

# *Shā Lā Te Ve: The Building of a Merit Shelter Among the Lahu Nyi (Red Lahu) of the Northern Thai Uplands*

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## INTRODUCTION

In a previous contribution to this journal (Walker 1984), I described in some detail the three Great Merit Days (*shī nyi lon̄*)<sup>1</sup> observed by the Tibeto-Burman-speaking Lahu Nyi (Red Lahu) people among whom I lived in the hills of north Thailand.<sup>2</sup> In this article I examine an important ritual event which follows immediately after at least one, and sometimes all, of these *shī nyi lon̄*. This is the construction of a rest shelter along the pathway to a Lahu Nyi village. The shelter is built with the principal objective of obtaining merit or blessings (Lahu *aw̄ bon*, from Tai<sup>3</sup> *bun* "merit") by providing a place of rest and shelter for the footweary traveler. The Lahu have certainly borrowed their custom from their lowland neighbors, the Buddhist Tai, who build similar shelters—and bridges as well—for exactly the same reason. Indeed the Lahu word for their merit hut, *shā lā*, is of Tai origin and refers, initially, to the pavilions erected in temple courtyards for pilgrims, and thence to any kind of rest hut built elsewhere for the benefit of tired travelers (cf. Kingshill 1960: 95; 302, s.v., *sa-la*).

While the ideological and practical origin of the Lahu *shā lā* is clearly Buddhist, these Lahu Nyi villagers have surrounded its construction with an essentially Lahu ritual idiom and supporting ideology. Thus, as with the *shī nyi lon̄* festivals described in my earlier paper, the making of a merit hut shows how non-Buddhist hill people adopt and adapt aspects of their lowland Tai neighbors' Buddhist culture, without themselves becoming fully integrated into that culture.

In order to understand the wider context of the ritual activity described in this paper, the reader should certainly study the introductory

remarks presented in the previous article (Walker 1984: 275–278) and preferably also examine my other works on Lahu ritual.<sup>4</sup>

*SHA<sup>ˆ</sup> LA<sup>ˆ</sup> TE VE:* BUILDING A MERIT SHELTER

The Lahu Nyi follow a lunar calendar, dividing each month into the period of the waxing and the period of the waning moon. The day of the new moon and the day of the full moon, which begin these two periods, are days of socially-enforced rest and ritual celebration (cf. Walker 1981). They are called *shi<sup>ˆ</sup> nyi* or merit days. In addition, the Lahu Nyi in northern Thailand celebrate three *shi<sup>ˆ</sup> nyi lon<sup>ˆ</sup>* or “great merit days” (cf. Walker 1984) to mark three important events in their agricultural year: the conclusion of the firing of their new swiddens, the harvesting of their first side crops (maize and others), and the harvesting of the first rice. Unlike an ordinary *shi<sup>ˆ</sup> nyi*, the great lunar festivals occupy two days rather than one. And, on the third day, the villagers may decide to put up a merit shelter.

The great lunar festivals, incidentally, have names which are derived from Tai festivals that occur at about the same time. The Lahu names are *Sheh<sup>ˆ</sup> kaw<sub>ˆ</sub> shi<sup>ˆ</sup> nyi*, *Hkao<sub>ˆ</sub> shi<sup>ˆ</sup> nyi* and *Aw<sup>ˆ</sup> shi<sup>ˆ</sup> nyi*, corresponding to the Northern Thai New Year, the beginning of the Buddhist “lenten” season and the end of that season (see below, Text 1-B, n. 30).



Fig. 1. Building a merit shelter stretching over pathway leading to the village.

The tasks related to *sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup> te ve* ("making the *sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup>*") begin early on the day after a two-day great lunar festival. When the villagers have breakfasted, a work party comprising a man from every household sets out for the place where the headman, after consultation with other village elders, has determined that the shelter is to be erected. They take with them the percussion instruments kept in the village temple (cf. Walker 1981: 671–679): drum (*ca<sub>-</sub> k'o<sub>-</sub>*), gong (*bo lo k'o<sub>-</sub>*) and cymbals (*cheh heh<sup>ˆ</sup>*). The man or boy who carries the gong beats it as the party walks to the work site. The women remain at home to prepare the noon meal, which they will later carry to the new merit shelter. Each household is expected to kill a chicken and prepare rice and chicken curry for the feast.

The *sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup>*, an open structure of bamboo and wood, has a roof



Fig. 2. The white wooden posts are called *katc mo<sup>ˆ</sup> taweh<sub>-</sub>*, the pendant is a *meh ca<sup>ˆ</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup> shaweh<sub>-</sub>*; at left, man with lighted beewax candle prays to the local hill spirit.

which extends over the pathway (Fig. 1). On each side of this shelter the workers set up two, or sometimes three, *kaw mõ taweh* or ritual posts (Fig. 2), an altar (*hti*) comprising a bamboo mat atop a wooden post (Fig. 3), and a bamboo pole with a pendant made of split bamboo (Fig. 2). The two altars will later hold food offerings for the spirits (Fig. 6, 9). The pendants, called *meh cã lã shaweh*, are stylized centipedes (*meh cã lã* "centipede," *shaweh* "pendant"). The centipede is associated with the spirits (perhaps because of its painful "bite"; the same word, *che ve*, is used for the "bite" of spirits) and is here offered to the local hill spirit (*hk'aw nẽ*), who through propitiation becomes the guardian spirit of the locality.<sup>5</sup> The symbolism of the ritual posts or *kaw mõ taweh*, usually offered to *G'ui sha* but here said to be gifts to the spirits, is uncertain. The headman of my study community told me that the three cuts on the posts for this occasion represent three wishes of the community: that the rice crop should not be destroyed by insects, that the people should not be killed, and that there should be no sickness. Posts and altars are decorated with red paper streamers attached to bamboo sticks. These *ca ca* (Fig. 3) are offerings for the spirits, and I was told that red is a particularly appropriate color for the spirits. Directly in front of the left-hand altar, a small half-section of bamboo resembling a feeding trough is placed on two forked sticks (Fig. 4). Inside this "trough" are placed long grasses and a noose made of grass, representing bait and a rope snare for the souls (*aw ha*) of the wild animals. Called *va lu k'u* (*va* "trap," *lu k'u* "hollow object"), the tiny trough and its contents symbolize the villagers' desire for game.

The *sha lã* itself, which is dedicated to *G'ui sha* rather than to the spirits, is decorated with white rather than red paper streamers. Attached to the main upright supports of the hut are small half-sections of bamboo which will later contain food offerings for *G'ui sha* (Fig. 5).

It takes three to four hours to build the merit shelter and prepare the necessary ritual paraphernalia (Fig. 10). By the time all is ready, the women will have arrived with the food, and the rites which dedicate the various offerings to *G'ui sha* and the spirits can begin.

Each woman places some grains of cooked rice and a little relish in each of the nine small bamboo sections attached to the main uprights of the merit shelter. (Maize cobs and other newly-harvested crops are added when the ceremony follows *hkao shi nyi*, and rice sheaves when it follows *aw shi nyi*). Next the women make similar offerings at the two spirit altars. Beeswax candles brought by every household are then lighted and placed on each offering receptacle. Once all these are alight, the headman and senior priest (*to bo pa*) take other beeswax



Fig. 3. Woman placing her offerings on the *hli* (altar) for the local hill spirit.



Fig. 4. Replica trough and snare in front of altar, symbolizing bait and snare for wild animals (see also Fig. 7).



Fig. 5. Placing rice and chilli offerings in one of the small bamboo troughs inside the merit shelter.

candles in their right hand (Fig. 6, 7), light them, and station themselves at the altars on either side of the *sha<sup>~</sup> la<sup>~</sup>* (it does not matter which man chooses which altar). Squatting in front of their respective altars the headman and priest pray, to the accompaniment of drum, gong and cymbals.

Both men address the local hill spirit, but their prayers differ according to the altar at which they are offered. The man at the right-hand altar asks the guardian hill spirit to create blessings or merit (*aw<sub>~</sub> bon*) in exchange for the offerings which the village community has provided. He asks the spirit to watch over the workers in the fields and protect the crops from wild animals, and he requests that the supply of food and drink may never be exhausted. Texts 1-A and 1-B are examples of this prayer recited by different men.



Fig. 6. Village headman praying to local hill spirit; maize cobs, beans, sweet potatoes, cooked rice and salt comprise the offerings.

TEXT 1-A<sup>6</sup>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. O<sup>7</sup>, O<sup>7</sup>, ya<sub>2</sub> nyi ka<sub>2</sub> haw Meh Hpa<sub>2</sub> te<sup>7</sup> fu<sub>2</sub> te<sup>7</sup> a daw<sup>7</sup> ve, ka<sub>2</sub> haw Meh Hpa<sub>2</sub> a g'aw<sup>7</sup>, Meh Hpa<sub>2</sub> hk'aw teh hk'aw g'aw<sup>7</sup> hta<sub>2</sub> haw, ha, Meh Hpa<sub>2</sub> hk'aw teh hk'aw g'aw<sup>7</sup> hta<sub>2</sub> haw, ca li<sup>7</sup> ca ma<sub>2</sub> la<sub>2</sub> meu<sup>7</sup> hta<sub>2</sub> haw, sha<sup>7</sup> la<sup>7</sup> bon shaw<sup>7</sup> u<sup>7</sup> shaw<sup>7</sup> meh<sub>2</sub> k'aw<sub>2</sub> pa<sub>2</sub> leh sha<sup>7</sup> la<sup>7</sup> bon, sha<sup>7</sup> la<sup>7</sup> shi<sup>7</sup> k'aw<sub>2</sub> mui<sub>2</sub> leh ka<sub>2</sub> haw.</p> <p>2. Ha, hk'aw sheh<sub>2</sub> law<sub>2</sub> sheh<sub>2</sub> hpa<sup>7</sup>, Meh Hpa<sub>2</sub> hk'aw teh hk'aw g'aw ka<sub>2</sub> haw ve, hk'aw sheh<sub>2</sub> law<sub>2</sub> sheh<sub>2</sub> hpa<sup>7</sup> ka<sub>2</sub> haw ve, cao<sub>2</sub> ba<sub>2</sub> cao<sub>2</sub> meu<sup>7</sup></p> | <p>1. Oh today, this village<sup>7</sup> here at Mae Hpa hill<sup>8</sup> once again exchanges<sup>9</sup> this merit shelter built with wood<sup>10</sup> [cut by axes made by]<sup>11</sup> the blacksmith's own hands; we once again make this merit shelter<sup>12</sup> here at <b>this place</b>.</p> <p>2. Ha, master of the hills and of the streams here at Mae Hpa hill, master of the hills and of the streams, lord of the village, lord of the country<sup>13</sup></p> |
|---|--|

- ka<sub>↓</sub> ve, ha, aw<sub>↓</sub> bon aw<sub>↓</sub> shi<sup>~</sup> ga  
leh hpa<sub>↓</sub> leh meh<sub>↓</sub>.
3. Hk'a<sub>↓</sub> g'a<sup>~</sup> chi g'a<sup>~</sup>, ka<sub>↓</sub> haw Meh  
Hpa<sub>↓</sub> te<sup>~</sup> fu<sub>↓</sub> te<sup>~</sup> a daw<sup>~</sup>, la<sub>↓</sub> sha mo<sub>↓</sub>  
la<sub>↓</sub> mo<sub>↓</sub> sha<sup>~</sup>, daw<sup>~</sup> hpu te<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>^</sup>  
k'aw<sub>↓</sub> mui<sub>↓</sub> leh la<sub>↓</sub> meu<sup>~</sup> hkaw<sup>~</sup> lu<sup>~</sup>  
hkaw<sup>~</sup> tan<sup>~</sup>, ce<sub>↓</sub> ce<sub>↓</sub> cu<sub>↓</sub> cu<sub>↓</sub> te leh,  
ha, naw<sub>↓</sub> haw k'aw<sub>↓</sub> ta<sub>↓</sub> la ve, naw<sub>↓</sub>  
hkui che leh ha<sub>↓</sub> la<sup>~</sup>, la<sub>↓</sub> che leh ha<sub>↓</sub>  
la<sup>~</sup>.
4. Cao<sub>↓</sub> maw cao<sub>↓</sub> tu<sup>~</sup> ka<sub>↓</sub> haw ve,  
hk'aw sheh<sub>↓</sub> law<sub>↓</sub> sheh<sub>↓</sub> hpa<sup>~</sup> ka<sub>↓</sub>  
haw ve, ha, ho<sup>~</sup> ti<sub>↓</sub> ta ti<sub>↓</sub> pfuh<sup>~</sup> sheh<sub>↓</sub>  
hpa<sup>~</sup>, chaw ya<sup>~</sup> la<sub>↓</sub> yu<sub>↓</sub> mui<sub>↓</sub> ca<sup>~</sup> va<sup>~</sup>  
ca<sup>~</sup> te<sup>~</sup> hpaw<sup>~</sup> ka<sub>↓</sub>, hk'a<sup>~</sup> deh<sub>↓</sub> g'a<sup>~</sup>  
ceu<sub>↓</sub>, g'a<sup>~</sup> pa<sup>~</sup>, g'a<sup>~</sup> fui<sub>↓</sub> la<sup>~</sup> ce<sup>~</sup>.
5. Ha, to nu<sup>~</sup> to sha<sup>^</sup> chi ma ve ka<sub>↓</sub>,  
nav<sub>↓</sub> g'a<sup>~</sup> fui<sub>↓</sub>, g'a<sup>~</sup> pa<sup>^</sup> leh pon<sub>↓</sub> la<sup>~</sup>  
meh<sub>↓</sub>.
6. Mui<sub>↓</sub> ca<sup>~</sup> va<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>~</sup>, mui<sub>↓</sub> k'o<sup>^</sup> va<sup>~</sup>  
k'o<sup>^</sup> ka<sub>↓</sub>, te<sup>~</sup> nyi mui<sub>↓</sub> ve, chi nyi  
ca<sup>~</sup> ma<sup>~</sup> peu<sub>↓</sub> ve; te<sup>~</sup> hk'aw<sub>↓</sub> mui<sub>↓</sub>  
ve, chi hk'aw<sub>↓</sub> daw<sub>↓</sub> leh ma<sup>~</sup> yaw,  
ha, aw<sub>↓</sub> bon aw<sub>↓</sub> shi<sup>~</sup> chi k'aw<sub>↓</sub> hpa<sub>↓</sub>  
leh ta<sub>↓</sub> pi<sup>~</sup>.
7. Hk'a<sub>↓</sub> g'a<sup>~</sup> chi g'a<sup>~</sup>, ui<sub>↓</sub> ka<sub>↓</sub> i ka<sub>↓</sub>,  
g'o<sup>^</sup> taw<sup>^</sup> g'o<sup>^</sup> g'a<sup>~</sup> ka<sub>↓</sub> haw yo<sub>↓</sub> law,  
te<sup>~</sup> nyi sheh<sup>^</sup> yan<sup>~</sup> hpa<sub>↓</sub> g'a<sup>~</sup> sheh<sub>↓</sub>  
hpa<sup>~</sup>, te<sup>~</sup> ha<sup>~</sup> sheh<sup>^</sup> yan<sup>~</sup> hpa<sub>↓</sub> g'a<sup>~</sup>  
sheh<sub>↓</sub> hpa<sup>~</sup>, cao<sub>↓</sub> maw cao<sub>↓</sub> tu<sup>~</sup> ka<sub>↓</sub>  
haw ve, ha, aw<sub>↓</sub> hkaw<sub>↓</sub>, aw<sub>↓</sub> bon  
aw<sub>↓</sub> shi<sup>~</sup>, ka<sub>↓</sub> haw Meh Hpa<sub>↓</sub> te<sup>~</sup>  
hpaw<sup>~</sup> yo<sub>↓</sub> law k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o<sup>^</sup>, cao<sub>↓</sub> maw  
cao<sub>↓</sub> tu<sup>~</sup> ka<sub>↓</sub> haw, ha, ca leh hpa<sub>↓</sub>  
leh la<sup>~</sup> meh, aw<sub>↓</sub> hkaw<sub>↓</sub>, aw<sub>↓</sub> bon  
aw<sub>↓</sub> shi<sup>~</sup> chi ve, ca<sup>~</sup> leh a<sup>~</sup> peu<sub>↓</sub>,  
daw<sub>↓</sub> leh a<sup>~</sup> yaw.
8. Hk'a<sub>↓</sub> g'a<sup>~</sup> chi g'a<sup>~</sup>, g'o<sup>^</sup> taw<sup>^</sup> g'o<sup>^</sup>  
g'a<sup>~</sup>, la<sub>↓</sub> meu<sup>~</sup> hkaw<sup>~</sup> lu<sup>~</sup> hkaw<sup>~</sup>  
tan<sup>~</sup>, ce<sub>↓</sub> ce<sub>↓</sub> cu<sub>↓</sub> cu<sub>↓</sub> te leh ka<sub>↓</sub> haw  
k'aw<sub>↓</sub> tan<sup>~</sup> la ve yo<sub>↓</sub> law k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o<sup>^</sup>.
9. Ui<sub>↓</sub> ka<sub>↓</sub> i ka<sub>↓</sub>, daw<sup>~</sup> hpu te<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>^</sup>  
k'aw<sub>↓</sub> mui<sub>↓</sub> leh k'aw<sub>↓</sub> sha<sup>~</sup> g'a<sup>~</sup>, ha,  
ca<sup>~</sup> leh daw<sub>↓</sub> leh a<sup>~</sup> peu<sub>↓</sub>, chi bon  
hpa<sub>↓</sub> leh keu la<sup>~</sup>, ka<sub>↓</sub> haw cao<sub>↓</sub> maw
- here at this place, create merit  
[for us].
3. Every person of the village here at  
Mae Hpa, the right-hand group<sup>14</sup>  
once again working together with  
the same pure intention,<sup>15</sup> has pre-  
pared many different kinds of offer-  
ings<sup>16</sup> made by their own hands;  
ha, we place [these offerings] under  
you; stretch out your feet<sup>17</sup> and  
receive [these offerings], stretch out  
your hands and receive [them].
4. Lord of this place, master of the hills  
and the streams here at this place,  
ha, you who are all-knowing, all-  
true, when the people are working  
with their hands on the farms, they  
ask<sup>18</sup> that you carefully look upon  
them and order that they be sepa-  
rated [from all misfortune].
5. Ha, please also let [our fields] be  
separated from all wild animals;<sup>19</sup>  
order that they bypass [our fields].
6. When we are farming our lands,<sup>20</sup>  
if we work for one day in the fields  
may the food not be finished in ten  
days; if we work for one year in the  
fields may the drink not be ex-  
hausted in ten years; ha, this boon  
once again create and put upon us.
7. Ha, you who can create three times  
in one day, you who can create three  
times in one night, lord of this place;  
lord of this place, the Mae Hpa side,  
search for and create for every per-  
son, the big and the small, every  
household, the boon of a great  
yield,<sup>21</sup> the boon of a great yield  
[so that] the food may not finish,  
the drink may not be exhausted.
8. Every person, every household has  
prepared all kinds of offerings made  
by our own hands and has come to  
put them here at this place.
9. The big and the small, once again  
working together with the same pure  
intention, once again make offerings,  
ha, may the food and drink not be



cao\_ tu\_ ka\_ haw ve, cao\_ ba\_ cao\_  
meu\_ ka\_ haw ve, hpa\_ g'a je^ g'a  
sheh\_ hpa\_ ho\_ ti\_ ta\_ ti\_ pfuh\_  
sheh\_ hpa\_ ka\_ haw.

exhausted; this boon create and grant<sup>22</sup> to us, lord of this place, lord of the village, lord of the country here at this place, creating and splitting<sup>23</sup> person, all-knowing, all-true master of this place.

## TEXT 1-B

1. Ya\_ nyi Meh Sho\_ Lo\_ hk'aw chi  
hk'aw g'aw\_ chi haw yo\_ law le\_  
k'o^ k'o, a, la\_ sha a daw\_ daw\_  
hpu daw\_ ca^ te ca^ k'aw\_ mui\_  
leh la\_ meh\_ a ga^ sha\_ hpu sha\_  
ca^ k'aw\_ mui\_ leh ta\_ pi^ o meh\_  
k'aw\_ kaw\_ leh sha\_ la^ bon sha\_  
la^ shi\_ k'aw\_ te g'a ve cho\_ ka\_  
haw yo\_ law le\_ k'o^ k'o.
  2. A, la\_ meu\_ hta\_ haw aw\_ meh yu\_  
leh k'aw\_ kao\_ k'aw\_ tan\_ leh la\_  
meu\_ hta\_ haw a\_ hpe\_ a\_ leh\_  
k'aw\_ tan\_ leh yo\_ law le\_ k'o^ k'o,  
nga\_ te\_ mo\_ te\_ cu\_ ve hk'o^ hta\_  
haw yo\_ law le\_ k'o^ k'o, k'aw\_ sha\_  
leh hk'aw u\_ hk'aw sheh\_ hpa\_ hta\_  
k'aw\_ ta\_ ga ve, law\_ u\_ law\_ sheh\_  
hpa\_ hta\_ k'aw\_ ta\_ g'a ve.
  3. A, nga\_ te\_ peu\_ sha\_ g'a hk'o^ hta\_  
nga\_ te\_ mo\_ te\_ cu\_ hk'o^ hta\_  
la\_ meu\_ hkaw\_ lu\_ hkaw\_ tan\_ te\_  
meu\_ te\_ lan\_ k'aw\_ tan\_ leh yo\_ law  
le\_ k'o^ k'o, cao\_ hpeu\_ nga\_ leh\_  
hk'o^ hta\_ haw k'aw\_ ci\_ leh la\_  
meu\_ hkaw\_ lu\_ hkaw\_ tan\_ chi ve,  
a, la\_ meu\_ hkaw\_ lu\_ hkaw\_ tan\_  
te\_ meu\_ te\_ lan\_ k'aw\_ tan\_ leh  
hkui che leh k'aw\_ ha\_ la\_, mvuh  
la mvuh g'a g'a cheh\_ g'a ka\_, neh\_  
g'a kui\_ ya\_ leh k'aw\_ ha\_ la\_, neh  
kui\_ lo cheh\_ g'a ka\_ mvuh kui ta^  
ha\_ la\_.
  4. A, nga\_ hui te\_ mo\_ te\_ cu\_ daw\_  
hpu te\_ ca^ k'aw\_ mui\_ leh ga\_ hpu  
te\_ sheu\_ mui\_ ve yo\_ law le\_ k'o^  
k'o, k'aw\_ sha\_ leh hk'aw u\_ hk'aw  
sheh\_ hpa\_ hta\_ k'aw\_ ta\_ ve, law\_  
u\_ law\_ sheh\_ hpa\_ hta\_ k'aw\_ ta\_  
ve.
  5. Ya\_ nyi tan\_ o^ k'ai ve k'o, nga\_ hui
1. Today, here under this Mae Salu-  
am<sup>24</sup> hill, [the people] of the head-  
man's right-hand side once again  
work together, united by the same  
pure thoughts; the people of the  
left-hand side once again work to-  
gether, united by the same pure  
thoughts;<sup>25</sup> they give [offerings to  
you]; they once again make a merit  
shelter here at this place.
  2. Oh, my whole group once again take  
up cooked rice prepared by our own  
hands and once again pray and once  
again offer [it to you]; we once  
again offer chillies and salt, we once  
again pray and put [our prayer] to  
the master of the hill top, we once  
again put [our prayer] to the master  
of the stream source.<sup>26</sup>
  3. Oh, I once again pray, my whole  
group once again presents these ten  
thousand, these one million offerings  
prepared by our own hands; we once  
again ride<sup>27</sup> under the great prince  
of this place<sup>28</sup> and we once again  
present these ten thousand, these  
one million offerings prepared by  
our own hands; stretch out your  
feet and once again take [these  
offerings], come down from the  
heavens to earth and once again  
take [them]; from earth once again  
take [them] to the heavens.
  4. Oh, our whole group, united by the  
same pure intention, once again  
makes offerings and puts them before  
the master of the hill top; we once  
again put them before the master  
of the stream source.
  5. Today and hereafter, when [the

- te<sup>h</sup> mo<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup> cu<sup>h</sup> hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup> haw, to<sup>h</sup>  
 hpaw<sup>h</sup> va<sup>h</sup> hpaw<sup>h</sup>, cheh<sup>h</sup> hpaw<sup>h</sup> mui<sup>h</sup>  
 hpaw<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup>, a, to<sup>h</sup> hpaw<sup>h</sup> ca hpaw<sup>h</sup>  
 cheh<sup>h</sup> hpaw<sup>h</sup> hui ka<sup>h</sup> yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup>  
 k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o, ce<sup>h</sup> hai<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup> hai<sup>h</sup> hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup>  
 ka<sup>h</sup>, k'aw<sup>h</sup> fui<sup>h</sup> k'aw<sup>h</sup> shu leh pon<sup>h</sup>  
 la<sup>h</sup>, chaw ca<sup>h</sup> chaw law<sup>h</sup> hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup>  
 ka<sup>h</sup>, k'aw<sup>h</sup> taw<sup>h</sup> k'aw<sup>h</sup> shu leh pon<sup>h</sup>  
 la<sup>h</sup>, ne<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup> ne<sup>h</sup> law<sup>h</sup> hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup>  
 k'aw<sup>h</sup> shu leh pon<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup>, ma<sup>h</sup> g'a  
 daw<sup>h</sup> ha<sup>h</sup>, ma<sup>h</sup> g'a daw<sup>h</sup> hki<sup>h</sup> k'aw<sup>h</sup>  
 hpaw leh ta<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup>.
6. Chi hk'aw<sup>h</sup> hkao<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup> sha<sup>h</sup> chi  
 hta<sup>h</sup> haw, a, chi hk'aw<sup>h</sup> sai<sup>h</sup> kaw<sup>h</sup>  
 va<sup>h</sup> sha<sup>h</sup> chi hta<sup>h</sup> haw k'aw<sup>h</sup> sha<sup>h</sup>  
 la<sup>h</sup> yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o, hk'aw<sup>h</sup> u<sup>h</sup>  
 hk'aw<sup>h</sup> sheh<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup>, law<sup>h</sup> u<sup>h</sup> law<sup>h</sup>  
 sheh<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup>, cao<sup>h</sup> maw hk'aw<sup>h</sup> peu  
 sheh<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup> cao<sup>h</sup> maw law<sup>h</sup> hk'o<sup>h</sup>  
 peu sheh<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup>, a, naw<sup>h</sup> yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup>  
 k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o, la<sup>h</sup> meu<sup>h</sup> aw<sup>h</sup> meh g'ui<sup>h</sup>  
 meh chi hta<sup>h</sup> haw k'aw<sup>h</sup> ha<sup>h</sup> g'a yo<sup>h</sup>  
 law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o, haw hpu mvuh<sup>h</sup>  
 hpu hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup> haw k'aw<sup>h</sup> ci<sup>h</sup> leh  
 nga<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup> meu<sup>h</sup> hkaw<sup>h</sup> lu<sup>h</sup> hkaw<sup>h</sup> tan<sup>h</sup>  
 te<sup>h</sup> meu<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup> lan<sup>h</sup> k'aw<sup>h</sup> tan<sup>h</sup> yo<sup>h</sup> law  
 le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o, hki<sup>h</sup> che leh ha<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup>,  
 la<sup>h</sup> che leh ha<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup>.
7. Nga<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup> pe<sup>h</sup> sha<sup>h</sup> ga hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup>,  
 ya<sup>h</sup> nyi tan<sup>h</sup> leh o<sup>h</sup> k'ai ve, ca ca<sup>h</sup>  
 ca g'a te<sup>h</sup> hpaw<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup>, mui<sup>h</sup> hpaw<sup>h</sup>  
 va<sup>h</sup> hpaw<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup>, sho meu<sup>h</sup> kui<sup>h</sup> meu<sup>h</sup>  
 hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup> k'aw<sup>h</sup> fui<sup>h</sup> leh shaw<sup>h</sup>  
 meu<sup>h</sup> ma<sup>h</sup> meu<sup>h</sup> k'aw<sup>h</sup> fui<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup>, a,  
 hk'a<sup>h</sup> hpaw<sup>h</sup> law<sup>h</sup> hpaw<sup>h</sup> k'aw<sup>h</sup> caw  
 g'a yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o, a na<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup>  
 ceu<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup>, a na<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup> ceu<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup> yan<sup>h</sup>  
 ka<sup>h</sup> ya<sup>h</sup> g'a ji<sup>h</sup> g'a ta<sup>h</sup> mui<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup>.
8. Ya<sup>h</sup> nyi tan<sup>h</sup> leh o<sup>h</sup> k'ai ve k'o, to<sup>h</sup>  
 hpaw<sup>h</sup> ca hpaw<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup> yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup>  
 k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o, ce<sup>h</sup> hai<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup> hai<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>  
 k'o, a, hk'aw<sup>h</sup> u<sup>h</sup> hk'aw<sup>h</sup> caw g'a  
 k'o<sup>h</sup>, hk'aw<sup>h</sup> meh<sup>h</sup> yu<sup>h</sup> ta<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup>, hk'aw<sup>h</sup>  
 meh<sup>h</sup> caw g'a k'o<sup>h</sup>, hk'aw<sup>h</sup> u<sup>h</sup> yu<sup>h</sup>  
 ta<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup>; nga<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup> mo<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup> cu<sup>h</sup> hk'o<sup>h</sup>  
 hta<sup>h</sup>, a ma te<sup>h</sup> ceu<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup> yan<sup>h</sup> te g'a  
 htaw<sup>h</sup>, ya<sup>h</sup> g'a ji<sup>h</sup> g'a ta<sup>h</sup> mui<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup>  
 yo<sup>h</sup> law k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o.
9. A, nga<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup> pe<sup>h</sup> sha<sup>h</sup> ga hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup>
- members of] our group are travelling  
 or farming, at home or at work,  
 traveling, searching for something  
 or at home, once again separate,  
 divide and protect us from wild  
 animals; once again separate, divide  
 and shield us from men of evil  
 intent; once again divide and protect  
 us from malicious spirits also;<sup>29</sup>  
 open up and bestow upon us [the  
 boon of] untroubled thoughts.
6. This year, at this "entering" *phan-*  
*saa*,<sup>30</sup> oh, this year, at this sand-  
 heaping *vassa*,<sup>31</sup> we once again make  
 offerings; master of the hill top,  
 master of the stream source, lord  
 who lives on the hill, lord who lives  
 in the stream, oh you once again  
 receive this cooked rice and cooked  
 water<sup>32</sup> prepared by our own hands,  
 once again ride on [your] white  
 elephant, [your] white horse;<sup>33</sup> I  
 once again offer these ten thousand,  
 these one million offerings made by  
 our own hands; stretch out your  
 feet and receive, stretch out your  
 hands and receive.
7. I make offerings this one time, [so]  
 today and hereafter when we are  
 searching for game, let us have suc-  
 cess; also when we are working in  
 the fields, once again separate us  
 from points of iron and points of  
 copper, once again separate us from  
 points of wood;<sup>34</sup> when we are  
 walking around the village or along  
 the streams, do not strike us with  
 all kinds of sickness.
8. Today and hereafter, when we are  
 traveling or searching for some-  
 thing, if wild animals are walking  
 around the top of the hill, take them  
 and put them at the bottom of the  
 hill; if they are walking around the  
 bottom of the hill, take them and  
 put them at the top of the hill; do  
 not strike anyone of my group with  
 any kind of trouble.
9. Oh, I once again make offerings at

- haw, sha hpa<sub>1</sub> la hta<sup>^</sup> chi ceu<sub>1</sub> k'aw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 yan<sup>ˇ</sup> hk'o<sup>^</sup> hta<sub>1</sub> haw yo<sub>1</sub> law le<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o, cho<sub>1</sub> ka<sub>1</sub> cao<sub>1</sub> ui<sub>1</sub> cao<sub>1</sub>  
 yaw<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a fui<sub>1</sub> g'a pa<sup>^</sup> leh pon<sub>1</sub> la<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 yo<sub>1</sub> law le<sup>ˇ</sup> k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o.
10. Te<sup>ˇ</sup> nyi mui<sub>1</sub> ve chi nyi ca<sup>ˇ</sup> leh ma<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 peu<sub>1</sub> ka<sub>1</sub>, cho<sub>1</sub> ka<sub>1</sub> haw, a, te<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 hk'aw<sub>1</sub> mui<sub>1</sub> leh chi hk'aw<sub>1</sub> ca<sup>ˇ</sup> leh  
 ma<sup>ˇ</sup> peu<sub>1</sub> ka<sub>1</sub> yo<sub>1</sub> law le<sup>ˇ</sup> k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o.
11. Cao<sub>1</sub> ui<sub>1</sub> cao<sub>1</sub> yaw<sup>ˇ</sup> naw<sub>1</sub> g'a ceu<sub>1</sub>  
 g'a pa<sup>^</sup> leh ta<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sup>ˇ</sup>, chi hk'aw nga<sub>1</sub>  
 te<sup>ˇ</sup> mo<sub>1</sub> te<sup>ˇ</sup> cu<sup>ˇ</sup> ve naw<sub>1</sub> g'a nyi leh  
 g'a ha<sup>^</sup> sha<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sup>ˇ</sup>, hk'a<sub>1</sub> g'a chi g'a<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 hta<sub>1</sub> haw naw<sub>1</sub> nyi leh ha<sup>^</sup> sha<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sup>ˇ</sup>,  
 a, ce<sup>ˇ</sup> ha ca<sub>1</sub> ha k'aw<sub>1</sub> ha<sup>^</sup> sha<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sup>ˇ</sup>,  
 ce<sup>ˇ</sup> hka<sup>^</sup> ca<sub>1</sub> hka<sup>^</sup> hta<sub>1</sub> hu g'a sheh<sub>1</sub>  
 hpa<sup>ˇ</sup> yo<sub>1</sub> law le<sup>ˇ</sup> k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o, cho<sub>1</sub> ka<sub>1</sub>  
 cao<sub>1</sub> ui<sub>1</sub> cao<sub>1</sub> yaw<sup>ˇ</sup> cao<sub>1</sub> lon<sup>ˇ</sup> naw<sub>1</sub>  
 g'a ceu<sub>1</sub> g'a taw<sub>1</sub> leh ha<sub>1</sub> sha<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 meh<sub>1</sub>.
12. To<sup>ˇ</sup> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> va<sup>ˇ</sup> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> ka<sub>1</sub>, naw<sub>1</sub>  
 g'a ha<sub>1</sub> sha<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sup>ˇ</sup> meh<sub>1</sub>, chaw hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 va<sup>ˇ</sup> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> ka<sub>1</sub>, mui<sub>1</sub> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> va<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> ka<sub>1</sub>, ce<sup>ˇ</sup> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> ca<sub>1</sub> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 ka<sub>1</sub>, naw<sub>1</sub> g'a ceu<sub>1</sub> g'a taw<sub>1</sub> leh ha<sub>1</sub>  
 sha<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sup>ˇ</sup>.
13. Ma<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a daw<sup>ˇ</sup> ha<sub>1</sub>, ma<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a daw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 hki<sup>ˇ</sup> leh hpo<sup>^</sup> hpo<sup>^</sup> sha sha g'a  
 kaw<sub>1</sub> g'a sha<sup>ˇ</sup> cho<sub>1</sub> ka<sub>1</sub> naw<sub>1</sub> bon  
 naw<sub>1</sub> va<sup>ˇ</sup> hta<sub>1</sub> haw, a, ya<sub>1</sub> nyi tan<sub>1</sub>  
 leh o<sup>ˇ</sup> k'ai ve, chaw hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> va<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> ce<sup>ˇ</sup> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> ca<sub>1</sub> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> ka<sub>1</sub>,  
 naw<sub>1</sub> g'a ceu<sub>1</sub> g'a nyi leh ha<sub>1</sub> sha<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 la<sup>ˇ</sup> meh<sub>1</sub>.
14. A ma te<sup>ˇ</sup> ceu<sub>1</sub> te<sup>ˇ</sup> yan<sup>ˇ</sup> te g'a ka<sub>1</sub>,  
 naw<sub>1</sub> g'a htaw<sup>ˇ</sup> leh ya<sub>1</sub> g'a ji<sup>^</sup> g'a  
 ta<sup>ˇ</sup> mui<sub>1</sub>, chaw hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> va<sup>ˇ</sup> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup>,  
 ce<sup>ˇ</sup> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> hta<sub>1</sub> haw, a na<sub>1</sub> suh tguh<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 na<sub>1</sub> tguh<sup>ˇ</sup> hk'o<sup>^</sup> hta<sub>1</sub> ka<sub>1</sub>, naw<sub>1</sub>  
 g'a pa<sup>^</sup> leh pon<sub>1</sub> la<sup>ˇ</sup> yo<sub>1</sub> law le<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o.
15. Cho<sub>1</sub> ka<sub>1</sub> haw yo<sub>1</sub> law le<sup>ˇ</sup> k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o,  
 la<sub>1</sub> meu<sup>ˇ</sup> hta<sub>1</sub> haw hkaw<sup>ˇ</sup> lu<sup>ˇ</sup> hkaw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 tan<sup>ˇ</sup> te<sup>ˇ</sup> meu<sub>1</sub> te<sup>ˇ</sup> lan<sup>ˇ</sup> hta<sub>1</sub>, hkui  
 che la<sub>1</sub> che leh ha<sub>1</sub> la<sup>ˇ</sup> yo<sub>1</sub> law le<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o.
16. Ma<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a daw<sup>ˇ</sup> ha<sub>1</sub>, ma<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a daw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 hki<sup>ˇ</sup>, shaw<sup>ˇ</sup> hpu shaw<sup>ˇ</sup> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> chi  
 k'aw<sub>1</sub> kaw<sub>1</sub>, shaw<sup>ˇ</sup> hpu shaw<sup>ˇ</sup> ti,
- this place, nine kinds, ten kinds of  
 offering [I make]; great lord of this  
 place who can separate, who can  
 order and protect us from [all mis-  
 fortune].
10. If we work for one day in the fields,  
 may the food not be exhausted in  
 ten days; oh, if we work for one  
 year in the fields, may the food not  
 be exhausted in ten years.
11. Great lord, you who can watch  
 [over us], can order [for us] and  
 place [boons] upon us; this year  
 you can look upon and care for my  
 whole group, look upon and take  
 care of every person; oh once again  
 take care of all the animals, you who  
 can look after all the animals, great  
 lord, big lord of this place, you who  
 can watch over, shield and look  
 after [all of us].
12. When we are travelling, when we  
 are working in the fields, you can  
 take care of us; look upon, shield  
 and take care of the people's side,  
 the farming side and the animals'  
 side.
13. Let us have no troubled thoughts;  
 the whole group makes offering;  
 here at this place [we search for]  
 your blessings; oh, today and here-  
 after watch over, look upon and take  
 care of the people's side and the  
 animals' side also.
14. Do not strike [anyone] with any kind  
 of misfortune; for the people's side  
 and the animals' side order protec-  
 tion from death and sickness.
15. Here at this place stretch out your  
 feet, stretch out your hands and  
 receive these ten thousand, these one  
 million offerings prepared by our  
 own hands.
16. Let us have no troubled thoughts;  
 we once again prepare this white  
 wooden [sha<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sup>^</sup>], we once again

kaw mo<sup>ˇ</sup> k'aw<sub>˩</sub> kaw<sub>˩</sub> leh suh hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 na<sub>˩</sub> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> hk'o<sup>ˆ</sup> hta<sub>˩</sub> k'aw<sub>˩</sub> taw<sub>˩</sub>,  
 k'aw<sub>˩</sub> suh leh te<sub>˩</sub> peu<sub>˩</sub> pa<sup>ˆ</sup> g'a<sub>˩</sub> u  
 hta<sub>˩</sub> haw, nga<sub>˩</sub> hk'o<sup>ˆ</sup> chi ceu<sub>˩</sub>  
 k'aw<sup>ˇ</sup> yan<sup>ˇ</sup> k'aw<sub>˩</sub> pa<sup>ˆ</sup> leh fui<sub>˩</sub> la<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 shu la<sup>ˇ</sup> yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>ˇ</sup> k'o<sup>ˆ</sup> k'o.

17. Chi hk'aw<sub>˩</sub> te<sup>ˇ</sup> ho<sup>ˆ</sup> chi te<sup>ˇ</sup> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 ma<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a<sub>˩</sub> daw<sup>ˇ</sup> ha<sub>˩</sub>, ma<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a<sub>˩</sub> daw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 hki<sup>ˆ</sup> k'aw<sub>˩</sub> hpaw leh ta<sub>˩</sub> la<sup>ˇ</sup> yo<sub>˩</sub> law  
 le<sup>ˇ</sup> k'o<sup>ˆ</sup> k'o; bon ya<sup>ˇ</sup> shi<sup>ˆ</sup> ya<sup>ˇ</sup> daw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
 hpu te<sup>ˇ</sup> ca<sup>ˆ</sup> hk'o<sup>ˆ</sup> hta<sub>˩</sub> k'aw<sub>˩</sub> mui<sub>˩</sub>  
 leh, a, ma<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a<sub>˩</sub> daw<sup>ˇ</sup> ha<sub>˩</sub>, ma<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a<sub>˩</sub>  
 daw<sup>ˇ</sup> hki<sup>ˆ</sup> k'aw<sub>˩</sub> hpaw leh ta<sub>˩</sub> la<sup>ˇ</sup>.

prepare these white wooden ritual  
 posts;<sup>35</sup> once again shield us from  
 and turn away from us death and  
 sickness and one time order that I  
 be separated from and divided from  
 the ten kinds, nine kinds [of mis-  
 fortune].

17. This year once again open up and  
 bestow upon this side [the boon of]  
 no troubled thoughts; we meritori-  
 ous people, united by the same pure  
 intention, once again work; oh, open  
 up and place before us untroubled  
 thoughts.

While one of the elders prays in this fashion at the right-hand



Fig. 7. Village headman praying to local hill spirit for success in the hunt (see also Fig. 4).

altar (Fig. 6), the man at the left-hand altar (Fig. 7) is praying to the same spirit, as keeper of all the wild animals in the area, requesting that the villagers may enjoy success in the hunt. Two examples of this prayer are given as Texts 2-A and 2-B below.

## TEXT 2-A

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|--|---|
| <p>1. O<sup>-</sup>, O<sup>-</sup>, ka<sub>↓</sub> haw Meh Hpa<sub>△</sub> te<sup>~</sup><br/>hpaw<sup>~</sup> yo<sub>↓</sub> law le<sup>~</sup> k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o, ha,<br/>chaw ya<sup>~</sup> chi ve ka<sub>↓</sub> haw Meh Hpa<sub>△</sub><br/>te<sup>~</sup> hpaw<sup>~</sup> ve, la<sub>△</sub> meu<sup>~</sup> hkaw<sup>-</sup> lu<sup>-</sup><br/>hkaw<sup>-</sup> tan<sup>~</sup>, ce<sub>△</sub> ce<sub>△</sub> cu<sub>↓</sub> cu<sub>↓</sub>, k'aw<sub>△</sub><br/>te leh naw<sub>↓</sub> u<sup>-</sup> naw<sub>↓</sub> va<sup>~</sup> hta<sub>△</sub> k'aw<sub>△</sub><br/>ta<sub>↓</sub> g'a ve.</p> <p>2. Ha, sha<sub>↓</sub> hu nga<sup>~</sup> hu sheh<sub>↓</sub> hpa<sup>~</sup>,<br/>va<sub>△</sub> pa<sub>↓</sub> va<sub>△</sub> ma hu sheh<sub>↓</sub> hpa<sup>~</sup>, tsuh<br/>pa<sub>↓</sub> tsuh ma hu sheh<sub>↓</sub> hpa<sup>~</sup>, hkui<sup>~</sup><br/>zuh<sub>↓</sub> pa<sub>↓</sub> hkui<sup>~</sup> zuh<sub>↓</sub> ma hu sheh<sub>↓</sub><br/>hpa<sup>~</sup> ka<sub>↓</sub> haw ve, cao<sub>↓</sub> maw cao<sub>↓</sub><br/>tu<sup>~</sup> ka<sub>↓</sub> haw ve, ha, ci<sup>-</sup> ga leh ma<sub>△</sub><br/>ca<sub>↓</sub> meu<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>~</sup> la<sup>~</sup> meh<sub>↓</sub>.</p> <p>3. La<sub>△</sub> meu<sup>~</sup> hkaw<sup>-</sup> lu<sup>-</sup> hkaw<sup>-</sup> tan<sup>~</sup> chi<br/>ma te leh law<sub>↓</sub> ca<sup>~</sup> hk'a<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>~</sup> ve<br/>ce<sup>~</sup> meh<sub>↓</sub>, ka<sub>↓</sub> haw Meh Hpa<sub>△</sub> te<sup>~</sup><br/>fu<sub>↓</sub> te<sup>~</sup> a daw<sup>~</sup> ve yo<sub>↓</sub> law.</p> <p>4. Ha, va<sub>△</sub> pa<sub>↓</sub> va<sub>△</sub> ma hu sheh<sub>↓</sub> hpa<sup>~</sup><br/>yo<sub>↓</sub> law k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o, sho ca<sup>^</sup> kui<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>^</sup><br/>hpeh leh nga<sub>↓</sub> g'u<sup>~</sup> ta<sub>↓</sub> la<sup>~</sup> meh<sub>↓</sub>.</p> <p>5. Ha, sho meu<sup>~</sup> kui<sup>~</sup> meu<sup>~</sup> hta<sub>△</sub> haw<br/>g'a<sub>△</sub> hpeh<sup>~</sup> la<sup>~</sup>, sho ba<sup>~</sup> kui<sup>~</sup> ba<sup>~</sup><br/>hta<sub>△</sub> haw g'a<sub>△</sub> hpeh<sup>~</sup> la<sup>~</sup>.</p> <p>6. Ka<sub>↓</sub> haw ve, va<sub>△</sub> shi<sup>-</sup> g'a leh ma<sub>△</sub><br/>ca<sub>↓</sub> meu<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>~</sup> la<sup>~</sup>, te<sup>~</sup> keu<sub>↓</sub> k'o, a vi<sup>-</sup><br/>a pa hku<sup>~</sup> taw<sup>^</sup> ga<sup>~</sup> leh te<sup>~</sup> keu<sub>↓</sub> k'o,<br/>mi<sup>~</sup> hu ya<sup>~</sup> hu ga<sup>~</sup> la<sup>~</sup>.</p> <p>7. Ka<sub>↓</sub> haw la<sub>△</sub> meu<sup>~</sup> hkaw<sup>-</sup> lu<sup>-</sup> hkaw<sup>-</sup><br/>tan<sup>~</sup> chi ma k'aw<sub>△</sub> ta<sub>↓</sub> leh, ha, law<sub>↓</sub><br/>ca<sup>~</sup> hk'a<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>~</sup> ve, ka<sub>↓</sub> haw cao<sub>↓</sub><br/>maw cao<sub>↓</sub> tu<sup>~</sup>, cao<sub>↓</sub> ba<sub>↓</sub> cao<sub>↓</sub> meu<sup>~</sup><br/>ka<sub>↓</sub> haw, kao<sub>↓</sub> ca<sub>↓</sub> lao ca<sub>↓</sub> caw<sub>↓</sub> la<sup>~</sup><br/>meh<sub>↓</sub>.</p> | <p>1. Oh, here at Mae Hpa, these people<br/>of Mae Hpa have made with their<br/>own hands these many different<br/>kinds of offerings; once again they<br/>place them before you.</p> <p>2. Oh you who look after the wild<br/>animals and the fish, you who look<br/>after the male and the female wild<br/>pigs,<sup>36</sup> you who look after the male<br/>and female barking deer,<sup>37</sup> you who<br/>look after the male and the female<br/>sambar deer,<sup>38</sup> lord of this place, oh,<br/>give us a little [game] to eat.</p> <p>3. The people of Mae Hpa village have<br/>made all these offerings with their<br/>own hands and they beg [for game]<br/>to eat.</p> <p>4. Ha, you who keep the male and the<br/>female wild pigs, tie them in iron<br/>chains, in copper chains, and put<br/>them in front of us.</p> <p>5. Ha, release [the game] on iron<br/>points, on copper points; release<br/>[them] on iron points, on copper<br/>points.<sup>39</sup></p> <p>6. Here at this place let us get the boon<br/>of a wild pig; we beg [for game] to<br/>eat; with one half [of the flesh] we<br/>will follow the custom of the elder<br/>relatives and of the fathers, one<br/>half we want for our wives and<br/>children.<sup>40</sup></p> <p>7. Here at this place we once again put<br/>offerings made by our own hands,<br/>ha, we beg [for game] to eat; lord<br/>of this place, lord of the village, lord<br/>of the country here at this place, let<br/>other people speak of our good for-<br/>tune [in the hunt].</p> |
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Fig. 8. Wrist-binding at conclusion of ceremony, symbolizing the binding of blessings into the body of the recipient.

TEXT 2-B

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| <p>1. O<sup>o</sup>, ya<sub>2</sub> nyi ka<sub>2</sub> haw Ho<sub>2</sub> Pa<sub>2</sub> Fa<sup>o</sup><br/>cao<sub>2</sub> ba<sub>2</sub> cao<sub>2</sub> meu<sup>o</sup> chi ma ve, ne<sup>o</sup><br/>chi ne<sup>o</sup> ya<sup>o</sup>, cao<sub>2</sub> maw cao<sub>2</sub> tu<sup>o</sup> ka<sub>2</sub><br/>haw ve, nga<sub>2</sub> la<sub>2</sub> meu<sup>o</sup> hkaw<sup>o</sup> lu<sup>o</sup><br/>hkaw<sup>o</sup> tan<sup>o</sup> chi ma ve g'a veu la<sup>o</sup>.</p> <p>2. La<sub>2</sub> meu<sup>o</sup> ui<sub>2</sub> ve i ve leh peh<sup>o</sup> haw<sub>2</sub><br/>naw<sub>2</sub> hk'av<sup>o</sup> g'a veu la<sup>o</sup>.</p> <p>3. Ka<sub>2</sub> haw Ho<sub>2</sub> Pa<sub>2</sub> Fa<sup>o</sup> te<sup>o</sup> hpaw<sup>o</sup> ve,<br/>sha<sub>2</sub> hu nga<sup>o</sup> hu sheh<sub>2</sub> hpa<sup>o</sup>, tsuh<br/>pa<sub>2</sub> tsuh ma, va<sub>2</sub> pa<sub>2</sub> va<sub>2</sub> ma, hku<sup>o</sup><br/>zuh<sub>2</sub> pa<sub>2</sub>, hku<sup>o</sup> zuh<sub>2</sub> ma hu sheh<sub>2</sub><br/>hpa<sup>o</sup>, ka<sub>2</sub> haw Ho<sub>2</sub> Pa<sub>2</sub> Fa<sup>o</sup> te<sup>o</sup></p> | <p>1. Oh today, here at this place, lord of<br/>the village, lord of the country at<br/>Huey Pang Farn,<sup>41</sup> and all you<br/>spirits, you children of spirits, you<br/>lords of this place, I bring for you<br/>all these offerings made by my own<br/>hand.</p> <p>2. I bring for you [all these offerings],<br/>large and small, made by my own<br/>hand, and these beeswax candles.</p> <p>3. Here at Huey Pang Farn, you who<br/>look after the animals and the fish,<br/>you who look after the male barking<br/>deer and the female barking deer,<br/>you who look after the male wild</p> |
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hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> ve g'a leh geh<sup>ˇ</sup> meu<sup>ˇ</sup> na<sup>ˆ</sup>  
meu<sup>ˇ</sup> hk'o<sup>ˆ</sup> haw hpeh<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sup>ˇ</sup> meh<sub>-</sub>.

4. Meh<sup>ˆ</sup> shi<sub>-</sub> suh<sup>ˆ</sup> hpa<sub>-</sub> k'o<sub>-</sub> leh g'a  
hpeh<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sup>ˇ</sup> mch<sub>-</sub>, sho ca<sup>ˆ</sup> kui<sup>ˇ</sup> ca<sup>ˆ</sup>  
hpeh<sup>ˇ</sup> leh law ta<sub>-</sub> la<sup>ˇ</sup> meh<sub>-</sub>.

5. Chaw ya<sup>ˇ</sup> hkaw<sup>-</sup> lu<sup>-</sup> hkaw<sup>-</sup> tan<sup>ˇ</sup> yu<sub>-</sub>  
leh ka<sub>-</sub> haw ga<sub>-</sub> la<sub>-</sub> o, naw<sub>-</sub> cao<sub>-</sub>  
maw cao<sub>-</sub> tu<sup>ˇ</sup>, cao<sub>-</sub> ba<sub>-</sub> cao<sub>-</sub> meu<sup>ˇ</sup>  
hkui che la<sub>-</sub> che leh ha<sub>-</sub> yu<sub>-</sub> lo<sub>-</sub>  
meh<sub>-</sub>.

pigs and the female wild pigs, you who look after the male sambar deer and the female sambar deer; drive [your animals] here to Huey Pang Farn and release them onto the points of our spears, onto the barrels of our guns.

4. Cover [the animals'] eyes with leaves, drive them here and release them; tie them with your iron chain, with your copper chain and let them wait [for us].

5. We people take these offerings and reach to you at this place, you great lord, lord of the village, lord of the country, stretch out your feet, stretch out your hands and receive [our offerings].

The guardian spirit of the locality having thus been propitiated, the officiating elders turn their attention to *G'ui sha*, the highest of all supernatural beings whom the Lahu recognize. They move to the *sha la* itself, light fresh beeswax candles and, praying in unison this time, offer



Fig. 9. Offerings to hill spirit: sweet potatoes, yams, chillies, cooked rice, etc. (See also Fig. 3)



Fig. 10. The completed *sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>^</sup>* or merit shelter; senior priest at center offering the shelter and its contents to the supreme supernatural *G'ui<sub>-</sub> sha*.

the shelter and its contents to *G'ui<sub>-</sub> sha* (Fig. 10). Texts 3-A, B, C, D are examples of prayers appropriate for this occasion.

#### TEXT 3-A

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| <p>1. Ha, ka<sub>-</sub> haw yu<sub>-</sub> nyi Meh Hpa<sub>-</sub> hk'aw teh hk'aw g'aw<sup>~</sup> chi hta<sub>-</sub> haw yo<sub>-</sub> law k'o<sup>^</sup> k'o, Meh Hpa<sub>-</sub> te<sup>~</sup> fu<sub>-</sub> te<sup>~</sup> a daw<sup>~</sup> ve, ca li<sup>-</sup> ca ma la<sub>-</sub> meu<sup>~</sup> chi hta<sub>-</sub> haw yo<sub>-</sub> law, shaw<sup>~</sup> hpu shaw<sup>~</sup> u<sup>-</sup> shaw<sup>~</sup> meh<sub>-</sub> k'aw<sub>-</sub> pa<sub>-</sub> leh ka<sub>-</sub> haw a g'aw<sup>~</sup> Meh Hpa<sub>-</sub> hk'aw teh hk'aw g'aw<sup>~</sup> hta<sub>-</sub> haw, sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>^</sup> bon sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>^</sup> shi<sup>-</sup> k'aw<sub>-</sub> mui<sub>-</sub> ve.</p> <p>2. Ui<sub>-</sub> ka<sub>-</sub> i ka<sub>-</sub> daw<sup>~</sup> hpu te<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>^</sup> k'aw<sub>-</sub> mui<sub>-</sub> leh, ha, ya<sub>-</sub> nyi mui<sub>-</sub> ca<sup>~</sup> va<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>~</sup>, mui<sub>-</sub> hk'o<sup>^</sup> va<sup>~</sup> hk'o<sup>^</sup> chi hta<sub>-</sub> haw, mui<sub>-</sub> suh<sup>-</sup> va<sup>~</sup> suh<sup>-</sup> k'aw<sub>-</sub> taw<sup>^</sup> leh sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>^</sup> bon sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>^</sup> shi<sup>-</sup> k'aw<sub>-</sub> mui<sub>-</sub>, k'aw<sub>-</sub> sha<sup>~</sup> ve.</p> <p>3. Ha, k'aw<sub>-</sub> sha<sup>-</sup> k'aw<sub>-</sub> go<sup>~</sup> leh no<sup>~</sup> g'a a pa ka ti<sub>-</sub> ka shch<sup>-</sup> hpaw<sup>~</sup> incu<sup>-</sup></p> | <p>1. Oh, today, here under Mae Hpa hill, we of Mae Hpa village<sup>42</sup> once again exchange this white wood [cut with knives fashioned by] the blacksmith's own hands; here under Mae Hpa hill we once again make a merit shelter.</p> <p>2. The big and the small, working together with the same pure intent, today once again work and once again bring these new crops, [the result of our] working in the fields, and once again make and once again offer up a merit shelter.</p> <p>3. Oh, we once again make offerings, once again raise our hands [in</p> |
|--|---|



k'aw<sub>^</sub> ta<sub>^</sub> g'a<sub>^</sub> yo<sub>^</sub> law, a pa ka ti<sub>^</sub>  
 ka sheh<sub>^-</sub> hpaw<sub>^</sub> meu<sub>^</sub> k'aw<sub>^</sub> sha<sub>^-</sub>  
 k'aw<sub>^</sub> go<sub>^</sub> leh, ha, ya<sub>^</sub> nyi sha<sub>^-</sub> la<sub>^</sub>  
 bon sha<sub>^-</sub> la<sub>^</sub> shi<sub>^-</sub> k'aw<sub>^</sub> mui<sub>^</sub> ve  
 k'aw<sub>^</sub> sha<sub>^-</sub> k'aw<sub>^</sub> go<sub>^</sub> hk'a<sub>^</sub> yo<sub>^</sub> law  
 k'o<sub>^</sub> k'o, hk'a<sub>^</sub> g'a<sub>^</sub> chi g'a<sub>^</sub>, ui<sub>^</sub> ka<sub>^</sub>  
 i ka<sub>^</sub>, g'o<sub>^</sub> taw<sub>^</sub> g'o<sub>^</sub> g'a, ha, ca<sub>^</sub> ta  
 daw<sub>^</sub> ta, ca<sub>^</sub> li<sub>^-</sub> daw<sub>^</sub> li<sub>^-</sub> k'aw<sub>^</sub> ta<sub>^</sub>  
 g'a.

4. Hk'a<sub>^</sub> g'a<sub>^</sub> chi g'a<sub>^</sub> hta<sub>^</sub> haw, ma<sub>^</sub>  
 daw<sub>^</sub> ma<sub>^</sub> ha<sub>^</sub>, ma<sub>^</sub> daw<sub>^</sub> ma<sub>^</sub> hki<sub>^-</sub>  
 g'a<sub>^</sub> ga<sub>^</sub>, ha, ya<sub>^</sub> nyi hkao<sub>^</sub> shi<sub>^-</sub> pecu<sub>^</sub>  
 chi hta<sub>^</sub> haw, sha<sub>^-</sub> la<sub>^</sub> bon sha<sub>^-</sub> la<sub>^</sub>  
 shi<sub>^-</sub> k'aw<sub>^</sub> mui<sub>^</sub> g'a<sub>^</sub> yo<sub>^</sub> law k'o<sub>^</sub>  
 k'o, ui<sub>^</sub> ka<sub>^</sub> i ka<sub>^</sub> k'aw<sub>^</sub> sha<sub>^-</sub> k'aw<sub>^</sub>  
 go<sub>^</sub> leh no<sub>^</sub> g'a<sub>^</sub> aw<sub>^</sub> na a pa ka ti<sub>^</sub>  
 ka sheh<sub>^-</sub> hpaw<sub>^</sub> meu<sub>^</sub> k'aw<sub>^</sub> ta<sub>^</sub> g'a.
5. Ha, hkui<sub>^</sub> ta nu<sub>^</sub> ta hpa<sub>^</sub> g'a sheh<sub>^-</sub>  
 hpa<sub>^</sub>, hkui<sub>^</sub> yaw<sub>^</sub> nu<sub>^</sub> yaw<sub>^</sub> hpa<sub>^</sub>  
 g'a sheh<sub>^-</sub> ma yo<sub>^</sub> law k'o<sub>^</sub> k'o, te<sub>^</sub>  
 nyi sheh<sub>^-</sub> yan<sub>^</sub>, leh u<sub>^</sub> heh meh<sub>^-</sub>,  
 hkui<sub>^</sub> ta nu<sub>^</sub> ta, hkui<sub>^</sub> yaw<sub>^</sub> nu<sub>^</sub>  
 yaw<sub>^</sub> k'aw<sub>^</sub> hpa<sub>^</sub> leh ta<sub>^</sub> pi<sub>^-</sub>.
6. Hk'a<sub>^</sub> g'a<sub>^</sub> chi g'a<sub>^</sub>, te<sub>^</sub> nyi mui<sub>^</sub>  
 leh chi nyi ca<sub>^</sub> leh a<sub>^</sub> pecu<sub>^</sub>, te<sub>^</sub>  
 hk'aw<sub>^</sub> mui<sub>^</sub> leh chi hk'aw<sub>^</sub> daw<sub>^</sub>  
 leh a<sub>^</sub> yaw ve, chi bon pa<sub>^</sub> leh ga<sub>^</sub>  
 pi<sub>^-</sub>.
7. No<sub>^</sub> g'a ui<sub>^</sub> hpaw<sub>^</sub> mvuh<sub>^</sub> hpaw<sub>^</sub>,  
 ma ha<sub>^-</sub> sha<sub>^-</sub> hti<sub>^-</sub> bon, ma ha<sub>^-</sub> sha<sub>^-</sub>  
 hti<sub>^-</sub> shi<sub>^-</sub>, kao<sub>^</sub> li<sub>^-</sub> k'aw<sub>^</sub> bvuh<sub>^</sub> leh  
 ka<sub>^</sub> haw Pi ti<sub>^</sub> La<sub>^</sub> hu<sub>^</sub> a g'aw<sub>^</sub> yeh<sub>^</sub>  
 chi hi<sub>^-</sub> chi hkui<sub>^</sub> ka<sub>^</sub>, k'aw<sub>^</sub> ta<sub>^</sub> pi<sub>^-</sub>  
 meh<sub>^-</sub>.
8. Hk'a<sub>^</sub> g'a<sub>^</sub> chi g'a<sub>^</sub> hta<sub>^</sub> haw yo<sub>^</sub>  
 law k'o<sub>^</sub> k'o, ha, ca<sub>^</sub> leh a<sub>^</sub> pecu<sub>^</sub>,  
 daw<sub>^</sub> leh a<sub>^</sub> yaw ve, hk'a<sub>^</sub> g'a<sub>^</sub> chi  
 g'a<sub>^</sub>, hk'aw<sub>^</sub> naw<sub>^-</sub> g'u<sub>^</sub> suh<sub>^-</sub>, ma<sub>^</sub>  
 daw<sub>^</sub> ma<sub>^</sub> ha<sub>^</sub>, ma<sub>^</sub> daw<sub>^</sub> ma<sub>^</sub> hki<sub>^-</sub>,  
 ha, ko<sub>^</sub> keu ko<sub>^</sub> na k'o, ca<sub>^</sub> law<sub>^</sub>  
 daw<sub>^</sub> law<sub>^</sub>, ca<sub>^</sub> ti<sub>^</sub> daw<sub>^</sub> ti<sub>^</sub>, te<sub>^</sub> nyi  
 sheh<sub>^-</sub> yan<sub>^</sub> k'aw<sub>^</sub> hpaw leh ta<sub>^</sub> pi<sub>^-</sub>.

prayer]<sup>43</sup> and once again place [our offerings] at the side of the all-true, all-precious father up there;<sup>44</sup> we once again make offerings and we once again raise our hands to the all-true, all-precious Father's place; oh today we once again make a merit shelter, we once again make offerings and once again raise our hands; every person, the big and the small, every household once again places food and drink, [we perform] the food custom, the drink custom.<sup>45</sup>

4. May every person have untroubled thoughts; today at the end of this *hkao<sub>^</sub> shi<sub>^-</sub> nyi*,<sup>46</sup> we once again make this merit shelter, the big and the small once again make offerings and once again raise their hands and put [their prayers] to the side of the all-true, all-precious Father up there.
5. Oh, Father creator of fertility, Mother creator of fertility,<sup>47</sup> three times in one day once again create fertility and put it at the top of the fields, at the bottom of the fields.
6. This boon create and grant to every person that when we work for one day in the fields, the food may not be finished in ten days; if we work for one year in the fields, the drink may not be exhausted in ten years.
7. Once again cry out and bestow upon the *Pi ti<sub>^</sub> Lahu*,<sup>48</sup> who live on the hills and in the forests, the boon of great wealth like that of [the people of] the great towns yonder.<sup>49</sup>
8. Three times in one day again open and bestow upon every person [the boon that] the food will not finish, the drink will never be exhausted; let no troubled thoughts befall any one of us, either in front or behind; oh, on the downhill side of the house and on the uphill side of the house, may there be enough to eat and enough to drink; may there always be enough to eat and drink.

9. No<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a g'ui<sub>m</sub> ma ka ho<sup>-</sup> kao<sub>u</sub> li<sup>ˇ</sup>  
hpa<sub>u</sub> g'a sheh<sub>u</sub> hpa<sup>ˇ</sup>, chi ceu<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
ceu<sub>u</sub> u<sup>-</sup> hta<sub>u</sub> haw hpa<sub>u</sub> g'a sheh<sub>u</sub>  
hpa<sup>ˇ</sup>, ha, ca<sup>ˇ</sup> ta daw<sub>u</sub> ta, ca<sup>ˇ</sup> ti<sub>u</sub>  
daw<sub>u</sub> ti<sub>m</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub> hpa<sub>u</sub> leh ta<sub>u</sub> pi<sup>ˇ</sup>.
10. Ya<sub>u</sub> nyi sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup> bon sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup> shi<sup>-</sup>  
k'aw<sub>u</sub> mui<sub>u</sub> leh k'aw<sub>u</sub> sha<sup>ˇ</sup>, k'aw<sub>u</sub>  
go<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a yo<sub>u</sub> law k'o<sup>ˆ</sup> k'o, te<sup>ˇ</sup> nyi  
sheh<sup>ˆ</sup> yan<sup>ˇ</sup>, te<sup>ˇ</sup> ha<sup>-</sup> sheh<sup>ˆ</sup> yan<sup>ˇ</sup> hpa<sub>u</sub>  
g'a je<sup>ˆ</sup> g'a sheh<sub>u</sub> hpa<sup>ˇ</sup>, ha, ca<sup>ˇ</sup> pi<sub>u</sub>  
a<sup>ˇ</sup> peu<sub>u</sub> ca<sup>ˇ</sup> suh<sup>-</sup>, te<sup>ˇ</sup> nyi k'aw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
suh<sup>ˆ</sup> k'aw<sub>u</sub> bvuh<sub>u</sub> leh ga pi<sup>ˇ</sup>.
11. Cheh<sup>ˇ</sup> sha caw<sub>u</sub> sha, chi hk'aw<sub>u</sub>  
hkao<sub>u</sub> hpa<sub>u</sub> sha<sup>-</sup> chi hta<sub>u</sub> haw yo<sub>u</sub>  
law k'o<sup>ˆ</sup> k'o, hk'a<sub>u</sub> g'a<sup>ˇ</sup> chi g'a<sup>ˇ</sup>, la<sub>u</sub>  
meu<sup>ˇ</sup> hkaw<sup>-</sup> lu<sup>-</sup> hkaw<sup>-</sup> tan<sup>ˇ</sup>, ce<sub>u</sub> ce<sub>u</sub>  
cu<sub>u</sub> cu<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub> te leh k'aw<sub>u</sub> sha<sup>ˇ</sup> la  
yo<sub>u</sub>.
12. Ha, hk'a<sub>u</sub> g'a<sup>ˇ</sup> chi g'a<sup>ˇ</sup>, suh hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup>  
na<sub>u</sub> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> k'aw<sub>u</sub> fui<sub>u</sub> leh pon<sub>u</sub> la<sup>ˇ</sup>  
meh<sub>u</sub>, tu<sub>u</sub> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> hka<sup>-</sup> hpaw<sup>ˇ</sup> ka<sub>u</sub>  
k'aw<sub>u</sub> g'aw leh shi<sup>ˆ</sup> la<sup>ˇ</sup>.
13. No<sup>ˇ</sup> g'a aw<sub>u</sub> na a pa ka ti<sub>u</sub> kan<sup>ˇ</sup> pa<sup>ˆ</sup>  
ka law<sub>u</sub> ka sheh<sub>u</sub> hpa<sup>ˇ</sup>, ha, Pi ti<sub>u</sub>  
Pi ya<sup>ˆ</sup> ka sheh<sub>u</sub> hpa<sup>ˇ</sup>, ya<sub>u</sub> nyi nga te<sup>ˇ</sup>  
peu<sub>u</sub> pa<sup>ˆ</sup> g'a, ka<sub>u</sub> haw sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup> bon  
sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup> shi<sup>-</sup> chi hta<sub>u</sub> yo<sub>u</sub> law k'o<sup>ˆ</sup>  
k'o, ha te<sup>ˇ</sup> nyi a na<sub>u</sub> chi ceu<sub>u</sub> chi  
yan<sup>ˇ</sup> u<sup>-</sup> hta<sub>u</sub> pa<sup>ˆ</sup> g'a keh<sub>u</sub> g'a sheh<sub>u</sub>  
hpa<sup>ˇ</sup> yo<sub>u</sub> law k'o<sup>ˆ</sup> k'o, nga<sub>u</sub> te<sup>ˇ</sup> peu<sub>u</sub>  
pa<sup>ˆ</sup> g'a u<sup>-</sup> hta<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sup>ˇ</sup> peu<sub>u</sub> g'a pa<sup>ˆ</sup>  
g'a fui<sub>u</sub> leh pon<sub>u</sub> la<sup>ˇ</sup>.
14. Ha, chi hk'aw<sub>u</sub> sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup> bon sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup>  
shi<sup>-</sup> k'aw<sub>u</sub> mui<sub>u</sub> g'a yo<sub>u</sub> law k'o<sup>ˆ</sup>  
k'o, hk'a<sub>u</sub> g'a<sup>ˇ</sup> chi g'a<sup>ˇ</sup> u<sup>-</sup> hta<sub>u</sub>,  
shaw<sup>ˇ</sup> meu<sup>ˇ</sup> ma<sub>u</sub> meu<sup>ˇ</sup> ka<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub>  
g'aw leh pon<sub>u</sub> pi<sup>ˇ</sup>, sho ba<sup>ˇ</sup> kui<sup>ˇ</sup> ba<sup>ˇ</sup>  
ka<sub>u</sub> g'aw leh pon<sub>u</sub> pi<sup>ˇ</sup>, ha, taw<sub>u</sub>  
g'a suh<sup>-</sup> g'a sheh<sub>u</sub> hpa<sup>ˇ</sup>.
15. Nga<sub>u</sub> te<sup>ˇ</sup> peu<sub>u</sub> pa<sup>ˆ</sup> g'a ve hta<sub>u</sub> haw,  
sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup> bon sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup> shi<sup>-</sup> k'aw<sub>u</sub> mui<sub>u</sub>  
te<sup>ˇ</sup> hkui yo<sub>u</sub> law k'o, te<sup>ˇ</sup> nyi a na<sub>u</sub>  
chi ceu<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sup>ˇ</sup> ceu<sub>u</sub> pa<sup>ˆ</sup> g'a keh<sub>u</sub>  
g'a ga<sup>ˇ</sup>.
9. Divine creator of all customs up  
there, creator of the nine kinds, the  
ten kinds [of things],<sup>50</sup> oh, once  
again create and grant to us [the  
boon] that the food will always be  
sufficient, the drink will always be  
sufficient.
10. Today we once again make a merit  
shelter, we once again make offerings  
and we once again stretch out our  
hands; you who three times in one  
day and three times in one night  
create [boons] and split [misfortune  
from fortune],<sup>51</sup> nine times in one  
day again cry out and grant to us  
that the old rice not finish until the  
new rice [is harvested].
11. May we have health and prosperity;  
this year at this *hkao phansaa*,<sup>52</sup>  
every person once again presents  
every kind of offering made by his  
own hands.
12. Oh, once again separate and let pass  
from every one of us the side of  
death and the side of sickness;<sup>53</sup>  
once again count<sup>54</sup> and sweep away  
the side of poverty.
13. You up there, all-true, all-powerful  
Father, keeper of the *Pi ti* people,  
today I say but one word at this  
merit shelter, you are the one who  
can order and cleanse us from the  
ten kinds of sickness; I order but one  
word, you are the one who can order  
nine words and separate and let  
pass [all misfortune from us].
14. Oh, this year we once again make  
a merit shelter, once again count  
and let pass from every person sharp  
points of wood, count and let pass  
[from us] iron points and copper  
points, oh you who can shield and  
protect.<sup>55</sup>
15. I once again order one word at this  
place; at this moment we build a  
merit shelter; in one day order that  
we be cleansed from the ten kinds,  
the nine kinds of sickness.

16. Chaw chi ve yo<sub>u</sub> law, k'aw<sub>u</sub> sha<sub>u</sub>  
 leh aw<sub>u</sub> na a pa ka ti<sub>u</sub> ka sheh<sub>u</sub>  
 hpaw<sub>u</sub> meu<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub> ta<sub>u</sub> g'a, ha,  
 hk'a<sub>u</sub> g'a<sub>u</sub> chi g'a<sub>u</sub>, chi hk'aw<sub>u</sub> ma<sub>u</sub>  
 hpui<sub>u</sub> ma<sub>u</sub> la<sub>u</sub>, ma<sub>u</sub> maw<sub>u</sub> ma<sub>u</sub> ha<sub>u</sub>,  
 chi co k'aw<sub>u</sub> pa<sub>u</sub> leh ga pi<sub>u</sub>, ui<sub>u</sub>  
 ka<sub>u</sub> i ka<sub>u</sub> u<sub>u</sub> hta<sub>u</sub> haw.
17. Te<sub>u</sub> nyi k'aw<sub>u</sub> suh<sub>u</sub>, te<sub>u</sub> ha<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub>  
 suh<sub>u</sub>, ha, a pa Sha<sub>u</sub> ca<sub>u</sub> la<sub>u</sub> sha mai<sub>u</sub>  
 mo co pui co law<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub> bvuh<sub>u</sub>  
 leh ya<sub>u</sub> hpu neh hpu hkui chi<sub>u</sub> hkui  
 daw<sub>u</sub> u<sub>u</sub> hta<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub> ta<sub>u</sub> pi<sub>u</sub>, la<sub>u</sub> chi<sub>u</sub>  
 la<sub>u</sub> daw<sub>u</sub> u<sub>u</sub> hta<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub> ta<sub>u</sub> pi<sub>u</sub>,  
 cheh<sub>u</sub> sha caw<sub>u</sub> sha, chi bon ti<sub>u</sub> g'a  
 ga pi<sub>u</sub>.
16. These people once again make of-  
 ferings and once again put them at  
 the side of the all-true, all-precious  
 Father up there; oh, may every  
 person this year suffer no decay nor  
 grow any older, once again order  
 and grant ten lifespans to the big  
 and the small.
17. Nine times in one day, nine times  
 in one night, may the eternal roll  
 of cotton string<sup>56</sup> at Father *Sha<sub>u</sub>*  
*ca<sub>u</sub>*'s right-hand side<sup>57</sup> again cry  
 out and again put [blessings] on the  
 feet of the menfolk and of the wo-  
 menfolk, again put [blessings] on  
 their hands; this boon of health and  
 prosperity alone give [to us all].

## TEXT 3-B

1. Hk'a<sub>u</sub> ma aw<sub>u</sub> ce<sub>u</sub>, mo<sub>u</sub> la<sub>u</sub> mo<sub>u</sub>  
 sha<sub>u</sub>, ui<sub>u</sub> ka<sub>u</sub> i ka<sub>u</sub> chi ma ve, Ho<sub>u</sub>  
 Pa<sub>u</sub> Fa<sub>u</sub> hk'aw teh hk'aw g'aw<sub>u</sub>, ca  
 li<sub>u</sub> ca ma<sub>u</sub> la<sub>u</sub> meu<sub>u</sub> shaw<sub>u</sub> u<sub>u</sub>  
 shaw<sub>u</sub> meh<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub> pa<sub>u</sub> leh ya<sub>u</sub> nyi  
 sha<sub>u</sub> la<sub>u</sub> bon, sha<sub>u</sub> la<sub>u</sub> shi<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub>  
 mui<sub>u</sub> ve.
2. K'aw<sub>u</sub> sha<sub>u</sub> leh no<sub>u</sub> a pa haw<sub>u</sub> hpu  
 hkui meu<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub> ta<sub>u</sub> leh no<sub>u</sub> g'ui<sub>u</sub>  
 ma ka<sub>u</sub> ho<sub>u</sub> ka<sub>u</sub> hpa<sub>u</sub> sheh<sub>u</sub> hpa<sub>u</sub>,  
 hkui<sub>u</sub> yaw<sub>u</sub> nu<sub>u</sub> yaw<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub> hpa<sub>u</sub>  
 leh ui<sub>u</sub> ka<sub>u</sub> i ka<sub>u</sub>, te<sub>u</sub> g'a<sub>u</sub> le le hk'a<sub>u</sub>  
 shu<sub>u</sub> g'a ca<sub>u</sub> pi<sub>u</sub>.
3. Cheh<sub>u</sub> sha caw<sub>u</sub> sha bon k'aw<sub>u</sub> hpaw  
 leh ui<sub>u</sub> ka<sub>u</sub> i ka<sub>u</sub> ga pi<sub>u</sub>, hk'a<sub>u</sub> ma  
 aw<sub>u</sub> ce<sub>u</sub> chi haw<sub>u</sub>, ma<sub>u</sub> daw<sub>u</sub> ma<sub>u</sub>  
 ha<sub>u</sub>, chi bon ga pi<sub>u</sub>.
4. A pa Sha<sub>u</sub> ca<sub>u</sub> la<sub>u</sub> sha na<sub>u</sub> pu<sub>u</sub> co  
 ceh<sub>u</sub> co g'aw<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub> bvuh<sub>u</sub> leh neh  
 hpu ya<sub>u</sub> hpu hta<sub>u</sub> ga pi<sub>u</sub>, Ai ma la<sub>u</sub>  
 meh<sub>u</sub> li<sub>u</sub> sheh<sub>u</sub> li<sub>u</sub> hka<sub>u</sub> k'aw<sub>u</sub> bvuh<sub>u</sub>  
 leh neh hpu ya<sub>u</sub> hpu k'aw<sub>u</sub> hpaw<sub>u</sub>  
 sha hpaw<sub>u</sub> ga pi<sub>u</sub>.
5. Neh hpu ya<sub>u</sub> hpu a yu<sub>u</sub> co meu<sub>u</sub> co  
 ca<sub>u</sub> ha<sub>u</sub> ca<sub>u</sub>, neh hpu co nu<sub>u</sub> leh co
1. The whole group within the four  
 corners of the village here on Huey  
 Pang Farn hill once again exchanges  
 the top of the wood, the bottom of  
 the wood<sup>58</sup> [cut with knives fashion-  
 ed by] the village blacksmith's own  
 hands; today we once again make  
 a merit shelter.
2. We once again make offerings and  
 put them at the foot of Father's white  
*haw<sub>u</sub> yeh<sub>u</sub>* up there;<sup>59</sup> divine creator  
 up there, once again create fertility  
 and let there be sufficient to eat for  
 the big and the small, every person  
 to the same degree.
3. The boon of health and prosperity  
 once again open upon us; grant this  
 boon to the big and the small that  
 there may be no troubled thoughts  
 within the four corners of the village.
4. May the eternal life tree<sup>60</sup> at Father  
*Sha<sub>u</sub> ca<sub>u</sub>*'s right-hand side once  
 again cry out [its blessing] upon the  
 womenfolk and the menfolk; may  
 the bejewelled and golden *li<sub>u</sub> tsuh<sub>u</sub>*<sup>61</sup>  
 at *Ai ma's* left-hand side once again  
 cry out [its blessings] and grant  
 happiness to the womenfolk and the  
 menfolk.<sup>62</sup>
5. May eternal life once again be joined  
 to the weak lives of the womenfolk;

k'aw<sub>˩</sub> ca<sup>˩</sup> la<sup>˩</sup> o, neh hpu ha nu<sup>˩</sup>  
 leh ha k'aw<sub>˩</sub> ca<sup>˩</sup> la<sup>˩</sup> o meh<sub>˩</sub>.

may eternal souls once again join  
 the weak souls of the womenfolk.<sup>63</sup>

## TEXT 3-C

1. O<sup>˩</sup>, O<sup>˩</sup>, chi hk'aw<sub>˩</sub> hkao<sub>˩</sub> hpa<sub>˩</sub> sha<sup>˩</sup>  
 chi yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>, a, a daw<sup>˩</sup>  
 hk'a<sup>˩</sup> ma aw<sup>˩</sup> ce<sub>˩</sub>, to bo hk'a<sup>˩</sup> ma  
 aw<sup>˩</sup> ce<sub>˩</sub>, hk'aw<sub>˩</sub> g'a<sup>˩</sup> chi g'a<sup>˩</sup> leh  
 hk'a<sub>˩</sub> g'o<sub>˩</sub> chi g'o<sub>˩</sub> yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>  
 k'o<sup>˩</sup>, sha ma suh<sup>˩</sup>, a<sup>˩</sup> hpe<sub>˩</sub> suh<sup>˩</sup> chi  
 hk'aw<sub>˩</sub> tan<sup>˩</sup> leh G'ui<sub>˩</sub> fu<sub>˩</sub> tcuh ya<sup>˩</sup>  
 chi hta<sub>˩</sub> k'aw<sub>˩</sub> ga<sub>˩</sub> la ve yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>˩</sup>  
 k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>, hk'a<sub>˩</sub> g'o<sub>˩</sub> chi g'o<sub>˩</sub> k'aw<sub>˩</sub>  
 ceu<sub>˩</sub> leh hk'a<sub>˩</sub> g'a<sup>˩</sup> chi g'a<sup>˩</sup> hk'o<sup>˩</sup>  
 hta<sub>˩</sub> k'aw<sub>˩</sub> ceu<sub>˩</sub> la<sup>˩</sup>.
  2. A, a e Na bo na ca<sup>˩</sup>, mvuh<sup>˩</sup> nyi ce<sup>˩</sup>  
 le<sup>˩</sup>, ha pa ce<sup>˩</sup> le<sup>˩</sup>, chi ma ve yo<sub>˩</sub> law  
 le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> leh ha pa ce<sup>˩</sup> le<sup>˩</sup> ma,  
 mvuh<sup>˩</sup> nyi ce<sup>˩</sup> le<sup>˩</sup> pa<sub>˩</sub> chi yo<sub>˩</sub> law  
 le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>, hk'a<sup>˩</sup> u<sup>˩</sup> hk'a<sup>˩</sup> meh<sub>˩</sub>  
 hk'a<sub>˩</sub> g'o<sub>˩</sub> chi g'o<sub>˩</sub> g'a<sub>˩</sub> ceu<sub>˩</sub> g'a<sub>˩</sub>  
 taw<sub>˩</sub> la<sup>˩</sup>.
  3. A, a<sup>˩</sup> hpe<sub>˩</sub> yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>, sha  
 ma yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>, yaw<sup>˩</sup> ta<sup>˩</sup>  
 ve ta<sup>˩</sup> te la<sup>˩</sup> ce<sup>˩</sup>.
  4. Ya<sub>˩</sub> nyi tan<sub>˩</sub> o<sup>˩</sup> k'ai ve yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>˩</sup>  
 k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>, hk'a<sub>˩</sub> g'a<sup>˩</sup> chi g'a<sup>˩</sup> ve,  
 hk'a<sub>˩</sub> pe<sup>˩</sup> chi pe<sup>˩</sup> hk'o<sup>˩</sup> hta<sub>˩</sub>, heh  
 u<sup>˩</sup> heh meh<sub>˩</sub>, a, a<sup>˩</sup> hpe<sub>˩</sub> hk'o<sup>˩</sup> yo<sub>˩</sub>  
 law le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>, sha ma hk'o<sup>˩</sup> yo<sub>˩</sub>  
 law le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>, te<sup>˩</sup> hk'aw<sub>˩</sub> ti g'a<sub>˩</sub>  
 ve, chi hk'aw<sub>˩</sub> g'a<sub>˩</sub> veu<sub>˩</sub> ve, heh te<sup>˩</sup>  
 pe<sup>˩</sup> te g'a<sub>˩</sub> ve, chi hk'aw<sub>˩</sub> g'a<sub>˩</sub> ca<sup>˩</sup> ve,  
 hpa<sup>˩</sup> ya<sup>˩</sup> hpa<sup>˩</sup> ya<sup>˩</sup> ma<sup>˩</sup> ta<sup>˩</sup> la<sup>˩</sup>.
  5. A, la<sub>˩</sub> meu<sup>˩</sup> hkaw<sup>˩</sup> lu<sup>˩</sup> hkaw<sup>˩</sup> tan<sup>˩</sup>  
 chi ma ve yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>, peh<sup>˩</sup>  
 hpu hkeh hpu chi yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>  
 k'o<sup>˩</sup>, k'aw<sub>˩</sub> taw<sup>˩</sup> k'aw<sub>˩</sub> sha<sup>˩</sup> leh kaw  
 mo<sup>˩</sup> ti<sub>˩</sub>, kaw mo<sup>˩</sup> sheh<sup>˩</sup> chi ka<sub>˩</sub>  
 k'aw<sub>˩</sub> taw<sub>˩</sub> k'aw<sub>˩</sub> suh<sup>˩</sup> leh heh u<sup>˩</sup>  
 heh mi, a<sup>˩</sup> ape<sub>˩</sub> hpa<sup>˩</sup> ya<sup>˩</sup>, sha ma  
 hpa<sup>˩</sup> ya<sup>˩</sup> yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'aw<sub>˩</sub>  
 taw<sub>˩</sub> pi<sup>˩</sup>.
  6. Hk'aw<sub>˩</sub> g'o<sub>˩</sub> chi g'o<sub>˩</sub> yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>˩</sup>  
 k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>, hk'a<sub>˩</sub> g'a<sup>˩</sup> chi g'a<sup>˩</sup>, peh<sup>˩</sup>  
 haw<sub>˩</sub> te<sup>˩</sup> g'a<sup>˩</sup> te<sup>˩</sup> ku taw<sup>˩</sup> leh haw<sup>˩</sup>  
 fu<sub>˩</sub> tcuh ya<sup>˩</sup> chi hta<sub>˩</sub>, haw<sup>˩</sup> fu<sub>˩</sub>  
 co ti<sub>˩</sub> pfuh<sup>˩</sup> sheh<sub>˩</sub> hpa<sup>˩</sup>, haw<sup>˩</sup>  
 fu<sub>˩</sub> co sheh<sup>˩</sup> pfuh<sup>˩</sup> sheh<sub>˩</sub> hpa<sup>˩</sup> chi  
 haw ga<sub>˩</sub> la ve yo<sub>˩</sub> law le<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup> k'o<sup>˩</sup>.
1. Oh, oh, this year at this *hkao phan-*  
*saa*<sup>64</sup> every person within the four  
 corners of the headman's village,  
 within the four corners of the *to bo*  
*pa*'s<sup>65</sup> village, every person, every  
 household this year offers this new  
 maize and these new chillies and  
 once again reaches to *G'ui fu*, the  
 messenger,<sup>66</sup> every household once  
 again meets together, all the people  
 once again meet together.
  2. Oh Mother *Na bo na ca*,<sup>67</sup> the solar  
 scribe and the lunar scribe,<sup>68</sup> all of  
 you, female lunar scribe and male  
 solar scribe, watch over and shield  
 the top of the village and the bottom  
 of the village, every household.
  3. Do not let the chillies and the maize  
 over-ripen.
  4. Today and hereafter do not allow  
 disease to climb up on any person,  
 any field, the tops of the fields or the  
 bottoms of the fields, the chilli fields,  
 the maize fields, and if we plant  
 during one year, let there be [profits  
 to buy] enough clothing for ten  
 years; if we make one field let there  
 be enough food for ten years.
  5. Oh we once again take and once  
 again present all these offerings  
 made by our own hands, these pure  
 beeswax candles; let these offering-  
 posts once again shield and once  
 again protect the tops of the fields  
 and the bottoms of the fields from  
 chilli disease and maize disease.
  6. Every household, every person takes  
 a pair of beeswax candles and  
 reaches under *G'ui fu*, messenger  
 of the *haw yeh*,<sup>69</sup> under the eternal  
*G'ui fu*, the all-precious *G'ui fu*.

7. A, chaw ya<sup>h</sup> ho<sup>h</sup> ti<sup>h</sup> a<sup>h</sup> pfuh<sup>h</sup>, ta ti<sup>h</sup> a<sup>h</sup> pfuh<sup>h</sup> leh G'ui<sup>h</sup> fu<sup>h</sup> ta ti<sup>h</sup> pfuh<sup>h</sup> sheh<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup>, a, mui<sup>h</sup> hk'o<sup>h</sup> va<sup>h</sup> hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup> sheh<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup> yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, k'aw<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup> leh keu pi<sup>h</sup>, te<sup>h</sup> nyi mui<sup>h</sup> ve chi hk'aw<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup> leh a<sup>h</sup> peu<sup>h</sup> ve, aw<sup>h</sup> bvuh aw<sup>h</sup> ta<sup>h</sup>, aw<sup>h</sup> bvuh aw<sup>h</sup> law<sup>h</sup> ve, chi bon hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup> k'aw<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup> la ce<sup>h</sup>.
8. A pa Sha<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup>, a e Na bo na ca<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup>, a, heh u<sup>h</sup> heh meh<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup> sheh<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup> yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, hk'a<sup>h</sup> g'o<sup>h</sup> chi g'o<sup>h</sup> hpa<sup>h</sup> leh keu pi<sup>h</sup> meh<sup>h</sup>, hk'a<sup>h</sup> g'a<sup>h</sup> chi g'a<sup>h</sup> leh keu pi<sup>h</sup>, o, o!
7. Oh, we people have no wisdom, no truth, so G'ui<sup>h</sup> fu<sup>h</sup>, the all-true, you who create [success in] the farm work, once again create and put [fertility] into our fields so that if we work for one day in the fields, the food will not finish in ten years; let us have great prosperity;<sup>70</sup> this boon once again create [for us].
8. Father Sha<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup> and you also, Mother Na bo na ca<sup>h</sup>, you creators of the tops of the fields and the bottoms of the fields, create and grant [good fortune] for every household, every person.

## TEXT 3-D

1. O<sup>h</sup>, O<sup>h</sup>, ya<sup>h</sup> nyi yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, sha<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup> bon sha<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup> shi<sup>h</sup> te leh a daw<sup>h</sup> hk'a<sup>h</sup> ma aw<sup>h</sup> ce<sup>h</sup>, to bo hk'a<sup>h</sup> ma aw<sup>h</sup> ce<sup>h</sup>, ui<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup> i ka<sup>h</sup> chi ma ve, a, va<sup>h</sup> ti<sup>h</sup> g'a<sup>h</sup> ti<sup>h</sup> leh sha<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup> bon sha<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup> shi<sup>h</sup> te ve yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>.
2. Mvuh<sup>h</sup> nyi ce<sup>h</sup> le<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup>, ha pa ce<sup>h</sup> le<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup>, a pa Sha<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup> chi ve, ka ho<sup>h</sup> ka hpa<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup>, a, ya<sup>h</sup> nyi yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, o<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup> hkui yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, i<sup>h</sup> ka<sup>h</sup> hpaw<sup>h</sup> ve yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, law<sup>h</sup> ne<sup>h</sup> ha<sup>h</sup> ne<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup> sha<sup>h</sup> te<sup>h</sup> hpaw<sup>h</sup> ve yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, hk'aw ne<sup>h</sup> law<sup>h</sup> ne<sup>h</sup> ve, a, aw<sup>h</sup> k'aw ji ve yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, a pa Sha<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup> pi<sup>h</sup> ve yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>.
3. Meu<sup>h</sup> nyi<sup>h</sup> chi ma ve yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, maw<sup>h</sup> je<sup>h</sup> ce<sup>h</sup> ta<sup>h</sup> ve, sha<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup> bon sha<sup>h</sup> la<sup>h</sup> shi<sup>h</sup> te leh g'a<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup> g'a daw<sup>h</sup> yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>.
4. A pa Sha<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup> yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, mui<sup>h</sup> hk'o<sup>h</sup> va<sup>h</sup> hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup>, hk'a<sup>h</sup> deh<sup>h</sup> k'aw<sup>h</sup> ma<sup>h</sup> k'aw<sup>h</sup> ga leh hk'a<sup>h</sup> g'o<sup>h</sup> chi g'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup> g'a<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup> g'a<sup>h</sup> veu<sup>h</sup> hk'a<sup>h</sup> shu<sup>h</sup> hk'o<sup>h</sup> hta<sup>h</sup> caw<sup>h</sup> pi<sup>h</sup> meh<sup>h</sup>.
5. Ya<sup>h</sup> nyi tan<sup>h</sup> o<sup>h</sup> k'ai ve yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, sha<sup>h</sup> maw<sup>h</sup> yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, hk'aw u<sup>h</sup> hk'aw meh<sup>h</sup> ta<sup>h</sup> ga<sup>h</sup> ceh yo<sup>h</sup> law le<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup> k'o<sup>h</sup>, a, na<sup>h</sup> chi hkui<sup>h</sup> zuh<sup>h</sup> pa<sup>h</sup> hkui<sup>h</sup> zuh<sup>h</sup> ma, va<sup>h</sup> pa<sup>h</sup> va<sup>h</sup> ma, tsuh pa<sup>h</sup> tsuh ma
1. Oh today we make a merit shelter, and the big and the small within the four corners of the headman's village, within the four corners of the *to bo pa*'s village, kill pigs and chickens<sup>71</sup> and make a merit shelter.
2. Solar scribe and lunar scribe, Father Sha<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup>, the creator also,<sup>72</sup> oh today, at this moment, [the altar] at the side of the water [we give to] the water spirit, the rock spirit; [the altar] at the right-hand side we give to the hill spirit, the dale spirit; [the merit shelter in] the middle we give to Father Sha<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup>.<sup>73</sup>
3. All these sweet potatoes, all these things we have planted, [we offer] and we make a merit shelter; let us have food and drink.
4. Father Sha<sup>h</sup> ca<sup>h</sup>, when we are working in the fields, carefully once again teach us, once again help us; let every household have food and clothing, grant that all of us, equally, may have [these things].
5. Today and hereafter, when the hunters<sup>74</sup> climb up to the top of the hill, oh let their guns very easily meet male sambar deer and female sambar deer, male wild pigs and

- hk'a ngai ngai ti<sup>-</sup> hto<sup>-</sup> pi<sup>-</sup> g'a pi<sup>-</sup> meh<sup>-</sup>.
6. Ya<sup>-</sup> nyi tan<sup>-</sup> o<sup>-</sup> k'ai ve yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, o<sup>-</sup> te<sup>-</sup> hti<sup>-</sup> yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, i<sup>-</sup> ka<sup>-</sup> ne<sup>-</sup> hta<sup>-</sup> pi<sup>-</sup> leh o, la<sup>-</sup> sha te<sup>-</sup> hti<sup>-</sup> yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, o hk'aw ne<sup>-</sup> law<sup>-</sup> ne<sup>-</sup> hta<sup>-</sup> pi<sup>-</sup> ve, aw<sup>-</sup> k'aw ji te<sup>-</sup> hti<sup>-</sup> sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>-</sup> bon sha<sup>-</sup> la<sup>-</sup> shi<sup>-</sup> yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, a pa Sha<sup>-</sup> ca<sup>-</sup> chi hta<sup>-</sup> pi<sup>-</sup> ve.
  7. A pa Sha<sup>-</sup> ca<sup>-</sup> ka<sup>-</sup> ho<sup>-</sup> ka pa<sup>-</sup> hpa<sup>-</sup>, ho<sup>-</sup> ti<sup>-</sup> ta ti<sup>-</sup> pfuh<sup>-</sup> sheh<sup>-</sup> hpa<sup>-</sup>, a, neh<sup>-</sup> hk'aw<sup>-</sup> ti g'a ve yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, hk'a<sup>-</sup> g'a<sup>-</sup> chi g'a<sup>-</sup>, hk'a<sup>-</sup> g'o<sup>-</sup> chi g'o<sup>-</sup>, ma<sup>-</sup> g'a daw<sup>-</sup> ha<sup>-</sup> ga<sup>-</sup> hki<sup>-</sup> leh ca<sup>-</sup> leh a<sup>-</sup> peu<sup>-</sup>, veu<sup>-</sup> leh a<sup>-</sup> yaw ve yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, heh u<sup>-</sup> heh meh<sup>-</sup> hk'a deh<sup>-</sup> hpa<sup>-</sup> pi<sup>-</sup>.
  8. A, hki<sup>-</sup> kui<sup>-</sup> keh kui<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, a pa Sha<sup>-</sup> ca<sup>-</sup> hk'a deh<sup>-</sup> taw<sup>-</sup> leh suh<sup>-</sup> leh pon<sup>-</sup> a<sup>-</sup> pi<sup>-</sup>.
  9. Heh u<sup>-</sup> heh meh<sup>-</sup> yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, te<sup>-</sup> hk'aw<sup>-</sup> mui<sup>-</sup> leh chi hk'aw<sup>-</sup> g'a ca<sup>-</sup> ve, te<sup>-</sup> nyi mui<sup>-</sup> leh chi nyi g'a ca<sup>-</sup> ve, veu<sup>-</sup> hpu veu<sup>-</sup> shi chi ma pa<sup>-</sup> leh ga pi<sup>-</sup>.
  10. Heh u<sup>-</sup> heh meh<sup>-</sup> yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, neh<sup>-</sup> hk'aw<sup>-</sup> ti g'a ve yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, ca<sup>-</sup> leh daw<sup>-</sup> leh a<sup>-</sup> peu<sup>-</sup> ve, a pa Sha<sup>-</sup> ca<sup>-</sup>, a, ka ho<sup>-</sup> ha hpa<sup>-</sup> pa<sup>-</sup>, naw<sup>-</sup> ho<sup>-</sup> ti<sup>-</sup> ta ti<sup>-</sup> pfuh<sup>-</sup> sheh<sup>-</sup> hpa<sup>-</sup>, hk'a<sup>-</sup> g'a<sup>-</sup> chi g'a<sup>-</sup>, a daw<sup>-</sup> hk'a<sup>-</sup> ma aw<sup>-</sup> ce<sup>-</sup>, hk'a<sup>-</sup> g'o<sup>-</sup> chi g'o<sup>-</sup>, hk'a deh<sup>-</sup> hpa<sup>-</sup> leh ji leh pe<sup>-</sup> leh g'a ca<sup>-</sup> g'a daw<sup>-</sup> hk'a shu<sup>-</sup>.
  11. Heh<sup>-</sup> hk'aw<sup>-</sup> ti g'a ve yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, ma<sup>-</sup> g'a daw<sup>-</sup> ha<sup>-</sup> ga<sup>-</sup> hki<sup>-</sup> leh va<sup>-</sup> u<sup>-</sup> va<sup>-</sup> meh<sup>-</sup> hk'o<sup>-</sup> hta<sup>-</sup> hk'a deh<sup>-</sup> ta<sup>-</sup> pi<sup>-</sup> meh<sup>-</sup>.
  12. Hk'a<sup>-</sup> g'o<sup>-</sup> chi g'o<sup>-</sup> yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, ma<sup>-</sup> g'a daw<sup>-</sup> ha<sup>-</sup> ga<sup>-</sup> hki<sup>-</sup>, ca<sup>-</sup> bon daw<sup>-</sup> bon hk'o<sup>-</sup> hta<sup>-</sup> ti<sup>-</sup> nyi leh hk'a deh<sup>-</sup> ga pi<sup>-</sup>.
  13. Ai ma, Na bo na ca<sup>-</sup> ka<sup>-</sup>, hk'a deh<sup>-</sup> ma<sup>-</sup> leh ga pi<sup>-</sup>, hk'aw<sup>-</sup> g'a<sup>-</sup> chi g'a<sup>-</sup> yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup> k'o, ma<sup>-</sup> g'a daw<sup>-</sup> ha<sup>-</sup> ga<sup>-</sup> hki<sup>-</sup> ve yo<sup>-</sup> law le<sup>-</sup> k'o<sup>-</sup>
- female wild pigs, male barking deer and female barking deer.
  6. Today and hereafter, the altar over there we give to the water spirit, the altar on the right-hand side we give to the spirit of the hills and dales; the altar in the middle, the merit shelter, we give to this Father *Sha<sup>-</sup> ca<sup>-</sup>*.
  7. Father *Sha<sup>-</sup> ca<sup>-</sup>*, the creator, the all-wise, all-true, oh next year when we plant [our crops], may every person, every household suffer no troubled thoughts, may the food not finish, the clothing not be exhausted; at the top of the fields and at the bottom of the fields carefully create and give [this boon].
  8. Father *Sha<sup>-</sup> ca<sup>-</sup>*, carefully shield, let pass from us and protect us from a troubled place.
  9. At the top of the fields and at the bottom of the fields, when we work for one year in the fields, may we eat for ten years; when we work for one day in the fields, may we eat for ten days; silver clothing and golden clothing grant to us.
  10. At the top of the fields and at the bottom of the fields, next year when we plant [our crops], let the food and drink not finish; Father *Sha<sup>-</sup> ca<sup>-</sup>*, the creator, the all-knowing, all-true, carefully create, spread and bestow [this boon] on every person and every household, let everyone equally have enough to eat and to drink.
  11. Next year when we plant, let us have no troubled thoughts; the top of a pig and the bottom of a pig we carefully give [to you].<sup>75</sup>
  12. Let every household not suffer from troubled thoughts; this boon alone look for and carefully grant to us.
  13. Ai ma, *Na bo na ca<sup>-</sup>*; <sup>76</sup> carefully teach and help every person that we have no troubled thoughts, and carefully shield and protect us from

- k'o, sho me<sup>ˇ</sup> kui<sup>ˇ</sup> me<sup>ˇ</sup> k'o, hk'a  
deh<sub>ˆ</sub> taw<sub>ˆ</sub> leh suh<sup>ˉ</sup> pi<sup>ˉ</sup>.
14. Zuh<sub>ˆ</sub> ma<sup>ˉ</sup> zuh<sub>ˆ</sub> mo tu<sub>ˆ</sub> k'o<sup>ˆ</sup> k'o, hk'a deh<sub>ˆ</sub> taw<sub>ˆ</sub> leh suh<sup>ˉ</sup> leh pon<sub>ˆ</sub> pi<sup>ˉ</sup>, hki<sup>ˉ</sup> kui<sub>ˆ</sub> keh<sub>ˆ</sub> kui<sub>ˆ</sub> k'o hk'a deh<sub>ˆ</sub> taw<sub>ˆ</sub> leh suh<sup>ˉ</sup> leh pon<sub>ˆ</sub> pi<sup>ˉ</sup>, chi bon ti<sup>ˉ</sup> k'aw<sub>ˆ</sub> hpa<sub>ˆ</sub> leh chi shi ti<sup>ˉ</sup> k'aw<sub>ˆ</sub> gu leh ta<sub>ˆ</sub> pi<sup>ˉ</sup> meh<sub>ˆ</sub>, a pa Sha<sup>ˉ</sup> ca<sup>ˆ</sup>, O<sup>ˉ</sup>! O<sup>ˉ</sup>!
- sharp points of copper and sharp points of iron.
14. Carefully shield and let pass from us troubled sleep; carefully shield, let pass and protect us from misfortune; this boon alone once again create and this boon alone once again prepare and grant to us, oh Father *Sha<sup>ˉ</sup> ca<sup>ˆ</sup>*.

After the prayers, all partake of the food which the women have spread out in the *sha<sup>ˉ</sup> la<sup>ˆ</sup>*. When all have eaten, the villagers tie cotton string around each other's wrists (Fig. 8). This wrist-binding rite symbolizes the passing of blessings from one person to another. The people say it also stresses the unity of the village community (cf. Walker 1972: 359–360). It is not necessary for everybody to bind everyone else's wrist, but the elders of the community are especially requested to bind the wrists of their juniors in order to pass on to them their blessings. And it may be—although it is not necessary—that the elder will recite a prayer when binding the wrist of a junior. Text Four below is an example.

## TEXT 4

1. Ha, a pa Sha<sup>ˉ</sup> ca<sup>ˆ</sup> mai<sup>ˉ</sup> mo co ca<sup>ˆ</sup> ha ca<sup>ˆ</sup> chi ve k'aw<sub>ˆ</sub> bvuh<sub>ˆ</sub> leh ya<sup>ˉ</sup> hpu la<sub>ˆ</sub> chi<sup>ˉ</sup> la<sub>ˆ</sub> daw<sup>ˉ</sup> u<sup>ˉ</sup> hta<sub>ˆ</sub> k'aw<sub>ˆ</sub> ta<sub>ˆ</sub> pi<sup>ˉ</sup> she<sub>ˆ</sub>, ha, ya<sup>ˉ</sup> hpu hku<sup>ˉ</sup> chi<sup>ˉ</sup> hkui daw<sup>ˉ</sup> u<sup>ˉ</sup> hta<sub>ˆ</sub> k'aw<sub>ˆ</sub> ta<sub>ˆ</sub> pi<sup>ˉ</sup>.
2. Ma<sup>ˉ</sup> hpui<sup>ˉ</sup> ma<sup>ˉ</sup> htai<sub>ˆ</sub>, ma<sup>ˉ</sup> maw<sup>ˉ</sup> ma<sup>ˉ</sup> ha<sup>ˉ</sup> ve, a pa mai<sup>ˉ</sup> mo co ca<sup>ˆ</sup> ha ca<sup>ˆ</sup> chi ve k'aw<sub>ˆ</sub> bvuh<sub>ˆ</sub> leh ya<sup>ˉ</sup> hpu la<sub>ˆ</sub> chi<sup>ˉ</sup> la<sub>ˆ</sub> daw<sup>ˉ</sup> u<sup>ˉ</sup> hta<sub>ˆ</sub> k'aw<sub>ˆ</sub> ta<sub>ˆ</sub> pi<sup>ˉ</sup>.
3. Ha, cheh<sup>ˉ</sup> sha caw<sub>ˆ</sub> sha pi<sup>ˉ</sup>, te<sup>ˉ</sup> nyi sheh<sup>ˆ</sup> yan<sup>ˉ</sup>, te<sup>ˉ</sup> ha<sup>ˉ</sup> sheh<sup>ˆ</sup> yan<sup>ˉ</sup>, a pa ka ti<sub>ˆ</sub> ka pa<sup>ˆ</sup> k'o<sup>ˆ</sup> k'o, ya<sub>ˆ</sub> nyi mai<sup>ˉ</sup> mo co ca<sup>ˆ</sup> ha ca<sup>ˆ</sup> chi k'aw<sub>ˆ</sub> bvuh<sub>ˆ</sub> g'a yo<sub>ˆ</sub> law le<sup>ˉ</sup> k'o<sup>ˆ</sup> k'o.
4. Ka<sub>ˆ</sub> haw ya<sup>ˉ</sup> hpu la<sub>ˆ</sub> chi<sup>ˉ</sup> la<sub>ˆ</sub> daw<sup>ˉ</sup> u<sup>ˉ</sup> hta<sub>ˆ</sub> k'aw<sub>ˆ</sub> ta<sub>ˆ</sub> g'a, te<sup>ˉ</sup> nyi le, cheh<sup>ˉ</sup> sha caw<sub>ˆ</sub> sha, chi bon pa<sup>ˆ</sup> leh ga pi<sup>ˉ</sup>.
5. Ma<sup>ˉ</sup> daw<sup>ˉ</sup> ma<sup>ˉ</sup> hki<sup>ˉ</sup>, ma<sup>ˉ</sup> daw<sup>ˉ</sup> ma<sup>ˉ</sup> ha<sub>ˆ</sub>, ha, hk'aw<sub>ˆ</sub> naw<sup>ˉ</sup> g'u<sup>ˉ</sup> suh<sup>ˉ</sup>, chaw ca<sub>ˆ</sub> ma<sup>ˉ</sup> g'a, ne<sup>ˉ</sup> ca<sub>ˆ</sub> ma<sup>ˉ</sup> g'a,
1. Ha, Father *Sha<sup>ˉ</sup> ca<sup>ˆ</sup>*'s life-string, soul-string,<sup>77</sup> once again cry out and once again put [blessings] on the hands of this person, once again put [blessings] on the feet of this person.<sup>78</sup>
2. May he not decay, may he not grow old; father's life-string, soul-string, once again cry out and once again put [this blessing] on the hands of this person.
3. Ha, grant health and prosperity; three times in one day, three times in one night, all-true, all-powerful father; today the life-string, soul-string once again cries out.
4. Down here, once again put [blessings] on the person's hands and feet; every day may he enjoy health and prosperity; this boon order and grant [to him].
5. Let him not suffer from troubled thoughts; oh, in front and behind, let him not be killed by men nor by

- chi bon pa<sup>^</sup> leh ga pi<sup>ˇ</sup>.
6. Daw<sup>ˇ</sup> sha ga<sup>ˇ</sup> sha, daw<sup>ˇ</sup> law<sub>ˇ</sub> ga<sup>ˇ</sup> law<sub>ˇ</sub>, ui<sub>ˇ</sub> ka<sub>ˇ</sub> i ka<sub>ˇ</sub> chi ma ve, ma<sup>ˇ</sup> hpui<sup>ˇ</sup> ma<sup>ˇ</sup> htai<sub>ˇ</sub>, chi bon pa<sup>^</sup> leh ga pi<sup>ˇ</sup>.
7. Ha, te<sup>ˇ</sup> nyi aw<sub>ˇ</sub> na a pa mai<sup>ˇ</sup> mo co pui co law<sub>ˇ</sub> no<sup>ˇ</sup> ve, te<sup>ˇ</sup> nyi k'aw<sup>ˇ</sup> cu<sub>ˇ</sub> k'aw<sup>ˇ</sup> suh<sup>^</sup> k'aw<sub>ˇ</sub> bvuh<sub>ˇ</sub> leh ga pi<sup>ˇ</sup> meh<sub>ˇ</sub>.
8. Ya<sup>ˇ</sup> hpu kui chi<sup>ˇ</sup> hkui daw<sup>ˇ</sup>, la<sub>ˇ</sub> chi<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sub>ˇ</sub> daw<sup>ˇ</sup> u<sup>ˇ</sup> hta<sub>ˇ</sub> k'aw<sub>ˇ</sub> ta<sub>ˇ</sub> pi<sup>ˇ</sup>.
- malicious spirits;<sup>79</sup> this boon order and grant [to him].
6. May the big and the small have easy thoughts, suffer no decay and never grow old; this boon order and grant [to us all].
7. Ha, every day may the life-string of the father up there nine times in one day again cry out and again grant [blessings to this person].
8. Once again put [blessings] on this person's feet and hands.

The wrist-binding rite finished, the whole ritual sequence is at an end and the villagers set off for home. The time is usually mid-afternoon, around three o'clock. The merit shelter will be used as a place of temporary rest by the Lahu villagers themselves and by anyone else traveling along that pathway, until it falls down after a year or two. New merit shelters are built at least twice a year, following any of the three *shī<sup>ˇ</sup> nyi lon<sup>ˇ</sup>* or "great merit days". At such times the rites described above are repeated.

#### CONCLUDING NOTE

The rites associated with the construction of a merit shelter manifest several important aspects of Lahu Nyi religious practice. Within one ceremony are found rites directed towards the supreme supernatural being of these people, *G'ui<sub>ˇ</sub> sha*, and others directed towards the spirits or *ne<sup>ˇ</sup>*. We have seen that the merit hut itself is for *G'ui<sub>ˇ</sub> sha*, while the resident hill spirit (*hk'aw ne<sup>ˇ</sup>*) of the locality is propitiated at two side altars. We find not only the priest but also the village headman acting in a ritual capacity. But perhaps the most interesting feature of all is that a lowland Buddhist practice—the building of a rest shelter to acquire merit—has been adopted by Lahu hillmen and adapted to their own ritual idiom. These Lahu build a *sha<sup>ˇ</sup> la<sup>^</sup>*, not simply to gain merit, but also to ensure the blessings of *G'ui<sub>ˇ</sub> sha* and of the local hill spirit.

#### NOTES

1. Lahu words in this paper are transcribed according to a romanization developed by American Baptist missionaries in Burma and China. (The ethnonym itself is an exception; "Lahu", rather than La<sup>ˇ</sup> hu<sub>ˇ</sub>, is common usage in the ethnological literature.) This orthography, still the most widely used among Lahu outside China, has supra- and sub-script marks after each syllable to indicate six of the seven tones of Lahu. There are five open marks (long vowel) and two checked (short vowel ending



in a glottal stop), indicated as follows:

- superscript straight line ( $ca^$ ): high-rising open tone
- subscript straight line ( $ca_$ ): very low open tone
- superscript wedge ( $ca^\wedge$ ): high-falling open tone
- subscript wedge ( $ca_\wedge$ ): low-falling open tone
- unmarked ( $ca$ ): mid-level open tone
- superscript circumflex ( $ca^\frown$ ): high tone, checked
- subscript circumflex ( $ca_\frown$ ): low tone, checked

2. My fieldwork among the Lahu Nyi in the districts of Phrao (Chiang Mai province) and Wiang Pa Pao (Chiang Rai province) was from 1966 to 1970. My thanks are due especially to Khun Wanat Bhruksasri and his staff at the Tribal Research Centre in Chiang Mai. I thank my wife, Pauline Hetland Walker, for her help in preparing this manuscript. Walker (1969, 1970b, 1975a, 1975b, 1975c, 1983) contain introductory ethnographic data on the Lahu people.

3. "Tai" is used here to refer to any group speaking a Tai (or Daic) language; "Thai" is reserved for citizens of the modern nation state of Thailand. The Tai people with whom the Lahu Nyi are associated are mostly Shan (in Burma and Thailand's Mae Hong Son province) and Khon Muang (in the rest of northern Thailand).

4. See the bibliography at the end of my previous article in *Asian Folklore Studies* for a more complete listing of my work on Lahu Nyi ritual (Walker 1984: 300-302).

5. The Lahu Nyi conception of their local guardian hill spirit and its relation to the general category of hill spirits is identical to that of their Khon Muang (Northern Thai) neighbors. Of the latter, Turton (1972: 245) writes, "... when forest is cut down, say to make a space for domestic use or cultivation, non-specific forest spirits become single specific locality spirits (*cao tii*)."<sup>1</sup> Sometimes these Lahu Nyi themselves address their locality spirit by this Tai term (in Lahu script, *cao\_ ti*.)

6. For convenience of reference between the Lahu original and my English translation, I have broken the texts into verses. No such divisions are recognized by the people themselves.

7. For "village" the Lahu original has the poetic couplet, *te^ fu\_ te^ a daw^*, literally "one *G'ui\_fu\_* (the spirit protector of the village) one headman" (*a daw^* from *daw^ ve* "to think" and so "he who thinks on behalf of the community," i.e., its headman).

8. Mae Hpa (Lahu, Meh Hpa\_) is the Thai name of a stream. The hill on which the Lahu village is sited takes its name from this stream.

9. The people "exchange" (*pa\_ ve*) the hut for blessings or merit.

10. The Lahu original has the couplet *shaw^ u\_ shaw^ meh\_* "top of the wood, bottom of the wood," instead of simply "wood."

11. Words in brackets do not appear, but are implied, in the Lahu original.

12. The Lahu original uses the couplet *sha^ la^ bon sha^ la^ shi^* (*aw\_ bon aw\_ shi^* "merit").

13. Here the Lahu couplet *cao\_ ba\_ cao\_ meu^* is a corruption of the Tai titles *cao ban* (*cao* "lord," *ban* "village") and *cao muang* (*muang* "country").

14. *La\_ sha mo\_ la\_ mo\_ sha^* the "right-hand group" (*la\_ sha* "right hand," couplet *mo\_ la\_ mo\_ sha^* "group") refers to the menfolk; the "left-hand group" (*la\_ meh\_ mo\_ la\_ mo\_ sha^*) is the womenfolk (cf. Text 1-B, verse 1).

15. The Lahu has *daw^ hpu* "white thoughts," *te^ ca^* "one rope."

16. Couplet *hkaw^ lu^ hkaw^ tan^* "offerings," couplet *ce\_ ce\_ cu\_ cu\_* "many different kinds." This refers to the hut, the ritual paraphernalia associated with it and the food offerings.

17. *Hkui che . . . la<sub>~</sub>che* "feet stretch out, hands stretch out" is a poetic couplet, in no way to be taken literally.

18. That the man's prayer is made on behalf of somebody else (in this case, all the villagers) is indicated in Lahu by the word *ce<sup>~</sup>* at the end of the sentence.

19. The couplet *to nu<sup>~</sup> to sha<sup>^</sup>* indicates the general category of wild animals.

20. *Mui<sub>~</sub> ca<sup>~</sup> va<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>~</sup>* is the poetic couplet which stands for "working in the fields."

21. *Aw<sub>~</sub> hkaw<sub>~</sub>* "great yield", couplet *aw<sub>~</sub> bon aw<sub>~</sub> shi<sup>-</sup>* "blessing, boon" (also "merit," but in this context "boon" is probably the best translation).

22. Literally, "put inside" (*keu ve*).

23. *Je<sup>^</sup> ve* "to split," in this connexion means, I think, to split misfortune from fortune, sickness from health, poverty from wealth, and so on.

24. Mae Saluam (Lahu, Meh Sho<sub>~</sub> Lo<sup>~</sup>) is the Thai name of a stream above which the merit hut was erected on this occasion.

25. The Lahu uses the coupled phrases *la<sub>~</sub> sha a daw<sup>~</sup> daw<sup>~</sup> hpu daw<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>^</sup>* and *la<sub>~</sub> meh<sub>~</sub> a ga<sup>~</sup> sha<sup>~</sup> hpu sha<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>^</sup>*. In fact, there are four couplets here: (1) *la<sub>~</sub> sha* and *la<sub>~</sub> meh<sub>~</sub>* (right and left [see n. 14 above]), (2) *a daw<sup>~</sup>* and *a ga<sup>~</sup>* (both meaning "headman," and deriving from the coupled verbs *daw<sup>~</sup> ve ga<sup>~</sup> ve* "to think" [see n. 7 above]), (3) *daw<sup>~</sup> hpu* and *ga<sup>~</sup> hpu* (both meaning "thoughts," again from the coupled verbs *daw<sup>~</sup> ve ga<sup>~</sup> ve*), (4) *daw<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>^</sup>* and *sha<sup>~</sup> ca<sup>^</sup>* (thought rope and offering rope; *daw<sup>~</sup> ve* "to think," *sha<sup>~</sup> ve* "to offer," *ca<sup>^</sup>* "rope").

26. "Master of the hill top . . . master of the stream source" (*hk'aw u<sup>-</sup> hk'aw sheh<sub>~</sub> hpa<sup>~</sup> . . . law<sub>~</sub> u<sup>-</sup> law<sub>~</sub> sheh<sub>~</sub> hpa<sup>~</sup>*) is a couplet, both parts of which refer to the resident hill spirit.

27. The verb *ci<sup>~</sup> ve* "to ride" is used here only for poetic effect.

28. Here I translate *cao<sub>~</sub> hpeu<sub>~</sub> nga<sup>~</sup> leh<sup>-</sup>* very roughly as "great prince." *Cao<sub>~</sub>* is "lord" or "prince," a loan from Tai, but I do not understand the rest of the phrase. (*Nga<sup>~</sup>* means "fish", but not, I think, in this context.)

29. "Men of evil intent . . . malicious spirits" is how I translate the phrases *chaw ca<sub>~</sub> chaw law<sup>~</sup>* and *ne<sup>-</sup> ca<sub>~</sub> ne<sup>-</sup> law<sup>~</sup>*. This is the *meaning* of the phrases, according to my informants, but they were unable to give me a satisfactory word-by-word translation.

30. *Phansaa* (Lahu, *hpa<sub>~</sub> sha<sup>-</sup>*) is the Tai form of the Pali *vassa* (Lahu, *va<sub>~</sub> sha<sup>-</sup>*). Frequently termed the "Buddhist Lent" in English, *phansaa* is the rainy season (late June to early October) when Buddhist monks must "cease their wanderings and take up residence in their monastery, going out only under unusual circumstances (e.g., serious illness of a relative) from which they must return within seven days" (Lester 1973: 52-53). The beginning of this period of retreat is known in Thailand as *khrao phansaa* because it is the time when the monks "enter" (*khrao*) their monasteries.

31. "Sand-heaping *vassa*" (Lahu, *sai<sup>~</sup> kaw<sub>~</sub> va<sub>~</sub> sha<sup>-</sup>*) represents the Lahu reciter's confusion of two different Tai festivals. *Sai<sup>~</sup> kaw<sub>~</sub>* "sand-heaping" comes from a rite associated with the Northern Thai new year celebrations (*songkran*), when people customarily carry sand from a river- or stream-bed to a temple courtyard and there model it into miniature temples. This festival falls in March-April. On the other hand, *vassa*, as noted above, is the "Lenten" season which begins with the festival of *khrao phansaa* (see note above) in June-July and ends with the festival of *awk phansaa* (*awk* "out"), when the monks may leave their monasteries, in September-October. The Lahu Nyi celebrate all three Tai festivals (with changed meaning) as *shi<sup>-</sup> nyi lon<sup>-</sup>* or "great merit days" (cf. Walker 1984).

32. "Cooked rice, cooked water" (*aw<sub>~</sub> meh g'ui<sub>~</sub> meh*) is a poetic couplet. No

water of any kind is offered.

33. *Haw hpu meṽ hpu hk'o\_ hta\_ haw k'aw\_ cĩ*: "Once again ride on your white elephant, white horse" means "Ride on these animals and come and receive our offerings."

34. "Points of iron and copper" (*sho meṽ kuĩ meṽ*) is a poetic reference to the knives, axes and other farming tools. "Points of wood" (*shaw̃ meṽ ma\_ meṽ*) means any piece of wood that might cause injury.

35. *Kaw mõ taweh\_*; see description above, p. 54.

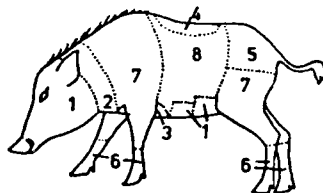
36. Although the Lahu text has only *va\_* "pig," rather than *heh va\_* "wild pig" (*Sus scofa*, Linn.), the latter is clearly implied here.

37. *Tsuh* from *tsuh pĩ kaweh\_* "barking deer" (*Muntiacus muntjak*, Zimmermann).

38. *Hkuĩ zuh\_* "sambar deer" (*Cervus unicolor*, Kerr).

39. *Sho meṽ kuĩ meṽ* "iron points, copper points" may refer either to the iron spears which Lahu Nyi attach to bamboo spring traps, or to the barrels of the hunters' guns. The repetition is alleviated in the Lahu by the use of the paired couplets *sho meṽ kuĩ meṽ* and *sho bã kuĩ bã* which have the same meaning.

40. This is a poetic reference to the Lahu Nyi custom of dividing any large game animal which they bag, with special portions (see diagram) going to the village headman (4), senior priest (3), blacksmith (2), father-in-law of the man who shot the animal (5), people who help butcher the carcass (6), the man who shot the beast (1 and half of 8) and, finally, every household in the village (7 and half of 8).



41. Huey Pang Farn (Lahu, *Ho\_ Pa\_ Fã*) is literally "stream (*huey*) of the barking deer (*farn*) camp (*pang*)." This is the Tai name for an important stream near the Lahu Nyi village. The name indicates that lowlanders have camped here on hunting trips for the much-prized barking deer.

42. Here the Lahu text has *Meh hpa\_ tẽ fu\_ tẽ a daw̃*, literally "Meh Hpa\_ one *G'ui\_ fu\_* one headman" (cf. n. 7).

43. The verb *gõ ve* "to raise the hand" refers to a common act of Lahu prayer, in which the supplicant lifts his right hand, in which he holds lighted beeswax candles.

44. "The all-true, all-precious Father up there" (*nõ g'a a pa ka ti\_ ka sheh̃*) is a reference to *G'ui\_ sha*, the supreme supernatural being.

45. "Food custom, drink custom" (*cã lĩ daw\_ lĩ*: *cã ve* "to eat," *daw\_ ve* "to drink," *aw\_ li* "custom") means the custom of making offerings to *G'ui\_ sha*.

46. This prayer was recited at the construction of a merit hut following the festival of *hkao\_ shi\_ nyi* or "enter merit day." Corresponding to *khrao phansaa*, the Tai festival which begins the Buddhist lenten season (see n. 30), *hkao\_ shi\_ nyi* is when Lahu Nyi celebrate their first harvest of the agricultural year: maize, chillies, sweet potatoes and several other side-crops (cf. Walker 1984).

47. *Ai ma* is a female deity, counterpart to the male *G'ui\_ sha*. At the same time she partakes in the latter's divinity in such a manner that she too may be termed "*G'ui\_ sha*" (cf. Walker 1976: 379-380; 1981b: 669, especially n. 9). *Ai ma* is sometimes

said to have created the earth, while Father *G'ui\_ sha* created the heavens. As female, and as creator of the earth, *Ai ma* is particularly associated with fertility.

48. I do not know the meaning of *Pi ti\_*, but it is sometimes used in prayer language to stand for Lahu. Here the reciter uses the couplet *Pi ti\_ La\_ hu\_*; elsewhere (e.g., v. 13), *Pi ti\_ pi ya\_* (*ya\_* "people").

49. Not without reason, Lahu mountaineers tend to view the lowland towns and cities as centres of wealth and material sophistication.

50. *Chi ceu\_ k'aw\_ ceu\_* "nine kinds ten kinds" is a poetic manner of saying "all kinds." Here, "all kinds of things"; v. 15 below, "all kinds of sickness."

51. See above, n. 23.

52. *Hkao phansaa=hkao\_ shi\_ nyi\_*; see n. 30 and n. 46.

53. *Hpaaw\_* "side" here means "state, condition, time" (of death or sickness).

54. *G'aw ve* "count" here means "to consider, take note of" (with the intention of preventing).

55. Here translated "protect", *suh\_ ve* is literally "side-step."

56. These Lahu Nyi conceive that everything that exists on earth must have its divine prototype in the heavens. Thus, as the Lahu use rolls of cotton string for the rite of wrist-binding (see below, p. 73 and Text 4), so the supreme deity, *G'ui\_ sha*, possesses an "eternal roll of cotton string" (*mai\_ mo co pui co law\_*) in his heavenly abode.

57. Here "Father *Sha\_ ca\_*" is used as an alternative name for *G'ui\_ sha*. This is somewhat confusing, since *Sha\_ ca\_* is also the name of a Lahu culture hero (cf. Walker 1981: 679-681, n. 17).

58. "Top of the wood, bottom of the wood" (*shaw\_ u\_ shaw\_ meh\_*) is simply a poetic manner of talking about "wood" in general.

59. The divine prototype village temple (*haw\_ yeh\_*) in the heavens (cf. n. 56). For a detailed description of the Lahu Nyi village temple, see Walker (1981: 671-679; 1982: 107-109).

60. The "eternal life tree" (*na\_ pu\_ co ceh\_ co g'aw\_*) is said to be part of *G'ui\_ sha's* possessions (*G'ui\_ sha ve maw\_*), but informants could not explain further. These Lahu Nyi also talk of a "tree of immortality" on the moon (they see the lunar shadows as a tree) and say that if only it were possible for a person to obtain a fragment of this tree, he or she would be free from sickness and death (cf. Walker 1970a: 12). Probably a similar idea is involved here.

61. The *li\_ tsuh\_* (cf. Walker 1981b: 677-678, fig. 5b) is a ritual offering: a bundle (diameter about 10 cm.) of split-bamboo sticks with cotton wool on top. *Li\_ tsuh\_* (from *aw\_ li\_* "custom" and *tsuh\_ ve* "to bind together") are placed in the village temple to cleanse the sins (*ve\_ ba\_*) of their donors, but I do not know what they are supposed to symbolize. *Ai ma's* (see n. 47) "bejewelled and golden *li\_ tsuh\_*" (*li\_ sheh\_ li\_ hka\_*), according to one of my informants, is to be found at the left-hand side of *G'ui\_ sha's haw\_ yeh\_* in the heavens (see n. 59).

62. This whole verse is an extended couplet of several pairs — tree: *li\_ tsuh\_*; *Sha\_ ca\_* (*G'ui\_ sha*): *Ai ma*; right: left.

63. I think the reciter did not intend to single out women as "weak" in body and soul, but simply forgot to add the second part of this double couplet, namely *ya\_ hpu co nu\_ . . . ya\_ hpu ha nu\_* "men weak lives, men weak souls."

64. See n. 52.

65. The *to bo pa\_* is the senior village priest, whose chief function is to act as intermediary between *G'ui\_ sha* and the villagers by leading prayers and ritual activities in the village temple (cf. Walker 1982: 113-116).

66. *G'ui<sub>~</sub>fu<sub>~</sub>*, the spirit protector of the village, is sometimes said to be *G'ui<sub>~</sub>sha*'s messenger (*G'ui<sub>~</sub>sha ve tcuh ya<sup>~</sup>*).
67. An alternative name for *Ai ma* (see n. 47).
68. The solar scribe (*mvuh<sup>~</sup>nyi ce<sup>~</sup>le<sup>~</sup>*) and the lunar scribe (*ha pa ce<sup>~</sup>le<sup>~</sup>*) are said to be "*G'ui<sub>~</sub>sha*'s people" (*G'ui<sub>~</sub>sha ve ya<sup>~</sup>*), but beyond this I could discover nothing about them.
69. *G'ui<sub>~</sub>fu<sub>~</sub>* (see n. 66) has an altar in the village temple or *haw<sup>-</sup>yeh<sub>~</sub>* (cf. Walker 1981: 676, fig. 4); hence the title *haw<sup>-</sup>fu<sub>~</sub>* (short for *haw<sup>-</sup>yeh<sub>~</sub>G'ui<sub>~</sub>fu<sub>~</sub>*) in this text.
70. "Great prosperity" is my translation of the paired couplets *aw<sub>~</sub>bvuh aw<sub>~</sub>ta<sup>^</sup>* and *aw<sub>~</sub>bvuh aw<sub>~</sub>law<sub>~</sub>*, both of which mean "pile, heap" and refer to the expected yield of grain.
71. This is hyperbole, a common feature of Lahu Nyi prayers. Chickens, but no pigs, were slaughtered for this occasion.
72. *Ka ho<sup>-</sup>ka hpa<sub>~</sub>* "the creator" is another title for *G'ui<sub>~</sub>sha*.
73. The translator of Lahu Nyi prayers frequently must decide whether to take words literally or read them only for their poetic effect. Here, what appears to be a simple statement of fact is only partially true. The middle building, that is the *sha<sup>-</sup>la<sup>^</sup>*, or merit hut itself, is indeed an offering to *G'ui<sub>~</sub>sha*. But both altars (*hti<sup>-</sup>*) are for the resident hill spirit, the one at the left (whether or not at the "side of the water") being given to this spirit as "keeper of the wild animals." Thus, in the context of this prayer, we are to read "water spirit, rock spirit" (*law<sub>~</sub>ne<sup>~</sup>ha<sup>-</sup>ne<sup>~</sup>*) as no more than a couplet paired with "hill spirit, dale spirit" (*hk'aw ne<sup>~</sup>law<sub>~</sub>ne<sup>~</sup>*) for poetic effect. See also verse 6.
74. The Lahu has *sha<sub>~</sub>* ("game") *maw* (from *maw<sup>-</sup>pa<sub>~</sub>* "doctor"), the whole apparently meaning "a specialist in game" and so a "hunter."
75. The couplet *va<sub>~</sub>u<sup>-</sup>va<sub>~</sub>meh<sub>~</sub>* "top of a pig, bottom of a pig" stands for "a whole pig."
76. See n. 47; n. 67.
77. See n. 56.
78. *La<sub>~</sub>chi<sup>~</sup> . . . hkui chi<sup>~</sup>* "hands . . . feet" is a poetic couplet, not to be taken literally.
79. See n. 29.

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