Hamei is a fermented food ingredient prepared by mixing powdered rice and sun-dried bark of Albizia myriophylla which is locally known as Yangli. The crushed rice soaked in water is kept for 30 minutes and ground in the form of powder. The already sun-dried Yangli bark is cut into small fragments and soaked in water till a brown colour is developed. This brown liquid along with the Yangli fragments is mixed with the powder rice to the formation of a paste in the proportion of 5:1 w/w.

The paste so prepared is made into small round cakes (1 cm. - 9 cm. broad and 1/2 cm. thick). Such round cakes are stretched and covered with thick cloths or thick layers of husk or straw (2 inches thick) and allowed to ferment for 5 days. After five days the fermented mass are dried in the sun and can be used for the preparation of liquor.

The role of Hamei in the preparation of local liquor may be looked into three aspects (1) enhancement in the process of alcohol production (2) improvement of alcohol quality (3) increase in the alcohol quantity.
The process of alcohol production was found to be enhanced by about 20 minutes with the addition of Hamei, though alcohol preparation may be made without Hamei. Moreover, the taste of the alcohol was far better and improved when organoleptic test was done by tasters when Hamei is added. The quantity of alcohol production is also found increased distinctly with the addition of Hamei.

The micro-organism involved in the fermentation of Hamei was identified as *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* and *Aspergillus niger*.

The fermentation of Hamei is caused due to the combined activities of *Aspergillus niger* and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. The powdered rice mixed with Yangli fragments when made fermented to the formation of Hamei serves as a good catalyst in the preparation of alcohol.

The biochemical composition, viz, Magnesium, calcium, Iron and Alkaloid was investigated. During the investigation the quantity of the above minerals was found as follows: magnesium - 21 mg, Iron 1.7 mg, Calcium 34 mg, Alkaloid 35 mg per gram.
Increased in the total Nitrogen content, Nitrate, Nitrite and total Amino acids was observed in fermented Hamei when compared with the freshly prepared Hamei. The contents of total Nitrogen in fresh and fermented Hamei was 0.38- and 1.26- respectively, the percentage of Nitrate in fresh and fermented forms was 0.035 and 0.135 respectively while that of Nitrate in fresh and fermented forms was 0.045- and 0.105- respectively. The total Amino acids in fresh and fermented Hamei was 0.26- and 0.82- respectively.

The Nutritional contents of the Hamei which is prepared with a highly starchy local rice i.e. Moirangphou are found as follows :-

Protein 9.5% fat 1.5%
Carbohydrate 82.06% Riboflavin 0.06 mg. Thiamine 0.34 mg.

By the improved method of Hamei preparation in the Laboratory we can enhance the fermentation period for 2 (two) days.

The enzymes involved were also investigated. Two types of enzymes viz. the Amylase the Invertase were
actively involved during the fermentation of Hamei formation. During the early period of fermentation the enzyme activity at PH 6.5 was found to be higher but during the mid period the activities at PH 5 was higher, while the activity at PH 3.5 was passive. Enzyme activity at PH 6.5 was found to be the highest in the late period of fermentation, while, the enzyme activity at PH 5 and 3.5 was found to be decreased.

The byproducts formed during the fermentation by the micro-organisms concerned were identified as Ethyl alcohol and Carbon dioxide.

During the fermentation of Hamei formation of the volatile phenolic compounds was detected during the investigation and the formation of these compounds was found increased during the late period. The evolution of flavouring phenolic compounds during the fermentation was noticed by Keinisnser et al (1984) in various fermented food stuffs. A flavoured smell emitted during the Hamei fermentation indicates the usability of the same in alcohol preparation.