



THIYAM SURYAMUKHI DEVI
Akademi Award: Manipuri Dance

Born in 1946 in Imphal, Shrimati Thiyam Suryamukhi Devi received training in Manipuri dance at the Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy since the inception of the institution in 1954. A disciple of the eminent master Shri Maisnam Amubi Singh, she also learnt from other gurus - Sarvasbree Y. Mahavir Singh, H. Tomba Singh, T. Amudon Sharma, Kh. Lokeshwar Singh, A. Yaimabi Singh, and Th. Babu Singh. Moving out of Manipur in the early part of her career, she also worked and trained with contemporary choreographers - notably Shri Apunikarta, Shri Prabhat Ganguli, and Shri Narendra Sharma. She received training in Chhau dance of Mayurbhanj from Shri Krishnachandra Naik.

As a solo dancer in Manipuri style, she performed compositions created by her guru Amubi Singh during the 1960s, as well as lead roles in Manipuri dance-dramas created by him, which were featured in Sangeet Natak Akademi's historically important events like the Tagore Centenary held in 1961 and the Geeta Govinda Seminar held in 1961. Later, she created her own solo compositions such as Basanta Barnam, Sakhi Ukti, Jasoda, and Duti Sambad, which she presented in important festivals. She was among the earliest Manipuri dancers to be part of Indian cultural delegations visiting other countries in the 1950s.

After initial experience in the dance-dramas of Little Ballet Troupe, Shrimati Suryamukhi Devi joined the Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy, Imphal as a senior dancer in its Production Unit in 1975. Since then, she has been the lead artist, and co-director of several of its productions. Her memorable performance as a female deer in the dance-drama Keibul Lamjao and its film version Sangai won her many accolades. Besides working and performing for her institution, she also teaches dance at residence as a guru. Several notable dancers of Manipur have worked under her guidance.

Shrimati Suryamukhi Devi has received the Manipur State Kala Akademi Award and has been honoured with the title Nritya Bhushan by the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad.

Shrimati Suryamukhi Devi receives the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for her contribution to Manipuri dance.