CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
OF SHÜPFOMEI NAGA TRIBE:

ORIGIN, MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT
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Introduction

For an outsider and even among many Naga tribes, \(^1\) when they hear about “Shüpfomei Naga” tribe, they will feel uneasy and strange at first, because till date they know them only as the “Mao Naga” \(^2\) tribe among the Naga tribe list. It is all because of the official non-use of the term. All the documents are recorded as “Mao Naga tribe” and we find “Mao tribe” in the Scheduled Tribe list of Manipur. When we peep into the history, the four kindred sub-groups do not know when they came to be called as “Mao tribe” and what it means. There is not a single place that is called Mao, and there is no people called by such a name as Mao, nor there is any area that is known as Mao. In the following chapter we shall see that the term “Mao” came from the wrong pronunciation of the one sub-group called “Ememee”. Who is to blame, the Indian government or government interpreters? The British government officials whom we called “Du-ba-shi” \(^3\) (from Hindi term) which means, “Du-two, ba-language, shi-interpreters”. Interpreters of the two languages either from English to Manipuri \(^4\) or Manipuri to English are also

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1. Ref. 1.6.1. The term Naga.
2. Cf. 1.3.1. Etymology of the word “Mao” vis-à-vis “Shüpfomei”.
3. “Du-ba-shi” is Hindi term and which means “interpreters” i.e. one who know two languages and can interpret the person who does not know that particular language.
4. Manipuri is the language spoken by Meitei. The Manipuris are commonly known as the people of Manipur. Manipur language is written in Bengali script, which has a very rich vocabulary. The real Meitei language is called Meitei Mayak, but very little population can read and write the script. Meitei Mayak script and the spoken language of the Manipuris is recognised by the Government of India in the 8th scheduled.
called Lambu⁵ which means one who helps in communicating your message to an other, i.e. Manipuri language to Shüpfomei and Shüpfomei dialect to Manipuri language through a middleman. The present Mao Naga tribe (Enemei, Lepaona, Chīūuve and Paomata generally known as Mao Naga tribe) actually does not know why, how and who are called by the generic term as “Maos”. But one thing they know for sure that “Shüpfomei” was the original name and commonly known by the traditional name - Enemei, Lepaona, Chīūvi and Paomata. They may forgive the British officials for their wrong assumptions and pronunciation resulting is to terming Shüpfomei race into a new nomenclature as “Mao”. But now, they can say that “Mao is not Shüpfomei nor Shüpfomei is Mao”.

Today ethnic groups consciously, unconsciously and unanimously assert their ethnicity through resolution in parliament or legislature and define their language and original term. In the international, national and state level. They have seen the ethnic assertion through the change of names such as, Burma to Myanmar, Bombay to Mumbai, Madras to Chennai, Calcutta to Kolkata. If the people feel that the name of their country or city has been changed by colonizers, people are not ready to live with it. Such colonized nomenclature is termed as suppressing and not in the cultural frame of the people. People then can reverse it to their original term. The same clarion call is given to the term “Mao” which does not make the people feel secure and ethnically comfortable.

⁵ Lambu is the recognised interpreter or translators of language. He/she is the middleman and middlewoman who goes between the different department or government officials and who knows the language and method to translate and interpret to the government official.
The change can occur only when educated group and like-minded intellectuals can come together and sort out their difference and reach a consensus. History repeats itself and history can be reverted with the peoples’ determination. “Shüpfomei” was known from the beginning, and therefore whether the “Shüpfomei” nomenclature can bring unity, prosperity and progress for the four kindred groups is another question? By merely given traditional name as “Shüpfowo” or “Shepouwo”, will it be accepted by all? Hope that the four sub-groups and with the using of the term “Shüpfomei” will become one and see a new light for the coming generation. Was it so hard to pronounce “Shüpfomei” that the government officials left out the word from the Scheduled Tribe list of Manipur? Many of the names of villages are the easy products – tones and tonalities, and phonetic nuances of the Meiteis and government recorders. No doubt, out of the many Naga languages Shüpfomei language is one of the hardest says Fr. Peter Bianchi. The reason is this that Shüpfomei dialect uses nasal diphthong, which makes outsiders find it very difficult to pronounce. The phonetic sound especially the usage of umlaut “ü” vowel mutation is another difficulty, to cite a few examples – Thohrū, Lohrū, Elohrū, Khashprungū etc., are often pronounced as Thori, Lori, Loho, Kashipri, Kashupro.

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6. “Shüpfowo” is pronounced by western area “Ememei” group. The use of umlaut “ü” with a hissing sound as ‘shh’ for silence symbol. The phonetic sound and pronounced as “Shü-pfo-wo”.

7. “Shepouwo” is pronounced by northern, southern area “Paomata, Lepoana, Chiluwe” groups. Instead of using umlaut “ü” they used the vowel sound “o” as “pou” and pronounced it “She-pou-wo”.

8. Cf. “Manipur” attained statehood on 21st January, 1972 as a full-fledged State in the Indian Union. It was a princely state and Manipur is called “the Land of Jewels”. Several ethnic groups inhabit the land of which the valley dwellers are the Meiteis, Scheduled castes and Meitei Pangals (Muslims) and the hill tribes are broadly divided into the Nagas and the KukicChin-Mizo tribes. There are 29 tribes recognised by the government of India. Every ethnic community has the language of its own and written in Roman script with the exception of Manipuri.

9. A Italian missionary who came to Manipur from Rimini Diocese of Italy. The first Catholic missionary who worked in Shüpfomei area, established schools, churches and development.

10. Cf. Due to the difficulty in pronouncing the Shüpfomei language especially wherever the word “ü” is there many often pronounced it according to their convenience.
etc., respectively. Mispronunciation leads to misspelling and misspelling leads to wrong writing. To write and pronounce “Shüpfomei” may be hard but taking the trouble will give the tribe their self-identity and self-esteem.

1. The term Shüpfomei

“Shüpfomei” is not a nomenclature coined, nor the composite name given to identify any tribe. Instead it is the original, real name and the only name of the present nomenclature “Mao Naga tribe” in the tribal list of Manipur. One of the main reasons why the term “Shüpfomei” is not being called by its name is due to lack of knowledge from the part of the outsiders. It was much less used in the past due to lack of communication facilities, remoteness and distant location from the National Highway No. 39. In the past the people were known by the village name. According to historians, the hill people came to be known only with the arrival of the British interpreters. And the interpreters are those Bengali officials working under the British. Thus, such interpreters had contacts with the king of Manipur, during the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26), and their knowledge was scanty about those inhabiting close to the National Highway No. 39, who were “Ememi”, one of the four groups which comprised “Shüpfomei tribe”. Finding it difficult to pronounce the term “Ememi” they preferred to call these people “Mao Naga tribe”. The interpreters also came from the Maram tribes, since some maharanis came from this tribe. They called ‘Ememi’ as ‘Maomei’. As a result assuming ‘mei’ stood for people as per popular usage, ‘Mao’ became descriptive for not only Ememi but for all “Shüpfomei”.

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In the following pages, we shall deal the different myths and theories which explain the origin, migration and settlement of “Shüpfomei”– the four kindred groups and how their great grand father was called “Shüpfowo”. According to the folktale “Shüpfowo” begot three sons –

(a) *Alewo* – was the eldest and he migrated from Makhel-Makhrefü and settled down first at Saranamai village (*Kosümei chüi*). His progenies dispersed and established many villages in the northern area. His descendants are known as *Paomata* group or they are also called *Kapemata*.

(b) *Tolewo* – was the middle son of Shüpfowo and he migrated from Makhel-Makhrefü and first settled down at Koide village (*Enamei chüi*). His progenies dispersed and founded many villages in the eastern and southern area. His descendants are known as *Lepaona*. They are also called *Tolupemata* for the whole group.

(c) *Memewo* – was the youngest son of Shüpfowo, who inherited his father’s house, and his progenies dispersed to different villages in the western area. His descendants are called *Ememei*.

According to the popular version, the progenies of the three sons migrated and formed *Chülave* group. Thus, the question “Shüpfomei” is not a coming together of people to coin a word or nomenclature, nor is it the feeling of people for an identity. It is much more a political organization developed by the four sub-kindred groups with a nomenclature “Shüpfomei”. Shüpfomei is the original name and no one can
change it or manipulate it for their political gain. Today there is a tendency to form organization, association or coin a word for mere political interest and group people by some selfish politician and vested persons without understanding the real historicity and much background of the people. Narrow visioned persons have divided “Shüpfomei” tribe into Ememei, Lepaona, Chüluve and Paomata and it is a very dangerous game plan they envisaged in dividing people or group for their selfish vision. It is not like the new nomenclature “Zeliangrong” coined in 1947 during the Zeliangrong Council. The new nomenclature “Zeliangrong” was coined by taking the first syllable of three sub-kindred tribes, i.e. Ze – from Zemei, Liang – from Liangmei and Rong – from Rongmei, constituting the composite name as “Zeliangrong”. \(^{11}\)

It is not the four ethnic groups namely – Ememei, Lepaona, Chüluve and Paomata coming together as a council or wanted to be called as “Shüpfomei”. These four groups were and are “Shüpfomei” without their choice. We cannot choose our father or mother, simply we are their sons and daughters. The unique umbilical cord that connects each group is their forefather “Shüpfowo” and the present Shüpfomei tribe is the progeny of that one man “Shüpfowo”. Ethnic consciousness is the cause of division and each division brings destruction and such destruction seldom can be repaired or restored. Shüpfomei cannot be adopted in place of “Mao Naga tribe” or by new nomenclature from the mispronunciation of “Ememei” to “Maomei”. \(^{12}\)

\(^{12}\) Anglo-Manipuri pronunciation often leads to misspelling and become the official word. The tune and intonations of particular language of people is hard and takes time. To kill a group of people and their culture is by taking away their language through misspelling and in writing.
Different authors and writers used the term “Shüpfomei” in various manner, due to the problem in pronouncing and as they pronounced they also wrote the spellings as J.H. Hutton writes in his book, “The Angami Nagas” “Sopvoma (Mao)” with inverted bracket ‘Mao’. F.S. Downs used, “Soproma” Nagas. According to T.C. Hodson, it is “Sopvoma” Mao or “Soproma” Nagas. Shüpfomei forefathers were known by the name “Shüpfomei” says N. Salew, and till date remote villages in Nagaland address the present Mao tribe as “Shüpfomei”.

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16. Cf. N. Salew, Interviewed on the 14th May, 1996. According to him, many southern Angami villages used the term “Shüpfomia”. The southern Angami villages like Viswema, Kuzhama, Merima, Kedima, etc. The author met village elders from different villages and the same concept “Shüpfomia” “Shepoumia” etc. with little different in tonalities was brought out.

From Punanamei Village - Robvermei
Mr. Hen Chakho (65), Village Headman
Mr. Dili Kaikho (62), Village Council Member
Mr. Kaisù Kholi (67), Farmer
Mr. Kaisù Lohrù (68), Village Chairman
Mr. Kaisù Sanu (75), Farmer

From Pudumamei Village – Pfoosemei
Mr. Nepuni Salew (69), Writer, pastor
Mr. Kaitri Elowo (67), Farmer
Mr. Atihko Eshuwo (59) Farmer

From Thingba Khullen Village – Chonamai
Mr. Ng. Panù (68) Farmer
Mr. Th. Thsiù (62) Farmer
Mr. D. Beso (66) Farmer
Mr. P. Thomas (60) Farmer

From Tunggam village – Chokhumei
Mr. Th. Ngao (58) farmer
Mr. B. Dahrù (61) Farmer
Mr. A. Siba (58) Farmer
Mr. Th. Akha (67) Farmer

From Saranamai village – Kostümei
Mr. S. Apao (67) Farmer
Mr. Th. Dasou (57) Farmer
Mr. B. Ngao (62) Farmer
1.1. Descendants of “Shüpfowo”

“Shüpfowo” is a name of a person and “Shüpfomei” are the progenies of Shüpfowo. The oral tradition says that this “Shüpfowo” was the eldest son of “Khephio”. “Shüpfomei” has two syllables “Shüpfowo” – person’s name, while “Mei” – stands for people. Thus, it means the descendants of “Shüpfowo”. From here we shall launch out the scope of study and the subject matter. The progenies of “Shüpfowo” are Ememei, Lepaona, Chüluve and Paomata. The composite of the four sub-kindred groups are known as –

(a) Ememei – Western Shüpfomei

(b) Lepaona – Southern Shüpfomei

(c) Chüluve – Eastern Shüpfomei

(d) Paomata – Northern Shüpfomei

According to Raini Pao, “Poumai” had different version of origin, migration and settlement as per the folksongs and folktales. It goes to say that “Pou” was a grand old man leading his two sons “Pao and Leo” through Indo-Burma boarder route and reached the present Makhel. On reaching Makhel, it is said that the old man’s walking stick struck to the ground and took root. On seeing the incident as a good omen he decided to settle down at Makhel. With the passing of years the progenies of “Pou” increased and slowly
migrated to different areas. Accordingly “Pou’s” eldest son known as “Pao” migrated and settled down at Saranamai village (Süfû) and his two sons, Ranapao and Raonapao formed different villages. It is said that Ranapao four sons formed the four villages (Südai) in Paomata or Kapemata area.

Süpao – formed Saranamai village (Sümäi)

Khipao – formed Maiba village (Khimai)

Phrepao – formed Phuba village (Phremaï)

Zhipao – formed Liyai village (Zhimai).

“Raonapao” the second son of “Pao” formed two villages in Paomata area, Tunngam village (Khumaï), Tungjoy village (Sochumai / Vemai).

“Pou’s” second son “Leo” also migrated from Saranamai village (Süfû) to Koide (Ngafû). It is said that “Leo’s” four sons formed four villages (Südai) in Lepaona or Tolupemata area. Accordingly the four villages originating from Koide village (Ngafû) are

Hrüleo – formed Purul village (Hrümai)

Ngaleo - formed Koide village (Ngamai)

Sholeo – formed Thingba Khunou village (Shomai)

Choleo – formed Thingba Khullen village (Chonamai) \(^\text{17}\)

According to Th. Nago, there are different versions regarding the origin, migration and settlement of “Pou”. He agreed that “Poumai” of Paomata area had the first

\(^\text{17}\) Cf. Raini Pao, Folk Tales of Poumai Naga. P. 6.
migration from Makhel and settled down at Saranamai village but was not very clear with formation of the villages.¹⁸

1.2. Shüpfomei as Naga tribe

There are different villages that are formed since the population increased and more or less united under the banner of “Shüpfomei or Shepoumai”. Here are some of the many villages established from time immemorial while others are recent establishments that have been settled to relieve pressure of population or search for better pasture. It is not the exhaustive list –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEOPLE</th>
<th>VILLAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Abomei</td>
<td>Chowainamei Khullen</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Ajüchemei</td>
<td>Mao Pungdung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Aromei</td>
<td>Shirong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Aphemei</td>
<td>Kodom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Aphemei inu</td>
<td>Kodom Khavao</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Arimei</td>
<td>Ngari Khullen</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Arimei</td>
<td>Ngari Lishang</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Apomei</td>
<td>Thiva</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Chakre chovu</td>
<td>Songsong</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Chobonghomei</td>
<td>Chowainu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Chakremei  Chowainamei Khullen
12. Charanghomei  Shajouba
13. Chokhumei  Tunggam Khullen
14. Ebverei  Roburnamei
15. Ekhramei inu kajü  Makhan Khullen
16. Ekhramei inu totsü  Makhan Centre
17. Ekhramei inu kothu  New Makhan
18. Ekhramei inu kati  Makhan Khunou
19. Eshofümei  Chakumei
20. Ethupfümei  Tadubi
21. Ephremei  Phuba Khuman
22. Ephremei  Phuba Thapham
23. Enamei inu arü  Upper Koide
24. Enamei inu akhrü  Lower Koide
25. Epfümei  Phaibung Khullen
26. Ekhrumei  Phaibung Khunou
27. Ehomei  Sorbung
28. Etamei  Ngatam
29. Emeshue  Emeshue
30. Folaimei  Folai
31. Karongmei  Mao Karong
32. Kayinu  Kayinu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Place Name</th>
<th>Other Name</th>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Kangpokpi Dili inu</td>
<td>Dili Khunou</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Kodzümei</td>
<td>Khongdei Ngaowar</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Kutomei</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Kathikho inu</td>
<td>Kathikho</td>
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<td>Liyai Kangpao</td>
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<td>Makhremei inu kati</td>
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<td>Mayankhang</td>
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<td>Makhel</td>
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<td>Mokhufü</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>Mahavümei</td>
<td>Chingmei Khullen</td>
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<td>Makhimei</td>
<td>Maiba</td>
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</table>
56. Makhrului
57. Mahika
58. Ozhimei
59. Ozhimei Chülo
60. Punı Pfosemei
61. Phiko inu
62. Pinimei
63. Pihrümei Arü
64. Pihrümei Akhru
65. Paomata totsü
66. Pfosemei
67. Prüşhumei (Shomai) Thingba Khunou
68. Prüşhumei (Chonamai) Thingba Khullen
69. Robvermei
70. Rakhutao
71. Rosofümei
72. Rafümei
73. Raidulaomei
74. Sadim
75. Soluphe
76. Senapatimei
77. Shovamei Karong
78. Shovamei

Makhrului
Mahika
Liyai Khullen
Liyai Centre
Puni Pfosemei
Phikomei
Oinam
Purul Akutpa
Purul Atongba
Paomata Centre
Pudunamei
Thingba Khunou
Thingba Khullen
Punanamei
Rakhutao
Rosofü
Rafü
Raidulao
Mao Sadim
Robve Soluphe
Senapati
Khabung Karong
Khabung
79. Songdo  
80. Shūrafü  
81. Sochumei  
82. Shūnafümei  
83. Tobufümei  
84. Tunggam Afü  
85. Tingson  
86. Taphou  
87. Vapfūmei  
88. Vapfü inu kothu  
89. Zhobumei

Songdo
Shūrafü
Tungjoy
Kaibi
Tobufū
Tunggam Afū
Tingson
Taphou
Lai
New lai
Chingmei Khunou

Some of the above mentioned villages are recognized by the Government of Manipur, while some other villages are on the process of being recognized. Christian missionaries and particularly the Catholic missionaries had demarcated the whole of Shiphomei inhabited areas into five distinct units. It was generally an accepted view for many educated and even for the social workers. Such demarcation was logical and working very well till 1960’s and 1970’s. But now such demarcation does not have much relevance.

Cf. The Shepoumaramith in the Naga National Movement, P. 222. The author has done little modification and adaptation done in order to have an alphabetical order. Few more village names are changed according to the village dialect to have a better tonalities and accent.
The main reason for such demarcation was based on their mission and administrative convenience. It created better co-ordination, unity and humanitarian service of the gospel message. Thus, in the late 1960's and 1970's the units are called as

(a) *Mao-Maram* Circle

(b) *Lepaona* Circle

(c) *Chiluve* Circle

(d) *Paomata* Circle

(e) Diasporas

1.3. Shüpfomei as Mao Naga tribe

1.3.1. Etymology of the word “Mao” vis-a-vis “Shüpfomei”

Prof. Gangmumei Kabui, offers the etymology of the word, “Mao”.

‘Mao’ appears to be appended to the present tribe of the name by the neighbouring tribe of Maram and the people call themselves as *Ememei* (descendents of *Emeo*). The assertion of T.C. Hodson that Mao is a *Meitei* name given to the village of Mao does not have corroboration since the *Meitei* gave name “Ngamei” to the Maos and Angami. Sometimes, they are locally known as Shüpfomei, descendents of a great cultural hero who love the name. The *Mao* Nagas are concentrated in the confederacy of 16 villages with the village of Pudunamei (*Pfosemei*) as the titular head. *Paomei* is a kindred group of the Maos who call them as *Kapemata, Paomata* or *Poumei* which means the descendents of *Pao* whereas *Kape Mata* means descendents of *Kapeo*. It seems
pao or Kapeo are one and same person who was also a descendent of Menuo, the ancestor who was living at Makhel to which the Maos point as the place of origin and a point of migration. The Maram and Thangals are linguistically and culturally allied people. They have affinity with the Liangmei of the Zeliangrong.

Till today old people in different areas have called themselves as the descendents of Shüpfowo, the central Angamis named the so called Maos "Sopfùmia". The southern Angamis have called them "Sapumi". Thus, the term "Mao" is of a recent development and there are various opinions and views given regarding the coinage of the word "Mao". According to some version, it is the British who coined the word first, referring to the Chinese people of the Mongoloid race. But this contention does not have much foundation. Apparently the Maos, (stands for the tribe and language) look like the Chinese and of Chinese stock. There are similarities with the Mongoloid facial, physique, appearance and even language, etc. that which is unquestionable. But we cannot prove that there is any such affinity with the Chinese people per se.

N. Saleo (Kakrû) a writer by profession says, the term "Mao" was very strange in the beginning, but as the British people started using it, then it sounded okay. The word,

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20. Cf. Joseph Athickal, Maram Nagas (a socio-cultural study) P. 25 “Marams” came from Taikong Rajainû. Paramahaha- God created Madungkastû who had sexual relation with Samotingdûngpui under a tree called Kababang at Maram Roukang the present site of Maram Khullen. Maram Naga tribe is the closet neighbour living next to the Ememei group.
21. Thangal tribe a small Naga tribe living next to the Marams. They have a close affinity to the Marams and have very similarities in shawl, culture and habits. In the past they were called Marams, but with the ethnic consciousness they called themselves Thangals.
23. Cf. Shüpfomei use to call the "Angami" as "Ngami" which means nice, good, perfect, beauty, etc. While the British recorded wrongly as "Angami". According to the "Zemei" another Naga tribe in Nagaland, they call "Angami" as "keregami" which means 'extracting' "extorting". There is close affinity between the Angamis and Shüpfomei tribe.
“Mao” must have sounded “Momei” of Maram accent, thus the accepted view and origin of the term Mao came from the Marams (Mahramei).

According to P.P. Giridhar, “When Britishers set foot in that part, they travelled from Kohima straight to Imphal without contacting the tribals on the way. They came into contact with Marams first, the “Marams” Naga tribe is the next door to Shüpfomei tribe, living close to western Ememei group. The Marams must have called Maos ‘Mao (mai)’ or when asked about the tribe the Britishers who passed by, must have said ‘mo’ meaning ‘I do not know’, which the Britishers took for the name of the tribe. The ‘mo’ came to be spelt as ‘mow’ and the spelling used is still there in the British records at Imphal as ‘mow’ and which the British records kept in Kohima, and thus “Mao” has come to stay”.  

There is a general version which most of the villages speak of how “Mao” came to be. The Marams must have taken a clue from Poumai who called their western Shüpfomei as “Momei” shortening the “Ememei”. The Marams also called the Maos as “Momei” = Maomei (in Maram accent). While the Meiteis (Mikrümêi) call the Maos in their broken accent as “Ngamei”. It is a fact that the Maharaja of Manipur and the Marams had a friendly relationship by maharanis and Thangal general, etc.

Their treaty of friendship resulted in the transaction of business and trade relationship through the barter system between the two communities. This is the linking

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24 Cf. P.P. Giridhar, Mao Naga Grammar. P. 2
root through which the Meities had their contact with the Maos, who learned and noted down the term “Mao” dropping the suffix “mei”.

P.P. Giridhar, quoting Grierson says, “Mao is the Manipuri name of their chief village”...the word Mao could also be from omo ‘pumpkin’ – A Zemi version has it that Maos grew very good pumpkins and so came to be called omoműi (‘pumpkin men’), which, with the passage of time, developed into Mao”. 25

While Milada Ganguli writes, “Mao is a Manipuri name which was also adopted by the British. In their own language, however, the members of this tribe call themselves Memai, and their chief village Imemai”. 26

J.H. Hutton had his own version, “Mao Sezemei, sopvomei, or Memei Nagas of Mao again have legends connecting them with the plain lands of Manipur”. 27

Thus, the literal word or the term “Mao” became the official record and “Mao” as the spoken language of this major tribe. It is also synonymous to the Mao tribe and people. It does not have any meaning and other connotation with any other nation, or race. No doubt, with the advent of the British, the term was commonly used and popularized.

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25. Ibid., P.2
There is much to be debated and debate is going on among the intellectuals and historians who are trying to define the terminology of the term “Mao”. Actually, the term “Mao” in its narrow sense of the word refers only to the western part of Shüpfomei.

1.3.2. Genesis of “Shepoumaramth and Poumai”

The genesis and birth of the new nomenclature of Shepoumaramth 28 can be traced down to Shüpfomei itself. Every human spirit when it intermingles with various ideological strands it will eventually produce a thesis, antithesis and synthesis out of that experience and daring spirit. Finally, the spirit of Naga nationalism within Shüpfomei tribe is the synthesis of that vision and birth of Shepoumaramth nomenclature.

The historicity of such formation can be dated back to post World War I after the return of the “France labour corps”, where hundreds of young Nagas in general and Shüpfomei in particular participated in the exposure to the world. 29 Their world of village concept was thrown into the world of a larger humanity and their ghetto mentality was exposed to a new-world order. Their dream of sovereignty was conceived as a blessing in disguise for the Nagas and Shüpfomei tribe in particular. Hundreds of Shepoumaramth both young and old, literate and illiterate joined in the freedom struggle.

29 S. Ashali gave the following names from Punanamei village (Robvomei) who went to France and came back as France labour corps recruited by Shana Chaoba from Imphal who was the interpreter to the villagers, Kaikho Hrúpuní (nickname as Johnny), Kaikho Sibo (elder brother) Chakho Hrúpuní, Heshu Díh. Nepani Ablí, Azholo Choro, etc.
The formation of a new nomenclature is always a welcome. The crux of the problem is whether to use the generic term *Mao, Shepouaramth* or any other name? There is a group using external pressure to divide Shüpfomei otherwise well knit house, for political gain. The internal selfish political leaders who use money power and half-baked social workers try to fish in troubled waters. Psychological disturbed person who wanted to fill their selfish void is doing their best to dislodge the unity and brotherhood of Shüpfomei. Will such evil desire give blessing to the principle which the forefathers stood for?  

1.3.3. Critical view to the new nomenclature “Shepouaramth”

The existing pronunciation and terminology as “Shüpfomei” or “Shepoumai” is unquestionable. But the new nomenclature as “Shepouaramth” is new and it has created a lot of difficulties in accepting the term and it also brought a colonized attitude in the face of partnership and dialogue. Precaution is when it not presented in a proper perspective, it is difficult to see eye to eye, but eventually more lobby and mass media will bring sentiment and peoples’ approval. Ever since the France labour-corps, of the First World War, the formation of Naga Club in 1918 became significant as the cradle of Naga national movement. The momentum gained after the Second World War with the formation of Naga National Council in 1946. The political and administrative jurisdiction

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30. Cf. The Shepouaramth in the Naga National Movement, P. 89. From the very beginning of the formation, the organisation had its clear and guided principle for a nationhood. And as a result life, money time, energy and sacrifice was the cry. The organisation worked and grew with a single minded goal, but as years passed men with that same zeal for sovereignty decreased and at the same time with the expansion of region wise, the same discipline was not maintain. There is much talked for and against the organisation as a result, the same people who supported for the cause without counting the cost became a stumbling block in the very struggle for sovereignty.
came under the Federal Government of Nagaland. After the establishment of both civil
and military administration, the Naga Army was divided into different regions, and with
the division gave birth to a new nomenclature known as "Shepoumaramth".

In 1963, a general meeting was held at Leishime village (Chakhesang area) and
delegates from Mao, Poumai, Maram and Thangal were present, but no amicable
solution was formed. Later, in February, 1964 another general meeting was summoned at
Kaibi village for the formation of the region. Finally the underground, Federal
Government of Nagaland proposed a new nomenclature as "Shepoumaramth" and it was
coined by taking the first proposal of the Maos (Ememi group) as "She," the Poumai
proposed "Pou," the Maram proposed "Ma" and the Thangal proposed "Tha" which
come to be called "Shepoumatha." The word was not suited as it had no flow in
pronouncing the word. Finally, the title "Shepoumaramth" was unanimously accepted by all
members present because it could be easily pronounced.

It is said that since, 16th August 1965, Shepoumaramth region has been recognized
as the full-fledged administrative region under the jurisdiction of Japfu state headed by
Zashie Huire, the then Angh, of the underground, Federal Government of Nagaland. With
the signing of the Shillong Accord, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN)
on 31st January, 1980 came into being. Till 1980 Shepoumaramth region was
administered by GPRN in all administrative set up.

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31. Ibid., P. 90
32. Ibid., P. 209
33. Ibid.,
According to K. Sani he says, "The new nomenclature "Poumai" can be trace back to early 70's and late 80's when the Mao Naga Baptist Churches Association (MNBCA) which was inclusive of the four groups, namely - Ememei, Lepaona, Chüluve and Paomata where under the same banner. He further says, Lepaona, Chüluve and Paomata group was ready to accept the Mao dialect and the script, to use the Bible, and Song book, etc. But they put one objection that is to remove the term "Mao" and use "Shüpfomei". To which the Ememei group (generally called the Maos) stick on and the real departure and formation of the new nomenclature "Poumai" began.\(^{34}\)

According to the Manipur north district "Naga Thinker Forum", in a meeting held on the 9th October, 1982 at Mao Potato Farm a resolution was passed and a committee was formed. The resolutions were as follows –

(a) To find out one common community name,
(b) To find out a way for one common dialect and literature,
(c) To study the historical facts about the origin of the Nagas, particularly the Nagas of Manipur north district,
(d) To study all aspects of cultural life of this area.

\(^{34}\) K. Sani. Interviewed on 28th May, 1997.
Under the resolution No. 3, the forum proposed that the tribes under consideration are Mao (Ememei), Paomata (Poumai), Lepaona (Lepouna), Chüluvei (Chülüveimei), Maram, and Thangal. According to them, presently all of them are claiming their own separate identity from each other inspite of the fact, that they are being one in origin, migration and cultural way of life.\(^\text{35}\) It is the wish and desire that each of the mentioned might get their tribes recognized from the Government of India, in order to enjoy certain benefits. Government of India has already recognized the Mao and the Maram as Scheduled Tribes. The status of the rest Ememei tribe, Poumai tribe, Lepaona tribe, Chüluvei tribe and Thangal tribe could be also recognized separately by Government of India. The Poumai tribe has set up a demand committee for taking the rightful step in demanding the Government of India to recognize them as a tribe. In the same way the rest of the tribes Ememei, Lepaona, Chüluvei and Thangal could work for their own recognition. We shall mention here, that though Government of India had recognized Ememei as Mao tribe, we have seen Mao is not Ememei and so Ememei could be recognized or used instead of Mao.

According to the meeting held on 5\(^{th}\) October 1993 at District Council ‘Guest House’, Poumai Colony (Imphal), “Shepoumaramth” was accepted since the term represents all the people that are clubbed together.

\(^\text{35}\) Cf. Manipur North District Naga Thinker Forum, Resolution of 9\(^{th}\) October, 1982 at Mao Potato Farm. The formation and the title as “Naga Thinkers Forum” was a very positive step, though the title covering the generic term “Naga” and sounds comprising of all the Nagas, yet in reality, the members are mostly from the four kindred groups – Ememei, Lepaona, Chüluve and Paomata. The organisation should continue to have dialogue and share their views for better and stronger movement for the area. It may be due to financial constraint, or due to sharp point of differences that they are unable to sit again. But giving time and such opportunities to the four groups will help in resolving the problem and bring out the better understanding of the problem.
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7. Hmar 17. Lushai 27. Thadou
10. Koirao 20. Paite 36

1.4. Shüpfomei Language and literature
1.4.1. Shüpfomei father’s dialect

Shüpfomei dialect originated from fathers’ tongue (*Opfo la*). The reason is that inter-marriage between different communities and tribes does often create a problem. Often the children tend to follow the mother’s tongue and they forget the father’s tongue. In a patriarchal society, the wife and children automatically had to follow the fathers’ tongue. And if the father who does not teach his children his language (father’s tongue), is looked down upon with a frown. Shüpfomei tribe generally accepts this principle and every woman who come from outside his tribe has to learn the language of the husband and teach the children too.

T.C. Hodson, quoting Dr. Grierson (Linguistic Survey of India) writes, "the Naga Bodo Sub-group, from the Mao or Sopvoma Nagas, who on linguistic grounds are connected with the Angamis, especially with Kezhama". 37

P.P. Giridhar, a modern linguistic from CIIL Madras writes, "Mao is a Naga language of the Tibeto-Burman family. It is closely related to Angami, as many features of phonology (both have bilabial affricates, have identical tactics in consonant clusters etc.) and syntax (number not an obligatory grammatical category, reflexive pronouns take an auxiliary pronoun before taking case markers etc.) attest." 38 Many Shüpfomei writers feel that Shüpfomei language is true Naga language and it is the mother language.

1.4.2. Shüpfomei classical language

Shüpfomei language came to be a written language only in the early part of this century, in the late 1920's – it came to be written in the Roman script. 39 But Shüpfomei classical language is preserved and handed down orally since generation by means of folksongs, folktales, dirges, prose and poetry, wise sayings, proverbs, etc. Social institutions such as morung system (Khruco ye Locho) brought this classical language to the young. Social feasts and festivals such as the feast of merit popularized this classical language. In the work place was such as the fields, the language was spoken and exchanged in conversation by peer groups.

37 Cf. T.C. Hodson, The Naga tribes of Manipur. P. 4
38 Cf. P.P. Giridhar, Mao Naga Grammar. P. 3
39 Ibid., P. 3
But today the classical language is dying within the society. Elders who had a good command of such a language are no longer alive and those who are well versed in its literary styles are dying and they are not passed on to younger generation. And much more, the younger generation will have no time, no intention, no motivation to accept and learn it. Changes are inevitable, changes in dresses, food habit, social structure, institutions, etc. There is also a welcome change in Shüpfomei society where the rich classical language is giving way to new innovative words. This is happening because the Shüpfomei intelligentsia, government servants, students and young generation live no longer in their native villages and they are no longer in contact with their parents and naturally they lose the command of Shüpfomei language. Thus, the growing generation knows only the rudimentary conversational skill and knowledge of the language.\textsuperscript{40}

1.4.3. Shüpfomei literature

The Government of India recognized “Mao” as a scheduled tribe and the Government of Manipur (Manipur Gazette) recognized “Mao dialect” as one of the major tribal dialect to be introduced in educational institutions in Manipur in the primary school level. \textsuperscript{41} Yet it must be made clear that the Mao dialect although apparently synonymous with the Shüpfomei dialect is technically only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the later. The composite Shüpfomei dialect is not wholly represented by the so called “Mao dialect”, as the “Mao dialect” is generally we can say “Emela” – the dialect spoken by Ememei group who

\textsuperscript{40} Cf. Hubert Ashuli, Quo Vadis. P. 3
\textsuperscript{41} Cf. The Freedom Manipur, Wednesday 3 July. 1996
reside in the western part of Shüpfomei. While Lepaona, Chüluve and Paomata will become truly Shüpfomei dialect, when it includes dialects of the other the rest three groups, possibly by blending those distinct forms and accents into a common communicable dialect. The dialect spoken by Paomata is known as Paola, Lepaola is spoken by Tolupemata (Lepaona), while Chüluvi group speaks both Emela, Paola, Lepaola. Shüpfomei diasporas general speak their village dialect and also a mixer according to their location, mostly Emela, Paola, Lepaola, Manipuri or Nagamis.

The classification regarding the dialect of the four groups in Shüpfomei area is due to largely demography and variation in their suffixes and prefixes. But the greatest drawback is the “ism” among the four groups i.e. Lepaona will feel that Lepaola is the best, Chüluve, Paomata and Ememei also feels that their dialect is the best and when such “ism” is within the group, then no coming together is possible. Instead such variation should not create any distinction or aloofness in the communication among the people of the tribe.

1.4.3.1. Shüpfomei linguistic classification

There is no common language among the Naga tribes, and the languages spoken by the various Naga tribes had different vocabularies, but all adhere to the same grammatical rules. 42 It is quite inevitable that languages and dialects vary from village to village and area to area.

This is very true of the language, tune, accent and tonalities among Shüpfomei tribe. And such variation within the four sub-groups can enrich the literature and help in the further development of vocabulary. Thus, Shüpfomei dialect is divided into four namely -

1.4.3.1.1. Ememei language = Emela 43. the dialect spoken by western Shüpfomei group, commonly known as “Mao”. We find a variation in accent, pronunciation and spelling and sound from village to village e.g. “Kashipri” pronounced by Makhan village while “Kashüpri” by Punanamei and surrounding villages.

1.4.3.1.2. Kapemata language =Paola 44 - the dialect spoken by northern Shüpfomei group, commonly known as Paomata area. There is also difference within the villages especially Tunggam, Saranamai, Liyai,Phuba, Maiba and Tungjoy in accent and tonalities. For example, Tunggam village (Chokhumei) people of Paomata area find it hard to understand the dialect of Ngari (Arimei) of Chüluvi area.

43. Emela is not the dialect spoken by all the western Shüpfomei, there is vast difference in accent and tonalities spoken by different villages. Within the same village there is changes in accent. When it come to writing the villages often write according to their tonalities. Kalinamei (Kahremei ) Song song (Chakre chovo) pronounced and write i.e. man (omei), big (kaji), while other villages write man(omei), big (kaji).
44. The dialect spoken among the Paomata area is called Paola.
In the same way Punanamei village (Robvemei) in western area can follow nothing of what Oinam village (Pinimei) of Lepaona speak.

1.4.3.3. Tolupemata language = Lepaola 45 - the dialect spoken by southern Shüpfomei group, commonly known as Lepaona. The variation between Paola and Emela with Lepaola is very much an exception to that of Oinam village (Pinimei). None of the Ememei, Paomei, Lepaona and Chüluvi understand that dialect. There is a saying that Oinam village devised the dialect to conceal trade secrecy. The village had the monopoly in the making of earthen pots known as Pinimei pot (Pinimei likho), just as Viswema village (Shünnamei) in Nagaland is famous for special cooking earthen pots (Shünnamei li or Shüna li). Besides in Oinam village dialect, there is a variation in accent, sound, pronunciation and tonalities from Kapemata, Ememei, and Chüluvi. The present New Testament and Catholic Song book (Mapao Shoyu Lou ye Veachi Bvü) is printed in Lepaona dialect.

1.4.3.4. Chüluvi language = Chüluvi la 46 - is spoken by the eastern Shüpfomei group. There is no specific dialect but it is a mixture of Emela, Paola, and Lepaola. The reason is this that in the olden days, these villages were settled from other villages in the western, northern and southern

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45. The dialect spoken among the Lepaona area is called Lepaola.
46. The dialect spoken by Chüluve area is known as Chüluve la.
groups. The advantage is this that they have a better and direct access to the three sub-groups in Shüpfomei area.

1.5. Mystery of Shüpfomei ancestral script

1.5.1. The popular oral tradition

The popular folktales and folksongs of Shüpfomei speak about the legend of the ancestral script. It is told that a script was given to the three brothers Asüpfo Alapha, Chütuwo and Khephio, according to one legend they are the sons of Shüpfowo, while another version says they are the sons of Dzüliamosüro.

On the eve of their departure, the sons were given the instruction that they should preserve the scripts for their posterity. The oral tradition says that the two brothers did follow the instructions and preserved their scripts, while the youngest son lost his script. The script carved on the bark of the tree (osüke) was given to:

(a) Alapha (Kolamei pfope), who is known as the forefather with the dark complexion like people of the Aryan and Dravidian race.

(b) While the other inscribed on the bamboo scale (soluke) was given to Chütuwo (Mikrümei pfope), who is known as the forefather of the non-Naga race (Meitei).

(c) And the last one was engraved on the hide of animal skin (osohei) and was given to Khephio (Nagamei pfope), the forefather of Naga race. With the lapse of time, Khephio stuck the hide of animal on to the wall, which was
carried away by the house rats and destroyed. Another version which says, it was the dog that ate it up. While the two brothers Alapha and Chütuwo preserved their scripts and Khephio lost his script. 47 Ever since then, the Nagas had not been able to construct their own script and so they have to borrow from others.

In this way, the legend tells us that the Nagas in general and Shüpfomei in particular lost their script. As a result they had to borrow others’ scripts to communicate and to write. This myth is perhaps being told and recognized as the standard model to explain and to cover up the lack of script among the Nagas. This particular myth is to stay and every Shüpfomei tribe whether young or old is conscious of the issue. Historians, sociologists and anthropologists could go the root of the myth together with the study of other Asian languages.

According to N. Salew, he tells that there is a lot of similarities and resemblance of sounds, accent, phonetic and pronunciation with other Asian countries with special reference to the Chinese. 48 So far there is no scientific study done of this subject. Shüpfomei have adopted the Roman script as their script. As a matter of fact all the Naga tribes have accepted the Roman script for the purpose of writing. Roman script was introduced to Shüpfomei dialect for the first time for the purpose of writing by late L.

47. According to S. Ashuli, some scripts were inscribed on the monolith stone at Makhel. Though the stone stands till date yet such scripts are no longer found.
48. N. Salew, Interviewed on the 24th May, 1994
Kashipri in 1935. In that year he brought out the first Mao Primer = Imela phrokara, who understood the value of the mother tongue and made a solid beginning. 49

After him many other writers started to contribute towards the enrichment of literature. The coming of Christianity and modern education brought double impact on Shüpfomei society. Christianity had made a deep impact directly and indirectly on the Shüpfomei society. Christian missionaries brought Christian religion as a vehicle and lit the torch of education. Thus, Christianity and education went side by side and to understand the new religion and message, education became necessary as a means and in order to read the Bible. Christian missionaries taught the English alphabet and by the early sixties, the New Testament known as “Achüchu larü kothu” (The New Testament in Mao Naga) was translated and printed by India Bible Literature, Madras. The man behind the whole translation was Mikrü Lohru, 50 an active Christian worker, who not only gave the people new religion but also gave a communicable and intelligible written text to Shüpfomei tribe.

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49 Ibid.
50 Bio-history collected from L. Ashali (second son of late M. Lohru)

Born in 1909 at Punanamei village
1927 Became Christian
1929 Educated at Kohima
1931 – 32 Evangelist
1939 – 40 Trained at Jorhat (Preliminary Course)
1943 – 44 Pastor and Teacher at Marba (Khimai)
1947 – 48 Pastor and Teacher at Purul (Pihrumai)
1949 – 53 Evangelist cum secretary to North Sadar Baptist Association
1953 – 60 Translated Mao Naga New Testament
1961 – 63 Field Evangelist
1964 – 66 Field Director
1966 – 67 Translated Genesis
1967 – 18th April, died at Tobufu
Till today this New Testament is used in every village. The Mao Academy passed a resolution to use this New Testament Bible as standard language for the future writing. Many persons have been tirelessly working to bring out the whole Bible in different versions according to their capacity. N. Ashuli, M.A. Z.E.O. also translated "Old Testament lei ko" in 1969 and also the first two books of the Pentateuch namely Genesis (Hrūhō Achari Larūbvi) in 1975 and Exodus (Tapra Kolo) in 1978. Rev. K. Hriupuni brought out the whole Bible in 1993.

Apart from the translation of the Bible in Shüpfomei language, there are many other books dealing on different topics and subjects. The first Newspaper, in Shüpfomei dialect was published and edited by M. Ashiho. The newspaper was Christened as "The Oka" - Story, and released in the early fifties (50's) by A. Daito. 51 Other newspapers like "Lipeo kovu ko" and "Hill Voice" edited by Rev. S.K. Kaikho Hokey and H. Neli respectively came into the scene.

1.5.2. The alphabet in Shüpfomei language

Shüpfomei has accepted in their written language, the use of German alphabet "Ü" umlaut (vowel mutation) and which is inalienable for Shüpfomei. While "Q" and "X" are considered as the odd man out from the alphabet.

51 Cf. Hubert Ashuli, Quo Vadis. Page. 7.
1.5.2.1. English alphabet 26 letters

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1.5.2.2. Shüpfomei has 25 single alphabet letters

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P R S T U Ü V W Y Z

Vowel mutation sign “ü” is called umlaut in German. ä, ë, ï, ö, ü,

1.5.2.3. Shüpfomei has 13 double consonants

Ch Dz Hr Kh Kr Ng Pf Pr Sh Th Ts Tt Zh

1.5.2.4. The 19 consonants

B C D F G H J K L M N P R S T V W Y Z

“C” is used in Shüpfomei language with “h”, like “Ch”

1.5.2.5. The 6 vowels A E I O U Ü

1.5.2.6. Triple consonants Khr Ngh Phr

1.5.2.7. Usage in Shüpfomei language

Bv:   Bvü, Bvüe, Sübvü, Robvü

Ch:   Ochü, Chüni, Chüthu, Chüsa

Dz:   Odzü, Dzüthe, Dzüla, Hodzü
F: Fühe, Efū, Kofū, Ofū
Hr: Hrümo, Kohrū, Ohrū, Kahrū
J: Ojū, Kajū, Kajūo, Artūjū
Khr: Okhrū, Khrūmo, Kokhrū
Kr: Kkrū, Akrūcho, Chohrū
L: Lūcho, Amolū, Elūcho
M: Mücho, Omū, Mülabu
Ngh: Anghūcho, Konghū
Pf: Opfū, Kopfū, Pfūzho
Phr: Ophrū
Pr: Choprū, Saprū, Koprū
R: Korrū, Rūcho, Erū, Larū
S: Osū, Osūtho, Sübu, Sūsū,
Sh: Rashū, Kashū, Ashūjū
Ts: Otsū, Totsū, Lotsū, Motsū
V: Ovū, Novū, Kovū, Avūcho
Z: Ozū, Zūcho, Mozū, Kozū
Zh: Kazhū, Azhūcho, Kazhūcho. 52

52 Cf. Fr. Linus Neli, Maola word and spelling formation. P. 1
1.6. Shüpfomei concept of Naga: origin, migration and settlement

1.6.1. The term Naga

Who are the Nagas? Where did they come from? When such a direct question is posed, without any doubt, many will fumble for words to answer the question. In order to answer the question, we may need to undertake a separate research. In the past decades several attempts have been made by anthropologists, social scientists and historians to trace out the origin of the word "Naga". 53

There are various hypotheses, assumptions regarding the origin of the word, "Naga". Many writers have done commendable work in this particular topic, "Who are the Nagas?" There are also many books and literatures in different corners regarding the origin and migration of the Nagas. We shall cite a few selected authors and their books on the Nagas and their origin such as, R.R. Shimray, "Origin and Culture of Nagas", M. Horam,"Naga Polity", Gangmumei Kabui, "Genesis of the Ethnoses of Nagas and Kuki-Chin", T.C. Hodson, "The Naga tribes of Manipur", J.H. Hutton, "The Angami Naga", Julian Jacobs, "The Nagas", etc. 54

54. Ref. In the Appendix
Dusanü in his book, “Nagas for Christ” writes, “Nagas are wooden platers and strappers for carrying load is a simple answer to ‘Who are Nagas?’” 55 Though there are different concepts and views in their approach of the Nagas, as wooden platers and strappers, it must be because of their life and situation and the atmosphere in which they lived. We can mention some of them, namely, their manual labour, their survival mechanism, their agricultural life, their mode of life and so on. We need to read their life history as their situation which is very raw.

The various theories and assumptions gives us a clearer picture and a closer to the definition. However there is no doubt that with the British administration this word became popular, and the generic term “The Nagas” became official. Today the term, “Naga” is synonymous with the Naga tribes and people living in different states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Somra Tract of Upper Burma (Myanmar).

1.6.2. Naga tribes according to Shüpfomei

The following are the Naga tribes commonly recognized and accepted by the general public and now been identified within the different states and country.

Assam : Zemei, Rongmei, Rengma.

Arunachal Pradesh : Tangsha, Wanco, Noete.
Burma (Myanmar) : Konyak, Tangkhul, Phom, Yimchunger.

Nagaland : Angami, Ao, Sema, Lotha, Rengma, Phom, Khiemungam,
Chakhesang (Chakru + Kheza + Sangtam = Cha+Khe+Sang)
Pochuri, Yimchunger, Kalya Kongnyu, Konyak,
Chang, Sangtam,
Zeliangrong (Zemei+Liangmei+Rongmei=Ze+Liang+Rong).
(Zemei+Liangmei is known as Kacha Naga by British)

Manipur : Anal, Maring, Moyon, Monsang, Lamkang, Kabui, Maram
Chothe, Tangkhul, Mao, Chiru, Kharam, Koireng, Tarao,
(Zeliangrong = Zemei+Liangmei+Rongmei+Puimei)
(Rongmei+Puimei are known as Kabui). 56

Though, “Mao Naga tribe” as it stands recognized by government and in official
records, if it can be re-recognized as “Shüpfomei” instead of “Mao Naga tribe”, it will
stand for the true identity of the people. Calling it Chüluvi + Ememei + Paomata +
Lepaoma as “Shüpfomei” would sound better and acceptable, than merely calling the
whole groups as “Mao Naga tribe”. The ethnic awakening and the Naga national feeling
or Naga nationality is a product of British colonialism, Second World War,
modernization and the Naga movement for political sovereignty. However, the evolution
of Naga nationality is not a “fiat accompli” but an ongoing search for ethnic identity. The
concept of a Naga nationality is a new force whose growth has been facilitated by the

56 Cf. Professor Gangmumei Kabui is a Naga scholar and he writes in his book “Genesis of the Ethnoses
of Nagas and Kuki-Chin” the different Naga tribes as well as the Kuki-Chin tribes.
Naga love for their culture and freedom. Thus, it is part of the Naganising process which is the product of the historical evolution of the Naga people.  

With this parameter, we shall call the new ethnic awakening or new nomenclature among the four groups, namely “the Poumai tribe” as the by product of social, economic, political, education, religion, etc. And much more, the feeling of dominance by little advance group and the feeling of backwardness from the western group, is often manifested clearly especially to outdo in the social celebration, social expenditure and by mean of propaganda.

1.6.3. Naga migration

Though many Naga tribes claim their origin from the caves or from the holes in the earth, yet from time immemorial according to Shüpformei myths and legends, they claim that they had their origin at Makhel-Makhrefü. The concept of “cave dwelling” should not and cannot be taken literally, because it was the hiding place and a safe place for mankind before they could master the art of making a house for themselves. One may question the very myths and legends related to this fact. Sometime such myths and legends when narrated can even feel uncomfortable for the narrator as well as the listening audience. Human history is marked by waves of migration of people, race and

58. Cf. Tho Raini Pao. The Folktales of Poumai Naga, P. 6. The Poumai tribe is a new nomenclature recognized by Naga Students' Federation and other organizations. But the government of India have not recognized to the Poumai tribe demand committee. According to the folktales of Poumai, all the Naga tribes came from Makhel, and they claim that Paomata and Lepaona tribes originated from Makhel under the guidance of an old man called “Pou” and his progenies are called “Poumai”. According to the folk songs “Pou” was a grand old man when he migrated to Makhel from outside. The legend says that this old man came through Indo-Burma reached Imphal valley. On reaching Imphal valley he found water and moved towards the north and rested at Makhel for the night. In the morning he found his walking stick taking root and alive, seeing as a good omen he settled down at Makhel. The descendants of Pou are called Paomata (Kapemata), Lepaona (Tolupemata).
tribes from place to place, from country to country and from one continent to another. Such a geographical movement is a reality and there could be many reasons for such movements. Thus, at one point of time, Shüpfomei in particular and the Nagas in general did make their exodus from some place to their present homeland. Though such migration and movement cannot be ascertained with date, time and place yet in reality it can be ascertained with cultural artifacts, blood groups etc. In that cloud of history one has to re-trace their history.

The Nagas do not have any written history as to record of how they originated or migrated. Naga history depends heavily on the oral traditions, transmitted from one generation to the next generation by word of mouth in the form of folksongs, folktales, legends, sayings, myths, proverbs, etc. Such a power of transmission and retention depended on the community and the interest of the group. It is a dialogue where the grandfather relates to their grandchildren, the mighty deeds they have done and their great grandparents, heros and heroins, great personalities, told through fairy tales, etc. These hearers retold such legends and stories to the coming generations according to their own understanding and memory power. Such unrecorded oral transcripts and translations are the only source of history for the Nagas with regard to their origin and migration. The real historical records of the Nagas and Shüpfomei are available in written form only from the time of the British.

As for the migration of the Nagas, the five Naga tribes in Nagaland, viz., Angami, Chakhesang, Rengma, Sema, and Lotha, traced their origin to the village of
Khezakhenoma–Kozhomei chiü. And the mentioned tribes have their folktales and legends that they migrated from Khezakhenoma. Some villagers during the interview i.e. Ememei group, western Shüpfomei also held such theory that Nagas migrated from Khezakhenoma.  

According to B.B. Ghosh, “Nagas belong to the Mongoloid stock of human races. It is believed that the Mongoloid people originated in the upper reaches of Howangho river in the Sinkiang province of China and there migrated in 2000 B.C. One group of this Mongoloid people went toward east and south-east and came to be known as Chinese, another group migrated towards south-west and came to be known as Tibetans, and a third group moved towards south and were divided into the different tribes of Indo-China. One of the tribes of this last group is the Karens who are now living in Burma. It is likely that the Nagas belong to this third group of migration.”  

How can such unrecorded history be relevant to study? Without doubt the oral tradition could help in bringing about a coherent foundation for constructing Naga

59. “Khezakhenoma – Kozhomei chiü” is often referred as the home of migration for many Naga tribes in Nagaland. Even among Ememei villages elders, there are two versions regarding the settlement and migration of the Nagas at Khezakhenoma. One group claim that Khezakhenoma was the first place where the Nagas migrated from Assam side taking the river route and first settled down at Chichama – otsu koso for some years and move slowly taking the same river route to the southward and for some time settled down at Mokhu leri – lower Punanamei village (Pfosemei) where the two stones are left there. Then once again taking Chuheri river, they settled down the present Khezakhenoma. While another group had different version, saying that the Nagas came from Assam side taking the same river route and reached Makhl-Makhrel first, and on reaching Makhel they decided to settled down at the present site, saying that this is the centre of the earth – meaning the highest point. From here one group migrated to Khezakhenoma and from there further migration.

60. B.B. Ghosh, Problems of writing the history of Nagaland. P. 248
history. We shall bring some of the oral tradition namely, folktales speaking about Shüpfomei origin, migration and settlement.

In the evening after work an opportunity arises, when the fathers of the family stroll with their children and grand children, telling their stories and sing lullabies about their great grand parents. Then suddenly pointing their fingers towards the direction of Makhel-Makhrefü, they say: “Look children! Your grand parents came from there and that is their homeland, see well and remember that you tell to your future generation.” This is one of the Shüpfomei creed, which every child is orally drilled into his/her nature through the elders, parents and through every social celebration. It has been retold and many of the folklore begins with this creed.

Oh! Where did mankind originate? Howa imei hi adei chü kona hrü prae?

Oh! Mankind dispersed from Makhel Howa imei hi Makhrefü no füshu tae.51

* Makhel-Makhrefü is the place where life originated and from there, human race dispersed to different regions. And every Shüpfomei as well as all the Naga tribes agree about on this place. Due to the lack of vocabularies in Shüpfomei language the word, about their origin, creation, migration, etc. became confused with the old people they say, “Makhrefü no imei hrü prae” or “Makhrefü no imei füshu tae” which means “from Makhel human being had its origin, or from Makhel human being dispersed”.

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51. There is a conventional prelude that every folksong begins with the exclamation as “Howa! She’! Oh! Etc. Such expression bring the singer a sense of concentration and key note in the music.
1.6.3.1. Naga migration chronology

B.B. Ghosh has given his opinion regarding the Ao Naga chronology. He writes, "All the major Naga tribes agree that the Aos went ahead of them and the Aos say that after leaving Chungliyimti, they crossed Dikhu river on their westward journey and first settled in Soyim which was later renamed as Ungma and from there fanned out to other places; and thus Ugma is the parent village of the Aos and it is accepted by all the Nagas to be the oldest village, and they respect it as such and that is why the second Naga People's Convention of 1958 took place in that village. An Ungma villager said in 1976 that they were 32 generations old. Aos give 30 years for a generation, but we should give 25 years as per international standard. So 32 generations mean 800 years, and therefore the village was established in 1976 minus 800 which would be A.D. 1176. Since the Aos claim to have originated from Longtorok, it is reasonable to give at least one hundred years for their antecedental stay at Chungliyimti. Therefore it is likely that the Aos came to Chungliyimti in A.D. 1076 (1176 minus 100) or say in 11th century. If the Aos have come to Chungliyimti in 1070s or earlier, the other major tribes such as Lotha, Sema, Rengma, Angami and Chakhesang set foot in Khezakenoma about 50 years before this date. Only 50 years is given for their migration from Khezakenoma to their present places of habitation because it was a short distance of about 100 to 200 km. And the journey was more or less a direct one. Therefore the major Naga tribes came to Khezakenoma by about A.D. 1026 (1076 minus 50) or say by early 11th century. Thus it is
presumed that the major Naga tribes came to their present habitat towards the end of 11th century, little later than the Aos came to Chungliyimti.” 62

1.6.3.2. Theories of Naga migration

There are various theories and school of thoughts about the waves of migration of the Nagas and Shüpfomei in particular. There may be many prepositions as to why such a migration? We assume that it was due to the population pressure, socio-economic constraint, lack of political stability, ecological imbalance, natural forces, search for a new livelihood, etc.

According to the opinion of N. Salew, the forefathers were forced to migrate due to over population and the difficulty in getting their livelihood. 63 Different scholars gave their migration theories of Shüpfomei and Nagas.

According to J.H. Hutton, he writes, “Again, while Semas point southwards to the village of Swemi or the hill of Tukahu (Japvo) in the Angami country as the place where they sprung, and the Rengmas to Sopvoma (Mao), the Angami point to Mao and the country of south of that as the home of their race, and to this day the priest of the Angami village wait for the priest of Mao and Makhel to give the word before appointing the day

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63. N. Salew, K. Lohru, H. Chakho, K. Sanu, etc., Interviewed on 24th May, 1994
for the celebration of any of the regular festivals, and point to the ceremonial of the Mao
village of Mekromal ("Maikel") as the type of Angami ceremony par excellence.⁶⁴

Modern historians have drawn a conclusion on the origin of the Nagas dating
back to the emperor of China, Qin Chin Haunghi, who built the great wall of China about
215 B.C. to keep out the Mongols. The short tempered character of the emperor who
demanded forced labour, heavy taxation from his subjects which led to discontentment
among the population. Many people died of starvation, exhaustion and moreover political
unrest forced the people to depart from the situation. Their miserable lives and survival
made a mass exodus during this period. People escaped through the hilly terrain, valleys
and meadows in search of a better livelihood. They slowly moved into the vast plains of
Assam, experiencing the heat, the rain and flood, and moved into the deep jungles of the
present Assam. The fittest survived and moved gradually towards the foothills of the
mountain ranges following the course of rivers and streams. The present two stones in
Makel-Makahrefu village known as chūnhī rikrū and chūnhī ridži symbolized the sun
hen and sun cock which was brought from all the way from Assam. The oral tradition
says that the early sojourners brought these two stones with them indicating their struggle
with the heat in the plain of Assam.

J.H. Hutton writes on migration, "The history of the Naga tribes came precisely to
occupy their present position has, passed into the dim obscurity of vague traditions. But
enough of them remain to give some indication of the course which the migrations

... It is very natural that every tribe will bring their different versions to substantiate their understanding regarding their origin and migration theories. It is also true that Shilpomei have their own folklore and tale to assert their origin. According to Hutton, "The Angamis too spring from ancestors who emerged from the bowels of the earth, but that not in Angami country, but in some other land to the south." 66

While R.R. Shimray, stresses that the Nagas had their origin and migration in and from Makhel, "As to their origin, and dispersal, the various tribes of the Nagas have now accepted that Makhel as the original place from they dispersed themselves. There are many historical facts such as stone monoliths and sacred tress planted at Makhel when they were about to disperse themselves to different directions." 67 "The importance of Makhel village in MAO area, in the history of origin of the Nagas is well known..." 68 "The Angamis, the Semas, the Chakhesangs, the Lothas, the Rengmas, etc., point to the flat stone somewhere near Makhel village as the place of origin..." 69
According to G. Makuga, the Rongmei group did not directly come from Makhel as the other Nagas legends. He says, "Rongmei Nagas came from Ramting Kabin located Makhellongdi commonly known as ‘Gongohugnring’ alias ‘Changwang Phungning’ somewhere near the present Oklong village now under Mao-Maram area in the North District of Manipur."  

Shüpfomei myth, legends, folklore, folktales have only one thing to say, that it is mentioned that Makhel-Makhrefū is their homeland and place of origin. They don’t have any other myth regarding their origin than Makhel-Makhrefū. No doubt, one has to accept such a human and sacred traditions and respects them with regard to their migration and dispersal which point out to Makhel. But how far can he rely on the myth alone?

1.7. Makhel – Makhrefū home of the Nagas

1.7.1. Makhel - Makhrefū Shüpfomei settlement

The oral tradition of Shüpfomei forefathers claim that Shüpfomei came from different directions and finally reached Makhel. From Makhel-Makhrefū, they dispersed by different routes. Such legends of dispersion of their ancestors are told and retold for the benefit of their posterity. The Tenyimia kindred tribes had a theory that during their exodus they temporarily settled across a lengthy block of stone near present Chichama village (Osu koso) in northern Angami. It is told that the early settlers used stone block

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71. Cf. Souvenir Tenyimia Union. The Genesis of Tenyimia Nagas (Mkhrei-hru) S. Asiho, P. 24
TABLE 6

Another view - Migration of Shüpfomei tribe to Makhel (Makhrefū)

Chuherū river view - Migration route of Shüpfomei Naga tribe
for their pillow and such marks are found at Chichama. From there they moved towards Kheiro village near Chazouba town in Chakhesang area following the river course and crossed Kedima (Kozumei) and Pudunamei (Pfosemei). Shüpfomei ancestors were moving enmass carrying with them the sacred seat of stone (Mokhulirü bu). The place where “Mokhulirü bu” is installed would be mark as their territory. It is also considered as a sign of God’s blessing and of great significance to the place where they settled down. The village elders often told that this sacred seat of stone fell at a place in between Kedima (Kozumei) and Pudunamei (Pfosemei) villages and they were unable to lift it up and it is still lying there. Shüpfomei ancestors followed the river and hill ranges. The most important river course that Shüpfomei ancestors followed was Chuherü river (Chuherü korü) which had its original source and streams at Makhel. According to the forefathers “Chuherü” in Ememei dialect has two meanings, (a) “escaping from, avoiding, running away, (b) “leading or guiding”. This theory, is much accepted by section of the people and they are very sure that Shüpfomei ancestors proceeded upward movement following the Doyang river course. They continued to move it till they reached Khezkkenoma and finally reached the present Makhel site.

It is believed that on reaching Makhel-Makhrefü Shüpfomei ancestors decided not to proceed any further, saying, ‘This is the end of the world’ in other words that is the highest place or centre of the earth, referring it as an umbilical region (fodzü-fola) of the land. There was a fear that if the proceeded farther they would go ‘downwards’ and so

1. Ref. Naga Migration Route in the Map. According to a theory among western Ememei villages that the forefathers came to Makhel through this river “Chuherü”. Till date, there is a place between Kaihi and Tobifi villages migratory birds (Khibo) come from Nagaland area. The theory is that the forefather reading the nature moved with these migratory birds.
**Makhel (Makhrefū)**

The Peepal tree, under which Džūliamosūro conceived and gave birth to her three sons—

(a) Asūpio Alapha (Forefather of Non-Naga Race)
(b) Chūtuwo (Forefather of Meitei Race)
(c) Alewo (Forefather of Naga Race)
A monolith stone believed that the scipt of the Naga is said to have been written.

Ememei dialect explaining the theory of conception.

The different gennas (Chüna khru)
they decided to settle in and around the present Makhel-Makhrefü. The beautiful landscape surrounding Makhel (Makhrefü) and the location with elevated region high mountain ranges, including Japvo (3014m or 9888.93ft.) ended abruptly within Esü, Houda, Khuochi, Ngapu, etc. The altitude is 1756.17m or 5762.02ft. from the sea level. We find great river sources like Barak, Doyang, Lani and other streams from Makhel-Makhrefü. 73

At Makhel, the ancestors erected a gigantic monolith (height 9ft. above the ground level; width 5 ½ ft. and thickness 1ft.) as a memorial stone. At one time this monolith bore the picture of a shield, a bullock with a rope tied on its neck, a cock, footprint of a tiger, and a script. And traditional folktales say that it was erected by the three brothers namely Asüpfo Alapha (the forefather of non-Naga race), Chütuwo (the forefather of Meitei (non-tribal race) and Khephio (forefather of the Naga race). There is also a megalithic fetish stone (Tupha Chava) 2 ½ km., from Makhel. According to legend, if a basketful of paddy was scorched on the stone, it collected double.

This stone made Tobumei forefathers very rich and they provided food and drink to the weary travellers. Another legend is that Shüpfomei ancestors brought a missile like gun (kobu Redzü) which could hit any target even if the target was not aimed at. This gun was hidden under the ground and covered with a huge stone lest it would kill mankind. The prophecy is this that Shüpfomei ancestors had such guns something that could link them to the Chinese who first invented gunpowder. 74

74. Ibid.
1.7.2. Dispersion from Makhel - Makhrefi

Many of the village elders often spoke of a certain “hole”, but they could never mention about any specific place, location and time. It is told that from this hole people were just crawling out like mole (sole) during the misty evening. It is said that many people were coming out from this hole day after day creating social tension, affecting social welfare and population explosion and they decided to close this hole once and for all. This they did for the good of the society. Even today many parents often advised their children not to dig the ground with “sode” a kind of special implement used for pounding rice for making rice beer, because the earth is considered the head of the ancestors. The myth has a message to convey regarding the emergence, migration and settlement of a race. Apparently the myth seems to be silly and funny, but going through their oral tradition, one may suggest that Shüpfomei forefathers were once a cave dwellers and had lived a hard life. The survival from external forces, natural calamities and self-defense for survival was brought out through this myth. Most of the Naga tribes have folktales more or less the same mono-type myth to recall their earlier settlement.

With the passage of time the population of Makhel increased and that led to dispersion. Thus, many tribes dispersed to different regions while Shüpfomei group remained around Makhel. Before the final dispersion took place, the Naga race gathered at a big wild pear tree (Chütebu kajü) at Shajouba village (Charanghomei), which still stands as a symbol of unity and oneness of the whole Naga tribes. At a convention under
the wild pear tree (*Chütebu*), Shüpfomei ancestors made a pledge that they would maintain their identity as a great family and nation to resolved to pay homage to that tree wherever they might be, as to remember the unique great event. The forefathers honored and venerated this wild pear tree for centuries as an historical event in their lives, displaying and symbolizing their solidarity and integrity as single a people. Whenever a branch of this wild pear tree is broken either by natural calamities like hail storm, gale or by any other, the whole Naga race used to observe a solemn "*Genna*" abstaining from work for a day.

The news of such misfortune is usually relayed from village to village through the announcement by village chiefs to their respective villages in a different intonation. There is a omen that if a branch of this breaks, it is a sign that people living in that direction will die more, and if a new branch comes out, it is a sign that an increase in population will take place in that particular direction.  

1.7.2.1. Etymology of Makhel - *Makhrefü*

Archaeological, ethnographic and linguistic study would give much evidence to the route of migration of the Nagas. The generally accepted norm is this that Naga tribes had Makhel-*Makhrefü* as their homeland. The forefathers coming from different routes, paths and times settled down first at Makhel and further dispersed to other direction.

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The word, "Makhre" in Shûpfomei dialect means "secret" "fū" means "place". And "Makhrefū" "place of secrecy". Before the forefathers dispersed from Makhel, they paid homage to "Tamara tsu" = commemorative stone, "Marabu" = Peepal tree, "Linotsu" = 3 Menhir stones at Chahelophi. On the one hand it is here that Shûpfomei ancestors took the following decision that they will never narrate to others about their settlement. On other other hand there is an old saying which the grandparents often narrate to their grandchildren, "Okhe, Ora ye Omei sū hino ohrū hrū prae, hihi ote onamei he pele" = from here, Tiger, Spirit and Man originated and you are to tell to the coming generations.

1.7.2.2. Importance of Makhe - Makhrefū

According to 1994 Revenue Census, Makhel is a small village of 127 houses with a population of 863 and which is 3 kms away from east of Tadubi on National Highway No. 39 in Senapati north district, Manipur. The following sacred monuments and relics are found in Makhel and the vicinity of Makhel village, which are considered as of great importance and of significance.

(a) Makhel is considered as the place of origin and migration / dispersal.

(b) It is situated in the north district of Manipur at the degree between 92-94 longitude and 24-25 latitude.

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76. Cf. The Shepoumsaramth in the Naga National Movements. P. 16
The mythical gun believed to have buried under this stone
Makhel (Makhrefū)

This particular stone is supposed to be used as
ritual for divination of climate
(c) *Marabu* – a peepal tree in the centre of the village.

(d) *Khubu ridzii, Khubu rekrü* – Sun cock and sun hen is kept in the village.

(f) *Khubu redzi* – Missile gun used for enemies.

(g) *Mukhu lirü* - village settlement stone.

(h) *Ora tobu tsu* – sacred stone for propitiation from the wrath of rains, hailstorms.

(i) Sacred shield - considered the shield of Shüpfowo.

(j) Lucky stone – worshipping the god of fortunes.

\[\begin{align*}
Omei va & \quad \text{- fortune of man} \\
Oto va & \quad \text{- fortune of wealth} \\
Otu va & \quad \text{- fortune of animals} \\
Oru va & \quad \text{- fortune of war}
\end{align*}\]

(k) Farewell monolith stone – the three brothers erected a stone to commemorate their life at Makhel. 77

(l) Three monoliths - *Ora tsu* (height=7ft above the ground; width=3 ½ft; thickness=1.3ft) eastern most stone.

- *Omei tsu* (height=6ft; width=3ft; thickness =1ft) middle stone.

-Okhe tsu (height=6ft; width=1.2 ft thickness=1ft) the western most stone. These menhirs located 3 kms south of the Makhel village, were erected to mark the dispersion of the Nagas from their ancestral homeland. These three monoliths namely, god stone, man stone and tiger stone respectively, at Chahelophi, symbolized of the three brothers their life and settlement at Makhel. 78

1.7.2.3. Progenies and descendants of Makhel

According to Shüpfomei forefathers' folktales, the following are the forefathers of the Nagas. The three children of Dzüliamosüro are

(a) Asüpo Alapha (forefather of the non-Naga race)
(b) Chütiowo (forefather of the Meitei race) and
(c) Alewo (forefather of the Naga race).

It is believed that Khephio was the eldest son of Alewo, and Khephio eldest son was Shūfspowo. And Shūfspowo had three sons they are

(a) Kapewo the eldest,

(b) Tolewo was the middle son and

(c) Memewo was the youngest.

While the sons and daughters, grand-sons and grand-daughters of Kapeo, Tolewo and Memewo are called Kapemata (Paomata), Tolewo Tolupemata (Lepaona) Memewo (Ememei) respectively. These are the progenies of Alewo -

1. Shūfspowo – whose descendants are known as Shūfspomei (Ememei, Lepaona, Chīluve, Paomata,).

2. Fujūwo – whose descendants are known as Marams (Mahramei) they first settled down at Wilong=Chizhumei and dispersed out into different directions.

3. Takai – whose descendants are known as Thangal, they first settled at Ikeilongdi and then spread out.

4. Epuwo – whose descendants are known as Epumei (Zeliangrong = Zemei + Liangmei + Rongmei + Puimei) their legend says that they originated from Makaulongdi near Oklong village.

5. Nahrūwo – whose descendants are known as Pihumei (Western Tangkhul) who first settled down at Hundung.
6. Shünamei (Angami) who settled first at Khezakhenoma and then at Makhel.

7. Osıkozhomei (Chakhesang = Chakru + Kheza + Sangtam) they first settled down at Khezakhenoma and then at Makhel.

8. Mozhomei (Sema)

9. Lozhomei (Lotha)

10. Satomei (Koynak)

11. Marimei (Rengma)

12. Kochowomei (Ao)

1.7.2.4. Tribute to Makhelian?

True tribute and respect is being expressed through these lines, “Makhrefu”...the home of our love,

The birth and death place of our soul,

Our home of love we bow to you,

We bring our broken hearts and self before your feet,

We settle East and West, North and South,

Your weary children returning home again,

We owe you for your motherly affection,

Soothe us with your caring hand,

Heal our mental, physical, spiritual fears and pains.
Before you we come dear beloved mother...

"Esū, Houdu, Ngapu, Khuochi"...carry us with your steady legs,
Shüpfomei Naga tribe, ever trusting your protection,
Guide and support our spinning heads
We come to learn at your feet,
Massage our toiling hands and aching bodies,
With your healing balm.
Yes, we bring our blistered hands and cracking feet,
Before you we come our dear father...

"Chütebu"...ever green and ever growing,
Animate Shüpfomei, the way to live and love,
Directing the wayfarer in distant land,
Tell us the story of the Past, Present and Future,
Instruct and instill the spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood,
Work again the same miracles in our history,
Melt down the difference within us,
We don’t want to wander away from you again,
Before you we come our dear beloved brother...

"Marabu"...our standard and banner,
Each year bringing forth new shoots to remind Shüpfomei,
And each year we are too busy to pay our homage,
Your timely invitation are turned down,
Our petty difference of sore legs, and minds distant your afar,
Each time, each season is your beacon call beyond,
Returning to you again our dear beloved sister...

Come...Shüpfomei, to the place of our birth,
Come...to our ancestral home,
Come...let us go and meet our dear Mother, Father, Brother and Sister.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Cf. William Nepuni, The Mao Myth as Christian Theology, P. 8
1.8. Genealogical descendants of Shūpfomei

1.8.1. Different Shūpfomei myths

Makhei is commonly known as the “Womb of the Nagas” and the womb of their birth and origin. From here one can trace back the ancestral tree by studying the myths, rewriting the folksongs and folktales. Shūpfomei mythologies vary from village to village, person to person, depending on the ability of the narrator and his skill. But in all such narration the core message is the same. Thus, myth in general varies from culture to culture and there is no universal myth though there may be a certain common elements, and each one is itself open to transformation. 80

Shūpfomei do not believe things blindly or take anything for granted. But every action and belief has a myth to explain of why such things happened and why such things are happening even today. One should not be blinded by the religious colouring, and religious faith experience in their socio-economic and other spheres. Because such myths explain and justify the whole phenomena of their culture, thought pattern and their understanding of the world. Shūpfomei myth reflects on the origin, migration, identity, agricultural modes, and their struggle for survival.

There are many other factors like sociological, psychological, environmental and economic aspects that influence in the creation of myths. Despite the many changes in all fields, yet, there is one thing we cannot overlook, that is the impact of such myths, these mythical roots justify all their concepts of life and world-view.

1.8.2. What is a myth?

According to Louis J. Luzbetak, "Originally myth (Gr. Mythos) meant the same as "Word," "Message," "News," or "story"... a myth is a story of primeval or cosmic times, that is to say, times preceding the present order; it speaks of deities and other sacred beings; and it treats of ultimate questions – of a people's view of reality, of the meaning of life, of the origins of the universe and humankind, of ancestors, of ancestral heroes and models, of the unknowable future." 81

According to Mircea Eliade, "Myth narrates sacred history; it relates an event that took place in primordial time, the fabled time of the "beginning"...myth tells how, through the deeds of supernatural Beings, a reality came into existence, be it the whole of reality, the cosmos, or only a fragment of reality – an island, a species of plant, a particular kind of human behaviour, and institution." 82

For George R.A., "Myth is always an account of creation. It relates how something was produced and what happened, which manifested itself completely. Myth

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81 Cf. Louis J. Luzbetak, The Church and Cultures. P. 267
82 Cf. Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality. Pp. 5-6
has often been understood as a fantasy, a fiction in the popular usage. But when myth is employed as a term used by scholars engaged in the fields of anthropology, psychology, history of religion and symbolism, it denotes an element which contains and expresses what is central, essential and efficacious in human existence." 83

And Mircea Eliade continues to say, “The actors in myths are supernatural beings who disclose their creative activity and reveal the sacredness (or simply the supernaturalness) of their works,…as a result of the intervention of Supernatural Beings that man himself is what he is today, a mortal sexed and cultural being.” 84 A myth is normally expressed in words and often takes the form of a story, but today the real mythical substance is lost due to the re-interpretation and influence of higher culture. Yet it has transformed and enriched by their gifted talents and creative visions.

Shüpfomei myth narrates the events of their ancestors, their life history, their deeds and glories past through such myths. With the passing of time lack of written account and free interpretation have led to distortion. But there is a re-interpretation and new understanding taking place among Shüpfomei young generation.

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83 Cl. George R.A. Studies on Mythologies, P. 28
84 Cl. Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality, P. 6
1.8.2.1. Shüpfomei first myth of conception

According to an oral tradition, one day while Dzüliamosüro was sleeping under the peepal tree (marabu) at Makhel (Makhrefü), a white cloud (kahe kakra) came and overshadowed her and she conceived. She gave birth to three sons namely, Tiger (Okhe), Spirit (Ora) and Man (Omei). The peepal tree was at Makhel. This tree is often referred as the tree of life, because under this peepal tree human race came to be. And Dzüliamosüro is considered as the great grand mother of human race and especially for Shüpfomei Naga tribe.

1.8.2.2. Genesis of the first myth

White Cloud (Kahe Kakra) enveloped Dzüliamosüro

Peepal tree (Marabu) while Dzüliamosüro sleeps under it

Dzüliamosüro (Woman) conceived and gave birth to

Tiger (Okhe)    Spirit (Ora)    Man (Omei)

According to another version of the oral folklore, the Shüpfomei’s great grand father was known as “Kateikozüwo”. Many people consider the White Cloud (Kahe Kakra) as this Kateikozüwo associated with the male gender. It stands for reproductive
force and generative power and life giving agent. Literally in pronouncing the word, two syllables are joint together, “Katei=black” and “Kozüwo=darkness”. Shüpfo mei symbolized Kateikozüwo as the primodial ancestor.

1.8.2.3. Second myth of conception

The second myth of conception brings out the natural human conjugal relationship. It is said that each time Dzüliamosüro sleeps under the peepal tree (Marabu), the white cloud used to visit her and enveloped her and there by she conceived and gave birth to three sons.

1. Asüpfo Alapha – the forefather of the non-Naga race (Kolamei) dark complex.

2. Chûturo – the forefather of the Meitei (Mikrûmei) non-tribal race.

3. Alewo – the forefather of the Naga race (Nagamei pfope).
1.8.2.4. Genealogical evolution

Kateikozüwo (*dark & darkness*)

Peepal tree (*Marabu*)

Dzüliamosüro (*Woman*)

Asüplo Alapha (*Non-Naga*)  Chütuwo (*Meitei*)  Alewo (*Naga*)

Khephio

Shüpfowo

Kapewo (*Kapemata*)  Toluwo (*Tolupemata*)  Memüwo (*Emewo*)

Paomata  Lepaona  Ememei

Chüluve

According to the legend "Shüpfowo" was the eldest son of Khephio and a valiant hero. He succeeded the legacy of his father and even today the eldest son gets the best property of the family. Kapewo the eldest son of Shüpfowo from Makhel first settled
down at Saranamei village (Kosümei) from here his progenies dispersed and esta many villages and his descendants are called Kapemata = Paomata. The second Shüpfowo was Tolewo, who settled down at Koide village (Enamei chū), a descendants are called Tolupemata = Lepaona. The last son of Shüpfowo was Me being the youngest inherited his father’s original home. His progenies dispers founded many different villages. His descendants are called Ememei.

1.9. Shüpfomei views of Dzüliamosüro (ancestral mother)

1.9.1. Meaning of Dzüliamosüro

The myth personifies Dzüliamosüro as the mother – nature. There is meaning behind the two syllables “Dzülia” = pure spring, clean and clear spring, uncontaminate, etc. while “Mosüro” = concern, caring, respectful, loving, and l etc. Thus, when Dzüliamosüro is literally translated, it would mean “Woman o concern” or “spring of life”. Many parents often give their child’s name as Dzü Dzüsero, Dzüsa etc. Thus, Dzüliamosüro possesses the following human quali woman of feminine character. And Shüpfomei concept of a mother is of the on gives birth, bring forth life, nourish and motherly.
1.9.2. Shüpomei and Dzüliamosüro

With the passing of time, Dzüliamosüro became mortally ill. And the three sons took their turns to nurse her back to health. The day when tiger (okhe) attended to her, the tiger would touch her body, pestering here and there saying that it would eat this and that part of her body when she dies. As a result, her condition would worsen on the day when the tiger looked after her. And on the day when god (ora) looked after her she would be suffering from a very high fever. But the day when she stays with man (omei), she would feel much better and relaxed. The man would nurse her to health by feeding with hot chilly soup. Then she wished to die in the presence of man. It was pre-ordained that all her wishes were fulfilled. Accordingly, she died on that day when the man (omei) was attending to her.

While she was alive, she had made her will, that is, to be buried in the ground. And she instructed the man (omei) to bury her body, and even have his cooking oven made on her grave. The grave had to be camouflaged from the recognition of the tiger (okhe), lest her body would be exhumed by the tiger and eat up. In conformity with this tradition Shüpomei tribe also bury their dead in the ground. The tiger predicted by Dzüliamosüro as usual came in search of the mother asking about her and disturbing the peace. The tiger continuously searched for the mother’s body day after day and showed no sign of leaving the house. The man would get fed up and wished to teach the tiger a lesson. Therefore he would ask the tiger what it feared most? The tiger would say to the man that it feared two things namely fire (omi) and the blow of the buffalo horn bugle.
(khebu kahe). The man devised a way to teach a lesson to the tiger. And after the long search of the mother’s body when the tiger would be tired and asleep, the man would tie a live fire object on the tail of the tiger and would blow the buffalo’s horn bugle into the ear of the tiger. At the sound, the tiger would be overtaken by fear and run for it’s life to a very far off place, never to come again.

1.9.3. Dzüliamosüro and white cloud

_Dzüliamosüro_, the ancestral mother, her character is portrayed in the myth as a mother bringing forth children and nourishing life. She personifies the mother earth, the womb of new life and fertility. The creative force is attributed to her. The white cloud signifies the spring season, which also brings new life, freshness and solace. It is the agricultural experience of the people that cloud brings rain, water and freshness to nature. The myth says that the white cloud overshadowed _Dzüliamosüro_ while she slept under the peepal tree (marabu). The belief of Shüpfomei is that the sky is the male principle and the earth, the female principle, and the earthquake is as it were in their conjugal embrace, whence all fertility, all growth on the earth, has its origin. 85

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Tiger stone (Okhe tsu)  
Uprooted in 1914  
symbolically it shows  
the disappearance of  
tiger species.

God stone (Ora tsu)
The three stones (Lino tsu) at Chahelophi, 3 kms from Makhel (Makhrefū)
1.10. Shüpfomei anthropomorphic symbolism

1.10.1. Shüpfomei rich symbolism

Every myth whether it be creation or conception, has the anthropomorphic symbolism to convey to the coming generation. Such rich symbolism is expressed orally, through story form, or through wise sayings. Such themes are told and retold during feasts and festivals.

Some of the villagers are very powerful storyteller, and often community would gather around such persons and listen to those stories. The oldest man in the community narrates solemnly and in respectful manner unfolds the meaning of those memories and legends. Today such myths carry a very powerful message for the present generation.

1.10.1.1. The tiger - Okhe

According to the folklore, the tiger is considered to be the second son of Dziliamosüro. The term, “Tiger” (Okhe) stands for the whole animal species and animal instincts. Tiger (Okhe) connotes fear, restlessness and instability. The psychological understanding of tiger for Shüpfomei is that, the tiger waits in a thicket of bushes and jungles to attack human beings for prey. The tiger is considered as darkness and it roams in the dark alone. The rationale of the people in the villages is that whenever a tiger is killed, the whole village observes a “genna” abstaining from their daily routine work.
People have an instinctive fear that it might destroy crop or property if a *genna* is not observed. Secondly, Shüpfomei observe a *genna* to show solidarity and respect as a sign of brotherhood. (cf. 1.6.3.1.) Thirdly, this occurs due to the irrational reasoning and ignorance.

**1.10.1.2. The God – *Ora***

One of the sons of *Dzüliamosüro* designates god (*ora*) as a generic term for the world of spirits. One may not be very sure as to whether the term connotes a benevolent God or malevolent gods of the lower grades. Shüpfomei understanding is that of a benevolent God (*Oramei*), who is supreme and in whom they put their trust, faith and confidence. The reason is this that the benevolent God does not do harm to them. They do not need to propitiate any offering to him. On the other hand, it is the invisible spirits whose powers are at work in the world and Shüpfomei call it as evil spirits = *ora kashü*. Among the spirits there are grades, while others are malevolent spirits whose power is attributed to them and are always at work to create trouble in the world. These evil spirits are the one who causes all the sufferings, miseries, misfortunes, sickness, natural calamities and death. Human beings need to appease these spirits by offering sacrifices, like chicken, coins, pieces of cloths, eggs etc. It is these spirits Shüpfomei fear the most. These spirits dwell in rocky places, near the mouth of streams, remote precipices. But there are also good spirits who guide and help people in their needs. According to the folktale (cf.1.6.3.1.) *Dzüliamosüro* conceived God (*Ora*) under the peepal tree. God / spirits occupied the vast wide world after the departure of the three brothers. In general
spirits are understood as evil, and often spirits need the support and help of people. Thus, the world of spirit is unknown and mystery.

1.10.1.3. The Man - Omei

Of the three sons of Dzüliamosüro, the Man (Omei) was the youngest. According to the myth Dzüliamosüro had a special love for the Man (Omei) particularly because the Man possesses unique intelligence which helps to look after the mother during her illness and win her favour. He could grasp the instructions and work toward the fulfilling of the aspirations of the mother. It is the man who invented the first bow and arrow the prime weapon and claimed the father-land through the competition with the other two brothers.

The bow stands for strength and arrow for accuracy, with the combination of the two the man becomes the nature is protector. Shüpfo mei understanding of man (omei) is that man is the animal of God (Oramei morü) which means we are all creatures of God with a special qualities like consciousness, ability to think, create and protect to nature.

1.11. Covenant and contract

1.11.1. Covenant between spirit and man

In the beginning Dzüliamosüro's children, Tiger, God and Man shared the same language and could communicate to each other. But as days went by jealousy started among them and division came within. One day God asked the Man whether he should eat only ripen chilly or even green and tender chilly. The man in response to the queries of
god said that it is his will to eat both ripen or unripe chilly. On hearing this, god decreed
that man must die maturely or prematurely. Thereafter man proposed that God also must
die, if he is first seen by man before god first sees man. At this proposal God arbitrarily
exchanged the eyes of man for dog and vice versa, because of that man could not see God
anymore. But as the dog could see God, it told man all the activities of God and God did
not want the dog to communicate to man. Therefore God pulled out the tongue of the dog
and thereby prevented the dog from speaking to man. Finally, God gave another
commandment to man that if man commit sins, then God would harm him with epidemic.
It is a reflection of human physical death, which take places. The myth is often retold
even today to reason as to why death occurs in each age.

1.11.2. Covenant between tiger and man

The tiger being elder to the man had entered in a covenant with each other. The
covenant was that if man commit incest in any form, then the tiger would devour him. In
the same way the man also dictated terms to the tiger saying if the tiger killed his
domestic animal then any vital part of the tiger would be vulnerable to the target of man's
weapon and it would die of its injury. Man being the younger brother of tiger requested
the tiger not to attack man if he did not commit incest and earnestly sought mercy and
safety. No sooner did the tiger and man entered into a covenant, the tiger was going away
and man shouted demanding from the tiger, that if the tiger should lay a leg of every
animal that it killed and keep them at promontory places for him. However the tiger could
not hear him properly since the tiger was on its way, and a wild cat (oche zhongo) offered
with its service to convey man's message to the tiger. On obtaining the approval of the man, the wild cat set off. Instead of conveying the man’s request to the tiger, it had given a contradictory message saying that man asked it to defecate at every promontory places to be seen by man in order to know the whereabouts of the tiger. It is therefore, said that whenever any man gives an opposite information to the concerned person, it is termed as “wild cat errand”.

1.11.3. Departure and erection of three monoliths

We learn that the three brothers, namely, Tiger (Okhe) stands for animal genes, Spirit (Ora) stands for the world of spirits and Man (Omei) stands for humankind. All the three of them possessed dual qualities of holiness and malignatery, instinctive and irrational behaviour, ability to know and follow the instructions had to depart from each other. And the myth explains that the three brothers wanted to occupy their fatherland. Finally, the three brothers agreed to have competition of race of touching the target (prodzi) made of grass. Thus, the one who touches first the target is supposed to inherit the fatherland.

Accordingly the competition took place, while god and tiger first touched the target before the man. But the mother, Dzüitamosüro wished that the man should occupy the fatherland and also being the youngest had a soft corner for him. She was the umpire of the competition and she superseded the first round of the competition and re-ordered for a fresh competition. The mother had instructed the man to equip himself with bow and arrow and shoot the target during the race. Thus, the three brothers raced towards the
target, but the man hit the target first with his arrow and proclaimed himself to occupy his fatherland. Thereafter, the two brothers agreed to the wishes of their youngest brother (man=omei). As a result the Tiger (Okhe) = standing for animal species departed into the thick jungle, Spirit (Ora) = standing for world of spirits occupied the vast space, and finally the Man (Omei) = standing for humankind occupied his fatherland = Makhel (Makhrefii).

The three brothers before their departure from Makhel erected three monolith stones to commemorate and perpetuate their memory, symbolizing their brotherhood and one mother, Dzüliamosüro, which was erected at Chahelophi, a place three kilometers from Makhel. The three monolith stones represent the traditional history and the fall of any stone would indicate the decline of their species. Out of the three monolith stones the tiger stone fell in 1914 while the other two stones are in tact. 86

According to the forefathers the fall of any stone would have bad consequence such as social upheaval, and the First World War was attributed to the fall of the tiger stone. The fall of man stone was predicated by the forefathers, which will be soon be followed by the unification of all the Naga tribes. And the fall of the spirit stone would usher the end of the world.

1.11.4. The Peepal tree - Marabu

The peepal tree (marabu) at Makhel-Makhrefū which is considered sacred and special by all Nagas. One can understand the sacredness and significance of this peepal tree (marabu) only when we place into the context or in Shüpfomei world-view. According to the myth, Dzulimosüro while sleeping under this peepal tree (marabu) conceived and gave birth to three sons. In Shüpfomei dialect “Marabu” connotes two syllables “Mara” and “bu” which means spreading across, scattering afar, and “bu” stands for tree. It has a symbolic meaning as the roots of peepal tree goes deep down into the soil and scatters far and Shüpfomei personifies stability, protection, power, strength and energy. It manifested all characters of firmness and ability to sustain themselves from external force. It also brings out the primodial male, the principle of life. The patriarchal society considers Shüpfomei male equal to the peepal tree as stronger and commands respect in the society. The male role is to provide shelter, protection and sustenance to the family. The primary concern of the man is his responsibility as head of the family and society to ensure stability to the clan, village and tribe. He acts as the ultimate arbitrator in the decision making process. In the myth of conception, the peepal tree (marabu) exhibits the male principle and Dzulimosüro as the female principle. Today this very peepal tree (marabu) is growing well and strong. At first sight strangers will not take notice but when observed closely we can see the difference among the leaves on the tree. The branches facing the east are full of new leaves, tender and fresh, while the branches on the west are full of old leaves, rough and drying up. To the north the branches are full
The wild pear tree (Chütebu) at Shajouba (Charangho)

It is believed that the descendants of Alewo, Khephio and Memewo departed under this tree (Ta pfone chütebu).
The commemorative wild pear tree where the Naga Race decided to come back under this tree.
of new buds and about to be opened, and the branches facing the south are without leaves or buds, just mere sticks. It goes on revolving all year round according to the seasons.

1.11.5. Wild pear tree - Chütebu

The tree which Shüpfomei and all Naga races pay homage and respect is the Wild pear tree (Chütebu). The tree is considered as sacred because of the myth and it message behind it. This wild pear tree is located at Shajouba village (Charanghomei chü) approximately 1 ½ km from the Nation Highway 39 on Imphal – Dimapur road. According to the oral tradition, in course of time the population increased much and the descendants of Alewo and Khephiwo had to depart from one another to settle in different regions and places. Before the departure they had planted a commemorative wild pear tree (Chütebu) to show their solidarity and brotherhood of all the descendants of Alewo and called this tree as “Ta pfone chütebu” = oath or promise of a memorable tree.

The tree is ever growing and reminds every Naga race reminding of their common ancestor and also their promise to re-unite again under this particular tree. The ancestors chose a wild pear tree to signify their long life together and to tell their future generation about their brotherhood. They chose the wild pear tree because it’s fruits last till the next bloom. The breaking of branches by natural calamities or any by other untoward incident is considered as a genna, a strict taboo of abstaining from work, amusement and making long journeys. Traditional account tells us that the direction in which the branch breaks

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will have misfortune in that direction. Today new shoots are also seen in the same spot and it has become a tourist attraction.

1.11.6. Departure stone - Tamara tsu

As the years rolled by, the three sons of Dzúliamosúró had to depart from one another to different settlements and so they had the farewell picnic. In the picnic the eldest son namely, Asüpfó Alapha brought one cock. While he was about to be eat, the meat turned into a cock and started crowing. Thus, Asüpfó Alapha, worked a miracle before the two brothers. Chütuwo, the second son had brought one fish for the picnic, and when it was about to be eaten, it turned into a fish and begun to swim in the pot. He also showed this miracle infront of the two brothers. Now it was the turn of Alewo, and he contributed one mithun. While it was being cooked, firewood began to run short and so when he went out to fetch some firewood and told the other two brothers not to touch the pot during his absence. The two brothers were very curious and they put their hands into the pot and tried to eat what was inside the pot, but they found their hand entangled into the pot. Upon coming back and finding them go, he extricated their hands by caressing with beads of necklace.

After performing different miracles, they erected a monolith (Height=9ft above the ground level; width = $5\frac{1}{2}$ ft and thickness = 1ft) and on it we find the picture of shield, a bullock with a rope tied around its neck, a cock, a footprint of a tiger and a
Tobufū (Tobumei chū)
The magical stone when a basket of paddy is dried collected double.

Another view of the miraculous stone (Tupha Chava)
script. Yet another version says, on the monolith was the engraving of symbols of a cock, fish, and a mithun head. On this commemorative stone such marks or symbols are no more found.

1.11.7. Fetish stone - Tupa chava

There is a megalithic fetish stone at Tobufū known as Tupha chava = miraculous stone. According to the legend, if a basketful of paddy is put for drying on the stone, at the end of the day it would become double. The saying goes to say that Tobumei (Tobufiomei), forefathers became so rich that they provided food and drink to the weary travelers. But as days went by one day two women wanted to dry their paddy on the same stone and they quarreled for the place and one of them in her anger took out her skirt (mani) shook it and hit the stone. From that day onwards no more such miracle took place. Even today that particular spot is specially preserved by the general public. (ref. The picture inserted)

87. Cf. Sani Ashiho, The Genesis of Tenyima Nagas, P. 4
“Ta-tto” - between Kaibi and Tobufu
Migratory route of different birds

Shüpfomei land scape
1.12. Shüpfomei concept of land

1.12.1. Myth has an answer

Shüpfomei belief system has a spirituality that is sustainable to a particular life style. And there is an intimate relationship between him and nature. And from that very belief system evolved out the holistic understanding to treat nature as sacred and not to be exploited. Land is the very gift of nature and is connected with life. Shüpfomei are pastoral and they are not businessmen or traders by profession. They are a simple and hard working agrarian tribe, living a very simple life depending on land for their livelihood. The hard labour and sweat of their physical labour is their daily earning. They had no cash crops but had enough for their daily use and needs. Agriculture is the main occupation, and therefore, “Land” means everything. “Land and blood stands for life” and above all the two connotes a deeper meaning. The “land” and “blood” have their relationship with the ancestors and generations because the land symbolized their forefathers and their ancestral home. Thus, it intermingled with their very nature of the people making the ancestors and the present generation merging them into one common family.

As a result today many cultivated lands, forest demarcated for cutting firewood is named after their forefathers. “Land” signifies their home, their breath and their resting place. The relationship between “Land” and Shüpfomei tribe is not a mere relationship of culture or economic relation where one can exploit and tax her, but, connotes protection,
conservation and a harmonious living. It is a mutual sharing and relationship of life and death. This myth supports to the above theme and the myth continues to say that the three brothers had never seen their father face to face. They had demanded their mother to show their father and Dzuliamosüro could not hide any longer and agreed to show them their father. The physical appearance of Kateikozüwo was something wonderful. It is told that his gray long hair touched his waist, his gray beard hanging down to his chest. And the chest hair reaching to his loins and to the knees. On seeing their physical appearances of their father Asüpfö Alapha, the ancestor of non-Naga (kolamei pfope) rushed upto his father and embraced him. While Chütuwo, the ancestor of Meitei (Mikrümei pfope) jumped onto the lap of his father admiring the gray long hairs of his father. The word “Meitei = Mei atei” means outsider, foreigner and for Shüpfomei dialect “Meikrümei” = an outsider, a different race. In the case of Alewa, the Naga ancestor (Nagamei pfope) on seeing their father for the first time was so shocked and out of fear rushed behind his mother’s apron and took shelter. The symbolic gesture shown by Asüpfö Alapha and Chütuwo made their father so happy and he rewarded them with a gift. As a gift, the father gave both a piece of cloth, Asüpfö Alapha and Chütuwo got larger size than that of Alewo. As a result, the two brothers got larger and better gifts and the gift was that the two brothers settled down in the vast plain lands, while Alewo dwelled on the narrow hilly and rocky areas. In order to boost up the morale of Alewo, his father gave him a divine gun called “Khubu ridzü” which could hit any intended target as commanded.

With this divine gun, the youngest brother started combating his adversaries and started living in the hilly narrow area. But the effect of using this divine gun was so devastating that for fear of extermination all living beings from the face of earth, Alewo dumped it
deep under the ground and placed a big stone over it. It is told that this particular gun is still under the ground at Makhel even today.

Conclusion

The problem of writing Shüpformeili history is not an easy task and there are many difficulties. Firstly, the whole subject matter has to be based on the oral tradition for lack of script and literature. Secondly, the syntheses of different hear say and different versions from different persons of villages becomes another Herculean task. Thirdly, the fast changing Shüpformeili scenario in socio-economic, socio-political, socio-cultural, areas etc. where inculturation and assimilation of another culture poses a problem. Christianity and modern education with fast eroding factors in family, society and village outlook causes a great barrier in the formation of culture in the people.

The complexity of various languages and such drastic changes within the cultural context is becoming inevitable and challenging. On the one hand, the different sentiments and ethnic consciousness bring the nomenclature ever to re-grouping and for a better union. On the other hand, there is division and breaking up of groups from the original ancestral root. This is very clear during election where political parties divide the people and area. It is to get the little political gain often time, for selfish momentary advantages, causing suspicion, hatred and division among brothers and people. Such breaking up of people and division will not pay in the long run and it will take centuries to heal the wound. Modern politicians and social workers are the pivot agents to create that
atmosphere for unity and coming together. But it can be pointed out from the above mentioned that such people are the causes of the breaking down of the infrastructure of the very social fabric of the nomenclature and it will be a misadventure for those people who use such tools.

No doubt, uniformity, homogeneity and oneness cannot be the only password for the tribe but it would be necessary to sustain them all through and has therefore become a dream in the modern sense. But taking the logical and rational thinking of the people, the only way where one can cement the bond of unity and nationalism is through the awareness of their root. If that root is lost then the whole nationalism and charism dies. This ought to be prevented from happening.