



20th North American Manipur Association (NAMA) Convention

New Jersey, USA July 2-3, 2011

The 20th Annual Convention of North American Manipur Association (NAMA) was held during the 4th of July weekend at New Jersey, USA. It was an enjoyable event with good number of participants from North America. The majority of the participants were from several states which include Texas, Virginia, Maryland, Ohio, North Carolina, South Carolina, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.

NAMA members residing at New Jersey & New York hosted the convention with great enthusiasm and dedication. It was a team effort - each member family contributing their commendable time and effort for the successful conduct of the convention. It will be difficult to single out a particular family but we would like to recognize the families of Sushil Laishram, Rajeshwar Laishram to make 20th NAMA Convention an enjoyable experience. We are very thankful to all the participant NAMA members for making the 20th NAMA Convention a grand success.

This year we had many new members from several states attending the convention for the first time. Their participation is encouraging and a great pleasure for the NAMA Executive Team and its members. We seek all the people from Manipur and Manipur origin to join NAMA as members so that we can celebrate and enjoy our culture and heritage. At the same time we can share valuable thoughts & ideas to serve our community here and abroad.

We also missed several NAMA members who could not make to the convention because of their schedule conflicts. We look forward to see everyone again in next year's convention during the July 4 weekend 2012.

The first day of Convention (July 2, 2011) was a reception party at Knights of Columbus, Edison, NJ; members greeting each other and knowing several new members and the first time attendees. There was plenty of good food and different kinds of drinks. Participant members introduced themselves and expressed their happiness to be able to attend and pleasure to know other members. There was a housie game. All the members participated in the game and everyone enjoyed it through. Of course, there were lucky winners who had cash prizes of considerable amount. Kids were having a good time playing together as well. Moreover, the participants fully enjoyed the traditional food prepared by local NAMA members. Indeed, it was really an enjoyable and memorable evening.

The next day on July 3rd, we had our main Convention event at the Royal Albert's Palace, Fords/Edison, New Jersey, USA. We are fortunate to have Doug Welkins from Pennsylvania for accepting to be the chief guest of the main convention day. Doug could speak Manipuri language well since he had been with Manipur people in many different parts of the world including India and Dubai. After the Chief Guest, NAMA President, NAMA Gen. Secretary, took its respective chairs at the podium, Lukhoi Shougaijam (Gen Secretary) gave the welcome address. Followed by several other speakers:

- a) Dr. A. Surjalal Sharma on General thoughts about Manipur
- b) Dr. Lalit Pukhrambam on Historical Manipur in general
- c) Mr. Lakshmikant Laikangbam on His Experience on Parvasi Bharatiya Divas 2011
- d) Mr. Sapam Samananda on Importance of Career Counseling
- e) Mrs. Monica Kharkar on CRY (Children's Rights & You) America

All the speakers presented their thoughts & ideas very well. Everyone in the audience was benefitted from their thoughtful presentations. We thank you for it. Especially we appreciate Mrs. Monica Kharkar and her family to join the NAMA convention and share such valuable and important information with regard to CRY projects in India and with specific to CRY projects in Manipur. We encourage everyone to be part of it and participate in its activities for Child rights and other humanitarian cause.

Bobo Hijam (Treasurer NAMA) delivered NAMA financial report (2009-2011). He spoke about other fund raising activities as well.

Lukhoi Shougaijam (Gen. Secretary NAMA) delivered NAMA official report (2009-2011). He highlighted some of the accomplishments in his term and gave a forward looking ideas & suggestion to become NAMA a more successful organization in the long run.

This year, the NAMA Recognition Award for 2011 was given to two individuals (Late Jupiter Yambem and Drita Kumar Sinha). Nancy Yambem & her son Shanti Yambem received the award in favor of Late Jupiter Yambem. Drita Kumar Sinha received the award personally. This award is given to NAMA member who has devoted his/her time and energy for the development of NAMA and/or has significantly contributed to the promotion of Manipur to the people of North America and around the globe. Each year the executive Committee will nominate members for consideration of the award. We appreciate both the awardees for their contribution to NAMA.

During the open interaction session with NAMA Members, Kunjakishor Maimom gave a presentation on www.manipurwiki.com which was very informative to all.

In this convention we expanded NAMA executives on top of the executive office bearers by forming additional Advisory sub-Committee, Executive Team sub-committee. The following individuals were announced for the term (2011 – 2013) as:

Executive Office Bearer

- 1) President: Rajeshwar Laishram (New Jersey)

- 2) Vice President: Manjarita Laishram (New Jersey)
- 3) Gen. Secretary: Sapam Syamananda (Michigan)
- 4) Asst Gen. Secretary: Adhikarimayum Sagar Sharma (Ohio)
- 5) Treasurer: Rajesh Khumanthem (New York)

Exec Team Sub-Committee

- 1) Monica Chaturvedi (New Jersey)
- 2) Kebola Wahengbam (Ohio)
- 3) Kunjakishor Maimom (Ohio) - IT Committee
- 4) Priyopan Phanjoubam (New Jersey) - IT Committee
- 5) Sonia Sarangthem (Maryland)
- 6) Doren Thangjam (New Jersey)
- 7) Bobo Hijam (Maryland) – Finance & Audit Team Lead

Advisory sub-committee:

- 1) Dr. A. Surjalal Sharma (Maryland)
- 2) Drita Kumar Sinha (New York)
- 3) Dr. Lalit Pukhrambam (Michigan)
- 4) Sushil Laishram (New York)

We are confident that the new NAMA Team would do great jobs for NAMA.

The chief guest expressed his happiness and gratitude for inviting him as the chief guest of the convention. He delivered his speech in Meiteilon. It was really great witnessing someone many oceans apart, from different culture & ethnic group, honoring our language & culture.

The NAMA president expressed his pleasure and thanks to all the NAMA members at New Jersey and other members in general for their time and effort for a successful 20th NAMA convention 2011. It concludes the official programs for the NAMA Convention (Morning Session).

After the morning session, we had our lunch break, which includes several specialties of Indian dishes catered for the convention. The food was really delicious. All the participants enjoyed it much. In the afternoon session, we had group pictures taken. Next, we had our kid's activities and cultural programs.

In Kids programs, Thaja Thangjam presented Manipuri Dance decorated with traditional Manipuri dance dress. It was spectacular to watch and many from the audience appreciated her by giving \$\$ which is part of our tradition. Amy Shougaijam, Lavani Laishram, Thaja Thangjam, Rachael Laikangbam sang their favorite songs. Neha chongtham presented her piano music. Lillianne Pukhrambam presented her violin music. All the participants were appreciated by giving \$\$ right after their performances as well as a citation and gift bag. We can clearly notice how our kids are growing before our eyes and how much they have learnt new skills in a year. NAMA is a platform for our children to showcase their own skills and form a network of friendship among them.

Bobo Hijam, Doren Thanjam, Mrs Doren Thangjam, Meghanath Chongtham presented an English group song in which Meghanath was on the guitar. Also, Meghanath chogtham presented a solo performance on Guitar as well. Monica Laishram, Ruhikanta Meitei & Lukhoi Shougaijam presented Manipuri song & Hindi Gazal as well.

Finally, we had Thabal Dance, which is one of the exciting and eagerly awaited events of NAMA each year. This year's NAMA Convention was a great success with the active

participation from a sizable number of member participants. Several of our members also took the advantage of visiting several tourist sites at and around New Jersey/New York. Every year, we try to select a venue that can combine NAMA convention with Summer Vacation for our families and members. We are thankful to all the NAMA members who attended the convention. We hope to see more members once again at the 21st Annual NAMA Convention 2012 during the 4th of July weekend, 2012.

From NAMA Executive team