



The traditional food of Meiteis from the aspects of medicine, cultural, spiritual and social value

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Summary

The relationship between plants and human beings has been known since time immemorial. Nowadays, there is scientific study of the relationship that exists between people and plants. This includes plants used as food, phytochemicals, pharmacology, clothing, currency, ritual, medicine, dye, construction, etc. Manipur was a small princely state in North-East India, having a history of about 2000 years. As Manipur is under Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hot Spot of the Northeast region, diverse flora and fauna are available. Meiteis, the dominant community of these states and the other 35 ethnic schedule tribes of Manipur, also have traditional foods like *Houttunia chordata*, *Elsholgia*, *Polygonum* species (Phakpai) as condiments, *Acorus calamus*, *Plectranthus*, *Mimosa pudica* (Lam ekaithabi), *Vitex negundo* (Uriksshibi) as medicinal Plants, *Oscimum sanctum* (Tulsi), *Cedrela toona* (Tairen) *Eupatorium balmanicum* (Langthrei) as spiritual plants, *Nicotiana tabacum*, *Lycopodium phlegmaria* (Leishang khekwaiba) as cultural plants, Siroy lily and Dzuko lily as social plants as it indicates the availability in Siroi hilltop, Ukhrul and Dzuko.

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Keywords: Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hot Spot, Meiteis, ethnic tribes, indigenous and traditional food plants, traditional medicinal plants, cultural plants, and social plants

Introduction

Manipur was a small princely state in North-East India, having a history of about 2000 years since Nongda Lairen Pakhangba, the first King of Manipur. Manipur is included under the Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hot Spot of the Northeast region out of the 36 selected Biodiversity Hot Spot of the World, indicating a high concentration of endemic species of plants (Tombi Singh 2009) and rich in biodiversity consisting of a large number of medicinal plants, edible non-conventional food plants, condiments, spiritual plants, cultural plants, social plants etc. Manipur is one of the most beautiful states of our country, India. In the west, it is bounded by Cachar district of Assam, on the east by Myanmar, on the north by Nagaland state and on the south by Mizoram. The total geographical area of Manipur is 22327 Km². The total hill districts of Manipur are Senapati, Ukhrul, Kamjong, Tengnoupal, Noney, Pherzawl, Kangpokpi and the plain districts are Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal, Bishnupur and Kakching. The plain districts are mainly inhabited by the Meitei community along with the different tribes and Muslims. The term Ethnobotany was first coined by a North American Botanist John William Harschburger in 1895 while he was teaching in the

University of Pennsylvania to describe the studies "Plants used by primitive and aboriginal people" (Ballic & Cox 1996; Bana et al. 2022). The present studies highlight the useful ethno-botanical information about the use of the plants by Meiteis as well as other ethnic tribes as traditional food, fodder, medicine, dye, oil, fiber, religious, rituals and in social function. Some of the plants are very important as they are associated with the rituals of the spiritual Realm of Meiteis in Manipur.

Materials and Methods

The Meiteis are indigenous people of Manipur in North East India, occupying mainly the central plain districts of Manipur. Meiteis are also inhabited in our neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Myanmar. Some Meiteis are also scattered in North East States like Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya. The present study was conducted and described after gathering systematic techniques of scheduled and in-depth interviews with key informants like elderly locale people, experience herbal practitioners (maibas), Panji (religious astrologers), Arangfam (attendants of rites and rituals, Brahman (Hindu priests) and authorised attendants (Amaiba and Amaibis) of the ancestral deities (Umanglai). The present study was carried out by adopting a mixed-method approach of scientific observation, photography of plant species observation, and in-depth interviews of key informants.

Traditional food

The Meiteis being an indigenous people of Manipur and having a history of 2000 years since Nongda Lairen Pakhangba, the first King of Manipur. The food plants which are not cultivated, are not commonly available in the market and those which are not commonly utilized as

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food throughout the country are considered as non-conventional food plants. Traditional foods are mainly indigenous non-conventional food plants. These non-conventional food plants therefore provide immense scope for addition of new plants in standard vegetable chart and will also solve the problem of food scarcity arising out of the population explosion. The study is based on a thorough survey and collections of wild flowers, fruits, rhizomes, and plant parts from local markets of the different plain districts of Manipur. "The Economic Plants of Manipur and Their Uses", a book compiled by S. Sukumar Singh (2006, 2009) and about the non-conventional food plants in and around the Imphal market have been published by Sharma et al. (2003). The collection of information was done at different seasons of the year according to the availability of the plants. Wild edible plants sold in the market in and around of Imphal have been published by Chakraborty & Paritosh (2003). The Meities have many religious rituals from birth to death and many plants are associated with these rituals. The present study focuses on their understanding of plant species through religion. Our

Table 1. Listings of some traditional food plants

S. No.	Name in Manipuri	Botanical name	Parts use	Family
1	Khonang tarung	<i>Ficus bengalensis</i>	Tender shoot / Kangsoi	Moraceae
2	Uthum	<i>Talouma hodsonii</i>	Tender shoot / Kangshoo	Magnoliaceae
3	Yendang	<i>Cycas cercinalis</i>	Tender leaves /Iromba	Cycadaceae
4	Feija	<i>Wendlandia glabrata</i>	Young inflorescence /Shingju and iromba	Rubiaceae
5	Yaipan	<i>Curcuma angustifolia</i>	Inflorescence	Zingiberaceae
6	Loklei	<i>Hedichium flavum</i>	Rhizome and young shoot	Zingiberaceae
7	Yongchak	<i>Parkia roxburghii</i>	Inflorescence and fruit pod	Mimosaceae
8	Huikhong	<i>Viola pilosa</i>	Trailing shoot	Violaceae
9	Ching yencil	<i>Antidesmum acidum</i>	Tender shoot	Vitaceae
10	Heining	<i>Spondias pinnata</i>	Fruit	Anacardiaceae
11	Kanglayan	<i>Schizophyllum commune</i>	Fruiting body	Schizophyllaceae
12	Uchina	<i>Auricularia delicata</i>	Fruiting body	Auriculariaceae
13	Meiribob	<i>Dendrocalamus giganteus</i>	Young shoot as fermented food	Poaceae
14	Heiban	<i>Ficus palmata</i>	Tender leaves	Moraceae
15	Lafu tharo and lafu	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>	Pseudostem and Inflorescence	Musaceae
16	Heiribob	<i>Citrus latipes</i>	Fruit skin is used as condiment	Rutaceae
17	Kongouyen	<i>Cissus adnata</i>	Leaves as vegetable	Vitaceae
18	Kuthab	<i>Cleodendrum colebrookianum</i>	Leaves as vegetable	Verbinaceae
19	Awa fadigom	<i>Eryngium foetidum</i>	Leaves used as condiment	Apiaceae
20	Lomba	<i>Elsholtzia blanda</i>	Inflorescence used as condiment	Lamiaceae
21	Haa	<i>Dioscoria alata</i>	Tuber	Dioscoriaceae
22	Kanghu	<i>Alpinia galanga</i>	Inflorescence and rhizom	Zingiberaceae
23	Peruk	<i>Centella asiatica</i>	Trailing shoot	Apiaceae
24	Heikru	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>	Fruit	Phyllanthaceae
25	Heijugag	<i>Juglans regia</i>	Nuts	Juglandaceae
26	Heimang	<i>Rhus semialata</i>	Fruit, tender leaves and inflorescence	Rutaceae
27	Mukthruhi	<i>Zanthoxylon oxyphyllum</i>	Fruit and tender leaves as	Rutaceae

ancestors related trees with spirituality and associated different trees with various Gods and Goddesses (Tiwari 2019; Haldhar et al. 2017; Sarangthem et al. 2023). The purpose of the present study is to record the local names of traditional foods (Manipuri), botanical names, and parts used.

Manipur is a state which have a reach culture in diversity. In the marriage ceremony, there will be a procession of ladies who carries firuk (basketry) filled with different varieties of fruits and eatables. The first lady called Jatra Pubi (leader), will carry Jatra with a firuk filled with rice grains. On top of that rice grain, some plants like *Lycopodium phlegmaria* (Leishang khekwaiba), a few leaves of *Nicotiana tabacum* (Hidakmana). *Colocasia esculenta* (paan), local salt made in discoid shaped, coin, *Gingiber officinale* (Ginger) and *Gossypium hirsutum* (cotton) are placed. This is a social customary in every marriage ceremony followed by every Meitei. The ceremony came to be closed with families exchanged of betel nuts (*Areca catechu* and *Piper betel*) and bowed down to each other.

			condiment	
28	Thangtup	<i>Phoenix humilis</i>	Young fruit	Arecaceae
29	Shingkhong	<i>Solanum torvum</i>	Fruit vegetable	Solanaceae
30	Leipung khanga	<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i>	Fruit vegetable	Solanaceae
31	Koukha	<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>	Tuber	Alismataceae
32	Fakpai	<i>Polygonum posumbu</i>	Tender shoot as condiment	Polygonaceae
33	Yelang	<i>Polygonum barbatum</i>	Tender shoot as vegetable	Polygonaceae
34	Tharo	<i>Nymphaea nouchali</i>	Leaf petiol in salad	Nymphaeaceae
35	Thariktha	<i>Nymphaea stellata</i>	Leaf petiol in salad	Nymphaeaceae
36	Kollamni	<i>Oenanthe javanica</i>	Tender shoot in salad	Apiaceae
37	Oinum	<i>Paederia foetida</i>	Young leaves as vegetable	Rubiaceae
38	Thambal	<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>	Young leaves, fruit, rhizome	Nymphaeaceae
39	Eshing ekaithabi	<i>Neptunia oleracea</i>	Tender shoot	Mimosaceae
40	Kolamni	<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i>	Tender shoot	Convolvulaceae
41	Thanging	<i>Euryale ferox</i>	Petiole and fruit	Nymphaeaceae
42	Hei-it	<i>Ficus auriculata</i>	Fruit	Moraceae
43	Yaingang	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Leaves and rhizome	Zingiberaceae
44	Yendem	<i>Alocasia indica</i>	Petiole and Corm	Araceae
45	Meitei tilhou macha	<i>Allium ascalonium</i>	Bulb and leaves	Liliaceae
46	Maroi-na-pakpi	<i>Allium hookeri</i>	Leaves and roots	Liliaceae
47	Maroi-na-kupi	<i>Allium odorum</i>	Leaves	Liliaceae
48	Eshing kambong	<i>Zizania latifolia</i>	Smut Infected shoot	Poaceae
49	Chakhao	<i>Oryza Sps</i>	Rice grain	Poaceae
50	Tharam	<i>Polygonum molle</i>	Tender leaves	Polygonaceae
51	kaothum	<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	Tuberous rhizome	Alismaceae
52	Eshing kundo	<i>Ludwigia adscendens</i>	Tender shoot	Onagraceae
53	Charuyen	<i>Volvariella esculenta</i>	Fruiting body	Bacillariophyceae
54	U hawaimaton	<i>Crotalaria alata</i>	Tender shoot and flowers	Fabaceae
55	Chollang	<i>Allium stracheyi</i>	Leaves	Liliaceae
56	Tek tek paan	<i>Clitocybe muticebs</i>	Fruiting body	Bacillariophyceae
57	Chu churang mei	<i>Sesbania sesban</i>	Tender shoot and tender fruit	Papilionaceae
58	Toningkok	<i>Houttonia cordata</i>	Trailing root and tender leaves	Soururaceae

Table 2. Listing of some medicinal plants

S. No.	Name in Manipuri	Botanical name	Therapeutic indication and Parts used	Family
1	Ganja	<i>Cannabis sativa</i>	Decoction of leaves and flowers is used for diarrhoea & dysentery	Cannabaceae
2	Urisanamanbi	<i>Cuscuta reflexa</i>	Decoction of stem for jaundice treatment	Cuscutaceae
3	Nongmangkha angouba	<i>Adhatoda vasica</i>	Once a day half glass fresh leaf juice for jaundice	Acantheceae
4	Lamthabi	<i>Melothria purpusilla</i>	Decoction of leaves and stem is given 1 glass 2-3 times a day for jaundice	Cucurbitaceae
5	Oinam	<i>Paederia foetida</i>	Crushed leaves with common salt for toothache	Rubiaceae
6	Lalu kaoba	<i>Spilenthesis acmella</i>	Crushed leaves and stem for toothache	Asteraceae
7	Pungdon	<i>Psidium guajava</i>	Tender leaves for dysentery	Myrtaceae
8	Hari khagok	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	Ripe fruit pulp extract in water is taken in empty stomach to cure stomach ulcer, dyspepsia and dysentery	Rutaceae
9	Tera paibi	<i>Gynura cusimba</i>	Leaf decoction is given for hypertension and leaf paste	Asteraceae

			stops bleeding	
10	Kuthab	<i>Clerodendrum cholebrookianum</i>	Whole plant as vegetable for hypertension	Verbenaceae
11	Awa fadicom	<i>Eryngium foetidum</i>	Raw leaves are taken orally for hypertension	Apiaceae
12	Torbot	<i>Benincasa hispida</i>	Boiled fruit pulp for diuretic and stone case	Cucurbitaceae
13	Kihom-man	<i>Pratia nummularia</i>	Boiled extract of shoot with sugar is given for urinary trouble	Campanulaceae
13	Tekhao yaikhu	<i>Curcuma aromatica</i>	Eating raw rhizome three times in a year stops calculi formation	Zingiberaceae
14	Nungai peruk	<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Leaves boiled with water taken orally	Rosaceae
15	Kongouyen	<i>Cissus adnata</i>	Leaves boiled with water is consumed for urinary disorder and stone case	Vitaceae
16	Heikru	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>	Fruit is taken raw in dyspepsia and jaundice	Phyllanthaceae
17	Heiban	<i>Ficus palmata</i>	Tender leaves taken as vegetable to increase lactation	Moraceae
18	Lafu	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>	Pseudo stem is taken as vegetable to increase lactation	Musaceae
19	Mukthubi	<i>Zanthoxylon oxyphyllum</i>	Boiled decoction is given in diabetes	Rutaceae
20	Eshing ekaithabi	<i>Neptunia oleracea</i>	Raw tender shoot and leaves are consumed in diabetes	Mimosaceae
21	Leibak kundo	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>	Decoction of whole plant in diabetes	Portulacaceae
22	Heikreng	<i>Celtis australis</i>	Decoction of bark and leaf is taken orally in diabetes	Ulmaceae
23	Yaithamna manbi	<i>Kaempferia galanga</i>	Dried rhizome powder is taken orally in stomachic	Zingiberaceae
24	Kwa mana	<i>Piper betel</i>	Crushed leaves juice is given in gastric trouble	Piperaceae
24	Langthrei	<i>Eupatorium birmanicum</i>	Decoction of leaf or raw is taken orally in stomachic & anti-ulcer	Asteraceae
25	Peruk	<i>Centella asiatica</i>	Decoction of whole plant is taken orally in stomachic	Apiaceae
26	Tairen	<i>Cedrela toona</i>	Bath with leaf decoction cures itchy skin disease	Meliaceae
27	Hidakmana	<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	Leaves soaked in water applied locally in skin disease	Solanaceae
29	Haa khamen machu manbi	<i>Dioscorea batata</i>	Crushed tuber extract applied in skin cancer	Dioscoreaceae
30	Shagol hidak	<i>Datura stramonium</i>	Application of leaf juice and eating fried leaf cures skin disease	Solanaceae
31	Okchak khombi	<i>Costus speciosus</i>	Fresh stem juice is used as eye drop and boiled juice of rhizome taken orally regulates menstrual problem	Costaceae
32	Nongmangkha sanamachu	<i>Flogacanthus thysiflorus</i>	Leaf decoction is taken orally in high fever	Acanthaceae
33	Leipung khanga	<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i>	Crushed fruit with honey is given orally in high fever	Solanaceae
34	Ok hidak	<i>Acorus calamus</i>	Rhizome extract is given in cough and chest congestion	Acoraceae
34	Yaimu	<i>Curcuma caesia</i>	Rhizome is crushed and taken orally in cough and chest congestion	Zingiberaceae

35	Yaingang	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Rhizome paste is applied on forehead at high temperatures and vertigo	Zingiberaceae
36	Yaipal	<i>Curcuma angustifolia</i>	Fresh rhizome is taken in cough, dysentery & intestinal worm infection	Zingiberaceae
37	Haa	<i>Dioscorea alata</i>	Leaf extract is taken in gonorrhea, Fresh tuber chewed in hypertension	Dioscoreaceae
38	Takhelei angouba	<i>Hedichium coronarium</i>	Fresh rhizome is eaten against cough, fever and dizziness	Zingiberaceae
39	Heibung	<i>Garcinia xanthochymus</i>	Extract of fruit ripe is given against dysentery jaundice, and uric stones	Clusiaceae
40	Leikham	<i>Goniothalamus sesquipedal</i>	Leaf decoction is used in bathing children against fungal & bacterial infection	Annonaceae
41	Khoiju	<i>Plectrenthes ternifolius</i>	Goniothalamus leaf & Plectrenthes burnt in maternity room believe that both mother and child are safe	Lamiaceae
42	Nungshi hidak	<i>Mentha arvensis</i>	Dried leaf extract is effective in toothache boiled leaf is taken in cold, cough, Diarrhoea & fever	Lamiaceae
43	Lam ekaithabi	<i>Mimosa pudica</i>	Leaf juice is taken in hydrocele, piles, boils, & in jaundice	Mimosaceae
44	Lam karot akhabi	<i>Momordica dioica</i>	Fresh fruit decoction juice with little salt is given in cough & fever	Cucurbitaceae
44	Tulasi	<i>Oscimum sanctum</i>	Leaf is eaten in cough & fever	Lamiaceae
45	Moirang khanum	<i>Cleodandrum serratum</i>	Root is used in rheumatism & dyspepsia, leaf extract is given in cough & fever	Verbenaceae
46	Yempat	<i>Plantago asiatica</i>	Seeds useful in constipation, genito-urinary tract complains, leaves applied after warming to boils & fresh injuries	Plantaginaceae
47	Urikshibi	<i>Vitex negundo</i>	Dried fresh leaf powder is anti-fungal, with salt relieves toothache	Verbenaceae
48	Nongleishang	<i>Xylosma longifolia</i>	Used in preparation of traditional hair lotion that kills lice	Flacourtiaceae
49	Mayokpha	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>	Bark & leaf extract is given in liver, heart complaints, piles, hypertension	Combretaceae
50	Ningthoukhongli	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>	Leaf juice is given in diarrhoea, against menstrual disorder and fomented leaf is applied in muscular pain	Menispermaceae
51	Maroi napakpi	<i>Allium hookeri</i>	Reduce blood pressure	Liliaceae
52	Kolamni	<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i>	Insect bite, anti-dot of opium poisoning	Convolvulaceae
53	Kongouyen laba	<i>Cissus javana</i>	Boiled extract of leaves is given in urinary and kidney stone	Vitaceae
54	Haona	<i>Cympopogon flexuosus</i>	Essential oil of plant that is applied in cuts & injuries	Poaceae
55	Kwa manbi	<i>Piper caninum</i>	Leaf extract is given for cough and jaundice	Piperaceae
56	Yerum keirum	<i>Stellaria media</i>	Fresh Plant decoction is applied in fresh wounds & skin itching	Caryophyllaceae
57	Mange	<i>Tamarindus indica</i>	Ripe fruit pulp is dyspepsiac	Caesalpiniaceae
58	Ishing Kambong	<i>Zizania latifolia</i>	Infected shoot is dyspepsiac	Poaceae

59	Khomthokpi	<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Fresh Plant decoction is applied in fresh wound & skin itching	Asteraceae
60	Shing khang	<i>Solanum torvum</i>	Fruit extract is given for cough and tonsillitis	Solanaceae
61	Heibi	<i>Meyna laxiflora</i>	Anti-diabetic, antioxidant, antibacterial	Rubiaceae

Table 3. Plants related with Religion and Rituals

S. No	Name in Manipuri	Botanical name	Uses in Hinduism/ Meiteism	Family
1	Tairen	<i>Cedrela toona</i> (Syn <i>Ciliata toona</i>)	Tender shoot is used to make sacred the offerings to god	Meliaceae
2	Tulasi	<i>Oscimum sanctum</i>	Plant itself is regarded as god, leaves offered in many rituals	Lamiaceae
3	Langthrei	<i>Eupatorium birmanicum</i>	Tender shoot is used to make sacred the offerings to God	Asteraceae
4	Sanakhongnang	<i>Ficus religiosa</i>	Tree itself is regarded as God	Moraceae
5	Nomgmangkha	<i>Adhatoda sps</i>	Goddess Panthoibi & Nongpok Ningthou took shelter on Sunday when chased by Khaba and tabooed to pluck on Sunday	Acanthaceae
6	Kurao angouba	<i>Erythrina variegata</i>	Tied in a thread in the neck protected from evil spirit	Papilionaceae
7	Khoiju & Leikham	<i>Plectrenthes ternifolius</i> & <i>Goniothalamus sesquipedata</i>	Fumigation for exorcising Evil spirit	Lamiaceae and Annonaceae
8	Heikru	<i>Embllica officinalis</i>	Guru of fruits, offered to God in the ritualistic boat race called heigruhidongba	Euphorbiaceae
9	Waa	<i>Bamboosa sps</i>	Various rituals offerings from birth to death (leaf and stem)	Poaceae
10	Phou	<i>Oryza sativa</i>	Various rituals offerings from birth to death(seed)	Poaceae
11	Mayokpha	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>	Associated with a deity (Umanglai)	Combritaceae
12	Pungphai	<i>Dactyloctenium aegypticum</i>	Tender shoot is used to make sacred the offerings to God	Poaceae
13	Itunglei	<i>Hibiscus mutabilis</i>	Birth rites of Meitei Hindus	Malvaceae
14	Yubi	<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Death rites	Poaceae
15	Kwa	<i>Areca catechu</i>	In all religious rites of Meiteis	Poaceae
16	Kwa mna	<i>Piper betel</i>	In all religious rites of Meiteis	Piperaceae
17	Tingthou	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Used in Meitei Hindus rituals	Poaceae

Result and Discussion

Meiteis the dominant community of Manipur have a wide range of traditional food plants which are cooked in different typical ways like vegetable soup (chamfut), iromba (boiled vegetables mashed with fermented fish & roast fish), Kangsoi (boiled vegetables with fermented fish & sun-dried fish, kangshoo (squeezed boiled vegetables with fermented fish & roasted fish), Soibum (fermented bamboo shoot) and ngakra (Catfish) thongba is also one of the best culinary of Meiteis. There are so many wild non-conventional food plants found in rice fields, ponds, lakes and small hills. In this study altogether there were 58 (fifty-eight) traditional food plants which belong to different families. The people of Manipur who are in remote areas and people in central Imphal are still in use of traditional medicines. The definition or concept of traditional medicine given in the World Health Organization technical report reads as "some total of the knowledge and practices, whether

explicable or not, used in diagnosis, prevention and elimination of physical, mental or social imbalance and relying exclusively on practice and observation handed down from generation to generation, whether verbally or in writing" (Singh et al. 2003). In this study, 61 (sixty-one) plant species are recorded belonging to different families and are found medicinally important. Some plants are used to reduce blood pressure, some plants are used to cure jaundice and so on. *Allium hookeri* is also used to reduce blood pressure in different communities of Manipur. Rhizome of *Acorus calamus* is found to be used against worms in children, aphrodisiac, expectorant, sedative, stomachic etc. (Neha Bhagat 2011), also used in digestive complaints, analgesic and anticonvulsant effect (Jayaram et al. 2010). Therefore, to conserve traditional knowledge and bioresources, documentation of this empirical knowledge is of utmost importance at the present-day information documented in this paper

would also be helpful in directing the phytochemist in search of the active constituents.

Several plant species are considered sacred to be offered in several festivals (Hedge & Bhat 2012) as well as considered to be incarnations or symbols of the Gods or Deities (Niroula & Singh 2015). In this study, there are 17 plants which are found used in religious rituals. The Meities (Hindu) also regarded, *Oscimum sanctum*, *Ficus religiosa* as sacred plants and Meitei sanamahi regarded *Cedrela toona* (Tairen) and *Eupatorium birmanicum* (Langthrei) as sacred plants. *Cocos nucifera*, *Areca catechu* and *Piper betel* are not indigenous plants of

Manipur but as they are frequently used in religious rites nowadays, they are planted in most of the houses of Manipur. Epistemologically, the economic importance of bamboo is very vast among the poor people to be used for many purposes such as building houses, tools and weapons, household implements, religious performances, food (Fermented bamboo shoot), firewood, fencing, all types of baskets, trays (lukmai) of different types in different rituals. Heijing kharai, Phiruk, Lukmai etc are some basketry containers used in marriage ceremony (Chitra et al. 2022).



Ficus bengalensis (Khonang taru)



Hedichium flavum (Loklei)



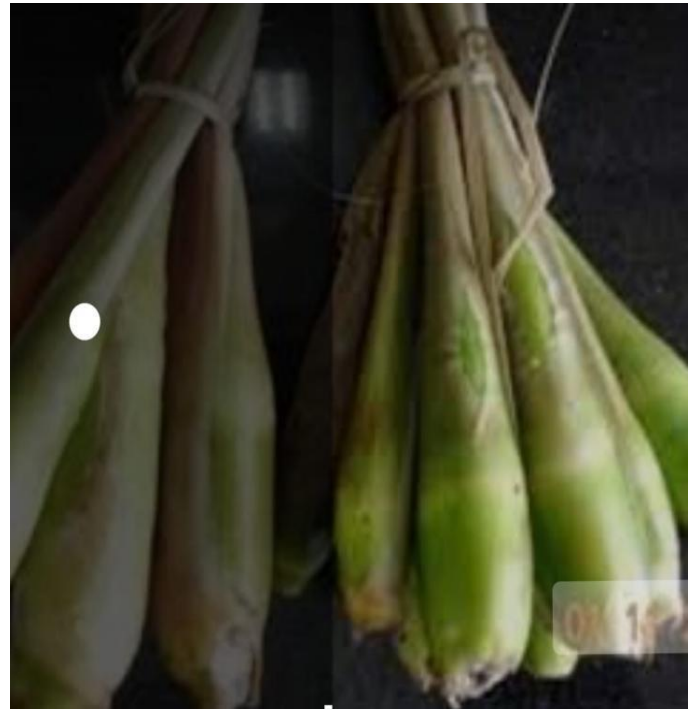
Roots of *Allium hookerii* (Maroi napakpi mara)



Trapa spinosa (Heikak yelli)



Sagittaria sagittifolia (Koukha)



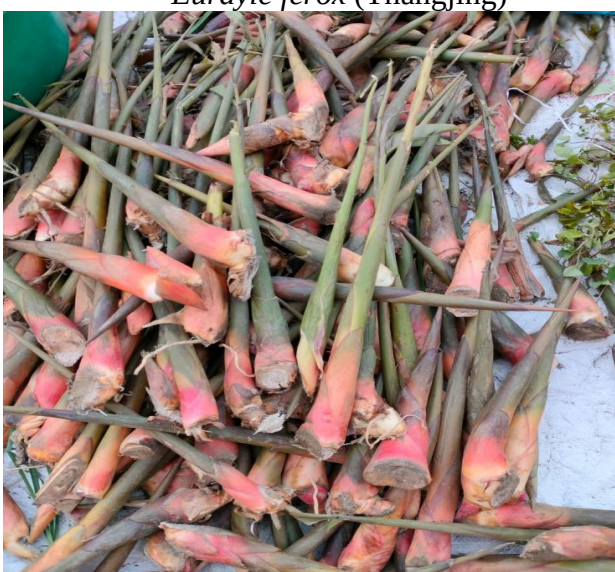
Zizania latifolia (Eshing kambong)



Eurayle ferox (Thangjing)



Cedrela toona (Tairen)



Alpinia allughas (Poolei)



Nelumbo nucifera (Thamna lakon)



Ficus palmata (Heiban mana)



Pletrenthes ternifolius and *Goniothalamus sesquipeda*
(Khoiju leikham)

Figure 1. Some plates of traditional food, medicinal and religious plants

Declaration of interests

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

Data Sharing

All relevant data are within the manuscript.

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