Chapter VII

AN EVALUATION OF THADOU’S CONCEPT OF GOD

We have already stated that the Thadou Kukis professed and practised their traditional religious belief and custom before the introduction of Christianity by the Christian missionaries from the west in the last century. In the present day, they have given up their traditional religion and have adopted Christianity. However, although their traditional religious beliefs were simple in comparison with such organised religion as Christianity, we find several elements, which are similar between the Thadou religion and Christian faith. We may bring out some of those similarities as follows:

1. God

Thadous like many other people believe in the existence of God, who is called Chung Pathen or God, who is above in heaven. They rightly believe that God is the creator of heaven, earth and man. They do not subscribe to the theory of evolution. This God, Chung Pathen, is known to be the creator, sustainer, mover and controller of all things visible and invisible. The monotheistic religions of the world like Judaism, Christianity and Islam all believe in the existence of God, who is the creator and sustainer of the world. The Jews called this Lord Yahweh.

The Muslims called him Allah. Hindus believe in god and goddesses although they believe in supreme being also. All tribal religions of the world believe in a high God, who transcends human beings. Christians
believe that God created the whole world, and all things that are in the world including man and animals. Christians believe that God created the world. The Bible says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Though God is believed to have created the world, and the whole universe and things that are in it. Thadous have no idea of God’s transcendence and immanence in his creation. They cannot think of a person greater than God. But for many of them knowing and obeying God is unknown to them. For instance, in Islam, Muhammad, the prophet said,

Will men not remember how the camels have been created? How the heavens have been lifted high, how the mountains have been set up, how the earth had been spread flat? So warn them (about God); your task is to warn.

This is a citation from the Quran where the prophet Muhammad strongly warned the people to remember the creator God, Allah. Here camels may represent animals; so also the heavens and the earth, which are there not by accident but by God’s creation. To Muslims, God is formless and invisible. Thadous too, held that God is invisible and has no form. Here the concept of God in Thadou religion is very close to monotheism. But it is difficult to say that this primitive religion is monotheistic strictly. Because they cannot imagine that God is close to the worshipper, instead they fear the anger of spirits.

\[200\] Genesis 1:1.
\[201\] The Quran Sura 88: 17-21.
For instance poet Rabindranath Tagore said:

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path maker is breaking stone. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. God is not reach through renouncing the world, but by accepting it. For God has taken upon himself the bond of creation, he is bound with us forever.  

Tagore believed that God is with every one, at any time. In the past, majority of the worshippers held that God was found only in temples, mosques and churches. In Thadou’s idea about God, they simply held that God occupies the highest heaven and they want to be with him when they die and leave the world, which is full of fears and sufferings. So, Thadous do not believe that God is with them when they worship him. Though they held him in high esteem and ascribed all goodness to Pathen, he keeps Himself aloof from their daily activities. Unlike the Christians and Tagore, they held that God is the creator of all things but he is not interested in the daily affairs of mankind. Their concept of God is monotheistic to some extend, but very close to deism, where God is believed to be the creator God, who will intervene when there will be a catastrophe or the world is in danger of being destroyed. So, it is partly monotheistic and partly deistic in Doctrine and belief. However vague their idea about God may be, it certainly helped the people to a very great extend in appreciating and accepting other views and religion. This may be the reason why it was not difficult for majority of the Thadous to accept the God who is found in Christianity. It really helps Thadous and

202 David A Brown, opcit p. 75.
prepares them to accept a religion which more advanced and more developed than this primitive religion. Thadous thus accepted the Christian religion when it was introduced to them by Christian from other states of India and the western missionaries.

Charles Darwin is said to have visited a place called *Tierra Del Fuego* in 1853. He was believed to have discovered an aboriginal people with no religion at all. People began to read about his report with interest and enthusiasm, and in fact, it really touched many thinkers. But after some fifty years ago, a scholar who lived with them, learnt their language and customs reported that the idea of God was well developed and there was no evidence that there was a time when God was not known to these Fugians.203 Darwin was not aware that the idea of God was already in the minds of those uncivilised Fugians. Like these Fugians, Thadous, however remote it might be their villages and cultures, they have a very clear idea about God, which when nourished and nurtured can be matured. It helps to foster the growth of Christianity when it was introduced to them because they already had the idea of a creator God who loves his people. It was like a preparatory course which prepared them for the fuller and clearer religion which was to come from outside. It is clear that they share the idea of many people on this earth, who in, their various ways try to find God or allowed themselves to be found by God, depending on the ways and means used to reach God.

Darwin simply concluded and said that in a preliterary society, the idea of God was not clear and totally absent among those primitive people. His wrong presupposition led him to make false conclusions. So, it can safely be said that irrespective of one's society and cultures, the idea of God can be there; since God revealed himself to all mankind or all kinds of people at different times and in different cultures. However, backward a tribe or a people may be the idea of God is not absent.

2. Spirits

Thadous, like people of other religions, held that there are spirits in this world. According to Thadou traditional story, man and spirits lived together in the same place many years ago. There took place a war in which man killed almost all the spirits, which resulted in the separation of man from the spirits. It is said that man killed all spirits except a pregnant spirit who escaped unharmed. She complained her case to God, the creator of man and spirits. God intervened and asked the spirit to put a plant, which look like turmeric into the well or the pool where man used to draw water. The female spirit used the plant and put it into the said well or pool. After that, man has developed pupil in his eyes, which prevents him from seeing spirits. Though man cannot see the spirits, the war or enmities continue until date. Thadous are not the only tribe or people who believed in the existence of spirits – good and bad.

People all over the world used to believe in spirits and feared these malevolent spirits. In Islam Judaism and in Christianity exorcism is very popular. Even in Christianity, there is a concept of spirits usually referred
to as bad and evil. Jesus, while he was on earth is said to have cast out spirits or evil spirits from different people. He also entrusted his disciples to cast out evil spirits from people as the sign of the continuation of his ministry on earth. He says, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believed in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak in new tongues.”

Jesus healed many people oppressed by demons and evil spirits. So, he asked his disciples to the same to heal and relieve people of demonic oppressions. Here, Christians are not the only people who practise exorcism. Hindus and Muslims too, practise exorcism. Thadous too, practise exorcism called bumble or releasing the person concerned from demonic powers. They believe that a man can use a witch doctor or a man well versed in what is called doithu or spiritism can bind a person and can even kill if they want to kill. Bumble is a kind of exorcism where the person fully under the control of spirit or spirits is brought back to normalcy. In Hinduism, this kind of the presence of spirits is evident. The Bhagavad Gita concepts of Daivi sampat (divine nature) and Asuri Sampat (demoaic nature) makes the difference between a spiritual person and a demonaic person. Gita says, “Boastfulness, pride, conceit, anger, harsh words and ignorance are the qualities of a demoaic which entanges him in bondage.

\[\text{Mark 16: 15-18.}\]
He does not know what voluntary action conducive to virtue ought to be done, and voluntary action conducive to vice ought not to be done. He does not know the customary morality..."205 We can see that Hindus also believe that person are controlled by good spirits or bad or evil spirits. The actual manifestation of the presence of the spirit is known by its resultant actions done by the persons concerned. That is why Hindus, Christians and Muslims practised exorcism to release the person or the individual soul troubled by the spirits. Thus, Thadou practise of bumble may be called exorcism, though it may be slightly different in practise. The system of the setting free of such souls may be different, but Thadou like their counterparts who follow other major religions of the world strongly held that there are two kinds of spirits: good and evil. So, the idea of the soul troubled by the evil or malevolent spirits is not absent in the religious thinking of Thadous.

In the Christian religion, it is believed those godly persons. Who accepted Jesus as Lord and saviour, and who walks by the leading of the Holy Spirit or the spirit of God are known as spiritual persons. It is one thing to have the spirit, but it is another thing to be filled with the spirit. The good spirit is called the Holy Spirit. It is differentiated from the evil spirits by naming the spirit as 'Holy Spirit'. So, Paul urges believers not to get drunk with wine, but to be filled with the spirit. He says, "Therefore, do not be foolished, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the

spirit."  

As discussed earlier, here the man who is filled with the spirit is considered to be a spiritual man, who can know the will of God. According to Christianity, to be filled with the spirit is to invite God to live in one's life and allow God to control one's life (his or her life). When a person is filled with the spirit of God, the result will be seen by others in various ways. Paul, the apostle says, "The act of sinful nature are obvious; sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord and jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgy and the like. I warn you as before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things, there is no law." 

Here, Paul discusses two important things, which are important for all Christians. They should be controlled by the spirit of God if they want to know the will of God. But if they do not allow the spirit to take control of themselves, they will not please God but will live that is not conducive to the spiritual life or the Christian life. Some scholars even said that this is a command, and not a request. So, for Christian, if they want to overcome evil desires of the flesh, they have to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

In Thadou concept of the spirits, though mention is made of benevolent spirits, malevolent spirits dominate the life of an individual as well as Thadou community. So, they are afraid of the spirits and want to

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206 Ephesians 5: 17-18.
207 Galatians 5: 19-23.
get rid of those malevolent spirits and of their evil influences. As they want to get rid of these spirits they feel that they can appease their anger with sacrifices; by killing dogs, fowls, pigs and in some cases mithun. They are thus drained of their economy due to those sacrifices. Unfortunately, Thadous are not aware of the good spirit who can help them in their struggles against the devils or evil spirits. They are in many cases in a no-win situation. That is why they take up sacrifices just to get rid of them. It is not an act of worship like the ones done by the Jews to Yahweh their Lord God. But it is a way to get rid of them. In Christianity, Jesus is said to have won victory over sin and death. That is why, believers’ drive out evil spirits in the name of Jesu of Nazareth, whom Christians worship and called him saviour and Lord.

In Thadous view, the person said to be possessed by spirit of spirits is dreaded and feared. They dare not mention the name of such persons for fear of being attacked. It is a pity that they sacrifice many of their domesticate animals to unseen or unkown spirits just to appease their anger. They can appease the anger of the lesser gods or spirits but cannot find out ways to subdue or to overcome their evil influence on their daily life. So, instead of having freedom and peace, their life was full of fear. These spirits are believed to live in forest, land and in water. There was no place the spirit is not present. Wherever they go, they are liable to be attacked by spirits. The life of Thadous was full of fears: fear of unseen spirits. They have to kill many animals just to appease the anger of gods or spirits. It really weakens their economic position in the society. It is also very confusing in many ways, for it was not easy to find out the kind
of spirits and the ways to appease them. It is believed that a spirit can be
driven out of a person by a priest by muttering some words. Then the
spirits are said to come out in the form of an insect. By killing the insects,
the soul of the person who caused problem to the individual soul is killed.
Persons feared to be possessed by such spirits are feared and dreaded by
the common people. They do not want them to live in their villages
because nothing good comes out from such persons. So, the persons
possessed by spirits are hated and their houses are often dismantled and
are expelled from villages. Persons possessed by spirits are believed to be
powerful than the common people. This idea is also found in the Bible. In
the days of Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, there lived a man named
Sceeva. They wanted to drive out evil spirit from a certain man possessed
by spirits. The sons of sceeva commanded the spirit to come out of the
person using the name of Paul and Jesus. But the spirit said to them: “I
know Jesus, and I know Paul; but, who are you? “The man who had the
evil spirit in him attacks them with such violence that he overpowered
them all. All the Jews and Gentiles who live in Ephesus heard about this;
they were all filled with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was given
greater honour.208 Here, the exorcists, the sons of Sceeva were seven in
number. They were Jews but did not have the Holy Spirit or the spirit of
God living in their lives. So, when they challenged the spirit, the evil
spirit over powered them. They fled and were badly wounded. Thadous
were afraid of the evil spirit because they believed that the possessed
person has more power than ordinary people. That is why they hated and

208 Acts 19: 13-17
expelled demon possesed person from their villages. This kind of evil or demon possessio was very common in the past. It is still very common in the world, especially in the third world and undeveloping countries. Willaim Shaw said,

The Thadous live in great fear of vampires or kausheman who can project astral bodies as to enter into those they wish to and devour their internal organ, particularly the liver and the heart. So, great is their fear of persons reputed to have this power that they will not as a rule on any account mention the name of a person who had spoken ill of him. 209

Thadous are not alone to hold this view. The same view is shared by many well-known religions of the world. Tha Ga people in Ghana also believe that the spirit of the departed influence the life of the people still living in the flesh, for both good and evil. The Ga, therefore, fear the ghost; when they know their wishes they carry them out with care, to avoid the punishments and misfortunes which the ghosts can inflict on offenders. The punishment they inflicted is usually sidden death, chronic diseases or poverty. 210

In short, Thadous firmly held that the spirits are there: good and bad. What Anderson says about the preliterary religions on spirit describes Thadous very well. He says,

Spirits dwell in all sorts of places such as trees, rocks leavesd, mountains, river crossings, animals, insects, and so on. They are quite unpredictable and people are always most careful not to offend them and pay them proper respect by making small offerings of food when they pass their

209 Shaw opcit p. 155.
210 David Brown opcit p. 28.
supposed dwelling places. Demons take various shapes to terrify people. 211

What Anderson says about the spirit is an apt illustration of Thadous view of spirit. So, Thadous share their view with many religions of the world.

3. Death and Burial

Thadous do not burn their dead, but bury their dead. Thadous and other tribals bury their dead. This is to say that even before the advent of Christianity and other religions of India, Thadous have a distinct religious belief which forbade them to burn their dead, for they have a hope for the next life. Death is not the end of life. Their belief is similar to that of the Semangs who lived in a virgin forest of Malaysia. They have their own medicine man who helps them to heal the sick with herbs and communicate with the help of the spirits. Sergei Tokarev says, “The Semang bury their dead in the ground. They believe that the soul of the dead goes somewhere to the west.” 212 They held that life does not end with death. Thadous too, held that life does not end with death. Good persons will go to heaven, and evil persons who do not believe in God will go to hell. Muslims believe in life after death. They held that good persons would live in paradise, where there will be plenty of water and fruits.

211 Anderson opcit p. 39.
212 Sergei Tokarev, Host of Religions (Moscow: Progree, 1989), p.50.
4. Life after death

The concept of life after death plays a very important role in traditional Thadou Kuki religion. Like people of preliterary religions, who held the belief of life after death; Thadous firmly held that there is continuation of life in a place called the land of the dead known as mithikhuo. In this regard, Anderson says, "The fact that the person once dead is believed to be in both the land of the dead and able to cause mischief to those whom he has left behind is most due to a common belief in a multi-spirited human personality. We noticed this about the Australian Aborigines, but it is widespread throughout the world." True with what has been cited above, Thadous held that life is to continue after death. This belief has been strongly supported by a folk tale where a hero named Ngambom, was deeply in love with a girl by name, Khupting. Though they could not fulfill their desire to unite themselves in matrimony due to family pressures, they were together at mithikhuo even before Ngambom actually died. He is said to have visited mithikhuo and met Khupting, who told him to go back and die to enter the same place. But he found that life was quite different from what he was used to in real life. The legend goes that during daytime Khupting appeared as a beautiful girl to Ngambom, but at night, she took the form of a bone of a skeleton. The kind of animal he killed while he was visiting mithikhuo were different from those animals he killed on earth. But when he died, he too, was in a different situation and thus wondered at the animals he killed.

213 Anderson opcit p. 40.
during his short sojourn to mithikhuo. That is why, some people opined that life may be in lower scale at mithikhuo.

One cannot be very clear and definite about the kind of life a person enjoys at mithikhuo. But the idea and hope is there to give hope to the hopeless who expect better life atleast in the life to come after death. Anderson says, “The land of the dead is thought by North American Indians as a happy hunting ground stocked plentifully with game.” 214 Muslim too, believes in the existence of life after death. They believe that man will be given rewards based on his actions.

The actions will be weighed in a scale. Paradise is the reward, and hell is the punishment. The scales contain the good deeds and bad deeds of man. The good deeds are heavy, but the bad deeds are light. It is believed that prophets, angels and believers will be exempted from this trial of weighing in a scale. 215 Christians too, do not hold that life ends with death, the dead person’s soul continues to live as a personality. Though death is imminent in the life of all person, Jesus gives comfort to all and says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.” 216

The Christian’s understanding of life to come is clearer than what is gleaned from Thadou concept of life after death. Though the views of Thadous on life after death may be unclear, but it is good that the idea

\[214\] Anderson opcit p. 40.
\[215\] Brown opcit p. 210
itself was held by its adherents. Believing in life after death is important for all kinds of people. It is necessary for them to correct their life here before death, on this earth. If this belief were absent, the result would be disastrous as all people would misconduct themselves and their society will be in chaos. It is this hope that controls their evil desires which push them to go forward in society. And if the good people have no hope of the life to come, they have nowhere to be rewarded for their good deeds. As a result, no body would like to do well in this life. Hedonism will be the order of the day or of the society where people will not be concerned about ethics, but will seek pleasure at the expense of ethics or morality.

5. Priests and Sacrifices

Thadous depend much on the services of the priests for sacrifices on their behalf. Some of the priests, acting as doctors treated patients with herbal medicinal plants. Every village has a priest. They share this idea with many other adherents of different religion of the world.

Among Ga people tsofatsemei as known as medicinemen or herbalists who healed diseases. The Ga believes that man is spirit, body and soul. They invoke all kinds of spiritual power to heal the spiritual side of the patients. Other used magic or witchcraft to achieve their purposes. The nature gods are usually invoked for protection and well being of the community, but other powers of spirit are often used for destructive purpose. Thadous with the help of thempu or priests used magic or charms to find out the ailment or the wrongdoers. In deciding who is wrong or who is in the right, they used herbal plant called Ai or ai plant. Cases are
decided by drinking *aitui* or the water made of *ai* plant. This was very common before the advent of Christianity among Thadous in Manipur and Myanmar. This kind of *thempu* is working among the people. I interviewed a priest and talked with him for hours. He told me the effectiveness of *ai* plant or drinking of *aitui* or *aituidon*. He said that the son of a village priest stole a gong. No one came forward and made public confession. The case was thus decided by drinking ai wate or *aitui*. At the later part of the year, when it was time for *ai* plant to die as usual, the person who had stolen the gong or *dahpi* and members of his family died one after another. So, as this event happened in the family of the priest, the priest also died. So, priests were not spared when they did not live up to what they profess and practise.

Sacrifices play a vital role in the religion of Thadou people. As already mentioned, these sacrifices were made just to avert the anger of the spirits or to gain its favour, if the spirits, is a benevolent spirit. Sometimes they killed fowls, pigs, cows and mithuns. This has greatly reduced the economic stability of Thadous. But this practice of sacrifice is common to people of all religions. Tirkey says, “The practise of sacrifice is so common among people of the world religions. It is found not only in primal or tribal religions, but is also found in Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, etc. Therefore, blood sacrifice has become a part of their life.”

217 Tirkey opcit p. 192.
As pointed out by Tirkey, all people of the world practise sacrifices to appease the angers of gods or spirits of God. Anderson says, “In village India, local gods and goddesses are worshipped and propitiated with gifts or in certain cases by the sacrificial blood or animals.”\textsuperscript{218} The problem with sacrifices is that priests can abuse the said sacrifices. So, Zairema is right in saying that the priests are notoriously known for their gluttony. It seemed that the priest was the butt or jokes. The village \textit{puithiam} or priest is a roque (a worthless rogue). He cannot even wait until the meat is well cooked.\textsuperscript{219} In many cases the motive of all priests can be questioned. Many times the priest is more concerned about the kind of meat cooked than the healing of the sick person for whom the sacrifice is being offered. A certain priest in the hillside is said to have performed sacrifices for all kinds of diseases. But it is said that he never perform sacrifices for his own children. He was questioned and it was found that, he did not believe in sacrifices for healing, but practised them for comfort.

As mentioned already, the priest can abused the sacrifices that are being offered to the spirits or to gods or God. They can become complacent and can be given to gluttony than helping the people who need their services for comfort and for healing. However weak the priest may be, his role and importance in Thadou religion cannot be ruled out. It is a matter of wonder that the role of some priests are still important to many people who go to them for healing when they feel they are troubled

\textsuperscript{218} Anderson opcit p. 151.
\textsuperscript{219} Keitzer opcit p. 71.
by spirits. The importance of the priest will go on as long as they are working for the people, at least for the sake of comfort.

6. Rites and Rituals

Thadous and other tribals perform rites and rituals relating to their social life cycle. Birth rite, marriage rite, death rite, funereral rite, *rites de passage* and other rites and rituals related to life and death are important for Thadous. All these have impacts on the religious worldview on Thadous. They observed this rite meticulously as these are closely related to their life. Birth rite is important for the child because this begins from birth to naming of child or *naominbol* etc. It is considered very important for the child’s health. For instance, it is considered a good thing to get the blessings of the child’s mother’s father for the child. It is important even in the present days, for they want to continue their relationship with the in-laws. Such relationship is given weightage in their social life. Marriage rite is important because it is a sign to others that the newly wedded couples enter the life of husband and wife into the community of married adults.

**Weaknesses of this traditional religion**

Some drawbacks of the traditional religion may be pointed out so as to show that it is not growing for different reasons.
(a) **Absence of Scripture**

Almost all the leading religions of the world have their own religious books: the Bible for Christians, the Quran for Muslims, the Gita for Hindus, and Torah for the Jews. For the Jews, it was Yahweh, who revealed himself to Israel or to them and gave them a law to follow. The people were governed by the law, which was given to Moses. Whether they obey or disobey the Lord is easily known by reading the Torah. The same is true to Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Thadous donot have any written revelation of Chung Pathen. They were guided by dreams, as was the case with *Kimchal*, who lost his daughter Japhal. He was asked in his dream to install a house god or magic called *Indoi*, which literally may be called house magic. It is held that installing *indoi* brought prosperity to the worshippers. In the absence of any written document, the real authenticity of the word use in worship cannot be established. So, it was not strange when the priests abused the sacrifices and were more concern about the meat than the welfare of the one, whose sacrifice is being offered.

In addition to what has already been said, it has no dependable creed to go with, because it has no book to guide it. For instance, in Islam, the creed is short, but very important which is based on the Quran. *LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMADUR RASULLULAH*. It means, there is no God, but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet. It endorses monotheism from the very start. It has actually accepted the Muhammad as its prophet. Thadous have no scripture to guide them. In the absence of scripture, there
is no teaching about worship or conduct in public and private life. Muslims are told not to worship idols or images. Such teaching is found in Judaism and in Christianity also. The Jews were instructed to teach their children. It runs thus: “Hear O, Israel, the Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your hearts, with all your soul, and with all your strength. The commands that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on to your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down or you get up…”

The Jews were required by Torah to believe in one God. This law or torah is to be shared to the children at anytime. Parents in no way should show slackness in teaching this monotheistic concept of God to their children. This kind of religious instruction about God is totally absent in Thadou religion. This may be the reason why Thadous are known for their disunity and divisiveness. Instead of feeding the young minds with good thoughts and spiritual values, they taught them the works of spirits, which they themselves could not overcome. All things related to religion are known only to the priests. It is hidden from the common people. In the Bible, Paul mentions the usefulness of the scripture this way, “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults and living instruction for right living, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed.” Such is the value of scripture to the adherents of a religion. Gandhi loved to read Gita. He called Bhagavad

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220 Leviticus 6:4-9.
221 II Timothy 3: 16-17.
Gita as the dictionary of life and conduct. He said that he turned his life to this dictionary of conduct whenever he came across life’s problems.

(b) Worship

The most important element is religion is worship. This worship is missing in Thadou religion. *Hun* or *ahkangtha* is the only occasion in which Thadous are known to have their worship of God. In this sacrifice, the fowl is killed, but the killer is not allowed to break the bones of the animal killed. It resembles the practice of the Jews; so, many Thadous based their claims on this *ahkangtha* and called themselves Jews and follow Judaism. The Jews were not allowed to break the bones when they kill the pass over lamb. Here, in *ahkangtha*, the family is blessed by *thempu* or the priest by invoking God’s blessings upon the family who perform this sacrifices. But in worship, there should be the realisation of who is the center of worship. God should be the centre of worship and not sacrifice. There must be a personal encounter with God, who is the main object of worship. But in Thadou worship, the priest is important and the worshipper has no private or personal encounter with God. Moreover, there is no prophet as the divine representative on earth to guide the people with religious doctrines. The priests who practise witchcraft are no substitute for the prophet.

(c) Sacrifices

Thadou religion was full of sacrifices. Though it did not give much comfort to the worshipper, it has cost them a lot of money and property.
Since they held that spirits live in and around their dwellings and almost all places, it was really difficult to get rid of the spirits. The only way to escape was to appease them. In an act of appeasing the spirit, one has to kill a mithun if the case in question is serious. For instance, a mithun is offered as sacrifice, it may cost a lot of money. Today, a mithun costs more than Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees ten thousand) only. Instead of sacrificing such big animal, he or she should have consulted a good doctor at a good hospital. We are saying this to evaluate the cost of sacrifices in today’s economy. But according to the traditional Thadou practice, in order to recall the soul of a particular person, believed to be left at the field or entrap by spirits who live in the field, a fowl is to be offered. The cost of a cock is Rs. 200/- (Rupees two hundred) only at the market these days. Economically they have been impoverished by these kinds of worship or sacrifices to the unseen and unknown spirits. The fear psychosis of the people can be dispelled through proper education. This may be the reason why many Thadous have left this traditional religion and accepted the Christian faith.

(d) Life after death

The belief in life after death plays a positive role in life. It really helps the Thadous Kukis to embrace the Christian faith, which gives a clearer picture of what is to come in the future. Real and committed Christians nowadays have no fear. The hope of heaven is clearer to its adherents than those of mithikhuo or the abode of the dead. In the Christian religion, one does not need to kill enemies of animals to gain
rewards in heaven. Instead, one has to believe in a person called Jesus, who has good deeds acceptable to all people. Fear of the evil spirit can be overcome by inviting and allowing the Holy Spirit to live in their lives. The Bible says clearly, "You dear children, are from God and overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater then the one who is in the world." 

Here, the apostle John is saying that the evil spirit is there, but the Holy Spirit, which indwells the believers of Jesus, is much stronger than the evil spirits. We are not saying that there is no spirits, but Jesus is providing his believers the power to overcome the dreaded influence and oppressions of the evil spirits or the devil and his cohorts.

(c) Religious experience

Religious experience is one of the most important aspects of religions. This aspect of religion is missing in Thadou conception of God. They cannot have the Holy Communion with God. They cannot derive comfort, peace and joy from their encounter with God. They tell about their failures, fears, and evil influences of the spirits, whom they feared so much. Stories about spirits and their evil influences are passed on to the next generations, which have weakened and dulled the senses and insight of the young talented people. Moreover, there are no moral codes associated with that religion. No ethics is taught, but the society is guided by customs and conventions, which cannot transform the society on the path of well being. It is rightly said by Swami Yogananda, "If

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religions does not influence the daily conduct, if it does not inspire every
day life, then it is useless.”