



# Concept of Gender through the Legend of Indigenous Pgaz K' Nyau (Karen) People in Northern Thailand

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**Opinion**

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## Opinion

The story of Pgaz K'nyau told from generations to generations that Pgaz K'nyau believed that there are two worlds, one world is the world of Pgaz soo hkof hpo (black hair human world) or the realm of human world and another world is Plei dof plau dof [1] (a big plain land) or the realm the another/second human world. Pgaz K'nyau believe that before they were born as human beings in this world, they lived in another world called Pleif dof plau dof . people in that world can choose to be born as human beings in this world. But those who are born must volunteer or choose to be born and birth as human beings in the world. The importance is they need to go to request and discuss with Muf qa hklej [2]. Will he or she really like to come to live in the human world? and how long he or she will volunteer to be born and live in human world, because some of them will be born and stay only in young age and return to their old world, some of them will live in this world until old age and return to their old world. All of these requested have been recorded in their skulls by Muf qa hklej and if someone died, he or she will come back to meet Muf qa hklej and Muf qa hklej will check and see that it is the time of he or she to come back or not? This is based on the record of requested in the beginning of before get birth. Reference through hta [3] that "Y hai muf qa hklej auf cav, uf lauz k' krev baf muf qa" Translated "When, I came, I have asked by Muf qa hklej, and I have agreed to come by principle...".

"Na civ siv, Na civ htauv [4]" Pgaz K' Nyau people believe that Na civ siv Na civ htauv are the spirits of people who are not married, therefore. they don't have children to deliver food for their spirit, when they hungry they are forcing other

ancestor's spirit to ask their children to do taj maz qai [5] (clan's worship for their ancestors), when, the spirit worship performed, Na civ siv na civ htauv will join the food from clan worship performance from those ancestors. Based on this believe, Pgaz k' Nyau people believe that their children need to get married for to have their children to continue to do taj maz qai for their ancestor spirits and for people who don't get married are unacceptable in the society. This is one original reason of to have Auf qai (clan worship performance) in Pgaz k' Nyau society.

Pgaz K' Nyau people is matrilinear, taj maz qai is ancestor worship performance in woman clan level. There is a ritual to raise the spirits of ancestors called "taj maz qai" (clan ceremony). In clan level, the grandmother of the clan is the center of the clan. Taj maz qai ritual call /arrange by the grandmother of the clan to perform this ritual in clan level. When call for performing of the ritual in clan level by the grandmother all of children of grandmother need to join the ritual performance that means all children man or women of grandmother need to come and join including all grandchildren of the grandmother daughters need to join, except the children of the son of the grandmother not allow to come, because they are belonging to another clan of the son's wife, therefore, the man who are the son of grandmother will join the clan ceremony alone. Therefore, all children and grandchildren of the daughter of grandmother will join the clan ritual.

The ritual process of Taj maz qui very strict, there are a lot prohibit regulations that create this ritual is becoming very sacred and powerful. The ritual need to perform by grandfather by allow by the grandmother to worship the spirit of the great ancestors of the woman/grandmother clan by praying to ask the ancestor spirits come down and

eat the food that prepared by their children..., then grand father and mother tase the ritual food, follow by the eldest family of grandmother children, follow by the second family until the youngest family. The Taj maz qui ritual is a strong and good connection of relationship in clan level, it is smart and power full mechanism because it is not only to perform the ritual together but also create close relation, faithful, and unite people in the clan level to become one on to help, to support each other in all aspects and in long-life process. And women focus group said that including good relationship between husband and wife based on this clan ritual, Pgaz k' nyau people are one husband and one wife, they are not divorce because this clan ritual create a strong spirituality on patient, respect, honest, faithful each other between the family (husband and wife) level and clan level.

### Literature

1. Plei dof plau dof means a big plain land, the livelihoods

of the people in this world similar to Pgaz soo hkof hpo/ human world.

2. Muf qa hklej is the queen of nature, stay in Bodhi tree and Pgaz K' nyaw people believe that Muf qa hkle is their great grandmother as their ancestor and play as mediator between the two world's human world and second world of human world.
3. Hta is traditional poems or songs, it is meaningful include knowledge wisdom and local philosophy. It can use for singing or chatting, depend on the needs or context of the event.
4. Na civ siv, Na civ htauv are the spirit of people who don't marry in their life, their spirits will not have their children to worship them after died.
5. Taj maz qai is the ancestors worship ritual in family and clan level, it is belong to women clan because Pgaz K' Nyau people are matrilinear based.

