



**THE ORIGINS, ROUTES OF MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE
GAWAAR, THIANG AND LAAK PEOPLES**

Yallow-Gatkek Koang Gatkuoth _____

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INTRODUCTION

Mythical narratives stated that, two brothers War and Kar descended from the heaven. Based on Nuer superstitions the two came down from the heaven when a certain man slaughtered a fat cow and roasted it and some of its smoke made these two brothers who desire to get that meat descend. They left their parents in the heaven and were adopted and by Haak Ran family and today War and his brother Kar are part and parcel of Haak Ran family.

It was also reported that approximately long time ago, there was a rope from heaven down to earth via a large Ardeib " Kar (Tamarindus indicus)" tree in Dok Nuer county, which was believed to be means of mobility by the people of heaven who used to descend on earth for recreation and in search of food. The earth at that time was inhabited by five Nuer sub-tribes: The Jaloh, Kuai, Nyuong, Reel and Bel.

1.0 THE ORIGINS, ROUTES OF MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE GAWAAR, THIANG AND LAAK

1.1 THE GAWAAR LOCATION

The Gawaar are residents of greater Fangak that lies along the Zaraf River or Phow. The area stretches long covering the Northern part Jonglei State. It was projected that the Gawaar have settled in the area for period of about 180 years. The Gawaar County of Ayod is bordered by Dukteen Counties in the south, Uror County inhabited by Lou-Nuer in the South East, Nyirol County equally occupied by Lou-Nuer in the East,

Khorfulus County in the northern part and Fangak County in the North West. The chronological roots of migration to the area began with migration history of the Nuer and other Nilotic people in South Sudan. In a period assumed to be around 1300s, the people who are now known as Western Nilotic (Jieng, Naath and Luo people), settled along the areas of Bahr-El-Ghazal and Western Bahr-El-Jebel rivers. The settlement helped them to acquire and develop techniques for animal domestication, as well as other lifestyles. But the challenging question remains, where did they come from and how? This article will attempt to answer it according to the Nuer traditions and beliefs.

1.2 THE GAWAAR ORIGIN

According to the oral history, one day a man from heaven called Jakar (Kar) came down via “Ardeib” in search of food and upon delay on earth, Kar made friends among the people. His absence in heaven was noticed by his elder brother War, who came down to earth and sought Jakar’s return to heaven. However, Jakar who had by this time been prevailed upon by his friends on earth to remain with them suggested to War that they should make the earth their home and give up the idea of returning to heaven. War would not agree with the suggestion of his brother and told him that they would incur the anger of God should they remain on earth.

He ordered his brother to buy a bull and slaughter it under a tree known as in Nuer language ‘Koat’ as a sacrifice to the beings in heaven in order that he would not be punished for his long absence. War decided that he would return to heaven in the meanwhile and would rejoin Jakar after he slaughters the bull and they will enjoy the meat, thereafter both of them would return to heaven. Jakar was unwilling to leave the earth and was afraid to disobey his brother’s orders or to remain on earth without his brother, but with the aid of his friends a plan was to hide him and upon War’s return to earth, he would be kept among them and would be able to leave again. The bull was slaughtered at the ‘koat’ and Jakar awaited for his brother at a distance away from the place where he had prepared for cooking the meat.

Jakar’s friends hid themselves in a tall grass not far from cooking spot. War having smelt the slaughtered bull he decided to descend via the rope down to earth and upon his arrival proceeded to help his brother cook the meat and feast on it. When he was engrossed thoroughly in this occupation, Jakar’s friend’s slipped out of their hiding places and cut the rope from heaven. From that day all communication with heaven was severed and War and Jakar were forced to become inhabitants of the earth. War married a woman from one of the sub-tribes and eventually became a powerful and respected man.

The other version of the mythical story about War and his brother Kar was that those guys did not descend from the heaven as many Nuer believe. In those days, people were not dwelling in one habitat due to the shortage of food, power struggle and environmental problems. As a result, War and his brother Kar came together with the rest of Nuer and more precisely during migration era from Middle East or from the Garden of Eden to the present South Sudan, when Nuer reached Lich Cuor they did not come along with the rest of people, due to the power struggle. According to Nuer story War and his brother Kar were founded in the forest by the man named Jaloh Haak Ran, first they founded Kar fetching some water in the nearby pond and run back to their hiding place when seeing people coming to that pond, but those people run to the village informing villagers they have seen a ghost.

One day, Jaloh’s and his dog were passing by that place where Kar and brother were hiding then the dog saw a leg of person inside a tree and the dog started barking and it woofed too much. So when Jaloh looked

sternly into the tree he also identified a leg of person hiding there so he said, if you are an animal don't come out and if you are a person please come out now or I will take serious action against you. The man inside the tree replied please don't kill me I will come out, I'm a human being. When that man came out from the tree, he mentioned his name as Kar Kuoth and made a statement to the effect that he just came from heaven to the earth in search of food and left his parent in the heaven, especially his beloved brother called War. Then Jaloh asked him as to how they could assist him to get his brother descend and Kar said that his brother loves meat a lot and if a fat cow could be slaughtered instantly he could come down without delay. Then, Jaloh said this is something that could be easily handled, and he asked Kar to wait where they met, Kar nodded his head as a sign of agreement and he rushed to the cattle camp and brought a fat bull.

When Jaloh left the scene Kar quickly goes into tree to call out his brother, then he tells his brother to climb on the nearby big tree or tamarind, hid there and told him to come down later when cow is killed as if he just came from heaven. When Jaloh and his cattle camp dwellers arrived with a bull and give it to Kar and he slaughtered it on spot, roasted some fat meat and call out loudly his brother, War jumps down from the top of the tree just like he is from the heavens and everybody there was amazed about that move.

1.3 GAWAAR FAMILY LINE

The name War means night because he was born at night that time, later on War dies from wound caused by the small catfish sometimes known as "*Nyäkwär*" (Nyak in Nuer language means to spoil something nice) which jabbed him on the heel of the foot seriously. In Central and Western Nuer they called it Nyiwar whereas those of Eastern Nuer call it "*Lonynhial*". The story narrates that small catfish once it fell into ponds or pools during the raining season and when the rain stops, they remain in the ponds until they naturally die or they are collected by the residents of the area. War one day tried to take bath in the nearby pond and jumps into the water where he was jabbed by that small fish on his heel and die after some days. Before he dies, he warned his children not to eat that small fish, because it is the one that spoiled his life and caused his death and he cursed those small fish to remain in those ponds forever without seeing the main river and that is the reason why War's descendants don't eat those small fish called Nyakwar.

War has the following children: -Yien (Riah War) where those of Dr.Riek Machar Puot Nyuon descent from), Padaang, Ker (Jamuoh), Tur and Thep War. Kar Kuoth has these children: - Ken, Kuelnyang Kar (where those of Mr. Both Diu come from) and Lieth (girl) Kar Kuoth. Then Tur War has children and they are: Roth and Jaah. Jaah has his son named Geng Jaah and Geng has three sons: Kapel, Ngunjok and Bichiok Geng and the Jaah Tur's mother was called Cieth Wunkoak the sister of Dhot Wunkoah who was also nicknamed as Jimem. Tur has another wife who mothered Yiol Tur and Yiol has two sons: Gai and Jock Yiol and Yiol's mother is called Nyadak Kuon or son of Jimuoh daughter and they themselves are chieng nyanyacguah. Roth Tur has two sons: Manyuer and Pakir who was also nicknamed as Nyang and called Gat Nyajimach because his mother was Mach Nyabil Denai daughter son. Then Thony Tur has two sons namely Cham and Nuoy Thony.

Thep War children are Gul and Maal Thep. Maal is not Thep War son, but he was the son of his friend called Nyal Waah who is Hoth Waah Haak Ran's brother. Nyal Waah gave his son Maal to his friend Thep to look after his cattle when Thep son Gul was still a young boy, there after there was a fight between Thep and Hoth Waah, where Thep's bull was gorged to death by Hoth's bull and the youth in Thep cattle camp killed Hoth's bull by putting an hot axe into its sensitive part of the body. So when the bull was skinned Hoth Waah youth found the axe inside the bull and they youth reported it to Hoth and his brother Nyaal who declared

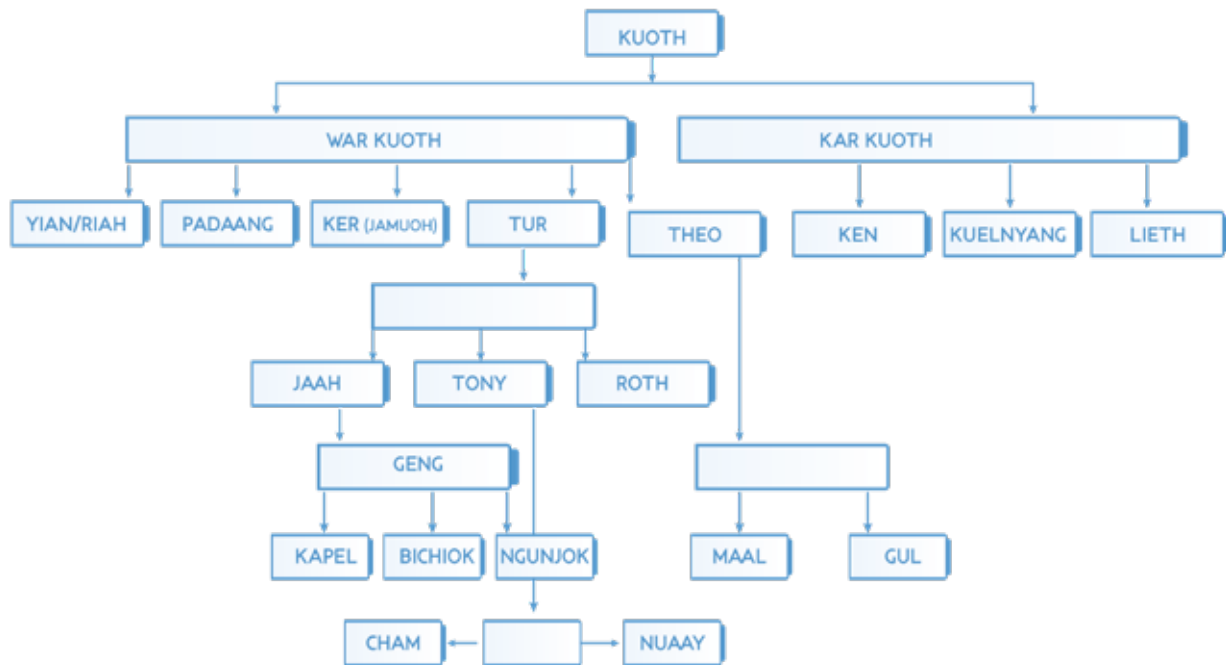
war against Thep War cattle camp and Thep cattle camp accepted to fight. So they set a condition that both of them should select a boy and a girl and send them to other Nuer cattle camps because tomorrow they will kill themselves to finish. So when dawn came, God made the grains planted yesterday mature ready to be eaten and when they have seen the miracle that was put as pacification between them, they ran into opposite directions and Maal escaped together with Thep ever since. So they put a rule that they will not share a room if rain is raining, because Hoth and Nyal Waah mother was called Jual.

1.4 THE THEORIES OF MIGRATION OF GAWAAR TO THE WEST NILE

Gawaar are considered the second people next to Lou Nuer, who migrated from Western to Eastern Nile round about 1826 through Pawarjaah port. Pawajaah was a famous man whose cattle was camped along the riverside and he prevented Buok Kapel and his people to cross the White Nile. In a fight that ensued Buok killed Pawajaah and crossed the river. His descendants first settle at Ayod, where they are still dwelling up to today and their leaders and religious leaders were: Buok Kapel Geng Jaah Tur War was leader and leopard custodian as well, Puol Bidiet Teny Bang Yiol who was deputy leader, Rol Kueth (a woman) and Nguen Thirr were their migration warriors. The reason of their migration to the east was associated environmental issues back home. The areas the people they came into contact with were Dinka Padaang

Another reason given for migration was that War and Kar were involved in power struggle between their children. As a result, a man called Jock Roal (Duang chotguar) from Jaloh, was entrusted leadership by Gea Holnyang when he becomes old. Jock leadership was very harsh and being a spiritual leader as well, he quarreled with Gawaar and displaced some of them to Leek land, especially children of Padaang War who are still settling there up to today. On the other hand, Jock was also displaced by Buoh Kapel and his group moved to the Eastern Nile and dislocated another group to Dok family.

KUOTH FAMILY TREE



GAWAAR PROPHETS

Gawaar have many prophets among them were Deng Leka whose divinity called Diw Yang Char, his son Dual Diu, Gony Yut, Matai Gatluak Thior and Gatjang Gai whose divinity was called Dhol Nyaala.

PROPHET GONY YUT

Gony was born by his mother Nyanuar Mut Diet Dhing Jak Waah Jiol Jaah Roth Tur War around 1928 with three other siblings: Khor, Nyamuonga and Diang Yut. He was initiated into Golong age- set in 1940. He hailed from Gawaar Nyang family. Gony was seized by his divinity Deng in late 1939 before being initiated. His divinity started from Haat village where he was born before he displaced to Payyowyow village by Rey flood in 1962. He went there and constructed big pyramid in Payyowyow village. Gony went to war with Anyanya one of Samuel Gai Tutyang because he accused them of killing pregnant cows. Gony warned them not to do so, just to concentrate on bulls and ox only. However, the Anya Nya refused

and that what dragged them into war which later turned into “Fangak prophets” war between Gony and prophet Ruei Kuic in 1967 where prophet Gony was backed by Khartoum government, whereas prophet Ruei supported by Anyanya one

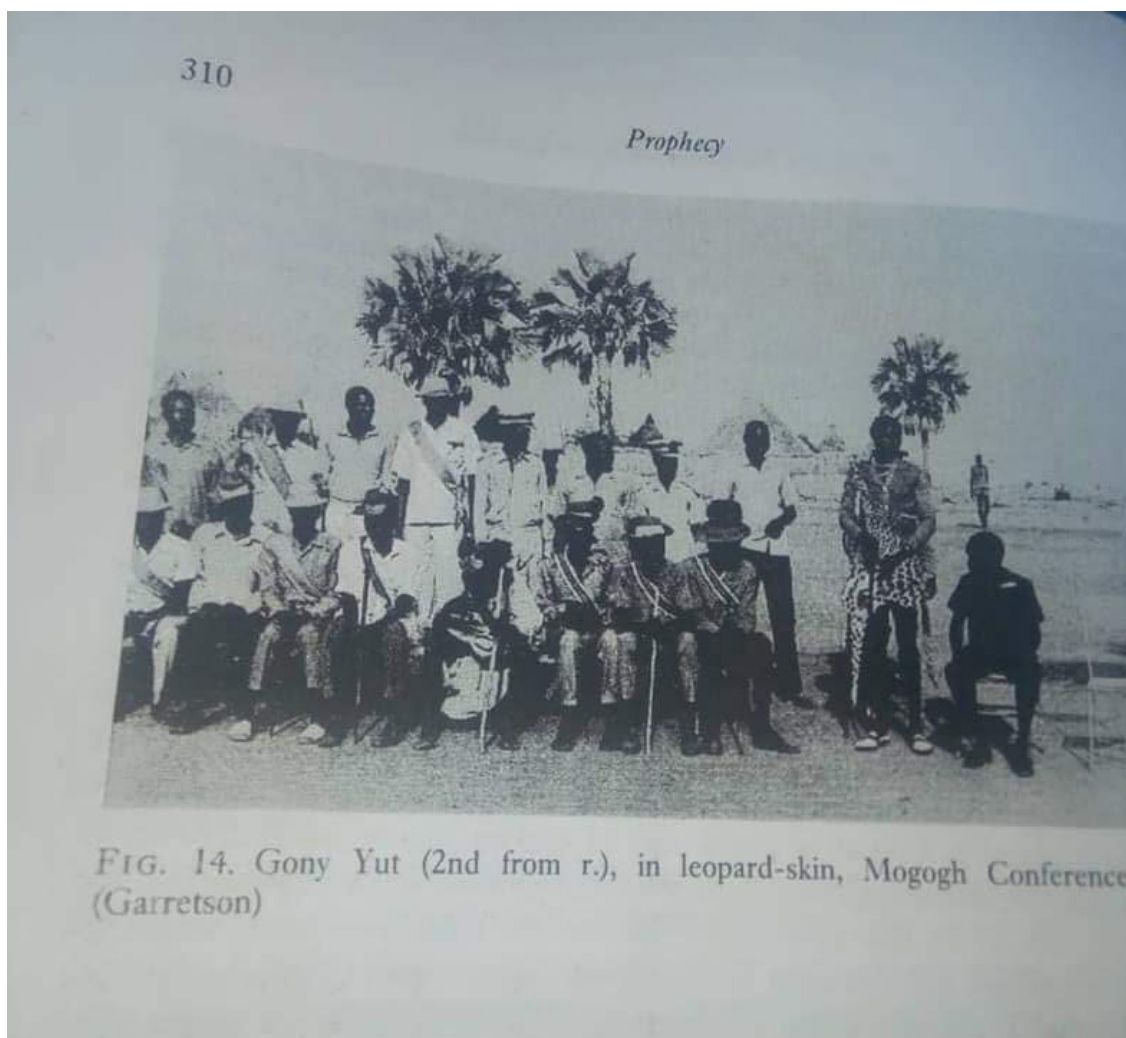
Gony divinity was famous for three things during his Prophetic era:

- 1). Gives women children
- 2). A rain giver
- 3). Lessen the death of people during war.

Prophet Gony Yut died on 11, October 2014 through heart failure when he received the news that Ayod town has been captured by the government during South Sudan crisis .



PROPHET DUAL DIU



GONY TUT CHAN WANGJAK

2.0 THE ORIGINS, ROUTES OF MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE THIANG

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Thiang Geka are one of Nuer sub-clans who come from Western Nile in 1826 according to Nuer elders that who interacted with children of age sets who migrated from Bentiu to the Zaraf Island known as Ngompiny, Yiybith and Tharpi. Thiang is also known as Ngor Geka, Thiang is the nickname of a man called Ngor and Thiang means brown ox which was given to him by his father Gea, when his sister Kher Geka was impregnated by a man called Jueny Dereel and that ox was given to him as reward or ruok in Nuer language by Jueny. Gea gave that bull to his first born son Ngor, because he was angry with Juey to kill Jueny who impregnated his sister.

2.2 THE THIANG LOCATION

The Thiang are people live in Fangak county along the Zaraf River or Phow. The area covers the Northern part of Jonglei State. It is projected that they have settled in the area for a period of about 182 years. The County Fangak is closed to Ayod County in the South East, Pigi County in the East, Panyikang (Shilluk County) in the North, Koch and Rupkoni Counties in the West part.

The chronological roots of migration to the area began with migration history of the Nuer and other Nilotic people in South Sudan. In a period presumed to be around 1300s, the people who became known as Western Nilotic (Jieng, Naath and Luo people), have settled along the areas of Bahr-El-Ghazal and western Bahr-El-Jebel rivers. The settlement helped them to acquire and develop techniques for animal domestication, and other lifestyles. However, the challenging question remains, where did they originally come from and how?. Thiang people are located in the southern part of Fangak Island (Gizera) County in Jonglei state of the Upper Nile region their big towns are Mareang, Toch Kulang Toat and Nyadin.

2.3 THE THIANG ORIGIN

According to this tradition, Ngor was the son to Gea Holnyang, whose nickname was Thieng. While the community of Gea was multiplying in number, the land became smaller and some internal disagreements started to occur to the level of conflicts. Other reasons were related to power struggle among the leaders, which led individual groups to decide to migrate in search for better living spaces. Thus, Eastern Nile was identified to be the best choice, which many years later on, became the home of three Nuer districts: Akobo, Fangak and Nasir.

2.4 THE MEANING OF THE NAME THIANG

Ngor means twin in the Dinka language owing the fact that his mother Nyanawel (Nyaguonga Awel means Guinfwol) Beh comes from Dinka and that is why she named her firstborn son Ngor and Ngor was born together with other twin who passed away during delivery. Ngor was followed by his brother Bol, his sister Kher and then twin brothers Nai and Diit Geka. Thiang had three sons known as Bang, Riah and Lek Ngor Geka and Bang Ngor had two sons who were Nyang and Yoak Bang.

a). **Bang Ngor**

Nyang Bang had a son called Bul Nyang and Bul who were maternal brothers of Chuol Wutiy whose mother was Nyandit Ker Riam Lep Laak Jueny Dereel and Bul Nyang mother was called Nyathiang Ker Riam Lep Laak. Nyandit was impregnated by a man called Wutiy Budhiay, Nyandit was brought by her sister Nyathiang as a babysitter, Nyandit fell in love with Wutiy, and when Wutiy was informed that he impregnated Nyadiet he fled for fear that he might be killed when people find out that the girl is impregnated by him. Wutiy vanished like that when Nyandiet's pregnancy matured, she revealed Wutiy was the one who impregnated her.

Nyang said no problem, there was no need to quarrel with in-laws, I he agreed to pay rewards (Ruok) and marry Nyandiet, because Wutiy was his friend. Nyandiet parent accept that settlement. Nyang married Nyandiet and up to today Chuol is not considered Wutiy son, because according to Nuer tradition, a legitimate son is considered belonging to someone who paid cows, although he might have had a biological father. Bul and Chuol called themselves Nyang's sons (Gaatnyang) without discrimination, and the name Gaat Nyang has become a nickname for all Thiang children (girl: Nyanyang and boy: Gatnyang)..

- Chuol had the following children: Jigar, Guel and Chung Chuol.
- Jigar Chuol had these children: Kuach Jigar, Teny Jigar, Walnai Jigar, Yaat Jigar (girl), Buor Jigar (girl) and Leaw Jigar
- Guel Chuol had these children: Khan Guel, Deptut Guel and Both Guel.
- Chung Chuol has these children: Bol Chung (like those of Apollo Gatkek Wich Thiech Puak Bol Chung) and Cinyot Chung.
- Yoak had his only a son called Liep Yoak and he had the following wives with their respective children:
- The Liep first wife was called Tuok and Touk had the following children Kuoth, Kual and Jal Liep.
- Liep second wife was called Nyamai and she has two sons: Chany and Puol Liep.
- Liep's third wife was called Tong Gatdiang and Tong had the following sons: Guol, Dung and Bidiit Liep; Dung and Bidiit were twins.

b). Riah Ngor

Riah is the junior brother of Bang Ngor and he had the following wives with their respective children: his first wife was Nyanthow and Nyanthow was believed to be a Dinka by origin because her name is related with Dinka or shilluk names. Nyanthow had the following sons: Terjok and his brother Ken Riah (Yat Dapir). Nyanthow quarreled with her husband Riah and left to her relative's home in Nyuong land where she became a concubine of a man called Dapier Jak and she gave birth to her son Yaat Dapier who later changed his name to Ken Riah. So Terjok the first born of Nyathow remained with his father Riah, when time went on Terjok became a grown up man and wanted to get married.

Meanwhile, some women in the area manipulated him by asking him why would you want to marry while his mother was not present. Thereafter, Terjok took decision to go and look for his mother. Terjok disappeared for long time until he found his mother in Nyuong area, then asked his mother to go with him Fangak, in order to attend his wedding ceremony and his mother accepted and went along with her two sons Terjok and Yaat.

When they reached home, Riah was happy because his son Terjok brought back his mother, after that Terjok changed his mind regarding his marriage, and told his father that now he will give this chance to his little brother because when he got married here he will not think of going back to his step father's house. Riah accepted his son decision's and then Riah named his step son Ken Riah instead of Yaat Dapier.

Ken married to first wife Gai Hooth and Gai has following children and grandchildren:

- 1). Kuony Yaat and Kuony had these children : Dol, Luot, Goak and Chan Kuony

- 2). Teel Yaat and had these children: Row and Chuol Teel
- 3). Dak Yaat the father of Nyabil Dak Yaat the mother of spiritual leader Gatkek Dup
- 4). Cuop Yaat
- 5). Luong Yaat (girl)
- 6). Dhion Yaat who was Diu Ruach 's mother, whose wife was called Nyacuy Bichiok
- 7). Buai Yaat.

Ken's second wife was called Tiit Juoch (Nyakerwok) with her two sons:

- 1). Mat Yaat has his son called Thong Mat
- 2). Buor Yaat has his two sons: Kuet and Dubay Bur.

Later on Terjok got married to one wife because his brother Ken took an advantage of him by married two wives at the same times, Terjock has his only son called Nyang Terjok. Even today Terjok has small homestead within Nyanthow family and now Nyanthow sons called themselves Chieng Jaah because of her little son Ken nickname -Yaad Dapier Jaah.

Then Riah second wife was called Gien Borluok and Gien has her son called Chan and Chan has the following wives with their respective sons:

Chan's first wife Tail had a son called Golong Chan and his descendants are those of Ruach Yut Geng Dongoay Golong Chan, Beach Geng Dongoay Golong Chan, Koryom Geng Dongoay Golong Chan and so forth.

Chan's second wife was called Nyaleak with her two sons: Biet and Bup Chan Riah and their offerings were Thoar Kuajien Bup Chan, Tilieng Biet Chan.

His third wife was called Tiac Gany, the mother of Nguen Riah whose children were Kuany Thoan Diu Nguen Riah (sometimes known as Garnyayiek me wa ci wide te gueth I ce kume le ling I ci wide cak due).

Riah fourth wife was called Nyakai and Nyakai had only a son called Kuai Riah. Kuai had two wives who give birth later with his sons: Luoh and Guol Kuai.

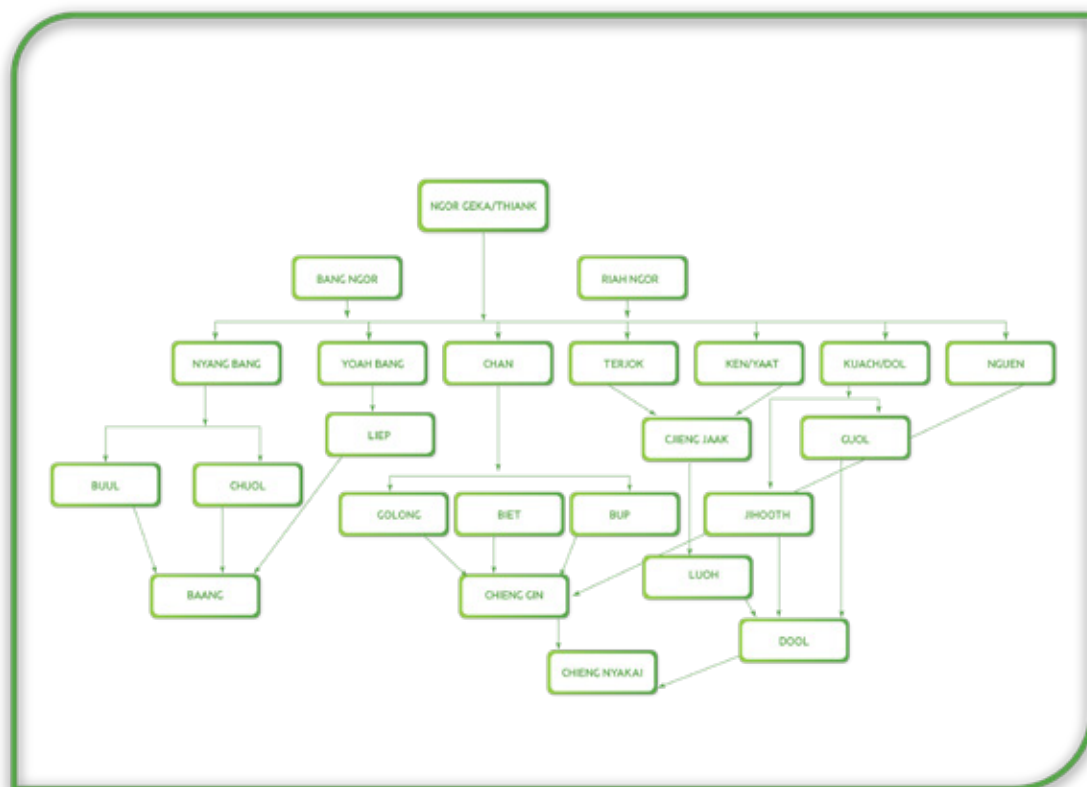
Kuai wives have developed reproductive problem for long time without having children where he struggled a lot to find divinities who can give his wives babies. One day Kuai travelled to another nation with his two wives in search for any assistance, on their way he got a lactating python which just gave birth to its tiny babies while there was very big wild fire approaching them. Kuai talked to his wives and told them that that they should help the python by making a break fire so that fire shouldn't burn her and babies. So he used his spear to separate the fire from Python and its babies.

As they started to resume their journey, the python has called Kuai with loud voice "Kuai Riah! Kuai Riah! Why did you saved my life and my babies? Kuai and his wives were astonished because the python can not speak like that, but the Python said "don't be afraid my savior, today you go and sleep with your wives and they will conceive together with boys and called the first one Luoh, because the way you waved your spear and called the other Guol because of the way I encircled over my babies.

Kuai and his wives praised the God of heaven a lot. After some months Kuai's wives got pregnant that made the whole village flabbergasted because those women got pregnant at the same time, while they spent several years without children. When the period of pregnancy was completed his wives gave birth with two boys as python told him and called the first son Luoh and the second one Guol . Indeed, up to today, Kuai Riah two sons are calling themselves Chieng Manyaal, which means Python family, because they were born through Python sympathy.

It is to be recalled that before Nuer migration to the eastern bank of the Nile a man called Hoth Waah from Haak family established friendship with Kuai Riah where they agreed that Hoth will offer Kuai his Leopard Skin and both be called after Hoth Waah's red cow "Dol".

However, Hoth Waah said my offerings will be praised with my traditional spear "mut thieli Jiwaah and even today Jihoth are calling their boys Gatheli, Mayiel and called their girls Nyadol, Nyayiel(yiel lual, yielcuor) Nyawaah Dol, Nyatheli Jiwaah. Even the author of this article comes from Dol's descendants. Therefore, the combination of the above mentioned Ngor Geka sub-clans had formed what is known today as Thiang Dangbakel or six Thiang offspring's



THE THEORIES OF MIGRATION OF THIANG GEKA

The historical narrative regarding reasons for migration of the Thiang states that, in addition to environmental issues and limitation of land space, Thiang, Bol family and other Jagey people's land had become overcrowded in the Kuer Nyanga, a village which is in present day Koch count, hence the need to go to a place which could accommodate them and their animals. Thiang started their migration as transhumance trip as they normally do every year, where they use to go to the cattle camp in Toch of Rier, Barjaak. And when wet season comes, they come back to Kuer Nyanga as their home town.

The Thiang decided to go to the Zaraf Island and sent some youth to go and see the Zaraf Island, which was in the west bank of Nile to where they were encamped. When the youth came back, they presented to the members of Thiang sub-clan their findings about the island. They recommended that it was a good area for both human and cattle. Thus, in late 1826 they started their migration to the western Nile.

Their first settlement was Fangak and their leaders of migration were Thoar Kuacjien Bup Chan Riah Ngor Geka, Yay Dongay Golong Chan and Bul Nyang Bang Ngor Geaka, all of whom went with their families, the reason for their migration was environmental issues and power struggle.

The second theory stated that Thiang migration happened when their sister Kher Geka's sons Lak and Lek quarreled over their father properties which led into deadly fighting between them. As a result of that dispute, Thiang were backed by Laak in the war, Leek overcame Laak and Thiang together which forced them to migrated from the west Nile to the Zaraf Island.

3.0 III. THE ORIGINS, ROUTES OF MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE LAAK

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Laak is a sub-clan of Nuer of Fangak County and they are descendants of western Nile people which they left for the east bank in 1829. Laak are residing in Zaraf Island and Laah father was Jueny Dereel Nyar who was believed to have originated from Anyuak tribe. His father Jueny got married to Gea Holnyang Gaw Ran's daughter called Kear Geaka who gave birth to two sons Laah and Leeh Jueny.

Dereel, Dhot Wunkoak who is also known as Jimem and Kiik, was believed to have come to Africa through Indian Ocean during migration period from Middle East. According to that theory another son of Dereel called Tut reel traveled with the canoe in Chambek port or in the present town of Nyirol in Lakes state searching of their brothers Haak and Gaw Ran who left them during Israel and Kush war as stated as narrated in 2 Chronicles chapter 14.

2.0 THE LAAK LOCATION

The Lak are people residing in greater Fangak along the Zeraf River or Phow in Northern Jonglei State. It is projected that they have settled the area for period of about 220 years since 1829. The Lak county, Fangak is bordering Ayod county in the south East, Pigi County in the East, Panyikang (Shilluk County) in the North, Koch and Rupkoni Counties in the West part of the river.

The chronological migration to the area began with migration history of the Nuer and other Nilotic people in South Sudan. In a period believed to be around 1300s, the people who became known as Western Nilotic (Jieng, Naath and Luo people), settled along the areas of Bahr-El-Ghazal and western Bahr-El-Jebel rivers. The settlement helped them to acquire and develop techniques for animal domestication, and other lifestyles. come from and how? This article will attempt to answer it according to the Nuer traditions and beliefs.

3.0 THE LAAK ORIGIN

According to Nuer oral history Jueny Dereel Nyar originated from Anyuak tribe and married Gea Holnyang Gaw Ran's daughter called Khear Geka who mothered Laah and Leah. Due to overcrowding, power struggle and internal conflicts among Nuer in Lich Cuor, an area covering the present day ton of Bentiu and its surroundings. Laak quarreled with Leek and in the processs of intense conflict, Laak decided to migrate to Zaraf Island which became their new home.

4.0 THE MEANING OF THE NAME LAK

The name Laah means red lily water roses Jueny used to eat when he went into hiding after he confirmed that he impregnated Kear Geka. He ran and hid himself in the river bank for fear that he might be killed when Kear reveals to her people as to who was responsible for her pregnancy. Meanwhile, Juey stayed for a while without coming home, until Kear pregnancy matured and Kear informed her parents that Juey was the one who impregnated her. Everybody in the family was shocked, especially her big brother Ngor who got furious and searched for Juey with the intention to killing him. Ngor looked everywhere and did not find him. Ngor's anger was triggered by the fact that Juey was staying in Gea 's house looking after the cattle for a long time and he was even given a cow and brown bull, which he later gave to Gea as a price for his daughter impregnation.

When the time came for Kear to give birth to her son, Gea gave an order to his sons not to kill Juey wherever they meet him, because he has a son with his daughter, hence there was no need to murder him. Meanwhile, Juey used to come to the back yard at night to listen to what people were saying about him and when he realized that Gea and his sons are no longer threatening to kill him, he came and reported himself to the village elders. Then the village elders went to Gea and told him that Juey has come. Juey have a cow and bull to Gea as reward and Juey named his son Lak in appreciation for the lily water roses he use to eat when he was staying at the river bank. Later on Juey behaved well very with his in-laws and as a result of the respect he has shown, Gea gave him Kear as his wife. Later on Kear gave birth to her second son called Leah.

Lak stayed with his uncle Ngor until he grew to a big boy and later married to a girl called Nyakuoth Rol Duar who mothered Lep, Gang, Rial, Lual and Nguol Laah who is also nicknamed as Kerlual and Laah. He married his second wife called Kerthiang mother to Yak and Kol Laah.

Laak call themselves Chiengkuachboor, Kuachboor was a nickname of a man called Kang Yak laah. Kang was the father of Kar and Cuak Kang. Kar is Nyang Doak's brother. Kang had concubine called Nyakuok Bol Nyang Len Jack Dok, who was nicknamed Kukan. Nyakuok came from Dok family with her son Nyang and gave birth later to her son Kar with Kang Yak.

Chiengkuachboor are found in two Payams in Fangak couty: Paguir and Pulita. Paguir is occupied by Dhol, Chieng Wicnyieng and Chieng Duongrial, whereas in Pulita Payam's occupants are Lep, Rial, Kol, Yak and Lual Laak. While the Gang reside together with Dhol in Paguir Payam, Kerlual clan stays with their cousin Leah children in Rupkoni county in Bentiu.

5.0 THE THEORIES OF MIGRATION OF LAAK TO THE WEST NILE

Laak migration came about as a result of a fight between Lak children with Leah children. Leah children defeated Laak children during the fight and pushed them to the Western bank of the Nile. The Laak and Jonyang were the last groups of people to have migrated from Western Nile to the Zaraf Island around 1829 through Bimgany and Tuoth ports and their first settlement was Zaraf island/Fangak. Their leaders and religious leaders of the migration included: Kuaany Jang, Bang Naang Joak, Khor Bidiet, Chantum Bol Mema the leopard custodian and then Kuony Kiich Nyang Dabuot who was also known as Kuony Rel and Kuiny Dak Nyieny Kuoh were their migration warriors. They migrated with their families.

Another reason cited for the migration was power struggle between Laah and his junior brother Leah Jueny Dereel Nyar who forced him to migrate to the present area of Fangak. When they reached Fangak, they found Lou Nuer residing in the area, and had to fight for more than four years. Laak crossed White Nile with help of a Shilluk convoy called Duarkook who used to fish and trade along the White Nile, Laak gave Duarkook two girls of Nyang Khor Bidiet, this is the reason why Fangak people are nicknamed Shilluk or Chienyakhor which mean Nyaang family and Nger Bang Naang Joak. Those two beautiful girls were given to Shilluk in order to help them with their canoes to cross the White Nile.

Prior to the migration of Laak to the Western Nile or the present town of Zaraf Island, Laak are situated in the Wunthow, Jajiok, Duar villages which were later occupied by Leek after Laak migrated. So when they reached the Island, Lou Nuer resisted and rejected their advancement deep into the Island and threatened Laak to go back to the West Nile, otherwise they will deal with them. When they fought, Lou overwhelmingly defeated Laak and pushed them back to the river bank. Thus, Kuony Kich Nyang Dabuot sent a message to a man called Thoar Kuacjien from Thiang to reinforce him and offered him, his beautiful daughter called Nyadaan Kuny to be his wife if he accepted his request.

Thoar accepted Kuony's request and sent about 230 youths to him; when Thiang youths joined the war they fought and overran Lou.

Laah's wife Nyakuoth Rolduar has a sister called Muoth Rolduar, who was married to a man called Nyang Darkuoh Holanyang Gaw Ran, Nyang and Muoth had only one son named Kuok Nyang. Nyang married to Nyakun Nyapir and had the following children Nyak, Jiguah, Nyieny and Thior Kuok. Kuok's second wife was called Gai Kuyien who gave birth to the following children: Geng, Kuduop, Looch and Bup Kuok Bup Kuok. Kuok Nyang children are called Jonyang, who have two payams: Manyajang and Barboi.

LAAK PROPHETS.

Laak had many prophets' beginning with Majiok Deang, Jial Gai, Ruck Kuic, Nyadieng Reath and Wutnyang Wiectuor Gatkek, prominent among them being prophet Ruei Kuic and white army prophet Wutnyang Wiectuor Gatkek.

PROPHET RUEI KUIC GIL

Ruei was born around 1940s and his mother's name was Nyakhor Gak. His siblings included Nyabieli, Kok and Lang. Ruei hailed from Duok Nyak Kuok family (Jonyang) and was initiated into Garang age set in 1955. Before his divinity Tutkuor seized him in 1967, that divinity was called Marpiny, which is said to be staying on and spoke in a big tamarind tree of Nyimkuan village in Fangak County. Marpiny perform several miracles such as, beating of women who tried to fight with each other without seeing who beat, whip the youths who imitate to club fighting. In 1966, Marpiny vanished without speech from that tree, people were extremely worried and asked Mr. Ruach Nhial who was under that tree and used to interpret what Marpiny says. Ruach had told them that Marpiny had gone back to the heaven. In early 1966, Ruei Kuic was seized by something he did not know, he started it when trying to roast some fishes in nearby gardens of a prominent family called Chieng Paleak in Kuong village. While Ruei was enjoying his roasted fishes, a small fire jumps into dried grasses next to Chieng Paleak gardens, where all barns were still in the forest before they were transported to their homes in the village. The fire burnt down those barns into ashes and Ruei tried to rescue the barns; however, the fierce fire overwhelmed him and even burnt some parts of his body seriously.

When people saw the smoke from the village they rushed to the forest and they founded Ruei standing in the empty place without single barn left by fire and he just told people that he was one who mistakenly lit fire into the grain barns. Chieng Paleak got furious and wanted to instigate a fighting with Kuic family, but other families intervened by promising Chieng Paleak that your grains will be recompensed by Kuic Gil's father and Chieng Paleak accepted the offer and Kuic Gil gave them a heifer for all grains burnt according to Nuer customary law. From that period onward Ruei did not feel well again, especially fire that has burnt his body. Then Ruei began to perform some miracles to the people and later on the Divinity declared that it was him who was in the tamarind tree and his name was Tutkuor.

The heifer which was given to Chieng Paleak by Ruei's father performed some miracles, for example, when they tried to put it in the byre with other cows, the byre got burnt and the heifer survived from that tragic situation many cows succumb by fire and that miracle frustrated Chieng Paleak, they had to fled to prophet Dual Diw home town for survival. When they were advised to give back the heifer to Ruei's father, they refused to give back that heifer.

Meanwhile, the Laak's first prophet Majiok Deang, whose divinity was called Deng Yoang tried to intervene between the Chieng Paleak and Chieng Kuic Gil and proposed that that offspring of that heifer would be returned to Kuic, but Chieng Paleak rejected and considered Majiok as someone who sided with Kuic Gil.

When Chieng Paleak reached the Diu's home, they explained the whole story to prophet Dual Diu as to what happened between them and Chieng Kuic Gil. Dual appreciated their coming to him, considering that he did not want any other prophet in Fangak to be greater than him. He told Chieng paleak that everything will be okay. In the evening, they put the cow with its offspring to Diw byre. From there the barn was engulfed by fire instantly as soon the cow reached inside the barn with other cows and people were narrowly rescued them. When Dual witnessed that miracle caused by that cow, he felt sorry and referred Chieng Paleak to Prophet Nyaruach Kulang Ket across the White Nile in Jagei area, in current Unity state.

Chieng Paleak travelled to prophet Nyaruach's home land, and before they arrived in Nyaruach's home, she told people that she will be receiving guests in two days and that they are coming to report to her a problem. Exactly, after two days, Chieng Paleak reached Nyaruach's home, they tried to explain their problem to the prophet Nyaruach and she told them that there was no need to explain to her their case, she said I have seen your problem before you arrived here.

Prophet Nyaruach continued to relate to them their problem saying that: "Chieng Paleak I know that you have been given a heifer by Chieng Kuic Gil in compensation for your grains that Kuic Gil's son Rueil burnt mistakenly." So when Chieng Paleak heard this they were astonished by Nyakulang's divinity power which revealed to them things that nobody has told her before, because the distance between Bentiu and Fangak was long and it takes some time to travel to Fangak or Bentiu by canoes.

When they finished talking with Nyakulang, they were happy for her kind words and in evening Nyakulang told them that they should put their cows into Maani big cattle kraal; however, nothing happened until dawn and in the morning when Chieng Paleak learnt that the barn was not burnt like the way it happened elsewhere, they praised Maani a lot, then Chieng Paleak spent one year in Nyaruach's home. In the following year, Nyakulang advised them to go back to Fangak and give back the offspring of that cow to Chieng Kuic Gil and prophet Majiok will be the one to facilitate the process. Then Chieng Paleak returned to Fangak and consulted prophet Majiok, Majiok called Chieng Kuic Gil and gave them the cow and the long dispute was resolved.

Prophet Rueil died from long illness on 12th of November 1989, the people of Fangak are still remembering that year which they referred to as Ruon kuony Rueil, which means Rueil's year, because there was a lot of rainfall that year where people harvested nothing from their gardens due to the heavy rain, prophet Rueil's death was officially announced on Malakal radio.



PROPHET RUEK KUIC GIL AND HIS PYRAMID

THE WHITE ARMY PROPHET WUTNYANG WIECTUOR GATKEK

Wutnyang Wiectuor Gatkek, born in 1962 and his mother was called Nyaruekni Roam Bol Kueth. He had three other siblings, Nyayior, Mayiek and Nyakeekni. the last born to Wutnyang he was seized by a divinity since he was eight years old and he used to do many miracles such as changing humans hair into maize grains and he also used to cause bulls made out of clay to fight with each other and flow some blood when gorging themselves, Wutnyang was initiated into Louk age-set and he hailed from Chak Bul Dhoat (Jimem) descendants. He comes from long line succession of prophets and succeeded prophet Ruei Kuich when his divinity began to speak in 1990s. Wutnyang was the one who coined the name jish en bor or white army in mid 1991 and in 1992. He mobilized his white army from Jikany, Lou, Gawaar, Laak and Thiang in order to attack the Malakal town.

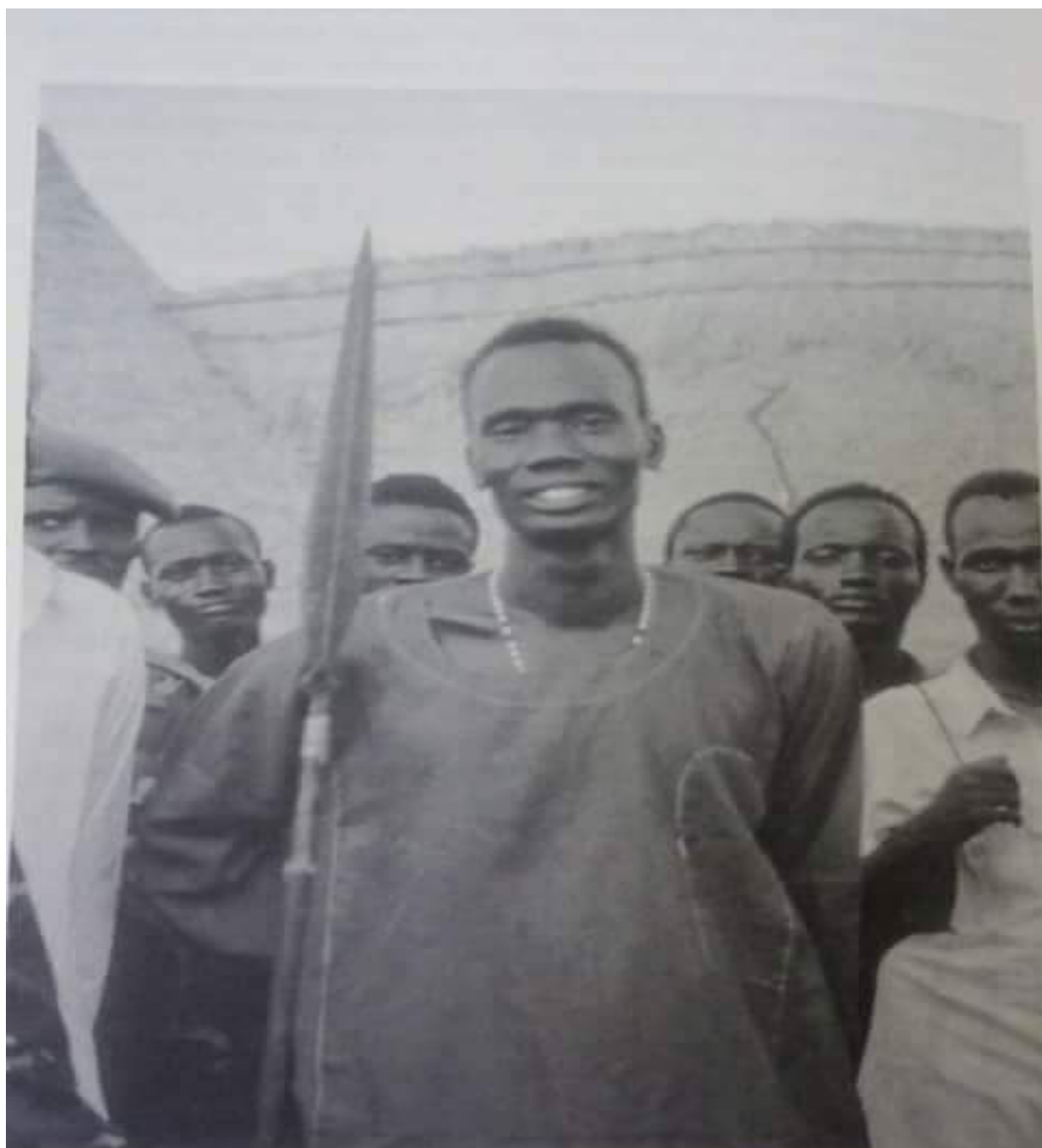


Plate 30. The contemporary Lak Nuer prophet Wutnyang Gatakek.

PROPHET WUTNYANG GATKEK

In early morning of November 1992, prophet Wutnyang ordered his army to attack Malakal from both sides of ANakdiar and Katdako suburbs, from there the white army was about to capture Malakal as whole. The Upper Nile government at the time was led by Governor Gatluak Deng Garang.

Prophet Wutnyang and his soldiers succeeded in capturing some parts of Malakal town included Bam and Dingirchupu and waited for few days expecting reinforcements from SPLA-United which delayed to respond. Afterwards, the government army re-organized itself after having identified them as civilian army, repulsed them by using heavy artillery weapons. When prophet Wutnyang realized that his soldiers retreated, he tactically withdrew from Dolep Hill where he encamped to Khorfulus having realized his white army will not sustain the fight.

Wutnyang continued to carry on with his activities serving the community until he joined the SPLA-United after his prophetic divinity left him. He died on January 27, 2006 . He was recruited by the SPLA with the rank of colonel during the violent disarmament campaign against the white army in Wuror County. Then his remains were relocated from where he was slayed to his shrine in Paak village in February 2006 by supporters of Dr. Riak Machar Teny.

THE BEGINNING OF NUER MARKS

Nuer six forehead marks were believed to have been created by the man called Targei Lek Bol Geka in 1765 where it was alleged that the six marks represented the Gea children: Ngor, Bol, Kear, Nai , Dit and Lang Geaka against Jock Roal who succeeded Gea. Gea children wanted to inherit their father 's chiefdom and in order to do so, they were to be marked.

BELOW ARE THE LOCATIONS AND YEARS OF INITIATION ACCORDING TO **JOHNSON, DOUGLAS H. (1993)**

S/N	WESTERN AND CENTRAL NAATH	EASTERN NAATH: FANGAK, LOU AND JIKANY	YEAR OR DATE OF INTIMATION
1	Riak		1765
2	Juok		1775
3	Chot-Bora		1785
4	Ger-Loch		1795
5	Yoach-Nuach		1805
6	Yil-Bith		1815
7	Ngompiny		1825
8	Chuet-Chuor / Tharpi 1830		1830
9	Lajak		1845
10	Thut		1855
11	Buoi-Loch/ Wor/ Wuor		1860/65
12	Lailek 1870	Maker	1875
13	Dang	Luach	1885
14	Lier	Dang-Guonga	1895
15	Dal/Yaal	Char-Buoi/ Guong	1905
16	Kiech/ Pilual/ Goong2	Lith-Gai	1915
17	Pilual/Kei	Chayat	1925
18	Chot-Jiok/Kac-Lou	Rial-Mach	1930
19	Guoluong	Reang-Gach/Kuek	1940
20	Koryom	Lit-Jang	1945
21	Garaang/Yaat-Jaani	Thok-Thok/ Sudan	1955
22	Tang-Nyang	Jak-Gach	1957
23	Pilual/	Tui-Tui	1960
24	Pilual	Loke-Leat	1965
25	Weah	Put-Chot-Gier	1970
26	Weah	Lunge/Pathayiot	1975
27	Louk	Nyang-Lek/Malicha	1980

Figure 6: Names and the meanings of Naath marks

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