

**Name of the Element: Mañipuri Mahārāslīlā (মণিপুরি মহাৰাসলীলা)**

Name of Inventory: Test Inventory 1

Serial No: D3-0011

**Brief Description**

‘Manipuri Maharaslila Utshob’ (festival) is celebrated by the Manipuri Community, residing in the greater Sylhet region, especially in Moulvibazar. The festival lasts for one and a half days and is organized at the time of the full moon of the Bengali month of Kartik (at the end of October or early November). The festival has three distinctive different parts - Rakhai (literally, shepherd) Nach, a dance of boys, performed in the afternoon; Raslila dance, representing the Dance of Divine Love between Lord Krishna and his devotee Radha. It is performed by young dancers dressed as a group of ‘Gopi’ and ‘Krishna’, following the dance form created by in 1779 by Ningthou Ching-Thang Khomba, also known as Rajarshi Bhagya Chandra, a 18th century Meitei monarch. The festival, which is held all night long, includes the third component of a village fair (Mela) for all local customers and outsiders. Historically, this festival has been arranged by the Manipuris for 172 years in Madhobpur region in Kamolganj sub-district of Moulvibazar, These days, the fair is also observed at Tetaigaon in Adampur of Moulvibazar District and Jayashree in Habiganj District. A similar celebration is at the same time in Assam (India), but not as significant as the traditional Raslila Festival.

The term "Raslila" roughly means Dance of Divine Love. The dance form tells the story of Lord Krishna, Radha and the Gopis, and is considered as Krishna's favorite past-time. The Ramlila is an important part of the traditional Manipuri culture. When the dancers perform the Raslila, it symbolises the spiritual love for Lord Krishna. It is one of the most important part of Manipuri classical Indian dance.

The Manipuri Raslila is unique, not only in terms of character but also costume. The look is indigenous, and the costume consists of embroidered stiff skirt, light muslin garment on top, white veil and traditional Manipuri jewelry.

Region: Madhobpur region in Kamolganj sub-district of Moulvibazar; Tetaigaon in Adampur of Moulvibazar District and Jayashree in Habiganj District of Sylhet

---

Photographs: Video: Consent:

Submitted by: Sukanta Singha  
Email: ss.du.ais@gmail.com