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**Ethnographic Study Series:
SELECTED GROUPS
IN THE REPUBLIC
OF VIETNAM**

THE RHADE

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ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY SERIES:

**SELECTED GROUPS IN THE
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**

THE RHADE



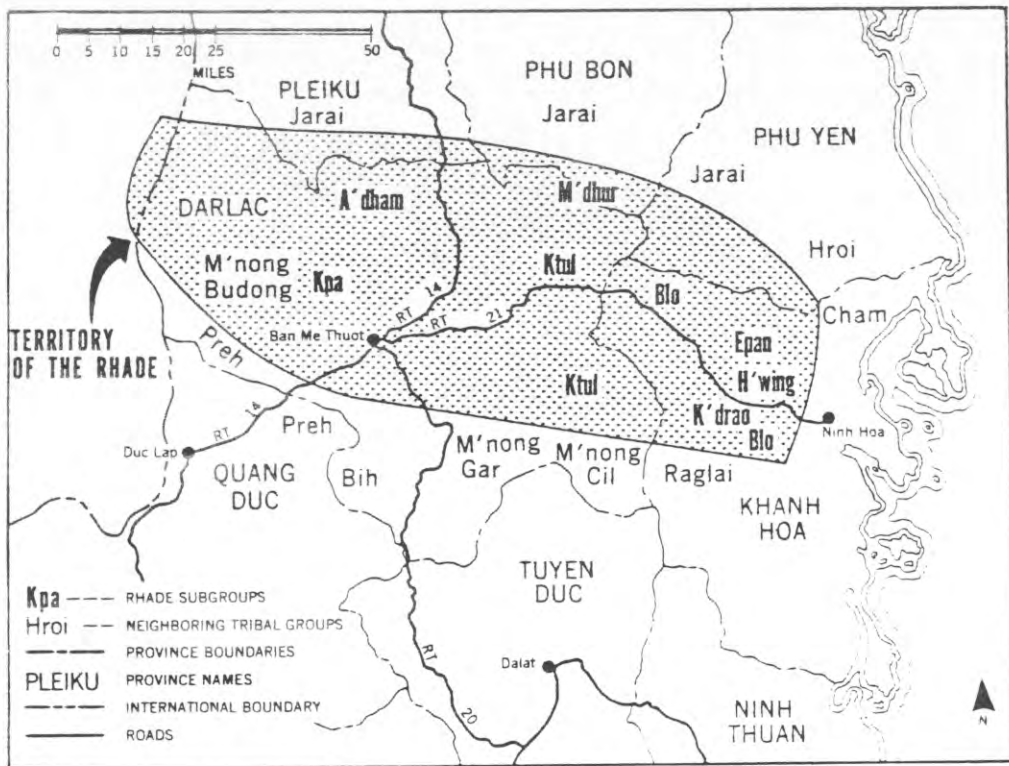
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THE RHADE SUBGROUPS

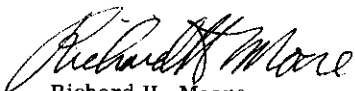
PREFACE

SORO, in response to a request from the Directorate of Special Operations, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, Department of the Army, is developing a CINFAC ethnographic study of selected groups residing in or migrating through the Republic of Vietnam. The complete study will cover 18 tribes and 6 minority groups.

The task of studying selected groups in the Republic of Vietnam is a complicated one. The country is undergoing crises of various types, in the course of which the groups have come into contact with modern civilization. It is difficult to gauge the true depth and nature of social and cultural changes, particularly those occurring because of contact with U.S. military and economic assistance programs. It does appear, however, that the minority groups are deeply involved in these changes. Finally, the available information is fragmentary and often biased or contradictory.

This working paper on the Rhade is the first of a prepublication series on the groups being distributed on a limited basis. It is a descriptive report based on secondary sources dealing with the Vietnamese society. Field research was not undertaken, although the comments of consultants and personnel recently returned from Vietnam have been incorporated. The final report will contain line drawings and illustrations.

It must be recognized, then, that this paper on the Rhade is not an exhaustive study. Further, the information contained herein may be dated even before it is published and may be subject to modification in the light of new developments and information. Although it contains the latest information available, the user is cautioned to consider this study as a point of departure to be checked against the current circumstances or conditions of the particular area in which he is working.



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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

For many decades the Rhade tribe has been considered the most important and most strategically located of the Montagnard tribes in the Republic of Vietnam. The Rhade is one of the largest tribes, numbering between 100,000 and 120,000 and inhabiting an extensive strip of the Darlac Plateau.

The Rhade language is of Malayo-Polynesian origin and is related to the languages of the Jarai and Raglai, two other important tribal groups. The tribe is a matrilineal group, living in village units that form the political organization of the tribe. The Rhade are a very religious people, living in constant interaction with the animistic spirits that surround them.

This tribe is of particular interest because United States military forces have been quite active in Rhade areas. Rhade tribesmen played an important role in the Montagnard revolt against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam in the fall of 1964.

Name of Group

The name Rhade is the French variation of the Montagnard name, Ete. Some authorities believe that ete (or ede) designates a type of bamboo and that the name of the Rhade would therefore be "those who live in the bamboo."¹ The Vietnamese use this Montagnard term, spelling it "E-De," while Rhade is the name commonly used by the French and Americans. Rhade is the usual spelling, though some investigators spell it "Raday." Some claim the word rhade is a corruption of the expression anak Ae Adie, which means "Children of the Master of the Sky," or "Children of God."

Anthropologists generally agree on the following Rhade subgroups: Rhade Kpa, Rhade M'dhur, Rhade A'dham, Ktul, Epan, Blo, K'ah, K'drao, and H'wing.² Although some sources consider the Bih a Rhade subgroup, most state that the Bih may originally have been a Rhade group but they diverged and joined the M'ning tribe.³

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Size of Group

Although no accurate records are available indicating the exact number of Rhade, estimates range from 100,000 to 120,000² with roughly 68,000 of this total registered in Ban Me Thuot. Precise figures are difficult to obtain because many of the Rhade do not bother to declare births and deaths in their families and a few, mostly those in the army, have legally become Vietnamese.

Location

The Rhade tribe is centered around the village of Ban Me Thuot and can be found throughout Darlac Province. Rhade groups also inhabit the northwestern quarter of Khanh Hoa Province, the southwestern corner of Phu Yen, and the southern border areas of Phu Bon and Pleiku Provinces. There are also scattered groups of Rhade in Cambodia near the Darlac border.

The Rhade Kpa, around the Ban Me Thuot area, have more contact with the Vietnamese than most of the other subgroups in Darlac Province because Ban Me Thuot is the center of plantations operated by the Vietnamese. To the south and west of the Kpa group are several M'nong tribes: the M'nong Gar, Bih, the Preh to the south, and the rest of the Preh and M'nong Budong to the west. North of the Kpa are the Rhade A'dham subgroups. The A'dham are located on the southern edge of Jarai territory. East of the A'dham and the Kpa are the M'dhur and Ktul (or Klul) subgroups. These people inhabit a north-south strip from the edge of Jarai territory to the southern portion of Darlac Province where their neighbors are various M'nong groups, primarily the M'nong Cil (or Chil). East of the Ktul area is another north-south strip inhabited by Rhade subgroups which, from north to south, are the Blo, Epan, H'wing, K'drao, and another group of the Blo. The Jarai, the Hroi, and a few Cham border the northernmost Blo and the Epan. The southernmost Blo border on the M'nong Cil area to the southwest and Raglai territory to the south. The Vietnamese touch the eastern edge of all these areas. See the frontispiece for a clear picture of subgroup locations.

Terrain Analysis of Tribal Area

The eastern part of the Darlac Plateau is about 1,500 feet above sea level. The Ayounh River, a tributary of the Song Ba, drains its extreme eastern part. The rest of the Plateau is drained by numerous tributaries of the Srepok River, flowing westward into Cambodia. The

Plateau is separated from the coastal plains by the mountains of Binh Dinh.

The climate of the Darlac Plateau is influenced by both the summer (April through October) and winter (mid-September to March) monsoon winds. In the summer, these winds come from the southwest and in the winter, from the northeast. Agriculture in the area is greatly dependent upon the rain brought by the summer monsoons. The winter monsoons also provide precipitation, though this is quite unreliable. The plateau region receives from 50 to 150 inches of precipitation annually, the heaviest rains falling in July and August.⁵ Temperatures in the Plateau are lower than in the coastal regions, differing by as much as 15° during the winter months.⁶

The soft, powdery, basalt-based, reearth of the Darlac Plateau once supported forests. Now, as a result of the slash-and-burn agricultural processes, only small wooded areas remain on granitic pegs (Dhu Ebung near Ban Me Thuot) and along the peripheral chains of hills. Otherwise, the whole region is a savanna-type area of grassy plains and bamboo.⁷

Tranh (Imperata cylindrica), known as lalang or alang-alang in Malaya, makes up a large part of the undergrowth. It is a tall, coarse grass that turns yellow when dry. When young, it is good for grazing, but it is principally used as thatches for houses.

Ban Me Thuot, located in the main area of Rhade concentration, is on Route 14 which connects it with Pleiku to the north and Duc Lap (Quang Duc Province) to the south. Ban Me Thuot is connected with the coast (Ninh Hoa in Khanh Hoa Province) by Route 21 and with Dalat by Route 20. Two airfields near Ban Me Thuot--an all-weather field north of the village and a seasonal field to the southeast--provide air accessibility to the region.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

Various authorities contend that most of the Rhade migrated from greater China, while the remainder came from Tibet and Mongolia. Another hypothesis is that the Rhade were originally from Indonesia and mixed with Thai and Khmer peoples who had immigrated from Tibet. The latter suggestion seems to correspond more closely with the Rhade's Malayo-Polynesian language and the Polynesian influence observed in their physical characteristics.

Language

The Rhade language is related to the Malayo-Polynesian language group. Malayo-Polynesian is one of the most widespread linguistic families in the world and is spoken in the Indochinese peninsula, the Malayan peninsula, and the Philippines. The Rhade language is also closely related to the Cham language. The many points of similarity in the language used by the Rhade and languages used by tribal groups in the Philippines, Borneo, and Indonesia seem to support the idea that the Rhade once lived nearer the coast and that pressures from other ethnic groups gradually pushed them onto the Darlac Plateau.¹

The Rhade language is almost nontonal. Words are of one syllable and have many explosive sounds with brief vowel sounds caused by the glottal stop. Each vowel has a long and short form. Consonants are not aspirated unless followed by an "h." The final "h" in a word is always pronounced. The "r" is often rolled.²

The Rhade vocabulary has few words that can be applied to modern or Western objects. However, it is very rich in words for things or subjects familiar to the Rhade. For example, it has many words for "bamboo," each word describing differences in bamboo according to size, type, and use.

There is a phonetically written form of Rhade, but few, except missionaries, use it. This written language, developed by Sabatier,³ a French administrator in the area, has existed for roughly 50 years.

The Rhade like to relate a legend to explain their lack of a written language prior to that developed by Sabatier. Ida, their creator, invited them to come and get a language. Other peoples brought pieces of weed upon which to write their language, but the Rhade, hoping to make a good impression on Ida, brought a buffalo skin instead, believing the skin to be more sophisticated and expensive. On the return journey from the meeting with Ida, a dog ran off with the buffalo skin thereby taking the only copy of their written language.⁵

Although the dialects of the Rhade subgroups are basically similar, slight differences indicate the speaker's origin.⁶ Rhade Kpa is quite different from the other Rhade dialects, but it is understood and used by most people in the general area, including neighboring M'ngong tribesmen.

Although few Rhade speak French, Vietnamese, or English some reportedly know enough English to serve as interpreters.⁷ Rhade interpreters used by outside personnel have generally received their English training from the Protestant Far East Mission Society.

Although some sources report that geometrical signs are used to communicate warnings to travelers, a recent visitor to the area reported he had seen no indication that such signs were a common means of communication between groups of different dialects.⁸

Legendary History

The legendary accounts of the Rhade reveal assumptions that the Rhade have held throughout the ages. These legends supply interesting parallels with traditional Western concepts about the origin of the world and reveal the degree of sophistication among the Rhade.

Their legendary history, contained in five epic poems, lists five epochs. The five epics yield valuable insights into the Rhade. They believe that they are the oldest race on earth and that they are the only human beings who have preserved, through oral tradition, contact with forebearers who lived in prehistoric times. The Rhade legend of H' Bia Ngo describes a creature which has been identified as a prehistoric mammoth.

The last Rhade epoch includes the period of recorded history. The Rhade left their original home in the Darlac Plateau in an earlier epoch and by the beginning of the last epoch were living in the islands south-east of Indochina. The Rhade never forgot their original home, however, and they sailed for the Indochinese coast where they disembarked. Not finding enough food there, they moved on to the Darlac Plateau where they have remained ever since.⁹

Factual History

In view of the limited and fragmentary data available, it is extremely difficult to present a comprehensive historical account of individual Montagnard tribes. Consequently, the recorded history of the Rhade tribe has to be treated in most instances as an integral part of overall Montagnard history.

In contrast to the relatively numerous anthropological and sociological studies on the Montagnards, there is little material dealing with Montagnard administrative and political history. The few historical studies are reports, mostly unpublished, by French colonial administrators who describe activities in the particular regions under their control.

The written history of the Montagnards is considered to begin with the arrival of the French in the mid-1800's. Although little is documented about Rhade activities before this period, prior to the coming of the French, Rhade society was village-oriented, and villages had some degree of autonomy. Each village was ruled by an oligarchy of leading families. Occasionally one village would become dominant in a local area, thereby forcing other villages to recognize its leadership, but none ever acquired a politically significant area or following.

In the beginning, the Rhade as well as the other tribes resisted the settlement of the Europeans in the highlands.¹⁰ Later the Rhade cooperated considerably with the French administrators, while other Montagnard tribes continued to oppose colonial authority.¹¹

Under French rule, the High Plateau became a Domaine de la Couronne directly under the authority of the Emperor. While Vietnamese settlers were practically excluded from this area, the French were permitted to fully exploit the economic resources of the Domaine.

At the end of the 19th century, the French established an administrative system which divided the High Plateau into three provinces, Pleiku, Kontum, and Darlac, each with a French administrator. The largest administrative unit, the province, was in turn divided into districts and cantons.¹² The village remained as the smallest administrative unit with its traditional leadership pattern.¹³ Under this administrative system, Montagnards were selected to serve as assistants to the provincial administrators and as officials at the district and canton levels.¹⁴

The pacification of the Montagnards at the beginning of this century was a slow process. There were numerous attacks on French military personnel and missionaries.¹⁵ In 1905 a small band of tribesmen led by Me Sao appeared in the highlands. They raided villages between M'drac and Ban Me Thuot,¹⁶ and it became necessary for the French administrator of Darlac to send troops to the area to protect the villagers. Me Sao was turned over to the French troops by a member of his own band and died in prison.¹⁷

During the tenure of Sabatier, the French administrator of Darlac Province in the first quarter of the 20th century, the region underwent many beneficial developments. Sabatier, a French educator and a very able, intelligent administrator, undertook public works projects, improved the administrative system, and undertook a systematic study of the ethnic groups of Darlac Province.¹⁸ He is credited with developing the written form of the Rhade language and codifying the traditional Rhade laws.¹⁹ In establishing a school system and a medical service for the Montagnards, Sabatier was aided by another able administrator named Antomarchi.²⁰

In 1925 there was a French colonial land rush in Darlac due to the region's reputation for rich and fertile soil. In a few months, about one hundred bids for land totaling 92,000 hectares were filed with colonial authorities in Saigon.²¹ In order to cope with problems created by the land rush, a study was made, and in 1927 Sabatier produced two reports. One dealt primarily with land tenure, and the other contained recommendations for the development of the area. The first report provided detailed information on the land system of the Rhade. One of the recommendations in the second report stated that French settlers bidding for land claimed by the Montagnards should acquire approval of the colonial administration, the Rhade's traditional guardian of the land, the po lan, and the headmen of villages in the region under question. This recommendation was aimed at easing the tension between the French settlers and the tribesmen who viewed the establishment of French plantations in the highlands as an invasion of their lands.

When the Japanese invaded the region in March 1945, some Montagnards assisted them while others resisted them. Similarly, during the Indochina War (1946-1954), some Montagnards fought for the French, while others supported the Viet Minh.

As to historical trends, several people who have had contact with the Rhade feel that the Rhade tribesmen are undergoing a remarkable cultural and social change as their contact with modern civilization continues. These visitors to the Rhade country also agreed that the rate of change varies considerably from village to village. Since the contact with the modern world is most pronounced in the vicinity of Ban Me Thuot, the amount of change varies inversely with the distance of a tribal village from Ban Me Thuot. Some Rhade men, particularly the younger ones, have been recruited by the Government to serve in the army, and this military service brings them into closer contact with other modes of life. During their training they are given shoes, clothing, weapons, and medical treatment. They learn something about personal sanitation, field sanitation, scouting and patrolling, field fortifications, first aid, and other basic subjects. Their contact with Vietnamese, U.S., and French personnel has introduced them to alien habits, customs,

and beliefs. It is therefore probable that much information about other cultures has filtered back to the various Rhade villages and has influenced village life to some degree.

Settlement Patterns

For centuries the Rhade have lived in the High Plateau, adapting themselves to their natural environment and making use of the natural resources in simple ways. They locate their houses and rice fields near rivers and springs and group together according to kinship ties.

Where there is a road, the Rhade build their houses so that the road runs through the middle of the village. At each end of the village an entrance gate crosses the roadway; although villages are seldom fenced, the road always passes through a gate. The villagers bar these gates during some religious ceremonies when they do not want outsiders to enter the village.

Most Rhade live in villages which usually contain from 50 to 200 people.²² Customarily built in a cleared area in the jungle, these villages are seldom walled. Inside the villages are fruit trees, frequently protected from the cattle by small bamboo fences. Most villages have a bamboo grove which, because of its religious significance, is not cut down. Other types of trees are allowed to grow within the village area, but the villagers are selective because they know some species do not endure and may fall upon their houses.

From harvest to sowing time, most of the people live in long houses built on pilings above the ground. Wood, cane, and bamboo are used for the frame, floors, and walls; nails are made of split bamboo. From the floor the walls slant slightly outward to the heavy, rather steep, overhanging roof, which is made of thick thatch, usually tranh grass. These simply designed and solidly built houses can withstand bad weather for a long time and are quite comfortable. While Rhade Kpa build houses about 50 meters long, the A'dham and the Ktul normally build them much longer.²³ The long houses are usually oriented in a north-south direction, parallel to each other, although some villages have been known to differ from this pattern. One reason for the north-south orientation is that the prevailing winds blow across this axis. Thus, smoke from the cooking fires inside the house is blown out the sides, rather than along the length of the house. Other explanations for this directional orientation have been offered; most of these explanations are related to their religion. The east-west direction has important meaning in various religious traditions. For example, one folk belief is that the houses of the living must not face the setting (dying) sun. Another explanation is that the Rhade do not want their homes to resemble the small houses built atop the tombs of the dead, which are built in an east-west direction.

At each end of the long house there is a porch-like structure, serving as a repository for winnowing baskets, chicken coops, buffalo ropes, and the like. It is also a favorite spot of the Rhade for resting, pipe smoking, and chatting. The porch at the front is sometimes ornamented with sculptured poles used for mounting and dismounting elephants. Often a notched tree trunk, or sometimes a huge block of hard wood, is carefully cut to form a stairway of narrow steps leading to the front entrance. Rich tribesmen show their position and wealth by the excellence of the woodwork design on these ladders. ²⁴

There are also special steps used by the women. These are on pilings of thick planks or wooden logs, supported by the projection of a beam; these give the appearance of steps as Westerners know them. The steps are decorated with a series of carvings.

Usually, each long house has a separate granary in which rice is stored. The granaries are nearly square, though built in the same manner as the long houses. Granaries may or may not be built on a north-south axis. ²⁵

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

Closely related to the aboriginal peoples of the Philippines, Borneo, and Indonesia, the Rhade are fairly small, averaging from 5 feet to 5 feet 6 inches in height. Although small, they are built quite sturdily and have very broad shoulders. Analysis of Rhade blood groups indicates some affinity with the neighboring Jarai and Bahnar.¹

The Rhade have lighter colored skin than that of other Montagnard groups, although the shade is not uniform; certain tribesmen have been nicknamed according to the differences in their skin color. They have clear, brown eyes. Although one study shows that one out of every eight tribesmen has slightly slanted eyes, there is infrequent evidence of the Mongol influence. Their eyes reportedly range from the Chinese almond shape to the Occidental type, and their eyebrows are rounded. Pale skin and dark brown eyes are considered a mark of beauty in their women.²

The Rhade have black hair, ranging from straight to wavy. Though the Rhade appear to have more hair on their bodies than many of the other tribes, they are constantly plucking facial hair and only, in exceptional cases, have beards or mustaches.³ They have characteristic hair styles for their children: little girls have only a tuft of hair at the back of the head; little boys have their hair cut short.

Their faces are hexagonal with strong jawlines and powerful chewing muscles. The cheekbones are extremely salient; their noses are small, sometimes wrinkled, and slightly flattened with rather thick tips. Their mouths are unobtrusive, the lips being of average thickness. Their chins are rounded, somewhat split, and tend to recede.⁴

Health

According to visiting village health officials and U. S. military returnees, health conditions in Rhade villages are poor. The Rhade who work with the U. S. military forces, as well as their dependents, are in much better health than those in the remote villages.

The major factors contributing to their poor health are ignorance of modern health and sanitation practices and the difficulty of securing

sufficient medical supplies and medical personnel. Although they bathe often using certain roots as a cleanser, skin infections are common.

The diseases that most frequently affect adults are malaria, enteritis, diarrhea, smallpox, and leprosy. Children's diseases are mainly dysentery, malaria, and whooping cough. Practically all the Rhade suffer from varying degrees of infection, particularly malaria. Ordinarily, in the treatment of any kind of disease, doctors need to treat malaria as well. Intestinal parasites and various skin diseases occur frequently but less often than malaria. Some skin diseases are most difficult to treat because many tribesmen have had them for several years. Dysentery⁵ and venereal diseases are common.

The Rhade call upon the spirits for help during time of stress and illness in the family.* A sorcerer or shaman is called to prescribe appropriate sacrifices. The longer the sickness the more expensive the affair, for sacrifices may include buffaloes, pigs, and jugs of rice wine. The shaman usually starts with the sacrifice of a pig and five jugs of rice wine. According to traditional Rhade folk medicine, if a healer prescribes the sacrifice of cows or buffaloes to cure a sick person and the sick person does not get well, the healer must replace the sacrificed animals.⁶

Although the shaman is the specialist for prescribing cures, some family remedies are used. For instance, all sores are cleaned with hot water and painted with tree or plant medicines. Boils are allowed to come to a head, then punctured and drained. If the boil does not begin to heal, a small hole is burned in the boil with a heated piece of metal. Various medicines prepared from plants are used for coughs, rashes, and infected eyes.

It is common belief that diarrhea in small children is caused by teething. The remedy for prolonged diarrhea in children requires that a jar and a chicken be sacrificed. Older children and adults are given medicine derived from the bark, roots, or leaves of local trees. If the patient passes blood, he must be given the urine of a scorpion. This concoction is given without the patient's knowledge, since very few, if any, would drink scorpion urine voluntarily.

During an epidemic in a village, signs are put up forbidding all passage.⁷ Since these signs vary from one area to another it is therefore advisable to check the meaning of any signs in a given locale. Tribespeople with contagious diseases must stay at home, and every sickness must be reported to the chief.⁸ If anyone has smallpox or leprosy, his family must provide for his isolation in the forest.⁹ Severe action is taken against anyone who shelters a leper; when a

* See "Religion," pp. 34-37.

leper dies, his house and belongings are burned. Finding a dead person and not reporting the incident is considered the same as killing him. The cause of his death may be very significant to the village, for he may have been the first victim of a contagious disease.¹⁰ Failure to report his death might be the cause of additional deaths.

Physical resistance to disease is low, partially due to the diet of the Rhade. The women are particularly affected by dietary deficiency because of their strenuous labor in the fields. Since pregnancy aggravates their weak condition, many miscarriages result.

Many traditional customs and religious requirements govern behavior and activities during pregnancy and birth. Therefore, it is difficult to persuade a Rhade woman to give birth in a hospital outside the tribal area. The women are very modest, and it takes great courage for them to call for medical aid. Rhade women find it difficult to lift a skirt before a man, and even the most ordinary obstetrical practices, such as a simple vaginal examination, frighten them terribly. Because their feelings of shame reach such extreme limits,¹¹ a physician must always act with the utmost discretion.

The Rhade believe in good and bad deaths: a bad death--one associated with a bloody accident or violence--is believed to cause the ghost of the deceased to wander the highlands forever. Although in the past this attitude resulted in Rhade antipathy for medicine, many of them now recognize the benefits of medical care and freely request and accept treatment.

U. S. government personnel and U. S. and French missionaries have taken an active part in trying to better health conditions in the Rhade area. Although their supplies and manpower are limited, medicine is periodically received, and some tribespeople are taught how to administer it. Occasionally, medical people accompanying military units in the Rhade area have found it useful to work with the Rhade medicine men and sorcerers in treating the ills of the Rhade people.

The Rhade are not accustomed to taking medicines in pill form; they prefer injections. This is largely attributable to French medical practice which depended primarily on injections. The Rhade do not understand how a pill can be as effective as an injection and have difficulty understanding, for example, how a pill can cure an infected toe or any other external wound. When explaining the proper dosage of pills to the Rhade--if pills must be used--one must be very careful that the Rhade understand their proper usage and understand the intervals at which they must be taken.

Endurance

The Rhade are not capable of working as long or as hard as a Westerner in Western kinds of work. On the other hand, they can walk for days without tiring while carrying loads on their shoulders.¹² Because their work primarily involves farming and building, the Rhade seem able to endure a great amount of physical strain. It is also reported that they are able to run better than average distance without stopping or showing signs of fatigue. Dietary deficiencies, however, make the Rhade require rest and food quite often.

Psychological Characteristics

For a psychological understanding of the Rhade, it is necessary to recognize the strong family ties that influence the individual. Family relationships are taken most seriously, and in a sense any act by an individual is considered an act of his family. An individual will not often make his own decisions, but will express his desire to discuss any matter with his relatives before reaching a conclusion.

The Rhade believe that man cannot challenge supernatural power; they accept their fate and take no practical measures to safeguard themselves from natural calamities. They accept serious misfortunes, such as fire and disease, because they attribute such occurrences to the evil influences of local spirits. This fatalism carries over into the realm of human relations; the Rhade agree to suggestions by the Vietnamese simply because the Government is stronger than they, just as they agreed with the French because the French were stronger.

Most observers consider the Rhade the most intelligent Montagnard tribe. One source even claims that Rhade tribesmen can learn practically anything. For example, a missionary group established a leprosarium in the Ban Me Thuot area and trained Rhade to carry out all tasks; this leprosarium is now completely staffed by Rhade.

The Rhade have a very strong desire to learn, particularly to learn the ways of the Americans with whom they have recently come into contact. They do, however, seek and require very explicit instructions and do not like to improvise. As a rule, the Rhade resist routine work; they like to attack new problems as long as they have detailed instructions and close supervision.

The Rhade have responded favorably to inquiries concerning language training for the tribe. The Rhade accept the idea of their children learning a foreign language and would like to send them to school for training in Vietnamese, French, or English. The Rhade learn English quite rapidly.

The Rhade see education as a means to better their communities and, when it is offered in these terms, they greatly desire to send their children to school. Young people do leave the village to study or to work for Westerners; this is accepted, even encouraged, by their families as long as the traditional bonds of respect are observed.

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Rhade society is organized into the basic elements of the family, the household, the kin group, and the village, in order of descending importance. The kinship system is matrilineal: the woman's family proposes marriage to the man's family; the husband becomes part of the wife's family; the children take the mother's family name; and, property belongs to the wife and is inherited by the daughters.

Kinship System and Tribal Structure

In general, the underlying principles of the Rhade kinship system are lineage, generation, sex, and seniority. Lineage is determined through the female line and consists of those individuals related through female kin to a common ancestor--the great-great grandmother on the mother's side. Groupings of lineages form clans.

The long house is the corporate kin group of most importance. It is the mutual aid group which, in addition to sharing and maintaining the long house, often shares food and always participates in cultivation of the common long house fields. Gongs, jars, cattle, and rice, as well as the house, are lineage property, the title to which is held by the senior female. The head of the lineage long house is a male and, upon his death, is replaced either by his son-in-law or the husband of one of his wife's sisters. If the successor is a minor, the eldest male in the house can temporarily assume the role of household head. If there is no son-in-law or brother-in-law, a nephew may succeed.*

*For more detailed anthropological information see Frank M. Lebar, *et al.*, Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964) and A. Maurice and G. Proux, "L'Amé du Riz," Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises, XXIX (1954).

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

Property, such as the house, gongs, jars, and harvest, is owned by the females of the house; inheritance proceeds down the female line. The oldest woman in the family controls the disposition of the family property. Also, the Rhade society is matrilineal: upon marriage the couple lives in the long house of the girl's mother. However, the chief of a long house is a man. The overall management of the livelihood and daily routine of the family is directed by the senior male living in the house, often the husband of the senior woman. It has been said, however, that the men in this position are less leaders in their own right than they are instruments of the women.¹

Among the Rhade there is a normal division of labor between the sexes with the males doing most of the heavy work, including clearing and burning the fields, cutting heavy trees, some of the harvesting and planting, and conducting business. They fish, make tools and implements, slaughter animals, weave bamboo, build houses, make coffins and bury the dead, play the flute, beat gongs, play drums, and cook rice for the various ceremonies. The men also conduct religious ceremonies and manage all political and military affairs.

The women oversee the farming activities, and the senior woman in each clan, called a *po lan*, represents her clan as keeper and protector of its ancestral lands.* The *po lan*, as guardian of the land, gives permission for the cultivation of selected individual plots of land. In addition to this control of the land itself, the women work in the rice fields, weeding, sowing, harvesting, and winnowing. The women also draw water, collect firewood, cook, clean the house, weave, wash clothes, and make the traditional red, black, yellow, and blue cotton thread of the tribe. Sometimes the women play the flute, and occasionally one will find female sorcerers and religious practitioners.

Rhade tribespeople are very fond of their children and raise them in a free and easy manner. They treat children almost as if they were adults with minds of their own, seldom forcing a child to do something he does not want to do. This respect for a child's wishes may stem from the Rhade belief that their ancestors are reincarnated in newborn infants. Play activities of Rhade children are varied: they walk on stilts, fly kites, play with tops, and swim.² Small children have certain chores during planting and harvesting periods, but ordinarily do little work in the fields.³ When children are near the age of puberty, they begin to participate fully in the agricultural

*See "Property System," pp. 43-44.

routine. They also are expected to watch the younger children and to help care for the domestic animals.⁴

Daily Routine

The entire Rhade family gets up before dawn. The men leave for the fields and are joined by most of the women and younger sons about 2 hours later. Everyone works in the fields until the women who remained in the village bring them lunch. After the meal, the women work in the fields until about 3 o'clock, when they go home to prepare supper. The men generally work until about 5 o'clock and then return to the village for supper.

In the evening, the people spend their leisure time talking to others who live in the long house or to neighbors. Life in the long house with the extended family is very sociable. It has been noted that when a tribesman moves to a small house, in a resettlement program for example, he misses the sociability and security of family life in the long house and usually takes the first opportunity to return to it.⁵

The Rhade also spend considerable time performing religious ceremonies and sacrifices. Their religion permeates every part of their daily life and work, requiring the performance of many ceremonies.

Marriage

According to the Rhade tradition, marriages are arranged by the parents of the couple. The family of the girl first approaches the family of a prospective mate through an intermediary. If the preliminary approach determines that the extended family of the boy might consider such a marriage, a direct approach is made to them.⁶ Arrangements for a marriage between a boy and a girl are often established by the two families many years in advance of the marriage ceremony.⁷

Marriage regulations vary somewhat by subgroup, but generally, the Rhade groups are exogamous--they do not marry within the extended family or, in some cases, within the clan. The union of descendants of a family with the same name is also forbidden.⁸ Violations of these prohibitions require the guilty parties to sacrifice a buffalo or pig to soothe the angry spirits.

It should be noted that some marriages result from the custom of replacing a dead spouse with a relative from within the same family.*

*See "Divorce and Second Marriages," p. 19.

This usually involves a younger sister or a younger brother of the deceased wife or husband.

Also, a marriage might be the result of a mutual attraction between a boy and a girl. Such relationships develop from meetings at festivals, at work during harvest time, or at ceremonies.⁹ A boy and girl could develop a very close relationship if, by custom, they exchanged bracelets. In a sense this is a tacit engagement, because the relationship between the two is considered binding: the boy has entered into an agreement to marry the girl if she becomes pregnant.

The essential part of the marriage ceremony is the celebration of the sacrifice. The engaged couple squat before a jar, drinking rice wine through long reed straws while prayers are chanted. With their feet placed on a hatchet, symbolizing the permanence of the union, they continue to drink, crossing the straws. Offerings are then presented at the east windows of the long house to the spirits of the dead, thereby symbolizing the foundation of a new hearth in the long house. After this, everyone present is served a communal meal--a square of raw meat and a piece of intestine or tripe. Finally, the guests file by the newly married couple and offer them small gifts for which they each receive one worth twice as much in return. This is a symbolic act to assure the couple of a rich and prosperous future.¹⁰ Following the marriage, the couple participates fully in the tribal society and its religious life.¹¹

Traditionally, a newly married couple moves to the long house of the family of the young woman, though the man may work a separate field if he so desires. It is the tribal custom for the girl's family to pay the boy's family a price, a dowry to compensate them for the loss of their son. According to tribal law, if the dowry is not paid on the date fixed by the marriage arrangements--usually, immediately following the marriage ceremony--the groom returns to his own family.¹² The boy's family, however, may request that the girl stay with them until full payment can be made. This period may last up to 3 years. Once the dowry has been paid, the couple resides in the long house of the bride's family.

The Rhade feel marriage is a permanent contract, and there are several traditional laws which deal with adultery. In adultery between married persons, the woman pays a fine to her husband and the man to his wife.¹³ If a man commits adultery with a married woman, he is guilty of the crime, not she.¹⁴ As has been noted, however, she must pay her husband a fine.

There are several Rhade laws which deal with rape. The blood price--the penalty for the shedding of another person's blood--is exacted in cases of rape where the girl is under the age of puberty.

In other cases of rape, the severity of the penalty depends on whether the woman is the wife or daughter of a poor or of a rich man; the penalty is less in the former instance than in the latter.

Incest, which includes sexual relations between members of the same clan, is believed to render the land impure and to endanger its fertility. Sacrifices are therefore necessary to purify it again. A pig must be sacrificed to purify the forest, and a jar of rice wine must be sacrificed to purify the earth. A fine is paid to the chief and one to the po lan, guardian of the ancestral land.

Divorce and Second Marriages

The Rhade believe that a man should stay with his wife until death.¹⁵ However, divorces or separations do occur. Traditional law states that if the husband and wife separate, they must return the dowry and the bracelets they have exchanged. They are then free to remarry.¹⁶

Traditionally, if one of the partners in a marriage dies, the family of the deceased spouse has to find a replacement from within the family. If one is not available within that family, one has to be found in the families of sisters of the deceased: the replacement must belong to the same clan as the deceased spouse. In recent years, however, this custom has become less common. If the deceased is a woman and her family refuses to find a replacement, most of the goods acquired in common go to the nieces of the widower, and the children of his marriage with the deceased receive only a small portion.¹⁷ If the deceased is a man and his family does not wish to find a replacement, a small part of the couple's goods goes to the nieces of the deceased.

A widow who wishes to remarry asks the parents of the man she has chosen. If the parents and the young man agree, the marriage takes place, and the new husband lives with his wife's parents. In such a case, the dowry has to be paid by the husband's parents. This custom applies to widows of chiefs as well as to all other widows. The widow of a chief, even if she is old and ugly, always remarries. The new husband becomes chief of the village, but instead of calling the village Ban me followed by the name of the chief, it becomes Ban noi, noi meaning "replacing."

If a husband is away for several years, or is taken prisoner or made a slave, his wife can remarry.¹⁸

Pregnancy, Abortion, and Birth

As in all other aspects of Rhade living, religion, spirits, and folk beliefs are deeply ingrained in the rituals surrounding pregnancy and birth. When a woman has been declared pregnant by a midwife, a sorcerer must make a sacrifice of a dog and a jar of rice wine. This ceremony, called kik k'kieng, takes place during the 3rd or 4th month of pregnancy and is designed to keep evil spirits away from the pregnant woman. After the sacrifice, the woman must stay in the house for 3 days, and before she leaves, she must take a bath to purify herself.¹⁹

There are many food restrictions for a pregnant woman. For example, she cannot eat fruit because it will make the baby fall out of the womb as fruit falls from a tree.²⁰ If she eats rabbit, he will be cowardly.²¹

From the 5th or 6th month of pregnancy, the woman works only in the house.²² Also, from this time she is prohibited sexual relations.

Miscarriages are quite frequent among the Rhade tribeswomen and are generally caused by malaria.²³ In the case of a woman who has had six or seven miscarriages or stillborn children, a family council decides whether abortion should be induced. The abortion is performed by a midwife in an abandoned house in order to avoid attracting evil spirits to the family long house.²⁴

If either an unmarried girl or a married woman wants an abortion, she agrees never to name the midwife. If the midwife agrees, the price will be very high, for a woman found guilty of performing an illegal abortion is required to pay a blood price of a flat gong. The midwife is seldom caught, however, because women are reluctant to admit that they have had an abortion.²⁵

In cases of normal pregnancy, the midwife does not see the woman from the time she has diagnosed pregnancy until the birth starts.²⁶ If the family of a pregnant woman is rich, the midwife always foresees a difficult birth and thereby makes the family promise a large sacrifice if the birth is normal. For poor families the same sacrifice is promised, if the midwife thinks the pregnant woman is in bad health or if she has had a history of difficult births.²⁷

A woman who has had many abortions must have her child in an abandoned house so that the evil spirits will not endanger the other members of the household.²⁸

After labor pains have started, a sacrifice, Phat atao, is made in front of the house. Rice wine, a pipe, and a young rooster with its comb barely formed are offered. All the departed souls of the family are called on to intervene to make the child beautiful, to make the birth easy, to protect the mother, and to give her many

more children so that the whole family, the living and dead, may become larger.²⁹

When the midwife has delivered the baby, the mother is then placed near the family hearth, and her body is rubbed with ginger.³⁰ According to Rhade custom, women can stay in bed 6 or 7 days after childbirth. In general, however, they get up after 3 or 4 days.³¹ The infant is suckled until he learns to eat rice, at the age of 2. When the mother does not have milk, another woman nurses the infant. The mother teaches the child to eat rice by chewing it and then putting it into the mouth of the child.³²

Parents always wish to have a daughter, especially if it is the first child. The birth of twins is a disaster, for a Rhade woman is physically incapable of nursing the two children. It is customary to find a wet nurse for one of the twins. If the twins are of different sexes, the family always keeps the girl. If they are both of the same sex, the larger and more beautiful one is kept.³³

If a child is born dead or dies before the midwife has purified herself by washing completely, a sacrifice, Ktubue, must be offered so that the evil spirits will not ruin her health or her profession. Depending on whether the midwife is from a rich or poor family, a pig or a chick must be sacrificed.³⁴

Evil spirits are blamed when a child is born with a malformation. Even though the defect can be corrected, the parents are extremely reluctant to have this done because the evil spirits will then manifest themselves in the next child.³⁵

If a sacrifice has been promised when the midwife declares a woman pregnant, it is made from 3 to 6 days after birth. This is the only occasion when a billy goat is used for sacrifice. If the family does not have or cannot buy a billy goat, they must sacrifice a pig or a chicken, which will satisfy the spirits until the family can obtain a billy goat.³⁶

The Rhade believe each person has three souls, * the second one being important at birth. This second soul, the yun, is considered the source of life. It enters the body of the newborn child through a bluish mark, the "Mongolian mark," near the base of its spine. This mark, which the Rhade call anok ba yun, is found on most Rhade babies. It disappears when the child is 2 or 3 years old. The baby's first cry indicates that the breath or lifegiving element has entered its body. This second soul, yun, is called m'ngah, life, while it resides in a body. It becomes yun when it has left one body but has not yet entered another.

*See discussion of souls, p. 36.

The prap yun is a sacrifice for the yun during its voyage from one body to another. The prap yun takes place shortly after birth.³⁷ At this time a prayer called kliang kong is made for the baby's safety. The prayer asks the benevolent spirits to provide a good soul which will stay in the child's body.

Po yun is the name given a person whose yun has entered the baby's body and becomes the infant's m'ngah. Relatives often try to determine which ancestor is the baby's po yun.

According to Rhade traditional law, it is a crime not to report a birth to the village chief.³⁸ A person who kills his newborn infant or child is likewise criminally guilty.³⁹

Naming the Child

The naming ceremony, called bi hoa bue, occurs the day after a child is born. At this time, before the mother is given a meal, the midwife names the infant. She puts a drop of dew on the child's tongue and says, "What is your name? Your name, is it (giving the proposed name)?" The child's smile indicates that it is his name, but if he cries, the family knows that the departed spirits of the family are not pleased, and this little ceremony must be repeated with a different name until the child smiles or is quiet. The names spoken are selected from those of deceased maternal aunts and uncles.⁴⁰ The dewdrop contains the spirits of these dead relatives. Thus, all the dead maternal aunts and uncles are agents in the selection of the child's name. And, in a sense, the deceased maternal aunts and uncles also make up the flang hia, a person's third soul.

After a naming ceremony, a sacrifice of a chicken and a cone filled with meat sprinkled with rice is stuck into the thatch of the roof as an offering to the evil spirit of violent deaths. This spirit is supposed to be responsible for abortions and accidental deaths.⁴¹

Childhood

Rhade tribesmen are very fond of children and they are reported to have bought Vietnamese children to raise as their own, giving them Rhade names. Rhade families are usually smaller than Vietnamese families. This is attributable to disease and a high infant mortality rate. In the Darlac region the average mortality rate of infants under 1 year is 60 to 70 percent, and from 10 to 15 percent of the children between the ages of 1 and 5 die. Malaria causes the largest number of deaths among children.⁴²

Rhade children have much independence, although according to Rhade traditional law, parents are responsible for all acts of their children.⁴³ During the first 5 years of their lives, Rhade children are not disciplined, because the parents think paying too much attention to them will attract evil spirits. They never force a child to do anything against his will. For example, if a doctor in the village is treating a child, and the child does not want to take medicine, his relatives do not force him.⁴⁴ This lack of attention is one reason for the high death rate among Rhade children.⁴⁵

Certain actions of a child are taken to be signs of participation in the life of another person. For example, if a child enters a neighboring long house and seems to recognize objects which might have belonged to a deceased uncle, this implies to the Rhade that a mysterious liaison between the living child and the deceased person exists. If the child wants to play with something which belonged to the uncle, the child's right to it is incontestable.⁴⁶

During the early years of his life, a child is not called by the name given to him in the naming ceremony described above. Instead, he is called by other vulgar names to discourage evil spirits and to protect him from their works. False names are given such as *eh*, excrement; *bru*, rotten; *djie*, death; and *trung*, big stomach. The false name is used to trick the evil spirits, who do not notice children with such unattractive names. At the age of 5, when danger from the evil spirits is past, the child's real name is used. In addition to its personal name, the child uses the mother's family name.⁴⁷ By receiving the name of the mother's family the child becomes a member of her clan.⁴⁸

Education and Child-Rearing Practices

The children who escape the ravages of infant diseases are taught the village customs and habits of life. The boys learn to make snares, nets, and winnowing baskets and are initiated into the secrets of the bush by their elders. The girls play with small spinning wheels and miniature looms, thus learning the art of weaving and making clothes; they also begin to husk rice and help their mothers.⁴⁹

Missionary groups have taught some of the Rhade to read and write, and some villages have school teachers.

Puberty Rite

A former custom among the Rhade was an initiation ceremony marking the attainment of adulthood. It is reported that in this

ceremony the child to be initiated paid for the sacrifice of a pig, and his upper front teeth were removed, in the following manner: the patient, lying on a mat, is made to bite a piece of wood so that the jaws were well separated and the lower jaw protected. Then with a sickle (normally used for cutting thatch), the practitioner filed parallel to the gum line, cutting the gum and reducing the tooth to powder. The curvature of the jaw allows the upper incisor and canine teeth to be filed at the same time. The operation was bloody and painful, and lasted 30 minutes to an hour. Immediately afterward the mouth was washed with warm water. If, by accident, a baby tooth had been filed and a permanent tooth later replaced it, the operation was generally, but not always, repeated. It was a bad omen for a tooth to fall out or break during the operation.⁵⁰

A mixture of rice wine, pig's blood, and blood from the child's foot was drunk by the people at the ceremony. The boy or girl then received a bracelet engraved with a secret mark.⁵¹

The practice of removing the front teeth is now apparently dying out.⁵²

Death and Burial

The Rhade prefer to die in their own villages because their local spirits cannot protect them outside the immediate area. Consequently, if the Rhade are in a hospital and believe they are dying, they will insist on being taken home. If a Rhade does die in a hospital, the tribesman responsible for his being there will be in trouble with the deceased person's family.⁵³

If, despite the care of the healers and of the family, despite the buffaloes sacrificed and despite the wine jars emptied, a person dies, the death is announced by beating a drum. For several days thereafter all the inhabitants of the long house are subject to certain interdictions. They may not work, trade, or travel. They must occupy themselves solely with the preparations for the funeral, which vary according to the wealth, sex, and status of the deceased, and the custom of the tribe. The ceremony may last several days.

The body is placed in a coffin made of fairly soft wood, but if the deceased was an important person, he has the right to an outer coffin of hardwood, a source of great vanity before death. This outer coffin will often take the stylized shape of a long house and is carved with geometrical designs.

Placing the body in the coffin is the occasion for new sacrifices and libations. The coffin is blessed to drive away the evil spirits which might lurk there. While jars of rice wine are being drunk, friends dig a deep rectangular grave at the burial ground.⁵⁴

The coffin is placed on a rack of branches and carried through the village to the burial place. During this procession and the funeral itself, the people who have been close to the deceased must carry the coffin and take the initiative in the funeral. Everyone who comes to the funeral participates in covering the coffin with branches and leaves and then building the dirt mound over the grave. The size of the mound, the number of guests, and the style of activities indicate the importance of the deceased.

The Rhade bury their dead with the heads turned toward the east.⁵⁵ The funeral services differ according to the type of death: whether the death was natural or an accident, whether it occurred far from the village, whether it was caused by a contagious disease, or whether the death was that of someone condemned to die, that of a fetus, a stillborn infant, or an infant dead before the cord was cut.⁵⁶

Many people attend Rhade funerals. Social mores require that friends, relatives, and important persons attend the funeral.

The Rhade A'dham build large funeral huts on four pilings, paint the walls with blood, and inside the hut offer numerous gifts to the dead. The tomb itself is rectangular, and a small pathway of earth traverses a ditch at the middle of each side. Two sculptured wooden posts decorate the four exterior corners of a rich person's tomb. Jars and various types of animals are often represented on these posts.⁵⁷

According to Rhade law, a person who constructs a tomb on someone else's land must pay a fine equal to the value of the latter person's harvest. He must also give a white buffalo to the guardian of the earth, the *po lan*, and to the owners of the field, give a white pig for sacrifice.⁵⁸

A deceased person may be metamorphosed or reincarnated as a newborn child, but more often he acquires formidable power by joining the ranks of the spirits of the dead. Every month the family offers him a meal placed on a little bamboo table. This continues for a varying length of time, depending on the wealth of the family and the closeness of their kinship tie with the deceased. The grave is very carefully tended until the ceremony of abandonment of the tomb.⁵⁹

The celebration of the abandonment may be as solemn as the funeral itself. When the tomb has been totally abandoned, the widow can remarry and the deceased is considered to be completely in the world of the dead. If a great deal of disease or many deaths occur in the family of a deceased person, a body may be exhumed because it is believed the deceased is not satisfied with his tomb. In such an exhumation, though rarely practiced now, the remains of the body are put in a jar with a stopper and buried at the head of the tomb.⁶⁰ This exhumation must be ordered by a sorcerer, who decides which

deceased member of the family is causing the trouble. The tomb chosen can be either a maintained or an abandoned one, but it cannot be a tomb that has been abandoned for more than 15 years.

The time between burial and the ceremony for abandoning the tomb varies according to the wealth of the deceased: 1 year for the poor and 5 to 6 years for the rich. The ceremony usually takes place in March after the monsoon if the harvest has been good. The reason for waiting until after the harvest is a question of economics, for then the family will know whether there will be enough rice to provide for a large number of guests.⁶¹

It takes 2 days to prepare for this ceremony. Sculptured posts, on which rice houses are placed, must be made for the sepulchral mound. Buffaloes are sacrificed at this ceremony, and depending on the wealth of the deceased, as many as five animals may be sacrificed.⁶³

The abandonment of the tomb is one of the most important Rhade ceremonies. The family, the villagers, and relatives and friends from other villages attend. All bring jars of rice wine and place them around the tomb, and a large meal is prepared for the deceased. From this time on, the deceased must ask the spirits for anything he wants, and the family is no longer responsible to him.

During the ceremony, a chicken is released to fly away. This chicken represents the soul escaping the tomb, signifying the deceased is no longer a prisoner of the spirits. This ceremony redeems the dead person and liberates his soul from the spirit that caused his death.⁶⁴

To conclude the ceremony, various plants are set in the sepulchral mound by female relatives. The Rhade consider any disturbance of these plants a serious offense.⁶⁵

After the ceremony, the wine from all the jars is drunk, and the sacrificed food is eaten. This celebration lasts until all food and rice wine have been consumed; then the mourners take their jars and other personal belongings and go home.⁶⁶

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Customs and taboos among the Rhade vary considerably from village to village and are influenced by the village chief, the local religious leader, and the po lan. Rhade cultural practices have been changing rapidly, particularly in areas where tribespeople have had contact with the Vietnamese and Americans.

Dress

Even though the costume of the Rhade is like that of many other tribal peoples of the South Vietnamese mountains, there are particular modes of dress that are characteristic of this tribe. Except for people of high importance or social prominence, clothing for the men and the nature of dress consists of a standard loincloth, usually blue or scarlet, and an iron neck ring. In addition, the men wear indigo blue shirts, narrow and long-sleeved, decorated with polychromatic designs woven into the material. The chest of the shirts is decorated with a series of red hooks and loops that fasten with small leather buttons. In recent years, however, the men have begun to wear Western style shorts and shirts.¹ The men also wear turbans which may have a Malaysian or Arabic influence.

The women wear either a skirt (a wrap-around cloth that reaches the ground and allows part of the leg to show when walking), or calico pants and a sweater or vest, which may or may not have sleeves. They also may wear close-fitting blouses without hooks and loops. In some remote areas the women are bare-chested.

From the Jarai, the Rhade often buy wide belts with red and white designs and long fringes that sweep the dust. In the wintertime, when a biting northeast wind blows across the Plateau, the tribesmen wrap themselves in large cotton blankets, ornamented with a series of motifs in all colors, woven by the women.²

Men and women often wear very large hats of intricately woven cane which have the form of a flattened skull-cap.³

The women pay particular attention to their hairdos. Some pull their hair back, twisting the end of it into a coil, and then pushing the coil into a chignon which is secured with a tin pin. Sometimes a lock falls gracefully on the neck.

Their jewelry is fairly simple particularly in comparison with that of the neighboring M'nong. Women wear small leather balls in their ears, while the men wear small thin pieces of wood that close the opening of the lobe. Both men and women wear bracelets. These bracelets are signs either of special friendship or of a vow to the spirits and are used to represent an alliance. Women also wear heavy, tin, ankle bracelets, some of which are very beautiful and may be Cham in origin.⁴

Folk Beliefs

The folk beliefs of the Rhade are intimately related to their animistic religion.* Each animate and inanimate object is inhabited by a spirit. There are both good and evil spirits. Evil spirits can cause anything from petty annoyance to major disasters, and they must be constantly appeased by sacrifices. The individual living in this society finds himself in a world of many very complex requirements, if he is to live safely and successfully.

A technique of divination, called Epa Cie, or "measuring the stick with the arm," is designed to ascertain the desires of the good and evil spirits that influence the smallest detail of each person's daily life. This consists of interrogating a spirit of the stick through an intermediary. A question is asked of the spirit and of the intermediary, who then measures his arm on a bamboo stick previously cut to that length. Under the influence of the spirit of the stick, the intermediary goes into a trance and is unable to stretch out his arm. The differences of degree of arm movement are observed and interpreted as responses of the spirit of the bamboo stick.

Only men can measure the stick. They can be of any age, clan, or tribe, but they are usually over 17. Measuring the stick is considered a special gift, although an individual who knows he has this gift may hide it. Men successful in measuring the stick develop a reputation and fame even outside their village. Only men question the spirit of the stick; women must ask questions through their husbands or maternal uncles.

The divination can occur either indoors or outdoors. It cannot be performed in a house where there is a dead person; it is usually not performed where a woman is giving birth, because birth and death are two events that stir up the spirits.

The stick is asked questions about all circumstances when it is important to know the intentions of the spirits. In addition, the stick

*See "Religion," pp. 34-37.

is consulted about the location for the house; it is used for interpretation of dreams; it is consulted to determine which spirit is causing a particular ailment in a person or in an animal. Divination guidance might include the correct sacrifice to obtain a cure.

The Rhade believe in omens which can order their lives. When there is death in the village, building of a house is stopped and does not begin again until the burial is completed.⁵ If a turtle facing eastward is seen in the rice fields, a speedy death is presaged because the incident reminds the Rhade of their custom of burying the deceased with the head toward the east, and the turtle shell resembles the mounded shape of Rhade graves. The movement of birds and small animals in the brush, the howl of the roe-deer, and the song of the m'lang birds are ill omens. If a deer barks three times in a newly prepared rice field, death will strike the family. If a crow lands on a long house during its construction, the structure must be abandoned or the family will suffer bad luck. When a Rhade walks through the forest, a call from a certain bird on his left heralds bad luck, whereas a call from the right forecasts good fortune. The appearance of a tiger, a snake, or a monkey is reason to stop work and make special sacrifices. It is forbidden to kill any kind of snake in the tribal fields.⁷ The sight of a lizard is always unfavorable and is a prediction of death.⁸

Sneezing has a special significance among the Rhade. They believe sneezing irritates the spirits, and after a sneeze by a person or an animal, one must remain still until the spirits recover from their anger. An early morning sneeze before going to work insures good luck for the rest of the day. A sneeze, however, during a trip or upon starting a trip or departing from a person's home, requires a short delay to prevent misfortune.

A person who leaves a village taking his mats, jars, dishes, chickens, and pigs without offering rice or corn to each house, arouses the anger of the dead and of the spirits. If a person in the village should become sick, the departed person is brought back and required to pay for all the sacrificed animals. If the sick person dies, the departed person must pay the blood price because he is considered responsible for the death.⁹

Dreams, especially those about unfavorable matters, assume great importance in the lives of the Rhade. Dreaming of water means that fire will destroy the house or possibly even the village. Dreaming of large fish or jars evokes a sense of death. If one dreams that his teeth are broken, there will be deaths in the family. The upper teeth represent the mother; the bottom, the father; and those on the sides, brothers, sisters, and cousins. A dream about an accident is a warning to remain at home and avoid an inevitable mishap. A dream about a red blanket also forecasts trouble. If a Rhade dreams about

fishing and then goes fishing and catches a white fish, he will have good fortune. Dreaming of harvesting eggplant means that people will be severely critical of the dreamer. A pregnant woman who dreams about a knife or a cross-bow will give birth to a boy, while one who dreams about a basket will have a girl. Generally, the first sacrifice of the day is a magical measure designed to ward off or overshadow the portents of the previous night's dreams. 10

Customs Relating to Nontribal Members

Since it is a Rhade custom to be hospitable to travelers, tribesmen are always ready to welcome guests. As a result it is not necessary for a traveler to carry food or drink. The proprietor of any Rhade house will provide nourishment to a traveler without expecting anything in return. Friendship can be easily established provided the guest does not elicit distrust.

Interpersonal relationships between outsiders and the Rhade must be conducted with the utmost sensitivity and discretion. The Rhade have very definite opinions about the manner of dealing and acting with people. If an outsider violates these rules, he may affect his rapport with the community. The visitor who comes to the village must visit the chief or, in lieu of him, his assistant. After this first diplomatic formality, he will be warmly received by the family that will house him.

Ordinarily, when a stranger enters a village, a tribesman will approach and "shake hands" with him. The proper procedure is to shake one's own left hand with the right hand of the tribesman and bow slightly. 11 On receiving a guest, it is customary to show him to the sitting room near the fireplace and to provide him with a mat, the warmth of the fire, and some tobacco. A guest of high standing is offered a drink of rice wine.

Unless a Westerner is very well known by the villagers, the women will generally retreat to their houses when he walks into a village.

Occasionally, a woman who is considered a leader in the village may come out to meet him. If a stranger meets a woman walking through the village, the woman pretends she does not notice him.

Often a metal bracelet is given to a stranger. The bracelet is evidence of a number of minor privileges--such as the right to touch certain sacred drums--which vary in detail from village to village. It also assures the visitor of the protection of the tribe.

The Rhade do not seem to mind the attendance of outsiders, including both Westerners and Vietnamese, at funerals and other religious ceremonies. In fact, the tribesmen consider the attendance of

a foreigner at one of their funerals to be an honor. In order to attend, the person who is responsible for the funeral or ceremony should always be asked for permission. This request may be a way of making friends with the tribesmen.

The Rhade reportedly respect and like Americans very much, almost to the point of American embarrassment according to one observer. However, in the past they disliked and distrusted the Vietnamese and preferred to have as little contact as possible with them. This distrust stems partially from Rhade fear of Vietnamese encroachment on tribal lands and partially from their suspicion of the Government's assimilation program.*

Eating and Drinking Customs

Customarily meals are cooked twice a day, in the morning before work and in the evening after work. Two meals are generally eaten, one at noon and another upon return to the village in the evening. It is at this evening meal that some rice wine may be drunk. Rhade men eat with chopsticks while the women eat with their fingers. It is considered very rude and ill-mannered for a tribesman to refuse to eat food that has been offered. Such an act is offensive to the spirits and therefore has a religious significance. Refusing to participate in a sacrificial ceremony constitutes a similar offense.¹² An outsider, however, may refuse food and drink that is offered him on the basis of his beliefs or for health reasons, but he must be consistent in his abstinence.

The basis of the diet of the Rhade is highland rice. They also grow and eat maize, sweet potatoes, manioc, peanuts, melons, cucumbers, cabbages, bamboo sprouts, jack-fruit, tangerines, oranges, coconuts, and pawpaw. They also eat beef, venison, chicken, duck, fish, and game, including snakes, lizards, and squirrels.¹³ At sacrificial ceremonies, they eat buffalo and pork.

It has been noted that rice has a very special significance for the Rhade. Its cultivation and use and the drinking of rice wine are all directly connected with their religion, and every act connected with rice has a religious significance or overtone. They believe rice was a gift from their gods and, in effect, is god. Other foods gathered, caught, and grown also have spirits and consequently require certain religious actions or duties, but none of these duties are as important as those required by rice.¹⁴

*See "Relations with the Central Government," pp. 48-49.

Meats and large fish are roasted or boiled while vegetables are eaten raw. Boiled meat is preserved by salting and drying. Fish is salted and may be kept for several months in jars.¹⁵

Although the Rhade grow many things on their land, they also gather wild plants and fruits. Many of the soups and stews they prepare contain the sprouts of young, wild plants, wild fruits, wild mushrooms, and even certain flowers. On their treks through the bush and forest the tribespeople gather everything that is edible, especially prized wild yams and wild honey.¹⁶

The tribespeople use traps to catch animals that attack their fields, and these animals are another source of food. Fish traps are set up in the streams and some villages place the juice of certain lianas or creepers in calm waters to drug the fish.¹⁷ Certain of the Rhade clans have taboos associated with hunting and eating certain animals.¹⁸

Rice wine and water are the principal beverages. Drinking alcoholic beverages is quite common among the Rhade. By consuming large quantities of rice wine, the tribesmen become quite happy, thereby believing that the spirits are as happy as they are. The importance of alcohol to the tribesmen is indicated by the common greeting among the highlanders, nam lu, which means "Let's get drunk together." The Rhade consider it a friendly gesture to have an outsider drink with them, but visitors may abstain, if their refusal is both logical and courteous.

Because fresh pure water is of great significance to the Rhade, they have very strict taboos about polluting streams. Villages are located according to these taboos, because water will not be used if something upstream will pollute it. Most of the water used is from open streams because few villages have wells. Those villages with wells acquired them only recently and usually as a result of U. S. aid. Normally, a stream is dammed and hollow bamboo tubes are placed in the dam, forming separate streams of water. Here the Rhade bathe, draw their drinking water, and get irrigation water for the small gardens occasionally located near this water source.¹⁹

The Rhade grow, process, and smoke their own tobacco. They roll their own cigars or cigarettes and smoke pipes, which play a part in sacrifice. Men are the primary smokers while women reportedly chew betel leaves and areca nuts.²⁰ Sometimes tobacco is added to the betel.

Customs Relating to Animals

On a varying scale, all families raise domestic animals which are generally reserved for ritual sacrifices. At night, the animals

are kept underneath the long house in a fenced area. Chickens sometimes are kept in chicken houses or in cages. The Rhade do not use or need draft animals in farming.

The elephant plays an important role in the Rhade life. Sold by elephant hunters or captured by certain villages along the Srepok River, the elephant not only serves as a means of transportation, but also represents capital. Furthermore, he is a kind of talisman, supposedly having mystical ties with the clan. These ties are so strong that he is considered a part of the family and given a name.²¹

Elephants, are used for heavy work such as house building. They may be rented, for about 100 piastres per day. This rental, however, varies according to the size of the task to be performed.²² Elephants are valued at about 100,000 piastres. Upon acquisition of an elephant, the new owner prepares a sacrifice for the elephant to inform the spirits of its possession. Some of the blood of a sacrificed animal will be poured on the head of the elephant during a special rite. Sacrifices are also made in connection with the use of the elephant for special jobs, such as house construction.²³

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The life of each Rhade tribesman and tribeswoman is bound up in very complex religious beliefs.* Briefly, each person is surrounded by good and evil spirits of all his deceased ancestors. The spirits inhabit inanimate and animate objects and can dwell in a human body, as well as in rocks, trees, and streams.

Principal Deities

The most important god is Ae Die, "Master of the Sky." He is the ruler of the universe and of all other spirits. In the past, Ae Die lived on earth with his wife and son, but when the son was killed by a centipede, Ae Die abandoned his earthly home.¹

H'Bia Dung Dai, the sister of Ae Die, is the goddess who oversees the cultivation of rice and the rice field, the ray or paddy. She is concerned with fertility and with the birth of children and their early years. She is responsible for the souls of all those who died when they were very young.

Ae Du is the husband of H'Bia Dung Dai. He is a good spirit who governs harvests and rain. He is also the spirit of cold, heat, wind, storms, and night--but only to the extent that these are beneficent. He serves as an assistant to Ae Die.²

The chief of the evil spirits is Yang Lie. He commands all the greatly dreaded evil spirits and the M'tao and K'sok who do lesser evils. Ae Die can intervene against the systematic and habitual malice toward humans caused by Yang Lie. If Ae Die forgets Yang Lie for a moment, Yang Lie will at once cause mischief and accidents. The Rhade represent Yang Lie in human form, his neck under a yoke, his feet fastened to a wooden block, and his head split by a saber blow.

Accidents and sudden deaths are caused by two types of evil spirits. The first type, Yang Brieng Pong and Hong Klang, with all of the higher ranking evil spirits under their command, are termed collectively Yang Brieng. The second type, M'tao and K'sok, perform lesser evil acts.

*See "Customs and Taboos," pp. 27-33.

Yang Brieng Pong is responsible for accidental and sudden deaths. The most dreaded of the Rhade spirits, he is responsible for deaths caused by drowning, burning, falling trees, wild animals, and in fact, all accidental deaths. In addition, he is also responsible for deaths occurring during pregnancy, for miscarriages, and for stillbirths. After a normal delivery he can still suddenly appear and cast a spell on the baby: if he arrives ahead of the good spirits, the Yang Mnut Hra, the child is slated for death.

All ceremonies held after Yang Brieng Pong has left the effects of his malevolent acts differ from other ceremonies. They are marked by a deep anguish which grips all participants; they feel his invisible presence still prowling around them. An individual on whom this accident spirit has acted is considered extremely contagious, and sacrifices must be made to purify him so that other members of the family and tribe are not endangered.

The evil partner of Yang Brieng Pong, Hong Klang, is found on earth and enters the corpses of all who die from accidents. He is found in the bones of a corpse where he assumes the form of a wasp, from which he gets his name. Hong Klang literally means "wasp of the bone." People attending the funeral of anyone who has died suddenly are afraid to be in the vicinity of the grave after sunset, for fear they might be in danger of this spirit which roams near the corpse.

The word K'sok designates the imps, jinn, and little devils, who are blamed for nasty tricks. In general, they appear suddenly before the Rhade, causing severe shock, and at times, miscarriages. They assume diversified and deceptive form. These errant spirits are invisible and live in villages, as well as deep within the forests. Their high chief is Yang Lie.

The word M'tao is almost always used in association with K'sok. It serves to designate demons and evil spirits of lower rank. The M'tao can enter the bodies of human beings to destroy them. From within the victim, they can, with the aid of a magic bellows, blow a cloud of powder that condenses into an internal ailment. They also shoot magic darts that will quickly kill their victims.

The Rhade have a degree of sympathy for these erring spirits; and even though they dread the sudden appearance of the M'tao, the tribesmen smile when the spirits leave. Their attitude toward Yang Brieng Pong and his sinister cohort, Hong Klang, however, is quite different. The tribesmen feel that the most serious dangers result when these two spirits act in concert. Therefore, every act of these spirits must be observed and precautionary measures taken through sacrificial ceremonies.³

In addition to these numerous spirits, the Rhade believe that a person has three souls. The m'ngat is the first soul which represents the individual during life and continues to represent him after death. After death, it is called yang atao.

The second soul, m'ngah, also called ewa, meaning life or breath, is the soul which after death quits the body and goes to another body to give it life. It is called yun for the short period after it has left one body and before it has entered another. The first cry of a baby is a sign that the yun has entered the body of the infant to give it life, m'ngah.

Tlang hia is the third soul, and it is represented by a bird which leaves the body at death and becomes dew. This dew is used in the infant-naming ceremony to obtain the consent of the deceased maternal aunts and uncles to use one of their names.⁴

Religious Ceremonies

The Rhade feel they have a contractual arrangement with the spirits; they must appease the spirits with continuous payments of ceremonies and sacrifices to an account which is never paid in full. The Rhade keep their payments up to date in order to avoid misfortune. When something goes wrong, such as the outbreak of an epidemic, the disaster is directly related to improper observation of religious rites.

There are no regular religious holidays among the Rhade. Ceremonies with religious significance take place when natural events, such as birth, marriage, or death occur, and at certain points in the agricultural cycle.* The rituals involved differ according to the event, and each specific ritual must follow an exact routine if the spirits are to be pleased. For most ceremonies related to a particular family, the event and the wealth of the family determine the sacrifices to be made. Likewise, the site of the ceremony will depend upon the circumstances. For example, a ceremony honoring a water spirit would be held near a spring or stream.

*See "Health," p. 10; "Marriage," p. 17; "Pregnancy, Abortion, and Birth," p. 20; "Death and Burial," p. 24; and "Economic Organization," p. 38.

Religious Practitioners

Relationships between human beings and the spirits can be adjusted to a degree by rituals and ceremonial sacrifices using certain animals, rice wine in jars, other objects, and prayers to the spirits. These relationships are handled by special religious practitioners called *Mjao*. *Mjao* can be either male or female, although in practice few are female. Observers often call them sorcerers or shamans. One of their duties is to cure illnesses which the Rhade believe are caused by the evil spirits. The *Mjao* also protect the tribesmen from attacks by the spirit of the tree trunk, the spirit of the mole-hill, the spirit of the forest, and the spirit of the spring; all of which are evil forces. A *Mjao* is one who, in his youth, was blessed with the favor of the spirit of the python and whose gift for healing was revealed to him by certain signs. This favor includes the ability to suck out the seed of a calabash through its peel. This gift is confirmed by dreams and is daily nourished by lessons from an experienced *Mjao* who knows the art of magic, sacrificial ceremonies, and healing. These powers are used against those of the lesser evil spirits.

Against Yang Brieng, on the other hand, the *Mjao* are powerless; their only recourse is prayer and sacrifice. All prayers contain a special appeal to the dead ancestors and ask their intercession in the fight against the forces of evil.⁵

Intervening constantly in the life of the tribe, a *Mjao* is a powerful person in the village and is usually wealthy as a result of the goods he collects for services to the sick or injured. There are, however, risks involved. If a *Mjao* is unable to cure a sick chief or a member of the chief's family, he is accused of wrongdoing. For this he may be expelled from his village or be made to undergo some severe test to determine his guilt or innocence.

A *Mjao* serves as a doctor, and when called on, sucks the sickness from the afflicted person. After he has sucked a certain area of the body, he produces from his mouth a small stone, piece of wood or piece of charcoal, that supposedly has been the cause of the sickness. The *Mjao* determines what type of transgression the person has committed to cause this illness and will order a sacrifice to be offered. Sometimes, seeking a cure, a tribesman will spend all he has in sorcerer fees and prescribed sacrifices only to be told that the spirits simply want his body, and that he will therefore never recover.⁶

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The Rhade economy is based upon swidden or slash-and-burn agriculture. This type of agriculture is very primitive and destructive to the land, but the great fertility of the soil allows the tribesmen to survive by periodically moving their fields. The principal crop is upland or dry rice, and land under such cultivation is called a ray. The Rhade distinguish between rays: the enah, a first-year, newly deforested ray; the kpuh, one resown after the first harvest; and the hma kpuh ray, one that has been resown after successive harvests.

Usually a ray does not support more than four successive crops; it is then abandoned and called a kso'r. The kso'r becomes overgrown, returns to its wild state, and will not be recultivated for at least 12 years. Once the ray has been abandoned, the last cultivator has no particular preemptive right to it.¹ Rhade villages are moved from time to time as the location of the ray moves too far away.

When the Rhade move to a new area, they look for a good location on virgin soil or on land that has been unused for several years. The choice of a new ray is surrounded by many superstitions and taboos.² The Rhade prefer fine red earth or gray earth that is not too pebbly. They choose the nearly flat areas of undulating hills between the deep valleys where springs provide water for the villages. The presence of certain types of trees indicates the fertility of the land; their size indicates the amount of rainfall. Sometimes the fields are located on slight slopes or gently rolling hills, but seldom are they located along sharp escarpments, as are those of the M'nong.³

Dreams play an important role in determining the location of a new ray, for the Rhade believe they indicate whether the new site will be favorable. For instance, dreams about jars, deer, wild boars, stags, tigers, panthers, pigs, horses, or monkeys are all evil omens. A dream about a small horse means rice will not grow on the new land and that the family will suffer misfortune. A monkey in a dream foretells sickness for the man clearing a new field. Dreams of chickens or birds moan turtle doves will eat the

grain. A dream about water presages a fire or a dry spell. However, a dream about toads or reptiles is a good sign. Dreams of births or acquisitions of buffaloes signify a good harvest.

In addition to dreams, Rhade seriously consider certain omens when they are looking for a new location for a ray. Worms or beetles in the earth and the cry of a wild goat in the area are good signs. The appearance of a python is especially favorable; even more so if a pig and three jars are sacrificed.

Certain restrictions must also be considered when the new ray is being chosen. It is forbidden to make a ray over a tomb before the ceremony of abandonment, although it is not strange to see a field planted in the midst of a cemetery once the various burial places have been ritually abandoned. On the other hand, it is a serious crime to use a ray as a place of burial for this attracts evil spirits and endangers the fertility of the soil.⁴

After the ray has been chosen, ownership must be marked: small clearings at the four corners and stakes marked with straw or bark are sufficient signs. A talisman, such as two goat's feet, may be buried in the soil to assure favorable work.

Cutting brush and small growth begins in September, during the period between rains known as the "little dry season," and continues into December. The first 3 days of work in the newly chosen ray are spent in silence. If the supernatural powers, in dreams or omens, do not seem to oppose the work, it can continue. Then in February and March the big trees are cut down. The trunks are cut a yard or more above the ground and left to dry. When fairly dry, the trees are burned. As a result, April skies are often filled with smoke and flames. After the burning of a new ray, the spirit of the ray is offered a drink to quench the thirst caused by the fire. In this ceremony, three bamboo tubes filled with water are placed on a stump and an invocation is recited.⁵

In March, a ritual planting of a special field precedes the general planting. The entire village participates in this ceremony: the men move along in rows, making holes with digging sticks; the women follow, carrying the seeds in a bamboo container.

The Rhade have 3 principal feast days associated with agriculture: Kam Angin, Kam Hwar, and Kam Buh. During the entire dry season, from October to about February, prevailing, dry monsoon winds, originating in the northeast, blow across the Darlac plateau in a southwesterly direction. To appease these violent winds, in February the Rhade organize a festival called Kam Angin. For this ceremony, a portico is set up east of the village, and elephant shackles are hung from the structure. The winds, compared with the power of an elephant, are thus symbolically chained to limit their force. At this celebration the village chief invites the gods and all the dead souls of the village to

partake of the sacrificial wine and pig with the people. Work is forbidden--the fields cannot be burned nor the bee swarms gathered until after the ceremony. The purpose of Kam Angin is to ask the winter winds to stop so the early rains can spread over the soil before sowing, the bees can take flight, and the fields can be burned.⁶ In the past, all foreigners were kept out of the village but this restriction has recently been discontinued.

About a month after Kam Angin, a second festival takes place. This is the Kam Hwar, or the ceremony to consecrate the agricultural tools. A bush representing a honey tree is planted in a small area near the wind portico and offerings, such as a winnowing basket, gongs carved from gourds, and rhinoceros hooves, are made to the spirits.⁷ This is a sacrifice to bless and purify the working tools--particularly the rake--which cut into the soil: These tools must be pure so they will not make the land sterile.⁸ At this ceremony, the Rhade also ask the gods' permission to clean and work the fields. A pig, a white cock, and rice wine are sacrificed to the gods. The people are told about the sacrifice in a low voice in their own houses,⁹ in order to prevent boars and other wild animals who might destroy the fields from knowing about it.¹⁰

Finally, near the end of March, the Rhade celebrate Kam Buh, the planting ceremony. This ceremony is more spectacular than the other two, and preparations begin early in the morning. When everything is ready, and the participants and spectators have gathered, a procession leaves from the long house of the chief or of the po lan. Wooden statuettes, effigies of Ae Die, Master of Heaven, and his wife, H' Bla Dung Dai, a goddess of fertility and rice, are carried at the head of the procession to the ray. Behind the bearers of these, others carry a jug of water to sprinkle the gods and those carrying them. The rest, following in single file, carry crude wooden carvings representing the harmful wild animals that will be killed in effigy. At the end of the group come the tom-tom and gongs. They proceed to the area used in all the preceding agricultural ceremonies, and it is now designated the ray of Ae Die. A miniature hut is constructed in the field and seven boiled chickens and seven jars of rice wine are offered to the spirits. Prayers are said to Ae Die and to his wife, H' Bla Dung Dai. The tribesmen then plant the deity's field; when it is sown, Ae Die will make it rain. This is done symbolically by the participants and spectators who sprinkle the ray and each other with water. The celebrations end with drinking in the village chief's long house. It is a very lively ceremony.¹¹

During the period in which the three celebrations, Kam Angin, Kam Hwar, and Kam Buh take place, the rays are prepared for planting. Although the surface may be leveled with a hoe, the earth is not spaded or broken up, for an implement must not break the soil before the tool has been purified and blessed.¹²

After the first weeding has been accomplished, the corn or maize planting begins in April. The area where corn is planted is simply marked off by a split bamboo shoot with a piece of cotton caught in its fork.¹³ The grain reserved from the last harvest is planted in holes spaced about a meter apart. The Rhade generally do not plant an entire field with corn, as do the Jarai and the M'ngong Gar, and they do not use corn for fermentation.

A sham planting, to appease the deceased, precedes the actual corn planting. Along the road to the cemetery are planted corn, cucumbers, gourds, and pumpkins, and only after this ceremonial planting can corn be planted in the ray itself.

Two months after the corn has been planted, the rice is sown. Much attention is given to dreams and other signs of a fortunate harvest, and 2 or 3 days before the seeds are sown, there is a ceremony to bless them. The actual benediction takes place in the long houses the night before the planting. Many offerings are made and prayers are said. Early the following morning, the sacrifice is completed by pouring a mixture of rice wine and chicken blood over two or three pans of seed and further incantations are said.

Reportedly, the Rhade grow 10 kinds of rice. Eight of these are: Adie yuan, used for making rice wine and relish; Mdie ana, Mdie dio (glutinous), Mdie ke (long, yellow grain), and Mdie wiet, used for food; Mdie hdro, fast-growing, 4-month rice, harvested in the 8th lunar month; and Mdie bla and Mdie kit, used for food and wine.¹⁴

If the planting is to be done on a new ray, the first morning begins with a sacrifice of purification--a male pig and several jars are offered on the ray. The Rhade make a simulated home, with three stones placed firmly on the ground, to attract the spirit of the earth, and place the pig's flesh and various pieces of its organs on two circles of leaves nearby. Then there is a small libation of wine mixed with blood.¹⁵

No one can undertake his own planting until the po lan, guardian of the land, has completed hers. She is entitled to collective labor, and her authority is never questioned.

The method of rice planting is similar to that of other mountain tribes practicing slash-and-burn agriculture. Both men and women work in the ray. Roughly, parallel lines are drawn in the ray from west to east; a man follows these lines, a stick in either hand, and pokes holes in the soil about a foot apart. They work from west to east in the ray to prevent the sun from attracting the soul of the rice. Generally, the women follow their husbands and drop the seeds into the holes, using hollow bamboo planting tubes.

As a matter of custom, it is the men who carry out the slash-and-burn operation. The women do the planting with some help from the men; both men and women weed and care for the fields. When work is pressing at planting time and harvest, all members of a village work

together and help each other. This reciprocity, however, does not extend to neighboring villages.¹⁶

As the crop grows and matures, many dangers await it. Insufficient rain or a hot sun can cause great harm; and, the tender shoots tempt the animals of the bush. Some rays are enclosed to keep the animals out. Numerous birds attack the ripening crop, and many kinds of traps or snares are set up to fight them. As the grain ripens from September to January, surveillance is even more important. Someone almost always sleeps in the ray, and sometimes the whole family moves out to scare away the birds. Many kinds of noise-makers are used by the Rhade, some of which can be manipulated by a line from quite a distance. The Rhade believe that certain plants protect the ray. The spirit of the cactus is often invoked in prayers, although the cactus is not native to the Darlac Plateau and is relatively scarce. It is often planted in the middle of the fields; here the ceremonial first seeds are habitually sown.¹⁷

The farmer is obliged by custom to mark any animal traps he sets out. If he does not, he may have to make reparations to anyone who is hurt or to the relatives of anyone killed through his negligence.¹⁸ The owner of the trap must pay the blood price with a flat gong and sacrifice a buffalo to the victim's family. If a man is wounded, the owner of the trap must pay an indemnity and sacrifice a pig to the victim's family.¹⁹ A man who lays a trap is not responsible for accidents if he had made its presence known. A man who is wounded by a marked trap must repair the damage. If a man is killed by a marked trap, his family must make good the damage. The wounded man or the family of the dead man must sacrifice a pig to purify the earth.²⁰

Although the harvest can begin before a sacrifice is actually carried out, the harvesters suspend their work for several rites and prayers. The harvesting is begun on the west side of the ray for both practical and religious reasons. During that time of year, the wind blows from the east; the uncut crop shields the workers. It is also thought that the souls of the ray will follow after the sinking sun. Therefore, the rice is cut opposite the path of the sun in order to prevent the sun from carrying away the souls of the field. The harvest can take more than a month and sometimes extends to 2 or 3.

There are two methods of harvesting. The first, called puot, consists of grasping the stalk below the ear and pulling the grain off in an upward motion. The grain is then put into a little basket carried on the worker's back. In the second method, called wea, the stalks are cut with a sickle and stacked in a semi-circle. This method is used for the glutinous rice, which is cut down with several inches of stalk attached to the ear, trampled on to separate the grain from the stalk, and then carried back to the village.²¹ The straw is cut off about a meter high,

but is rarely used except for fertilizer for the little tobacco fields of the village.²²

Usually the rice is spread out on great round winnowing baskets to dry. These baskets are put in the sun in front of the long house and hung over the hearth of the house when it rains. The women, children, or old people frequently stir the grain to speed the drying process.

Property System

Under the Rhade social system, the women of the tribe own valuable things, like the long house, gongs, jars, and the harvest. The men do not own these things, nor do they own the land. As discussed earlier, the land is owned by the clan: it is ancestral land and cannot be sold. Its use can, however, be allocated, and for each tract of land there is a hereditary guardian, or po lan. The po lan's position is one with deep religious significance because the land and its fertility are under the domain of the wife of the chief god, Ae Die.

The duties and responsibilities of the po lan are clearly prescribed by Rhade traditions. As keeper and protector of the clan's land, the po lan has no right to alienate it. Nonclan people often cultivate clan land but this can be done only with the permission of the po lan.

The po lan does not need to live on the land but must periodically walk the boundaries of the land. The clan elders and the po lan know the boundaries of their land, and some of the po lan have papers attesting their ownership. The po lan, or to be exact, the clan of the po lan, must periodically prove that it is the owner of the tribal lands and has been since its first member lived on them. The po lan, as guardian of the land and the clan's representative, must recite the geographic points which are the boundaries of the tribal lands. She must recite the genealogy of all the po lans who have been guardians of the land on the female side of the tribe. Such genealogies usually run about 15 generations.²³

There has been some indication recently that the po lan system is losing its traditional function. The role of the po lan seems less important than it once was, and there is less respect for the po lan's claim to land. It has been reported that the Vietnamese Government is planning to redivide the Rhade land and give each family a determined amount with a title of ownership. Adoption of this plan would mean the end of the po lan system.²⁴

Rhade traditional property law states that household objects must not be sold. A bachelor must give his goods to his mother or sisters and may not give away possessions to anyone.²⁵ Nothing can be bought without consulting a member of the family,²⁶ and it is forbidden to buy goods from a minor.²⁷

ADVANCE COPY

Traditional Rhade law also deals with borrowing property or material goods. If a man who borrows something refuses to return it by the agreed time, the lender can take the borrower's gongs and jars as well as the borrowed item.²⁸ If a borrowed item is broken, it must be replaced and, if it is a sacred jar, a fine must be paid.²⁹

It is forbidden by Rhade law to enter another person's house alone. If a person enters alone and something is later discovered to be missing, he must replace it.³⁰

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Political Organization and Leadership

The village is the significant political unit in Rhade society. Villages are led by a village chief and a council of elders. Although the women of the tribe control land and property, the chief is a man. He is chosen by the villagers, usually from one of their leading families, and is usually the wealthiest and most intelligent man in the village. The selection is partially based on his rank and possessions, and possibly on any power he may have over the spirits. The man chosen, however, must be approved by the village council of elders.

The chief is responsible for selecting new village sites and for the conduct of all village affairs and rituals. According to traditional law, if the village chief does not protect his people and does not see that things are well run in his village, he is guilty of a crime. His responsibility and authority do not go beyond the village.¹ There are no political leaders who speak for the entire Rhade tribe.

By Rhade traditional law, the chief has great local authority. Disobeying the chief of the village is a serious and punishable crime. In practice, however, the chief's authority is very limited, and he is usually very conscious of this fact. Consequently, Rhade chiefs are not prone to take very strong actions.³

Officials designated by the provincial administration are the administrative functionaries throughout the Darlac Plateau. The Chief Judges of the Tribunals, although well known and enjoying great prestige, are not political figures. There also appear to be well-known sorcerers, but they appear to have no political function.

The Rhade often refer to "kings" whom they believe have considerable power. In the province of Darlac, in the district town of Ban Don, there is a man known as the King of the Rhade. Actually, he is head of the Tribunal Coutumier which is held monthly in Ban Me Thuot and, while he is well known among the Rhade, he apparently has no political function.⁴

Legal System

The Rhade conception of right and wrong is based upon what is good for the tribe as a group and what is pleasing to the spirits. Justice is based on utility and objectivity, and major crimes are those that detract from the welfare of the group or clan. Indiscretions against individuals are considered minor in nature and are subject to only minor punishment. However, Rhade law upholds the strictest morality, and equivocation is punishable by exile or slavery. As could be expected with an animistic society, there is no death penalty because the spirit of the executed would haunt the living forever.

Law among the Rhade was passed down through an oral tradition. These traditional laws of the Rhade were recognized and codified by the French administration. The French felt that support of these laws would contribute to the maintenance of law and order in the Rhade area and would permit the Rhade to observe their traditions and customs. The alternative, French law, would have been disruptive to the Rhade social structure.

The Rhade law has a set code of rules for dealing with illegal practices. A person who has something stolen reports his loss to the village magistrate (usually anyone who will plead the case). The property owner requests the magistrate to go to the home of the suspected thief to confront and question him. If a judgment is made, the village chief summons the suspect to appear for trial. The trial is held in the suspect's house. If found guilty, the thief must return to the owner three of whatever was stolen. If the man or his family cannot pay the fine, he then becomes a slave of the man whose property he stole.

The traditional Rhade law covers the property system, stating that the women must keep watch over and preserve the land. The law states that "the land must never be like a horse without a master, like oxen without a guard."⁵ It also states that no one owns the land, water or woods: "nobody can lay hands on them, nobody can appropriate them."⁶ The land is under the guardianship of the po lan, who is responsible for the management of the tribal resources. Certain parts of the forests are considered sacred, and cutting trees in such an area is forbidden. Should trees be cut in a sacred area, great misfortune will strike the clan that inhabits the area, and the shaman must be summoned to appease the spirits.

The Rhade law covers the responsibilities of the cultivator and the animal breeder. The farmer must see that his field and gardens are fenced and must keep up the fences. It is forbidden to use the wood from the fences for firewood. Animal owners must pay a fine for any damage their animals cause to fields that are fenced, but the farmer cannot kill animals because they damaged his crops.

Rhade taboos and beliefs are also embodied in the traditional law. Thus, persons guilty of incest are punishable because such a sin endangers the crops. Such persons must pay a fine for their sin: the woman pays the po lan; the man pays the village chief.

The law also deals with inheritance and family organization in the case of death. The family property is passed down from mother to daughter, from aunt to niece, and responsibility for guarding the land is likewise inherited by the daughters and nieces. Upon the death of a family's female head, the eldest sister is considered the "mother" or head of the family.

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate matters concerning the Rhade. In the village, the chief presided over the village court and decided the sentences. His sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and such groups handled only Rhade matters. Each group selected a president to preside over it and the court met in the house of the district chief.⁷

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved by the chief were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the Tribunal, the Chief Judge relied on the written collection of Rhade customs.⁸ The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were Rhade tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and Rhade were the responsibility of the Province Chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the Tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate politically the tribal people into the Republic of Vietnam. This was further encouraged by the Vietnamese attitude toward tribal justice; they have long considered tribal justice harsh, particularly the trials by ordeal, by which guilt is often established by fate or lack of endurance.

In March 1965, the Montagnards requested that legislative codes and practices for tribal areas again be revised. The Vietnamese Government has since promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.⁹

Village Customs Law Courts, consisting of the Village Administrative Committee Chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.¹⁰ When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.¹¹

District courts, governed by the President of the Court (the District Chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bi-monthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court, "all minor offenses," and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.¹²

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard Presiding Judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month depending upon the requirements.¹³

Relations with the Central Government

With the Geneva Agreement of 1954, and the creation of the Republic of Vietnam, the problems of establishing a rapprochement between the Montagnards in the highlands and the more culturally advanced Vietnamese in the coastal areas became acute. The French Government had supported a policy of permitting the Rhade and other tribes to be separate administrative entities. The Government of the Republic of Vietnam, however, has taken measures to incorporate the highlanders into the political organization of the nation. In the past, the Vietnamese considered these people inferior and called these mountain tribes by the collective term moi, meaning savages. Their policy was to move into tribal areas and to impose the Vietnamese culture on the tribes, rather than to consider the complex tribal culture patterns and values. The highland mountain peoples resented the Vietnamese. One of the particularly important problems was the question of land rights: the tribal people believed they owned all of the land in the tribal area, and the Rhade resented Vietnamese encroachment on what they considered their rights to the land. One aspect of this problem was the granting of land concessions to individuals: the Vietnamese maintained that the po lan did not have control of the land and therefore was not the authorized person to allocate its use.

The Vietnamese view the Darlac Plateau as a new territory; settlers, encouraged by the Government, have moved in at an ever increasing rate. Towns like Ban Me Thuot and Pleiku have almost doubled their populations, and the areas surrounding them are dotted with new villages and new fields. The Rhade tribesmen fear this influx of settlers; they look upon it as an invasion of their land.

The Rhade dislike any measures to incorporate them into the political organization of the new society and may be extremely suspicious of the Vietnamese. Much of the time they may look for a hidden meaning in any good act by the Vietnamese. Given a choice, some Rhade would have nothing to do with the Vietnamese, although the intensity of their dislike for lowlanders varies from village to village.¹⁴

The accumulation of various justified and unjustified grievances along with the aspiration for autonomy resulted in overt tribal violence during September 1964. The leader of the revolt was reported to be Y Bham, who afterwards went into exile in Cambodia. Among the demands put forward by the Rhade involved in the revolt were: more hospitals and more schools; direct military and economic aid from the United States (i.e., not Vietnamese administration of aid); command of Rhade troops by Rhade officers; the return of tribal lands and the removal of Vietnamese colonizers; representation in the Vietnamese Government; the appointment of Montagnards as province and district chiefs; and, permission to travel abroad.¹⁵

Although all of these grievances intensified the revolt, it appears that the uprising occurred after Vietnamese officers and noncommissioned officers were put in charge of tribal military formations which had been set up by the Americans.

Through the mediation of the American advisors and the presence of Prime Minister Nguyen Khanh, further difficulties were avoided. While Khanh attended a ceremony of raising the flag of the Republic of Vietnam in place of the rebel flag, the Prime Minister stated that Ban Me Thuot and Quang Duc were an inseparable part of the national territory of Vietnam and that the Vietnamese people of the highlands and the plains must remain united in order not to fall prey to Communists or foreign rulers.

Third Country Influence

Nationals or agents of countries other than the Republic of Vietnam are active in the Rhade area, including missionaries, United States military personnel, and agents of the North Vietnamese Government. United States military personnel have been in the Rhade area for some time serving as advisors to South Vietnamese soldiers in their military efforts to counter the activities of the Viet Cong.

SECTION IX

SUBVERSION

Subversive Influences Evident Within the Tribe

After the Geneva Conference in 1954, it was estimated that approximately five to six thousand Rhade left the tribal villages to join the Communists. There have been reports of Rhade and Vietnamese Communist agents in the villages. They gain acceptance in these villages by participating in the village activities. Naturally, Communist Rhade agents are rather easily accepted, while the Communists from North Vietnam generally comply with Rhade customs in order to gain the confidence of the villagers.

Objectives and Methods of Subversive Elements

The Viet Cong have directed their agents to create dissension among the Rhade by playing on the dislike of some Rhade for the Vietnamese. These agents attempt to generate Rhade dissatisfaction by promoting the idea of an autonomous Rhade state or tribal area. The Viet Cong agents extol the North Vietnamese policy of creating autonomous tribal regions and promise that if the North Vietnamese gain power in the Republic of Vietnam, the Rhade will have autonomy. In addition, their propaganda stresses that the South Vietnamese Government fails to keep its promises to the tribal people.¹ They make a great issue of the promises of the Government that they claim will not be carried out, and of the Government's lack of respect for the mountaineers.

The agents sent to the Rhade area speak the tribal language and are reported to adopt the dress of the Rhade, as well as to break their front teeth and marry into the Rhade groups. Using a knowledge of the Rhade culture and customs, the Communists are trying to use these people to accomplish their own ends. Undoubtedly, Communist agents will continue to attempt to exercise their influence with some of the tribesmen.

Extent of Opposition Within Tribe to Subversive Elements

While there are no signs of activities within the Rhade tribe that would indicate massive subversion by Communists or extreme reluctance on the part of the Rhade to support actions against the Communists, it is very difficult to determine the real influence of the Viet Cong and the real opposition thereto. Some hamlets employ a courier responsible for reporting the presence of any strangers in the village to district officials or to military units. This courier receives no pay and carries no weapon.

SECTION X

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

Principal Means of Information Dissemination

Word-of-mouth communication is the principal means of passing information. There are some transistor radios in the tribal area but not enough to make their employment important for conducting psychological operations.

Although it had been generally assumed that the Rhade literacy rate was too low to make written propaganda effective, one observer recently noted that many of the Viet Cong leaflets directed at the Rhade were written messages, not just illustrations.

The Rhade, when telling stories about themselves or when going about some of their ceremonies, use a method which they call "to sing." This is a kind of solo extemporaneous chant, which is extremely difficult to understand if not well versed in the language, because its manipulation is extremely deceptive. Any villager may sing, and there seems to be no training involved. The villagers are fascinated by such performances, and when someone begins to sing, they drop everything to listen.¹

It should be noted again that the Rhade use signs on the village gates, fields, and tombs to indicate certain ideas. For example, a monkey skin hung at the entrance of a village signifies that admittance is not allowed because a religious ceremony is in progress. Although detailed information on all such practices is not available, some seem to be relatively unimportant for Americans in the area. The Rhade do not expect Americans, as outsiders, to be aware of or understand all customs.

The Rhade enthusiastically contribute their energy to community projects. Therefore, propaganda and psychological warfare themes should indicate a picture of a Rhade helping his village. In order to obtain a Rhade's most enthusiastic response, it is necessary to appeal to his imagination.

SECTION XI

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Vietnamese and U.S. military personnel assigned to Rhade areas possess resources of technical knowledge, materiel, organization, communications, and innovative ability that can substantially assist the tribe in its social, political, and economic progress and development. Tangible proof of willingness to assist the Rhade can contribute to cooperative, efficient working relationships with the tribesmen.

Any civic action undertaken should include, in the planning stage, particular consideration of Rhade religious and social beliefs and superstitions. In addition to specific social and cultural factors that must be considered in the development of civic action programs, it is also important that the Rhade be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. At least initially, this will require detailed consultation among village leaders, careful assurance of result, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

The Rhade respond most favorably to ideas and suggestions for change when they are put in terms of community betterment. Therefore, civic action proposals should stress the role of such programs in improving village life rather than stress the basis of ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than imposed suggestions of a remote central government or foreigners.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion times or have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.

5. Ideally, projects should lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.
6. Credit for success should be attributed to the Republic of Vietnam's civil and military authorities, as appropriate.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for working with the Rhade encompass everything from suggestions to lessen the difficulties of day-to-day routine to sophisticated assistance for economic development or the provision of modern political and administrative institutions. Usually, however, civic action programs will fall somewhere between these two extremes. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all-inclusive and they are not listed in order of priority.

1. Agriculture and natural resources
 - a. Increase or improve production of pigs, rice, and vegetables.
 - b. Insect and rodent control.
 - c. Improvement of marketing system.
 - d. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
 - e. Clearing areas for increased cultivation.
2. Industry and communication
 - a. Road building.
 - b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of telephone, telegraph, and radio systems.
 - c. Construction of housing facilities and buildings.
 - d. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
3. Health and sanitation
 - a. Improve sanitary standards.
 - b. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment or for first aid.
 - c. Provide safe water supply systems.
 - d. Eradicate malaria and other insect-borne diseases.
 - e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.

4. Education
 - a. Organize basic schools for reading and writing.
 - b. Organize vocational training programs.
 - c. Provide language instruction in Vietnamese and English.

5. Public administration
 - a. Provide guidance to local administrators and officials.
 - b. Aid in the organization of public services, such as agricultural extension services and medical and educational programs, operated by the Vietnamese Government.

6. Mass communication
 - a. Provide information on the outside world that may be of interest to the tribesmen.
 - b. Present propaganda supporting objectives, policies, and programs that the Republic of Vietnam and the United States have in common.

SECTION XII

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

The Rhade may be used as informers, intelligence agents, propaganda agents, labor and service forces, trackers and guides, interpreters and translators, and as self defense forces in addition to use in organized counter guerrilla combat units. Given good leadership, the paramilitary potential of the Rhade is excellent.

Operational Background and/or Experience

Rhade trained by colonial French forces are reportedly excellent soldiers. Those with French Army training are likely to be capable of sophisticated combat operations. Many Rhade have also been trained by U. S. military forces and are familiar with U. S. operation techniques as well as modern American equipment.

Operational Potential

The ability of the Rhade to accept and absorb military instruction is limited to some extent by the generally low level of education. However, the factors mentioned above seem sufficiently significant to warrant attempts to develop greater receptivity to instruction.

Specialized Abilities

In addition to their familiarity with the local terrain and environment, the Rhade have considerable stamina and are capable of sustained, long-range, cross-country marches in this difficult terrain. They are skilled in the use of various hunting weapons, such as crossbows, knives, spears, traps, and snares; they are now trained to use modern U. S. weapons and equipment.

SECTION XIII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE RHADE

Every action of the Rhade tribesman has specific significance in terms of his beliefs and religion. A person who comes from a culture where every action has fewer religious and cultural implications must be careful not to be misled into thinking the Rhade will react as the outsider does. What an outsider may consider a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel dealing with the Rhade tribe are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Rhade village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief who will then introduce the visitor to other principal village figures.
2. Personnel living and working with the Rhade and Vietnamese together should remain strictly impartial. Establishing a degree of mutual Vietnamese-Rhade respect and cooperation is necessary for the attainment of any joint Vietnamese-Rhade--U. S. objective.
3. Openness, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Rhade. In this respect, promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. Tribespeople usually consider new groups of U. S. personnel obligated to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
4. The confidence of Rhade tribesmen is not gained quickly--developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
5. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience should be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.

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6. Projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways should be avoided whenever possible.
7. Personnel should not be surprised if the tribesmen use unexpected means to achieve a given goal. It is the end result that counts.
8. Projects and operations should be kept simple and the attention of supervisory personnel should be focused on a few manageable projects at a time.
9. Items should not be given away without some form of payment. Something useful to the village--i. e. , a drainage ditch in return for the loan of a set of shovels--should be obtained in return.
10. An individual Rhade should not be placed in the position of having to make an immediate decision of importance. An opportunity should always be provided for family consultation. If this is not done, a flat refusal to cooperate may result.
11. U.S. personnel should be sure that both the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and the United States receive credit for all assistance.
12. Every effort should be made to elevate the local leaders in the eyes of the tribespeople. The local chief and his assistants should receive major credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Rhade should be treated with respect and courtesy. It is better to speak in a quiet voice than in a loud one because the Rhade consider a quiet voice more respectful and dignified.
2. The term "moi" should not be used because it means "savage" and is offensive to the tribesmen. Use "Dong-Bao-Thuong" which means "compatriot of the highlands."

3. The term of address given outsiders in tribal areas is the one for "grandfather." This term is a suitable and respectful form of address for older tribesmen.
4. The Rhade establish close individual and collective friendships. These ties are usually represented by an exchange of Rhade bracelets--these bracelets should be considered a very significant sign of friendship and alliance and should not be undervalued by outsiders.
5. A Rhade offer of food or drink may be refused by an outsider as long as consistency and impartiality are displayed--i.e., after refusing Rhade rice wine, other alcoholic drinks should not be accepted.
6. A gift or an invitation to a ceremony or to enter a Rhade house may also be refused by an outsider as long as consistency and impartiality are shown.
7. Outsiders wishing to attend a Rhade ceremony, festival, or meeting should request permission from the village chief or other persons responsible for organizing the affair.
8. An outsider should never enter a Rhade house unless accompanied by a member of that house. As in other cultures, this is a question of good taste and cautious behavior--if anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
9. Outsiders should not photograph the tribesmen until sure such action will not offend them.
10. Outsiders should not get involved with Rhade women. This could create jealousy and hate and negate attempts to create trust and good will.
11. The Rhade are hypersensitive and proud. Outsiders should never be arrogant, sarcastic, or belittling in their relations with the tribesmen.
12. The Rhade are generally eager to learn--outsiders should try to help the Rhade learn new techniques, methods, and concepts but should be careful not to seriously disrupt traditional cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Bamboo groves inside Rhade villages have religious significance for the tribesmen. This bamboo is considered sacred and should not be cut down.
2. Certain parts of the forest around a Rhade village are also sacred. Outsiders should find out where these areas are in a particular localé and should not cut or otherwise disturb trees in these areas.
3. The plants around Rhade graves should never be disturbed, because this would disturb the spirits.
4. Rhade tradition delimits the areas available for use as burial sites. Burial arrangements for Rhade, Vietnamese, and outsiders should be cleared with the tribespeople to avoid religious conflicts. Rhade fields should never be used for burials.
5. According to tradition, if a death occurs in a Rhade village, construction work is suspended until after burial. Outsiders involved in construction projects with the Rhade should make allowances for discontinuing work during these short periods of mourning.
6. Snakes have religious meaning for the Rhade and should not be killed in the tribal fields.

Living Standards and Routines

1. The fences around Rhade fields should not be disturbed-- the wood from these fences should never be used for construction or for firewood.
2. The Rhade have strict rules governing the treatment of domestic animals and tribal or personal property. Generally, outsiders should treat Rhade property and village animals with the respect they would pay their own belongings. Any damage done to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission. Outsiders should never kill animals in Rhade villages.

3. When buying goods from Rhade tribespeople, outsiders should always allow time for family conferences because an individual Rhade is obliged by tradition to consult his family before selling anything.
4. The Rhade set out animal traps to protect their fields from both wild and domestic animals. These traps are marked to warn others of their location and outsiders should become familiar with the local warnings in order to avoid accidents.
5. The Rhade are extremely sensitive about water pollution. Precaution should be taken to avoid any act that might appear to endanger their supply of pure water. Often, outsiders will not be permitted to draw water for themselves but will be served by the tribesmen. Should this occur, the outsiders should not insist upon drawing water for themselves.
6. The Rhade generally dislike routine work and prefer challenging jobs. Routine tasks should be presented to the tribesmen in terms of a test.
7. The tribesmen ask for explicit instructions and close supervision for their work. Although they are generally reluctant to improvise because they fear doing something incorrectly, evidence of successful initiative should be praised.
8. The Rhade prefer to live in long houses where the family ties can be maintained. Wherever possible, housing projects should take this preference into consideration.

Health and Welfare

1. The Rhade are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Rhade areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible. Care should be taken not to degrade the efforts of Vietnamese medical personnel.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle and have adequate supplies for extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

3. It may be useful in remote Rhade villages for U. S. medical people to work with the Rhade shaman or sorcerer. In many cases, the shaman welcomes such an opportunity because his status increases as his healing average "rises" due to the use of Western medicine.
4. The Rhade prefer injections to pills for medication, thinking the former more effective. When pills are used, instructions as to their use must be carefully explained, and a large number of pills--to be administered during a several day period--should never be given to a Rhade as others in the village, regardless of their illness, may experiment with them.
5. Medical personnel must be very discreet when treating Rhade women as they are extremely shy and modest.
6. The outsider should maintain the Rhade practice of requiring that all deaths be reported immediately. This is not only useful for intelligence purposes but also for health reasons--the deceased may have been the first victim of a contagious disease that may be controlled with enough warning.

FOOTNOTES

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According to N. R. Ziemer of the Viet Nam Mission of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Ban Me Thuot is a Rhade tribal name meaning Buon Ama Thuot, or, translated, "the village of the father of Thuot." The author was told by the Rhade that the father of Thuot was a very wealthy man who owned seven elephants and had conquered that entire area. However, when the French moved into this area from Ban Don, he submitted to their rule because he was informed that his elephants were no match for the French sticks that emitted fire.
17. Hickey, op. cit., p. 25.
The discussion of Me Sao is based on Hickey's account.
18. Hickey, op. cit., p. 25.
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18. Ibid., p. 179.
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