

LAHU NYI (RED LAHU) NEW YEAR TEXTS-II

by

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INTRODUCTION

In *JSS* LXII Part 1, 1974 I presented the first two of nine prayer texts associated with the Lahu Nyi (Red Lahu) new year celebrations. Here I shall analyse two more, leaving the remaining five (which are shorter) for a later issue of the journal. The texts are recorded in a romanized orthography described in brief in *JSS* LXII, 1, 1974 and in some detail in Matisoff's "Note on the orthography of Lahu", which appears at the beginning of my 1970 report on Lahu Nyi village society and economy in north Thailand (Walker 1970b).¹

As previously, I deal with each text in three stages : Lahu transcription, "working translation" and formal translation. The working translation enables me to indicate areas of uncertainty or failure to understand the Lahu meaning which could be glossed over in a formal translation. In this section Lahu words are written without tone marks but with hyphens to join syllables into words (word boundaries are not indicated in the standard orthography).

Once again, no attempt is made to give the ethnographic context of the prayers since this can be found in my original article on the new year celebrations (Walker 1970a). A note prefacing each Lahu text refers readers to the appropriate pages in that article. In reworking these texts I have corrected a number of errors in the English translations which accompany my ethnographic paper.

TEXT THREE

[Prayer by the village headman at the New Year Tree (*hk'aw_Λ ceh_Λ*) in the centre of the village (cf. Walker 1970a: 13-17).]

1. Sha⁻, ya_Λ nyi na__ pu__ hk'aw_Λ suh⁻ ha suh⁻ te[~] nyi, na__ pu__ hk'aw_Λ ya[~] ha ya[~] chi ma ve, a⁻, na__ pu__ hk'aw_Λ suh⁻ ha suh⁻ te[~] nyi yo_Λ law, ya_Λ nyi a daw[~] mo__ la_Λ mo__ sha[^] chi ma ve, la_Λ sha mo__ la_Λ

- 1) I wish to thank my friend and colleague in Lahu studies, Dr. James A. Matisoff of the Department of Linguistics, University of California, Berkeley, for his assistance in the analysis of these texts. To my wife, Pauline, go my particular thanks for her help in preparing this difficult manuscript.

mo_ sha^ˈ chi ma_ ve, na_ pu_ hk'aw_ ya^ˈ ha ya^ˈ chi ma ve
 yo_ law, a⁻ chi hk'aw_ bi^ˈ nyi hk'aw_ ve^ˆ hta_ haw k'aw_ maw ve,
 veu_ nyi k'a^ˈ nyi k'aw_ veu_ leh veu_ hto^ˆ k'a_ hto^ˆ k'aw_ veu_ leh
 veu_ suh⁻ k'a^ˈ suh⁻ k'aw_ veu_.

2. No^ˈ g'a na_ pu_ hk'aw_ sheh_ ha sheh_ hpa^ˈ, aw_ law hkui meu^ˈ
 ta_ leh yo_ law, na_ pu_ hk'aw_ sheh_ ha sheh_ hpa^ˈ, hk'aw_
 suh⁻ nyi suh⁻ fui_ sheh_ hpa^ˈ, a⁻, hk'aw_ suh⁻ ha suh⁻ fui_
 sheh_ hpa^ˈ, chi hk'aw_ hk'aw_ suh⁻ ha suh⁻ te^ˈ nyi yo_ law, suh
 tchu⁻ na_ tchu⁻ k'aw_ fui_ leh po_ la^ˈ, a⁻, suh hk'a^ˈ na_ hk'a^ˈ
 ka_ naw_ k'aw_ ce_ k'aw_ taw^ˈ leh po_ la^ˈ.
3. Na_ pu_ hk'aw_ sheh_ ha sheh_ hpa^ˈ, na_ pu_ hk'aw_ nga^ˆ aw^ˈ to
 te^ˈ nyi k'aw^ˈ suh⁻ te^ˈ ha⁻ k'aw^ˈ suh⁻ k'aw_ bvuh_ leh, a⁻, na_ pu_
 hk'aw_ ya^ˈ ha ya^ˈ chi ma ve u⁻ hta_ haw g'aw leh ha_ sha⁻ sheh_
 hpa^ˈ, chi hk'aw_ daw^ˈ sha ga^ˈ sha, a⁻, cheh^ˈ sha, hk'aw_ meu^ˈ chi
 hta_ daw^ˈ sha ga^ˈ sha, hk'a^ˆ ma aw^ˈ ce_ mo_ lo_ mo_ sha^ˈ chi ma
 ve ma^ˈ g'a daw^ˈ ha_ ma^ˈ g'a daw^ˈ hki⁻ hk'a_ g'a^ˈ chi g'a^ˈ.
4. Sho meu^ˈ kui^ˈ meu^ˈ, a⁻, taw_ g'a sheh_ hpa^ˈ, no^ˈ g'a na_ pu_
 hk'aw_ sheh_ ha sheh_ hpa^ˈ, hk'aw_ suh⁻ nyi suh⁻ fui_ sheh_
 hpa^ˈ, hk'aw_ ya^ˈ ha ya^ˈ u⁻ hta_ g'aw leh lo_ g'a sheh_ hpa^ˈ yo_
 law k'o^ˆ k'o, a⁻, chi hk'aw_ cheh^ˈ sha hk'aw_ meu^ˈ chi hta_ haw
 yo_ law.
5. Veu_ hto^ˆ k'a^ˈ hto^ˆ k'aw_ veu_ veu_ nyi k'a^ˈ nyi k'aw_ veu_ hk'aw_
 ya^ˈ ha ya^ˈ chi ma ve k'aw_ sha^ˈ leh no^ˈ g'a G'ui_ ma a daw k'o^ˆ na,
 na_ pu_ hk'aw_ ceh_ nga^ˈ ceh_ nga_ she^ˈ bvuh_ g'a hpaw^ˈ meu^ˈ
 ta_ g'a.
6. Na_ pu_ hk'aw_ nga^ˆ aw^ˈ to, a⁻, na_ pu_ hk'aw_ nga^ˆ aw^ˈ to
 k'aw_ bvuh_, bk'a^ˆ ma aw^ˈ ce_ meu^ˈ hta_ hk'a ho_ hk'a beh chi bo
 ti^ˆ pa^ˆ leh k'a la^ˈ she_.
7. Chi hk'aw_ hk'aw_ suh⁻ ha suh⁻ te^ˈ nyi yo_ law, ma^ˈ g'a daw^ˈ ha_
 ma^ˈ g'a daw^ˈ hki⁻, hk'a_ g'a chi g'a^ˈ hk'aw_ meu^ˈ chi hta_ haw
 yo_ law k'o^ˆ k'o, daw^ˈ sha ga^ˈ sha, ma^ˈ na_ hk'a_ g'a^ˈ chi g'a^ˈ veu_
 hto^ˆ k'a^ˈ hto^ˆ k'aw_ veu_, neh⁻ hk'aw_ hk'aw_ suh⁻ ha suh⁻ te^ˈ
 nyi hk'aw_ meu^ˈ, chi bo pa^ˆ leh k'a la^ˈ.

8. A⁻, ca^v leh ma^v peu^v, daw^v leh ma^v yaw, kao^v ma ha⁻ sha⁻ hti⁻ no^v g'a ma__ ha⁻ sha⁻ hti⁻, chi bo k'aw[^] pa__ leh k'a la[^].
9. A⁻, hk'aw[^] ya^v ha ya^v chi ma ve u⁻ hta[^] haw, no^v g'a hk'aw[^] sheh__ ha sheh__ hpa^v, a⁻, suh hpaw^v na^v hpaw^v k'a__ k'aw[^] fui__ leh po^v la^v.
10. Chi hk'aw[^] hk'aw[^] suh⁻ ha suh⁻ te^v nyi yo^v law, nga^v k'aw[^] sha^v leh no^v g'a na__ pu__ hk'aw[^] ceh^v aw^v ceh^v aw^v she^v hpaw^v meu^v k'aw[^] ta__ la^v, a⁻, na__ pu__ hk'aw[^] nga[^] aw^v to, te^v ha⁻ k'aw^v suh[^] k'aw[^] bvuh^v, te^v nyi k'aw^v sub[^] k'aw[^] bvuh^v leh ka[^] haw.
11. A⁻, mi^v ma chaw ya^v hk'aw[^] ya^v ha ya^v chi ma ve, va^v chi hk'aw[^] ceh^v hk'aw[^] li^v k'aw[^] ta__ leh k'aw[^] sha^v leh no^v g'a na__ pu__ hk'aw[^] ceh^v nga^v ceh^v nga^v she^v hpaw^v meu^v k'aw[^] ta__ la^v.
12. Te^v ha⁻ k'aw^v suh[^] ca leh ce__ g'a, hk'a^v g'a^v chi g'a^v u⁻ hta[^] haw ve, chi ceu^v k'aw^v ceu^v u⁻ hta[^] k'aw[^] ce__ k'aw[^] pa[^] leh keh^v pi^v, ma^v daw^v ma^v ha__, ma^v daw^v ma^v hki⁻.
13. A⁻, hk'aw[^] sub⁻ ha suh⁻ fui__ sheh__ hpa^v, no^v g'a na__ pu__ hk'aw[^] sheh__ ha sheh__ hpa^v, suh tcuh⁻ na^v tcuh⁻ fui__ g'a sheh__ hpa^v, tu[^] tcuh⁻ hkan⁻ tcuh⁻ fui__ g'a sheh__ hpa^v, a⁻, na__ pu__ a⁻ g'a^v hk'aw[^] meu^v chi hta[^] haw, htaw^v sha hk'aw[^] meu^v chi hta[^] haw, daw^v sha ga^v sha, hk'a^v g'a^v chi g'a^v, la[^] sha mo__ la[^], la[^] meh__ mo__ hin⁻ chi ma, ma^v g'a daw^v ha__ ma^v g'a daw^v hki⁻.
14. A⁻, te^v nyi k'aw^v co chi co k'aw[^] ji^v leh ta__ pi^v, a sho-e^v u⁻ hpu k'aw^v co chi co k'aw[^] ji^v leh k'a pi^v, a⁻, ma^v daw^v ma^v ha__, ma^v daw^v ma^v hki⁻, chi li^v k'aw[^] yu[^] leh ta__ pi^v.
15. Hk'a^v g'a^v chi g'a^v, yeh^v ma pa__ tu hpaw^v meu^v hta[^] haw, la[^] meu^v va^v hpu law⁻ bo ca fui__ ta__ g'a u⁻ hta[^] haw, a⁻, suh tcuh⁻ na^v tcuh⁻, tu[^] tcuh⁻ hkan⁻ tcuh⁻ fui__ g'a sheh__ hpa^v, na__ pu__ hk'aw[^] tcuh⁻ ha tcuh⁻ fui__ g'a sheh__ hpa^v, te^v nyi sheh[^] yan^v k'aw[^] pa[^] k'aw[^] fui__ leh, a⁻, na^v u⁻ chi ceu^v u⁻ hta[^] fui__ g'a sheh__ hpa^v, hk'a[^] ma aw^v ce^v la[^] sha mo__ la[^], la[^] meh__ mo__ hin⁻ chi ma u⁻ hta[^] haw, chi ceu^v k'aw^v ceu^v meu^v hta[^] haw taw__ g'a sheh__ hpa^v.
16. No^v g'a chi hk'aw[^] na__ pu__ a⁻ g'a^v hk'aw[^] meu^v chi hta[^] haw, htaw sha hk'aw[^] meu^v chi hta[^], daw^v sha ga^v sha, hk'a^v g'a^v chi

- g'a[˥], daw[˥] law_˥ ga_˥ law_˥, yeh_˥, ma pa__ tu chi haw[˥], hpa[˥] ceh ma ceh ma[˥] gui[˥], ya[˥] ceh du_˥ ceh ma[˥] gui[˥], a[˥], chi bo pa[˥] leh k'a pi[˥], mo__ la_˥ mo__ hin[˥] u[˥] hta_˥ haw.
17. Hk'a_˥ g'a[˥] chi g'a[˥] g'o_˥ taw[˥] g'o_˥ g'a, ku_˥ k'aw_˥ ku_˥ hk'o[˥] ce[˥] hu ce[˥] shin[˥] g'a ca[˥], ce[˥] hu ce[˥] mvuh a[˥] pi_˥, chi bo pa[˥] leh k'a pi[˥].
 18. A sho-e_˥ u[˥] hpu k'aw[˥] pa[˥] te[˥] co, a[˥], chi co k'aw_˥ ji[˥] leh no[˥] g'a hk'aw_˥ sheh__ ha sheh__ hpa[˥] meu[˥] hta_˥ k'aw_˥ ca[˥] leh hk'aw_˥ li[˥] ha li[˥] k'aw_˥ yu leh k'aw_˥ bvuh_˥ leh no[˥] g'a hk'aw_˥ sheh__ ha sheh__ hpa[˥] hk'aw_˥ ceh nga[˥] ceh_˥ nga[˥] she[˥] ti g'a hpaw[˥] meu[˥] ta__ g'a yo_˥ law k'o[˥] k'o.
 19. No[˥] g'a a pa ka[˥] ti_˥ ka[˥] pa[˥] meu[˥] hta_˥, hk'a_˥ g'a[˥] chi g'a[˥] daw[˥] sha leh daw[˥] law_˥ hpaw leh hk'aw_˥ meu[˥] chi hta_˥ daw[˥] sha leh ga[˥] law_˥, chi bo k'aw pa[˥] leh k'a pi[˥].
 20. Ku_˥ k'aw_˥ ku_˥ hki[˥] u[˥] hta haw, chaw ca__ chaw law[˥] ma[˥] g'a, ne[˥] ca__ ne[˥] law[˥] ma[˥] g'a, a[˥], la_˥ hti[˥] kui[˥] bo chi bo k'aw_˥ bvuh_˥, la_˥ hti[˥] kui[˥] shi[˥] te[˥] nyi k'aw[˥] suh[˥] g'a k'a, la_˥ hti[˥] kui[˥] bo, te[˥] ha[˥] k'aw[˥] suh[˥] g'a k'a, chi bo pa[˥] leh k'a pi[˥].
 21. Hk'a_˥ g'a[˥] chi g'a[˥], ui_˥ ka_˥ i ka_˥ u[˥] hta_˥ haw, a[˥], hk'aw_˥ meu[˥] chi hta_˥ zub_˥ sha mui sha, ca[˥] g'a meu[˥] hkui_˥, daw_˥ g'a meu[˥] meh_˥, chi bo pa[˥] leh k'a pi[˥], ma[˥] g'a daw[˥] ha__ ma[˥] g'a daw[˥] hki[˥].
 22. Chi hk'aw_˥ k'aw_˥ ta__, a[˥], paw hto[˥] sha hto[˥] k'aw_˥ ta__ leh no[˥] g'a hk'aw_˥ sheh__ ha sheh__ hpa[˥], na__ pu__ paw hto[˥] sha hto[˥] k'aw_˥ g'o[˥] leh ta__ la[˥], a[˥], paw sha te[˥] ho sha, k'aw[˥] co chi co k'aw_˥ ji[˥] leh hk'a_˥ g'a[˥] chi g'a[˥] u[˥] hta_˥ haw ta__ la[˥], chi hk'aw_˥ hk'aw_˥ suh[˥] ha suh[˥] te[˥] nyi.
 23. A[˥], chi hk'aw_˥ mui_˥ suh[˥] va[˥] suh[˥] k'aw_˥ ta__ leh yo_˥ law k'o[˥] k'o, k'aw_˥ sha[˥] leh no[˥] g'a hk'aw_˥ ceh_˥ nga[˥] ceh_˥ nga[˥] she[˥] hpaw[˥] meu[˥] ti__ g'a, cheh[˥] sha caw_˥ sha, ca[˥] ti_˥ daw_˥ ti_˥ k'aw_˥ pa[˥] leh k'aw_˥ ce__ k'aw_˥ g'o[˥] leh ta__ la[˥].
 24. Chi hk'aw_˥ hk'aw_˥ suh[˥] ha suh[˥] te[˥] nyi, na__ pu__ hk'aw_˥ sheh__ ha sheh__ hpa[˥], suh tcuh[˥] na_˥ tcuh[˥] k'aw_˥ fui__ k'aw_˥ pa[˥] leh fui__ pi[˥].

25. Hk'a^ ma aw^ ce_, hk'a_ g'a^ chi g'a^, tu_ tcuh^- hk'a tcuh^- hta_ k'aw_ ce_ leh fui_ g'a yo_ law k'o^ k'o, no^ law hk'aw_ sheh_ ha sheh_ hpa^.
26. A^, u^- shi hk'aw_ ceh_ hk'aw_ li^ k'aw_ ti leh no^ g'a na_ pu_ hk'aw_ ceh_ nga^ ceh_ nga^ she^ hpaw^ meu^ k'aw_ sha^ leh te^ nyi yo_ law k'o, a^, hk'aw_ li^ chi li^ u^- hta_ k'aw_ fui_ leh k'aw_ pa^ leh ta_ g'a sheh_ hpa^, no^ g'a yo_ law k'o^ k'o, ka_ ho^- ka_ hta_ ka_ ho^- ka_ li^ ta_ g'a sheh_ hpa^.

TEXT THREE – WORKING TRANSLATION

Verse 1

1. *sha*: an exclamation which commonly begins a prayer
2. *ya-nyi*: today
3. *na-pu*: eternal (?). Some informants say that *na-pu* is the name of the sacred moon tree. According to some, Lahu see the lunar shadows to form the shape of a tree. There is a myth to the effect that if humans could only touch this tree they would achieve immortality. The elder who gave me this text said that *na-pu* is used here simply for sound effect (*na sha-ve*: good to hear).
4. *hk'aw suh*: new year (*aw-suh*: new)
5. *ha suh*: new moon (month)
6. *te nyi*: one day
7. *na-pu*: eternal (?) (see above, 3)
8. *hk'aw ya*: year people
9. *ha ya*: moon people
10. *chi ma ve*: all these. 7-10 means "all the people of the village now celebrating the new year"
11. *a*: oh!
12. *na-puh k'aw suh ha suh te nyi*: eternal (?) day of the new year, new moon (see 3-6)
13. *yo law* (sometimes *yo law k'o k'o*), a phrase with no meaning, used for sound effect (*na sha-ve*: good to listen to/hear) and sometimes to indicate end of one idea. By itself *yo* means "yes".
14. *ya-nyi*: today

15. *a-daw*: headman
16. *mo-la mo-sha* (couplet; literal meaning of each word unknown): group, i.e. the villagers
17. *chi ma ve*: all these. 15-17 means "all the headman's people", i.e. all the villagers
18. *la-sha*: right hand
19. *mo-la mo-sha chi ma ve*: the whole group (see 16-17). 18-19, literally "all the people at the right hand", means "all the menfolk of the village". Men are associated with the right hand, women with the left hand.
20. *na-pu hk'aw ya ha ya chi ma ve*: all the people of the year, people of the month (see 7-10)
21. *yo law*: (see 13)
22. *a*: oh!
23. *chi hk'aw*: this year
24. *bi*: full
25. *nyi*: day
26. *hk'aw ve*: year-flower
27. *hta haw*: on
28. *k'aw*: again
29. *maw-ve*: show. The meaning of 22-29 is obscure but perhaps "Oh, this day when the year is full (complete), show us again the year-flower". The "year-flower" may refer to the *hk'aw-ceh* or "year tree" (cf. Walker 1970a: 13-17), a kind of altar which the villagers erect in the centre of the village; alternatively it might refer to the old year itself, now completed, perfected like a blossomed flower.
30. *veu nyi k'a nyi* (couplet): "dressing" or "dressing-up day" (*veu-ve*: to dress). Refers to the fact that the villagers dress in their new clothes for the new year celebrations.
31. *k'aw*: again
32. *veu*: dress up
33. *leh*: and
34. *veu hto k'a hto* (couplet): layer upon layer of clothes
35. *k'aw veu*: again dress up
36. *leh*: and

37. *veu suh k'a suh* (couplet): dress up in new clothes (*aw-suh*: new)
 38. *k'aw veu*: again dress up

Verse 2

39. *no-g'a*: up there
 40. *na-pu*: eternal (?) (see 3)
 41. *hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: year owner, month owner (*sheh-hpa*: owner), referring to the guardian supernatural of the year
 42. *aw-law*: the first
 43. *hkui*: feet
 44. *meu*: point
 45. *ta*: keep. 42-45 may be some attribute of the guardian of the year (39-41), but I fail to understand the exact meaning of the phrase.
 46. *leh*: and
 47. *yo law*: (see 13)
 48. *na-pu hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: eternal (?) guardian of the year and the month (see 40-41)
 49. *hk'aw suh*: new year
 50. *nyi suh*: new day
 51. *fui sheh-hpa*: dividing person (*fui-ve*: to divide; *sheh-hpa*: "owner" in 41 above but here "expert")
 52. *a*: oh!
 53. *hk'aw suh*: new year
 54. *ha suh*: new month
 55. *fui sheh-hpa*: dividing person (see 51). 48-55 means "you guardian supernatural of the year who divides the new year from the old", i.e. "who chooses the time of the new year".
 56. *chi hk'aw*: this year
 57. *hk'aw suh ha suh te nyi*: this day of the new year, new moon (month) (see 4-6)
 58. *yo law*: (see 13)
 59. *suh*: death
 60. *tcuh*: joint, e.g. *va tcuh*: the joint between sections of a bamboo
 61. *na*: sickness

62. *tcuh*: joint. 59-62 (couplet) probably "the time of death", i.e. the point between life and death
63. *k'aw fui*: again separate
64. *leh po la*: and save from, let pass. 59-64 "separate (all the villagers) from, and let pass, the time of death and the time of sickness".
65. *a*: oh!
66. *suh hk'a*: death path
67. *na hk'a*: sickness path
68. *ka*: also
69. *naw*: you
70. *k'aw ce*: again help
71. *k'aw taw*: again shield
72. *leh po la*: and let pass. 65-72 "oh you once again help us, shield us from, and let pass the path of death and the path of sickness"

Verse 3

73. *na-pu hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: eternal (?) guardian of the year and the month (see 40-41)
74. *na-pu*: eternal (?) (see 3)
75. *hk'aw nga*: year-birds
76. *aw to*: four bodies. 74-76 refers to four celestial birds which the guardian of the year is said to possess (see note f in formal translation)
77. *te nyi*: one day
78. *k'aw*: nine
79. *suh*: times
80. *te ha k'aw suh*: one night nine times
81. *k'aw*: again
82. *bvuh*: cry out (as in prayer)
83. *leh*: and
84. *a*: oh!
85. *na-pu hk'aw ya ha ya chi ma ve*: all these eternal (?) people of the year and the month (see 7-10)
86. *u-hta haw*: on
87. *g'aw*: count, i.e. take note of

88. *leh* : and
89. *ha-sha* : look after
90. *sheh-hpa* : expert. 74-90 "oh you four (celestial) birds... take note of and look after all the people of the village". 89-90 should probably have been *ha-sha la* : "please look after"; *ha-sha sheh-hpa* means "looking-after person" which does not make sense in the context.
91. *chi hk'aw* : this year
92. *daw sha ga sha* (couplet): easy/good/pleasant/untroubled thoughts (*daw-ve* : to think)
94. *a* : oh!
95. *cheh sha* : living easy, i.e. to be in good health
96. *hk'aw meu* : year point
97. *chi hta* : on this
98. *daw sha ga sha* : untroubled thoughts (see 92)
99. *hk'a-ma* : village
100. *aw ce* : four corners. 99-100 "within the four corners of the village"
101. *mo-lo mo-sha* : group, community
102. *chi ma ve* : all these [people]
103. *ma g'a daw ha, ma g'a daw hki* (couplet) : no troubled/distressing thoughts; literally, no difficult thoughts (*ma g'a* : cannot, *daw-ve* : to think, *ha* : difficult; *hki* has no meaning by itself)
104. *hk'a g'a chi g'a* (couplet) : every person

Verse 4

105. *sho meu* : iron points
106. *kui meu* : copper points. 105-6 (couplet) refers to the cutting edge of the farming implements
107. *a* : oh!
108. *taw g'a sheh-hpa* : shielding expert (*taw-ve* : to shield, *g'a-ve* : able to, can). 105-8 "you who can shield us from the cuts of our knives and axes"
109. *no-g'a* : up there
110. *na-pu hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa* : eternal (?) keeper of the year and the month (see 40-41)

- 111. *hk'aw suh nyi suh fui sheh-hpa* : divider of the new year, the new day (see 49-51)
- 112. *hk'aw ya ha ya* : year-people, month-people
- 113. *u-hta* : on
- 114. *g'aw* : count, i.e. take note of
- 115. *leh lo* : and cover, look after
- 116. *g'a* : can, able
- 117. *sheh-hpa* : expert. 112-17 "you who can take note of and care for all the people"
- 118. *yo law k'o k'o* : (see 13)
- 119. *a* : oh!
- 120. *chi hk'aw* : this year
- 121. *cheh sha* : good health (see 95)
- 122. *hk'aw meu* : year-point
- 123. *chi hta haw* : at this
- 124. *yo law* : (see 13)

Verse 5

- 125. *veu hto k'a hto* : layers upon layers of clothes
- 126. *k'aw veu* : again dress up
- 127. *veu nyi k'a nyi* (couplet) : red clothes (*nyi* : red)
- 128. *k'aw veu* : again dress up
- 129. *hk'aw ya ha ya chi ma ve* : people of the year, people of the month, all these (see 10)
- 130. *k'aw sha* : again pray
- 131. *leh* : and
- 132. *no-g'a* : up there
- 133. *g'ui-ma a-daw* : divine headman
- 134. *k'o-na* : place
- 135. *na-pu* : eternal (?) (see 3)
- 136. *hk'aw ceh* : year-tree, (divine prototype of that erected in centre of village)
- 137. *nga ceh nga she* (couplet) : five trees. It seems that *she* is a poetic classifier for plants, used synonymously with *ceh* : tree
- 138. *bvuh* : call out in prayer

- 139. *g'a*: can
- 140. *hpaw-meu*: side
- 141. *ta*: put
- 142. *g'a*: can

Verse 6

- 143. *na-pu*: eternal (?) (see 3)
- 144. *hk'aw nga aw to*: four year-birds (see 76)
- 145. *a*: oh!
- 146. *na-pu hk'aw nga aw to*: (repeats 143-4)
- 147. *k'aw bvuh*: again cry out in prayer
- 148. *hk'a-ma aw ce*: within the four corners of the village (see 99-100)
- 149. *meu-hta*: in
- 150. *hk'a ho hk'a beh* (couplet): cover/protect everybody as with thatch (*hk'a*: everybody, *ho-ve*: cover, protect, *beh-ve*: cover with thatch)
- 151. *chi bo*: this boon (from *aw-bo*: boon, blessing, merit)
- 152. *ti*: only
- 153. *pa*: order
- 154. *leh*: and
- 155. *k'a la she*: please bestow

Verse 7

- 156. *chi hk'aw*: this year
- 157. *hk'aw suh ha suh te nyi*: new year new moon day (see 4-6)
- 158. *yo law*: (see 13)
- 159. *ma g'a daw ha, ma g'a daw hki*: no troubled thoughts (see 103)
- 160. *hk'a g'a chi g'a*: everybody
- 161. *hh'aw meu*: year-point
- 162. *chi hta haw*: at this
- 163. *yo law k'o k'o*: (see 13)
- 164. *daw sha ga sha*: untroubled thoughts (see 92)
- 165. *ma na*: no sickness (*na-ve*: to be sick)
- 166. *hk'a g'a chi g'a*: everybody
- 167. *veu hto k'a hto*: layer upon layer of clothing
- 168. *k'aw veu*: again dress up

- 169. *neh hk'aw*: next year
- 170. *hk'aw suh ha suh te nyi*: new year new month day (see 4-6)
- 171. *hk'aw meu*: year-point
- 172. *chi bo*: this boon
- 173. *pa*: order
- 174. *leh k'a la*: and grant, bestow

Verse 8

- 175. *a*: oh!
- 176. *ca*: food
- 177. *leh ma peu*: and not finish
- 178. *daw*: drink
- 179. *leh ma yaw*: and not be exhausted
- 180. *kao* [possibly from *aw-hkao*?]: the first
- 181. *ma-ha*: great (from Burmese < Pali < Sanskrit)
- 182. *sha-hti*: to be very rich, rich man (from Burmese < Pali < Sanskrit)
- 183. *no-g'a*: up there
- 184. *ma-ha sha-hti*: great wealth (see 181-2)
- 185. *chi bo*: this boon
- 186. *k'aw pa*: again order
- 187. *leh k'a la*: and grant bestow

Verse 9

- 188. *a*: oh!
- 189. *hk'aw ya ha ya chi ma ve*: all these people of the year and the month (see 8-10)
- 190. *u-hta haw*: from
- 191. *no-g'a*: up there
- 192. *hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: keeper of the year and the month (see 41)
- 193. *a*: oh!
- 194. *suh hpaw*: death side
- 195. *na hpaw*: sickness side
- 196. *k'a*: also
- 197. *k'aw fui*: again divide
- 198. *leh po la*: and let pass (see 59-64, 65-72 for comparison with 194-8)

Verse 10

199. *chi hk'aw* : this year
200. *hk'aw suh ha suh te nyi* : new year new month day (see 4-6)
201. *yo law* : (see 13)
202. *nga* : I
203. *k'aw sha* : again pray
204. *leh* : and
205. *no-g'a* : up there
206. *na-pu* : eternal (?) (see 3)
207. *hk'aw ceh* : year-tree
208. *aw ceh aw she* : four trees (see 137)
209. *hpaw-meu* : side
210. *k'aw ta la* : again put
211. *a* : oh !
212. *na-pu* : eternal (?) (see 3)
213. *hk'aw nga aw to* : four year-birds (see 76)
214. *te ha* : one night
215. *k'aw suh* : nine times
216. *k'aw bvuh* : again cry out in prayer
217. *te nyi* : one day
218. *k'aw suh* : nine times
219. *k'aw bvuh* : again cry out in prayer
220. *leh* : and
221. *ka haw* : here under

Verse 11

222. *a* : oh !
223. *mi-ma* : earth
224. *chaw-ya* : people
225. *hk'aw ya ha ya* : year-people, month-people
226. *chi ma ve* : all these
227. *va* : bamboo
228. *chi* : this
229. *hk'aw ceh* : year-tree
230. *hk'aw li* : year-custom (*aw-li* : custom)

- 231. *k'aw ta* : again put
- 232. *leh k'aw sha* : and again pray
- 233. *leh* : and
- 234. *no-g'a* : up there
- 235. *na-pu* : eternal (?) (see 3)
- 236. *hk'aw ceh* : year-tree
- 237. *nga ceh nga she* : five trees (see 137)
- 238. *hpaw-meu* : side
- 239. *k'aw ta la* : again put. 234-9 "I again pray and put my prayer
before the five eternal year-trees up there"

Verse 12

- 240. *te ha* : one night
- 241. *k'aw suh* : nine times
- 242. *ca* : look
- 243. *leh ce* : and help
- 244. *g'a* : can
- 245. *hk'a g'a chi g'a* : everybody
- 246. *u-hta haw ve* : on
- 247. *chi ceu* : ten kinds
- 248. *k'aw ceu* : nine kinds
- 249. *u-hta* : from
- 250. *k'aw ce* : again help. 247-50 "help us avoid the ten kinds, the
nine kinds (i.e. all kinds) of trouble"
- 251. *k'aw pa* : again order
- 252. *leh* : and
- 253. *keh* : purification
- 254. *pi* : give
- 255. *ma daw ma ha, ma daw ma hki* : (couplet) : no troubled thoughts
(see 103)

Verse 13

- 256. *a* : oh!
- 257. *hk'aw suh ha suh fui sheh-hpa* : divider of the new year and the
new moon (see 55)

258. *no-g'a na-pu hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa* : up there eternal (?) master of the year and of the month (see 39-41)
259. *suh tcuh na tcuh* : time of death and time of sickness (see 62)
260. *fui g'a sheh-hpa* : person who can divide (see 51, 55)
261. *tu tcuh hkan tcuh* : (couplet) : time of poverty (*tu-hkan-ve* : to be poor, to be in distress; from Shan)
262. *fui g'a sheh-hpa* : person who can divide
263. *a* : oh !
264. *na-pu* ; eternal (?) (see 3)
265. *a-g'a* : a kind of tree (?)
266. *hk'aw meu* : year-point
267. *chi hta haw* : under this
268. *htaw-sha* : pine tree
269. *hk'aw meu* : year-point
270. *chi hta haw* : under this. 265-70 is obscure but probably refers to the *hk'aw ceh* or year-tree. *Htaw-sha* is a pine tree and among the Lahu, as among Chinese, it is a symbol of longevity; probably *a-g'a* is also a variety of tree.
271. *daw sha ga sha* : untroubled thoughts (see 92)
272. *hk'a g'a chi g'a* : everybody
273. *la-sha* : right hand
274. *mo-la* : group
275. *la-meh* : left hand
276. *mo-hin* : group. 273-6 (couplet) : "the menfolk and the women-folk" (see 19)
277. *chi ma* : all these
278. *ma g'a daw ha, ma g'a daw hki* : no troubled thoughts (see 103)

Verse 14

279. *a* : oh !
280. *te nyi* : one day
281. *k'aw co chi co* : nine lives, ten lives
282. *k'aw ji* : again cover
283. *leh ta pi* : and grant, bestow
284. *a-sho-e* : of former times

285. *u hpu*: white-headed [elders] (*hpu*: white, *u*: head)
 286. *k'aw co chi co*: nine lives, ten lives
 287. *k'aw ji*: again cover
 288. *leh k'a pi*: and ordain, bestow: 279-88 "oh, in one day, cover us with nine lives, ten lives (longevity), ordain for us and cover us with the nine lives, ten lives of the elders of yesteryear"
 289. *a*: oh!
 290. *ma daw ma ha, ma daw ma hki*: no troubled thoughts (see 103)
 291. *chi li*: this custom (*aw-li*: custom)
 292. *k'aw yu*: again take
 293. *leh ta pi*: and give

Verse 15

294. *hk'a g'a chi g'a*: everybody
 295. *yeh-ma*: house
 296. *pa-tu*: door (from Shan and Thai)
 297. *hpaw-meu*: side
 298. *hta-haw*: under
 299. *la-meu*: own hands
 300. *va*: bamboo
 301. *hpu*: white
 302. *law-bo*: lotus
 303. *ca fui ta g'a*: ?
 304. *u-hta haw*: under. 294-304 is obscure, but possibly refers to the rice-cake altar (*aw-hpfuh hti*) which each household erects inside the front part of the house and therefore near the front door (cf. Walker 1970a: 5-6)
 305. *a*: oh!
 306. *suh tcuh na tcuh*: time of death and time of sickness (see 62)
 307. *tu tcuh hkan tcuh*: time of poverty (see 261)
 308. *fui g'a sheh-hpa*: dividing person. 306-8 "you who can separate us from the time of death, sickness and poverty"
 309. *na-pu*: eternal (?) (see 3)
 310. *hk'aw tcuh*: year-joint (see 60, 62)
 311. *ha tcuh*: moon (month)-joint

312. *fui g'a sheh-hpa* : dividing person
 313. *te nyi* : one day
 314. *sheh yan* : three times
 315. *k'aw pa* : again order
 316. *k'aw fui* : again separate
 317. *leh* : and
 318. *a* : oh !
 319. *na u* : ? (I have in my notes "languages", but am not certain of this translation)
 320. *chi ceu* : ten kinds
 321. *u-hta* : on
 322. *fui g'a sheh-hpa* : person who can divide. 319-22 "you who can divide (and therefore know) the ten different kinds of languages(?)", i.e. "all tongues"
 323. *hk'a-ma aw ce* : within the four corners of the village (see 99-100)
 324. *la-sha mo la, la-meh mo-hin chi ma* : all the people of the right hand and all the people of the left hand (see 19)
 325. *u-hta haw* : under
 326. *chi ceu k'aw ceu* : ten kinds, nine kinds [of misfortune]
 327. *meu hta haw* : from
 328. *taw g'a sheh-hpa* : person who can shield

Verse 16

329. *no g'a* : up there
 330. *chi hk'aw* : this year
 331. *na-pu* : eternal (?)
 332. *a-g'a* : a kind of tree (?)
 333. *hk'aw meu* : year-point
 334. *chi hta haw* : under this
 335. *htaw-sha* : pine tree
 336. *hk'aw meu* : year-point
 337. *chi hta* : this. 329-37 is obscure, but possibly it means "I put my prayer under the eternal year-tree up there"
 338. *daw sha ga sha* : easy, untroubled thoughts
 339. *hk'a g'a chi g'a* : everybody

340. *daw law ga law* (couplet) : knowledge (*daw-ve ga-ve* [couplet] : to think)
 341. *yeh-ma* : house
 342. *pa-tu* : door
 343. *chi haw* : this
 344. *hpa ceh ma ceh* (couplet) : husband and wife, probably from *yeh sheh-hpa* (household head) and *yeh sheh-ma* (mistress of the house)
 345. *ma gui* : may not separate
 346. *ya ceh du ceh* (couplet) : children
 347. *ma gui* : may not separate
 348. *a* : oh!
 349. *chi bo* : this boon
 350. *pa* : order
 351. *leh k'a pi* : and bestow
 352. *mo-la mo-hin* : group
 353. *u-hta haw* : upon

Verse 17

354. *hk'a g'a chi g'a* : everybody
 355. *g'o taw g'o g'a* : (couplet) : every household (*g'o* : household)
 356. *ku k'aw ku hk'o* (couplet) : every person (*ku* from Shan *khon* : person)
 357. *ce hu* : domesticated animals (*hu-ve* : to keep, take care of)
 358. *ce shin* : animal fortune. 357-8 (couplet) "may all the domesticated animals prosper"
 359. *g'a ca* : can look for
 360. *ce hu* : domesticated animals
 361. *ce mvuh* : animals' hairs
 362. *a pi* : not fall out
 363. *chi bo* : this boon
 364. *pa* : order
 365. *leh k'a pi* : and bestow

Verse 18

366. *a-sho-e* : in former times

- 367. *u-hpu* : white-headed [elders]
- 368. *k'aw pa* : nine spans
- 369. *te co* : one life
- 370. *a* : oh!
- 371. *chi co* : nine lives
- 372. *k'aw ji* : again cover
- 373. *leh* : and
- 374. *no-g'a* : up there
- 375. *hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa* : keeper of the year and the month (see 41) .
- 376. *meu* : country, place
- 377. *hta* : in
- 378. *k'aw ca* : again look to
- 379. *leh* : and
- 380. *hk'aw li* : year-custom
- 381. *ha li* : month-custom
- 382. *k'aw yu* : again take
- 383. *leh k'aw bvuh* : and once again cry out in prayer
- 384. *leh* : and
- 385. *no-g'a* : up there
- 386. *hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa* : keeper of the year and the month (see 41)
- 387. *hk'aw ceh nga ceh nga she* : five year-trees (see 136-7)
- 388. *ti g'a* : plant
- 389. *hpaw meu* : side
- 390. *ta g'a* : put
- 391. *yo law k'o k'o* : (see 13)

Verse 19

- 392. *no-g'a* : up there
- 393. *a-pa* : father
- 394. *ka-ti* : all-true, one who never breaks a promise
- 395. *ka-pa* : powerful
- 396. *meu hta* : country, place (to/in that place)
- 397. *hk'a g'a chi g'a* : everybody
- 398. *daw sha* : untroubled thoughts
- 399. *leh* : and

- 400. *daw law* : knowledge
- 401. *hpaw leh* : open and
- 402. *hk'aw meu* : year-point
- 403. *chi hta* : this
- 404. *daw sha* : untroubled thoughts
- 405. *leh ga law* : and knowledge
- 406. *chi bo* : this boon
- 407. *k'aw pa* : again order
- 408. *leh k'a pi* : and bestow

Verse 20

- 409. *ku k'aw ku hki* : all the people (see also 356)
- 410. *u-hta haw* : on
- 411. *chaw ca chaw law ma g'a*, literal meaning obscure but general sense is "if people try to kill any of the villagers may those people not succeed"
- 412. *ne ca ne law ma g'a*, literal meaning obscure; "if spirits attack the villagers, may the spirits not succeed in harming them"
- 413. *a* : oh!
- 414. *la-hti* : strength
- 415. *kui bo* : copper boon (*aw-bo*, *aw-bon*, : boon)
- 416. *chi bo* : this boon
- 417. *k'aw bvuh* : again cry out in prayer
- 418. *la-hti* : strength
- 419. *kui shi* : copper boon (*aw-shi* : boon; often in form of couplet *aw-bon aw-shi*)
- 420. *te nyi* : one day
- 421. *k'aw suh* : nine times
- 422. *g'a k'a* : bestow
- 423. *la-hti* : strength
- 424. *kui bo* : copper boon
- 425. *te ha k'aw suh* : one night nine times
- 426. *g'a k'a* : bestow
- 427. *chi bo* : this boon
- 428. *pa* : order
- 429. *leh k'a pi* : and bestow

Verse 21

430. *hk'a g'a chi g'a*: everybody
 431. *ui ka i ka* (couplet): the big and the small
 432. *u hta haw*: on
 433. *a*: oh!
 434. *hk'aw meu chi*: this year-point
 435. *hta*: on
 436. *zuh sha*: sleep easily
 437. *mui sha*: sit easily
 438. *ca g'a*: eating
 439. *meu hkui*: good taste
 440. *daw g'a*: drinking
 441. *meu meh*: good taste
 442. *chi bo*: this boon
 443. *pa*: order
 444. *leh k'a pi*: and bestow
 445. *ma g'a daw ha ma g'a daw hki*: no troubled thoughts (see 103)

Verse 22

446. *chi hk'aw*: this year
 447. *k'aw ta*: again put
 448. *a*: oh!
 449. *paw hto sha hto* (couplet): layers of wealth (*paw-sha*: wealth, *hto*: layers)
 450. *k'aw ta*: again put
 451. *leh no-g'a hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: and up there keeper of the year and the month
 452. *na-pu*: eternal (?) (see 3)
 453. *paw hto sha hto*: layers of wealth
 454. *k'aw g'o*: again give, bestow
 455. *leh ta la*: and put
 456. *a*: oh!
 457. *paw-sha*: wealth
 458. *te ho sha*: ?
 459. *k'aw co chi co*: nine lives, ten lives (i.e. eternal life)

460. *k'aw ji* : again cover
 461. *leh* : and
 462. *hk'aw g'a chi g'a* : everybody
 463. *u-hta haw* : on
 464. *ta la* : put
 465. *chi hk'aw* : this year
 466. *hk'aw suh ha suh te nyi* : new year, new month, one day

Verse 23

467. *a* : oh!
 468. *chi hk'aw* : this year
 469. *mui suh va suh* (couplet) : making new fields (*mui-ve* : to work in the fields, *suh* from *aw-suh* : new)
 470. *k'aw ta* : again put
 471. *leh* : and
 472. *yo law k'o k'o* : (see 13)
 473. *k'aw sha* : again pray
 474. *leh no-g'a* : and up there
 475. *hk'aw ceh nga ceh nga she* : five year-trees (see 137)
 476. *hpaw-meu* : side
 477. *ti g'a* : plant. 474-7 "and plant [my prayer] at the place of the five year trees up there"
 478. *cheh sha caw sha* (couplet) : health and prosperity; literally, "live easy, be easy"
 479. *ca ti* : food
 480. *daw ti* : drink
 481. *k'aw pa* : again order
 482. *leh k'aw ce* : and again help
 483. *k'aw g'o* : again give
 484. *leh ta la* : and put

Verse 24

485. *chi hk'aw hk'aw suh ha suh te nyi* : this year new year new month one day

486. *na-pu hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: eternal (?) keeper of the year and the month
 487. *suh tcuh na tcuh*: death time, sickness time
 488. *k'aw fui*: again divide
 489. *k'aw pa*: again order
 490. *leh fui pi*: and divide

Verse 25

491. *hk'a-ma aw ce*: within the four corners of the village
 492. *hk'a g'a chi g'a*: everybody
 493. *tu tcuh hk'a tcuh* (couplet): time of trouble
 494. *hta*: on
 495. *k'aw ce*: again guard
 496. *leh fui g'a*: and divide
 497. *yo law k'o k'o*: (see 13)
 498. *no-law*: up there
 499. *hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: keeper of the year and the month

Verse 26

500. *a*: oh!
 501. *u shi*: yellow-headed [people], i.e. "youngsters", as opposed to *u hpu*: white-headed people or elders (*shi*: yellow)
 502. *hk'aw ceh*: year-tree
 503. *hk'aw li*: year-custom
 504. *k'aw ti*: again plant
 505. *leh*: and
 506. *no-g'a na-pu hk'aw ceh nga ceh nga she hpaw-meu*: up there five eternal year trees' side (see 135-7)
 507. *k'aw sha leh*: again pray and
 508. *te nyi*: one day
 509. *yo law k'o*: (see 13)
 510. *a*: oh!
 511. *hk'aw li*: year-custom
 512. *chi li*: ten customs
 513. *u-hta*: on

514. *k'aw fui*: again divide
 515. *leh k'aw pa*: and again order
 516. *leh ta g'a*: and put
 517. *sheh-hpa*: master, expert
 518. *no-g'a*: up there
 519. *yo law k'o k'o*: (see 13)
 520. *ka ho ka hta* (couplet): everything (?)
 521. *ka ho ka li* (couplet): every custom (*aw-li*: custom)
 522. *ta g'a sheh-hpa*: putting master. 520-22 "you who ordain every custom"

TEXT THREE—FORMAL TRANSLATION

1. Oh, on this day of the new year, day of the new month, [show] all the people of the year, all the people of the month,^(a) on this day of the new year, day of the new month, [show] all the headman's people, all the people of the right hand,^(b) all the people of the year, all the people of the month, on this day when the year is full, show us again the year-flower,^(c) this day on which we once again dress up, we once again dress in many layers of clothes, we once again dress in new clothes.^(d)
2. You up there, eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, ...^(e) eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, you who divide the new year, the new day [from the old], you who divide the new year, the new month [from the old]; on this day of the new

(a) "People of the year, people of the month" is a poetic way of describing the villagers as they are celebrating the new year.

(b) Refers to the male members of the community; women may be called "the people of the left hand".

(c) The "year-flower" may be a poetic reference to the Year-Tree, a bamboo altar erected in the middle of the village.

(d) The new year is the time for people to sport their new clothes.

(e) The missing words are, in Lahu, *aw law hkui mui ta*—, the meaning of which I fail to understand, although my notes suggest that this is another attribute of the guardian supernatural of the new year, the "keeper of the new year".

year, day of the new month, once again divide us from and let pass the time of death and the time of sickness, once again help us [to avoid], shield us from and let pass the way of death and the way of sickness.

3. Eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, may the four eternal birds of the year^(f) nine times in one day, nine times in one night^(s) again cry out in prayer, you who can count^(h) and look after all these people of the year, people of the month, please look after them and this year may they enjoy untroubled thoughts and good health, throughout the year may they enjoy untroubled thoughts, may this whole community, every person within the four corners of the village suffer no troubled thoughts.
 4. You who shield us from the points of iron and the points of copper,⁽ⁱ⁾ you up there, eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, you who divide the new year [from the old], the new day [from the old], you who can count and care for all the people of the year, all the people of the month, this year may we enjoy good health.
 5. We once again dress up in many layers of clothes, we once again dress up in red clothes,^(j) all the people of the year, all the people of the month once again pray to you, the heavenly headman up
-
- (f) The guardian of the year is said to possess four celestial birds, two pairs. The male birds are siblings. The elder male, *na_pu_co nga^*: "eternal life bird" (*co*: life), and his mate sing or cry out in prayer for the long life of the villagers. The younger brother is called *na_héh ha nga^*: "eternal soul bird" (*aw*, *ha*: soul). He and his mate sing for the wandering souls of the villagers which, on hearing this song, return to their owners. Lahu believe that sickness, and eventually death, results when a soul leaves the body of its rightful owner and fails to return.
- (g) The numeral nine is frequently used in Lahu poetry to indicate "many". In such cases it has no symbolic connotations but is simply, as the Lahu say "*na sha ve*: good to hear".
- (h) "To count" is used in the sense of "to know, be aware of".
- (i) Refers to the knives and axes which the Lahu use to clear and cultivate their fields.
- (j) Lahu Nyi women's clothes are predominantly red in colour.

yonder;^(k) I cry out in prayer and put my prayer at the side of the five eternal year-trees.^(l)

6. Once again order and bestow upon us this boon alone, that the four eternal birds of the year may once again cry out in prayer and cover and protect everybody within the four corners of the village.
7. This year, on this day of the new year, day of the new month, may all the people suffer no misfortune; throughout the year may everybody enjoy untroubled thoughts, may they suffer no sickness; and next year, on the day of the new year, day of the new month, may all the people once again dress up in many layers of clothes;^(m) this boon order and bestow upon us.
8. This boon order and bestow upon us, that the food may not finish, the drink may never be exhausted, you up there, possessor of great wealth.
9. Oh you up there, keeper of the year, keeper of the month, once again divide from these people of the year, people of the month and let pass from them the side of death and the side of sickness.
10. This year, on this day of the new year, day of the new month, I once again pray and I once again put my prayer at the side of the four eternal year-trees up there;⁽ⁿ⁾ oh may the four eternal birds of the year, nine times in one night, nine times in one day again cry out in prayer for us.
11. Oh, all these people of the earth, all these people of the year, people of the month once again offer this bamboo tree of the

(k) Probably "heavenly headman" here refers to the guardian supernatural of the new year; but according to Lahu myth there is also a headman in the heavens who is the divine prototype of all earthly headmen.

(l) The "eternal year-tree" is the divine prototype of that sacred altar which the villagers erect in the centre of the village (see note c). But why the numeral five is mentioned is obscure. Probably it is for poetic effect only, "good to listen to" as the Lahu say.

(m) "May all the villagers live safely through the coming year so that everybody will be alive at the time of the next new year celebrations."

(n) Previously it was "five year-trees" (see note 1), now "four"; probably both numerals are only for sound effect,

year,^(o) and once again pray and put this offering at the side of the five eternal year-trees up there.^(p)

12. Seek us out and help us nine times in one night, all of us, help us [avoid] the ten kinds, the nine kinds [of sickness],^(q) once again order this and purify us; may we be without distressing thoughts.
13. Oh you who can divide the new year [from the old], the new month [from the old]; you up there, eternal keeper of the year and of the month; you who can divide us from the time of death and the time of sickness, you who can divide us from the time of poverty, may all the people under this new year tree,^(r) all of us, the people of the right hand and the people of the left hand, all of us, may we suffer no troubled thoughts.
14. Oh, in one day cover us with the nine lives, ten lives,^(s) ordain for us and cover us with the nine lives, ten lives of our elders of yesterday,^(t) may we not be troubled by worried thoughts; accept these rites [which we perform for you].
15. Everybody places this white bamboo made by his own hands near the door of his house;^(u) you who can divide us from the time of death, sickness and poverty, eternal divider of the year and the month, three times in one day once again order, once again divide; you who can divide the ten kinds of languages,^(v) you who can shield from the ten kinds, the nine kinds [of misfortune] all the people of the right hand, all the people of the left hand, within the four corners of the village.

(o) The new year altar in the centre of the village is made of bamboo.

(p) The idea of manufacturing something and offering it to its divine prototype occurs frequently in Lahu Nyi ritual.

(q) "All sickness"; the numerals nine and ten are simply for poetic effect.

(r) "All the villagers".

(s) "Grant us longevity".

(t) "May we live to the same ripe old years as the old men now departed".

(u) Probably refers to the rice-cake altar which each household erects inside the house (cf. Walker 1970a : 566).

(v) "You who can understand all tongues".

16. [I put my prayer] up there under the eternal year-tree; may everybody enjoy untroubled thoughts, good knowledge; in every house may the husbands and wives not separate, may the children not separate; oh this boon order and bestow upon the whole community.
17. Order and bestow this boon upon every person, every household, everybody, that the livestock may prosper, that the animals' hairs may not drop out.
18. May we enjoy the nine lifespans of our elders of yesteryear, oh once again cover us with nine lives; we once again look up there to the place of the keeper of the year, keeper of the month, we once again perform the customs of the year, the customs of the month, and once again cry out in prayer and plant our prayer at the side of the keeper of the year and of the month up there, [at the side of] the five year-trees up there.
19. You up there, all-true, all-powerful father, once again order and once again bestow upon us this boon, that everybody may enjoy untroubled thoughts, good knowledge; open upon us throughout the year untroubled thoughts and good knowledge.
20. Nine times in one day, again bestow on every one of us this boon as strong as hard-wrought copper, nine times in one night again bestow this boon that we may not be killed by men nor fall prey to malicious spirits; once again I pray for blessings as strong as hard-wrought copper, blessings as strong as hard-wrought iron; this boon once again order and bestow upon us.
21. May every person, the big and the small, throughout the year sleep well and sit well, may the rice taste good to our lips, may the drink taste good to our lips; this boon order and bestow upon us, may we be free from troubled thoughts.
22. This year once again lay down for us layers of wealth, grant it to us like the eternal wealth-layers of the keeper of the year, keeper of the month up there, oh once again cover us with wealth, with nine lives, ten lives, each and every one of us, on this day of the new year, day of the new month.

23. Oh this year when we make the new fields, I once again pray and put my prayer at the side of the five year-trees up there, once again order and once again help us, once again give to us and once again bestow upon us health and prosperity, food and drink.
24. This year, on this day of the new year, day of the new month, eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, once again order and once again divide us from the time of death and the time of sickness.
25. You up there, keeper of the year, keeper of the month, once again guard, and once again divide from trouble, every one of us within the four corners of the village.
26. Oh the yellow-headed youngsters and the white-headed elders^(w) once again plant the year-tree^(x) and follow the year customs and once again pray to the side of the five eternal year-trees up there; oh you up there who once again divide^(y) and once again order the ten year-customs, you who ordain every custom.

TEXT FOUR

[Prayer by village elder at the New Year Tree (hk'aw_Λ ceh_Λ) (cf. Walker 1970a: 19-20).]

1. A daw^v hk'a^Λ ma aw^v ce_Λ, to bo hk'a^Λ ma aw^v ce_Λ, ui_Λ ka_Λ i ka_Λ,
hk'a_Λ g'o_Λ chi g'o_Λ ve, chi hk'aw_Λ na__ pu__ hk'aw_Λ sheh__ ha sheh__
hpa^v, hk'aw_Λ naweh_Λ ta^v hki^Λ, sho tcuh^Λ kui^v tcuh^Λ, shaw^v meu^v
ma meu^v hk'o^v hta_Λ yo_Λ law k'o^Λ k'o leh hk'a_Λ g'o_Λ chi g'o_Λ taw__
leh suh^Λ leh po_Λ pi^v.

(w) "U^Λ shi u^Λ hpu yellow head white head" is a common couplet meaning "the young and the old". Sometimes the more accurate "u^Λ na^Λ u^Λ hpu: black head white head" is used.

(x) "Divide" is here used in the sense of creating or "separating out", ordaining to each people their particular customs.

2. Neh[—] hk'aw_Δ hk'a ti[—] ga_Δ ve, na_Δ beu_Δ suh_— chi suh_— yan_— ve u[—]
hta_Δ, hk'a_Δ g'a^Δ chi g'a^Δ, hk'a_Δ g'o_Δ chi g'o_Δ hk'o^Δ hta_Δ, k'aw_Δ ce_—
k'aw_Δ taw^Δ la.
3. Ai ma hkui^Δ ta k'aw^Δ hk'aw_— law^Δ, nu_— ta k'aw^Δ hk'a_Δ jaw_Δ, hk'a_Δ
g'o_Δ chi g'o_Δ hk'o^Δ hta_Δ k'aw_Δ she_— leh mui_Δ hk'o^Δ va^Δ hk'o^Δ hkui_—
taw_Δ la_Δ taw_Δ hk'a^Δ sub k'aw_Δ she_— leh g'a ca_Δ g'a daw_Δ ve, g'ui_Δ
ma_— ha[—] sha[—] hti[—] k'aw_Δ pa_— k'aw_Δ g'o^Δ leh hk'a_Δ g'o_Δ chi g'o_Δ,
hk'a_Δ g'a^Δ chi g'a^Δ hk'o^Δ hta_Δ, hkui taw_Δ la_Δ taw_Δ hk'o^Δ hta_Δ k'aw_Δ
she_— leh hk'a_Δ g'a^Δ chi g'a^Δ hk'o^Δ hta_Δ, g'a ca^Δ g'a daw_Δ hk'a shu_—.
4. Hk'a_Δ g'a^Δ chi g'a^Δ, ui_Δ ka_Δ i ka_Δ chi ma ve, sho tcuh[—] kui^Δ tcuh[—]
hk'o^Δ hta_Δ, sho ba^Δ kui^Δ ba^Δ hk'o^Δ hta_Δ, shaw^Δ ba^Δ ma ba^Δ hk'o^Δ
hta_Δ, k'aw_Δ taw_— k'aw_Δ suh[—] leh po_Δ pi^Δ, na_Δ beu_Δ suh_— chi suh_—
yan_— ve.
5. Hk'a_Δ g'a^Δ chi g'a^Δ k'o_— haw[—] k'o_— hta_Δ yo_Δ law k'o, ce^Δ ta ca_Δ ta
hpaw leh keu pi^Δ, k'o_— hta_Δ chaw ta va^Δ ta chaw hin[—] chaw la_Δ,
mo_— la_Δ mo_— sheh[—] hk'o^Δ hta_Δ g'a keu pi^Δ.
6. Ui_Δ ka_Δ i ka_Δ chi ma ve, hk'a^Δ ma aw^Δ ce_Δ to bo a daw^Δ, hk'a^Δ ma
aw^Δ ce_Δ ui_Δ ka_Δ i ka_Δ ve, hk'a_Δ g'o_Δ chi g'o_Δ hk'o^Δ hta_Δ, te^Δ hk'aw_Δ
mui_Δ ve chi hk'aw_Δ ca^Δ leh a^Δ peu_Δ, te^Δ nyi mui_Δ ve chi nyi ca^Δ
leh a^Δ peu_Δ, chi nyi veu_Δ leh a^Δ peu_Δ.
7. Ai ma, a pa Sha[—] ca^Δ, te^Δ nyi na_— pu_— hk'aw_Δ sheh_— ha sheh_—
hpa^Δ, k'aw_Δ hpa_— k'aw_Δ g'o^Δ leh hk'a deh_Δ k'aw_Δ hpa_— leh keu pi^Δ,
ui_Δ ka_Δ i ka_Δ chi ma ve.
8. Ya^Δ hu g'a^Δ yo_Δ k'o, ya^Δ da_Δ ve^Δ a[—] paw^Δ tu hk'e, mvuh^Δ nyi keh_Δ
law_Δ hk'e, ha pa keh_Δ law_Δ hk'e, chi ve k'aw_Δ hpa_— leh keu pi^Δ.
9. Ma^Δ g'a daw^Δ ha_— ga^Δ hki[—] leh ui_Δ ka_Δ i ka_Δ ve, hk'a_Δ g'o_Δ chi
g'o_Δ hk'o^Δ hta_Δ, paw ta sha ta hk'o^Δ hta_Δ keu pi^Δ, kao_Δ g'ui_Δ ma
ha[—] sha[—] hti[—] hk'a deh_Δ hpa_— leh ho_— pi^Δ taw^Δ pi^Δ meh_—.
10. Ya_Δ nyi tan_— o[—] k'ai ve k'o leh_Δ, na_— pu_— hk'aw_Δ sheh_— ha sheh_—
hpa^Δ, nga_Δ te^Δ to pa^Δ g'a ve a keh[—], sheh^Δ chi sheh^Δ ha peu_— pa^Δ
leh ta_— pi^Δ, o[—], o[—], hk'a_Δ g'o_Δ chi g'o_Δ da_Δ pi^Δ meh_—.

TEXT FOUR—WORKING TRANSLATION

[Roman numeral III refers reader back to Text Three, Working Translation.]

Verse 1

1. *a-daw* : headman
2. *hk'a-ma* : village
3. *aw ce* : four corners
4. *to-bo* : *to-bo-pa*, the senior priest (*to* from *aw-to* : body, *bo* from *aw-bon* : merit, meritorious, *pa* : male suffix)
5. *hk'a-ma aw ce* : village four corners. 1-5 "within the four corners of the headman's village, the four corners of the priest's village"
6. *ui ka i ka* (couplet) : the big and the small (*ui* : big, *i* : small)
7. *hk'a g'o chi g'o ve* (couplet) : every household (*g'o* : household)
8. *chi hk'aw* : this year
9. *na-pu* : eternal (?) (see III/3)
10. *hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa* : guardian of the year and of the month (see III/41)
11. *hk'aw naweh ta hki* (couplet) : all the troubles the year may bring
12. *sho tcuh* : iron joint
13. *kui tcuh* : copper joint
14. *shaw meu* : wood point
15. *ma meu* : wood point. 12-15 "the cuts of sharp pieces of metal (i.e. tools) and wood"
16. *hk'o-hta* : from. In the poetic language of prayer, *hk'o-hta* seems to be a morpheme of quite general locative meaning; Noun + *hk'o-hta* : in/at/around/up to/on/away from the noun (personal communication, J.A. Matisoff).
17. *yo law k'o k'o* : (see III/13)
18. *leh* : and
19. *hk'a g'o chi g'o* : every household
20. *taw* : shield
21. *leh* : and
22. *suh* : side-step
23. *leh po pi* : and let pass

Verse 2

24. *neh hk'aw* : next year
25. *hk'a ti ga-ve* : until reach (*ga-ve* : to reach)
26. *na-beu* : sickness
27. *suh-chi suh* : seventy-seven
28. *yan ve* : kinds
29. *u-ta* : from
30. *hk'a g'a chi g'a* : everybody
31. *hk'a g'o chi g'o* : every household
32. *hk'o-hta* : from
33. *k'aw ce* : again help
34. *k'aw taw la* : again take off

Verse 3

35. *Ai-ma* : name of a supernatural
36. *hkui-ta* : fertility
37. *k'aw* : nine
38. *hk'aw-law* : baskets (type used for storing rice)
39. *nu-ta* : young shoots
40. *k'aw* : nine
41. *hk'a-jaw* : baskets (type carried on back)
42. *hh'a g'o chi g'o* : every household
43. *hk'o-hta* : on (see 16)
44. *k'aw she* : again sow broadcast
45. *leh* : and
46. *mui hk'o va hk'o* (couplet) : preparing the fields
47. *hkui taw* : foot prints
48. *la taw* : hand prints. 34-5 (couplet) "wherever we leave our foot-prints", i.e. "wherever we go"; "handprints" is simply used to rhyme with footprints
49. *hk'a-suh* : following
50. *k'aw she* : again sow broadcast. 35-50 "wherever we farm may Ai-ma's fertility be on the land"
51. *leh* : and

52. *g'a ca g'a daw-ve* (couplet) : can eat can drink, i.e. "sufficient to eat and drink"
53. *g'ui* : G'ui-sha, the supreme Lahu supernatural
54. *ma-ha sha-hti* : great wealth (see III/181-2)
55. *k'aw pa* : again order
56. *k'aw g'o* : again bestow
57. *leh* : and
58. *hk'a g'o chi g'o* : every household
59. *hk'a g'a chi g'a* : every person
60. *hk'o-hta* : on
61. *hkui taw la taw* : footprints, handprints
62. *hk'o hta* : on
63. *k'aw she* : again sow broadcast
64. *leh* : and
65. *hk'a g'a chi g'a* : every person
66. *hk'o-hta* : on
67. *g'a ca g'a daw* : sufficient to eat and drink (see 52)
68. *hka-shu* : the same. 65-8 "may everybody alike enjoy sufficient to eat and drink"

Verse 4

69. *hk'a g'a chi g'a* : every person
70. *ui ka i ka* : the big and the small
71. *chi ma ve* : all of them
72. *sho tcuh kui tcuh* : ends (literally, "joints") of iron and copper
73. *hk'o-hta* : from
74. *sho ba kui ba* (couplet) : iron and copper implements (*ba* : ?)
75. *hk'o-hta* : from
76. *shaw ba ma ba* (couplet) : wood
77. *hk'o-hta* : from
78. *k'aw taw* : again shield
79. *k'aw suh* : again side-step
80. *leh po pi* : and let pass
81. *na-beu suh-chi suh yan ve* : the seventy-seven kinds of sickness (see 26-8)

Verse 5

82. *hk'a g'a chi g'a* : every person
83. *k'o-haw k'o-hta* (couplet : under and inside the house. 82-3 "all the animals and the people". *K'o* seems to mean "house"; thus "veranda" is *k'o_ca* : "that which is joined to the house" (personal communication, J.A. Matisoff).
84. *yo law k'o* : (see III/13)
85. *ce ta ca ta* (couplet) : animals
86. *hpaw* : side
87. *leh* : and
88. *keu pi* : put inside
89. *k'o-hta* : inside the house
90. *chaw ta va ta* (couplet) : people
91. *chaw hin* : people one thousand (*te hin* : one thousand; from Shan)
92. *chaw la* : people one million (*te lan* : one million; from Shan)
93. *mo la* : groups one million
94. *mo sheh* : groups one hundred thousand (*te sheh* : 100,000; from Shan)
95. *hk'o-hta* : over (see 16)
96. *g'a keu pi* : can put inside

Verse 6

97. *ui ka i ka chi ma ve* : the big and the small, all of them
98. *hk'a-ma aw ce to-bo a-daw* : within the four corners of the priest's and the headman's village (see 1-5)
99. *hk'a-ma aw ce ui ka i ka ve, hk'a g'o chi g'o hk'o-hta* : within the four corners of the village, the big and the small, every household
100. *te hk'aw* : one year
101. *mui-ve* : work in the fields
102. *chi hk'aw* : ten years
103. *ca* : eat
104. *leh* : and
105. *a peu* : not finish
106. *te nyi mui-ve chi nyi ca leh a peu* : one day work in the fields, ten days eat not finish
107. *chi nyi veu leh a peu* : ten days dress not finish (*veu-ve* : dress)

Verse 7

108. *Ai-ma* : name of a supernatural
109. *a-pa Sha-ca* : Father Sha-ca, sometimes a Lahu culture hero, but here another name for the supreme supernatural, G'ui-sha (so Lahu informants tell me)
110. *te nyi* : one day
111. *na-pu hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa* : eternal (?) keeper of the year, keeper of the month
112. *k'aw hpa* : again create
113. *k'aw g'o* : again bestow
114. *leh* : and
115. *hk'a-deh* : carefully
116. *k'aw hpa* : again create
117. *leh keu pi* : and put inside
118. *ui ka i ka chi ma ve* : the big and the small, all of them

Verse 8

119. *ya hu* : pregnant
120. *g'a* : get
121. *yo k'o* : (usually no meaning, see III/13; but here, "if")
122. *ya* : children
123. *da-ve* : good
124. *a-paw tu* : banana shoot
125. *hk'e* : like
126. *mvuh-nyi* : sun
127. *keh law* : pure
128. *hk'e* : like, as
129. *ha-pa* : moon
130. *keh law hk'e* : pure as
131. *chi ve* : this
132. *k'aw hpa* : again create
133. *leh keu pi* : and put inside

Verse 9

134. *ma g'a daw ha ga hki* : no troubled thoughts (see III/103)
135. *leh ui ka i ka ve* : and the big and the small

- 136. *hk'a g'o chi g'o* : every household
- 137. *hk'o-hta* : on
- 138. *paw ta sha ta* (couplet) : wealth
- 139. *hk'o-hta* : on
- 140. *keu pi* : put inside
- 141. *kao* : the first (?) (see 111/181)
- 142. *g'ui* : from G'ui-sha, the supreme supernatural
- 143. *ma-ha sha-hti* : great wealth
- 144. *hk'a-deh* : carefully
- 145. *hpa* : create
- 146. *leh* : and
- 147. *ho pi taw pi* (couplet) : cover
- 148. *meh* : please

Verse 10

- 149. *ya nyi* : today
- 150. *tan o k'ai-ve* : beginning and going on
- 151. *k'o leh* : (indicates pause only)
- 152. *na-pu hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa* : eternal (?) keeper of the year, keeper of the month
- 153. *nga* : I
- 154. *te to* : one body, i.e. "I myself" (*aw-to* : body)
- 155. *pa g'a ve* : can order
- 156. *a-keh* : more than. 153-6 "more than I myself (poor mortal that I am) can order/ordain'.
- 157. *sheh-chi* : thirty
- 158. *sheh ha* : three hundred
- 159. *peu* : times
- 160. *pa* : order
- 161. *leh ta pi* : and put [upon us]
- 162. *o, o* : oh!
- 163. *hk'a g'o chi g'o* : every household
- 164. *da* : good
- 165. *pi* : give
- 166. *meh* : please

TEXT FOUR — FORMAL TRANSLATION

1. This year, eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, shield and let pass from the big and the small, from every household within the four corners of the headman's village, the four corners of the priest's village, all troubles that this year may bring, the cuts of sharp pieces of iron and copper^(a) and of wood.
2. Until we reach next year once again help us and remove from every person, every household, the seventy-seven kinds of sickness.^(b)
3. Once again bestow upon every household nine baskets of Ai-ma's fertility,^(c) nine baskets of young shoots; once again bestow fertility wherever we cultivate our fields; once again order that we may enjoy enough food and drink, that we may enjoy G'ui-sha's great wealth; let every household, every person, all in like manner, enjoy enough food and drink.
4. Once again shield, protect and let pass from all the people—the big and the small—the cuts of iron and copper and of sharp pieces of wood, and the seventy-seven kinds of sickness.
5. Grant and bestow blessings on every person, on all the animals underneath the house and all the people inside the house, on the one thousand one million peoples, on the one million one hundred thousand communities.^(d)
6. Grant to all of us, the big and the small within the four corners of the priest's and the headman's village, the big and the small, every household within the four corners of the village, that if we work for one year in the fields the food may not be exhausted in ten years, that if we work for one day in the fields the food may not be exhausted in ten days, the cloth may not be exhausted in ten days.^(e)
7. Ai-ma, Father Sha-ca, eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, once again create and once again cover us with these bless-

a) Poetic reference to the farming tools.

b) "All kinds of sickness"; the number 77 has no particular symbolic significance.

c) Ai-ma is a female divinity particularly associated with fertility (cf. Walker 1970b : 177).

d) "On every person and every community".

e) "The clothing purchased from the proceeds of the crops".

ings, once again carefully create and bestow these blessings upon the big and the small, all of us.

8. If the women get pregnant may they bear children as beautiful as the wild banana shoot, as pure as the sun, as pure as the moon; once again create and bestow this blessing upon us.
9. Grant that the big and the small, every household may suffer no troubled thoughts, grant us all wealth; carefully create for us, and cover us with, G'ui-sha's great wealth.
10. Today and hereafter, oh eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, more than I, (poor mortal that I am) can order, thirty times, three hundred times order and put [good fortune] upon every household.

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f) "Father Sha-ca" is here another name for the supreme supernatural G'ui-sha. There is also a Lahu culture hero of the same name who is said to have gone straight to G'ui-sha's heaven without dying.