

Introduction To The Rongmei Nagas



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By : G. MAKUGA, B.A., (N.C.S. Retired)



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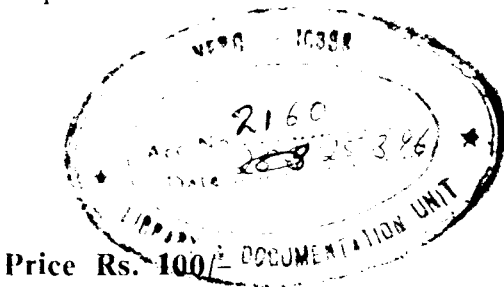
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Introduction to Rongmei Naga

1. 1. CREATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH :

According to the belief and traditional legend of Rongmei Nagas carried down from generation to generations, there were many Gods in the beginning. Among them the most powerful and omnipotent one is known as 'RAAGONG' i.e., the supreme God. T.C. Hodson quoted Dr. Brown's remarks in his book 'The Naga Tribes of Manipur (Page 127) as "The Rongmei believes in one SUPREME DEITI, whose nature is Benevolent. This Deity is the Creator of all things. Further, he added that they believed that the Sky is their God-Father and the Earth is thier God-Mother." The Priests of Rongmeis used to call 'TINGPUK APU' 'KANDIH APUI' means the Sky, my Heavenly Father, and the 'Earth, my Mother' began with these words reciting the rites at the offering ceremony of Joupaang keimei.

First of all the Supreme God created TINGPUK (Heaven) and KANDI (Earth) ; and then BU (moon), NEI (sun) and Gaanchongna (stars) in the Heaven. He later made different kinds of Mei (men), su-zou (animals), Thaoroi (birds) and all kinds of creatures (khouring). Lastly, He gave Air (pol), water (dui) and fire (mai) to all living things created by Him.

There is a legend of Rongmei Nagas about the formation of the Earth in the beginning of the World. In the Ritual ceremony of Rongmei Nagas called "Dih chuk" the story as to how the Earth was formed was mentioned that the Supreme God appointed Dihdimpu (the God) and Dihdimpui (goddess) for the purpose of creating the Earth. In response to the command of the Supreme God, Dihdimpu and Dihdimpui summoned all living men, animals, birds and creatures : and enquired whether

any of them could form the Earth. The spider (Duikachekpui or cherapui) first suggested to Dihdimpu and Dihdimpui to seek the will of the Supreme God through their dreams ; for the creation of the Earth is possible if they had a good dream. After seeking the advice of the Supreme God, Dihdimpui and Dihdimpui asked the earthworm (chipu/chupreng) to mould the lump of earth and have first settlement on it. In reply, the worm informed his inability to do so until its dung in tubular form of mud piling reaches to the sky from the earth. On pressing, the earthworm further put forward a demand to engage the grasshoper (Pijinpui) for his wife. But the grasshoper refused to become the wife of the earthworm saying that she is unable to weave and provide clothing to the earthworm, because the earthworm is too long in its length. On her refusal, the earthworm cursed that no grasshoper or locust would be allowed to die on the ground of the earth. This is why the grasshoper or locust are found lying their dead bodies on the plants or grasses which we have seen even in the present days.

On hearing the curse, the grasshoper appealed to Dihdimpu as Homakampu (mankind) to settle the issue. Otherwise, in future the mankind would suffer their limbs from the numbness or swelling of throat in case they happen to touch the dead body of locust lying on the plants or herbs with their legs or hands in cutting herbs or jungles from time to time.

Thus according to the belief of Rongmei Naga, the earthworm moulded the earth with its dungs in the size and shape of an egg (Chalung or roidui bung) at the first stage : and later it was expanded by the ground cricket (Tingthinpui), with its two blades of sawy teeth with noisy and shrilling sound.

2. CREATION OF HUMAN BEING

According to the ritual words contained in the Rongmei Naga traditional and ceremonial rites known as "NAAZUM GAIMEI KHATNI NAASAN KANMEI" usually performed