

The Origin of Dak Nue

A MNONG RƠLƠM LEGEND¹
OBTAINED FROM MUOM NƠM

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Introduction

This legend is well known in the RơLơm area near the district center of Lạc Thiện, Darlac Province. Lake Nue (Dak Nue) is at the village of Uon Dham, about six kilometers from the district center. Uon Dham is a Rade village, but the people know RơLơm. Near the village is a little Lake called the Lake of the Flying Chickens. Uon Nởng Krieng is a village about one kilometer from the district center in the opposite direction from Uon Dham.

The legend was written from memory by Muom Nờm, twenty years of age. His village, Uon Yang Lan, is about two kilometers from the district center. He knew the legend well because it was used as a bed time story when he was a child.

Pop Pro-prơ ta Bal Dham Yau Làk

Yau làk mau t lơ-tlau bal uon Dham²sak wơ-wang jưl pơm, mau ju nau nih ku-đoi sak re bu kan. Bal sak wowang kan, mau bả-bả nih ngan, bả-bả nih cắc. Bal sak wơ-wang han dang bu yùk uon Dham trưh ta yùk uon Nởng Krieng². Bal han ay-so doi geh jưl pơm. Lai jok ta ien bal han njoh, koyuadah ar. Blah ien mau nih cắc lah ta kan nih ku-đoi han, « Me jay sue, he cap mi, me jueh pue, hi be a-muh, me ji chue, hi ce map, me jưn ne. »²

Lai djap pơp kan ku-đoi eh han doh jue, bal nih cắc han doh cap jong ti-u-pơng. Nai phơng ưn mau pueh bu, ndràm bu, brua yae u-pơng nai sit ta su-dieng. Blah ien tơ lai surn nai buh u-pơng hau, nai bok boh mbrac, nai pac ting-tau, pruc, t lơm u-pơng lể nai sa. Lai lể sa bal han ta-tả ndang bu-kan. Bu kan lah blah ieo, « Tơ yo kan lúp ta uon tĩ ay rau bu me tề-tềh yuh. Tơ de lúp bu me lah blah ieo, hi ay so gưt so e, ay so kan sak bak hi, kan sak bak bal nih dih. » Blah ien, tơ bal han plồ ta uon, truh ta uon yo kan lúp blah iao, « Mả so ản doh ay so di ơ-hơ. ? » Nai lah ta de, « Hi ay so gưtsoe, ay kan sak bak hi. ». Blah ien yo kan han lúp hui-hai ok nih; nai lah nai ay so gưt. De wih lúp sưt nih sak ta nể. De lah blah iao, « mả so ản doh ay so di ơ-hơ ? » Kan han lah ta de, « So e lainai sa di-u-pâng doh bở ơ-hơ. Nai ay so geh jưl pơm doh

han, eh hao nuih nai, nai buh u-pâng. Añ ndrom blah e ya, mhay nai buh kan doh eh huor dàk mat añ, kơ-yuadah añ tlàng ta kan. Blah ien de yo kan hau hao nuih ngan, de tong kan han doh tê-têh. Kan so nai sa u-pâng han doh ok ngan, cõng-gu kan ay so sa, kan trieng gu nai sa. Blah ien yo kan han de plõ ta hih de tom, de sok kuon sau, de lang truoñ su, soh ao, pan kơn, lai han de hao mâng tom gơ-giê[†] jua ngan. Tơ de trũh mâng nun ràm eh, de gũk ta ien, lai han de cah-col kuon sau de han doh. Jok ta ien mau mih mbal ngan, blah ien mau nih peh pat teh han doh. Bu de so ka pat eh kah buk-dih, bu de gơm « rik-khik, rik-khik ». Lai han bu de so djap ka eh kah buk-dih han doh, bu de wih gơm « rik-khik, rik-khik. » Jok ta ien bu de so ta prt uon bu de mau dàk-nung ku-ít, mâng dàk han bu-de so ya eh ray tở-tở, au-au. Blah ien bu de gơm « rik-khik, rik-khik. »⁸ Biã-dah mih eh sak hui-hai, jok ta ien teh èh ham lẽ ju nguol uon han doh, mih yang, puh sur, lẽ ya coh. Lai han ier eh par tũk dũh, blah ien nar au nai nan dàk « Par ier ». Dàk eh ham uon làn, nih yàng han doh nai nan « Dak Nue ». Tơ lẽ bal han khut, blah ien de yo kan nih ku-đoi nai sa han doh, de guk hui-hai mâng chi ien. Nai tũn de han, yàng dru de, lai han chi nai ndàng so de han doh, nar au hum, mỗn ta lỏ Uon Nđõng krieng Nar au nai nan chi han « Blang Nđàng đoi ». Pp'p' đoi so trũh nar au Dàk Nue lai han Dàk Par Ier mỗn ta Uon Dham lai han Tom Blang mỗn ta Uon Nđõng Krieng.

A long time ago the Uon Dham men went hunting deer. An orphan boy went with them. Of those who went hunting there were both ordinary men and men with evil spirits. They went from the mountain at Uon Dham to the mountain at Uon Nđàng Krieng but they were not able to get any deer. After a while they rested because they were tired.

The men with evil spirits said to the orphan boy, « You look for rope. We'll tie you up. You look for firewood. We'll roast you. You look for tree. We'll tie you to it. You look for fire. » After the boy had looked for all the things the men with the evil spirits tied his arms and legs and lit the fire. They had large logs and large dry sticks and they gagged him with rags. They roasted him until he was coked and put on salt and pepper. They chopped up his bones and skin, and ate his intestines, liver, and all of him. When they finished eating they talked together and said, « When his grandmother asks about him at the village, don't you tell. When she asks you, you say, « We don't know about your grandson. He didn't go with us. He went with some other people. » So when they arrived back at the village the grandmother asked, « And where is my grandson? » They said to her, « We don't know about your grandson. He didn't go with us. »

The grandmother kept asking everybody and they said they didn't know. She asked a man who came later, saying, «And where is my grandson?» He said to her, «The people ate him already. They didn't get any deer, so they were angry and butchered him. I feel the same as you. As soon as they butchered him, I cried, because I had pity for him.» So the grandmother was very angry when she heard what the man reported. He saw many people eat the boy; he was the only one who didn't eat; he only watched.

So the lady went to her house, took her dog, put a loin cloth and shirt on it and wrapped it in a cloth. Then she climbed up a very high tree. When she reached a large branch she sat there and bounced her dog up and down. After while it rained hard.

There were women pounding on the ground. They saw fish coming out of the earth. They laughed, «rik, khik, rik, khik.» Then they saw many fish coming out of the earth and laughed again, 'rik, khik, rik, khik.' After a while the women saw a little lake around their village and in the water the women saw an alligator swimming to and fro. Because of that the women laughed «rik, khik, rik, khik.» But it kept on raining, and after a while the village was flooded. The alligator ate all the people and animals. The chicken flew to another place, and so today people call the lake The Flying Chicken Lake. The water that flooded the village the people call Lake Nue.

When everyone was dead, the grandmother of the orphan boy that the people ate, stayed in the tree. People thought the spirits helped her.

And the tree where the people tied the orphan boy still is today near the rice field at Uon Nđang Krieng. People today call the tree Blang Nđang Đoi (tree-stake-orphan, the tree where they tied the orphan). These things you can see today: Lake Nue, The Lake of the Flying Chickens, near Uon Dham, and the Blang tree near Uon Nđong Krieng.

¹Mnong Rơ Lơm is a dialect of Mnong, which in turn is a member of the Mon-Khmer language family in Vietnam. It is spoken in Lạc Thiện district, Đarlac Province, within a radius of about ten kilometers from the district center.

²Uon Dham and Uon Nđong Krieng are villages in the Mnong Rơ Lơm area. At Uon Dham is a lake called Dake Nue. Nearby is a little lake called Pơ Jơ.

³The men with the evil spirits spoke with mixed-up Mnong when they talked to the orphan boy. «Me jay sue = Me jue say.» (You look for rope) «He cap mi = Hi cap me.» (We'll tie you up) «Me jueh pue.' = Me jue pueh'». (You look for firewood.) «Hi be amuh = Hi buh me.» (We roast you.) «Me ji chue = Me jue chi.» (You look for a tree.) «Hi ce map = Hi cap me.» (We tie you up.) «Me jũũ' ue = Me jue uũũ» (You look for fire.)