

# Origin and Migration of the Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh

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The Tagins, earlier clapped under the common nomenclature with the Nyishis called Daflas is one of the major tribes in Arunachal Pradesh with a population of 39369 as per 1991 census. Demographically, the Tagins inhabit in the upper course of Sinik (Subansiri River) in upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh. They have comon international border with the Nyeme (Tibet) presently intersected by the McMahan Line.

In this paper, in attempt has been made to study the origin and migration of the Tagins with the help of oral tradition and myth of the Tagin and some secondary sources.

The English word came for Greece muthos ('word' or speech).<sup>1</sup> Muthos in its meaning of 'myth' is the word for a story concerning gods and superhuman beings.<sup>2</sup> Thapar, events concerning the more remote periods often take the form of a myth. "Myth is in a sense a prototype history since it is a selection of ideas composed in narrative form for the purpose of preserving and giving significance to an important aspect of the past. Although myths cannot be used as descriptive sources on the past, their analysis can reveal the more emphatic assumptions of a society. Myth record what people like to think about their past and to that extend even some modern histories are not always free of an element of myth-making"<sup>3</sup> A myths "is an expression of the sacred in words it reports realities and events from the origin of the world that remains valid for the basis and purpose of all there is consequently, a myth functions as a model for human activity, society, wisdom and knowledge."<sup>4</sup> A myth, whether its subject is the acts of deities or other extraordinary events, always takes us back to "beginning of all things", hence, the cosmology the birth of the world, is a principle theme.<sup>5</sup> Myth is also defined as an utterance, often a tale recited in association with religious ceremony. The myth involved archetypal or elemental character, themes and symbols. It focus on the 'grand events' of the past-the creation of the world, the origin of man and gods, the justification of kinship.<sup>6</sup> The creation of the earth, the sky, origin of human genertion and migration of the Tagins are being recited by the Nyibu (priest) at the time of ritual ceremony. The Nyibu narrates the origin, migration and genealogy of the particular clan and family who performs the ritual.

The Tagins inhabited one of the most difficult terrains of Arunachal Pradesh. They tried to adjust themselves with nature and wanted to live in peace and free from diseases, sufferings and misfortunes. However, the natural phenomena remained mysterious to them. Their curiosity to know the source of the origin of this world must have resulted into various myths about the creation. However, there are various versions of the myths on creation and migration.

Like other Tani, tribes the Tagins also claimed their origin from TANI/ ABO-TANI (legendary ancestor of Tani tribes) whom they regard as their ancestor, however, the MRA and NA clans claims their ancestor from NYIDO (the rain). In the matter of genealogy, the 'Tagins' have good memories and almost all-elderly persons can trace their account from TANI though, they have different versions about the evolution of human among themselves. It may be recounted as follow :

After the creation of the SECHI (the earth) and the NYIDI (the sky) numerous spirits and organism-plants and living beings evolved on the lap of SECHI. In this evolutionary process, a female human figure was originated in 'seimi-spirit' form called CHETU (daughter of the earth). She grew up without human partner, however when attained maturity, she conceived through RILO-RIAMSO (wind) and gave birth to TUNI and TUPE, TUNI was known to the TANI or ABO TANI and TUPE was known to be CHENE-YAPI or ANY-YAPI in complete human form later on from their wedlock human race started on the earth<sup>8</sup>. However, there is another version on procreation from the CHETU. CHUTU get natural conceived without any partner and gave births to TUNI (son) and TUPE (daughter) as the first human beings on the earth.<sup>9</sup> As there was no other human female, except his sister, TUNI married female of various objects and organisms such as leaves, tree, frog, bird, etc, but no human offspring was born. With all futile attempts to create a human generation, TANI consulted DORICHIJI (God of highest degree of wisdom and knowledge) for solution. DORICHIJI advised TANI to take egg of CHERI-YASHI (her originated from the earth) and throw it on the abdomen of TUNE. If, the egg does not beak no further action to be taken, if egg burst into loud, TANI can marry TUNE. TUNI carried out the action without knowledge of TUPE. Shocked at the bang of breaking egg thrown at her abdomen TUNE jumped and embraced TUNI, thereby biological needs of body arose between them. Nevertheless, another version is that the egg was boiled in the hearth without knowledge of TUNE and when the egg burst from the hearth TUNE was shocked and run toward TUNI. As per DORICHEJI's direction, TUNI embraced TUNE thereby same needs arose. Thereafter,

both started the life partner and human race was born out of their wedlock.<sup>10</sup>

Another version is SI created a female from called CHETU, CHUTU in turn procreated three children in human form viz, two sons called TUNI and TUKI and a daughter called TUNE.<sup>11</sup>

Another version is that, SECHI created CHETU (semi-spirit human female), who bore POHA-TANI<sup>9</sup> semi-spirit human male). From POHA-Tani, Nigur was born, from him GURNI, from Gurni Nia-tani (complete human male) and Nia-Tupe (complete human female) was born and from wedlock of both Tani and Tupe, the human generation started.<sup>12</sup>

However, MRA and Na Tagins do not claims to be line of Abo-Tani as their ancestor, but from the Nido (the rain)<sup>13</sup>

## Migration

Indeed, it is very difficult to arrive at any definite conclusion regarding the Tagins original homeland, route of migration and date of their settlement at present place. However, there are some views, which needs critical examination to draw the conclusion.

The Hill Miri traditions says that Abo-Tani with his seven sons used to live at the source of Subansiri River called Sipo-Rigo. They were always crying for food, so Abo-Tani with his wife fled away while the children were sleeping. Following the footprints of their parents, they moved down stream the river Subansiri. The eldest one went to plains; the second lived in foothills, the third settled near Panior River, the fourth stayed in Kamla valley, the fifth near Simi River, the sixth near Sig<sup>14</sup> and the last who bother to travel was the ancestor of the Tagins area . as per this tradition, it seems that the Nyishis and Hill-Miris migrated down in course of Subansiri River from the Tagins inhabitant place, but the Tagins never undertook the course of migration.

The Bori myth says the Tagins were living in Gamen in Upper Siang district, but the Boris and the people of Payum drove them away.<sup>15</sup> This tradition believed that the Tagins migrated from Upper Siang to the present settled area.

Sachin Roy viewed that; the Tagins are believes to be migrated from the Penzi a village in Tibet to Tadedage region<sup>16</sup>. However, he failed to mention how they migrated to the present area from Tadedage.

M.L. Bose put another view that the Tagins migrated from the Khams. Some Tagins are to be seen across that line in Tibet<sup>17</sup>. Bose seems

to be very assertive about the place of Tagins migration and claimed some of the Tagin are found in Tibet, but has not mentioned about the route of migration.

J.N. Choudhury wrote that the ancestor of the Tagin came from PUI-Pudu believed to be located in Tibet. From there, they came to Pumte and from there to Dibeh. Abo-Tani was the first to come and died at Nide-Lanking. The Tagin migrated from Dibeh to Nari and Nari to Nalo. In course of the movement, their ancestor had crossed Subansiri and Khru rivers.<sup>18</sup> As per the oral traditions, Abo-Tani was common ancestor to Nyishis, Adis, Apartanis, Hill Miris, Tagins, and Mishings.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, as per this version all the Tani Tribe must have been migrated together to Nide-Lankin.

According to oral history of the Tagins' migration, the Tani group of tribes migrated from the same place Anne Puii-Pudu (place in their language imagined to be in Tibet). From Pui-Pudu Dogin-Mole (migration) started vis Esi-naka, Uyi-pere (exit), to Iaru-situ, yagne-dibah (upward route), from this point, the different groups moved to different directions : to Hampu-Rialu, Ditir-Dinia and Dikur-Dirik (left side of slope down and last visible mountain) the Adis. The Dodum, Dol and Dopum (Nyishis) moved toward Apa-Moya (dense forest toward west), Ayu-Satu, (upward land), Diri-Dimi (many mountains and hills) and Lalilalen (present settled area of Nyishis). And to the middle, following the course of Sinik (Subansiri) the Tagins come down to Dibin-Disap (place imagined to be barren) from there to Putegate and Reko-gah (entrance to vegetation), then to Soken-geli and Nyorie-sesso (single entry point between two patches of land mass joined by branches of tree), then to Pate-yorja (elevated land sloping down) and finally Rutu-hampu and Diso-katu (mountains in present settled area).

Another version is that the Tagins are migrated from ANE Pui-Pudu in Tibet to present area. From Ane Puii-Pudu, they moved to southward toward via HINI DALI, than to TATO, then to YAPIK, than to POLO, and from POLO (places in west Siang, district) they moved westward via Mobuk from Mobuk to Moya, than to Lipi than to Kora and Banium and finally spread in present settlement area.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, they again move upward to upper course of sinik river some of the Tagins in and around Daporijo in search for safe place for settle from the enemies attack.<sup>22</sup>

The MRA and NA Tagins claims that together with Apatanis migrated from Helujian (Mgyithung in Tibet), but MRAS stayed at Lemeking area whereas the Apatanis and NA Tagins proceeded downward.

Apatanis stayed at Ziro, while Na Tagins returned back to present inhabited area.<sup>23</sup>

The MRA and NA Tagins migrated from lower Tibet. The entire Tsari area, including Yume-Yuto and Chikchak villages belong to the Na clan. The Tagins used to collect taxes from these places as war gratuity after they had suffered defeat from the Tibet.<sup>24</sup> NELU (Migyithun) in both banks of Gelen (Tsari Chue) belong to MRA Tagins and the Tibetan came later on, therefore, the Tibetan gave annual subsidy and twelve years compensation to the MRA Tagins<sup>25</sup>. Still some of the Tagins are settled in Tsari area. In April 1956, Puri Taring (late) a Tagin leader of his own clan from Helu/Longju (Tibet) invited S.M. Krishnatry, the Political Officer, Subansiri Frontier Division who was exploring Tagin territory at Lemeking to established Gyagara (Indian) influence at Migyithun before the Khungten (communist China) could establish its influence in the area. However, Krishnatry informed Puri Tariang that the Indian Frontier does not cover Migyithun on Indian sides and they must better remain with the Tibet. Then again, Puri Tariang approached Krishnatry to rehabilitate his clan at Gilomo (hunting ground of Mra) in Indian side<sup>26</sup>, however, no notice was given on to Tariang's appeal. Thus, finally, only Puri Taring himself had settled at Daporijo town leaving other his clan members at other side of border. Therefore, the NA and MRA Tagins were settled at Gelen (Tsari Chue) valley before migrating to present land and still some Tagins are said to be there<sup>27</sup>.

The barren land, single exit, upward and down routes depicted in their oral traditions via which they migrated resemble topographical setting and passes between Tibet and Indian boarder. Thus, according to the oral history of the tribe, they migrated from the South-Tibet. In any case, the tribes along with other Tani group of tribes must have left Tibet before reaching of the Buddhism at there, i.e. 7th century A.D. as the tribes has no influence of Buddhism and retained their pristine way of life except Na clan.

#### *Notes and References*

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