

# Naamghar In North America

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The idea of establishing a Naamghar in North America was initially proposed by the *Satradhikar* of Auniati Satra, Dr. Sri Sri Pitambar Dev Goswami (Ref-1). He visited New York and New Jersey in September 2016 as the chief guest at our Sankardev *Tithi* function. As this endeavor is for a religious and spiritual institution, it is relevant to quote our former president of India, Late A. P. J. Abdul Kalam in this context. He was invited to address the European parliament on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the European Union on April 25, 2007 (Ref-2). "Different religions could be bridged through spiritual components. The spiritual component spreads the values to be inculcated by human beings for promoting a good human life and the welfare of society, while pursuing material life", he said. The whole parliament gave him a standing ovation, while the president of the European parliament said, "They had never heard such a great speech; it was God inspired"!

*Satradhikar* and his accompanying *Deka-Satradhikar* and *Bhakats* from Assam were formally welcomed by a traditional *Gayan-Bayan* at the Sankardev *Tithi* at the Balaji Temple of Bridgewater, NJ, as shown in Figures 1 and 2. *Bhakatanis* joined us as seen in the photos. He formally conferred the title of *Bor Medhi* to me at the *Tithi* to lead this initiative of building the maiden Naamghar in North America. Subsequently, he also conferred the titles of *Naamgharia* to Anjan Saikia and *Barik* to Niren Choudhury. We formed an organization called Naamghar Association of America, Inc. (NAAM) to realize our vision to have our Naamghar.

The following year in December 2017 *Satradhikar* presented us with a *Guru-Axon* to recognize our efforts in a formal manner. Our first year of celebration was captured at a function in New Jersey as shown in Figure-3.

We had conducted a survey in the North-East community to determine if a Naamghar was indeed really needed, as it was a project with a significant funding requirement. While we saw a whole distribution of responses in our sampling size, we found that a majority was in favour of having a Naamghar. That was not surprising in a way because the North-East community enjoyed the critical mass of residents capable of undertaking such a project with traditional cultural activities. It is well-known that the North-East was the birth place *Bhaona* in North America, witnessed by late Dr. Bhupen Hazarika at the 1989 Assam Convention in Toronto. A plan and progress to-date may be briefly summarized as shown below.

- Naamghar Association of America, Inc. (NAAM) is now taking shape with a Board of Trustees headed by a Chairman and a New Jersey based bank account. However, we are still awaiting the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status from the IRS.
- NAAM has now seven executive committee (EC) members and twelve working group (WG) members from all across North America.
- We have seven sub-committees looking after various projects to drive our goal of building the first Naamghar in America in the New York /New Jersey /Pennsylvania area.

- We continue with the various programs and functions of a Naamghar that you are familiar with, for example, *Naam-praxanga*. We plan to organize about four of these in a year. Figure-4 shows such an event organized at the residence of a host family.
- We want to start organizing video-conferencing for a Spiritual Dialog with *Satradhikar* taking a lead in the discussion, with participation from *Bhakats* and *Bhakatanis* from all across North America. We may do that at a Community Center to start with.
- Our Short-term objective is to explore a Temporary Community Naamghar, and long-term a Permanent Naamghar for which we have an architectural design as shown in Figure-5. It may cost us at least half a million dollars with land and building.

Our Assamese diaspora is small. We have to be able to attract and educate others about the teachings of Srimanta Sankardeb in our spiritual dialog. The onus is on us only to develop the educational process. This will increase our support base. The Hindi version of the *Naamghosha* is now available. Its book release meeting was inaugurated by none other than the chief minister of Assam (CM) in 2017. I had a

meeting with the CM earlier that year in Guwahati in 2017 about our Naamghar. We saw that he asked the Assamese folks to support the cause for our Naamghar in America at the same book release public meeting, which was organized with Dr. Nagen Saikia, ex-president of Asam Sahitya Sabha, as the chief guest and keynote speaker.

While the architectural design of our Permanent Naamghar in the North-East is now taking some shape as shown in Figure 5, we would be glad to consider Naamghars in other parts of North America where we have a concentration of Assamese people with enough interests.

Please visit our website at [www.Naamghar.net](http://www.Naamghar.net) to see more details. We are seeking more committed individuals to join us in the effort. If you are interested or if you want further information, please e-mail us at [NaamInfo@Naamghar.net](mailto:NaamInfo@Naamghar.net)

#### **Book References:**

- 1) Dr. Sri Sri Pitambar Dev Goswami, "Americar Amranga Rang" (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. 2018, Barnamala Prakashan)
- 2) A.P.J. Abdul Kalam with Arun Tiwari, "Transcendence : My Spiritual Experience with Pramukh Swamiji" 2015, Harper Collins Publishers)

*Dr. Binoy K. Bordoloi is a resident of Bridgewater, NJ. He is currently leading the efforts of the Board of Trustees of NAAM as its Chairman*

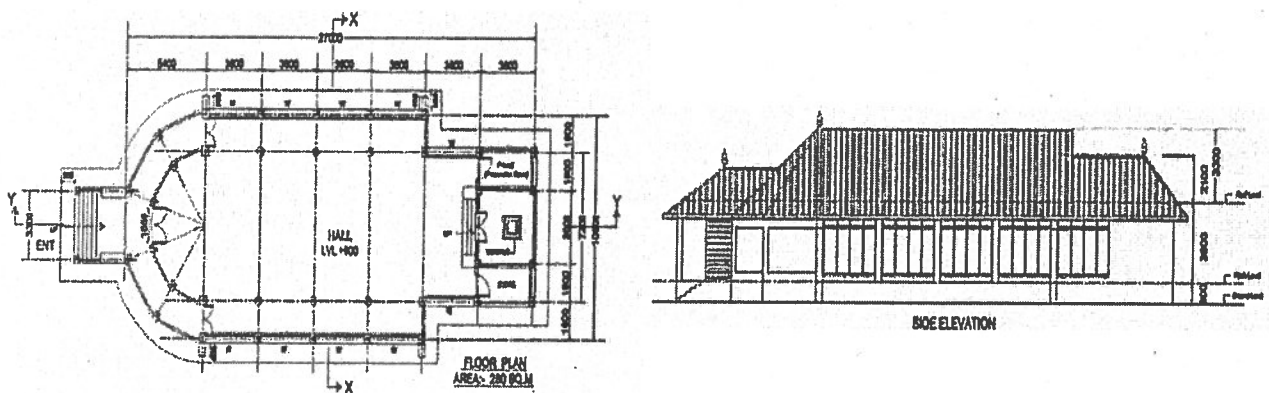


Figure - 5 : Architectural Design of a Naamghar in the North-East, Floor Plan and Elevation





Figure-1 : Traditional Assamese Gayan-Bayan welcome of Satradhikar at Sankardev Tithi, Balaji Temple, Bridgewater, NJ, 2016



Figure-2: Enthusiastic Bhakats and Bhakatanis are seen with Satradhikar coming for Sankardev Tithi





**Figure-3: Donation of Guru-Axon by Satradhikar for our Naamghar, ]  
organized at a cultural function in New Jersey in December, 2017**

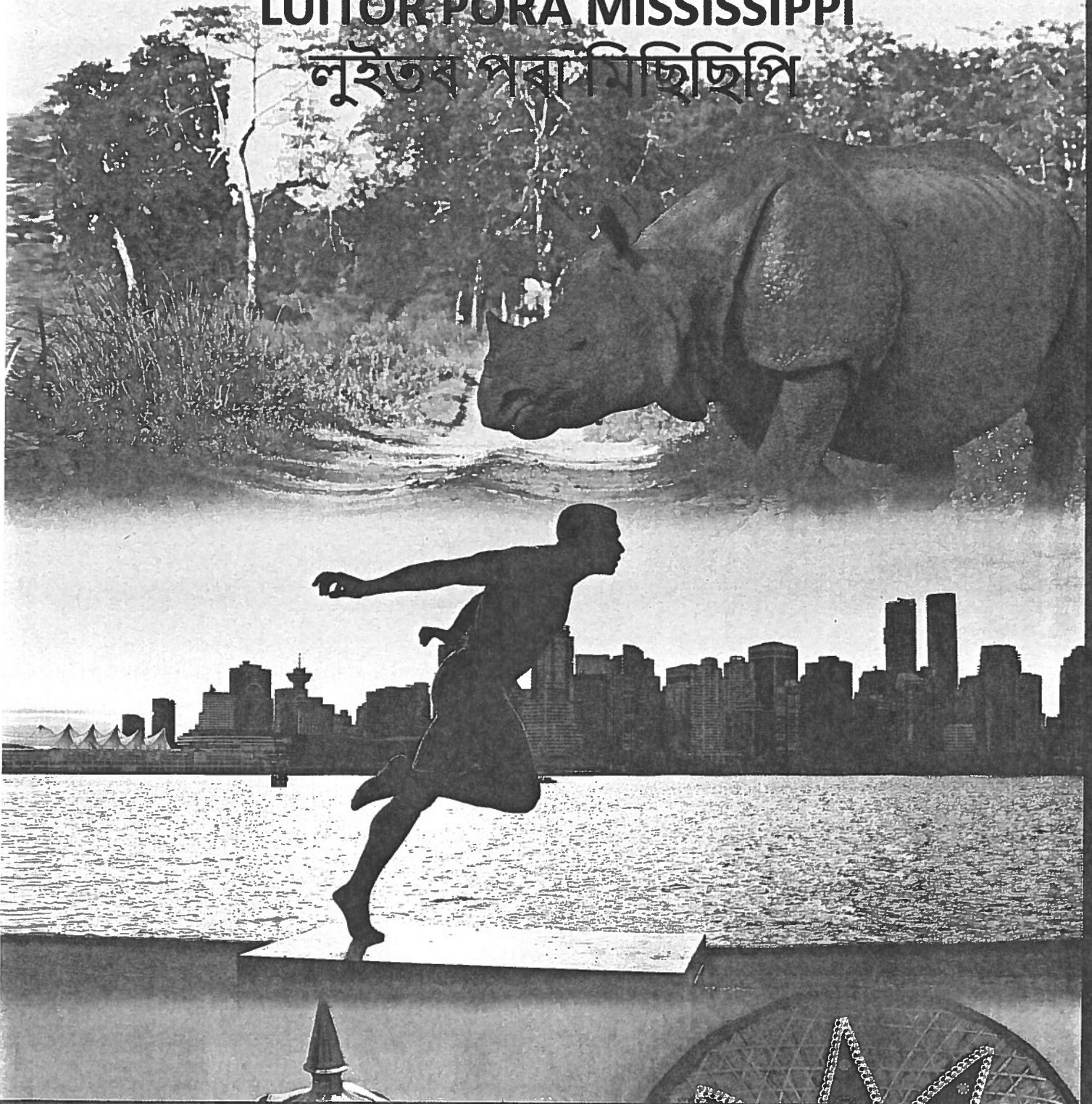


**Figure-4: Performing Naam-Praxanga at the Residence of a Host Family**



# ASSAM ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA LUITOR PORA MISSISSIPPI

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