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Beliefs and Rituals of 'Khwan' in Tai Khoen Community in Kengtung,
Shan State, Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Juthamas Nithipanich



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Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

Juthamas Nithipanich

December, 2012

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Abstract

A study on the beliefs and rituals of 'Khwan' in Tai Khoen in Kengtung, Shan State, reflects the relationship of the beliefs, rituals, the way of life, and the social systems in Tai Khoen group. This paper aims to create an understanding of the importance of the belief systems. 'Khwan' is a traditional custom that the Tai ethnic groups share until today.

This research made use of a qualitative approach study. The researcher collected the data from four Tai Khoen villages in Kengtung, Shan State which are: Phakham village, Nongla village, Nonghong village (or Nongcha village) and Nongbua village. The researcher collected the data about belief and rituals that concern with *Khwan* from the target group involved with the culture and rituals on *Khwan* of Tai Khoen, Kengtung, Shan State. They are the Tai Khoen monks, Khwan ritual master, Khwan owner in the ritual, people who take part in the ritual, and the Kopaga group committee.

This study showed that the roles and functions of 'Khwan' play an important part in Tai Khoen groups' social systems and in their culture because of the following reasons: emotional responses, community unity, cultural identity, moral, and education in Tai Khoen community. However, the beliefs and rituals of 'Khwan' in Tai Khoen Community have undergone inevitable change due to society, politics, economy, culture, and in general the way of life.

1. Rationale

The existence of *Khwān* (a guardian spirit) is a traditional, long-standing, belief that can be found in almost every culture in the world. Even though the concepts of *Khwān*, its applications, and its names can vary across different regions, still there is an intrinsic idea of that is shared by people living in different parts of the world. In other words, it is believed that there is an invisible and sacred element hiding in a human body. It is believed that *Khwān* is an important element comprising a complete person; to be able to learn, to make a decision, to realize their preferences, and to identify or differentiate themselves from others (Khanitthanan, 1986).

In the East, the belief of *Khwān* is wildly held by Asians. In Lao PDR, it is known to be a cricket called *Khuan*. In Myanmar, it is called *Lebbya* which means a butterfly. It is also called as *Semagud* in the Malayu language and it is believed to be a little bird. Moreover, the *Khwān* is referred to as *Phueng-Khamou* by the Mon, and *Pralueng* by the Khmer. However, the imaginary figures of it are not clearly identified in the Thai, Mon, and Khmer beliefs. In the West, it is believed that a person's spirit will flee out of the body in the form of a butterfly or a beetle after death. This is somehow similar to that held by people in the East (Koset, 1963). However, other concepts are more complex particularly in the Japanese and Chinese culture. Japanese people believe that there are two elements that are comparable to *Khwān* hiding in the body of human beings; they are called *nigi-mitama* and *ara-mitama*. *Nigi-mitama* involves goodness or the virtue that leads the host into happiness. In contrast, *ara-mitama* implies adventure and evil. These two elements can flee out of their host anytime, and can startle their host by appearing before their eyes. In Chinese culture, it is believed that a human being is comprised of the two invisible elements, *Hun* and *Poh*. *Hun* conveys wisdom, and is an immortal part of a human being. In contrast, *Poh* conveys a negative meaning. The combination of *Hun* and *Poh* is the key determinant of people's personalities and characteristics. Moreover, Chinese people believe that there is another intrinsic element embedded in the body called *Ching*. *Ching* is defined as a person's strength. Living without *Ching*, one can never be a complete person. Therefore, Chinese people often explain the death of their child as absence of a *Ching*'s growth. In this sense, *Hun* and *Ching* play an important role in people's personalities. The term *Ching-hun* means wisdom. After one has

died, *Hun* will flee from the body and turns into *Shen*, finding its way into heaven. On the other hand, *Poh* will turn into *Kuei*, wandering the earth after their host has died.

The belief associated with *Khwan* is considered as one of the most primitive beliefs among the Tai ethnicity since the term is collectively rooted in Tai language. It is also used widely by Tai people in China, India, Myanmar, and Lao PDR even though they are living apart in the different regions and have never communicated with one another. The reason is because the belief associated with *Khwan* is the primitive belief shared among the Tai ancestors and it has been passed from generation to generation (Ranee Lertleumsai, 1996). For example, Tai Lue people in Xishuangbanna, Chinese, Tai Khoen in Kengtung (Kengtung or Chiang Tung), Myanmar, and Tai Lao PDR Laan Chang in Lao PDR believe in *Ya Khwan Kao* (a rice goddess) occasionally deliver rituals or ceremonies in order to pay homage to the goddess, *Bhucha Ya Khwan Kao* (paying homage to the goddess), *Su Khwan Kwai* (a ceremony to show gratitude to the buffaloes), and *Hag Na Khwan* (the Plowing Ceremony). Also, Tai Dam and Tai Khao in Vietnam believe that *Tan* is a determinant for people's *Khwan*. They believe that there are 32 *Khwans* embedded in a human body (Na Thalang, 1996). Among other Tai people, they believe that it is up to 80 *Khwans* (Wanlibhodom, 1991).

As the result of time, changes can be seen toward the primitive belief associated to *Khwan*. They are the following:

1. Dialectic change; the term *Khwan* is used in the Central Thai dialect. But, the term is called differently such as *Khuan*, *Khon*, or *Phan* in other different dialects.
2. Conceptual change; the extent of *Khwan* is believed and treated differently among Tai people living in the different regions.

On the one hand, *Khwan* is believed and treated similarly by the Tai people living outside the Thai territory such as China, India, and Myanmar but they believe that it can still exist after the death of its host. This belief can be read in the folklores. In Thailand, *Khwan* is believed to exist only when its host is alive. It will never be mentioned again after the host has died. Instead, the term that is often mentioned after death is *Winyan* (spirit) (Khanitthanan, 1986). There are also some rituals or ceremonies that are arranged in order to call their *Khwan* back into the host.

For people living in South-East Asia, *Khwan* plays an important role affecting people's mode of thought and the system of beliefs. The belief associated with *Khwan* is considered as the origin of several rituals and ceremonies to keep it in human body. These rituals and ceremonies are important to Tai social system and culture. Therefore, it is crucial to study the belief patterns associated with *Khwan* among Tai ethnic people in order to understand their social system and their culture.

Tai Khoen is a group of the Tai ethnic people that demonstrates a distinctive identity in terms of their history, culture, tradition, and their way of living. They are also unique in terms of their dressing, housing, written, and spoken language, as well as, their distinctive belief pattern. Tai Khoen is scattered around the South-East Asia region, a great number of them can be found on the eastern basin of Salawin river; in Kengtung, Shan State, and Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The Tai Khoen in Kengtung shares a long history with Tai Lue in Xishuangbanna and Tai Yong in Yong State. They also hold a long relationship with Tai Yuan in Lanna Kingdom. Their relationships greatly reflect their culture, customs, history, politic, and marriage. Through the recorded history, the marriages between the members of ruling families of Lanna Kingdom and Kengtung took place three times. The first time was the marriage between the son of *JaoFaSamChai* (the highest price *SamChai*) and princess *SriKaew*, the daughter of *JaoBureerat* (Lord *Bureerat*). The second time was the marriage between the son of *JaoKaewNawarat*, prince *Inthanon Na Chaing Mai*, and princess *Sukantha* the daughter of *JaoFaRattana Konkaew In-thalang*. The third marriage was held between *JaoFaPromLue*, the son of *JaoFaRattanaKonkaewIn-thalang*, and princess *Tippawan Na Lampang*, the daughter of *JaoChaiyaSong-kram Na Lampang* of *Jao Jed Ton* family (one of the greatest ruling families of Lanna Kingdom). The kinship system formed through these marriages created a significant relationship between the two kingdoms in a way that they helped each other when one was in trouble (Kasetsriri and La-ongsri, 1998). The two kingdoms have a long history of exchanging their culture, tradition, and customs. Thus, some similarity can be noticed through their spoken language, tradition, rituals and ceremonies, including their beliefs.

It should be noted that, the identity, history, and culture of Tai Khoen in Kengtung were once greatly preserved due to the social and political forces in Myanmar. Since Myanmar closed

itself to the rest of the world, so was Kengtung for almost 30 years (from 1963 to late 1992). Nowadays, Myanmar's government allows tourists to visit Kengtung. This contact with the outside world and other alien culture. As a result, Tai Khoen's society, culture, tradition, and their way of life changed.

The above information reflects an important virtue of studying the belief and the ritual patterns associated with *Khwan* among Tai Khoen in Kengtung, Myanmar. The study will ultimately shed light on understanding the roles and the significances of the belief and rituals associated with *Khwan* in the particular context of Tai Khoen, Kengtung. Moreover, it will illuminate the factors associated with the existence and the changes concerning the beliefs and rituals held among the current Tai Khoen community in Kengtung. In addition, the study will reveal the future trend toward the contextual change that might affect the way of life of Tai Khoen people in the future.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are the following:

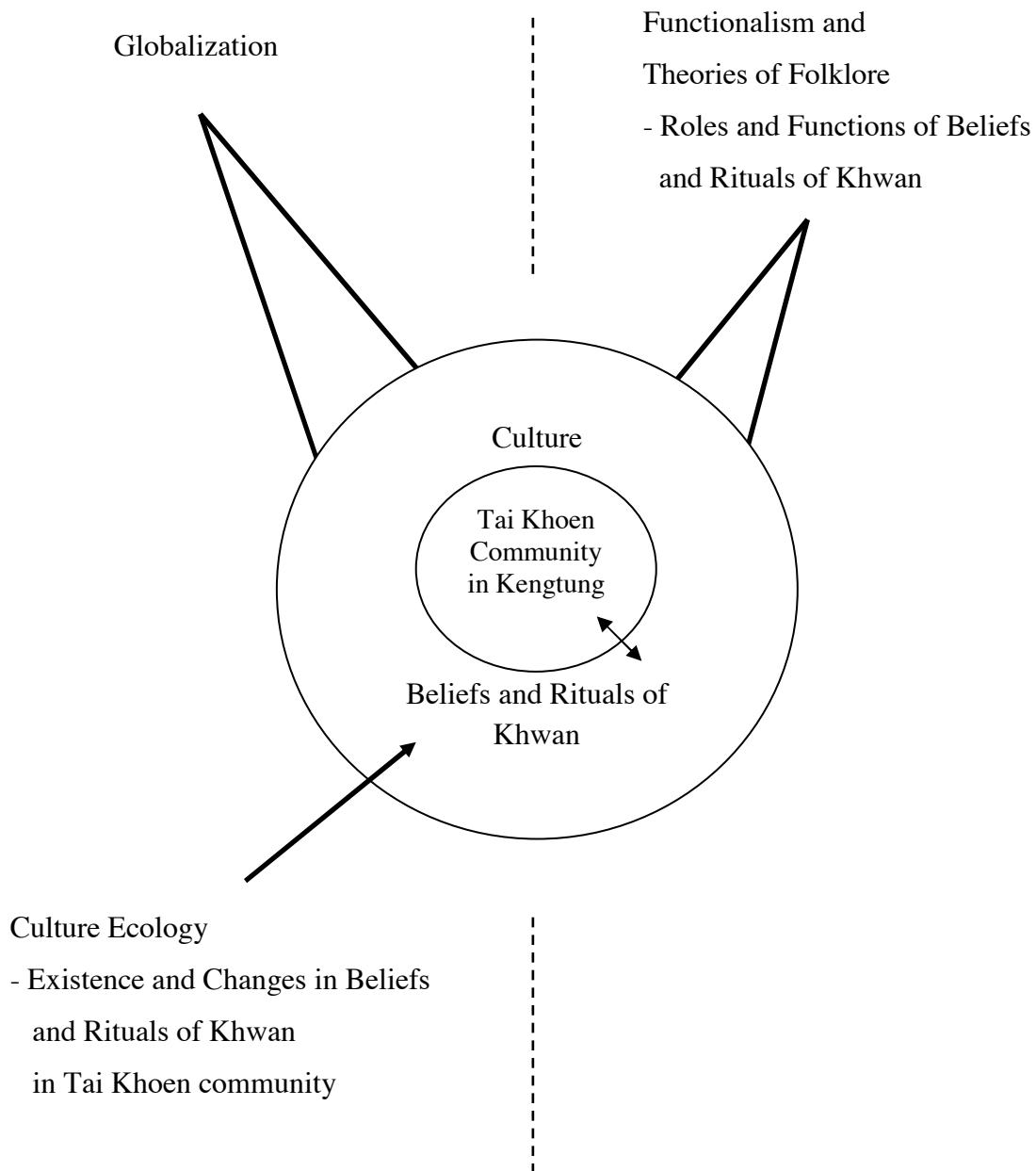
1. To study the belief patterns and the ritual patterns associated with *Khwan* among Tai Khoen people in Kengtung, Myanmar;
2. To investigate and analyze the roles of rituals associated with *Khwan* in the social and cultural context of Tai Khoen in Kengtung, Myanmar;
3. To explore and analyze the existence and changes associated with the beliefs and rituals held among the current Tai Khoen community in Kengtung.

2.1 Research Questions

1. What are the belief patterns and the ritual patterns associated with *Khwan* among Tai Khoen people in Kengtung, Myanmar?
2. What are the roles of rituals associated with *Khwan* in the social and cultural context of Tai Khoen in Kengtung, Myanmar?
3. What are the changes and modifications in the belief and rituals being practiced among the Tai Khoen community in Kengtung, Myanmar?

4. What are the key factors that influence the changes and modifications in the belief and rituals being practices among the Tai Khoen community in Kengtung, Myanmar?

2.2 Conceptual Framework



The beliefs and rituals of *Khwan* in Tai Khoen in Kengtung which is important in the culture of Tai Khoen group was analyzed with the Functionalism Theory and Theories of Folklore of Bronislaw Malinowski. Moreover, the researcher studied the key factors that influenced the changes and modifications in the belief and rituals being practices among the Tai Khoen community in Kengtung by using the Globalization Theory; and clarified the existence and changes in the beliefs and rituals of *Khwan* in Tai Kheon, Kengtung by using Culture Ecology Theory of Leslie A. White.

2.3 Scope and Limitation

This research collected data from four Tai Khoen villages, Kengtung, Shan state, Myanmar. Since Kengtung is a place where many ethnic groups inhabit together, the researcher narrowed the data to only obtain from Tai Khoen village. According to the chosen four Tai Khoen villages are the ones that preserved most of their originality. These are: (1) Phakham village (2) Nongla village (or Nongcha village) (3) Nonghong village (4) Nongbua village. The data collection from these four villages allowed the researcher to collect adequate data for the analysis. Data gathered were in two categories:

1. Rituals concerned with *Khwan* that are performed annually such as *Khao Pans*, *Khwan Kao ritual*, and *Khwan Phra Mae Bhosop ritual*.
2. Rituals concerned with *Khwan* that involve people's lives. These rituals are usually performed at the changing period of life such as having a new born baby, or entering monkhood, and wedding ceremonies.

2.4 Methodology

This research made use of a qualitative approach study. This research will be descriptive. In order to collect the data as complete as possible, the data collection method is designed to combine techniques derived from several fields of study including history, sociology, and anthropology. Therefore, the findings found in this research will be applicable for other fields of study as well.

2.5 Data collection

1. Documentary Research: Data was collected through reviewing literature; books, papers, or research articles to understand the issues or phenomena related to the research objectives. The documents included in this research are: literature or folklore associated with *Khwan* that exist in different regions of the world, history of Tai Khoen, Kengtung from Thai and English documents, books, or printed media that are concerned with society, culture, tradition, way of life, politics, economy, beliefs of Tai Khoen people, and documents associated with the legend of Tai Khoen that has been translated and interpreted into Thai.

2. Field Work: The data was collected from the following:

- (1) Pa-kham village
- (2) Nong-la village (or Nong-cha village)
- (3) Nong-hong village
- (4) Nong-bua village

The researcher collected data from interviewing target groups who possess the knowledge and wisdom of Tai Khoen people such as Tai Khoen monks, Tai Khoen *Khwan* ritual master, the owner of *Khwan*, and Tai Khoen people who have experienced the ritual. The researcher also collected data from “Kopaga” group, a committee for religion, tradition, culture of Kengtung who occupy themselves with the promoting and preserving tradition and culture of Kengtung.

Tools for Data Collection

The data was collected by:

- 1. Interview:** This included formal and informal interviews.
- 2. Observation:** The researcher conducted participant observation during the *Khwan* ritual together with the formal and informal interviews with the target groups.
- 3. Documentation:** Books, journals, and research papers concerned with the topic was studied.

Inspecting Data Accuracy

The data was analyzed using the ‘Triangulate’ method. This method was conducted by interviewing people from different parties, places, and periods.

2.6 Data Analysis

The data gathered from documentation was sorted and categorized to see each aspect clearly and to come to conclusions according to objectives of the study. Functionalism Theory and Theories of Folklore of Bronislaw Malinowski were used as an instrument to view and analyze the roles and functions of beliefs and rituals of Khwan in the culture of Tai Khoen group in Kengtung. The Globalization Theory was used to clarify the existence and changes in the beliefs and rituals of Khwan in Tai Kheon, Kengtung.

3. Review of Related Literature

Nimmanhemmin (1978) defined *Khwan* as the mental strength or encouragement of humans. It is believed that it can move out of the body. In addition, the study of Khanitthanan (1986) studied the *Khwan* rituals of Tai ethnic groups in various countries especially India, Myanmar and Thailand. It was found that this ritual has been passed from generation to generation with apparent changes. These changes are in both form and content of the rituals. The changes that occur are related to changes in the society, more so in the city. It certainly reflects the condition of social change but not as much in villages. In terms of rituals, knowledge and modern technology have begun to take over the significance of beliefs and rituals of Khwan, especially in Thailand.

The most changed among the Khwan rituals is the ‘*Tham Khwan script*’ (the poems used to call Khwan back to the body). In Thailand ‘*Bai-Sri*’ (made from banana leafs and flowers) has become a replacement for ‘eggs’ but ‘cotton thread’ as is the old tradition. These are the symbols of the bond between body and Khwan and ties the relations between elders and children.

One of the most important pieces of this research is ‘Tai Ahom Myth’ of Lertleumsai (1996). The results of the study found that the traditional beliefs of the Tai group are related to the development stages of society and culture. The study focuses mainly on the parts that are

related to the traditional beliefs regarding the origin of the world, the origin of the deities, the origin of mankind, and the origin of civilization. It also deals with the customs and the genealogy of the kings of the Tai ethnic groups that moved to Brahmaputra valley in Assam and found a new kingdom during the 12th century from Mau Long. It is found that the concept of the universe theorized by the Tai Ahom reflects the Tai Ahom's social ideal which consists of three inter-related beliefs, namely:

1. **'Fa'** the worship of nature, ancestors, deities and kings each of which has different hierarchies;
2. **'Muang'** emphasizes the harmony among various communities;
3. **'Khwan'** is the concept of spirit which is an absolute entity and its power.

This system of the beliefs theorized that the strong and unaffected spirit has influence on society in the same degree as the external power such as the deities, the planets, the kings etc. The system of beliefs requires the harmonious relation among *Fa*, *Muang* and *Khwan*. Other beliefs of the Tai ethnic groups are Tai Dam, Tai Yai, Tai Mao and Tai Nue. In conclusion, the Tai Ahom myths are the origins that explain the root of the beliefs.

Khongkhasurichai (2003) focused on the analysis of the 'Bot Tham Khwan' and its effect on social environment and culture of Tai Song folk, Khao-You district, Petchaburi Province. This research discovered that belief in the guardian spirit and the ceremonies are for human beings, animals, and plants. Ceremonies for people are still considered popular unlike those for animals and plants.

4. Research Results

4.1 Forms of Belief and the Morale Rite of the Tai Khoen Community in Kengtung

The Tai Khoen ethnic group believed that each person had 32 Morales or spirits that dwelled in different locations of the body. However, it did not say where they were located specifically. They also could not identify the exact shape or form of the Khwan but this was how they have defined it according to the selected target group:

1. Khwan was a young and a childish spirit that seemed to have an envious nature and was always easily frightened.
2. Khwan had a very tiny force; thus, it was always threatened by higher powers or was kidnapped. Although it had little power, it could make the host suffer when it left. In conclusion, Khwan is still important to the life and body of the host.
3. Khwan is considered as complementary.
4. Khwan had its own life having its own feeling and thinking. Thus, it could commit adultery with the children of Ishavara or Brahman and it could escape to be reborn in a human uterus or in animal wombs. The host would get sick or get frustrated.
5. Khwan had the ability to leave or enter the body wherein the soul cannot. In fact, the soul of a person could only leave the body when that person was dead.

It was also found that the belief on Khwan of Tai Khoen ethnic group is linked to the story of “Pusakkangsi Yasakkangsai or Punang Yanang” which was very important to the Tai Khoen ethnic group. In the chronicle, the Tai Khoen ethnic group believed that Punang Yanang was the creator of the world or “Kao of the world” who made everything including the earth. Punang Yanang was the maker of human beings and animals. Therefore, the Tai Khoen ethnic group would always pay respect to Punang Yanang. They considered themselves as the descendants of Punang Yanang, a very powerful. Thus, when a person become sick because the Khwan had run away, the only one that could help was the Punang. The ritual performed in order to invite Punang Yanang was considered to be a magnificent and wonderful rite. The preparation had to be great and glorious. Normally, the search of the Khwan was an ordinary ceremony except for severe cases. The ceremony was called “*Hakwan Luang Ceremony*” or “*Hakwan Punang Yanang ceremony.*” Additionally, the belief also mentioned about the Khwan of Punang Yanang had dwelled upon the pillars and the stoves. Therefore, there is a link between the pillars and the stoves referring to the fire and the clay elements which were the instinctive birth elements of Pusakkangsi Yasakkangsai or Punang Yanang.

Consistent with the study on *Punang Yanang* is the *Madha Kwan Luang* which is the Tai Khoen palm leaf scripture. The Tai Khoen scripture explained about the vision that revealed the creation of the Universe and the world according to the Tai Khoen belief. The essential thing was that it reflected the shape and the form of the chronicle, the tale, and the narrative stories including various kinds of rites concerning the belief in Khwan which could be a sign

of social development. For example, the chronicle and the narrative stories could explain the history of the Tai Khoen ethnic origin which was the beginning of the earth and mankind starting from Kings and their descendants as well as the origin of their rituals and rites. The stories also revealed the explanation on the *HaKwan* ceremonies of the Thai Khoen. It also talks about the do's and don'ts such as paying respect to the aged and paying gratefulness to the ancestors including all kinds of animals and plants and all the things that believed that they had to be grateful for to have a good life.

The Tai Khoen ethnic group also believed that the Khwan dwelled in animals and plants and in some things as well such as horses and elephants; and in certain types of plants and things such as rice, rice pots, rice jars and pillars as well as stoves, silver, and gold. The belief came from the thought that the Tai Khoen always considered the things that had utility for human beings. There were ceremonies for plants, animals, and human beings. It was a good thing to do for it could compensate for the bad things done by humans. However, these traditions are fading away and now only some have remained. Those that remained are ceremonies that dealt with humans and society.

4.2 Roles and Functions of Morale Rite in Social and Cultural Context of Tai Khoen Community in Kengtung

The belief on Khwan and the ceremonies concerning Khwan in various occasions' had played the important roles; and the functions of the morale rituals in the Tai Khoen ethnic group society and the culture of the Tai Khoen ethnic group which could be concluded into 5 factors as the following:

4.2.1 The Responsive Role and Function of Morale Rite on Psychological Need

The ceremony called "*HaKwan*" was believed to empower a person and will eventually lead to a strong mind and to fight against any form of suffering. It was also believed that the "*HaKwan*" ceremony would bring happiness and peace. This was considered essential to the Tai Khoen ethnic group because it boosts the morale of the entire family. It was also believed to support travellers and newlywed couples. Lastly, the "*HaKwan*" ceremony helps strengthen the community.

4.2.2 The Role and Function of Morale Rite on the Unity of Community

The “*HaKwan*” ceremony also builds and develops relationships within the community and fosters respect among the young and elderly. This helps keep the community tightly knit. Hence, it became the custom to do the ceremony with their formed kinships.

4.2.3 The Role and the Function to Preserve the Cultural Identity

The Tai Khoen ethnic group would usually have the “*HaKwan*” ceremony as their tribal origin. For example, the “*Khamhong HaKwan*” ceremony which the Tai Khoen ethnic group call the “*MadhaKwan*” is composed of three consecutive days of preparation and some additional rites. This process enabled the ceremony to be an integral part of the cultural identity of the Tai Khoen ethnic group in Kengtung township, Myanmar. In summary, it expresses their cultural uniqueness.

4.2.4 The Role and the Function of Ethical Cultivation for the Community

The ceremony also cultivates the ethical values of the Tai Khoen ethnic group. People believe that it helps instil their traditions and values to their children. Some of the highly valued morals are gratitude, appreciation, and respectfulness to their ancestors, parents, friends and the elderly. Kindness and mercy towards all kinds of animals including human beings is also important. Another interesting ceremony is called “*MadKwan-Ngoen Kwan Kham*”, which refers to gold and silver. It gives instructions on paying respect through gold and silver to families in order to live peacefully and happily. It also includes instructions on how a man should treat a woman in marriage. The gold and the silver would bring prosperity into the family after marriage.

4.2.5 The Role and the Function to Give Education to the Community

Apart from instructions to preserve culture and tradition, the ceremony also contributes to education. It helps them learn from life with a sense of being. It is for the children and for the future in general to be able to live their lives with peace and happiness.

4.3 The Existence and the Change on the Belief of the Morale Ceremony of the Khoen Community in Kengtung, Myanmar at Present

Currently, the belief and the ceremony of the Tai Khoen ethnic group have undergone changes. The reason of the change came from globalization. Globalization has made its way all around the world. Whether it is political, economic, or technological, it is slowly absorbing and converting the whole of Southeast Asia region.

4.3.1 The Change on the Belief and the Morale Ceremony

According to the study, it was found that currently, the belief and the morale ceremony belief of the Tai Khoen ethnic group had been changed from the originality and could be explained in the following:

4.3.2 The Change on the Language That Had Been Used in the Khwan Calling Ceremony

The language that used in the “*MadhaKwan*” ritual procedure changed from “*MadhaKwan Luang*” to “*MadhaKwan Kway*.” This was because the writings were in palm leaf scripture of the Phonan Boon, Ban Pakham. Hence, the original changed over time. Furthermore, the “*MadhaKwan Kway*” ritual ceremony which was a very ancient HaKwan ceremony, stated that the *Pusangsi Yasangsai* or *Punang Yanang*, the creator is now called *Kao Khong Lok*. In other documents, it was called *Pusakkangsi Yasakkangsai*. The researcher suspects that the change came from mistakes in pronunciation and writing in records.

4.3.3 The Decline of the Khwan Calling Ceremony

At present, the Tai Khoen ethnic group gives less importance to the ceremony of the HaKwan, especially the new generation. For instance, in wedding ceremonies, younger generations would omit a number of words so as to make the ceremony shorter. It was not considered necessary to keep the old long wordings of the original HaKwan ceremony.

In comparison, when a person became sick, there was a way to cure the illness mentally and physically. The physical healing would be the treatment via medicine, while the treatment of mind had to be done by performing the HaKwan ceremony. The goal was to enrich and

refresh the patient. Although curing the sick physically was important, after the sickness the HaKwan ceremony was to make the person become normal and prevent sickness in the future. However, in recent times, the ceremony is now often neglected as it was not deemed necessary after being sick.

4.3.4 Khwan Calling Ceremonies Rarely Seen

The HaKwan Chang or elephant ceremony, the *HaKwan Ma* or horse ceremony, and the *HaKwan Wua* or cow ceremony, have almost completely disappeared. Only sometimes the ceremony for the buffalo was performed. There are only narrations about such ceremonies. Even for new born babies, mid-wives no longer perform such ceremonies.

4.4 The Reason for the Change of Beliefs and Moral Ceremonies

4.4.1 Social and Cultural Aspects

The Kengtung town has recently been opened to the outside social and cultural circumstances. It now has access to technology such as mass communication and transportation. It is also now exposed to the social and cultural aspects from Chiang Mai. The town has received cultural influence from Thailand including ceremony practices. For example, Kengtung accepted ceremonies such as *Sueb Chata* ceremony and used it with *HaKwan* ceremony of the Kengtung.

Moreover, it was also found that the new generation of the Tai Khoen ethnic group was unable to read and write the Tai Khoen language, Myanmar language became a priority. That was why the Tai Khoen language had obstacles and difficulties in the passing of the language from generation to generation. Tourism was also a factor. The goal was to welcome tourists and travellers from Thailand and from overseas. Therefore, Kengtung had to adjust to accommodate tourists and travellers and pave way for resorts and hotels. The economy seemed prosper inside Kengtung but the rural areas seem to have primitive lifestyles still.

4.4.2 Political and Governmental Aspects

According to the Myanmar governmental policy of Kengtung, it was found that the Kengtung had to adjust itself to the new tourism environmental circumstance receiving the social

influence from the outside. Therefore, the Tai Khoen ethnic ceremonies received some impacts from the outsiders. Additionally, the Myanmar government did not support the Tai Khoen ethnic group very much. The Tai Khoen ethnic group had to develop their own cultural organization, for instance, the *Kopaga Group* (a group of people who work for a cultural conservation) and *Youth of Kengtung Group* (a group of Young Tai Khoen people) had to set up their own association working with the temples aiming to keep their own tradition, folklore, and ceremonies.

4.4.3 Medicine and Modern Science Aspects

Inside the Kengtung town, there is a hospital which gives modern medical services as well as modern medicine. They had the latest drugs new medical sciences had to offer. Thus, after the new generation of people had received new and modern medication, they did not follow the old folklore of receiving HaKwan ceremony for they believed that it was not necessary.

5. Conclusion

Due to the interpretation of the document, it was found that the domestic folklore concerning the story of Pusakkangsi Yasakkangsai which was written on the palm leaf scripture of the Phonan Ai, Ban Nong La and the *Madhakwan Luang* also written on the palm leaf scripture of the Phonan Boon, Ban Pakham and the Phona Mahatan of Ban Khuen Noi, state that the chronicle and the record of history of Pusakkangsi Yasakkangsai or Punang Yanang is the creator.

Furthermore, the Pusakkangsi Yasakkangsai chronicle also gave details on the origin of Kings of the Tai Khoen ethnic group with reason and rationale to support the Kingship and how to be a King which was the development of the community leader. Finally it helped create rules for the society. The importance of the ceremonies lies in the instructions given and practiced by the Tai ethnic group. They still have not surrendered despite all the changes that are happening. They still taught their children to be alert and be ready to face all kinds of troubles and difficulties through the ceremonies. Additionally, they taught their descendants to be grateful towards their ancestors, to love their homeland, to protect their territory, and to preserve the local knowledge of the Tai Khoen ethnic group. These words had been recorded

and the words were considered as precious speech to teach their children as instructions. In summary, the teaching could be utilized in daily life of the Tai Khoen ethnic group.

The ceremony and the belief of the Tai Khoen ethnic group changed through the language used, reduction in length and words of the ceremony, and the younger generation is now too preoccupied with the modern society brought about by globalization. But there is still hope for the dying tradition. The Tai Khoen ethnic group could make adjustments or adapt to fit in the society when there is constant change in economics, politics, and social as well as cultural aspects. The cultural has to change to survive.

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