

April 1, 1963

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

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

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

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

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

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[160]

Today several villagers were constructing a ^{๓๓๓}thâ:t. This is a cement structure on the wát grounds in which are kept the remains of a cremated person. I asked if someone had just died. The answer was no, but that the thâ:t was being built for a ^[160/1]person who died in 2504. This person's cremated remains are presently in the bò:t. Sometime this month there will be a tham bun ceremony for this person's remains. [161]

April 2, 1963

cut> I went to the village to determine the date for moving into our house out there. I asked the headman, who in turn took us to consult the village shaman whom he calls 'a:ca:n. The shaman thought about the possibilities, doing some ^amental calculations. He didn't look at anything. Finally, he decided Friday, the 12th day of the waxing of the moon of the 5th month (Friday is often an auspicious day) at 9:00 in the morning would be a good time. cut>

April 5, 1963

EWB Today was our first day in the village as residents.

Customs Concerning Health:

We went to Mr. Cək's house where there were some women doing what looked like the ramwong. There was khs:n music playing in the background. Then I saw there was a sick person being watched over. Mr. Ngaw explained that Mr. Cək's wife, who is in her mid-60's, has been ill for some 10 months. Today she really became ill. Hence a shaman was called from Ban Khwăw. In this case the shaman was a woman. She came with two woman friends. These were the ones who were dancing. It was explained that they were calling the phĩ:, including the phĩ: of the woman's father and mother (for which they asked the permission of the younger brother^[16/2] because he might be frightened in the presence of his parents' phĩ:. He gave his permission).

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

The concern over death seems to be minimal. Mr. Ngaw said that people of this age are likely to die. And Mr. Cək seemed completely unconcerned (spending a good portion of the afternoon over at our house). [16/2]

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(62) Mr. Ngaw:

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

His father was a good friend of Mr. Cèk's, and apparently Mr. Cèk sponsored Mr. Ngaw when he first came to the village. Mr. Ngaw give credit and had a list which he showed me of about a dozen people in the village who owe him money. ^[62/2] I don't know whether these are people who have borrowed money as well as people who have credit. There was one person who just recently paid off a debt of B500. There were several others who owed B200 or more.

I had noticed today, - the first time I have spent all day on the road - that there are a larger number of vehicles which go by than I thought. One was on its way to Wapi Pathum (I wasn't aware that this road went to Wapi). [63]

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Festival at Ba:n Khwaw and Ku:

The following list of events at the temple fair in Ba:n Khwaw and during the Ku: ceremony on the 6th, 7th, and 8th of April, 1963 is taken from an advertising poster which was put up in BNT.

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

1. Boxing matches sponsored by the Community Development Committee of Ba:n Khwaw.
2. Showing of Thai, Western and Japanese movies on all three nights.
3. Two well-known groups of ramwong dancers will perform on stage.
4. Performance by the most famous mu:lam troupe in the Northeast.
5. Fireworks competition.
6. Firerocket competition of 1000 rockets in which a first prize of ฿250 will be given.
7. Competition between processions of firerockets and 'money trees' from 12 villages.
8. Fire balloon and long drum competitions.

April 6, 1963

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

The following is a list of events at the ~~BĀ:n~~ BĀ:n Khwāw Vāt Fair:

② Kū: Festival which will occur on April 6, 7, & 8, 1963. This information was advertising copied from a poster put up in BNT:

At this festival, there several important schedules of events:

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

รายการอาหารกลางวัน

๖๖๖

หมู่บ้านศึกษาดูงานเขา อ. เมืองฯ จ.มหาสารคาม

วันที่ ๖ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖

เวลา ๐๗.๐๐ น.

ทำพิธีเปิดงาน

เวลา ๐๗.๓๐ น.

มีตลาดนัด

เวลา ๑๑.๐๐ น.

แข่งโขนสม

เวลา ๑๕.๐๐ น.

เริ่มชมมวย

เวลา ๑๘.๓๐ น.

หมดคำขวัญ รำวง ภาพยนตร์ เริ่มแสดง

วันที่ ๗ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖

เวลา ๐๗.๐๐ น.

มีตลาดนัด

เวลา ๑๐.๐๐ น.

แข่งรถจักรยาน

เวลา ๑๓.๐๐ น.

ฟังปาฐกถาธรรม

เวลา ๑๕.๐๐ น.

รวมของไฟเจ้าประจำเพื่อฌมไทย

เวลา ๑๘.๐๐ น.

เริ่มชมมวย

เวลา ๑๘.๓๐ น.

หมดคำขวัญ รำวง ภาพยนตร์ เริ่มแสดง

วันที่ ๘ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖

เวลา ๐๗.๐๐ น.

มีตลาดนัด

เวลา ๐๘.๐๐ น.

แข่งของไฟใหญ่ (ประกวดขบวนแห่)

เวลา ๑๑.๓๐ น.

แข่งรถจักรยาน

เวลา ๑๔.๐๐ น.

แข่ง ๑/๔ มงไฟ

เวลา ๑๘.๐๐ น.

ชมมวย

เวลา ๑๘.๓๐ น.

หมดคำขวัญ รำวง ภาพยนตร์ เริ่มแสดง

เวลา ๒๕.๐๐ น.

ปิดงาน.

Handwritten signature and date: 23 April 1963

April 6, 1963

C163D

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

Daily Patterns:

Mr. Ngaw says the villagers usually get up at 4:30 or 5:00 a.m. (Though we heard stirrings at 5:00 this morning, there was very little real motion till 5:15 or so). Villagers usually eat their breakfast at 8:00 (though often as late as 10:00), lunch at 1:00, and dinner at 8:00 in the evening (after dark). This latter practice leaves the daylight hours for work and play.

In the early evening, -5:30-6:00 p.m. - the children came out onto the road to play. They made necklaces and bracelets out of the stems of certain plants. They blew ^[163/4] soap bubbles using a piece of reed turned on itself to make a hoop to hold the soap. Between 6:00 and 6:30 the cows and buffaloes were brought back from the fields and tethered for the night under the houses.

Mr. Cèk came round this morning and we asked him more questions about eating. It seems that for the morning and noon meals, the family doesn't eat together. Also they eat whatever is available. If the men are off fishing, they will eat at the fishing grounds. [114]

April 7, 1963

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

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

This morning we are going to the interment of the remains in Wát Bangkok of a man from the village who had risen to become governor of Loei. (165)

Funerary Rites:

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

One of the accoutrements of a high status funerary rite is the invitation etched in black and placed in an envelope also etched in black. At high status rites, the men wear a white suit with a black tie and black mourning band, and the women a black dress or a black skirt and white blouse. The rites which we observed are formally called ka:n ba:nčü'ât (the interment of the ashes). The deceased had been cremated at Loei last year (16 September, 1962), (166)

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(165) his wife had kept his ashes for a year and now had decided to inter these at his home village. The events took place over two days (6th and 7th). The following is a translation of the invitation card:

Schedule of Events for Internment of Ashes

of Naj Kiti Jótka:ri:

at Wát māj khǎn khwǎw Amphoe Myang Carwat Mahasarakham

Saturday, April 6, 2506

7:00 a.m. Arrangement of ashes at Wát sala [165/6]

5:00 p.m. Priests chant the ma:tika:

8:00 p.m. Celebration.

Sunday, April 7, 2506

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

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

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

Mrs. Pinsàmùt Jótka:ri:	wife	}	Sponsors
Mr. Sǒ:n Phonchamní'	cousin		

This morning when we went to the wát, we discovered the rites were not only for the former Governor of Loei, but also for a former abbot of a wát in Bangkok who had been born in B. Khwǎw, and for the parents of Mr. Sǒ:n, one of the sponsors of the funeral. However, in the main, the ceremony was for the former Governor of Loei. [166]

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[143] Since the ceremony was not in the village proper, I will not, - nor was I able to - make complete notes on the activities. Rather I will merely outline what were the outstanding features. The wát was decorated with preparations for the reciting of the Wetsandon (see notes on village observations) Chadok (this came in the afternoon). There were flags round the sala wat with little baskets of food at the bottom of the pole. These were for the evil spirits who might be attracted by a rite for the dead. Also there was a basket of things [166/7] for the Buddhist saint who will protect the ceremony (again see description of comparable village artefact).

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

After the feeding, the standard ritual request was made by the people for a sermon by the priests. It was explained that traditionally only standard chants could be given. However, there have been changes in modern years. Instead of chants, the priests made funeral orations for each of the dead. This was followed by the bangsúkun. This consisted of ritual presentation of gifts to the priests. This ritual is called cha:t'ani:cha: in Lao. [167]

7/4/63

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bangsukun (ບັງສຸກຸນ) - the Lao word for this cannot possibly be cha:t ani:che: as there is
no /ch/ in Lao. [see notes, 29 April 1963].

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[1st] After this ceremony, we all processed around the bat returning to the front. Here the boxes of ashes in a box covered with a white cloth and black ribbon were placed on the stoop. Those present came forward and poured perfumed water on the boxes. They were then placed in ready-made niches^(167/s) in the wall. These would be filled up and a memorial plaque placed in front.

The case of the former governor is a good point of social mobility. I was given a cremation volume of his funeral. [168]

กำหนดการบรรจุอัฐิ

นายกิติ ยชการี

ณ วัดใหม่ขุนเขวา อ. เมือง จ. มหาสารคาม

วันเสาร์ที่ ๖ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖

เวลา ๑๒.๐๐ น. ตั้งอัฐิ ณ ศาลาการเปรียญ

เวลา ๑๒.๓๐ น. พระสงฆ์สวดมาติกา

เวลา ๒๐.๐๐ น. มีมหรสพฉลองสมโภช

วันอาทิตย์ที่ ๗ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖

เวลา ๐๘.๐๐ น. ถวายภัตตาหาร

เวลา ๐๘.๐๐ น. มีพระธรรมเทศนา และบังสุกุล

เวลา ๐๘.๓๐ น. บรรจุอัฐิ

นางปิ่นสมุทร ยชการี ภรรยา

นายสอน พลขำนิ หลาน

} เจ้าภาพ

7 Feb 1963

April 9, 1963

(109) Festival at Kù:

(8 April)

Monday there was a big celebration at the kù: near Bâ:n Dò:n Du:, Tambon Khwăw. This attracted several thousand people from all over the area (this was the first time I saw such a big celebration in Thailand, though such must be quite typical of India and traditional China). This celebration is held once a year - always according to the lunar calendar - during the day of the full moon in the fifth month. ๖๕ 15 ๕๗ ๕๕ ๕

1. Origin and raison d'être of ceremony:

I discussed the ceremony with Mr. Wichian and Mr. Sǒ:n (head of the pig coop in Bangkok). The latter explained that the day of the full moon in the fifth lunar month is "Lao New Years", whereas Songkran (April 13, 14, 15) is "Thai New Years". I actually think they are probably the same thing. Traditionally, Thai-Lao New Years was determined according to the lunar calendar and the traditional date was the day of the full moon of the fifth month. After the adoption of the Western solar calendar, the government made Songkran a fixed date. The people in the N.E. at least (though I think this is partially true for the whole country) - (168/2) see Kaufman and Kingshill - have retained celebrations on both dates, though the celebrations on the traditional date seem somewhat reduced compared with those on the new date.

Mr. Sǒ:n said that festivals on the day of the full moon of the fifth month are held at every kù: in the Northeast. This made me wonder, since the kù: are all of Khmer origin, and since Thai-Lao New Years is (169)

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originally a Brahmic^{an} fête, and since the Khmer were Brahmic^{an}, whether the custom of worshipping at the kù: is a vestige of a Khmer rite. This is just speculation, though.

2. Activities at kù:

The events of the day were an admixture of Brahmin and Buddhist customs. Monks played a major role even in supervising some obviously Brahmic customs. Mr. Wichian said, however, that the major purpose of the fete was to worship the the:wáda: - "Brahmic^{an} divinities".

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

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

I call this group "clown dancers" because the group was a source of endless mirth to the crowd. One of the favorite forms of humour among Thai is the male impersonation of females. The group did a comic version of the ramwong with the men making passes at the women (played by men) and being rebuffed. [170]

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

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

c) Worship of Buddha and Deva Images: - In the kù: precincts themselves were five Buddha images and the Deva images which were originally found in the kù: proper (a Buddha image is now in their place and the Deva images are normally kept at the Sala Klang in Sarakham). The manner of worshipping these images was the taking of námhõ:m (literally, "fragrant water, but usually ^{น้ำคumin} water with cumin so that it has a yellow color). This water is used to bathe the images. The people also use candles, incense and jasmine flowers for worshipping. Also they stuck gold leaf on the images. All of the things for worshipping were being sold by the priests, with the money to be used for building a priest's residence at the kù:. I noticed mainly older people were engaged in the worshipping.

d) Worshipping the Deva: - Probably the biggest event of the celebration was the setting off of huge fire rockets (as well as small fire rockets). These are very fancy, and require the expenditure of much time and money. (171)

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(171) Each village sponsors one (last year BNT made one, but not this year). They are often decorated with papier mache' type models of deva. Don't quite understand why fireworks are used for "worship", but this is also a Chinese pattern.

3. Analysis:

This annual event is one way in which people from all over the area come together. At such a time, young men and women can meet one another. Also, the ceremony is an integrating factor for the commune and surrounding area. The worshipping graphically illustrates the synthesis of Brahmic and Buddhist elements in the local religion. (171/7)

4. Water Ceremony:

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

Songkran:

I discussed the beliefs and customs surrounding Songkran with Mr. Wichian, Mr. Sǒ:n (in Ban Khwaw) and some people in BNT. In the local custom wan sǒnkra:n (วันสงกรานต์) is called wan naw (วันใหม่). [ใหม่ means "nine" or "new".] The consensus was that people didn't work during Songkran but pray, feed the priests, and do things of this sort. I asked some man in khùm p.h. if Songkran was Buddhist or Brahmic^{an}. He was quite nonplussed by this question, as he had obviously never thought about it before. (172)

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[177] Mr. Wichian thought that water throwing originated with the idea that one provided bath water for travellers during the hot season. However, Mr. Sǒ:n (Bangkok) said that since the season was hot at the time of Songkran, people would take water to the old men (relatives) of a village in order for them to take baths. The old men in turn would give the bringers a blessing (หำphon) - hâjphon.

Today, relatives will give older people presents of cloth, etc. The older people will reciprocate with money, land, farm animals, etc. This latter is usually a type of inheritance gift called หำmorá-dòk (hâj morá-dòk). (This also occurs at weddings.)

There will be a fair and celebration at Bâ:n Mi:.. They will play ti:khli: (ตีขี่ม้า), which is a version of polo. [177/3]

[178] Village Miscellaneous:

There will be a ceremony of depositing bones in the wát during Songkran.

Mr. Hǒ:m who has the new store was buying kapok plants (pods) from children - 1 pod - 1 rubber band).

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

Talked with people in Khúm p.h. One man (the one with a mole on his nose) has very bad cold/cough/headache which he has had for 5-6 days. He is using Chinese balm as a medicine. Uses no handkerchief, but did blow his nose away from the group. [178]

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[173]

Planting will begin in the sixth or seventh month depending on rains.

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

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

Everybody got a kick out of the fact that we got soaked yesterday. [173]

April 10, 1963

[173] I began mapping today. May have committed a faux pas. I entered the wát to pace off the width. As I was doing this, the village priest came over purposely to ask me what I was doing. I distinctly feel he doesn't like me. I hope this won't be a sore point as far as my collecting of information on religion is concerned. [173] and Bal. I]

April 11, 1963

In Mahasarakham.

April 12, 1963

Today we attended the cremation of the ~~Grand~~ grandmother (Fa Mo) of Mr. Chynchai at Wat ~~Phu~~ Po: Si: in Mahasarakham. Mr. Chynchai, the Provincial primary education officer, is a descendent of one of the first Chinese merchants to settle in Mahasarakham. He still lives in what was once the family store. It was interesting to observe the ~~people~~ relatives attending the funeral as some seemed wholly assimilated to Thai culture, while others ~~was~~ still wore Chinese dress (women). One of Mr. Chynchai's brother's who was in attendance is a high-ranking army officer. Reverend Dagep also attended the funeral and even participated ^{by} ~~in~~ placing a taper on the ~~funeral~~ funeral pyre.

~~April 13, 1963~~

~~Made a trip to Khopkasa Khavakl ~~to see~~~~

11 Apr 1963

กำหนดการงานปณิกกิจศพ

คุณแม่กลิ่น หิตาภีระตะ

ณ เมรุวัดโพธิ์ศรี จังหวัดมหาสารคาม

วันพฤหัสบดีที่ 11 เมษายน 2506

เวลา 15.00 น. ตั้งศพบำเพ็ญกุศล

เวลา 19.00 น. สวดพระอภิธรรม

วันศุกร์ที่ 12 เมษายน 2506

เวลา 11.00 น. ถวายภัตตาหารเพล

เวลา 13.00 น. เทศน์ปลงจำวิสัชนา 2 ธรรมาสัน

เวลา 15.00 น. สวดมาติกา, บังสุกุล

เวลา 16.30 น. ประชุมเพลิง

ขอประทานกราบเรียน เรียนเชิญมาด้วยความเคารพ

นางเลียง	แม่ตั้ง	น้อง
นายเทือง	พัฒน์เพ็ญ	บุตร
นายวิชัย	เสวีรัตน์	หลาน
นางทองลิ้ม	ทาหะพรหม	"
นายชื่นชัย	วรามิตร	"
พ.ต. มานะ	วรามิตร	"
นายทองคำ	วรามิตร	"

April 13, 1963

[B-4-B, 174] This morning we went to the village for the duration of the Songkran festival. On the way we attended a special ceremony at Bâ:n Mi:.

Honouring of Priests:

Two ceremonies took place. One, an honouring of priests by water pouring priests who have served for a long time, and the other, a ba:j sǐ: ceremony for two priests with their fans indicating respectively parian 4 and 5 - (a similar ceremony to that held in BNT for phrá'máhă sěng).

Procession: When we arrived at Bâ:n Mi: school, we were immediately faced by a procession in which the priests being honoured were being carried. This procession, called hăe: (h^1v) in Thai consisted first of laity carrying a display indicating the status of the two high monks - including the fans of the priests, a picture of each, and certificates proclaiming their achievements in the Buddhist system. Following this were the priests themselves, raised high and being carried on bamboo litters. The two priests who were being especially honoured wore pointed hats looking somewhat like the pointed mitred hats worn by bishops in the West. There were seven priests being carried. Behind them were three men dressed as women, a group of people carrying gifts for the priests, and some people playing instruments (also some instruments at the front of the procession), primarily gongs, drums, cymbals and pim, the Thai two-stringed guitar.

The procession left from the school and proceeded through the village, circled the wát^[74/5] and returned to the school. [175]

13/4/63

1 Add.

pim should be ~~phim~~ phin (2754).

April 13, 1963

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(175) Presentation of Clothes to Priests:

The five priests who were being honoured for their service (not the two with fans) continued to sit on their litters in the school grounds. These priests did not come from Bâ:n Mì: but were from surrounding areas (the abbot of Bangkok was one). Five laymen took a bundle which included all the wearing apparel of the priests and sat themselves in front of the priests. Then another priest led the laity in a chant by using the P.A. system. When this was over, the five lay persons presented each priest with the package. The priests took these and on each article made three points (. . .) which are called câm phin thú' (คัมพินทุ) . This mark indicates that the article belongs to the priests. (There was some more information on this which I couldn't read - check again). [175/6]

Ritual Bathing of Priests:

When the giving of gifts was finished the five priests were led by their lay guide by a long metal stick called a máj tháw lèk (มัจท้าวเหล็ก) .
- a stick used by priests in the forests.



{ pieces of loose metal which jingle when shaken.

[176]

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



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

The priests were led one by one into the compound. They stripped down to their "bathing costume". Then one by one they were put under the "snake". Nâm hǒ:m was poured in the "snake" so that it ran down over the priest. It was also taken in water scoops and poured over the priest by both laity and other priests. During this there were several other priests nearby who chanted. [177]

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

According to the headman of the village, the ceremony used to be called sōmdét (~~ສອມເດັດ~~ សំព័ត្ត), but this word was forbidden by the government as it applies to the king. Now the ceremony is called សា (sa:). Formerly there were three parts to the ceremony: sōmdét, sa: and khru:. Now there is only sa:. This ceremony is called locally hót phrá ("to bathe the priests"). The ceremony isn't necessarily held at Songkran, but it is always held once a year for priests who have been ordained for at least two years (thus neither of the two priests at Bâ:n Mi: or the one priest at BNT was so honoured). [177/9]

Ba:j Sí: for Two Priests:

After the ritual bathing was finished, a ba:j sí: ceremony was held for the two priests with fans. These had been born in Bâ:n Mi: and were now being honoured by the village. The ceremony was held in a gaily decorated pavilion now full of gifts for the priests. This pavilion had a sign on it which read ក្រុងសំព័ត្ត (ka:ŋ 'ammuaŋ ka:n).

A Mǔ: sùat led the ceremony by chanting Brahmic "scriptures" in an admixture of Lao-Thai-Pali. This ceremony is for priests who have been ordained for a long time in order to bring them mong_khon and to "call their khwǎn".

Mr. Wichian then led by pouring "holy water" on the hands of the priests during which the mǔ: sùat chanted (in Lao). Mr. Wichian then tied the strings (ផ្កា ភ្នំ ក្រហម -fâ:j phù:k khě:n) on the wrists of the priests. He wished them well. Others then followed, donating money while doing so. Mr. Wichian announced each time money was donated, both the amount and the donor. [177]

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[176] Miscellaneous at Bâ:n Mi:

Near the pavilion was erected a small shrine for the spirits to protect the ceremony (like in ba:j sǐ: for Phrá' máhã: sěng at BNT). One person told me that this is called ห่อสังเลจ (hǒ: sāng lə:j).

The headman of Bâ:n Mi: said that priests used to be called in the N.E. ห่อหู่ (câw hũa). [176] [ห่อหู่ 176]

Communism in Tambon Khwăw:

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

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

Mr. Pha:

Mr. Wichian suggested I might use one of the people in the village as an assistant. One possibility was Mr. Pha:, who has just returned from a [177]

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[157] prolonged stay in Bangkok and is the elder brother of the fellow who just married Mr. Csk's daughter. However, though fluent in Bangkok Thai, Mr. Pha: [157/c] proved to be illiterate, and thus couldn't help me much. He worked in Bangkok five years as a wage laborer, and did many jobs, including street work and working at the Erawan Hotel.

A Walk:

We went for a walk with Mr. Ngaw around 6:00 p.m. past the fields and wells. I noticed the fields were quite broken up by dikes so only small fields remain. I asked if each of these little fields were the possessions of one person per field, but Mr. Ngaw said that many of these small fields belong to one person, and they are broken up this way to better hold the irrigation water. [158]

April 14, 1963

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

There is a plethora of colds in the village which may partially account for my own present affliction. [189]

April 14, 1963

(184) Pig Castration:

I spent early Easter morning before breakfast watching Mr. Ngaw castrate a pig (tɔ:n , ngaw). ^[184A] Several men held the pig down and tied its legs. One man knelt on its snout while others kept it from squirming, though it screamed throughout the whole process. Then Mr. Di: took a straight razor and made a small slit through the two skins of the testicles. He squeezed until he got the raw inside of the testicles out, taking it away from the skin. Then he put the skin back inside the sack and stuffed in bran to stop the bleeding. He sewed up each side with about four stitches per skin. Then the blood was washed off and the flesh rubbed with salt. There were lots of children and a few men, but no women watching.

Líang Phǐ:

During the sixth month on a Wednesday - it must be a Wednesday - there will be the ceremony of "feeding the spirits" or líang phǐ: (เลี้ยงผี) at lák myang and at the shrine of pu:ta:. The person who leads the ceremony is called the khacam (ช่าง). This person is Mr. Ta:p, the blacksmith from khùm Jāj (he was the one who led the propitiation of the village spirits during the wát fair).

The feeding of phǐ: must include one chicken, rice and rice wine. The people say lāw hǎj káj to: (เลี้ยงหนึ่งไก่ - Lao), meaning "one chicken, one bottle of wine". They also worship with candles, flowers and incense. Mr. Ngaw told me that each household will bring offerings, but most would offer (as is the custom) a mixture of chaff and ashes. [185]

14/4/63

1 Add

khacam should correctly be khácâm (ค้ำค้ำ)

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[192] Thieves and Pursuers:

About 4:30 p.m., two men from a village quite a distance on the other side of Sarakham came into the village. They were looking for three head of cattle which had been stolen from their village three days ago. We had seen the remaining two head come through the village an our or so before. The thieves had eaten the one small calf, but the other two were still alive. The worth of these cattle was B800 for the two mature head and B200 for the calf. I didn't quite understand why they didn't continue their pursuit, for they stopped and had a drink with Mr. Ngaw and then returned home.

In the evening we sat outside and had a long conversation with Mr. Ngaw and Mr. Pha:.

Mr. Ngaw:

When Mr. Ngaw was in Bangkok he lived, ate and worked for Chinese, though he is not Chinese. After living in Bangkok, he says that white rice is sãbã:j kwã:, though he eats sticky rice as his daily diet in the village and prefers rice noodles more than anything. When he returned to the Northeast, he had quite a bit of capital and wanted to go into business, unlike his family who are farmers. He chose BNT because it didn't have a rice mill or store. He also has a close relative in BNT, an older sister who is married to a man of BNT and who lived here five-six years before he came. However, he said her being here had no bearing on his choice of BNT. Incidentally, his older sister's husband reversed the usual pattern by living in the village of his birth rather than moving to his wife's village. Both Mr. Pha: and Mr. Ngaw pointed this out. Mr. Pha: says that a young couple should live, at least two months with his wife's family. [170]

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[141] Mr. Pha:

Mr. Pha: is planning to get married during the sixth month to a girl from Bâ:n Khô:k Nô:j (ບັນ ກ໌ ກ໌ ນ໌ ຈ໌). He will go to live with her family. The wedding will be held - along with other marriages in BNT - on the second day of May, which is the tenth day of the waxing of the moon. All weddings must be held on either the tenth day of the waxing or the tenth day of the waning of the moon of the fourth, sixth, and twelfth months (also the eighth).

Concepts of Government:

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

Mr. Ngaw asked who "President Eisenhower" was? At first I didn't understand the name, and he went on to ask if he was the President of China. When I explained he was a former president, and Kennedy is now president, Mr. Pha: asked if they were brothers. [142]

April 15, 1963

[111] Holy Days:

Mr. Ngàw says that wan phrá' is called wan sǐn in the local language and today is wan sǐnnó:j and tomorrow (really wan phrá') is wan sǐn jàj. Thus, there are two merit-making days per week, though there are no ceremonies at the wát. [112]

Food Anxieties and Implications:

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

This food anxiety has been expressed by Mr. Ngàw before. He said that villagers don't like to keep cats because "when there isn't enough food for people, than how can they feed cats?" Dogs eat rice and thus are not so big a drain and they serve the useful function of being watchdogs. However, dogs in the village are generally underfed. [112]

April 16, 1963

[170] The following is a reorganization of the data collected on April 13, 14, and 15 during our stay in the village during Sǒṅkra:n.

Sǒṅkra:n

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

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

First Day (April 13):

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

About 3:15 in the afternoon, the drum in the wât was struck to call the villagers to come and sǒṅ phrá' or Sǒṅ ná:m phrá' (สงกรานต์ พิธีน้ำพูน) - that is to ceremonially bathe Buddhist images with ná:m hǒ:m (น้ำพูน) (water mixed with cumin). This ceremony is held every day during sǒṅkra:n and is one of the [170]

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[180] distinctive features of the festival. Apparently the ritual bathing of the priests which we had observed in Bâ:n Mi: in the morning (see notes of April 13, 1963) is also a sǒk^hkra:n custom. For the bathing of the images, a small pavilion was built near the bò:t. The images were removed from the bò:t and placed in the pavilion. This bathing of the images takes place on all three days of the ceremonies and was also held at the kù: festivities the week before (see notes of April 9, 1963) and in every village we visited during the ceremonies. Though the gong rang at 3:15 it wasn't for a couple hours more that people started coming to do the ritual bathing. I believe that the ritual bathing is also connected with the traditional water throwing during sǒk^hkra:n.

Mr. Ngaw said young people particularly enjoyed going paj lèn to B. Thâ: tu:m or B. Mi: where there are many activities and opportunities for courting. He said that in previous years there were more events in BNT (last year especially in Khùm Bâ:n Khwǎw Nó:j where there was much horse play and water throwing among young people, but this year there were more activities drawing the young people away from the village.

For the special occasion the villagers had made khà:w pū'n (Lao for rice noodles), which are much prized among the villagers as better than rice.

The village remained relatively quiet throughout the afternoon, with occasional screams which indicated that young people and children were throwing water. Some children were using water guns made of bamboo. This instrument had a small hole in the closed end of the tube. At the other end was a larger hold. Into this hole was placed a smaller stick with something wrapped around the end to make it fit tight. This stick was removed to fill the tube with water. Then the stick was placed back into the level of the water. When this stick is pushed, the water is forced out under pressure through the small hole. [181]

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[150] The instrument looks like this:



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

Second Day (April 14):

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

Mr. Ngaw again said there was very little ka:n lên in BNT this year because of the fair in Bâ:n Mi:. This is understandable, for when it gets dark in BNT it is too dark to dance or do anything else, while an electric-lit fair would be a great attraction. There was a little drum playing and fun making in BNT during the late afternoon. [151/2]

Third Day (April 15):

In the late morning and afternoon, the young people were out playing a game called lên hĩa (เล่นหิ้ว). This consisted of dividing into two sides; one of boys, the other of girls with a single boy assisting them. One side is "at bat" while the other side is "in the field". A small thick stick about 4 inches by 3 inches is placed on the ground. A "batter" from the one side comes up and stands with the small stick - the "ball" - between his feet. Then swinging a [152]

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[152] longer stick - about 3 feet in length - the "bat" - with both hands between his legs, he hits the "ball" toward the opposite side. If the "ball" went up into the air and was caught by a member of the opposite side (men catching the "ball" with their hands, women with a ^{phâ:khâ:w má:} phâ:khâ:wma: held out from one shoulder to form a "cradle") the "batter" was "out". If it wasn't caught in the air, then the person who recovered the "ball" would take it and move to the center of the "court" and pitch the "ball" at the "bat" which had been placed lengthwise facing the opposing team. If the "ball" hit the "bat" then the "batter" was "out". However, if the "ball" missed the "bat", then the "batter" would take the "ball" and throw it a short distance toward the opposite side. A member of the opposite side would then "pitch" the "ball" - usually on the ground where the "batter" would be waiting swinging the "bat" on the ground. If the "batter" succeeded in hitting the "ball", then he had another opportunity to throw the "ball" out to be "pitched". Once he missed, however, he was "out". Each side stood until all its players had had a turn at "batting", or in other words until each player was "out".

What rather surprised me about this game was that the priest and novices were also playing. The priest had removed his outer garments to be free to play. The young girls had no hesitancy about throwing water or physically striking the ^[152/152] novices. One of the novices had a drum which he used to give a musical accompaniment to the festivities.

About 2:00 that afternoon, we went with Mr. Ngaw to visit T. Thâ:tu:m (ท. ทิว ฤๅ), first visiting the village where he comes from and where his parents live, namely B. Nõ:η Khâ: (บ. นโๅว ฤๅ). This is a village of about 100 households. I was interested that Mr. Ngaw's family are strictly farmers, i.e. there is no appearance of trading or business. The village has [153]

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[153] far more fruits and vegetables than BNT, and we were treated to coconut water, fresh coconut meat, special bananas which are very delicious and sell for a salyn each in Sarakham. To top off the hospitality, when we left we were given peanuts, papaya, coconuts, squash and sweet potatoes by the family.

We also visited the village wát, which is very interesting because it has a nearly-completed new bò:t. On the facade of the building is a very interesting scene depicting Hanuman, the Monkey God of the Ramayana, coming after the Buddha with a knife - a graphic representation on the synthesis of Buddhism and Brahmanism. I asked Mr. Ngàw why this village has a new bò:t when it doesn't seem any richer or bigger than BNT. He answered that the abbot - a monk of many years - is very zealous. He has made it his goal since becoming abbot to get a new bò:t built. This abbot is very interesting because he lives part of his time in a wát in Sarakham and the rest of the time in the village. Mr. Ngàw refers to this abbot as 'a:ca:n or 'a:ca:n jàj (because he is an important monk, in this case an abbot). [193/4]

Mr. Ngàw explained that he had been ordained for three "Lents", part of his time in this wát and part of his time in Thâ: tu:m.

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

We then went on to Thâ: tu:m, the tambon centre of some 300 households. This village is beautifully situated on the Chi: River. Here there was a much larger traditional sǒnkra:n festival going on. They had had and were now having such diverse activities as feeding the phĩ:, sǒn phrá', storytelling, dancing [184]

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[184] (where the boys and girls actually touch each other), and various games for the young people. Mr. Ngaw explained that the dancing and games for the young people are only held during Songkra:n and at no other time of the year.

One game which we saw is called lên ka:n ti: khli: (เล่นการตีลิ้). This could be roughly translated as "polo". It is played by two teams, both mixed sexes, and is played in a small field surrounded by the dikes. Each player is equipped with a stick which should be shaped like a golf club or polo stick (many were in fact just sticks of about 2 1/2 to 3 feet in length). The principle, as in polo, is to beat a "ball" (in this case a wooden unrounded object) across the field to make a goal. In this case, making a goal_[184/5] consisted in getting the "ball" across the dike. However, instead of having "goalies" to protect one's goal, there were players at the end where goals were to be made to assist in getting the ball across when the teammates had got it to the end of the field. The number who can play seem expandable and teams are not balanced for number.

We also saw another game being played by young boys and girls. This was called lên nǎ:n khru: (เล่นขนทราย). The participants mainly stand in a circle in pairs.



There are two other participants not in the formation. One person is "IT" as in Western "Tag". The other person is "free". The "free" person must prevent being tagged. He is "safe" when he goes and stands in front of a pair, thus making the person behind, i.e. the last person "free". As soon as a "free" person has been tagged, then the "IT" person becomes "free" and the "free" person "It". [185]

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[145] However, the game has more than one purpose. The boys and girls get a great kick out of really giving one another a smack (often on the behind), such customs of boys and girls touching usually not being tolerated. If both the "It" and the "Free" persons are of the same sex they will work in coordination so that "It" can tag a person of the opposite sex. Sometimes if a boy is "It" and really gives a ^[146/6] girl a smack on the behind, she will go and give him several blows despite the fact that he has become "safe".

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

At Thâ: tu:m we also saw the shrine of pù:ta: which is located right next to the wát. We also met a priest from Bangkok who used to be the head monk at Thâ: tu:m wát and was Mr. Ngaw's mentor at that wát. However, he is now in a "Lao" wát in Bangkok. [156]

20 April 1963



ที่ ๓๒๕ / ๒๕๐๖

วิทยาลัยกรมศาสรคาม

๒๐ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖

เรื่อง ขอเชิญเป็นเกียรติปกครอง

เรียน **มิสเตอร์โคย์และมิสซิสโคย์**

อ้างถึง หนังสือวิทยาลัยที่ ๒๒๕ / ๒๕๐๖ ลงวันที่ ๔ มีนาคม ๒๕๐๖

ตามหนังสือที่อ้างถึง วิทยาลัยได้ขอเรียนเชิญท่านเพื่อไปเป็นเกียรติ
ปกครองอบรมวิชาหัตถศึกษาในวันที่ ๒๕ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖ เวลา ๑๖.๐๐ น. นั้น
หน่วยอบรมมีความจำเป็นต้องเลื่อนเวลาปกครองอบรมเป็นวันที่ ๒๕ เมษายน ๒๕๐๖
เวลา ๑๓.๐๐ น. จึงได้เรียนเชิญมาเพื่อโปรดทราบ หวังว่าคงได้รับความร่วมมือ
ด้วยดี ขอขอบคุณอย่างสูงมา ณ โอกาสนี้.

ขอแสดงความนับถือ

(นายประณต พรชัย)

ประธานกรรมการอบรมหัตถศึกษามหาสารคาม.

แนบท้าย "ชุดตรวจการหรือสากล"

April 24, 1963

[192] Economic Activities:

This time of the year is kapok harvesting time. I have seen people in the village as well as in surrounding villages taking the kapok from the pods and stuffing it into sacks to be sold in the market. There are two types of kapok, one of which is called "red kapok". Mrs. Wichian makes kapok mattresses with the kapok she buys from BNT. She buys it for B2.50 per kilo.

Animism:

I had a long interview with Mr. Ta:p concerning specialists in animism in BNT (Mr. Wichian acted as interpreter). He is himself the khàw câm (เขี้ยวคำ) - Mr. Wichian's spelling) which is as near I can figure out to the intercessor between the village and the spirits of the village, i.e. pù:ta:. He has held this position for ten years and will continue to hold it for life. He said he was "chosen" by the villagers ten years ago. He then succeeded his father who had just died. [192/3]

I asked Mr. Ta:p what his responsibilities were. Primarily he is the intercessor for the village with the village gods. He must make presentations to these gods at least once a year, - at the lîaŋ phĩ: ceremony which is called lîaŋ bâ:n in the village. However, he also will approach the gods at other times if there is to be an event affecting the whole village or if something bad has befallen the whole village. He certainly stands at the apex of the whole village's relationship to the village gods. [193]

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[193] He is also the earthly guard of the village gods' domain. If someone invades this domain to cut trees or take earth or in any other way desecrates the gods' property, then Mr. Tà:p must determine a punishment which will placate the gods or some evil will befall the desecraters. Usually, the way that such violations are revealed is by the illness of some person who has committed a violation. In order to regain their health, they will confess to Mr. Tà:p who then will set a fine, - usually the gift of food and/or liquor. However, sometimes it will be money which may be used to buy fireworks to "worship" the gods.

Mr. Tà:p is not the only one in the village concerned with animistic practices. The Mǔ: sùat who performs the sù:khwǎn ceremonies is also a mǔ: phǐ: or mǔ: tham (นางอธรรม) as he is called locally.

Mr. Tà:p's wife is a mǔ: phǐ: fá: (นางผีฟ้า) similar to the woman from B. Khwǎw whom I observed at the bedside of the sick wife of Mr. Cak (see notes of April 5, 1963). There are other words for phǐ: fá:, viz. thaj thəŋ (นางเท้ง) and phǐ: sǒŋ (นางสง). The primary duties of a mǔ: phǐ: fá:, who may be either a man or woman, concerns that of villagers' health. Mr. Wichian contrasted this person's duties with that of a "doctor" by saying that a mǔ: phǐ: fá: must keep up the "morale" (กำลังใจ) of the sick person. When a person is ill, this person will go and dance to the accompaniment of Northeastern khe:n music. Then she will try to contact the ancestral phǐ: (phǐ: sýa in the local language. (N.B. This is the same word as "butterfly" in Thai). She will then ask the ancestral spirits what the demand is so that they will leave the sick person alone. Their demands may be the ordination of some relative so that merit will accrue to the ancestors, some other merit-making act, a baŋsākun, etc., or a combination of things. [194]

24 April 1963

2 Add.

I can't find the word thai thoeng (thoeng) in either Thai or
Lao dictionaries. It is possible that the first word is thai (thai),
'to prophesy...' (McF.)

April 24, 1963

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[144]

The mǔ: phǐ: fá: must always be willing to go to a sick person and to go as often as she is requested. No matter how often she goes, she will never charge more than a total of $\text{฿}4.00$.

It is interesting that the wife of Mr. Csk who has been ill for some ten months first was "treated" by the wife of Mr. Tà:p but is now being treated by a mǔ: phǐ: fá: from B. Khwāw.

An animistic ceremony called tǒppà tha:j (တုပဲ:ကလ) is held at lāk bā:n or by:bā:n (ပိဝ်ဘဲ) some 30 days after sǒkra:n. At this time piles of a soil are made - and that was as far as I got. [144/5]

Schedule of Events:

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

Monday, April 29, 7th day of waxing of the moon, 6th month: ceremony of putting bones in the thàt and mǔ:lammu: postponed.

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

Wednesday, May 1, 9th day of waxing of the moon, 7th month: līaŋ bā:n postponed.

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

Tuesday, May 7, 15th day of waxing of the moon, 6th month: ordination postponed. [145]

24 April 1963

3 Add.

Although Reinhorn indicates under ๗๗๕ (p.301) that there is a word
๗๗๕, he lists no such word. It is probable that the word is cognate with
Thai ๗๗๕ (thai'), 'to prophesy; foretell by divination...' (McF.) MW in both
Lao & Thai means 'to ~~hit~~ slap, bat, hit with the hand' (McF, Reinhorn).

๗๗๕ (Lao ๗๗๕) means 'navel' (Reinhorn). ๗๗๕ must then mean
'navel of the village'.

thāt : should be thāt (๗๗๕)

"sakavichā" = ?

April 28, 1963

Made a trip to Kho:nkz:n.

28 April 1963

สุขสันต์ สุขสมบูรณ์
ขอกราบลาอุปสมบท ณ พัทธสีมา วัดศรีจันทร์ทราวาส
อำเภอเมือง จังหวัดขอนแก่น
ในวันอาทิตย์ที่ 28 เมษายน 2506
เวลา 9.30 น.
กรรมใดที่ได้ล่วงเกินท่านด้วย กายกรรม วาจกรรม มโนกรรม
ขอท่านได้โปรดอโหสิกรรมแก่ข้าพเจ้าด้วย

April 29, 1963

[115] Death:

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

Funeral Rites:

I was seated in the house when I saw a "procession" pass by carrying a casket. I naturally enquired about this and learned there was to be a cremation for Mrs. Tq:n who had died the day before. [195/6]

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

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

I have used the word "procession" advisally, for though a large number of villagers were making their way toward pà:chá:, they were ^{divided} ~~dived~~ into groups of 10 or so and these groups were wending their own ways. The only "procession" in reality was that of the priests with sun parasols followed by [146]

April 29, 1963

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four males carrying the coffin on a litter.

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



[196/7]

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

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

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

The priests present included those from the wát, phrá'màhă:sěng, a young male relative of the woman (a son?) who had just been ordained to make merit for this relative, and a priest from another village. They now chanted a short chant.

The casket was then borne aloft by the pall bearers and a small procession led by the priest-relative proceeded to circumambulate around the pyre. The canopy had been removed and on one of the posts which had supported [197]

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[17] the roof was attached a fish-net. This the priest-relative used as a lead for he held this as he led the procession around the pyre. They circled three times - the exact place of starting being commented upon and shouted out to the procession by the on-lookers. The group was not allowed to proceed any further once it had returned to its starting place.

Then the fish-net was removed and the casket was struck three times against the side ^[197/2] of the pyre. It was then placed on top of the pyre.

A male relative then mounted to the top of the pyre and removed the loose clothes, fans and perhaps other things from the casket. These he threw onto the pyre. Then he removed the shroud and lifting up the body, removed the mat upon which the body was lying. This mat was laid at the bottom of the pyre. Then some "packages" of what are known as sāk'anitca: (๑-๕๗๗) were laid on the casket. These are "presents for the dead".

The shroud was then thrown back and forth across the casket and pyre. This shroud must touch the ground as on one occasion one of the throwers caught the cloth. He then dropped it and then picked it up again and threw it.

Finally two large logs were laid, leaning against the pyre on either side (I think to support the casket from falling). Then the pyre was lit by the priests and people who then stood back a good distance away to watch. However, the people were on the whole more interested in other things such as searching out red ant eggs than watching the burning. When it was obvious that the consumption would be complete, most of the people left, leaving only a few to tend the fire.

I saw only one person really mourning, and that was the woman who prepared the food for the corpse. She cried a bit. As for the rest of the [40]

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3 Add

sāk ʔanitca: : ສັກອັນຕົວ /sāk ʔnitcā / (?)

ອັນຕົວ (~~ອັນຕົວ~~) (Lao ອັນຕົວ =) impermanent, unstable (McF., Reinhorn)

ອັນຕົວ 'an exclamation of sympathy, sorrow, or disappointment in the transitoriness of life and perishable of all things' (McF.)

ອັນຕົວຕາຍ (Lao ອັນຕົວຕາຍ = ອັນຕົວຕາຍ) 'death (of a nobleman)' (McF., Reinhorn)

sāk, perhaps < ສັກຕາຍ (Lao ສັກຕາຍ) 'an offering or tribute manifesting reverence towards, or respect for' (McF., also Reinhorn). cf. ສັກຕາຍຕາຍ 'to present offerings at a cremation' (McF.)

I have also thought that sāk < (perhaps) ອັນຕົວ (Lao ອັນຕົວ), 'corpse', in which case it would be pronounced sā:k. But I think (< ສັກຕາຍ) is more reasonable.

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[197] on-lookers who were primarily men, they were in a rather gay mood and went around gathering plants and red ant eggs in a place which they wouldn't ordinarily come to because of the fear of the phǐ: which inhabit the area. [198/9]

Other Customs at the Time of a Death:

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

On the evening of the funeral and for two subsequent evenings there is a "fun-making" ngan held at the houses of the dead persons. These "wakes" are held to cheer up the family of the dead person and to take their minds off their loss. Young people are the main attendants at these nga:n. These occasions give young boys and girls the opportunity to play together and make merry - a kind of communal courting. There was the playing of games and in one house mǒ:lammù: and khæ:n music. (See further on for description of games). We visited both the house in Khun BKN and the one in Khum jàj.

Death of an Infant:

At about 6:00 in the evening three or four people passed again on their way to the cemetery. It seems the infant daughter of Mr. Sǒm Tháptha:ni: (สมทพทณี) aged 3-4 days old had died. They live in H.H. No. 27. In this case there were essentially no rites - the infant was buried immediately. There was no cremation and there was no wake afterwards. Mr. Ngaw said that when a child dies, its khwan was not secure and that the baby hadn't yet attained the status of a human being. [199]

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[200] Sale of Kapok:

According to the villagers there are several types of kapok.

Mr. Hq:m (หอม) for example said there are two types.

<u>Type.</u>	<u>Village sale price.</u>
<u>mángiŋ lq̄:t</u> (มั่งจิ่ง หลอด)	฿1.80 per kilo
<u>mángiŋ daè:ng</u> (มั่งจิ่ง หนอง)	฿2.00 per kilo

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

Mr. Nq̄:j:

Had a visit from Mr. Nq̄:j, the young man from Khum Law whom I have
been considering as a possible assistant. He lived 3-4 years in Vientiane
where he worked for some Filipinos. His elder sister was married to a Lao
army soldier. However, she was not happy with him and has now returned to
BNT. Nq̄:j himself has been married. His wife lives in Ba:n ^{Khawaw} ~~Khaw~~. He too
was unhappy and so returned home. He is 23 years old.

Belief in Phĩ:

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

I said I understood the worst kind of phĩ: is the spirit of a
woman who has died in childbirth. Mr. Phon confirmed this and said there [200]

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[200] had been one of these phi:^[200/1] in BNT a few years ago. However, it is now gone. However, there is one of these phi: in Ban Khwaw presently. Mr. Ngaw, in this regard, referred to a famous Thai movie of a few years past concerning this type of phi:. (See Bangkok World, Sunday Supplement, 21 April 1963, "Phi: are where you find them".)

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

I asked if the the:wada: and phi: are the same and the answer was no. Mr. Phon said there were hardly any the:wada: in the village.

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

Games:

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

1. Drawing of Straws: This is very similar to that in the West. One player - always a man - prepares three straws - a long, a medium and a short. He then holds them so that the three tops are exposed at equal length with one another and the bottoms are covered with his hand. He then asks another player - always a girl - to draw after he has said "long", "short" or "medium". If she draws the correct one drawn, she wins: if not he wins. [201]

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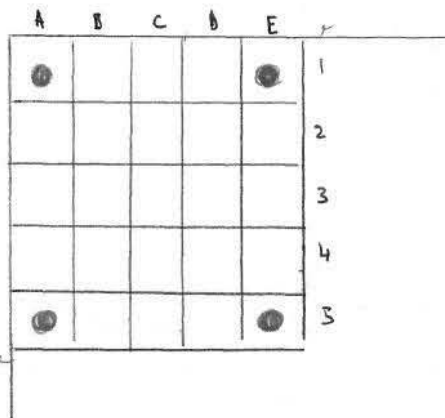
7

[2014]

[201] The winner gets to strike the other λ on the knee (and they use hefty blows!)

The variation on this game is that there are two "sides" each consisting of a number of boys and a number of girls, though there are only two major participants. If the girl draws correctly then all the girls get to hit all the boys and vice versa if she doesn't draw correctly.

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



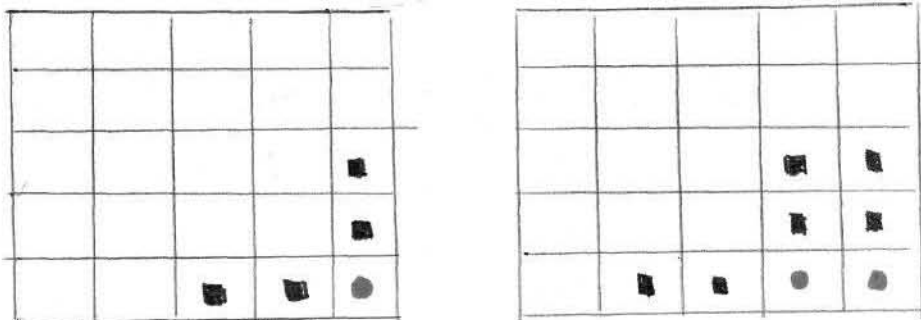
four corners are "tigers". The player with the "pig" counters can place his counters anywhere on the board one at a time. For one play of a "pig", the "tigers" can - one at a time - be moved one space vertically or horizontally but not diagonally. Thus for example, say a "pig" is played at C3, then a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

A "tiger" can "eat" a "pig" if a "tiger" and a "pig" are on adjacent squares and there is no counter - either a "tiger" or "pig" - on the square in a direct line on the other side of the "pig". "Pigs" cannot eat "tigers", but "tigers" may "die" if cornered. Thus if a "tiger" is caught in squares [202]

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[102] A1, A5, E1, E5 so that they can't move, then they will "die". Similarly if two or three "tigers" are caught in a corner, say one in E5 and another in [103/2] D5, then both will die. However, this is rarely the case. The object of



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

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

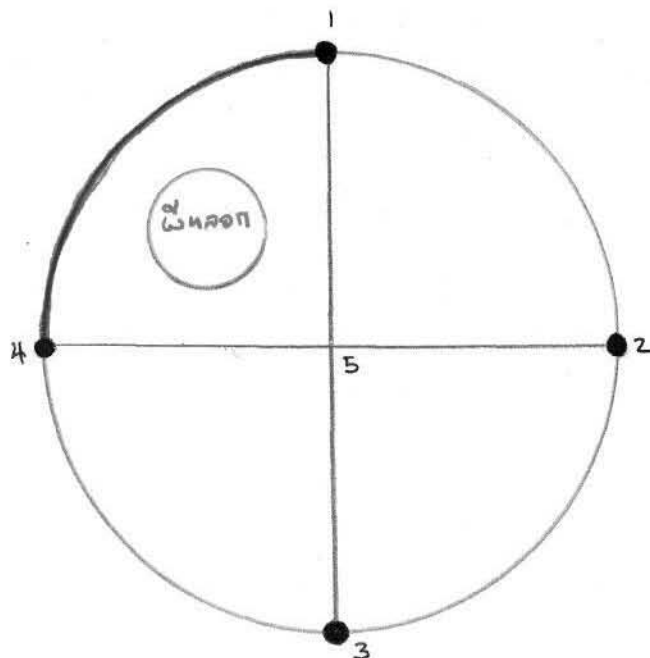
A tiger can only eat one pig at a time. [103/4]

3. Kôe:ng ta: we:n (⁹ក្រែង តា: វេ:ន) : In this game there are two players each with two counters. They play on a board as follows: [104]

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[704]



Black and green represent the counters of the two players respectively. The words in the small circle mean "haunted". The counters can move along the lines in any direction except from 1 to 4 or 4 to 1 (indicated by the red part of the large circle). Each player may move a single counter, one at a time along any of the other lines. The object is to manoeuvre one's own counters in such a way that one's opponent's counters cannot be moved except along the line 4-1 or 1-4. Such is the case when green is at 5 and 3 and black is at 1 and 4. [I think the latter should read when green is at 1 & 2 and black is at 5 and 3] [704/5]

Gamblers:

Near the house of the dead Mrs. Tq:m where we went for the "wake", we ran into a group of gamblers or nák ka:n phānan (นักกาหนาน). This was a group of men. They were somewhat flustered when Mr. Phon came (he was with us) as gambling is illegal. However, they continued. I had heard references to women gamblers earlier in the evening. Mr. Ngaw says that sometimes people lose over ฿100.00. There was one case where a game was [215]

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[12] worth over ฿5000.00.

People use the stones of the tamarind which are divided in half. One side is "white" and the other "black". Several of these are shaken in a cup together and then turned out. The men bet on whether the majority will be "white" or "black". [105]

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[75] Cost of Village Items:

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

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

Mr. La:

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

Mr. Ngaw's "Wife":

Jane had a conversation with Mr. Ngaw's wife Nuan. She is 17 years old. Mr. Ngaw said she was 18. Her mother Mrs. Ho:m Somphithak (โฮ่ม สัมพันธ์ศักดิ์), looks after the pigs for Mr. Ngaw. Nuan's father died when she was still a student and she left school at the age of 10. She has one older brother aged 19 and four younger siblings. Her sister Duan is 14, and her youngest brother That is 7. The other two younger siblings are also boys.

Jane says that she guesses that Mr. Ngaw provides rice and charcoal for the mother in return for her care of the pigs and Nuan's work, but this is only a surmise. [76]

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

Sarakham Liquor:

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

Bà:p ("sin"):

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

On the question of bà:p, Mr. Ngaw was quite adamant about killing. Killing a horse, buffalo or cow bring much demerit (and killing a man, of course, much more). However, killing a chicken brings much less and killing insects brings an almost insignificant amount (except for monks). Nonetheless, this attitude is interesting when one considers that the villagers do their own slaughtering. [206]

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[27] In a sense, the attitude towards "merit" and "demerit" is essentially one of not letting one's "enjoyment of life" (sanuk) be spoiled by too close observance of religious prescription. If one is really vitally concerned about "merit", then one should (for men, at least) become a monk for life. And even in the monkhood, a certain amount of worldliness enters in. The villager is concerned about being born in a better state or at least in as good a state in the next life, but he doesn't believe that he can jump from this life to Nirvana. The reductio ad absurdum of the "merit-making" idea is that everyone should be a monk all his life (at least for men). But the exigencies of perpetuating a social community offset this. Once this principle has been rejected, other things can be tempered accordingly. [27]

HISTORICAL NOTES ON B.N.T.

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

BNT:

- 1) Originally, ~~Tambon Khwao was called~~ ~~it~~ (at least 27 years ago),
Amphā:
~~Amphā~~ Myang was known as Amphā: Tā-lā:t (1927).
- 2) In 2477-80, BNT was mū: thî: 20 of T. Khwao.
- 3) In 2481-, BNT was mū: thî: 16 of T. Khwao.