

SATURDAY<sup>6</sup> OCTOBER 29, 1966 -- page 1

Saturday, Oct. 29th, in ~~Bangkok~~<sup>Bo Rema biman</sup> Palace, Bangkok, Thailand. Helen woke me at 6 o'clock for the adventure I had looked forward to almost most of all on this trip -- a tour of the Klongs (A).

I had coffee in the tub -- the huge marble and tile bathroom as big as any living room I nearly ever had and before 7 was dressed and ready to go.

Mrs. Graham Martin, our Ambassador's wife, came for me, and we went to the Royal Landing, boarded the Queen's own launch -- 40 feet of gleaming mahogany, shining brass and white scalloped canopy / Kuna<sup>?</sup> molly Koma, the wife of the Foreign Minister, was along, and a lovely young woman <sup>Won</sup> whom I had met on my trip before, called Wee ~~One~~, who was the daughter of Prince Won. She is in the foreign service, an excellent interpreter, and Mrs. DeTa<sup>?</sup> Merchev, the wife of our USIS officer, who is fluent in Thai. Two Ladies in Waiting represented the Queen, who couldn't be with us because she has a bad cold, and of course Liz was there, anxious, interested, alert, every minute to get the most colorful pictures and story for the other part of her constituency, the Press.

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So we set forth for 2 hours that I shall never forget, the most crowded, romantic, vivid page in my memory. The Klong is a slow, narrow stream lined with houses and little stores. It is the heart's artery of this exotic capitol. The people live beside it, trade on it, bathe in it, it is lined with houses -- two storied made of teak banistered in rails, orchids in pots on the porch, roofs of tin or tile, with schools that are bursting with children, ancient moss-covered mosques with ornate ~~x~~ domes reaching to the sky, little shops that sell hats or coffee or meat and fish. Mostly it is teeming with life, with hundreds and hundreds of Thais lining the bank smiling, waving, saying something that sounded like "Chi yo, chi yo," with group after group after ~~group~~ group of little children, the boys dressed in ~~kahki~~ shirts and white blouses, the little girls in blue skirts and white blouses, all with waving flags and big smiles. Several were so excited they fell in the Klong.

The Klong itself was full of traffic. What Liz called the Thai Navy followed us. Behind them a huge lumbering boat full of the Press with their cameras frantically trying to record these wonderful pictures, but dextrously prevented, unhappily, by the officials in between.

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But the real traffic were the people trading. Little wooden boats with a square lip at the front and at the back into which the people stepped as easily as I would step into my living room or kitchen, so much at home on the Kdong are they, and in the boats their wares: bananas, coconuts, oranges, papayas, crab apples, a stack of roast duck, orchids, orchids, orchids, vegetables I couldn't identify; some of them looked like squash/shallots, turnips greens, and whole boats loaded with hats for sale.

Soon a boat came along <sup>side</sup> us and a woman offered me a gift of orchids or a basket of oranges or a cluster of bananas. Within an hour we could have gone into business ourselves.

Wee Won told me that most of the houses had their own little orchard behind them, or their little garden patch, where they raised the things they sold. <sup>Scenes</sup> ~~Spice~~ I will remember. A glimpse into a house where I saw a picture of the King and Queen on the wall; another, a small hammock swaying gently suspended from the beam. It was the baby's cradle. And another a sign saying Cock Fights, and then Fish Fights. A white <sup>Cockatoo</sup> ~~cock~~ or ~~two~~ swaying gently in his perch in a love apple tree. A cage of rabbits, but I was told they were not being sold for meat but for pets. I could believe it. Everywhere there were dogs and cats.

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A woman cooking her family's meal over a little charcoal stove. I asked Mrs. K~~alia~~----- what it was and she said probably a mixture of tapioca and pork.

Some of the boats are large, obviously lived in by a family who probably live and die in their boat on the Klong.

We passed two saw mills with stacks of lumber, teak I was told, and a coffee shop - a sort of social center, but to me the whole Klong is a social center, and once a man who was up to his chest in the Klong calmly lathering himself with soap -- the only one I think who did not notice us .

There was an old woman who came up to the boat with her gift, and her smile revealed <sup>teeth</sup> ~~teeth~~ that were quite brown from chewing bettlenut.

Many of the groups of boys and girls that we passed had on uniforms of girl guides or boy scouts or brownies or coo scouts. They were all singing and smiling, and two of them fell in in their excitement, and they quite put an end for me to the oft repeated phrase "that the Thais are impassive and withdrawn" Several times there were tourists, and once inevitably someone called "Welcome to Thailand Mrs Johnson. We're from Texas."

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KUNYAN Molly (?) had brought along fruits and sweets and coffee, but I had a hard time stopping for a drink, there was so much to see and do and there was always a boat drawing up besides ours with a gift. The least I could do in return was one moment of contact, of eyes, and smile and appreciation. Little boys wearing T shirts that advertised Asian games, and frequently we saw an ad in Thai that we could not read except for one word, such as "fab" apparently a favorite of <sup>them</sup> ~~ours~~.

Often along the way there were golden altars ~~box~~ decorated with flowers. Right at the edge of the Klong a cluster of people sitting crossed legged on the ground around it. This, I was told, meant they had great respect for me. "One keeps one's head below a revered person,"

The Klong was also racing with fast little boats that had outboard motors, some with a long shaft about 4 feet and a propeller on the end. In this crowded Klong I could see what the King meant when he spoke of them as dangerous, and how he was trying to invent and get produced one that would be just as fast but not dangerous.

The fronds of palm trees awayed above the houses, and amazingly there was a long line of poles with wires - telephone or electricity I did not know -- and out beside each house were big terra cotta jars to catch the rainwater for their supply of drinking water. Otherwise, all their needs were filled from the Klong itself.

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And very often standing on a little stilt was a spirit house a sort of miniature temple, brightly decorated, frequently garlanded with flowers, and every few blocks the bright orange tile ~~roofs~~ roofs of a wat (?)

Once I saw a man with a little charcoal stove on which there was a steaming kettle, and lots of tiny cups. He was selling coffee. Sometimes bunting was strung along the Klong and nearly everywhere there were flags ~~on~~ poles, and signs of "Welcome, President and Madame Johnson," and one a poster "Hail to the Protection<sup>or</sup> of World Justice."

The real experience for me was the varied tapestry of life, the crowded, teeming life of the Klong itself. I do not ~~know~~ know of any two hours on my trip I shall cherish as much.

A little past nine we docked and made our way to one of the Thai handicraft shops where I got a quick look at some silk being ~~being~~ woven <sup>was</sup> and introduced to some of the handicraft people, and then in to the car and back to ~~Borame~~ Buramabiman Palace in time to change into my blue linen, and ride with Mrs. Martin to Kachula<sup>Sp.?</sup>uncorn (?) University where Lyndon was to receive an honorary doctorate in political science.

The colorful ceremony took place in an auditorium of the University, witnessed by the Thai Cabinet, including Prime Minister Kittichorn<sup>ph</sup> (?) and as many of the 8,000 students and professors of the University as could crowd in.

Beginning in 1938 at little Southwestern in Georgetown and in the 28 years since I have participated in a lot of honorary degrees but the Thais take the prize for having the right kind of academic robes. The top professors of the University filed in and then His Majesty the King escorting Lyndon, and everybody had on a robe made out of net -- sheer, cool, just right for the Thai climate! Lyndon's and the King's were banded in gold and red braid; others in pink and silver. It was a beautiful sight. I wish Lyndon could wear this robe in any June academic ceremony where there is no air-conditioning.

The King is a slight, dark, intense young man, seldom smiling. He wears dark glasses because of an eye injury. You feel that he is very earnest about his country and working searchingly at this job. There is an air of constraint wherever he is present or so it seemed to me, everybody being very deferential and dignified. I felt rather sorry for him and the Queen. I wonder how they ever get through to simple contacts, to laughter, or do people ever tell them an unpleasant truth.

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The King himself gave Lyndon the citation, and in Lyndon's speech he made an appeal to the leaders of Hanoi to lay aside arms and sit down together at the table of reason. He spoke of all the things we could do -- constructive things for health and education if we could lay aside our arms.

And then a most unusual thing happened. He signed the International Education Act which will bolster international training and research, both graduate and undergraduate in American colleges. The first time any American legislation has ever been signed on ~~American~~ foreign soil.

There was one line in his speech that rang in my mind through the whole summation of our day. "The central tragedy of our times is <sup>the</sup> a human and material waste that goes into war." That tells the whole story of today.

We filed into a big reception room, champagne <sup>was</sup> passed, a gift was presented to me, and then Lyndon and I parted, he to step out into the flag-waving crowd of smiling students -- not a protest banner in sight -- <sup>and</sup> as he was swamped by their reaching hands and engulfed by their cheers, I thought of the warnings we had had all along that these were a very retiring ~~capex~~ people who would not express themselves. Lyndon was enjoying it but he was mindful of the King's presence which always imposes a necessity of being restrained and quiet so he made as little of it as possible,



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reaching for a few hands, and smiling into all the eyes he could, and then was in his car and gone, and I drove with Mrs. Martin across the campus to the Red Cross Building. There Queen <sup>Sanahit</sup> ~~Secret~~ met us. She is one of the most genuinely beautiful women I have ever seen -- a very sweet face, gentle, composed, I cannot imagine her making a loud or ugly noise. She wore a chartreuse and blue printed blouse over a long bright blue skirt.

Everytime I see her I remember that I have read she is one of the world's best dressed women. It is a flag that sort of precedes one once you have got the title.

I was presented with a medal of merit from the golden bowl in which all things are given to one. (On my first trip here I thought you were supposed to take the bowl!)

And I presented the hospital with a tele(?)thermometer which records the body temperature of 6 patients simultaneously and continuously.

On this trip I have learned what ladies-in-waiting<sup>"</sup> are for! They take the bouquets and the gifts from the Queen the ~~moment~~ moment the presentation is over so that she will not be burdened.

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In Thailand leis have become instead bracelets that one wears around the arm or wrist, made of thousands of tiny, cream colored blossoms with long tassels of red and pink or yellow on cream colored sewed together in a very elaborate design. I cannot look at them without calculating the hours of labor it took to produce one! They are overwhelmingly fragrant.

The Queen gently lead me through some of the wards where the patients were sitting cross-legged on the beds and greeted us with impassive faces mostly, and the joined hands and bowed heads -- the traditional greeting of their country. That is, the old ones did. The young ones and the nurses were all smiles and lively interest.

It was a brief ceremony. The Queen talked with me about her work with the Red Cross, the need for more hospitals, and I told her of the Senate Ladies Red Cross unit, and asked about her cold. It was better. And then we said good bye, and with Mrs. Martin I went to the Doosit ~~Zoo~~ Zoo, my last stop of the day. where I was met by the Director and the Deputy Prime Minister's wife, and spent an hour strolling around the grounds looking at the topiary ~~shrub~~ shrubs which are most imaginatively clipped into the shape of birds and Thai dancers and dinosaurs, very lifelike and amusing -- a very lot of work -- and feeding stalks of sugar cane to the elephants while Jerry looked on with a pretty jaundiced eye,

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Number of items	Control (%)	Low (%)	High (%)	Very High (%)
0	0	0	0	0
20	15	10	15	10
40	30	45	30	35
60	45	65	45	55
80	60	75	60	65
100	85	80	75	70

But by now I was beginning to ~~quit~~ wilt. It had been a long time since coffee in the tub at six o'clock so we signed the last of many guest books of my 6 hour sight seeing trip and went back to Brancu Bogdan Palace where I had a quiet lunch with Lyndon and then collapsed in bed for awhile.

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Close to five I put on my yellow lace dress -- my "wedding dress" <sup>(from Lucie's wedding)</sup> -- and Lyndon and I went to Government House for Prime Minister and Mrs. Kittichakorn's reception. With three days in Manila and two days here, I am beginning to feel very much at home with them. He is always smiling and she is plump, comfortable and very pleasant. It was a beautiful party in a large spacious hall, well organized, and not crowded.

They lead us around the room, introducing us to groups. There was the American community, businessmen representing Singer Sewing Machine and the petroleum companies, and government officials, and other Thais. I saw Prince Won (?) and his ~~where~~ daughter Wee Won, and my friend Air Marshal Diawee (?) and Arwee (?) his wife, and we talked about swimming in the Sunset Sea.

There was champagne <sup>gr</sup> and toasts and a pleasant hour, and then close to six we returned to the Palace, and I made a hurried trip to Salasahafi, the Grand Palace where we are giving a banquet tonight in ~~honor~~ honor of the King and Queen. I talked with Barbara Keene who has been here managing it for several days. She looked harrassed. It hasn't been easy to do -- to run a party 13,000 miles from your base. She had ~~decorated~~ decorated the hall with swags of yellow bunting and is using round tables and menus and place cards engraved and ~~written~~ written at the White House which transfers as

much of the East Room and the State Dining Room as can be in this exotic city.

And then back to my ~~lxx~~ large suite in the Palace for a shampoo and set . I have such a nice hairdresser, and after having known me this long Shay and her assistant have finally stopped approaching me on their knees -- a custom which makes me extremely uncomfortable <sup>and</sup> which I noticed this morning with <sup>a</sup> certain flinching <sup>when</sup> ~~from~~ the middle-aged Red Cross officials ~~who~~ approached the Queen on their ~~kneep~~s with their hands outstretched in front with a golden bowl and its presentation in it, <sup>although</sup> ~~though~~ there is certainly nothing in her gentle ~~x~~ manner to require that sort of groveling.

I wore my ivory chiffon and pearls and felt quite elegant, and Lyndon his white dinner jacket , and close to eight we went to Sala SATHAI where we were on time to greet them at the front steps and to pause for photographers looking at the great full moon above the temple tops.

The Queen was in ruby red , high neck, long sleeves, girdled with gold and an enormous gold ornament in the front and lovely ~~Thai~~ chandelier ~~is~~ like Thai earrings that would be as fashionable today in our country as are traditional here.

The guest list was mostly Thai government officials though we introduced a few American business men. Barbara

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tried bravely but we sorely missed the wonderful setting of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. We had crab meat crepes and fillet of beef and strawberry <sup>sorbet?</sup> ~~soupe~~ (<sup>?</sup>). The bouquets on the yellow covered tables were ~~studs~~ daffadils and daisies and sweet peas and asters, and in this land of orchids it looked very simple.

The high point of the evening I thought were the toasts — both of them. Lyndon borrowed from Lincoln a rather amusing story: "the first offer of assistance between our countries was made in 1861 by your great King ~~the~~ Mongkut". That was the King's great grandfather, and the one in whose household Anna served as tutor, and the offer was made to our great President Abraham Lincoln. King Mongkut knew we were in a Civil War. He read where we had no elephants so he wrote to President Lincoln offering to send him some elephants. Mr. Lincoln thought seriously about the proposal, and then he wrote a letter to King Mongkut. He thanked the King and said he would happily accept the offer save for the fact that the climate in our country was too cold for elephants to prosper. The whole point of the story was that the disposition of our two countries to help each other goes back well into the past, Lyndon said "Your Majesty President Lincoln closed his letter to your great grandfather more than 100 years ago with

~~with~~ these words: "Wishing for your Majesty a long and happy life and for the generous people of Siam the highest possible prosperity I commend both to the blessings of Almighty God". I cannot improve upon those words."

~~There~~<sup>It</sup> was a good piece of research, and kept us all listening and then the King answered quietly, putting down his written text, and talking off the cuff in a lively way with humor and freshness. "Yes, his great grandfather had tried to lend us elephants which we assumed we couldn't use. Now they were certainly learning to make good use of the technical assistance that America was offering to Thailand."

After the toasts we went into a great conference room 130 or so of us, took our seats, and Stan Getz (?) and his troop who had come over from the United States especially for this occasion played a medley of jazz for us. It was not my cup of tea but it is so well known that the King is a jazz <sup>buff</sup> ~~bug~~ (?) and has upon occasion gotten up and played an instrument right along with the band that I think it was very enterprising of Bess and Barbara to have provided Stan Getz, and all the other guests raved about him.

We bid the King and Queen goodnight at the front door about eleven thirty, urging them not to get up to say ~~goodbye~~ goodby to us as we left the country tomorrow morning at a very early hour, and so at 12:30 I went to bed at the end of one of the fullest ~~days~~ in my whole life ~~to~~ the high point of which was for me the trip on the Klong

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where one could feel really immersed in the life of this  
exotic romantic country.

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