



### SHRI YUMNAM JATRA SINGH (POSTHUMOUS)



Shri Yumnam Jatra Singh was a legendary Manipuri cultural icon and a distinguished exponent of Nata Sankirtana, the traditional Vaishnavite dance and music form of Manipur. He served as a visiting guru at the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy (JNMDA).

2 Born on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1923, at Tendongyan Awang Leikai, Imphal West, Manipur, Shri Yumnam started learning music at a very early age. Over a career that began as early as 1949, he performed all across India. His life's work, spanning over seven decades, was dedicated to preserving and promoting spiritual heritage, including training generations of younger artists. He held a Diploma in Nat Eshei (1976) and Diploma in Nat Cholom (1980) from JNMDA, demonstrating a deep academic and practical command over both the singing and rhythmic aspects of Manipuri traditions.

3. Shri Yumnam performed extensively in Manipur and beyond. He participated in several festivals organized by Manipur Sahitya Parishad, Manipur State Kala Academy, and Guru Gulapi Nat Sankirtan Academy. He also performed at Kirtan Festival in Tripura, Niti Leela and Nimai Sanyas Festival in West Bengal, and Manipuri Nata Sankirtana show in Delhi in 1960. Internationally, he performed at the Barak Festival in Bangladesh in 1949.

4. Shri Yumnam's contributions to Nata Sankirtana are timeless. His efforts played a significant role in UNESCO's recognition of Sankirtan as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013, and the establishment of Manipur University of Culture's Department of Sankirtan.

5. Shri Yumnam received numerous state and national awards and honours in recognition of his outstanding service and contribution to Nata Sankirtana. He received Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Award presented by Sangeet Natak Akademi, Delhi in 2023. He received the honourable Khamen Chatpa (royal dhoti), Sana Khuji (Gold Bangle), and cymbals presented by Maharaj Bodhachandra's wife. He was awarded the title "Nata Bhushan" at the 73rd annual session of Manipuri Sahitya Parishad in 2008. He was honoured with the Manipur State Kala Akademi Award in Nata Sankirtana by Manipur State Kala Akademi in 2013. A special honour was also presented to him in the Diamond Jubilee of Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy in 2015. In recognition of his lifelong contributions, the Cultural Forum Manipur presented him the Lifetime Achievement Award in Nata Eshei in 2016. In 2017, he was bestowed with the title "Nata Ratna" in Sankirtana by Manipur Sahitya Parishad in 2017. He also received the Harinam Maha Mantra Award by International Sankirtana Day Celebration Committee in 2019. He held the title of 'Eshei Hanba' (chief performer) of the Shree Govindajee Naha Pala. He was an approved artist of All India Radio, which helped extend the reach of Nat Eshei beyond state borders.

6. Shri Yumnam passed away on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2025.