The Nuosu Book of Origins
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In the ancient past,
a nijju talisman fell from the sky,
fell onto Mount Ngejjiejjieli,
and started a raging fire.¹
The nine skies burned until night;
for nine nights burned until dawn.
by day the burning made clear spires of smoke;
by night the fires were very bright.
The sky was burning;
the earth was burning.
Burning to transform the ancestors;
burning to transform the parents.²
Transforming, transforming,
two sons of Gewo were thus transformed.
The earth was round as a drum;
the spring winds blew wildly.
Could they be transformed into ancestors?
They were unable to be transformed into ancestors.
Could they be transformed into progenitors?
No, they were unable to be transformed into progenitors.
White clouds and the yellow clouds
were sent to the human world.
Could they change into living creatures?
They were unable to change into living creatures.
Could they change into creatures that produce life?
They were unable to change into creatures that produce life.
Male copper and female iron
were sent to the human world.
Could they change into living creatures?
They were unable to change into living creatures.
Could they change into living beings?
They were unable to change into living beings.
Yellow snow and red snow
were sent to the human world.
Could they change into living creatures?
They were unable to change into living creatures.
Could they change into living beings?
They were unable to change into living beings.
Transforming, transforming,
at this time, the Ssussevoge Man was born.\(^3\)
About this Ssussevoge Man—
The first generation was as tall as a person sitting;
the second generation was tall as a person standing;
the third generation was as tall as a pine tree;
the fourth generation was as tall as a mountain peak;
the fifth generation was as tall as the sky.
They dully hulked along,
wavering back and forth,
wobbling back and forth,
listing back and forth,
floating all about,
neither dead nor alive.
Magpies lived on their heads;
honeybees lived on their waists;
sysy birds lived in their noses;
pine squirrels lived in their armpits;
jyli birds lived in their navels;
ants lived on the soles of their feet.
Could they change into living creatures?
They were unable to change into living creatures.
Could they change into living beings?
They could not change into living beings.
Then, at that time,
Ssussevoge’s family
sent a giant spider,
to go up to the sky to ask the reason.
The big spider
went to the world of the sky
and sat on the Sky Spirit Ngeti Gunzy’s knee. 4
Ngeti Gunzy said,
“Dirty things from the world below have entered my home.”
And he angrily broke the spider into three parts:
Its head was thrown in a pile of rocks,
its waist was thrown in a river,
and its tail thrown among pine trees.
Seven to thirteen days later,
Ngeti Gunzy’s wife
got a spider web in her eye. 5
Because of this situation,
Ngeti Gunzy
began to look everywhere for a bimo,
everywhere searching for those telling fortunes and divining;
going three times around the head of the village;
going three times around the tail of the village.
In the middle of the village he found a bimo.
But the grand bimo was not at home,
only a bisse apprentice was at home.
The apprentice Gage
turned the pages of the sacred book.
The paper pages had things to say;
the black ink had things to tell:
“On the wide expanses of the world below,
in Ssussevoge’s family,
there lived a giant spider.
When someone came to your house to invite a bimo,
the spider was cut into three pieces.
The head was thrown into a pile of rocks,
the waist was thrown into water,
the tail was thrown in among pine trees.
As for Ngeti Gunzy’s wife,
her eyes grew spider webs.
This is the reason.”
After that, Ngeti Gunzy sent a pair of rats to circle the top of the rocks three times, and circle the end of the rocks three times, and return to the middle of the rocks, to search for the spider’s head. It was found beneath the rocks. He then sent a pair of otters to circle the head of the waters three times, to circle the ends of the waters three times, and return to the middle of the waters to search; but they did not find anything in the middle of the waters. Finally he sent a pair of hunting dogs to circle the head of the fir forest three times, to circle the end of the fir forest three times, and return to the middle of the fir forest to search—and they found the spider’s tail in the fir forest.

Across the way lived Anre; Anre wove silver thread. On this side lived Vosa; Vosa spun gold thread. And they used the threads to connect the head and tail of the spider. They connected the head and tail, so today spiders have no waists.

After that, a bimo was invited, invited to the world of humans, to come and do a ritual. A wild pig was captured for a sacrifice, a small pig was caught to bring as an offering; so the magpies living on the being’s heads were flung off, flung into the deep forests.

After that, an old bear was captured as a sacrifice; a small bear was caught as an offering. The bee nests in their waists were flung onto the steep cliffs. The ssysy birds that built the nests in their noses were flung into the mountain valleys;
the squirrels that built nests in their armpits were flung out onto the earth; the *jjizy* birds who made nests in their navels were flung into the middle banks of the fields; the doves that made nests in their waists were flung into the mountain forests. After that, a small pig was caught as a sacrifice; a small chicken was caught as an offering. The ants that built nests on the soles of their feet were flung onto the earthen mountains. Were the persons able to become real living creatures or not? They were not able to become real living creatures. Were the persons able to become real living things? They were not able to become real living things. After that, *Ge* fell down from the sky.⁹ *Ge* rotted for three years, three columns of white mist rose up to the sky, then red snow fell three times. For nine days it melted until dusk, for nine nights melted until dawn; melted to become our ancestors, melted to become our progenitors. Common purification rites were done nine times; vaunted purification rites were done nine times. Then ice became bones, snow became meat, the wind became breath, falling snow became blood, stars became eyes, and in the end they became the people of snow— the twelve sons of snow.¹⁰

Of the twelve snow tribes, six groups had blood; six groups had no blood. Of the six without blood, one group was grasses.
Black-headed grass grows
in the grassy places,
in three hundred grassy places.
The second group was trees—
white cypress was a snow tribe.\textsuperscript{11}
The third group was fir trees—
the fir trees growing in the high mountains.
The fourth group was \textit{bbyzy} grass—
the long-legged \textit{bbyzy} grass was a snow tribe.
The fifth group was \textit{punuo} grass—\textsuperscript{12}
black \textit{punuo} grass was a snow tribe,
the \textit{punuo} grass growing in the marshlands.
The sixth group was green vines,
growing at the foot of trees and in caverns.

The six groups with blood were:
One group was frogs.
The frog groups had three brothers,
living in the marshy places.
The frog tribe’s eldest son
became Uoba Nyuomgu,
and lived in the black earth place.
The frog tribe’s second son
was Uoba Qihni,
and lived in the marshy places.
The frog tribe’s youngest son
became the frog species Frog God,
and lived in people’s houses.\textsuperscript{13}
And there were more and more types of frogs.

The second group was snakes.
The snake tribe’s eldest son
became a \textit{tusi} dragon,\textsuperscript{14}
and lived in the high, barren cliffs.
The snake tribe’s second son
was the \textit{shygobbohlyr} snake,
that lived in the top of the fields.
The youngest son of the snake tribe
was the \textit{bbujjiekehni} snake,
that lived in the muddy places.
The snake tribe became larger and larger.

The third group was large vultures,
the king of the winged creatures;
the vultures of the vast sky,
living in the white clouds and mountains.
The *tusi* of the winged creatures
was the peacock,
living at the Diepa Shunuo Sea.\(^{15}\)
The head of the winged creatures
was the swan,
living in the Ggucho Chohxo Gorge.
The second son of the vulture
was an eagle.
The eagle’s eldest son
was the big-headed black eagle,
living in the fir forests.
The eagle’s second son
was the spotted-face white eagle,
living in Shuonuo Mountain.
The eagle’s smallest son
was the short-winged cliff eagle,
freely soaring around.
The vulture’s third son
became the red-winged hawk,\(^{16}\)
living in the Ganluo area.

The fourth group was the old bears.\(^{17}\)
The black bear had one mother and two sons.
They spread out into the fir forests,
and the black bears became plentiful.

The fifth group was monkeys.\(^{18}\)
The red monkeys had one mother and two sons.
They spread out into the forests,
and the red monkeys became plentiful.
The sixth group was humans.
The humans lived in the human world,
and the humans, in their realm, became plentiful.
After that,
Four eggs dropped from the snow
and fell onto the grass.
The sparrows thought they were their eggs,\textsuperscript{19}
so the sparrows took them to hatch.
But they would not hatch,
so the sparrows threw them aside.
Doves and hawks took them to hatch,
but they would not hatch.
So the doves and hawks left them.
A sharp-eyed rat came to hatch them.
But they would not hatch,
so the sharp-eyed rat left them.
When the butterflies from the deep forests and valleys
found out, they came to hatch them.
Clearer and clearer,
brighter and brighter,
the front feet were like artificial limbs,
the back feet were round,
the mane was like a bamboo fence,
the tail was like a bundle of bamboo,
eyelashes were like dried branches,
eyeballs were like deep pools.
Of the strange steeds,
Hali Anuo was the strangest,
and the types of horses multiplied.\textsuperscript{20}

After that,
while following the other sorts of creatures
to drink the waters of wisdom and waters of dullness,\textsuperscript{21}
it was discovered that the spirit frog had been kicked off the road.
The elder spirit frog said to
Shyly, the son of snow,
“If you please, put me back on the road,
then I’ll tell you which is the water of wisdom.”
Shyly, the son of snow, put it back on the road.
The elder spirit frog
said to Shyly, the son of snow,
“Below, the waters of wisdom are held in the leaves of
the \textit{shuoma} flower;\textsuperscript{22}
above, the waters of dullness are held in the painted wooden bowl.”

The frog told this to Shyly, the son of snow, and Shyly, the son of snow, drank the waters of wisdom held in the petals of the shuoma flowers. Other sorts of living beings all drank the water of dullness. The shuoma flower petals were pecked by a crow, so that is why crows are intelligent.