

Charles F. Keyes, Field Notebooks, Thailand

April 1 through April 30, 1963.

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

Bān Nōng Tūn

April 1, 1963

Today Mr. Thiang showed me a book in which all the students for the last 13 years have been registered. This book contains the following information on every student: Number assigned to the pupil (the book begins with no. 465); name of student; place of birth (tambon, amphoe, changwat); name of parents (both mother and father); occupation of parents; original place of schooling; reason for moving to BNT school; day of entering school; present place of residence (village, tambon, amphoe, changwat); previous school record; date of leaving school; reasons for leaving school (migration, finished *prathom* 4, died, reached age at which compulsory education no longer applied); comments.

This book covers the school years 2493-4 to 2505-6 (a period of 13 years). It covers students no. 465-821 (356 students).

Obviously, I must have a copy of this material if it means shooting Mr. Thiang to get it. It is most frustrating to know that such information exists and is impossible to get at it. There are so many things that I can do with the information therein contained:

- (1) Average number of years that it takes for a student to complete the four years. In this case I would use only those years for which all students have completed school.
- (2) Migration pattern (at least in part) for the past 13 years.
- (3) An inventory of all the people in the current age group of 8 – 21 (to this I can add the age group 7 for which school registrations were just made and the age group 1-5 for which I have at least partial records from the birth records at amphoe office.
- (4) A check on deaths of children between the ages of about 7 and 14 years.

- (5) If I am able to use my questionnaire, I shall be able to check on what young people of about the ages of 15-21 who are not now living in the village but whose parents are still living in the village.
- (6) Possibly, there is information concerning the students who have continued their education.
- (7) Records of any increase in the yearly enrollment of school.

Today several villagers were constructing a *thāt* ฐာต. This is a cement structure on the wat grounds in which are kept the remains of a cremated person. I asked if someone had just died. The answer was no, but that the *thāt* was being built for a person who died in 2504. This person's cremated remains are presently in the *bōt*. Sometime this month there will be a *tham bun* ceremony for this person's remains.

Bān Nōng Tūn

April, 1963 (undated)

What follows are notes that were not in the original field notebook, but which were written in April 1963.

Historical Notes on BNT

From the Student Registration book, I have gleaned the following notes on the history of BNT:

- 1) Originally (at least 27 years ago), Amphoe Muang was known as Amphoe Talāt.
- 2) In 2477 – 80, BNT was *mū thī* 20 of T. Khwao.
- 3) In 2481 - , BNT was *mū thī* 16 of T. Khwao.

Bān Nōng Tūn

April 2, 1963

I went to the village to determine the date for moving into our house out there. I asked the headman, who in turn took us to consult the village shaman whom he calls *ācān*. The shaman thought about the possibilities, doing some mental calculations. He didn't look at anything. Finally, he decided Friday, the 13th day of the waxing of the moon of the 5th month (Friday is often an auspicious day) at 9:00 in the morning would be a good time.

Bān Nông Tūn

April 5, 1963

Today was our first day in the village as residents.

Customs Concerning Health

We went to Mr. Cāēk's house where there were some women doing what looked like the *ramwong*. There was *khāēn* music playing in the background. Then I saw there was a sick person being watched over. Mr. Ngao explained that Mr. Cāēk's wife, who is in her mid-60's, has been ill for some 10 months. Today she really became ill. Hence a shaman was called from Ban Khwao. In this case the shaman was a woman. She came with two woman friends. These were the ones who were dancing. It was explained that they were calling the *phī*, including the *phī* of the woman's father and mother (for which they asked the permission of the younger brother because he might be frightened in the presence of his parents' *phī*. He gave his permission).

To call the *phī*, one of the women would go into an apparent trance and be possessed by the *phī*. Once this possession had taken place, the shaman would ask the *phī* if death was to be the result of this disease. If the answer was affirmative, apparently nothing is to be done. However, if the answer is negative, then the shaman will ask what the *phī* want to eat in order to appease them. Once this is determined, then the food would be provided, and the ceremony would be over. The shaman and friends would get 20฿ for their work.

The concern over death seems to be minimal. Mr. Ngao said that people of this age are likely to die. And Mr. Cāēk seemed completely unconcerned (spending a good portion of the afternoon over at our house).

Mr. Ngao

Mr. Ngao lived six years in Bangkok working for a company "which sells things from many countries". He went there when he was 19 and wanted to join the police, which he never succeeded in doing. After he returned to the N.E., he first returned home and then set up shop in Bān Nông Tūn.

His father was a good friend of Mr. Cāēk's, and apparently Mr. Cāēk sponsored Mr. Ngao when he first came to the village. Mr. Ngao give credit and had a list which he showed me of about a dozen people in the village who owe him money. I don't know whether these are

people who have borrowed money as well as people who have credit. There was one person who just recently paid off a debt of ฿500. There were several others who owed ฿200 or more.

I had noticed today - the first time I have spent all day on the road - that there are a larger number of vehicles which go by than I thought. One was on its way to Wapi Pathum (I wasn't aware that this road went to Wapi).

Festival at Bān Khwaw and Kū

The following list of events at the temple fair in Bān Khwaw and during the *Kū* ceremony on the 6th, 7th, and 8th of April, 1963 is taken from an advertising poster which was out up in BNT.

In this festival there are several major events such as the following:

1. Boxing matches sponsored by the Community Development Committee of Bān Khwaw.
2. Showing of Thai, Western and Japanese movies on all three nights.
3. Two well-known groups of *ramwong* dancers will perform on stage.
4. Performance by the most famous *mōlam* troupe in the Northeast.
5. Fireworks competition.
6. Fire rocket competition of 1000 rockets in which a first prize of B250 will be given.
7. Competition between processions of fire rockets and 'money trees' from 12 villages.
8. Fire balloon and long drum competitions.

Bān Nōng Tūn

April 6, 1963

Last night we sat talking with Mr. Ngao. He says he prefers living here to Bangkok because he can make more money here. Also we discovered he keeps a mistress - getting married is not good, he said. However, with the way Thai custom is, she is more or less considered his wife, and common-law wife would probably be a more applicable term than mistress. She is 17.

Daily Patterns

Mr. Ngao says the villagers usually get up at 4:30 or 5:00 a.m. (Though we heard stirrings at 5:00 this morning, there was very little real motion till 5:15 or so). Villagers usually

eat their breakfast at 8:00 (though often as late as 10:00), lunch at 1:00, and dinner at 8:00 in the evening (after dark). This latter practice leaves the daylight hours for work and play.

In the early evening - 5:30-6:00 p.m. - the children came out onto the road to play. They made necklaces and bracelets out of the stems of certain plants. They blew soap bubbles using a piece of reed turned on itself to make a hoop to hold the soap. Between 6:00 and 6:30 the cows and buffaloes were brought back from the fields and tethered for the night under the houses.

Mr. Cāēk came round this morning and we asked him more questions about eating. It seems that for the morning and noon meals, the family doesn't eat together. Also they eat whatever is available. If the men are off fishing, they will eat at the fishing grounds.

List of events at Wat Fair at Ban Khwaw and Ku: ceremony, April 6, 7, 8, 1963
from an advertising poster put up in BNT

ในงานนี้มีรายงานสันตนาการที่ยิ่งใหญ่หลายรายงาน เช่น

๑. รายการแข่งขันมวย จัดโดยคณะกรรมการพัฒนาการชุมชนบ้านเขาว
๒. มีภาพยนตร์ไทย ฝรั่ง ญี่ปุ่น ให้ชมทั้ง ๓ วัน ๓ คืน
๓. รำวง ๒ คณะ ที่มีชื่อเสียง ประชันโฉมกันบนเวที
๔. หมอลำหมู่ที่มีชื่อเสียง ใน ภาคอีสาน
๕. แข่งขันตะโล
๖. แข่งขันของไฟหมื่น รางวัลที่ ๑ จำนวน ถึง ๒๕๐ บาท
๗. แข่งขันชวบนแหของไฟ คั้นคอกเงิน ๑๒ หมู่บ้าน
๘. แข่งขันโคมลม และ กลองยาว

UNISORT ANALYSIS CARD FORM Y9. BURROUGHS CORPORATION - TODD COMPANY DIV. - L HADLEY PRINTED IN U.S.A.

ในงานนี้มีรายงานสันตนาการที่ยิ่งใหญ่หลายรายงาน

List of events at Wat Fair at Ban Khwaw and *Kū* ceremony, April 6, 7, 8, 1963 from an advertising poster put up in BNT.

April 6, 1963

FESTIVAL AT KŪ: BĀ:n Khwāw and Temple Fair at BĀ:n Khwāw:

The following is a list of events at the ~~BĀ:n~~ BĀ:n Khwāw Wát Fair at
KŪ: Festival which will occur on April 6, 7, & 8, 1963. This information was
advertising
copied from an poster put up in BNT:

At this festival, there several important schedules of events:

1. Boxing competitions arranged by the Community Development Committee of BĀ:n Khwāw.
2. Thai, Western, and Japanese movies to be shown on ~~the~~ all three nights.
3. Two groups of well-known ~~and~~ ^{folk} ramwong dancers will ~~compete~~
dance & exhibit their beauty on stage.
4. A famous Isan mō:lām mī: will ~~be~~ be performed.
5. A ~~fireworks~~ competition. tālai (type of fireworks) competition.
6. Competition of one thousand bo:ng fai ('fire rockets') with a first prize of
250 baht.
7. Competition amongst 12 villages in procession of bo:ng fai stuffed (?) with
dō:k gā:n (lit., 'money trees').
8. Competition of kho:m lom ('fire balloons') & long drums (khlong yā:w
('long drums').

หมายกำหนดการงานสงกรานต์

หมู่บ้านสันตนาการบ้านเขาว อ.เมือง จ.มหาสารคาม

Schedule of "Song Ku" festival

บัญชีรายจ่าย

๒๕๖

หมู่บ้านสหกรณ์บ้านเขวาสี อ.เมืองฯ จ.มหาสารคาม

วันที่ ๖ เมษายน ๒๕๖๖

เวลา ๐๘.๐๐ น.
เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น.
เวลา ๑๑.๐๐ น.
เวลา ๑๕.๐๐ น.
เวลา ๑๕.๓๐ น.

ทำพิธีเปิดงาน
มีตลาดนัด
แข่งฟุตบอล
เริ่มชมมวย
หมดอำนาจ ร้าง ภาชนะที่ เริ่มแสดง

วันที่ ๗ เมษายน ๒๕๖๖

เวลา ๐๘.๐๐ น.
เวลา ๑๐.๐๐ น.
เวลา ๑๓.๐๐ น.
เวลา ๑๕.๐๐ น.
เวลา ๑๕.๓๐ น.
เวลา ๑๕.๓๐ น.

มีตลาดนัด
แข่งฟุตบอล
ถึงปากทางธรรม
รวมของไปเขาพระจำเพื่อคนไทย
เริ่มชมมวย
หมดอำนาจ ร้าง ภาชนะที่ เริ่มแสดง

วันที่ ๘ เมษายน ๒๕๖๖

เวลา ๐๗.๐๐ น.
เวลา ๐๘.๐๐ น.
เวลา ๑๑.๓๐ น.
เวลา ๑๕.๐๐ น.
เวลา ๑๕.๓๐ น.
เวลา ๑๕.๓๐ น.
เวลา ๒๕.๐๐ น.

มีตลาดนัด
แข่งของไปใหญ่ (ประกวดมวยมวย)
แข่งรถของขาว
แข่งฟุตบอล มงไฟ
ชมมวย
หมดอำนาจ ร้าง ภาชนะที่ เริ่มแสดง
มีจัดงาน.

23/4/๒๕๖๖

Ban Khwaw

April 7, 1963

Yesterday morning after leaving the village we went to Ban Khwaw to attend the three-day fair (6th, 7th, 8th) and celebration at *kū*. This is an annual affair. Mr. Wichian was trying to get a market going where people would come to sell their goods, but yesterday it was a failure. Nothing happening as yet at the *kū*, but saw a large group of village men on their way to the irrigation tank to fish. The tank is large, and I think the villagers fish as a village. They go, eat and return together.

We went back to B. Khwaw in the evening for the boxing. Many villagers there. However, when we returned to BNT at 10:30, no sign of human life, although there was nearly a full moon and plenty of light outdoors.

This morning we are going to the interment of the remains in Wat Bangkok of a man from the village who had risen to become governor of Loei.

Funerary Rites

These seem to be the most marked of all life crises. There are a whole collection of rites associated with death, - Buddhist, Brahman and animist. Today we observed a fairly elaborate version, since the rites were for a former governor and hence high status person, even if he had been born in Bangkok.

One of the accoutrements of a high status funerary rite is the invitation etched in black and placed in an envelope also etched in black. At high status rites, the men wear a white suit with a black tie and black mourning band, and the women a black dress or a black skirt and white blouse. The rites which we observed are formally called *kānbānčū'at* ကာဏဘဏ္ဍာနုဇ္ဈိ ("the interment of the ashes"). The deceased had been cremated at Loei last year (16 September, 1962), to his wife had kept his ashes for a year and now had decided to inter these at his home village. The events took place over two days (6th and 7th).

The following is the invitation card and its translation:

กำหนดการบรรจุอัฐิ

นายกิติ ยศการี

ณ วัดใหม่ขุนเขาวา อ. เมือง จ. มหาสารคาม

วันเสาร์ที่ ๖ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖

เวลา ๑๖.๐๐ น. ตั้งอัฐิ ณ ศาลาการเปรียญ

เวลา ๑๖.๓๐ น. พระสงฆ์สวดมัทธกา

เวลา ๒๐.๐๐ น. มีมหรสพฉลองสมโภช

วันอาทิตย์ที่ ๗ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖

เวลา ๐๘.๐๐ น. ถวายภัตตาหาร

เวลา ๐๘.๐๐ น. มีพระธรรมเทศนา และมังสกุฏ

เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. บรรจุอัฐิ

นางปิ่นสมุทร ยศการี ภรรยา } เจ้าภาพ
นายสอน พลขำนิ หลาน }

Schedule of Events for Internment of Ashes
of Nai Kiti Yotkārī

at Wat mai khun khwaw Amphoe Muang Changwat Maha Sarakham

Saturday, April 6, 2506

7:00 a.m. Arrangement of ashes at *Wat sala*

5:00 p.m. Priests chant the *mātikā*

8:00 p.m. Celebration.

Sunday, April 7, 2506

8:00 a.m. Presenting of food (to priests).

9:00 a.m. Dharmic sermon and *bangsukun* ("the ritual presentation of gifts to a monk or monks at a funeral")

9:30 a.m. The interment of ashes.

Mrs. Pinsamut Yotkārī wife

] Sponsors

Mr. Sôn Phonchamni cousin

This morning when we went to the wat, we discovered the rites were not only for the former Governor of Loei, but also for a former abbot of a wat in Bangkok who had been born in B. Khwao, and for the parents of Mr. Sôn, one of the sponsors of the funeral. However, in the main, the ceremony was for the former Governor of Loei.

Since the ceremony was not in the village proper, I will not - nor was I able to - make complete notes on the activities. Rather I will merely outline what were the outstanding features. The wat was decorated with preparations for the reciting of the *Wētsandôn* (see notes on village observations) *Chādok* (this came in the afternoon). There were flags round the *sala wat* with little baskets of food at the bottom of the pole. These were for the evil spirits who might be attracted by a rite for the dead. Also there was a basket of things for the Buddhist saint who will protect the ceremony (again see description of comparable village artifact).

When we arrived, most everyone was in the *sala wat* feeding the priests (and then themselves). We were seated in the small pavilion near the *sala* for the officials and high status persons. Among our compatriots were the wives of the Assistant Governor of Mae Sariang, the Lord Mayor of Mae Sariang, the Mae Sariang forestry officer (who had served under the former Governor), the amphoe education officer, etc. There didn't seem to be too great a range of officials present, though someone said there were 33 priests present.

After the feeding, the standard ritual request was made by the people for a sermon by the priests. It was explained that traditionally only standard chants could be given. However, there have been changes in modern years. Instead of chants, the priests made funeral orations for each of the dead. This was followed by the *bangsukun*. This consisted of ritual presentation of gifts to the priests. This ritual is called *chāt'anīchā* in Lao.

After this ceremony, we all processed around the *bōt* returning to the front. Here the boxes of ashes in a box covered with a white cloth and black ribbon were placed on the stoop. Those present came forward and poured perfumed water on the boxes. They were then placed in ready-made niches in the wall. These would be filled up and a memorial plaque placed in front.

The case of the former governor is a good point of social mobility. I was given a cremation volume of his funeral.

Tambon Khwao

April 9, 1963

Festival at *Kū*

Monday (8 April) there was a big celebration at the *kū* near Ban Don Du, Tambon Khwao. This attracted several thousand people from all over the area (this was the first time I saw such a big celebration in Thailand, though such must be quite typical of India and traditional China). This celebration is held once a year - always according to the lunar calendar - during the day of the full moon in the fifth month. ขึ้น 15 ค่ำ เดือน 5

1. Origin and *raison d'être* of ceremony

I discussed the ceremony with Mr. Wichian and Mr. Sôn (head of the pig coop in Bangkok). The latter explained that the day of the full moon in the fifth lunar month is "Lao New Years", whereas Songkran (April 13, 14, 15) is "Thai New Years". I actually think they are probably the same thing. Traditionally, Thai-Lao New Years was determined according to the lunar calendar and the traditional date was the day of the full moon of the fifth month. After the adoption of the Western solar calendar, the government made Songkran a fixed date. The people in the N.E. at least (though I think this is partially true for the whole country) - see Kaufman and Kingshill - have retained celebrations on both dates, though the celebrations on the traditional date seem somewhat reduced compared with those on the new date.

Mr. Sôn said that festivals on the day of the full moon of the fifth month are held at every *kū* in the Northeast. This made me wonder, since the *kū* are all of Khmer origin, and since Thai-Lao New Years is originally a Brahman *fête*, and since the Khmer were Brahman, whether the custom of worshipping at the *kū* is a vestige of a Khmer rite. This is just speculation, though.

2. Activities at *Kū*

The events of the day were an admixture of Brahmin and Buddhist customs. Monks played a major role even in supervising some obviously Brahman customs. Mr. Wichian said, however, that the major purpose of the *fête* was to worship the *thēwadā* เทวดา - "Brahman divinities".

People began really gathering in the afternoon around noon. The place was full of processions of beautifully made fire-rockets, dancers, priests and thousands of people.

a) Clown dancers: - There was one group of dancers composed of all men, some dressed as women and others with painted faces and strange clothes. They were led by a man dressed in white with a bare chest with breasts accentuated by paint and a Hindu turban on top. Mr. Wichian explained these actor-dancers were portraying *kān chū chok* กัณทชุก from the *Vēssantara Jātaka* เวสสันดรชาดก. In this story the *Vēssantara* goes to live in the forest. He leaves his son and daughter in the care of poor Brahmins. These Brahmins take the children to their home where they learn about poverty and how they can help. The man in white with the Hindu turban represents the Brahmin.

I call this group "clown dancers" because the group was a source of endless mirth to the crowd. One of the favorite forms of humour among Thai is the male impersonation of females. The group did a comic version of the *ramwong* with the men making passes at the women (played by men) and being rebuffed.

b) Fôn lep ฟ็อน เล็บ dancers: - There was another group of dancers of a more traditional type (in fact said to be traditional to the N.E.). This group was entirely composed of young girls dressed in traditional N.E. fancy garb. On their fingers they had long pieces of decorated bamboo about a foot in length forming extensions of their fingernails. Hence the origin of the name of the dance which is literally translated as the "fingernail dance".

These girls processed to the *kū* led by an orchestra (primarily drums) and followed by the clown dancers (with their own orchestra). They danced as they went in the traditional graceful manner of the Thai classical dance, and danced more in the precincts of the *kū*.

c) Worship of Buddha and Deva Images - In the *kū* precincts themselves were five Buddha images and the Deva images which were originally found in the *kū* proper (a Buddha image is now in their place and the Deva images are normally kept at the Sala Klang in Sarakham). The manner of worshipping these images was the taking of *nāmhôm* (literally, "fragrant water, but usually water with cumin so that it has a yellow color). This water is used to bathe the images. The people also use candles, incense and jasmine flowers for worshipping.

Also they stuck gold leaf on the images. All of the things for worshipping were being sold by the priests, with the money to be used for building a priest's residence at the *kū*. I noticed mainly older people were engaged in the worshipping.

d) Worshipping the Deva: - Probably the biggest event of the celebration was the setting off of huge fire rockets (as well as small fire rockets). These are very fancy, and require the expenditure of much time and money. Each village sponsors one (last year BNT made one, but not this year). They are often decorated with *papier maché* type models of deva. Don't quite understand why fireworks are used for "worship", but this is also a Chinese pattern.

3. Analysis

This annual event is one way in which people from all over the area come together. At such a time, young men and women can meet one another. Also, the ceremony is an integrating factor for the commune and surrounding area. The worshipping graphically illustrates the synthesis of Brahmic and Buddhist elements in the local religion.

4. Water Ceremony

Another element which marks the celebration at the *kū* as a New Year's custom is the traditional water throwing which accompanies it. (We were soaked).

Songkrān

I discussed the beliefs and customs surrounding Songkran with Mr. Wichian, Mr. Sôn (in Ban Khwao) and some people in BNT. In the local custom *wan songkrān* (วัน สงกรานต์) is called *wan naw* (วัน เนาว).[เนาว means "nine" or "new".] The consensus was that people didn't work during Songkran but pray, feed the priests, and do things of this sort. I asked some man in *khum p.h.* if Songkran was Buddhist or Brahmic. He was quite nonplussed by this question, as he had obviously never thought about it before. Mr. Wichian thought that water throwing originated with the idea that one provided bath water for travellers during the hot season. However, Mr. Sôn (Bangkok) said that since the season was hot at the time of Songkran, people would take water to

the old men (relatives) of a village in order for them to take baths. The old men in turn would give the bringers a blessing (ไห้ พร) - *hai phon*.

Today, relatives will give older people presents of cloth, etc. The older people will reciprocate with money, land, farm animals, etc. This latter is usually a type of inheritance gift called ไ้ มรดก (*hai mora-dok*). (This also occurs at weddings.)

There will be a fair and celebration at Ban Mi. They will play *tīkhī* (ตีคี่), which is a version of polo.

Village Miscellaneous

There will be a ceremony of depositing bones in the wat during Songkrān. Mr. Hōm who has the new store was buying kapok plants (pods) from children - 1 pod - 1 rubber band).

Last Saturday the Headman went to town to register all 20-21 year olds for the draft. This was a large event at Lak Muang School. People from this area go to Udon or Khon Kaen for training. I haven't figured out if there are many people from the village called up or not.

Talked with people in *Khum p.h.* One man (the one with a mole on his nose) has very bad cold/cough/headache which he has had for 5-6 days. He is using Chinese balm as a medicine. Uses no handkerchief, but did blow his nose away from the group. Planting will begin in the sixth or seventh month depending on rains.

One boy in *Khum p.h.* (older teenager) knew that 100 Lao *Kip* are equal to 8 Thai baht, though no one in the village seemed to have one.

I saw some boys shooting lizards with blow guns. They are quite accurate.

Everybody got a kick out of the fact that we got soaked yesterday.

Bān Nōng Tūn

April 10, 1963

I began mapping today. May have committed a *faux pas*. I entered the wat to pace off the width. As I was doing this, the village priest came over purposely to ask me what I was doing. I distinctly feel he doesn't like me. I hope this won't be a sore point as far as my collecting of information on religion is concerned.

Bān Nông Tūn

April 13, 1963

This morning we went to the village for the duration of the Songkrān festival. On the way we attended a special ceremony at Bān Mī. (See April 16 for more notes written on April 13.)

Honouring of Priests

Two ceremonies took place. One, an honouring of priests by water pouring priests who have served for a long time, and the other, a *bāi sī* ceremony for two priests with their fans indicating respectively *parian* 4 and 5 - (a similar ceremony to that held in BNT for *phra mahaseng*).

Procession

When we arrived at Bān Mī school, we were immediately faced by a procession in which the priests being honoured were being carried. This procession, called *hāē* (แห่) in Thai consisted first of laity carrying a display indicating the status of the two high monks - including the fans of the priests, a picture of each, and certificates proclaiming their achievements in the Buddhist system. Following this were the priests themselves, raised high and being carried on bamboo litters. The two priests who were being especially honoured wore pointed hats looking somewhat like the pointed mitred hats worn by bishops in the West. There were seven priests being carried. Behind them were three men dressed as women, a group of people carrying gifts for the priests, and some people playing instruments (also some instruments at the front of the procession), primarily gongs, drums, cymbals and *pim*, the Thai two-stringed guitar.

The procession left from the school and proceeded through the village, circled the wat, and returned to the school.

Presentation of Clothes to Priests

The five priests who were being honoured for their service (not the two with fans) continued to sit on their litters in the school grounds. These priests did not come from Bān Mī but were from surrounding areas (the abbot of Bangkok was one). Five laymen took a bundle which included all the wearing apparel of the priests and sat themselves in front of the priests. Then another priest led the laity in a chant by using the P.A. system. When this was over, the five lay persons presented each priest with the package. The priests took these and on each

article made three points (. . .) which are called *cam phin thu* (จ๊าพินทุ). This mark indicates that the article belongs to the priests. (There was some more information on this which I couldn't read - check again).

Ritual Bathing of Priests

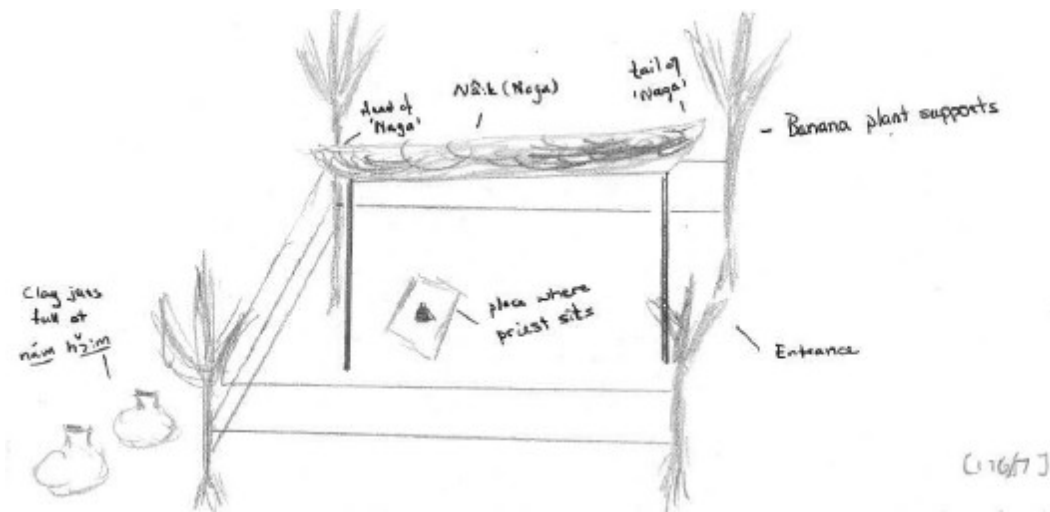
When the giving of gifts was finished the five priests were led by their lay guide by a long metal stick called a *mai thaw lek* (ไม้เท้าเหล็ก).

- a stick used by priests in the forests.



- pieces of loose metal which jingle when shaken.

They were led to a place called (couldn't read rough notes). This is where the ritual pouring of water was to take place. The place looked something like this:



This was a small square compound formed by four banana trees and closed off by rope, - except one end which was open. In the centre of the compound was erected two bowls (?) which supported a piece of rough wood which looked a little like a dugout canoe. This was said to be a นาค (*nāk*) or Naga (the mythical snake god which is worshipped all over Southeast Asia and India). In the centre of this "snake" was a hole. Under the hole, on the ground was a piece of cloth on top of which was a flat stone. It is here that the priest sits. The "snake" was covered with many lighted candles (which were extinguished when the water was poured into the "snake"). Near the compound were two clay jars full of *nām hōm*.

The priests were led one by one into the compound. They stripped down to their "bathing costume". Then one by one they were put under the "snake". *Nām hōm* was poured in the "snake" so that it ran down over the priest. It was also taken in water scoops and poured over the priest by both laity and other priests. During this there were several other priests nearby who chanted.

When the priest was thoroughly soaked, he was lifted by some lay people and carried back to the place where his new costume was. Here he changed clothes in full public view without once revealing himself.

According to the headman of the village, the ceremony used to be called *somdet* (สมเด็จ), but this word was forbidden by the government as it applies to the king. Now the ceremony is called ซำ (*sā*). Formerly there were three parts to the ceremony: *somdet*, *sā* and *khrū*. Now there is only *sā*. This ceremony is called locally *hot phra* ("to bathe the priests").

The ceremony isn't necessarily held at Songkran, but it is always held once a year for priests who have been ordained for at least two years (thus neither of the two priests at Ban Mi or the one priest at BNT was so honoured).

Bāi Sī for Two Priests

After the ritual bathing was finished, a *bāi sī* ceremony was held for the two priests with fans. These had been born in Bān Mī and were now being honoured by the village. The ceremony was held in a gaily decorated pavilion now full of gifts for the priests. This pavilion had a sign on it which read กองอำเภวนวการ (*kōng' amnuai kān*).

A *mô suat* led the ceremony by chanting Brahmic "scriptures" in an admixture of Lao-Thai-Pali. This ceremony is for priests who have been ordained for a long time in order to bring them *mong khon* and to "call their *khwan*".

Mr. Wichian then led by pouring "holy water" on the hands of the priests during which the *mô suat* chanted (in Lao). Mr. Wichian then tied the strings (ฝ้ายผูกแขน - *fāi phūk khāēn*) on the wrists of the priests. He wished them well. Others then followed, donating money while doing so. Mr. Wichian announced each time money was donated, both the amount and the donor.

Miscellaneous at Bān Mī

Near the pavilion was erected a small shrine for the spirits to protect the ceremony (like in *bāi sī* for Phra Mahā seng at BNT). One person told me that this is called หองสังเวย (*hông sang lōēi*).

The headman of Ban Mi said that priests used to be called in the N.E. เจ้าหัว (*caw hua*).

Communism in Tambon Khwaw

I had quite a talk with Mr. Wichian regarding communism in Tambon Khwaw. He says he has to work very hard in B. Khwao and B. Mi because there are communists in these areas (or so the police believe). There are people from this area who have lived a long time in Laos, and who have returned to work among their own people. Whether these are really communists or not, I am not sure.

Mr. Wichian rather surprises me at times. He has quite an intelligent approach towards communism. He recognizes that in dictatorships there is often as little freedom as in communist countries. He also asked why the U.S. helps dictatorship - a rather difficult question to answer sometimes. "Dictatorships are sometimes worse than communism". He also said Thailand was a dictatorship. He seems to know quite a bit about the subject, and keeps harping on the Community Development responsibility to help villages before it is too late.

Mr. Phā

Mr. Wichian suggested I might use one of the people in the village as an assistant. One possibility was Mr. Phā, who has just returned from a prolonged stay in Bangkok and is the elder brother of the fellow who just married Mr. Cāēk's daughter. However, though fluent in Bangkok Thai, Mr. Phā proved to be illiterate, and thus couldn't help me much. He worked in Bangkok five years as a wage laborer, and did many jobs, including street work and working at the Erawan Hotel.

A Walk

We went for a walk with Mr. Ngao around 6:00 p.m. past the fields and wells. I noticed the fields were quite broken up by dikes so only small fields remain. I asked if each of these little fields were the possessions of one person per field, but Mr. Ngao said that many of these small fields belong to one person, and they are broken up this way to better hold the irrigation water.

Bān Nōng Tūn

April 14, 1963

It is very pleasant to wake in the morning to the sounds of birds, roosters, and the steady beat of the rice mortars. Of course, this peaceful setting is broken as soon as Mr. Ngao turns on his radio. When I got up at about 5:30, I could see several lights around the village.

There is a plethora of colds in the village which may partially account for my own present affliction.

Pig Castration

I spent early Easter morning before breakfast watching Mr. Ngao castrate a pig (*tôn* ທອນ). Several men held the pig down and tied its legs. One man knelt on its snout while others kept it from squirming, though it screamed throughout the whole process. Then Mr. Dī took a straight razor and made a small slit through the two skins of the testicles. He squeezed until he got the raw inside of the testicles out, taking it away from the skin. Then he put the skin back inside the sack and stuffed in bran to stop the bleeding. He sewed up each side with about four stitches per skin. Then the blood was washed off and the flesh rubbed with salt. There were lots of children and a few men, but no women watching.

Liang Phī

During the sixth month on a Wednesday - it must be a Wednesday - there will be the ceremony of "feeding the spirits" or *liang phī* (เลี้ยงผี) at *lak müang* and at the shrine of *pūtā*.

The person who leads the ceremony is called the *khacam* (ขะจ๋ำ). This person is Mr. Tāp, the blacksmith from *khum Yai* (he was the one who led the propitiation of the village spirits during the wat fair).

The feeding of *phī* must include one chicken, rice and rice wine. The people say *law hai kai tō* (เล่าให้ไก่โต - Lao), meaning "one chicken, one bottle of wine". They also worship with candles, flowers and incense. Mr. Ngao told me that each household will bring offerings, but most would offer (as is the custom) a mixture of chaff and ashes.

Thieves and Pursuers

About 4:30 p.m., two men from a village quite a distance on the other side of Sarakham came into the village. They were looking for three head of cattle which had been stolen from their village three days ago. We had seen the remaining two head come through the village an hour or so before. The thieves had eaten the one small calf, but the other two were still alive. The worth of these cattle was ฿800 for the two mature head and ฿200 for the calf. I didn't quite understand why they didn't continue their pursuit, for they stopped and had a drink with Mr. Ngao and then returned home.

In the evening we sat outside and had a long conversation with Mr. Ngao and Mr. Phā.

Mr. Ngao

When Mr. Ngao was in Bangkok he lived, ate and worked for Chinese, though he is not Chinese. After living in Bangkok, he says that white rice is *sabāi kwā*, though he eats sticky rice as his daily diet in the village and prefers rice noodles more than anything. When he returned to the Northeast, he had quite a bit of capital and wanted to go into business, unlike his family who are farmers. He chose BNT because it didn't have a rice mill or store. He also has a close relative in BNT, an older sister who is married to a man of BNT and who lived here five-six

years before he came. However, he said her being here had no bearing on his choice of BNT. Incidentally, his older sister's husband reversed the usual pattern by living in the village of his birth rather than moving to his wife's village. Both Mr. Phā and Mr. Ngao pointed this out. Mr. Phā says that a young couple should live at least two months with his wife's family.

Mr. Phā

Mr. Phā is planning to get married during the sixth month to a girl from Bān Khōk Nōi (บ้านโคกน้อย). He will go to live with her family. The wedding will be held - along with other marriages in BNT - on the second day of May, which is the tenth day of the waxing of the moon. All weddings must be held on either the tenth day of the waxing or the tenth day of the waning of the moon of the fourth, sixth, and twelfth months (also the eighth).

Concepts of Government

Mr. Ngao asked if America has a king and I answered that we have only a president. He then asked if having a king was better than a president or vice versa. I said I didn't know. Mr. Phā says that the Thai king can speak Lao, but both agreed he has an accent in Thai. Mr. Ngao asked me if I had seen the royal couple on their trip to America.

Mr. Ngao asked who "President Eisenhower" was? At first I didn't understand the name, and he went on to ask if he was the President of China. When I explained he was a former president, and Kennedy is now president, Mr. Phā asked if they were brothers.

Bān Nōng Tūn

April 15, 1963

Holy Days

Mr. Ngao says that *wan phra* is called *wan sin* in the local language and today is *wan sin nōi* and tomorrow (really *wan phra*) is *wan sin yai*. Thus, there are two merit-making days per week, though there are no ceremonies at the wat.

Food Anxieties and Implications

I asked Mr. Ngao if there were more priests at the wat whether they would go around to "beg" for food. He answered that they never do. People take food to them. He says that if there were too many priests, there wouldn't be enough food.

This food anxiety has been expressed by Mr. Ngao before. He said that villagers don't like to keep cats because "when there isn't enough food for people, than how can they feed cats?" Dogs eat rice and thus are not so big a drain and they serve the useful function of being watchdogs. However, dogs in the village are generally underfed.

Bān Nông Tūn

April 16, 1963

The following is a reorganization of the data collected on April 13,14, and 15 during our stay in the village during Songkrān.

Songkrān

Songkrān (สงกรานต์) or *songkān* in Lao is a festival commemorating the traditional beginning of the Thai solar year. The traditional date for celebrating New Year's is at the time of the full moon in the fifth lunar month (see notes of April 9, 1963). However, the National Government has established the day for celebration permanently from the 13-15th of April (during the vernal equinox) and this is the time when the biggest celebrations are held in rural Northeast Thailand.

Mr. Wichian said villagers do no work at songkrān, but go about visiting relatives and having *sanuk* (สนุก) in their own village or wherever there is the greatest opportunity to have fun.

First Day (April 13)

We spent the morning in Bān Mī (see notes of April 13, 1963) and returned to BNT about noon. I had seen some people going fishing early in the morning when we were in the village and also had seen some women going to the woods to gather plants. However, in general, it seemed as though the village was very quiet and those who were out were more gaily dressed (flowers in the girls' hair) than on a normal day.

About 3:15 in the afternoon, the drum in the wat was struck to call the villagers to come and *song phra* or *song nām phra* (สร้างพระ สร้างน้ำพระ) - that is to ceremonially bathe Buddhist images with *nām hōm* (water mixed with cumin). This ceremony is held every day during songkrān and is one of the distinctive features of the festival. Apparently the ritual bathing of the

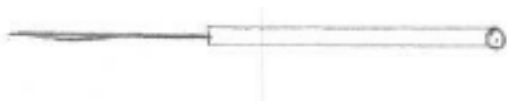
priests which we had observed in Bān Mī in the morning (see notes of April 13, 1963) is also a songkrān custom. For the bathing of the images, a small pavilion was built near the *bōt*. The images were removed from the *bōt* and placed in the pavilion. This bathing of the images takes place on all three days of the ceremonies and was also held at the *kū* festivities the week before (see notes of April 9, 1963) and in every village we visited during the ceremonies. Though the gong rang at 3:15 it wasn't for a couple hours more that people started coming to do the ritual bathing. I believe that the ritual bathing is also connected with the traditional water throwing during songkrān.

Mr. Ngao said young people particularly enjoyed going *pai len* to B. Thā Tūm or B. Mī where there are many activities and opportunities for courting. He said that in previous years there were more events in BNT (last year especially in *Khum Bān Khwaw Nōi* where there was much horse play and water throwing among young people, but this year there were more activities drawing the young people away from the village.

For the special occasion the villagers had made *khāw pūn* (Lao for rice noodles), which are much prized among the villagers as better than rice.

The village remained relatively quiet throughout the afternoon, with occasional screams which indicated that young people and children were throwing water. Some children were using water guns made of bamboo. This instrument had a small hole in the closed end of the tube. At the other end was a larger hold. Into this hole was placed a smaller stick with something wrapped around the end to make it fit tight. This stick was removed to fill the tube with water. Then the stick was placed back into the level of the water. When this stick is pushed the water is forced out under pressure through the small hole.

The instrument looks like this:



On the way home from an evening walk through the fields with Mr. Ngao, we got doused with water by a group of young people at *khum wat*. This was, however, the only wetting we got in the village itself. The blacksmith from *khum wat* very quickly explained that I was thrown water at only because the people had respect for me (as different from people in Sarakham, he said).

Second Day (April 14)

Activities during the second day were at a minimum - as a whole the village was quiet with the stillness occasionally broken by the screams of water throwing. The ritual bathing of the statues took place in the afternoon and some people went to the fairs.

Mr. Ngao again said there was very little *kān len* in BNT this year because of the fair in Ban Mi. This is understandable, for when it gets dark in BNT it is too dark to dance or do anything else, while an electric-lit fair would be a great attraction. There was a little drum playing and fun making in BNT during the late afternoon.

Third Day (April 15)

In the late morning and afternoon, the young people were out playing a game called *len hing* (เล่นหิ้ง). This consisted of dividing into two sides; one of boys, the other of girls with a single boy assisting them. One side is "at bat" while the other side is "in the field". A small thick stick about 4 inches by 3 inches is placed on the ground. A "batter" from the one side comes up and stands with the small stick - the "ball" - between his feet. Then swinging a longer stick - about 3 feet in length - the "bat" - with both hands between his legs, he hits the "ball" toward the opposite side. If the "ball" went up into the air and was caught by a member of the opposite side (men catching the "ball" with their hands, women with a *phā khāw mā* held out from one shoulder to form a "cradle") the "batter" was "out". If it wasn't caught in the air, then the person who recovered the "ball" would take it and move to the center of the "court" and pitch the "ball" at the "bat" which had been placed lengthwise facing the opposing team. If the "ball" hit the "bat" then the "batter" was "out". However, if the "ball" missed the "bat", then the "batter" would take the "ball" and throw it a short distance toward the opposite side. A member of the opposite side would then "pitch" the "ball" - usually on the ground where the "batter" would be waiting swinging the "bat" on the ground. If the "batter" succeeded in hitting the "ball", then he had another opportunity to throw the "ball" out to be "pitched". Once he missed, however, he was "out". Each side stood until all its players had had a turn at "batting", or in other words until each player was "out".

What rather surprised me about this game was that the priest and novices were also playing. The priest had removed his outer garments to be free to play. The young girls had no hesitancy

about throwing water or physically striking the novices. One of the novices had a drum which he used to give a musical accompaniment to the festivities.

About 2:00 that afternoon, we went with Mr. Ngao to visit T. Thā Tūm (ต.ท่าตุม), first visiting the village where he comes from and where his parents live, namely Ban Nōng Kā (บ.หนองท่า). This is a village of about 100 households. I was interested that Mr. Ngao's family are strictly farmers, i.e. there is no appearance of trading or business. The village has far more fruits and vegetables than BNT, and we were treated to coconut water, fresh coconut meat, special bananas which are very delicious and sell for a *salūng* each in Sarakham. To top off the hospitality, when we left we were given peanuts, papaya, coconuts, squash and sweet potatoes by the family.

We also visited the village wat, which is very interesting because it has a nearly-completed new *bōt*. On the facade of the building is a very interesting scene depicting Hanuman, the Monkey God of the Ramayana, coming after the Buddha with a knife - a graphic representation on the synthesis of Buddhism and Brahmanism. I asked Mr. Ngao why this village has a new *bōt* when it doesn't seem any richer or bigger than BNT. He answered that the abbot - a monk of many years - is very zealous. He has made it his goal since becoming abbot to get a new *bōt* built. This abbot is very interesting because he lives part of his time in a wat in Sarakham and the rest of the time in the village.

Mr. Ngao refers to this abbot as *ācān* or *ācān yai* (because he is an important monk, in this case an abbot).

Mr. Ngao explained that he had been ordained for three "Lents", part of his time in this wat and part of his time in Thā Tūm.

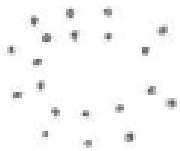
Mr. Ngao's father has been ill with a stomach ailment for four years. He was recently in the hospital in Sarakham for several months, but they couldn't help him there. Mr. Ngao thought that maybe he should go to Bangkok, but the head doctor at Sarakham dissuaded him because he said that they couldn't do any more for him in Bangkok.

We then went on to Thā Tūm, the tambon centre of some 300 households. This village is beautifully situated on the Chī River. Here there was a much larger traditional songkrān festival going on. They had had and were now having such diverse activities as feeding the *phī son*

phra', storytelling, dancing where the boys and girls actually touch each other), and various games for the young people. Mr. Ngao explained that the dancing and games for the young people are only held during Songkrān and at no other time of the year.

One game which we saw is called *len kān tī khī* (เล่น การ ตีคี่). This could be roughly translated as "polo". It is played by two teams, both mixed sexes, and is played in a small field surrounded by the dikes. Each player is equipped with a stick which should be shaped like a golf club or polo stick (many were in fact just sticks of about 2 1/2 to 3 feet in length). The principle, as in polo, is to beat a "ball" (in this case a wooden unrounded object) across the field to make a goal. In this case, making a goal consisted in getting the "ball" across the dike. However, instead of having "goalies" to protect one's goal, there were players at the end where goals were to be made to assist in getting the ball across when the teammates had got it to the end of the field. The number who can play seem expandable and teams are not balanced for number.

We also saw another game being played by young boys and girls. This was called *len nōn khū* (เล่นหนอนคู่). The participants mainly stand in a circle in pairs.



There are two other participants not in the formation. One person is "It" as in Western "Tag". The other person is "free". The "free" person must prevent being tagged. He is "safe" when he goes and stands in front of a pair, thus making the person behind, i.e. the last person "free". As soon as a "free" person has been tagged, then the "It" person becomes "free" and the "free" person "It".

However, the game has more than one purpose. The boys and girls get a great kick out of really giving one another a smack (often on the behind), such customs of boys and girls touching usually not being tolerated. If both the "It" and the "Free" persons are of the same sex they will work in coordination so that "It" can tag a person of the opposite sex. Sometimes if a boy is "It" and really gives a girl a smack on the behind, she will go and give him several blows despite the fact that he has become "safe".

These games and dances and water fights which characterize Sonkrān, and are participated in only a Sonkrān, serve to give an opportunity to release certain of the prohibitions surrounding male-female relationships. Usually in dancing – the *ramwong* being the best example - boys and girls never touch, but during Sonkrān there are dances in which touching is permitted. We even saw a young couple holding hands - probably still a brazen act - especially for the girls - but one which would never be allowed other times of the year.

At Thā tūm we also saw the shrine of *pūtā* which is located right next to the wat. We also met a priest from Bangkok who used to be the head monk at Thā tūm wat and was Mr. Ngao's mentor at that wat. However, he is now in a "Lao" wat in Bangkok.

Bān Nōng Tūn

April 24, 1963

Economic Activities

This time of the year is kapok harvesting time. I have seen people in the village as well as in surrounding villages taking the kapok from the pods and stuffing it into sacks to be sold in the market. There are two types of kapok, one of which is called "red kapok". Mrs. Wichian makes kapok mattresses with the kapok she buys from BNT. She buys it for ฿2.50 per kilo.

Animism

I had a long interview with Mr. Tāp concerning specialists in animism in BNT (Mr. Wichian acted as interpreter). He is himself the *khaw cam* (เข่าจាំ - Mr. Wichian's spelling) which is as near I can figure out to the intercessor between the village and the spirits of the village, i.e. *pūtā*. He has held this position for ten years and will continue to hold it for life. He said he was "chosen" by the villagers ten years ago. He then succeeded his father who had just died.

I asked Mr. Tāp what his responsibilities were. Primarily he is the intercessor for the village with the village gods. He must make presentations to these gods at least once a year, at the *liang phī* ceremony which is called *liang bān* in the village. However, he also will approach the gods at other times if there is to be an event affecting the whole village or if something bad has befallen the whole village. He certainly stands at the apex of the whole village's relationship to the village gods. He is also the earthly guard of the village gods' domain. If someone invades this domain to cut trees or take earth or in any other way desecrates the gods' property, then Mr.

Tāp must determine a punishment which will placate the gods or some evil will befall the desecraters. Usually, the way that such violations are revealed is by the illness of some person who has committed a violation. In order to regain their health, they will confess to Mr. Tāp who then will set a fine - usually the gift of food and/or liquor. However, sometimes it will be money which may be used to buy fireworks to "worship" the gods.

Mr. Tāp is not the only one in the village concerned with animistic practices. The *mô suat* who performs the *sūkhwan* ceremonies is also a *mô phī* or *mô tham* (หมอธรรม) as he is called locally.

Mr. Tāp's wife is a *mô phī fā* (หมอผีฟ้า) similar to the woman from B. Khwaw whom I observed at the bedside of the sick wife of Mr. Cāēk (see notes of April 5, 1963). There are other words for *phī fā*, viz. *thai thōēng* (ไทยเทิ่ง) and *phī song* (ผีทรง). The primary duties of a *mô phī fā*, who may be either a man or woman, concerns that of villagers' health. Mr. Wichian contrasted this person's duties with that of a "doctor" by saying that a *mô phī fā* must keep up the "morale" (กำลังใจ) of the sick person. When a person is ill, this person will go and dance to the accompaniment of Northeastern *khāēn* music. Then she will try to contact the ancestral *phī* (*phī sūa* in the local language. N.B. This is the same word as "butterfly" in Thai.). She will then ask the ancestral spirits what the demand is so that they will leave the sick person alone. Their demands may be the ordination of some relative so that merit will accrue to the ancestors, some other merit-making act, a *bansakun*, etc., or a combination of things.

The *mô phī fā* must always be willing to go to a sick person and to go as often as she is requested. No matter how often she goes, she will never charge more than a total of ฿4.00.

It is interesting that the wife of Mr. Cāēk who has been ill for some ten months first was "treated" by the wife of Mr. Tāp but is now being treated by a *mô phī fā* from B. Khwaw.

An animistic ceremony called *toppa thāi* (ตบปะทาย) is held at *lakhān* or *būbān* (บื้อบ้าน) some 30 days after *songkrān*. At this time piles of a soil are made - and that was as far as I got.

Schedule of Events

During the next ten days there are a variety of events:

Monday, April 29, 7th day of waxing of the moon, 6th month: ceremony of putting bones in the *that* and *môlammū* postponed.

Tuesday, April 30, 8th day of waxing of the moon, 6th month: ceremony of "*sakavicha*" postponed.

Wednesday, May 1, 9th day of waxing of the moon, 7th month; *liang bān* postponed.

Thursday, May 2, 10th day of waxing of the moon, 6th month; wedding.

Tuesday, May 7, 15th day of waxing of the moon, 6th month: ordination postponed.

Khon Kaen

April 28, 1963

Made a trip to Khon Kaen.

Bān Nōng Tūn

April 29, 1963

Death

Some of the events were postponed due to the deaths of two people in BNT on the 28th. These were "Mother" Tōn (แม่ต๋อน) who lived in *khum yai* and was over sixty years old and died of "T.B." (I am not certain yet what this means). The second was a man of over seventy who lived in B.K.N. (แจน แวน) who died of "stomach trouble" (ปวดท้อง). Funeral activities and death rites had necessitated a postponement of some of the scheduled events.

Funeral Rites

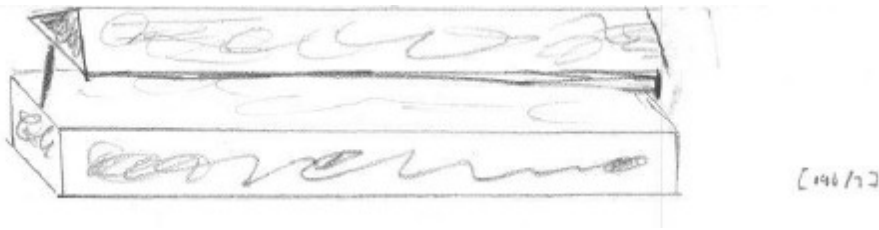
I was seated in the house when I saw a "procession" pass by carrying a casket. I naturally enquired about this and learned there was to be a cremation for Mrs. Tōn who had died the day before.

The "procession" was headed for the cemetery which is located quite a way west of the village - beyond the little stream (now nearly dry at this time of the year). This cemetery is known as *pāchā* (ป่าช้า) lit. "evil forest" in Thai, and *phīpālōk* (ผีป่าหลอก), lit. "haunted forest" in Lao (see later for beliefs concerning this place).

It should be noted that contrary to practice among urban Thai and to Central Plains peasants (see Kaufman), the body is cremated within 24 hours (or thereabouts) of death. There is no preservation of the body for a later cremation.

I have used the word "procession" advisedly, for though a large number of villagers were making their way toward *pāchā*, they were divided into groups of 10 or so and these groups were wending their own ways. The only "procession" in reality was that of the priests with sun parasols followed by four males carrying the coffin on a litter.

The casket is a box made of rough planks covered with colored paper and roofed with a detachable wooden canopy. The corpse and the other contents



of the casket were covered with a piece of rough white cotton cloth.

When we reached the cremation grounds, several other piles of ashes were pointed out to me (some with broken pieces of pottery, or a knife, or a water scoop) as places where other cremations had been held (there had in fact been one earlier in the day for the man from *Khum B.K.N.*). The men (who composed predominantly the group at the grounds) began to gather wood in order to make the cremation pyre.

When the pyre had been constructed, a woman relation - a daughter, I believe - "fed the corpse". That is she prepared glutinous rice, raw leaves and some other dishes which were placed by the corpse and then were placed near the pyre (this included a glutinous rice basket full).

The priests present included those from the wat, Phra Mahā Seng, a young male relative of the woman (a son?) who had just been ordained to make merit for this relative, and a priest from another village. They now chanted a short chant.

The casket was then borne aloft by the pall bearers and a small procession led by the priest-relative proceeded to circumambulate around the pyre. The canopy had been removed and on one of the posts which had supported the roof was attached a fish-net. This the priest-relative used as a lead for he held this as he led the procession around the pyre. They circled three times - the exact place of starting being commented upon and shouted out to the procession by the on-

lookers. The group was not allowed to proceed any further once it had returned to its starting place.

Then the fish-net was removed and the casket was struck three times against the side of the pyre. It was then placed on top of the pyre.

A male relative then mounted to the top of the pyre and removed the loose clothes, fans and perhaps other things from the casket. These he threw onto the pyre. Then he removed the shroud and lifting up the body, removed the mat upon which the body was lying. This mat was laid at the bottom of the pyre. Then some "packages" of what are known as *sak'anitcā* (ອະນິຈຈາ) were laid on the casket. These are "presents for the dead".

The shroud was then thrown back and forth across the casket and pyre. This shroud must touch the ground as on one occasion one of the throwers caught the cloth. He then dropped it and then picked it up again and threw it. Finally two large logs were laid, leaning against the pyre on either side (I think to support the casket from falling). Then the pyre was lit by the priests and people who then stood back a good distance away to watch. However, the people were on the whole more interested in other things such as searching out red ant eggs than watching the burning. When it was obvious that the consumption would be complete, most of the people left, leaving only a few to tend the fire.

I saw only one person really mourning, and that was the woman who prepared the food for the corpse. She cried a bit. As for the rest of the on-lookers who were primarily men, they were in a rather gay mood and went around gathering plants and red ant eggs in a place which they wouldn't ordinarily come to because of the fear of the *phī* which inhabit the area.

Other Customs at the Time of a Death

After a cremation is over, the participants, or some of them, repaired to the home of the dead person. The guests, who seemed to be all men, were given *satto* and food (a chicken, bamboo-shoot curry and glutinous rice). There wasn't much food, but this is a poor household.

On the evening of the funeral and for two subsequent evenings there is a "fun-making" *ngān* held at the houses of the dead persons. These "wakes" are held to cheer up the family of the dead person and to take their minds off their loss. Young people are the main attendants at these *ngān*. These occasions give young boys and girls the opportunity to play together and make merry - a kind of communal courting. There was the playing of games and in one house

molammū and *khāēn* music. (See further on for description of games). We visited both the house in *Khum BKN* and the one in *Khum yai*.

Death of an Infant

At about 6:00 in the evening three or four people passed again on their way to the cemetery. It seems the infant daughter of Mr. Som Thapthānī (สมทัพนัน) aged 3-4 days old had died. They live in H.H. No. 27. In this case there were essentially no rites - the infant was buried immediately. There was no cremation and there was no wake afterwards. Mr. Ngao said that when a child dies, its *khwan* was not secure and that the baby hadn't yet attained the status of a human being.

Sale of Kapok

According to the villagers there are several types of kapok. Mr. Hôm (หอม) for example said there are two types.

<u>Type</u>	<u>Village sale price</u>
<i>mangiw lôt</i> (มะงิ้วหลอก)	฿1.80 per kilo
<i>mangiw dāēng</i> (มะงิ้วแดง)	฿2.00 per kilo

However, Mr. Phon, the headman, said all kinds vary in price from ฿1.50 - ฿3.00 a kilo.

Mr. Nôi

Had a visit from Mr. Nôi, the young man from *Khum Lao* whom I have been considering as a possible assistant. He lived 3-4 years in Vientiane where he worked for some Filipinos. His elder sister was married to a Lao army soldier. However, she was not happy with him and has now returned to BNT. Nôi himself has been married. His wife lives in Ban Khwaw. He too was unhappy and so returned home. He is 23 years old.

Belief in *Phī*

I had a talk with Mr. Phon and Mr. Ngao concerning *phī* in the village. The discussion came about with regard to the deaths that had occurred in the village. It was stated that people don't like to go to the cemetery because it is inhabited by *phī*. This is certainly born out in both the Thai and Lao names for the cemetery - "evil forest" and "haunted forest".

I said I understood the worst kind of *phī* is the spirit of a woman who has died in childbirth. Mr. Phon confirmed this and said there had been one of these *phī* in BNT a few years ago. However, it is now gone. However, there is one of these *phī* in Ban Khwao presently. Mr. Ngao, in this regard, referred to a famous Thai movie of a few years past concerning this type of *phī*. (See Bangkok World, Sunday Supplement, 21 April 1963, "*Phī* are where you find them".)

Mr. Phon says that if anyone in the village were to cut trees in *pūtā*'s domain, the whole village would suffer disastrously.

I asked if the *thēwadā* and *phī* are the same and the answer was no. Mr. Phon said there were hardly any *thēwadā* in the village.

If a season is particularly dry, there is a special ceremony for determining whether the rains will come or not. There is a tug-of-war between an equal number of girls and boys. The gods (*thēwadā*) will help the ones win which determines the rain. If the girls win, rains will come post haste. If the boys win, the dry season will continue a bit longer.

Games

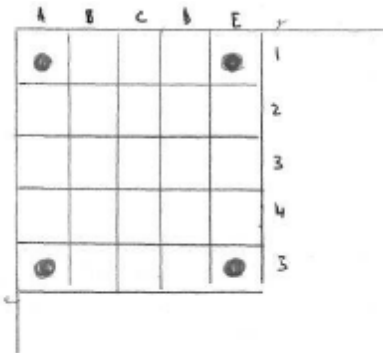
As mentioned above, I observed several games being played during the "wake". However, as these are played at other times as well, I will deal with them separately.

1. Drawing of Straws: This is very similar to that in the West. One player - always a man - prepares three straws - a long, a medium and a short. He then holds them so that the three tops are exposed at equal length with one another and the bottoms are covered with his hand. He then asks another player - always a girl - to draw after he has said "long", "short" or "medium". If she draws the correct one drawn, she wins: if not he wins.

The winner gets to strike the other on the knee (and they use hefty blows!) The variation on this game is that there are two "sides" each consisting of a number of boys and a number of girls,

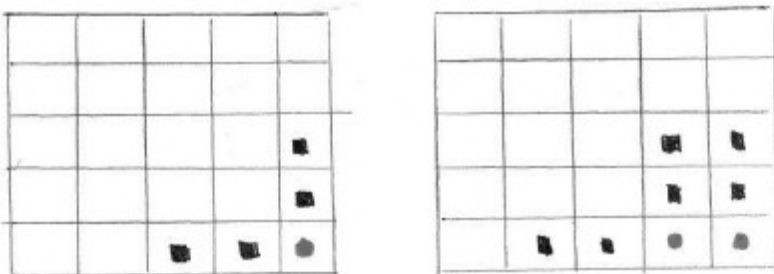
though there are only two major participants. If the girl draws correctly then all the girls get to hit all the boys and vice versa if she doesn't draw correctly.

2. "Tiger eats pigs": (เสือกินหมู): This game is played on a board of 25 squares, X 5 each way. There are four pieces called "tigers" and 21 pieces called "pigs". The red counters originally placed in the



four corners are "tigers". The player with the "pig" counters can place his counters anywhere on the board one at a time. For one play of a "pig", the "tigers" can - one at a time - be moved one space vertically or horizontally but not diagonally. Thus for example, say a "pig" is played at C3, then a "tiger" is moved from A5 to A4 (all these examples necessitate seeing the illustration above).

A "tiger" can "eat" a "pig" if a "tiger" and a "pig" are on adjacent squares and there is no counter - either a "tiger" or "pig" - on the square in a direct line on the other side of the "pig". "Pigs" cannot eat "tigers", but "tigers" may "die" if cornered. Thus if a "tiger" is caught in squares A1, A5, E1, E5 so that they can't move, then they will "die". Similarly if two or three "tigers" are caught in a corner, say one in E5 and another in D5, then both will die. However, this is rarely the case. The object of



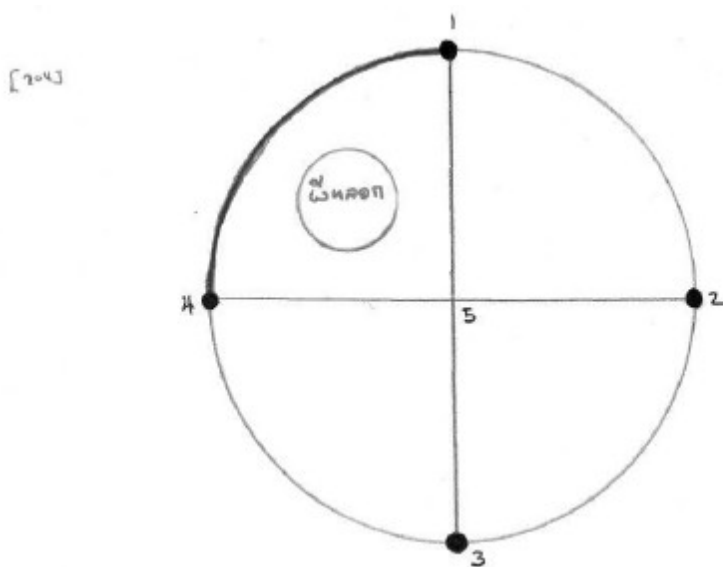
the game is for the "tigers" to win and for the "pigs" to keep the "tigers" from winning. The "pigs" rarely win.

If all 21 pigs are played without one being "eaten", then 5 (?) must be removed from the board so that there are spaces to move. When all 21 pigs have been played, whether any have been eaten or not, then the game shifts to a moving of counters around the board, pigs defensive and tigers offensive. If the tigers become bottled up or similarly the pigs are unable to move, then the pigs have been successful. Also, if they move into a position where they can move indefinitely without being taken then they have won. However, if the tigers successfully eat all the pigs, then they win.

A tiger can only eat one pig at a time.

3. *Kōēng tā wāēn* (แก๊งตาแว่น): In this game there are two players each with two counters.

They play on a board as follows:



Black and green represent the counters of the two players respectively. The words in the small circle mean "haunted". The counters can move along the lines in any direction except from 1 to 4 or 4 to 1 (indicated by the red part of the large circle). Each player may move a single counter, one at a time along any of the other lines. The object is to manoeuvre one's own counters in such a way that one's opponent's counters cannot be moved except along the line 4-1 or 1-4. Such is the case when green is at 5 and 3 and black is at 1 and 4. [I think the latter should read when green is at 1 & 2 and black is at 5 and 3.]

Gamblers

Near the house of the dead Mrs. Tôm where we went for the "wake", we ran into a group of gamblers or *nak kân phanan* (นักการพนัน). This was a group of men. They were somewhat flustered when Mr. Phon came (he was with us) as gambling is illegal. However, they continued. I had heard references to women gamblers earlier in the evening. Mr. Ngao says that sometimes people lose over ฿100.00. There was one case where a game was worth over ฿5000.00.

People use the stones of the tamarind which are divided in half. One side is "white" and the other "black". Several of these are shaken in a cup together and then turned out. The men bet on whether the majority will be "white" or "black".

Bān Nông Tūn

April 30, 1963

Cost of Village Items

Mr. Ngao says that an ox-cart costs from ฿300-1000. The villagers don't make them themselves but buy them from other villages where they specialize in making them. However, all repairs, including on the wheel proper, are done by the villagers themselves.

There is one type of fishnet in the village to which a heavy chain is "knitted" to give it weight. This chain costs ฿6.00 per kilo in Sarakham.

Mr. Lā

Mr. Lā lives in *khum pāhāt* and has always seemed to me to be rather rich because he owns a large house, a radio and a bicycle. Mr. Ngao calls him a *nak leng* (นักเลง) - a type of playboy cum wastrel. He is the one who is in charge of killing animals and the organizer of gambling in the village.

Mr. Ngao's "Wife"

Jane had a conversation with Mr. Ngao's wife Nuan. She is 17 years old. Mr. Ngao said she was 18. Her mother Mrs. Hōm Somphithak (โหมสมพิทักษ์), looks after the pigs for Mr. Ngao,

Nuan's father died when she was still a student and she left school at the age of 10. She has one older brother aged 19 and four younger siblings. Her sister Duan is 14, and her youngest brother That is 7. The other two younger siblings are also boys.

Jane says that she guesses that Mr. Ngao provides rice and charcoal for the mother in return for her care of the pigs and Nuan's work, but this is only a surmise.

Nuan went to the market yesterday. She bought one lace-edged petti-top for ฿7.00 which she showed Jane. She has never been to Roi-Et (where Mr. Ngao goes at least once a week).

Sarakham Liquor

The liquor truck from Sarakham came through to sell liquor to Mr. Ngao (and in surrounding villages). This liquor is the 40 degrees whiskey made in Sarakham. Mr. Ngao was stocking up for the forthcoming wedding which comes two days hence. One bottle costs ฿8.00.

Bāp ("sin")

I asked Mr. Ngao the question of why Thais drink liquor when it is strictly forbidden in the Five Precepts. I also had asked this same question to a group of officials but never received a satisfactory answer. To the best of my understanding, one only makes a little *bāp* (บาป), i.e. "sin" or "demerit", unless one is a real drunkard. The word *chōēi chōēi* (เฉื่อยเฉื่อย) came up in this regard. Essentially the idea is a practical one; a little liquor won't really contribute too much to one's store of demerit.

On the question of *bāp*, Mr. Ngao was quite adamant about killing. Killing a horse, buffalo or cow brings much demerit (and killing a man, of course, much more). However, killing a chicken brings much less and killing insects brings an almost insignificant amount (except for monks). Nonetheless, this attitude is interesting when one considers that the villagers do their own slaughtering.

In a sense, the attitude towards "merit" and "demerit" is essentially one of not letting one's "enjoyment of life" (*sanuk*) be spoiled by too close observance of religious prescription. If one is really vitally concerned about "merit", then one should (for men, at least) become a monk for life. And even in the monkhood, a certain amount of worldliness enters in. The villager is

concerned about being born in a better state or at least in as good a state in the next life, but he doesn't believe that he can jump from this life to Nirvana. The *reduction ad absurdum* of the "merit-making" idea is that everyone should be a monk all his life (at least for men). But the exigencies of perpetuating a social community offset this. Once this principle has been rejected, other things can be tempered accordingly.

Bān Nông Tūn

1963 (undated)

What follows are notes that were written sometime in early 1963 on keysort cards.

SEX AND AGE

I. Sex: - Discriminations and taboos

- a. dress and Decoration
- b. speech
- c. etiquette
- d. food
- e. recreation
- f. freedom of movement
- g. division of labour
- h. ownership of property
- i. participation in political life
- j. political responsibility
- k. participation in communal activities
- l. specific forms of grouping

II. Age

In village Thailand there are certain age-groupings which tend to become apparent to the researcher in a heuristic sense though they are not linguistically denoted. I would tend to analyze the village social system according to the following roughly demarcated age-groups:

Age Group	Characteristics
0-2	Infants; still being nursed; usually greatly patronized by adults and minded by older siblings.
3-6	Pre-school; independent; relatively little responsibility as regards household chores and helping in family economics; tend to play together rather than being tended by parents; main responsibility is in tending infants.
7-14	Students; children are required to enter school at the age of 7 and to remain in school until completing the fourth grade in the compulsory education system or until the age of 14. Because a good portion of the time of this age-group is taken up in going to school, I call them the "student" age-group. Most will leave this age-group at about the age of 12 or 13. This age group has more responsibilities in the family and will help in at least some of the family economic functions. The group has the distinctive dress of the student anywhere in the country - the dark pants or <i>phasin</i> and the "white" shirt or blouse.
15-19	Teenagers; this group have taken on most of the responsibilities of the adult status insofar as economic functions are concerned; a lot of by-play takes place in this group between members of the sex; this is the age group and also the next if they are unmarried, in which the young men go <i>paithēosāo</i> . Very few in this group will marry at this age level.
20-29	Young adults; the age of 20 marks the time when a young man can become a monk - and the age at which he usually does so; the age group when young men, and some young women go away to work in urban centers; and the age group in which most marriages are made.
30-45	"Uncles"; the most productive of the age-groups in econ. sense; men addressed by the term "uncle";
45-65	"Fathers"; age group at which men are addressed as fathers and women as mothers;

Rites of Passage

tonsure-cutting; topknot cutting entrance into school entrance into novicehood entrance into monkhood marriage

Division of labor by Age & Sex for Everyday Activities

I started to prepare a systematic chart of observations of divisions of labor by age and sex for the main activities engaged in by villagers. Several different types of charts were (theoretically) experimented with & no comprehensive chart was following constructed. The following table sums up the observations I did make. The table does not allow for distinctions between activities which are general or nearly universally practiced by all those noted in the "commonly" column and those which are restricted to the specialist among the group indicated in the same column. Some such distinctions are noted in the "Comments" column. The abbreviations used signify the following:

M	men
YM	young men
b	boys
W	women
YW	young women
g	girl

Division of Labor by Age & Sex for Everyday Activities

Activity	Commonly	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Comments
plow fields	M		b	gW	
harrow	M		b	gW	
transplant rice	MbWg				
fish-net making, repairing	M	bW	g		
Sewing machines use	MW		bg		
Smoking	Mb		OW	gW	
Drinking	M	Wb	g		
Hand mill rice	yWg	W	yMb	M	
winnowing	Wg	W		Mb	Mr. Ngao says
gathering mushrooms	Wg		yMb	M	
making bamboo walling	Mb			Wg	
charcoal making					didn't note
gathering firewood					didn't note
tending oxen & buffalo	b	g	MW		
feeding monks at wat	OWg	WMb			
gathering bamboo shoots, leaves, vegetables, etc.	Wg		yMb	M	
tending infants	W	bgM			
tending small children	bg	WM			
fishing with hāē	M	b		Wg	
hunting with blowgun	b	M		Wg	
attending village meetings	M		Wbg		
participating in work parties	M		b	Wg	
building a house	M		b	Wg	
gambling	M		OW	bgW	
carrying water	Wg	b	M		
chewing betel	OW	W	OM	bgM	
collecting of small	Wg		yMb	M	
tending pigs					didn't note
tending ducks					didn't note

Activity	Commonly	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Comments
slaughtering of large animals	M			Wgb	
slaughtering of small animals	M	b		gW?	not sure about women
driving <i>khwian</i>	M				
wearing earrings	ygW		g	Mb	school girls are forbidden to wear earrings
having tattoo	bM			gW	
putting black dye on hair	yW, g	W		bM	
playing <i>khāen</i>	bM			gW	
going to marker	M	b	gW		
wearing a <i>phākāomā</i>	Mb			Wg	
" " <i>phāsin</i>	Wg			Mb	
" " sarong	Mb			Wg	
smithing	M				There are only 3-4 proper smiths in the village, though other m/b at --
preparing food	W	Mg	b		
making of gins for cotton/kapok	M			Wbg	There are only a few men who are able to make gins

Geo-social frames-of-reference for the BNT Villager

THE HOUSEHOLD

THE *KHUM*

THE VILLAGE

THE COMMUNE

THE AMPHOE

THE CHANGWAT

THE NATION

I believe that there is somewhat the feeling of being a "poor cousin" on the part of the BNT villagers relative to the commune because the commune is a lot more progressive and a lot richer than the village.

I think that in some ways the Northeastern villager is more conscious of being a Thai citizen than his compatriots on the Central Plains because he recognizes his affinity with the people of another country and yet knows that he lives under a different system. I think that Skinner made a point on this order in his Local, Regional and Ethnic Loyalties in Village Indonesia. The Central Plains villager never has to think about himself being Thai because he has no point of reference with which to contrast himself (of course, I am now talking about the villager whose awareness hasn't been intensified by newspapers, radio and other means of mass communication). On the other hand, the Northeastern villager realizes that it is as easy for him to assimilate into the Lao nation as it is into the Thai nation. It would be interesting to determine whether he thinks he would have more opportunity under a Thai government than under a Lao government and whether if he had a choice he would like to be a part of Laos. This will be somewhat hard to get at.