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Ghost Bites

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Kay
Logan, Utah
27 November, 2017

Ghost Bites
Folk Belief

Informant:

Kay is a friend of mine. She has lived in Logan, Utah her whole life with her family. She has an older brother and two younger sisters. Her family is Vietnamese American. Her father and his parents left Vietnam for the Philippines before flying to America. Her is also from Vietnam as well. Her grandparents lived with them for a number of years when she was younger and they helped raise her because her parents were busy with work. She is 19 years old.

Context:

I interviewed Kay at my house. We sat on my bed with my computer in front of us so I can record for transcription later. We converse for a while before like we would do and I explain that I will be interviewing her. She sits back and hugs one of my stuffed animals while we talk. She tells me a bit about her family and how her grandparents raised her and her siblings when they were younger because her parents worked a lot. She tells me about how her younger sister wasn't raised by her grandparents because they moved to Texas when she was in 8th grade. She then tells me a number of things that her grandmother used to tell her. The friend she refers to is also Vietnamese American. She heard the saying from her grandparents and what told the saying in the original Vietnamese. She told me the original Vietnamese name for ghost bites but doesn't know how to really write in Vietnamese or retell the whole story in Vietnamese.

Text:

[Kay]: Ok so when I was younger and my grandparents still raised me there was a saying where when we wake up to random bruises it's called ghost bites in translation and basically we don't know where the bruises come from and so that's why we call it ghost bites because you sleep and then you wake up with bruises like somewhere strange so that's our thing about ghost bites

[Me]: Was it just your grandparents or your parents that said it or do you know if other families said it?

[Kay]: I asked my friend about it too and she said that she did hear about that's what they also called it in their family but in her version she said like if you get it after 12pm but in my family it's after you wake up from sleeping

[Me]: was it originally in Vietnamese?

[Kay]: It's called Ma cắn which basically translates to ghost bites My grandma gets it all the time that's why

[Me]: So did she only tell it to you guys when you were kids or is it something she would still tell to you now?

[Kay]: yea she only says it when she gets like weird or random bruises and she'd always joke about it so

[Me]: Does it have to be at night or could it be during the day?

[Kay]: it's at night because we don't see ghosts but that's a different story but basically when it's daylight you would know how you got your bruise most likely cause you can see it but at night you wouldn't even know what happens cause you're sleeping and you get random bruises so they just blame it on the excuse of having like ghost bites and that's just bruising

Texture:

She is a little hesitant as she speaks and a little awkward. She seems a little wary of the computer I use to record. Normally she is a little more laid back but is a little stiff during our conversation. She speaks in a very professional style interview. She speaks a little slower at points as she tries to make sure she gets the details right.

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Introduction to Folklore/English 2210

Dr. Lynne S. McNeill
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