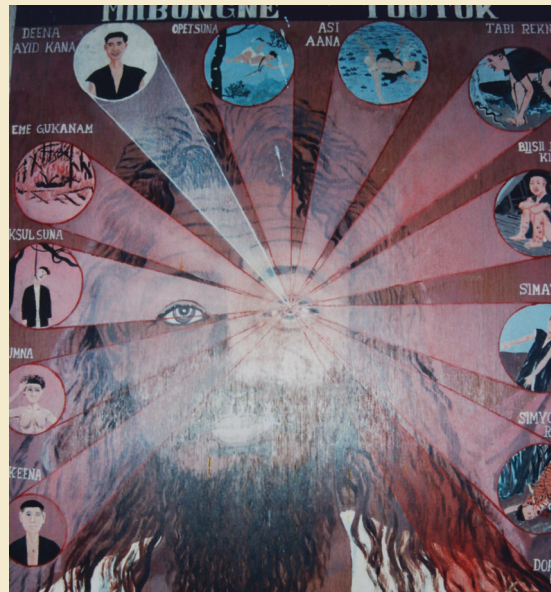


According to the followers of Donyi-Poloism nothingness and silence were prevalent in the beginning. Donyi-Polo already existed in the form of a luminary body. The desire to create a universe led to the exertion of the luminary body, which broke into two parts. One part became the firmament, revered as the Father; the other one became Mother Earth. But Donyi-Polo himself remained in between the sky and the earth as the Creator, Protector and Destroyer. It is believed that by connecting heaven and earth through his existence, which signifies the concept of union, all living and non-living beings were born, also the father of mankind, the Abotani. With him also Taki, the leader of evil spirits, and Taro, the brother of the Abotani, along with lions, tigers and elephants appeared from the womb of the Mother Earth.

In order to pray to Donyi-Polo, no gestures like the folding of hands or kneeling down are necessary. It is believed that a direct communication with the Almighty is possible always and everywhere. Rituals are needed only for the appeasement of the numerous subordinate deities and spirits, of which most are evil in character and hostile to man. Furthermore, it is believed that everyone praying to Donyi-Polo will always be blessed, since nothing is possible without His blessings. Donyi-Poloism has developed a practical moral code, which defines itself in four basic statements: Menyi menma beka (Speak no evil), Tanyi tama beka (Hear no evil), Kanyi kamabeka (See no evil), and Rinyi rima beka (Do no evil). Heeding these commandments will lead to self-realisation, to a life without fear, and finally to admission in heaven (Donyi-Polo moko). Violation of these commandments leads to damnation in hell (uyumora). Out of these basic commandments, the followers of Donyi-Poloism have developed ethical concepts such as striving for equality, liberty, justice and knowledge. They believe in the feeling of oneness, universal brotherhood and love for all. In the eyes of an adept of Donyi-Poloism, all beings are children of Almighty Donyi-Polo. Nobody shall be regarded as superior or inferior, low or high; everybody is the same in the eyes of the Almighty Donyi-Polo.



Top: Traditional egg sacrifice on a temporary shrine. Photo by K Cox. **Above:** Poster for promoting Donyi-Poloism. Photo by C Neuenhofer.

Overleaf: Adi-Galo villages consist of huge clusters of big and spacious houses roofed with thatch and raised on stilts and laid out over fairly wide terrains. Photo by H Höger.