

LATE SHRI ATOMBAPU SHARMA

It is with deep regret that I have to convey to you the sad news of the death of Shri Atombapu Sharma at Imphal on September 2, 1963. He was the recipient of the Akademi's Award for Manipuri dance this year.

Shri Atombapu Sharma was born in 1889 in Imphal. He studied Sanskrit, and at the age of twenty became the head pandit of a Sanskrit school. When he was thirty-five, the Maharaja of Manipur appointed him as the Raj Pandit. In 1959 he was awarded a Certificate of Honour in Sanskrit by the President of India.

As the Raj Pandit, Shri Atombapu Sharma came into contact with the leading Gurus of Manipuri dance. He also studied all the relevant literature, most of it rare and to be only found in the Maharaja's library. Thus Shri Atombapu Sharma was able to make a deep study of Manipuri dance, resulting in the production of a number of books on the subject. He also wrote on religion, literature and history.

Shri Atombapu Sharma's vast knowledge of dancing made him a highly honoured Guru in the field. His art and his scholarship won him many honours.

The Akademi Award is being received by his eldest son.

SHRI CHENGANNUR RAMAN PILLAI

I present to you Shri Chengannur Raman Pillai, winner of the Akademi Award for Kathakali dance.

Shri Chengannur Raman Pillai was born in 1885. From early childhood he evinced considerable interest and skill in dancing. At the age of thirteen he joined a 'Kalari' started by Thakazhi Kesava Panicker and later continued his training under such eminent gurus as Ambalapuzha Kunju Krishna Panicker and Mathur Kunju Pillai Panicker.

Shri Chengannur Raman Pillai has performed throughout the country and has received laurels and honours due to an artiste of eminence. As early as 1926, the Maharaja of Travancore appointed him the Palace Dancer and he was the principal Guru of the Kathakali school attached to the Palace. The Kathakali form of dance has received much from him.

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