

July 1, 1963

[256] Marriage:

This morning there was a wedding in the village. Apparently this is a fairly auspicious day because there are weddings all over the area. [280/1] The reason for this may be that, this is the last time before Lent begins, and thus the last day to get married for three months. Also it is the first of the month, - an auspicious day.

Those who got married were ນາງ ສວຍ ສົມພິທັກ (sāmō:n sōmphithāk) and ນ.ສ. ຄໍາ ກາ ທັບຸຣີ (khamphā: thāpsurī). The boy was the son of ນາງ ທ່າປ (Tā:p), Hse, No. 56 KY and the girl the daughter of ນາງ ບັງ (Beng), HSE. No. 9, KW. The boy was 26 years old and the girl 25. The bride price was 8796.

It is interesting that this boy was the son of Mr. Tā:p who got a girl pregnant last year and whom was sent to Bangkok. An indemnity was paid for the fact that a marriage did not ensue. He has now returned and married this girl. Apparently Mr. Tā:p objected to the other girl who got pregnant because her family was poor and Mr. Tā:p's family wealthy. Apparently, thus there is some sort of status relationships determining marriage.

Wedding Customs:

As I have described other weddings in length, I will not describe this one but only make a few notes to supplement other reports. I should add there was no satho at this wedding because of fear of the police.

Sōmmā:

The custom of sōmmā: (ສົມມາ)) (Lao) must be present in any 2210

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[70] wedding ceremony, no matter how brief, to make it a proper wedding. This custom is sometimes called ๓๐๖๓๓ (khō: khāma:) in Thai. This custom is the presentation of flowers and candles (usually placed on a bowl) and sometimes money to the parents of the bride. This custom was demonstrated by the ^[๒๓/๒]son of Mr. Tà:p coming up to Mr. Wichian (who was present) on his knees. Pushing the bowl with flowers and candles in front of him towards Mr. Wichian and with head bowed until it almost touched the floor and arms outstretched touching the bowl. He remained in this position while Mr. Wichian explained some of the responsibilities and duties associated with marriage. This is the traditional way of doing things. When he had finished, Mr. Wichian touched the bowl and the son retired. This procedure was repeated with me. When I had finished, however, I was instructed to place the flowers and candles on mattresses behind me which the couple would use in the evening.

Sōmmā: applies to a variety of practices: the presentation of the flowers - candles to respected people; the presentation on the first night of marriage of the bride to her husband, and at other times as well; the custom of placing the flowers and candles in the lowest step of the bridegroom's house just before he leaves for the wedding; and doing the same thing at the foot of the steps of the bride's house before she enters. These latter two practices are called sōmmā: bandaj. When he does it at his own house, he gets down on his knees and places the flowers-candles in the bottom step, saying while he does this such things as "now I will leave". He then rises, and bows and wājs in several directions.

However, the most important sōmmā: is that to the parents of the bride. (๒๒)

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[285] If a couple have no ceremony, they must do this. And often, when they have no other ceremony, they will present some money to the bride's parents (a token bride price). Mr. Ngaw^[282/73] and ~~Luang~~^{Nuan} got married by having a sōmmā: to her mother.

Village and Army:

The villagers talk continuously about the (American) army. I think almost everyone in the village has been over to see the camp. One comment was that the soldiers "don't drink water". I imagine this opinion has arisen because the soldiers refuse local water and because of their great fondness for cokes, etc. (We were even asked if we drank water before we came here by the villagers). Also discussed are their sleeping habits, the cigarettes they smoke, etc. At least when they leave the villagers will have some criterion by which to judge other farangs, - whether for good or bad.

Mr. Wichian is not particularly happy about the building of the new school because he says, and I agree, that it has difficult implications for the CD program of encouraging villagers to help themselves.

Return of the Miscreants:

Today the six men taken by the police in the raid at the last set of weddings were returned by taxi to the village. They had spent 45 days in jail. They did not seem particularly repentant. [283/4]

[284] Mr. Ngaw and Nuan:

This morning at the wedding, Mr. Phon and others were talking about [285/1]

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[241] Nuan and Mr. Ngaw. It seems that Nuan had spent $\text{฿}24$ for some pills that were no good and Mr. Ngaw had been quite unhappy about this and they had had a quarrel. This quarrel was soon known all over the village. The result was that Mr. Phon and others said that Mr. Ngaw treated Nuan with little more respect and consideration than a servant.

As a matter of fact that was how the relationship began. First Nuan was a servant who came to help with the pigs. Then about four months ago they got "married", which in this case consisted of no more than sōmmā:, - the presenting of flowers and candles to Nuan's mother. There was no bride price.

This feeling among the villagers that Nuan isn't given proper status is interesting. For one thing I think that the expression of the idea represents a slight resentment on the part of the villagers toward the "capitalistic-oriented" person. But more than that, I think, that it reflected the feeling that Nuan was being maltreated, - that in other words she was being demeaned beneath the normal position of a married woman. In the village, a woman is entitled to as much equality and independence as a man (though there are division of labours).

Nuan's mother is a sister of Mr. Phon's first wife, a relationship which entitles Mr. Phon to refer to her as a relative. [241/5]

Buddhism and Village Status:

Mr. Phon, Mr. Tā:p, Mr. Pha:, Mr. La:, Mr. Chu: and others have never been ordained. Thus they don't have the title of thit. Mr. Ngaw says that if a person hasn't been ordained, he won't have a proper [245]

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[245] understanding of Buddhism and will be more likely to tham bà:p. I am somewhat surprised that Mr. Phon has never been ordained because he has two younger brothers who have gone up in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. One is phrāmāhā:sēng and the other, who is no longer a monk, is called tamrùat sīng - lit. "policeman Sing" because he is now a policeman in Sarakham. Mr. Sing's wife is a teacher at Bâ:n Mì: school.

Mr. Sǐ: hǎ: Thǎpsùrí, the old mǒ:suát was in the monkhood many years and has a great amount of status. I have often seen him helping the priests in certain ceremonies. He was a monk in another village near Mahasarakham.

Some Personal Notes:

Mr. Cha:j the assistant headman was over. He said he has had 12 children, two of whom are now dead. Mr. Phon apparently had a fairly boistrous adolescence and was among other things a mǒ:lām player. But the real mǒ:lām person is Mr. Sǎw Thǎpthani: (hse. no. 8) who is an a:ca:n. He learned his trade in Myang Phon where he lived with his wife, who is from there.

Changes in Custom:

Mr. Ngaw said Mr. Phon's daughter can ramwong very nicely as can Mr. Sǎw. I said that I had never seen any ramwong in the village except at the wat fair, ^[245/6] with "imported" girls. Mr. Ngaw said that ramwong is a custom of times past. Nowadays there are the dances at wat fairs, and so the traditional village dancing isn't carried out much anymore. [286]

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[286] Bridge Building:

When the bridge was built on the road the other day, there were men from all khums participating. Mr. Ngaw said that Mr. Phon chose the people who would work. [286]

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Wedding Invitations

The following are translations of wedding invitations used by villagers in villages near BN (I copied the originals into keyport cards).

Mr. ʔḡ:nsǎ Khamwísǎ: — Mr. Campa: Mǎ:trǎngammyang
Have the pleasure of requesting the honor of your presence in an auspicious
wedding ceremony

between

Mr. Chu: Khamwísǎ: and Miss Nǔ: Mǎ:trǎngammyang
at Bǎ:n Nǔ:ng Khǎ:, Village No. 5, Tambon Thǎ:tu:el

A. Myang C. ~~Mǎ:hǎ:sǎ:rǎkhǎ:m~~ Mǎ:hǎ:sǎ:rǎkhǎ:m

On 1 July 2506

8 a.m. Meal.

9 a.m. Procession to house of the bride-to-be.

y

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WEDDING INVITATIONS:

Although none in BNT seems to use ~~wedding~~ formal wedding invitations, a few people in other villages have imitated town patterns and have sent out such invitations. The following is a translation of two such invitations received by Mr. Ngaw..

Na:j ʔj:nsǎ: Khamwísǎ: - Na:j Čampa: Ma:trǎga:mmyay

Would be greatly honored if you would join in the ~~wedding~~ auspicious ceremony celebrating the marriage

between

Na:j Chu: Khamwísǎ: and N.S. [Na:j sǎ:w] Nǎ: Ma:trǎga:mmyay

In Bǎ:n ~~to~~ Nǎ:y Khǎ: , Mǎ:thī: 5, T. Thǎ:tu:m , A. Myay , C. Mahǎ:sǎ:rǎkha:m

On 1 July 1963

8:00 a.m. Partake of a meal.

9:00 p.m. ~~Accompany~~ Travel to 'send' [the groom] to the house of the bride (~~to~~ cǎw sǎ:w)

Cont.

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Mr. Sūbin Khamśō:ntha: - Mr. Klian Khamse:nā:

Have the pleasure of inviting [you ~~to~~ perform the ceremony] of
pouring of holy water and conferring blessings

On the occasion of the auspicious wedding between

Mr. Thor'in Khamse:nā: and Miss Sā:rā:i Khamśō:ntha:

At Bā:n Mī: A. Myāng C. Māhā:sā:rātham

On 1 July 2506

3 p.m. Please come to a meal.

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Na:j Sūbin Khamso:ntha: - Na:j Khian Khamṣṛ:nā:
would be greatly honored if you would join in the pouring of lustral water
and the ~~present~~ conferring of blessings on the occasion of the auspicious
ceremony celebrating the ~~the~~ marriage between...

Na:j Tho:g zin Khamṣṛ:nā: and N.S. Sā:rā:j Khamṣṛ:ntha:

In Bā:n Mī:, A. Myay, C. Mahā:sāṅrā:kha:m

On 1 July 1963

[AT] 8:00am. Please ~~join in the part~~ [you] are invited to
partake in a meal.

In this second invitation, there is indication of ~~part~~ omission of ~~the~~ central
Thai pattern for the 'pouring of lustral water' (lāg nā:m phā'phūtthāmm)
has been substituted for the more typical Isan custom of 'tying of wrists'
(ba:isī: sū:thāṅ khwān).

July 2, 1963

[286] Buddhist Lent:

The 7th of July (๗ กรกฎาคม ๒๕๐๖) is the first day of phansā: (Buddhist Lent). The day before, on the 6th, there will be ceremonies both in town and in the village. The ones in town are supposed to be quite beautiful.

Shaman:

There are two mǎ:phǐ:fá: (นมอด้ฟ้า) in the village. One is the wife of Mr. Tà:p, the other is māē: pû: (แม่ปู้) the wife of นายสอน คำทอง (sǎ:n khamkɔ:ng) in Khúm Yàj.

Wat Committee:

There is a wat committee. [286]

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^{Kūthi}
[130] Repairs on ~~khut~~:

Today there was a work party to repair the ^{icūthi}~~khut~~ at the wat. The major instigators of this were Mr. Phon, Mr. Hō:, the man I have often seen at the wat, ^[Mr. Sō:n Sē:trāksā:] Mr. Nō:j, and the three priests. After the wooden drum was sounded, other people began straggling in to help so that in the end there were quite a few people working. The job was really a complete one in that all pole supports which had been eaten away by termites and cross boards which were broken were replaced. Also new boards were placed around the porchways. Mr. Phon explained that these repairs were made in anticipation of khāw phansā:.

Buddhism:

Mr. Phon says that there will be no other men ordained as monks because there is no a:ca:n jāj at the wat. I have often wondered why phrā'mahā: sēng doesn't come back during phansā:. There seems to be a new little sāmāne:n at the wat (now making two).

Rain-Making Ceremony:

Mr. Phon says that tomorrow there will be a ceremony or event at the wat at noon to determine whether or not there will be a "rain requesting" ceremony. Certain astrological calculations by a mō:du: will be made. If such a ceremony is held, it will be a tug-of-war between teenage girls and boys. If the girls win, rains will not be long in coming. [227/63]

^{Bunsuk:}
Mr. Boensuk:

^{Bunsuk}
Mr. ~~Boensuk~~, the brother of Mr. La:, who has been in jail with the [228/63]

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others because of the incident at the last wedding, apparently has not lost his job because of his jail experiences. He showed me his card today indicating that he is still the representative of such-and-such an advertising firm in Sarakham. He was going to Roi-et on business today.

Horse-Killing:

Yesterday another horse was killed in Khum Pà:hà:t. Mr. Phon apparently indicated to those in charge of the slaughter that we didn't like horse meat. Mr. Ngaw is afraid to eat horse meat and says that BNT is known for eating horse meat.

Janè Interviews

Feeding and Raising of Pigs:

"Spoke with girl from B. Khwaw who came to buy bran. At her house there are 20 pigs which her family sells in B. Khwaw. Twenty pigs eat 10 thǎng of bran per day, and 1 thǎng costs 1 baht. Also told me there are three rice-mills in B. Khwaw, but occasionally they all run out of bran to sell, as on today. Hence came here to get it. Brought along a water-cart to carry it in."

Cost of Rice:

"Girl also said 1 thǎng of khaw niaw (khâ:w ^{sà:n} ~~sān~~) costs B25.00.

Activities at Store:

"Two boys on their way through BNT came and cooked themselves 3 [255]"

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[299] sausages and a big^[255/a] whack of khaw niaw over Nuan's fire. These they wrapped in papaya leaves. For this they paid B2.00 (i.e. Mr. Ngaw also sells cooked food, or provides a rented cook-out)."

Mr. Ngaw:

Today Mr. Ngaw has been away in the market all day to see about buying a sewing machine. Jane noticed that when Mr. Ngaw is away, Nuan's mother is around much more.

Courting:

Occasionally in the quiet of a night, one hears the music of a khae:n. This is some young swain entertaining his sweetheart. Often both will be in the company of other young people.

Contacts with Outside:

One of the major contacts which villagers have with the immediate world around them is through conversations they have with people who come from surrounding villages to have their rice milled by Mr. Ngaw, to sell charcoal, buy bran, etc. These people sit around talking with other people, particularly villagers and gossiping. The store really takes the place of the coffee shop in other parts of the world. Currently, the major bit of conversation concerns the American soldiers who are building the new school. And we are repeatedly asked to explain their habits.

People come bringing haps of paddy or they may come by khwian (1 [299])

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(๓๕) khwian equals 10 thang) with straw for the oxen or buffaloes while they are waiting for rice to be milled. [๒๕๙/๙๐]

One of the standard contacts with the outside world is through the buses which pass through on their way to Sarakham in the morning between 9-10:30 a.m. and which return between 4-5 in the afternoon. These buses are always full, and people often stop to drink water or the bus will stop to take on goods and passengers at the store. The cost of traveling one of these buses is ฿1 to the corners (often done for a cigarette), ฿3 to Sarakham. At the corners, one can catch a bus to Roi-et for ฿3-4 (bargaining is even done in this case). A bus to Sarakham can be got at the corners for ฿2. [๒๙๐]

3/7/63

VEHICULAR TRANSPORT THROUGH BNT:

I had started keeping a record of vehicular transport passing through BNT, but made only the following notes:

Date	Time	TYPE OF VEHICLE	Direction Travelling	Comments
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[See attachment]

DATE	Time	TYPE OF VEHICLE	DIRECTION	Comments
25/6/63	8:30	Bus	N	Buses to Mahasarakham
"	9:40	Bus	N	" " "
27/6/63	9:40	Bus	N	" " "
"	9:45	"	"	" " "
2/7/63	9:20	Bus	N	
"	9:35	Lorry carrying fire wood	N	
"	"	" " " "	N	
	10:15	Bus	N	Goes to MS
"	11:40	Small Bus	S	
"	11:45	Lorry	S	empty
"	12:40	"	S	"
"		"	W	with wood
"		"	N	
"	4:30	Bus	S	
"	4:45	"	N	

July 4, 1963

[210] Women and Travel:

Today a woman from N^v:ng kae: (the pond surrounded by a number of villages where the American army is encamped) said she had bought her phâ:s^yn in Bangkok where she had spent 15 days in visiting relatives. This woman had also lived in Khon~~k~~haen and Udorn. This is one of very few village women whom I have met who has gone on such long paj thⁱaws. She speaks Bangkok Thai to some extent. There is one woman in Khum No:n who has been in Bangkok recently. [211]

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(๗๙๐) Rain-Making Ceremony:

Yesterday Mr. Phon had said that an a:ca:n would come and determine whether there would be a rain-making ceremony or not. Unfortunately the a:ca:n was unable to come. If he had decided that a ceremony was necessary, then six boys and six girls equally matched as to size and weight would have had a tug-of-war. Another custom for bringing the late rains is to place a cat into a ^[๗๙๐/๒๙๐๔] fish-holding basket and set it afloat on the water. The subsequent cries of the cat were supposed to make the thewada aware of their responsibility of sending rains.

Unfortunately rains began last night and so all hopes for any ceremonies were dispelled.

Wedding:

This morning there was a wedding between a boy in KNKN and a girl in Ba:n Ja:ng - a village near the road leading to the place where the soldiers are working. The groom was ^{๗๗๗} ส่ม ทัพธาไน (sòm tháptha:ni:) son of ^{๗๗๗} ชอม ทัพธาไน (chom tháptha:ni:) - Hse. No. 86. He is 21 years old. It is interesting that this is the same boy who was supposed to be married to another girl from KNKN on May 2nd (see May 2, page 2) but was sick on that day.

The bride is ^{๗๗๗} น.ง. นา:ง (na:ng) who is 18 years old. The bride price was $\text{฿}816$ ($\text{฿}20$ more than would have been paid if he had married the other girl).

There was no sù:khwan ceremony for the boy.

While we were visiting the house of the boy, several guests pressed ^[๗๙๐]

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us to go with the procession to the household of the girl. We were said now to be villagers of BNT and therefore should go. I will never forget the wedding for we walked some 2-3 miles in heavy rains and barefoot through mud and water to get to the house of the girl. There was little difference in this wedding and those we had observed in BNT.

Types of Mǒ:lám:

Yesterday we talked with Mr. Wichian concerning mǒ:lám. He said there are several types of mǒ:lám among which are the following: [29/291]

1. นมอสีานมู (mǒ:lammù:):

นมอ (mǒ:) - "performer, doer, one skilled in"

สีา (lám) - "to sing"

นมู (mù:) - "group"

Group of singers who perform "folk operas" with themes taken from the Ramakhian and other sources.

2. นมอสีากวอน (mǒ:lámklɔ:n):

กวอน (klɔ:n) - "rhyme, poetry"

Singing done in rhyme by 2 or 3 persons who use great play on words.

3. นมอสีาผีฟ้า (mǒ:lámphǐ:fǎ:):

ผีฟ้า (phǐ:fǎ:) - "sky spirits"

Dancing and singing done to exorcise or placate spirits who are causing illness. [291]

Kasetsart University
Written July, 1963
Bangkok, Page 23 of 65
Thailand

5th July 1963

Dear Bif and Jean,

Thank you so much for your comments on the first half of the Thonkaen study. We liked them so much that enclosed is the remainder of the study for your perusal! Hope you'll be interested, will send us opinions, and will return the manuscript! — **SOON***

We'll write you a proper letter and comment on your comments soon. Are now rushing (as ever) to get this to the mail.

Take care of yourselves. Don't get sick or get converted by the communists. How are you holding out against the offers of children?

Best wishes from us both

Mulland and Francis.

* Because we're hurrying to get the thing rewritten we'd really like your comments within the next two weeks. / P.S.

July 6, 1963

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[293]

5:00 p.m. All donors and believers take flowers, incense and
candles and present them to the monks in the wat.

(Signed) Mahasarakham municipality
17 June, 2506

1. อวสทินิ "the eighth lunar month"
2. เข้าปุริมพรรษา "to enter Buddhist lent"
3. ธรรมาศกัปปวัตตนาสูตร Dhammacakkappavattana sutta (see Finot p. ~~180~~ 182)
4. พระอุโบสถ formal word for "temple".

[also ~~was~~ associated with this schedule was a Pali script to be used
by worshippers "presenting flowers, candles, and incense on the day
of ʔà:tsǎ:lá:hə:bu:cha:.]

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กำหนดการ

การทำบุญวันอาสาฬหบูชา และวันเข้าพรรษา
ปี ๒๕๐๖

วันเสาร์ที่ ๖ กรกฎาคม ๒๕๐๖ (วันอาสาฬหบูชา)

- เวลา ๙.๓๐ น. มีการทำบุญถวายภัตตาหาร แก่ภิกษุสามเณร เสร็จแล้วมีการ
ฟังธรรมเทศนา ซึ่งแสดงธรรมจักรกัปปวัตตสูตร
- เวลา ๑๙.๐๐ น. มีการประชุมเวียนเทียนรอบพระธาตุโบสถ์ วัดมหาชัย และมี
การประกวดโคมไฟบูชา

วันอาทิตย์ที่ ๗ กรกฎาคม ๒๕๐๖ (วันเข้าพรรษาประกวดคันเทียน)

- เวลา ๑๘.๐๐ น. ทายกคุ้มวัดต่าง ๆ นำขบวนแห่เทียนมาบริเวณหน้าศาลากลาง
จังหวัดมหาสารคาม เพื่อประกวด
- เวลา ๑๘.๓๐ น. กรรมการตัดสินการประกวดเทียน
- เวลา ๑๙.๐๐ น. ทายกทายิกาตลอดคุ้มมีภัตตาหารทั้งหลาย นำดอกไม้ธูปเทียนไป
ถวายแด่พระภิกษุสงฆ์ที่วัด.

เทศบาลเมืองมหาสารคาม

๑๗ มิถุนายน ๒๕๐๖

คำถวายดอกไม้, รูป, เทียน
ในวันอาสาฬหบูชา

ขมมุต โข มย ภควนุท สรณ คทา โย โน ภควา สตถา, ยสฺส จ มย ภควโต
ขมฺม โรเจม อโหสิ โข โส ภควา อรหํ สมฺมาสมฺพุทฺโธ สตฺเตสฺส การุณฺณํ ปฏิจฺจ กุณฺดาโย
หิเตสฺสิ อุนฺกมฺปํ อฺปาทาโย อาสาฬหปุณฺณมิมํ พาราณสียํ อีสิปกเน นิลทาเย ปญฺจวคฺคิยานํ ภิกฺขุณฺ
อุนฺคฺตรํ ขมฺมจกฺกํ ปฐฺมํ ปวตฺตเตสุวา จตุตถาริ อริยสจฺจานิ ปกาเสสฺสิ ฯ

ทสฺมิณฺจ โข สมเย ปญฺจวคฺคิยานํ ภิกฺขุณฺ ปมุโข อายสฺมา อญฺญาโกณฺฑญฺโฆ ภควโต
ขมฺมํ สุตฺวา วิรชํ วิทมฺลํ ขมฺมจกฺกํ ปฏฺธิภิกฺวา "ยงฺกิญฺจ สฺมฺทตฺตขมฺมํ สพฺพนุทํ นิโรธขมฺมนฺติ"
ภควทํ อฺปสมฺเปทํ ยาจิตฺวา ภควโตเยว สนฺตีกา เตหิภิกฺขุอฺปสมฺเปทํ ปฏฺธิภิกฺวา ภควโต ขมฺมวินเย
อริยสวากสงฺโฆ โฉเก ปฐฺมํ อฺปฺปนฺโน อโหสิ ฯ

ทสฺมิณฺจปิ โข สมเย สงฺฆรทณํ โฉเก ปฐฺมํ อฺปฺปนฺนํ อโหสิ พุทฺธรทณํ ขมฺมรทณํ
สงฺฆรทณนฺติ ทิรทณํ สมฺปุณฺณํ อโหสิ ฯ

มย โข เอกธฺมิ อิมํ อาสาฬหปุณฺณมิมํกาลํ ทสฺส ภควโต ขมฺมจกฺกนุปวตฺตทณกาลสมฺมตํ
อริยสวากสงฺฆอฺปฺตฺตติกาลสมฺมตญฺจ รทณทตฺตสมฺปรณกาลสมฺมตญฺจ ปชฺวา อิมํ ฐานํ สมฺปชฺฐา อิมเ
สตฺถาเว ลเหตุวา อตฺตโน กายํ สตฺถารูปชานํ ภริชฺวา ทสฺส ภควโต ยถาภุจฺเจ อฺเน อุนฺสฺสรนฺตา
อิมํ ฐป (อิมํ พุทฺธปฏฺธิม) ติภฺชชฺคฺคํ ปทกฺขินํ ภริชฺสาม ยถาลหิเตหิ สตฺถาเวหิ ปุชฺ คุรุมานา ฯ

สาธุ โน ภนฺเต ภควา สุจิรปรินิพฺพุโตปิ ญาตพฺเพหิ อฺเนหิ อตีตารมฺมณตฺยา
ปญฺญาบมาโน อิมเ อมฺเหหิ ลหิเตหิ สตฺถาเว ปฏฺธิภิกฺกนฺทาสุ อมฺหากํ ทิฆรทณํ ทิตาย สุชาโย ฯ

7 July 1963

Add

In Mahasarakham where we attended a ~~ceremony~~ khao phansa ceremony
at the Sa-la: kla:ng.

~~8 July~~

8 July 1963

In Mahasarakham

9, 10, 11 July 1963

Left to Bangkok; returned by evening train on 11th.

Dear Millard and Jancis,

I have read the other half of your report with great interest. I really think that your study will be very valuable and I hope that it gets a wider circulation than just among a few interested specifically in Northeastern development.

I do not have very many comments to make, but I will make a few which struck me while I was reading the report. First, a couple of minor points:

1. In the section on "General Description" under the rubric of "communications" you say that the road between Banphai and Mahasarakham is laterite and not all-weather. It is in fact one of the best roads in the Northeast - maccadanized and completely usable (except when a bridge washes out) in all seasons.
2. In the section under "religion" you mention the two sects of Thai Buddhism. I think that the most usual spelling of these are Mahanikai or ~~Mah~~ Mahanikaj and Thammayut.

I only have two other more lengthy comments:

1. With regard to demography, you might mention that research needs to be done on attitudes towards a potential birth-control program as this is in current official opinion one of the best ways to reduce population growth and hold dow the pressures on the land in the Northeast. You yourself made the same comments in your "Letter to the Editor" in the World. I have just begun to investigate this topic and I find a ~~weak~~ complete lack of knowledge on the part of the villagers not only as regards "the pill" and devices, but also as to the rhythm method.
2. You say under the section on attitudes that you think that villagers seem unaware of the greater economic possibilities of the Central Plains, the North, and the South and thus tend to migrate to better-off areas in the Northeast. On the contrary, I think that most villagers are aware of the greater economic possibilities of these areas, and particularly of Bangkok. Madge found in the villages surrounding Ubon that some 30% of village men had engaged in work in Bangkok (primarily as samlor drivers). I have found that the majority of seasonal migration among men is to Bangkok (and occasionally to Vientiane). However, villagers are also aware of the higher cost of living in Bangkok ~~of~~ and of the more impersonal relations there. They prefer the warmth of village relationships among people who speak the same language and have the same cultural patterns and thus are willing to migrate for a short period of time to Bangkok but not permanently. They might, on the other hand, be willing to migrate to somewhere else in the Northeast where they feel that they will find at least an approximation to the type of relationships which exist in their own village.

Jane and I are doing a pretty good job of avoiding major diseases and the communists though we are presently plagued by a company of American soldiers who are building a school and dam some 6 kilometers from our village (they are here as an aftermath to the SEATO exercise).

Again, let me say that I think that your report is excellent. I am anxiously awaiting a final draft.

Best wishes to both of you and the short Longs.

Dear Beryl

Thank you so much for the first half of the book. I think it is the best I have seen so far. The conclusion of the study is very good. The interesting part is the return to the manuscript.

We'll give you a paper on your comments soon (as ever) to the main

part of yourself. Don't forget contact with the communists. Holding it against the effect of

Best wishes

Philip

* Because I'm busy to get the thing rewritten in two weeks. Comments will be in two weeks

July 12, 1963

[293] Returned to the village after 4 days in town and 3 days in Bangkok.

Death:

The sister of Mr. La: who lives in Khum wat had an infant child who died this week.

Rain-Making Ceremonies:

The village had originally planned to have a วอว์น (khō:fōn) or rain-calling ceremony on Tuesday and had sent Mr. Ngāw to town to inform us of this. However, as I was away, they postponed it. But yesterday the farmers decided they had better hold the ceremony or the rains would never come. The ceremony is held on three successive nights and in all cases consists of a tug-of-war between young girls and young boys.

The "rope" for the tug-of-war consists of long tough vines attached to a mortar placed in the middle. The mō:suat came and lighted some candles and placed some leaves and tobacco on this mortar and then chanted a few words. [293/294 (no pp 294-5)]

The belief is that when the tug-of-war is held, if the girls win, the rains will come; if not the rains will be delayed. This evening there were four competitions held among gay hilarity. The girls won three - not without some help from some young men - and the men won the first trial. Another go will be held tomorrow. [296]

July 13, 1963

[296] Mr. Ngaw bought two female pigs, one for ฿200 and the other for ฿300.

Another tug-of-war was held in the wat in the evening. Mr. Sī:hă:
didn't show up so the ceremony wasn't for real. Three times the device
being pulled broke, too, so the thing was something of a farce. [297]

July 14, 1963

[296] Lack of Rains and Concern About "Starvation":

This morning Mr. Phon was worrying out loud about the lack of rains. He said, though laughing about it (as Thais seem to do about all serious matters), that if the rains didn't come soon people would have very poor crops and people would starve.

I have noticed that Mr. Ngaw has been buying paddy. He will mill and sell this to people who have run out of rice before the next harvest. There are apparently quite a few people who have to buy rice.

In the evening the rather half-crazy barber was over and saying he was starving. Mr. Ngaw says he doesn't make enough from barbering to feed himself and family. This I can believe. He was rather curtly treated by Mr. Ngaw and Mr. Phon. [296/7]

Attitudes Towards Food:

This could really be said to be a subsistence economy insofar as food is concerned. So far as I can tell, the only time that any family in the village buys food is at a time of a major celebration. There is "hunting and gathering" used to supplement the diet - to provide the kap khâ:w. Women go to the fields to look for frogs, snails, insects, plants, fruits, all sorts of leaves, bamboo shoots. Men fish, hunt lizards, and this morning one person brought in a 6 foot snake he was planning to eat.

Food is an area over which we have to be careful lest we damage our "rapport". Our diet is so vastly much more expensive than standard diet that it sets us off immensely. People gather around to see what garbage Jane throws to the pigs, and should we have some meat or fruit [297]

July 14, 1963

2.

[297] which has gone bad so that we have had to throw them out there has been much consternation among the onlookers.

Even when the financial level of a family improves, diet usually does not. The only difference between Mr. Ngaw's diet and that of other villagers is that occasionally when he goes to the market he may bring back some meat. He also does not like certain things gathered or hunted, such as snakes and rats.

Probably the worst and most humiliating status that a family can be in is that of having no rice nor the means to obtain it. Such a person is without the pale of the economic system and has become dependent on others. [298]

Village Leadership:

Mr. Phon has been headman now for 15 years. He says he will remain headman until he dies and then the villagers will choose another headman. The villagers choose the headman, but the headman chooses the assistant headman. The Kamnan is always the headman of Bân Khwaw. The present one has been Kamnan 3-4 years.

Co-operative Labour:

Mr. Phon says that work on the school will begin very shortly. In this case, every household must contribute a member to help. As only 20 people can work per day, there will be a rotation among households. [299]

July 14, 1963

3.

[291] Ideas About the Outside World:

There certainly has been an effect among the villagers in their knowledge of the outside world with the coming of the SEATO forces and the engineering company. Today I overheard a conversation among a group of young men (late teenagers) with such things as: - "Is Japan among the SEATO countries?" (They thought not). "Why don't Filipinos speak Thai seeing they look like Thais?" (They have small brown bodies also). "What language is spoken in Japan?" (Thought maybe English), etc. The point here is not the question itself but the fact that names of foreign countries were being bandied around at all. There was discussion not only of these countries but also of Australia, France, etc. One person commented that Russia and Red China ("red" is used in Thai as well) are Communist countries.

Also there was considerable discussion of the antics of the Americans, with particular^[292/10] mention being made of negroes. Some villagers have picked up such words as "Hi" and "OK" though they don't know what they mean.

It must be pointed out that these impressions made by foreign troops on the villagers have not been organized systematically in the villagers' minds. Ideas of what and where other countries are are still vague in the extreme. Nonetheless, the existence of other peoples and different ways of life have been visually impressed on the villagers. And this awareness has stimulated a curiosity concerning the strange. Also I am myself aware that probably more knowledge about the ways of Westerners has come, insofar as the villagers are concerned, via Jane and me than it has through the casual contacts with the American troops. [293]

July 14, 1963

4.

[299] More Tug-of-War:

At night there was an even bigger "celebration" at the wat - many more people who again came to participate in the tug-of-war in order to bring the rains. It certainly is great fun for the young people. This time the girls (with Jane's help) won 3 out of 4 goes. [299]

July 15, 1963

Rapport Difficulties:

Jane has just returned from the school and it seems that Mr. Bunthiang was rather huffy and said he hadn't seen me for some time. I think he is hurt because I have been going over there very little of late whereas I used to go nearly every day. Also I think he felt that ours was a special relationship and that I would spend far more time with him than the rest of the villagers. [11/30]

Villages Which Bring Rice to be Milled at Mr. Ngaw's Mill:

People from the following villages bring rice to be milled at

Mr. Ngaw's:

B. Nok Kràdò:k	B. Nq̣:ng Dùk	B. Hùá Nq̣:ng
B. Yâ:ng	B. Khô:k Nq̣:j	B. Sýa kin ngua
B. Lĩng	B. Nq̣:ng Kung	B. Khô:k rāj
B. Nám thiang	B. Mĩ:	B. Dq̣:n Du:

In addition some people from as far away as Mr. Ngaw's village (Nq̣:ng Khâ:) in T. Thâ: tu:m come to have rice milled.

Attitudes Towards Lack of Rice:

A woman came here today to buy rice who said it was^a necessary to buy rice because the rains hadn't come yet and there was no rice to eat.^v She also said Jane's helping on the tug-of-war last night should help bring rains. [304]

July 15, 1963

2.

[7.0] Khaen:

In the afternoon Mr. Ngaw and I went to B. Song Plyaj to buy a khae:n which Mr. Ngaw was having made for me. In the evening we had a regular "jam session" in the house which people came to to demonstrate my khae:n and play the phim. [phi:n]

The rains came in the evening, so there was no tug-of-war. [30.0]

July 16, 1963

(761) Mr. Ngaw's Pig Sales:

This morning Mr. Ngaw sold a sow to B. Khwāw co-operative. He had had it for two years. It has had two litters of pigs, but the second batch was not very health so he decided to get rid of it. He received ฿600 for the pig for which he originally had paid ฿100.

Buddhism:

Mr. Ngàw says that the man in Khum Nò:n (Mr. Khun Thaptha:ni:) where we got sathò the other night, used to be the a:ca:n jaj in the wat up until February or March of this year. (761)

17 July 1963

Add

in town.

ผู้ว่าราชการจังหวัดมหาสารคาม

มีความยินดีขอเชิญ . . . มิสเตอร์ . . . โคท . . . และ ภรรยา

ไปร่วมเป็นเกียรติในพิธีรับมอบอาคารเรียน ซึ่งหน่วยทหารอเมริกันจัดสร้าง
ให้ที่บ้านหนองหูลิง ตำบลเขวาสินรินทร์ จังหวัดมหาสารคาม ในวันที่ ๑๕
กรกฎาคม ๒๕๐๖ เวลา ๑๑.๐๐ น. เริ่มพิธี เสร็จพิธี เชิญรับประทานอาหารร่วมกับ
หน่วยทหาร.

July 18, 1963

[311] Head of Household Questionnaire:

Began the head of household questionnaire today. Mr. Wichian came out to help me begin it. It is interesting the sort of channels that were gone through in getting the groundwork laid. First we went to Mr. Thiang and Mr. W. explained the questionnaire to him. He in turn called a meeting of all the students and explained to them about the questionnaire and told them to inform their parents. He also explained that I was not an outsider coming in to the village, but a person whom everyone knows. We then went to talk with Khun Ng'j about being my interviewing assistant and I agreed to give him B300 for helping with the whole questionnaire (Mr. Phon had some doubts about him because he thinks he doesn't read too well and also thought the amount of money a little high). I think that maybe I will have a little trouble with him at first and then it will be all right.

We also talked with Mr. Phon and he seemed quite receptive to the idea. In fact the first three people to whom the questionnaire was given seemed quite agreeable, - Mr. Phan (KPH), Mr. Phon and Mr. Ngaw. [311/2]

Several comments were made:

(1) Mr. Thiang says he thinks some people have a gun but as they have it illegally, they will not answer this question. Mr. W. was more sanguine.

(2) Mr. W. added Korat as another city where people sometimes go to live and work.

(3) The question on how many years the person has studied brings the response of how many were spent in studying as opposed to the number of years of schooling completed. [311/3]

July 19, 1963

[302] Education:

Today we had lunch at the school. This came about as a result of a monthly program at the school where a special lunch is prepared for the students. Each student is supposed to donate 50 satang. The total amount is used to buy chickens and the other food to be made for the lunch (the children each bring their own rice). It is indicative of the poverty of some of the families in the village that only about 3/4 of the students participated on this occasion (it may also be a function of the time of the year when farmers have the least money).

Six chickens were bought for $\text{฿}5$ each, i.e. at a big discount (in the market they sell for $\text{฿}12$ and up - J.). Khun Beng and Khun Buapha: made the food, consisting of kàj jang, kàe:ng phâet kàj and kàj tòm. Only [See comment pp.] the latter two were given to the students, the kàj jang being saved especially for the teachers and ourselves. There are rough hewn picnic benches situated near the bò:t. It was here that the students were served. The two watery dishes were mixed together and then placed in small bowls for 3 or 4 students to eat from. As mentioned before, the students had brought their ^{own} rice. As soon as the students were finished, we ate.

There were three students standing apart and not participating. It seems they forgot their rice or else had none to bring. Finally the teachers called to them and had them come over. They shared the rice of other students.

Educational Committee:

The Educational Committee includes the following people: [303]

July 19, 1963

2.

[707] นายทศ ทัตสุริย์	Mr. Phon Thápsurí (Headman)
นาง ดี พงษ์พันธ์	Mr. Di: Phonkhán
นาง ช่าง สมพิทักษ์	Mr. Cha:j Sǒmphíták (Asst. Headman)
นาง มี ทัตสุริย์	Mr. Mi: Thápsurí
นาย ลา ทัตสุริย์	Mr. La: Thápsurí
นาย สม ทัตสุริย์	Mr. Sǒm Thápsurí
นาย ทรมมา (เชษฐ์กษา)	Mr. Phonma: Sê:tráksă:
นาย สอน เชษฐ์กษา	Mr. Sǒ:n Sê:tráksă:
นาย ดาว ทัตธานี	Mr. Da:w Tháptha:ni:

Description of School:

The school is located in the să:la: wat, a building open on all four sides. In front of the să:la: is a small enclosed ground (enclosed by a low fence) in the middle of which are planted flowers and plants (also houses the flag - J.).

Desks for the students consist of low benches about a foot above the floor. These are about a foot^[333/4] wide and about three feet long. Behind each of these three and sometimes four students will kneel on the floor. The students come in with their papers, erasers and rulers wrapped in a pha:khoma: or a piece of rough cotton. These are placed underneath the low desks when the children are in class. The four grades are divided by woven bamboo partitions which can be removed (as can most of the rest of the school equipment) when the să:la: wat needs to be used for other purposes. In the front of each "classroom" are a chair, a desk (rough hewn) and a fold-away blackboard. These are used by the teachers. [334]

July 19, 1963

3.

[704] There are various posters, announcements, pictures etc. placed on the posts in the building. The most important of these is an assemblage of the following things placed on the centre post: a picture of the King below which are the national colours, and below that a "shrine" with a glass statue of the Buddha and vases of false flowers on it. There are also a number of placards which always ^{begin} ~~begin~~ with "พุทธ (phút 'o:râ:t)" or "Buddha says" followed by several words in Pali (written in Thai orthography with certain special symbols) and then a Thai translation of a moral aphorism such as "As a person speaks, so he shall do". There are also several little wooden blue boards on which a snippet of a poem, again usually with a moral overtone, is written. There are two biological diagrams, one showing the internal organs and one about the teeth. There is also a small map of Thailand. In addition there are several pictures of important buildings and wats in Thailand.

As one enters the school there is the major blackboard on which "Statistics concerning numbers of students at Wat Ba:n Nq:ng Ty:n school" is written. This includes the number of students in each class and is supposed to include the daily statistics on the number of students who are sick, tardy, truant. It also includes the names of each teacher and which classes they are teaching. [304/5]

There is also another major blackboard on which important announcements are written, - such as "Today is examination day" or "Today is wâj khru: day". There is another board on which pictures from magazines are occasionally posted. [305]

19 July 1963

Add

kài jang : correctly đi sít - kài yâ:ng in Thai ; kái ~~ng~~ nã:ng in Lao

kàeng phàet kàj : คั้งพืดคัจ - kz:ng phèt kài (Thai); kz:ng phèt kái (Lao)

kàj tòm : คัจต้ม - kài tòm (Thai); kái tòm (Lao)

July 19, 1963

4.

Illegal Children:

Yesterday the girl that had a child by the son of Mr. Tà:p (the boy who married very recently) was around. Jane said Mr. Ngàw was teasing her mercilessly on how the child had no father and how the boy wouldn't marry her because she has got too thin and about her having trouble finding another husband. Jane said she seemed to take it all in good humour which is more than she could have done. Mr. Ngàw said the indemnity paid for getting this girl pregnant was ฿12 because the girl's family is very poor (her father is dead). However, if she had come from a rich family, the indemnity might have been as high as ฿5,000. However, it would usually be about ฿1,000. He also said that bastard children are somewhat looked down on, but I doubt this and think he may have been expressing a personal opinion. However, such a child might be teased because the Thai show no regard in talking about others' disabilities.

Learning to Play Khae:n:

For two days now, Khun Nin from Khum Wat has been over to teach me to play the khae:n. He must be finding it a hard job. He himself is one of the better players in the village and has played for two years. [335/4]

Miscellaneous:

Continued census today. Another tug-of-war rain requesting contest at the wat in the evening. [336]

July 20, 1963

[301] Tham Bun at House of Mr. La:

This morning there was a ceremony of tham bun bā:n and su: khwān at the house of Mr. La: - the nakleng - in KPH. Many people from all over the village attended and partook of his food and ^{sā:to:} ~~satho~~. Told that ceremony held in his house every year, always in the 8th month. Held to placate the ancestral spirits and to make the house, its inhabitants and visitors happy.

In an inner room the two priests and a novice were chanting. When this was finished, a bucket (or more properly a basket) of water in which a candle had been allowed to drip and a twig was stirred during the chanting and then was taken by one present and sprinkled on the rest of us present. Then the priests went to the four corners of the house. At each place they did as they had in the case of Mr. Hq's house, i.e. a collection of food on a small piece of bamboo was propped up on a stick. Then a string was attached to this to which the priests held. Then they chanted. When they had finished, a hole was dug at the base of the post and the food was deposited therein. This food was for the phī: bā:n.

Also a string was taken and wrapped around the house. This functions somewhat similarly to the phū:kkhāe:n on a persons's wrist - a tying of the khwān of the house. [301 17]

Mr. Ngaw says that Mr. La: had this ceremony to get rid of the bad influences of having been arrested by the police and thrown in jail. A tham bun bā:n ceremony is held in order to ward off accidents throughout the year. Only richer people, or people who feel the need because of extenuating circumstances (such as Mr. Hq: because of the deaths in his [301 17])

20 July 1963

Add

tham bun bân : ທຳບຸນບັນ - in lao, more usually ທຳບຸນ ບັນ ao bun hân

July 20, 1963

2.

(1963) household) have the ceremony because of the outlay in money for food
and drink.

Today completed six more questionnaires. Spent part of the day in
town. (1963)

20 July 1963

Add.

- In Mahasarakham fired Tong Chan who had working for us at
Dregers' house. Hired Suphan & Co., Suphan being a former servant
of the Dregers'.

21 July

In town.

July 22, 1963

[37] Army and Village:

On Saturday a group of soldiers along with John McClean came to the village to present 34 roughly made tables and chairs for the school (very roughly made indeed). Unfortunately I wasn't in the village when they arrived. On Sunday I went to the army camp and discovered that BNT had been selected as a result of a list which Mr. Wichian and I had prepared concerning what villages in Tambon Khwaw most needed things and which we had given to Lieut. McCarden, the man in charge of Civic Action for this area during the SEATO exercise. BNT had been at the top of the list.

I informed Mr. Ngaw and Mr. Thiang that I had been more or less responsible for the getting of the desks. They appreciated the fact, and I don't think our rapport was at all injured by this situation. In fact Mr. Thiang was a little effusive, saying that I had contributed B500 for the school and had been responsible for getting the students' SEATO kits and the desks (not exactly true, but true in part). [77/92]

On Friday there was a major ceremony at the new school ("Friendship School") in which the head of JUSMAG came up to officially turn the school over to the Changwat. There were rumours floating around the village that Sarit himself was coming (though this was not true). Even if it had been the case, I doubt that people would have shown much more interest, - a real contrast to the interest taken in the Queen and King?

Khun Nin:

This evening when Nin was teaching me on the khae:n, he played the "King's song". He also knows the words. This is interesting as regards [78/93]

July 22, 1963

[303] participation in national cultural traditions. It is also interesting
that the khæ:n with its uniqueness is used to play a Western-type
melody. [304]

July 23, 1963

(308) Mr. Ngaw and Bangkok:

Last night we discussed with Mr. Ngaw about his experiences in Bangkok. He spent two periods there, each of three years. The first one was when he was 18-21, and the second 23-26. When he went down he first found a job in a Chinese store at B250 a month, but as this was too little, he changed jobs and ended up working in a Chinese noodle and cracker making company. He started this job at B400 a month. He was also provided with board and room (room being a dormitory with another 12 or so workers). He worked a night shift (all the time he worked for the company) of 7-8 hours a night, 7 days a week, every day of the year except the three days of Chinese New Year's. By the time he left the second time, he was earning B700 a month. He said that some of the other workers were earning up to B1,200 a month for doing the same job, but "they were Chinese". [308/12]

He got his first raise by a demonstration of honesty. One day he came across an open safe full of "piles" of hundred-baht notes. He reported this to the owner, who as a reward for his honesty raised him to B500 a month the next month.

At the end of his second stay he had saved B7,000. He said that he deprived himself of most luxuries, restricting himself, for example, to two cheap cigarettes a day.

He says that many people from the Northeast work for the Chinese because they make better salaries this way than they can in working in other unskilled labor jobs such as construction. This is particularly true of his village, Bâ:n Nỗ:ng Khâ:, but not so true of BNT. [209]

July 23, 1963

2.

[701] School:

The school is presently closed for 45 days during the planting and transplanting. Khun Buapha: herself will help with the planting in her parents' fields in Bâ:n Khwăw. Mr. Thiang says that when the school re-opens there will be a Buddhist suat mon at the school. [701]

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[21] Elections and Village:

Last night Mr. Ngaw described the last election that was held for legislative representatives before martial law came into effect. There were 19 candidates for three positions and every voter voted for just one candidate (the three with the most votes were the three who got the seats). Mr. Ngaw said the villagers really enjoyed the campaigning for one candidate had free movies in town and another went around giving medicines for villages. When it came time to vote, Headman Phon said he thought to vote for such-and-such a candidate was best because he would most consider the needs of the villagers. [309/10] Mr. Ngaw said, however, that if one didn't agree, he wouldn't have to vote for the candidate Mr. Phon suggested.

The actual voting took place at Bâ:n Khwăw. Here there were a number of boxes - a number corresponding to a candidate. People deposited pieces of paper in the box corresponding to the candidate of their choice. The candidate Mr. Phon had suggested came in second and thus was chosen as one of the representatives. [710]

Nq̣:j:

Mr. Ngaw was talking about Nq̣:j's family last night. It seems his father is a bit of a ne'er-do-well. He used to own farm land but sold it for ready capital. Now he fishes, makes charcoal and makes bamboo walling to sell. He buys two litres of rice per day from Mr. Ngaw to feed 5-6 people in the family.

Nq̣:j has been married before, to a girl in Bâ:n Khwăw. One day he came here and never returned to her. No one knows why. He now claims to be single. There apparently weren't any children. [711]

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Amount of Land Needed for Subsistence:

Mr. Ngaw says that for a family of 5-6 people, 12 raj of poor land or 5 raj of good land is needed to produce enough rice for the family throughout the year.

Radio Listening:

This evening Mr. Ngaw had Radio Peking on (in Lao). He says he doesn't like to listen for too long because it is illegal to listen and he is afraid of the ^{police} police.

Travelling Salesman:

This morning a travelling medicine salesman came to the village. He set up a small table on which he placed two types of gaily decorated bottles and several types of packets of medicine. When a crowd had gathered (all women and children except the priests and ourselves) one of his assistants passed out free packets of a powder to be used for aches and pains. Then he gave his spiel on his medicines, explaining their use and told the people they could get a cheaper price here and now than they could get in the market. He then offered a combination of two bottles and two packets for a total of $\text{B}15$. However, at this point the crowd dispersed and he made no sales. He left shortly afterwards.

He himself was from Kalasin and the medicines were made in Yasothon.

Work in Vientiane:

Ngaw says that when he worked in Vientiane, he made 70-80 kip a month

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[711] (at that time 4 kip equalled 1 baht). He says that now inflation has got so bad that his sister is waiting until the kip is worth more before she returns from Vientiane.

I asked Nq:j the other day if any of the many people who have been to Laos have ever been in the Lao army. He said there was no one, but that he himself could have joined if he had wanted to. He said there was a man from Bâ:n Khwāw who is in the Lao Paratroopers.

The following information arose during my survey: [711/12]

Birth Control:

Mr. Cha:j who has had 12 children (10 still living) says that having so many children is very difficult. "One must lose so much money to raise so many children". He is interested in using birth control methods.

Sickness:

Three of Mr. Cha:j's children were sick with a fever of some sort. I really fear for them.

Mr. Si:hă:

The mṵ:suāt says that he has been an "a:ca:n" for 48 years. He studied with some other man in the village in the arts of this practice. He can read both Lao and Thai though he never studied in school. [712]

July 25, 1963

[37] Rice Cycle:

1. Preparing the fields: Sometime during the period of late May to mid July (depending on when the rains come) the men will go to the fields with a plough made of hand-hewn wood (木) with a cutting edge made of rough iron made in Roi-et. This is done after the fields have been dampened by sufficient rains to make the earth moist. With their buffaloes they will do the first ploughing. After it has rained more, they will plough the fields a second time and they will harrow the fields. The harrow is entirely hand-made in the village. [112/3]

2. Planting: First unshelled rice kernels are placed in a basket. These baskets are floated (soaked) for two days (one full day and an additional night) in a small pond such as the one near the wat. This is to let the rice germinate.

One field is prepared and diked to hold the rain water. The germinated rice seedlings are then planted broadcast in this field. They are planted very close together.

3. Transplanting: When the rice has grown to about a foot high, the villagers of both sexes and all ages go to the fields to pull up the rice seedlings. Before this can be done, however, sufficient rain must have fallen to fill the diked unplanted fields. The rice seedlings are pulled up in such a way that the roots remain intact. The seedlings are shaken free of dirt and mud and then tied in bundles. The villagers then put these bundles on a ^{hà:p} ~~hap~~ stick and carry them to the unplanted fields, where there is a layer of fine mud covered by a thin layer of water. The seedlings are here transplanted. [113]

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(77) Smallpox Epidemic:

Some 18 or 19 years ago, according to Mr. Ngaw, there was a smallpox epidemic in this area. He said that something like 100 people died in Ng:ng Khà: alone. Many people abandoned their homes and went to live in makeshift houses in the fields to escape from the uncleanliness of their homes. [713/4]

Death:

An infant child died in the village yesterday. The mother was around this morning but I didn't know her.

Killing of Buffalo:

This morning a buffalo of Mr. Tà:p's was slaughtered and butchered. It seems that in the last few days this buffalo, an old one, has been chilled by the rain and so Mr. Tà:p decided to have it killed. The meat was sold to various villagers.

Politics and Village:

Mr. Ngaw last evening expressed some opinions on various political personages in recent Thai history. He believes that Pridi along with several of his friends were responsible for the death of King Ananda. He was surprised to learn that Pridi was still alive and was in Red China, and was also somewhat surprised to hear that Phibun was in Japan. He had very strong feelings against General Phao whom he considered an evil [714]

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[314] person in no uncertain terms. He thinks it was good that General Sarit "seized power" before Phao did. He thinks Sarit is a good leader.

He again expressed his dislike for the Red Chinese because they are ~~anti~~-American. He also said the situation in Laos is terribly confused, a really funny situation, he commented, that such a small country should have both a Communist and non-Communist government. He is unaware of the personages involved in the Lao struggle for power. He was quite surprised to learn that Cambodia was not a Communist country. Why is Thailand not friendly with Cambodia if she isn't Communist? He expressed the opinion that Khao Phra Wiharn ^[314/5] probably should belong to the Khmers since it did belong to them in ancient times. (He was in Bangkok during the height of the Khao Phra Wiharn crisis).

Mr. Sǎw and Mǒ:lammù:

Last evening Mr. Sǎw was over helping me learn about the khæ:n. He said he learned his skills of mǒ:lammù: director in BNT, though Mr. Ngǎw says he perfected his skills while living in his wife's home in Myang Phon. Mr. Ngaw says that every village has its mǒ:lammù: group. [315]

27 July 1963

Add

Returned to Mahasarakham.

28 July 1963

In Mahasarakham. Lunched with Mrs. Chuanphit (จันทิพย์)
at the Teachers' College.

29 July 1963

Made a trip to B. Phat.

30 July 1963

Returned to village.

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[75] Rice Planting:

In the fields today saw people of all ages pulling up the rice seedlings from the seedling plots to be replanted in other fields. The women and young girls will strike the plants against their foot in order to shake the earth loose. The men do it against their thighs. The seedlings are gathered in bunches to be transferred to other fields. When they are replanted, they are merely stuck into the mud at about foot intervals between each row and between each plant as well. I would guess that there is some correlation between how close the plants are and the goodness of the soil in which they are planted. People seemed to be enjoying themselves in the fields, and I didn't notice anyone working alone. Several houses I passed were completely closed up as everyone had gone to the fields. This sort of work must be done when there has been enough rain so that the rice seedlings can be stuck into the soft mud. This period is one of intense activity and people seem to be away from the house from early morning until almost sunset. [75/63]

Local Alcoholic Beverages:

When we were in the field yesterday, Nq:j took me to drink some ^{sa:to:} ~~setto~~. This was in a large clay pot which had been buried in a rice field dike, the top being covered with a cloth and then a small metal dish. When people want to drink this, they uncover the pot and scoop out the wine. I imagine there are several reasons why the rice wine is kept here:

- (1) it has to age several days (this particular wine is 10 plus days old);
- (2) in the fields the police are less likely to find it (the making of local brew being illegal). [76/63]

July 30, 1963

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[๓] At dinner, Mr. Ngaw arranged for us to buy a quart of ^{sa:to:} ~~setto~~ from a man for ๒1 (Jane's comment: "Where else in the world could one buy a bottle of wine for a nickel?") This was a most welcome addition to the meal.

Local Lottery:

In the surrounding villages (and I understand throughout rural Thailand) a local version of the lottery is run. This is based on the national lottery in the following way: a person chooses a number of two digits (often chosen by taking a baht bill and choosing the last two numbers of the serial number). He pays for this choice (as yet I don't know how much) and more than one person may choose the same number. The purchasing of the numbers is done on the five days preceding the announcement of the winners of the national lottery. The winners are determined by the last two numbers of the winning numbers of the national lottery. The chances of winning in the local lottery are much higher (1 chance in 90) than in the national lottery, but, of ^[314/7] course, the returns are much lower.

Mr. La: is the local person in charge of the local lottery. Nq:j is the seller of "tickets". Actually there are no tickets, but Nq:j will write down the chosen number on a piece of paper along with the name of the purchaser. The buying of a local lottery ticket is called literally "The buying of a number" (^{๕๑ ๑๖๑}). The local lottery is illegal and Nq:j says that if he saw a policeman coming, he would have "to run very fast". [๓๗]

July 31, 1963

[317] Education:

I have been struck in making my household census with the high incidence of literacy. However, I noticed that Kingshill says in Ku Daeng that "most people over 38 years of age are illiterate". He made his study 10 years ago, so I would expect to find most people over 48 are illiterate, which is an approximation of what I do find. I think I would find similar comparisons in Kaufman.

Talked with Mr. Si:hā: this afternoon and asked him if he could remember how long the school has been in BNT. He couldn't, but he said it wasn't here when he was a youth. [317]