The Nuosu Book of Origins

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In the ancient times,
a dragon was born in the sky,
and the dragon lived on the earth.
A dragon was born on the earth,
and the dragon lived in the rivers.
Adult fish played with the dragon,
    comparing each other’s beauty.¹
Fingerlings were the dragon’s playmates;
fish fry were the dragon’s good friends.
A dragon was born in the rivers,
and the dragon lived in the cliffs.
Rocks played with the dragon,
    comparing each other’s beauty.
Honeybees were the dragon’s playmates;²
little honeybees were the dragon’s good friends.
A dragon was born in the cliffs,
and the dragon lived in the fir forests.
Deer played with the dragon,
    comparing each other’s beauty.
Muntjac were the dragon’s playmates;
water deer were the dragon’s good friends.³
A dragon was born in the fir forests,
and lived in Ggupcho Chohxo.
Ggupcho Chohxo was
where Celestial Swan Woman, Ggumo Arryr, was born.⁴
She later lived at the mountains in Vondi Hlyqu, where the beauty of Hlyqu was born.\textsuperscript{5}
She later lived in Dishy Shuonuo, where Dishy Majie was born.\textsuperscript{6}
She later lived in Olu Zzivo,\textsuperscript{7} where Zzimo Hnimo was born.
She later lived in Orro Ndassy,\textsuperscript{8} where Zyzyr Amy was born.\textsuperscript{9}
A woman of the Zy family married into the Gi family; a woman of the Gi family married into the Pu family, and gave birth to the three daughters of the Pu family.
The Pu daughter Jy married into the Jy family; the Pu daughter Ma married into the Ma family, leaving only Pumo Hniyyr, who did not marry.

Pumo Hniyyr
for three years prepared the weaving equipment, took three months to set up her backstrap loom.
The ground spike was like a star; the batten glimmered like eagle wings; the shuttle moved through the warp like a honeybee;\textsuperscript{10}
the loom beam jumped up and down; the weft threads were like a rainbow.
There at Zhazhajjielie a pair of eagles soared above,\textsuperscript{11}
coming from Dihxo Gulch.
On the earth was pair of eagles, that flew from Zhyenge Mountain.
In Suopyr was a pair of eagles, that flew from the middle of Black Fern Mountain.\textsuperscript{12}
A pair of eagles in the human realm came from Nyuluvi.
Finally, four dragon-eagles came from within the fir forests.
As Pumo Hniyyr prepared to go see the eagles, prepared to go play with the eagles, three drops of eagle blood splattered down onto Pumo Hniyyr’s body; falling down so strangely.
One drop fell on her head, and seeped into nine strands of her hair; one drop fell on her waist, and seeped through nine layers of her cape; one drop fell on her lower body, seeping through nine layers of her skirt.

Pumo Hniyyr thought it was the polluting force of a pervert ghost. No matter what, someone must be sent to deal with it. “Send Vaddur Vawa. Have him go and invite a bimo.”

He made three circles at the head of the village, but there was no bimo at the head of the village. He made three circles at the tail of the village, but there was no bimo at the tail of the village. There was, however, a bimo in the middle of the village. But the grand bimo was not at home, only the bisse apprentice Gaga was at home. The bisse apprentice Gaga sat thus: The bottom layer was a bamboo mat; the middle layer was a wool felt mat; the top layer was loose hair of muntjac and water deer. His left hand opened the scripture box; his right hand reached in to the bottom, and took out the sacred scriptures.

He turned to the first page, but it had no answer; the ink gave no remedy. He turned another pair of pages—it said it had to do with a pervert ghost. He turned another three pair of pages—it said it had to do with a living being. Lastly, he turned to the fifth pair of pages, saying, “It said to use a yellow hen, and use a sacred willow branch to summon Gefi, the life-giving soul.” In this manner, will be produced a sacred being.” The bimo came to Pumo’s house, came to find the life-giving Gefi spirit. Pumo Hniyyr at dawn gave off a white mist,
and at noon gave birth to Alu.
Zhyge Alu,
on the night he was born,
refused to drink his mother’s milk.
On the second night after birth,
refused to sleep alongside his mother.
On the third night after birth,
refused to wear the clothes his mother made for him.
Because of this perverse behavior,
his mother put him in a cave.
In the cave lived dragons;
Alu understood dragon language
and called himself a dragon.
The days he was hungry, he ate dragon food,
the days he was thirsty, he drank dragon milk,
and when cold he wore dragon clothes.  

Zhyge Alu
was born on the day of the dragon,
in the year of the dragon.
His birth was in Lu Ddi Ho, to the southeast,
and his name was called Alu.
A year after
Zhyge Alu’s birth,
while out with those tending pigs,
he made a bow of a bamboo strip,
and used grass stalks as arrows.
Two years after his birth,
while out with those herding sheep,
he carried a bamboo-stalk bow.
Three years after his birth,
while out with those conducting their affairs,
he carried a wooden bow.
In battles he was cool-headed;
his archery stance was steady.
In the fourth and fifth years after his birth,
his ancestors in the sky;
his roots on earth.
He carried four magical bows,
and carried four magical arrows.
He wore four sets of magical armor,
and led four packs of magical dogs,  
and rode four magical horses.

As he prepared to measure the ancestral grounds,  
as he prepared to measure the homeland,²²  
he shot arrows from the east and west.  
The arrows stuck in Joturmuggur.

He shot arrows crosswise from the north and south,  
and again the arrows stuck in Joturmuggur;  
If you don’t believe it,  
there are still marker stones there to prove it.