

THE DONGBA SPIRIT OF NATURE

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Originally nomads from the Tibetan Plateau, the Nashi people settled in the fertile Himalayan foothills of Yunnan over 2,000 years ago. From the ancient Tibetan religion of *Bön*, they developed a unique religion of nature-worship called *Dongba*. The progenitors of humanity and nature were two half-brothers, two mothers with the same father. Nature is controlled by a human-snake chimera called *Shv* –a statue of whom you see here.

The Nashi are a peaceful gentle people whose ideal is living in accordance with nature. They dress very colorfully, women have equal respect with men, they write with the world's only still-functioning pictographic script, and are proud of preserving their culture for millennia. It is an enchanting experience to be among them. (*Glimpses of Our Breathtaking World #163* photo ©Jack Wheeler)

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