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Mr. Ngau and another fellow, looking at a Baht-note with a picture of King Bhumibol, said that they didn't know why he was assassinated. However, they both agreed that Pridi and his clique were responsible for the assassination (though Mr. Ngau reserved some doubts). Thus, of the three most important PM's since the war, only the current one remains un-discredited in villagers' eyes. Pridi-~~assassinated~~ is alienated because of being responsible (at least in villagers' eyes) for that most reprehensible of acts - regicide. Phibun is thought to have been a "bad dictator" because of such things as his corrupt labour policy during the war. Only Sarit as yet stands free of ~~the~~ censure - partially because his work has been somewhat remote from the villagers. He on the other hand has the best opportunity for getting his case to the people because of the spread of radios and better communications.

Nonetheless, currently, the idea of the PM is of a person who possesses the highest power which he can exercise in an arbitrary and personal way. There is ~~little~~ nothing that villagers can do to influence or restrain that power. Thus, if the power is exercised in a bad way, there is no use complaining, but one must be resigned and accept it. Of course, where an act like regicide occurs, it is expected that the system will do something - and did do something.

The idea of power being exercised from above, with little possibility of influence or restraint from below extends all the way down the system, eg. the power of Kamnan List up T. N'ay Key and the orders of the Nazi Angkor. The only way

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to have any influence on these higher powers is to "have a friend up court" - a patron who has a personal interest (for one reason or another) in helping those of lower status. Thus, BNI would turn to Mr. Wichian for help. Also, they would expect the Attakon family to be interested in helping Maharakham in general.

FISHING:

Last evening I went on a special fishing expedition with Mr. Ngau & Muán. We went out to the fields where there was still fairly deep water. Through such fields (actually all fields) runs a little "path" between the rice. We walked quite a way out on this path & then Ngau & Muán began to string a net along this path. The net was strung up at intervals with sticks for a 100 m. It was fixed so that fish or freshwater crabs would get entangled in it. The net was left out overnight. This morning when Muán went out to check it, it was full of crabs but no fish.

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Liag phra by a family:

This morning being wan phra, Jane went with Nean & Anan (as representatives of two families) to Liag phra. When they reached the wat, there were very few people. Food was carried on trays. At the khua, the rice was divided into 3 parts: (1) the biggest portion, of course, was reserved for putting in the baht of the monks; (2) a small portion was placed in what looks like an upturned basket, or stool, and this was for the phra-bik (๑๓๑๓); and (3) some was kept to be placed in the thut of some

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ancestors after the priests had finished.

As there were no more presents at the wát, the "presents" (sín) could not be requested & only the hòj phon & truat na:m were chanted by the priests. When the priests had eaten & finished chanting, the plates (empty) were returned to the donors and they went to place food on the that. There was no sermon.

In this case, the that on which Nean and Duau (as representatives of their families) & Jone placed offerings included the Mother Ho:m's younger sister (ໂຮມໂມງໂມງ), Mother Ho:m's younger brother (ໂຮມໂມງໂມງ), Mother Ho:m's parents - single that (ໂຮມໂມງ and ມ່າງໂມງ), plus or two other that of "just other people". There is no that for Mother Ho:m's husband. Apparently, not the same that are given food each time, & it should be enquired as to what that are so honored & when are some & when others.

In Nean's two families - his mother's & husband's - both make a point of feeding the priests only on wan pho unless there is some special occasion.

Loj krahtog:

This evening we went to a Loj krahtog in Mahasarakham. At this festival, a contest was held between various schools to make the greatest Phat. Present were officials from the town gov. & priest to judge the results. It is interesting that this ceremony which is so important in the Central Plains is hardly celebrated in villages in the N.E. The villagers explain that this is because there is no water near many villages in N.E. However, I think that it is not indigenous but is an import from the C.B. At the ceremony several young

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NE'ers were insistent in pointing out that this was a "Buddhist" custom.

CHILDREN:

I have noticed that children often have a topknot - a puff of hair in the fore skull which is called hò:m (Lao). I have sometimes wondered if this is associated with the ~~same~~ tonsure ceremony that used to be held in the C.P. I asked Niri about this & he said that this is just the style for children. Also, have noticed that some young children have heads completely shaved, and some have full heads of hair.

MONKS:

The priests went by today on their way to bathe in the huaj.

WEAVING:

I asked Mr. Ngau how old children are usually when they are weaved. He discussed this subject with a man & woman both of whom have had children. The answer was that usually a child is weaved when a new child is born. However, if there is no child, then it may not be weaved until it is 6 or 6 yrs. old. However, a normal age for weaving is about 3. There doesn't seem to be any compulsion about weaving except if a new child comes. A child is simply given the braid until he no longer wants it.

LINGUISTIC INDICATORS OF AGE SIGNS:

In Lao in fact children from birth to a few years of age are called déb hò:j. According to Mother Ho:m, people can begin using the word mè: (ໂມງ) for women when a woman is 30 yrs. old. After marriage and having in fact children. Old women

3 November

Today, Jane & I were out to the Teachers' College where Jane had a lesson from Mrs. Chrasapit on Thai cooking and I had a long talk with Mrs. Chrasapit's husband. He is a descendant of the old cau myang of Kaban & knows quite a bit ~~up~~ about local custom & history. I was asking him about what language he normally uses, and he said that he is completely bilingual in Thai & Lao but normally uses Lao en famille. However, he said the many officials like to use Thai in the family so that the children will grow up speaking correct Thai.

This little fact made me realize that there are two basic types of officials in the N.E.: (1) Indigenous and (2) Non-indigenous (most usually from Bangkok). The former are again divisible into two varieties: (a) those descended from old nobility & bureaucratic families and (b) those from village or near-village backgrounds who have recently moved upward socially. Of these three groups ~~the~~ (b) retain the ~~more~~ most Lao custom and are more Lao than Thai. They are usually only in the lower echelons of the bureaucracy (Mr. Wichai would be one of the higher of this type of group). (2) are the most Thai with very little knowledge of Lao ways & practices. These are usually high echelon and middle echelon of Pinar - the governor, the D.D., etc. Finally, (1a) are in between being bilingual and to some extent bi-cultural with a tendency towards the Thai. Then ~~there~~ too are middle and high echelon officials - the Mayor, Mr. Chrasapit's husband, etc.

Charles F. Keyes Field Notebooks, Thailand
Original hand-written version

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called m̄: n̄j̄j̄.

5 November.

RELIGION:

I asked Mr. Ngaiw today if there is any set program for feeding the priests - i.e., is there an arrangement whereby some people (or khim) is in charge of feeding the priests in particular days. He replied that there was no plan, who then feeds the priests if no one comes? I asked. He said that the parents go everyday to feed the priests or at least to make certain that they are fed. Usually, older people are more likely to feed the priests.

PERSONAL ORNAMENTS:

Village women wear earrings made of gold and shaped as follows:



I have noticed that gold or silver bracelets and armbands are sometimes worn by infant children but rarely by anyone else.

HARVESTING:

Mr. Ngaiw said that the main crop of rice is called khāw j̄j̄. This crop rice, according to Mr. Phon, is ~~called~~ harvested in the 1st month of the lunar calendar. There is a faster growing rice which is currently being harvested by some people. This rice doesn't have as high a yield as the slower maturing rice. Ngaiw stressed that those who are

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now harvesting are those who are especially in need of food - who ^{of} m̄: k̄. Ngaiw added that Mr. Hō: who currently has lots of rice will not begin harvesting until January or February when the ears are fuller. The early rice called khā:w d̄j̄ (Lao).

Mr. Ngaiw said that there are no ceremonies of first harvest - no "first fruit" ceremonies. No feeding of field spirits. When the harvest is complete, there will be a tiag ph̄i ceremony.

Black rice is grown in very small quantities (about 1-2 thao) & is used only for making ~~khim~~ khim.

LANGUAGE:

Mother Hō:m was pointing out that in B. Khok Nōj, they say m̄: j̄j̄: t̄j̄ in stead of m̄: j̄j̄: t̄j̄. She pointed ^{this} out ~~that~~ as something very amusing that the dialect there was a bit different.

10 November

For the past two and a half days, Tom Kirach & some Thai friends of his from his Phu: Thai village. Yesterday, Tom & I came to BNT. There were a number of nice things that I found out.

On our tour of the village we saw some people harvesting khā:w d̄j̄ in Khum Lao. Tom noted that in his village regular rice harvesting has ~~temporarily~~ been underway for 2 or more weeks and that the rice looked fuller in his village.

We ran into a number of people ~~at~~ seated in the open space in front of the

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barber's house. Included amongst these was a man from the Highway Dept. Camp in Ban Khwan. He was acting as a mō:du:, using a book published in Bangkok. Also, the head teacher from Ban Mi: was over with some books on astrology. It seems that he is a mō:du: also. Mr. Tho:ng Duau, this teacher, comes from Nongkhai: has many relatives who live in Laos.

Monday (wan lē:m 10 kham, dyan 12) is to be a day of marriages. Included will be the son of Mr. Sō:n in KNKN. We learned ^{that} today that the Ford Mayor of Mahasarakham will go make an ordinary thambun in Ba:n Dō:n Du: where he will present a thammāit - a place where a priest gives his sermons.

KATHIN:

In discussing kathin with Mr. Tho:ng Duau, he said that the curia kathin (ᠵᠠ ᠬᠠᠳᠢᠨ) is known in Lao as kathin lē:n (ᠬᠠᠳᠢᠨ ᠯᠡᠨ). Last evening in discussing this with Mr. Chenchaj, he said ^{that} this ceremony "little kathin" used to be more popular than ~~now~~ now and was usually held on the last day of the kathin period. Mr. Ngau: or In this ceremony only robes are given as the kathin gifts and are ginned from raw cotton, spun, woven and dyed all in one day. Mr. Ngau: said that young boys (phū:ba:w) liked to torment and tease the girls who were making the cloth in order to keep them from completing the robes on time.

Mr. Chenchaj emphasized that the robes are the only proper kathin gifts

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and that everything else is boi:wain. He had never heard of māj:thə:w lēk and thought that it was Northeastern. He also had no other explanation for the "brooms" other than they were "for priests to sweep the wūt" and were an old local custom. He said that the period of kathin - the 30 days following ᠵᠠᠵᠢᠨ ᠬᠠᠳᠢᠨ - is called ᠵᠠᠵᠢᠨ ᠬᠠᠳᠢᠨ ᠬᠠᠳᠢᠨ (mōt khē:t kathin).

LOJ KEATHONG:

I asked Mr. Chenchaj if loj keathog is traditional in the Northeast in Laos? He answered that it wasn't but that there is a Lao ceremony similar to it called cūt prathip (ᠴᠤᠲ ᠫᠠᠮᠠᠮᠠᠳᠢᠫᠤ = cūt - 'to light' (fire); prathip - 'lamp'). The "lamps" were prepared by ^{first} making an oil by squashing kapok seeds in a cotton gin and then placing this oil in the shells of a local woody fruit. The oil was set on fire and the "lamps" were floated. He said that this custom was held in older times, but is not much held now.

Loj keathog has only ~~had~~ had this name (and presumably this form) in the寮国 area. Before then it was known as gā:n nōp phāmā:t (ᠭᠠᠨ ᠨᠣᠫᠤ ᠫᠠᠮᠠᠳᠢᠨ).

CALENDAR:

In Thai even-numbered months are called dyan khī: and odd-numbered months are called dyan khī: (ᠳᠢᠶᠠᠨ ᠬᠢᠶᠢ; ᠳᠢᠶᠠᠨ ᠬᠢᠶᠢ).

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KA:N CŪT PRATHĪP:

I mentioned the cūt prathĪp which I had heard about from Mr. Cheunchaj to Mr. Ngāw today & he said that these existed even today & had been made at the time of ṣṣ:k phraṇā: by the priests. Apparently, they weren't quite the same as what Mr. Cheunchaj had described.

VILLAGERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THAT PHANOM:

Tom's visit has given rise to considerable discussion about visiting that phanom. Mr. Ngāw is trying to organize a group to go uaj thāt (๑๖๓๕๗๑) at the big ceremony in the 3rd Lunar Month. Apparently, from the discussion at the house of Mr. Sō:n this morning, no one from BNT has gone before, though everyone knew of the large festival held there. Mr. Ngāw said that he has heard people say that before the thāt was built, people used to come to the lā: in B.Khuṣāw for ^{the} big ceremony, but he wasn't certain whether this was true or not.

WEDDINGS:

Today is an auspicious day (wan 12:m 10 khām, dyan 12) for marriages and there were two people from BNT (both from KNKN) who got married (both to people in B.Yaig). The information on these weddings is as follows:

I. Bride: Nang Mi: Sē:trāksā: (๑๖๓๕๗๑) from KNKN age 22
Groom: ๑๖๓๕๗๑ (Na:j phan) " B.Yaig " 23
Bride price: \$576

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I. G. Na:j Chu: Sē:trāksā: from KNKN age 26

(๑๖๓๕๗๑)

Br: Nang Tho:juāj (๑๖๓๕๗๑) B.Yaig age 20

Bride Price: \$526.

W. attended the wedding of ~~Na:j Chu:~~ Na:j Chu: - one of the twin sons of Na:j Sō:n Sē:trāksā:

This young man has been married before and has a child by his first wife. We asked Mr. Ngāw why he broke up with his first wife. He answered that he wasn't certain but that he had heard that Chu: liked to have intercourse 5-6 times a night and his wife thought that this was a little excessive. Mr. Ngāw also said that he heard that the new wife, though never married before, was pretty free with her charms. She apparently got pregnant once & took some kind of medicine to induce abortion.

At the house of Mr. Sō:n, we were given a break fast of lā:p wua (both dī:p & sāk) and k̄:ig k̄:aj. Mr. Ngāw was keeping the records of how much each person was donating.

I noticed that there were fewer guests than usual. Mr. Ngāw explained this as because Na:j Chu: had been married before. At a wedding here, only people who are invited by the host go to a wedding. This was symbolized by Mr. Sō:n's special invitation for us. Each guest, however, has an obligation to give a monetary gift - either outright or at one of the two sī:khwān ceremonies that are held in conjunction with the marriage. The size of the gift will depend on one's status vis-à-vis the persons getting married. If one is a close friend or relative, then more money is given. The usual donation is one or two baht. The highest donations will come from the immediate families of the bride & groom.

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In this case because there were only 2 weddings in the village, the brother (huin) & a close friend of the groom went & bought beef for the food.

There had been a sū:khuwān nō:j ceremony at the house of Mr. Sōin before we arrived. The pattern of the ceremony was the same as described before, but I will again put down some details which I observed.

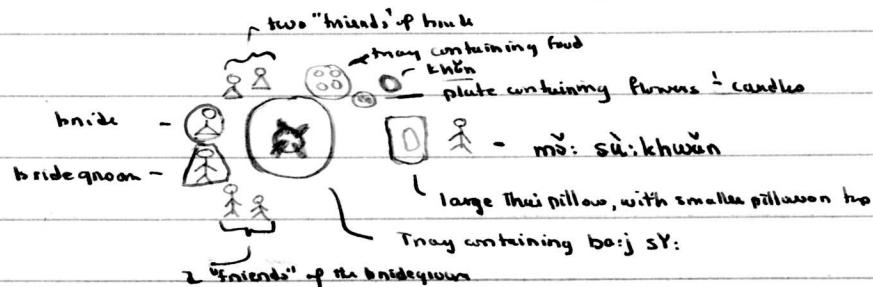
Mō: sī:hā: was the mō:sū:khuwān in charge of supervising this wedding. When the party was ready to make the procession to B. Yaig, he had Naj Chue: crouch at the bottom of the stairs of his house. He held flowers & candles in a worshipping position (the wāj position) & repeated after the shaman in formal language, concerning respect for his family, etc. Then he wājed the house, & turned around and wājed his father who was standing behind him. ~~The procession then made its way to the house of the bride.~~ There then he placed the flowers & candle on a lower rung of the stairs way. Then, the procession made its way to B. Yaig & the bride's house. There, a similar ceremony was repeated at the bottom of the stairs. Then the bridegroom stood on the banana leaf and stone ~~on~~ which he was to have his feet washed. Mō: sī:hā: gave him some tujuwān of some kind and then a woman came and washed his feet.

The physical properties of the sū:khuwān ceremony included the following. On a white piece of cloth was placed a circular stand (about 4" in height), a large cushion with a small cushion on top of it, a tray of food, a plate containing candles & flowers tied together, and a water scoop. On the tray was placed another white piece of cloth

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and on top of this was placed a large khān, probably made of brass. Inside the khān were placed 4 small ba:j sī: made of banana leaves and flowers, leaves around the outside, homemade candles, skeins of cotton thread, a hard boiled chicken egg, a ball of cooked glutinous rice, and a bottle partially filled with catfish. In the top of the bottle was placed the ingredients for a chewup betel, rolled up in a leaf & two flowers.

The arrangement of participants and properties is indicated by the following diagram:



First, in the ceremony, two long homemade candles were lit and attached to the ba:j sī: container. Then, the mō:sū:khuwān started to chant some Pali Buddhist phrases. The participants, the bride and groom and their two friends each placed the tips of their right hands on the tray holding the ba:j sī:. The hands were palm down. The bride & groom both had white cloths over their shoulders, and all the other participants had cloths over their shoulders. During this chanting a chain of string (white cotton) into which had been tied a khāw tōm and a bud not was tied to the arm of the mō:sū:khuwān. This Mr. Njau explains as something the cāu phāp must do for the mō:sū:.

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Two older women also with white cloths over their shoulder came up and sat behind the bride and groom. They periodically wiped the faces of the bride & groom free of perspiration.

After one section of chanting was done, the mō: took the bottle of suttō and poured some liquor into a khaw. The participants changed hand positions by turning palms upward - this time male's left hand, & female's right. The mō: then took two flowers and while continuing chanting stirred these flowers in the liquor and sprinkled the liquid on the upturned palms. The egg, rice, & two sheets of cotton were taken by another person from the ba:j sɿ: tray. On the head of the groom was laid the rice, egg, and a ball with. A sheet of cotton was laid across the waist of both bride & groom.

When the mō: stopped chanting, people came up and tied the phū:khesn. Then the egg was taken and broken open and a piece was taken from it and handed to one of the women. The woman took some of the cooked rice and made two balls of egg and rice & placed these in the bride & groom's mouth.

When the tying of the string was finished, then the ba:j sɿ: tray and the pillows were removed. The mō: set the tray with candles & flowers on the floor and the bride & groom kraped touching the tray with outstretched hands in prayer position. Also on this tray were the things from the lip of the liquor bottle. The mō: chanted & then the ceremony was over.

Then the bridegroom was led to be shown the bridal chamber by his mother-in-law. This was followed by much reception.

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In this description I have omitted mention & description of the sū:lekwan nō:j, up to items making up the things carried in the wedding procession, the tāu ke:, the presentation of the bride price, and the incident at the entrance of the bride's house. I might add that Mr. To:p was the tāu ke:. The bride price money was carried in a kle:n which had tobacco and betel wrapped in a white cloth.

After the marriage ceremony was over, the bridegroom returned to his orig. home. He will return in the evening in time to eat dinner with his new wife. Mr. Ngai says that the custom at this time is for the bride & groom to eat their dinner separated from the rest of the family in front of the door to the bridal chamber.

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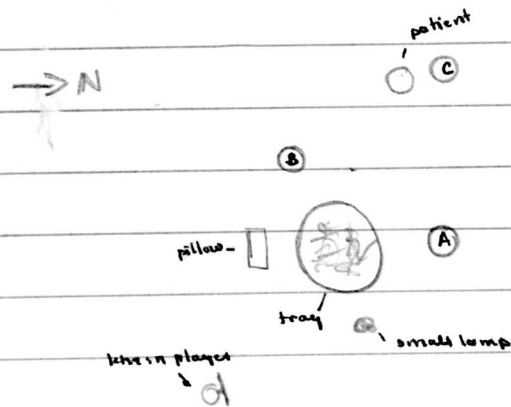
A SPIRIT TRANCE:

Last evening Nin came over to borrow the kle:n in order to go play lanphī: fā: (လံဖီဖာ). I accompanied him to the house of Na:j Le: Conthayag where this event was to take place. It seems that the wife of Na:j Le: has been ill for a long time & has returned recently from 2 months in the hospital. However, she is still ill, so the family called in some mō:phī: fā: - a person or persons who by means of music, singing, etc. can go into a trance and be possessed by an ancestral spirit of the sick persons. The idea is that the person has been made ill by the same spirit in order to indicate its need of being given something from the real world. It is the purpose of the mō:phī: fā: to discover what this need is so that it can be provided and the person will become well.

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The main mô:phî:fá: is Naig pû: (นางผู้) who is the wife of Naig Sô:n (KV). She had two assistants: Naig Khôn (นางขน) the wife of Mr. Tsip in KV and Naig Phrom (นางพร) the wife of Naig Ai: (KW). I believe that the assistants are called Naig thiam phî:fá: (นางเทียมผีฟ้า). I shall hereafter refer to these 3 people as A (Naig pû:), B (Naig Khôn), & C (Naig Phrom).

In the middle of the room near the sick person was placed a tray/stand (like the one used to hold the pa:ij sî: yesterday at the wedding). As it was dark, I could not make out all that was on the tray, but there were at least the following: cloth, silk phô:khawwa:, money, hard boiled chicken's egg, cooked glutinous rice, uncooked rice, rolled cigarettes, chess of betel, flowers, candles. Behind the tray was a pillow. The participants first arranged themselves this way:



All were facing the tray and
All the participants were kneeling (except Nin who was sitting in ordinary position). Nin started playing the khên and A & B then paid their obeisance to the tray by lifting their hands to

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the wâj position in front of their chests and then dropping their hands palm down on the floor (remiscent of the kráp done in front of priests). This was done 3 times. Then A began "singing" in the style of lam khî:ôn or lam mi: - I could not follow this at all. During the course of her singing, she kept ~~holding~~ ^{would sometimes hold} her left hand (in this case with the cloth which she had draped over her shoulders in that hand) to her left ear. I am not certain that this is significant but it was repeated by both A & B during the course of the ceremony. Occasionally, she would repeat the "worship" with her hands: wâj position, palms on the floor - but only once at a time. Other times she kept her hands in the wâj position and they would sometimes shake violently.

She finished this, & the position of the participants was shifted so that the patient and C moved up much closer to the tray. Then ~~A began to dance~~ where they had then moved up, A took a khên and B, C: patient bowed to the floor, fingers touching the khên in which were placed chess of ~~betel~~ betel, while A repeated some formula. Then A began to dance (in traditional Thai style - with emphasis on movement of hands) and concurrently singing. While she was doing this, C & the patient had their hands in a wâj position. Sometimes, C would make the obeisance - wâj and palms on to the floor - and then clap twice. The patient first followed this lead, and then began doing the something at her own discretion - sometimes without clapping. ~~After A had danced for a while, she would occasionally get the shakes throughout her body.~~ After she had danced for a while, she sat down (and chewed betel) & B

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took over her dancing & singing. She did the same things as A (including the shaking), but occasionally would go over to C or the patient and clap her hands in their face. After B had done this for a while, C had had some shakes, C stood up, hands held against her thighs, and started swaying on her feet. Then she would get violent shakes. During the course of this A would speak with both B & C and it was apparently during this time that the spirit possession took place and A was able to discover what was required.

Then, abruptly, all sat down. A & B each tied a string around the waist of the patient & the ceremony was over. The things were taken from the tray & the money was kept by the M^o. The spirits had asked for 4 cigarettes, deats, and some other things.

Nin says that possession takes place as indicated by the shaking. Ngai says that this ceremony is Brahmin in practice & origin. He also said that some people believe it is its efficacy while others don't. He also said that most people don't like to have their k^h in played for lamphy:fa: because, they say, the k^h in would be as good afterwards.

RELIGIOUS PRACTITIONERS:

In the village there are quite a number of people who have some knowledge and skill in non-Buddhist magico-religious customs. With the help of Mr. Ngai, I compiled the following list of mediums, shamans, etc.:

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1. M^o:suaat (K20 920):

This practitioner is also known as M^o:sukhwan (T) (K20 9 750) and Na:j phrom (K70 917 72 02). The main duty of this person is officiate at Su:khwan or ba:jsi: nite. These rites are undoubtedly of Hindu origin. Na:j Si:ha: (K1) is the leading practitioner and Na:j Runy: (K1) & Na:j So:n Se:traksö: (K1K1) are learning. Na:j So:n says that he is not yet able to officiate, but Mr. Ngai says he can.

2. M^o:phi:fo: (K20 074):

Despite Mr. Ngai's statement, this is most certainly an animist medium. The 3 practitioners are Na:j Du: (K20 73 7) of K1 (wife of Mr. So:n) who is the leading practitioner, Na:j Khön (K20 94) K4 (wife of Mr. Tap), and Na:j Phrom (K20 932) of K1 (wife of Mr. Di:). Although all these practitioners are women, Mr. Ngai says that they may be men.

3. Khaucam (K20 97):

This is another animist role and is currently filled by Mr. Tap (K4). I have already described the characteristics of this role previously.

4. M^o:tham (K20 932):

I know very little about this role as I have never seen it practiced, but from what Mr. Ngai says, the individual uses sacred Buddhist words and incantations to cure diseases caused by malevolent phi, and to kill phi who have entered a

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person's body (see below). In BNT Naij Se:n (KṚU 1184) in KB is somewhat skilled in this role, but only in a limited way. A man in B.NS:g Kug is a m̄s: thəm jəj - a person well known for his mastery of this role.

5. m̄s: kən p̄h: (KṚU 1184):

This is another animistic role. The only reason thing I have heard about this role is that the person helps protect a new-born infant from malevolent p̄h:. The limited practitioner of this role in BNT is Naij Di: (KṚU 1184) in KB.

6. m̄s: du: (KṚU 1184):

This role is best translated as "seer" or "fortune teller". The customs are based on basically Hindu teachings, with some Chinese customs thrown in. There is a wealth of written literature on this practice. In BNT Naij Si:hāi (KY) is the main practitioner and Naij B̄N̄h: (KṚU 1184) who lives across from us is apparently skilled in a limited way.

7. m̄s: siəŋ khəŋ (KṚU 1184):

Of this role I know nothing but that it exists. Naij Si:hāi (KY) again is the person who is the practitioner.

ANIMISTIC BELIEFS:

There is a belief that some types of p̄h: will possess a man and eat his blood because the p̄h: is "hungry". This is called p̄h: p̄:p (KṚU 1184) or p̄h: siŋ (KṚU 1184). When a man is possessed, he will act crazily and do all sorts of things and will eventually die unless a m̄s: thəm kills the p̄h:. Several people died recently in a

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nearby village. It was first thought that they had been killed, but no wounds were found - it was then decided that they had been killed by p̄h: p̄:p. Also, the huge Pol on whom we saw ^{at} the wedding ~~the~~ yesterday had once been possessed by a p̄h: p̄:p. He would go around banging on people's doors at night and people were frightened. He was finally cured, at a cost of \$1,200, by having a m̄s: thəm kill the p̄h: p̄:p.

INNOVATION:

People have taken to buying \$ nylon thread instead of using cotton thread for making fish netting because it is much stronger. This, despite the fact that nylon thread is considerably more expensive.

SPORTS DAY:

Yesterday, at the school, we heard the children singing to the accompaniment of drums & "hell" made from a thick metal cylinder. The purpose of this ceremony - accompanied by ~~unrhythmic~~ unorthodox clapping - was a practice for a "Sports Day" to be held at Ba:n Khudum on 22 Nov. Tambon Khosai will compete against Tambon Ke: Dam. Today the students were practicing various sports.

MARITAL STRIFE:

Last night, this morning & occasionally throughout the day Nuan has broken out sobbing. Apparently there is some sort of strife between him and Nuas. It all began when Nuas made a business by offending some business associates while Ma. Nj. was away. In contrast to her sobbing, his voice has been quiet but uncompromising.

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PAJ THIAW SA:W:

Nin said yesterday that it is alright for men to go paj thiaw sa:w (L) after they are married if they don't speak with the girls (except at fairs and other major festivities). Only unmarried girls will be given such attention, however. Nonetheless, very few men go.

BUSES AND LORRIES:

Of the two regular bus-lorries that go & come through the village, the smaller one originates in B. Nō:ŋ Phibā:n in T. Nō:ŋ Kug and the other, the larger, originates in B. Nō:ŋ Sē:ŋ near Wapipathum. In addition to these vehicles, one also sees on the roads, lorries going to buy and transport kenaf, kapok, and the like, occasionally officials' cars (Noj Amphoe, Malaria Control, etc.), "Taxi," etc.

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CUSTOMS RELATED TO BIRTH:

Last night discussed with Mr. Ng. concerning birth customs. When a woman begins to have labour pains, she will send for a mid-wife called mē: tām pē: (1121 1121) in Lao. This woman used to be mē: suaj who died the day the army came to distribute things at the school. The mid-wife helps the labour by pushing down on the stomach in order to help her force the baby out. When the baby has been delivered, the umbilical cord (1121 1121 - sō:ŋ hē:) will be cut by a metal spoon. It used to be cut by a bamboo knife, but now they use a sharp metal spoon. The afterbirth is burnt in a fire made at the bottom of the stairs. Once burnt, it is covered with dirt at the same place. Shortly after

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birth, a mō: kan phī: will come & make a fire around the house to protect the child against malevolent phī:

The "lying by the fire" (1121 1121 - jū: faj) is practiced extensively in the village. For a first birth, a woman will lay by the fire for as much as 12 days. During this time she will be allowed to eat only salt & hot water. This practice is followed "to stop the bleeding" & even Mr. Ngai was a little incredulous that there has never been a custom like this in the West. After the 1st birth, the woman will "lie by the fire" for fewer days depending on how soon she feels well.

"School Names" are often given to children by teachers when the child enters school.

Mr. Ngai and Politics:

Also, last night we discussed political personalities a bit. I asked Mr. Ngai if he thought people were glad that Phibun was gone. He said that many people were still "thinking about" Phibun & that he was well liked. It was Police Gen. Phao whom people did not like.

Mr. Ngai said that he had heard on the radio that Cambodia was thinking of becoming Communist [Norodom Sihanouk has recently announced that if relations between Cambodia and its neighbours, Cambodia would kick out all foreign Western aid & invite the Chinese communists to come in. This led to a general discussion of communism. He feels that it would be hard for a Buddhist country to become comm. because comm. don't "respect" Buddhism. He also showed some basic

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basic understanding of comm. He asked if it were true whether in comm. countries that the govt. owns all the land & the people just work on it. I answered that this was true and he replied that this was not a good practice. He then asked if the "Free World" (an expression he has picked up) had more countries than the comm. I explained that there were 3 types of countries in the world: free, communist, & neutral. He asked which countries were neutralist. I told him ~~that~~ India, Cambodia, Indonesia, & Laos among others. He noted that he did not know that Laos was ~~communist~~ neutralist.

Jane asked him if he learned most of what he knew from the radio and he answered that he did. He said that most ^{other} people didn't really listen to the news and even if they did often exaggerated the stories. As an example of this, he said that the other day he overheard the head man talking something like this: "The Pres. of South Vietnam whose name I can't remember has been ~~so~~ sick for a long time and was taken to the hospital by the army." This incident occurred shortly after the coup d'état in V.N. & Mr. Ngai said that if he hadn't been present everyone would have been misled. Another example of this misinterpreting of the news came the other day at Mr. Sorn's when I overheard several men talking about some news incident in Vietnam, Vientiane. ~~The~~ The story that they had (elaborated on by several people) was that heavy fighting had broken out in Vientiane & the Buddhist monks had all escaped across to Nonkhai.

I think, however, that it is no exaggeration to say that Mr. Ngai is the

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limiting case (upper limit) of knowledge about national politics & world events.

RADIOS AND "KEEPING UP WITH THE THAPSURI'S":

There are several new radios in the village. In KW Nag Deg recently bought one & now No: J Di has bought one. Mr. Ngai is rather amused at this situation. He says that when one person buys one, then other people have to buy one also to prove that the other person is not "herder" (Hṛṇṇ) than they are. He deplores this keeping up with one's neighbours because it leads to buying unpractical things like a radio (he considers his own radio good for business, but has considered selling it). This at least illustrates some concern with social status in the village. The reason that people are able to buy things at the present time is because they have just sold their kump & thus some people have a little ready cash.

HEALTH:

Also, discussed with Mr. Ngai last night the large open ~~ulcer~~ ulcer which Mr. Ngai's elder sister's child has on his bum. It seems that Khru: Sunit had come out & given an injection of some sort of antibiotics, but this had not helped (& may even have aggravated the situation). Both Jane & I commented on how bad the sore looked & said that the child should be taken to the hospital. Mr. Ngai agreed & said that he had encouraged his sister to go to the hosp. He also said that Khru: Sunit had volunteered to have mother & child stay at his home in town in order to go to the hosp. Mr. Ngai said that he didn't understand why they didn't go to the hosp. because husband had just

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made quite a bit of money from selling kumaf.

[Following Nsk added, 7 Dec., 1963]

In their case, they did go to hosp. because child developed pain in leg. It turned out that the development of the sore was due to an improper injection given by Khru: Samit. Fortunately, the difficulty was caught in time & the child is now well: back in village.

A GAMBLING GAME:

Last night Mr. Ngai described to me what is one of the most popular gambling games in the village. Four tamarind seeds are taken and on each one side is painted white. Thus, each has one side black, and one side white. These, these 4 seeds are placed in a tin and shaken up and thrown on to the ground. People bet on whether they result will be "even" or "odd" depending on no. of whites appearing (I don't quite understand this as there are 5 possibilities on any one throw).

TO A SLAUGHTER:

At about 11 this morning Mr. Ngai and I went on a little walk. We ended up going out to the fields behind KV. The road that lead out past the shrine of pi:ta: used to used on the main road to the highway. After spending some time in a field house - Thing nô: - we witnessed the slaughter & butchering of a calf. This calf was worth 18400 & that was what the major portion of the meat was sold for. There was no special reason why this calf was killed today - occasionally

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meat is butchered merely for sale & for local consumption. The skin of the calf will be sold in turn to a tanning factory.

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SPORTS DAY:

Yesterday, was Sports Day in Ban Khwaw in which teams from every school in T. Khwaw competed with students from B. Khôik MÔ: . Each team wore identifying T-shirts and had special flags and decorated stands (made by themselves) and some musical instruments to help in cheering. This event is held every year.

HEADMASTER OF PŪT VILLAGE:

Talked with headmaster of B. MÔ: school. He was a teacher in BNT 2491-97. He said that when he was in BNT, there were more students than there are now. I asked him why he thought there were fewer now and he answered that people have migrated away. The reason for this migration is that land is not very good in BNT.

He says that all put makers - such as those as in B. MÔ: - come orig. from Kouch & he says that they still have Kouch accents. There are other such villages spread throughout the NE. - all originating from Kouch

C.D. Committee in BNT:

I had orig thought that there was no C.D. comm. in BNT, but I now discover that there has been one since the 5th month of last year. I asked Mr. Wichian how this comm. was chosen; he said that the people voted them

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into office. Mr. Phon was naturally everyone's first choice. The comm. includes the following 9 people:

- Mr. Phon Thápsuri (KW) - Headman (KW)
- Mr. Phonma: Sê:tráká: (KNKN) - Mr. W. Soup he is chm. (KNKN)
- Mr. Tô:p Sômphíták (KY)
- Mr. Ho:m Thápsuri (KY)
- Mr. Chaj Sômphíták (KY) - Asst. Headman (KY)
- Mr. Phan Thápsuri (KL)
- Mr. Sôm Thápsuri (KNKN)
- Mr. La: Thápsuri (KL)
- Mr. Sô:n Sô:tráká: (KNKN)

4 December, 1963

Today, after ~~one~~ ^{rather than a} week's trip around the N.E., Tom Kiesch went along with Mr. Wichian & me to visit the abbot at Bâ:h Khwâw: then onto BNT.

RELIGION:

We had a very interesting & free-ranging discussion with Phô:lâ chô:j. Some of the points that we covered including the following:

People come to feed the monks at B. Khwâw rather than the monks going around the village to have their bowls filled. The abbot gave a couple of reasons for this. For one, this means that people only come when they feel that they afford

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to feed the monks and not be forced into a somewhat embarrassing position of having to feed them everyday or else be publicly teased. Also, he said that by being fed in the wud, "time is saved"

In discussing the ordination procedure for monks and novices, he said that it is necessary to have at least 5 priests present at an ordination as witnesses and one of these must be a monk who is qualified to ordain. ~~Only~~ ^{Only} ~~one~~ ^{one} monk is necessary to ordain a novice, though this monk must also be one who is qualified to ordain. The only exceptions to this are novices who enter the monkhood for a few days ^{hours} to make merit for a recently deceased relative. In that case it is not necessary to have an ordaining monk.

Monks must carry identification card which attest to their bona fides when travelling. Monks must ask permission of the câukhō:j wut before they can go to spend a single night or longer away from their home wut.

Monks only "meditate" in wutpâ:w when they are wandering "forest" monks. In other words no meditation takes place in the ordinary village wut.

When a monk leaves the monk hood (S) he should go ask permission of the ordaining monk. At such a time 4 priests must be present and then the monk leaving will make a formal request in Pali to return to being a layman.

During last there was a priest from B. Hân who came to live & study at wud B. Khwâw. There is now an older man who used to work from the highway Dept.

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smaller, was no different than the first. Our palatial room consisted of high ceilings painted along with the concrete walls in the dingiest green I have ever seen. The bed had a single sheet, no blankets and no pillow cases (a sight that brought visions of all the previous chaletale who might have used the same pillows). But really what made the delight of the hotel was the ability one had to hear conversation in neighbouring rooms. It seems that our neighbours were a few American soldiers and their girl. The snatches of conversation in mid-afternoon that we caught went something like this: "A Namler I Phus:giy". "If I don't like her can I send her back?" "OK, honey, take off yessse clothes." "Come on take them off", etc. Later at night we overheard the soldiers returning from their encounters with local whiskey-beers. Ah, memories of days in the fraternity in college - such comparable language. A deep depression set in on me because of our surroundings - a depression which later in the evening turned into an almost irresistible desire to escape by ship.

We wandered a bit about the town of Ubon - at least the main shopping area. The town has an older appearance than Udon and the streets are not straight but wander a bit with widenings and narrowings that makes them like a European town's. We happened to see a USIA office and went into read the newspapers concerning President Kennedy's death. The Thai clerk in charge here recommended a place to eat across the street - a place whose kuay tiao can at least be ~~was~~ suggested to others.

In our brief wandering around the town we saw into a bookstore which had in stock many of the Northern books from Khun Kasee. I gazed to myself in a buying spree of

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those books - an event which did much to assuage my feeling of depression over the hotel.

We ~~didn't~~ help feeling a bit lost and not really enjoying oneself in a town where we knew no one - where we had no guide to the major points of interest. Both Jane and I agree that travelling for the simple sake of seeing new places is barren and unrewarding. As we wandered around the town, we saw people with whom conversation could only have brought interesting reports, but except for a few brief occasions contact was never made and we wandered alone and uninterested except on foreign exhibits - The few moments when this changed was when we ~~went~~ walked into the USIA office and later into the Vietnamese (South) Information Centre. The man in charge here first took us to be French from Paris. We learned that he was from Saigon and lived in Thailand 15 yrs. He was well aware of what his counterparts in the North Vietnamese Red Cross.

This morning we ~~happily~~ left our den of iniquity and took a ~~cab~~ bus to the bus stop. As so often happens in Thailand, our number driver became very interested in us and kept a running conversation all the way to the bus stop. We left about 9:30 in the morning from Ubon and much to my surprise, the first ⁵⁵ ~~100~~ or so km. were untraveled. The first town we reached was ~~called~~ an ampho center called Muang Saïmsip (เมืองสีชมพู). A strange name as muang means violet and saïmsip means 30. As we entered this town, I noticed a set of baï saïma gathered together and surrounded by a fence. We proceeded on from this town to that of Amnâit Carain (อำเภออินทนิล).

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In the evening after a big and rather expensive Chinese dinner, we all went to the cinema. The Thai movie was typical: entangled love affairs; numerous subplots, lots of tears and reconciliation. The major difference was that it was a talky picture (and thus more boring) and there was very little melodramatic ~~action~~.

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This morning Jane and I wandered about the town while Tom and Ratsame, the ~~girl~~ daughter of the household at which we are presently staying, went to buy needed things. Mukdahan has a quite different ~~complex~~ complexion from towns of similar sizes in the interior of the N.E. The large Vietnamese population is manifest in the innumerable Vietnamese huts (work also in this area by the Thai), a Vietnamese information center, Vietnamese message, shops in which Vietnamese music was coming over the wireless. One is also aware of the left bank as one sees two women in their ~~too~~ traditional phansia and hair ~~to~~ taken back in buns, as one buys a loaf of french bread wrapped in a ~~small~~ scrap of a month old french newspaper, as one examines the bottle after bottle of Parisienne ~~is~~ ~~sent~~ in the shops (apparently though the customs officials are sticky about liquor and cigarettes, they are not so concerned with ~~scud~~). ~~The~~ ~~birth~~ The Chinese influence is also apparent in a very handsome Chinese shrine in mid-town. The architecture of the buildings also shows a different influence in that the cream stucco is as much in place in southern Europe (and one should point out in Southern France) as it is in this oriental

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setting. It would be a pleasant town to spend a week in if one were looking for a quiet picturesque community in a foreign clime.

At noon we went to the bus stop to catch the bus-lorry that was supposed to leave at 12:30 for the village where Tom has been living. Of course, something was wrong with the vehicle and so at 3:15 we finally left town. The first ^{large} village we reached along the way was most unusual in that it has a very large market; is mostly inhabited by Vietnamese (what a fascinating place to make a study). The road to this point had been reasonable in that it had been recently graded by the Highway Dept. However, from here on, the road got increasingly worse and it is easy to understand why Tom needs this trip as few times as possible.

6 km. further on we reached the village of Nam Thang which is now the sulphur center. It seems that in the former sulphur center of Kham Cha-ee, malaria is endemic and the District officials got tired of catching it. Thus, they moved their offices to Nam Thang which is about 15 km. from Kham Cha-ee.

Halfway to Kham Cha-ee we got stuck in a stream bed. Fortunately, however, after all of us had got off, the bus-lorry was able to make it up the opposite shore. There were a few doubtful moments, however, when the vehicle stalled & didn't look as though it would begin again. Finally at 7 a.m. we arrived in Sr. N'ig S'ig and we were immediately taken to the home of the headmaster's home where Tom has lived - the home of headmaster. This house was a real revelation to us.

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The first thing was its size. Folding doors like are on all the stores in Thailand opened us to a huge room which was furnished with a few tables, a few straightback chairs and assorted other things. On being taken upstairs, we found the same big room as below except that it was divided in half by a wall. Sleeping quarters were separated off by curtains.

The second thing was that the balok place was made of teak wood that the teak floors were in a state of high polish and, we were told, were kept this way by daily polishing.

The household normally consisted of Headmaster Saij, 4 of his 7 children, his wife, and a servant who had especially hired to take care of Tom - and for the past year Tom has also been a member. Saij presents a striking contrast to his daughter Ratsame who had been with us since Mukdahan and who had visited us in Mahasarakham.

Saij was a small - no taller than 5' - wiry man who betrayed an obvious uncertainty about his foreign guests. His hospitality was ~~not~~ counterpointed by a fear that things would not be done properly for our sakes. His nervousness was present in his furtive eyes and in his inability to sit down and converse with us for a long time. His daughter, on the other hand, was obviously the mistress of the situation. Immediately as though she went, she is more plump, and is quite self possessed. Immediately on entering the home, she began bustling around to arrange for supper and to see that things were made comfortable. She took Jane upstairs and arranged for her to take ~~the~~ the ubiquitous bath post haste.

When we first arrived, the lighting was all by rather decorative looking

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kerosene lamps which where not light ~~was~~ helped create just the proper atmosphere for our arrival in such a setting. Later when I returned downstairs after changing and a bath, a pressure lamp had been placed overhead.

Dinner consisted of Central Thai style food (using meat & other ingredients which Ratsame had bought in the Mukdahan market this morning) with white rice. Only the 4 of us - Tom, Jane, Ratsame, and me - ate together. All others had already eaten & ate separately. While we were eating a number of villagers - most of whom were friends of the family wandered in to view the new arrivals ~~and~~ Some stayed to play gin rummy which they call "Dummy".

The evening ended with a glass of Thai whiskey - a tradition which Tom had instituted on arrival in the village.

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Last night was quite chilly and we were glad for the heavy Chinese blanket with which we had been provided. Our morning bathing experiences were public as a result of another custom Tom had - inadvertently - begun.

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In Nō:g Sū:g. Tom's farewell party.

1/12/63

Left Nō:g Sū:g & travelled to Nakhon Phanom. Ratsame: & Sister went with us. Stayed at "Civilized Hotel" Bungalows.