

THAI CHARMS AND AMULETS

by

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The belief in and use of charms and amulets as magical protection against dangers and misfortunes, and also to bring love, luck and power is a world-wide one. It is not confined to primitive races only, but also to be found among modern peoples of every nation and faith. In fact "the thought and practice of civilized peoples cannot be cut off as with a knife from the underlying customs and beliefs which have played a determining part in shaping the resulting products, however much subsequent knowledge and ethical evaluation may have modified and transformed the earlier notions".¹ For this reason, every faith and religion has in one form or another certain cults and formulas, as inherited from the dim past and handed down from generation to generation, from the old belief of magic and superstition, which are paradoxically contrary to the real teaching of the religion's founder. This is inevitable; for the mass of humanity that forms the woof and warp of the woven fabric of faith of the great religions, is composed of many levels of culture. A.B. Griswold says in his "Doctrines and Reminders of Theravada Buddhism" that "within the Theravada there are two very different sorts of Buddhist-rationalists and pious believers."² This may be applied equally to other religions: there are always implicitly two sorts of believers within the same religion, the intellectuals and the pious people. It is with the latter that one can find abundant phenomena of charms and amulets in belief and practice.

In the Thai language charms and amulets are called collectively *khawng-khlang* (ของขลัง) which means "sacred, potent objects." Traditionally, this is divided and classified into four major classes, namely:

1 Preface to the Comparative Religion by E.O. James, 1961.

2 The Arts of Thailand, p. 28, 1960 A.D.

I *Khriiang-rang* (เครื่องราง) II *Phra Khriiang* (พระเครื่อง)
 III *Khriiang pluk-sek* (เครื่องปลุกเสก) and IV *Wan-ya* (ว่านยา)¹

I *Khriiang-rang*. This is a material substance transformed from its natural and normal state mostly into stone or copper. Such a thing is supposed to be imbued inherently with magical power. If held in the mouth or carried or worn on the body of a person, it will provide him or her with invulnerability and protection against dangers or misfortunes. "Guns will not explode, sharp things will not wound if fired at or struck at the wearer" (ยิงไม่ออกฟันไม่เข้า) who has such a magical object with him or her.

The *khriiang-rang* is sub-divided roughly into two sub-classes, namely:

(a) *Khot* (คต). A certain kind of talismanic stones found in certain animals, birds, fishes, crabs and trees; (for instance teak and bamboo). Included also in this sub-class are certain stones found in termite hills, stone eggs, certain kinds of ores and *lek-lai* (เหล็กไหล)² and a certain kind of stone called "khot akat" (คตอากาศ), literally the "khot of the sky." Probably it is a meteoric stone or fragment. There are many kinds of "khots", more than enumerated here, and no text books relating to the subject as far as I know are in printed form. Some khots I have seen resembled in material substance black stone or oxidised copper. Whether, perhaps they were artificial, I am unable to verify.³

(b) *Unclassified*. Included in this sub-class are certain seeds found in jack fruit, tamarind, *krathin thet* (กระถินเทศ — *agacia faraciana*), *pradu* (ประดู่ — *pterocarpus indicus*), *saba* (สะบ้า — *entada phaseoloides*), *sati* (สะตือ — *caudia chrysantha*) and *makha* (มะค่า — *Intsia bejuga*).⁴

1 The transcription of Thai words is based mainly on the Transcription of Thai Characters into Roman, The Royal Institute, Bangkok, 1954.

2 A miraculous iron characterized by its quality to become soft if held over fire.

3 Probably the "khot" and the Burmese amadé are one and the same thing. See Shway Yoe, *The Burman, his life and notions*, 3rd ed. 1909. p. 46.

4 Latin words from McFarland, *Thai-English Dictionary*.

With the exception of the jack-fruit tree, all the above trees and vines are "leguminosae" in species, and are found more or less as indigenous growths in Southern Thailand, the northern part of the Malay Peninsula. Any seed or pod from the aforesaid species of trees if found unusually in its natural state to be copper, it is deemed a miraculous object which commands awe and trust, and can be utilized for its supposed inherent vital force as *khriiang-rang*.

Parenthetically, there is a well-known belief among the older generation that if a man is born, as a freak of nature, with a lone copper testis, he will have in himself a certain magical property. Such a prodigy cannot be slain by any means with ordinary weapons but by impalement only. There have been once or twice, if my memory serves me right, mentions in old chronicles of such a notable man. Undoubtedly, the belief in the magical efficacy of copper is an echo of the Copper Age preserved superstitiously by man that any such object, a novel and a freak of nature, is a thing of awe and wonder.

Sometimes, I am told, for lack of such rare magical things as enumerated above, people will resort to artificial ones by fashioning them in copper as representations of the aforesaid natural ones. *Khriiang-rang* both sub-class (a) and (b) may be set, mounted or encased with precious metals and strung to a gold chain to be worn as a necklace. Sometimes they are enmeshed with fine wires strung to a piece of thread to be hung around the neck, or wrapped with a narrow piece of white cloth, then rolled and twisted to be worn as a charm or an armlet. If a natural one is sizable, in particular the "khot" stone, it may be broken in smaller pieces for convenience of wearing.

Included too in sub-class (b) are adamantite cat's-eye (เพชรตาแมว) and rat's-eye (เพชรตานู) solid boar's tusk, canine tooth of tiger or "sang"¹ (sang), boar's or elephant's tusk broken and lodged in a tree. The latter elephant tusk has a special name in Thai *kamchat kamchay* (กำจัดกำขาบ) = to expel and disperse). Also included in this sub-class (b) are buffalo's and bull's horns

1 Sang is an old tiger which can transform itself into a man, or vice-versa a magician who can turn himself into a tiger. It is a were-tiger in Thai folklore.

which flash with a radiant light in darkness as if in flames. Any object of this class, (or part of it if it is a big one) may be ornamented with precious metal and worn or carried by the owner as a protection against any danger.

The names of these talismanic objects of the *Khrüang-rang* are mentioned frequently in Thai historical romances, particularly in the well-known story of "Khun Chang Khun Phaen" (ขุนช้างขุนแผน). Without an elementary knowledge of the objects of *Khrüang-rang*, one will not be able to have a clear idea of popular beliefs and lore of the good old days among members of certain social groups in Thailand. One studies such survivals of the present day in order to know something of the past and to understand the present. To ignore such studies for various reasons is to understand incorrectly the growth and development of the thoughts and ideas of the folk.

II *Phra Khrüang* (พระเครื่อง). Allied to objects in class I or *khrüang-rang* are certain classes of figurines representing attitudes and episodes of the life of the Lord Buddha. In fact, the Thai word *Phra Khrüang* is a shortened form of *Phra Khrüang rang* (Phra = the lord + *khrüang-rang*).

These figurines are of three sizes, large, medium and small which can be utilized as a necklace pendant or carried conveniently by a person. One or many of these figurines may be worn or carried at the same time after the manner of folk thinking that the bigger the number, the better the safeguard against dangers. (The more the water, the fewer fish will die; the less the water, the more fish will die" is a Thai saying.) These sacred figurines are divided into four classes according to materials used and the process of making them. They are:

(a) *Terracotta figures*. These are made of fine clay, or a mixture of clay, pollens from certain kinds of flowers and "wan-ya" (see Class IV). The ingredients of the mixture vary in different degrees in different "schools of teachers" and the formulas are a jealously kept secret.

(b) *Votive tablets of Phra Phim* (พระพิมพ์) meaning Buddha figurines cast in a mould. The materials used are of many kinds.

They may be made purely of clay or chalk powder after a certain magical pronouncement and religious process of a mixture of certain metals such as iron, copper, tin, lead or certain alloys of metals. Sometimes gold and silver and mercury are added also. These again are varied according to the ideas of different "schools of teachers".

Votive tablets were originally made in tens of thousands and deposited in caves or enclosed in a stupa or *Phra Chedi* (= pagoda) for the pious purpose of reminding the people of their reverential feeling for the Lord Buddha and his religion; at the end of five thousand years after his death he will be succeeded by another Buddha named Sri Arya Metrai (ศรีอารยเมตไตรย์) or *Phra Sri Arn* (พระศรีอารย์) in colloquial Thai. Undoubtedly this belief was influenced more or less by Mahayan, or the Northern School of Buddhism in contrast to Hinayan, the Southern School of Buddhism, which has been adopted as the national religion of Thailand. Historically, there are traces of Mahayan Buddhism embedded in literature, folklore and ancient monuments in Thailand which formed the belief of the mass of people or Popular Buddhism in Thailand and the neighbouring countries.

In the process of time more and more such votive tablets were deposited in stupas as erected, sometimes made not in fulfilment of a vow but to be used rather as talismans. Old ones have been discovered from time to time in old or ruined *phra chedi*, and many of them fetch high prices determined by the types and localities where they were discovered. Evidently there are fake ones too and a knowledge of how to distinguish the real from the faked ones becomes an art in itself.

(c) *Cast figurines*. The casting of these Buddha figurines has a ritual process in the same manner as casting Buddha images, but there are certain details that differ, of course, with different "schools of teachers." The metal cast is either iron, *nak* (นาก - an alloy of gold and copper, the red gold), or silver.

(d) *Carved figurines*. Materials used for carving are the wood of certain kinds of trees, Such as the sacred fig tree, sandal-wood tree, teak tree and star gooseberry tree, The latter is called in Thai

mayom (มายอม). The second syllable in the word "yom" has the same identical sound as two other Thai words *niyom* (นิยม) and *Phra Yom* (พระยม). The former means "liked, approved, respected" (Sanskrit *niyama*), and the latter means the Hindu God of the Underworld (Sanskrit-Yama) feared by all evil spirits. This is no doubt a play on words which have the same sound but different meanings, carried far back to the superstition that the same sound will produce the same effect in the realm of magic. Apart from such specific words, the figurines of Buddha may be carved also out of stone, "khot" (see above), ivory, or tiger's canine tooth.

III *Khriiang pluk-sek*. Before dealing with objects pertaining to this class, which are numerous, it is necessary to say something first on the word *pluk-sek*, for it enters magically not only this class of talismanic objects, but also other kindred ones as well. *Pluk-sek* in Thai means "to arouse the potency of a person or an object by the use of a spell or incantation;" hence "a consecration, a blessedness" in a sense. A spell in the Thai language is *khatha-akhom* (คาถาอาคม) or *wet-mon* (เวทมนตร์). These two sets of words are used synonymously by the people, even by the adepts of magical arts. In fact the four words *Khatha*, *akhom*, *wet* and *mon* have Sanskrit and Pali words as their origin. They are *gatha*, *agama*, *veda* and *mantra*.

Gatha is a verse or a song in Sanskrit and Pali, but *khatha* in Thai, apart from its original sense, means also a spell.

Agama in one sense means the Vedas while in Thai *akhom* means a spell to be used magically when inscribing or tattooing certain cabalistic letters, arithmetical figures, circles, squares, etc. (Yantra) on an object or on the physical body of a person.

Vedas, the sacred scriptures of the Hindus, is *Wet* in Thai, which means spell or a set form of words supposed to have magical power.

Mantra is in Thai pronunciation *mon* and both mean spell also. The two terms *Veda* and *mantra*, though synonymous in the Thai language, have different uses. The Vedas mean spells in relation to post-Vedic Brahminism and the mantras mean mostly

spells in connection with Popular Buddhism. The Thai knew the first four books of the Vedas, i.e. the Samhitas or the collection of mantras only, and called them *Phra*¹ *Wet* (พระเวท). If a recitation of certain selected verses from the Buddhist scriptures is applied with a purpose as a protection against danger or for the promotion of health and wealth, it is called *mon* (mantra) and if otherwise it is called *wet* (Veda). Hence the confusion of meanings of these four words with the tendency to merge into one and another in popular usage.

There is another type of *wet-mon* or spell peculiar perhaps to the Thai where purely Thai words are recited, or sometimes with Pali terms interspersed here and there for sacredness. Many of the Pali words therein are corrupted ones, while some of the Thai words are sometimes unutterable or unprintable in everyday speech because of their obscenities in meanings. Paradoxically, such a spell is to be pronounced in a loud voice during incantation in order to have an instant effect on a person or thing concerned. This type of spell is called *Mon Maha Ongkan* (มนตร์มหาโองการ) = the mantra of the Great Aumkar or Aum) or in brevity and in Thai pronunciation *mon* or *Ongkan* for the reason that most of the spells begin with the Hindu mystic sound Aum. Many Thais of older generation, particularly the uncultured ones, know more or less of these mantras or spells. They have them by heart for emergency use, but will not divulge the secret for fear of indecency or want of kind consideration,² but they may be told to someone as humorous anecdotes during informal conversation among intimates.

Sometimes the set form of words to be recited or muttered is a long one, a selection of initial letters of certain words of the spell being used as a sort of cabalistic word in place of the full-length text. It is deemed that such an abbreviated form will have the same

1 *Phra* (พระ) is *vara* in Sanskrit and Pali. It is an honorific word in Thai meaning "lord, precious, etc., to be found in such Thai words, *Phra Chao* = God, *Phra Jesu* = Lord Jesus, and *Phra Mahamad* = Prophet Mohamad. *Phra* alone means also God, a Buddhist monk, or a king or a hero in Thai romance.

2 See "The Development of Trantraism in later Schools of Buddhism in Buddhism", by Edward Conze, N.Y. 1959 pp. 180-183.

magical effect not unlike that of the magic "abracadabra". This abbreviated word is called in Thai "the core of the heart" (หัวใจ); probably the same as the words *hridaya* and *bija* in Sanskrit which mean heart and seed.

I may add here also, as a parenthesis, that when inscribing or tattooing the word-form in its abbreviation, Cambodian letters are used for sacredness; only numeral figures are written in Thai. Why? In the old days all sacred Buddhist scriptures were inscribed on palm leaves with the *khom* or Cambodian characters unlike the present day when they have all been replaced by the Thai alphabet. It has been a traditional belief and preserved unreflectively among the folk that *khom* or Cambodian letters of the old days were not unlike runic characters with regard to magical purpose.

Now we can discuss at some length those objects that pertain to class III, *Pluk-sek*. Any artificial objects, apart from Buddha figurines in class II, have to pass through certain processes of "*pluk-sek*" in order to arouse in them their magical property by the use of certain magical formal figures such as magic squares, circles or other and certain incantations appropriate to the objects or purposes concerned. Talismanic objects in class I *khruang-rang* and also even Buddha figurines in class II *Phra Khruang*, if they are deemed to grow effete in their magical functioning, may go through the same process of "*pluk-sek*" in order to re-enforce and renew their potency. What has been said here, applies equally to objects in class IV *wan-ya* also.

As there are a large variety of objects pertaining to the class of "*pluk-sek*," only certain ones which are comparatively well-known, or so far as I know, will be described as the following.

Takrut (ตะกรุด) or amulet (in its limited sense). This class of objects is a long hollow cylinder in shape with varying length and thickness. Usually, as far as is known, it is about two inches long more or less; the shortest one is about half an inch, while its thickness varies as to material used, ranging from about half an inch in circumference to about an eighth of an inch. What has been described here is an approximation only, for there is to my know-

ledge no hard and fast rule relating to a standard measurement. The material used is a small sheet of metal, such as gold, *nak* (red gold), silver, copper, tin or lead, cut to the desired size and inscribed on a small piece of paper or on the metal itself with mystic letters or other forms and figures as determined in a particular formula of *pluk-sek* which differs with each "school of teachers". The sheet of metal is then rolled to form a long hollow cylinder. Sometimes a small twig of bamboo is cut to the desired length and enlarged with ample hollowness for convenience of stringing. The *takrut* is worn with a gold or silver chain, or with a cotton string, consecrated or otherwise, as a necklace, a chain worn over the right shoulder as one wearing a sash, an armlet or a girdle, for protection against dangers or for other magical purposes as determined by each particular treatise. Usually the *takrut* as worn is not a single object but comprises many pieces, all of the same uniform sizes and lengths as a set or otherwise.

Sometimes magic figures to be inscribed on the *takrut* are elaborated into many figures and lines of letters so as to form a complete set. These cannot be inscribed in totality on a single small piece of metal but have to be spread out on a number of *takruts*; hence the wearing of a number of "takruts" of uniform size in a single chain. They are usually 3, 5 or 7 in number and such *takruts* are called *takrut phuak* (ตะกรุดพวง) or associated *takruts*. Sometime *takruts* of various sizes and lengths are worn on a single chain, because these *takruts* belong to different "acharns" (อาจารย์ - *acharya*) or teachers of different schools of magic which have each a peculiar virtue of sacred potency, and one ought not to miss wearing them if one has a chance of owning them. There are also ornaments made in the shape of a *takrut* which have nothing to do with magic, but are for adornment only.

Salika. This is a very tiny kind of *takrut*. The word *salika* is a Pali word (Sanskrit-*sarika*) which means a mynah bird which features often in folk-tales as a sweet talker. Hence the name of

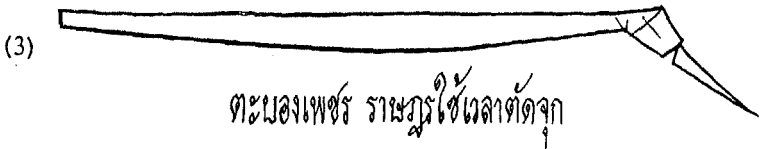
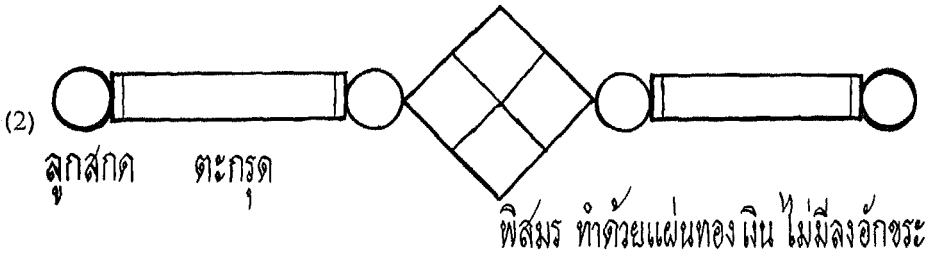
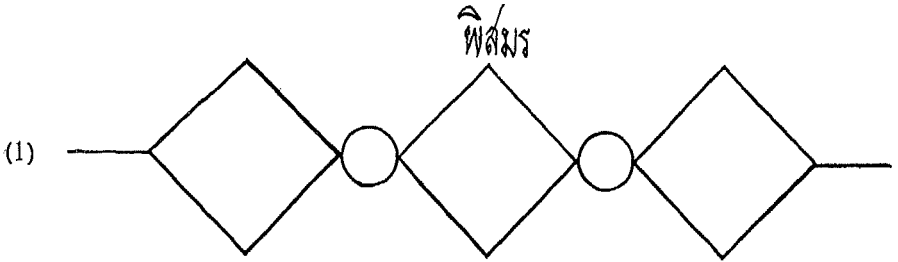
this kind of *takrut*. Whoever has a *salika takrut* inserted in a narrow space between his or her teeth, will find himself or herself, while talking to someone, to have sweet and melodious speech commanding goodwill towards him or her. Hence common saying "he is a *salika lin thong* i.e. a golden-tongued *salika*. If it is found inconvenient to insert the *salika* in the space between the teeth, the *salika* may be made in a tiny thin form instead of rolling it into the *takrut* shape. Sometimes the *salika* is inserted on the inner lower lid of either eye to command goodwill from other people toward oneself when in sight. Some authorities say that in this case, it is a misnomer to call it *salika*. Its appropriate name is *takrut prasom net* (ตะกรุดประสมเนตร) which means literally in my own rendering "Takrut of meeting with the eyes," i.e. the *takrut* which has the power to condition the meeting of friend or lover to be united in wedding or for gaining wealth, luck or fortune as desired.

Phismon (พิสมร). A talismanic object made from a piece of leaf of talapot palm inscribed with mystic figures and letters through a magical process, and woven into a square shape about an inch in diameter. It is strung on a silk thread, for reason of its relative strength, rather than on an ordinary cotton thread. It is worn crosswise from the left shoulder.¹

Phismon was used during one of the Thai traditional New Years, of which there are two—*Trut Thai* (ตรุษไทย) and *Trut Songkran*—the water-throwing festival.² The former, *Trut Thai*, falls on the last day of the 4th lunar month (March-April). In the old days it was a time for people to make merit by offering food to monks and to wear a *phismon* during the end of the Old Year as a protection against evil spirits still lurking as supposed during and after a ceremonial expulsion at the end of the Old Year. There was during those days an official ceremony, participated in by both Buddhist priests and brahmins of the royal court, when palm-leaf "*phismon*

1 The description of "phismon" is based on a description and a rough sketch kindly supplied me some 20 years ago by my friend the late Phra Devabhinit, one of the famous Thai artist painters.

2 See J.S.S. Vol. 42 (July, 1954) pp. 23-30.



"Phismorn" charm — (1) made of palm leaf, (2) made of gold or silver, the round ones are "luk skot" or restrainers, and the long cylinders are "takruts" or amulets.

(3) "Tabong Phet" made of palm leaf.



and *tabong phet* (ตะบองเพชร)¹ were distributed to the people who longed for some tangible protection against evil spirits and the bad luck of the Old Year.² The *Trut Thai* is still observed feebly by the older generation up to the present day when food is presented to priests and monks as a special occasion only.

There are also *phismons* made either of gold or silver which have no magical value, but are for ornamental purposes only, unless they have passed through a magical process. They are worn over the left shoulder in a cross-wise direction strung to a gold chain, or over both shoulders across the breast and fastened in front with a pin or a brooch. When many are worn on a chain, there are also *takruts* in between the *phismons*, and again there are gold beads at both ends of the *phismons* and *takruts* called in Thai *luk skot* (ลูกสะกด) which act as “restrainers” (สะกด) or separators.

The word “*phismon*” is curious. It seems to be a word in a Sanskritized form. It is written as *bismara* but pronounced *phismon* in Thai, but no word *bismara* is, to my knowledge, to be found either in Sanskrit or Pali, the classical languages of the Thai. There is a word *basmala* in Malay, Arabic in origin, which is a formula for the words “In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate”. It is inscribed on a piece of paper and enclosed in a small metal case and hung by a string and worn as a necklace. I describe this from memory only when I saw half a century ago a Pathan wearing such a thing around his neck. He told me that it is called *bismala*. It is possible that the Thai *phismon* and *bismala* or *basmala* may come from the same source.³

1 *Tabong phet* means baton made of diamond. In reality it is made of a piece of palm leaf, and is now still used in the “ tonsure ceremony ” as a survival of the old days. See a sketch of *tabong phet* in plate II No. II of G.E: Gerini, Chulakantamangala or The Tonsure Ceremony, Bangkok, 1895 A.D.

2 See H.M. King Chulalongkorn, “ The Royal Monthly Ceremonies of the Year ” (พระราชพิธีสิบสองเดือน) in Thai.

3 See article “ Basmala ” in Encyclopaedia of Ethics and Religion.

There are two other words in Malay which are similar to Thai words in connection with magic. They are the words *kaphan* (กะพัน) and *khun* (คุณ) The former is usually juxtaposed to another Thai word to form a synonymous couplet peculiar to the Thai language as *Yukhong Kaphan* (อยู่คงกะพัน) *Yukhong* is no doubt an indigenous Thai word meaning invulnerability; the same meaning attaches also to the word "kaphan" — a word of doubtful origin. The Malay has a word *kabal* with a similar sound and meaning i.e. invulnerability. *Khun* in Thai means an incantation by which a piece of rawhide is magically reduced greatly in size to harm an enemy by sending it with magical means to enter the victim's body. The magical raw hide will resume gradually its normal size inside the victim, and he will suffer great pain and die in agony. If I remember right Malay has a word "guna" with a similar meaning. There is no doubt that because of similar conditions of mind among the simple folk of the peoples of South-East Asia, there have been in the past mutual borrowings of magical practice. This may apply to other peoples as well; for "civilization is only skin-deep." One will find similar practices and ideas, though modified and transformed to modern ideas, among people of every race or nation.

Pha prachiat (ผ้าประเจียด). This is a piece of cloth about the size of a handkerchief or a napkin inscribed with *yantra*. In the days when people usually wore a singlet or otherwise with a *pha khama* (ผ้าขาวม้า) i.e. a scarf hung loosely on a shoulder or as a sash as one's upper garments, the *pha prachiat* was worn as a neck- or an arm-band when going out as a proof against weapons or as a protection from malignant spirits and to avert any mishaps. Later, when one wore a coat, a hat or a cap, the *pha prachiat* was kept either in the coat-pocket or in the hat or cap.

There are a number of books in Thai, mostly in manuscripts in private possession, which treat the subject of *yantras* more or less systematically with copious patterns and designs of the *yantras*. No one who is a stranger to this mystical art will be able to make *yantras* effectively from book knowledge only. He must also know the mysteries communicated or imparted ritually by a teacher. Hence

yantras made by a priest famed for his holiness are eagerly sought for. Psychologically, any object magical in its origin must acquire a religious significance ritually before it can be regarded as an object of *kehrüang pluk-sak*.

The ritual process by which a *yantra* can be produced effectively is roughly as follows:

After the usual preliminary purificatory act as required in all solemn rites, the practitioner will begin by making an address invoking the help, firstly, of the holy Triple Gems, i.e. the Buddha, his Law and his Council of Orders; next come the chief deities of Hinduism and semi-divine beings, including in their train also certain *rishis* or holy seers who are traditional preceptors peculiar to the particular rite on hand; then come one's parents and teachers, both in the past and present as relevant to one's particular profession. In certain rites evil spirits, both local and foreign, are coaxed and coerced at the same time.

The list of such conglomerations of beings varies more or less in different "schools of teachers", and some of the names in the list, particularly the *rishis* or seers, are corrupted and difficult to identify with Indian ones. Some of them bear local names only. The invoking address is not confined to the production of *yantras*, but carried out also as a preliminary act traditional for other solemn undertakings; for instance, the rite relating to the casting of Buddha images, the writing of certain literary compositions and the annual homage to teachers and instructors by students. The tradition is a beautiful one as an expression of gratitude to ones' benefactors, both imaginary or real and in the past and present, and to ask solemnly for grace, goodwill and success in any undertaking or learning. The tradition has a great influence upon the attitude of most of the Thai towards their parents, teachers and mentors.

After the afore-said act, the practitioner will concentrate his mind religiously and begin to draw the *yantra*. He has to hold his breath while mumbling certain specific *gathas*, or, in other words, a magic spell, and at the same time he must not withdraw his chalk or pencil, as the case maybe, until he has completed certain specific

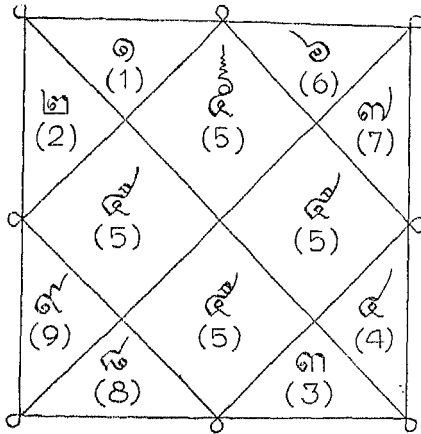
lines. What has been described here is an imperfect statement of a layman who has never been instructed in the mysteries as imparted by a teacher of the art.

Akin to *pha prachiat* there are a number of specific *yantras* inscribed on a piece of cloth or paper. They are not known by name as a class like *pha prachiat* but called individually by the names they bear with the word *yantra* as a prefix. Their uses in magic are the same as *pha prachiat*, save that they are not worn or carried by a person but hung somewhere as a means of protection against unseen danger from the *phi* or evil spirits. Two of these *yantras*, well-known ones, are described herewith.

Yan Thao Wessuwan (ยันต์ท้าวเวสสุวรรณ). It is a *yantra* bearing a figure image of King Wessuwan who is a *yaksha* or supernatural being of gigantic size. He is no other than Kuvera or Vaisravana the Hindu king or chief of the evil spirits, a sort of Pluto, and also a god of wealth and a regent of the North. His vehicle, unlike that of other Hindu chief deities, is man. In Thailand there has been a belief among the folk that Wessuwan is the guardian of new-born babies which are liable to be taken or killed very easily by numerous evil spirits that swarm and lurk somewhere near the vicinity where a child is born. Hence a *yantra* bearing his image is hung over a baby cradle or cot. Evil spirits seeing Wessuwan's image in the *yantra* will be frightened and give it a wide-birth for Wessuwan has a terrible and ugly appearance as a giant holding always a very massive bludgeon. In Hindu mythology he has three legs as his means of locomotion. Why is he very interested in human babies? Because they are his human vehicles. In the old days, some fifty years ago, there were printed copies of this *yantra* on sale in the market. I do not know whether these printed *yantra* were merely ordinary printed ones or whether they had passed through a proper magical process. Anyhow, to the folk this is not important so long as they had faith in the efficacy of the *yantra*.

Yan Trinisinghe (ยันต์ตรีนิสิงเห). A *yantra* in the form of a square with four equal sides, and a smaller one interposed diagonally. A line is drawn across either angle of the two squares; thus forming

four little squares diagonally within the main one. There are also three small circles to each side at the outer rim of the main square two at each corner and one in the middle between the two. Thus within the main square there are four little squares and two half-squares each at every corner. In these eight spaces certain numeral figures are inscribed, so that when added up in a straight line they will give certain mystic numbers. Here is the diagram of the *yantra* :



Note figure 5 at the top with a spiral crest. It is a sacred and mystic symbol known as *unalom* in Pali and *urna* in Sanskrit. It is a traditional curled tuft of hair between the eye-brows peculiar to the Lord Buddha.

The *Yan Trinisinghe* has many functions in connection with white magic. In former days when a baby was born, a number of these *yantras* were hung by a string around the perimeter of the room where the mother with her baby was lying near a fire after giving birth. This is a safe-guard against danger from evil spirits especially the *phi krasii* (ผีกระสือ)¹

There are many kinds of *yantras* of the type of *yan trinisinghe*. No doubt they are elaborations of the said *yantra* even though they bear different names and functions.

Sua Yan (เสื้อยันต์). Akin to *pha prachiat* is the "*sua yan*" or a jacket inscribed with *yantra*. It has the same use and function

¹ See "The Phi", J.S.S. Vol. 41, pt. 2, 1954.

as a magical protection not unlike the *pha prachiat*. In principle the *sua yan* jacket and the *pha prachiat* are evidently one and the same thing. The difference lies in that the former has ample space for drawing *yantra* in details, enabling one to include on the jacket many patterns of *yantra* to comparatively satisfy one's needs as desired, while the latter cannot.

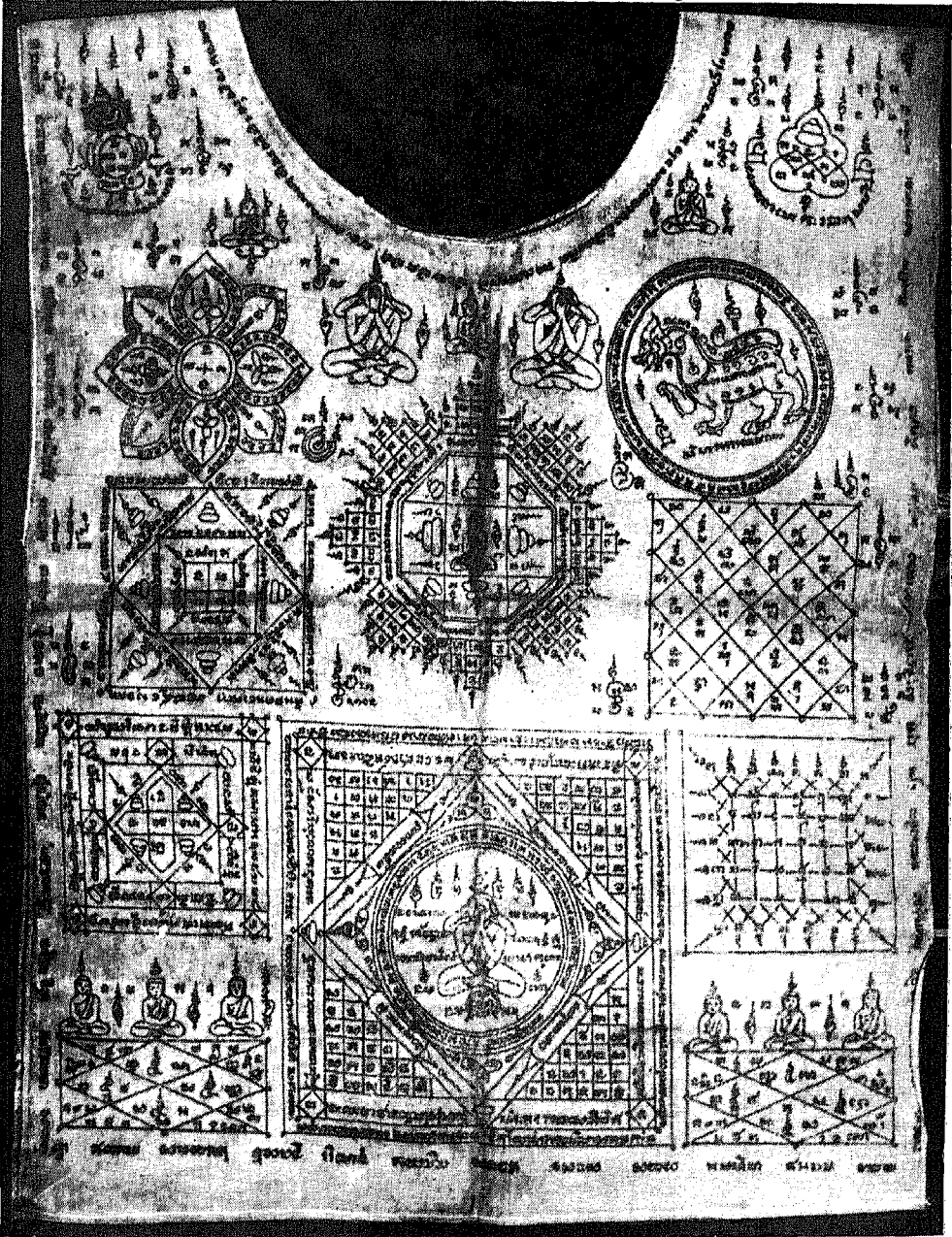
The *sua yantra* jacket is usually red and the inscription black. Those that I have seen which belonged to the king's wardrobe were each in one of the seven colours corresponding to the seven days of the week, (each of which has a specific colour relating to the apparel one wears).¹ These royal jackets are called in Thai court language *chalong ong long raja* (ฉลององค์ลกระราช) which means literally "royal jacket inscribed with raja," (which in this instance means *yantra*), identical in sound and meaning to the Malay word *raja*.

Tattooing. Five decades ago or more most male Thai, particularly among the folk, tattooed themselves for invulnerability. Travel in the old days outside one's own village was an adventure, with danger both from human beings and the *phi* or evil spirits. One had to be a law to oneself in some outlying places. Hence to have certain potent magical tattooed charms always on oneself as a safeguard was better than none. Tattooing was also done by other classes of people too, sporadically, for the healing of certain diseases magically. The practice of tattooing for such purposes survives weakly up to the present day.

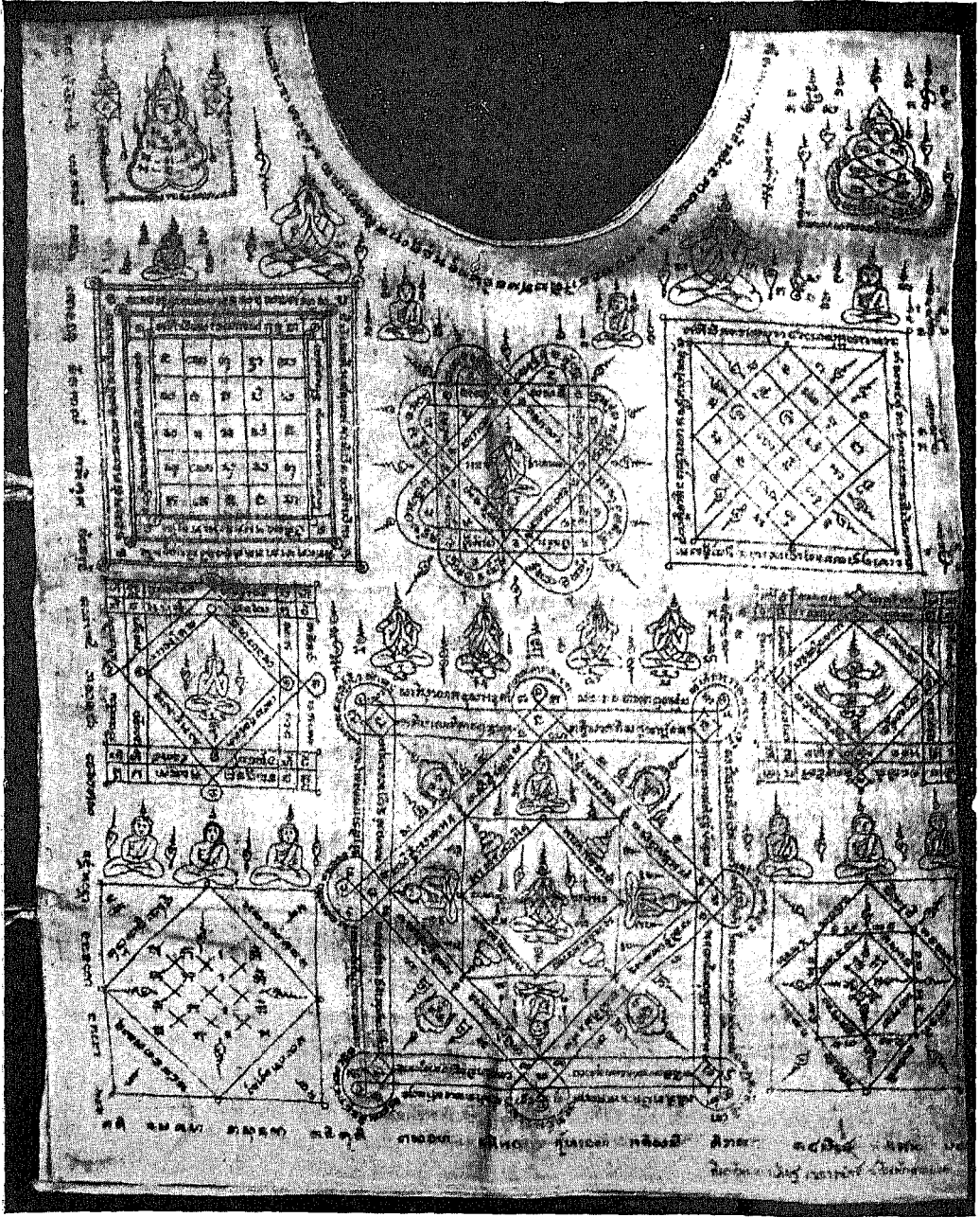
In Northern Thailand tattooing was practised to the extent that both thighs, down nearly to the knee and up to the waist were totally tattooed. Seen from a distance, if scantily clad, the tattooed man appeared to wear black short trousers. Tattooing of *yantra* may be done on any part of a human body - arms, hands, chest, back and even on the crown of the head, and sometimes on the nape and chin. Prominent tattooed marks are usually made on the breast and back, for the reason that here are comparatively wider spaces for one to include certain *yantras* which require more room for inscribing.²

1 See "Swasdi Raksa." p. 16, Thai Culture Series, No. 3, 1956, Ministry of Education, Bangkok.

2 See Shway Yoe, The Burman, his life and notions, tattooing, chap. 5. pp. 39-47.



Thai "Sua Yantra" or jacket with yantra, red color, front view.

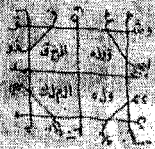


Thai "Sua Yantra" — back view.



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 الحمد لله رب العالمين
 والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد وآله
 أما بعد فإن هذا العلم الشريف
 هو علم الحروف والاشرف على
 العلوم وهو علم الربوبية
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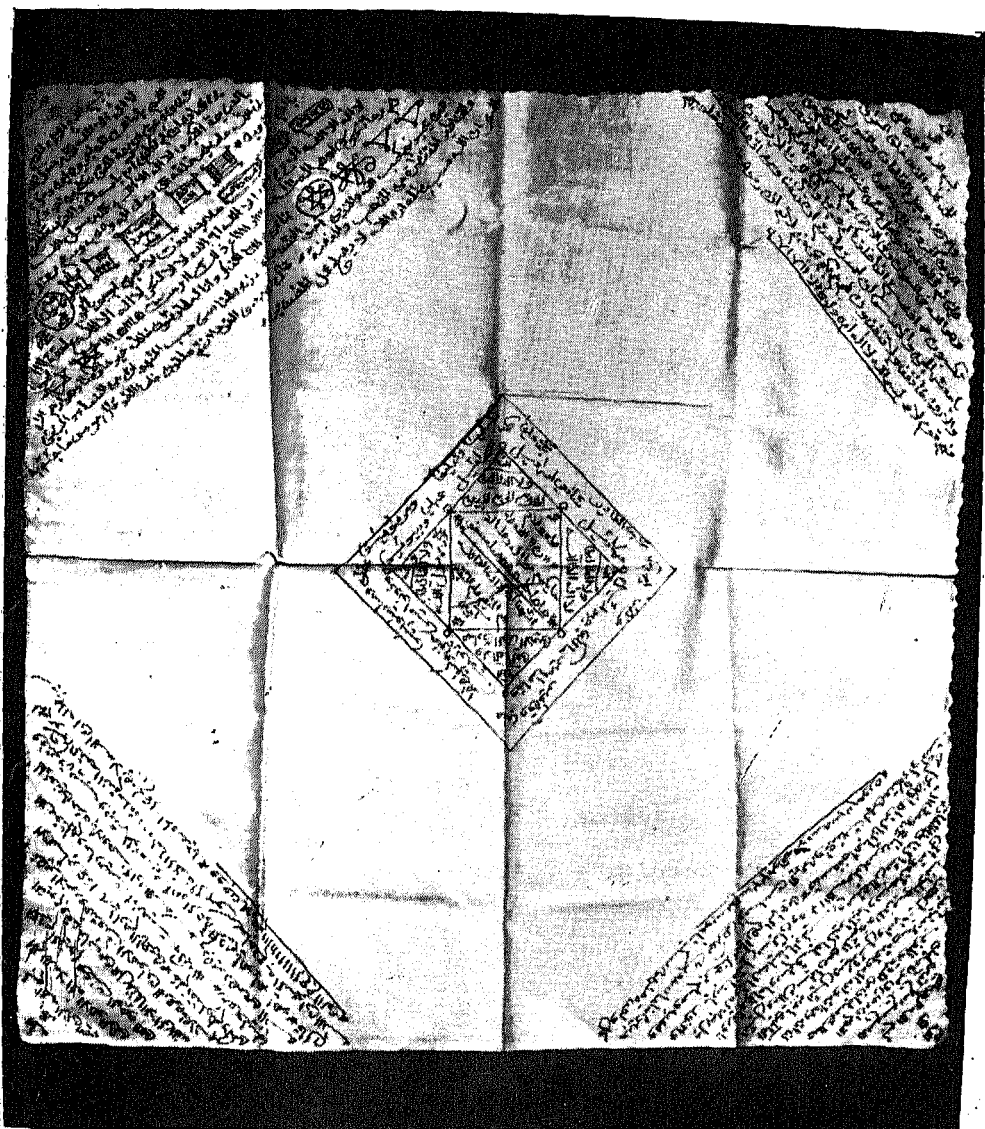
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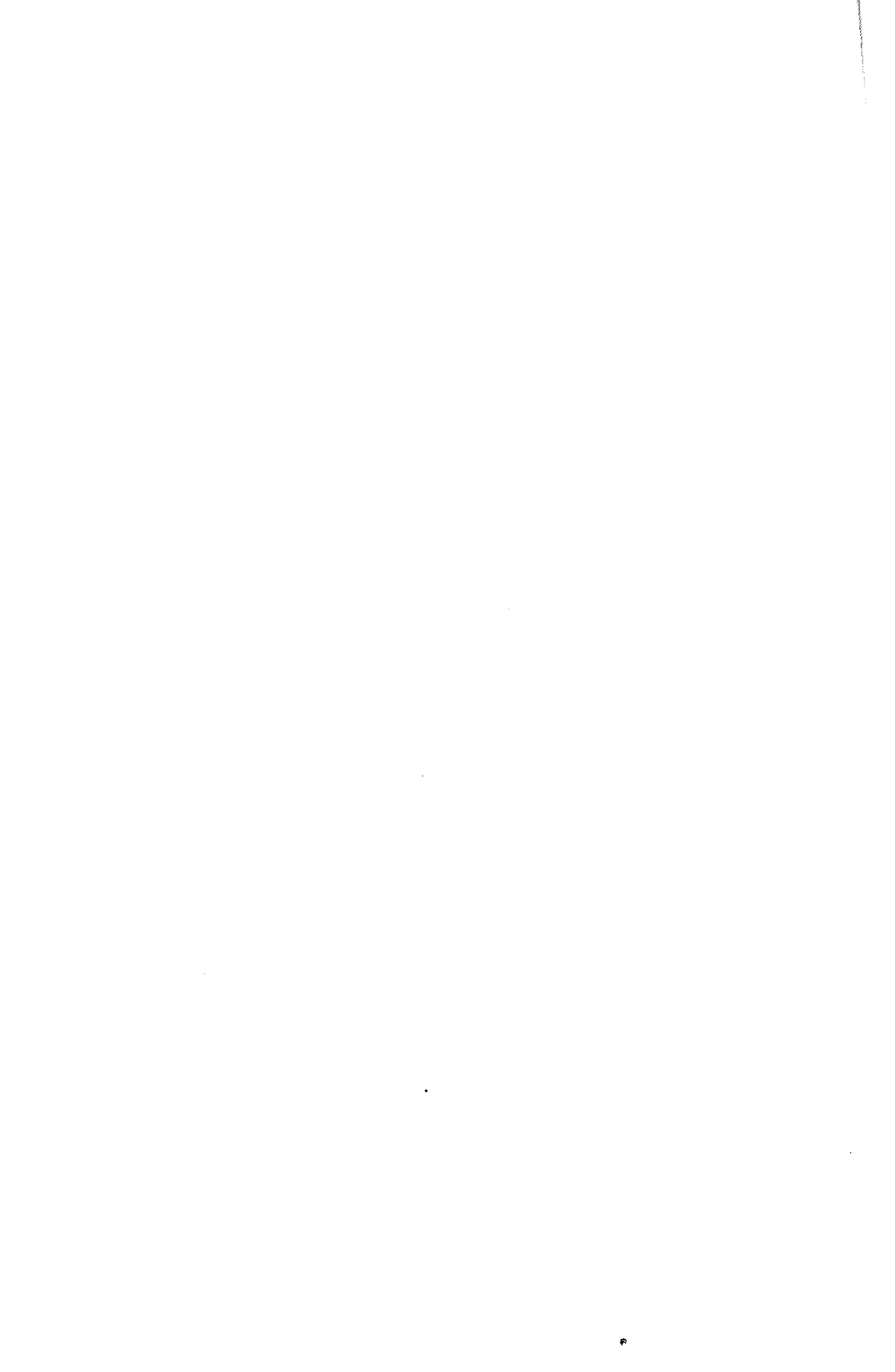
Malay "Sua Yantra", red colour, front view.



Malay "Sua Yantra"—back view.

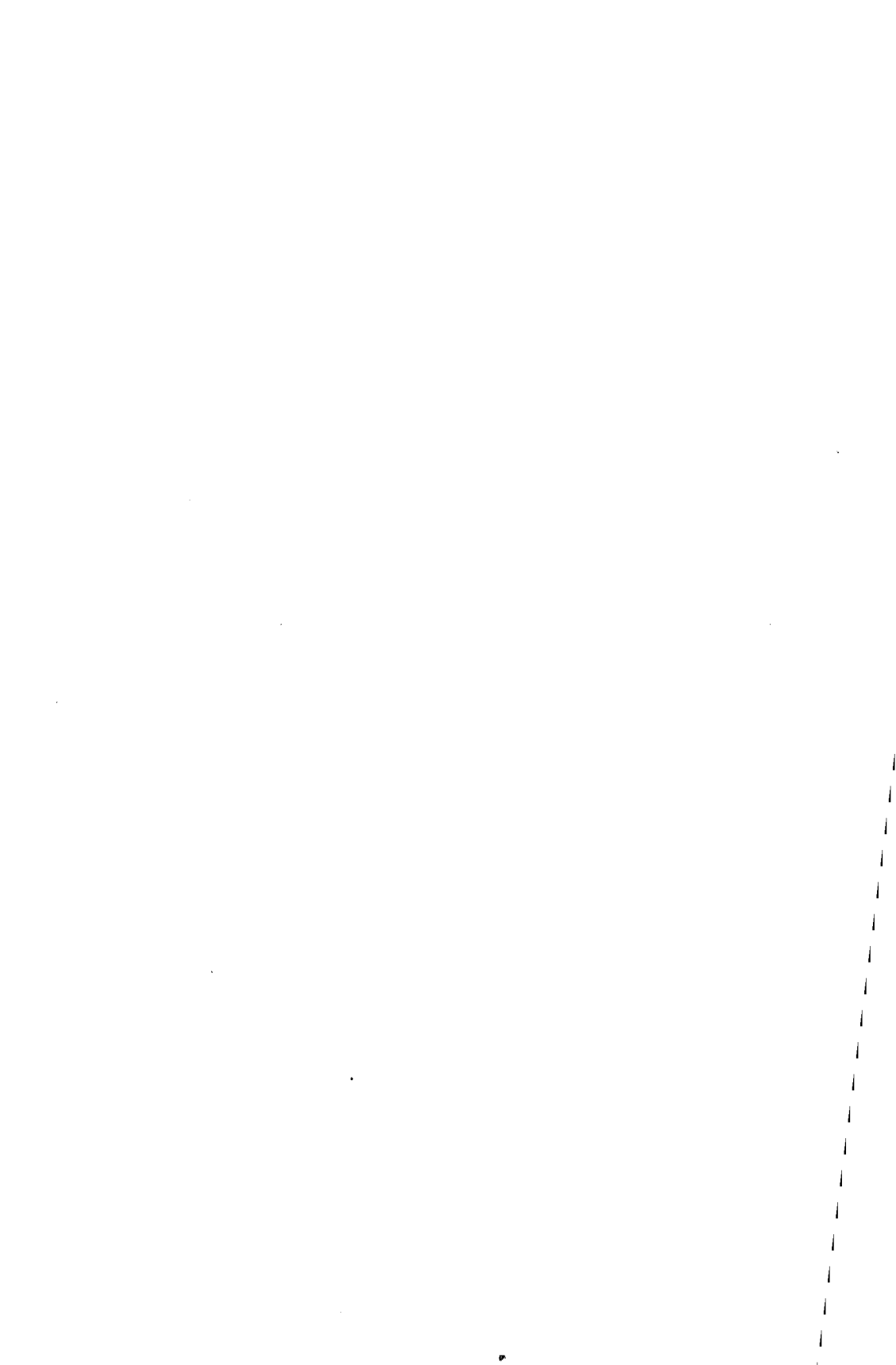


Malay "Pha Prachiat", light blue colour.





“Phirot ring”—black in colour, made with cotton yarn mixed with lac.



Evidently the tattooing of oneself with *yantras* and the inscribing of them on a jacket *süa yan* seem to be one and the same in principle; the difference lies in that the former is made on a human living skin but the latter on a cloth. There is an apparent advantage of the former over the latter in that to have a charm always permanently with one is better than to wear one with a *süa yan* jacket. One need not worry about losing such a valuable thing. On the other hand, the wearing of a jacket of *süa yan* has a compensating advantage over the former for one will not suffer obvious pain at the initial stage during tattooing. On this assumption I am inclined to believe that the *süa yan* jacket might have been a development from tattooing *yantras*.

Tattooing with a *yantra* has a rite of its own. It is to be done traditionally within the sanctuary of a "bote" (Buddhist chapel). After having made a customary obeisance before the Buddha image, the tattooing begins under the supervision of an adept, a priest or a layman, who will recite in a subdued voice certain incantations throughout the time while the puncturing of skin is in progress. When the tattooing is completed, the tattooed man will have to face a more painful ordeal of *pluk-sek* which is specific and different from what has been described. The tattooer will strike hard with his open hand on the tattooed *yantra* many times, until the designs of the *yantra* tattooed emerge distinctly and prominently on the skin. There may be a test done on the tattooed man by throwing something hard at him, or striking him with a sharp instrument and if he comes out unscathed, it means that the ritual process is magically a success. I am here describing what I got from an informant, and I am unable to verify the fact, for very few people I have come across can enlighten me much with any authority. It seems to be in one respect something of an initiation ceremony into manhood for young men.

There are no books on tattooing magically I have ever come across, though there may have been many patterns and designs kept by professional tattoo-ers which were meant more for decoration than for magical purposes. I incline to believe that they use the same kind of *yantra* as selected from such books on *yantras*. Perhaps

there may have been some specific patterns that are used exclusively by tattoo-ers. In my younger days, some sixty or more years ago, I saw certain tattooing designs appearing on certain persons' thighs often which I have never come across in books on *yantras*. Perhaps it is too late now to find such specimens. I may add here that a person with a tattooed *yantra* or one who can say by heart certain spells will superstitiously not eat carambola fruit or bottle gourd for fear that the charm and spell he has with him will deteriorate in potency.

There were, also, two tattooed designs of by-gone days, one of which I can remember vividly but hesitate to describe them, for they border on vulgarity. However for academic purposes I will write here roughly what they are. These two tattooed designs are no other than phallic symbols representing both male and female generative organs. They are known respectively as *ai khik* (อ้ายจิก) and *ee pü* (อีป้อ). No one can enlighten me what they mean either literally or etymologically; save that the prefixing words "ai" and "ee" are appellations for male and female used now in a derogatory sense. I was able to draw one of them sketchily when I was a boy through a vagary of youth.

These two patterns of dual phallic symbols were usually tattooed, either one or the other, on a thigh or on a forearm above the wrist. The "ai khik" was the more frequent, for it could be drawn easily in a grotesque shape with a tail and two legs added, in a rearing position.¹ I have never come across either of them nowadays. Strange to say, as told to me, a person with a tattooed *ee pü* has to express in sacrilegious words or acts things going against his own Buddhist religion, if he wants the charm to operate effectively.

The *ai khik* was also made, as a detachable object of a little size, of metal (usually copper or silver), or of certain kinds of wood. It is similar in shape to the Hindu *linga*. Many pieces of these little things were worn on a string round a male child's waist; while a female one would wear instead a *chaping* (จ่าปิง)—an ornamental

1 See similar design in Institute Indochinois pour l'Etude de l'Homme, 1941, tome iv pl. 11, 14b.

shield suspended from a string round a small girl's waist. It is a Malay word of Portuguese origin *chapiñ* which means a metal disc to cover the hole of anything.

Many *ai khik* objects were worn around a small boy's waist, but sometimes they were worn alternately on the same string with other miniature metal padlocks, bells, and objects in the shape of a chilli or red pepper pod. Such a string of magical objects may have survived up to the present day, probably in outlying places far from urban influence. I am told that they are, when worn, a proof against weapons for those that are tattooed with such figure, and as a protection from animal's teeth and fangs which is in the Thai idiom "fangs and tusks" (เขี้ยวเขี้ยว). I believe the practice of wearing these little things and also the *chaping* the little girl wears to hide her nudity was to avert the evil eye, which idea seems to be forgotten now among the Thai, for there was a Thai word *du rai* (ดูร้าย) in ancient Thai law books meaning literally "evil look." Probably it may mean "evil eye" or *drishtadosha* in Sanskrit.

In certain localities in out-of-way places, one will still sometime come across phallic symbols of a comparatively large size in the shape of the Hindu *linga*. They are mostly made of wood, crudely done and lying or hanging on small tree branches around or in front of a spirit shrine. One will know at once that a female spirit has her abode there. Such thing is called in Thai *dokmai chao* (ดอกไม้เจ้า) or flowers of a chief *phi* as an offering to her. I saw some years ago while passing along a "klong" (canal) in a boat actually in Bangkok, a spirit shrine with many such "chao's flowers" hanging there. Many *farangs* (Westerners) also have seen them and have asked me as to the reason why. It is a relic of "the good old days" revived as a practical joke by a certain old gentleman now long dead on the sophisticated folk who look at things materially and realistically.

Luk-om (ลูกอม). Anything of a globular shape is called "luk" in Thai and "om" means to hold in a mouth. The "luk-om" is, in this instance, a ball which one can hold in the mouth—a name for a certain class of *khruäng pluk-sek*. The materials used as ingredients

to form into a ball of *luk-om* are many. It can be made of a composition of stone, lime, wax, silver, etc. The best and well-known one is a *luk-om* of solidified mercury or quick silver. Here is the secret formula.

File down a silver baht coin into powder of $\frac{1}{2}$ baht in weight. Mix the silver powder with pure quicksilver of one baht in weight. (To have pure quick-silver, mix it with one ladleful of boiled rice). The mixing is done in a small mortar, stirring well with a pestle until they adhere to each other sufficiently to become a compact little ball. Put it in a piece of cloth and tie it into a compress with a piece of string attached for hanging. Hang it above the mouth of a boiling pot for a day; the quicksilver will thicken into a solid. Take a kaffir lime (มะกรูด *Citrus Hystrix*, McFarland's Siamese-English Dictionary) and cut its top open. Insert the quicksilver into the lime and close it with the piece of the lime which has been cut as a lid, pinning it with a sliver of wood. Boil the lime with the quicksilver in it until the quicksilver becomes a solid mass in a ball about the size of a thumb, very weighty and having a glossy surface. The quicksilver now has a magical property. Anybody having with him such quicksilver will be free from misfortunes and accidents. If it is put in his mouth he will feel no thirst. It goes so far in popular belief that whoever holds it in the mouth will feel rejuvenated. Though old, his skin will become smooth, his wrinkles and the folds of skin will disappear. He will in the end be able to fly and become a *phethyathon* (semi-divine being, the *vidyadhara* of Hinduism). Having a magic solid quicksilver with you, when going into a jungle, evil spirits will not dare to harm you. A friend of mine jokingly said he once lived in a jungle for some time and was not molested by evil spirits because he had with him such magical quicksilver. But when he left the jungle, after a few days he had an attack of high malarial fever. Assuredly the making of quicksilver into a solid mass which gives a magical property is the alchemist's art. This solid quicksilver may be compared to the "Philosopher's mercury" of Mediaeval Europe.

Included in this class III *khriiang pluk-sek*, are the *phirot* arm and finger ring (แหวนพิรอด),¹ used by officiates in traditional ceremonies, the *nang kwak* (นางกวัก = "she who beckons") made of metal,² *mit naw* (มีดหมอ - "a master knife" inscribed with *gathas*, a weapon against the *phi*) and many others too numerous to enumerate and describe herein.

As already described, the *khriiang pluk-sek* are consecrated objects aroused into their magical potency by the use of certain incantations and other ritual acts. Many of these incantations are excerpts from certain *gathas* or stanzas from Buddhist literature, and there are certain mystic abbreviations of the texts. A well-known one is the formula *Namo Buddhaya* shortened into five initial letters of the five syllables *na, ma, bha, dha, ya* and interpreted as the five names of the Buddhas of the present period of the age of the world (the *kalpa* in Sanskrit and Pali). E.O. James in his "Comparative Religion" (p. 40) says rightly that "before anything can be venerated as an object of worship it must acquire a religious significance, that is to say, condition religious behaviour", and in another place he says "The Indian does not interpret life in terms of religion, but religion in terms of life" (p. 43). Look with a generous mind on the world's great religions and one will not wonder why magic and superstition still form an integral part of the faith in every religion in its popular aspect, for it takes all sorts and conditions of humanity to form a world.

Parenthetically, there appear in a book of *yantra* (คัมภีร์พุทธรัตนมหายันต์ โดยเทพย์ สารีบุตร) a set of 14 stanzas of *gatha*, or "spell" in this instance, which are meant to be inscribed specifically each on 14 different *yantras*. The first and the fourteenth stanzas in Pali are as follows:

"Pajotā dhamma bhāhotu jotavaro satāvaho tāva riyo suvatbhā dharo yogo chasusammā" (first stanza).

"Ti loka magga hana komatam nayo sabba dayo mahasamapa dhamsa yi ti loka maggā hana ko matam nayo" (fourteenth stanza).

1 See "*phirot* ring" in Gerini's *Chula-Kantamangala*, p. 154. Also in "Bracelets de sorciers au pays Thai" (Institute Indochinois pour l'Etude de l'Homme, 1941, tome iv).

2 See "*Nang kwak*" in Class IV *Wan-Ya*.

It says in the book that these fourteen gathas originated in Lankadvipa (Ceylon) during the reign of King Devanampiyadis of Ceylon. The scholars and seers of the realm, who wished that prosperity might reign with the great king, selected all the best referring to the graces of the Lord Buddha and composed them into 14 stanzas together with procedures as to their uses. These were presented to the king who committed them to memory and practice. By the grace and efficacy of the Fourteen Stanzas, king Devanampiyadis had a long and prosperous reign in *Anuratburi* (Anuradhapura), Lanka.

There was a great elder or *maha thera* named Phra Maha Vijaya Mangala Thera, famed for his holiness, who visited Ceylon to pay homage to the famed tooth relic of the Lord Buddha. Wishing that the great king Brahma Trailok of Jambhudvipa might derive great benefit from these Fourteen Stanzas, he copied and brought them as a present to the said king. By virtue of these Fourteen Stanzas the great monarch became famous for his regal splendor far and wide and foreign kings never dared to oppose his majestic greatness and paid homage to the great king.

Whoever, whether he be a king, a samana (monk), a brahmin, a wealthy man, or a householder, wishes to derive benefit and happiness in the three worlds (heaven, earth and nether world) from the Fourteen Stanzas, he has to study and commit them to memory and to practise them daily and he will be prosperous with happiness and good fortune until the end of his days.

IV. *Wan Ya* (ว่านยา). "Wan" is the Thai name of certain plants, mostly with tuber roots, popularly considered as a class; and "ya" means medicine, either as a healing agent or as a poison. The "wan ya", as its name implies, is used mainly in folk medicine, and many of the plants are used also in magic. Medicine and magic among the untutored folk are inseparable in practice in most of the remedies. Certain *mantras* i.e. charms and spells form a preliminary and essential part for beginner in the study and practice of the traditional art of folk medicine. Certain diseases of unknown cause were deemed as implications of the *phis* or evil spirits which lurked

invisibly nearby. Without the aid of magic one could not be sure of the efficacy of a remedy. It however, served a useful purpose for some ailments as faith-healing does.

As most of the so-called *wan ya* are to be found growing wild in jungles, it is no wonder that the lore of utilizing them as remedial agents and poison may have come by experience originally from jungle folk who use them as their sole medicinal remedy. The same plant of the *wan ya* may have different names in different localities, and the same name may be known in certain areas referring to a different kind of plant. Hence it is difficult sometimes to be sure of the identity of any of the plants. George B. McFarland in his Thai-English Dictionary gives under the word "wan" some ten well-known names of the *wan* plants with identifying Latin names, but gives no definition of the meaning of the word "wan" itself. There are more than a hundred names of *wan* with descriptions of the plants and their use transmitted orally as lore which await systematic study before it is too late. We call medicinal materials derived from plants in their crude form *smun phrai* (สมุนไพร). The word *smun* is still etymologically and literally in meaning unknown, while the word *phrai* means a forest or jungle from a Mon-Khmer word. Tacitly such medicinal materials were originally forest products.

As the *wan ya* forms a major part of the study of folk medicine it is outside the scope of this article. We, therefore will confine the discussion here to one kind of *wan ya*, as an example, that has some bearing on charms and amulets.

Wan nang kwak (ว่านนางกวัก). As hinted previously, *nang kwak* means "she who beckons" with her hand; this *wan* is well-known among shop-keepers. It is used exclusively as a mysterious magical agent to attract more buyers of the goods in the shop if placed somewhere nearby. Here is a rough description of the plant from memory. It is a small plant similar to the arum family with a reddish or greenish colour. It is usually cultivated in an earthen pot. My description here differs radically from the one described in a

certain Thai treatise on the *wan* plants.¹ The *wan nang kwak* as known by botanists is *Eucharis* sp.² There are one or two stalls in the week-end bazaar in Bangkok (Phramane Ground) that deal with *wan* plants. Perhaps there are some of the *nang kwak* variety in the collection. The difficulty lies in that one has to believe what the seller asserts, with no way to verify it.

It is a well-known belief, mostly among women of the shopkeeper class, that whoever has the *wan nang kwak* in the stall will enjoy a brisk market for goods through the mysterious attraction of the *wan nang kwak* i.e. "she who beckons". It may be made from the said *wan* either from its tuber root, certain kinds of wood of the fig family, or cast from metal, into a small figure in the image of a young woman with traditional hair style and dress attire in an attitude of sitting side-ways on the floor. The left hand either placed on the thigh or supported on the floor while the right hand is raised and stretched a little forward in a beckoning attitude of Thai style with palm downward. To beckon with palm upward may create a misunderstanding and a sensitive feeling to certain Thai, for it is deemed undecorous in Thai manners.

Here is one of the three formulas I can find for making a *nang kwak* charm :

Have a piece of mistletoe that grows parasitically on the fig tree, *Ficus glomerata*, or other kinds of trees of the fig family. Fashion it in the shape of a woman and on it inscribe with mystic letters: "du" on its left breast,³ "s" on its right breast, "m" on its forehead, "ni" on its back, "bhogam" (โภก) on its left hand an "jana" (ชณ) on its right hand, then intone an incantation with deep concentrated mind of the following *gatha* or spell 'bhogam jana du sa ma ni' repeatedly 108 times,⁴ and follow with a ritual process of

1 ตำรากระบิลว่าน หลวงประพัฒน์สรรพากร (ประพัฒน์ กาญจนโกลีน) รวบรวม
เลขที่ ๔ ว่านนางกวัก

2 Through the kindness of Nai Tem Smitinanda of the Forest Department, Bangkok.

3 In Thai expression left comes first before right in its arrangement of words as left and right, not right and left; but in practice it is now right that comes first before left;

4 Thai mystic number. Also means very many in Thai idiom.

pluk-sek with an incantation of *mantra* "Maha Ongkarn".¹ A literal translation of which is as follows :

"Om, Maha siddhi joga.² Om, the great "Pu Chao"³ of the Blue Mountain⁴ who has an only daughter named Nang Kwak. If women see her they will make a friendly remark, if men see her they will love her. May the acquisition of luck be bestowed on me. All peoples know me. Om! traders, lead me to the Maen Country (เมืองแมน)⁵ where I gain a thousand *thanan* (ทะนาน)⁶ full of ring tops (หัวแหวน)⁷ I trade in diverse wares and gain profit easily. I trade in silver, it comes to me brimful, I trade in gold it comes to me brimful. Come and partake food my dear friends, for to-day I have varieties of luck. I come home with a full *hap* (หาบ)⁸ of them. I am better in luck than those female traders, even surpassing the master of junks. Om! Lord Pu Chao of the Blue Mountain bestow good fortune on me alone, *svaha svahom*.⁹

"The consecrated *nang kwak* charm is to be worshipped daily with pop-rice, flowers, candles and scented paste accompanied with *mantras*"¹⁰

Here is another formula for making a "nang kwak" charm.

If the nang kwak plant is found wild in its growth before it can be dug out from the ground, one should fashion from a banana

- 1 See page 175.
- 2 Joga means lot, fortune. Probably from Yoga in Sanskrit.
- 3 "Pu Chao" (ปู่เจ้า) means Lord Paternal Grandfather; an epithet of a certain spirit chief, probably in origin the ancestral spirit.
- 4 Blue Mountain means mountain in particular or in general.
- 5 The country of gods or "maen". Legend says that the Maen live on a very high mountain. Probably one of the Man tribe of Southern China. There is a cult related to spirits of the "Maen" (ผีแมน) observed by certain people in North Thailand.
- 6 A traditional measure of capacity for rice made with polished coconut shell.
- 7 Wealth in the Thai expression is "precious stones, rings, silver and gold" in a literal translation.
- 8 Baskets suspended from both ends of a pole and carried as loads on the shoulder, peculiar to China and certain countries in the mainland of South-East Asia.
- 9 There are known three other variations of this mantra sung by children of the older generation as a nursery rhyme. *Svaha* is a word like amen added to the end of a *mantra* in Sanskrit. There are also *svahom* and *svahai* in Thai probably variations of the word *svaha*.
- 10 Information supplied by Nai Reed Rūang Riddhi of the National Library, Bangkok.

leaf three small leaf cups. Place in each a certain amount of spirituous liquor, a handful of boiled rice, a piece of fish and three mouthfuls of betel for chewing, which include a piece of betel-nut flesh, either fresh or dried, a leaf of betel vine smeared with stone lime mixed with catch and *khamin* (*curcuma domestica-Zingiberaceae*). This forms a usual oblation offered to a spirit before one can deal successfully and naturally with a spirit. After the spirit has been entertained with a sumptuous feast thus, one makes an incantation of "Namo Buddhaya", three or seven times, then one can begin digging up the *wan nang kwak*, and fashion it into a figure image of the "she who beckons". The figure is further to be consecrated with the ritual process of *pluk-sek* before it can function potently as a charm. The performer as a preliminary act has to make a fast and observe the religious commandments. He then makes consecrated water with the well-known *gatha* formula of "iti pi so bhagava", (Adoration to the Triple Gems, The Buddhist doxology,) three or seven times. He has to purify himself with this consecrated water three days consecutively prior to beginning the "pluk-sek" act, which has to be done inside the "wat's" chapel. The formula "Namo Buddhaya" is to be uttered solemnly 108 times before the magical object is functional.

Whoever has the "*nang kwak*" figure object placed in front of his or her shop or stall will have good business in trading. Whoever desires a magnetic charm in himself or herself for love or kindness, rubs and smears the face and body with the *wan nang kwak* accompanied by recitation of "Namo Buddhaya" 108 times. If the "*wan nang kwak*" is wrapped with a handkerchief and wrapped round the head, he or she will be invisible. No one can arrest him or her and one will obtain any wish one desires.¹ The *nang kwak* charm in this instance goes beyond the original aim of the charm of placing it in a money bag to attract more money.

The *nang kwak* now seems to be on the wane. It is gradually being superseded by a *pla taphian* (a fish of the carp family) charm. It is made from palm leaf inscribed with specific *yantra* and woven in the shape of the fish in various sizes, and painted red, black and

1 ตำรากระบิลวาม ของ หลวงประพัฒน์สรพาทกร

yellow. It may be seen sometimes hanging in front of certain shops and also in some taxi cabs, dangling in front or behind inside the car as a mascot.

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