CHAPTER FIVE

SHÜPFOMEI SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE WAKE OF CHRISTIANITY AND EDUCATION: A CRITICAL EVALUATION
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Introduction

In this chapter, we shall discuss how Shüpfomei socio-cultural world changed in
the wake of Christianity and education. In the first part, we shall see how Christianity and
education have positively influence and consequently the effects in today’s society. In the
second part, we shall point out that the two (Christianity and education) have not only
contributed to Shüpfomei society, but such has made it depart from the traditional
concept of Shüpfomei life.

In the Introduction we have asked a critical question that is, what has contributed
and make Shüpfomei have an identity? And the second question is what makes
Christianity and education so powerful so as to change the tested Shüpfomei social
values? In the wake of Christianity and education, Shüpfomei world-view has changed
and changed so radically it is hard to imagine now the society without Christianity and
education. The social tension is visible today in the economic and politic divide the
struggling masses within the community. How has this come about? The spoken words
and the implications which the elite group often air their views, attribute to Christianity
and education the progressive change that may be termed good and desirable.
With Christianity come education and with education brought forth clash of economic system and interest that questions, the very identity and prevailing cultural traits. As Horam writes, "In the quest for identity, the Tangkhuls are in the process of questioning, revaluing, readapting, and if need be disregarding the age-old ways of life."

And for that matter all the Nagas are facing the clash of economic interests leading to social tension and social disturbances which in turn permeates deep affecting the very fabric of the family, clan, village and tribe. The new set of values along with the new culture is emerging and has over taken as the gospel truth, ignoring the tested age-old values. Old villager's, who are still living, often express their feeling of pain to see the sudden change of old values to the modern and they are unable to accept it. And they often mutter their displeasure about the new religion, that is Christianity. The coming of multinationals, foreigners and people from other states, there is accompaniment of new culture. The economic globalization is now a reality, resulting in the working together and contacts has expanded also their global outlook.

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Cf. M. Horam, Social and Cultural Life of the Nagas. P. 94
Shüpfomei tribe lived in isolation for years until the coming of Christianity and Education bringing them into contacts with the rest of the world during the First World War and much more so during the Second World War. Many took part in the war as labour corps who went to France on 17th May 1917. 2

Christianity is a religion which has grown through centuries and it has touched every age and people, history and culture, nation, and race. From initial persecution and rigidity, it has gripped the mind of the people to become universal and accommodated. From schisms, dogmas and doctrines it has evolved out to a world religion. Christianity has touched different socio-economic, socio-cultural, socio-political and races. Shüpfomei history witnessed a distinct historical change in the late nineteenth century. We shall call this historical change as a sudden departure from forefather’s life and a move towards the present. And we shall call the late 19th century as the stage of dying and resurrection of Shüpfomei socio-cultural heritage. The distinctive stage, namely, the dying (departure) and resurrection (modern return approach) can be attributed to the British military expedition. British colonial design in India, further extended to north east. We shall mention Manipur and Nagaland particularly. The final annexation of Naga

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1. Kaikho Hruipuni (nickname as Johnny)
2. Kaikho Sibo (elder brother)
3. Chakho Hruipuni
4. Heshu Dili
5. Kaptuj Kholi
6. Nepuni Athili

Cf. S. Ashuli, Interviewed on the 18th January, 1999. According to him the following persons went from Punnamei village to France and returned. They were recruited by Mr. Sana Chaoba, who accompanied the British officers and translated to them in Manipuri language. Out the following person’s name mentioned Kaikho Hruipuni lived the longest. He died in 1971 and the government of India gave him pension for his attendance.
Hills gave a new impetus to the advent of Christianity, education, social welfare, medical facilities, health care, etc., through missionary activities.

Reflecting on the present society having modern outlook on culture and exposed to mass communication, education in every field, the development of science and technology, medical and health care, modern economy and standard of life, etc., as compared with the olden days of Shüpformei forefathers, there is a sea of change. The patriarchal society had a democratic form of decision making process and there was a belief system where moral values, like hospitality, sincerity, adventure, generosity, etc., were identified with the Shüpformei character. But today the very society sees and feels the absence of that nature in Shüpformei society.

5. Impact of Christianity and Education

5.1. Socio – cultural changes

5.1.1. The family

Family is a universal phenomenon in every human society and family is rooted in the very nature of "Man". In Shüpformei society the family is the oldest social structure and very closely knit social institution. It is this social institution which determines and controls the khel, village and the tribe at large. The family is composed of the father, mother and children.

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1. The term "Man" with a capital letter us used in this treatise to signify the generic term. It is used as inclusive term male and female. The term connotes both male and female without any distinction in sexes.
2. "Khel" is the smallest units or sub-division of the village. The village is clearly known by the distinctive "khel" and marriages within the "khel" is strictly prohibited.
The traditional Shüpfomei concept of family is a nuclear family with a patriarchal family system. The father is the head of the family, which is taken consciously or unconsciously accepted by the society. Shüpfomei family comes from monogamous marriage and there is exception. The eldest son inherits the parents' property, but not the parental house, which goes to the youngest son. Married sons often move out of the parental house and it is the youngest son who has to look after the aged parents.

The mother in the family plays a vital role in the family affairs. Such a traditional role model hold true even in society today, she is much better in the status of women comparison with the rest India, especially concerning in social, economic, political, marital, inheritance, environment, education, health, equal of status of sexes and the participation in decision making process. Yet in reality living in traditional and patriarchal society, the customary laws on the above subjects are interpreted, legislated and implemented by village councils composed solely of men in the decision making process. The society often takes for granted that domestic affairs falls on the mother, daughter and sister. And there are many social taboos on woman, which are taken as the conventional code by the society. Shüpfomei traditional woman is looked upon by the society as a woman of work. Her life is almost compartmentalized and routine with household chores. She gets up early morning to make fire at the hearth, fetch water from

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1. In matters of village rules and regulations, decisions are taken by village councils. No Shüpfomei women or Naga women are allowed or invited for any village of tribal meetings. Women are excluded from village council. In a very rare occasion where she has no male issue she is invited and when invited she is a passive listener.

2. Generally the parental property does not go to the daughters nor can they inherit or assume it. If the man does not have any male issue his property goes to the nearest kin and kin. But there is an exception that the father may specifically promise to her through an agreement with his brothers and relatives.
the village pond, cook the morning meal, feed the domestic animals (chickens, pigs, dogs) and her children, pack lunch for the field work, she does all the agricultural works plough, harrow, plant, harvest, thrash and carry it to the barn, etc. During the village genna, she stays at home, dries paddy, pounds and cleans. During the weaving season when free from agricultural duties she is with her weaving loom making shawls and different kinds of cloths. Thus, her day begins with work and ends with work. Such was the conventional attitude towards Shüpfomei traditional woman held by the society and is true even today.

Shüpfomei family is monogamous and there is no exception. And marriages within the same clan is strictly forbidden and considered as incest. And if anything happened the clan/khel settled the exception with fine. Marriages are often arranged, divorces are rare and due to family quarrels husbands and wives do separate for some days or months. It is often due to barrenness, adultery or the character and temperament of the spouses. In case of adoption the child becomes part and parcel of the khel. When children are born out of wedlock, it is man who generally accepts the responsible of taking care of the child.

The male / son inherits the family property; Female / daughters do not have the general right to inherit the parental property. A daughter before and at the time of marriage enjoys all the gifts especially the equal status of all the children. But after marriage all her parental property ceases to be hers. If there is no male issue in the

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5. Ashuli, Interviewed on the 22.05. 99.
6. Ibid.
family, the property goes to the nearest male relative. The widow is entitled to use her husband's property during her life time and if she is married to others she forfeits the right to the property. In case of settlement of disputes between persons or villages it is done through traditional laws and village court. Different methods are used to settle disputes, through negotiation, compromise, fine and by taking oaths (icha icho).

According to the settlement, both the parties have to contribute a token fee to the judges for the case in the form of drinks, common meal, wages, or sometimes by butchering a pig or a cow to serve the village.

Shupforme picturesque family has undergone drastic changes in the wake of Christianity and education. The socio-cultural changes are so rapid that the family which was closely knit and the practice of monogamy seem to be changing and eroding. In the olden days marriages lasted though it was a arranged marriage, yet today divorce is becoming like the changing of fashion. The family economy, which was shared by all the family members especially in the agricultural work is no longer so, due to modern education. The school going children have to stay in hostels, boarding and convent in order to pursue their studies. They are unable to help in the family burden. The children are not taught manual labour, folktales, folksongs, the myths and customs. The whole society is becoming individualistic and the concern for the community is slowly on the decline. There is a social division that is 'the have' and 'have nots' 'educated and

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2. "icha icho" is the solemn oath taking procedures in the village with the assembly of all the representatives of the village khels. It is here that the disputes between persons are settled and forever closed.
illiterates' within the same society have become manifest. In the past, the wealth of a rich man was counted on the numbers of paddy fields, cattle, land, etc. But today, the wealth of a person is seen on the building, money, vehicle, educated children, etc. The problem within the family and village is much more acute than the by gone days.

5.1.2. The life’s style

Shüpforme people lead austere and simple lives. The food habit, diet are also simple, rice is the chief diet and different vegetables like yam, potatoes, cabbages, brinjal, etc. are taken with salt and chilly ingredients. The cereal crops like maize, millet, etc., are also used. Different meat of animals are also used apart from the common domestic animals, fish, shell fish, crabs, frogs, prawn, insects, bee, etc. Fermented food is also much used like bamboo shoot, soya bean, chilly, ginger, garlic and mushrooms, etc. The daily use of rice beer in large quantity and much more during the festivals and feasts. The general diet for Shüpforme depend much on the seasonal crops.

The traditional dress for men and women vary and such variation is not much in colour or changes for a person by their status in the society. Such traditional dresses are ceremonially woven with natural skill and texture. The ceremonial dresses are dyed in different colours, with shell cowries, feathers, etc. Men wear loincloth and shawl, practically nothing else on it. Women wore short skirts reaching upto the knee, with two small pieces of cloths knitted from either the side shoulders across the breast reaching the knee (sapu). Beads and necklaces, bangles and earrings are also used. Special shawls like
"zhoso sa" are only used by those who have done the feast of merit (zhoso mozü). "Khepi lade sa" — which is decorated with horns, animals, war shields, etc. These shawls when worn often implied persons of rank and status. Men wore different ornaments made of metal, cowries, shells, canes, horns, and tusks of elephants or wild boars. The leggings are made of special canes and dyed with colours of red, blue, green, etc. The spears and shields of various kinds are decorated with hairs and designed in varied motifs of animals, man head, etc.

The traditional Shüpfomei houses are made of wooden posts, bamboo wall and the roof is covered with thatch. The houses had facades of logs wood stand erect with carved buffalo horns and decorated with different war trophies, animal heads, horns, and buffalo horns are displayed. The houses were simple. The portico of the house is full of dirt because of the cattle, domestic animals, etc. Upon entering the house, the pounding table (opu) and the paddy barns (obe) (depending on the family members and paddy fields), the agricultural implements, etc. are on the either side of the open corridor. At the rear of the house is the hearth and beyond are the sleeping beds. Different utensils, water vats, wine vats, etc., are placed in the kitchen. Above the central hearth hangs a basket; in it the meats are dried, fermented goods are roasted, and during the long raining season paddy, firewood is also dried.

One of the significant external drastic changes, which touched Shüpfomei society, is the life’s style. Some of such changes are diet, food habit, dresses, health, hygiene, child-care, medical facilities, etc. The economy and standard of life have improved much
due to modern means of communication, transport system, etc. Even in the remote
villages, men wear western type of dress, pants, shirts, coat, necktie, etc., and women
wear skirt, blouse, cosmetics and have become fashionable and westernized. Wearing of
cultural dresses and traditional costumes are rejected and only tolerated on occasions like
tests, meetings, conferences, congress or cultural seminars where those customary
dresses are seen. But there is also a positive approach taken by the student organizations
and through various platforms the need and importance of cultural revival is advocated.
The response is general acceptable and such changes are bringing a renewed inner love,
care and respect for the tradition and cultural values.

5.1.3. Traditional arts and crafts

By nature Shüpfomei tribe have a simple approach to their arts and crafts. They
have artistic and practical skill in wood carving, stone engraving, on posts, pillars and
village gates. The creative imagination is also seen in the decoration of the house, spears,
shields, and in the embroideries on shawls, designs on baskets, mats and plates.
Traditional arts and crafts on the village gates, door posts, pillars, infront of the house
inclined rafters (the rich and wealthy person house can be recognized by such carvings),
are commonly seen. Motifs of animal heads, hornbills, man skulls, mithuns, are carved.
The designs are mostly of man’s head (symbolically standing for courage, bravery,
valour, etc.), elephant and mithun, tiger etc. (stands for courage, strength) while on the
spears and shields (cock, dog, etc. standing for faithfulness).
Sometime figures of man and woman are also carved, which symbolizes the human relationship, love etc. The different musical instruments played during the different seasons are made indigenously. The wild reed trumpet cut from the jungle is decorated and fitted with dried gourd to have better sound. The buffalo horn is also specially carved and fitted with bamboo to have better effect.

Traditional arts and crafts are almost abandoned today and in their place there are modern building, modern architecture with modern painting and carving. Traditional arts and crafts are preserved and renovated with modern mixture bring a different outlook. In social celebrations today traditional motifs are rendered in modern colours, and this creates a modern ambience which not necessarily westernized. Modern architecture especially buildings are much more spacious with high ceilings, cosy, clean or brighter and better furnished. It is because of modern education and exposure to other cultures.

5.1.4. Social celebrations

Shüpfomei social celebrations revolved on community and on agriculture. The community celebrations are birth, marriage and death observance. The birth begins the social celebration of a child to the khel. It is into that particular khel where he of she belongs. The naming ceremony, the sacred meal (macha kozü), etc., are some of such social celebration.

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Cf. S. Ashuli, interviewed on the 24th May, 1996

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Marriage is also a social celebration where the couple enjoy the full support of the community, and even death, it is a social celebration where the khel, village and tribe bid farewell to the departed.

Other social celebrations are like the agricultural festivals, harvest feast or feast of dawn (new year) “Chüthum”. “Salen” is another feast celebrated soon after the transplantation of paddy in the field. The feast of merit, memorial stone pulling festivals, and other family social celebrations brings joyful atmosphere where everyone and everything seem happy and in high spirits due to drinking of rice beer, playing various indigenous games, instruments, making of Naga bread, exchanging of gifts, etc.

In the past, indigenous laws and calendar dictated such social celebrations naturally. But today much of its celebrations are coloured by Christian moral code, principles and westernized culture. The social celebration brings once again, the colourful customs, dances, singing of traditional songs and re-living the folktales. The yoke of the indigenous laws and calendar appeared to give democratic atmosphere, that is, equality of sexes and respect for each other, but today there is much less respect for human life and this is seen in abortion, using of contraceptives. This lack of restraint or fear of God is alarming.
5.2. Socio-economic changes

5.2.1. Agricultural economy

Agriculture provided subsistence to 90% of the population, agricultural products made into business transaction supported 2%, while government service give sustenance the rest. Mountainous topography of the land with little narrow valleys made a tilling and production laborious and tedious. There are two methods of cultivation which is still carried out in modern times i.e. shifting (jhuming farming) and terrace cultivation (using traditional implements).

5.2.2. Traditional farming

The external changes taking place in Shüpfomei society is glaring, but one of the unique feathers where Shüpfomei society in particular and the Nagas in general has not changed is the traditional method of cultivation. One may wonder why inspite of Christianity and modern education there is not much revolution in this particular way of life. The amount of labour, time, energy, work-load put into the traditional method of cultivation is highly inefficient as the returns are less then the input in value. It is a wonder while Shüpfomei still retain their old mode of cultivation, the ploughing of the paddy field with outdated implements, harrowing with buffaloes, preparing the bans, cleaning and made compose for manure, transplant, weeds and harvest etc.
They cut trees to prepare for slash and burn cultivation to plant paddy, maize, vegetables, cash crops, etc. They hunt, fish and gather firewood. The old cottage industries of weaving, pot making, basket making, black smithy, brewing rice beer, etc., still continue. Mechanized and modern techniques of farming are yet to be introduced although pesticides, artificial manure, power tillers machines, etc., are now being introduced. There is no such facility as quality control or cold storage to store goods from rain, heat and humid climate. The industrial textile goods, which are cheaper and available in great quantity are driving out the hand-woven products from the market. At the same time traditional basket making, pottery, indigenous arts and crafts of furniture are being replaced by steel, aluminum, plastics, etc.

Can there be a change in the traditional method of cultivation? Will there be a philosophical and attitudinal change in the present generation regarding paddy plantation?

5.2.3. Shüpfomei low per capita income

The economic development of a people is measured in terms of Gross National Product, per capita income, etc. In the case of Shüpfomei, per capita income is about Rs. 7,510 per amount at current prices, while the National per capita is Rs. 12,237.  

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Cf. Manorama Year Book, 2000
The Stoic and Epicurean philosophy can be compared with Shüpfomei individual and society. The idea is to work and earn for the year only, eat and make merry and not think of tomorrow. The reason may be due to illiteracy, backwardness, remote, hilly region, underdevelopment, etc. Another concept is that rice, and rice transplantation is the only means of income and there are no other substitutes. Thus, rice as staple food is as old as Shüpfomei life itself. Any other crops, other than rice is going to be a failure tantamount to starvation and misery. Commercial crops and business cannot substitute with the old philosophy of the tribe.

According to K. Kapani, "Shüpfomei forefather considered rice as the only crop and means for survival, and human race will come to an end in starvation the year when rice crop fails." And the question that does not arise in their mind is selling surplus rice and making a business of trading grains for income generation. With the coming of market system and modern means of transport, there is however a little change in the whole outlook in the field of business. There is an improvement in her per capita income which can be seen in the standard of improved life styles. Cash crop commodities like beans, maize, mustard, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, cabbage, pumpkin, chilly, etc. are exchanged and exported to different areas.

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1. Cf. K. Kapani, Interviewed on the 24th may, 1992
5.2.4. Social class

In a Shüpfomei village world, there is also an emergence of a strong educated middle class, and a highly competitive economy among the people. The gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ is also widening. The city culture especially with government servants with ‘westernized colouring’ creates tremendous economic pressure. Economic progress and development among the Shüpfomei tribe is no doubt a marvel and appreciative. Such economic progress can be measured with the new yardsticks of the monetised economy in terms of new indices of wealth, prestige and authority.

Materialism and secularism together with individualism is fast invading and gaining ground in Shüpfomei society. It is undermining the traditional social, religious, cultural, political, economic values. The modern economic system is making in roads into Shüpfomei society hitherto marked by community oneness and sense of equality effecting strangeness such as individualism, private property and abundant wealth. It is also eroding the traditional values of hard work (work culture), honesty, mutual respect, integrity of life and self-reliance. Monetary economy is manifestly transformed by fast money or easy money, love of material comforts, corruption and unfair means etc. 14 Shüpfomei forefather society believed in a barter system or money-less, class-less or socialistic existence, but now there is emerging a competitive, monetised and new classes

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stratified by wealth. In the process practitioners of the new system has an upper hand over that of the old economically and politically and social justice.

5.3. Socio-political changes

5.3.1. Shüpfomei polity

Democratic system operated in Shüpfomei polity. In such system everyone has a say in the decision making process. A council of elders, who are elected, manages the village and some time by virtue of their status, becomes a member in the council. They enforced laws and regulations, settled disputes and made important decisions for the village. Generally the council members are mostly elders and they are respected. The village headman (movuwo) played a very important role in social as well as in the religious matters. In the social role, with his status officiates and administers functions i.e. village settlement of disputes with other village; undertaking any war expeditions, social celebrations etc. While in religious matters, he acts as a village priest. He announces the village gennas, taboos. It is he who inaugurates the sowing of seeds, and he begins the harvest. He also does all the sacrificial sacrifice on behalf of the village.

In a patriarchal society, the father is the head of the family, and it is he who exercises the political authority in the khel. The village council is the collective body of male members from different khels. Till today village elders, 15 gaonburas,16 village

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15 The “Elders” are representatives from each of the khel who form the village council or village authority.
16 The understanding of “gaonburas” is the village committee, set apart by the village through election, appointment, voting and volunteer, the committee decision is taken and binding to the village.
khullapa are taken as village council and they are the representatives of the village in settling disputes, crimes, and they legislate, execute and interpret the village rules and regulations. The traditional and patriarchal society can be seen a male dominated, and customary laws and policies are enforced without much consultation of women. There are changes in the society in this respect and during such important meeting today women associations are invited and they have a say in the decision making process. Women organizations in village, district, state, national or international levels are taken into confidence. Some organizations in village, district or state level can be mentioned: Village Women society, Naga Mother Association (NMA), Naga Women Association, Manipur (NWAM), Mahila Mandal, etc.

5.3.2. Traditional village

Shüpfomei villages are built on the hill-tops. One of the main reasons why such location is because of the constant warfares to protect, defend, and used topography as a strategic position to guard from head hunting expeditions, inter village feuds, etc. Each village do have the village gates numbering according to the clans in the village and which are fortified with wooden gate erected. The villages have two or more clans and each clan has a chief and within the same clan marriage cannot take place.

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17 Khullapa is taken as the village headman, chief of the village. His role as village headman in olden days with lot of authority, respect and power have been very much reduced and bare nominal. It might be due to lack of education and modern government system of administration with courts, judges and legal system.
In olden days each village was independent and economically self-sufficient. The village had its own cultivable land, marked out land boundaries, common village land etc. Shüpfomei villages were sovereign and it shut itself out from external influence. As a result the people lived a very simple life without outside interference. Due to increase of population new villages were established elsewhere and the mother village was the model for the new settlements also. With the establishment of a new village demarcation of the boundaries between the village are marked.

5.3.3. Shüpfomei political system

The complexity of modern politics and political system demands a lot from each Shüpfomei individual those who have political power and political muscle are those that control the policies of the world. Shüpfomei political system is still in the process of taking a concrete shape. The new democratic system that has come to play is much larger in scope than that of the earlier tradition. Here opinion of the mass is taken as the voice of the public. Modern politicians, political groups and policy makers do play in dividing the people, area, and community. The simple villager without much political knowledge is often bought off with money power of the politician to gain vote bank. Political education, awakening and awareness are still to come in remote villages. The old democratic form, which was considered the pure state, can no longer applied in the present political system. Because with different ideology and 'isms', money can change the political table.
5.3.4. Political crisis

The present socio-political situation in Shüpfomei area is of her own making. The tension is the result of the fluid scenario between Shüpfomei politicians and political agents who are not outsiders but her sons. Lack of development and progress in modern sense of the word by lack of communication, transport, modern science and technology, education, bare minimum necessities of food, clothing and shelter etc., are glaring even though the 21st century has already dawned. The different movements and mushrooming of insurgent groups with different ideologies has made people to wonder which is the 'real group' and their ideology?

The politician for their political survival and the different insurgent groups for their ideology have pressurized people and strained their creative spirit. 'Contribution', taxes, demands, extortions, donations, gifts, etc., make people suspicious and have an aversion to the politicians and insurgent movement groups. All the politicians and insurgent groups need to be aware that it is only with the good will of the people that they can survive chiefly in the hands of the people.

5.4. Socio-religious changes

5.4.1. Shüpfomei belief system

The whole belief system and spirituality evolved out from the intimate relationship or between with nature and their sustainable lifestyle. Believing in "nature"
As sacred, life giving, to be respected form the core belief of Shūpfomei. The religious concept is also seen as animism or “worship of nature” by outsiders. Judging on the external expression and especially their superstitious offering of sacrifice, propitiating the spirits are some of the reasons why outsiders passed their view and comment. In reality Shūpfomei religion (chūna) and religious rituals (chūna chūno) is their understanding of God (Oramei) and the nature is the mediator. In nature the benevolent God is manifest and according to the traditional creed is the addressed as:

“Oratho, ochū madei opfoe, ojū mashū opfūe,” - Deep blue sky father, deep earth mother, praised be God. This concept may be because a man is essentially formed of the dust of the earth having the breath of life in his nostrils.

“Omei khowe, otoko khowe, out morūko khowe” – Asking human being, food, cattle.

The existence of spirits, both benevolent spirits (ora kazhū) and malevolent spirits (ora kashū), worship of ancestor’s spirits (opfo ope raku) are in the mind and their daily lives is the play of spirits. Thus, the encounter of supernatural power in nature, as epidemic, storm, lighting, fear of death, which human beings face are expressed as religious faith and not mere animistic expression.
5.4.2. Life after death

The concept of salvation, heaven, hell, are Christian understanding which Shüpfomei experienced after becoming Christian and getting acquainted with theological abstracts which the church expresses in the creed. According to Shüpfomei understanding of salvation, heaven, hell, is completely different and such terms do not arise in their religious belief. Today we may research about the forefathers’ understanding of the above mentioned terms, for Shüpfomei life after death is the continuous living in another life – joining the ancestors.

It is hard to differentiate human soul, (raku) ghost (koma). It is believed the human soul and body are different identity. It is told that when a person returned home from jungle and gets sick, it is said his soul did not follow him. The relatives have to call the soul of the sick person. When the soul enters into the body of the sick person he recovers from his sickness. The unnatural death of a certain person is because his soul which is supposed to have gone to the land of death lingers on and keeps on frightening people especially near the place where death took place. It is told that people who had accidents like falling from tree, drowned, killed by wild animal, etc., in the very same place has the ghost of the death person hovering and frightening people in different ways.
And such a person who had an accidental death, come in the form of a ghost and disturbs the family by demanding food and drink. It is when the family offers the demands of the ghost, only then it leaves the family. When such a thing happens, it is believed that the spirit of the person has not joined the ancestors. It can be taken as the present understanding of hell and punishment. Human spirit after death lives another seven lives, becoming stars, and the final stages is becoming a bee (oli), fly (thomai), insect (khenā).

5.4.3. Belief in omen

Believing in the divination of omen is to know the divine will. It is to know the hidden meaning, message and revelation of the supernatural being and deities. In the divination of omen it is believed that the fortune of a person, future events, signs are known. Every new-years day the whole male folk go to the village pond to wash their body and weapons. It is a belief that God blesses and assesses one’s life for the year on such day. And if the person does not perform the new-year ritual it is believed that the whole year he will face misfortune, sickness and even death.

The divination of omen (osa kopfū) is done on new year’s day. In the divination of omen, the following things are searched and sought (a) life cycle, (b) life stock, (c) year’s climate, etc., consultation of omen is also done to know the expedition would be

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1 The other word for propitiation and it is known as “lidzū kocho” offering of cooked rice and rice beer. It is also called “ora khe kho” that is offering the spirit separate cooked rice and rice beer. By placing the vessel, the spirit is understood to have accepted the offering and stop disturbing the members and leaves the family in peace.
successful or a need to be abandoned especially during the hunting expedition, sowing seeds, marriage engagements, pulling of memorial stone, celebration of the feast of merit, building house, establishment of new village, etc.

There are different ways of performing the divination of omen. The village headman or who is known for divination is called and he often uses chicken, egg, plant, and for divination. On new—years day sliced bamboo strings are used. The divination of omen is also meant for calling the spirit from the sick person to know the reason for the illness.

5.5. Deculturation 20 of Shüpfomei religious concepts

5.5.1. Christianity meets Shüpfomei religion

Christian culture is making the Gospel message and Christian theology relevant to the Nagas and Shüpfomei culture as a way of life. Shüpfomei education has enlightenment and there are positive changes in their approach towards life and family. Often the Naga Church is told to be westernized and she has therefore not involved herself to be Naganised 21 or into Shüpfomeinised 22 i.e. a true local church. No doubt there is a lot such of experience as it looks. But if the Naga church or Shüpfomei church at this juncture attempt to become fully local, will the same local church revolt? Christianity and western education have come to stay in Naga society and particular to

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20 The concept of punishment and hell can be seen as not reaching or joining the ancestors.
21 Inculturation means, adapting, adopting, planting into the culture of the people.
22 Naganised is to be root in the culture and tradition of the Naga people.
23 Shüpfomeinised is the same as in the ethos of the local culture.
Shüpfomei tribe. The two pillars that have contributed radically and also it has helped in the departure of the social system are Christianity and education.

Today Shüpfomei society and Shüpfomei church owe much to each other. It is the same for the whole Naga church and Naga society too. The society is caught up in the whirlpool of change and changes so rapid that society, indigenous religion suffered the effect of such change apart from the loss of cultural traits. It is dying and giving birth to the other or will they co-exist? Christianity and western education are too firmly rooted in Shüpfomei society.

According to S. Ashuli, "Christian missionaries have to be praised for their evangelization work in varied method empowering the locality with pastoral care, social development programmes, health, school, education and higher education etc." Shüpfomei church takes an active part, participate and involve herself much, but still the structured church has not become an indigenous local church. The message of Christ is liberation in particular cultural context and Shüpfomei church will understand the real liberation when she becomes fully a local church. Introspection and retrospection for every evangelist taking his / her blue print and launch within the culture will make the difference.

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23 S. Ashuli, interviewed on the 24th May, 1994
According to Charles Chasie, “Christian missionaries came with a vision of preaching the gospel message – Good news into the hills of the Nagas, but their vision and their attitude toward the Nagas was judged by western ethos and only looked at the Naga world from the viewpoint of the cultural environment under which they themselves were brought up.” 24

5.2. Catholic Church and non-Christian religion

The Second Vatican Council document of the Catholic Church brings out the need of the Catholic Church. The church has made significant statements about non-Christians, their religion and the culture. The church fosters only benevolence towards all religious efforts at expressing faith and love of God, individually and in community, rough devotion and ritual. Thus not only did the Council express deep appreciation of daim but also Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. 25

Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Exhortation, “Evangelii Nuntiandi” urges that evangelization is to be achieved, not from without as though by adding some decoration applying a coat of colour, but in depth, going to the very centre and roots of life. The gospel must impregnate the culture and the whole way of life of man.” 26

Cf. Daly E.J. The treasures of Vatican II. P. 52.
Cf. Vatican Council II. (Nostra aetate) P. 719.
The Council declaration in relation to the church and non-Christian religions renewed the church attitude towards non-Christian religions which is applicable to Shüpfomei religion. The Catholic church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless, often reflects a ray of that truth which enlightens all men....Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians, also their social life and culture. 27 Modern scholars understand that religion is a relationship between man and the supernatural power, in whom he believes and on whom he feels he is dependent. 28

Vatican Council II writes, "From ancient times down to the present, there is found among various peoples a certain perception of that mysterious power abiding in the course of nature and in the happenings of human life; at times some indeed have come to the recognition of a Supreme Being, or even of a father. This perception and recognition penetrates their lives with a profound religious sense." 29

Therefore, it is the desire of a “local church” – “local church” means “diocese” and the Bishop as the pastor. It also speaks of diocese as a “particular” church 30 to develop its own indigenous theology, indigenous liturgy and indigenous church

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27 Cf. Vatican Council II (Nosstra aetate) P. 668.
institution which will help the faith expression in that particular culture. Thus, Christ is proclaimed and presented within particular people, place – that is Christ in that culture and that particular people experience Christ in their midst.

5.5.3. Christian and other culture

According to Louis J. Luzbetak, "Mission consists in incarnating Christ in the given time and place, allowing him to be reborn in the given life way. A true Christian is but another "Christ"...Contextualization is the process by which a local Christian community integrates the Gospel message (the "text") with the real life context, blending text and context into that single, God-intended reality called "Christian living". By "Christian living" we mean living as Christ would live here and now – that is as he would behave, what he would teach here and now, and what his values and emotions, his underlying premises, attitudes and drives would be if he belonged to the particular community we are dealing with." 31

According to him, therefore "Culture is a composite view as a way of life, a plan consisting of a set of norms, standards, and associated notions and beliefs for coping with the various demands of life, shared by a social group, learned by the individual from society, and organised into a dynamic system of control." 32

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2. Ibid.. P. 156.
5.5.4. Catholic Church and Shüpfomei culture

Catholic Church with the spirit of openness and respect to other cultures, taken by Vatican Council document shows that the church is universal and embracing. "The seed which is the word of God grows out of good soil watered by the divine dew, it absorbs moisture, transforms it, and makes it part of itself, so that eventually it bears much fruit".

So too indeed, just as it has happened in the economy of the incarnation, the foundations of the apostles, take over all the riches, of the nations which have been given to Christ as an inheritance (cf. Ps. 2:8). They borrow from the customs, traditions, wisdom, teaching, arts and sciences of their people everything which could be used to praise the glory of the Creator, manifest the grace of the Saviour, or contribute to the right ordering of Christian life." 34

Catholic Church in Shüpfomei area is of view with universal openness and respect to different cultures and there is a realization for the preservation and dissemination of Shüpfomei culture. 35 The Christian world-view particularly Catholic Church meets Shupfomei culture in the early 1920's. The early encounters of Christian missionaries and later with the Catholic foreign missionaries to mention one particular name Rev. Fr. Peter Bianchi, 36 from Italy (Rimini Diocese), contributed much. And today Catholic Church

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2. Ibid., Bishop Abraham, Church and Culture.
3. The first Catholic Missionary to Shüpfomei area and he held from Italy (Rimini Diocese).
has asserted and influence Shüpfomei culture in every way, her agriculture, economy, social, political, religion, education, literature, moral values, spiritual etc. The early missionaries did depart a little from Shüpfomei cultural background. It may be due to the little apprehension and lack of knowledge of Shüpfomei culture. But things are more at ease and open when both came with open vision. Education and educated groups had brought enlightenment bringing the message of Christ.

The Gospel message of God’s merciful love and forgiveness has taken root in Shüpfomei culture. The different churches have grown and practically we can say Shüpfomei are Christians except a very few who are still non-Christians. Catholic Church is taking a lead in the field of inculturation of the people in the area. The basic knowledge of the church and their culture will help in knowing the people better and able to love them. Once such knowledge and love of the people is there then, evangelization will be also easy and Jesus will become more acceptable.

The spirit of inculturation taken by Catholic Church is to communicate Jesus within Naga or Shüpfomei culture. Christianity and Christian Churches, particularly Catholic Church in Shüpfomei area have a great role to play and can contribute much for the preservation of the Shüpfomei culture and inculturation. The impact of Christianity and modern education to Shüpfomei cultural life is something we cannot think off. We shall deal with about the impact of Christianity and modern education in the concluding chapter.
5.5.5. What is contextualization?

What do we mean by "contextualization"? The word ‘context’ means text with or in relation to the text. Contextuality is the capacity to respond meaningfully to the Gospel within the framework of one's situation. It is the capacity to respond to the total human situation, namely the social, political, ecological, economic, cultural and religious context.

Therefore contextualization of theology means meeting the challenges and facing the problems in a given society. We analyze the signs and read different symbols of times in the light of faith, considering them in view of the integral or total human development. This contextualization means a renewed understanding and articulation of the Gospel and Christian tradition with the experience due to a dialogical relationship of the here and now, i.e., the present total human situation. It means a constant and continuing encounter between the Gospel and Christian tradition and the present human situation in every local Christian community under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In such a contextualization, the word of God takes root as it heals, ennobles and perfects the actual life of the human community leading it to the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. 38

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Indigenization means incarnating the Gospel by using cultural ‘language’ to express its message. It means responding to the Gospel in terms of traditional culture. It seeks the goal of cultural authenticity. The mission of the church is the proclamation of the Gospel in Shüpfomei milieu in which faith is concretely and historically articulated. A Christian expresses his/her relation to God through the symbolic rites of sacraments. Through them his/her faith in the paschal mystery is expressed. The sacraments symbolize the Christ-event ever present in the world. These are encounters with Jesus in different areas in human life. They are the living personal encounters with God who is always present in the world and reveals himself concretely to us through the sacraments. The Church celebrates through the sacraments the saving efficacy present in Christian life at different levels of space and time. Therefore Jesus Christ is a sacrament because he is the sign of salvation.

5.5.6. Confrontation and challenges in contextualization

5.5.6.1. Disciplinary action

Firstly, Christian missionaries faced confrontation and challenges in the process to contextualize certain Shüpfomei cultural habits, way of life, social practices and social celebrations etc. In such a situation, Christian missionaries imposed disciplinary actions.

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40 The Church understanding of Paschal mystery is the Salvation brought through suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ bringing redemption for mankind.
but basing on the healing touch of Christ and forgiving spirit of Christ, they slowly persuaded them to change and throw away the old habits. The principles and ideologies which Jesus stood for and died for became the key proclamation, thus the Gospel message of Christ - love of God, neighbour, truth, Kingdom of God were imparted. From such confrontational attitude, Christian missionaries accept and adapt the culture and Gospel message incarnate in Shüpfomei culture and today He (Christ) becomes Shüpfomei Christ.

5.5.6.2. Old village warfare

The practice of head hunting and village feud was inter-woven in the Naga or Shüpfomei blood. Head hunting as traditional practice was cutting or chopping of enemy's head by knife in war. The enemy is killed by spearing or shooting with bow and arrow through ambush or burning the village etc. But in such warfare ground rules are strictly observed lest opposite effect might come. Head hunting was one of the challenges and confrontation faced by early missionaries. The Christian concept – Christ ever conquering, Christ ever forgiving, loving, changed the war cry, yell, into a joyous spirit of unity, the weapons being a decorated goods at the feet of Jesus cross.

5.5.6.3. Superstitious belief system

The superstitious belief and practices among Shüpfomei and various Naga tribes for their limitless rites and rituals to perform had cost them much. The many costly
Sacrifices taken from domestic animals, the countless cattle taken from the herds to be killed as sacrifice were merely to appease and propitiate gods and evil spirits to take away sins and sickness. The coming of Christianity and contextualization brought great relief in expense to both human wealth and psyche.

5.5.6.4 Lack of eco-spirituality

The Christian missionaries see the jhumming system as destruction to nature. The lack of eco-spirituality and lack of conservation among the people was to be reformed. The concern for the earth and nature brought eco-spirituality. And the theology of economy became the hidden agenda, which created a spirit of conservation of the gift of nature. The church, working together with various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is creating much awareness for the earth and nature. The theology of economy and conservation of world wild life, bring moral boost to the Christian teaching which discourage eating of strange wild animals or birds as unclean. Shupfomei contextualization and indigenisation is the unspoken Christain contribution.

5.5.6.5 Change of food habit

The staple food is rice and staple drink is rice beer but such staple food and drink caused problem, pain, discord for the newly convert. Christian missionaries brought a hold on brewing such staple food and drink. It brought once again the same unity, peace and harmony in the family, neighbour, village and society. Prior to the advent of
Christianity there must have been hardships, pains, problems with the same staple food and drink which was a need and a must for their weary bodies. Thus, it purified Shiupfomei culture and Christianity became a ray of hope for the culture.

5.5.6.6. Traditional way of behaviour

The behavioural and attitudinal change of a new outlook brought radical changes in dress, food habits, hair style, health, economy, hygiene, education, faith and belief system etc. Thus, Christianity and Shiupfomei have much to contribute to each other. The only approach where the church can make a church to be a local church is through inculturation, contextualization and indigenization.

5.6. Inculturation a need of the Local Church

The Word of God which became flesh (cf. Jn 1:14) \(^42\) in Jesus Christ, continues to incarnate itself in the cultures of the peoples it encounters, transforming them in the power of the spirit and leading them to the universal fullness of the new creation (cf. Eph. 1:10).\(^43\) In the process of inculturation people receive ‘the Word’, makes it the principle of their life, values, attitudes and aspirations. In this way they become the Body of Christ in their particular place and time – a local church. \(^44\)

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\(^1\) Cf. Revised Standard Version (Bible)
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Cf. FABC Documents, For all the Peoples of Asia. Vol. I. P. 138.
To inculture is the immediate need, because Christianity is often termed westernized, foreign. It is not Christianity is superior or inferior, but it is essential to make it more relevant to the people. The basic understanding is that the Gospel message becomes effective and takes root within the cultural milieu. Thus Shüpfomei acceptance of the religion of Christianity is within the ethos and mental framework of the people.

Inculturation is not mere adaptation of a ready-made Christianity into a given situation but rather a creative embodiment of the Word in the local church. This is the basic and fundamental process of inculturation.\textsuperscript{45} To that situation and within that context it will create the spirit of participation, and not where the people feel and resist globalize imposition of new religion. It is not the sacrifice of one for the other, instead it should be for the growth and fullness of both i.e. Shüpfomei culture, its values and Christian universality.

Shüpfomei feasts and festivals are communitarian celebration and community takes important role in every event of life. Even Christian celebrations of sacraments are also a communitarian celebration in nature. Taking the common similarities and mutual exchange of their discoveries among the local churches will lead to their enrichment of Shüpfomei tribe as well as that of the universal church.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{45} Cf. FABC Documents Vol. I. For all the Peoples of Asia. P. 138.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
Inculturing the external will be just clothing the outside and it will not be bringing out the real human self-expression. If human reality is explicitly expressed then there will be reaction and in such reaction both have to be purified, healed and transformed by the saving power of the Gospel. 47 By bringing inculturation and adaptation to the cultural milieu, the church mission of incarnating the Word of God, is being fulfilled and the Vatican Council documents are translated in the local church.

5.6.1. Shüpfomei liturgy in the process of inculturation

The local church to be much more effective and to make a meaningful response to Shüpfomei's deep yearning and to be a true witness to the Gospel message is the application of tribal hermeneutics. ‘Hermeneutics’ being the science of interpretation, the tribals need to interpret the Bible, their history, their situation of neglect and conflict in the light of their Christian faith...They will become conscious of their situation in the process of historical development of leaving their animistic faith to following an established religion like Christianity. 48 The rich cultural heritage and values, which have been cultivated over the centuries should able to enrich Christianity, thus tribal hermeneutics will bring Shüpfomei Christians meaningful witness to the Gospel. The process of inculturation can be possible when the church understands and assimilates the real tribal hermeneutics in general and particularly Shüpfomei traditional culture.

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1. Ibid,
According to Fr. P.C. Mani, "Inculturation makes Christianity enriched – Christianity brings about the fulfillment of the aspirations and the innate goodness of the tribal religion and culture".49

The cultural crisis is seen everywhere in Shüpfomei world. Her traditional behaviours are being replaced by new modern customs like dress, music, eating, drinking, sexual relations, etc. One of the external signs and explicit manifestation of the local church is the Christian inculturation taking place in the church reading the signs of time and adapting to the local culture, namely in liturgy. It is the starting point of a real forward-looking step taken by the missionaries. There have been a gradual change taking place in this particular aspect. Apart from mere adaptation of the liturgy from the external dress rehearsal, the local church is becoming more daring into the enrichment of her community.

Today in the field of liturgy, the local church has made the liturgical celebrations very meaningful, participatory and fulfilling. Thus, the liturgical service that was considered monotonous now becomes lively and a sense of belonging has dawned. The liturgical books like morning and evening prayers, holy mass, catechism books, hymnals are printed in Shüpfomei language. And one of the greatest contribution done by the missionaries and educated persons is the translation of the Holy Bible into Shüpfomei language.

49 Fr. P.C. Mani, Interviewed dated 07.11.99.
Today it has helped and made the mass congregation to witness the Gospel message in their own language. Another particular contribution is breaking the Word of God by the ordained ministers and mostly by the local vocations. The advantage and contribution is that such local priests and sisters contributed much through their local dialect directly. The problem of speaking the local dialect and persons to interpret or to translate the Gospel message by the missionaries from outside becomes problematic, takes time and there is no personal rapport in it. Now there is a renewed vigor in the seminary formation to master at least one local dialect, which will bring a positive result in the local church.

The songs and hymns used in the church liturgy are mostly attuned to the people situation and most of them are in the process of translating to folk tune, which can be sung and understood by young as well as older generations. The technique the early missionaries used to approach the local people, was through singing. Shüpfomei tribe loved singing, songs in folk tunes with different themes at different occasions. They also sing composed songs on various occasions like feasts and festivals, work etc. Such adaptation of songs in local tunes accompanied with indigenous musical instruments, there is active participation and the feeling as if it is their own service, creating eager spirit and taste among younger generations for cultural revival. Shüpfomei people can identify human signs and symbols that will enrich their liturgy. It is through these signs and symbols God communicates to them. Shüpfomei liturgical celebrations can be seen in human events and seasonal change, which bring meaningful atmosphere in such celebrations. The Church has made rapid adaptation in liturgical fields apart from the
inculturation of liturgical rites and rituals, she has incorporated liturgical vestments like the chasuble, stole, altar cloths etc. designed and decorated in different Naga tribal styles. Shüpfomei Church is to be appreciated and welcomed for the different styles and designs in such step. The altars, lecterns, tabernacles, Chalices, Ciboriums are also designed in tribal style. The different decorations done during the celebration of Christmas, Easter, Congresses, Conventions, Ordinations, Professions etc., are in tune with the cultural context. The different style of worship, with colourful dresses and dancing according to folk tune sung during the entrance, offertory procession, or recessions etc., bringing delight, life and celebration, is a clear sign that the church is working on it. But the most important for such inculturation of the external signs and symbols is the attitude disposition. Attitude for change is the momentous atmosphere required both in the people and also much more in the one who initiate that change. It has to come from a true urge within knowing the root culture of the people.

5.6.2. Shüpfomei traditional initiation

5.6.2.1. Macha kožü as Christian sacrament of baptism

The seven sacraments in the Catholic church are instituted by Christ and have biblical foundation. The seven sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life. Christian sacraments are expression of God’s presence in the community and the meeting point of God.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{50}} \text{ Cf. CCC. 1210}\]
The first three sacraments namely Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are sacraments of Christian initiation. Penance and Anointing of the Sick are sacraments of healing, while Holy Orders and Matrimony are the sacraments at the service of communion and the mission of the faithful. Shüpfomei did celebrate the feast and festival based on agricultural life cycle. In such celebrations they encounter God in such community celebration. Every male child had to pass through the meeting point or a decisive stage in life. As Baptism is the sacrament of Christian initiation, every Christian is initiated into, thus, external sign of manifestation is shown as his/her acceptance to the community. Shüpfomei traditional ceremony known as “Macha kožū” – sacred meal, is the external sign showning that the child is presented to the community and through such sign he/she becomes part and parcel of the community. Soon after his birth the parent would call two elders to bless the child and these two elders often blesses the child in the following words...

“Anato peno koso kono so chuño” - let my child be free from sickness and diseases.

“Mei pi motu malawo mohrū le” – let him live above others.

“Oţhro chůnghi kapra ti kole” – like the ever rising sun and moon.

“Kazhūo kajū koso sowo mohrū le” – let him live a good and great life.

“Ora yi tho” – God be glorified.

When the child is five days old he is initiated into the “Ale kocho” – sanctification and purification. On this day the parents offer sacrifice of food and drink as a gratitude to God and asking blessing for the child, by placing it at the corner of the

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\(^{51}\) Cf. CCC, 1211
The mother on this day pinches out the cooked chicken heart and rice is smeared on the child’s forehead, chest and joints. It symbolizes as good health and God’s protection in the child’s life. Such signs and symbols when adapted into Christian celebration, there will be a great acceptance in the church.

5.6.22. **Macha kozić initiation ceremony**

Traditional initiation ceremony takes place for every male child who reaches the age of two to three. The ceremony often takes place during the “Saleni” festival, i.e. on the third day of the feast which is also called “Macha kozić” – Sacred meal (cf. 2.4.1.) The ritual begins with “Khudzić” – drawing of water from the village pond early dawn by the father or any member of the family in a yam leaves. The significance of the drawing water early morning is to ensure the purity of the water. Before any wild animals, birds or any person drinks or muddies the spring pond. The water is brought home and the child is washed with this pure water on the head, chest, hands and legs. Prayers are also said over the child as the water is poured, “may all the sickness and diseases be washed away” and with a great yell (makei) the parents declared their male child as the citizen of the society. From then on the child becomes a part of the community. It culminates with the sacred meal – *Macha kozić* given to all his peer groups.
5.6.2.3. *Macha kozi* can be incorporated into Christian baptism?

Taking Shüpfo mei ceremony like "*Macha kozi*" i.e. traditional initiation into Christian baptism would mean the local church accepting and adapting Christ event in Shüpfo mei culture. Can the church adapt it as a part of inculturation? It will be hard at the initial stage but when such inculturation takes place the church will be incarnating the Gospel in culture.

(a) The baptismal water used during baptism ceremony symbolizes life and signifies communion with Christ’s death.\(^52\) In the same way, the water drawn during "*Khudzi*" is considered holy, pure and cleansing.

(b) The wording prescribed in the ritual, for the use during the baptism ceremony is the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity through configuration to the Paschal mystery of Christ. \(^53\) In such manner Shüpfo mei initiation ceremony, words are uttered, "may you be freed from all sickness and diseases, God bless you" and the water is poured on the child. The mode of integrating this should be discussed and accepted by all.

(c) After the initiation ceremony, meal is served to commemorate the happiness and gratitude to God and celebration begins. Even in the Church today for older persons, once he/she after receiving baptism he/she shared the Eucharist joining in the meal.

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\(^{52}\) Cf. CCC. 1220
\(^{53}\) Cf. CCC. 1239
(d) During such Christian initiation the president, ordained minister or a priest presided over the ceremony, while in the case of Shüpfomei ceremony it is the head of the family or the village priest (khehrüwo). While during the time of "Lidzü" – purification and sanctification, the water is drawn from the village pond by the one who celebrated the feast of merit (Zhoso mozü kosowo)(cf. 3.4.5.)

(e) Before the real initiation day, Shüpfomei priest (khehrüwo) or head of the family does fast to make preparation for the special occasion. Such fasting (ale kocho) is done towards evening by observing and abstaining from eating, but allowed to drink rice beer.

It is mostly done to male child and there is not hard and fast rule that it cannot be extended to female child. The identification of signs and symbols used in Shüpfomei celebration is a powerful means to communicate to the society and the community will accept such signs and symbols as religious ritual.

6.3. Christian Eucharist

6.3.1. Shüpfomei Chüthuni feast as Eucharist

Vatican Council II document of the Catholic Church, Constitution on Divine Liturgy (Sacrosanum Concilium) No. 47 writes, "The Eucharist is the memorial of his Christ) death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a neschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge
of future glory is given to us." 54 According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation...and participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist. 55 And the sacrament of Eucharist evokes blessing at meal, Lord's Supper, Breaking of bread, Memorial meal, sharers of Holy Communion. 56 The Church considers the Eucharist as the centre, the heart of the church. It is a sacrament instituted by Christ as a sacrifice, meal and presence and therefore every Eucharist celebration is the action of Christ in the church.

It is also a communitarian celebration where the community shares, participate in the celebration. But there is a great diversity in the Eucharistic celebration where wheat is used to make hosts and grape for wine in the celebration of Eucharist. The question is when there is liturgical interpretation within Shüpfomei context, it seems out of place and looks like imported culture. The mind of the church may be for uniformity, and for church discipline and not merely an imposition of other culture.

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[55] Cf. CCC. 1322
[56] (cf.) CCC. 1328, 1329, 1330, 1331
5.6.3.2. Inculturation of Shūpfomei Eucharist

The new approach to Shūpfomei Eucharist would be using the staple food and drink of the people and transforming them. The staple food of Shūpfomei is rice in the morning, afternoon, and evening. The staple drink is drinking of rice beer, which is to be an Eucharist species instead of a small piece of host and grape wine. Rice and rice beer is considered nourishing and the best for agricultural farmers. Can the staple food and drink of the people be replaced with other elements for the sake of uniformity and discipline? Can the church understand and accept from different cultural point of view? Is there any scope where the people’s staple food and drink are incorporated in their Eucharist sacrament? Eucharist contains elements of thanks giving, a praising, a blessing, a memorial and community sharing. Taking the whole elements into one component, we shall present Shūpfomei Eucharist with “Chūthuni” feast – harvest festival celebration and particularly the main feast day called “Nijū”. Catholic Church celebration of Eucharist and Shūpfomei “Chūthuni” feast celebration can be incorporated.

(a) Eucharistic celebration commemorates Jewish blessing at meal and thanksgiving. Shūpfomei harvest festival is a commemoration of thanksgiving to God for the blessing of good harvest, for good health over the years and it is the celebration of life. It culminates with the sharing of prepared meat and rice beer. It is a joyous sharing with friends, relatives, near and dear ones and visitors. There is an old belief that by sharing the goods and wealth with others God’s blessing is brought to the family.
(b) One of the main aspects of Eucharist is a community meal celebration, which is a sign of unity, bond of charity, and the Paschal banquet of Christ is consumed. Every male big or small, young or old, rich or poor come together and celebrate the community sharing of drink. The community celebration begins with the collecting of Naga bread (lire), chilly and salt from every household by young boys. While elders collect 3 to 4 litres of rice beer and one basket of fire wood from each household. All the collection are put together in a particular house and towards evening a great bon fire is lit and without any distinction gather together to share the bread, chilly, salt and rice beer. The community celebration symbolizes and manifests village unity, co-operation, solidarity, bond of charity and reconciliation is created within the village. The greatest moment of such celebration is handing down of traditional folk tales, folk songs, dances, yells and many wise sayings are imparted to the young generation, the God experience of the forefathers. The climax comes with the blessing of the elders to the young generation to shoulder the future. And with a sense of joy and oneness the congregation departs. Since Eucharist is a symbolic memorial meal, many of the social celebrations can be taken as a memorial meal.
5.6.4. Shüpfomei Christology

5.6.4.1. Who is Jesus Christ for Shüpfomei

Shüpfomei Christian understanding of Jesus Christ is their faith expression and based on faith commitment. And Christology tries to answer who Jesus really is. New Testament describes Jesus as truly God and truly man. Are Shüpfomei people able to accept that Jesus is truly God and truly man? Can we accept the Jesus of Nazareth who lived in the Jewish culture as the personal Saviour for Shüpfomei tribe and Nagas in general today? Can He (Jesus) be alive and be Saviour in Shüpfomei or Naga culture?

5.6.4.2. Humanity of Jesus

Taking the historicity and humanity of Jesus in New Testament, the scriptures presented Jesus as a real human, lived in Jewish culture and customs, felt hunger, thirst, loved, wept, prayed and was tempted.

5.6.4.3. Divinity of Jesus

The same scriptures bring Jesus as divine and this is very clear from the confessional statements (Jn. 1:1, Jn. 10:10, Jn. 14:9, Mt. 14:23).57

57. Cf. Revised Standard Version (Bible)
How do the Nagas tribes and Shüpformeï tribe respectively reconcile the two – Jesus of History and Christ of faith without destroying the values and culture of the Nagas and Shüpformeï tribe?

5.6.4.4. Shüpformeï Christ

There is no dichotomy between faith expression of the Nagas and Shüpformeï on the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the central point of reference for every Naga and Shüpformeï Christians. Incarnating Jesus Christ in Shüpformeï culture is called Shüpformeï Christ or Naga Christ. But in reality do we feel Naga Christ or Shüpformeï Christ by giving different titles as "Nagaland for Christ", "Naga Christ", "Shüpformeï Christ", "Shüpformeï Christ as the chief, elder, ancestor, head of the family" or Shüpformeï Christ as insurgent National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isaac-Muivah) NSCN (I-M), etc.

5.6.4.5. Shüpformeï Jesus of History

Shüpformeï / Naga ‘Jesus of history’ as we imagine would be an ordinary villager in a remote village without any means of communication, played village games of helping parents, looking after the cows, and having a care-free life. Coming from literate parents and their sole occupation would be cultivators tilling the ground and earning their daily livelihood. His physical appearance must be flat nose, small eyes, well-cut muscles, wheat complexion and his height would be 5ft 8’ or 6ft 0’ etc. Singing folk
tunes, dancing the different steps. From birth to death he is supported and nourished by the well-knit family, clan, village and tribe. His knowledge would be not going beyond his village or tribe. His meetings and discussion would be democratic and taking consensus of all in the decision making process etc. Shüpfomei Jesus would be proclaiming the Good News of total liberation of mankind. His vision of a new world by his words and actions, to denounce the life of his contemporaries and to invite them to a new life. The inaugural message of Jesus contained both the Good News of God’s designs on the world and an urgent exhortation to hope and change.  

5.6.4.6. Shüpfomei Christ of faith

Shüpfomei / Naga ‘Christ of faith’ is not bound by any of the villagism, clanism, tribalism or only for the Nagas / Shüpfomei. It does not have limits and boundaries but it embraces whole humanity – black or white, rich or poor, literate or illiterate etc. Every human being man or woman is my brother and sister. Thus Naga Christ or Shüpfomei Christ should be based on the two principles of Christ – Love of God and love of neighbour. Historically, Jesus had to make the choice between the political and nationalistic struggle of the zealots against the Romans and the path of prophetism along with the creation of the new Israel.  

\footnote{Cf. John Desrochers. Christ the liberator. P. 272.}
\footnote{Ibid., P. 273.}
5.7. Christological titles

5.7.1. Šhipfomei Christ as insurgent / liberator

The New Testament present “Christ” with different titles like ‘Messiah’, ‘Lord’, ‘King’, ‘Logos’, and Wisdom were adoptions of terminologies current and meaningful at the time for applying them to Christ.\(^{60}\) The different titles came from the Jewish and Greco-Roman socio-historical, socio-cultural, socio-political milieu. The title revolutionary or the rebel was given to Jesus for his radical and questioning of the whole social culture of the Jews of his time. He was concerned for the liberation of the whole mankind and he challenged the whole social structure of the Jewish and Roman worlds and acted as the ferment of change.\(^{61}\) Can Šhipfomei characterize Christ as the insurgent – liberator?

Manipur state today\(^{62}\) is plagued by ills that has no easy solutions. Bandhs, Blocades, AIDS, Insurgency, etc. attacks the ordinary citizen as ants do on a helpless earthworm. Wherever he turns he is not comforted, only preyed upon. Likewise is the situation for Nagaland state\(^{63}\) also.

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In such an environment Shüpfomei tribe and the Nagas lives. Will their hopes, dreams and their aspiration have a place? Internal fractional of insurgent groups and within national workers, fratricidal fighting among the tribes and villages seems no avail. The gun culture using the AK-47, AK-56 and diktats to impose fear psychosis to the people in their own land of freedom. Shüpfomei Christ as insurgent/liberator would be without arms and his followers without sophisticated weapons but with the weapons of Love, forgiveness, peace, reconciliation and brotherhood. Shüpfomei Christ, instead fractional and fratricidal fighting among the different tribes would be uniting them as his brothers and sisters. For Shüpfomei Christ human values are his core values. He lived, suffered and died to bring about genuine unity and peace among men and women and nations. In other words he was concerned with the total and ever-lasting liberation of mankind. His approach was to give human values above everything. One could be a Christian and a Jew, a Roman, an Indian, an American, a Naga or a Shüpfomei, belonging to different political parties or different undergrounds movements and charism, but all for promoting human values. 64

Shüpfomei Christ or Naga Christ as insurgent / liberator will be shedding all 'ism' tribalism, villagism, clanism, individualism, nepotism, etc. By putting “Human values” above everything to make Shüpfomei a better Shüpfomei Christians and Nagas a genuine Naga Christians. Carrying a Bible in the armpit on Sunday does not make a Christian, prayer and fast to burn the enemy village, while from Monday to Saturday practice all kinds of corruption, but giving fiery homilies in the pulpit and do just the opposite.

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64. Cf. John Desrochers, Christ the Liberator, P. 125.
Shūpfomei or Naga Christ as insurgent / liberator would be liberating and revolutionizing such situation in the society with his charism. The resurrection of Jesus was the total and everlasting liberation which reveals and gives hope of liberation and the fulfillment of all his aspirations, thus kingdom of God became a glorious reality. Thus, Shūpfomei Christ is intimately connects our quest for total and everlasting liberation beyond the struggles for limited, but essential, earthly liberations.

5.7.2. Shūpfomei Christ as village headman

Greek – Hellenistic setting of religio – socio – political – cultural milieu as King of kings, Lord of lords, Master, King, are some of the New Testament writing and Shūpfomei Christ in Shūpfomei cultural milieu will be much more relevant as village headman, village chief, village elder in the society. Within Shūpfomei social milieu, the society has a great respect, honour, and consulted and sought after. The main reason is because of their wisdom, knowledge and experience of life in different matters. Their voice and decision is taken, accepted and their sanction is binding to the family, village and tribe. In fact the village headman, chief and elder are one and the same in some village while in other villages the three above mentioned are separated. The village population consider them as God’s people because of their godly lives. And often parents appraise to their children to show respect, to wish them well. The parents consider them that they are close to God and always seek God’s blessing.

Ibid. P. 275.

Ibid. P. 276.
The responsibility and accountability of the headman, chief and elder are something which cannot be imagined. The headman, chief and elder acts as a priest for the village and conducts all the religious function on behalf of the village. He observes all the gennas and taboos throughout the year. He is the first to inaugurate any village ceremonies regarding the village either in sowing the seeds. In matters of disputes he is the chief spokesman in settling village feud or to accept fine for the village. Thus, he stands as the symbol of peace and harmony. The old saying that if the village have a experience batch of elders, headman or chief then that particular village is respected by other villages and young generations become disciplined, progress in wealth and health to that particular village.

In spite of modern democratic form of government and representation is the main system and such a form of government today is manipulated by money power and influence of ideologies. Though modern political system has changed the old concept of chieftainship, headmanship, eldership in Shüpforme society, but it has not lowered much he core of the village structure. There is strong affinity between individuals even today they show their respect, concern, love and honour to the village headman, or elders. Shüpforme Christological titles as Shüpforme Christ as village headman, village chief and village elder, then there will be a great change in our concept of Christ. Shüpforme Christ could evoke the reality of cultural system enjoyed and the fulfillment of true headman, chief and elder.
5.7.3. Shüpfomei genna as moment of grace

Shüpfomei expresses his fear and joy, invocation and thanks by observing the different gennas, taboos and fulfilling the rituals. The religious expression is through invocation to God, for fertility, crops, averting of sickness and from natural calamities. Secondly, thanking God, for the good harvest, health, etc., and thirdly, recalling the departed spirits of the dear ones and forefathers. Thus, in such fulfillment, he experienced God’s goodness, loving kindness, wealth, life, family and cattle and he calls this as the moment of grace in his life.

The church’s liturgical calendar centred on Christ’s acts of salvation and his work of redemption for the world. The work of salvation of Christ is marked with Christmas, the birth of Jesus and his paschal mystery (suffering, death and resurrection). The church’s yearly celebration of the mystery coincide meaningful with the yearly season. Shüpfomei observance of their yearly gennas is meaningful and coincide with the season. Both the church as well as Shüpfomei has taken such celebrations as moment of grace. Every observation of yearly and causal holidays bring God’s blessing in life, health, food, lives stock, etc. And each of such gennas are physically and spiritually to be prepared and celebrated with hope and excitement.
Conclusion

With the wake of Christianity and Education, the whole outlook of Shüpfomei changed and everyone does agree that there is change in everything. The socio-cultural change in Shüpfomei society is glaring and there is much excitement and fears when certain ideologies and change take place. Every society looks forward with doubts and even frown at the beginning, but the initial fears and doubts slowly give way to hope and acceptability. But the initial excitement and thrill of the people has to be fed. Christianity and modern education no doubt bringing that initial zeal of the people and they have not damper down that expectation of the people.

Christianity and education to be much more effective, it has to be rooted in Shüpfomei ethos and in the Shüpfomei socio-cultural belief system into consideration, the signs and symbols, the myths, faith expression, the value systems, the feast and festivals, etc. This will counter the negative effects of media bringing in consumerism, westernization and competition, etc. Shüpfomei society can then face the new trend like selfishness, individualism and work culture and overcome them all.