

Budha Chingtham  
Haobam Marak Chingtham Leikai, Imphal West, Manipur  
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### **BUDHA CHINGTHAM**

Budha Chingtham (Born Dec7, 1957) is an Indian playwright, theatre critics, actor, columnist and theatre Olympian. He is greatly respected for bringing Manipuri theatre to Indian masses. His work at as playwright evoke fervid emotions. He has written over 18 plays including the META (best original script) winning play Mythical Surrender and the META (best original script) plays like A Far Cry. The Priestess and Dreams From My Room. He is a four time META nominated playwright and one winner of the META (one of the highest rational award for theatre). His play “A Far Cry” participated in 8<sup>th</sup> Theatre Olympic 2018 in India, the biggest theatre event in the world.

Born	Budha Chingtham (December 7, 1957) Haobam Marak Chingtham Leikai, Imphal West, Manipur.
Occupation	Playwright, Actor, Theatre Critic, Columnist.
Parents	(L) Chingtham Brajamani Singh (father) (L) Chingtham (O) Lourembam Ibeni Devi (Mother)
Spouse	Chingtham (O) Nongthombam Urmila Devi
Children	2
Year active	Since 1975
Educational Qualification	Graduate

### **THEATRE AND ACTING**

He was initiated into theatre under the guidance of Shri Laishram Uday, Director, Galaxy mobile drama Imphal in 1975. He was an actor, director of the galaxy mobile drama. He has acted in more than 50 plays. His acting days were embellished with productions like "Sanulembi", "Pamuba kari", "Taramdai Korou", "Sakharam Binder", "Nungshiba Thiba", "Yotki Thong", "Sanulembi", "Thangal Naha", "Puchkhel", "Thangal General", and a role in the Indian classical play "Mrichhakatikam"(1980) sponsored by the Manipur State Kala Academy in collaboration with Theatre centre Manipur, an apex body of the Theatre Organisation of Manipur. He then went to win the best actor award in the XIV<sup>th</sup> Inter Office

Civil Services Drama competition, 1995, in the role of 'Sakharam Binder' in Vijay Tendulkar's play of the same name. And he is still continuing his acting career and he recently acted as a courtier in the light and sound show "Kangla" (2018) produced by Tricolour India Limited Mumbai. He is also the casting director of this show. He also choreographed the short story theatre adaptation of K Radhakumar's Atoppa Sangsar Amada. He has directed over 10 plays and 2 summang Leelas. He is the project Director for the upcoming "Loktak Landscape Theatre Project". Recently he has directed one play "Crying of Kangleipak" based on the present conflict in Manipur.

## PLAY WRITING

Budha chingtham's work as a playwright evoke fervid emotions. He is greatly respected for bringing Manipuri theatre to Indian masses. His plays are crafted around the central theme of the troubles faced by the locals due to AFSPA (Armed forces special power act). His work reflect the struggle of the people of Manipur stuck between the force of insurgency and counter insurgency. He wrote his first play '**Black Orchid**' in 2008 which won him the best script award in All Manipur Short Play Competition for creative directors organised by Theatre Centre Manipur. 'Black Orchid' (Director Toijam Shila) participated in many national and international theatre festivals like the Bharat Rang Mohotsav International Festival of India, ISBN International Summit 2009, Delhi, Kerala National Theatre festival, Guwahati National theatre festival, Jharkhand national festival.

The first part of his conflict tetralogy "**Mythical Surrender**" won him the best original script award at the 6th META awards 2011. The META is the country's one of the most definitive and highest award for theatre. Mythical Surrender also participated in the Bharat Rang Mohotsav, Kerala National Theatre Festival, North East Theatre Festival. Then the second part of his conflict tetralogy "**A Far Cry**" craned him his Second Best original script META nomination at the 2012 META awards. The play "A Far Cry also participated in the Bharat rang Mohotsav 2018 and The Theatre Olympic held in India. Theatre Olympic is an international theatre festival, which presents some of the achievements of the greatest theatre practitioner of the world. And then the third part of his conflict trilogy "**The Priestess**" craned him his third consecutive nomination for best original script at the 2013 META awards. The last part of the conflict tetralogy "**Dreams from my room**" earned him his fourth best original script META nomination at the 2015 META awards. Dreams from my room also participated in the Poorva tar theatre festival organised by National school of drama in Tripura

Another one of his play "Makoi Nungol ching" participated in the Poorva tar theatre festival held in Sikkim

His other plays include "**Dance of Statue**", "**Wild Water**", "**The Sub-human people**", "**Venomous Woman(Linleima)**", "**No Man's Land**", "**Kaidongpal**", "**Suicide Room**",

**"Lumdaithel", "House of Fire", "The Smoky Lake", Imagi Ningthem Yeknabagi Macha (My Royal Son, the son of my Enemy), "Hi Ho Hi", "Tunnel Song".**

He has currently finished writing a trilogy "Lampi 1, Lampi 2 and Lampi 3" This trilogy have been translated in the Kabui dialect by Star Kamei as Lamana 1, Lamana 2 and Lamana 3" and performed by Star Repertory theatre. The Kabuis have now regarded the trilogy of Lampi as their own ancestral folklore. His play "Mythical Surrender" is also translated in Kabui dialect and published by Star kamei Almost all of the main protagonist of Budha Chingtham's play is female except some.

He has also written a summang leela (Courtyard play or performances simply performed without any raised stages or any set design or props). He has directed two summang Leela plays. He also translated the English script for the light and sound show "Kangla" produced by Tricolor India Limited Mumbai. He participated as a regular faculty member of "75 Day Playwriting Workshop organised by the National School of Drama New Delhi in collaboration with Khenjonglang. Imphal (2006).

He also participated in the Workshop on creative playwriting (April 8th to 12th 2004) organised by Dept. of Art and Culture, Govt. of Manipur in collaboration with EZCC(Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre) Kolkata.

He is associated with eminent personalities like Ratan Thiyam, H. Kanhailal, Robert Wilson (American theatre Experimentalist), Vesa Valo Tapio (dramaturge, Director, Finland), Havib Tanvir, Anuradha Kapur.

## **COLUMNIST AND THEATRE CRITIC**

Budha chingtham is also a theatre critic and a columnist. His criticism can be found in the Imphal based local daily "**The Sangai Express**" (the largest circulated daily in the state). He is also a contributor to "**Theatre India**", a half yearly journal published by the National School of Drama and "**Rangvartaa**" Jharkhand based Hindi Theatre journal. As a columnist, he was awarded the RK Maipaksana Journalist Fellowship for 2014.

He has presented more than dozen of seminars held in various part of the country. He participated in the international theatre seminar on theatre in the world today: Individual and Collective Vision and presented a paper entitled "Some Reflection on Modern Theatre in Manipur" (Oct 10/12/2003). As a critic Chingtham was nominated as an expert critic from the north east India by the Sangeet Natak Academy, New Delhi for its Golden Jubilee celebration.

## **AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS**

Budha chingtham is a 4 times nominee and a one time winner of the **META (Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Award)**, the country's most definitive and highest award for theatre. He has also won Best Script at the **All Manipur Short Play Competition organised by Theatre centre, Manipur 2008**.

He received the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Kalakshetra Movement National Award 2013" He also won the best actor award at the **XIV<sup>th</sup>** Inter office civil services drama competition, 1995. He was nominated as an expert critic from the North east by the sangeet Natak Academy, New Delhi for its golden jubilee celebration, 2003.

As a columnist he was awarded the RK Maipaksana Journalist Fellowship.

Others awards that can be mentioned are **Dr.R.K Somorjit Singh Memorial cash Award, Samata Sahitya Academy Lifetime Achievement International Award for Theatre And Dramatic Arts 2022 Nagpur, Yambem Mani Sahitya Mana 2021 for his book Mukyetnaba Drama Mari"**, Best Script Award Langmeidong Drama Fest, Floating World Theatre Award 2024 Thanga, Samata sahitya Best President Award, Delhi 2023, Salam Irabot, Ibomcha Ningsing World Theatre Day Cash Award 2022.

#### **PANEL OF JUDGES, COMMITTEE MEMBER & MEMBERSHIP**

- He is the screening committee member of National School of Drama, New Delhi international theatre Festival, India and a regular visiting faculty of National School of Drama, New Delhi, Sikkim and Tripura.
- Former member NEZCC (Northeastern Zonal Cultural Centre), Dimapur and member of EZCC (Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre), Kolkata.
- Member of Manipur Cultural university Syllabus Committee
- Member, Board of Governors, EZCC Kolkata, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India.
- He is also in the panel of judges for 7th and 8th state film festival organised by Manipur Film Corporation, Imphal, All Manipur Short Play Competition for Creative Director organised by Theatre Centre Manipur, Youth Festival Drama Competition organised by Manipur University, Drama competition MANFETE, organised by MIMS, Manipur University

#### **PAST AND PRESENT POSITION HELD**

- President-Cultural Workers and Activist Forum, Manipur( an apex body of Manipur)
- Treasurer-The Critic's Forum Manipur

- President - Mayai Lambi Cultural Organisation
- Advisor - Shiva Cultural Organisation, Imphal
- President-Summer Set Cricket Club Imphal
- President - Palem Panthou Cultural Trust, Imphal
- Visiting Guru - Manipur University of Culture
- State President-National Samata Sahitya Academy India

### CRITICAL RECEPTION

The Hindu's journalist Dewan Singh Bajeli wrote a column of Budha Chingtham's first trilogy entitled "**Horror and Beyond**" analysing the three plays of his trilogy (21 March 2013, The Hindu). A former Fulbright fellow at Yale university Prateek, Ramjas College New Delhi and Krispa Ningombam, an independent theatre critic wrote a performance review of his play "Mythical Surrender" on the Rupkatha Journal

"Budha Chingtham is a serious theatre artiste whose works reflect the bitterness and anxieties of the people of Manipur who are sandwiched between the forces of insurgency and counter insurgency. Budha's dramatic works assume special contemporary relevance and are a strong protest against the prevailing political system"

- Dewan Singh Bajeli, The Hindu