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Nonghan Ruined City's Legends: The cultural capital for tourism of Nonghan basin, Sakon Nakhon province, Thailand

Surachai Chinnabutr^{a*}, Kanjana Chantaduang^a

^aSakon Nakhon Rajaphat University

*Email: surachai_ch@snru.ac.th

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Abstract

Nonghan, Sakon Nakhon Province was the second largest freshwater lake in Thailand. It has a long history, which appeared in the legendary such as the white barking deer legend (ตำนานกึ่งเผือก), the white squirrel legend (ตำนานกระรอกด่อน), Uranggadhat tale (อุรังคธาตุนิทาน) and Phadeang - Nang Ai literature (วรรณกรรมผาแดงนางไอ่). The researcher collected the folk narratives around Nonghan basin and used to analyses by methodology in folklore. This article aimed to study the myths and folk narratives describing the history of Nonghan and the collapse became a large marsh.

The study founded that the white barking deer legend is a legend that appeared in the chronicle of Sakon Nakhon province. It explained the cause of the sinking of the ground became a large marsh causing various small islands that led to historical and cultural stories of Sakon Nakhon province. Besides, the legendary white squirrel legend, also described the collapse of the city, Ekchathita which became a large marsh because people ate the white squirrel meat. Moreover, Uranggadhat legend (Phra That Phanom myth) also described the prosperity of Nonghan luang and the collapse of the city. As for the literature of Pha Daeng Nang Aii, it explained the collapse of Nonghan luang city as well. This study reflected the story of the belief and sacredness of the place that appeared in the story Nonghan basin of Sakon Nakhon province to be used as a cultural capital for sustainable ecotourism development in Nonghan basin.

Introduction

Around the end of July 2017, there was a major flood in Sakon Nakhon Province, causing a lot of suffering to the villagers. Some of them were destitute and at that time, it was not the first occurrence of flooding for Sakon Nakhon. In the past, it got a major flood affecting the city submerged in the ground. Both major occurrences came from the greed of human as well. For the first flood event, Sakon Nakhon people believed that it was caused by supernatural power. In the chronicle of Sakon Nakhon mentioning about Phraya Surautaka, ruling the Nong Han Luang city, was

not satisfied with Phraya Tanamun Nak supervising the territory of the city. Therefore, he wanted to show his supernatural power by carrying a sword and wielding it along the Mul river to intimidate Phraya Tanamun Nak, with the result that, Tanamun Nak was so angry and fought with him. No one lost, and no one won. Later on, Thanamun Nak was so angry that he commanded the armies of the snakes to destroy the city. Thanamun Nak transformed into a white barking deer to wangle the villagers to catch him. The hunter caught and killed him. After that, the hunter brought the meat to Phraya Surautaka to eat. Thanamun Nak made a supernatural power to make the white deer as big as an elephant. The

hunter gave the meat to all villagers to eat but they could not eat it all. At night, Thanamun Nak ordered all the snakes to dig the ground down then used the cube to capture Phraya Surautoke and dragged him to the Mekong River and he died later. (Khunsrinakornrananurak, 1924: 4-7) The legend of Pha Daeng - Nang Ai, was another myth that confirmed the collapse of the city into an awamp caused by the actions of the Naga, which in this legend had some links to see the history. The story and the history of Nong Han Luang and Nong Han Noi related to the brotherhood. The story involved the tragedy about unrequited love. Hence, the legend tried to point out the cause of the collapse of the city, the quarrel between the people and the Naga (Preecha Pinthong, 1994). According to the legends and the narrative, the researcher tried to reveal the important cause of the collapse of the city becoming a large swamp. It was a legend telling about the large swamp having the city under it. In addition, the legend revealed that the penalty for the destruction of “the nature (Naga)”. In addition, the legend was also used to describe about the geography and many places in Sakon Nakhon province. Also, it could confirm the importance of the place, showing the sacred beliefs and traditions that were hidden in the legend because these legends were the explanation or confirmation of the importance of the ritual. Nowadays, most communities have brought these kinds of matters for the sustainable tourism. The legend of collapsed Nong Han was considered to be a cultural capital for tourism, especially ecotourism, tourism based on nature. Moreover, there were some cultural studies providing benefits on conservation and creating the satisfaction for visitors. Urangkhatat, the legend of Phra That Phanom: The primary source of the collapsed Nong Han legend Urangkhatat was another legend used to tell the history of Nong Han Luang (Sakon Nakhon). It was compiled by Phra Srichaichumpoo, the confidant soldier of King Suriyawongsa of Lan Chang because of this document had many expressions and was widespread around the Mekong River Basin. And at that time King Suriyawong ascended the throne, therefore, it was also the opportunity to honor him (Surachai Chinnabutr, 2016: 1-34). The legend said about the history of both Nong Hans that in the past, they had not been the swamps before. The story occurred because Phraya Surautoke showed his power walking with a sword on the Mulanatee River. Thanamun Nak who looked after the river, was very angry that he was walking on his head. Therefore, Thanamun Nak told

his serpents to destroy the city down into swamps. After that, the rest of the people migrated to build their houses along the river, so it was called Nong Han Luang. (Fine Arts Department, 1940: 58). The legend of Nong Han Luang was expanded that why Phraya Surautaka had to fight with Thanamun Nak.



Figure 1 Sakon Nakhon City Gate

Sakon Nakhon Chronicle: From Uranggadhat tale to the story of Nong Han people

Chronicles were the stories related to the circle of kings. Nong Han Luang was ruled by the king, so there were some strange stories concerning this city. Besides the study of the documents, from the villagers was another way to study about Nong Han Luang. According to the document of Sakon chronicles, Sakon city was the a part extended from the legend of Uranggadhat which Phraya Prachantapatheththani, the ruler of Sakon Nakhon province and Phra Anubansakonkhet, Permanent Secretary of Sakon Nakhon Province and the Department of Political Affairs compiled the stories from the documents and hearsay of villagers for new generations to study and named “The Legend of White Van”. Later on, Deputy Amat Ek Phraya Anubansakonkhet (Mek Phrommasaka) passed away. Khunsrinakaranurak, the son and the sheriff of Pha That Choeng Chum, published the chronicles of Sakon Nakhon city as a memorial to his father’s cremation (Khun Srinakaranurak, 1920: 1-9). In conclusion, Khun Khom Rajabutra, the ruler of Inthapatra Nakhon, brought his family to settle down at the edge of Nong Han, in Tha Nang Arb area, and named the city Nong Han Luang. He had one son named Phraya Surautaka who was born with a fountain near the city. When Phraya Surautaka was 15 years old, his father passed away, so the villagers invited him to become the ruler. He had got two children, whose names were Chao Pingkala and

Chao Khamdaeng. One day, Phraya Surautaka inspected the city and came to the Mulanatee River, a dividing line between Nong Han and Inthapatra Nakhon, along the Mulanatee River that Khun Khom and the governor of Inthapatra Nakhon assigned Thanamun Nak the caretaker. Phraya Surautaka was angry with his father and grandfather authorized the beast to govern the city. He drew his sword and walked along Mulnatee River and performed a super powerful fighting. Thanamun Nak was very angry, so he fought with him and there was no defeat. Phraya Surautaka brought his people back to the city. For Thanamun Nak, he was very angry and followed Phraya Surautaka at Nong Han Luang and told people to transform into the beautiful white vans walking through the city to three Pho trees. When people saw them, they reported to Phraya Surautaka, so he ordered the hunter to catch the white vans (catch on or dead). The hunters surrounded the herd of the vans, transformed by the Nak soldiers. All of them escaped and disappeared, but only Thanamun Nak existed. He tricked the hunter and his people into the forest. He pretended that his legs were painful. Then, the hunter and his people could not catch him on, so he shot with a crossbow and a ball bearing mixed with poison. Then, the white van was dead.



Figure 2 Phraya Surautaka of mueang Nong Han

After the white van was dead, Phraya Nak then made an effect on the body of Phraya Nak as big as an elephant. Then, the hunter told the people to lift the carcass of the white van, but they could not, too heavy. Therefore, they took it to Ban Pho Samton, when arriving the edge of Nong Han Luang, they could continue dragging it.



Figure 3 Phraya Surautake to fights with Thanamun Nak

The hunter told Phraya Surautaka about the matter. For this reason, Phraya Surautaka ordered the hunter and the people at Nong Han Luang to cut the van meat for 3 days 3 nights, but they could not finish it. The flesh of the van was still more and more. After Phraya Surautaka had eaten the van meat, he was satisfied because it was more delicious than other meat. At night, while people were sleeping deeply, Thanamun Nak commanded his subordinates to dig the land of Nong Han Luang to fall over. Thanamun Nak went directly to catch Phraya Surautaka with the lasso and dragged him down to Thonnatee (Mekong River) until he died. After that, Thanamun Nak brought the body of Phraya Surautaka to give back to Inthapatra ruler, the original lineage. For Nong Han Luang city, Chao Pingkala, Chao Khumdaeng, civil servants, and people were aware before downing, then they tried to swim up to the island in the middle of Nong Han which people believed that it was Donsawan island. Chao Pingkala and Chao Khumdaeng took the people to settle down at Phone Mueng, at the edge and in the south of Nong Han Luang. After that they tried to find the place for building the city. They found a moat through Chueng Chum as a suitable location. At that time, there was a serpent named Suwan Nak, guarding the lord Buddha's footprint, made gold flakes from the ground. And they appointed Chao Pingkala as the leader of Nong Han Luang city and named him Phraya Suwanna Pingkarn. He got married with Phranang Naraichengweng, the daughter of the ruler of Inthaphatra city. The route that Thanamul Nak dragged Phraya Surautoke down in Mekong River became the canal running from Nong Han Luang to Mekhong River. Many people called the canal of Karma (Khum River). For the route that the hunter dragged the dead white van became the canal flowing down in Nong Han Luang and so called "the Draggged Canal". Later on, Chao Khumdaeng went to

occupy Nong Han Noi, therefore, Nong Han Noi and Nong Han Luang were brothers.



Figure 4 *Thanamon Naga captured Phraya Surautaka with a rope.*

Sakon Nakhon chronicle was a document that told the history of the province. The written notes were divided into 3 parts. Part 1 was about the family separation from Inthapat city, Cambodia, Part 2 was about the family separation from Kalasin city and Part 3 was about the family separation from Nakhon Phanom city. For part1, it was a story which was similar to the legend noted from the hearsay of elderly people. It was called " the Legend of white Van (albino barking) " which was related to the destruction of Nong Han Luang becoming the large swamp later. However, the perception of this legend was not as widespread as it should be. When tourism had influence on monetization, this hearsay was very important thing for the villagers using to generate income for their Nong Han Luang community.

The statues creation of the Phraya Nak fighting with Phraya Surautoke , the Cambodian ethnic groups or even the symbol of Sakon Nakhon city gate telling about Phraya Surautoke's legend or the legend of Nak also came from Nong Han Luang. Nowadays, the story about Nak is the way of life of people in Sakon Nakhon basin. Therefore, Nak is the main product promoting the income for people in this area such as movies concerning Nak , the Nak statues or even the ceremony to worship Nak ,usually with seven or five heads ,created from banana leaves that make good money for them. It is believed that this kind of ceremony, originating from Sakon Nakhon basin, is another way for people to earn money(author).

The Legend of the white squirrel: Some of the legends that described the Nong Han Luang.The legend was a story that was similar to the legend of Pha Daeng-

Nang Ai. The legend had not been told about the story of the place but was only told in the neutral manner. Mr.Niyom Suphawut, a retired lecturer of Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat, brought the recorded story of white squirrel with Thai Noi character to be exchanged into the current Thai alphabets for the simplicity of reading and understanding. Currently, the legend of the white squirrel, featuring the excerpt from the origin of Nang Ai. The story was similar to Pha Daeng-Nang Ai, Nong Han Luang capsized into a large lake by the destruction of the Naga. And in the story, the name of the new character changed from Tao Pha Daeng to Tao Kumdaeng. The ending of the story was not the same as Pha Daeng-Nang Ai because it showed that the magic could help all people to revive and finally Pungkee and Nang-Ai became lovers.

This legend had a part that was different from the legend of Pha Daeng-Nang Ai because it might be due to the error of exchange lacking of the contents of the palm leaf noticed by the use of many repeated words. However, the white squirrel before was regarded as an important piece of literature that was a cultural capital for the owner to continue gaining the benefits from this literature.Another legend of Pha Daeng - Nang Ai, a cultural capital that described the destruction of Nong Han, Sakon Nakhon

The legend of Pha Daeng - Nang Ai (Suphon Somchitsripanya,1981) was a story that described the name of the places or landscapes of Nong Han, Kumphawapi District. This was to claim the ownership of the legend between Nong Han villagers at Sakon Nakhon and Nong Han villagers at Kumphawapi, However Nong Han Luang, Sakon Nakhon claimed that legend was partially related to the island, the upland in Nong Han as well, such as Nang Ai's Phraemon palace (hankerchief). This was the place when she threw the handkerchief into the river due to the Naga's following. Nang Ai dropped the handkerchief which was according to the words of the villagers at Ban Thawat. It was believed that it was in the area of Wat Klang Chiang Mai and Wat Mahaphrom and around the chapel at Ban Chom Chaeng and Ban Don Kaew area. In rainy season, if a lot of water was generated, it was a vortex where people believed that the Naga was trying to capture Nang Ai. From the author's study ,the legend of Phra Daeng - Nang Ai was partially related to Nong Han Luang, but the belief among group of villages they believed that this legend was the property of Nong Han Luang as well. Therefore, using the legend as a capital

to generate income for the community was the right of people at Nong Han Luang.

Conclusion

Nong Han Sakon Nakhon was the large basin which was very important for raising the lifestyle of multi-ethnic groups. Therefore, Nong Han was a part of life for people living around this area because of its abundant food sources.

When tourism could make money for the community, the search for cultural capital to respond to the income generation for the community was something that made people in each community with a long history awake and become interested in paying attention. The community then produce something called the identity of the community to respond the need of people outside their community, hence, the identity of each community was picked up to use.

Nong Han, Sakon Nakhon was an ancient civilization that had a long history and its own unique tradition culture. The legend of Nong Han destruction city was another cultural capital that the Nong Han people used as well as tradition for tourism. The destruction of city became the large swamp made by the action of Naga a mythical creature causing the flooding. Reproduction of this belief originated in all eras and eras. In the legend of Suwannakodom which was in the northern part, the collapsed city caused by the action of Naga. Likewise the legend of Singhonnawatikumam, when the villagers ate the white eels the city was collapsed.

Many legends found in the Nong Han river basin, including the legend of white barking deer, white squirrel, Pha Deang-Nang Ai and even the myth of Urangkatat could be considered as one of the cultural capital that people used to tell the visitors story which showed that Nong Han was a sacred area where there was a story that where people going to Don Swan which was in Nong Han Luang, and it was not collapsed. They shouldn't talk about Pha Daeng-Nang Ai or the legend of white braking deer while taking a boat trip since it would cause danger from the invisible things. These beliefs would be with Nong Han forever.

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Truyền thuyết về sự phá hủy của thành phố Nonghan: Thủ đô văn hóa du lịch của lưu vực Nonghan, tỉnh Sakon Nakhon, Thái Lan.

Surachai Chinnabutr, Kanjana Chantaduang

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Tóm tắt

Nonghan, tỉnh Sakon Nakhon là hồ nước ngọt lớn thứ hai ở Thái Lan. Nó có lịch sử lâu đời, xuất hiện trong các truyền thuyết như: truyền thuyết con nai trắng (ตำนานแก่งเผือก), truyền thuyết con sóc trắng (ตำนานกระรอกต๋อน), chuyện cổ tích xương ngực Đức Phật (อุรังคธาตุนิทาน). Nhà nghiên cứu đã thu thập các câu chuyện dân gian xung quanh lưu vực Nonghan và sử dụng để phân tích theo phương pháp luận trong văn hóa dân gian. Bài viết này nhằm mục đích nghiên cứu các câu chuyện thần thoại và truyện dân gian mô tả lịch sử của Nonghan và sự sụp đổ đã trở thành một đầm lầy lớn.

Nghiên cứu cho thấy truyền thuyết nai trắng là một truyền thuyết xuất hiện trong niên sử của tỉnh Sakon Nakhon. Nó giải thích nguyên nhân khiến mặt đất chìm xuống trở thành một đầm lầy lớn gây ra nhiều hòn đảo nhỏ khác nhau dẫn đến những câu chuyện lịch sử và văn hóa của tỉnh Sakon Nakhon. Bên cạnh đó, truyền thuyết con sóc trắng cũng mô tả sự sụp đổ của thành phố, Ekchathita đã trở thành một đầm lầy lớn vì mọi người ăn thịt sóc trắng. Hơn nữa, chuyện cổ tích xương ngực Đức Phật (truyền thuyết Phra That Phanom) cũng mô tả sự thịnh vượng của Nonghan và sự sụp đổ của thành phố. Đối với văn học của Pha Daeng Nang Aii, nó cũng giải thích sự sụp đổ của thành phố Nonghan. Nghiên cứu này phản ánh câu chuyện về niềm tin và sự linh thiêng của nơi xuất hiện trong câu chuyện lưu vực Nonghan của tỉnh Sakon Nakhon được sử dụng làm thủ đô văn hóa để phát triển du lịch sinh thái bền vững trong lưu vực Nonghan.
