

Charles F. Keyes Field Notebooks, Thailand

Written July 14 through August 25, 1967.

This document contains field notes written in Mahasarakham Province (Changwat Maha Sarakham) and Amphoe Mae Sariang, Mae Hong Son Province (Changwat Mae Hong Son) when Charles F. Keyes and E. Jane Keyes began conducting fieldwork in July and August 1967. This document is followed by field notes written in Mae Sariang in September, 1967.

Mahasarakham

July 14, 1967

Traveled to Mahasarakham today by new road – makes traveling much easier. In Mahasarakham stayed at the irrigation department's guest house – arranged by Mrs. Chuanphit Thongthawi whose husband, Nukun, is in the irrigation department.

Conversation with Nukun Thongthawi

He thinks that there are now lots of Communists in the Northeast, though not in MK. Rather they are in the mountains [Phuphan Mts. in Kalasin, Sakon Nakhon, and Nakhon Phanom provinces], including in Kalasin province. He thinks that Communists are mainly young men who are in search of ways to better themselves. The Communists promise them the opportunities of being Nai Amphoe or other types of government officials when otherwise they could not be. It is now dangerous to travel in certain parts of the NE, though not in Mahasarakham.

I asked about the Americans in the Northeast – won't this lead many to dislike Americans. Nukun answered no, because Thai don't judge all people by what one person does. But, I said, he is more sophisticated – that is, villagers wouldn't think like this. But he still thinks that villagers won't turn against Americans because of the presence of the army. Also, Thailand has never been a colony; this helps in keeping Thai from turning against Americans.

I spoke about making a study of the *cao müang* in the NE. Nukun says that this should be done rapidly because all the old men who about it are dying off. His own family is descended from the *cao müang* family of Kalasin. [Nai Bunchuai Atthakon, Lord Mayor of Mahasarakham and a descendant of the *cao müang* family of Mahasarakham, said in a later interview that Nukun was descended through the female side – his FaMo (father's mother).] Nai Kwang Thongthawi,

formerly an MP from MK and Kalasin, was his uncle. He has another relative who is a judge who wears a traditional *phanung* in court.

Nukun is thinking about applying for a job with USAID in Laos because he wants foreign experience. He has traveled to the Philippines in conjunction with his work.

Bān Nōng Tūn

July 15, 1967

Visit to Bān Nōng Tūn

We traveled to Bān Nōng Tūn this afternoon after the villagers were already aware that we had returned. One woman from *Kum Wat* (Bān Nōng Tūn) had seen us in the morning when we were eating at Chuanphit's restaurant – she had been on the way to the hospital to visit her dad. In consequence, Ngao came to MK where he found us at lunch time at the same restaurant.

Family of Mae Hōm

Ngao is building a new house across from Nai Hōm's house (in the place where the old store was and where the family who moved out just before we left had lived). Ngao now has two children, both girls.

Duan married the son of Nai Hōm. She and her husband are living in the house of Māē Hōm. She has a child about one month old, which she had to have at the hospital. Ngao said that many women must have their first baby at the hospital because it is difficult.

Muan is also married to some girl from KW and lives in his parents-in-law household.

Other people

Nin has built a new house across from his parents-in-law compound – next to the house of Nai Som.

Phô Sīhā and Phô Cek are still alive, but Phô Phan (KL) has died.

Nai Chai is still called *phūchuai* [refers to his being the assistant headman], which suggests that despite the incident of killing someone's buffalo just before we left the village had not resulted in his losing his job. Of course, since the *phūchuai* is appointed by the headman, it is possible that Headman Phon would not want to do anything which would alienate anyone.

Phon is still the headman. I mentioned that when Tosh Yatsushiro had visited the village, he had had been told (or so he reported in his notes) that Lāē Čantharüang was now headman.

Villagers laughed at this and one man said that this might be because villagers referred to him as the ‘big man’ of the village [referring to his large size]. Phon has built an extension on to his house. His daughter, Thông Yū, is now married, has children, and is living with Phon.

I asked Ngao about Nai Sao. He is still living in BNT in the same house, but is not well [which I confirmed the following day when we met him]. I asked if he had ever remarried and Ngao seemed amazed at the question and shook his head emphatically.

Buddhism

There are now three novices and three monks at the wat. *Buat nāk* was held a few days ago. [This is the period of ordinations – many in town and we could not find some of our friends because they were attending ordinations. The last possible day for ordination is July 22nd which is *wan khao phansā*.]

Education

The village now has a new school building which I noticed when we arrived in the village.

Bān Khwao & Bān Nông Tūn

July 16, 1967

Cheunchai Voramitra

We visited Bān Khwao and Bān Nông Tūn together with Mr. Cheunchai and two of his sons. He invited himself along – he tries hard to ingratiate himself with us, but he also tries to use us. He had not visited Bān Nông Tūn since we left and, thus, had not seen the new school.

Bān Khwao

I asked Cheunchai what *khwao* means. He says it is the name of a tree.

We stopped first in B. Khwao at the home of the *kamnan*. He had made a trip to Taiwan under the auspices of USOM, I believe. In consequence of his visit there, he had constructed an ingenious type of stove modeled on a type seen in Taiwan. This stove uses natural gas which is obtained from cow and buffalo dung. The whole rig cost 568 baht. Despite its cheapness, it seems so complicated that I doubt it will be copied by other people. In fact, I had the impression that the one the *kamnan* has is used only to display to visitors (there is a big sign outside his house in Thai and English announcing the existence of this device) [After I had returned to

Bangkok I mentioned to Tosh Yatsushiro that I doubted whether the dung-gas stove would become popular. He agreed because wood (and charcoal) is cheap in Thailand. In other places such as India or China, he said, it might be a very useful device.]

Khrū Bunthiang

Khrū Bunthiang arrived at the house of the *kamnan*. He was very friendly and apologetic about not having written us. “Too busy,” he said.

Other People

We also met Khrū Orawan, her husband, Khon Phaicit [the head of the tobacco station at B. Khwao], Khrū Thōngmuan, and Khrū Buaphā (not yet married).

People in Bān Nōng Tūn

Mr. Hōm still plants rice in B. Dôn Dū where he owns land in consequence of his marriage to a woman from there.

Mr. Sao is a ‘distant’ relative of headman Phon. He definitely looks unwell – very thin and unshaven.

There are now two stores in the village. The second one is run by the daughter of Mr. Lāē Cantharūng in KY.

Mr. Phrommā no longer has a rice mill. He sold it to someone in a village near the friendship school.

Phô Cek’s daughter has remarried and has another child.

Sponsoring a *Thôt Kathin*

We are trying to arrange to sponsor a *thôt kathin* (ทอดกฐิน) in Bān Nōng Tūn, but appears that Phô Sīhā has already ‘bespoken’ (*cōng*, จอง) for the opportunity to sponsor the ritual. While we were in the village, several village elders had a meeting at the house of Mother Hōm – including HM Phon, Mr. Tāp, Mr. Phrommā, Mr. Chāi, Mr. Hōm, Phô Sīhā, Mr. Lū and several others whom I did not see. They decided that if another wat in a nearby village can be found where Phô Sīhā can sponsor a *thôt kathin*, I will be able to sponsor the one in Bān Nōng Tūn.

Otherwise I will sponsor a *phīthī phāpā* (ทอดผ้าป่า) which is similar to a *thōt kathin*. As I recall, such ceremonies are rare in the NE.

Mahasarakham

July 17, 1967

Conversation with Bunchuai Atthakôn

This morning Mr. Cheunchai took me to meet Nai Bunchuai Atthakôn, Lord Mayor of Mahasarakham. He welcomed me very warmly. I spoke to him briefly about *cao müang*, but quite frankly, I found it difficult to understand him. As much as I could follow, he didn't say much more than I had already learned from his book, other than the fact about Nukun's relationship to the *cao müang* of Kalasin (see above). Most of the time he and Cheunchai talked about a coming summer in-training program to be held for teachers from three provinces in Mahasarakham. Towards the end of the conversation, I mentioned the fact that more people in BNT knew his name and the name of Atthakôn than knew the name of the Nai Amphoe or Governor. He said that this wasn't surprising because district officers and governors come and go, but he remains constant. Also, he mentioned that since he had been elected before as an MP, people knew him. He said that if the governor were elected, more people would know him. I said that it would be a good thing if provincial and district leaders were elected because people would feel closer to them. He agreed and gave a little spiel in favor of elections.

Meeting with Ācān Wisān

We met Ācān Wisān this morning at the Teachers' College. We presented him with a set of prints by Prince Naret which he thanked us very nicely for and proceeded to explain each picture (from the *Jātaka* tales). We also presented him with a set of books by 'Sathian Koset' and by Direk Jayanama for the school's library. These he was very pleased with and showed them around to the teachers later when we had lunch at the school canteen.

In turn, he presented us with two books – one written in honor of his 60th birthday in February and the other in honor of Armed Forces Day which was on the 18th (tomorrow). (the latter would bring school reserve units from Kalasin, Roi-et, and Mahasarakham for a parade and a day of speeches and *ngān*). He also presented both Jane and me with a tie-clasp which had been made in honor of his 60th birthday.

Ācān Wisān will retired in October and then go to live with one of his children in Bangkok. He had remembered that before he had said he planned to live in Khorat where he had his house. But he now thinks that he knows no one in Khorat and would not feel happy living there.

Education in Mahasarakham

I asked Mr. Cheunchai several questions about education. Now that there had been a transfer of primary education from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Interior, primary education falls under the responsibility of changwat and district officials (that, members of the Interior bureaucracy). However his own job as *süksānithēt* (ศึกษานิเทศ) still is within the Ministry of Education although his responsibility is for primary school curriculum. There are eight such people for Mahasarakham. He himself visits schools throughout the province.

I also asked about the Friendship School which is located near B. Khwao. He says that at the moment there are only a little over 200 students from eight villages in the school (this confirmed by the fourth teacher at BNT school). Capacity for the school is about 3600 students. I commented that the cost of the school seemed too great for its use, but he didn't really respond to this observation.

Bān Nōng Tūn School

In the afternoon we visited the school in Bān Nōng Tūn. We had misunderstood and the teachers had prepared us lunch, but we didn't arrive until 2 pm. However, we still ate lunch. The school is a vast improvement over the old *sālāwat*, although the classes are still divided only by bamboo partitions. There are now four teachers at the school – the three who were there before (Bunthiang, Beng, and Buaphā) and another older man who is Khrū Bunthiang's assistant and who lives in the village just across the bridge from Mahasarakham town. He used to teach at Bān Tio or Bān Mō.

There was another visitor at the school, a young man who come to visit Khrū Buaphā. He is now in the army and stationed either at Udorn or Ubon (I can't quite figure out how he met her). His birthplace, coincidentally, was Mae Hong Son.

Mr. Ngao and HM Phon also joined us at the school. They had spent all morning in trying to find another wat at which Phô Sthā could sponsor a *thôt kathin*, but had not yet found one that was free.

It was very pleasing to us that on all of our visits to BNT, villagers (first women and children, and then the men) came crowding around to welcome us and to see Nikhom. We certainly felt that the villagers did like us and were pleased to see us return, although they hadn't believed we would come back.

Incident of the 'Stranger'

I had forgotten to note that yesterday when we were in the village a young man arrived on foot from the south (from Nōng Kung way). He had joined the group in front of Ngao's shop. He was asked where he had come from (*mā tāē sai*) and it was ascertained that he was not from the area. When we were preparing to leave, he tried to bum a ride back to town with us. In fact, Jane had originally agreed to his doing so, not realizing he that he was a 'stranger'. This had caused quite a stir with HM Phon, Ngao and Cheunchai. They finally went and told him that he couldn't ride with us and he departed on foot. Ngao said that since he wasn't from the area, one couldn't be sure that he wouldn't do something to us. This strong fear of strangers, or perhaps I should say wariness, certainly has implications insofar as 'communist subversion' goes.

Anti-Communist Posters in Bān Nōng Tūn

I noticed on the wall of both Māē Hōm's house and of the school, pictorial posters which depicted the choice between 'communism' and 'freedom'. The one showed a scene in which villagers were being forced under commissars to do their own plowing without the help of plows, while its companion piece showed free Thai villagers happily using buffaloes in their own fields. The second poster (the one is the school) showed obvious Chinese in a situation where a son was denouncing his parents to the cadres while its companion piece showed a Thai family happily eating together. Cheunchai says these posters are made by USIS.

Wat Bān Khwao

On the way back to town, we stopped at Wat Khun Khwao (วัดบ้านเขวาว) to visit Phra Khrū Choei (พระครูไชย), but he wasn't there. We noticed a new *bōt* had been built, primarily with money given by Nāi Bunchana Atthakôn. Khrū Buaphā said that the *bōt* had cost between 100,000 and 2000,000 baht and that a special artisan had been brought from Roi-et to do the decorations. The first donation which Bunchana had given for the *bōt* had come during a *thôt kathin* which he sponsored when we were here before.

Buying items from Bān Nōng Tūn

I began negotiations with Ngao and Phon about buying artifacts made by the villagers. I told them I had 5,000 baht to spend.

Bangkok

July 20, 1967

Conversation with Jim Woods

Today met Jim Woods (ARPA Political Scientist) who was introduced to me by Prof. George Kahin who is currently visiting Thailand. Prodded by questions from George and myself, Jim talked for nearly two hours about situation in NE which he has come to know well during his 34 months in Thailand.

*Situation much worse than the mission officially admits. [This observation nearly the same as that of Lee Huff, ARID liaison, who had said at an earlier meeting, that “the situation is very bad indeed.”] [NB: 24/7/67 – met Herb Phillips in Chiangmai who had come out to Thailand as a member of an academic advisory panel for ARPA. He had spent several days in NE – which Woods had mentioned – and did not agree with Woods and Huff. Feels that they exaggerate the situation.]

*The situation is not bad in most parts of the NE, but only in isolated regions of Sakon Nakhon, Nakhorn Phanom, Nongkhai, and Ubon [didn't mention Kalasin or Udorn]. Thinks that there are several thousand “communist terrorists” (this word and the abbreviation “CT” are what the mission personnel use to refer to what NE'ers call *tahān pā*, ‘forest army’). He says that people in this area are now very frightened.

*The symptoms of the deteriorated situation include the fact that RTG officials and police fear to go into certain areas without armed escort, that villages are terrorized, that large scale arms supplies are being brought into the “CT’s”. He claims that there are areas where the government, has lost effective control.

*Recruitment: coercion is a major factor. Also a factor is the desire of young men to seek to improve their fortunes, or because they seek adventure which is not provided for in village life. Thinks that maybe youth programs might help, at least should be tried. Discussed at this point Dr. Somchai (Ph.D. political science from Vanderbilt)’s project to train Thai researchers to study village leadership and youth activities in the NE. Somchai is currently training a group of Thai researchers (which after final elimination will include ten men) to carry out research in the rural areas of the NE. Woods thinks that this is a fine program in theory, but is worried about what will happen after the researchers, mainly urbanites, spend a few nights in the villages of the NE.

*Once recruited, the “CTs” are taken to be trained, either in Thailand in the woods, or, in exceptional cases, sent to Hoa Binh in Vietnam for training. Most are discouraged after a short time in the difficult conditions in which they find themselves in the forest. Some actually defect, but many are afraid to because they know or believe that the government, police know that they have left the village and would be punished if they returned. They are also afraid to turn themselves in because of the treatment they expect to receive. [I queried the statement that the police know when most villagers have left their village because many village youth leave their villages to become workers in Bangkok or elsewhere – that is, many village young men leave their homes for reasons other than joining the “CT”. But he said that the police now have a system of knowing who leaves villages (prob. refers to the informer system which I have heard about). Also mentioned one incident where an older man actually said that his son had gone off to join to “CT”. However, I remain skeptical because if the govt. has lost control of areas, how can it get information on the actual activities of every member of the village.] Despite the fact that few actually defect, he believes that NE’ers make poor “CT’s” because they do not like living under the hardships which they must. I asked, why doesn’t the govt. simply ignore the situation because it doesn’t sound that serious, and it would be better for the government to take no interest than to create fears that if one steps temporarily out of line, he would be punished. Woods reply was that the CT’s are well-organized and backed by the Communists who will continue to enhance their strength unless checked. He believes that arms and core members of

the “organization” stem from VN, although the actual leaders are Thai who have been trained in VN or China. Despite foreign backing, he believes that the movement is indigenous.

*George asked about the Am. bases. It would seem logical, he queried, that the bases be used as propaganda material for the “CT’s” and that the people in Hanoi would like to create trouble for the Am. at bases from which bombing raids on North Vietnamese originate. Woods agreed with the logic, and said that he didn’t know why the bases had never been attacked, as they could be easily. In fact no Am. has been killed or even wounded in Thailand. With regard to the impact of the bases on the economy and their propaganda value, he thinks that the bases have had a disruptive impact on the economy only in limited areas around the areas in which they are located. They may provide propaganda material in the future, but to date they haven’t seemed to have done so. He commented that the Thai are very concerned to make the Am. presence invisible in the countryside in order to avoid the impression that the CT’s are trying to push that Am. actually controls Thailand as a sort of colony. He thinks that this may be the reason that Am. are restricted when they travel or work in certain parts of the NE.

Woods is very pessimistic about the Thai’s desire to do anything about the situation in the NE. He feels that the Thai system needs to be overhauled in order to really cope with the problem, but that is an unrealistic solution.

Mae Sariang

July 25, 1967

Today made first trip to Mae Sariang and although the main purpose was to look for a house, did obtain some first impressions.

Our contact in Mae Sariang was Čit Thanômsāēng (จิตร ถนอมแสง), the younger brother of our servant, Sanga (สง่า), who came with us from Bangkok. Čit works for the Phannāsit (ห้างหุ้นส่วนจำกัด พนาสิทธิ์) Company, which has its headquarters in the North, based on Chiang Mai and Mae Sariang. Sanga’s youngest brother also works for this company in Chiang Mai. Both brothers are married to northern girls; Čit to a girl from Phrae where he lived for some time. According to what Sanga told Jane, this company not only has interests in lumbering, which we thought was its specialty, but also in tobacco and sugar in the south. Also according to S., she knew the mother of the present owners (three brothers), who was also the wife of the founder

(where she knew her is not certain). The mother was Mon, and the father was part Mon, part Burmese. Since Sanga's family is also Mon, this might be an interesting connection.

Čit has only lived in Mae Sariang for less than a year. Before working for the company, he was involved in tobacco marketing (for the same company?). A friend of his who is also employed by the company, who is also not a Northerner, but married to a Northerner, helped us in looking for a house. This friend has lived in Mae Sariang for 20 (?) years. When he first lived there, it took four or five days to get from Chiang Mai to Mae Sariang.

Friend of Čit says that there are about 30,000 people in Mae Sariang, half of whom are tribal people (*phuak chāo khao*). The ethnic composition of Mae Sariang is fascinating: Lua, Karen, Burmese, Indians, Pakistanis, Thai Yai (Shan), as well as Khon Müang (northern Thai). Sanga says that there also are numerous Mon in Mae Sariang.

In addition to looking for a house, we also visited the Lua village in the town which Pete had mentioned to me. Pete called the village Ban Pae', whereas Čit's friend referred to it as Bān Čôm Čhāēng in obvious reference to the fact that it is located near to Wat Čôm Čhāēng. In walking through the village we were struck by the absence of men – out planting rice according to Čit's friend. We were also struck by the friendliness with which we were greeted by the women, mainly older women. One old woman with whom we talked was born in Ban Pa Pae, but “many years ago.” She came here before she had children and now she has grandchildren.

After visiting the village, we paid a call at the house of Don Schlater (?sp.), a New Tribes missionary who has specialized in working among the Lua (or so Čit's friend informed us). He was away, but we talked with his wife and children (of which she has five including one adopted Lua boy). Mr. Schlater said that one finds Lua of many dialects, and many origins, in the village near Mae Sariang. They themselves live near the village in a house without electricity and without many of the usual amenities *farang* expect even up-country.

Chiang Mai

On the road between Chiang Mai and Hot I noticed several things about the lowland villages which seemed in marked contrast with the NE. In the morning, we noticed that nearly every village had a market. In the evening we noticed that while some people were involved in ploughing fields in preparation planting, other fields were ready for harvesting. We also saw two

groups of young people in two different villages threshing rice. In the second instance, we noted that they were using a very large basket within which they were beating the sheaves.

Mae Sariang

August 15, 1966

Miscellaneous Observations on Mae Sariang

Today has been our first day in Mae Sariang. Visited by Čit Thanomsāēng (Sanga's brother) and a friend of his from the Phanasi Co. From them I discovered the Nai Amphoe is still sick. I mentioned to them that I wanted to visit the border police hill tribe center which is apparently some 10 to 15 kilometers outside Mae Sariang on the road to Hôt. I told them also that I wanted to visit each wat in Mae Sariang. Čit says that there are seven to eight wats. The one which has caught my attention is the one off the Mae Sariang road (the road we live on) near town. This wat has quite different architecture than ones I have ever seen before. This is a Burmese (Wat Mān), which has services in Burmese, Mon, Kammüang, depending on the audience – but basically Burmese and Mon. The abbot apparently also knows English. I asked them also about whether anybody here is particularly versed in the history of Mae Sariang. Answer: there is one man, a teacher, who apparently has a reputation for knowing the history.

I had two visits from a chap known as Benny, a Karen connected with the Baptist Mission station and a friend of Pete's. He speaks excellent English. He had been a customs official in Rangoon and then was sent to the Karen state (where, he said, no Burmese wanted to go) as a customs official. When things became very bad about ten years ago, he fled into Thailand. He has lived in Mae Sariang ever since. He and his wife are 'houseparents' at a hostel for tribal children (all except two being Karen) who came to Mae Sariang to study in government schools (the mission has no school of its own). He was also involved in a Bible translation project under Bill Smalley (Benny is translating into Karen), but he is not too happy about this since he doesn't feel competent in 'theology'. He apparently is somewhat dissatisfied with his life at the mission station but doesn't see how he can get out.

I was also visited by a couple of students who are related to our landlady through their mothers (all three are sisters?). They want to study English. The girl is 15 and the boy 13. The latter's surname is na Chiang Mai (ณ เชียงใหม่). The girl's name is Phannīwāsā (พรณีวาษา). The boy's name, Chalophon na Chiang Mai (เฉลิมพล ณ เชียงใหม่). The na Chiang Mai in the boy's

name indicates that he is related to the former royal family of Chiang Mai. His father works for the Thai Cement Co. and has lived here at least since the boy was born.

Finally, we were also visited by a Karen woman from the Baptist mission who wished to sell us some cloth she had woven. She apparently had sold a number of things to Sally.

Mae Sariang

August 17, 1967

'Benny'

Last evening Benny and his wife visited us again and we heard more of Benny's life. He was raised in Bassein, but sent to Catholic schools and then Anglican schools. Ever since World War II his life has been in turmoil, the Karen rebellion, seven months in a Communist prison camp, hiding out from the Burmese. Finally he made his escape to Thailand and has lived here for ten years. However, he has no papers, no citizenship and is more or less restricted to Mae Sariang. About five years ago when Karens made an attack on Mae Sot, he was arrested along with his wife and kept in the local prison for 29 days while the Thai authorities tried to ascertain if he were connected with the Karen rebellion. No connections being found, he and his wife were released. This release gave him he said somewhat of a sense of respect for the Thai following due process of law, but he was frightened while in jail. This is particularly true because since he was in jail there were some Shans from Chiang Mai and a man who claimed to be a hill Karen carrier, but who in fact was an officer in charge of explosives in the Karen army.

Benny's wife, who speaks even better English, is from an old Baptist family. Her younger sister went to school with Mi Mi Khaing. Benny's wife obviously is in a much higher class than are hill Karen. Both are, in fact, lowland Karen.

Nearby Wat

The wat opposite our house is called locally (not its official name) Wat Pā Hiao (วัดป่าเหี้ยว). It is said to be a local Shan wat.

Christian Hostel for Karen Students

This morning I paid a visit to Benny and his wife, Lasay (? sp.)¹ at the Baptist Mission Station where they run a hostel for Karen (and a few other tribal) students who are attending government schools in Mae Sariang. There are a total of 45 students at the hostel, 34 boys and 11 girls. Three of the students are Lua, two (siblings) are half Karen, half Thai. Interestingly, these latter two are children of a Karen father and a Thai mother. Benny commented that this was unusual. The father is a school teacher. Only three of the students are non-Christian – animists with some overtones of Buddhism, according to Benny's definition. There is a practice of favoring Christians at the hostel. However, according to Lasay, some of the students still believe in spirits "even though they shouldn't". She said that when a student becomes ill, their parents often put pressure on them to return home to undergo the proper that ceremonies propitiating spirits. She said that the hostel (mission?) fights this pressure on the grounds that a periodic school in the hills would seriously disrupt the students' education.

This is the ninth year of the hostel operation. When it was first opened most of the students were older (14 or 15) even though they hadn't yet begun school. The older age has been reduced in recent years although they still have a problem with older students. Since Thai law (or practice ?) insists that children not be older than 15 when graduating from *pathom 7*, and entering *pathom sām*, some of the students at the hostel are not officially eligible. Last year the hostel had to get special permission for two over-age children and this year they had to get permission for one.

I asked about the teaching of Karen writing to the students. There is no formal teaching. Rather, Benny says, the students pick it up through the Bible and through the hymn books. The younger students are much more at home, however, with Thai script, than with Karen script. The script developed by the Baptists is a modification of Burmese script. However, the Catholics introduced Roman script. No Thai script has been developed for Karen, according to Benny although he thinks it might be a good idea. The ages of the children range from 7 up to about 17 years, as there are students in all grades from *pathom 1* to *mathayom 6*. Some children come to the hostel after having completed *pathom 4* at a school in the hills, while most enter *pathom 1* in Mae Sariang. Those who have completed *pathom 4* in the hills do not do nearly as well as those

¹ In subsequent notes I used Leh Say as the spelling for her name.

who start in Mae Sariang, because they don't have enough command of Thai. According to Lasay, many of those who start *pathom* 1 in Mae Sariang use Thai among themselves while playing.

The idea was that all students would finish *mathayom* 6 but there are some drop outs because the parents believe that the child has had enough and should return home to work. I asked about the cost to the students for room and board and I believe the answer was about ฿80 per month. However, according to Lasay, this cost was calculated at a time when prices were lower. Some students do not return to their homes during the vacation because they can earn some extra money by working around the mission. Some students often do not get enough from their parents to buy new clothes, etc. This interview, which was conducted entirely in English, was interrupted by Čit, who came to take me on a visit to the Nāi Amphoe.

Visit with the Nāi Amphoe

Today I finally had an opportunity to meet the Nāi Amphoe. Who has been either away or been ill since I arrived in Mae Sariang. His name is Captain (Rōi 'ēk) (ร้อยเอก) Khačit Sukhānon. (ขจิตต์ สุขขานนท์) he has only been here about 5 or 6 months. Before that he was in the district of Nān, which borders on Laos. He has also worked at Phrae, Chiang Rai, Ubon, and Khon Kaen. He is originally from Uthaithani.

I presented my letter from the National Research Council and told them in general terms about my projected work. He appeared very friendly and willing to help me in any way he could. He called in his assistant, Palat Amphoe trī Nakhôn Čüngpoksôt (ปลัดอำเภอตรีนคร จึงประเสริฐ) and introduced us. He directed this man to provide me with any statistics which I might want. He also discussed the Department of Public Welfare's center which is some 15 to 20 kilometers outside of Mae Sariang on the road to Hot. This is not a Nikhom, but a center where experimental crops are tested for possible use in the hills. There is a wat there. There are monks from Bangkok working under the Thammathūt (ธรรมทูต) program for bringing Buddhism to the hill tribes. He is planning to visit the center on Saturday to check about the preparations for the visit of the director-general of the hill tribes' division of the Public Health Department (he was coming up on Sunday and attend the hill tribes' conference in Chiang Mai). As I expressed an

interest to see the center the district officer invited me to join him in his trip to the center. As I could not go on Saturday he changed his plans to go on Friday, so that I could go with him.

We also talked in general terms about his family and home in Uthaithani. He has two children, one 6 and one 1. He invited me to both visit his house here and in Uthaithani. when he goes there on a visit.

After leaving the district officer Mr. Nakhôn took Čit and me for coffee at the restaurant behind the district office. I discovered that Nakhôn had spent two months in Mahasarakham in Bān Dōn Dū, Tambon Khwao, apparently on Tosh Yatsushiro's project, also working apparently under Jacques Amyot. Nakhôn was then a student of political science at Chulalongkorn University. He has only been in Mae Sariang 5 months, probably his first job since graduating from Chulalongkorn University. His home is in Bangsaen, in Chonburi. province. He said that when he out to the villages "to inspect land" he must often walk. On occasions he is out for several days, he must get food from the villages which are mainly Karen. He feels very much his lack of knowledge of Karen. He estimates that 75 per cent of Mae Sariang town is Karen. I have heard 40 to 50 per cent from other people.

He took me to the health center where there was a rough map of the district (I will make a copy of this later). In talking to the "doctor" in charge of the center, I discovered that this health center services most of the health problems of the district and town in the absence of a government hospital (there is of course, a Baptist Mission hospital). The health center has only 10 beds and even most of these were not filled.

A Karen Nationalist

After lunch Khun Nakhôn took me to meet a Karen refugee by the name of George Mahnsra Po. I was quite startled when entering his house to see his room filled with books, especially prominent were a set of Encyclopedia Britannica and a set of Great Books published by Encyclopedia Britannica. But there were also books on such diverse subjects as English literature, nuclear physics, the book on Thailand by the Human Relations Area Files, Burmese history, etc. I felt quite ill at ease during the whole conversation because it soon became apparent that he was a man of exceptional intellect, especially in Mae Sariang, but also a man with a dominant obsession, Karen nationalism. We started talking about different types of Karen. He himself was a P'wo, but his wife is half S'kaw, half P'wo. Kayah, he says, are different (he refers

to them as P'wo and agrees that they are what the Thai call *yāng dāēnq*, i.e., red Karen), in that they have a tie-up with the Shans for a long time even to the point that one Kayah principality in losing its leader, recruited a Shan *sawbwā*. He explained three colors (white, red and black) in the Karen flag which existed from 1932 to 1948 represented the three Karen groups.

This led him into a discussion of Karen nationalism. It followed with an admixture of his personal life history, Karen/Burmese history, and diatribes against the Burmese. Using a map of Burma he showed me his birthplace in the delta near Bassein. His father was a schoolteacher who once punished U Nu by beating him over the head with an umbrella (for which he was forced to move). George himself was educated in several places including Rangoon (he is referred to as "doctor") but where, when and in what subject he received his doctorate I did not discover. Before the war he became director of physical education at a teacher's college in Rangoon. During the war the teacher's college was moved to a place in northwest central Burma but it was later disbanded and he was stranded at Kelao near the Kayah state. He was interned for about a third of a year by the Japanese. After the war he entered the Kayah state and became one of the leaders of KNU (Karen Nationalist Union). For the next several years he was involved in the Karen rebellion, but after the death of its leader he fled into Thailand for 11 years. In other words, ever since he fled he has been living in Mae Sariang. He now devotes himself to writing about Karen history and tradition so that the Karen will not forget.

His intense anti-Burmese sentiments are most vividly contained in a couple of paragraphs which he had written in a text for "Famous Writers' Writing School" (in America). He also is bitter against the English for not helping the Karen. He sees no government of Burma, Communist, Socialist, or Democratic, in which the Burmese could give the Karen their due. To him the Burmese are intruders into Karen land. The delta of Burma is Karen and they almost succeeded in capturing it (which they almost did).

Although his grandfather was a Baptist pastor, he calls himself a "liberal Catholic". This is because his wife is a devout Catholic. (I forgot to mention that he has a number of Catholic books among his collection.)

In many ways he is a pathetic figure. He is an expatriate from a place where there is no nation of its own, from a cause, which, even if it ever succeeds, will be carried on by other hands. He has no work of his own, but he has picked up such odd jobs as working part-time for a Japanese anthropologist, Iijima, and selling *Encyclopedia Britannica*'s (which he has sold

several sets in Mae Sariang, much to my surprise, since each set costs ฿8000 to ฿9000). He has taken a sophomore English course from the University of Chicago and has written to Professor Cady about mistakes he has made in his *History of Modern Burma*. I could sense a barely concealed hope that I too might employ him. How ironic and how tragic. A man but for the twist of fate and post-war politics might have been a national leader in a free Karen state. Here was he hoping that a young man half his age might deign to employ him for some minor task.

Mae Sariang

August 22, 1967

Interview with Khun Tā (คุณตา), an Old Inhabitant of Mae Sariang

Yesterday afternoon Khun Čit brought an old man over who came to tell me about Lua and Karen customs. This man, whose name is Khun Tā is a native of Mae Sariang and is now about 65 years old. He is a Khonmüang, but his years of experience as a policeman (which if the calculations are correct were between 2477 and 2485) brought him into contact with hill tribesmen.

Local Geography

Our conversation started out with discussion of Khun Tā's "beat" as a policeman, which was between Mae Sariang and Mae Hong Son. In the course of this conversation some comments were made about the local geography. The river that passes through Mae Sariang and eventually ends up in the Salwin has its origins in Dōi Khun Yuam (คอกขุนขวม) more than 100 kilometers north of here.

Japanese in Mae Sariang

Before the war, according to Khun Tā, some Japanese came here as gardeners and traders. Actually they were soldiers in disguise who came here (as according to Čit to many places in Thailand) to map the area in preparation for military action. The Japanese did not apparently stay here during the war. I asked Tā about whether there were any "free Thai" here during the war. At first he didn't understand, but when Čit explained to him, he didn't recall any people of that sort. Čit, however, thinks there must have been some free Thai here.

Government in Mae Sariang

The younger brother of Thanom Kittikachorn (the present Prime Minister) used to be an official here.

History of Mae Sariang

I tried to ask Tā a few things about the history of Mae Sariang. I asked him when he was a young boy if there were many Lua and Karen living in Mae Sariang. I think that his answer was that there weren't (only Khonmüang) but there was some confusion in his answer and in my understanding.

When he was a boy Mae Sariang was known as Müang Yuam (เมืองขวม) and was governed by a *Čao Müang* (เจ้าเมือง) who was appointed by the Prince of Chiang Mai, in Lamphun. The four highest government officials of the *müang* were (1) *čao* (เจ้า), (2) *phia* (พิชัย), (3) *thao* (ท้าว), and (4) *sāēn* (แสน). The names changed according to Čit's interpretation of what Tā said, in the Fifth reign, that is the reign of King Chulalongkorn. I tried to ascertain when Mae Sariang was founded as Müang Yuam. Tā said that he recalled his father saying to him that it was founded by the Thai (Khonmüang?) in order to prevent Karen and Shan from settling here. Apparently there was a war between the Thai on one side and Karen and Shan on the other (probably two wars).

Traditional Trade

I asked about traditional trade carried on or in or through Mae Sariang. The answers were somewhat confused, as the situation seemed to be different for things coming from Burma and things going to Chiang Mai. From Burma Mae Sariang (i.e. Khonmüang) traders brought such items as lamp oil, candles, *kapi* (closer to get it from Burma than Bangkok), rope, Indian sandals and cloth. The traders usually travelled on foot carrying their goods *hāp* style but occasionally horses and elephants were used. Interestingly, the traders carried nothing to Burma when they went there to get their goods.

In Mae Sariang these traders sold their goods to "Indian" merchants who in turn sold them to other. Sometimes these merchants would take things to Chiang Mai. Sometimes Chiang Mai merchants would come here to buy things. But apparently the trade was minimal (even today I doubt that very much besides a little cloth goes from here to Chiang Mai). The route to Chiang Mai apparently followed much the same route as the road today.

Hô soldiers apparently played and still play a very minor role in the trade carried on in or through Mae Sariang. Tā said that traditionally they brought only a type of nuts (there was apparently only one Hô. trader in Mae Sariang, an older man who owned a tin mine. He was made a captain in the Hô array [specifically distinguished in the "Chinese army"]).

Lua and Karen Buddhists

I asked Tā some questions about the Lua and Karen who live in Mae Sariang and who are Buddhists. Tā said that those groups, even though Buddhists, continue to bury rather than cremate their dead, although they will have priests and monks participate in the ceremonies. The Lua for example, will have priests to the house of the deceased to chant for seven days (if rich) or three days (if poor).

Buddhist Lua make merit at Wat Čôm Čěng (วัดจอมเจียง) which is in Mae Sariang or Wat Čôm Thông (วัดจอมทอง) which is located up in the hills at the eastern edge of town near the other Lua village. Lua young men have been ordained in Wat Čôm Čěng.

Karen Buddhists make merit at Wat Phā Phā (วัดผาผา) which is not in Mae Sariang town. Young Karen boys may become novices there, but Karen men are not ordained as Monks. According to Čit, Karen men at Bān Phā Phā have too much work (elephant mahouts, lumbering, etc.) to take time to be ordained. There are Karen priests in Wat Māē Hān (วัดแม่หัน), a village near the town of Mae Sariang. Tā says that this village Māē Hān is close to being Khonmüang.

There is no wat in Mae Sariang where Karen or Lua is used for chants or sermons. According to Tā there used to be a Karen monk at Wat Pā Hiao, the wat near here, who did chant and preach in Karen but he is now, according to Tā, dead.

Temples in Mae Sariang

The following is a list of temples in Mae Sariang with the main ethnic affiliation, according to Tā with the help of Ćit.

- (1) Wat Sithimongkhon (วัดสิทธิมงคล) also known locally as Wat Khapuang (วัดกะปาง). This is a Khonmüang wat.
- (2) Wat Sī Bunlüang (วัดศรีบุญเรือง). This is a Shan wat in the process of becoming a Khonmüang wat. [NB. Elsewhere in notes, this wat is called Wat Sī Bunrüang.]
- (3) Wat Čông Sūng (วัดช่องสูง), a Shan wat
- (4) Wat Čantharāwāt (วัดจันทราวาส) also known locally as Wat Mantālē (วัดมันตาเล), in other words, the Mandalay wat. This is a Burmese wat. This is the wat, incidentally, which also has services in Mon.
- (5) Wat Kittiwong (วัดกิตติวงศ์) This is a Khonmüang wat and the seat of the head monk of the head abbot of the amphoe.
- (6) Wat Sāēn Thōng (วัดแสนทอง) This also is a Khonmüang wat.
- (7) Wat Čông Kham (วัดจองคำ) This is a Shan wat.
- (8) Wat Pā Nāt (วัดป่าหนาด) This is a Khonmüang wat.
- (9) Wat Čôm Thōng (วัดจอมทอง) This is a Khonmüang wat, though, as I mentioned earlier, there are Lua who go to this wat.
- (10) The wat locally known as Wat Pā Hiao (วัดป่าหิยา) This is a Burmese wat.²
- (11) Wat Čôm Čāēng (วัดจอมแจ้ง) This is a Khonmuang wat which also has Lua attending it.

As a final note Tā noted that the Lua eat dog meat.

² Subsequently, I found out that the abbot, although following the Burmese tradition is actually a Kayah or Red Karen.

Visit to Wat Pā Hiao

Yesterday morning Jane and Sanga went to Wat Pā Hiao to take some food for the monks. They discovered only one monk there, a Burmese, who speaks Kammüang, but not Central Thai. He said that the other monks had gone to Bangkok (?) but would return shortly.

Chinese shopkeeper

Yesterday morning we went to the market to buy some cord, etc. with Čit. We went to the shop of a Chinese shopkeeper on the main market road next to the Esso distributor. I saw a letter on the shopkeeper's table written in Chinese and with Taiwan stamps. I thought that he might be Hô, but Čit says no "he is Chinese."

I asked the shopkeeper if he or any of the other shopkeepers in the shops near the market went to the mountains to trade with tribes people. He said no, the tribes people come to the market. There are, he said, some traders who go to the mountains, but are from another part of town.

Mae Sariang

August 24, 1967

Visit to Wat Čôm Čhāēng

This morning Čit and his friend from the Phanasit Company, Mō Thawan³ (not really a *mô*) took me to wat Čôm Čhāēng which is near the Lua village Bān Phae' (บ้านแพะ) and near the Khonmüang village of Bān Čôm Čhāēng. At the wat we had a long conversation with the abbot.

This wat currently has two priests and ten novices, all of whom are Khonmüang. However, some Lua have been ordained here in the past as novices, although not as monks. The 'congregation' of this wat is primarily Khonmüang, some Lua and a few Karen. [For Karen participation in a cremation ceremony for a former abbot of this wat see the picture on page '19' at the set of pictures in Pete Kunstadter's, editor, *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities and Nations*] The sermons and chanting at wat Čôm Čhāēng are both in Kammüang (the reference to chanting in Kammüang refers to the sounds used in chanting Pāli words, see below). The wit possesses *bailān* in both Khonmüang and Thai.

³ I originally mis-heard his name as Thawôn. His real name is Thawan Thammarak.

The abbot does participate in certain Lua festivals upon invitation, among which are burials, the funeral rites known as *sangkhaha* (สังฆหะ) and *sankhathān* (สังฆทาน) and a ceremony known as ‘entering a new home’ – *phithī khün bān mai*. There are differences in these ceremonies from those which are found among the Thai. At death people are buried rather than cremated. The offerings of the people in other funeral rites are for the dead and not for the priests in honoring of the dead. There is some confusion about the two terms used. The first apparently refers to offerings immediately after death while the latter refers to a ceremony at some indefinite time later. It is interesting to note that all ceremonies are performed by households rather than by villages. Čit commented and the head priest agreed the Lua who live in this area are neither Buddhists nor ‘animists’ but a little bit of both.

We talked at some length of the old abbot who had died about three years ago and his cremation was attended by a personal representative of the King [Peter Kunstadter attended this funeral]. This abbot was extremely well respected.

The present abbot has been here for 14 years in this wat and is a native of Mae Sariang. His Central Thai was a little sketchy, at least in speaking.

I asked about books in the wat but there was nothing old. Also there is no history of the wat. After finishing talking to the abbot we walked around the wat. Čit and Mō Thawan explained to me that the *bōt* is in northern Thai style. The two of the three *čēdī* (the third holding the ashes of the recently deceased abbot.) And the gates are in Burmese style. The half man half beast decoration, among other things, indicates this.

Burmese Goods in the Market

After leaving Wat Čôm Čhāēng we returned to the town where I was taken to a shop selling, among other things, Burmese cheroots and tobacco. This same shop has sane medicine in Burma. The other shop (the large, modern one) has Burmese *phāsins* and blouses, Some goods that continue to come to Mae Sariang from Burma.

Interview with the Chief Abbot of the Amphoe

This afternoon Čit and Thawan took me to Wat Kittiwong (วัดกิตติวงศ์) which is the residence of *Phra khrū* 'Anusōnsātsanakiat (พระครูอนสรณ์ศาสนเกียรติ์) the chief abbot of the

Amphoe, that is *cao khana amphoe* (เจ้าคณะอำเภอ). We spent more than two hours talking with him.

The chief abbot said that this monastery has ten monks and two novices, all of whom are Khonmüang. There have been Karen as novices (but not as monks) here before, but not now. He again mentioned Bān Māē Hān (บ้านแม่หัน) as a Buddhist Karen village. There were 5 or 6 monks ordained there in April. Only one now remains. Also a Karen from there is still in a monastery in Chiang Mai. He said that the wat across from where we live, Wat Pā Hiao, or Wat ‘Ommarāwāt (อम्मราวัด) has a monk who is Karen (it has two monks, the other being Shan). This Karen was ordained here, but studied in Burma.

Apparently what makes a wat 'Burmese' is the mode of chanting the Pāli text, quite different from the Thai sounds employed in the same chants (there is also a difference between Thai and Kammüang). Mons and Shans use the Burmese style. Actually there is only one real Burmese monk in Mae Sariang, the abbot of Wat Čantharāwāt. The abbot has reached the highest stage of Pāli learning, but he studied in Burma rather than in Thailand.

It is not necessary for a monk who has been ordained in Burma to be re-ordained in Thailand if he moves here.

He mentioned that Bān Huai Sāi and Bān Huai Sin were nearby Lua in which Buddhism was practiced. Bān Thung Lāēng (บ้านทุ่งแสง) is a village that used to be Lua, but now is Khonmüang. He said that the Lua "used to be Buddhist". Karens, on the other hand, are not very good Buddhists. They do not like to be ordained as priests for two reasons: one, they are afraid that the *phī* will not like it, and two, they feel that they should help their parents.

He knows quite a bit about the Thammathūt program although he is not directly involved. It is restricted in this Amphoe, at least to the hill tribes center on the road to Hot. There the monks do not go out much in the villages but are available tribesmen who come in.

We discussed the history of Mae Sariang and I picked up a few disjointed facts. The ex-chief abbot who died a few years ago at the age of 110 had made a few notes on the history of the Amphoe, but these have not been published and do not seem to be available. The abbot suggested that I read the book *Niyāi bōrān khadī khōng phākñüa* (นิยายโบราณคดีของภาคเหนือ)

The abbot mentioned that the most famous person who originally came from Mae Sariang was one Thēp Sing (เทพสิงห์) who lived in B.E. 2270, that is, A.D. 1627, who appeared in the history of Chiang Mai. Another famous personage was Čaofā Kam Kōrān (เจ้าฟ้าคำโกهران)⁴ (a Burmese name) who somehow ended up in the Shan states. There used to be a wall around Mae Sariang, remnants of which can still be seen. The wall, which had four gates like Chiang Mai, was to protect the populace from attack by the Red Karen and Shan. This wat used to be called Wat Chai Songkrām (วัดชัยสงคราม) because it represented victory over the Karen and Shan. One hundred and thirty-three years ago the name was changed to Wat Sohphān Naiwiang (วัดสบหานในเวียง). Same 46 years ago it received its present name Wat Kittiwong. Wat Sāēn Thong is the oldest wit in Mae Sariang.

The abbot provided me with some statistics. Population of Amphoe Mae Sariang in 1960 (1960 census) is as follows:

men	19,387
women	19,227
Karen	19,860
Lua	2,464
Total	38,614

The following is a religious breakdown of Changwat Mae Hong Son 1960:

Buddhists	67,360
Christian	2,277
Islam	299
Chinese (or Confucian)	2
Other	10,869
Total population	80,807

⁴ Subsequently I found that most sources refer to him as Kōlān.

Wats and Clergy in Amphoe Mae Sariang 1967:

29 wats

75 priests

114 novices

All wats belong to the Mahānikāi sect. Only 5 wats have *bōt* with *sēmā* within which ordinations can take place. These include Wat Kittiwong, Wat Čantharāwāt, Wat Sībunrüang, Wat Uthayārom (วัดอุทัยารมณั) which is the formal name for Wat Chông Sūng, and Wat Phā Phā.

Only two monks in the Amphoe are *upatchayā*, the Amphoe head abbot and one other.

The head abbot of the Amphoe was very friendly and invited me to return often. His Central Thai is excellent and he is up on much of what is happening in Thai and world Buddhism. He is a relatively young man, not much older than his late 30's or early 40's.

Mae Sariang

August 25, 1967

Visit to Tribal Development Center

This morning the Nāi Amphoe in the company of three assistants, a driver, six-year old son, and Cit, took me to the Tribal Development Center some 17 kilometers outside Mae Sariang on the road to Hot. We didn't spend too long at the Center because its director had gone to Chiang Mai to meet the Director-General of Tribal Welfare Division of the Department of Public Welfare. We did look around at some demonstration plots – apples, grapes, linchis, corn, coffee, etc., which are being tested for possible use in the hills. Also at the center is a store for tribes people. Although the main people at the Center are Thai, the workers in the fields are tribes people, predominantly, if not exclusively, Karen.

The Center also serves as a base camp for teams of workers who go out to live in selected villages. Three Thais, an agricultural officer, a development officer, and a public welfare officer, live in four Karen villages (both S'kaw and P'wo). Within two hours walk from the Center. These villages in turn serve as sub-centers for work in other nearby Karen villages.

There was a Thammathūt program. One monk lived in a village near the Center, but he has returned to Bangkok for Lent.

One young Thai at the Center with whom I talked has been there for 3 months and is a graduate of Thammasat University in Public Welfare. Although he knows no Karen, one of his companions or co-workers does.

I asked about opium. The first answer was that it is forbidden. Then the young worker admitted that the Karen grow poppies "but not in the area covered by the Center."

The Center is obviously a pleasant place to live, at least for part of the year, as there are several very nice houses with bath and there is electricity and running water as well as the cooler weather and the produce of the demonstration plots.

Visit to the Court in Mae Sariang

On the return to town the Nāi Amphoe had to stop at the Mae Hong Son court in Mae Sariang so that I could meet the two judges. Both were young men in their late 30's or early 40's and had only been here since May (the Nāi Amphoe commented on the tremendous ability of Thai government officials!). One judge is from Ayutthaya and the other is from Bangkok.

The Court hears only about 100 cases a year. I asked if tribes people ever appeared before the Court. They answered that occasionally they do in connection with opium.