

Adversaria of Elephant Hunting, (together with an account of all the rites, observances and acts of worship to be performed in connection therewith, as well as notes on vocabularies of spirit language, fake or taboo language and elephant command words).

BY

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Secret rites & observances divulged to writer.

All professions have their secrets the key to which is held by the master craftsman, and the profession of elephant-hunting is no exception to the rule. The casual observer looking on at the silent and methodical actions of the men engaged in the operation of hunting would be quite unaware of the extraordinary rites and ceremonies which have to be observed and of the complexity of their nature. Elephant men do not talk of these matters, they are too closely interwoven with their lives. They have a sacred meaning and character for them. One of the master craftsmen opened the door to the secrets with his key and the full character and nature of the ceremonies to be observed was revealed to the writer, who has ventured to record them in this paper. He felt that an account of what takes place might be interesting not only to those who probe into the tangled mass of ancient beliefs in an endeavour to ascertain how man has thought and acted, but also to members of the Siam Society. The introduction of railways and roads, hidden by the dust of motor traffic, into the provinces of the Korat plateau and the seaboard provinces will in the course of a few years cause men to change their methods of earning a livelihood and the profession of elephant hunting will become a thing of the past. The new generation will know nothing of how their forefathers voluntarily faced the dangers of the hunt and by what means and by what

powers they attempted to protect themselves from these dangers arising from causes seen and unseen.

This paper forms parts V and VI of a paper I have written attempting to give reasons for the great esteem and respect certain classes of elephants are held in by the peoples of Asia, and wherefore the fortunes and prosperity of a country and its royal house are bound up with the possession of elephants of noble and distinguished lineage. The original paper deals with the position of the elephant in mythology, in the Jataka or Buddha birth stories, in history, and gives a description of a noble or distinguished elephant known to Europeans as the White elephant, but as the paper runs to great length I have decided to ask the Siam Society to accept and print this portion first.

Habitat of elephant. Elephants live in a wild state in most parts of Siam and Burma, but with the extension of cultivation and the cutting down of forest timber, are much troubled by the consequent restricting of the forest lands in which they make their homes. The actual number of wild elephants in this country to-day, probably, does not exceed 3,000, broken up in small herds of from 20 to 200. In central Siam, especially in the circles of Prachin and Ayudhya, where not many years back one would frequently meet herds of semi-wild elephants browsing on the trees and bushes and eating the paddy-crop, hardly an animal is to be met with to-day. These semi-wild animals were those which came under the control of the Royal Elephant Department (กรมช้าง) and were driven to the great elephant kraal at Ayudhya on the occasion of a royal elephant drive or hunt. The last of these royal drives took place in 1906 when the Duke of Turin visited this country. Since that year these herds have not been molested or disturbed for a royal drive, but have been forced back to the forests bordering the great central paddy plain.

Types & classification. There are several types of elephants known under different names in this country. Those with peculiar

characteristics are the “ช้าง ลำคิม” (distinguished or noble elephant), those of colour different from type “ช้าง สีปลาด” (the colour variant elephant), those with a black skin and nails, the “ช้าง เนียม” (the black elephant) as well as animals of the ordinary type, amongst which, however, there is found a tuskless variety known as the “ลัดอ”, this animal having a short tooth protruding from the jaw in place of the tusk. The “ลัดอ” possesses great courage, sagacity and strength, is mostly used in elephant hunts, for fierce battles between the tame and the wild animal are not infrequent. The male elephant is known as a “พลาย” (plai) and the female as “พัร” (pang). They are given names like human beings with the distinguishing sex prefix of “Ai” or “Ee”, but greater respect is paid to the female for she is frequently accorded the higher title of “มม”, whereas the male is never called “นาย”. White elephants and those of peculiar colour when in the possession of a monarch are given high rank corresponding to titles conferred on dignitaries of the State, such as Phya and Phra. It would seem from an examination of a list of these titles that a female elephant was never given a title higher than that of Phra, but was classified as “มมพรวนช้าง”.

Mythological beliefs. The Siamese have also accepted the Indian division of elephants into castes, following closely the Hindu caste system. The first and highest castes are those of the lineage of Brahma and were transmuted from the 8 petals and 24 portions of the stamen of the golden lotus which grew from the navel of Narayana and were presented by him to Lord Siva on Mount Kailasa, who in his turn gave them to the Supreme Lord Brahma. They are the Brahmans or priests (purohitas) of elephants. The possession of elephants of the lineage of Brahma assures longevity and wisdom to their owners. The Kshatriya caste was transmuted from the 8 portions of the stamen accepted by the Lord Siva from Narayana. They possess

royal attributes and virtues. The possession of elephants of the lineage of Siva assures wealth and power to their owners. The Vaisaya class was transmuted from the 8 portions of the stamen of the original lotus given by the Lord Siva to the Lord Vishnu. They possess the qualities of mercy and love in the same degree as Vishnu the preserver. They are the commercial and agricultural caste of the elephants, and their possession assures victory over all evil and freedom from want. The Sudra class was transmuted from the 133 portions of the stamen of the original lotus given by the Lord Siva to Agni when in attendance on the three great lords at the time of Narayana presenting the golden lotus to the Lord Siva. Those of the lineage of Agni possess both evil and good qualities at variance one with the other; they are the Sudras or servile caste of the elephants, and their possession ensures the enjoyment of material pleasures and plenty.

Elephants descended from these four lineages are again subdivided into numerous classes, each class having its own peculiar attributes, form and colour.

The first elephant. The first of all elephants is the magnificent Airavata, the riding and war elephant of the Lord Indra. References to this animal are frequent in Hindu Mythology and the Ramayana. In the Siamese version he is represented as having 33 heads in consonance with the 33 heavenly states (ดาวดึงส์). In India he only possesses one and sometimes three heads, representing the 3 great lords, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The reputation of the great Airavata has been to some extent transcended in Buddhist countries by the noble elephant "Chaddanta". It is more than probable that the Latin, "elephantus, elephas, elephantis", and the Greek "elephas, elephantos": are mere corruptions of the Sanskrit word Airavata, sometimes pronounced "eravanna, eravata, and eravanta". The elephant fills an important place on the stage of the former births of Buddha, the Enlightened One. The most notable stories are :—The Vessantara

Jataka; The Silavanaga Jataka; the Mati Pasaka Jataka, and the Chaddanta Jataka.

The White elephant a cause of war. The possession of a white elephant by a king was an event of great importance and sometimes was the cause of war. In Siamese history there are several instances of this, notably the attack by King Bayin-Naung of Hamsavadi on King Maha Chakrapati of Siam, towards the end of the sixteenth century. The entry of a white elephant into the capital was marked with great pomp and ceremony, religious and secular, the ceremonies in their main features being Brahminical. At one time these animals were treated as being of kingly rank due to their being of the lineage of the great lords as briefly described above.

Lullabies sung. It may not be generally known that after the capture of a white or noble and distinguished animal, lullabies were composed and sung to make it sleep, the theme of the composition being in praise of its high qualities, and eulogies were also sung to wean it from the craving for the forest life. This curious practice has the sanction of antiquity, for Megasthenes, a Greek ambassador at the court of the Hindu Emperor Chandragupta, about 300 B. C., whose capital was at Pataliputra (modern Patna), records that the Indians sang songs to the accompaniment of music to soothe and coax wild elephants recently captured. Megasthenes also gives a story of a white elephant which was caught and kept by its owner; there arising between the two a great friendship and love. The king hearing of this white elephant commanded that it be made over to him, but the owner refused and fled to the jungle with his animal. The king sent men in pursuit and a great fight in which the elephant fought on the side of its master took place. The king's men were put to flight, and the elephant nursed its master, who had been wounded, bringing him to convalescence. It is not recorded that the king obtained possession of this animal, but the story goes to prove that over 2,000 years ago the white elephant was the object of desire on

the part of a monarch, and the same is amply proved by the Jataka stories in which the white elephant plays an important part.

Statuettes in the Phra Sriratanasas-darama Temple. Within the walls of the temple Wat Phra Sriratanasasdarana, the home of the Emerald Buddha adjoining the great palace in Bangkok, may be found 21 statuettes of elephants each with its name carved on the pedestal representing the white elephants which have added to the splendour, prestige, and prosperity of the Royal House of Chakkri of Siam.

The use of elephants. It will be readily understood from the few notes given above that the elephant has a fixed place in the mythology, religion, history and court-life of the country; and beyond this the elephant has a place in the everyday activities of the people. The elephant has been used in war, for which it has to be specially trained. Kings would fight in single combat on their elephants, and these animals were also used for dragging heavy ordnance from point to point and in many other ways assisting the soldier in his hazardous operations. In the everyday life of the people, elephants not many years back were very generally used for the transportation of heavy articles of commerce and to-day are still used for dragging timber from the forests and for freeing timber jammed by floods in the streams. They are also used for riding purposes but in a lessening degree every year. In some of the backward jungle districts especially amongst the Karen, elephants take a place somewhat akin to the horse or ox, living with their owners on easy terms of intimacy and liking.

Elephants used in ceremony of praying for rain. So deeply has the elephant entered into the life of Asia that it has been called on to take part in the ceremony of praying for rain which is performed in the seventh month of the year, (June-July).

A lack of rain brings disaster on the people of an agricultural country. This ceremony has not been carried out for many years. Two "must" elephants would be tied to posts with strong ropes of

sufficient length to allow their tusks to meet, but not long enough to allow them to inflict a wound. These animals being much excited by their "must" condition would rush at each other in an attempt to fight, their tusks would clash, giving forth a loud sound. The animal which succeeded in forcing its tusks between those of its opponent and with this leverage, in raising the other's head was deemed to be the victor. The animals would then be separated and the mahouts indulge in a competitive dance and exchange of views regarding the other's skill and courage. This false combat known as "သိုက်သိုက်" *bamru-nga* (clashing of tusks) would be fought three times, followed by the dance and word war on the part of the mahouts. The movements, rhythm and postures of the dance followed a set form.

**Religious
discipline
necessary in
elephant
hunting & use
of special
language.**

The hunting and catching of wild elephants is a pursuit still engaged in, and as it is one which demands the possession of activity, courage and skill on the part of the hunters, it has been found necessary to surround these operations with the glamour and discipline of religion and the exercise of virtue. These operations are of necessity carried out in the depths of the great forests inhabited and governed by spirits and much attention has to be paid to the spirit people in order to obtain their favour and protection. These attentions take the form of supplicatory prayers, the reciting of "mantras" and stanzas, sacrifices—the offering of food and drink, the worship of Agni, the Lord of Fire, and the use of a language known by the hunters as "သမ္မာသိပ္ပံ" (language of the spirits of the forest). In all these forms of worship are found traces of animism, demonism, Brahminism and Buddhism, showing very clearly the development of the religious life of the people, how they have passed from belief to belief, retaining a little here and discarding a little there. A description of these ceremonies and acts of worship will be given in this paper. The most peculiar part of

the operation is the use of the spirit language. What is this language, where does it come from? It does not seem to have much in common with any of the languages used in the surrounding districts such as Khmer, Sue, So, Sek, Puthai, La-wa, Lao, Yao, Tin, Kha, and other aboriginal dialects. This spirit language is used by the hunters on the Korat plateau where the inhabitants are Khmer, Sue, So, Sek, Puthai and Lao, as well as in the Lao provinces of Northern Siam, Nan, Chieng-rai and Chieng-mai where the people are Lao, Yao, Tin, Kha, Miao and Mushu. The most skilled elephant hunters in the Korat region are found amongst the Sue of Surindr, a people divided into many septs, each using slightly different dialectic variations of the original language. This spirit language is not used in the seaboard provinces of the country, where, however, the fake or taboo language is spoken during elephant trapping operations in its stead. It may be interesting to know that in all ancient Hindu plays there always appears a character speaking the language of "pisaccha", a language unknown to the audience, and as far as that goes the same peculiarity may be found on the European stage of olden times, where it was usual for a character to speak "gibberish", a form of spirit language. What is the "pisaccha," or the original Gibber? He undoubtedly was one of the aboriginal tribes in the lowest state of civilization. Can this spirit language be found to have its origin in the language of the ancient pisaccha? To push this matter a little nearer home, most of my readers will remember games of their childhood, in which it was necessary to use gibberish or nonsense language in the belief that they were using the tongue of the spirit.

Two methods for catching elephants employed. In Siam the hunting and catching of elephants is carried out in two ways. In the Northern provinces of Chieng-mai, Chieng-sen, Chieng-rai, Nan, as well as in the Southern seaboard provinces, the kraal or keddah system is employed. These enclosures are made in the neck of a pass in the hills or other place where the conformation

of the ground lends itself to this purpose, and the wild herd is driven by means of trained hunting elephants into the enclosure, where a selection is made from those trapped, the others being allowed to go free.

**Megasthenes,
record of an
elephant
hunt 2200
years ago
and mention
of a white
elephant.**

Perhaps one of the oldest records of the method and manner of catching wild elephants by the keddah system is given by Megasthenes, mentioned above, as well as by the historian Arrian. They both say that a large plot of arid jungle was selected, a wide and deep trench was dug round it, the earth from the trench being used as an embankment or wall, and a bridge, covered with earth to conceal its purpose and to prevent suspicion arising on the part of the wild elephants to be driven into the enclosure, was thrown across this trench or moat. Well trained female elephants were placed within. A herd of wild elephants was rounded up and driven towards this enclosure, where getting scent of the females they moved over the bridge into it. The bridge was removed and the animals left undisturbed until weakened by hunger and thirst. The hunters would then rebuild the bridge, enter the enclosure and overcome the wild elephants they selected by blows, and make them captive. These captives would be led away by the decoy animals, tied to posts and trained in much the same manner as is done to-day.

In the Eastern provinces on the Korat plateau, including Petchaboon, wild elephants are really hunted and caught, trained fighting animals being used. This form of hunting requires great skill and courage on the part of the men and elephants employed, and it is this form which I describe in paper No. 1. An account of trapping by the kraal or keddah method is given in paper No. 2. A collection of the words of elephant command used in various parts of the country has been made and is given for the purpose of comparison as an appendix to papers 1 and 2. It will be noticed that most of the command words are of foreign origin and used very generally by all elephant men irrespective of their race or language.

This would seem to point to the fact that the catching, training and use of elephants was learnt from foreigners. I have gathered together a number of words of the spirit language and also many of the fake or taboo language. These vocabularies form paper No. 3. The fake or taboo language is much used by all jungle people when faced by the darkness and terrors of the great forests, mountains and torrents. The people will not use everyday words, but prefer to invent new expressions in the belief that the spirits listening will not know that they are being spoken of and will therefore not visit their vengeance on the speakers. The vocabulary which I give has been collected in the seaboard provinces of the Circle of Nagor Sridhammaraj.

Paper No. 1.

ELEPHANT HUNTING ON THE KORAT TABLE-LAND.

Preliminary remarks. The following sketch is an attempt to give an account of an elephant hunt (มรดกโพธิ์) as carried out in the Eastern provinces of Siam on the table-land of Korat, together with its framework of spirit worship. It will be noticed that a hunt is not a simple everyday affair in which a man only risks his life, it is a matter which has to be approached in a reverential spirit and is encompassed by many rites and observances, all designed with the one object of securing the favour and protection of the spirits, whether of the lasso-rope, forest, or elephants. A hunt has several main features, the collection of the men and ceremonies in connection therewith, the homage rendered to the lasso-rope, ceremonies pertaining to the obtaining of permission to enter the forest, those in connection with the camp, the finding of the herd and the hunt, the training of the captives and the return home. Each step is surrounded by its own ritual, the performance of which requires the possession on the part of the chief huntsman of much knowledge of spirit, forest, and animal lore. This ritual is an entangled mess of the beliefs of the people, having their origin in the ancient all-pervading and still practised worship of the spirits, as well as the Tantric phase of Brahminism and the mystic aspect of Buddhism, all of which are based on a strong faith in spiritual power. There will be found evidence of the primitive belief that the object is the spirit itself which denotes an understanding of the unity of the universe, take for instance the lasso and Mother Earth, they are the spirits. There are rites demonstrating the fact that the people had moved from this belief of unity to one of separation, for it will be observed that some objects are no longer the spirits, but rather the habitation of the spirits, as instanced in the spirits of the trees, and there are also examples showing the people's belief in the power of mantras to ward off evil or bring forth good as well as instances of the worship of Agni. Perhaps two of the most curious

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features of the ritual are that the hunter is required to give up the world with its sense pleasures and pains, much in the same manner as when a man enters the Buddhist priesthood, and that he loses his identity in that of his elephant.

Establishing rules of conduct. Elephant hunting is a pursuit fraught with and surrounded by many dangers, so it behoves those engaging in it to approach the matter with clean and pure hearts. It requires the protection of nature in its divine aspect to enable the hunters to pass through those dangers unscathed, for, if they were holding sinful or lustful thoughts protection could not be extended to them. Owing to these dangers those following this occupation have built up a definite procedure and rules of conduct which embrace not only the actions of those actively engaged, but also wives in their distant homes. A husband and wife are one, and as the man has voluntarily renounced all worldly activities during the period of the hunt, so it is required of the woman that she comport herself in accord with the precepts of purity, and not embellish or beautify her person by artificial means during the absence of the husband.

Elephant hunting is an ancient profession. The experience gained from the earliest times has been handed down from father to son, for this profession has become hereditary in many families. The totality of this experience gained during a period extending over several thousand years has expressed itself in the formation of strict rules of procedure and conduct.

The business of elephant hunting is in fact of such a serious nature and so many prohibitions and restrictions are laid on the acts of the men so employed that it has also led to the establishment of a complete system of organisation.

Organisation. Elephant men start as menials, they have to perform all the unpleasant and hard work, and when riding are the assistants of the Mahout or he who sits on the elephant's neck, these menials have their place on the hindquarters of the elephant, they are known as "Ma" (မာ). When a menial has proved himself to

have attained some skill in the handling of elephants, he is promoted to the position of "Mahout of the left". Men holding these positions must possess some skill in their business and also have some knowledge of the language used in the forests, which may be termed spirit language. Mahouts of the left are promoted to the position of Mahouts of the right, who having attained some success as hunters are elevated to "Khu" (คู้). These "Khu" have the duty of conveying instructions to the Mahouts from the Chief hunter, and also of seeing that such orders are properly performed. The position above that of "Khu" is that of "Pakam" (ปากัม). There is a Pakam of the right and of the left, they are the deputies of the Chief hunter. The Chief hunter is known as "Patiyai" (ปัติยัย) and on him falls a variety of duties, for in addition to directing the operations he is also the priest of the hunters; he performs all ceremonies, such as making offerings to placate the evil spirits, suitable sacrifices to obtain the protection and help of the good spirits, to officiate at the ceremony of lustration and absolution from sin, and before entering the forests to hold converse with the spirits to obtain their permission to enter. These men having passed through all the stages related above, become much versed in forest, elephant, and spirit lore. Their authority is upheld by the respect called forth from those under them by their great knowledge. In most districts where wild elephants roam the forest, will be found an ancient man known as the "Patiyai-thout" (ปัติยัยทวด). He knows all there is to know of forests, elephants, and spirits, and it is to him that all engaged in the pursuit of elephant hunting appeal for information regarding these matters, and also for decisions about procedure and rules of conduct.

Fee. The payment of a fee to the "Patiyai" has to be made when promotion to any of the above mentioned grades is granted. For instance a menial who has not yet entered the

priesthood, when promoted to be a Mahout of the left has to pay 1 baht, 1 fowl, and 1 bottle of spirits, but he who has performed his obligations as a priest has to pay double this amount, and menials who are unmarried have to pay treble the fee mentioned here. A Mahout of the left on promotion to Mahout of the right pays 5 bahts, 3 fowls and 3 bottles of spirits. A Mahout of the right when made a "Khu" pays 6 bahts, 4 fowls and 4 bottles of spirits. A Khu when promoted to "Pakam" of the left pays 10 bahts 4 fowls and 4 bottles of spirits, and a similar fee on promotion to Pakam of the right. A man holding the rank of Pakam on being made a Patiyai pays 20 bahts, 6 fowls, and 6 bottles of spirits. A layman who has taken elephants into the forest and slept therein for over four nights is deemed to be a Mahout and is eligible for the position of "Khu", and when granted this grade pays a fee of 6 bahts, 4 fowls and 4 bottles of spirits. No fee is necessary for the position of "Patiyai-thoat". All fees so paid are the prerequisite of the Patiyai.

Success in the catching of elephants being the basis of promotion, it is laid down that 15 animals must be taken before a hunter can be promoted to be a Mahout, but as elephants are divided into classes (see Introductory note), it has been further prescribed that one noble elephant (ช้างมงคลหรือช้างเผือก) is equal to five common. Promotion above that of Mahout does not require that any specific number be caught.

Lectures. The Patiyai holds regular meetings in his house or some other convenient place where he, being assisted by one Pakam, one Khu, one Mahout of the right and one of the left, delivers lectures on all matters concerning elephants, forest-signs, oblations, sacrifices, incantations, and spirit-language, as well as the rules of conduct required of men when engaged on this business.

Preparations for the hunt. When the season, which extends from December to March, arrives for commencing hunting operations, the Patiyai, the experienced one, apprises his men and requires them to make preparations and be ready to start when he

has selected the auspicious hour and day. The experienced one who is versed in some degree in reading the face of the heavens makes a solitary vigil about the third watch of the night, to ascertain from the position of the stars the right time to leave for the hunt. Having fixed the time and day, word is sent round to the men who must henceforth divorce themselves from their ordinary mode of living, separate themselves from their wives and families, and as far as possible endeavour to be pure in thought and act, for they have to participate in many ceremonies which can only be approached by those who have consecrated themselves to the new life. In fact this change demands that they drop even their names; if a man is a Mahout, he must henceforth be known by the name of his elephant with the prefix Pakam, if he is a menial then he is called after his elephant with the prefix "Ai" or "Ee" according to the sex of the animal. This implies that the men lose their identities in that of their animals.

Enjoinments on women. The first thing these men have to do is to take farewell of their wives and families and when doing so to enjoin on the women the necessity for being chaste, and to refrain from embellishing their bodies with cosmetics, powders, perfumes, turnerie, and on no account to cut their hair. It is also required of the women that when cutting fire-wood they shall cleave right through with the axe, and not use the foot as a lever for breaking. Guests and strangers must not be received and allowed to sleep in the house, this prohibition applies also to relatives. It is forbidden to use a broom in sweeping the house, all dust and other rubbish must be gathered in the hands and cast away some distance from the house. Wood and other articles shall not be cast under the house, and women should not sit with their limbs across the sill of the door. Nor shall they sleep on a mattress. Wives shall not sing or show any signs of happiness nor shall they being in the house speak to any one on the ground. Should the wife of a man who is absent on a hunt, contravene or disobey any of these injunctions, injury will befall the absent man, and if the woman is

unfaithful, he will lose his life by falling from his elephant, or by attack of a tiger or other wild beast. I was told of a variation of these requirements as existing on the east bank of the Mekhong, a variation exactly the opposite. When a man goes on a hunt he asks a male friend to live in his house as a companion to his wife. On his return from the hunt on meeting his wife his first question is to ascertain whether the wife has had intercourse with the lodger, if she replies in the negative the husband is much upset, for he will then have to hand over to his substitute all the profit obtained in the hunt, whereas should the woman reply in the affirmative the husband is highly pleased for all the profit of the hunt remains his own. The substitute returns to his home, and the husband resumes his ordinary relations with his wife on whom no stigma falls. I will not guarantee the truth of this story, but it is current throughout the eastern provinces.

The thong-lasso. The most important thing in connection with a hunt is the thong lasso. The greatest attention and care has to be bestowed on the lasso, for the very lives of the men depend on its reliability and strength, which must be great enough to hold the most powerful captive in his struggles to escape. The lasso is housed in a building standing high and separated from the homes of the villagers, no woman is allowed to trespass within the precincts of this house. A fact stands forth with clear definition which is of importance and must be set down here, it is that the lasso is not protected by any particular spirit or possessed by one. It is the spirit itself, and it is for this reason that such honour is paid to it. There is no ceremony of propitiation in order to obtain its favour as in the case of spirits which inhabit or protect certain things. Prayers of supplication are offered up begging that the lasso spirit will use its strength in furtherance of the interests of the hunt.

**Reading of
the omens
from fowl
mouth-bone.**

Each man, who has been notified of the coming hunt, must proceed to the meeting ground which is generally near the lasso house. He must bring with him certain articles for the purpose of making

the sacrificial offerings, they are: a fowl, rice, a bottle of spirits, candles, sandal wood, incense tapers, cigars, betel-nut, betel-leaf, and small banana leaf cups for holding flowers, as well as four bananas tied round with red and black thread. Although the actual articles used in the ceremony may differ according to the custom or practice in vogue in any particular district, it is absolutely indispensable to bring the first five. When the sacrifice is offered up to the lasso-spirit an invocation is made using these words: “สาธุทอน เจ้าทอน เจ้าโหม่ย๋ย เจ๋ยว่น จะพาเข้าดอน นอน ถิ่น จิโฆก จิหมาย ก็ขอให้เห็น ใน คางไก่ จิโฆก จิหมาย ก็ให้ คางไก่ เป็น แอก แยกเป็น ไถ ถ้าขี้อโฆก บ่อดมน ก็ให้เป็น หัวเจ้าต้นจิษ,” which rendered into English means: “O Goodness, Chief of the lasso shrine, we are about to take thee, O Lasso to the forest, where thou shalt sleep in strange places; if we are to be favoured with good fortune let this be manifested in the mouth-bones of the fowls sacrificed by the same, by these being arched as the yoke and forked like a plough; if fortune is not to be ours, let this be manifested in bruises and dark spots on the skin of the heads of the fowls”.

The fowls which are sacrificed on the altar by the Patiyai play an important part in this ceremony. The fate of a hunter, as to whether he shall join in the hunt or not, is decided by certain omens or signs seen in the mouth-bone and head of each fowl by the Patiyai, who is gifted with powers of divination. In those districts where the mouth-bone is used the Patiyai takes it in his hands for examination saying “เพื่อนจะพาช้างให้ แก่พวกมันแล้ว” — “Our good friend (the lasso) is about to give us elephants”. In the province of Nagara Rajasima (Korat), the following omens are read from the bone. (1) Should both ends of the bone be bent backward symmetrically, it is taken as a good omen, fortune will attend the hunt. (2) Should the end of the bone be bent sideways, the herd of wild elephant will break away and scatter in all directions, but fortune will attend the hunt. (3) Should the ends of the bone run

straight, neither good nor bad fortune will attend the hunt, animals may or may not be captured. (4) Should the ends of the bone bend downwards, it is a bad omen, injury or death will befall some of the hunters.

In the province of Chaiyapom which lies North of Korat, the acceptance is somewhat different, for in this province should the bone be straight with the ends bent upwards and the skin of the fowl clean and white, it is a good omen, fortune will attend the hunt; should however the bone be shrunk, deformed and bent and the skin of the head of the fowl black or dark, it is a bad omen, misfortune will attend the hunt.

If at this ceremony the fowls were sacrificed together without distinction of ownership, it now becomes necessary to make a second offering to ascertain which member of the party is in disfavour with the lasso spirit so that he may be rejected. Each man must bring one fowl, one bottle of spirits, four banana-leaf cups for flowers, four candles, four quids of betel, four cigars, which are offered up on the altar in the hall of ceremonies where the lassoes are placed. Each man makes his own offering and calls on his ancestors experienced in the ways of the hunt to accept it. The reading of the omens or signs is as follows: (1) Should there be one or two black spots in the skin of the back portion of the neck of the fowl, great fortune will attend the hunt, it may also mean that there will be a long but successful chase. (2) Should there be dark lines in the skin above the eye sockets, it is a very good omen, the hunters will succeed in placing the lasso at the first throw round the hind leg of the animals they are trying to catch. (3) Should the point projecting from the joint of the bone be bent towards the left, good fortune will attend the hunt. (4) Should the point projecting from the joint of the bone be bent and shrunk so that it touches the bone itself, misfortune will attend the hunt and the owner of this fowl should not be allowed to join the party, for if he or his elephant does so, illness will be his lot and he may die. (5) Should the point projecting from the joint of the bone be straight, it

is a good omen, many elephants will be caught. (6) Should the skin of the head of the fowl be dark in colour or bruised, it is a bad omen; the owner of this fowl should not be allowed to take part in the hunt, for if he does he will be killed by falling from his elephant, or by a tiger.

In the province of Kukhan the readings of the bones are as follows: (1) Should the point projecting from the joint of a bone be arched or curled, it is an omen portending that the owner of this fowl will succeed in capturing elephants. (2) Should the point projecting from the joint of the bone be straight or at an angle, or be arched but not in contact with the bone, or should it be bent towards either the right or the left, or have no kink or accretion, it is a sign that no elephant will be caught, and the members of the hunting party will fall victims to disease. The owner of a fowl which gives bad omens must not be allowed to join the party.

In the Northern province of Bayab, which includes the Lao territories of Chieng-mai, Lampoon, Lampang, Phre, Nan, Chieng-sen, etc, the practice is somewhat different. Each hunter before joining the party must bring two fowls, one bottle of spirits, one handful of tobacco, and place them with his iron driving goad before his elephant. The Chief hunter offers up a prayer to the king spirit of the forest, the spirits of the trees and the servitors of the king spirit, and begs them to shower favours on the petitioner. Each man now presents the mouth-bone of his fowl to the Chief hunter for him to read the omens. Should the point projecting at the joint of the bone be slightly bent, moderate fortune will attend the party; should it be much bent there will be great good fortune. Should, however, the point be straight it is a bad omen. The owner of this fowl together with his utensils as well as his clothing is taken by the Chief hunter to the bank of a stream of running water, where water consecrated by the recitation of certain stanzas is poured on him, so that by this act of lustration all evil may be purged from the sinner and carried away by the running water. His clothing must be washed. This ceremony over, the men

together with the Chief hunter cry in unison, "He is purified" and this man may then join the party.

In this province, there are two other manners of reading the omens. I cannot find that they are used in any other part of the country. During the ceremony of offering up prayers to the leather lasso imploring the spirit to exert its strength and skill on behalf of the hunters, candles are lit and fixed to a great tree. The flame of each candle is carefully watched, if it rises high by leaps, the omen is good and the owner of this candle may join the hunt; if, however, the candle burns steadily, the flames not leaping, the omen is bad and the owner cannot be allowed to take part in the hunt until he has been purified by the ceremony of lustration described above. Swords are also used for giving the omens. A sword is hung up so that it may swing freely. Two men, candidates for the hunt perform this ceremony of reading the omens. They stand one on each side of the sword, pointing with a finger at the flat side of the blade where it joins the hilt, give voice to a wish that the sword may turn round to either the right or the left. Should the sword move in accord with the wish expressed, it is a good omen, there will be a good catch; should the sword remain steady, it is a neutral omen, there will be neither good nor bad fortune; but should it swing round in the direction opposite to that wished, it is a bad omen, the man wishing cannot be allowed to join the hunt for great misfortune will attend it, he must be purified before being accepted as a member of the hunt. In all districts before homage is paid and oblations are offered to the lasso spirit, the hunters must circumambulate the lasso-shrine thrice, blowing on a buffalo horn when passing its eastern side.

**Start for the
hunt, wearing
of waist-belts
necessary as
having
protective
powers.**

Prayers having been made to the lasso-spirit, the omens read, the men selected, the hunting party with its elephants is formed and a start is made for the serious business of the hunt. The lassoes having been placed on the elephants and the Chief hunter being seated on the neck of his mount calls out:

“ Omnipotent One, kindly lead the way, thy slaves will humbly follow, and grant to us the favour of thy protecting hand to ward off and frustrate all evil”. (เจิญพระครู (พระอินทร์ครว) เดินนำ ผู้ล่าเดินหลัว สักขาหลัว วิภาตสันติ). Each of the senior hunters should tie round his waist a sheath-belt made of cloth into which he may put all the odds and ends such as parched rice (a kind of iron ration), medicinal roots and herbs; the menials are only allowed to use sheath-belts made of coarse hemp. These belts must be always worn round the waist as a necessary defense against the attacks of evil spirits, should this precaution be neglected the men so neglectful will be visited by evil spirits at night who will squeeze their testis and cause great pain. It is however curious that these men are not allowed to carry on their bodies either small images of the Buddha (รูปพระปฏิมากร) or charms with cabalistic signs inscribed on them (ระฆุต พิตม), for these amulets are deemed to be eminently efficacious against demon power. Can it be that the wearing of these sheath-belts has any analogy with the sacred cord worn by the twice-born (Brahman).

Begs for permission to enter forest, and for protection from the king-spirit of the trees, Before entering the forest it is necessary to obtain permission to do so from the guardian spirit. The Chief hunter on bended knees informs the spirits of the forests and hills of the number of men and elephants forming his party, and then recites the following stanza partly in the spirit language:—
LadyMother Earth, & ancestors. “โอมเผณิกเข็กนณกษปะระกัณมมพระชนเณ ทาณลันนัก็เคยลั้ว ปลัอ์ทาณนี้ญะคยเท่ยว โอมสวาทะโดนะโมตัสสะ,” which rendered into English means “Salutation to thee, O

Beneficent Lady Mother Earth, and to ye spirits of the forest, I beseech ye to protect and safeguard us in our journeyings along forest paths and in forest glades and in the hunt that we may enjoy well being and be unharmed

by the dangers of the forest and of our enemies, and that the same may be frustrated". The road into the forest having been opened by the use of the magic inherent in this mantra the party proceeds on its way. At the foot of the first great tree encountered, another ceremony of propitiation has to be performed. The Chief hunter sitting on the neck of his elephant and facing the tree cries in a loud voice:— “เจ้าต้นไม้ ธิญ์เจ้าออกไป สวรรค์วิเศษสันติ,”

which is a mantra recited for the purpose of beseeching the queen spirit of the tree to leave her home, that the tree may be used as a tying place for newly captured elephants during the period of training, and may be translated thus: “O Spirit of the tree, please quit your arboreal home and surrender it to us in a spirit of self-sacrifice.” The party halts here, but before each man descends from his elephant, he must enquire of the Lady Mother Earth whether she is present to receive him by saying the following stanza:—

“นางพระธรณีเจ้าเอ๋ย อยู่แล้วหรือยังสวรรค์วิเศษสันติ” — “O Lady Mother Earth, Benevolent One, art thou present and willing to receive us in a spirit of kindly protection?” The men now get down from their elephants to Mother Earth and with much reverence remove the leather lassoes from their place on the back of the elephants to the ground. Before doing this however, it is necessary to repeat this mantra:— “โอม เณนิเกกแผนก เมกพระกำกวมพระธรณี สวรรค์”,

with the purpose that Mother Earth shall receive the lasso spirit into her bosom, this mantra in English has this value: “Salutation, O Lady Mother Earth, please exercise and extend to us thy benevolent power that we (the lasso-spirit?) may pass safely o’er thy person and obtain the fruition of our desires”. The leather lassoes having been placed on the ground, the spirit is fed with small pieces of the cooked flesh of a fowl, placed between the coils of the thongs at each point of the compass. The spirits of the ancestors of the hunters are now fed. Banana leaves are cut into two squares, one square placed on the other so as to cover half of it. A bit of the boiled flesh of a fowl is placed on each square, a little

spirit is dropped on the flesh as well as a little water. The ancestral spirits are invited to partake of the meal provided, the following words are used for the invitation:— “เทือกกวดชะเมอนบัจญัต เทือกแล้วเอาโชกขอหมานจุการ ขอให้อยู่ดีมีเม” —“We beseech ye to partake of the rice, fowl, and liquor and having partaken thereof, to favour us with good fortune and to keep us safe from all evil things, sickness and danger”. There is a variation to this stanza used in the province of Kalasindhu where it is worded thus:— “เทือกตัวอ้อย กับชะเมอนบัจญัต แล้วขอให้อยู่ดีมีเม และให้จุการ ขอข้าพเจ้าที่ดูวัวดูควนไปเป็นนุ ลคน คนที่มา.....คน ข้างต่อ.....ตัว ขออย่าให้เป็นอันตราย,” which means literally, “O Spirits, kindly partake of the pork, fowl and liquor offered, and grant us thy protection that we may have well being and may succeed in capturing elephants of beauty and strength to become our property and our servants; we are taking into thy domain.....hunters and.....elephants, give these thy protection”. The number of men and elephants has to be stated. When resuming the journey the lassoes cannot be raised from the ground to load them on the elephants without first obtaining permission from the Lady Mother Earth. The formula used is “นางพระธรณีจ้ายอ โอม เมณีกเล็ก.ช่วยลม สัตวิเสาะ” which means—“O Lady Mother Earth, please return to us that which we have entrusted to thy care without impediment or obstacle”. This status of the leather lasso is so exalted that this ceremony of handing them over to the care of Mother Earth and receiving them back from her bosom has to be repeated each time they are unloaded from or loaded on to the backs of the elephants. When rivers are encountered and have to be crossed or mountains block the way it is necessary for the Chief hunter to beg for permission from the governing spirits to cross or pass over. These words are used” นางพระคงคาจ้ายอ อยู่แล้วหรือยัง สัตวิชาติวินาศสันติ”,—“O Lady Gonga (swift flowing waters) art thou present? If thou art present allow us to pass over in thy safe.

keeping". In the case of a mountain, these words are used "เจ้าภูเขา อยู่แล้วหรือยัง สักวาตวิฆนาคสนันตี" "O Mountain Lord art thou present? If thou art present allow us to pass over in thy safe keeping".

The hunting camp, its plan & observances to be followed therein. The hunting party with their elephants having entered the forest it is intended to explore and hunt in, the Patiyai selects a suitable spot for the camp which should if possible be near running water. The business of building the huts is entrusted to the menials. The hut of the Patiyai is located in the centre. The number of huts required is determined by the size of the party. There are many customs to be observed in connection with the camp. Each hut is in charge of one of the senior hunters. Separate door-ways must be used by the senior hunters and menials. Each man must sleep in the same place every night, going to another man's bed is forbidden. This injunction is based on the belief that in so far as the men obey it and sleep in their own beds placed on the same spot every night, so will the elephants whose tracts have been found hover round these tracts and not wander from them. It would seem that this result is obtained by setting in motion some process of sympathetic telepathy. In connection with this belief it should be remembered that the hunters have separated themselves from the material world and are in the spirit world. They are in daily commune with the spirit, they speak the language of the spirit, they have become identified with the elephant world. Menials except those attached to the Patiyai are not allowed to wear coats, the coatless ones may however cover their bodies with a shawl or blanket.

All members of the party must take their meals together and eat at the same time, the rice must be equally divided, the food must not be blown on to cool it nor should insects or other foreign matter which may be on it be blown away with the mouth. Talking at meals is prohibited. Smoking, chewing betel, and talking when

in bed is also strictly prohibited. All menial work such as cleaning the camp, cutting the firewood, carrying the water and cooking the food is performed by the "Ma". The Patiyai, his Pakam and Khu deliver lectures on elephant catching and training, and induct the uninitiated into the intricacies of the spirit language which must be spoken during the whole period of the hunt. If the eggs of a jungle-fowl or an iguana (ไคย) are found, they must be presented to the Patiyai, the finder is forbidden to eat them, he may however eat the eggs of a crocodile. The internal organs of any wild ox, deer, or other wild animals must be given to the Patiyai, no one else shall eat of them but they may partake of the flesh.

Worship of Agni in the camp. Perhaps the most important feature of these camps is the status of the three fires kindled from wood placed at the two sides and the front of the Patiyai's hut.

The fires at the right and left side of the hut are called "Khampuak-sadam" (right) and "Khampuak-sadiang" (left), that at the front "Khampuak-churug" (foot). The fires of the right and left must be made up at a distance of three cubits from the side of the hut on a level with the shoulder of the Patiyai when in a recumbent position, that at the foot is placed at the same distance from the hut. The fires of the right and the left are sacred, they cannot be used for any purpose nor can burning faggots be taken from them for starting other fires. The fire at the foot of the hut is a common fire, its burning wood and ashes may be used for all purposes. These fires must be attended to and kept alight during the whole period the camp is occupied. The fire-wood used in the sacred fires must be one cubit in length and the faggots be placed side by side when the fire is built up. The fires having been kindled the Patiyai on bended knees with upraised and joined hands invokes the favour and blessing of the Lord Agni, "अग्नि" which is a prayer for success in taking elephants. Each morning the men in the camp

on rising from their beds must approach the fire in reverential attitude and make obeisance at these shrines of Agni.

A restriction is laid on the conduct of the men, namely that all loose, ribald, bantering and joking conversation is prohibited. Talking about women is on no account allowed, for it behoves the men to enter on the operation of elephant hunting with pure hearts, a continual watch has to be placed at the portals of their minds, in order to prevent the inrush or arising of carnal desires. This restriction must be obeyed with effect from the third night after the men have left their homes.

Inhibitions on conduct of hunters. The ethical thread binding the acts of the men to the precepts of right morality and conduct is very strong, any breach of good conduct produces some ill effect. Should the men take food surreptitiously outside the regular hours fixed for meal, vultures and crows will attack and peck at the provisions collected in the camp. The smelling of rice which has been scorched by fire is forbidden, if this prohibition is contravened then a curious form of fermentative telepathy is set in motion reacting on the wild elephants which when met with will break away and elude capture.

Ceremony of confession & absolution. The camp having been built, and everything being in its place and in order, a very peculiar ceremony has to be conducted by the Patiyai. It may be called "The service and rite of confession and absolution". The Patiyai calls his men together and sitting before them enquires of each whether he has committed any fault or sin against the social order, for if he has, he cannot be permitted to join in the coming hunt without having made a full confession and obtained absolution. The Patiyai as the Chief priest of the hunt and being in close communion with the spirits is invested with authority to hear confessions of sins committed, and grant absolution for the same. From what has already been related, it will be readily realised that the serious business of hunting can only be entered on with hearts

which have been cleansed from all impurities, and each of the men knowing full well the evil things which will befall him if he engages in this pursuit unpurified takes advantage of the opportunity given him by the Patiyai to obtain absolution.

Offerings to Each man approaches the Chief priest in reverential
Patiyai. attitude and prostrating himself, makes obeisance by raising his joined hands above his head and makes a full confession of any faults, sins, and crimes, which he may have committed and which lie heavy in his conscience. He presents an offering of a pig, a jar of spirits, one baht, and flowers, sandal wood sticks and candles, two of each, four leaf cups or boxes. Should a pig not be procurable at the time, it may be presented by the penitent on his return to his home. These offerings are required as proof of the earnestness of the sinner to obtain purification, and some of them are required for the oblations to be made to the spirits at the service of absolution. The Patiyai then conducts such penitents to the bank of the stream near the camp, erects an altar and having lit the candles and sandal wood tapers which have been placed on it, informs the spirits of the sins committed by each of the men kneeling before the altar, and mentioning their names and occupation prays that the offerings made may have the power to invoke the help of the spirits to cleanse the penitent of his sins. The penitent asking for absolution uses the following formula, in craving for forgiveness he says:—"O Lord of the forest spirit, please grant me absolution from my sins". The lord of the spirit demands what he has done. The penitent replies "I am a buffalo thief". The man then turns to the lady spirit of
Act of **lustration.** Mother Earth and begs her to cleanse him of his sins. The spirit asks what his fault is, he replies, "I am a buffalo thief". The man then turns to the Sun Lord and begs him to cleanse him of his sins. The Sun Lord asks what his fault is, he replies "I am a buffalo thief". This formula having been repeated three times the Patiyai pushes the penitent sinner with his foot into the stream of running water, and then the ceremonial act of lustration is completed

and absolution is obtained. From this day forth it is incumbent on these men who have received pardon, to protect themselves against the entry into their minds of evil thoughts and to be loyal to their companions in the hunt. Should, however, any of these men who have been absolved commit an offence again, a second ceremony of lustration as described above must be performed, and twice the amount of the fees fixed paid. Should the offence be that of having committed adultery with the wife of another, the fine to be paid is one baht and one pig. If the offence is that of giving expression to remarks derogatory to the reputation or honour of the Patiyai, the fine is 25 bahts and one buffalo, no abatement is permissible. If, however the offence is one of speaking evil of a companion, the fine is one baht and one bottle of spirits, and the offender is required to beg for pardon from him of whom he has spoken improperly, and in performing this act of apology, must present the ceremonial wax, candles, and sandal wood tapers.

When lack of success in hunt traced to the man who has diverged from the path of virtue, curious & severe punishment inflicted. If during the progress of a hunt traces of elephants are not found or being found and followed up the herd is not met with, it is held that the guardian spirits of the forest are withholding their favour and the hunt has been led to the wrong forest due to some member of the party having left the path of virtue, the following of which was enjoined on him when he prayed for and received absolution. Enquiries having produced the offender, he is promptly punished; the punishment being that he shall go down on his hands and knees, the lasso ropes to be placed on his back and that he shall be whipped round the camp three times making sounds like the trumpeting of an elephant.

Finding traces of wild elephants. At the appointed hour for leaving the camp, the Patiyai mounts his elephant skilled in the art of hunting, leads the way into the forest searching for the herd living there. When the first traces are found, the

Patiyai and his men exclaim actuated by feeling of great pleasure: "Here are manifestations in answer to our prayers and offerings made by our true hearts". The traces are followed until the herd is met with. The Patiyai orders his Mahout of the right to take his place on the right side of the herd, and the Mahout of the left to do the same on the left, and to drive the herd of elephants towards the spot on which he with his huntsmen all on their trained hunting-elephants are awaiting their approach. When the herd is

Manner of approaching wild herd. not far distant the Patiyai gives orders to his men to spread out and surround the animals. Each man having selected one of the herd for capture, he urges

his elephant towards this animal. Each Mahout carries the leg lasso with him, one end of which is tied round his hunting-elephant's neck. The lasso is attached to a long but light pole which the Mahout holds over his shoulder in readiness to slip over the foot of the animal he is attempting to snare. When the hunting elephants approach the herd, it frequently happens that the leader comes forth and gives battle. The Mahout does all in his power to help the animal he is riding, striking the attacker with the lasso pole and the iron driving goad. Should the hunting elephant be worsted in the fight, he flees from the field of battle hotly pursued by the victor, knowing full well this pursuit will not be of long duration and rarely covers more than a mile, for the leader of the herd invariably

Selection of wild animal for capture & fight. gives up the chase to return to protect his companions. When the chase is not interrupted by the pugnacity of one of the herd, the Mahout having selected his prey begins hustling him away, and as he runs the trained hunting elephant moves by his side being forced forward to gain a front position by the man on his back striking him on the hind quarters with a ball of iron or lead contained in

The chase & capture a string bag attached to the end of a rope. When a favourable position has been gained, the Mahout leans forward and places the lasso in a right position to slip over the foot of the hind leg of the animal. If successful the rope is tightened by

a jerk, the lasso pole is pulled away and dropped. Mahout and his elephant have now to use all their skill and energy in holding the captive, and bring him to a standstill. The chase is a severe strain on both man and beast; however, eventually the captured animal is butted, dragged, pushed, and coaxed to a favourable position near a strong tree, where the hunting elephant with great dexterity runs the leather rope holding him and his captive together round the tree where it is so firmly tied by the men as to prevent its being torn away. The leather lasso is now removed from the neck of the hunting animal. It sometimes happens that the lasso breaks and the wild elephant runs from his enemies; if however, the broken end of the rope is long enough to trail on the ground, a number of men join in the pursuit on foot. If they succeed in getting hold of the end of the rope and can hang on till a good opportunity occurs for running it round the trunk of a tree this is done, the rope is tied

**Difficulty
of tying up
captured
animal.**

and the animal captured. The elephant having been brought to a standstill, the most difficult part of the operation commences, it is the attempt to get the leather neck-rope over the head and round the neck of the captured elephant. The animal always puts up a great fight trying to frustrate every attempt by all means in its power, charging, moving the head, striking the neck-rope with its trunk, trying to tear it from the hands of its tormentors, trampling on it with its feet and biting with its teeth. This struggle may continue for hours, but the Mahout owing to the advantage he possesses from his seat on the neck of his animal and helped by its sagacity and skill, eventually places the rope round the neck of his captive, in preparation for leading him to the tethering post in the training ground. These hunting operations are generally conducted on moon light nights or with the help of torches, but some times in day light.

**Taming
of capture.**

When an elephant has been tamed sufficiently and cowed into submission by using the power of starvation and brute force to allow of its being handled, it is taken

to a tying post which has been erected for the purpose. The owner of the trained hunting elephant which caught this animal prepares an offering of one fowl, one bottle of spirits and one and a half ticals, which having been placed in the right position on an altar before the training post, the Patiyai comes forward and after having recited certain stanzas, the leg tether-rope is put on and thus the act of tying up is completed. A wild elephant having been tied to the training

Training of post, the process of taming and training is now entered
capture. on. Animals are alternately starved and fed, coaxed, and punished, the tame elephant is always by its side to keep it in submission and teach it by example how to behave in its new status as the companion and helper of man. This training may occupy any time from one to four months according to the temperament and age of the captive. Many animals die during this period, generally the older ones, therefore hunters endeavour to take young animals.

Ceremony for releasing spirit of elephant & purification of animal. Before the newly captured animals are taken to the homes of the hunters, it is necessary to drive out the spirit which has lived in the animal in his forest home. Water which has been consecrated and made holy by the recitation of magic stanzas or mantras is sprinkled over the animal and a little rice thrown at it. A bottle of spirits and a fowl are offered up as an oblation to the spirit possessing the elephant, which being unable to resist the power of the magic of the holy water and rice, leaves the animal, accepts and partakes of the food offered. The animal is now freed from all obligations to its companion of the wild herd to which it belonged and can now join with man in his aims and ambitions, whether war, commerce or the chase.

Ceremony of releasing hunters from obligations accepted & translation The hunt being over, the captured animals tamed, the whole party turn their faces towards their homes, and when two days journey distant, the Patiyai acting as priest has to prepare offerings for the purpose of performing the ceremony known as “ลาชีวิตลาครอง” for freeing the forest spirits from

**from the
spirit to the
material
world.**

their obligations to help and protect the party which they accepted at the commencement of the hunt. The Patiyai tells the spirits to return to their country and avocations and not to follow and remain with him saying: "The elephants caught are our property and well compensate us for the offerings made to you the spirits". He further enjoins the spirits to continue to protect the forest and beasts therein, and intimates that he will return the following year and make offerings and presents to them as he has done this year.

**Ceremony of
releasing
hunters from
obligations
accepted &
translation
from the spirit
to the material
world.**

When about to leave the forest which has been hunted in, a custom has to be observed by the hunters which has the purport of translating the men from the spirit world back to the material one. Each of the hunters must light a candle and make the usual offerings to spirits in order to be freed from the obligations and inhibitions they accepted at the commencement of the hunt. He must also remove and destroy by fire the cord which he tied round his waist at the beginning of the hunt and which has never left his body. By this act of burning the cord, the man is freed from the possibility of spirits interfering in his affairs and doing him injury, and from this moment he may use his mother tongue and engage in all his ordinary pursuits in the same manner as he was wont to do before he left his home.

**Curious
ceremony
when two
Patiyai or
Chief-hunters
meet.**

In order that the sense of harmony which is so essential to the successful conduct of elephant hunting may not be disturbed by any discordant note, a curious custom is observed when two Patiyai meet in any camp or path. The younger approaches the elder with respectful bearing and holding the flowers and candles of pardon, begs for indulgence for any act committed or thoughts held wittingly or unwittingly against the elder, asks for a right of passage and that no misfortune may befall him. The elder gives a benediction and prays that he may succeed in that

which he desires to do. The younger man then departs on his way.

Share rights in Captured elephants. Captured elephants are not shared in equally by all members of the hunt. There is a fixed rule by which certain shares are allotted, this allotment varies according to custom and usage. In the province of Ubol, the owner of the hunting elephant, the Pakam and the Ma have equal rights of property in a captured elephant and the profit accruing from its labour. When sold the proceeds are divided equally amongst these three men. A payment of 4 bahts has to be made by the Ma to the Pakam, to which sum the Pakam adds 4 bahts paying 8 to the owner of the hunting animal on account of the leather-lasso (ขี้เหล็ก). In some cases the share rights are different, for instance the owner of the hunting elephant receives a half-share and the Pakam and Ma a quarter each. Should the hunting elephant have been hired for the hunt, then it is usual to deduct the hire money from the proceeds of the sale of any captured elephant, the balance being divided equally between the owner, the Pakham and the Ma. In the province of Kukhan the share rights are, half to the owner of the hunting animal, the other half being allotted two-third to the Mahout and one-third to the Ma. No payment is required for the use of the lasso. In Chaiyapom the owner of the elephant receives 2 shares and the Mahout and the Ma one each, and it is usual for a sum of Tes. 20 to be paid to the owner of the lasso in respect of each elephant caught. Should however the lasso be hired then the payment is arranged by agreement. In the province of Buriram there is no fixed rule for the allotment of share rights. In this province the owner of the hunting-animal generally hires a Mahout and Ma, and these men have no right in the animal captured. In Surindr the owner receives 3 shares the Mahout 2 and the Ma 1. In Kalasindhu, the owner, the Mahout and the Ma share equally, and payment on account of the use or hire of the lasso is a matter of arrangement.

Observances peculiar to Chaiyapom. In the district of Chaiyapom and in fact in several others, the observances to be carried out in connection with the making of offerings to the spirits of the

forest which it is intended to hunt in are bound up with local tradition. Only such offerings as the spirits delight in should be given, and for this purpose it is usual to ask those living in the vicinity of the forest what food the spirits partake of. In addition to the food offering each man must chip a piece of wood from a tree, fashion it in the form of two lotus flowers and present these flowers with two candles, two sandal wood tapers, one quid of betel and one cigar to the spirits. An entry into the forest can now be made, and if elephants are not found, it is sure evidence that a mistake has been made in the choice of the food offered. A curious ceremony has to be performed to ascertain the gastronomic desires of the spirits. Clay is taken and moulded in the form of a pig, duck, fowl and a turtle. These are placed on a high altar on a level with the eyes and a fervent wish is held by the Patiyai that the spirits may manifest their requirements by causing one or other of the figures to fall down. Whichever animal is upset food of an animal of that species must be procured and offered.

Some obser- In the province of Surindr, the ceremony of
vances peculiar propitiation of and homage paid to the spirits of
to the province the forest before entering the same is somewhat
of Surindr. different to that observed elsewhere.

On arrival at the outskirts of the forest a halt is made and the Patiyai sends his men out on a foraging expedition to bring in such animals as they can get by snaring. All species of animals except a crocodile are legitimate as sacrifices to the spirits of the forest, mountains, and elephants. The animals caught are prepared as food, an altar is erected on which is placed two small blocks of wood which are held to be the embodiment of ancestral spirits, the spirits of the paternal and maternal grandfathers who have become spirit governors of the forests. The belief that persons profoundly interested in and much concerned with certain things in this world continue to be so interested and concerned with the same thing in the spirit world is extant among many of the peoples of Asia. All being ready for the acts of propitiation to be made, each man brings

a pair of funnel shaped leaf cups for holding flowers, a pair of candles, the goad or ankus for driving his elephant, a net bag weighted with a lump of iron or lead for striking the hind-quarters of his hunting elephant, elephant breast-ropes, the pole for throwing and placing the lassoes and lays them before the altar together with the sacrificial offerings. The net bag holding the weight used for striking the hind-quarters of the hunting elephant to cause it to accelerate its speed is attached to a cord of about 4 cubits in length which is tied round the waist of the man using it. Homage is rendered to these blocks of wood and prayers are proffered to them asking that the hunt be successful. From this day forth the men who form the hunting party give up and leave the material world and live during the course of the hunt in the spirit world as mentioned elsewhere. The Surindr men while in camp have to perform daily the rite of making offerings of rice to the lasso spirit.

Worship of the lasso-spirit. Two handfuls of boiled rice are placed on a leaf dish by each of the men before his lasso. The men then in a kneeling posture pray in their own language beseeching the spirit of the lasso to capture an elephant each day and they promise that if the spirit complies with the intercession an offering of a pig will be made. The hunters having made the daily oblation when turning from the altar to go the camp cry out with a loud voice: “มดขมิ้น มดก้านพร้าว ขนขอมมด สมน้ำร้อน” which translated in the sense of its value means, “O men, depart for the forest to forage for the daily food to be prepared in our pots and pans, together with fuel of propitious lengths suitable to the honour and dignity of our purpose to gain the favour of the spirits, that our hunting elephants may win success”. This command is given out every morning that the men engaged in the hunt may perform faithfully their daily duties and not forget the obligations they have accepted. While in camp the following observances must be practised; the Patiyai shall take his meals before the other members of the hunt. At night time the men must sleep with their heads in

the direction of the Chief hunter's hut, when sitting in the camp they must sit on a piece of leather or skin spread on the ground, but at night their beds should be made of leaves, and if a man desires to point at any object he should not use his thumb straightened out, but must bend it in towards his body and point with bended thumb. Should elephants not be caught the amount of rice allowed to each man is reduced in quantity daily, but the other dishes are not curtailed.

This sketch gives a fairly full account of what takes place during an elephant hunt on the Korat plateau and I hope will be of value to those interested in such matters. The next paper will tell you of the rites, ceremonies, observances, and mantras employed by elephant men in the seaboard provinces when out on their business of erecting kraals and driving the herds into them. The procedure is very complex, much more so than that used on the Korat plateau. No step can be taken without invoking the power of the spirits and an amazing number of mantras have to be memorized and understood in order to evoke such power from the spiritual depths of the universe as are necessary to protect the hunters and bring success to the hunt.

