

Kusuman THA 001-ENG

Story title	The Story of King White Snake				
Story-teller: Name	Grandmother Bai Worahaad	Sex	F	Age	100
Recording time/date	February 15, 2017				
Recording place	Phopaisan Sub-district, Kusuman District, Sakon Nakhon Province				
Length					
Language(s) used	Thai				
Data available	video	audio	picture	<input type="checkbox"/> notes	other ()
Topic/key words					
Category					

Pa Khaw Stream is a water source which the villagers use for bathing, watering vegetables in gardens, and growing rice. The villagers believe that a guardian spirit lives in the stream. Some villagers have seen a big white snake live there. They expect the ruler of the stream to protect and take care of Pa Khaw Stream as well as the residents in the village.

Miracles have happened. In the year when it rains so hard that the village is flooded, a noise occurs from Pa Khaw Stream. The noise which the villagers hear is like the water-flow hitting something hard. The noise is so loud that it can be heard all over the village. The villagers know that there will be so much rain and it will flood the village. They then prepare for the approaching water.

In some years, the villagers see logs floating along Pa Khaw Stream. They also hear a noise which is just like the echoing sound of a gong. The noise comes out of the floating logs. It is a warning to the villagers that there will be much water and flooding that year.

On the third day of the third month in the lunar calendar, the villagers hold a ceremony to pay homage to *phi bhoo taa* or the ancestral spirit of the village.¹ Some villagers

¹ *Phi bhoo taa* (ผีปู่ตา) is an *Isaan* (Northeast Thailand) term for ancestral spirits who protect the village. The words *bhoo* (ปู่) and *taa* (ตา) mean "grandfather" and are used in general to refer to a group of ancestors of the villagers who have settled and established the village. Ancestral spirits usually stay at sites which are significant to the villagers culturally, geologically, or resource-wise, for instance, a hill (เขาปู่ตา) or a forest (ป่าปู่ตา), and guard the sites and the resources, and watch over the village. The villagers often build a shrine where the spirits can live. The shrine is called *saan bhoo taa* (ศาลปู่ตา). Different villages have different ways to pay homage to and celebrate ancestral guardian spirits. References:

join a worshipping ceremony at half moon and full moon days of every month. The villagers have kept these practices until today.

The villagers have worked together to build a spirit house on a hill where some villagers have seen a cave. The spirit house which the villagers have worked together to build is now called Don Bhoo Taa or the “ancestors’ hill”.