

Name of the element- Lai- Haroba

Region- Manipur

Brief Description-

Lai- Haroba is an annual ritualistic festival observed by the Meitei/Meetei community of Manipur to please their ancestral deities. The main feature of this festival is the re- enactment of Meitei's myth of creation of universe and lives on earth, advancement of human civilization-construction of house, cultivation, spinning, weaving etc.- through performances of elaborate dance, song and ritual sequences. Led by the mabia(priest), pena-khongba(players of pena, a traditional bowed instrument) and maiba(priestesses) , this festival , which predates the advent of Hinduism in Manipur ,is celebrated with mass community participation , irrespective of age and gender, with the belief that when the deities are pleased ,they would shower their blessings on the land and its people.

Observed mainly in May-June, and generally for 7or 9 days, separately in the courtyards of different shrines- each dedicated to one of the 364 ancestral deities and his/her consort- Lai Haroba also provides enough space for exhibition of indigenous games and sports of Manipur.

Regarded as the soul of Meitei culture, Lai – Haroba is a unique social occasion that brings together the entire community, men, women, young, old, all engaging in the joyful act of dancing and singing while also paying their reverence to the deities.