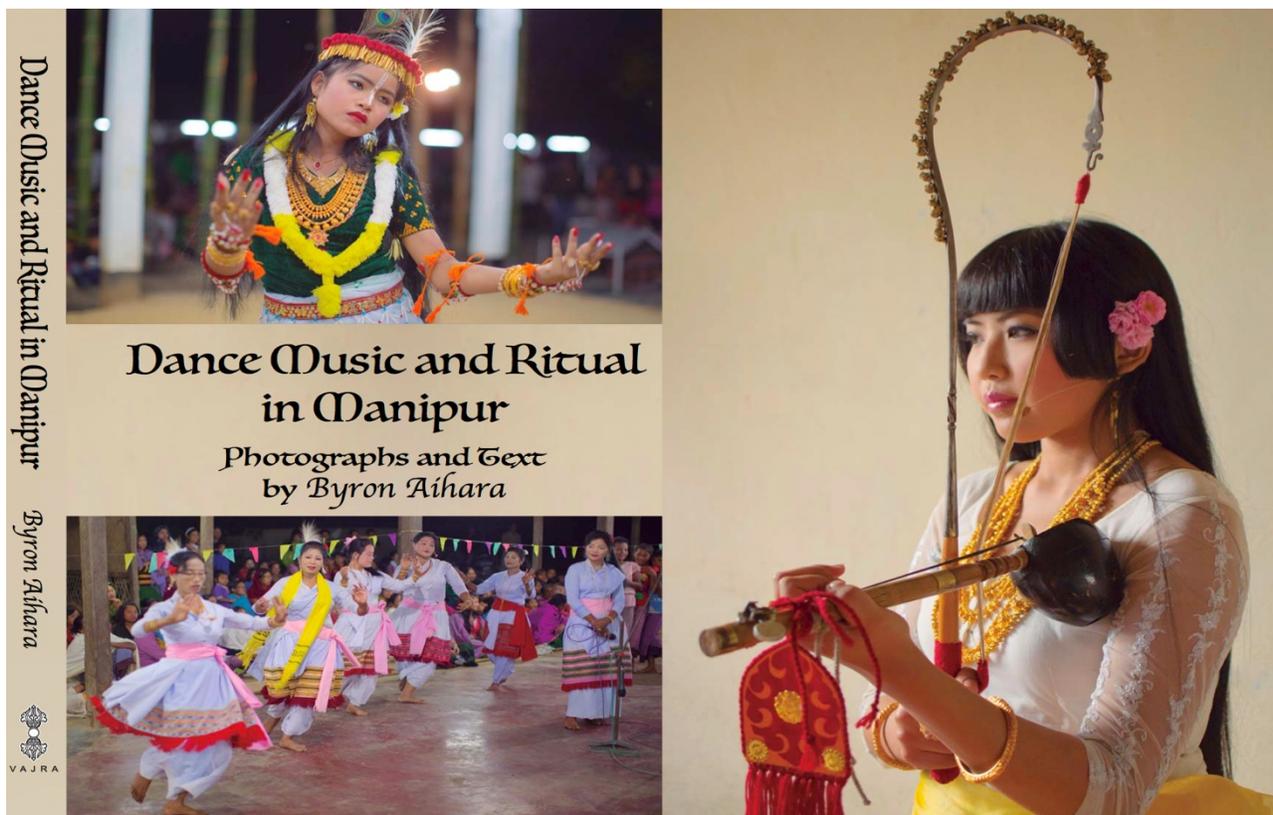
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Picture: Cover of the *Dance Music and Ritual in Manipur* book



The California based film maker and photographer Byron Aihara has just published a book about the cultures and traditions of Manipur. After a two-and-a-half-year period of research work and with the help of a successful Kickstarter campaign his book has recently been published. Titled, *Dance Music and Ritual in Manipur*, the coffee table size book combines over 300 beautiful photographs with research text richly documenting both the indigenous Meitei Lai Haraoba festival and the courtly Ras Lila tradition. It has the distinction of being the first in depth photographic study of Lai Haraoba and the faith of the Umang Lai. Byron spent 16 months from 2013 to 2015 in Manipur researching the project. During that time the author lived at the homes of many traditional artist musicians including the famous Pena Khongba musician and Padma Shree recipient, Oja Khangembam Mangi with whom he lived for over four months, and also with the family of Oja Mangansana of Laihui whose daughter is the rising star of Manipur traditional music and dance, Mangka of Hada Samadon fame.



Photographs from the book have been shortlisted by the Royal Photographic Society of England to be featured in their annual print competition. And Byron's work on Lai Haraoba has gathered him the attention as a featured photographer on the popular website, LensCulture.com. Byron is also posting a number of videos on YouTube of traditional Manipuri music and culture under his production company, Seven Sister Music. You can go search "Seven Sisters Music" channel on YouTube to see them. He also has a popular Facebook page posting photographs and videos from his travels and research in Manipur that has over 6000 followers: <https://www.facebook.com/ManipurBook/> . He has also become close to many members of the Meitei community who live in the Santa Clara, Bay Area of California.

As a documentary filmmaker and photographer Byron has lived in India for over four years and in 2010 he first traveled to the Northeast in Arunachal, Nagaland, and Assam, and then in 2013 to Manipur. He only expected to stay in Imphal for 30 days but then became so enamored with Manipur and its diverse cultures that his research extended to 16 months. In that time, he attended over 10 Lai Haraoba festivals and two of the grand Maha Ras ritual performances held at the Govindaji temples in Imphal. His research took him to nearly every part of Manipur's valleys and hills. Then in early 2015 he returned back to his home in California where from an archive of over 40,000 photographs, 100 hours of video recordings and interviews, he designed and wrote the book. Byron says that this is the first phase of his research into the traditional music and dance of the Northeast states and he plans to return to Manipur next year.

The book is available through Amazon by searching [Dance Music and Ritual in Manipur](#). However, Byron wants to extend a special promo offer to NAMA members where they can get a signed first edition copy with an additional 2 gift card photographs for the special price of \$35.00. You can order the book directly from Byron by contacting him at byron.aihara@gmail.com or messaging Byron Aihara on Facebook with the promo code NAMA.



NAMA Photography Contest

The 2016 NAMA Photography Contest was held through an online voting that was completed the night prior to the second day of the NAMA convention. The first prize was awarded to Balesh Koijam. The second prize was awarded to Preetam Yengkokpam and the third prize was awarded to Ruhikant Amom.



"Fading red or a striking golden... a shimmery silver or a sober blue... Ruling the sunset sky all alone"

- by Balesh Koijam



"Rays of Hope"

- by Preetam Yengkokpam



"Spring has come and gone several times, but I am still waiting!!"

- by Ruhikant Meitei



Below are some of the accomplishments and initiatives that NAMA has taken up in the year 2016:

- Identified outstanding students and awarded the 2016 NAMA Excellence Awards during the 25th Annual NAMA Convention.
- Launched Meetei Mayek and Basic Communication online program.
- Created a secure NAMA members' portal.
- Conducted NAMA photography contest.
- Conducted a meeting with NIT director, Dr. Sarungbam Birendra to discuss challenges faced by the NIT students and how NAMA can help.
- Gautam Thockchom conducted a seminar at NIT, Manipur and lectured on education and employment in the United States.
- Provided online advise to 10+ Manipuri students regarding education and employment in the US.
- Collaborated with Progressive Manipur and conducted a meeting to discuss steps to end the bandh culture in Manipur



NAMA AND NIT COLLABORATION



Picture: Seminar given by Gautam Thockchom at NIT, Manipur

NAMA offers a variety of opportunities for our members to contribute and make a difference in the community. Some of them are: *Impact TV's Diaspora Speak program, Manipur University, regional community programs and many more.* There are a few outstanding NAMA members who took the time to share their knowledge and experience to the Manipuris living in Manipur. These actions taken up by our members are highly appreciated by NAMA, and highlight their dedication to the people back home.

Few months ago, NAMA was approached by the Dr. Sarungbam Birendra, Director of Manipur's National Institute of Technology (NIT). Dr. Birendra requested NAMA to share any recommendations and thoughts on how to improve the NIT students' academic performance and career goals. NAMA reached out to Dr. Birendra and requested a meeting with him and NAMA members. The meeting was conducted on Sunday, June 12th 2016. Of the several important points that were discussed in the meeting, one particular request from the NAMA members by NIT was to visit the institution and conduct a seminar when they come for vacation. Sharing the experiences of NAMA members may motivate students to improve their communities and seek further education inside and outside Manipur.

In fulfillment of the request, Gautam Thockchom, Vice President of Sureline Systems Inc. USA, conducted a seminar at NIT on July 12th, 2016 during his visit to Manipur. Mr. Thockchom introduced himself and NAMA to the NIT students. He further discussed studies abroad, job prospects in the USA and how NAMA can help them. NAMA is very thankful for Mr. Thockchom's active participation and his many contributions in the community. NAMA hopes that more members voluntarily take up initiatives like this in the future.

The NAMA Executive team would like to thank similar contributions by our other members. NAMA hopes for more members to come forward and be part of this educational outreach. Suggestions are always welcome and initiatives appreciated. Your experiences abroad can significantly impact the lives of those back in Manipur. If you are interested to participate in the outreach program, please email NAMA at namagroups@gmail.com. We would be happy to provide further information on this. May the good work continue!





Ningol Chakouba 2016, Michigan



Ningol Chakouba 2016, Ohio





Ningol Chakouba 2016, Maine



Ningol Chakouba 2016, Washington DC





Ningol Chakouba 2016, Charlotte, North Carolina



Ningol Chakouba 2016, Dallas, Texas





Ningol Chakouba 2016, Chicago, Illinois



Ningol Chakouba 2016, California





The NAMA Executive team would like to thank all our members who have contributed to NAMA. Thanks for hosting the cultural festivals (Cheiraoba, Ningol Chakouba etc), donating to specific causes, sharing about your life in the USA to the Manipuris in Manipur, participating in the NAMA convention programs, encouraging your children to learn Manipuri via the online Manipuri program and many more.

If there is anything else that NAMA can do for you, please let us know. If there is any new Manipuri who is not part of this association, please spread the word about NAMA to them.

We will make sure that we continue to work hard and live up to your expectations.

Best,

The NAMA Executive Team





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FB Closed Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/namaonline/>

FB Community/Public Page: <https://www.facebook.com/NamaSince1992>

