**MEMBA**

Membas, also known by the Tibetan term Neh-nang, meaning, "people living in the holy place", are a cluster of people occupying the higher reaches of Mechuka valley in Shi Yomi district, and Tuting and Gelling valleys of Upper Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The tribe in the past identified themselves as Pachakshrisba after Pachakshiri, the old name of Mechuka. The term Memba has had been reportedly first coined to refer to the Buddhist people inhabiting in the Tuting circle of Upper Siang district, while for the tribe living in Mechuka, it most probably came into general use after India's independence. Numbering around 4500 souls in population, Membas originally belonged to Dakbo - Kongba area of south east Tibet and from there the tribe came to Bhutan and Tawang, and thence to Tuting, Gelling and Mechuka in early 17th century AD. They are among one of the Bodic group of tribes and follow Nyingmapa Tibetan Buddhism. As a devout Buddhist, they follow all the intricate details of Buddhist rituals, hosting atleast a Buddhist flag or a string of Buddhist flags infront of every household. Festivals usually celebrated by the tribe includes Losar and Choskar. They are mongoloid by race and their language belong to Tibeto Burman language family, and have a script of their called Ume or Hokar of Tibetan origin. They are agrarian people practicing shifting cultivation and growing millet, maize, buckwheat and various other crops.