



Naamghar Association of America

NEWSLETTER

WWW.NAAMGHAR.ORG

Volume 4/Issues 3/ July-September 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE BOR-MEDHI

Dear community members and well-wishers of NAAM,

First, my sincere thanks to all of you who made the NAAM fundraiser on this past August 28th a success. We need your active and continued support, particularly financial support, to build a Naamghar in America. The video recording of this event is available at: https://youtu.be/UVf11_s2_c.

We hope to host such events in the future, and we look forward to your participation and financial support for such and other NAAM events. Thank you!

Here I am pleased to share with you the welcome speech I presented to the audience on the August 28th event. As always, please feel free to contact me directly or via Naaminfo@Naamghar.org with any questions or comments you may have about NAAM and its mission and activities.

Jai Guru SankarXarba Gunakar

Jakeri Nahi Anupam

Tohari Saranaka.....Renu Xata Kauti

Bareko Koruhu Pronam

নমস্কাৰ, আপোনালোক সকলোকে স্বাগতম জনালো । আজি আমাৰ এই virtual NAAM Fundraising Event ত ভাগ লবলৈ অহাৰ কাৰণে মই সকলোকে মোৰ আন্তৰিক কৃতজ্ঞতা জনালো ! নামঘৰ হল অসমীয়া ৰাইজৰ বাপতি সাহোন ।

A) I welcome you all to the first Fundraising Event of the Naamghar Association of America (NAAM).

Our Naamghar *Thapona* was established in 2016 by the head of the Sri Sri Auniati Xattra, one of the oldest and largest monasteries in Majuli, Assam. It

was the maiden visit of a *Satradhikar* to America. Its *Guru Axon* was then duly consecrated by the same *Satradhikar* in his second visit in 2017. NAAM is a not-for-profit trust that was granted 501(c)(3) status in 2018. So we are an organization for the Assamese diaspora to celebrate the spiritual traditions and the philosophical teachings of the great *Vaishnavite* Saint Srimanta Sankardeva.

We offer you a forum to express and experience these traditions propagated by Srimanta Sankardeva, including but not limited to regular *Naam-Praxangas*, singing of devotional songs like *Borgeet*, various performing arts, for example *Xatriya Dance*, *Bhaona* and many more at our two annual events. This is the mid-year Fundraising event and then we will have our Annual *Janmotsav* of Sankardeva later in October this year.

While currently we have a Temporary Naamghar where we have the *Guru Axon*, we are also actively seeking a community place for the same. Our long term objective is to build a Permanent Naamghar in America. We can have several Naamghars in North America, as in Assam, where we have a critical mass of the Assamese diaspora and folks interested in having a community Naamghar in their locality within a drivable distance. We are encompassing and embracing the entire Assamese community in North America in our noble endeavor of NAAM, while the focus is in this tri-state area of the east coast for the first Naamghar.

B) We have organized **an attractive agenda of ten items** for you today that includes

- One Naam-praxanga / Prayer
- Three Borgeets
- One Tokari Geet

- One Kamrupia Loko Geet
- One Diha Naam
- One Xatriya Nritya
- Dashavatar Nritya
- One Kathak Nritya
- One Dhol Ojapali
- One Khol Badan

Please enjoy.

C) On behalf of NAAM, I want to offer my sincere **Vote of Thanks** as follows :

1) All the invited performing artists of the above items: Gayatree Sarma, Nritya Dhvani School students of the USA of Priyadarshini Inman, Priyanka Jagat Saikia, Rabin Goswami, Hemanta Kr Kalita, Jina Rajkumari Goswami, Sankumani Sarma, Mridangom of Anita Tamuli's disciples, and Arunabh Jyoti Malakar)

2) Satradhikars of Natuan Kamalabari, Barpeta and Auniati Sattras for their blessings via video messages

3) Our Board of Trustees, Office Bearers, and Working Group members

4) Technical Support team for the Zoom event: Chiranjit Bordoloi, Shyam DevChoudhury, and Niraj Barbara.

5) Emcees, namely Priyadarshini Inman, Nayan Nirban Barua and Krishangi Kaushik for the event's successful delivery

6) DY365 and Assam Tribune for promoting our event in the news media in Assam

7) Ekodus team of Manoranjan Bordoloi for all the design work with our Posters & Flyers

8) Finally, last but not the least, you all in our audience and all the well-wishers in North America, Assam and beyond, for your time and active participation with guidance.

Again, Thank you all.

Sincerely,

Dr. Binoy K. Bordoloi, *Bor Medhi*

Email: binoy.bordoloi@gmail.com

UPDATE ON FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

NAAM hosted a cultural event on August 28, 2021 to raise community awareness about NAAM's activities and to raise funds for a Naamghar in North America. Total funds raised from this event was \$10,250.00 (ten thousand two hundred fifty dollars).

NAAM also soliciting your donations via its website (<https://naamghar.org/>), NAAM Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/NaamgharAssociationOfAmerica/>), and the "DONATE" button on this page to fund a community Naamghar in North America.

NAAM is looking forward to an active participation of the community (Assamese diaspora) for realizing

a common dream of building a Naamghar in North America. Please use the "DONATE" button below and/or contact Dr. Binoy Bordoloi at binoy.bordoloi@gmail.com for additional information. Thank you!



Please contribute to NAAM's effort to build a naamghar in North America:



FEATURED ARTICLE

LIFE & LIVING : THE BHAGAVAD GITA PRESENTS THE SCIENCE OF BEING AND THE ART OF LIVING

By Dr. Binoy K. Bordoloi

The *Bhagavad Gita* guides one to the understanding of true values of life, achieving supreme happiness and peace of mind. It is a book of light, love and life – *Jnana, Bhakti and Karma*. The *Gita's* philosophy of doing one's duty has universal appeal.



Its ethical aspect is a source of inspiration to one and all, irrespective of religion and country. It has become an ambassador of goodwill and understanding between the East and the West, the old world of thought and the new world of action.

The *Bhagavad Gita* embodying the philosophy of the *Vedas* and the *Mahabharata* is the quintessence of true wisdom and a great contribution of India to the spiritual heritage of mankind.

This article summarizes a few key messages from each of the eighteen chapters of the *Gita*:

1) Arjuna's Distress:

- “Alas, we have resolved to commit a great sin as we are ready to kill our friends and relatives out of greed for the pleasures of a kingdom”, Arjuna said.
- “It would be far better for me if the sons of Dhritarashtra, with weapons in hand, should

kill me in the battle without any armed resistance on my part”, Arjuna told Shri Krishna.

2) The Way to the Ultimate Reality of Life:

- The man who is not disturbed by the contacts of the senses with their objects, who is even-minded in pain and pleasure and who is steadfast makes fit for eternal life.
- You have control over your action and never over its fruits. You should not live for the fruits of action, nor attach yourself to inaction.

3) The Way of Action:

- A man who rejoices in the Self, is satisfied with the Self and is content with the Self alone – he has nothing for which he should work.

4) The Way of Knowledge:

- I am born in every age for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of *Dharma*.

5) The Way of Renunciation:

- A person whose soul is no longer attached to outer objects finds the happiness that is in the Self. He whose heart is devoted to the contemplation of *Brahman* enjoys undying bliss.

6) The Way of Meditation:

- He who looks at the pains and pleasures of all beings as he looks at them in himself is a supreme person.
- Mind is unsteady and difficult to curb, but it can be controlled through practice of meditation and by warding off worldly ideas.

7) The Way of Realization:

- Four types of virtuous men worship me (God). They are the man in distress, the man seeking knowledge, the man seeking enjoyment, and the man endowed with wisdom.
- I confer on the devotee unflinching faith on whichever image of form he chooses to worship.

8) The Way of Indestructible *Brahman* (individual soul, *Atman*):

- *Brahman* is supreme and indestructible, which is immortal, imperishable and eternal, and *Atman* resides in all beings.
- I am easily accessible to that ever-steadfast *Yogi*, who constantly meditates on Me and gives no thought to anything else.

9) The Way of Royal Knowledge and Royal Mystery:

- He is everywhere and He is nowhere.
- All persons who take refuge in Me, attain the highest goal.
- The true means of attaining Him is simply through pure devotion and love.

10) The Way of Divine Perfections:

- I am the Self, seated in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings. I am the creator of the Universe.
- Shri Krishna told Arjuna that it was impossible to speak of all his manifestations.

11) The Vision of the Universal Form:

- “Therefore, stand up and win glory, conquer your enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. They have already been killed by Me, you be only the instrument,” Shri Krishna told Arjuna

12) The Way of Divine Love:

- Knowledge is better than practice, meditation is better than knowledge, renunciation of the fruits of action is better than meditation, peace immediately follows such renunciation.

- The performance of action without desire appears very simple, but it is the highest *Yoga*.

13) Discrimination between the Body and the Soul:

- Constancy in the knowledge of the Self, an insight into the object of the knowledge of truth – this is declared to be true knowledge and all that is contrary to it is ignorance.



14) Discrimination of the Three *Gunas*:

- *Sattva* is illuminating. It attaches to happiness. It gives peace and enlightenment.
- *Rajas* is born with action and desire. It causes attachment to actions and their fruits.
- *Tamas* is born of ignorance. It binds one to helplessness.
- One should watch the *Gunas* in one's character, eradicate *Tamas*, control *Rajas*, and when *Sattva* predominates, beware of pride and ego. This is precious knowledge.

15) The Way to the Supreme Self:

- “I am seated in the hearts of all. It is I alone who is to be known through all the *Vedas*. I am indeed the author of *Vedanta* and the knower of the *Vedas*”.
- He is superior to both body and soul. He is the prime immortal force, and is therefore known as *Purushottama*.
- Shri Krishna told Arjuna that He had given him the most profound knowledge, acquiring which a person becomes wise and perfect.

16) The Divine and the Demoniatic:

- Shri Krishna told Arjuna that there are two types of people born in this world, the divine and the demoniac.
- The virtues of the divine enable one to attain wisdom. These are fearlessness, intelligence, charity, self-control, non-violence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, peaceful disposition, compassion, kindness, non-attachment, gentleness, sense of shame, forgiveness, steadfastness, purity of thought, freedom from hatred, humility, absence of greed, austerity, sacrifice, study of scriptures (*Vedas*).
- The vices of the demoniacs include hypocrisy, pride, arrogance, anger, harshness, and ignorance
- “Therefore, let the scriptures be your authority for determining what should be done and what should not be done. You should do your work in the world according to the rules of scriptures (*Vedas*).”

17) The Threefold Faith:

- The faith of every individual is in accordance with his nature. A man is made of his faith, he is what his faith is.
- *Brahman* has threefold designation: *Om Tat Sat*. All acts of sacrifice, austerity and charity are always begun with the utterance of *Om*. With the utterance of *Tat* without desiring any reward are these various acts performed by those seeking liberation. *Sat* is used in sense of praiseworthy act, truth, and goodness. Any action without faith is called

Asat. Such actions are of no help in this life or the next.

18) Deliverance through Renunciation:

- Shri Krishna replied that abandonment of all action was called renunciation – *Sannyasa*. The abandonment of the fruits of action was called non-attachment - *Tyaga*.
- Control of mind, control of the senses, undergoing hardship for the sake of duty, internal and external purity, forgiveness, straightness of mind and belief in God are the qualities of a noble soul.
- “Arjuna must fight because being a *Kshatriya*, it is his duty to do so.”
- “Fix your heart in Me, give your love to Me, worship Me, so shall you come to Me. This is my pledge to you, for you are dear to Me.”

(This article was prepared from one of the collection of books left behind by Late Dr. Nobin C. Bordoloi, father of the author. This booklet titled "The Bhagavad Gita", was written by O. P. Ghai with a foreword by M. P. Pandit, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondichery (2nd ed., 1992). The author, Ghai, undertook the challenge of writing one chapter a day. He completed the eighteen chapters of the Gita in eighteen days. This is an attempt of the author of this article, with ideas taken from Ghai's book, to make it simple to understand, while being fully aware that any translation or summary, however competent, cannot convey the beauty and force of the original. The author also reviewed the Assamese version of Srimad Bhagavad Gita compiled and published by Tarun Baruah (2007).

This article was first presented to a select group of invitees at the "Gita Path" yearly event organized by Drs. Aradhana and Robert Satin at their residence in Neshanic Station, NJ in 2017.

Picture source: Google.

The author can be reached at: binoy.bordoloi@gmail.com).



FEATURED ARTICLE

SAINTS AND DEVOTION

By Kamalakshi Hazarika

Sri Sri Sankaradeva, Sri Sri Madhavadeva, Mirabai, Sitaamma and other Bhaktas were among many Indian saints who showed devotion to one God only. Sri Sankaradeva, though born to a chieftain family dedicated his life to spirituality. Similarly, Mirabai though married to a king was always immersed in devotion to God. Eknath who was infinitely patient, had saintly ability to give faith. The Saints, through ages, have revived faith and belief in the eternal.

Maharashtrian saint Jnaneshwar was part of the Varkari tradition of travelling devotees that sing and compose devotional songs to God. Among his friends were Namdeva who was a tailor, Narhari the goldsmith, Janabai the maidservant and Chokhamela and his wife who were outcasts; hence the thought that God lives with the one who seeks him, irrespective of his work, his caste or upbringing.

In a story of devotion, Saint Chokha is born with unquestionable faith. The devotee is always drawn to the temple to pray. The Brahmin priest opposes this act, as Chokha belongs to a backward class that is barred from worshipping in

the temple. One day when the priest does not allow Chokha to enter the temple he goes back to his house and sings the praise of God. The priest follows Chokha and finds him composing devotional songs. Outraged that a lowly caste person is composing songs in God's praise, he enters Chokha's house and asks about the compositions. Chokha explains how God is all pervading and is the source of his inspiration. The priest becomes enraged and loses control. He slaps Chokha on his cheeks. The next morning when the pundit goes to the temple, he finds that there is a hand imprint on the cheek of the deity that he worships. He realizes that God took the suffering of his devotee when he had slapped Chokha. The priest is filled with remorse and begs God for forgiveness.

Devotion bestows faith and the devotee becomes one with God.

(The author lives in New Jersey with her family and can be contacted at: kamalakshi.hazarika@gmail.com).



OBITUARY

The Assamese diaspora in North America lost several noted members of the community in the recent months. This section is dedicated to these honorable members of the community who are fondly remembered. May their departed souls rest in eternal peace.

Dr. Rajen Barua

Dr. Rajen Barua, the son of the late Debendra Nath Barua and the late Kanchan Bala Barua of Jorhat was a lifelong activist for the welfare and



development of Assam and the Northeast India. He graduated at the top of his class from Assam Engineering College with a degree in mechanical and migrated to USA in 1979.

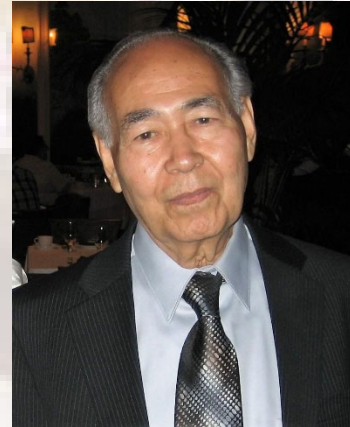
In 2006, he established the US-based philanthropic organization Friends of Assam and the Seven Sisters (FASS international), a think tank organization aimed at promoting the economic development and growth by providing an inspirational energy and a motivating force for overall revival and development of the Northeast India in all its spheres. By the phrase 'Assam & Seven Sisters' we mean specifically the eight states of Northeast India: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura and Sikkim. He was the President of FASS from 2006-2021. Under his direction and dedication FASS achieved a lot and completed lots of social projects in Assam and Northeast India.

He was also a great scholar and writer. Few years back, Dr. Barua translated 1,000 famous poems of the world and the book was published from Jorhat,

Assam. Following are some of Dr. Rajen Barua's published books: 1) Buddhism in Assam; 2) Poetry of the World; 3) An Anthology of Short Story Translation in Assamese; 4) Gautam Buddha and Buddha Dorxon; 5) Dao De Jing (Assamese); 6) The Story of the Assamese Language; and 7) The Story of Assam.

Dr. Narendra K. Bora

Dr. Narendra Kumar Bora (Naren), son of the Late Dr. Bishnuram Bora and Late Mrs. Labonya Bora, passed away on July 29, 2021 at the age of 88, at home surrounded by family. An I.Sc student of St.



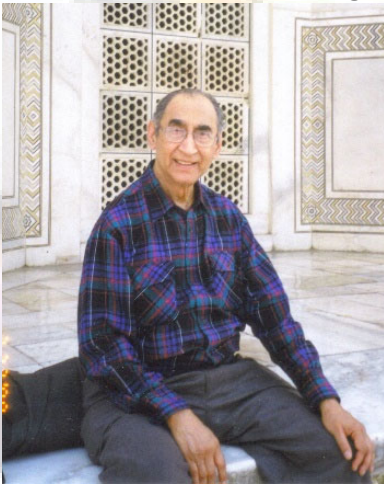
Edmunds College in Shillong, Dr. Bora completed his M.B.B.S from Assam Medical College in 1959. In 1964, he married Ranjana Phukan (Rina) from Kenduguri, Jorhat and soon had two sons, Nabajyoti (Ping) and Dhrubajyoti (Pong).

He came to the USA in 1971 and successfully passed the medical board exams. In 1977, he and his family left NY for Kansas where he worked at Osawatomie State Hospital as its medical/surgical director. In 1980, a final move to West Virginia would lead him to eventually retire in 2002 from the

medical/surgical unit at the Huntington State Hospital. In 1999 and 2000, he became a proud father-in-law to Kimberly and Sukanya (Rimjhim), respectively. In 2004, Dr. Bora became grandfather to Devin, followed by Asha a few weeks later and Aleesha in 2006. Dr. Bora will be remembered by family and friends as an honest, humble, sincere, and hardworking man who cared for hundreds of patients and helped others.

Dr. Kripanath Borah

Dr. Kripanath Borah breathed his last on 9 July 2021. He was born in Kolkata, to Ambicanath and Gunaboti Borah, in 1931. He was the grandson of the



renowned litterateur Satyanath Borah. He received his BS and MS from Kolkata University, and his Ph.D. in Pharmacy from Munich University in 1961, where he was a Humboldt Scholar. He returned to India to work at CIBA of India from 1962-1976 as Development Mgr. He immigrated to USA with his family in 1976. There, he began by doing research at Boston College before rejoining Industry. He was Director of Pharmaceutical Development at Organon Inc. 1980-1990 and of Product Development at Enzon from 1990-1992.

He was active in many cultural and professional organizations in India, Germany, and USA including helping establish the North America branch of the Assam Sahitya Sabha and the American Association of Indian Pharmaceutical Scientists. He is survived by his wife Sadhana, his sons Shambhu and Arun,

his daughters-in-law Menoka and Roxanne, and his grandchildren Sanika and Mihir.

Habibur Rahman Boruah

Habibur Rahman Boruah, one of the first wave of immigrant Assamese engineers to settle in Southern California, passed away on August 27, 2021 after a



brief illness. A son of Nagaon, an alumnus of Cotton College, Jadavpur University, and Durham University, New Castle, UK. He had a long and hugely successful professional career with Southern California Edison Company until he retired.

Habibur Boruah was a very active member and leading voice of the Assamese diaspora in Southern California. He was an involved member of AANA and helped to host one of its very first yearly conventions in LA in the summer of 1986. He leaves behind a legacy of graciousness, good will, and kindness to all. Locally known simply as "dada", he was a vital part of all the Assamese gatherings, Bihu, and other community celebrations.



RECENT AND UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Cultural event in August 2021: NAAM organized a fund-raising cultural event in August 2021 and the event was well-attended. Future events are planned, and the community will be informed in due time.

Tithi celebration in September 2021: NAAM co-hosted with NEIACO (North-East Indian American Cultural Organization) the Sankaradeva Tithi on September 11, 2021 in New Jersey. It was a hybrid event and was well-attended. Both organizations expect to host the Tithi in-person in 2022.

Sankaradeva Janmotsav celebration in October 2021: NAAM will host a community event on October 16 at 4:00 pm to celebrate the Sankaradeva Janmotsav. This will be a hybrid event; more details to come.



Q&A

Q: What is NAAM?

A: Naamghar Association of America, Inc. (NAAM) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit spiritual and cultural organization formed to construct and manage a Naamghar for the Assamese diaspora to celebrate and perform the spiritual traditions and philosophical teachings of Srimanta Sankaradeva. With strong ties with all the *Satras* of Assam, NAAM seek to provide a forum for learned spiritual leaders and traditional artistes to share their knowledge and talent with the current and future generations of the Assamese diaspora.

Q: What are the immediate goals of NAAM?

A: Some of the immediate goals of NAAM include spreading awareness on NAAM initiatives, build a digital media platform, plan for fund raising, and participate regularly in Naam-proxongo. NAAM seeks volunteers from the large Assamese diaspora across the United States to achieve these goals. Please join us (details at the bottom of this newsletter). In our planning activity, the first priority is to identify what is needed to establish a

temporary *Naamghar*. This will make the *Guru Axon*, consecrated by the Sri Sri Auniati Satra Satradhikar, more easily accessible to the public, while we work on the longer-term project of building a permanent *Naamghar*.

Q: Does NAAM collaborate with other organizations?

A: NAAM is actively seeking to collaborate with all community organizations which are willing to help achieve NAAM's mission. NAAM plans to have meaningful discussion with all organizations in our community; please contact us if you would like to be a part of this conversation (contact details at the bottom).



HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH NAAM?

JOIN THE NAAM WORKING GROUP (WG):

We need your help in achieving the dream of building a Naamghar in North America. Therefore, NAAM is open to everyone who is interested in building the Naamghar.

an email to: Naaminfo@Naamghar.org. The WG meets regularly via teleconference/video conference to discuss various issues that are related to NAAM and its mission and goals.

If you are interested in getting involved actively in NAAM's mission, please join the NAAM by sending



NAAM WORKING GROUP TEAM MEMBERS

Following individuals comprise the current NAAM working group (WG) team. ***We invite all individuals who are sincerely interested in the Mission and Goals of NAAM to join the NAAM team.*** The current WG members are:

- Iswar Agarwalla, NC
- Niraj Barbara, PA
- Dr. Sanjib Bhuyan, NJ
- Pranab Bora, WI
- Lolit Bora, PA
- Subhasini Bora, NC
- Dr. Babul Borah, OH
- Utpal Borah, VA
- Dr. Binoy Bordoloi, NJ (*Bor-medhi*)
- Manoranjan Bordoloi, NJ
- Monidipa Bordoloi, CA
- Susanto Bordoloi, CT
- Malabika Brahma, NJ
- Debojit Chowdhury, CA
- Niren Choudhury, NJ
- Bikul Das, MA
- Namita Das, VA
- Dr. Pradip Das, MO
- Shyam DevChoudhury, PA (Secretary)
- Dr. Saswati Datta, OH
- Hemanga Dutta, NJ
- Panchali Dutta, NJ
- Sawmick Dutta, CA
- Prandeep Gogoi, NJ
- Ajoy Hazarika, NY
- Kamalakshi Hazarika, NJ
- Suranjoy Hazarika, NJ
- Priyadarshini Inman, NC
- Dr. Jukti Kalita, NJ
- Rashmi Kalita, CA
- Sangaurav Kaushik, NC
- Nilanjona Mahanta, CA
- Nabanita Mazumdar, WA
- Chayanika Mohan, NC
- Rachna Nath, AZ
- Shakhyar Neog, NJ
- Dr. Yashwant Pathak, FL
- Anu Perlmutter, VA
- Nilakshi Phukan, NC
- Gayatree Prasad, CA
- Dr. Purandar Sarmah, NJ (Treasurer)
- Vavani Sarmah, CA

Contact Us

Email: Naaminfo@Naamghar.org

Website: www.naamghar.org

Facebook: Naamghar Association of America – NAAM

