

**Research Article**

**Nora Tang Ke**

**Pemika Kasetsomboon** \*

*33 Phet Kasem road, Hat Yai, Songkhla 90110, Thailand*

**Abstract**

Rum Tang Ke is part of the Nora Rong Khru ritual performed on the last day called “Song Khru day” (Teacher’s departure day). A crocodile model used in the ritual portrays evil and misfortunes. In a strict sequence, Rum Klong Hong (swan lassoing dance) must precede Rum Tang Ke in order to be granted talisman’s blessing as a protection against evil and misfortune from the crocodile. After Rum Klong Hong, Rum Tang Ke comprising seven performers together with one Nora Yai (Head of Nora) who will be the first to stab the crocodile. After that, each of the seven will take turn dancing toward the crocodile and stabbing it. Every participating Nora must board the banana tree’s trunk’ raft to simulate a raft journey to hunt the crocodile. Nora’s dance poses each of the Noras assumes differ. Spears are used as a weapon for both dancing and stabbing the crocodile. A crocodile model is a replica of a crocodile made using banana tree’s trunks cut into pieces fitting for each part of the crocodile. Only shamans with expertise in supernatural practices can make a crocodile model. Violating the traditional practice is believed to bring misfortune to a violator.

**Keywords:** Ritual, Belief, Nora Tang Ke, Crocodile-Stabbing, Nora Dance

---

\* Corresponding authors:

Pemika Kasetsomboon E-mail: hmaying@gmail.com

Received: 3 November 2021,

Revised: 21 December 2021,

Accepted: 23 December 2021

## Introduction

Southern culture has long been intertwined with life of people in Thai society especially through traditional plays characterized by its uniqueness vividly portraying each community's ways of lives. Such uniqueness is attributed to a number of factors such as norm, culture, tradition, faith, belief and ritual. These all contribute more or less as a beating heart of southern traditional performances and play a vital role in a day-to-day living and culture. They meet the physical and mental need of people as well as entertaining and uniting the community which as a result leads to conception of wisdom and identity of that particular community.

In the past, Nora dance is the activity specific for men and those descending from Noras. It is a traditional play featuring three performers including Nai Rong (Head), Nang Rum (Female performer) and Nai Pran (Hunter). This kind of play applies poses wittily improvised in response to each other despite exclusion of a formal stage. Instead, a decent piece of mat is used to substitute for such a stage, providing sufficient space for the performers' convenient movements. In terms of stage arrangement, the mat's central spot is occupied by the performers literally surrounded by audience sitting in circle around them allowing for clear visibility from any angles. Such arrangement enabling proximity between the Nora performers and the audience tightens relationship among the community members. Comic teasing and casual conversations become part of the performance which grows a sense of unity even further.

However, due to popularity of the central region's Like (traditional Thai musical folk opera), the original Nora dance underwent some changes and modification transforming it into that resembling Like. It, for instance, imitates Like's identifying components such as a lifted stage full of decorations, a sign with the performing group's name written on hung in front of the stage and participation of female Nora performers necessitating a clear boundary to keep the audience only at the front of the stage for appropriateness, despite the expense of all good old audience-performer interactions.

Nora is a noble artistic performance of southern locals. Originally, this performance gains

popularity in the south in many provinces such as Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phattalung, Trang and Songkla.

Chaowlitprapan (2015) stated that the practice of Nora dance as well as beliefs and norms of Nora Rongkru not only propagated in the south of Thailand but also the northern states of Malaysia.

The type performed may aim for an aesthetic purpose or as a ritual related to the southern locals' beliefs. Nora performers respect and worship Khru Mor Nora or Ta Yai Nora (past Nora master) watching over them as a guardian angel. However, those violating rules of conducts are believed to face misfortune which can be lethal. Faced with difficulties, those worshipping Khru Mor Nora will pray to have their problems solved. When the wish has been granted, grantees will commonly perform Nora Rong Khru as a votive offering.

Chaowlitprapan (2015) added that Nora Rongkru is a ritual performed to summon the past Nora master to the ceremony hall. Nora is charged with the duty of summoning the past Nora master to take over the medium to receive the offerings and meet with descendants. Nora Rongkru is divided into two purpose-related categories namely, first to make a votive offering locally referred to as "Kae Mei". Also, Nora Rongkru is also arranged as a topknot cutting ceremony for new Noras. However, Nora Rongkru specifically arranged to pay a homage to a family's Nora master is no longer seen.

Nora Rong Khru is characteristic of Thailand's southerners. It is regarded as a holy ritual entailing steps which must be carried out in a complicated and strict sequence. The typical annual period usually falls within June leading up to November. Nora Rong Kru organized as a token of appreciation after the wish has been granted can be organized as deemed appropriate to pay homage to Khru Mor Nora ancestors (past Nora masters). Nora Rong Khru comprises quite a few rituals as parts of it such as Krob Serd Puk Pha (headdress - crowning and cloth-tying ritual), Yeab Sen (skin-tumor stepping), Klong Hong (Swan lassoing dance), and Tang Ke (crocodile stabbing dance) etc.

Nitnirun (1997) suggested that Nora Rongkru also serves as a stratagem for the descendants of

Nora to respect ancestors known as Nora elders or Ta Yai Nora through the medium and Noras.

Rum Tang Ke or Crocodile-stabbing dance is part of the Nora Rong Kru dance and it is performed subsequently to the Swan-lassoing rite. In the rite, each performer carries out a different role in the dance but uses a spear as a prop weapon for both the dancing and crocodile stabbing parts. Rum Tang Ke is formally referred to as Rum Tang Jarake meaning a crocodile - stabbing dance. A crocodile in this ritual is symbolized by a piece of a banana tree's trunk cut and assembled into the shape of a crocodile. Despite such simple making, a craftsman creating the crocodile must be qualified with distinction in supernatural practices and need to strictly follow the traditions to prevent misfortune.

### **History of Nora Tang Ke Dance ( Crocodile-stabbing dance)**

Nora Tang Ke, according to its legend, is a ritual originating from a story of princess Nuan Tong Sumlee. In the ancient time, Tao Kosin (King Kosin), also known as Phraya Sai Fa Fad banished Lady Nuan Tong Sumlee from the palace together with her court ladies by having them put on a raft floating out of the city. In the lyric poem or Khan Ae Poem, words illustrated the raft voyage as

Jittham (1976) added that Phraya Sai Fah Fad performed a blessing ceremony for his daughters and sons additionally commemorated by 7 days and 7 nights of Nora performance. In addition, Phraya Sai Fah Fad bestowed his daughters and sons royal apparels as well as the title of Khun Si Satha who is assumed to be the first Nora.

"Lan Rea Ta Were Nong Klai Taling Klai Fang Aou Koh Kachang Ma Pen Puean" meaning "sail away my dear, away from the bank, away from the shore, let the Kachang island be your home" (Kachang island situated in Ranot District, Songkla). After the banishment, Lady Nuan Tong Sumlee, having been pregnant with the king's son, Khun Si Satta, floated to Kho Kachang leading to them settling and living there for years. Kho Kachang is what is presently known as Chao Cape or Kho Yai (Yai island). In that island, the lady and her ladies-in-waiting lived a difficult life due to scarcity of

food and a small number of neighboring households. Lady Nuan Tong Sumlee subsisted on home-grown vegetable and rice. Then, the banished migrated further inland to settle at a more populated district called Na Prae Chan. After that, Pung Sing temple was constructed by Phra Thep Singkorn and Luang Nai practically in charge as respectable head of village. Pung Sing temple was founded in around 1458. Lady Nuan Tong Sumlee lived there for several years until Phraya Sai Fa Fad dispatched noblemen to search for and restate her position. However, Lady Nuan Tong Sumlee firmly insisted on not returning for many times until finally the invitation escalated into an abduction order. Followed the successful abduction was a rough journey back to the palace. Upon reaching an estuary in Bang Kaeo district, Phattalung (currently called Kieng Bang Kaoe temple) infamous for being an abundant crocodile habitat, the convoy came to a halt. As a result, the noblemen had soldiers perform Tang Ke ritual (a crocodile-stabbing ritual). As part of Nora's ritual, Tang Ke is performed to ward off evils and ask for luck. The ritual strictly demands a person excelling in supernatural practices as a performer. A person lacking such qualification but nonchalantly performing is believed to attract misfortune or even evils which can be lethal as a result of violating the tradition.

Tang Ke must be performed by Nora Yai (head of Nora/ professional Noral) who has been through a traditional Krob Serd Puk Pha ritual as having been traditionally practiced.

### **Occasion for Nora Tang Ke (Crocodile-stabbing Nora dance)**



**Figure 1** Lub Hok and Chare Hok ritual (spear sharpening and spear immersing ritual)  
Source: Nora Chalee



**Figure 2** Dancing on a banana tree's trunk  
Source: Nora Chalee



**Figure 3** Crocodile stabbing  
Source: Nora Chalee



**Figure 4** Tang ke (crocodile stabbing) with a dagger  
Source: Nora Chalee

Nora Tang Ke is part of Krob Serd Puk Pha ritual (a headdress crowning and cloth tying ritual) entailing deliberately sequenced steps as anciently practiced. Krob Serd ritual is a holy ritual transforming novice Noras into a professional real Nora qualified to perform the rituals such as Nora Rong Khru ritual, Yeab Sen ritual and Tad Jook ritual (hair cutting). Professional Noras can then perform the Krob Serd ritual for novice Noras as well. Qualifications of those able to perform Krob Serd are as follows:

1. 20 year of age
2. The Serd crowning and cloth-tying ritual must be followed by ordainment except the Nora apprentices have already been ordained.
3. Not having lost virginity prior to the ritual
4. Unmarried
5. Male

In the present, Nora Rong Khru is mostly organized as a votive offering or to Wai Khru (pay homage to the past Nora masters). Very few is organized for of Krob Serd Puk Pha ritual which probably results from decreasing popularity of Nora dance among males. In conformation to the rules, all the seven Noras carrying out the Tang Ke ritual must have passed the of Krob Serd Puk Pha ritual and possess the abovementioned qualifications.

Chaowalitpraphan (2015) said that the person who will undergo a topknot cutting must be 20 years of age and be a virgin, ie, having never been romantically involved with the opposite sex before. Otherwise, the Noras will be deemed as defrocked called Nora Para chic disqualifying him from attending the topknot cutting ceremony because his status is not accepted by the Nora master. Historically, to determine whether the Noras attending a topknot cutting ceremony is rid of defrocking, a coin is put on the headdress or Serd. While performing the dance with Serd on after having a topknot cut, the Nora is assumed to be Nora Para Chic if the coin falls of Serd.

Nora Tang Ke will be performed on the last day of Nora Rong Khru ritual which is called Song Kru day (the teacher's departure day). The rituals performed on Song Kru day are all the main rituals such as Rum Klong Hong (Swan-lassoing dance), Rum Tang Ke (crocodile-stabbing dance), Song Kru ritual and Tad Meoy (commitment terminating ritual).

Rum Klong Hong (Swan-lassoing ritual) is a special dance performed for the of Krob Serd ritual. Rum Klong Hong is believed to ward off evils and prevent dangers. It is also performed to commemorate Lady Nuan Tong Sumlee who was abducted back to the palace by King Sai Fah Fad's soldiers. Performing the Rum Klong Hong requires seven male Nora performers, head of which assumes the role of the great swan and the others

assume that of attendant swans. Certain beliefs assert that Rum Klong Hong is probably an adaptation of the Prasuton Manora sequel in the episode in which hunter Bun catches the Kinnari named Manora while she and her Kinnari sisters are bathing in pool Anodat. Nora house is taken as Pool Anodat. A piece of white cloth will be tied to the roof on its four corners with its hem dangling down and four men will be holding the four corners as a mock tree. Outside the house, wooden sticks are stuck all the way toward the front of the Nora house so that the hunter can use them as shelters keeping him from Kinnari's a sight.

Rum Klong Hong commences with Nora Yai running around the mock trees in a shape of Tao Ruean Turtle talisman using the great swan's poses before descending into the pool for bathing. In the meantime, hunter Bun will be slowly approaching to get a peek at Nang Nora through all sticks. The hunter continues approaching until he reaches the middle pillar in front of the Nora house. At the right moment, the hunter will ambush Nang Nora resulting in Nang Nora feeling shocked and everyone starting to run around the pillar in a Tao Ruean Turtle talisman's pattern again. After that, each of the Kinnaris will start dancing in the order starting from the oldest Kinnari sister to the youngest one, Nang Nora. After the hunter's ambush, the Kinnaris will try to escape and hide behind the pillars. The Kinnari caught by the hunter will quickly change into a swiveling post around her ankle to release herself from the lasso. After that, the hunter will loosen the lasso and so will move around aiming for the next target. Those breaking free from the hunter's lasso must be splashed with a shaman's holy water. Rum Klong Hong is an imperative step preceding Nora Tang Ke. (Department of Cultural Promotion, 2016)

For the Crocodile stabbing ritual or Nora Tang-Ke, prior to the crocodile stabbing ritual, a Nora troupe starts by performing a background story of Krai Tong leading toward the crocodile stabbing ritual performed by 7 performers including Head of Nora or Grand Nora (Nora Yai) along with six Nora fellows, each of which is armed with a spear named differently to stab the crocodile. (Butree, 2015)

Nora Tang Ke dance comprises seven performers, one of whom is Nora Yai (head of Nora). All participating Nora performers must be male and have been through the Krob Serd Puk Pha rite. Before the start, the performers will be gathered in front of Baisi Tong Rong (a rice offering altar on the ceremonial stage) in the presence of a shaman. Nine candles are lit and every Nora performer including the shaman prostrate down on a pillow. Nora performers start singing verses in Tub and Ton songs' rhythms, whose lyrics illustrate Tamkhwan (a blessing ceremony) and supernatural power of the seven spears. While singing, Nora Yai shall be the one passing the spears to each Nora performers. After being given the spears, the Noras proceed to assemble the spear's tips, referred to as Lub Hok or Chare Hok. When it is ended, the orchestra starts playing the Cherd song and Nora Yai leads all the Noras out of Rong Khru (a ritual stage). Nora Yai proceeds to dance in a sequence of standing poses on a banana tree's trunk-made raft. Such action simulates act of floating on the water. Then, the Nora Yai will be the first to fling a spear into the crocodile model, followed by others from Nora two to Nora seven carrying out the exact same steps as Nora Yai. Upon the completion, all of the seven Noras including the shaman are gathered around the crocodile and step on it with one foot before chanting Bungsukun together. The ritual is complete when Nora yai stabs the crocodile on its neck and kick the crocodile into an overturning position.

### Beliefs about spears



**Figure 5** seven spears  
Source: Nora Chalee

Rueang rao ja klaw bot pai  
เรื่องราวะจากล่าวบพีป  
Klaw Chom Chaokrai namjai han  
กล่าวโถมเจ้าไนน้ำใจหาย  
Japaiha Takhru Phuchamnan  
จะไปหาตากรูผู้ชำนาญ  
Krabkran khor rian wichamon  
ทราบกรานขอเรียนวิชามนต์  
Rak-kha hoe ta phrakhru  
รักข้าเหลาพะครู  
Tan mijai endu muean button  
ทำน้ำใจเงินคุณเหมือนบุตรตน  
Phosonhai Chao rian wichamon  
พ่อสอนให้เจ้าเรียนวิชามนต์  
Dampud longhon kambangkai  
คำผุดล่องหนกำบังกาย  
Hai rian god sadom phasomya  
ให้เรียนกดสะدمผสมยา  
Ao-wan-long khong-kha nam-haeng-hai  
เอว่า่นลงคงคาน้ำแห้งหาย  
Pra-than-hok lem-yai tao-bai-pai  
ประทานหอกเล้มใหญ่เท่าใบพาย  
Chue Phet-na-rai Son-sunghan  
ชื่อเพชรนารายณ์ศรั้งหาร  
Ik-tung mid-mor mi-lo-luea  
อีกทั้งมีดหมومิหลอเหลือ  
Khru-hai dai chuea thuk pra-kan  
ครูให้ได้เขื้อทุกประการ  
Rian-set wi-cha chan  
เรียนเสร็จสำเร็จวิชาชัย  
Mai-nan kor-dai sib-ha wan  
ไม่นานเกิดลีบหัววัน  
Dai dung prat-ta-na ko-la-khru  
ได้ดังปรารถนาขอลาครู  
Tan-chueng uai chai-yo hai-suk-khang  
ท่านเชียงอยชัยโภให้สุขชั่ง  
Pai-ha-mit sa-hai tung-lai-yang  
ไปหาเมตรสหายทั้งหลายยัง  
Lao -khwam tam-sang tuan-tuk-kon  
เล่าความตามสั่งวันทุกคน  
Phuak-kloe oe-ueai- long-ruai wa  
พวากเกลօเอօวยลงรวยว่า  
Rao ja-kha man tam-mai ai jai-akuson  
ราเจชมน์ท่านไม้อ้ายใจถูกคล  
Ai Cha-la-wan ai to-ra-chon  
อ้ายชาละวันอ้ายทรชน  
Rao cha kha hai chon muai ban-lai  
ราเจช่าให้เจนน้ำยบรลัย  
Wa laew tao-nan mi-tan-cha  
ว่าแล้วเท่านั้นเมทันชา  
Chao Krai-thong nam-na ma rew-wai  
เจ้าปีกขอของทำฟ้าหัวเรือไว

Kab sa-hai thang-lai sa-bai-jai  
กับสายทั้งหลายสายใจ  
Tuk-kon wang-wai tang-jai ma  
ทุกคนว่องไวตั้งใจมา  
Ma chuay khan sang rong-pi-ti  
มาช่วยกันสร้างโรงพิธี  
Nai sam-wan-nee hai-laew-na  
ในสามวันนี้มีแล้วหนา  
Tak-sao lao-fak yeb-chak wai-pha  
ถูกเสาเหลาฟากเย็บจากหวายผา  
Thao hong mi-cha set mi-nan  
เท้าห้องมีชาเสร็จมินาน  
Rong khru hai-pu pha khao lad  
โรงครูให้ผู้สาวขวากัด  
Luan khao sa-at pha-pe-dan  
ล้านขวะสะอาดผ้าเดดาน  
Pai ni-mon ta-khru phu cham-nan  
ใบปิ่นไม้ตัดครูผู้ชำนาญ  
Hai-ma-du roek-yam muea khao rong  
ให้มาดูกุกษ์ยามเมื่อเจ้าโรง  
Nai-krai ab-nam cham-ra-kai  
นายไกรอานน้ำชำระภายใน  
Nung-pha jib-chai kra-ben-chong  
นุ่งผ้าจีบชายกระเบนใจ  
Wan-sao kao-chan hai-lan-mong  
วันสาร์แก้ชั้นให้ลับใหม่ง  
Pha Nai-Krai khao-rong tam-piti  
พนาอย่างเจ้าโรงทำพิธี  
Phuak bi-da man-da  
พวงบิดามารดา  
Wong-sa nang-klai-chai bai-ya-si  
วงศานั่งไกล้วยนายศรี  
Khun-hon jut thian wan-wi  
ชุนหนอนจุดเดียนแวนวี  
Wat-wai kao-ti laeo-chen-khwan  
วัดไวนก้าที่แล้วเชิญมาสูญ  
Cham-puak-khon kon-ngan  
จำพอกโขนคนงาน  
Hua-lan nom-yan ma-len-kan  
หัวล้านนมยานมาเล่นกัน  
Phuak-nak-muay ma tang-ta khan  
พวงนักมวยมาตั้งท่าขัน  
Sam pra-chan kan kao-long  
สมประชันนั่นเข้ากอง  
Bak bu-ro-hit neb krit ri  
แขกบุหรี่ติดเหล็บกธิชรี  
Mue chub kra-bi ti kra-bong  
มือจับกระปี่ตีกระบอง  
Chuay mai-ri ti-mai-song  
จวยไม้รตีไม้สอง  
Koi-chong mong-rub chong-chub kan  
ค้อยช่องมองรับข้องกัน

Chao tang-mueang ma-du pen pi-set	Hok lem-ni Jatulomahalai
ชาวต่างเมืองมาญูเป็นพิเศษ	หากเล่นนี้จตุ่ลมหายา
Kak-tet chawa mailailan	Tang si-la dai mai klon-lan
แยกเศษช้ามาหลายหล่น	แหงศิลป์ได้ไม่คลอนแคลน
Siang-sanan Krug-kruen chet kuen chet wan	Chet lem-ni mi-chai saidam mai-pai-ruak
เสียงสนั่นเครื่องรีนจีดีนีจีดีวัน	เจ็ดเล่มนี้ซึ่งได้ตามเมี้ยไกรราก
Kao len-ngan tam-khwan Nai Krai-tong	Tangke muean tang-yuak tai nab-san
เข้าเล่นงานทำวัฒนธรรมของ	แหงเข็งเรื่องแหงหยวกดายนับแสน
Hai puak-gloe mu-puean pai jatha	Au si-la makon-un khat mai-wen
ให้พากเกลอนญูเพื่อนไปจัดหา	ເອົາສີຄາມາຄນອັນຫີໄນ່ວັນ
Au kluay-pangla timi tong	Tuk-chao tuk-yen fao khhad-khom
ເອກລ້ວຍພັກທີ່ມີທ້ອງ	ທຸກເຫັນທຸກເຍື່ນເຝຶ້າດົມ
Chat-ha ma-hai sam-sib-song	Lab duay man-rad man-chang man-khwang man-mu
ຈັດທານາໃຫ້ສຳສັບສອງ	ລັບດ້ວຍມັນແຮດມັນຫ້າງມັນກວາງມັນໝູ
Nai Krai-tong aou-roi hai pen pae	Man-lan tuk-tu man-sin-lom
ນາຍໄກຣອກອ່ອງອ້ອຍໃຫ້ເປັນແພ	ມັນແລນຕຸ້ມັນສິນລົມ
Ruea phra sa-hai jat-wai-set	Set laew Nai-krai ma-long phom
ເຮືອພະສາຍຈັດໄວ້ເລື່ອຈ	ເສົ່ງແລວນຍິກຣມາລອງໝູ
Sam-ret rab-reab du ut-air	Chae yaplum duay khata
ສໍາເຮົາຈະບໍາວັດແອ	ແຂ່ຢາສົມດ້ວຍຄາຕາ
Tang-ruea tang-pai jat-wai kae	Lab-oei lab-hok
ທັງເຮືອທັງພາຍຈັດໄວ້ແກ່	ລັບເອີ່ຍລັບທອກ
Nu ruea ni pae khao-mon-ton	Meaun chab chok su-ra
ໜູ້ຮູ້ອັນແພເຂັ້ມ່ານຫລດ	ມືອຈັບຈາກສຸຮາ
Set-laew rong-choen hok-pi-chai	Lab kiaow lab-nga
ເສົ່ງເສົ່ວວັດຈີ່ຢູ່ທີ່ພີ້ຍ້າ	ລັບເຫັນລັບຈາ
Hai-khao-ma nai-rong bat-diaw kon	Ma rao cha-lab Phraphech Sanugan
ໃຫ້ເຂົ້າມາໃນໂຮງບັດເດືອຍາຄນ	ມາເຮົາຈະລັບພະເພື່ອຮາສະຫຼຸກົນ
Hok kong-sahai jet-khon	Khru hai phra-sit
ທອກຂອງສຫາຍເຈັດຄນ	ຄຽງໃຫ້ປະສິທີ
Rao ja dai nam-chueam tang gan	Yang-lao mi-rit khangkhan
ເຮາຈະໄດ້ນາມຂໍ້ຕ່າງໆກັນ	ຍັງເລີ່ມຕົກເຂົ້າຂັ້ນ
Nueng lem chue-wa son-sang-han	Ko de-cha Phech Sanugan
ໜຶ່ງເລີ່ມນີ້ຂໍ້ວ່າສັງຫາຮ	ຂອເດະເພຫະສະຫຼຸກົນ
Sai-dam-mai pai-san ban-chu yan	Ko Choen tan ma-chuai sang-han
ໄສດ້ານໄມ້ເປົາລະບຽບຈຸ້າ	ຂອເຊີ້ນທ່ານມາຫ່ວຍສັງຫາຮ
Song lem-ni Ko-buay chuay mai-tan	Ko de-cha sattharakom
ສອງເລີ່ມນີ້ໂຄຕະບວຍຄວາມໄມ້ທັນ	ຂອເດະະສຕາສຕາຄມ
Banju-yan sai-dam mai-phlap-phla	Kong-ong phraprom promachan
ບຣຽຢູ່ນີ້ສີຄາມໄມ້ພລັບພລາ	ຂອອງອົງປະພຣະມາຈາຈາຍ
Sam lem-ni bai-ta-kong tang trang mai pit	Hai machuay sunghan
ສາມເລີ່ມນີ້ໃບຕະກະແທງຕັ້ງໄມ້ຜິດ	ໃຫ້ມາຫ່ວຍສັງຫາຮ
Sai dam mai Chai rit unkomkhla	Ti tai-nam nam khong-kha
ໄສດ້ານໄມ້ເຫັນທີ່ອັນຄົມກຳລ້າ	ທີ່ຕື່ນ້າງາງຄາ
See lem-nei Ratthanakomplumya	Porlab set-laew Nai Krai
ສີເລີ່ມນີ້ຮັນນາຄມເສມຍາ	ພອລັບເສົ່ງແລ້ວນາຍໄກ
Saidammai fa-pha ban-chu pai	Koi au pai cha ya
ໄສດ້ານໄມ້ພັກ່າບຮູ່ພຣາຍ	ຄ່ອຍເອາໄປໆແຫ່ຍາ
Ha lem-ni lek-kom som- chai-nuek	
ຫ້າເລີ່ມນີ້ເຫັນກົມ ສນໃຈນີກ	
Koei pan kha-suek ma-mak-lai	
ເຄຍັ້ນຈ່າຍກົມາກຫລາຍ	

### Beliefs about Tam Khe (the making of a crocodile model)



**Figure 6** Stabbing the crocodile with a dagger  
Source: Nora Chalee



**Figure 7** Stabbing the crocodile with a dagger  
Source: Nora Chalee



**Figure 8** Stabbing the crocodile with a dagger  
Source: Nora Chalee

The making of a crocodile model can only be done by those with expertise in superstition. Cut pieces of a Pung la banana tree, commonly known as *Musa acuminata* bananas, are assembled into a crocodile-like shape. The chosen tree must be of an extremely large size and uprooted with its intact rootstalk, the part particularly carved into a shape of a crocodile's head. Other parts, namely arms and

legs, are carved out of varied parts before being stuck to the body using sharpen sticks as a pin. Making of the tail part can be made using either a coconut thatch or a banana tree's trunk. When finished, four 100 centimeters-long wooden sticks are used as a mock crocodile's arms and legs maintaining the model's balance. In sequence, a shaman performs a relic containing ritual. After the making of a crocodile, the crocodile model will be put in the north east. Four wooden pillars are stuck at four corners to stretch a piece of white cloth over the crocodile model. A one bite-sized offering of betel nuts, one flower, one candle, 9- or 12-baht worth money and a banana tree's trunk-made raft to be used as a mock raft for a crocodile-hunting journey. Sticks are inserted into the model as a core and then the crocodile model is placed in front of Khru (the teacher) facing eastwards.

## References

Butree, P. (2015). *Nora Rong Kru Wat Ta-Kae Patthalung the best of Nora, the Value of Southern Thailand*. Retrieved from <https://mgonline.com/travel/detail/9590000052662>

Chaowalitpraphan, P. (2015). *Nora Culture: Existence and Inheritance in the Context of Baan Plai Ramai Pendang District, Kedah State (Taiburi), Malaysia* (Ph.D.Dissertation, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand).

Department of Cultural Promotion. (2016). *Ta-Kae*. Retrieved from [http://www.culture.go.th/culture\\_th/ewt\\_w3c/ewt\\_news.php?nid=5885&filename=](http://www.culture.go.th/culture_th/ewt_w3c/ewt_news.php?nid=5885&filename=)

Jittham, P. (1976). *Nora Master (Kru Mor Nora Encyclopedia of Southern Thai Culture)* (4th ed.). Bangkok, Thailand: Thai Cultural Encyclopedia Foundation.

Nitnirun, N. (1997). *Nora: Symbols, Rituals, Identity of the Southern Around Songkhla Lake in the age of globalization*. (Master's Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand).