The *Poubi lai* is regarded as a malicious spirit of a giant python. He is believed to have lived in the core of Loktak Lake. Manifestation of the Poubi Lai from intangible to a tangible form was expressed by the artist Late Karam Dineshwar in 2002, through a wooden sculpture which is highlight of this exhibition. In collaboration with Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal, National Museum displays a series of paintings that describe the Manipuri folk tale of Giant Python who threatened to kill the people of Moirang Kingdom for his daily meal.
The sudden appearance of Poubi Lai
Artist: M. Nobin Meitei
Loktak Lake is famous for being the largest fresh water lake in Northeast India. *Lok* here stands for ‘stream’ and *tak* for ‘the end’.

Almost 2-3$^{rd}$ of this enormous expanse of freshwater is covered with unique floating islands of reed & humus; i.e. *Phumdis* or *phumshongs*. These floating islands are actually a heterogeneous mass of vegetation, soil, and organic matter at various stages of decomposition.

The lake is a significant source of livelihood and of locals who reside in the surrounding areas and on *Phumdis*. They have made floating islands for dwellings and fishing purposes.

*Poubi lai* lived in *Loktak Lake* as the ancient folk tale states. As the story goes he was annoyed by the tremendous increase in fishing activities by the people of *Moirang* Kingdom which led to hunting of fishermen for his meals.
Poubi Lai sculpture was carved out of one root of a big tree near the bank of Leimatak River as forecasted in Karam Dineshwar’s dream.
Poubi Lai threatening the king of Moirang to serve a person for his daily meal
Artist: A. Krishnadas
Young lad *Apanba* visiting the Shaman *Kabui Salang Baji* for help

Artist: M. Nobin Meitei
Showing the magical weapon for the hunt of Poubi Lai
Artist: S. Nongpokhenba Meitei
An act of fight between Poubi Lai and Kabui Salang Baji
Artist: M. Nobin Meitei
Pakhangba in the form of an Eel fish bites the leg of Leisna
Artist: Th. Robindro Singh
POUBI LAI
THE STORY OF A GIANT PYTHON

According to the Meitei Folk lore, Poubi Lai is a huge size mythical form of a Python who lives in the core of Loktak Lake. Incidentally, the spirit was awakened with collective fishing activities held under the patronage of the Moirang King. Out of anger this giant spirit began to destroy the fishermen's habitat and started killing the people around. He decided to destroy the Moirang kingdom. The terror of this giant creature had grieved the surrounding chieftains and the Moirang kingdom. He threatened the King to provide one basket of rice and a person for his daily meal. This understanding in turn had led the people to live in great despair. When there was a turn for a handsome lad called Chauhi Leirang Aponba, he visited the most remembered Shaman called Kabui Solang Baji to seek his help. He promised to save Moirang kingdom from the evil act of Poubi Lai. Under his magical power, he transformed a Tou-an aquatic plant into a nine headed javelin. It is said that, this malevolent spirit was tamed and killed by Kabui Solang Baji.

POUBI LAI
एक दैवताकर अंधकार की कथा
मैंहै दैवताकर अंधकार की कथा। यह तो लोक-विश्व के जन्मदिन पूबी लाई एक अंधकार की कथा। हमें यह विधान निचले पितलकर टुटक रहा है। यह संपत्ति माटियो में साधूविद्युत विद्युत नहीं है। नामानुसार जीतता जा रहा है। कोटित होकर यह मोहर अपने साथ मिलता है। हमें यह विधान निचले पितलकर टुटक रहा है। नामानुसार जीतता जा रहा है। कोटित होकर यह मोहर अपने साथ मिलता है। हमें यह विधान निचले पितलकर टुटक रहा है। नामानुसार जीतता जा रहा है। कोटित होकर यह मोहर अपने साथ मिलता है। हमें यह विधान निचले पितलकर टुटक रहा है।
*Poubi Lai* sculpture at National Museum
Visiting Information

National Museum
Janpath
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Open 10:00 am to 5:00 pm (Tuesday to Sunday; Monday closed)
Phone: 91-11-23019272

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