

August 1, 1963

[317] 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. [317/16]

Transplanting Rice:

Today Jane and I had our first experience of working in the fields. We helped in the planting of rice seedlings in the regular plots. One takes a bundle of 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 off 3 or 4 rice plants, gets their roots together by pushing them with right hand against the left and then stuck in the soft (though sometimes not so soft) mud. They stuck about an inch in the ground, the thumb being used to knead the plants into the ground. The seedlings are planted about 8-10 inches apart in rows which are, though not straight, about 8-10 inches apart.

Mr. Phon's Second Wife:

In walking around various fields, we stopped at the small shelter (called thiang nã: or "field house") of Mr. Phon and talked a bit with his wife. As we already knew, she is a second wife. She herself has had only one child, Thọ:ng Dàe:ng ( ๓๐๓ ๑๑๓ ). She also [318]

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[318] has lost one child. She was nursing (or seemingly so) the child of her stepdaughter. Neither of us can understand how she could still have milk.

(Thq:ng Dae:ng is 7 years old - J.) [318]

August 2, 1963

[318] Conversation with Mr. Ngaw:

Last night had another long "bull session" with Mr. Ngaw. Discussed the relative poverty and riches of other people in the world. This led to a discussion of money. Jane asked Mr. Ngaw what he would do if he won a large sum in the Government <sup>[318/9]</sup> lottery. He said he would buy quite a bit of land and rent it out. This was his first reaction. On further questioning he said he might buy a truck and give some things to the wat. Under no circumstances would he leave this area for Bangkok or somesuch.

We spent quite a bit of time last night explaining to him the birth control practice of the "rhythm method". He said 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.

Age:

I was noticing yesterday that Mr. H<sup>o</sup>: was working in the fields. I asked Mr. Ngaw if it was usual for old people to work in the fields and he said some do and some don't, but most 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 (the same for women). If he stops working, in a sense he becomes a charge, and loses dignity. Furthermore, what is there for him to retire to, - staying at home with the children? [319]

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๓๑๙ Cattle Ownership:

Jane asked me today what all the cattle (oxen) in the village are used for, and I in turn asked Nq̄:j. He says 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 <sup>[ ๓๑๙/๒๐ ]</sup> 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 the villagers, like the Bhil villagers we visited in India, are husbandmen as well as farmers. Cattle which are sold in the market are almost inevitably killed for beef.

Remittance from Bangkok:

While walking around on the survey yesterday, we stopped off for a chat at the house of Mrs. Pq̄' ( ปจ ). She said she had just received B400 from her son in Bangkok. This son is the "head" ( เจ้าหน้ ) of a lumber mill (or something to do with lumber). I think he is probably some sort of foreman. At any rate, he earns B25 a day (about B750 a month).

An Afternoon Drink:

While Nq̄:j and I were sitting in the house of Mrs. Pq̄', Mr. Tà:p came along and said he would like to stand us a drink. We all trooped over to Nq̄:j's house where <sup>Nq̄:j</sup> ~~Nq̄:j~~ Khe:n, Nq̄:j's father, had a pot of 4-5 day old brew buried. This was distributed among all around who Mr. Tà:p invited over. The partakers included three middle-aged women. The liquor cost 10 sàlyng (B2.50) for what was about two quarts. [ ๓๒๐ ]

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[320] A Trip to the Fields:

In search of a couple of brothers who we have been unable to find at home, Nq̄:j and I walked from the edge of Khum Yàj, past pù:ta:'s forest to the fields of these men. This area is very interesting because of the wooded characteristics (but hardly jungly) <sup>[320/21]</sup> which finally give way to the fields. We found the two brothers making bamboo matting (rather than working in the fields) in their "field house". I think that people often prefer these small huts to their real houses.

Local Lottery:

It struck me today that the local lottery makes 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 Nq̄:j and Mr. La: (particularly the latter as he is the organizer of the lottery).

Visit from Teachers:

Khun Beng and Khun Buapha: visited us today. It seems that Mr. Bunthiang has taken a short holiday off to No:ng khaj (school is currently out till the 2nd of September). Khun Beng is pregnant and expecting her 6th. The teachers spent quite a lot of time in the woods looking for mushrooms, which are unobtainable in Bâ:n Khwáw.

Mushrooms:

This is mushroom gathering time. The wat ground has begun to be [321]

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[320] 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 trayful for B2.50 (though the woman - not from BNT - tried first to sell Jane one large mushroom for B1.) Mushrooms are usually put into a kae:ng. [321]

August 4, 1963

[322] Daily Pattern:

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. [322]

4 August 1963

Adc

Returned to Mahasarakham.

5 August 1963

Returned to village.

August 6, 1963

[322] Tham Bun Bâ:n Ceremony:

This morning I took the opportunity of using Mr. Wichian as an interpreter/informant in discussing with Mr. Hǒ: about the tham bun bâ:n ceremony that was held a few weeks ago at Mr. Hǒ'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 phǐ:. If the occupants of a house have had a run of misfortune (such as the three deaths in the family of Mr. Hǒ:, - his son-in-law, his wife and then his grand-daughter), they believe that it is necessary to exorcise the malevolent phǐ: and to make the future more auspicious for the inhabitants. The priests are called in to perform the ceremony. First they chant the ສຸຕ ທຳ ທອນ (Lao: sù:t thǒ:t), a sutra believed to be efficacious in exorcising phǐ:. Then they chant the ສຸຕ ນຳ ທອນ (Lao: sù:t njāt) which is like the ສຸຕ ມອນກອນ (sùat mongkhon) 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 the four house posts, representing the four 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 nearby. On this was placed such food as different<sup>[ 322/3 ]</sup> colored rice, fish and "any other foods which people eat". This food is not for the phǐ: being exorcised, but is an offering for "good spirits" to bring good fortune. [323]

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[323] Local Lottery:

Mr. Wichian helped explain the "local lottery" which is called literally "buying of a number" (see July 30, page 2.). He explained as I had thought with the following additions: One buys "numbers" for  $\text{฿}1.50$  (or any multiple up to  $\text{฿}13.50$ ) or  $\text{฿}14$  (or any multiple). If one wins on a  $\text{฿}1.50$ , he would receive  $\text{฿}100$ . If he bought a  $\text{฿}14$  number and won, he would receive  $\text{฿}1,000$ .

e.g.s:	<u>Cost of "Number"</u>	<u>Amount if winning number</u>
	$\text{฿} 4.50$	$\text{฿} 300$
	42.00	3000
	140.00	10000

Obviously thus the organizer of a lottery, the  $\text{เจ้ามือ}$  (caw 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. La: is the local caw my:.

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

Mr. H<sup>๑</sup>: once bought a ticket for  $\text{฿}420$ . His wife strongly disapproved of this. Jane asked him what he would have done with the money if he won  $\text{฿}30,000$ . He said he would have built a new house and bought some liquor. He wouldn't have bought more <sup>[323/4]</sup> land because he has enough. Actually, I get the impression that most people don't really think how they would use the money, but play the "numbers". When they do win, they usually squander the money rather rapidly. [324]

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[324] Mr. Hō: and History of the Village:

I asked Mr. Hō: if he thinks that villagers in BNT are better off today than when he was a young man. He said yes, because when he was young there were no roads, no vehicles, no school, no outward signs of progress such as zinc corrugated roofing. A person then who had 3-4 baht was a very rich man. A buffalo then cost ฿4 and an ox ฿2.

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

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

Finding work in Bangkok was hard then, though he found a job as a farm help tending cattle (for an Indian family). He received ฿100 a year. He said that he learned in Bangkok how to be diligent, and followed the same practices when he returned to BNT. [324/5]

A Progressive Headman:

Mr. Wichian explained that every year the Governor gives prizes for one Kamnan and two headmen in the Changwat who have contributed to the progressiveness of their tambon or village. The headman who receives first prize gets ฿600 and the one who wins 2nd gets ฿400. It seems that Mr. Phon has been selected as one of the two headmen (which one is yet [325])

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[325]not known). He was chosen because he supervised the building of two bridges and has been involved in the raising of money and labor to build the new school. I also wonder if there wasn't a bit of personal interference on the part of Mr. W. and some influence brought because of our living here.

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

#### Pig Sale:

This morning Mr. Ngaw sold two pigs to the head of the pig cooperative in Bân Khwāw for ̢1,000.

#### A Bad Dream:

At the house of ກຸ່ມ ກຸ່ມ ກຸ່ມ (Lâe: cantaryang) this afternoon, the m̄q:suat (Mr. Sî:hâ:) was exorcising the bad influences of a bad dream which the wife of Mr. Lâe: had had. The ceremony was as we saw before at the house of Mr. Chu: in Khum Yāj, sometime back. I didn't quite gather what the dream was about, but the reason for the ceremony was that Mr. Lâe: has invested some money in a local lottery "number" and though that if the dream was exorcised, he would be more likely to win. [325/6]

#### A Returnee from Vientiane:

Miss Buncan, the daughter of Mrs. Po' ( ມີ: ) has just returned from Vientiane. She has lived there for about three years. Currently [326]

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[374] 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 Mahasarakham so that she doesn't have problems in Laos on her citizenship. She quite enjoys living in Vientiane and thinks that it is sànűk.

I asked Nq̄:j why people go away to work in Vientiane or Bangkok and yet most always return here to settle down rather than migrating permanently. He said that people go away as young men to paj th̄law, "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've got no children" over and over again. His elder brother Bunthom came and told him to shut up and struck him and 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 (Thais often seem to make fun of others' infirmities); (2) the disciplining of a younger by an older sibling; and (3) the reprimanding of a child for showing disrespect to a higher status person. [376]

August 7, 1963

[327] Language and Sex Differentiation:

Kingshill (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 Lannathai. The same is partially true in the Lao dialect spoken in BNT. The most common word for "I" for both men and women (but not for children) is khò:j. Polite words are rarely used in ordinary conversation within the village, but when they are used they preserve the sex differentiation (khāp for men and khâ for women). I am only speaking of distinctions made for persons speaking and not for the person spoken to for 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 kms.) and to the far end 1.75 miles (2.8 kms.). The village, thus, is 0.7 kms. in length. From the end of the near end of the village to the near end of the wat is 0.3 kms. and from here to the far end of the village is 0.4 kms. "Near" means the end closest to the corners. From the far end of the village to Khum Nò':j via Khum Nò':n is 0.5 1/2 - 0.6 miles (0.9 - 1.0 km.).

House of Mr. Phonma: Sè:tráksǎ:, Khum Nǒ':ng Khwǎw Nǒ':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 runs and owns the 2nd rice mill in the village (which services primarily only Khum Nǒ':j). [327]

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[327] His house has a wooden stairway rather than ladder as in most houses.

The house is built of solid wood rather than bamboo thatch walling. ~~It~~ It also has windows which can be shut and locked, and opened and locked open. Inside the house there are also signs of more wealth. For one thing, there is a table and <sup>[327/327a]</sup> a chair. There is also mosquito netting, mattresses, and several lamps of different kinds. One the wall is a large mirror (mirrors are one indice of greater wealth) which has a decal 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 neighbour who has a large brood. As Mr. Phonma: 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 assistant to his wife.

House of Mr. Sǒ:n Sè:tráksǎ:, Khum Nǒ:n Khwǎw Nǒ:j:

This man is also a relatively wealthy man of the khum. 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 an interesting meal which included dishes of bamboo shoot curry, curry made of the small green flora scum off the top of ponds (when collected in baskets this looks a bit like green mash), raw land crabs and snails; and a mixture of pla:ra: and peppers. This man is also a mǒ:suat. [327c]

August 8, 1963

[328] Religion:

Mr. Ngaw says that in his village of Bâ:n Nỗ:ng Khà: older men and sometimes others as well go to sleep in the wat on holy days during phansă: in order to "make merit". However, in the four years that he has been in BNT he has never seen anyone follow such a custom. He says that some villages follow this custom and some don't. When asked why, he thought that one of the reasons was that there is no elder respected abbot in this wat.

In general he felt that Bâ:n Nỗ:ng Khà: is more religious than BNT. One of the things he cited in support of this was that people drink liquor more in BNT than in his village: "In Bâ:n Nỗ:ng Khà: people drink liquor in moderation, but in BNT there are many people who drink to get drunk".

In Lao as in Lannathai, wăn phrá' is known as wăn sǐ:n (Lao) ( วันพระ ). However, it is also known as wăn sǐ:n njáj (Lao) as the following day is known as wăn sǐ:n nôm:j (Lao). If wăn sǐ:n is translated as "precept day" (Kingshill's translation), then wăn sǐ:n njáj would be "major precept day" and wăn sǐ:n nôm:j would be "minor precept day".

Death:

On 6/8/63 the youngest child of นางสาว (Cha:j) the assistant headman died. Mr. Ngaw said he thought it was because of the mother's lack of milk. But there is also the fact that the child had a fever.

An Unusual Relationship:

Some three years ago the wife of สมชาย (sôm thápsuri) [328]

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[ 326/329 ]

[326] who lives in KNKN died in child birth though the child lived. Na:ng Pha:, the wife of Na:j Khu:n Tháptha:ni: who now lives in Khum No:n came to be wet nurse. What exactly occurred, I am not certain but Na:ng Pha: and Na:j Khun subsequently "separated". After spending a period of time as monk, Na:j Khu:n remarried, not long ago, Na:ng thom and now lives in Khum No:n. Na:ng Pha: continued living in the house of Na:j Som. Soon people began asking them if they were married. They still deny such a relationship, though the children of Na:j Som, and particularly the youngest, have taken to considering Na:ng Pha: as their mother. [ 329 ]

August 9, 1963

[327] Mr. Phon's House in the Evening:

Tonight I stopped by Mr. Phon's house. He had a hurricane lamp 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 8:00 a group of local swains showed up to listen to the "8 o'clock mǎ:lammù:" program. [329]

August 10, 1963

A Periodic Market

On Saturday, August 10th, we went with a group of people from Tambon Khwaw and some CD people (Mr. Wichian, Mr. Sawai) to the tambon center of B. Bq: Phâ:n ( ב. ב. ק. פ. ח. נ. ) in Amphoe Myang in Rqi-et. Here under the auspices of a CD Pilot Project, a periodic market has been established. This market is held six times a month at 5-day intervals fixed according to the lunar calendar: khùn 5 khâm, 10 khâm, 15 khâm; lâe:m 5 khâm, 10 khâm, 15 khâm.

At the present time the market is held for about 4 hours in the mornings of these days and not in the afternoons.

Small shops have sprung up in the center 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 Rqi-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, one notices a paucity of meat. Except for pla:râ:, and very few dried and even fewer fresh fish, there was no meat to be had. One of the reasons is probably that the fishing season hasn't really begun. Oh, I did forget there were some small crabs, snails, and frogs. Basically, there is no market for larger meat in such a village setting.

10 August 1963

Ad.

To Mahasarakham.

August 11, 1963

Some ideas on family structure and kinship in BNT arising from the "Genealogical Survey":

1. Surnames:

Surnames present a rather difficult problem in that older people (particularly older women) do not recall their surnames or the surnames of their parents. This follows from the fact that surnames are only a recent innovation in the Thai social system - being made compulsory in the sixth reign.

Children do not necessarily take the surnames of the father. If there is a divorce, or if a husband dies young and the mother and children continue to reside with her own parents, or in the cases of illegitimate children, the child will often have the surname of the mother.

Adopted children apparently do not take the surname of their foster parents, but retain the surname of one or the other of their real parents.

2. First Names:

People often have two first names: (1) a "common" or nickname which is used in everyday village situations and (2) a "school" name which is used in more formal situations as for registrations of births, in school and in other such circumstances.

3. Household:

The definition of "household" is somewhat complex in a Lao village due to the factor of uxori-local residence. In local thought, a couple (usually with child or children) who have a separate abode in conjunction with the house of the wife's parents (in the same compound?) will be included in the household of the parents-in-law. But as time goes by and the son-in-law

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improves his house (or builds a new one), as more children appear, and as the parents-in-law die, this house is separated in the minds of the villagers and becomes a distinct household.

There is some problem in using the criteria of one hearth, one household, because there are some separate houses whose inhabitants do share a single hearth on some occasions and on others do not.

4. Divorce:

The local definition of "divorce" seems to apply only to the break up of socially-recognized liaisons. In other words, if a couple has been married according to any of the several ways in which contracting a marriage is possible and then the couple "separate", they have divorced. There is no formality in such cases and some theoretically (at least I have never noticed any of these situations) difficulties could arise as when a young man who has returned home (to his home village) leaving his wife behind him and then decided that he really would like to continue his marriage. But on his return he finds that his "wife" has taken a second husband. But, even if such a situation did arise, I would doubt that anything more drastic than the young man's return home again would occur.

In cases of liaisons which are not socially recognized - i.e., midnight trysts, no question of marriage or divorce is involved. If a child is born as a result of such a liaison, a marriage is de facto said to have occurred. But if the couple do not take up residence (with or without ceremony) together, then a de facto divorce has also occurred. Note the case of the girl who had a baby by the son of Mr. Tap.

11-12 August 1963

Add.

In Mahasarakham.

13 August.

Return to village.

August 13, 1963

[330] Religion:

This afternoon we went with Mr. Wichian to the wat in Bā:n khwaw. Here we first went to the sa:la: where some 10 men and 10 women (mostly elderly) were staying for wan s̄in. One man was reading a book on chants which are normally used in everyday activities. He also brought out a palm leaf scripture written in Lao which was about the Wetsandon. 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 ( <sup>๑๒</sup> ). This drum-beating is done on wān s̄in nō:j and wān s̄in njāj.

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 observances in BNT. The answer was that 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 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 that if he did that nobody would understand him. Thus he said he would [330]

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2.

[335] read the sermon and then would discourse on it in the local language. [330/331]

The Girl From Vientiane:

The daughter of Mrs. Pô<sup>o</sup> who 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 Nô:j and kidded him by saying "I will return here in the 6th month". The 6th month is the most auspicious time for weddings. [331]

August 14, 1963

[331] Religion:

About 11:00 this morning the head priest from the wat came over to "buy" some kàp khâ:w. I was rather surprised at this and asked Mr. Ngàw 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. Ngàw didn't have anything to sell so he returned home. We took the opportunity to make our first presentation at the wat. Jane took a tray which contained two platus (dried), a cucumber, and some limes and rice from Mr. Ngàw.

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 thrice-repeated krâ:p which I thought was required). She then put the food with other food which 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 priests. 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 hâj phon (hâj phon) or "blessing" for those who had given food. <sup>[331/332]</sup> The novices then brought the empty trays back to the donors who then departed.

In this case rice was presented in a khâ:w nīaw basket. Mr. Ngaw says this is alright for the noon meal but not for the morning meal when rice must be placed in a dish for presentation.

A person who has been a novice but has never been a priest has the title of ībos or ībos (chiang/sīang). A person who has <sup>[332]</sup>

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2.

[332] once served as a priest has the title of <sup>๓๓</sup> (thīit). A person who has been in the monkhood a second time but has again returned to the world has the title of <sup>๓๓๓</sup> (ca:n). All these titles apply to people who are now laity.

No:j and the Radio:

This morning I had to go to town. On the way I met Nq:j, my assistant, who asked to go along. In town I had to go off on some business and when I came back he said he wanted to buy a radio. I was surprised at this, to say the least, because Nq:j'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 had only ฿130, he "borrowed" ฿170 from me (based on the fact that when we finished the census he will be owed ฿150).

When Mr. Ngaw heard about this he was rather distressed at Nq:j's behaviour. He said that Nq:j's mother had told Mr. Ngaw that when Nq:j received the ฿300 I was paying him for his work, he was planning, nay promised, to help build a bigger and better house. Mr. Ngaw also said that it would be far better if Nq:j had invested in a bicycle which he could use in transporting fish which he catches around the area to sell. [332/332a] At any rate, he was quite against Nq:j investing his money in something whose only tangible asset is sànùk.

In fact this incident rather illustrates the value in which sànùk is held. There seems to be little conception of saving money or investing it in things which will help bring in more money. Ngaw is exceptional in this regard. [332a]

August 15, 1963

[ 332c ] Mr. Ngaw's Family:

Mr. Ngaw informed us last evening that Nuan is pregnant. He asked about medicines to give her during pregnancy. He said again he wanted three children, - two boys and a girl. He then said 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. Bunthiang 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 day by day reports on their work. These books he has at his house.

The Khae:n:

Mr. Bunthiang, it turns out, is a rather capable khae:n player. He explained a few things about the khae:n. There was once a prince who liked to hear the sound of the manuang (?J.). He held a contest for people to try and 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 khae:n. This was the sound the prince was looking for. [332d] 333]

Mr. Bunthiang also demonstrated the scale of the khae:n. There are seven notes in an "octave", and Jane says that it sounds like the old Gregorian scale. This scale applies to the khāe:n pāe:t - the [333]

August 15, 1963

2.

[333] "8-holed khæ:n". 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:

<u>Left hand</u>	<u>Right hand</u>
open	1 and 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 ລ່າງ (lǎj) which literally means "current" like that of a stream or river. There are 32 laj all of which can't be played on a khæ:n pàe:t. Mr. Bunthiang demonstrated several of these and gave us the names: lǎj jǎj, lǎj toe:j, lǎj toe:j phámâ: (Burmese) which is associated with ລ້າງ (lam khwǎ:n - the "axe song"), lǎj sô:j, lǎj nô:j, lǎj sutsǎne:n or lǎj lam, lǎj pò:sâ:j, lǎj khâmě:n (Cambodian), lǎj lam phǐ:fá: (used at the exorcising of the malignant influence of spirits causing illness). (333/334)

There are basically two types of khæ:n, - (1) the khæ:n pàe:t or 8-holed khæ:n, and (2) the khæ:n kâw or "9-holed" khæ:n. The latter is apparently much more difficult but more versatile and more expensive.

#### Local Literature:

This morning Mr. Sóm Thápsùrǐ from KNKN stopped in when I was studying Lao. He also can read Lao and began to explain to me how he learned [334]

August 15, 1963

3.

[334] to read Lao script while he was a monk. He said that the writing on palm leaves ( ບາງລ້າ baj lǎ:n) is not the same as Lao and proceeded to demonstrate. He called the current Lao script Lao nǒ:j.

Cost of Corrugated Iron Roofing:

Mr. Bunthiang says that the corrugated iron roofing which is now so common in the village costs B18-20 for a sheet 2' by 8'.

Jane's Frog Catching Expedition:

(Jane's note) "This morning two women came round and invited me to go hunting for small frogs (huak?) with them. They had two sàwings (fish-nets attached to a circlet of bamboo) and carried pails. We went out to the fields and sought those fields where the water was lying in pools but no rice was being grown. Here we would take the sàwing, 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 pails, enough water being left at the bottom to ensure they would stay alive. [334/5]

" 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 flavour".

A Visit from the Monks:

The head priest and the middle novice came over this evening just as I was going out with Nǒ:j to interview. Much to my later surprise, they [335]

August 15, 1963

4.

[35] stayed after I had gone and talked with Jane. Another surprising thing was that they had made khă:w wă:n - a fermented rice dish - which they had brought over to give Mr. Ngaw. [335]

August 16, 1963

[335] Clothing and Status:

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 phasin 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 amidst those children who are not. The school teachers and the headman all have brown khaki shirts and pants which symbolize their membership in the government bureaucracy. Furthermore, the teachers have epaulettes which indicate 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 woven band which appears at the bottom of the phasin of a married woman who has had children. Mrs. Ho:m explained this as signifying that a woman's responsibilities are now in the home and not in the field<sup>[335/6]</sup> where she would get the bottom of the phasin wet or muddy. (N.B. This strip is known as the dinsin (Lao) - Jane).

Finally, there is the rather indefinite "wearing" of a fountain pen by men in the upper breast pocket of a shirt. This symbolizes membership in the bureaucracy, wealth or 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). (N.B. People will continue [336])

August 16, 1963

2.

[336] to wear a watch that hasn't been working properly for a long time, e.g. Mr. Boonsuk who confessed to me that he liked to keep it on even though it didn't work - Jane).

A Business Method:

Mr. Ngaw gives food to those people who bring a khwian full of rice to be milled. He says he doesn't want people to say he is "stingy". Also he explained that if people know that they are well taken care of when they come to mill their rice (especially when they have to wait a long time for a khwian 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 return to their village, that is, those who practice seasonal migration come home to help with the work. It is when the village is at its maximum population. This factor may be the reason why the 1960 census figures for the village seem comparatively low, as the census was made in the dry season. [336]

August 17, 1963

[336] A Bee Hunt:

This evening Ng'j came over and asked me if I wished to go on a "bee hunt".<sup>[336/1]</sup> First we went to the end of Khum jaj and turned down the path that leads past Pu:ta:'s wood. We came on a group of four men who were drinking <sup>gá. to:</sup> satho and so we stopped and had a drink and a chat. Then we went on to the field house of the brother of Mr. Cha:j. Here there were some coals still burning and so Ng'j went out and "procured" some corn which was roasted. We sat in this house for some time - a rather idyllic setting in a strictly romantic sense. The slight intoxication of the wine, the dusk turning to night, the shadows of the trees outlined against the sky, the slow conversation. 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 bee's nest was located by flashlights. Then some long banana leaf wrapped torches were taken over to the base of the tree and Ng'j climbed up the tree (a feat I wouldn't even try in broad daylight with a safety net beneath me). He took the 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. However, there were no larvae and thus no honey, so the expedition was in vain.

Religion:

Ng'aw 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 a:ca:n jaj) as an officiant. It is necessary to be a novice before becoming a priest though this may be<sup>[337/4]</sup> for five minutes at the time of the ordination into the monkhood (this was the case for Mr. Ng'aw). [336]

August 17, 1963

2.

[338] The second little boy in the wat (is not?) a novice but is a  
lû:k sít. He is the nephew of one of the monks. His parents don't  
live in BNT, but have moved either to Yangtalat or Udorn. [338]

August 19, 1963

[336] Ceremony of "Decorating the Earth":

Very early this morning (beginning at about 2 a.m.) someone representing every household or family in the village went to the wat singly or in small groups to present food to the ancestral phī: in order to "decorate the earth" (ประดับ prădăp din). Earlier the previous day, we had observed the preparations for this ceremony. To take an example, I will describe how Măe: Ho:m (the mother of Mr. Ngaw's wife) prepared for the ceremony.

Yesterday (August 18th) Măe: Ho:m took the bus to Bâ:n Khwăw where she bought bananas and two coconuts. Then she returned home where she took <sup>khâ:w</sup> khaw niaw which had been soaked for a long time and went to one of the traditional rice mills (mortar and pestle) where she pounded the rice into a sort of rice flour. This flour was then mixed with water, sugar, crushed bananas and coconut cream. The resulting mixture was hand patted into small rectangular lumps which were wrapped in banana leaves. These little packages were then placed in a <sup>khâ:w</sup> khaw niaw arrangement and were steamed. The packages containing the bananas were finished at this stage and are known as khâ:w tôm. The ones containing coconut were taken out of their packages and rolled in grated coconut meat and palm sugar and then cut into small bite-sized bits. There are known as khâ:w nôm. These two special foods are prepared especially for this ceremony. Every family made these foods. [338/9]

People began going to the wat as aforementioned at about 2 a.m. and continued going until about 4 a.m. They took with them packages of food in banana leaves. These packages contained the two special "sweeties" [339]

August 19, 1963

2.

[339] plus boiled sticky rice, pla: ra:, pieces of boiled corn, and occasionally other foods. All these were placed in one banana leaf. In a second banana leaf were placed tobacco (rolled cigarettes) and the ingredients for a chew of betel. These two packages were joined together by sticking a piece of bamboo through the banana leaves. Open packages containing a mixture of the two packages were placed by some people at the base of the Bo tree. Those who did this also took a bottle of "fragrant water" which they poured on the ground at the roots of the tree. Some packages were also placed on the <sup>thà:t</sup> that of some dead relative. By far the greater number of packages were placed on the fence around the wat and in a basket in the <sup>kùthi.</sup> ~~khut~~.

In the <sup>kùthi</sup> khut: the priests were sitting, but they didn't seem to be doing anything other than contributing their physical presence. People would come, make their offerings and return home. In the morning these packages will be thrown away.

Mr. Ngàw says that the same ceremony is held in Bâ:n Nỗ:ng Khà:, but that it is held in daytime (in the morning) and food is presented to the priests at the same time. I have yet to find out why people in BNT hold the ceremony at the dead of night. Campi:, our servant in town, says the same ceremony is held at every wat in town. She says it is a "Buddhist" ceremony and the monks actively participate. She called the ceremony bun pràdàp din.

Mr. HỖ: says that this ceremony is Brahmanic. At any (rate?) it is held once a year in the 9th month. As a matter of fact the morning it was held was the last day of the 9th month: <sup>[339/40]</sup> lâe:m sipsi: khâm. A similar [340]

August 19, 1963

3.

[345] ceremony, held during the day, is observed in the 10th month.

This is definitely a sort of liang phi: ceremony - but for ancestral phi:. Mr. Ngaw jokingly pointed to the scavenger dogs who were eating the food placed at the foot of the Bo tree and said "there are the phi:". [346]

19 August 1963

ADD

To Mahasarakham

20-21 August

In Mahasarakham.

22 August

Made trip to ~~Khonkaen~~ Khonkaen.

23 August

In Mahasarakham.

August 24, 1963

Conversations with Mr. Cheunchai

Today we had a long conversation with Mr. Cheunchai 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 merchants in Korat. The house in which Mr. Cheunchai is now living was the original store and was on what was then the main street of town (but not now). When they first lived here, they had to buy their merchandise by travelling by oxcart to Korat. To protect themselves against <sup>ขโมย</sup> khamoi (thieves), 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 Rqi-et would go to Surin with cart loads of milled rice (worth B300-1,000) which they would sell and then used the proceeds to buy their goods. The railway to Khon Kaen was only laid down about 25-30 years ago.

We also discussed the pù:ta: shrines which are found in most every village in the Northeast. He repeats that these are definitely village ancestral shrines. It is a single spirit (phĩ:xtua diaw). I asked if there were pù:ta: spirits in the towns and he answered that there are the spirits housed in the lākmyang shrines -- the câw phô: lākmyang. I asked him if these spirits had any power over the spirits in the village. He said they probably did, representing something like the governor. [Actually, though this is probably true, the spirit world probably parallels the real world in a more definite way. That is, I would guess that the people in the villages rarely

August 24, 1963

2

give thought to the câwphô: lăkmyang any more than they give thought to the ~~governor.~~  
~~viceroy.~~ Certainly, the hierarchy, if it does exist, is 'loosely structured' as it is in real administrative life.]

We also discussed the use of khǒ:khâmă: (ໜຸ່ມ) - literally 'to apologize' or 'to ask pardon of'. This is used as a form of marriage - when a couple decide to marry but do not wish to go through a ceremony, they will take flowers, candles, and incense and go khǒ:khâmă: to the girl's parents. This is so that the man doesn't 'do wrong' by taking up with a girl without her parent's permission. If the parents respond by tying the string around the wrists of the couple, they approve of the match. If they don't, they disapprove and the young couple will be 'doing wrong' (thamphít) if they still insist on living together. The khǒ:khâmă: also must be done at a funeral (at least in town funerals for I haven't noticed it in the village) because one should 'ask forgiveness' for all those misdoings which one has done during the late departed's life time. Not to khǒ:khâmă: is bà:p. The same 'asking of forgiveness' is done by a young man of his parents just before he is ordained. Again, not to do so is bà:p.

24 August 1963

Add.

In Mahasarakham. Dinner at Mr. Chunchai (๒๕๖).

25 August 1963

In Mahasarakham.

August 25, 1963

[242] Miscellaneous:

Leaf roofing lasts usually only one season, whereas straw roofing  
lasts 2-3 years. [240]

26 August 1963

Returned to village.

August 26, 1963

[342] The following are some notes which Jane has made at various times during the last few days:

Making of Bamboo Shoot Curry:

On 16/8/63 Nuan'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 and 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 stunted 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 phāk jānāng and phāk ĩtú: used in <sup>KE:ŋ</sup> kaè:ŋ nq: māj. I learned that there are two <sub>[343/44]</sub> (possibly three?) types of phāk ĩtú:. One grows as high as a small bush, the other about the height of parsley. Phāk ĩtú: has a smell like lemon verbena and is used for flavouring, while phāk jana:ng which has a dark green shiny leaf, is made into a form of vegetable puree by wringing 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". [344]

26 August 1963

Add.

phāk jānāng (or) jānāng : ? can't find word phāk correctly is phāk (ค้ำ)

phāk í.tú: : also can't find word, but perhaps, phāk í.tú: (ค้ำอิ๋น)

kz.ig nó.mái      1174 2410 25

August 26, 1963

2.

[341] Ngaw Sales:

"Mr. Ngaw receives  $\text{฿}4$  per empty large size kerosene tin (in Roi-et), but says he can't sell the small ones".

Nq:j's Clothing:

"Nq:j's navy jacket cost him  $\text{฿}50$  which he said was very expensive, but it has lasted him three years. His pants also cost  $\text{฿}50$ ."

Fares to Sarakham and Roi-et:

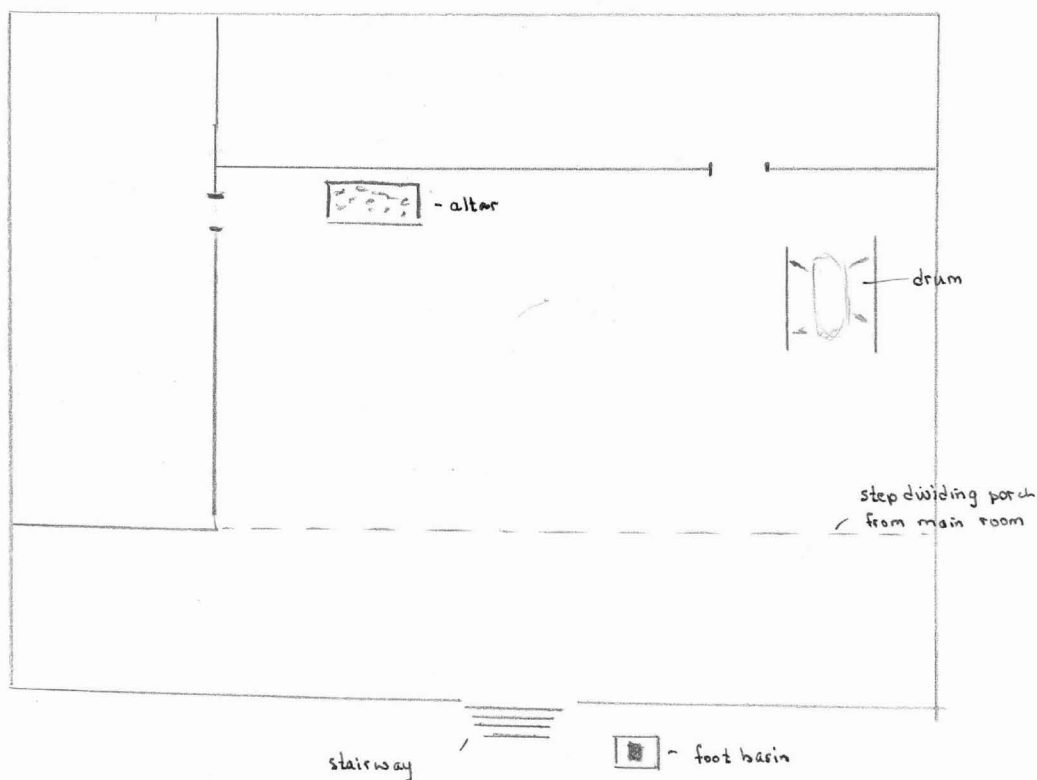
"The fare (from the corners) to Sarakham is  $\text{฿}2$ , to Roi-et  $\text{฿}4$ . I am sure this is the basic reason why more villagers shop in Sarakham, even though things are cheaper in Roi-et". [341]



August 27, 1963

2.

[342] Inside the <sup>kuthi:</sup> ~~kuthi~~ the main focus is the "altar". On one of the raised-levels are four glass Buddhas of different colours. Below them on another level are a collection of other Buddha statues (whether <sup>[342/3]</sup> of wood or metal I am not certain). Also on the altar are paper flowers and incense. Above the altar from a piece of bamboo matting are hung various coloured paper decorations and two "parasols" (without handles) also decorated with paper decorations. The <sup>kuthi:</sup> ~~kuthi~~ 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 to it. How these are arranged within I am not certain, for I have never been inside. The basic design is something like this:



[343]

August 27, 1963

3.


[344] On the main facade and over the doorways entering the two off rooms are writing in Thai, as yet I don't know what about. In the main room, in addition to the altar is the big drum which is struck to announce special religious functions, to convoke the villagers, and sometimes in fun. It is struck by two sticks, both of which are covered at one end with wrapped pieces of cloth. Also in this room is a cupboard which seems to house dishes and cooking utensils and left-over food from the morning meal. There is also a small charcoal brazier and charcoal strewn on the floor. The priests' clothes are hung over the rafters in various places around the room. The bà:t ( ບາດ ) the black "begging-bowls" of the priests, are hung on hooks in the posts of the house. There were also several mats around the room. I noticed a large leaf broom, - probably 12' in length - which when wielded by the little lû:ksit 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 wat possesses no lantern, but there is at least one small kerosene-glass lamp.

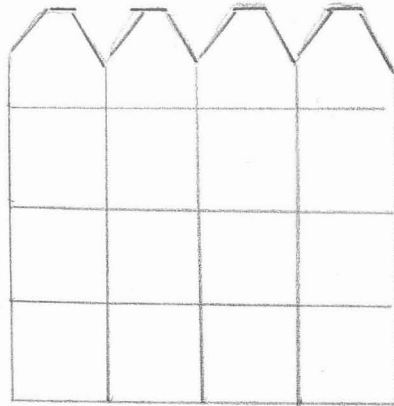
A "Fire-Balloon":

Today we saw made and demonstrated a device which could have come straight from the annals of Marco Polo, namely a ໂຄມໂຟ (ko:m faj) or what we have decided to call a "fire-balloon". In mid-afternoon the priests came over to the shop to buy the necessary squares of very thin coloured paper (mauve, pink, purple, turquoise, white). Four squares [344]

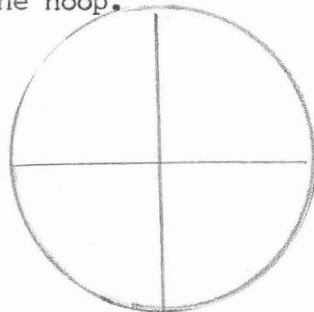
August 27, 1963

4.

[344] were tapered at the end . These were attached to another square until one had four constructions of four squares each, <sup>[344/5]</sup> and these were in turn attached to one another.



These different coloured panels were all attached together with cassava flour glue. When they were all glued together a strip of bamboo (an osier) was cut and fastened together with wire. The circumference of this hoop equalled the width of the bottoms of the four sheets placed together. Two pieces of wire were then attached at right angles across the diameter of the hoop.



Using a piece of cloth dipped in the same cassava flour glue (extra hot for best results) the priest made the rim of the hoop tacky. This was then [345]

August 27, 1963

5.

[345] placed on the bottom of the paper about 1-2" up from the balloon and the paper then rolled up around the hoop. The two unattached sides of the hoop were attached with glue as well. Finally the four ends were brought together and attached to one another. Then two small sheets of paper were pasted together and then pasted on top of the joined ends so that there was no more open space at the end of what now turned out to be a cylinder. [345/6] The whole device was then checked for holes, and if there were any they were patched with bits of paper.

Next pieces of cloth which had been soaked in <sup>น้ำมัน</sup> man ja:ng, - i.e. oil from the local "rubber" trees) were wound round 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 sent up again and again 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. Ngaw). They are particularly conspicuous at the khâ:w sâ:k ceremony and at the "coming out of phansa: 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 [346]

August 27, 1963

6.

[346] at night (when I think it got lost). Mr. Ngaw says that these ko:m faj are used for "worship" (bu:cha:), - I imagine worship of the the:wa:da:. the:wáda:

Educational Committee:

Today Mr. BT, the headmaster, was over, and I asked him about the Education Committee. <sup>[346/7]</sup> The committee is chosen by the headmaster and the names duly registered at the Amphoe office. All the present nine 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" ( ดเ นศม ) and people who have money, land and cattle.

There are no regular meetings, but they 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 the Village:

Duan (Mr. Ngaw's WiSi) has been suffering with a fever which is probably malaria. She says she feels better but "can't bathe yet". I asked Mr. B.T. about this later and he said that when a person has a fever he shouldn't bathe. If he bathed he would probably die. The idea behind this is that if a person is very hot from fever and then takes a bath with cool water, the change in body temperature will kill him. Duan has also cut her hair. Whether this has anything to do with her illness I don't know. [347]

August 27, 1963

7.

[347] 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 an ellipse 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 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 and the trap covered with fresh green leaves. The whole thing would be put up in a tree and then the cover taken off the bird cage. The bird would coo and another bird would come to investigate and then be caught in the trap. This device is called a <sup>๓๒๓</sup> tum nók. [348]

August 28, 1963

[348] Travelling Medicine Men:

This morning some travelling medicine salesmen came by the shop on their way out of the village. These three men have been staying at the ku:thi: khut:ti (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 so:m ( ໄຊໂມ - "ginseng"). This particular medicine is supposedly good for "giving strength", "fattening the thin", helping people with "weak blood", women who are pregnant, etc. This medicine which is made in Ubon sells for B5 a 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. It 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 constituent and is used much like our Mentholatum. Finally there were little packets of powder which are good for headaches, dizziness, etc. - similar to Thancaj. [348/9]

A second salesman had a pedal dentist's drill. This he uses to treat 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 costs about B3-4 and so is obviously not real gold. Mr. Ngaw says that the practice of putting gold on one's teeth is a practice among villagers and is looked down upon by townspeople as being vulgar. [349]

August 28, 1963

2.

[349] The third man has a box very similar to the first and probably had much the same things.

Thô:t Kàthín ( *น่าน ป่าน* ):

Today Khun Buapha: (3rd teacher at BNT) and a friend from B. Khwa:w came to visit. They said that Bunthin Attakorn - Director of Teachers' Training for Ministry of Education and brother of the Lord Mayor of Mahasarakham - is going to sponsor a thô:t kàthín ceremony sometime in October after Lent is over. Also learned that someone from B. Khwa:w will sponsor a thô:t kàthín ceremony here in BNT. The method of announcing one's intentions of sponsoring such a ceremony is for the person who plans to sponsor it to go in the dead of the night "like a thief" and attach a piece of paper to the door of the <sup>kuthi:</sup> ~~khuti~~ in the wat announcing that "such-and-such" a person "has spoken for" this wat as the place he wishes to sponsor a T.K. ceremony. Once a wat has been spoken for, no other person from any other village can sponsor the ceremony in the same wat.

Kamnan Lô:t of Tambon Nô:ng Kûng:

A woman stopped by the shop on her way from the market to B. Nô:ng Kûng. She turned out to be one of the six wives of Kamnan Lô:t of T. Nô:ng Kûng. She apparently (according to <sup>[349/30]</sup> Mr. Ngaw) "likes men" 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 telling her husband who is reknowned for his "fast draw" (he has killed several men and [350])

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3.

[35] always carries a gun) and his vindictiveness. One man, a school teacher, had to pay over a ฿1000 because if she told, he would have lost his job.

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

I asked Mr. Ngaw why if people dislike him so much they don't get rid of him. He said he is too powerful to be disposed with. It is interesting that Mr. Ngaw thinks it is basically a matter of luck whether a tambon has a good kamnan or not. [350/51]

Khā:w Sā:k Ceremony:

When Miss Buapha: and her friend were here we discussed the forthcoming <sup>กำนัน</sup> ~~กำนัน~~ <sup>บ้าน</sup> ~~บ้าน~~ <sup>สาม</sup> ~~สาม~~ (thambun khā:w sā: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 September). This ceremony is called <sup>พิธี</sup> ~~พิธี~~ <sup>สาม</sup> ~~สาม~~ (phithi: sā:t) in Thai. Mr. Hq: believes [351]

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[351] this ceremony is held all over the country on the same day, and said it in a way which indicated that he felt it was an 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 4th of October). There will be a rather large ceremony with many ko:m faj on this day. [351]

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[351] Tham Bun and Sù: Khwǎn for Young Man Leaving to Go to the Army:

Khun Bunjang (KY) leaves to join the army on Saturday. He is the first person since we have been here who has gone into the army. For the last few days there have been drinking parties for his teenage friends. Obviously, the prospect of three years away from home is something which slightly terrifies him. He admitted he wasn't looking forward to going. He will be stationed at Korat, Khon Khaen or Udorn. It was felt that he begin his experience away from the village with all the safeguards for his health and well-being made before he leaves. Thus, this morning a combination tham bun and sù: khwǎn ceremony was held for him at his <sup>[351/2]</sup> house.

The thambun ceremony was more elaborate than most I have seen before. When I arrived at the house, there was already a big gathering of people and 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 three plus the novice and dèk wát) were seated on mats and mattresses. The mǒ:suàt (มอสูต - Mr. Sǐ:nǐ:) was seated in front of the priests and "chanting" to them when I entered. He then took a water scoop with candles and leaves in it and presented it to the head priest who signified his acceptance by touching the scoop. Then the head priest chanted a bit. Then the mǒ:suàt chanted again and took a small tray of food, flowers and candles which was taken away to be given to the phǐ:. Then the priests chanted a suàt while their bowls were filled with rice and trays of food were brought up (under the direction, primarily, of Mr. Hǒ:). When the priests had finished chanting, the food on trays were [352]

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[352] taken up by various people, raised while those presenting the food knelt. They then chanted the standard "I take my refuge in..." and presented the food to the priests. The mǝ:suət led this oral recitation. The food consisted of lâ:p kàj, a dish with bamboo shoots, a dish with rice vermicelli, khâ:w nôm and khâ:w wa:n.

While the priests were eating, people sat around and talked. Then, 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 and make merit" by eating. [352/2]

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 mǝ:suət 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 (Thơtani: ) 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. [353]

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[353] Then the mǒ:suət held a sù:khwǎ:n ceremony as we have seen before. There were three "friends" of the same age as the young man who joined in the ceremony and in touching the tray. Most of the guests left before the sù:khwǎ:n ceremony.

An aside: Mr. Hǒ: told me that this ceremony is called sú: khǎn in Lao and ba:sǐ: in Thai. Interesting that he uses the word ba:sǐ: which is actually Lao instead of ba:jsǐ: which is Thai. [353/4]

#### Jù: Faj Customs:

About noontime Miss Buapha: ( บัวภา "บัวภา" ), the newest teacher at BNT came visiting with Miss Sùda:phǒ:n ( สุดาพจน์ "สุดาพจน์" - nickname น้อย น้อย ) who is a student from B. Khwǎ:w studying at the Teachers' Training College in order to teach Jane some ramwong. We got talking about the practice of jù:faj, - the "roasting" of a woman by the fire after she has given birth. We had asked if the wife of Mr. BT would "lie by the fire" when her next child comes (in about four months). They said that she would. The practice, they went on, is quite commonly held and even a person like a:ja:n Ratchani who teaches at the Teachers' College and who is partially if not entirely Chinese, practices this custom. It is believed that by "lying by the fire" helps a woman regain her strength, dry out the insides (J.) and make the blood better. The length of time a woman will stay by the fire depends on how a woman feels and how soon she becomes better (also whether this is a first or subsequent child, I think - J.). Thus, there is a variation from a few days to as much as two weeks. [354]

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[354] Ramwong:

Khun Buaphá: and Khun Sùda:pho:n taught Jane a song and one style of dance to the ramwong. Each style has its distinctive hand positions and its distinctive song. The style they taught is called ท่ารำ ร่มตม ร่มตม บารว (thâ:ram sô:t sô:j maki:), which is danced in conjunction with the song called งามแสงเดือน (nga:m sǎe:ng dyan) - "The beauty of the light of the moon". It goes as follows: [354/5]

งาม แสง เดือน	งาม ร่มตม ร่มตม บารว
Nga:m sǎe:ng dyan	ma: jyan sô:ng lâ:
งาม ร่ม ตม ตม ร่ม ร่ม ร่ม	งาม ร่ม ตม ตม ร่ม ร่ม ร่ม
nga:m paj nâ:ma: sù: wong ram	raw lèn kan phýa sànu:k
งาม ร่ม ตม ตม ร่ม ร่ม ร่ม	งาม ร่ม ตม ตม ร่ม ร่ม ร่ม
plyâng thuk mâj wa:j rakam	khô: hâj lèn fô:n ram phýa
	งาม ร่ม ตม
	sǎ:mák khi: 'oe:j.

The two styles of hand movement used in this dance are called ท่าวง (tâng wong) and ท่าป (ci:p). [355]

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[354] History of the Name of BNT:

The following story is according to Mr. Sa:w, the mḡ:lammũ: 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 ( ឃ្លាង - nḡ:ng). In this forest lived a rhinoceros ( រីនូ - râe:t). 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" ( ក្រូច ) tree and the rhino wandered off. Shortly afterwards another man came into the woods in search of the sap of the "rubber tree" ( ក្រូច រាជ គ្រា នា.ម man ja:ng). 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 ( ត្រា - thà:j). Thus, he crouched 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 ( ភ័យ - tỳ:n) and went running home. And this is how the village of Bâ:n Nḡ:ng Tỳ:n got its name - "the village of the frightened pond".

There is also another story as to how the field opposite the wat got the name of nḡ:ng khâmě:n. It seems that a long time ago a Khmer came here in search of food. He was close to starvation and when he didn't find any food, he died at this particular spot. [354]

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[35] Thô:t Thian Ceremony:

Last night we were awakened at about 9 p.m. by a commotion in the wat. Because of my being rather unwell, we didn't go to see but Mr. Ngaw explained that during lent, villagers from surrounding villages make surprise visits on wat BNT with gifts and food. This is called တၢ်တၢ်ထီၤ (thô:t thian), - lit. to cast or throw down candles.

BNT villagers reciprocate by making similar presentations at neighbouring wats. This is a thambun ceremony at which the priests of the receiving wat 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. Nq:ng duk. [35]