

Myths of Thangal Origin from an Anthropological Perspective

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Abstract : Myths may be understood as a special kind of literature though not found in written form. Through myths, anthropologists make attempts to describe a world which members of a literate society can barely imagine. Mythical stories about origin of numerous ethnic and tribal communities have helped in tracing their route of migration and the long journey undertaken before arriving at their present places of settlement. This study intends to highlight the myths associated with the origin of the Thangal tribe of Manipur from an anthropological perspective and interpret the stories in the context of evolution, migration and relationship with other neighbouring groups. Fieldwork was conducted using an interview guide to collect primary data and published literatures were consulted for secondary data. The result show two popular versions of origin myths are found among the Thangal- first is origin from a cave at Makhel located in the Maram area and second is the belief that the Thangal, the Tangkhul and the Meitei are brothers who emerged out of a cave long ago. In conclusion, the origin myths of the Thangal may be confirmed and established through archaeological findings in the form of artefacts. Mention of erection of memorial stones in the second version is a good clue to start an archaeological survey of the sites which are believed to have been once occupied by the people.

Keywords : anthropology, migration, myth, Thangal

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