

## SUBJECT 23 : MYTHOLOGICAL CONNECT

# M - 90%, C - 05%, R - 05%

The reference material lays out the literary writings and rituals being followed by the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh which establishes a deep historical connect with Ramayana. The Tani - Monkey war is indicative of the era of war between monkey soldiers of King Sugriva and Ravana. In remembrance of this great war the Apatani tribe carries out Myoko Ceremony every year which has a deep religious importance wherein the nominated warrior clan, as a mark of the monkey war, is supposed to hunt the monkeys and perform the rituals. These historical evidences are a testimony to the deep connection between Arunachal Pradesh and rest of the country, as the Monkey warriors were the main army of lord Rama.

### Reference:-

1. Osik, N. N (1996): A brief History of Arunachal Pradesh, Osmons Publications; New Delhi, pn - 19 & 20
2. Chutiya, Pavitra (2006) Ethnozoological Study of Nyishi Monpa and Apatani Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh; North Eastern Hill University, pn - 139 & 141
3. Dutta, S Tripathy, B (2006); Martial Traditions of North East India, Concept Publication Coy; pn - 115
4. Obang, Tayeng (2003); Folk Tales of Adis: Mittal Publications; pn - 154

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- M - Mythology
- C - Culture
- R - Religious

**Refer Attachment 1**

(Osik, N. N (1996): A brief History of Arunachal Pradesh, Osmons Publications; New Delhi, pn -19 & 20)

### **Tani Monkey War**

The first war ever recorded in the memory of the Adis is Tani's (Ancestor of Tani group of AP) war with the monkeys.

**Cause of the War :** It was Ninur, one of the kins of Tani who manufactured metallic plates, vessels, swords, daos, knives and the arrow heads. The monkeys used to help Ninur in his smithy works and in return obtained arrow heads from Ninur. One day, Ninur was brutally killed by some unknown murderers. Tani was roaming about to find out the killer. One day, Tani happened to see a shooting competition organised by the monkeys. One of the monkey's arrow got the target and the victor exclaimed with joy saying. "The arrow got its mark as the like arrow got Ninur and killed him."

Tani's anger grew no limit and he declared war against the monkeys. The monkeys attacked Tani with the bow and arrows and killed many of his kith and kins.

This legend although cannot be taken into historical evidence testifies the truth of the Ramayana epic which in Kishkindya Parva describes that Ramachandra, the prince of Ayodhya fought with Ravana, the king of Shri Lanka and rescued his wife, Sita with the help of monkey soldiers whose king was Sugriva and the commander was Hanuman. The Tani monkey war must have taken place during the Ramayana period.

Tani was utterly helpless since he had to fight against the powerful monkey forces with swords and daos only. As such, Tani submitted and pleaded the monkeys to end the war to which the monkeys gave a positive response.

***Downfall of the Monkeys*** : The monkeys were all powerful and incessantly harassed the men by attacking with the bows and arrows. The men were weaker and had to adopt some tricks to deal with the monkeys. So, the men sent a peace delegation and offered the monkeys a treaty of permanent peace and tranquillity. The Monkeys accepted the offer of friendship and to ratify the treaty agreed upon, the men proposed for a fishing expedition of both parties to a river. Accordingly, the men engaged themselves in blocking and diverting the course of the river with leaf, earth and sand and requested the monkeys to catch the fishes. The river soon dried up and the fishes

started fluttering and jumping for water. The monkeys who could not fathom the sinister plot of men, were overwhelmed with joy and jumped to catch the fishes. The monkeys were merrily catching fishes singing and dancing when the men released the water. The mighty current of the river carried off the monkeys and all were drowned except a female monkey.

The female monkey went searching for husband for many days without any result. One day, she laid on the ground and offered prayer to God to provide her with a husband. The God responded to her prayer and a Tok (Bamboo species) leaf fell into her vagina and made friction. She conceived and gave birth to a male baby. Out of their union, the generation of the monkeys continued.

## SUBJECT 23 : MYTHOLOGICAL CONNECT

### **Refer Attachment 2**

(Chutiya, Pavitra (2006)

Ethnozoological Study of Nyishi

Monpa and Apatani Tribes of

Arunachal Pradesh; North

Eastern Hill

University, pn - 139 & 141)

**Myoko ceremony and monkey hunting:** The Myoko is the oldest magical and religious festival of the Apatani celebrated for general welfare of the society. It is believed that by the myoko celebration society is protected from any type of epidemic and it brings elixir and prosperity to life and society. Wild fowls and non-human primates (*Macaca assamensis*, *M. mulatta*, and *Trachypithecus pileatus*) are sacrificed mainly during this ceremony. The use of skull and hands of the monkey is a must to celebrate the festival. So they are required to hunt monkey at any cost, their skull and hands are placed at the altar of the myoko during its ceremony. The hunting of monkey is the task undertaken by the male members and

hunting is done in particular forest demarcated by own clan or villages; others are not permitted to hunt therein.

In some village only one or two monkeys are hunted for a village during the myoko. The total number of monkeys hunted in the myoko ceremony per year is constant without any criterion, 8 for Hong village, 3 for Hija, 2 for both Hari and Michi-Bomin villages, 1 each for Tajang, Talyang, Dutta and Mudung-Tage. Thus, 19 primates are killed in every year. Killing percentage of primate is expressed in Figure 7.1.

The hunting of the monkey on the eve of the myoko ceremony has deep religious concern hence all sections (clan) of the Apatani society are not permitted to hunt but can use the body part of the monkeys killed by the authorized clan in the society. The different parts of the body are gifted to person of different social status (Table 7.2).

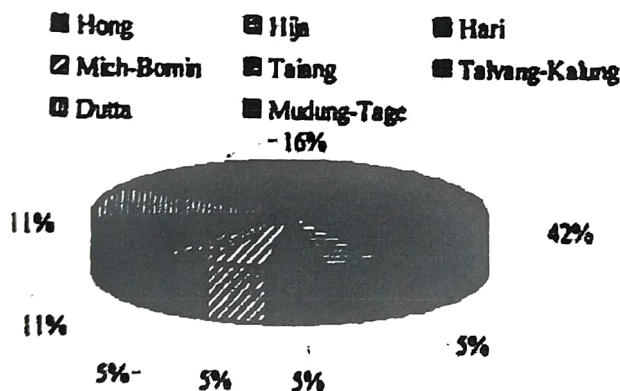


Figure 7.1 Relative percentage of primates hunted in different Apatani villages

**Refer Attachment 3**

(Dutta, S Tripathy, B (2006); Martial Traditions of North East India, Concept Publication Coy) pn -115)

infighting between Abo Tani<sup>7</sup> and Weyis.<sup>8</sup> Many a time, Abo Tani proved to be at upper hand as he was blessed by almighty, i.e. Ayu Donyi.<sup>9</sup> The warfare took place even between Abo Tani and Sebi (the monkey). The monkeys were so cunning and disturbing that, Abo Tani decided to finish them all. He induced the Sebis to enter inside a big wooden cage and they were burnt alive. But only one could be able to escape through

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a small hole. It is believed that the monkeys now belong to that only survived one.<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to know that the fight

Refer Attachment 4

(Dutta, S Tripathy, B (2006); Martial Traditions of North East India, Concept Publication Coy)  
; pn - 154)

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## THE STORY OF MONKEY

*N*inur Lomang was one of the sons of Pedong Nane and Yidum Bole. As he grew up, he developed into an expert architect and smith. He designed and made various metal pots and tools.

To help him in his work, Ninur Lomang employed a bevy of monkeys in his smithery. The monkeys toiled hard daily in his forge by pumping blowers of bamboo tubes. In the hope of earning handsome wages, they pumped the forge diligently as they hopped and swayed by the smouldering forge. When tired, they sang in a chorus to entertain themselves.

The famous smith however, did not pay their wages regularly, because of which they resented him. Coming to know of this one day, Medng Sene, instigated the monkeys against their employer. Consequently, the monkeys secretly plotted a trick to kill him and selected Banbo Tanang, one of their expert shooters to kill him. As planned, Banbo Tanang shot Ninur Lomang one day while he was working in his forge.

Every body was outraged with the great smith's cruel murder. Nevertheless, they could not do anything about it, as everyone was clueless about the killer's identity and purpose.

One day, while scouring a tract of jungle for hunting, a man saw a bevy of monkeys shooting arrows at some banana knots. One of them in a short while, whispered to

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At last, the wind listened to her prayer and blew fiercely. Trees swayed and leaves began falling from stems. Suddenly, a leaf dropped down in between her parted legs. Soon, she was impregnated by the leaf.

This is how the monkey has survived its near annihilation at the hands of the man.