

Name of the Element: Maibe/Meitei Priestess
Domain 2: Performing Arts
Name of Inventory: Pilot Inventory 1
Serial No: P1-D2-005

Brief Description: Maibis or the traditional priestesses of Manipur are believed to be the spiritual medium since days of yore. Through them, it is believed that one can reach God. They can foretell one's future and whatever hindrances or obstacles that come one's way can be cleared through rituals and prayers. In almost every ritual of the Meitei race of Manipur (majority group in Manipur who practices SANAMAHISM), the maibis plays a relevant and exigent role. SANAMAHISM is one of the oldest religions of Manipur which was introduced during the reign of King Kangba. In Sanamahism, Lainingthou Sanamahi and Leimarel Shidabi are worshipped in either of the two ways:-

1. Phamban langba - meaning the arrangement of the throne.

In this form of worshipping the deities, small wooden or metal thrones are placed in the Sanamahi corner or the corner most of every meitei house. Small two mud pots are placed above it depicting Lainingthou Sanamahi and Leimarel Shidabi. The one that symbolises Lainingthou Sanamahi will be adorned with kokyet (a turban), pheijom (a dhoti) and the one symbolizing Leimarel Shidabi will be adorned with phanek (a traditional dress for women), necklace, mirror, and blouse.

2. Phamba langdaba- meaning disarrangement of throne.

In this way of worshipping the deities, neither throne nor idols are kept. The Sanamahi corner is kept empty. Phamban langba way of worshipping Lainingthou Sanamahi and Leimarel Shidabi is very strict and there are a lot of rituals and norms to be kept. The clothes of the idols are to be changed on every "Nongba panba Cheiraoba" or the New Year celebration in Manipur.

During a major festival of the Meiteis well known as "Lai-haraoba" the maibis through their dance display the creation saga or birth of the universe.

Region: In the Districts of Sylhet Division in the North East of Bangladesh.
Photographs:Video: Consent:

Submitted by: Lubna Marium

Shadhona – A Center for Advancement of South Asian Culture

House 5, Road 27, Block J, Banani, Dhaka 1213, Bangladesh

Tel: 8801713040814

Fax: 91-11-23385715

E-mail: kanchendzonga@gmail.com, Website: <http://www.shadhona.org>