



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences

journal homepage: <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/kjss>

Beliefs and rituals related to Chao Bao Noi, a sacred tree on Khuan Sung hill, Southern Thailand

Jureerat Buakaew

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Songkhla 90112, Thailand



ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 23 September 2015

Received in revised form 29 April 2016

Accepted 3 May 2016

Available online 16 February 2018

Keywords:

Chao Bao Noi,
Khuan Sung hill,
ritual,
the belief

ABSTRACT

This study explored beliefs and rituals related to Chao Bao Noi (the Little Bridegroom) on Khuan Sung hill, Southern Thailand. The data of this qualitative study were collected from related documents, research reports, and in-depth interviews with Phru To locals. The study found that the beliefs in Chao Bao Noi have existed for over 100 years and Phru To locals still have a strong belief that Chao Bao Noi is the sacred tree dwelled in by gods. In the past, Phru To locals tended rice farming and fruit plantations and had to depend on the uncertainties of nature. Thus, they had to learn to struggle for survival by adapting to nature and requesting Chao Bao Noi to give them soil fertility, and when their wishes were fulfilled, they performed rituals as repayment for the favors given by Chao Bao Noi. However, villagers of the new generation, especially those of working age, still want Chao Bao Noi to provide them with spiritual support but they have adapted the rituals of paying respect to Chao Bao Noi to suit the present social situation.

© 2018 Kasetsart University. Publishing services by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Introduction

In ancient time, humans believed that natural changes happened because of powers of gods or spirits. When there were natural phenomena such as rain, thunder, lightning, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, and storms that influenced human lives and the way of living, it was difficult for humans to prevent or solve such problems. Some phenomena were useful while others were dangerous to human lives and the way of living. Humans, thus, tried to find ways to make use of the phenomena to give them happiness. Their doings towards these supernatural powers have led to practices that have become rituals or religions (Southern Teachers Colleges Group, 1983). Therefore, life for people in ancient times depended on nature and resulted in beliefs in mysterious and invisible things, especially spirits and ghosts. In short, original beliefs among humans were in

spirits and ghosts which involved superstition that such omens had power over humans and could provide advantages and disadvantages for humans. Phraya Anuman Rajadhon (1989), as cited in Chanthara (2001), refers to spirits and ghosts as mysterious things or immortal things and thus they are not human but rather non-human and superior to humans. However, some of their characteristics are similar to those of humans, especially their class structure as there are high class and low class ghosts, and good and bad ghosts. High class ghosts are those living in the sky, and they are called Phi Fa or Sky Ghosts which later were also called gods. Then there are ghosts that live in the human world but in mountains and forests, and they are gods of the forest and gods of the mountain.

Most Southerners believe in superstition and that there are spirits in nature. These mysterious things play an important role in determining and controlling people's destiny and in giving advantages and disadvantages to them. If they do good deeds, ghosts protect them. Mysterious powers can conceal themselves or be disguised in

E-mail address: jureeratana.k@psu.ac.th.

Peer review under responsibility of Kasetsart University.

different forms and are named differently. For example, the low class spirits or ghosts are called “Phi” such as Phi Pa, Phi Dip, and Phi Phrai. Unlucky people with ill-fortune may be haunted or possessed, and become ill or mad. Some ghosts look after their property and treasures while ancestral ghosts protect their children. People who violate rules or do wrong can be punished by ghosts while people who do good things and satisfy the ghosts may dream of the ghosts who would tell them the location of treasures. Spirits with power as a result of accumulated merit are called “Thiamda” (gods with high power), and “Thuat” (gods with less power than “Thiamda”). Thuat who are half human and half animal include Thuat Ngu (snake) and Thuat Chorakhe (crocodile). There are Thuat who used to be humans with virtues and passed away such as Thuat Hum (at Khao Daeng in Songkhla province), Luang Pho Thuat (at Wat Chang Hai in Khok Pho district, Pattani province and Wat Pha Kho in Sathing Phra, Songkhla province) (Phongphaibun, 1986).

Furthermore, in Southern Thailand over 100 years ago, people paid respect to Chao Bao Noi or the Little Bridegroom in the area on Khuan Sung Hill in Thung Yai sub-district, Hat Yai district, Songkhla province. Elderly people in the community still remember the stories of Chao Bao Noi and passed on the stories to the researcher that Chao Bao Noi is the only large tall tree that has stood prominently in the forest for a long time. The large, tall trunk of the tree is different from other trees in that area. People in Khuan Sung community regard the tree as a sacred thing of the village that can eliminate their suffering, protect the community, and make it peacefully happy as well as grant people what they wish and request from the tree such as recovering from illnesses, passing entrance examinations, passing examinations for employments in government and other organizations, and praying for rainfall. Every year, the community holds a ceremony to pay respect to Chao Bao Noi and to fulfill the vows they have made to the tree. This ceremony or ritual is regarded as a tradition that unites people in the community (informant interview, October 29, 2014).

When materialism plays a role that affects Thai society and leads the way of life for more Thais economically, politically, and socially—especially in a large town like Hat Yai City, a center of business, industry and tourism which keeps growing and expanding—it is ready to enter Phru To society. Nevertheless, whatever and however the time changes, the belief still remains deeply in Phru To society, and if there is any change at all, it is for the society to continue the existence of the belief and pass it down to the next generation.

Will the belief in Cha Bao Noi that has long been part of the way of life among people in the Khuan Sung community gradually disappear amidst social changes? Can the belief in Chao Bao Noi remain a part of the life of the Phru To community because it is also occupied by capitalism in this age of globalization, just like in any other community in Thai society? These questions are interesting because the area where Chao Bao Noi is located on Khuan Sung hill of Thung Yai sub-district is adjacent to the city of Hat Yai, the economic center of Southern Thailand. It would be interesting to conduct a study about Chao Bao Noi in terms of its history and the importance of the belief that exists amidst

social changes where the new generation is attached to the never-ending changing popularity of modernity. Will this young generation continue to believe in Chao Bao Noi or will they abandon it and leave only a trace of the legend to be told?

Objective of the Study

To explore the belief in Chao Bao Noi, the sacred tree on Khuan Sung hill in Thung Yai sub-district, Hat Yai district, Songkhla province amidst social changes.

Definitions of Terms

Chao Bao Noi refers to the sacred, large, tall tree on Khuan Sung hill in Thung Yai sub-district, Hat Yai district, Songkhla province.

A belief refers to human acceptance of natural powers in that they have power over humans and humans cannot prove such powers, and thus, humans are afraid of them and accept them.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

In conducting the study on beliefs and rituals related to Chao Bao Noi, a sacred tree on Khuan Sung hill, southern Thailand, the concept of resistance in Scott (1985) and that of Ganjanapan (2012) are used to describe relationships between beliefs in Chao Bao Noi and the ongoing struggle and negotiation with nature for survival by the Phru To locals. After the study, it was found that the beliefs have not faded but the rituals in paying respect to Chao Bao Noi have been adapted to suit the present way of life.

Literature Review

Ganjanapan (2012) states beliefs and rituals in the opinion of people who utilize beliefs and rituals with faith expressed in the form of rituals, especially Lan Na people, according to the structure of their belief—refer to merit in the Buddhism context. Regarding sacredness in respecting ghosts, superstition and astrology, Lan Na people connect such beliefs with those beliefs that describe social phenomena that have developed and changed but are still able to be blended with Buddhism and have power regarding fertility and prosperity in cultivation for families and the community. Therefore, rituals involving paying respect to spirits are usually those rituals of offering food to ancestral spirits and household spirits. Moreover, there are beliefs in spirits that protect watersheds, dams, and towns. Vallibhotama (1994) specifies that beliefs in the supernatural are tied with life and the culture of people in Thai society and the emphasis is on expressing such beliefs through performing rituals. According to Weber, modernizing society involves rationality and secularization. Nevertheless, even though Thai society has developed economically and socially in accordance with Western concepts, almost everywhere in Thailand, shrines, spirit houses, and large trees with offerings under them continue to be seen with no sign of decreasing.

Fuengfusakul (2003) asserted that reactions between a mental model and a cultural model are a social process that brings about perception and knowledge leading to human actions. Thus, to examine personal thinking patterns to understand what is in a person's thought, Panya and Sirisai (2003) carried out studies to investigate perceptions that different groups of people had towards the environment to understand their awareness of the environment and the cultural framework of thought of society. Telling stories about oneself is self-reproduction of daily life and is a process that humans use to express their identities. Eoseewong (1993) defined a cultural hero as a person (an existing person or a supposed person) who creates a behavioral model in that culture or who creates a useful model or tool for the culture, and the person who becomes a cultural hero will be honored generation after generation. In many cultures, a cultural hero is a person who creates or introduces alphabets and law; who builds a town or introduces an occupation, dress codes, or manners. Because these cultural models and tools can last for a long time, cultural heroes were honored in the past, too.

The knowledge obtained from reviewing the literature was used in analyzing Phru To society where the beliefs in Chao Bao Noi have supported locals in their struggle and negotiations with nature for survival, and where Chao Bao Noi has been their spiritual support.

Research Methods

This qualitative research employed in-depth interviews for data collection, and its design was as follows.

Selection of the Study Areas

Villages No. 4 and No. 5 of Thung Yai sub-district, Hat Yai district, Songkhla province were selected as areas for field data collection because they used to be the main villages from which locals went up Khuan Sung hill to perform the ritual of paying respect to Chao Bao Noi every year. Moreover, there are still elderly people who have had direct experience and can tell the stories of Chao Bao Noi very clearly.

Informants

There were 10 informants divided into two equal groups. One was a group of working age informants aged 25–49 years. The other was a group of informants aged 50 years or older.

Data Analysis

Data collected from related documents, in-depth interviews, and non-participatory observations were analyzed with a historical approach using concepts on beliefs of several Thai academics, namely, Phongphaibun (1986), Phongsapit (1990), Phromkaew (2001), Chittham (1979), Thammawat (1978), and Phatranuphat (1985) as the main instruments in describing locals' beliefs in Chao Bao Noi on Khuan Sung hill in the Thung Yai community through analytical description.

Results of the Study

Background

Chao Bao Noi is a large, tall tree standing prominently on Khuan Sung hill in Thung Yai sub-district, Hat Yai district, Songkhla province (Figures 1 and 2). The researcher surveyed the area and found that most people come to pay respect to Chao Bao Noi and wrap pieces of cloths around it, and there is a small spirit house in front of it for where people pay respect. There were newly burned joss sticks and candles and fresh flowers showing that some people had just been there before the researcher arrived. Two other trees also had pieces of cloth wrapped around them. Presumably, people who come to pay respect to Chao Bao Noi still not only have high respect towards it but also make a vow to it and fulfill that vow (Buakaew, on collecting field data, December 10, 2014).

The field data indicated that most people nowadays do not know the history of Chao Bao Noi and where the name comes from. There was only one informant who knew the origin of the name (personal interview, November 18, 2014), an elderly informant aged 92 years. He said that the name Chao Bao Noi refers to a young man in the village who was going to get married with his girlfriend but it did not work out the way he expected it. He was heartbroken and hanged himself on the tree. Later when robbers came to the village, Phru To locals escaped and hid themselves in this area and they believed that Chao Bao Noi helped cover them so the robbers could not see them and therefore they were safe from being hurt by the robbers (personal interview, November 11, 2014). From then on, villagers talked about Chao Bao Noi's sacredness and began to pay respect to the tree and to ask for blessings and protection from it, and they named it Chao Bao Noi (personal interview, November 29, 2014).

Furthermore, the rest of the informants provided similar information that Chao Bao Noi is a Thewada (god) or sacred thing on Khuan Sung hill, and the name Chao Bao Noi refers to the sacred entity of the Khuan Sung community, and some people call the tree Thuat Chao Bao Noi. Most people in the community have been to the place to pay respect and participate in the yearly ritual of paying respect to Chao Bao Noi.

Economic Way of Life among Phru To Locals from the Past to Present

In the past, Phru To locals grew rice for household consumption which was a basic need for people in the community where rice was the main staple food, and they sold rice only after they had enough for their own consumption. Thus, rice production was mainly for self-sufficiency (Natsupha & Manarangsang, 2014). Most of the area was lowland and suitable for in-season rice growing depending on water given by nature without an efficient water management system. As a result, in growing rice, farmers were sometimes faced with natural disasters such as droughts, floods, and pests such as rats and snails that damaged their rice in addition to storms in the monsoon season. Consequently, Phru To locals requested Chao Bao Noi to protect



Figure 1 Khuan Sung mountain range, Thung Yai sub-district, Hat Yai district, Songkhla province

them and give them success in rice growing. As can be seen, the culture of this community was tied with their beliefs related to nature. For example, they held annual rituals to pay respect to Chao Bao Noi because they believed Chao Bao Noi could bring rain in the rainy season and fertility to their crops (personal interview, February 13, 2015).

In addition, Phru To locals have had to use chemicals to solve problems resulting in higher costs for rice farming that have not necessarily given them commensurately high yields. Consequently, the need for help from Chao Bao Noi to make it rain and to eliminate their suffering remained an ongoing need. Until 1982, the deterioration of natural resources and an influx of Western influence that permeated into Thai society including Phru To caused some Phru To locals to stop growing rice and turn to growing rubber trees and fruit trees because rubber trees need less water and have less pests but give higher returns. In an age when economics brings development to the village, materials have become an important factor sought after by everyone. The working age group is more educated and goes out to work in other provinces even though rice fields have been changed to rubber plantations and fruit orchards and some go to do other labor outside Phru To. As a result, Phru To locals are stressed and thus, need Chao Bao Noi to remain their spiritual support.

Beliefs in Chao Bao Noi

The agricultural society of Phru To has had to depend on natural resources, seasonal uncertainty, and on their beliefs in Chao Bao Noi for over a hundred years. From interviews with five people over 50 years old living in villages No. 4 and No. 5, it was found that all of them had participated in



Figure 2 Chao Bao Noi, the sacred tree on Khuan Sung hill, the largest tree with a spirit house in front of it

the ritual of paying respect to Chao Bao Noi on Khuan Sung hill, and some of them still do it every year. Nonetheless, all of them believed that Chao Bao Noi is a sacred thing and that a god dwells in the tree on Khuan Sung hill, and they respect Chao Bao Noi highly. Some people believe in the mysteries of Chao Bao Noi and dare not walk past the area where Chao Bao Noi is while others dare not go up Khuan Sung hill because they are afraid of Chao Bao Noi. There is a story related to Chao Bao Noi that once there was a boy who went hunting near Chao Bao Noi and heard the hoarse cry of a serow which was believed to be a bad presage, and that not more than 3–5 days after that someone in the village would die. It is also believed that the sacred Chao Bao Noi can be seen as an illusion. Some people went up to collect chestnuts while others to collect fruits. Once there was a man who went there for such a purpose and saw a monkey and shot it but it turned out to be a man that was shot (personal interview, November 18, 2014). Another story was that Uncle Seng went up to clear an area to grow something but he accidentally invaded Chao Bao Noi's area, so he a stone was thrown at him (personal interview, November 20, 2014). If anyone cut down a tree, he or she would die or be killed; if any group asked for lottery winning numbers, Chao Bao Noi would ask for one head of a group member and so they had to run down from the hill. Another incident involved someone who was possessed by a spirit (personal interview, October 28, 2014).

Some people in the current generation, especially of working age, have gone up to the Chao Bao Noi area while others have not. Nevertheless, all of them believe in Chao Bao Noi because they have heard about the sacredness of Chao Bao Noi from their grandparents and great grandparents since their childhood. Interestingly, many of them said that their great grandparents told them a story about Chao Bao Noi, in particular, when robbers came to the village and Chao Bao Noi led villagers to hide in the open space in the Chao Bao Noi area and the robbers also went after them there but could not see them (personal interview, October 26, 2014). Some people said that as soon as they could remember things, Chao Bao Noi was part of their memory, and when they were 14–15 years old, they began to go up there once a year and they saw that it was a large tree growing on a flat area on the hill. Visits were also made to perform a ritual requesting Chao Bao Noi to provide rain (personal interview, November 29, 2014). Some have heard about it but not been interested in it; they just listened and never saw any miracle, and therefore, they felt indifferent about it. Others have been up there to pray. One informant commented: *"About 10 of us walked up the hill carrying our lunch to eat there but we dared not go near Chao Bao Noi because we did not want to have anything to do with it."* Some of the younger generation went up to make offerings; they went with three Buddhist monks, one from Nam Noi Temple and two from Phru To Temple. They went there in the drought season (summer) to make a request for rain. These people came from several villages but they went with their own groups, not together in one large group. The journey started at around 7–8 o'clock in the morning and they arrived there around 10 o'clock. They talked to each other in a fun way (personal interviews, November 10, 2014).

In collecting the field data, it was found that most of the elderly informants used to make vows very often and most of the vows they made were for rainfall because in the past most families grew rice and fruits, and water from nature was needed. Therefore, they requested for abundant rain when the rainy season arrived to obtain good crop yields. After their requests for rainfall, they made requests for safety of life, cattle, and crops when storms hit their village, followed by requests for children not to be recruited to the military, and requests for protection from robbery. Nowadays, the locals of Phru To still make requests to Chao Bao Noi but less frequently and mostly, what they do is tell about what they do and ask for help or simply pay respect to Chao Bao Noi. For example, they ask Chao Bao Noi to protect their children when they travel, and to keep them safe while travelling. They make a request when their child is not well, when they have suffering, when they want to sell something for a good price, and when they do not want their trees to fall. Every request is fulfilled. So, they still believe in Chao Bao Noi, and their children and grandchildren also do. They make requests only as needed (personal interview, October 30, 2014).

Some of the informants in the working age group believe in and have made requests to Chao Bao Noi by making a wish and thinking of Chao Bao Noi's name. Some made a request when they lost something and they got it back (personal interview, November 29, 2014); some ask him not to tease their children but to protect them (personal interview, November 29, 2014) while others ask him to protect their children and keep them safe when they go out (personal interview, December 22, 2014). The new generation doesn't know much about Chao Bao Noi. However, when they apply for jobs, they ask Chao Bao Noi to help, and they get the jobs they want (personal interview, October 10, 2014). Some working age people who dared to ask for lottery winning numbers also won (personal interview, December 9, 2014).

Rituals for Paying Respect to Chao Bao Noi

In the past when Phru To locals' requests were fulfilled, they arranged an appointment to perform rituals to pay respect to Chao Bao Noi. Mostly, the rituals were performed on the 8th day or 15th day of the waxing moon in the sixth lunar month of the year but sometimes the rituals were performed 3–4 times a year. Buddhist monks, a shaman, neighbors, relatives, and friends were invited to participate in the ceremony. They walked together in groups up Khuan Sung hill; each family took with them food, flowers, joss sticks, candles, and offerings to pay respect and fulfill the vows they had made to Chao Bao Noi. The ceremony began with Buddhist monks chanting, then the shaman performed the vow-fulfilling ritual, and it ended with offering lunch to the monks. People also had lunch together after the monks had finished theirs. Later, they adapted the method of fulfilling vows by doing it whenever a family was ready or whenever it was convenient for them to do so but they still went up to perform the ritual on Khuan Sung hill. Some took a shaman and Talung shadow puppet show up there depending on what they vowed to offer Chao Bao Noi. Others went with their relatives and without a shaman

to perform the ritual. Later, most people did not go up the hill to fulfill their vows because elderly people and the ritual performers passed away or were not healthy enough to walk up there. Thus, they adapted the method of vow-fulfilling to make it suitable for the situation and convenience by offering a shadow puppet show to Chao Bao Noi in their garden or in a space in front of their houses and invited a shaman to perform the ritual there, too. When they want to fulfill their vows, a Talung shadow puppet master performs the ritual and informs Chao Bao Noi by lighting a candle and making offerings of betel nuts to let Chao Bao Noi know that they have come to fulfill their vows, and that is the end of the ritual (personal interview, November 9, 2014).

Nowadays, vows are fulfilled when it is convenient for the people who have made them. Some families arrange for a Manorah dance to perform at home. These methods of fulfilling vows depend on the requests made to Chao Bao Noi. Most people choose to fulfill their vows with lighting firecrackers because it is convenient, most economical, and can easily be done at home without having to invite a shaman to perform the ritual. However, some people made a vow that if they won a lottery, they would build a pavilion for Chao Bao Noi, but until now they have not fulfilled their vow even though they had already won a lottery (personal interview, December 17, 2014).

It can be seen that there have been a variety of ways people use to fulfill the vows they make to Chao Bao Noi as time goes by. The methods have been adapted to suit the situation at different times and for different people. However, they all have the same purpose, that is, to pay back Chao Bao Noi, the symbol of belief that helped them and their families to achieve what they had wished for. In addition, fulfilling their vows made them happy.

Discussion

Belief in Chao Bao Noi

Phru To locals believe and have faith in Chao Bao Noi that he can eliminate their suffering in all matters from illnesses to occupation, natural disaster, robbery, and examinations. This corresponds with the concept of Phongsapit (1990) in Phromkaew (2001) that in the past when humans encountered natural disasters and could not withstand them, they thought that it was because ghosts or gods who had power over humans had caused them. Chittham (1979) said that humans believe there are mysterious powers that give them good things and make them happy. Similarly, Thammawat (1978) considered that beliefs are caused by problems that humans have in their lives such as natural disasters and illnesses that they cannot solve. As a result, they think there must be mysterious powers that cause such problems, and they must find ways to satisfy the mysterious powers so that they will be safe and their hopes fulfilled. Thus, this thought had led humans to make vows and perform rituals to fulfill their vows. Phru To locals' beliefs and practice are no different from the aforementioned concepts.

Consequently, the belief in Chao Bao Noi is a matter of cultural meaning; it is a culture of thinking rather than a

scientific fact. Moreover, it reflects a method of thinking of a system of thinking related to the relationship between Phru To locals and nature that has existed for so long that it has become a belief in their way of life.

Community Economy Tied Up with Beliefs in Chao Bao Noi

The way of life in Phru To mainly depends on natural resources as agriculture is the main occupation in the community. It is, therefore, necessary for Phru To locals to seek ways to be prepared for natural disasters causing damage to humans. This corresponds with Scott's (1985) concept of resistance referred to in Boonprakarn's (2015) *Weapon of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance* in which peasants in a northern part of Malaysia who fight and negotiate resistance among peasants themselves and against local capitalists using different means such as not doing what is required, resisting, escaping, avoiding, and gossiping. This is also in agreement with Ganjanapan (2012) who states that humans struggle to adapt themselves to society and fight with nature for their survival; humans build and accumulate produce to help them find outlets for the future. Looking at the phenomena in Phru To through the concepts of these two academics, they are different from that of Scott's because Phru To society is complex in its struggle for economic survival and fertility of crops using various means to fight and negotiate with nature that is not controllable by humans. They adapt themselves to live with nature, respect nature, and make requests and promises to Chao Bao Noi for protection. Even though their needs to depend on nature have become less nowadays, they still make requests for help from Chao Bao Noi in terms of employment, finance, health, and safety. This indicates that the economy in the age of consumerism remains the main reason for Phru To locals to struggle for survival. Therefore, Chao Bao Noi remains a means of spiritual support to Phru To locals in carrying out their work to maintain the economic status of their families.

Rituals in Paying Respect to Chao Bao Noi

When Phru To locals strongly believe and have firm faith in Chao Bao Noi that he is the sacred tree in which a god dwells, they have high respect for the site. This belief has influenced the thoughts and behavior of Phru To locals and is reflected in their making requests, informing, and making vows. The elderly have all been up the hill to make and fulfill vows to Chao Bao Noi in the full form of rituals paying respect to Chao Bao Noi. However, as time passes by, elderly people have become physically weak and can no longer walk up Khuan Sung hill. The new generation of working age has inherited the ritual and adapted it to make it more convenient and suitable for the present situation. This reflects that consumerism has an influence on the way of life among Phru To locals who have been faced with economic problems. This is in congruence with Ganjanapan (2012) who specifies that being possessed by a high class spirit is very popular because it can respond to the needs of many types of people—the rich or the poor and those living in urban or rural areas who are stressed due to development. Furthermore, the vow-fulfilling ritual is in accordance with

the concept of Phromkaew (2001) who said that beliefs in spirits or ghosts play a role in building moral support and encouragement in every phase of life. Buddhists in Southern Thailand still depend on the power of spirits or ghosts for moral support and encouragement all the time, especially when they are in trouble or need to be involved in competitions or to do something risky such as taking an examinations for a job, fighting with foes, and going into battle. The role of spirits or ghosts in providing moral support and encouragement can be as simple as the people who believe in them, thinking of them and begging for help silently or they can perform a ritual.

It can be said that fulfilling vows is an agreement without witnesses between Phru To people and Chao Bao Noi, the sacred spirit that eliminates people's suffering and gives people mental support and encouragement so that they can move on amidst the social changes of the modern world where the beliefs and faith in Chao Bao Noi still strongly and firmly remain in the heart of Phru To people—the way it has always been.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Related Organizations

Conducting this study, the researcher learned that Phru To locals strongly believe and have faith in Chao Bao Noi that is considered a form of strength and social capital of the community that related organizations can use in planning for cultural promotion for community development.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study investigated the belief in Cha Bao Noi, the sacred tree on Khuan Sung hill among people who lived in villages No. 4 and No. 5. This belief can have relationships with other communities nearby. Therefore, there should be more studies so that the accumulated body of knowledge can be used for community development in other nearby communities.

References

- Boonprakarn, K. (2015). *Cross-border traders and the space of life in Padang Besar market*. Chiang Mai, Thailand: Chiang Mai University. [in Thai]
- Chanthara, B. (2001). *A study on cultural anthropology: A case study on the tradition of wedding with Nang Mai in Singha Nakhon District, Songkhla*. Bangkok, Thailand: Office of the National Culture Commission, Ministry of Education. [in Thai]
- Chittham, P. (1979). *Beliefs*. Songkhla, Thailand: Mongkhon Kanphim. [in Thai]
- Eoseewong, N. (1993). *Heroes in Thai society*. The 4th special talk on Puey Ungpakorn. Faculty of Economics, Thammasat University. Retrieved from <http://www.econ.tu.ac.th/econarchive/index.php>. [in Thai]
- Fuengfusakul, A. (2003). *Identity concept*. Retrieved from <http://digi.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/sw/2758/03CHAPTER2.pdf>.
- Ganjanapan, A. (2012). *Guardian spirit and grandparent spirits: Dynamics of folk knowledge, power, and identity of locals*. Chiang Mai, Thailand: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University. [in Thai]
- Natsupha, C., & Manarangsang, S. (2014). *Thai history and economics until 1941*. Bangkok, Thailand: Thammasat University Press. [in Thai]
- Panya, O., & Sirisai, S. (2003). *Investing knowledge from hearing: Experience management natural resources by local community in Thailand*. Bangkok, Thailand: Sahaprinting & Publisher. [in Thai]

- Phatranuphat, C. (1985). Study conditions on Thai beliefs. Cited in P. Phromkaew. *Beliefs and rituals related to having respect for spirits and the social role played by Buddhist Thais in the Southern part* (Research Report). Bangkok, Thailand: Office of the National Culture Commission, Ministry of Education. [in Thai]
- Phongphaibun, S. (1986). Beliefs among southerners. *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (Vol. 2). Bangkok, Thailand: The Institute for Southern Thai Studies, Amarin Printing. [in Thai]
- Phongsapit, A. (1990). *Culture, religion and ethnicity: Anthropological analysis on Thai society*. Bangkok, Thailand: Chulalongkorn University. [in Thai]
- Phraya Anuman Rajadhon. (1989). *Thai culture and traditions*. Bangkok, Thailand: The Royal Institute. [in Thai]
- Phromkaew, P. (2001). *Beliefs and rituals related to having respect for spirits and the social role played by Buddhist Thais in the southern part* (Research Report). Bangkok, Thailand: Office of the National culture Commission, Ministry of Education. [in Thai]
- Scott, J. C. (1985). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Southern Teachers Colleges Group. (1983). *Understanding of society*. Bangkok, Thailand: Krung Siam Printing. [in Thai]
- Thammawat, C. (1978). *Principles among natives of the northeast*. Bangkok, Thailand: Mahasarakham University. [in Thai]
- Vallibhotama, S. (1994). *Life, culture and beliefs in Thai society*. Bangkok, Thailand: Amarin Printing and Publishing. [in Thai]