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FOREWORD

Phya Anuman Rajadhon is Thailand's leading scholar in the fields of Thai culture and linguistics. At present he is Acting President of the Royal Institute, Professor of Thai Linguistics at Chulalongkorn University, and Chief Editor of the Thai Encyclopedia. He earned the high civil service title of "Phya" as Deputy Director-General of the Customs Tax Department. Later he became the Director-General of the Department of Fine Arts. For decades he has contributed richly, as teacher, as writer, and as administrator, to the development of scholarly work in Thai culture and linguistics. A foreigner seriously interested in either of these fields inevitably finds his way sooner or later to Phya Anuman's home.

I have often visited Phya Anuman on a Sunday morning, and have been rewarded with the stimulating pleasure of listening to the man who knows more than any other living person about Thai customs. Despite the pressure of a hundred other commitments, he has always seemed to have time for these discussions. Our conversation would often continue for a matter of hours, moving pleasantly from subject to subject, but never losing the quality of critical judgment that Phya Anuman applies to every problem of cultural history and analysis. From time to time he would bob up and disappear into another room, returning with a manuscript on the subject at hand, in Thai or English, that he had prepared perhaps ten years ago, but that was still "not quite ready for publication." At length I persuaded him to part with five of these "not quite ready" items from his seemingly inexhaustible trove. They were in English, but at his request I have edited them with an eye to clarity and balance. I have, however, tried otherwise to leave his way of saying things alone, so that some of the charm of the original writer will shine through.

Transliteration of Thai terms follows the system of Dr. Mary R. Haas (Spoken Thai, New York: Henry Holt, 1945). The use of a standard rather than linguistic typewriter keyboard has necessitated a few changes, viz., "ae" for reversed "3" and "au" for reversed "c." For these two vowels, length is not shown. In no case is tone shown.

Today at seventy, Phya Anuman stands as not only a wonderfully productive contributor to Thai studies, but as a constant inspiration to younger Siamese scholars. He is a living example to them that what really counts is love of the subject, critical judgment, and hard work. That he has been able to do all this without once studying for a higher degree, without once having visited a Western country, is truly a remarkable accomplishment.

Robert B. Textor

Cornell Research Center
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THE THAI SPIRIT MEDIUM

A person who acts as a medium is called a khon song in Thai. In some parts of the country such a person may be called a mae mod, a term which is also used as a translation of the English word "witch." Khon song means simply a "medium," while mae mod means something approaching "sorceress." In former days every village would be likely to have its own khon song or mae mod, or else it could ask the help of one from a neighbouring village whenever occasion demanded. The medium was an old woman, and her profession was a hereditary one.

For a spirit to enter a medium, whether a sorceress or otherwise, a rite had to be performed, which proceeded in something like the following manner. A platter of banana stems and leaves is made, on which is put a small quantity of boiled rice and other kinds of food, either in small leaf cups or merely placed on the platter in a heap. Also on the same platter are betel nuts and leaves for chewing purposes, and a bundle consisting of a taper, an incense stick, and some flowers. The rite commences when the medium takes the above platter in her hands, raises it to the level of her eyes, and moves the platter around and around in a horizontal plane. (In Thailand, such movements enter into many rites which deal with the unseen, and are no doubt acts of worship.) After finishing these movements, the medium puts the platter in front of the spirit shrine or any other appropriate place. All this is done while music is being made by the beating of drums or other instruments. The medium, after lighting the taper and the incense stick as an act of obeisance, performs a ritual dance honouring the spirit, who all the while is supposedly partaking of the offering of food.

Then the dancing comes to an end, and the medium sits down in front of the shrine. Holding her hands with finger-tips touching, she describes circular movements similar to those made in the food offering a moment previously. Now, if the spirit condescends to speak through the medium, the latter will suddenly toss her head thrice and push back her hair once with her hand as a sign that the spirit is now in her. Then she sits in silence. If anyone wishes to know where the spirit has come from, he may find out by putting a question such as: "Is Your Honour the Lord Father of the Lake?" (There are many Caw Phau or "Lord Fathers" whom the questioner can name.) If the questioner has guessed correctly, the medium will reply something like this: "Oh, yes! That's my name, and I live at the lake. I have come to-day to join in amusement among my children." Many questions will then be asked by persons on any subject they want to know about; and the questions and answers will continue for quite a while. After this, if the "Lord Father" is a drinker of alcohol, the medium will likewise proceed to drink alcohol, and then perhaps do a dance. The playing of drums or other musical instruments continues apace all the while. It is the usual case that many spirits will enter the medium, one at a time, during a single session. In this event, the time occupied would be from morning till afternoon. The medium dresses herself

as a man if the spirit is to be a "Lord Father," and changes to female dress if the next spirit is to be a "Lady Mother" or Caw Mae. She speaks masculine Thai in the first instance and her normal speech in the second.

A quite different form of spirit possession occurs during the Songkraan Festival, the traditional sidereal New Year which occurs in April. At this time the maidens of the village have traditionally played the part of a medium, called Mae Sii or "Mother Sii." Sii is Sri in Sanskrit, an honorific and the name of the Hindu Goddess of Prosperity. In India, and also in Indonesia, Sri is also the name of the Rice Goddess or Rice Mother. Possibly Sri was also at one time the name of the Rice Mother in Thailand, particularly in the central and southern parts--but if so, it has now lost this meaning, probably through a displacement of names. The name of the Thai Rice Mother is Mae Phoosob, a word of unknown origin. Mae Sii is now merely the name for a beautiful young girl who acts as a medium in the folk songs and dances that are peculiar to the Songkraan Festival. This same syllable, sii, is often found in the names of Thai people, both in surnames and given names; in the case of given names, the person is usually female. The word mae has the generic meaning of "mother," but may also be used as a term of respect or endearment prefixing the name of a girl or woman.

The playing of the Mae Sii game begins on Songkraan day at around six o'clock, just after the evening meal. The place is an open patch of ground, perhaps in the village temple enclosure. A number of girls arrange themselves into a ring with the would-be girl medium sitting in the center, usually on an upturned wooden mortar of the type used for pounding paddy. An incense stick is lighted as an act of worship to an unseen spirit and stuck in the ground somewhere nearby. The girls in the ring now sing a Mae Sii song in chorus. This is repeated many times, to the point where an outsider would consider it monotonous.

This folk song is well known in central Thailand. The wording is in a metrical rhyming pattern and the words are almost all pure Thai, (i.e., not loan-words) and reflect the psychology of unsophisticated folk. The rhyming pattern is undoubtedly a very old one, and is seldom seen in written form. Such patterns can be noted to-day in the everyday idiomatic speech of the Thai people. The song has various versions, a common one of which may be translated roughly as follows:

"Hail, Mae Sii
Mae Sii the pretty girl
Raising her hands to worship the Buddha
People will admire you
Your eyebrows are joined
The end of your hair at your nape is rounded
As you pull a scarf to cover your breasts
We admire you."

This singing, or rather chanting, continues for some while. Then, if the girl in the middle begins to sway to and fro, it is a sign that the Mae Sii has now entered her. Sometimes a test is performed, by thrusting the lighted tip of an incense stick at the girl. If she is

not startled and shows no signs of consciousness, it means that the spirit is now truly within her. If she jumps when the lighted incense stick is applied to any part of her body, the singing must be resumed until the required state of trance is reached. Sometimes a girl will not submit to the test and must be replaced by another girl.

When the Mae Sii has entered the girl and caused her to begin to sway, she will then rise. Adjusting her scarf diagonally so as to cover her breasts (with one end placed on the left shoulder like a lady's dress scarf of the old style), she begins a dance to the accompaniment of singing in chorus by the other girls. These girls now also rise, break up their ring into small groups, and join the dance. The dancing and singing go on for some while. Then the singing stops and the girl medium will regain her normal self. Now a new girl takes her place in the center of the ring and the entire process is repeated.

The dancing and singing of Mae Sii have been incorporated into Thai drama and form a popular part of the Thai classical ballet that one often sees on the stage either at the theatre or at school performances.

THE EXPULSION OF EVIL SPIRITS

Siamese doctors of the old school, on their professional visits, sometimes perform a Sia Kabaan ritual for the expulsion of evil spirits before they diagnose a seriously sick patient. A piece of clay is moulded into a figurine a few inches in length, resembling a human being. A piece of cloth taken from the clothing of the sick person is then wrapped around the body of the clay doll. If there is more than one sick person, the clay dolls will correspond to them in number. The sculpture is rough and unattractive; hence a Siamese saying describes a very ugly person as resembling the sia kabaan doll.

A square tray is made of banana stems half a foot in length. Bamboo splints are inserted into the bottom of the tray and a banana leaf is placed over the top. The doll is then placed on the tray together with boiled rice and other foods heaped around. If desired, the rice and other articles of food are placed in small banana leaf cups. Sometimes small triangular flags are inserted at the four corners of the tray. This tray is brought to the sick person and moved round and round over his head. Whether the person performing the rite recites any charms or not I am unable to say definitely. Perhaps he tries to tempt the evil spirit obsessing the sick person to come out and partake of the offering on the tray, or perhaps coercion will be resorted to if the evil spirit is a particularly stubborn one. In some cases the tray is placed by the sick person's feet and the performer of the rite gently beats the patient with a branch of camphor plant (Blumea balsamifera Compositae) from his head down to his feet. Immediately after this he takes the tray away and leaves the house. At the same time, the inmates of the house close all the doors and windows. One of them bears the tray far from the house and leaves it at a place where three roads (or paths) meet; or the tray is floated away along a tidal creek or river. On his return, the man who took the tray away must not turn or look back. He breaks a branch of a tree nearby and carries it with him. He sometimes makes a line across the road with a sacred knife or with any other convenient object. On reaching the house he calls in a loud voice, "Is everybody in this house well?" On hearing this, one of the inmates will answer, "Oh! yes, everybody here is well. Nobody is sick." After this the doors and windows are opened and the rite comes to an end.

There are different regional variations of this pattern. In the Province of Phrae, near Chiangmai, when a person is sick a rite of sending a satuang is performed. A satuang is a square tray made of banana stems similar to the sia kabaan tray. On this tray are placed the clay doll and clay figurines of such domestic animals as an elephant, a horse, a buffalo, a cow, a pig, and a dog. Also placed on the tray are one or two heaps of food and a candle, a joss stick and a flower. The tray is brought in and placed in front of the sick person. The performer of the rite, a medicine-man, places a mouthful of partly chewed betel-and-areca on the tray and gives a jumbled incantation enumerating various kinds

of phi (spirits), both good and evil, coaxing them to partake of the food and depart. After the incantation, the tray is taken out and placed far away from the house.

I am informed that in Chiangmai the "sending of satuang" is also performed on New Year's Eve. A tray of such nature is made and left at a place where three roads meet. The rite is explained as an expulsion of all evils of the old year.

In a district of Baan Poong, in Raadchaburii Province, there is found the rite of "releasing a cart and bullock." It is done in a manner similar to the sia kabaan save that, instead of a tray, a miniature cart is made of bamboo splints, with a bullock and a driver holding a goad made of clay. A small triangular flag is inserted in the front of the cart, and a small quantity of food is placed in the cart. The cart is moved round and round over the head of a sick person, and then taken away to a jungle and left there.

Further enquiry from other places in nearby northern districts of the Peninsula elicits no satisfactory information with the exception of a district in Fraanburii, near Hua Hin. Here and still further south, there is evidence of such a rite with the same name and mode of performance. It is regularly performed during the Saad Festival, an autumnal feast for the dead ancestors. It may also, however, be performed during sickness. In its association with Saad the rite is apparently a local one peculiar to these districts. I have no doubt that the people in these districts differ ethnologically in a number of other ways from their surrounding neighbours.

In the southern areas of the Peninsula the Sia Kabaan is called Sia Ruub Taang Tua, or "to abandon your own image." It closely resembles the Sia Kabaan, the only difference being that the tray is placed next to the head of the sick person instead of being moved round and round the head. Two balls of boiled rice are also used, one being placed on the forehead and the other on the breast of the sick person. The medicine-man will recite certain incantations and then replace the tray near the sick person's feet. Another ball of rice is then placed on one of the sick person's feet and another incantation is recited. The medicine-man then removes the tray and throws the three balls of boiled rice over the roof of the sick man's house from front to back. He takes the tray and after reciting another charm he abandons the tray at a place where three paths meet. The medicine-man may neither return to the sick person's house nor partake of any food for a period of one day.

When an epidemic breaks out in a southern village the people will cooperate in making a raft of banana trees with a leaf roof. On the raft are placed food and fruits. The villagers insert their nail parings and some tufts of hair into a clay doll and place it on the raft, which is then released, after an appropriate incantation, into the flowing river. If the raft touches another village, the inhabitants must then push it away, make another such raft, and release it in the same manner. There thus are sometimes many rafts floating down to the sea.

In the Northeastern provinces there are many kinds of rites for the expulsion of evils which are effective both for individuals and for the community. These are known by various names. Whoever meets with misfortune in trade, occupation or sickness, or with accidents, has to perform a rite of expulsion of evils. A medicine-man is needed to perform it; and it is carried out in a manner similar to the Sia Kabaan only with certain variations. Instead of having one clay doll, two are placed on the tray to symbolize a man and a woman. Beside these are placed clay domestic animals and food offerings. Boiled rice is made into three balls; two of which are dyed, one black and one vermillion red. A miniature bow and arrow and a quantity of water in a section of bamboo are also placed in the tray. I am unable to obtain satisfactory descriptions of the precise content of these rituals in the Northeast. After the ceremony, however, the tray is abandoned in a forest on the outskirts of the village in a direction prescribed in a book on astrology. For instance, if that day happens to be a Sunday, the tray must be abandoned on the northwest edge of the village.

The expulsion of evils is found widely among primitive peoples. The doll is a substitute for the sick person; the clay domestic animals are probably substitutes for real live animals, and are a symbolic offering to the spirit. The doll is wrapped in a small bit of cloth from the sick person's clothing to hoodwink the spirit into believing that the doll is actually the sick person himself. Perhaps the doll's clothing has the odor of its owner. The hair and nail parings inserted in the clay doll are deemed to be intimate and vital parts of the person. The Malays, who are the neighbours of the Southern Thai who adhere to this latter practice, have very much the same ritual and associated beliefs.

The moving of the tray round and round over the head of the sick person is probably designed to tempt the spirit to come out and devour the offering. It is believed that an evil spirit is usually voracious and cannot resist good food. The spirit's constant hunger symbolizes its destructiveness. Sometimes the spirit is reluctant to come out of the ill person despite coaxing and offerings of food. The patient is then struck lightly in order to drive the spirit out. No doubt the spirit resides in the region of the sick person's head. When that part is struck with the branch of camphor plant, the spirit shifts itself downward until it reaches the extremity of the foot. Unable to withstand the blows of the camphor plant, it leaves the body temporarily. Seeing the food in the tray nearby, the spirit gets into the food in order to devour it. Instantly the tray is taken away, and the patient is thus relieved of his sickness.

The tray is removed to a place where three paths meet. Why? The folk theory seems to be that when the phi or "spirit" has satisfied himself with devouring the food in the tray, it wants to get back into the body of the sick person. It sees the clay doll in the tray, and attracted by the odor of the piece of used clothing of the sick person wrapped round the clay doll, the phi mistakes it for the real sick person and enters it. Later realizing that this is a ruse, the

spirit leaves the clay doll and wants to return and again enter the patient. But it is at a loss to find the way back, for there are three roads from among which to select. If it fails to pick the right one, so far so good. If it does choose the right one, it will notice that one of the trees nearby bears no resemblance to the one it has seen before, for one branch of the tree has been lopped off by the carrier of the tray. It will therefore probably hesitate and retrace its steps. If it continues on the right road, however, it may be baffled by the line drawn across it; and in any event it will be unable to identify the house, for the doors and windows are now closed, unlike the one which the phi has seen with doors and windows open. It passes the house by, and the sick person is no longer tormented.

There is an article in an old law which says: "Whoever performs the expulsion of evils and abandons a phi tray in the compound of anyone's house, must atone for his conduct by offering an oblation which must include a pig's head, miang (fermented wild tea leaves which are chewed or sucked with salt by the people of Northern Thailand), betel leaves, sugar cane, a set of baj sii (a small ceremonial tower-like structure holding rice or other offerings), chad (tiered umbrellas), flags, candles and joss sticks. Monks are to be invited to chant chapters of sacred texts. Failure to make such an offering will mean a fine in the event that any man or animal in the house becomes sick. If there are deaths or losses [probably meaning the death of animals] the negligent party must pay damages equal to one-third of the whole value."

The above plainly shows why a Sia Kabaan tray is not allowed to be abandoned in anyone's compound, for the phi, after devouring the food, will come out and get into any person or animal which it finds nearby. Compare this with the South Indian belief that one should not tread upon similar offerings placed where three or four roads meet, lest one should contract or absorb the evil. Even to this day the people in outlying districts of Thailand who see the Sia Kabaan tray abandoned somewhere will not go near it. For sensible people the reason is obvious.

THE CEREMONY OF PREPARING THE BRIDAL BED

In the Thai wedding ceremony, especially in the central area of the country, it is the duty of the bride's family to invite an elderly married couple to perform the ceremony of "preparing the bridal bed," before the wedding comes to a culmination.¹/

The officiating couple is chosen for certain auspicious characteristics: they must have been properly married according to established custom, have lived a long and happy married life, and must be blessed with many children, health, wealth and dignity. The time to initiate the ceremony is calculated and given by an astrologer, and it is always during the night of the wedding day. If the time given is from 9:35 p.m. to 11:10 p.m., it means that the ceremony must begin during that interval.

When the auspicious time arrives, the officiating couple enter the room which will be the bridal suite of the wedded pair. There they find mattress, pillows, bed-sheet and mosquito net lying sometimes on the bedstead in a heap, or perhaps in their proper places but only half arranged. On a table nearby there are a number of things; a tray with three small bags each filled with paddy, peas and sesame seeds; sometimes a small bag of coins; a small gourd-like vegetable fruit, called in Thai fag, smeared all over with a chalk-like toilet powder called din sau phaung standing in a tray; a small stone roller for pulverizing native medicine, also in a tray; rain-water in a small bowl (or in the earlier days in a newly-made earthen pot), and sometimes but rarely a tomcat. I give here the list of things used in the ceremony in its maximum possible completeness, but in all my experience I have never seen a complete set of these paraphernalia, since always one thing or another is left out. There may be an altar or a shelf for a Buddha image in the room. If a tomcat is included among the items, the first thing to do is to get hold of the cat, for it objects strongly to being kept in the room. Doors and windows must be closed before the cat is released in the room.

The first duty of the old couple is to prepare the bed. If there are one or two long pillows or "Dutch wives" (in Thai they are called side pillows, and in Indonesia, rolling pillows), these must be taken out and put somewhere else, for they are superfluous articles on such an occasion. In fact, they are rather a hindrance to the newly

1. Another frequent practice by which marriages are effected is that of informal elopement followed by formal apology to the girl's parents; this type of marriage is not described in this paper.

married pair, who are obviously "Dutch wives" to one another. When the preparation of the bed is complete, the elderly couple light tapers and incense sticks, pay obeisance to the Buddha image at the altar, and say their sacred recitations.^{2/}

If there is no altar or shelf for Buddha images in the house, the devotional act may be done in bed. When first lying down on the bed, one of the couple will say some auspicious words something like this: "How nice and soft this bed is! Whoever sleeps on it will prosper and be full of happiness!" The other will reply saying, perhaps, "Yes, you are right. The bed is soft and cool. Whoever sleeps on it will be healthy, wealthy, and have a number of children." There is no prescribed formula. It is left to the couple to think out and say something auspicious.

After lying down for a minute or two, the pair rise from the bed, straighten the bedclothes, and place the cat on the bed. The cat will jump out of the bed instantly. Never mind what the cat does; the important thing is to have it lie on the bed; that is all. They then place the other articles mentioned above on the bed and leave the bedroom. The ceremony is now at an end. Presents are then offered to the elderly couple as a token of thanks. Here I may add that before lying on the bed, the couple ought to shut the doors and windows and put the lights out in order to give an appearance of reality. The rite is intended to be a solemn one, but has degenerated in some instances into buffoonery during or after the ceremony. Some couples during the sleeping ceremony do not close doors and windows or put out the lights. They play practical jokes in bed allowing the people outside to have a peep at them. The ceremony seems to be one of homeopathic magic, based on the principle of "like produces like." Sometimes, when the couple comes out of the bedroom after the ceremony, the lady will say to the other persons, including the bride and bridegroom in the sitting room, that she dreamt a good dream. She tells her husband that somebody has given her a very nice baby. Her husband will ask such questions as, "Is the baby male or female?" "What is its complexion -- fair or dark?" "Whom does it look like?" To these questions the lady will answer that the baby is a male or a female. It has a complexion like that person -- pointing either to the bride or bridegroom. The audience will laugh at such a joke. The elderly couple will then pronounce some words of blessing.

How about the articles placed on the bridal bed by the old couple? They are to remain there for three nights. The small bags of paddy, peas and sesame seeds are no trouble if they remain in the bed, but the other things, especially the bowl full of water, will create difficulty.

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2. Devout people always observe such religious devotion before going to bed and usually instruct their children to do likewise. I use the word "recitation" for there is, strictly speaking, no prayer in Buddhism. Formally, the recitation is for the purpose of praising the virtue of the Buddha, his Law and his Sanga or Order of Priests, but actually to the people, it has something of the psychological nature of a prayer.

A small inattention will cause the water bowl to spill and wet the bed. What is the newly wedded pair to do? Take it out of the bed, of course, and put it back the next morning. What do these articles signify? There is a saying in regard to these things: "May you be cool like the fag and heavy like the faeng; may you stay in the house like the kaun sawh and watch the house like a tomcat." Fag and faeng are certain kinds of gourds. They are smeared with din sau phaung, a chalk-like toilet powder which the Thai people like to mix with scented water and smear on the body to give a cooling effect. The gourds fag and faeng, when eaten also have a cooling property and, thus, when smeared with such a powder, symbolize cool-heartedness, even-temperedness, peace and happiness. Kaun saw is a stone, three pieces of which are placed in triangular arrangement on the hearth to support the rice-cooking pot. It is, perhaps, a symbol of hearth and home. Probably because the kaun saw are dirty things, they are replaced by a stone pulverizer. The cat is no doubt a symbol of a stay-at-home. A cat which is used for the ceremony must, of course, be washed and sprayed with scented water. A reasonable thing to do. As to the colour of the cat, authorities differ. Some say it should be a cat with stripes like a tiger; and others say that it should be a white cat or even the tawny type which the Westerner calls a "Siamese" cat. Sometimes the cat is adorned with a small gold neck chain and gold anklets.

The paddy, peas, sesame seeds and water stand as symbols of fertility. Three days after the wedding, the peas and sesame seeds are sown, to predict the future life of the newlyweds. If the seeds sprout well, they indicate that the pair will prosper. As to the water in the bowl, one authority says that it is a symbol of the purity of the lives of the pair. Undoubtedly the water is to wet and fertilize the seeds which will be planted. In the self-contained village of olden days, people grew their own peas and sesame sufficient for their use in making sweetmeats for festive occasions. The cultivation of peas and sesame seeds as part of the wedding ceremony may derive from such an origin, but its meaning has since been lost through a change of culture.

As to the mattress used in the wedding ceremony, the Thai mattress is stuffed with kapok or silk cotton. It is unlike the European mattress, for it can be folded either in two or three joined transverse parts, to facilitate carrying. Each part has a number of corrugated longitudinal folds. A bridal mattress must be made up of an even number of parts. Anything in odd numbers in connection with the wedding pair portends misfortune. Everything must be in pairs, or in even numbers, like the wedding pair themselves. (If it happens that the mattress is in three parts to fit with the modern bedstead, then the corrugated folds in each part should be in even numbers, say four or six folds, to counteract the unlucky odd number of parts.) A bridal mattress is sometimes left unsewn at one corner. In such a case the bride is called to complete the sewing, for in the old days the mattress was made, stuffed and sewn by the would-be bride. In those times, every daughter of a good family had to be taught the arts of weaving and sewing. The bridal mattress is supposed to have been made by the young bride herself, but in practice nowadays, especially in Bangkok, the wedding mattress is in most cases bought from the bazaar. Sometimes a piece of money, gold, or other article symbolizing wealth, love or

happiness, is inserted in the mattress before the final sewing.

The ceremony of Preparing the Bridal Bed is actually a ceremony of house warming. It has nothing to do with the actual wedding ceremony. According to the Thai tradition, as far as it is known, a man should marry out, that is, he lives and works with his wife's family, at least for a time, after marriage. In such a matrilineal tradition, a new house must be built by the bridegroom and the bedding is furnished by the bride.

In days gone by, the King, just after coronation, had a similar ceremony to perform, called 'The Assumption of the Royal Residence,' held at the palace where he slept for the first time as a crowned king. A list of articles used in connection with the ceremony of the assumption of the royal bed-chamber included a black cat (not a striped or a white or tawny one), a stone pulverizer, a fag gourd on a tray, a tray each of paddy, green peas, vegetable seeds and sesame seeds, a gold key, and a replica of a cluster of buds of the betelnut tree (probably a symbol of fertility, for the buds were very numerous). Also on the list were a white cock, a spirit-possessed walking stick, and a beautiful girl. The animals and articles as mentioned were carried in a procession, astrologically timed to insure auspiciousness, by a group of girls mostly belonging to the royal family or to the royal residence. The cat and the white cock were released outside the royal residence. The articles were placed appropriately in the royal chamber. The paddy and the seeds were afterwards sown on the ground by courtiers near the royal residence. This is all the information I can gather. The black cat was no doubt for the purpose of catching mice, and the white cock served as an alarm clock. The spirit-possessed walking stick and the beautiful girl are obviously of Chinese origin. The rest of the articles explain themselves as to their symbolization. The ceremony was apparently closely similar to that by which commoners prepared the bridal bed, excepting that there was no old couple to lie down first on the royal bed.

The ceremony of house warming, in its traditional style for a dignitary or a well-to-do person of the older generation, is similar to what has been described for the King, but it is rarely seen nowadays. The white cock is released in the compound of the house and the cat in the house itself; the gourd and the stone pulverizer are placed under the bedstead or near the bed. The cane and other articles are placed on the bed.

The cat plays an important part in another Thai domestic ceremony. When a baby is put in the cradle for the first time, a cat is placed there first and rocked to and fro for a minute before the baby is put in it. Undoubtedly, a domestic cat was in the past a necessity in a house infested by rats, especially in the vicinity of rice fields.

A SIAMESE "DR. KNOWITALL"

"Dr. Knowitall" is a type of folk-tale well known in many parts of Europe and Asia. There is one such story as told in Thailand.

A monk named Theen Thaung lived a comparatively hard and poverty-stricken life, for unlike his brother monks, he was offered food by few people of his village. 1/ One day he hit upon an idea; he told his boy disciple-servant to steal a plow belonging to one of the farmers working in the field and hide it somewhere. 2/ The boy did as he was told and informed his teacher where the plow was hidden. When the owner came back after his morning meal to continue plowing, he could not find the plow. 3/ Seeing the boy disciple, the farmer enquired whether he had seen his lost plow. The boy denied any knowledge but advised the farmer to see his luang phau, who could foretell anything. 4/ The farmer went to see Theen Thaung as directed and asked his advice in finding the lost plow. Theen Thaung, although he knew nothing about reading or writing, took his slate and made as if to write and calculate

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1. Theen is a title prefixed to the personal name of a monk who leads a loose monastic life. Perhaps the word is a corruption of the Pali word thera which means "elder." There are a number of droll Siamese folk-tales relating to such Theen not unlike some of the ribald stories of monks found in medieval European literature. In some versions Theen Thaung is called Teacher Thaung.
 2. In some versions a water buffalo is stolen.
 3. Siamese farmers usually take their morning meal about ten or half past ten in the morning after plowing (or doing other work) strenuously from dawn. There is, in a sense, no lunch time. The evening meal is taken at about five or six in the afternoon.
 4. Luang phau (luang - to be great; phau - father) is a title of respect for elder relatives who become monks. It is also used for other elder monks who are much revered by the folk. Usually the luang phau is abbot of the village monastery. Villagers rely on luang phau for his advice in matters both temporal and spiritual. In ancient days all villagers were kinsmen. The luang phau was therefore their eldertrelative who forsook a layman's life and became a monk. This may be compared to the third stage of life of a Brahman who becomes a forest dweller or aranyika. A famous Buddha image of miraculous power is also called luang phau by the people.

something on the slate, muttering some nonsensical words. 5/ He then told the farmer that the lost plow might be found lying somewhere near a white ant hill at the foot of a big tree and hidden by something green. The farmer acted as advised and found his plow. Thereupon Theen Thaung's fame spread as one who could foretell anything by the power of his knowledge. The people held him in high esteem and honored him with food and other gifts.

Sometime later a drought occurred. With much anxiety for their future, the farmers went in a body to Theen Thaung for advice. He told the farmers in an off-hand manner that there would be heavy rains within the coming six or seven days. The people were glad and believed him unquestioningly. Five days later there was still no sign of rain. Theen Thaung became uneasy and kept putting off the people who came to him, saying that there would be a downpour in the near future. Still no sign of rain appeared, and Theen Thaung had no alternative but to decide to leave the village forever. When night came he left the monastery. While walking along the edge of a pond, he heard frogs making loud croaking sounds. He was very glad to hear this noise for it meant rain. He hesitated to go farther and on second thought retraced his steps to the monastery. At dawn the sky became cloudy, and it drizzled lightly. Soon there was a downpour. The people rejoiced as Theen Thaung's prediction of the coming rain became true. Theen Thaung's name then became famous over a wide area, and he prospered, for many people came to him with more and more offerings.

After a while it happened that a gold plate belonging to the king of the country was stolen. Now the king, hearing of Theen Thaung's great powers, ordered his minister to invite Theen Thaung to the palace in order to use his power to locate the lost gold plate. When the minister went to fetch Theen Thaung and invited him to mount a palanquin, Theen Thaung was very much frightened; but he had no choice but to accept the king's invitation. Seated in the palanquin, Theen Thaung was anxious and uneasy. He spoke absent-mindedly to himself saying, "Now, Thaung, you are sure to die." He repeated this many times along the way.

Now among the four palanquin bearers, the one just behind Theen Thaung was also named Thaung, and he was actually the person who had stolen the king's plate. Hearing Theen Thaung speak this way, and thinking that the monk knew the secret of his being a thief, Thaung, the bearer, became frightened. When Theen Thaung called to the bearers to stop for a while so that he might relieve himself, the culprit bearer saw his opportunity. After Theen Thaung relieved himself, the man went near to the monk and asked in a whisper that the monk not give him away. Theen Thaung, seeing the man's behaviour, guessed that he was the man who had stolen the king's gold plate. The monk pretended to know all and said in a threatening manner, "What's the matter now?"

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5. The Siamese slate has an oblong shape and is made of soft wood daubed with blacking. The best type has a frame on two of its sides, each with an ornamental ivory knob forming its top, to which a string is fastened for hanging. Such a slate is still used by Siamese astrologers.

What do you know about it?" The man made obeisance respectfully as if to confess his guilt. Theen Thaung, seeing himself at an advantage, threatened him saying, "All right! If your conscience hurts, then make a clean breast of it. No harm will come to you if you confide in me. Tell me where the gold plate is."

The man replied, "I hid it under the threshold of the southeastern city gate."

Theen Thaung replied, "All right. That is enough."

After that confidential meeting Theen Thaung continued his journey in the palanquin until he reached the palace. The king came out to meet him in person and escorted him into the palace where a seat of honour had been arranged for him. Theen Thaung felt timid in the presence of the king but tried to bear up as best he could. The king asked Theen Thaung whether he could tell by his power where the gold plate might be found. Theen Thaung took out his slate and jotted down some figures on it, pretending to be an astrologer. Then he spoke to the king in this manner: "May it please Your Majesty, this gold plate is not actually lost. The thief who stole the gold plate is a man with wavy hair, round eyes and dark skin. He is short and fat and pot-bellied. He hid the gold plate under the threshold of the southeastern city gate. If Your Majesty will but send someone there, it will be found." The king sent one of his royal pages to dig under the gate, and the gold plate was found there just as Theen Thaung had said. The king was very glad to have his gold plate back, and made Theen Thaung chief monk of the kingdom.

One day the king, in order to test Theen Thaung's ability to foretell the future, ordered one of the pages to put some fruit flies in a bottle of dark colour. After the bottle was sealed, the king commanded the page to take it to Theen Thaung and ask him what was inside the bottle. The page did as he was commanded. Theen Thaung was eating when the page arrived, handed him the bottle, and repeated the king's command. Theen Thaung accepted the bottle and tried to see what was inside. He could not see anything, for the bottle was too dark in colour. He put the bottle to his ear but could hear no sound. In vain he tried, but found no clues. While he was trying to solve the problem, a fruit fly circled round and round his eyes, annoying him. Unthinkingly, he uttered in a loud voice, "Oh, you fruit fly!" The page who brought the bottle, thinking that Theen Thaung knew its contents, replied, "Yes, Your Eminence! They are fruit flies." Theen Thaung seized the advantage and sought to confirm it. "Yes, of course they are, and what else could they be? Why try to deceive me thus? Aha! It takes me such a long time to see the real thing." The page reported the incident to the king, and the king was very pleased with Theen Thaung's remarkable ability. He invited Theen Thaung and other monks to feast and receive gifts in the palace the next day.

When Theen Thaung knew that he was to be honoured by a feast in the palace on the next morning, he tried to prepare himself for the occasion as best he could by rehearsing good manners and proprieties. On the morrow Theen Thaung went to the palace. The sky was cloudy, for it was a Buddhist holy day falling on the fifteenth day of the waxing moon, and it was sure to rain. While dining with his fellow monks and

seated in the place of honour as befits the chief monk of the kingdom, Theen Thaung eyed a big piece of pork. He took it with a spoon and put it in his mouth, but being toothless, he could not chew it. He tried to swallow it, but it stuck in his throat. Fearing that he would choke, he raised his eyes upward in distress. The king, mistaking the gesture and thinking that Theen Thaung wanted more curry for his almost empty plate, rose from his royal seat to attend to the wants of Theen Thaung, his chief monk.^{h6/} No sooner had the king moved a few paces from the royal seat than there was a flash of lightning and a clap of thunder. The royal seat was wrecked by the lightning, but the king came to no harm. Theen Thaung, startled by the great noise, swallowed the piece of meat successfully. He took advantage of the occasion by saying to the king, "I made that sign in order that Your Majesty might move away from the royal seat as quickly as possible. I knew this terrible thing would happen." The king was very pleased, and marveled at Theen Thaung's ability to foretell the future. Then Theen Thaung received the greatest esteem of the kingdom and lived happily to the end of his days.

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6. When offering a merit-making feast to the monks, it is traditional that the host and other laymen, whatever their rank, should sit somewhere not far from the monks in order to attend to their wants.

TRAVEL BY BULLOCK CARTS

Bullock carts were in the old days a common conveyance for long overland trips in many parts of Thailand. Ordinary people traveled in organized caravans of bullock carts because highwaymen and thieves made travel dangerous in some thinly populated regions of the country.

The time for making long trips was in the dry season, preferably in February and the earlier part of March. The occasion was often to bring rice or forest products to market. There were no roads in the modern sense of the word, but only cart tracks. In December and January, though the rainy season was over, the land had not completely dried, and there might still be mud in certain places. In the latter part of March and in April the people seldom made a journey, for this was the hottest part of the year and water was scarce. When the rainy season began, and most people were needed at home for ploughing and sowing, almost all travel ceased unless it was an absolute necessity. The land would begin to soften with the rains, and sometimes in certain areas it would become suddenly flooded. Then, too, there was the difficulty for travelers of finding dry wood for fuel, and dry places for camping. Overland communication between distant regions of the Kingdom was more or less suspended, therefore, in the rainy season. Even raids by robbers and invasions by the armies of enemy countries stopped. Invaders, in cases where they could not withdraw after the rainy season had set in, simply established a defense area and turned themselves into rice cultivators for the time being to replenish their stores. The fighting would recommence after the rains were over.

Travel by bullock caravan started early, usually before day-break, in order to reach a pre-determined point where the travelers could make a halt and take a morning meal about eleven o'clock. This point would be near a stream, pond or lake where water could be conveniently obtained for man and beast. If such a place were situated at a great distance, the caravan had to start long before daybreak in order to reach the place in time.

After a rest, say until two o'clock in the afternoon, the people would start on their travels again. They did not start earlier than this, for the time between noon and two o'clock was very hot, and it was also the time when harmful spirits were abroad, as the people believed. The bullocks could not stand working in such heat under the blazing sun, not to mention the discomfort of the people. The caravan halted for the night about six o'clock again at a place where water was available. If such a place was reached earlier, they would travel no further that day. If necessary, however, the people would continue to travel even after dark in order to reach the pre-determined camping site; the need of water was an all-important controlling factor.

At the stopping place the bullocks were unyoked, watered and fed with grass. The carts were arranged in a large circle with the bullocks in the middle. Some of the men would go out to find wood for the fires. If the place was frequently used as a camping ground, they would have to go far afield for fuel. Fires were built for cooking and also around the outside of the camp as a protection against wild beasts.^t The men slept on mats under the carts, and no one normally slept inside a cart. If the encampment were in a forest, it was explicitly prohibited for anyone to sleep inside the carts for it was believed that in that case Phedchaluukam, the God of the Cart would withhold his protection. ^{1/} In fact, to sleep inside a cart was more dangerous than to sleep under it. A tiger could pounce or leap on a cart and easily procure a victim. But to get under the cart was not so easy for the tiger had to crawl into a confined sleeping place which was protected by the heavy cart wheels and spokes. Sleeping inside the carts was also avoided because it was close and stuffy. While the people slept, there were one or two persons assigned to guard the camp and keep the fires around the ring of carts from dying out. Even to-day when traveling by car along a modern highway in the evening, one sometimes sees groups of lights here and there in the forest. These are encampments of such caravans of bullock carts.

When people traveled in the dry season in open country, they were troubled by comparatively few mosquitoes. But in the rainy season it was otherwise; there were swarms of these pests, especially in a swampy place near a lake, pond, or thick forest. In an open forest there were pests like cattle-flies and sand-flies rather than mosquitoes.

Besides the danger to caravans from wild animals there was also the danger from strangers of the human species. These strangers were often cattle thieves living in villages near the caravan tracks. They would pretend to be wayfarers. One or two of them would ask the men of the caravan to accept them as fellow travelers, a request that could hardly be refused. When everybody of the caravan was in deep sleep, these strangers would seize the opportunity to steal as many bullocks as they could. Before it became known, the stranger together with the stolen bullocks would be deep in the forest. Hence while traveling in a district known to be infested with robbers, the caravan would have to be constantly on guard, and strangers who joined it as fellow travelers were always viewed with suspicion and kept under close surveillance.

Travel over plains between cultivated fields in the lower central part of the country was easier. There would be no camping in the forest for days in a row. Usually the owners of the fields would readily give small sections of their lands to be utilized as a public track or highway; to have a road, even if it was only a cart track and full of mire during the rainy season, passing through their lands was to their own convenience.

The farmers of central Thailand use buffaloes to pull their carts and sleds instead of bullocks, for buffaloes are stronger and thrive in water and mire, while bullocks favor higher dry land. Buffaloes cannot endure the blazing sun for very long, while bullocks can. Hence for any long trip the people in the lower regions prefer traveling by boat along the many canals and creeks during the rainy season and for as long

1. Phedchaluukam is a corrupted form of Visvakarma, the Indian Divine Artificer of the Godst

as possible during the dry season that follows. They travel overland by cart when conveying goods during the rest of the year, when they cannot utilize boats because most of the canals have insufficient water. Nowadays, in most places, motor trucks can travel these cart tracks during the dry season.

When traveling alone or in the company of one or two persons, with no goods to be conveyed (as when visiting or on pilgrimage) the people go on foot. They carry with them their belongings and some food in baskets hanging to either side of a shoulder yoke. They may put up for the night without cost at a saalaa or rest pavilion. These have been built by benevolent merit-makers for just this purpose, and are found in every monastery, and often at other convenient stopping places along the roadways and waterways of the country.

