

AN ACCOUNT OF THE HUNTING OF THE WILD OX ON HORSE BACK IN THE
PROVINCES OF UBOL RAJADHANI AND KALASINDHU, AND THE RITES
AND CEREMONIES WHICH HAVE TO BE OBSERVED

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The author has already published in this Journal (Vol. XXIII, pt. 2 and Vol. XXV, pt. 2) an account of elephant hunting on the Korat plateau as well as in the province of Langsuan, situated on the sea board of Siam. These two papers not only record the methods adopted in hunting, but also give a full account of the ceremonial rites which have to be performed in order to bring the hunt to a successful issue. The present paper deals in a similar manner with the hunting of the wild ox. The writer hopes to be able to prepare a paper dealing with the ceremonies surrounding the catching of the *Plabük* (ปลาปัก) a kind of catfish, of the genus *Pangasius* in the Mekhong river.

This paper, on the hunting of wild ox, should be of interest to the anthropologist as well as the hunter of big game. The ceremonial which surrounds the acts of hunting and the rites which have to be performed give an insight to the beliefs of the people. One peculiar feature is that the hunters are protected by the chief spirit of a shrine which is the dwelling place of this spirit. The spirit enters the men, goes with them on the hunt, and they lose their identity in that of the ponies they ride. On the completion of a hunt the spirit returns to its shrine. Many enjoinderments of a prohibitory nature are laid on the hunters as well as their women. When any act of importance is to be carried out it is necessary for the chief huntsman to recite a prayer or stanza or to make some decoration to the spirits of the forest. The voice speaking to the spirits of the forest is that of the chief spirit of the shrine, who accompanies the men. Attention is drawn to the act of driving away the spirit which hovers about the *Kang Lüei* (คางลือย) plant and prevents the use by human beings of the beneficial properties inherent in that plant. When this spirit has been driven to a distance, a huntsman

digs up the roots and by virtue of the spirit which is in him is able to utilise the beneficent properties to give his men and their ponies courage and endurance. The same act is performed when taking timber to erect a Kraal or Kedah for the trapping of elephants. I do not know the scientific name of this plant, but it would seem to possess a certain quality which acts as a stimulant or produces a form of intoxication which causes the men to be devoid of fear. There seems to be very little if any trace of the influence of Buddhism in the prayers or stanzas which are used; but there are slight traces of Brahmanic beliefs. The men who engage in this pursuit of hunting the wild ox are eastern Laos, inhabiting a region where there has been Cambodian influence. The prayers or stanzas used are probably of great age, going back to pre-Buddhist and Brahmanic days. This method of hunting the wild ox is not used in any other part of Siam nor have I heard of it in any part of Burma, the Shan States, Cambodia or French Laos. It is probable that the hunting of the wild ox on horse back as described in this paper will be abandoned before many years have passed, owing to the building of roads and the use of motor vehicles, which are rapidly penetrating every part of Asia. In fact it will not be long before all remembrance of ancient customs and habits will have disappeared from the minds of the people inhabiting territories which a few years back were considered almost inaccessible, except to the explorer and adventurer. It is for this reason that I have placed on record an interesting pursuit of a people living in Eastern Siam.

My thanks are due to Khun Satok Supakit (ขุนสาคสุภกิจ), formerly a revenue officer in Ubol Rajadhani and now stationed in Nakhon Rajasima (Korat), for the very kindly help he has given me in ascertaining the facts recorded in this paper.

CHAPTER I

HUNTING IN UBOL RAJADHANI

(1) From enquiries made by me, it would appear that the hunting of the wild ox (*Bos Sondaicus*, โดศ^๑) on horse-back is only practiced in two localities, namely in the provinces of Ubol Rajadhani (อุบลราชธานี) and Kalasindhu (กาฬสินธุ์). There are some divergencies in the rites observed in these two districts.

The hunting of the wild ox is followed in the district of Nong Buahi (หนองบัวฮี) situated in Amphur Phimul Mangsahar (พิบูลมังสาหาร) of the province of Ubol Rajadhani, and in the districts of Lub (หลุบ) and Kuchinarayana, (กุฉินารายณ์) situated in the province of Kalasindhu. The account given below describes the practice followed by the hunters living in the district of Nong Buahi and was given to me by two experienced hunters named Mo Di Phumchandra (หมอดี พุ่มจันทร์) and Mo Lun Phumchandra (หมอลูน พุ่มจันทร์). Although men are trained for the purpose of the hunt, the profession of hunting wild ox is hereditary in certain families and these men alone attain to leadership in this craft. As the hunting has to be carried out on horse-back, and the weapon used for slaughtering the wild ox is a spear, some training in riding and the use of the spear is required of the men who engage in the hunt. The ponies used have to be fleet, sure of foot, strong, and possess qualities of endurance because the ox is hunted in the forest where trees and other obstacles have to be avoided while riding at full gallop in pursuit of a herd. The men other than the professional hunters go through a course of training in riding and the use of the spear for a period of from seven to fifteen days. A light pole resembling a spear is used for this purpose. The bridle is an article of the equipment of some importance and, having to be strong, is made of plaited cane. The reins are short and end in a loop which the rider holds. The saddle is a padded cushion made of kapok (ฝ้าย) some twenty four inches long by fifteen inches broad and is fixed to the pony's body with girths made of cane web. The hunting party is composed of the leaders or professional huntsmen (หมอเต่า), trained hunters (หมอน้ำ) and servants (มหฺล่ง). These latter look after the transport which is generally bullock carts, cut grass for the ponies, and cook the food for the hunting party. The hunt takes place in the dry season, commencing about the fourth month (February-March).

(2) The first rite to be observed is of some importance as having for its object the prevention of ill befalling the hunters. The men who are about to engage in a hunt must bring their ponies, spears, and saddles to a spirit shrine, and make themselves, and these things over to the spirit, that they may be protected from all evil such as fear, and stumbling on the part of the ponies, breaking of the spears and the slipping of the saddles. This ceremony is per-

formed by the chief huntsman, who makes three prostrations or obeisances before the spirit shrine, before uttering a prayer for protection. The men having assembled in front of the shrine each one makes an offering of one boiled fowl, one bottle of spirits, eight cone-shaped cups holding flowers, and an oblation composed of five cone-shaped cups holding flowers and five wax candles grouped together, symbolic of the five constituents of conditioned life or sensorial existence (เบ็ญจขันธ์) from which one must escape.⁽¹⁾ These offerings are made to the high spirit (พระกำนัล) on the day on which these things i. e. the ponies, spears and saddles are entrusted to this spirit, that they may enjoy his protection. The men who attend this ceremony come within the jurisdiction of the high spirit in all matters, and entirely lose their identity, being known during the period of the hunt by the names of their ponies. Men who follow the pursuit of elephant hunting on the Korat Plateau also lose their identity and are known by the names of their elephants.

(3) Certain enjoïnments or prohibitions are laid on these men, *viz.*—

a) that they shall not enter their own houses, or those of other persons;

b) that they shall not indulge in an amorous intrigue with any woman or have any connection with their own wives;

c) should any article or thing have been left behind in a house, the hunters shall not go to fetch it themselves, but must send a person having no connection with the hunting party;

d) that the hunters and servants shall not carry on their persons or in any manner during the period of the hunt any protecting amulets, charms, or talismans of any description whatsoever, but shall have implicit faith and trust in the protecting power of the high spirit to whom they have entrusted themselves;

e) no woman, whether young or old or a wife of any of the men, shall be allowed under any circumstances to accompany the hunting party.

Should any member of the hunting party contravene any of

(1) The five constituents or *skandha* are :—

- 1) matter ;
- 2) feelings ;
- 3) ideas ;
- 4) volition and other faculties ;
- 5) pure sensation or general consciousness.

The elemental constituents form part of the Dharma in Buddhism,

these conditions, evil and ill such as death or sickness will befall him. Having committed a breach of any of these prohibitions, confession of fault or sin before the chief huntsman or any other person will not absolve the offender from the consequences or penalties of his fault or sin. It is almost unknown for any member of a hunting party to commit a breach of these enjoiments.

Certain enjoiments are laid on the women belonging to the men during the absence of their husbands on a hunt. These are:—

a) they shall not wear a white skirt or petticoat under the outer skirt (ရွီ);

b) they shall not sit on the steps or in the doorway of a house;

c) they shall not throw baskets or others such receptacles from the house to the ground;

d) when giving alms of food, such alms shall not be given with the bare hand but should be placed on some article. All such alms must be made in a sitting posture as an act of reverence;

e) they shall not adorn or beautify their bodies with any powders, perfumes, or gay apparel;

f) they shall not beat their children;

g) they shall not indulge in an amorous intrigue or commit adultery with any man.

Should any woman not comport herself according to these enjoiments, ill fortune such as death by goring or falling from a pony, as well as through sickness will be the lot of the respective man.

When the men with their chief huntsman are assembled with their ponies, spears and saddles before the spirit shrine and the chief huntsman has made three ceremonial prostrations before the shrine, he offers up this prayer asking the high spirit to give his protection to those about to engage in the hunt. This prayer is as follows:—

“Spirit of goodness! O Great Chief of hunters, omniscient preceptor spirit! We are about to enter the forest wilds and live therein. We invoke thy power that the hunters, servants, ponies, cattle may be free from injury to foot and hoof. We crave that thee, O Spirit, will guard us safely in the forest that we may not follow wrong paths and lose our way, that the forest may not be dark and when treading the boundless plains that we be not overcome by fear. That should we step on plant or shrub they should bend to earth. That should we tread on wood or timber, it may firm remain. That should the forest be a tangle, we may find the right path

through. That when we lead our ponies we may lead them by the right way too. That when we with our spears thrust, we may stab the ox's neck. That when we evade the ox's rush, we may by the right way go. We ask for fortune and success."

คำขุเนอ หมอเฒ่าเจ้าหุดวง พระกำมทิด พระกำจายยั นมนต์คนดีจะ
เขาคอนนอนเถื่อน ขอให้คุมมดคุมหมอกคุมแหดคุมโหดคุมมาคุมกว
คนอย่าให้เจ็บ เดบอย่าให้ปวด ให้พระกำพะกาพทกษรภษา เขาบา
อย่าให้หุดงเขาดงอย่าให้มด เข้าโคกกวงอย่าให้ผดหัวใจ เขียบไม่
ให้นอนเขียบขอนให้แทบ เคาะมาให้หม่นบองหุดองมาให้หม่นทาง
แทงงัวให้หม่นคอกออกงัวให้หม่นทาง ขอให้โชคขอให้หมาง."

The chief huntsman having made this prayer, performs a libatory ceremony by pouring a little spirit on the points of the spears, and the head or pommels of the saddles, after which he blows three times on a buffalo horn. When this ceremony is complete the men remove their saddles and spears from the shrine, saddle their ponies and immediately leave the village for the forest. It is required that the men should commence their journey this day although they may only travel a short distance.

(4) The chief huntsman having bathed and dressed himself in white, proceeds to search for a herb or root known as *Kang Liei* (คางเลื้อย). He recites these verse for the purpose of driving out from the plant a spirit, Phraya Thara (พระยาธร):

"Om, auspicious word, breath of God! Phraya Thara (พระยาธร) spirit of the air, endowed with knowledge, having power to move through boundless space, riding his spirit horse at speed apace. I with my hammer strike him on the head. Lie thee not at foot of tree; watch thee not about the plants. By virtue of the sacred power Om, retreat, desert thy post and run away, remain thee at a distance from the tree."

"อมพระยาธรตั้งครีพ พระยาธรขมาพรมาจอกพอก ๆ ค่อนกุดอก
หัวพระยาธร มั่งอย่ามานอนใต้เบา มั่งอย่ามาเฝ้ากก (ต้น) ยา อม
ดะหะเพกให้มั่งเด็กหนูเือก มั่งอย่ามาเือกถักกยา."

Having driven away the guardian spirit of the plant, the chief huntsman now offers up this prayer, asking that the powers latent slumbering in the root of this good plant may come to life and rise:—

“Om, word of good, cause this power to rise. I have found the precious plant. When required to rise, please rise. When woken from thy slumber, please wake. Shouldst thou be at top of tree, please come down. Shouldst thou be at root below, please come up. This plant loveth me as the elephant loveth his tusks. This plant loveth me as fish loveth the water. It clings to me more firmly than to its best friends. Om, gracious word, by virtue of thy power, that power, that strength inherent in the stones of a fortress hath entered me within, acting as a screen behind, and the golden flashes of celestial axes invisible me make, these two like unto walls of stone hiding me from view. By virtue of power inherent in me, protected by the father, by virtue of power in me fostered by the teacher. The father and teacher bathing below, I refrain from bathing above. The father and teacher bathing above, I refrain from bathing below. I commit no act derogatory to, and I place no indignity on, my teacher. Om, by thy power, I reverence thee, primordial preceptor.”

“อมคะดุค ๆ คุณนกกยาให้ดุคกัดุค กุปลดกกยาให้ต่นกต่นเจ้าอยู่
 ยอดเทญเจ้าตงมา เจ้าอยู่ ช่าง เทญเจ้าขนมา กกยาชกกุปาน
 ช่างชกกา กกยาชกกุ ปานปลาดชกกา ให้คงเตศตกว่าเผ่นทงหลาย
 อมตติจจับสระหีบคง ๆ หินพุทไธเข้าในตนกู ก่ามฝายหตงม้ทงชวรนพ่า
 มาบงตนกูต่งด่ามช่าง เหมือนแผ่นกระต่านหิน มาบงตนกู คงดีทช
 กุกุ่มนำพ้อ คงดีทชกูก่อนำครู พ้อครูอาบไต้กูป้อไต้อาบเหนือ
 พ้อครูอาบเหนือกูป้อไต้อาบไต้ กูป้อไต้ธองอาจ กูป้อไต้ประมาทครู
 อมลิตทธิดะการพระครูอาจวราย เจ้าเอย.”

(This phrase อมตติจจะสระหีบคง ๆ หินพุทไธ is obscure, and I do not guarantee the accuracy of my translation).

When this prayer has been recited, the chief huntsman proceeds to dig up the root of this plant which he distributes amongst his men who eat a piece and tie a portion round the necks of their ponies. It is believed that by doing this the men and ponies become

courageous, and capable of much endurance.

(5) When the hunting party has entered the forest and arrived at that part selected for the hunt where it is known that the wild ox are to be found, the chief huntsman calls together the hunters and requires them to bring their ponies, spears and saddles to a spot under the shade of a tree or near an ant-hill where a ceremony of propitiation has to be performed. The men bring their spears and saddles and lay them together at a given spot, the men standing by, having tied their ponies to form a circle round the spot. The chief huntsman now proceeds to propitiate the Chief Spirit, and makes an oblation, to which each of the men presents one boiled egg, one bottle of spirits, and eight cone-shaped cakes, which number in the case of the servants is reduced to four. This prayer asking for protection is offered up: "Spirit of goodness! We thy slaves, the hunting party, composed of hunters, servants, ponies, oxen, dogs, guns crave thee, O Great Chief of hunters, omniscient preceptor spirit, to grant thy protection to us who have now arrived in the forest wilds. Guard us, that we may not be afflicted by sickness evil or danger." This prayer then follows the same form as that given in para. 3, offered up when about to enter the forest.

When this ceremony has been completed, the chief huntsman instructs his men as to how they are to act, and enjoins on them the prohibitions which have to be observed. In addition to those prohibitions regarding conduct already laid down, the men are warned: (a) not to indulge in angry strife, quarrelling or fighting; (b) not to utter any falsehood or scandal and not to impose one on the other by practicing any act of fraud or deceit; (c) the men are commanded to take their meals together, at the same time; (d) should any grains of rice adhere to the hands of the men engaged in cooking or steaming rice they are not to remove the same by licking with the tongue; (e) they are not to sit astride, any stump or trunk of a tree, nor jump therefrom to the ground; (f) not to fling about any pieces of wood or earth; (g) when collecting firewood, they must take those pieces of wood, which they have laid their hands on and are forbidden to change from one piece to another, because they happen to see something more suitable. Having once placed their hands on any piece of wood, that piece must not be discarded for another but must be brought to the camp; (h) the central or kitchen fire may be used for all cooking operations, except that the boiling and toasting of meat shall not be performed under the iron tripod or grill used for

roasting meat under any circumstances. In fact the roasting or toasting of all meat on a spit is absolutely forbidden as being of evil portent. Should any of the hunters cook, roast or toast meat on a spit, evil will befall them, for they will lose their lives by thrust of spear, or gore of wild ox horns; (i) when the food is ready for a meal the servants arrange the places for the party to sit and partake thereof in a straight line. The chief huntsman takes the foremost place at the top and then each of the hunters takes his place in order of precedence according to age, and then the servants take their place likewise. The chief huntsman must commence eating before the rest of the party can partake of the food; (j) during the hunt, the hunters must sleep separately, must have a separate fire, and use a separate bamboo for holding water. The servants are allowed to sleep together. One servant is attached to each hunter, and there are special men for looking after the transport. The whole party is under the command, and must obey the orders, of the chief huntsman.

Should any member of the hunting party contravene or commit any of the acts which are prohibited as enumerated in this paragraph, the chief huntsman shall call all the men together requiring them to bring their ponies, spears and saddles, to form a council to judge the offender for the sake of upholding the power and prestige of the Chief Spirit. Should the offender be found guilty, he shall be punished according to the gravity of the offence committed against the Chief Spirit. Should the offence be serious, such as quarrelling or fighting, then the punishment is beating with a stick, not exceeding three strokes, but should the offence be slight, then the offender shall beg pardon of the spirit and present an offering of four cone-shaped cakes (กวน) and ceremonial flowers, incense tapers, and candles. The chief huntsman is the judge and passes judgment.

Should a wounded ox make its escape into the forest, or should wild ox be seen but not be kept in contact with, it is held that some member of the hunting party or their women have committed an act contravening the prohibitions laid down.

(6) When the hunting party is in the forest they should not use their ordinary language in connection with certain words and phrases. The words which come under prohibition or taboo are as follows: หอก, "spear," should be called แหวน, a "pointed instrument;" ตกม้า, "falling from a pony," should be called พัง, "to break down" or

“crumble;” หลยถึอน “to lose one’s way in the forest”, should be called วนถึอน, “to circle about in the forest;” สัตว์ป่าชน, “to be butted by a beast of the forest”, should be called โยม; กลับบ้าน “to return home”, should be called ต้ามซึยงลม. These words have been in use from time immemorial. Excepting these words, ordinary language is spoken.

(7) When the time has arrived for entering the forest to hunt the wild ox, the chief huntsman must recite this stanza, for the purpose of bringing the spirits of the forest, hills and dales under control.

“Om, word of power, I will subdue, control the Great Spirit. He of authority and power, I will subdue him. He, with eyes red like unto (forest) fires in the fifth month, I will subdue him. He of speech daring, like unto the rays of the sun, I will subdue him, as well as he of the vales and dales and the pits and holes, I will subdue him. He of the mountains and upland forests, I will subdue him. He of the grassy plains and lakes, I will subdue him. He of the “Yaw wood” posts, I will subdue him. He of the hardwood stumps, I will subdue him. He of the earth, I will subdue him. Having subdued ye all, let ye fall from a standing posture, that ye shall not return and oppose me. I am known as the Spirit doctor, I am known as he, who by shouting at elephants, causeth them to fall. Let ye not return and oppose me. Om, word of power, the teacher commanding me to shout, I shout.”

“อมผาญ กุกถึผาญทงผทตวงตวมนแกกตากถึถึผาญ ต้ามแตงปาน
ไฟเดอนห่ากถึถึผาญ ปากผักต่าปานแตงควนถึถึผาญ ถึถึผาญทงผ
หวย และ ผย กถึถึผาญ กถึถึผาญทงผกแตงผกถึถึผาญ กถึถึผาญทงผถึง
แตงผั่นองกถึถึผาญ กถึถึผาญทงหตกไมยอกถึถึผาญ กถึถึผาญทงคอไม
แก่น กถึถึผาญ กถึถึผาญ ทงแผ่นดินเพียงกถึถึผาญ กถึถึผาญแตงให้มน
ตมถึถึผาญทงยน ม้งอย่ามาคั่นตอกถึถึผาญ ไก่ กถึถึผาญช้อว่าหมอวค้ำจ กถึถึผาญช้อว่า
จาดข้าง ตมถึถึผาญทงยน ม้งอย่ามาคั่นตอกถึถึผาญ ไก่ อมถึถึผาญช้อการครุบา
จารย์กุกให้จาดจิงจาด.”

Having brought the spirits of the forests under control by the recitation of this stanza, the chief huntsman now offers up this prayer being an invitation or invocation to the beasts of the forest to come.

“Om, word of power. Come! Come! Oh please come! Ye mothers all with twisted, crooked horns, bending down and slanting to the back, I invite ye all. The bison, solitary, fierce, and huge, and wild ox, I invite ye all to come. I having sent my invitation, please come out, and graze on the high lands of the forest, brothers all. I having sent my invitation, please come out and lick the salted earth in forest wide, brothers all. He who fails to come, break off a bamboo, strike and force him to come. He who fails to come, break off a branch, strike him on back and cause to come. He who fails to come, break off a *Rany* tree branch, screen the face and cause to come. Om, word of power, teacher mine, hath commanded me to invite, hence I invite ye all. He who fails to come, let him without a liver be. He who fails to come, let his marrow ooze away. He who fails to come, let his eyes sightless be. He who fails to come, let his head drop off and bound away. Om, that sacred word, which giveth power to teacher mine.

“อมเขิญ ๆ มหาเขิญกุจกเขิญอแม่เขาบิดอแม่เขาเบยวเกยวกันคินหลัง
 กุกดีเขิญ กูดีเขิญทงควายโตดและบาเชิงโคกระทิงกุกจกเขิญ กุเขิญ
 แต่วออกมากินโดกบาหลวงพีเนอ กุเขิญแต่วออกมากินบะปากวางพีเนอ
 โตโตบ่อมาหักไม้บังค้ให้ต่มานเออ โตโตบ่อมาหักไม้ให้ตด้หลังมานเออ
 โตโตบ่อมาหักไม้ยังบงหนัมนมานเออ อมดีทริศการพระครูบาจารย์ผู้ข้า
 ให้เขิญจิงเขิญ โตโตบ่อมาตบออย่าให้มันมี โตโตบ่อมาให้มันมีหล่อน
 ให้คามันด่อน หัวมันดะเด็น อมดีทริศการพระครูบาจารย์ผู้ข้าเออ.”

(8) Having taken these steps, preparatory to entering the forest the party now commences the serious business of searching for, and hunting the wild ox. The first thing to be done is to consecrate the spear points, giving them power to slay. This stanza is used for this purpose:

“Om, word of power, I shout and roar with terrifying voice. I fill with terror ye mothers all, with twisted crooked horns, with crooked horns, bending down and slanting to the back. I will shout and terrorize ye all. I will also terrorize the bison, fierce and huge wild ox. I will shout and terrorize ye all. He who has been filled with terror, let him fall from standing posture. Let him not return, and oppose me. Om, by virtue of thy power, my teacher hath com-

manded me to terrorize by my voice, hence I shout and roar.”

“อมจาด ๆ กุฎีจาดทงแม่เขาบิดแม่เขาเบยว
 กุฎีจาดทงแม่เขาเบยวเกยวณคนหดงกุฎีจาด
 กุฎีจาดทงควายโตดตะบาเซ็งโคกระทิงกุฎีจาด
 กุจาดแด้วมนตมถาวทงย่น อยามาคนค้อกุน ได้
 อมดีทริตการพระครูบาจารย์กุให้จาดจิงจาดฮะ.”

This verse having been recited the hunting party makes every preparation for the start. The ponies are saddled, the spears are examined and held in right position, the servants, one attached to each hunter, pack up the food and water. The party now takes the trial marching in order of precedence according to age, each hunter leading his pony. When a herd of wild ox is sighted each hunter eats a portion of the consecrated root given him by the chief huntsman. This root has the property of inducing a form of intoxication, which causes the men to become courageous, without fear of danger or death. Each man now mounts his pony, holds his spear in his right hand with the point on the animal's head and the butt on his own hip, takes the reins in his left hand, crying out *beeb*, *beeb*, เบ็บ, and charges on the herd at a gallop. The herd generally turns and flees, followed by the hunters. Then the wild ox show signs of exhaustion which generally occurs after running for 50 sen (1¼ miles) if the ponies are swift footed and press hard, or for a distance of 150 sen (3¼ miles), if the ponies are slow. The herd being exhausted, each animal tries to make its escape, and it is at this juncture that the hunters select the animal they wish to take.

The ox rushes through the forest dodging trees and other obstacles, trying to escape, followed relentlessly by the hunter. Finding this impossible as the hunter is always on his heels, he turns at bay, ready to fight for his life. The hunter jumps from his pony, leaving the animal to fend for itself, and places himself with his spear in position to receive the charge of the wild ox. Should the ox charge, the man thrusts at the base of the neck near the shoulder, for if he strikes at the right spot the animal falls dead. Should the ox not charge but stand overcome by exhaustion, the hunter approaches it and thrusts his spear at the animal at such spots as are exposed. Should the hunter's aim be at fault and not strike a vital spot, he

must continue striking with his spear until the animal falls. This may take some time as the animal being wounded tries to get away and may cover some distance before falling dead.

More than one hunter should not follow up the same ox riding one behind the other, as in the event of the forward hunter's pony falling, a serious accident might ensue, and the fallen man be killed.

(9) The hunter having slain his prey, returns to search for his pony which he brings with him to the place where the dead ox is lying. The servants having followed the tracks of the ponies and wild ox soon come up and a search is then made for the other hunters. The servants are sent to bring the carts or other transport to the spot to convey the flesh of the carcase to the camp. Here the carcase is cut up and some portions are prepared as dried or jerked meat (*biltong*), another portion including the spleen and liver being pickled in salt and placed in the sac or stomach. Each member of the party receives an equal share after the hunter who killed the animal has taken his portion. This does not include the neck, the head, the skin, the muscles of both hind-legs and a portion of the loin meat, which is known as the fruit of the spear (หมากหอก) and belongs to the hunter who killed the animal.

The fruit of the spear is given to the hunters in the camp but the dried flesh etc. is always divided on return to the home village.

While in the forest camp, after the carcasses of the dead wild ox have been brought in, a portion of the flesh is prepared in the Lao manner by pickling the meat and seasoning it with condiments, another portion being boiled. The meat having been so prepared the chief huntsman has to perform a ceremony of thanksgiving. The men bring their spears, saddles and the heads of the animals slain that day, to a given place. Two portions of the meat prepared as stated above are put into leaf-cups, and placed on the pommel of each saddle as an offering to the spirit. The chief huntsman then makes this declaration:

"We have killed.....ox, and we invite thee, Oh Spirit! to come and partake to repletion of our offering of pickled and boiled meat. We beg that thou wilt grant us thy favour and success in our future hunting."

“แทงโคป่าได้.....ตัว ขอเชิญพระกาม์ กินตามคาบหย่อและขอให้
โชค ให้มันต้อๆไป.

The chief huntsman then blows on a buffalo horn three times and the ceremony which is repeated each time that oxen are slain, is complete. The number of oxen slain must be declared to the spirit.

(10) The hunt being over, the chief huntsman performs a ceremony bidding farewell to the spirits of the forest in which the hunting has taken place. This valediction is couched in these words:—

“May'st thou increase in prosperity, and continue to live in this forest. Go thou not with me. May thou live in health, peace and prosperity. Having played and feasted together, I bid thee farewell.”

“ขอให้ผู้เจ้าอยู่ภูมิจำรวณ้อยู่ป่าคงพงไพร อย่าไปติดตามกับภูน้อย
ให้อยู่ ต้มต้มแข่งกับภูมุดมเย็น มาเล่นมากินด้วยกันแล้วจะได้ตาไปก่อน
แล้ว.”

The hunting party now leaves the forest taking the trail for the home village. When passing beyond the precincts of the forest, the chief huntsman has yet to perform another ceremony. This is for the purpose of sending the various spirits who have given their help during the hunt back to their spirit homes and vocations. When sending the spirits home, the chief huntsman says to them:—

“Om, word of power, I send and send ye home. All spirits, spirits of the vales, dales, pits, and holes, spirits of the hills and upland forests I send ye home. Ye spirits of the open spaces and the guardian elves of the fields, I send ye home. Ye spirits of the air and the fields, I send ye home. Ye spirits of the air and trees, ye spirits causing fever and ague, I send ye home. Ye spirits who wander in the night, I send ye home. Ye spirits who roam at eventide, I send ye home. All ye spirits male and female, indulgers in amorous intrigue (เล่นก๊วย), whose abode in the centre of the forest is, I send ye home. Having released ye all and sent ye home, command ye to fall from standing posture, that ye may not to me return. Peace be with ye all when I have granted your release and to distant places ye have gone.”

อมดั่ง ๆ ภูตีสั่งทงผีห้วยแฉะผุ่ย ภูตีสั่งทงผีภูแฉะผุ่ยบง ภูตีสั่งทงผี
ถังกวางผีเล็ก้อย ถังนา ภูตีสั่งทงผีอะหก ภูตีสั่งทงผีกกไม้ ภูตีสั่ง
ทงผีเฮ็ดถ่าน ไช้แฉะเจ็บหนาว ภูตีสั่งทงผีเที่ยวคันท่า ๆ ภูตีสั่งทงผี
เที่ยวคันท่า ๆ ภูตีสั่งทงผีคดเมยแฉะคดผุ่ย ภูตีสั่งทงผีเดินชู้คด้อย

กตางคก กุดังแตวใหม่หมดมถ่าทงยงน อยามาคันค้อคนกนได้ อม
 ดหะเพกให้มิงเด็กหนเกด."

(11) When the hunting party has arrived at the home village, at whatever time whether day or night, the men must proceed to the spirit shrine taking with them their saddles and spears which they place before the shrine. Each man then makes an offering of one piece of dried meat, one piece of salted tripe, one bottle of spirits and one basin of perfumed water. The purpose of this visit is to release and return the spirit of the shrine who has accompanied them during the hunt, and to bid farewell of him. The chief huntsman delivers this message "On the occasion of this hunt we have slain.....wild ox, we now bring them as an offering to thee, we bid farewell to thee, thatched roof shrine. We are free from all prohibitions: if we meet young damsels, we will flirt with them; if we meet elderly persons, we will joke with them. Oh ye spirits of this shrine, reside and live therein as of yore, and when we next time a hunting go, we will invite thee with us to go again."

ไปคราวน ได้เนอ.....ตัวได้พากันมาเดินไหวพระกามันแล้วจะได้
 าดาดาคาจากพระกามันพะกาไปแล้ว เห็นผู้สาวก็จะได้เวา เห็นผู้เฒ่าก็
 จะค้อแย (แต่ถกข้อห้ามทุกอย่าง) ให้พระกามันพะกาอยู่ในหออยู่ในโฮง
 เดี้ย ไปคราวหน้าจึงจะนิมนตอ."

Having bade farewell of the spirit, the men make reverential obeisance with hands joined, thumbs placed between the brows and fingers raised o'er head. They then rise, a buffalo horn is blown thrice, and each man takes his spear and saddle and proceeds to his home. From this moment the men return to their ordinary habits of life, and are free from all enjoiments placed on them. The spears and saddles are put on one side and kept as though they were ordinary chattels.

(12) A hunting party consists of not less than five mounted men and rarely more than fifteen, the number of ox taken varies from four to ten animals. Sometimes two hunts are arranged for in a year. A hunt generally occupies ten to twenty days, but if the forest to be hunted in is situated at a distance, then a hunt may occupy thirty to forty-five days. The forest usually hunted in is known as

Phayaya (พระยาฯ) situated in amphur Dejudom (เดชอุดม) in the province of Ubol Rajadhani, south of the Mun river.

CHAPTER II

HUNTING IN KALASINDHU

The rites and ceremonies observed in connection with the hunting of wild ox in the province of Kalasindhu are somewhat different to those practised in the province of Ubol Rajadhani, although no great distance separates these two provinces. The following is an account of what takes place in the province of Kalasindhu.

(1) Men who engage in this pursuit are found in the villages of Ban Chod (บ้านจืด) and Ban Na Charya (บ้านนาจารย์), Tambol Phai (ตำบลไผ่) in the district of Lub (หลุบ), the headquarters Amphur of Kalasindhu. The forests in which the hunt takes place are situated in Tambols Kok Krtia (ตำบลโคกศรีชัย), Mahachaya (มหาไชย), Pon (โพ้น) and Mu Mon (มุมนัน), in the Amphur district of Sahasakhan (สหะขันท์), and in Tambols Chaen Laen (ตำบลแจนแลน) and Phu Laen Chang (ภูแล่นช้าง), in the Amphur district of Kuchinarayana (อัมภกภูคินารายณ์). The hunt takes place during the dry season in the fourth month.

The ponies and their riders go through a course of training in the forest, that they may learn the habit of avoiding obstacles and trees, as well as to learn to jump over streams and shallow places. The bit is made of iron in three pieces and is known as *yai* (ไหย้). The hunting party is composed of a chief huntsman, hunters and servants, having the same duties as in Ubol.

(2) The enjoiments laid on the hunters are as follows: a) they shall not quarrel; b) they shall not sit on any fallen trunk or stump of a tree; c) they shall not make any article by weaving bamboo strips together; d) they shall not throw or fling any articles about; e) they shall not call out when anything out of the common is seen; f) they shall not thrust their spears into any animal other than wild ox, bison, sambhurdeer, barkingdeer, Pamangdeer, swamp or eld deer, hog deer and all other deer, as well as wild pig; (g) they shall not ride on any animal other than the ponies they have with them,

These prohibitions must be faithfully observed or evil will befall the man who commits a breach thereof.

(3) A start for the hunt must be made in the afternoon of either Tuesday or Friday. Other days are unlucky. An auspicious day having been chosen for the hunt, the chief huntsman, hunters and servants go to the ancestral spirit shrine for the purpose of making offerings to obtain the favour and protection of the presiding spirit. Each man takes three salvers (ขันสมร), preferably made of metal, but should it be impossible to find these, then any dish, plate, or cup made of leaves may be used. A boiled egg, four pairs of cone shaped leaf cups filled with flowers, and one pair of wax candles are placed on each of the salvers. In addition to these articles, leaf cups filled with flowers known as *hawnimon* (ห่อนิมนต์) are placed on each of the salvers. The *hawnimon* are vested with the special privilege of inviting the chief spirit to assume jurisdiction and authority over all the members of the party. Each man brings a bottle of spirit with him for presentation to the spirit of the shrine. In fact this spirit as in Ubol pervades each member of the party and goes with them on the hunt.

This ceremony of eliminating self and allowing the spirit to control is conducted in this manner. Each hunter brings his spear to the shrine where the spears are arranged with their points uppermost round the altar. The saddles are placed at the foot of the spear butts, each man's saddle against his spear. The ponies are then tethered round forming an outer circle. Two pairs of cone-shaped leaf cups filled with flowers are placed by the hunter on the pommel of his saddle. These cups are known as *suei pishnu* (ชวยพิศหนู) and are taken by the men on the hunt. It is believed that they are vested with the power of warding off all evil and danger. The men have absolute faith in this power and tell about many instances when they and their friends have been saved from death by goring or other cause.

The chief huntsman places oblations on the shrine and addresses the chief spirit in this language :

"Spirit of Goodness, Pishnu, his ancestors and their relations. The ancient Great One and the chief Bejrpani, the ancient Great One and the robber men. Mun spear and Sen drive, Uparaj, Koan Luang, Muang Sen. Oh! all of ye, please come partake of the good things

บ่อกุ๋ ต่อกุ๋บ่อน้ำ ขอบใจของพวก หมกเว่ยน ” (1)

(4) The chief huntsman having made his offerings at the shrine and addressed the presiding spirit in the terms given above, he then takes the offerings of the men and presents each one separately, making the same address on behalf of each man. When this ceremony is completed, then the chief huntsman performs an act of divination, in order to ascertain whether good fortune will attend the hunt. He takes one of the boiled eggs, breaks the shell, and then examines the egg. Should the yolk appear through the white of the egg, then fortune will be with the hunt. One of these boiled eggs is cut into six sections, each of which is put on to a leaf dish and placed on the shrine as an offering. Sometimes two eggs are offered. No speech or address is made to the presiding spirit when this ceremony of divination takes place.

(5) The ceremony at the shrine being over, the party must leave for the hunt at once. When camping, it is required of the men that they place their spears round the trunk of a tree. The butt is thrust into the ground, and each man places his saddle at the butt and at night is bound to sleep on the ground in front of his spear.

Every third night counting from the day of departure, the chief huntsman has to perform, always at night, before going to bed a ceremony of propitiation to the spirit of the spear head. A wax candle is placed on the spear point, then lit and the spirit is addressed in the same terms as given in para. 3, ending with the words “Muang Sen”. He then continues to ask that good luck may be the

(1) Pishnu (พิศพนุ) is the name of a spirit who at one time was a famous hunter deeply versed in forest lore. The ancestral spirit (พระปู่ พระตา) are the ancestors of Pishnu. Uncles (อาญาพ่อเต๋า) are the avuncular relations of the ancestors of Pishnu. The other spirits referred to are spirits of persons who have held high rank and dignity in the State, and those who have attained the great skill in the hunting of wild animals. That part of this address which likens the servants to dogs and the hunters acting like persons bereft of their senses, owing to their lack of knowledge, and belittling the ponies, comparing them with wild dogs, is done for the purpose of humbling the hunters and their horses making them less than the spirits, so that the spirits shall grant them their protection and give them good fortune. It should be remembered that the men have lost their identity and have been filled with the spirit of the shrine.

lot of the hunters, and that the number of wild oxen slain may be great.

The men, whether hunters or servants are allowed to mix together and laugh and joke without restriction. The men use their ordinary language, no spirit or fake words are employed. At the first camp in the forest in which it is intended to hunt, the chief huntsman with the hunters must make an oblation, omitting the boiled egg, to the spirit of the spear head, in the same manner as at the spirit shrine as explained in para. 3. Wax candles are fixed on the spear points and lit, the chief huntsman addresses the spirit in the same language as given above but concluding with a petition that the party may be in good health, free from sickness during the hunt.

(6) The hunters mount their ponies, each one going his own way in search of wild oxen. When these are found the men place the butt of the spear under their armpits with spearhead just over the ponies ear. Should a wild ox charge, the hunter jumps from his poney, screens himself behind a tree or anthill, and awaits the charge. Should the wild ox not see the man, he calls out to attract its attention and when the ox is close enough he thrusts with his spear at a vulnerable spot, and thus despatches him. The men have to rely on their skill and courage in this very dangerous occupation. Should the herd turn and flee, the hunters then ride after it at full speed, and when overtaking any particular animal kill it with a thrust of the spear, without alighting from the saddle. Should other animals which they are not prohibited from hunting be found, they hunt and kill them in the same manner.

(7) When the day's hunt is over, the servants come to the places where the wild ox and other animals have been slain, skin the carcasses, remove the horns and cut up the flesh, all of which is removed to the camp. Next morning each hunter prepares as food certain quantity of the flesh of the animal he has killed as an offering to the spirit of his spear and the spirit of the forest. This food is placed in seven cups or dishes made of leaves. These offerings are taken by the chief hunter and six of them are placed near the butt of the spear belonging to the man who has prepared the offering, and one cup or dish is offered to the spirit of the forest at a place selected for the purpose. When making these offerings the chief huntsman repeats the first portion of the address given in para. 3, ending with the words "presented here". He then concludes by saying: "Oh ye spirits of this place, grant us thy favour that we may

have good fortune in the hunt and enjoy the fruit of our success."

“ เจาพนักดขยใหญ่กุดานโชนกหมานเกิด ”

This ceremony which must be performed only by the men who have killed an animal, is repeated after each day of successful hunting.

(8) On returning to the home village, it is usual for a hunter who has enjoyed the fruit of his spear to make an offering of thanks to the presiding spirit of the shrine. This offering consists of one boiled fowl, some spirit, rice, flowers and wax candles, but any other article may be used for this purpose. These offerings are made by the hunter himself, not the chief huntsman. The hunter repeats the stanza already mentioned ending with the words "presented here", and asks that help and strength may be his.

The spears used are two edge blades about five centimetres in breadth and fifty centimetres long having a butt made of cane (หวายกระบุง) about two metres in length.

This concludes the account of wild ox hunting on horse back in two eastern provinces situated on the Korat Plateau.

Bangkok, 18th October, 1933.

