

Remembrances of Red Trauma (21) - Hakom

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By Charuphat Petcharavej

She was sitting on a wide bamboo bench with seven or eight relatives, eating *tam miang kha*, a galangal salad. Without warning, Nang Jiao's head rolled down towards the ground. She twitched and convulsed, eyes popping, jaws masticating wildly, while her face took on a cruel expression. Her body, wrapped below in a sarong and above with a t-shirt screen-printed with the face of a TV drama starlet, was covered in dirt and debris from the ground beneath the bench. Her relatives shrieked and screamed in worrisome fright, and piled onto her, trying to get her to sit up straight. But her wildly flailing limbs kicked them in the chins and breasts, so that they were doubled over in pain. But they persevered in getting a hold of Nang Jiao's rebelling body. A woman's voice rent the air, calling for strong young men to come and help. But it was still before dusk. The men, their fathers and the fathers of their children, had yet to return to their homes. Some of them were out to bring the oxen and buffalo back home to their pens. Others were laboring on construction sites, building houses in neighboring villages, and had yet to return. Right now, the only males in Dong Bong village were some students from the district vocational college. They'd finished their classes early today so they were staring at their smartphones with headphones on.

The ruckus sounding loudly throughout the neighborhood was soon joined by a mother yelling at her son to go and see what all the fuss was about. All the young vocational college boys reluctantly removed their earphones, and grumpily put down their phones.

"If someone's dying, let them die. What does it have to do with me?" A young man in a brown workshop shirt rushed to the scene of the incident. He ran into some friends who had just returned from school together. They gave one another the wry, quick hiss of a laugh. When he got there, the situation had not improved. Nang Jiao was still writhing like something was sucking the blood out of her body and turning her into a zombie. Her chubby body, round like a jar of fermented fish, was ploughing around on the ground, as if in extreme agony. The coarse hair of a mother of two in her early thirties, was red from the dirt on the ground. Her tube skirt [*sinh*] had all but fallen off. One end was down at her ankles, while the other end was touching her breasts. The actress-faced, purple t-shirt was all crumpled up. The face of the actress, who had played both heroine and villain, was being ground into the dirt. More and more villagers -women, men, and the aged- showed up at the scene. The crowd surrounded her awkwardly, afraid to try to get her up again. Nang Jiao's hands and feet were still flailing and sweeping around. With each stroke of her hand and feet, her eyes would bulge as if she were being strangled. And every time she lifted up her legs, her tube skirt would immediately disclose to everyone the sorry sight of her black underwear, with its worn elastic

straps about to split. All the people surrounding her wore a worried face because Nang Jiao had never been like this before. Many people asked for her husband. His wife was god-damn dying. Why hadn't he shown up? Who had her husband's phone number? Who did he go to do construction work with? Which village? Many hands fumbled for their rugged Samsung Hero mobile phones and feverishly padded through the menu, trying to find the right number to call. After a while, someone was able to reach him. The person told the other end of the line to rush here quickly because they had no idea what was happening to Jiao, his wife. She had rolled her head down to the ground while she was eating tam miang kha. Nobody could get close to her. Her feet had kicked people in the mouth and in the waist, rolling them over like oranges. That woman hung up. She told everyone that Nang Jiao's husband was hurrying over. Some people in the circle were watching her intently, trying to find a good moment to charge and stand her up. The three young students stood awkwardly, not knowing what to do. They pushed each other at times, giggling nervously. Moments later, Nang Jiao sprang up, in a flash sitting herself upright on the ground. Her hair going every which way, her eyes glowered as if they could tear the flesh off the onlookers by sight alone. It startled the onlookers so much that they all fell back. As one, they withdrew.

"Looks like a *pop* [ghoul] has gotten into her," someone said. Many people in the crowd nodded in agreement. But many were still unsure.

"How can it be a ghou? The ghou died years ago," someone countered.

All eyes were on the lone naysayer. Then an old man said, "Ghouls never die, my lad. They just keep getting stronger and stronger until they turn into *hakom* [an even more fearsome ghou]."

Upon hearing that, everyone's hairs stood on end, and they fled from the circle in disarray. Everyone knew that a *hakom* spirit was a thousand times more savage than a ghou. The ghou is just an evil spirit that preys on ones who -learning *khatha*, the magical spells of the Brahman tradition- put a curse on themselves by violating the teachings of their masters. The presence of a *hakom* meant that the human beneath the skin had been completely consumed, body and soul. They either die when asleep, or they die suddenly and inexplicably, whether they are standing or sitting. This kind of death is called the *hakom* death, often after a long period of persistent sickness. The symptoms were the same as Jiao now showed. Yes, a *hakom*, a monster living inside her. That's what robbed her of her ease, her appetite, and her sleep. Holes and gaps exist for this evil spirit to get inside and sup on the spirit, binge on the very essence of the body, and eventually the liver, kidneys, and intestines. Until finally, the physical body is unable to carry on, and falls lifeless. *Hakom* come along in two ways. They can develop from a hereditary ghou. That means that someone's ancestor was once the prey of a *hakom*, and that *hakom* would travel along the etheric highways of family connection, preying on the descendants as it went along. It did not know death, and could go on forever. Or sometimes, it was a new ghou. These evil predatory spirits are fierce and powerful. They consume the spiritual essence of their victims, one after the other. People hosting these spiritual parasites are not aware of it until it is exorcised by a suitably adept *mo tham*, a spirit expert. The *mo tham* would force the evil spirit to identify itself. And that budding ghou would then turn itself into a hereditary ghou, as it moves out of the saved victim and on to the nearest viable prey in the family, when opportune. Fat on the lifeforce of its prey, yet never satiated, it grows from strength itself until it becomes a powerful *hakom*, forcibly inherited endlessly through generations. Many people were starting to get very uncomfortable because Dong Bong village had seen numerous deaths from *hakom* in the past. They were dismayed and frightened. It was only the three young students who were not afraid. They laughed upon hearing the old man's explanation.

"What man is laughing at me?" Nang Jiao raised her head and swivelled her gaze toward the people who surrounded her.

"These three little shits. You don't know who your betters are. I will break your necks."

The voice boomed out of Nang Jiao while her shaking fingers pointed at the young students.

The three young men stared back at her in visible amusement.

"Who's my 'better'? How many years older than me are you anyway?" One of them replied.

"Yeah, that's right." Another one said in support.

"Don't you know who I am?" Nang Jiao said in a furious tone, her breath heaving.

"Who doesn't? You're Jiao," said another young man.

Nang Jiao bellowed out a laugh, and shook her head from side to side. She looked at all the people around. Her face changed as quickly as a chameleon's colors. Her face contorted into a cry and then morphed into a grin, like a psych-ward patient in Phra Si Mahapho Hospital.

"No, I'm not Jiao." Nang Jiao stopped for a moment, then raised her hands and swayed them back and forth.

"I AM Jiao. Where is Bak Pom, my husband? These three aren't my husband." Then Nang Jiao flashed a big toothy grin. She beckoned at the three young men while staring at them. It made them sick to the core in an instant.

"Hey, let's go home and fuck!" said Nang Jiao. She then tried to get up. But the exhausted body was unable to support the movement. The three young men fell back when they heard her say that.

"Well ain't you boys in for it now, joking around with a hakom," someone said.

All three of them pulled back to a more bearable distance. They pulled out their mobile phones to take pictures.

They were each posting on their Facebook pages their own comic interpretations of the event happening before them. Nang Jiao continued arguing with other villagers. There was still no sign of her husband. The sun dropped lower and lower in the sky. Some of the relatives watching her intently began to leave. They had to go home to cook. There were only a few elders who stayed to keep an eye on the situation, trying to wipe her face and eyes. But she didn't allow a single person to approach her. She spat out that she would break their necks of whoever got near her and eat their livers, kidneys and stomachs. People began talking about getting a mo tham to come and exorcise this hakom. But for now, in Dong Bong village, no one had the magical prowess to do that. There used to be Mr. Wan, the previous village headman. A group of villagers had driven him out of the village, forcing him to make a new home for himself on a hill, far away from the village. They'd accused him of being a hakom. No one dared to go and fetch him, because they feared being expelled by the villagers who were against him. They also feared the wrath of another family of mo tham who had been seeing to the village ever since its founding. These people were the original lineage of mo tham of Dong Bong village. But they had never been able to heal anyone. People whispered that this mo tham family only treated their patients just enough so that they would keep seeking their services. They were the big dogs here. No one dared to cross them. Another thing was that the more they treated people, the more people became ill. So, no one dared to ask them for more treatment. And it was also believed by some villagers that these mo thams were the real hakom; they made people ill so that they would be called on to treat them.

It was seven o'clock when Bak Pom, Nang Jiao's husband, arrived. He wheeled up an old motorcycle, complaining of the punctured tires as he did. Upon seeing her husband, Nang Jiao began trembling again. She squirmed and tumbled around the dirt where a new house was supposed to be erected. Her whole body was grimy and bedraggled, like a dog that had been fighting for a bitch in heat. Bak Pom just stared, dumbstruck for a moment, before he decided to pounce on his wife. But whatever he did, he just couldn't keep a hold of her. He called one of his construction site buddies over to help him. With the help of that muscular, middle-aged man, he was able to pin her down. It wasn't long after that Nang Jiao's exhausted body became too weak to resist them. She opened her mouth and asked for water. But when someone gave her water, she brushed the bowl away, spilling the water everywhere. Then, she let out a loud, painful groan. She moaned that she was in pain, that her body was searingly hot. She complained that she felt like a burning hot metal rod had been thrust into her navel. Then she pressed her navel and screamed out at the entire village. The loud noise caused the villagers who had returned home for dinner to come back out for another look.

"Try giving her some piss to drink. She might get better," the same old man told Bak Pom, the husband. According to folklore, drinking piss might help people with this kind of malady. Bak Pom stood awkwardly for a moment or two, before he decided to unzip his trousers, and let loose a stream of steaming piss into the bowl until it was almost full.

After he finished peeing, he ordered his friends to hold his wife steady. Then Bak Pom squeezed Nang Jiao's jaw, and forced her mouth open. The wife struggled to resist as much as she could but she was unable to withstand the strength of six stalwart men. Grabbing her by the chin, he lifted her face up. Squeezing her mouth open, he then poured the white-tea-colored liquid into her mouth. The fresh, warm piss flowed into her mouth and bathed the neck of the struggling patient. She blubbered and choked it up with some difficulty. She was swallowing as much piss as she was sputtering out. When the bowl was empty of piss, they all let her go. Once freed from the iron grip of her husband's fellow laborers, Nang Jiao collapsed into the dirt, exhausted. Her breath short and painful, her cries and moans not quite able to escape her throat. Nang Jiao sobbed; snot and drool smeared all over her mouth and stained her cheeks. Her hands trembled as she raised them to cover her face. She kept repeating the same words, "I am ashamed. I am ashamed." As her weeping went continued on, the crowd of villagers felt pity watching her.

During the dark night, the old house of Nang Jiao's relatives was illuminated with neon lights. All the villagers stood shoulder to shoulder in a circle at the spot where a new house was supposed to be built.

Nang Jiao was lying at the center of the circle, motionless and exhausted. Her condition seemed to have stabilized, but no one knew when another fit of rage would take hold of her again. The elders in the village were consulting each other with tense faces. If they left her like this, she would probably never be able to escape the cruel clutch of hakom. The elders recommended that they request the help of Nang Buaphan, a woman well versed in making spells, before Nang Jiao's symptoms got worse. A distinct murmur went through the crowd when Nang Buaphan's name was mentioned. People in the village knew her as the owner of a grocery shop but no one knew that Nang Buaphan had studied magical incantations. Naturally, they were quite excited about this new information. When the old man elaborated on her history, some people began to agree to ask her for help. And then more and more people agreed, too. And when villager after villager realized that Nang Buaphan was also the younger sister of the previous village headman Wan, a wave of support went through the gathering at the ground where a new house was to be built. But after a while, the sound of a stern voice drowned out the crowd. An angry-faced man, annoyed by the villagers, said:

"That's impossible. I won't let anyone go and get one of the hakom to heal a villager again!"

"Who is hakom? Bak Det, you have such a foul mouth," said Bunsri, a buffalo dealer in the village.

"Of course Bak Wan is a hakom. You have been busy buying cows and selling buffalos. What do you know?" Bak Det replied.

"Oh, what a bastard you are. Watch out, you'll be fined for defamation and disrespecting the old headman." Boonsri was no longer interested in what Bak Det had to say. He turned around to tell the elders and the young men to hurry to wake up Nang Buaphan and come before Nang Jiao got worse.

While they waited for Nang Buaphan to arrive, a group of mo tham from the old lineage led by Bak Phon, the youngest son of the family, together with many of his brothers and sisters, broke into the group of villagers. They forcefully demanded to treat Nang Jiao on their own but the relatives refused. The argument that erupted between them led to wild scuffle. Many people were injured in the brawl but the relatives of Nang Jiao suffered the most injuries as they were fighting with their bare hands while Bak Phon and his relatives were armed with wooden sticks.

The clash was fierce, and it kept going until Sergeant Khamla, a relative of Bak Phon and Vietnam War veteran aged eighty-three, fired his gun into the sky to calm down the crowd.

When Nang Buaphan arrived, the villagers clapped their hands in joy. As she parted a way through the crowd to see Nang Jiao, a relative of Bak Phon raised his voice: "Everyone, brothers and sisters, I have seen this damn woman before. She went to learn the *mon hi yai* [big vagina mantra] from the black magic experts in Sok Chuak village." When he finished, his group broke out into biting laughter because the love spell mantra was known to work only for those whose minds were already consumed by lust and desire. He added, through the mantra, three slaps on the vagina would make it big and plump like a rice-winnowing basket. It worked to spellbind and attract men from all over the country. This mantra was black magic and came with the risk of turning its user into a hakom.

Nang Buaphan didn't care about ridicule from Bak Phon's relatives as she slowly sat down next to Nang Jiao. She stared at her face and asked with a sweet-sounding voice "Oh, dear Sao Jiao. Where do you hurt?" Nang Jiao raised her hands to cover her face again and only kept saying, "I am ashamed. I am ashamed." Shaking her head back and forth, her hair flowed in dark waves, messy like rice straws blown out from the pipe of a mill truck.

Nang Buaphan touched the shoulders of Nang Jiao, only to have them brushed off. She said sternly: "Don't touch me. I am not Nang Jiao. You are a hakom, too. Don't you touch me." And then she went back to sobbing and groaning. Nang Buaphan pressed her hands together and recited her incantation before blowing on Jiao's forehead. The patient stopped crying and her body seemed to relax slightly. But only a moment later, Nang Jiao lowered her head, covered her eyes with one hand and mumbled that she was ashamed and begged to be let go.

"Who are you ashamed of? There are only people from our village here," Nang Buaphan said despite the fact that there were several people from other villages present.

"I am ashamed before my children and grandchildren," said Nang Jiao in a shivering voice. "I am ashamed before my descendants. I am ashamed before everyone."

"Who are your descendants?" someone in the middle of the crowd intervened. The old man warned the questioner not to disturb the mo tham's treatment of Nang Jiao as the hakom could choose to move into his body instead.

Nang Jiao turned silent for a moment. Many people in the crowd were getting fed up with Nang

Buaphan's treatment method, but everyone kept waiting calmly. Some people remembered that the treatment of this mo tham woman was similar to that of her older brother. Both of them used an approach of gentle talk; they were neither rough or tried to hit the patients with a whip, nor did they stab them with a needle or used stones to squeeze their toes to force them to expose the identity of the hakom inside their bodies in order to cast a spell, the preferred method of Bak Phon's family, a very tortuous kind of treatment. Nang Buaphan tried to politely ask the sick person over and over, but every time she asked questions and stared at her patient, Nang Jiao just yelled back at her fiercely. Jiao also spit everywhere and at everyone like a cobra. Her hands never stayed still. They kept scratching the ground until blood gushed out of her fingers. All of a sudden, she changed her posture, and covered her face with her hands and closed her eyes again.

"Who are you? If you're not Sao Jiao," Nang Buaphan asked as she offered her some holy water which Nang Jiao accepted and hastily drank. After drinking the holy water, the patient began to have convulsions. Her eyes popped open again and her upper body lifted up from the ground while her legs stretched forward. Her head was quivering like a cow having its head smashed with a hoe. Then she wept, demanding all people to be chased away—only then would she tell who she was. Everyone retreated four or five steps away from the circle's center, anxiously waiting for the hakom to open its mouth. The words, 'I'm ashamed, I'm ashamed' were still repeated rhythmically. After a while the sick woman laughed out loud in the middle of the construction site and then produced yells that sounded throughout the whole village.

"I am the Great Buarin. Hahahaha. I am the Great Buarin." The circle of villagers groaned loudly. The old people turned to look at each other. Many people in the village knew and still remembered the story of the person who Nang Jiao asserted she was. Some people did not know because they were just in-laws or daughters-in-law who had moved to live in the village after Buarin died. Some middle-aged and young people only knew the name from hearsay from older people. Children and those who were students had no idea who that was. They could only look at one another and curiously ask among themselves who that person was. Many years ago, the village had to chase away a pop or hakom, the evil spirit possessing a sick person. There were both real and fake stories. But the most recent event was when one person died in their sleep, killed by the power of a hakom. The deceased's father was extremely angry. He wiped the village temple's meal-time drums with some raw eggs that were supposed to be used in the ceremony to prognosticate where in the cemetery his child should be cremated. It was believed that when monks hit the drums it would cause the hakom that resided in the body and consumed the person's spirit, to identify itself. When Nang Jiao uttered that name, many people in the village believed that she definitely had not lied.

"What an evil bastard you are. You are humiliating my clan. Who are you? I will slash your face now," Bak Phon said, raising his voice in anger. He tried to push people into attacking the patient but the villagers did not let him.

"Listen first, Tao Phon. Don't be impatient. Just listen and let her speak first," the same old man said.

"Get it out of her, I-Buaphan, or I will kick the life out of all of you, the healer and the sick." Bak Phon was annoyed and sat down in the middle of the circle.

"I am the Great Buarin. My father's name is the Great Thippahad, the founder of this village. I speak the truth. Here, I am bigger than all of you. Remember, if I want to eat anyone, I will eat them, hahahaha. I will rip out and eat your livers, kidneys, and stomachs." Nang Jiao laughed. Then she pretended to be holding a halberd in her hand. She took on the fighting pose of ancient warriors because the Great Buarin used to be a servant of Phra Kasem Samranrath, a former ruler of Khemarat Thani [Translator's note: located in today's Ubon Ratchathani province]

"You motherfucker. You don't want to die like this, right? How dare you embarrass my great grandfather like this. You are really Bak Wan himself, aren't you?" Bak Phon jumped up and pointed his fist at Nang Jiao's face.

"Damn it. Speak carefully, Bak Phon. Why would you bring him into this? He is not involved in this matter." Bunsri, the buffalo dealer, showed his dissatisfaction. He and a few of his followers stood up.

"I'll say what I want. It's none of your business. You're just like these people." Bak Phon moved towards Bunsri. His relatives followed. "You only talk about money and cheat the villagers out of their cows and buffalos."

"Hey, all of you, sit down! Don't hover over me," Sergeant Khamla spoke loudly. Both groups of Bunsri and Bak Phon were forced to sit down.

Moments later, Nang Jiao repeated over and over again that she was the Great Buarin, and every time Bak Phon would rise up, shouting harsh and rude words at her. Nang Jiao talked with intimate knowledge about the Great Buarin; whom and where he had killed, with whom of his offspring he had lived with, until today when he came to live with Bak Phon. Upon hearing this story, Bak Phon's anger exploded. A fierce fight broke out that left some villagers with bloody stabbing wounds. But no one seemed interested in catching the person who had stabbed them.

The next day, Nang Jiao received treatment and her symptoms improved. She was able to understand some of what had happened but she was still not completely cured. Nang Buaphan kept giving her treatment but less frequently so. One day, she concluded that Nang Jiao's condition was still very bad. Her knowledge and magic spells were not excellent enough. She consulted with the villagers and recommended to ask her brother to provide help as only this way could Nang Jiao be cured from the disease. But none of the villagers went to ask Buaphan's brother for help. Instead, the relatives of Bak Phon gathered and yelled at her in front of her house. Bak Phon was furious. At night, he decided to perform an ancestral ritual and summon the evil spirits in order to fight Bak Wan and all the villagers who would not allow his family to cure the illness of Nang Jiao or anyone else.

Inside an ancient extended *ruan koei* house, Bak Phon gathered all his relatives for a calm meditation. Sergeant Khamla was there too. At times he chose the side of Bak Phon's family, the Great Thippahod clan, while other times he chose the side of their enemies. As the master of ritual, Bak Phon sat facing a table covered in black magic totems. There were hundreds of amulets in the shape of buffaloes. Next to it was a tray holding a pile of tamarind leaves that had been removed from the stalks. In front of Bak Phon, there was a large bowl containing holy water and a white cotton thread tied to the table in front, and then there was a human skull with a bright candle lit on top. It was a peaceful atmosphere. Bak Phon was sitting cross-legged. He pressed his hands together, spelled the katha, and then lit a long candle used in the mantra ceremony. He let the tears of the candle drip into the bowl with a sizzling sound. He blew into the holy water three times to cast the katha spell and then took out a lancet from his bag placed beside him. He slid his palm just enough to let a small red drop of blood slip into the large bowl. He extinguished the long candle and signalled to his relatives to follow his example and mix their blood into the bowl. One by one, with calm faces, they moved over to the bowl and slid the palms of their hands. Despite the peaceful mood, everybody's mind was crowded with anger, hatred, and vengeance for Bak Wan and his sister who they wanted to erase from this world forever. After Sergeant Khamla added the final drops of blood, Bak Phon lifted the bowl and put it down before him again.

He practiced the katha, dipped a bundle of grass into the bowl and whisked it all over at the buffalo

amulets lined up on the table. One by one, he blew the mantra on each amulet and then threw them out of the window. When the magically-charged amulets hit the ground, they transformed into large, strong buffalos standing in the yard of his house. Bak Phon continued putting spells on the amulets and throwing them out until the table was empty. Hundreds of buffalos walked all through the grounds of the yard. They moved their heads and horns while pawing at the ground impatiently with their hooves. They were fully ready to run and chase.

Bak Phon lifted the tray filled with tamarind leaves and put it down in front of him. He scooped the holy water out the bowl and sprayed it over the tamarind leaves until they were all wet. He spoke another incantation, pressed his hands together and then blew softly onto the tamarind leaves. They turned into an enormous swarm of bees, wasps and hornets. They soared out of the window and flew in a circle swirling above the ground no further than an arm length over the herd of buffalos.

After that, Bak Phon took a lump of wax out of his bag. He had been carrying it with him all the time. It was his family's sacred wax. And it was the most valuable to this fight. Bak Phon blew one more the spell, and threw this last sacred item out of the window to where the buffalos, bees, wasps and hornets were. Once the wax fell onto the ground, it turned into a black dog. It let out a string of deep terrifying barks. Its sound terrified the hearts of those who heard it.

"Off you go. Do the work worthy of the rice and water that I have fed you," Bak Phon ordered in a loud voice. He then released the ghosts of *kaen kae* birds [pigeons] who followed the procession of animals as observers and heralds.

In this fight, the black dog led the way. Howling along, the dog ordered the buffalos to run over the villagers' fences leaving behind a trail of destruction.

The black dog's fierce howls sounded through the village. Its eyes were red like fireballs in the night. Everytime, a bark escaped its snout, poisonous slobber scattered throughout the road. Any villager who touched the black dog's slime suffered from burning wounds that were difficult to cure. Sometimes, the black dog howled melodiously gaining the praise of the bees. Sometimes the black dog's barks sounded like battle drums inciting the buffalos to ram their horns into the village hall until it collapsed into the ground. Meanwhile, the bees, wasps and hornets flew around the villagers' houses in a nerve-wrecking circle that left residents unable to neither eat nor sleep.

Dong Bong village had descended into chaos. Not a single soul dared to leave their houses as they feared to be chased by the buffaloes, and stung by the relentless swarm of bees, wasps and hornets until their limbs and face were properly swollen up. The sky over Dong Bong village was swarmed with the buzzing insects flying around. They kept blocking people's ways, almost driving the villagers insane. Some people had little patience and lashed out against the bees, wasps and hornets. But once they fell to the ground, they had no chance of surviving the attack that was sure to follow. Against these poisonous animals and fierce beasts out on the streets in a show of full force, the villagers little at their disposal to fight back. So many of them went to see Nang Buaphan for help. But she had nothing to match the power of the attackers. She could only tell the villagers to endure this crisis until one day, the monsters would run out of energy and leave.

But the situation did not develop as expected by Nang Buaphan and the villagers. Each day passed and the black dog barked louder, and the buffaloes and the swarm of bees, wasps and hornets grew more and more ferocious. No sign that the situation would turn for the better anytime soon. Meanwhile, Sergeant Khamla was sitting there laughing to himself in satisfaction.

Then one day, Bunsri couldn't bear it any longer. He rushed to the distant rice field high up on the hill, far away from the village to consult with Mr. Wan. But Mr. Wan could also do nothing more than

sit and complain from the distant rice field high up on the hill and far away from the village. He created something similar to what Bak Phon had created but kept it in a quiet place. It was to prepare for events that were difficult to predict. Events that could possibly occur in the future but none of the villagers of Dong Bong were able to foresee, or even fully wrap their heads around.

Amid the chaos that had engulfed the village, Nang Jiao walked aimlessly out of her house. She sat down in the middle of the street where the black dog's army was just about to march by. She raised both of her hands up to cover her face, and then began moaning over and over again "I'm ashamed, I'm ashamed..."

Translated by Anusara Kartlun.