



Traditional Homes of India-Manipur

Due to its geographical situation, Manipur is a shining pearl in the Himalayan system. Jawaharlal Nehru once described Manipur as the 'Jewel of India'. Manipur is a natural delight with hills around the cup-shaped valley and numerous small lakes and swamps. Rongmei tribe has a typical traditional house type based on their cultural beliefs. Manipur has population of two groups, the people who inhabit the hills called the Nagas and those who inhabit the valley called the Meiteis. The hills are also inhabited by the group called the Kukis. Imphal is the political capital of Manipur.

The traditional house in Manipur can be broadly divided into:-

- a) Common man's house
- b) Rich person's house

Common man's house: - The common people house is a basic house. It is made from wood, bamboo, thatches, and cane (lee) etc. It is generally built in an area selected by the owner.



The villagers build the house in during dry season. Traditionally Rongmei tribe built their houses facing east direction. They start building their houses after a rituals conducted by Mooh (Diviner). The Mooh prays to the supreme deity Tinkouraguang. Zoupan (a form of oblation) is performed by him with pouring of rice bear. During Zoupan sliced ginger is placed on the right side of a laa (plaintain leaf) which is known as Khuloutamba.

The ground plan of a traditional common people house is rectangular in shape. It comprises of two rooms a sleeping room which is locally known as Keijao and a kitchen which is locally known as Keinung. Keijao is at the front part of the house and Keinung is at the back part of the house. Keijao is bigger in size than that of Keinung. This room is also provided to the traveler (Khullanba) or guest.

The Keijao has a plank on the northern side of the house which is locally known as Langom. The Langom is used as a bed.

There is a fire place on the south-eastern side of the room which is locally known as Meimang. The main purpose of having Meimang is for lighting the room and warming the room during winter. A large mortar with three holes, which is used for pounding rice and grain, is also placed at the western part of the Keijao.

Inside Keinung or kitchen, there is a large fire place or Meimang at the center of the room. The Keinung is also used as bed room. Two beds are placed, one on southern and one on the eastern part of the room. This bed is locally known as Langphai. At the western part of this room there is a large wall rack having five tiers. This rack is used for keeping kitchen utensils.

A granary is placed outside the house. It plays an important role in the lives of the common people. Granary or Shap is carefully chosen by the family . It is built in a place where it is free from getting moisture which may spoil the stored grains and from wild and domestic fire. The Shap is built on a wooden platform above the ground about 3 to 4 feet. The people consider the Shap very important because food grain and rice are stored for the whole year.

Tarangkai (Rich person's house):-

The house built by rich people is locally known as Tarangkai. A tarangkai is made of the following; Thangchi (a type of wood) for pillar; Leihou (a type of wood); bamboo, lee (cane) for roofing, paints for painting front design and plank wall of four sides and doors.

Place for building the house is same as common people house type; depend on the choice of the owner the house is usually built during the dry season.



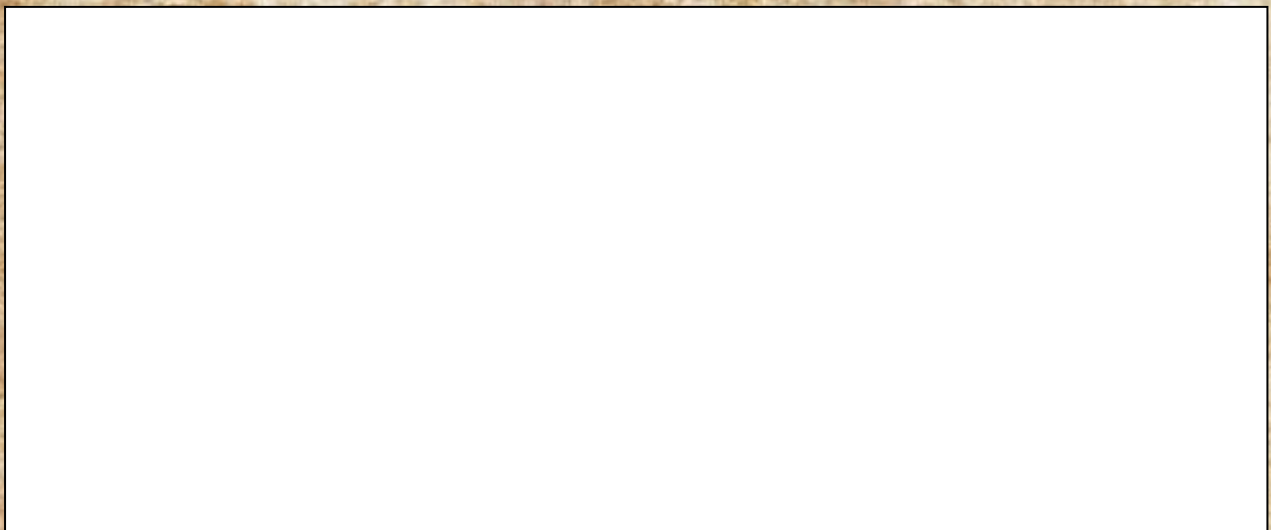
The Rongmei tribe has a traditional believed of facing the house towards east. Here in building the Tarangkai they followed the tradition of facing east. The building of the houses is initiated by rituals usually conducted by elderly man or the Mooh of the village. The ritual includes the prayer by the Mooh to the supreme God Tinkouraguang and offering of rice bear. During the offering sliced ginger is placed on the right side of a laa (plaintain leaf) this part of the ritual is also known as Khuloutamba.

Ground plan of Tarangkai is same as that of common people house but the size is bigger as compare to common people house. For Tarangkai, beds (Rang Khuang) are made up of u-yung (a type of wood) because this wood is strong enough and feel warm. Same as that of common people house granary for Tarangkai is also placed outside the house in chosen place which is safe.

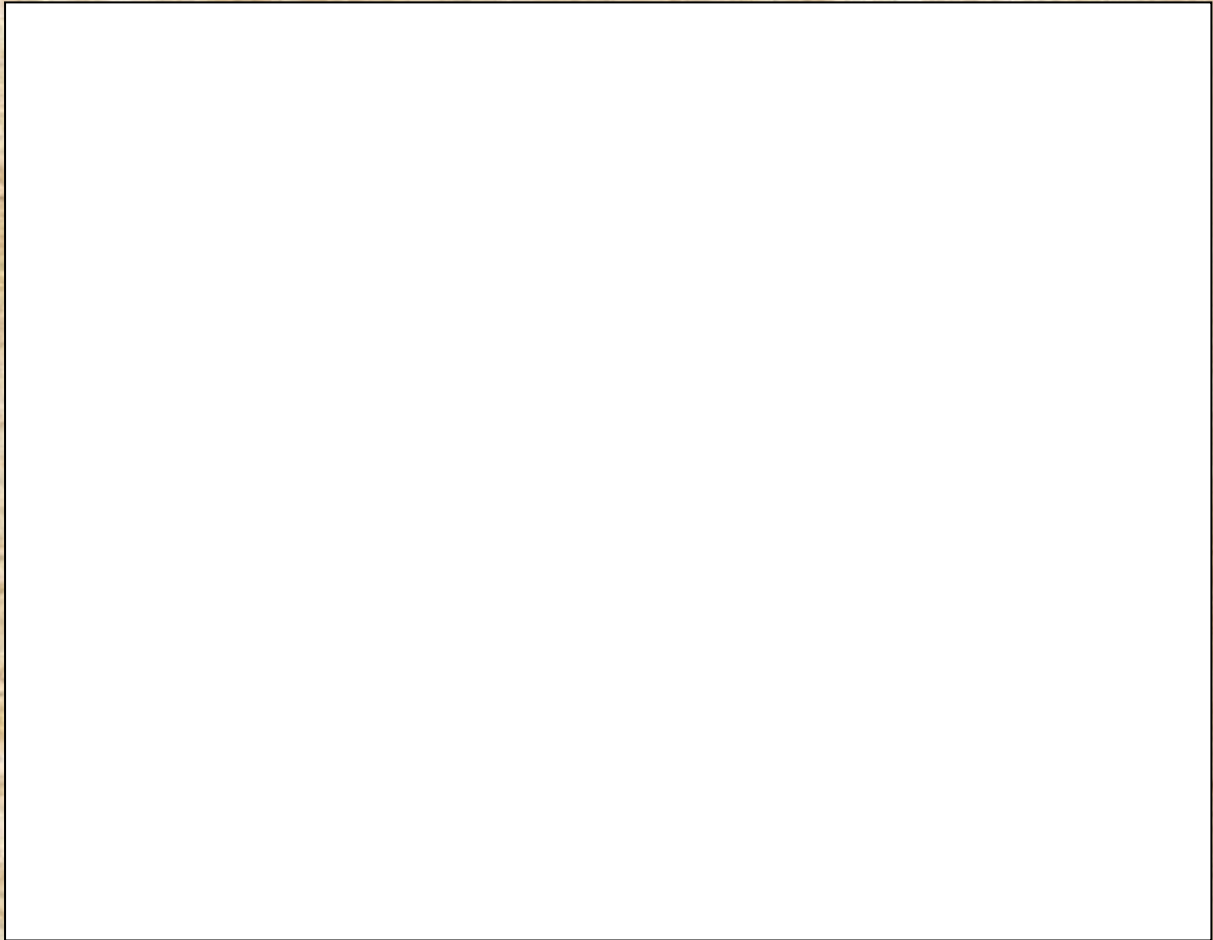
Front door and back door is locally known as Keijang and Keilak respectively. There are two doors in front side of a Tarangkai one is used by the members of the household and another one is used by the members of the Pakhang/Leisha phan when the house become the office of Khangchu/Luchu. Usually the villagers make the office of Khangchu/Luchu in such family who can effort of building the Tarangkai.

Different form of decorative painting found in front part of a Tarangkai like Bee, Cow head, Moon and Sun, Rainbow, Figures of dancing, Pattern of a traditional Rongmei cloth, Tortoise and Hen.

Activity: Draw a Manipur style house.



Activity: Paste the picture of the dwellers of your house in the windows of your house.



Activity: Find out about different kinds of house that exist in different types of Northeast India.
