

Usin sinba: the case of Khurkhul

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Abstract:

The present study was conducted in Khurkhul village in Manipur. Traditional healers, called 'maiba' and 'maibi', thereof, use a holistic approach in dealing with health and illness. 'Usin sinba' is one of the traditional practices of substituting a seriously ill person with a fish through an act of ritualistic performance by a 'maiba'. It is generally done by releasing a 'Meitei ngamu' (*Channa gachua*) into the pond or river. At family level, as one of preventive measures of illness or traditional health seeking behaviour, it is performed annually in large scale during 'Lamta', the Meitei month in February-March and 'Cheiraoba' (the 'Meitei' New Year celebration in 'Sajibu' i.e. in the month of April). At the village level, 'usin sinba' is also performed during the festival of 'lai haraoba', celebrated to please traditional deities known as the 'Umang lai' during which the head of the 'maibas', called the Pundit will release the 'Meitei ngamu' (*Channa gachua*) to ward off the evils and to seek health and prosperity for each and every families in the village. Sometimes sacred trees like the 'Sanakhongnang' (*Ficus religiosa* L.) or the 'Kokal' (*Alangium chinese* (Lour.) Harms) or the 'Uhal' (*Sida acuta*) are also approached for similar substitutions and protection. It shows that the people of Khurkhul are conservative and traditionalist in nature. They are adhered to practicing traditional medicine in good health and perform various traditional preventive measures as embodied in their culture.

Key Words: Khurkhul, laiharaoba, maiba, sanakhongnang, usin sinba, yelhing thaba.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Usin sinba is one of the traditional healing practices of warding off the evils and substitution of a seriously ill person by a *maiba* (a man who performs rituals as a priest, and as a medicine man, who can cure and act as shaman who performs magic that may be good or bad and performs a ritual for the benefit of family or person or community) by releasing a *Meitei ngamu* (*Channa gachua*) into the water in a pond or river¹. It is commonly known as the *Ngamu Usin* because of the involvement of the sacred fish, the *Meitei ngamu* (*Channa gachua*). It is performed as a crisis rite particularly when a person gets seriously ill on the belief that the fish so released will carry away all the ill-luck and miseries of the ailing person.

According to legends, *Meitei ngamu* (*Channa gachua*) was created by the supreme god of the *Meiteis*, the *Lainingthou Sanamahih*, to take away all human misfortunes by chanting "*Hei ngamu mitam nga nang munna taroko, Hayeng Taipang malem ashida Icha Isu singna pak sanna taraba matamda nangbu faraga makhoigi awa ana pumnamak nangna puduna chatkhro haina ishingda amuk thadoklaklabadi, nangna puduna chatkhigadabani, soiba yadeko*"², which literally means "Take away all sufferings and misfortunes likely to fall on human beings and provide solace to the distressed ones by giving good health and prosperity when you are released back into the water". That is why it is believed that this fish when released back into the water cannot fail to take away illness or sorrow or any other misfortunes that are entrusted upon.

Ngamu Usin, in larger scale, is also performed in every family during *Lamta thangja* (i.e., on Saturdays of the *Lamta*, the Meitei month in February-March), in the morning and on the day of *Cheiraoba* (i.e., the *Meitei* New Year celebration in April) in the evening. During the occasion of the *Lai Haraoba*, which is celebrated to please traditional deities known as the '*Umang lai*' (*Umang*; forest/wood and *Lai*, the *Meitei* deity). a particular *Maiba* is appointed as *pandit* (the highest priest) by the Khurkhul *Lai Haraoba* celebration committee. He will remain as the *pandit Maiba* for tenure of one year or more and will perform all the rituals of the *Lai Haraoba* festival including the *Ngamu Usin* for the well-being of the whole village by releasing some of the *Meitei ngamu* (*Channa gachua*) into the water. Other forms of *Usin sinba* are also carried out by approaching specific sacred trees like the '*Sanakhongnang*' (*Ficus religiosa* L.) or the '*Kokal*' (*Alangium chinese* (Lour.) Harms) or the '*Uhal*' (*Sida acuta*).

1.1. Purpose and statement of the study

The aim of the study was to study the importance of *usin sinba* as a form of traditional healing practices of the people of khurkhul village in Manipur. The application of *usin sinba* is important to the lives of the villagers as preventive measures for prevention of any ailments. They are much concerned about their health and rely on the practices of plural therapeutic system of treatments. Every society has a shared belief and behaviour about the prevention and treatment of illness. These shared belief and behaviour about the prevention and treatment of illness constitute the medical systems of a society. Medical systems may simply be conceptualized as “community’s idea and practices relating to illness and health”³. Health is the prime concern for the people of Khurkhul and that they still adhered to their ancient traditional medical system of prevention and treatment of illness and ailments. One of the most common practices is *usin sinba* and their goal is to ensure the prevention and substitution of illness. It is an age-old practice founded on their cultural belief. Khurkhul where the present study has been carried out is a small village located in Lamshang Sub-division of Imphal West district of Manipur state with a total of 1,344 families⁴. It is inhabited by one of the Scheduled Caste (SC) communities of Manipur known as the *Loi*. The connotation of the term *Loi* has diverse versions. The term *Loi* connotes not only the people who preserve the pre-Hinduism traditions and customs of the Meiteis but also the people who were banished to the penal colonies in Sugnu, Ithing and Thanga islands⁵. Khurkhul was chosen for the present study because its people are conservative having traditionalist attitudes and still practice traditional medicines.

1.2. Literature review

In order to understand the anthropological approach towards health and illness, prevention, diagnosis, treatment of disease or injury, it is necessary, first of all, to know the meaning and definition of health as related to the topics. The World Health Organization (WHO), in its broadest term defined health with reference to an “overall sense of well-being”, which means that it is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”⁶. Further, the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, and political belief, economic or social condition. The health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest co-operation of individuals and States. And the extension to all peoples of the benefits of medical, psychological and related knowledge is essential to the fullest attainment of health.

But as the health systems include cultural perceptions and classification of health-related issues, diagnosis, prevention, healing practices, and healers⁷, for decades, anthropologists have been studying the interaction of cultural values and norms on health-related issues, and that, the western medical practitioners are beginning to use anthropological data to better understand their multicultural patients’ responses to ‘modern’ health care practices. Furthermore, Medical anthropologists have contributed towards the understanding of health and illness among humans by using anthropological research methods and results to “identify, assess and solve contemporary problems”⁸.

Traditional medicine also called as indigenous medicine or folk medicine and it comprises medical aspects of traditional knowledge that developed over generations within various societies before the era of modern medicine. The word traditional medicine is also sometimes used as a synonym for ethnomedicine. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines traditional medicine as “the sum total of the knowledge, skills, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness”.

Traditional healers hold an esteem and powerful position. Traditional healers can play important and valuable role in helping communities to improve their health and quality of life. Their role is that of physician, counsellor, psychiatrists, and priest, and people visit a traditional healer for problems ranging from social dilemmas to major medical illness. They, therefore have a role to play in building the health system so far. To understand illness behaviour, the native perceptions regarding the disease and illness are necessary. According to Ackerknecht (1947), the disease and its treatment are only the abstract purely biological processes but the fact that a person gets diseased and what kind of treatment he receives, including diet and rest, depend on social and cultural factors⁹.

Seeking of treatment also vary from society to society and person to person. In case of any sickness, the *Bhotia* tribe in Mana village of Uttarakhand first go to allopathic doctors and use the medicines prescribed by them. But when they find that the treatment is not enough, they go to ‘*puchher*’, a sacred priest, who has the knowledge of the supernatural powers¹⁰. After studying Traditional medicinal practices among the *Raj-Gonds* of Korba district of Chhattisgar, Rajesh Shukla and Moyna Chakravarty¹¹ reported that the *Raj-Gonds* prefer the traditional healers. However, when the condition becomes serious, they approach modern medicinal practitioners.

The traditional healers usually treated the common ailments of the villagers in their home setting¹². Some medical practitioners are expert in bone setting, wound healing, poisonous bites, neurological disorders, etc. and some others in spiritual healing through rituals¹³. Anthropologists are studying traditional medicine in many countries like Africa, Europe and Russia¹⁴. China is able to give health care for its urban as well as the rural population by combining both traditional and modern health care system¹⁵. Attempts are also made to study household remedies from different areas in India, for treatment of similar ailments.

How the traditional healer carries out the healing process differ from society to society. Oftentimes during private healing, only the patient and the health practitioner are in the room. For some, healing practices take place in front of the whole community and often involved their participation. One example is the healing dance of *Ju/hoansi* foragers of the Kalahari. Several times a month, the healing dance is performed to draw on the collective energy of the participants. Men, and sometimes women, dance around a circle of women who sit around a fire, clapping and singing. Healers draw on the spiritual energy of the dancers and singers to enhance their consciousness. During this period of enhanced consciousness, healers can heal those in need¹⁶.

II. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The present study adopted standard techniques of modern ethnographic research such as observation, case study and interview for data collection. Person to person interviews were conducted with a view to elicit individual perspectives on issues relating to health. To supplement the interviews, informal discussions were held with various people. Secondary sources as archives, records and libraries were also relied upon for more background information. Secondary materials ranging from newspaper articles to published scholarly texts such as journals and books relevant to the topic were also consulted. In depth interviews were conducted with currently practising local *Maiba* and *Maibi* (traditional priestesses of Manipur who are believed to be the spiritual medium since days of yore).

III. RESULTS

In Khurkhul, the ritual of *Ngamu Usin* is performed by a *maiba* from the village. On the appointed day, as a crisis rite, the *maiba* comes into the house of the seriously ill person and the rituals of the *Ngamu Usin* is performed right at the ground edge of the main door of the house locally called the *Thongjin* (of the door), a place where the *Thongarel*, (the deity of the main door) is believed to be guarding the house at the threshold. *Thongarel* is responsible for the entry and exit of the death.

Important items for this ritual are a healthy *Meitei ngamu* (*Channa gachua*) which will swim fast on release into the water after the recital of the rituals, a *Laphu tonga* (strips of banana stem) to represent a coffin, *pheijup marol ahum* (three layered cloths), *meitha marol ahum* (three pieces of firewood), *sana konyai* (representation of gold pieces), *lupa konyai* (representation of silver pieces), *heiruk* (set of fruits), *pana* (beetle nuts and leaves), some water, flowers, candles and incense sticks etc.

When everything is sanctified and placed in order, the *maiba* calls upon the *Thongarel*; the deity of the door by chanting the following recitals (as recorded during the field work):

He kuru Thongjin Thongarel kouba kuru
Achang thongbu hangliba
Ashi thongbu thingliba kuru ibungo
Mee pokpashu kuruni Mee hinghanbashu kuruni
Adungei atiya kuru sidabana Taibang panba meebu
Semba Saba matamda Palem mamagi garva nungda
Loidam thabum tarani Numit shingbul chahumni
Naopurakpa matamda
Kuruna haiye ipari imomsa
Nakhoibu taibang panbada phaoro
Kuru Eina piba chahi Chamma Kun palluro
Napari namom shantokluraga
Taibang kumhei yengluro
Ashumna hairaklabada
Garva nunggi mitam aduna haiye
Kuru Ibungo eikhoidi
Taibang Malang pangbada phaoningdre
Taibang panbadi tugo tusa yammi
Taibang magi minok chao e phaoraroige hairakpa matamda
Kuruna amuk haiye
Ipari imomsha nakhoibu taibang panbada phaodaba yaroi
Phaoro hayeng nakhoina taibang panba phaoraba matamda

Nakhoina awaba taraba matamda
Ipada usinlon chama nipan singjarak o
Ipana nakhoigi awaba kokpirakkani Ashumna hairabada
Garva nunggi mitam aduna taibang panbada phaorakle
Taibang phaoraba matam ashida
Ngashi thabi chengjenbada thabal lallangdaba
Korou numit ashida usinlon chama nipan makpu sinnajariye
Ugi usinne wagi usinni numit thagi usinne sajik thawa okpuroi
Usinlon chama nipan bu shingjaribase
Thongjin thongarel kouba kuruna
Nadairen nachashing nashusingi
Awa ana tagadaba mama mapa machin manao
Macha mashu marup mapija setna khainaragadaba
Ekai eki naggadaba kriti koloi maming chatkadaba
Louri yumpham honggadaba kwakna mang sanggadaba
Thangpham meikhu khugadab
Meikoi chapu kera thang chandawa ngadaba
Manglak haraknagadaba kalimaina shokkadaba
Tungoda tekkadaba langphamda kaigadaba
Nata pita naggadaba chahigi togot tosha langpham apaiba
Lakkadaba pumnamakpu thongjin thongarel kouba
Kuruna chingo nangak ethokke ngakthokpiyu
Khoyum nakan thokne kanthokpiyu
Nadairen nachashing nashusingdi
Kuruna piba chahi chama kun sudriye
Sukmu thanba wangamba langya
Thamba watemba sajik mamei waiba
Ngamkhiroi haidana thongjin thongrel kouba kurugi
Ngaklou khuya khada heiruk panna
Thaomei phiral lemlei nga ngamu kouba nga ama
Mayada sana konyai lupa konyai umlaga
Usinlon chama nipan makpu shingjaribase
Thongjin thongarel kouba kuruna
Nadairen nacha nashusingi awa ana lakkadaba
Pumnamakpu lemlei nga ngamu kouba nga ashida
Mahut mareng sinnabiyu
Lemlei nga ngamu nangondasune nadairen
Nataasing nashusingi sigadaba nagadaba pumnamakshe
Ngamu kouba nga nangna pubikhro
Nataoshu natashu tingkokchahourage
Laikokchahourage kumshidagi
Nongmei chahi pashora youdrilhaoba
Nahanbirakkanu yekhanbirakkanu
Sidayaibu pibirammu nadayaibu pibirammu
Punshilol nungshangbarolbu khaibirammu
Haiduna thongjin thongarel kouba kurugi
Ngaklou khoya khada khurumjariye

The literal meaning is as translated below:-

O Master, *Kuru* (derived from
hindi word 'guru', a spiritual teacher),
Lord *Thongjin Thongarel*,
The venerable one,
Opener of the door of life
Opener of the door of death
Birth and death art thine.
During the creation of man by Lord *Atiya Kuru Sidaba*

In the womb of mother
For 19 months, 300 days
The Lord says, sons – daughters
Go to the world
Live for My allotted 120 years
Ramify to your sons and daughters
See the earthly festivals.
Hearing this,
The soul in the womb says
O Master
We do not like to go unto the world
Worldly melancholy is enormous.
As they hesitant due to the massive worldly miseries,
The Lord again says
My children you cannot deny
Go and when you live in the world
When you fall in distress
Sacrifice 108 *usin* to your Father
I will save you.
As ensured by the Lord
The child in the womb comes to this world.
While living in this world
Today, the day of mistake-cooking, moonlit of commotion
All the 108 *usins* are being offered
Usin of tree, *usin* of bamboo,
usin of sun and moon, *sajik-thaba* (stars).
Arranging the 108 *usins*
To Lord *Thongjin Thongarel*
For Thy humble sons' and grandsons'
From the befalling distress of parents, siblings
Separation of descendants and friends
Migrating from the homestead, crows waiting at grave
Smoking Dao's cut mark
Observing religious vows
With *meikoi chaphu* (earthen pot for death ritual)
And *chandawa* (for funeral pyre)
Nightmare, touch of *Kalimai* (Goddess *Kali*,
Responsible of fatal accidents)
Accidental injuries
Besides year-wise fortuitous incidents
From all these being impended over
The Lord called *Thongjin Thongarel*
Please protect us by Thy divine proficiency
Lord, please thrash them away diligently
Thy devoted children
Not completing thy 120 years.
Disagree with immature death
Lord *Thongjin Thongarel*
To Thy divine sole
Fruits, betel,
A fish called *ngamu*
Keeping a piece of gold and silver inside its mouth
The offering of 108 *usin* is arranged.
The Master called *Thongjin Thongarel*
All the transpiring suffers
Be please transferred to this fish called *ngamu*
As replacement
To you the fish called *ngamu*
For your loyal sons and grandsons

All the befalling sufferings of death and illness
You, who are called *ngamu*, please carry away
Be blessed your friend too
Free from sufferings of this year.
Till the coming of the next year
Please protect from ailing
Bless not to die, bless not to sick
Let the long life be sanctified
Seeking this, Lord *Thongjin Thongarel*
As I pray at thy sole.

After the recital, all the family members prayed for the recovery and well being of the seriously ill person. The *maiba* then puts some of the *sana konyai* and *lupa konyai* into the mouth of the *Meitei ngamu* (*Channa gachua*) and sprinkles some waters of the ritual upon the seriously ill person and quietly goes out with the fish *Meitei ngamu* (*Channa gachua*) along with the necessary items used during the rituals to the pond and released it by saying “*he ngamu mitam nga nangna awaba numgaitaba pumnamak anabashigi mahut shinduna chatloko aduga meeoibagi nungaiba yaiphaba pibirammuko*” (you substitute all the miseries of the ill and give back a new life).

3.1. Usin sinba in crisis

Usin sinba is carried out in various forms. When it is done with a healthy cock instead of a *Meitei ngamu* (*Channa gachua*) to substitute the illness, it is called the *Yelhing-thaba*. In this case the *maiba* after the recital releases the cock in the open but no one from the concerned family will catch and eat it. *Usin sinba* is also carried out by selecting any of the three sacred trees like the *Sanakhongnang* (*Ficus religiosa L.*) or the *Kokal* (*Alangium chinese (Lour.) Harms*) or the *Uhal* (*Sida acuta*) as these trees are traditionally believed to have cultural significance such as the *Sanakhongnang* to be the strongest and most powerful of all trees while the *Kokal* as protector and the *Uhal* to be the oldest or the first tree on earth. *Usin sinba* performed with these trees does not require the releasing of the particular fish, *Meitei ngamu* (*Channa gachua*) or a cock as in case of the *Yelhing-thaba*. Otherwise, the proceedings and the rituals are the same as mentioned above. It is believed that these trees will take away the miseries of the ailing persons.

Usin sinba with the *Sanakhongnang* (*Ficus religiosa L.*), requires a piece of cloth in the form of a tri coloured flag having red, black and white. During the ritual, the *maiba* will place this flag locally called the *phiral* by the side of the tree or hang it by using a piece of bamboo. This process is locally called *phiral katpa* (*phiral*, the flag and *katpa*, the offering). They consider the *Sanakhongnang* (*Ficus religiosa L.*) to be a strongest male tree and that is why after the recital the *maiba* will adorn its trunk with a large men’s white loin cloth.

For *Usin sinba* on the tree of *Kokal* (*Alangium chinese (Lour.) Harms*) and the *Uhal* (*Sida acuta*) a garland of only white flowers is a must. During the ritual, the *maiba* will garland the tree to seek blessings for the ailing person and its family. For this purpose any types of white flowers may be used but not that of a *kundo* (*Jasminum pubescences*). It is prohibited because the garlanding of *kundo* flowers represents bonds of the *Meitei* marriage. That is to say that the garlanding the tree with *kundo* flowers will meant marrying the tree.

3.2. Usin Sinba as Cyclical Ritual

The observance of *Usin sinba* as a cyclical ritual is performed every year i.e. during *Lamta thangja* (on the Saturdays of the *Lamta*, the *Meitei* month in February-March), *Cheiraoba* (the *Meitei* New Year celebration) and *Lai Haraoba* (one of the most ritualistic performance of *Umang*; forest/wood and *Lai*, the *Meitei* god). It is performed almost in every family and also at the community level. The people of Khurkhul village perform *Usin sinba* in their family during *Lamta thangja* (in the morning) and *Cheiraoba* (in the evening). It is during the occasion of the *Lai Haraoba*, that the village *Pundit Maiba* of the *Lai Haraoba* Committee performs it for the well being of the whole villagers by releasing some of the *Meitei ngamu* (*Channa gachua*) into the water.

The *Meiteis* have a belief that the so called *Lamta thangja*, i.e. the first *thangja* (Saturday) of the *Meitei*’s last month *Lamta* (February-March) is very unpleasant as it is considered to be the day for all the evil spirits. That is why the elderly women folk comes out to chase away all the evil spirits at the cross roads of their village borders by performing a ritualistic ‘*saroi-ngaroi-khangba*’. The observance of *Lamta thangja* is for the protection of the family members from the evil spirits by releasing the fish *Meitei ngamu* (*Channa gachua*) in the morning. Sometimes it is hard to get such fishes for such occasion that is why people also replaced it with some stone pebbles, locally called *Thoudounung*, to represent the actual numbers of the family members. On this day children are advised not to go out in the night.

Ngamu Usin also takes place during the celebration of the *Cheiraoba*. The *Cheiraoba* is the celebration of New Year festival in Manipur. This sacred occasion is celebrated religiously in a grand manner every year.

The people of Khurkhul welcome it by cleaning their houses and decorate them with traditional vigour and cultural flavour. Exchange of gifts, sharing of varieties of traditional dishes by visiting one another's places are some of the main programmes of the celebration.

The *Meitei hindu* or the people of Khurkhul who follow *Hinduism*, celebrate it on the first day of the Solar New Year, usually on 13 or 14 of April (*Sajibu*) every year while others who follow *Sanamahism* religion celebrate it as *Sajibu Nongma Panba* or *Meitei Cheiraoba* on the basis of lunar New Year calendar in the month of April (*Sajibu*) but not on the same date with that of the *Meitei hindu*. The *Sajibu Nongma Panba* is derived from the Manipuri words: *Sajibu* –the first month of the year which usually falls during the month of April, and *Nongma Panba*- the first date of this month to be.

The day and date as well as its name may be given differently but it is celebrated in the similar manner in every house and worship *Lainingthou Sanamahi* and *Ima Leimarel Shidabi* for seeking good health and prosperity. They celebrate it with great fanfare by gathering all the family members to share a sumptuous feast for lunch. The day begins by offering fresh fruits, vegetables, rice and other food items that are to be cooked and shared after the ceremonial prayers to their deity.

The dishes, so prepared, are also offered at the traditional location of the front gate that has been specially cleansed and sanctified by using mud, flowers and leaves. Usually the eldest son of the household will make these offerings there in respect of their deities namely, the *Kumsana Kumlikal* (lord of the golden year), *Lamsenba Tusenba* (guardian of the land) and *Lummaba Tumaba* (lord of the land). It shall be accorded with a token of coin, fruits, flowers and betel nuts all placed upon a plantain leaf with a candle or lamp and incense stick.

After this, portions of the dishes prepared are also exchanged with the relatives and the neighbours. This custom of exchanging the dishes is called the '*Mathel Laanaba*'. Later on all the family members will gather and eat happily. It is believed that anything that happens on this day will keep happening all through out the year i.e. if you are happy and healthy on this day, you will remain so for the rest of the year.

That is why, after the feast, it is a tradition that the family members including children will climb a small community hillock commonly known as the *Cheirao Ching* in the afternoon. They also pay homage to the hill deity and join the traditional group dance called '*Thabal Chongba*' which is performed as merry making programme. In the evening most of the households in Khurkhul perform *Usin sinba* as an important part of the *Cheiraoba*, by releasing the fish *Meitei ngamu (Channa gachua)* into the water.

It is also compulsory for the village *Pandit maiba* to perform a *Ngamu Usin* for the well being of the entire village during *Lai haraoba* (literarily *Lai* is God and *haraoba* means rejoicing). It is carried out in one of the most traditional ways of the *Meiteis* representing the expressions of whole human life from birth to death. At the individual level, the ill fated villagers who have been casted during the process of *maibi laimang phamba* of the *Lai haraoba* will bring either the fish *Meitei ngamu (Channa gachua)* to perform *Ngamu Usin* or a cock for *Yelhing-thaba* whichever is appropriate. In this way all the miseries will be relieved and no evil spirits will cast upon them again.

IV. CONCLUSION

The people of Khurkhul are conservative and traditionalist by nature. They still practice their ancient traditional medicines and are much concerned about good health. The study of their traditional healing practices reveals the use of *Usin Sinba* when a person is seriously ill. This ritual is performed on the belief that all the misfortunes will be substituted by releasing a fish, *Meitei ngamu (Channa gachua)* into the water by a *maiba*. Other forms of *Usin Sinba* that takes place without the use of this particular fish are carried out by offering specific items to any of the three plants bearing cultural values and beliefs, namely, the *Sanakhongnang (Ficus religiosa L.)*, the *Kokal (Alangium chinese (Lour.) harms)*, and the *Uhal (Sida acuta)*.

It is also one of the megico religious practices performed every year during the occasion of *Lamta thangja*, *Cheiraoba* and *Lai Haraoba*. It signifies their aged old traditions of preventing illness and all other forms of unto want miseries from the wraths of the evils. They take it as a compulsion measures for seeking blessings even at the community level. They believed that the observance of *Usin Sinba* prior to festivals and worshipping gods will bring good health and prosperity in the village.

The case presented in this paper demonstrates the experimental reality of one of the traditional ways of health seeking behaviours in Khurkhul. It is evident that physical well being and mental satisfactions are two sides of the same coin: one cannot live a healthy life without honouring the mental aspects. They have their own system of belief, which is deeply rooted in their mental cognition and physical surroundings.

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