

MYTHS AND LEGENDS RELATING TO THE ORIGIN OF GALO

HENDO TAIPODIA,
GENSI, WESTSIANG DISTRICT,
ARUNACHAL PRADESH

The Galo tribe believes in many myths and legends relating to the origin of man and earth. The story of TOPO GONE, a statue at Monigao circle, West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh is most popular among Galos. The legend orally passed on from generation to generation. The story of TOPO GONE and origin of Galo Tribe as narrated by our elders goes like this.

GOLO YORBE is a place in MONIGAO in West Siang district. This is the place from where the descendants of ATO TOPO and ATO KARBU parted their ways and the word GALO was originated from GOLO after this ridge.

Once in a picturesque village near Yomgo river lived a simple but beautiful girl called TOPO GONE with her parents and two elder brothers MIDI and MIMA. When she attained marriageable age, her marriage was fixed with one boy called 'DEKI' who lived with his parents in a nearby village. He was poor but humble. However, Mima, brother of Topo Gone, opposed the proposal on the plea that Deki would not be able to afford the well being of his younger sister in a peaceful and wealthy atmosphere. After a long persuasion by the parents, he agreed. On the day of marriage ceremony, all the rites and rituals were performed without the interference of Mima. But at the time of Nyunam achin (last lunch) offered by the parents, Mima refused to perform the rites in the premises of their house.

Having no other alternatives, the parents and relatives of TOPO GONE decided to perform the rites on the lap of a stone. But as soon as she began to eat the meal, the stone began to engulf her feet. TOPOGONE screamed for help. She requested her brother to save her life. Both brothers tried to cut the stone with axe. But they failed to save TOPOGONE. Gradually the stone devoured TOPO GONE from her

Knee to chest. She repeatedly cried for help but her scream became in wilderness. The parents and relatives were also helpless.

Finally the mysterious stone swallowed her completely and TOPO GONE was transformed into a stone.

It is popularly believed that when the leg of TOPOGONE first stuck up in the stone, she requested her two brothers to save her life in the following manner-

ASSA BITO, MIDI BITO
ASSA BITO MIMA BITO
TOPO NGOM BITO, GONE NGOM BITO.
LITE GE BITO GELUE BITO
LITAK GE BITO, GEU-E-BITO
GELUP DU BITO, KOBI GO BITO
KOBSEK BE BITO, KAKU BE BITO.
LITAK GE BITO KOBI GO BITO.
KOPSEK BE BITO, KAKU BE BITO, KAKU BE BITO.
ASSA BITO, MIDI BITO.
ASSA BITO MIMA BITO

The literal meaning of TOPOGONE's sobbing is like this-

O BROTHER MIDI' O BROTHER MIMA, my legs are stuck up in the stone, now I am unable to move to here and there. Please save from the stone, this is swallowing both my legs.

The tragic love story of TOPO GONE is still remembered by the Galo community irrespective of age and sex. The name of TOPOGONE finds its place in Nitom (traditional songs) and other folk songs and folk dances. During the marriage ceremony the Galo community forbids not to perform the ritual of Nyunam achin (last lunch) on stone. Many people still believe that the statue of TOPO GONE is located at some where in Monigao circle of West Siang District in Arunachal Pradesh.

Home Coming Ceremony in Taliha, Arunachal

31st December 2009 : A daylong programme of "Home Coming" (Ghar Vapsi) was organized by the Taliha Namlo-Committee, Upper Subansiri District, one of the remotest places in Arunachal Pradesh.

The programme was organized in order to welcome back those individuals who had once switched over to Christianity deserting their indigenous faith and cultural values.

About 125 (One hundred twenty five) members attended the programme. They shared their experiences after they wedded to Christianity. Every member regretted greatly and confessed that what they had done was a great mistake. They were overwhelmed with emotions when they heard the chanting of hymns by the Priests. They visualize their identity in every piece of their ornaments (Tasing), traditional dress, songs dance etc. They felt in every breath of the air the self-respect and freedom from the clutch of alien faith and culture. The persons who embraced their forefather's faith and culture were under the grip of three different denominations of church, i.e. Catholic, Revival and Baptist. People represented from 21 villages of Taliha circle of Upper Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh.

The programme was graced by Shri Taku Mara (ASM) chairperson as chief guest, and Shri Jumli Ligu as special guest and other native officers and local public. Shri Taku Mara and Jumli Ligu gave high emphasis on preserving culture & faith and cautioned the young generation not to be swayed away by the fraudulent allurements by missionaries.



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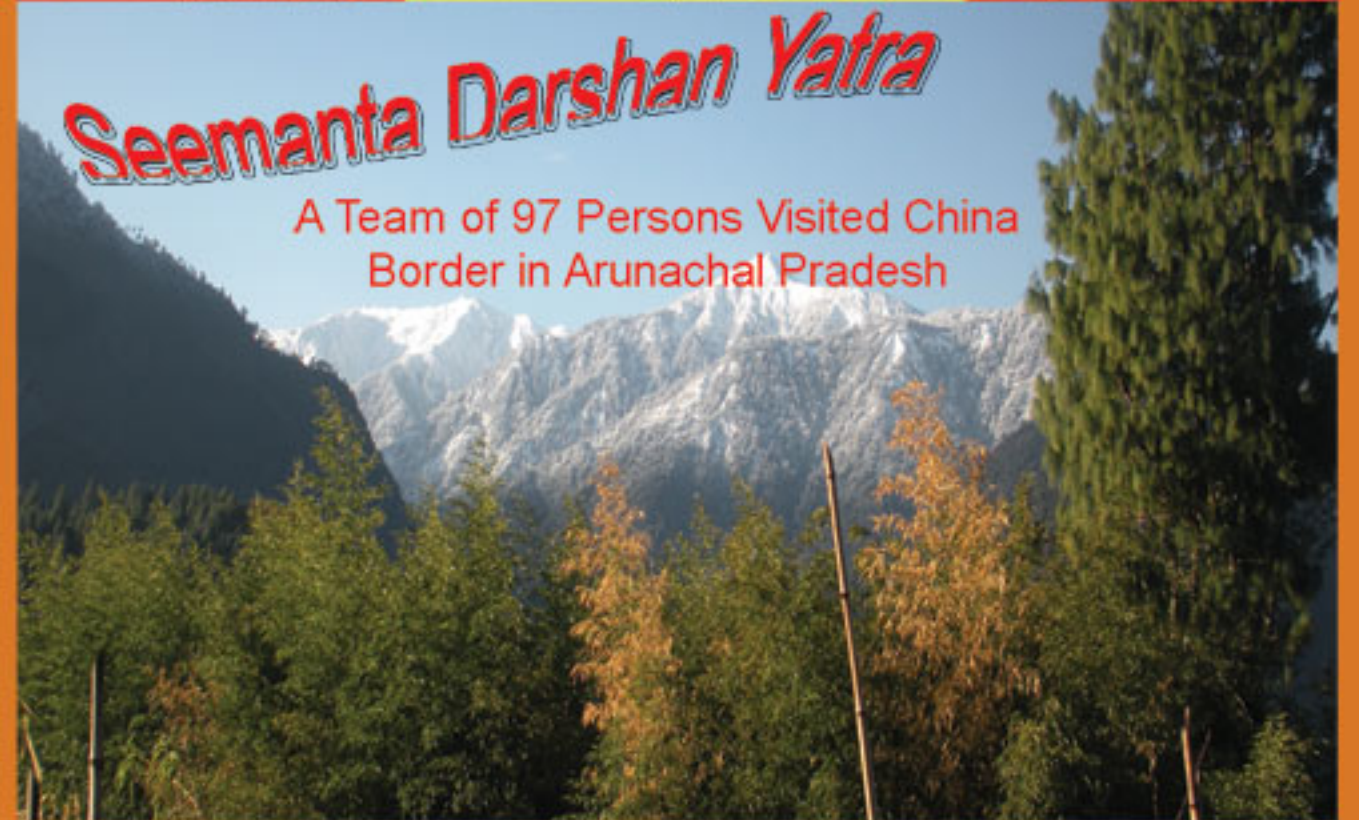
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Seemanta Darshan Yatra

A Team of 97 Persons Visited China
Border in Arunachal Pradesh



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Articles on **Eternal Faith and Culture** and different Socio-Cultural movements in Northeast are invited for publication.

TAMLA-DU Festival of Arunachal Pradesh

To retain the cultural identity and to unify the various diversified beliefs and practices existing in Mishmi community, the elders of the Mishmi community organised the Tamla-du on the 15th February 1972 as a major festival and has declared the 15th February as a local holiday (for the district) by the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh.



The term "TAMLA-DU" is in dialect of Towrah (Digaru) Mishmi. In Kaman (Miju) Mishmi dialect it is "TAKA THUNG". But in fact, this multi-lingual intermixed community has consensually recognised and accepted the term "Tamla-du". The "Tamla-du" or "Taka" means a ritual performed in and around a house or in a particular place of an area. Where as "Du" or "Thung" means a common puja. In other version the 'Tamla' refers to initial ritual and sacrifice which is considered auspicious for beginning of all kinds of puja or festivals. One more importance of Tamla- Du, in form of "NAMSAN", is organised in open field within the boundary of the village with an obvious objective of warding off evil spirits which are believed to be responsible for disease, accident, natural calamities and cruel actions in the society. The rituals aims at propitiating those evil spirits. The Tamla-Du is also performed during occupation of a newly constructed house as a precautionary measure against the evil spirits, believed to be occupying the place before hand.

Nagaland to Observe Lui-Ngai-Ni

IMPHAL, Feb 14: The Naga seed sowing festival, the Lui-Ngai-Ni, will also be celebrated at Dimapur in Nagaland with pomp and show where Nagaland Home Minister Imkong L Imchen will grace the occasion.

Meanwhile, the Lui-Ngai-Ni celebration committee has said that during the recently conducted pre-Lui-Ngai-Ni regional consultations held in the various hill districts of Manipur the various Naga tribes have confirmed for their participation in all the events scheduled during the festival at Senapati.

Apei Hinga, chief of Maram will be gracing the occasion as the "chief celebrant" and inaugurate the festival and elders from the tribes will perform the "Solemn Blessing Ceremony" on seeds for bumper harvest. Besides the participating Naga cultural troupes, guest cultural troupes would perform Kuki dance by Khengjang village, Gorkha dance from Kalapahar and a Chakpa-Lois cultural presentation.

Galaxy of Naga tribal Hoho leaders; elected representatives including government officials, women, youth and student leaders, village elders, journalists and general celebrants have confirmed their participation in the celebration, according to the festival organizing committee.

Queen Apei Hinga, born in 1933 was given to marriage at the age of 18 to King Karang, the Chief of Maram in 1951. They were settled in Maram Namdi village. Their married life which lasted for only 13 years was very eventful and were blessed with six sons and four daughters and Apei Hinga was coronated as the Chief in Maram tradition.

However, she was widowed in 1964 and her responsibility became more hectic but with the active advice and cooperation of the elders of the Maram community she carried out all the customary and traditional rituals and practices very efficiently and was respected by one and all.

Today, she is confidently dependant on her only surviving child, the begotten son K Namba who is shouldering the responsibility as the village headman of Maram Namdi (Maram Khulen). Queen Apei Hinga brought about many changes in the society by abolishing the primitive practice of N'bong Katei (dead while giving birth) in 1975; lifted the restriction on inter-clan and inter-tribe marriages.

She also proclaimed the freedom to villagers to start cultivation works on their own convenient season even before or after the Saraha kati lura manai (seed sowing ritual). As a Kindhearted Queen and a loving mother, she had extended help and shelter to many needy people.

On many occasions she had intervened and stopped fights and quarrels among villagers and her assertion was accepted as final and binding. Even on the event of a criminal who comes to her house for protection and shelter were protected by her and no one can touch them so long as they were under her shelter.

She is known and recognized as the link to the primitive way of life with the present generation by upholding the indigenous culture and traditional identity. Apei Hinga was declared and awarded the 'best mother' by the Naga Women's Union, Manipur in 2006.

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