Chapter-IV

Religious Observances and Other Sacraments

The religious faith and belief of the Meiteis as the other theism and creeds of the other advanced and primitive nations, tribes, etc. have their own cultic observances and sacraments. Those observances sacraments are appeared to be in the annual calendarized trend and trait. These observances and sacraments are also treated as the festivals which signify and symbolized the religious mindedness or cultic believable fear of god of the Meiteis. Over and above the calendared religious observances, sacraments, etc, there are such others also carried out in the life cycle ceremonies, celebrations, etc. To cite an example is the adoration of household deity in public in the inauguration of the residential housebuilding. The Meitei, being invested all their thoughts and beliefs in the faith of acts, of the gods are conceived to have been vested on benevolent and malevolent deeds of gods so as to find their fate and fortune in the human life. Therefore, they are try to procure kindness, pleasing, satisfaction unseen superhuman powers.

The Calendared Religious observances and other Sacraments in Meitei Society

The Meiteis religious observances and sacraments may be categorized into 1) Private and II) Public and which can be more incentively divided into i) Individual and ii) Communal Social ones. The examples of the former two are Apok-Asha-Thaba of marriage and Chengkoi Eeruppa respectively while the latter two can be exemplified with Phungga Apokpa Khurumba and Lai-
Haraoba respectively. The accounts of some of the calenderized religious observances and sacraments are describing here under.

(A) The Religious observances in Native Cult

(1) Cheiraoba (Declaration of New Year)

The Cheiraoba (declaration of New Year) is observed on the first day of the Meitei lunar month of Shajibu for the followers of the lunar calendar of Manipur. But for the followers of the solar calendar, the observance is carried out on the first day of the solar year in the saka era. Hence, both the days are conceived as the New Year’s Day according to their computation of time in their respective calendars. The festive observance of Shajibu Cheiraoba is made up of the following sacraments:

i) Shengshatpa (to take out of the enumeration) this sacrament is carried out on the preceding day of the New Year’s day. The Meitei priests put a bundle of shengnang, a land reed to the shrine of Guru and Leimaren shidabee at the heipok hills. They then worship the divinities. The pieces of reed, each one of which has the name of the royal family personnels are taken out of the shrine on the next day with paying homage again and are given to each person.

ii) Eeram Taret Eewanba (To fetch water from seven ponds) this sacrament is taken up on the New Year day for the bathing of the Meitei king. The ponds prescribed for this are: a) Nungjeng of Kangla b) Puruk - Shoubee of Kongba c) Mantri Punsiba’s pond at Lamlonggei or Mantripukhri d) Puns-
khong of Langgon hill locality e) Khakhong of Kangla f) Laikhong of Kangla g) Marongkhong of Kangla

iii) Cheiraoba Numit On the day of New Year’s day all the households of Manipuri society offered the raw items of foodstuff to divine Sanamahi, the household god and after those are cooked, offering of dishes of food is also made with a devotional mind. In the afternoon and evening before dusk every people enjoys the welcoming of the ensuing year.

iv) Konthong Chakthaba (offering of dishes to the spirits of outdoors at the Residential Gate) this sacrament is carried out after the offering of dishes of cooked items of foodstuff to divine household deity. Three dishes, one for the outgoing year, one for the incoming year anf for the year to be come after the incoming year are to be offered to the spirits of outdoor.

v) Numidang Sanamahi-Leimaremda Tan-Katpa (offering of bread to divine Sanamahi and reverend Leimaren Shidabee) this sacrament is brought out in the evening after dusk of the day of the New Years Day. The breads made of the flour of rice are offered with sweatmeats, fruits flowers and new items of dresses of the divinities.

vi) Nongshabagee Thounee (Adoration of divine Nongshaba)

vii) Pakhangbagee Thounee (Veneration of divine Pakhangba)

viii) Yumjao Lairembeegee Thounee (worship of Yumjao Lairembee)
ix) Thongngak Lairembeegee Thounee (Paying homage to divine Thongngak Lairembee, who presides over gateway to the nether world)
x) Thongngak ningthougee Thounee (worship of divine Thongngak Ningthou, the consort of Thongngak Lairembee)
xii) Huidon Pokpeegee Thounee (Adoration of divine Huidon Pokpee)

xiii) Cheiraoba or Cheithaba (Enumeration of year)

The sacraments from No. VI to No.XIII is the ceremonials in the public sector. These are carried out by the royal office of the kingdom during the monarchial periods. The enumeration of year with the reception of the incoming New Year is carried out under the name of Cheithaba. The Meitei use to have a person as the sponsor of every year or under the sponsorship of a personnels, the sponsor of the outgoing year and the to be sponsor of the Govindajee who is treated as the king of Manipur and the handing over and taking in of the charge are carried out before the deity with declaration of the commencement of the new year. Even though this sacrament is taken up before divine Govindajee the central core deity of the Manipuri Hindu Vaishnavite religious school it is treated as a local cultic sacrament as it were an indigenous religious cultural piece.²

xiv) Kongba Leithong Phatpa, Shajibu Leikhun Phunba\(^3\) (To excavate the mouths of cavity at shrines at Kongba and refill the cavities of the excavation in the month of Shajibu).

This sacrament has two parts i) Kongba Leithong Phatpa (literally to dig out the mouths of cavities, the shrines at Kongba locality) and ii) Shajibi Leikhun Phunba (literally to refill the cavities of earth in shajibu month). The former is performed on the seventh day of the Meitei month of Shajibu. On this day the royal priests in the Meitei cultural and native cultic themes went to Kongba (Kongpal) and worship divine Angom-pokpa (Langmai Kainou cheengshomba or Nongpok Ningthou) and Ningthem-pokpa (Meidingngu Nongda Lairen Pakhangba) at their respective shrines there with digging out the earth as if the mouths of cavity. The dug out earth are brought to the royal palace on the return of the priests and this step is the end of Konba Leithong phatpa.

The latter phase, Shajibu Leikhun phunba starts with the deposition of the earth keeping in two pots separately inside the temple of divine Yumjao Lairemma. After five days the royal priest worships the guardian deity of Meitei monarch (Nongshaba, Pakhangba and Yumjao Leiremma) and takes out the jars of earth deposited in the temple of divine Yumjao Lairemma. They observed the mixing containts of the earth and predict the future climatic condition and other calamities of the ensuing year and bring the earth again to the shrines at Kongba. The earth containing in separate jars refill the mouths of

\(^3\) Ibid, Pp. 18-25.
the cavity made five days before. The sacrament of Kongba Leithong phatpa and Shajibu Leikhun-phunba, even though it has literal meaning has a symbolic and significant meanings with relation to the new year's day of the Meitei.

2) Pakhangba Chenghongba (Offering of uncooked Rice to Divine Pakhangba)

Pakhangba chenghongba is denoted literally the inauguration or introduction of uncooked rice on the birthday ceremony but colloquially the offering of uncooked and cooked rice in the anniversary of the ceremony of the birth of divine Nongda Lairen Pakhangba. This religious sacrament is carried out on the full moon day of the Meitei Lunisolar month of Kalen (April-May) as divine Pakhangba is conceived as to have been born on this day in an immemorial year of C. 4000 B.P. On this memorial ceremony uncooked rice is offered to divine Pakhangba and his consort in the style of pouring down the rice grains from a basket in front of the altar of the divine couple. The rice is then cooked and offered in dishes with other floral and faunal food items. This sacrament is also treated as one of the public prayer for the peace and tranquility, prosperity and fertility, abundance and plenty of foodstuffs as well as welfare and betterment of Manipuri society as a whole.

3) Eenga Kurak Lamtaiba (Sacrifice of quadrupeds to evil spirits in Eenga month)

This religious sacrament is observed in the Meitei lunisolar month of Eenga (May-June). This sacrament of sacrifice of quadrupedal animals to the wild spirits is also treated as an observance of adoring the presiding deity of the

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4 Ibid, p. 44.
year to ward off or to drive away the spirit of death with sacrifices of four footed animal to the benevolent divinities under Laibungthou Mapan and Lainura Taret (9 proto proactive gods and 7 proto-proactive damsels) and malevolent spirits.\(^5\) This is a public and communal sacrament carried out by every village in the territorial jurisdiction of Manipur valley. This cultic sacrament consisted of the followings:

i) Khayom Lakpa (to offer oblations)

ii) Sharoi-Khangba (to offer sacrificial stuffs to wild or outdoor spirits)

iii) Koujeng Thaba (to set by a grasshopper)

iv) Yelhing Thaba (to set free a live hen)

v) Nganu Thaba (to offer a duck)

vi) Khunu Thaba (to offer a pigeon)

vii) Yen Anganba Thaba (to offer a red cock)

viii) Yen Angouba Thaba (to offer a white cock)

ix) Khurak Lamtaiba (to worship for driving out wild spirits)

\(^{4}\) Sanamahi Chenghongba (Offering of Rice to Divine Sanamahi)

Sanamahi Chenghongba is carried out in an appointed auspicious day in the month of Eenga. Some modern scholars opine that this observance was executed in the month of Langban previously.\(^6\) It is the worship divine Sanamahi the Meitei central god with the offering of pouring out the uncooked rice from baskets in the front of the altar of the divinity and reoffering the dish

\(^5\) Ibid, p. 53.

\(^6\) Ibid, p.60.
of cooked rice and other faunal and floral food items. This sacrament is similar to the “Pakhangba Chenghongba” cited above.

(5) Eengen Kurak Lamtaiba (The Adoration of Outdoor Spirits in Engen Month) or Thawan Lai Tanba (To drive away Evil Spirits in Thawan Month)

This sacrament belongs to the Chapak Phayeng community of Manipur. The Kurak Lamtaiba is actually observed in the month of Eenga for the Chakpa communities, Meiteis and other communities in the valley of Manipur. But the Chakpa Phayeng people adopt the sacrament in the month of Eengen with the observance of “Thawan Lai-tanba”. This additional sacrament is neither other than the worships of divine Koubru and divine thangijing in their village to secure themselves from the evil spirits.

(6) Thawan Potlakpa (Offerings made to the God of Water)

This sacrament is carried out on an appointed auspicious day in the month of Thawan. In this paying homages are observed to the water god Wangbren and his consort divine Eereima (the divine mistress of water) or Anal Nanphou chanu for not to suffer losses of life in the water during the year. The observance is generally executed at the river Imphal flowing on the eastern boundary of Oinam Thingen, Imphal.

(7) Langban Apokpa Latpa (Ancestor worship in Langban Month)
(8) Heikru Hidongba (Offering of phylhanthu to Divine Bijayanatha Govinda)

This sacrament, even though observed in the Hindu Vaisnavite religious fashion, is an indigenous festive sacrament introduced in the memory of the die-out Meitei cultic sacrament of Hiyanggei kumshaba (worships of the presiding deities of the out-going year and in-coming year on the rowing or floating boat) or Hiyanggei hidongba. This sacrament of heikru Hidongba is carried out on the 11th day of the Meitei lunar month of Langban every year. It was introduced by Prince Ananta Shai Mantri Punsiba. This sacrament is made up of the following:

i) Heikru Hidongba at Moirang Leima moat of Sagolban.

ii) Hiyang Tannaba or boat race at the cited moat.

iii) Pakhangba Thouneeba with the hymn of Pakhangba Temjoiron (prayer for seeking approval of the observance).

9) Mera Chauren Hauba (Adoration of Divine Sanamahi with the offering of New Harvest)

This sacrament is carried out on the first of the Meitei month of Mera. It is the observance of offering feast with the new harvest of paddy. It is treated as the first tasting of the newly cropped cereal (Chanou Tangba).

10) Mera Kwak Tanba (To drive crows in Mera)

This religious sacrament and state function is carried out on the 10th day of Mera. It consists of
i) Kwak Kappa (To shoot the crows to drive away the crows for observation of signs of good and evil phenomena and calamities to be happened during the following days in the year)

ii) Mera Ukai Kappa (To shoot the branched target to observe the fate of the year as in “kwak kappa”)

iii) Kwakshang Kummei (Cultural programme at an erected hall)

iv) Miyeng Phu Yengba (To observe the image of the king)

v) Mikouron shakpa (To invoke the starry body of the monarch to preside over the gross body)

11) Mera Shanduba (To sacrifice Bison to Divine Creator)

This sacrament was carried out on the scheduled day in the month of Mera for the welfare, longevity of life and betterment of the social beings of the kingdom of Manipur.\(^8\) It becomes an extinct cultic observance at this stage of modernity. It is nothing other than the sacrifice of bison to the divine creator by shedding blood of the animal to stain or smear the surface of earth in front of shrine of the divinity.\(^9\)

12) Mera Men Tongba (Annual ceremony of Coronation of Meitei Monarch)

The cultic ceremonial sacrament was carried out in a scheduled day appointed by the then government of the past monarchial kingdom of Manipur in the month of Mera. Now it becomes a dead sacrament.

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\(^8\) Lm(L) Ibungohal and N. Khelchandra, op.cit.p.44.

13) Mera Hao-Chongba (The Festive Dances of Hill dwellers)

This cultic and festive sacrament literally termed the jumping or dancing of the hillmen and colloquially conceived the festive sporting meets of the hill tribes and communities of Manipur under the sponsor of the past monarchial government of Manipur is an expiral sacrament now. It was carried out on an appointed day as scheduled by the past government in the month of Mera or its consecutive month Hiyanggei.\textsuperscript{10} This festive and cultic sacrament was introduced on November 26, 1847 A.D.\textsuperscript{11} with the objectives of the socio-cultural and politico-economic integration of the hill dwellers and plain settlers of Manipur but it had the cultic theme and idea of ritual and ritualistic prayers to bring forth the universal brotherhood in among the people of the hills and dales of Manipur.

14) Hiyanggei Chanou Katpa (To offer Feast of Newly cropped cereal In Hiyanggei)

The sacrament of Hiyanggei chanou Tangba (literally to taste newly cultivated stable food grain prior to the harvest in the month of November) is carried out on the first day of the Meitei lunisolar month of Hiyanggei. It is the general offering of feast or dishes prepared from the seasonal cultivated crops prior to its time of harvest to the Meitei cultic sylvan gods and goddesses.

15) Ningon Chakkouba (To Invite Sister by Brother for Feasting)

This sacrament, even though introduced in the memory of the love and caress between poireiton, the ultimate progenitor of Luwang and Khuman clans

\textsuperscript{10} Lm(L) Ibungohal and N. Khelchandra,op.cit, p.311.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, p.284.
and Laisna, the consort of divine Nongda Lairen Pakhangba (C.33/34-154A.D.) the founder of the Ningthouja clan, Meitei royal dynasty and Meitei principality as the first historical king of Meitrabak Manipur, is treated as a festival to express the brother and sisterly love and affection and it is carried out on the second day of Meitei lunar month of Hiyanggei (November-December). The introduction of this festive sacrament is attributed to Meitei-King Chandrakeerti Singh (1834-44 and 1850-86A.D.) K.C.S.I. On this day the sister is to come to her parental or brother’s home as invited by the brother is to have a sumpluous meal along with her relatives and blesses the brother to have a bright future. This is a yearly festive sacrament observed only for one day.

16) Ayangleima Kabok Chaiba (Adoration of Divine Ayang-Leima with the offering of sweet meats)

Divine Ayang Leimas are the lovely consorts of Lord Thangjeeng, the creator, guide and sustainer of the Moirang ethnic community. The sacrament of the worship of the two Ayang Leima-s, viz. Lera-Leima, Laison-thanbee or Ayang-Leima Ahan (Koiren-Leima Ngangshabee and Lera-leima Atonbee (Panthoibee) is carried out at the primary valley shrine of divine Thangjeeng Koiren-Lai at Moirang town. The cultic sacrament is an annual festive worship for five days starting from the fullmoon day of the Meitei lunar month of Wakcheeng (Jan-Feb). To speak the truth this cultic veneration is a Moirang communal one with no distinction class and clan. It consists of all the processes

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and procedures of Meitei-Umang-Lai Haraoba (Annual merry-making devotional adoration and festive of Meitei native.

17) Phou-Woibee Latpa/Khurumba (Veneration of Divine Goddess of Cereal)

The sacrament of Phou-woibee Latpa or khurumba is also called Phougouba (Invocation of divine goddess of cereal crops for good harvest). These are three types of phougouba in accordance with the months in a year, namely – (1) Poinu (Dec-Jan) Phougouba, (ii) Kalen (May-June) phougouba and (iii) Langban (Sept-Oct) phougouba. The first is observed for good cropping, harvest and storage and the latter two is observed for grants of good sowing of the seed and transplantation of the seedling and healthy growing of the paddy plants so as to produce improved procurement in the harvest respectively. These worships are carried out in the paddy fields in the months of Kalen and Langban and at the yards of storage rooms.

18) Apokpa Khurumba (Worship of Ancestors)

Please see above. For general people without distinctions of class and clan, this sacrament is carried out in three phases in different months in a year for different purposes of the worshippers. Those months and the purposes are:

1) Eenga month for seeking blessing of wealth
2) Langban month for seeking blessing of child
3) Poinu month for seeking blessing of longevity of life

14 Ibid, p.132.
15 Ibid, Pp.149-150.
Over and above the annual clannish and subclannish or family worships of different ethnic groups or clans of the Manipuri society in different months of a year there are occasional worships of the ancestors for various purposes in public and private enterprises and individual and communal businesses.

From the above facts and findings with regard to the calendared religious sacraments of the Meitei in the sphere of the native or indigenous cultic category it is brought to light that there are many others in this lines, namely 1) Khunthong-latpa (Worship of the presiding deities of the four directional gateways of the proper Imphal town), 2) Chengoi Eeruppa (sacramental dip in the sacred water of the Chinggoi in Nongmaijeeng hills in the memory of Langmai Petangga), 3) Nongmaijeeng Cheengshengba (Cleansing of the Nongmaijeeng hill region),etc. There are also many other sacraments of Hinduised adopted such as Yaoshang (Holi), Jhulan (Swinging), Jalakeli (Playing at water pool), Durga Puja (worship divine mother goddess Durga, the mistress of fortress of protection, security, etc), Ratha jatra (riding of chariot), etc. But the most popular and familiar religious sacrament of both native cultic aspirants and Hinduised religious devotees is the Lai-Haraoba or Meitei Umanglai Haraoba (the annual rejoice-making observance and festival of Meitei indigenous deities).

Account of Umanglai Haraoba

The Meitei Umanglaiis who are comparable to the Nats of the Burmese and Tibetan spirits of the Pon/Bon cult were the indigenous deities. Their
emergence is appeared to be happened during the tenure of kingship of Meitei-lord Khagemba (1597-1652 A.D.) who introduced the divine right of kingship in Manipur for the first time in 1608 A.D. and obtained the approval of the same from his subjects in 1622 A.D.¹⁶ The Meitei set all their mental faculties to the belief of gods and goddesses in their polytheism and appeared to spend their lives on the mercy of such benevolent and malevolent spirits. So they have full interest devotion, etc. to any observance as cited above. So their forefathers took up annual and regular worship of their native deities. Thus the revering and regard in the trend of worship turned up as the annual merry-making ceremony of their cultic arboreal divinities. But in due course the Umanglai Haraoba is seemed to spring up into two categories on the seasonal basis as – 1) Kalen (Summer season) Lai Haraoba and II) Ningtham (Winter season) Lai-Haraoba and the Umanglais are also divided in the termed as Kalen-Lai and Ningtham-Lai.

[A] Origin and History

The root of the historical origin and evolution of Meitei Lai-Haraoba lies in the aspiring worships of the Meitei indigenous divinities during the regime of Meitei-lord Khagemba. But many modern scholars and priests imagine having the radicle in the prehistoric time on basis of legendary formation forming the same in the mythical story and idea of the novelized love-story of divine Apanbee (Panthoibee) and Nongpok-ningthou. In such fantastic hypothesis the original source and evolutionary peduncle of Meitei Umanglai Haraoba is pointing on another fagot to the Chakpas’ ethnic legend

¹⁶ Lm (L) Ibungohal and Khelchandra, op.cit., Pp.34, 37, 38 etc.
of seeing the dances of gods and goddesses in the land of divine Soraren.\textsuperscript{17} But these legend or mythological dissertation are set aside and the view of the origin and evolution of Meitei Lai Haraoba during the regime of Meitei-lord Khagemba is pleaded as to have been written the book on Meitei Lai Haraoba during the tenure of Kingship of this king and no statement of having oral account of this tradition is mentioned.\textsuperscript{18} The root of the historical origin and evolution of Meitei Lai-Haraoba, recorded in the royal chronicle.\textsuperscript{19}

The event of “Laibu khong chingba” is still living in the Meitei Umanglai or Moirang Thangjeeng Haraoba in course of the annual worship. Hence, the veneration of Meitei lord-Khagemba of all the deities in the then Meitei theistic pantheon in 1632 A.D. may be treated as the root of origin of the annual observance of festive and devotional merry-making of the meitei arboreal deities.

Historical Process and Events

Meitei-lord Khagemba, the fountain of all the cultic affairs of Meitei or Manipur had also introduced the worships of Lord Sanamahi, divine Thangjeeng, Marjeeng, Koubru, divine Nongshaba, divine Kasa (Soraren), Apanbee (Panthoibee) and Nongpok ningthou in coupling and singular identities with the erection of regular and general worshipping shrines of bower in which temples with altars were elevated.\textsuperscript{20} During the regime of king Khunjaoba, (1652-66 A.D.), the son and successor of Khagemba introduced the

\textsuperscript{17} Moirangthem Chandra Singh, Panthoibee Khongul, Imphal, 1999, p.115.
\textsuperscript{19} Lm (L) Ibungohal and Khelchandra, op.cit., Pp.36 and 38.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, Pp.36, 38, 39 and 41.
religious sacrament of Mera Shantuba as the cultic festival and established the institution for paying homage to the python as supernatural animal in 1658 and 1659 A.D. respectively.\textsuperscript{21} Meitei-lord Paikhomba (1666-97 A.D.), the successor of king Khunjaoba contributed his shares in the religious matters with the addition of worships of divine Puthiba, divine Chakhaba divine Panthoibi (individually), divine Lammabee, god of bricks, divine Khamlangba and Yumthei-Lai.\textsuperscript{22} Meitei-lord Tubee Charairongba (1697-1709 A.D.), the successor of king Paikhomba introduced the venerating trend of idol worship in 1700 A.D.\textsuperscript{23} by moulding the facial anatomic image of divine Panthoibee in 1699-1700 A.D. Meitei monarch Charairongba is attributed the introducer of the python-cult and the information supporting the attribution is recorded in royal chronicle.\textsuperscript{24}

This incident of the vision of the pythonic deity is seemed to be the evolute of real origin of the python worship cult which transformed into the divine Pakhangba cult in due course during the reign of Meitei-lord Garibanawaza.\textsuperscript{25}

From the above facts it is brought to light that Meitei-lord Garibanawaza had a great contribution in shaping the Manipuri python cult to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid, p.44.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid, Pp.48,50,52,53,55 and 57.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid, p.62-63
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid, p.69.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid, p. 113.
\end{itemize}
manifest itself into the divine Pakhangba cult. This king also introduced the cult of divine Nungoibee, the Meitei war goddess in 1748 A.D.\textsuperscript{26}

Even though Meitei-lord Garibanawaza had the name and fame for introduction of the Hindu Vaisnavite religious sects (Nimandi and Ramandi) and he was an incentive aspirant of the Sanamahi worship cult prior to his adoption of Ramandi sect of Vaisnavism Meitei-lord Garibanawaza the true introducer and founder personnel of archetype of Meitei Lai-Haraoba enduring at present. This information of this archetype is recording in the Meitei scripture named “Sanamahi Laikan”.\textsuperscript{27}

The above displaying episode of the wedding of divine Sanamahi and Langmai-Cheengjaroibee is falsely recorded in the royal chronicle.\textsuperscript{28}

The consort of divine Marjeeng is titled Khunbu-leima Khulleima.\textsuperscript{29} while the consort of divine Sanamahi is Cheengjaroibee\textsuperscript{30} or Langmai Cheengjaroibee. Hence, the name giving as “Marjeeng is conceived to be Sanamahi.

The regime of Meitei-lord Cheengthangkhomba (1763-98 A.D.) even when he had a deep respect and regards to the Meitei indigenous cultic divinities is appeared to have been devoted to the Hindu sacraments,. His two sons and successor’s viz. Labanyachandra (1798-1800A.D.) and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid, p.119.
\item \textsuperscript{27} O. Bhogeswar, Sanamahee Laikan, 1974, Pp.107-108.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ln(L) Ibungohal and N. Khelchandra, op.cit., p.94.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Thokchom Rajo (Maibee), Langdai, Imphal, 1980, Pp.9-10.
\item \textsuperscript{30} O. Bhogeswar, op.cit.,1974, p.
\end{itemize}
Madhuchandra (1800-03 A.D.) followed the prints of their honourable father. Hence there is no record of introduction, revival of Meitei Umanglai Haraoba. Even though they worshipped the deities in the Meitei-theistic pantheon those were performed as it were done during the reign of Meitei-lord Khagemba as a veneration of the gods and goddesses in the Meitei cultic sphere.

The First Record of Lai-Haraoba: The first and foremost record of performance observance of Meitai Lai-Haraoba so far concerned to the records of information of the royal chronicle of Manipur is found during the tenure of kingship of Meitei-lord Chourajit alias Nongchup Wairang Pamheiba (1803-13 A.D.).

As the tradition and trend of recording the information of the first event of almost all the introductions, works enterprises, cultures, cults, celebration, ceremonies, commemorations, and natural and humanly activities, achievements, acts phenomena, calamities and other affairs in the royal chronicle of Manipur even though there are some repeated informations in the recording bind or endure the recording style and technique of the chronicle, the above exhibiting information may be treated as the first and foremost record with regard to the Meitei Umanglai Haraoba after the informations or messages of divine Meitei-lords Khagemba and Garibanawaza. This factual record is beyond the measure of fantastic and fanatic assumption of introduction of Meitei-lai Haraoba beyond the time ranges of Meitei-lord Khagemba.

31 Lm(L) Ibungohal and N.Khelchandra, op.cit., p.194.
The Continuance Until 1891A.D: The continuance of the Meitei-lai Haraoba observed occasionally unless and until it became a yearly devotional festival is recording in among the records of information of the royal chronicle of Manipur. In its earlier stage it remained as kingdom’s public function taken place the royal capital complex, specially at Kangla on the special events. Such observances were sponsored by the then state government.  

The above displaying events of the aspirant merry-making festivals of Meitei deities are of the respect of occasional ones from which the regular annual observance of the same in due course of the history was inferred and continued. The yearly observance of the Meitei Umanglai Haraoba is appeared to have been taken place since the regime of Meitei-lord Leiren Nonglen Sentreng Manik-Khomba alias Raja Nara singh (1844-50A.D.) along with the establishment of various ancestral goddesses of different families such as Leishangthem, Wahengbam, Khoisnam, Maisnam, Irai Leima, etc, at various localities. Thus the yearly rejoice making festival of Meitei arboreal deities came into continuity and the erection of shrines of the indigenous cultic deities for each village, locality, subdivision, etc. came into being as those of the Burmese dominion.

Prohibition and its Vaccation

The prohibition of Meitei Umanglai Haraoba was enforced by the British rule in Manipuri side and 31st March on the British side the Manipuris were defeated and their monarchial kingdom was annexed by the British Indian

32 Ibid, Pp.215, 244.
33 Ibid, Pp.268, 272, 274, 276, 282, 299, etc.
giverment on the 27th April 1891. After the addition of territorial dominion of Manipur to the vast Asiatic colonial empire the British issued the order of prohibition of the festival of boat-race on Monday, the 20th July, 1891 A.D. 34 The forbidding of the annual merry-making festival of the Meitei sylvan deities is also supposed to have been effected on the same of the prohibition cited precedingly as the record of the prohibitive statement is there. 35 This step of Britannic administration was nothing but the moral assassination and annihilation of the mentality of the war likeness of the Manipuris.

The British authority appointed princely churachand Singh, son of princely Chaobiyaima from the house of the royal dynastic personnels descended from raja Nara Singh on the 18th September 1891. He was a boy of 8 year and so the administrative, functions, were born by the then Political Officer of Manipur Field Force. After the dissolution of the Manipur field Force, 1891, the Political Officer who was used to the function the administration of the native state of Manipur was converted to the post of Political Agent. Thus the administration of the British colonial state of Manipur was under the supervision of the British Political agent since 1892 and who was said to be regent of the minor king who was appointed in 1891. The British Political Agent accordingly held all the political and administrative powers unless and until 1908 when the appointed king was decided to deem fit for the appointment and the changes of the administration of Manipur was handed

over to the appointed King Churachand Singh in the same year of 1908. Prior to this date the Manipuri-s were under the mercy of the British Political Agent.

After about 8 years elapsed from the date of prohibition of the Meitei cultic indigenous festival of Umanglai-Haraoba movement to revive the religious function was carried out as a humble request to the knowledge of the then Political Agent Mr.A.Portous Esq. ICS was serving as the officiating Political Agent since April 1898 and the vacated the prohibition on the polite prayer of Moirangthem Ramananda Singh, the then clannish king of the Moirang. The information of this vacation of prohibition of Meitei Lai Haraoba goes as under:36

> ...Selmai Labanggagee kum shaka 1820...Kalen tha..6ni yumshakeishada mabudhou ibungngo Moirang Ningthouna Meitei Leipakkee Umanglai Haraoba lepkhrababu Bada Sahebna haidoktuna mamangngeigee matougumna harauhalle ||

From the above fact and circumstance provided in the information of recording in the royal chronicle of Manipur it is clearly obvious that the Meitei traditional cultic observance of annual rejoice-making festival of Meitei sylvan deities was revived after the prohibition of about 8(eight) years by the Britannic authority. Since then the festival swayed in almost all the corners quarters, villages, etc. in the settlement areas of the Meitei, specially in the central valley of Manipur.

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36 Ibid, p. 530.
i) Preparation and Arrangement

The Lai Haraoba is found at present as categorized into  i) Kanglei-Haraoba (the merry-making festival carry out in the trend swaying in the Imphal area or people) ii) Moirang-Haraoba (the trend swaying in the Moirang area or people, iii) Kakching- Haraoba (the trend favoured to the Kakching people) and iv) Chakpa-Haraoba (the trend adopted by the Chakpa ethnic groups such as Sekmai, Andro, Phayeng, Leimaram etc.\(^{37}\) Even though the concept of the aspiration of observing or performing the Lai-Haraoba stream down in the same trends and traits, there are some variations, and unlikenesses in the feature of the processes and procedures of the programmes carried out in these four categories.\(^{38}\) These variations are appeared to be results of differences of ethnic culture, indered in their genetic characters, of the ethnic group as well as the environmental factors influenced on the group of the people with their surroundings Hence, the religious sacraments of the ethnic groups are evolved with the inspiration of what they are bearing in their genes with the inducements of the environmental and geographical factors to express.

The preparation and arrangement of Umang-Lai Haraoba are carried out by the village authority, or kingdom’s authority prior to a month of the time of observance which is going to set in for the festival.\(^{39}\) The Lai committee after a thorough discussion fixes a date and the number of days to be carried on the rejoice-making festival. The committee has to fix the date of start of festival

\(^{37}\) Ibid, p. 530.
\(^{39}\) Ibid, p.2.
after the observation of the dates in the lunar month with the effects of auspiciousness of Laicha-s of every date of the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 5\textsuperscript{th}, 11\textsuperscript{th}, 12\textsuperscript{th}, 13\textsuperscript{th}, 15\textsuperscript{th}, 21\textsuperscript{st}, 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 23\textsuperscript{rd} and 25\textsuperscript{th} days in the month.\textsuperscript{40} The invitations of Amaiba, Amaibee and pena-khongba (Asheiba) are served by the Lai-shellungba and choubol-lungba (the supplier of edible items) of the concerned deities as their responsible duties.

All the village youths twin up to the village shrine-bower and construct all the necessary huts and repairing, cleansing and clearing the temple (if any), gates, court-yard, etc. inside the arboreal shrine of the divinity. All the needs and necessities with regards to the material requirements to be used during the days of Lai-Haraoba are collected under the leadership of the Laishellungba, the treasurer-cum-keeper of the deity (ies) and if the material is to purchase, the village elderly women along with the Lai-shellungba are to buy the sames.

The Required Materials

The required materials are provided different view points and those are described as under:

i) Requirements of the Primary Deities

A) For the God – (1) A dhoti (loin-dress), (2) A wrapper and

(3) A turban (headgear)

B) For the Goddess – (1) A phanek (waistwear), (2) A wrapper,

\textsuperscript{40} Ngangbam Kumar Maibee, Kanglei Umanglai Harauba, Imphal, 1988, p.1.
(3) A cloth for gridle

C) For the pot (Eeshaiphu) representing the mother-goddess –

(1) A phanek, (2) A wrapper, (3) A cloth for gridle

ii) Required cloths for other divinities

(1) One cloth of double or broad sheet, (2) A seat covering cloth, (3) A red cloth, (4) A thin cloth for cleaning over the alter, (5) A broad sheet for covering the idols, (6) A broad sheet for using as curtain, (7) Five Khudei or towel-cloths, (8) Four broad sheets of thin quality (Phirang) and (9) One Laibou-phi (cloth to be used as the seat of floral and faunal offering representing the deity(ies).

iii) Other materials

(1) Three (3) sets of gold and silver pieces or their substitutes for Kontharon (offering of precious metals), (2) Three (3) rolls of cane, (3) Two (2) eggs, (4) Five (5) scented fruits, (5) Three discs of salt from Ningel, (6) One big pot, (7) One pottery-cover, (8) Two smaller pots (Eehaiphu), (9) Two medium sized pots for consecration (Nahaiphu), (10) A set of cooking pots (Chaphu and Uyan), (11) Three/Five/seven pieces of mud fish (Namu) and (12) One wallago atu (Sareng) along with 7 pieces of supplementary fish (es).

(iv) Others for floral Offerings

(1) Seven bunches of bananas having odd number in counting of double pieces or even number, (2) Five bunches of bananas of even number, (3) heineeng (Hog plum), (4) Heikru (Alma), (5) Papaya, (6) Sugar cane, (7) some
other fruits [3-7 are called Heikal Lakan or fruits for protection], (8) sweetmeats, (9) Zingers of clockwise and anticlockwise curves, (10) Khoiju-Laikham (Plectranthusternifolius), (11) One ball of rolled thread, (12) Binding bamboo strips, (13) A wreath of baked barbusticto (Ngakha), (14) A basket of paddy, (15) A drake, (16) A circular winnow, (17) Thirteen (13) Utongs (an Utong contains about a seer of grains) of uncooked rice. (18) Seventeen pieces plaintain leaves of tip-side, (19) Seven (7/9) pieces of bamboo-pipe, (20) Twenty seven coins, (21) Leaves of meldar tree, (22) some flour, (23) Kaboknachan Taret (seven handful of parched rice), (24) Ngaree-Ngatai (dried rotten fish and other dried fishes), (25) salt, and (26) pepper or chillis. These are provided as unavoidable materials. (27) Each of thirteen betel nuts and leaves are required for every day.

(v) Necessitated Persons
A) On The Side of Male: (1) Two youngmen for carrying the male deity, (2) Two youngmen to serve as gaurds with dao, (3) Two youngmen for holding insignias (4) All the youngmen of the village are detained to retain the festive merry-making.

B) On The Side of Female: (1) Four damsels for holding insignias made of brass, 2) One chastised women of not infirm or handicapped quality is to carry the water pitcher which represents the divine mother goddess.

C) Others: (1) Flowers and floral buds are to supply every day by the Leiroi-hanjaba (head of supplairs of flowers and floral buds), (2) Lairoi-hanjaba will
supply the leaves of plantain tree every day. (3) Shengloi-hanjaba will supply
the fire woods every day, (4) Pakhanglakpa (Instructor of youngmen) and (5)
Naharakpa (the instructor of children) will supply youngmen everyday for the
observance till the end of the festival. (6) Ningol-lakpa (Instructor of maidens)
will supply young women and married women for the festive observance in all
respects of required works.

The members of the Laroi and Shengloi institutions are to engage in the
compitative games and sports such as, (i) Meitei style of wrestling (Mukna), (ii)
Foot-races (khong lamjen) (iii) shot-put (Nung-hunba), (iv) wooden rod
throw(shuk-hunba), etc. during the days of Lai-Haraoba. The sporting atheletic
games are carried out by forming groups in the style of performances of the
kingdom, brought out in the divisional houses or Panna clubs.

(2) Preparation on the Preceding Day

On the precious day of the date of Lai Haraoba the organizing
committee of the festival arranges to keep the compound of the arboreal or
other land shrine in at the village. They employ sweepers and surface cleaners
to clean the temple and its surroundings and huts of auditorium. These works of
cleaning the compound are carried out in the morning. In evening when the
priests, priestesses and vocal and instrumental muscians arrived for the
purpose of the fistive merry-making ceremony, the personnels of the
organizing committee with set in front of the temple and will hand over all the
necessary materials collected by them.
The Dressing of the Deities

The Lai-shellungba (keeper-cum-treasurer) and the choubon lungba (supplier of edibles) will have to make two pollangs (large baskets), one for the figuration of the male deity and another for the figuration of the female deity. These baskets are called pollong-changkhrang (foundation of figurative forms in basket).

The Yoiren (the scholarly priest) who is above the knowledge of Amaiba (priests) will wear the dresses of the male deity. He is also to make the packet of offering of different food items of uncooked rice and egg in which the precious metal pieces of gold and silver are set inside by breaking the tip of the egg and floral buds of Langthrei, called the Khayom, the footstuff of divinities. The Amaibee (priestess) is to dress up the goddess by the time while the scholarly priest is wearing the dress and ornaments of the god for whom the Lai-Haraoba is to be carried out. Then the god and goddess are installed on the throne of the altar inside the temple. The entire person presented there will pay their visions and will establish their faithful thought to reverse to deem fit of the divinities for the Lai-Haraoba.\textsuperscript{41} The facial anatomic structures, if any, are also to be affixed to the framework of pollong-changkhrang.\textsuperscript{42}

(2) The Occasion of Commencement of Rejoice-making Festival

On, the scheduled day of annual festival of Umanglai-Haraoba all the villages including village elderly men and women, young men and girls and married men and women will assemble in the compound of the shrine of the

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{42} Wahengbam Lukhoi Singh, \textit{op.cit.}, p.19.
village divinities. The invited Amaibas Amaibees and Asheibas or Penakhongbas who have sojourned in the village will come forward and they are engaged in making the floral decorative two pots which would substitute the two spousal deities or and mythical nine laibungthous (Lai-eebudhous, i.e the divine great grand fathers or divine ancestral gods) and seven Lainuras (reverential damsels or divine goddesses). 43

Plantain leaves are attached around the mouths of the pots and the upper ends of the leaves are bent down-ward around the necks of the pots. The plantain leaves are to be arranged in opposite way of wrapping each other in the thought and nature of symbolic positions of lying man and women together. Two conically rolled cylinders of plantain leaves are to be fixed at the middle of each mouth of the two pots and flaps of pieces of plantain leaves are also made to hang down from conical top of the cylinders of the plantain leaves. At each tip of the conical cylinders where flaps are beginning to attach three buds of Langthrei and a coloured flower are to be adorned as ornamentations. The coloured flowers is to be aspired as the divine Almighty Being while the bent plantain leaves lying around the necks of the pots are also to be revered as the root fibers of the earth. Then two strands of nine and seven individual threads are to be knotted to each of the plantain cylinder in the reverent considerations of the pot with the knot of the strand of 9(nine) threads as the divine gods and the pots with the strand of 7(seven) threads as the reverential goddesses. Then the two strands of threads of nine and seven are to be rolled separately to two pieces of small sticks, strip of bamboo or thin strips threads. Six pieces of

43 Ngangbam Kumar Maibee, op.cit., p.6.
plantain leaves are made in the manners of keeping the leaves into three (3) dorsal ones for the god and the three ventral ones for the goddess. To each of the triads of leaves offerings of flowers in 9 or 7 counts are to be set in between two leaves of the triads. The offering of the god will be double of 9 and 7 bands of thread respectively. Then the pieces of bamboo-strips with the rolls of thread are inserted into the wrapped flowers buds and those are kept inside the pots respectively. These pots which become embellished effigies of objects of veneration are placed on the altar near each deity in respect of their genders after wrapping with white cloths. The cloth which is using in wrapping these effigies of objects of worship is called Heegau-phi [a derivative of Hee, Kouba and phi (cloth) i.e. Heekouphi or cloth used in the evocation].

Lai-Eekouba [Evocation of the Spirits of the Deities from Water]

Even though the Meitei believed that the benevolent gods and goddesses are the residents of heaven conceived firmly as to be lying in the sky beyond the human vision, they generally use to evoke the gods and goddesses in arboreal pantheon from the medium of water lying in the ponds, streams, still water of lakes, etc. They also use the water for retention or divinities in water and an example of such act is the keeping the pot full of water as the object of adoration in the daily and occasional worships of household divinities under the name of Leimaren Shidabee (divine immortal supreme Madam with the entitlement of Supreme Mother Goddess) as one of the household deities.
(A) Requirements for Conjuring Up

The priests and priestesses will have to arrange the materials of offerings from among the advancedly collected and stored objects and articles. Two Khayoms (packets of divinities’ foodstuff), mixture of leaves of medlar tree and some other spicy vegetables of condiments, flavoured with salt, chilli and dried rotten fish, yam (flour), 9/7 Utong of cheng (uncooked rice), kabok nachan 7 (seven handful of parched rice), Heiram 7 (seven kinds of fruits), Leiram 7 (seven kinds of flower) and Heishoy (sliced pieces of fruits) are to be put on a rounded winnow. Some pieces of plantain leaves and footholds of the divinities are also to be set on the winnow.

The materials for offering to evil spirits on the bank of the water are to kept separately on a dish. The offering materials of suck kinds are – Laphoi changthokpa 1 (one bunch of bananas having odd number in the double pieces counting), kwa 1 (one betel nut), Mana 1 (one betel leaf), cheng khara (some quantities of uncooked rice) and Heijang 1 (one citrus sinensis).

The Pakhang-lakpa is to render to bring forth 6(six) youngmen while the ningol-lakpa is responsible to bring forth 7 (seven) females from the reverent services of the deities. The dressing styles of some participants in the divinities’ services are in different mottos and motives and such styles are: For Males:

(i) The two youngmen who are going to carry the objects of veneration are to wear their wrappers in crossing the ends of the cloth on their

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chests and they are to dress with white dhoti (loin wear reached up to the ankles from the waist), white shirt [kurta], turban and white wrapper.

(ii) The two youngmen who are going to hold the chong (divinity’s insignia) and (iii) the two youngmen who are going to hold the Thang (dao) are to fasten their waists as the girdles with their draperies of the shoulders and they are also to dress with the same items of dresses in white colour.

For Females: (1) The girls who are going to carry the deities are to dress with the lasses dress of stripped design phanek (loin-gear) to their loins and the wrappers are of thin and white ones. The girls are four in number.

(ii) The number of married women to be in the reverential service of the deities is three. One is to bear the bronze insignia, one is to carry the object of adoration identified as the divine immortal madam. They are to wear their wrappers covering the heads. The woman who is going to carry the object of worship of Leimaren Shidabee is to have a headpiece or rolled of cloth for carrying anything on the head. The lady who is going to bear the water pot of veneration signified as divine immortal madam is prescribed to be the consort of the Lai-shellungba\(^{45}\) and if is not there one of others may be selected.

(B) The Time and Arrangement for Evocation

The Time: The time scheduled for the evocation of the spirits of the deities are generally timed at the early timing will give ample of interest to

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\(^{45}\) Ibid, p.12.
people who are going to join the annual merry-making festival of the Meitei sylvan gods and goddesses.

The Arrangement: The arrangement for Lai-Eekouba is carried out under the instructions of the leading Amaiba. He is to set the bronze footholds (khunet-shen) inside the temple and summoned all the men and women to be in the service of the deities. The two persons who are going to bear the object of worship called Eehaipu (pot of fetching water), with wearing their prescribed dressing style hold the pots placing those at the level of their navels. Those men who are going to hold the Thang (dao), Laipot (utensils of the deities), chong (royal insignia) and Pe (regal umbrella) are also supplied with their respective items. The married women are given shenpot the decorative bronze regalas) and phida (cloth of seats). Other two maiden are supplied with the circular winnows on which the Heiruk (basket of fruits) and khayom (the packet of divinities foodstuffs). The Amaibas who are going to perform the ritual are supplied with the precious metals in the pieces of gold and silver.

All the persons to have to join the ritual of evocation are assemble in lines by standing at the respective positions and consecutive orders in the front of the temple inside the complex of the arboreal shrine. The Lai-shellungba and choubollungba are to inform and ask the gathering to set out by then for the ritual service of the evocation. On receiving the information all the astray persons moving or standing here and there are to turn up to their respective places of assemblage. The musical band consisting of Penna-khongba (player of Meitei voil), Pungjao-yeiba (drummer), shen-yeiba (player of cymbals and
other artists of metal gongs, bells,) Vashi khongba (player of flute), etc. is also lined up before the temple and the scholarly priests, other priests and priestesses are also joined the gathering for the ritual of evocation.

The Procedures: When all the persons who are going to join the procession of Lai-eekouba are in ready condition, the priestesses are to perform the dance called Chumsha (simple dance) and she would take the deity(ies) or the objects of worship to begin the procession.

(i) The start of Procession: Thus the procession of ritual for conjuring up the spirits of the deity (ies) to be in the ceremony of annual merry-making starts. The lands of musicians are also to join the procession and they are to play their instrument and the Ashiba is also to sing with the accompaniment of their viols.

(ii) Arrival And Ritual: The procession will be proceeded until the party finds the scheduled spot, when they arrive there the priestesses are to set four pieces of plantain leaves on the ground adjacent to the water and four metal (bronze) footholds of the divinities are kept on the plantain leaves. Then the priestess calls for the two persons who would carry the deities or objects of worship and they are made to stand on the footholds.

When the two bearers of the deities are in their positions as instructed by the offering the pieces of the khayom (packets of deities’ foodstuff) is proceeded. The Amaibee, then, carried out the offering of the sliced fruits on the land surface adjoining the water to the astray spirits presented there. On the
next procedure the Amaibee is to take the Eehaiphu (water fetching pots) from the hands of the bearers of the deities. Her right hand is to hold the pot of worship representing the divine god and left hand is to hold that of the goddess. Then she fills the pots with water by putting the pots under the water. After this she is to dance the chuppharon with holding the water pots in her hands. The chuppharon dance means to dance in the choreographic movements to the four directional quarters (north-east, south-east, south-west and north-west) to appease and plead the foresiding deities of the directional quarters. The dance is to start from the quarter of south west or the direction of divine Thangjeeng Koiren-lai, then proceeds to the north-east (divine Marjeeng’s quarter), the south-east (divine Wangbren’s quarter) and the north-west respectively. The dance of the Amaibee then comes to Chuppun Jagoi on the fifth stage of dancing. This dance is the symbolic signification of pleading and appeasing the divinities in the water and on the land. Finally the Amaibee will have to come to the Divine Almightys for appeasing all the divine being and pacification of His universe.

The Amaibee, then arrives at the stage of her giving predictions to the people with regards to benevolent, omens, good weather, fortunes etc. in the personal affairs of individuinals and public businesses and enterprises, natural calamities, human phenomenal events, etc. This ritualistic aspect is termed Lai-bao chenba literally “to give messages or information revealed or delivered by divine beings but colloquially” forecasting the near future. Then the Amaibee is to slip the stands of thread representing the lines of spirits of the deities with
her hands three times to each of them and cleanses the iconographic images of the divinities. The strands of threads (Heeree) are set inside the Eehaiphus without interlacing with the Leiyom (bundle of flowers). The Amaibee, taking the pitcher to be represented the divine immortal madam is to fill the jar with the water of the spot of evocation. This is the end of the conjuring up the spirits of the deities from water.

Eekarakpa (Returning with Water in which the spirits of the deities are):- The assumed faiths and beliefs with regards the materials and procedures of the Lai-Eekouba remain as:46

1) The Heeree (the stand of thread) is conceived to be the navel cord of the human beings.
2) The Leiyom (the bundle of flowers) is imagined to be the mound of navel or site where the mental faculties or thinking power lies
3) The pot is aspired as the globular form and feature of the earth.
4) The hanging plantain leaves, as aforecited are supposing the root fibres of the earth.
5) The erecting conical cylinder of plantain leaf elevating at right angle is conceived to be the Almighty One.
6) The Pajeng (the fastening pins of the bamboo strips) are imagined to be the axial rod of the Leiyom.

7) The Leiyom-la (the pieces of plantain leaves wrapping the flowers) is keeping in the idea of being the placenta (Naupham) or amnion (Nauyom) of the universe.

8) All the process and procedures of the Lai-Eekouba is conceived to be the process and procedures of evolution of the earth.

Having thus conceiving the the idea of the evolution of the earth above which is covered with the hemispherical sky as if lying in an inverted five, the objects of worship are brought in to the shrine-temple of the divinities. The returning procedure of the evocation of the sprits of the deities is called “Eekaba” or “Hikaba”. On this returning rite the musicians are to play on their instruments. The mistrelwho occopany the Penna or Meitei viol will have to sing the lyrics of Lamyin (melody for royal accompaniments in-tour, journey, expedition, etc).

The Amaibees are to dance for the warm welcome of the gods and goddesses at there stages on the way in course of the returning journey. Those dances are:47

i) First stage = Lai-ok Jagoi (the dance of reception of the deities) is to performed by the priestesses. This dance is to start with Kangbom or Konggol (bubble) Jagoi (the buddly dance) and to be closed with Laiyingthou-Lairementa Jagoi (the dance perform with taking roles of the god and goddess concerned to the merry-making festival)

ii) Second stage:- The dance to be taken up in the second stage is to have to start with Kangbon Jagoi then proceeded to Kakkup Jagoi (the dance in the initiation of small water lettuce) and is closed with Laiyingthou Lairemma Jagoi.

iii) Third stage:- The dance is to start with Kangbon Jagoi is then proceeded to Kakkup and Kangjao Jagoi (the dance performs in the imitation of the (big) water lettuce) and will have to close with Laiyingthou-Lairemma Jagoi.

Laibung Youba (Arrival at the Shrine): Prior to the arrival of the party in the procession of the Lai-Eekouba (invocation of spirits of the deitei through water) some members of the organizing committee or village authority of the Lai Haraoba are setting articles of usual reception in front of the temple lying before the shrine altar of the deities. The articles and their arrangement go: 48

(1) Nga-pareng (a basketary tray full of strings of small fishes), (2) Thum Kagup (a basket of a pair of salt dishes facing each to each) (3) Shen Kagup (a pair of bell metal circular or rectangular pieces facing each to each) (4) Phoudang Thummuk Ama (one basketful of paddy), (5) Yot- Khunet (footholds made of iron), (6) Shen Khunet (foot holds made of bellmetal) (7) Ngamu Khonggal 9(mapan) (nine wide string treads and treading steps) and (8) Khunu-khongan Ama (one narrow pacing step).

48 Ngangbam Kumar Maibee, op.cit. p.13.
The arriving parties led by the female bearer of the pot of water of the immortal divine madam are to enter directly in the straight line in the shrine temple after they had passed over the above cited articles with stride. Excepting the leading women in among the other persons, the ones on the side of the god will pass over the articles with right leg while the persons on the side of the goddess are to have stridden the articles with their left legs. The Amaibee viol unless and until the completion of treading the articles of reception by all the persons concerned to the Lai-Eekouba. Treatments of reception with smoke favouring of burning oily substance and Khoiju Leikham are also mentioned in this arrival party of Lai-Eekouba.49

Lai Phamdenghanba (Installation of the Deities): After a short while of the arrival the Leiyom or Lai-Heeree-s set inside the water fetching pots are taken out by the Amaiba and Amaibee with their respective sexes corresponding to the god and goddess. And well have to hold in the Kokshet (women headdressing) and Khwangshet (gridle) are to hold the lines of the strands of threads in the respective genders. The personnels of the male and female traiads will have to approach in steady steps towards the installing idols/images of the divinities. When are approaching the Amaiba will mounce for the animation/vitalization of the divinities and Amaibee-s will have to give response of positive enlivement. The announcement and response are together termed “Heeree Phanba”.50 The numbers of males and females employed in the vitalization are provides 9 in the case of the god and 7 in the case of the

49 Wahengbam Lukhoi Singh, op.cit., p.25.
50 Ngangbam Kumar Maibee, op.cit., p.13.
The approaching persons with the Heeree, when they arrive at place where they can touch the images of the god and goddess on the alter will have to render to touch the navels or at the level of the navel of the images. This is the way of animation of the deities and the Amaiba will have to announce the vitalization which is responded incessantly by the Amaibees.

The Eeshaiphu of the Leimaren is to set on the altar on a seat of piece of plantain leaf. The two Eekouphi of the god and goddess are to be kept near the respective divinities in order of their sexes after wrapping the pots with Heekouphi (the cloths used during the time of evocation) in the manner of the god’s pot on the right side of the idol of the god and the goddess’s pot on the left side of the image of the goddess. The rolling strands of threads of the Leiyom are to be put inside the Eekouphu or Eeshaiphu after coiling them up. When opening Leiyoms or flower-bundles, the 5 buds of Langthrei which are used to set in the pack/bundle of the god are to be set in between the space of the god and goddess. This set of five buds is called Namnga-lei and the nine buds of Langthrei in the same pack are to be kept on the throne in front of the idol of the god and the seven buds of Langthrei in the pack of the goddess are also to be put in front of the goddess as the spirits of the divine Immortal Almighty the god and the goddess respectively. After a while the five buds of Langthrei placed in between the god and goddess are to be divided into sets of three and two buds. The former is to add to the 9(nine) buds of the god and the

51 Wahengbam Lukhoi Singh, op.cit. p.25.
latter to the 7 buds of the goddess. These procedures are generally termed Leihun-Tamba (offering the flowers).\textsuperscript{52}

Four pieces of plantain leaves are to be laid to each of the stand supporting the seat/throne of the deities and pieces of plantain leaves are to be in the manner of ventral position of the leaf. Another piece of plantain leaf is to be laid in the dorsal position on the middle ground of the two deities underneath the seat or throne. This piece of plantain leaf is termed chaneeng-thaba (marking the pubes of the deities). Three plantain leaves are to be laid over lapping their marginal lines as a broadsheet and this is known as Lukmang-thaba or Luklenthaba (marking the site of dish for feasting) or altar. Nine pieces of plantain leaves are to be lain in the dorsal position of the leaf on the right side of the Luklen and these are called the Laibunghthou Maphangee Latha (the floral dishes for nine divine protoprogenitors). Seven pieces of plantain leaves are to be laid in the ventral position of the leaf on the left side of the Luklen and these are known as the Lainura Taretkee Latha (the floral dishes for the seven divine damsels). The floral dishes of the 9 Laibunghthous and 7 Lainuras are to be laid in the position of facing themselves together. To all these lying pieces of plantain leaves are to be set bunches of bananas, pieces of sugar-cane, sweet-meats, fruits, etc. Again in setting the bunches of banana, those pieces of leaves in the ventral and dorsal positions of the leaves the bunches of bananas are also to be set in the same manner ventrally and dorsally in the respective manners.

\textsuperscript{52} Wahengbam Lukhoi Singh, op.cit., p.25
There are some Meitei sylvan or aboreal deities such as divine Poreiromba, Khoiriphaba, etc who are not permitted to offer parched, baked, etc. rice or the sweetmeats treated with heat of fire. Divine Khoiriphaba is also not allowed to offer fish (dry or fresh).\textsuperscript{53}

Following Procedures: After setting of edible offerings the Amaiba is to take up the ritual of Anam Athou-kokpa or sanctification with the purification of any possession of evil spirits. For this Anam-Athou kokpa a sheet of cloth after folding it into three rolls is laid down and a piece of plantain leaf is also to be set of the cloth over which offerings of uncooked rice, a bunch of bananas with odd number in the counting of even number, fruits, flowers and sweetmeats are to be place. Four footholds made of bronze are also to be kept on the plantain leaf. The rites of the Konyai-Hunba (offering of precious metals) are to be carried out.

The next procedure is the minstrel song to be carried out by the Asheiba (singer of minstrelsy). He would enumeral the benevolent virtues, achievements, abilities of the god under the ceremony of the annual merry-making observance. He is to sit on the seat made of the leaves of the whorl of plantain tree. This singing is termed as Eekarakpagee Phammang Thougal (musical service of entertainment after arrival from the conjuring up).

This musical service of recreation is to be followed by the prediction of the Amaibee who entering into the state of trance to communicate with the

sphere of divinities. She forecasts mainly the affairs flourishing by the time of the observance of the cultic devotional festival of the annual rejoice-making of the sylvan deities. The next procedure is the sharoi-khangba (offerings made to the evil spirits).

(C) The Programme

On The Second Day of Lai-Haraoba

The procedures or programme to be carried out on the second day of Meitei umang-lai-Haraoba may be found into two, viz. (1) Morning programme and (2) Evening programme. These items of the two programmes may be observed as the pool of the religious heritages, affairs and cultural heritages of dance, music and dramatic performances. Even though the enterprises of the Meitei Lai-Haraoba are set of the folk, archaic and classic establishments and hypotheses of human phenomenal affairs and activities. These elements, matrixes and elementary matters of culture and cultic faith are to be seen the dances of the Amaibees, such as creation of the universe, evolution and birth of mankind, structural establishments of the features and forms of limbs, organs, of human body, constructon of house for living of man, spinning of yarons and weaving for dressing man, agricultural cultivation of stable food crop, etc. These dances are mostly used to bring forth in daily routine Programmes without omission of none of those. Hence to set a bird’s eye view in performance or the religious sacrament of Lai-Haraoba will not be in the condition to have a good knowledge of the religious observance or annual cultic ceremony.
The Morning Programme\textsuperscript{54}

The morning programme of the second day of the Meitei Umang-lai Haraoba is to commence with the vocal musical sound of awakening song called Yakairon (the song of awakening). This song is to be sung before altar of the idols of the temple by the Asheiba (the minstrel of Meitei viol). This minstrel song opens the items of the morning programme.

The next item of the programme is to take up the Leihun-Tamba (offering of flowers). The main offering bud is the Langthrei.

The following item of the morning programme is Laimang-phamba (literally to sit before the images of deities but colloquially to predict the near future by entering into the medium of trance to obtain the communication with the divine world) of the Amaibee.

The final item of the morning programme is Lai-Luk-chanba (the offering of feast to the divinities) and this item of the programme is primarily brought forth by the Amaiba.

The Evening Programme\textsuperscript{55}

The evening programme of Meitei Umang-lai-Haraoba is to start with the assemble of all the important and responsible persons of village along with the middle men and women youths of both sexes, who take the responsibilities of carrying out the religious ceremony. The seats of both the gendors to

\textsuperscript{54} (i) Ibid, p.27 (ii) Ngangbam Kumar Maibi, op.cit., p.16
witness, participate and to be in presence are arranged in sides and manners. Those are:

The Seats of Male: The seats of male persons are generally set on the right side, facing to the temple. If the temple of the deities is facing towards the east (it is on the normal nature) the seats of male lay on the southern side of the temple as it were the right side of the facing of temple. The arrangement of different seats of various male persons goes as:

The first seat of the right side of the temple is to be sitted by the Lai-shellungba and if the deity is clannish subclannish or family (Yek Shallai or shagei) deity, the seat is to be reserved for the Piba or Chief of the clan. Next to him the Amaiba (priest) is to be sitted and the next seat is to be kept in the name of the Asheiba (singer).

The right side of the courtyard of the shrine temple is also the reserved area of men’s seat. The rank holders of the village such as Laipu (the daily or occasional worshipping servant of the village in the service of the divinity), Pakhang-lakpa, Naharakpa, Ningol lakpa, Laroi, Sheengloi, Leiroi, etc. are to take their seats in order of the superiority and seniority of ranks, status, etc. The elders and elderly men of the village, youngmen etc. are also to take their seats in this area of males’ seats.

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56 Ngangham Kumar Maibee, op.cit., p.16.
The Seats of Female

The first seat on the left side of the temple or goddess is to be sitted by the Lai-shellungba (the consort of Lai-shellungba) or the female spouse of the Piba. She is to be followed by the Amaibee and Leima shija. The left side of the courtyard of the temple is also reserved for the seats of the female spouses of the rank holders in the village authority as it were done in the right side of the courtyard with the men of rank holders. Next to them village elderly women, maidens, lasses, girls are to take their seats.

The Special Seat

The Pakhang-lakpa (the instructor of youngmen) and sheengloi (the suppliers of firewood) are to take their seats on the right side of the gate of the shrine. The Ningol-lakpa (the instructor of girl) and Leiroi (the supplier of flowers and floral buds) are to take their seats on the left side of the gate of the shrine.

Opening Item

Lai-ok Jagoi- When all the servants of the deity and responsible person of the cultic observance have taken the respective seat in time, the opening item of the evening programme is to be started. The Amaiba, Amaibee and Asheiba will come forward on the open stage-like portion of the courtyard of the temple lying in front of the temple. The Amaiba and Amaibee will have to carry out the Lai-ok Jagoi (dance for reception of the deities) while the Asheiba will have to play his viol to accompany the dancing. Technically, this opening dance is
termed Chumsha Jagoi-Anoybee (simple dance for entertainment). No one is allowed to dance prior to this dance of greeting the divinities.  

Second Item

Lei-Langba – These offerings are executed by the Leiroi-hanjaba (the head of the suppliers of flowers) and Leiroi-hidang (Asstt. Head of the suppliers of floral buds) in their respective full dresses.

The Leiroi hanjaba and Hidang will have to offer the flowers and floral buds at the foot of the divine insignia on the side of men, then to the divine insignia on the side of the women and then will have to offer to the shrine-sanctum. The offered flowers are to be handed over to the Amaibas for distribution to all the people on the side of men. For the distribution of flowers on the side of women the flowered offered to the insignia and shrine of goddess are handed over to an Amaibee or a women distribute the sames to the side of women.

Interlacing Item:

Laibou-La Shemba: While the item of Lei-langba is going on some Amaibee will have to seek and prepare the materials for Laibou-La (offering for divine activation). The materials are three plantain leaves, a thin cloth and buds of Langthrei.

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57 Wahengbam Lukhoi Singh, op.cit., p.27.
58 Ibid, p.27.
59 Ngangbam Kumar Maibee, op.cit., p.17.
Third Item:

Hoi-Lauba: The third item of the programme is Hoi-Lauba (Addressing the divinities to pay their attention) The leading Amaiba, along with some ceremonial works of the observance who have been in the full dress of festive observance will have to go and arrive at the south western corner of the complex of the shrine-bower. There the Amaiba will have to recite the hymn of addressing the divinities to pay their attention in the ceremony by that time onward.

Fourth Item:

Laibou-La Thaba: The fourth item is Laibou-La Thaba (To set offerings for activation of the divine force). Three plantain leaves are placed by laying on one another, a thin cloth folded in three folds is placed over the plantain leaves and the buds of Langthrei Laibou La is to be brought at the middle of the courtyard in front of the temple and offering the same is to be made to the deities who are presiding over the four directional quarters starting from divine Thangjeeng and following to divine Marjeeng and Wangbren. It is to be closed with the offering sequence to divine Koubru.

After making the offering of Laibou-La the Amaibee will have to remove the 8(eight) buds of Langthrei. These buds are to be used as the Khurak-lei (the flower set between fingers) and all the persons who took parts in the evocation of the spirits deities are rendered to stand in lines of their
respective genders in front of the temple.\textsuperscript{60} The procedure of Lai-Happa (Addition of the spiritual powers of the deities).\textsuperscript{61}

Fifth Item:

Laibou-Chongba: To start the Laibou Chongba (Activation of divine force) the Amaiba, Amaibee and Asheiba are to stand before the deities facing towards the divinities and the Pena-khongba will have to play his instrument and the Amaibas (priestess) will also have to begin dancing. The starting dance of the priestess is termed “Laiching Jagoi and procedures of dancing as provided are\textsuperscript{62} 1) Khurumba (salutation), 2) Leipekpa (collection of mud), 3) Khubak Jagoi (clapping dance), 4) Laiching Jagoi (the dance of driving of the attention of the spirits), 5) Khubak Jagoi, 6) Leitai-Nongai Jagoi (dancing to plead to appease the earth and sky), 7) Khubak Jagoi, 8) Kongol Jagoi (the dance of bubbles) 9) Khubak Jagoi, 10) Kangkup Jagoi, 11) Khubak Jagoi, 12) Kangjao Jagoi (Water lattuce imitative dance), 13) Khubak Jagoi, 14) Khutum Jagoi (the dancing with fists), 15) Khubak Jagoi and 16) Laiyingthou-Lairemma Jagoi (dance of divine god and goddess)”.

Sixth Item:

Hoirou-Haya-Lanba: The lines of persons standing in the genderwise group, led by the bearers of insignia (chong puba) are guided by Amaiba and Amaibee in their respective genders to go around the site of Laibou-La. After they have three times around the Laibou-la with no breach the rule of going

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, p.19.
\textsuperscript{61} Wahengbam Lukhoi Singh, op.cit., p.30.
right and left by men and women, the leading Amaiba and Amaibee will have to stop in front of deities’ shrine-sanctum. In this act of going around the Laibou-La the Amaiba is exempted to hold his position or not. The Asheiba is then gone towards direction of the opposite side of the tip of the Laibou-La and stands there at the back of the deities or Hoirou Haya-Lauba. When the Asheiba stood at his position the Amaibee addressing all the participants will have to inform for the ensuing act. The Asheiba is to sing with the accompaniment of his viol the lyrics of Hoirou (Hoirau, the announcement of agreeable option) and Haya (the willingness). When the Asheiba is singing the Amaibee is to dance the Khayom Jagoi. This dance of offering Khayom to the four deities presiding over the directional quarters is followed by the Leishee (dissolution of the earth).

Seventh Item:

Hakchang Shaba: The Asheiba is to change his rhythm and rhyme and he is to sing the lyrics and song of Anoiron (the art of dancing). Then the Amaibee will dance the artistic dance of Hakchang Shaba (forming of human body), 1) navel, 2) the crown of the head, 3) the sites of horn on the head, 4) the corners of forehead, 5) forehead, 6) eyebrows, 7) the outer ends of eyes, 8) eyes, 9) Nakhang (nasion), 10) Naton (nose), 11) Nakchee (the outer edges of the nose), 12) cheeks, 13) top of upper lip, 14) upper and lower lips, 15) teeth, 16) chin, 17) ear, 18) auditory meatus), 19) occiput, 20) frontal neck, 21) shoulders, 22) outer ends of shoulders, 23) the upper side of shoulder 24) Arm,
25) elbows, 26) the forearm, 27) wrists, 28) outer surface of hand, 29) palms
30) thumb, 31) fingers, 32) nails, 33) khubak the lines on the palm, 34) lines on
the tips of fingers, 35) backbone, 36) the flank part of chest, 37) ribs, 38)
breast, 39) the lower part of breast, 40) heart, 41) brain, 42) the intermeditary
part of two breasts, 43) loin, 44) pubis, 45) groins, 46) hip, 47) sex, 48) vagina,
49) thigh, 50) thighjoint, 51) fleshy bulging part of thigh, 52) knee, 53) shin,
54) calf, 55) ankle, 56) ankle-point, 57) heel, 58) back of sole of foot, 59) foot,
60) tiptoe, 61) toes 62) nail of foot, 63) lines on the tips of toes, 64) sole of
foot, human body of total limbs and organs, praying to divine immortal Atiya
for the human soul and animation.

The above described formation of human body, limbs, organs are expressed by the gestures and gesticulations of the Amaibee and the gestures are the most used gesticulation in these artistic and ritualistic acts and activities. They are generally called Laibou Khuthek Humphu Mari (sixty-four gestures of Laibou).

The Eight Item:

Taibang-mee Pokpa: After the completion of the Laibou Khuth Humphu-Mari the creation of a human being is complete as it were shown above. It is also conceived that the period of pregnancy (ten months or 300 days) of the above created human being is also completed. So the acts and deeds of child birth and bringing up the child to a man is taken in the
expression of dance of classic gestures and gesticulations with the sprinkle of a little dialogic addresses. The incidents displaying the performance go as:65

1) Wanggonshang (shabokshang) shaba (construction of hut for delivery of child), 2) Angang Unaba (child birth). i) Leephak punsinba (bringing in of mat), ii) Maiyoknabee changba (entering the delivery nurse), iii) Angang makok-uba (labouring of the mother to deliver her child), iv) Angang-pokpa (birth of the child), v) khoiree-kakpa (the cutting of umbilical cord), vi) Wangkhudeng pushinba (bringing in of the wooden basin for bathing the child), vii) Angang Eerujabiba (the bathing of the child), viii) Angang machum Teithokpiba (rubbing down the water from body of the child). Phi Konshing (wrapping of the child with cloth). ix) Mingkhei-peeiba (whispering of the auspicious name of Almighty), x) Khomlang-Maiyoknahanba (rendering to suck the breasts. xi) Angang chaurakpa (showing the signification of the growth and development of child), xii) Angang chongba (rendering to play with seeking blessing for normal healthy development of the child), xiii) Chaoba leptamphaba (having the normal size and figure of the child), xiv) Phishetpa (wearing of cloth), xv) Yumshaba (building of house to live in ).

There are 364 (three hundred sixty four) gestures or hand gesticulation of Laibou from birth of the child up to his attainment of youth. But these are in the exxclusion of the gestures in the trands of dancing in the Lai-Haraoba of Moirang, Chakpa, Kakcheeng, etc.66

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66 Wahengbam Lukhoi, op.cit., p.46.
The Nineth Item:

Yumsharon: The following item of the programme is appeared as a part of above Laibou procedure of human birth and his bringing up to attain the stage of an adult. The mentioning works of labour in the building houses to live in are:

i) Yumpham yengba (looking the site of the house), ii) Yumpham thonba (Raising the plinth of the house), iii) Leiyei thaba (leveling the ground of the plinth), iv) Langshan-hunba (marking the planned ground feature), v) Paring konba (drawing the plan on the ground), vi) chup-yungba (planting sticks at the sites of post), vii) Uhou-Urep Yungba (erecting of the primary or first post), viii) Uhou-Urepkee Mapu-happa (erection of matching post of the first post), ix) Khagen-happa (installation of beam), x) Yumbeeren 6 Happa (to elevate 6 other posts in addition), xi) Phaklang khaba (making of wall of reeds and bamboo strips), xii) Khangngabu (fitting of runner which lie over the beam), xiii) Ura-thaba (fitting of rafters), xiv) Yum-kuppa (roofing), xv) Cheerong-happa (fitting of the crossing decorative pointed sticks in the representation of horns of animal) and xvi) Leimai-wai-teiba (clean the floor with mud and water).

After the end of the building of the house, the Amaibee is to offer the constructed house to the divinities with showing the symbolization of fitting the significant corns and horns of animals. The Amaibee after her salutation to the worshipping deities proceeds toward the site where the Laibou-la was offered. She takes off the khurak-lei and set those on buds of the Langthrei
lying on the Laiboula. The Amaiibe and the Asheiba then again salute down to adoring deities to close their participation in the programme when the Amaiibe and the Asheiba leave the stage of worship, the others standing on that ground will have to dance.

The Tenth Item:

Panthoibee Jagoi: The Panthoibee Jagoi (the dance of divine Panthoibee) is seemed to produce to exhibit the relative love affairs of the youthful mind of the people and to entertain the youngmen and women which the elders in their personal ages had passed away and the advancing life. The Panthoibe dance has the following sequences: 67 i) Nongpokpu thiba (balletic performance of Panthoibe in search for her love), ii) Nongpok-Panthoibe Unaba (meeting of Nongpok and Panthoibe), iii) Nungshi-Nungwonnaba (love-play), and iv) Paushanaba (talking of Nongpok and Panthoibe).

The Eleventh Item:

Anoiron: 68 It is a balletic performance in the idea and theme of creation of the universe and the earth. These are expressed in gestures, choreographic movement and melodic songs.

The Twelveth Item:

Pamyanba: This performance displays the ideas and themes of agriculture and cultivations of the food crops and industrial works. This item consists of the following: i) Pamyan Jagoi (dance of tillage of land), ii) Meiba-

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67 Ibid, p.46.
chingba (acts for the produce of fire by friction of floral material and stones),

iii) Meithaba (burning the plants and trees for shifting cultivation), iv) Pam-yanba (tillage of land with spade), v) Maruomba (preparation of seedlings), vi) Lashing Panbee Thaba (plantation of cotton plant) vii) Lei shatpa Amasung Mahei Yanba (flowering and fruiting the plants), viii) Lashing Hekpa (plucking of the cotton bearing fruits), ix) Lashing ponda namba (putting the cotton fruit in baskets), x) Lashing Kaiba (taking out the fibres of cotton from fruit case), xi) Lashing phouba, manba, etc (sunning, taking away, the unwanted materials, of the fibres), xii) Lashing takpa (granding and removing the seeds from the fibre), xiii) Lashing kappa (spreading out the fibres), xiv) Moithap naiba (spinning the cotton-fibre), xv) Langchak chakpa (rolling the three to spindles), xvi) Phi-houba (warb-making for cloth), xvii) Khwangda phi shaba (weaving on loin-loom) xviii) Phi-kakpa (cutting the cloth to produce finished pieces), xix) Phi-shooba (washing the cloth), xx) Laida phi-katpa (offering the cloth to the deities) and xxi) Leishee Jagoi (earth-dissolution dance to be perform by all participants under the guidance of the priestess.

The Thirteen Item:

Longkhon: Longkhonba, the act of fishing with hyperbolic basketary net-basket is carried out after the Laibou chongba every day, excepting the day of inauguration of the ceremonial festival, i.e. Eekouba-day.
The fourteen Item:

Phibul Habee shanba: Phibul habee is a game of throwing and catching a ball made of rools of a cloth. This play of this game is carried in the feature of balletic performance with gesture, choreographic movements.

The fifteen Item:

Chongkhong Yetpa: This ritual is going around the insignia of the divine god and goddess by the concerned priestesses of the deities and the tract of the Amaibees will be in the feature of the figure “8” (Bengali numerical figure 4).

The sixteen Item:

Pachuba: The word Pachuba mating with the matching/consorting partner and the priestesses in the matching for the god and goddesses will have to dance to have contact the phibuls (cloth balls) which they are holding since the item of Phibul Habee Shannaba.

The Eighteenth Item:

Chongkhong Yetpa: This is another phase of Pachunaba. This is done with curtain lied by other Amaibees.

The Nineteenth Item:

Lairen Mathek Chatpa: The Amaibees and Amaibas and all other participants of the Laibou-chongba are to take part in this item. This item is going along the course of Lairen Mathek or Serpentine coils of the python. The Amaibees and Amaibas are to lead the movement of going on the tracts of serpentine coils. These nine types of such diagrammatic serpentine coils and
the shown diagram called Yumjao Paphal.\footnote{Ibid, p.57-66.} Such diagrammatic serpentine coil used in the annual merry making observance of the Moirangs or divine Thangjeeng is called Teellu-Lairu Paphan.

The Twentieth Item:

Kanglei (Lam) Thokpa: This item means the outing of deities who are under the festive observance of their rejoice-making. This programme consists of dancing of the Amaibees in front of the deities, ii) One of Amaibees entering in trace and predicting the future of the village and iii) showing the game of wrestling hockey in Manipuri style.

This programme is not a daily routine programme and carried out on the 5\textsuperscript{th}, 7\textsuperscript{th}, 9\textsuperscript{th}, 11\textsuperscript{th} day as a special programme. In the past days prior to 1950s Lai-Nupee-Thiba (selection of bride and symbolic marriage of the same to divine Khoiriphaba) was in the inclusion of this item but it was dropped due to the social abuses on the part of the girl who was happened to be the bride.

The Twenty-first item:

Lairoi: The Lairoi is the closing function of the festive merry-making observance of the deities in general sense. This item is made up of the following procedures: 1) arrangement of essential materials [i) 4 rolls of ropes to be kept on a plantain leaf ii) 50 ears i.e. 50 pieces of bamboo splits iii) offering items of fruits, flowers, torch, incense, etc, iv) keeping of Amaibee’s bell in the special way on a plantain leaf v) setting of 50 pieces of plantain
leaves called Huithee-Yenthee]. 2) Offering of all arranging objects to the divinities, 3) ritual dancing of Amaibee, 4) ritual singing of the closing of Laibou and 5) a balletic melodrama of Tangkhul and Nurabee (they are none other than Nongpok Ningthou Kainou Cheengshomba and Tampha wangngamlon Panthoibee). The last programme is a special and particular one shown as the symbolic representation of socio-cultural integration of the hill-dwellers and plain-settlers of Manipur since immemorable time.

The next procedure of this item is the Augree Hanggen Chongba (literally pulling or taking up of the line of lineage and heritage): This is a ritual performance composed of balletic sequences of songs and dances with a peculiar choreography. The participants of Laibou with holding the time of the aboved cited rolls of rope without touching on the surface of the ground in the arboreal shrine in the circular choreography will have to dance and sing. No one is allowed to leave the holding of the rope if the act of Augree Chongba has started. Then the closing of this item is preceded to Thabal Chongba dance.

The Twenty-second Item:

Thawai-mi-Konba: This is the ritual of calling for the astray astral bodies or souls of all the villages to set them in proper positions and condition and calling in the deities to have abundances in foodstuffs, improvement and growth of population, to flourish peace and prosperity in the village and state. It is a ritual of fertility cult prevailed in almost all the primitive tribes and communities.
Then the Thawai-mi-Konba is preceded to Huithee Yenthee yeppa (to aspire to take up the divine force) for the final collection of life-force or vital power for the happy and prosperous living and maintenance, sustenance and retention of welfare, development, upliftment, etc. of the village community.

Thawai-mi-konba is proceeded to Shari Leetpa (literally means to move under promise but colloquially to escape the vow) which is carried out as a symbolic phenomenon of avoiding the promise of adoption of Hinduism. Shari Leetpa is included Shari Hanba or the taking of repromising the vow of reinstation the Meitei indigenous cultic faith.

The Twenty-third Item:

Khencho (Ritual of expression of rejoice or merriment by gradual emergence) - This is ritualistic song sung by the participants in two lines before the deities in the expression and exhibition of the merriment and happiness of the divinities with the gradual emergence of the emotions and feeling of the glee and gay.

The Twenty-fourth Item:

Hijeeng-Hirau (ritual performance is the preparation and cleaning of the boats and drawing the same out of their shed for the departure of the spirits of the deities. This song has a long lyrical libretto staring from the invention and construction of boat in the Meitei context along with the rites and rituals of felling a tree in the hill or plain forest or elsewhere in domain of Manipuri [Uyallon] in the traditional heritage of Manipur.
The item includes Lai-Nonggaba (Leaving of the deities for heaven). The Amaibee and Amaiba will enter inside the temple, while all other participants are standing in front of the temple. The Amaibee will ring her bell with reciting the hymn of departure of the spirits of the deities. Then the Amaiba will sing another ritualistic hymn of the same theme. The players of the Meitei viol will have to play their instruments from outside the temple. All the persons who are joining the ritual group song of this Lai-nongarol are to have the same time of closing the song. This is the remarking episode of closing the festive observance of Umang-Lai-Haraoba.

The Twenty-fifth Item:

Lai Tethaba (The finish touch of the festive observance): Keeping the materials of the god and goddess of the village in good order and position after the departure of the spirits of the deities in the festive observance is called Lai-Tethaba in the language of Meitei priests and priestesses. All the dresses and ornaments adorned to the images of the deities are to be set inside appropriate or concerned boxes and this trend is to be carried out for the pieces of properties of the deity.

The Twenty-sixth Item:

Sharoi-Khangba (the ritual of offering of fruits, flowers, sweetments, flours, rice, Langthrei buds, Heibee-mana Shingju, etc, made to the accompanied and associated mischievous and malicious spirits who had presented themselves during the time of festive observance.
The Rituals of Post-observance of Lai-Haraoba

The above described ritual of Sharoi-khangba is also one of rituals of post observance of the Lai Haraoba. The ritual of driving away the evil spirits in presence during the time of the festive observance is taken up with the appropriate spells. Then the door of deities is to be closed for five days.

On the next day of the closing function of Lai-Haraoba, i.e. the following day of Lai-Nonggaba there will the atheletic sporting games of Lamjen (foot race) of the men and women and Mukna (Manipuri style of wrestling) of men. For the Mukna is to be perfomed with seven athletes from each team under the style of pana system of Manipur and for the foot-race every competitor of male and female is allowed to participate in accordance with his/her choice.

A musical performance or consort of minstelsy to be carried out by an artist of Manipuri Pena (viol) is to be arranged to perform at a place inside the settlement area of the village so as to bless to ward off the evil consequences supposed to have been produced by the wrongful acts and activities taken up unknowingly in the course of the festve observance and accidental failor of production of programmed items. The programme of this musical concert of Pena Taba is termed Keineeng Kumba (to have room behind the tiger).

After the completion of the taboo of closing the gate of the divinities is to be opened with the proper rituals on the 6th day of the ending day of LaiHaraoba.

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Dishes of Meitei Cheiraoba
Kangla Divine Nave

Ayangleima Kabok Chaiba of Moirang
Leima Jagoi of Lai Haraoba

Phamnaiba Jagoi of Lai Haraoba
Maibi Jagoi of Lai Haraoba