



A Study of the Creation Myth in A·chik literature

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Abstract: This study will bring A·chik's point of view on the creation myth in literature. A·chik fond of storytelling. A·chik has Chera Sola, Serejing, Katta Agana, Ajea Doroa and Dani doka. All these are song forms. They preserved it from generation to generation through word of mouth. A·chik would tell Creation Myths in rhyme. Time passed A·chik learnt to collect it and write it down. Now they are preserving this precious wealth in written form. All over the world, there is always a tradition where every race or culture has a story about creation. As I talk about A·chik society they are no exception. They have myths about the creation of Earth and Heaven. A·chik God Tatara Rabuga created the world, placing every living and non-living in order. For them, it is not only the story but a treasure which connects them to their ancestors and also the way of preserving their culture and tradition for the future. This paper aims to highlight the cultural significance of creation myths in A·chik society. It will also encourage future researchers to conduct debt research. Additionally, I will summarize selected creation myths from A·chik.

Keywords: myth, creation, A·chik, help, encourage, literature.

There are songs, chants, and verses dealing with the creation myth in the A·chik literature such as the Chera Sola, the Serejing Ringa, the Katta Agana, the Ajea, the Doroa, Dania etc. Throughout this paper, I will attempt to illustrate how A·chiks passed myths from generation to generation through the use of song, chant, and the Katta Agana, Doroa, and Dania. The book *Religion and Relation: Method Application and Moral Location* (1992) by Ivan Strenski suggests there are some links between the creation myth and other myths. The foundation of all myths lies in it. He suggested that

the 'creation' of the world being the pre-eminent instance of 'creation', the cosmogony becomes the exemplary model for the creation of every kind.... origin myth continues and completes the cosmogonic myth(32,33).

The myth gives birth to each myth and fulfils the creation myth. In *Theory of Myth (Six Studies)* 1973 Adrian Cunningham refers to Mercia Eliade's belief that myth is always an origin story that orients a person in all aspects of his existence at once: for psychic and social orientation, as well as for his perspective on the universe as a whole (63). Myth is narrative, it existed before when there were no written records. *Myth: A Hand Book* (2004) quotes,

Myths are above all (but not exclusively) narrative, and that means we have to consider what happens when oral materials become written down, and hence subject to canonization (restriction to only a certain number of "true" stories)(8).

Alan Dundes in a book called *Sacred Narratives - Readings in the Theory of Myth* (1984) described the theory of creation myth,

psychological considerations of myth are represented by Switzerland's C.G.Jung's delineation of the notions of collective unconscious and archetype in his essay on the child archetype by an incisive critique of Joseph Campbell's approach to myth by Robert A Segal an American specialist in myth theory; and by folkloristic application of Freudian theory to the widespread earth-diver creation myth(2).

Charles Long suggested various approaches in his book *Alpha: The Myths of Creations* (1969) Myth and mythical thinking are studied across different disciplines, including theology, philosophy, psychology, ethnology, and anthropology. This book explores various mythological stories of creation, including emergence myths, world parent myths, creation from chaos and cosmic eggs, creation from nothing and earth-diver myths(1-221).

In The Beginning Creation Myth from Around the World(2009), Carolyn North and Addriene Robinson's book (published by ICRL Press (ix) says about creation myth,

the world as beginning in the fathomless, timeless Void—an ineffable darkness, a nothingness which contains the consciousness to yearn for more. This yearning is what shakes the motionless Void into motion, and that initial movement is what sets the whole thing out of its equilibrium into a shimmying dance of new possibilities(ix).

Creation myths and cosmogony myths are the same. Earth was created from nothingness in Carolyn North's book. As the earth was created, there was nothing and it came from emptiness. All these stories lead us to the conclusion

that the creator of the universe loved human beings, so he created them. All creations were created sequentially. After everything had been created, the creator was very pleased to see his creation (x, xi).

Humans can find answers to all their questions in creation myths. Despite all of Human's information, the creation of the world has answers to all his questions. As a result, C.S Lewis and Joseph Campbell on the Veracity of Christianity are described by James W. Menzies in *True Myth* as follows:

myth has served as a source to explain questions of creation and human origins, making sense of tragedy, finding meaning for one's existence, and to help prepare for life after death(2).

All tradition has creation stories. The creation story in the Bible Genesis describes a heavenly and a terrestrial God who created all life on earth. It is written in the Bible that in Genesis Chapter 1 verses 1-21 creation of everything is discussed. It is written that “*in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters*” (1). A voice came from God that separated the light from the darkness. The darkness was called night, and the light was called day. Then, God created the hole in the middle of the ocean. Whenever there is nothing but empty space, it is called the sky(1). Every tradition tells the story of the earth's creation. An overview of some creation myths of Northeast India.

In India, there are creation myths in all traditions. Angela Ingtý Wa·tre in her paper *Creation Myth of Karbis* (Mikir Tribe of Assam) title *Myth of Origin* writes about *Mikir's creation myth (Creation Myths of The Seven Tribes of the North-East India, 29)*, so she explained in this way, there is a supreme being among the Karbis, called Arnam Kethe, or Hemphu Lord, which is worshipped as a pantheistic god. At the beginning of creation, Hemphu was alone and feeling very lonely when Mukhrang approached him. In an attempt to find a piece of land, they approached all the gods, but none of them would provide them with any land. In order to create the world on the web, they moved about searching for a piece of land. As a result, one of the gods offered land, and the spider promised to help by creating a web, and the world was born(29).

Several renowned authors of Achik wrote creation myths based on their ancestral collection as well as their research areas. One of them is Dewansing Rongmuthu who wrote *Apasong Agana* (1970) with many creation stories to explore.

Creation stories in A·chik Literature:

In *Apasong Agana* (1970), Dewansing Rongmuthu collected oral stories from A·chik ancestors. The creation myth can be found in his collection of oral tales. His book clearly states that Dakgipa Rabuga A·ning Rana Chining created the earth and water. In his writings of the creation of the earth, the author describes the earth being measured, the earth added to compensate for its shortage, and the earth being made like a seed of sue, like a peel of chambil, as a twisted string, binding a bamboo basket, weaving a basket. As the layer is put on, the male puts the layer on. The young man folds the layers on as the layers are folded tight. Using bamboo strips, Bil·e the woman rolls the layers into a fine pattern for the heavens. Tom·e the woman ties everything together. Like a basket's rim, the sky is shaped. The edge of heaven is beautifully folded with bamboo strips(1). In the story, he described how the Mane was made beautiful and the Pilte firm. It was too narrow for the mortar, and the pestle hit the sky(2). Every single thing was created by Tatara Rabuga. Firmness gradually spread across the earth. Tatara Rabuga then cuts slashes for the ribs to distinguish between earth and water. The dry part was called earth and where there is water flows the river stream (2).

Caroline R. Marak in her *Creation Myths of the Seven Tribes of the North East India*(2016) described creation myth from A·chik oral literature(9,10). Here, she translated creation myths that A·chik keeps in oral form. She writes *they have a tradition of their migration, popularly recited in verse form, in much the same way as Katta Doka, their epic poetry, the A·chiks had no need to make up a myth about their origin. They do have myths, however, of the creation of human beings in general, the birth of the earth, its infancy, of the stars and galaxies, the origin of rocks and cliffs, of the plant world, origin of domestic fowls, of paddy, fire, cotton, of the great flood, of the earthquake, etc. They have myths about the first death and the firsts of many things*(10).

A·chik tells varieties of origin myths. It is believed in A·chik tradition that every living and no living were created. In order to give birth to earth, Tatara Rabuga the supreme God appointed Nostu Nopantu. Her book says that Tatara Rabuga was born from her mother's womb. At the time of Earth's creation, it was a mixture of soil and water. Marak says an A·chik had no need to invent a myth about their origin. However, they also have myths about infants, stars, galaxies, rocks and rivers, and about domestic birds, paddy, fire, cotton, the great flood, earthquakes, and the origins

of rocks and cliffs. Tatara Rabuga commanded Nostu Nopantu to give birth to earth. When the earth was young, it resembled a flat, barren bog, just earth and water mixed together. There were no features on the surface except for the enormous tree that was born with the earth. Mother Earth needed to be clothed with seed rocks. Ribs” need to be cut on the earth's surface so water can flow and form seas. It must also be cut to create dry land, springs, hills, and valleys(10). There is another version of the creation myth in A·chik. In this creation myth, Susimema Sangkildoma gave birth to all the living objects of the land and the waters: the sun, the stars, the god Susime, the demons, and the plants. While at the end giving birth to the fire she died of burns.

Julius L R Marak, in *Atchu Ambini Ku·bisring* (2004) brings other versions of creation in A·chik. He writes the name called Bisikrom-Bidatare-Tatara-Rabuga creates the earth(43-54). In his book Marak, write down A·chiks’ creation story. Bisikrom-Bidatare-Tatara-Rabuga command his subordinates goddesses Nostu Nopantu to take care of the earth but it was volatile. She couldn’t find anything to put her feet. Everything was floating because no earth was found on Earth. That is why Nostu Nopantu sent one after the other to bring earth from the bottom to create earth once again. Which will be liveable for any living organism(44).

Aschik has myths regarding the creation of stars. In their view, every natural phenomenon is the result of the efforts of gods and goddesses. The creation of stars was the work of the goddess Susime, daughter of Susimema Sangkildoma. It is believed that the goddess Susime and Salgra's mother died after giving birth to fire. As part of her mother's funeral preparations, Susime invited all to attend.

Conclusion: All children learn something important about their own traditions at an early age. Continually passed down from one generation to the next. By doing so, one specific tradition will be able to learn more about its past generations. By learning about their ancestors' good and bad experiences, they prepare themselves and their children for the future, providing wisdom and guidance to live a better life. Myth is merely not the stories of ancestors, but rather a way to impart knowledge to young people. When I was collecting information for my research paper, one interviewee told me that one lady who passed away had always wanted to share her knowledge with her descendants. She doesn’t want to take all the knowledge she acquired from her forefathers. She wants to pass it down to the coming generations. That is why she choose him to pass over. Regarded to this all stories she told was not only a story but a

treasure for them. Creation myth to A·chik is something they always wanted to preserve either in the form of songs or stories. There are many versions of the Cosmological myth, some of which are related to ancestral speculations. The myth of creation is captivating because of its facts regarding life's beginning, including the conception of events related to the world. Why do things like animals and plants grow, and what causes meteorological conditions to exist? In order to explain these origins, the myth of creation is used. As discussed in this paper's abstract, I have summarised the selected A·chik creation. In addition to being very helpful for researchers interested in A·chik creation myths, it's very useful to scholars.

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