

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY OF AKADEMI LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD & AKADEMI AWARDS, 2015 ON 6TH FEBRUARY, 2019 AT MAHARAJA CHANDRAKIRTI AUDITORIUM, PALACE COMPOUND, IMPHAL

Secretary, Manipur State Kala Akademi,

Respected Awardees,

Distinguished Invitees,

Member of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to be here for the Award Presentation of the Manipur State Kala Akademi. We have just honoured those who have excelled in different fields of Manipuri culture and I heartily congratulate all the award winners on this occasion.

As we all know, Manipur is widely known for its rich culture. The richness and the diverseness of culture emanating from such a small State leave the rest of the country and even the world in awe and admiration. I am sure the beauty of the Manipuri Raas Lila is not to be found anywhere in the world. Even though, it is an art form that evokes religious fervour, its magnificence is such that it can easily charm everyone irrespective of cultural background or religion. There are also the vigorous folk dances and music of the Hills of Manipur which add diverseness and richness to the culture of the State. The State is also equally rich in various other art forms such as Nata Sankirtana which has been recognised as an intangible heritage by UNESCO, Theatre, Shumang Leela, Pena, Thang-Ta and so on. The beauty and popularity of Manipuri culture has not diminished over the centuries due to the hard work and sincere efforts of many illustrious gurus, exponents and practitioners. Today, I have had the privilege of honouring some of those personalities.

You all are well aware that the Manipur State Kala Akademi is a composite Akademi dealing with the preservation and promotion of Music, Dance, Theatre and other Forms of Arts, Literature and Fine Arts. Established by the Government of Manipur in 1972 as its cultural agency, the Akademi receives outright grants from the Government for taking up works for preservation and promotion of art and culture. I happily note that keeping pace with the changes taking place throughout India in the realm of culture, the Akademi has been able to speed up its activities and create an impact on many creative and multi-dimensional aspects of Manipur culture. The Akademi has organized many programmes and projects in different fields by holding festivals, workshops, seminars, symposia, exhibitions and cultural exchange programmes. It also carries out the work of documentation, publication, acquisition of books, materials for its Library, Archives and Museum connected with culture, besides bringing out many publications both in English and Manipuri.

The Manipur State Kala Akademi, since its inception, has been making sustained efforts for promotion, preservation and propagation of Manipur's rich cultural tradition both within and outside the State. The Akademi has been honouring every year outstanding scholars and artistes in the fields of Music, Dance, Drama and the native theatrical tradition of Shumang Leela, Tribal Culture, other Forms of Art, Fine Arts and Literature by conferring Fellowships and Awards which symbolize not only the highest standard of excellence but also recognizing the individual works of the highest professional accomplishment. In memory of four distinguished sons of Manipur who had excelled in Manipuri culture covering major dimensions, the Akademi has also instituted four Memorial Lectures viz., (1) Rajarshri Bhagyachandra Memorial Lecture in Dance and Music, (2) H. Anganghal Singh Memorial Lecture in Literature, (3) S. Lalit Singh Memorial Lecture in Theatre and (4) Bhadra Singh Memorial Lecture in Fine Arts. The memorial

lectures have attracted many scholars, writers and artistes from many parts of India and abroad to whom Manipuri culture has been introduced through interaction.

I am happy that the Akademi has presented, in today's function, Akademi Awards for the year, 2015 to 32 Awardees including two Fellows for their outstanding contribution in their respective fields of Dance, Music, Theatre, Shumang Leela, Thang-Ta, other Forms of Art, Tribal Culture, Literature and Fine Arts. I am also extremely happy that the Akademi has just conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award after a gap of more than 8 years to a centenarian guru, Shri Hijam Gourasing Singh, who has dedicated his whole life to the cause of Manipuri culture. The relentless efforts of the Akademi will certainly go a long way in the preservation and promotion of the rare and unique cultural heritage of Manipur and also encourage the efforts of individual scholars and artistes striving for excellence. Such efforts of the Akademi deserve appreciation by all.

I, once again, congratulate all the award winners and wish the Akademi and scholars as well as artistes all success in their future endeavours.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.