

Thesis Title	An Analysis of Ritual Texts from Lom Kao District, Phetchabun Province
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze Thai ritual literature collected from Amphoe Lom Kao, Phetchabun Province. The works selected by the writer for literary and folkloric studies consist of 9 palmleaf manuscripts relating to 8 folk rites, namely, Neutralizing Mae Kamloet, Averting One's Poor Fate, Reviving One's Predestined Life, Removing One's Astrological Star, Eliminating Bad Luck, Subduing Calamities, Wiping Out Bad Luck, and Recalling Lost Spirit. This thesis is divided into 6 chapters dealing with (1) an introduction, (2) the provenance of the sources, (3) textual criticism, (4) rites performed in Amphoe Lom Kao, Phetchabun Province, (5) social conditions and folk beliefs as reflected in the ritual literature under study, and (6) a conclusion.

The result of this study shows that ritual literature from Amphoe Lom Kao, Phetchabun Province, exists in prose as well as in the *rai* poetic genre. Most works consist of 6 parts as follows: invocations of *devas*, homage prayers, a prologue, a propitious chanting, misfortune-quelling prayers, and a blessing. The language used in these literary works is plain and simple, dotted with local dialect vocabulary, while the style of presentation is awe-inspiring. This kind of ritual literature is a source of folk wisdom and shows the relationship between the sacred texts and their related-ritual arrangements. But most important of all, these ritual literary works reveal the social conditions, attitudes, belief systems, and way of life of the people of Amphoe Lom Kao.