



# Thai Ghosts

# Thai Ghosts and Evil Spirits

**They eat you alive!  
They eat you dead!**

A Treat of Thai Tales

sanpaper and layabout books

BANGKOK

# Good Spirits



Thai Spirit House

# Homes for the Local Spirits

Spirit Houses are common throughout South East Asia. They shelter the unseen guardians and owners of a particular location. Residents of the place offer gifts of food and drink and incense, as well as prayers, to the spirits. If you look after your good spirits, then they will look after *you* - and protect you from their evil kin.



Animism, Buddhism, and Hinduism mix into a cocktail of folk beliefs. It is a world of priests, and shamans, and spirit doctors, and amulets, and protective tattoos.

It is a world of powerful beliefs.

# Bad Spirits

Spirits can be good or bad and Thais need to keep on the right side of them.

If you pick up only one Thai word from this booklet, try: phee(R)

ผี / pee / rising tone, [listen](#)

ผี is also transcribed as 'phi.'

*phi* are celebrated in Ghost Festivals.



There are plenty of other Thai words for ghosts and spirits and phantoms and demons and spectres and so on, as in English. Ghosts are a gift to the Thai Film Industry which turns out horror flicks so regularly that they are known as *the B-Movies that never fail.*



Shown in Sensurround Cinemas, the soundtrack blasts the audience with shrieks and screams and bangs and crashes. A favourite sound effect is a dismembering chain saw which is an audio treat. Extra hilarity is provided by the subtitles.

*“I will kill you until you are dead from it!”*

# Ghost of Gut Eater

## Kraseu Night Terror of Bangkok



Krasue (กระสือ), known as *Ahp* in Cambodia and as *Kasu* in Laos, manifests itself as a woman, usually young and beautiful, with her viscera hanging down from the neck, trailing below the head.

This spirit hovers in the air above the ground, for it has no lower body. The throat may be represented in different ways, either as only the trachea or with the whole neck.

The organs below the head usually include the heart and the stomach with a length of intestine. Her teeth often include pointed fangs in vampire fashion. She glows in the dark with a nimbus around her head. She is a hungry ghost and, as the gripping movie title blurts, wants to eat your guts.

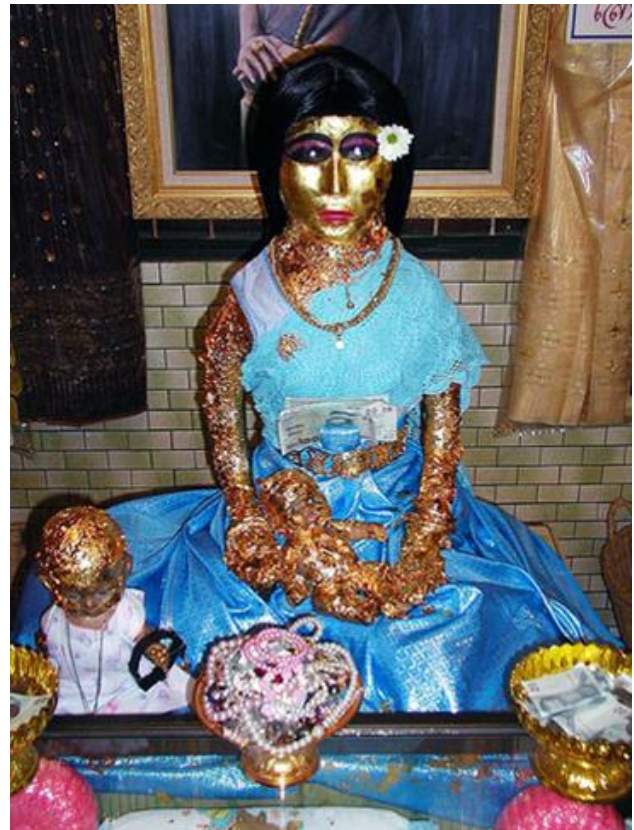


# Mae Nak Phra Khanong

## Another Bangkok Ghost

Mae Nak Phra Khanong (แม่ตากพระโขนง, meaning "Lady Nak of Phra Khanong"), or simply Mae Nak (แม่ตาก) or Nang Nak (นางตาก, is a well-known and popular Thai ghost with extensible arms - all the better to grab you with. Her stamping grounds are in the Phra Khanong area of Bangkok and you can visit her shrine in Sukhumvit Soi 101 inside Wat Mahabut. (BTS Skytrain Phra Khanong). She has been the subject of 15 Thai movies. She is a phi who kills and eats young girls, but a venerable monk confined her in Wat Mahabut.

A visit to her shrine and offerings help to keep her sweet.



# House of Bop

## Village Terror

**Bop** (บ๊อบ) is a cannibalistic female spirit of Thai folklore. It manifests itself as a woman that likes to devour human viscera. Bop is related to the Phi Fa spirit more common in Laos. You have to bring in the spirit doctors or shamans to purge this one. It appears able to move from one victim to another unless stopped.

It is similar to the North American Wendigo.



This is from an older world, beyond the towns, where the night is dark and full of terrors.



The most common phi do not have specific names, only the general term Phi Tai Hong (ผีตายโหด). These are the vengeful and restless spirits of persons who suffered violent or cruel deaths.

# Krahang

He who flies by night



Krahang (กฺรหัง) is a male ghost that flies in the night and attacks women in rural areas. He has wings made from rice husking panniers and flies on a large wooden rice pestle. Once, he was a farmer who attempted to practice sorcery but a spell rebounded on him. During the day, he still appears to be an ordinary rice farmer but his night life really takes off after sunset. However, reports of his scariness vary. It may be possible to befriend him and go for a ride on his pestle.

# Nang Ta-khian

## The Lady of the Odorous Tree

the Lady of the Ta-khian tree is distinctly benevolent. This large decorative tree has no common name in English but

its Latin title is *Hopea odorata*. It is planted for shade, away from structures that its roots might damage, and also serves as a boundary

marker. It is considered fragrant and fortunate. Women tie lengths of coloured brocade to its exposed roots. Nang Ta-Khian appears as a beautiful young woman, wearing traditional Siamese dress, who is credited with miracles. The blessing of the Ta-Khian is when it produces two-winged seeds that spiral gracefully to the ground. This tree may not be felled for lumber in Thailand, except for use in monasteries.



NParks Flora&FaunaWeb



# Phi Dip Chin

## The Hopping Corpse

Chin (Qin) means *Chinese* in Thai, so this evil spectre is a foreign import and may be confined to Chinatown. It is a curious hopping ghost that appears in the ceremonial dress of a Qing dynasty mandarin. A *jiangshi*, 僵尸 also called a hopping vampire or zombie, is a type of reanimated corpse in Chinese folklore. It is known in Vietnam, Korea and Japan and is depicted as a stiff corpse dressed in official garments. It moves around by hopping, with its arms outstretched and kills living creatures to absorb their *qi*, or life force, usually at night.

If you are not Chinese-Thai, you may not need to worry. Hong Kong Horror Movies treat it as similar to Dracula.



# Hungry Ghosts

## Buddhist Preta



These emaciated ghosts are cursed with great hunger and small mouths. The Hungry Ghost Festival (TC: 盂蘭盆, SC: 盂兰盆 Yúlánpén) is held to appease the hungry ancestor ghosts with offerings of food and drink. At the same time, Hell Money may be burnt to give the family ghosts some cash in Hell.

This is more Chinese than Thai.



# Preta



Preta is a Sanskrit word translated as *hungry ghost*. Preta are described in Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Chinese and Japanese folk tales, as undergoing suffering greater than that of humans, particularly an extreme level of hunger and thirst. In Thailand, pret (Thai: เปรต) are hungry ghosts of the Buddhist tradition that have become part of Thai folklore. They are abnormally tall, and can emit high-pitched sounds from tiny mouths - sounds which can be heard only by a monk or a shaman.



# Phi Ta Khon

## Thai Ghost Festival

This is a festival celebrated in Issan - the north-eastern part of Thailand where the Mekong River forms the border between Thailand and Lao. Participants dress in elaborate ghost costumes and masks. Revellers dance in the streets and drink and eat. This is a festival for the living not the dead.



# Talismans

## Amulets

Need extra defence against fate and fortune?



Visit the world's largest amulet market in Bangkok

The veneration of amulets and sacred objects is an ancient practice in Siam. In addition to supernatural beliefs, each amulet is a reflection of the Thai way of life deeply intertwined with agriculture, familial tie, gratitude, history, and influences from other religions and countries.

# Tattoos

You can't lose one of these



Get a Sacred Sak Yant tattoo and have it activated by a shaman. This is the spirit equivalent of Kevlar body armour. It may not deflect bullets but the evil beasts won't get you.

# Shaman

sounds like  
**shay·muhn**

Urban Thais hold on to folk beliefs as artifacts of an earlier, pre-industrial life that exists in modern urban Thailand only as nostalgia. The people from Isaan, though, and from the small baans and hill tribe villages scattered around the north, bring with them intact traditions that explain, in some part, their seemingly alien spiritual beliefs.



Shamans can enter a trance state and commune with the spirits.

# Fortune Tellers

ones who can see



There is a deeply held belief in horoscopes and in determining auspicious days and dates for important events.



# Urban Ghost House

derelict buildings become infested with  
ghosts even downtown



incomplete tower block and disused shopping mall



# Everyday Thai

the seen and the unseen



# Wear a Mask

Halloween Daily



# Ghost House Movie

take a look - its's a scream

# Afterword

There are more where these came from.

Be aware of where you are.



The end is not when we can say this is

**THE END**

