

SHRI MANIRAM DATTA MOKTAR

I present to you Shri Maniram Datta Moktar, who has received the Akademi Award for Sattriya dance.

Shri Maniram Datta Moktar was born in 1880, and he entered the Vaishnava ascetic order when he was only six years of age. He learnt the Sattriya dance, which is performed by all members of the Sattras, or Vaishnava monasteries in Assam, from Shri Bholaram Bayan, the leading Guru in dance and music in the Kamalabari Sattras. After thirty-two years as a performer, Shri Datta Moktar became the 'Oja Bayan', or the principal teacher of the Sattras.

Shri Datta Moktar has been both a great exponent of his art and an eminent teacher.

SHRI SUDDHENDRA NARAYAN SINGH DEO

I present to you Shri Suddhendra Narayan Singh Deo for the Akademi Award for Chhau dance.

The Chhau dance of Seraikella, since its inception, has been intimately associated with the royal family of Seraikella. The foremost performers of this dance have always been the rulers of Seraikella. Shri Suddhendra Narayan, the youngest son of the Maharaja of Seraikella, is today the leading exponent of this form of dance. He received his training from his uncle Kunwar Bijoy Pratap Singh Deo and from his late elder brother Rajkumar Shuvendra Narayan.

Shri Suddhendra Narayan has popularised this unique form of dance in this country and has given performances in Europe which have been much appreciated. He is the head of the Srikalapitha, which is the principal institute for imparting training in Chhau dance.