

THE CURSE AND LEGACY OF THE NAATH AND JAANG PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN

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ABSTRACT

If the legendary mythology between the Nuer and Dinka existed and is true, what traces of myth that becomes legend supported this kind of notion? I summarize the mythologies taken from the oral tradition from both communities and documented sources from the Anglo-Egyptian historians, anthropologists, and administrators who had the first contact with both communities and were informed about the myth. This paper will give you another view on how you normally look at the relations between the Nuer and the Dinka tribes.

INTRODUCTION

In this article, I set out to broaden the scope of understanding of the legendary mythology surrounding the Nuer and the Dinka. Following what few authors have already written and the undocumented oral history among the two communities, I argue that the competition between the two communities is about curse and legacy. The Nuer of today are called with their ancient name 'Naath' while the present-day Dinka are called the 'Jaang' or 'Jieng'. Both live side-by-side in South Sudan, have the same culture and traditions and also share borders. These two neighbours for a long time have been competing over resources such as pastures and water for their animals, which has resulted in raids and deaths. They are traditional competitors, and the current politics of the country is being steered in the direction of their choice. They have more similarities than differences compared to the rest of the South Sudanese people. According to history, the two came from Babylon, where their ancestors ruled the kingdom and who, after their rule collapsed, migrated and established civilisations and kingdoms in Egypt, along the Nile, with their animals. As a result of Egypt being invaded by foreign forces, they found themselves in the current geographical location that constitutes South Sudan. Some historians have always recognised this journey, and Chancellor Williams puts it keenly:

The Blacks who are under pressure today in Bhar el Ghazel, Upper Nile and Equatoria are still fighting for survival against the all-conquering Colored Arabs just as their fore-fathers fought five thousand years ago, from the Mediterranean in Lower Egypt to where they are now making a last stand . . . they have been massacred by the hundreds and villages left in ashes, but they fight on. This-all Black region is kept isolated and cut off from the developments, and higher levels of life seen in the Arab dominated Sudan. These Southern Sudanese have remained (even in 1973) ‘primitive’ and ‘Pagan’, just as their brothers elsewhere had to remain under similar circumstances.¹

Both tribes have come a long way to settle in their current geographical location and have been blessed with abundant natural resources – the same can be said about their traditional feuds. Some mythologies trace the origins of such feuds to the allocation of wealth by their aged father, who wanted to ensure that each child had their own share of resources to establish themselves before he died. Unfortunately, things did not go the way they all wanted, and this was believed to have generated the curse which has plagued the descendants of the two tribes to this day.

NAATH AND JAANG MYTHOLOGY

Henry Rawlinson, who lived from around 1810 to 1895, found that the people who established civilisation in Babylon were of Kush or Kushite origin. And those who once inhabited Akkad and Sumer were black people who called themselves Sag-gig-ga, which means ‘black-headed people’. Such a name was given to them by Akkadians, Semitic people who shared borders with them. Akkadia was one of the lands occupied by black-headed people for generations and conquered by force. John Baldwin, who wrote the 1869 book Prehistoric Nations, specified that those early colonists who settled in ancient Babylonia were the same race of people currently occupying the Upper Nile region in Sudan. These people were later called Nilotic and made the Upper Nile their home. Along the stretch of that valley, people who were full of energy, known as Sumerians, built the world’s first cities more than 5,000 years ago. They were the first to invent the system of writing and were also the first to use wheeled vehicles.

It is also mentioned in different books including the Bible that it was the descendants of Ham (Africans) that built and occupied Mesopotamia and were called Sumerians. The word Kush came from the Kushites. Kush means ‘black’, and it is another name for Ethiopia, which also comes from the Greek word Aithiop meaning ‘black’ or ‘burnt face’. Many people will agree that Kush is another name for the Upper Nile or ancient Nubia. It is the area that extends from Sudan to the horn of Africa up to the eastern side of the Red Sea. This region dates to about 3800 BC and has the oldest known agricultural tradition forming almost the same place as that of Sumerians. Sumerian features have been agreed by many scholars as having a dark chocolate or a dark complexion, a thin and long stature but a sturdy frame, an oval face, stout nose, straight hair and also a full head, like the ancient Egyptians.

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There were wars since 2300 BC; a man named Sargon the Great of Akkad conquered the Sumerians and ruled over the Kish city in Iraq. He was from the Semitic desert group of nomads who later settled in Mesopotamia just north of the Sumer after the Sumerians were defeated and eventually migrated to Africa.

¹ Chancellor Williams (1987). *The Destruction of Black Civilization. Great Issues of a Race from 4500 BC to 2000 AD.* Third World Press Chicago. Printed in the United States of America, p. 194.

It was Ham's son Cush who is credited for founding the Babylonian Empire, and his empire goes back before 4000 BC. After Cush, it was his son Nimrod who continued building the city and extended his rule to conquering his neighbours, taking over Erech, Accad, and Calneh (all these towns are in the modern geographical location of Iraq), expanding his empire.² The leader of the empire was Nimrod, and it was during his fall when the Babylonian Empire crumbled, which led to the migration of the Naath³ people (later called Nilotic with their association with the Nile) out of Mesopotamia. Nimrod was described as a great hunter who liked to dress up with his trophies of the hunt which included leopard skin and horn headdresses.⁴ Even today, most African cultures, particularly the Naath and the Jaang, still use leopard skin for their rituals and sacrifices just as their forefather Nimrod did in Babylon. Horns are still used as trumpets for war. It was mentioned in the Bible that Babylon was the empire where the languages of the world were distributed after the fall of the Tower of Babel, which was built during Nimrod's reign.

The leader of the empire was Nimrod, and it was during his fall when the Babylonian Empire crumbled, which led to the migration of the Naath

Traditional mythology dictates that the Naath and Jaang were brothers who come from the same parents. Jaang was the elder son who was much-loved by their mother while Naath was the youngest adored by their father. As an old man, their father studied his children for a long time and realised that Jaang could not hold the family together and knew him as rough. Thus unable to unite his family after he has passed on. This was in consideration of the elder son as the deputy parent who, through his position as an elder in the family, is tasked to support his younger brothers.

In around 101 BC, the family moved to present-day Khartoum and settled there. When their father grew old, he asked his children to see him so he can distribute his wealth among them. His wife asked him in private, 'Among the two cows we have, who is going to be given the heifer and who is going to take the old cow?' The old man said the calf would be given to Naath because he was young and responsible. The old cow will be given to Jaang because he could fend for himself and he is also an elder. Their mother did not say anything further. Instead, she stepped out discontented. In the evening, their father called his two children and informed them that his health was deteriorating and that he could pass on anytime. He informed his two sons that he was going to distribute his wealth among them. He called out Naath and told him that he was going to take the heifer and that it would be his possession and he would survive with it. He told Jaang that he would take the old cow and that it would be his gift. Jaang was not happy, but because it was the final word of their father, he kept quiet.

They both went out, and their mother, recognising from the look of Jaang that they have already heard the news of their father's wealth distribution, called on Jaang. She told him, 'If you are sad because of the old cow, then don't be. I have an idea'. Jaang was keen to listen to his mother's advice and did what she told him. Early in the morning, he went to his father and imitated the voice of his younger brother. Their father told him to take his heifer and prosper, and he was given the blessing. Afterwards, Naath came and called out to his father. He was told that his brother already came and had taken the heifer and he imitated his voice, and because it was dark, he could not recognize him and had no reason to doubt him. Naath was furious and said he would go and seize the calf by force, but his father told him to come closer and kneel. His father

² From Babel to the Beginning of Egypt 5000? 4000? BC to CA 3300 BC.

³ From Babel to the Beginning of Egypt 5000? 4000? BC to CA 3300 BC.

⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

blessed him and told him to prosper and said, ‘Let Jaang keep the heifer and when you know that you had power and grown strong, you will go and get the heifer back and instead to get only one, you will get even the offspring of the heifer that he has taken. In addition, you will be stronger, wise and a kind-hearted man and everyone will look upon you for direction and guidance. You will be a warrior that has no match in the land, feared far and wide, and you will be known because of your skills of fighting, forgiveness and your generosity’. He listened to his father and moved on, but he never forgot what his brother had done to him.

According to research conducted by Evans-Pritchard in 1940, in which he interviewed Naath from the western and eastern Upper Nile, the mythology of the old cow and heifer (calf) was mentioned widely by his respondents. He summarises his findings as follows:

Always the Nuer [Naath] have been the aggressors, and raiding of the Dinka [Jaang] is conceived by them to be a normal state of affairs and a duty, for they have a myth, like that of Esau and Jacob, which explains it and justifies it. Nuer and Dinka are represented in this myth as two sons of God who promised his old cow to Dinka and its young calf to Nuer. Dinka came by night to God’s byre and, imitating the voice of Nuer, obtained the calf. When God found that he had been tricked he was hungry and charged Nuer to avenge the injury by raiding Dinka’s cattle to the end of time. This story, familiar to every Nuer, is not only a reflection of the political relations between the two peoples but is also a commentary on their characters. Nuer raid for cattle and seize them openly and by force of arms. Dinka steals them or take them by treachery. All Nuer regard them and rightly so as thieves, and even the Dinka seem to admit the reproach . . .⁵

Mr. K. C. P. Struve, who was inspector of the Zeraf Valley in 1907 and a member of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium rule in Sudan, met with the Deng Aguer, who was the keeper of the shrine of Dengdit at Luak Deng. He was told the same story of the cow, and a similar narrative was mentioned. It was the night that the Jaang (Dinka) stole the calf that was given to Naath (Nuer) that resulted in a policy in which the Dinka of today lived by stealing while the Nuer lived by forced seizure.⁶ The Nuer are said to be blessed with superhuman strength and was promised that his descendants should always overcome those of his brother.⁷ To this day, the Nuer still look down on the Dinka, as they are no match to them in the battlefields, and the Dinka seem to admit that the Nuer are warriors.

In Naath language, Jaang means ‘foreigner’, and this is a name designated only to the descendants of the Dinka; other tribes from distant lands are called Jur. To a certain degree, because of the dispute over the heifer, the Naath could raid the Jaang for cattle as predicted or advised by their father. The raid of the Jaang’s cattle was not because the Naath do not have them but because it was a show of force as a result of the behaviour of their grandfather who stole the heifer from the Naath. Even to this day, the Jaang steal from the Naath while the Naath forcibly seize cattle.

After years of migration, the family found themselves in what they later called Cush land in present-day Sudan. Jaang left their home and settled in the confluences of the Nile in Khartoum. He called it Kar-tuom, which means ‘two branches that unite’.⁸ This was an area where the Blue Nile and White Nile merged. Meanwhile, Naath went with their father and mother to the Tuti Islands and settled there with their old cow.

⁵ E. E. Evans-Pritchard. *The Nuer: A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people*, p. 125.

⁶ *The British Academy. Empire and the Nuer. Sources on the Pacification of the Southern Sudan, 1898 – 1930.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁸ Ngundeng Bong, the prominent Nuer prophet, talked about attributing Khartoum to the sons of Jaang and referred to Khartoum as ‘Rol Gatjaangni, the land of the descendants of the Jaang’. This was in his songs, and the songs were composed a long time ago in around the 1880s or even before the big debate over the migration in South Sudan.

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The place was green and had enough grass for their old cow. Naath prospered, and his old cow produced offspring, eventually producing a big cattle camp, and Jaang also had herds of cattle. Because Jaang had the heifer, his herd increased and became more prominent than that of Naath, who was envious. Both brothers got married and had prominent descendants. Even at present, an observer would state that the Nuer would look around in vain for grazing grounds in the desert sand whenever they came to Khartoum.⁹

ORIGIN, MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

The name Babel has a mysterious origin. Researchers have discovered that the word was not English, French, Hebrew or Greek. These were world-class languages, and the name should have emerged from them, as they were famous and are still influential. It is possible that the word came from the languages that were discovered from the destruction of Babel, in which the languages were confused.¹⁰ If Babel is none of these languages, then where did it come from? Through ages, there have been different pronunciations which many have put forward, and this is based on different languages over time. We know that

the best point that can be made on this is that people are still affected by language division that occurred at Babel, and this is obviously the case, to a lesser degree, with the word Babel. And after the events at Babel, it was probably pronounced a multiple of ways, and they were all correct.¹¹

The Naath believe that Babel could be their language, and this is due to both the meaning and the spelling of the word. The word Babel in Nuer means ‘to be blamed’, and many elders assumed that the name referred to when they were constructing the tower, and some of them were afraid that it was too high and they may blame themselves afterwards because God may not approve such a high building as a dwelling place. The second name associated with that name was ‘Dak-Pany’, or ‘Dapany,’ which is also the name given to the building after it was destroyed by God. The intention of the tower was believed to be a remedy for the flood that nearly wiped out every single living organism on earth during the time of Noah. Different writers who based their interpretations on the Bible put Nimrod into the negative side of evil and referred to him as ‘Satan’s reincarnation’, which meant he was in the centre of practices throughout traditional African circles as stated below. Since their articles were written through the lens of biblical philosophy, the use of the ‘good and evil’ perception was taken to explain Nimrod in his kingdom:

⁹ J. S. R. Duncan. *The Sudan*.

¹⁰ Bodie Hodge (2013). *Tower of Babel*.

¹¹ Bodie Hodge (2013). *Tower of Babel*, p. 16.

Nimrod was a tyrant and a dictator who desired to wrest the people’s loyalty from God so that all power would rest in him. The Bible describes Nimrod as a great hunter. He dressed up in trophies of the hunt. His emblem was a spotted leopard’s skin, and this is the origin of leopard skin as the chiefly symbol of the Bantu tribes [and Nilotic people]. He was known to the Greeks as Nebrod, the spotted one, since he wore spotted robes. He also wore a horned headdress, and so was called ‘the horned one’. It is believed that he subdued leopards and horses for use in hunting. Some feel his name comes from Nimr-leopard and rad-to subdue. (Sometimes leopards are still used for hunting in India . . . Nimrod was most definitely a wizard, and some feel, Satan incarnate. The practice of divination before the hunt undoubtedly originated with him. Some have said that the preposition in Genesis 10:9 translated ‘before’ in the King James Version can also sometimes mean ‘against’. That is, he hunted against the Lord, not only animals, but also the souls of men by witchcraft. There is evidence that he warred on those who remained faithful to God, especially on the line of Shem.¹²

We could still spot the ancient practices of the Nilotic people especially the Naath and Jaang, such as hunting being carried out in South Sudan. Naath has Kuarmuon (earth master) and Kuarhok (cattle man) who use leopard skin for their powers, and the Dinka have their own names for them. Even the use of leopard skin as means of divination is being practiced by present-day Cushites or Nilotic people. But we cannot guarantee that Nimrod was the source of divination and turning away from God. Through lineage, as mentioned above, there is a powerful connection between the ancient Cushites, which Nimrod is part of, and the current Africans especially the Nilotic group of South Sudan. If the practice of divination began with Nimrod, it was not evident in the practice of traditional Nilotic beliefs.

It was not until 15,000 years ago that the ancient Sumerians or Cushites moved away from that part of the land and came to the current geographical location that constitutes Egypt and brought along agriculture from the Neolithic Age and many other inventions. They were among the first races which provided civilisation in that part of the land. On the Sumerian land, the descendants of Kush dispersed, with some going to the side of Arabia, Yemen, Australia and China settling there. Some of the children proceeded to India while the majority of the children of Kush came to Egypt and later settled in the Upper Nile region and were called Ethiopians. It was confirmed by Greeks that Kush is closer to Egypt and that Ethiopians are those people with the burnt faces. The sociologist, historian and writer Chancellor Williams was keen on bringing invasion to light when he wrote about the invasion and displacement many years ago from the Mediterranean Sea that had been happening in South Sudan. He stressed that the Nilotic group, especially the tribes occupying Bhar el Ghazal, the Upper Nile and Equatoria, are still fighting the coloured Arab population who hold the northern part of the country. He made some references to early migration 5,000 years ago, from the Mediterranean Sea in Lower Egypt, during which the forefathers of the same group in Sudan (currently South Sudan) fought the invaders. After they occupied Southern Sudan, the River Nile and the Sudd swamps protected them from invaders who wanted to enslave them. At the current borders between South Sudan and Sudan, slavery and the burning of houses into ashes were still ongoing until 2005 when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed.

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¹²From Babel to Beginning of Egypt 5000? 4000? BC to CA 3300 BC, p. 1.

A French writer, Count C. F. Volney, travelled to Egypt between 1783 and 1785 and observed that the star worshippers were the Nilotic group currently occupying the Upper Nile. He found that the black race occupying these borders of the Upper Nile organised a complicated system of worshipping the stars. Besides this, the same race should also be recognised for their contribution to the earth and agricultural labour. This is characterised by their adoration of their forms and national attributes, which is also the work of the human mind.¹³ The people of the Upper Nile still map the zones of heaven and could predict what would come out of them. Their seasons and months are named according to the cosmology.

THE TERMS USED ON THE NAATH AND JAANG

The Naath and Jaang are portrayed as cousins and, to a certain extent, as brothers having the same father and mother. Others say they were cousins from different fathers and that their mothers were sisters, generating the terms Gatnyaruop, referring to the descendants of the Jaang, and Gatnyatuoy, referring to those of the Naath; these terms are used in the two communities. The father of the two sisters was named Deng, and this is linked to the names of the sisters as ‘Nyatuoy’ and ‘Nyaruop Deng’. It is worth noting that the two descendants look at themselves as very close to each other than to any tribe in South Sudan. Deng is the name of God, who was their father and who created them. It also refers to their father, who distributed his wealth. Different researchers positioned their views based on the assumption that the Naath could be part of the Dinka, and this conclusion was drawn from similarities seen in the Naath and Jaang and in other mythologies about their origin. We have seen so far that ‘the argument as to whether Nuer are Dinka has no foundation. But there are also in the western literature two Nilotic languages known in English as Nuer and Dinka, which may have more objective reality. This is true, but unfortunately the Dinka, with a vast and scattered population of over a million, without any centralising institutions of their own, speak a large number of dialects varying considerably from one another’.¹⁴ The term Nuer, referring to the Naath, and the term Dinka, referring to the Jaang, were recent inventions, and ‘most people’ do not even know how they acquired those names.

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The term Naath was acquired from time immemorial, and it has existed since ancient Babylon. On the discourse on the terms Naath and Nuer, Liah argued that

the term Naath is a plural form for all Negroid [black people] and the Egyptians stated that singular form could be Nahas. This has changed with time the singular form of Naath is known as Ran (human). The other related terms include ‘Ram mi ran’ which is closely translated as ‘the actual (true) human’. This further leads us to its plural form Nei tin Naath (actual human beings).¹⁵

It is believed that it has existed since the time of the Tower of Babel. J. S. R. Duncan talked about the Naath people being present in ancient Babylon where

he lives with his great herds of cattle, the horns of which are trained in the manner of the ancient Babylonian Empire, two thousand years before Christ... he is born among them, he grows up with them, he marries with them, and he dies with them. He believes not in Islam but in his own gods.¹⁶

¹³ Cheikh Anto Diop. *Civilization or Barbarism*, p. XX.

¹⁴ Nuer and Dinka Are People: Ecology, Ethnicity and Logical Possibility Author(s): Aidan Southall Source: *Man, New Series*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Dec. 1976), pp. 463–491, 464.

¹⁵ Liah, Kim Jial, *The Discourse on the Origin of the Terms Naath and Nuer*. Published by the Center for Strategic & Policy Studies. Notes and Records. 2017.

¹⁶ J. S. R. Duncan (1952). *The Sudan*, p. 158.

When they arrived in Egypt, it was the same name that was later used to name all the black people who were inhabiting the country. The Senegalese historian and Egyptologist Cheikh Anto Diop confirmed that the true name is not Nuer but Naas, or Nahas, which was the term by which the Egyptians called the Nubians and other blacks of Africa.¹⁷

The term Nuer has a recent origin, and Liah (2017) described it as follows:

At the shrine in Kuerkuong (area starting from Lake No extended to Koat Lich in Koch County near Leer town), a council of elders was invited and a new calabash was brought and placed in the middle of the Council of Elders, an ox was sacrificed and the blood was drifted into the calabash, the members of the Council of Elders also cut their bodies and dropped their blood in the calabash and saliva¹⁸ were also spitted in and they mixed it well. These activities were in fulfillment of the covenant in the making. A session of the bad things that were in practice and needed to be abolished and good practices that need to be introduced were all placed in the session. After exhaustive plenary sessions, they came to an agreement, and the responsibility was given to elder with divine qualification to invite the higher power. After lamentation, God was invited to bless their agreement and add power into it. When they nearly finished, they all drank the contents of the calabash, and this sealed the agreement between themselves and God. After this, they agreed that whoever will go against these laws (Nguot/Ngut) which expresses the relationship between God and the people through the concept of Nguot or Ngut and denotes an inviolable bond both between the Creator and all creation and between all people. And any violation of this covenant may lead to curse/sins, particularly in the cases of homicide (nueer) will be contaminated and will fall into sin and will be a sinner, thus generated the term Nuar. Nuer comes from the term Nueer (literarily means contamination or sin).¹⁹

This system of creating laws was the first of its kind when the Naath came to Koat Lich, also known as Kuerkuong, in second millennium BC. The second and third convergence of all the elders of the Naath (Nuer) in the western Upper Nile and Fangak, in which the Nuer have 'Fangak laws', or 'Nguot Fangak', could have come from this starting point.

According to sources, the Dinka has been described as thus:

the Dinka belong to a larger group known as the Nilotics. The term 'Dinka' was invented by outsiders, and no one knows the origin of the word. The people are now known as the Dinka actually call themselves Muonjang or Jieng. Among the Dinka, only an educated minority knows that they are called Dinka.²⁰

On the term Dinka, an explorer who came to Sudan came in contact with someone called Ding Kak, and from there, the term Dinka started being used to refer to the Jaang people

The origin of the term Jaang is unknown and unclear. Tracing such an origin is challenging, and where it has been used for thousands of years remains a mystery. On the term Dinka, an explorer who came to Sudan came in contact with someone called Ding Kak, and from there, the term Dinka started

¹⁷ Cheikh Anto Diop (1981). *Civilization or Barbarism. An Authentic Anthropology*. Published by Lawrence Hill Books. New York, p. 181.

¹⁸ These practices, which indicate that saliva is a source of blessing, is very common in the Naath community. An oldman could spit saliva on your head. This indicates blessing. Handshake is not very common; when you meet with an oldman, you only bow your head in respect. To a certain degree, it is believed that the morning saliva that was not spitted out has more blessing than that of the afternoon.

¹⁹ Liah, Kim Jial. *The Discourse on the Origin of the Terms Naath and Nuer*. Published by the Center for Strategic & Policy Studies. Notes and Records. 2017. <http://ss-csps.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/CSPS-Newsletter-SEPTEMBER-2017-B.pdf>

²⁰ Dinka. *Encyclopedia.com*. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/asia-and-africa/middle-eastern-history/dinka>

being used to refer to the Jaang people. The man named Ding Kak was said to have assured the explorer that all people who have settled along the area were Ding Kak, and that was where the term originated. The genesis of the conflict between the two brothers, Naath and Jaang, have been told with passion by the descendants of the two brothers, who make up the two main tribal groups of South Sudan today. The descendants of Jaang are considered the largest tribal group in South Sudan while the Naath are the second largest tribal group after the Dinka. Whether that ranking is in accordance with the Sudan census is debatable. Some challenge that position by stating that the culture of the Jaang involves scattering their dwellings across the land while the Naath like to live together without creating spaces around their homesteads. With regard to other censuses, it was mentioned that upon the arrival of those who conducted the census, a typical Nuer man would not report how many children he has, fearing they would be bewitched. This was seen as a factor that undermined Nuer statistics. Whether such views were correct or not is beyond this paper.

OTHER SIMILAR STORIES

This is not something new in the history of mankind, and similar stories could be traced to the history of the Middle East and also to the Bible to Adam's children: Abel, who was referred as a 'keeper', which in Hebrew means 'shepherd', and Cain, a 'tiller of the ground', which in Hebrew means 'servant'. This was reflected when Adam was expelled from the garden and was sent to till land with hard labour. In his sacrifices to God, Cain, the farmer, brought fruits from the ground to show what he had worked for, and Abel, the shepherd, brought sheep, and it was Abel's sacrifices that were respected and received by God. This resulted in Abel's death by his brother's hand. God was annoyed, chasing Cain out of their dwelling and forcing him to leave. According to the Revised Standard Version Bible, in Genesis 4:14, Cain knew that he had done wrong against God by committing murder, lamenting, 'Behold, thou hast driven me this day away from the ground; and from thy face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me'. Cain did not feel remorse and got worried with the punishment for his evil act. He thought 'his guilt was greater than he can bear' and lived with it for his entire life. We are also told about Isaac's children, Esau and Jacob; Isaac promised Esau, the elder son he loved, to make supplication to God by sacrifice, and after Esau was sent to hunt, the gift was stolen by his younger brother Jacob through the influence his mother, who loved him very much. This led to Jacob's escape as advised by his mother, and Esau was left without blessing and became Jacob's servant. Trickery and deceit are always present in family feuds.

Both stories have similarities to the story of Naath and Jaang and how they quarrelled over the old cow and the heifer. The situation of the Naath and Jaang in South Sudan is equated to the current situation of Abraham's descendants (Ismael and Isaac), whose conflict has dominated Middle Eastern politics for generations.

CONCLUSION

There were many totemic symbols for worshipping either spirits and waal (kujur), and majority of them were borrowed from the Dinka, who then got them through associations with the Bantiu and others. Most researchers also state that

one is tempted to see the myth of Aiwel, or the worship of Deng, or the presence of totems, as distinctively Jieng, but the difficulty is that so many Jieng have become Naath by absorption that a great deal of what Evans-Pritchard describes as Naath religion and culture has to be referred to Jieng origins.²¹

²¹ *Nuer and Dinka Are People: Ecology, Ethnicity and Logical Possibility* Author(s): Aidan Southall Source: *Man, New Series*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Dec. 1976), pp. 463-491.

Prophet Ngundeng was a gift from Deng, and that is what his name refers to. The god Deng has a mother named 'Buk', and that name seems to be associated with Dinka origin. An old man I interviewed said sarcastically that after the curse from their father, even the spirits migrated away from them to the Naath. From parts of speech, culture and tradition and their ways of life, one cannot see differences between the Naath and the Jaang. During dry season, the children of both brothers could migrate with their cattle and live together in cattle camps without any problems. And during their interactions in the cattle camps, there are no problems as well. Despite all the hatred and fight to the death, both communities still see themselves as descendants of the same father and could forgive each other anytime. The elders who were interviewed in February 2013 informed me that it could be the other way around, that the Dinka could be a section of the Nuer. They justified their statement that the Nuer language is an old one, and even their common ancestors were also using the same language. They went on to say that many things changed and that they do not think that the Nuer language has changed much; one could still obtain evidence of the language being very much alive.

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