

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR ON THE OCCASION OF SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF ALL COMMUNITIES GURU PUJAH, 2017 OF SURYABARA SANA KALA KENDRA ON 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY, 2017 AT MALEM IMA COMMUNITY HALL, THANGMEIBAND, IMPHAL

Dr. Radheshyam Yumnam ji, Hon'ble Chairman (MANIDCO),

Dignitaries on the Dias,

Artistes of Suryabara Sana Kala Kendra,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am glad to be among you today, on this momentous occasion of the Silver Jubilee Celebration of All Communities Guru Pujah, 2017. The celebration is to remember all Gurus belonging to different communities, who have moulded our character and instil in us humility and love for humanity.

Many of us know the age-old Guru-Shishya relationship and the pujahs performed by the students of their respective Gurus and the discipline shown to their Gurus during the time of famous Epics Mahabharata and Ramayana. The Guru was God Himself manifesting in a personal form to guide the aspirants. Grace of God takes the form of Guru. He inspires devotion in others. His presence purifies all. You must have heard the name of Akalabya, from Sutra community, who practised his art – archery before the statue of famous Guru Dronacharya in the forest. Lateron, he became a very good student better than the blue eyed student of Guru Dronacharya – Arjuna. Akalabya practised everything in front of the statue of his Guru as if he was guiding him in all respects. This is what I want to tell the students of this present modern society that Guru is God.

The Guru is verily a link between the individual and the immortal. He is a being who has raised himself from this into that, and thus has a free and unhampered access to both the realms. He stands, as it were, upon the threshold of immortality; and bending down, he raises the struggling

individuals with his one hand, and with the other lifts them up into the realm of everlasting joy and infinite Truth-Consciousness. It is only the Guru who will find out your defects. The nature of egoism is such that you will not be able to find out your own defects. Just as a man cannot see his back, so also he cannot see his own errors. He must live under a Guru for the eradication of his evil qualities and defects.

All great ones had their teachers. All the sages, saints, prophets, world teachers, incarnations, great men have had their own Gurus, however, great they might have been. Svetaketu learnt the nature of Truth from Uddalaka, Maitreyi from Yajnavalkya, Bhrigu from Varuna, Narada from Sanatkumara, Nachiketas from Yama, Indra from Prajapati; and several others humbly went to wise ones, observed strict Brahmacharya, practised rigorous discipline, and learnt Brahma-Vidya from them. Lord Krishna sat at the feet of His Guru Sandipani. Lord Rama had Guru Vasishtha who gave Him Upadesa. Lord Jesus sought John to be baptised by him on the banks of the river Jordan. Even Devas have Brihaspati as their Guru. Even the greatest among the divine beings sat at the feet of Guru Dakshinamurti.

Today, on this auspicious occasion of Guru Pujah, I would also like to highlight the sublime role of mother earth in our lives. Mother earth is the life giver and guru to mankind. We have hurt our mother and guru by wanton felling of the trees and endless devastation of the nature. What were once verdant green are lying barren now. My heart sunk and a deep sense of sorrow descended on me when I saw recently the barren slopes of the Khongjom hills. I became resolute to pay back whatever little I can to mother earth by planting trees and what could be more gratifying than this form of guru pujah. In order to make this day more significant, I would make a sincere appeal to all the communities of the state to plant trees in our respective houses on this very day, every year without fail. This would be a rich tribute to our mother earth. In the Raj Bhavan this morning, I took a small initiative by planting 150 tree saplings. Let us take a pledge today to plant trees every year on this Guru Pujah Day across the state with the slogan 'one family member, one tree'. In a Scandinavian country I have visited, a

tree is planted everytime a child is born and it is something worth emulating. Cutting across social and political systems, religions, continent and nations, protection of the earth and the environment has now become the rallying point. The growing awareness today is how to live in harmony with our surroundings. The rate at which the environment is being destroyed far exceeds the rate of population growth. Destruction of environment has threatened the survival of humanity. Sources of water are drying up. In our own state, the beautiful Loktak Lake is drying up. The air is getting polluted. Because of rapid erosion, productivity of the soil is declining. Recurring floods and landslides are causing serious damage to life and property. Here, I must tell you that Government alone cannot accomplish the gigantic task. Hence, more and more voluntary organizations with the noble objective of preserving environment should come forward. Unless the guideline stipulated by the Government and the experts are followed by the general masses, our attempts will be infructuous.

I am hopeful that Suryabara Sana Kala Kendra will grow and succeed in enriching and popularising Manipuri arts and culture. This Organization will not only serve the interest of all communities in the field of arts and culture but also work for the protection of the environment. They can play a defining role to transform the moral, discipline and attitude of students of all communities of the state as well as keeping mother earth green. This Kendra can be the apostle of the value of Guru Pujah.

I, once again, thank the organizers for inviting me to this celebration and am fully confident that Guru Pujah will instil in our youths true moral values and discipline. I am also hopeful that all of us will rise to the challenge of greening the earth.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.