

Charles F. Keyes, Field Notebooks, Thailand

May 1 through May 31, 1963.

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

Bān Nōng Tūn

May 1, 1963

Wedding Preparations

Tomorrow is the wedding. At 3:00 a.m. tomorrow morning they will kill 3-4 cattle for the food for the wedding. They do this at that time because it is cool and the insects are not as bad. Two cows cost more than ฿1000.

School Opening

School opened today without any special fanfare. There are two new teachers. One is male the other female. Both are quite young and both live in Bān Khwaw. The girl, Miss Bua Phā (บัวภา) studied at Mahasarakham Teachers' College.

Meeting of Headmen

Mr. Phon stopped in on his way to a meeting of the headmen in the district at the district office.

I spent most of the rest of the day going around with Mr. Narong, a teacher from BK who was making the Agricultural Census.

Charles F. Keyes, Field Notebooks, Thailand

Today is the day of the wedding of a large group of people in the village.

Weddings Held on May 2, 1963

<u>No.</u>	<u>Name of Bride and Groom</u>	<u>Ages</u>	<u>Place of Residence</u>	<u>Bride</u>	<u>Arranger or sponsor</u> เจ้าภาพ
1	G: พา ทัพสุริย์ (Phā)	18	Khum Wat, <u>BNT 31</u>	B276	Mr. Phā's parents dead. Siblings sponsor, esp. brother
	B: ไหว (Wai)	25	B. Khok Noi		
2	G: มี (Mī)	21	B. Nok Krudok	B1,406	Mr. Čhēn Sētraksā (เงิน เศรษฐรักษา) Father of the bride.
	B: Nôi (น้อย)	18			
3	G: สมัย จันทรมนตรี (Samai Čanthamontri)	21	Ky, <u>BNT?</u>	B496	Mr. Tāp Somphithak (ตาม สมพิทักษ์) Father of the bride.
	B: ทองอยู่ สุ่มพิทักษ์ (Tôngyū Somphithak)	19	Ky, <u>BNT 46</u>		
4	G: จันทร ทัพสุริย์ Čhan Thapsuri	22	K1, <u>BNT 77</u>	B466	Mr. Phan Thapsuri (พัน ทัพสุริย์) Father of the groom.
	B: คำตา ทัพธานี Khamtā Thapthānī	19	K1, <u>BNT 80</u>		
5	G: บุญ ทัพธานี (Bun Thapthānī)	21	K1, <u>BNT</u>	B116	
	B: นาง ทัพธานี (Nāng Thapthānī)	20	Ky, <u>BNT 57</u>		
6	G: สม ทัพธานี (Som Thapthānī)		KNKN, <u>BNT 96</u>	B796	Mr. Dāo Thapthānī (ดาว ทัพธานี) Father of the bride. [Wedding postponed because ill. Later he married another girl.]
	B: ทองสา ทัพธานี Tôngsā Thapthānī		KNKN, <u>BNT 99</u>		

Preparations for Wedding

Preparations really began at 3:00 a.m. when the cattle were killed. Other preparations were begun by 5:00 a.m. By 6:00 a.m. when we started making the rounds of the houses, there were already quite a number of people who were drunk. Before the *sū khūan nôi* ceremonies, the households concerned were making food and the accoutrements for the *bāi sī*.

Feeding of Priests

Because there is only one priest and a large number of households having ceremonies, it was impossible that the priest be fed at every household. Thus women of the households involved prepared food and took it to the wat. This was the only intrusion of Buddhist elements that we saw all day.

Food and Drink

In every house sponsoring a wedding, there was served to guests a standard fare of *lāp suk* (cooked *lāp*), *lāp dip* (raw *lāp*), boiled innards curry, sticky rice and rice liquor or wine.

Raid by Police

At about 4:00 a.m. we heard someone shouting for Mr. Ngao. It turned out to be the police who had come to check on the production of *satto*. It seems this is an illegal brew as the villagers don't have a license for brewing. Also it is known by the police that the 10th day of the waxing of the moon in the 6th month is a time when many villagers in the area have weddings and they know that there will be much *satto* made at this time.

Though the police left, they returned at about 7:00. We were sitting in the house of the family of Mr. Bunsak Thapsuri—the boy who was studying in Sarakham—when we saw a policeman run through the house with a gun strapped across his shoulder. He was followed by an enraged group of village men, - some of them bearing knives.

This group went down the stairs. There was much shouting and hubbub. Then we heard a shot. We later learned that there were 9 or 10 police who were gathering up kettles of *satto*. The shot had been fired by one policeman who fired a warning shot to stave off villagers who were on the point of attacking the police with knives. Mr. Ngao was certain that there would have been a

murder (of a policeman) if the police hadn't fired the shot.

I have never seen the villagers so angry. There were several who were on the point of hysteria (brought on partially by the large amounts of liquor which they had been drinking since 4 a.m.). Mr. Lā, the *nak lēng* from Khum Lao was amongst the worst. They were really ranting and raving. However, there were a few people trying to quiet the worst down.

One interesting thing occurred after the police left. Some men -and especially Mr. Lā who has lived in Vientiane - commented that such a thing would not occur in Laos. The police don't raid there. There was considerable discussion on the point, and though I could't understand much of what went on, I heard the word "Laos" mentioned any number of times.

We learned later that the police returned and arrested 9 of the men who had been threatening the police. Among the group arrested were Mr. Lā and Mr. Bunsuk.

Wedding of Čhan Thapsuri

We observed the full wedding of Čhan Thapsuri and Khamtā Thapthānī (wedding no. 4 in the above list). The ceremony began in the house of Mr. Phan Thapsuri in Khum Lao. The first part of the ceremony was the *sū khūan nōi* ceremony for the groom.

In the room in the place of honor were seated the groom-to-be with his younger brother. Both boys were seated in the "respectful" position with their legs tucked under them as they would sit at the wat. Both were wearing white shirts and khaki pants with a silk *phā kāo mā* over their shoulder.

In front of the boys was the *bāi sī*. First on the floor was placed a piece of rough white cloth. On top of this was a cushion on top of which was a tray. The tray was covered with another piece of rough white cloth on top of which was a banana leaf. On this was a bowl, candles and flowers. In the bowl was the *bāi sī*, a bottle of liquor, flowers, string and an egg. In the top of the bottle were candles, a cigarette, a chew *of* betel, and flowers wrapped in banana leaves.

Near this "altar" were a tray of food, a basket of cooked sticky rice, and a bottle of *nam hōm*.

In front of the *bāi sī* was a large cushion. Leaning on this was the *mō sūat*. The *mō sūat* comes from *Khum Nong Khwao Noi* and is named 'āčhān tao (อาจารย์ เต้า). He also has a *phā kāo mā* over his shoulder (not silk, however).

The two boys, the younger sister of the groom and an older female relation of the groom (I

believe his mother is dead) all placed their hands in the *wai* position. So did the *mô sūat* who rested his hands on the large cushion while chanting.

When the *mô sūat* had finished chanting, he blew out the large candle which had been attached to the bottle of liquor. He then took the things out of the top of the bottle. He poured some *satto* into a scoop, and then took a jasmine flower and stirred it in the liquid, chanting all the time. He sprinkled some of this liquid on the up-turned hands of the 2 boys who were resting their hands on the tray.

From the bowl an egg was taken (hard-boiled). This was peeled and split in half to tell the bridegroom's fortune. Then the two halves were given to two people to eat. The *mô sūat* was the one who told the future by this egg.

The *mô sūat* then laid a 10 baht note on the hand of the bridegroom and tied a string around his wrist. This was followed by others tying strings and giving money.

We were then given some *satto* to drink "according to custom" for the occasion. We were then served some more food.

The members of the man's wedding party then began to prepare for the procession to the house of the bride. A gathering of instruments took place first - *khāēn*, cymbals, drum (something like a bongo drum), *pim* [*phin*] (Thai banjo). Then people - particularly the young people - started to sing and dance. Finally people began descending the staircase to form the procession. I noticed that at the bottom of the stairs, a candle attached to a jasmine flower had been placed in the lowest rung.

The front of the procession consisted of the dancers, singers and players. Then followed the bridegroom dressed as before except that he had exchanged his silk *phākāomā* for white cloth especially made for this occasion to be worn over his regular shirt. He was also carrying a parasol made of paper and of an yellow-orangeish color. Following the groom were the other members of the bride's party, some of them bearing things such as pillows, mats, trays of food, etc. The woman-relation of the groom was carrying a suitcase.

When we reached the house of the bride, there were people of the bride's party who wouldn't allow us to enter the house. At the base of the steps was a banana leaf with a large flat stone on it. Then the groom got down on his haunches and took a jasmine flower and candle. He *wai*ed his side of the family and then placed the flower-candle in the lowest rung of the bride's house's ladder. There was more discussion between the *thao kāē* of

the groom's side and some members of the bride's side. Finally some liquor exchanged hands and the groom's party was allowed to enter.

Inside at the ceremony the major participants were arranged as follows: In front of the *bāi sī* were (1) the "bridesmaid"; (2) the bride, (3) the groom, (4) the "best man". Both the bride and groom had white cloths over their shoulders. The "bridesmaid" and "best man" had silk *phākāomās*.

The *mô sūat*(same one as before) began to chant. Then the groom turned to *wai* his parents. The *bāi sī* was arranged as before. The bride and groom were seated on a white cloth. The female relative of the groom kept wiping the faces of the couple free of perspiration. There was much noise in the background where the instruments were being played and singing and dancing was taking place. Nobody except perhaps the couple seemed to be paying attention to the *mô sūat*. Liquor was being passed to the men in the room during the ceremony. Only the 4 participants had their hands in the *wai* position.

A small bundle including cigarettes, betel, candles, money, banana leaves and string was tied to the wrist of the *mô sūat*, who twisted a candle in his fingers. The 4 participants sat with their legs tucked under them as they would sit in the *wat*.

A scoop was taken as before and the flowers placed in it and stirred in the *satto* and then he sprinkled the liquid on the up-turned hands.

A ball of *khāo nīeo* with some egg yolk on top of it was placed in the mouths of the couple by the female relative of the groom, signifying that they were now man and wife. When this was over, the guests came to tie strings on the wrists of the couple and to give money.

Miscellaneous Asides

Noticed a screened food cupboard in the house of Mr. Phan. This is the place where there is also a sewing machine. I am certain the radio present both at the groom's house and the bride's house belongs to Mr. Hōm. It was turned on after the ceremony was over.

Wedding of Samai Čhantamontrī (m.) and Tōngyū Somphithak (f.)

Returned to the house of Mr. Tāp where Mr. Wichian was and where the groom was just arriving. He too was challenged at the bottom of the stairs (where there was also a banana leaf with a flat stone on top of it). He got down on his haunches and prayed. Then he placed a flower and

candle in the bottom rung of the ladder. This was done "to make the ceremony auspicious". This time the *mô sūat* (the one from *khum yai*) was with the grooms side of the party. The owners of the house - the bride's side -demanded a song of the groom's side and liquor to "open the mouth". However, in actual fact the liquor came from the bride's side.

The groom's side came bearing things for the new couple to use. The groom's feet were washed by a woman while he stood on the banana leaf and stone. The woman received 1 or 2 baht for this. The groom was also carrying an umbrella (*parasol*) as in the other case. A radio was also brought into the house.

Again the bride and groom had white cloths over their shoulders. The *mô sūat* chants partially in Pali which comes from the *tamrā bōrān* (ตำราโบราณ). The bride and groom must always have a "friend", but no one could explain why.

The wearing of the white shoulder cloth should always be done at a *sū khūan* ceremony (though sometimes colored *phākāomās* are substituted). This is "polite" custom". "In former days the people used to always wear the white shoulder cloth when visiting friends or relatives".

Must call the *khūan* when go to new style of life.

The bride must always be on the left-hand of the *mô sūat*, and the groom on the right-hand side.

One thing that the *mô sūat* says in his chanting is that today is an "auspicious day".

There is only a single room in the house of the parents of the bride used for a bridal chamber. This is called the *suam*. This is always in the west end of the house, for the eastern room is always reserved for guests or important persons. This room is the *rūan hō* (เรือนหอ) of Central Plains custom. There will be no new house for a bride and groom in the N.E. for some little while. If not the last daughter of the household, the new couple will build a separate house after at least one year of marriage.

There is a special ceremony at night in the *suam* called *sommo* (สมณะ). The bride will present a *khun hā* with candles and flowers to the groom before they sleep together. "This is because men and women are not equal".

People give money at a wedding only if invited. Have met a lot of people from Ban Don Du. Mr. Ngao says that people from here have many relatives in B.D.D. This invitation bit makes

the wedding less of a village affair though many people attend more than one wedding.

(below, notes added in 1970)

2 May 1970 10 add.

sưam: Lao ສູ້ມ ; ~~thi-u~~ (Reinhorn). This word causes a certain amount of humor for it is quite the name as Thai สุ่ม / sūm /, water closet.

sōmma (ສຸມມາ): prob. correctly sōmma (ສຸມມາ) or even sū or, more likely,

samā: (ສາມ) (McF.); cognate with N. Thai sūma: (ສຸມ) (Met);

~~forgiveness~~, 'the act of begging pardon or forgiveness' (McF.)

Bān Nông Tūn

May 3, 1963

Police and Village

Met Mr. Phon and the Asst. Headman on their way to town. They were going to the police station in Sarakham to try to arrange the release of those arrested during the raids.

Children

Have seen adults fondling the sex organs of very young children. Children are greatly made over and petted both by parents and other people (male and female). I have hardly seen a child cry that it hasn't been immediately picked up by an adult and soothed. I have yet to see a child corporally punished and only occasionally have I seen one reprimanded. Sometimes when the children become too much of a nuisance in front of our house, Mr. Ngao or Mr. Cāēk will shoo them away.

Spent most of the day taking census.

Bān Nông Tūn

May 4, 1969

Mr. Phon went again to consult on those who have been imprisoned. Mr. Chāi (ชาไ) was working on the *thāt* for tomorrow's ceremony.

Took more census material.

Preparations for *Tham Bun* Ceremony

A *tham bun* ceremony is being held today and tomorrow for the interment of the bones of the father of Mrs. Mō Thap thānī (แม่หม้อ ทัพธานี) who lives in House No. 29, Khum Yai. This woman is the "sponsor" (เจ้าภาพ) of the ceremony. The man whose ashes were being interred died in 2504, but his ashes (bones) have been kept since then.

The ceremony follows much the same order as the more formal ceremony held for the former governor of Loei (see notes for 7 April 1963). On the morning of the first day the family feeds the priest. This is repeated at noon. In the evening the priest chants the *suatmon*. During the evening there is a celebration which in this case consists of a *mōlammū* performance. The next morning, the priest is again fed. Then follows the ceremony of the internment of bones and the *bangsakun*.

During the day of the 5th, the family sponsoring the *tham bun* ceremony entertains guests, makes foods, and prepares the necessary things for the ceremonies to follow. When we arrived in the mid-morning, a pavilion was being built in front of the house.

Dāēk kō (แตกก้อ) means "dead person" in the local language.

This event also has special food associated with it - *khāw phūn*, beef and liquor. This seems to be basically a family affair except for the *mōlammū*. Only relatives were participating.

In this case, it has been 2 years since the person died. However, one year may be all that is waited. What determines the period of time? Money? Status?

A public address system and a generator for it and for the electricity at the *mōlammū* performance had been rented by the family.

5 May 1963 Additional notes

Dāēk kō (แตกก้อ): unlikely spelling – maybe *tēk* “to break” *kō*

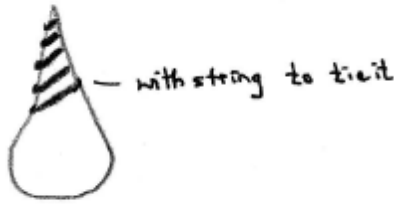
Khāw phūn: correctly *khāw pūn* (ข้าวปุ้น)

Making of *Bangsakun*

One of the major accoutrements of the ceremony is the *bangsakun* or *sakanitchā* (Lao). This is a special collection of items "needed" by the dead person which after they have been presented to the dead person are claimed by the priests and used by them.

First some rough white cloth was brought out. On this was placed raw *khaw niaw*, home-made cigarettes and prepared chews of betel, money wrapped in banana leaves, dried fish (*pātāsōi*) wrapped with prepared *khaw niaw* in a banana leaf, salt and dried pepper also wrapped in a banana leaf, raw cotton, home-made candles, matches.

The cloth was wrapped up as follows:



with string to tie it. To this was attached a long candle.

5 May 1963 Additional notes

Sak anit chā : correctly *sak anītcā* (สักอนิจา)

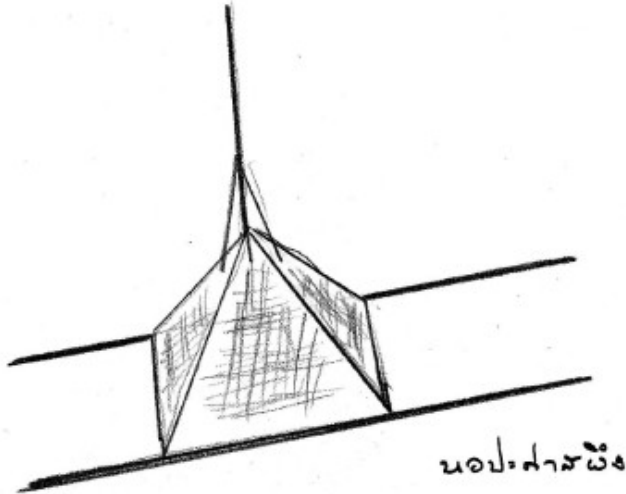
Pātāsōi : ?

Monetary Gifts

I noticed that money was being given by guests and noted down by one of the family. This money is used apparently to offset the cost of the events.

Making of *Hô Pasāt Phüing*

Inside the pavilion below some men were making the *hō pasāt phüing* (หอปะสาทผึ้ง) which is a make-believe house for the dead person to live in. It looks something like this:

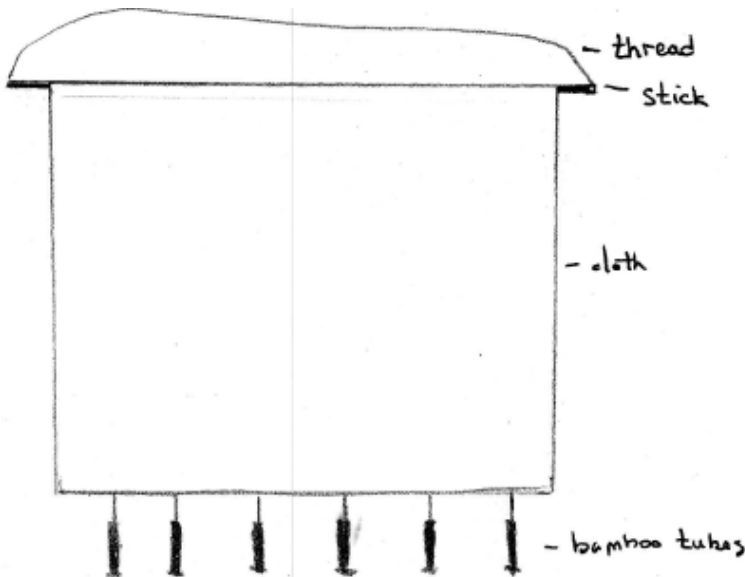


5 May 1963 Additional notes

Hô pasāt phüing (หอประสาธผึ้ง): probably *hô pasāt* (หอปราสาท), a sacred building (of Mc.F.), *phüing* might be *phüing* (ผึ้ง) “bee,” but this seems unlikely.

Other Preparations

Another piece of white cloth was brought out. Six pieces of hollow bamboo of about 6 inches in length were fixed with a thread so that they could be attached to one end of the cloth. At the other end a 2 inch fold was sewn. Through this a piece of wood was passed to which thread was attached.



Food

We were given a meal of *khāw pūn* and chicken curry broth. (Saw some men eating *lāp dip*.)

Miscellaneous

Have noticed tattooing on the forearm of one woman. It was in the shape of a flower.

Death of Man in Khum BKN

The man who died in Khum BKN on 28 April was named Cān khrū dā Thapthānī (จันทน์ครูดาตัพธานี). The first 2 elements in the name, i.e. *cān* and *khrū* both mean "teacher" and formed part of a title because he had been a priest for a long time and was skilled in animistic and astrological practices.

Celebration of National Holiday

Tomorrow is the major Buddhist holiday of *witsākha būchā* (วันวิสาขบูชา) which commemorates the birth, death and enlightenment of the Lord Buddha. Yesterday was "Coronation" Day, a day commemorating the coronation of the king. Though there were national holidays and work was stopped in the market, the only indication of this existence in the village was that school was closed for Monday and Tuesday. *Witsākhā būchā* was not observed in the village, nor in Bān Khwaw. Mr. Ngaw says such holidays "are for officials".

Cost of the Wedding

Mr. Ngaw says the cost of a wedding usually depends on the cost of liquor. Meat is standard at around ฿500.00.

Môlam Mū Performance

Last night there was a *môlam mū* performance on the wat grounds. I had asked Nōi if there was always *môlam* at the time of *tham bun*. He answered that there always must be "a celebration" at such times. The *môlam* troupe had been hired for about B250 by the "sponsor" of

the bun. This is a low price according to Mr. Ngaw. The troupe comes from a village in Amphoe Muang, Roi-et. The BNT villagers had built a make-shift stage near the wat. The P.A. system and generator for electricity were also there.

The scene was idyllic. After a rainstorm earlier in the evening, the sky cleared, and the moon and stars had come out making the evening quite bright. People were seated on the ground in front of the stage and there were several little "stands" on the side with their small kerosene lamps. where one could buy small tidbits (from people in the village, I believe).

The "folk opera" itself concerned the story of Prince Wetsandon and that is as far as I got in understanding. There was some interesting costuming even for such a minor troupe. Some of the players were obviously comic relief in the way they played up to the audience and in the costumes. The music was provided primarily by a *khāēn* with some percussion (drums, cymbals, etc.) supporting.

5 May 1963 Additional notes

Prince Wetsandon: เวศสันดร [*wētsansōn*] – Vessantara; the last incarnation of the Buddha before his birth as the Buddha. This Jataka tale is extremely popular with Northerners & is presented in many forms.

Nōi

Nōi was over here during the storm last night. He says he has never visited Bangkok though he has lived several years in Vientiane. He has no relations (at least consanguineal) in Vientiane. He went there because he had several friends both from BK and from BNT who had gone there to live. He says he is not a farmer, though he is reputed to be a good fisherman. He was one of the "sponsors" of the *môlam* last evening.

Tham Bun Ceremony

At the wat last night I noticed streamers had been attached to the *thāt* where the ashes will be placed today. The inscription on the *thāt* reads: "In loving memory of พ่อเรือง สัมพิทักษ์ ("Father Ruang Sômphithak"), age 76, who died in 2504 and (whose remains) were placed here in 2506".

Mr. Chai Sômphithak (ชาย สมพิทักษ์), the assistant headman, and a relative, painted the *thāt* and prepared the inscription.

Went at about 7:00 to the *kuti* where people (mainly women) were bringing food to feed the monks. Each woman would carry a small tray of rice with maybe something else on it. She would get on her knees, bow, and then place everything except a small amount of rice into the priest's container. Then she would *wai* and retire.

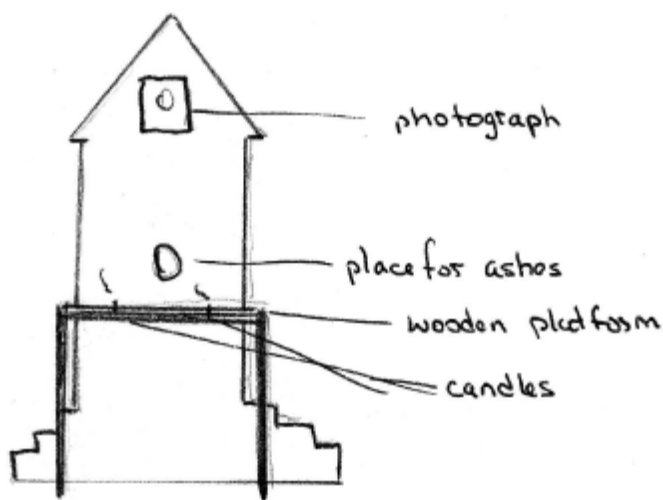
About 7:30 the *hō pasāt phüing* gaily decorated and a small banana palm on a stand were brought into the *kuti*. Someone else had carried in a coconut.

Then chanting of the laymen - offering food to the priests began. This chanting was led by the *môsuat* from *Khum Yai*. He and a few women wore *phakawmas* over their shoulders. Some of these were silk.

Food consisted of 4 "alms-bowls" of rice and trays of food prepared by the immediate family of the dead person. After the chanting of the laymen was over, the priest and novices ate. The priest separated from the novices.

There had been a basket set aside on to which were placed the remnants of rice and other goodies. There were for the spirits, for *pūtā*. Some balls of rice were placed in corners of the *kuti*. Candles and flowers were also placed on this container.

About 8:00 we left the *kuti* and went over to the *thāt*. Here a picture of the dead man was placed on the front of the *thāt*. In front was erected a wooden platform where 2 burning candles had been attached.



Slightly to the left of the *thāt* a small hole had been dug. Leaning against the base of the *thāt* near the hole were 2 bamboo containers called *bangram* (?). In front of the platform were 2 bamboo mats. On the first of these was laid the bones, exposed to the air, on a white rough cotton cloth. Behind this was a coconut which had been opened.

A little ways away was another mat with two male relatives who had two *bangsakun* sacks. The *bangsakuns* were opened and some more things were added - matches and more money. One *bangsakun* was wrapped with a *phakhawma*.

The daughter of the dead person took some coconut water and poured it into the nearby hole. The hole was then filled with earth and smoothed over. The water was "to be used for the dead person to wash with". The *bangsakun* are similarly a collection of things for a dead person to use.

The leftover food which we had seen collected in the wat was brought out and placed around the base of the Bo tree and on other *thāt* and around the area to feed the *phī*. We saw the *hō pasāt phüing* being thrown away just outside the wat grounds.

The priest came and poured coconut water over the bones and over the *bangsakun* which had been placed near the bones. Then he poured "perfumed water" (น้ำหอม) on the bones. Then one *bangsakun* was set in front. Some relatives came forward and poured more coconut water and perfumed water over the bones and *bangsakun*. Some more candles were laid on the platform and lit. Then the bones were wrapped up and placed at the base of the *thāt*.

The priest and novices sat down on a mat and chanted some sutras appropriate to death. One of the *bangsakun* (the one without the *phakhawma*) was placed at the bottom of the *thāt* as well. More candles lit. Then the *mōsuat* came forward and motioned to priest and novices. Four strings leading from the *bangsakun* led to the priest and 3 novices. Again they canted. Then the *mōsuat* took the *bangsakun* and set it down near the other one. The priest and novices sat down and began to chant again. The bones were tied up. The priest came forward and placed the bones in the *thāt*. A piece of wood was placed over the opening.

Then the priest, the novices, the *mōsuat*, some relatives with the other *bangsakun* (in the *phakhawma*) went to the *thāt* where the ashes of the wife of the dead man were interred. An abbreviated form of the same above ceremony was again held - except in this case water was splashed on the *thāt*.

Bangsakun were then taken and given priests and the ceremony was over.

Lao Book

In the house of Mr. Phan in KPH, I was shown a sheet of the leaf-book written in Lao. Think it concerns *sūkhwan* ceremony.

Bān Nōng Tūn

May 8, 1963

Liang Bān Ceremony

Today was the day "to feed the village spirits". As I entered the village at about 6:15 I saw a group of men gathered at Mr. Tāp's (the *khawcam*) house. At 7:30 I went there myself. Many women, a few children and a rare man were bringing food for the *phī*, the items brought being:

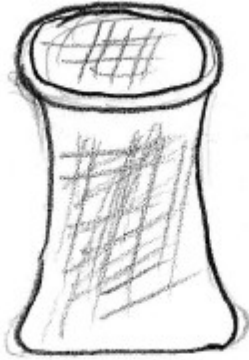
1. hard boiled chicken eggs
2. *khaw niaw* rolled in balls
3. leaves
4. leaves with candles and cigarettes
5. small cooked, whole chickens
6. bran in bamboo tubes
7. money — usually a *salūng*.

The bran is called *law* (*liang law hai kai tō*). Also there were some fire rockets (*bang fai*) which would be used to "worship the *phī*."

This ceremony is conducted during the "hot month" in order to insure that fanning, the activities of the village and the weather will be satisfactory during the rainy season.

At 8:00 the priest and novices came to the house. They had been fed, as must occur before the ceremony can begin. At 8:15 they left for the shrine, and the various items of food, etc. were placed in baskets. Then Mr. Tāp, a man who was acting as an assistant, those bearing the baskets of food, some men and many children went to the shrine of *pūta*. The priest and novices were already there. The whole village was obviously not present, - mainly, children, young men and an equivalent number of elder women. Many more, however, than the last ceremony I saw here at the time of the wat fair.

Mr. Tāp took the "basket" from the house of *pūta*.



Candles were then lit and the *khawcam* "worshipped" the *pūtā* by taking by taking two lit candles with leaves and raising them above his head. He then said he hoped the *pūtā* would partake of the food mentioning each type that was being offered. He then took two cigarettes from me, lit them, placed them on the basket, offered them to *pūtā*, took them from the basket and placed them in the house of *pūtā*. While he was doing this some of the men placed the containers of bran below the house of *pūtā*'s servant and poured water in them. Two candles were also lit in the house of *pūtā*'s servant. On the basket from that house was placed 2 chickens, 2 eggs, 2 balls of rice, as was done similarly for *pūtā*'s basket. The leaves and candles and incense and flowers were laid out inside the houses of *pūtā* and his servant. Baskets of food with lighted candles attached were placed in the house. The firerockets were placed in the house of *pūtā*. The chickens had been broken open before they were offered to the spirits. When all the things had been placed, Mr. Tāp asked *pūtā* to partake of the food. If *pūtā* was satisfied, it was asked that he provide a good year; he asked for each khum's well-being, and for good rains.

The tray with the money had also been placed inside the house. Mr. Tāp had a *phakhawmā* over his shoulder while he was worshipping *pūtā*. Then some of the fireworks were taken to one corner of the clearing and were set off after Mr. Tāp had first presented these to *pūtā*.

Then the food was removed from the houses and distributed to the people. More of the same kind of food was given to *pūtā* and then also taken and given to the children, who quickly disappeared once they had got their chickens and eggs.

The money totalled ₪12 and this was kept by Mr. Tāp.

Ordination of New Priests

An ordination of new priests will be held on the 14th of May (7th day of the waning of the moon, 6th month). There will be a *ngān* with *mōlam* at that time.

Bangkok

May 9 - May 23, 1963

From the 9th of May until today, May 23, we have been in Bangkok.

Mahasarakham (letter)

May 29, 1963

477 Nakhorn Sawan Road,
Mahasarakham, Thailand.
29th, May, 1963.

Dr. Millard Long,
Department of Cooperative Sciences,
Kasetsart University,
Bangkok, Thailand.

Dear Millard,

I am enclosing herewith the report which you lent me. I apologize for "bringing it up-country with me, but I didn't have time to finish examining it in Bangkok before we left (rather in a hurry). I hope that it reaches you all right as I am sending it registered post.

I found the report extremely fascinating and on the whole I feel that you have made an excellent go of it. I only hope that I can do nearly so well in my work. I am looking forward with great interest to seeing the final draft which I hope won't be too long in the making. In reading the report, a number of things did occur to me. These are by no means complete or systematic but are a few things which I thought of at various points in the reading.

1. Nonintroduction of an age variable:

When talking about farmers, this is an important variable. For one, younger farmers are more likely not to have very much land or to be renting some because they have often left their own villages to go live with their parents-in-law.

The age variable is even more important when talking about migration and seasonal work of the villagers away from the village. My impression is that your finding that only 6 people took jobs outside the Changwat misrepresents the true situation. Most of the people in my village who take jobs in Bangkok or Vientiane or elsewhere outside the Changwat are young men who are not heads of households (and thus would be included in your interviews) and are as yet unmarried. It is my finding in the village in which I am working, that there is a very high percentage of young

men in the age group 17-26 who have taken jobs outside the village and a surprisingly high percentage who have worked either in Bangkok or Vientiane. However, this seasonal migration is a relatively new phenomenon, arising primarily in the last 15 years or so, and thus those farmers who you interviewed would be less likely to have worked outside the village.

2. Fertilizer:

You mention that you didn't enquire to deeply into the use of fertilizer and what type is used. In my village, there is not any artificial fertilizer used, though every head of household reported that they used manure at some time or another. However, when I visited some villages in the south of the province, I was surprised to see artificial fertilizer present, I was told that this was used almost solely in the fields where watermelons are grown.

3. Rice yields:

Do you know whether glutinous rice yields are consistently lower than white rice? It struck me that this might be one explanation of the lower average yield in the Northeast and in Khon Khaen as compared with the whole country (though, undoubtedly, part of the reason is that there are worse climatic and soil conditions in the area).

4. Rice yield vs. number of *rai* planted:

I, too, still remain very puzzled at the phenomenon of a lower average rice yield as the number of *rai* planted increases. I am inclined to agree with your first suggestion that farmers are not interested in maximizing production but only in producing enough rice to satisfy familial requirements. I don't think, however, that your second suggestion holds. That is, that those with fewer *rai* have the better land and those with more have been forced to acquire the more because they have worse land. I would disagree with this suggestion on the basis that if it were true, then one would expect that the average wealth of the farmers in a village would be pretty much equal - or rather, that one would find as many rich farmers among those with smaller holdings of land (because they have the better land) as among those who have the larger holdings (because they get a lower yield). This is just not the case, either in your study or in my village.

I have also been impressed by the great variation in yields reported by farmers for all levels of *rai* holdings and *rai* cultivated in my village. It would seem to us, therefore, that there is some

difficulty for the farmer to estimate the amount of yield which he obtained. And since he is not interested in maximizing his production, he would tend to underestimate if he has produced more than enough for his family. The only way to check this would be to do a study on the amount of rice which a farmer has sold in one year plus the amount of rice which he uses for home consumption and for gifts to the wat etc. This would give some sort of approximation of the amount of yield which he actually had. Do you have any way of figuring such statistics from the information which you gathered?

As I said the above points are not a complete set but are just random ideas that come to mind while reading the report. The one section of the report which really caught my interest was the one on kenaf because of its implications for innovation and the acceptance of innovation by villagers. It has given rise to some questions which I would like to ask in questionnaire in my village: such as, How long have you planted kenaf? Why did you start planting kenaf? Where did you get the idea to plant kenaf? Why did you stop (if he has)? If you had more land, would you grow more kenaf? I certainly would be very interested in seeing the Kasetsart report on kenaf if one is available.

Do keep us posted on your plans and on the development of your work. I do hope that we get a chance to get together again before you leave for England.

Best regards,

Charles F. Keyes

P.S. I am enclosing the notes of yours which I found in my book.

Ban Nông Tũn

May 30, 1963

Môlam and the "great tradition" of the Northeast

It seems to me in looking for cultural traditions within the village context which are manifestations of larger cultural traditions that *môlam* would be one tradition one would have to take into account. If it is, then the person or persons in the village in charge of preserving and promulgating the practice would be "cultural brokers."

What is the geographical spread of *môlam*?

What are the major sources for stories?

What are the places that are and have in the past been recognized centers of *môlam*?

What is the relationship of *môlam* to *likē* and *lakhōn*?

What are the stories in the *môlam* about?

Bān Nōng Tūn

May 31, 1963

Returned to the village for the first time in over three weeks. It seems the villagers thought perhaps we had returned to America. Made me realize that we shouldn't have any more prolonged absences from the village - at least until the seminar in late September. It will take a little while before we are truly back in the swing of things. Mr. Ngaw didn't seem very pleased, that is, he seemed a little put out that we had been gone so long. We have been here a couple of hours now and have had very few of our standard visitors - except the women. However, Mr. Ngaw and Mr. Thiang have gone to town.

Yesterday Mr. Ngaw had a *tham bun* ceremony at the store - a ceremony which he has every year. He said he fed the priests and then fed the village.