

ABSTRACT

Thesis Title : The Comparative Study of the Belief in Phi Pu-Ta in the
Northeast and Phi Ta-Yai in the South of Thailand

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The purposes of this study are (1) to investigate the source of Phi Pu-Ta and Phi Ta-Yai, (2) to study and compare the beliefs and rituals concerning Phi Pu-Ta and Phi Ta-Yai, (3) to explore the role of Phi Pu-Ta and Phi Ta-Yai in it respective the communities in social, economic, political and hierarchical terms (4) to study and compare how the belief in these spirits affects to the way of life in both communities; Ban Koke-kong, Tambon Khudwa, Amphoe Kuchinarai, Kalasin and Ban Thasamed, Tambon Thasamed, Amphoe Cha-uad, Nakhonsrithammarat.

The results are as follows:

1. The source,

1.1 The Phi Pu-Ta were the souls of the villages' ancestors. This institution include Phi Pu-Ta, the shrine, the 15 rai of sacred land and the Thao-Jum who acted as

the spirit medium between the villagers. Phi Pu-Ta played important roles in the community.

1.2 The Phi Ta-Yai were the spirits of the ancestors' kin. The institution include Phi Ta-Yai, the altar in villagers' houses, the senior member of the family, or "Song", the spirit medium.

2. The belief and ritual,

2.1 The beliefs and rituals regarding the Phi Pu-Ta included the rite of feeding Phi Pu-Ta , the Chao Pu festival or waterfall fair, the invocation rite, the rite of pledging and the rite of offering.

2.2 The beliefs and rituals regarding the Phi Ta-Yai included the offering of pious deeds to the dead ancestors (Pra-paeni Thum Boon-Duen-Sip), Vukdum, or ancestor worship during the marriage rite, Khad (Invocation rite), the rite of pledging and the rite of offering.

3. The Phi Pu-Ta and Phi Ta-Yai represented the relationship between human beings and supernatural spirits. In this social role, the "Phi" provides social structure and security as well as cementing ties and reinforcing relationships among members of the community.

In this economic role, the Phi Pu-Ta represented the wisdom of protecting the forest and to concerning natural resources. The villagers hoped for fertility by paying homage to the "Phi", in the "Pra-paeni Thnm Boon Duen-Sip" ritual influencing the economic status of the community.

In this political and hierarchical terms, the "Phi" reflected the power structure for both, the family and the community. The "Phi" played a big role in controlling the behaviour of the family members and reflecting the social norm of the community as a whole.

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4. The belief in “ Phi” played an important role in teaching morality and integrity as well as a sense of giving.