

Charles F. Keyes Field Notes, Thailand

March 1 through March 31, 1963.

Field notes in this document were primarily written in Mahasarakham (Changwat Maha Sarakham), Thailand. This document is preceded by field notes written in Mahasarakham in February 1963. This document is followed by notes written in Maha Sarakham province in April 1963.

Mahasarakham

March 1, 1963

Dave and Alene arrived in Mahasarakham for a visit.

Invitation

Music/Voice Teachers Alliance

Invites Professor Charles F Keyes and wife

For dinner and performance in the opening ceremony

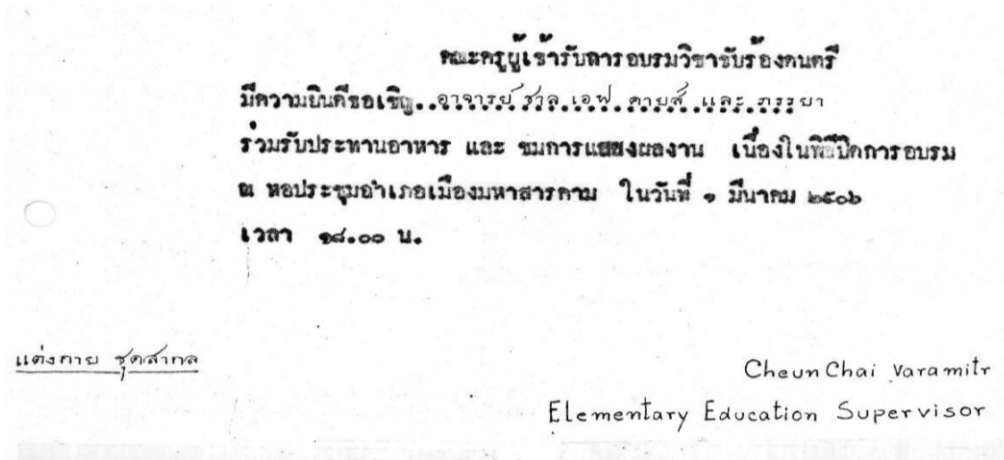
At Muang Mahasarakarm Meeting Hall on March 1st 2506 BE (1963 AD)

At 6:00PM

Dress code: Casual

Cheun Chai Varamirt

Elementary Education Supervisor



Muang Fa Daed

March 3, 1963

Muang Fa Daed (เมืองฟ้าแดด) is an archaeological site at the village of Ban Sema, Tambon Nong Paen, Amphoe Kamalasai, Changwat Kalasin. We (with Dave Wyatt, Lou Smith, John McLean) visited this site by driving from Mahasarakham to Kalasin, then to Kamalasai, and finally to Ban Sema.

As one approaches the village of Ban Sema there is what looks like the remnants of a moat around the outside of the village (rice fields now fill in this 'moat'). We first went to the wat where many of the *bai sēmā* (ใบเสมา) have been collected. Most of these *sēmā* are around the boundary of the wat, but a few are in the wat grounds proper¹. All these *sēmā* are distinguishable in the stylized leaf shape with the rib on the back. Many of the *sēmā* have bas reliefs on the front depicting Buddhist stories in the Dvavarti style². One stone which sets at the corner of a small building attached to the *sala wat* seems to have inscriptions on the back. These, however, are in pretty poor condition.

The wat is interesting but irrelevant. It looks to be quite old and is built in rather unusual style but it certainly isn't contemporaneous with the *sēmā*. There doesn't seem to be any images in the wat of interest.

We walked from the village across the road, to a *that*. This *that* has a modern construction on the top. The most interesting thing about the *that* is that it is ribbed and is octagonal in shape (the lie of which I am not at all familiar). Also, in looking close at it, it seemed as though some of the bricks on the second level were rather new and quite un-weatherworn³. In the fields near the *that* are a large number of hills which are obviously remains because of the bricks which are near them. Also, there are occasional *sēmā* in the fields-some half-buried (an old villager commented that it was difficult to farm because he keeps plowing up bricks. This same farmer escorted us to a hill at some distance away at which there was a Buddhist image sans head (this had been dug up on top of the hill and placed upright). The farmer said that there had been some *khamois* who had come to dig in this place. Also near this

¹ See photo in Chin Yūdī, *Bōrān Watthu Sathān Thua Phrrātcha-ānācak* (Bangkok: Krom Sinlapakōn, 2500), p. 252.

² See pictures in Chin Yūdī, pp. 253-4

³ See Yūdī, p. 255.

hole is another *sēmā* which pictures some being (the Buddha?) doing battle with an elephant. There are several other stones lying nearby.

Bān Nōng Tūn

March 4, 1964

Bun Phra Wēt

Saturday and Sunday (*lāēm 9-10 khām*) are the days for the *Bun Phra Wēt* in BNT. Today people have been making *khāo kiap* – a *khanom* particular to this ceremony and to *Bun Khāo Cī*. Also this evening there will be a "flower making" session at the wat under the direction of the priest.

Jane gives the following description of making *khāo kiap* (L) / *khāo kriap* (T):

"This can be made from white or black *khāo niao*, but the black seemed to be popular. After being steamed it is pounded to a flour in the rice pounder, and mixed either with a little sugar or with water in which a root known in Lao as *tot mā* (ตดหมา) have been soaked. (These stalks have the property of sweetening, in the same way that beet sugar does).

"Once pounded into a sticky paste, the paste is placed in a container and taken away to be made into patties. To prevent the mixture from sticking, banana leaves are coated in grease first (in this case fish grease into which the yolk of a hard-boiled egg had been blended). After similarly greasing one's hands thoroughly, lumps of the rice paste were pulled out of the container, patted into balls in the hand and then pressed down on the greased banana leaf. The rice patty is then pressed outward continually until it forms a flat round. These are then placed on a straw mat to dry, and then the process repeated until all the rice mixture is used up." These patties are then kept until time to be used. Then they are toasted over the fire and while being toasted they expand and the rice puffs out. They are toasted until browned and crisp and then are eaten. Most, however, are put aside and stored until the morning of the bun when they are taken and presented to the wat."

The priest is in charge of the ceremony and it is he who arranges for invitations to other wats for their priests to participate. I visited him at the *kuthi* this afternoon and he showed me a list of different sections of the *phra wēt* story, and the names of the wat or the priest who read/chant that section. The list was broken down into the following categories: (1) Number (consecutive); (2) name of part of Bun Phra Wet story; (3) section of each part by number (6 sections to a part); (4) name of wat, priest, or novice in charge of the section; (5) finally, a

column for those who will "sponsor" or "receive the sermon" of the specific section.

The way of selecting a sponsor or recipient of the sermon was as follows: on slips of paper had been written the name of the part of the sermon, the number of the section, the name of the wat who will send the priest or novice to read the section (in about half the cases, the person in question would be a priest or novice from BNT and in those cases, the name of Phra Mahā Seng, Phra Thōngsai, or Nēn Mai was written instead of the name of the wat). These pieces of paper were then rolled up into small cylinders and placed in a *bāt*. When a person came to volunteer to sponsor a section, he would draw one of these from the *bāt*, and then his name would be written in the appropriate column. As of today, the following people had already agreed to sponsoring a sections Phô Hô, Phô Sīhā, Phô Bunsī, Phū Chuai Chasi, Lung Lāē, Nāi Hōm/ Nāi Lāē (KY), Lung Sao, Nāi Nan (the barber). There are a total of 78 sections to be sponsored and all will be allotted before the time arrives. This means that about 75-80 percent of the households in the village will participate in this part of the bun. The priest showed me the *bailān* that will be used for the ceremony. It is interesting that the version which is being used, entitled *lam mahā chāt* (ล่ำมหาชาติ) is the Northern rather than the NE'ern version though both would be published in Bangkok. He also showed me some traditional *bailān* (in Khōm script) which he said were also the *Bun Phra Wēt* sermons. I asked him if anyone in the village can still write this script and he said that Phô Sīhā can and does.

Books and Literature

In the wat there are several types of books: (1) printed books in Thai script in Thai/Isan concerning religious practices, chants, and sermons; (2) printed *bailān* in Thai script in Thai/Isan (priests style) which are usually sermons; (3) written *bailān* in Khōm script, in Lao/Isan which are either sermons, or (the older ones), *nithān*.

The following is the book which the priest used for sermons connected with *bunbān* and ways of doing things: เทศนาอนิสงส์สมัยใหม่ (เล่ม ๔๔ อนุสัง) โดยพระอาจารย์ ทองดีอินโท (ตรวจแก้โดย มหาเถื่อน อุชุกโร) (พระนคร ร.พ. วัฒนาพานิช). The book contains the sermon, for ex., for *bunhāocī*.

Ranks, Statures, Titles

I was noticing on *Bun Phra Wēt* list that the priest had written and used several titles:

phônjai (L) / *phôyai* (T) (พ่อใหญ่) ("grandfather") for Mr. Hô;

phôcan (L) (พ่อจันทร์) for Mr. Sīhā;

lung (L, T) (ลุง) ("uncle") for Mr. L;

Nāi (L/T) (นาย) ("mister") for Mr. Hōm and Mr. Lāē (KY);

phūsui (L) / *phūchui* (T) (ผู้ช่วย) ("assistant [headman]) for Mr. Chāi;

sammānēn (L/T) (สามเณร) ("Novice") for Novice Mai.

For himself he had written either *phrachā* (T) / *phāsā* (L) (พระชา) or simply *chā/sā* (L) (ชา). This latter title comes to a priest after he has passed through the ceremony of *hōtnām* (L) (สดน้ำ).

Mahasarakham

March 5, 1963

Dave and Alene returned to Bangkok.

Bān Nōng Tūn

March 6, 1963

After a break of some little while during Dave and Alene's visit, I returned to the village. Unfortunately, I missed a *tham bun* ceremony yesterday, but I did find out a little bit about what happened.

Tham Bun

The ceremony was held for all the inhabitants of *khum pā hāt* (though some of the other villagers attended). The ceremony was sponsored by Mr. Phon (the Khum headman), Mr. Phim and Mr. Lā, though the whole village supported the ceremony and festivities.

The events can be divided into two parts: (A) religious, and (B) *sanuk* ("fun"). The first consisted of a non-Buddhist and a Buddhist part.

A. Religious: Buddhist

The priest and three novices from Wat BNT came to the *khum* in the evening at about 6:00. During the evening period, they chanted and sprinkled holy water on the people. The next morning the people fed the priest and the novices. They again chanted. The priest was given ฿20.

B. Religious: Non-Buddhist

The major religious aspect of the ceremony consists of 'tying the *khwan*' for both the villagers and the *khum*. A tray called (*khāi mongkhon*) (ข้าวมงคล) (? sp.) was prepared and consisted of the following things:

flowers – *dōk campā khāo*

raw cotton

cotton thread

cigarettes

candles

banana leaves containing salt, peppers, tobacco, betel

pieces of wood called *kāēn khūn* (แก่นคูณ) used with betel

banana leaves containing lime for betel – *bai phlū* (ใบพลู)

peppers

bowl of "holy water"

As I didn't see the ceremony, I can't describe what was done with those artifacts. However, I do know that each villager had string tied around their wrists, had holy water sprinkled over them (in fact when I arrived in the village, the villagers were throwing water at each other in the fashion of *songkrān*, and the whole *khum* had a string tied from house to house to bring *khwām suk* to the *khum* and protect it against evil *phī*.

C. Sanuk

The major portion of this small festival consisted of *môlam*, food and drinking *sātō*. This was the time when people from other *khums* joined in. A P.A. system had been rented for ฿100 (which all the *khum* members helped pay for). This *khum* has a *môlam* stage and many of the members are quite adept in singing *môlam* or in playing the instruments which go with it. The *khum* has its own *môlam* group and owns the backdrops for the stage (these cost ฿3,950).

D. Some General Observations

This ceremony obviously demonstrates the integration of *khum pā hāt* – the tying of the string from house to house, the joint financial support, etc. In fact, I am beginning to think that this *khum* has many aspects, which sets it off differently from the other *khums*. I certainly find it the friendliest *khum*. Mr. Wichian says that Mr. Tāp in *khum yai* will sponsor a *tham bun* ceremony for that *khum*.

House Building

Tomorrow morning the building of a new house for Mr. Cāēk will begin. At about 7:00 or 7:30 a.m. there will be a ceremony to begin this process. This will be the ย้าย ธรณี (*yāi thorānī*) ceremony, i.e. the ceremony of "moving (*yāi* means "to move") the earth fairies" (*thorānī* means "earth, soil"). When the posts for a new house are set in the ground, the spirits who live there have to be placated. This will be done by putting food which is called พาทวาน (*phā wān*) into the hole for the house stakes.

Visitors to the Village

A. Mr. Pā: This man is a carpenter who has lived in Bangkok for seven years (earning a wage of ฿24 a day). He has returned for the wedding of his younger brother. He can speak a little Chinese because he has worked with Chinese workmen. He is living in House Number 17. He doesn't know if he will return to Bangkok after the wedding.

B. In *khum pā hāt* there is a man who used to live in the village but now lives in Udon province. He has returned to *mālēn*.

C. Assistant Nai Amphoe: Today Mr. Charoen, the *palat amphoe thō* decided to come out with us. He has always been interested in what I am doing and in ray interest in Thai customs. He was quite fascinated about my having eaten horse, for he says he couldn't have done so himself. He also doesn't like *khāo niao*.

D. The Veterinarian: Mr. Prasat, one of the vets in Sarakham, also came with us because one of the buffaloes of Mr. Phon, the headman, has been suffering with diarrhea. However, it seems to be all right now because Mr. Phon had got some medicine from the changwat station. He says that the biggest disease of water buffaloes is a type of hemorrhagic fever.

Education

Mrs. Beng says that there are only three students from the village studying advanced education anywhere. She says that the students here are just not well suited for such continued education.

Later in the afternoon we visited the school at B. Khwao. What a contrast! Here, there are ten teachers for 237 pupils. There is an office for the headmaster (with typewriter). The school is just full of all sorts of aids and proper desks and a small library. The students are much cleaner and much better dressed. It is hard to believe that it is the same tambon as BNT.

Kenaf Growing

I asked the headman if kenaf is grown in the village. He answered that it used to be, but isn't now. His reasons were the following:

1. The price of kenaf has gone down (because of the preference for Pakistani hemp, which at the time of the beginning of kenaf growing in Thailand was in a slump).
2. The productivity of the land decreases after two years of use.
3. There isn't enough spare land.

Bān Nōng Tūn

March 7, 1963

This morning Jane and I went to the village to observe some house building ceremony and other events.

House Building

This day, which was the 13th day of the waxing moon of the 4th moon had been determined a particularly auspicious day for house building. There were in fact two houses being built. The village shaman said that the day was auspicious because it was *wan fū* (วันพุธ) ‘to float’. Determined by knowing whether a piece of something floats or not (must find out more on this). We observed the building customs for the house of Mr. Cāēk in khum wat.

Some beliefs connected with house building

The villagers believe that a house must be completed the same day it is begun. This is because a spirit might see the house, think it is uninhabited, and come to live in it. Thus, the house must be lived in the same day as it is begun whether or not it is finished. Therefore, many of the sections of the house are prepared beforehand, giving it somewhat of a prefabricated appearance.

Cooperative behavior

The person who wishes to build a house in BNT does not hire workers to come and build. Rather, on the day before the house is to be built he goes around to his friends and relatives and announces that he is going to begin building on the next day and requests their help. He provides food and drink for the workers. Only men help in building houses.

Some tools of house building

One of the more interesting instruments used in house building was the *maikôpdin* (ไม้
กอบดิน) (Central Thai). This is merely a long bamboo tube which has had many slits made in the bottom. When a hole has been dug for a house post, this instrument is put into the hole. It is pressed down hard onto the loose dirt. The ends splay out and separate and pick up the soft moist dirt.

Some magical omens

There are several magical devices which are employed during the house building ceremonies:

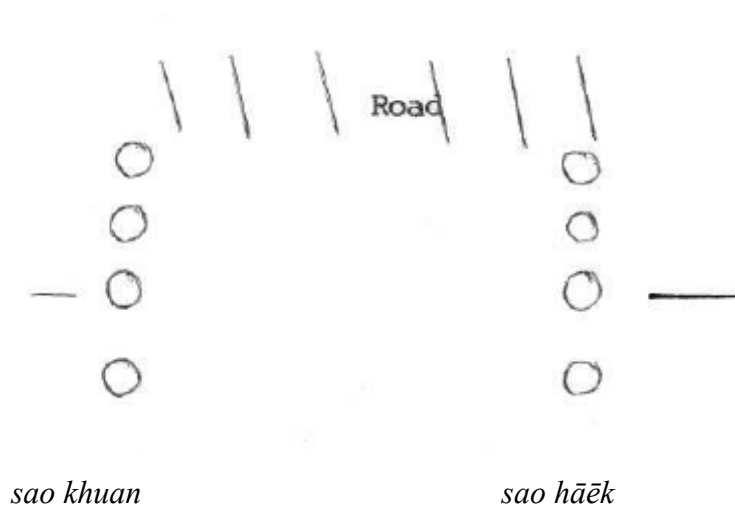
- Leaves: The leaves of the *bai yô* (ใบยอ – *morinda citrifolia*) and *bai khūn* (ใบคูน – *cassia fistula*).
- magical water: This consisted of a bucket full of *nām hōm* (น้ำหอม – "scented water") with some stones which are called *hāē kap sāi* (แห่กับทราย) in it.
- *sao ēk*: One of the posts of the house is made the No. 1 pole. This is called *sao ēk* (เสาเอก) in Thai and (เสา แสก) *sao hāēk* in Lao.
- *sao mongkhon*: Another of the poles is deemed the "auspicious" post. This is called *sao mongkhon* (เสามงคล) in Thai and *sao khuan* (เสาขวัญ) in Lao.
- *njān nok khum* (sp?): Probably one of the most important omens connected with house building are little bits of paper on which are written in Lao characters (known as *tua tham* – ตัวธรรม). There is a piece of paper for each of the 8 directions, i.e. for each of the 8 posts of the house. These pieces of paper are made up by Mr. Bunsī (บุญศรี), who lives in khum pā hāt. He is known as *cān* (จ่านัย) because he has spent many years in learning his secrets. In this case he learned while he was a monk (for 4 years). He copies these characters from the *tamrā bōrān* (ตำราโบราณ). Each of the pieces of paper is different and each is attached to a different one of the 8 posts. These pieces of paper, which remain until they decay, are supposed to protect the house from fire and other dangers. They are known as *njan nok khum* (ยันต์นกคุ้ม) in Lao and *khāthā nok khūm* (คาถานกคุ้ม) in Thai. (There are some in our house which I will try to compare some time.)

- *kuak fāi* (?): This is a bamboo basket which is wound with cotton string and dyed blue string. It is stuffed with the auspicious leaves mentioned above. It is usually used for worshipping fairies who live in trees. It is attached to the *sao khuan*. In the house being built in Khum Yai an *ak* (ອັ່ນ) was used instead of a *kuak fāi*.
- *sai*: A bamboo fish trap known as a *sai* (ໄສ) is also wrapped with string and stuffed with auspicious leaves. It too is attached to the "No. 1" pole.
- The juice of the *matūm* (มะตูม- Central Thai) or *maktūm* (ມັດຕຸມ - Lao), i.e. the aegle marmelos or bael fruit was used for the glue.

Events

Some of the auspicious leaves, the water, and the rocks in the water were taken and put in every hole of the new poles, first going to the hole of the *sao hāēk*, then to the hole of the *sao khuan*.

The following is a diagram showing the relative location of the various poles:



Also, the "fragrant water" was poured on the poles where they will enter the holes. This was done for each of the poles except *sao hāēk*. "This is done not for the fairies, but for auspiciousness."

The *sao hāēk* had the mark ฮ ('H') on it indicating which pole it was. The fish trap was attached to this pole by measuring the fish trap four times along the pole and then attaching it to it. The other basket was attached to the *sao khuan*.

A measuring rod was used to measure the depth that the poles must go into the ground. From the ground to the floor of the house is 1.90 m. The pole goes .78 m. into the ground. The house poles are 5 m. from ground to top.

Feeding the Earth Fairies

Food for the earth fairies consisted of glutinous rice, chew of betel, palm sugar water (*nām ôi*, น้ำอ้อย) and cigarettes. The man in charge – Mr. Sao – took the food in three bunches and placed it around the area each time asking the earth fairy to go away.

Erecting the Poles

Once the earth fairies had been propitiated, then the erection of the poles began. First *sao hāēk* then *sao khuan* then the others as follows:

5 ๐

8 ๐

2 ๐

4 ๐

3 ๐

7 ๐

1 ๐

6 ๐

Numbers 3 and 4 are known respectively as the pole that *pitnū* (ปิดหนู), "shuts out the rat" and the pole that *pitmāēo* (ปิดแมว), "shuts out the cat".

After the poles had been erected with much grunting and groaning, then they were turned to face the 8 directions. Once this position had been made the building in earnest began.

Rice Milling

We watched the rice milling with the traditional mortar and pestle. Three different sized pestles (ສາກມລຸງ (were being used. These go from smaller to larger, the smallest being *sāk njao* (ສາກເຍາ); the medium one, *sāk tao* (ສາກເຕົ້າ?) and the largest called *sāk sôm* (ສາກສ້ອມ?).

"The Lent Watch"

Today a man from Ban Khwao came to the headman with a complaint that his son had been 'engaged' to a girl who lives in BNT. She has a watch which belongs to the man. She claimed that the boy had given it to her in exchange for a 'kiss'. The father claims that she had only been given the watch to look at, as the watch was not the son's to give away. Now the engagement has been broken as the son has found someone else to marry. The father wants the watch back.

Mr. Phon, the man from Ban Khwao, a friend of his from BNT and our little coterie went to the house of the girl and the mother (the father is dead). Much discussion ensued and many villagers gathered around. Finally, Mr. Phon decided that the watch should be returned. This was done, albeit reluctantly. The villagers just shrugged and said that a kiss ought to be free.

Laos

In talking with the owner of the watch, we learned he had got it in Vientiane. It was said that "many" people from Ban Khwao go to Vientiane to find work. The reason why some prefer to go there rather than to Bangkok is that Vientiane is "underdeveloped" and thus it is easier to find work there. This man said that he worked in Vientiane in order to earn enough money to buy the watch.

School

The school children cleared the wat grounds of leaves and papers before the school opened in the morning.

Sū khuan Ceremony

This morning there was also a *sū khuan* ceremony for a woman who had had a baby last month. She had had trouble with it and had to go to the hospital in Sarakham. The baby doesn't seem very well, and so they decided to have there ceremony which was held in the homes of the parents of the child in Khum Wat.

A *bāi sī* had been prepared containing the usual flowers (*dōk chōm*, ดอกโชนม, *dōk lāo*, ดอกลาว), candles, leaves in the form of *bāi sī*, string, betel, cigarettes.

A shaman (*mō suat*) had come from Ban Kut Suai in T. Koen. The reason the local shaman was not used was because this man is the grandfather of the child.

A bowl containing the *bāi sī*, etc. was placed on a tray, candles lit near the tray, a tray of food, rice and water set near the tray also, and shaman began chanting.

The mother sat with the baby (daughter). She had a silk breast scarf on. Then she handed the sleeping baby to another woman and *wai*-ed the chanting shaman, who also wore a silk shoulder cloth. A piece of white cloth was brought and laid between the bowl and tray. The candles were then put out and the mother and a female friend ("there must be a companion in this ceremony") took hold of the bowl.

The shaman then took the bottle from the bowl and poured some of the contents (*sātō*) into a metal scoop. Then he took some of the string and a few other things from the bowl and draped these over his right wrist. He took one of the flowers and put it in *sātō* and sprinkled some drops over the hands of the mother and her friend. He explained some story and then drank the rest of the *sātō*.

Then the shaman took one of the short strings, placed two baht in the hand of the woman, and tied the string round her wrist, chanting some auspicious blessing while doing so. Then other people followed suit, i.e. placed small amount of money in hand of woman, tied the string and said a blessing.

Sātō was being passed around to the men while this was going on. People also tied strings around the wrists of the mother's friend and the baby, but without the accompanying money. The money, it was explained, could be used to buy things for the baby. Also, I noticed some of the elder women tying strings on each other.

The shaman usually gets from 1-5 baht for his services. In this case he received nothing because he was a relative.

Following the ceremony, we had a meal in the house next to that where the ceremony had taken place. We discussed several things during the course of the meal, including:

Tattooing

I had noticed our host was thickly tattooed on his legs and thighs down to below the knees. Also, he had a variety of other types of tattoos on him elsewhere. When asked, he said young people no longer like to be tattooed and there is nobody left in the village who can do tattooing. On his upper arms he had tattooing in *Khôm* script. These are auspicious writings. The pictures on his legs, which were heavy black tattoos offsetting a design left in the untattooed part were probably pictures from the Ramakhian. Some men had designs of birds and other animals.

Mr. Ngao: His father is definitely a farmer.

Village Meeting

A meeting is to be held at the school this afternoon, called by Mr. Hōm, again to discuss the use of and deposit of the money gained at the wat fair. This is the third time the subject has been discussed at a formal meeting. It seems as though the villagers are going to keep on until they have their way against Mr. Thiang.

March 8-15, I did not go to the village because of illness.

Tambon Khwao

March 6-8, 1963

Ceremony at the Old Khmer Shrine in Tambon Khwao

About three kilometers from the main Mahasarakham-Roi-Et highway in Tambon Khwao is an old Angkorian (Khmer) shrine which is known locally as the *kū*, a designation specifically for old shrines dedicated to Hindu deities. From the 6th to 8th of March, an annual (?) festival. Although we did not attend the fête (*ngān song kū*, វ័នស័នក្នុង), I received a program (see below). The events associated with the fête included , paper balloon and rocket competitions, a market, boxing match, and folk opera performances.

สมุดบันทึกประจำวัน

ของ
นายแพทย์กมลกรบ้านเขวาสี เมืองฯ จ.มหาสารคาม

วันที่ ๖ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| เวลา ๐๗.๐๐ น. | ทำพิธีเปิดงาน |
| เวลา ๐๗.๓๐ น. | มีเทศาภิบาล |
| เวลา ๐๘.๐๐ น. | แสดงละคร |
| เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. | เริ่มชมมวย |
| เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. | ชมคอนเสิร์ต รำวง ภาพยนตร์ เริ่มแสดง |

วันที่ ๗ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| เวลา ๐๗.๐๐ น. | มีเทศาภิบาล |
| เวลา ๐๘.๐๐ น. | แสดงละคร |
| เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. | ฟังปาฐกถาธรรม |
| เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. | รวมของไปเขาพระจำเพื่อคนไทย |
| เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. | เริ่มชมมวย |
| เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. | ชมคอนเสิร์ต รำวง ภาพยนตร์ เริ่มแสดง |

วันที่ ๘ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| เวลา ๐๗.๐๐ น. | มีเทศาภิบาล |
| เวลา ๐๘.๐๐ น. | ชมของไปใหญ่ (ประกวดขบวนแห่) |
| เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. | แสดงกลองยาว |
| เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. | ชมคอนเสิร์ต ของไป |
| เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. | ชมมวย |
| เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. | ชมคอนเสิร์ต รำวง ภาพยนตร์ เริ่มแสดง |
| เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. | มีงาน. |

Khon Kaen: Christian and Missionary Alliance

March 18, 1963

Went with Dregers (Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries in Mahasarakham) to visit the CMA leprosarium/Bible School near Khon Kaen and then on to Khon Kaen. At the leprosarium, I consulted Dr. Bucher, regarding my recent disease. He thinks I probably had chicken pox.

Bān Nōng Tūn

March 19, 1963

A Wedding

Today was a wedding ceremony in the village for two couples. We arrived at 8:00 a.m. among a flurry of activity and rushed through the bustle of eating, drinking and ceremonies until 2:00 p.m. when people began to collapse (literally) on mats around the village, the ceremony being over.

It was difficult to discern the "structure" in the events because of the haze of anarchy due to the influx of people from outside the village, the growing number of drunkards, and the seeming unimportance attached to the ceremonies.

First I will attempt to describe the major events of the day. Then I will give annotations of our progression through these events.

Preparations

There were actually two weddings today. One between the daughter of Mr. Cāēk (Miss Keng who was said to be over 30 years old) and Mr. Tā (whose parents were dead). The second wedding was between the son of Mrs. Beng (Mr. Bun) and Miss Wai who lives in Bān Māk Yā (บ.หมากหญ้า), a village some 2-3 kilometers away. As the actual wedding ceremonies are held in the house of the bride, we only saw the wedding between the first two.

Early in the morning a buffalo and an ox were slaughtered to provide food for the day's festivities. The buffalo cost from 4-500 baht, and the ox about 600 baht. This meat plus the quantities of alcohol (*sātō* and the rice whiskey – 40 degrees – made in Sarakham) were paid for by Mr. Pā, the elder brother of Mr. Ta: (groom no. 1), Mr. Cāēk, father of Miss Keng (bride no. 1), Mr. Lē, father of Miss Wai (bride no. 2 from B. Māk Yā) and Mrs. Beng, mother of Mr. Bun (groom no. 2), whose father was dead. Everywhere we went during the day, we were offered food consisting entirely of meat dishes using meat from these animals (plus rice, of course), and whiskey or wine.

Tham Bun

The first ceremony of the day was the feeding of the priest from the wat at the house of Mr. Cāēk. Here, special foods were prepared, in addition to the meat dishes. The priest was fed and the usual act of chants ensued.

The reason for holding this feeding of the priests was incidentally to "make merit" for Mr. Cāēk and for the bride as well. More importantly, it was to give Buddhist sanction to the proceedings of the day. This, however, was the only appearance the priest made throughout the proceedings (he departed the village shortly after being fed). I subsequently enquired if the bride and groom would make special offerings to the priest the next morning (as they do in the Central Plains). The answer was in the negative.

Sū khuan for the Groom

The *sū khwan* (Central Thai) or *sū khuan* (Lao) ceremony is the dominant motif of a Northeastern marriage ceremony. There are two *sū khuan* ceremonies in the course of the day. In this case, the ceremony was held in the home of bridegroom no. 1 and was led by the *mô suat* from T. Koeng (the one who had performed the *sū khuan* ceremony for the mother and the sick child).

Presentation of the *Khan Māk*

One of the most important parts of the wedding ceremony in the Central Plains is the presentation of the *khan māk* (ขันหมาก) bowl containing betel and areca presented to the bride's guardian during the marriage ceremony"). Phya Anuman in his *Praphēnī rūang tāēngngān bāo sāo khōng Thai* devotes a large part of his discussion on Thai marriage customs to the *khan māk*. Usually, in the Central Plains the *khan māk* is taken from the groom's house to the bride's house in accompaniment with a large procession.

We saw the *khan māk* being prepared in the house of the bridegroom during the time that the *sū khwan* ceremony was being done for the bridegroom. On a brass tray (with pedestal) were placed some candles and the leaves of *dōk lap*. Then was laid a cloth in which were put betel, areca, tobacco and rolled cigarettes. Finally part of the bride price was placed inside the cloth as well.

Bride price

I wish to make a slight diversion to explain about the bride price (*ngoen sin sôt* เงินสินสอด), In the case of the first couple, the bride price was ฿496; for the second couple, ฿566. Ordinarily the parents (i.e. the father) of the groom would pay this amount, but in the case of the first couple the parents of the bridegroom were dead. Thus the young man had raised the amount out of his own earnings.

In the case of the first couple, *thaokāē* (เต้าแก่) of the groom (Mr. Chai) gave ฿100 to the father of the bride to seal the marriage contract. The rest was to be paid at the time of the marriage. When Mr. Chai made up the *khan māk* he only put ฿200 into the cloth on the tray. The other ฿196 he placed in his pocket.

When he had placed the money in the *khan māk* he proceeded to go to the house of the bride alone. There was no procession and the groom did not accompany the *khan māk*. The *thaokāē* entered the room where the wedding "ceremony" would take place. In this room was Mr. Cāēk, the *thaokāē* of the bride and others.

The first thing that happened was a small tray of food was taken from the room. This is called the *khai kehung* and is used to propitiate the gods (*wai phī*). [N.B. This last later proved to be incorrect. See *khāi phra hūng* in notes of March 26, 1963 - Evening.]

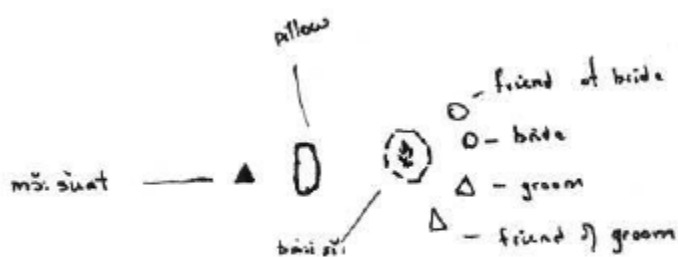
When Mr. Cāēk and Mr. Chai were seated, Mr. Chai presented the *khan māk* to the *thaokāē* of the bride. This latter person looked at the money in the cloth and then announced it was not the full amount. He showed the money to Mr. Cāēk. Some discussion ensued. Finally, Mr. Chai took the other ฿196 from his pocket and laboriously counted it out. Mr. Wichian said that this is called *māk khāo kū sim* [Slightly incorrect. See notes of March 26, 1963].

Entrance of the Groom

After the *khan māk* had been presented, two *mô suat* came into the room (one from the village, the other from T. Koeng). Then there was considerable commotion at the stairway to the house. A group of young men were barring the way to the stairs. Mr. Chai ran and got some liquor and came back to the stairs where he 'bribed' the young men. When this had been done, the groom and his party entered the room.

The Marriage *sū khuan*

When the groom had entered, the room was ready for the marriage *sū khuan*. First a *bāi sī* was placed in the center of the room. This was on a tray with betel, areca, tobacco, candles, flowers, string, etc. In front of this was a large pillow with a smaller pillow on top of it. The *mô suat* from BNT sat in front of this pillow. Facing him across the *bāi sī* were the bride and groom who were each accompanied by a young friend (male for groom, female for bride).



The *mô suat* had a silk *phākhaomā* thrown over his shoulder (as he has had on every occasion that I have seen him perform). He also took a skein of cotton thread and wrapped these around his wrist. In this skein was a chew of betel and two one baht notes.

The groom had a white cloth over his shoulder. This cloth was open. The bride also had a piece of cloth over her shoulder, but it was folded. The dress of the couple was not special: she had on an ordinary navy-blue *phāsin* and a white blouse. He had on dark trousers and a long-sleeved white shirt.

First, the *mô suat* got up and went to the couple. They *wai*-ed him and then their parents. A candle was lit and the *mô suat* began to chant in Lao. First, the bride's hand was touching his, then their hands were placed on the tray, palm upwards. Also the hands of the "friends of the bride and groom" were placed on the *bāi sī* tray.

After the ceremony had gone thus for a short while, the *mô suat* took a water scoop and poured *sātō* into it. He then took a flower and stirred it into the *sātō*. He would stir and then sprinkle the liquid over the *bāi sī* and the hands of the four. He chanted all the time.

When this was finished, Mr. Chai began to collect money from each person in the room (1, 5, 10, 20 baht notes). With each donation (which was written in a book), the people in the room tied the strings on the wrists of the bride and groom. Each time a string was tied to the wrist of the bride, he would support her arm by putting a hand under her elbow. She did the same for him.

All during the ceremony some people would wipe the perspiration from the faces of the couple and their friends.

The giving of money proceeded. The Kamnan from Ban Khwao came and donated 5 baht. Some money was placed in the hands of the groom. The biggest donation came from Mr. Cāēk, the father of the bride, who gave ฿100. When everybody had contributed, the total was announced – ฿258. I had also seen earlier in the morning the collecting of money in the house of the bridegroom. This was also noted down in a book. I was told that both collections of money would be used for the personal use of the bride and groom.

The *thaokāē* of the groom then took a bowl containing flowers and candles. This was placed in front of the bridegroom (the *bāi sī* and cushion having been removed). The couple *krāp*, i.e. bowed with their heads touching the floor. The *thaokāē* gave his blessing. When this was finished, the candles and flowers were passed out to the guests. These were to be used for worshipping the Buddha on the family altar. It was also explained that the couple must worship the Buddha before they went to bed at night. When this was over, the couple departed. They separated and went to eat.

rüan hô: The ceremony had taken place in the new house of Mr. Cāēk. Part of this house consisted of the bridal house or *rüan hô*. We were shown the bridal chamber.

Miscellaneous Observations

With the departure of the bride and groom, the ceremonial part of the wedding was finished, though the feasting and drinking would continue for as long as the food and drink held out.

During the morning we had processed first from the house of Mr. Cāēk where we had seen the *tham bun* to the house of Mrs. Beng (the mother of the second bridegroom). Here we had been served broiled meat and *lāp* and liquor.

There was *khāēn* music in the background.

Then we went to the house of the bridegroom, Mr. Tā. On the way we passed some women who were carrying some things that looked like *bāi sī* covered with cheese cloth. I never saw these things again.

At the house of the first groom, we saw the making of the *bāi sī* for the *sū khuan* ceremony for the groom. They used *dók rak* (ดอกรั้ง) for this *bāi sī*. The groom had many strings tied around him when this ceremony was over.

When we went to the house of the bride at the time that the *thaokāē* took the *khan māk*, we met at the house a middle-aged woman who was dancing and singing in traditional N.E. style.

There were many guests and relatives (*phī nōng*) from other villages in BNT. In fact it was almost difficult to find a villager for all the strangers. The proceedings took place entirely in Khum Wat.

After the ceremonies were over, we went to the house of Mr. Hōm in Khum Yai for lunch. We had *lāp* and *tôm khriiang nai* (boiled innards of buffalo). No more liquor.

School was not closed for the day so that the teachers did not participate in the proceedings.

Analysis

It seems as though the dominant motif of the proceedings was the *sū khuan* ceremonies. This contrasts considerably with marriage customs in the Central Plains. In a way the ceremony in the N.E. is more religious in that the shaman has a leading role, whereas in the Central Plains, the wedding is officiated a civil official.

References

For a description of a wedding ceremony on the Central Plains, see Kaufman, *Bangkhuad*, pp. 148-156.

For a general description of wedding customs in Thailand see Phya Amman's work on the subject: ประเพณีเรื่องแต่งงานบ่าวสาวของไทย

For a description of marriage customs in Laos see Thao Nhoi Abhay, "Les rites du marriage" in *Aspects du Pays Lao*, pp. 2-22.

Miscellaneous

During the day, several other hints occurred extraneous to the wedding. I met the son of Mr. Chai who is studying in Sarakham. He says that he speaks Chinese. Also he knows some English. Studying in *Mathayom* 4.

Mr. Wichian was going back and forth to Ban Khwao where they were having a big pig sale.

Ban Nong Tun

March 20, 1963

Marriage

I talked with Mr. Thiang and Mr. Sanit about the weddings. I asked if the marriages held yesterday had to be registered at the Amphoe office. Mr. Thiang said that usually marriages were not registered there (though the law states they should be registered within 15 days). However, Mr. Phon does note down all marriages, deaths, births, etc. in order to report these to the amphoe.

The two *sū khuan* ceremonies have separate names. The ceremony for the bride groom is known as *sū khuan nôi* or *bāi sī nôi*. The ceremony for both of the couples is known as *sū khuan yai* or *bāi sī yai*. I enquired about the nature of the *khuan*. This is said to be a soul (*winyān* วิญญาณ). The *khuan* can wander and must occasionally be called back to the body – ‘to call the *khuan*’. The first *sū khuan* ceremonies have separate names. The ceremony for the bride ceremony is to call the *khuan* of the young man. The second ceremony is held to call the *khuan* of the couple at the same time. I enquired as to why there is a special *sū khuan* ceremony for the groom. I didn't get a very satisfactory answer but one of the reasons seemed to be to raise money for the groom.

Mr. Chai was a relative of the bridegroom.

Mr. Thiang said the *sū khuan* is a Brahmin ceremony.

Immigration

Mr. Hōm and his family migrated last year from Bān Dôn Dū. His place in Bān Dôn Dū had been flooded and destroyed in the last flood so he migrated to BNT. Mr. Phim also migrated to BNT from Ban Khwao. He came last December.


There doesn't seem to have been much migration from the village in the last few years. The last migration was a family who went to Udon. Migration to Bangkok seems to be seasonal and rarely permanent. I asked about migration to Vientiane. There seems to be little migration from BNT though more from Ban Khwao. An interesting statement was made to the affect that "people from this area like to join the Laotian army because they have more chance to be officers than in the Thai army". Also, the point was made that people from this area like to join the Laotian air force because they get an opportunity to fly.

Mahasarakham

March 20, 1963

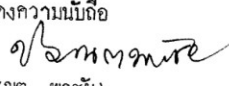
Invitation to Function at Teachers' College

We received an invitation to an function at the Teachers' College for the beginning of a training workshop:



ที่ ๓๒๔ / ๒๕๐๖
๒๐ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖
วิทยาลัยครูมหาสารคาม

เรื่อง ขอเชิญเป็นเกียรติประกอบ
เรียน **มิสเตอร์ไคย์และมิสซิสไคย์**
อ้างถึง หนังสือวิทยาลัยที่ ๒๒๔ / ๒๕๐๖ ลงวันที่ ๔ มีนาคม ๒๕๐๖
ตามหนังสือที่อ้างถึง วิทยาลัยไค์ขอเรียนเชิญท่านเพื่อไปเป็นเกียรติ
ประกอบการรวมวิชาหัตถศึกษาในวันที่ ๒๔ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖ เวลา ๑๖.๐๐ น. นั้น
หน่วยอบรมมีความจำเป็นต้องเลื่อนเวลาประกอบการรวมเป็นวันที่ ๒๕ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖
เวลา ๑๓.๐๐ น. จึงไค์เรียนเชิญมาเพื่อโปรดทราบ หวังว่าคงได้รับความร่วมมือ
ด้วยดี ขอขอบคุณอย่างสูงมา ณ โอกาสนี้.

ขอแสดงความนับถือ

(นายประจักษ์ พรชัย)
ประธานกรรมการอบรมหัตถศึกษามหาสารคาม.

แจ้งกาย "ชุดตรวจการหัตถศึกษา"

Had dinner with Dregers.

Bān Nōng Tūn

March 21, 1963

Miscellaneous

Older men in the village one addresses as *phô yai* (literally, "great father"). Middle-aged men one addresses as *phô lung* (literally, "father-uncle")⁴, and middle-aged women (or those older than oneself) as *māē* (literally, "mother").

Transportation from Village

Mr. Ngao said that various trucks and buses go from T. Nōng Kung through BNT up until the rains make it impossible for them to travel the road. The cost of transport is three baht

⁴ This is probably wrong. I think only *lung* is used.

from the village to Sarakham. It costs two baht to go from the corner (Roi-et-Sarakham Road) to Sarakham.

Customs Concerning Violent Deaths

On Tuesday evening in Sarakham there had been a rather hideous murder where a man chopped off the head of his son-in-law (a Chinese from Bangkok). I discussed this subject with Mr. Ngao and "the trader" from Khun P.M. They said that when a person dies a violent death, there can be no cremation. The body is buried instead. Death by violence is called *tāi hōng*, and when such a death occurs "there are many *phī*". I asked if people would live in a house where a person had died a violent death. The answer was that people could if a special *mô* had performed an exorcism ceremony.

Wedding

Mr. Cāēk said that his daughter who was recently married was 22 and her husband 23. They are living in the same house as him. (Incidentally, the age which he gave for his daughter conflicts with what I had heard before, i.e. 30.

Buddhism

In the sixth month (April-May) there will be an ordination. Two or three people will be ordained at this time for a short period (this is not the ordination for *phansā* (Buddhist Lent), which comes in the eighth month. This month seems to be a popular time for short terms in monkhood – Mr. Suksarn, the head of the English Department at the Teachers' College will be ordained on the 28th of April.

Village Religion

I enquired of Mr. Ngao about the *phī*. He said that he had never seen any and thus didn't know if they existed or not. He said he thought there were none in America, and that Americans didn't believe in them. "The trader" from Khum P.H. said, however, that *phī* would make knocking sounds in houses, I said to Mr. Ngao that there were no *cao thī* in the village. He said no, but there was a *sān cao*. By this he meant the shrine of *pūtā* in the forest. There are also *phī*

at *lak müang*. In the fifth or sixth month there will be a ceremony of "feeding the *phī*" at *lak müang*.

Education

Illiterate villagers go to the schoolteachers to have them write letters. One villager came to Mr. Sanit today to have him write a letter.

School is closed during the month of April (the hottest month) and during August (rice-planting ?).

Khum Nōn Khwao Nōi

I visited Khum Nōn Khwao Nōi today with Mr. Sanit to gather census data. Mr. Phonmā, the headman of the khum, says that there are 23 households in this khum (though I got information on 24).

Mr. Phonmā had just sold a pig for 300 baht. I asked if he sold it in Ban Khwao. He said no, he had sold it in Ban Chiang Hian. There are about 30 pigs in the khum. Mr. Wichian had investigated the pigs in this khum before because they were something special.

Economic Activity

I learned from Mr. Ngao today that the villagers do sell rice for a profit. He also showed me bundles of raw kapok which were being sold.

Bān Nōng Tūn

March 23, 1963

Food

Yesterday in the village I was offered fried beetles. Today I was offered lizard curry (in which they took a lizard shot from a tree, let it die, and then cut it up and put it into the stew without cleaning it).

Economic Activity

Today as I was walking past Mr. Hōm's house, I noticed he is building a new structure in front. I asked if this was a granary and he said no. it was a store for selling "small things". There

is also a new food stand in the village (run by villagers) which sells *som tam*, bananas and miscellaneous other food items.

I observed the whole charcoal making process. First the wood is piled up and it, then branches with leaves are piled on top. On this loose dirt is thrown. Then more branches, and then more dirt. Holes are poked in the mound to aerate the burning matter. Charcoal making is only done during the dry season. I also saw a man in a truck who comes and buys sacks of charcoal for nine baht (they sell for 14 baht in town).

Cooperative Behavior

I visited the house of Mr. Tāp with a young man from Khum P.H. He is having the roof of the sleeping quarters of the house repaired. A bunch of men were around. Subsequently, we were all given a large meal and *sātō*. It struck me that there is an awful lot of sharing in the village – if one man has more food, people come around to partake of it. People call on friends and relatives to help when a project is too large for the immediate family.

Sharing is certainly not carried on to the extent it is among the poverty-stricken Crow Indians of Montana. There the poverty is so prevalent that the people must help one another to survive. But because of the sharing, personal initiative is stifled and the progress of a single family is rendered impossible. Among the villagers in BNT, I would say that definite forces exist for the sharing of surpluses and for helping one another. There are also social pressures against working to make oneself conspicuously above the other, economically speaking. On the other hand I would say there are strong individualist tendencies, e.g. Mr. Ngao, Mr. Phonmā and his rice mill, Mr. Hōm and his new store, etc. However, I would say the traditional ideal would be something like this: If one is to be a member of the community, then one must conform to patterns of sharing, suppression of individual initiative relative to the group good, cooperative behavior against the working for money. If one wished to exert his individuality and desire for personal advancement, one would leave the village, if only for short periods. However, a new pattern is evolving where individual activity is manifesting itself within the village context: not only are outsiders like Mr. Hōm and Mr. Ngao working to better their own ends, but there is an obviously better house in Khum P.H., there is the rice mill and pigs (and better house) of Mr. Phonmā. However, the accouterments of personal advancement are oftentimes themselves thought of as "village property", e.g. radios. Certainly here is a transitional case.

Eating Habits

When I have eaten with the villagers, the usual practice has been of the men eating together and the women and children eating alone, though sometimes [138] the head of a household will eat with his family while guests eat separately. The food is set in front of the people. After hands are washed, they begin eating. There is no cue from the host when to begin or stop eating. When one feels he has had enough, he goes and washes his hands and drinks water (a habit that is very much insisted upon).

Smoking and Drinking

Both smoking and drinking are very prevalent habits in the village. Smoking consists of home grown tobacco wrapped in banana leaves (or occasionally paper). One sees quite young boys smoking, though not continuously. Cigarettes are quite often passed around to various people. Boxes full of tobacco and banana leaves are always offered when a guest comes in (as is water). There is rarely a group of men where there isn't tobacco present. Women never smoke (to my observation) but chew betel if anything. Very few men, old or young, ever chew betel.

The most common alcoholic drink in the village is a sweet rice wine called *sātō*. This is paraded out on almost any pretext. There seems to be no inhibitions against drinking in the morning. Stronger drink is a rice whiskey (40 degrees) which is distilled locally in Mahasarakham. With both wine and whiskey, the practice of drinking is to pour a bit out into a water scoop or glass (according to the desires of the person) by a host. This is then handed to each person in turn (the highest status person being served first or right after the host who may test the wine). The person then must drink the proffered drink in one swig, leaving a few drops which are poured out onto the ground before the next person drinks. Women and children rarely drink, but do so on occasion. I have seen very young children drink a little bit of rice wine.

Rapport

Before coming to Thailand, Jay Ingersoll had chivied me about being a pipe smoker. He said I should be a cigarette smoker so that I could offer cigarettes as "gifts". However, my pipe has been a real hit. People who normally roll their own cigarettes feel no hesitation in coming up

and sponging "American tobacco" from me. Also many villagers have shared my pipe and get a real kick out of it.

Maharakham

March 24, 1963

Mr. Bunsak

This evening in Sarakham we had a visit from Mr. Bunsak Thapsuri (บุญศักดิ์ ท้าสุริ), who is the young man I had met in the village the day I ate horse. He had just completed Mathayom 6 in Sarakham. He was born in BNT, but his parents are now dead. His elder brother is Mr. Lā, the "trader" in Khum P.H.

This fellow has had a most interesting career. He went into the monastery after his parents died. He first entered in Thā Tūm where he remained for two years. He then transferred to Sarakham where he was for three years. He reached "1st class". He is a relative of Phra Mahā Seng. He still lives in a wat in Sarakham.

After he came out of the wat, he went back to school. He is one of two students from BNT who are studying in Sarakham. The other is the son of Mr. Chai who is Mathayom 4.

Mr. Bunsak has also lived two-three months in Vientiane where he worked as the gardener at the North Vietnamese consulate. He claims that he understands Vietnamese though he can't speak it (though I have my doubts, because he also says he can read French and speak English, which he can't).

He is now working for a company in Sarakham and apparently has a job which takes him into the countryside as the company's representative. He also mentioned an idea of wanting to join the air force if he could pass the examination.

Bān Nōng Tūn

March 25, 1963

Records at School:

Today I was given access to some of the school records. Some of the material is not complete and will have to be added to later:

CHILDREN BORN IN 2499 (1958)

The following is a listing of children born in the year 2499, their sex, birthdate and parent's name. (see next pages)

TEACHERS AT BAN NONG TUN SCHOOL SINCE 2502 (1959)

(see next pages)

[tables in pdf form]

[THIS TABLE SHOULD ALSO BE VIEWED IN pdf FORM]

Education

There will be a *wai khrū* day in June after the next term opens. There will be a closing ceremony of the term near the end of March, or at least there is supposed to be. Mr. Thiang keeps records of what time teachers come each morning and when they leave in the evening. I rather amusedly noted in these records that he always arrives first, followed by his wife and then Mr. Sanit, at 8:00, 8:10 and 8:15 respectively. All always leave at 4:00 according to the records.

Maps of the Village

Among the records of the school are two maps of the village both apparently made about the same time. One is an ink drawing, while the other is in color. The colored one cannot be more than four years old as it shows the rice mill which didn't exist before then. This map was apparently made by a former headmaster. At the time of making he lists 108 households and 642 people (in the legend). I will use this map as a basis for drawing up one of my own.

Records at School

There are a variety of records available at the school from which most interesting information can be obtained:

- 1) Each class: student's name, birthdate, parents' names, grades and whether passed or failed.
- 2) Plans for new school.
- 3) Lists of past teachers.
- 4) An astrological paper made by a former teacher.

Food

According to Mr. Bunthiang, Thais recognize the following tastes: a) *som* (ส้ม) or *prīeo* (เปรี้ยว), i.e. "sour"; (b) *fāt* (ฝาด), i.e. "astringent"; (c) *chāng* (จาง) or *chūt* (จืด), i.e. "tasteless, bland"; d) *wān* (หวาน), i.e. "sweet", and e) *khem* (เค็ม), i.e. "salty". I was offered a dish of raw mangoes (said to be very *fāt*) which one eats with salt, fermented fish and green peppers.

Mr. Thiang

Amazed at his geographical knowledge, particularly in contrast with very limited concept of the outside world of the villagers. Mr. Thiang is very intelligent and knowledgeable for one of his position [villagers often ask "what direction does one go to get to America"?].

Village Implement

The *sawing* is a dip net. To a piece of circular wood is attached a 'crocheted' net.



School

Today as yesterday, the students were working in the field where the new school will be, clearing brush and scrub. Apparently at this time of year when examinations are over, but school is not formally closed, many schools have projects of this sort. I saw students at B. Chiang Hian working in their school yard as well. There were also students yesterday in BNT helping clean up the school building and clearing up leaves from the (old) school grounds.

Each morning school begins by the raising of the flag and the singing of national songs. These songs are usually led by pupils.

Mr. Sanit

Mr. Thiang says that Khun Nit has taken a job at the amphoe office and may or may not return to teach next year.

Travelers

While sitting at our house a procession of travelers on their way home from some celebration passed by. As they reached the store, they came and helped themselves to water courtesy of Mr. Ngao.

Bān Nông Tùn

March 26, 1963

Marriage

This evening discussed some of the things connected with the wedding with Mr. Wichian.

- a) *sū khuan*: I asked why there were two ceremonies of *sū khuan* at the time of the marriage, one for the groom, one for the groom and bride. The first Mr. Wichian explained was a ceremony for a person moving from or leaving a house. Since the groom is leaving his house to go live in the house of his parents-in-law, there must be this ceremony for him. Also said the *sū khuan* is a Brahmin ceremony (this is the general belief). A *mô suat* must always be present at the ceremony (and officiate), no matter how small it be. The *sū khuan nôi* is a small ceremony usually *en famille* at which food and liquor are not usually served to guests. Where the ceremony is held for a priest it is not called a *sū khuan* ceremony, but a *bāi sī* ceremony. *Khan bāi sī* is the name of the collection of items (including the banana leaf construction which is sometimes also called *bāi sī*) over which the ceremony is performed:
- b) *Khan somma*⁵: The *khan somma* (*samā*) (ขันสมา) (local language) consists of candle plus flower as we were given at the conclusion of the wedding ceremony. In conjunction with marriage, these items have several uses:
- c) *Khan somma* (*samā*) *thaokāē* (ขันสมาเต่าแก่): Immediately after the ceremony was over, the couple had together bowed before Mr. Chai with their palms extended and their faces touching the floor. Usually this would be done in front of the father of the groom, but since he was dead, Mr. Chai as the *thaokāē* for the groom's side stood instead of the groom's father.

⁵ *Somma* should be *samā* (สมา), as in *khô samā* (ขอสมา), to ask forgiveness. Cf. N. Thai *sūmā* (สุมา).

- d) *Khan somma (samā) phua* (ขันสมาผ้า): On the wedding night, the new bride must kneel in bed and *wai* her new husband, using the *khan somma (samā)*. Other wives are supposed to do the same thing even *wan phra*. Such "worship" of the husband is supposed to be auspicious for the wife.
- e) When a couple has been married 3-4 days, they are supposed to go to the house of the father. There they present him with some gifts which are called *khriang somma (samā)* (เครื่องสมา). These gifts usually consist of a pillow, silk, a piece of cloth called *phā sinmī* (ผ้าชิ้นหมี่) (this is a multi-colored silk cloth)⁶, and a sarong.
- f) *Khāi Phra Hūng* (ชายพระสูง): Just before the wedding *sū khuan* began, I saw a small plate of food taken out. This is called *khāi Phra Hūng*. (I had mistakenly heard *khāi ke hung* at the time – see notes of March 19, 1963. *Phra Hūng* is a Buddhist saint who "lived at the time of the Buddha". He supposedly protects people against dangers and protects ceremonies against bad things.⁷ Thus, at the beginning of the ceremony he was given food in order to have him "protect" the ceremony.
- g) *ōm*: at the beginning of the ceremony, I heard the word *ōm* (โอม). This is a magical word (*khāthā*) used at the beginning of many ceremonies.⁸
- h) *māk khāo phū sim*: After the *thaokāē* of both sides agreed that the sum being given as the bride price, tobacco was passed around. The side of the bride offered tobacco to the *thaokāē* of the groom. The *thaokāē* of the groom then said that the tobacco was very good, with a good flavor. He says this to bring the couple good fortune, for if the taste was not good, it is bad for the bride and groom to live together. This is called *māk khāo phū sim* (Lao) or *māk khāo phlū chim* (Thai) (หมากข้าวพลูชิม)⁹. Literally this means the "tasting of betel" and certainly betel must have been used before tobacco became popular.

⁶ This is a traditional Lao tie-dye silk cloth worn as a lower garment by women.

⁷ I think that *Phra Hūng* may be the Lao epic hero *Thāo Hūng*.

⁸ See McFarland, p. 1016.

⁹ I am not sure if ข้าว is the right word.

- i) Registration of marriage: The law requires that all couples register their marriage at the amphoe. However, in the village many do not even though this is illegal.

Bān Nông Tūn

March 27, 1963

ōm (โอม)

This morning in the village we discussed the word *ōm* again. Mr. Wichian thought he had told me wrong, so he asked the villagers. For one thing, he says the word should be spelled *ōm* (โอม) instead of *om* (อม). (The word is translated as "a word uttered before saying a prayer" in the dictionary.

However, it is also used in a special sense in the N.E. when used in conjunction with marriage. *klāng tām ōm hā* (กลางตำโอมหา) means that when a couple has agreed to marry, the boy approaches his father to go ask for his lover's hand in marriage. This is the same meaning as *sū khō* (สู่ขอ) in Thai which means "to ask for the hand of (someone) in marriage".

Innovation

Mr. Wichian has persuaded the villagers to buy some special rice seed from the agricultural station in Sarakham. He wants this rice to be demonstrated for the villagers. The rice he wants planted is called *khāo bao* (ข้าวเบา) in Thai and *khāo dô* (ข้าวดอ) in Lao. This is a fast-maturing rice; it matures in 3-4 months.

A Troubadour

While we were sitting in Khum Pā Hāt this morning, two young boys entered the village. The youngest boy was leading the other, who was blind. The blind boy was carrying a *sō* (ซอ) a kind of Thai violin which has two strings. This particular instrument was made of a tin can, two pieces of wire, and a wooden handle. He also had a bow. The boy couldn't have been more than 15. He sat down in the midst of the group and played songs from *môlam* and Thai boxing.

I was utterly amazed, not only at his extreme competence but at the versatility of his rather crude instrument. As he played, more and more people gathered around and requested different renditions. He played like this for over half an hour. Finally people began bringing tobacco and giving it to him. He would feel the growing pile and if he felt it wasn't enough would play a little more. When he finally decided he had enough, he headed off towards the rest of the village. I was told he travels to many villages.

Village Radio I met Mr. Hōm who also has a radio.

Women's Work

I saw a woman carrying a large load of firewood. It was explained to me that women collect all the firewood. They also go and get the water supply for each house.

Village Improvements

Mr. Phon is currently building a new toilet in the wat grounds (there is an old one there). Mr. Phā is doing the carpentry. Mr. Wichian wasn't particularly happy about this "John" because it will fill up too quickly. But Mr. Phon said the village doesn't have much money and so can't build a fancy type.

Forthcoming Events

In the sixth month (lunar calendar) there will be another wedding (maybe for two couples). In April there will be the Songkrān Festival. On the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th of April, there will be a big event at the *kū* for the whole tambon and including all the accouterments of a wat fair.

Visitor to Bān Nōng Tūn

There was a visitor to the village today. He is a man who was born in BNT, but hadn't lived there for 24 years. Twenty-four years ago, he joined the army (c. 1938). He was subsequently stationed in Khorat. During World War II he was sent to Petchabun province where he still is. There he met his wife and settled down. He now says he is a *mô* for the army (probably a medic).

The subject of Petchabun province brought up an interesting point of discussion among the villagers. It seems that during or just prior to World War II, P.M. Phibun Songgram had decided Bangkok was too vulnerable to enemy attack and wanted to move the capital to a more secure place. He chose Petchabun.

He first decided to build roads to the site of the new capital. In order to build these he employed the traditional Thai pattern of corvée labor. He "recruited" people from Roi-et, Kalasin and Sarakham to go to work on these roads. Petchabun is known for its malaria (even yet). Many people from those N.E. provinces where malaria is relatively rare died of it in Petchabun. Thus, many people from the village, including Mr. Cāēk, ran away to hide (away from the village) when the government recruiters came to get laborers. For this reason, Mr. Cāēk said Phibun was a "bad dictator".

Mr. Thiang versus the Village

The issue of the new school is becoming more and more one which is pitting Mr. Thiang against the village. He has now gone and tried to requisition trees from the forest of the village spirit (*pūtā*) to use for the school building. (This is roughly equivalent, in a Catholic town, to ask to tear down the church and use the stones for a city hall). The villagers were quite incensed by Mr. Thiang's asking. Sometimes, I feel he purposely tries to alienate himself from the village.

School

Mr. Wichian said he had asked the Community Development Department to give 12,500 baht towards the new school. I am not too pleased at this, which I feel might have something to do with me. For one thing, it is giving the village something for nothing. Secondly, it means the school is no longer strictly a village project.

Khon Kaen

March 28, 1963

Invitation to Ordination

Today, we went to an ordination of Suksan Suksombūn (สุขสันต์ สุขสมบุญ), an *ācān* who teaches English at Mahasarakham Teachers' College. The ordination was held at Wat

Sīcantharāwāt (วัดศรีจันทร์ทราวาส) in Khon Kaen town, Suksan's home town. The following is the invitation we received for this event.

สุบสันต์ สุบสมบรณ์
ขอกราบลาอุปสมบท ณ พัทธสีมา วัดศรีจันทร์ทราวาส
อำเภอเมือง จังหวัดขอนแก่น
ในวันอาทิตย์ที่ 28 เมษายน 2506
เวลา 9.30 น.
กรรมใดที่ได้ล่วงเกินท่านด้วย กายกรรม วจีกรรม มโนกรรม
ขอท่านได้โปรดอโหสิกรรมแก่ข้าพเจ้าด้วย

Bān Nōng Tūn

March 30, 1963

Miscellaneous

Mr. Sao (เสาร์), the *mōlam* director for Khum Wat has just returned from a visit to his mother-in-law who lives in a village near Muang Phol [Phon].

Mr. Hōm, the man who is building a new store, is the younger brother of the headman. He migrated from Bān Dōn Dū when the floods ruined him last year.

Mr. Thiang says that the headman and Mr. Ngao don't get on well together.

Mr. Sanit has definitely left the teaching profession to become a clerk at the amphoe office.

Religion

I had a discussion with Mr. Phon, Mr. Sao, Mr. Cāēk and a few others regarding religion. Mr. Phon says next month there will be an ordination of seven to eight monks. I asked how long these monks would stay in the wat, but nobody knew. Some stayed a few days (15 was

mentioned as the lowest), others stay in for years. When a person is ordained he "makes merit" for himself, his parents, and the whole village.

Also I asked about novices. Only some boys become novices. They are *lūk sit* (ลูกศิษย์) i.e. "pupil, disciple", to the priest(s). While they are novices, they study religion, Thai language, Pāli. The group pointed out that a man should be ordained before he marries. However, a person can also be ordained after marriage. I asked what was the rank of the priest in the wat. The answer was that he didn't have a high rank because he hadn't studied long.

Kantharawichai

March 31, 1963

Today went with Mr. Thiang, the headmaster of Bān Nōng Tūn, to visit his family in Kantharawichai. In this amphoe of Mahasarakham there are two Buddha statues. There is a legend concerning these two statues. It is said that once there was a son of the "Nai Amphoe " (the word used, but meaning some local leader of some sort). This young man wanted also to be the district leader, but he was foiled in his ambitions – apparently by his parents. He subsequently took a gun and shot his parents. However, once he had done this, he began to fear the tremendous amount of *bāp* or 'evil, demerit' which he made because of his misdeed. Thus, he erected these two Buddha statues: one in memory of his father (the one nearest the amphoe office) and one in memory of his mother (the one near Mr. Thiang's home).

I only visited one of these statues – the one furthest from the amphoe office. This is the one which Chin Yu Di refers to as *phraphuttharūp khū müang* (p. 161). The standing Buddha is located in the crotch of a tree. Its head had once been removed, but the people in the area claim that the original has been replaced. The carving is very rough and is certainly no work of art. The tree has many bricks in it. Both tree and Buddha are located on a hill above a contemporary wat. There are several *bāi sēmā* around the statue of the shape shown in the first diagram on the following page.

One *bāi sēmā* appeared to have had some inscriptions on its back. Surrounding the tree-Buddha is a square small wall of laterite which looks like it might have been a building. The second diagram on the following page shows the various imp. features of the site.

Chin Yū Dī says the following about the statue, et al (my translation), on p. 161:

"Phraphuttharūp khū müang: About 35 sen from the amphoe office in Tambon Kantharāt is a Dvāravati Buddha statue of red sandstone. It is a standing image and faces toward the south. It is about 4 m. high. The shoulder measured from right to left measures 1m.10 cm. The neck and head were damaged and were repaired in A.D. 1817. Both feet are imbedded in the ground at the ankles. There is a stone *bāi sēmā* in the front of the statue and one behind."

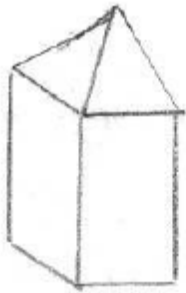
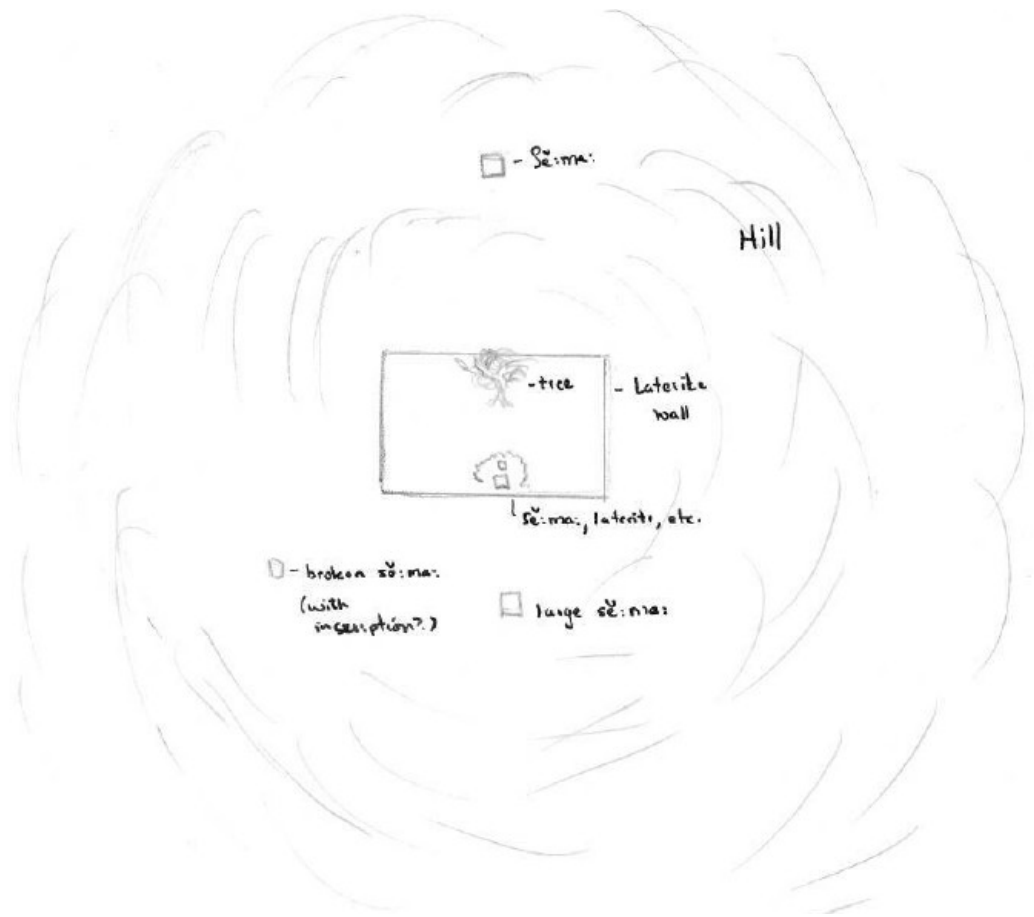


Diagram 1.

Diagram 2.



Bān Nông Tūn

Early 1963 undated

In the village, I have learned that there are a trader and tailor - therefore, it is important for me to investigate diversity of occupation in a village. Certainly, one indicator of change is that of diversity of occupation. In the "folk" community, occupation is homogenous - and the families are by and large self-contained economic units. In any peasant community, there are certain rudimentary breakdowns in specialization of occupation. For example, in the traditional Thai village there are the monks and the laity - occupational specialization which was offset by the fact that most monks did not spend their lifetime in the monkhood, and to a certain extent (are certainly as an ideal) all the men of the village had been or would become monks thus making the specialized talents somewhat an extension of the male sex role instead of a true occupational specialisation among the men. With regard to the monkhood, thus, one would expect that the greater the urbanization process in the village, the fewer men who become monks.

HYP: The greater the role diversification of a community, the greater its urbanization. Role specialization can even be found in the realm of agriculture. In the traditional Thai community, everyman is foremost a rice farmer. With greater urbanization, and the concurrent introduction of new agricultural pursuits as cash making occupations, the more specialization in various diverse agricultural pursuits. Thus, though a man still may be a rice farmer, he may also be a tobacco grower, a pig raiser, a kenaf grower, a vegetable cultivator, etc. And eventually, one would expect that some men would shift their major emphasis from rice farming to some other agricultural pursuit, though still keeping up rice farming as a now subsidiary occupation.

Roles in Nông Tūn

Monk

Teacher

Rice Miller

Tailor

Trader

Store-keeper

I have noted that there are two rice mills in the village, one store, one tailor "shop", one trader (whatever this means), 3 teachers, 1 monk (who has been in the wat for 1 year).