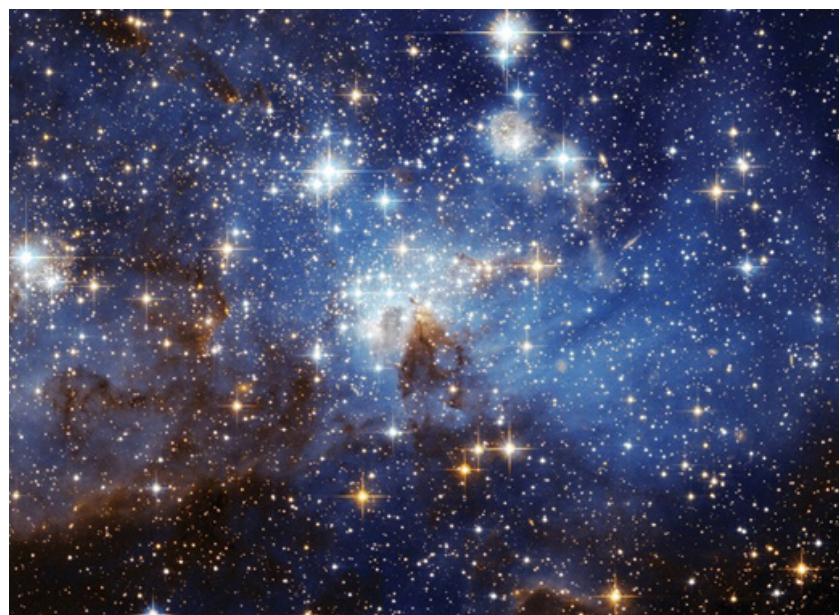


## The Naath Cosmology

**Kim J. Liah**

### Abstract

There is no recorded information on the contemporary understanding of the Naath<sup>1</sup> cosmology, and in particular, the study of the stars, as passed down from generation to generation throughout the centuries and millennia. Before any records were written, sources suggest that the group that came to be known as



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‘Nilotic’ migrated from the Great Lakes region, near the source of River Nile and these blacks were the ancestors of the Naath people. Naath are known for studying stars and mapping them, just like any other ancient people in Africa.

<sup>1</sup>Naath is an ancient name of the people who are currently occupying eastern and western Upper Nile, in the Republic of South Sudan. It is believed that they acquired this name at the onset of creation and that all the Nilotic people branch from it. There are theological arguments that propose that it was the language of Adam and Eve, Noah, Nimrod and Cush. The name is not very much used currently. The alternative name used instead is the term Nuer. I purposely avoided the usage of the term Nuer in this article because Nuer is the latest invention and does not fit to replace the term Naath.

They are aware of the constellations and the Milky Way (Tek-Mai) and know their local interpretation. For instance, the appearance of certain stars indicates that the rainy season is approaching. It reminds the people to abandon their cattle-rearing, no matter where they are, and to go home to prepare their lands for planting. Other stars appear when the rainy season is ending. Their appearance indicates that the dry season is approaching and the rains will end as a new year approaches – which is the 12th month. Other stars act as a light and brighten the path during movement and migration. The Naath have perfected the art of studying the stars over the years, and they have understood which stars guide them and enable them to navigate their land.

Stars are considered to be imaginary cattle. When the stars are very few, Naath consider it as a time when the hyenas take their turn to herd the cattle. They liken this to the way cattle flee from hyenas that seek to eat them while grazing in the fields. When there are many stars in the sky, Naath believe that the foxes are guarding the cattle. This general understanding is attributed to the perception that good people who are deceased (ancestors) are living in the sky above us, and are like stars that shine down on us. Moreover, there is reason to believe, according to the interpretation of the traditional religious leaders, that there was direct worshipping of the sun, the moon and the stars.

The main purpose of this paper is to discuss the neglected knowledge of the Naath cosmology as a source of knowledge that has existed for years, and to share it with those who may be interested. The paper will reflect the genesis of the study of stars, the moon and the sun, and the related mythology across the land of the Naath.

## Introduction

It is believed that there was an expansion of life that was experienced about 570 million years ago. Fossils that were discovered provide more evidences on what happened prior to this period.

Since that time, there is an untapped wealth of knowledge on the Naath people. This knowledge has been scattered among the people found along the migration routes of the Naath, and the legacy is being enjoyed by others who have taken over their previous lands and used their records as their own.

There is concrete evidence indicating that North Sudan was a land of the Black people, particularly the Nilotic group, before the coming of the current occupants. A well-preserved settlement spanning the period between 300,000 to 200,000 years BCE was discovered around Dongola Reach on the site of the Kaddanarti, north of Kerma<sup>2</sup>. These people who lived along the Nile were believed to be among the Nilotic group. The stars guided them and lit their path throughout their migration, until they arrived at the Upper Nile Basin, which they found conducive for their livestock and their own survival. Throughout this period, most of the known facts about the heavenly bodies such as the stars, the moon and the sun as well as their significance was completely lost.

What people still remember is the immediate solution to their meanings and signs they show to people. The deeper understanding however remained hidden, and only spiritual leaders retained its knowledge. The rich history of the Naath has been neglected over the years as the focus remained on the study of other peoples. Studying cosmology among the Naath has never been commissioned, and there is no existing individual research on this area.

The entire culture and ways of the Naath people are unexploited and the raw knowledge still remains intact. Few excavations were conducted around Bhar el Gazel and Upper Nile states, particularly among the Jieng and Chollo people. However, the entire region inhabited by the Naath is yet to be exploited. I begin this paper by quoting a few authors who have contributed to the writing on the origin and migration of the Black people from their original location to North Africa, and they

<sup>2</sup>Rift Valley Institute and contributors (2011). *The Sudan Handbook*. London United Kingdom.

may actually have contributed to what Egypt looks like today.

## Astronomical Study

Science has taught us that Africa is the cradle of man. Jared Diamond stated that the cradle of human life was Africa, so determined by fossilized evidence, which indicates early human evolution.<sup>3</sup> In addition, “all of that human history, for the last 5 to 6 million years after our origin about 7 million years ago, remained confined in Africa”.<sup>4</sup> Historians are in relative agreement that there are no facts or archaeological evidence that authorise us on the origin of human’s original habitat outside of Africa.<sup>5</sup> National Geographic wrote an article entitled ‘Modern Humans come out of Africa.

They mentioned that we are solely children of Africa with no Neanderthals or island dwellers. A study conducted by scientists which compared the skulls and DNA of human remains around the world came to a conclusion that results indicated modern humans (Homo sapiens) had their origin in Africa. All the rest of the human species in other parts of the world contribute to the single source of origin, that is, Africa. This study was conducted by the University of Cambridge in England and combined the global genetic variations, which compare more than 6,000 skulls from more than a hundred ancient human populations.<sup>6</sup> The East African region has been recorded as the location in Africa where humanity had its origin, as proved by the research scientists have conducted in the area,

in which bones of humans estimated to be over 200,000 years old have been found. In Jabel Irhoud in Morocco, remains of the ancient people estimated to be much older than those found in East Africa have been found. Investigations revealed that these bones were over 300,000 years old.<sup>7</sup>

According to Cheikh Anto Diop, Black people called Anu came from the Great Lakes region and Southern Africa, and populated Egypt from South to North. They first settled between the current Sudan and southern Egypt

**The civilisation that was in Egypt had its roots from the Great Lakes and Southern Africa where remains were traced, and this is why ancient Egyptians designated Great Lakes and Southern Africa as the Holy Land of the gods.**

then went down the Nile to conquer the entire country. The civilisation that was in Egypt had its roots from the Great Lakes and Southern Africa where remains were traced, and this is why ancient Egyptians designated Great Lakes and Southern Africa as the Holy Land of the gods.<sup>8</sup> He further commented on the routes that the ancient Egyptians took when they faced difficulties, when they had no water for their animals or when they wanted a better place to live and settle. They always faced the south as the land of their ancestors. He commented “we understand better why the Egyptians turn toward the south, the heart of Africa, the land of their origins, land of their ancestors, and the land of the Gods”.<sup>9</sup> Here, he was referring to Sudan that is, the key to the heart of Africa, and in it

<sup>3</sup>Diamond J (1997). Guns, Germs and Steel. A short History of Everybody for the last 13,000 years. P. 36.

<sup>4</sup>Diamond J (1997). Guns, Germs and Steel. A short History of Everybody for the last 13,000 years. P. 36.

<sup>5</sup>Diop, Cheikh Anta (1974). The African Origin of Civilization. Myth or Reality. Edited and translated by Mercer Cook. Lawrence Hills and Co. p. 179

<sup>6</sup>James Owen (2007). Modern Humans Came Out of Africa, ‘Definitive Study says. National Geographic News. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/07/070718-african-origin.html>

<sup>7</sup>Ian Sample (2017). Oldest Homo sapiens bones ever found shake foundation of human story. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/jun/07/oldest-homo-sapiens-bones-ever-found-shake-foundations-of-the-human-story>

<sup>8</sup>Cheikh Anto Diop (1991). Civilization and Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology.

<sup>9</sup>Cheikh Anto Diop (1991). Civilization or Barbarism. An authentic Anthropology. P. 108.

being an Upper Nile basin blessed with evergreen pastures with sudd, hosting life just as the Nile does. According to a study by Ogot, “among the areas to which the Sahara dwellers moved, the most suitable for human settlement was the Nile Valley”. The Valley starts from Central Africa and divides Sudan into half, then proceeds to Egypt then to the Mediterranean Sea.

The ancestors of the Naath people could have been among the first people within the tribe of Anu who crossed to Egypt during the early migration. This is known because the same author proved the existence of the term Naath [nas] in ancient Egypt where he argued that “...In fact, their true name is not Nuer, but Naas or Nahas, which is the term by which the Egyptians designated the Nubians and other Blacks of Africa”.<sup>10</sup> In addition, Chancellor Williams acknowledged the presence of Nilotic people in ancient Egypt as far as the Lower Egypt. He emphasised it as below:

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.”<sup>11</sup>

The pharaonic civilization was from the people of Central and Sub-Saharan Africa, and they were indeed black Africans who had their roots in Central Africa.<sup>12</sup> In 1974, an astronomical megalithic site was discovered in Nabta Playa, located at the Western Desert, 100 kilometers west of Abu Simbel in Egypt by Fred Wendorf and his team. The site was pre-dating Stonehenge by at least one thousand years.<sup>13</sup> Archaeologists who conducted the excavation believed that the African prehistoric people of Nabta Playa could be the ancestors of Pharaohs who had developed knowledge of astronomy, agriculture, and cattle-herding, and were the ones who provided the impetus that inspired the great civilization of ancient Egypt.<sup>14</sup> At the Nabta Playa, bones of cattle were discovered and this shows that it was a designated cattle camp to the ancient Egyptians. In the fourth millennium BCE, the people of Nabta Playa abandoned their post and spread to the adjacent Nile Valley in search of pastures and agriculture, and this is believed to have sparked the Pharaonic culture. So it was people of Nabta Playa that acquired the importance of the origins of civilization as well as early human activities such as astronomy, the domestication of cattle, agriculture and early religious ideologies<sup>15</sup>, in which Greeks, Romans and others benefited. It was this heritage, which also included mathematics, writings, agriculture, architecture and religion etc that was brought by the Innu tribe from the heart of Africa many years ago. It was used to build the entire Egypt and make it famous. The people who made up the Egyptian army and those who served

<sup>10</sup>Cheikh Anto Diop (1981). *Civilization or Barbarism. An Authentic Anthropology*. Published by Lawrence Hill Books. New York. P. 181

<sup>11</sup>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. 193-194

<sup>12</sup>Robert Bauval & Thomas Brophy (2013). *Imhotep, The African: Architect of the Cosmos*.

<sup>13</sup>Robert Bauval & Thomas Brophy (2011). *The Black Genesis: The prehistoric origin of the ancient Egypt*. P. 307

<sup>14</sup>ibid p. 306

<sup>15</sup>Robert Bauval & Thomas Brophy (2011). *The Black Genesis: The prehistoric origin of the ancient Egypt*.

before the Pharaoh were Nubians. They were seen wearing Nubian insignia which were the symbol of the Jackal and the Sparrow hawk which were associated with the Nubian totems.<sup>16</sup> As the invaders pushed out the Blacks, the Black empire declined slowly in Egypt, and over time they settled down in Sudan.

According to Naath mythology, stars represents cattle and they have been mapped based on their positions and occurrences. The same understanding

sky and motion of the stars Just like the Naath in recent times, ancient Egyptians use the stars for navigating at night', and the ancient cattle herders "...had all the time in the world to study the sky at night, because they were there in the desert, night after night, from generation to generation, from century to century, perhaps even from millennium to millennium.

headed this center.<sup>17</sup> He was a Black African and his name was Imhotep. He was from the culture of people who came from Central Africa. Two important tombs were discovered; one belonged to Imhotep and the other Tutankhamen, and they are linked to African ancestors.



Naath have toward the stars was also the practice of the ancient Egyptians who also devoted their time in mapping the stars of heaven. One of the ancient sites named as Innu by the Egyptians and was later renamed as Heliopolis by the Greeks, which means, the 'City of the Sun', was a dedicated center of learning for the ancient world. The high priest or Chief Observer who was tasked to observe the night

The black-skinned people occupied Geblein town, located some thirty kilometers south of modern Luxor in the ancient time. Some Egyptologists believed that Imhotep was a native to Memphis in Northern Egypt<sup>18</sup>, and this indicates that the people with black skin occupied the entire ancient Egypt before the coming of the invaders into the

<sup>16</sup>Cheikh Anto Diop (1974). *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*. Edited and translated by Mercer Cook. Lawrence Hills & Co.

<sup>17</sup>Robert Bauval & Thomas Brophy (2013). *Imhotep, The African: Architect of the Cosmos*.

<sup>18</sup>Robert Bauval & Thomas Brophy (2013). *Imhotep, The African: Architect of the Cosmos*.

land.

Just like the Naath in recent times, ancient Egyptians ‘use the stars for navigating at night’, and the ancient cattle herders “...had all the time in the world to study the sky at night, because they were there in the desert, night after night, from generation to generation, from century to century, perhaps even from millennium to millennium. They could become fully familiar with all the observable star cycles...”<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, the Chief Observer or the Imhotep built Step Pyramids, which were used in rituals for the kings. The ritual performance had to be conducted to ensure passage of the king’s soul into the starry heaven to be reunited with his ancestors who were long dead<sup>20</sup>. The pyramids were designed to assist the pharaoh to ascend into the starry heaven. Ancient Egyptians think that dead kings [believed not to be dead] are looking down on them from the starry heaven and they give them their blessing. According to Hermetic texts found in the Pyramid which were believed to have been

Naath also think that there is life in the starry heaven and that symbolism was represented by the story of three stars seen following each other in a line. written by high priests, Egypt was seen and portrayed as the image of heaven and the work in heaven was represented here on earth. The whole cosmos dwells in the land of Egypt<sup>21</sup>.

Naath also think that there is life in the starry heaven and that symbolism was represented by the story of three stars seen following each other in a line. The story represents one person taking the cow by the rope, followed by the one helping and

a dog after them. This portrays a practical situation seen on earth with the cattle herders. In addition, they also think that elders who died are also part of the stars. Ancient Egyptians targeted Big Dipper, Sirius, and Orion’s belt, giving them bull symbolism which could be identified from the ancient texts and drawings<sup>22</sup>. This actually coincided with the idea that early migrants from Great Lakes region and Southern Africa could be the people who brought civilization to the Pharaonic Egypt. Traditionally, Naath considers old people who died a long time ago to still be alive in the starry heaven.

Thus, when sickness befalls the family, elders from the community always summon the spirit of dead old man to come for help. Rituals and sacrifices will be offered and the spirit of the dead will respond. When elders summon the spirit, they don’t look down on earth where the old man was buried, instead, they will face the sky and speak to the dead.

### Naath Mythology

The Naath mythology is the undocumented collection of myths starting from the ancient Naath and passed down to the current generation. The mythology describes the actions of the collective Naath from the Western to the Eastern part of the River Nile. This myth gives them lenses that make them see the world according to their interpretation. This belief dates back to millions of years and unfortunately, the most important part has been forgotten. The parts that are mainly remembered are the ones Naath need to solve their immediate challenges and those that guide them as they live their lives. Some of the Naath beliefs match those of the ancient Egyptians.

<sup>19</sup>Robert Bauval & Thomas Brophy (2011). *The Black Genesis: The prehistoric origin of the ancient Egypt*. P. 211

<sup>20</sup>Robert Bauval & Thomas Brophy (2013). *Imhotep, The African: Architect of the Cosmos*.

<sup>21</sup>Robert Bauval & Ahmed Osman (2012). *Breaking the Mirror of Heaven. The Conspiracy to Suppress the Voices of Ancient Egypt*.

<sup>22</sup>Robert Bauval & Thomas Brophy (2011). *The Black Genesis. The prehistoric origin of the ancient Egypt*. P. 210

The early culture of the Naath shows the patterns of behaviour that led to the study of the sky and creation myths that explain the astronomical understanding of the local culture. A strong link on observing the stars and predicting their outcomes has existed for centuries, and it is the role of elders to read them and interpret their meanings to their children. This has been part of their ancient practices, and it has been passed down from one generation to another.

The only way to mark a star is to use the position it normally appears. After years of observation, the elders are able to give an accurate prediction on the occurrences of the events. Stars have been mapped and categorised based on their impact on the community, as they help the people to predict what may happen next. There are beliefs that are connected to conflict between the Naath and their enemies. When the moon's sphere shape turned on one side, people thought that their enemies would be defeated and Naath warriors would fight bravely. They believed that the moon had already decided the outcome of the fight. For them, the moon was used as a sign that gives them a prediction on the outcome of the fight.

Ngundeng is one of the most trusted prophets of all time across South Sudan. He talks about the stars, the moon and the sun in a way that indicates his gift. He refers to his father who is looking after his children with the guidance of the sun and the moon to empower them. Here is what he said that he would die and upon his death

*"...I would be seen in the sun the next day, beside my father where he came from, in his powers."*<sup>23</sup>

I am not sure of what he meant here but what is

clear is that there is some element of the moon and the sun being portrayed to give light to the people



Image from comet's previous visit on October

who are migrating from one place to another. He was very vocal on referencing a man, which may not be an ordinary person.

While predicting his death to the people, this is what he has to say in relation to the sun:

*"I would die and upon my death, i would be seen in the sun the next day, beside my father where i came from, in his powers..."*<sup>24</sup>

What was not clear was whether he was referring to the sun as his father or using the sun as the vessel to show himself to his followers. Moreover, his statement was referring to his return from where the sun, stars and moon dwell<sup>25</sup>. This aspect points us towards the Naath notion of three levels of worlds where the third world was the place where all good people are taken. They live there and respond to the living from there; this is the place where the stars, the moon and the sun dwells. According to Dak Kueth who is a religious leader claiming descent from Deng, this is what he has to say on the status of the moon and the sun; "The sun (male) and the

<sup>23</sup>Book Deng Taath: Book Ruach Deng Kene Nyeyiel. P.19. No publication date.

<sup>24</sup>Book Deng Taath: Book Ruach Deng Kene Nyeyiel. P.19. No publication date.

<sup>25</sup>Book Deng Taath: Book Ruach Deng Kene Nyeyiel. P.19. No publication date.

moon (female) created us, like females [referring to woman] are soft and through them God created other human beings.

The stars are the electricity, they create the lightning”<sup>26</sup>. This indicates that there are some elements of belief in the moon, the sun and the stars, in which religious leaders consolidate their powers.

Below are some examples of the stars that are frequently used to guide and give meaning to Naath culture.

### 1. Cultivation and Planting Stars

These stars are in three main categories, and they include Cier-pitha, Kuel and Chur. Their period of appearance starts from April to November each year. Cier-pitha appears when the rainy season approaches. They informed the Naath that the rains were approaching and it was time to start cultivating. The fields were to be prepared, and were to stay ready to wait for the rains. The planting materials such as planting sticks and grains like millet and maize would be prepared in readiness for the rains. The entire community would be alerted to stay ready for a wet season. Those who had gone to herd their cattle would leave behind their herds to come and prepare their land. The gods would be consulted to allow a proper germination of crops and to ensure a healthy harvest at the end. Prophet Ngundeng acknowledged the same practice when he said:

*“when your crops germinate, you have to conduct a feast together, the first crops that have germinated, you have to prune them and take them to the river, and praise God because your crops have germinated.”<sup>27</sup>*

The translation is that “when your crops germinate, you have to conduct a feast together, the first crops that have germinated, you have to prune them and take them to the river, and praise God because your crops have germinated”. When maize and millet crops are ready, the people are to throw them on the ground first before feasting on them. This is a gift to the gods who have made the maize grow.

Cier-pitha are normally four stars and they appear from the south-east direction. Kuel are a cluster of stars that are easily identifiable from the rest of stars and could be counted easily. As the name implies, they are many in number and only few are brighter than the rest. They emerged from the east. When Mai (spring) approaches, Kuel will start to emerge and this indicates that the end of the rainy season is approaching. They start appearing at around October and November each year. The Naath of Eastern Upper Nile region called them Kueleyuot while the Naath from the Western Upper Nile region maintain the same name Kuel. Chur are clusters of stars that look like scorpions and they emerged from the east. They appear when it starts raining and shine very brightly. They start appearing in May each year when planting of crops has started and disappear in October when harvest ends (see stars that bring bad omen).

Finally, Gotbarrou are seven stars, which appear in the midst of the rainy season. At this time of the year, there is heavy downpour, and people generally understand that certain activities like tukul construction should be suspended. This particular star also helps to guide lost travelers to their destination.

<sup>26</sup>Irma Specht & Kim Jial (2016). Applied Anthropological Research Paper on Children in the White Army. We don't refuse peace and we don't refuse fighting. UNICEF South Sudan and Transition International Book Deng Taath: Book Ruach Deng Kene Nyeyiel. P.19. No publication date. Jonglei South Sudan.



## 2. The Stars of Light

Under the category of the stars that provide light, Liephokpai is one of the visible sources of light. It appears immediately sun goes down to provide light to the entire community. The Naath from the Eastern Upper Nile region refer to it as 'Lieppaychieng', which is loosely translated as 'source of light to the family members'. In the Western Upper Nile region, it is referred to as Liephokpay which literarily means 'source of light to the cattle'. The concept behind the naming of the star shows the way of life of the people around their cattle that is, the variety of activities associated with caring for cattle such as milking and tendering. Each of these activities requires a source of light, and this is provided by Liephokpay. It appears in the evening and mostly comes from the west. Another important star that provides the same services to the Naath is Bakwar or Kang-ngooth. This is a giant star that shines very brightly and it appears in the early hours of the morning. The Naath from Western Upper Nile region mainly use the name Bakwar, while the Naath from the Eastern Upper Nile refer to it as 'Kang-dhom'. It appears throughout the year. Naath mentioned that it was helpful during the ancient days of migration. Bakwar is more helpful during the dry seasons when people migrate with their cattle to look for green pastures and water, as they cannot move during the day due to the high temperatures that cause thirst. Lieppaychieng or Liephokpay are more helpful in the evening.

## 3. Stars of bad Omen

Cier-in-jual is one of the stars believed to bring misfortune by the Naath. Cier-in-jual is the name used by the Naath of the Eastern Upper Nile while the Naath of the Western Upper Nile call it 'Kuoljiduol'. It is known scientifically as an asteroid or a minor planet. It mainly comprises of rocky remnants left over from the early formation of our planets system. Cier-in-jual orbit the sun between Mars and Jupiter within the main asteroid belts and does not appear every year but it comes

occasionally. When it appears, the Naath from the Eastern Upper Nile believe that it brings misfortune and bad things will happen, while the Naath from the Western Upper Nile think that it will bring problems to the Kuarmuoni or the earth masters. When it appears, Kuarmuoni give sacrifices. Most of the major conflicts that took place in South Sudan are believed to have happen after the visitation of this particular star. It has been named as the star of war and destruction. When it appears, elders from the community gather and give sacrifices to reduce the impact and consequences of the visitation of the star.

**The story behind this belief is that Kuel and Chur were good friends and quarreled over a beautiful girl whom they both dated.**

## 4. Stars of love and adultery

Kangdhom or Kangngooth (see discussion above), as the name implies, is the star used by those who have gone to look for concubines and sexual partners. Traditionally, they could go to the house of a woman and when that star comes, they may think that it is already daybreak. This is because they fear being caught red-handed and they will leave before dawn.

The story behind this belief is that Kuel and Chur were good friends and quarreled over a beautiful girl whom they both dated. However, they did not know that they were dating the same girl. One day, Kuel realised that Chur was also dating the same girl. When the girl was in her house, Kuel visited her inside her room and they were having a good time. So the girl informed Kuel that both of them were dating her and she asked Kuel to invite his friend Chur to come. The girl's intention was to choose one of them. Chur, who had a big head, was invited by Kuel to come to the girl's house. However, Chur was unable to enter the house because of his big head. Kuel asked the girl to choose between him and Chur so that the matter would be solved amicably. Kuel persisted in asking the girl 'if she liked the one with the big head who could not enter the house, then she was to say so'. The girl eventually chose

Kuel. Chur got disappointed and told Kuel that he had tricked him, causing the girl to break up their relationship. He therefore ceased being Kuel's friend and left them.

If you look at the sky at night, you will find that Kuel and Chur follow each other; they don't see each other face to face. During the rainy season (Tot), Chur is accompanied by lightning and thunder.

When the dry season approaches with the last drop of rains, Kuel will appear with a few stars. The thunder and lightning were believed to be the anger of Chur against Kuel on the issue of the girl that was taken from him. It marks the ending of the Chur with rainy season ending and emergence of Kuel with the dry season (Mai) approaching. During the last days of rain, which take place around October, heavy thunders and lightning will be heard and the Naath think it is Kuel beating up Chur over the quarrel on a girl they both dated. Kuel also comes in early hours of the morning and disappears with the emergence of the sun in the morning.

### 5. The Seasons

Naath have four seasons in their calendar. These seasons include Tot (Summer), Jiom (Winter), Mai (Spring), and Ruel (Autumn). These four seasons have a different impact in Naath community. They are associated with their environment and connected to their coping mechanism. The environment is associated with drought, hunger, war and pestilence. All of these have a direct impact on how the Naath manage to live within the harsh environment. Naath divide the four seasons into two, namely Tot and Mai that is, the wet and dry seasons.

Certain rituals are conducted at particular times of the season where they believed bad things normally happen, and God would be in position to pay attention to their request. For instance, weddings are not conducted around February because it is too hot and it may jeopardise newly wedded couples.

When approaching this month, each family offers sacrifices to the gods to allow their families to live in harmony and to survive the month. In addition, during Tot, too much rain is also bad for the crops and the people. When the dark clouds and heavy rains are anticipated, Naath turn to those who are able to blow the god of the wind away. There are certain groups of people who have power to carry the clouds away and prevent it from raining. Moreover, this power is usually visible from those whose relatives have mysteriously disappeared as a result of strong winds or who have been killed by lightning. The relatives are believed to have power to beckon the deceased to assist them on any request; including stopping the rain or helping them overcome danger.

### 6. Milk way

Dak-tot-kene-mai or Tekmai also known as the Milky way, is part of the stars and seasons. It contains over 200 billion stars, as well as dust and gases to make billions more. It lies about 300,000 light-years away from the galactic center. Scientists state that stars found in the Milky Way are more than 4.5 billion years old. It is possible to observe Tekmai on a clear night sky, in a village without electricity and other sources of light. It is clearly visible, especially when there are no clouds in the sky. Naath believed that it is the dividing line between rainy and dry seasons, which separate the story of 'Gawar and Jakar'. It is believed that they descended from heaven and gave birth to the two large clans found in Naath land today.

## 7. The Three Worlds

According to Naath, three worlds exist in the universe and all of them are interconnected. These worlds have a direct impact on their beliefs and their way of life. The communication between the three worlds is made possible through dreams.

One particular story tries to explain this in the Naath community that is, the story of ‘Gawar and Jakar’. It is believed that they descended from heaven and gave birth to the two large clans found in Naath land today. They are believed to have come from where the angels dwell, that is heaven, where the saints (dead old men) live. Below is a short description of each world and their contribution.

### *Rol-jokni (World of the Dead)*

There are beliefs that impacted the way the Naath give sacrifices and summon the dead to respond to a family crisis. When a person dies, the body will go back to the soil and the soul will depart. People who died as sinners or who have been committing crimes either through magic or homicide, will be kept in Rol-jokni. Upon death, these people are not considered or are not called upon when a family faces crisis. The world of the dead or Rol-jokni is believed to be situated under the ground and this is the place where the bad people go. It is believed that these people communicate with the living through bad dreams that lean towards revenge and killings. This group of people is not mentioned when elders give sacrifices, and they are ignored and forgotten once they die. Life testimonies from the village dwellers revealed that when men dig wells along the riverbed, the dead are always complaining of cutting the ropes of their goats. And this shows that there is world of the dead beneath our world. A place called Thornhom in the Ganyliel town of Panyijiar had an open ground, which was believed to be a place where the men and women of different ages mysteriously disappeared as they took part in traditional dances at night long ago.

### *Rol-Liepa-Jokni (World of the Waiting Dead)*

This world is believed to be situated in the sky or starry heavens above. Once a person died, his body would go back to the soil and the soul would go to Rol-Liepa-Jokni. These people are like saints who did good things on earth while they were alive. The people who died from old age or whom the Naath believed to be closer to God as their words made more sense to God, are believed to be living in the sky closer to the stars, the moon and the sun. They are consulted when the family encounters diseases and death. They are remembered when someone is given something to drink or eat; a small part of it will be poured or dropped on the ground. This indicates that the living is giving them some of their food or drink. They live together with the gods in the sky. In this world, when an old man who is alive pronounces a curse, the effect of the curse will be felt by the person on ground. That is why what the old men say matters a lot among the Naath, and the gods implement it immediately.

### *Rol-Teka (The World of Living)*

This is current world which acts as a transition to another world. This is the place where we live. It is believed that information is transmitted through the three worlds in form of dreams. The dreams are used as a means of communication from one person to another. The other important aspect of these worlds is that there are invisible lines which allow them to communicate and transmit information.

## CONCLUSION

It is clear that there is a connection between the spiritual leaders and the way they perceived the stars, the moon and the sun. There is an element within the community that indicates that heavenly bodies are useful to the Naath social life. Such connections are seen through the observation of the stars, which directly impact their world. There are several sources showing that Naath could have been part of the journey that Black people took to the current location of Egypt in the past. The movement of that group may have assisted in establishing the ancient civilisation of Egypt.

This is indicated by the ways, the culture and certain rituals and practices currently conducted in both communities. The only difference is that the practices of the people of ancient Egypt are advanced and have been documented, while those of the Naath have only been told orally.

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