

Charles F. Keyes Field Notes, Thailand

January 1 through January 31, 1964

Field notes in this document were primarily written in Mahasarakham Province (Changwat Maha Sarakham), Thailand. This document is preceded by notes written in Mahasarakham in December 1963, and is followed by notes written in Mahasarakham in February 1964.

Central Thailand, Mahasarakham

January 1 – 8, 1964

(Notes added later.)

1 January 1964

Bangkok, Biff's family left.

2 Jan.

Bangkok

3 Jan.

Bangkok: Dinner w/ Di. Abner Hura--ity, FAO advisor.

4 Jan.

Pataya - with Jill & John Hale.

5 Jan.

Pataya

6 Jan.

Pataya

7 Jan.

Return to Mahasarakham via Bangkok.

8 Jan.

MK.

Băn Nông Tũn, Mahasarakham

January 9, 1964

Economics

While I was in Bangkok, I had a talk with Mr. Hans Platenius, the World Bank Adviser to the Northeast Development Comm. Among other things, we discussed a couple of things which bear directly on the economic activities of the village. This year the government has been

encouraging the growing of watermelons in the N.E. and distributed free seed to many villagers. As a result, according to Platenius, the price has dropped tremendously. It will be interesting to see if the amount of watermelon production drops next year as a result of the low market.

I have often wondered why since there is a tobacco station in Ban Khwao which purchases Turkish tobacco, why no one (except the school last year) produces tobacco for sale to the station. I mentioned this to Mr. Platenius and he suggested that the following might be the reason for lack of tobacco production in BNT. Tobacco bought by the Government Tobacco Monopoly is purchased on a quota system. If the farmers are not in the quota, then anything which they produce may or may not be purchased depending on the demands of the station and the quality of the tobacco produced. Thus, Platenius suggested, BNT villagers may have thought that the production without the quota was too risky.

I also discussed the tobacco situation today with Mr. Wichian. He suggested two reasons why BNT does not grow tobacco commercially:

(1) No one from the tobacco station has ever gone to show the people how to grow the tobacco.

(2) When a few years ago the station was buying Virginia tobacco instead of the Turkish variety, the villagers did grow it. However, they were often unable to sell their tobacco because it was usually adjudged to be of an inferior quality. Thus, they became discouraged and ceased growing tobacco. Mr. W. also said that people (i.e., villagers) weren't getting their proper share of the money paid. This arose because there is no competition in tobacco purchasing and the Government Monopoly decides on the price it will pay. But, I wonder if this isn't Mr. W.'s own feelings.

Mr. Ngao says that he thinks villagers don't grow tobacco because "They don't have enough land." When I queried this saying that they have enough land for kenaf and watermelon he elaborated by saying that tobacco requires much water which these other crops do not. It is necessary, he said, for a person growing tobacco to make certain that the plants get water every day.

Some objectives of final survey, "Economic Survey of Households in Băn Nông Tũn" to be administered in January-February, 1964

I. Income

The first questions concern total income for the past year and income from the various sources from which income could be obtained. This, it should be pointed out, only concerns cash income. I do not expect that I shall be able to get fully satisfactory answers from this section of questions because it will be difficult for people to recall in such detail. However, I am hoping that because the sources of income are few enough that I will be able to obtain some general estimate against which I can get some idea of percentages of income derived from the various sources. This information should be compared with the Long's study in Khon Kaen and the study being made by the National Statistics Office on Income and Expenditure in the Northeast.

II. Investments

I had originally intended to include a section on household expenditures for a year, but decided that it simply would be too difficult for the respondents to remember and thus make the data (if any could be obtained).

Băn Nông Tũn

January 11, 1964

Mr. Ngao's Investments

Mr. Ngao has bought six pigs at ฿450/each from the village of Băn Pā Kung near Sarakham. He says that though he has had them only for two days, he could already sell them for ฿500 each. However, he wants to wait until he can sell them for ฿600 each. Nonetheless, when some men from another village came visiting today with an interest in buying some pigs, he said that he would be willing to sell them if he could have sold a large number. He now has 38 pigs and that is too many to take care of he claims. He says that he would rather invest his money this way than by placing it in the Government Savings bank where he would only get a low rate of interest.

Child Training

Mr. Ngao says that when he was a child, his parents used to frighten him into being good by threatening him with sayings such as "we'll let the cat come and eat you," "we'll throw you away in the forest;" "We'll give you to the elephant." He also admitted that they would sometimes strike him if he were not good.

Attitudes Towards National Government

I tried to get Mr. Ngao, Mr. Saw, and the son of the headman involved in a discussion about the merits of the new P.M. They were non-committal because "he hasn't been in long enough." The son of the H.M. thought that Thanom was from Ubon (he's not). All three agreed that if Thanom were to go, General Praphat would take over.

Division of Labor by Sex

Threshing is strictly man's work — i.e., the beating of the sheaves to loosen the rice from it is such "hard work" that only men can do it. However, women "beat the straw" (ตีฟาง *tīfāng*) after the rice has been thrashed. The pair of sticks used in threshing is called ไม้กอนดีข้าว (*mai kôn tī khāo*).

Forthcoming Ceremonies

On วันศุกร์ขึ้น ๓ ค่ำ เดือน ๓ (*wan suk khün 3 kham düan 3*), i.e., Friday, 17 January, Mr. Phon will sponsor a ceremony of *tham bun bān / sū khwan khāo*. Also in the 3rd month will be the ceremony of บุญข้าวจี (*Bunkhāocī*) which is also called บุญสังคทาน (*Bun sang khāthān*). In the 4th month will be the ceremony of *Bun phrā wēt* (บุญพระเวศ).

Attitudes Towards the Introduction of Christianity

Today a young man, สุข เสรีรักษา (Suk Sētraksā) also known as แยก (*khāēk*) began talking about Jesus. I asked him where he had heard about Jesus and he said he had read a book which a friend gave him. As he was talking about "respecting Jesus" and learning about "sin" and

"Good deeds", I gathered that the book was one of those pamphlets which the local C and MA missionaries distribute.

In actual fact we have found that the missionaries in this area have had very little success. One reason why this may be so is due to a lack of curiosity about foreign ways and manners among the Thai-Lao. When I have tried explaining about customs and ceremonies of Westerners, I find very little interest (this does not hold for Western economic patterns). There would seem to be two reasons for this lack of interest (and similarly for lack of interest in news of the "outer world"): (1) the existence of a self-contained social world which needs very little from without it; (2) a contentment with the system as it now exists. In other words, the world in which the Thai-Lao villager finds himself is satisfying and there seems to be little (other than material things) which the villager desires from the outside.

Birth Customs

Today Jane went to visit the 2nd daughter of Mr. Hô who had just had her first baby. She had had considerable trouble in having the baby, and thus had had to be taken to the hospital by taxi at a cost of ₪90.00. Mr. Hô, her husband, and one other male relative accompanied her. She was, she claims, in labor for 3 days, but fortunately she did not have to have a Caesarian. She spent a little over 3 days in the hospital at a cost of ₪300 (Mr. Ng. says ₪100; one woman said ₪500; but Mr. Hô says ₪300 and was concurred in by others.).

Jane observed Nāng Khing (the new mother) "lying by the fire" (ဝဲယူဖို - *yū fai*) and the following are her edited observations:

"She ... said that altogether she would "lay by the fire" for 11 days. About 6 other people (all women except one small boy) came along too. The headman's wife explained to me that the girl was "lying by the fire" in order to dry her insides thoroughly.

"Mr. Hô's daughter was lying on a plank of wood propped up by green coconut logs at each end. The whole was fixed to a couple of bamboo walls attached to the roof to prevent the under logs from rolling about. Mr. Hô's daughter was sitting up with her legs stretched out flat before her. She had her *phāsin* pulled way down below her tummy button, and right up her thighs forming a sort of pair of briefs. Her hair was wet from perspiration and the water was

running down her back. She had been burnt slightly on one hip from being close to the fire. She had strings round her wrists and ankles, and fastened around her neck, over the breasts, and passing around to the back (see diagrams).



Illustration of strings tied on the torso of a new mother, as protection from *phī*

“These had been put around her to protect her against the *phī* by Nāi Phommalin (นายพรหมจีน), a *môkanphī* (หมอ กันผี) from KNKN. [In the ceremony of tying these strings he reads from a book called (*phāēn thōng*).] Nang Khing complained bitterly several times of "crunk" from having to sit on the hard wood plank.

“To her right lay the fire, on which stood a clay pot used for cooking a special medicine which Nang Khing had to drink frequently. This medicine called *kāēn khām* (แก่นขาม) consists of the inner wood of the tamarind tree boiled with plain water. The resulting *tiscene* is scooped out with a china bowl and is drunk boiling hot. The old women explained that this was to help the mother produce plenty of milk. The rest of the mother's food consisted of rice (2 *khāo niao* basketsfull being placed beside her on her left), salt and pepper, but no regular *kapkhāo*. She was also allowed to chew betel, and in addition I saw a paper twist of a brownish-yellow powder which looked and smelled like *khamin* but may have been some kind of medicine (Mr. Ngao said he thought it might be a medicine called *wān* (วาน) which is used to help coagulate the blood.).

"The baby lay to the left and foot of the mother in a cloth sling tied to the bed post. I was also shown a special collapsible mosquito net for the baby though this wasn't in use at the time."

A Fishing Expedition

Went fishing with Mr. Ngao in the pond in the fields of Mother Hōm - Mr. Phon. This pond is called หนองนาตึก (*Nông nātūk*) or *nông nā tuk* in Lao. Here Mr. Ngao worked in conjunction with his brothers-in-law Muan, Bunthom, and Suphom with little That and the little son of Mr. Phon, Thông Dāēng joining in more in play than in earnest. This outing illustrates two interesting social facts:

(1) Children learning behavior by being present during an activity. In other words, though the outing was an occasion for swimming and splashing about in the water for That and Thông Dāēng, they were also learning how to fish and were given responsibilities (particularly That was) such as placing captured fish in the basket. Small boys are always to be seen on the fishing (and other) expeditions of adult males.

(2) Economic cooperation between matrilineally related males. More specifically, joint economic endeavors between males of a parent-in-law and son-in-law household. The fact that son-in-law Mr. Ngao was the leader of this group follows from his being the older male (his father-in-law being dead). In a sense he is often the father surrogate for the Ngao – Hōm households.

The methods for catching fish were 3:

(1) simply burrowing in the mud with one's hands and catching what fish one could

(2) using a *hāē* (L. แห่)

(3) using a *sawing* (สวิง)

The latter was used by one person making sweeping motions with his hands in the water towards another person scooping with the *sawing*. The fish caught consisted mainly of minnow-sized fish which will be used whole to make a หมอก (*mók*). Some larger fish were also caught.

Lack of Food in Village

Mr. Ngao was again bemoaning the fact that the market (Sarakhom) was too far away, and so "people lack food" in BNT. This certainly illustrates that though the market is only 15 km. away, it is not seen as source of food for the daily diet.

Threshing Floors

At the place where Mr. Phon has his threshing floor, two other households also have theirs. Mother Hōm and someone from KNKN. These floors are all separate and distinct. The determining factor seems to be proximity of fields.

Out Migration From Neighboring Village

Mr. Ngao says that about 10 families have recently migrated away from B. Dōn Dū because of the great trouble and damage that floods have caused. They have gone to such changwats as Kamphaeng Phet, Nakhon Phanom, Nakhon Sawan.

Bān Nōng Tūn

January 12, 1964

Economic Innovation

This past rice season Mr. Wichian was able to get a new type of glutinous rice seed called ดองานนวล (dōngānnuan) from the Agriculture Station in Sarakhom. He distributed this seed to selected people in the Tambon, in BNT. Seven people each planted one *rai* each:

Mr. Phon (พร) the Headman

Mr. Chāi (ชาย) Assistant Headman

Mr. Hōm (โฮม) Acting Assistant Headman

Mr. Lāē (เล่ห์) which one I'm not certain (think Cantharuang -KW)

Mr. Phan (พัน) KL

Mr. Phim (พิมพ์) KL

Mr. Sang (สง) KPH

Today as the rice harvest is over Mr. W. came to arrange to get seed from these people in order to be able to distribute it again next year in the Tambon. The results in BNT were :

(1) Higher yield: The headman and Mr. Hōm thought that the yield was about 30 *thang* (300 kg.)/*rai* as compared with 12 *thang*; (120 kg)/*rai* average that Mr. W. says is normal in the Amphoe.

(2) Satisfaction: Mr. Phon and others said the new rice "has a good smell."

(3) Decision to plant again: Those who planted this year want to plant next year on a more extensive scale and are willing to help spread the use of the seed.

This was the first year that the seed had been planted in BNT.

Another innovation which has been made this year is the raising of watermelon. The government distributed free seed to a large number of interested people (but by no means to everyone) in the villages throughout the area. Most of the watermelons raised have been for home consumption and not for sale. However, at least 2 people in BNT, Hōm Thapsuri and Bunsuk Sētraksa, have grown them for sale. Mr. W. said that Bunsuk has received ฿3000 for his work which he has done on government land. One of the results of the government's program of encouraging increased watermelon production has been a decrease in the price of watermelon, naturally!

Linguistic Determinants of Status

In observing teenage boys looking at the pictures which we have taken, I have heard them use the following linguistic determinants of status for identifying people in the pictures:

(1) prefix *māk* - or *bak* (ม៉ัก-/ บัก-) for male children and male members of peer group. (Notes added later.) *māk*- *bak* - actually *bak* - (บัก) (see Reinhorn); I was hearing an allophone which sounded like *m*.

(2) prefix *ī* (อี) for female children and female members of peer group. Other forms, I have already described: *thīt*, *siang*, *lūng*, *māē*.

Cooperative Labour

This morning Mr. Som who lives in KW opp. to the headman had neighbours, friends, and relations help in bringing in the threshed rice from his fields to place in his granary. Mr. Hōm explained that he wanted to get the rice into the granary with all due speed. This activity was called by one person *long khāēk hāpkhāo* (ลงแขกหาบข้าว), though Mr. Hōm said that it wasn't a true *long khāēk*.

For their work, those who carried the rice, usually in their own baskets, received a midday meal of *kāēng kop* ("frog stew") which was made with *phāk chī* and frogs and *kāēng nô māl sāl plā* ("bamboo shoot stew with fish") and, of course, rice. They were also given tobacco and plenty of rice wine.

Economics

Bunsuk was over and said now that he was finished with his watermelon growing, he was going to Bangkok to "find work." I asked him how he had done on watermelon and he answered noncommittally.

Went over to buy a watermelon from Mr. Phon in KL. He has quite a small commercial operation in watermelons, onion and kenaf and his house is full of these things. He and the group of young men who live with him certainly form one of the most active agro-economic groups in the village. It was interesting to hear that they "inject" sugar into their watermelon.

Bān Nōng Tūn

January 13, 1964

Trip to Roi Et

Went to Roi-et today with Mr. Ngao who was going on one of his regular buying trips for stocks for his shop. He always buys from the same store in Roi-et — a Chinese store which seems to specialize in large orders from village shopkeepers. I asked Mr. Ngao how he first found this store and he replied that he just went looking around until he found a store which was doing a large trade. He gets a discount for buying in quantity and then resells his goods in the village for not much more than the retail price in Roi Et (which is sometimes less than the retail price in Sarakham). Nearly all business of this sort, both in towns and in villages, seems to operate on the principle of large rapid turnover of stock with small mark-ups.

One item which Mr. Ngao always buys in quantity is salt. The salt he gets from Roi-et is from Bangkok and probably ultimately from the salt fields of the Chonburi-Na Klua Southeast Coast Area. I asked Mr. Ngao what people did before salt was able to be transported from great distances and he said that people used to make their own salt. They had methods for distilling it from the saline N.E. soil.

The headman,— Mr. Phon — also went to R.E. with us. It seems that his main purpose was to buy a gold necklace and pendant for ฿140 from one of the most reputable shops in the area. He bought these for his daughter ทองอยู่ (Thong Yū), but there was no special occasion why he bought it at this time. Mr. Ngao said that he wanted to buy some jewelry for his wife and younger sister but was short of cash at the moment.

Bān Nōng Tūn

January 14, 1964

Today has been my bad day. The only day that I have ever got drunk on the local rice wine and the village has visits from two sets of important guests. At about 2:00 this afternoon a land rover full of Ministry of Health officials including a Norwegian WHO nurse arrived. Their purpose was to investigate the results of injections given to children for small pox and T.B. (BCG shots) last September. (We missed their coming). There is a real attempt to get all the children in the country injected before they are too old (preferably before 6)—but this usually means while they are school aged.

After this group left, I came back to take a nap. About an hour later I was awakened by someone calling me. This someone happened to be Mr. Chuenchai, the Changwat Primary Education officer, and a few other officials. Fortunately, I was sober by this time. They had just come from making a visit to the "Friendship School". The governor did show an interest in Mr. Ngao's milling, but the education official asked us how we could stand the noise of the rice mill and the smell of the pigs.

Long Khāēk Hāp Khāo

The occasion of my getting slightly high was a *long khāēk hāp khāo* (ลงแขกหาบข้าว) for carrying Mr. Hô's rice from the field and placing it in his granary. We joined those who were

bringing in the rice in a meal of *lāp kai* and liquor. In contrast to the *long khāēk* we observed yesterday at this one the rice was brought in in *khwian*. I asked how much rice there was, and the answer was that they didn't know the amount but the granary would be completely filled (and indeed it was). These occasions are certainly ones of great jollity and merrymaking on the part of the men (only men participate) who join in.

A Salt Salesman

A man selling salt came to the village today. He comes from Wapi Pathum. His salt costs ฿10/*thang*.

Phūk Khāēn

Jane observed an impromptu *Phūk Khāēn* ceremony in the middle of the road today. Nang Khēn, who lives opposite, has a baby who is not well at the moment. She was walking along the road with her child when she encountered a young man (whose name was perhaps *lāē* or *lē*) who is a *mô*. She stopped him to get him to perform the "tying of the string" ceremony. He did this by chanting some ritual words, blowing over the child's head a few times, and then tying the string.

Kin Relations

Mother Hōm apparently had only two siblings—an older sister and a younger brother. The house that the headman lives in was Mr. Hōm's parents' house. Mr. Ngao says that Mother Hōm's father had been *phū yai bān*. I had originally understood that Mr. Phon's own father had been headman, but it was really his father-in-law who had been. This error should be noted.

Observance of Wan Phra

This morning as it is *wan phra* Jane went to the wat with Nuan to feed the priest and novice. The pattern was as usual except that she noticed that some people (women) had brought little bottles of water with them. Their purpose was for "spreading the merit" to the ancestors during the *truat nām* part of the ceremony. Some people pour the water through the cracks in the floor while others pour it into a dish.

Rice Threshing

About 6:00 we went over to the fields of Nāi Dī to help thresh rice. I asked why threshing was done at such an hour and Mr. Ngao replied that it was because it was cooler than in the morning and that threshing was never done during the heat of the day. The method of threshing is as follows: one has a pair of sticks which are joined at the top by a rope with the right-hand stick protruding further beyond the rope than the left one :

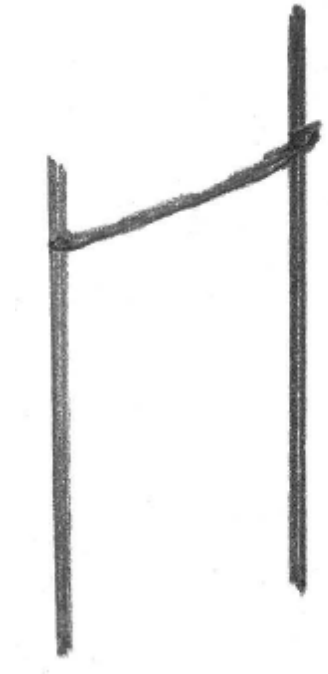


Illustration of threshing sticks, ไม้ตีข้าว (*mai tī khāo*)

Then one takes a sheaf of rice and places the end with the rice on the ground. Then one grips the top of the sheaf by laying the rope of the threshing sticks on top of the sheaf, taking the right hand stick and twisting it so that the top goes behind the sheaf and ends up on top of the second stick (see diagram):

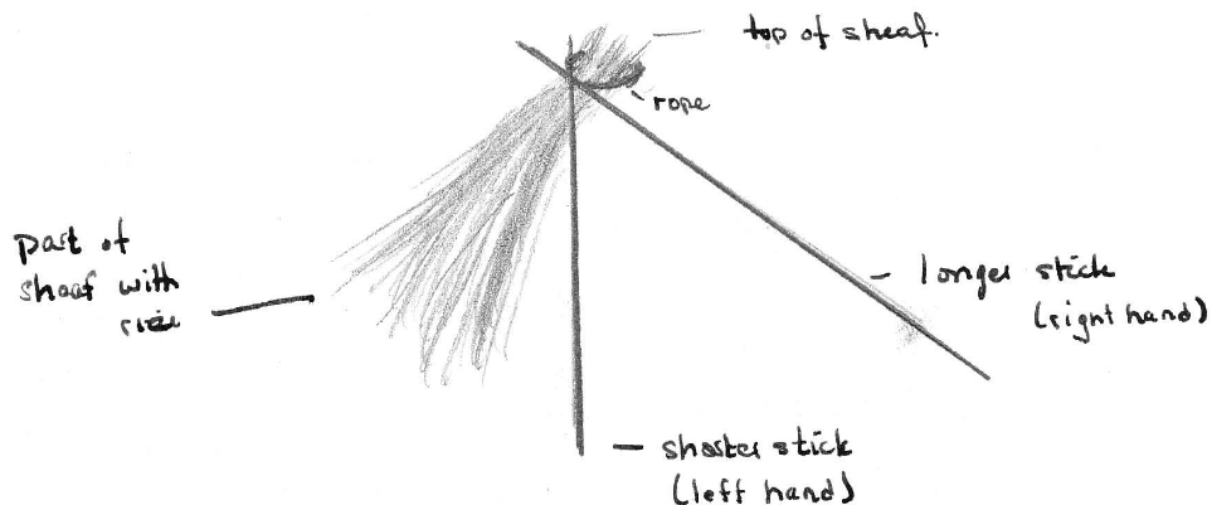


Illustration of how threshing sticks are used to hold a sheaf of rice

One now has a vise which will hold the sheaf of rice. To thresh one stands holding the sheaf in the vise on top of a pile of already threshed rice, on the threshing floor. Then one lifts the vise-and-sheaf above one's head and then brings it down striking it hard against the pile of rice. This process is repeated until all the rice has been loosened from the sheaf.

Frog Gathering

This morning Jane went on a frog gathering expedition with Nuan.

The following are her notes: "Went out hunting frogs (*hā khiat*) with Nuan. (I get the impression that the difference between *khiat* and *kop* is that *khiat* are land frogs, while *kop* live in water/check). We each took a *siam* (เสียม) that came along with a fish basket of this shape to put the frogs in.

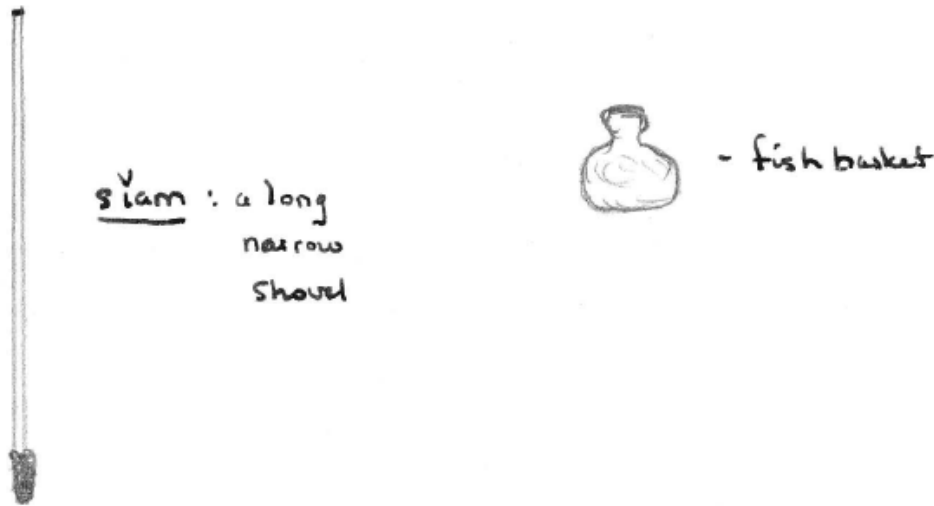


Illustration of a *siam*, a long narrow shovel, and a fish basket used when hunting frogs

"We went out to *nông tũng* [the pond], which was just about dry and started hunting in the fields round there. The frogs live in holes in the hard clay surrounding the old rice stubble, or in the dykes dividing up the fields, or in the still slightly wet and marshy land where the kenaf had been laid out to soak. They often dig holes 2-3 feet deep, so that chipping out the clay to get down to them can be quite hard work. We caught 10 frogs, 1 mouse, and several crabs. I asked Nuan if she wasn't afraid of the mouse biting, but she said she had pulled its teeth out to prevent this. Similarly she broke the legs of the frogs to prevent them jumping away. All these beasts were caught by hand, Nuan placing her hand over them as they tried to run."

Bản Nông Tũn

January 15, 1964

Water Conditions in Village

Mr. Ngao this morning was saying that he would like to request that the Nai Amphoe give BNT enough of the circular cement frames used in building a well to build a well about 10 m. in depth in *Khum wat*. He says that as it is now, people from *Khum wat* have to walk great distances to reach a well in the dry season. This is not true of the other *khums* (each *khum* has its own well(s)) because they are on lower ground than is *khum wat*. He says that he figures it would take about 15 of the cement frames at B30/frame to build a proper well.

Fear of the Police

This afternoon Mr. Ngao had a visitor — a friend whom he knew in Bangkok and who is making a visit to his native N.E. As a result Mr. Ngao broke out the local rice wine. While they were drinking, a policeman in civies but carrying a rifle came along. Fortunately, Mr. Ngao concealed the wine, but was fearful lest he should be discovered. He said that he thought it wouldn't matter because he knew the policeman -- the younger brother of the wife of *khṛū sanit*, but he wasn't about to take any chances. The policeman was investigating villages to search out the making of local liquor, gambling, participating in the local lottery, or killing animals without paying the tax.

Ceremony of *Liang Phī Na*

In the 10th month, each farmer prepares an offering to the field spirits (ผีนา, *phī nā*) in order to propitiate them for their help in protecting the rice, making the rice grow tall, and bringing in a full harvest. The offering must be as Mr. Ngao had described before for a *liang phī* ceremony — i.e., *laohai kai tō* (เหล้าไหไก่โต) which is literally translatable as one 'pot' (*hai* = pot or container) of liquor and one chicken. Those two ingredients are essential to the offering. However, charcoal ash mixed with bran is a legitimate substitute for the liquor, though "liquor is better". In previous ceremonies which I have seen, the ash-bran mixture is placed in bamboo containers. In actual fact the offering consists of more than these two things, including other things to eat like rice, sweets, fish, etc., and tobacco and betel.

Also, included in the offering will be a chain made from bamboo. Mr. Ngao didn't know the reason for this, but said that it is always included.

The offering is taken to the "house of the *phī*" in the fields which I have briefly described before. This house is called ตาแฮก (*tā hāēk* - lit. "first eyes"). The offering is presented in a worshipful position and the propitiant asks that the *phī* partake fully of the offering and grant that the rice will grow tall, the heads will be full, and the fields will be protected from damage and danger.

Type of Spirits Recognized in BNT

Mr. Ngao gave me the following list of types of spirits/ghosts recognized by villagers:

(1) ผี (*phī*)

(a) *phī nā* (ผีนา) - field spirits.

(b) *phī pong* (ผีโปง) - also a field spirit which, however, lives in a big tree

(c) *phī sūa* (ผีสู่อ) - ancestral spirits; ghosts of dead relatives

(d) *phī lôk* (ผีหลอก) - general word for spirits/ghosts

(e) *phī kông kôi* (ผีกองก่อย) - mountain spirits

(f) (*phī*) *pū tā* ([ผี]ปู่ตา) - patron spirit (single spirit — not plural as name might indicate) of village; arrives in village when village first settled.

(g) *phīpôp* (ผีโปบ) - The Thai dictionary (Modern pp. 767-8) defines this spirit as "a spirit believed to dwell in the body and eat the bowels." Mr. Ngao says that this spirit possesses the individual and eats blood and follows other ghoulish habits. This type of spirit is especially feared in this area. Villagers think that Nāng Beng died of possession and destruction by a *phīpôp* because she died so suddenly. Now a person in B. Nok Kradok is also possessed and it is thought that this is the same one who possessed Nāng Beng. This *phī* may be multiple spirits which appear in multiples of 3: i.e. 3, 6, 9, 12 (12 being the highest). When a *mô* is employed to kill the *phīpôp*, it is necessary to pay him ฿100 for each of the multiple *phī* that he kills. Thus if there are 12 *phī*, it is necessary to pay the *mô* ฿1,200.

(h) *phī prēt* (ผีเปรต) - the ghost of a person who has committed much *bāp* and who lives in the precincts of the wat. Apparently, is not a malevolent spirit (other than frightening people by its gigantic and grotesque features). Its only desire is to gain merit so that it can be reborn again.

(i) *phī phāi* (ผีพาย) - spirit of woman who dies in pregnancy. Becomes a large bird and "eats" pregnant women.

(j) *phī fā* (ผีฟ้า) - Mr. Ngao is not certain what this spirit is though he has often heard the word. Thinks may be same as *thēwadā*. Lit. translated "sky spirits".

(2) Other spiritual beings

(a) *nāng khō sok* (นางโศก) - The rice goddess. Equivalent to Thai *Māē khō sok* (แม่โศก) is a *Thēwadā*. Not the same as *Nāng thōrānī* (นางธรณี) who is the Goddess of the Earth. During the ceremony of *sū khuan_khāo* (สู่วัญข้าว), this is the spirit who is propitiated.

(b) *Nāng thōrānī* (นางธรณี) - Goddess of the Earth.

A Legend

Mr. Ngao says that the Isan people believe that the *Khōm* people who inhabited the land before the Lao came were a race of giants 8 *sok* high (one *sok* is equivalent to the length between the end of one's fingers to one's elbow; thus 8 *sok* would be about 10-12' in height). One reason why they were so conceived was because they were thought able to carry the large laterite stones as formed at the *kū* on their shoulders.

Bān Nōng Tūn

January 16, 1964

A Birth

Jane's observations: "This afternoon went over to the house of Nin's mother-in-law (Nang Bua) where his wife, Nang Sua, had just had a baby. Mr. Ngao says that women always like to return to their mother's house to have babies. The child was lying in a heap on the floor yelling, still tied to the afterbirth, and covered in a yellow-green film. The mother was wet and shivering, having just been bathed by having had a bucket of water tipped over her. A number of women and children were sitting around watching. Nin's mother-in-law was acting as midwife. Also ordering people to things was Mr. Suan's wife [also a relative and next door neighbor, to Nin]. The child was left on the floor for some 15-20 minutes while the fire was built by Nin. He

brought up 4 boards and formed these into a square, laid a piece of old matting down in the square and then covered this with a couple of buckets full of earth. He then went and got 3 clay pot stands, set these well into the earth, placed a clay pot over them and then filled the pot with water to boil.

“While the fire was being built, Nin's mother-in-law tied the cord joining the baby (a boy) to the afterbirth in 4 places and then cut the cord between two of these ties. (Checked whether it was a bamboo knife, but it wasn't. It was a regular metal one.). The afterbirth was left lying on the floor.

“The baby was then picked up by the mother, who washed away some of the yellow-green substance coating it as the mother-in-law and Mr. Suan's wife tipped water from a *khan* over it. The mother then took an old cloth and wiped away some more. The baby was then taken by the mother-in-law and wrapped in an old *phāsin* and laid on a *kradông* (กระด้ง) or wicker tray used for winnowing rice. (Nuan told me that the baby must always be put on a *kradông* for the first couple of days of its life). The child was then put out in the front room while the mother was put by the fire.

“The afterbirth was wrapped in a piece of banana leaf, tied with string and later buried by Nin.

"New vocabulary: *ham* = penis, *hāē* = "afterbirth"

Burning the Afterbirth

After Nin's baby was born today, he took the afterbirth (*hāē*, แห) and went to bury it in a white ant hill (*puak*, ปลวก) in the woods near his house. Mr. Ngao says that some people bury them at the foot of the stairs while others place them in an ant hill. Why the latter, he didn't know. Nin pointed out that this ant hill had been used before for the same purpose. He dug a hole with a long small shovel (*siam*) and then he took a premade cigarette and a chew of betel and placed them near the hole. Then he requested permission (of the local spirits) to bury the afterbirth in this place. Then he buried the afterbirth—without actually touching it with his hands—covered the place with sticks and logs "to prevent dogs from digging it up" and placed the tobacco and betel on the top of the hill.

Tham Bun Bān

Tomorrow, Mr. Phon is sponsoring a *thambun bān*. Today he did three things in conjunction with the ceremony:

- (1) Special food: the household prepared *khāo phūn* (ข้าวพูน) and a special chicken *kāēng* to go with it. A meal of this was served to selected guests for the noon meal.
- (2) *suat mon yen*: the priest came to the house at about 6:00-6:30 and chanted the *suatmonyen*. This seems always to precede (the evening before) any *thambun*.
- (3) Sponsored a *môlam* troupe in this case it was a troupe made up of local people primarily from KW and some from KY. The leading woman was Mr. Phon's daughter *Thông yū* and the leading man - Nuan. Many of the actors had costumes and they own their own backdrops. The troupe is under the supervision of Mr. Saw, and the performance was held on the stage in front of Mr. Phon's home.

Bān Nông Tūn

January 17, 1964

Tham Bun Bān

This morning a *tham bun bān* ceremony was held at the house of Mr. Phon. The physical properties of this ceremony include the following:

- (1) *fāi phom macārī* (ฟ้ายพรมมะจารี): This is a thread which passed from the house of Mr. Phon's son-in-law, Nāi Khai, to Mr. Phon's granary, to the rafters of Mr. Phon and down to the tray known as *khāi mongkhon*. It is over this string that the merit made in the ceremony passes to the elements of the "household" for which the ceremony is being held. Note the integration of a matrilineal extended family. Mr. Saw says that พระพรหม (*phra phrom*) is the supernatural being who intrudes in the ceremony and transfers the merit from place to place. I was somewhat uncertain as to my understanding of this explanation, but I would guess that the term used should be in Thai *fāi phrom macārī* (ฟ้ายพรมมะจารี) where ฟ้าย (*fāi*) is 'string', พรหม (*phrom*) refers to the "God Brahmā, and จารี (*cārī*) means "doer". Thus, the meaning would be something like "the string which

Brahma uses." The Hindu/Brahmic implications are obvious. Mr. Saw also used the word พรหมมาจะโรคา (*phrom mā ca'rōkhā*), the meaning of which escapes me. The thread is also known as *fāi mong khon* (ฝ้ายมงคล)

- (2) *khāi mongkhon*: (ค้ายมงคล): The above described string ends in a tray which is placed in front of the priest. This tray and its contents are known as *khāi mongkhon*. In this case the tray included 5 candles, raw cotton, a baht note, 5 flowers, a bowl of water in which were placed the crossed sticks (floating on top of the water), 2 pre-made cigarettes, cotton thread.

At the beginning of the ceremony, there was the following arrangement of major participants and artifacts:

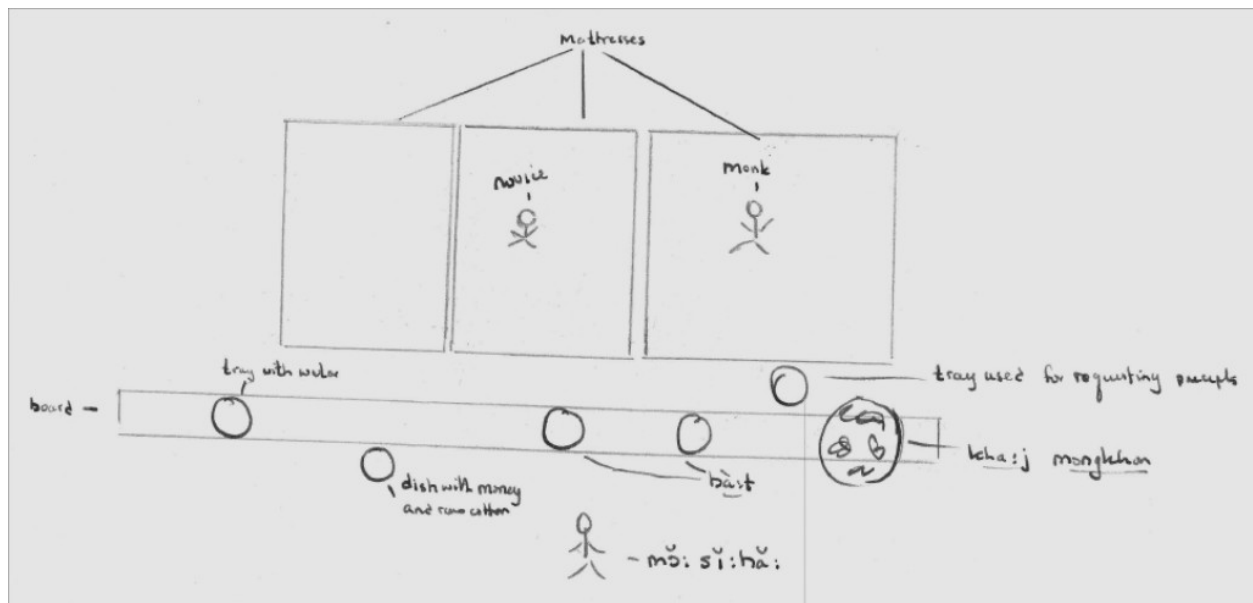


Illustration of the arrangement of participants and objects in a *tham bun bān* ceremony

The ceremony was begun by *mōsīhā* as the leader of the laymen, leading a chant by the laity. He then took a small tray on which were placed two lighted candles and leaves and presented this to the priest (in the diagram, the tray in front of the priest). This was the tray which accompanies the "request for the priests" (ขอศีล – *khô sin*). Then began the *namō*... repeated in response form with the priest leading.

When the "precepts" were finished, the priest blew out the candles and then *môsihā* chanted something. Then the priest and novice chanted, which is called สวดพระหุง (*suat phra hung*). While this chanting was going on, the *bāt* were filled with rice and a woman (the wife of Mr. Phomma, KNKN, whom Jane says often arranges the monk's food on trays on *wan phra*) prepared two trays of food.

The food was presented to the priests when they had finished chanting the *suat phra hung*. This ritual presentation of food is called (*thawāi sangkhathān*) by Mr. Saw. During this presentation, laymen (not women) kneel in front of the priest and raise the *bāt* and the trays of food.

After the priests had finished eating, a meal was given to all the guests present.

When the people had finished eating the priest and novice chanted the *truat nām* (ตรวจน้ำ) which Mr. Saw also calls การสวดปริตมงคล (*kānsuat parit mongkhon*). This finished, and the water poured into a special container which had been brought in during the meal and set in front of the priest. This container, which was triangular (see diagram) and made from banana tree "bark" was a special offering to the Earth Goddess - *phra nāng thoranī* (พระนางธรณี).



Illustration of a container for water, used as an offering to the Earth Goddess *phra nāng thoranī*

This offering is called in Lao โทงหน้าว้าว (*thōng nā wua*) and included the following items: glutinous rice (cooked), yellow rice, black rice, *khāo phūn*, 1 cigarette, and 1 chew of betel.

When the *truat nām* was finished, a small bowl on which cotton was placed (the money having been removed) was taken by Mr. Sao who attached two lighted candles to it. This was the *khāi thēt* which *mōsīhā* took and presented to the priest while chanting a formal request for a "sermon." The "sermon" in Thai and Pali was read/chanted by the priest.

Then when this was finished a water basket filled with water and in which was placed a leafed branch was placed in front of the priest. He took two long lighted tapers which he held over the basket and while chanting let the molten wax fall into the water. This was the preparation of the "sprinkling water". This is called สุกไสรดน้ำ (*sut chai rotnām*). When the chanting was nearly finished, he began sprinkling the water on the inhabitants of the room. When he had completed chanting he took the basket and sprinkled water in other parts of the house.

N.B.: I may have confused the order of *rotnām* and *truat nām* in my accounting. Check on this.

Other observations at ceremony. Priest provided with premade cigarettes. Ceremony held in inner room of the house. *Khāo phūn*, the chicken dish, and a fish dish served at the meal. Fish purchased previous day at Mahasarakham market.

Sū Khwan Khāo

On the 3rd day of the waning of the moon in the 3rd month (i.e. today) in every granary in the village the ceremony of *sūkhwan khāo* (สูขวันข้าว) is held. Prior to this all the rice has been harvested (or rather the major rice harvest is complete), the rice has been threshed and transported to the granary. Thus, this ceremony marks the official end of the rice cycle. I observed two incidents of this ceremony—one in the granary of Mr. Phon and one in the new granary of Mother Hōm.

In Mr. Phon's granary, the following arrangement was observed on top of the rice:

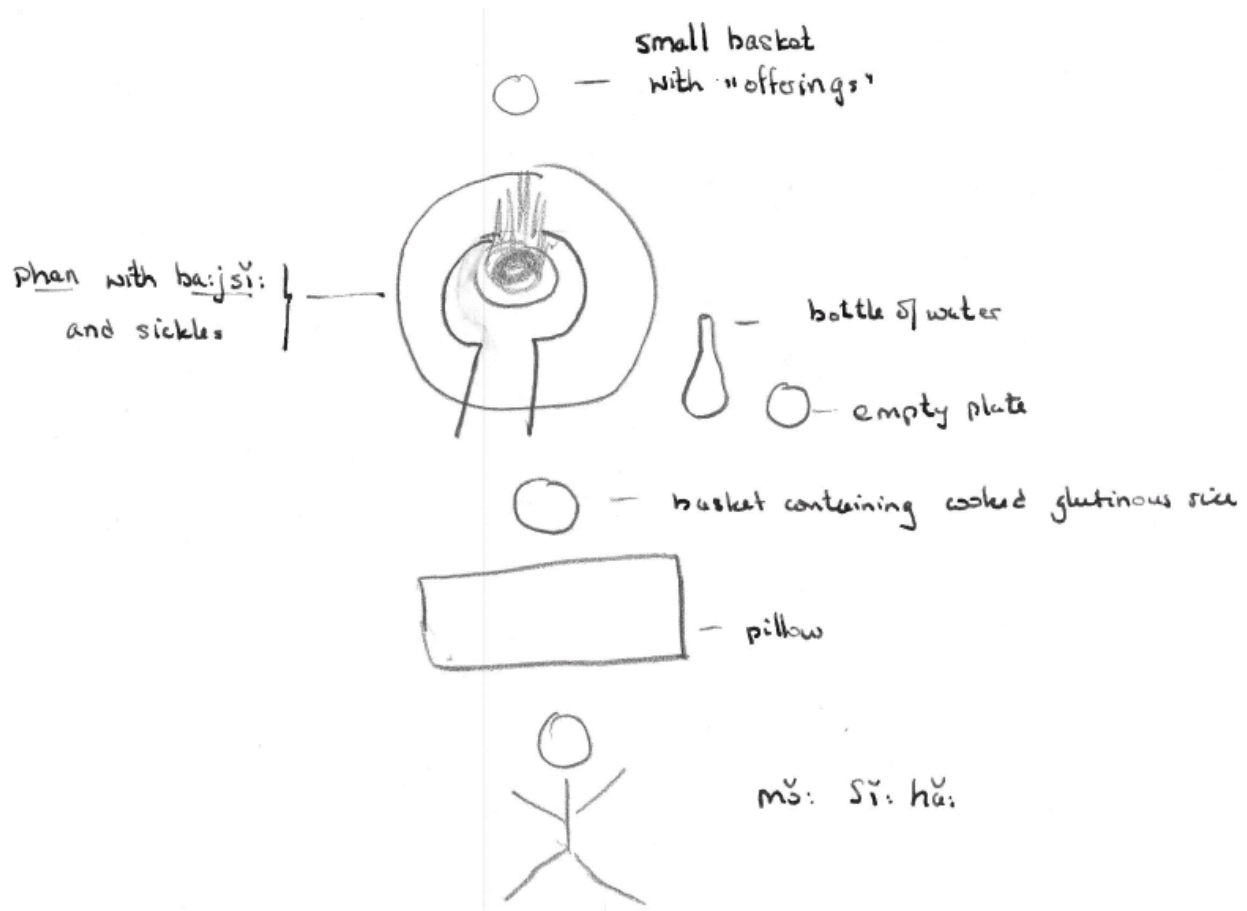


Illustration of arrangement of the *mōsīhā* and objects in a *sū khwan khāo* ceremony

The first object, the small basket, had placed in it *khāo tōm dō* (glutinous rice in banana leaf), *khāotōm*, *phüak* (เผือก -taro), 2 chews of betel, 2 premade cigarettes, and glutinous rice (cooked).

On the large *phan* (พั้น) which was an old-fashioned bronze tray with pedestal was placed two sickles each with a ball of glutinous rice at the end and a water scoop in which was placed a *bāi si*, *khāotōm*, 5 candles (called *khan 5*), *phüakman*, a hard-boiled chicken's egg, 1 baht, cotton, flowers, bottle of *nāmhōm* string, *fāi mongkhon*.

The ceremony is held as an offering to the rice goddess นางโคสก (*Nāng khōsok*). The participants include *mōsīhā* as the major officiant, Mr. Saw, and Mr. Phon on the outside of the granary (observing only).

The ceremony began by the lighting of two candles and attaching them to the *phan*. The *môsihā* began by chanting the *namō* and then continuing in a ritual request to the rice goddess to accept the offering and to look after the fortunes of rice for this family. During the chanting, Mr. Saw would occasionally break out by repeating phrases of the chants and in a manner seconding the requests of *môsihā*. When the chanting was over, the candles were blown out, the egg was taken and broken. If the egg was good, then fortune would be good. Then Mr. Sīhā took the baht note, the string, and some of the *khāo tōm* as recompense. Finally, a basket was filled with rice (paddy). This would be taken to the wat and given there.

One more note : 2 pieces of glutinous rice placed on the cross beam above *phan*.

The ceremony in Mother Hōm's granary was nearly the same also with Mr. Sīhā officiating. Started ceremony with *namō*. Then went in to chant about the rice and propitiating the rice mother. In this case there was a sheaf of rice (already threshed) next to the other objects, and 4 sickles on the *phan*. No small basket of offerings. Again Mr. Sao acted in role of seconder to important points. Also, in this case there was a banana leaf container placed in lip of bottle of *nām hōm*. Phô Sīhā sprinkled *nām hōm* with flowers taken from this container. Also did this in other case at end of ceremony by pouring *nām hōm* in the empty dish and using flowers to sprinkle *nām hōm* around the granary. Then the egg business—this time it was a very good egg. In banana leaf container in the mouth of bottle of *nām hōm* were 2 flowers, 2 candles, 1 cigarette, 1 chew of betel.

A Cooperative Fish Hunt

After the *sūkhwan khāo* ceremonies, we went out to the fields of Mr. Phon and Mother Hōm. In the fields of both there are small ponds which are the exclusive property of the Phon and Hōm families respectively. Today as these ponds are nearly dried up, it was decided to drain them in order to get all the fish in them. Thus, relatives of the two families were called in to help. Working on Mother Hōm's pond were Nuan, Duan, and the boys, Mr. Ngao and 3 other men. There was another group working in Mr. Phon's pond.

The first thing that needed to be done was to drain the ponds of remaining water. This was done in the following manner. To a kerosene tin which was completely open at one end

ropes were attached so that there were two ropes attached top and bottom to two sides of the tin (see diagram):

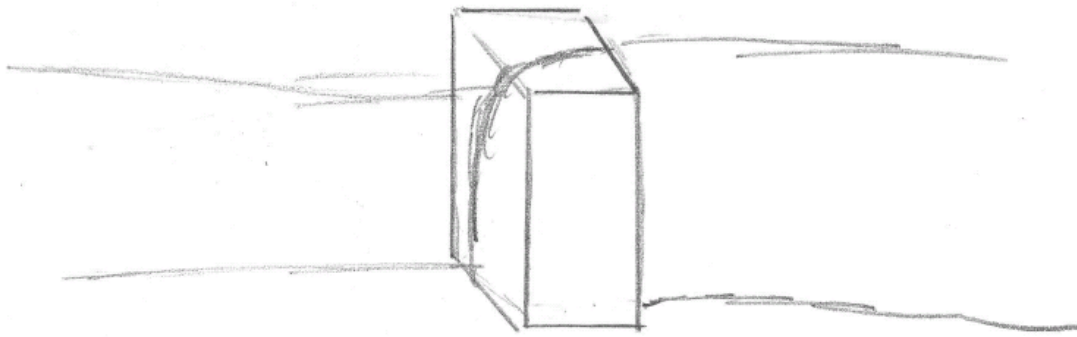


Illustration of a kerosene tin used to drain water from a pond

Two men standing on the edge of the pond would swing this time into the water, fill it, and lift it out, emptying it on the bank.

When the pond was nearly empty, dikes were built so that small pockets of water could be caught and emptied through *sawing*. Also, when the pond was finally emptied, the people would dig in the very soft mud to catch fish that burrowed into it.

After both ponds had been nearly cleaned out of their fish, a meal was held in the field house of Mr. Phon. This was a very large group for whom was provided liquor (rice wine) *samtan*, eaten with raw minnows, and a fish *kāēng*. The atmosphere was extremely festive.

Bān Nōng Tūn

18 January 1964

To Mahasarakham. (Notes added later.)

Bān Nōng Tūn

January 19, 1964

A Community Development Outing in Ban Khwao

Today, in return for the visit which people from Ban Khwao made a few months ago to Ban Pō Phan in Roi-et, villagers from that Tambon came to Ban Khwao for an explanation and view of the development projects in Tambon Khwao. In actual fact, the event boiled down basically to a *sanuk* event for all concerned as a huge feast and entertainment was held in B. Khwao School. For an explanation of events and a history of C.D. in B. Khwao, see sheet which Mr. Wichian prepared.

A Legal Incident

Mr. Ngao was trying to explain to me today about a legal incident which occurred in BNT. It seems that Mr. Chāi, the assistant headman, "stole", killed, and ate a cow. I am not quite certain as to whom the cow belonged, but at any rate, Mr. Lāē made a complaint. The incident was referred to the *Kamnam* who today made his mediation. He mediated the dispute and an indemnity of ฿200 was decided upon. Mr. Ngao says that if relatives had not been involved the indemnity would have been much higher.

The Father of Mother Hōm

Mr. Saw confirmed the story that the house of Mr. Phon had been his father-in-law's house and that his father-in-law had been the head man. He also said that the father-in-law had been a priest for a long time and had been a *nakprāt* (นักปราชญ์). By this he means a *nakprāt* (นักปราชญ์)-- 'a scholar'. Mr. Saw said that he thought that the reason why Mr. Phon has more land than Mother Hōm is that Mr. Phon has purchased more land.

Bān Nōng Tūn

20 January 1964

In Mahasarakham. (Notes added later.)

Bān Nōng Tūn

January 21, 1964

Catching Fish in the Communal Pond

Previously, I described the fish hunting project in the ponds of Mother Hōm and Mr. Phon. This pond draining type of fishing is called *sāpā* (สาปปลา). I also mentioned that the project was limited to kinsmen. The case of who worked on Mother Hōm's pond presents an interesting use of bilateral kin ties for bringing together on a communal project a group of kinsmen. There were the two younger brothers of Mother Hōm's husband —Nāi Lāēw (นายเหล่ว) and Nāi Can (นายจันท์), Ngao, Nuan, Bunthom, Duan, Phom (and That). Mr. Ngao was the head of the group

as the leading male in the central family—i.e., Mother Hōm's. The following kin diagram shows the working party (those participating shown in red):

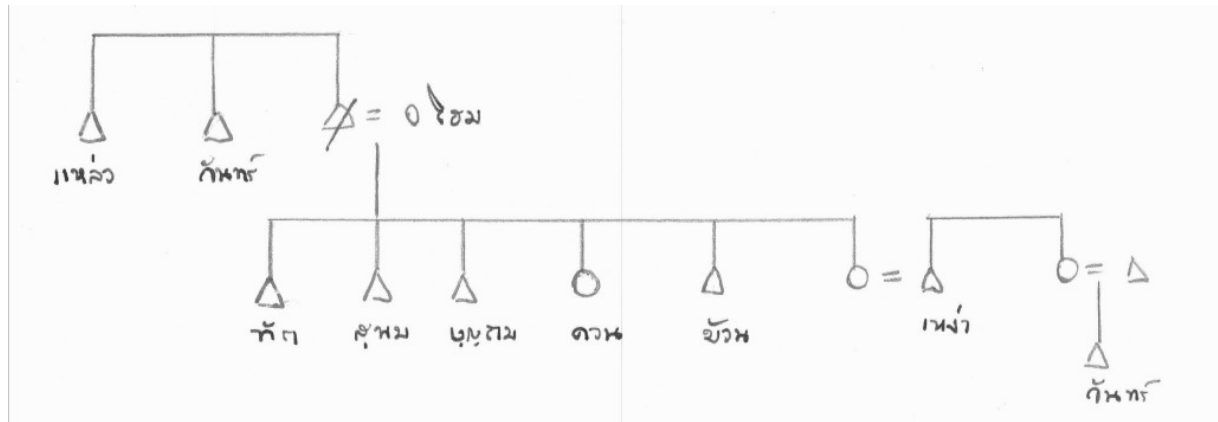


Illustration of kin diagram of participants in a communal pond-draining/fishing activity

Thambunbān

Observed *khāophūn* being made at the house of Mr. Tāp. Mr. Ngao says that he will have a *thambunbān* tomorrow. Mr. Ngao says that at this time of the year when the rice cycle is complete and the rice has been placed in the granary, people like to have *thambunbān*. In addition to Mr. Tāp, Mr. Hok (หอก)-- Mr. Ngao's brother-in-law — and Mr. Lāē (แล) in KY are in preparatory stages for a *thambunbān*.

Legal Incident

In the case of Mr. Chāi killing the cow, it seems that the cow belonged to Nāng Suai, the daughter of Nāng Beng and the wife of Nāi Lāē (Lē ?) in KY. Mr. Chāi's explanation was that he had been walking in the fields and he had seen the cow which he thought was already dead. He was very hungry and so he decided to eat it.

Scarecrow

That came by with a scarecrow made of straw — called *hun* (หุ่น) in Lao. Exactly same pattern as in west. Made in shape of man; placed in garden (Mr. Ngao mentioned watermelons); used to frighten away crows; clothes and hat placed on it; associated with instrument which makes sound in the wind.

Material Culture Associated With Rice

Paid a visit to the threshing floor of the family of Nāng Beng (Nāi Samōn is now head of family). In the middle of the threshing floor – *lān* (ลาน)-- there was a huge pile of rice which Mr. Ngao said was the biggest harvest in the village. On one side was the pile of straw (Lao - *fiang* เฟียง; Thai *fāng* ฟาง) which will eventually be put in a straw stack. On another side was a small pile of rice sheaves as yet unthreshed. On the opposite side was a much larger stack of sheaves which will be used as seed. The sheaves are known in Lao as *khāo pūk* (ข้าวปลุก). The rice which is threshed is stacked into the pile by means of using a long stick to which is attached a curved board.

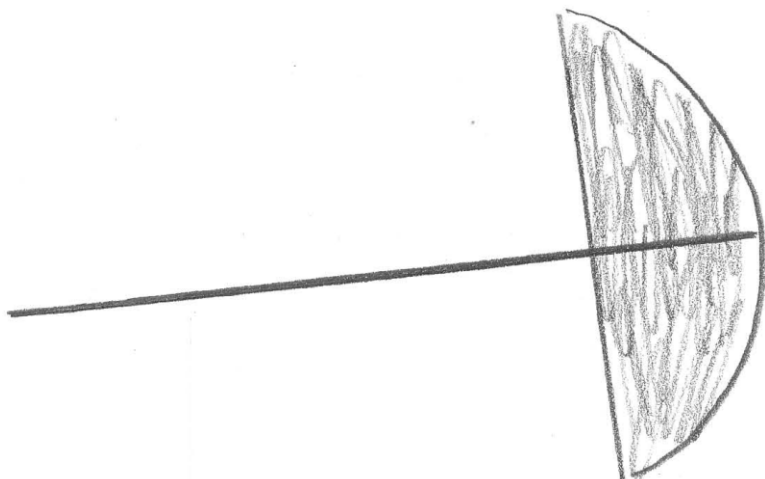


Illustration of the tool used to stack threshed rice into piles: a *maikathā* (ไม้กะทา)

This in Lao is called *maikathā* (ไม้กะทา). A sort of weed broom, called in Lao *mai khān lāo* (ไม้กวาดหลาว), is used to sweep the pile of rice free of extraneous matter.

During the time that the rice is on the threshing floor, someone sleeps there. He sometimes sleeps in a small hut, but occasionally will sleep in a burrow made in the straw. This burrow is called in Lao *sum* (ซุ่ม).

On the way back from the fields we saw some men making a platform on which the straw will be placed. The platform is called *hān fiang* (ฮานเฟียง). Sometimes, the straw is also placed in a tree. Both practices are to get the straw up out of the reach of the buffalo and cattle.

Also, noticed at the threshing floor a hoe which is called *makcok* (มัจจก) in Lao.

Mr. Ngao explained to us that there are two types of oxcarts depending on whether the frame is attached to the outside or inside of the axle. If it is attached to the outside, it is called a *kian* (เกียน) in Lao and a *khwan* (เกวียน) in Thai. If it is attached to the inside it is called a *lô* (ล้อ) which means lit. 'wheel'.

A Social Realignment in Khum Pā Hāt

Near the house of Mr. Can Thapsuri, a new small house has been erected. This is for the father of Mr. Lāē Somphithak, who also lives in KPH. Apparently, the old man who is very deaf, moves from one son to another and had been living with another son in KL prior to moving here. This however is a separate household.

The Illiteracy of Mr. Can Thapsuri

Mr. Can Thapsuri who is still a young man and who lives in KPH explains the fact that he is illiterate by the fact that his father died when he was very young, and thus he never had the opportunity to attend school.

Bān Nōng Tūn

January 23, 1964

Thambunbān

Mr. Ngao says that he is planning to buy white rice in the market today in order that the making of *khāophūn* for a *thambun* can be begun. I asked what *thambun*? He replied a *thambun* either for *Khum Yai* or for the whole village. He said that Mr. Phon and Mr. Sīhā will be making this decision.

Wat Leaders

In referring to Mr. Sīhā as leader of the wat, Mr. Ngao called him the *thāyokwat* (ทายกวัด). If there was a female leader (there is none in BNT), she would be called *thāyikāwat* (ทายิกาวัด).

Genealogical Illustration of Kin Structure in BNT

The following kin diagram shows three generations of descendants of Mr. Sōn Thiprüangtai.

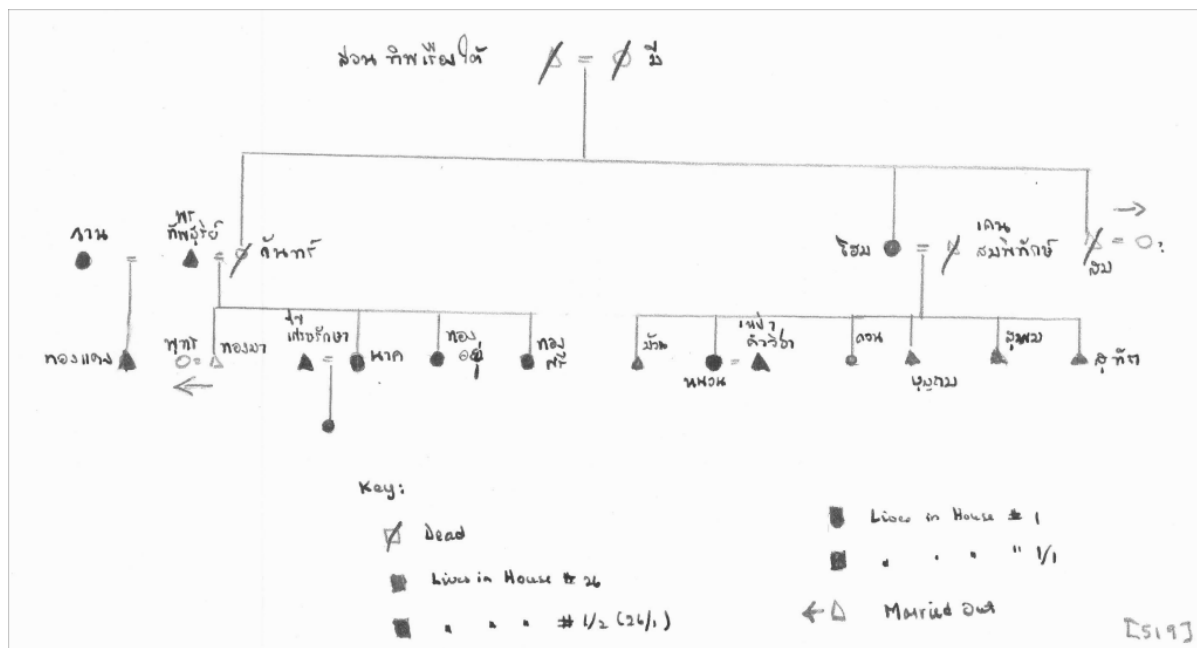


Illustration of genealogical kin structure of Mr. Sōn Thiprüangtai's decedents

Certain social structural features can be seen by referring to the people included in the diagram.

1. Uxorilocal Residence Rule

Upon marriage to N:ang Canthī, Nāi Phon came to live with his parents-in-law. Similarly for Nāi Khēn, the husband of Nāng Hōm. Though later Khēn built a separate house (number 26) near the house of his parents-in-law's house (number 1). Phon continued to reside in his parents-in-law's house, and eventually inherited the house (or rather his wife inherited it). In the next

generation, Nãi Khai orig., on marriage to Nãng Nāk, the daughter of Nãi Phon and Nãng Canthī, came to live with his parents-in-law (Hse. number 1), but later built his own house (number 1/1). Nãi Som, the son of Nãi Sōn, married out and went to live in the village of Băn Dôn Dũ. Similarly, Nãi Thōng Mā, the son of Nãi Phon moved out, on marriage, and went to live with his wife's parents.

There are two exceptions to this rule: the first is the case of the 2nd wife of Nãi Phon, Nãng Wãn, who moved in with her husband. The reason for this was because when the marriage occurred, later in middle age, Mr. Phon had an established position (headman) and land (inherited from his first wife) in BNT. The second exception is Ngao who came to live near his mother-in-law's house before he had any intention of marrying.

However, once he did marry Nuan, the pattern became established, though the relationship of Nuan-Ngao went through stages of servant, mistress and finally wife (without formal ceremony other than presenting *sommā* to Nuan's mother). In fact something might be made of the pressure of traditional patterns on Mr. Ngao for him to make permanent a relationship which he himself admitted to us when we first arrived in the village as being purely temporary.

2. Property Inheritance

Upon the death of the parents Sōn and Mī, their two daughter inherited their property. The inheritance was uneven with Nãng Canthī getting the house and more land than Nãng Hōm. The reason for this is unclear but seems to have something to do with a preference for son-in-law Phon. When the property passed to the two daughters, it became joint property with their respective husbands. The son and Brother Som received nothing.

Mr. Ngao gives one reason for matrilineal inheritance as due to the fact 'that it is easier for men to find new land or money'. It should be noted, however, that this principle is supplemented by the facts that men make decisions about selling (and buying) land, about building new houses, and about leaving and starting up in a new area.

Upon the death of his wife Canthī, after 20-25 years of marriage, Mr. Phon 'inherited' all joint property. Since his new wife came to live with Mr. Phon, he did not forsake this inheritance as he would have had he 'followed his wife'. Mr. Ngao says that Phon is to be pitied because he has three daughters who will divide up his property and land.

3. Possible Inheritance of Position

Another interesting fact which may or may not be significant is that on the death of Mr. Sōn, who was headman, Mr. Phon, his son-in-law, was 'selected/elected' to be the new headman. From my inquiries, I have found no feeling that a principle of 'matrilineally inherited' position was applied. Mr. Ngao has said repeatedly that there are a number of qualified people who could succeed Mr. Phon as headman (none of whom are his son-in-law). When I had mistakenly thought that Mr. Phon had succeeded his own father as headman, I had opined that one of the reasons for this being the case was because Mr. Phon had exercised the duties and powers of headman in the old age of his father. This same reason would make far more sense in the case of son-in-law succeeding father-in-law when the son-in-law is living in the same house as his father-in-law. In any event, if there was matrilineal inheritance of position on the part of headmanship, it does not seem to be fixed principle at the present time.

4. Economic Units

The matrilineal extended family, even when more than one household is involved, seems to be an economic unit. Thus, households Nos. 1 and 1/1 cooperate on rice farming and fishing (see above example). Similarly, for households Nos. 26 and 26/1 (1/2), though since Mr. Ngao is not a rice farmer, he does not participate in that economic endeavor, there is cooperation also. However, the households also retain a separate economic identity in that a son-in-law household may and often does have separate rice land (Household number 1/1 has 2 *rai* of rice land) which it takes care of itself. Whether the rice from this rice land goes into a communal or separate granary, I am not yet certain, but this will become apparent in the current economic survey which I am making.

5. Ritual Integration of Matrilineally Extended Households

In the *thambun bān* ceremony which Mr. Phon CH.H. number 1) sponsored, and which was described above, the parent H.H. (number 1) and the son-in-law H.H. (1/1) were symbolically brought together by the "string".

6. Kin Behavior

Mr. Ngao has a strong feeling of responsibility towards his mother-in-law and has already helped build her a new granary and is planning to contribute in both money and work to help her repair her house. Part of the feeling of responsibility may stem from his greater wealth and from the fact that there is no head of household for Mo. Hōm's household.

Mr. Phon exercises a certain masculine, elder, influence over the family of Mo. Hōm because of the fact that the male head of family — Khēn — is dead. He feels perfectly free, and has done so, to criticize what he considers atypical treatment as a wife which Nuan has received from Mr. Ngao.

Bān Nông Tūn

January 24, 1964

Morning Activities

This morning, I went to the fields near KY well to watch the priest flying a kite which he made for my family. As it was about 7:30, I was able to observe some morning behavioral patterns. Many people were at the well, mainly adolescent girls and young teenage boys 12-14. Some women and children were out catching fish with a *sawing* in the *nông*, known as *nông tūm*, or were digging for small frogs with a *siam* in the mud flats around the drying pond. I passed several groups of men who had already begun making bamboo walling.

A Case of Male Inheritance

This morning we saw a group of men going out to the fields. What transpired was that they were going out to divide more land for the inheritance of Mr. Lāē Somphithak (H.H. number 20). This story went something like this: Mr. Lāē married out and went to live with his wife's family. When his own parents died, his sister inherited their land and property, and as was traditional, he received nothing. However, his own wife died, and he decided that he didn't wish to continue living in her house and managing her property, so he returned to BNT. He then laid claim to part of his sister's land as his own inheritance. And this is what he got today. He threw a small feast after the division for the large group of men present.

Some points of analysis: It is interesting to note that such a situation can occur — i.e., that a man can lay claim to a part of his parents legacy and more interesting that his claims can be sanctioned by others in the community. Mr. Ngao however said that it was not truly proper

behavior of Mr. Lāē to do this and obviously himself disapproved of such a trespass of what he considers the correct patterns.

Wat Committee

The following people are members of the wat committee (*kammakānwat* or *kammakān sātsanā* [กรรมการวัด / กรรมการศาสนา]):

Mr. Hōm Thapsuri (นายโฮม ทัพสุริย์) Ky Assistant Headman

Mr. Chāi Somphithak (นายชาย สมพิทักษ์) Ky Assistant Headman

Mr. Lā Thapsuri (นายลา ทัพสุริย์) KL

Mr. Lāē Cantharüang (นายเหล่ จันทรวง) KW

Mr. Dī Phonkhan (นายดี พลจันทร์) KW

Mr. Dāw Thapthanī (นายดาว ทัพธานี) KNKN

Mr. Sōn Sētraksā (นายสอน เศรษฐรักษา) KMN

Mr. Phonmā Sētraksā (นายพรมมา เศรษฐรักษา) KNKN

Mr. Bunsī Rātsīhā (นายบุญศรี ราชสีหา) KL

In addition to this committee there are old respected laymen who are in charge of looking after wat affairs. These men are called *sārawat* (สารวัตร), 'inspector'. These men are as follows:

Father Hô ('Cek') Thapsuri (หอ ทัพสุริย์) KW and KN

Father Mī Thapsuri (มี ทัพสุริย์) KY

Father Bun Thapthamāt (บุญ ทัพธมมาตร) KNKN

Father Phan Thapsuri (พัน ทัพสุริย์) KL

Finally, there is Father Sīhā Thapthānī (สีหา ทัพธานี) who is *sārawat* for the whole village and is kind of supervisor of village religious affairs. He is also called *thāyokwat* (ทายกวัด) and supervisor, *phūdūlāē* (ผู้ดูแล) and "permanent secretary".

Taken together, it is the responsibility of these men to look after the religious affairs of the village.

A Realignment in HH Number 36

After the death of the wife of Mr. Mā Thapsuri (มา ทัพสุริย์) lived in HH Number 36, he took a 2nd wife from B. Klāng (Bride price ฿106). Then the old household Number 36 split up. Half the house (physically) was moved from the original spot in KY to a new spot near the house of Mr. Chū at the crossroads at the entrance to the village. He took with him his new wife and his children by his first wife.

Nāng Mū, the sister of Mr. Mā's 1st wife (and who incidentally is blind) and her infant daughter continued to live in the 2nd half of House Number 36.

Village Meeting

This evening there was a meeting—this time held in the *kuthi* in the wat instead of at *môlam* stage in front of Mr. Phon's house — probably a result of the meeting concerning religious matters. The meeting concerned the following: (1) *thambun* ceremonies for *khums* (KW, KY, KL will probably hold ones); (2) *Bunkhāocī* or *Bun Khao kī*; (3) *Bun Phra Wēt*; (4) and paying for a Burmese gong that was received last year but which hasn't yet been paid for.

I am continually amazed at these meetings that anything gets done at all because everyone talks at once and no one seems to chair the meeting. At any rate what seemed to have been decided was (1) the ordering of events: the *thambun* for KW followed by that for KL and KY; *Bunkhāocī*, and finally *Bun Phra Wēt*. (2) that there will be a collecting of money from everyone in the village to pay for the gong. A point was made especially of telling me about the need for the money for the gong.

Objects and Possessions of Households

This morning I began the Economic Survey. While giving the survey in the house of Mr. Phan Thapsuri — one of the more wealthy households of the village — Jane made a list of things in the household. The following are the things which she observed.

On porch, clay water jugs of various sizes (some the cheap kind from B. Mô and others expensive variety from Saraburi)

Coconut shell water scoop with handle

Metal water scoops (*khan*)

broom (*mai khwat*)

thang for measuring rice

clay bowls

chopping board (*khian*)

mortar and pestle (*khrōk* ครก and *maitīphrik* ไม้ตีพริก)

knives of various shapes

water carrying baskets

palm toppee hat

charcoal stove (*tao fai* เตาไฟ)

fish net, *sawing* (สวิง)

fish net, *hāē* (แห)

basket for drying cotton and other things (*kradong* กระด้ง)

fish baskets of assorted shapes

cradle stand

shirts, *phākhaomā*, *sarong*, blouses, cotton underpants, *phāsin*, T-shirts (on people) earrings, watch

rubber and leather thong sandals; sneakers, socks

straw hats

metal *bīp* for carrying water
different sizes of enamel bowls
reed mats
spittoons (metal with painted colored flowers)
bamboo bed
mattresses
pillows
large chopping board with handle carved out of it
blankets, towels
fermented fish jars
4-sided stand for winding silk and cotton on
special silk baskets for worms to spin in
rough chairs and tin stools
crochet hooks for making fish nets
betel sets
screened food cupboard (probably the only one in village)
wireless
glutinous rice baskets of various shapes
glutinous rice steaming baskets
clay cooking jars
wood spoons of straight bamboo
looms
wicker chicken cage
small spade, *siam* (ເສີຍມ)
hoe
rope
mirror
photos, calendars, posters
carrying stick
tin spoons
sickles

sticks for threshing rice (*maitīkhāo* - ไม้ตีข้าว)

weaving circle

khwian / *lō* and large basket which fits on to it

flowered trays used esp. for carrying food for monks and for guests

metal pails

saw and hammer

umbrella

bow for cleaning cotton

mailbox looking contraption in which can be placed a small kerosene lamp thus forming a primitive sort of flashlight

kerosene lamp

sewing machine (rare in village)

un-lacquered baskets for carrying rice

It should be noted that this house was one of the richest in the village.

Village Activities

In KY observed near place where men are working on blacksmithing (but not at Mr. Tāp's house), women collected in a kapok-tree orchard. One woman making bamboo matting. Other women working on thread winding. Two women tending children. One woman lying down.

Visit with Nai Amphoe, et al. to Tambon Nōng Kung

Today, the Nai Amphoe came to the village with Mr. Sawai (the Community Development supervisor), Mr. Wichian, the Nai Amphoe's family (wife, 2 daughters & small son), female CD officer for T. Nosng Rung, and two Peace Corps Volunteers CD workers (one of whom will be working in Mahasarakham). We were invited and joined in on a tour of Tambon Nōng Kung. I was especially interested to see this tambon because that is where the feared ("killed 2 men") Kamnan Lôt lives. The Kamnan certainly has vast holdings in livestock, upland (lots of watermelons this year) and rice land, and house property (he has 5-6 houses and a different wife in each of them). I was also interested to see the Nai Amphoe in action. He

certainly exercises *rites de seigneur vis-a-vis* most of the people and he came back with gifts of watermelon and fish. His family were obviously bored and his wife indicated that though she had lived in Mahasarakham for 14 years, she has never learned a word of Lao. The group had brought a picnic lunch built around white rice and central Thai dishes. To this was added *kai yāng*, watermelon, and some Lao dishes by Kamnan Lô. I was amused at the eating arrangements.

Except for Jane all the men ate separately and then no villager, not even Kamnan Lô was included in the group.

It has long been known that a "special relationship" exists between the Nai Amphoe and Kamnan Lô. What this relationship exactly is, I am not certain, but I did see some excellent machine-produced lumber for the building of bridges, whereas further up the road in T. Khwao, near BNT, the villagers have had to make their own lumber. I suspect, but have no substantial evidence, that a financial arrangement beneficial to both Kamnan Lô and the Nai Amphoe exists.

We came back to town for the evening where we had supper at the Nai Amphoe's house. He got completely drunk and made an absolute ass of himself.

The Nai Amphoe has a very gruff manner and his exercising of the traditional official-in-power relationship *vis-a-vis* villagers does not endear him to the villagers though he certainly is shown every outward sign of respect and deference. Fortunately, he will retire in 7 months and perhaps one of the "newer breed" of officials will take his place. But the system is unfortunately thoroughly permeated with this type, and even the best have a difficult time in swimming against the current.

Ban Nong Tun

January 26, 1964

Age, Betel, and Tobacco

I noticed the other day a small female child of about 4-5 years old who was chewing betel. Jane says that Mother Hōm says that women usually start chewing betel at about age 12 and that young boys of any age can start smoking. One often sees very small boys picking up the lighted butt which someone has discarded and taking a few final puffs on it. However, despite how early young girls can begin chewing betel, most betel chewing as a daily habit is limited to women middle-aged and older.

Bān Nōng Tūn**January 27, 1964****Thambunbān**

This evening and tomorrow morning the households of Mr. Dī Thapsuri (ดี ทัพสุริย์), Mr. Hō (หอ / แจ็ก), Mr. Lāē Cantharuang (ແລ່ ຈັນທຣເຣືອງ), and Mr. ‘ēn Sētraksā (เอน เสธรักษา) are holding concurrent *thambunbān* ceremonies. There will be separate ceremonies for each household and not one ceremony encompassing all the households. Apparently, the fact that the wives of Mr. Hō, Mr. Dī, and Mr. ‘ēn are sisters is not a reason for this holding of a bun on the same day.

Bān Nōng Tūn**January 28, 1964****Thambunbān**

I did not get the opportunity to see part of the ceremony of the previous evening, but priests came to *suat mon* and a meal is given to those present. This morning went to the ceremonies in all 4 houses and will give a composite picture of the *thambunbān* ceremony from these four and then will give individual variations on these themes.

1) Preparation for Ceremony

A string, *fāi mongkhon* (see description previously on pp. 504-5 in notebooks [e.g., January 17, 1964]) is taken and wound around the house and ends in tray placed in the room in which the ceremony is to be held. This tray is called *khāi mongkhon* (see description of what is included on the tray on p. 505 above). The priests come in and are seated on mattresses which are placed on top of reed mats. In front of them are placed empty *bāt* and nearby is placed a large container of prepared *khāoniao*. Other accoutrements may be present or brought in when necessary. These will be explained below. In the case of the 4 ceremonies in point, *phra maha seng*, the brother of the headman from wat Pōsī in Mahasarakham, had come to the village and acted as head priest.

2) "Requesting the Precepts"

The ceremony begins by the "requesting of the precepts," *khôsin* (ขอศีล), Phô Sīhā acted as leading layman (*thāyok*) in these occasions and he led the laity present in "requesting the precepts" by taking a water scoop in which the three *khriiangbūchā* with two lighted candles attached had been placed, held it up in a worshipful position while kneeling in front of the priests and then leading the laymen in the ritual request. When the request had been made, Phô Sīhā presented the bowl to the head priest, who indicated the priests' willingness to comply with the request by touching the bowl. The bowl was then placed, by Phô Sīhā, in front of the priests.

3) The Giving of the Precepts

Beginning with the *namō*..., the priests lead the laity in a response manner in repeating the Pali versions of the precepts.

4) Suat Phra hung

After the finishing of the repeating of the *sin*, the head priest picked up the bowl with the *khriiangbūchā* and the two attached lighted candles and blew out the candles. Then after a short chant by Phô Sīhā, the priests and the novices chanted a *suat*, which was termed by one informant as *suat phra hung* (สวดพระหุง).

5) Sai Bāt

During the above chant, or immediately following it, one or more laymen will *saibāt* (ใส่บาตร), i.e., fill the monks bowls with rice from the one or more containers of rice present. This is done by taking a handful of the rice and begins by placing it in the head priest's *bāt*, then a handful is placed in each of the succeeding *bāt*, down through and including the novices'. When the last *bāt* has been reached, a second handful of rice is placed in the last *bāt*, and then the person filling the *bāt* moves back up towards the head priest's *bāt*. Also during this time, someone, usually a woman, will arrange the dishes of *kap khāo* on a tray. Sometimes cash is also placed in the last placing of rice in the *bāt*.

6) Presentation of Food to the Monks

When the food has been arranged, the ritual presentation of the food to the monks was done. This is known as *thawāi sangkhathān* (ถวายสังฆทาน) — a name by which the whole morning ceremony of the *thambunbān* is also known because of the fact that it is the actual presentation of the food to the monks which brings the *bun* of the ceremony. During the changing of the presentation chant, those laymen presenting the food kneel (rather than sit in the 'wat position') and hold the offerings—trays of food and the *bāt* — and face level. When the chant is finished, the food is placed in front of the monks, and they indicate their acceptance by touching the container. Only men may make this actual presentation of food to the monks.

7) Monks eating of Food

The monks thus partake of the food. If money has been placed in the *bāt*, it is unobtrusively taken out and placed in the monk's bag (by the monk). Sometimes, money is presented directly by the sponsor of the ceremony to the monk just before he begins eating. There is certainly no reluctance on the part of the monks to touch money.

The monks must eat their fill because it is by doing so that merit is conveyed. Thus, since there were 4 ceremonies this morning, the monks were obliged to eat at all four places. There is always more food than the monks can eat. They indicate their being through by the customary practice of drinking water and washing their hands. The trays of food and *bāt* are then removed.

8) Feeding of the guests

After the trays have been removed from in front of the priests, they are placed in front, of the guests present. The laity can eat from the same trays as the monks, but they can't eat the rice from the *bāt*. People usually eat in small groups of 4 or 5 and more food, if there are many guests, is brought forward to supplement what the monks had left.

9) Making of Holy Water

Either during the time the laity are eating, or immediately after they have finished, the priests make holy water *nām phraphutthamon* น้ำพระพุทธมนต์ by holding candles (lighted) over

baskets of water which had leaves in it. Appropriate chants were made during the making of holy water. There is apparently some allowances as to what order this occurs in the events.

10) Requesting a "Sermon"

After the 'holy water' had been made, Mr. Sīhā took a water scoop, a *khāi thēt*, and attached to it lighted candles. Then he ritually requested a *thēt* ('sermon'). *Phra Mahā Seng* indicated his willingness to give a sermon, by taking the *khāi thēt* and blowing out the candles. He then made a short introductory chant and then entered into an extemporaneous sermon (in Thai, not Lao). During the sermon in all 4 ceremonies, he explained the significance of the *thambunbān* and hoped that blessings would come to the house, the members of the family, and especially the head of household whom he would mention by name. On some occasions, hardly anyone paid any attention to what was being said, but this didn't daunt *Phra Mahā Seng*. He concluded the sermon with a short chant.

11) Truat Nām

Then followed the *truat nām* which has a variation in case of *thambunbān*. A banana stalk basket called in Lao either *thong nāngua* or *thong tuat nām* was placed near a house post. A description of the contents of such a container is given on p. 507 of the notebooks. This was an offering for the earth goddess who is called in Lao *phānāng Thōlānī* (พระนางธรณี).

During the pouring of the water during the chant *chumnum thēwadā* (ชุมนุมเทวดา), in which the bun made at the ceremony is spread to all creatures, humans, and spirits, the water in this case is passed specially in the offering for the Earth Goddess and not to the ground for all beings. The only time I have observed this offering is at the *thambunbān* ceremony.

[N.B. These above comments on the *truat nām* are not quite correct and the correct version is given at a later date. The Earth Goddess herself does not receive the offering, but is the carrier of the merit to all sentient beings and to the Devas (*thēwadā*) as well. Also the ceremony is performed at the end of all ceremonial feeding of the monks. CFK 1.9.64]

In the house of Mr. Dī, this offering was not present —ordinary *truat nām*.

[N.B. In the above note, I overlooked the point that there are special features associated with the performance of *truat nām* in the *thambunbān* ceremony, i.e., the use of the *thong*. –CF Keyes Sept. 1, 1964]

12) Rot Nām

Then followed the sprinkling of the 'holy water'. The heads of the household are first sprinkled during the chanting. Then the priests sprinkled water on the other inhabitants of the household and then around the house to all the corners, and all the rooms. After this and the chanting is over, the priests may take the remaining water and ritually bathe the head of household and wife. This was done in all 4 cases.

13) Sometimes the ceremony ends at this point, but in the case of Mr. Dī, there was one other thing. Four flat banana stalk trays with offerings were taken and ritually presented to the malevolent *phī* so they will be pacified and not trouble the household. For a description of this part of the ceremony, refer to the description of the *thambunbān* ceremony held at the house of Mr. Hô last year, and especially the description below.

14) The ceremony is concluded by taking the offering to the Earth Goddess and the offerings to the *phī* and placing them at a "Three Corner" intersection of paths.

Other Observations on Thambunbān Ceremony

During the monk-laity activities, some men and women have *phākhaomā* draped over their left shoulder and across the chest. However, this does not appear in all cases.

An offering is laid at the entrance of the granary. This offering is called in Lao *pīsāt* (ปี่สาด).

Bān Nōng Tūn

January 29, 1964

More Thambunbān

Today there is to be a *thambunbān* at the house of Mr. Hok (Mr. Ngao's brother-in-law) and for the whole of *Khum Wat*. Last evening the priests first went to the house of Mr. Hok (2 priests, no novice). There they sat upon cushions with the *khāi mongkhon* placed in front of them. From the *khāi mongkhon* was attached a string which was wound around the house. The

priests were ritually "requested" to chant — *suat mon* [I do not understand the parts of this chant as used in the evening]. Guests at Mr. Hok's house were then fed a meal.

The scene then shifted to the *môlam* stage which had been set up in front of Mr. Hok's house—thought by the villagers to be the centre of the *khum*. After the priests finished at Mr. Hok's house, they were led to the stage. Strings were tied around every house in the *khum* and then strung from these houses and attached to the stage. The *khāi mongkhon* was placed in front of the priests. Again, they were "requested" to chant and again they chanted *suat mon*. There was no evening sermon though *Phra Mahā Seng* had been requested (not formally or ritually) to give one.

The *môlam* performance which followed was very much an essential part of the *thambunbān* for the *khum* ceremony. During the previous day and again yesterday, Mr. Hōm had gone around collecting money from people in KW so that a generator and electricity could be made available for the *môlam* (people gave from ฿2.5 - 10.00). The stage had been erected in the centre of the *khum* though this was not the best place for viewing purposes. No outside troupe was hired, but, rather, the troupe from KW (with Muan and Thōngyū as stars) were on for the evening. The *môlam* got underway at about 10 p.m. after much time was spent in dressing, in *waikhrū*, etc.

It seemed to me that the story of the production was irrelevant for what people really enjoy are the humorous quips, the horseplay, the costume, the dancing.

During the day yesterday, in preparation for the big *thambun*, people were making *khāo phūn*.

Thambunbān at Mr. Hok's

I noticed that the sprinkling of water was done not only over people but also in various places in the house. Also, the heads of household were ritually bathed, but in this case it wasn't done by the priests but by Mr. Tāp. The offering to *phrā nāng thōlānī* was placed near a post — this I have observed in other cases as well.

An important aspect of the ceremony which was observed in more detail than yesterday were the offerings placed at the corner posts of the house (no. 13 in the listing above). The offerings consisted of black, yellow, white rice (in this case no black rice was present in the house so the rice was sprinkled with charcoal dust), *khāo phūn*, joss sticks, tobacco, betel

(prepared chews), and flowers. These implements were placed on flat banana stalk containers of the following shape.



Illustration of the shape of banana stalk containers used in a *thambunbān* ceremony

Though these offerings are also called *thong*, they are not for *ph(r)ā nang thōlānī*: but form part of the ritual to ward off and appease malevolent spirits (*phīrāi* ผีร้าย) so that they will leave the house and its inhabitants alone during the ensuing year.

Other implements of the ceremony consisted of sticks about 2-3' in height and a mixture of sand and pebbles.

The order of events was as follows:

1. The priest (in this case) would move from corner to corner of the house and at each corner or direction would stand touching the stick which in turn touched the *thong* placed at the foot of the post. He would chant something, then repeat the process at the next post. This is called in Lao *sūt thōt* (spelled for me as สุตถอด). It is possible that *sūt* is the word for sutra and *thōt* means "to take off, to pull off". It is also called in couplet form *sūt thōt sūtthōn* (สุตถอด สุตถอน) in which *thōn* means "to withdraw, retreat". Thus, it is possible that the meaning of this aspect of the ceremony may mean "[the chanting] of a sutra [to cause the *phī*] to withdraw or leave."

2. When this first aspect of the ceremony was over, a second priest would stand at each successive post at which was placed a bowl (*khan*) containing money, flowers and candles, and a dish with earth and pebbles called in Lao *hin hāē kap sā:i* (หินแห้งกับทราย "pebbles and sand") or alternatively *lūk kuat sī lūk* (ลูกกวาดสี่ลูก *don't know what *kuat* means). The householder would dig a small hole by the pole in which the priest would place the pebbles and sand. Then the priest would sprinkle some more around the post after the hole had been filled over. He would say a few *khatthā*. This part of the ceremony is called in Lao *sūt yāt* (สูตยัด) in which *yāt* means "to cram or stuff".

After this last aspect of the ceremony was over, the banana leaf containers of the offerings were taken to a *sāmyāēk* (สามแยก) and left there. This Mr. Saw called *buangsuanglāhū* (บวงสรวงละหู่) where *buangsuang* means "to give worship to", but I have been unable to find the meaning of *lāhū* (the spelling is Mr. Saw who is not always trustworthy). The purpose is to *song pīsāt* (ส่งปรีสาท)— the meaning of which is probably something to do about sending away an evil spirit or force called *pīsāt*.

I enquired into the significance of the sand and pebble aspect of the ceremony, Mr. Saw explains this as because these elements were kept by Buddha and their being placed, thus, at the foot of the corners of the house brings good fortune on the house,

Thambunbān for Khum Wat

Running in conjunction with Mr. Hok's was *thambun* the *thambunbān* for *Khum Wat*. In this case the priests were on the *mōlam* stage. Exactly the same ceremony with the priests being given a second meal brought by every household (or contributions towards the meal made by every household) in the *Khum*. Also, every household prepared a *thong* offering for *phrā nāng thōlānī*. In this case, as in all others, *Phra Mahā Seng* made a sermon asking blessings on those living in the *Khum*. Water baskets from each house-hold were brought and filled with holy water. PMS sprinkled the people present and then they took the water home.

Sūkhwan Khāo

Following the *thambunbān* for KW, Mr. Hok had a *sūkhwan khāo* ceremony. The ceremony was held in the house rather than in the granary.

Implements: in wash basin were placed leaves (3 bunches), *khāo tōm*, bottle of liquor, basket containing cooked rice, candles, egg, *phīakman*, *khāotōm dô*, *yôt buai*. Whole thing called *khanhā*. 4 sickles with rice at end, pillow with small khan and ball of rice on it.

The ceremony apparently followed the same form as previously described (Phô Sīhā was the efficient), though I was unable to see it because of activities of the *thambunbān* for KW going on simultaneously.

Events of the Third Month

This has been an important month for *thambunbān* ceremonies. The following have been held:

wan khun sām kham (Fri., 17 Jan.) Mr. Phon

wan khun 8 kham (Wed., 22 Jan.) Mr. Tāp

wan khun 14 kham (Tue., 28 Jan.) Mssrs. Hō, Dī, ‘ēn, Lāē

wan khun 15 kham (Wed., 29 Jan.) Mr. Hok, *Khum Wat*

wan lāēm 2 kham (Fri., 31 Jan.) *Khum Lao*

In addition, the ceremony of *khāo cī* (*khāo kī*) will be held on *lāēm 6 kham* (Tues, 4 Feb.).

Religious Behavior

Priests shaved heads, etc. today. They say they do it once a month on *khun 14/15 kham*.

Linguistic Determinants of Status

Overheard Mr. Hō calling Mr. Lāē Cantharüang, *hōi Lāē* (ฮ้อย แห่ล). I asked Mr. Ngao about this and he said that the title *hōi* is given to people who are skilled or well-known merchants/traders in animals (maybe other things as well but particularly as applies to large livestock). Two men in this village, Mr. Lāē and Mr. Lā Thapsuri (the *nakleng*) have been accorded this title.

Realignment in HH No. 14

When I did the agricultural census, the head of household number 14 was Nāng ‘aw Thapsuri. She died and her son-in-law Nāi Mī Khambunkōēt (มี คำบุญเกิด) became head of household. About a week ago he moved half (physically) of the original house to near the house of Mr. Suan Siwanthā (สวน ศรีวันทา), HH No. 16 and established a separate household. Then Nāng ‘aw’s other son-in-law, Mr. Thông Dī Mātrā (ทองดี มาตรา), HH No. 17/2, moved his family from his old house to become head of HH No. 14. He sold his old house to the son-in-law of Mr. Lāē Canthariuang.

Bride Price

Jane talking with Mother Hōm asked why Mr. ‘ēn’s daughter received ₭1,400 bride price. Because, Mother Hōm answered, she is an only daughter and therefore "precious". Also, the son-in-law came from wealthy family. This is the highest known bride price in the village.

Ceremony for the Dead

I have heard one ceremony for dead referred to as *cāēk khāo* (Lit. "to distribute the rice"). This means a ceremony in which rice is given to the dead person by presenting it to the monks — better Mr. Ngao says than putting it in the ground, because Buddha established the way of making merit for the dead (comb, of pre- and post-Buddhistic ceremonies).

The Date of a Ceremony

In giving the date for a festival/bun, people often give the day when the special food is made, not necessarily the day for presenting the food to the monks. Thus, for *Bun Khāo Cī*, the date of *lāēm 6 kham* is given. This is "the day for making *khāo phūn* and *khāo cī*," not the date for presenting these foods to the monks (which is the following morning).

Mr. Ng. and Nôi said that often *Bun Khāo Cī* and *Bun Phra Wēt* are held in conjunction with each other, but not in BNT where they are kept separate. The general pattern of ceremonies is always the same -- Day for making food, evening entertainment (if it can be afforded),

morning presentation of food to monks accompanied by special ceremony if any. This is not an invariable formula as there are exceptions, but it holds for the major festivals.

Mr. Sôn Khamkông

Mr. Ngao says that Mr. Sôn Khamkông who lives in the place which is somewhat like a restaurant used to have the government liquor license and used to have a small shop. However, he decided that he wanted to become headman of KNKN (even though there was at that time no headman as it was not a separate village), and so he started giving away liquor to influence people to vote for him into office. Apparently, he also drank heavily himself. As a result, he got himself into very bad debt with the Government Liquor dist. and had to sell all of his rice land to pay for his debts — as well as selling off the stock of the shop. Thus, he is now one of the poorest people in the village.

Băn Nông Tũn

January 30, 1964

Visit of a Medicine Man

[Jane's note] "A man came around in a truck with a PA system asking for empty bottles. In return the villagers were given medicines of which there were two kinds: (1) a powder to make the blood rich (for adults) and (2) pellets for children —an all purpose cure. The salesman came from Sarakham, where he has a pharmacy. He was formerly a teacher for many years."

Sale of Tamarind

[Jane's note] "Duan went off by herself to the market today in the bus. She received 16.00 baht for her *makhām piak*, at 0.75/kg. Of this ฿5.00 went on the fare, ฿1.00 on a pair of earrings, plus an unspecified amount on *tāēng*. Mother felt that she received pretty little."

Nôi's Marriage

Nôi, my former asst., is going to be married again with a girl from Băn Yāng. He says that he will get married in 6th month, but he will go "to request" the hand of the girl—*khô sào* (ขอสาว) in the 4th month.

Household Belongings

I noticed on the walls of Mr. Nôi Thapsuri in HH No. 18, KW, a large mirror, picture (framed) of King and Queen, pictures of male members of the house in priest's garb, small pictures of male members of household and friends (probably taken in Bangkok). I have noticed in several households large mirrors which seem to be a status symbol of sorts because they are displayed prominently in the main room of the house. Also there is a great love of photographs of members of the household — particularly in priests robe, in urban clothing, in *sanuk/thiao* surroundings. Older people like to have photographs which can be used at their funerals.

Linguistic Status Indicators

Mr. Lū Thapsuri (KL) is called by some people by the title *cam* (*khaocam*) which is the title given to Mr. Tāp who is the village intermediary to *pūtā*. However, there does not seem to be any basis for his being called this title, but people call him that in a joking kidding manner.

Realignment in HH No. 97, KNKN

Mr. Phūn Thapthamāt (พูน ทัทธมาตร) took his family and built a new house near that of Mr. Sībū (สีบุญ). The head of household No. 97 is now a new son-in-law, Mr. Pūn Mātrā (บุญมาตรา).

Attitudes Towards Government

The government land taxes seem to the villagers to be rather arbitrary because they do not seem to have any relationship to actual land holdings. For example, people with small holdings have paid relatively large taxes and vice versa. In making the economic survey, Mr. Ng. has commented on how "crazy" the government is because it does not actually make correct tax appraisals.

Sex Divisions of Labor

Women do make bamboo matting also, though this seems to be a pursuit normally restricted to men.

Ceremonies

Mr. Ngao says that in the 6th month when the ceremony of *liangphī* is held, there is a feeding of *phī* at *lakhbān* as well. At that time there is also a *môlam* held at *lakhbān*. I didn't observe this last year but this may be because we left for Bangkok in the afternoon right after the ceremony was held at the shrine of *pūtā*.

Today and tomorrow is a *thambunbān* for KL. This evening there was a *môlam* performance by the local troupe from KY/KL after the *suatmon*. Mr. Ngao says that the *môlam* in this *khum* is Vientiane style — *môlamwiang* (หมอลำโขง), whereas the one in KW is a different style called *môlam sinsai* (หมอลำสินไซ). The troupe from KY/KL is made up of people from KL and KY, but is directed by a woman from a village near Rợ:ī-et. Tomorrow morning there will be the same ceremony for the *thambunbān* which is called by the general word *sangkathān* (สังฆทาน) "ritually presenting food to the monks".

Names of Things

The full name in Lao of KL is Bān Lawpāhāt (บ้านเหล้าป่าหาด) by which is meant "the (village) of the small forest (*lao* = 'small forest'; *pā* = 'forest') of *hāt* (a type of tree) trees". The word for the local rice wine in Lao is *laothō* (เหล้าโท).

Bun Phra Wēt

Today at Bān Dôn Māk Yā (also known as Bān Hām Khōn) there was a *Bun Phra Wēt* ceremony. In the afternoon, people from BNT took over a money tree (*kanlōn*, ก้นหลอน) to present to the head priest of BDMY.

The wat grounds had been especially prepared for the festival. In the centre was a special pavilion, decorated with a huge tableau cloth depicting the life of *Phra Wēt* (this cloth comes from B. Mī). In the centre of the pavilion was a "preaching platform" to which priests and novices mounted to read their assigned segments of the *phra wēt* story.

Priests from all over the area had been invited to preach various sections and the priest from our village also went to participate.

We had neither the time, nor was there any good informant present, so I only got a superficial impression of the ceremony. However, I hope that when the ceremony is held in the 4th month in BNT, I get better information.

The procession from BNT entered the village and subsequently the wat with a fanfare of drums and gongs. The procession was made up primarily of *phūsao* and *phūbāo* obviously out for a good time and especially for a chance to meet other young people. The procession circled the *phra wēt* pavilion and then dispersed. The group listened to the sermon-making in the pavilion for a while and then gathered together outside the pavilion. Here they sat down in front of the head priest of BDMY, and led by Phô Sīhā they presented him with the *kanlôn*. He responded by giving a special sermon.

A rather unusual thing occurred. The head monk of the village was served and he ate one of the Thai coconut and sugar deserts. Mr. Ngao and others said that this was quite against the rules.