

SIL MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY

PUBLICATION 6

William R. Merrifield
Museum Director

George L. Huttar
Academic Publications Coordinator

NOTES FROM INDOCHINA

**on ethnic
minority cultures**

edited by

Marilyn Gregerson

and

Dorothy Thomas

SIL MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Dallas, Texas

1980

© Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc. 1980
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 78-65445
ISBN 0-88312-155-7

Cover design by Jerry Jenkins
Illustrations by David Blood and others

This title available at:

SIL Museum of Anthropology
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, TX 75236

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| Preface. | xiii |
| House Construction among Mường Refugees. <i>Milton E. Barker</i> | 1 |
| Aspects of Cham Culture. <i>Doris E. Blood</i> | 11 |
| The Script as a Cohesive Factor in Cham Society. <i>Doris E. Blood</i> | 35 |
| Mnong Lăm Texts on Sacrifice and Shamanism <i>Evangeline E. Blood, tr.</i> | 45 |
| A First Case of Historiography among the Roglai. <i>Maxwell Cobbey</i> | 61 |
| Jeh Music. <i>Nancy Cohen</i> | 85 |
| Death and Burial in Katu Culture <i>Nancy A. Costello</i> | 99 |
| Nyaheun Medicine and Some Problems Posed to Western Medical Practice <i>John J. Davis</i> | 107 |
| Cross-Cousin Marriage and Chru Kinship Terminology <i>Eugene E. Fuller</i> | 113 |
| Notes on Rengao Law. <i>Marilyn Gregerson</i> | 125 |
| Rengao Vocal Music <i>Marilyn Gregerson</i> | 135 |
| Notes on Stieng Life <i>Lorraine Haupers</i> | 143 |
| Sedang Astronomy <i>Wanda Jennings</i> | 177 |

Nung Weddings 195
Janice E. Saul

Nung Priests and Spirits. 201
Janice E. Saul and Kenneth Gregerson

Notes on Chrau Ethnogeography 215
David Thomas

NOTES ON STIENG LIFE

Lorraine Haupers

This paper¹ is a general sketch of some aspects of Stieng life. The Stieng people are a highlander group of Viet Nam, located along the Vietnamese-Cambodian border in Phước Long Province. About 10,000 Stiengs were resettled in Lâm Đồng Province in 1973 due to war activity. Several thousand Stieng people are also believed to live across the border in Cambodia (Le Bar et al. 1964:157). The Stiengs divide themselves into two major groups: bủđ 'the people above' (upstream) and bủđêh 'the people below' (downstream).

The Stieng language is a member of the Mon-Khmer family. It is subcategorized as South Bahnaric in the scheme of Viet Nam minority languages. Stieng is not tonal as is Vietnamese and does not exhibit the interesting vowel register phonemes of many other Mon-Khmer languages. It does, however, have the features of contrastive long and short vowels as well as long and short initial consonants. In addition, extensive use of semantic pairing, onomatopoeic forms, and internal rhyming make Stieng a colorful and fascinating language.

Many Stieng men speak enough Vietnamese to care for government business and converse in the marketplace. Very few were able to read or write either their mother tongue or Vietnamese, however, at the beginning of our residence among them. As time progressed some were becoming literate.

The people are small in stature, but stockier than the Vietnamese. Their skin is light brown and their hair black, usually straight. Occasionally, a Stieng has slightly curly hair. Stiengs have noses that are smaller than Euroamericans and broader than Vietnamese.

They are a friendly, nonaggressive people. The women tend to be very shy, especially when men are present. The Stiengs have a refreshing 'live and let live' attitude which allows an outsider to make an easy adjustment to their culture.

TECHNOLOGY

Dress. Men traditionally have worn hand-woven loincloths, but in recent years have found short pants cheaper. A hand-woven loincloth is expensive because thread is purchased from Vietnamese and because it takes a woman many days of weaving. For feasts and special ceremonies, a Stieng man will wear a special ceremonial loincloth three or four yards long and at least a foot wide, with front and back flaps of an intricately woven design of red, white and yellow.

In recent years, especially since 1963, many hundreds of Stieng men have served in the local militia and therefore wear army uniforms of one kind or another. Those that do not actively serve are very glad to receive cast-off military shirts as they are sturdy and warm. It is not uncommon to see a man wearing some sort of a loincloth in combination with a rather long army shirt.

Men and women are accustomed to going barefoot everywhere, so are often victims of injuries, sores, ulcers, and snake-bite. If a man has money to spare, he may buy a pair of lightweight tennis shoes.

At home in the village, women and girls often wear only small loincloths. If it is cool, or if they are going to the market, they wear wraparound black satin sarongs bordered at the waist with a red band. In the past, they wore hand-woven sarongs as those in the most remote areas still do. These are much more durable than the satin sarongs purchased in the market from Vietnamese. They do not generally wear blouses unless they are cold or are going to town.

A woman never leaves her village without a carrying basket. The most widely used basket is the large back basket (*sah*) for carrying anything from firewood to gourds of drinking water, unhusked rice, or items bought in the market.

Adornments. Men wear brass hand-tooled bracelets. If their hair is long, they tie it in a little bun around a wide aluminum blade used as ornamentation. A man sometimes wears a single strand of beads. At puberty, Stieng boys and girls have their four upper front teeth chopped out at the gum line, and the bottom four filed to a point and lacquered black. By 1960, however, that custom was seldom practiced

in the village and surrounding area where we lived. Some older men have become self-conscious of their filed teeth when around outsiders and have had them gold-capped by Vietnamese practitioners.

Women wear aluminum bracelets and anklets, sometimes only a couple, but often many on both arms; these are never removed. Most women wear solid aluminum necklaces. One of the most interesting adornments that Stieng women wear is their ivory ear plugs (pi bluc) made from the tusk of an elephant or wild boar. Ear lobes are pierced when girls are infants, and a string is inserted into the hole. Then as a girl grows, the hole is gradually stretched with a small bamboo plug or even a hand-rolled cigarette. At puberty, girls usually receive small ivory plugs to insert in their already stretched lobes. Later, in adulthood, they may purchase a larger pair, which are considered very valuable.

In recent years, new plugs have been impossible to obtain because wild animals have moved deeper into jungle areas to escape bombardment, where it is unsafe to hunt. Neither Stieng men nor women scarify themselves or use paint or makeup of any kind.

Young girls wear their hair hanging loosely, but teenagers and women wear their hair in a loose bun at the nape of their necks. Women in the Sông Bé area do not cut their hair unless their spouse dies. Women from Đức Phong can be recognized by their distinctive hairstyle--they cut a fringe of bangs all the way around their head, but then allow the rest to grow long and tie it into a bun at the back of their head.

Housing. Since the Stieng people live in a forested area with an especially heavy growth of bamboo, it is natural that they build their houses using this versatile material. A house often measures as much as sixty feet in length, but only about twenty feet in width. Trees six to eight inches in diameter are sufficiently sturdy to be used as main house posts, planted in holes three feet deep. Bamboo poles are lashed to the main posts to make side frames and rafters. Rattan, split into one-eighth inch cords, is the material of choice for tying frames together. When rattan is not obtainable, the outer layer of green bamboo is the second choice, and makes an excellent tie. The outer one-eighth inch layer is peeled from the bamboo pole into strips. The strip breaks

at the knot, so in effect, comes premeasured long enough for ties. It is pliable when green, stiff and tight when dried in place, and does not need to be braided into cords.

For the outer walls and partitions, many large bamboo poles are carried long distances from the forest. The men split them while still green, dry the strips to protect against weevils, and then weave them neatly into large sheets for walls and partitions. Usually two men work together on the weaving. The outside walls are tied to the bamboo framework with rattan or bamboo cord.

The thatch roof is completed as soon as possible so that the house may be occupied immediately while the interior is being finished. Thatch ('ja) is a waist-high wild grass with a serrated edge. When it is tied in clumps, each piece clings to the next and makes a waterproof covering. Thatch is gathered in bundles and carried to the village where it is dried. If it is not dried well, it will rot during the rainy season or develop leaks as it dries and contracts. Dried thatch is laid out in neat rows on the ground and clamped together in three-to-four-foot sheets by means of interlaced splits of bamboo. When many of these roofing sheets are finished, then two or three men work together fastening the grass to the rafters with bamboo ties. A roof in a Stieng house has a very steep pitch in order to allow the heavy rains to run off quickly. The roof of the house is thus more prominent than are the walls. Doorways are usually cut opposite each other at the narrow ends of the house.

The house does not include furniture as Euroamericans think of it. The main item of furniture is a sleeping platform from eight to ten feet wide, made of split bamboo laid across a frame of bamboo poles along the entire length of one side of the house. The sleeping platform also serves as a storage area for valuables such as wine jars, blankets, gongs, and clothing.

After the sleeping platform is built, partitions of woven bamboo may be put up for privacy. Each compartment is large enough for one of the nuclear families of the extended family which occupies the house. If a man has two or more wives, each wife and her children have a separate compartment.

A girl sleeps in her parents' compartment, whereas a boy sleeps separately. Married children living in the same house with their parents have separate compartments of their own. When someone dies, his section of sleeping platform is chopped away, leaving a vacant space.

The unpartitioned side of the house is simply a dirt floor with a cooking fire for each wife.

Tools. A man seldom goes anywhere without his shoulder axe (wiêh) and small knife (pêh). The shoulder axe is his most useful tool. With it, he clears his field, chops his firewood, and builds his house. An axe blade is bought in the market and fitted to the end of a curved portion of a bamboo shoot. The shape of the handle is a modified letter J which allows it to rest neatly on the shoulder. The blade, which is closer in size to a wide knife blade than an axe blade, is held tightly in the knot of the bamboo shoot with a small peg of wood. A shoulder axe blade that is broken, or can no longer be sharpened, is fitted to a two-foot long bamboo handle to make a small, efficient hoe used for weeding corn, tobacco or other plants. A commercial hoe blade, available at Vietnamese markets, is used for digging holes and gardening. This large blade is eight inches wide and twelve inches long.

Another axe (sung) is about half the size of a medium-sized American axe and has a heavier head than the shoulder axe blade. The back of the head is hollow, allowing a three-foot curved piece of wood to be inserted. This increases the weight of the head with a minimum use of iron and results in a heavy axe capable of felling trees or splitting large pieces of firewood.

A man makes his own knife handle from a small curved portion of bamboo shoot. The blade is five inches long and has a sheath made of two flat pieces of wood tied together with braided rattan cord. He tucks this knife into the waistband of his loincloth, always on the right side.

Weapons. Besides shoulder axes, knives, and clubs, Stiengs have spears and crossbows in their arsenal. Spears are used ceremonially to kill water buffalo. Crossbows (sôna) made of

hard wood are used to hunt small game such as squirrels, porcupines, and groundhogs. The bow of the crossbow measures from four to six feet in length, and the stock is similar in length. It has a trigger of bone and a slot on top for placing a poison tipped bamboo arrow. The tip of the stock is often decorated with carvings, as well as blood and fur from the first kill. A poison which apparently attacks the nerve center of the animal is made from the bark of the 'jar tree, and is very effective. The crossbow is more powerful than accurate since arrows made of bamboo splits are irregular in shape. The advantage, when hunting, is in having the cover of thick jungle. The hunter never has to shoot across an open field, but can get within a few yards of his target.

Basketry. In a land where bamboo is plentiful, it is no surprise that quite a variety of baskets are made. Boys learn the skills of basketry, beginning by making the simplest types first.

The back basket (sah) is tightly woven of fine strips of bamboo, with two shoulder straps of strong, flexible braided rattan. It is used by the women for carrying heavy loads of wood, rice, or water. A loosely woven basket (waas) is used only to carry gourds of water. Baskets of various shapes and sizes are woven for specific purposes. A quart-sized basket (cupiêng) with fitted lid and one shoulder strap is used to carry cooked rice to the field. A long and narrow basket (sôôr) with two straps and pointed bottom is used as a quiver and for carrying small game. A gallon-sized harvesting basket (khiêu) of tightly woven bamboo is carried over one shoulder and tied to the waist while harvesting. A flat basket (đông) with one slightly pointed side measuring four to five feet in diameter is used for winnowing.

We were especially impressed with the speed with which hundreds of small baskets were made at a wedding feast, to be used for dividing up the meat that was butchered. Young men are also adept at weaving fish traps, complete with a bamboo spring which pulls the opening shut after the fish enters.

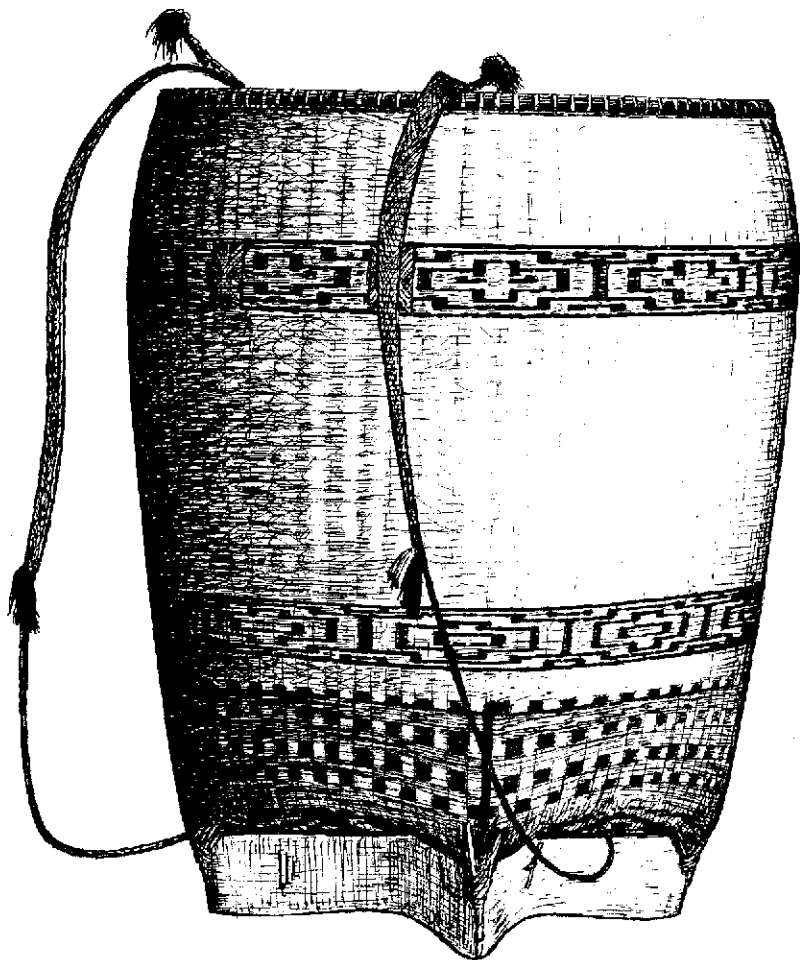


Figure 14. Sah.

Weaving. Women are skilled in weaving loincloths, skirts, blankets, and a cloth for carrying an infant on one's hip. A woman, sitting on a blanket on the ground, holds a simple wooden loom with her feet, resting it on her lap and tying it to her waist. Material is woven with rather intricate designs of red, black, white, and yellow thread. In former days, women grew their own cotton in the village, spun the yarn, dyed it, and then wove it. Today they buy yarn from the Vietnamese. This art is fast dying out as it is cheaper for them to buy cloth than to make their own.

Pottery. A few older women still are skilled in making clay pots. A white clay sediment from a stream is shaped into pots by hand without the use of a wheel. After drying the pot for a time, it is fired by placing it directly into a fire. The pots are used for cooking rice and are made with lids. This craft is no longer common as it is more customary to buy aluminum pots in the market.

Musical Instruments. Most minority peoples of South Viet Nam have gongs as part of their inventory of musical instruments. The Stieng people have two sets of gongs, one set called gong consisting of five separate gongs with convex centers, and another set called chênh consisting of six separate flat-centered gongs. These are purchased from Chinese merchants in large towns or in Saigon. Each individual gong has its own pitch and is played separately by one man. It is taboo to play these outside the house except under certain circumstances, such as when a water buffalo is sacrificed. Wine flows freely when gongs are played, since gongs summon the spirits, and the spirits must be offered wine at the very least. On such occasions, which last through the night, the same tune is played continuously, with no variation.

The khôôm buôt (literally, 'blow-joined') is a wind instrument made of a gourd into which six varied lengths of bamboo are inserted and held in place with pitch. The musician blows through the top of the narrow neck of the gourd varying the pitch by fingering notches in the sides of the bamboo.

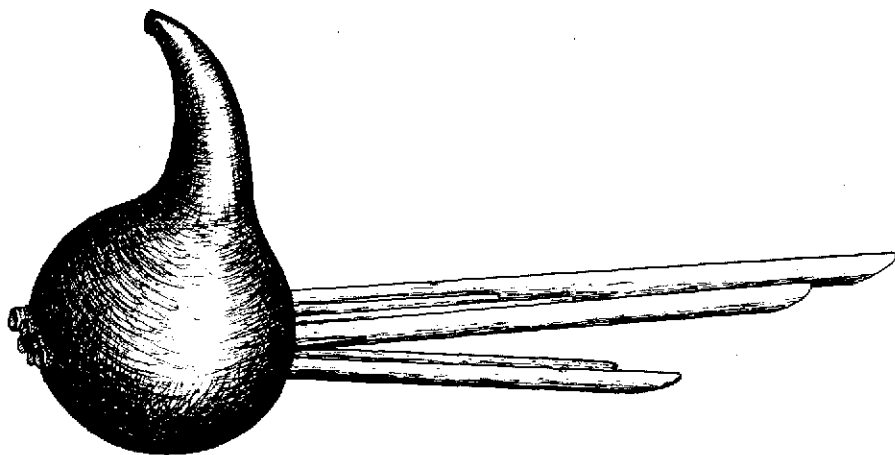


Figure 15. Khôôm Buôt.

The *chênh kây* (literally, 'gong horn') is made of hollowed-out buffalo horns. There are six to a set, and they have pitch levels which correspond to the six gongs called *chênh*. Each horn is played individually, and they can only be blown outside the village at night during harvest season. We enjoyed listening to their flutelike sound as the men returned from the field.

Every young boy learns to make and play a six-stringed banjo (*đênhdut*). It is made from an eighteen-inch piece of bamboo. Strands of the outer layer of the bamboo are lifted from the circumference of the tube, extending to its entire length. Various sized frets of bamboo are inserted under each strand to determine its pitch.

Toys. Men make very large kites (*clêêng*) using a bamboo frame and covering of paper bought in the market. They add several long tails with tassels. A bull-roarer which vibrates in the wind, making a musical sound, is attached to the frame. Kites are flown during the windy season, in February and March, and may be kept airborne through the night when the wind is strong.

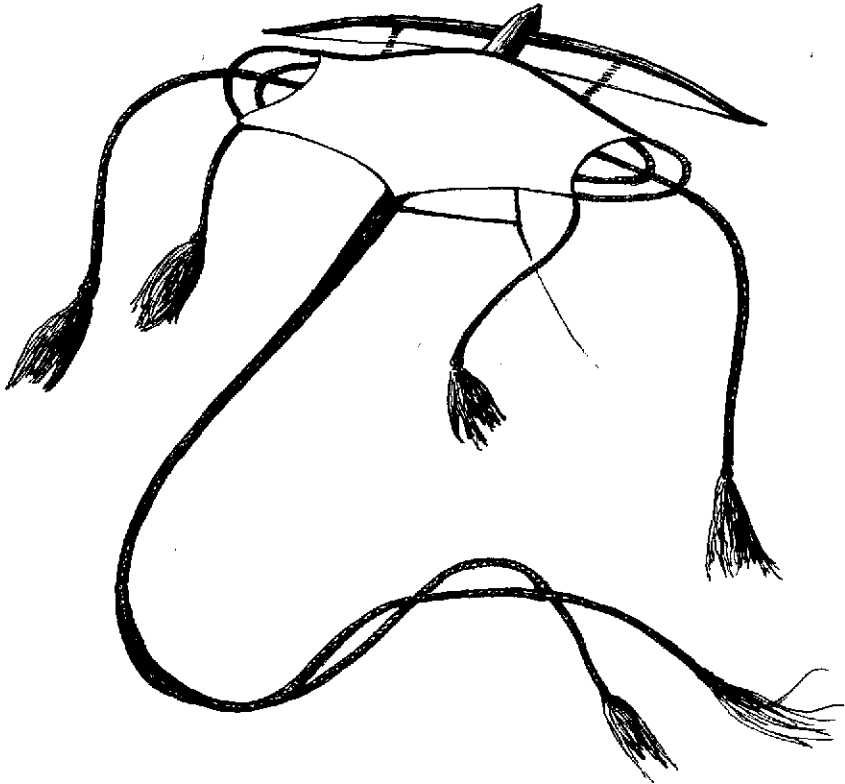


Figure 16. Clêêng.

Stieng boys carve small tops (pi blir) of wood, and make special string for them of vine. Two or more boys play together with their tops as a competitive sport.

As the war machinery came closer and closer to the Stieng area and children saw machine guns, artillery, planes, and parachutes, they began copying these. The center rib of a banana leaf was used to make toy repeating rifles. They cut a series of slits, lifted them up, and then in pretending to shoot, ran their forefinger quickly down the barrel. This made a sharp 'rat a tat tat' sound. Once, after they had observed paratroops practice jumping at a nearby airstrip for the first time, all the children cleverly made their own parachutes out of bits of cloth and string.

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

A few Stiengs have recently (1974) been moving away from their traditional nonmarket economy. In each village one finds someone selling wine, tobacco, rice, or dried fish. Before this, only Vietnamese would buy and sell to the Stieng. Stiengs live at a subsistence level, made more difficult because of the long period of war. Vietnamese money has come into wide use, both for market purchases as well as for borrowing and paying of debts.

Work and Labor. As in many agricultural societies, the Stiengs have periods when they work very hard, and other times when they are free. During planting and harvesting season, they work from dawn until dusk, walking long distances to and from their fields as well. At those times everyone in the family--men, women and children--works together in the household fields.

Division of Labor. Some types of work--pounding rice, winnowing, cooking meals, chopping firewood, hauling water, and weaving cloth--are specifically done by the women of the society. Young girls receive training in these practices, and take responsibility in accordance with their age.

Men hunt, trap, fish, build houses and fences, make tools, and clear the fields. They also make most of the artifacts of the society, such as baskets, traps, kites, shoulder axes knives, pipes and musical instruments.

Young people, both boys and girls, herd cattle and water buffalo, if the household has such.

Wealth. Prosperity is measured by the number of wives a man has and by material possessions such as wine jars, slaves, gongs, cattle, water buffalo, and pigs.

The most valuable of the wine jars (srung) may be worth as much as five slaves. The diameter of a wine jar measured in cubits (that is, the length of the forearm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger) determines its value. A wine jar which measures one cubit in diameter is normally equal to one slave; a jar of two cubits would be worth two slaves.

Stieng men of the bulô division feel that the bride price in their area is extremely high compared with that of other parts of Indochina. Even so, having two wives is not uncommon, and a man in Sôn Trung village had seven wives.

Consumption. War and the resettlement of Stiengs into overcrowded hamlets have caused the people to consume much less food than they really need. In recent years, they have not grown enough food to feed themselves because their fields have always been in contested areas.

FOOD

The main food is rice, grown by swidden agriculture. Corn and a favorite type of elongated squash (plai dien) is also grown. The Stieng raise animals such as pigs, ducks, and chickens, and grow bananas, papaya, and chili peppers in small quantities. Hunting for wild boar and other small game gives them another source of food, along with fishing. Stiengs also gather edible plants such as bamboo shoots, insects from the forest, and algae from the rocks in the river.

Fishing. Although the Stieng are adept at many types of fishing, it provides only a minor portion of their food supply. One form of fishing is by means of a trap made from woven strips of bamboo complete with a small gate. Bread or rice is placed inside the trap in order to attract fish, which then enter through the small opening. The trap is placed at the bottom of a stream. It is often left there all day with no catch at all.

A second common way of fishing is by scooping small fish out of a shallow stream using a woven bamboo scoop the size of a large straw hat. Usually, only a few small fish are caught in this way.

A third method is with line and hook, and a fourth method is by poison. This latter method is done by an entire village and is an enjoyable community affair. First, the river is dammed up, causing it to become shallow on the downstream side. Then a pungent reddish root from the forest is pounded and tossed into the river. This poison stuns the fish, bringing them to the surface, where they can be grabbed. Sometimes they have a good catch, but they are often disappointed.

Agriculture. Once a field is prepared, it is customarily used to plant crops for three years before being abandoned and allowed to lie fallow. Each family usually works three fields at the same time. These include the present year's newly prepared field, last year's field, and a field from the year before.

In late February, Stieng men go to the field and clear the underbrush. Then they chop down any trees in a new field. The wood is stacked for housebuilding or firewood, and brush is piled up to dry and burn.

Just before the rains begin in May, rice is planted. Corn is planted between the rows of rice as well. It grows quickly and can be harvested long before there is danger of it shading the rice plants. Families work together in planting. A man walks back and forth across the field making holes with a dibble stick in each hand, while a woman follows him, dropping three or four grains of rice into each hole, then covering the hole with her foot.

Since it rains every day, five or six months a year, there is always sufficient water for growth. Harvesting a large crop, however, does not only depend on rain, but on a Stieng's ingenuity in keeping away pests and wild animals. Therefore, as soon as planting begins, someone must stay in the field day and night in order to keep the animals and birds away. A noisemaker (pôôh) of bamboo clackers is connected with systems of twine around the field that one person can operate from a little field house. It is used to scare off little black birds considered to be a major pest. Young people and women take turns watching the fields, freeing the men to seek cash income while waiting for harvest.²

Men, women, and young people all help with the harvesting, and each person carries a khiêu basket. The rice plant is not cut, but each ripened head is picked by hand. This takes longer than cutting, but the Stieng have a taboo against cutting the rice stalk. An exceptional harvest would be a hundred back baskets of grain per family.

Gardening. Each Stieng family has a small garden behind the house where it grows its favorite squash year round.

All parts of this plant are eaten--the fruit, vine and leaves. Besides squash, the garden produces gourds used to store drinking water, betel leaves, mint, chili peppers, leeks, bananas, jackfruit, and papaya.

Domestic Animals. Water buffalo, pigs, ducks, and chickens are raised in and around the village. Buffalo are raised only for sacrifice and wealth, but are not used for plowing. Dogs are raised as pets, as well as for meat.

Problems. I would like to emphasize that what has been described is typical of good times. But during much of the time we lived among the Stieng people, they were not able to farm in their usual manner. Many Vietnamese had moved into the area, precipitating land disputes and forcing the Stieng to go further from their villages to plant. Available land was often too far from the village to permit travel back and forth each day, or the land was in an area contested by warring parties where they were not permitted to travel. Another difficulty was that the government would not allow them to stay in the fields at night, which meant that they lost much of their crop to predators.

Cash Income. During the years when it was safe for Stieng men to go into the forest, they cut down great quantities of bamboo and sold it to Vietnamese traders. The traders paid the men by the piece and then hauled heavily loaded trucks to the coast, or to Saigon to sell to other Vietnamese who specialized in furniture making or house building. After 1963, it was no longer possible to earn much money in this way because of the constant danger of war activity.

A second means of obtaining cash is through the sale of sesame seed which the Stieng plant in their rice fields. They sell this seed to Chinese merchants.

A third important way to earn money is to collect the sap of the huge, toddm raach tree in five gallon cans, and sell it to Vietnamese traders, who then sell it to boatmakers. The Vietnamese call this type of tree cay bau. To get the sap, the tree is notched and a fire is built in the notch. When the fire cools, the sap runs into the notch and is collected.

A fourth means of earning money is to lead loggers to very large trees deep in the forest. Since Vietnamese are not familiar with the forest, they pay Stieng men to scout out the best sources. A great deal of commercial lumbering has been done in the area by the Vietnamese. Of course, war hampered this activity too, as no one dared go deep into the jungle.

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

Courting. Courting as we know it is not part of Stieng culture. Young people do chores and other activities together, but it is never proper for an unmarried couple to be alone. Group activities which bring young people together include herding water buffalo or cattle, fishing, hunting, and gathering edible roots, nuts, and berries in the forest. If an unmarried couple is found alone together, they are assumed to be having illicit sexual relations, and will be so accused.

Selection of a Spouse. Marriage with the daughter of a mother's brother is preferred, but is not obligatory. Marriages are often arranged by parents while boys and girls are still infants. The purpose of such a marriage is primarily economic. The bride price and gift exchange are taken care of then, and the children grow up together in the boy's home as brother and sister. When the girl reaches marriageable age, right after puberty, she may be given in marriage to some other man and her bride price used to pay for a girl to be wife to the boy with whom she grew up. This is probably due to the fact that they feel more like brother and sister, and an actual marriage relationship would seem strange to them. In some cases, however, when the young couple reaches adulthood, they do marry.

Some opportunity to choose a marriage partner is open to a young man since it is possible for him to see a girl that he finds attractive in a village that he is visiting, inquire about her--whether she's married, if she's skilled, and if she can work hard in the field--and, if she meets his standards, begin arranging for a marriage.

Once a girl has been chosen, it is necessary for the parents to give permission and begin making arrangements for the marriage. It is possible that parents may refuse to arrange a marriage, either because they cannot afford the bride price at that time, or because the girl is the child of a witch (chaac).

Bride Price. In arranging the details of the marriage, two intermediaries each are chosen by the parents of both bride and groom. These men must not be members of their families and must be acceptable to both sides. The groom's parents and their intermediaries go to the bride's village to discuss the proposed marriage with the bride's parents. After this initial contact, which may or may not settle the bride price, the parents return to their own village and entrust everything into the hands of their intermediaries.

Intermediaries have a great deal of responsibility. They not only are witnesses to the marriage agreement, but they must see that the bride price is paid. In a situation where the price cannot be paid, and the groom is not able to serve in his father-in-law's household, then the intermediary is liable.

In spite of much bargaining, the bride price is quite rigid, and follows the price paid for the bride's mother. A normal price would be one bond slave, one expensive jar (srung), a water buffalo, three or four pigs, 20 small wine jars, five bush axes, and five spears. Bargaining takes a lot of time, because, if there is no bond slave or wine jar, they must figure the equivalent in money. The devaluation of money has caused much difficulty in figuring current equivalents.

As an alternative to the bride price, the couple takes up residence with the bride's family, and the groom contributes his labor to his father-in-law's household.

Most men complain about the high bride price, and some men therefore choose to take a Cambodian wife to avoid having to pay it.

When the bargaining is completed, a wedding date is set. It can take place within a few days or after as long as a

month. The marriage, however, cannot take place three or thirteen days after the agreement is made. These days are taboo.

An interesting economic feature connected with the bride price is called trading (toh laas). This means that a brother of the bride can borrow from the groom at an advantage. If a man is in debt, if he needs a wine jug or water buffalo, or plans to get married and is in need of his own bride price, he can ask his married sister for any of these and she and her husband are obligated to help with the debt. The brother, however, must check the financial situation of his sister before asking. Otherwise, because the obligation is so strong, the brother-in-law might be forced to make his own wife a bond slave. If the request for help is agreeable, a month is allowed for the sister and brother-in-law to procure what is needed. The brother will return to his sister's house bringing baskets of glutinous rice. The rice is divided by the sister among all the children who are related to her husband. Then the sister butchers a pig so that they can feast and drink together. Killing a pig is compulsory in this situation.

Long before borrowing takes place, brothers have reciprocal obligations to their newly married sister. They must help the new couple get financially established by bringing gifts--pigs, chickens, or other basic household necessities.

Elopement. A young couple from wealthy families may fall in love and decide to marry on their own. Early some morning, while the girl is pounding rice, he will sneak to her village and carry her off. Later, when the girl's parents miss her, they send out search parties. Eventually they will find that the couple has eloped. Then all the relatives go to the groom's village where the full bride price is paid, plus a little extra. There they join in a time of feasting and drinking.

Marriage Ceremonies. The first feast known as 'bringing gifts to them' (Jên drap a bu), is the main marriage ceremony, after which the couple may engage in sexual intercourse. The ceremony takes place at the village of the bride. Three

pigs, which are part of the bride price, are brought to the bride's parents by the groom or groom's parents. These pigs are known as the 'sacrificial pig', the 'looking for a wife pig', and the 'spear and axe pig'; the last of these relates to an engagement present which includes a spear and a sacrificial shoulder axe with a curved handle (wiêh úr).

All the animals brought are butchered that day and are shared equally by both families. Most of the meat is consumed by wedding guests.

Before any of the meat is eaten, there is an elaborate ceremony. When evening begins, the intermediary has the responsibility of calling on the spirits. The bride and groom stand facing each other with their right feet on a buffalo horn. The intermediary mixes together pig's blood, a mashed tuber, a little wine, and a piece of the pig's liver, using the same knife which he used to kill the pigs. Taking the knife, he smears some of this mixture on the bride's foot, and then on the groom's foot. While anointing their feet, the intermediary calls to the spirits of the sky, the grave, the house, and all the deceased relatives, and asks them for their blessings on the marriage, requesting that the spirits prevent sickness and guard the new home. He also asks that the spirits make the union prosperous. This special knife becomes the property of the groom. He must not lose it, sell it, or trade it.

The second part of the ceremony involves the drinking of rice wine. A wine jar is filled with wine, using a hollowed-out buffalo horn as a measure. The groom uses a reed to drink from the jar. As he drinks, someone pours water into the jar of wine, using a buffalo horn to measure exactly how much is added. In this way they can tell how much the groom has drunk. He can drink either two or four hornfuls of wine; three is taboo. While he's drinking, the bride places a string of red beads around his neck. When the groom finishes, the bride drinks wine in the same manner. The groom removes the beads from his neck and places them around the bride's neck. She wears those beads all that night and the next day. She can wear them longer if she chooses, but usually removes them after the first day or two.

After this ceremony is completed, all the guests are served rice and roast pork. The bride ceremonially gives her husband a handful of rice; and he reciprocates, signifying their pledge to live and work together.

At the end of the first ceremony, the couple takes up temporary residence in the bride's parent's house. The parents prepare a separate compartment for the newlyweds, and they are permitted to have sexual intercourse.

The second ceremony takes place immediately after rice harvest at the groom's village, and is a regular part of the harvest ceremony. It is called 'our son brings his wife home' (jên coon seq a sai). It refers to the fact that the bride price has been paid, and the couple takes up residence in the groom's village. From that point, they begin to contribute to the economic welfare of the groom's family. It is important that the second ceremony occur after rice harvest because of the significance of making fresh wine from that year's rice. It insures the success of the marriage. Commercial wine sold by the Vietnamese is not considered legitimate for the purpose, since the Stieng believe that the spirits are not accustomed to Vietnamese wine.

Three pigs are brought and butchered for the feast. Also, a type of glutinous rice considered especially delicious is carried by the guests to the groom's village, where it is cooked in bamboo tubes. There is a special term for each pig. One is called the 'sticky rice pig', referring to the fact that all the bride's relatives can go to the groom's village. The second pig is known as 'stepping on the sleeping mat pig', indicating that a new household is to be established in the groom's village. The third pig is named 'entering the bedroom pig' which symbolizes that the couple may engage in sexual intercourse in the groom's village.

As the years pass, the intermediaries keep a record of the payment of the bride price. In most cases, it is years before a groom is able to procure the valuable jar or bond-slave. In this situation, the groom lives in his father-in-law's house and contributes to that family's economy. This may continue indefinitely, or the full bride price may in fact be paid. In the latter case, another feast takes place

at the village of the bride, for which the bride's parents are responsible to provide the meat.

In recent war years, the extremely costly bride price has added greatly to the burden of debt that Stieng households carry. We have observed that they are never free of debt, and some of their debts are beyond their ability to ever repay.

Number of Spouses. Stieng marriages are often polygamous.³ The suggestion that a man take a second wife may come from the first wife, who wants help with the work. In a polygamous household, each wife and her children have a separate compartment within the same house. They also each keep separate their own rice, cooking utensils, pigs, chickens, and gardens. The husband owns all these things in common with each wife, but ownership is not shared between wives. A man eats and sleeps with each wife in turn.

Men also acquire additional wives through the levirate, that is, by taking the widows of their deceased brothers. When a man dies, the preference is for his brother or other male relative to take the widow as wife. The brothers may divide the possessions of the deceased among themselves, and they are obligated to also take the widow. If a widow does not agree to live with one of her husband's male relatives, she can return the bride price and marry someone else or return to her parents' village. A son may take his father's widow as his own wife, providing she is not his biological mother.

Whoever takes a widow as wife also assumes the debts of the dead husband.

Avoidance. The Stieng have strict sex avoidance rules. This especially applies to affinal relatives. A man must never have physical contact with the wife of his brother or his son. A Stieng family unit living together in a long house includes all members of the patrilineally extended family, as well as couples whose bride price has not been completely paid. Still it is important that certain relatives never touch each other. If they do, even inadvertently, the younger is always considered at fault.

Divorce and Adultery. Divorce is very uncommon.⁴ About the only real cause for divorce is adultery. If a wife is

unfaithful, she is believed to cause her husband to become sick or otherwise have trouble. So if a husband is on a fishing or hunting trip, or arranging a loan, and is unsuccessful, he will suspect his wife of infidelity.

The female partner in a case of adultery is severely punished. If a husband believes his wife is guilty, he may beat her until she confesses. Then he may demand that she go with her parents and sue for settlement from the guilty male partner. The interloper may be required to pay a jar (srung) or pig as indemnity. The wronged husband may choose to go along and watch the proceedings, but he has no right to make any charges. In the case of repeated adultery with the same man, the payment may be a bond slave, which may be the man himself. If that happens, the bond slave must live and work in the house of the woman with whom he has had the affair.

A wife can do no more than scold her husband if he is suspected of adultery; but she can threaten to tell the husband of the woman involved, in which case suit could be brought against him. This is one way wives keep their husbands in line.

Men and women are very careful not to be seen alone with someone of the opposite sex. They would never go to their fields together, walk back from a river together, or perform any other ordinary daily task in the company of someone who was not their spouse. If they did, they would be accused of adultery. There must always be a third person present in any such situation.

If divorce does occur, the bride price must be returned. If the wife's parents cannot make payment, then the intermediaries chosen by the wife's parents are responsible for the debt.

Mistresses. Although dating, as Americans think of it, is not part of Stieng culture, a young unmarried man may have a mistress. He must make arrangements for the rendezvous through an intermediary--another girl. He pays something to both girls, and the couple meet at a prearranged spot in the forest. A relationship like this can last from between one meeting to a couple of years, or even marriage. If the

girl becomes pregnant, they must marry, and the bride price must be paid. The alternative is to pay a penalty.

The Stieng have a legend about a girl sent out to the field each morning to keep doves from eating the newly planted rice seed. While there she had opportunity to meet her boyfriend. But as the rice sprouted, she cut it down and told the family that it had not yet sprouted. When the rice sprouts, the doves are no longer a problem. In this way she continued her rendezvous for a long time.

Single People. A person does not remain single unless crippled, disfigured, or unusually ugly. All other women marry; and all other men marry, even if the bride price is exorbitant and they are very poor. Foreign single women—whether Vietnamese, French, or American—are assumed by the Stieng to be someone's mistress.

Orphans. An orphan is usually cared for by the brother of the child's deceased father. If the child has no such kinsman, the mother's brother takes responsibility. There are situations, however, where an orphan will not be cared for because its family has caused others trouble, and the relatives do not feel pity for the child. An orphan, when becoming a part of a new household, helps by working in the field.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN RICE PLANTING

There are three major ceremonies connected with the planting and harvesting of rice. They are: the ceremony for finding a field, the sprinkling ceremony, and the harvest ceremony.

Ceremony for Finding a Field (Pê Lnoong). In January, when the rains have stopped, the head of the household begins to look for a field. He looks close to his own village first, but more often must search a one or two hour walk from his village. Ideally, he chooses a field adjacent to his present one, since he tries to work three fields at the same time. It is necessary to choose one that has been fallow for fifteen or twenty years. He can judge this by the size of the trees. He is also alert for a certain grasslike weed (la siêt),

the presence of which indicates favorable soil conditions. He also prefers terrain free of rocks or difficult slopes.

When he has chosen a field, he marks it as such by cutting a small four-foot square clearing in which he plants a bamboo pole. The bamboo is split at the top into four strips, one pointing down with *la siêt* grass placed in the splits. He offers a prayer at the site which goes something like this: "I am trusting here. I haven't dreamed, I haven't had a nightmare, I haven't had anything to show me not to plant. I want to plant. Even if I should plant the hardwood tree, have it bear fruit. If I should plant a pestle used for pounding rice, let it sprout."

When the man returns to the village, it is taboo for him to speak to visitors, and visitors are forbidden to enter his house. If either of these happen, it is believed that wild pigs or deer will ruin his field after it is planted.

After staking out his field, a man waits a night or two for omens in his dreams. Bad dreams would reverse his decision. If he dreams of clear running water, that would be a good sign; but if he dreams of falling or some other accident, then he would take that as a warning not to plant there. He would then choose another field. After two or three days of uneventful dreams, however, he returns to his new field and performs the second part of this first ritual called 'the testing' (*Pê Lnoong*). An area of ten to fifteen feet square is cleared. While clearing, the man continually watches for bad omens warning him not to plant the field. A bad omen, for example, might be the sound of a falling tree, which the Stiang believe to be the sound of one's own coffin being made. He also watches for certain birds which are bad omens. No prayer is offered at this particular time. If he clears this small area and nothing happens to warn him, he then returns and begins to clear the entire field.

The small area which was originally staked out is the spot where he erects his field house. It becomes his shelter and home for much of the year while he is planting and harvesting. He even spends some of his nights there protecting his fields against predators.

Ceremony of the Sprinkling of Rice (Broh Ba). When the rice is about two feet tall, but before the seed appears, a sacrifice is made in the village. Both a pig and a chicken are killed and a spirit pole (cōnhjoh) is made within the village. Spirit poles are made of bamboo and are used in all Stieng sacrifices. The bottom is split into several parts into which other strips of bamboo are woven, producing the shape of a lamp base. The top of the pole is also split into many thin shavings, so thin that they curl.

One split, used to pierce the liver of the chicken, is not curled. It stands in the center of what appears to be tassels of curled bamboo. These curlicued tassels are smeared with blood from the sacrifice, and this pole then becomes the focal point of the worship ceremony. Though the pig and chicken are killed in the village, they are carried to the field for the remainder of the ceremony.

In the original four foot square clearing, a small replica of the rice house, called the 'rice spirit's house', is erected. The sacrificed meat is placed alongside this small spirit house, and a handful of freshly cooked rice from the top of the pot is offered to the spirits. Basic ingredients used in making betel chew--including the betel nut, betel leaf, lime, and tobacco--are placed in a little dish and set inside the spirit house. The meat from the sacrifice is also placed within the spirit house at this time.

The farmer has previously planted a tuber (gun) believed to have magical properties alongside his field house. Such a tuber is now pulled up, mashed together with water, and placed in a bamboo tube. In the actual 'sprinkling ceremony', the owner of the field sprinkles some of this substance on all four sides of his field and on the path that he uses to go to the field. While sprinkling, he calls upon the rice spirit to give him a good rice harvest.

When he finishes, he places the empty bamboo tube inside the spirit's house and removes the meat, leaving the rice and betel chew ingredients for the rice spirit. In the evening, back in the village while his wife cooks the evening meal, the man takes a little part of the sacrificed meat, makes another small spirit pole, and goes to the spring where

he normally bathes each day. He calls on the spirit of the water and offers it a sacrifice too. He leaves a little rice and betel chew ingredients, which are part of all sacrifice ceremonies.

The Harvest Ceremony (Pủ Ba Khiêu). This third ceremony also begins in the same little square that was first cleared. The harvest ceremony takes place anytime after all the rice is harvested, either immediately or some months later. Evidently the ceremony is postponed as long as possible to show abundant harvest and to avoid the immediate cost of a sacrifice. The ceremony is named after the particular basket (khiêu) used to harvest rice.

Each household builds a storehouse high off the ground, either within the village or in the field. As the rice is harvested, the storehouse is filled first, except for what is eaten that day. None of the storehouse rice can be eaten until the harvest ceremony is completed. Once the storehouse is filled, then the remainder of the rice is stored in large baskets in the house. This extra rice can be eaten before the harvest ceremony.

If there is a good harvest of one hundred or more large back baskets, the harvest ceremony must take place or else the owner cannot leave his village. His family may leave, but it is taboo for him to leave until the sacrifice is offered.

During the harvesting, the rice around the spirit's house is harvested last. It is put into an old basket, and that particular rice is considered to be the spirit's rice and is kept in the storehouse.

For this sacrifice, the owner of the field makes a new spirit pole, which is anointed with the blood of a chicken and pig. The basket of rice for the spirit is brought from the storehouse, and the head of the roasted pig and a whole chicken are put on top of the basket. Then the spirit pole is placed on top of the rice. Every type of food found in a Stieng household is also placed in the basket. One special preparation is the cooking of sticky rice (pênjêng) in a finger-thin bamboo tube. After cooking, the tubing is cut

every inch or so to make it flexible, and then it is wound around the top and sides of the spirit pole. Three other items of importance in the sacrifice are a dish of betel nut chew, a dish of wine, and some drinking water for the spirit. After these are all in place, the man calls upon the spirit of the rice. He especially asks for protection and health for the new family if his son and daughter-in-law have returned to his home. He also asks for good luck, freedom from sickness for his family during the coming year, and then calls attention to all the parts of the sacrifice he has just made--the pig, the chicken, the wine, and the betel he has given to the spirit to use. After that, he retrieves the chicken and the pig's head for the guests to eat along with rice that has been prepared.

SICKNESS AND DEATH

Sickness and death are believed to be caused by a witch or sorcerer (chaac). In Stieng eyes, all people are divided into two classes, sorcerers and good people (joh). Any illness or misfortune is attributed to the curse of a real person, often an individual of one's own village. Furthermore, death is divided into two categories, violent death (chhêt briêng) and death from sickness, both caused by sorcery, with the possible exception of death in battle. If a person is killed by a tiger, it is believed that the tiger was raised and fed rice by a sorcerer. It is believed that if the tiger's stomach were cut open, cooked rice would be found, proving that a sorcerer had been feeding it. If there is an auto accident, sorcery is believed to have influenced the vehicle by causing the driver to temporarily lose his vision. Or if a person becomes ill, it is believed that a sorcerer is eating his liver or brain. The sorcerer is believed to subsist on liver or brain of other people.

Healing Techniques. There are several ceremonies used in healing. The mhom ceremony is performed by a 'spirit woman' (mê brah), a woman who, by visitation of the spirits, is claimed as their wife, and to whom they entrust a special white stone (tmau tlaar). The stone has magical powers used in healing and authenticates her status as a shaman. She carries it in a small shaman's bag. A spirit woman is called upon to hold the mhom ceremony and to divine the type of

sacrifice required to appease the sorcerer and stop him or her from further harming the sick person.

The spirit woman orders a chicken and possibly a dog to be killed for sacrifice prior to her arrival. These are roasted on a spit. A spirit pole is made, and the chicken is hung on a wall to the left of the pole, above the sleeping platform of the patient. The entrails of the chicken are attached to the wall to the right of the pole. The dog is hung to the left of the chicken. A miniature bamboo ladder is made and leaned against the spirit pole. On the right of the pole is a bamboo tube of water and an empty bowl. Around the spirit pole is a large dish of uncooked rice, two bowls of cooked rice, a plate of food and a gourd of water.

When all of these items are assembled, the spirit woman begins a chant, with heavy breathing and calling of the spirits. During this chant, she falls into a trance and is believed to make contact with the sorcerer, who tells her the cause of the illness. When the trance ends, she begins to heal by sucking the stone, stick or string which has caused the illness out of the person's body. This ceremony may last all night since, as soon as the prime patient has been attended, everyone in the village with any and all ailments comes for a brief treatment.

In the *prông* ceremony, a sick person's body is rubbed with homegrown cotton wet with saliva, by a male shaman (*chôngrông*) who has contact with the spirit world. This shaman discerns what animal must be sacrificed in order for the person to be healed by holding the wet cotton behind a candle. He then receives insight as to the sacrifice the spirits require.

After an animal is killed and roasted, a sliver of each part of the animal--leg, tail, eye, skin, etc.--is placed on a tray along with rice and wine, and taken to the village gate and left. Then each family in the village is given a piece of meat from the sacrificed animal. It is essential that this be done; otherwise the sacrifice will not be effective. It often happens that several animals, such as water buffalo, cattle, pigs or chicken, are required.

Because animals are very costly, this system of animal sacrifice is a tremendous financial burden; but intense cultural pressure induces the people to be willing to suffer debt or poverty in order to perform them.

In a more simple ceremony than the previous two mentioned, the individual householder functions as priest by praying to the spirits (bon brah) himself. The head of the family kills a chicken for sacrifice, spreading the blood on the spirit pole and putting the spirit pole outside the village gate. He then calls the spirits of the forest, mountains, rivers, rocks, trees, and dead relatives to request pity on him because a member of his family is sick. He promises the spirits a sacrifice if the person is healed. This is financially more advantageous than the previous two ceremonies, as a man is not obligated to sacrifice unless the sick person becomes well.

Trial by Ordeal. Occasionally, someone who is extremely ill may dream that a particular person in the village is a sorcerer. In the dream, he sees the sorcerer coming to eat him. Each fireplace in the village is then given a notched piece of bamboo (khaac) as a warning that someone is suspected of sorcery. The village is told that the sick person had better improve or there will be an open accusation. If the person does not improve, a close relative goes to the person and accuses him or her of being a sorcerer, demanding a trial by ordeal.

In one form of trial by ordeal, seven layers of leaves are put on the accused person's hand. A razor sharp bushaxe is held to the person's wrist to keep him from moving while molten lead is poured onto the hand. If the lead, burning through the layers of leaves and then the hand, drops to the ground in the shape of a water buffalo horn, then the person is guilty of causing the illness. If the person suffers only a minor burn, however, the charges are dropped.

If the accuser wishes to be doubly sure, he goes to the forest and drops molten lead on a round section of bamboo. It too must form the shape of a water buffalo horn while he is calling out the name of the accused. If that happens, the accuser announces the fact to the entire village.

A person usually confesses to being a sorcerer when presented with this evidence since, if he does not, he is beaten or tortured until he does. If the sorcerer can heal the sick person, he is released; but if not, he may be sold into slavery, killed, have his fingers chopped off, or be tortured to death by making cuts on his body and rubbing red pepper into them.

Another variation of the ordeal is to see if a person can hold his breath under water. A sorcerer will not be able to hold his breath at all. In 1968 there were young men in their twenties who had witnessed the trial by ordeal, although the government no longer permitted sorcerers to be killed. We are told that the French government did allow these killings as a part of the Stieng system of justice.

Medicine. Although the Stieng perform all the foregoing ceremonies, they also accept Vietnamese or Western medicine. There seems to be no incongruity with this practice. We have attended healing ceremonies, and have given an injection to the sick person immediately afterwards. The person is believed to recover if the spirit allows him to do so; but if the spirit wants him to die, he will, no matter what medicine is given.

Magical Charms (gun). One means of avoiding sickness and death is the wearing of charms. A charm is made from the tuber, mentioned earlier, (gun) which is considered to have magical powers. The tuber is sliced into small pieces one quarter inch in circumference and one eighth inch thick. After being dried, these pieces are worn on a string around the neck to ward off evil powers.

The tuber can also be made into a special potion to perform other desired functions--anything from a love potion furtively given to a girl whom one wants as a mistress, to a potion to cause a dog to bite someone unwanted in the village.

Infant Mortality. The rate of infant mortality is extremely high among the Stieng. There is a lack of knowledge of basic sanitation, and babies often die of pneumonia because they are exposed to rainy or cold weather when newborn.

Of the babies born during the three years (1960 to 1963) we were living in a Stieng village, perhaps fifty percent died.

The people have responded to this problem in a number of ways. First, babies are not named until about three years old, when their chances of survival are better. They also believe in reincarnation, that is, that dead infants return to life in the form of another baby. They mark a dead infant with charcoal or ink and look for a birthmark in that spot when a new child is born to see if it is the reincarnated child.

This marking of a child is not obligatory; but it is believed that if a reincarnated child is born and the parents do not give it the right name, the baby will cry a lot until it is given the name of the dead child. The dead child may appear to them in a dream and tell them which name to give.

Death. If none of the healing remedies previously discussed are effective, the quietness of a Stieng village is broken by the death wail. All of the relatives of the deceased run to the deceased person's sleeping platform. They gather around the body, and as they wail, each person simply calls out the term of relationship he had with the deceased. If he was the father, then "father, father, father" is called out. Wailing continues day and night until burial. The people purposefully remain awake to keep the dead one company. The men drink and kid each other a bit in order to keep themselves awake, but often fall asleep by morning. If a Stieng person dies in the province hospital and is laid in the morgue, the relatives do not always stay with the body.

Able-bodied male relatives of the deceased prepare the coffin. It is sometimes made of purchased lumber, but typically the men choose a large tree and chop it down. A log is squared off at the sides, split in half, and hollowed out to fit the corpse. The work party divides itself, and one group hollows out the top half while the other group hollows out the bottom. If the family is too poor to afford a sacrifice feast, the body may be wrapped in only a few strips of bamboo or put into a broken wine jar which is sealed for burial.

Each man who works on the coffin cooks his own food separately in the forest. He fears he will contract the disease of the dead person if food is prepared in the village and carried out to him. The family of the deceased person provides a little meat for each man in the working party if they have it.

The coffin is carried back to the village when ready. Stiengs do not wash the body, change the clothing, or make any other special preparations for burial. The body is not embalmed, but is simply put into the coffin and the coffin sealed. If the person's death is caused by an accident, then only the closest relatives are willing to handle the body.

A water buffalo or pig is sacrificed and roasted. Then when the coffin is sealed, a ceremony is performed (seen *comôôch*). Each person attending the funeral takes a bit of meat, a little rice, and a small piece of tobacco and places it on top of the coffin just before it is carried to the graveyard. Some of the men have dug a grave about three or four feet deep, and then the coffin is placed into the hole. The dead person's personal belongings--such as clothing, crossbow, shoulder axe, and water jug--are buried with him. His back basket is burned, and his wine jar broken. The grave is heaped with dirt as high as two or three feet above the ground.

A bamboo shelter is erected over the grave with a waterproof roof over it. Then other possessions of the deceased are placed at the grave. The items placed there are always very battered and worn. It is believed that things are opposite in the next life, so if the deceased has broken items at the grave, then in the next life, he will have good things. This also has a practical purpose in that people will not steal broken things from a grave.

As the burial party returns from the graveyard, all the members stop at a stream and bathe and wash their clothes (*ôm bôôc*) before entering the village. As soon as they arrive at the village, the closest relative of the deceased must light a fire. The sleeping platform of the deceased is burned, and the fire is closely watched to keep it burning--six days if a woman has died, and seven if a man.

Immediately after the burial, as an outward sign of mourning, a widow cuts her hair off and smears ashes on her face. A husband or child cuts a lock of hair from his forehead.

The name, or any word rhyming with the name, of a deceased person must not be mentioned in the hearing of the deceased person's relatives. If the name is MÊ, for example, rhymes of the name such as bê or tê would become bay or tay. The dead person is always referred to as 'the deceased' (cmôôch).

Two days after burial, the closest adult relative takes a finger-sized tube of cooked rice and shrimp to the grave site and places it on top of the grave. This is the final symbolic act performed at the grave.

On the sixth or seventh day, a closed bamboo tube is put on the fire. The relatives stand around the fire, and when the tube explodes, a gourd of water is thrown into the fire. The gourd breaks and the fire is extinguished. This signifies the end of burial rites.

NOTES

¹The material for this paper is based on observations and interviews collected over a fourteen year period from 1960 to 1974. My husband Ralph and I, along with our three children, lived with Stieng people nine of those fourteen years. We lived five of the nine years in the village of Bukrêoaï and then in the capital city of Sông Bé, both in Phước Long Province. Our purpose in living in close contact with the Stieng was to learn the Stieng language in order to develop a written language, prepare literacy materials, and translate the New Testament portion of the Bible. In order to accomplish these goals, we also spent time studying the culture of the Stieng people. Neither of us had any professional anthropological training, so there are gaps in our notes.

²Describing Stieng life in the 1860s among the Bu Dêh Stieng (Azemar 1886), reported little care taken to ward off pests, and little opportunity for cash income.

³Azemar (1886) found little polygamy, except among chiefs. Le Bar et al. (1964:157), quoting Gerber, report little polygamy because of the high bride price. We found wide differences in the marriage customs of the Bu Dêh and Bu Lơ.

⁴Azemar (1886) says divorce was not permitted except for sterility. In cases of adultery, the woman was presumed innocent.

REFERENCES

- Azemar, (Pere) H. 1886. "Les Stiengs de Brolam." *Excursions et Reconnaissances*, pp. 147-60, 215-50.
- De Barthelemy, P. 1904. *Au Pays Moi*. Paris, Plon.
- 1899. "Au Pays des Mois." *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de Paris*, 7th ser., 20:330-93.
- 1901a. "Reconnaissance chez les Mois-Stiengs et aux Environs du Mont Djambre." *La Géographie* 3:489-98.
- 1901b. "Un Voyage chez les Moi-Stiengs Vivant au Pied de la Chaîne Djambra." *Revue Indochinoise* 129:300-302 and 130:327-28.
- Embree, John F. and Lillian Ota Dotson. 1950. *Bibliography of the Peoples and Cultures of Mainland Southeast Asia*. (Southeast Asia Studies.) New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gerber, T. 1951. "Coutumier Stieng." *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient* 45:228-69.
- Le Bar, Frank M., Gerald C. Hickey, and John K. Musgrave. 1964. *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: HRAF Press. Esp. pp. 157-58.
- Raulin, Henri P. 1946. "L'Evolution des Stieng de la Delegation de Hon-quan." *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises* 21:2.67-71.
- 1947. "Les Technique de la Percussion et de la Production du Feu chez les Stieng." *Bulletin de la Société Etudes Indochinoises* 22:2.111-21.