

September 1, 1963

[357] National Holiday:

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

Effects of Radio Advertising:

Mr. Ngaw bought a special health tonic called "Lion's Blood" ( เลือดสิงห์ ) which costs B5 because he "heard it advertised on the radio so often". One thing that impressed him about the tonic was that it was invented by a doctor who studied medicine in Germany (or so the advertisement states). [357/6] The association of a product with a foreign country is a ploy that is used greatly in Thailand.

Khaw Sà:k Ceremony:

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

Today Mother Hq:m has a young relative (about 16 years old) from Nq:ng Duk staying or visiting. She specifically says, in connection with [358]

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[355] this young man's visit, that "on this day people go visiting to make merit and to think of everything ( នាំ ក្រុម មក )".

Ethnic Conceptions:

Mother H<sub>o</sub>:m was today talking to Jane about some Khà: people who used to come here to trade. These people, she says, are very dark with teeth ( នាំ ក្រុម ), and wear only loin cloths. She says that they have very dark knees (probably tattooed - Biff). They carry things on their backs and on their shoulders. She says they don't live in villages but "in the forest". She has only seen men, no women. (Mr. Ngaw has never heard of them, so they apparently no longer come). They wear gold earrings. Interestingly, she says that they come from "the East". A few speak Lao, but most know only their own language. (I would guess from this description that they are similar, if not in fact, to the phǐ: thə:ng lǎng). [356/9]

She pointed out that "dark" people are always ugly.

She also says that the Sua<sub>j</sub> people "from the South" (Surin, Sisaket) come up sometimes "in search of rice because they don't have enough to eat". She also pointed out that these people are darker.

In the dry season some Thai-Khmer from the south of the Northeast come through in order to take their animals to That Phanom to the big fair there. They make their living by taking their elephants around and having people pay for rides. It apparently is a very colourful scene with the women in red phasins. These people also speak Lao. They are, she pointed out, also darker.

Jane asked her if she considered herself Thai or Lao and she was a little taken aback by the question. She finally answered by saying that "people in the Northeast are Lao". [359]

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๑๕๑ Thô:t Thian:

Last night the priests, young people (particularly girls) and a scattering of old people paid a return visit to Bâ:n Nq̃:ng Dũk, the village that held the thô:t thian ceremony in BNT a few nights back. One of the reasons that this particular night was chosen was that there was a big celebration with cinema being held last night. The reason for the festivities is that today is opening of school day, and there is to be a major ceremony at the "Friendship School" - the school built by the American Army. The group did not return from the village (they left about 8:30) until after 1 a.m. [๓๕๑/๖๐]

Preparations for Khâ:w Sà:k Ceremony:

Today has had a really festive nature. For the first time since rice-planting began, people have been at home - except for those who have gone on short paj thîaw. The main occupation throughout the day has been the making of various glutinous rice sweeties en famille. The atmosphere reminded me of my family's making of popcorn balls at Christmas time. We have been involved with "our" family - namely Mr. Ngaw, Nuan, and Nuan's family. They have been, with Jane pitching in, making three types of goodies: khâ:w tôm, khâ:w nq̃:m (like for the prâdâp din ceremony) and khâ:w tôm phât. All these take quite some time to prepare and have required the buying of coconuts and bananas. I think that the children of the village must truly get ill on all the sweeties they have eaten. And the kids are in fact complaining of stomach pains. [๓๕๐]

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[366] Mr. Ngaw as a Money Lender:

Mr. Ngaw went to Sarakham this afternoon. He mentioned that among other things he was going because it was the first of the month and he wished to collect some money which he had lent to some teacher at 10 per cent per month interest. [366]

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[300] Local Health Practices:

This morning the headman was over and said that he has had a stomach ache for several days. I aksed him what medicine he used. He said he didn't use medicine but only local remedies ( ยาหม่อง - ja: phy:n ba:n ). I asked him where he got the medicine and he said from the "doctor" (mǔ:), who turns out to be Mr. Sǎw, the mǔ:lammù: director.

Castration of Pigs:

Mr. Ngaw had three pigs castrated this morning - the big boar and two smaller pigs. A "doctor" came from another village to do this. Mr. Ngaw paid him B5 apiece (total B15) for the work. He also took the testicles.

Education:

Today went over to the school which had opened today (official opening of the school was yesterday) but the teachers had to go to a meeting of the teachers from the amphoe and so school didn't open today. The teachers were busy poring over records at the school, including which was another book of registration of students prior to the one I had already seen and copied. In one book, the Headmaster's "Diary", Mr. Thiang had copied a brief history of the school. The first sentence of this book gives the date of the official founding of the school:

"The school (at wat BNT) was established on the 1st of February, 1934".

( โรงเรียนวัดบึงนาราง นี้ ได้ ก่อตั้ง ขึ้น เมื่อวันที่ ๑ กุมภาพันธ์ พ.ศ. ๒๔๕๗ ) [341]

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Add

Returned to Mahasarakham.

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In M.K.

5 Sept.

In M.K.

6 Sept.

In M.K.

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[362] Kha:w Sa:k Ceremony:

The khàw sà:k ceremony was held in the village on the 3rd. Today I talked with Mr. Wichian concerning the ceremony and so will combine the two notes.

Meaning and Function of the Ceremony:

There actually seem to be several functions connected with this ceremony. All these functions stem from the basic idea of feeding supernatural beings. The ceremony is called ບຸນ ກ້າວ ສ່າກ (bun khā:w sà:k) in Lao and ພິທີ ວັນ ສ່າກ (phithi: wan sà:t). The official government dictionary defines ສ່າກ (sà:t) as "concerning or born in the autumn; festival season at the end of the 10th (lunar) month".<sup>1</sup> The Pali word for this is ສ່າຣາທ (sàráthá) and the Sanskrit is ສ່າຣຕ (sà:rt). In the Modern Standard Thai-English Dictionary (p. 1343), the word is defined as "autumn; autumnal merit-making ceremony". I had never heard of the ceremony and can find no references to it in any of the literature on village life in the Central Plains. However, many people up here believe that it is a ceremony held all over Thailand. Everyone agrees on the fact that it is a ceremony of Brahmic origin. The linguistic indications would support this idea. What I don't understand linguistically is why the name of the ceremony in Thai is based on the word ສ່າກ (sà:t) and yet this word is said to be the same word as ສ່າກ (sà:k) in Lao. Why does the /t/ change to a /k/? [362/3]

One story that is told as the reason for the ceremony was given to me by Mr. Wichian. He says that some of the souls ( ວິນຈານ - winja:n) [363]

1. พจนานุกรม ฉบับราชบัณฑิตยสถาน, p. 906.

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[363] of dead ancestors ( ผี เจ้า - phǐ:sǎ in Lao; ບໍ່ ບໍ່ ບໍ່ ບໍ່ - bâp  
bûrút in Thai) have gone to hell ( นรก นรก นรก นรก nârók). One day a year  
the king of hell allows the spirits to return to the earth. If the  
descendants take the opportunity to present food and gifts on that day,  
the ancestors will be able to accept them. This one day of the year is  
at the time of khà:w sà:k.

This ceremony is also connected with the rice-cycle. It is held at  
a time of the year when the rice is mostly all planted and people are  
now waiting for it to grow and ripen. Mr. BT, the headmaster, says that  
the ceremony is held to "make the rice grow". The people, he continued,  
make merit which they transfer to the gods, benevolent spirits in the  
hopes that they in turn will assist in the rice growing process. Mr.  
Thiang confirms this and says that food and "merit" is presented to the  
spirits of all growing plants, - trees, rice, etc. - so that they will  
grow well. These things are also presented to the "spirit of the Earth"  
พระแม่ท้าวเวสสุวรรณ (phrá' mâe: na:ng thōráni:) for her help in the  
rice process.

I asked Mr. Wichian to explain the difference between this ceremony  
and the ceremony of ปฐมาวาส (pradap din) which had been held a  
fortnight before (but in the 9th month), and which seemed to me to be for  
the same purpose. He said he wasn't certain, but pràdàp din was "a smaller  
ceremony".

The day on which the ceremony was held was wan phrá' and was the 15th  
day of the waxing of the moon (i.e. full moon) of the 10th month. People  
[363/4]  
had prepared not only the special rice foods, but also other foods as [364]

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[344] well, so that the ceremony was certainly a feast day.

The Events:

1. Feeding of the Priests at Morning Meal:

In the morning, the priests were fed as usual in the <sup>kù thi:</sup> ~~khúti~~ by having people take food to them. However, there were many more people and much more food than on an ordinary day or even on any other wan phrá'. Jane went with Nuan to present food to the monks. The following is her report of what took place.

"Went to wat with Nuan to liang phrá'. We each took a trayful of food, hers consisting of a bowl of kăe:ng kâj, some khâ:w tôm, khâ:w nôm, cigarettes, betel, white flowers and khâ:w năw; mine of khâ:w năw, omelette stuffed with peper beef, a separate bowl of peppered beef with more water, onions and chillies to make it like a kăe:ng, also khâ:w tôm which Nuan had donated. We carried the trays up on our shoulders and took them over to the wat, depositing them at the foot of the central section of the khúti. There was one old woman there (grandmother of the illegitimate child) tending plates of other food which had been brought by earlier arrivals. The novice and the old woman took the food from our trays, but left a little rice on each. After we had taken leave of the priests (we did not wait till they had eaten, unlike at lunch), we took the rice over to the wat grounds and each deposited a small piece on the thâ:ts of Nuan's maternal grandparents and that of the headman's father (also a relation). The headman's father has a very tall thâ:t to the right of the steps leading to the wat grounds. It is decorated with a mirror, as is that of the headman's mother." [344]

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[365] 2. Main Ceremony:

About 10:15 Mr. Sǐ:hǎ:, the mǝ:suət, went to the ~~khut~~<sup>khuthi</sup> and struck the big drum there. Shortly afterwards women bearing baskets and accompanied by their children began to arrive also. They went to the centre room and on to the porch of the ~~khut~~<sup>khuthi</sup>. There were very few men present throughout the ceremony, and all totalled there were only seven (other than myself and the priests). These included Mr. Sǐ:hǎ:, Mr. Sǝ:n (father of the head priest), and later Mr. Tà:p (the ~~khut~~<sup>khácâm</sup>). The reason given several times was that only women came because men had to work in the fields. It was deemed important only that there be a representative of every family at the ceremony. And certainly all the women with their children made quite an impressive gathering and was one of the largest gatherings I have witnessed since coming to BNT.

The women brought the following types of items:

1. paired banana leaf containers, one full of food, the other of betel and tobacco.
2. khâ:w nǎw
3. rice sweeties including khâ:w tòm and khâ:w nôm.
4. candles and flowers or flowers and leaves
5. food such as curries, broiled fish, etc.
6. bottles of water.

Some of these were taken by a woman in the centre of the room and divided into categories according to type. Some of the men also helped in this sorting, but the one woman did most of the work. The items that were taken and placed in separate containers were especially items 1, 3, 4

[365/6] above. People also retained some of these items in their own baskets. [366]

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[366] When I first arrived, the priests were not present, but their mattresses were arranged in the back of the room in front of the altar. Finally the priests entered. They had been newly shaved for the day. They took their places on their mattresses. In front of them were placed various curries, rice in their bowls, with one bowl being filled with sweets, and other food. In front of this an array and facing the priests was the row of seven men. Then behind them were the women.

The mǒ:suət, old Mr. Sǐ:hǎ:, started chanting. Then he took a water tray in which were placed flowers and candles. He presented these to the head priest who indicated his acceptance by touching the bowl. This chanting and presentation, it was pointed out to me by one man, was the (khǒ: sǐn), - the "requesting of the precepts". When this request had been made, the precepts were chanted by the priests and repeated by the laity with Mr. Sǐ:hǎ: acting as lay leader.

When this was finished, the big baskets of items which had been divided beforehand were brought forward. Then there was the chanting of presentation by the laity. Then these baskets were presented to the head priest who touched them. The baskets were then taken away and redistributed among the women. The priests then began to eat what had been previously placed in front of them. Some big containers of the rice sweets were taken away and placed in another room where they could be kept for the morrow.

The women took their baskets and went around the wat grounds placing offerings on the thât of the ancestors, at the base of certain Bo trees, and on the fences. At the base of the thât the women would place open bundles of food, tobacco and betel. Then they took their bottles of water

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[367] and slowly poured the liquid on the ground near the offerings. This pouring, according to Mr. BT, is called  $\text{น้ำดื่ม}$  (njâ:t nâ:m - lit. "<sup>to drink</sup>particles of water") or  $\text{น้ำดื่มให้คนตาย}$  (njâ:t nâ:m mǎ: thǎ:n - lit. "alms giving water") according to Mr. Wichian. This is done in order to transfer the merit made in presenting food to the monks and in listening to the precepts to the ancestral spirits.

Some people told me that food and these items would be taken to be given to the spirits in the fields. Francis Cripps who had observed the ceremony at the larger wat at Bâ:n Sî:sàwát (near Mahasarakham's Teachers' College) had observed that women came during the sermon and collected the already made offerings in the wat grounds to take and present them in the fields. The monks said that this wasn't quite right. Incidentally, at the ceremony he observed, only the small banana leaf packets attached in pairs - one containing food (of everyday variety) and the other containing betel and tobacco - were used as offerings to the spirits. The special rice sweeties were all consumed by the people themselves or else given to the monks.

When all the presentations had been made in the wat grounds, the participants (but not all) returned to the <sup>kūthi:</sup> ~~kūthi:~~ to request and listen to a sermon by the head priest. The mǒ:suât was the one who ritually requested the sermon. The head priest read the ~~sermon~~ from a book. Francis Cripps said that at Wát Sî:sàwát the head priest preached a sermon on "the spirits being allowed to come from Hell" theme. I am afraid that I didn't understand the sermon given at BNT - partially, because there was so much noise [367]

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[367] with people talking that it wasn't possible to hear. It would seem that what Kingshill has said is true - only the fact of "listening"<sup>[367/8]</sup> to a sermon is important, and that "understanding" is not important. When the sermon was over, the priests chanted and when they reached a certain point, water was slowly poured through the cracks in the floor by one man with a scoop. This is always done in thambun ceremonies and is done to notify phrá' ~~mae~~: mae: na:ng thōrāni: of the proceedings.

Money had been collected during the whole affair - most people donating about 50 satang. When the chanting was over, the money was divided up and given to each of the priests and the novice.

Other people, though only a fraction of the participants, were also eating in the <sup>kūmi:</sup> ~~khāi~~. We ourselves were encouraged to eat (sweeties, toasted fish, rice) or else we wouldn't make merit. I think there is a particular significance attached to the special foods made for this ceremony - the khâ:w tōm (and/or khâ:w tōm phát) and the khâ:w nō:m (called khâ:w sǎk in Lao). Both are made from khâ:w nǎw and both are thought to be special treats. Since one of the purposes of the ceremony is to make the rice, which is glutinous, to grow well, it would seem that there might be something to the idea that the spirits on seeing what delectable things can be made from the rice would be more prone to helping the rice grow.

### 3. Mr. Ngaw's Private Ceremony:

Because Mr. Ngaw is not a rice-farmer, but has a special relationship to the rice, he held a private little ceremony in the rice mill. He took two plates of offering plus candles and put them on the two major parts of the rice mill - the mill itself and the engine. These plates contained [368]

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[366] incense, khâ:w tôm phât, cookies (from the store), flowers and a bit of  
canned fish, two<sup>[366/A]</sup> cigarettes, two chews of prepared betel, rice, meat, egg,  
coloured paper. Two candles (called "egg candles") were placed beside each  
plate. When he had placed these on each piece of machinery, he lit the  
candles, the incense, the cigarettes. He then repeated the "I take refuge  
in ..." and asked the spirits to come and bless the mill, make the equip-  
ment run properly, make the mill popular and help make lots of money. He  
said that he was worshipping (bu:cha:), the:wáda: ( မုတ်တူဝါဒ ),  
phrá' mâe: na:ng thóráni: and the three elements of the Buddhist trinity,  
the Buddha ( ဗုဒ္ဓ phút), the Dharma ( ဒဿန - tha:m) and  
the Sangha ( သံဂါ - săng). He says that he does this ceremony  
every year. He also says that he has seen the Chinese do the same sort of  
thing at their rice mills.

#### Buat Hă:

Mr. Wichian says that when a close relative of a recently deceased  
person enters the monkhood for a short time (sometimes less than a day) to  
make merit for the deceased this is called မုတ်တူဝါဒ (bùat hă:).

#### A Person Knowledgeable About Northeastern Custom:

Mr. Wichian says that the abbot of B. Iat, near B. Khwá:w, knows  
much about Northeastern customs and ceremonies. [369]

September 7, 1963

Conversation with Francis Cripps

I was talking with Francis Cripps today. He says that in Amphoe Càtùràphákphíma:n (อ. ฉะตุรพัทลุงพื้มาฬ), there is a village called B. Mụang Hǒn (บ. เมืองหนอง) which has a wát which was registered in R.S. 1 (1st year of the Bangkok Era). Very old bò:t - probably Khmer. He suspects that the village, which is very large having over 400 houses, was probably originally a Khmer town. He says that there are a number of interesting artefacts in the bò:t including some old ba:ila:n. The villagers are planning to pull down the bò:t in a couple of years time to build a new one.

This whole amphoe (Càtù) is on high ground, and Francis suspects that the whole area was a Khmer stronghold. There are many ruins in the area (in the village of a student from the Teacher's College - Sangnga - there are very old ruins of a bò:t with an interesting Buddha statue.

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Ada

In Mahasarakham. Attended going away party for John  
McLean held at house of Peace Corps girls.

September 8, 1963

Material culture and culture change

I was thinking the other day that a good little illustration of cultural change as regards material culture could be made of tracing the history of various lighting mechanisms in BNT. For example, there are a variety of devices still used in the village, but some have lost a prominent place and others are gaining greater prominence. The following lighting mechanisms now exist: (1) brush torch; (2) kerosene wick lamps which are sometimes placed into "mailbox" containers to make torches of them; (3) electric torches; (4) candles; (5) hurricane lamps. There are also other things such as the resins which are used to light fires and matches.

Not only has the type of lighting mechanism changed, but how they are constructed has also changed. For example, the introduction of matches, kerosene, and gasoline. These have replaced the local resins and saps which come from such trees as what is known locally as "rubber" trees.

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Bun Khà:w Sà:k

Last night we had Mr. Cheunchai and Mr. <sup>Charoen</sup>~~Charoen~~ to dinner. They said that there are two wát pà: (Thammáyút) in Mahasarakham.

I was also trying to get at the origin of the word khà:wsà:k ( קראש ) and why it differs from the word sà:t ( קראש ) which is the equivalent in Thai. They said that they thought that the word sà:k ( קראש ) is the word for 'pestle' because of having to use a large mortar and pestle to make the paste for the khâ:wtôm ( בגד ). They also brought up the word sàlà:k ( קראש ) in this connection, but I didn't quite follow them in their discussion.

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Add

In Mahasarakham

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In MK.

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[37] Travelling Cloth Salesmen:

Today a group of about 10 young men who sell cloth came to the village to peddle their wares and to spend the night. Most of this group originally comes from Nakhorn Phanom or That Phanom. I doubt that any of them is much over 25-30. We talked with one young man whose home is That Phanom. He says that these particular goods he has come from a store in Khon Khaen. He has travelled all over the Northeast from Ubon to Korat to Udorn, etc. They never travel by bus, but always by foot. He apparently has never been to the Central Plains, but has been to Thaket, Savannakhet and worked for an ice-making company in Vientiane. He says he used to go across to Savannakhet by means of his own boat. These young men stay in the wats (courtesy of the priests) in the villages they visit. I wasn't quite certain how they get their food, but probably buy it from villagers. They have been on the road on this particular trip now for something over a month. They won't return to Nakhorn Phanom for another six months.

These young men certainly have the opportunity to bring news to people from all over the Northeast. And Jane pointed out that they would make ideal Communist agents. However, my impression was that they were barely tolerated by the villagers. This was probably partially because of their youth.

Religion:

In the Northeast, at least in the villages, women can't enter the  
bò:t. [37]

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2.

[370] Status Terminology:

There are a number of terms which are used as titles and which indicate certain acquired statuses. This evening I discussed some of these terms with Mr. Nga:w.

1. ca:n ( ๑๗๕ ):  
[370/1]

Mr. Ngaw says that this term particularly applies to people who have been in the monkhood long enough to have had the hōt phō' (Lao) ceremony performed for them. (This was the ceremony we observed at Bân Mì: at the time of Songkra:n). I asked if people who were mō:suàt, mō:tham, mō:sù:khwǎn, etc. also had this term. He said they often do but not because of this knowledge, but because of their length of stay in the monkhood. During their long stay, however, many of these men acquired these specialized knowledges.

2. thít ( ๓๘ ):  
[371/1]

This is a title for one who has once been a monk, but was not in the monkhood long enough to receive the title of ca:n.

3. chiang (Thai); sīang (Lao) ( ๓๙ / ๓๙ ):  
[371/2]

This is a title for one who has been a novice, but never a monk.

4. ta: ( ๔๐ ):  
[371/3]

This is a title used for a no longer young man, usually married, who has never had any religious experience as a monk/novice.

5. câm ( ๔๑ ) (Lao only):  
[371/4]

This title is given to the <sup>kháo câm</sup> ~~khâ:câm~~ the village's representative to the patron god. In this case the incumbent, Mr. Tâ:p, has never been in the monkhood and so <sup>[371/372]</sup> this is obviously not a criterion for the position. [372]

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3.

[372] 6. phrá' (T); phā' (L); ( พริ ):

A person who is now a priest. Usually used for a term of reference rather than a term of address.

7. 'a:ca:n (T and L) ( อาจา ):

This term is susceptible to a variety of interpretations, depending on the situation in which one is. In Mahasarakham the term is used for teachers at the Teachers' College. In Bangkok it is used for professors at Chula. However, it has a much wider usage than the English word "professor". In the village setting one hears the term applied to priests, particularly head priests. If the priest is an old and respected "abbot" (somphā:n) he will be called a:ca:n jāj. I have also heard this title ascribed to others with extensive specialized knowledge such as one renowned for his Brahministic skills or one who is a major teacher of mō:lām mū:.

8. khū: ba: (L. only) ( ครูบา ):

This term means roughly the same thing as 'a:ca:n in the Lao village setting. Priests are often called (R and A <sup>reference and address</sup>) khū: ba:.

9. khru: (T); khū: (L); ( ครู ):

This term can be translated as "teacher". In the village setting, the term as a title (though other people may be "teachers" of some skill or other) is reserved almost exclusively for the teachers of the village school (except in the combined form above in number 8). If the individual concerned is headmaster, he will be called khru: jāj, but will be called khru: so-and-so. [372/3]

10. phū:jāj (T), phū:njāj (L), ( พ่อจ๋าน ):

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4.

[313] The headman of a village is called phû:jâjbâ:n (lit. "big man of the village"), but carries the title phû:jâj in front of his name. Thus Mr. Phon, the headman of BNT, is addressed as phû:njâj phõn (1) - lit. "Big man Phon".

There are other statuses as well, as, for example, phû:chûaj phû:jâj bâ:n cha:j (T), or "the assistant headman Cha:j", but though this is a specific status, there is no title of address carried with it. A lay person who has considerable knowledge as to Buddhism is known as a นักปราชญ์ (nâk prâit - T.), but again there is no special title. The term (mǒ:), usually translated as "doctor", is a special case. A person who is called mǒ: may be a herbal doctor, a specialist in Brahmanistic or animistic practices, or a variety of other things. Though there are a number of people in the village who have such knowledge and are mǒ: sù:khwan (like mǒ: Sǐ:hă:) etc., I have never heard them called mǒ: so-and-so. The one individual who has some knowledge as to herbal medicines, - Mr. Saw - , doesn't know enough, according to Mr. Ngaw, to be classified as a mǒ:.

#### Leaving-of-Lent Ceremony:

Mr. Ngaw says that the headman has decided to have a ko:m faj contest on the "leaving-of-lent" day. He thinks that there will be about 50 competitors. I think that this is being done partially for our sakes. Mr. Ngaw was waxing quite eloquently on the beauty and largeness of this ceremony in Thâ:tù:m. [313]

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[374] Mr. Ngaw - Personal:

When we left the village last week, Nuan was very ill with "stomach pains". It turns out, on our return, that she has had a miscarriage (2nd month).

Clothing:

We learned today that there are a variety of styles of phâ:sîn amongst them being: (1) Chiangmai; (2) phÿ:n myang; (3) phâmâ: (Burmese); (4) Lao; (5) thaj jâj; (6) thaj. The term used for style was lă:j ( นลาจ ).

There are three kinds of phâ:khăwma:, distinguished by the size of the checks, - small, medium and large.

The cloth which one sees women wearing across the shoulder in the wat is called phâ: sâwŋang bà: ( ผ้าสะอ้งบ่า ) in Thai and phâ: biang bâ:j ( ผ้าเปียงบ่า ) in Lao. This cloth is two metres long. Usually it is white, but old women sometimes wear black. Since it is necessary to keep the white clean, it symbolizes a pure heart. One also sees silk ones of many colours.

Religion:

I asked Mr. Ngaw if Na:j Sĭ:hă: was the "lay leader" because I saw him usually leading the laity in chanting and in "requesting the precepts". Ngaw said that anybody could be lay leader provided he knows the chants and doesn't "make mistakes". In actual fact deference is always paid to the senior male present and since Mr. Sĭ:hă: is probably the most knowledgeable with regard to religion (and is the head of the wat committee, I think), he

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[715] would always take precedence over anyone else.

I asked Mr. Ngaw about the wat committee. He couldn't remember who all were members, but told a bit about it. It is usually made up of older males who have had considerable religious experience (though not always because the headman is a member and he has never been priest or novice). Membership is apparently decided by the committee itself, and is not chosen by the whole village. Mr. Ngaw said that he was rather surprised to find how inactive the committee in BNT is after coming from Nḡ:ng Khà: where the committee often met once or twice a week.

#### Village Leadership:

There is no name for the "village council". Membership is open to any male who wants to attend, and since the meetings are always for a specific reason (never for making general policy), those who are interested or concerned will be the ones who will attend.

I asked Mr. Ngaw if Mr. Phon's son will succeed Mr. Phon as headman. Mr. Ngaw said he didn't know but that there were many people in the village such as Mr. Sḡ:n (KNKN), Mr. Cha:j (the assistant headman), Mr. Sḡm (brother of Mr. Phon from KNKN) who could be headman. He said that in Nḡ:ng Khà:, the successive head men are usually not related. [775

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[375] Night-Time Activities:

Last night we saw a large number of men go by with the torches that  
[375/6] look like/mail boxes. These men were going to catch fish - a fairly  
normal practice at night time during the rainy season.

Education:

I sometimes truly wonder how the students at the school ever learn anything at all. When I went to the school this morning, I found Mr. BT on his own. Khun Buapha: was in town taking some sort of exam, and Khun Beng had been delayed in arriving for some reason (she arrived later at about 12:00 noon). When I arrived, Mr. BT dismissed what few students there were left (some had gone to Bân Khwá:w to get the big tar drums which would be turned into water storage tanks and some were already in search of fertilizer) to go collect fertilizer for the plants in the school plot and for the school's jute crop. I guess that Khun Beng was supervising the students bringing the drums from B.K. (these they pushed). Later Mr. BT went to work on the drums in trying to fix them up. And finally all went to work in the jute field. In other words no studying was done today.

I worked today on some educational records in the village which date back to the founding of the school. Some general points I got from these statistics were that 29 years ago, T. Khwá:w was in amphoe: tálà:t (อ. พลาต) and BNT was village number 20 of T. Khwá:w (this means that there were more villages in the tambon than there are now). [376]

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[377] Legends Concerning the Northeast:

Last night Mr. Ngaw was telling some of the legends of the Northeast including the story of the origin of the bô:ng faj ceremony. This in essence was the same story as Mr. Wichian had told me: That a Prince Khô:m ( ๗๕๐๗ ๖๑๒ ) had a very lovely daughter named "àj ( ๗๗๑๖ ). In order to choose between her suitors, he held a contest for surrounding princes to make bô:ng faj, and whosoever went the highest would win her hand. He also mentioned in conjunction with this story that phrâjâ: khô:m lived in a town in Sakon Nakhon and that princes from Chiang Hian (now B. Chiang Hian in T. Khwâ:w) and Myang Sî: Khâ:w (now B. Sî: Khâ:w in Roi-et) were cities from whence princes came to compete. This morning he pointed out this story was being told by some mô:lam players on the radio. Thus the legend exists in the mô:lam series.

Ngaw says that a Mr. Sa:n who lives in B. Khwâ:w is particularly skilled in telling the legends of this area. [377]

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[377] Phìthi: Thô:t Khâ:w Să:n:

During Lent BNT will go at nights to neighbouring wats, and neighbouring villages will come to wat BNT to participate in a ceremony called ກວດຈ້າງ ສາງ Thô:t khâ:w să:n (lit. "to throw away - give - milled rice") or ກວດເກັບ Thô:t thian ("to throw away - give - candles"). (See August 31, 1963 for previous mention). [377/6]

Last night BNT villagers went to B. dq:n majâ: (alternatively known as B. Nq̄:j, B. mâ:k jâ:, etc.). We went about 8:30 - 9:00. The group was composed of the three priests (who always went on these events) and primarily teenagers and young people. Included in the group were Mr. Ngaw, Nin, the sister of Bunjang, Bunsuk, the daughter of the headman, Nq̄:j and others. The procession was quite colourful as we wandered across the fields (walking on the dykes) with two hurricane lanterns, Nin playing on the khaen, someone else playing on a harmonica, and one boy striking a large bronze cymbal. This last instrument is a perfect replica of a Dong San drum. The priests said that it was pure gold (it is called a "gold drum" - ກລອນ ກອນ - [did they perhaps mean thong dae:ng ? - J.]), and that it cost \$1300-1400. The most essential thing which was carried in the procession was a basket half filled with milled rice and with tobacco laid on top of the rice.

After walking through the field, wading across the "river" and climbing up a hill, we reached the village. Everyone was obviously asleep and "not a creature was stirring". We went to the wat, which is quite new and has only a khūthi. There some of the young men went and struck the drum which is used to call villagers together. After a while a few people [378]

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[374] appeared, but they didn't mingle much with BNT villagers. Then a couple of drums, like elongated bongo drums, were brought out from this wat. With the drums being played, the cymbal being struck, the khāe:n and harmonica being played, and everyone else keeping time to the music by clapping, we processed around the <sup>kūthi</sup> khūthi, being led by the priests from BNT, four times. While we were doing this some villagers from B. dɔ:n majā: ( ๒.๑๒๙ ๒๐๕ ) went up into the <sup>kūthi</sup> khūthi. The priests from BNT went to sit with the priests [374/9] from that village. The group from BNT sat in front of the priests. While there were a few villagers from that village (the headman for one) sitting with us, most others were in an inner room watching through the doorway. The ceremony was obviously one between BNT villagers and the priests of the visited wat. There were incidentally two priests, - an older man and a young man.

A great deal of amused commotion and discussion followed. I later learned that either a young girl or older man was supposed to lead the presentation of the rice to the monks. However, there was no older man, and the young girls were too shy. Thus Mr. Ngaw finally decided to lead. We started out by krā:p three times. Then Mr. Ngaw led us in a "I take refuge in ..." etc., following which flowers in a scoop were presented to the monks. Then some more discussion followed as Mr. Ngaw didn't know the proper chant. Finally Bunsuk led the chant. Then Mr. Ngaw lifted the basket of rice and tobacco and presented it to the monks. The monks from the visited wat then chanted a "thank you" during which water was poured through the crack in the floor as usual. [379]

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[374] When this chanting was over, people relaxed a bit and talked among themselves. Then someone requested that the head priest of the visited wat give a "sermon". He agreed and finally began delivering a "sermon" in a singing voice that was a cross between a cantor and a mō:lām singer.

The head monk here is very famous for being able to predict the lottery/numbers. [379/40] So someone asked him to figure out what would be the next number. He wrote on the floor, with chalk, several things - part words part numbers. It was a bit delphic oraclish in that he didn't fully commit himself to one answer, more or less letting people draw their own conclusion from what he wrote.

Finally we kra:pped again three times and returned home.

Today, in talking with Mr. Ngaw about the meaning of the ceremony, he said that in olden times during the rainy season people used to do this ceremony because monks didn't have enough rice. But now they just continue doing it because that is the custom. Candles can be presented to the monks as well as rice.

#### Headman's Illness:

The headman was around today and said that he still has stomach pains. He said if they don't clear up soon, he will go to the hospital. From what I can gather, his trouble is part muscular because twice the pains have been set off by straining in pulling an ox on a tether. However, he also has diarrhoea and is off his food. [380]

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[380] Thô:t Khâ:w Să:n:

Today a group of young villagers from B. Dq:n du: came to thô:t khâ:w să:n or thô:t thian BNT. There were some variations on what I saw the other night, other than the fact they came during the day. The villagers (from B.D.D.) processed around the să:la:wăt instead of around the kùtì as we had done at B. majâ: (where there is no să:la:). The group came about 11:00, [380/1] and so the monks had to be fed first. The food was presented by women from BNT who prepared things in the kùtì. When the monks were finished, all the guests from both B.D.D. and BNT ate in the kuti.

The presentation followed a different pattern in that the young girls did all the chanting. This chanting was quite unusual in its minor key (almost like Bulgarian music I have heard). When they reached the point of actually presenting the rice (also with tobacco and lighted candles attached to the baskets and some pretty little artificial flowers made by the villagers), they chanted something like this: "We give this food to you priests and hope that it will be useful to you. We hope that when it is cooked, the food will fill you". These girls also chanted, or rather sang, after the major presentation was over.

Mr. Ngaw said that there were far fewer villagers from BDD this year than in past years. The BDD villagers all left in a group and none of them stayed to talk with BNT villagers.

The Pot Man:

There is a man who comes through selling pots quite often (he comes from "the pot village") and we have got to know him. We were talking about [381]

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[381] the making of pots today with him. He said only women make the pots, -  
the men aren't able to. A woman can make about 5-6 pots in a day. It  
struck me that one of the reasons that only the women make the pots is  
because of ~~matrilocal~~ <sup>wxorilocal</sup> residence. Only the women <sup>[381/2]</sup> form the stable group  
through time to retain and pass on this skill.

He also has worked in Vientiane as both a construction worker and  
as a samlor driver. He says that as a construction worker he made 1,000  
kip per month. He didn't like to be a samlor worker because it is too  
tiring and because he couldn't make as much money. He lived in Vientiane  
for 12 months. [382]

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[312] For the last couple of days we have had a farang visitor in the village - Harry Rolnick. As a result my work has been rather disrupted.

Thô:t Kàthĩn:

Last evening we heard the drums being sounded in the wat at about 8:30. This was to call a general village meeting to discuss where BNT will sponsor a Thô:t kàthĩn ceremony. [312]

Add

17 September 1963

In Mahasarakham

18 Sept. 1963

In MK

19 Sept.

In MK

20 Sept.

Leave for Kasat & Bangkok

21 Sept.

Kasat

22 Sept

Bangkok

23 Sept.

Bangkok: Dinner with Francis Cripps

24 Sept.

Bangkok: Lunch with Lucien & Jan Hanks

25 Sept.

Bangkok.

26 Sept.

Bangkok: Dinner with Tom Kirsch & Peacocks & Nyatta

Add

27 September 1963

Bangkok: Dinner at Turners (Sheldon Turner, USOM Advisor)

28 September

Bangkok: Dinner with Brian Stevenson (friend of Phiang's)

29 Sept.

Bangkok: Lunch with Bill Klammes, Asia Foundation

30 Sept.

Bangkok: London. Cornell Seminar

1 October

Bangkok: London-Cornell Seminar

2 October

Bangkok: London-Cornell Seminar

Contracted Miss Emily Jones, Coordination Centre for Southeast Asian Studies