

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

30/7/63

Local Alcoholic Beverages:

When we were in the field yesterday, Nōj took me to drink some satto. This satto was in a large clay pot which had been buried in a rice-field dike (the top being covered with a cloth & then a small metal dish. When people wish to drink this, they uncover the pot & scoop out the wine. I imagine that there are several reasons why the rice wine is kept here: (1) it must be kept some place for several days (this part wine is 10+ days old); (2) in the fields, the police are less likely to find it (the making of local brew is illegal).

At dinner, Mr. Nōj arranged for us to buy a quart of satto from a man for \$1 (Jane's comment, "where else in the world could one purchase a bottle of wine for a nickel?"). This was a most welcome addition to the meal.

Local Lottery:

In the surrounding villages (and I understand throughout the rural Thailand) a local version of the lottery is run. This local lottery is based on the national lottery in the following way: a person chooses a number of two digits (often chosen by taking a birth bill and choosing the last 2 numbers of the serial number). He pays for this choice (as yet I don't know how much) and more than one person may choose the same number. The purchasing of the numbers is done on the 5 days preceding the announcement of the winners of the national lottery. The winners are determined by the last 2 numbers of the winning numbers of the national lottery. The chances of winning in this local lottery are much higher (1 chance in 90) than in the national lottery, but, of

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course, the returns are much lower.

Mr. Lai is the local person in charge of the local lottery. Nōj is the seller of "tickets". Actually, there are no tickets, but Nōj will write down the chosen number on a piece of paper along with the name of the purchaser. ~~The lottery is called~~ ^{usually} ~~literally~~. The buying of a local lottery ticket is called literally, "the buying of a number" (ซื้อเลข). The local lottery is illegal; Nōj says that if he saw a policeman coming, he would have "to run very fast."

31 July, 1963

Educations:

I have been struck in making my household census in the high incidence of literacy. However, I noticed that Kinghill says in Ku Daey, that "most people over 35 yrs. of age are illiterate." He made his study 10 years ago, so I would expect to find that our people over 45 are illiterate which is an approximation of what I do find. I think that I would find similar comparisons in Kaufman.

Talked with Mr. Si-hai this afternoon and asked him if he could remember how long the school has been in 120T. He couldn't, but he said it wasn't here when he was a youth.

1 August, 1963

Names:

I discovered today in the census that people often have two first names: a "school name" (or formal name) and a "common name". Sometimes when I have made the census, I have got the one, and other times the other.

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TRANSPLANTING RICE:

Today, Jane and I had our first experience of working in the fields. We helped in the planting rice seedlings in the regular plots. In this work one takes a bundle of the rice stalks which have been grouped together at the time of pulling them up from the seed plot. This bundle is laid across the left arm near the wrist. A section of the bundle is pulled away slightly and held in the left hand. In planting, one pulls up 3 or 4 rice stalks, gets their roots together by pushing them with right hand against the left and then sticks in the soft (though some times not so soft) mud. They stick about an inch in the ground, the thumb being used to head the plants in to the ground. The plants are planted about 8-10 inches apart in rows which are, though not straight, about 8-10 inches apart also.

MR PHON'S SECOND WIFE:

In walking around various fields, we stopped at the small shelter (called thiang nâ: or "field house") of Mr. Phon. We talked a bit with his wife. As we already knew, she is a second wife. She herself has had only one child - Thi:ng De:ng. She also has lost one child. She was nursing (or seemingly nursing) the child of her stepdaughter. Neither of us can understand how she could still have milk.

2 August, 1963

CONVERSATION WITH MR. NGAI:

Last night we had another long conversation with Mr. Ngai - a regular "bull session". We got into a discussion of the relative poverty & richness of other people in the world. This led to a discussion of money. Jane asked Mr. Ngai what he would do if he won a large sum in the Govt.

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Lottery. He said that he would buy quite a bit of land and rent it out. This was his first reaction. On further questioning, he said that he might buy a truck and give some things to the wall. Under no circumstances would he leave this area for Bangkok or the such.

We spent quite a bit of time last night explaining to him the birth control practice of the "rhythm method." He said that he felt that there were lots of people in the area who would be interested in restricting the number of their children. He brought in a magazine called "Sex Science Magazine" which he bought in Bangkok and wanted me to examine to see if it was any good or not.

NGE:

I was noticing yesterday that Mr. Hô was working in the fields. I asked Mr. Ngai if it was usual for old people to work in the fields. He answered that some people do and some don't, but not do. It struck me that in this society, "retirement" is a meaningless term. A man is only worth his salt as long as he is able to work (similarly for women). If he stops working, in a sense he becomes a charge, and he loses dignity. Furthermore, what is there for him to retire to - staying at home with the children? - hardly a suitable occupation.

3 August, 1963

CATTLE OWNERSHIP:

Jane asked me today what all the cattle (oxen) in the village are used for, and in turn asked Nô:ng. He says that they are primarily a capital investment which people buy when they have excess money. This is a good investment he said because the cattle breed and

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have calves which in turn can be raised and then sold in the market. Cattle are never used in the fields, though they are often used to pull carts. What I hadn't realized before is that villagers, like the Shit villagers we visited in India, are husbandmen as well as farmers.

Cattle which are sold in the market are almost invariably killed for soap.

REMITTANCE FROM BANGKOK:

While walking around on the survey yesterday, we stopped off for a chat at the house of Mrs. pō⁹ (pō⁹ie). She said that she had just received \$400 from her son in Bangkok. This son is the "head" (หัว) of a lumber mill (or something dealing with lumber). I think that he is prob. some sort of fireman. At any rate, he earns B25/day (about B750/month).

AN AFTERNOON DRINK:

While Nō⁹j and I were sitting in the house of Mrs. pō⁹, Mr. Tā:p came along and said that he would like to stand us to a drink. We all trooped over to Nō⁹j's house where Mr. Nō⁹j Khe:n, Nō⁹j's father had a pot of 4-5 day old brew buried. This was distributed among all around who Mr. Tā:p invited over. The partakers included 3 middle aged women. The liquor cost \$10 a jug (\$2.50) for what was about 2 quarts.

A TRIP TO FIELDS:

In search of a couple of hoes who we have been unable to find at home, Nō⁹j and I walked from the edge of Khem yō⁹, past pō⁹ta's forest to the fields of these men. This area is very interesting because of the wooded characteristics (but hardly jungle)

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which finally gives way to the fields. We found the two brothers making bamboo matting (rather than working in the fields) on the "field horse". I think that people often prefer this ~~to~~ small bit to their real houses.

LOCAL LOTTERY:

It struck me today that the local lottery number BNT the focus of attention of several surrounding villages because it is here that the local lottery is run. The two major characters of this lottery are Nō⁹j and Mr. Lō⁹ (part. the latter as he is the organizer of the lottery).

VISIT FROM TEACHERS:

Khun Beng and Khun Buepha: visited us today. It seems that Mr. Buepha has taken a short holiday off to Nō⁹ghaj (school is currently out until the 3rd of September). Khun Beng is pregnant and expecting her 6th. The teachers spend quite a lot of time in the woods looking for mushrooms which are unobtainable in Ba:n Khwan.

MUSHROOMS:

This is mushroom gathering time. The wet ground has begun to be fertile breeding areas for mushrooms. Hardly a day goes by now that people don't pass by with a basket full of mushrooms. Yesterday, we bought a tray full for B2.50 (though the woman - not from BNT - was tried first to sell just a large mushroom for B1). Mushrooms are usually put into a ke:ig.

4 August, 1963

DAILY PATTERNS:

Noticed this morning that people were up and about at about 4-4:30. My observation is that people get up as soon as it is light and retire after dark and after dinner.

6 August, 1963

THAM BUN BAIN CEREMONY:

This morning I took the opportunity of using Mr. Wichian as an interpreter/informant in discussing with Mr. HS: about the tham bun bain ceremony that was held a few weeks ago at Mr. HS:'s house.

The basic reason for the ceremony is this: People believe that the area on which a house is built is inhabited by malevolent phi. If the occupants of a house have had a run of misfortune (such as the 3 deaths in the family of Mr. HS: - his son-in-law, his wife, and then his grand daughter), they believe that it is necessary to exorcise the malevolent phi and to make the future more auspicious for the inhabitants.

The priests are called in to perform the ceremony. First they chant the ຈົມ ສັດ (Lao: sit thit) - a sutra believed to be efficacious in exorcising phi. Then they chant the ຈົມ ສັດ (Lao: sit ojat) which is like the ສັດ ສັດ (sitt mokkhan) in Thai. This is done to cast an air of auspiciousness over the house. This was followed by the sprinkling of water ("auspicious water") over the inhabitants of the house.

When they had finished this part of the ceremony, the priests descended and went to each of 4 house posts, representing 4 directions. Here, they poured water into a small hole dug at each post. This was part of the exorcism. Also, at each post a small stand constructed of a piece of banana trunk and a bamboo stick was placed near the post. On this was placed such food as different

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colored rice, fish, and "any other foods which people eat". This food is not for the phi: being exorcised, but is an offering for "good spirits" to bring good fortune.

LOCAL LOTTERY:

Mr. Wichian helped explain the "local lottery" which is called literally "buying of a number" (see pp. 216-217). He explained as I had thought with the following additions: One buys tickets "numbers" for \$1.50 (on any multiple up to \$13.50) or \$4 (on any multiple). If one wins on a \$1.50, he would receive \$100; if he bought a \$4 number and won, he would receive \$1,000.

eqo.:	Cost of "Number"	Amnt. if Winning No.
	\$ 4.50	\$ 300
	\$ 42	\$ 3,000
	\$ 140	\$ 10,000

Obviously, then the organizers of a lottery (the ຈົມ ສັດ - cau my:) must have enough cash to cover the largest possible winner (though such is not always the case and trouble ensues in such cases). Mr. Ca: in the local case says:

Mr. Wichian doesn't at all approve of the local lottery because he thinks ~~the~~ villagers spend too much money on the lottery. He said that the local lottery is the Governor's biggest problem.

Mr. HS: once bought a ticket for \$420. His wife strongly disapproved of this. She asked him what he would have done with the money if he won \$30,000. He said that he would have built a new house and bought some liquor. He wouldn't have brought any

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more land because ~~his~~ he has enough. Actually, I get the impression that most people don't really think about how they would use the money, but play the "numbers" for their own sake. When they do win, they usually squander the money rather rapidly.

MR. HÛ: AND HISTORY OF VILLAGES:

I asked Mr. HÛ: if he thinks that villagers in BNT are better off today than they were when he was a young person. He said that they are better off today than when he was young because there then were no roads, no vehicles, no school, no outward signs of progress such as zinc corrugated roofing. A person, then, who had 3-4 bulut was a very rich man. A buffalo then cost B4 and an ox B2.

He says that when he was ~~younger~~ a young man, BNT was larger. The father of Mr. Phon was headman. He says the boat was built when he was a child (? about this) though the boat was here when he was ~~younger~~ born.

He went to Bangkok when he was 18 to look for work. He walked to Korat from here as there was no transportation. This journey took him 6 days. From Korat, he took the train to Bangkok. He said that many people from here went to Bangkok, but few went to Vietnam. The reason for this being that transportation was easier to Bangkok.

Finding work in Bangkok was difficult then, though he did seem to find work doing some sort of farm work such as tending cattle (for an Indian family). For his work he received B100/year. He said that he realized learned in Bangkok how to be delinquent, and followed the same practices when he returned to BNT.

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A PROGRESSIVE HEADMAN:

Mr. Wichian explained that every year the Governor gives "prizes" for one Kamnan and 2 headmen in the Changwat who have contributed to the progressiveness of their tambon or village. The headman who receives 1st prize gets B600; the one who wins 2nd gets B400. It appears that Mr. Phon has been selected as one of the 2 headmen (which one is yet not known). He was chosen because he supervised the building of 2 bridges and been involved in the raising of money & labor to build the new school. I also wonder if there wasn't a bit of personal interference on the part of Mr. Wichian and some influence brought because of our living here.

Mr. Wichian also came to tell Mr. Phon that the Nai Amphise is still not happy about the roads and bridge and wants some more work done on the road.

PIG SALE:

This morning Mr. Ngau sold 2 pigs to the head of the pig cooperative in Ban Khuan for B1,000.

A BAD DREAM:

At the house of HÛ: 11 HÛ: HÛ: HÛ: (LÛ: cantaryag) this afternoon, the mÛ: suat (Mr. SÛ: hÛ:) was exorcising the bad influences of a bad dream which the wife of Mr. LÛ: had had. The ceremony was as we saw before at the house of Mr. chi: in Khum Yaj, sometime back. I didn't quite gather what the dream was about, but the reason for the ceremony was that Mr. LÛ: has invested some money in a local lottery "numbers" & thought that if the dream was exorcised, he would be more likely to win.

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A RETURNER FROM VIETNAME:

Miss Bun can, the daughter of Mrs. Dò (12/12), has just returned from Vietnam. She has lived there for about 3 yrs. Currently she is working for a Filipino family as an assistant to the cook. She has returned because she wants to get a registration card from the police in Makhosarakham so that she doesn't have problems in Laos on her citizenship. She quite enjoys living in Vietnam and thinks that it is sanit.

I asked Nó:j why people go away to work in Vietnam or Bangkok and yet not always return here to settle down rather than migrating permanently. He said that people go away as young men to paj thian, "look for money", and "to have fun", but they return here to get married and to settle. I have noticed, however, that when girls go away they rarely return.

A CHILD'S PLAY:

Jane says that this afternoon, that, the son of Mrs. Ho:m, was over and in a mock-imitating voice of an old woman started singing "they have no children." His elder brother, bun thom came along and struck him and told him to shut up and then took him away to his mother who also reprimanded him. This incident illustrates several points: (1) the fact that our lack of children is seen as an infirmity to be mocked at (Thai's often seem to make fun of other people's infirmities); (2) the disciplining of a younger sibling by an older one; and (3) the reprimanding of a child for showing disrespect to higher status persons.

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LANGUAGE AND SEX DIFFERENTIATION

Kinghill (Ku Daeng, p. 73) makes the point that whereas there is sex differentiation in pronouns and polite words in Thai, these are not found in ~~the~~ Lannathai. The same is partially true in the Lao dialect spoken in BMT. The most common word for "I" for both men ~~and~~ & women is (but not for children) is khà:j. Polite words are rarely used in ordinary conversation within the village, but when they are used they preserve the sex differentiation (kháp for men and khá: for women). I am only speaking of distinctions made for person speaking and not for person spoken to. In the latter case sex differentiations are preserved. Age differentiations are preserved in pronouns.

DISTANCES TO VILLAGE:

From the corners to the near end of the village is 1.3 miles (2.1 km.) and to the far end 1.75 miles (2.8 km.). The village, thus is 0.7 km in length. From the end up the ^{near} ~~far~~ end of the village to the ~~far~~ ^{near} end of the wall is 0.3 km. and from here to the far end of village is 0.4 km.

"Near" means the end closest to the corners. From the far end of the village to Khum Nó:j via Khum Nó:n is 0.5-0.6 miles (0.9-1.0 km.).

HOUSE OF MR. PHOMMAI SÈ:TRAKSAI, Khum Nò:j Khum Nò:j

This man is the Khum headman and is one of the wealthier men in the village. In addition to his lands and pigs, he also ^{and owns} runs the 2nd rice mill in the village (which services primarily only Khum Nó:j). His house has a wooden stairway rather than ladder as in most houses. The house is built up solid wood rather than bamboo thatch walls. It also has windows which can be shut and locked, and opened and locked. Inside the house there are also signs of more wealth. For one thing, there is a table and

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chair. There is also mosquito netting, mattresses, and several lamps (of different kinds). On the wall is a large mirror (mirrors are one index of greater wealth) which has a discal display of the national flag, king, Queen, and Buddha. There are also several pictures of the King and Queen and of the Buddha on the wall.

The household also has a "servant". This girl of 15 is the daughter of a somewhat impoverished neighbor who has a large brood. Mr. Phomas has only boys (4), he is in need of some extra female help. Thus, this girl lives and eats at his house in return for which she works as an aid to his wife.

House of Mr. Sŏ:n Sĕ:ra:ksh:, Khüm Nŏ:n Khwŏw Nŏ:n:

This man is also a relatively wealthy man of the Khüm. He also has a house with stairs and with wooden slatting. But the thing that is interesting about this individual is that he is the father of the current head priest and probably the greatest current supporter of the wat.

At his house I observed a interesting meal which included the following dishes:

- 1) Bamboo-shoot soup
- 2) Curry made of the small ^{green} flowers which come off the top of ponds (when this is collected in baskets it looks a bit like green ~~meat~~ mesh)
- 3) Raw land crabs and snails.
- 4) A mixture of fermented fish and peppers.

This man is also a mŏ:suət.

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RELIGION:

Mr. Ngaw says that in his village of B. Nŏ:g Khŏ:, old men, and sometimes others as well, go to sleep in the wat on holidays during phasŏ: in order "to make merit". However, in the 4 years that he has been here in BNT he has never seen anyone ~~one~~ follow such a custom. He says that some villages follow this custom and some don't. When asked why this is true, he thought that one of the reasons was that there is no elder, respected abbot in this wat.

In general, he thinks that Bŏ:n Nŏ:g Khŏ: is more religious than BNT. One of the things he gave as an index was the fact that people drink liquor more in BNT than in Bŏ:n Nŏ:g Khŏ: "In Bŏ:n Nŏ:g Khŏ: people drink in moderation, but in BNT there are many people who drink to get drunk."

In Laos as in Lannathai, wan phŏ: is known as wŏn sŏ:n (Loi). (ວັນສັນ). However, it is also known as wŏn sŏ:njŏj (L) as the following day is known as wŏn sŏ:n nŏ:j (L). If wŏn sŏ:n is translated as 'precept day' (Kingshill's translation), then wŏn sŏ:n jŏj would be 'major precept day' and wŏn sŏ:n nŏ:j would be 'minor precept day.'

DEATH:

On 8/8/63 the youngest child of ໝູ່ ຈູ່ (cha:j), the ant. headman died. Mr. Ngaw said that he thought the child died because of his mother's lack of milk. But there is also the fact that the child had a fever.

AN UNUSUAL RELATIONSHIP:

Some 3 yrs. ago the wife of ໝູ່ ຈູ່ ຈູ່ (sŏm thŏpŏ:ri) died in ~~an~~ ~~ab~~ ~~who~~ ~~was~~ ~~in~~

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KNKN died in child birth though the child lived. na:ɣ pha:, the wife of na:ɣ khu:n thapthani: who now lives in khum nɔ:n came to be wet nurse. What exactly occurred, I am not certain, but na:ɣ pha: and na:ɣ khu:n subsequently "separated". After spending a period of time as monk, na:ɣ khu:n remained, not long ago, na:ɣ thom and now lives in khum nɔ:n. na:ɣ pha: continued living in the house of na:ɣ som. Soon people began asking them if they were married. They still deny such a relationship, though the children of na:ɣ som, and particularly the youngest, have taken to considering na:ɣ pha: as their mother.

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MR. PHON'S HOUSE IN THE EVENING:

Tonight I stopped by Mr. Phon's house. He had a television kept burning and the radio playing. His wife was knitting a fishing net while he and his daughter were apparently just listening to the radio. A little after 9:00 a group of local swamis showed up to listen to the "8 o'clock mō: lu mū:" program.

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF MR. BANTHUNG:

~~Mr. Bantung (Banthung) was born in Ban Nɔ:ɔ (near the mt.) in Kantarawichay, Mahasarakham. He studied for 10 yrs. and completed M.B.~~

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RELIGION:

This afternoon we went with Mr. Wichan to the wat in Ban Khawo. Here we first went to the sala where some 10 men and 10 women (mostly elderly) are staying on wan sin. One man was reading a book of chants which are normally used in everyday activities. He also brought out a palm leaf script here written in Lao which was about the Wetsandps. While we were sitting in the wat a young priest went to the drum and played on it for at least 5 minutes (he interestingly used two sticks to beat the drum). This, it was explained, is to call people's attention to following the Lord Buddha's precepts (D.B.). This drum-beating is done on wan sin nɔ:ɣ and wan sin jɔ:ɣ.

We then went and had a long talk with the head abbot. We asked him why in BNT do ^{the} priests play the drum every evening. He said he didn't know because it should signify the calling of the people to come and listen to a sermon, but as there is no sermon to be preached, it is somewhat incorrect on their part to play the drum. We also asked why it was that there was very little religious observance in BNT. The answer was that these the priests were very young and had too little knowledge to be the spiritual guides of the people. They couldn't impart any knowledge because the laity knew more than they did.

The abbot also showed us a modern palm leaf ^{book} script which is printed in Bangkok. It is in Burmese Thai and is a sermon. He said that ecclesiastical authorities wish to improve the people in rural areas by having the priests speak in Thai rather than in the local language. But, he said, if I do that no one will understand me. Thus, he said that he was reading the sermon and then would discourse on it in the local language.

10 / Aug. 1963

A PERIODIC MARKET:

On Saturday, 10 August we went with a group of people ~~from~~ from ~~Ban~~ Tambon Khwaw and some CB people (Mr. Wichain, Mr. Sawaj) to the tambon centre of ว. ๖๖๖๖๖ (B. B.: phain) in Amphoe Mueang in Roi-et province. Here under the auspices of a CB Pilot Project a periodic market has been established. This market is held 6 times a month at 5 day intervals fixed according to the lunar calendar: ๗, ๑๕, ๒๓, ๓๑, ๗, ๑๕, ๒๓; ๑๕, ๒๓, ๓๑, ๗, ๑๕, ๒๓.

At the present time the market is held for about 4 hours on the mornings of these days.

Small shops have sprung up in the centre where people sell cloth and other non-food things. There were also places to get a hair cut or to have clothes sewn on a sewing machine. Some of these non-food things were provided by people coming out from Roi-et. The food things were brought mostly by villagers in the surrounding areas. There was corn, onions, peppers, mushrooms, garlic, varieties of greens, and most of the other things which can be raised in a garden or gathered in a forest. However, we noticed a scarcity of meat. Except for pla-rai, and very few dried and was fewer fresh fish, there was no meat to be had. One of the reasons is prob. that the fishing season hasn't really begun yet. Oh, I did forget, there were some small crabs, snails, and frogs. Basically, there is no market for large meat in such a village setting.

THINGS TO CHECK ON:

1. The husband of Mrs. Chansit, a teacher ~~off~~ at the Mahasarakham Teachers' College, is an old resident of Kulisin and is now an irrigation officer for the Chansong. He apparently is related to the old ^{quite} ~~old~~ ~~old~~. He knows ^{quite} a bit about the history of Kulisin.

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2. Banchuej Atakorn, the Lord Mayor, is the person in Mahasarakham most knowledgeable about local history.
3. The family of Mr. Chuen Chai were the first Chinese merchants in Mahasarakham. He is also very interested in Overseas Chinese.
4. Get the legend of เจ้าแก้ว from Mr. Wichian.

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CONVERSATIONS WITH MR. CHUEN CHAI

Today we had some long conversations with Mr. Chuenchai who is the director of primary education in Mahasarakham. His grandparents (maternal) were some of the first Chinese merchants in Mahasarakham. They migrated here 70 years ago from Krat which they left because there were too many village merchants in Krat. The house in which Mr. Chuenchai is now living was the original store and was on what was then the main street of the town (but not now). When they first lived here, they had to buy their merchandise by travelling by up-cast to Krat. In order to protect themselves against khomoi (theives), they would travel in "wagon trains" (shades of the "Wild West") of 15-20 carts. The trip, one way, took a month. Later, when the train line was extended to Surin, the merchants from here as well as from Roi-et would go to Surin with cart loads of milled rice (worth \$500,000) which they would sell and then buy their goods. The railway to KK was only ~~extended~~ laid down about 25-30 yrs. ago.

We also discussed the putai shins which are found in most every village in the Northeast. He reports that there are definitely village ancestral shins. "It is a simple spirit (ผีบ้านผีเรือน). I asked if there were putai spirits in the towns. He said that there are the spirits housed in the lak myang shins - the caw pho: lak myang. I asked him if these spirits had power over the spirits in the villages. He said they prob. did, ~~but~~ representing something like the governor. Actually, though this is prob. true, the spirit world prob. parallels the real world in a more definite way. That is, I would guess that people in the villages rarely give thought to the caw pho: lak myang any more than they give thought to the governor. Certainly, the hierarchy is a "loosely structured"

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF MR. BANTHUNG:

~~Mr. Bantung (Banthung Phanthakun) was born in Ba:n No:io (near the alt.) in Kantarawichaj, Mahasarakham. He is 35 yrs. old. He studied for 10 yrs. and completed M.B.~~

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RELIGION:

This afternoon we went with Mr. Wichai to the wat in Ban Khawo. There we first went to the sala where some 10 men and 10 women (mostly elderly) are staying on wan sin. One man was reading a book of chants which are normally used in everyday activities. He also brought out a palm leaf scripture written in Lao which was about the Utsandayn. While we were sitting in the wat a young priest went to the drum and played on it for at least 5 minutes (he interestingly used two sticks to beat the drum). This, it was explained, is to call people's attention to following the Lord Buddha's precepts (D'A). This drum-beating is done on wan sin no:j and wan sin jai.

We then went and had a long talk with the head abbot. We asked him why in BNT do ^{the} the priests play the drum every evening. He said he didn't know because it should signify the calling of the people to come and listen to a sermon, but as there is no sermon to be preached, it is somewhat incorrect on their part to play the drum. We also asked why it was that there was very little religious observance in BNT. The answer was that these the priests were very young and had too little knowledge to be the spiritual guides of the people. They couldn't impart any knowledge because the laity knows more than they did.

The abbot also showed us a modern palm leaf ^{book} scripture which is printed in Bangkok. It is in Central Thai and is a sermon. He said that ecclesiastical authorities wish to improve the people in rural areas by having the priests speak in Thai rather than in the local language. But, he said, if I do that no one will understand me. Thus, he said that he was reading the sermon and then would discourse on it in the local language.

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THE GIRL FROM VIENTIANE

The daughter of Mrs. D₂ who ~~was~~ is a servant in Vientiane but had come down here to get a registration card is leaving to go back to Vientiane tomorrow morning at 6:30. She is something of a "fan" of N₂'s and kidded him by saying "I will return here in the 6th month." The 6th month is the most auspicious time for weddings.

14 August, 1963

REVENUES

About 11:00 this morning the head priest from the wat came over to "buy" some leap khao. I was rather surprised at this and asked Mr. Ngaw about it. He said that often during the rice planting season there are no people around at noon to present food to the priests. As it turned out, Mr. Ngaw didn't have anything to sell so he returned home. We took the opportunity to make our first presentations at the wat. Jane took a tray which contained 2 plates (dried), a cucumber, and some limes and rice from Mr. Ngaw.

The manner of presenting food is interesting. As Jane entered the wat she got down on her knees and made a deep bow (instead of the three-repeated khra:p which I thought was required). She then put the food with other food which ~~she~~ ^{some other} women had collected. She herself did not present the food directly to the priests. A novice came and collected the food and gave it to the priest. The three priests sat apart and in the lotus position and the two novices sat in another place and ate (but not as well as the priests). When they had finished eating, the priests chanted a Q₂h₂ph₂ (khaj phon) - a "blessing" for those who had given food.

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The novices then brought the empty trays back to the donors who then departed.

In this case rice was presented in a khaw khao basket. Mr. Ngaw says that this is all right for the noon meal but not for the morning meal where ~~rice~~ rice must be ~~placed~~ placed in dish for presentation.

A person who has been a novice but has never been a priest has the title of ph₂o or ph₂o (thit). A person who has once served as a priest has the title of ph₂o. A person who has been in ^{the} monkhood a second time but has again returned to the world has the title of ph₂o (ca:n). All these titles apply to people who are now laity.

N₂'s and the RADIO:

This morning I had to go to town. On the way I met N₂, my assistant, who asked to go along. In town I had to go off on some business and when I came back, he said that he wanted to buy a radio. I was surprised at this, to say the least, because N₂'s family is one of the poorest in the village. He took me over to one of the more expensive shops to look at the radio. The one he had picked out was a blue plastic, single-band, transistor Sanyo which sells for \$300. As he has only \$150 but, he "borrowed" \$170 from me (based on the fact that when we finish the census he will be owed \$150.).

When Mr. Ngaw heard about this he was rather distressed at N₂'s behavior. He said that N₂'s mother had told Mr. Ngaw that when N₂ received the \$300 I was paying him for his work, he was planning, unintentionally, to help build a bigger and better house. Mr. Ngaw also said that it would be far better if N₂ had invested in a radio bicycle which he could use in transporting fish which he catches over around the area to sell there. At any rate, he was

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quite against Náj in vesting his money in something whose only tangible asset is sauk.

In fact this incident rather illustrates the fact that the value on ~~set~~ sauk is very highly held. There seems to be little conception of saving money or investing it in things which will help bring in more money. Ngaw is certainly an exceptional person in this regard.

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Mr. Ngaw's Family:

Mr. Ngaw last evening informed us that Nuon is pregnant. He asked about medicines to give her during pregnancy. He said again he wanted 3 children - 2 boys and a girl. He then said that he hoped he would be able to give his children a better education than he has had. He said that he has always regretted that he didn't have more opportunity to have advanced education.

EDUCATION:

Mr. Buntiang visited us today. I was trying to get some idea of the history of the school from him. He really didn't know but told me that every (?) headmaster has kept records - their duty by day reports on their work. These books he has at his house.

THE KHEIN:

Mr. Buntiang, it turns out, is a rather capable khein player. He explained a few things about the khein: There was once a prince in India who liked to hear the sound of the manray. He then had a contest for people to try to make an instrument which would duplicate this sound. Many people came with many types of instruments, but no one succeeded. Finally, some person invented the khein. This was the sound the prince was looking for.

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Mr. Buntiang also demonstrated the scale of khein. ~~There are 7 notes in an "octave"~~ and Jane says that it sounds like the old Gregorian scale. This scale applies to the khein pèit - the "8 holed ~~khein~~ kheon". If one numbers the thumb hole as "1" and continues through to the small lowered hole a "8" on each side, the scale would read like this:

Left handRight hand

open

1 & 4

2

5

1

2

3

6

4

7

5 and 7

open

6

3

He also explained about the different "styles" of playing. I call these "styles" rather than "melodies" because there is no set tune, but an allowance for a large amount of improvisation. These styles are called ᨧᩢ᩠ᨦ (lāj) which literally means "current" like that of a stream or river. There are 32 lāj all of which can't be played on a khein pèit. Mr. Buntiang demonstrated several of these and gave us the names:

lāj jāj, lāj tōj, lāj tōj phá mui (Burmese) which is associated with ᨧᩢ᩠ᨦ (lam khwain - the "axe song"), lāj sōj, lāj nōj, lāj sūtō nain or lāj lam, lāj pōi sōj, lāj khame:n (Cambodian), lāj lam phī: fá: (used at the quiescing of the malicious influences of

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spirits causing illness).

There are basically 2 types of khe:n: (1) the khe:n p̄:it are "8-holed" khe:n and (2) the khe:n k̄aw or "9-holed" khe:n. The latter is apparently much more difficult but more versatile, and more expensive.

LOCAL LITERATURE:

This morning Mr. Som Thapsuri² from KNKP stopped in when I was studying Lao. He also can read Lao and he began to explain to me how he learned to read Lao script in the west while he was a monk. He said that the writing on the palm leaf leaves (๒๖๗๕ - baj lam) is not the same as Lao and proceeded to demonstrate. He called the current Lao script, Lao N̄:ij.

POST OF CORRUGATED IRON ROOFING:

Mr. Bunthiang says that the corrugated iron roofing which is now so common in the village costs \$13-20 for a sheet 2' x 8'.

JANE'S FROG CATCHING EXPEDITION:

(Jane's note) "This morning two women came round and invited me to go hunting for small frogs (hicks?) with them. They had two s̄awj (fishnets attached to a circle of bamboo) and carried poles. We went out to the fields & sought those fields where the water was lying in pools but no rice was being grown. Here we would take the s̄awj, wade out into the water and with a wide circular movement scoop through the water and pull up an assortment of tiny frogs, water bugs and minute fishes. These were then transferred to the pools, enough water being left at the bottom to make sure they would stay alive.

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"I was pressed into eating the water bugs raw and alive, though I did manage to pinch the heads off first to avoid eating the eyes. They had a slightly nutty flavor."

A VISIT FROM THE MONKS:

The head priest and the middle novice came over this evening just as I was going out with N̄:ij to interview. Much to my later surprise, they stayed after I had gone and talked with Jane. Another surprising thing was that they had made kh̄aw w̄in - a fermented rice dish - which they had brought over to give Mr. Ngai.

16 August, 1963.

CLOTHING AND STRESS:

Within the village there are certain features of clothing which signify particular statuses. The most conspicuous, of course, are the yellow robes of the monks and novices. There is also the regulation "white" shirt and dark trousers or plain (khaki) for the students. There is considerable variation in the school uniform due to the fact that clothes are usually home made, but, nonetheless, it is relatively easy to spot a student amongst children who are not. The school teachers and the head man all have brown khaki shirts and pants which symbolize their membership in the gut bureaucracy. Furthermore, the teachers have epaulettes which signify their status in that bureaucracy. The headman does not have these because he is not truly a member of the bureaucracy.

One of the more interesting clothing status indicators is the band woven band which appears in the bottom of the ph̄is in of a married woman who has had children. Mrs. Horn explained this as signifying that a woman's responsibilities are now in the home and end not in the field.

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where she would get the bottom of the khui-in wet or muddy.

Finally, there is the rather is definite "wearing" of a fountain pen^{by men} in the upper breast pocket of a shirt. This symbolizes membership in the bureaucracy, much wealth, higher education. The wearing of a wrist watch is more specifically the display of one's financial status (either present or past as poor farmers who have earned some money in working abroad may also possess a watch).

A BUSINESS METHOD:

Mr. Ngai gives food to those people who bring a khui-in full of rice to be milled. He says that he doesn't want people to say that he is "stringy". Also, he explains that if people know that they are well taken care of when they come to mill their rice, (especially when they have to spend a long time waiting for a khui-in of rice to be milled), they will return.

CENSUS:

It occurred to me last night that despite the difficulties of finding people at home during the rainy season, it is really the best time to make a census because it is the time when most people are at home - that is, those who practice seasonal migration come home in order to help with the work. It is when the village is at its maximum population. This factor may be the reason why the ABO census figures for the village seem comparatively low - as the census was made in the dry season.

17 August, 1963

A BEE HUNT:

This evening No:ij came over and asked me if I wished to go on a "bee hunt". I didn't

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know quite what he meant but I was certainly willing. First we went to the end of Khum Jai and turned down the path that leads past Pi:ta:la wood. We came on a group of 4 men who were drinking sattho and so we stopped and had a drink and a chat. Then we proceeded on to the field house of the brother of Mr. Chaij. Here there were some cows still burning and so No:ij went out and "procured" some corn which was roasted. We sat in this house for sometime - a rather idyllic setting in a strictly romantic sense. The slight intoxication of the wine, the dusk burning to night, the shadows of the trees outlined against the sky, the slow conversation. A world far from the worries of urbanized existence - but a world which the villagers themselves probably could appreciate as much as I because I have seen the frustrations of civilized life.

Finally, a group of other people joined us and we set out to the woods. In the woods, we located a large tree where the bees nest ^{was} located by means of flashlights. Then some long banana leaf wrapped torches were taken over to the base of the tree and then No:ij climbed up the tree (I felt I wouldn't even try in broad daylight with a safety net underneath me). He took this torches and set fire to the nest. The bees were attracted by the fire and thus died. Finally, the whole nest fell to the ground in a blaze of fire. Unfortunately however, there were no larvae and thus no honey so the expedition was in vain.

RELIGION:

Ngai says that there is an ordination ceremony for novices as well as for monks, though in the case of novices, it isn't necessary to have a head monk (an aca:n:ja:j) as an officiant. It is necessary to be a novice before becoming a priest though this may be

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lɛ:m sip.sɪ:k hām. A similar ceremony, held during the day, is observed in the 10th month.

This is definitely a sort of lɛ:ng phɪ: ceremony - but for ancestral phɪ:. Mr. Ngau jokingly pointed to the scavenger dogs who were eating the food placed at the foot of the Bo tree and said, "Here are the phɪ:."

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MISC:

Leaf roofing lasts usually only one season, whereas straw roofing lasts 2-3 yrs.

26 August, 1963

The following are some notes which Jane has made at various times during the last few days.

MAKING OF BAMBOO SHOOT CREEK:

On 16/8/63 "Nua's mother (Mrs. Ho:m) invited me to go looking for bamboo shoots. We went out into the fields at the back of her house where there were several bamboo trees. The shoots, which have a curious overlapping conical formation grow up from the ground all around $\frac{1}{2}$ in the midst of the bamboo bush, but I noticed Mother Ho:m took only those in the middle, not those around the tree, since presumably the former would grow up straight since they could not receive enough light, whereas the latter could grow up into new plants. These former she cut down with a type of axe (about 8-10 shoots) and placed them in her basket before collecting also phak janaij and phak i:tu used in lɛ:ng nɔ:maj. I learned that there are 2

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(possibly 3?) types of phak i:tu. One grows as high as a small bush, the other about the height of parsley. Phak i:tu has a smell like lemon verbena and is used for flavouring, while phak janaij which has a dark green shiny leaf, is made into a form of vegetable puree by unripping the leaves with one's hands in a little water, and then removing the nerves.

To prepare the bamboo shoots, one must first peel off the outer layers surrounding the shoot. These are covered with a multitude of very fine prickles which make the hands itch painfully, as if one had contracted an allergy. Once the "scales" have been removed one shaves off the long fine parings till the whole shoot has been used up, working from the top of the cone to the base."

NGAU SALES:

"Mr. Ngau receives \$4.00 per empty large size kee-see tin [in Roi-et], but says he can't sell the small ones."

NOI'S CLOTHING:

"Noi's new jacket cost him \$50.00, which he said was very expensive, but it had lasted him 3 yrs. His pants also cost \$50.00."

FARE TO SARAKHAM & ROI-ET:

"The fare [from the corners] to Sarakham is 200¢, to Roi-et, \$4.00. I am sure this is the basic reason why most villagers ship in Sarakham."

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2. Banchuang Atakorn, the Lord Mayor, is the person in Mahasarakham most knowledgeable about local history.
3. The family of Mr. Chuan Chai were the first Chinese merchants in Mahasarakham. He is also very interested in Overseas Chinese.
4. Got the legend of โศภ from Mr. Wichien.

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CONVERSATIONS WITH MR. CHUAN CHAI

Today we had some long conversations with Mr. Chuanchai who is the director of primary education in Mahasarakham. His grandparents (maternal) were some of the first Chinese merchants in Mahasarakham. They migrated here 70 years ago from Korat which they left because there were too many village merchants in Korat. The house in which Mr. Chuanchai is now living was the original store and was on what was then the main street of the town (but not now). When they first lived here, they had to buy their merchandise by travelling by upcast to Korat. In order to protect themselves against khomoi (theives), they would travel in "wagon trains" (trains of the "Wild West") of 15-20 carts. The trip, one way, took a month. Later, when the train line was extended to Surin, the merchants from here as well as from Roi-et would go to Surin with cart loads of milled rice (worth \$800,000) which they would sell and there buy their goods. The railway to KK was only ~~extended~~ laid down about 25-30 yrs. ago.

We also discussed the puta: shrines which are found in most every village in the Northeast. He reports that there are definitely village ancestral shrines. "It is a simple spirit (phy: khon shian). I asked if there were puta: spirits in the towns. He said that there are the spirits housed in the lak myang shrines - the cau pho: lak myang. I asked him if these spirits had power over the spirits in the villages. He said they prob. did, like representing something like the governor. [Actually, though this is prob. true, the spirit would prob. parallel the real world in a more definite way. That is, I would guess that people in the villages rarely give thought to the cau pho: lak myang any more than they give thought to the governor. Certainly, the hierarchy is a 'loosely structured'

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H̄im sips̄y: kh̄am. A similar ceremony, held during the day, is observed in the 10th month.

This is definitely a sort of H̄ag ph̄i: ceremony - but for ancestral ph̄i: . Mr. Nḡaw jokingly pointed to the scavenger dogs who were eating the food placed at the foot of the Bo tree and said, "Here are the ph̄i:."

25/8/63

MISC:

Leaf roofing lasts usually only one season, whereas straw roofing lasts 2-3 yrs.

26 August, 1963

The following are some notes which James has made at various times during the last few days.

MAKING OF BAMBOO SHOOT CREEK:

On 16/8/63 "Nuee's mother (Mrs. Ho:m) invited me to go looking for bamboo shoots. We went out into the fields at the back of her house where there were several bamboo trees. The shoots, which have a curious overlapping conical formation grow up from the ground all around $\frac{1}{2}$ in the midst of the bamboo bush, but I noticed Mother Ho:m took only those in the middle, not those around the tree, since presumably the former would grow up straight since they could not receive enough light, whereas the latter could grow up into new plants. These former she cut down with a type of axe (about 8-10 shoots) and placed them in her basket before collecting also ph̄ak j̄an̄ai and ph̄ak i:ti used in l̄eig n̄o:m̄aj. I learned that there are 2

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(possibly 3?) type of ph̄ak i:ti. One grows as high as a small bush, the other about the height of parsley. Ph̄ak i:ti has a smell like lemon verbena and is used for flavouring, while ph̄ak j̄an̄ai which has a dark green shiny leaf, is made into a form of vegetable puree by uningking the leaves with one's hands in a little water, and then removing the nerves.

To prepare the bamboo shoots, one must first peel off the outer layers surrounding the shoot. These are covered with a multitude of very fine prickles which make the hands itch painfully, as if one had contracted an allergy. Once the "scales" have been removed one shaves off the long fine parings till the whole shoot has been used up, working from the top of the cone to the base."

NḠAW SALES:

"Mr. Nḡaw receives \$4.00 per empty large size keechee tin [in Poi-et], but says he can't sell the small ones."

NO:J'S CLOTHING:

"No:j's new jacket cost him \$50.00, which he said was very expensive, but it had lasted him 3 yrs. His pants also cost \$50.00."

FARE TO SARAKHAM & POI-ET:

"The fare [from the corners] to Sarakham is 200¢, to Poi-et, \$4.00. I am sure this is the basic reason why these villagers ship in Sarakham."

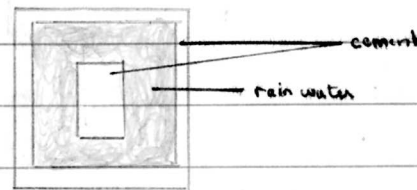
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REGION:

๓๘๕๖๗ (Phansa:) is exactly a 3 month period calculated according to the lunar calendar. Lent began on the 1st day of the waning of the moon in the 5th month (๒๒๕๖ | ๑๗ | ๑๕๖๗ ๘) and ends on the 1st day of the waning of the moon of the 11th month (๒๒๕๖ | ๑๗ | ๑๕๖๗ ๑๑). In intercalary years, the kuteu period begins in the 2nd 5th month. This year lent began (according to solar calendar) on the 7th of July and will end on 8th of October.

The ~~thot~~ ^[๓๐๐๗ ๑๕๖๗] ~~kathin~~ ^{๓๐๐๗ ๑๕๖๗} kathin ceremony always comes after the end of Buddhist lent. Contrary to what is the pattern in the Cent. plains, it would seem that most every wat in this area has this ceremony. Also, associated with this ceremony is the ceremony of leaving robes in the wood for the priests (๓๐๐๗ ๑๕๖๗).

I noticed some things at the Khudi today of interest. At the bottom of the stairs is a cement "basin" placed in the ground, which contains rain water and which is used to wash one's feet in before entering. I also have seen this at Wat Bui:n Khui:n and there is also one at the Daeger's house in Sarakhom. It looks like this:

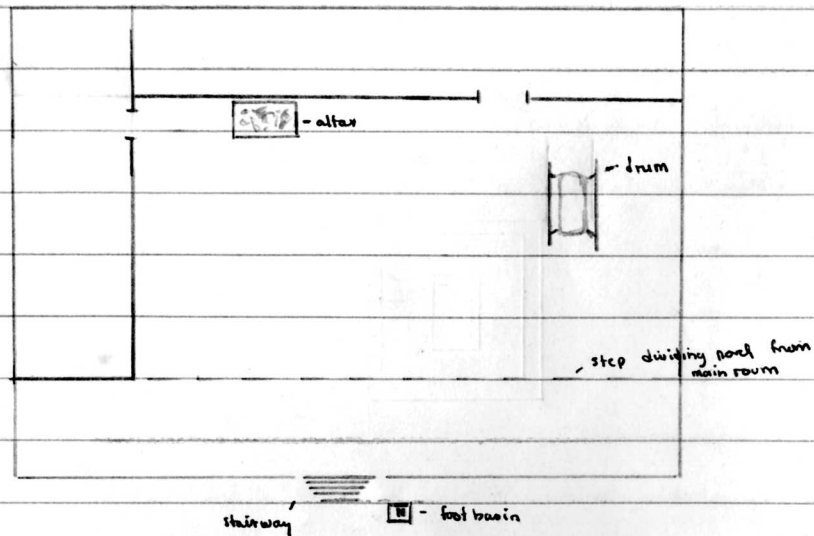


Inside the khudi, the main focus is the "altar". One on level - raised - are 4 glass Buddhas of different colors. Below them on another level are a collection of other Buddha statues (whether

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they are made of wood or metal, I am not certain. Also, on the altar are paper flowers, incense. Above the altar from a piece of bamboo matting are hung various coloured paper decorations and two "parasols" (without handles) which are also decorated with paper decorations. The Khui itself is constructed as follows: as one enters the stairway, there is a broad porch running across the whole front of the building. Then one enters the major room by walking up a single step that runs parallel to the porch the whole way along. There are no walls separating this room from the porch. There are at least two other rooms - one running parallel to the porch at the back of the big room and one running perpendicular. How these are arranged within, I am not certain for I have never been inside. The basic design, then is something like this:


~~On the main facade and over the~~



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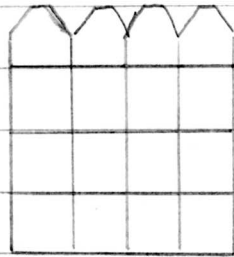
On the main facade and ~~on the door~~ over the doorway entering the two upper rooms are writing in Thai. As yet I don't know what ~~these~~ these are. In the main room, in addition to the altar is the big drum which is struck to announce special religious functions, to convince the villagers, and, sometimes, in fun. It is struck by two sticks, both of which are covered at one end with bits of cloth. Also, in this room is a cupboard which seems to house dishes and cooking utensils. There is also a small charcoal brazier and charcoal stumps on the floor. The priests' cloths are hung over the rafters in various places around the room. The bai (the (U)MS), the black "begging-balls" of the priests are hung on the hooks in the posts of the house. There were also several mats around the room. I noticed a large leaf broom - prob. 12' in length - which when yielded by the little Wai sit looks almost ludicrous. At one end of the porch are the collection of pots and jars which are used for holding drinking water and bathing water. There is a fence around the porch with a gate at the top of the stairs made of corrugated iron sheeting. The wall possesses no locusts, but there is at least one small house - glass lamp.

A "Fire Balloon":

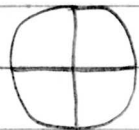
Today we saw made and demonstrated a device which could come straight from the annals of Marco Polo - namely a Wai (ko:m faj) or what we ~~had~~ have decided to call a "fire balloon". In mid-afternoon the priests came over to the shop to buy the things necessary for making this device - these consisted of squares of very thin coloured paper (mauve, pink, purple, turquoise, white). ⁴ ~~Four~~ squares were taped at the end: - . Then these were attached to another square - and if one had 4 constructions of 4 squares each

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and these ones were in turn attached to one another:



These different coloured panels were all attached together with cassava flour glue. When these were all glued together a strip of bamboo (an oin) was cut and fastened together with wire. The circumference of this hoop equalled the width of the bottoms of the 4 shells placed together. Two pieces of wire were then attached at rt. angles across the diameter of the hoop:



Using a piece of cloth dipped in cassava flour glue (extra hot for best results) and then run along the rim of the hoop. The hoop was then placed on the bottom of the paper about 1-2" up from the bottom and the paper was then rolled up around the hoop.

The two unattached sides of the hoop were attached with glue as well. Finally, the 4 ends were brought together and attached to one another. Then 2 small sheets of paper were pasted together and then pasted on top of the joined ends so that there was no open space at the end of what now turned out to be a cylinder.

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The whole device was then checked for holes and if there were any, they were patched with bits of paper.

Now the device proper was finished. Now pieces of cloth which had been soaked in ^{น้ำขี้เถ้า} น้ำขี้เถ้า (nám man jai - "oil from the local 'nutty' trees") were wound at the center of the hoop - at the junction of the two wires. One piece of cloth was left dangling down. The device was then supported from the top (hoop on bottom) by several people and the oil soaked cloth was lit. As the smoke proceeded upwards, it was caught inside the paper cylinder. Eventually, the whole cylinder filled and began to rise. In fact it rises very high - when finally the fire burns out, it floats back to earth like a parachute. The device can be used for as long as the paper holds out.

The making of ko:m faj is something which is done during the Lenten period. They are made primarily by priests, because "priests are the only ones who have time to make them." (Mr. Ngai). They are particularly conspicuous at ~~the~~ the chá:w sák ceremony and at the "coming out of Chausá: ceremony". At such times there are contests to make ones that will go the highest. They are sent up during the evening as well as during the day. The one we saw today was sent up two times during the day and once at night (when I think it got lost). Mr. Ngai says that these ko:m faj are used for "worship" (bu:cha:) - I imagine worship of Stewa:da:.

Educational Comm.:

Today Mr. B, the headmaster was over and I asked him about the educational comm. The

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common: chosen by the headmaster and the names are duly registered at the Amphoe office. All the present 9 members were chosen before Mr. BT came to the village. He says that the members need not necessarily be older people, but must be persons who have "good personality characteristics", "good behavior" (ดี = งามดี), and people who have money, land, and cattle.

There are no regular meetings, but are called at the instigation of the headmaster when something in the way of business arises. Sometimes if the business is very important, like the building of a new school, the whole village will be called to a meeting.

HEALTH IN VILLAGE:

Today when we returned to the village, we talked with Duan [Ma. Ngau's Wi Si] who has been suffering with a fever which I suspect is probably malaria. She says that she feels better but that "I can't bathe yet". I later asked Mr. BT concerning this and he said that when a person has a fever, he shouldn't bathe. If he bathed, he would prob. die. The idea behind this is that if a person is very hot from fever, if then takes a bath with cool water, the change in the body, due to the change in temperature will kill him.

Duan has also cut her hair, whether this has anything to do with her illness, I don't know.

A Bird Trap:

This afternoon some men from another village passed by. They were going to catch doves with a very ingenious device. On one end of a ~~platform~~^{slip} made of bamboo was a cage containing a dove. The trap worked on the same principle as a mouse trap (with the already captured dove as bait). A stick with a net attached on a spring mechanism could be lifted and

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attached to a spring mechanism could be lifted up attached to the cage with the bird. A lever on the flat part would release the net when stepped on by a bird. The cage with the bird was covered with a cloth.

The trap was all covered with fresh green leaves. The whole thing would be put up in a tree and then the cover would be taken off the bird cage. The bird would see and another bird would come to investigate and then be caught in the trap. This device is called a ก้างจัน (kang jan).

TRAVELLING MEDICINE MEN:

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This morning some travelling medicine salesmen came by the shop on their way out of the village. There 3 men have been staying at the khui (at least overnight). They came from Ubon Province. One man had a box (cardboard) fixed with ropes so that it could be carried over his shoulder. In this box, he had several types of medicines - one, called "Panther" (lit, "Black Tiger"), was a potent herbal medicine consisting of ground deer antler and a root called โสม (Som) - "ginseng". This particular medicine is supposedly good for "giving strength," "fattening the thin," helping people with "weak blood," women who are premenstrual, etc. This medicine which is made in Ubon sells for 85/ box. Another medicine was similar to this, but included some more exotic herbs. It is made in Bangkok, but has instructions written in Lao as well as Thai and Chinese. This medicine is basically good for the same things as the one above. He also had the ubiquitous balm which one sees all over Thailand. This particular medicine is a cream with some sort of menthol content and is used for much the same thing and in much the same way as Mentholatum is used. Finally, there were little packets of powder which are good for headaches, dizziness, etc. - similar to Thanasaj.

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A second salesman had a pedal dentist drill. This he uses to heat the dental problems of villagers (a torture instrument in my opinion). This man also installs the "gold" plating on teeth which one sees so often among villagers. This "gold" plating, incidentally, costs about \$3-4 and so is obviously not real gold. Mr. Ng. says that the practice of putting gold on one's teeth is a practice among villagers and is looked down upon by townpeople as being rather vulgar.

The third man had a boy very similar to the first and prob. had much the same things.

THŌ:T KĀTHIN (๓๐๐๓๕)

Today Khun Bunpha: (3rd teacher at BNT) and a friend from Bkwan came to visit. They said that Bunthin Attakorn - Dir. of Teachers' Training for Min. of Educ. and brother of the former Mayor of Mahasarakham - is going to sponsor a THŌ:T KĀTHIN ceremony sometime in October after Lent is over. Also, learned that someone from Bā:n Khwā:w will sponsor a THŌ:T KĀTHIN ceremony here in BNT. The method of announcing one's intentions of sponsoring such a ceremony is for the person who plans to sponsor the ceremony to go in the dead of the night "like a thief" & attach a piece of paper to the door of the khudi in the wai announcing that "such-and-such" a person "has spoken for" this wai as the place he wishes to sponsor a T. K. ceremony. Once a wai has been spoken for, no other person from ^{other village} ~~wai~~ can sponsor the ceremony in the same wai.

KAMMAN LŌ:T OF TAMBON NŌ:NG KUNG:

A woman stopped by the shop on her way from the market to B. NŌ:ng Kung. She turned out to be one of the 6 wives of Kamman LŌ:t (of T. NŌ:ng Kung). She apparently (according to

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Mr. Ngāw) "likes me" and will go to bed for money. She has the nasty habit of blackmailing certain of her former paramours by threatening to reveal all by threatening to tell her husband who is renowned for his "fast draw" (he has killed several men and always carries a gun) and his wickedness. One man, a school teacher had to pay over a \$1000 because if she told, he would have lost his job.

The Kamman is quite a man for he strikes terror even in little children who are threatened by their parents to be sent to Kamman LŌ:t if they misbehave. He packs a gun and has been known to send his buddies out to steal the cattle or kill cattle of a person against whom he has a grudge. An interesting but obvious point was made by Mr. Ngāw in contrasting this man with the Kamman of T. Khwā:w. The latter, it was said, will drink satto and won't crack down on the local lottery. He is "loved" by the people of this tambon. On the other hand, K. LŌ:t will have arrested anybody caught in one of these acts. This characteristic plus that of his other qualities make him a man little loved ~~by~~ but much feared. He is very rich (apparently made through usury) & is a good friend of the Nai Amphoe (prob. because of his enforcement of laws).

I asked Mr. Ngāw why if people dislike him so much, why they don't get rid of him. He said that he is too powerful to be disposed with. It is interesting that Mr. Ngāw thinks it is basically a matter of luck whether a tambon has a good Kamman or not.

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Khà:w sà:k CEREMONY:

When Miss Bamphai and her friend were here we discussed the forthcoming หมั้น (Thām bun khà:w sà:k) which will be held during the day on Tuesday, the 15th day of the waxing of the moon (full moon) in the 10th month (i.e. 3 Sept.). This ceremony is called พิธี (phǐthi: sà:k) in Thai. Mr. Hō: believes the ceremony is held all over the country on the same day and said it in a way which indicated that he felt it was important national celebration. At this celebration there will be more ko:m faj and more special foods.

END OF LENT CEREMONY:

Lent ends officially on the 1st day of the waning of the moon in the 11th month (Friday, the 11th of Oct.). There will be a rather large ceremony with many ko:m faj on this day.

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THAM BUN AND SĪ: KHUAN FOR YOUNG MAN LEAVING TO GO TO ARMY:

Khun Bunjag (KV) leaves to join the army on Saturday. He is the first person since we have been here who has gone into the army. In the last few days there have been drinking parties for his teenage friends. Obviously, the prospect of 3 yrs. away from home is something which slightly terrifies him. He admitted to us that he wasn't looking forward to going. He will be stationed at Korat, Khon Kaen, or Udorn. It was felt that he begin his experience away from the village with all the safeguards for his health and well-being ~~was~~ made before he leaves. Thus, this morning a combination tham bun and sĪ: khuan ceremony was held for him at his

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house.

The tham bun ceremony was more elaborate than most I have seen before. When I arrived at the house, there was already a big gathering of people & priests in the big open front room. There was a greater number of women and it was obvious that they had been helping in preparing the food. The priests (all 3 plus the novice and sĪk wāt) were seated on mats and mattresses. The mō: sĪt (หม้อ) was seated in front of the priests and "chanting" to them when I entered. He then took a water ^{cup} with candles & leaves in it & presented it to the head priest who signified his acceptance by touching the scoop. Then the head priest chanted a bit. Then the mō: sĪt chanted again & took a small tray of food, flowers, and candles which was taken away to be given to the phī:. Then, the priests chanted a sĪt while their bowls were filled with rice and trays of food were brought up (under the direction, primarily, of Mr. Hō:). When the priests had finished chanting, the food on trays were taken up by various people, raised which those presenting the food knelt. They then chanted the standard, "I take my refuge in..." and presented the food to the priests. The mō: sĪt let this oral recitation. The food consisted of lā:p (chicken); dish with bamboo shoots; dish with rice vermicelli; khà:w nōm; khāi: wā:n. While the priests were eating, people sat around and talked. When, when the priests had finished, the food was taken from them (except the rice in their "begging bowls") and added to more of the same and given to the guests. Jane arrived at this point and as she was busy with the camera, she didn't eat straight off. When Mr. Ngaw noticed this, he chastised her good-naturedly and told her to "come make merit" by eating.

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When everyone had taken their fill, the head priest read a sermon from a book of sermons. The radio in the room was simultaneously being played at full volume so I doubt that many people could have followed the sermon, though all sat in a reverent pose.

When the sermon was finished, the mī:sūat sat a basket of water in front of the head priest and the priest nearest him. These two priests were then given candles which were lit and held over the water. Then all the priests and co. chanted and thus made "holy water." While this was going on a woman took a scoop of water and a man did likewise and slowly poured the water through the cracks in the floor. This, it is said, is to notify the ancestral spirits (tho:ra:n) of the merit-making ceremony. These spirits live in the ground.

When the chanting was finished, the priests took the "holy water" and bathed the young man with it. This was done to bring him good health.

Then the mī:sūat held a sū:khwan ceremony as we have seen before. There were 3 "friends" of the same age as the young man who joined in the ceremony and in touching the boy. Most of the guests left before the sū:leuou ceremony.

An aside: Mr. H.Y. told me that this ceremony is called sū:khwan in Lao and ba:sī: in Thai. Interesting that he uses word ba:sī: which is actually Lao instead of ba:isī: which is Thai.

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Jū: Faj customs:

About noontime Miss Buaphas (ບູຢາຟາ), the newest teacher at BUR came visiting with Miss Sūda:pho:n (ສຸດາຟອນ - nickname Sū) who is a student from Ban Khuan studying at the Teachers Training College in order to teach Jane some namwong. We got talking about the practice of jū:fej - the "roasting" of a woman by the fire after she has given birth. We had asked if the wife of Mr. Bueathiang would "lay by the fire" when her next child comes (in about 4 months). They said that she would. The practice, they went on, is quite commonly held by even a person like Ajarn Ruchani who teaches at the Teachers College & who is partially, if not entirely Chinese practices this custom. It is believed that by "laying by the fire" helps a woman regain her strength as well as to make the blood better. The length of time a woman will stay by the fire depends on how a woman feels & how soon she becomes better. Thus, there is a variation from a few days to as much as two weeks.

Namwong:

Khun Buaphas and Khun Sūda:pho:n taught Jane a song and one style of dance to the namwong. Each style has its distinctive hand positions and its distinctive song. The style they taught is called ກຳລັງ ສຸດາຟອນ ສຸດາຟອນ ສຸດາຟອນ (kham:ram sū:t sū:ma:la) which is danced in conjunction with the song called ອາໄສ ນາມ ສຸດາຟອນ (gam sē:ng dyan) - "The beauty of the light of the moon." It goes as follows:

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งาม แคว่ ได้อ่อน มา เขื่อน ล่อง หล้า
 ga:m sɛ̃ŋ dyan ma: jyan sɔ:ŋ lǎ:
 งาม ไผ่ หน้า มา ล่อง รัง มา เขื่อน หน้า เขื่อน สหภูมิ
 ga:m paj nâ:ma: sū: wɔŋkam raw lɛ̃n kan phya sanuk
 งาม ไผ่ หน้า มา ล่อง รัง มา เขื่อน หน้า เขื่อน สหภูมิ
 pajay thuk maj waj sakam khǎ:hāj lɛ̃n fɔ:n ram phya sǎ:mák khi: zɔ:ŋ

The 2 styles of hand movement used in this dance are called ต้งวอย (tɔ̃ŋ wɔj) & ต้ง (tɔ̃ŋ).

30 August, 1963

History of the Name of BNT:

The following story is according to Mr. Saw, the mɔ:lammù: director, who is said by other villagers to be very knowledgeable in matters concerning local history and custom:

A long time ago before there was any village here, there was a dense forest surrounding a pond (น้ำจืด - nǎj). In this forest lived a rhinoceros (น้ำจืด - rɛ̃:th).

One day a man came into the forest in search of food. While he was near the pond, the rhino came up and charged him. He climbed a "rubber" (น้ำจืด ๕๕๕) tree & the rhino wandered off.

Shortly afterwards another man came into the woods in search of the sap of the "rubber tree" (น้ำจืด ๕๕๕ - nām mɔn ja:ŋ). He discovered the tree in which the other man was still hiding. He sat down under the tree to rest a bit before going to work.

While he was sitting there, the man in the tree got the urgent desire to defecate (น้ำจืด ๕๕๕ - thǎi). Thus, he crawled down on some branches ^{above} where the other man was sitting. When the man below heard the first sounds of the man above defecating, he thought it was the rhino and became very frightened (น้ำจืด - tɔ̃:n) and went running home.

As thus is how the village of Bâ:n Nǎj Tɔ̃:n got its name - "the village of the frightened pond".

There is also another story as to how the field opposite the wát got the name of nǎj kɛ̃n mɛ̃:n. It seems that a long time ago, a Khmer came here in search of food. He was above his situation and when he didn't find any food, he died at this particular spot.

31 August, 1963

THĪ:t THIAN CEREMONY:

Last night at about 9 p.m. or after we were awakened by a commotion in the wāt. Because of my being rather unwell, we didn't go to see but Mr. Ngāw explained to us what was happening. It seems that during Lent, villagers from surrounding villages make surprise visits on wāt BAV with gifts and food. This is called NON INEK (thĪ:t thian) - lit. BAV villagers reciprocate by making similar presentations at neighbouring wāt. This is a thambun ceremony at which the priests of the receiving wāt will chant (and preach?). These tours are always made during the Lenten season and not after the "leaving of Lent" ceremony. Such events also occur occasionally during the day. The priests of the donor village always accompany the group going. In this case the donor village was B. Nĕ:g dik.

1 Sept., 1963

NATIONAL HOLIDAY:

According to Ngāw, who heard it on the radio, today is some sort of national day. There is no ceremony in the village, but some people were interested in listening to the speeches of the King & Queen on the radio.

EFFECTS OF RADIO ADVERTISING:

Mr. Ngāw bought a special health tonic called "Lion's Blood" (လိၼ်ၼ် ဝိၼ်ၼ်) which costs \$5 because he "heard it advertised on the radio so often." One thing that impressed him about the tonic was that it was invented by a doctor who studied medicine in Germany (see the advertisement). The association of a product with a foreign country is a ploy

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that is used greatly in Thailand.

KHĀW SĀ:k CEREMONY:

Apparently, the khāw sĀ:k ceremony is very imp. festival in this area. Today and tomorrow people go to visit relatives - especially son-in-laws living in different villages will go to visit parents & relatives in their home village. Mr. Ng. gives several reasons why visiting is done: (1) it is "customary" at the time of the khāw sĀ:k ceremony; (2) people have been working in the fields & haven't had time to visit their relatives; (3) people want to go to get bananas and coco-nuts to use in making special foods - which will be done tomorrow - for the ceremony.

Today "mother" Ho:m has a young relative (of about 16 yrs. of age) from ~~some~~ Nĕ:g dik staying or visiting. She specifically says, in connection with this young man's visit, that "on this day people go visiting to make merit and to think of everything (၅၀၀ ၼ်း ၼ်း)." "

ETHNIC CONCEPTIONS:

"Mother" Ho:m was today talking to Jane about some khā: people who used to come here to trade. These people, she says, are very dark with teeth (၅၀၀ ၼ်း), and wear only loin cloths. She says that they have very dark knees (and buttocks) they carry things on their backs and on their shoulders. She says they don't live in villages but "in the forest". She has only seen men, no women. (Ng. has never heard of them, so they apparently no longer come). They wear gold earrings. Interestingly, she says that they come from the "East". A few speak Lao, but most know only their own language. [I would guess from their description that they are similar, if not in fact, the phĪ: thĪ:g [yang]]