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Donyipoloism: Old Age Ancestor Religion

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Introduction

Many laymen even arms chair scholars may argue *Donyipoloism* religion is revitalized after initiated by late *Talom Rukboji* as pioneer during 1970s. Though he started the movement for systematization and institutionalization in modern context otherwise, this religion was existing since time immemorial which was originated from *Changam Narba* (place from where *Abo Tanyi's* and its descendant migration's originated). The *Donyipoloism* is basically followed by the *Tanyi* ethnic group of Arunachal and Assam viz. Adi, Apatani, Galo, Mishng, Nyishi and Tagin. The religion Donyipoloism is derived from two words i.e. Donyi means Sun & Polo means Moon. The Nyubus(traditional priest) of *Nyishi* tribe also considers it as their ancestral and indigenous religion since time immemorial. As per definition given by Nyubu, the actual meaning of Donyi is Ajang or Ajang Ane, the literary meaning is Ane Donyi(mother sun) and polo means moon. All Nyubus used priestly language Ajang as Donyi during ritualistic chanting and considers Ajang Ane as supreme and take her name first before starting chanting known as Ajang Aaling fwngnam chanting part".

The *Ane Donyi* is perceives more spiritual with divinity than *Ato Polo*. She is consider as supreme goddess and *Polo* perceives more for calendar purposes means for calculation of day and night, seasons, time, months etc. in *Nyishi's* society. The combination of spirituality and calendar is important guiding forces in any human civilization so as *Donyipoloism* too.

Donyipoloism Religion is Named Based on Nyubus Ritual Chanting

As per the Nyubus (traditional priest) of *Nyishi* community's recitation, traditional ritual chanting, folk chanting or folksong. There are various traditional ritual stages to perform and to complete any ritual ceremonial. As per Nyubus ritual language, the name of Donyi is called Ajang. In order to complete any ritual ceremonial, the following are the actual ritual process followed and narrated by the traditional Nyubus.

1. **Ajang Aaling Fwngnam:** This is first chanting of Nyubus in where Ajang Aaling Fwngnam means narration or chanting about genesis and power of Ajang Jangtey Anv. As per, Nyubus terminology, Ajang means Donyi and Ajang Jangtey means supreme mother sun. In the beginning of any ritual chanting, this Ajang Aaling Fwngnam is compulsory verses chanted by any Nyubus and this is prayer or seeking blessing for going into invisible spiritual world for successful completion of ritual chanting and activities. So, Nyubus considers Donyi as supreme and first in *Nyishi* human civilization,
2. **Langpu-Langta Fwngnam:** The second chanting stage or verses used by Nyubus after Ajang Aaling fwngnam is Langpu Langta fwngnam means narration about roles of Nyubuus and its origin through asupernatural power gifted by yernebo Anv Donyi,

- 3) **Doging /Tadey Gingnam:** The third stages is Doging/Tadey Gingnam chanting means narration of genesis of phratry, clans and migratory routes of ailing person's family till present generation as a part of searching soul.
- 4) **Namchang Noloko:** The fourth one chanting stage is Namchang Noloko means chanting or narration about searching of soul in the dwelling or settlement places of ailing family/person with human relationship with mother nature specially land, river, forest and universe during course of migration so that proper purification can be done,
- 5) **Yaji Yalo Menam:** The fifth stage chanting is about searching of souls or invisible form of ailing person for curing. As per indigenous faith belief system, every object have two form i.e. physical and soul form (Yaji Yalo). The Nyubus searched the soul of the ailing person to bring back with purification during ritual.
- 6). **Yalo Namchang:** The sixth stage chanting is convincing the soul (Yalo) to come back to own family's namchang(village) and mikram(parent family) so that ailing person can be cured with re-joining with parents family members,
- 7). **Pwre Tannam:** The final stage of Nyubus ritual chanting is Pwre(offering) to deities as exchange of gifts for peace, prosperity and happiness of family/clans or human being. Also, promise for respects to maintain balance with the nature. Offering is in every religion though nature of offering may vary.

Forms of Ajang Ane(Ane Donyi)

The Nyishi community, based on traditional Nyubus chanting and philosophy considered *Ajang Jangtey Aane* (mother sun) as supreme goddess. As per Nyubus Ajang Aaling fwngnam chanting, the Ajang Jangtey Ane has different forms and name with re-incarnation spiritual power. The supreme one is Ajang Jangtey Ane (priestly term of supreme mother sun) which is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. She is everywhere and created everything and came first in the universe. The second incarnated of Jangkam Ajang is Nyikam Donyi in physical or celestial body form whom Nyishi considers as Jangkam Ajang Ane (universal mother Donyi/sun); she is source of universal light, energy and guiding positive energy to universe. So, all celestial bodies revolves around the sun including earth and consider Ajang came first than to Changtey Ane(mother earth). So, name is common and same i.e. Ajang Ane. The last incarnated form of Ajang Jangtey Ane was as pretty lady form named Donyi Bijine/Donyi Yai Chumji in human form whom Abo Tanyi married and after she became wife of Abo Tanyi, she guided him about indigenous way of life, indigenous culture and tradition. She told Abo Tanyi about code of conduct and upcoming civilization phases. She saved Abo Tanyi from different dangers and even protected from extinction. So, Abo Tanyi considers Ajang Jangtey Ane as his supreme goddess and henceforth started worshipping. Hence, still even Nyubus pray and take Ajang Jangtey Ane in their first stage ritual chanting in form of Ajang Aaling Fwngnam before starting any ritual chanting. So, Ajang Jangtey Ane is considered as supreme goddess (supreme mother sun) and came earlier than Changtey Ane.

Background of Worship to Ane Donyi by Tanyi Ethnic Group

As per Nyubus narration, one day, *Abo Tanyi* got trapped from evil designed in the hands of his jealous brother *Robo Pacha*. One day *Robo Pacha* by treacherous means closed *Abo Tanyi* in the *Pakung*(coffin) and hung on the *Saa-Subu Langlo/Saa Ginglo*(primordial ocean) as a revenge to *Tanyi*. *Abo Tanyi* prayed to every living creature for help but no one came for his rescued. The wood cutter bird (*Tading Tarring*) bored a hole near the eyes of *Abo Tanyi* on the coffin and the *Takeh*(squirrel) cut the rope and coffin fell into the ocean. He was drowning, at last *Taakhe*(ginger)

came and when it saw the life of *Abo Tanyi* was in danger than ginger rushed to the abode of *Aane Donyi* and informed her that today human race will finish if not rescue to *Abo Tanyi*. Than *Ane Donyi* immediately sent *Chahi Tano*(sacred small thread made of grass) and within a just fraction of minute *Tanyi* found himself to be in front of his house. Due to prompt action of *Takhe*(ginger), the *Abo Tani's* life was saved by *Aane Donyi* and that of the human race too. So, ginger plays important roles in every *Nyihsi's* ritual through helping for saving of *Tanyi's* life. So, priest use leaf and roots of ginger for healing from illness and also for ward off evils spirits. It is belief that, *Ane Donyi* power is with ginger.

Ane Donyi's Verse (Gamle)

In due course of civilization, the *Abo Tanyi* married *Ane Donyi* after winning so many competitions to all male deities and had two children. One day *Tanyi* disobeyed his wife named *Donyi Bijinne/Donyi Yai Chumji* advised while on trip to bring her sister *Ressani* for their baby sitting from *Ajang Jangtey/Donyi Bijine/Yayi Chumji Namlo*(the abode of Sun). The *Ane Donyi* told that in order to reach *Donyi ne Namlo*, there are two routes viz. one was *Myori* (wrong and narrow routes or evils prone: the land of misery, sorrow and poverty) where *Hwma Tada* the deity of poverty stay and another one was *Myoba* (the right path which passed through the abode of happiness, where all benevolent deities inhabit). The *Ane Donyi* advised *Abo Tanyi* to take *Myoba* route but he deliberately neglected her wife's advised and ignored and took the journey through *Myori* route. She knew that *Hwma Tada* (deity of poverty), an evil man had long been conspiring an evil design against *Tanyi*. On the way, he came acrossed *Hwma Tada* and induced to fights or exchange all his precious beautiful dresses and worthy ornaments with that of *Hwma Tada's* unworthy rugged and valueless objects made of wood, grass and bamboo. *Abo Tanyi* after lost his valuable ornaments and dresses with unworthy dress with *Hwma Tada*, he realized his great mistake and could not proceed further to *Ajang JangteyAne/Bijine/Donyi Yayi Chumji's namlo*. He decided to return his home back and camouflaged as disguised dog but *Aane Donyi Bijine* knew, it was *Tanyi* but for confirmation she asked her two childrens namely *Bamchari* and *Bamcharo* to offer the spit on the palm and told, if it licks then it is your father *Abo Tanyi*. The two children performed same and dog licked the spit. After confirmation, *Ane Donyi* got angry and decided to go back to her parents' home *Ajang Jangtey ne Namlo*(*Donyi's* abode). Because, she suggested *Tanyi* many a times for discipline, gentle and sober but all the times, he disobeyed her advised. When she was leaving, *Abo Tanyi* caught her feet and begged for staying back but *Aane Donyi* refused. But suggested him to devote her every verses and teaching as his guiding philosophical knowledge for betterment of mankind and promised to bestow her blessing for peace, prosperity and happiness of the human race as and when the human race on the earth remember and pray her with pure heart and mind by following her every verses. So, it is still believed that she will come to rescue human race and she usually comes in two separate physical appearances viz.in normal time, visit to examine human activities as an ordinary woman and appreciates that leads with honest and devoted to works with sincerity, cleanliness, purity in hearts and deeds, and disappearances from those who are involved in wrong deeds. And other is that *Ane Donyi* visits on auspicious occasions during the time ritual if invoking with pure heat and clean heart to bestowed upon human being. So, still *Nyishi* people always pray *Ane Donyi* every time and remember whenever any rituals and prayers are offer. During happy and sorrowful moments too, remember her, as she is watching from abode. So, in order to reach *Aane Donyi* and to get blessing of her, one must adopt her five qualities through her verses, she taught to *Abo Tanyi*. The first is "*Atur to* means be strong by heart, mind, body and spirit, the second one is "*Anya to*" means love other

creatures, feel good to other and see things beautifully, the third one is “*Darwq to*” means be pure in heart, be fresh and clean both physically and morally, the fourth one “*Swrso to*” be peace both in mind and action (behave in soft and humble way and last one is “*Huto to*” means be cheerful, openness in heart and mind and brightness both in one’s mind and actions without hurting others. So, the believers of Donyipoloism seems always liberal and secular approaches irrespective faith and religion.

Change and Continuity

In every day-to-day life, the Nyishi people always remember Ane *Donyi* as source of guiding, blessing and energy. The Nyishi believe that she is vigilant about our omission and commission and she knows our past, present and future too. She also even knows your inner thinking and every deeds/actions. She is watching from her abode *Donyi ne Namlo*. But there are certain changes also occurred in Donyipoloism. Now, the holy prayer institution of *Donyipoloism of Nyishi* religion is known as *Nyedar Namlo* which is systematized began from 2001 in Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh. The “*Nyedar*” means “purity, clean and crystal” and “*Namlo*” as ‘palace or sacred home’. The prayer house is established in every district and *Nyetam* (holy book of *Donyipoloism’s Nyedar Namlo* meaning “commandments”) which is being written for prayer codes and process. The Nyishi intellectual and thinkers is doing hard work to codify and documents the Priest’s version of chanting. Now, through *Nyedar Namlo*, an attempt is being made for continuous flow of old age faith and belief i.e. Donyipoloism in an organized way in discipline manner in the hearts of every soul.

Conclusion

There is shifting of prayer system in the *Donyipolism* having both traditional and modern approaches based on core values of *Aane Donyi’s* teaching but others faith believers consider it as copy from others and influenced by someone which baseless and defaming the wisdom of great Abo Tanyi, ancestors and pioneers. The Donyipoloism is most liberal and secular religion of the world in where embraced everyone with following mutual respect and love but today that liberal and secular philosophy became factors for danger of its existing in own native place. So, in order to systematized and keep in orderly way. All Nyubus chanting and verses are being documented from oral tradition to written documented form to adapt with in modernity.

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