

Ritual Objects of the Umanglai Haraoba of Manipur: A Study of Senpot Laipot

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Abstract

In Manipur, many ritual objects are preserved and represented within the ritual tradition of Umanglai Haraoba through the sacred items known as Senpot Laipot. Objects made from metal or coins are called Senpot, while items specially prepared for divine worship are known as Laipot. These ritual objects are indispensable in the worship of Lainingthou and Lairembi and form an essential part of the complete ceremonial practices of Lai Haraoba. Senpot Laipot is deeply connected with the cultural and civilizational history of the people, including governance, economy, occupations, handicrafts, and ornaments, systems of worship, and social life from birth to death. Over time, however, these sacred objects have undergone changes in their forms, shapes, meanings, names, and functions according to changing social conditions and human understanding. Today many people use or carry these ritual objects without properly knowing their names, meanings, functions, or spiritual significance. In many cases, the practices are followed only as tradition or display, rather than with true understanding. Moreover, the deeper meanings and traditional knowledge of these objects are rarely explained by traditional experts such as the Amaiba, Amaibi, Pena Asheiba, and Sellungba, while many people also show little interest in learning them. As a result, there is a danger that the original values and wisdom preserved by the ancestors may gradually disappear or be misunderstood.

Keywords- Umanglai, Lai Haraoba, Traditional knowledge, Senpot Laipot

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Introduction

The beginning of human civilization dates back millions of years from the present time. Based on available archaeological evidence, the earliest known human presence is from the Stone Age period dates back to around 30,000 years ago, particularly during the Upper Palaeolithic Period. (Birchandra, 2013) The indigenous people of South East Asia, often described as having features such as a shorter nasal bridge, medium skin tone and moderate height is generally associated with Mongoloid Ethnic groups. Many people of these groups settled in different regions over time including the people who inhabit *Kangleipak* (Present day Manipur) are known as the *Meitei*, who have developed a distinct cultural identity, Language and Traditions. According to historic and traditional beliefs within the *Meitei* community, ancient oral traditions, folklore, rituals and early manuscript such as the *Puya* suggest that the *Meitei* people consider themselves to be descendants of divine origin. For example, according to many ancient texts (*Puya*) of *Meitei* traditional, in the story of “*Nongkhong Koiba*”. It is described that the one who ascends the throne is given the title *Pakhangba*. This figure, originally known as *Konjin Tingthokpa*, is regarded as the first king of the *Meitei* people and is believed to be both a god and human at the same time. According to the Historians and Archaeologists who all trusted by the people, it is believed that from time immemorial the land was ruled by king *Tangja Leela Pakhangba* and *Queen Sinbee Leima Leihou* (1445 BC- 1045 BC). During this ear, which is traditionally understood as a time when humans and deities coexisted, known as *Heiyi Chak* period, a child born to *King Tangja Leela Pakhangba* and *Queen Sinbee Leima Leihou*, came into the world in a cave of *Koubu Hill*. This child later came to rule the land as king *Kangba*. (Angou,1976) (Nityai,1981) (Wikipedia, *Ningthou Kangba*) Following this period, the king established a tradition of worshipping the god *Sanamahi* reflecting animistic beliefs in which the deity is represented in the form of Stone. From that time onward, the king governed the land by administering justice through divine judgment and upholding the principles of righteous rule. It was during this king’s reign that the *Sagol Kangjei* (Polo) was introduced, a game that remain widely known even today. Moreover, it is not an exaggeration to say that from the time people began forming their own communities, the community developed religion, games, customs and traditions, along with system of governance. Thus, over generations and through successive reigns, different clans gradually united to form the *Meitei* Community. In *Umanglai Haraoba*, it shows that the *Meitei* Community holds their elders in high regard and treats them with great respect.

Umanglai Haraoba depicts the creation of the universe and the deeds performed since ancient times by the ancestral deities. These rituals and festivities

are re-enacted by the present descendants who imitate and preserve those traditions. It is recorded in both early texts and contemporary accounts that *Umanglai* are worshipped and various ritual are practiced by both tribal communities and the *Meitei*. From early times, all the communities in this land have possessed their own basic needs, which continue to persist even today, keeping them interconnected. All these necessities were especially offered to the *Umanglai* as well as to the king, the sovereign rulers of the land. Traditionally, money and finely crafted goods made by skilled artisans were offered as tribute to the king and queen. Likewise, the king offered tribute to the *Umanglai*, whom he personally worshipped, furthermore, these goods were also distributed as rewards to ministers of the royal court and other officials. In similar way, they gradually came to be used by commoners in ritual and during important life events such as Birth, Marriage and Death.

These valuable and significant items continue to be used in *Umanglai Haraoba* and are collectively referred to as *Senpot Laipot*. According to the book “*Lai Haraoba Amasung Meyoiba Khunai*.”, the items used by humans in the worship of deities are known as *Senpot Laipot*. These are also referred as *Laipot Senpot or Thougai Potlam Asuba*. The late preceptor *Maichou Pural Meisnam Apabi Luwang* explains the meaning of *Senpot Laipot* as follows “*Senna saba pot laigi oiba pot, lai hapnaba pot* (Ritual objects made of metal for carrying the symbols and objects of god)” (Ruhichand, 2024).

This refers to items made of metal, intended for offering to the deity. In present usage, it denotes a wide mouthed vessel, also known as *Kaosan*, which is used to place and hold the deity’s cloth, arranged in a bundled *Phibul* form. *Senpot Laipot* made of brass metal or coin, appear in various forms and shapes. Examples are *Lai Konmai*, *Lai Konlu*, *Khudeisen-Kaosan*, *Senthak Senkha*, *Kwagok* etc. There are also offering made of bamboo and cloth, such as *Chong*, *Pomit Polang*, *Sekpin/Satra*, *Peyjao*, *Humai Khokshangba/Khokshangbi*, *Thakkan* etc. And for other items *Lepshum Pheeda*, *Kona Humai*, *Eshaiphu*, *Laithang*, *Spear (Ta)*, *Bamboo-Comb (Tunanbi)*, *Mirror (Mingsel)*, *Kangjei Kanghu*, *Lai Phambal*, *Lupa Leikham*, *Sana Leikham*, *Sarik*, *Senbung* etc. Additional items constitute a significant subject of discussion in the world. In this land, from early items to the present, the development of handicrafts can be observed through *Senpot Laipot*.

Moreover, in the society of this land, *Senpot Laipot* plays a significant role in the life-cycle rituals, including birth, life and death. Thus, it may be regarded as a ritual essence of life, shaping and sustaining the very life of human society.

Senpot Laipot of Umanglai Haraoba

It is very important to know the meanings, shapes, names, sizes and function of the *Senpot Laipot* used in *Umanglai Haraoba*. In the present era, many people

use these sacred objects in the worship of *Lainingthou* and *Lairembi* without properly knowing how and why they are used, what benefits and significance they hold, or even the names of the items themselves. If the names, meanings, and rules of worships are forgotten or misunderstood, the original traditions and regulations of the ritual may gradually be lost. When the rituals of *Umanglai Haraoba* are performed with proper knowledge and understanding the results will be harmony, blessing and good result. But when they are performed unknowingly or without understanding their true meanings and rules, the results may become improper or harmful instead of beneficial. Just as medicine cures a disease only when it is properly understood and correctly used, otherwise it may worsen the illness, the same applies to the sacred practices of worship. Therefore, it is very important to know and understand the meanings, shapes, sizes, names, and function of the *Senpot Laipot* used in *Umanglai Haraoba*, which are given below: -

The Pomit Polang is a structure of the God and Goddess made of *Utang-Wa (Bambusa Tulda)*, symbolizing their bodies. It is fully adorned with dress and ornaments for *Lainingthou* and *Lairembi* placed upon a throne and used in *Umanglai Haraoba*. The *Pomit Polang* for the god is made larger, while that for the goddess is smaller. These sacred vestments and adornment are traditionally used by *Amaiba* and *Amaibi* to dress and adorn the deities.



Fig. 1 : Pomit Polang

The Lai Konmai consists of a pair of brass, copper or bronze masks symbolizing the god and goddess. Traditionally, the *Umanglai* did not have a full bodily structure, but only facial representation attached to the *Pomit Polang*. The *Lai Konmai* for the god and goddess is made together as a pair, then attached to the *Pomit Polang* in *Umanglai Haraoba* and dressed with the deity's attire. It is used in *Lai Phamdengba*, *Lai Ekouba*, though in earlier times it was not used in *Lai Lamthokpa*. There are also certain *Umanglai* where attaching the *Konmai* is not permitted. The painting of beards and lips on the *Lai Konmai* was absent in earlier times and was introduced later by artisans. The making of *Lai Konmai* is traditionally restricted to specific surname, notably *Aheibam*.



Fig. 2 : Lai Konmai

The Ehaiphu/ Leiyom-Chaphu is an earthen water vessel used in *Lai Ekouba*, the calling of the divine spirit from water, and it also serves as a symbolic

container of *Leiyom*. It is made from two small earthen pots, arranged together with elements symbolising origin and life, such as earthen pot, banana leaves, thread, and *Langthrei*, all of which collectively constitute the *Ehaiphu*. Each pot is encircled with carefully prepared strips of banana leave: for *Lainingthou*, the leaf is turned so that its underside faces outward and is cut into nine strips, while for *Lairembi*, the upper surface faces outward and the leaf is divided into seven strips; these strips are pierced through the thread like a garland and then fastened around the neck of pot. At the top, three buds of *Langtharei* are placed, though at times red flowers of *Lairembi* may be used instead. Inside the pots, *Hiri* thread is wound around the *Khoibumchei* stick and placed within. Separate *Ehaiphu* are prepared for *Lainingthou* and *Lairembi*; during *Ekouba* they are carried by two men to the ritual site, where the *Amaibi* receives and uses them while performing the *Leitai Nongdai Dance*.



Fig. 3: Ehaiphu

The Laithang is a traditional sword of distinctive form used only in *Umanglai Haraoba*. It is a ritual sword made of metal, without a wooden or iron hilt, without a sharp cutting edge and without a sheath; the upper handle is wrapped only with pure white cotton thread. It is used for both *Lainingthou* and *Lairembi* in *Lai Phamdengba*, *Lai Ekouba*, *Lai Lamthokpa* and is especially important in the performing of *Thang Jagoi* (Sword dance) by the *Amaibi*. During *Ekouba*, the sword is carried by two men by hand and borne upon the shoulder, proceeding at the very front before the *Senpot Laipot*. It is also used in rites of protection and expulsion of harm full forces. There are right and left swords, each with its own ritual significance.

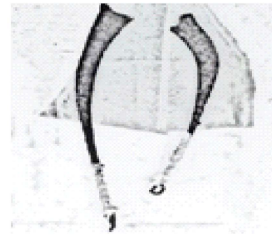


Fig. 4: Lai Thang

The Kona Humai is a ritual hand fan used in serving both *Lainingthou* and *Lairembi*. It is traditionally made from the leaves of the *Kona Plant*. It is carried by maidens in rites such as *Lai Phamdengba*, *Lai Ekouba*, *Lai Sanaba* and *Lai Lamthokpa*. In the present day, it is made with cloth embroidered with *Plastic Kinar* designs, though this is regarded as an incorrect departure from the traditional form.



Fig. 5: Kona Humai

The Kaosen is a sacred brass container with a lid, characterised by broad a broad, flat, dish-like top and a rounded swelling body beneath, enshrining *Pheebul*, which symbolises *Nongpok Ningthou* and *Panthoibi*. In *Umanglai Haraoba* it is regarded as one of the complete and important ritual items. It is also known as *Chinkup Sen*. Once associated with the spittoon vessel used by kings and high-ranking members of the Royal Court. In *Lai Ekouba* it is at times used with *Pheebul* placed within, though some considered this incorrect, and it may also serve as a support for the *Kona Humai*, set above it. It is especially important in *Lai Phamdengba*, *Lai Ekouba*, *Lai Lamthokpa* and *Lai Sanaba* etc.



Fig. 6: Kaosen

The Humai Khokshangba / Khokshangbi is a ritual fan made of white cloth and bamboo, with long handle and a round head. For *Lainingthou*, three dolls are attached at the edge, while for *Lairembi* the edges are adorned all around with *Leiyat*. It is bound with *Khwangchet*, with two dolls placed at the top, and at times coins are also added. Its height is about that of a person, with an extension roughly from hand to elbow, and the bamboo must have an odd number of nodes. Its stand is made of *Khok Wa* Bamboo, sometimes wrapped in white cloth. It is especially used in *Lai Ekouba*, *Lai Lamthokpa* and *Lai Sanaba* etc.

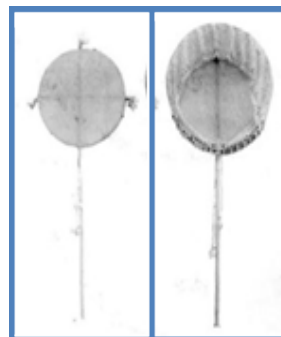


Fig. 7: Humai Khokshangha

The Khudeisen is one of the complete serving items of *Umanglai Haraoba*, a jug made of silver, copper or brass traditionally associated with kings and high royals' members of the royal court for wishing hands, cleansing mouth, and washing the face. It is also known as *Khut-Tei-Sen*. It is graceful vessel with rounded, swelling body and slender neck, often covered at the mouth with a cloth while containing water. It is carried by maidens and used in ritual service during *Laimai Taba*, *Lai Phamdengba*, *Lai Ekouba*, and *Lai Lamthokpa* etc.



Fig. 8: Khudeisen

The Chong and Pey are traditional umbrellas made of *Utang Bamboo* (*Bambusa Tulda*) with *Khok Wa* bamboo as the stand, used as protection form harsh

sun and rain. Formed with bamboo rites, covered in white cloth painted with *Khoiru* (Bee wax), and set on long staffs, they are ancient ceremonial umbrellas. In the *Ekouba* of *Umanglai Haraoba*, the *Lai Puba Leiyom Chapphu* is served with *Chong*, while *Pey* is served to the *Leimarel Eshaiphu*. *Chong* is importantly used in *Lai Ekouba*, *Lai Lamthokpa*, *Pheebul Habee* and *Lai Sanaba*, while *Pey* is used in *Ekouba* and is made to stand at the *Laiboula* spot in *Laibung* (Shrine).

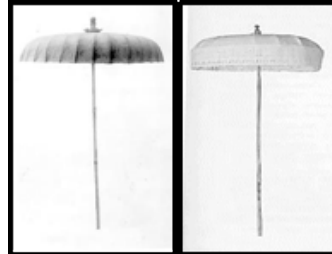


Fig. 9: Pey and Chong

The *Leimarel Eshaiphu* consists of a medium and a smaller earthen pot together forming a symbolic body of the goddess and evolving the body of mother earth herself. It carries the ancient belief that life emerged from water and is regarded as a scared vessel rooted in primordial device time. It has long been used in rites associated with deities and unseen spiritual forces. Before *Ekouba* it is known as *Erangpul*, and after *Ekouba* it is called *Ema Leimarel Eshaiphu*. Made of earth and fire, it is a vessel of moderate size with rounded swelling body, a slender neck, and a height reaching about the knees.



Fig. 10: Leimarel Eshaiphu

In the *Ekouba* of *Umanglai Haraoba* the *Leimarel Eshaiphu* is worshiped after water is collected by the *Sellungbi*, then dressed and adorned with ornaments. It is worshiped not only in *Umanglai*, but also in the *sacred* corners of countless homes, from household to household across the land.

The *Lepshum Pheeda* is a kind of ritual seat made of *Wang* Tree Wood for serving both *Lainingthou Lairembi* light weight and about knee-high, it has an opening in the middle and serves as a sacred support. When used for the deities, a piece of white cloth is placed upon it, while for king a red cloth known as *Pheerangji* is used. In *Umanglai Haraoba* especially during *Lai Phamdengba*, *Lai Ekouba*, *Lai Lamthokpa* and *Lai Sanaba*, it is placed at the very rear and used in ritual service.



Fig. 11: Lepshum Pheeda

Not only the above-mentioned *Senpot Laipot*, but also in all the major rites of serving the deities such as *Lai Phamdengba*, *Lai Ekouba*, *Lai Lamthokpa* (*Sabal Lamthokpa Kongba Lamyengba*), *Kanglei Thokpa* (*Lai Nupi Thiba*), *Tangkhul Nurabi* (*Langmai Loutarol*), *Lairoi Tanba* (*Lai Haraobagi Aroiba Numit*), *Keining Kumba*,



Fig. A: Lai Phamdengba

Fig. B: Lai Lamthokpa

Mangani Leikhomba Saroi Khangba, Sarel Chanba, and others, many additional ritual items are also used within these practices, including *Lai Phambal*, *Lai Dolai*, *Thakthal*, *Sekping* (Satra, Pajeng Pheral), *Kangjei KangHu*, *Kangdrum*, *Tor Thang*, *Khangning Ta*, *Ten-Tenjei-Tendong*, *Yairi*, *yotpak*, *Kuraogi ThangKhum*, *Utang Wa Kanam Paya*, *Chirong*, *Cheisu*, *Meinam*, *Lumai*, *Heijing Kharai*, *Yangkok*, *Sana Lupa Konyai*, *khoiju Leikham*, *Laitang Thumok*, *Charu*, *Phou*, *Thum Kaguppi*, *Morok*, *Pannao-Singnao*, *Lashing*, *Ngari*, *Cheng Laitang Thumok*, *Heibi Mana*, *Larung*, *Nachan 7ki Kabok Afaba*, *Yam*, *Lang Ahingba*, *Khoibungchei*, *Langthare*, *Meitei Ngamu*, *Mira Mekruk*, *Uchan*, *Mekruk*, *Lik-kon*, *Pheeral Mcha*, *Yenthou Utong Taret- Mapan*, *Puk-Yu Wai-Yu*, *Mei Changdaba Chakyom*, *Khoiragi Laphpoi Changthokpa Lawu*, *Tairen Masa Apungba*, *Leithak Khayom*, *La Laton Lapun*, *Nganu Marum*, *Nganu Marum*, *Khunu Marum*, *Yot Khunet Sen*, *La*, *Hei*, *Lei*, *Heijang Manam Naiba*, *Kwa-Mana-Marum*, *Heiruk Athenpot etc.* (Lai Haraobada Tangkhul Nurabi, 2016) (Lai Haraoba Haraobagi Kanglon, 2024) and similar objects. For ritual attire and ornaments, items such as *Pheijom Angouba*, *Kokyot*, *Lengyan*, *Thambal Leikhok Phanek*, *HaoPhee*, *Inna Phee*, *Khwangchet*, *Tungga Phanek*, *Lenggon Phee* (Marak Taibi), *Phambal Phee* (Marak Taibi), *EshaiPhu Pheejum*, *Khudei Sudaba Konbi Pabot*, *Laimai Tanaba-Khumnba Phee*, *Higao Phee*, *Leirum Phee*, *ThangTha Phee*, *Kanglei Thokpagi Pheijom*, *ChinPhee Thakhum*, *Kumjengbi*, *Sarong Pheejing*, *Kamu Chappa Pheijom*, (*Khamu Chappa Mana Phee*), *Likphang*, *Leikphang Makhalsing*, *Chak Khudop*, *Likngou*, *Sinou Lasing*, *Kuhi Kumlang*, *Tal*, *Chomlang*, *Chomai*, *Khuji Popchaobi*, *Mingsel*, *Samjet tunanbi*, *Sana Leikham*, *lupa Leikham* are used. Likewise, various vegetables, leaves, and other plant offerings such as *Tairen*, *Pungphai*, *Napu*, *Nasen*, *Singbi*, *Loudrei*, *Chaderi* are included in recitation rites, while certain flowers like *Kundo*, *Aprajita*, *Jubakusum*, *Sangbrei*, *Tulsi* are

traditionally not permitted as offering to the deities. (*Lai Haraobage Kanglon, 2024*) (*Kanglei Haraorol, 2012*) and some Musical Instruments are *Pere-Pena, Sarik, Langte, Toudri, Sempung* etc. The said items vary slightly in shape and size from place to place. For Kanglei Haraoba and Chakpa Haraoba, there is always variations in the *Senpot Laipot* items from each other's. On overall, the *Senpot Laipot* of the god are generally larger than that of the goddess. This is very beautiful yet strict traditional rule.

Significance of *Senpot Laipot*

In *Umanglai Haraoba*, to hold the *Senpot Laipot* and serve the deities is believed to be like touching heaven with one's own hands. Elders say that in ancient times, the acts performed by the gods during the Creation of the Universe are re-enacted by human in imitation through ritual festivals, of which *Lai Haraoba* is one. The items said to have been used by the gods in those divine acts, now used in *Umanglai Haraoba* & known as *Senpot Laipot*, carry sacred significance; thus, who serve the god and goddess by holding them are each regarded as participating in the role of deity. A vivid proof of this is that the participants who hold these items while securing the deities are regarded as divine beings, and often their duties are completed, the Amaiba, through a ritual act of purification, declares them returned to human form. In *Umanglai Haraoba*, one cannot simply come forward and say they will hold the *Senpot Laipot* and serve the deities. There are specific rules governing who and what kind of person may hold the *Senpot Laipot*, even those who know the spiritual merits of holding them often do not get the chance to do so. The benefits believed to arise from men and women, young and old; serving the deities while holding the *Senpot Laipot* are many; for women, it is believed to help cure ailments related to blood circulation, dispel misfortunes, relieve illness and overcome lack of wisdom. For men it is believed to help relieve joint ailments, dispel misfortunes, protect against spirit-caused insect-borne afflictions and cure mind related disorders. For elderly, it is believed to bring happiness and joy, ward illness and disease, bestow the blessing of the deities and grant long life. For both men and women, it is believed that holding the *Senpot Laipot* can cure 108 diseases. As seen in the most significant rites of *Umanglai Haraoba* such as *Lai Kumchanba, Chaknou Katpa, Saroi Khangba*, etc, the benefits and extensive use of *Senpot Laipot* are greatly manifested; contributing to numerous rituals related to the cycle of the 12 months, they have been used from time immemorial to the present. To mention a few examples, *Sanamahi Cheng Hongba, Pakhangba Cheng Hongba, Kwak Tanba, Sajibu Singsatpa, Kurak Lamtaiba* etc. In human society as well, the *Senpot Laipot* items greatly helps and contribute to rituals related to birth, marriage, and death.

Serving of Senpot-Laipot to the Deities

The ancestors have preserved the rules and regulations governing the service of the deities through holding the *Senpot Laipot*, since ancient times. These includes keeping the *Senpot Laipot* of the god and goddess separate, observing distinct rules of carrying them and regulations regarding what kind of persons may hold them. The shapes and sizes of *Senpot Laipot* indicate which belongs to the male and which to the female deities. There are traditional rules governing the holding of the *Senpot Laipot* by men, women, the elderly the young, the married and the unmarried.

The rules including; *the Laithang is held by a married or unmarried man and is carried at the very front of the procession. The Humai Khokshangba is served by a married or unmarried man; for the Laininthou there is also a doll, though not for the Lairembi, used for ornamental purposes. The Kwagok is carried by maidens. The Khudeisen is also served by maidens, likewise the Kaosen is carried by maidens, though the inclusion of Phibul in it is believed by many to be incorrect. The Konna Humai is also served by maidens. The Esaiphu of both Lainingthou and Lairembi is to be held only by married man. The Chong is served by married or unmarried mainly. The Lepshum Pheeda is served by married women or middle-age women. In between the two lines the Eshaiphu of Ema Leimarel is held by the Khullakpi, who also serves Pey, While the Pey is held by married or unmarried men.* As stated in (UKAL,2024) those who serve the *Senpot Laipot* should observed rules such as marrying outside one's own clan or blood relations, being free from physical disability and following a vegetarian life; in sum, the one who serves should be of good character and disciplines.

The Evolution of Senpot Laipot

Since the very beginning of human civilization, in the early stages of human society, the items used in these practices have gradually evolved over time with the coming of a new era; with the progress of time, the earlier forms of these items have changed into more refined forms, and this development is known even to the present generation. Because of this, over times the *Senpot Laipot* used by the ancestors have undergone changes in shape, size, features and colour and in some case, even the original form has been altered or lost. The reasons behind these changes can also be discussed. In short, the usage of *Senpot Laipot* gradually became less understood overtime; its significance and power were no longer fully recognized, and it was not deliberately preserved. It is also believed that during historical disruption such as *Chahi Taret Khuntakpa* (The 7 Years Devastation) and through attempts to refine or enhance it by skilled artisan, error occurred, leading to a loss or alternation of its original form, after which imported items came to be used instead.

For example, the *Kollu*, which was earlier made using the sacred god's coin, is now replaced by imported plastic dolls for aesthetic appeal. Similarly, the *Konna Humai* is now often substituted with decorated cloth material and garments embellished with ornament borders (*Plastic Kinar*) where the entire cloth is richly embroidered with such designs. The *Lepshum* has in some cases taken form of a *Meinam* like item, the *Chong-Pey* is at times replaced by imported umbrellas covered with white cloth and the *Laithang* is sometimes substituted with imported swords. In place of *Khudeisen*, *Kaosen*, *Senthak-Senga*, steel cup or metal made substitutes are now often used and the *Leimarel Eshaiphu*, is also increasingly made of metal for durability and to prevent cracking. For the famed deity *Moirang Epathou Thangjing*, even the *Sattrra* (*Sekpin*) cloth has undergone changes into *Mana Phee Kamu Chappa Pheijom* (*Khamu Chappa*), while the clan-lineage colour associated with the *Sattrra* (*Sekpin*) have also changed. From all these transformations, the present generation can no longer fully understand the original form, names, shapes and the proper context of where, when, and how these items were to be used. To derive benefits, preserve its original form and truth, and conserve its cultural heritage, it is essential that researchers, experts in the field, artisans, sellers of *Senpot Laipot*, Government bodies, private museums, archaeological departments, on governmental organisations, UKAL (the organisation for preserving *Umanglai Haraoba*), *Maiba-Maibi* (ritual specialists), *Pena Asheiba*, *Sellungba Sellungbi*, *Lai Thougai Lup* (the Committee of serving the deities), Manipur University of Culture, Department of *Umanglai Haraoba* and most importantly the *Sana Konung* (Royal Palace) Custom Authority etc. work together with since and strict commitment to study, discover and preserve it; it is believe that through such collective efforts, it will remain a priceless heritage in the world History.

Economic Significance of Senpot Laipot

In the context of *Senpot Laipot* from early times, one can observe the history, civilization, systems of governance, traditional royal rules across generations and the fine craftsmanship of artisans. By thoroughly researching these origins, it is natural to understand how *Senpot Laipot* is include in *Umanglai Haraoba* and how it exists in the land. In the activities of *Umanglai Haraoba*, the *Senpot Laipot* are shown to be collectively made from various material including coins, metals, woods, bamboos, cloths and other items. For this reason, it is not an exaggeration to say the *Umanglai Haraoba* is a Living Museum. Based on the findings of Archaeologist and Historian, it is suggested that the use of coins began in ancient times; as mentioned in the book "*Meitrabakki Yot Thanggee Chak*", it is related to a part of the creation of the universe, where in *Lainingthou Ashiba* body, "*Marinnadi Kori oi, Mahaonadi*

Pitharai oi, Matinnadi Senbi oi” is referred to. Traditions stories and finding also describe the origin of coin in relations to the world states that “*The use of metal was first discovered in Iran and Turkey about 6000 B.C. Six Centuries later the inhabitants of Catal Hiijik, in Southern Turkey were smelting both copper and lead*”. (Kulachandra,2007) Likewise, bamboo, wood, metal, other material is believed to have their origin reflected in the *Senpot Laipot* of *Umanglai*. The said items, in relation of the economy, show the *Senpot Laipot* making a traditional profession of artisans and play a significant role in society. It has also become one of the livelihood professions. Making a *Senpot Laipot* is not an easy task; it is a highly skilled and demanding craft that requires fine handwork, cleanliness and exceptional mastery. Artisans who excel in this profession are often recognized by the Indian Government or the State through prestigious awards and in earlier times, the king also honored such experts with high distinctions and even granted clan names in recognition of their skill. This is also a distinctive and highly respectable profession. The *Senpot Laipot* is an essential element in the *Umanglai Haraoba*, it is produced by skilled artisans and brought to *Ema Keithel* through intermediaries, thereby making it a means of livelihood and a foundation of the local economy. The *Senpot Laipot* made in the land, along with item such as *Chong-Pey* and those crafted using coins are also exported to neighboring states and regions for use in festivals, thereby contributing significantly to the economy. Items such as *Xorai*, often decorated with coin-like metal work, are also seen as important ceremonial items used alongside *Senpot Laipot*. This item is also brought for use in *Umanglai Haraoba*. Not only this there was also a tradition among neighboring kings, generals and ministers who are high-ranking individual, of exchanging gifts with one another during various festivities and occasions. In the Manipur diaspora, where *Meiteis* have settled in neighboring regions, there is also a tradition of buying and selling *Senpot Laipot* for use in *Laibung* and other related rituals. Thus, the *Senpot Laipot* plays a significant role across various sectors of the economy through handicraft industry.

Conclusion

Different communities have their own culture and traditions, religion and rituals, costumes and ornaments, games, food habits, languages and scripts, history, system of governance, occupation rooted in tradition and economy; a community that preserves and develops all these aspects can be considered a well-developed society. From very early time, according to the beliefs of different human communities the sun, moon, nature and there exist a tradition of worshipping towards them. The items used therein are not merely placed or arranged in a simple manner, but are imbued with deep symbolic meaning and sacred significance. From those early ages

of human civilization, the object that accompanied life's journey, born alongside human need, belief and creatively, carry the story of material cultural evolution. Among them, *Senpot Laipot* took stands as a living fragment of that heritage. These items are not merely things arranged for ritual use; each bears an origin, a name, a form, a measure, a type and a purpose, how it is used, where it belongs and when it comes alive in practice. If scholars and researchers can uncover their true origins and meanings and preserve these ancestral inheritances with care, they may recognize not only as a rich cultural heritage, but as treasures of the world. Furthermore, sincere research into how this field can contribute meaningfully to the wider world would itself be a great fulfillment and success for *Senpot Laipot* rooted in *Umanglai Haraoba*. For this reason, the wisdom passed down through generations must be understood and carried forward with responsibility. For if the present generation fails to truly receive and use this inherited knowledge, it may become like the proverb of the monkey clutching a coconut, holding a treasure in its hand, yet unable to taste its worth.

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