

*Traditions.*—(a) The creation. The main points in the lengthy account which a Nat priest can give on this interesting topic are the following : Originally, “before the beginning,” only wind, clouds, and a mysterious being, half human and half avian, existed in some unaccountable manner through a self-creative power. From these elements were brought forth, by means of a generative process, the first cosmical matter and the primitive spirits or Nats. These Nats in their turn brought forth vegetation, animal and human life. While the elementary parts of this world still existed in their rudimentary forms, a great Nat, named Chinun, gave birth to a monstrous giant, half spirit and half man, named Ninggawnwa. It took seven years for him to be born, and he held at his birth a great hammer and a pair of tongs in his right hand. With these instruments he in due time gave form and order to the visible earth. As soon as the arrangement of this earth was completed, Chinun brought forth a great pumpkin, which the “omniscient” one (also a later son of Chinun), after the death of his mother, divided into two parts. From the part to the right the first man was made, and the first woman from the one to the left. This human pair dwelt at the central part of the earth, by a beautiful mountain created from the head of Chinun. Man was made immortal, but because of a foolish desire to see a dead being, and having by a lie brought over himself the wrath of the Sun-Nats, death was imposed upon him as a punishment. A number of cattle were sent to eat the “fruit of life,” which otherwise would have served as a preventive of death. The first human pair gave birth to another, and so on until the third generation, when nine sons and nine daughters were born to a certain Wachstwa. These are the progenitors of the different Kachin tribes, or, as some would assert, of the Asiatic races in general. The pedigree of white people can be traced to a certain kind of monkeys, and according to some were not found until after “the great flood.” Everything is now existing through itself, and an overruling providence in the Christian sense is not recognized. The Nats at times shake the mountains, thus causing earthquakes, or send a great frog to swallow the sun or the moon, which causes eclipses, but are not otherwise interfering with the regular order of the universe. The Kachins, as far as I have been able to find out, do not believe in any interruption of the present order of things. Everything has for them an endless existence.

(b) “The great flood.” It has often been observed that the story of the deluge has in some form or another been preserved, with surprising exactness of detail, in most separate countries and by widely different races. The Kachins having no written language, and consequently no literature of any kind, form, however, no exception to this interesting fact. Their unique story of the “great inundation” runs in somewhat the following way : Some time after Ninggawnwa had finished his creative work and appointed to the different races separate places where to live and dwell, an attempt was made by him to build a huge bridge, at the central