LAHU NYI (RED LAHU) NEW YEAR TEXTS–II

by

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

TEXT THREE

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

1. Sha" , ya, nyi na _ pu _ hk'aw, suh - ha suh - te nyi, na _ pu _ hk'aw, ya' ha ya' chi ma ve, a", na _ pu _ hk'aw, suh - ha suh - te nyi yo, law, ya, nyi a daw" mo _ la, mo _ sha" chi ma ve, la, sha mo _ la,

¹ I wish to thank my friend and colleague in Lahu studies, Dr. James A. Matisoff of the Department of Linguistics, University of California, Berkeley, for his assistance in the analysis of these texts. To my wife, Pauline, go my particular thanks for her help in preparing this difficult manuscript.
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mo_ sha' chi ma_ ve, na_ pu_ hk'aw_ ya' ha ya' chi ma ve yo, law, a'-- chi hk'aw_ bi' nyi hk'aw, ve^ hta, haw k'aw, maw ve, veu, nyi k'a' nyi k'aw_ veu, leh veu, hto^ k'a, hto^ k'aw, veu, leh veu, suh^ k'a suh^ k'aw, veu.

2. No' g'a na_ pu_ hk'aw_ sheh_ ha sheh_ hpa', aw, law hki meu' ta_ leh yo, law, na_ pu_ hk'aw_ sheh_ ha sheh_ hpa', hk'aw, suh^ nyi suh^ fui_ sheh_ hpa', a', hk'aw, suh^ ha suh^ fui_ sheh_ hpa', chi hk'aw, hk'aw_ suh^ ha suh^ te' nyi yo, law, suh tcuh^ na_ tcuh^ k'aw, fui_ leh po, la', a', suh hk'a' na, hk'a' ka, naw, k'aw, ce_ k'aw, taw' leh po, la'.

3. Na_ pu_ hk'aw, sheh_ ha sheh hpa', na_ pu_ hk'aw ng'a' aw' to te' nyi k'aw^ suh^ te' ha' k'aw^ suh^ k'aw, bvuh, leh, a', na_ pu_ hk'aw, ya' ha ya' chi ma ve u'-- hta, haw g'aw leh ha, sha' sheh_ hpa', chi hk'aw, daw' sha ga' sha, a', cheh' sha, hk'aw, meu' chi hta, daw' sha ga' sha, hk'a' ma aw' ce, mo_ lo, mo_ sha' chi ma ve ma' g'a' daw' ha_ ma' g'a' daw' hki'-- hk'a', ga' chi ga'.

4. Sho meu' kui' meu', a', taw_ g'a sheh_ hpa', no' g'a na_ pu_ hk'aw, sheh_ ha sheh_ hpa', hk'aw, suh^ nyi suh^ fui_ sheh_ hpa', hk'aw, ya' ha ya' u'-- hta, g'aw leh lo_ g'a' sheh_ hpa', yo, law k'o' k'o, a', chi hk'aw_ cheh' sha hk'aw, meu' chi hta, haw yo, law.

5. Veu, hto^ k'a' hto^ k'aw, veu, veu, nyi k'a' nyi k'aw, veu, hk'aw, ya' ha ya' chi ma ve k'aw, sha' leh no' g'a' Guiv, ma a daw k'o' na, na_ pu_ hk'aw, ceh, ng'a' ceh, ng'a' she' bvuh, g'a' hpaw' meu' ta'_ g'a.

6. Na_ pu_ hk'aw, ng'a' aw' to, a', na_ pu_ hk'aw, ng'a' aw' to k'aw, bvuh, bk'a' ma aw' ce, meu' hta, hk'a' ho_ hk'a' beh chi bo ti' pa' leh k'a' la' she_.

7. Chi hk'aw, hk'aw, suh^ ha suh^ te' nyi yo, law, ma' g'a' daw' ha_, ma' g'a' daw' hki', bk'a', g'a' chi g'a' hk'aw, meu' chi hta, haw yo, law k'o' k'o', daw' sha ga' sha, ma' na, hk'a', g'a' chi g'a' veu, hto' k'a' hto' k'aw, veu, neh' hk'aw, hk'aw, suh^ ha suh^ te' nyi hk'aw, meu', chi bo pa' leh k'a' la'.
8. A-, ca leh ma yu an, daw leh ma yu an, kau, ma ha hti no g’na ha -sha hti, chi bo k'aw pa leh k’a la.

9. A-, hk’aw ya ha ya chi ma ve u’ hta haw, no g’na hk’aw, sheh ha sheh hpa’, a-, suh hpaw na, hpaw k’a k’aw fui leh po, la.

10. Chi hk’aw, hk’aw suh ha suh te nyi yo, law, nga, k’aw sha leh no g’na na pu hk’aw ceh, aw ceh, aw she hpaw meu k’aw ta_ la’, a-, na pu hk’aw nga aw to, te ha’ k’aw suh k’aw bvuh, te nyi k’aw suh k’aw bvuh, leh ka, haw.

11. A-, mi, ma chaw ya ya ha ya’ chi ma ve, va’ chi hk’aw ceh, hk’aw li’ k’aw ta leh k’aw, sha leh no g’na na pu hk’aw ceh, nga ceh, nga she hpaw meu k’aw ta_ la’.

12. Te ha’ k’aw suh ca leh ce_ g’a, hk’aw g’a’ chi g’a u’ hta, haw ve, chi ceu, k’aw ceu, u’ hta, k’aw ce_ k’aw pa leh keh, pi’, ma’ daw ma’ ha, ma’ daw ma’ hki.

13. A-, hk’aw, suh ha suh fui sheh hpa’, no g’na na pu hk’aw sheh ha sheh hpa’, suh tcuh na, tcuh fui g’a sheh hpa’, tu tcuh hkan tcuh fui g’a sheh hpa’, a-, na pu a- g’a’ hk’aw meu’ chi hta haw, htaw sha hk’aw meu’ chi hta haw, daw sha ga’ sha, hk’a g’a’ chi g’a’, la’ sha mo_ la’, la’ meh_ mo_ hin’ chi ma, ma’ g’a daw ha ma’ g’a daw hki.

14. A-, te’ nyi k’aw co chi co k’aw ji’ leh ta_ pi’, a sho-e, u’ hpu k’aw co chi co k’aw ji’ leh k’a pi’, a-, ma’ daw ma’ ha, ma’ daw ma’ hki, chi li’ k’aw, yu, leh ta_ pi’.

15. Hk’a g’a’ chi g’a, yeh ma pa tu hpaw meu hta haw, la, meu’ va’ hpu law bo ca fui_ ta_ g’a u’ hta haw, a’, suh tcuh na, tcuh’, tu tcuh hkan tcuh fui g’a sheh hpa’, na pu hk’aw, tcuh ha tcuh fui_ g’a sheh hpa’, te’ nyi sheh yu’ k’aw pa’ k’aw fui leh, a-, na u’ chi ceu u’ hta, fui_ g’a sheh hpa’, hk’a ma aw ce_ la’ sha mo_ la’, la’ meh_ mo_ hin’ chi ma u hta haw, chi ceu k’aw ceu meu hta haw taw g’a sheh hpa’.

16. No g’a chi hk’aw na pu a’ g’a’ hk’aw meu’ chi hta, haw, htaw sha hk’aw meu’ chi hta, daw sha ga’ sha, hk’a g’a’ chi
25. Hk'a^ ma aw^ ce., hk'a, g'a^ chi g'a, tu, tcuh- hk'a tcuh- hta, k'aw, ce_ leh fui_ g'a yo, law k'o^ k'o, no^ law hk'aw, sheh_ ha sheh_ hpa^.

26. A-, u- shi hk'aw, ceh, hk'aw li' k'aw, ti leh no^ g'a na_ pu_ hk'aw, ceh, nga^ ceh, nga^ she^ hpa^ meu^ k'aw, sha' leh te^ nyi yo^, a-, hk'aw, li' chi li' u- hta, k'aw, fui_ leh k'aw, pa^ leh ta_ g'a sheh_ hpa^, no^ g'a yo, law k'o^ k'o, ka_ ho^- ka_ hta, ka_ ho^- ka_ li' ta_ g'a sheh_ hpa^.

TEXT THREE—WORKING TRANSLATION

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

16. *mo-la mo-sha* (couplet; literal meaning of each word unknown): group, i.e. the villagers

17. *chi ma ve*: all these. 15-17 means "all the headman's people", i.e. all the villagers

18. *la-sha*: right hand

19. *mo-la mo-sha chi ma ve*: the whole group (see 16-17). 18-19, literally "all the people at the right hand", means "all the menfolk of the village". Men are associated with the right hand, women with the left hand.

20. *na-pu hk'aw ya ha ya chi ma ve*: all the people of the year, people of the month (see 7-10)

21. *yo law*: (see 13)

22. *a*: oh!

23. *chi hk'aw*: this year

24. *bi*: full

25. *nyi*: day


27. *hta haw*: on

28. *k'aw*: again

29. *maw-ve*: show. The meaning of 22-29 is obscure but perhaps "Oh, this day when the year is full (complete), show us again the year-flower". The "year-flower" may refer to the *hk'aw-ceh* or "year tree" (cf. Walker 1970a: 13-17), a kind of altar which the villagers erect in the centre of the village; alternatively it might refer to the old year itself, now completed, perfected like a blossomed flower.

30. *veu nyi k'a nyi* (couplet): "dressing" or "dressing-up day" (*veu-ve*: to dress). Refers to the fact that the villagers dress in their new clothes for the new year celebrations.

31. *k'aw*: again

32. *veu*: dress up

33. *leh*: and

34. *veu hto k'a hto* (couplet): layer upon layer of clothes

35. *k'aw veu*: again dress up

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

**Verse 2**

39. *no-g’a*: up there
40. *na-pu*: eternal (?) (see 3)
41. *hk’aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: year owner, month owner (*sheh-hpa*: owner), referring to the guardian supernatural of the year
42. *aw-law*: the first
43. *hkui*: feet
44. *meu*: point
45. *ta*: keep. 42-45 may be some attribute of the guardian of the year (39-41), but I fail to understand the exact meaning of the phrase.
46. *leh*: and
47. *yo law*: (see 13)
48. *na-pu hk’aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: eternal (?) guardian of the year and the month (see 40-41)
49. *hk’aw suh*: new year
50. *nyi suh*: new day
51. *fui sheh-hpa*: dividing person (*fui-ve*: to divide; *sheh-hpa*: “owner” in 41 above but here “expert”)
52. *a*: oh!
53. *hk’aw suh*: new year
54. *ha suh*: new month
55. *fui sheh-hpa*: dividing person (see 51). 48-55 means “you guardian supernatural of the year who divides the new year from the old”, i.e. “who chooses the time of the new year”.
56. *chi hk’aw*: this year
57. *hk’aw suh ha suh te nyi*: this day of the new year, new moon (month) (see 4-6)
58. *yo law*: (see 13)
59. *suh*: death
60. *tcuh*: joint, e.g. *va tcuh*: the joint between sections of a bamboo
61. *na*: sickness
62. *tcuh*: joint. 59-62 (couplet) probably "the time of death", i.e. the point between life and death

63. *k'aw fui*: again separate

64. *leh po la*: and save from, let pass. 59-64 "separate (all the villagers) from, and let pass, the time of death and the time of sickness".

65. *a*: oh!

66. *suh hk'a*: death path

67. *na hk'a*: sickness path

68. *ka*: also

69. *naw*: you

70. *k'aw ce*: again help

71. *k'aw taw*: again shield

72. *leh po la*: and let pass. 65-72 "oh you once again help us, shield us from, and let pass the path of death and the path of sickness"

Verse 3

73. *na-pu hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: eternal (?) guardian of the year and the month (see 40-41)

74. *na-pu*: eternal (?) (see 3)

75. *hk'aw nga*: year-birds

76. *aw to*: four bodies. 74-76 refers to four celestial birds which the guardian of the year is said to possess (see note f in formal translation)

77. *te nyi*: one day

78. *k'aw*: nine

79. *suh*: times

80. *te ha k'aw suh*: one night nine times

81. *k'aw*: again

82. *bvuh*: cry out (as in prayer)

83. *leh*: and

84. *a*: oh!

85. *na-pu hk'aw ya ha ya chi ma ve*: all these eternal (?) people of the year and the month (see 7-10)

86. *u-hta haw*: on

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

*Verse 4*

105. *sho meu*: iron points
106. *kui meu*: copper points. 105-6 (couplet) refers to the cutting edge of the farming implements
107. *a*: oh!
108. *taw g' a sheh-hpa*: shielding expert (*taw-ve*: to shield, *g' a-ve*: able to, can). 105-8 "you who can shield us from the cuts of our knives and axes"
109. *no-g' a*: up there
110. *na-pu hk' aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: eternal (?) keeper of the year and the month (see 40-41)
111. *hk'aw suh nyi suh fui sheh-hpa*: divider of the new year, the new day (see 49-51)
112. *hk'aw ya ha ya*: year-people, month-people
113. *u-hta*: on
114. *g'aw*: count, i.e. take note of
115. *leh lo*: and cover, look after
116. *g'a*: can, able
117. *sheh-hpa*: expert. 112-17 "you who can take note of and care for all the people"
118. *yo law k'o k'o*: (see 13)
119. *a*: oh!
120. *chi hk'aw*: this year
121. *cheh sha*: good health (see 95)
122. *hk'aw meu*: year-point
123. *chi hta haw*: at this
124. *yo law*: (see 13)

Verse 5
125. *veu hio k'a hto*: layers upon layers of clothes
126. *k'aw veu*: again dress up
127. *veu nyi k'a nyi* (couplet): red clothes (*nyi*: red)
128. *k'aw veu*: again dress up
129. *hk'aw ya ha ya chi ma ve*: people of the year, people of the month, all these (see 10)
130. *k'aw sha*: again pray
131. *leh*: and
132. *no-g'a*: up there
133. *g'ui-ma a-daw*: divine headman
134. *k'o-na*: place
135. *na-pu*: eternal (?) (see 3)
136. *hk'aw ceh*: year-tree, (divine prototype of that erected in centre of village)
137. *nga ceh nga she* (couplet): five trees. It seems that *she* is a poetic classifier for plants, used synonymously with *ceh*: tree
138. *hvuh*: call out in prayer
139. g’a: can
140. kpaw-meu: side
141. ta: put
142. g’a: can

Verse 6
143. na-pu: eternal (?) (see 3)
144. hk’aw nga aw to: four year-birds (see 76)
145. a: oh!
146. na-pu hk’aw nga aw to: (repeats 143-4)
147. k’aw bvuh: again cry out in prayer
148. hk’a-ma aw ce: within the four corners of the village (see 99-100)
149. meu-hta: in
150. hk’ a ho hk’ a beh (couplet): cover/protect everybody as with thatch
   (hk’a: everybody, ho-ve: cover, protect, beh-ve: cover with thatch)
151. chi bo: this boon (from aw-bo: boon, blessing, merit)
152. ti: only
153. pa: order
154. leh: and
155. k’a la she: please bestow

Verse 7
156. chi hk’aw: this year
157. hk’aw suh ha suh te nyi: new year new moon day (see 4-6)
158. yo law: (see 13)
159. ma g’a daw ha, ma g’a daw hki: no troubled thoughts (see 103)
160. hk’a g’a chi g’a: everybody
161. hh’aw meu: year-point
162. chi hta haw: at this
163. yo law k’o k’o: (see 13)
164. daw sha ga sha: untroubled thoughts (see 92)
165. ma na: no sickness (na-ve: to be sick)
166. hk’a g’a chi g’a: everybody
167. veu hto k’a hto: layer upon layer of clothing
168. k’aw veu: again dress up
169. *neh hk'aw:* next year

170. *hk'aw suh ha suh te nyi:* new year new month day (see 4-6)

171. *hk'aw meu:* year-point

172. *chi bo:* this boon

173. *pa:* order

174. *leh k'a la:* and grant, bestow

**Verse 8**

175. *a:* oh!

176. *ca:* food

177. *leh ma peu:* and not finish

178. *daw:* drink

179. *leh ma yaw:* and not be exhausted

180. *kao* [possibly from *aw-hkao*?]: the first

181. *ma-ha:* great (from Burmese < Pali < Sanskrit)

182. *sha-hti:* to be very rich, rich man (from Burmese < Pali < Sanskrit)

183. *no-g'a:* up there

184. *ma-ha sha-hti:* great wealth (see 181-2)

185. *chi bo:* this boon

186. *k'aw pa:* again order

187. *leh k'a la:* and grant bestow

**Verse 9**

188. *a:* oh!

189. *hk'aw ya ha ya chi ma ve:* all these people of the year and the month (see 8-10)

190. *u-hta haw:* from

191. *no-g'a:* up there

192. *hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa:* keeper of the year and the month (see 41)

193. *a:* oh!

194. *suh hpaw:* death side

195. *na hpaw:* sickness side

196. *k'a:* also

197. *k'aw fui:* again divide

198. *leh po la:* and let pass (see 59-64, 65-72 for comparison with 194-8)
Verse 10

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

Verse 11

222. *a*: oh!
223. *mi-ma*: earth
224. *chaw-ya*: people
225. *hkw ya ha ya*: year-people, month-people
226. *chi ma ve*: all these
227. *va*: bamboo
228. *chi*: this
229. *hkw ceh*: year-tree
231. k'aw ta: again put
232. leh k'aw sha: and again pray
233. leh: and
234. no-g’a: up there
235. na-pu: eternal (?) (see 3)
236. hk’aw ceh: year-tree
237. nga ceh nga she: five trees (see 137)
238. hpaw-meu: side
239. k’aw ta la: again put. 234-9 “I again pray and put my prayer before the five eternal year-trees up there”

Verse 12

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

Verse 13

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

Verse 14

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

Verse 15

294. hk'a g'a chi g'a: everybody
295. yeh-ma: house
296. pa-tu: door (from Shan and Thai)
297. hpaw-meu: side
298. hta-haw: under
299. la-meu: own hands
300. va: bamboo
301. hpu: white
302. law-bo: lotus
303. ca fui ta g'a: ?
304. u-hta haw: under. 294-304 is obscure, but possibly refers to the rice-cake altar (aw-hpfuh hti) which each household erects inside the front part of the house and therefore near the front door (cf. Walker 1970a: 5-6)
305. a: oh!
306. suh tcuh na tcuh: time of death and time of sickness (see 62)
307. tu tcuh hkan tcuh: time of poverty (see 261)
308. fui g'a sheh-hpa: dividing person. 306-8 "you who can separate us from the time of death, sickness and poverty"
309. na-pu: eternal (?) (see 3)
310. hk'aw tcuh: year-joint (see 60, 62)
311. ha tcuh: moon (month)-joint
112. *fui g'a sheh-hpa*: dividing person
113. *te nyi*: one day
114. *sheh yan*: three times
115. *k'aw pa*: again order
116. *k'aw fui*: again separate
117. *leh*: and
118. *a*: oh!
119. *na u*: ? (I have in my notes "languages", but am not certain of this translation)
120. *chi ceu*: ten kinds
121. *u-hta*: on
122. *fui g'a sheh-hpa*: person who can divide. 319-22 "you who can divide (and therefore know) the ten different kinds of languages(?)", i.e. "all tongues"
123. *hk'a-ma aw ce*: within the four corners of the village (see 99-100)
124. *la-sha mo la, la-meh mo-hin chi ma*: all the people of the right hand and all the people of the left hand (see 19)
125. *u-hta haw*: under
126. *chi ceu k'aw ceu*: ten kinds, nine kinds [of misfortune]
127. *meu hta haw*: from
128. *taw g'a sheh-hpa*: person who can shield

Verse 16

129. *no g'a*: up there
130. *chi hk'aw*: this year
131. *na-pu*: eternal (?)
132. *a-g'a*: a kind of tree (?)
133. *hk'aw meu*: year-point
134. *chi hta haw*: under this
135. *htaw-sha*: pine tree
136. *hk'aw meu*: year-point
137. *chi hta*: this. 329-37 is obscure, but possibly it means "I put my prayer under the eternal year-tree up there"
138. *daw sha ga sha*: easy, untroubled thoughts
139. *hk'a g'a chi g'a*: everybody
340. *daw law ga law* (couplet): knowledge (*daw-ve ga-ve* [couplet]: to think)
341. *yeh-ma*: house
342. *pa-tu*: door
343. *chi haw*: this
344. *hpa ceh ma ceh* (couplet): husband and wife, probably from *yeh sheh-hpa* (household head) and *yeh sheh-ma* (mistress of the house)
345. *ma gui*: may not separate
346. *ya ceh du ceh* (couplet): children
347. *ma gui*: may not separate
348. *a*: oh!
349. *chi bo*: this boon
350. *pa*: order
351. *leh k'a pi*: and bestow
352. *mo-la mo-hin*: group
353. *u-HTA HAW*: upon

Verse 17

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

Verse 18

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

Verse 19

392. no-g'a: up there
393. a-pa: father
394. ka-ti: all-true, one who never breaks a promise
395. ka-pa: powerful
396. meu hta: country, place (to/in that place)
397. hk'a g'a chi g'a: everybody
398. daw sha: untroubled thoughts
399. leh: and
Verse 20

409. ku k'aw ku hki: all the people (see also 356)
410. u-hta haw: on
411. chaw ca chaw law ma g'a, literal meaning obscure but general sense is “if people try to kill any of the villagers may those people not succeed”
412. ne ca ne law ma g'a, literal meaning obscure; “if spirits attack the villagers, may the spirits not succeed in harming them”
413. a: oh!
414. la-hti: strength
415. kui bo: copper boon (aw-bo, aw-bon, : boon)
416. chi bo: this boon
417. k'aw bvuh: again cry out in prayer
418. la-hti: strength
419. kui shi: copper boon (aw-shi : boon; often in form of couplet aw-bon aw-shi)
420. te nyi: one day
421. k'aw suh: nine times
422. g'a k'a: bestow
423. la-hti: strength
424. kui bo: copper boon
425. te ha k'aw suh: one night nine times
426. g'a k'a: bestow
427. chi bo: this boon
428. pa: order
429. leh k'a pi: and bestow
Verse 21

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

Verse 22

446. *chi hk’aw*: this year
447. *k’aw ta*: again put
448. *a*: oh!
450. *k’aw ta*: again put
451. *leh no-g’a hk’aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: and up there keeper of the year and the month
452. *na-pu*: eternal (?) (see 3)
453. *paw hto sha hto*: layers of wealth
454. *k’aw g’o*: again give, bestow
455. *leh ta la*: and put
456. *a*: oh!
457. *paw-sha*: wealth
458. *te ho sha*; ?
459. *k’aw co chi co*: nine lives, ten lives (i.e. eternal life)
Verse 23

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

Verse 24

485. \( chi \; hh'aw \; hh'aw \; suh \; ha \; suh \; te \; nyi \): this year new year new month one day
486. *na-pu kk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: eternal (?) keeper of the year and the month
487. *suh tcuh na tcuh*: death time, sickness time
488. *k'aw fut*: again divide
489. *k'aw pa*: again order
490. *leh fui pi*: and divide

*Verse 25*

491. *hk'a-ma aw ce*: within the four corners of the village
492. *hk'a g'a chi g'a*: everybody
493. *tu tcuh kk'a tcuh* (couplet): time of trouble
494. *hta*: on
495. *k'aw ce*: again guard
496. *leh fui g'a*: and divide
497. *yolawlc'o*; (seel3)
498. *no·law*: up there
499. *hk'aw sheh ha sheh-hpa*: keeper of the year and the month

*Verse 26*

500. *a*: oh!
501. *u shi*: yellow-headed [people], i.e. "youngsters", as opposed to *u hpu*: white-headed people or elders (*shi*: yellow)
502. *hk'aw ceh*: year-tree
503. *hk'aw li*: year-custom
504. *k'aw ti*: again plant
505. *leh*: and
506. *no-g'a na-pu kk'aw ceh nga ceh nga she hpaw-meu*: up there five eternal year trees' side (see 135-7)
507. *k'aw sha leh*: again pray and
508. *te nyi*: one day
509. *yo law k'o*: (see 13)
510. *a*: oh!
511. *hk'aw li*: year-custom
512. *chi li*: ten customs
513. *u-hta*: on
514. k'aw fui: again divide
515. leh k'aw pa: and again order
516. leh ta g'a: and put
517. sheh-hpa: master, expert
518. no-g'a: up there
519. yo law k'o k'o: (see 13)
520. ka ho ka hta (couplet): everything (?)
521. ka ho ka li (couplet): every custom (aw-li: custom)
522. ta g'a sheh-hpa: putting master. 520-22 "you who ordain every custom"

TEXT THREE—FORMAL TRANSLATION

1. Oh, on this day of the new year, day of the new month, [show] all the people of the year, all the people of the month, (a) on this day of the new year, day of the new month, [show] all the headman's people, all the people of the right hand, (b) all the people of the year, all the people of the month, on this day when the year is full, show us again the year-flower, (c) this day on which we once again dress up, we once again dress in many layers of clothes, we once again dress in new clothes. (d)

2. You up there, eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, . . . (e) eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, you who divide the new year, the new day [from the old], you who divide the new year, the new month [from the old]; on this day of the new

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

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

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

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

(e) The missing words are, in Lahu, aw law hkei niea ta_, the meaning of which I fail to understand, although my notes suggest that this is another attribute of the guardian supernatural of the new year, the "keeper of the new year".
year, day of the new month, once again divide us from and let pass the time of death and the time of sickness, once again help us [to avoid], shield us from and let pass the way of death and the way of sickness.

3. Eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, may the four eternal birds of the year, nine times in one day, nine times in one night, again cry out in prayer, you who can count and look after all these people of the year, people of the month, please look after them and this year may they enjoy untroubled thoughts and good health, throughout the year may they enjoy untroubled thoughts, may this whole community, every person within the four corners of the village suffer no troubled thoughts.

4. You who shield us from the points of iron and the points of copper, you up there, eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, you who divide the new year [from the old], the new day [from the old], you who can count and care for all the people of the year, all the people of the month, this year may we enjoy good health.

5. We once again dress up in many layers of clothes, we once again dress up in red clothes, all the people of the year, all the people of the month once again pray to you, the heavenly headman up above.

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(f) The guardian of the year is said to possess four celestial birds, two pairs. The male birds are siblings. The elder male, na_ pu_ co nga": "eternal life bird" (co : life), and his mate sing or cry out in prayer for the long life of the villagers. The younger brother is called na_ heh ha nga": "eternal soul bird" (aw, ha : soul). He and his mate sing for the wandering souls of the villagers which, on hearing this song, return to their owners. Lahu believe that sickness, and eventually death, results when a soul leaves the body of its rightful owner and fails to return.

(g) The numeral nine is frequently used in Lahu poetry to indicate "many". In such cases it has no symbolic connotations but is simply, as the Lahu say "na sha ve: good to hear".

(h) "To count" is used in the sense of "to know, be aware of".

(i) Refers to the knives and axes which the Lahu use to clear and cultivate their fields.

(j) Lahu Nyi women's clothes are predominantly red in colour.
yonder;\(^{(k)}\) I cry out in prayer and put my prayer at the side of the five eternal year-trees.\(^{(l)}\)

6. Once again order and bestow upon us this boon alone, that the four eternal birds of the year may once again cry out in prayer and cover and protect everybody within the four corners of the village.

7. This year, on this day of the new year, day of the new month, may all the people suffer no misfortune; throughout the year may everybody enjoy untroubled thoughts, may they suffer no sickness; and next year, on the day of the new year, day of the new month, may all the people once again dress up in many layers of clothes,\(^{(m)}\) this boon order and bestow upon us.

8. This boon order and bestow upon us, that the food may not finish, the drink may never be exhausted, you up there, possessor of great wealth.

9. Oh you up there, keeper of the year, keeper of the month, once again divide from these people of the year, people of the month and let pass from them the side of death and the side of sickness.

10. This year, on this day of the new year, day of the new month, I once again pray and I once again put my prayer at the side of the four eternal year-trees up there,\(^{(n)}\) oh may the four eternal birds of the year, nine times in one night, nine times in one day again cry out in prayer for us.

11. Oh, all these people of the earth, all these people of the year, people of the month once again offer this bamboo tree of the

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

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

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

\(^{(n)}\) Previously it was "five year-trees" (see note 1), now "four"; probably both numerals are only for sound effect.
year,\(^{(o)}\) and once again pray and put this offering at the side of the five eternal year-trees up there.\(^{(p)}\)

12. Seek us out and help us nine times in one night, all of us, help us [avoid] the ten kinds, the nine kinds [of sickness],\(^{(q)}\) once again order this and purify us; may we be without distressing thoughts.

13. Oh you who can divide the new year [from the old], the new month [from the old]; you up there, eternal keeper of the year and of the month; you who can divide us from the time of death and the time of sickness, you who can divide us from the time of poverty, may all the people under this new year tree,\(^{(r)}\) all of us, the people of the right hand and the people of the left hand, all of us, may we suffer no troubled thoughts.

14. Oh, in one day cover us with the nine lives, ten lives;\(^{(s)}\) ordain for us and cover us with the nine lives, ten lives of our elders of yesteryear,\(^{(t)}\) may we not be troubled by worried thoughts; accept these rites [which we perform for you].

15. Everybody places this white bamboo made by his own hands near the door of his house;\(^{(u)}\) you who can divide us from the time of death, sickness and poverty, eternal divider of the year and the month, three times in one day once again order, once again divide; you who can divide the ten kinds of languages,\(^{(v)}\) you who can shield from the ten kinds, the nine kinds [of misfortune] all the people of the right hand, all the people of the left hand, within the four corners of the village.

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(o) The new year altar in the centre of the village is made of bamboo.
(p) The idea of manufacturing something and offering it to its divine prototype occurs frequently in Lahu Nyi ritual.
(q) "All sickness"; the numerals nine and ten are simply for poetic effect.
(r) "All the villagers".
(s) "Grant us longevity".
(t) "May we live to the same ripe old years as the old men now departed".
(u) Probably refers to the rice-cake altar which each household erects inside the house (cf. Walker 1970a: 566).
(v) "You who can understand all tongues".
16. [I put my prayer] up there under the eternal year-tree; may everybody enjoy untroubled thoughts, good knowledge; in every house may the husbands and wives not separate, may the children not separate; oh this boon order and bestow upon the whole community.

17. Order and bestow this boon upon every person, every household, everybody, that the livestock may prosper, that the animals' hairs may not drop out.

18. May we enjoy the nine lifespans of our elders of yesteryear, oh once again cover us with nine lives; we once again look up there to the place of the keeper of the year, keeper of the month, we once again perform the customs of the year, the customs of the month, and once again cry out in prayer and plant our prayer at the side of the keeper of the year and of the month up there, [at the side of] the five year-trees up there.

19. You up there, all-true, all-powerful father, once again order and once again bestow upon us this boon, that everybody may enjoy untroubled thoughts, good knowledge; open upon us throughout the year untroubled thoughts and good knowledge.

20. Nine times in one day, again bestow on every one of us this boon as strong as hard-wrought copper, nine times in one night again bestow this boon that we may not be killed by men nor fall prey to malicious spirits; once again I pray for blessings as strong as hard-wrought copper, blessings as strong as hard-wrought iron; this boon once again order and bestow upon us.

21. May every person, the big and the small, throughout the year sleep well and sit well, may the rice taste good to our lips, may the drink taste good to our lips; this boon order and bestow upon us, may we be free from troubled thoughts.

22. This year once again lay down for us layers of wealth, grant it to us like the eternal wealth-layers of the keeper of the year, keeper of the month up there, oh once again cover us with wealth, with nine lives, ten lives, each and every one of us, on this day of the new year, day of the new month.
23. Oh this year when we make the new fields, I once again pray and put my prayer at the side of the five year-trees up there, once again order and once again help us, once again give to us and once again bestow upon us health and prosperity, food and drink.

24. This year, on this day of the new year, day of the new month, eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, once again order and once again help us from the time of death and the time of sickness.

25. You up there, keeper of the year, keeper of the month, once again guard, and once again divide from trouble, every one of us within the four corners of the village.

26. Oh the yellow-headed youngsters and the white-headed elders once again plant the year-tree and follow the year customs and once again pray to the side of the five eternal year-trees up there; oh you up there who once again divide and once again order the ten year-customs, you who ordain every custom.

TEXT FOUR

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

1. A daw ’hk'a^ ma aw' ce, to bo ’hk'a^ ma aw' ce, ui, ka, i ka, , ’hk'a, g'o, chi g'o, ve, chi ’hk'aw, na pu ’hk'aw, sheh ha sheh hpa', ’hk'aw, naweh, ta’ hki, sho tcuh kui tcuh', shaw meu ma meu' ’hk'o' hta, yo, law k'o k'o leh ’hk'a, g'o, chi g'o, taw_ leh suh' leh po, pi'.

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

(x) "Divide" is here used in the sense of creating or "separating out", ordaining to each people their particular customs.
2. Neh- hk'aw, hk'a ti ga, ve, na_ beu, sub_ chi suh_ yan_ ve u- hta, hk'a, g'a chi g'a, hk'aw, g'o, chi g'o, hk'or ht'a, k'aw, ce _ k'aw, taw_ la.

3. Ai ma hku, va k'aw_ hk'aw_ law, nu_ ta k'aw_ hk'a_ jaw, hk'a, g'o, chi g'o, hk'or ht'a, k'aw, she_ leh mui, hk'o va hk'o hku, taw, la, taw, hk'a, sub hku, sub k'aw, she_ leh g'a ca, g'a daw, ve, g'ui, ma_ hau_ sha_ htu_ k'aw, pa_ k'aw, g'o leh hk'a, g'o, chi g'o, hk'aw, g'a chi g'a, hk'or ht'a, hkui taw, la, taw, hk'or ht'a, k'aw, she_ leh hk'a, g'a chi g'a, hk'or ht'a, g'a ca g'a daw, hk'a shu._

4. Hk'a, g'a, chi g'a, ui, ka, i ka, chi ma ve, sho teuh kui teuh hk'o ht'a, sho ba' kui ba' hk'o ht'a, shaw ba' ma ba' hk'o ht'a, k'aw, taw_ k'aw, suh_ leh po, pi, na, beu, suh_ chi suh_ yan_ ve.

5. Hk'a, g'a, chi g'a, k'o_ hau_ k'o_ ht'a, yo, law k'o, ce_ ta ca, ta hpaw leh keu pi, k'o_ ht'a, chaw ta va' ta chaw hin_ chaw la, mo_ la, mo_ sheh_ hk'o ht'a, g'a keu pi._

6. U_i, ka, i ka, chi ma ve, hk'a, ma aw_ ce_ ui, ka, i ka, ve, hk'a, g'o, chi g'o, hk'or ht'a, te' hk'aw, mui, ve chi hk'aw, ca_ leh a' peu, te' nyi mui, ve chi nyi ca_ leh a' peu, chi nyi veu_ leh a' peu._

7. Ai ma, a pa Sha_ ca_, te' nyi na_ pu_ hk'aw, sheh_ ha sheh_ hpa', k'aw, hpa_ k'aw, g'o leh hk'a deh, k'aw, hpa_ leh keu pi, ui, ka, i ka, chi ma ve._

8. Ya' hu g'a' yo, k'o, ya' da, ve' a' paw_ tu hk'e, mvuh' nyi keh, law, hk'e, pa keh, law, hk'e, chi ve k'aw, hpa_ leh keu pi._

9. Ma' g'a daw_ ha_ ga_ hki_ leh ui, ka, i ka, ve, hk'a, g'o, chi g'o, hk'or ht'a, paw ta sha ta hk'or ht'a, keu pi, kao, g'ui, ma ha_ sha_ htu_ hk'a deh, hpa_ leh ho_ pi_ taw_ pi_ meh_.

10. Ya_ nyi ta_ o' k'ai ve k'o leh, na_ pu_ hk'aw, sheh_ ha sheh_ hpa', nga, te' to pa' g'a ve a keh_ , sheh_ chi sheh_ ha peu_ pa_ leh ta_ pi, o', o', hk'a, g'o, chi g'o, da, pi' meh_.

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TEXT FOUR—WORKING TRANSLATION

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

Verse 1

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

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

Verse 3

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

53. *g'ui*: G'ui-sha, the supreme Lahu supernatural

54. *ma-ha sha-hti*: great wealth (see III/181-2)

55. *k'aw pa*: again order

56. *k'aw g'o*: again bestow

57. *leh*: and

58. *hk'a g'o chi g'o*: every household

59. *hk'a g'a chi g'a*: every person

60. *hk'o-hta*: on

61. *hkui taw la taw*: footprints, handprints

62. *hk'o hta*: on

63. *k'aw she*: again sow broadcast

64. *leh*: and

65. *hk'a g'a chi g'a*: every person

66. *hk'o-hta*: on

67. *g'a ca g'a daw*: sufficient to eat and drink (see 52)

68. *hka-shu*: the same. 65-8 "may everybody alike enjoy sufficient to eat and drink"

**Verse 4**

69. *hk'a g'a chi g'a*: every person

70. *ui ka i ka*: the big and the small

71. *chi ma ve*: all of them

72. *sho tcuh kui tcuh*: ends (literally, "joints") of iron and copper

73. *hk'o-hta*: from

74. *sho ba kui ba* (couplet): iron and copper implements (*ba*: ?)

75. *hk'o-hta*: from

76. *shaw ba ma ba* (couplet): wood

77. *hk'o-hta*: from

78. *k'aw taw*: again shield

79. *k'aw suh*: again side-step

80. *leh po pi*: and let pass

81. *na-beu suh-chi suh yan ve*: the seventy-seven kinds of sickness (see 26-8)
Verse 5

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

Verse 6

97. \textit{ui ka i ka chi ma ve} : the big and the small, all of them
98. \textit{hk’a-ma aw ce to-bo a-daw} : within the four corners of the priest’s and the headman’s village (see 1-5)
99. \textit{hk’a-ma aw ce ui ka i ka ve, hk’a g’o chi g’o hk’o-hta} : within the four corners of the village, the big and the small, every household
100. \textit{te hk’aw} : one year
101. \textit{mui-ve} : work in the fields
102. \textit{chi hk’aw} : ten years
103. \textit{ca} : eat
104. \textit{leh} : and
105. \textit{a peu} : not finish
106. \textit{te nyi mui-ve chi nyi ca leh a peu} : one day work in the fields, ten days eat not finish
107. \textit{chi nyi veu leh a peu} : ten days dress not finish (\textit{veu-ve} : dress)
Verse 7

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

Verse 8

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

Verse 9

134. ma g’a daw ha ga hki : no troubled thoughts (see III/103)
135. leh ui ka i ka ve : and the big and the small
136. *hk’a g’o chi g’o*: every household
137. *hk’o-hta*: on
138. *paw ta sha ta* (couplet): wealth
139. *hk’o-hta*: on
140. *keu pi*: put inside
141. *kao*: the first (?) (see 111/181)
142. *g’ui*: from G’ui-sha, the supreme supernatural
143. *ma-ha sha-hti*: great wealth
144. *hk’a-deh*: carefully
145. *hpa*: create
146. *leh*: and
147. *ho pi taw pi* (couplet): cover
148. *meh*: please

*Verse 10*

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

1. This year, eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, shield and let pass from the big and the small, from every household within the four corners of the headman's village, the four corners of the priest's village, all troubles that this year may bring, the cuts of sharp pieces of iron and copper(a) and of wood.

2. Until we reach next year once again help us and remove from every person, every household, the seventy-seven kinds of sickness.(b)

3. Once again bestow upon every household nine baskets of Ai-ma's fertility,(c) nine baskets of young shoots; once again bestow fertility wherever we cultivate our fields; once again order that we may enjoy enough food and drink, that we may enjoy G'ui-sha's great wealth; let every household, every person, all in like manner, enjoy enough food and drink.

4. Once again shield, protect and let pass from all the people—the big and the small—the cuts of iron and copper and of sharp pieces of wood, and the seventy-seven kinds of sickness.

5. Grant and bestow blessings on every person, on all the animals underneath the house and all the people inside the house, on the one thousand one million peoples, on the one million one hundred thousand communities.(d)

6. Grant to all of us, the big and the small within the four corners of the priest's and the headman's village, the big and the small, every household within the four corners of the village, that if we work for one year in the fields the food may not be exhausted in ten years, that if we work for one day in the fields the food may not be exhausted in ten days, the cloth may not be exhausted in ten days.(e)

7. Ai-ma, Father Sha-ca, eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, once again create and once again cover us with these bless-

a) Poetic reference to the farming tools.
b) "All kinds of sickness"; the number 77 has no particular symbolic significance.
c) Ai-ma is a female divinity particularly associated with fertility (cf. Walker 1970b: 177).
d) "On every person and every community".
e) "The clothing purchased from the proceeds of the crops".
ings, once again carefully create and bestow these blessings upon the big and the small, all of us.

8. If the women get pregnant may they bear children as beautiful as the wild banana shoot, as pure as the sun, as pure as the moon; once again create and bestow this blessing upon us.

9. Grant that the big and the small, every household may suffer no troubled thoughts, grant us all wealth; carefully create for us, and cover us with, G’ui-sha’s great wealth.

10. Today and hereafter, oh eternal keeper of the year, keeper of the month, more than I, (poor mortal that I am) can order, thirty times, three hundred times order and put [good fortune] upon every household.

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