

FOLKTALE OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

The Cricket and the Crab (Adi tale)

(From A New Book of Tribal Fiction, Verrier Elwin, 1970, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh)

A long time ago there was a Wiyu who had a daughter Cricket, and a son, Crab. After the birth of Crab, the father died and the mother, unable to do the heavy work of the fields resolved to go to Tibet to trade. As she was about to leave, her little daughter ran to her and begged her to come back soon. The mother noticed that the girl's hair was full of lice and she thought, "If I leave her here like this, the lice will get into the boy's hair too.

I had better take her with me." So the mother and the daughter went together to Tibet leaving the boy behind. The mother traded skins for salt and wool in Tibet but one day she passed away. Her daughter was now alone but as she liked the country so much, she decided to fetch her little brother and settle there. She went home but when she asked her brother Crab to go with her, he refused.

She tried to drag him along, but he was too strong for her and in a fit of temper she beat him with her dao and broke his legs. The crab then scuttled away to hide in a hole under a pile of stones. So Ever since this incident the crab's leg have been bent and he has lived in holes and under stones. But Cricket returned to Tibet and every year in the rains still comes to see her brother but he hides when he hears her song.